

# 18.

## Apparition of October 13, 1917

Going against the advice of Father Ferreira, Lucia's mother had been present at the September 13 apparition. While at the Cova, Maria Rosa saw none of the miraculous phenomena witnessed by thousands, but she did see her family's property damaged beyond cultivation. When she went home Antonio was not there. He refused to be at home when visitors were there, which was most of the time. Maria Rosa's brief honeymoon with Lucia was over.

Now her daughter was saying there was going to be a great miracle on October 13 that would convince everyone the Blessed Virgin was appearing at the Cova da Iria. National attention had turned to Fatima and Aljustrel, and the visits of pilgrims had increased. Maria Rosa became re-convinced that Lucia was an incorrigible liar who was deceiving tens of thousands of people, and impoverishing her own family.

Maria dos Anjos remembers:

"My family was much preoccupied. As the 13<sup>th</sup> drew nearer we kept on telling Lucia that it would be better if she did not keep up the affair any longer because ill would come of it to her and to us, and we would all suffer because of the things she had invented. My father scolded her very, very much. When he had been drinking he was very bad but he did not beat her. It was my mother who did that.

"It was said they were going to put bombs down to frighten us and the children. Some people told us that if it were their children they would shut them up in a room until they came to their senses. We were all very much afraid. We wondered what would become of us all and said so behind Lucia's back. The neighbors said that the bombs would destroy our houses and our belongings. Someone came to my mother and

## *Sister Lucia*

advised her to take Lucia right away where nobody would know where she was. Everyone said something different and gave different advice until we didn't know what to do for the best.

"Only the children didn't seem to mind at all."<sup>1</sup>

Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta did mind the frequent interrogations by clergy. They were exhausting, particularly when a priest was obviously incredulous, or repeatedly tried to trick them into inconsistencies. One of the priests, however, gained the children's trust and became a friend.

His name was Dr. Manuel Formigao, professor at the Seminary in Santarem. He had attended the September apparition and, like Maria Rosa, had not witnessed the remarkable phenomena witnessed by thousands. He did believe the children were sincere, however, and returned to Fatima on September 27 to interview them. After meeting with Francisco, and then Jacinta, Dr. Formigao met Lucia. He found her

"Taller and better nourished than the other two, with a clearer skin and a robuster, healthier appearance, she presented herself before me with an unselfconsciousness which contrasted in a marked manner with the shyness and timidity of Jacinta. Simply dressed, like the latter, neither her attitude nor her expression denoted a sign of vanity, still less of confusion.

"Seating herself on a chair at my side, in response to my gesture, she willingly consented to be questioned on the events in which she was the principal protagonist, in spite of the fact that she was visibly fatigued and depressed by the incessant visits and the repeated and lengthy questionings to which she was subjected."<sup>2</sup>

"His interrogation was serious and detailed," Lucia wrote later, adding: "I liked him very much, for he spoke to me a great deal about the practice of virtue, and taught me various ways of exercising myself in it. He showed me a holy picture of St. Agnes, told me about her martyrdom and encouraged me to imitate her. His Reverence continued to come every month for an interrogation, and always ended up

## Apostle of Mary's Immaculate Heart

by giving me some good advice, which was of help to me spiritually. One day he said to me:

“My child, you must love Our Lord very much, in return for so many favors and graces that He is granting you.’

“These words made such an impression on my soul that, from then on, I acquired the habit of constantly saying to Our Lord: ‘My God, I love You, in thanksgiving for the graces which You have granted me.’ I so loved this ejaculation that I passed it on to Jacinta and her brother...”<sup>3</sup>

Father Ferreira also questioned Lucia, for the last time, as he was soon to depart the Fatima parish. “His Reverence still did not know what to say about the whole affair,” Lucia remembered. “He was also beginning to show his displeasure:

“Why are all those people going to prostrate themselves in prayer in a deserted spot like that, while here the Living God of our altars, in the Blessed Sacrament, is left all alone, abandoned, in the tabernacle? What’s all that money for, the money they leave for no purpose whatsoever under that holm oak, while the church, which is under repairs, cannot be completed for lack of funds?”

“I understood perfectly why he spoke like that,” said Lucia, “but what could I do? If I had been given authority over the hearts of those people, I would certainly have led them to the parish church, but as I had not, I offered to God yet another sacrifice.”<sup>4</sup>

There was no sunrise the morning of October 13. Torrential rains threatened to drown everything, including the 70,000 pilgrims that had descended upon the Cova da Iria. Here is Lucia’s account of the final apparition.

“We left home quite early, expecting that we would be delayed along the way. Masses of people thronged the roads. The rain fell in torrents. My mother, her heart torn with uncertainty as to what was going to happen, and fearing it would be the last day of my life, wanted to accompany me.

“On the way the scenes of the previous month, still more numerous and moving, were repeated. Not even the muddy roads could prevent these people from kneeling in the most humble and suppliant of attitudes. We reached the holm oak in the Cova da Iria. Once there, moved by an interior

impulse, I asked the people to shut their umbrellas and say the Rosary. A little later we saw the flash of light, and then Our Lady appeared on the holm oak.

“What do You want of me?”

“I want to tell you that a chapel is to be built here in My honor. I am the Lady of the Rosary. Continue always to pray the Rosary every day. The war is going to end, and the soldiers will soon return to their homes.”<sup>5</sup>

“I have many things to ask you: the cure of some sick persons, the conversion of sinners, and other things...”

“Some yes, but not others. They must amend their lives and ask forgiveness for their sins.”

“Looking very sad, Our Lady said: ‘Do not offend the Lord our God any more, because He is already so much offended.’”

“Then, opening Her hands, She made them reflect on the sun, and as She ascended, the reflection of Her own light continued to be projected on the sun itself.”<sup>6</sup>

It was Our Lady, then, that caused the Miracle of the Sun through the grace projected from Her small hands. It was a surprise in itself that the rain had stopped and the sun had appeared. Now Lucia cried: “Look at the sun!”

“We beheld St. Joseph with the Child Jesus and Our Lady robed in white with a blue mantle, beside the sun. St. Joseph and the Child Jesus appeared to bless the world, for they traced the Sign of the Cross with Their hands,” Lucia said. “When a little later this apparition disappeared, I saw Our Lord and Our Lady; it seemed to me that it was Our Lady of Dolours. Our Lord appeared to bless the world in the same manner as St. Joseph had done. This apparition also vanished and I saw Our Lady once more, this time resembling Our Lady of Carmel.”<sup>7</sup>

The rest of the throng saw something else: something terrifying and wonderful, a sign of the end of times, it seemed: the Miracle of the Sun.

#### **Notes**

1. TWTAf, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 270.

2. De Marchi, op. cit., p. 121.

3. Second Memoir, p. 74.

4. Ibid., p. 81. Father Ferreira’s difficulty in restoring the parish church was one of the reasons he left, but probably not the only reason.

## Apostle of Mary's Immaculate Heart

5. After the apparition Lucia said the war would end the day of the apparition. When this did not happen, Canon Formigao questioned her several times on this error. The issue was not whether Our Lady was wrong, of course; rather, whether Lucia invented the idea of the war ending on October 13, or whether she was simply mistaken in her interpretation of what Our Lady said. Lucia's most recent explanation for this error is in her Fourth Memoir (p. 170): "It was possibly because I was so anxious to remember the innumerable graces that I had to ask of Our Lady, that I was mistaken when I understood that the war would end on that very 13<sup>th</sup>." It should also be noted that when Lucia made this mistake about the war, she was immediately corrected by Jacinta.

6. Fourth Memoir, pp. 169-170.

7. Ibid., p. 170.