

## VIII. Fifth Apparition

The words that most deeply embedded themselves on the minds of the children were the last words spoken by Our Lady at Valinhos, "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." These words awakened in the children an even stronger desire for mortification, prayer and suffering. Their one longing was to close that terrifying furnace of Hell so that no more souls could go there.

When alone in the fields with their sheep, the three youngsters spent hour after hour in the gully of the Cabeço where the Angel had appeared, prostrate upon the ground, repeating the prayer the Angel had taught them. "My God, I believe, I adore, I hope, and I love Thee. I ask pardon for all those who do not believe in Thee, do not adore Thee, do not hope in Thee, and do not love Thee... Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, I adore Thee profoundly and I offer Thee the most Precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of the same Son Jesus Christ, present in the Tabernacles of the world, in reparation for all the sacrileges, outrages and indifferences by which He Himself is offended. And by the infinite merits of His Most Sacred Heart, and through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg of Thee the conversion of poor sinners."

When this cramped position became unbearable, they changed positions and said the Rosary, adding the special prayer Our Lady taught them, "O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of Hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those most in need."

The children prayed much, but they sacrificed themselves even more. They trained their minds to discover new ways of suffering for the conversion of sinners. Lest others misunderstand the motives of their mortifications and prevent them from saving souls from Hell, they kept this a secret between themselves and Our Lady. Only under orders from her superiors many years later, did Lucia relate the extent of their youthful prayers and sacrifices.

Watching the sheep on the hot barrenness of the hills, they offered up to God and Our Lady their burning thirst. The children went for days without drinking anything while they were alone in the fields. This was one of their biggest and most difficult sacrifices. Indeed, that summer they went the whole month of August without water. Lucia tells how one day, as the three of them walked by the pond of Carreira on their way home from the Cova da Iria, Jacinta was so overcome with thirst, she was forced to speak out, "Look, I am so thirsty, my head aches so much. I'm going to drink a little of this water."

"Not that water," Lucia said. "My mother doesn't want us to touch that water. People do their washing in it and the animals drink it. It will make us sick. We'll go over and ask Aunt Maria dos Anjos to give us a little water."

"No, Lucia," Jacinta spoke up, "I don't want good water. I'll drink this since I can offer to Our Lord the sacrifice of drinking of this foul water instead of my thirst."

Another day, the children were playing, as their mothers thought, by the well, when Jacinta's mother brought them a few bunches of grapes to munch on. As soon as her mother went away, Jacinta said, "Let's not eat them. We'll offer this sacrifice." Just then, she saw some poor children on the road, so she ran over to give them the luscious looking grapes. On another occasion, Senhora Olimpia gave Jacinta a basket of figs for the three of them. They sat on the ground and started to eat them when Jacinta



**Shrine at Valinhos**

remembered the sinners whom she wanted so much to save from the fire of Hell. She put hers back and ran off for a while so that she would not give in to the desire for the figs. While they were picking some little plants that grow between rocks and burst with a crack when squeezed, Jacinta hurt herself in some nettles. One would think she found a big diamond. "Look," she exclaimed, "I found something else for our mortifications."

Another day, while pasturing their sheep, they found a piece of rope. Playfully, Lucia tied it around her arm and soon discovered that it hurt. "Look, this hurts! We could tie this around our body for another sacrifice." The rope was thick and very rough. They cut it in three pieces and tied it around their waists. The sharp pain it caused was difficult to endure, especially for little Jacinta. Lucia suggested that she take it off, but Jacinta insisted she keep it on. She would willingly endure any sacrifice to save sinners from Hell. They even wore the rope to bed. This prevented them from getting the rest they needed and Our Lady spoke about it in Her next visit.

While the children sought every means of pleasing Our Lady, there were men determined to discredit the children and make a fiasco of the apparitions. For them, it was another opportunity to destroy the Church in Portugal. When the local magistrate found his efforts foiled, another man arose to take up the cudgel. He was José do Vale, the editor of a leftist newspaper. His idea was to put an end to the Fatima affair by having a public meeting and distributing pamphlets in the towns and villages telling the "truth" about Fatima and the Church. José do Vale thought that the best time to get the people together would be after the last Mass at the church of Fatima.

Anticipating easy success, he went there on a Sunday morning with some guards and a few influential people of the district. The only man in the churchyard was the *Regedor*, the village Magistrate.

The place of Mass had been unexpectedly and quietly changed this Sunday by the Pastor, who occasionally alternated between the several churches in the parish.

Not to be outdone, the group proceeded to the Cova da Iria where they knew would be many people. An unusual reception awaited them. A man had mustered some donkeys, which he had tied to the holm oaks. As soon as the men appeared, he tricked the donkeys into braying and kept them at it, to the very great annoyance of the unwelcome visitors.

