



On the Hill, There Stands an Angel

Fatima. Spring. 1916.

The mysterious figure who had appeared above the trees to Lucy dos Santos and her two companions in 1915 returned once again in 1916. But this time the details of the figure were clearly defined, and by 1916 Lucy's companions were no longer Teresa Matias and her sister, but her two young cousins, Francisco and Jacinta Marto. Francisco was barely eight, and Jacinta a child of 6.

A different relationship existed between Lucy, Francisco and Jacinta. Lucy treated them with love, solicitude and endless patience — remarkable qualities for a child so young. It is almost as if she were acting as their mother. And they were a happy threesome, the sound of their laughter filled the fields.

"Around this time," Lucy would write in her Memoirs, "Francisco and Jacinta sought and obtained permission from their parents to start taking care of their own flock.

"To avoid going to the *serra* with all the other shepherds," Lucy remembered, "we arranged to pasture our flocks on properties belonging to my uncle and aunt and my parents." The land owned by the Marto and the dos Santos families included the Cova da Iria, the field where the great events of 1917 would take place. But it was not to the Cova the three cousins went first, but rather to the east side of a little hill known as the Cabeço, a name that simply means head or skull.

From there they could see the rooftops of Aljustrel, where they were born, their parents' homes and the hamlets of Casa Velha and Eira da Pedra. It was around noon. Among the large grey lichen-spotted boulders, stones

and pebbles scattered about the hill, the children played their favorite game of 'Pebbles'.

"The dates I cannot set down with certainty because at that time I did not know how to reckon the years, the months or even the days of the week", said Lucy.

Raindrops punctuated their noon-hour Rosary prayers and dotted the stones amid the bleating sheep, and the squeals of children playing in the pathways of Aljustrel rose to the Cabeço.

By remembering the weather outside, Lucy, when writing her Memoirs, was able to indicate the season when each of the three apparitions of 1916 took place.

"Around the middle of the morning a fine rain began to fall, so fine it seemed like mist. We went up the hillside, followed by our flocks, looking for an overhanging boulder where we could take shelter."

Thus it was for the first time that the three shepherds entered what Sister Lucy would call 'this blessed hollow' among the rocks in the middle of an olive grove belonging to Lucy's godfather, Anasacio.

"We spent the day there among the rocks in spite of the fact that the rain was over and the sun was shining bright and clear. We ate our lunch and said our Rosary."

They had enjoyed their game of Pebbles for only a few moments when suddenly the sound of the wind filled the trees, as if a storm were approaching. They looked up to see what was happening, for the day had been unusually calm.

A bright light above the trees moved toward them.

Then they saw coming toward them, above the olive trees, the figure in white that Lucy, Teresa Matias and her sister Maria Rosa had seen the year before.

"Jacinta and Francisco had never seen it before, nor had I ever mentioned it to them."

The light began to take on human features.

"As it drew closer we were able to distinguish its features. It was a young man about fourteen or fifteen years old, whiter than snow, transparent as crystal when the



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Saint Sebastian, Martyr

St. Sebastian was born at Narbonne, in Gaul, but his parents were natives of Milan, in Italy. Thus it was in Milan where St. Sebastian was brought up. He was a fervent servant of Christ, and his natural inclinations gave him an aversion to a military life. Yet, he went to Rome and entered the army under the emperor Carinus to be better able to assist the confessors and martyrs in their sufferings, without suspicion. He was diligent in helping his brother Christians, and particularly those who languished in prison. He not only helped the prisoners with alms but also encouraged them to suffer for Jesus Christ.

It so happened that the martyrs, Marcus and Marcellianus, having been sentenced to death, appeared in danger of being shaken in their faith by the tears of their friends.

St. Sebastian, seeing this, ran instantly to their assistance, and God's blessing so accompanied his words, that he induced them to receive a most cruel death with joy.

