

14.

Secret of Mary's Immaculate Heart (July 13)

“What a crowd of people were there that day,” remembered Ti Marto, the father of Francisco and Jacinta.¹ He had believed his children from the first, but July 13 was the first time he went to the Cova.

Now he couldn't see his children over the crush of people trampling the Cova. Many had their umbrellas open against the scorching sun. It was a blistering hot day. There hadn't been rain in days, and trees and plants withered. The air was dry and dusty and hard to breathe.

Working his way closer, Ti Marto saw two men trying to protect the children from the crowd. One of the men recognized him and called out: “Here is the father. Let him through.” Soon Ti Marto was next to Jacinta.

“Lucia I could see a little way off,” Ti Marto said. “She was saying the Rosary and the people were responding aloud. When the beads were finished, she jumped up suddenly. ‘Close your umbrellas,’ she called out. ‘Our Lady is coming.’ She was looking to the east, and I was too, but I could not see anything at first. But then I saw what looked like a little grayish cloud resting on the oak tree, and the sun's heat lessened and there was a delicious fresh breeze. It hardly seemed like the height of summer.”²

Lucia had a kerchief on her head, as if she were in church. Francisco and Jacinta knelt on either side of her, entranced by the sight of the beautiful Lady. After they had venerated Her in silence for some time, Jacinta shot a look at Lucia: “Come Lucia, speak! Don't you see that She is there already and that She wants you to speak to Her?”³

Now it was Lucia who was tongue-tied. Here she was again, face to face with the beautiful Lady from Heaven, whom Lucia had been convinced just a day ago was a deceit from the devil. Now the scales fell from her eyes, and Lucia was completely mortified and appalled with herself. She dare not say anything to the Lady after betraying Her.

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Perhaps she strove to apologize, or perhaps the look in the Lady's eyes told her all was forgiven. Whatever happened during that silence, Lucia would later say, "Thanks to our good Lord, this apparition dispelled the clouds from my soul and my peace was restored."⁴

Finally Lucia said what she always said: "What does Your Excellency want from me?"

"I want you to come here on the 13th of next month," the Lady replied, "to 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, because only She can help you."

Reassured by the beauty and heavenly presence of the Lady, Lucia once more felt grounded in reality. "I would like to ask You to tell us who You are, and to work a miracle so that everybody will believe that You are appearing to us." Given the mockery and incredulity of family and friends, this was a heartfelt request.⁵

"Continue to come here every month," the Lady answered. "In October I will tell you who I am and what I want, and I will perform a miracle for all to see and believe."⁶

Lucia asked the Lady to heal Maria Carreira's crippled son, John. The Lady replied that he would remain crippled, and live in poverty, and added a requirement that he pray the Rosary with his family every day.⁷ Lucia then inquired about a sick woman who wanted to be taken to Heaven. The Lady answered, "Tell her not to be in a hurry. Tell her I know very well when I shall come to fetch her."⁸

The Lady told Lucia "it was necessary for such people to pray the Rosary in order to obtain these graces during the year." She continued:

"Sacrifice yourselves for sinners, and say many times, especially whenever you make some sacrifice: 'O Jesus, it is for love of You, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.'"

"As Our Lady spoke these last words (Lucia said), She opened Her hands once more, as She had done during the two previous months. The rays of light seemed to penetrate

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the earth, and we saw as it were a sea of fire. Plunged in this fire were demons and souls in human form, like transparent burning embers, all blackened or burnished bronze, floating about in the conflagration, now raised into the air by the flames that issued from within themselves together with great clouds of smoke, now falling back on every side like sparks in huge fires, without weight or equilibrium, amid shrieks and groans of pain and despair, which horrified us and made us tremble with fear. The demons could be distinguished by their terrifying and repellent likeness to frightful and unknown animals, black and transparent like burning coals.”⁹

At this moment Ti Marto observed that “Lucia took a deep breath, went pale as death, and we heard her cry out in terror to Our Lady, calling Her by name.”¹⁰

Lucia continued: “Terrified and as if to plead for succor, we looked up at Our Lady, who said to us, so kindly and so sadly:

‘You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to My Immaculate Heart. If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace. The war is going to end, but if people do not cease offending God, a worse one will break out during the reign of Pius XI. When you see a night illumined by an unknown light, know that this is the great sign given you by God that He is about to punish the world for its crimes, by means of war, famine, and persecutions of the Church and of the Holy Father.

