

Chapter 1

FATIMA

In the spring of 1916, a guardian angel appeared to three peasant children, Lucia dos Santos, Francisco Marto, and his sister Jacinta, in an olive grove near Fatima, Portugal. The heavenly angel, whiter than snow, transparent as crystal, asked the three shepherd children to pray. But, it was the following year when the story began to venture on a world stage.

The event occurred on May 13, 1917, in the countryside above the grazing pastures owned by Lucia's father. Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta were out in the green fields to pasture their flocks. The sky was so bright and so blue that the children's thoughts belonged to their beautiful imagination. Then, suddenly a loud clasp of thunder sounded out of nowhere. In an instant, a flash of lightning sent the children running. Frightened that a storm was brewing, they began to run back to their houses when another flash of lightning and thunder rocked the skies.

Over a small oak tree at the Cova da Iria a lady of transcendent beauty "more brilliant than the Sun" appeared and said, "Do not be afraid. I will do you no harm. I am from Heaven. I want you to come here on the thirteenth day for six months at this same time, and then I will tell you who I am and what I want." She asked them if they would like to offer themselves to God and accept sufferings for the conversion of sins. They replied yes. She told them to pray for peace before she disappeared.

The Portugal of 1917 was embroiled in Marxist ideology because of its 1910 Socialist revolution. Marxism was new and was seen as the promising new reform in Europe, where it all started. It was the order of thought for the government of Portugal. In Fatima many churches were closed on orders of the government, reminiscent of the early days of 1910. (The government could not close all churches since it did not have enough men; most were off fighting in World War I.)

At this time, WW I had brewed for about three years. One side was led by Germany. The other side countered with the powers Imperial Britain, France, Imperial

Russia and, after 1916, the United States. Imperial Russia was one of the most powerful and largest states on the face of the Earth in 1916. Russia, of all the nations of the world, has the distinction of being named at Fatima. For the most part, the Russians were still loyal to the Russian language and culture. Christianity was the principal religion.

In October, Lenin encouraged an insurrection against the provisional government and from that ensued the connecting rise of Marxist-Communism. (That ideology which, if you have forgotten, promised to end religion and faith.)

On the 13th of June, 1917, the Catholic feast day of St. Anthony of Padua, Portuguese government officials came looking for the three children at church service. Only Lucia was there, but she escaped and went to the Cova da Iria as instructed the month before, the meeting place in the green pastures.

The Lady appeared to them for the second time over the same oak tree. During the apparition the Lady revealed their future. "I have been sent by God with a message for every man, woman and child living in this century," spoke the Lady. She told only the children to come back the next month and to pray the rosary. She stated she would take Francisco and Jacinta to heaven soon but, told Lucia she was to remain on Earth a little longer. "Have no fear," she told them, adding for Lucia to remain to help bring a path to God. Also in the message the Lady, who did not reveal her name, desired the children to learn to read and write and pray, and to establish a devotion to the Immaculate Heart in the world. The children couldn't read or write, and at that time the nearby school was just for boys, and the mother of Lucia, the eldest, did not allow her to go to any school. Two magnificent rays of light encompassed the children. The children perceived a heart on the Lady, who was clad in white garment, with a blue mantle over her head. The mantle was bordered by a thread of gold. The heart was circled and pierced by thorns.

The reported apparitions spread all across Portugal. Yet, the Catholic priests told the children it was possibly the work of the devil. The three were forbidden from going back to the cova. Based upon the voices of the three children their parents disagreed with the priests and allowed them to return. On July 13th a very serious message was given. The Lady told them to continue praying and that the war was going to end. She wanted them to continue to come every month, and that in October she would let them know who she was, what she wanted, and that she would perform a miracle so that everyone might see and believe.

At this time she outstretched her hands from which light streamed, a light that

streamed to Earth, and the children were permitted a vision of Hell. This came to be known as the First Secret of Fatima.

