

ALL NEW MATERIAL
First Update in 13 Years

FATIMA PRIEST



**By Francis Alban with
Christopher A. Ferrara, Esq.**



INTRODUCTION

About the Book, *Fatima Priest*

The first edition of *Fatima Priest* appeared in 1997, bringing the story of Father Nicholas Gruner's life and work, dedicated to the service of Our Lady of Fatima, before the general public in a comprehensive and integrated format. A great many Catholics and devotees of Our Lady were already to some degree familiar with this courageous priest through his *Fatima Crusader* magazines, which have been in circulation since 1978. But this inspiring, long-awaited biography by Francis Alban, was a much-needed marshalling together of all the pieces of an increasingly complex story into a book-length format, assuring a greater impact and durability of all the varied aspects of this history.

Three subsequent editions followed within three years of *Fatima Priest's* initial 1997 printing, through the collaboration of another well-known author, Christopher A. Ferrara. Nevertheless, the landscape of the Fatima controversy has continued to change so rapidly and so dramatically that it has not been easy to keep Father Gruner's readership aware of the progress of his work toward the fulfillment of Our Lady of Fatima's requests. This battle for souls has raged more fiercely year by year, year after year, and so much has taken place since the fourth edition's printing in 2000, that many people have urged the publisher to issue a new edition of this ever-timely book, so that the whole story, of his thirty-six year struggle to make the full Message of Fatima known and understood, might again be available to readers in a single volume.

About this All New, *Part IV – A New Day for Fatima* (This 2013 Edition Supplement)

You hold now in your hands the supplement that will appear in a soon-to-be-published edition of *Fatima Priest*, bringing the previous, 2000 edition up to date. It is in many ways a heartening chronicle of events, though we are not yet at the stage of securing peace for the world and salvation for many souls in the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. But the truth of Father Gruner's position has been vindicated in the most stunning and public ways imaginable. Thus its title, "Part IV, A New Day for Fatima." Parts I through III ("In Person," "Politics vs. Prayer," and "A Fatima Spirituality for the 21st Century") find their long-overdue climax in the exciting breakthroughs made against the ruthless efforts of Our Lady's enemies to silence and distort Her Message.

Six new chapters trace a dramatic arc in the story of the Fatima Priest, ascending toward what must be, in the end, the triumphal climax Heaven itself demands for the divinely written saga that began at the Cova da Iria nearly a century ago.

The many surprising developments of the past twelve years demonstrate God's desire and power to bestow upon us the blessings He has promised through Our Lady of Fatima—and also how generously He blesses the efforts of those who persevere in the labors of His vineyard.

After thirty-six years of dogged persistence, Father Gruner continues to publish proofs of our obligation to believe and obey Our Lady, and perseveres in knocking on the doors and minds of all Catholics, stirring them to wake up before the entire world is enslaved and various nations are completely annihilated, i.e. wiped off the face of the earth.

It is time the whole world knows why he won't give up... one 70-year-old priest against all the powers of the Vatican and their slavish followers!

We dedicate this work anew to the Holy Mother of God and, above all, to Him Who sent Her on a mission of mercy to the Church and the world. May God speed us all to a successful conclusion of Our Lady of Fatima's final vindication.

Fatima Priest

**By Francis Alban with
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PART IV

A New Day for Fatima

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Chapter 23

2000: The Vision of a “Bishop dressed in White”

For every capital sin there is an opposing capital virtue. In opposition to the capital sin of sloth or laziness is the capital virtue of diligence or perseverance. And this virtue of perseverance has yielded great fruit in the priestly labors of Father Nicholas Gruner, particularly in the dozen years that have passed since the last edition of this work appeared. Father Gruner’s thirty-five years in this battle for souls and for Our Lady’s honor had led, by the year 2012, to a veritable new day for the cause of Fatima, despite the best efforts of the Vatican Secretary of State to consign the Fatima event to the eternal night of forgotten history. As the years following 2000 unrolled, the great lie remarked at the beginning of this book—the lie that “Fatima is finished”—would begin to be undone with dramatic effect.

The Vision of the Third Secret Revealed

It was in 2000—on June 26, to be precise—that Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Angelo Sodano, bowing to mounting pressure from the faithful, including Father Gruner’s Fatima Center,^{1a} superintended publication of the obscure vision of the “Bishop dressed in White” at a press conference attended by the world’s media. Sodano and his successor as Secretary of State, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, have since maintained that what follows is the Third Secret of Fatima in its entirety. Herewith is the text of the vision in the third part of the Secret of Fatima, presented as if it were everything recorded by Sister Lucia:

J.M.J.

The third part of the secret revealed at the Cova da Iria-Fatima, on 13 July 1917.

I write in obedience to you, my God, who command me to do so through his Excellency the Bishop of Leiria and through your Most Holy Mother and mine.

After the two parts which I have already explained, at the left of Our Lady and a little above, we saw an Angel with a flaming sword in his left hand; flashing, it gave out flames that looked as though they would set the world on fire; but they died out in contact with the splendour that Our Lady radiated towards him from her right hand: pointing to the earth with his right hand, the Angel cried out in a loud voice: “Penance, Penance, Penance!” And we saw in an immense light that is God: “something similar to how people appear in a mirror when they pass in front of it” a Bishop dressed in

^{1a} It was only in 2007 that Cardinal Bertone acknowledged it was due to Father Nicholas Gruner and ^{bb} *The Fatima Crusader* (among others) that the Vatican apparatus finally decided to reveal the Third Secret (at least in part).^{aa} See Cardinal Bertone’s book *L’ultima veggente di Fatima*, p. 57, “Il Giubileo di fine millennio era già così saturo di eventi religiosi. Perché aggiungere anche la pubblicazione del ‘Terzo Segreto’? ... Le pressioni dei ‘fatimisti’ erano fortissimo, ...” [“The Jubilee at the end of the millennium was already saturated with religious events. Why add [to all this] also the publication of the Third Secret? ... The pressures from the ‘Fatimists’ were very strong, ...”] And who does Cardinal Bertone identify as ‘Fatimists’? “Hard-core Fatimists, like the followers of Father Nicholas Gruner and readers of his magazine, *The Fatima Crusader*” (*The Last Secret of Fatima*, p. 64).

