

The Story of Fatima - Part Four of Four

Jesus Christ: Yesterday, Today, and Forever ~



Greetings in the Lord.

This week we finish our four-part synopsis of the events of Fatima. If you missed any of the first three parts, please go on-line to the Holy Redeemer website at www.holyredeemervan.org and click on the pastor's column tab on the right side of the page. The following account of the Story of Fatima 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: and can be found

at <https://wafusa.org/the-story-of-fatima>. I have added some further insights in brackets. Enjoy.

With Our Blessed Mother's Love,

Fr. Thomas Nathe

The Great Miracle Our Lady Had Predicted

The greatest miracle to occur since the Resurrection is also the only miracle ever precisely predicted as to date, time of day and location. Although it is popularly known as "*The Miracle of the Sun*" and October 13, 1917 has come to be known as "*The Day the Sun Danced*," a great deal more took place. The solar phenomena included the dancing of the sun, its fluctuations in color, its swirling and its descending toward the earth. There were also the stillness in the leaves of the trees in spite of howling winds, the complete drying of the rain-soaked ground, and the restoration of clothes all wet and covered with mud so that, as eye-witness Dominic Reis put it, "they looked as though they had just come back from the cleaners." Physical cures of the blind and the lame were reported. The countless unreserved public confessions of sin and commitments to conversion of life attest to the authenticity of what they saw.

The miracle is reported to have been seen from as far as 15-25 miles away, thus ruling out the possibility of any type of collective hallucination or mass hypnotism. Doubters and skeptics had become believers. Even *O Seculo's* chief editor,

Avelino de Almeida, who had written satirically before, now reported affirmatively, and stood by his story later on in spite of harsh criticism.

The Deaths of Francisco, Jacinta, and Lucia

An influenza epidemic swept Europe in autumn of 1918 just as the war was finishing, and both Jacinta and Francisco fell ill. Francisco recovered somewhat and there were hopes that he might become well, but he realized that he was destined to die young as Our Lady had foretold, and his condition worsened again. He offered up all his sufferings as a way of consoling God for the sinfulness and ingratitude of mankind and in supplication for the conversion of sinners. He became so weak that eventually he could not even pray. He received his first Holy Communion and on the next day, April 4, 1919, he died.

Jacinta too was confined to her bed during the long winter months, and although she recovered was struck down with bronchial pneumonia, while also developing a painful abscess in her chest. She was moved to the hospital in Ourem in July 1919 where she underwent the painful treatment prescribed for her but without much effect. She returned home in August with an open wound in her side. It was decided that another attempt should be made to treat her, and so in January 1920 she was taken to Lisbon, where she was diagnosed as having purulent pleurisy and diseased ribs.

Eventually in February she was admitted into the hospital, where she underwent another painful operation to remove two ribs. This left her with a large wound in her side that had to be dressed daily causing her great agony. On the evening of February 20, 1920 the local priest was called and heard her Confession, but he insisted on waiting till the next day to bring her Holy Communion despite her protests that she felt worse. As Mary had foretold she died that night alone and far from her family. Her body was returned to Fatima and buried with that of Francisco until both were later moved to the Basilica built at the Cova da Iria.

Later Apparitions to Sr. Lucia

The new bishop of the restored diocese of Leiria decided that it was best if Lucia was removed from Fatima, both to spare her from the continual questionings she had to endure, and to see what affect her absence would have on the numbers coming as pilgrims. Her mother agreed to her being sent away to school, and she left in May 1921 in great secrecy for Porto, where a school run by the sisters of St. Dorothy was situated. She became a sister in this congregation and later in life joined the Carmelites.

On December 10, 1925, while at the Dorothean Convent in Pontevedra, Spain, Lucia had another apparition of the Blessed Mother, this time with the Child Jesus. She had returned to ask for the Communions of Reparation we now call *First Saturday Devotions*, as she said she would during her July 13 apparition at Fatima. Mary told Lucia to announce that she promised to provide, at the hour of death, the graces necessary for salvation to those who, on the first Saturday of five consecutive months, confessed, received Holy Communion, recited five decades of the rosary, and kept her company while meditating on the mysteries of the rosary for fifteen minutes, all with the intention of making reparation to her.

On June 13, 1929, Our Lady returned again as Sr. Lucia was at prayer in the convent chapel at Tuy, Spain. This time she appeared alongside a representation of the Holy Trinity. Mary spoke to her saying: "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, promising to save it by this means..."

On January 25, 1938, a strange light filled the skies of northern Europe. It was described as a particularly brilliant display of the Aurora Borealis, but Sr. Lucia realized it was the "unknown light," spoken of by Mary during the July 13, 1917 apparition. It meant punishment for the world was close, principally through the Second World War, because it had not turned back to God.

The Bishop Approves of Fatima

The Church, meanwhile, had maintained silence about the apparitions during the years from 1917. It wasn't until May 1922 that Bishop Correia issued a pastoral letter on the subject indicating that he would set up a commission of inquiry. In 1930 he issued another pastoral letter on the apparitions, which after recounting the events at Fatima, contained the following brief but important statement:

"In virtue of considerations made known, and others which for reasons 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. Advisers 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."

Russia Consecrated – First Saturday Devotion Still Not Promulgated

While Pope Pius XII twice (1942,1952) and Pope John Paul II once (1984), tried to consecrate Russia to Mary's Immaculate Heart, yet none of them fulfilled Mary's request at Fatima.

They either did not mention Russia by name or were not done with a "moral totality" of the world's bishops. Not until 2022 did Pope Francis finally carry out the Blessed Virgin Mary's wishes to consecrate Russia (by name) to her Immaculate Heart with a majority of the world's bishops joining him. We still await a Pope that will fulfill the second part of Mary's plea, the promulgation of the First Saturday Devotion.

The Third Secret of Fatima

During the beatification ceremonies of Jacinta and Francisco in the year 2000, the details of the third part of the Fatima secret were revealed, and the third millennium was entrusted to Our Lady of Fatima. [Whether all the contents of the 3rd secret were revealed at that time is debated, intentionally or not, some claim that a part of the 3rd secret was not revealed.] Here is what was revealed of *The Third Secret* of Fatima (in Lucia's words):

"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 it' a Bishop dressed in White 'we had the impression that it was the Holy Father'. Other Bishops, Priests, Religious men and women 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 the 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, Religious men and women, 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 [sprinkler] 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."^[56]

Canonizations

On May 13, 2017, Francisco and Jacinta were canonized by Pope Francis and declared saints. They are the youngest saints to be declared by the Church who did not die as martyrs. Lucia died in 2005 at the age of 97, 86 years after Francisco and Jacinta passed away. Her cause for canonization is well underway.