



DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Memo

To: All
From: Bishop Myron J. Cotta
Date: October 2, 2017
Subject:: 100th Anniversary of the Last Apparition of Our Lady of Fátima, October 13, 1917

As we welcome the season of Autumn, we direct special attention to the month of October and recall the sixth and last apparition of Our Lady at the Cova da Iria on the 13th of October in the 1917. It was in the midst of the darkness of World War I, and the social and political upheaval which threatened the existence of the Catholic Church in Portugal, that "the Lady clothed in light" appeared to the three *little shepherd children*. Our Lady promised, on the *13th day*, she would perform a miracle so that *all* may believe. This last appearance of Our Lady at Fátima would bring peace and an end to the WWI. The event, which was to occur at the Cova, in the midst of the most inhospitable conditions of drenching rain and cold, would transform the lives of all waiting in anticipation of "the miracle."

The following is the eyewitness account of the last Apparition on October 13, 1917 in the words of Sr. Lúcia dos Santos, visionary of Fátima:

We left home quite early, expecting that we would be delayed along the way. Masses of people thronged the roads. The rain fell in torrents. My mother, her heart torn with uncertainty as to what was going to happen, and fearing it would be the last day of my life, wanted to accompany me.

On the way, the scenes of the previous month, still more numerous and moving, were repeated. Not even the muddy roads could prevent these people from kneeling in the most humble and supplicant of attitudes. We reached the holmoak in the Cova da Iria. Once there, moved by an interior impulse, I asked the people to shut their umbrellas and say the Rosary. A little later, we saw the flash of light, and then Our Lady appeared on the holmoak.

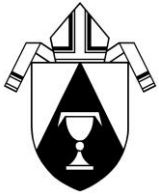
"What do you want of me?"

"I want to tell you that a chapel is to be built here in my honor. I am the Lady of the Rosary. Continue to pray the Rosary every day. The war is going to end, and the soldiers will soon return to their homes."

"I have many things to ask you: the cure of some sick persons, the conversion of sinners, and other things..."

"Some yes, but not others. They must amend their lives and ask forgiveness for their sins."

Looking very sad, Our Lady said:



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"Do not offend the Lord our God any more. Because He is already so much offended."

Then, opening her hands, she made them reflect on the sun, and as she ascended, the reflection of her own light continued to be projected on the sun itself. (It was at this moment, when the rain had stopped and the clouds parted, that the multitude, up to 70,000, witnessed the supernatural solar phenomena, and its effects upon them and the surrounding area, known as *the miracle of the sun*.) While they experienced the awe inspiring and terrifying event, the shepherd children witnessed something entirely different.

Lúcia continues:

After Our Lady had disappeared into the immense distance of the firmament, we beheld St. Joseph with the Child Jesus and Our Lady robed in white with a blue mantle, beside the sun. St. Joseph and the Child Jesus appeared to bless the world, for they traced the Sign of the Cross with their hands. When, a little later, this apparition disappeared, I saw Our Lord and Our Lady; it seemed to me that it was Our Lady of Dolores. Our Lord appeared to bless the world in the same manner as St. Joseph had done. This apparition also vanished, and I saw Our Lady once more, this time resembling Our Lady of Carmel.

On that afternoon, those gathered at the Cova da Iria, believers and non believers alike, left that special place, a *changed* people. For it was on that day, 13th day of October, they witnessed the wonder and power of God's mighty hand at work. They were blessed with the extraordinary generosity and transforming power of his grace and mercy.

Thus ends the series of six apparitions and the "messages from Heaven" which God conveyed to the "little shepherd children" by means of the intercession of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary of Fátima in the Year of Our Lord, 1917. It is a message which continues to have meaning, and an impact, on us and the world of the Third Millennium.

As St. John Paul II mentioned in one of his messages:

"The Lady of the message seems to read the signs of the times - the signs of our time - with special insight...The insistent invitation of Mary Most Holy to penance is nothing but the manifestation of her maternal concern for the fate of the human family, in need of conversion and forgiveness."

Let us pray, during this 100th Anniversary of the Apparitions of Fátima, that our world will be blessed with the gift of *grace and mercy*. *The gift* necessary to move hearts to repentance and ongoing conversion. May these graces assist us in avoiding sin so as "not to offend the Lord our God anymore. Because He is already so much offended." May God have mercy on us. May the prayers of Our Lady be our refuge and lead us to the Love, that is God. Lúcia, Jacinta and Francisco, pray for us!

Let us find comfort and assurance in the words of Our Heavenly Mother, Our Lady of the Rosary:

In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph!