

31.

“No! Not the World! Russia! Russia!”

William Thomas Walsh was not the only American to visit Sister Lucia at her new Dorothean residence. Father Thomas McGlynn, a Dominican from New York, traveled to Gaia to talk to Lucia about a statue of Our Lady of Fatima that he was making.

Father McGlynn was a sculptor, and he brought a small model to show Lucia. He was nervous, but the Mother Provincial reassured him: “Irmã Dores is very simple; she is a child of the mountains.”

Irmã Dores roughly translates to Sister Sorrows, but Lucia’s manner belied her name. “Her eyes are very dark, very penetrating,” remarked McGlynn (who also noted that Lucia stood a little less than five feet tall). “Irmã Dores leaned forward as we shook hands, looked me straight in the eye and smiled pleasantly.”

“Her eyes,” Father McGlynn continued, “were most attentive and always fixed upon the person who was speaking. There seemed to be both passive and active qualities in her attitude. She humbly attended on the completion of any question yet keenly studied the person and words of the questioner. Agility and strength of mind were reflected in her mobile, expressive mouth and large chin.

“She sat relaxed but leaning a little forward... Her voice, thin and high-pitched, fell in rather monotonous cadences — a characteristic which I have observed of many Portuguese, in contrast to the more varied tonal articulation of other Latin peoples. On provocation she laughed with spontaneity and brevity, consistent with her fine sense of humor and lifelong characteristic of reserve.”¹

Sister Lucia examined his statue of Our Lady with a furrowed brow. “*Nao da posicao,*” she said. “It’s not the right position. The right hand should be raised and the left lower down,” she added, an apparent reference to the June 13

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apparition when Our Lady showed the children Her Immaculate Heart in Her right hand.

"The garments in the statue are too smooth," she continued. Father McGlynn explained that light in sculpture is expressed by reflecting light from simple, smooth surfaces. Lucia was not impressed.

"But the light was in waves and gave the impression of a garment with folds. She was surrounded by light and She was in the middle of light," Lucia explained, adding, "And Her feet rested on the *azinheira*."

In Father McGlynn's statue the feet were obscured by a cloud that had been particularly difficult for him to sculpt. He objected: everyone talked of Our Lady being in a cloud. Lucia was insistent. "The people spoke of a cloud but I saw none. Our Lady's feet rested lightly on the tops of the leaves."

Lucia mentioned other details. The beautiful Lady always had a cord with a little ball of light that fell to about Her waistline. Lucia never saw Her hair. The Lady wore two visible garments: a simple tunic and a long veil, or mantle. The tunic had no collar or cuffs, and was drawn in around the waist although there was no visible sash. Both tunic and mantle were two separate "waves of light," one on top of the other. Both were white in color.

There was a line of gold on the mantle like a thin thread, "a ray of sunlight all around the mantle." Was Our Lady's flesh the color of flesh or of light? "Flesh colored light," Lucia replied, "light which took on the color of flesh."

"She was all of light. The light had various tones, yellow and white and various other colors. It was more intense and less intense. It was by the different tones and by the differences of intensity that one saw what was hand and what was mantle and what was face and what was tunic."

(Father McGlynn noted: "Irmã Dores seldom referred to the Blessed Virgin as "*Nossa Senhora*," or "Our Lady," but generally used just the personal pronoun, "*Ela*," or "She"... she pronounced "*Ela*" with an inflection of such reverence that it became quite restricted, as though, used in that manner, it could apply to no one but Our Lady.)

Our Lady's expression was "pleasing but sad; sweet but sad." ("*Agradavel mas triste; doce mas triste*.") When Our Lady

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opened Her hands during the first and third apparitions, Her gesture was similar to the priest at Mass when he says "*Dominus vobiscum,*" except that Our Lady's hands were slightly lower. Her posture was slightly bent over, as She was higher than the children.

