

Our Lady of Fatima 100 years.



Please Pray the Rosary every Day during the Centenary year

Leading their flock out from Aljustrel on the morning of the 13th of May 1917, the feast of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament, the three children passed Fátima, where the parish church and cemetery could be found, and proceeded a kilometer or so north to the slopes of the Cova. Here they allowed their sheep to graze as they played in the pasture land sprinkled with the occasional oak tree. After having had their lunch about noon they decided to pray a rosary, although in a somewhat truncated fashion, saying only the first words of each prayer. Shortly, they were startled by what they later described as "lightening in a clear sky." Thinking that a storm might be approaching they debated whether they should take the sheep and go home. Preparing to do so they were again surprised by a strange light.

And we began to go down the slope driving the sheep towards the road. When we were half-way down, near a holm oak there [the large tree which today is encircled with an iron fence], we saw another flash of lightening, and after a few steps we saw on a holm oak [a small one lower on the hillside] a lady dressed in white, shining brighter than the sun, giving out rays of clear and intense light, just like a crystal goblet full of pure water when the fiery sun passes through it. We stopped astounded by the Apparition. We were so near that we were in the light that encircled her, or which she radiated, perhaps a meter and a half away [4-5 feet].

Please don't be afraid of me, I'm not going to harm you.

Lucia responded for all three, as she would throughout the apparitions.

"Where are you from?"

I come from heaven.

The Lady wore a pure white mantle, edged with gold and which fell to her feet. In her hands the beads of a rosary shone like stars, with its crucifix the most radiant gem of all. Still, Lucia felt no fear. The Lady's presence produced in her only gladness and confident joy.

"And what do you want of me?"

I want you to return here on the thirteenth of each month for the next six months, and at the very same hour. Later I shall tell you who I am, and what it is that I most desire.

And I shall return here yet a seventh time.

"And shall I go to heaven?"

Yes, you will.

"And Jacinta?"

She will go too.

"And Francisco?"

Francisco, too, my dear, but he will first have many Rosaries to say.

For a few moments the Lady looked at Francisco with compassion, tinged with a little sadness. Lucia then remembered some friends who had died.

"Is Maria Neves in heaven?"

Yes, she is.

"And Amelia?"

She is in purgatory.

Will you offer yourselves to God, and bear all the sufferings He sends you? In atonement for all the sins that offend Him? And for the conversion of sinners?

"Oh, we will, we will!"

Then you will have a great deal to suffer, but the grace of God will be with you and will strengthen you.

Lucia relates that as the Lady pronounced these words, she opened her hands, and

we were bathed in a heavenly light that appeared to come directly from her hands. The light's reality cut into our hearts and our souls, and we knew somehow that this light was God, and we could see ourselves embraced in it. By an interior impulse of grace we fell to our knees, repeating in our hearts: "Oh, Holy Trinity, we adore You. My God, my God, I love You in the Blessed Sacrament."

The children remained kneeling in the flood of this wondrous light, until the Lady spoke again, mentioning the war in Europe, of which they had little or no knowledge.

Say the Rosary every day, to bring peace to the world and an end to the war.

After that she began to rise slowly in the direction of the east, until she disappeared in the immense distance. The light that encircles Her seemed to make a way amidst the stars, and that is why we sometimes said we had seen the heavens open.

The days that followed were filled with excitement, though they had not intended it that way. Lucia had cautioned the others to keep their visitor a secret, correctly perceiving the difficulties they would experience if the events became known. However, the joy of seven year old Jacinta could not be contained, and she rather promptly forgot her promise and revealed all to her mother, who patiently listened but gave it little credence. Her brothers and sisters piped in with their questions and jokes. Among the interrogators only her father, "Ti" Marto, was inclined immediately to accept the tale as true. He believed in the honesty of his children, and had a simple appreciation of the workings of God, such that he became the first believer in the apparitions of Fátima.

Lucia's mother, on the other hand, when at last she heard what had transpired, believed her own daughter to be the instigator of a fraud, if not a blasphemy. Lucia would quickly learn what the Lady meant when she said they would suffer a great deal. Maria Rosa was unable to get Lucia to recant, even under threats. Finally she hauled her before the parish priest, Fr. Ferreira, with no better success. On the other hand, Lucia's father, who was not especially religious, was practically indifferent, attributing all of it to the fancies of women. The next few weeks, as the children awaited their scheduled appointment with the lady in June, would reveal that they had few believers, and many detractors, in Aljustrel and Fátima.

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***Here are some prayers that were given to the children in
Fatima.***

The children had experienced supernatural visions the year before when an angel (quite possibly the archangel Michael) visited them three times in 1916. He called himself the Angel of Peace and taught them the first of these Fatima prayers, also known as the Pardon Prayer, that spring:

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

He later referred to himself as the Angel of Portugal and taught them the second of our Fatima prayers covered here in his last appearance that autumn, amazingly, while leaving a Host (the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ) and a golden chalice both suspended in mid-air.

Most Holy Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit- I adore Thee profoundly. I offer Thee the most precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles of the world, in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges, and indifferences whereby He is offended. And through the infinite merits of His Most Sacred Heart and the

Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg of Thee the conversion of poor sinners.

The following Fatima prayers came from Our Lady herself. When she appeared to the children in July, 1917 she taught them this prayer, to be said when offering up personal sufferings, sacrifices, or acts of penance:

Oh my Jesus, I offer this for love of Thee, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

*This last of our Fatima prayers followed shortly, after Mary opened her hands and showed the children a terrifying vision of Hell. She then taught them to say this after each decade of the rosary:***Oh My Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of Hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who have most need of Thy mercy.**

