

Our Lady of Fatima's PLAN TO ACHIEVE WORLD PEACE FATIMA CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION



Begins:

13 May 2017

and the 13th of every month until October 2017

Activity:

Holy Mass (when in a Parish)

Message of the Month

Holy Rosary

Procession with the Image of the Holy Virgin of Fatima,
accompanied by chants.

***"My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the path
will lead you to God"***

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Jubilee Prayer of Consecration

Hail, Mother of the Lord,
Virgin Mary, Queen of the Rosary of Fatima!
Blessed among all women,
you are the image of the Church dressed in the Paschal light,
you are the honour of our people,
you are the triumph over the mark of evil.

Prophecy of the merciful Love of the Father,
Teacher of the Annunciation of the Good News of the Son,
Sign of the burning Fire of the Holy Spirit,
teach us, in this valley of joys and sorrows,
the eternal truths that the Father reveals to the little ones.

Show us the strength of your mantle of protection.
In your Immaculate Heart,
be the refuge of sinners
and the way that leads to God.

In unity with my brethren,
In Faith, Hope and Love,
I surrender myself to you.
In unity with my brethren, through you, I consecrate myself to
God,
O Virgin of the Rosary of Fatima.

And thus surrounded by the Light that comes from your hands,
I will give Glory to the Lord for ever and ever.

Amen.

Our Lady of Fatima's PLAN TO ACHIEVE WORLD PEACE

As preparation for the Centennial of the apparitions of Fatima, an initiative is being presented by faithful lay people to awaken a response in every heart to the petition of the Holy Virgin Mary: **Conversion, Pray and Penance** to achieve peace.

*** BEFORE MAY, READ AND REFLECT ON THE 3 APPARITION OF THE ANGEL.**

*** AFTER THE LAST APPARITION IN OCTOBER, CLOSE WITH THE APPARITIONS OF PONTEVERA AND TUY.**

When: Begins 13 May 2017 and continues every 13th of the month until October 2017

Where: In Parishes, Schools and Apostolates.

Activity:

- **Holy Mass** (when in a Parish)
- **Message for Reflection** for the month
- Prayer of the **Holy Rosary**

- **Solemn Procession**, led by the image of the Holy Virgin of Fatima accompanied by Marian chants

** If the procession is at night, the faithful can carry candles.*

THE ROSARY

Begin the prayer with the sign of the Cross. Gloria.

The "mystery" is said at each decade, and after a brief pause for reflection, pray:

One Our Father, ten Holy Mary, and one Glory.

Afterwards the prayer of the Virgin Maria in Fatima:

"Oh Jesus forgive us, free us of the fire of Hell, take to Heaven all souls, especially those most in need of your mercy."

At the end of the fifth Mystery pray one Our Father and three Holy Mary for the health and work of the Holy Father. End with the prayer of the Salve Regina.

Joyful Mysteries

(Monday and Saturday)

1st Mystery: The Incarnation of the Son of God (Luke 1: 26-38)

2nd Mystery: Visit of our Lady to her Cousin Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-56)

3rd Mystery: The Birth of the Son of God in Bethlehem (Luke 2:1-20)

4th Mystery: The presentation of Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:22-38)

5th Mystery: The Child Jesus lost and found in the Temple (Luke 2:41-50)

The Sorrowful Mysteries

(Tuesday and Friday)

- 1st Mystery:** The Prayer in the Garden (Matthew 26:36-46)
- 2nd Mystery:** The flagellation of Jesus tied to the column (Matthew 27:24-26)
- 3rd Mystery:** The Crown of thorns (Matthew 27:27-31)
- 4th Mystery:** Jesus carrying the cross up to Cavalry (Luke 23:26-32)
- 5th Mystery:** The Crucifixion and death of Jesus (John 19:17-30)

Glorious Mysteries

(Wednesday and Sunday)

- 1st Mystery:** The resurrection of the Son of God (Matthew 28:1-10)
- 2nd Mystery:** The ascension of the Lord to Heaven (Acts 1:6-11)
- 3rd Mystery:** The coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:11-14 and 2:1-4)
- 4th Mystery:** The Ascension of Mary to Heaven (1 Corinthians 15:12-23)
- 5th Mystery:** The crowning of Mary as Queen and Lady of all creation (Apostles 12:1-17)

Luminous Mysteries

(Thursday)

- 1st Mystery:** The Baptism in the Jordan (Mattes 3:3-17)
- 2nd Mystery:** The Wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11)
- 3rd Mystery:** The announcement of the Kingdom of God (Matthew 4:12-17-23)
- 4th Mystery:** The Transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36)
- 5th Mystery:** Beginning of the Eucharist (Luke 22:14-20)

PROCESSIONAL SONGS

*ur Lady of Fatima, sent from above,
appeared to three children to tell of God's love:*

Refrain: Ave, Ave, Ave Maria! Ave, Ave, Ave Maria!

1. In Fatima's cove on the thirteenth of May;
the Virgin Maria appeared at mid-day.
2. The Virgin Maria surrounded by light;
God's Mother is ours for she gives us this sight.
3. The world was then suffering from war, plague, and strife,
and Portugal mourned for her great loss of life.
4. To three shepherd children the Virgin then spoke
a message so hopeful, with peace for all folk.
5. With sweet Mother's pleading, she asked us to pray,
do penance, be modest, the Rosary each day.
6. All Portugal heard what God's Mother did say,
converted it sings of that Queen to this day.
7. We all must remember Our Lady's request,
do all that she asks for, obey her bequests.

8. She warned of behavior from which we must turn,
of thoughts, words, and actions which Christians must spurn.

9. To her sad, sweet pleading our promise is made,
that God's Law in all things be strongly obeyed.

10. From nation to nation her fair name is praised,
as souls from sin's bondage are contritely raised.

11. Our thanks to the Godhead, whose ways are so sure,
for giving us Mary, our Mother Most Pure.

12. Our hearts, overflowing with kindness and love,
thank her for God's graces bestowed from above.

13. Hail, Refuge of sinners! Hail, Star of the Sea!
Hail, Queen of Creation! Our hope is in thee.

14. All hail, Virgin Mary! This Star guides our way,
our country's Protectress, America's Way!

BACKGROUND

"Don't be afraid, I won't hurt you!" "Where are you from?" "I am from heaven." "Do you wish to offer yourselves to God, to endure all the suffering that He may please to send you, as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and to ask for the conversion of sinners?"

This conversation between the Virgin and Lucia, a girl, 10 years old who was with her cousins Francisco, 8 and Jacinta, 7, was the beginning of the apparitions on 13 May 1917 in Fatima, Portugal. One century later, the Church celebrates the centennial of that event with a Jubilee Year (27/XI/16 TO 26/XI/17), with the legend: "My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God".

One hundred years have passed since the Holy Virgin appeared to the three little shepherds, Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta, to leave messages of conversation, prayer, sacrifice and penance to a world that was torn by the First World War (1914-1918), by atheism and materialism, decided to remove God from social and cultural life, from politics and from the heart of man. The Virgin in Fatima came to warn us with the love of a Mother, Mother of God and our Mother, what could become the scourge of humanity – families and nations – unless the path of modern history, a path that bore the banners of social justice, development and freedom without god, were not corrected.

There is no better time than now to begin to note the consequences of removing God from our lives and from society, when everywhere we breathe fear of moral degradation, cruelty and violence that have taken over communities. Now is the time – even urgent – that we stop and make a sincere self-criticism of what we have done or failed to do for things to reach the point where they are. Because it is undeniable that confusion has burrowed into families themselves about how what is good for one is bad for others and vice versa.

The Message of the Holy Virgin in Fatima invites us to give a solution to these conflicts through conversation, penance and prayer. It is the "unfailing prescription" for the situation today. It is an invitation and a school for salvation, begun by the Angel of Peace in 1916, and completed by Our Lady one year later in 1917 and heroically lived by the three little shepherds.

The essence of the Message of Fatima is formed of motherly words of hope from the Mother of God, and the means that she offers to us to solve the crisis of today: "Pray the Rosary every day, to achieve peace".

The Message is so simple that we are almost tempted to exclaim, "That's all? The Virgin appeared, did extraordinary things only to ask that we pray?" Yes, that is the great promise. Because if we once again take the beads of the Rosary in our hands and through the grace of God hearts are transformed to the point that Jesus lives in them, war will leave the world, humanity will abandon sin, peace will reign on earth, in families and in the consciences and the words of the Virgin will become true: "Finally, my Immaculate Heart will triumph".

Once again we hear the call of the virgin to prayer and to sacrifice, as the world needs generous hearts willing to restore those who are in danger of losing their way to God. We live this year as a time that is ready for true prayer to reach peace and to defend the dignity of the innocents, victims of ideologies, wars and genocides without precedent.

Just as the little shepherds were called to intervene in history in favor of peace through adoration, through repairing devotion, conversation and their own sacrifice, today we Christians are also called to intervene, aware that the Immaculate Heart of Maria will triumph and that peace will be given to the world.

WHAT DOES THE MESSAGE OF FATIMA TELL US TODAY?

Fatima, "after the Scriptures" is the "strongest and most impressive accusation of sin in the world" which "invites the entire Church and the world to a serious examination of conscience".

The message of Fatima today, in this relativist, utilitarian and modernistic society, in which man believes himself to be self-sufficient and which has led to a morally and economic bleeding, is more true than ever before. And understanding the message requires a minimal desire by the heart that is listening.

Despite all the signs and miracles, the official approval of the Catholic Church as well as the recognition paid by hundreds of millions of pilgrims who have come to the Cave of Iria, this message of love and hope is still unknown to many people in the world.

The message of Fatima could be defined as a sum or compendium of Christian doctrine. All off the essential is there: the Holy Trinity, how God lives in souls by grace, the mystery of our redemption by Christ, the mystery of the iniquity of sin, the sense of solidarity of Christians within the Mystical Body of Christ-head in reparation, the intercession of the angels and the saints, the mystery of the Eucharist, the unique place that is held by the interceding Virgin, showing the maternal love of her Immaculate Heart, the great dogmas of Heaven and Hell. Fatima is in truth, an "abbreviated Scripture".

The devil knows well that when the complete message of Fatima is broadly proclaimed and correctly understood, appreciated and obeyed, his empire of evil in the world will be destroyed.

For this reason it is important that those of us who know him do our part. We must accept the message of the Virgin, work with Her and thank Her for her maternal presence in the Church during these days.

Remember that when Our Lady appeared on 13 May to the three shepherds, Jacinta told her mother and the news spread rapidly. Fifty people went to the 2nd apparition in June; 5000 in July; 15,000 in August; 30,000 in September and 70,000 in October – all told by word of

mouth. Seventy thousand is not a small group, and it happened because the people did what they could. We would be surprised at how many people may be interested in hearing this message.

We can all help to spread the message; we can at least pray the Rosary every day and pray with all our heart. And given the insistence of Our Lady on the need to repent for sins, we can add many sacrifices, no matter how small, to our rosaries. Practice the devotion of the five First Saturdays of the month. Consecrate our homes, work and ourselves to Her Immaculate Heart and personally bear the Scapular of our Lady of Carmen.

We are sure that our Holy Mother will reward our efforts to reveal and spread her maternal message of love and warning, given in Fatima.

HISTORY

1917 was a very special time for humanity. As important as the international situation. At that time the First World War was devastating Europe where the principal European powers were fighting: French and English were fighting the Russians, Germans and Austrians. A war that seemed to have no end.

While a large part of the civilized world was suffering the First World War, communism was making its first great conquest: Lenin came to power in Russia as a result of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, causing as a result a terrible persecution of the Church, erecting impiety and massive crime as a system of government. The Bolshevik Party immediately began to spread "its errors" throughout the world.

Until then their form of government was completely unknown: the formation of the most complete equality and suppression of private property; divorce and free love; abortion and birth control; the "liberation" of women; euthanasia; the omnipresent State; hyper-life planning; psychiatric torture of dissidents; extermination of entire social classes, ethnic groups, opponents and even silent sympathizers. Everything was geared to the final objective of eradicating from the soul any form of religion and implanting a true anti-religion: that of materialism and relativism ...

The Portuguese Revolution of 1910 had deposed the ruling Monarch and proclaimed the Republic, which was formed mainly of Freemasons of the upper class. The Church was the first target of the revolution: churches were sacked, convents attacked and priests and nuns harassed. The fiercest and most specific attacks, however, were through anti-clerical legislation approved by the Republic. Immediately after the Republic was proclaimed, all convents, monasteries and religious orders were suppressed, their members personally expelled and their properties confiscated.

Laws were approved that were designed to destroy the country's morals, one after another: a divorce act was passed, religious vote was abolished, religious education eliminated from the schools, and the use of priestly robes forbidden. Playing church bells and the hours of workshop were restricted.

Religious holidays were abolished and, a law allowing divorce and the separation of Church and State were approved. At this point Freemasons set to the task of de-Christianizing the country. The republican government and the Masons unleashed a campaign of violence against the Church.

The apparitions of Fatima occurred in a Portugal that was in upheaval and against the Church. 1917 was a very special year for a dual event: the coming of the Woman dressed in the Sun, in Fatima, and the arrival of the red dragon to the world with Communism taking control of one of the largest nations on the earth.

That same year the Mother of God took a message of peace, hope and love for Humanity, through three little shepherds in Fatima. These shepherds led a simple and poor life, the children of peasants who lived in a village with just twenty houses, part of the Municipality of Fatima. Every day they would rise and take the livestock to graze until mid-afternoon. Afterwards they would play with other children of the village, and once a week go to Catechism which was the only place where they earned sacred history and some reading and writing. Partly due to the lack of means, partly due to the poverty suffered by all of Portugal during those years, the children had no money to go to school and could barely read and write.

That was the situation at the time of the apparitions.

THE SITUATION OF THE WORLD

The history of Fatima actually begins in the year 1916 when 3 children, Lucia, 9 years old, Francisco, 8, and Jacinta, just 6, received the visit of an Angel in the Valley of Cova de Iria, located near the village of Fatima in Portugal. The angel, who identified himself as the “Angel of Portugal” and the “Angel of Peace” prepared the souls of the little shepherds to better understand, live and spread the message of Fatima. The apparitions of the Angel are actually a “door” that opened for the apparition of Fatima and its message.

In rural Portugal in the year 1916, at the time of the apparitions, it was not unusual to see children taking their herds of sheep to graze. This is what the children of the Marto and Santos families were doing when the angel appeared to them. It was almost always Lucia Santos, Francisco Marto and his little sister Jacinta, who happily took on this responsibility, enjoying the opportunity to play outside while the sheep grazed.

The little shepherds would take small groups of sheep to graze in paddocks that belonged to their parents in different parts of the hillsides, in the highlands where the village of Fatima was located (site of the parish Church) and Aljustrel (where the children lived), near a field the *Loca do Cabeco* (Place of the Head) and the *Cova da Iria* (Cave of Irene), not far from Fatima.

This was the site of the apparitions that would change the lives of these children and announce future events that would involve all of humanity.

That was day was a day like many others when the children took the sheep to graze. On that day in the early spring of 1916, it began to rain and the children hurried to reach the foothills near the village, to shelter in a small natural cove called Cabeco. There they continue to pray, ate their lunch and, as was the custom in all of Portugal, knelt together to pray the Rosary.

APPARITIONS OF THE ANGEL

NARRATIVE of the FIRST APPARITION OF THE ANGEL

Location: Loca do Cabeço, Pregueira in Valinhos

Date: 1916 Spring

"Do not be afraid. I am the Angel of Peace. Pray with me."

Kneeling on the ground, he bowed down until his forehead touched the earth. Led by a supernatural impulse, we did the same, and repeated the words which we heard him say: *"My God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love You! I ask pardon of You for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope and do not love You!"*

Having repeated these words three times, he rose and said:

"Pray thus. The Hearts of Jesus and Mary are attentive to the voice of your supplications."

Memory of Iram Lucia, l.14. ed. Fatima: Secretariado dos Pastorinhos, 2010, p. 169 (IV Memorandum). See also Memories of Irma Lucia I, p. 77-78 (II Memorandum)

REFLECTION:

When the Angel of the Lord appeared before the children for the first time he said, *"Do not be afraid. I am the Angel of Peace. Pray with me."* *"Do not be afraid"*. The same words that the angel said to Mary at the Ascension (Luke 1:30).

