



Queen's Promise

Americans play a large role at Fatima. It was an American priest who founded the largest apostolate of Fatima in the world, for the conversion of Russia. It is called "The Blue Army" and numbers millions of members in almost every nation. Above is the International Centre of this apostolate, known at Fatima as "The Blue Army House". It is seen here from the tower of the Basilica. Built by Americans, the house contains two chapels on top of each other. The top chapel is "Russian". Mass is said here daily in the Russian manner even though no Russians are present. The emptiness of the Russian chapel at Fatima is like the emptiness of outstretched arms.





Rector of the Pontifical Russian Academy of Rome says Mass in the Russian rite at dedication in Fatima's Blue Army Centre, His Eminence, Eugene Cardinal Tisserant, dean of the Sacred College of Cardinals presiding.



Queen's Promise

by

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Adapted from his earlier books

RUSSIA WILL BE CONVERTED

and

MEET THE WITNESSES

Printed in U.S.A.

by



Ave Maria Institute
Washington, New Jersey

*Imprimatur: Most Rev. George W. Ahr
Bishop of Trenton
January 10, 1966*

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How It Began

At the time of this publication in 1966 one of the children who saw Our Lady of Fatima, still popularly known as Lucia and still favored to see Our Lady from time to time, was in a convent in Portugal. The author spoke to her. Everything written here is based upon his personal research and two earlier books* which were widely read, translated into Portuguese, and gone over by many experts on Fatima, including the Bishops of Fatima.

So what you are about to read is a rigidly authentic account of the most extraordinary story of the twentieth century. The author begins with Lucia's own description of what happened.

A description of our visit with "Lucia" (now Sister Mary of the Immaculate Heart, O. D. C.) will follow later, but here is the *first* extraordinary event she remembers:

In the Spring of 1915, in pastureland owned by her father, she and her cousins and another child saw something which floated in the air. They described it as white, very bright, but none of the children had any idea of what it was though it seemed to have a human outline. When

*The author was about to write a new book to summarize the story of Fatima. *RUSSIA WILL BE CONVERTED*, which had become a best-seller, was fifteen years in print and his later book, *MEET THE WITNESSES*, was almost solely about the miracle of the sun. He decided that what might be most appreciated in this age of fast reading and little time would be the heart of both books.

they told the story in their various families they were severely ridiculed. They soon wished it had never happened.

Some time afterwards just Lucia and Francisco and Jacinta were in a cave near Fátima. They had been watching the sheep when rain began to fall. They had taken shelter in sight of the flock and after the rain stopped, they remained in the cave to eat their lunch, said their traditional noon-day Rosary, and began to play jacks. They had hardly begun to play when they heard a great wind. As they looked up in surprise at the suddenness of the whirling air they saw their first real vision.

There, above the bending trees, they saw a bright light appearing from the east. As they watched, it came closer and closer until . . . as they became accustomed to the light . . . they saw that it was the form of a young man, "Transparent," Lucia said, "and more brilliant than a crystal pierced by the rays of the sun."

Coming near, the lighted figure said.

"Fear not! I am the Angel of Peace. Pray with me!"

As the young man knelt and bowed to the ground, the children awesomely followed suit. They found themselves repeating with the angel: *

"My God, I believe, I adore, I hope, and I love You. I beg pardon for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope, and do not love You."

This prayer, word for word, was repeated three times.

"We felt the presence of God so intensely," Lucia

* It is thought by many that this angel who appeared to the children in 1915 might have been Saint Michael, whom God has often sent as a messenger, and who is called "The Angel of Peace and Warrior Against Hell". He is mentioned in the Apocalypse as the one who will kill the dragon after those days when men shall see "A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon beneath her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars." (Apoc. 12:1)

later said, "that we dared not speak even to each other. The next day we still felt that atmosphere of Divine presence. Only very gradually did it diminish. None of us thought of speaking to anyone about it. It was so intimate that it was not easy to utter a single word about it."

We have not and we will not go into details about the children's personal reactions, but we will single out essentials and try to probe their meaning. In this instance it is noteworthy that the six great apparitions of the "Lady in Light" were to be of such world-importance that the little visionaries were prepared in advance to see her and to transmit her message. And of course those who have any acquaintance with mystical phenomena are not at all surprised that these children, rather than adults, should have been selected for such an honor . . . first because of their innocence, and second because . . . like the twelve apostles . . . they could not be considered to have manufactured the amazing and consistent story for which they were later willing to die.

Some time after this appearance of the "Angel of Peace," when the seriousness had long since passed, they were playing by the well behind Lucia's house when suddenly they saw a similar vision.

"What are you doing?" the vision asked. *"Pray! Pray much! The Hearts of Jesus and Mary have merciful designs on you. Offer prayers and make sacrifices to the Most High."*

"How must we sacrifice?" Lucia asked.

"With all your power offer a sacrifice as an act of reparation for the sinners by whom He is offended, and of supplication for the conversion of sinners. Thus draw peace upon your country. . . . Above all accept and endure with submission the suffering which the Lord will send you."

From that day, although they kept these experiences to themselves, the children began to give up little pleasures and to make sacrifices for the sinners of the world. They remembered especially to pray as the first angelic vision had taught them, repeating often: "My God, I believe, adore, hope and love You! I beg pardon for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope and do not love You!"

Finally, just about six months before the appearance of the "Lady in Light," the angel appeared the third time. It was in the cave where the children had taken refuge from noonday heat and were in the act of saying the prayer: "I believe, I adore, I hope, and I love You!" It was his final and most memorable appearance.

Suddenly standing before them in blinding light, the angel held in his hands a chalice and a Host. Leaving the Host and the chalice suspended in the air, the angel fell to the ground and said three times: "*Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I adore you profoundly. I offer you the most precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles of the world, in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges, and indifferences, whereby He is offended. And through the infinite merits of His Most Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg of you the conversion of poor sinners.*"

Then, after their recital of the same words, the angel rose, took the chalice and the Host, and communicated the three children saying:

"Take and drink the body and blood of Jesus Christ, horribly outraged by ungrateful men. Repair their crimes and console your God."

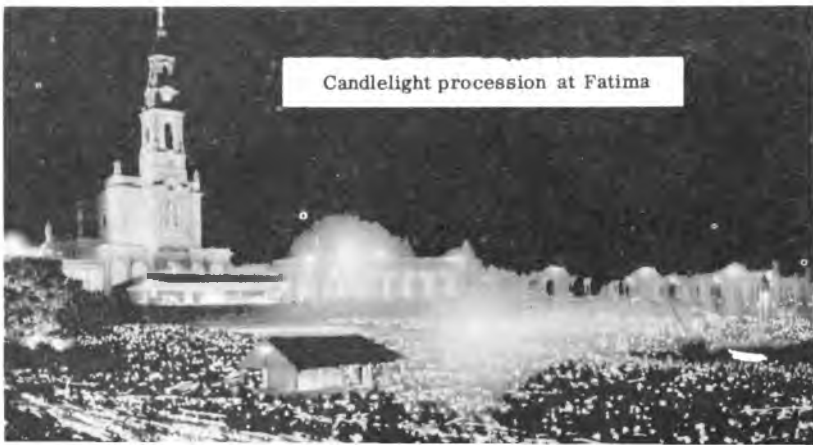
Then towards noon, on May 13th, 1917, the three chil-

dren, instructed by the angelic visions, were playing in the Cova da Iria, near the Village of Fátima, beside the grazing flock.

The Cova da Iria is a great hollow of ground. In English, the name means literally "Hollow of Irene." Tradition is that the name was derived from a saintly hermit, named Irene, who centuries before had dwelt in that arid and lonely place high in the Serra Aire mountains. Today, three things are noted of the spot: First, that it is a natural amphitheater capable of holding one million persons at one time (as occurred May 13, 1946); second, that it for centuries bore the name "Irene," which means "Peace"; third, that over this ground Blessed Nun' Alvarez, the Portuguese George Washington, won the final battle of independence, under the aegis of the Blessed Virgin, five hundred years before. But agriculturally it was so poor that it belonged to one of Portugal's poorest families, and sheep scrounged in its powdery, arid soil for food.

The children had said an abbreviated Rosary and began to play house-building. In the quiet, abandoned waste, Francisco was the Builder, and Jacinta and Lucia carried stones for him.

Today, on that very spot stands one of the most magnificent basilicas erected in modern days . . . the outside steps alone being capable of holding eight thousand peo-



Candlelight procession at Fatima

ple. It was there, from that spot, that the apparitions of the "Lady in Light" began.

There was a sudden flash of light.

None of the children had seen lightning at high noon on a clear, sunny day. They felt a certain awe and fear. After a moment, Lucia said:

"We'd better get the sheep and take them home. There must be a storm coming from behind the hills."

Quickly they rounded the flock, and began to hurry down through the Cova towards the rutted road to Fátima. As they hastened along, the light flashed again. More frightened, they began to run when, over a little tree (about three feet high), they saw a beautiful lady . . . all in light.

The children stopped, frozen in their tracks, and stared at her "indescribable beauty."

Finally Lucia spoke.

"Where do you come from?" she asked awesomely.

"*I am from Heaven,*" the Vision replied.

Telling the children to come to that same place six times at the same hour on the same day of the month, the Vision added: "*Then I will tell you who I am and what I want. Afterwards I will come a seventh time.*"

Lucia wanted to know if she would go to Heaven, and also Francisco and Jacinta.

"*You will come to Heaven,*" the Vision answered, but of Francisco she said: "*He will have to say many Rosaries.*" Then she continued:

"*Do you wish to offer yourselves to God, to endure all the sufferings that He may please to send you, as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and to ask the conversion of sinners?*"

The children, through Lucia, said they did.

"*Then you will have much to suffer,*" the vision said,

"But the grace of God will be your comfort."

Saying this, the vision opened her hands and great rays of light streamed forth as pictured on the 'Miraculous Medal'. In these rays of light, the children seemed to see themselves in God (to repeat Lucia's own explanation), and instinctively they cried out: "Oh most Holy Trinity, I adore you! My God, My God, I love You in the Most Blessed Sacrament."

Finally the vision told them: *"Say the Rosary every day to obtain peace for the world and the end of the war."*

When the vision had gone, the children felt light and joyous. That is how they described the difference between this experience and the appearance of the angels. For a long moment they were unable to speak.

Three things are particularly notable in the messages thus far:

First, emphasis was laid by the Angel on the essential act of worshipping *the Most Holy Trinity*: Adoration, faith, hope and love.

Second, *the means* specified are prayer (words for which the angel supplied), acts of sacrifice and reparation, especially by submission to daily trials, and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament

Third, this was to be somehow linked with extraordinary aid from the *Blessed Virgin*. In each appearance were mentioned "The Hearts of Jesus and Mary," and the children placed particular significance on the rays emanating from the hands of the "Lady in Light" in which they saw themselves in God.

In that light, notice well, the children *saw themselves in God*. They were transported with joy . . . and they instinctively cried out: *"O Most Holy Trinity, I adore You!*

My God, My God, I love You in the most Blessed Sacrament!"

If it is indeed the Blessed Virgin whom God was sending to Fátima, and if God now wished in a special way to renew devotion to her, would it not be in order that the same light which enveloped the children (revealing them in God) might shine to all the world . . . illuminating the minds of men to cry out in a transport of world peace and joy: "O Most Holy Trinity, I adore You! My God, My God, I love You."?



In 1951 the tomb of Jacinta was opened in the little cemetery at Fatima. Although her body had been covered at burial with lye it was found mostly incorrupt . . . although the lye had left some scars. One of the ecclesiastical examiners is seen on the right examining the body of this little one who so loved Our Lady that when she thought the Communists were going to burn her to death was consoled because it meant that Now she would see Our Lady "always".

II

More Visions

On June 13th, the lady appeared to the children again. By that time, many people had heard of the first vision, although the children had tried to keep it a secret, and several onlookers gathered at the Cova on June 13. She told the children that *many souls go to hell because they have no one to pray and make sacrifices for them.* She said that Francisco and Jacinta would soon go to heaven, but that Lucia would have to stay on earth to make the fullness of the Fatima Message known.

The Lady from heaven told the children, *“I want you to continue saying the Rosary every day. And after each one of the mysteries, my children, I want you to pray in this way: O My Jesus, forgive us and deliver us from the fire of hell. Take all souls to heaven, especially those who are most in need.”*

“ . . . Jesus wishes you to make me known and loved on earth. He wishes also for you to establish devotion in the world to my Immaculate Heart.”

The children were shown a heart encircled with piercing thorns. And they understood clearly that this was the Immaculate Heart of Mary that called for reparation from men for all the sins that have sorrowed our Savior and His Mother.

On July 13, 1917 Our Lady made her third appearance. “I want you to come here on the thirteenth day of next month,” were the Lady’s first words to Lucia’s question: “What do you want of me?”

"Continue to say the five decades of the Rosary a day in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary to obtain peace for the world and the end of the war. She alone will be able to help."

Lucia wanted the Lady to perform some wonder so that the people would know she was real.

"In October I will tell you who I am and what I wish, and I will perform a miracle that everyone will have to believe."

"Sacrifice yourselves for sinners and say many times, especially when you make some sacrifice: O JESUS IT IS FOR YOUR LOVE, FOR THE CONVERSION OF SINNERS AND IN REPARATION FOR THE SINS COMMITTED AGAINST THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY."

Again great light emanated from her hands, but this time it seemed to pierce through the earth and there the children saw a horrible vision, so awful that they were unable to describe it. "Had she not been there." Jacinta said later, "I would have died of fright."

"You see hell," the Vision said, "where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them God wishes to establish in the world the devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If they do what I will tell you, many souls will be saved, and there will be peace. The war is going to end."

"But if they do not stop offending God, another and worse war will break out in the reign of the next Pope. When you will see a strange light illuminating the night you will know that it is a sign which God gives you that he is going to punish the world for its crimes by means of war, hunger, persecution of the church and of the Holy Father."

