

VII. Fourth Apparition

The Magistrate

The village of Fatima belongs to the County of Ourém. At the time of the apparitions the *Administrator* of the county, or Chief Magistrate, was Artur Oliveira Santos, a man of tremendous political power. All administrative, political and sometimes even judicial power was centered in his hands. Though he was a man of meager education, a tinsmith by trade, he had been in politics since his youth. A baptized Catholic, he had abandoned the Church at the age of twenty to join the Masonic Lodge of Leiria. Later, he founded a lodge at Ourém of which he was the head. What added to his power was the fact that he published a local newspaper by which he endeavored to undermine the faith of the people in the Church and the priests.

When he heard about the apparitions of Fatima, he realized the effects they might have among the people. He realized, too, that if he allowed the Church to rise to new life in his county, he would be laughed to scorn by his friends and Masonic brethren. He counted on his immense power and the cringing spirit of the people to destroy this new religious fad in the beginning.

Although the citizenry of the county did cringe in fear before this all-powerful magistrate, there was one man who, when the good of his children and the good of the Church was threatened, had no fear. He would stand up boldly before any man in the interest of truth and justice. This man was Jacinta's father.

"My brother-in-law and I had both been summoned to appear at the County House, with Lucia, at twelve noon, August the eleventh," Ti Marto reported. "Compadre Antonio and his daughter arrived at my house early in the morning before I had finished my breakfast. Lucia's first question was. 'Aren't Jacinta and Francisco going too?'"

"Why should such little children go there?" Ti Marto replied. "No, I will answer for them."

Lucia ran to Jacinta's room to inform her cousin of the summons they had received and how she feared she would be killed. "If they kill you, tell them that Francisco and I are like you and that we want to die too," Jacinta cried.

Lucia and her father did not wait for Ti Marto, but went on ahead of him. Senhor dos Santos did not want to take a chance on being late and arousing the anger of the Magistrate. Lucia rode the donkey, and as she rode along she thought how different her father was from Ti Marto and her other uncles. "They put themselves in danger to defend their children but my parents turn me over with the greatest indifference so that they can do with me whatever they wish. But patience!" Lucia comforted herself, "I expect to have to suffer more for Thy love, O my God, and it is for the conversion of sinners."

Ti Marto walked to the County House alone. When he reached the square in front of the house, he saw Lucia and her father waiting there. "Has everything been settled already?" he inquired, thinking they had finished their audience with the Magistrate.

"No, the office was closed and no one was there." It was some while before they discovered that they had come to the wrong building. Finally they came before the Magistrate.

"Where is the boy?" He shouted right away at Ti Marto.

"What boy?" Ti Marto said. He continues to tell us what went on. "He did not know

that there were three children involved, and as he had sent for only one, I pretended that I did not know what he meant. 'It's six miles from here to our village,' I told him, 'and the children can't walk that distance. They can't even stay on a donkey,' (Lucia had fallen from the donkey three times on the journey.) I had a mind to tell him some more things; imagine, the children so small wanted in court!

"He flared up and gave me a piece of his mind. What did I care! Then he began to question Lucia, trying to pry the secret out of her. But she didn't say a word. Then he turned to her father, 'Do the people of Fatima believe in these things?'"

"Not at all. All that is just women's talk." Then the Magistrate turned towards me to see what I would say.

"I am here at your orders and I agree with my children!"

"You believe it is true?" he sneered at me.

"Yes, sir, I believe what they say." He laughed at me, but I didn't mind. The Magistrate then dismissed Lucia, at the same time warning her that if he did not learn her secret, he would take her life.

The interview ended and they left for home.

Ti Marto thought he was through with the Magistrate. It wasn't as easy as that. The Magistrate had only begun the execution of his plans. It was almost time for the next apparition and this all-powerful official determined to prevent it at any cost.

"Monday morning, the thirteenth of August," Ti Marto recalled, "I had just begun hoeing my land when I was called home. As I entered the house I saw a group of strangers standing there, but that no longer surprised me. What did surprise me was finding my wife in the kitchen looking so worried. She didn't say a word, only motioned me to go to the front room. 'Why the hurry?' I said good and loud. But she kept waving me away. Still drying my hands, I went into the room, and who was there but the Magistrate! 'So you are here!' I said.

"Yes, of course, I want to see the miracle, too.'

"My heart warned me that something was wrong.