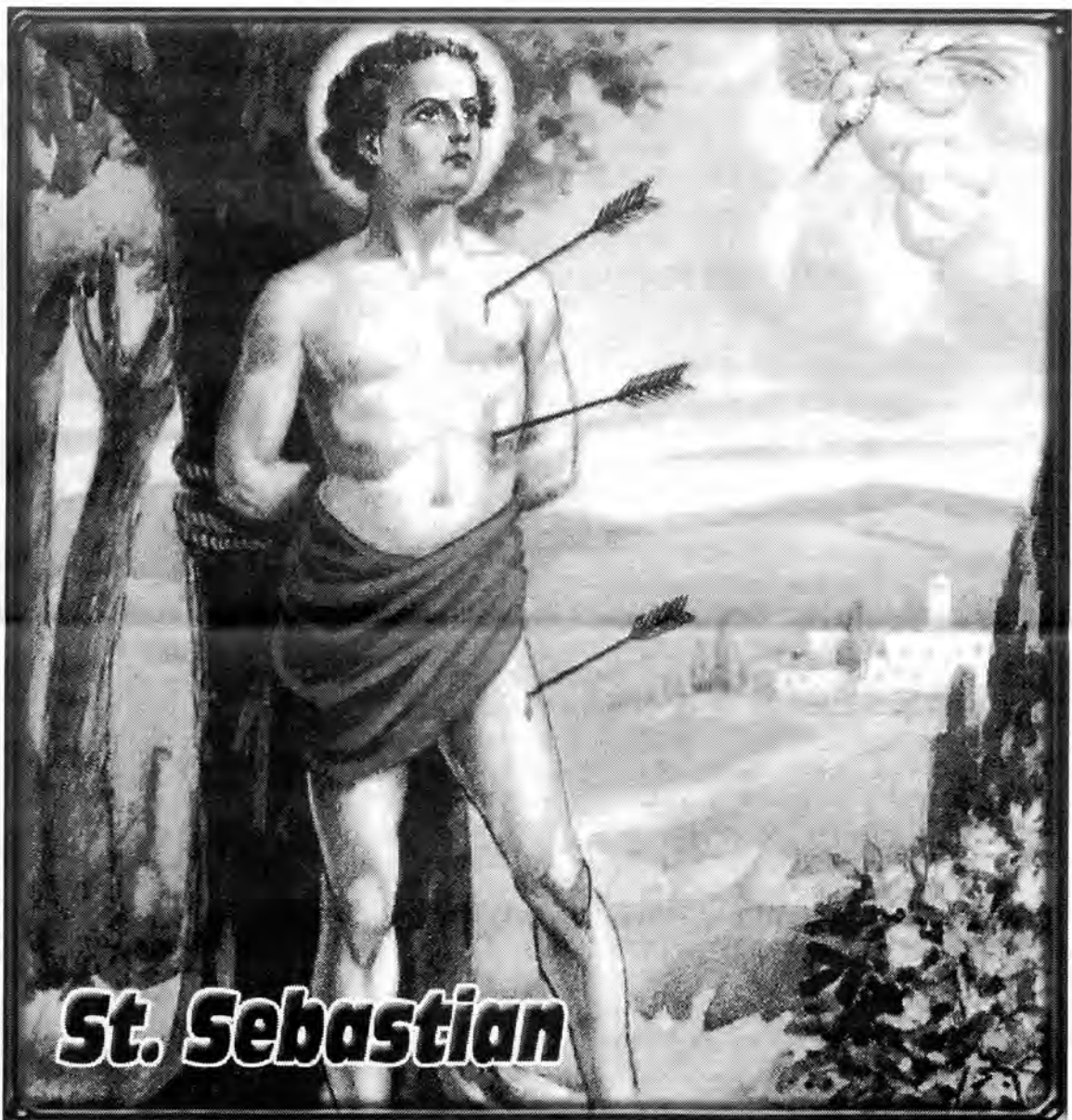
St. Zoe, the wife of Nicostratus, having lost the use of speech by a palsy in her tongue for six years, fell at St. Sebastian's feet, and then spoke distinctly, as a result of the saint making the Sign of the Cross on her mouth. St. Zoe and Nicostratus, who was master of the rolls; the parents of Marcus and Marcellianus; the jailer Claudius; and 64 prisoners were all converted by St. Sebastian.

Nicostratus, who had charge of the prisoners, took them to his own house, where the holy priest, Polycarp, instructed and baptized them.