She then told them further secret things she did not wish others to know. The Lady predicted another world war, worse than the first and that it would break out in the time of Pope Pius XI. She detailed to Lucia, “When you see a night illuminated by an unknown light, know that this is the great sign that God is giving you, that He is going to punish the world for its crimes by means of war, hunger, persecution of the Church and of the Holy Father.” To forestall this, she asked for the consecration of Russia. If her request was honored, there would be peace and Russia would be converted. But if not, Russia would be powerful, spreading wars, persecution and much suffering. Russia would be the instrument of punishment. The good news was that eventually Russia would be converted and a period of peace would follow for the world. She asked that the rosary be prayed.

On August 19, at Valinhos, the Lady reappeared to the children. She promised to return. She repeated her message of prayer in September, and again said that a miracle would occur in October.

Our daily life is packed with stress and challenging things. We all have things to do in school and at home.

The difficulty of measuring the future is a heartache, especially if it is distant. Despite this, we are in a fantastic wondrous era where even the average person can be able to understand.

We are reminded that our Earth is part of a larger cosmos. Yet, within this physical realm, is the nonphysical—that which is not easily touched or seen.

Some things that are non-physical happened a long, long time ago.

This is not to say we cannot learn from the past. Put together all the yesterdays and the todays of world history, and one learns to be mindful that the themes of today are on a level more important than yesterdays.

Some of the religious stories once thought of as legend have a basis of truth, and, depending upon one’s faith, can even harness lessons in humanity. One needs to learn what Fatima is all about. The main focus is on a message, a peasant girl Lucia, which means *light* or the *light of dawn*, and the luminous apparition of a Blessed Lady, the Mother of Jesus. The Mother of Jesus Christ the divine Son of God is as unique as can be and is part of this book.

She lived 2000 years ago and is known as the Blessed Virgin Mary of Nazareth, the mother of Jesus. For many, she is held in high esteem and reverence because she

has a way that touches people in this day and age.

She is from higher and more beautiful regions than those which ordinary men and women know. What lies ahead today falls under the category of supernatural, yet may be answered by knowing a little bit more about her story.

OCTOBER 1917

Finally, there came the historic meeting on October 13, 1917, with thousands present at the cove. For the first time in modern history, a miraculous event supported by thousands of eyewitnesses was recorded, an event normally associated with ancient biblical accounts.

Summer had definitely evaporated as a storm raged fiercely throughout Europe. In the figurative sense, on display was the mortal storm of world war which was still being waged with horror unparalleled. Countless soldiers were killing each other in Europe, most notably in the fields of France. In the literal sense, Portugal was drenched in heavy rain October 13 after a long night of constant drizzles, and Fatima was dark and gloomy. So the stage was set. With as many people as can easily fill any football or soccer stadium, throngs of people were there to witness a miracle. The number on foot, in wagons, bikes and cars, beside many donkeys each with its own little bundle of straw, was fantastic and estimated between 60,000 to 70,000—much greater than any American indoor basketball crowd you can ever visualize. A professor from the University of Coimbra, Dr. José de Almeida Garrett, estimated the crowds at over one hundred thousand. A rumor had been spread that the authorities were planning to explode a bomb at the very moment of the apparition, close to the children. Nevertheless, people came.

Close to noon, a tiny column of blue smoke seemed to appear and disappear three times around the children. Whatever conversation took place between the children and the apparition, no sound was discernible except the children's voices. Lucia asked who she was, and was told She is the Lady of the Rosary. She was the mother of Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God. A chapel must be built in honor of the mother of Jesus; that people should pray the rosary daily; that people all over the world must cease sinning and offending God; and that the world war would end soon.

The climax, to use Lucia's words from her memoirs, "The Blessed Mother outstretched her hand just as she was leaving, opened her hand and rays of light extended in the direction of the Sun. The Sun broke through the clouds, and gradually grew

pale so all could gaze.” The Sun brightened as light seemed to blend and gleam from The Blessed Lady’s hands, to paraphrase Lucia’s own words. It appeared as a silver saucer. Rays of multicolored light streamed from the Sun in every direction, every color of the rainbow. While this was going on, the children were witnessing another view. Unlike the movie of Fatima the three children also saw Saint Joseph to the left of the Sun holding the infant Jesus. The baby Jesus, along with Joseph, appeared beside Mother Mary. The Blessed Lady appeared to Lucia twice more, once in her blue and white apparel, and the final time in a brown robe. While she was still in blue and white, Jesus and Joseph were clothed in red, and appeared to be blessing the world. This vision did not remain, but it was replaced by a more mature Jesus blessing the crowd.

