

Our Blessed Mother appeared to three simple shepherd children six times in 1917 so they could warn the world of upcoming trials and tribulations. The three children were, siblings Jacinta, age 7, and Francisco Marto, age 9, and their cousin Lucia Dos Santos, age 10. Since that time, many of the prophecies have come true, and there is much debate about the happenings involving the Third Secret and Our Lady's request to consecrate Russia to Her Immaculate Heart.

It began in a small village of Portugal called Fatima. The name of the village alone has an interesting history. Centuries before the apparitions, from April, 711 to 1492 A.D., Muslims conquered and occupied the lands of Spain and Portugal, forcing the people to become Islam. During this time of Moorish occupation, the small village in Portugal was named after a beloved 12<sup>th</sup> century Muslim princess named Fatima. Due to a reconquering by the defending Christian forces, Islamic Princess Fatima was captured. Princess Fatima married the Spanish Count of Ourem and converted to Catholicism. At baptism, she changed her name to Oureana. Her original name was Fatima because, in the Islamic faith, many girls are named after the daughter of Mohammed, the founder of Islam who lived from 570 to 632 A.D. When his daughter Fatima died, Mohammed expressed in his grief, "She has the highest place in heaven after the Virgin Mary."

On a sunny day in the year 1915, Lucia Dos Santos was playing with three other girls when they took a break to sit down for lunch. After lunch, as was their custom, they prayed the rosary. While praying, they noticed a bright white cloud in the sky that had taken on a human form. The vision appeared to them three times. All four girls were filled with wonder. Lucia would later describe, "Like a cloud, whiter than snow, slightly transparent, with a human outline."

## The Angel

A year later, Lucia was out tending her father's sheep and was in the company of her cousins Jacinta and Francisco. After having lunch and praying the rosary, they proceeded to play jacks in a cave when a brilliant Angel appeared to them and said, "Fear not! I am the Angel of Peace. Pray with me!"

The Angel knelt on the ground and bowed very low. The children imitated him and repeated his words, "My God, I believe, I adore, I hope, and I love You. I beg pardon of You for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope, and do not love you." The Angel repeated this prayer three times, then arose and said before he disappeared, "Pray this way. The Hearts of Jesus and Mary are attentive to the voice of your supplications."

The Angel appeared again to them the following summer and said, "What are you doing? Pray! Pray a great deal! The Hearts of Jesus and Mary have designs of mercy for you! Offer unceasingly to the Most High prayers and sacrifices!"

Lucia asked him, "But how are we to sacrifice ourselves?"

The Angel replied, "Offer up everything within your power as a sacrifice to the Lord in an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended; and of supplication for the conversion of sinners. Thus invoke peace upon your country. I am her Guardian Angel; the Angel of Portugal. Above all, accept and bear with submission the sufferings that the Lord may send you."

When autumn came, the Angel appeared to them again, this time holding a chalice in his hand. A host hovered above it from which blood dropped into the chalice. The Angel left the chalice and Host suspended in mid-air and prostrated himself on the ground saying, "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 the same Son Jesus Christ, present in the Tabernacles of the world, in reparation for all the sacrileges, outrages and indifferences by which He Himself is offended. And by the infinite merits of His Most Sacred Heart and through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg of Thee the conversion of poor sinners."

The angel then arose and, taking the chalice and Host, he gave the Host to Lucia, and the contents of the chalice to Jacinta and Francisco while saying, "Take and drink the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, horribly outraged by ungrateful men. Make reparation for their crimes and console your God."

Again, the Angel prostrated himself on the ground and again repeated with the children three times the Most Holy Trinity prayer before disappearing.

## The First Apparition

The following spring, on May 13, 1917, the three children took their flocks out to pasture in the Cova da Iria when two bright flashes of something like lightning from out of the clear blue sky startled them. Lucia describes what the children saw next above a holmoak tree, "A lady, clothed in white, brighter than the sun, radiating a light more clear and intense than a crystal cup filled with sparkling water, lit by burning sunlight."

The Lady smiled and said, "Do not be afraid, I will not harm you."

Lucia asked from where she came and what she wanted.

The Lady pointed to the sky saying, "I come from heaven. 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."

