



The Statue and Sanctuary of Our Lady of Fatima in Fatima, Portugal

INTRODUCTION

Over a hundred years ago during World War I, the world was gifted with a Plan for Peace at Fatima, Portugal. The recipients were three young, peasant children, aged ten, nine and seven years-old. The apparitions and messages were of the Guardian Angel of Portugal (*the Angel of Peace*) in 1916, and the Mother of God (*Mary as Our Lady of Fatima*) in 1917. In the decades that followed, Mary and also Jesus appeared and spoke to Lucia, the oldest of the three children, while the youngest two, Francisco and Jacinta, died by early 1920 due in part to the Spanish flu epidemic. The Bishop responsible for Fatima established a commission to investigate the apparitions in 1922 and declared in them worthy of belief in 1930.

Lucia would become a nun and live a long life, dying in 2005 at the age of 97. Beloved by the Portuguese, two days after her death, Portugal declared a National Day of Mourning. In 2008, Pope Benedict XVI announced the beginning of the process for Lucia's beatification, having waived the five-year waiting period under Canon Law. In February 2017, Pope Francis accorded Sister Lucia the title *Servant of God*, that being the first major step toward her canonization. The two younger children were canonized as saints by Pope Francis on May 13, 2017 at Fatima.

The Apparitions

Nine apparitions with messages occurred during the 1916-1917 period of World War I. The first three apparitions were by the Angel of Peace in 1916, being preceded by a May Rosary Crusade of the Portuguese faithful. The six monthly 1917 apparitions were by Our Lady of Fatima, and they occurred from May 13th to October 13th. They were immediately preceded by a May Novena for Peace initiated by Pope Benedict XV seeking Mary's intercession in World War I.

The children were harassed in 1917 by the secular civil authorities as each month an increasing number of people came to the apparition site. The children said that Mary promised a miracle on October 13th so that even more people would believe in the apparitions and messages. The stupendous miracle of the sun did occur as foretold on that date. It was witnessed by an estimated 70,000 people and documented by the skeptical, secular press of Portugal.

The Fatima Peace Plan

Over the course of the nine apparitions, seven main elements of the Fatima Peace Plan, a plan for both personal and world peace, were revealed by the Angel and Our Lady. Briefly they are:

- Praying, especially the Rosary daily
- Making Sacrifices for Souls
- Accepting Suffering that God Wills to Send
- Practicing Eucharistic Devotion
- Making Reparation to Console God
- Practicing the First Saturday Devotions
- Making a Papal Consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in union with all the Bishops of the Church

There is an eighth element practiced by popes and they recommended it to the faithful and it complements the elements above, that being:

- Making Personal Consecrations to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

More detail information on the apparitions and messages follows.

BACKGROUND ON THE APPARITIONS

Fatima is in central Portugal, northeast of Lisbon. The nation is traditionally Catholic. Its King and one son were assassinated in 1908 and after another son became King, he was overthrown by a revolution of the very anti-Catholic, anti-clerical Freemasons in 1910. Once in power, the Freemasons passed in 1911 an anti-religious law; their leader's goal was to eliminate Catholicism within two generations. As the apparitions began, the devastating First World War was about to enter its third year elsewhere in Europe but Portuguese soldiers were about to become involved. Such was the internal political climate in Portugal prior to 1916.

The 1916-1917 Fatima Apparitions

The 1916 apparitions of the Angel of Peace profoundly impacted the children. The Angel instructed them in the ways of prayer, reparation, intercession and suffering as well as in a profound love for and adoration of the Holy Eucharist.

On May 13, 1917, Our Lady appeared to the children as they tended their sheep and she returned each month on the 13th from June to October except in August. In that month, the children were interrogated, jailed, and threatened with death by the atheistic, local civil authorities. After their release, Mary appeared on August 19th.

The children also endured much disbelief from their families, friends and pastor, and were ridiculed and even spat upon by some neighbors. Lucia was sternly treated by her strict, unbelieving mother. Yet, despite an overwhelming and intimidating situation, the children did not change their testimony about the apparitions.



Our Lady of Fatima and her Immaculate Heart

The Fatima Apparitions & Heaven's Plan for Peace

The July and October apparitions would prove to be the most significant and powerful. In July Mary gave additional elements of Heaven's Peace Plan and serious warnings if people did not change their sinful ways. She also promised both a great miracle in October to help people believe in the apparitions and the ultimate triumph of her Immaculate Heart. In October she delivered the miracle and its timing was significant considering a 13-day difference between the Gregorian calendar used in the West and the Julian calendar still used then in Russia in 1917, since this apparition likely occurred on or around the same day that Lenin recrossed the Finnish border into Russia to initiate and lead its 1917 Communist revolution. Russia would soon begin to spread its errors.

