

## V. Third Apparition



Left to right: Jacinta Marto, Lucia dos Santos, Francisco Marto.

The date of the next apparition was approaching. Jacinta and Francisco were the happiest children in the world. Lucia's heart, however, was filled with gloom and despair; so much so that she made up her mind not to go to the Cova da Iria again. So often did her mother repeat the words of the Pastor that it was the work of the devil, that it upset her.

One day, the Pastor was talking to José Alves, one of the first to believe in the apparitions. "It is the invention of the devil," the priest said.

"Not at all, Father," Alves spoke up, "there is praying at the Cova da Iria, and the devil does not like that."

"The devil even goes to the Communion rail," countered the priest.

"You have studied, Father — I have not." The man would not argue with the Pastor.

The eve of the thirteenth, Lucia went to Jacinta and Francisco and told them of her decision not to go to the Cova the next day. "We are going!" they answered her; "the Lady told us to go there."

"I will speak to Her," Jacinta declared, breaking into tears.

"Why are you crying?" Lucia asked.

"Because you don't want to go."

"No, I am not going. Look! If the Lady asks for me, tell Her I am not going because I fear She is the devil," and then Lucia, grief-stricken, hurried away. The people were already gathering for the apparition of the next day and she wanted to hide herself from them. In the evening, her mother, thinking that Lucia had been out playing all the time, scolded her. "What a little wooden saint you are, eaten up with termites. Every minute you have away from the sheep you spend playing and no one can find you."

The morning of July thirteenth came, and Lucia felt the same doubt and confusion. By some strange impulse, however, when it was time to leave for the Cova, every doubt and fear disappeared. Her heart was transformed. Joyfully she went to her cousins' house to see if they had gone. They were still there, both of them, kneeling by the side of the bed, crying their eyes out.

"Aren't you going?" Lucia asked.

"Without you we didn't dare go," they said. But realizing that Lucia had changed her mind, they jumped to their feet.

"Let's go," they said together.

“I was on my way now,” Lucia responded. So off they went, the three of them, walking happily through the crowds of people that jammed the roads to the Cova. The three children could not hurry, because many people stopped them, asking them to speak to Our Lady and ask special favors for them.

Jacinta’s mother, seeing all the people going towards the Cova, was afraid. She went to Lucia’s mother, “Comadre”<sup>1</sup> she pleaded, “We must go to the Cova, too. We may never again see our children. What if they kill them?”

“Don’t worry,” Lucia’s mother responded; “if it is Our Lady who appears to them, She will defend them. If it is not, then I don’t know what might happen.” Together, the two mothers went to the Cova, each carrying a blessed candle which they intended to light in case it was something evil. When they reached the place, they crouched behind the bushes, their hearts pounding in expectation of some approaching evil.

Ti Marto was thoroughly convinced of the truth of the apparitions. He knew well that the accusations made against himself, Lucia’s parents and the priests were false. The children were never known to lie and received encouragement from no one. The Pastor even supposed the visions were the work of the devil. Ti Marto made up his mind to follow his children boldly to the Cova da Iria. “With these thoughts in mind,” he confessed, “I took to the road. How crowded it was! I could not catch sight of the children but from the knots of people stopping now and then and gathering together, I guessed they were going ahead. In a sense this suited me better. However, when I got to the Cova da Iria, I could not keep myself back anymore. I wanted to be the closest one to the children. But how? I could not break through for the great crush of people. At a certain point, two men, one from Ramila and the other from our village, made a circle around the children. When they happened to see me, they pulled my arm and shouted, ‘Here is their father! Come right in here!’ and so I was able to stand very close to my Jacinta.

“Lucia knelt a little ahead and was leading the Rosary, which we all answered aloud. When the Rosary was over, Lucia stood up, looked towards the East and cried out. ‘Close the umbrellas, close the umbrellas. Our Lady is coming!’ Looking closely, I saw something like a small greyish cloud hovering over the holm oak. The sun turned hazy and a refreshing breeze began to blow. It did not seem that we were then at the height of summer. The silence of the crowd was impressive. Then I began to hear a hum as of a gadfly within an empty jug, but did not hear a word. It seems to me that it must have been as when people speak on the phone, not that I have ever used a phone. To me, all this was great proof of the miracle.”

Many years later, Lucia gave the details of this extraordinary apparition. With the unbounded love of a mother bending over her sick child, wishing to strengthen and console the children in the truth of the apparitions, the beautiful Lady engulfed the three in Her immense light and rested Her loving eyes on Lucia. The girl could not speak for joy. Jacinta prodded her, “Lucia, go ahead, speak to Her. She is already speaking to you.”

