

The First Saturdays

A written memoir regarding the First Saturday devotion done at the request of Father José Aparicio da Silva, S.J., which order was given in December 1927. In response Sister Lucia asked permission to write this memoir in the third person. Father Aparicio agreed. Then Sister Lucia, in obedience, wrote as follows:

On December 17, 1927 she approached the Tabernacle and asked Jesus how she might fulfill what she was asked; "If the origin of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary was included in the secret that the Blessed Virgin had entrusted to her?" Jesus, in a distinct voice, made her hear these words:

"My daughter, write what you are asked for, and everything that the Blessed Virgin revealed to you in the apparition She spoke about this devotion, write it as well. As for all the other parts of the secret, keep silence."

What in 1917 was revealed concerning this matter is as follows: she asked to be taken to Heaven. The most Holy Virgin answered, "Yes, Jacinta and Francisco, I will take soon. But you are to remain here for some time more. Jesus wishes to make use of you to make Me known and loved. He wishes to establish in the world the devotion to My Immaculate Heart. To those who embrace it I promise salvation. And these souls will be beloved by God like flowers placed by Me to adorn His throne."

"Am I to stay here alone?" she asked with sadness.

"No, My daughter. I will never forsake you. My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God."

On December 10, 1925 there appeared to her the most Holy Virgin, and at Her side standing on a luminous cloud a Child. The most Holy Virgin put Her hand on her shoulder and at the same time She showed a heart encircled by thorns in the other hand. At the same time the Child said, "Have pity on the Heart of your most Holy Mother that is covered with thorns which the ungrateful men at every moment pierce without anyone to make an act of reparation to remove them."

Then the most Holy Virgin said, "Look, My daughter, at My Heart surrounded with the thorns with which ungrateful men at every moment pierce Me by their blasphemies and ingratitude. You, at least, try to console Me, and announce that I promise to assist at the hour of death with all the graces

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necessary for salvation, those souls who, on the first Saturdays of five consecutive months, confess, receive Holy Communion, recite the Rosary and keep Me company for 15 minutes meditating on the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary with the intention of removing (from My Heart) these thorns."

On February 15, 1926 the Child Jesus appeared to her again and asked if she had already promoted the devotion to His most Holy Mother.

She explained to Him the difficulties her confessor had. The Mother Superior was ready to promote it but the confessor had said that she alone could do nothing.

Jesus answered, "It is true that your Superior can do nothing by herself. But with My grace she can do everything."

She then presented the difficulty that some souls had in going to confession on Saturdays, and asked if it would be valid to confess within 8 days. Jesus answered, "Yes. It can even be within many more days, provided that when they receive Me, they are in the state of grace and have the intention of offering reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary."

She asked, "My Jesus, what about those who forget about conceiving such an intention?"

Jesus answered, "They can conceive it in the following confession, when they get the first opportunity of receiving the sacrament of penance." (*Here ends the memoir written at the request of Father Aparicio.*)

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It seems that our good Lord deep in my heart, urges me to ask the Holy Father's approval for the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary that God Himself and the Blessed Virgin asked for in 1925, so that through this little devotion, They would grant forgiveness to those souls who have offended the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The Blessed Virgin Herself promised to help the souls of those who practiced this devotion with all the graces needed for their salvation, in the hour of their death. (...) If I am not mistaken, the good Lord promises to end the persecution in Russia, if the Holy Father will himself make a solemn act of reparation and consecration of Russia (to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary), as well as ordering all the bishops of the Catholic world to do the same. The Holy Father must then promise that upon the ending of this persecution he will approve and recommend the practice of the reparatory

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devotion already described. (*Letter of Sister Lucia to Father José Bernardo Gonçalves, S.J., May 29, 1930.*)

(May 29-30, 1930) (The following was revealed to me [by Our Lord]): My daughter, the motive is simple: there are 5 ways in which people offend and blaspheme against the Immaculate Heart of Mary. 1st - The blasphemies against the Immaculate Conception. 2nd - Against Her Perpetual Virginity. 3rd - Against the Divine Maternity, refusing at the same time to accept Her as the Mother of all mankind. 4th - Those who try publicly to implant in the children's hearts, indifference, contempt and even hate against this Immaculate Mother. 5th - Those who insult Her directly in Her sacred images.

