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Parish Newsletter

Tuesday May 12, 2020

Our Lady, an Apostle, and a Farmer...

It sounds like the beginning of a joke a Nun could tell...

by Fr. Augie Gothman

This coming week we can rejoice with Catholics in Portugal, and the world over, as we celebrate **Our Lady of Fatima May 13th**, who appeared over the course of several months in 1917. We also celebrate the **Apostle St. Mathias, May 14th** who was chosen after the betrayal and death of Judas Iscariot. On the same day, we have been asked by Pope Francis to **join believers all around the world in prayer and fasting**. And for those who have been praying the **Novena to SS. Isidore and Maria, May 15th** concludes in a national celebration hosted by the Diocese of Victoria, Texas. ~Fr. Augie

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Resources for You and Your Family

Join Catholics and other religious traditions in fasting & prayer May 14th for end to Coronavirus



On Thursday 14 May, believers around the world will join - whether through prayer, fasting or by performing acts of charity - to pray for an end to the deadly Covid-19 pandemic.

Speaking on 3 May, Pope Francis said *"since prayer is a universal value, I have accepted the proposal of the Higher Committee for Human Fraternity for believers of all religions to unite spiritually this 14 May for a day of prayer, fasting, and works of charity, to implore God to help humanity overcome the coronavirus pandemic. **Remember: 14 May, all believers together, believers of different traditions, to pray, fast, and perform works of charity**".*

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2020-05/covid-19-faithful-respond-to-popes-invitation-to-pray-may-14.html>



IN 1917

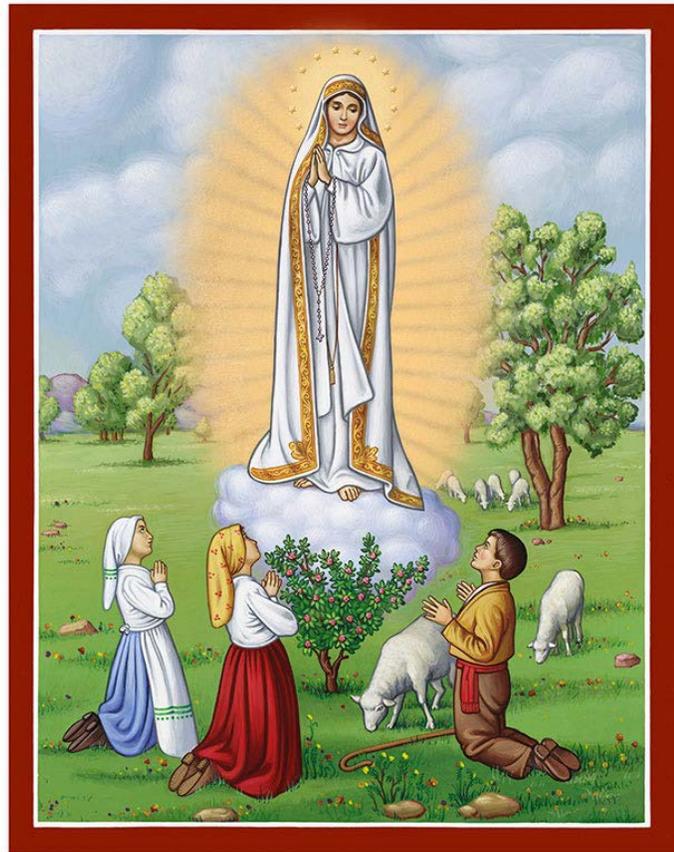
the Holy Virgin appeared to three shepherd children...

In 1917 the Holy Virgin appeared to three shepherd children, Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco, in the small mountain village of Fatima in Portugal. They saw a woman hovering above an oak tree, "brighter than the sun, shedding rays of light clearer and stronger than a crystal ball filled with the most sparkling water and pierced by the

burning rays of the sun" (as described by Lucia). Holding a rosary in her hand, the Blessed Virgin told the children not to be afraid and that "I come from Heaven."

The Virgin Mary appeared to the children five more times, always on the 13th day of the month, and told them prophecies about the future of the world and the Church. Each month more and more of the faithful prayerfully gathered for these apparitions.

The Blessed Virgin promised the children a miracle that would occur on the day of her last apparition, October 13, 1917. Over 70,000 pilgrims, along with reporters and sceptics, gathered that rainy day at Fatima. At midday the children knelt in prayer with uplifted faces towards a vision they alone could see, in which the Virgin Mary declared herself as "the Lady of the Rosary," requesting a chapel be built in that spot, and requesting all to pray the Rosary daily. Then, seeing a disc of light rise from the Virgin's hands, Lucia cried out "Look at the sun!"