"To forestall this I shall come to ask the consecration

of Russia to my Immaculate Heart and the Communion of Reparation on the first Saturdays.

"If they heed my request, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace. If not, she shall spread her errors throughout the world, promoting wars and persecutions of the Church; the good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, various nations will be annihilated. But in the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me, she will be converted, and an era of peace will be conceded to humanity.

"In Portugal the dogma of faith will be kept always.

*"Do not tell this to anyone . . . *"* the vision concluded.

ON August 13th, 1917, while the Communist revolution in Russia was seething to a boil, some fifteen thousand people gathered in a hollow near the village of Fatima, Portugal.

It was a clear day. The large crowd would easily see the three children stand before the little oak tree and talk to a visitor from another world.

Some in the crowd were saying the Rosary. A story spread that it was all a trick of the devil . . . that there was an extinct volcano nearby and that these "supernatural" things were caused by the devil to get pious people together so that the volcano could erupt and destroy them. This brought smiles to the faces of most who heard it. All wanted to see the children . . . to watch them talking with something from the other world.

Where were they? It was almost noon . . . time for the vision. Had anyone seen the children?

A great murmur began to make its way through the crowd.

*See footnote on page 31.

The children were not there.

Arturo dos Santos, atheist revolutionary and "Administrator" of that area of Portugal, had arrested them.

Dos Santos was one of several dozen practical atheists who had come to power in Portugal in the 1910 Revolution which followed the words of Lenin:

"Our revolution is international. We shall begin in Russia and on the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal), and then close across Europe."

To know any typical Communist leader is to know Arturo dos Santos: A mysterious blend of sympathy and ruthlessness. You could never be sure about what he believed, but only as to why he believed it: What served the state was good . . . and the enlightened few, free of

Left to right:
 Jacinta
 Mar. 11, 1910-Feb. 20, 1920
 Lucia
 March 22, 1907-
 Francisco
 June 11, 1908-April 4, 1919



This photograph of the three children is perhaps the first ever taken. It was made by Mario Godinho, who lived eighteen miles from Fatima. His mother had heard the story of the children and because she had a large tumor on one eye she persuaded Mario to take her to Fatima on June 13th. She was cured. Nearing death in 1960, Godinho gave his testimony to us for the book MEET THE WITNESSES, together with this rare photograph. He himself, despite his mother's cure, did not believe in the apparitions until after the miracle of the sun. The number of witnesses in June was put by Godinho as "some dozens". By October, because of the extraordinary events attending each apparition, they numbered over 100,000.

the opiate of religion, should decide what was good for the state.

The arrest of the children had not been easy. It had taken the form of a kidnapping.

Shortly before noon, that fateful August 13th, the impressive Arturo dos Santos stopped in front of a poor little house in the parish of Fatima where hundreds of people were crowding towards the door.

Leaving his automobile, Santos made his way through the quickly parting throng and demanded to see Mr. Marto.

Marto was the father of two of the children: Francis, aged nine; and Jacinta, aged seven. The third child, Lucia, ten years of age, was Marto's niece.

"I've come to see the vision from Heaven myself."

Santos spoke to Marto with that blend of sympathy and coldness which made it difficult to know whether he wanted to be sheep, or wolf in sheep's clothing.

"Where are the children?"

They had not come in from their daily chore of grazing the sheep.

"You'd better call them," Santos exclaimed impatiently, glancing about with such nervousness that Mr. Marto sensed something wrong. "Seeing is believing, as Thomas said," Santos added. "We will take them to the Cova in my car."

"They don't have to be called," Mr. Marto said matter-of-factly. "They know when they have to bring in the sheep and get ready."

The words had hardly been spoken when the sudden raising of voices outside the cottage made it obvious that the children were coming. As soon as they entered, the Administrator repeated that he had come to see for himself and would take them to the Cova in his open car. "Hurry now," he said, "it will be much faster this way."

The children were frightened.

"There's not need to take them in the car," Senhor

Marto said with his usual courage. "Walking, they will get there just the same."

The unwillingness of the children, backed by the bluntness of the parent of the two youngest, made the Administrator think that greater insistence might betray him. Quickly remembering the intimidated priest in the Fátima parish, he said:

"Well, you all go along and stop at the rectory in Fátima as I want to ask the children some questions." This time there was imperiousness in his voice. With a stern look at Senhor Marto, he wheeled from the room followed by his several henchmen.

Mr. Marto's courage had gone the limit, and when the children left the cottage they went directly to the parish rectory to which the Administrator had preceded them. They saw the Administrator standing with the parish priest on the little balcony under the second-story window.

"Send up the first!" snapped the mighty Arturo Santos.

"Which one is the first?" Senhor Marto answered, sensing that there was going to be trouble.

"Lucia."

"Go ahead, Lucia," Senhor Marto prodded the eldest of the three frightened children.

Mr. Marto felt a certain confidence in the presence of the priest and the crowd of sympathetic people. After all, what harm could come of questions? Already there had been so many! *Had not the "Lady" of the vision told the children that they would have much to suffer because of her?*

As Lucia entered the house, the Administrator and the Pastor disappeared from the balcony, and Lucia met them in the pastor's office.

"Who taught you to say the things that you are going about saying?" asked the Pastor, who wished to show

the Administrator once and for all that he (the Pastor of Fátima) not only did not believe, but wanted to help put a stop to, the inventions of this wayward child.

"The Lady whom I saw at the Cova da Iria told us," Lucia answered.

"Anyone who goes about telling such wicked lies," thundered the priest, "will be judged and will go to Hell if they are not true. More and more people are being tricked and deceived by you!"

"If one who lies goes to Hell," Lucia answered, "then I will not go to Hell for I do not lie. I tell only what I have seen and what the Lady said to me. The crowd goes there only because the people want to go. We don't call anyone."

"Have you said that the Lady confided a secret to you?"

"Yes."

"What is that secret?" demanded the priest.

"I cannot tell it," the little girl replied but, as though strengthened by a wisdom beyond her years, she added: "*If Your Reverence wants to know the secret I shall ask the Lady and, if She gives me permission, I will tell you.*"

Now Santos, who had not at all suspected the intimidated churchman of complicity in the matter but who was merely anxious to see that the children did not get to the Cova da Iria where thousands of people were waiting that very morning, shut off the idea of Lucia asking the Lady for permission to tell the secret.

"But these are supernatural matters!" he expostulated, with an air of finality and authority.

Then, instead of summoning the other two children, he said:

"That's enough."

Taking Lucia downstairs, where Senhor Marto and the other two children were waiting, he said: "You may go . . .

or, better still, let's all go. It's getting late."

In the interim, his car had been brought to the door . . . right up to the step . . . so that it was impossible to leave the rectory without deliberately avoiding the car door. In a moment, still mentioning that it was late and they would have to hurry to get to the Cova da Iria on time (as was true), *he handed the children into the open auto . . . Francisco in front and the two girls in back.*

"It was so quick that for the moment I was stunned," Mr. Marto said later. "The car roared off in the direction of the Cova da Iria, and then I suddenly wondered why I had worried at all. But upon reaching the road the car turned and streamed off toward Ourem. It was all so well planned! . . . Nothing could be done."

In the car Lucia spoke first in a slightly frightened, timid voice:

"This is not the way to the Cova da Iria."

"We are going to see the Pastor at Ourem," lied the Administrator, "we will get his advice, too."

People hurrying along the road were slowing the car. Suddenly some persons who had been to the Cova da Iria before recognized the children and read the fright in their little faces. The cry ran along the road that Dictator Santos was kidnapping the children. As the Administrator snapped a command to speed, some stones flew at him from a shouting, angry mass. Quickly he covered the children with a blanket to prevent them from being recognized and as he whirled down the road to safety he gloated in his success.

Telling a lie was not merely easy for Santos, as anyone acquainted with the principles of the atheist revolution understands. In his eyes it was right. Anything which he deemed expedient to the state (and it made little difference that he and the state were one) was morally right. Delib-

erate deception is the Communists' most used . . . and often quite skillfully used . . . weapon. Whether that lie be in a solemn treaty among nations, or merely the "framing" of individuals deemed dangerous to "the state," makes no difference. *Lies are the hard nails with which they find it easy to pierce the susceptible hands and feet of truth.*

For a moment, consider the parallel between what was happening on that road to Ourem and what is happening now.

Dozens of famous instances in the modern story of Russian-Communist aggression fly to mind, but none more clearly than the conviction of Archbishop Stepinac in Yugoslavia, or of Cardinal Mindszenty in Hungary.

Cardinal Mindszenty was the sixteenth Bishop to have disappeared into a Red prison since the "end" of World War II. And his case was particularly famous because Hungary had been close to the West; *in a free election, after the war, it had voted overwhelmingly (83%) against Communism* even though occupied by Russian Troops! After the Communist *coup d'état* in Hungary, the few atheist rulers were afraid to strike against the Cardinal because of the sympathy of the people. The majority of Hungarians revered him as a saintly prelate who lived simply and spoke fearlessly in the cause of truth as they all understood the truth.

When command came from Moscow for the liquidation of the Cardinal, the Hungarian Communists found it impossible to carry out several plans to kill the Cardinal "accidentally." Knowing of similar happenings in other countries, those around the Cardinal took precautions. (See Reader's Digest, Nov., 1949, and Soul Magazine, Jan., 1950.)

So the lie was used with more fervor than before . . . in the hope that even though the people were too well in-

formed to believe the lies . . . they might at least get a vague idea that the Cardinal was not as perfect as they thought. Finally, when enough of this had been done, the Cardinal was imprisoned, there was a lightning trial, and the lie was forced from the tortured Cardinal's own lips with such perfection that his torture was not evident. Those who knew the Cardinal knew the lie. But little by little, thousands of people came to wonder . . . and the force of the lie spread simply because it was advertised more than the truth. Sides were taken . . . for and against Cardinal Mindszenty . . . in bar-room conversations and in mass demonstrations in many cities.

Such is the tremendous perfection of the propaganda technique used by International Communism. Such is the power of their nails for the Christian Body.

Thus Arturo Santos had kidnapped the three children of Fátima by a lie, he had comforted them by a lie, and he exulted in the success of his lies.

People were going to Fátima, to the Cova da Iria, to watch three children communicate with Heaven. But they would see nothing! He had the three children with him . . . and he was going to lock them in prison. Let Heaven *try* to communicate with them! Mysterious clouds and lights at the Cova da Iria indeed! He would prove there wasn't any God, there wasn't any Heaven! He would prove that the only realities of the earth are the realities of the strong . . . of those daring enough to use lies and make them stick! Anyone could see that it is religion which makes a man weak, so that simple lies can reduce him to nothing; religion is therefore truly the opiate of the people. . . .

With such a philosophy, Lenin rightly said: "*Our First enemy is religion.*"

Arriving in Ourem, Santos hurried the children into his

own house and locked them in a room. His astute mind had devised a way to make the final destruction of the "Fátima Story" easy.

First, nothing would happen at the Cova da Iria when the children weren't there, and then he would issue bulletins (they were already written) pointing out that it was all a hoax, that he had found it out in time. The fact that nothing happened at the Cova when the children were absent would be proof.

Second, *he would actually get the children to retract their story without even asking them to deny the visions! He would make them tell the so-called secret.* Once they had told that, he would force them to admit that the giver of the secret was not from Heaven . . . because, if so, they would not have gone *against* Heaven in telling it!

It is noteworthy that in using this intelligent ruse Arturo Santos showed a profound understanding of the religious mind.

By the time the children had been discharged from the car and taken into the house, they were thoroughly frightened.

"You won't leave here until you tell me the secret," Santos said, locking them in a room and glaring ferociously.

"If they kill us," trembled Jacinta (only seven years old) for the consolation of the other two (Lucia, aged ten, and Francisco, aged nine), "it won't make any difference because we shall go straight to Heaven."

Back at Fátima the Administrator's first purpose in kidnapping the children was about to be put to the test.

It was noon . . . the usual time for the visions. The crowd estimated at fifteen thousand had just realized that the children were not there. Some new arrivals excitedly testified that they had seen the children in the automobile with Santos wheeling along the road to Ourem. Yes, there

was no doubt. Some from Fátima had seen the children enter the car, and they would have been at the Cova well before this. "The children have been stolen by the wicked Santos!" became a cry through a stunned crowd . . . leaving seething anger rolling up from seven years of religious persecution in its wake.

"We will go," one man shouted, brandishing a heavy stick, "and free them."

Scattered through the crowd were government agents. Everyone knew that. No man in Portugal felt himself entirely safe, as one was taught to spy against the other. Their very presence there in the Cova da Iria showed that they did not care about the things the government press had been saying about the children and the "visions." *And, unarmed, they were quite helpless like the some fifteen to twenty million prisoners in the forced-labor and concentration camps of Russia.*

Arturo Santos wanted the crowd to see the futility of prayers. Christ had not come down from the cross. He wanted the people to realize that this Fátima affair was a Church hoax, or at best an outcropping of superstition. With the children gone, Arturo Santos relied on the belief that nothing would happen in the Cova da Iria.

But Arturo Santos was wrong.

Within that very hour, the stupefied Santos had electrifying news from the Cova da Iria.

As the crowd milled about, wondering what to do, *thunder rolled suddenly from the clear sky . . .* above the cries and noise of people. The heavenly roar struck the crowd to instant silence, as though a great giant suddenly catching its breath, and then cries of fear broke out louder than ever: "We will be killed! It is the end! We are all

going to die!"

As panic began to spread, again there was a sudden silence . . . a sudden united gasp. . . .

A white cloud was seen to move through the air and descend to the top of the little tree before which the children had knelt the three previous times. An eyewitness says:

"Just after the thunder and lightning we all noticed a little cloud, very white, as though made of light, which came down and rested over the holm oak. It stayed a few minutes, then rose towards the heavens and disappeared. Looking about, we noticed a strange sight. . . . Everyone's face, and all the landscape, glowed . . . rose, red, blue, all the colors of the rainbow. The trees seemed to have no branches or leaves but were all covered with color: every leaf seemed to be rather a flower. The ground appeared to be in little squares, each one a different color. Our clothes, everything seemed transformed into the colors of the rainbow."

