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Dress neatly
for Sunday Mass
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What Happened At Fatima.

Three little shepherds were tending their flocks near their home in Fatima, Portugal. This was in 1917 when World War I was in its third year. The children were very small. Jacina was seven, Francisco nine and Lucia ten. A Lady of incomparable beauty appeared to them. She was standing on a bright cloud over a small oak tree. She carried a Rosary. The Lady spoke to the children: "Have no fear. I will do you no harm. I come from heaven. I want you children to come here on the thirteenth of each month until October. Then I will tell you who I am."

The news of the apparition spread through Fatima. On June 13 sixty or seventy people accompanied the children to the meeting place. Our Lady appeared as she promised. This time she recommended frequent recitation of the Rosary, and she taught the children an ejaculation to say after the Gloria of each decade of the Rosary: "O MY JESUS, PARDON OUR SINS. SAVE US FROM THE FIRE OF HELL. RELIEVE THE SOULS IN PURGATORY ESPECIALLY THE MOST ABANDONED."

On July 13 over 5000 people were present. On this occasion the children beheld the fires of hell, and Our Lady made a prophecy: "You have seen the inferno where the souls of sinners end. To save souls, the Lord desires that devotion to my Immaculate Heart be established in the world. If what I tell you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace. THE WAR WILL END BUT IF THEY DO NOT CEASE TO OFFEND THE LORD, NOT MUCH TIME WILL ELAPSE, AND PRECISELY DURING THE NEXT PONTIFICATE, ANOTHER AND MORE TERRIBLE ONE WILL COMMENCE. When a night illuminated by an unknown light is seen, know that is the signal that God gives you that the castigation of the world for its many transgressions is at hand, through war, famine and persecutions of the Church and the Holy Father. To prevent this I ask the consecration of the world to my Immaculate Heart, and COMMUNION IN REPARATION on the FIRST SATURDAY of each month."

In Fatima there were men who hated God. They kidnapped the children. When August 13 came, 15000 people were on hand for the apparition. They did not know that the mayor of the town had jailed the shepherds. But the apparitions took place just the same, three days later. On September 13, 30,000 gathered to see the wonders and to protest against the unjust actions of the city officials. Our Lady appeared and the crowd witnessed a phenomenon. A luminous globe coming from east to west in the clear sky was seen, and what appeared to be snowflakes or rose petals fell in great quantity, disappearing before they touched the soil. On October 13, despite incessant rain, an enormous crowd of 70,000 assembled from all corners of Europe. The Lady spoke again "I am the Lady of the Rosary, and I have come to warn the faithful to amend their lives and ask pardon for their sins. They must not continue to offend Our Lord already so deeply offended. They must say the Rosary." And then another extraordinary event took place. The heavy rain ceased and the sun, resembling an eclipse, emerged for the dark sky and revolved three times within ten minutes, casting off great shafts of colored light which flashed and fell upon sky and earth.

The communists in Fatima were angered by these events which brought people back to God and orderly living. They placed five bombs in the small chapel that had been built on the site of the apparitions. The explosion destroyed the little oak upon which Our Lady had stood. Lucia, now a nun, is still alive. It was she who recorded the words of Mary: "MY CHILD, BEHOLD MY HEART SURROUNDED WITH THE THORNS WHICH UNGRATEFUL MEN PLACE THEREIN AT EVERY MOMENT, BY THEIR BLASPHEMIES AND INGRATITUDE. YOU, AT LEAST, TRY TO CONSOLE ME AND TELL THEM THAT I PROMISE TO HELP AT THE HOUR OF DEATH WITH THE GRACES NEEDED FOR SALVATION, WHOEVER, ON THE FIRST SATURDAY OF FIVE CONSECUTIVE MONTHS, SHALL CONFESS AND RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION, RECITE FIVE DECADES OF THE ROSARY AND KEEP ME COMPANY FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES WHILE MEDITATING ON THE FIFTEEN MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY, WITH THE INTENTION OF MAKING REPARATION TO ME." (Recent confession and your customary reflection on the mysteries of the Rosary satisfy the confession and meditation requirements of the promise.)