The clouds broke and the sun appeared as an opaque silver disc that all could gaze on without hurting their eyes. It then began to whirl rapidly like a gigantic firewheel, casting brilliant colored lights across the sky, the landscape, and the faces and clothes of the onlookers, now green, now red, now blue. After three repetitions of this spectacle it began to zig-zagged down towards the earth, to the terror of the onlookers; then returned back to its position in the sky, became tranquil, and then returned to its natural dazzling appearance.

"The sun, at one moment surrounded with scarlet flame, at another aureoled in yellow and deep purple, seemed to be in an exceedingly swift and whirling movement, at times appearing to be loosened from the sky and to be approaching the earth, strongly radiating heat," described a reporter writing for the newspaper *Ordem*.

The onlookers were amazed to find their rain-soaked clothes now dry, and the muddy pools of rain water that had collected in the valley had dried up within the few minutes of the apparition – a phenomena that engineers who studied the case said could only have occurred through an incredible amount of energy.



Movie
about
Fatima
available
on
FORMED
video

In a world torn apart by persecution, war, and oppression, three children in Fatima, Portugal, were chosen by God to offer an urgent message of hope to the world. Based on the memoirs of the oldest seer, Lucia Santos, and many thousands of independent eye-witness accounts, *The 13th Day* dramatizes the true story of three young shepherds who experienced six apparitions of Our Lady between May and October 1917, which culminated in the final prophesied Miracle of the Sun on October 13. Abducted from their homes, thrown into prison, and interrogated under the threat of death in the government's attempt to silence them, the children remained true to their story about the crucial messages from Mary of prayer, repentance, and conversion for the world.

**This movie is not rated, but was created with an adult audience in mind. It may contain violence indicative of the life and times of the saint or character portrayed. We would recommend that parents preview it before watching with younger children.*

<https://watch.formed.org/the-13th-day>

5 Things to Know About First Saturdays

The devotion specifically requested by the Blessed Virgin Mary at Fatima

If the Church has accepted the message of Fátima, it is above all because that message contains a truth and a call whose basic content is the truth and the call of the Gospel itself.

“Repent, and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15): these are the first words that the Messiah addressed to humanity. The message of Fátima is, in its basic nucleus, a call to conversion and repentance, as in the Gospel.

—Pope St. John Paul II

Why First Saturdays?

A more recent practice in the Church that is lesser known and is often confused with the First Friday devotions is the observance of the five consecutive First Saturdays in reparation to Our Lady. It is a separate devotion that was specifically requested by the Blessed Virgin Mary for the troubling times that we live in. Connected to the visions of Our Lady in Fatima, Portugal, the central theme of the devotion is repentance, conversion and reparation.

To help us better understand this “new” devotion in the life of the Church, here are five things to know.

1. How did the First Saturday Devotion begin?

Saturdays have traditionally been a day to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary for many centuries, but it wasn't until 1925 that the First Saturday devotion was revealed. On December 10, 1925, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to Sister Lucia at a convent in Pontevedra, Spain. Sister Lucia had previously been the recipient of Marian visions in Fatima, Portugal, along with her cousins Jacinta and Francisco. In this new private revelation eight years after the visions at Fatima, Mary requested the institution of the five consecutive First Saturday devotions in reparation to her Immaculate Heart.

2. Why five consecutive months?

The five months correspond to five different blasphemies against the Immaculate Heart of Mary as revealed by Our Lady to Sister Lucia:

- 1.) against her Immaculate Conception*
- 2.) against her perpetual virginity*
- 3.) against her place as the Mother God and mother of all humanity*
- 4.) those who openly seek to foster in the hearts of children indifference, or even hatred, for this Immaculate Mother*
- 5.) those who directly insult her holy images*

3. What am I supposed to do on First Saturdays?

Go to Mass and receive Holy Communion with the intention of making reparation for the blasphemies and ingratitude done to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Going to confession is also a requirement of this devotion, along with reciting the five decades of the rosary and meditating on the mysteries (one or all) of the rosary for 15 minutes.

4. What are the “promises” connected to this devotion?

Our Lady said to Sister Lucia, “Look, my daughter, at my heart, surrounded with thorns with which ungrateful men pierce it at every moment by their blasphemies and ingratitude. You at least try to console me and say that I

promise to assist at the hour of death, with the graces necessary for salvation, all those who, on the first Saturday of five consecutive months, shall confess, receive Holy Communion, recite five decades of the rosary, and keep me company for 15 minutes while meditating on 15 mysteries of the rosary, with the intention of making reparation to me.”

This means that anyone who practices this devotion with faith will be given extra graces at the moment of their death with the promise of reaching the gates of heaven.