Chromatius, governor of Rome, being informed of this and that Tranquillinus, the father of Saints Marcus and Marcellianus, had been cured of the gout by receiving baptism, desired to be instructed in the faith himself, being grievously afflicted with the same distemper. Accordingly, having sent for St. Sebastian, Chromatius was cured by him and was baptized along with his entire family and 1400 slaves. Chromatius then increased the number of prisoners he had converted, freed his slaves, and resigned his prefectship. Chromatius, with the emperor's consent, then retired into the country in Campania, taking many new converts along with him.

It became a contest of zeal, out of a mutual desire of martyrdom, between St. Sebastian and the priest Polycarp as to which of them should accompany this

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Why We Should Fear Hell

Father Marcel Nault reminded bishops at the Fatima Peace Conference in 1992 that "Our Lord Jesus Christ came on earth for one reason, to save souls from hell. Teaching the reality of hell is the most important and unavoidable duty of the Holy Catholic Church. Preaching on hell produces many more true and strong conversions than only preaching on Heaven."

The devil wants nothing more than for us to stop believing in the eternal damnation of souls who have turned away from Our Lord and His Blessed Mother.

Our Lady of Fatima stressed the necessity of believing in hell when She showed Lucy, Jacinta and Francisco the vision of "demons and souls in human form ... amid shrieks and groans of pain and despair, which horrified us and made us tremble with fear."

It was then that Our Lady taught the Fatima seers the prayer: "O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell; lead all souls to Heaven, especially those most in need."

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troop, to complete their instruction, and which should remain in the city to encourage and assist the martyrs, the city being in the more dangerous province. Pope Caius, who was appealed to, judged it most proper that St. Sebastian should stay in Rome as a defender of the Church. In the year 286, with the persecution of Christians growing hot, the Pope and others concealed themselves in the imperial palace, as a place of the greatest safety, in the apartments of Castulus, a Christian officer of the court.

St. Zoe was the first to be apprehended, while praying at St. Peter's tomb on the Feast of the Apostles. She was stifled with smoke, being hung by the heels over a fire. Tranquillinus, ashamed to be less courageous than a woman, went to pray at the tomb of St. Paul and was seized and stoned to death. Nicostratus, Claudius, Castorius, and Victorinus were taken and, after having been tortured three times, were thrown into the sea. Tiburtius, betrayed by a false brother, was beheaded. Castulus, accused by the same wretch, was put on the rack three times and afterwards buried alive. Marcus and Marcellianus were nailed by the feet to a post and, having remained in that torment for twenty-four hours, were then shot to death by arrows.

St. Sebastian, was himself impeached before the Emperor Diocletian. The emperor, having grievously reproached St. Sebastian with ingratitude, delivered him over to the archers to be shot to death. His body was covered with arrows, and he was left for dead.

A prevalent misconception today is that God loves us too much to allow us to spend eternity in hell. People who find this rationale fits their lifestyle best too easily forget that God and His Mother sacrificed Their Son for us so that we may be forgiven our sins and go to Heaven – that was a true act of love.



Father Marcel Nault, R.I.P.

Sacred Scripture, the saints and Our Lady have all warned us about sin and its consequences. We have been given the Brown Scapular, the Green Scapular, the Rosary, the Miraculous Medal and much more, and still too many walk blindly along their chosen path.

Satan wants us to forget about hell; he wants us to forget about Our Lady's Fatima Message; he wants us to forget about Our Lord's death on the cross; he wants us for eternity.

Irene, the widow of St. Castulus, went to bury the body of St. Sebastian but found him to be still alive. She took him to her lodgings, where he recovered. One day he stood by a staircase where the emperor was to pass. Seeing the emperor, St. Sebastian then said to him: "How long, O Prince, wilt thou believe the calumnies that have been spread against the Christians? I have returned to tell thee again that thou hast not in the empire subjects more faithful than the Christians, who by their prayers obtain for thee all thy prosperity."

This admonition, from a person supposed to have been dead, greatly astonished the emperor. Recovering from his surprise, the emperor gave orders for St. Sebastian to be seized, scourged to death, and his body then thrown into a marsh.

