

On May 13 the Church celebrated the memorial of Our Lady of Fatima. Dr Warren Carroll, a Church historian and founder of Christendom College, said that Fatima is the single most important religious event of the 20th century (the 1900's). Pope St John Paul II said that the message of Fatima is more relevant for our times than when the apparitions first occurred. Furthermore, May is a month dedicated to Mary in the Church so it seems fitting to talk now a little about this spectacular event that happened in Fatima.

Most are probably already familiar with what occurred at Fatima but I will reiterate the events briefly. In 1917 our Holy Mother appeared to 3 young children in Fatima, Portugal. The children's names were: Jacinta Marto (the youngest, aged 7 when the Marian apparitions began), Francisco Marto (aged 9), and Lucia dos Santos (the oldest at age 10). Francisco and Jacinta were brother and sister and Lucia was their first cousin. Their job was to take the families' sheep out to pasture during the day and it was in that pasture that Mary appeared to them. There were six Marian apparitions altogether which occurred on the 13th of each month starting in May. The only exception was in August when the socialist, atheistic government in power at that time had the children in jail on the 13th; Mary's appearance was then several days later (August 19) after they'd been released. After the first apparition, Lucia told her cousins that they shouldn't tell anyone and they agreed. But little Jacinta couldn't contain herself and quickly told her mom. Word spread far and wide about the visions of the three children and people started flocking to the apparition site in hordes. Mary had promised the children a sign, a miracle, at her last appearance so that everyone would know they were telling the truth. She delivered.

It was raining hard in Fatima on October 13, 1917 but in spite of the downpour, an estimated 70 to 100 *thousand* (70,000 – 100,000) people flocked to that simple sheep pasture, on soaked ground. Mary appeared to the children and spoke to them, as usual. Lucia suddenly shouted: look at the sun. It appeared as a sort of silver disk, which people looked at easily without hurting their eyes. The sun then began to spin and move; some said it appeared to dance. The sun then seemed to hurl itself to the ground. People screamed and crouched down, thinking they were going to be annihilated. But then it returned to its normal position. Various colors of light were also seen while this was going on. The miracle of the sun lasted for several minutes. When it was over, everything was perfectly dry in spite of having just been drenched by rain – the people themselves were dry, their clothes, the ground – everything. Even the atheistic journalists who had come to mock could not deny this miracle and, in fact, testified to its occurrence. I believe this is the most pronounced miracle ever done to confirm an apparition. God has something to say to modern man, and He wants there to be no doubt about it.

What is that message? There are so many facets of modern life that the messages and events connected to Fatima and Lucia touch upon that we cannot possibly cover them all here. I will hone in on just the 3rd apparition, the one in July, which contained the brunt of the central message of Fatima. In this **3rd apparition**, our Mary said to the children: “sacrifice yourselves for sinners;” she then showed them a vision of hell. The kids heard shrieks and groans of pain and despair coming from hell. Lucia said that souls were falling into hell like snowflakes (i.e., there were so many) and she thinks they would have died of fright if Mary had not already told them that she would take them to Heaven. The children looked up at Mary and she said: “You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them God wants to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart.” Mary went on to talk about the end of World War I but warned that another worse war would break out if man did not stop offending God. Finally Mary said that if Russia is converted, there will be peace in the world; but if not, Russia will spread her errors throughout the world. They were then given another vision in which they saw the Pope wounded and appear to be dead, along with many other faithful who were killed. In this vision, there was an angel with a flaming sword crying out: Penance, Penance, Penance.

The central purpose of Fatima, as affirmed by Pope Benedict and Sr Lucia herself, was: to save souls. The means of this was repentance, personal sacrifice, and devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM). At Fatima, our Lord is calling His people back to Himself, giving us Mary as an example par excellence to follow.

I want return to the Blessed Virgin's statement about Russia spreading her errors throughout the world because it is so important for us today and ties directly to the central purpose of salvation of souls. Some people look at

this and say – well that didn't happen; there was Communism in the Soviet Union and Asia but basically that's it. This is erroneous on a number of fronts. First, Communism is far from dead. The communism of China and other parts of Asia is ever bit as oppressive as Soviet communism was. We would do well to remember our brothers and sisters in faith who suffer under those regimes. But even more to the point, more and more people in the western world have become very friendly towards Socialism. Socialism in any form has never ended well, invariably leading to a greater and greater materialistic mindset and belief. And this comes to the second and main point: Our Holy Mother did not say that Russia would spread *Communism* throughout the world; she said that Russia would spread her *errors* throughout the world. And that fundamental error was not political or social – it was error in belief. The Communism of Russia and all of its consequences was built upon a materialistic belief – an absolute insistence that the only existence is material existence; there is no such thing as spirit, nothing immaterial exists, no human soul, no angels or demons, and certainly no God. Without exception, this mentality leads to the degradation of man even here on earth and obviously separates him from his true and ultimate destiny, which is eternal life in our Father's Kingdom. And this materialistic mindset has spread throughout the world. Pope St John Paul II said that there were still many people who didn't ascribe formally to materialism per se, *but...*they live as if that is the case. He called this practical materialism, a subject that he returned to and warned about over and over again, even in his encyclicals. The world demands that even the Church and the faithful speak only in these terms, materialistic terms. This is unacceptable.

The visitations from Heaven have never been so frequent than in the last century or so. God has acted, He has called, pleaded, and shown us great signs. How will we respond? *God bless you, Fr Kahn*

Pictures From Fatima



The 3 children, from left to right: Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta



Picture showing the massive crowd at the last (6th) apparition on October 13, 1917



Vista parcial de algumas das 70.000 testemunhas visuais, no momento em que assistiam ao Milagre do Sol, em Fátima, a 13 de Outubro de 1917.

This picture is also from the last apparition and shows people looking up at the sun with some already falling to their knees



A picture of the sun, at the last apparition, as it “spun”