The children were so astonished at the presence that Lucia describes it as: *"The supernatural atmosphere which enveloped us was so intense, that we were for a long time scarcely aware of our own existence, remaining in the same posture in which he had left us, and continually repeating the same prayer. The presence of God made itself felt so intimately and so intensely that we did not even venture to speak to one another. Next day, we were still immersed in this spiritual atmosphere, which only gradually began to disappear. This grace also repeated in the last revelations of the Angel, which caused an even greater movement towards grace and love."*

She remembers that, *"The force of the presence of God was so intense that it absorbed us and almost completely annihilated us. It seemed to deprive us even of the use of our bodily senses for a considerable length of time. During those days, we performed all our exterior actions as though guided by that same supernatural being who was impelling us thereto. The peace and happiness which we felt were great, but wholly interior, for our souls were completely immersed in God. "*

Lucia mentions that after the first encounter with the Angel: *"It did not occur to us to speak about this Apparition, nor did we think of recommending that it be kept secret. The very Apparition itself imposed secrecy."*

The Angel gave his message through the light of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, so that the soul receives a divine knowledge, understood but which cannot be expressed. The Angel did not speak to the children only in words, but also through spiritual grace in the depth of the soul.

When he appears he says, *"I am the Angel of Peace"*. Father Gregoria Magno teaches us that the names of the Angels do not refer to their essence, but to their **mission and the service that they provide to humanity**. This is the Angel of Peace. **His mission, therefore is to guide men to peace.**

He also urges them, *"Pray with me!"* What good could we obtain from the help of the Angel in our prayer? The Angel, with his prayer, intercedes for us. We can see this in the holy sacrifice of the mass. Saint Thomas Aquino attributes to the Angel a special force for intercession, greater than that of the priest. He writes, *"The holy Angel, present in the divine mystery, takes the prayers of the priest and the people to God.* We can call the mass holy for this

reason, (“missa” comes from the verb “mittere” meaning to send), because the priest sends his prayers through the Angel to God, just as the people send their prayers to God through the priest.

The prayer that the Angel taught to the children is a prayer of adoration and intercession. **“My God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love You! I ask pardon of You for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope and do not love You!”** The world was at war. The Angel of Peace came to ask for the prayers of the little shepherds for peace and he taught them a supplication; the first part are acts of faith, hope and charity, and the second acts of repentance to God and supplication for sinners.

The efficacy of this prayer can be seen correctly only when we understand it as compliance with the two greatest commands of love: love God and love our neighbor. If we understand that, then we would no longer admire that the children, through this prayer that they prayed for hours, made so much progress in the virtues and in holiness. And we each have the grace of God within our reach, something that prepares us to exert ourselves heroically to love, and the simplest way to exercise it is this prayer.

But the Angel does not give us just a prayer for compliance with this commandment, so that we would be able to do it for ourselves. No, the Angel’s fiercest desire is that we pray together with him. The Guardian Angel also wishes that we kneel and pray together with him. If we do this, the Lord can make one of the most beautiful promises come true, *“where two or three are gathered in my name, I will be there with them”* (Matthew 18:20). This prayer is so brief that we can pray it many times during the day as a short prayer together with our Angel, and therefore draw near the presence of God.

The form in which the Angel didn’t just kneel, but touched the earth with his forehead, indicates to us that this is how we should pray, with complete reverence, so that our prayer is not just a prayer from the lips.

The Angel said to the children, *“Pray this way!”* Those words: Pray this way! Literally repeats Jesus’ words to his apostles when he taught them to pray the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9).

Some people are easily discouraged with prayer; we should remember that *“The hearts of Jesus and Mary attentive to the voice of your supplication”*, as all that is good comes to us through prayer.

After this the Angel disappeared and left the children alone for some months to see if they would remain faithful to the grace received and to their purpose. Without speaking to anybody except amongst themselves, with no other visits from the Angel, the children remained faithful to their purpose.

Lucia noted, *“His words engraved themselves so deeply on our minds that we could never forget them. From then on, we used to spend long periods of time, prostrate like the Angel, repeating his words, until sometimes we fell, exhausted.”* This was an act of heroic generosity.

(Quotes from the book: *Memoirs of Sister Lucia*, Portuguese ed. Vice-Postulacao, Fatima, 1987).

NARRATIVE of the SECOND APPARITION OF THE ANGEL

Location: Backyard of Lucia's house, next to Poço do Arneiro

Date: 1916 Summer

- *"What are you doing?" he asked. "Pray! Pray very much! The Hearts of Jesus and Mary have designs of mercy on you. Offer prayers and sacrifices constantly to the Most High."*
- *"How are we to make sacrifices?" I asked.*
- *"Make of everything you can a sacrifice, and offer it to God as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and in supplication for the conversion of sinners. You will thus draw down peace upon your country. I am its Angel Guardian, the Angel of Portugal. Above all, accept and bear with submission, the suffering which the Lord will send you."*

Memoirs of Irma Lucia I.14th ed. Fatima: Secretariado dos Pastorinhos, 200 p. 170 (IV Memoir)

REFLECTION School of Prayer and Sacrifice

In its second apparition to Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco the Angel of Portugal taught the children how to adore God with holy reverence and intercession for all sinners. They proved to be good students in prayer, as they remained strong and grew in holiness even without immediate contact with the Angel for a long period of time. The three little shepherds with their constancy showed that they were worthy of the continuous help of the Angel. This help arrived a few months later, in the summer.

Given the temperatures that easily exceed 30 degrees Celsius, it was the habit of the shepherds to take their sheep to graze in the morning and to return to their sheds before the heat of midday. In this way the children were able to play after a while after the meal, next to the well behind Lucia's house. "Suddenly, we saw the same Angel right beside us," she tells us. *(How different we would act if we were always aware of the presence of the Guardian Angel at our side! The mission of the Angel is to take us to the place prepared to us by God, and to do this he guides us into the presence of God.)*

The Angel first asked the children, *"What are you doing?"* – not because he didn't know, but because he wanted to show them the abyss that exists between the spirit of the world and the spirit of faith, and to show them how we pass time without care, or all of our lives in superficial things.

Later he urged them to **"Pray very much"**. This is very important, as prayer is the expression of our love of God and our neighbor. It should be all of our joy. We should love as much as we can: with all of our heart, with all of our soul and with all of our strength. But what each one understands as "pray very much" is guided by the amount of love in his heart. If we were each to pray a lot that amount of love would also increase, and if we were each to love a lot then the amount of prayer would also increase. As love and prayer grow, peace and joy also grow.

The Angel, in addition to his request that they pray also asked that the children offer continuous sacrifices. To sacrifice is to pray with the whole body. This form of prayer is very important because it joins us with the sacrifice made by Jesus on the Cross. Lucia simply asked, *"How should we offer sacrifices?"* The Angel's response is precise and profound, *"Make of everything you can a sacrifice, and offer it to God as an act of reparation for the sins which are an offense to God, and in supplication for the conversion of sinners."*

Sacrifice “*in everything you can*” means that everything you do can be a sacrifice. For example inside you, in silence, without anyone else knowing, you can offer to Jesus and to the Virgin a day that is very hot or very cold; a meal that I do not like, I will eat without complaining; some household chore that I do not like to do I will do quietly and without complaint; instead of answering impatiently, I will reject impatience and answer with affection and love; if there is a person that I do not like I will still treat him with love and respect, for love of Jesus, etc. As the Angel says, “everything” can be a sacrifice, asking for the conversion of sinners. The only possibility that we can offer for this perpetual sacrifice is by giving this intention to all of our acts.

The Angel speaks of two forms of sacrifice: those that we choose and the suffering the God chooses for us or allows in our lives.

Those that we choose can be those thousands of small things that every day, all day we can offer to God for love. And those small sacrifices we can always perform as an atonement for the grave offenses to God and for the conversion of sinners.

And the second is the sacrifice of our will, through which we bear the sufferings sent us by God every day. This is greater than any sacrifice that we can choose for ourselves. By delivering ourselves to God’s will we find inner peace and strength, carrying the crosses on the road of our life.

Lucia describes many of those sacrifices that were accepted for the conversion of sinners. They gave their lunch to some neighbor children who were very poor. Instead of ordinary meals they ate acorns and wild onions that they gathered themselves. Often they went without drinking water during the horrible heat of summer. On their own initiative they invented the penitential strap that caused such pain, to offer this to God and to the Mother of God for sinners.

They became insatiable in their thirst to satiate the thirst of the Lord for the salvation of sinners. It is here where we see the true heroism of Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco. The Angel saw them in all of their attempts and helped them. Lucia said about the help of the Angel in a determined period of her life is true for all of our lives: “*During those days, we performed all our exterior actions as though guided by that same supernatural being who was impelling us thereto.*”

The Angel left them saying that he is the “Angel of Portugal”, meaning that not just individuals, but the country itself has a Guardian Angel. In this way our country also has a guardian angel, and we must pray to him for our Country and our countrymen, because he was sent by God to help us. For example we must pray for those who govern, to remove laws against life, the family and marriage, and above all for what our beloved Country needs, above peace, which comes from prayer and sacrifice. It is also Church doctrine that all human groups – families, prayer groups, etc. – have their own guardian angel.

The spiritual effects of these teachings on the meaning of sacrifice are found in the writings of Lucia: “*These words (the Angel indelibly impressed upon our minds. They were like a light which made us understand who God is, how He loves us and desires to be loved, the value of sacrifice, how pleasing it is to Him and how, on account of it, He grants the grace of conversion to sinners. It was for this reason that we began, from then on, to offer to the Lord all that mortified us, without, however, seeking out other forms of mortification and penance, except that we remained for hours on end with our foreheads touching the ground, repeating the prayer the Angel had taught us.*”

NARRATIVE of the THIRD APPARITION OF THE ANGEL

Location: Loca do Cabeço

Date: 1916 Fall

[...] holding a chalice in his hands, with a host above it from which some drops of blood were falling into the sacred vessel. Leaving the chalice and the host suspended in the air, the Angel prostrated on the ground and repeated this prayer three times:

- *“Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I adore You profoundly, and I offer You the most precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles of the world, in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges and indifference with which He Himself is offended. And, through the infinite merits of His most Sacred Heart, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg of You the conversion of poor sinners.”*

Then, rising, he once more took the chalice and the host in his hands. He gave the host to me, and to Jacinta and Francisco he gave the contents of the chalice to drink, saying as he did so:

“Take and drink the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, horribly outraged by ungrateful men. Repair their crimes and console your God.”

Once again, he prostrated on the ground and repeated with us three times more, the same prayer. *“Most Holy Trinity...”*

Memoirs Of Irma Lucia I.14th Ed. Fatima: Secretariado Dos Pastorinhos, 2010, P. 10-171 (Iv Memoir)

REFLECTION The Angel of Fatima and the Eucharist

By the time of the third apparition of the Angel of Portugal in the autumn of 1916 the three little shepherds had advanced considerably in their spiritual life. Unlike the time of the Second Apparition of the Angel when the children are playing, here they were found praying, the prayer was the one taught them by the Angel. Of course the Angel had been a great help to them, but all of the inspiration and help of the Angel would have been for naught if the seeds of grace had not fallen on good earth and generous hearts. The magnanimity and perseverance of the three children was truly extraordinarily admirable.

In addition to prayer, the little shepherds showed that they had learned the lesson of praying to God at all times, not for obligation but for love: one who loves someone likes to speak of the one he loves; whoever loves God likes to pray to him, because to pray is to speak with Him and to receive his infinite merciful love.

After the second apparition of the Angel, when he had instructed the children of the great value of penance and sacrifice, they quickly familiarized themselves with the secrets of this science of love. They discovered that the poor children of the village happily accepted their lunch when they together took the sheep to the meadows to graze. They also learned that they could live on corns and wild flowers. They learned what a belt of sackcloth was and the meaning of intercession for sinners. They were replete with a burning love, and therefore also generous for God.

The Holy Sacrament is the key for the third apparition. What more did the Angel have to announce to them? He had taught them to pray and to express their love through sacrifice. And they were very generous in their prayers and sacrifices.

The Angel appears wrapped in a light “whiter than snow”, a symbol of the sanctifying grace in which he lives, bearing a chalice and a Host, from which drops of blood fall into the chalice. In this way the Angel teaches that the Eucharist is not a blessed bread: it looks like a bread, it tastes like a bread, but it is the Body, the Blood, the Soul and the Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The fact that drops of blood fall from the Host into the chalice indicates that the Host is living, breathing, resuscitated and glorious, Jesus Christ with his Sacred Heart from which the Blood falls to be caught in the chalice. The Blood reminds us that the Mass is the sacrifice of the Cross, but bloodless, and at the same it is the sign of the limitless love of Jesus for each of us.

Later he leaves the chalice and the Host suspended in the air, prostrates on the earth and repeats a prayer three times: “Holy Trinity ...”. In this way he teaches them to worship the Eucharist and to offer it as reparation for the sins of man, mainly the sins of ingratitude.

He also teaches how to take Communion: on our knees, after first performing an act of adoration of Christ God Present in the Eucharist. To take Communion we must first pray inside ourselves, from the deepest part of the heart, and since that prayer originates in the love of Jesus Eucharist we cannot commune without love of Jesus. The inner love and adoration are accompanied by an external gesture that represents them, and that is taking communion on our knees. Whoever takes communion on their knees but without first making that internal act of love and adoration of Jesus Eucharist does not commune as taught by the Angel. Whoever communes and does so on his knees must have first performed an act of profound love and adoration of Jesus Present in the Eucharist.

The Angel, at the time of the communion, shows the Sacred Heart of Jesus, “horribly outraged” by the evil of the human heart. Whoever takes communion must also be aware of that Sacred Heart, and beg pardon for their own sins as well as those of others. The expression “horribly outraged” is very strong, and gives an idea of the magnitude of the offenses committed against Jesus in the Eucharist.

Therefore, can we must never take communion while we are distracted, as if the person communing were receiving a piece of bread; it must be an act of love, of worship and of repair, to console Jesus. The prayer to the Holy Trinity also prepares us to receive the holy communion and then later an act of thanks. Praying this prayer together with the Guardian Angel will help give us a greater spiritual advantage from our holy communions. It is sad that for many souls communion ends with taking the host. Instead of speaking intimately with Jesus in our heart, we look around curiously at what is happening in the Church, we check our watch and run to the parking lot as soon as the service is over.

The Angel teaches us here to give God a correct act of thanks. The time in which we have our God, Jesus Christ exclusively for us is a “private audience”; it is undeniably the most valuable time of our day. If men do not know how to take advantage of His Eucharistic presence in their hearts, then we cannot assume that they have a great love for God at other times.

Just as the first prayer, “My God, I believe” is a summary of the law and the prophets as it gives us a prayer that is a perfect expression of the love of God and our neighbor, the new prayer of the “Holy Trinity” is a summary of all of the New Testament, which consists of the revelation of the Holy Trinity and the death of the Son of God, made man, on the cross. The prayers of the Angel synthesize the essential doctrine of the Old and the New Alliance; they are basically Biblical prayers.

The third apparition of the Angel is a great revelation of this love of our Lord. It doesn't just stay in the tabernacle; it also wants to enter our heart. After the Angel has instructed the children on prayer and sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins, he takes them to the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, which is the perfect Sacrament of Love.

This was the last revelation made by the Angel to the three children. We cannot express more precisely what the Angel completed on his mission, than with the words of Lucia herself: *“Impelled by the power of the supernatural that enveloped us, we imitated all that the Angel had done, prostrating ourselves on the ground as he did and repeating the prayers that he said. The force of the presence of God was so intense that it absorbed us and almost completely annihilated us. It seemed to deprive us even of the use of our bodily senses for a considerable length of time. During those days, we performed all our exterior actions as though guided by that same supernatural being who was impelling us thereto. The peace and happiness which we felt were great, but wholly interior, for our souls were completely immersed in God.”*

By leading the children to Christ in the Eucharist, the Angel had completed his mission. Although he disappeared from their eyes he did not stop guiding them and helping them invisibly to complete their duties. He was known as the Angel of Peace, and now, having united with Christ in the Eucharist, they found a great inner peace, that can come only from a union between God and a being who is completely immersed in God.