Continuing the account of what thousands of people universally and simultaneously testified to have seen, this witness to whom the present writer spoke continues:

"When the signs disappeared the people seemed to realize that the Lady had come from Heaven and, not finding the children, had returned. A tremendous resentment seemed to replace their awe. Most of them started towards the village, crying out loudly against Arturo Santos, against the priest, against anyone they thought might have had anything to do with the arrest of the children."

Most of the crowd, it is to be remembered, had been for seven years subjected to a very effective and violent vilification of religion. Somewhat like the people of Russia today, they had been without instruction and spiritual

guidance and had therefore quite naturally assimilated some of the pagan doctrine of "Might is right." To them, as to Saint Peter who drew his sword and struck at one of the soldiers who seized his Lord, bloodshed seemed in order. As they began marching toward Leiria, their mob sense of justice-through-blood blotted out the incredible experience in the Cova.

But the truly Christian among them knew that even if the pastor and the administrator had perpetrated injustices, such things were to be left to God . . . the God Who had so awesomely demonstrated His power in the Cova da Iria. Senhor Marto cried: "*Be calm! Be calm! Whoever deserves punishment . . . will he not get it from God? Have we not seen that this is from above?*"

His virtue triumphed. A bloodthirsty but inherently Christian mob suddenly came to its senses, and once again God heard the prayer "Not our will, but Thine be done" . . . and Arturo Santos could relax. Stupid virtue had won, and he was safe. And he would make those children retract if he had to threaten them with death!

Back in Fatima, the poor parish priest knew that he had . . . by the barest margin . . . escaped death. And he knew, too, that this matter could not longer be thought the invention of publicity-minded children . . . because so many thousands, in the absence of the children, had seen wonders in the Cova da Iria . . . people who together could not have been deceived. The next day, in complete turnabout from his subservience to the Administrator, he issued a formal statement to the newspapers:

"The rumor that I was an accomplice to the sudden kidnapping of the children . . . I repel as an unjust and insidious calumny. The Administrator did not confide the secret of his intentions to me. . . .

"And if *it was providential*, for such it was, that *the*

authority succeeded in taking the children away furtively and without resistance, it is no less providential that the anger of the crowd, excited by this devilish rumor, was dispelled. Otherwise this day the parish would have been mourning the Pastor. Certainly it was through the intercession of the Virgin Mother that he is now alive. . . .

"The authority wanted the children to reveal a secret that they have told to no one* *Thousands of witnesses testify (from the events of yesterday) that the children were not necessary for the Queen of Angels to manifest the Power of God. They all testify to the extraordinary occurrences which have now deeply rooted their belief in a case so marvelous and sublime.*"

One would think that Arturo Santos, with all his astuteness, would perceive that something was happening at Fátima which was not "run of the mill." It looked as though this was one of the rare times in History when Christ was going to come down from the Cross or, should we rather say . . . that the twentieth century was about to see the stone begin to roll back from a Christian tomb guarded by the guns of militant atheism? Thunder from Heaven, a light descending from the sky, strange lights . . . all seen by thousands of people . . . seemed apocalyptic. The crucifixion had been going fine, and as some scientist in England had said . . . echoing Karl Marx . . . the days of religion seemed numbered. But now . . . ?

Somehow, Arturo Santos did not see.

* On July 13th (see pages 17-19) Our Lady revealed a secret to the three children. This secret consisted of three parts, two of which have been revealed: (1) the vision of hell; (2) devotion to the Immaculate Heart. The third part of the secret was opened by Pope John XXIII in 1960 but was not revealed to the public.



Trial By Fire

On the morning of August 14th, following the extraordinary events of the previous afternoon, the children were taken to government headquarters in Ourem for treatment now being endured by so many behind the Iron Curtain. In this instance the issues of religion vs. anti-religion were completely clear because those on trial were not "powerful" priests, not "property-owning" Cardinals, not arms-bearing men "threatening the security of the state."

The prisoners to be tried were three little children.

First they were subjected to questioning by an apparently kind and elderly lady. She was experienced, shrewd. Her affectedly careless questions were pointed to find the slightest wedge of contradiction in their story. She knew that it did not matter to her government . . . her "cause" . . . that the children might be telling the truth. The important thing was that they should contradict themselves.

But each of the children, even to the details of the appearance of their "Lady from Heaven," told the same story over and over. There were some things of which they could not be sure, because the Lady was in light, they said, *all in light*. Over and over they repeated: "She was all in light." She wore a simple tunic, gathered high at the waist, and a single veil which hung from her head to the bottom of the tunic. A globe of gold was suspended from her neck, the edge of the veil shining brighter than the

rest, and there was a star on her tunic. From folded hands she held a pair of shining rosaries.

The old lady had been told to concentrate on the secret.

She tried pitting one child against the other, she coaxed, she suggested, she offered bribes . . . actually holding pieces of shining gold money out to them.

The children held fast.

For the rest of the morning, the dictator himself took up the questioning. Finally he resorted to promises, then to threats of torture.

After lunch, the gruelling ordeal was resumed. One tired questioner gave place to another without suspecting that three children could so long withstand the pressure.

Finally, seeing that threats and promises failed, Santos fell to his last resort.

"Throw them into prison," he thundered, "and prepare vats of burning oil."

When the children reached the jail, seven-year-old Jacinta began to cry incontinently . . . her little body racked with sobs. Lucia and Francisco tried to quiet and console her. Ten-year-old Lucia said softly:

"Why must you cry, Jacinta?"

"Because we are going to die without ever seeing our mothers and fathers again. None of them have come to see us. They don't care for us anymore. *I want to see my mother!*"

For this small child of seven years, violent separation from her mother was perhaps greater torture than physical injury. The prospect of dying did not seem as terrible as did the awful loneliness. . . . Whenever she had cried her mother soon made things right.

"Don't cry, Jacinta," said Francisco, even though he was only two years older. "The Lady told us to make sacrifices

for sinners, and we can offer this sacrifice for sinners.”

At this Jacinta instantly choked back her sobs, raised her face and wiped the hot tears. Then, simultaneously motivated, all three children . . . entering the jail . . . looked Heavenwards and repeated a prayer the beautiful Lady had taught them: *“My Jesus, all this is for love of You and for sinners.”*

“And for the Holy Father,” Jacinta added, including other requests of the Vision, “and in reparation for the offenses against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.”

There were several men in the prison at the time. At sight of the three children, with their frightened eyes and trembling lips, not one of the men failed to show sympathy. At first, having learned why the children were in prison, one of the men told them not to be afraid because seeing a vision, or even telling a lie, was not enough to merit death. But the very sight of the jail, the smell, the men, the hours of questioning and threats, the awful words *“Prepare vats of boiling oil”* . . . all were too much, too real.

Deeply touched at seeing the children remain frightened and on the brink of tears, the inmates of the jail began a chorus of reassurances . . . laughing the matter off and trying to get the children to laugh. But it was to no avail. The children did not seem to mind being in jail, or even of dying. They wanted their mothers.

“Why don’t you tell the secret?” one of the men urged. “Why should you care?” “Yes,” another took up, “tell him the old secret. There can’t be any harm in that. Why should you care if he knows the secret?”

It was Jacinta, the most outwardly distressed of the three, who answered with broken voice:

“Never. We would never tell because the Lady would not want it. We would rather die.”

The men were impressed. There was some silence, and then one of them suggested a song. An accordion sounded. Singing began . . . and a kind-hearted convict took Jacinta up in his arms and, carrying the chorus, began to dance. But the thought of death made the children unable to participate in the well-meant merriment.

"Stop," Jacinta said to the man who was carrying her. There was a catch in her voice. "Please stop."

The man set her down. The music stopped.

Jacinta took a medal from about her neck and asked the man to hang it from a nail on the wall which was too high for her to reach.

Then all three children knelt on the prison floor and began the Rosary. And one by one, the prisoners found themselves, in the presence of such radiant faith, falling to their knees. Some of the men began to mumble along with the prayers. One man, who had knelt with greater reluctance than the others and who still wore his hat, heard Francisco say: "We should take off our hats when we pray," He took off the hat and rather violently dropped it to the floor. Francisco picked it up and carefully laid it on the bench.

The Rosary was not over when there was a sound of footsteps outside the door, the key rattled in the lock, and a surly attendant barked at the children:

"Come with me."

Back in the Court House, Jacinta . . . who had appeared to be most weakened by the ordeal . . . was called first.

"The oil is now boiling. If you tell the secret, we shall let you all go. Otherwise. . . ."

Jancinta, no longer crying, remained silent.

"Take her away!" growled the judge. *"Throw her into the oil!"* And a guard grabbed the child by the arm and

wheeled her from the room.

While this was going on, Francisco whispered to Lucia . . . as though to reassure them both: "If they kill us we shall soon be in Heaven. Nothing else counts. I hope Jacinta won't get frightened. I should say a *Hail Mary* for her." And he took off his cap to pray.

"What are you saying?" a puzzled guard inquired.

Naively, Francisco replied: "I am saying a *Hail Mary* for Jacinta, to give her courage."

A moment later he himself was dragged by the arm before the judge.

"All right, now," the judge glowered, not at all pleased by his failure with the seven-year-old Jacinta, "Your sister has already been boiled in oil because she didn't tell the secret. Now it's your turn. Out with it! If you want to save yourself and the other girl, tell it."

"I can't," Francisco protested. "I can't tell it to anyone!"

"*Take him away!*" shouted the magistrate. "*Throw him in, too!*" And as the guard began to drag Francisco toward the door through which Jacinta had disappeared, the judge and all about him waited anxiously hoping and expecting to see the little lad break down. But tight lipped, with the same expression which must have lighted the faces of the first martyrs, Francisco went without even turning about.

Lucia had had much time to think. She remembered that when she first came to the Court House with her father, the Dictator had not even known there were three children instead of two. So she thought she might bluff her way against death. When it came her turn to be dragged before the magistrate, she talked.

"The Lady said," she began, as though answering the demand that she tell the secret, "that men must mend their lives and give up sin. She said that we must say the Rosary

and that she will tell who she is in October when she comes, and then she will have a message and perform a public wonder so that everyone will believe."

The judge was interested in the public phenomenon to come on October 13th, which the Lady said would convince everyone that she was indeed from Heaven, but he recognized that in the interrogations of the day these same things had come to light and Lucia was not telling the secret.

"Is that the secret?" he asked.

Lucia was silent.

"That is not the secret," roared the judge *"and either you tell the secret or join the others in boiling oil."*

Lucia remained silent.

Arturo Santos had failed . . . as the Communists of the world fail every time they find it necessary to kill or imprison a devout layman, a priest, a nun, a Bishop.

In his anger, probably Arturo Santos would have been very happy to have really boiled the children in oil . . . but he had merely removed them to a locked room.

Now frustrated, but not anxious for a bloody clash with thousands of indignant citizens at such an early stage of this strange, new battle, Santos decided to take the children back to their homes.

It was August 15th, a great religious feast day . . . the feast commemorating the final triumph of the Queen Mother who bore a Son into this vale of tears, watched Him die slowly on a cross, and then lived years of exile through the birth-pangs of His new church. Arturo Santos drove into Fátima to return the children to their families.

Had the children really been telling the truth?

Even hardened Arturo Santos could not help but wonder. Strong men had broken down under an ordeal such

as these children had endured. Yet they had never once contradicted their extraordinary story. Whatever the secret was . . . they had preferred death to betrayal of their "vision."

Years later I talked with Lucia, and when asked if she had really expected to die that day in the Ourem prison, she answered: "Yes, I thought Francisco and Jacinta had already been killed, and that I would be next."

As we progress in this story we may become convinced that the red-letter day of the twentieth century may one day be known as that May 13th, when three children saw a flash of light in the pasture where they were watching sheep . . . and, like Joan of Arc, heard a voice from the sky.

Let us remember that Lenin, *before* the revolution in Russia, thought not of Russia but of the world. In the early days of Bolshevik formation, as we already mentioned, he said: "Our revolution is international. We shall begin in Russia and *on the Iberian Peninsula* (Portugal and Spain) and then we shall close the revolution across Europe." Then was to come the Communization of the world, perhaps in one, perhaps in two, perhaps in three generations. It made no difference.

Portugal is only a small country, but Lenin saw it as the key to Spain, and he saw both together as the jumping-off place for one side of his European pincers.

The agents of his atheism, of whom Arturo Santos was one, were active in Portugal without calling themselves Bolsheviks or . . . as they came later to be known . . . Communists. They were equipped with the same efficient

The author apologizes for occasionally slipping into the first person, but later experiences narrated in the book will make it convenient both for the writer and for the reader.

technique which succeeded in Russia. Their war cry was "Long live the republic! Down with religion! Long live democracy!" Poverty and subjugation to unjust law were identified with Godliness; freedom was made synonymous with Atheism.

Meanwhile the revolution in Russia was postponed because, as Lenin advised, "It is expedient to wait until the war with Germany has weakened the Czar."

Thus it was in Portugal . . . the scene of Atheism's early triumph . . . that we witness the strangest spiritual drama perhaps of the entire Christian era. *As Atheism made Portugal and the Iberian Peninsula a testing ground, so did God.*

Hence Arturo Santos, and his challenge to the God in Whom he did not believe, has become more than a news story.

When Santos returned the children to the village of Fatima the people were just leaving church after Mass. Being the Feast of the Assumption, it was a day on which all Catholics are bound to attend Mass; hence there was a crowd. Everyone was asking: "What has happened to the children?" Some offered the opinion that they might have been taken to Lisbon. But no one knew.

At this moment Santos arrived. Pandemonium broke. Senhor Marto was the first to get to the children. He threw his arms around Jacinta, tears streaming down his face. The other two children clung to him.

