



## First Communion Class of 2017

**Michaela Adsit**

**Allison Broadbent**

**Madison Bradley**

**Brody Hilts**

**Lillian Spies**

**Ty Stiefel**

**As we congratulate the members of the Class, we join in thanking**

**Conner Cummings, Joanne Fitch and Trina Henry**

**who worked preparing them for this important moment in their lives.**

### Fatima: Part 1, The Children

This year marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 6 apparitions of Our Lady to the three shepherd children at Fatima, Portugal, where the Blessed Mother appeared once each month from May 13 until October 13, 1917.

The Fatima apparitions actually began with the three apparitions of the Angel of Peace in 1916 and extended to subsequent apparitions to Sister Lucia in Spain (1925-1929).

Fatima is the most significant of all Marian apparitions. John Paul II added the May 13 Feast of Our Lady of Fatima to the general Roman calendar in 2002. On May 13, 1981, he survived an attempt on his life and credited his survival to the intervention of Our Lady of Fatima. The bullet that almost killed him is inserted in a crown of Our Lady at the Fatima shrine.

The shepherd children, Lucia dos Santos (10), Francisco Marto, (9), and Jacinta Marto (7) were cousins. The oldest, Lucia, was the youngest of seven siblings and took harsh criticism when she reported to family what she had seen. When she was 14, and her two cousins had already died, she was sent to the Dorothean Sisters of Villar and became a Sister. In 1946 she entered the convent of the Carmelite Sisters of Coimbra, was known as Sister Maria Lucia of the Immaculate Heart and was visited by Mary several more times. She died in 2005 at the age of 97. Her canonization process began in 2008, Pope Benedict XVI waiving the usual 5-year waiting period.

Blessed Francisco Marto saw the Blessed Mother but could not hear what she was saying. Following the apparitions, he chose to “console Jesus for the sins of the world”. One year later, he became ill during an influenza outbreak, but continued to recite the Rosary daily. He received his 1<sup>st</sup> Holy Communion on his deathbed in 1919. He was beatified by Pope John Paul II in Fatima on May 13, 2000.

Blessed Jacinta Marto dedicated herself to praying for the salvation of souls after seeing the vision of hell. She also fell ill with influenza, but suffered more than Francisco, undergoing surgery and several other procedures in an attempt to save her life. She was hospitalized with pneumonia and tuberculosis, during which she was visited by Our Lady three more times. The hospital chaplain refused to give her Communion, saying he would return the next day, but she died before then. She, too, was beatified on May 13, 2000.

[Next Week: The Apparitions]

*Judy Pearson*