Christ is present and awaits us in the holy Sacrament of the Altar. How the Angels want to pray with us, to strengthen us in prayer and in sacrifice and take us to a union with God. What more do we need to become saints? (Cites and prayers from the book: Sister Lucia speaks of Fatima.).

ABOUT THE APPARITIONS OF THE ANGEL

After prayer and sacrifice, there is the sacrament of the Eucharist. The angel, instructed by God, proceeds to gradually instruct and prepare the witnesses for their mission.

While in the first apparition he asked them to pray for those who “do not believe, do not worship, do not expect and do not love God”, thus letting them know that there were people who lived this way. In the second apparition he takes a step forward, clearly speaking of the “sins that have offended Him (God)”, and of the need to offer repentance for those sins, praying and making sacrifices “for the conversion of sinners”.

In the third apparition the angel uses strong terms, saying that Jesus Christ is “horribly outraged by ungrateful men”, so that it is necessary to perform acts of “repentance for the outrages, sacrileges and indifferences that have offended Him (Jesus)”. And he ends: “Repair their crimes (of the sinners) and console our God”.

How can we console God? By offering to the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, “The most precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, present in all the Sanctuaries on earth”, and praying for the conversion of sinners “for the infinite merits of his Holy Heart and the Immaculate Heart of Mary”.

This was the picture of humanity at the start of the 20th Century! What can we say about the start of the 21st Century, when everything has only deteriorated since then? This is an image that causes us to feel serious, and to combat easy optimism and the superficiality of the spirit.

In this way, correctly prepared by the angel, the three children were in a condition to duly respond to the plans that the Mother of God had for them.

WHAT DOES THE ANGEL OF PORTUGAL TEACH US THROUGH HIS APPARITIONS?

- Awareness of the presence of God
- Prayer
- Sacrifice, mortification and penance
- Repentance
- Eucharistic worship

- Awareness of the Presence of God

The apparitions of the Angel was a very intense experience of the children, with the Divine Presence felt even physically, unlike the apparitions of the Virgin where they experienced more “expansion, freedom” and serenity. Sister Lucia describes it like this: *“I do not know why, but the Apparitions of Our Lady produced in us very different effects. We felt the same intimate joy, the same peace and happiness, but instead of physical prostration, an expansive ease of movement; instead of this annihilation in the Di- vine Presence, a joyful exultation; instead of the difficulty in speaking, we felt a certain communicative enthusiasm.”*

What was the reason for this difference? One possible explanation may be that the angels, purely spiritual beings irradiated the divine holiness that comes from being an angelic being, without medication, that is without the “obstacle” or perhaps “brake” that is matter. When the Virgin appears, although her glory is greater than that of the highest seraphim, this glory is covered by her human nature, and so it happened with the nature of our Lord, even after his Resurrection. It may also be that the divine intention was for them to feel the holiness of God through the apparitions of the angel.

- Prayer

Although the children were young at the times of the apparitions, the invitation to prayer is the first indication given them by the Angel of Portugal: *“Do not be afraid. I am the Angel of Peace. Pray with me.”* He prostrates himself and prays the first of the prayers for repentance that he taught the children; this is the prayer to the Only God – *“My god, I believe”, ...* - he repeats the prayer three times and then once again tells them, *“Pray this way.”* And he tells the children something that invites them to pray: that *“the hearts of Jesus and Mary are ready to hear you.”*

In the Second Apparition, although as children the fact that they were playing is justified, that is, an innocent activity of childhood, the Angel reproaches them for not praying, *“What are you doing? You must pray! Pray!”*

In the Third Apparition and before the children were given the Communion of Body and Blood of the Lord brought by the Angel, he teaches them the prayer of repentance to God One in Three: *“Holy Trinity ...”*. That is, in the three Apparitions, the Angel of Portugal teaches us to pray, and instructs us to pray.

- Sacrifice, mortification and penance

In our time, dominated by materialism and hedonism, where sensual pleasure is the goal of everyone, it may be strange that some children are to make sacrifices, mortification and penance, and yet this is what the Angel of Portugal is asking of the children in the Second Apparition: *“Offer your prayers and sacrifices to God, the Highest”*. And in answer to Lucia’s question of how they should offer their sacrifices, he answers, *““Make of everything you can a sacrifice, and offer it to God” Make of everything you can a sacrifice, and offer it to God as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and in supplication for the conversion of sinners.. Accept and patiently bear the sufferings that God will send you.”* The reason for this request: the conversion of sinners and reparation.

- Eucharistic Adoration

The Angel of Portugal taught the children to adore God, no just the One, but the One in Three, that is the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity. This teaching was given during the Third Apparition, when he taught them to commune with the Body and Blood of the Lord.

The unique nature is that to teach them to adore the Holy Trinity, they prostrate before the Eucharist, saying, *“Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I adore You profoundly, and I offer You the most precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles of the world....”* The reason is that Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity, is Present in the Eucharist with his Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity, and this is the Eucharist that is offered in adoration and reparation to the Holy Trinity.

APPARITIONS OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY

(Narrative of the 6 apparitions of the Virgin in Fatima (1917) by Lucia in her journal).

First Apparition of the Virgin in Fatima

(13 May 1917)

Almost 8 months passed after the apparitions until the first apparition of the Virgin. Until then, Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta actively practiced everything that the Angel had taught them, praying the Rosary every day and offering sacrifices to the Lord.

When the Virgin appeared to them, Lucia was 10 years old, Francisco would be nine in June and Jacinta had just turned seven in March. The day of the First Apparition of the Virgin on 13 May 1917, the little shepherds decided to take their sheep to some hills that belonged to Lucia's father and known as the *Cova da Iria*, or the Irene's Meadow. It was there with just one exception where the Holy Virgin appeared on six occasions in 1917 under the name of Our Lady of the Rosary, and a ninth time in 1920 to just Lucia.

To better understand what the Virgin tells us from the heavens we must remember that at that time in 1917 the First World War was raging, a war whose cruelty was ravaging most of Europe and many other nations of the world. At the same time in Moscow Lenin was preparing a revolution, the Communist Revolution that would end with Lenin governing Russia from the violence of arms, to later export his strange belief to other countries: there is no God. It was in this time of chaos and violence that the Virgin appeared in Fatima.

NARRATIVE

PLACE: COVA DA IRIA

DATE: 13 MAY 1917

I was playing with Jacinta and Francisco at the Cova de Iria, building a little stone wall around a clump of furze. Suddenly we saw what seemed to be a flash of lightning.

*"We'd better go home," I said to my cousins, "that's lightning; we may have a thunderstorm."
"Yes, indeed!" they answered.*

We began to go down the slope, hurrying the sheep along towards the road. We were more or less half-way down the slope, and almost level with a large holm oak tree that still stands there, when we saw another flash of lightning. We had only gone a few steps further when, there before us on a small holm oak, we beheld a Lady all dressed in white. She was more brilliant than the sun, and radiated a light more clear and intense than a crystal glass filled with sparkling water, when the rays of the burning sun shine through it.

We stopped, astounded, before the Apparition. We were so close, just a few feet from her, that we were bathed in the light that surrounded her, or rather, which radiated from her. Then Our Lady spoke to us:

"Do not be afraid. I will do you no harm."

"Where are you from?" I asked.

"I am from Heaven."

"What do you want of me?"

"I have come to ask you to come here for six months in succession, on the 13th day, at this same hour. Later on, I will tell you who I am and what I want. Afterwards, I will return here yet a seventh time."

[Do you know if the war will still last a long time or will it end soon?]"

"I cannot tell you that yet, until I tell you what I want.]

"Shall I go to Heaven too?"

"Yes, you will"

"And Jacinta?"

"She will go also."

"And Francisco?"

"He will go there too, but he must say many Rosaries."

[...]

"Is Maria das Neves in Heaven?"

"Yes, she is."

"And Amélia?"

"She will be in purgatory until the end of the world."

[...]

"Are you willing to offer yourselves to God and bear all the sufferings He wills to send you, as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and of supplication for the conversion of sinners?"

"Yes, we are willing."

"Then you are going to have much to suffer, but the grace of God will be your comfort."

As she pronounced these last words Our Lady opened her hands for the first time, communicating to us a light so intense that, as it streamed from her hands, its rays penetrated our hearts and the innermost depths of our souls, making us see ourselves in God, Who was that light, more clearly than we see ourselves in the best of mirrors. Then, moved by an interior impulse that was also communicated to us, we fell on our knees, repeating in our hearts:

"O most Holy Trinity, I adore You! My God, my God, I love You in the most Blessed Sacrament!"

After a few moments, Our Lady spoke again:

"Pray the Rosary every day, in order to obtain peace for the world, and the end of the war."

Memoirs of Irma Lucia I. 14th ed. Fatima: Secretariado dos Pastorinhos, 2010, p. 172-173 (IV Memoir); Vol. I. Fatima: Santuario de Fatima, 1992, p. 9

Then she began to rise serenely, going up towards the east, until she disappeared in the immensity of space. The light that surrounded her seemed to open up a path before her in the firmament, and for this reason we sometimes said that we saw heaven opening.

The following days were days of enthusiasm for the children as they remembered the apparition of the Virgin. Lucia had warned the others to keep her visit secret, knowing the difficulties that would occur if the apparitions were known. However Jacinta was so happy that she forgot her promise to keep the secret and revealed everything to her mother, who listened to her patiently but did not believe her. Her brothers and sisters made fun of her, mocking her with questions and jokes. Only her father, "Ti" Marto accepted the story as true from the very beginning. He believed that his children were honest. He had a simple faith, like that of a child about the works of God, so that he became the first believer in the apparitions of Fatima.

The reaction of her mother, Maria Rosa, was very different: when she heard what had happened she believed that her daughter was the instigator of a fraud, if not worse, a blasphemy. Lucia understood then what the Lady had meant when she said that they would "have much to suffer". Despite her attempts, including threats, Maria Rosa could not get Lucia

to retract her words.

Finally she took Jacinta to speak to the parish priest, Father Ferreira, but he too was unsuccessful. On the other hand Lucia's father, who was not very religious, was practically indifferent, attributing everything to women's things.

REFLECTION

The Virgin appears to them "dressed in white", enveloped in a light that "was more brilliant than the sun", and "radiated a light more clear and intense than a crystal glass filled with sparkling water, when the rays of the burning sun shine through it." When God illuminates, the soul feels flooded by Love, the peace and joy of God, and also experiences a new life much like what happened to the little shepherds. This is seen in the feelings of the little shepherds: not only were they not afraid when the Virgin appears to them, allowing them to come to within one and a half meters from her, but on the contrary they feel "trust" and "happiness" and "are enveloped" in that light, meaning that they find themselves in the Presence of God.

They say that She is "from Heaven", and this together with the request to pray the Rosary leads us to understand although it does not say, that the Rosary is a prayer that comes from Heaven, it is taught by Heaven and it leads to Heaven. This is the reason why the Virgin promises that if we pray the Rosary we will be saved. When Lucia asks if she and her cousins will be saved the Virgin says that yes, but that Francisco will have to first pray "many Rosaries", confirming that the Rosary is the stairway to Heaven.

In this Apparition the Virgin confirms to us the truths of the Church and the Catechism: that he who dies without purging his sins, that is with little love for God in his heart, must go to Purgatory, where the flames will burn all impure love until purified in Love, he can be in the Presence of God, in Heaven.

The Virgin asks them, as the Angel had previously done, if they "*accept the sufferings sent to you by God*" to repair the offenses made against Him and to ask for the conversion of sinners, and Lucia, answering for the three, says yes. The Virgin tells them that "the grace of God be with you and strengthen you". This is because God never gives a test that is greater than what we can bear, and when he tests us he gives more than enough grace so that we can pass that test according to his Will.

Second Apparition of the Virgin in Fatima
(13 June 1917)

The Second Apparition of the Virgin occurred on 13 June 1917. As had occurred in the first apparition the little shepherds once again saw a great light which they call lightning, although it was not actually lightning but a reflection of a light that drew near. As the Virgin had told them that she would appear on that day and in that place there was a group of around fifty people there with the children. Some people in the group noticed that the light of the sunlight dimmed during the first few minutes of the conversation. Others said that the top of the budding holm oak bent down, as if under the weight of something. During the dialogue between Our Lady and the children, some heard a sigh like the buzzing of a bee.

NARRATIVE

Location: Cova da Iria

Date: June 13, 1917

People present: 50 to 60

After praying the Rosary with other people who were present (about fifty) we once again saw the reflection of light drawing near, which we called lightning, and then Our Lady appeared on a holm oak, as in May.

«- *What do you want of me?*” I asked.

“- *I wish you to come here on the 13th of next month, to pray the Rosary every day, and to learn to read. Later, I will tell you what I want.*”

I asked for the cure of a sick person.

- *If he is converted; he will be cured during the year.*

- *I would like to ask you to take us to Heaven.*

- *Yes. I will take Jacinta and Francisco soon. But you are to stay here some time longer. Jesus wishes to make use of you to make me known and loved. He wants to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart.” [I promise salvation to those who embrace it, and those souls will be loved by God like flowers placed by me to adorn His throne.]*

Am I to stay here alone? I asked, sadly.

No, my daughter. Are you suffering a great deal? Don't lose heart. I will never forsake you. My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God.

As Our Lady spoke these last words, she opened her hands and for the second time, she communicated to us the rays of that same immense light. We saw ourselves in this light, as it were, immersed in God. Jacinta and Francisco seemed to be in that part of the light that rose towards Heaven, and I in that which was poured out on the earth. In front of the palm of Our Lady's right hand was a heart encircled by thorns which pierced it. We understood that this was the Immaculate Heart of Mary, outraged by the sins of humanity, and seeking reparation.»

Memoirs of Irma Lucia I. 14th ed. Fatima: Secretariado dos Pastorinhos, 2010, p. 175-176 (IV Memoir): Memoirs of Irma Lucia I, p. 175, note 14.

When this vision vanished, the Lady, still enveloped in the light that radiated from Her, lifted from the tree without effort, softly, going up towards the east, until she disappeared in the immensity of space. Some of those who were closest noticed that the holm oak buds leaned in the same direction, as though the robes of Our Lady had dragged them. Only a few hours later did they return to their natural position.”

REFLECTION

The Virgin appears enveloped in a light brighter than the sun. She, the Immaculada, has not the smallest shadow of a sin or malice, she is transparent in the light of God, to God who is light, and therefore when she appears the light of the sun pales. This is what it means when the shepherds say that “the light of sun dimmed”.

Another detail from the witnesses was that the buds at the top of the holm oak where the Virgin stood seemed to be bent below a weight, and that when the Virgin withdrew those buds moved as if they had been dragged by the robe of the Virgin. This would indicate that reality of the human body glorified in another life: it continues to be the same human body that we have here, but glorified – for those who go to heaven. Those who heard what seemed to be the buzzing of a bee means that the dialogues of heaven were heard and understood only by those who will go to Heaven and who want to hear and understand.

Lucia respectfully asked the Virgin what the Virgin wanted of her. This is what we must all ask of the Virgin every day of our lives, as we get up in the morning, during the day, when we got to bed, “*Virgin Mary, my Mother, what do you want me to do? What do you want of me?*” There is nothing more joyful than obeying the orders of the Virgin, because they are the orders of God Himself in Person, which is Love and only Love.

The Virgin responds that she wants her to return the following month, on the same day, and that “*you pray the Rosary every day*”. We are asked to return to her presence, that is that we keep her in our thoughts, not just early next month but every day, and this by means of praying the Holy Rosary.

Lucia asks that she cure a “sick person”, and the Virgin tells her that “if she converts”, she will be well that year. Although this is not always the case, in this case curing the physical body depends on the conversion of the soul. To convert is to turn the face of the soul to God, who is the Sun of justice, whose rays illuminate and with that light give Life, Love, peace and joy. But God cannot illuminate and communicate with those who do not wish, that is why conversion is necessary.