As the children were enraptured by their most heavenly visions, the entire crowd was bathed in a continuous shaft of slowly changing light of different colors. The people, the animals, the trees and hills, and all the Earth were painted in the colors similar to the coloring display that took place most recently and was seen by eyewitness of the solar eclipse on August 11, 1999. Such an eclipse was international, but a uniqueness happened in 1999 near the tiny hills of Reims, France, baring the clouds. People there were actually bathed in a spectacular blue that seemed to eerily transcend Earth. One can only imagine how it looked in 1917 with the changing colors.

The view was reported by numerous newspapers. The newspaper *O Dia* reported, “The sky had a certain greyish tint of pearl, and a strange clearness filled the gloomy landscape, every moment getting gloomier. The Sun seemed to be veiled with transparent gauze to enable us to look at it without difficulty. The greyish tint of mother-of-pearl began changing as if into a shining silver disc, that was growing slowly until it broke through the clouds. And the silvery Sun...was seen to rotate and wander within the circle of the receded clouds! The people cried out with one voice, the thousands of the creatures of God whom faith raised up to Heaven, fell to their knees upon the muddy Earth.

“Then, as if it were shining through the stained glass windows of a great cathedral, the light became a rare blue, spreading its rays upon the gigantic nave....Slowly the blue faded away and the light seemed to be filtered through yellow stained glass. Yellow spots were falling now upon the white kerchiefs and the dark poor skirts of coarse wool. They were spots which repeated themselves indefinitely over the lowly holmoaks, the rocks and the hills.” The lively colors continued for many minutes. The words of Dr. Garrett is most telling: “During this occurrence, the air took on

successively different colors. While looking at the Sun, I noticed that everything around me darkened. I looked at what was nearby and I also cast my eyes away towards the horizon. Everything had the color of an amethyst, the sky, the air, everything and everybody. A little oak nearby was casting a heavy purple shadow on the ground. Fearing impairment of the retina, which was improbable, because then I would not have seen everything in purple, I turned about, closed my eyes, cupping my hands over them, to cut off all light. With my back turned, I opened my eyes and realized that the landscape and the air retained the purple hue.

“This did not give the impression of being an eclipse. While still looking at the Sun, I noticed that the air had cleared and I heard a peasant nearby say, ‘This lady looks yellow.’ As a matter of fact, everything far and near had changed now. People seemed to have jaundice. I smiled when I saw everybody looked disfigured and ugly....”

One of the most interesting descriptions attributed to Dr. Garrett’s eyewitness accounts is his description of the disc. In some books it seems he described the Sun as something different from the disc, which in most accounts are the same thing. He saw a disc of smoky silver, “a disc with a well-defined rim and clear edge, luminous and lucent.” Dr. Garrett is claimed to have said it could not be confused with the Sun because the Sun was shining through a slight fog. Hence people may think he saw something like a UFO saucer. He did say, everybody “saw and felt that it was a body with life. It was not spheric like the moon, neither did it have an equal tonality of color.” He said there was no fog at that time. The rain and the fog had stopped. But, he did say, “It could not be taken for the Sun as though seen through fog,” meaning it was the Sun but not as a Sun through fog. Get the picture? Anyway, the disk appeared to spin profusely by every account. It was about two o’clock wartime or about noon, Sun time.

The phenomenon of the Sun was not witnessed by a select few; it was witnessed by all present—a huge crowd composed of atheists as well as Christians. The Sun seemed to hurtle down into the Earth, but pay close attention, for as far fetched as it may seem, what appeared to come down was something silvery and disk-shaped with the power of immense solar energy to dry all the mud of a rain soaked Earth. God did not come to destroy the Earth, but to save it. Villages surrounding Fatima saw the apparition, but the rest of the globe did not experience the calamitous spin of the solar object on the terrestrial phenomenon. How the Sun came down while an Earth was

hurtling through space at 66,600 miles per hour is beyond me. It was not felt on the battlefields of France or the skyscrapers of New York. However, it was very real indeed. The Sun broke through the clouds so that everyone could gaze at it and it did its thing for at least 10 minutes. The drama that it entails was chronicled by the words of eyewitnesses and by the pen of newsreporters who were there. When the Sun began to spin inexhaustibly on its axis, it appeared to turn a bright red.