The anger of the crowd against Santos was such that the parish priest, even though he had repudiated the rumor of his complicity in the kidnapping, immediately appeared and made a speech implying that with his permission the children went to Ourem . . . thus directing some of the storm away from the threatened dictator. Then Mr. Marto, still holding Jacinta in his arms, careless of the tears wet

upon his cheeks, climbed the rectory steps and . . . quieting the crowd by his mere appearance with Jacinta . . . said:

"Friends, behave! Some shout against the priest, some against the Administrator, some against the Governor. But no one is to blame. The blame lies in lack of faith, and all has been allowed by the One above."

The priest hearing this from the rectory, took advantage of the sudden silence to say: "Senhor Marto speaks the truth . . . Senhor Marto is right."

Most of the crowd was quiet, but there were still a few men who looked menacingly at Santos while talking among themselves. Seeing this, *Senhor Marto offered to accompany the Administrator* (who for the past two days had tortured his own children) *to safety*.

Was the Administrator grateful for this wonderful Christian understanding and forgiveness? Was he touched by it, and . . . after seeing the great faith of the children, was he sorry?

During the time that Mr. Marto remained with him, the Administrator spent almost every moment trying to convince that poor and uneducated shepherd of Fátima that he should disbelieve his children's story.

Like Judas . . . and perhaps like most of the obdurate Communist leaders of the world today whether of petty, revolutionary, or of national jurisdiction . . . he was too hardened in his policies and too blind in his ungodly use of power to accept a chance at truth. To him, the unbelievable Christian virtue which had again saved him from physical harm was still stupid. Did not his very safety seem proof of the invincible strength of godlessness?

What he had done . . . in kidnapping and trying the children . . . had turned against him. Everything that transpired at Ourem had become a matter of court record, and

it made the existence of a secret revelation to the children undeniable.

But his personal failure, and what later happened at Fátima, merely confirmed Santos in his intent to destroy that Divine Enemy which was winning against him without fighting back!

On August 13th, the children were in prison, but fifteen thousand people in the Cova da Iria heard thunder, and saw a cloud move from the east and come to rest over the tree as we have already described.

The next time the children saw the vision was at nearby Valinhos on August 19th, according to Lucia's report.

The vision said:

"I want you to continue to go to the Cova da Iria on the thirteenth of the month and to keep on reciting the beads every day."

Having continually suffered so much at the hands of her family and recalling the recent merciless treatment of the Administrator, Lúcia wants to make sure that the Lady will not forget the promised miracle:

"You won't forget to perform a miracle so that everyone will believe that you are really appearing to us?" she asks.

"Yes," answers the Lady. "In the last month I will perform a miracle so that all may believe. If they had not taken you to the town the miracle would be better known. The Child Jesus will come with Saint Joseph to bless the world. Our Lady of the Rosary and Our Lady of Sorrows will also come. And Our Lord will come to give peace to the world."

"What should be done with the money the people leave

at the Cova da Iria?" she enquires.

"Two biers should be made for the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. You and Jacinta and two other girls dressed in white, carry one: Francisco and three other boys, carry the other. The money on the biers should be used for the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary."

"Several sick people have asked me to implore you to cure them."

"Yes, I will cure some of them within a year," comes the Lady's reply.

Many people are concerned about the health of their bodies, fewer about the spiritual welfare of their souls. The Lady from heaven is concerned about the body as she has proved by her willingness to grant cures at Lúcia's request. But she is especially anxious about the eternal salvation of souls, and this she impresses upon the seers in a supreme recommendation.

"Pray, pray very much," she says, as her beautiful features take on a look of great sadness, *"and make sacrifices for sinners, for many souls go to hell because they have no one to make sacrifices and to pray for them."*

When the vision was gone, the children broke off the branches on which she had rested. Later these branches were noted to have an unusual and wonderful fragrance.

On September 13th, about thirty thousand people gathered in the Cova da Iria.

The news, winged by attacks in the controlled government press, had now spread not only through Portugal but even to neighboring France and Spain.

Again the vision spoke of the "miracle" to be performed in October:

"Continue to say the Rosary to bring about the end of the War," the Vision directed. *"In October Our Lord will come also, and Our Lady of Sorrows and of Carmel, and Saint Joseph with the Child Jesus, to bless the world. God is content with your sacrifices but does not wish you to sleep with the rope . . . wear it only during the day."*

Again Lucia asked about cures people were begging.

"Some I will cure, others not. In October I will perform the miracle so that all will believe."

On this occasion, the thirty thousand people not only saw the children in their ecstasy . . . but they saw a globe of light move over the sky from the east, as on August 13th, and rest over the tree. Afterwards, under the burning and brilliant Portuguese sky, they saw a rain of bright petals . . . like snow . . . which disappeared just as it seemed to reach the ground.

In October, therefore, it is little wonder that *the crowd reached the incredible number of 100,000 . . .* according to a careful estimate made by a professor from the University of Coimbra. We say "incredible number" because Fátima was ninety miles by road from Lisbon, with no public means of transportation, and the entire population within an area of many miles could not have made that number. Moreover, it was raining. High winds swept the roads. The Cova was a slushy pool.

papers have recorded eye witness accounts of editors and reporters who had been at Fatima. They had expected to report a crowd dispersed and put to flight by soldiers, or a crowd repudiating the children because a miracle predicted had not materialized.

But this — verbatim — is what they saw . . . as they wrote it and as it appeared in print in *The Daily News*:

The rains kept falling. Drops trickled down the women's skirts of coarse wool or striped cotton, making them as heavy as lead. Water dripped from the caps and broad-brimmed hats onto Sunday finery. Bare feet of women and hobnailed boots of men sloshed in the wide pools of muddy roads. They did not seem to notice the rain but went up hills without stopping, illuminated by faith, anxious for sight of the miracle promised by the lady to take place at noon.

A murmur drifting down from the hills reached us. It was a murmur like the faraway voice of the sea. It was the religious songs; now becoming clear, intoned by thousands of voices. On the plateau, over a hill, filling the valley, there was a vast and a moving mass of thousands upon thousands of people in prayer."

O Seculo adds that, entering Fatima, some of those who had become atheists during the seven years of the atheist regime were joking. "Aren't you going to see the saint?" one asked. "Not unless she comes to see me!" and the newspaper continues:

They laughed heartily but the devout went on, indifferent to anything which was not part of their pilgrimage. All night long through the dark and rain, the most varied vehicles moved into the town square (of Ourem) carrying the faithful and the curious, and also old ladies, somberly dressed and weighted by the years.

At dawn the sun was rising grayly through the rain but dark clouds loomed over Fatima. Yet nothing could stop

the crowd converging from every road toward that now holy place.

Though some came in luxurious automobiles, continually sounding their horns, oxcarts dragged slowly alongside them. There were carriages of all types, victoria chaises, landaus, and wagons fitted out for the occasion with seats and crowded to the limit.

After a further description of the vehicles and the people, O Seculo continues:

About ten o'clock in the morning the skies were altogether black and sheets of rain, driven by a chilly northeast wind, whipped the faces of the pilgrims, drenched the roads, and chilled the people to the bone. Some sought shelter under the trees, against the walls, or in scattered houses. Parked along the road near Fatima were carriages of every type and thousands of pilgrims that had come from many miles around and from the provinces, gathered about the small oak tree which, in the words of the children, their Lady had chosen as a pedestal. This small, shredded tree was the center of a great circle around which the devout and other spectators ranged themselves.

Then, in the Cova da Iria, *Diario de Noticias* reports:

At one o'clock the rain stopped. The sky had a certain gray clarity but seemed to suddenly be getting darker. The sun seemed veiled in gauze. We could look at it without strain. The gray tint of mother-of-pearl began changing as if into a silver disc that was growing and growing . . . until it broke the clouds! Then the silvery sun, still shrouded in that grayish light, began to rotate and wander within the circle of the receded clouds!

The people cried out with one voice. Thousands, transported by ecstasy fell to their knees upon the muddy ground. Then, as if it were shining through the stained glass windows of a great cathedral, the light became a rare blue,

spreading its rays upon the nave . . . Slowly the blue faded away and now the light seemed to be filtered through yellow. Yellow spots were falling now upon the white kerchiefs and dark shirts of coarse wool. They were spots which repeated themselves indefinitely over the landscape. All the people were weeping and praying bareheaded, weighted down by the greatness of the miracle. These were seconds, moments, that seemed hours . . .

O Seculo, the other heretofore skeptical newspaper adds: *From beside the parked carriages and where many thousands stood, afraid to descend into the muddy soil of the Cova da Iria, we saw the immense crowd turn toward the sun at its highest, free of all clouds. The sun seemed to us like a plate of dull silver. It could be seen without the least effort. It did not blind or burn. It seemed as though an eclipse were taking place. All of a sudden a tremendous shout burst forth, 'Miracle, miracle!'*

Before the astonished eyes of the people, whose attitude carried us back to Biblical times, and who, white with terror, heads uncovered, gazed at the sun which trembled and made brusque and unheard of movement beyond all cosmic laws, the sun seemed literally to dance in the sky.

Immediately afterward the people asked each other if they saw anything and what they had seen. The greatest number avowed that they saw the sun trembling and dancing; others declared they saw the smiling face of the Blessed Virgin herself. They swore that the sun turned around on itself as if it were a wheel of fireworks and had fallen almost to the point of burning the earth with its rays. Some said they saw it change colors successively.

Then occurred what was perhaps the strangest, the most substantiating evidence of all.

When the phenomenon was over, and the sun was shining normally in a now clear sky . . . too brilliant to be

gazed upon . . . the bewildered people, excitedly conferring with each other, began to feel their clothing.

They had been in rain for many hours . . . Even those under umbrellas . . . as most of them were . . . had become soaked to the skin. They had stood here, less than fifteen minutes before, in dripping misery.

But their clothes were dry.

Ten witnesses might have made a mistake. A hundred, in such a vast crowd, might conceivably have been hysterical. But the witnesses numbered almost a tenth of a million!!

The reporter from "The Century" was Avelino de Almeida, who went to school with the president of the Municipal Council of Santarem, Antonio de Bastos. Mr. de Bastos was among the many unbelievers who had gone to Fatima. He decided to write Almeida, after reading the report in "The Century", to ask Almeida's *secret* and *personal* opinion of the phenomenon.

At the request of Bastos, Almeida wrote a much more sincere and detailed account than he had dared to give in the pages of "The Century". It reads in part:

Breaking a silence of more than twenty years, you write to ask me for details of what I saw and heard on the mountain at Fatima.

Some are convinced that promises from Heaven were fulfilled; others find themselves far from believing in the unquestioned reality of a miracle. You were a believer in your youth and later ceased to be a believer. Family reasons brought you to Fatima in the great wave of people who gathered there on October thirteenth. Your rationalism suffered a formidable blow, and wishing to establish a definite opinion, you make use of unprejudiced evidence, such as mine, since I was there only in fulfillment of a very difficult mission, that of reporting impartially for "The Century" facts which might develop before me.

It may not satisfy you, but certainly what your eyes saw and what you heard was no different from what I saw and heard, and there were few who were insensible to the grandeur of this spectacle, unique and worthy of thought and study from every viewpoint.

And then Dr. Almeida goes on to tell, not so much from the reports of others (as he does in the reporting in "O Seculo") but from his own background and observations, exactly what happened.

This testimony is extremely lengthy and we need not repeat it. However, Dr. Almeida explains that phenomena reported before October at Fatima, and historical conditions in Portugal, were responsible for this tremendous wave of people that went to the mountain top that celebrated Saturday.

*He concludes: Was it a miracle, as the people shouted? Was it a natural phenomenon as the learned say? I now don't care to know. But I only tell you what I saw. The rest is with science and the Church.**

What was the effect of the Miracle on the *unbelievers*?

There are at least seven scientifically objective facts:

1. *The time and place* of this event were *predicted in advance*;
2. *A light* of extraordinary power was seen over a radius of more than twenty miles like a "*Catherine wheel*" of fireworks, sending off great shafts of colored light which tinted objects on the ground;
3. It plummeted toward the earth after several minutes, assuming such a gigantic nearness that the tens of thousands of witnesses *thought it was the end of the world*;

*This letter appeared in *Ilustracao Portuguesa*, Number 610, October 29, 1917.

4. The great ball of fire stopped *just as it was about to crash upon the earth*, and returned into the sky;

5. It came from and went back to the location of *the sun*, so that those who saw it actually thought it was the sun;

6. The top of the mountain where this occurred, which had been drenched by several hours of constant rain, *suddenly dried* within a matter of minutes;

7. *Tens of thousands of witnesses* of all classes and of various creeds, extended over an area of about six hundred square miles.

Colonel Frederico Oom, professor of the Faculty of Sciences and Director of the Lisbon Observatory, stated:

“If it were a cosmic phenomenon, astronomical and meteorological observatories would not have failed to record it. And this is precisely what is missing: that inevitable recording of all the disturbances in the world system, no matter how small they may be . . .”

Asked if this phenomenon was of a psychological nature the scientist replied that it might have been, but as an astronomer he could definitely affirm one thing:

“It is completely foreign to the branch of science that I cultivate.”

This statement by Colonel Oom was published in *O Século* in Lisbon shortly after the Miracle occurred, with the intention of giving the only possible explanation which science could offer: collective suggestion.

However, as the evidence has been studied and evaluated, it becomes absolutely certain that the phenomenon was not the result of mass hypnosis or collective suggestion.

The reasons are:

1. It was witnessed over a large area by persons not in the crowd;

2. Among the crowd were scientists and “unbelievers” who viewed the phenomenon not only with objectivity, but with particular care to protect themselves from the possibility of collective suggestion.

For example, we have the Baron of Alvaiazere, who carefully took all precautions outlined by Gustave le Bon in his *Psychology of the Crowd*. The Baron had not expected a miracle and wanted to be sure that he would not be the victim of suggestion. He died in 1955, and in a deposition to the Canonical Committee he stated: “. . . An indescribable impression overtook me. I only know that I cried out: ‘I believe! I believe! I believe!’ And tears ran from my eyes. I was amazed, in ecstasy before the demonstration of Divine Power . . . converted in that moment.”

