

June 10

The Angel of Portugal

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We all know the story of how Our Lady of Fatima appeared to three shepherd children as they were watching their flock. She told them to pray the Rosary for peace and to pray for sinners no one else would pray for. Our Lady even made the sun dance in the sky so that the world would believe in her message. But did you know that before Our Lady appeared to the three children, an angel appeared to them first?

It was a spring day when Lucia, who was nine, and her two cousins, Francisco and Jacinta, ages eight and six, were in the hills watching their sheep as they did every day. A drizzle of rain sent them to a nearby olive grove, where they rested, ate their lunch, and prayed the Rosary. A strong wind stirred the trees. The children looked up and saw a white light approaching them. It was in the form of a young man, bright and transparent as crystal in the sun's rays. The children were astonished. When the man of light was near enough, he said, "Do not be afraid. I am the Angel of Peace. Pray with me." Then he bowed down, and the children did the same. They repeated after the angel three times the following prayer:

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

Then the angel disappeared, and the children were flooded with feelings of peace and joy. The angel appeared to them two more times. In his second visit, he taught them the importance of patiently offering their sufferings for sinners and to make up for sins that offend God. He also told them that he was the guardian angel of Portugal and that their sacrifices would bring peace to their country.

In the angel's third visit, he held a golden chalice. Above it floated the Blessed Host, which is the Body of Christ. Red drops of blood fell from the Host into the chalice. The angel bowed before the Host and chalice, led the children in prayer, and gave them Holy Communion. To Lucia he gave the Host to eat; to Francisco and Jacinta he gave the wine of the Blood of Christ to drink. When the angel disappeared, the children were filled with the sacredness of what had just happened. Little did they know that the angel's visit was preparing them for an even greater visit—one from the Queen of Peace, Mary, the Mother of God. Angel of Portugal, help me to offer my sufferings to God for peace and for poor sinners!



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