"Well let's go,' he said, 'I'll take the children with me in my carriage. As Thomas said, seeing is believing!' He was uneasy and glanced about nervously. 'Haven't the children come home yet? Time is passing. You had better call them!'

"They don't have to be called. They know when they are supposed to bring back the sheep and get ready.' The children arrived almost at once and the Magistrate began urging them to go in his carriage. The children kept insisting it was not necessary.

"It's much better,' he repeated, 'for we'll get there faster and no one will bother us on the way.'

"You all go to Fatima,' he capitulated, 'and stop at the rectory because I want to ask the children a few questions.' As soon as we got to the rectory, he shouted to us from the balcony, 'Send up the first!'

"The first? Which one?' I snapped right back. I was upset by the premonition of some evil.

"Lucia,' he said arrogantly.

"Go ahead, Lucia,' I said to her." Ti Marto would remember this day well.

The Pastor was waiting in his office. He had changed his mind towards the apparitions. Now he considered them not the work of the devil, but plain inventions. He would call Lucia to task, making sure that the Magistrate would realize he had no responsibility in these events. "Who taught you to say the things that you are going about saying?"

"The Lady whom I saw at the Cova da Iria."

“Anyone who goes around spreading such wicked lies as the lies you tell will be judged and will go to Hell if they are not true. More and more people are being deceived by you.”

“If one who lies goes to Hell,” answered the little girl, “then I will not go to Hell for I don’t lie and tell only what I have seen and what the Lady has said to me. And as for the crowd that goes there, they go only because they want to. We don’t call anyone.”

“Is it true that the Lady has confided a secret to you?”

“Yes, but I can’t tell it. But if Your Reverence wants to know it, I shall ask the Lady and if She gives me permission, I will tell you.”

The Magistrate cut in as his plans would be spoiled if Lucia was allowed to return to the Cova to ask permission to tell the Pastor the secret. “But those are supernatural matters,” he said with finality.

“The whole thing was a hoax and sheer treachery on the Magistrate’s part,” Ti Marto continued. “When it came time for my children to go in, he said, ‘That’s enough. You may go; or better, let’s all go for it’s getting late.’”

“The children started down the stairs. Meanwhile, the carriage was brought right up to the last step without my noticing it,” Senhor Marto reported. “It was just perfect for him, for in a moment, he decoyed the children into it. Francisco sat in front and the two girls in the back. It was a cinch. The horse started trotting in the direction of the Cova da Iria. I relaxed. Upon reaching the road, the horse wheeled around, the whip cracking over him, and he bolted away like a flash. It was all so well planned and so well carried out. Nothing could be done now.”

In the carriage, Lucia spoke up first, though timidly, “This is not the way to the Cova da Iria.” The Magistrate tried to make the children believe that he was taking them first to see the Pastor of the church at Ourém to consult with him. As they rode away, the people along the road realized that he was stealing the children and stoned him. Immediately, he covered them with a robe. When he reached his house, gloating over his success, he grabbed the children out of the carriage, pushed them inside and locked them in a room. “You won’t leave this room until you tell me the secret,” he warned them. They did not answer him a word.

“If they kill us,” Jacinta consoled the other two when they were alone, “it doesn’t matter. We’ll go straight to Heaven.”

Instead of an executioner with axe in hand, the wife of the Magistrate came and proved herself very kind to the three little children — She took them from the room, gave them a good lunch and let them play with her children. She also gave them some picture books to look at.

The “Hoax”

Meanwhile rumors had spread through the village that the devil would appear this time at the Cova da Iria to cause the earth to open up and swallow all those who were there. In spite of the rumor, however, many persons traveled to the holy spot. Maria da Capelinha was among them. She gives an eyewitness account of what went on.

“I was not afraid. I knew there was nothing evil about the apparitions because if there were, the people would not be praying at the Cova. My constant prayer as I walked along was, ‘May Our Lady guide me according to God’s Holy Will.’ The crowd at the Cova on August thirteenth was even larger than in July.

“About eleven o’clock, Lucia’s sister, Maria dos Anjos, came with some candles to light to Our Lady. The people prayed and sang religious hymns around the holm oak. The absence of the children made them very restless. When it became known that the

Magistrate had kidnapped them, a terrible resentment went through the crowd. There is no telling what it might have turned into, had it not thundered just then. Some thought the thunder came from the road; others thought that it came from the holm oak; but it seemed to me that it came from a distance. It frightened us all and many began to cry, fearing they were going to be killed. Of course, no one was killed.

