

XIV. Lucia's Mission

After Francisco and Jacinta had gone home to Heaven, Lucia felt all alone in the world. She remembered the consoling promise of Our Lady that She would never leave her alone but would be her constant comfort, but still her heart yearned for the pleasant companionship of her beloved cousins. Everything reminded her of them: the hills, the trees, the sheep, and especially the Cova da Iria. Besides, thousands upon thousands of visitors flocked to Fatima to visit the scene of the apparitions and all wanted to speak with Lucia. They came to her home every hour of the day. They insisted upon learning every detail of the apparitions: how Our Lady looked, what She wore, what She said, everything. When Jacinta and Francisco were with her, it was easier to face all these people, but alone, oh, if only she could go away and be alone with Our Lord and Our Lady. And the one thing that hurt Lucia perhaps more than everything else was that the constant stream of visitors disturbed and upset the peace of her home.

Meanwhile, in January, 1918, only three months after the last apparition, the Holy See, after a lapse of sixty years, reestablished the Diocese of Leiria, Portugal, of which the village of Fatima is a part. The Reverend Joseph Correia da Silva was named Bishop and took possession of his See on August the fifth, 1920. Bishop da Silva considered it his most important duty to obtain the complete facts on the Fatima apparitions so that he might safeguard and foster true devotion to God and His Mother. The Bishop moved slowly and prudently, refusing to make any decisions or to take any action except after long and prayerful deliberation. He investigated every source of information and had his first interview with Lucia on the thirteenth of June, 1921.

Having heard about the frequent intrusions upon Lucia and her family by the many visitors, he invited Lucia and her mother to visit him. He then informed mother and daughter of his plan to send Lucia to a convent school where she would not be known and where no one would bother her. Besides, the Bishop considered that if the many cures and conversions that had already taken place at the Cova da Iria continued in Lucia's absence, it would be an almost certain sign of Heaven's approbation. If not, the devotion would die of itself.

"You must not tell anyone when or where you are going," the Bishop said to Lucia, informing her that she must leave within five days.

"Yes, Bishop," Lucia respectfully replied.

"You must not tell a soul at school who you are."

"Yes, Bishop."

"And you must not utter a word about Fatima."

"Yes, Bishop." Lucia would do whatever he commanded. And when she returned home with her mother, the few remaining days sped by ever so fast. She ardently wished to say goodbye to the Martos and to Senhora da Capelinha, but she had promised not to tell anyone of her going. She could, however, spend her time visiting the holy places where she and her cousins had spent so many happy days. The last day home, June the seventeenth, Lucia went first to the rocks where the Angel had appeared. There she prostrated herself on the ground, repeating over and over again the simple prayer of the Angel, "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, do not love Thee."

Lucia then went to Valinhos, where Our Lady appeared after the children's im-



The great esplanade before the Fatima Basilica was filled on May 12, 1967 with people the evening before the Holy Father Pope Paul VI arrived at Fatima.

prisonment. She knelt beside the little holm oak whereon Our Lady had stood, though the tree had long since been stripped of all its branches by pious pilgrims. She spent quite a while there, then rose from her knees, walked on past the bog and the little pond where the three used to graze their sheep, directing her steps towards the Cova da Iria. No one was there. How

happy Lucia was to be alone, to live again the enchantment of the heavenly apparitions. She again heard in her heart those beautiful, comforting words of Our Lady, "Don't be afraid, I shall not leave you. I will take you to Heaven... but you are to remain a longer time on earth, for Jesus wants to use you to make Me known and loved. My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God."

Lucia remained at the Cova so long, she did not realize the passing of time, the sun was setting on the far hills. She hastened to the little Chapel to make one last visit, then on to the Parish church where she had been baptized and where she had so often attended Holy Mass and received Our Lord in Holy Communion. She knelt at the altar rail, thanking Our Lord for these wonderful privileges of her faith, then walked around the church, stopping for a moment before each statue to bid goodbye to the many saints and to ask their help on her journey. Leaving the church, she journeyed to the grave of her beloved father, who had died some time past, then on to the grave of Francisco. How she loved her little cousin, Francisco. He was such a quiet boy, strong, manly, truthful, and reliable, so much like St. Joseph must have been when he was a boy. She remembered his words to her before he died, "Lucia, I am going to Heaven. Jacinta is going to pray a great deal for sinners, for the Holy Father and for you. You are going to stay here below because Our Lady wants you to. Do whatever She says." Lucia promised she would.

