

In the year 1916 three shepherd children, Lucia dos Santos, age nine, and her two cousins, Francisco and Jacinta Marto, ages eight and six, tended their parents' flock of sheep. An Angel spoke to them: "Fear not. I am the Angel of Peace. Pray with me", and taught them this prayer: "My God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love You. I ask pardon of You for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope and do not love You." He appeared to them two more times. Then on May 13, 1917 the children were tending the sheep on the same piece of land known as the Cova da Iria. They had finished praying a Rosary, ate lunch and were beginning to play. Abruptly there was a brilliant flash of light. Fearing a storm, they excitedly herded the sheep to head for shelter. Again, there was another flash of light and there before the children appeared the vision of a beautiful



Lady. The Lady majestically floated above the branches of a small oak tree. She was dressed in white and was radiant like the sun. This was the first of six apparitions. The children were promised that a miracle would occur on October 13th, 1917. On that day a crowd of 70,000 gathered. Gradually the sun grew pale, lost its normal color, and appeared as a silver disk at which all could gaze directly without even shading their eyes. Then, to the astonishment of all present, rays of multicolored light shot out in every direction; red, blue, yellow, green, every color of the spectrum. Meanwhile, the very heavens seemed to be revolving as the sun spun madly on its axis like a gigantic wheel of fire, painting the rocks, the trees, the faces of the people with sunshine such as human eyes has never seen before. Three times it stopped and three times the mad dance was resumed. Then, while the crowd went to its knees in abject terror, the sun suddenly seemed to be torn loose from its place in the heavens. Down it hurtled, closer and closer to the earth, staggering, "drunkenly" as it zigzagged through the skies while

from all parts of the now terrified multitude arose cries of repentance and appeals for mercy. "It's the end of the world," shrieked one woman hysterically. "Dear God, don't let me die in my sins," cried another. "Holy Virgin, protect us," implored a third. Suddenly, as if arrested in its downward plunge by an invisible Heavenly hand, it poised for a moment and then, in the same series of swirling motions it began to climb upward till it resumed its accustomed place in the heavens. Gone was the silver disk with the brilliant rays. It was once more a ball of fire at which nobody could look at directly with unshaded eyes. During that day drenching rains had left an estimated 70,000 pilgrims soaking wet and standing in mud. After the miracle the weather was beautiful. While the people looked at one another, still trembling from their terrifying experience and not yet sure that some further disaster would not overtake them, a cry of astonishment was heard on every side. The people's rain-sodden garments had suddenly dried, and the muddy land was also dry.

About picture on right: Photocopy of the promised miracles as they are taking place October 13, 1917, as published by the Portuguese Newspaper "Oseculo." The Newspaper was a socialistic publication in a socialist run government. The journalist who did not believe in God and apparitions could not dispute the most unusual unexplainable events that took place and were witnessed by an estimated 70,000 people.



Actual photograph of all three Fatima seers during the time the apparitions were taking place October 13, 1917. From left to right, Saint Jacinta Marto, Saint Francisco Marto and Servant of God Sister Lucia dos Santos. Francisco and Jacinta were both stricken by the Spanish flu. Francisco died on 4/04/1919 at Fatima, age ten, and Jacinta died on 2/20/1920, 22:30 GMT at Lisbon, age nine. Sister Lucy Dos Santos, the last of three children who claimed to have seen the Virgin Mary in 1917 in Fatima, Portugal, died on February 13, 2005. She was 97. On May 13, 1989, the 72nd anniversary of Our Lady's first appearance at Fátima, the Vatican announced that His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, officially recognized the heroic virtues of Francisco and Jacinta

Marto. He therefore paved the way for the Church to officially beatify these two children who saw Our Lady at Fátima. The Beatification of Jacinta and Francisco, the child Seers of Fátima, was held on May 13, 2000 when Pope John Paul II visited Fátima. Episcopal approval of the apparitions at Fatima was officially granted on October 13, 1930 by Bishop da Silva of Leiria (the diocese that contains Fatima) and has been confirmed by the Popes since then. St. John Paul II visited Fatima 3 times.