



The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: Miracles and Faith
Part IX: Visions and Messages of Fatima



Our Lady of Fatima
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Introduction

[Greeting:] → Welcome to “The Armor of Faith,” a show where we hope to bring our listeners closer to the Word of God and the blessings we receive through living in the fullness of the Catholic faith. My name is Doug and I will be your host as we discuss the blessings of the Church Christ built upon Peter.

I am joined today by my panel: [names]

Helen is a lay-Dominican, which is also known as the Order of Preachers, and she, along with her husband Dan, are engaged in youth catechesis and music ministry at Saint Philip Benizi Catholic Mission in Cedaredge, Colorado. Sharon is our token cradle Catholic, and, as everyone by now knows, I am simply here to ask questions. That is why we have our panelists, because someone has to carry the burden of providing the answers, so welcome to our panelists as well as to our listeners.

Let us open with a prayer:

Heavenly Father, we lift up our hearts in thanks and praise for this opportunity to open and share your Holy Word this day. We pray that You are with us and all our listeners as we share with one another the blessings of faith. We pray You will grant us wisdom and understanding as we seek to learn Your Holy Truth.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit we pray.

Discussion:

Last time, we began to examine the apparitions of Our Lady at Fatima. We discussed how Our Lady appeared to three relatively young children and the responses of the parents, the community, and the parish Pastor. As we concluded our discussion, I pointed out the similarities of response which we discussed concerning the story of the Man Born Blind as well as the experiences of St. Catherine, who received the request from Our Blessed Mother for the striking

of what became known as the Miraculous Medal, and St. Bernadette, who received the request from Our Blessed Mother that a chapel be built on the grounds of the grotto at Lourdes.

As I alluded to in our discussions, it is one thing to sort out what just happened when we witness a miracle, but it is a different challenge to sort out what we might believe when we hear about a miracle based only on the testimony of someone we do not necessarily know. I also mentioned that if we do believe the event was an intervention by God, then, we must also ask of ourselves, what is God communicating to us?

Last time, we discussed the first three apparitions of our Blessed Mother at the Cova da Iria and the reaction of those who witnessed and those who simply heard. Today, as we continue with the story of the miracle at Fatima, we will review some of the messages from Our Blessed Mother as we continue to discuss the apparitions.

At the third apparition, Our Lady reminded the children of the special vocation to which they were called. She told them, “*Sacrifice yourselves for sinners; and say often, especially when you make some sacrifice: ‘O my Jesus, it is for love of Thee, for the conversion of sinners and in reparation for sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary I offer this sacrifice to Thee.’*” (Marchi, 28)

Lucia later described what the children saw as Our Lady spoke these words to the children. “She opened Her hands again as She had done the two previous months. The light reflecting from them seemed to penetrate into the earth, and we saw as if into a sea of fire, and immersed in that fire were devils and souls with human form, as if they were transparent black or bronze embers floating in the fire and swayed by the flames that issued from them along with clouds of smoke, falling upon every side just like the falling of sparks in great fires, without weight or equilibrium, amidst wailing and cries of pain and despair that horrified and shook us with terror. We could tell the devils by their horrible and nauseous figures of baleful and unknown animals, but transparent as the black coals in a fire.”

Our Lady explained to the children, “*You have seen Hell — where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them God wants to establish throughout the world the devotion to My Immaculate Heart. If people will do what I 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 Pius XI.*”

(Question 1: Here, Mary encourages the children to the vocation to which they were called; to pray for sinners, that their sacrifices may be offered in reparation for the sins of others. What is brought to mind as we hear these words and how might we join in this vocation?)

(2 Maccabees 12:38-46)

38 Judas rallied his army and went to the city of Adullam. As the seventh day was approaching, they purified themselves according to custom and kept the sabbath there. 39 On the following day, since the task had now become urgent, Judas and his companions went to gather up the bodies of the fallen and bury them with their kindred in their ancestral tombs. 40 But under the tunic of each of the dead they found amulets sacred to the idols of Jamnia, which the law forbids the Jews to wear. So it was clear to

all that this was why these men had fallen. 41 They all therefore praised the ways of the Lord, the just judge who brings to light the things that are hidden. 42 Turning to supplication, they prayed that the sinful deed might be fully blotted out. The noble Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves free from sin, for they had seen with their own eyes what had happened because of the sin of those who had fallen. 43 He then took up a collection among all his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the resurrection in mind; 44 for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. 45 But if he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. 46 Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be absolved from their sin.