The July 1917 Warnings

On July 13, 1917, Mary appeared, asking the children to pray the Rosary to honor her, to gain graces and peace for the world, and to end the current war. She also gave the three-part 'Secret' warning of the reality of Hell and of worldwide tragedies that would occur if people did not stop offending God.

The Vision & Warning of Hell

Our Lady instructed the children to pray and sacrifice themselves for the conversion of sinners and showed them a vision of Hell to underscore its reality. The vision was an extremely frightening experience, which filled them with a profound desire to pray and sacrifice for sinners. This vision was so real that the children later made severe sacrifices for the salvation of sinners. After commenting upon the vision, Mary then gave the second part of the 'Secret' of Fatima that contained two warnings.

The Warning and Sign of World War II

Our Lady promised the children that World War I would end, but if people do not amend their ways, there would come an even greater war with further consequences of hunger and also of persecution of the Church and Pope.

Mary then told the children that to prevent all this, she would come later to ask for the Pope's Consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart, and for the Communion of Reparation (*the First Saturday Devotions*). She promised that if her requests were heeded, Russia would be converted, and the world would have peace. If not, Russia would spread her errors, provoking wars and persecutions of the Church, yet in the end, her Immaculate Heart would triumph.

Our Lady spoke of a warning sign of an "unknown light" preceding the war, which did occur at night on January 25-26, 1938, just weeks before Hitler invaded Austria. From 9 pm to 2 am, a very unusual light appeared over the Northern Hemisphere that troubled many people. The New York Times devoted almost an entire page to the event. Some scientists attributed it to an exceptional aurora borealis yet others, including Sister Lucia considered that an insufficient explanation.

Tragically, Our Lady's requests were not heeded and the disastrous World War II began in March of 1938 with that invasion of Austria, the first country of many in which the Germans would invade in World War II. Then with Japan's increasing imperialistic and hostile actions against countries in Asia and the Pacific, and its attack on the United States at Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the war became worldwide in scope. It would result in an estimated 66 million deaths, both military and civilian. That is a huge death toll that equates approximately to the total population today of seven states in the Southeastern U.S. (FL, GA, AL, MS, TN, SC & NC).

The Warning of Russia's Errors Spreading

In July 1917, Russia was poor and militarily weakened due to World War I fighting. With the October Communist revolution, matters became even worse. There was no reason then to expect that Communist Russia would become a great power, quickly spreading its errors of Communism and state supported abortions within a new Soviet Union (USSR). Russia will help Hitler expand World War II, later provoke proxy wars in the Cold War, and initiate wars in Afghanistan (1979) and Ukraine (2014). Yet back in July 1917, Mary warned the children that if people do not respond to her requests (*the Peace Plan*), Russia would spread its errors and provoke wars and also that the Church will be persecuted (*which did occur in the USSR and continues today in Communist China*).

Our Lady further warned that good people would be martyred (*which was very true under Soviet Communism*) and that the Pope would suffer much (*an example was the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II, likely with Soviet KGB complicity*), and that other nations would be destroyed (*examples being Poland in World War II, invaded and devastated by Nazi Germany in 1939 and twice by the Soviets in 1939 and 1944, and Russia's 2022 Ukraine invasion and continued bombing*).

Mary also warned of hunger, which did happen during and after World War II. It also occurred in the Soviet Union with major famines in its 1917-1923 Civil War and in its 1930s collectivization policies which killed millions. In China, Communist policies caused tens of millions deaths in the Great Chinese Famine of 1959-1961.

Tragically, the full extent of Mary's Consecration request was not fulfilled until 1984, years after Communism had already spread and impacted over 70 countries. By then Communism in its various forms had a worldwide impact causing roughly 94 million deaths. This too is a hard to imagine death toll, one that equates to the population of the 12 more densely populated states in the Northern U.S. (MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, PA, OH, MI, IN, KY, DE & MD).

In addition to spreading Communism, Russia would legalize abortion in 1920, becoming the first modern state to formally support abortion. This error initially spread in 1922 in the newly created USSR and later, spread worldwide into today's great *World War on the Unborn* which now kills over 70 million unborn children each year, more than all the deaths in World War II. In 1921 Russia's Communism spread to China and quickly led to its long and deadly civil war. China today is the largest Communist nation with 1.4 billion people and the largest number of abortions (18 million/year). Today, ris-



The children after July apparition

ing hegemon China and belligerent Russia, both nuclear powers, threaten world peace.

