

# Fatima and the Vision of Hell

by [Kenneth Francis](#) (September 2024)



Look at the haunted faces on these three children. They look like they have seen a vision of Hell. Their names (from left) are Lucia dos Santos, with her cousins Francisco and Jacinto Marto.

This story about what they say they witnessed is well-documented and re-told many times but, to give a brief recap for those unfamiliar with this strange theological phenomenon, on October 30, 1917, these three shepherd children from Fatima, Portugal, claimed to have encountered a Marian Apparition, during which Our Lady showed them what Hell looked like. This terrified the children, as Hell looked like a vast sea of fire with suffering souls being tortured. Plunged in this fire, they saw the demons and the souls of the damned, the latter were like transparent burning embers, all blackened or burnished bronze, having human forms. The demons resembled frightful and unknown animals, black and transparent like burning coals. That vision only lasted for a moment and it frightened the children.

In the novel *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* by James Joyce, a character in the book, a Catholic cleric, gives a fire-and-brimstone sermon on Hell that is truly terrifying. I feel I must warn readers that the following is not for the faint-hearted and they might sleep more soundly if they skip the quote, which I'll present in its entirety. It is a description of what eternal damnation means:

*He says: "What must it be, then, to bear the manifold tortures of Hell forever? Forever! For all eternity! Not for a year or an age but forever. Try to imagine the awful meaning of this. You have often seen the sand on the seashore. How fine are its tiny grains! And how many of those tiny grains go to make up the small handful which a*



*child grasps in its play. Now imagine a mountain of that sand, a million miles high, reaching from the earth to the farthest heavens, and a million miles broad, extending to remotest space, and a million miles in thickness, and imagine such an enormous mass of countless particles of sand multiplied as often as there are leaves in the forest, drops of water in the mighty ocean, feathers on birds, scales on fish, hairs on animals, atoms in the vast expanse of air. And imagine that at the end of every million years a little bird came to that mountain and carried away in its beak a tiny grain of that sand. How many millions upon millions of centuries would pass before that bird had carried away even a square foot of that mountain, how many eons upon eons of ages before it had carried away all? Yet at the end of that immense stretch time not even one instant of eternity could be said to have ended. At the end of all those billions and trillions of years eternity would have scarcely begun. And if that mountain rose again after it had been carried all away again grain by grain, and if it so rose and sank as many times as there are stars in the sky, atoms in the air, drops of water in the sea, leaves on the trees, feathers upon birds, scales upon fish, hairs upon animals – at the end of all those innumerable risings and sinkings of that immeasurably vast mountain not even one single instant of eternity could be said to have ended; even then, at the end of such a period, after that eon of time, the mere thought of which makes our very brain reel dizzily, eternity would have scarcely begun.”*

For those atheists who read the above and are spooked by it, wondering if Christianity is true and the consequences for them for rejecting it, here is the good news: The infliction of punishment proportionately will be by degrees, which is an outworking of divine justice. Scripture states that God will judge “in righteousness” (Acts 17:31) and that it is a

function of God's justice and glory to avenge every wrong (Rev. 16: 1-7; 19: 1-6). In other words, punishment will be given out according to the nature of the offence.

Hell for a Pol Pot will be far harsher and painful than it will be for the late New Atheist celebrity, Christopher Hitchens, who seemed like a decent chap, despite his egoistical, boastful manner and denial of God.

In His parables, Jesus speaks of Hell as a place of outer darkness (Matt. 8:12); a fiery furnace where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 25:41); and eternal punishment (Matt. 25:46). "For many are invited, but few are chosen." (Matt 22:14) "You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to Hell?" "You belong to your father, the devil." (John 8:44) John in Revelation speaks of a bottomless pit (9:1); a huge furnace (9:2); fire and burning sulphur (14:10); no relief day or night (14:11); the fiery lake of burning sulphur (21:8); and the second death (21:8).

Our Lady also accurately predicted chilling messages which all came true and are still coming true today. But some might ask: Our Lady must have known the innermost thoughts of the children and their purest of heart and soul in order to appear to them, and surely such insight is exclusive to God and the person(s) having such thoughts..

However, on Catholic doctrine, it is generally held that the saints (and Our Lady) do not possess omniscience, thus reading our thoughts, apart from certain circumstances, as the great majority of the saints are in the "intermediate state" between death and resurrection and lack such perceptive abilities.

But consistent with their state of beatitude, God might not withhold from them knowledge that might be relevant to them. As for the Apparitions of the Virgin Mary: According to Pope Francis, they are "not always real." he said, after a woman drew thousands of pilgrims to a town near Rome to pray before

a statue that she claimed shed tears of blood.

“Don’t look there,” Francis said recently during an interview with the Italian Public Network, Rai 1, when asked about apparitions. “There are images of the Madonna that are real, but the Madonna has never drawn [attention] to herself,” he said.

“I like to see her with her finger pointing up to Jesus. When Marian devotion is too self-centred, it’s not good. Both in the devotion and in the people who carry it forward.”

But Marian devotion is not self-centred, as Our Lady is seen as a portal, and intermediary, for the faithful to send their message to God.

On May 3, 2024, a group of 17 scholars and activists released a lengthy statement calling for Pope Francis to resign or to be formally asked to resign by the College of Cardinals.

According to a report in LifeSiteNews, the scholars and activists said that Francis has “caused an unprecedented crisis in the Catholic Church” by his words and actions, the 17 signatories attested that the Pope has “done great harm to the Church and the whole world” since assuming the papal throne in March 2013.

LifeSiteNews added: The signatories accuse Francis of committing “crimes other than heresy,” attesting that the actions listed are “crimes because they violate either canon law, the law of temporal states, the natural law, divine positive law, or some combination of laws from these different legal systems.”

The core warning from Our Lady at both Fatima and Akita, Japan, is: “The work of the devil will infiltrate even into the Church in such a way that one will see cardinals opposing cardinals, and bishops against other bishops... The priests who venerate me will be scorned and opposed by their confreres ...

churches and altars sacked; the Church will be full of those who accept compromises and the demon will press many priests and consecrated souls to leave the service of the Lord.”

To quote that old Chinese proverb: *We are living in interesting times.*

## [Table of Contents](#)

**Kenneth Francis** is a Contributing Editor at *New English Review*. For the past 30 years, he has worked as an editor in various publications, as well as a university lecturer in journalism. He also holds an MA in Theology and is the author of [The Little Book of God, Mind, Cosmos and Truth](#) (St Pauls Publishing) and, most recently, [The Terror of Existence: From Ecclesiastes to Theatre of the Absurd](#) (with Theodore Dalrymple) and [Neither Trumpets Nor Violins](#) (with Theodore Dalrymple and Samuel Hux).

Follow NER on Twitter [@NERIconoclast](#)