



The Armor of Faith

Topic Summary: Miracles and Faith

Part X: Miracle of the Sun and the Years Surrounding Fatima



*Fatima – People Looking at Miracle Sun
Public Domain*

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, I mentioned that 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. I pointed out that 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 they could 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.

Today, we will discuss the sixth apparition which includes the Miracle of the Sun. Again, we should note the different forces in play. While many came to the sixth apparition to witness in faith, others were simply curious, while others came to scoff and ridicule what they believed to be the fabrications of children.

Over the sixth months of the apparitions of Mary at Fatima to Lucia dos Santos and her cousins Francisco and Jacinta Martos, there was considerable discussion which spread well beyond Fatima. As word spread, people responded through the lens of their view of the world. Each month, following the first apparition of 13 May 1917, attending crowds grew in size from approximately 60 on 13 June 1917, to an estimated 70,000 on 13 Oct 1917.

The days leading up to 13 Oct 1917 were filled with rain. Indeed, as the anticipated day arrived, the crowds formed in the mud within the fields surrounding the holm oak at the Cova da Iria. One Lisbon paper, *O Dia*, reported;

“All night long and into early morning, a light persistent rain fell. It soaked the field, saddened the air, and chilled to the bone the men, women and children and the beasts plodding their way towards the hill of the miracle. The rain kept falling, a soft, unending drizzle. Drops trickled down the women’s skirts of coarse wool or striped cotton, making them as weighty as lead. Water dripped from the caps and broad-brimmed hats onto the new jackets of their suits for seeing God. The bare feet of the women and the hobnailed shoes of the men sloshed in the wide pools of the muddy roads. They seemed not to notice the rain. They went up the hills without stopping, illuminated by faith, anxious for the miracle promised by Our Lady to the pure and simple children who watched sheep, for the thirteenth at approximately 1:30 p.m., according to the legal time.” (Marchi, 50)

Another Lisbon newspaper, *O Seculo*, reported;

“About ten in the morning, the skies became overcast. Soon it had turned to rain. Sheets of rain, driven by a chilly autumn wind, whipped the faces of the pilgrims, drenched the roads, and chilled the people to the bone. While some sought shelter under the trees, against the walls or in scattered houses, others continued their march with impressive endurance.” (Marchi, 51)

(Question 1: When we choose to participate in outdoor events, the weather plays a factor. Crowds are often less on cold rainy days. What might we think would motivate people to travel along muddy roads in adverse weather conditions, many exposed to the elements, to witness what skeptics viewed as a total fabrication of children?)

Despite all the turmoil and the crowds, the children made their way to the Cova da Iria. A priest, who was near them questioned as to when Our Lady would appear. Lucia responded that Our Lady would appear at noon. The priest, checking his watch, noted it was already noon. After a

few more minutes, the priest checked his watch again, then declared, “Noon is gone. Everyone out of here! The whole thing is an illusion!” (Marchi, 52)

The priest began pushing the children away, but Lucia protested, saying, “Whoever wants may go away, I’m not going. I’m on my own property. Our Lady said She was coming. She always came before and so must be coming again.” Suddenly, Lucia turned to Jacinta and said, “Jacinta, kneel down; Our Lady is coming. I’ve seen the flash.” (Marchi, 52)

As Our Lady appeared, Lucia asked as she normally did, “What does Your Grace want of me?”

