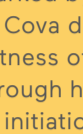


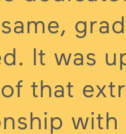
Young Pilgrim Itinerary

Aljustrel and Valinhos

EN



ISANTUÁRIO DE FÁTIMA
SHRINE OF FATIMA



«To make Me known and loved»

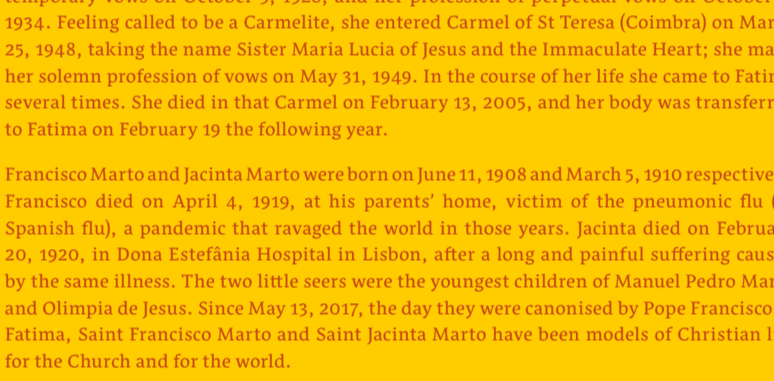
Lucia was 10 years old when the encounter with Our Lady of the Rosary took place. Her life as a shepherdess in the mountains, marked by the activity to which she dedicated her days in the hills of Cova da Iria, was no longer the same, gradually moulding to the witness of the gift she had received. It was up to her to transmit, through her *Memoirs*, the content of that extraordinary experience of initiation into an intimate relationship with God, through the hands of Mary. She lived for a long time, most of her life as a Carmelite, in Coimbra, always guided by the mission of announcing, as a faithful witness, what she was given to see and hear.

«I love God so much!»

Francisco was almost 9 years old when, together with his sister and cousin, he saw the «Lady brighter than the sun». Francisco only saw Our Lady, not being able to hear what she said. Perhaps it was from the silence that marked these encounters that his particular contemplative vocation was born: his life as a child was filled with the incessant search for the contemplation of God, especially through the company of the «hidden Jesus», to whom he dedicated hours of silence before the tabernacle of the parish church. Francisco was touched by a special sensitivity to unrequited love of God, seeking to comfort Him and to make up for this lack of love with his own love.

«To do as Our Lord did»

Jacinta was the youngest of the three little shepherds. Aged only seven, she let herself be transfigured by the experience of that encounter with Our Lady of Heaven, growing in an attitude that was particularly sensitive to the dramatic consequences of life without God. Her heart was inflamed with compassion and care for sinners, for those far from love. Her gaze never ceased to be on those «who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope and do not love», living in a sacrificial attitude, in a permanent and loving offering of herself for others, «as Our Lord did». She also had a special love for the Immaculate Heart of Mary and for the Holy Father.



1 | Houses of the Seers

Lucia de Jesus was born on March 28, 1907, the youngest of six children born to Maria Rosa and António dos Santos. In 1921, she left Fatima, entering the Asylum of Vilar (Porto), a school run by Dorothean nuns. She later went to Pontevedra and then to Tuy. There she became a nun, taking the name of Maria Lucia das Dores: she made her profession of temporary vows on October 3, 1928, and her profession of perpetual vows on October 3, 1934. Feeling called to be a Carmelite, she entered Carmel of St Teresa (Coimbra) on March 25, 1948, taking the name Sister Maria Lucia of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart; she made her solemn profession of vows on May 31, 1949. In the course of her life she came to Fatima several times. She died in that Carmel on February 13, 2005, and her body was transferred to Fatima on February 19 the following year.

Francisco Marto and Jacinta Marto were born on June 11, 1908 and March 5, 1910 respectively. Francisco died on April 4, 1919, at his parents' home, victim of the pneumonic flu (or Spanish flu), a pandemic that ravaged the world in those years. Jacinta died on February 20, 1920, in Dona Estefânia Hospital in Lisbon, after a long and painful suffering caused by the same illness. The two little seers were the youngest children of Manuel Pedro Marto and Olimpia de Jesus. Since May 13, 2017, the day they were canonised by Pope Francisco in Fatima, Saint Francisco Marto and Saint Jacinta Marto have been models of Christian life for the Church and for the world.

The house where the two siblings were born is located at the entrance of the village of Aljustrel, about 1.2 miles from Cova da Iria. It was acquired by the Shrine in November 1996, and was later rehabilitated and made into a museum. The house where the eldest of the Little Shepherds was born and lived is about 0.12 miles away from the house of the cousins. The first interrogations to the seers took place in this house, and in the courtyard there are still fig trees in the shade of which the three little shepherds played and hid from curious onlookers or pilgrims. In 1981 Sister Lucia offered the house to the Shrine, which took possession of it in 1986. An Information Office was built next to the house, opened in August 1994.

