



Honor Thy Mother

Maria Rosa had lived for a long time in the small hamlet of Aljustrel, just outside Fatima.

In addition to being a mother, a duty carried out with great firmness, she often acted as a nurse, sometimes spending the night in the home of a sick person.

Being one of the few educated women in her village,

Maria Rosa enjoyed reading.

"For me," she told her youngest daughter, Lucy, "there is nothing better than reading in my own house, in peace.

... And the lives of the saints are so beautiful." She always kept an air of seriousness, and everybody knew that whatever she said was like a word of Scripture. Her young children never heard anyone dare to say a disrespectful or unfitting word in her presence. And they learned early in life to obey her without delay.

The children were taught their catechism by their mother who did not want to be ashamed of her children's failure to learn their lessons.

Maria Rosa's instructions were so well received that one daughter became a catechist at the age of nine. Under-



standing Christian doctrine was also very important and one memorable explanation was on hell. When asked by one of her daughters how the fire of hell could not consume and destroy the damned, like the wood one puts in the fireplace, she answered "then you don't know that if you put a bone in the fire, it will appear to burn without being consumed?"

The dos Santos children were taught by their mother to be humble and industrious. One of the things least tolerated was a lie. The smallest fib would result in a beating with the broom.

The first thing young Lucy learned was the Hail Mary, since her mother would take her in her arms when she taught it to an older sister. And being the youngest, Lucy was constantly being held and covered with kisses and caresses.

The parish priest preached against dancing, common to the parish festivals. As soon as Maria Rosa heard this condemnation from the priest, she forbade her daughters to attend such amusements. Instead, the evenings at home were spent with music, singing, prayer and reading from

the Old Testament or the Gospel, or the story of Our Lady of Nazare or Our Lady of Lourdes. During Lent it was on the Passion of Our Lord.

Because of her mother's lessons, Lucy was allowed to go to Communion at the early age of six. "She understands what she's doing better than many of the others," stated Father Cruz, who had just examined her on the catechism and the mystery of the Eucharist. And what were Maria Rosa's last recommendations to her daughter when she received Our Lord into her heart? "Above all, ask Him to make you a saint." Many years

later those words still echoed in Lucy's heart.

When Caroline turned 13 and was put out to work, Lucy, who had just turned eight, was assigned her former task of tending the flock of sheep - Lucy resembled her mother in that she had a serious attitude and natural authority over companions her own age. And it was during this year, 1915, that the Fatima story begins. Lucy re-

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solved to say nothing when a luminous figure, far off, manifested itself to her and three companions.

The other witnesses spread the story and Maria Rosa questioned her daughter about it. In response, Lucy said it looked like a person wrapped in a sheet. Maria Rosa concluded it was "childish nonsense". Even after the third and final sighting, Lucy could not explain adequately to her mother what it was she saw.

The following year was one of sadness in the dos Santos household. The two eldest daughters got married and left home; two other girls were sent out to work to help support the family. The only son was expecting to be drafted by the army. Instead of a house full of joyous, singing children there were empty places at the dinner table. "My God, where has all the joy of our home gone?" Maria Rosa exclaimed sadly one evening.

How much worse would she have felt if she knew her nine-year-old daughter sometimes went off by herself and cried in bitter grief, unable to subdue her own suffering? And how much deeper would Maria Rosa's sadness have been if

she knew the "childish nonsense" of the previous year was now returning to her youngest daughter? Unlike before, Lucy's companions were now her younger cousins, and they were able to keep silent about the appearance of an Angel.

But it only got worse. The following spring her daughter claimed that the Blessed Virgin appeared to her and her two cousins at the Cova da Iria. Maria Rosa was determined to have her daughter admit she was telling a lie. She would use whatever means it took – caresses, threats, even the broomstick. That evening, Maria Rosa wanted a confession. And when Father Ferreira questioned the three shepherds and did not believe them, she was more convinced her daughter was a liar.

On June 13, the feast of St. Anthony, the parish was celebrating with a festival. Maria Rosa was certain her daughter would not be tempted to leave all this and go back to the Cova da Iria. But if they did, she would follow them and see for herself what transpired. Fear of being recognized by people going to the Cova, and then being laughed at by her neighbors, weakened her resolve and she returned to the festival.

After the apparition of June 13, and still skeptical of her daughter's story, Maria Rosa balked at letting Lucy go to school. "What difference does it make to Our Lady, whether you know how to read or not?" she asked. At that time school was only for boys.