José do Vale went towards the holm oak where another surprise awaited the group. There was a pile of straw and feed placed around the tree. The good people of Moita invited them to eat it, likening them to the animals that live on such things. "It was an insult and they took it as such," Maria da Capelinha said. "I got there about half past eleven with two of my neighbors. We hid ourselves so that we could be close to the men when they came. The Chapel of the Confessions is now on the spot where we hid. Further up, three men sat on the branches of a large holm oak. One of the evil men started to talk

against the Church and every time he said something especially wicked we answered, 'Viva Jesus e Maria; Hail Jesus and Mary!' A boy standing on another large holm oak opposite us echoed loud after us, 'Hail Jesus, Hail Mary,' taking off his hat each time in great reverence.

"The men became so disgusted that they sent two guards after us, but we cut across the fields and they lost sight of us. Meanwhile, Mass was over and our menfolk came along. When they realized what was going on, they began to heckle the speakers and make fun of the guards. 'Mule-heads, mule-heads, mule-heads.' José and his cohorts started calling the men 'mountain clodhoppers' and 'hillbillies' etc. They sent the guards after them but the men scampered to the right and left, laughing and poking fun at the men who were going to reveal the 'whole truth' about the Church and Our Lady. José do Vale and his crowd were never heard from again."

Meantime the three children counted the hours to the next apparition. Many thousands believed and as many still refused to believe in the apparitions. This unbelief and misunderstanding, especially on the part of the priests, together with the constant, repetitious questions of the people caused the children keen suffering and a sense of utter loneliness. They felt that no one but Our Lady really understood them and that only they understood Her.

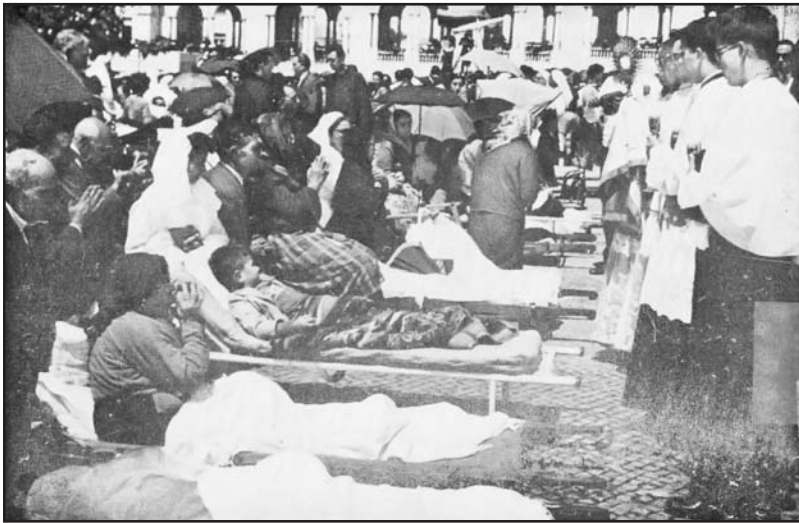
The thirteenth of September was at hand. As the day broke, crowds stormed the homes of the children and everyone wanted to speak to them to ask a special remembrance to Our Lady. "When it came time to leave for the Cova da Iria," Lucia wrote, "I left with Jacinta and Francisco, but there were so many people that we could hardly move a step. The roads overflowed with people. Everyone wanted to see and speak to us. There was no human respect in that crowd. Ordinary people, even noble ladies and gentlemen, succeeding in breaking their way through the crowd surrounding us, fell on their knees before us, asking that we bring their needs before Our Lady. Many others, unable to get near us, shouted, 'for the love of God, ask Our Lady to cure my lame child... ask Her to make my child see... to make my child hear... ask Her to bring my husband and son back from the war... to convert a sinner... to make me, sick with tuberculosis, whole again.'" There could be seen all the miseries and afflictions of mankind. Some shouted even from the trees and walls which they had climbed in order to see us.

"To some we said, 'Yes.' To others we lent a hand to help them rise from the dust on the ground. Thanks to a few gentlemen who opened a way for us through the crowds, we were able to move along. When I read now in the New Testament of the enchanting scenes that accompanied the passage of Our Lord through Palestine, I remember these others, that Our Lady made me, who was so young, witness on the roads and lanes from Aljustrel to Fatima and the Cova da Iria. I thank Our Lord as I offer Him the faith of our good Portuguese people; and I think that if these people humbled themselves so much before three poor children, only because there was given to them, in all mercy, the grace of speaking with the Mother of God, what would they not have done if they were to see Jesus Christ Himself?"

When they finally arrived at the holm oak, Lucia as usual started the Rosary, with the people responding. They were almost finished when the children arose to scan the horizon. They had seen the flash. Our Lady would soon come. A few moments passed. A globe of light appeared before the crowd, and the all holy Queen of Angels was standing over the holm oak.

"What do You want of me?" Lucia spoke very humbly.