Our Lady responded, “*I want a chapel to be built here in My honor. I am Our Lady of the Rosary. Continue to say the Rosary every day. The war will end soon and the soldiers will return to their homes.*”

As Lucia asked about the healing of some who were sick and the conversion of some sinners, Our Lady responded, “*Some, yes; others, no.*” Our Lady continued, “*People must amend their lives and ask pardon for their sins.*” With a growing look of sadness, Our Lady continued, “*They must not offend Our Lord any more for He is already too much offended.*” (Marchi, 53)

As the conversation ended, the miracle which was promised by Our Lady began to unfold in the sky above the crowd. Jacinta's father, Ti Marto, described it as follows:

“We could look at the sun with ease. It did not bother at all. It seemed to be continually fading and glowing in one fashion, then another. It threw shafts of light one way and another, painting everything in different colors, the people, the trees, the earth, even the air. But the greatest proof of the miracle was the fact that the sun did not bother the eyes. Everybody stood still and quiet, gazing at the sun. At a certain point, the sun stopped its play of light and then started dancing. It stopped once more and again started dancing until it seemed to loosen itself from the skies and fall upon the people. It was a moment of terrible suspense.” (Marchi, 54)

The newspaper, *O Dia*, described the event as such;

“At one o’clock, the hour of the sun, the rain stopped. The sky had a certain greyish tint of pearl and a strange clearness filled the gloomy landscape, every moment getting gloomier. The sun seemed to be veiled with transparent gauze to enable us to look at it without difficulty. The greyish tint of mother-of-pearl began changing as if into a shining silver disc, that was growing slowly until it broke through the clouds. And the silvery sun, still shrouded in the same greyish lightness of gauze, was seen to rotate and wander within the circle of the receded clouds! The people cried out with one voice, the thousands of the creatures of God whom faith raised up to Heaven, fell to their knees upon the muddy ground.

“Then as if it were shining through the stained glass windows of a great cathedral, the light became a rare blue, spreading its rays upon the gigantic nave... Slowly the blue faded away and now the light seemed to be filtered through yellow stained glass. Yellow spots were falling now upon the white kerchiefs and the dark poor skirts of coarse wool.

They were spots which repeated themselves indefinitely over the lowly holm oaks, the rocks and the hills. All the people were weeping and praying bareheaded, weighed down by the greatness of the miracle expected. These were seconds, moments, that seemed hours; they were so fully lived.” (Marchi, 55)

As the sun dove towards the earth, many thought it was the end of the world. The miracle was not only seen by the crowd at the Cova da Iria, but in villages several miles away, yet, it was not recorded by any observatory. As the miracle concluded, the people also noticed that despite the drenching rains, their clothes were now dry as well as the land beneath their feet. (Marchi, 58)

(Question 2: I am sure you can guess my next question. Let's put ourselves in the shoes of those in the crowd. What would be our response? What do we think might be the response of those who were not Catholic or perhaps even atheist?)

The Miracle of the Sun occurred on 13 Oct 1917. In Russia, other events were in play, which history remembers as the October Revolution. On 25 October 1917, the Bolshevicks seized power, which opened the door to communism and what became known as the Soviet Union.

We should note, here, that this date was according to the Julian calendar in use by the Russians at the time. Shortly thereafter, the Russians began to use the Gregorian calendar, in use by the West. According to that calendar, the date was actually 7 November 1917. Hence, the Russians subsequently celebrated the anniversary date of the October Revolution on 7 November.

(Question 3: As we look at historical events, we should reflect upon the statements by Our Lady during the course of her apparitions. What warning did Our Lady give that might be related to this historical event?)

During the first apparition, Our Lady instructed the children, “*Say the Rosary every day to bring peace to the world and the end of the war.*”

During the third apparition, Our Lady instructed the children, “*I want you to return here on the thirteenth of next month. Continue to say the Rosary every day in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary to obtain peace for the world and the end of the war; for She alone can save it.*”

During the sixth apparition, Our Lady instructed the children, “*Continue to say the Rosary every day. The war will end soon and the soldiers will return to their homes.*”

(Question 4: As we read various accounts, it was the custom for the children to pray the Rosary daily, sometimes more. On what date did World War I end? Is this consistent with what Mary said during the sixth apparition?)

During the second apparition, Lucia said to Our Lady, “I would like to ask You also to take us to Heaven!”