The Warning of further Church Persecution

This warning, which was the third part of the 'Secret', was a silent, prophetic vision of the penance, the suffering which the Church would encounter. Lucia would write a description of the vision in January 1944 in obedience to her Bishop in Portugal. The sealed envelope containing Lucia's account was not to be opened until 1960, and in 1957 it was transferred from the custody of her Bishop to the Vatican Archives. Popes John XXIII and Paul VI did read this part of the secret but returned it to the Archives without revealing it publicly. Pope John Paul II read the secret in 1981 after the assassination attempt on his life, and later authorized its publication with a Theological Commentary [*see Vatican's Internet site*] on May 13, 2000.

The vision was prophetic since devastating persecutions of the Church followed the October 1917 Communist Revolution. The impact in the Soviet Union (*with Russia as its largest and leading republic*) between October 1917 and the beginning of World War II included an estimated 50,000 priests who vanished and 1,000 monasteries and 60 seminaries which closed. By 1933 in Moscow, 500 of its 600 churches had closed. By 1941, a large majority of all Russian Orthodox churches had closed. By 1985 only 7,000 of the 50,000 pre-1917 revolution Orthodox churches remained, Russian Orthodoxy being by far the largest Christian denomination in Russia. The Ukrainian Catholic Church under the Pope was nearly obliterated.

Cardinal Ratzinger wrote in his June 2000 *Vatican Commentary* on the third part of the Secret: **"To save souls" has emerged as the key word of the first and second parts of the "secret," and the key word of this third part is the threefold cry: "Penance, Penance, Penance!" ... Sr. Lucia said that it appeared ever more clearly to her that the purpose of all the apparitions was to help people to grow more and more in faith, hope and love - everything else was intended to lead to this.**

October 13th Apparition & Great Miracle

The July 13th warnings certainly troubled the children, but to give them comfort and confidence, Our Lady promised a miracle in October 1917 **"so that all may see and believe"** in the children's accounts of the apparitions.

On October 13th, the pilgrim crowd had increased to an estimated 70,000 by many accounts. Newspaper reporters and photographers were there to record the miracle or try to prove the children were lying. The crowd stood in the relentless, pouring rain with mud up to their ankles. Many were praying the Rosary as the Blessed Mother made her final appearance in 1917 to the children to tell them:

"I would like a chapel built here in my honor. I am the Lady of the Rosary. Continue to pray the Rosary every day. The war is going to end soon and the soldiers will soon return to their homes... I have come to warn the faithful to amend their lives and ask for pardon for their sins. Do not offend the Lord Our God any more, because He is already so much offended."

As Our Lady was about to leave, she pointed to the sun. The rain had stopped, the clouds parted, and the sun began to whirl in the sky, scattering rays of multicolored light, lighting up the countryside. The sun whirled for three minutes, stopped, and resumed a second and third time, lasting a total of twelve minutes. The sun spun faster each time and at the end, seemed to tear itself from the sky and plunge toward earth. Many thought that it was the end of the world!

The crowd was on their knees, terrified, asking for pardon for their sins. As the miracle ended, the sun returned to its normal position and the rain-soaked earth and peoples' clothes were now dry and many healings were reported. The Portugal newspaper reporters gave long and detailed accounts but newspapers in most other countries ignored the story.

The 1925 & 1929 Requests

On December 10, 1925 and June 13, 1929, Mary gave Lucia the requests for the First Saturday Devotions and the Consecration of Russia respectively.

Back in the July 1917 apparition, Our Lady said that to prevent future wars, hunger, and persecution of the Church and the Holy Father, she would later:

"... come to ask for the Consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart and the Communion of Reparation on the first Saturdays."

On December 10, 1925, Mary made the request for the Communion of Reparation on the first Saturdays. The request occurred at a time when Hitler was rising to be the leader of the emerging Nazi Party and as Stalin was maneuvering to be the top leader of the Soviet Communists after the death of Lenin in 1924.

Then on June 13, 1929, Our Lady requested the Consecration of Russia. The timing of this request is notable since events were about to unfold in the immediate years ahead in Germany, the Soviet Union and the Far East that would lead to a war greater than World War I. Stalin's policies would prove catastrophic for the USSR with his 1930's mass relocations of 60 million peasants, with 6 million people sent to forced labor camps, with 8.5 million deaths due to a major famine made much worse by his policies, and with his murderous purges of any suspected opponents including top military leaders. Stalin's severe persecutions of the Church would continue through the 1930s. In Germany, Hitler would become Chancellor in 1933, then Dictator, rearming Germany, initiating the Holocaust, and with Stalin's connivance in 1939, expanding World War II by invading Poland. Under Stalin's leadership, the Soviet Union will experience an enormous death toll of up to 25 million in



October 13, 1917 crowd looking toward the sun

fighting Germany in World War II after being duped and invaded by Hitler in 1941.