White “we had the impression that it was the Holy Father”. Other Bishops, Priests, men and women Religious going up a steep mountain, at the top of which there was a big Cross of rough-hewn trunks as of a cork-tree with the bark; before reaching there the Holy Father passed through a big city half in ruins and half trembling with halting step, afflicted with pain and sorrow, he prayed for the souls of the corpses he met on his way; having reached the top of the mountain, on his knees at the foot of the big Cross he was killed by a group of soldiers who fired bullets and arrows at him, and in the same way there died one after another the other Bishops, Priests, men and women Religious, and various lay people of different ranks and positions. Beneath the two arms of the Cross there were two Angels, each with a crystal aspersorium in his hand, in which they gathered up the blood of the Martyrs and with it sprinkled the souls that were making their way to God.

Tuy-3-1-1944.^{1b}

What does it all mean? The definitive explanation could come only from Her Who had delivered the message. The Vatican’s presentation lacked what the Vatican itself had revealed via its press release in 1960, when the Secret was suppressed by order of John XXIII: “the *words* which Our Lady confided as a secret to the three little shepherds...” The Virgin had explained to the three seers something as obvious as the vision of hell, which they had just seen in the first part of the Great Secret: “You have seen hell, where the souls of poor sinners go.” Surely She would likewise have explained the utterly enigmatic vision (the Vatican had just published) of the “Bishop dressed in White”. Yet the rather obscure text contained not a single word of explanation from the Virgin, much less the plainly needed explanation of its precise significance, including the how, where, why, when and who of the events depicted.

Clearly, something was missing. Suspicions in that regard could only have been heightened once it became apparent that the June 26 press conference would be a forum for Sodano’s usurpation of the task of “interpreting” a vision that should have needed no interpretation, given the “words of the Virgin” that were obviously not being revealed. Sodano would treat the Secret as he had the rest of the Message of Fatima: not as a heavenly prophecy and warning for the good of the Church and all of humanity, but rather as a public relations problem to be handled by a “spin” to divert the public’s attention from the truth. The Italian author and intellectual Antonio Succi would call this a “preventative interpretation.”

The spinning of the Third Secret had already begun with Sodano’s announcement of the vision’s imminent publication during Pope John Paul II’s pilgrimage to Fatima a few weeks earlier in May. On its face, the text of the vision depicts a white-clad bishop, evidently a future Pope, being executed by a band of soldiers on a hill outside a half-ruined city filled with the dead—a clearly post-apocalyptic scenario whose historical context is not provided by the text of the vision standing alone. As Pope John Paul II, suffering with Parkinson’s Disease, sat silently by, however, Cardinal Sodano launched an “interpretation” that twisted the text into a mere depiction of events in the 20th century, culminating with the attempt on the life of John Paul II in 1981. On May 13,

^{1b} Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *The Message of Fatima (TMF)*, (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, June 26, 2000) p. 21, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000626_message-fatima_en.html

2000, Cardinal Sodano said:

The vision of Fatima concerns above all the war waged by atheist systems against the Church and Christians, and it describes the immense suffering endured by the witnesses to the faith *in the last century of the second millennium*. It is an interminable Way of the Cross led by the Popes of the twentieth century.

According to the interpretation of the “little shepherds,” which was also recently confirmed by Sister Lucia, the “Bishop dressed in White” who prays for all the faithful is the Pope. As he makes his way with great effort towards the Cross amid the corpses of those who were martyred (bishops, priests, men and women religious and many lay persons), he too falls to the ground, *apparently* dead, under a burst of gunfire.

After the assassination attempt of May 13, 1981, it appeared evident to His Holiness that it was “a motherly hand which guided the bullet’s path,” enabling the “dying Pope” to halt “at the threshold of death.”...

The successive events of 1989 led, both in the Soviet Union and in a number of countries of Eastern Europe, to the fall of the Communist regime which promoted atheism. For this too His Holiness offers heartfelt thanks to the Most Holy Virgin...

Even if the events to which the third part of the Secret of Fatima refers now seem part of the past, Our Lady’s call to conversion and penance, issued at the beginning of the twentieth century, remains timely and urgent today....²

So, as Sodano would have it, a vision depicting a Pope and innumerable others being executed outside a half-ruined city filled with the dead signified John Paul II alone *not* being executed by a solitary assassin in the perfectly intact city of Rome. This was a patent attempt to neutralize the clearly apocalyptic implications of the vision—which, again, only the Virgin Herself could clarify. It would be precisely the conspicuous absence of the Virgin’s own explanation that would lead to the collapse of the “official” version of the Secret.

An Ecclesiastical Fixer

The thoughtful reader will ask himself the question Father Gruner posed publicly from the moment Cardinal Sodano took “command” of the vision’s publication and interpretation: As the Vatican Secretary of State is a mere Vatican functionary with no pastoral authority over the Church, by what right was Sodano “interpreting” the vision in the first place? The answer to that question lies in the ascendancy of the Vatican Secretary of State to the level of a veritable “prime minister” of the Church in keeping with the radical restructuring of the Roman Curia carried out by Cardinal Villot after Vatican II.³

The Secretary of State’s “Party Line” on Fatima—that “Fatima is finished”—would now extend to the Third Secret. Just as the Secretary of State had put out the order to propagate the fiction that the Consecration of Russia was accomplished in 1984 (a development noted in Chapter 10), orchestrating the concomitant persecution of Father

² Vatican Information Service (VIS), May 13, 2000. (Emphasis added.)

³ For a detailed discussion of this development see *The Devil’s Final Battle*, Chapter 8 (also at http://www.devilsfinalbattle.com/book/BookChaptPDF/dfb_chapter8.pdf).

Gruner, so had he arrogated to himself the “interpretation” of the vision published in 2000. Here we see how the post-Vatican II Secretary of State has acted as a kind of ecclesiastical politician, subordinating spiritual matters to the requirements of the “new orientation” of the Church and the “opening to the world” after the Council, including the policy of *Ostpolitik*.

