

Our Lady of Fatima

Saint of the Day for May 13

The Story of Our Lady of Fatima

Between May 13 and October 13, 1917, three Portuguese children—Francisco and Jacinta Marto and their cousin Lucia dos Santos—received apparitions of Our Lady at Cova da Iria near Fatima, a city 110 miles north of Lisbon. Mary asked the children to pray the rosary for world peace, for the end of World War I, for sinners, and for the conversion of Russia.

Mary gave the children three secrets. Following the deaths of Francisco and Jacinta in 1919 and 1920 respectively, Lucia revealed the first secret in 1927. It concerned devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The second secret was a vision of hell. When Lucia grew up she became a Carmelite nun and died in 2005 at the age of 97.

Pope John Paul II directed the Holy See's Secretary of State to reveal the third secret in 2000; it spoke of a "bishop in white" who was shot by a group of soldiers who fired bullets and arrows into him. Many people linked this vision to the assassination attempt against Pope John Paul II in St. Peter's Square on May 13, 1981.

The feast of Our Lady of Fatima was approved by the local bishop in 1930; it was added to the Church's worldwide calendar in 2002.

Reflection

The message of Fatima is simple: Pray. Unfortunately, some people—not Sister Lucia—have distorted these revelations, making them into an apocalyptic event for which they are now the only reliable interpreters. They have, for example, claimed that Mary's request that the world be consecrated to her has been ignored. Sister Lucia agreed

that Pope John Paul II's public consecration in St. Peter's Square on March 25, 1984, fulfilled Mary's request. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith prepared a June 26, 2000, document explaining the "third secret."

Mary is perfectly honored when people generously imitate her response "Let it be done to me as you say" (Luke 1:38). Mary can never be seen as a rival to Jesus or to the Church's teaching authority, as exercised by the college of bishops united with the bishop of Rome.

Want to learn more about Our Lady of Fatima? Click the image below!