Thus, the timing of the 1925 and 1929 requests was not coincidental and proved prophetic. The requests, reflecting God's will, were made in love to spare Russia and the world from future horrible consequences of sin. The lack of a timely and full response to God's mercy proved truly tragic for the Church and the world.

Yet Portugal Is Blessed with Its Response

The Fatima pilgrims responded with faith, prayers and sacrifices, and by building a chapel as Mary requested, a humble beginning for today's magnificent Shrine. They impressed the bishop with their devotion and he began the formal investigation of the Fatima apparitions in 1922 and later declared them "worthy of credence" in October 1930. Then in May 1931, the bishops of Portugal consecrated the Nation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and renewed that Consecration in 1938 and 1940. Notably, Portugal was spared the deadly impacts of the neighboring Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and the devastation of World War II (1938-1945).

Portugal later faced challenges with independence movements in its colonies during the 1960s and 1970s, and with a military coup and subsequent social and political turmoil in 1974. This prompted the nation's bishops in May 1975 to again renew the Consecration. In November a Communist coup failed and a transition to a democratic constitutional republic government began. Now in the 2020s, Portugal is consistently rated as one of the world's most peaceful nations, rated the third most peaceful in Europe.

Today, millions of pilgrims come to Fatima yearly to give honor to Our Lady of Fatima by praying to God for peace, by worshipping her Son, Our Lord, and celebrating His great sacrifice and love in the Mass. The bishops of Portugal responded to Our Lady's requests and continue their support of the Fatima Peace Plan and Shrine.

ELEMENTS OF THE FATIMA PEACE PLAN

1. Praying, especially the Rosary daily:

The Angel said in the Spring of 1916 (*always with the three children present in 1916*): **Fear not; I am the Angel of Peace. Pray with me: 'O 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.' Pray thus; the Hearts of Jesus and Mary are attentive to the voice of your supplications.**

The Angel said in the Summer of 1916: **Pray, pray a great deal. The Hearts of Jesus and Mary have merciful designs on you. Offer prayers and sacrifices continually to the Most High.**

Our Lady said on May 13, 1917 (*always with the three children present in 1917*): **Pray the Rosary every day to obtain peace for the world, and the end of the war.**

Our Lady said on June 13th: **... pray the Rosary every day.**

Our Lady said on July 13th: **... 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 for she alone can help.** When Lucia made petitions, Our Lady said it would be: **... necessary for such people to pray the Rosary in order to obtain the graces.**

Our Lady also said on July 13th: **When you say the Rosary, say after each mystery: 'O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of Hell and lead all souls to Heaven, especially those most in need.**

Our Lady said on August 19th: **... continue praying the Rosary every day.**

Our Lady said on September 13th: **Continue to pray the Rosary every day in order to obtain the end of the war.**

Our Lady said on October 13th: **Continue to pray the Rosary every day. The war is going to end soon and the soldiers will soon return to their homes.**

2. Making Sacrifices for Souls:

The Angel said in the Summer of 1916: **Make everything you do a sacrifice, and offer it as an act of reparation for the sins by which God is offended, and as a petition for the conversion of sinners. Bring peace to our country in this way.**

Our Lady said on July 13th: **Sacrifice yourselves for sinners and say often, especially when you make some sacrifice, 'O my Jesus, this is for love of You, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for the offenses committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.'**

Our Lady said on August 19th: **Pray, pray a great deal and make sacrifices for many souls go to Hell because they have no one to make sacrifices and to pray for them.**

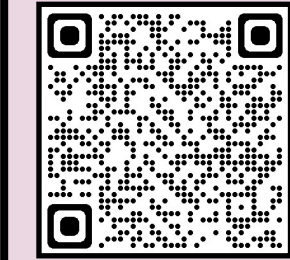
3. Accepting Suffering that God Wills to Send:

The Angel said in the Summer of 1916: **Above all, accept and bear with submission all the sufferings the Lord will send you.**

Our Lady asked on May 13th: **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 sins by which He is offended, and of supplication for the conversion of sinners?** Lucia replied: **Yes.** Our Lady responded: **Then you will have much to suffer, but the grace of God will be your comfort.**