“Right after the thunder came a flash, and immediately, we all noticed a little cloud, very white, beautiful and bright, that came and stayed over the holm oak. It stayed a few minutes, then rose towards the heavens where it disappeared. Looking about, we noticed a strange sight that we had already seen and would see again. Everyone’s face glowed, rose, red, blue, all the colors of the rainbow. The trees seemed to have no branches or leaves but were all covered with flowers; every leaf was a flower. The ground was in little squares, each one a different color. Our clothes seemed to be transformed also into the colors of the rainbow. The two vigil lanterns hanging from the arch over the holy spot appeared to be of gold.

“When the signs disappeared, the people seemed to realize that Our Lady had come and, not finding the children, had returned to Heaven. They felt that Our Lady was disappointed and hence they were exceedingly upset. Resentment grew in their hearts. They started towards the village, clamoring against the Magistrate, the Pastor and anyone they thought might have had anything to do with the arrest of the children.”

Everything had been so beautiful but the sense of frustration at not having the children for the apparition made the people seethe with anger and roar out, “Let’s go to Ourém to protest. Let’s go and drench everything with blood. We’ll get hold of the Pastor, for he is just as guilty... And the Regedor, we’ll settle accounts with him.”

Ti Marto, meanwhile, had gone to the Cova da Iria, and when this shouting of the people grew louder and louder, though he considered both the Pastor and the Magistrate guilty, he felt inspired to intervene in the tumult.

“Be calm, men, be calm.” He shouted with all his might. “Don’t hurt anyone. Whoever deserves punishment will get it. All this is by the power of the One above.”

Indeed, the One above also intervened to preserve for His Mother the name of Fatima forever gracious and unstained, as is evidenced by the letter which the Pastor wrote the following day for the newspapers. It was published a few days later.

“The rumor that I was an accomplice to the sudden kidnapping of the children... I repel as an unjust and insidious calumny... The Magistrate did not confide the secret of his intentions to me...”

“And if it was providential, for such it was, that the authority succeeded in taking the children away furtively and without resistance, no less providential was the calming of the spirits, excited by this devilish rumor. For otherwise the parish would have been mourning her Pastor today. Certainly, it was through the Virgin Mother that this snare of the devil did not strike him dead...”

“The authority wanted the children to reveal a secret that they have told to no one... Thousands of witnesses say that the children were not necessary for the Queen of the Angels to manifest Her power. They themselves will testify to the extraordinary occurrences which have now so deeply rooted their belief... The Virgin Mother does not need the presence of the Pastor to show Her kindness; and this itself should explain my absence and apparent indifference regarding a case so marvelous and sublime ...”

The Ordeal

The children spent the night of the thirteenth in loneliness and prayer, beseeching Our Lady that they might have the strength to remain faithful to Her always. When morning arrived, however, they were all taken to the County House where they were

put through relentless questioning. The first to quiz them was an old lady, who used all her cunning and wiles to learn their secret. Later, the Magistrate tried bribes, offering them shiny gold coins; he made all kinds of promises to them and threatened them with every sort of punishment, but the children would not give in. This kept up all morning, broken only by lunch. They were put through the same inhuman “third degree” all afternoon. Finally, the Magistrate told them he was going to put them in jail and have them thrown into a tank of boiling oil.

When they reached the jail, poor little Jacinta began to cry her eyes out. Lucia and Francisco tried to comfort her.

“Why do you cry, Jacinta?” Lucia said.

“Because we are going to die without ever again seeing our parents. None of them have come to see us, neither yours nor mine. They don’t care for us anymore. I want to see my mother, at least.”

“Don’t cry, Jacinta,” Francisco interrupted, “we are offering this sacrifice for sinners.” Then the three raised their hands towards Heaven, repeating together, “My Jesus, all this is for love of You and for sinners.”

“And for the Holy Father,” Jacinta put in, not wishing to forget any request of Our Lady, “and in reparation for the offenses against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.”

There were many men imprisoned in the jail at that same time, and not one of them, no matter how hardened a criminal he might have been, could remain unmoved at the sight of the three little children. Each of the men took his turn trying to console the children or to shake them from their purpose of retaining the secret.

“Why don’t you tell it to him?” “Why should you care?”

“Never,” Jacinta said, “we would rather die.”