5. Are the First Saturdays just another “ticket” to heaven?

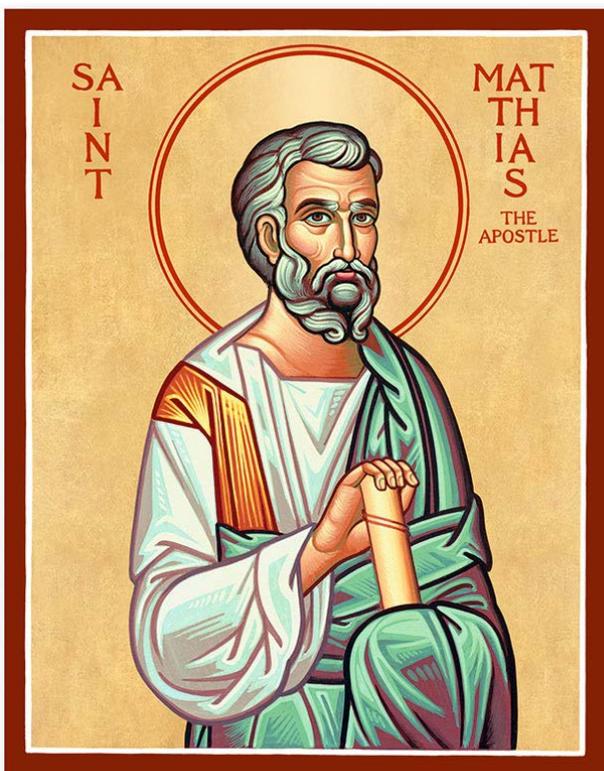
Similar to the First Friday devotion, it is not as simple as going to Mass for five months and then expecting to receive extra graces at the hour of death.

The purpose of this devotion is to lead a soul closer to Jesus through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The closer we get to Mary, the closer we are to Jesus, her son. By practicing these extra devotions, we allow Mary to form our hearts and prepare us for a lifelong relationship with Christ.

Mary wants to lead us to heaven and a sure path to eternal life is the frequent reception of Holy Communion and the sacrament of confession. She is the “Star of the Sea,” who points the way and beckons us to draw closer.

May we practice the First Saturday devotions in a spirit of faith to honor the Mother of God and repair the damage done to her Immaculate Heart

<https://aleteia.org/2016/05/07/5-things-to-know-about-first-saturdays/>



Feast of Saint Matthias, Apostle May 14th

Although Matthias does not appear among the lists of Apostles of Jesus in the Gospels we know he met the criteria set out by St. Peter in the Acts of the Apostles; that Matthias was, “...one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us.” (Acts 1:21b-22-RSV) Matthias was chosen by lot to take the place of Judas Iscariot and so to share the apostolic ministry of the Twelve (Acts 1:15-26). He then passes out of the New Testament record. His later life is very unclear, as is his field of preaching.

Matthias, was numbered among the Seventy Apostles (Gospel of St. Luke 10) and is commemorated by the Coptic liturgy on March 4, and by the Byzantine liturgy on August 9. He has been honored at Rome since the eleventh century on February 24. The martyrology of Jerome (mid 5th cent.) in the chapter “Notes on the places of the Apostles” records this date. Since it frequently occurs in Lent, the feast was transferred in 1969 to May 14— so that it may be celebrated in the Easter season, close to the solemnity of the Ascension. He is named in Eucharistic Prayer I (The Roman Canon).

The tradition of the Orthodox churches associate his ministry very closely with that of St. Andrew. *“After the Descent of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Matthias preached the Gospel with the other Apostles (Acts 6:2, 8:14). From Jerusalem he went with the Apostles Peter and Andrew to Syrian Antioch, and was in the Cappadocian city of Tianum and Sinope. Here the Apostle Matthias was locked into prison, from which he was miraculously freed by St Andrew the First-Called.*

The Apostle Matthias journeyed after this to Amasea, a city on the shore of the sea. During a three year journey of the Apostle Andrew, St Matthias was with him at Edessa and Sebaste. According to Church Tradition, he was preaching at Pontine Ethiopia (presently Western Georgia) and Macedonia.”

Saints Isidore and Maria Pray for Us!

Join the Catholic Rural Life
Association

Novena Prayers

May 7th through 15th

<https://catholicrurallife.org/virtualnovena/>

For over 96 years, Catholic Rural Life Association has been serving rural communities and promoting Catholic life in rural America. Every year hundreds of people across the country join together for a very special Novena to St. Isidore, patron saint of farmers and Catholic Rural Life. Due to the challenges of the current pandemic, we decided to offer the novena virtually this year! Each day a Bishop from our Board of Directors will lead us through the novena, lifting up all the intentions of rural communities throughout our country. Videos will be live on