Lucia asks that “she take them to Heaven”. The Virgin says that yes, but first she will take Jacinta and Francisco, and leave Lucia some more time so that she can reveal and love and show the world the devotion to her Immaculate Heart. As a devotee to her Immaculate Heart, She promises salvation and tells her that those souls will be loved by God as flowers placed by Her to adorn His throne. He who is consecrated to the virgin and works to imitate her virtues and to live in grace will not just be free of the pestilence of sin, but convert their heart in an imitation of the heart of the Virgin. A heart in sin is like an arid desert; a heart that does not love the Virgin is like a dark forest, cold, frightening. In such a heart the light of grace does not enter, it is filled with fallen angels. But he who is consecrated to the Virgin adorns his heart with the light and grace of God, and make it such a pleasant place that even God Himself wants to live there.

The Virgin says that her Immaculate Heart will be two things: “refuge” and “the way that leads to God”. “Refuge”, because the world is under what is malignant and therefore has such violence, such deceit, so many lies. Evil devastates the world, and demons stalk, causing us to talk into their perverse traps, at all times. The world under this malignancy is like a giant tornado that destroys and devastates everything in its path; the only safe refuge is the Immaculate Heart of Mary. It is also the only “road that leads to God”, because the Virgin teaches to deny us

ourselves, our anger, impatience, laziness, and all bad things; the Virgin teaches us to carry the Cross every day, to sow our Heart with the desire to follow Jesus, and guides us so that we follow her Son on the road to Calvary, the only road that leads to God. The world on the other hand shows us an easy road where all we do is follow our egotistical and selfish whims. This road leads us far from God; it is easy to walk, but it ends in a dark abyss where there is dark angel. The only road that leads to God is the Immaculate Heart of Maria.

In the hand of the Virgin is her Immaculate Heart, surrounded by thorns “that pierce all sides”: these are the sins of men, the worst things that come from their hearts – lies, disobedience, deceits, violence, disrespect of the Eucharist, among many other things – and that offend the Heart of Maria who therefore needs reparation from us.

Third Apparition of the Virgin in Fatima

(13 July 1917)

The Great Secret.

In Hell the damned must bear the

Horrible vision and presence of demons, who mock the damned and punish them harshly

For all eternity.

As the July date drew near Lucia suffered great tribulations caused by the position of the parish priest who warned her that the devil may be behind these apparitions. Because of these suspicions Lucia confided in Jacinta that she intended to not go. However when the day finally arrived, her fears and anxieties disappeared, so that at noon she was in *Cova da Iria* with Jacinta and Francisco, awaiting the arrival of the beautiful Lady.

The Third Apparition on 13 July is viewed as one of the most important of the entire message from the Virgin in Fatima, with a secret that was divided into three parts, a secret that was jealously kept by the children. The first two parts, the vision of hell and the prophecy of the future role of Russia and how to prevent it were revealed in the year 1941 when Lucia wrote her third journal. The third part, commonly referred to as the Third Secret, was later communicated to the bishop, who sent it without reading to Pope Pius XII.

NARRATIVE

Location: Cova da Iria

Date: July, 13, 1917

People present: more than 3000

Moments after reaching the Cova de Iria next to the holm oak, among a numerous crowd (*around 4000 people*) who were praying the rosary, once again we saw a ray of light and a moment later the Virgin appeared over the holm oak.

"What do you want of me? , I asked.

"I want you to come here on the 13th of next month, to continue to pray the Rosary every day in honour of Our Lady of the Rosary, in order to obtain peace for the world and the end of the war, because only she can help you."

Then I said, *"I would like to ask you to tell us who you are, and to work a miracle so that everybody will believe that you are appearing to us."*

"Continue to come here every month. In October, I will tell you who I am and what I want, and I will perform a miracle for all to see and believe."

[Here I made some petitions that I do not remember now. I remember that Our Lady said that we must pray the rosary to find grace during the year]. And she continued:

"Sacrifice yourselves for sinners, and say many times, especially whenever you make some sacrifice: O Jesus, it is for love of You, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary."

As Our Lady spoke these last words, she opened her hands once more, as she had done during the two previous months. The rays of light seemed to penetrate the earth, and we saw as it were a sea of fire.

Plunged in this fire were demons and souls in human form, like transparent burning embers, all blackened or burnished bronze, floating about in the conflagration, now raised into the air by the flames that issued from within themselves together with great clouds of smoke now falling back on every side like sparks in huge fires, without weight or equilibrium, amid shrieks and groans of pain and despair, which horrified us and made us tremble with fear. (It must have been this sight which caused me to cry out, as people say they heard me).

The demons could be distinguished by their terrifying and repellent likeness to frightful and unknown animals, black and transparent like burning coals. Terrified and as if pleading for mercy, we looked up at Our Lady, who said to us, so kindly and so sadly:

“You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace. The war is going to end; but if people do not cease offending God, a worse one will break out during the pontificate of Pius XI. When you see a night illumined by an unknown light, know that this is the great sign given you by God that he is about to punish the world for its crimes, by means of war, famine, and persecutions of the Church and of the Holy Father. To prevent this, I shall come to ask for the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart, and the Communion of Reparation on the First Saturdays 15. If my requests are heeded, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace 16; if not, she will spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions of the Church. The good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, various nations will be annihilated. In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me, and she will be converted, and a period of peace will be granted to the world. In Portugal, the dogma of the Faith will always be preserved.”

(At this point the third part of the secret begins, written by Lucia between 22 December 1943 and 9 January 1944.) *[After the two parts which I have already explained, at the left of Our Lady and a little above we saw an Angel with a flaming sword in his left hand; flashing, it gave out flames that looked as though they would set the world on fire; but they died out in contact with the splendor that Our Lady radiated towards him from her right hand: pointing to the earth with his right hand, the Angel cried out in a loud voice: ‘Penance, Penance, Penance.’ And we saw in an immense light that is God something similar to how people appear in a mirror when they pass in front of a Bishop dressed in white; ‘we had the impression that it was the Holy Father’. Other Bishops, Priests, monks and nuns going up a steep mountain, at the top of which there was a big Cross of rough-hewn trunks as of the bark of a cork-tree; before reaching there the Holy Father passed through a big city half in ruins, and stumbling and with halting step, afflicted with pain and sorrow, he prayed for the souls of the corpses he met on his way; having reached the top of the mountain, on his knees at the foot of the big Cross, he was killed by a group of soldiers who fired bullets and arrows at him, and in the same way there died one after another the other Bishops, Priests, nuns and monks and various lay people of different ranks and positions. Beneath the two arms of the Cross there were two Angels each with a crystal aspersorium in their hands in which they gathered up the blood of the Martyrs and with it sprinkled the souls that were making their way to God.] Do not tell this to anybody. Francisco, yes, you may tell him.*

“When you pray the Rosary, say after each mystery: “O my Jesus, forgive us, save us from the fire of hell. Lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who are most in need.”

After this, there was a moment of silence, and then I asked:

“Is there anything more that you want of me?”

“No, I do not want anything more of you today.”

And as usual she began to rise to the east, until she disappeared in the immensity of space. **Memoirs of Irma Lucia I. 14th ed. Fatima: Secretariado dos Pastorinhos, 2010, p. 176-177 (IV Memoir); Santuario de Fatima, 1992, p. 13-15; (Memoirs of Irma Lucia, 1975).**

REFLECTION

The Virgin returns to ask that they return the following month and that they continue to pray the Rosary every day in honor of the Virgin of the Rosary. This is the condition to obtain world peace and the end of the war, because only She can do this. The Rosary is a very powerful spiritual weapon by virtue of which the Instigator of evil, of rage, of enmity amongst men, the demon, is completely disarmed. The Rosary for the demon becomes a heavy chain with the hardest links of steel, wrapping around him and preventing him and his subjects from harming the souls. When the Rosary is not prayed those chains are loosened and the devil and all of Hell are set free, and as they have only hate in their hearts, completely empty of grace and full of evil and rage, they seek to destroy, to tempt, to deceive and to provoke ills of all kinds. When people, families, cities, entire nations do not pray the Rosary they are exposed to the merciless attacks of these wicked beings who would destroy the world and souls in an instant if they could. This is why it is so important to pray the Holy Rosary, and the insistent petition of the Virgin to pray the Rosary every day.

Wars among men and violence of all kinds are on the rise because we do not hear the warnings from Heaven and do not pray the Rosary as the Virgin asks: every day.

Lucia once again asks who she is and asks for a miracle so that everybody believes. The virgin responds that she will say who she is in October and that she will do a miracle so that everyone believes. Lucia then asks for some of the people from the village: one had asked that the Virgin cure a paralysis and lift them from poverty, but the Virgin says that she will do neither because they must pray the Rosary every day together with their family. Why does the Virgin respond this way? Would it not have been a sign of her goodness to cure the illness and lift the people from poverty? The reason why the Virgin does not grant what is requested is that She, with the Wisdom of God, knows what is truly good for us. She knew that if the person was cured of paralysis, he would use his legs and feet to work for evil, and if they were lifted from poverty they would use their money not to help the poor and to give charity, but to adorn themselves and use it for bad things. In other words, the Virgin knew if to grant what they asked would only condemn their souls, and for that reason did not grant their requests. However she asks that they pray the Rosary every day with their families. This is a double assistance: with the Rosary, more than walk we can fly spiritually to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and from there to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This is infinitely more valuable than walking, because it is living heaven on earth. In addition with the Rosary we find true riches, those that we should “covet” with all of our heart to have and place in heaven, spiritual riches. That is everything that comes to us from God and from his infinite Goodness: peace, grace, joy, love, true happiness. By praying the Rosary then, this person would receive much more than what he asked for: he would obtain the health of the soul and the richness of heaven. For that reason the Virgin does not grant the request, but asks that he pray the Rosary in order to obtain infinitely more than he asked for.

The Virgin again asks for sacrifices for sinners, and teaches them to pray every time they make a sacrifice: “Sacrifice yourselves for sinners, and say many times, especially whenever you make some sacrifice: O Jesus, it is for love of You, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.” Sacrifice or mortification is the quickest road to Heaven: a gesture of patience, anger turned into a smile, a word of encouragement in a difficult time, not complaining, encouraging others, to help in any way possible, according to our condition of life, such as for example cleaning the table, washing dishes, helping in the home, not arguing, not fighting, looking for peace, etc., everybody joining in sacrifice for Jesus on the Cross, asking for the conversion of sinners and offering this in

reparation for the offenses to The Immaculate Heart of Christ is to help so that Love, Goodness and Peace of God reign in the hearts of our brothers-- it is to allow the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Maria.

After saying this, the Virgin immediately opens her hands as she had done in the other Apparition, but instead of the light of God, this time the light from her hands showed something very different: Hell. However more than just showing them Hell, the Virgin had them feel its proximity, and in a way took them there so that the little shepherds felt terrified, to the point that Lucia screamed in fear.

This is a warning for those who do not want to speak of Hell to children – or to young people, to adults, to anybody --: if the Virgin in person more than speaking of Hell shows it to them, and more than shows it has them experience Hell, and this to children who are still in the most innocent stage of childhood: who are we to deny this supernatural reality? Who are we to hide the truths of heaven? Who are we to select the contents of Faith, transmitting what we feel is right and hiding what we do not like? Can the Virgin be accused of being “cruel” by showing some small children Hell, and having them actually experience it? Of course not; therefore it is our duty to transmit the truths of faith, among these the dogma of the existence of Hell.

If a person does not decide to love God for his goodness, at least he can abstain from doing ill for fear of Hell and its horrible punishments. And if one wishes to sin and condemn oneself – because the person who condemns himself does so because he wants to and because he does not want to save himself--, then at least do not say “I didn’t know there was a Hell”, because we warned him.

All men must be very sure of the existence of Hell and of the real possibility of being personally, eternally condemned, for always, if we harden our hearts and do ill without repent. The problem is not doing ill, but rather not repenting.

The pains of Hell are severe , enormous, indescribable, impossible to imagine, eternal; in fact all that we can know is just the slightest idea of what it is, which is very far from reality. The souls suffer in all ways possible.

(Possession of the Secret proved to be a great test for the three children. The family, neighbors, followers of the apparition, even the clergy attempted without success to have it revealed).

Not all is lost for sinners. While there is prayer there is hope of salvation. That is the reason why after the vision of Hell the Virgin once again asked that they pray the Rosary, but now she added something new: devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the first Saturdays each month. She also asked that Russia, which was spreading godless Communism, be consecrated to her Immaculate Heart so that they would stop spreading their errors throughout the world because it is a great lie to say that God does not exist. If Russia is consecrated, the world will have peace.

Finally the Virgin leaves a message of hope: “Finally, my Immaculate Heart will triumph”. And this is so because the Heart of the Virgin, full of the Love of God, will light all the hearts with divine Love, and the Love of Jesus will triumph over the hate of the fallen angel.

The Virgin asks that we pray thusly at the end of each mystery: “O my Jesus, forgive us, save us from the fire of hell. Lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who are most in need.” In this prayer we recognize sinners and ask for forgiveness, as Peter did when he repented; we ask that Jesus free us from the horrible fires of Hell, and that he forgive and take all sinners with Him so that none are condemned.

Fourth Apparition of the Virgin in Fatima **(19 August 1917)**

On 13 August, the day that the children should have seen the fourth apparition, they could not hold their appointment with the Virgin in Cova da Iria, as they were held back by the Administrator of Ourem who intended to tear their secret from them through threats. Offering to provide the children with their own automobile so that they could safely move through the crowd that surrounded their homes, he had actually taken them to the district offices in Vila Nova de Ourem, about 9 miles away. Here he attempted to bribe them, he threatened them with death and he locked them in the jail where the children hung on the wall a religious medal that Jacinta had brought, they proceeded to pray the rosary together with the other prisoners.

Despite their young age and the moral and verbal violence with which they had been treated in the form of multiple threats, up to telling them that they would “fry in oil”, the children remained firm and did not succumb to the pressure.

Meanwhile in Cova the external signs characteristic of the apparition had become visible to the crowd, the largest that had gathered to that time. After these signs had concluded the crowd dispersed, still unaware of the traps that had been set for the children by the government.

The “trial” of the children continued for two days, causing their families to fear. Finally, during the holiday of the Ascension on 15 August the Administrator once again took them to Fatima and left them at the door of the rectory. Here they were seen by the people as they left the Mass, trying to know where they had been.

Days later, on 19 August, Lucia was with Francisco and another cousin in the place known as Valinhos, a property owned by one of her uncles, when around four in the afternoon they noted the beginning of the atmospheric signs that preceded the apparitions of Our Lady in Cova da Iria.

NARRATIVE

Location: Valinhos

Date: August 19, 1917

People present (on the 13th): around 5000 or more

I was accompanied by Francisco and his brother John. We were with the sheep in a place called Valinhos, when we felt something supernatural approaching and enveloping us. Suspecting that Our Lady was about to appear to us, and feeling sorry lest Jacinta might miss seeing her, we asked her brother to go and call her. As he was unwilling to go I offered him two small coins, and off he ran. Meanwhile Francisco and I saw the flash of light, which we called lightning. Jacinta arrived, and a moment later we saw Our Lady on a holm oak tree.

“What do you want of me?”

“I want you to continue going to the Cova da Iria on the 13th, and to continue praying the Rosary every day. In the last month, I will perform a miracle so that all may believe.”

“What do you want done with the money that the people leave in the Cova da Iria?”

“Have two litters made. One is to be carried by you and Jacinta and two other girls dressed in white; the other one is to be carried by Francisco and three other boys. The money from the litters is for the “festa” of Our Lady of the Rosary, and what is left over will help towards the construction of a chapel that is to be built here.” [*Litters used in Fatima and other places were not to carry images, but to pick up offerings in cash and in kind.*]

“I would like to ask you to cure some sick persons.”

“Yes, I will cure some of them during the year.”

Then, looking very sad, Our Lady said:

“Pray, pray very much, and make sacrifices for sinners; for many souls go to hell, because there are none to sacrifice themselves and to pray for them.”

And the Lady began to rise as usual towards the East.

Memoirs of Irma Lucia I. 14th ed. Fatima: Secretariado dos Pastorinhos, 2010, p. 178-179 (IV Memoir); Fatima: Santuario de Fatima, 1992, p. 17.