Our Lady continued to explain to the children, “*When you see a night illumined by an unknown light, know that it is the great sign that 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 for the Consecration of Russia to My Immaculate Heart and the Communion of Reparation on the First Saturdays. If they heed My requests, 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; in the end, My Immaculate Heart shall triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to Me, which will be converted, and some time of peace will be given to the world.*”

(Question 2: Here, Our Blessed Mother asked for the consecration of Russia. We will discuss the response to this request in our next show, but for now, let's consider the meaning of the request if it is not done. In what ways might Russia spread its errors to the world if Our Lady's request is not heeded? What does Our Lady mean when she says, “In the end, My Immaculate Heart shall triumph?”)

After the third apparition of our Blessed Mother, the community continued to talk. Many were curious about the events, but others were dismissive and angry at what they perceived as a hoax of children. The local magistrate was baptized Catholic, but abandoned the faith at the age of 20. In later years he became the leader of the local Masonic Lodge as well as the owner of a local newspaper. It was noted that he regularly used his newspaper to try and undermine those of religious faith.

Fearing that the events reported by the children might cause a surge of Christian faith within the community, the Magistrate used his platforms of power in an attempt to intimidate the children into recanting their stories. (Marchi, 34)

As the time for the fourth apparition approached, the Magistrate devised a plot to kidnap the children. Under the ruse of offering to take the children to the Cova da Iria in his carriage, he instead took them to his house to interrogate and intimidate them into recanting their accounts of the apparitions. (Marchi, 35)

While the children were detained, a crowd had formed at the Cova da Irai. As word spread that the Magistrate was holding the children, the crowd became resentful. An elderly woman, Maria da Capelinha, gave the following account:

“I was not afraid. I knew there was nothing evil about the apparitions because if there were, the people would not be praying at the Cova. My constant prayer as I walked along was, ‘May Our Lady guide me according to God’s Holy Will.’ The crowd at the Cova on August thirteenth was even larger than in July.

“About eleven o’clock, Lucia’s sister, Maria dos Anjos, came with some candles to light to Our Lady. The people prayed and sang religious hymns around the holm oak. The absence of the children made them very restless. When it became known that the Magistrate had kidnapped them, a terrible resentment went through the crowd. There is no telling what it might have turned into, had it not thundered just then. Some thought the thunder came from the road; others thought that it came from the holm oak; but it seemed to me that it came from a distance. It frightened us all and many began to cry, fearing they were going to be killed. Of course, no one was killed.

“Right after the thunder came a flash, and immediately, we all noticed a little cloud, very white, beautiful and bright, that came and stayed over the holm oak. It stayed a few minutes, then rose towards the heavens where it disappeared. Looking about, we noticed a strange sight that we had already seen and would see again. Everyone’s face glowed, rose, red, blue, all the colors of the rainbow. The trees seemed to have no branches or leaves but were all covered with flowers; every leaf was a flower. The ground was in little squares, each one a different color. Our clothes seemed to be transformed also into the colors of the rainbow. The two vigil lanterns hanging from the arch over the holy spot appeared to be of gold.

“When the signs disappeared, the people seemed to realize that Our Lady had come and, not finding the children, had returned to Heaven. They felt that Our Lady was disappointed and hence they were exceedingly upset. Resentment grew in their hearts. They started towards the village, clamoring against the Magistrate, the Pastor and anyone they thought might have had anything to do with the arrest of the children.”
(Marchi, 36-37)

(Question 3: So the children were kidnapped and kept from going to the Cova da Iria on the day Our Lady asked them to meet her. Some in the crowd responded in anger and almost a mob mentality began to stir. Let’s place ourselves in the position of someone in the crowd **How might we have reacted to such a situation? What do we think God would expect from us?)**

Jacinta’s father, Ti Marto, represented himself well as the anger of the crowd grew. He shouted out to the crowd, **“Be calm, men, be calm. Don’t hurt anyone. Whoever deserves punishment will get it. All this is by the power of the One above.”** (Marchi, 37)

The next day, after the children were released, Ti Marto again spoke to a crowd which had gathered after Mass and said, **“Boys, behave yourselves! Some of you are shouting against the Senhor Prior, others against the Administrator, and still some against the Regedor. No one is to**

blame. **The blame lies with lack of faith and all has been allowed by the One above.**" (Marchi, 40)

(Question 4: Sometimes our passions, even passions of faith, get the best of us. What do the words of Ti Marto demonstrate to us? What should we learn from them?)

On 19 August 1917, Lucia, Francisco, and Francisco's older brother John were at a place called Valinhos. Lucia noticed the signs which usually preceded the appearance of Our Blessed Mother. Jacinta was not there, so she dispatched John to go find her. Just as John and Jacinta arrived at the field, Our Lady came to speak with the children.

