

## Lesson 24: Francisco and Our Lady of Fatima

*Please click twice to watch the video* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o5fa33L5gsM>

Francisco Marto was born on June 11, 1908. He was the sixth of seventh children. Francisco was kind, gentle, mischievous, courageous; a lover of nature, animals, and having fun. He was also a peacemaker who liked to sit by himself and think. Francisco played a reed pipe and Jacinta and Lucia would dance when he played.

Francisco was only 10 years old when our Blessed Mother appeared to him, his sister Jacinta, and his cousin Lucia, in their small town of Fatima, Portugal. The visions, which we call “apparitions,” occurred in 1917, between May and October. Mary appeared to the children five times.

Francisco was only 9 years old when Our Lady appeared for the first time. While Lucia and Jacinta saw *and* heard Our Lady, Francisco only saw her and felt her presence. Since he never heard Our Lady’s words, Lucia and Jacinta would tell him what they heard.

Although he couldn’t hear Our Lady, Francisco heard God with his heart, experiencing constantly the great sorrow of Our Lord. And like a child toward a parent, he desired only to make it better through his obedience to Our Lady’s requests for daily prayers and penances.

Francisco told his parents, his parish priest, the mayor of his town, and anyone who questioned him that he truly saw Mary on each of her visits and that he felt her presence. Like his sister and cousin, Francisco reported that Mary told the children to pray the Rosary every day and to pray for sinners.

After the apparitions ended, Francisco was sent to school, but he often missed out on his classes because he preferred to visit “the Hidden Jesus.” He was very dedicated to praying alone and to consoling the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. When people asked him what he wanted to do when he grew up, it is said that he answered, *“I don’t want to be anything. I want to die and go to Heaven.”*

Some of the people who questioned Francisco and the other children about the apparitions acted like bullies. They tried to get the children to say they lied about seeing Mary. But the children knew that they had been blessed by Mary’s visits. In time the children were believed and a church was built on the site where Mary appeared.

Francisco grew closer to Mary and Jesus because of Mary’s visits. He especially loved to go to church by himself and kneel before the tabernacle. He prayed to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

In August of 1918, Francisco and Jacinta became victims of the great Flu Pandemic of 1918. In October of 1918, Jacinta told Lucia that Our Lady had appeared to her and promised to take her and Francisco to Heaven soon.

Francisco did not wish to be taken to a hospital, and on April 3, 1919, he received his First Communion. On April 4, 1919, Francisco died at the age of 10.

Pope Francis canonized Francisco and Jacinta on his visit to Fátima to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first apparition—May 13, 2017.