So Lucia, looking up towards Our Lady, her eyes filled with loving devotion, asked, “What do You want of me?”

*“I want you to return here on the thirteenth of next month,”* the Lady said. *“Continue to say the Rosary every day in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary to obtain peace for the world and the end of the war; for She alone can save it.”*

Lucia, thinking of her mother and the words of the Pastor, wishing to clear up the doubts of people, spoke again in her own childish manner, “Will You please tell us who You are and perform a miracle so that everyone will believe that You really appear to us?”

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<sup>1</sup> Comadre or co-mother; a term expressing the relationship between the natural mother of a child and the child’s god-mother.

*“Continue to come here every month. In October, I will say who I am and what I desire and I will perform a miracle all shall see, so that they believe.”*

Then Lucia spoke of the petitions of the people. Our Lady answered, *“Some I will cure and others not. As to the crippled boy, I will not cure him or take him out of his poverty, but he must say the Rosary every day with his family.”*

Lucia told Her of the case of a sick person who wished to be taken soon to Heaven.

*“He should not try to hurry things. I know well when I shall come for him.”*

Lucia asked for the conversion of some people. The answer of the Lady was, as with the crippled boy, the recitation of the Rosary. Then, to remind the children of their special vocation and to inspire them to greater fervor and courage for the future, the Lady said:

*“Sacrifice yourselves for sinners; and say often, especially when you make some sacrifice: ‘O my Jesus, it is for love of Thee, for the conversion of sinners and in reparation for sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary I offer this sacrifice to Thee.’”*

“As Our Lady said these words,” Lucia later described the scenes, “She opened Her hands again as She had done the two previous months. The light reflecting from them seemed to penetrate into the earth, and we saw as if into a sea of fire, and immersed in that fire were devils and souls with human form, as if they were transparent black or bronze embers floating in the fire and swayed by the flames that issued from them along with clouds of smoke, falling upon every side just like the falling of sparks in great fires, without weight or equilibrium, amidst wailing and cries of pain and despair that horrified and shook us with terror. We could tell the devils by their horrible and nauseous figures of baleful and unknown animals, but transparent as the black coals in a fire.”

Frightened, deathly pale, the little ones raised their eyes to Our Lady for help as Lucia cried out. “Oh... Our Lady!”

Our Lady explained: **“You have seen Hell — where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them God wants to establish throughout the world the devotion to My Immaculate Heart.**

**“If people will do what I tell you, many souls will be saved, and there will be peace. The war is going to end.**

**“But if they do not stop offending God, another and worse war will break out in the reign of Pius XI. When you see a night illumined by an unknown light, know that it is the great sign that God gives 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, I shall come to ask for the Consecration of Russia to My Immaculate Heart and the Communion of Reparation on the First Saturdays.**

**“If they heed My requests, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace. If not, she shall spread her errors throughout the world, promoting 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 shall triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to Me, which will be converted, and some time of peace will be given to the world.**

**“In Portugal, the dogma of the faith will always be preserved etc.**

**“Do not tell this to anyone. To Francisco, yes, you may tell it.”**

Lucia, her heart aching to do something heroic for her Lady, once again said to Her, in childlike abandon, "Don't You want anything else from me?"

*"No; today I desire nothing else from you."*

At this point something like thunder was heard, and a little arch that had been set up to hold vigil lanterns shook as if there had been an earthquake. Lucia rose, turning around so fast that her skirt flared. "There She goes," she shouted, pointing up to Heaven. "There She goes." Then a few moments later, "She's gone!"

The small, greyish cloud vanished and as soon as the children recovered from their profound emotion, a ruthless, inquisitive crowd surrounded them, all saying at once, "Lucia, what did the Lady say to make you look so sad?"

"It is a secret," she responded.

"Is it something good?"

"For some, it is good; for others, it is evil."

"Won't you tell it?" they pressed.

"No, I cannot tell it," she answered with convincing determination.

The people kept pushing so much that they almost smothered the children. Jacinta's father, frightened for the safety of his children, perspiration rolling down his face from the excitement of the occasion, elbowed his way close to the children, picked up Jacinta in his strong arms and, sheltering her from the sun with his hat, started for the road home.

The two mothers, still hiding behind the bushes, felt all strength gone from them. When they saw the crowd milling around their children, Jacinta's mother cried out, "Oh, good Mother, they are killing our children!" How relieved both were a few moments later to see Jacinta on the shoulders of her father, Francisco in the arms of a relative, and Lucia being carried by a very tall man, so tall in fact that Lucia's mother was distracted from her worry. "Oh, what a big man," she blurted out.



Photo shown is that of the countryside near Fatima. It looks exactly as it was in 1917.