

Fatima – Part II: The Aftermath¹

By Jim Seghers

“For those with faith, no explanation is necessary.
For those without faith, no explanation is possible.”

The miracle of the sun was electrifying. Among the witnesses were the curious, skeptics and atheists. There were about fifty-five thousand people gathered in the area of the Cova da Iria and another estimated twenty thousand people who witnessed the miracle as far away as twenty-five miles. This diversity prevented the amazing phenomenon from being dismissed as a case of mass hysteria.

Thirteen years later, in his formal approval of the apparitions at Fatima, the Bishop of Leiria wrote: “The solar phenomena of the 13th of October, 1917, described by the journalists of that period, was so astonishing as to leave an indelible impression upon those who were so fortunate to witness them. These phenomena, that no astronomical observatory ever registered, proving, therefore, that they were unnatural, were attested by persons of every rank of society, believers and unbelievers, by journalists of the principal newspapers of Portugal, and by persons many miles distant from the scene of events, which serves to disprove any faint suspicion of collective illusion that might exist.”²

Francisco Marto – b. June 11, 1908; d. April 4, 1919

On June 13, 1917 Lucia asked the Lady if she would take them to heaven, she replied: “Yes, I will take Jacinta and Francisco soon.” During the interim, these two young children put into practice the lessons the Lady taught them about prayer, sacrifice, suffering and reparation for sins. Francisco contracted the dreadful influenza that took the lives of almost twenty million people. He had a great desire to pray for sinners and loved to go to the church in his village and visit with the Hidden Jesus. He told Lucia and Jacinta:

“I loved seeing the angel, and I loved seeing Our Lady even better, but what I liked best of all was seeing Our Lord in the light which Our Lady put into our hearts. I love God so much, but he is so sad because of all the sins. We mustn’t commit even the slightest sin.”

On April 4, 1919 Francisco asked his family to forgive him for all his faults. Then little Jacinta said to her dying brother: “Give my love to Our Lord and Our Lady and tell them I’ll suffer as much as they want, to convert sinners and to make up to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.” At ten in the morning, Francisco said to his mother: “Mother, look at that lovely light by the door!” The “beautiful Lady” had come to take this holy boy to heaven.

Jacinta Marto – b. March 11, 1910; d. February 20, 1920

The seven-year old Jacinta was powerfully moved by the seriousness of sin and how it offends and separates us from God. The vision of hell affected her so deeply that she offered herself completely for the salvation of souls. Like Francisco, Jacinta contracted influenza in October

¹ This essay draws heavily on and to some extent is a summary of Fr. Andrew Apostoli’s fine work *Fatima For Today: The Urgent Marian Message of Hope*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, c. 2010. All the quotations, unless indicated otherwise, are drawn from this book. I hope what I have written here will motivate you to get and read the book.

² *Fatima Cove of Wonders* by Alphonse M. Cappa, Translated by William H. Lyden, pp. 88-89.

1918. Our Lady appeared to Jacinta and asked her if she wanted to stay on earth a little longer to suffer for the conversion of sinners. When she answered in the affirmative, our Lady informed her that she would go to a hospital where she would suffer much.

The child developed bronchial pneumonia, and then an abscess formed. She was sent to a hospital in Ourem where she remained alone for almost two months. Her physical pain was great, but her greatest suffering was being alone. When she returned home she had a large open wound in her chest and tuberculosis was consuming her little body. During this period she told Lucia”

“[Our Lady] told me that I am going to Lisbon, to another hospital, that I will not see you again, nor my parents either, and after suffering a great deal, I shall die alone. But she said I must not be afraid, since she herself is coming to take me to heaven.”

While in the hospital in Lisbon, Jacinta had three visits from our Lady who revealed important things to the little visionary:

- War is a punishment for sin
- Many fashions would come into the world that would greatly offend God
- Many marriages are not of God
- Priests must be very pure and concentrate on their mission to the Church and souls
- Priests must be obedient to the pope and their lawful superiors
- More souls go to hell because of sins of impurity than any other

In the hospital Jacinta endured a successful surgery, but her condition grew worse. Four days before her death, our Lady visited Jacinta to comfort her and prepare her for death. The life of this remarkable child ended in the evening of February 20, 1920, when her heavenly mother came to escort her soul to heaven. Francisco and Jacinta were beatified by Pope John Paul II on May 13, 2000 in the shrine of the Cova da Iria. Lucia, then a Carmelite nun, attended the beatification of her two little cousins. Jacinta’s body was discovered to be miraculously incorrupt when her coffin was opened on March 1, 1951.

Lucia dos Santos – b. March 22, 1907; d. February 13, 2005

The beautiful Lady told Lucia on June 13, 1917, “you are to stay here some time longer. Jesus wishes to make use of you to make me known and loved. He wants to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart.”

Devotion of Five Consecutive First Saturdays – Communion of Reparation

On December 10, 1925 our Lady appeared with the Christ Child to Lucia who was then a postulant in the congregation of the Dorothean Sisters in Pontevedra, Spain. She showed Lucia her heart, which was encircled by thorns. Then the Christ Child said:

“Have compassion on the Heart of your most holy Mother, covered with thorns, with which ungrateful men pierce it at every moment, and there is no one to make an act of reparation to remove them.”