Doctor Garrett a professor from the University of Coimbra in detailed testimony describes that he feared some impairment to his retina, covered his eyes and turned in an opposite direction, opened his eyes again . . . and continued to see the miracle.

Several other men of science who were actual witnesses, testified to the objective reality of the phenomenon and added that no natural explanation could be given.

Pio Sciatizzi, S.J., scientist who published a critique of the Miracle in Rome, says: “Of the historic reality of this event there can be no doubt whatsoever. That it was outside and against known laws can be proved by certain simple scientific considerations.” And he concludes:

“Given the indubitable reference to God, and the general context of the event, it seems that we must attribute to Him alone *the most obvious and colossal miracle of history . . .*”

Perhaps as amazing as the “miracle” itself is the revelation which the children claimed that Heaven was asserting:

World War I (then at its peak) would soon end, but

another . . . a more terrible war . . . would begin soon unless people recognized that war is a punishment for sin. Men had to cease offending God, Who was too grievously offended by too many.

Moreover, following this "More terrible war" . . . which would come even "Within the reign of the next Pope" . . . an atheistic power would arise in Russia and extend its errors "throughout the entire world", fomenting further war, and "several entire nations will be annihilated".

Of course the effect on the nation, as is immediately evident in the attitude of the editors of *O Seculo* and *O Dia*, was deep and mighty. The atheist government did its best to discredit the whole affair and to hold to its doctrine and its power.

But, as the ensuing months and years soon proved, *God had won.*

At first the church was reticent, as is her traditional and proper attitude in such matters. This phenomenon might have been diabolical, and it might even have been something explicable by unknown natural laws.

A Commission was appointed by Monsignor José Correia da Silva, a devout and learned priest who was consecrated Bishop of Leiria and appointed to make a thorough investigation. Thousands of witnesses were interrogated, scientists consulted, every possible facet was exhaustively examined. On June 13th, 1921, fourth anniversary of the apparition of the Immaculate Heart, the Bishop spoke with Lucia and requested that she go incognito to Porto and live in utter seclusion without ever mentioning who she was or anything that had happened. This was perhaps a final test, as well as it was a protection for the now fourteen year old girl from the intrusions of thousands of pilgrims who were plaguing her constantly

with the same questions, the same adulation, the same thoughtless harassment.

The other two children, as the Vision foretold, had died. (We will speak of this in more detail later.)

By 1929, with increasing thousands visiting the Cova da Iria and miraculous cures reported, the investigation had been completed. The apparitions were considered genuine by the Bishop, and in his historic pastoral letter he wrote:

"The children long before named the day and hour at which a public miracle was to take place. The news spread quickly over the whole of Portugal and, although the day was chilly and pouring rain, many thousands of people gathered . . . They saw the different manifestations of the sun paying homage to the Queen of Heaven and Earth, who is more radiant than the sun in all its splendor. This phenomenon which no astronomical observatory registered was not natural. It was seen by reporters of the principal newspapers *and by people many miles away.*"

Surprise was evoked at the great length of time required for this formal approbation. Shrines like Lourdes, Pontmain, and La Salette had been approved after only a few years. Yet, even though the proofs at Fátima were so dramatic, the local hierarchy took thirteen years!

It was the very unusualness of Fátima, however, that caused the long hesitation. Pope Pius XI publicly expressed belief in the apparitions as early as 1922. And in 1942, twenty-fifth anniversary of the apparitions, Pope Pius XII consecrated Russia and the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and called upon all Christendom to throw itself wholeheartedly into the "revolution of faith" begun at Fátima.

V

What It Proved

ASKED why they thought the Miracle occurred, all witnesses gave a similar answer:

"So that we might believe."

If we accept this as caused by God, then we must accept two corollaries: (1) The reality of the children's apparitions, and (2) The authenticity of the message.

Apparitions, as such, are not uncommon. And on examination we find that the apparitions of Fatima *in themselves* were never referred to by the children as particularly significant. In all six apparitions no special significance was attached to the *appearance* of the apparition. The apparition wore a brilliant star at the hem of the robe and a golden globe suspended around the neck. Yet no explanation was given of the globe and the star.

There is reason to believe that the globe represented the world, and that the star represented the red star of Russia which the apparition had promised to change into a star of light if certain conditions are fulfilled.

But again this is something we only can conjecture from the *message*.

So we conclude that the apparition, as such, was of secondary importance and that the Miracle was primarily wrought *to prove the message* brought by the apparitions to the world.

In summary, that message is this:

- (1) There is a heaven and an eternal state of separation from God, and at the present time "Many, many souls" are going to hell because

“there is no one to pray and to make sacrifices for them”;

- (2) World War I was going to end but a second world war would begin within the reign of the next Pope (Pius XI). The world would know this second and more terrible war was about to begin when a strange light appeared in the sky (This light appeared on January 17, 1939, and caused consternation throughout Europe; three months later Hitler marched into Austria);
- (3) Error will spread from Russia, through atheists, *fomenting further war*;
- (4) The Pope will suffer much;
- (5) The good will be persecuted;
- (6) Several nations will be annihilated;

However, (and this seems to be the most important part of the message):

- (7) *The above occurrences will take place only if this message is not heeded by the world and, in particular, if a sufficient number of persons do not cease offending God, already so much offended*;
- (8) If men do heed this message, the Vision promises: *“Russia will be converted, and there will be peace.”*

In 1946, when this writer spent four consecutive hours with the eldest of the three children who carried on the conversations with the apparitions, most of the time was in discussion of this one subject: *Exactly what the vision wanted to prove to the world.*

She summarized it in that one sentence:

“Men must cease to offend God who is already so much offended.”

Sometime after the Miracle was over, one of the children said to another:

“What are the sins by which men offend God?”

“I really don’t know,” the other child answered. “Missing Mass, I guess. Stealing, swearing, cursing . . .”

“And just for these things a soul goes to Hell?”

“Well . . . *it's a sin.*”

It is precisely here that world-conscience needs awakening.

The evil of sin is not so much in the act itself as in the fact that it is an offense against God.

Indeed, under some circumstances certain acts are not sinful, while under other circumstances they are. The evil of sin (which is the only true evil in the world) lies in the fact that it is *an offense against the Infinite Goodness of the Creator.*

This very simple, important fact is buried by modern man beneath an atmosphere of secularism.

The essential is our *relationship to God*. It is the same today as it was when Moses came down from Mount Sinai. It is the same today as when Sodom and Gomorrha were annihilated (in what a Soviet scientist recently suggested to have been a nuclear blast).

Tiny man, on a tiny globe in a tiny solar system, looks out into all the vastness of the universe and says as he throws a red star rocket at the moon: “God does not exist!”

And this is the supreme offense.

One-third of the nations of the world are now controlled by men who take children from their families and educate them to deny God. They are atheists who build armies such as man never dreamed possible, armed with weapons capable of destroying all life on the planet, and they have vowed to wipe out religion from the earth—like the first “Red Star” revolution in the tiny nation where the Miracle of the Sun occurred.

For us in the free world and for all those enslaved in the Red world, the Miracle speaks.

It recalls to us—like a new Sinai—that God exists and that man rejects Him not only in the absolute heresy of Communism, but *whenever he disobeys and neglects God.*

Modern man's problem is the inability to accept moral authority. He pushes his claim of freedom to the point of denying the "Giver of freedom", and he embraces the ridiculous heresy of making his own objectives the rule of morality.

So while the fullness of the message of Fatima can be understood and embraced only by persons of a certain degree of faith, the ultimate, great message of the miracle of Fatima is for all mankind, with the universal blessing which all must hear: "*Men must cease offending God, Who is already so much offended.*"

ADMINISTRATOR of Ourem, Arturo dos Santos, refused to bow to the Miracle of the Sun.

He not only fought a war against the children "even unto death", threatening to burn them alive in boiling oil, but he fought a war against the crowds with squadrons of soldiers armed with swords and bayonets. Indeed, he fought a daily, haunting struggle, hour by hour, against the mysterious "Lady" of the Fatima mountain.

And this leads to a point of very great importance:

"If God wanted to change Russia", someone might ask, "then why does He not perform a Miracle of the Sun over Moscow?"

Arturo dos Santos helps us to understand; *Miracles in themselves do not cause conversion.*

If some men do not accept God when they look into the immensity of the universe, or into the microscopic intricacy of the atom, then how can we expect them to acknowledge His existence over other phenomena, which — no matter how marvelous or unexpected—could never hope to exceed these wonders to which we are daily witnesses?

Furthermore, to see a miracle, and *to realize what one is seeing*, are two different things.

First there is a feeling of complete *unreality*—as though

one has been dreaming, as though one were suffering hallucinations. What is witnessed is so unreal against the background of life's experience that the mind at first rejects it as not being real at all.

The present writer's experience of having witnessed a dramatic cure at Fatima emphasizes this fact. It was the cure of a twenty-one year old girl named Arminda Campos, ill for thirteen years and dying of a complication of three diseases. She had been in seven hospitals and undergone nine major operations before being brought to Fatima. She had not come there in the hope of a cure, but because she knew she was dying and wanted to visit there before her death. During all her thirteen years of illness, in imitation of one of the children of Fatima she had offered her sufferings "for the conversion of sinners and in reparation for the sins of the world".

Standing in front of her pallet one could not have the slightest inkling that this pitiable, dying person was about to be the center of an "explosion of the supernatural" just as marvelous as the one about which this book is written.

She was *instantly cured*.

We actually walked around her as she was getting up, and saw the blankets shrink upon her body. The great tumor had disappeared instantly. Within two hours we saw dry, clear scars on the girl's side where just before there had been two great, running incisions made by a surgeon's scalpel.

We will not go into the details of the cure here. Our purpose is to analyze the effect of this curative miracle on those who saw it as a prelude to understanding the effect of the miracle of the sun on the witnesses who will soon appear in these pages.

First there was the writer's own experience of *NO emotional reaction*.

Even seeing the girl staring with almost ecstatic expression as she moved her hand in awe at the places in her side where scars had appeared, the writer felt no more emotion than might have been experienced under any happy circumstance.

It was fully *two hours* before the tremendous event which had just happened crossed the chasm from understanding to *realization* and evoked the marveling exclamation: "I have seen the Hand of God!"

Although one might consider it necessary to believe what his own eyes had seen, *because it was so completely contradictory to normal reality and experience* the mind and emotions had instinctively rejected it as *unreal*.

More remarkable than the writer's reaction to the cure of Arminda Campos was that of her own father.

This good man had seen his daughter progress, through various stages of illness over a period of thirteen years, to the door of death. And now, in a moment, he saw her walking about perfectly normal, cured of an almost total paralysis, of a great tumor, of incisions in her side, and even of the debility which would necessarily follow from her long immobility.

Although the nurses were radiant with joy, this man made no move to speak to his daughter or to embrace her. Indeed he showed no emotion whatsoever for perhaps an hour after the cure.

Then suddenly he cried out across the hospital room in which his daughter had been segregated from the crowds, ran to her and embraced her, weeping *in the final realization that he was not dreaming*.

We are not asking any one to believe in this particular cure. We are testifying only as to *reactions personally experienced and witnessed*. And in the light of this experience,

the Miracle of the Sun on October 13, 1917, was of extraordinary character not merely in itself, but *in its effect on the witnesses*.

The emotions of the crowd on that mountain on October 13, 1917, were literally shredded. Most of the crowd was stricken with terror. They believed it was the end of the world.

Then suddenly the terror was lifted. There followed a tremendous feeling of relief, of joy at having been spared burning destruction. And in addition to all this, when the phenomenon was over, there was a *second* miracle when suddenly the entire mountain top—before that moment a sea of water and mud—became dry. *And they could feel it with their hands*.

But for us who were not there, *does it not still seem unreal?*

We can understand why some elements of the miracle—such as the fact of the mountain suddenly becoming dry—are not discussed much by most writers. These “extra” elements were more personal, and heighten the feeling of unreality in those who were not there.

But it is very probable that many of the witnesses, after panic followed by sudden relief, would have thought the whole thing a dream if *each one* had not had a personal *tangible* evidence that they had been witnesses to an “explosion of the Supernatural”.

The captain of the regiment of soldiers on the mountain that day—with orders to prevent the gathering of the crowd—was converted instantly. Apparently so were hundreds of other unbelievers, as their testimony will show. *

Yet, here is Arturo dos Santos, the Administrator of Ourem, who had received more evidence than anyone, and

* For detailed testimony read MEET THE WITNESSES, AMI Press 1961, 160 pages, with more than sixty photographs taken at the time of the miracle and later.

who turned away and still claimed there was no God, and that the red star would continue to fight through the world against the Lady of the Star of Light.

And this poor man's lonely death in 1955 refusing the Sacraments, leaves us with one of the most sobering thoughts about man in the atomic age of Communism.*

We would like to end on this note, but for the "good" persons—for those who sincerely try not to offend God—the message of Fatima has particular directions.

During the first five apparitions the Vision specified certain aids which men could use to help them overcome themselves, to help them rise from the offenses against God which now deliver the world to the precipice of atomic war.

These positive conditions have been formulated into a simple pledge which has subsequently been signed by more than twenty million persons in fifty-seven nations. Those who keep this pledge are called "The Blue Army"—an army of positive religious action in the face of the mass of sinfulness which, like an ugly and festering boil, has come to a head in the militant atheism of small party dictatorships in Russia and China.

* Arturo dos Santos died June 27, 1955. He could not have a religious burial, but in December of that year an interesting article appeared in *Stella*, the outstanding religious magazine of Portugal, which revealed something not previously known.

A pious woman approached Santos in June, 1920 (less than three years after the miracle) to ask permission to install a statue in the little Chapel at Fatima. After hesitating, suddenly *he gave permission*, stipulating that it be done when there were no crowds and that *she should not reveal that he had given permission*. (This was revealed by the woman in question to the Baron of Alvaizere, who described it in a letter to the Viscount of Montelo on June 5, 1920).