The little girl then went home, had her supper, and her mother sent her off to bed early. But Lucia was too weary to sleep. Although she was eager to go away to pray and be alone with Jesus and Mary, it was not easy to leave her dear mother. She offered this sacrifice to save souls from Hell. At two o'clock in the morning her mother roused her, helped her get ready, and together they started on the long journey. The light of the moon and the beautiful stars lighted their way and as they neared the Cova da Iria, Lucia said, "Mother, let's stop for a while and say our Rosary."

"All right, Lucia," Senhora dos Santos answered, and together they went to recite their beads. When they finished, they resumed their journey to the city of Leiria where Lucia was to take the train for Oporto. Her mother would leave her at the station, for the Bishop had appointed another woman to accompany Lucia on the train and take her to the school. The scene at the station as mother and daughter said goodbye to each other was sad to watch for tears poured forth from their eyes, tears of deepest love



The front page of the anti-clerical paper *O Seculo*, a major Portuguese newspaper, reporting in great detail the Miracle of the Sun.

And when she finished her course of studies, she asked if she might be admitted into the Order of the good sisters who had taken care of her, the Sisters of St. Dorothy. They were happy to welcome this sweet and holy girl into their midst.

In the convent, Our Lady did not leave Lucia alone. She came to visit her a number of times. At the Cova da Iria, Our Lady had already told Lucia of the bitter sorrow of Her heart over the ingratitude and sinfulness of mankind. She asked that the first Saturday of each month be set aside by all as a day of reparation to Her Immaculate Heart. Our Lady appeared to Lucia on December 10, 1925, while she was in her room at the convent. The Child Jesus was at Our Lady's side, elevated upon a cloud of light. Our Lady, resting one hand upon Lucia's shoulder, held in Her other hand a heart surrounded with sharp thorns. (See picture of this apparition on inside front cover.) The Child Jesus spoke first to Lucia:

"Have pity on the Heart of your Most Holy Mother. It is covered with the thorns with which ungrateful men pierce It at every moment, and there is no one to remove them with an act of reparation."

Then Our Lady said to Lucia: *"My daughter, look at My Heart encircled with the thorns with which ungrateful men pierce It at every moment by their blasphemies and ingratitude. Do you at least try to console Me and announce in My name that I promise to assist at the hour of death with the graces necessary for salvation all those who, on the first Saturday of five consecutive months, go to Confession and receive Holy Communion, recite the Rosary and keep Me company for a quarter of an hour while meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary with the intention of making reparation to Me."*

Lucia could never forget this vision of Mary's bleeding heart. She informed her confessor and her superior of this apparition but they felt unable of themselves to spread this devotion. Two months passed, and on the fifteenth of February, 1926, the Child Jesus again appeared to Lucia, inquiring if she had spread this devotion of reparation to the Immaculate Heart of His Mother. She told Our Lord how her confessor had pointed out to her so many difficulties, and though the Mother Superior ardently desired to propagate the devotion, her confessor also warned her that she could do nothing by herself.

and bitter sorrow. They knew not when they would again meet.

When Lucia reached the convent school, the Mother Superior, under orders from the Bishop, gave Lucia a new name. She was henceforth to be known as Maria das Dores, and no one would recognize her under that name. The Superior also warned her of the Bishop's injunctions never to tell who she was and not to speak of Fatima. Lucia would gladly offer this sacrifice to Our Lady.

The girls at the school quickly grew to love Lucia. They were drawn to her as the many children of Fatima used to gather around her at home. And though she never spoke of Fatima, she did speak to them often of Our Lady, how beautiful and kind She was and what all should do to please Her. She inspired in all an ardent love for Mary.

"It is true that your superior alone can do nothing, but with My grace she can do all," Our Lord answered.

Lucia meanwhile did her part to make this devotion known by writing her own mother, urging her to become an apostle in the crusade of reparation:

"Dear Mother," her letter began "as I know my letters always bring you great consolation, I am writing to you now to urge you to offer Our Lord the sacrifice of my absence. I know truly how deeply you feel this separation. However, you must realize that, if we did not separate from each other willingly, Our Lord would have taken it upon Himself to do it. Let us remember Uncle Manuel, who said that he would never allow his children to leave home, and Our Lord took them away.

"This is why I wanted you, mother, to offer our separation to Our Lady generously, as an act of reparation for the offenses She receives from Her ungrateful children. I desired that you, mother, might give me the consolation of embracing the devotion which I know pleases God and which Our Lady Herself requested.