The Sun defied all laws of nature, and subsequently, appeared to grow larger and larger as if it were getting closer. People screamed as the heat increased. They, in anguish, frantically ran every which way as the shared effect, apparition, call it what you like, materialized itself. One can imagine the effect it had on all the people, the ordinary people and the military, plus the countless police and reporters. All felt the same thing on that October, 1917.

The world had witnessed a strange sensation of the Sun that is difficult to explain. It seemed to detach itself from the firmament and grew larger. Who knows how many thought this was the end of the world. But, it was not.

The profound changes lasted approximately 12 minutes. To top it off, when the Sun stopped plummeting, it just as suddenly ascended to its normal state, but not before one more miracle was performed: as if by magic, the Sun had thoroughly dried all the clothes of every person, plus the ground. Mass hypnosis does not dry clothes and land. The largest newspaper in Lisbon, an anticlerical paper, had this account, as written by one skeptic Avelino de Almeida, the chief editor of *O Seculo*: “A spectacular, unique and incredible event, if one had not been a witness to it! The crowd is turned toward the Sun, which revealed itself free of clouds at full noon. The great star of the day makes one think of a flat plate of silver, and it is possible to look on it, without the least discomfort. It might be an eclipse. But, it burst forth in a colossal clamor, and we hear spectators all cry out, ‘miracle, miracle, marvel, marvel.’ Before the astonished crowd— whose attitude transported us to Biblical times, and whose uncovered dumbfounded heads contemplated the blue of the sky— the Sun trembled, made strange brisk movements, unprecedented and outside of cosmic law. The Sun has danced.” The love of the Mother of Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God is unique. She seems to transcend all the yesterdays and todays of world history. She knows that one learns from the past to be mindful that the themes of today are ironically more important than yesterday’s; yet, is it not true that in perspective that what is going on today needs the past as a helpful foundation? Through her helpful intercession, She assists us in attaining a union with her Son, Jesus Christ.

The magazine “Fatima” reported on September 27, 1967, that a Bishop Joao Pereira Venancio gave the pope a letter from Sister Lucia, perhaps outlining some message or request unheeded. To this day it has never been made public. Perhaps this letter is a rumor. This so-called letter is part of a much larger story which is associated with three secrets. Number three is divided into two parts, and a part of it was revealed in the year 2000.

The secrets delivered over the initial six appearances made by the Blessed Mother at Fatima, in addition to the consecration of Russia, were revealed for the first time in 1941 by Lucia as containing three accompanying parts, but only the first two were told, initially.

By 1941, little Francisco and Jacinta had sailed to the other world, for death had arrived on their doorstep within 28 months of the miracle of the Sun. Francisco died of influenza in April, 1919. Jacinta died in February, 1920. On September 12, 1935, the corpse of Jacinta was removed to Fatima. When the casket was opened for examination the face of the little girl appeared preserved, despite the fact her body had been covered with quicklime as a medical measure against influenza. Quicklime is a substance used to hasten the decomposition of dead bodies. Lucia died in 2005.

The Catholic Church began its official inquiry into the events at Fatima in 1922, after two of the children had died. The apparitions were declared worthy of belief in October, 1930. In the same year the cultus of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima was heralded.

In 1946, Pope Pius XII wrote favorably of the Blessed Virgin’s message at Fatima in his encyclical *De parea Virginis Mariae*. That same year Pope Pius XII proclaimed Her officially, “Queen of the World.”

For over sixty years, a secret request entrusted to Lucia at Fatima for the consecration of Russia (the Soviet Union) to the Immaculate Heart of Mary went unheeded. [The fervent ideology behind that great nation was: Communism. Communism descended upon the world and, in my lifetime, it seemed unthinkable that the Soviet Union could ever be toppled without a war.] The once-mighty Soviet Union does not exist today, because it is broken up into different little countries. The only major power that remains Communist today is Red China with its red flag.

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