"*Let the people continue to say the Rosary every day to obtain the end of the war,*" Our Lady responded, at the same time renewing the promises She made during Her last apparition. "*In the last month, in October, I shall perform a miracle so that all may*



**The Blessing of the sick at Fatima.**

*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.*

*“God is pleased with your sacrifices but does not wish that you sleep with the rope. Wear it only during the day.”*

me to ask You many things,” Lucia then said. “This girl is a deaf mute. Don’t You want to cure her?”

*“In the course of the year she will be improved.”*

“Will You help these other people?”

*“Some I will cure; but the others, no. Our Lord does not have confidence in them.”*

“The people would like very much to have a chapel built here,” Lucia suggested.

*“Use half of the money received so far for the litters. On one of them, place the statue of Our Lady of the Rosary. The other half should be set aside to help with the building of the chapel.”*

“Many people say that I am a swindler who should be hanged or burned. Please perform a miracle for all to believe.”

*“Yes, in October, I will perform a miracle so that all may believe.”*

“Some people gave me these two letters for you and a bottle of cologne.” Lucia did not want to forget any requests.

*“None of that is necessary for Heaven.”*

Our Lady then began to leave. Lucia, pointing towards the East, shouted to the people, “If you want to see Our Lady, look that way!” They looked eagerly towards the East and many saw the luminous globe now ascending towards Heaven. As soon as it disappeared, the whole crowd swarmed upon the children asking them a thousand questions... “What did Our Lady say?... Will She cure my boy?... Will my husband come home from the war safe?... Will She help my little girl?” It was with great difficulty that the parents reclaimed their children and brought them home. When they reached home, hundreds more waited to ask the children more questions.

“What did Our Lady look like?... Was it really Our Lady? ... Tell us everything that happened.”

Among the many witnesses of this apparition, there were a few priests, including the Vicar General of Leiria, Monsignor John Quaresma and Father Manuel do Carmo Gois. The Monsignor, a man of great learning, came to the Cova da Iria with many questions in his mind; he didn’t know whether to believe or not in the testimony of the children. He gives us his own personal account of the happenings of this day.

He had been thinking, “... have the little shepherds been the victims of a beautiful



mirage?...” Was there any truth in the words of the children?... What should we say of the evergrowing multitudes that on every thirteenth asserted that they saw extraordinary signs in the skies of Fatima?

“I left, the morning of September the thirteenth, 1917, in a slow carriage drawn by an old horse, to go to the place of the apparitions. Father Gois chose a spot overlooking the vast amphitheater of the Cova da Iria. From it we could easily see, without coming too close, the place where the little shepherds prayed as they waited for the heavenly apparition. At noontime, silence fell on the crowd, and a low whispering of prayers could be heard. Suddenly, cries of joy rent the air, many voices praising the Blessed Virgin. Arms were raised to point to something above, ‘Look! don’t you see?’... ‘Yes, I see it!’

“I, too, raised my eyes to probe the amplitude of the skies, hoping to see what the other more fortunate eyes were seeing before me. There was not a single cloud in the whole blue sky, yet to my great astonishment, I saw clearly and distinctly a luminous globe, coming from the east to the west, gliding slowly and majestically through space. My friend also looked up, and had the happiness of enjoying the same unexpected but enchanting apparition. Suddenly, the globe with its extraordinary light, disappeared before our eyes.

“There was a little girl near us, dressed like Lucia and about the same age. She was excited with joy and kept saying, ‘I still see Her... now She is coming down.’ A few minutes later the child exclaimed again, pointing to the skies, ‘Now She is rising again,’ following the globe with her eyes until it disappeared towards the sun.

“I asked my friend, who was enthusiastic over what we had seen, ‘What do you think of that globe?’ Without any hesitation, he replied, ‘That was Our Lady.’ That was also my belief. The three little shepherds had seen the Mother of God Herself; to us had been given the grace to see the chariot that had borne Her from Heaven to the barren inhospitable hills of Aire. It must be said that everyone around us had seen the same as we. For on all sides were heard manifestations of joy, and greetings to Our Lady. Some, however, saw nothing; for one good and pious soul nearby wept bitterly for not having seen.

“My colleague went about from group to group in the Cova da Iria, and afterwards along the road, to inquire of each what they had seen. The persons interrogated were of the most various classes; yet with one voice they affirmed the reality of the phenomena which we ourselves had contemplated.

“Deeply satisfied, we returned home from our pilgrimage to Fatima, with the firm purpose of coming back on the thirteenth of October to accede to Lucia’s invitation and to fortify even more our faith in the apparitions of Our Lady.”

Other signs were reported on this day. There was a sudden cooling of the air; and the sun was dimmed, so much so that thousands of people could see the stars even though it was mid-day. Also there was a rain of iridescent petals that vanished upon reaching the ground.