‘To prevent this, 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, 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

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Holy Father will consecrate Russia to Me, and she will be converted, and a period of peace will be granted to the world. In Portugal, the dogma of the Faith will always be preserved etc."¹¹

(Sister Lucia's account of the Third Secret is contained in her Third and Fourth Memoirs. The two accounts are identical — word for word — except for the addition of this last sentence in the Fourth Memoir: "In Portugal, the dogma of the Faith will always be preserved etc." This is regarded as the beginning of the third part of the Fatima Secret, and its most logical placement seems to be after the sentence ending with the words "various nations will be annihilated", and before the paragraph beginning with "In the end, My Immaculate Heart will triumph...")

"Do not tell this to anybody," the Lady told the children. Then, in answer to Lucia's question, She said, "Francisco, yes, you may tell him." Then She taught them a prayer:

"When you pray the Rosary, say after each mystery: O my Jesus, forgive us, and deliver us from the fire of hell. Take all souls to Heaven, especially those who are most in need."¹²

After a silence, Lucia asked: "Is there anything more that You want of me?" The Lady said: "No, I do not want anything more of you today."¹³

"After Lucia interrogated the vision for the last time," said Ti Marto, "we heard a large clap of thunder and the little arch that had been put up to hang the two lanterns on, trembled as if in an earthquake. Lucia, who was still kneeling, got up so quickly that her skirts ballooned around her, and pointing to the sky she cried out: 'There She goes! There She goes!'"¹⁴

Or as Lucia would put it later, "Our Lady began to ascend towards the east, until She finally disappeared in the immense distance of the firmament."¹⁵

The apparition over, the heat returned with a stifling vengeance. With the departure of the Lady, human nature also returned with a vengeance. Only a few minutes earlier the large crowd had been silent, praying, weeping, and watching. Now the children were accosted with questions, requests, and demands. Ti Marto and another man carried

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Jacinta and Lucia away from what now seemed like a mob. The children were exhausted when they made it home.

Notes

1. The estimates of the crowd ranged from 2,000 to 5,000.
2. De Marchi, op. cit., p. 73; TWTAF, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 184.
3. Barthas, op. cit., p. 29. This exchange was witnessed by Lucia's sister, Teresa, who was at the Cova that day.
4. Second Memoir, p. 71.
5. At Lourdes, Bernadette Soubirous asked the Blessed Virgin to make a rosebush in the grotto bloom. Our Lady smiled. When Lucia requested a miracle, Our Lady promised one three months in advance. (TWTAF, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 186.)
6. Fourth Memoir, p. 161.
7. John grew up to be the sacristan of the Chapel of the Apparitions in the Cova da Iria. (De Marchi, op. cit., p. 74, fn 1.)
8. De Marchi, op. cit., p. 75.
9. Fourth Memoir, p. 162.
10. TWTAF, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 190.
11. Ibid., pp. 182-183.
12. Father de Marchi writes: "By Lucia's interpretation, this refers to the souls in the greatest danger of condemnation. The prayer itself, in Portuguese, is: *O meu Jesus, perdoai-nos, livrai-nos do fogo do inferno; levai todas as almas para o ceu, especialmente as que mais predisarem.*" (Op. cit., p. 62, fn 1.)
13. Fourth Memoir, p. 166.
14. TWTAF, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 184.
15. Fourth Memoir, p. 166.