Here, My daughter, is the motive why the Immaculate Heart of Mary made Me ask for this little act of reparation and, due to it, move My mercy to forgive those souls who had the misfortune of offending Her. As for you, try incessantly with all your prayers and sacrifices to move Me into mercifulness toward those poor souls. (*Letter of Sister Lucia to Father José Bernardo Gonçalves, S.J., June 12, 1930.*)

Then, in a revelation She asked that the Communion of Reparation on the first Saturdays of 5 consecutive months be propagated throughout the world, with its conditions of doing the following with the same purpose: going to confession, meditating for a quarter of an hour on the mysteries of the Rosary and saying the Rosary with the aim of making reparation for the insults, sacrileges and indifferences committed against Her Immaculate Heart. Our good Heavenly Mother promises to assist the persons who will practice this devotion, in the hour of their death, with all the necessary graces for their salvation. (*Letter of Sister Lucia of October 24, 1940 addressed to the Holy Father, but not sent.*)

In 1917, in the portion of the apparitions that we have designated "the secret", the Blessed Virgin revealed the end of the war that was then afflicting Europe, and predicted another forthcoming, saying that to prevent it She would come and ask for the Consecration of Russia to Her Immaculate Heart as well as the Communion of Reparation on the first Saturdays. She promised peace and the conversion of that nation if Her request was attended to. She announced that otherwise this nation would spread her errors throughout the world, and there would be wars, persecutions of the Holy Church, martyrdom of many Christians, several persecutions and sufferings reserved for Your Holiness, and the annihilation of several nations.

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Most Holy Father, this remained a secret until 1926 according to the express will of Our Lady. Then, in a revelation She asked that the Communion of Reparation on the first Saturdays of five consecutive months be propagated throughout the world, with its conditions of doing the following with the same purpose: going to confession, meditating for a quarter of an hour on the mysteries of the Rosary and saying the Rosary with the aim of making reparation for the outrages, sacrileges and indifferences committed against Her Immaculate Heart. Our good Heavenly Mother promises to assist the persons who will practice this devotion, at the hour of their death, with all the graces necessary for their salvation. (*Letter of Sister Lucia to Pope Pius XII, December 2, 1940.*)

(March 1939, Our Lord said to me once more:) Ask, ask again insistently for the promulgation of the Communion of Reparation in honor of the Immaculate Heart of Mary on the First Saturdays. The time is coming when the rigor of My justice will punish the crimes of diverse nations. Some of them will be annihilated. At last the severity of My justice will fall severely on those who want to destroy My reign in souls. (*Documentos, p. 465.*)

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Sister Lucia explains the reparatory devotion of the First Saturdays in a collection of letters noted by Frère Michel de la Sainte Trinité below. He wrote as follows:

Sister Lucia took this "lovable devotion" of the First Saturdays so much to heart that she constantly returns to it in her correspondence. Unquestionably there is nothing more capable of touching our hearts than this insistence of Our Lady's messenger. Here are some of these beautiful texts:

"I never feel so happy as when First Saturday arrives ..."

On November 1, 1927, she writes to her sponsor for confirmation, Dona Maria Filomena Morais de Miranda:

"(...) I don't know if you already know about the reparatory devotion of the five Saturdays to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. As it is still recent, I would like to inspire you to practice it, because it is requested by Our Dear Heavenly Mother and Jesus has manifested a desire that it be practiced. Also, it seems to me that you would be fortunate, dear godmother, not only to know it and to give Jesus the consolation of practicing it, but also to make it known and embraced by many other persons.

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“It consists in this: During five months on the first Saturday, to receive Jesus in Communion, recite a Rosary, keep Our Lady company for fifteen minutes while meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary,¹ and make a confession. This confession can be made a few days earlier, and if in this previous confession you have forgotten the (required) intention one can offer the following confession for this intention, provided that on the first Saturday one receives Holy Communion in the state of grace, with the intention of repairing for offenses against the Most Holy Virgin, and which afflict Her Immaculate Heart.²

“It seems to me, my dear godmother, that we are fortunate to be able to give Our Dear Heavenly Mother this proof of love, for we know that She desires it to be offered to Her. As for myself, I avow that I am never so happy as when first Saturday arrives. Isn’t it true that our greatest happiness is to belong entirely to Jesus and Mary and to love Them, and Them alone, without reserve? We see this so clearly in the lives of the saints ... They were happy because they loved, and we, my dear godmother, we must seek to love as they did, not only to enjoy Jesus, which is the least important — because if we do not enjoy Him here below, we will enjoy Him up above — but to give Jesus and Mary the consolation of being loved ... and that in exchange for this love They might be able to save many souls. Adieu, my dear godmother, I embrace you in the holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary.”³

On November 4, 1928, after several attempts to obtain an official approval from Bishop da Silva, she writes to Father Aparicio:

“I hope therefore that Our Good Lord will inspire His Excellency with a favorable response, and that among so many thorns I may pick this flower, seeing the maternal Heart of the Most Holy Virgin honored also on this earth. This is my desire now because it is also the will of Our Good Lord. The greatest joy that I experience is to see the Immaculate Heart of our most tender Mother known, loved and consoled by means of this devotion.”⁴

On March 31, 1929, Sister Lucia writes to Father Aparicio on the subject of Canon Formigao and Father Rodriguez, who desire to preach the reparatory devotion:

