A Mysterious Lady

On Sunday, May 13, 1917, three children were pasturing sheep about two kilometres from the village of Aljustrel, in a place called the Cova da Iria, which means in Portuguese *peaceful valley* . They were Lucy Dos Santos, aged 10, who had recently made he
r First Holy Communion, and her two cousins, Francisco and Jacinta Marto, aged 9 and 7. After eating their meal and praying the Rosary, the children were playing at making houses with stones. Suddenly there was a flash of lightning. Fearing a storm, they made to return home. Another flash of light caused them to go faster.

They reached the bottom of the hill. To their surprise, a short distance before them and just above the branches of a small evergreen oak, there stood a lady, all dressed in white, more brilliant than the sun, radiating a light clearer and more intense than a crystal glass filled with clear water, pierced by the most burning rays of the sun.

A white veil covered her head and her dress, white as snow, embroidered in gold, reached to her feet. From Her hands, joined at the height of the chest, was hanging a beautiful Rosary with beads resembling pearls. Her whole person, surrounded by a splendour more brilliant than the sun, radiated clusters of light, and especially Her face was of a beauty impossible to describe and incomparably superior to any human beauty. She seemed to be about eighteen years old to the children, serene and grave, and with a shade of sorrow.

The children stopped in their tracks. The Apparition was so close that they found themselves in the light which surrounded Her.

-Do not be afraid. I will do you no harm.

- Where is Your Grace from? Lucy asked.
- I am of Heaven.

- What does Your Grace want of me?
- I have come to ask you to come here for six months in succession, on the 13th day, at this same hour. Later on, I will tell you who I am and what I want.

- Shall I go to Heaven too?
- Yes, you will.

- And Jacinta?
- Also.

- And Francisco?
- Also, but he will have to say many Rosaries.

The moments passed, and the lady added:

-Recite the Rosary every day in order to obtain peace for the world and the end of the war.

Then she began to rise serenely, going up towards the east until she disappeared in the immensity of the sky.

When the children returned home and told about what had happened, Lucy's mother would not believe her, and told her that she had invented the whole thing, which caused the child much upset. Jacinta and Francisco's mother was slow to believe their account too. But when Jacinta told her about the lady's request to pray the family rosary every day, she agreed. It was a beginning.

June Apparition

This is an excerpt from the first of six apparitions of the lady to the three children in the parish of

Fatima, between May and October 1917. As promised, in October of that year, when Lucy asked her who she was, this was the reply:

I am Our Lady of the Rosary

In each one of these apparitions Our Lady stressed the praying of the Rosary, and in five out of six it was the daily recitation she asked for.