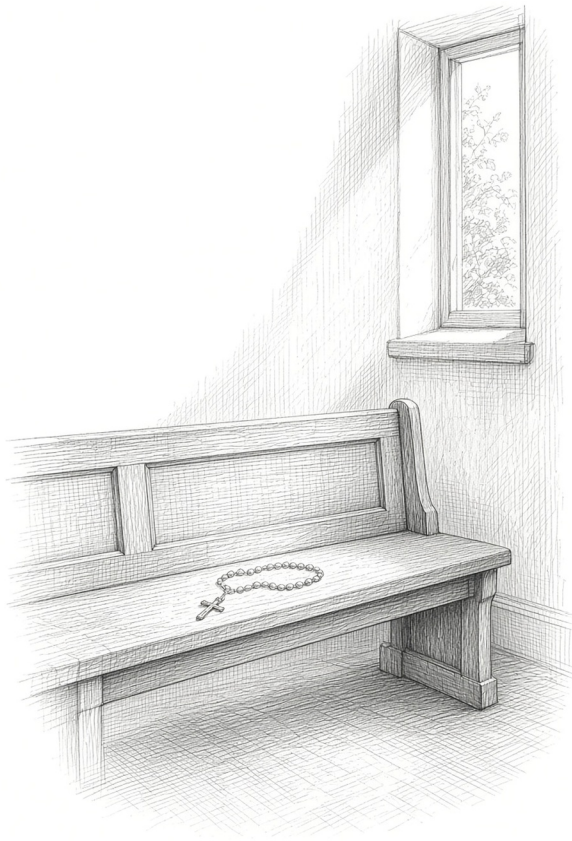




SILENT HOMILIES

The Saturday She Asked For

*Five First Saturdays, and the
fifteen minutes nobody mentions*



Silent Homilies

Little Treasures



SILENT HOMILIES

The Saturday She Asked For

*Five First Saturdays, and the fifteen
minutes nobody mentions*

*A small book of forgotten facts,
short stories, and quiet hope.*

Before You Begin

Most Catholics who have heard of Fatima remember the thirteenth of the month, the three children, and the sun. Fewer people know what happened eight years later.

In December 1925, Sister Lucia was living in a convent in Pontevedra, in Spain. She was eighteen. There, she said, Our Lady explained something very practical. She asked Catholics to keep five First Saturdays in a row, in a particular way, out of love for her Immaculate Heart.

The request is often reduced to a list. Confession. Communion. The Rosary. Fifteen minutes of meditation. The intention of reparation. Five months. The list is useful, but on its own it can feel like homework. This little book puts the list back into the story.

The Child Jesus spoke first that day. He did not hand Lucia a programme. He asked her to have compassion on the Heart of her Mother, which was being treated as if it did not matter.

The Church already has First Fridays in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Saturday has long been Mary's day. The First Saturdays do not compete with the Fridays. They belong beside them.

Read this if you have tried the five months and lost count. Read it if you have never tried because the conditions sounded fussy. The details are there so that the Saturday has a clear shape. They are not there to make the devotion feel like an exam.

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Chapter 1

Not the Hill This Time

Most people who know Fatima think of 1917: a hillside in Portugal, three children, and Our Lady appearing on the thirteenth of the month. On 13 July that year she spoke of her Immaculate Heart and said that a devotion to it would later be asked for. The children were still young. The war was still going on. She did not yet give a timetable.

That timetable came eight years later.

On 10 December 1925 Sister Lucia was living with the Dorothean Sisters in Pontevedra, in Spain. She was eighteen. She said that Our Lady appeared to her there with the Child Jesus, on a luminous cloud. The Child spoke first, which many accounts leave out. Have compassion, He said, on the Heart of your Most Holy Mother, covered with thorns which ungrateful men place there at every moment, while there is no one to pull them out by an act of reparation. Then Mary explained what she wanted.

The setting was very different from Fatima. There was no crowd and no public miracle. There was a convent corridor, a young sister, and a request that an ordinary Catholic could keep if a church could be found on a Saturday.