No one was better suited to the blunt pragmatism required for the job than Cardinal Sodano, an ecclesiastical “fixer” skilled in the art of the cover-up. It was Sodano, in fact, who was instrumental in covering up the crimes of the infamous Marcial Maciel Degollado, head of the Legionaries of Christ, who molested boys, fathered children out of wedlock, abused drugs, and engaged in financial improprieties throughout his long career as an immensely successful ecclesiastical entrepreneur. As *America* magazine has observed: “The key Vatican figure in protecting Maciel in the 1980s and 1990s was Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the all-powerful secretary of state [sic] under John Paul II and now Dean of the College of Cardinals.”⁴ All-powerful indeed—so powerful that he took control of the Message of Fatima, although, as we shall see, Providence has confounded his attempt to neutralize it. The respected Catholic pro-life website Lifesitenews.com summarized the evidence of Sodano’s complicity in the Maciel scandal, as documented in an exposé in *National Catholic Reporter*:

Maciel developed a close relationship with Angelo Sodano, who served as Pope John Paul’s Secretary of State, effectively the Vatican’s Prime Minister, from 1991 to 2006... The Legion hired Sodano’s nephew as consultant when they built their flagship institution, Regina Apostolorum University in Rome.... [M]uch later, efforts to reveal Maciel’s machinations and sexual improprieties were actively blocked by “pressure from Maciel’s chief supporter, Cardinal Angelo Sodano.” Berry reports that after nine former members of the Legion who claimed to have been sexually abused by Maciel filed a canonical case against the founder with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1998, Sodano “pressured” Cardinal Ratzinger to halt the proceedings.⁵

By late 2004, however, the future Pope Benedict XVI would put an end to the scandal. After a Vatican ceremony in November 2004 during which John Paul II honored Maciel, “Ratzinger broke with Sodano and ordered a canon lawyer on his staff, Msgr. Charles Scicluna, to investigate. Two years later, as Pope Benedict, he approved the order that Maciel abandon ministry for a ‘life of penitence and prayer.’”⁶ Maciel died shortly thereafter. Despite his deep involvement in the Maciel scandal, Sodano left office without consequences in 2006 to be succeeded by Cardinal Bertone, becoming Dean of the College of Cardinals. The journal *First Things* rightly observed that “Cardinal Sodano has to go. The Dean of the College of Cardinals [is]... an ongoing embarrassment to the Church he serves.”⁷

⁴ Austen Ivereigh, “Will Sodano Resign Over Maciel?”, *America*, April 13, 2010, http://www.americamagazine.org/blog/entry.cfm?entry_id=2749.

⁵ Hilary White, “Sodano’s ‘Head Should Roll’: Report Reveals Close Ties Between Vatican Cardinal and Disgraced Legion,” Lifesitenews.com, April 14, 2010, <http://www.lifesitenews.com/news/archive/ldn/2010/apr/1004140>.

⁶ Jason Berry, “Money paved way for Maciel’s influence in the Vatican,” *National Catholic Reporter*, April 26, 2010, <http://ncronline.org/news/accountability/money-paved-way-maciels-influence-vatican?page=2>.

⁷ Joseph Bottum, “The Cost of Maciel,” *First Things*, May 12, 2010, www.firstthings.com/onthesquare/2010/05/the-cost-of-father-maciel.

Yet in the year 2000, Sodano was still firmly in command of what could be called Operation Neutralize Fatima. Hence it was his patently untenable “interpretation” of the vision that controlled the press conference of June 26 at which the vision was published to the world *sans* any explanation by Our Lady. Then Cardinal Ratzinger, serving as head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), provided a theological commentary on the vision in *The Message of Fatima (TMF)*, the booklet published along with the vision. In *TMF* Ratzinger adhered slavishly to Sodano’s twisted interpretation, even as he called it a mere “attempt” to make sense of the vision without the Virgin’s crucial assistance:

Before attempting an interpretation, the main lines of which can be found in the statement read by *Cardinal Sodano* on 13 May of this year ...⁸

For this reason the figurative language of the vision is symbolic. In this regard *Cardinal Sodano* stated ...⁹

As is clear from the documentation presented here, the interpretation offered by *Cardinal Sodano*, in his statement on 13 May...¹⁰

First of all we must affirm *with Cardinal Sodano*...¹¹

Cardinal Ratzinger likewise followed Sodano in pronouncing the Third Secret a thing of the past:

A careful reading of the text of the so-called third ‘secret’ of Fatima, published here in its entirety long after the fact and by decision of the Holy Father, will probably prove disappointing or surprising after all the speculation it has stirred. No great mystery is revealed; nor is the future unveiled. We see the Church of the martyrs of the century which has just passed represented in a scene described in a language which is symbolic and not easy to decipher.

We must affirm with Cardinal Sodano that the events to which the third part of the ‘secret’ of Fatima refers now seem part of the past. Insofar as individual events are described, *they belong to the past*.¹²

For Father Gruner, and for Catholics the world over, these affirmations were impossible to accept. For if the vision reveals “no great mystery” and concerns only 20th century events, there would have been no reason to keep it under lock and key at the Vatican since 1957, or to declare in 1960 that it would be kept “forever under absolute seal.” Nor would there have been any reason for Cardinal Ratzinger to have stated in 1984 that the Secret speaks of “dangers threatening the faith and the life of the Christian and therefore of the world.”

⁸ *TMF*, p. 32. (Emphasis added.)

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 38. (Emphasis added.)

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 39. (Emphasis added.)

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 42. (Emphasis added.)

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 32, 42. (Emphasis added.)

Chapter 24

Something Is Missing

Whereas before 2000 a primary focus of Father Gruner’s apostolate had been achieving the Consecration of Russia, after the press conference of June 26 the apostolate’s related initiative respecting disclosure of the Third Secret acquired a new urgency. For the Vatican apparatus had clearly not only withheld a crucial part of the Secret—the Blessed Virgin’s very explanation of the significance of the vision—but was also claiming its disclosure had been whole and entire, and that the matter of the Secret had been laid to rest. Given the very nature of the Secret as a dire warning for the Church and the world, the risk entailed in this deception could not be ignored. Hence, in the aftermath of the press conference, the apostolate pursued the question of the Third Secret with a new and tighter focus. The focus now would be on the missing companion text that must contain the “*words*” of the Virgin to which the Vatican itself had alluded in the 1960 press release announcing that the *words* of Our Lady in the Third Secret would not be revealed, as the world was expecting, but rather most likely kept “forever under absolute seal.”

Here it is crucially important to bear in mind that Sodano’s “interpretation” of the vision was said to be necessary only because, as Cardinal Ratzinger had stated in his commentary, the vision is “not easy to decipher.” It could hardly be the case that in 1917 the Blessed Virgin had appeared on earth to deliver a cipher that would have to be deciphered in 2000 by—of all people, Cardinal Sodano—the Vatican Secretary of State. This was, after all, the same Vatican functionary who was at that very moment engaged in covering up the crimes of Father Maciel. The idea that Sodano was the appointed oracle of Fatima for the Church and the world was preposterous on its face.