Afterward our Lady said:

“Look, my daughter, at my Heart, surrounded with thorns with which ungrateful man pierce me at every moment by their blasphemies and ingratitude. You at least try to console me and say that I promise to assist at the hour of death, with the graces necessary for salvation, all those who, on the first Saturday of five consecutive months,

- shall confess [their sins], - [either on the first Saturday or during the week before or after]
- receive Holy Communion,
- recite five decades of the Rosary,
- and keep me company for fifteen minutes while meditating on the fifteen³ mysteries of the Rosary, with the intention of making reparation to me.”

What is striking about this apparition is the request of the Christ Child, who wants humanity to focus on the great sorrows his mother endured during her life, but especially during his bitter Passion and death. In this way he honors his mother who suffered for him and with him to atone for our sins.

Jesus appeared to Lucia on February 15, 1926 to ask what she had done to spread the devotion of the Five First Saturdays. Lucia replied that her confessor was not convinced Jesus was asking that this devotion be spread worldwide, since many people were already receiving Holy Communion and praying the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary on the first Saturday. Jesus replied to her:

“It is true, my daughter, that many souls begin the First Saturdays, but few finish them, and those who do complete them do so in order to receive the graces that are promised thereby. It would please me more if they did five with fervor and with the intention of making reparation to the Heart of your heavenly Mother, than if they did fifteen in a tepid and indifferent manner.”

The selection of *five* first Saturdays was chosen because that number corresponded to five offenses committed against the Immaculate Heart. Jesus explained the number in a vision to Lucia in Tuy, Spain, May 29-30, 1930:

“Daughter, the motive is simple. There are five kinds of offenses and blasphemies spoken against the Immaculate Heart of Mary; blasphemies⁴

- (1) against the Immaculate Conception;
- (2) against her perpetual virginity;
- (3) against her divine maternity, refusing at the same time to accept her as the Mother of mankind;
- (4) by those who try publically to implant in the hearts of children an indifference, contempt, and even hate for the Immaculate Mother; and
- (5) for those who insult her directly in her sacred images.”

Lucia also reported that “peace or war depends on the [Five First Saturdays devotion] along with the Consecration,” which will be examined next.

Consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart

On July 13, 1929, our Lady made the following request to Lucia:

“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,

³ The mysteries of the Rosary now number twenty with the addition of the Luminous Mysteries added by Pope John Paul II.

⁴ Blasphemy is speech, thought, or action that entails contempt for God or the contemptuous ridicule of saints, angels, sacred objects, or Christ’s Church.

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.”

Fifty-five years passed before Pope John Paul II consecrated Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in 1984. That event took place on the Solemnity of the Annunciation, at the closing ceremony of the Holy Year of the Redemption. It was made at Saint Peter’s Basilica in Rome with numerous cardinals and bishops present, as well as in union with all the bishops throughout the world. Two hundred thousand people had gathered in Saint Peter’s Square for the occasion. Sister Lucia reaffirmed on November 17, 2001: “I’ve already said that the consecration Our Lady wished for was performed in 1984, and that it was accepted by Heaven.”

There can be little doubt that the delay of the consecration gave Russia additional time to spread its errors. One example is the testimony of Bella Dodd, an ex-Communist who was received into the Catholic Church by Bishop Sheen. She told the bishop that as a Communist in the 1930’s she recruited men with no vocations to enter the priesthood in order to destroy the Church from within. She reported this directive came directly from Joseph Stalin who believed that the Roman Catholic Church was the greatest enemy of Communism.

Pope Pius XII consecrated the world with special mention of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on October 31, 1942. However, only the bishops of Portugal joined in with him. The Pope repeated the consecration at Saint Peter’s Basilica in Rome on December 8 of the same year, but neither consecration included all the bishops of the world. On July 7, 1952, Pope Pius XII explicitly consecrated the people of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in a special apostolic letter, but the world’s bishops did not participate.

On May 13, 1981 Pope John Paul II was making his rounds in an open jeep throughout Saint Peter’s Square. As he handed a little girl named Sarah back to her parents, two shots rang out. The Holy Father collapsed in the arms of his secretary apparently mortally wounded. However, five and a half hours of surgery seemed successful. His life was spared. A few weeks later he was rushed back to Gemelli Hospital for another surgery before he was recovered from his wounds. When the Pope visited the would-be assassin Ali Agca⁵ in Rebibbia prison, Ali said, “I know I was aiming right. I know that the bullet was a killer. So why aren’t you dead?” Secretary Dziwisz, who was nearby, understood that two things terrified Ali Agca: first, forces he could not control had protected the Pope; and, second, these forces were related to the other Fatima besides Muhammad’s daughter [namely Our Lady], whom he referred to as “the goddess of Fatima.”

The importance of Fatima will be examined in Part III.

⁵ In his last book *Memory and Identity*, Pope John Paul II wrote: “Ali Agca, as everyone says, is a professional assassin. The shooting was not his initiative, someone else planned it, someone else commissioned him.”