“I hope that Jesus will make them — according to the desire I have of spreading this lovable devotion — two ardent apostles of the reparatory devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Your Reverence cannot imagine how great is my joy in thinking of the consolation which the Holy Hearts of Jesus (and Mary) will receive through this lovable devotion, and the great number of souls who will be saved through this lovable devotion. I say, ‘who

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will be saved', because not long ago, Our Good Lord in His infinite mercy asked me to seek to make Reparation through my prayers and sacrifices, and preferably to perform Reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and implore pardon and mercy in favor of souls who blaspheme against Her, because the Divine Mercy does not pardon these souls without reparation."⁵

"Here is my way of making the meditations"

In this devotion which is so simple and so easy, Sister Lucia writes to her mother, "it seems to me that the fifteen minutes of meditation are what might give you some difficulty. But it is quite easy." We have said that it is a question only "of keeping Our Lady company for fifteen minutes"; and it is not at all necessary to meditate on all fifteen mysteries of the Rosary, but one or two can be chosen. In a letter quoted by Father Martins, Sister Lucia writes:

"Here is my way of making the meditations on the mysteries of the Rosary on the first Saturdays: First mystery, the Annunciation of the Angel Gabriel to Our Lady. First prelude: to imagine myself seeing and hearing the Angel greet Our Lady with these words:

"'Hail Mary, full of grace.' Second prelude: I ask Our Lady to infuse into my soul a profound sentiment of humility.

"1st point: I will meditate on the manner in which Heaven proclaims that the Most Holy Virgin is full of grace, blessed among all women and destined to become the Mother of God.

"2nd point: The humility of Our Lady, recognizing Herself and declaring Herself to be the handmaid of the Lord.

"3rd point: How I must imitate Our Lady, in Her humility, what are the faults of pride and arrogance through which I most often displease the Lord, and the means I must employ to avoid them, etc.

"On the second month, I make the meditation on the second joyful mystery. The third month, I make it on the third joyful mystery and so on, following the same method of meditating. When I have finished the Five First Saturdays, I begin five others and meditate on the sorrowful mysteries, then the glorious ones, and when I have finished them I start over again with the joyful ones."⁶

Sister Lucia thus reveals to us that far from contenting herself with the Five First Saturdays, every month she practices "the lovable reparatory devotion" indicated by Our Lady. Since it is a question of "consoling Our Heavenly Mother" and interceding so efficaciously for the salvation of souls, why not follow her example and renew this pious practice often? We could then ask this good Mother, with the firm hope of being heard, to vouchsafe to grant particular assistance at the hour of death, "with all the

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graces necessary for salvation”, for such or such a soul whom we confide to Her⁷, as She has promised to us in return for this “little devotion” accomplished through love and a spirit of Reparation.

(This collection of letters and subsequent notes was taken from pages 817-821 of Frère Michel’s book *The Whole Truth About Fatima, Volume II* and was also published in *The Fatima Crusader, Issue 49*.)

Notes

1. Let us recall that according to the Blessed Virgin’s exact request, this quarter of an hour of meditation must be performed outside of the time when the Rosary is recited. Bishop da Silva’s interpretation, according to which it suffices to meditate during recitation of the Rosary, is a regrettable dilution of Our Lady’s true requirements (see *The Whole Truth About Fatima*, Vol. II, pages 719-721).
2. It is clear, according to this letter, that there is no need to express this intention to the confessor, but only to offer God this monthly confession, in the spirit of Reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Let us also make it clear that the Mass of Saturday evening, even if it is an “anticipated Sunday Mass”, can be counted as Mass of the first Saturday of the month.
3. Quoted by Alonso, (*Ephemerides Mariologicae*, 1973, pages 41-42) and recently, by Father Martins (*Novus Documentos*, pages 118-119; and *Fatima e o Coração de Maria*, pages 22-23).
4. *Ephemerides Mariologicae*, 1973, page 54. Cf., in the same sense, the letter of December 20, 1928 (op. cit., page 55); cf. *Fatima e o Coração de Maria*, pages 25-27.
5. *Ephemerides Mariologicae*, 1973, page 57. *Fatima e o Coração de Maria*, pages 27-28.
6. *Cartas*, pages 19-20. Unfortunately, Father Martins does not indicate the date of this letter.
7. Although this promise does not explicitly figure in the seer’s writings, many texts guarantee for us that it is indeed in the spirit of Our Lady. Sister Lucy writes, for example, on May 27, 1943, on the subject of devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary: “The holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary love and desire this devotion, because They use it to draw souls to Them, and herein lie all Their desires: *To save souls, many souls, all souls, salvar almas, muitas almas, todas as almas.*” (*Fatima e o Coração de Maria*, pages 62-63; cf. *The Whole Truth About Fatima*, Volume III, page 222.)