Although Sister Lucia was critical of the sculpture, it was evident she liked it as well. She told Father McGlynn that she had always wanted to see a statue of the June 13 apparition, and had wished she had the skill to sculpt one. Lucia prayed in the chapel for his success, and visited McGlynn often as he revised and revised his work in accordance with Sister Lucia's recollections, which were sharp and precise. In between sculpting and chain smoking he tried to teach Lucia English. Sister Lucia was game, but it became evident she did not possess the gift of tongues. "Our Lady" was "hour laddy", and "OK" was "Ho-Kayee."

Father McGlynn learned some Portuguese. "An important word I learned was the verb *gostar*, which means to like or to be pleased with. "*Gosta?*" suffices for asking, "Do you like it?" and "*Gosto*" means "I like it." Now, with unprecedented daring, I inquired of Irma Dores: "*Gosta?*" She replied with a smile and the greatest compliment ever given to the statue: "*Gosto.*" Sister Lucia carried the statue to a pedestal. She placed an *azinheira* branch on the base, and allowed her picture to be taken with it.

During the time he spent with Sister Lucia, Father McGlynn asked her questions about her memoirs and the apparitions. What was the Fatima Message? "The conversion of sinners, and the return of souls to God," Lucia answered. "This idea was repeated in all the apparitions; that is why I consider it the principal message."

Would Lucia publish any more of her writings? She laughed and said, "No, I can't publish anything." "She made it clear," McGlynn explained, "by a simple reference to the authority of the bishop, that the measure and manner of her presenting the message of Our Lady to the world are dictated entirely by obedience."

Why couldn't all of Lucia's writings be published? "They must contain private things which the bishop thinks inconvenient to publish; and they might contain things about Russia which the bishop thinks should not be published."

Sister Lucia

Lucia also said there were references in her writings to living persons, thus making it imprudent to publish them.

Father McGlynn read a text of the first two parts of the Fatima Secret to her. When he read "I ask for the consecration of the world..." Lucia stopped him. He recalls, "Irma Dores was emphatic in making the correction about Russia. 'No!' she said, 'not the world! Russia! Russia!'"²

"Our Lady commanded that the Holy Father consecrate Russia to Her Immaculate Heart and that he command all the bishops to do it also in union with him at the same time."³

Had Pius XII consecrated Russia to Mary's Immaculate Heart? "He included Russia in the consecration," Sister Lucia answered. "In the official way that Our Lady asked for it? I don't think so." Father McGlynn noted that Lucia said this "very humbly, as if wishing that she were wrong."

Was Our Lady's request complied with? Not completely. Sister Lucia noted in 1943 that Pius XII's consecration would shorten World War II, but not achieve the conversion of Russia. "God has already shown me His satisfaction with the act 'although incomplete according to His wish' performed by the Holy Father and several Bishops," she wrote. "He promises in return to put a stop to the war soon; but the conversion of Russia is not for now."⁴

When it was time to go back to America, Sister Lucia offered to pack "our statue" in a box. She did so with care, and then stood holding it while good-byes were said. She finally gave it to Father McGlynn as he was getting into his car. As he drove off the Sisters waved. "Irmã Dores was in the center, smaller than the rest. She held her hand highest and longest in that backhand wave peculiar to Europeans."

Father McGlynn showed the statue to Bishop da Silva, who liked it so much he asked McGlynn to make an identical, but larger statue to grace the top of the doorway of the Fatima Basilica, which at the time was under construction. In Rome, Pope Pius XII smiled when he saw the statue, and solemnly blessed it.

Thomas McGlynn went home a happy man. His eyes looked out the plane window for the coastal United States. Back in Portugal, Sister Lucia, the "child of the mountains," fixed her eyes on Mount Carmel.

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Notes

1. Thomas McGlynn, O.P., *Vision of Fatima*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1950, p. 61. All other quotations in this chapter concerning Fr. McGlynn's visit with Sister Lucia are from the same source, pp. 58-80.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
4. Father Alonso. In the book *A Heart for All*, Ave Maria Institute, 1972, p. 62.