Hence Father Gruner’s conflict with the Secretariat of State expanded to a new front: unearthing the suppressed text of the Secret that accompanies the vision and provides its definitive interpretation. By the date of the press conference in 2000 members of the faithful throughout the world, thanks largely to the efforts of the Fatima Center, were already aware of a vast body of evidence, much of it provided by direct witnesses to the content of the Secret, pointing to the existence of a text that must have been withheld by the Vatican.

A full review of the evidence, presented fully in other sources,¹³ is beyond the scope of this essentially biographical work. Suffice it to note here some keynotes concerning the elements of the Third Secret clearly not present in the vision alone:

- something so terrible that Sister Lucia could not commit it to paper without a direct order from her bishop in October 1943 and then a direct intervention of the Virgin Mary on January 2, 1944;
- *two parts*, one of which contains the words of the Virgin that are the “logical continuation” of Her statement “In Portugal, the dogma of the Faith will always

¹³ For a detailed exposition and sourcing of the evidence on this score, cf. Christopher A. Ferrara, *The Secret Still Hidden* (New York: Good Counsel Publications, 2009), Chapters 2-3.

be preserved etc.” (source: Father Joseph Schweigl in 1952);

- a single page of some 25 lines of text (sources: Bishop Venancio [1959] and Cardinal Ottaviani [1967]);
- a text in the form of a letter to the Bishop of Leiria-Fatima in a sealed envelope (sources: Sister Lucia, Bishop da Silva, Father Jongen [1946] and the 1960 Vatican press release);
- a text that was lodged in the papal apartment during the pontificates of Pius XII, John XXIII and Paul VI (sources: Sister Pasqualina; Robert Serrou [1958]; Father Caillon; Archbishop Capovilla [2006], a still-living eyewitness);
- a text that contains difficult expressions Pope John could not read without a written translation prepared by a Portuguese native in 1959, unlike the text he read in 1960, which he understood without need of translation (source: Archbishop Capovilla);
- a text whose prophecy would become clear in 1960, by which time Vatican II (which would have a disastrous aftermath) had been announced (source: Sister Lucia);
- a “divine warning” about “suicidal” alterations in the liturgy, theology and soul of the Church (source: the future Pius XII in 1931);
- a prediction that after 1960 “the devil will succeed in leaving the souls of the faithful abandoned by their leaders,” by causing “religious and priests [to] fall away from their beautiful vocation... drag[ging] numerous souls to hell,” and that “nations will disappear from the face of the earth” (source: Sister Lucia to Father Fuentes in 1957);
- contents “so delicate” that they cannot be allowed “for whatever reason, even fortuitous, to fall into alien hands” (source: Cardinal Ottaviani in 1967);
- a text “diplomatically” withheld because of the “seriousness of its contents” and which predicts, *after 1980*, “great trials” and “tribulation” for the Church which “it is no longer possible to avert” and the destruction of “whole areas of the earth” so that “from one moment to the next millions of people will perish” (source: John Paul II at Fulda, 1980);
- details that could be “badly interpreted” (source: John Paul II in 1982);
- a “religious prophecy” of “dangers threatening the faith and the life of the Christian and therefore of the world” (source: Cardinal Ratzinger in 1984);
- matters which would make for the “sensationalistic utilization of its contents” (source: Cardinal Ratzinger in 1985);
- a prediction of apostasy in the Church that “begins at the top” (source: Cardinal Ciappi in 1995);
- “details” that would cause “disequilibrium” in the Church (source: Cardinal Ratzinger in 1996);
- a warning of a material chastisement of the world which accompanies the great apostasy in the Church, like that predicted in the approved apparition of Our Lady of Akita in 1973, whose message is “essentially the same” as the

message of Our Lady of Fatima (source: Cardinal Ratzinger to Howard Dee, as reported in 1998);

- a warning to avoid the “tail of the dragon” (the devil) referred to in the Book of the Apocalypse (12:3-4), which sweeps one-third of “the stars” (priests, bishops, cardinals and other consecrated souls) from Heaven and cast them to the earth (source: John Paul II on May 13, 2000).¹⁴

The published vision, standing alone, did not involve a single one of these elements. There could be no other reasonable conclusion: something was missing.

Besides the details provided by various witnesses and numerous other evidentiary facts indicating the existence of a companion text,¹⁵ the vision’s ambiguity and the conspicuous lack of any explanation by the Virgin led Catholics around the world to conclude that there must be a companion text still hidden in the Vatican. Doubting questions immediately abounded, and Father Gruner led the way in posing them:

- Where are the *words* of the Virgin which are the “logical continuation” of Her statement “In Portugal, the dogma of the Faith will always be preserved etc.,” as Father Schweigl revealed?
- What is so terrible about this ambiguous vision that Sister Lucia could not commit it to paper without a direct intervention of the Virgin Mary?
- Where is the letter to the Bishop of Fatima, comprising some 25 lines of text?
- Given that *TMF* stated that the text of the vision had been kept in the Holy Office archives,¹⁶ where is the text that a living witness said was kept in the papal apartment under the Pope’s personal custody during the reigns of Pius XII, John XXIII and Paul VI?
- Why is the vision devoid of any reference to a crisis of faith in the Church and dramatic consequences for the world, alluded to by a train of witnesses who had either read the Secret or had indirect knowledge of it?
- Why is the text of the vision 62 lines when Cardinal Ottaviani spoke of a text of only 25 lines?
- What of the testimony of various witnesses concerning the location, paper size, and date of delivery of the text to the Vatican, which did not at all correspond to the “official” account, thus indicating the existence of another text that accompanies and explains the vision?¹⁷

The Secret’s Connection to 1960

Moreover, as Father Gruner was quick to note, on its face the vision has absolutely nothing to do with 1960, the year the Secret was supposed to be revealed because it would be “more clear” then. Evidently in recognition of this problem, then Archbishop Bertone had claimed in *TMF* that during an unrecorded “conversation” with Sister Lucia at Coimbra on April 27, 2000, weeks before the press conference, she allegedly told him that the Virgin *had never said anything* about 1960:

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ See also, enumeration of facts set forth in Table 10, *The Devil’s Final Battle*, Ch. 13 (also at http://www.devilsfinalbattle.com/book/BookChaptPDF/dfb_chapter13.pdf).

¹⁶ *The Message of Fatima [TMF]*, p. 5.