Lucia told Our Lady of the turmoil within the community and expressed her concern at the unbelief of so many. Lucia asked Our Lady once more to perform a miracle so the community would believe. Our Lady responded, "Yes. *In the last month, in October, I shall perform a miracle so that all may believe in My apparitions. **If they had not taken you to the village, the miracle would have been greater.** Saint Joseph will come with the Baby Jesus to give peace to the world. Our Lord also will come to bless the people. Besides, Our Lady of the Rosary and Our Lady of Sorrows will come.*" (Marchi, 41)

(Question 5: Our Lady responded she would perform the requested miracle, but she also said, the miracle would have been greater if the Magistrate had not kidnapped the children. Why do we think that Our Lady made such a comment, that the miracle would have been greater?)

(Matthew 13:54-58)

*54 He came to his native place and taught the people in their synagogue. They were astonished and said, "Where did this man get such wisdom and mighty deeds? 55 Is he not the carpenter's son? Is not his mother named Mary and his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? 56 Are not his sisters all with us? Where did this man get all this?" 57 And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his native place and in his own house." 58 **And he did not work many mighty deeds there because of their lack of faith.***

(Hebrews 3:1-19)

*1 Therefore, holy "brothers," sharing in a heavenly calling, reflect on Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, 2 **who was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was "faithful in [all] his house."** 3 But he is worthy of more "glory" than Moses, as the founder of a house has more "honor" than the house itself. 4 Every house is founded by someone, but the founder of all is God. 5 **Moses was "faithful in all his house" as a "servant" to testify to what would be spoken, 6 but Christ was faithful as a son placed over his house. We are his house, if [only] we hold fast to our confidence and pride in our hope.***

7 Therefore, as the holy Spirit says:

"Oh, that today you would hear his voice,

*8 'Harden not your hearts as at the rebellion
in the day of testing in the desert,*

9 where your ancestors tested and tried me and saw my works

10 for forty years.

Because of this I was provoked with that generation
and I said, "They have always been of erring heart,
and they do not know my ways."

11 As I swore in my wrath,
"They shall not enter into my rest."'''

12 Take care, brothers, that none of you may have an evil and unfaithful heart, so as to forsake the living God. 13 Encourage yourselves daily while it is still "today," so that none of you may grow hardened by the deceit of sin. 14 We have become partners of Christ if only we hold the beginning of the reality firm until the end, 15 for it is said:

"Oh, that today you would hear his voice:
'Harden not your hearts as at the rebellion.'"

16 Who were those who rebelled when they heard? Was it not all those who came out of Egypt under Moses? 17 With whom was he "provoked for forty years"? Was it not those who had sinned, whose corpses fell in the desert? 18 And to whom did he "swear that they should not enter into his rest," if not to those who were disobedient? 19 And we see that they could not enter for lack of faith.

When Lucia asked about those who were ill, Our Lady responded that some would be cured within the year, but she also instructed the children that it was more important to pray for health of souls rather than of bodies. Our Lady said, "Pray! Pray a great deal and make sacrifices for sinners, for many souls go to Hell for not having someone to pray and make sacrifices for them." (Marchi, 41)

(Question 6: Of course, we discussed this a little earlier in the show, but Our Lady is telling us something here. Beyond the children, to whom might this message have meaning and what might that meaning be?)

On 13 September 1917, the day of the fifth apparition, an even larger crowd appeared at the Cova da Iria to observe the children as Our Lady appeared and spoke to them. As Our Lady spoke with the children, Lucia inquired as to the healing of the afflicted. Our Lady responded, "Some I will cure; but the others, no. Our Lord does not have confidence in them." (Marchi, 46)

(Question 7: If we think about it, this is a rather heavy response; some yes, but others, no. Our Lord does not have confidence in them. How might we interpret this response?)

After expressing once more for the need for a miracle and receiving an assurance from Our Blessed Mother that it would be performed in October, Lucia said, "Some people gave me these two letters for you and a bottle of cologne." to which Our Lady responded, "None of that is necessary for Heaven." (Marchi, 46)

Thinking of the bottle of cologne which was offered to Our Lady brings to mind Matthew 26:6-13, which reads:

(Matthew 26:6-13)

6 Now when Jesus was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, 7 a woman came up to him with an alabaster jar of costly perfumed oil, and poured it on his head while he was reclining at table. 8 When the disciples saw this, they were indignant and said, "Why this waste? 9 It could have been sold for much, and the money given to the poor." 10 Since Jesus knew this, he said to them, "Why do you make trouble for the woman? She has done a good thing for me. 11 The poor you will always have with you; but you will not always have me. 12 In pouring this perfumed oil upon my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. 13 Amen, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be spoken of, in memory of her."

