



20 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT FATIMA

As we commemorate the one-hundredth anniversary of the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima to the three shepherd children — Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta — we would like to present in this short article twenty points that we should know about this important event. We also invite you to meditate — that is to say, to pray over these points. Then we implore all of the great lovers of Jesus, Mary, Saint Joseph, Blessed Jacinta and Blessed Francisco to become Apostles of the message of Fatima. In sum, the message of Fatima is a simple but very profound summary of some of the most important messages in the Bible, some of the most important highlights in the Gospel, some of the most salient teachings of the greatest Teacher, the Lord Jesus Christ!

Therefore, let us immerse ourselves deeply in this tremendous spiritual gold-mine of wisdom that is contained in the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Our Lady of Fatima, also known as Our Lady of the Rosary. These short points of meditation are meant for you, and for you to share with your loved ones for the purpose of the salvation of their immortal souls! Our Lady of Fatima, pray for us!

1. **Number of Apparitions.** Our Lady of Fatima appeared six times to Lucia dos Santos, and Francisco and Jacinta Marto. Both Francisco and Jacinta were siblings; Lucia was their older cousin, whose last name was Los Santos.
2. **The Number 13.** Our Lady would appear on the 13th of every month. Very curious! Many consider the number 13 to be a number that causes bad luck. Even elevators in tall buildings will go from the 12th floor to the 14th floor, eliminating 13th because many have fear that if they are living temporarily on the 13th floor bad luck will visit them. Our Lady appeared on the 13th to dispel this myth. There is no such thing as a bad number or a series of bad numbers. Actually nothing happens by chance, but all is guided mysteriously but firmly by God's loving and providential hand; this we call "Divine Providence".
3. **Guardian Angel.** Before Our Lady appeared to the children in 1917, the Guardian Angel of Portugal appeared to the children three times, preparing the way for the appearance of Our Lady. Therefore, the reality of ANGELS has a prominent role in the message of Fatima.
4. **Mass and the Eucharist.** Actually, the third and last apparition of the angel to the three children carried with it one of the most extraordinary elements in approved private revelations and apparitions. It was this: the angel appeared and suspended in the air was the Host and Chalice. The Host of course is the Body of Christ; in the Chalice is the Blood of Christ. The angel commanded the children to receive! Lucia received the Host and Jacinta and Francisco received from the Chalice, the reason being that the Chalice symbolizes suffering. Both Jacinta and Francisco shortly after the apparitions would suffer much and die so as to be taken to heaven. May we augment our faith, love and devotion for the most Holy Eucharist and have a real hunger for Holy Communion, even daily Holy Communion — "Give us this day our daily bread..." (The Our Father)
5. **War, Suffering, and Our Lady.** These apparitions took place in the world during a period of intense suffering and bloodshed—the First World War. Our Lady stated clearly that war came as a consequence of sin. Furthermore, she stated sadly that if people kept sinning then

a worse war would break out. We all know what happened close to twenty years later — the Second World War, resulting in even much more bloodshed than the First World War. May Our Lady and Jesus help us to stop sinning so that we will experience peace in our world ravaged by wars and innocent blood being shed every day!