For Jacinta, Francisco and Lucia, the family was the first place of encounter with God. In building family and community relationships founded on faith, hope and charity, and living to the rhythm of prayer and the relationship with God, the little shepherds grew opening their lives to others and to God. From this fruitful family environment, their hearts were able to dispose themselves to the divine action in their lives. The encounter with God, offered through the mediation of the Angel and Our Lady, engraved itself so deeply on their hearts that it never ceased to bear fruit in their lives and, through their witness of self-giving to God, in the lives of many others.

2 | The Well of Arneiro

At the end of the backyard of Lucia's house is the well where the Angel appeared for the second time to the little seers in the summer of 1916. It was also there that Jacinta had a vision of the Holy Father crying and praying, on his knees, in a big house. The sculptures of the Angel and the Little Shepherds are the work of Maria Irene Vilar.

The Angel came to invite those children, whose eyes were beginning to fill with God, to offer Him their lives continually as a loving gift, to offer them in a fruitful and transfiguring sacrifice for the good of others.

Today I too am earnestly asked to pray and to offer myself lovingly as a gift to God and for the sake of those who do not love Him. I can, in the very words of the Little Shepherds, offer in this way what I am and what I do: «O Jesus, it is for the love of You, for the conversion of sinners and in reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary!»

Like Saint Jacinta, I also make my own the intentions and needs of the Pope and of the Church, of which I am a part, and I take them up in my prayer.

3 | Monument of Valinhos

The fourth apparition of Our Lady happened in this place where I am standing, situated between the 8th and 9th stations of the Way of the Cross on the Little Shepherds' Way. Held up in Ourém on the 13th and, therefore, unable to go to Cova da Iria on the appointed day, the little seers received the visit of Mary on 19th August 1917 in this place known as Valinhos. The monument marking this apparition was built with donations from Hungarian Catholics. The image was sculpted by Maria Amélia Carvalheira da Silva and the structure in which it stands was designed by António Lino.

In the month of August, in a different place and on an unexpected day, Our Lady of Heaven reaffirms her solicitude and faithfulness towards the three little seers, surprisingly coming to meet them and reinforcing the requests made until then: that they continue to go to Cova da Iria on the 13th day of the following months, that they pray the Rosary daily, that they live in self-offering, for love, for sinners... reference is also made, for the first time, to a chapel to be built. Absent from the «place of meeting» on the «day of the meeting», the Little Shepherds feared that Our Lady would not return. It was therefore with redoubled joy that they received her visitation, so much desired, on that 19th day, in Valinhos.

Just like a hundred years ago for the Little Shepherds, today it is I who am invited to have complete trust in God's faithfulness, which the attentive presence of Mary expresses so well. I too am called to persevere, even in the midst of tribulations, in that intimate and constant encounter which nourishes my friendship with Him.

4 | Loca do Cabeço

Loca do Cabeço, or Loca do Anjo, is the place where the first and the third apparitions of the Angel to the seers took place, in the Spring and Autumn of 1916. Here began and developed a path of growth for the Little Shepherds in deep intimacy with God, through the pedagogy of the Angel. The statues representing the Angel and the three children are from Maria Amélia Carvalheira da Silva. The grid, in forged iron, is the work of Domingos Soares Branco.

In this place, the Little Shepherds were introduced to the intimacy of their encounter with God, learning to believe, adore, hope and love more deeply. Guided by the Angel, Jacinta, Francisco and Lucia were ready to offer themselves in sacrifice for the good of all, particularly for those who were far from the love of God. The Lord asks of me this same readiness to the gift of myself; I can make it happen in the most diverse ways in my life, in big gestures as well as in small things.

I am challenged to learn from the Angel, just like the Little Shepherds, adoration, that way of living, which is also a way of praying, that better expresses the humble, available and grateful attitude that I am called to assume before God. Thus I recognize myself, just like them, invited to enter into a profound *heart to heart relationship* with God. And because this relationship cannot fail to give rise to loving care for others, I can pray, with them and like them: «My God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love you. I ask pardon of you for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope and do not love you.»

The path I have been walking is called the *Little Shepherds' Way*. Starting near the South Roundabout, this path is punctuated with Stations of the Cross (extending as far as the Hungarian Calvary). If I wish, in due time, I can pray the Way of the Cross.

Living Fatima at WYD



ISANTUÁRIO DE FÁTIMA
SHRINE OF FATIMA