REFLECTION:

The fact that the children were arrested and threatened with death shows that it is useless for man to attempt to stop the work of God, as it would be like trying to hide the sun with one hand: although for a moment you may not feel the light of the sun on your face because it is hidden by your hand, the sun continues existing and shining its light on the earth; it is the same with God’s plan, which are always carried out.

It is also important to remember that even those who do ill, such as the civil authorities of Ourem, are led by God so that His will is always done. In this case the children suffered the anguish of persecution in the Name of Jesus, through which they acquired the beatitudes of being pursued for Him and for the Kingdom of God. Those who do ill also have an opportunity for sainthood, because if they repent of the ill done God, in His infinite mercy, always forgives.

The Virgin in her fourth apparition once again asked that they pray the Rosary every day, for the conversion of sinners, and also asked that they sacrifice for the same cause.

To encourage us to pray the Rosary and to make sacrifices the viregin reminds us of the vision of Hell from the previous Apparition: “*Many are condemned to Hell because there is nobody to pray or make sacrifices for them*”. This means that when we pray and when we make a sacrifice, or when we accept a mortification with patience and love, and when we unite ourselves privately with the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross and in the Holy Mass, we are doing something that is infinitely greater than what it appears or could appear at first sight.

For example if instead of complaining about food that we do not like we remember Jesus on the Cross suffered both hunger and thirst, and we offer it to him in silence and with love, then what we are doing is actually not just “being good”, nor are we simply practicing a virtue; what we are doing, by joining that little sacrifice with the sacrifice of Jesus, is saving a soul! When we pray the Rosary we are not simply reciting some prayers from memory: we are spiritually uniting with Jesus, who on the Cross and in the Holy Mass prays to God the Father for our salvation. For this reason the act of praying – and above all praying the Rosary – and making sacrifices is much greater, it is something that only in Heaven can we come to appreciate its true meaning: by reciting the Ave Marias, meditating the mysteries of the life of Jesus, by not complaining, by doing what we are asked, by being patient, exercising humility, we are saving a soul from eternal Hell because we are joining with God in his work of illuminating souls with his grace. And when God illuminates the soul with his grace, then in the deepest part of the heart and mind, that person no longer does ill and begins to love God and to do good. And so begins his path to salvation, his path to Heaven, what is called “conversion”.

So as we see praying the Rosary and making sacrifices, penance and mortifications are small acts that, together with the Sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross and in the Holy Mass – which is the same and only sacrifice – becomes something great: united with Jesus and the Virgin, we save many souls that were condemned to Hell.

Fifth Apparition of the Virgin in Fatima **(13 September 1917)**

As the hour approached the children set out for Cova de Iria, but owing to the crowds around us we could only advance with difficulty. The roads were packed with people, and everyone wanted to see and speak. There was no human respect whatsoever. Simple folk, and even ladies and gentlemen, struggled to break through the crowd that pressed around the children. No sooner had they reached them than they threw themselves on their knees before them, begging them to place their petitions before Our Lady. Others who could not get close shouted from a distance. One of them:

“For the love of God ask Our Lady to cure my son who is a cripple!”
Yet another cried out, “And to cure mine who is blind!
To cure mine who is deaf!
To bring back my husband, my son, who has gone to war!
To convert a sinner!”
“To give me back my health as I have tuberculosis!” ...

All the afflictions of poor humanity were assembled there. Some climbed up to the tops of trees and walls to see the children go by.

As what had happened in previous apparitions a series of important cosmological phenomena occurred, observed by those who were at the place: a sudden coolness in the air, the sun dimmed to the point that stars became visible, a type of rain as of petals or snowflakes which disappeared before reaching the ground. As usual the little shepherds noted the reflection of alight and then saw Our Lady over the holm oak:

NARRATIVE

Location: Cova da Iria

Date: September 13, 1917

People present: between 20,000 and 30,000

"- Continue to pray the Rosary every day in order to obtain the end of the war. In October Our Lord will come, as well as Our Lady of Dolores and Our Lady of Carmen. Saint Joseph will appear with the Child Jesus to bless the world. God is pleased with your sacrifices. He does not want you to sleep with the rope on, but only to wear it during the daytime.

- I was told to ask you many things, the cure of some sick people, of a deaf-mute.

- Yes, I will cure some, but not others. In October I will perform a miracle so that all may believe.

REFLECTION

Each apparition of the Holy Virgin was accompanied by significant meteorological changes—the sun dimmed to the extent that stars were seen. This means that the entire universe, visible and invisible, obeyed the Virgin, because one of her titles, as well as Mother of God, is the “Queen and Lady of all that has been created. All Creation pales in the Presence of the Mother of God, and the sun darkens as a sign that the light that inhabits the Virgin from her Immaculate Conception, the light of her Grace is infinitely more powerful than any light created. The light of the Sun, or billions of suns together, compared with the light of the Virgin Mary, are like shadows.

The Virgin tells them to continue praying the Rosary in order to end the war. The prayer of the Rosary, words recited with some wooden beads that are joined by a thread and ended with a cross, has more power than the power of the bombs and guns made by man to kill each other. The Rosary is more powerful than guns, because through the Rosary men enter into communion with the Virgin, and through Her and her Immaculate Heart they come into contact with God, who is Peace and Love in them, and the Peace and Love of God which come from praying the Rosary are unimaginably more powerful than the power of guns made by men.

In addition John tells us that God “is Love”, and the Love of God is “stronger than death”. Because of this by praying the Rosary we find peace: because through the Rosary, God in Person enters the hearts of men, with His Love, Peace and Life, and God, who is Love, Peace and Life, always triumphs over that which was built by man with their arms: hate, war and death.

Since the children have made sacrifices, the Virgin is happy with them but tells them that there some specific sacrifices that they should not make. How does this apply to us today? The person who wants to make a stronger sacrifice must always speak to their Spiritual Director – one should always have one – and obey everything that he says, because a sacrifice made by obedience is worth more than thousands made by one’s own will.

The Virgin will cure some of the sick, others no. Everything depends on the Will of God, which always gives us the best for us. If curing one will lead to his salvation, then he will be cured; but if it does not, then he will not be cured. It may be that some, receiving the miracle of being cured, feeling their good health, will not use it to do go, and because of that they do not receive the gift of being cured. It may also be that others because of their illness will reach Heaven, and for that reason they will not be cured. Whatever the case, God always does what is best for us.

The Virgin promises that in October “I will do a miracle for all who believe”, a miracle that will amaze the entire world.

Sixth Apparition of the Virgin in Fatima **(October 13, 1917)**

It had rained all night between October 12-13, soaking the ground and the thousands of pilgrims who had traveled to Fatima from all parts. On foot, in carriages they came, entering the area of Cova over the Fatima-Leiria road, which today still passes in front of the plaza of the Basilica. From there they went to the place of the apparitions. Today there is a modern glass chapel on the site, enclosing the first that was built and the statue of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima where she appeared over the holm oak.

As for the children, they reached Cova among the praise and skepticism that had followed them since May. When they arrived they found critics who questioned the veracity and the punctuality of the Lady, who had promised to arrive at midday.

NARRATIVE

Location: Cova da Iria

Date: October 13, 1917

People present: 50,000 to 70,000

We left home quite early expecting that we would be delayed along the way. Masses of people (*70,000 people*) thronged the roads. The rain fell in torrents. My mother, her heart torn with uncertainty as to what was going to happen and fearing it would be the last day of my life, wanted to accompany me. On the way the scenes of the previous month, still more numerous and moving, were repeated. Not even the muddy roads could prevent these people from kneeling in the most humble and supplicant of attitudes. We reached the holm oak in the Cova da Iria. Once there, moved by an interior impulse, I asked the people to shut their umbrellas and say the Rosary. A little later we saw the flash of light, and then Our Lady appeared on the holm oak.

"- What do you want of me?"

- I want to tell you that a chapel is to be built here in my honor. I am the Lady of the Rosary. Continue always to pray the Rosary every day. The war is going to end, and the soldiers will soon return to their homes.

- I have many things to ask you: to cure some sick persons, the conversion of sinners, and other things...

- Some yes, but not others. They must amend their lives and ask forgiveness for their sins.

Looking very sad, Our Lady said:

- Do not offend the Lord our God anymore, because He is already so much offended!

- Is there anything more you want of me?

- No, I do not want anything more of you.

Then, opening her hands, she made them reflect on the sun, and as she ascended, the reflection of her own light continued to be projected on the sun itself.

[...]

After Our Lady had disappeared into the immense distance of the firmament, we beheld St. Joseph with the Child Jesus and Our Lady robed in white with a blue mantle, beside the sun. St. Joseph and the Child Jesus appeared to bless the world, for they traced the Sign of the Cross with their hands. When, a little later, this apparition disappeared, I saw Our Lord and Our Lady; it seemed to me that it was Our Lady of Dolores. Our Lord appeared to bless the world in the same manner as St. Joseph had done. This apparition also vanished, and I saw Our Lady once more, this time resembling Our Lady of Carmen.'

While the children saw the different apparitions of Jesus, Mary and St. Joseph, the crowd witnessed a different prodigy, the now famous miracle of the sun. Among the witnesses were the following:

O SECULO (*A pro-government and anti-clergy Lisbon newspaper*)

«From the road, where the carriages were crowded together and where hundreds of persons had stayed for want of sufficient courage to advance across the muddy ground, we saw the huge crowd turn towards the sun which appeared at its zenith, clear of the clouds. It resembled a flat plate of silver, and it was possible to stare at it without the least discomfort. It did not burn the eyes. It did not blind. We would say that it produced an eclipse. Then a tremendous cry rang out, and the crowd near us were heard to shout: 'Miracle! Miracle!'

Before the dazzled eyes of the people, whose attitude transported us to biblical times, and who, dumb-founded, heads uncovered, contemplated the blue of the sky, the sun trembled, it made strange and abrupt movements, outside of all cosmic laws, 'the sun danced', according to the typical expression of the peasants.

An old man who stood on the stairs of a bus with his face turned towards the sun recited the Creed aloud. I asked who he was and they told me that he was Joao da Cunha Vasconcelos. Later I saw him addressing those around him with their hats on, vehemently imploring them to uncover their heads before such an extraordinary miracle.

The people asked each other what they had seen. The great majority admitted that they saw the sun dance and tremble, others affirmed that they had seen the face of the Holy Virgin. Others swore that they saw the sun turn like a wheel that drew near the earth as though it would burn them with it rays. Some said they saw successive changes of color.

O Dia (*Another Lisbon newspaper, edition of October 17, 1917*)

"At one o'clock punctually in the afternoon, solar midday, the rain stopped, the sky color of shiny gray, illuminated the vast arid region with a strange light. The sun appeared to have a veil of transparent gauze that made it easily to stare at. The grayish tone of mother of pearl looked like a sheet of silver that broke when the clouds opened and the silver sun, wrapped in the same veil of gray light, turned and moved in the open circle of clouds. A shout was heard from all mouths and people fell to the knees on the muddy ground ...

The light became a beautiful blue as though it came through a glass of a cathedral and spread its rays over the people who were kneeled with their arms extended. The blue slowly disappeared, and then the light seemed to pass through a yellow glass. The yellow light tinted the white handkerchiefs, the dark skirts of the women. The same happened in the trees, the stones and on the hills.

The people cried and prayed with their heads bare in the presence of the miracle that they had awaited. The seconds past like hours, they were so intense.

Ti Marto (Father of Jacinta and Francisco)

We could look easily at the sun, which for some reason did not blind us. It seemed to tilt first in one direction and then the other. Its rays spread in many directions and colored everything different colors, the trees, the people, the air and the earth. But the most extraordinary to me was that the sun did not hurt our eyes. Everything was quiet, silent and everyone looked up. All of a sudden it seems that the sun stopped turning, then it began to move and to dance in the sky until it seemed to come loose from its place and fall on us. It was a terrible moment.

Maria Capelinha (*one of the first believers*)

It transformed everything into different colors – yellow, blue and white, then it shook itself and trembled. It seemed like a wheel of fire that fell on the people. They began to shout “It’s going to kill us all!”, others cried to our Lord to save them, they recited the act of contrition.

One woman began to confess her sins aloud, saying that she had done this and that... When the sun finally stopped jumping and moving everyone breathed, relieved. We were still alive, and the miracle predicted by the children was seen by everyone.

I was looking at the place of the apparitions, waiting quietly and coldly for something to happen, and my curiosity was declining because a lot of time had passed since anything had happened that drew my attention. Then I heard thousands of voices shouting and I saw the crowd suddenly turn to the other side, with their backs to the place where I was looking and I looked at the sky on the other side.

It was 2 o’clock in the afternoon, around the solar midday. The sun just a few minutes before had appeared amongst the clouds which hid it and it shone clear and strong. I turned to the magnet that seemed to attract all eyes and I saw a disc with a clearly marked ring, luminous and shining, but that did not hurt the eyes. I do not agree with the comparison that I have heard that it was a heavy silver disc. It was a lighter, rich color and shiny, that glowed like a pearl. It did not seem like the moon on a clear night because you could see it and feel it; it was like a living body. It was not a sphere like the moon nor did it have the same color or in. It seemed like a wheel of glass made from the other of all pearls. It could not be confused with the sun seen through the fog (because there was no fog at that time), because it was not opaque, diffuse or covered with a veil. In Fatima it gave light and warmth and looked like a light box with a will defined arc.

REFLECTION

The Virgin asks that a chapel be built: the physical temple is very necessary for the People of God, because as human beings we need a place, a physical space to meet to pray to God. Although we can pray anywhere and at any time, it is necessary to meet in a temple, because we can concentrate and give more attention to prayer and to the presence of God.

However we must remember that the physical temple, made of stone, brick, roofs, doors and windows, is just a figure and a representation of that temple of God that is infinitely more valuable, that is the human body. Through baptism each body is converted into a temple of the Holy Spirit, therefore that physical temple helps us to know how we must care for the temple that is the body.

For example: has anybody ever thought of letting all kinds of animals in the physical temple? Of course not, because that would make it dirty and offend the Presence of Jesus in the Sanctuary. Well, those animals are a figure of the passions and our sins, that must not enter in the body because they offend the Holy Spirit. Has anyone ever heard bad and indecent music, or even just worldly music in the chapel? Of course not, and much less in the body that is the temple of the Spirit. Has anybody ever shouted, gotten angry, kicked, spoken ill of other people, or planned bad things against anybody else in the chapel? Of course not, and of course much less in the temple that is the body.

The Virgin gives her name: the Virgin of the Rosary, and once again asks that we pray the Rosary every day, and she promises that the war will end soon. How important it must be to pray the Rosary that the Queen of Heaven comes, in person, to our world to ask that we pray! The promises made by the Virgin for praying the Rosary are beautiful, and the most beautiful of all is that she promises the grace of conversion to those who pray every day.

Whoever says that it “is boring” to pray the Rosary says this only because they do not know how to pray the way the Virgin taught us. To pray the Rosary is to review the mysteries of the life of Jesus with the eyes of the soul and the heart, mysteries that pass before the eyes of the soul like a movie that is projected on the walls of the heart, a movie in which we are not mere spectators, but actors because we pray the Rosary to learn of the life of Jesus. We must

“get into” the scenes, as St. Ignacio of Loyola says, to see and hear the main actors, Jesus and Maria, so that the Virgin can record the life and Life of her Son Jesus on our hearts. To pray the Rosary is never just repeating empty prayers said into the air: it is to enter the Immaculate Heart of Maria so that She teaches us the life of her Son Jesus and records his virtues on our hearts, so that we are constantly more like Him.

Again, the Virgin says that she will cure “some but not others”. Why? Why will the Virgin not cure everyone? The reason is that God through the Virgin gives us what we need for our salvation. If a cure will help us give more glory to God, then he will cure us; but if after curing us we will forget God and begin to turn to the road to perdition, then he will not cure us. But it may also be that a person will not be cured because that illness, offered to Jesus on the cross, actually opens the doors of Heaven to that person and to many others. That is, the Virgin cannot cure one person because that person, through their illness, will reach Heaven, together with many other people. If the Virgin cures that person then he will not go to Heaven. She will not cure them so that they in this way they go directly to Heaven. This is what happened to Jacinta and to Francisco, who even though they had received the visit of the Virgin were not cured. She did not cure them, so they went directly to Heaven without going to Purgatory.