The children did not seem to mind in the least their being imprisoned in jail. But seven-year-old Jacinta could not accustom herself to the thought of dying without first seeing her mother. To distract her, the prisoners began singing, playing the accordion and dancing. They tried to get the children to dance with them, and one very tall man picked up Jacinta in his arms and danced around with her. The thought of Our Lady flashed through her mind; dancing was not the right preparation for Heaven. So Jacinta made the man stop; she took the medal from around her neck, asked the man to hang it from a nail on the wall, then she knelt with Francisco and Lucia to say the Rosary. Embarrassed and ashamed, the prisoners also got on their knees. One man still kept his hat on. Francisco got up, went over to him and said, “When we pray, we take our hats off.” The man took it off and dropped it on the floor. Francisco picked it up and laid it on the bench.

Soon, they heard steps outside. A guard entered, looking at the children, he barked, “Come with me.”

Again they were taken to the County House and put through the third degree. Jacinta was called in first, “The oil is already boiling. Tell the secret... otherwise...” Jacinta, like Our Lord before the judges, remained silent.

“Take her away and throw her into the tank!” yelled the inquisitor. The guard grabbed her arm, swung her around and locked her in another room.

Outside the Magistrate’s office, while waiting their turn, Francisco confided to Lucia, “If they kill us, we shall soon be in Heaven. Nothing else counts. I hope that Jacinta does not get scared. I should say a *Hail Mary* for her.” He took off his cap and said a prayer.

The guard, watching the children, was puzzled at the boy’s behavior. “What are you saying?” he demanded.

“I am saying one *Hail Mary* for Jacinta, to give her courage.”

The other guard came back, and led Francisco into the Magistrate’s office. Grabbing hold of the boy, he shouted, “Spit out the secret. The other one is already burned up; now it’s your turn. Go ahead, out with it.”

“I can’t,” he replied, looking calmly into the eyes of this new Nero. “I can’t tell it to anyone.”

“You say you can’t. That’s your business. Take him away. He’ll share his sister’s lot.” The boy was taken into the next room, where he found Jacinta, safe and happy.

Lucia was convinced that they had been killed and thinking that she was next to be thrown into the burning cauldron of oil, she trusted in her heavenly Mother not to desert her, but to give her the courage to be loyal and courageous, even as Francisco and Jacinta were.

Though Lucia did tell the Magistrate something of what happened in the visions, even as she had told her parents and the Pastor, she kept the secret part to herself. It was a solemn promise to Our Lady and she would rather die than break it. The Magistrate was not satisfied with this little bit. He wanted to know the secret. After her inquisition, Lucia too was locked in the room where the other two were and how happy they were for their unwavering fidelity to Our Lady.

The Magistrate did not yet give up. The guard came in to remind them that soon they would be thrown into the burning oil. The thought of being able to die together for Our Lady made them all the happier. The Magistrate finally admitted, after further fruitless questioning, that he could accomplish nothing. Then out of fear of what the enraged people might do, he himself took them in his carriage to Fatima, hardly realizing that the Church was celebrating on that day the Feast of the Assumption.

The Secret

When the people filed out of church, after attending Mass on the Holy Day, they congregated in the yard. The one topic on all lips was what had happened to the children. As Ti Marto came out, they all asked, “Where are the children?”

“How do I know,” he replied, “maybe they took them to Santarém, the capital. The day they kidnaped them, my stepson, Antonio, went with some other boys to Ourém, and he saw the children playing on the veranda of the Magistrate’s house. That’s the last news I heard.”

He had hardly said these words, when someone shouted, “Look, Ti Marto, Look! The children are on the rectory balcony!”

Ti Marto recalls his feelings. “I can’t say how quickly I got there and swept Jacinta in my arms. I couldn’t say a word. Tears ran down my face, wetting the child’s face. Francisco and Lucia both threw their arms around me, saying, ‘Father, your blessing! Uncle, your blessing!’ (as the custom is in Portugal, when children return home after an absence).

“A public official and underling of the Magistrate approached me. He shook, from head to foot. I never saw the like before. ‘Here you have the children!’ he said. I wanted to speak my mind but I restrained myself and remarked, ‘This might have come to a sorry end. They wanted the children to contradict themselves, but they failed. Even if they succeeded, I would always say they spoke the truth.’”