At Fatima Our Lady announced that devotion to her Immaculate Heart would be asked for. At Pontevedra she explained what Catholics were to do. If Fatima has become, in your mind, only a secret and a warning, this later request is the practical part of the story. It is a Saturday morning.

A Small Reflection

Fatima is famous. Pontevedra is not. Yet the First Saturdays were explained there, eight years later, to a girl of eighteen. The public wonder of 1917 still matters. So does the quieter request that followed it. One without the other leaves the story unfinished.

A short prayer

Our Lady of Fatima, do not let us remember the hillside and forget the Saturday you asked for. Amen.

Chapter 2

What She Actually Asked For

The request has four acts and one intention. They are to be kept on the first Saturday of five consecutive months.

First, go to confession. Second, receive Holy Communion. Third, pray five decades of the Rosary. Fourth, spend another fifteen minutes meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary. Do all of this with the intention of making reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

That is the whole shape of the morning. You go to confession. You receive Holy Communion. You pray the Rosary. Then you stay a little longer with the mysteries, instead of leaving as soon as the last Amen is said. The intention of reparation gives the morning its direction.

On 15 February 1926 the Child Jesus appeared again, Lucia said, while she was taking out the rubbish. She had been worrying about confession: how soon it had to be, and how tightly it had to be tied to the Saturday itself. The answer that later settled in the practice of the Church is generous. Confession may be made some days before or after the Saturday — commonly understood as about eight days either side — provided the Saturday itself is lived in the state of grace and with the intention of reparation. This book does not treat that flexibility as a new official law. It is the pastoral way the request has been kept, so that a practical difficulty does not close the door.

The later apparition is one of the least printed scenes in the story. It is also one of the kindest. Lucia was doing an ordinary household task when the question about confession was answered.

The devotion does not depend on a perfect diary. The conditions give the Saturday a form. They are not meant to turn a missed month

into a superstition about ruined grace.

A Small Reflection

The list is short on purpose. Confession, Communion, the Rosary, fifteen more minutes, and the intention of reparation. If the details have ever put you off, look at them again as a shape for one morning, not as an exam paper.

A short prayer

Lord Jesus, you met Lucia in the middle of an ordinary chore. Help us to keep the Saturday you asked for without turning it into a burden.

Amen.

Chapter 3

Why There Are Five Saturdays

Why five Saturdays, rather than three, seven or nine?

On 29 May 1930, in a letter to her confessor Father Jose Bernardo Goncalves, Lucia wrote down what she understood Our Lord to have told her. There are five kinds of offence against the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The five Saturdays answer those five offences.

The first is against her Immaculate Conception: the refusal to believe that she was preserved from original sin from the first moment of her life.

The second is against her perpetual virginity.

The third is against her divine motherhood — that she is the Mother of God — and against receiving her as Mother of men.

The fourth is the sowing of indifference, contempt or hatred toward her in the hearts of children.

The fifth is the insulting or dishonouring of her sacred images.

Two of these are not only old arguments among theologians. They are still easy to recognise. Children can be taught to shrug at her. Her pictures can be treated as junk or as a joke. The devotion answers those wounds as well as the others.

Five is not a magic number. It is an explanation Lucia gave for the number she had been asked to keep. You do not have to treat private revelation as if it were a council document in order to understand the point. The five mornings correspond to five ways of refusing honour to Mary.

A Small Reflection

The number five has a reason. Each Saturday answers a particular offence against Mary: her Immaculate Conception, her virginity, her motherhood, the love of children for her, and the honour given to her images. If one of those five feels close to home, begin there.

A short prayer

Immaculate Heart of Mary, help us to understand the ways in which you are still rejected or dishonoured, and teach us to respond with love.

Amen.

Chapter 4

What Reparation Really Means

This raises an obvious question. What does reparation actually mean?

Many Catholics hear the word and think of bookkeeping. Someone has done damage. Someone else pays. That is not what the First Saturdays are. They do not force Heaven to issue a receipt. They do not buy forgiveness or earn Heaven.

Reparation is a response of love when love has been rejected or offended. It is prayer, faithfulness and honour offered on purpose, because something sacred has been treated as if it did not matter. The Child Jesus at Pontevedra spoke of thorns around Mary's Heart and of acts of reparation that pull them out. Confession, Communion, the Rosary and the extra fifteen minutes are the concrete way that request was given a shape.

