

position. After staying still for a small while, it happened again. Suddenly, it looked as if it came out from the sky to fall onto the crowd. All fell to their knees and cried out in terror!

Meanwhile, the children saw a Lady dressed like the white of the sun with a blue cape, and St. Joseph with the Child Jesus who blessed the world. Then, they saw Our Lady of Sorrows and finally Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. The people then became aware that their clothes were completely dry despite the rain. This was called the Miracle of the Sun!

Francisco was a sensitive child. Since the angel's apparitions, Francisco realized that God was sad because of war and many people who did not know God, and that it was important to comfort God. He loved nature, birds, and the sun. He felt a special attraction to be alone and in prayer. He would spend hours in front of the Blessed Sacrament. He could spend even three hours in the same position, kneeling or sitting in prayer.

He reflected on the apparitions, saying, "We were burning in that light that is God and we were not burnt. How is God? This we cannot say. But what grief. He is so sad; if only I can console Him!"

In his final illness, Francisco confided to his cousin: "Our Lord, is He still sad? I'm so heartbroken that He is this way. I offer Him all the sacrifices I'm able to." On the eve of his death, he confessed and received Holy Communion. After five months of continuous suffering, on a First Friday, April 4, 1919 at 10:00 am, he passed away. He is buried near his sister in the Basilica of Fátima.

Jacinta was the youngest of the three shepherd children. Many described her as bright and charming, although at times spoiled and self-centered. She enjoyed playing outdoor games, especially jumping, dancing, and running. The vision of hell impressed her very much, and afterwards she did all she could to prevent sinners from going there. One time she said, "I feel sorry for sinners! ...If I could show them hell!" She died a holy death on February 20, 1920. Her body is buried next to Francisco in the Basilica of Fátima.

Lucia entered a Convent of Carmelite nuns, and died on February 13, 2005.

Sources include: aletia.org, holyrosary.org, piercedhearts.org, catholic.org



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Saints Francisco & Jacinta Marto

Francisco: Jun. 11, 1908–Apr. 14, 1919

Jacinta: Mar. 11, 1910–Feb. 20, 1920

Born: Aljustrel, near Fátima, Portugal

Feast Day: 20 February

Canonized: 13 May 2017, Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary, Fátima, Portugal, by Pope Francis



As the world sank into World War I which would leave Europe devastated and millions dead, three shepherd children from the small, quiet Portuguese village of Aljustrel had extraordinary encounters in their family-owned field outside a town known as Cova da Iria. Francisco and Jacinta Marto, and their cousin Lucia de Jesus dos Santos, ranged in age at this time from 7 to 10 years old.

In the Spring of 1916, they were in the meadow with their sheep. After they ate lunch, they began to pray the Rosary and play a game of jacks. Then, a strong wind came, and a bright light appeared with a young man. He was 'the Angel of Peace,' and invited: "Pray with me." The angel knelt and bowed low as he taught them this prayer: *My God, I believe, I adore, I hope, and I love You. I beg pardon of You for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope, and do not love You.* He asked them to pray it three times, daily.

Then, in the summer of 1916, while the children were playing near the well of Lucia's house, an angel appeared, saying: "What are you doing? Pray! Pray a great deal! The hearts of Jesus and Mary have merciful designs for you. Offer prayers and sacrifices continually to the Most High." The children asked how they should sacrifice, and the angel answered: "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. By this you will bring peace to your country. I am its Guardian Angel, the Angel of Portugal. Above all, accept and bear, with submission, all the suffering the Lord will send you."

They began to offer to God everything that offended Him, without trying to find any other ways of mortification or penance other than passing hour after hour bowed to the ground, repeating the prayer that had been taught by the angel.

On May 13, 1917, the children were pasturing their flock as usual in the meadow, about a mile from home. They were playing when suddenly they saw a flash of what appeared to be lightning. Afraid, they looked around at the sky; it was clear and bright without the least spot of cloud. Then, they saw, standing over a small holm oak tree, a lady dressed all in white, more brilliant than the

sun, shedding rays of light, clear and stronger than a crystal glass filled with the most sparkling water, pierced by the burning rays of the sun.

