

The Apparitions at Fatima (analysed by R. F. Beck)

Source: <http://www.theotokos.org.uk/pages/approved/appariti/fatima.html>

In the account of Fatima below, I have highlighted in pink the text that is suggestive of the link between UFOs/aliens and angels that my own research led to, as explained in Chapter 17 of my Autobiography. Further research suggested at the end indicates that the current and last Popes knew that there was more to the third secret than was revealed in 2000, and that it relates to the Biblical 'end of the age'.

During World War I Pope Benedict XV made repeated but forlorn pleas for peace, and finally, in May 1917, made a direct appeal to Mary to intercede for peace in the world. The response was Mary's first appearance at Fatima just over a week later. At this time Fatima was just a small village about seventy miles north of Lisbon; the three children to whom she appeared were Lucia dos Santos, aged ten, and her cousins Francisco and Jacinta Marto, brother and sister, aged eight and seven respectively.

The Angel of Portugal

However, it was in the spring of the previous year, 1916, that the children had their first joint supernatural encounter as a means of preparing them for their meetings with Mary. As they were looking after the sheep one day they saw a dazzlingly beautiful young man, **seemingly made of light**, who told them he was the Angel of Peace; he invited them to pray with him.

Later on, in the summer, the Angel again appeared to the children and encouraged them to pray and make sacrifices, as a way of drawing down peace on the country.

In the autumn the children again saw the Angel as they were out looking after the sheep. He appeared before them holding a chalice in his hands, above which was suspended a host from which drops of blood were falling into the chalice. The Angel left the chalice suspended in the air and prostrated himself before it in prayer.

He then gave the host to Lucia to eat, and let Francisco and Jacinta drink from the chalice whilst saying: "Take and drink the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, horribly outraged by ungrateful men. Repair their crimes and console your God." Then he prostrated himself again in prayer before disappearing. The children did not tell anyone about these visits of the Angel, feeling an interior necessity of keeping quiet about these events.

13 May 1917

On 13 May 1917 the three children took their flocks out to pasture on the small area known as the Cova da Iria. After lunch and the rosary they suddenly saw a bright flash of something like lightning, followed quickly by another flash in the clear blue sky.

They looked up to see in Lucia's words, "a lady, clothed in white, brighter than the sun, **radiating a light** more clear and intense than a crystal cup filled with sparkling water, lit by burning sunlight." The children stood there amazed, bathed in the light that surrounded the apparition, as the Lady smiled and said: "Do not be afraid, I will not harm you." Lucia as the oldest asked her where she came from.

The Lady pointed to the sky and said: "I come from heaven." Lucia then asked her what she wanted: "I have come to ask you to come here for six months on the 13th day of the month, at this same hour. Later I shall say who I am and what I desire. And I shall return here yet a seventh time."

Lucia then asked if they would go to heaven and she was told yes, she and Jacinta would go to

heaven, but Francisco would need to say many rosaries first. The Lady then said: "Are you willing to offer yourselves to God and bear all the sufferings He wills to send you, as an act of reparation for the conversion of sinners?" Lucia as spokesman for all three readily agreed: "Then you are going to have much to suffer, but the grace of God will be your comfort."

Lucia recounted that at the same moment as she said these words the Lady opened her hands and **streamed a "light" on the children which allowed them to see themselves in God**. The Lady finished with a request: "Say the Rosary every day, to bring peace to the world and the end of the war." With that she began to rise into the air, moving towards the east until she disappeared.

The children got together and tried to think of ways they could make sacrifices, as the Lady had asked, resolving to go without lunch and to pray the full rosary. Francisco and Jacinta received more support from their parents than Lucia, but the attitude of the local inhabitants was sceptical and even derisory; the children had much to suffer, just as the Lady had told them.

13 June 1917

About fifty people turned up at the Cova da Iria on June 13, as the three children assembled near the holmoak tree where the Lady had appeared. The children then saw a flash of light followed immediately by the apparition of Mary, as she spoke to Lucia: "I want you to come on the 13th of next month, to pray the Rosary every day, and to learn to read. Later, I will tell you what I want."

Lucia asked Mary to take them to heaven and was reassured in this way: "I will take Jacinta and Francisco shortly; but you will stay here for some time to come. Jesus wants to use you to make Me known and loved. He wishes to establish the devotion to My Immaculate Heart throughout the world. I promise salvation to whoever embraces it; these souls will be dear to God, like flowers put by Me to adorn his throne." This last sentence is found in a letter written in 1927 by Sr. Lucia to her confessor.