The Virgin also says that it is more important to convert the heart than to cure the body, because by converting the heart the soul not just stops offending God, but loves him even more. It is for this reason that the Virgin is sad and asks that we no longer offend God.

So that we realize, a lie, impatience, anger, an act of laziness, of pride or vanity offend God, because none of these bad things are in God. But we must know that in addition to offending Him, a soul that is lazy, angry, impatient, or that says lies cannot be before God who has absolutely nothing of these bad things. A soul that is not converted, that is a soul that in this life does not try to be “soft and humble of heart” like the Sacred Heart of Jesus; a soul that does not try to be “pure and immaculate”, by sanctifying grace, such as the Immaculate Heart of Maria, will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven unless it repents and is mended. This is why conversion is so important, and the reason that the Virgin insists on conversion.

After this dialogue the Holy Family appears in the heavens: St. Joseph, the Child and the Virgin. This is to teach us what is the true and only family created and loved by God: father-man (although St. Joseph was only the adoptive father of Jesus), mother-woman, and the son, who is

The fruit of love of the spouses (although in this case the Child Jesus is the fruit of the Love of the Holy Spirit, Husband of the Virgin Mary).

Later Our Lord and Our Lady of Dolores appear to remind us that the Virgin is Co-Redemptrix, that is She, together with her Son Jesus, also saves us; and although she has not suffered the whips or been crowned by thorns or carried the cross like Jesus, She suffered all of that in her spirit and was united to her Son in his suffering. And for this reason she is called “Co-Redemptrix”.

Finally the image of Our Lady of Carmen appeared in the heavens to remind us to use the Holy Scapular. According to her promises this saves us from Hell if we die with Him and above all, if we promise to live in a state of grace and prefer “to die before committing a mortal or deliberate venial sin”, as said by Saint Dominic Savio.

Finally, the Virgin performed the miracle that she had promised so that all would believe, and that is the miracle of the dancing sun. She causes the sun to spin and brings it so close that the people believe that it is going to crash into the earth. The Virgin can do this because She is the “Queen and Lady of everything that is created”. As the Mother of God, She is the “Woman dressed in the sun with the moon at her feet” as the Apocalypse describes her. For this reason she has power over all visible Creation; but she is also the Queen of the Angels, and therefore has power over all the angels; she is the Queen of all the saints in heaven, and therefore her power over them is that of a loving mother over her loving children.

To better understand the magnitude of this miracle we must remember that it had rained during the entire apparition. Therefore all of the people, between 50 and 70 thousand, despite their umbrellas were all soaking wet. This is very important because at the end of the miracle of the sun everyone was completely dry, because of the scarce distance between the sun and the earth, the distance that the sun had come near the earth.

The sequence of the miracle, according to the witnesses present, was thus: when the conversation between Lucia and Our Lady had conclude, at the moment that the Holy Virgin rose and Lucia shouted, “*Look at the sun!*”, the clouds opened, revealing the sun as an immense silver disc. It shone with an intensity never before seen, but it did not blind. This lasted barely an instant.

At this point the sun began a series of unusual movements that everybody agreed was “the dance of the sun”. In this dance the sun began to rapidly turn, stopped for a moment, and then immediately began to turn the other way like a disc; then the edges turned scarlet red (reminding us of the color of the Blood of Christ), and when this happened it began to turn like a windmill, shooting out red flames. This red light was reflected on the trees, bushes, on the faces and clothing of the people, to then change to different colors. Then something even more impressive happened: the sun moved three times, as though shaken by a tremor, and then fell on the multitude, rapidly drawing near the earth in a zig-zag motion.

This lasted barely ten minutes, and then the sun, again in zig-zag returned to its usual place and was still and bright, shining with the light of every day. The people noted that their clothing had completely dried when the sun had come so close to the earth: it came so close that it seemed that it would crash into the earth. This miracle was observed not just by the witnesses to the apparitions, but also up to a distance of around 40 kilometers and was described the next day in numerous newspapers.

With the “Miracle of the sun”, the apparitions in Fatima ended.

THE LITTLE SHEPHERDS AFTER THE APPARITIONS

The response of the three little shepherds to the petitions of Our Lady, is extraordinary

The cave behind Lucia's house and the rocks of the Cabeco where they had once looked for space for their games are not places where they hid to pray and meditate on the words of the Lady.

To convert sinners so that they would not go to Hell, to console Jesus and to make amends for the Heart of Maria, they fulfilled their desires and they invented and practiced sacrifices of all kinds that their innocent and generous hearts suggested: they went without food and gave it to poor children, they passed hours without drinking water in the intense heat; they ate bitter corns; they accepted what they liked the least and rejected what they liked and also wore a rope tied at the waist; they offered to God all the discomforts and sufferings that they could, mainly the discomfort of interrogations, mocking, doubts and threats.

The words of the Angel in its third apparition "console your God" made a deep impression on the soul of Francisco. Dominated by the feeling of the presence of God, received in the light of what Mary had communicated to the believers, he would say, "We are on fire in that light that is God and yet we do not burn. What is God? We cannot say. But how sad that God is so sad ... If only I could console him!" and he spent long hours before the Sanctuary, accompanying and consoling the "Hidden Jesus", as the Eucharist has come to fill his heart, attention and time.

Jacinta was impassioned by the ideal of converting sinners in order to take from them the suffering of Hell, that vision that had so frightened her. She felt a great affection for the Holy Father and always asked about him. She made these recommendations to Lucia, "It is not long until I go to Heaven. You stay here to say that God wants to establish a devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. When you say that, do not hide. Tell everyone that God grants us grace, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Pray to her because the Heart of Jesus wants us to venerate Mary at his side. Pray to Her for the peace, since God granted that to Her. If I could only put in everyone's heart the light that I have here inside, that is embracing me and that makes me love the Heart of Jesus and Mary!"

An epidemic raged through Europe, taking Jacinta and Francisco amongst those affected. Francisco accepted and converted every moment of the five months of his illness and sufferings in one offering. He died on April 4, 1919, shortly after receiving communion. Jacinta accepted here prolonged illness and dying only in order to save more sinners. She was taken to a hospital near Fatima and then to another in Lisbon, where she died in grace on February 20, 1920.

Lucia, a nun since 1925, entered the Order of the Carmelites with the permission of the Holy Father in 1925. There, in the Carmelite order in Coimbra, Portugal, which she left only to be in Fatima during the visit of Paul VI and the three visits of John Paul II (at their request), she offered her life, her prayers and her sacrifices in order to establish a worldwide devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

APPARITION OF OUR LADY IN PONTEVEDRA

Location: in her cell, in Pontevedra

Date: 10 December 1925

In 1921, four years after the Apparitions of the Virgin in Fatima, Portugal, the seer Lucia, 14 years of age, entered the school of the Doroteas Sisters in Vilar, near Oporto, Portugal.

Later, after pondering for some time the desire to become a nun, in 1925 Lucia, then eighteen, began with the Doroteas Sisters, entering as a postulant in the convent of the Order in Pontevedra, Spain, where Our Lady, as promised in 1917, went to reveal to her the first part of God's plan for saving sinners in our time of rebellion against God: The repairing Communion of the First Saturdays of the month. The message of Fatima was therefore definitely no concluded in the cycle of apparitions in the Cova da Iria in 197.

Lucia, referring to herself, describes the encounter in the third party:

"On December 10, 1925 while Lucia was a postulant with the Doroteas Sisters, she was in her cell in the convent of Pontevedra, Spain, when the Most Holy Virgin appeared, as she had announced in the apparition of July 13 with "I will come to pray the repairing Communion of the First Saturdays", borne by a cloud, with a Child beside her. The Most Holy Virgin, placing one hand on her shoulder, showed her, at the same time, in the other hand a heart surrounded with thorns. Simultaneously, the Child said:

«Have compassion on the Heart of your Most Holy Mother, covered with thorns with which ungrateful men pierce it at every moment, and there is no one to make an act of reparation to remove them».

-Then, said the Most Holy Virgin:

"Look, my daughter, at my Heart, surrounded with thorns with which ungrateful men pierce me at very moment by their blasphemies and ingratitude. You at least try to console me and say that I promise to assist at the hour of death, with the graces necessary for salvation, all those who, on the first Saturday of five consecutive months, shall confess, receive Holy Communion, recite five decades of the rosary, and keep me company for 15 minutes while meditating on the mysteries of the rosary, with the intention of making reparation to me. I promise to be with them at the time of death, with all the grace necessary for salvation.»

REFLECTION

The most noticeable part of the first Apparition in Pontevedra is the incomparable promise made by Our Lady to all those who make the Repairing Devotion of the Five First Saturdays, under the conditions set: "I promise to be with you at the time of death with all the Grace necessary to save your soul."

This amazing grace, which even the most holy souls cannot be sure of, is promised unconditionally to all those who make this Devotion. This is an indication of the great power to intercede that God has given to the Holy Virgin to save souls.

APPARITION OF THE CHILD JESUS IN PONTEVEDRA

Location: in the yard, in Pontevedra

Date: February 15, 1926

NARRATIVE

On the 15th of February 1926, while returning as usual to empty a garbage can outside of the yard, I found there a child who appeared to me to be the same whom I had met once before, and I asked him:

- Have you prayed to Our Heavenly Mother for the Child Jesus?

The Child turned to me and said:

- And have you revealed to the world what the Heavenly Mother has asked you?

- And saying that, He transformed Himself into a resplendent Child. Recognizing then that it was Jesus, I said to Him:

- My Jesus! You know very well what my confessor said to me in the letter I read to you. He said that this vision had to be repeated, for there are to be facts permitting us to believe it, and the Mother Superior alone could not spread this devotion.

- It is true that the Mother Superior, alone, can do nothing, but with My grace, she can do anything. It is enough that your confessor gives you permission, and that your Superior announces this for it to be believed by the people, even if they do not know who it was revealed to.

- But my confessor said in his letter that this devotion already exists in the world, because many souls receive Thee every first Saturday of the month, in honor of Our Lady and the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary.'

- It is true, My daughter, that many souls begin, but few persevere to the very end, and those who persevere do it to receive the graces promised. The souls who make the five first Saturdays with fervor and to make reparation to the Heart of your Heavenly Mother, please Me more than those who make fifteen, but are lukewarm and indifferent ...

- My Jesus! Many souls find it difficult to confess on Saturday. Will You allow a confession within eight days to be valid?

- Yes. It can even be made later on, provided that the souls are in the state of grace when they receive Me on the first Saturday, and that they had the intention of making reparation to the Sacred Heart of Mary.

- My Jesus! And those who forget to form this intention?

They can form it at the next confession, taking advantage of their first opportunity to go to confession."

After this the Child Jesus disappeared without saying more.

Letter of Sister Lucia, to Mons. Pereira Lopes, her confessor in *Memoirs of Irma Lucia I.* 14th ed.

REFLECTION

Lucia's confessor later asked her a series of questions about the Apparitions of Pontevedra. One of the questions was, Why five Saturdays and not nine or seven in honor of the Sufferings of Our Lady? After receiving the questions, she ask that Our Lord teach her the answers, which a few days later she gave to her confessor. This is what she wrote to him:

When I was in the chapel with Our Lord part of the night of May 29-30, I spoke to Our Lord about questions, I suddenly felt myself more intimately possessed by the Divine Presence and, if I am not mistaken, this is what was revealed to me:

“My daughter, the reason is simple. There are five types of offenses and blasphemies committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary:

1. *Blasphemies against the Immaculate Conception.*
2. *Blasphemies against Her Perpetual Virginity.*
3. *Blasphemies against Her Divine Maternity, in refusing at the same time to recognize Her as the Mother of men.*
4. *The blasphemies of those who publicly seek to sow in the hearts of children indifference or scorn, or even hatred of this Immaculate Mother.*
5. *The offenses of those who outrage Her directly in Her holy images.*

Here, My daughter, is the reason why the Immaculate Heart of Mary inspired Me to ask for this little act of Reparation, and in consideration of it to grant my Mercy to forgive the souls who have offended it. As for you, try unceasingly, through your prayers and sacrifices, to move My Mercy with those poor souls.”

APPARITION OF THE HOLY TRINITY AND OUR LADY

Location: in the chapel in Tuy

Date: June 13, 1929

Lucia left Pontevedra on July 16, 1926 to enter the novitiate of the Dorothean Sisters in Tuy, a city near Galicia in Spain, on the Spanish-Portuguese border. She took the habit on October 26, 1926, and made her first vows on October 3, 1938.

It was there in Tuy where Our Lady fulfilled her promise contained in the Secret of July 13, 1917: "... I will come to ask for the consecration of Russia ..."

NARRATIVE

"I had sought and obtained permission from my superiors and confessor to make a Holy Hour from eleven o'clock until midnight, every Thursday to Friday. Being alone one night, I knelt near the altar rails in the middle of the chapel and, prostrate, I prayed the prayers of the Angel. Feeling tired, I then stood up and continued to say the prayers with my arms in the form of a cross. The only light was that of the sanctuary lamp. Suddenly the whole chapel was illumined by a supernatural light, and above the altar appeared a cross of light, reaching to the ceiling.

In a brighter light on the upper part of the cross, could be seen the face of a man and his body as far as the waist, upon his breast was a dove also of light and nailed to the cross was the body of another man. A little below the waist, I could see a chalice and a large host suspended in the air, on to which drops of blood were falling from the face of Jesus Crucified and from the wound in His side.

These drops ran down on to the host and fell into the chalice. Beneath the right arm of the cross was Our and in her hand was her Immaculate Heart. (It was Our Lady of Fatima, with her Immaculate Heart in her left hand, without sword or roses, but with a crown of thorns and flames).

Under the left arm of the cross, large letters, as if of crystal clear water which ran down upon the altar, formed these words: "Grace and Mercy."

I understood that it was the Mystery of the Most Holy Trinity which was shown to me, and I received lights about this mystery which I am not permitted to reveal.

Our Lady then said to me:

"The moment has come in which God asks the Holy Father, in union with all the Bishops of the world, to make the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart, promising to save it by this means. There are so many souls whom the Justice of God condemns for sins committed against me, that I have come to ask reparation: sacrifice yourself for this intention and pray."

I gave an account of this to the confessor, who ordered me to write down what Our Lady wanted done.

Later, in an intimate communication, Our Lord complained to me, saying: "They did not wish to heed my request!... Like the King of France they will repent and do it, but it will be too late. Russia will have already spread her errors throughout the world, provoking wars, and persecutions of the Church: the Holy Father will have much to suffer."

The request of Tuy was especially different from the others, given the role that the Bishops of the Church and especially the Holy Father would have in God's plan for peace. In the other appearances of Fatima it had been the faithful who were instructed in their role of prayer and sacrifice. In Tuy, on the other hand, the Pope is given the responsibility for future peace, "God asks that the Holy Father ...". In 1917 the Holy Father had asked that the Holy Mother

obtain peace for the world, and as a loving mother She had agreed in good faith, but with the condition of cooperation from the Holy Father and the faithful of the Church in His plan.

Description from Irma Lucia to Jose Bernardo Goncalves, her confessor, in the Memoirs of Irma Lucia I. 14th ed. Fatima: Secretariado dos Pastorinhos, 2010, p. 195-196; cf. Antonio Maria Martins, Letters of Irma Lucia. 2nd ed. Porto: Livraria Apostolado da Imprensa, 1979, p. 77-78.

From 1928 to 1946 she remained with the Dorotheas of Tuy, where she lived and worked in domestic labors. She was very reserved and spent most of her time praying in the chapel.

Finally it was in this last year when she decided to enter the Convent of the Barefoot Carmelite order in Coimbra (Portugal), where she will remain permanently with just a few visits to Fatima, where she died in the year 2005 at the age of 97.

THE “SECRETS” OF FATIMA

In her apparitions in Fatima the Virgin gave the children a set of announcements. Some were immediately communicated, and others are known as “the secret”, whose 3 parts were to be revealed later on different dates.