Our Lady responded, “*Yes, I will take Jacinta and Francisco soon. You, however, are to stay here a longer time.*”

Here, Our Lady also used the word, “soon.” She also said that Lucia would remain “a longer time.” Of course, these are not precise indicators of time, but let's look at what happened to the children.

Towards the end of October 1918, the Marto family was exposed to influenza. It infected everyone except Ti Marto, who cared for his ill family. Francisco was to suffer several months until 4 April 1919, he passed away. Almost a year later, after two hospital visits and extensive efforts by doctors, Jacinta passed away, on 20 February 1920. Lucia lived to the age of 97. She passed away on 13 February 2005.

(Question 5: As I mentioned, the words “soon” and “longer time” are not precise measures. How do we believe these words align with the dates Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta passed from this earth?)

Despite what was reported about the miracle of the sun to the world, there were those who were skeptical. They would promote theories such as, collective hallucination or mass manipulation by Lucia. Of course, one might wonder how a 10 year old girl could wield such power over an estimated crowd of 70,000, much less those who witnessed the miracle from up to 20 miles away.

Still, politics were in play and an anti-catholic government was in power as the people attempted to make sense of all which was seen and all which was reported. The faithful moved forward to address the request of Our Lady to build a chapel. With the permission of local priests, the community began to erect the chapel in 1919. On 13 Oct 1921, the first Mass was authorized to be said at the chapel. (Broussard)

On 6 March 1922, two bombs were set. One was set at the chapel and one at the holm oak where the apparitions occurred. While the first bomb blew off the roof of the chapel, the second bomb failed to detonate such that there was no damage to the holm oak. (Foley)

(Question 6: As I previously mentioned, it is one thing to determine, “what just happened,” if we are a witness to a miracle. It is another to determine what we are to believe when we hear of events third hand. Still, even secular and anti-catholic newspapers reported the event as an inexplicable event. Why, after all which was witnessed, do we think there were those who would go to such measures as to bomb a chapel?)

During the third apparition, Our Lady told 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 7: On 13 July 1917, the pope was Pope Benedict XV. Pope Pius XI served in the chair of Peter from 6 February 1922 to 10 February 1939. Why is the comparison of these dates important to us?)

Continuing on from the statement above, Our Lady told 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.*”

The consecration of Russia was not accomplished in a timely fashion. On 25-26 January 1938, lights were seen in the sky across Europe and as far as Bermuda. On 12 March 1938, Hitler annexed Austria, (Ernst) setting in motion the road to WWII which historians cite as beginning with the 1 September 1939 German invasion of Poland.

(Question 8: The lights in the sky, which occurred at the end of January 1938 were coined by some as the Fatima Storm. If the faithful were aware of Our Lady's prophecies and warnings, why were they unable to change the course?)

I would like to look at a day 33 years earlier, the same number of years Jesus walked the earth in human form. According to some accounts, on 13 October 1884, Pope Leo XIII had a vision which caused him grave concern. The vision is said to have been a conversation between Jesus and Satan. The subject of the conversation was a boast by Satan that he could destroy the Church which Jesus had established. Satan said he would need 100 years. It has been said that in response to this vision, Pope Leo XIII composed the Saint Michael prayer.

(Question 9: The battle between good and evil on earth has continued to rage since the first deception in the garden. The challenge we face as we examine historical accounts, such as the one above, is how we should connect the dots. Given the battle of good and evil on earth transcends generations, how are we to recognize events connected to prophecy? If we do, how might we change the course of events over which we are warned, especially when so many fail or refuse to see?)

Quotes:

Professor de Oliveira himself wondered if the Miracle of the Sun might not indicate the magnitude of the chastisement an unrepentant mankind was bringing on itself. The sun had unexpectedly spun all over the sky. Might other things we normally take for granted “spiral” out of control and threaten us with total destruction?

– Raymond E. Drake (*Forward II to the book, Meet the Witnesses of the Miracle of the Sun*)

Father, a time will come when the decisive battle between the kingdom of Christ and Satan will be over marriage and the family. And those who will work for the good of the family will experience persecution and tribulation. But do not be afraid, because Our Lady has already crushed his head.