Lucia was sad at the first part of this reply, saying: "Am I to stay here alone?" Mary replied: "No, my daughter. Are you suffering a great deal? Don't lose heart. I will never forsake you. My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God."

One of the witnesses to this apparition, Maria Carreira, described how Lucia then cried out and pointed as Mary departed. **She herself heard a noise like, "a rocket, a long way off," and looked to see a small cloud a few inches over the tree, rise, and move slowly towards the east until it disappeared**. The crowd of pilgrims then returned to Fatima where they reported the amazing things they had seen, thus ensuring that there were between two and three thousand people present for the July apparition.

13 July 1917

On 13 July the three children assembled at the Cova and again they saw the indescribably beautiful Lady over the holmoak. Lucia asked what she wanted, and Mary replied: "I want you to come here on the 13th of next month, to continue to pray the Rosary every day in honour of Our Lady of the Rosary, in order to obtain peace for the world and the end of the war, because only she can help you."

Lucia then asked her who she was and for a miracle so everyone would believe: "Continue to come here every month. In October, I will tell you who I am and what I want, and I will perform a miracle for all to see and believe."

Lucia made some requests for sick people, to which Mary replied that she would cure some but not others, and that all must say the rosary to obtain such graces, before continuing: "Sacrifice yourselves for sinners, and say many times, especially when you make some sacrifice: O

Jesus, it is for love of You, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary."

The vision of hell

Lucia later revealed that as she spoke these words, Mary opened her hands and rays of light from them seemed to penetrate the earth so that they saw a terrifying vision of hell, full of demons and lost souls amidst indescribable horrors.

This vision of hell was the first part of the "secret" of Fatima, and was not revealed until much later. The children looked up to the sad face of the Blessed Virgin, who spoke to them kindly:

"You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace. The war is going to end; but if people do not cease offending God, a worse one will break out during the pontificate of Pius XI. When you see a night illumined by an unknown light, know that this is the great sign given you by God that he is about to punish the world for its crimes, by means of war, famine, and persecutions of the Church and of the Holy Father.

"To prevent this, I shall come to ask for the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart, and the Communion of Reparation on the First Saturdays. If my requests are heeded, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace; if not, she will spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions of the Church. The good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, various nations will be annihilated. In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me and she will be converted, and a period of peace will be granted to the world."

At this point the second part of the secret of Fatima ends and the third part begins with the words, "In Portugal the dogma of the faith will always be preserved ... " The first two parts of the secret only became publicly known in 1942. The third part of the secret has only recently been publicly divulged, in June 2000.

Mary specifically told Lucia not to tell anyone about the secret at this stage, apart from Francisco, before continuing: "When you pray the Rosary, say after each mystery: O my Jesus, forgive us, save us from the fire of hell. Lead all souls to heaven, especially those who are most in need." After assuring Lucia that there was nothing more, Mary disappeared off into the distance.

August 1917

As 13 August approached, the story of the apparitions had reached the anti-religious secular press, and while this ensured that the whole country knew about Fatima, it also meant that many biased and negative reports were circulating. The children were kidnapped on the morning of the 13th by the Mayor of Vila Nova de Ourem, Arturo Santos. They were interrogated about the secret; but despite his threats and promises of money, they refused to divulge it. In the afternoon they were moved to the local prison and threatened with death but determined that they would die rather than reveal the secret.

On August 19, Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta were assembled at a place called Valinhos, near Fatima, late in the afternoon, when they again saw Mary, who spoke to Lucia: "Go again to the Cova da Iria on the 13th and continue to say the Rosary every day." Mary also said she would perform a miracle, so all would believe, and that if they had not been kidnapped it would have been even greater.

Looking very sad, Mary then said: "Pray, pray very much, and make sacrifices for sinners; for many souls go to hell, because there are none to sacrifice themselves and pray for them." With that she rose into the air and moved towards the east before disappearing.

By now the children had thoroughly absorbed Mary's plea for prayer and penance, and did everything they could to answer it. They prayed for hours while lying prostrate on the ground and went as long as they could without drinking, in the burning heat of the Portuguese summer. They also went without food, as a sacrifice for sinners, to save them from hell, the vision of which had so profoundly effected them. They even knotted some pieces of old rope around their waists as a form of mortification, not removing them day or night.