On April 7, 1942, when this same statue was being carried in triumphant procession from Fatima to Lisbon, Santos was in the crowd when it passed through Ourem, and he was heard to declare: "I am not at all in favor of religion and of priests . . . but when I saw the image of the Vision I felt inwardly something which I cannot explain . . ."

VI

How Is It Carried Out?

Monsignor Harold Colgan, founder of the Blue Army of Our Lady, admits: "Like many priests as well as most Catholics, I did not begin to hear about the message of Fatima until after the war.

Two years later, facing a blank hospital wall and waiting for death, I began to consider the importance of all Our Lady told us. The war she foretold was over. But her prophecy of the continued spread of Communism with further war and annihilation of nations remained our alternative to hearing her requests.

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In addition to these three promises (which do not bind under sin) the pledge adds two practices expected of all members of the Blue Army of Our Lady: 1) The outward wearing of *a sign of blue* (such as a blue Miraculous Medal or a bit of blue ribbon, as a reminder of membership in Our Lady's spiritual army and a reminder of the pledge: 2) *A communion of reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and fifteen minutes of meditation on mysteries of the Rosary on the first Saturday of five consecutive months.*

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also, anticipate Her definite triumph over evil, as *She Herself announced here at Fatima.*”

On August 28, 1963, Feast of the Assumption in Russia, Cardinal Tisserant, Dean of the Sacred College of Cardinals, returned to Fatima to dedicate a Byzantine Chapel built in this same Blue Army International Centre as a welcome to the Russians and a symbol of the unity and peace Our Lady of Fatima promised.

On Nov. 21, 1964 Pope Paul VI renewed Pius XII's consecration to the Immaculate Heart before the *entire Ecumenical Council* and simultaneously announced a *mission to Fatima from the Pope*. This Papal Mission took place May 13, 1965. Pope Paul VI presented the Golden Rose at Fatima, confiding “the entire Church” to her protection. At this time he also sent a golden Rosary to Lucia.

On May 13, 1967, a record 1,000,000 pilgrims, assembled in Fatima, witnessed what was the greatest triumph in favor of the message of Fatima that had taken place in 50 years. Pope Paul VI himself went to Fatima and in a pastoral letter (*Signum Magnum*) to the bishops of the world, confirmed many of the truths proclaimed by Our Lady to the seers in 1917, such as the NEED for devotion to the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and that this devotion should take the form of consecration.

The Most Reverend Joao Venancio, Bishop of Fatima and International head of the Blue Army of Our Lady, has urged crusaders of the Blue Army throughout the world to increase their efforts “*because through the fulfillment of these conditions the conversion of Russia is assured, and because as long as enough per-*

sons do not fulfill them the poison of atheistic propaganda continues to emanate from Russia to the corners of the earth."

Father Pio, the famous stigmatist in the Capuchin Monastery of San Giovanni Rotondo in Italy, who accepted all members of the Blue Army as his "spiritual children," made this remarkable prophecy:

"Russia will be converted when there is a Blue Army member for every Communist."



The "Blue Army Pledge was prepared in consultation with Lucia, who spoke to the apparitions. The writer promised on the first page of this book to tell of his interview with her.

Few people have actually spoken with Lucia. Her communications have been made mostly to the Bishop of Fatima. In May, 1948, she entered a Carmelite cloister under the name of Sister Mary of the Immaculate Heart. I saw her there for an hour on October 18th, 1952. I had visited previously with her for several hours in 1946, just before she retired to the privacy of cloistered walls. Visits with her are so rare that, at the time of this writing, I am the only living American layman to have seen her.

In 1920, when Bishop Don José Correia da Silva was appointed to the see of Leiria (in which Fátima is located) after the see had been vacant for eighty years, he was given to know that one of his greatest tasks was the thorough investigation of Fátima. And any of us who have the grace to know this wonderful Bishop, and to know his history, believe that the choice of such a prudent, intel-

ligent, thorough, judicious and religious person was made in Heaven. He was perfectly suited for the very difficult task. Portugal was still governed by anticlericals and opinion in Portugal at the time was tremendously divided both within the church and without.

One of his first acts was to call Lucia to him.

Until the moment of that interview, he had not spoken to her. He was one of the ecclesiastics who had maintained a prudent reserve in the entire matter. And now, instead of plying her with many questions about the apparitions, he asked if she would be willing to leave her mother and her home and enter a private school in a distant city, without telling anyone who she was.

"Yes, Bishop," the fourteen year old girl answered.

"And you will tell no one where you are going," the Bishop added, in a voice which naturally mingled gentleness with authority.

"Yes, Bishop," the girl replied.

"In the school where you are going you will tell no one who you are."

"Yes, Bishop."

"You will say nothing more to anyone about the apparitions of Fátima."

"Yes, Bishop."

And in the ensuing years, teachers in the school (with exception of the superior) and all the students had no idea of the identity of the dark girl named "Maria das Dores" (her assumed name). When Fátima was mentioned (as it often was, since it was becoming a matter of international as well as national news) this Maria, whom everyone liked, never betrayed by the slightest expression or word that she knew anything more about it than those who talked around her.

It was on August 12th, 1946, that I was privileged to visit with her. I sat immediately next to Sister during the interview, holding a little black notebook in which I had jotted the various questions I wanted to remember. I had had several interviews with religious celebrities, including the living sister of Saint Therese of Lisieux, and other persons whom I know to be unusual, but this interview was sensibly different. Here beside me was a person to whom I believed that God, through the Blessed Mother, had revealed the future . . . *and His conditions for world peace.*

In the course of the visit, I asked: "Sister, is the recitation of the Rosary the principal request of Our Lady?"

"No," she answered, with a surprising positiveness.

I had asked the question only as a lead. Until that moment I had thought that the Rosary *was* the principal condition for Russia's conversion. Nothing in all the ensuing conversation, until we came to the question of another war, surprised me more.

"Well what is the principal request?"

"*Sacrifice,*" she answered.

"And what do you mean by 'sacrifice'?"

"By 'sacrifice' Our Lady said that She meant *the faithful fulfillment of one's daily duty.*"

"But isn't the Rosary important?"

"Yes," she said, "because we must pray if we are to be able to fulfill our daily duty."

We talked for some time on this point, and then I said:

"Sister, you have not mentioned the First Saturdays. In a vision in 1927 did not the Blessed Virgin tell you that She asked Communion on five consecutive first Saturdays of the month, together with fifteen minutes spent in meditation upon the mysteries of the Rosary, for the Conver-

sion of Russia?"

"Yes."

"Well, would you not say that these first Saturdays are therefore important?"

She was silent for a moment. It was obvious that she did not want to emphasize the importance of anything but daily duty. Finally she said:

"I would say that the first Saturdays are important, because if people make them they will purge themselves of sin once a month and renew their purpose to fulfill daily duty."

"And what about going to Fátima, to the Shrine. Is that not a good thing to do?"

This brought a smile to Sister's face as she replied:

"We will do far better to fulfill our daily duty."

I had always considered the Scapular to be of importance in the Fátima message because it is the most widely used sign of consecration to the Blessed Virgin. Lucia corroborated this judgment. However, many books written prior to 1950 did not mention the Scapular at all in connection with the Fátima message.

On August 15, 1950, Sister Lucia corrected this very positively in an interview with the Very Rev. Howard Rafferty, O. Carm.

"In many books written about Fátima," Father Rafferty said, "the authors do not give the Scapular as part of the message."

"Oh, they are wrong!" Sister Lucia exclaimed.

Then Father Howard asked what she thought Our Lady meant by appearing as Our Lady of Mount Carmel and holding the Scapular.

The visionary replied: "*She meant that she wants all to wear the Scapular.*" Following another question, she

added: "The Holy Father has told this to the whole world, saying that the Scapular is a sign of Consecration to the Immaculate Heart. Nobody can disagree now." (She referred to a letter written by Pope Pius XII in commemoration of the seventh centennial of the Scapular 1950-51.)

Further pressing the point, as though reluctant to believe that something of importance in the Fátima message had been overlooked by so many, Father Howard then asked if the Scapular was NECESSARY to fulfill the requests of Our Lady of Fátima.

"Yes," she replied.

"Would you say that it was AS NECESSARY AS THE ROSARY?"

And Sister Lucia answered with a sentence which summarizes almost seven hundred years of devotional history:

"The Scapular and the Rosary are inseparable."

It must seem difficult for anyone to believe that such utterly simple devotions could be enough to draw our hearts to God. But when we analyze the Rosary and the Scapular, we find that their simplicity is as deceptive as the chemical simplicity of water. The humblest person need know nothing more than that it exists and is useful, but the scholar can exhaust a life-time learning "why" and "how."

In these pages, it is our purpose above all to make the reader believe in Fátima .

Therefore, we are not writing here of the devotions of Fátima in any detail. It is our purpose above all to make the reader believe in Fátima . . . believe that there is hope for what many of us may have begun to believe was impossible: The conversion of Russia and universal peace. We want the reader to feel that not only did God send

His Mother at Fátima to indicate a solution to this greatest crisis in world history . . . but that the solution is workable . . . and *working*. We want each reader to feel, after turning the last page, that he or she might be the very one who may add the last bit of weight to the scale between good and evil . . . between atheism and fidelity to God. We want it because . . . as we hope yet to prove . . . *the very person reading these lines may very well be the final instrument in obtaining the conversion of Russia.*

We realize this perhaps but what are we, in fact, to do? Are we only to take part in processions, sing hymns and acclaim the Statue of Our Lady of Fátima?

There is a need for supplemental reading, especially for those who are not well instructed in religion. But there is one thing to keep in mind: The Fátima message is SIMPLE. It is as simple as the water we drink. It is the message of daily duty.

In 1946, The Bishop of Fátima, during our rather lengthy interview, said: "The devotions of Fátima are the Rosary, Our Lady's Sorrows, and the Scapular." But, as to the meaning of Fátima, the Bishop said: "Fátima means that we be children of Mary . . . as expressed in the devotion of the Scapular . . . and as Her children, and inspired by the use of the Rosary, offer our daily sacrifices to God in reparation for sin."

Our Lady came at Fátima not to give herself to the world, but Her Son. Such is her office, the office given to her two thousand years ago when an angel appeared in her presence and said: "*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women. Fear not, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and thou shalt bring forth a son; and*

thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the most High . . . and of His Kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke, 1, 28-33.)

And this same Holy Virgin, sent by her Son, came back at Fátima to help *us* find grace with God and, in our own hearts, to bring forth Christ once again to the world that His Kingdom may triumph over the kingdom of evil.

A prayer . . . such as the Rosary . . . is important not so much in itself but because of the effect it must have in our daily lives.

We expressed this thought at great length in the book "*Mary in Her Scapular Promise*," and it is expressed perhaps in its very best form in the book "*True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*," by Saint Grignon de Montfort. This latter book was recommended in a special way by Pope Pius X, and in the Marian Congress of Einsiedeln, in 1906, it was resolved that: "Devotion to Mary after the manner of Blessed de Montfort ought to receive first and weightiest emphasis in the whole educational field, in the family as well as in the social union and in the educational institutions."

And it is possible that if that latter resolution had been adopted after the Congress by the entire church-world, there would not have been two world wars. Indeed, if the requests of the Popes, beginning particularly with the sixteen encyclicals of Leo XIII on the Rosary, had been obeyed . . . Fátima might not have been necessary.

What Our Lady asks of us is essentially no more than we are already obliged to do. Because we have been failing in this obligation, we are threatened with atomic destruction. And she comes to warn us . . . and to offer a Mother's help.

VII

Why The Blessed Virgin?

Fatima is not a magic cure-all for the world's ills but holds the secret of the remedy which lies in our power to apply. In a mystical interpretation of the Old Testament story of Jacob and Esau, St. Grignon de Montfort explains that these two are the figures of the natural and unregenerate man and of the predestinate. Esau, the natural man, is strong and robust and self-reliant. Jacob, the predestinate, is the weaker, the stay-at-home. When Esau was out hunting, Rebecca (their mother) warned Jacob and told him to take two kids from the flock which she prepared in a dish relished by Isaac (their father). Moreover she clothed Jacob in skins, so that Isaac was deceived into thinking that it was the hairy skin of his elder son Esau. Thus Jacob received the greater blessing from his father, Esau receiving the blessing of earth and being placed in subjection to his brother.

The mystical interpretation is that Rebecca, figure of the mother, transforms the weaker son and adorns him in such a way that it is he who receives the coveted blessing. In the same way we may present Our Lady with our love, our good works, our very selves, as Jacob gave her the two kids, and she will transform them and us into fit objects for our Father's blessing.

No Christian is without respect and honor for the Blessed Virgin. He could not adore Christ without honoring her.

But few Christians have learned to regard her as a mother not only of Christ, but of themselves. Few Christians, therefore, really understand what Christ meant when He said: "I am the Vine, you are the branches"; few Christians understand that they have *part* with Christ, *which honor to the Blessed Virgin automatically brings to men.*

Fundamentally this, and this alone, is the reason why in giving the message of Fátima she said: "My Divine Son wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart." Because as Our Lord chose to be born in a stable through her . . . so it is now necessary in a similar manner to have Him come once again into the stable of our tarnished world.

It is important for the Catholic reader, as well as the non-Catholic reader, to understand the role of the Mother of Christ.

In the early centuries, devotion to the Mother of Christ . . . who was called "The new Eve" . . . was fervent among all Christians. It was not, as some supposed, idolatrous. She was revered as the greatest of saints, and her prayer before the throne of God . . . Who had chosen Her as His Mother when he became Man . . . was greatly esteemed.

After the Reformation the Christian world came to be divided on the subject of devotion to her, so that today it can be said that she constitutes one of the principal differences between Catholicism and Protestantism. Within the Catholic Church there is unity of doctrine about her but difference of opinion as to just how much eminence should be given to her. Some say that devotion to her is overemphasized, and some say it is not emphasized enough.

