

Spirituality Commission
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The Miracle of the Sun

Three little children, Lúcia Santos, age 10, Francisco Marto, age 9 and Jacinta Marto, age 7, saw visions of angels and Our Lady of the Rosary, who proved her miraculous appearances by showing 50,000 people the Miracle of the Sun, in Fatima, Portugal, on October 13, 2017. We will be celebrating the 100-year anniversary of this supernatural phenomenon in just a few days.

The children were shepherds. They would take their sheep out to pasture on Lúcia's parent's farm. The visions came when they would see an angel in the Cova da Iria. Francisco could see the angel but couldn't hear him so the girls told him what the angel said. He told them, "Do not be afraid. I am the Angel of Peace. Pray with me."

When the angel returned some time later he asked the children to make sacrifices. They would go the day without eating and give their lunches to the sheep and would drink only a minimal amount of water. During the angel's third appearance he gave the young seers Communion.

Lúcia and her cousins Francisco and Jacinta talked very excitedly about what they had seen. Mr. and Mrs. Marto believed their children and shared in their excitement. Lúcia's mother accused the children of making up stories and called little Lúcia a liar. Maria Santos would beat her daughter with broomsticks trying to get the truth out of her, admit she had made it all up. Lúcia kept the truth but stopped telling her mother about the visions.

On May 13, 1917, the shepherd children saw a flash of light by the Cova da Iria and Our Lady, brilliant white, appeared to them and spoke to them. She said she would return on the 13th of each month. She told them to pray the rosary every day to end the war.

Lúcia asked Our Lady if they would be joining her in heaven soon. The apparition told them she would be taking Francisco and Jacinta very soon but Lúcia was going to have to stay and spread Our Lady's message. This seriously

disturbed Lúcia. It was a heavy weight on the shoulders of such a young girl and she suffered greatly.

The children agreed not to tell anyone about their visit with the Holy Mother. At dinner, Jacinta couldn't keep quiet about what she saw and told her family. They asked her brother Francisco, "is this true?" He reluctantly admitted he had seen her too.

Maria Santos was very unhappy to hear from the neighbors that her daughter was still making up stories although Lúcia hadn't said a word about it. Lúcia's mother took her to the Priest to see if he could get the truth out of her and stop these crazy stories. Afterwards, he said he couldn't explain it.

There were others who believed the children and would come from miles around to see where the visions had taken place and for a chance to talk to the children. They trampled the Santos land so much they couldn't grow crops and the whole family suffered.

On August 13, 1917, a lawman from the city came to question the children. A large crowd had gathered. The administrator invited the three children into his car. He abducted them and took them to the prison where they were separately interrogated and threatened to be boiled in oil. They were put in the prison with adult men. Our Lady protected them and the prisoners began to sing and dance with the children to make the time go by faster. When the administrator brought them home, Mr. Marto gave him a stern talking to. Since they were in prison on the 13th, Our Lady visited them on the 19th of August.

In September, a large crowd came to see Our Lady in the Cova da Iria. Only the shepherd children could see her and only the two girls could hear her. They told everyone what she said. Our Lady told the children she was going to prove her existence by showing them a miracle.

October 13, 1917, 50,000 people had gathered with little Lúcia, Francisco and Jacinta. The sun was bright that day. As they watched, completely astonished, the sun began to move around in the sky. It almost appeared as if the sun were dancing. As suddenly as it had begun the sun stopped dancing and began moving closer to the earth, getting bigger and bigger.

The people were afraid the sun was going to crash into the earth. They began to repent and confess their sins. The sun then went back to its original place in the sky. They had truly seen a miracle and they believed.

This 100-year anniversary of the Miracle of the Sun is historic. I'm leading a Rosary Rally in Richland Center, where I live, at noon, at the Richland County Courthouse, on Saturday, October 14th. The Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, in La Crosse, is having a celebration starting on Friday, October 13th, at 6:15 pm. Many parishes have something special planned.

As always, Mary Our Queen of the Rosary, pray for us.