– Sister Lucia (*Letter to Cardinal Caffarra*)

The Most Holy Virgin is very sad because no one has paid any attention to Her message, neither the good nor the bad.

– *Sister Lucia of Fatima*

Final Thoughts:

As we have examined a variety of miracles from Biblical Times to the 20th Century, we have noted some common threads in the responses. As I have said, it is one thing to discern, “what just happened,” when we might be witness to a miracle, but another to determine what to believe when we hear or read about an event. I have also mentioned that history is somewhat problematic in our assessment in that evidence may be sparse, we may be unaware of critical information, and of course the pollution of the historical record with falsehoods, sometimes well mentioned, but falsehoods none-the-less.

It may be a challenge for us to accept a miracle without evidence, but as we look at such events as Fatima, a miracle of relatively recent times, we might wonder how it is skeptics remain? How is it that the world largely ignores what was witnessed by an estimated 70,000 people, especially in light of reports from those who were initially believed the apparitions of Fatima to be merely the fabrication of children, but reflected a different tone after the Miracle of the Sun?

As we examine the events and endeavor to connect the dots, the most important question to answer is what is God communicating to us through His interventions? The messages of Fatima were clear. Our Lady spoke of penance, prayer, and devotion to her Immaculate Heart. She gave warning of the chastisements which God would allow if we do not heed her instructions.

As we look at the accounts surrounding the composition of the Saint Michael Prayer, we might wonder when the 100 years began of which Satan was allowed in response to his boast that he could destroy the church Christ built upon Peter. Some place the date in 1914. Others speculate that it began with the Miracle of Son on 13 October 1917. In either of those cases, 100 years has come and gone, but the spiritual battle around us continues to rage. Perhaps it was with the beginning of WWII on 1 September 1939. If that is the case, there are many years left to the fight. While we know the end, [spoiler alert] The Immaculate Heart of Mary will Triumph and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail (Matthew 16:18), we must not be complacent, for during battles and wars, there are casualties. We do not want to become a casualty of Satan's deceptions. We must heed the warnings given to us and the signs before us.

Jesus told us in Luke 12:54-56:

(Luke 12:54-56)

54 “When you see cloud rising in the west you say immediately that it is going to rain—and so it does; 55 and when you notice that the wind is blowing from the south you say that it is going to be hot—and so it is. 56 You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky; why do you not know how to interpret the present time?”

As we look to the prophecies of chastisement, we must also remember, a warning does not

mean what will happen is inevitable, it means we may have the opportunity to influence the outcome. Consider Jonah 3:3-10.

(Jonah 3:3-10)

3 So Jonah set out for Nineveh, in accord with the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an awesomely great city; it took three days to walk through it. 4 Jonah began his journey through the city, and when he had gone only a single day's walk announcing, "Forty days more and Nineveh shall be overthrown," 5 the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast and all of them, great and small, put on sackcloth.

6 When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. 7 Then he had this proclaimed throughout Nineveh: "By decree of the king and his nobles, no man or beast, no cattle or sheep, shall taste anything; they shall not eat, nor shall they drink water. 8 Man and beast alike must be covered with sackcloth and call loudly to God; they all must turn from their evil way and from the violence of their hands. 9 Who knows? God may again repent and turn from his blazing wrath, so that we will not perish." 10 When God saw by their actions how they turned from their evil way, he repented of the evil he had threatened to do to them; he did not carry it out.

Let us, then, look to the signs of the times. Let us in prayer ask God what He desires of us. Let us consider the purpose for which God created us and how we may help accomplish His will.

Wrap Up: Our time has once more come to an end. We hope you enjoyed this series concerning miracles and faith. We also hope you will be able to join us next week as we begin a new discussion concerning how we may recognize the wolves who walk among us in the clothing of sheep.

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: [By Their Fruits You Shall Know Them](#)

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