

Our Lady of Fatima and the Goan connection

Written by



Our Lady of Fatima Shrine Monte de Guirim Bardez - Goa - India (Photograph by: Tony Fernandes, October 2000)

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Many of us have our own childhood memories of devotion to Our Lady of Fatima.

Here are a few of my own.

Our Lady of Fatima is a title given to the Blessed Virgin Mary. She is the Queen of Peace, Love and Hope. She appeared to three shepherd children at Fatima, Portugal, on the 13th day of six consecutive months in 1917, starting on 13 May.

The names of those children are Lucia dos Santos, cousin to brother and sister Francisco and Jacinta Marto. These are very common names in Goa. It was a Portuguese colony for over 450 years.

Also common in Goa is the name Fatima. It was a name given to a village by the Moors who once occupied a part of Portugal.

My childhood memories often take me back to the years from 1953 to 1964. During this period the devotion to our Lady of Fatima was picking up at a rapid pace in all the parishes in Goa. The statue of Our Lady of Fatima circulated from house to house in the villages. The annual celebration and procession of devotees with candles and lanterns from Guirim church to the grotto at Monte de Guirim in the night was a sight to behold. I accompanied my mother who made the journey to the top of the hill and still remember holding a lantern walking along with

other children. Grottos with life-size statues of Our Lady and the Three Children adorned the courtyards of many churches and still continue till today. Many homes have small grottos in their front gardens too.

The legendary Goan musician Antoninho Servitas De Souza composed the touching and beautiful hymn 'Maie Kakutin Bhorlele' (Mother, full of mercy) in the year **1949**. This was the year when the statue of our Lady of Fatima was brought to Goa from Portugal. This timeless classic hymn in Konkani (language of the people of Goa) dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima is still sung at the slightest chance or suggestion, at feasts and otherwise, in churches, chapels and at Litanies that are commonly held in the chapels and homes in Goa. The melodic hymn is probably still sung at Goan occasions or institutions all over the world. Here below is the first verse and chorus:

Maie kakutin bhorlele

Rannie sorga sounsarache

Sodanch amchea mogan laslele

Sandumnakaim Maie mogache

Ch: Pau Maie, heo Maie

Ghe amkam tujea gopant

Pau Maie, heo Maie

Ghe amkam tujea gopant

The Fatima - Goa connection and devotion is still going strong as it has done in the past. The following events chronicled by the World Apostolate of Fatima bear testimony to the fact.

These are a few but valid indications that the devotion to Our of Fatima have continued since a long time. **1949** - Statue of Our Lady of Fatima brought to Goa from Portugal. **Oct 11, 1954** - Rev. Fr. Servulo de Piedade introduces the Blue Army in Goa.

Oct.27-29, 1978

- The 4th All India Blue Army Marian Congress held in Goa.

From 1954 to 1993 - The Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Our Lady of Fatima visited Goa 6 times.

May 16-18, 1986 - All India Fatima Apostolate Meet held in Pilar Seminary, Goa. **October 1992 - February 1993** -

Visit to Goa of the Pilgrim Statue of Fatima. During these four months, the statue toured many Parishes and Institutions in Goa and stirred up tremendous religious farewell –Eucharistic and Marian- as Muslims, Hindus and Catholics gave the common Mother and Queen a truly Royal welcome. In one such very stirring and poignant journey of the statue was, I am told, when people from the Catholic and Hindu communities stood on both sides of the streets, adorned their houses with coloured string-lights, lit candles and lamps along the streets of Parra leading up to the Church of St. Anne that has a shrine dedicated in honour of Our Lady of Fatima.

November 13, 1997 - Goa takes over as the National Centre of India of the World Apostolate of Fatima.

May 13, 1999 - Bishop Emeritus of Belgaum, together with 10 priests and around 500 faithful participate in a day long Seminar at Don Bosco's, Panjim, Goa.

May 1, 2002 - President of the World Apostolate of Fatima (India), Archbishop Henry D'Souza (Emeritus Arch-Bishop of Calcutta) presides at the 3rd National Council Meet held in Goa.

May 2-3, 2000 - The First ever National Council Meet of the W.A.F. (World Apostolate of

Fatima) was held in Goa.

May 1, 2002 - The 3rd National General Body meeting of the W.A.F. India was held in Goa.

May 13, 2002 - FATIMA DAY - The 85th Anniversary of the 1st Apparition of Our Lady of Fatima was commemorated at Institute Piedade, Panjim.

The Blue Army

*According to the World Apostolate of Fatima, Washington, New Jersey, USA, the Blue Army is a worldwide movement of the faithful, responding to the requests that Our Blessed Mother made to three shepherd children in Fatima, Portugal in 1917, to help save souls and bring peace to the world. It promotes Eucharistic prayer and the Rosary, as well as penance, especially the generous acceptance of the duties of our state in life. **International Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Our Lady of Fatima.***

This is a world-famous statue that continuously circles the globe. It was sculpted by Jose Thedim, in the year 1947. The look of the Virgin Mary towards the heavens in prayer is depicted in the statue based on the description of Sr. Lucia, one of the three young holy children who saw Our Lady each month from May to October 1917 in Fatima, Portugal. On October 13, 1947, the statue was blessed in the presence of over 150,000 pilgrims by the Bishop of Leiria at Fatima, Portugal, to be the pilgrim, the traveler of love, hope and peace, to the entire world.□