

**ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
**RIO VISTA, CA**  
**THE STORY OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA**



**Spring 1916** - In the spring of 1916, there lived three cousins named Lucia aged 9, Francisco aged 8, and Jacinta aged 6. These simple children lived in the country of Portugal, where they would help tend to the family sheep. One day while watching the sheep graze, an Angel appeared to the children. He told them not to be afraid. He bowed low to the ground and He taught them this prayer: *“My God, I believe, I adore, I hope, and I love Thee! I ask pardon for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope, and do not love Thee.”* The Angel came again in the summer and told the children, *“Make everything you do a sacrifice, and offer it as an act of reparation for the sins by which God is offended, and as a petition for the conversion of sinners. By this you will bring peace to your country.”* On the last meeting, in the Autumn of 1916, the Angel gave the children Holy Communion.

**May 13, 1917** - It was Sunday, May 13<sup>th</sup> in the mountain village of Fatima, Portugal. World War I was still raging. Russia, a devoutly orthodox nation, was also a weak nation in a liberal provisional government. The children were tending their sheep, when they saw a flash of light that looked like lightning. Suddenly, a beautiful lady appeared above a small tree, her feet hidden in a cloud. She was *“dressed all in white, more brilliant than the sun, shedding rays of light.”* Lucia asked her where she was from and she replied that she was from heaven. She asked the children to visit her there on the 13th of each month, for six months. She also spoke of God’s sadness, and asked them to pray the Rosary every day to obtain peace for the world and the end of the war. The children said they would do as she asked.

**June 13, 1917** - On Wednesday, June 13th, the children visited as promised. People began following the children, but only Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta could see Our Lady. In June, Our Lady showed her Immaculate Heart to the children, it was pierced by thorns. She told them Francisco and Jacinto would soon leave this world for Heaven but God wished Lucia to remain on earth for some time because *“He wants to use you to establish in the world the devotion to my Immaculate Heart. I promise salvation to those who embrace it, and their souls will be loved by God as flowers placed by myself to adorn His throne.”*

**July 13, 1917** - On Friday, July 13th, they were shown Hell, where the souls of poor sinners go. Our Lady stretched out her hands, and bright rays came forth, which seemed to penetrate the earth. All at once, the ground vanished and the children found themselves standing on the brink of a sea of fire. As they peered into this dreadful place, the terrified children saw huge numbers of devils and damned souls. All were on fire within and without their bodies. They were tossing about in the flames like fiery coals in a furnace. There was never an instant’s peace or freedom from pain. She told them, *“When you recite the Rosary, say at the end of each decade: Oh, My Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, and lead all souls to Heaven, especially those in most need of Your Mercy.”*

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**August 13, 1917** - The children sadly could not visit Our Lady on Monday, August 13th, because the civil authorities had the children imprisoned since they were worried about the large number of people who were now following the children and they did not want the people to believe in God. Fearing violence from the people, the children were ultimately released and Our Lady came to them a few days later. She told them *"Pray, pray a great deal and offer sacrifices for the sinners. You know that many souls go to hell because there is none who pray for them."* She told them World War I was going to end soon. But if people do not stop offending God, another and worse war will begin.

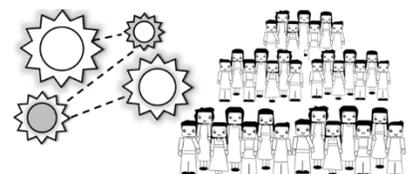
**September 13, 1917** – On Thursday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, more than 30,000 people came to visit with the children. Some people saw a shower of mysterious white petals fall to within 10 feet of the ground before dissolving into the air. Many also saw the globe of light bearing the Lady come to rest atop the tree, and the branches bend as though someone were standing on them. Our Lady told the children that a miracle would occur on October 13th. She asked them to continue praying. To pray for sinners, to end all wars, and to also pray for the country of Russia. This was before Lenin began the Marxist revolution there and so people did not understand why Russia would be a threat to world peace.

**October 13, 1917** - When Saturday October 13th arrived, it was raining and muddy. Yet, as many as 70,000 people came to see the miracle. The children prayed and listened to Our Lady. She asked that a church be built, and for all people to change their bad ways and ask God's forgiveness for their sins. She pointed to the sun and suddenly the sky cleared and the sun began to spin, casting off great shafts of multi-colored light and zig-zagged across the sky. After three minutes the wonder stopped, but was resumed a second and a third time, three times in all, within about 12 minutes. The Sun then seemed to tear itself from the heavens and come crashing down and just when it seemed that the ball of fire would fall upon and destroy the earth, the miracle ceased and the Sun resumed its normal place in the sky, shining forth as peacefully as ever. When it ended, the people were no longer wet and their clothes and the ground were dry. Many felt God's Love and Mercy.

**Miracle of the Sun** - Reporters gave long detailed accounts of what had taken place, while the newspapers published many photographs (copies are on file in the U.S. Congressional Library). But few people outside Portugal paid any attention to this event and most newspapers in most countries ignored the story completely.

On the day the sun danced some people were healed from their illnesses and many began to change their ways. The Miracle of the Sun reminds us of the power of God and that He wants us to stop sinning. We should pray for others and seek Peace on Earth. Our Lady of Fatima no longer wants us to hurt God and to pray the Rosary daily. The Rosary is a gift from Our Heavenly Mother, reminding us to never forget the Life and Love of God.

Images created by Theresa Salas



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