¹⁷ Cf. *The Devil’s Final Battle*, Chapter 13, for the pertinent facts.

Before giving the sealed envelope containing the third part of the “secret” to the then Bishop of Leiria-Fatima, Sister Lucia wrote on the outside envelope that it could be opened only after 1960, either by the Patriarch of Lisbon or the Bishop of Leiria. Archbishop Bertone therefore asked: “Why only after 1960? Was it Our Lady who fixed that date?” Sister Lucia replied: “*It was not Our Lady*. I fixed the date because I had the intuition that before 1960 it would not be understood, but that only later would it be understood...”¹⁸

Tellingly, *TMF* failed to mention that on the envelope Sister Lucia had written: “*By express order of Our Lady*, this envelope can be opened only in 1960...” Nor did any of the presentations at the June 26, 2000 press conference or the text of *TMF* include a copy of the envelope as supporting documentation. We will see that in 2007 Cardinal Bertone, Cardinal Sodano’s successor in office, would finally reveal the envelope—or rather, *two* such envelopes bearing the same express order of the Virgin respecting 1960. But during the June 2000 press conference, then Archbishop Bertone (serving at that time as Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) had the temerity to claim that Lucia declared to him in private weeks earlier: “*It was not Our Lady*. I fixed the date!” We say temerity, because the future Secretary of State knew then that his representation was flatly contradicted by what Lucia had written on the two envelopes he had chosen not to reveal at that time.

Father Gruner did not miss the significance of what Bertone was claiming here: Either Sister Lucia had lied about this crucial matter throughout her life, which was inconceivable, or the words attributed to her by Bertone were not hers, and thus it was Bertone who was the liar! Here, in and of itself, was reason to doubt the entire “official” account of the Third Secret.

The Telltale “etc”

Father Gruner’s publications after the June 2000 press conference focused intensely on the famous “etc” in Sister Lucia’s Fourth Memoir. According to Father Schweigl’s testimony, noted above, the Third Secret includes the “logical continuation” of the Virgin’s discourse following the phrase that ends with Sister Lucia’s “etc”—“In Portugal, the dogma of the Faith will always be preserved etc.” In fact, the attention of Fatima scholars had always been focused on the “etc” as the very key to the Secret, as it was obvious that the Virgin’s words to the seers had not trailed off in the middle of a thought.

Yet, in a maneuver that undermined all confidence in the official account, *TMF* had evaded any discussion of the “etc” by taking the text of the Message of Fatima from Sister Lucia’s *Third* Memoir, wherein Our Lady’s prophecy concerning Portugal is not recorded, rather than the more complete Fourth Memoir, where the prophecy is recorded in full. The conspicuous avoidance of the Fourth Memoir could only further engender suspicion. Why rely on the Third Memoir when the more complete Fourth Memoir was available? In his Introduction to *TMF* Bertone attempted to explain this curious behavior: “For the account of the first two parts of the ‘secret’, which have already been published and are therefore known, we have chosen the text written by Sister Lucia in the Third Memoir of 31 August 1941; some *annotations* were added in the Fourth Memoir of 8 December 1941.”¹⁹ Tellingly, Bertone’s Introduction did not

¹⁸ *TMF*, p. 29.

¹⁹ *TMF*, p. 3.

specify what is contained in these “annotations,” which is none other than the very phrase of the Virgin he had to know was at the heart of the entire controversy.

According to Bertone, then, the only difference between the Third and Fourth memoirs was “some annotations” by Lucia, the suggestion being that no one should think it amiss that the Vatican had ignored mere “annotations.” The suggestion was less than honest, for the reference to the preservation of dogma in Portugal was a *direct quotation of the Blessed Virgin* (“In Portugal the dogma of the Faith will always be preserved etc.”), immediately after which She Herself had said: “Tell *this* to no one. Yes, you may tell Francisco.” Yet Bertone and his collaborators, acting according to the imperatives of Operation Neutralize Fatima, had dared to mischaracterize the very words of the Mother of God as Lucia’s personal “annotations” and then bury those precious words in a footnote that *TMF* never mentions again.²⁰

A Telling Discrepancy

Bertone’s Introduction to *TMF* contained another point that, as Father Gruner would show, had decisive importance in the Third Secret controversy. According to Bertone, John Paul II did not read the Third Secret until July 18, 1981, a full three years into his papacy, when the text of the Secret was taken from the Holy Office archives and brought to him at Gemelli Hospital, where the Pope was recovering from the assassination attempt.²¹ But according to papal spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls, as reported by *The Washington Post*, John Paul II read the Third Secret in 1978, within days of his election.²² There is no record, however, of any text of the Secret being brought to John Paul from the Holy Office archives in that year.

Thus, whatever text John Paul read in 1978 must have been located elsewhere—evidently in the papal apartment, as attested by the witnesses and photographs already cited. It is highly significant that *neither Navarro-Valls nor the Pope ever denied the report that the Pope had read the Secret in 1978*, even though (with explosive implications) that report flatly contradicted Bertone’s representations to the press.²³ It could hardly have been the case that John Paul II, the very “Pope of Fatima”, would have waited for three years after his election to read the Secret. This major discrepancy between the accounts of Bertone and Navarro-Valls in itself indicated the existence of two distinct but related texts comprising the entire Secret.²⁴

Dispensing with the Consecration of Russia

Leaving no aspect of the Fatima Message unburied, Bertone’s Introduction to *TMF* purported to enlist Sister Lucia for the proposition that Pope John Paul II’s consecration of the world in 1984 had sufficed for a Consecration of Russia: “Sister Lucia personally

²⁰ *TMF*, p. 15. The footnote reads: “In the ‘Fourth Memoir’ Sister Lucia adds: ‘In Portugal, the dogma of the faith will always be preserved etc....’”

²¹ *TMF*, p. 5.

²² Bill Broadway and Sarah Delancy, “3rd Secret Spurs More Questions; Fatima Interpretation Departs From Vision,” *The Washington Post*, July 1, 2000: “On May 13, Vatican Spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls said the Pope first read the secret within days of assuming the papacy in 1978. On Monday, an aide to Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger [Bertone], Prefect of the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, said that the Pope first saw it in the hospital after his attack.”

²³ The Associated Press, “Vatican: Fatima Is No Domsday Prophecy,” *The New York Times*, June 26, 2000: “John Paul II read for the first time the text of the Third Secret of Fatima after the attack,” a top aide to Ratzinger, Monsignor Tarcisio Bertone, told journalists during a news conference to present the document.”