Lucia asked if they would go to heaven. The Lady told her that she and Jacinta would go to heaven, but Francisco would need to say many rosaries first. Then she 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, with the approval of the other two children, agreed, and the Lady continued, "Then you are going to have much to suffer, but the grace of God will be your comfort." As she said this, the Lady opened her hands and a stream of light on the children allowed them to see themselves in God. The Lady finished, "Say the rosary every day, to bring peace to the world and the end of the war." The Lady then rose up into the air, moving east, until she disappeared.

## The Second Apparition

On June 13, 1917 the three seers were joined by about 50 people as they awaited the Lady's next promised visit. Again, the children saw a flash of light followed by the apparition of Mary. She said 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."

When Lucia asked her to take them to heaven, Mary said, "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 the 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."

Sad upon hearing these words, Lucia replied, "Am I to stay here alone?"

Mary answered her before she departed to the east, "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."

## The Third Apparition

On July 13 1917 the beautiful Lady once again appeared to the children. When Lucia asked what she wanted, she said, "I want you to come here on the 13th of next month, 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 asked who she was, and if she could perform a miracle so that all present would believe. The Lady replied, "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 asked the lady to fulfill requests people had asked of her for sick people, and Mary replied that some would be cured, but not others, and that all must say the rosary to obtain such graces.

She added, "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."

When Mary spoke these words, She opened her hands and rays of light from them seemed to penetrate the earth so that they saw a terrifying vision of hell, full of demons and lost souls amidst indescribable horrors. This is the first of the Three Secrets of Fatima.

With a sad expression on Her face, the Blessed Mother said to them kindly, "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."

The Second Secret begins, "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 she will be converted, and a period of peace will be granted to the world."

At this point the second part of the secret of Fatima ends and the third part begins with the words, "In Portugal the dogma of the faith will always be preserved ... " As of the writing of this blog article on January 22, 2011, Lucia's description of the visual images in the secret were revealed in the year 2000, but not the text itself. The first two parts of the secret became publicly known in 1942.

After telling the children not to reveal the Secret yet, Mary said, "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."

## The Fourth Apparition

On August 13 there was a large crowd assembled at the apparition site, but the children were prevented from attending at the request of the Mayor of Vila Nove de Ourem, Arturo Santos. In spite of intense interrogations, the children held their ground and refused to reveal the Secret, despite temptations of money and threats of painful deaths.

On August 19, the children saw Mary who said, "Go again to the Cova da Iria on the 13th and continue to say the Rosary every day."

Mary also said she would perform a miracle so that all would believe, but it would not be as grand as planned because the civil authorities had wrongly kidnapped and interrogated the children.

Looking very sad, Mary added, "Pray, pray very much, and make sacrifices for sinners; for many souls go to hell, because there are none to sacrifice themselves and pray for them." With that she rose into the air and disappeared to the east.

## The Fifth Apparition

On September 13 a very large crowd had gathered. Again, after the flash of light, Mary appeared to the children and said, "Continue to pray the Rosary in order to obtain the end of the war. In October Our Lord will come, as well as Our Lady of Dolours and Our Lady of Carmel. 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."

Lucia spoke to Mary on behalf of people who had asked for cures and Mary responded, "Yes, I will cure some, but not others. In October I will perform a miracle so that all may believe." With that she rose, moved to the east, and disappeared.

## The Sixth and Final Public Apparition

On October 13, 1917, a crowd estimated at about 70,000 or more found their way to the Cova da Iria because of reports that a great miracle would take place. The children had to be guided to the holmoak tree because of the converging crowds.

They saw the flash of light and Mary appeared before them. Lucia asked what she wanted and she responded, "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."

As before, Lucia told the Blessed Mother the petitions people had requested of her, to which She responded, "Some, yes; others, no. People must amend their lives and ask pardon for their sins." Then she grew sadder and said, "They must not offend Our Lord any more, for He is already too much offended." Lucia then asked, "Do you want anything more?" to which Mary responded, "Nothing more."

Rising into the air and opening her hands towards the sun, she pointed towards the sun with light emanating from Her hands. Later, Lucia did not remember shouting, "There she goes! There she goes!" At the same time, the clouds parted and the sun appeared as a dull grey disk, pale as the moon.

To the left of the sun, the children saw Saint Joseph from the chest up, holding the Child Jesus. Together they made the Sign of the Cross three times over the world. To the right of the sun, Our Lady was dressed in the blue and white robes of Our Lady of the Rosary. Lucia was given the privilege of seeing Our Lord dressed in red as the Divine Redeemer, from the chest up, blessing the world. Beside Him stood Our Lady dressed now in the purple robes of Our Lady of Sorrows. Finally, She appeared clothed in the simple brown robes of Mount Carmel.