6. **The Existence of Hell.** In the apparition on July 13, 1917, Our Lady appeared and manifested to the three children a very graphic vision of Hell. Very Ignatian and Dantesque, the vision caused in the children fear and suffering. They stated that if the Blessed Mother were not there present with them, they would have died of fear. Today in so many liberal theological centers the reality of hell is either laughed at or simply dismissed as an obsolete relic of the medieval times. Hell does exist and souls can go there if they die unrepentant in mortal sin.
7. **The Existence of Heaven.** Lucia asked Our Lady in the apparition in June if she would go to heaven, as well as Jacinta and Francisco. Our Lady said YES. However, Francisco would have to say many Rosaries before he would be ready to go to heaven. In our case, of course we want to go to heaven. Most probably we need to say many Rosaries, too.
8. **Jacinta and Sacrifice.** After this vision of hell, little Jacinta armed herself to do as many sacrifices as possible so as to save poor souls from ending up in hell. Sacrificing grapes and dancing both of which she loved, wearing a rope around her waist underneath her clothes, giving her lunch to the poorer children, not drinking water on hot days, and praying many rosaries — these as well as many other sacrifices Jacinta willingly accepted and carried out so as to save souls from precipitating into the fires of hell after death!
9. **Heroism to the Max.** On August 13th, the children did not have the awaited and expected apparition of Our Lady at Cova da Iria. Why? Because they were detained and imprisoned by the local government. The news had spread far and wide about the apparitions and it was a real nuisance to the government and local officials. So they had a plan! They decided to apprehend the children and make them recant publicly, say it was really a farce, really an optical illusion, and that they never really heard or saw Our Lady. And if they did not recant and admit that they were lying, then they would be boiled in a cauldron of hot oil! All three of the children refused to recant and were willing to undergo the cruel and painful martyrdom of being boiled to death. In a certain sense they were ready to be real martyrs. What a message for children and adults as to the importance of always telling the truth, despite the consequences! We should always think about what God wants and to carry it out. Jesus said: "I am The Way, The Truth, and The Life." Jesus also said: "The devil is a liar and a murderer from the beginning."