4. Practicing Eucharistic Devotion:

The Angel knelt in the Fall of 1916 with the three children before a chalice with a Eucharistic Host suspended above as drops of Jesus' Blood were falling from the Host into the chalice. The Angel adored the Eucharist, giving an example for all believers, and prayed: **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.**



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5. Making Reparation to Console God:

The Angel said in the Fall of 1916 while giving the children Holy Communion: **Take and drink the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, horribly outraged by ungrateful men. Make reparation for their crimes and console your God.**

6. Making the First Saturday Devotions:

Our Lady said on July 13, 1917, concerning a future war, worse than World War I, if people do not stop offending God: **To prevent it, I shall come to ask for the Consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart and the Communion of Reparation on the first Saturdays (The First Saturday Devotions).**

Jesus said to Lucia on December 10, 1925: **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.** **Our Lady** then appeared requesting the First Saturday Devotions saying: **I promised to assist at the hour of death, with the graces necessary for salvation, all those who [fulfill the Devotion on five consecutive first Saturdays with the] intention of making reparation to me. [At this time, Hitler and Stalin were rising in power in the Nazi and Communist Parties respectively. Interestingly, on December 11th Pope Pius XI renewed the 1899 consecration of the world to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and established the Feast of the Kingship of Jesus, unaware of Jesus' and Mary's requests to Lucia the day before.]**

Jesus said to Lucia on February 15, 1926: **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...**

7. Making a Papal Consecration of Russia in Union with all the Bishops:

Our Lady said on July 13, 1917 (*as repeated from above*): **"I shall come to ask for the Consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart."** [*She later appeared to Lucia and made the request below in 1929.*]

Our Lady said on June 13, 1929: **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 for reparation: sacrifice yourself for this intention and pray. [The request was communicated to the Vatican. Also, by the end of 1929, Stalin had consolidated his power in the Soviet Union to the point where in the 1930s he would be a dictator.]**

Jesus expressed His displeasure to Lucia on August 29, 1931, after waiting 26 months for the papal Consecration: **Make it known to My ministers that given they follow the example of the King of France [Louis XIV back in 1689] in delaying the execution of My request, that they will follow him into misfortune. It will never be too late to have recourse to Jesus and Mary. [The critical moment for the Pope to make the Consecration must have been approaching considering Jesus' words here and below as well as events unfolding in Germany, the Soviet Union and Japan, the latter with its invasion of Manchuria in Northern China imminent.]**

Jesus spoke again to Lucia around the beginning of 1932 about the Consecration request: **They did not wish to heed My request. Like the King of France, they will regret it and then do it, but it will be late. Russia will already have spread her errors throughout the world, provoking wars and persecutions against the Church. The Holy Father will have much to suffer. [In 2000 the Vatican declared that the requested Consecration in union with all the bishops was finally made in March 1984. In March 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev became top leader of the Soviet Union and would ironically, contribute unintentionally to the unraveling and end of the Communist regime on Christmas Day 1991, that being a step toward Russia's conversion, which remains incomplete and sorely needed as of 2023.]**

Jesus said to Lucia on May 18, 1936: **I want My whole Church to acknowledge [the successes of] that Consecration as a triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary...**

8. Making Personal Devotions & Consecrations to Mary's Immaculate Heart:

Our Lady said to Lucia on June 13, 1917: **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.**

Our Lady said, after the children had seen the vision of Hell on July 13th: **You saw Hell where the souls of poor sinners go. In order to save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If people do what I ask, many souls will be saved and there will be peace.**

Jesus said to Lucia on May 18, 1936: **... I want My whole Church to acknowledge that Consecration [of Russia] as a triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary so that it may extend its cult later on and put the devotion of the Immaculate Heart besides the devotion to My Sacred Heart.**

Jesus said to Lucia on May 27, 1943: **I really want the spread of the cult and devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary; for it is the magnet that will attract souls to Me, the spotlight that will throw the rays of My Light and Love on the earth, the Eternal Spring that will flood the earth with the living water of My Mercy.**

Note: **The Popes made many Consecrations to Mary's Immaculate Heart including personal consecrations, and have encouraged the faithful to do likewise. The Popes also honored Mary with encyclicals and decrees, including the declaration of two Marian Years and the Dogma of her Assumption into Heaven. There is historical evidence that these papal actions have positively impacted world affairs, such as helping bring to an end World War II, the Korean War and the Cold War.**



Our Lady of Fatima Statue