²⁴ Cf. *The Devil’s Final Battle*, Chapter 13, “The Third Secret Consists of Two Distinct Texts,” for further explanation.

confirmed that this solemn and universal act of consecration corresponded to what Our Lady wished.... Hence any further discussion or request [for the Consecration of Russia] is without basis.”²⁵ But how could Sister Lucia “confirm” that the same sort of ceremony that did not suffice during the reigns of Pius XII and Paul VI—a consecration of the world with no mention of Russia and no participation by the world episcopate—had suddenly become sufficient?²⁶

Curiously, Bertone cited only one solitary piece of evidence in support of his claim: a purported letter from Sister Lucia, identified only as “Letter of 8 November 1989,” in which she is alleged to have written: “Yes it has been done just as Our Lady asked, on 25 March 1984” (“*Sim, está feita, tal como Nossa Senhora a pediu, desde o dia 25 de Março de 1984*”).²⁷ Even more curious: the addressee of the letter is not identified and no copy of it was provided as supporting documentation, even though other documents are reproduced in *TMF*’s appendices.

The purported letter, generated by a computer at the dawn of the personal computer age, contained a blatant error: a statement by “Lucia” that Paul VI had consecrated the world to the Immaculate Heart during his visit to Fatima in 1967, when in fact he had consecrated nothing at all. Lucia, who was present throughout the Pope’s visit, would hardly have made such a mistake. Nor was it credible that an elderly cloistered nun, who had written thousands of letters by hand over her lifetime, would suddenly switch to a word processor at age 80 to peck out a one-page note to a Mr. Noelker, especially when even many business offices in Portugal were without personal computers at that time.²⁸

Still more curious: the dubious “letter of 8 November 1989” was the only evidence Bertone cited even though, as *TMF* states, Bertone had “conversed” with Sister Lucia on April 27, 2000, only two months earlier, and could have obtained her direct testimony on this question at that time—or indeed at any other time. The failure to cite any direct testimony by Lucia, when such testimony was readily obtainable, spoke volumes. And note well: During the April 2000 “conversation” Bertone *did not ask Sister Lucia to authenticate the “Letter of 8 November 1989”* even though Bertone had to have known of the worldwide circulation of articles by Father Gruner’s apostolate decisively debunking the letter.²⁹ The only reasonable inference was that Lucia had not been asked to authenticate the letter because it was indeed a fake that could not be authenticated.

To knowledgeable Catholics, it was not surprising that Bertone had been forced

²⁵ *TMF*, p. 8.

²⁶ Concerning the consecration of the world by Pius XII and several bishops on October 31, 1942, Sister Lucia wrote: “The Good Lord has already shown me His contentment with the act performed by the Holy Father and several bishops, *although it was incomplete according to His desire*. In return He promises to end the war soon. The conversion of Russia is not for now.” Letter to the Bishop of Gurza, February 28, 1943; quoted in *The Whole Truth About Fatima*, Vol. III, pp. 60-61.

²⁷ *TMF*, p. 8.

²⁸ Flatly contradicting himself, Bertone would admit seven years later that Sister Lucia “never worked with the computer.” See *The Last Visionary of Fatima*, p. 101. (“Sister Lucia never worked with the computer, nor visited any website.”) This is one of the many self-contradictions in which the Cardinal has embroiled himself, as Socci has noted.

²⁹ This letter was published and critiqued on pp. 10-11 of the May 1990 (No. 229) issue of *The Catholic Counter-Reformation* (CRC, English edition, published by Maison Saint-Joseph, F-10260 Saint-Parres-lès-Vaudes). This critique was explicitly referenced in *The Fatima Crusader*, No. 35 (Winter 1990-91), with a circulation of some 500,000 copies, in a story debunking the Noelker letter (on pp. 12ff, or at www.fatimacrusader.com/cr35/cr35pg12.asp).

to rely *entirely* on a non-authenticated and previously publicly debunked 11-year-old “letter” to an unidentified addressee. That purported letter was the only thing Bertone could pit against a lifetime of contrary testimony by Sister Lucia, which had been surveyed exhaustively in the Fatima Center’s publications.³⁰ Here it should be noted that when John Paul II journeyed to Fatima in 1991, Lucia was ordered to attend an audience with him (although she was disinclined to do so). At no time during or after the encounter between the Pope and the visionary did either of them suggest that Russia had been consecrated seven years earlier.

Also noteworthy was the conspicuous absence of Lucia at the June 26, 2000 press conference. Was it feared that she would make some devastating revelation or refuse, if queried by the press, to confirm the “official account”? Such fears concerning the survivability of the Secretary of State’s version of the Third Secret would be confirmed as the “official account” almost immediately began to unravel.



Huge 26 foot by 13 foot poster in the busiest mall in Rome – positioned at the elevator bank so more than 2 million people saw it in April and May 2011. The poster says: “Only the Pope can save Rome! By means of a special prayer of only 5 minutes.”

³⁰ For a detailed presentation of Lucia’s testimony from 1946-1987—and even after 1987 her testimony by her silence, when she met John Paul II in 1991, speaks volumes—see *The Devil’s Final Battle*, Chapter 8 (also at http://www.devilsfinalbattle.com/book/BookChaptPDF/dfb_chapter8.pdf). It is also worth noting that if Sr. Lucia had really changed her mind, the perfect time to announce her agreement that Russia had been consecrated in 1984 would have been immediately after her private meeting with John Paul II in 1991 at Fatima. But, after this audience, neither Sr. Lucia nor the Pope had a word to say about the adequacy of the 1984 ceremony, although Sr. Lucia had previously declared publicly that it was *not* adequate.

Chapter 25

The Cover-Up Exposed

By the year 2001 the “worried signals” from the Vatican Secretary of State that had inaugurated the long persecution of Father Gruner by elements of the Vatican apparatus seemed to have lost much of their power to interfere with Father Gruner’s legitimate canonical status and the Fatima Center’s activities. The Vatican’s response to Archbishop Arulappa’s resounding affirmation in 1999 of his incardination of Father Gruner in the Archdiocese of Hyderabad in 1995 was met with an equally resounding silence.