There is a promise attached, as there is to the First Fridays: help at the hour of death, and the grace of salvation. The promise has been loved, and it has also been misunderstood. Catholic faith does not turn five Saturdays into a machine. Grace, conversion, the sacraments and perseverance still matter. The promise is a mother's word to people who keep coming back. It is not an insurance policy.

Do the five months because her Heart is worth five mornings. If consolation comes, receive it. If it does not, you have still done what was asked. Company was the word used for the fifteen minutes. Company does not always feel like a result.

A Small Reflection

Reparation is not a bargain with God. It is love answering an offence. The five Saturdays give that answer a simple shape. If a promise of help at death is attached, receive it as a mother's word, not as a ticket.

A short prayer

Immaculate Heart of Mary, teach us what reparation means, and keep us from treating your request as a deal. Amen.

Chapter 5

The Fifteen Minutes Nobody Mentions

But one part of the request is often forgotten.

Most leaflets remember the Rosary and forget the extra quarter of an hour. Lucia was told to keep Mary company for fifteen minutes, meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary. The Rosary is already a meditation. The extra time is in addition to the five decades. That is the detail many people miss.

You have said the beads. You do not get up at once as if the appointment were over.

Fifteen minutes is long enough to notice, and short enough to be possible on a Saturday that also includes shopping or family work. You may stay with one mystery. You may stay with Mary at the tomb, since it is Saturday. You may stay with the Finding in the Temple if you have lost someone. You do not have to cover every mystery. You are asked not to leave the moment the last Amen is said.

If formal meditation sounds too ambitious, the time can be kept in a very ordinary way. Choose one mystery. Read the Gospel passage slowly. Picture the scene. Think about what Jesus and Mary experienced. Look at an image connected with that mystery. Or simply remain quiet. Staying is already rare.

If you have done many First Saturdays and never done the fifteen minutes, you have kept three parts of a four-part request. Begin there. The rest you already know.

A Small Reflection

Perhaps the hardest part is not the Rosary or even finding Mass. It may simply be giving Mary time on purpose. Fifteen minutes is not much, but it is long enough to notice how quickly we normally hurry away.

A short prayer

Mary, teach me to give God my time without always watching the clock. Amen.

Chapter 6

Why Saturday Belongs to Mary

There is another reason Saturday matters.

Before Fatima ever asked for a first Saturday, the Church already honoured Mary on that day. Holy Saturday is the day when the Lord lay in the tomb and the women waited. The Gospels say almost nothing about what His Mother did in those hours. The Church remembered the waiting, and Saturday in ordinary time kept a Marian colour because of it. Many dioceses long had a Saturday Mass of Our Lady. The First Saturdays did not invent her day. They gave that day a particular work: reparation to her Immaculate Heart.

This is also why the devotion is not simply a copy of the First Fridays with a different name. Friday belongs to the Passion and to the Heart of Jesus that was pierced. Saturday belongs to the Mother who stood beneath the Cross and then waited. Reparation offered to her on that day is offered to a love that remained when there was nothing public left to see.

A parish that announces First Friday and never First Saturday has kept one of these mornings and not the other. They are not in competition. Catholics can practise both. First Friday is dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. First Saturday is offered in reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

If your church is locked on Saturday morning, the devotion may mean going to another church where Mass is said. That extra effort is not a failure of the request. It is sometimes what the Saturday costs.

A Small Reflection

Saturday already belonged to Mary before Pontevedra. The Church remembered the waiting at the tomb. The later request used a day that was already hers. If Friday honours the Heart of Jesus, Saturday honours His Mother.

A short prayer

Our Lady of Holy Saturday, stay with us in the hours when there is nothing to see yet. Amen.

Chapter 7

Beside the First Fridays

Many Catholics know the First Fridays. The connection with the First Saturdays is worth understanding.