The Virgin revealed to the Children the three mysteries:

- 1) The vision of Hell so that they could perceive the urgency and importance of praying “for sinners”.
- 2) The conversion of Russia and sinners through consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary;
- 3) The great apostasy or abandonment of the Church and martyrdom of the Pope, bishops, priests, religious and secular people. Along this entire route of calamities in the 20th Century, the Virgin Mary in Fatima revealed the road: prayer and penance. “At the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph” (July 13, 1917).

The first two parts of the secret were revealed in 1941, in a document written by Sister Lucia at the request of Jose Correia da Silva, Bishop of Leiria. The first part essentially relates the Vision of Hell. The second part refers to devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Maria and the consecration of Russia to her, to save the souls from Hell and to prevent the Second World War.

In 1943 when the Bishop of Leiria asked that Sister Lucia reveal the third part of the secret, she hesitated a short period of time “not convinced that God had not sufficiently clearly allowed her to do so”. Nevertheless on January 3, 1944 Lucia wrote the “secret”, placed it in an envelope and delivered it to the safekeeping of the Bishop. To assure the greater protection of the “secret”, the envelope was deposited in the secret archives of the Vatican on April 4, 1957. Sister Lucia was informed of that.

The complete text of the third part of the “secret” was officially revealed by Pope John Paul II in the year 2000, a few months after the Beatification of Jacinta and Francisco Marto. This third prophetic vision refers to the assassination of the Holy Father and describes the terrible sufferings of the Martyr Church in our times.

First Part of the Secret: *The Vision of Hell*

(Narrative of Sister Lucia)

“Saying these words – Sister Lucia continues speaking of the Third Apparition of the Holy Virgin on July 13, 1917 - She opened Her hands once more, as She had done during the two previous months. The rays of light seemed to penetrate the earth, and we saw as it were a sea of fire. Plunged in this fire were demons and souls [of the damned] in human form, like transparent burning embers, all blackened or burnished bronze, floating about in the conflagration, now raised into the air by the flames that issued from within themselves together with great clouds of smoke, now falling back on every side like sparks in huge fires, without weight or equilibrium, amid shrieks and groans of pain and despair, which horrified us and made us tremble with fear. The demons could be distinguished by their terrifying and repellent likeness to frightful and unknown animals, black and transparent like burning coals.”

This vision lasted but an instant, and Lucia exclaimed “Oh!” She comments that if it weren’t for the promise of Our Lady to take them to Heaven, they would have died of fear.

Second Part of the Secret: *The announcement of punishment and the means to prevent it*
(Narrative of Sister Lucia)

“Terrified, and as though asking for help, we raised our eyes to Our Lady who said with great goodness and sadness:

You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace. The war is going to end; but if people do not cease offending God, a worse one will break out during the pontificate of Pius XI. When you see a night illumined by an unknown light, know that this is the great sign given you by God that he is about to punish the world for its crimes, by means of war, famine, and persecutions of the Church and of the Holy Father. To prevent this, I shall come to ask for the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart, and the Communion of Reparation on the First Saturdays. If my requests are heeded, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace; if not, she will spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions of the Church. The good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, various nations will be annihilated. In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me, and a period of peace will be granted to the world. In Portugal, the dogma of the Faith will always be preserved. Do not tell this to anybody. Francisco, yes, you may tell him.”

Third Part of the Secret: *A prophetic vision of an imminent punishment, an immense catastrophe and the Great Return of souls to God.*
(Narrative of Sister Lucia)

Sister Lucia writes at the order of the Bishop of Leiria, Mons. Jose Alvs Correia da Silva and at the order of the Mother of God. In her book *New Documents of Fatima*, R.P. Antonio Maria Martins S.J. transcribes a document from the archive held by Canon Sebastiao Martins dos Reis, in which he reads:

“According to statements written by Mother Cunha Mattos who was the superior of Sister Lucia in Tuy and who received the most intimate confidences of the Seer, Our Lady appeared to her on the 2nd day [today we know that it was the 3d day at 16:00 hours] of January 1944, and she told her to write the third part of the Secret.”

Third part of the secret revealed on July 13, 1917 in the Cova da Iria – Fatima. I write this as an act of obedience to You, my God, who ordered me to do so through His Excellency the Most Reverend Bishop of Leiria and Our Holy Mother and mine.

First scene: The threat of punishment that hangs over the world

After the two parts which I have already explained, at the left of Our Lady and a little above, we saw an Angel with a flaming sword in his left hand; flashing, it gave out flames that looked as though they would set the world on fire; but they died out in contact with the splendour that Our Lady radiated towards him from her right hand: pointing to the earth with his right hand, the Angel cried out in a loud voice: “Penance, Penance, Penance!”

Second scene: A terrible catastrophe that leaves half of the world in ruins and produces victims of all social categories, including and especially the Holy Father, the Pope

“And we saw in an immense light that is God: “something similar to how people appear in a mirror when they pass in front of it” a Bishop dressed in White “we had the impression that it was the Holy Father”. Other Bishops, Priests, monks and nuns going up a steep mountain, at the top of which there was a big Cross of rough-hewn trunks as of a cork-tree with its bark; before reaching there the Holy Father passed through a big city half in ruins and half trembling with halting step, afflicted with pain and sorrow, he prayed for the souls of the corpses he met on his way; having reached the top of the mountain, on his knees at the foot of the big Cross he was killed by a group of soldiers who fired bullets and arrows at him, and in the same way there died one after another the other Bishops, Priests, monks and nuns, and various lay people of different classes and positions.”

Third scene: The Great Return of humanity to God

“Beneath the two arms of the Cross there were two Angels, each with a crystal aspersion in his hand, in which they gathered up the blood of the Martyrs and with it sprinkled the souls that were making their way to God.” Tuy, January 3, 1944

**What is the whole meaning (*in its three parts*)
Of the Secret of Fatima? What does it tell us?**

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

The Message of Fatima.

www.vatican.va

INTRODUCTION

As the second millennium gives way to the third, Pope John Paul II has decided to publish the text of the third part of the “secret of Fatima”.

The twentieth century was one of the most crucial in human history, with its tragic and cruel events culminating in the assassination attempt on the “sweet Christ on earth”. Now a veil is drawn back on a series of events which make history and interpret it in depth, in a spiritual perspective alien to present-day attitudes, often tainted with rationalism. Throughout history there have been supernatural apparitions and signs which go to the heart of human events and which, to the surprise of believers and non-believers alike, play their part in the unfolding of history. These manifestations can never contradict the content of faith, and must therefore have their focus in the core of Christ's proclamation: the Father's love which leads men and women to conversion and bestows the grace required to abandon oneself to him with filial devotion. This too is the message of Fatima which, with its urgent call to conversion and penance, draws us to the heart of the Gospel.

Fatima is undoubtedly the most prophetic of modern apparitions. The first and second parts of the “secret”—which are here published in sequence so as to complete the documentation—refer especially to the frightening vision of hell, devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the Second World War, and finally the prediction of the immense damage that Russia would do to humanity by abandoning the Christian faith and embracing Communist totalitarianism.

In 1917 no one could have imagined all this: the three *pastorinhos* of Fatima see, listen and remember, and Lucia, the surviving witness, commits it all to paper when ordered to do so by the Bishop of Leiria and with Our Lady's permission.

The third part of the “secret” was written “by order of His Excellency the Bishop of Leiria and the Most Holy Mother ...” on 3 January 1944.

There is only one manuscript, which is here reproduced photostatically. The sealed envelope was initially in the custody of the Bishop of Leiria. To ensure better protection for the “secret” the envelope was placed in the Secret Archives of the Holy Office on 4 April 1957. The Bishop of Leiria informed Sister Lucia of this.

According to the records of the Archives, the Commissary of the Holy Office, Father Pierre Paul Philippe, OP, with the agreement of Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani, brought the envelope containing the third part of the “secret of Fatima” to Pope John XXIII on 17 August 1959. “After some hesitation”, His Holiness said: “We shall wait. I shall pray. I shall let you know what I decide”. In fact Pope John XXIII decided to return the sealed envelope to the Holy Office and not to reveal the third part of the “secret”.

Paul VI read the contents with the Substitute, Archbishop Angelo Dell'Acqua, on 27 March 1965, and returned the envelope to the Archives of the Holy Office, deciding not to publish the text.

John Paul II, for his part, asked for the envelope containing the third part of the “secret” following the assassination attempt on 13 May 1981. On 18 July 1981 Cardinal Franjo Šeper, Prefect of the Congregation, gave two envelopes to Archbishop Eduardo Martínez Somalo, Substitute of the Secretariat of State: one white envelope, containing Sister Lucia's original text in Portuguese; the other orange, with the Italian translation of the “secret”. On the following 11 August, Archbishop Martínez returned the two envelopes to the Archives of the Holy Office.

As is well known, Pope John Paul II immediately thought of consecrating the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and he himself composed a prayer for what he called an “Act of Entrustment”, which was to be celebrated in the Basilica of Saint Mary Major on 7 June 1981, the Solemnity of Pentecost, the day chosen to commemorate the 1600th anniversary of the First Council of Constantinople and the 1550th anniversary of the Council of Ephesus. Since the Pope was unable to be present, his recorded Address was broadcast.

In order to respond more fully to the requests of “Our Lady”, the Holy Father desired to make more explicit during the Holy Year of the Redemption the Act of Entrustment of 7 June 1981, which had been repeated in Fatima on 13 May 1982. On 25 March 1984 in Saint Peter’s Square, while recalling the *fiat* uttered by Mary at the Annunciation, the Holy Father, in spiritual union with the Bishops of the world, who had been “convoked” beforehand, entrusted all men and women and all peoples to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in terms which recalled the heartfelt words spoken in 1981.

Sister Lucia personally confirmed that this solemn and universal act of consecration corresponded to what Our Lady wished (“*Sim, està feita, tal como Nossa Senhora a pediu, desde o dia 25 de Março de 1984*”: “Yes it has been done just as Our Lady asked, on 25 March 1984”: Letter of 8 November 1989). Hence any further discussion or request is without basis.

The decision of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to make public the third part of the “secret” of Fatima brings to an end a period of history marked by tragic human lust for power and evil, yet pervaded by the merciful love of God and the watchful care of the Mother of Jesus and of the Church.

The action of God, the Lord of history, and the co-responsibility of man in the drama of his creative freedom, are the two pillars upon which human history is built.

Our Lady, who appeared at Fatima, recalls these forgotten values. She reminds us that man’s future is in God, and that we are active and responsible partners in creating that future.

Tarcisio Betone, SDB
Archbishop emeritus of Vercelli
Secretary of the Congregation
For the Doctrine of the Faith

**ANNOUNCEMENT MADE BY CARDINAL ANGELO SODANO
SECRETARY OF STATE**

At the end of the Mass presided over by the Holy Father John Paul II at Fatima, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the Secretary of State, made this announcement in Portuguese, which is given here in English translation:

Brothers and Sisters in the Lord!

At the conclusion of this solemn celebration, I feel bound to offer our beloved Holy Father Pope John Paul II, on behalf of all present, heartfelt good wishes for his approaching 80th Birthday and to thank him for his vital pastoral ministry for the good of all God’s Holy Church; we present the heartfelt wishes of the whole Church.

On this solemn occasion of his visit to Fatima, His Holiness has directed me to make an announcement to you. As you know, the purpose of his visit to Fatima has been to beatify the two “little shepherds”. Nevertheless he also wishes his pilgrimage to be a renewed gesture of gratitude to Our Lady for her protection during these years of his papacy. This protection seems also to be linked to the so-called third part of the “secret” of Fatima.

That text contains a prophetic vision similar to those found in Sacred Scripture, which do not describe photographically the details of future events, but synthesize and compress against a single background facts which extend through time in an unspecified succession and duration. As a result, the text must be interpreted *in a symbolic key*.

The vision of Fatima concerns above all the war waged by atheistic systems against the Church and Christians, and it describes the immense suffering endured by the witnesses of the faith in the last century of the second millennium. It is an interminable *Way of the Cross* led by the Popes of the twentieth century.

According to the interpretation of the “little shepherds”, which was also confirmed recently by Sister Lucia, “the Bishop clothed in white” who prays for all the faithful is the Pope. As he makes his way with great difficulty towards the Cross amid the corpses of those who were martyred (Bishops, priests, men and women Religious and many lay people), he too falls to the ground, apparently dead, under a hail of gunfire. After the assassination attempt of 13 May 1981, it appeared evident that it was “a mother's hand that guided the bullet's path”, enabling “the Pope in his throes” to halt “at the threshold of death”. On the occasion of a visit to Rome by the then Bishop of Leiria-Fatima, the Pope decided to give him the bullet which had remained in the jeep after the assassination attempt, so that it might be kept in the shrine. By the Bishop's decision, the bullet was later set in the crown of the statue of Our Lady of Fatima.

The successive events of 1989 led, both in the Soviet Union and in a number of countries of Eastern Europe, to the fall of the Communist regimes which promoted atheism. For this too His Holiness offers heartfelt thanks to the Most Holy Virgin. In other parts of the world, however, attacks against the Church and against Christians, with the burden of suffering they bring, tragically continue. Even if the events to which the third part of the “secret” of Fatima refers now seem part of the past, Our Lady's call to conversion and penance, issued at the start of the twentieth century, remains timely and urgent today. “The Lady of the message seems to read the signs of the times—the signs of our time—with special insight... The insistent invitation of Mary Most Holy to penance is nothing but the manifestation of her maternal concern for the fate of the human family, in need of conversion and forgiveness”.

In order that the faithful may better receive the message of Our Lady of Fatima, the Pope has charged the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith with making public the third part of the “secret”, after the preparation of an appropriate commentary.

Brothers and sisters, let us thank Our Lady of Fatima for her protection. To her maternal intercession let us entrust the Church of the Third Millennium.

Sub tuum praesidium confugimus, Sancta Dei Genetrix!

Intercede pro Ecclesia.

Intercede pro Papa nostro Ioanne Paulo II.

Amen.

Fatima, 13 May 2000

THEOLOGICAL COMMENTARY

“To save souls” has emerged as the key word of the first and second parts of the “secret”, and the key word of this third part is the threefold cry: “Penance, Penance, Penance!” The beginning of the Gospel comes to mind: “Repent and believe the Good News” (*Mark 1:15*). To understand the signs of the times means to accept the urgency of penance – of conversion – of faith. This is the correct response to this moment of history, characterized by the grave perils outlined in the images that follow. Allow me to add here a personal recollection: in a conversation with me Sister Lucia said that it appeared ever more clearly to her that the purpose of all the apparitions was to help people to grow more and more in faith, hope and love—everything else was intended to lead to this.

Let us now examine more closely the single images. The angel with the flaming sword on the left of the Mother of God recalls similar images in the Book of Revelation. This represents the threat of judgment which looms over the world. Today the prospect that the world might be reduced to ashes by a sea of fire no longer seems pure fantasy: man himself, with his inventions, has forged the flaming sword. The vision then shows the power which stands opposed to the force of destruction—the splendor of the Mother of God and, stemming from this in a certain way, the summons to penance.

In this way, the importance of human freedom is underlined: the future is not in fact unchangeably set, and the image which the children saw is in no way a film preview of a future in which nothing can be changed. Indeed, the whole point of the vision is to bring freedom onto the scene and to steer freedom in a positive direction. The purpose of the vision is not to show a film of an irrevocably fixed future. Its meaning is exactly the opposite: it is meant to mobilize the forces of change in the right direction. Therefore we must totally discount fatalistic explanations of the “secret”, such as, for example, the claim that the would-be assassin of 13 May 1981 was merely an instrument of the divine plan guided by Providence and could not therefore have acted freely, or other similar ideas in circulation. Rather, the vision speaks of dangers and how we might be saved from them.

The next phrases of the text show very clearly once again the symbolic character of the vision: God remains immeasurable, and is the light which surpasses every vision of ours. Human persons appear as in a mirror. We must always keep in mind the limits in the vision itself, which here are indicated visually. The future appears only “in a mirror dimly” (*1 Cor 13:12*). Let us now consider the individual images which follow in the text of the “secret”. The place of the action is described in three symbols: a steep mountain, a great city reduced to ruins and finally a large rough-hewn cross. The mountain and city symbolize the arena of human history: history as an arduous ascent to the summit, history as the arena of human creativity and social harmony, but at the same time a place of destruction, where man actually destroys the fruits of his own work. The city can be the place of communion and progress, but also of danger and the most extreme menace. On the mountain stands the cross—the goal and guide of history. The cross transforms destruction into salvation; it stands as a sign of history's misery but also as a promise for history.

