

The Story of Fatima—Part Two of Four

Jesus Christ: Yesterday, Today, and Forever ~

I ran part one of this pastor's column on May 28. In case you missed it, you can find it here <https://holyredeemervan.org/pastor-columns/thefatimastory1>. At



the time I thought I would be able to run the whole four-part series by the end of June, then too many things got in the way, and I was not able to resume it until now. We should be able to finish it out in consecutive Sundays in a row.

The story of Fatima is amazing. The Miracle of the Sun on October 13, 1917 was the greatest public miracle since Jesus Christ ascended

into heaven nearly two thousand years ago (more on this in part three). Beyond the astonishing spectacle, the apparitions raise the question: "why did God choose to send the Blessed Virgin Mary in such a public way, at that time in history, with the messages she brought?"

The Fatima story developed in two parts: that which was reported in 1917; and information later mentioned in Sr. Lucia's memoirs which she wrote years later. This column is the second of a four-part series that explores what happened at Fatima and subsequently. The following abbreviated account is based on the booklet, "*Lucia Speaks – The Message of Fatima*," – a condensed version of *Sister Lucia's Memoirs* – published by The World Apostolate of Fatima-USA.

Enjoy.

In the Love of Christ and His Mother,

Fr. Thomas Nathe

May 13, 1917

On May 13, 1917, the three children took their flocks out to pasture in the small area known as the Cova da Iria. After lunch and the Rosary, they suddenly saw a bright flash of something like lightning, followed quickly by another flash in the clear blue sky.

They looked up to see, in Lucia's words, "a lady, clothed in white, brighter than the sun, radiating a light clearer and more intense than a crystal cup filled with sparkling water lit by burning sunlight." The children stood there amazed, bathed in the light that surrounded the apparition as the Lady smiled and said: "Do not be afraid, I will not harm you." Lucia, as the oldest, asked her where she came from.

The Lady pointed to the sky and said: "I come from heaven." Lucia then asked her what she wanted. "I have come to ask you to come here for six months on the 13th day of the month at this same hour. Later I shall say who I am and what I desire. And I shall return here yet a seventh time." [Mary only appeared six times not seven. Will Mary one day appear at Fatima for her promised seventh visit?]

Lucia then asked if they would go to heaven and was told yes, she and Jacinta would go to heaven, but Francisco would need to say many rosaries first. The Lady then said: "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 conversion of sinners?" Lucia, as spokesman for all three, readily agreed. "Then you are going to have much to suffer, but the grace of God will be your comfort."

Lucia recounted that at the same moment as she said these words the Lady opened her hands and streamed a "light" on the children which allowed them to see themselves in God. The Lady finished with a request: "Say the Rosary every day to bring peace to the world and the end of the war." With that she began to rise into the air, moving towards the east until she disappeared.

The children got together and tried to think of ways they could make sacrifices as the Lady had asked, resolving to go without lunch, to pray the full rosary, and eventually much more.

The Story of Fatima—Part Two of Four

Francisco and Jacinta received more support from their parents than Lucia, but the attitudes of the local inhabitants ranged from skepticism to utter contempt, and the children thereby suffered many insults. They would have much to suffer, just as the Lady had told them. For the first few months, Lucia's mother thought she was making the whole thing up, mocking, scolding and slapping her for lying. In fact, the only reason anyone beyond the parents knew of the apparitions was because Lucia's mother mockingly joked about it with a couple of her village friends – and presto – everyone knew. It was a good thing the vices of Lucia's mother led her to tell her friends, or the greatest visits from heaven since Jesus ascended there might have never been known.

June 13, 1917

About fifty people turned up at the Cova da Iria on June 13 as the three children assembled near the Holm oak tree where the Lady had appeared. The children then saw a flash of light followed immediately by the apparition of Mary as she spoke to Lucia: "I want you to come 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."

Lucia asked Mary to take them to heaven and was reassured in this way: "I will take Jacinta and Francisco shortly, but you will stay here for some time to come. Jesus wants to use you to make me known and loved. He wishes to establish devotion to my Immaculate Heart throughout the world. I promise salvation to whoever embraces it. These souls will be dear to God, like flowers put by me to adorn his throne." This last sentence is found in a letter written in 1927 by Sr. Lucia to her confessor.

Lucia was sad at the first part of this reply and asked: "Am I to stay here alone?" Mary replied: "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."

One of the witnesses to this apparition, Maria Carreira, described how Lucia then cried out and pointed as Mary departed. She herself heard a noise like "a rocket a long way off," and looked to see a small cloud a few inches over the tree rise and move slowly towards the east until it disap-

peared. The crowd of pilgrims then returned to Fatima where they reported the amazing things they had seen, thus ensuring that there were between two and three thousand people present for the July apparition.

July 13, 1917

On July 13 the three children assembled at the Cova and again saw the indescribably beautiful Lady over the Holm oak tree. Lucia asked what she wanted, and Mary replied: "I want you to come here on the 13th of next month and to continue to pray the Rosary every day in honor 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."

Lucia then asked her who she was and for a miracle so everyone would believe: "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."

Lucia made some requests for sick people, to which Mary replied that she would cure some but not others, and that all must say the rosary to obtain such graces. And she continued: "Sacrifice yourselves for sinners and say many times, especially when 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."

(To be continued in upcoming issues: More revelations and "The Miracle of the Sun")