The people in the churchyard were in an uproar, shaking their fists, swinging their staffs. Everyone was restless. The Pastor left the church immediately, and started up the stairs into the rectory. Suspecting that Ti Marto was stirring up the people against him, he said in rebuke, “Senhor Manuel, you scandalize me.”

“I knew how to answer him then,” recalls Ti Marto, and the Pastor went into the house. Ti Marto could not at the time realize the noble role the Pastor was playing that day. Ti Marto then turned to the crowd in the yard and, still holding his little Jacinta in his arms, he shouted, “Boys, behave yourselves! Some of you are shouting against the Senhor Prior, others against the Administrator, and still some against the Regedor. No one is to blame. The blame lies with lack of faith and all has been allowed by the One above.”

The Pastor heard this and was very pleased, so he said from the window, “Senhor Manuel speaks very well; he speaks very well.”

The Magistrate had gone to the inn, and when he returned, seeing the crowd and Ti Marto on the balcony of the rectory, he shouted at him, “Stop that, Senhor Marto!”

“All right; all right. There is nothing wrong.” The Magistrate then went into the Pastor’s office and called Ti Marto in.

The rage of the people had subsided. The generous Pastor was allowing the people to believe that he had shared in the abduction of the children in order to save the Magistrate. The prudent words of a man of faith had the power to keep the crowd below under control. It was a fine proof of the power of religion, and the Pastor did not miss his chance to point out the fact to the Magistrate. “You must realize, Senhor Administrator, that religion is a necessity also.”

As Ti Marto was leaving, the Magistrate turned to him, saying “Senhor Marto, come and have a glass of wine with me.”

“Don’t bother now, thanks.” However, he noticed a group of young men on the street, armed with staffs. It made him fear that they might clash with the Magistrate. It was better that everything end in peace, so he stood at the Magistrate’s side, thinking within himself that it might be the wise thing to accept his invitation.

“I am grateful,” the Magistrate said, realizing what he was doing. He felt safe. “You ask the children if I did not treat them right.”

“All right. All right... There’s no hard feelings. The people think more of asking questions than I do.” Just then the children came down the stairs, and headed for the Cova da Iria without losing a moment. The people began to go home and the Magistrate and Ti Marto went to an inn.

Of their conversation over the wine Ti Marto later recalled, “The whole thing bored me very much, for he was trying to convince me that the children had told him the secret. ‘Very well, very well,’ I said, ‘They did not tell it to their father or mother, but they did tell it to you!’”

With that the matter ended for the time being. It is important to note, however, that the interrogation of the children served one purpose that was providential. Since everything became a matter of official record, the Magistrate unwittingly made the existence of a secret revelation undeniable.

The Nineteenth of August

On the following Sunday, the 19th of August, the children, according to their custom, went to the Cova da Iria after Mass. There they said the Rosary, then returned to Aljustrel. After lunch, Lucia, together with Francisco and his elder brother John, left for a place called Valinhos, not far away, where they intended to spend the afternoon.

The afternoon passed quickly, but towards four o’clock, Lucia became aware of the signs that always immediately preceded the apparitions of Our Lady: the sudden cooling of the air, the paling of the sun, and the typical flash. The children had already been having a wonderful premonition that they were to experience the supernatural again.

Now Our Lady was about to come and Jacinta was not there! Lucia called out to John, "Go quickly and get Jacinta, Our Lady is coming!"

The boy did not want to go. He too wanted to see Our Lady. "Go fast," Lucia insisted, "and I will give you four pennies, if you bring Jacinta back with you. Here's two now and I'll keep the other two for you until you return."

John took the pennies and started running home. When he reached his house, he called in, "Mother, mother, Lucia wants Jacinta!"

"Aren't the three of you enough for your games? Can't you leave her alone for a minute?" the mother answered back.

"Let her come, little mother, they want her there now. See, Lucia gave me two pennies to make sure I would bring her."

Two pennies! That was a lot of money for little children to give away so easily. "What does she want Jacinta for now?"

John wriggling like an eel, burst out, "Because Lucia has already seen the signs in the skies and she wants Jacinta there in a hurry."

"God be with you; Jacinta is at her godmother's house."

John bolted off to get her. There, he whispered the news to Jacinta, and together, hand in hand, they raced over to Valinhos so as not to miss Our Lady. Just as John and Jacinta reached the field, a second flash rent the air. A few moments later, the brilliant Lady appeared over a holm oak, a slightly taller one than that at the Cova da Iria. The Lady was rewarding the children for their fidelity.

