

FATIMA NEWSLETTER

A newsletter devoted to the full and complete message revealed by Our Lady of Fatima and the Guardian Angel of Portugal to three young shepherd children.



Young Lucia

The Start of the Fatima Story

As recounted in Sister Lucia's Memoirs

Mysterious Apparitions, 1915

It seems to me that it was in 1915 that the first Apparition took place. As far as I can judge, it was the Angel, although at that time he did not venture to make himself fully known. From what I can recall of the weather, I think that this must have happened between the months of April and October.

I was seven years old. My mother decided I should take over the care of our sheep. My father did not agree, nor did my sisters. They were so fond of me, that they wanted an exception made in my case. My mother would not give in. "She's just like the rest," she said. "Carolina is already twelve years old. That means she can now begin to work in the fields, or else, learn to be a weaver or a seamstress, whichever she prefers."

The care of our flock was then given to me. News that I was beginning my life as a shepherdess spread rapidly among the other shepherds; almost all of them came and offered to be my companions. I said "Yes" to everybody, and arranged with each one to meet on the slopes of the serra.

Next day, the serra was a solid mass of sheep with their shepherds, as though a cloud had descended upon it. But I felt ill at ease in the midst of such a hubbub. I therefore chose three companions from among the shepherds, and without saying a word to anyone, we arranged to pasture our sheep on the opposite slopes. These were the three from Casa Velha I chose: Teresa Matias, her sister Maria Rosa and Maria Justino.

On the following day, we set out in the direction of a hill known as the Cabeço. We went up the northern slope.



Valinhos is on the southern side of the same hill. On the eastern slope is the cave I have already spoken of. Together with our flocks, we climbed almost to the top of the hill. At our feet lay a wide expanse of trees – olives, oaks, pines, holmoaks, and so on, that stretched away down towards the level valley below.

Around midday, we ate our lunch. After this, I invited my companions to pray the Rosary with me, to which they eagerly agreed. We had hardly begun when, there before our eyes, we saw a figure poised in the air above the trees; it looked like a statue made of snow, rendered almost transparent by the rays of the sun.

“What is that?” asked my companions, quite frightened.

“I don’t know!”

We went on praying, with our eyes fixed on the figure before us, and as we finished our prayer, the figure disappeared. As was usual with me, I resolved to say nothing; but my companions told their families what had happened the very moment they reached home. The news soon spread, and one day when I arrived home, my mother questioned me:

“Look here! They say you’ve seen I don’t know what, up there. What was it you saw?”

“I don’t know,” and as I could not explain it myself, I went on:

“It looked like a person wrapped up in a sheet!” As I meant to say that I couldn’t discern its features, I added:

“You couldn’t make out any eyes, or hands, on it.”

My mother put an end to the whole matter with a gesture of disgust: “Childish nonsense!”

After some time, we returned with our flocks to the same place, and the very same thing happened again. My companions once more told the whole story. After a brief interval, the same thing was repeated. It was the third time that my mother heard all these things being talked about outside, without my having said a single word about them at home. She called me, therefore, quite displeased, and demanded:

“Now, let us see! What is it that you girls say you saw over there?”

“I don’t know, Mother. I don’t know what it is!”

Some people started making fun of us. My sisters, recalling that for some time after my First Communion I had been quite abstracted, used to ask me rather scornfully:

“Do you see someone wrapped in a sheet?”

I felt these contemptuous words and gestures very keenly, as up to now I had been used to nothing but caresses. But this was nothing, really. You see, I did not know what the good Lord had in store for me in the future.

This Apparition made a certain impression upon me, which I do not know how to explain. Little by little this impression faded away, and were it not for the events that followed, I think I would have forgotten it completely.