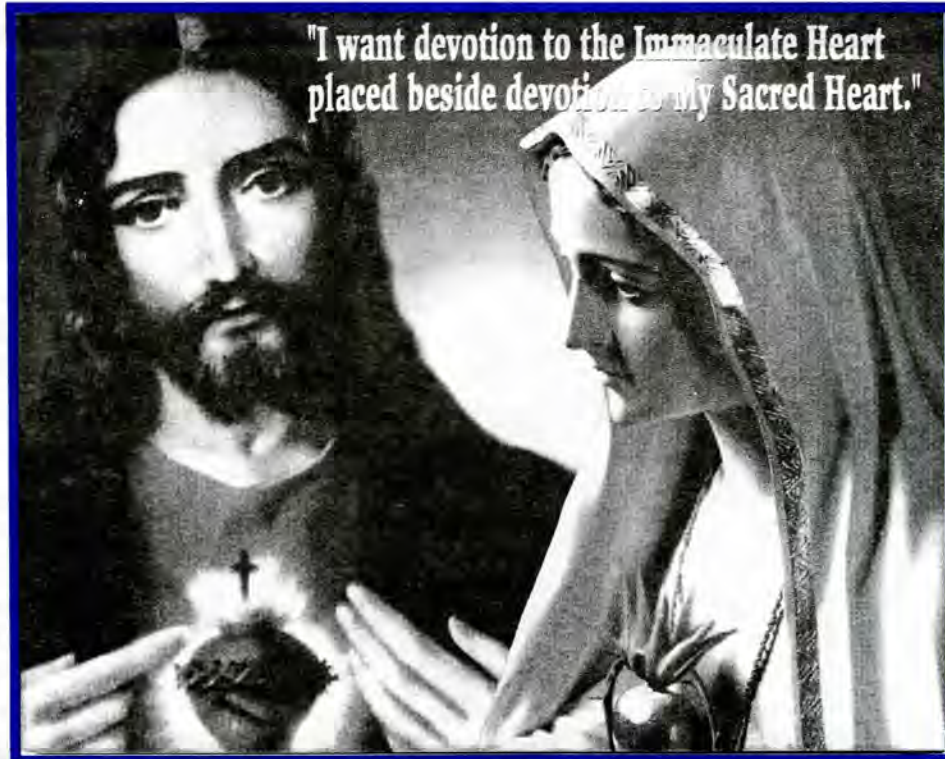
Father Ferreira decided to question Lucy and her cousins. Her mother insisted that she say she lied and put an end to the whole affair. The children were unable to provide enough evidence to convince the parish priest they really saw Our Lady so he pronounced his judgment thus: "It doesn't seem to me like a revelation from Heaven. ... This may also be a deceit of the devil. We shall see."

The priest went on to advise Maria Rosa not to beat her daughter physically but to strike fear into her, so she would admit she lied.

"The devil'll be there for sure," Lucy's mother said as July 13 neared.

After that date, crowds came flocking from all parts. "These poor people come here, taken in by your trickery, you can be sure of that, and I really don't know what I can do to undeceive them," Lucy's mother said in exasperation.

One man who made fun of the three children and even went so far as to beat them, asked Maria Rosa what she had to say about her daughter's visions. "I don't know," she answered. "It seems to me that she's nothing but a fake, who is leading half the world astray." And when he informed her that there may be some who would want to



kill her daughter, she replied "Oh, I don't care, just as long as they force her to confess the truth."

The people who were drawn to the Cova da Iria on the 13th of each month trampled the crops underfoot, adding yet another burden to the dos Santos household. Maria Rosa, completely frustrated, told her youngest daughter "when you want something to eat, ask the Lady for it." And in despair she would beat the 10-year-old girl with the broom-handle or a stick from the woodpile in an attempt to put an end to the lies that were tearing her family apart.

On September 13, in an attempt to discover the truth for herself, Maria Rosa saw nothing out of the ordinary at the Cova da Iria, neither did the parents of Francisco and Jacinta. Lucy's mother lost heart once more and the persecution at home continued for the young girl. Neither were her sisters immune to the pressures on the dos Santos family. "We wondered what would become of us all and said so behind Lucy's back ... neighbors said bombs would destroy our houses," stated Maria, the eldest sister.

On the morning of October 12 Lucy's mother was overwhelmed with fear, she woke her daughter saying "Lucy, we had better go to confession. Everyone says that we shall probably be killed tomorrow in the Cova da Iria. If the Lady doesn't do the miracle the people will attack us, so we had better go to confession and be properly prepared for death." Lucy was positive the Lady would keep Her promise and she was not afraid, so there was no more talk of confession.

Still, Maria Rosa was unable to shake off the feeling a tragedy might follow if the miracle predicted did not take place. Lucy wiped away her mother's tears.

A mother's love for her daughter forced Maria Rosa to disobey her parish priest on October 13. He had recommended that she not go to the Cova da Iria but if her daughter was going to die, she wanted to die by her side. In spite of the large crowd of pilgrims Maria Rosa managed to stay close to Lucy. When Lucy told Jacinta she saw the lightning that preceded Our Lady's arrival, her mother remained cautious "Look carefully, Lucy, make no mistake!"

Her fears were groundless, Our Lady fulfilled Her promise to the letter with the Miracle of the Sun. Maria Rosa, who had feared a diabolical intervention, put aside the holy water she armed herself with and proclaimed "Now, it is impossible not to believe, because nobody can touch the sun!"

Peace and happiness returned to the dos Santos household, but not for very long.