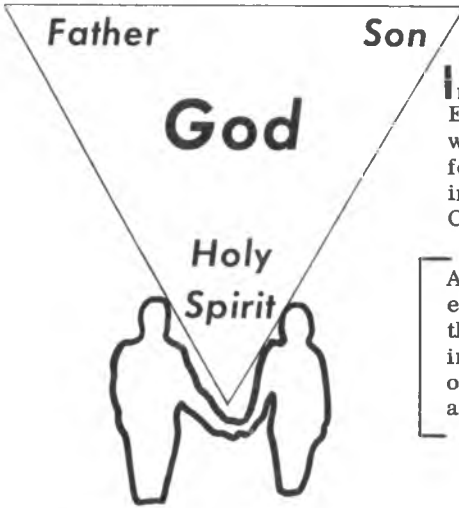
Today, Saint Grignon de Montfort, Saint Alphonsus Ligouri, Saint John Eudes and others have largely contributed to the belief that devotion to the Blessed Virgin

is such an essential part of Christianity that until devotion to her is put in its proper perspective Christianity will never achieve the world perfection to which it is destined.

This perspective sees the Mother of Christ in the role of co-Redemptrix and Mediatrix. It presupposes that her relation to the souls of the world did not cease with the single act of cooperating in the Incarnation, but rather that it began with that act. It is pointed out that God could have become man simply by appearing from nowhere at the age of thirty, and commencing public life; indeed, on the surface it would seem more fitting that He should have thus appeared without multiplying miracles. But He chose to have a human mother in order that He might thus honor all mankind through her, and restore to all men a woman and a Mother who might return what Eve had lost for us.

The most unfortunate and deplorable intellectual loss of our age is the loss of faith in Christ, and for Christians of all creeds that is the loss which interest in devotion to the Mother of Christ can restore. We cannot honor her without, by that very fact, showing understanding and appreciation of God having become a man . . . and that He has a constant and active part in our struggle between good and evil. Thus, to honor her presupposes and includes a *supreme* honor to Him. She is a physical and intellectual link between ourselves and the Incarnation. In associating her in the act of becoming man, God associated us . . . all mankind . . . in that act; and in asking her cooperation for the Incarnation and for the act of Redemption which followed, He asked us . . . because she is one of us.

A diagram-description may help us to understand what all this means.

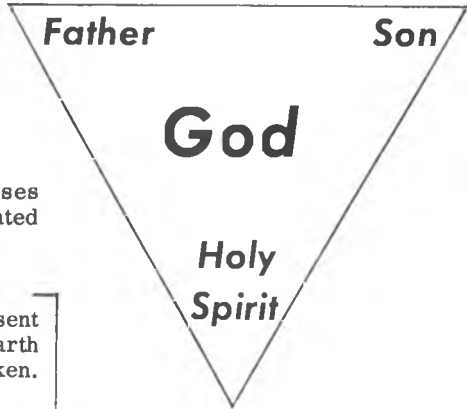


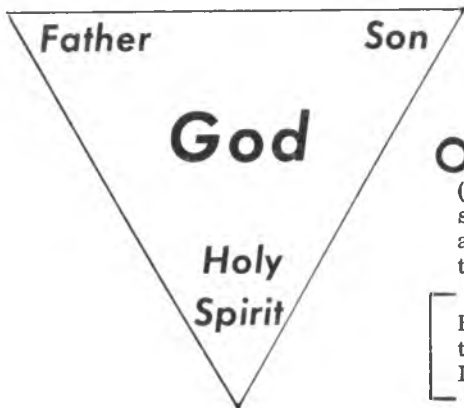
In Paradise, Adam and Eve enjoyed perfect union with God... complete perfection of soul and body in communion with their Creator through Grace.

And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth; and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Gen. II, 7.

By original sin, man loses grace and is separated from God.

And the Lord God sent him out... to till the earth from which he was taken. Gen. III, 23.





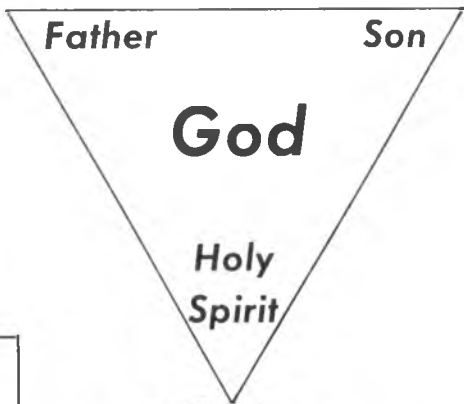
One of the human race (Virgin Mary) is preserved free from sin in anticipation of Redemption.

Hail Mary, full of Grace, the Lord is with thee. Luke, I, 28.



Mary conceived by the Holy Ghost, and GOD BECAME MAN. Through His death on the Cross the Godman, Christ, redeemed us, and made possible again our union with God IN HIS OWN PERSON:

"Now you are the body of Christ, member for member." St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, XII, 27.



From the fact that it was the Blessed Mother who appeared to the children, we are not to gather that mere devotion to Her will convert Russia . . . any more than Patrick Henry's speech freed America. *But devotion to her brings about fuller devotion to Christ and thus to God . . . and the consequence of this in daily living is what will convert Russia.*

VIII

There Will Be Peace

Consequently there is an historical as well as theological reason for saying that the modern loss of appreciation of the Blessed Virgin is not only concomitant with a decline of Christianity but is an integral part of that decline. The restoration of our understanding and devotion to her will necessarily herald a fresh turn from the atheists' camp into a deeper and fuller knowledge and love of Christ.

This fact is not understood.

Pope Pius X said: "Unless devotion to the Blessed Virgin is restored as it should be, we will not have Christ restored to His rightful place." Pope Leo XIII said, "We look to her for the salvation of the modern world." Father Faber expressed it completely and firmly: "Devotion to Mary is not the prominent characteristic of our religion which it ought to be. It has no faith in itself. Hence it is that Jesus is not loved, that heretics are not converted, that Christianity is not exalted; that souls, which might be saints, wither and dwindle; that the Sacraments are not rightly frequented or souls enthusiastically evangelised. *Jesus is obscured because Mary is kept in the background.* . . . It is the miserable unworthy shadow which we call our devotion to the Blessed Virgin that is the cause of all the evils, omissions and declines."

Pope Paul VI, proclaiming Mary as Mother of the Church at the closing of the third session of Vatican Council II on November 21, 1964, stated: "*The intimate,*

the primary source of the sanctifying effectiveness of the Church is to be sought in its mystic union with Christ; a union which we cannot conceive as separate from her who is the Mother of the Word Incarnate and whom Jesus Christ Himself wanted closely united to Himself for our salvation."

Our greatest danger to success in obtaining fulfillment of the glorious promise of Fatima is probably not the atheists (who are rather objects of the promise than persons expected to fulfill its conditions).

Perhaps our greatest danger lies in our own failure to accept such a simple solution to the world's problems, and to accept the message of Fatima for what it is.

For those who want to be sure that they are carrying out the message of Fatima, they need only to make and keep the Blue Army pledge. And if they want to be sure that they are effectively causing the message of Fatima to be fulfilled by others in the world, they need merely see that this pledge is made by others, even as they keep it themselves.

By this effort the world-force of atheism is going to be converted. *How* this will come about is something of which, as we have said, most of us have little idea.

In a manner of speaking, Saul of Tarsus could be called the first "Red."

He was a short, stocky man with tremendous vitality, physical courage, sense of principle and leadership. He was present when a disciple of Jesus Christ (named Stephen) was hustled outside the gates of Jerusalem to be killed. Saul joined, and helped murder the first Christian martyr.

As Saint Stephen fell under a rain of stones, bleeding

and dying, he cried out the words used by His Master a short time before: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Saul mounted his horse. Leaving Stephen's battered corpse he started to ride towards the city of Damascus with letters entitling him to supervise and carry out the death of every Christian in the city.

Can any of us imagine how different history might be if that fiery agent . . . Saul of Tarsus . . . had continued that ride and he, as well as all the agents of anti-Christ, had succeeded in their immediate goal of exterminating Christianity?

As he galloped along the road, lightning suddenly flashed from the sky and struck Saul from his horse! Bruised and blind, he lay helpless in the dust of the road, and out of the sky came the majestic words: "*Saul, Saul . . . why persecuteth thou ME?*"

The world's first Red stumbled back upon his horse, made his way to Damascus, *changed even his name* to wipe out the past, and labored until he had turned the network of Roman roads into a highway to Christianity.

Saint Paul had been converted.

Today, Russia is a Saul of Tarsus. Many in Russia and in the Third International hate and persecute Christianity because they have been reared to an opposite ideology. They do not know what they are doing. The writer has talked with Communists in Europe and America, and he has yet to meet an atheist who understands Christianity. For most of them, Alexander VI is still in the Vatican and Church property is what keeps the people poor. Like Saul and his followers striking out at Stephen, they strike out because they confuse peace with materialism; they mistake socialism for love of society, the cross for defeat. They have *no idea whatever* of what the angels

meant when they sang over Bethlehem: "Peace on earth to men of good will."

Once again, lightning is going to strike from the sky . . . and militant atheists will fall into the dust, blinded momentarily to all their false ideas, and in that moment of blind light they will hear the words: "*Why persecuteth thou Me?*"

And they will rise. They will go to the ends of their International . . . turning the perfection of their world organization and following into a highway to Christianity.

And there will be peace . . . *for humanity.*



Epilogue by the Bishop of Fatima

EXPLAINING THE BLUE ARMY

Notwithstanding the excellent organization of the Apostolate of the Church which operates well-known under various titles in many lands, there is no doubt that **MUCH REMAINS STILL TO BE DONE** and there are still **MILLIONS** of believers who have **NEVER HEARD** of this organized Apostolate. For instance, the great number of **CHILDREN, OLD PEOPLE, INVALIDS, millions of PARENTS** for example absorbed exclusively from morning to night in household chores, the care of their children or their work in the fields or the factory, without either time or possibility for the intense organized work of the Apostolate.

To **MOBILIZE** these reserve forces and bring them to the conscientious service of the Church, to **COLLABORATE** with other movements, to give **NEW LIFE** to the various forms of Apostolic activity, that is or can be the great and important **TASK OF THE BLUE ARMY** of Our Lady

of Fatima. All the above mentioned believe that, in spite of their physical or psychological incapacity, **THEY CAN SERVE** the active Apostolate of the Church in the strict sense of the word, seeing that they are **FULLY CAPABLE** of responding to the requests made by the Queen of the Rosary. They **CAN PRAY**, they **CAN SACRIFICE** themselves, they **CAN EXPIATE**, they can live and work according to the desires of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, thus contributing to the fulfillment of the **ESSENTIAL PART** of the spirit of the Message, the great work to which we are all called: the **INTERIOR RENOVATION** of the Church, the victory over **atheistic communism** and the **SECURING FOR THE WORLD A TRUE AND LASTING PEACE**.

Another factor that contributes to the popularity of The Blue Army is the fact that it asks for **NOTHING NEW** in practice. The old devotional practices of the Church carried out with **GREAT-**

ER FERVOUR of spirit will suffice.

Pain Questioned

Allow me just one parenthesis here. Those who preach the Message of Fatima are CENSURED AT TIMES, in some places, for announcing a DOCTRINE OF PAIN and thus causing unnecessary perplexity among believers. We must take note first of all that there exists a SALUTARY PAIN which can be a GREAT GRACE. In the Old Testament we read of how God threatened His people with chastisement and at times unleashed it upon them and allowed them to fall when the chosen people were in DANGER OF DEVIATING from the Law. These threats and punishments caused the people to RECONSIDER their life and move away from the danger. "Thy own wickedness shall reprove thee, and thy apostasy shall rebuke thee" says the prophet Jeremias to the people of his time (Jer. 2, 19). ST. PAUL CONFIRMS this way of thinking when he writes "My son neglect not the discipline of the Lord... for WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE CHASTISES... now all discipline seems for the present to be a matter not for joy but for grief; but AFTERWARDS IT YIELDS the most peaceful fruit of justice to those who have been exercised by it" (Hebr. 12, 5-6, 11). And in his 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians he rejoices that he has saddened them for the GOOD OF THEIR SOULS (2 Cor. 7. 8ss.).

Every threat of chastisement and even the chastisement itself is a CALL from the infinite love of God to sinful humanity. As Our Lady said at Fatima on July 13, 1917 "IF YOU DO NOT LISTEN to my words Russia will spread her false teaching and bring war and persecution. Many will be killed, the Holy Father will have much to suffer and many nations will be wiped out."

To say this is NOT to set up among men a PSYCHOSIS OF PAIN but to call us to LISTEN to the counsel that comes from the loving heart of Mary that MEN MAY KNOW THEY CAN BE SAVED.

Part of God's Plan

Truly, NEITHER DID CHRIST preach a doctrine of pain but in His REDEEMING LOVE for men He wished that they would PONDER THE GRAVITY of His decision when He affirmed "...but EXCEPT YOU DO PENANCE you shall all likewise perish." (Lk. 13, 5). Neither the MESSAGE OF FATIMA nor the message of the GOSPEL can be called a doctrine of pain. The Message is one of HOPE AND OF JOY so that according to the WISE PLAN OF GOD, there will be achieved that of which Our Lady was thinking when she said "IN THE END MY IMMACULATE HEART WILL TRIUMPH."

Monstrous Task

The task of the Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima consists in

MAKING KNOWN TO THE WHOLE WORLD the Message of Fatima, by all the means at its disposal so that men of all nations will realize it in their **PERSONAL LIVES**. In a word this Message asks for nothing more than that **WHICH THE CHURCH RECOMMENDS** to her children with pressing urgency. The Apostolate of The Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima does not address itself to an elite class. Its practices are contained in those **DUTIES OF THE CHRISTIAN WHICH ARE ROOTED IN THE GOSPEL**.