To be sure, the Secretary of State made further efforts to continue the persecution. Chief among these was its intervention against a Fatima conference held in Rome by the Fatima Center from October 7-13, 2001, a month after the infamous terrorist attack in New York City on September 11. Although invitations to the conference extended to bishops had been signed by two bishops, a monsignor and four priests—not Father Gruner—the Secretary of State attempted to scuttle the event by publishing in *L’Osservatore Romano* on September 12, 2001—the day after the terrorist attack—an unprecedented unsigned “announcement” concerning Father Gruner and the conference:

The Holy See has received several news reports concerning the so-called Conference for Peace in the World, which is being planned for Rome for October 7 to 13 and which has been organized by Fr. Nicholas Gruner of Canada. The Congregation for the Clergy, upon the mandate from a higher authority, wishes to state that Rev. Nicholas Gruner is under an “a divinis” suspension, which has been confirmed by a definitive sentence of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura. The activities of Fr. Gruner, therefore, including the above-mentioned conference, do not have the approval of legitimate ecclesiastical authorities.

The canonically meaningless “announcement” was easily disposed of, however. For one thing, it failed to state any grounds for the alleged “a divinis” suspension—because there were none. It is crucial to note that *no one in the Vatican had purported to suspend Father Gruner*, and that the “suspension” was not attributed to anyone else. Who, then, had supposedly imposed it? While the Bishop of Avellino, under pressure from the Secretary of State, had indeed threatened Father Gruner with suspension “failing to be incardinated” elsewhere—after the Secretary of State himself had attempted to block incardination—*no decree of suspension had ever been promulgated*. At any rate, the issue had become moot in view of the incardination in Hyderabad.

Further, the “announcement” referred to a “higher authority” as its anonymous source, which is Vatican-speak for the Secretary of State. But the Secretary of State had no authority to suspend a priest, and his attempt to block the incardination in Hyderabad had failed. The alleged “suspension a divinis” rested, therefore, on thin air. It was a canonical sham designed to discredit Father Gruner and his work.

Finally, contrary to what the “announcement” falsely implied, neither the Fatima

conference in Rome, nor any of the other activities of the Fatima Center's apostolate, required "the approval of legitimate ecclesiastical authorities" which the "announcement" falsely implied were necessary. Here, too, the "announcement" was a canonical sham. As the Code of Canon Law provides, members of the faithful, including priests, do not need approval by "ecclesiastical authority" to hold conferences or form private associations for the purpose of communicating with each other and with the sacred pastors on matters of concern in the Church.³¹

A changing landscape

The Catholic author Mark Fellows has aptly likened the Message of Fatima in general, and the Third Secret in particular, to a cork that keeps bobbing to the surface of the ocean despite every effort to sink it. No press conference at the Vatican could make Fatima go away. Quite simply, the faithful were not persuaded that Fatima was finished. Less than a year after the June 26, 2000 press conference, the worldwide incredulity of the faithful was given voice by Mother Angelica, foundress of the Eternal Word Television Network, who declared to a television audience of millions:

As for the Secret, well *I happen to be one of those individuals who thinks we didn't get the whole thing*. I told ya! I mean, you have the right to your own opinion, don't you, Father? There, you know, that's my opinion. *Because I think it's scary...*³²

On October 26, 2001, a few weeks after 9-11 and the apostolate's 2001 Fatima Conference in Rome, the story on the Third Secret "broke wide open", as reporters say, when *Inside the Vatican* news service (along with various Italian newspapers) ran an article entitled: "The Secret of Fatima: More to Come?" The article reported: "News has just emerged that Sister Lucia dos Santos, the last surviving Fatima visionary, several weeks ago sent Pope John Paul II a letter reportedly warning him that his life is in danger. *According to Vatican sources*, the letter, claiming that events spoken of in the 'Third Secret' of Fatima had not yet occurred, was delivered sometime after September 11 to John Paul by the bishop emeritus [retired] of Fatima, Alberto Cosme do Amaral."

This was a controversy that would not go away, despite the best efforts of the Secretary of State to consign the Third Secret to oblivion. And Father Gruner's work would be instrumental in keeping the controversy alive. Over the next four years his apostolate's astonishing output of books, magazines, news articles, videos, TV shows, website content and regularly staged Fatima conferences (including Portugal in 2006, Brazil in 2007 and India in 2008) would disseminate throughout the world a wealth of material on the true nature and content of the Fatima Message, the failure to consecrate Russia in the manner the Virgin had requested, and the probable contents of that part of the Third Secret yet to be revealed: the Virgin's own words explaining the meaning of a vision "not easy to decipher," as Cardinal Ratzinger had admitted in *TMF*.

On February 13, 2005, Sister Lucia passed on to her eternal reward at the age of 97, to be followed by Pope John Paul II on April 2. By the closing months of 2006 Archbishop Bertone had become Cardinal Bertone, successor to Cardinal Sodano as Vatican Secretary of State under Pope Benedict XVI. In a manner befitting the ecclesiastical politician he always was, Sodano "hunkered down in the apartment

³¹ Cfr. CIC (1983), Canons 212 §§ 2, 3: 215, 216, 299, 300.

³² "Mother Angelica Live," May 16, 2001.

and offices he occupied as former Secretary of State and [defied] the Pope to remove him,” threatening “that any attempt to remove him will be met by Sodano’s revelation of ‘where the bodies are hidden’ from the last ten years of John Paul II’s pontificate—meaning the many things that went terribly wrong on account of the Pope’s declining capacity during that period.”³³

As Bertone assumed his new office—forced to reside temporarily in Saint John’s Tower on account of Sodano’s refusal to relocate—the controversy over the Third Secret had not only failed to abate, it had reached a level of intensity it was now impossible for the Vatican to ignore. In November 2006 the appearance of a new book from a surprising source would shift to the Vatican a heavy new burden of proof concerning its “official” position that the Third Secret had been revealed in full.

A Remarkable Change of Mind

When he set out to write a book on the Third Secret affair, the Italian “public intellectual,” Antonio Socci, was at first determined to demolish the claim of the so-called “Fatimists” that the Vatican was holding something back. As he stated in the introduction to his ironically and provocatively entitled *The Fourth Secret of Fatima*,³⁴ Socci had viewed the claim as a mere “dietrology,” an Italian idiom for conspiracy theories that look behind (*dietro*) events for hidden plots. He was convinced that the vision of the bishop in white was all there was to the Third Secret, and that the “official account” presented in *TMF* had laid all questions to rest.