13 September 1917

On September 13 very large crowds began to converge on Fatima from all directions. Around noon the children then arrived, and after the customary flash of light, they saw Mary on the holmoak tree. She spoke to Lucia: "Continue to pray the Rosary in order to obtain the end of the war. In October Our Lord will come, as well as Our Lady of Dolours and Our Lady of Carmel. Saint Joseph will appear with the Child Jesus to bless the world. God is pleased with your sacrifices. He does not want you to sleep with the rope on, but only to wear it during the daytime."

Lucia then began to put forward the petitions for cures, to be told: "Yes, I will cure some, but not others. In October I will perform a miracle so that all may believe." **With that she rose, moved to the east, and disappeared.**

13 October 1917

The proclamation of a public miracle caused the most intense speculation throughout Portugal, and the journalist Avelino de Almeida, published a satirical article on the whole business in the anti-religious newspaper *O Seculo*. People from other parts of the country descended, in their tens of thousands, on the Cova, despite the terrible storm that lashed the mountain country around Fatima, on the eve of the 13th. Many pilgrims went barefooted, reciting the rosary as they went, all crowding into the area around the Cova, as by midmorning the weather again turned bad and heavy rain began to fall.

The children reached the holmoak around noon, and then saw the flash of light as Mary appeared before them. For the last time, Lucia asked what she wanted: "I want to tell you that a chapel is to be built here in my honour. I am the Lady of the Rosary. Continue always to pray the Rosary every day. The war is going to end, and the soldiers will soon return to their homes."

Again Lucia made her requests, being informed that people must amend their lives, and ask forgiveness of their sins, if they wanted healings or conversions. She reported too that Mary grew very sad and said: "Do not offend the Lord our God any more, because He is already so much offended." Then rising into the air and opening her hands towards the sun, growing more brilliant as she did, she disappeared, being replaced by various visions seen only by the children.

The Miracle of the Sun

At the same time the vast crowd saw a true miracle. **The black clouds parted, and the sun became visible, looking like a dull grey disc that could be looked at directly quite easily.** In *O Seculo* Avelino de Almeida would adopt a very different tone from his earlier satirical article on Fatima:

"...one could see the immense multitude turn towards the sun, which appeared free from clouds and at its zenith. **It looked like a plaque of dull silver and it was possible to look at it without the least discomfort.** It might have been an eclipse which was taking place. But at that moment a great shout went up and one could hear the spectators nearest at hand shouting: "A miracle! A miracle!" Before the astonished eyes of the crowd, whose aspect was Biblical as they stood bareheaded, eagerly searching the sky, **the sun trembled, made sudden incredible movements outside all cosmic laws - the sun "danced" according to the typical expression of**

the people. ...

"People then began to ask each other what they had seen. The great majority admitted to having seen the trembling and dancing of the sun; others affirmed that they saw the face of the Blessed Virgin; others, again, swore that the sun whirled on itself like a giant Catherine wheel and that it lowered itself to the earth as if to burn it with its rays. Some said they saw it change colours successively. ..."

Other witnesses too, such as Maria Carreira, testified to the terrifying nature of the solar miracle: "It turned everything different colours, yellow, blue, white, and it shook and trembled; it seemed like a wheel of fire which was going to fall on the people. They cried out: 'We shall all be killed, we shall all be killed!' ... At last the sun stopped moving and we all breathed a sigh of relief. We were still alive and the miracle which the children had foretold had taken place."

Other people witnessed the solar miracle from a distance thus ruling out the possibility of any type of collective hallucination. A final intriguing, and important, point was that the heat of the sun, as it descended on the people, also had the effect of drying their clothes and the ground, so that they went from being completely soaked to being dry in about ten minutes.

The deaths of Francisco and Jacinta

An influenza epidemic swept Europe in autumn of 1918, just as the War was finishing, and both Jacinta and Francisco fell ill. Francisco recovered somewhat and there were hopes that he might become well, but he realised that he was destined to die young, as Our Lady had foretold, and his condition worsened again. He offered up all his sufferings as a way of consoling God for the sinfulness and ingratitude of mankind, becoming so weak that eventually he could not even pray. He received his first Communion, and on the next day, 4 April 1919, he died.