At this point human persons appear: the Bishop dressed in white (“we had the impression that it was the Holy Father”), other Bishops, priests, men and women Religious, and men and women of different ranks and social positions. The Pope seems to precede the others, trembling and suffering because of all the horrors around him. Not only do the houses of the city lie half in ruins, but he makes his way among the corpses of the dead. The Church's path is thus described as a *Via Crucis*, as a journey through a time of violence, destruction and persecution. The history of an entire century can be seen represented in this image. Just as the places of the earth are synthetically described in the two images of the mountain and the city, and are directed towards the cross, so too time is presented in a compressed way. In the vision we can recognize the last century as a century of martyrs, a century of suffering and persecution for the Church, a century of World Wars and the many local wars which filled the last fifty years and have inflicted unprecedented forms of cruelty. In the “mirror” of this vision we see passing

before us the witnesses of the faith decade by decade. Here it would be appropriate to mention a phrase from the letter which Sister Lucia wrote to the Holy Father on 12 May 1982: "The third part of the 'secret' refers to Our Lady's words: 'If not, [Russia] will spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions of the Church. The good will be martyred; the Holy Father will have much to suffer; various nations will be annihilated'".

In the *Via Crucis* of an entire century, the figure of the Pope has a special role. In his arduous ascent of the mountain we can undoubtedly see a convergence of different Popes. Beginning from Pius X up to the present Pope, they all shared the sufferings of the century and strove to go forward through all the anguish along the path which leads to the Cross. In the vision, the Pope too is killed along with the martyrs. When, after the attempted assassination on 13 May 1981, the Holy Father had the text of the third part of the "secret" brought to him, was it not inevitable that he should see in it his own fate? He had been very close to death, and he himself explained his survival in the following words: "... it was a mother's hand that guided the bullet's path and in his throes the Pope halted at the threshold of death" (13 May 1994). That here "a mother's hand" had deflected the fateful bullet only shows once more that there is no immutable destiny, that faith and prayer are forces which can influence history and that in the end prayer is more powerful than bullets and faith more powerful than armies.

The concluding part of the "secret" uses images which Lucia may have seen in devotional books and which draw their inspiration from long-standing intuitions of faith. It is a consoling vision, which seeks to open a history of blood and tears to the healing power of God. Beneath the arms of the cross angels gather up the blood of the martyrs, and with it they give life to the souls making their way to God. Here, the blood of Christ and the blood of the martyrs are considered as one: the blood of the martyrs runs down from the arms of the cross. The martyrs die in communion with the Passion of Christ, and their death becomes one with his. For the sake of the body of Christ, they complete what is still lacking in his afflictions (cf. *Col* 1:24). Their life has itself become a Eucharist, part of the mystery of the grain of wheat which in dying yields abundant fruit. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of Christians, said Tertullian. As from Christ's death, from his wounded side, the Church was born, so the death of the witnesses is fruitful for the future life of the Church. Therefore, the vision of the third part of the "secret", so distressing at first, concludes with an image of hope: no suffering is in vain, and it is a suffering Church, a Church of martyrs, which becomes a sign-post for man in his search for God. The loving arms of God welcome not only those who suffer like Lazarus, who found great solace there and mysteriously represents Christ, who wished to become for us the poor Lazarus. There is something more: from the suffering of the witnesses there comes a purifying and renewing power, because their suffering is the actualization of the suffering of Christ himself and a communication in the here and now of its saving effect.

And so we come to the final question: What is the meaning of the "secret" of Fatima as a whole (in its three parts)? What does it say to us?

First of all we must affirm with Cardinal Sodano: "... the events to which the third part of the 'secret' of Fatima refers now seem part of the past". Insofar as individual events are described, they belong to the past. Those who expected exciting apocalyptic revelations about the end of the world or the future course of history are bound to be disappointed.

Fatima does not satisfy our curiosity in this way, just as Christian faith in general cannot be reduced to an object of mere curiosity. What remains was already evident when we began our reflections on the text of the "secret": the exhortation to prayer as the path of "salvation for souls" and, likewise, the summons to penance and conversion.

I would like finally to mention another key expression of the "secret" which has become justly famous: "my Immaculate Heart will triumph". What does this mean? The Heart open to God, purified by contemplation of God, is stronger than guns and weapons of every kind. The *fiat* of Mary, the word of her heart, has changed the history of the world, because it brought the Saviour into the world—because, thanks to her *Yes*, God could become man in our world

and remains so for all time. The Evil One has power in this world, as we see and experience continually; he has power because our freedom continually lets itself be led away from God.

But since God himself took a human heart and has thus steered human freedom towards what is good, the freedom to choose evil no longer has the last word. From that time forth, the word that prevails is this: "In the world you will have tribulation, but take heart; I have overcome the world" (*Jn 16:33*). The message of Fatima invites us to trust in this promise.

Joseph Card. Ratzinger

Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE MESSAGE OF FATIMA

1. The principal call made by the Virgin in Fatima is the call to conversion: **“Men must repent for their sins and ask forgiveness from God for them; they must not offend Our Lord God, who has been greatly offended”**.

2. One very special part of the Message is the call for reparation, based on the Communion of the Saints. Both the angel as well as the Holy Virgin continuously insist: **“reparation to the Majesty of God ... to the Eucharist ... to the Heart of Jesus ... to the Immaculate Heart of Maria”**. The message proposes these ways to make these reparations and conversion:

a) **Penance**. As all Christian penance, this means to reject and remain distant from sin, complete Christian duties, physical mortification, and to accept and offer the sufferings and pains that we suffer in life.

b) **Prayer**. The Holy Virgin Mary, particularly in Fatima, teaches us how through prayer God hears and attends our petition, and also how with prayer we can find the grace that is necessary in order to remain on the road that will lead us to God.

3. **Pray the Holy Rosary daily**. This is the favorite prayer of the Holy Virgin and highly recommended by the Holy Fathers. It is a petition in which our Lady insists on six apparitions. She also recommends that we offer it for the peace of the world and that we pray it fully, that is accompanied by meditation of the great mysteries of the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

4. The prayer of the Angel reminds us that the Body and Blood of the Lord are the “perfect offering”. **Love of the Eucharist** was strongly impressed on the little shepherds, illuminated by that light that seemed to emanate from the hands of Our Lady. Then and now, the Eucharist “is” the core of Fatima.

5. This is an important point of the Message of Fatima. Ecclesiastical life, according to the doctrine of Vatican II, is “the communication of charit., The sacramental union and hierarchical unity”. The first element is found in Fatima, above all in the proposal for reparation. The second – **sacramental life** – lives in the acts of Fatima and in the constant practice of pilgrimage. And finally the third element, hierarchical unity, is seen not just when Fatima rises as a privileged charisma of and for the entire Church, approved by the Hierarchy as such, but also by the visions of the seers who encourage love of the Holy Father.

6. Fatima has an eschatological message to the world and to the Church in different dimensions, repeatedly emphasizing to man the ultimate meaning of life. Heaven of Hell, for example, are relevant elements of the message and the expression of God’s mercy and justice.

7. It is absolutely essential to note the relationship established by the Message with the words: “Russia and Fatima”. The historic fact, well proven by that relationship, is indubitable. It is especially important that that relationship not be adulterated with false interpretations. Fatima, as a continuation of the Story of Salvation is an exclusively religious and supernatural message. It refers to Russia only in this aspect. In this way it deals with how atheist Communism as a doctrine and practice of the Communist Party since October 1917 forbids, limits and attacks the religious freedom of that nation, which was very Christian. Fatima does not show any aversion to men who erroneously militate communism; on the contrary, it asks that we pray for their conversion.

8. The references to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the invitation from God to embrace devotion to that loving Heart is the most specific, the most essential, and the most characteristic

point of the message. Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary was already practiced and known in the Church through Scripture, Tradition, History and Theology. But in Fatima there are completely original manifestations that penetrate and inform s of all the other elements of the Message. Therefore, when we are invited to pray, the prayer should pass through the pure crucible which is the Heart of Mary. In this way she adds her maternal intercession to our prayer. Not only does it ask that we make reparations to god, but that we ask for reparation for the offenses given to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and therefore asks for the repairing communion of the First Saturdays of the month. It also asks for Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, a recommendation that has been satisfied by various Popes, consecrating the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary: Pius XII in 942 (and in the consecration of Russia in 1952); Paul VI in 1967, and John Paul II in 1982 and 1984.

DEVOTION TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY EXPRESS WILL OF GOD

The devotion to the Heart of Mary was prepared by her messengers St. Gertrude, St. Bridget, St. John Eudes, St. Anthony Mary Claret ... God always prepares the hearts and especially in this case, so that it was not unknown on June 13, 1917.

We remember that at the beginning of the last century Pope Pius VII taught: *"The Heart of Mary, the Mother of God and Our Mother is her kind Heart, the object of pleasure of the Loving Trinity, and worthy of all veneration and tenderness of the Angels and men, the Heart most similar to that of Jesus whose most perfect image is Mary, Heart full of goodness and with great compassion for our miseries. (Pius VII, August 18, 1807).*

Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary is also a consolation and joy for our souls, it allows us to honor our vows and promises of the Baptism: to renounce Satan and his works, and to be faithful to the true Church of Jesus Christ.

We ask the Holy Virgin to grant us the grace to record in our memory and in our hearts the will of God, said and repeated by Her in Fatima: *Jesus wants to establish in the world a devotion to my Immaculate Heart"*.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE EVENTS OF FATIMA

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| 1907 | March 22 | Lucia de Jesus dos Santos (later known as Sister Lucia) is born in the village of Aljustrel. |
| 1908 | June 11 | The Blessed Francisco Marto is born in Aljustrel |
| 1910 | March 11 | The Blessed Jacinta Marto is born in Aljustrel |
| 1917 | May 13 | First apparition of the Virgin. The apparitions took place on a property owned by the parents of Lucia known as Cova da Iria, two and a half kilometers from Fatima. |
| | June 13 | Second apparition. The Virgin speak for the first time of devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary |
| | July 13 | Third apparition. The Virgin reveals the Secret of Fatima to the children |
| | August 11 | The three seers are taken by trickery by the governor and taken to Ourem. |
| | August 13 | The Virgin appears in Cova da Iria but does not find the little shepherds. |
| | August 19 | Fourth apparition. The Virgin appears to the children in Valinhos, property of an uncle of Lucia. |
| | September 13 | Fifth apparition. The Virgin tells the little shepherds: "God is content with your sacrifices". |
| | October 13 | Sixth and last apparition. The miracle of the sun takes place before a multitude of 70,000 people. |
| | November | A revolution leads the Communists to power in Russia. |
| 1918 | | As foreseen by the Virgin in Fatima, the First World War ends. |
| 1919 | April 4 | With an angelical smile the Blessed Francisco Marto dies of bronchial pneumonia in his house in Aljustrel. |
| 1920 | February 20 | In an atmosphere of sanctity the Blessed Jacinta Marto dies of pleurisy in a hospital in Lisbon. |
| 1921 | May 17 | Lucia leaves Aljustrel and is received in the school of the Dorothean Sisters in Oporto. |
| 1925 | October 24 | Lucia enters the Institute of Saint Dorothea as a postulant |
| | December 1 | Apparition of the Virgin in Pontevedra. Our Lady reveals the great promise of the five first Saturdays |
| 1927 | December 17 | Our Lady asks Lucia to spread the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary |

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| 1928 | May 13 | The Archbishop of Evora together with the Bishop of Leiria place the first stone in the Basilica of Fatima |
| | October 3 | Lucia takes her first vows as a nun |
| 1929 | June 13 | New supernatural communication: "The time has arrived when God asks [...] the consecration of Russia". Tuy |
| 1930 | October 13 | "The Bishop of Leiria declares the apparitions worthy of faith and authorizes the cult of Our Lady of Fatima. |
| 1931 | May 13 | Portuguese bishops consecrate their country to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Our Lord revealed later to Sister Lucia that that act freed Portugal from the horrors of the Second World War. |
| 1934 | October 3 | Sister Lucia takes perpetual vows and takes the name Maria de los Dolores. |
| 1935 | December | By order of the Bishop of Leiria, Sister Lucia writes her First Memoir containing various facts that illustrate the virtues of Jacinta. |
| 1937 | November | Second Memoir – Sister Lucia narrates the story of her life and the apparitions. |
| 1938 | January 25-26 | The night of January 25-26 the skies of Europe are lit up by an extraordinary light which the unbelievers characterized as an "aurora borealis". Sister Lucia sees in it the "great signal" of the beginning of World War II |
| 1941 | August 31 | Third Memoir – Sister Lucia finally reveals the first two parts of the secret |
| | December 8 | Fourth Memoir – A more systematic and orderly narrative of the apparitions |
| 1942 | October 31 | Pope Pius XII consecrates the Church and humanity to the Immaculate Heart of Mary |
| 1944 | January 2 | Our Lady orders that Lucia write the third secret |
| | January 3 | Sister Lucia writes the third secret in Tuy |
| 1945 | | World War II ends and the "errors of Russia" begin to expand throughout the world |
| 1946 | May 13 | Solemn coronation of the image of Our Lady of Fatima |
| 1948 | March 25 | Sister Lucia leaves the Institute of Saint Dorothea and enters the Carmelites of Coimbra |
| | May 13 | Sister Maria Lucia of the Immaculate Heart takes the habit of Saint Theresa |
| 1949 | May 31 | Solemn vows of Sister Lucia as a barefoot Carmelite |
| 1957 | April 4 | The envelope with the third secret is placed in the Secret Archive of the Holy See. |
| 1964 | Nov 21 | Pope Paul VI entrusts all humanity to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. |

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| 1967 | May 13 | On the 50 th anniversary of the apparitions, Pope Paul VI visits Cova da Iria |
| 1973 | | The manuscripts of Sister Lucia are published by the student of Fatima, Antonio Maria Martins, S.J., under the title "Memoirs and Letters of Sister Lucia". |
| 1981 | May 13 | Pope John Paul II is the victim of a serious attack on his life in St. Peter's Square |
| 1982 | May 13 | In a visit to Fatima, Pope John Paul II consecrates the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary |
| 1984 | March 25 | In Rome Pope John Paul II once again consecrates the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary |
| 1988 | May 13 | Beatification of Francisco and Jacinta Marto on the steps of the Sanctuary of Fatima |
| 2000 | June 26 | The Holy See reveals the third part of the Secret of Fatima. |
| 2005 | February 13 | Sister Maria Lucia of the Immaculate Heart dies in the Carmelite of Coimbra, just before reaching 98 years of age. |

CATHOLIC CHURCH APPROVAL

Thirteen years after the last apparition on October 13, 1930, the first Bishop of Leiria, Mons. Jose Alves Correia da Silva announced that the apparitions of the Holy Virgin to the three little shepherds in the year 1917 were worthy of faith, and authorized the cult to Our Lady of Fatima in a pastoral letter on the appearances, in which he said:

"In virtue of considerations made known, and others which for reason of brevity we omit; humbly invoking the Divine Spirit and placing ourselves under the protection of the most Holy Virgin, and after hearing the opinions of our Rev. Advisors in this diocese, we hereby: –

1. *Declare worthy of belief, the visions of the shepherd children in the Cova da Iria, parish of Fatima, in this diocese, from the 13th May to 13th October, 1917.*
2. *Permit officially the cult of Our Lady of Fatima."*

Since 1930 the Catholic church has officially approved the Message of Fatima as "worthy of belief". Various Popes have visited Fatima in solemn pilgrimage, and Pope John Paul II publicly accredit Our Lady of Fatima as having saved his life during an attempted assassination on May 13, 1981. The next year, while he was in Fatima to give thanks to the Virgin for her intervention, the Pope declared that "The Message of Fatima is more important and more urgent" today, even more than when Our Lady appeared for the first time.