

## Fatima: A Warning From Heaven Come True

Last Sunday, the oldest living visionary of the Blessed Mother of Jesus died.

At 97, Lucia had outlived Francisco and Jacinta, the two other children God had chosen in 1916 to receive and to share the message from heaven. While tending their sheep on a warm spring day, they saw an angel of brilliant light who introduced himself as the Angel of Peace. In later apparitions, he led them to adore the consecrated host which is the Body of Christ, inviting them to pray with him. He also prepared them for the coming of the Virgin Mary.

Mary appeared seven times in 1917, from May to October. Lucia described her as "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's first words were: "Do not be afraid, I will not harm you...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."

On July 13<sup>th</sup>, Mary obtained for the children a vision of Hell. Then she said, "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.

"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." With this warning, she asked the children to say the following prayer with the Rosary: "O my Jesus, forgive us, save us from the fire of hell. Lead all souls to heaven, especially those who are most in need of thy mercy."

On October 13<sup>th</sup>, before 70,000 witnesses, God demonstrated the authenticity of the Fatima apparitions by sending a great miracle. Many of those present were atheists. Many had come to debunk the children's story. A heavy rainstorm drenched everyone. Then, suddenly, the black clouds parted, and the sun became visible, appearing as a dull gray disc that could easily be gazed at directly. In "*O Seculo*" (a newspaper), a former skeptic adopted a very different tone from his earlier satirical article on the alleged apparitions:

"...one could see the immense multitude turn towards the sun, which appeared free from clouds and at its zenith. It looked like a plaque of dull silver and it was possible to look at it without the least discomfort. It might have been an eclipse which was taking place. But at that moment a great shout went up and one could hear the spectators nearest at hand shouting: 'A miracle! A miracle!' Before the astonished eyes of the crowd, whose aspect was Biblical as they stood bareheaded, eagerly searching the sky, the sun trembled, made sudden incredible movements outside all cosmic laws - the sun 'danced' according to the typical expression of the people..."

The author continued: "People then began to ask each other what they had seen. The great majority admitted to having seen the trembling and dancing of the sun; others affirmed that they saw the face of the Blessed Virgin; others, again, swore that the sun whirled on itself like a giant [Ferris] wheel and that it lowered itself to the earth as if to burn it with its rays. Some said they saw it change colors successively..." (Avelino de Almeida, a journalist).

This spectacle served to confirm the validity of the children's story and to draw widespread attention to Mary's messages. Before long, the First World War ended. However, the Bolshevik Revolution followed soon afterwards. People later understood what Mary meant, in warning about Russia's errors and their effect on the world. The strange light over European skies which she had predicted was recorded in many newspapers (January 25<sup>th</sup>, 1938). A few months later, Hitler and Stalin launched the Second World War.

The United States entered the war on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1941 (Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary). Hiroshima was bombed on August 6<sup>th</sup> (Feast of the Transfiguration of Christ). The war ended on August 15, 1945 (Feast of the Assumption of Mary into Heaven). Pope John Paul II was shot at close range on May 13<sup>th</sup>, 1981 (date of Mary's first apparition in Fatima). His doctors said the bullet was guided miraculously around his vital organs.

Fatima is one of many Marian apparitions which have affected the history of the Christian world. The events at Guadalupe in 1531, Lourdes in 1858, and Medjugorje since 1981, are among the best-known apparitions. The Catholic Church has officially approved some of these. While none of those approved are required as articles of faith to believers, they are recommended for our prayerful consideration. Mary's purpose is always, ultimately, to bring us to Jesus, and to urge us to "do whatever he tells you to do" (John 2:5).

To those who reject all Marian apparitions as from collective hallucinations or even from the devil, I would respond: "Beware of offending God. We have no right to dictate to God what He can or cannot do. If God has chosen to send Mary to bring us back to faith, who are we to oppose Him?" (see Acts 5:39). Beware also of offending Jesus. You're talking about his mother. He too was accused of having a devil. But he entrusted his mother to the Church from the cross. We are supposed to make room for her in our hearts and lives. I suggest that doubters review Revelation chapter 12 again.

Of course, with supernatural events, we always have to "test the spirits" (1 John 4:1). The evil one is capable of appearing in any disguise. The Roman Catholic hierarchy approaches all apparitions with extreme caution. It usually takes years, even decades, before approval is granted for an apparition. But until the event is actually condemned (as occasionally happens), the faithful are permitted to study the details and to respond by a life of greater charity.

In the case of Fatima, the call to repentance, stronger faith, and a life of self-sacrificing service rang out loud and clear. Millions have drawn closer to Jesus as a result of having believed that his mother appeared in Portugal. Now that Sr. Lucia has returned to the God who gave her life, the message she helped to communicate renews its cry. It is a stern message of warning. But, as with all authentic prophecy, it is above all a loving assurance of hope.

May the world take this message seriously. It is not by accident that, in this era of tensions, terrorism, and political turmoil in the Middle East, the name "Fatima" should return to the news. Fatima was the daughter of Mohammed.

Our Lady came to Portugal to set the record straight.

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