Jacinta too was confined to her bed during the long winter months, and although she recovered was struck down with bronchial pneumonia, while also developing a painful abscess in her chest. She was moved to the hospital in Ourem in July 1919, where she underwent the painful treatment prescribed for her, but without much effect, returning home in August with an open wound in her side. It was decided that another attempt should be made to treat her, and so in January 1920 she was taken to Lisbon, where she was diagnosed as having purulent pleurisy and diseased ribs.

Eventually in February she was admitted into hospital, where she underwent another painful operation to remove two ribs; this left her with a large wound in her side that had to be dressed daily, causing her agony. On the evening of 20 February the local priest was called and heard her Confession, but he insisted on waiting till the next day to bring her Communion, despite her protests that she felt worse, and as Mary had told her she died that night alone and far from her family. Her body was returned to Fatima and buried with that of Francisco, until both were later moved to the basilica built at the Cova da Iria.

Later apparitions to Sr. Lucia

The new bishop of the restored diocese of Leiria decided that it was best if Lucia was removed from Fatima, both to spare her from the continual questionings she had to endure, and to see what effect her absence would have on the numbers coming as pilgrims. Her mother agreed to her being sent away to school, and she left in May 1921, in great secrecy, for Porto, where a school run by the sisters of St. Dorothy was situated. Later she became a sister in this congregation, before joining the Carmelites.

On 10 December 1925, while at the convent in Pontevedra, Spain, Lucia saw another apparition, this time of Mary with the Child Jesus. Mary told Lucia to announce that she promised all the graces necessary for salvation to those who, on the first Saturday of five

consecutive months, confessed, received Holy Communion, recited five decades of the rosary, and meditated on the rosary for fifteen minutes, all with the intention of making reparation to her.

On 13 June 1929 Sr. Lucia, while at prayer in the convent chapel at Tuy, where she had moved, saw another apparition, this time a representation of the Trinity. She also heard Mary speak to her, asking that the Pope, in union with all the bishops of the world, make the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart that she had spoken of during the July 1917 apparition.

On 25 January 1938, a strange light filled the skies of northern Europe; it was described as a particularly brilliant display of the Aurora Borealis, but Sr. Lucia realised it was the "unknown light," also announced by Mary in the July apparition. It meant punishment for the world was close, principally through the Second World War, because it had not turned back to God.

Pope Pius XII consecrated the whole world to Mary's Immaculate Heart in 1942, and carried out a similar consecration of Russia in 1952, but neither of these fulfilled Mary's request at Fatima. This collegial consecration, in union with a "moral totality" of the world's bishops, was finally carried out by Pope John Paul II in 1984. Fatima received further Papal support when, on 13 May 1979, the Pope declared Jacinta and Francisco "venerable," the first stage in the process of their possible canonisation.

Pope John Paul has further emphasised the importance of Fatima by beatifying Jacinta and Francisco on 13 May 2000 during the Jubilee Year. At the same time he has announced that details of the third part of the Fatima secret will be revealed, while also entrusting the third millennium to Our Lady of Fatima.

The Bishop approves of Fatima

The Church, meanwhile, had maintained silence about the apparitions during the years from 1917, and it wasn't until May 1922 that Bishop Correia issued a pastoral letter on the subject, indicating that he would set up a commission of enquiry. In 1930 he issued another pastoral letter on the apparitions, which, after recounting the events at Fatima, contained the following brief but important statement.

"In virtue of considerations made known, and others which for reasons of brevity we omit; humbly invoking the Divine Spirit and placing ourselves under the protection of the most Holy Virgin, and after hearing the opinions of our Rev. Advisors in this diocese, we hereby: 1. Declare worthy of belief, the visions of the shepherd children in the Cova da Iria, parish of Fatima, in this diocese, from the 13th May to 13th October, 1917. 2. Permit officially the cult of Our Lady of Fatima."

The following sites are suggested for further research on the question of whether the third secret was fully revealed in 2000:

<http://paranormal.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http://www.marianland.com/thirdsec.html>

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/inquirerheadlines/nation/view/20101031-300671/Fatimas-third-secret-still-secret>

<http://www.tldm.org/News7/PopeBenedictXVIThirdSecret.htm>

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000626_message-fatima_en.html

<http://www.greatdreams.com/secrets.htm>