"What do You want of me?" Lucia asked.

"I want you to continue to come to the Cova da Iria on the thirteenth and to continue to say the Rosary every day."

Lucia then told Our Lady of her anguish at the unbelief of so many in the reality of Her presence. She asked Our Lady if She would be willing to perform a miracle so that all might see and believe.

"Yes," Our Lady answered, "In the last month, in October, I shall perform a miracle so that all may believe in My apparitions. If they had not taken you to the village, the miracle would have been greater. Saint Joseph will come with the Baby Jesus to give peace to the world."

"Our Lord also will come to bless the people. Besides, Our Lady of the Rosary and Our Lady of Sorrows will come."

Lucia remembered Senhora da Capelinha's request and said: "What do you wish us to do with the money and the offerings that the people leave at the Cova da Iria?"

"Have two litters made. One is to be carried by you and Jacinta and two other girls dressed in white; the other one is to be carried by Francisco and three other boys. The litters are for the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, and the money that is left over will help towards the construction of a chapel that is to be built."

Lucia then spoke to Our Lady of the sick who had been recommended to her.

"Yes, I shall cure some of them within the year." But She went on teaching them to pray rather for the health of souls than of bodies, *"Pray! Pray a great deal and make sacrifices for sinners, for many souls go to Hell for not having someone to pray and make sacrifices for them."*

The Lady took leave of Her little friends and began to rise towards the East, as before. John was disappointed. He tried hard to see Our Lady but had seen nothing. However, he heard something like "a clap of thunder similar to the firing of a gun," when Lucia said, "Jacinta, see Our Lady is going away." It gave John small consolation.

The three children, who had stood by helplessly at the Cova da Iria when the older people stripped the holm oak of its foliage, broke off the small branch which the resplendent robe of Our Lady had touched. John and Lucia stayed at Valinhos with the sheep while Francisco and Jacinta rushed home with the precious branch to tell their parents of the unexpected visit of Our Lady.

As they passed Lucia's house, her mother and sister were at the door with some neighbors. "Aunt Maria Rosa," Jacinta cried out with joy, "we saw Our Lady again! It was at Valinhos!"

"My, what little liars you turned out to be! As if Our Lady would appear to you wherever you go!"

"But we did see Her," Jacinta insisted. "See here, Our Lady had one foot on this twig and the other on that one."

"Give it to me. Let me see." Jacinta gave the branch to Lucia's mother. The mother's face showed great surprise as she put the branch to her nose. "What does this smell of?" she said, continuing to smell it. "It is not perfume, it's not incense nor perfumed soap; it's not the smell of roses nor anything I know but it is a good smell." The whole family gathered and each wanted to hold the branch and smell the beautiful odor. "Leave it here, Jacinta. Someone will come along who will be able to tell what kind of an odor it is."

From that moment, Lucia's mother and her whole family began to modify their opposition towards the apparitions. Jacinta then took the branch and hurried home to show it to her own mother and father. Ti Marto tells of the occasion in his own words.

"I had taken a round of my properties on that day. After sunset, as I was drawing near my house, a friend of mine met me and said, 'Ti Marto, the miracle is becoming clearer.'

"What do you mean?" I said, not knowing anything about the apparition at Valinhos or the branch.

"You know, Our Lady appeared again, just a little while ago, to your children and Lucia at Valinhos. You can believe it is true. I want to tell you that your Jacinta has something special. She had not gone with the others and a boy came to call her. Our Lady did not appear until she arrived!" I shrugged my shoulders. I didn't know what to answer, but I was thinking about what my friend said as I reached the yard of my house. My wife was not at home. I went into the kitchen and sat down. Jacinta came right in with a big smile on her face and a little branch in her hand.

"Look, father, Our Lady appeared to us again at Valinhos!"

"As she came in I sensed a magnificent fragrance which I could not explain. I stretched out my hands towards the branch saying, 'What are you bringing in, Jacinta?'"

"It is the little branch on which Our Lady placed Her feet.' I smelled it but the odor had gone." Our Lady did not have to perform a miracle to prove Her case to him.¹

¹ When Lucia's sister, Teresa, and her husband were coming into the village of Fatima, they noticed the cooling of the air, the paling of the sun and the pattern of different colors over everything, the same as happened at the Cova da Iria six days previous, when the children were prevented from going to the Cova because of their arrest and imprisonment. This was the very hour of the apparition at Valinhos.