

THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

PONTEVEDRA, SPAIN 1925

WHEN the Blessed Mother first appeared at Fatima on May 13, 1917, Lucia, the oldest of the visionaries, was only ten years old. At the age of fourteen, she was admitted as a boarder in the school of the Sisters of St. Dorothy in Vilar. Wanting to dedicate her life to Our Blessed Mother, she entered the Institute of the Sisters of St. Dorothy as a postulant in the convent in Tuy, Spain, on October 24, 1925, and pronounced her perpetual vow on October 3, 1934.

THE FIRST VISION

During her years of religious life she continued to receive messages from Our Blessed Mother, starting on December 10, 1925, while she was still a postulant. In this apparition, Lucia saw the Blessed Mother standing over a cloud of light with the Child

Jesus at her side. The Blessed Mother put one hand on Lucia's shoulder while the other hand held her Immaculate Heart that was surrounded with thorns. The Child Jesus spoke, "Have compassion on the Heart of your Blessed Mother. It is surrounded with thorns that ungrateful men pierce each moment and there is no one that is willing to offer an act of reparation to take the thorns away."

The Blessed Virgin then spoke, "Look my daughter. My heart is surrounded with thorns that ungrateful men pierce unceasingly with their blasphemies and ingratitude. You, at least, try to console me. You should announce that I promise for all those who on five consecutive first Saturdays, confess, receive Holy Communion, pray the Holy Rosary with the intention to do reparation, I will assist at the hour of death with the graces needed for salvation."



Our Lord Himself revealed to Lucia the offenses and blasphemies which wound the Immaculate Heart of Mary: those who deny or question the Immaculate Conception, her virginity, her divine maternity and those who instill in children their prejudices against the Immaculate Heart, and those who insult or offend her sacred images.

Our Lord once again appeared to Lucia in February 1926, asking about the promotion of the requests made by His Mother. Lucia could only explain the difficulties she encountered, but Jesus replied that His grace was sufficient.

Another apparition of the Blessed Mother occurred in June 1929. Lucia describes the apparition in this manner:

suddenly the entire convent chapel was illuminated in a supernatural light, and a cross of light appeared over the altar and reached the ceiling. On the superior part the face of a man was seen and his body down to the waist. A dove of light was over his chest and nailed to the Cross was another man. Suspended in air over his waist I was able to see a chalice with a large Host. Drops of Blood from the face of Jesus Crucified and blood from His pierced side fell into the chalice, dripping from the Host.

Beneath the right arm on the cross was Our Lady who appeared as Our Lady of Fatima. In her left hand was her Immaculate Heart that was encircled by a crown of thorns and flames. Underneath the left arm of the cross, big letters, similar to crystal water came down to the altar forming these words: "Graces and Mercy."

I understood it was the mystery of the Blessed Trinity that was revealed to me, and I perceived inner light about this mystery which I am unable to reveal. The Blessed Virgin told me: "The time has come in which God asks the Holy Father to consecrate Russia to my heart in union with all the bishops of the world. I promise salvation through this means."

In response to Our Lady's request, various consecrations of the world were made by Pope Pius XII, Pope Paul VI and twice by Pope John Paul II. The last consecration by Pope John Paul II in 1984, was considered by Lucia to have been in conformity with the Blessed Mother's request. In the year 2000, Pope John Paul II consecrated the third millennium to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

In seeking a more contemplative life, Lucia entered the Discalced Carmelite convent of St. Teresa in Coimbra where she made her profession on May 31, 1949. She received the name Sister Maria Lucia of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart.

Sister Lucia wrote two books, *Memoirs*, telling the events of Fatima in her own words, and *Calls from the Message of Fatima*, which answered questions frequently asked of her about the messages of Fatima. For the fiftieth anniversary of the apparitions at Fatima, Sister Lucia in 1967, traveled there for the ceremonies conducted by Pope Paul VI. When Pope John Paul II visited the Shrine on May 13, 1982, to thank the Immaculate Heart for saving his life during the assassination attempt of May 13, 1981, Sister Lucia was again present. Her last visit to Fatima was in the year 2000, for the beatification of Jacinta and Francisco. Lucia spent eighty years as a religious and died on February 13, 2005, at the age of ninety-seven, succumbing to the infirmities of old age. Her funeral Mass at the cathedral was presided over by the city's bishop, Most Reverend Antonio Cleto. Her body is now entombed in the basilica in Fatima beside those of Jacinta and Francisco, her companions in the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima