



Chaplain's Corner

By Father Denis Doyle

The fourth apparition of Our Lady of Fatima took place in August. With each passing month, the crowds that gathered to see the children continued to grow.

The authorities did not like what was taking place and tried to stop it. So they devised a scheme to take the children into custody and force them to tell the “truth.” In other words, they wanted the children to confess that they had been lying. Under the pretext of offering the children safe passage through the crowds who had gathered around their homes, and a ride to the place of the apparition, the mayor of the area where Fatima is located showed up on the morning of August 13th. He offered to take the children and their parents to the parish priest, whom he claimed wished to see them, and then to drive them to the *Cova da Iria*.

When they reached the parish rectory, the mayor abandoned the children’s parents and took Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco to the district headquarters, nine miles away. First, the mayor tried to bribe the children to recant their story; then he made various threats. He threatened them with death and to lock them

in a prison cell with other criminals. In spite of their youth and these menacing threats, the children remained firm in their belief that our Lady had appeared. The “trial” of the children lasted for two days, which understandably was very upsetting to their families. Finally on August 15th, the Feast of the Assumption, the children were released and driven back to the rectory in Fatima. The crowds that were trying to find out what happened to the children, poured out their anger on the driver and on the mayor. They were happy to be rid of the children and to get away unscathed. This was the only time that authorities tried to interfere with the apparitions.

Although Our Lady’s plans were delayed a little, she appeared to the children on Sunday, August 19th. Mary asked the children to come again on the thirteenth of the next month and to continue to pray the Rosary every day. Lucia asked, “What are we to do with the offerings of money that people leave at the *Cova da Iria*? Our Lady responded by asking that two litters (for carrying statues) be made and what remains would be used toward the construction of a chapel at the *Cova*. Today, a beautiful basilica welcomes pilgrims from around the world to Fatima. The fourth apparition of Our Lady of Fatima reminds us that nothing can stop God or Our Lady from accomplishing their plans!