(Question 8: We often give gifts or write letters as a means to represent our love and respect. Why might we think that Our Lady would respond that none of that is necessary for Heaven? How does this response relate to what Jesus said in Matthew 26:6-13?)

Of course, we can assume that the gifts sent to Mary were a demonstration of love and respect. We might also consider this in light of Matthew 22:36-40, where Jesus confirms the two greatest commandments.

(Matthew 22:36-40)

36 "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" 37 He said to him, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. 38 This is the greatest and the first commandment. 39 The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments."

(Question 9: Let's assume we had the opportunity to give a gift to our Lord and our Blessed Mother. What might we think would be an appropriate gift for Heaven?)

(Matthew 25:31-46)

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, 32 and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. 34 Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' 37 Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? 39 When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' 40 And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.' 41 Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, 43 a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing,

ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.’ 44 Then they will answer and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?’ 45 He will answer them, ‘Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.’ 46 And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

Quotes:

“I left, the morning of September the thirteenth, 1917, in a slow carriage drawn by an old horse, to go to the place of the apparitions. Father Gois chose a spot overlooking the vast amphitheater of the Cova da Iria. From it we could easily see, without coming too close, the place where the little shepherds prayed as they waited for the heavenly apparition. At noontime, silence fell on the crowd, and a low whispering of prayers could be heard. Suddenly, cries of joy rent the air, many voices praising the Blessed Virgin. Arms were raised to point to something above, ‘Look! don’t you see?’... ‘Yes, I see it!’

“I, too, raised my eyes to probe the amplitude of the skies, hoping to see what the other more fortunate eyes were seeing before me. There was not a single cloud in the whole blue sky, yet to my great astonishment, I saw clearly and distinctly a luminous globe, coming from the east to the west, gliding slowly and majestically through space. My friend also looked up, and had the happiness of enjoying the same unexpected but enchanting apparition. Suddenly, the globe with its extraordinary light, disappeared before our eyes.

“There was a little girl near us, dressed like Lucia and about the same age. She was excited with joy and kept saying, ‘I still see Her... now She is coming down.’ A few minutes later the child exclaimed again, pointing to the skies, ‘Now She is rising again,’ following the globe with her eyes until it disappeared towards the sun.

“I asked my friend, who was enthusiastic over what we had seen, ‘What do you think of that globe?’ Without any hesitation, he replied, ‘That was Our Lady.’ That was also my belief. The three little shepherds had seen the Mother of God Herself; to us had been given the grace to see the chariot that had borne Her from Heaven to the barren inhospitable hills of Aire. It must be said that everyone around us had seen the same as we. For on all sides were heard manifestations of joy, and greetings to Our Lady. Some, however, saw nothing; for one good and pious soul nearby wept bitterly for not having seen.

“My colleague went about from group to group in the Cova da Iria, and afterwards along the road, to inquire of each what they had seen. The persons interrogated were of the most various classes; yet with one voice they affirmed the reality of the phenomena which we ourselves had contemplated.

“Deeply satisfied, we returned home from our pilgrimage to Fatima, with the firm purpose of coming back on the thirteenth of October to accede to Lucia’s invitation and to fortify even more our faith in the apparitions of Our Lady.”

– *Monsignor John Quaresma* (Marchi, 47)

Final Thoughts:

As we continue to discuss the apparitions of Fatima, we should note many forces in play as well as different observations of those who came to witness. The children clearly saw Our Lady, but it was only Lucia who spoke with her. Jacinta could see and hear Our Lady, but Francisco could only see her, he always had to ask the girls what Our Lady said.

Others who came to witness could see a cloud or globe, but not Our Lady herself. Some were not able to see anything at all. We might wonder as to the consistencies and differences of observation, but then, we might also consider what our faith allows us to see.

Wrap Up: Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we pick up our discussion with the sixth apparition, the Miracle of the Sun, and some history before and after the events of Fatima.

Let us conclude with a prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to open and discuss Your Holy Word. We pray that as we go our separate ways, You will continue to walk with us and help us to see how we may put on the armor of **truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation**, and the **Word** of the gospel not only for the benefit of our lives, but also the lives of all who cross our path. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.

Thank you all and God bless.

Next Session: Miracles and Faith – Part X: The Miracle of the Sun and the Years Surrounding Fatima

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