"As soon as I knew it, I embraced it myself and have wanted to do everything possible to make others practice it. I expect that you will write to me saying that you have accepted it and are trying to make others take up this devotion. You can never give me a greater consolation. It consists only in what is written on the back of the enclosed little card. Confession can be made on another day. The fifteen minutes of meditation are what will puzzle you most, but it is very easy. Who is the person who cannot think upon the mysteries of the Rosary? The Annunciation of the Angel and the humility of our dear Mother, who, when She was exalted, called Herself the handmaiden of the Lord? Who cannot meditate on the sufferings of Our Lord, Who suffered so much in His love for us and Our Lady near Jesus on Calvary? Who is the one who cannot spend fifteen minutes near the most tender of mothers, reflecting on these thoughts?

"Good-bye, dearest mother. Console our dear heavenly Mother in this manner and do your best to get others to console Her. In this way you will give me unbounded joy. Your most devoted child, who kisses your hand.

Lucia de Jesus."

When she spoke of this devotion to one priest, he remarked that Our Lady used more or less the same words that Our Lord used when He made His promises to St. Margaret Mary with regard to the Nine First Fridays. Lucia merely smiled, saying, "Can I tell the Blessed Virgin how She is to express Herself?"

Lucia had not yet been given permission to reveal all that Our Lady had spoken to her at the Cova da Iria. She did, however, have permission to reveal the need of reparation and the devotion of the First Saturdays. It was in 1927, while she was praying



Lucia is shown in this photo which was taken just before she left Fatima for the Convent School at Vilar de Porto, June 17, 1921. She did not return to Fatima ever again to live there. She first came back in May, 1946 for a few days.

in the convent chapel at Tuy, Spain, where she was then stationed, that she received permission from Heaven to reveal the first two parts of the Secret: the vision of Hell and the urgent need for devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. “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. ... I shall come to ask for the Consecration of Russia to My Immaculate Heart.”¹

Lucia informed her confessors, her Mother Provincial, the Bishop of Leiria and the Reverend Joseph Galamba of this. The third part of the Secret revealed to the three children at the Cova da Iria on July 13, 1917, was written down by Sister Lucia by January 9, 1944.²

Two years later, in 1929, Our Lady again appeared to Lucia while she was praying in the chapel at Tuy. This was the time chosen by Our Lady to ask for the fulfillment of Her previous request: “I shall come to ask for the Consecration of Russia to My Immaculate Heart... If they heed My request, Russia will be converted and there will be peace.” Our Lady explained that this consecration should be made by the Holy Father in union with all the bishops of the world.

Lucia made known this request to her confessors. One of them, the Reverend Francisco Rodrigues, S.J., told her to write it down. He showed this letter to the Bishop and gave him the full details. Father Rodrigues also had it brought to the attention of the Holy Father. Two years passed during which nothing was accomplished.

In the summer of 1931, Sister Lucia was sent by her religious superior to Rianjo, a small city in Spain. While she was there, she went to the little church of Our Lady of Guadalupe and she prayed for the conversion of Russia, Spain and Portugal. Sister Lucia described in a letter to her bishop what happened next. At the end of August 1931 she wrote:

“My confessor orders me to inform Your Excellency of what took place a little while ago between the Good Lord and myself: as I was asking God for the conversion of Russia, Spain and Portugal, it seemed to me that His Divine Majesty said to me: ‘You console Me a great deal by asking Me for the conversion of those poor nations. Ask it also of My Mother frequently, saying: *Sweet Heart of Mary, be the salvation of Russia, Spain, Portugal, Europe and the whole world.* At other times say: *By Thy pure and Immaculate Conception, O Mary, obtain for me the conversion of Russia, Spain, Portugal, Europe and the whole world.*’

“Make it known to My ministers, given that they follow the example of the King of France³ in delaying the execution of My command (to consecrate Russia), they will follow him into misfortune. It will never be too late to have recourse to Jesus and Mary.”

Years passed. The Pope was pleading for peace. Then in March, 1938, Germany invaded Austria and prepared for World War II, which broke out in September, 1939, six months after Pius XI died.

Father Jongen asked Lucia if Our Lady mentioned the Pope’s name. “Yes, Our Lady pronounced his name,” Lucia said. “We did not know whether it meant a Pope or a king.

¹ Since this book was first published in 1947, there has been some important primary research done by various Fatima scholars, especially Father Alonso, the greatest Fatima researcher who had direct access to Sister Lucia to resolve any apparent contradictions. For the sake of clarity and accuracy, a few details of Father de Marchi’s book have been edited in this edition in this chapter from towards the end of the next paragraph.

² According to instructions given by Our Lady in a vision on January 2, 1944, Lucia has written it down. It was sealed and by order of the Bishop of Leiria placed in his diocesan archives. It stayed there until early 1957 when it was sent to the Vatican.

