

Centennial of the Birth of Blessed Francisco Marto

Born February 20th, 1908

"Francisco, the consoler of the hidden Jesus", by the Fr. Fernando Leite, SJ.



Each one of the Little Shepherds of Fatima has a special spiritual physiognomy. Jacinta is the apostle of sinners; Francisco, the consoler of Jesus; and Lucy, the privileged soul of the Heart of Mary. Referring herself to her cousins, Lucy writes: "While Jacinta seemed preoccupied only with the conversion of sinners and saving them from Hell, Francisco seemed to only think about consoling Our Lord and Our Lady, who looked to him very sad".

The words uttered by the Angel in his third apparition - "Console your God" – made an impression on the little shepherd and marked forever his life. Let us listen to what he told Lucy: "I prefer to console Our Lord. Didn't you notice how Our Lady, still last month (October), became so sad when She said that we shouldn't offend Our Lord anymore, that He is already very offended? I'd like to console Our Lord first and then convert sinners, so that they don't offend Him anymore".

Jacinta once asked him: Don't you have pity on sinners?

"I have, but I pity still more Our Lord. I would like to console Him first of all".

When Lucy, fearing the wiles of the Devil, decides not to return to Cova da Iria, Francisco encourages her with these kind thoughts: "How sad! God is already so sad with so many sins that, if you don't go, He will be even sadder!"

In the first two apparitions, Our Lady caused a light so intense to shine on the chest of the Little Shepherds that they saw themselves in God. Francisco would later comment: "We were burning in that light which is God and were not consumed... What a pity to see Him so sad! If only I could console Him?!...".

In order to make reparations to Our Lord, he used to add sacrifices to his prayers. Sometimes one would hear him exclaim: "What a pity to see Him so sad! If only I could console Him?! Would He still be so sad? I offer to Him all the sacrifices I can think of".

When he was ill, Lucy asks him: - Francisco, do you feel sick? Yes, I do; but I offer it up in order to console Our Lord!

The day before his death, he whispers to Lucy: - Look, I'm very ill. I'll soon be going to Heaven. Then, once there, don't forget to pray hard for sinners, for the Holy Father, for me and for Jacinta. I will, but those things you better ask Jacinta, because I'm afraid I'll forget them when I see Our Lord and then I'd rather console Him. Then, on the morning of April 4, 1919, First Friday of the Month, Francisco the seer departs for Heaven in the arms of his Heavenly Mother, in order to console Our Lord. At the Garden of Olives, before His Passion and Death, Jesus showed his sadness and asked the apostles to accompany Him in His Agony. They didn't; so an Angel descended from Heaven to do it. Francisco listened to Jesus' request; he wanted to be His consoling Angel. To that end he would offer his prayers, sacrifices and prolonged visits to the Blessed Sacrament.

Fr. Fernando Leite, SJ.