

The Story of Fatima, Portugal

The Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, appeared 6 times to 3 shepherd children; Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta; between May 13 and October 13, 1917. She came to the little village of Fatima which had remained faithful to the Catholic Church during the recent persecutions by the government. Our Lady came with a message from God to every man, woman, and child of our century. Our Lady of Fatima promised that the whole world would be in peace, and that many souls would go to Heaven if Her requests were listened to and obeyed. She told us that war is a punishment for sin; that God would punish the world for its sins in our time by means of war, hunger, persecution of the Church and persecution of the Holy Father, the Pope, unless we listened to and obeyed the command of God. At Fatima, Pope John Paul II said on May 13; " the message of Fatima is more relevant and more urgent " then when Our Lady first appeared. The message is an anguished appeal of our Heavenly Mother, Who sees us in great danger and Who comes to offer Her help and advice. Her message is also a prophesy, a clear indication of what was about to transpire in the 20th century, and what is still going to happen infallibly in the near future, depending on our response to Her requests.

THE MIRACLE

As a great sign of the whole message truly coming from God, a marvelous miracle was worked in the sky above Fatima before 70,000 witnesses on October 13, 1917 at the time, date and place that Lucy and the other two children had prophesized in the name of Our Lady of Fatima. The children were told by Our Lady that God would perform a miracle so that people would believe in the apparitions. The date the children was October 13, 1917, in Fatima. On that date, 70,000 people came to see the phenomenon. The miracle occurred with the sun. All could stare perfectly at the sun without blinking, or even hurting heir eyes. While all were watching the sun, it rotated, got large and small, got close to the people, and got far away from them. The sun " danced ". Every single person who was there testified to seeing the sun dance, even non- believers who immediately dropped onto their knees and begged for forgiveness.

MIRACLES TODAY Our Lady of Fatima continues to work miracles today through Fatima water which is sent from Fatima, Portugal around the world. This Fatima water sprang up in Fatima at the spot the Bishop told people to dig, very near where Our Lady appeared at the Cova de Iria (the Cove of Peace) in Fatima. The water is known to cure people with sicknesses and poor health. Still, other people are cured when they go on pilgrimage to Fatima, which is about 90 miles north of Lisbon, Portugal.



The Basilica at Fatima, Portugal. The tiled building, left foreground, is the original Shrine marking the exact spot where Our Lady Appeared to the children.

A MESSAGE OF WARNING AND HOPE

If we do not heed Our Lady's warnings soon, Her horrible prophesy may well be realized in the near future, even in our own back yards. She told us that God had chosen to use Russia as the instrument of chastisement to punish the whole world if we did not, by our obedience, prayers, and sacrifices, obtain conversion of Russia to the Catholic faith. She promises us: " If my requests are granted, Russia will be converted and there will be peace. " But She also warned us: " If My requests are not granted, Russia will spread her errors throughout the world raising up wars and persecutions against the Church, the good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, various nations will be annihilated. " She has told us that the whole world (the part surviving) will be enslaved by the atheistic tyrants of Russia.

(**Medjugorje**, a small Croatian farming village nestled in the hills of Herzegovina (its name translates to "between the mountains"), was first mentioned historically in 1599. The current parish of Medjugorje was founded in 1892, pastored by Croatian Franciscan friars and dedicated to the apostle St James the Greater, patron saint of pilgrims. The current

church building replaced the original church in 1969, to accommodate parishioners from the five local villages, which make up the parish of Medjugorje.

One of these villages, Bijakovici, is situated along the base of a rocky hillside that borders the fertile valley. This tiny hamlet of stone houses is home to the six children who, in the summer of 1981, experienced something that would change their lives and their Parish forever. On the evening of June 24, 1981, Feast of St. John the Baptist, around 6:00 pm two teenage girls named Ivanka and Mirjana were walking near the outskirts of their village when they noticed the figure of a beautiful young woman holding an infant in her arms, standing among the rocks and bramble on the hillside. She did not speak but gestured for them to come closer. Some other children alerted by the girls also saw the vision. The children were surprised and frightened and ran home, although they immediately thought the woman to be the Blessed Virgin. Mary.

On the following evening, June 25th, six of the children returned to the spot. They were Ivanka Ivankovic, Mirjana Dragicevic, Vicka Inabkovic, Ivan Dragicevic, Marija Pavlovic and Jakov Colo ages 10 - 16. Their families and others who had heard of the experience followed them. Upon reaching the place, they saw a flash of light, and looking up the hillside, saw Our Lady, this time without the child. She was smiling, joyful and indescribably beautiful. She gestured with her hands for them to come closer and when they came before her, the children immediately knelt and began to pray with Our Lady. She spoke with the children and telling them not to be afraid, introducing Herself as the Queen of Peace. On the evening of June 26th, the children sprinkled holy water onto the vision saying "If you are the Blessed Mother please stay but if you are not go away from us.". At this Our lady smiled and stayed. Since then, many have come to the village, both believers and skeptics. The children and priests underwent many trials and tests, especially from the communist government, but Our Lady remained, to bring hope and peace to the world through the six village children who were the first to respond to her call)..