<https://www.facebook.com/catholicrurallife/>



The Day The Sun Danced

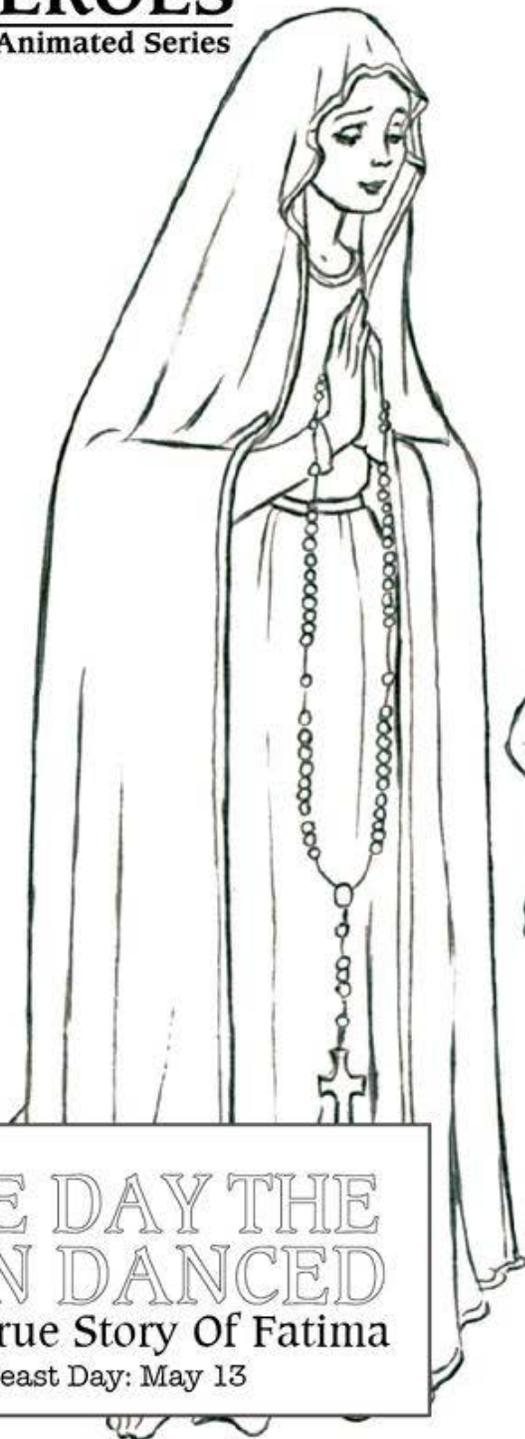
October 13, 1917—Miracle of the Sun at Fatima



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SAINTS AND HEROES

An Animated Series



THE DAY THE SUN DANCED

The True Story Of Fatima

Feast Day: May 13



Playground Printables

www.ccofamerica.com

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After praying to God for help in selecting an apostle to take Judas Iscariot's place, the eleven apostles chose Matthias.

Coloring & Activity Pages by: Bible-Printables.com

May 15th Saints Isidore and Maria, Patron Saints of Farmers

Isidore was born in 1070 to a peasant family near Madrid, Spain. He was baptized "Isidore" in honor of the famous archbishop of Seville. Isidore the farmer was actually a day laborer, working on the farm of the wealthy John de Vergas at Torrelaguna, just outside Madrid. He married a poor girl, Maria Torribia. They had one son. On one occasion this son fell into a deep well, and at the prayers of his parents the water of the well is said to have bubbled up miraculously to ground level—bringing the boy up with it, alive and well! At that moment, the parents made a vow of continence and from then on lived in separate but nearby houses.

Isidore & Maria's lives are a model of simple Christian charity and faith. They prayed while at work, they had a deep devotion to the Eucharist and attended Mass daily. Though poor farmers themselves, they shared what they had with those poorer still, and often gave more than they themselves had.

A story told about St. Isidore is that because he would first attend Mass in the morning he came later to work in the fields than other laborers. Yet his work never suffered and he always met the chores required of him. It was said two angels, one on either side of Isidore, appeared and joined their pious companion in plowing the fields.

St. Maria always kept a pot of stew on the fireplace in their humble rural dwelling. She knew that her Isidore would often bring home anyone who was hungry. One day he brought home more hungry people than usual. After she served many of them, Maria told him that there simply was no more stew in the pot. Isidore insisted that she check the pot again, and she was able to feed them all.

In art, St. Isidore is portrayed as a peasant with a sickle or staff, and sometimes with an angel or white oxen near him.



He died in 1130 and He was canonized by Pope Gregory XV, along with other famous Spanish saints: Ignatius Loyola, Francis Xavier, Teresa of Avila, and Philip Neri on March 12, 1622. St. Isidore is widely venerated as the patron of peasants and day laborers. The cities of Madrid, Leon, Saragossa, and Seville honor him as their patron.

After Isidore's death, Maria lived by herself, but she too performed miracles and after her death became known as "*Santa Maria de la Cabeza*", (literally "Saint Maria of the Head") because the people sought her intercession with prayerful processions in which a relic of the saint (her skull!) was carried. St. Maria is honored at Torrelaguna, where her relics were transferred in 1615. She was beatified in 1697.