She said, “Don’t be afraid! I will not harm you.” They asked, “Where are you from?” Raising her hand towards the horizon, she said, “I am from heaven.” Lucia asked, “What do you want of me?” The lady replied with what would become her usual request; “I came to ask you to come here for six consecutive months, on the thirteenth day, at this same hour. I will tell you later who I am and what I want. Afterward, I shall return here a seventh time.” During the apparitions, each child’s part would be distinct: Lucia was the only one who spoke to the lady; Jacinta saw and heard Her but did not speak; and Francisco saw Her but could not hear Her, and had to be told afterward what She said.

Lucia continued by asking: “Will I go to heaven?” “Yes, you’ll go.” “And Jacinta?” “As well.” “And Francisco?” “Him too, but he will have to say many Rosaries.” In the end, the lady asked, “Do you wish to offer yourselves to God, to endure all the suffering that He may send you, as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and to ask for the conversion of sinners?” The children replied, “Yes, we do.” She told them, “You will have much to suffer, but the grace of God will be your comfort.” Then she opened her hands with the loving gesture of a mother who offers her heart. From it, an intense light shone that seemed to go through them. The vision vanished telling them; “Recite the Rosary every day to obtain peace for the world and the end of the war.”

The following month, they went to the place as previously instructed, even though it meant missing all the festivities for the Feast of St. Anthony de Padua, patron saint of their parish and of Portugal. When they arrived, there were already many people gathered, as word of the apparition had spread. The lady appeared to them saying; “I wish you to come here the 13th of next month; that you say the Rosary every day... Don’t be discouraged, I will not abandon you ever. My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and through it will lead you to God.” She opened her hands, and a bright light shone on the children.

On July 13, 5,000 people joined to pray the Rosary, and the lady appeared. She repeated her usual request, including: “Recite the Rosary every day to our Lady of the Rosary to obtain peace in the world and the end of the war, because only She will be able to aid you.” Lucia said, “I want to ask you to tell us who you are, and to make a miracle for the crowd to believe that you appear.”

She answered: “You continue to come here. In October, I will tell you who I am, that which I want, and I will do a miracle so that all can see and believe. Sacrifice yourselves for sinners, and say often this prayer, especially during any

sacrifice: *O my Jesus, I offer this for love of Thee, for the conversion of poor sinners, and in reparation for all the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.*” Bright rays seeming to penetrate the earth shone from her hands. The ground vanished, and the children saw a terrible, frightening vision. They lifted their eyes to the lady, who told them: “You have seen Hell, where the souls of poor sinners go. To save future souls, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to My Immaculate Heart. If people do what I tell you, many souls will be saved and there will be peace...”

“When you recite the Rosary, say at the end of each decade, *Oh My Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, and lead all souls to Heaven, especially those in most need of Your Mercy.*”

On August 13, the children were imprisoned by the district administrator, an anti-Catholic. Amid threats to harm them, he attempted to get them to confess that they were liars. They bravely held to the truth, and after two days were released. During their imprisonment, a large crowd still went to the Cova and witnessed there a beautiful vision of all the colors of the rainbow and various flowers covering the meadow and the trees.

The children went to pasture August 19 and saw the lady, who repeated her usual request, and with a sad look said, “Pray, pray much and offer sacrifices for sinners. Many souls go to hell because there is no one who prays for them.”

In September, the children and about 30,000 prayed the Rosary. Soon after, the lady appeared and said, “I want you to come here on October 13 and that you continue to recite the Rosary to obtain the end of the war. In October, the Lord, Our Lady of Sorrows, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, and St. Joseph with the child Jesus, will also come to bless the world. God is satisfied with your sacrifices...”

Finally, in October, the children and a crowd of 70,000 under a torrential rain saw the lady, who said, “I am the Lady of the Rosary. I desire here a chapel to be built in my honor, and that people continue to recite the Rosary every day. The war is going to end, and the soldiers will soon return to their homes.” Lucia said: “May I ask you for cures and conversions... Will you grant them?” She replied, “Some yes, others no. They must amend their lives and ask pardon for their sins.” Sadly, she continued, “Do not offend the Lord Our God anymore, for He is already too much offended.”

At the end, Lucia shouted to look at the sun. The rain stopped suddenly, and there appeared an exceptionally bright sun which began to turn as if projecting in every direction bands of light of every color that lit the clouds, the sky, the