Maria Rosa sent her youngest daughter to school and also wanted her to learn weaving and sewing. But once

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Our Guardian Angels Pray with Us and for Us

Holy Scripture clearly teaches that the Angels pray in our behalf. The Prophet Zacharias, speaking of the supplicating Angels who were watching over Jerusalem, says, "The angel of the Lord answered, and said: 'O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Juda?'" (Zach. 1:12) And the Archangel Raphael said to Tobias, "When thou didst pray with tears ... I offered thy prayer to the Lord." (Tob. 12:12) St. Augustine says: "The Angels pray for us, not as if God did not know our needs, but the sooner to obtain for us the gift of His mercy and to secure for us the blessings of His grace."

On one occasion, while assisting at Holy Mass with special fervor, St. Gertrude was rapt in ecstasy. In this state she saw her Guardian Angel bearing her prayers to the throne of the Divine Majesty, presenting them to the three Divine Persons and imploring them to hear her petitions. The prayer of the Guardian Angel was accepted and Gertrude was blessed by each Person of the Godhead.

St. Bernard frequently admonished his disciples to conduct themselves in an edifying manner in the performance of their devotional exercises, lest their Guardian Angels, who took part in them, should withdraw. "How happy you would be," he exclaimed, "if you could see how they hasten to join those who sing the Psalms and with what reverential bearing they remain among them! They assist those who pray and meditate. With great solicitude they go back and forth between God and us, bearing our sighs to the throne of God. Let us therefore strive earnestly to make their joy complete."

It is related that St. Gregory of Tours and others who slept at the time of prayer received a blow from their Guardian Angel. The histories of religious orders recount many instances of holy souls being awakened by their Angels for prayer in the morning and being punished by them for small faults, such as not rising immediately or not giving themselves to meditation with sufficient fervor.

THE
International
FATIMA
Rosary Crusade
Readers' Mail



Dear Father Gruner,

Every day I remember to pray the three Hail Mary's begging that the Pope may consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary together with all the Bishops of the world. I know this has been a request from Our Lord and Our Lady for many years. I am hopeful that our prayers will be answered.

I also remember you in my daily prayers knowing how much pressure you are suffering from those who envy you as you are a priest deeply loved by Our Lady and Our Lord.

Angelita S., CA

Dear Father Gruner,

May God Bless you and your staff of dedicated helpers.

And may God give you strength for the battles that lay ahead. God bless you, Father.

Mr. and Mrs. D., FL

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again what she wanted most was not to be. There were unending interruptions from people who wanted to question Lucy, and others who wanted her to pray with them. Lucy and her cousins resorted to hiding from "pesky strangers", as Francisco called them.

When her closest friends, her two cousins, were bed-ridden with the Spanish Influenza, Lucy was quite concerned. Francisco was the first to succumb to his illness and find his peace in Heaven. Jacinta suffered through what she hated most, the loneliness of being parted from her mother, when she was hospitalized in Lisbon and suffered greatly before she joined her brother in Heaven, as Our Lady of Fatima had foretold. Maria Rosa was unable to console her daughter over the loss of her best friends.

At least one ray of sunshine broke through the dark clouds hanging over the dos Santos household. Antonio died reconciled to God. A few days before his death, July 31, 1919, he had gone to confession.

In the winter of 1919, Maria Rosa's health failed. Her children thought she was dying and gathered around her bed to receive one last blessing. Lucy was sent by her

Memorare

Remember, O most compassionate Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to Thy protection, implored Thy assistance, or sought Thy intercession was left unaided.

Inspired with this confidence, we fly unto Thee, O Virgin of Virgins, our Mother; to Thee do we come; before Thee we kneel sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not our petitions, but in Thy clemency hear and answer them.

older sisters to the Cova da Iria to ask Our Lady to cure their mother. "Promise Her whatever you wish and we'll do it; and then we'll believe." Lucy did not hesitate to make that journey and Our Lady answered her prayers.

Maria Rosa's eldest daughter observed, "The cardiac problems disappeared on the spot ... indeed she seemed younger than her age."

In July of 1920, Canon Formigao recommended that Lucy be placed in a boarding school. Maria Rosa objected, "If this is for her to learn how to pray, I'll teach her." Always obedient to Church authority, Maria Rosa relented and Lucy and her mother were separated. Their last embrace left Maria Rosa overwhelmed with sorrow and shedding abundant tears.

It was Lucy's ardent desire that she would be able to return to Fatima to visit with her family and once again journey to the Cova da Iria. Since this was not to be, Lucy's mother visited her, but only twice, during their twenty-two years of separation. Maria Rosa was unable to keep silent about not being able to communicate with her daughter directly when writing letters, but Lucy reminded her it would be going against the will of her bishop.

Twenty-seven years after the "childish nonsense" that turned mother against daughter, Maria Rosa died on July 16, 1942, feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The Jubilee Year of the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima were celebrated, the mother of the young girl who was entrusted with the only way man can find true peace was mourned by loved ones, Sister Lucy continued to reach out to the Holy Father with a warning and a Secret.

To reach us:

Attention

International Fatima Rosary Crusade Newsletter,

In U.S.A. - 17000 State Route 30, Constable, NY 12926

In CANADA - 452 Kraft Road, Fort Erie, ON L2A 4M7

Or call us toll-free at: 1-800-263-8160

or fax us at: 1-905-871-3646

Visit Our Lady on the World Wide Web at: www.fatima.org