



THE SHRINE OF THE THREE LITTLE SHEPHERDS OF FATIMA

Our Lady of Fatima Church
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THE LITTLE SHEPHERDS

In the year 1917, in the small village of Fatima, Portugal, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to three shepherd children, Lucia dos Santos, age ten, Francisco Marto, age nine, and Jacinta Marto, age seven. The Blessed Mother identified herself as *Our Lady of the Rosary*. She repeatedly urged the children to pray the rosary for peace and to make sacrifices as a form of reparation for sin and to obtain the conversion of sinners. She also told them of God's desire to establish in the world devotion to her Immaculate Heart and of His plan to use them to spread this devotion.

Models Of Holiness



Many people admire the children of Fatima primarily because the Mother of God chose to reveal herself to them. However, the Catholic Church venerates them for a more profound reason – their holiness of life. The little shepherds were ordinary children who allowed the grace of God to penetrate their souls. Desiring to become one with Christ, they each made the choice to practice virtue in a heroic manner and to dedicate themselves wholeheartedly to accepting and doing the Will of God. Each of them, in their own way, embraced a spiritual life centered on prayer, penance and charity, making personal sacrifices for the sake of others. They also endured great suffering at the hands of strangers, friends and family, being physically and verbally attacked, ridiculed, kidnaped, imprisoned and threatened with death. Yet despite all this, they remained steadfast in their faith. The Church holds them up as models of sanctity in the hope that people everywhere will come to know them and be inspired to imitate their virtues. Francisco and Jacinta have already been declared *Saints* by the Church. Their feast day is February 20th. Lucia, who later in life became a Carmelite nun and died in the year 2005, has been declared *Venerable* and her canonization process continues to move forward.



Powerful Intercessors



In addition to being models of heroic virtue and unwavering faith, the little shepherds are considered powerful intercessors. Many healings, conversions and blessings have been attributed to their prayers. From their place in heaven, they continue to do as they did on earth – to intercede for those in need. The little shepherds are recognized as the patron saints of children, prisoners, the sick and those ridiculed for piety.

At this time, the faithful are strongly encouraged to pray to Sister Lucia as she is in need of one miracle to be declared officially a saint by the Catholic Church. Please report any graces received to:

Carmel of S. Teresa / Rua de S. Teresa, 16 / 3000-359 Coimbra – Portugal

THE SHRINE

A small shrine of the three little shepherds is currently located inside Our Lady of Fatima Church, Piscataway, New Jersey. As part of a major renovation project, a new larger shrine is being built. This shrine will be located in the lower level of the church and will consist of two chapels – one dedicated to our Blessed Lady and the other, to our Blessed Lord.

The chapel dedicated to Our Lady will serve as a *Votive Chapel* where numerous candles will burn for the personal intentions of the faithful. The chapel will highlight a central theme in the spirituality of the shepherd children - their love for the Immaculate Heart of Mary, who is “our refuge and the way that leads to God”. The chapel dedicated to our Blessed Lord will serve as a *Eucharistic Adoration Chapel* and likewise highlight an important theme in the spirituality of the children – their love for the “hidden Jesus” in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

THE STATUES



Until the new shrine is built, individuals and groups are welcome to visit and pray at our current shrine where they may light a votive candle near the statues of the three little shepherds. These statues were acquired through the official Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal and were custom-made especially for our church. The statues were unveiled to the public and blessed on Sunday, February 20, 2022, the feast day of Saints Francisco and Jacinta. The event took place in the presence of an overflowing crowd with many children in attendance.

It should be noted that the new shrine will have new and larger statues of the three shepherd children and of our Blessed Lady which have also been ordered and were custom-made in Portugal. The statues currently in the church will continue to be displayed and utilized at special liturgies and ceremonies.

THE RELICS

On display, near the statues of the little shepherds, are the relics of Saints Francisco and Jacinta Marto. These relics are actually two wood fragments extracted from the coffins in which the young saints were buried. They were given to us by the *Francisco and Jacinta Marto Foundation*, the official agency of the Roman Catholic Church responsible for promoting devotion to the little shepherds and distributing their relics.



Such relics are few in number and difficult to obtain. We are blessed to possess them and want to do everything we can to let people know we have them. For this reason, we will move the relics to the new shrine where they will be displayed in a larger and more prominent reliquary that will highlight their importance and promote their veneration.

Devotion And Education

As a center of devotion and a place of pilgrimage, Our Lady of Fatima Church frequently holds special liturgies and devotions that aim to foster a deeper love for the Blessed Mother and the little shepherds of Fatima. It also sponsors educational events and activities which attempt to explain the Catholic faith and the spirituality of the three little shepherds. Of course, as with everything the Church does, these events and activities are directed to God to Whom we give all glory and praise.

Future Services

It is our hope that in the future, we will be able to establish an online and on-site gift shop, make available new resources on the Fatima children and provide special presentations to individuals and groups who visit our shrine. Please pray for us and for the success of our work.



*This information was provided by the **Society of the Three Little Shepherds of Fatima** which seeks to foster devotion to Saints Francisco and Jacinta Marto, promote the cause for the canonization of Sister Lucia and inspire the faithful to imitate the virtues and piety of the three Little Shepherds. Members of the Society produce and distribute literature, organize devotions, sponsor special events, and promote the construction of the new shrine.*

Please contact us if you wish to become a member of the Society, help as a volunteer, make a donation to support our efforts or contribute to the construction of the shrine.

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Please print

NAME _____

ADDRESS

EMAIL _____ PHONE _____

I wish to: become a member of the Society of the Three Little Shepherds of Fatima

Volunteer

Make a donation to support: **the work of the Society**

the construction of the Shrine

Please make all checks payable to Our Lady of Fatima Church and specify purpose on memo.

Mail to: Society of the Three Little Shepherds
Our Lady of Fatima Church,
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