

A sign so great

It is not hard to imagine that as the words of happenings at Fatima gradually spread to the other towns and villages of Portugal, and was reported in other parts of Europe, there were many who refused to believe that Our Lady appeared to the world in such a forgotten place as Fatima.

So it was that in September of 1917, Our Lady said to the children, "In October I will perform the miracle so that all may believe."

Miracle of the Sun

In spite of the rain and the mud, all the roads to Fatima were crowded on the days before the 13th of October. Everyone wanted to see Our Lady. Shortly before noon Our Lady came for the last time. Hearts overflowing with love, the children listened to her last message, "They must amend their lives and ask pardon for their sins. Do not offend the Lord our God any more, for He is already too much offended!"

Then was seen the great miracle of the sun, during which the sun turned blood red and began to dance in the heavens; it even began to leave the sky and throw itself into the crowd of over 70,000 people who watched in terrified wonder. All thought that the end of the world had come. Everyone was crying and weeping, "Holy Virgin, take us not in our sins!" When the sun finally returned to its place, everyone knew that Heaven had indeed come to earth. They turned to the children of Fatima with the one question, "What does Our Lady want us to do?"



In 1916 the Angel said:

"What are you doing? Pray, pray very much! The Holy hearts of Jesus and Mary have designs of mercy on you. Offer prayers and sacrifices constantly to the Most High."



Prayer of the Angel

My God, I believe, I adore, I trust, and I love Thee!
I beg pardon for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not trust and do not love Thee.

Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I adore Thee profoundly and I offer Thee the Most Precious Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles of the world, in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges, and indifference by which He is offended. By the infinite merit of His Most Sacred Heart, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg of Thee the conversion of poor sinners. Amen.



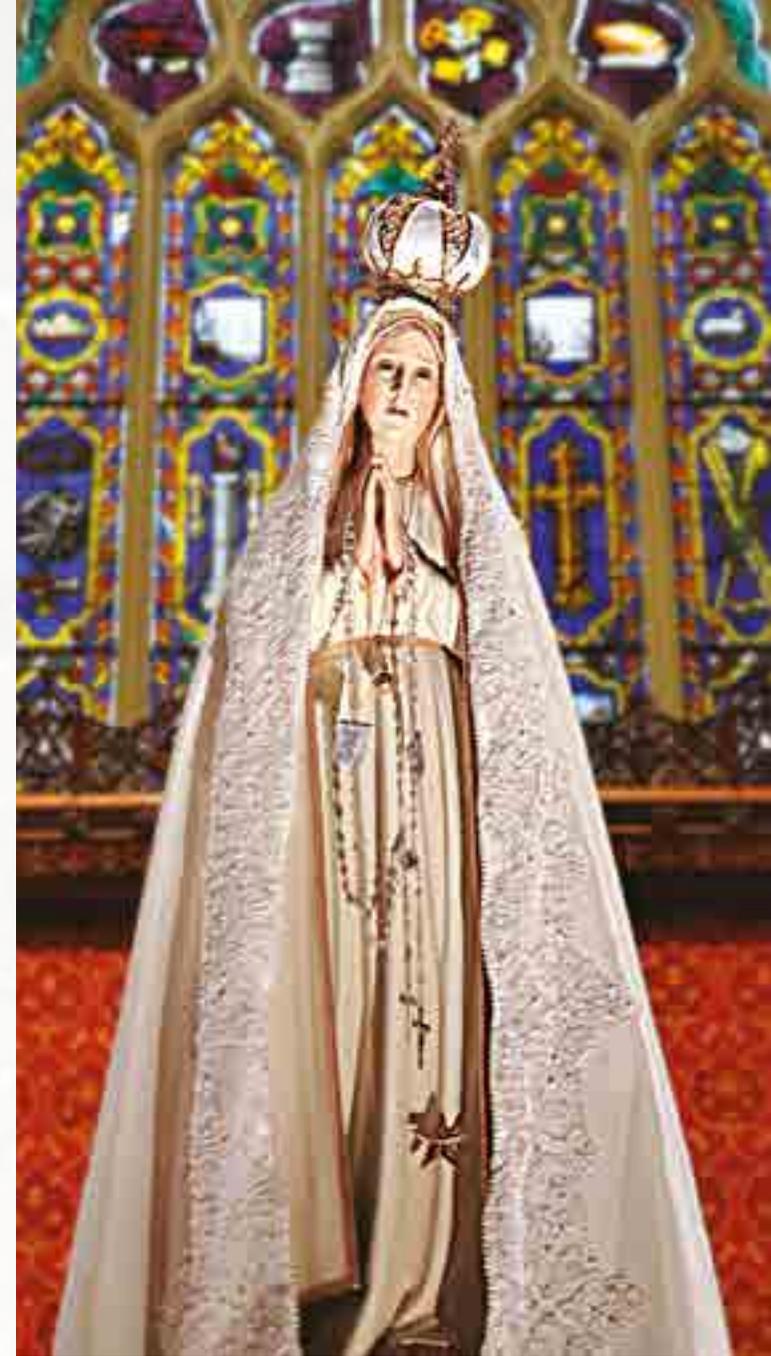
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Our Lady of Fatima



The history of Fatima can be divided into three groups: the apparitions of the Angel in 1916, the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary from May to October 1917, and the additional apparitions in which Our Lady requested the Reparation of the First Saturdays.

The Children of Fatima

The story of Fatima really begins in the year 1916 when three children – Lucy, a girl of 9, Francisco, a boy of 8, and Jacinta, a little girl of 6 years, received the visit of an Angel in order to prepare them for the apparitions of Our Lady the following year.



An answer of Our Lady

On the 13th of May 1917, the children did not know about the confusion in the world. They had not heard the voice of Pope Benedict XV, who had addressed himself to the Mother of Mankind, asking the Blessed Virgin Mary to look upon the world in tears, to sympathize with the wailing of innocent children, the anguished cries of mothers and wives. This was the day on which the Queen of heaven had decided to answer the Holy Father's plea.



About noon, the children were startled by a sudden flash of lightning. Looking up, they saw no sign of a storm. The sky had never been so beautiful, nor the valley more peaceful. Again came the flash.

Fearing now that a sudden storm would overtake them, they ran in the direction of the little cave. As they turned, they were startled to see a beautiful lady standing on one of the little oak trees nearby. "Do not be afraid. I will do you no harm", said the beautiful lady.

Mary's Immaculate Heart

In June Our Lady came again. She asked for daily sacrifice. Then, opening her hands which had always been folded in prayer, she revealed her Immaculate Heart, surrounded by thorns, pierced and bleeding. Although Our Lady said nothing about her Heart on this occasion, the children understood that her Heart was pierced and bleeding because of sin, and that Our Lady wanted reparation for sin.



Hell and War

In the weeks that followed, the children could not stop thinking about the terrible vision of Hell (which they saw on the 13th of July). Little Jacinta would sit and think for hours at a time. "How sorry I am for the souls that go to Hell... the people there, alive, burning as wood in the fire. Lucy, why do people go to Hell?" And Lucy would explain. "Lucy, you must tell Our Lady to show everybody Hell; then no one will sin anymore."

Little Heroes

On the 13th of August the apparition did not occur because the Administrator of the local district who was also president of the Municipal Council had captured and took the shepherd children to Vila Nova with the intention of forcing them to reveal the secret of the messages from Mary.

They were imprisoned in the district in the municipal jail. They were offered the most valued gifts if they would reveal the secret. The young visionaries responded, "We will not say it even if the whole world was given to us." They were back to jail.