In 1675, at Paray-le-Monial, Saint Margaret Mary was asked for First Fridays in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The shape is familiar: a day, a number, Communion, reparation, and a promise about the hour of death. There is an obvious similarity with Pontevedra. The Church did not invent a new kind of devotion in 1925. She recognised an old one, now asked in honour of Mary's Heart.

That resemblance may help people who find Fatima strange. The First Saturdays are not a private club. They sit beside a devotion the popes have welcomed for centuries. You can keep both without belonging to a party.

You can also keep one. A person whose work makes five consecutive Saturdays almost impossible is not cast out. Begin with one Saturday lived properly. The five months are an invitation to a habit. They are not a password.

What the Fridays and Saturdays share is simple. Love is given a morning and a task. The task is small enough to do.

A Small Reflection

First Friday and First Saturday belong together. One honours the Heart of Jesus. The other honours the Heart of Mary. If you can keep both, keep both. If you cannot, keep the one you can, and do not despise the other.

A short prayer

Heart of Jesus and Heart of Mary, teach us to honour you both without turning either devotion into a party. Amen.

Chapter 8

How the Devotion Spread

Lucia did not publish a book in 1925. She wrote to her confessors. She obeyed when she was told to wait. She was later moved from Spain to Coimbra. The devotion spread unevenly, as these things usually do in the Church: through priests who believed her, through priests who wanted more proof, and through lay people who simply began to come on Saturday.

Wider history gathered around the same Heart. Pius XII consecrated the world to the Immaculate Heart in 1942, in the middle of a war. After the attempt on his life on 13 May 1981, John Paul II tied his remaining years to Fatima with a frankness that still startles some Catholics. None of that papal history is required before you may sit in a pew with a rosary. It is the larger story into which the small Saturday fits.

The devotion has often been reduced to an argument about Russia or about a secret. Lucia herself spent decades refusing to let curiosity swallow the Saturday. Reparation is not extra information. It is a way of being present.

If you have avoided the First Saturdays because you did not want to join a debate about popes and consecrations, you may begin without the debate. A Catholic does not need to settle every historical controversy about Fatima before keeping the morning Our Lady asked for.

A Small Reflection

Lucia carried the request by writing to confessors and by waiting when she was told to wait. You do not need to win an argument about Fatima before you begin. A Saturday morning does not depend on a finished debate.

A short prayer

Lord, teach us the difference between keeping a Saturday and winning an argument. Amen.

Chapter 9

What the First Saturdays Are -- and Are Not

They are not a charm. Five ticks on a card will not make a life holy if the rest of the month is full of contempt. The Lady asked for reparation. That assumes we are at least trying, in the rest of life, not to add to the wounds we say we are repairing.

They are not a replacement for Sunday. A Catholic who keeps the first Saturday and skips the Lord's Day has not understood either morning.

They are not a weapon against other Catholics who pray differently. Fatima has sometimes been used as a badge of the truly faithful. The girl who was taking out the rubbish was not founding a party.

They are not only for people who like apparitions. You may be cautious about private revelation and still see the sense in confession, Communion, the Rosary, and a quarter of an hour with Mary on a Saturday. That sense does not depend on the apparition in the corridor. If you receive the apparition, it tells you that this sense was asked for out loud.

A Small Reflection

A good devotion can be spoiled by the use we make of it. The First Saturdays are not a charm, a substitute for Sunday, or a way of proving that we are the serious Catholics. They are a morning offered to Mary's Heart.

A short prayer

Our Lady of Fatima, keep your request from becoming our proof that we are better than other people. Amen.

Chapter 10

How to Keep One Saturday Well

Look at the calendar and mark the first Saturday. If confession is not offered that morning, go in the week before. If it helps, tell the priest that you wish this confession to include the First Saturday. Arrive a little early for Mass. Offer Holy Communion on purpose. A sentence in your own words is enough: for her Heart, in reparation.

Pray five decades without racing. Then stay. Ten minutes already feels long if you are unused to stillness. Fifteen is what was asked. You may take one mystery for the whole time, or move slowly through several, or stay with Mary at the tomb. When the time is done, go home and try to let the rest of the day belong to the same intention.

