## Mary and the Little Shepherds of Fatima

Illustrated by Maria João Lopes





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Lucia dos Santos and her cousins, Francisco and Jacinta Marto, lived in Portugal one hundred years ago. Although they were ordinary children, God chose them to meet the Blessed Virgin Mary and bring her message to the world. This is their extraordinary story.



Francisco, Jacinta, and their nine-year-old cousin Lucia were shepherds. They led the sheep out to pasture every day.

"Can we pray the Rosary the way we usually do?" asked seven-year-old Francisco.

"Sure," said Lucia. "I'll say 'Hail Mary' and you and Jacinta can say 'Holy Mary.'"

"Then we'll have more time to dance while Francisco plays his flute!" added six-year-old Jacinta.

The world was at war, but not much ever happened in the fields outside Fatima. Until one day, an unexpected visitor appeared.



"Don't be afraid. I am the Angel of Peace."

Although they could all see the angel, only Lucia and Jacinta could hear him.

"Pray with me," the angel continued. He bowed down until his shining face touched the ground.

The shepherds did the same. They repeated the angel's words three times.

"Pray often," the angel said. "The hearts of Jesus and Mary are listening to you." Then he left them.

"Don't tell anyone about this," Lucia warned her cousins. "No one would believe us, and we'll get in trouble."

"We won't," Francisco and Jacinta promised.

Later in the summer, the angel returned.

"Pray for peace and make sacrifices," he reminded the children.

"How do we make sacrifices?" Lucia asked.

"When you give something up or do something extra because you love God, it is a sacrifice," the angel explained. "If you do this, the war will end. I am your country's guardian, the Angel of Portugal."

From that day on the children looked for ways to make sacrifices.

In September, the angel appeared holding a Chalice and Host.

Leaving the Body and Blood of Christ floating in the air, the angel and the children bowed down in adoration. He then gave the Host to Lucia and offered the Chalice to Jacinta and Francisco.

"Will we see the angel again?" Jacinta asked with a sigh. None of them knew. Neither could they imagine the even more extraordinary things that would happen.