10. **Lucia's Many Sufferings.** One of the greatest sufferings of Lucia, the oldest of the three, was that her mother Maria Rosa, did not believe her and for many years. How painful that this innocent child was thought to be a liar even by her own mother! May we always seek God's will above human opinion! As the poet Dante reassures us: "In God's will is our peace."
11. **Early Death.** Both Francisco and Jacinta would die as children. Also they would suffer much before their death. Our Lady appeared later to Jacinta and asked her if she would be willing to suffer a little longer before she died to save souls and the little girl willingly said YES. Jacinta died alone far from home without her parents being present in a hospital in Lisbon. Question? Are you ready to die now? How would you like to die? What are your thoughts on death? Saint Ignatius of Loyola strongly exhorts us to meditate on death, most specifically on our own death, as a very powerful means to help us to eradicate sin from our lives!
12. **Beatification.** Did you know that both Jacinta and Francisco Marto were beatified by Saint Pope John Paul II in the millennium year — 2000! What day do you think the saintly pontiff chose for their beatification? Nothing more fitting: MAY 13! This of course was the day of the 1st of Our Lady's apparitions to the children. Nothing happens by chance! May is for Mary, but May 13th is for Our Lady of Fatima! Blessed Francisco and Blessed Jacinta, pray for us and for the entire world!
13. **The Rosary.** In all of the six apparitions of Our Lady, she told the children as well as the world at large to pray the Rosary. Saint Pope John Paul II in his document *The Blessed Virgin Mary and the Rosary* (October, 2002) insisted on the daily recitation of the most Holy Rosary and for two specific intentions: for world peace and for the salvation of the family. Let us obey the Pope and the Mother of God and pray the Rosary every day. Father Patrick Peyton encourages us: "The family that prays together stays together."
14. **The Greatest Miracle.** One of the greatest miracle last century was the miracle of the sun, October 13, 1917. The whole morning it was raining buckets and the people were drenched. However, shortly after noon the sun came out and wheeled around like a Ferris Wheel in the sky. The people fell to their knees and begged pardon for their sins. Miracles occurred: the blind recovered their sight and the paralyzed could walk. Not only that, but the people's clothes were immediately and totally dry after being soaked from the torrential downpour of rain! This was seen by as many as 70,000 people!
15. **The Vision.** Lucia saw the Child Jesus in the arms of Saint Joseph blessing the world, as well as Our Lady of Sorrows and Our Lady of Mount Carmel! May the Holy Family — Jesus, Mary and Saint Joseph bless us. May all of us wear the brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. May all families, especially men, cultivate a tender and growing devotion to good Saint Joseph who is patron of men, of spouses, as well as of the family. Good Saint Joseph, pray for us!
16. **Fatima and Pope St John Paul II.** May 13, 1981, after blessing children from his pope-mobile, Pope John Paul II was brutally shot and rushed to the hospital. It seemed as if it was a lost cause! Heaven was stormed with Rosaries, prayers and sacrifices for the beloved Pontiff. We all know history; he would live almost another 24 years — dying April 2, 2005. Pope John Paul II attributed his life being saved to Our Lady and specifically Our Lady of Fatima.
17. **The Crown and the Bullet.** The following year on May 13 1982, Pope John Paul II, now healed from the attack, traveled as a pilgrim to Fatima. The purpose of this momentous visit, better said pilgrimage, was to thank Our Lady of Fatima for having intervened and saved his life! As the writer George Weigel highlighted, Pope John Paul recognized the malicious intent of the evil spirit in the shooting of the bullet that almost killed him. However, the hand of Our Lady was more powerful!!! Today we live in constant spiritual warfare, surrounded by countless spiritual bullets for our children, teens, as well as ourselves. May we seek refuge in the mantle and the Immaculate Heart of Mary as our most sure haven, refuge and ark of safety — like the Ark of Noah.
18. **Reason for the Loss of Many Souls.** Our Lady pointed out that many souls are lost because of a shortage of SACRIFICES!!! She said that she was very pleased at the sacrifices of the children. Jesus also pointed out to Saint Faustina in the *Diary of Mercy in my Soul* that souls are saved by suffering — another name for sacrifices! The little children had no formal education, not too much spiritual formation, and of course no seminary formation. However, they had the best of teachers — Our Lady of Fatima, the Blessed Virgin Mary. What are you willing to sacrifice so as to collaborate in the salvation of immortal souls? Never forget the teaching of the Angelic Doctor, Saint Thomas Aquinas: "One soul is worth more than the whole created universe." Let us be generous and sacrifice for the salvation of immortal souls ransomed by the Precious Blood of Jesus!
19. **The Sins that Offend the Immaculate Heart of Mary.** Do you know what Our Lady revealed with respect to the sins that hurt her most? There are actually five...
- Sins against the Immaculate Conception — the fact that Mary was conceived without the stain of Original Sin.
 - Sins against her Perpetual Virginity — sins against purity and those who deny Mary was a Virgin before the birth of Jesus, during the birth of Jesus, and after the birth of Jesus.
 - Sins against Mary's Divine Maternity — meaning sins against Mary's greatest privilege of all — the fact that she was and is the MOTHER OF GOD!
 - Sins that damage the little children. Jesus said: "Let the little children come to me for such are the kingdom of God." Think of the many sins that scandalize, damage, destroy the innocence of children! So many today! How the Hearts of Mary and Jesus weep.
 - Profanation of images of Our Lady. Over the past few years there has been a real proliferation of vandalism in churches and the destruction or mockery of the images of Mary! These sins of blasphemy penetrate and wound the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. May we do all we can to repair for these five sins against the Blessed Virgin Mary!
20. **The Power of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.** It would be incomplete if we did not mention in the message of Fatima, the importance of love and devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. When Jacinta was beatified Pope John Pau II presented her as a "Little Victim Soul"; Francisco, "A Little Mystic". However, Our Lady wanted Lucia to spend more time on earth and she lived into her late nineties as a Carmelite cloistered nun in Coimbra, Portugal. One of the hall marks of the spirituality of Lucia was to promote love, devotion and consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In a later message to Jacinta, Our Lady revealed one of her most ardent desires: "Tell everybody that God give graces through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Tell them to ask graces from her, and that the Heart of Jesus wishes to be venerated together with the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Ask them to plead for peace from the Immaculate Heart of Mary, for the Lord has confided the peace of the world through her." Therefore, let us all love the Immaculate Heart of Mary, consecrate our lives, families and parishes to her tender, loving and powerful intercession. "Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation."