## The Miracle of the Sun

As the crowd watched, they did not see all the visions to which the children were favored, but they were able to gaze directly at the sun as it faded and glowed in different ways. It gave off amazing shafts of colorful light in various directions as it appeared to spin and dance. Suddenly, it appeared to zig-zag downward, hurtling toward the people. Many screamed out in terror, many begging for mercy, others praying the Act of Contrition. As suddenly as it had appeared to be falling toward them, the sun swerved back into its orbit and took its normal place. The rain had stopped and everything, including the muddy ground, was dry. The promised miracle had indeed occurred as promised.



The day of the miracle was rainy and many came carrying umbrellas.



People in the crowd stare in awe at the sun after the miracle. Notice how dry everything appears, in spite of all the rain falling just minutes before.



The promised miracle drew a crowd that many estimated to be at least 70,000.

## Interesting Facts

Our Holy Mother had told the children that the two younger ones would be in heaven soon. True to Her word, Francisco died on April 4, 1919 at age 11, and Jacinta died on February 20, 1920 at age 9. Lucia entered the Dorothean convent to learn to read and write as instructed by Our Lady, and later became a Carmelite nun. She died at age 97 in the year 2005.

Before she died, little Jacinta revealed little-known but remarkable statements made by Our Lady. Here are just some of them:

More souls go to hell because of sins of the flesh than for any other reason. Certain fashions will be introduced that will offend Our Lord very much. Many marriages are not good; they do not please Our Lord and are not of God. Priests must be pure, very pure. They should not busy themselves with anything except what concerns the Church and souls. The disobedience of priests to their superiors and to the Holy Father is very displeasing to Our Lord. The Blessed Mother can no longer restrain the hand of her Divine Son from striking the world with just punishment for its many crimes.

Tell everybody that God gives graces through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Tell them to ask graces from her, and that the Heart of Jesus wishes to be venerated together with the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

## Private Apparitions and Messages to Lucia

On December 10, 1925, in her cell at the convent in Pontevedra, Spain, Sister Lucia saw an apparition of Mary with the Child Jesus and a heart encircled with thorns. Mary told Lucia, "See, my daughter, My heart surrounded by thorns which ungrateful men pierce at every moment by their blasphemies and ingratitude." Mary instructed that she would assist at the hour of their death with all the graces necessary for the salvation of their souls, all those who, on the first Saturday for five consecutive months, make a good confession, receive Holy Communion, recite five decades of the rosary, keep Her company by meditating on

the fifteen mysteries of the rosary, all with the intention of making reparation for the sins committed against Her Immaculate Heart.

On June 13, 1929, Sister Lucia saw another apparition while alone in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the convent chapel at Tuy. She was given an amazing understanding of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament with a vision of the representation of the Holy Trinity. As Lucia tells it, "I had sought and obtained permission from my superiors and confessor to make a Holy Hour from the eleven o'clock until midnight, every Thursday to Friday night. 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 of light; 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 the host and fell into the chalice. Beneath the right arm of the cross was Our Lady and in her hand was her Immaculate Heart. Under the left arm of the cross, large letters, as if 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."



Lucia's Vision in the convent chapel at Tuy

## The Fulfillment Begins

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."

The Fatima apparitions were approved by the Church in 1930.

On January 25, 1938, a strange light filled the skies of northern Europe. Scientists described it as a particularly brilliant display of the Aurora Borealis, but Sister Lucia, now age 31, knew it was the "night illumined by an unknown light," of which Mary had spoken in the July 13, 1917 apparition. Mary had said, "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." The Second World War began almost 18 months later, on September 1, 1939 when Germany invaded Poland.

## Controversy

There is much debate over whether or not the consecration of Russia as requested by Our Holy Mother has been accomplished. Peter Miller from [www.catholicapologetics.info](http://www.catholicapologetics.info) provides a concise summary about the controversy:

"There have been a number of gestures that have come close to fulfilling the requests of the Queen of Heaven. In 1952, Pope Pius XII consecrated Russia without the participation of the world's bishops. On May 13, 1982, Pope John Paul II consecrated the world without the world's bishops. On March 25, 1984 at the Vatican, Pope John Paul II consecrated the world with some of the world's bishops. Obviously, none of these gestures fulfilled heaven's requests as reinforced repeatedly by Sister Lucy. In 1982, after Pope John Paul's first almost consecration, she repeated what she had said since at least 1946 that Russia needed to be mentioned and the bishops of the world needed to participate.<sup>2</sup> Prior to the 1984 consecration, Lucy read the Holy Father's prepared text and remarked to Maria Eugenia Pestana that:

'This act of consecration cannot be decisive because Russia does not appear in it as the sole object of the consecration.'