If you miss a month, pastoral custom is to begin the five again without drama. This book does not treat that restart as hidden Church law. It is simply a sane way to keep a habit of prayer from turning into fear. If your parish has no Saturday Mass, go where Mass is said, or ask your priest. Sometimes a First Saturday Mass exists because someone asked for it.

Children can begin more gently -- a decade and a few quiet minutes -- as a pastoral start, not as a rewritten official condition. One of the five offences Lucia named was the wounding of children's love for Mary. A family Saturday that is not grim is already an answer to that.

A Small Reflection

The practical shape is simple enough to begin this month. Mark the day. Go to confession when you can. Receive Communion. Pray the Rosary. Stay fifteen minutes. If a month is missed, begin again without making a tragedy of it.

A short prayer

Immaculate Heart of Mary, receive the Saturday we can actually give. Amen.

Chapter 11

A Parish That Leaves the Door Open

A devotion dies when the building is locked. First Saturdays need a church that opens, a confession that is possible, and a Mass that is said. Priests who keep that morning for a handful of people are doing more for this request than many conferences. Pontevedra began with one sister and no crowd.

A parish might print the five offences once a year. It might put a small card in the porch as an invitation, not as propaganda. It might keep fifteen minutes of silence after the Saturday Rosary instead of stacking chairs at once. These are modest things. The request itself was modest.

Where Saturday morning has become only shopping and sport, even one open church door matters. Someone has chosen this hour instead of the next errand. Most errands can wait half an hour.

If you are the only person in the pew, you are not a failed event. You are close to what December 1925 looked like before anyone printed a leaflet.

A Small Reflection

The devotion needs a door that opens. A priest who says Mass for three people on a Saturday morning is already keeping what was asked. If you find yourself alone in the pew, you are not late. You are close to the original scene.

A short prayer

Lord, bless the priests and parishes that make the First Saturdays possible, even when only a few people come. Amen.

Chapter 12

After the Five Saturdays

The easiest way to miss the First Saturdays is to treat them as five units of religious work. They are five mornings spent with someone who has been wounded by being ignored. Work ends. A habit of company can last longer than the five months.

Living with the devotion after the five Saturdays means letting Mary remain in the rest of the month: a Hail Mary that is not rushed, a refusal to teach a child to sneer, a picture that is not put away because it looks unfashionable. The five offences are not only for the morning of the Mass. They are a way of noticing the week that follows.

It also means keeping Friday and Saturday as a pair if you can. If you cannot keep both, keep the one you can, without contempt for the other.

Our Lady did not ask for a conference. She asked Catholics to give her five Saturday mornings, with confession, Communion, the Rosary, and fifteen more minutes. She asked for Saturday. That is enough to begin.

A Small Reflection

The five Saturdays are meant to change more than five mornings. They teach a way of remaining with Mary when ordinary time begins again. She asked for a Saturday, not a spectacle. That is enough to start.

A short prayer

Immaculate Heart of Mary, receive the mornings we bring, and teach us how to stay. Amen.

A Last Word

The First Saturdays began in a convent corridor, not on a hillside. A Child asked for compassion. A Mother listed four acts and five offences. A girl who had been taking out the rubbish was told that confession could be treated mercifully. After that, the Church has tried, unevenly, to keep a small appointment.

You do not need to settle every argument about Fatima in order to sit still for fifteen minutes. You need a Saturday, and a willingness to treat Mary's Heart as if it can be hurt when it is ignored.

May every first Saturday find one door unlocked. May the extra quarter of an hour not disappear from the leaflets. And may we learn how to keep a simple request without making a speech about it.

Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Our Lady of Fatima, pray for us.

Sister Lúcia of Jesus and of the Immaculate Heart, pray for us.



Silent Homilies
Little Treasures

A word of thanks

If these pages have helped you understand the Saturday Our Lady asked for, a small gift on the Silent Homilies website would be received with real gratitude. It is never asked as a condition of reading -- only as a kindness, if you wish and if you can.

Printing tip

*This booklet is designed in A5 format. For best results print double-sided on A5 paper (or print two pages per A4 sheet and cut).
Recommended paper: 80–100 gsm for a pleasant reading feel.*

Written to be read in one or two sittings.