³ The Kings of France for 100 years did not obey the command given by Jesus in 1689 to consecrate France to the Sacred Heart, and as a result the King of France and his ministers were killed by the French Revolutionaries and the Reign of Terror between 1789 and 1794.

However Our Lady did speak of Pius XI.”

“But the war did not begin under Pius XI.”

“The annexation of Austria gave occasion for the war,” replied Lucia. “When the Munich Accord was made, the sisters rejoiced for they thought that peace was secured. Unhappily, I knew more than they.”

“And what about that great sign that God was going to give the world that He was going to punish it for its crimes?”

Lucia answered that this sign was the appearance of the “Great Northern Lights” of 1938 when unusual lights appeared in the skies of the world. “This was the sign,” she said, “that God used to make me understand that His justice was ready to deal the blow upon the guilty nations.”

“But the astronomers say that it was a common aurora borealis (i.e. the Northern Lights),” the priest countered.

“I do not know, but it seems to me that if they had studied it well, they would have realized that, owing to the circumstances under which the light appeared, it was not nor could it have been an aurora borealis.”

Meanwhile World War II was raging throughout Europe, threatening to engulf the whole world.

In 1940, Lucia wrote again to the Bishop of Leiria expressing her regret that the consecration had not yet been made. “Would that the world knew the hour of grace that is being given it and would do penance.” Then she wrote directly to Pope Pius XII at the command of her spiritual directors. Lucia this time wrote what her director told her to write. She asked for the consecration of the world to Mary’s Immaculate Heart with a special mention of Russia.

The Pope deliberated long and prayerfully upon this request. In 1942, the clergy and people of Portugal celebrated the silver anniversary of the apparitions of Fatima. On the last day of October of the same year, the bishops gathered at the Cathedral of Lisbon to join with the Holy Father.

The Pope at that time consecrated the Church and the world to Her Immaculate Heart, referring obliquely to the people of Russia (but not the country by name) in these words: “Give peace to the peoples separated from us by error or by schism and especially to those who profess such singular devotion to Thee and in whose homes an honored place was ever accorded Thy venerable icon, today perhaps often kept hidden to await better days; bring them back to the one fold of Christ under the one true Shepherd. ...”

Six weeks later, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, in the presence of 40,000 people, the Holy Father repeated this consecration at St. Peter’s in Rome. This consecration was a decisive event in the history of the world, and would bring about an early end to World War II. It was not, however, the consecration Our Lady asked for, and thus did not bring about the conversion of Russia and the lasting peace She promised us.

In the spring of 1943, Our Blessed Lord appeared to Lucia to express the joy of



Many pilgrims at Fatima walk the penitential path on their knees. They do this imitating the penance Lucia and all her sisters offered to Our Lady of Fatima in thanksgiving for the cure of their mother.



On May 13, 1982, 1991 and 2000, Sister Lucia met Pope John Paul II at Fatima.

His Heart over this consecration. Lucia tells about it in her letter to the Bishop of Gurza, her spiritual director. Therein we begin to realize how this consecration marked the change in the course of history. World War II that threatened to go on interminably, with its wholesale and inhuman destruction, was to end soon. The war stopped abruptly on the Feast of Our Lady!

“Your Excellency,” Lucia wrote, “The good Lord has already shown me His pleasure in the act of the Holy Father and the various bishops, although incomplete according to His desire. In exchange, He promises to bring the war soon to an end, but the conversion of Russia will not take place yet: if the bishops of Spain heed the desires of Our Lord and engage in a true reform of the people, clergy and religious orders... good; if not, she (Russia) will again be the enemy with which God shall punish them once more.”

Also Our Lord told Sister Lucia that “while the present distress (i.e. World War II) would be shortened” on account of the consecration of the world, world peace would not be granted without the explicit Consecration of Russia by the Pope and the bishops. Lucia reiterated this critical part of the Fatima Message over the next four decades. (See Appendix II.)

Father Jongen, a Dutch priest, visited Sister Lucia at Tuy in 1942, and interviewed her on three occasions. Speaking of the letter she wrote to Pope Pius XII, Lucia said:

“In the letter which I wrote by order of my spiritual directors to the Holy Father in 1940, I exposed the exact request of Our Lady. I also asked for the consecration of the world with a special mention of Russia. The exact request of Our Lady was that the Holy Father consecrate Russia to Her Immaculate Heart, ordering that this be made at the same time and in union with him by all the bishops of the Catholic world.”

On July 15, 1946, the eminent author and historian William Thomas Walsh interviewed Sister Lucia. In his widely circulated work *Our Lady of Fatima*, he writes: “Lucia made it plain that Our Lady did not ask for the consecration of *the world* to Her Immaculate Heart. What She demanded specifically was the Consecration of *Russia*...