Still, if anyone asks "Why this **SPECIAL FORM OF PROPAGANDA** for things which the Church daily asks from the conscience of each one" we ask in return "Why did the Mother of God **COME ESPECIALLY TO FATIMA** to ask for this."

Why? Because humanity so often turns **A DEAF EAR** to the voice of the Church God sends His Immaculate Mother to remind men in an **EXTRAORDINARY WAY** of these obligations which the Church preaches sometimes in vain.

In this way God **REMINDS** men of the Church which **HE HIMSELF INSTITUTED** among us as a propagator and defender of the Truth.

Not For You?

No more than Fatima has The Blue Army any **PRIVATE OBJECTIVE** of its own: it is simply at the **SERVICE OF THE CHURCH**. The reason of its existence is to

try by means of the Message and the Apparitions to give to the Church **NEW HEARERS** of her word and proselytes especially in those places where she is **NOT LISTENED TO** and at times despised.

As the Message of Fatima is addressed to all men **WITHOUT EXCEPTION**, independently of the fact that they already belong or do not belong to an ecclesiastical organization, so The Blue Army is **OPEN TO ALL**.

To already belong to **ANY** Marian Association **DOES NOT JUSTIFY A REFUSAL** to join The Blue Army. Practically speaking this is not a movement apart from others but rather an **APPEAL TO ALL** to establish in the life of the individual and in the life of society a Christian foundation **BUILT ON THE MESSAGE** of Mary.

There is no doubt but that each organization and movement has its own specific end, its own method, but all are directed towards the **SAME FINAL END**. In harmony with the Message of Fatima The Blue Army seeks, with this **SPECIAL MOTIVE** to bring the individual in these organizations to work with **DOUBLE DEDICATION**. If, in a last analysis, all the members of all Catholic associations, spurred on by the Message of Fatima, **PRAY MORE** than they ever did before, **DO PENANCE** for the sins of the world and **CONSECRATE THEMSELVES** to The Immaculate Heart of Mary, it follows log-

ically that EACH AND EVERY FORM of the Apostolate of the laity, animated by this SPIRITUAL RENEWAL, will be of inestimable profit not only in the PERSONAL SANCTIFICATION of the individual associate but also in the accumulated work of the ENTIRE APOSTOLATE. To each member will be given that BROAD CATHOLIC OUTLOOK which must always be the SINE QUA NON (indispensable condition) of spiritual fecundity.

It would be a LAMENTABLE ERROR to see in the Blue Army nothing more than a TRIBUTARY STREAM to other Marian movements. Not at all. These Marian movements should be the FIRST to seek to accept, understand and realize the Message of the Queen of Heaven. They should FORM THE VANGUARD of the Army of of "The Conqueror of all the battles of God", who in Fatima called us all to fight against the POWERS OF DARKNESS, comforting us with the PROMISE that her Immaculate Heart would triumph in the end.

Those who join the Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima have one sole obligation: to make every effort in all seriousness to FULFILL THE OBLIGATION which they sign (there is no question of being obliged under sin).

Only when one is thoroughly acquainted with the CONTENT and completely possessed with the SPIRIT OF THE MESSAGE may one proceed to the further obligation of doing all in one's power

to secure that the greatest possible number of one's FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES be ready to FULFILL THE CONDITIONS laid down by Our Lady for the realization of her promises.

Obedience and SELF-conversion

Needless to say neither the organization of collaborators nor the active Apostolate of the movement may be attempted in any place without the EXPRESS PERMISSION OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL AUTHORITY. Any Catholic animated with the Marian spirit knows that an apostolate alienated from ecclesiastical authority, or in opposition to it, is a silly illusion.

Without the seal of OBEDIENCE there can be NO AUTHENTIC APOSTOLATE.

As we all know, if this Unity (of Eastern and Western Christianity) be realized in a LASTING WAY, the West must prepare for and proceed to an AUTHENTIC SPIRITUAL RENOVATION. We must decide once and for all to RETURN TO THE CROSS OF CHRIST. It was at the foot of the Cross that Mary became our Mother. So the Message of Fatima is the SPLENDID OFFER AND THE STRONG INCENTIVE to this renovation.

"THE CONVERSION OF THE WEST" says Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen "IS THE ANTERIOR CONDITION FOR THE CONVERSION OF THE EAST". To this all Christians of the world are cal-

led, **EVEN LITTLE CHILDREN**. In fact **CHRIST HIMSELF CALLED**, embraced and blessed the little children and **MARY IN HER APPARITIONS** spoke again and again to children and **CALLED THEM TO HER SERVICE**. In some countries the movement provides formulas of dedication especially for children, adapted to their mentality, and from time to time they receive their own circular letters. The prayer of a child pierces the clouds. At this hour of the world's history when we hear such expressions as "Mothers who have no time", "increasing critical conditions for children and young people", **THE LITTLE ONES ARE SURELY IN GREAT DANGER**. However, "their Angels in Heaven always see the face of my Father Who is in Heaven" (Mat. 18, 10). **DOES GOD WILL TO SAVE THIS GENERATION BY CHILDREN?** "But the foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the wise; and the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the strong" (I Cor. I, 27-28). Our Lord also said to the grown-ups "AMEN, I SAY TO YOU, UNLESS YOU BE CONVERTED, AND BECOME AS LITTLE CHILDREN, YOU SHALL NOT ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN". (Mat. 18, 3).

Nature of the Battle

The Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima calls to each and all, great and small, rich and poor,

cultured and ignorant. In truth, "our wrestling is **NOT AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD**, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places" (Eph. 6, 12). In this combat **EVERY MAN OF GOOD WILL IS ENGAGED**. And peace belongs to those who are united in the fight.

To strengthen ever more and more "the peace of Christ in the kingdom of Christ", being **THE FIRST AND GREATEST INTENTION** of its Apostolate, The Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima takes as its motto those words of Pius XII in his encyclical "Divini Redemptoris" of March 19th, 1937.

"When our country is attacked, **ALL THAT IS NOT STRICTLY NECESSARY** for and immediately directed towards the common defence, **TAKES SECOND PLACE**. So now it is our duty to desist from work however good and beautiful it may be, confronted as we are with the **VITAL NECESSITY OF SAVING THE VERY FOUNDATIONS OF OUR FAITH AND CHRISTIAN CULTURE**."

Of Eternal Consequence

I'm sure we all agree that we have arrived at a **VERY DEFINITE CROSS-ROADS** in the history of the world. The future is in the balance. Today more than ever before that verse of Scripture is verified "They arise, the kings of the earth, **PRINCES PLOT AGAINST THE LORD AND HIS**

ANNOINTED" (Ps. II, 2). The powers of darkness in an apocalyptic effort advance in their united strength to TRY TO BLOT OUT THE NAME OF GOD from the entire world.

IT IS INTO THIS SCENE, so full of foreboding that OUR LADY COMES, appearing in the Cova da Iria to bring us her celestial Message.

THE BLUE ARMY IS BORN IN THE LIGHT OF FATIMA THAT THE MESSAGE MAY BE MADE KNOWN TO THE WHOLE WORLD.

The Church is ESSENTIALLY AN ARMY, in pacific march to the Fatherland of Heaven, an army in which EVERY ONE OF US IS ENLISTED.

The Weak, the Strong - Come!

The Blue Army is to remind us that every single one of us is needed that victory may be ours; that there is a common front

where EACH HAS HIS PLACE, from the least fervent to the most zealous and exacting member of Catholic Action and all Apostolic Movements.

It comes to REMIND US AND CONVINCING US in a practical way that, WITH MARY the Mother of God and our Mother, THE HOLY CHURCH ONCE AGAIN WILL TRIUMPH AND IN HER AND WITH HER WILL TRIUMPH CHRIST, OUR LORD.

The Blue Army of Our Lady would alert us now to the great SUPERNATURAL REALITIES—eternal life, redemption, reparation, penance, prayer, faithful discharge of our daily duty and the perfect fulfillment of the Law of God—these will be the POWERFUL CONTRIBUTION to the carrying out of the Message of Fatima—the CONVERSION of the communistic world, the CONSTRUCTION of that long-desired peace and the TRIUMPH of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. * *

THE BLUE ARMY PLEDGE

I Pledge Myself to Our Lady

Dear Queen and Mother, who promised at Fatima to convert Russia and bring peace to all mankind, in reparation to your Immaculate Heart for my sins and the sins of the whole world, I solemnly promise: 1) To offer up every day the sacrifices demanded by my daily duty; 2) To say part of the Rosary* daily while meditating on the Mysteries; 3) To wear the Scapular of Mt. Carmel as profession of this promise and as an act of consecration to you. I shall renew this promise often, especially in moments of temptation.

*Usually understood to mean at least five decades daily.

Signature _____

(Note: This pledge is not a vow and does not bind under pain of sin. Nevertheless it is a promise... your word given to your Heavenly Mother.)

HIGHLIGHTS OF ROME'S APPROVAL SINCE


THE "MIRACLE OF THE SUN" AT FATIMA, **Oct.13, 1917**

Jan. 17, 1918	Fatima Diocese restored by Pope Benedict XV.
Oct. 13, 1930	Bishop declares Fatima apparitions supernatural.
Oct. 31, 1942	Pius XII consecrates world to Immaculate Heart of Mary.
May 4, 1944	Pius XII institutes Feast of Immaculate Heart of Mary, 25th Anniversary of Fatima.
May 13, 1946	Pius XII crowns image at Fatima and proclaims her "Queen of the World."
June 13, 1946	Pius XII issues encyclical explicitly referring to message of Fatima.
Oct. 13, 1951	Holy Year for all the world closed at Fatima. Legate tells of "Fatima Vision" to Pope Pius XII.
July 7, 1952	Pius XII consecrates Russian people to Immaculate Heart of Mary.
Oct. 11, 1954	In Encyclical "To the Queen of the World" Pope Pius refers to Her miraculous image at Fatima.
Nov. 12, 1954	Fatima Church elevated to Basilica by Pius XII.
Oct. 13, 1956	Pope Pius XII, through Papal Legate Eugene Cardinal Tisserant (Dean of Sacred College), blessed and dedicated International Centre of the Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima next to the Basilica.
Dec. 13, 1962	Pope John XXIII INSTITUTES FEAST OF OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY OF FATIMA.
Nov. 21, 1964	Pope Paul VI renewed Pius XII' consecration to the Immaculate Heart before the entire ECUMENICAL COUNCIL and simultaneously announced a MISSION TO FATIMA FROM THE POPE.
May 13, 1965	Pope Paul VI, through Papal mission, presented Golden Rose at Fatima, confiding "the entire Church" to Her protection.
May 13, 1967	Pope Paul VI HIMSELF WENT TO FATIMA and called all the world to renew consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.



For almost fifty years the crowds at Fatima on May 13th have been counted in the hundreds of thousands, but three days stand out above all others: those of 1946, when the statue was crowned by a Legate of Pius XII; 1951, when the Holy Year for all the world outside of Rome was closed at Fatima; and May 13th, 1965, when Pope Paul VI sent the Golden Rose to Fatima.

This is how it was in 1918, just one year after the first apparition. There was only one little building: the chapel of the apparitions. Approbation had not yet been given by the Church. The Soviets had bombed the chapel and as you see here the roof had not yet been restored. Turn the page to see how it is today.

A large crowd of people is gathered outdoors, many holding umbrellas, suggesting a rainy or overcast day. In the background, a wooden structure, possibly a stage or a small building, is visible. The scene is set on a hillside with trees and buildings in the distance.

The original chapel was repaired and has remained, while great buildings have risen up to surround it and the vast hollow in which it marks the spot of Our Lady's appearances.

The Basilica (opposite) stands on ridge where the children had been playing when they saw the first flashes of light. On "apparition days" (13th of the month from May to October) crowds are often numbered in the hundreds of thousands. Lone tree in Cova was there at time of apparitions. Beneath it are buried names of millions of Blue Army members from every part of the world.



**Additional
decrees
from Rome
relating to
the requests
made by
Our Lady
of Fatima:**

Dec. 12, 1942

Plenary Indulgence* gained on each First Saturday by those who perform the exercises of the devotion of the Five First Saturdays.

March 3, 1952

Additional Plenary Indulgence to those who, on the first Saturday of any month, perform special acts of devotion in reparation for the blasphemies committed against the name and other prerogatives of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Feb. 4, 1956

Authorized the recitation of the special Fatima prayer after each decade of the rosary in private and public devotions (Office of indulgences, 878:56.) The prayer alluded to is: "O my Jesus forgive us; save us from the fire of hell; lead all souls to heaven, especially those in greatest need (of thy mercy)."

*Under the usual conditions.

Taught at Fatima

Pardon Prayer



MY GOD, I BELIEVE, I ADORE, I TRUST AND I LOVE THEE! I BEG PARDON FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT BELIEVE, DO NOT ADORE, DO NOT TRUST, AND DO NOT LOVE THEE.

Eucharistic Prayer



MOST HOLY TRINITY, I ADORE YOU! MY GOD, MY GOD, I LOVE YOU IN THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT.

Angel's Prayer



O MOST HOLY TRINITY, FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT, I ADORE THEE PROFOUNDLY. I OFFER THEE THE MOST PRECIOUS BODY, BLOOD, SOUL AND DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST, PRESENT IN ALL THE TABERNACLES OF THE WORLD, IN REPARATION FOR THE OUTRAGES, SACRILEGES AND INDIFFERENCE BY WHICH HE IS OFFENDED. BY THE INFINITE MERITS OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS, AND THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, I BEG THE CONVERSION OF POOR SINNERS.

Sacrifice Prayer



O MY JESUS, IT IS FOR LOVE OF YOU, IN REPARATION FOR THE OFFENSES COMMITTED AGAINST THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, AND FOR THE CONVERSION OF POOR SINNERS.

Decade Prayer



O MY JESUS, FORGIVE US; SAVE US FROM THE FIRE OF HELL, TAKE ALL SOULS TO HEAVEN, ESPECIALLY THOSE MOST IN NEED.