"In a 1985 interview, Sister Lucy was asked if the Pope fulfilled the request of Our Lady when he consecrated the world in 1984. Sister Lucy replied: 'There was no participation of all the bishops, and there was no mention of Russia.'

"She was then asked, 'So the consecration was not done as requested by Our Lady?' to which she replied:

'No. Many bishops attached no importance to this act.'

"Again on July 20, 1987, Sister Lucy told Enrique Romero in an interview that the consecration of Russia has not been done as requested. Our Holy Father seems to agree. At the end of the consecration formula, he added an impromptu prayer for those whose consecration Mary is still awaiting.

'Enlighten especially the peoples of which You Yourself are awaiting our consecration and confiding.'

"Interestingly, this was the only addition to a text that had been finalized and set for months. It has also been omitted from some news accounts covering the consecration. This statement would not make sense if the

consecration of the world (and everyone in it) was already just completed. Who else was left and who else would heaven be particularly 'awaiting' consecration? The only possible answer is the nation specifically requested: Russia."

"After the 'almost consecrations', the Catholic faithful were in the same position as they'd been for years — praying, sacrificing and petitioning for Russia's consecration. Sister Lucy had repeatedly and explicitly stated the "almost consecrations" were not sufficient and Our Holy Father had echoed this sentiment.

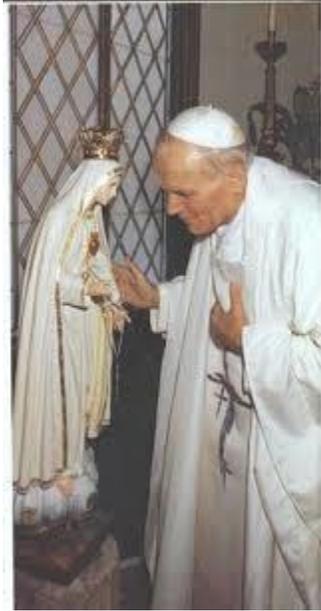
"The problems started years later when certain Vatican officials started claiming that the consecration had been done in 1984. *Wait a minute. What about the requirements for consecration set forth by Sister Lucy and restated as recently as 1987?* According to the revisionists, she had changed her mind. In a typed letter dated November 8, 1989, Sister Lucy supposedly reversed her position and said the 1984 consecration was sufficient.

"There are a number of problems with this letter and reasons to question its authenticity — least of which is the fact that after a lifetime of hand-written letters, it's hard to believe she suddenly started using a word processor. This letter also contains factual errors that Sister Lucy would not have made and a signature that does not match her handwriting. Numerous objections to the authenticity of the letter have gone unanswered. An easy way to clear this up would be asking Sister Lucy to clarify her supposed statements or verify the contents of the letter, but such a thing has never happened. In fact, Sister Lucy is still to this day bound to silence on the subject of Fatima — a silence that can only be released by Cardinal Ratzinger. What are they afraid of her saying?

On June 26, 2000, at the Vatican press conference concerning the Third Secret, Msgr. Bertone declared that

*'Any further discussion or request [for the Consecration] is without basis.'*

"As proof of this, they refer to this questionable decade-old letter rather than ask Sister Lucy herself who was available to answer questions regarding the consecration."



Pope John Paul II visiting Fatima after recovering from the assassination attempt on his life.

## The Beatifications of the Seers

In 1935, Jacinta's body was exhumed and found to be incorrupt. Pope John Paul beatified Jacinta and Francisco on May 13, 2000 during the Jubilee Year. At the same time he has announced that details of the third part of the Fatima secret will be revealed, while also entrusting the third millennium to Our Lady of Fatima. As already mentioned in this article, a description of the visual images of the third part of the secret was publicly divulged in June 2000 with the text omitted.

On February 14, 2008, Pope Benedict XVI authorized the cause of the beatification for Sister Lucia who died on February 13, 2005.

The shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal sees thousands of faithful pilgrims each year. Now more than ever, our world needs the rosary. Pray the rosary daily!