A pious lady, called Lucina, admonished by the martyr in a vision, got the body privately removed. She then buried it in the catacombs at the entrance of the cemetery which is now called the "Catacombs of St. Sebastian." A church was afterwards built over St. Sebastian's relics by Pope Damascus, which is one of the seven ancient stationary churches at Rome.

St. Sebastian has always been honored by the Church as one of Her most illustrious martyrs. In the year 680, Rome was freed from a raging pestilence by the patronage of this saint. Milan in 1575, Lisbon in 1599, and other places have also experienced the effects of his intercession with God on their behalf during like calamities.



Dear Father Nicholas,

It is with deep gratitude that I would like to acknowledge receipt of the rosaries, religious articles and reading materials you sent. I am extremely happy to inform you that through these rosaries and other sacramentals we could reach out to many of our unfortunate brothers and sisters in the community whom we believe most need Our Blessed Mother's inspirational help, especially in our present critical political situation when most people are lured by money rather than the dictate of conscience.

We join hands with you in the propagation of Our Lady's invitation: PRAY THE ROSARY! Rest assured that we are continually committed to spreading the Rosary devotion. We hope you would also continue to send us more because this apostolate work is for life. We like to serve more people from all walks of life and direct their hearts and minds to Our Blessed Mother Who is the ever powerful Virgin, the glorious and mighty protector of the Church.

In the Blessed Mother,

Father A., Philippines

Dear Father Gruner,

Thank you for *The Fatima Crusader*. It is filled with so much information and truth. Everyone should have a copy. Keep spreading the True Fatima Message.

Our prayers and love are with you.

Mr. and Mrs. G., CA

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sun shines through it and of great beauty."

On reaching the three children the figure spoke.

"Do not be afraid, I am the Angel of Peace. Pray with me."

Sister Lucy recalled, "Kneeling on the ground, he bowed down until his forehead reached the ground. Led by a supernatural impulse, we did the same, and repeated the words which we heard him say."

"My God, I believe, I adore, I hope, and I love Thee. I ask pardon for all those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope and who do not love Thee."

Jacinta and Lucy were spellbound. Together they answered, "My God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love Thee ..."

Francisco was bewildered. He could not hear the Angel's words. The Angel repeated the words three times then rose and gave them specific instructions.

"Pray thus. The Hearts of Jesus and Mary are attentive to the voice of your supplications."

Then the Angel disappeared, as if dissolving into the air. It was then that the words that had been spoken were told to Francisco. We can only imagine the effect this had on the children. But we have Lucy's own words to give us an exact description:

"The supernatural atmosphere which enveloped us was so intense that for a long time we were scarcely aware of our own existence, remaining in the same posture in which he had left us continually repeating the same prayer." They were spent, dazed.

The physical weakness that overcame them was also very great. The presence of God made itself felt so intimately and so intensely that the three children did not even venture to speak to one another. The next day they were still immersed in this spiritual atmosphere, which only gradually began to dissipate. It did not occur to them to speak about the apparition, but neither did they consciously decide to keep it a secret.

"The very apparition itself imposed secrecy. It was so intimate that it was not possible to speak of it at all. The impression made upon us was all the greater, perhaps, in that it was the first manifestation we had experienced. The peace and happiness which we felt were great but wholly interior, for our souls were completely immersed in God."

The three had remained prostrate in the field with the subdued sounds of the Angel's prayer on their lips. From that day on the three would spend long periods of time repeating the words of the Angel until sometimes they fell, exhausted. The Angel of Peace, when he appeared in 1916, made a lasting impression on the young children. There was no indication he would return. But testifying to the fact that these were normal, healthy children, it was not long before the desire to play seeped back into their pious activity.

**We'd like to hear from YOU! Write or call:
The Editor,**

League of the Immaculate Heart Newsletter,

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

IN CANADA - 452 Kraft Rd., Fort Erie, ON L2A 4M7

Call us toll-free at: **1-800-263-8160**

or fax us at: **(905) 871-3646**

Visit Our Lady's Web Site at: **www.fatima.org**

or e-mail us at: **info@fatima.org**