“She said more than once with deliberate emphasis: ‘What Our Lady wants is that the Pope and all the bishops in the world shall consecrate Russia to Her Immaculate Heart on one special day. If this is done, She will convert Russia and there will be peace. If it is not done, the errors of Russia will spread through every country in the world.’”

Some three years later, Father Thomas McGlynn, a Dominican from New York, talked to Lucia. He read her the text of the first two parts of the Fatima Secret. When he read that Our Lady said: “I ask for the consecration of the world...” Lucia stopped him. In his book, *Vision of Fatima*, he recalls, she [Lucia] was emphatic in making the correction about Russia. “No!” she said, “not the world! Russia! Russia!” Our Lady commanded that the Holy Father consecrate Russia to Her Immaculate Heart and that he command all the bishops to do it in union with him at the same time.

This fact was again confirmed by a revelation of Our Lady to Sister Lucia which

is recounted in *Il Pellegrinaggio Della Meraviglie*. Our Lady appeared to Sister Lucia in May 1952 and said:

“Make it known to the Holy Father that I am always awaiting the Consecration of Russia to My Immaculate Heart. Without that Consecration, Russia will not be able to convert, nor will the world have peace.”



The small building in lower right hand corner, the little chapel (the Capelinha) is built on the exact spot of the apparitions.

This consecration is a crucial part of the Fatima Message, along with the call for penance. On this point, Sister Lucia wrote: “The good Lord is allowing Himself to be appeased, but He complains bitterly and sorrowfully about the small number of souls in His grace who are willing to renounce whatever the observance of His Law requires of them.”

Sister Lucia also wrote in Lent 1943 to the Bishop of Gurza on this subject as follows:

“This is the penance which the good Lord now asks: the sacrifice that every person has to impose upon himself is to lead a life of justice in the observance of His law. He requires that this way be made known to souls. For many, thinking that the word ‘penance’ means great austerities, not feeling in themselves the strength or generosity for these, lose heart and rest in a life of lukewarmness and sin.

“Last Thursday, at midnight, while I was in the chapel, with my superior’s permission, Our Lord said to me, *“The sacrifice required for every person is the fulfillment of his duties in life and the observance of My law. This is the penance that I now seek and require.”*

Our Lord said the act of the Holy Father is incomplete. It cannot be completed until more individuals, more homes, more dioceses and more countries consecrate themselves to the Immaculate Heart. For as the Bishop of Leiria wrote, “At the request of the bishops of Portugal and of Sister Lucia herself, the Holy Father, in the course of his famous message to Portugal at the close of the Fatima Jubilee on October 31, 1942, made the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, a consecration which we all must repeat officially and personally.”

This personal consecration has four essential elements: grace, penance, the Rosary and reparation. “Our Lord complained bitterly and sorrowfully about the small number of souls in His grace who are willing to renounce whatever the observance of His Law requires of them.”

Our Lady came to bring peace to the world and the foundation of peace is the possession of grace. Wars are only punishment for the sins of the world. Only grace makes man pleasing to God. Only when grace illumines man's soul is there peace between God and man. And when peace reigns between God and enough men, Mary will reward the world with peace.

To persevere in this peace and the grace of God, not all men need to perform heroic sacrifices as did the children of Fatima; but all men must fulfill their daily duties in life. And because these duties are oftentimes hard and burdensome, they become works of penance and sacrifice. "The sacrifice required of every person is the fulfillment of his duties in life and the observance of My law. This is that penance that I now seek and require." In the Gospel, Our Lord speaks of this as man's "daily cross." "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." (Luke 9:23)

An essential element in the life of Christ was a deep love of His Mother, Mary. So the true disciple of Christ must share in this love for Mary and prove it in his daily life through the recitation of the Rosary. The person who says his beads sincerely is bound to be pleasing to God and draws God's grace unto himself. Also, the Rosary gives Mary new power to crush the head of the Serpent and to destroy his evil power over the world.

Communions of Reparation are also required for the fulfillment of this personal consecration to Our Lady. It was no mere coincidence that Our Lord requested the Communions of Reparation on the First Saturdays in almost the same words that He used when He spoke to St. Margaret Mary about the First Fridays. He desires that this devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary be made known and spread throughout the world and that it become a common practice like that of the First Fridays.



Lucia's family after the death of her father, Antonio, in 1919. Her mother, Maria Rosa, is seated and Lucia stands beside her. Her mother's face shows the effects of the illness she almost died from. Behind from left are Lucia's brother, Manuel, and her sisters Maria (holding her daughter Gloria Lucia), Caroline and Gloria.