As Socci first believed, “Fatimist” literature on the Third Secret—much of which was produced and disseminated by Father Gruner’s apostolate—was merely the result of “the burning disappointment of a Third Secret that controverted all of their apocalyptic predictions.” The “Fatimists” had to be refuted, he thought, because the “polemical arms” in their arsenal were “at the disposal of whoever wanted to launch a heavy attack against the Vatican.”³⁵ But then Socci encountered unexpected strength in the “Fatimist” case presented by Father Gruner, which he had never studied closely. At the same time, his own suspicions were aroused when Cardinal Bertone declined to grant him an interview, despite their friendly relations and Socci’s intention to defend Bertone’s position. That refusal opened Socci’s eyes to the possibility “that there are embarrassing questions and that there is above all something (of gravity) to hide.”³⁶

As Socci explained: “In the end, I had to surrender.... Here I recount my voyage into the greatest mystery of the 20th century and set forth the result I honestly reached. A result that sincerely contradicts my initial convictions...”³⁷ In agreement with vast numbers of skeptical Catholics, Socci concluded that something must be missing: “[T]hat there is a part of the Secret not revealed and considered unspeakable *is certain*. And today—having decided to deny its existence—the Vatican runs the risk of exposing itself to very heavy pressure and blackmail.”³⁸

What completely changed Socci’s mind and made him “surrender” was simply

³³ Christopher A. Ferrara, “World Waits for Indult to Come and Sodano to Go,” *The Remnant*, March 5, 2007, http://www.remnantnewspaper.com/Archives/archive-2007-0215-news_from_rome.htm.

³⁴ Antonio Socci, *The Fourth Secret of Fatima* (Fitzwilliam, New Hampshire: Loreto Publications, 2009), English-language edition.

³⁵ *Fourth Secret*, pp. 12, 13.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

³⁸ Antonio Socci, *Il Quarto Segreto di Fatima* (Milano: Rai and Eri Rizzoli, 2007), p. 173.

this: overwhelming evidence, the greater part of which had been marshaled and presented by Father Gruner and the investigators and writers associated with the Fatima Center. *Fourth Secret* made numerous references to the definitive Fatima scholarship of Frère Michel de la Sainte Trinité and Father Joaquin Alonso, the one-time official Fatima archivist, as well as *The Devil's Final Battle* by Father Paul Kramer, an edited compilation of Fatima material, and also to the 2000 edition of this very book. These publications were mainstays of the Fatima Center catalogue that had been disseminated throughout the world in multiple languages, including Italian. It is fair to say that Socci's book is permeated with information and insights gleaned from the Fatima Center's publications.³⁹

Indeed, since the fateful Vatican press conference of 2000, the Center had been operating full blast despite the increasingly ineffectual efforts of the Secretary of State to interfere with its work. The Center's activities included international Fatima conferences attended by bishops and even cardinals as well as the laity. Each of these massive undertakings met with increasingly ineffective interference by the Secretary of State, as the following conference statistics would suggest:

- **2006 – “Last Chance for World Peace”** (October 6 – 13, 2006)
Locations: Tuy, Pontevedra and Rianjo, Spain; and Fatima, Portugal
Clerical attendees: 30 bishops, 74 priests and Cardinal Agre.
- **2007 – “Fatima: Only Way to World Peace”** (August 20 – 24, 2007)
Location: Botucatu, Brazil
Clerical attendees: 4 bishops, 160 priests
- **2008 – “The Only Way to World Peace”** (January 30 – February 5, 2008)
Location: Chennai, India
Clerical attendees: 4 bishops, 318 priests
- **2010 – “The Fatima Challenge”** (May 3 – 7, 2010)
Location: Rome, Italy
Clerical attendees: 9 bishops, 41 priests.
- **2011 – “Consecration Now!”** (May 9 – 13, 2011)
Location: Rome, Italy
Clerical attendees: 10 bishops, 41 priests and Cardinal Martino.
- **2012 – “Fatima: Your Last Chance”** (May 14 – 18, 2012)
Location: Rome, Italy
Clerical attendees: 3 Archbishops, 14 bishops, 61 priests, Cardinal Martino and Archbishop Capucci from Palestine.

In addition to these major initiatives were two full-fledged documentary films, *Heaven's Key to Peace* (2004) and *The Secret Still Silenced* (2008), and a continuous public relations campaign under the title “Target Rome” (October 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012). And, for the written record, the apostolate published worldwide a series of landmark books on the Fatima controversy, including this one: *The Devil's Final Battle* (2002 and 2010, 2nd edition), *Fatima in Twilight* (2003), *Sister Lucia: Apostle of Mary's Immaculate Heart* (2007), and *The Secret Still Hidden* (2008).

³⁹ See, e.g. *Fourth Secret*, pp. 19, 21, 23, 30, 46, 51, 65, 66, 68, 72, 75, 86, 89, 94, 101, 106, 111, 112, 113, 114, 116, 135, 138, 139, 140, 141, 143, 145, 146, 147, 149, 152, 154, 156, 159, 176, 178, 180, 181, 184, 185, 189, 190, 191, 193, 196, 198, 203, 205 (reference to *Fatima Priest*), 210.

Under Benedict XVI, who as Cardinal Ratzinger had described Father Gruner as “a serious man” (*un uomo serio*) during the 2000 press conference,⁴⁰ there appeared to have been a kind of tacit surrender within the Vatican bureaucracy to the reality that the Fatima Center had the right to exist and to propagate its message. It had become clear that Father Gruner’s work could not simply be snuffed out by meaningless bureaucratic dictates concerning completely unnecessary “canonical approval,” or by false and irrelevant depictions of Father Gruner’s canonical status.

The evidence the Center had made available to the world convinced Socci that the “dietrologies” of the “Fatimists”—i.e., loyal Catholics who have reasonable doubts about the official account—were actually correct: there must be a separate but related text of the Secret, not yet revealed, containing “the words of the Madonna [which] preannounce an apocalyptic crisis of the faith in the Church starting from the top.” This second text is probably “also an explanation of the vision (revealed on June 26, 2000) where there appear the Pope, the bishops and martyred faithful, after having traversed a city in ruins.”⁴¹ That explanation, wrote Socci, would involve “the preannounced assassination of a Pope [the white-clad bishop in the vision] in the context of an immense martyrdom of Christians and of a devastation of the world.”⁴² Only such an explanation would make sense of the “difficult to decipher” vision.

A Devastating Eyewitness

In addition to the body of evidence the Fatima Center had marshaled, Socci gave wide publicity to the newly adduced testimony of Archbishop Loris F. Capovilla, the still-living personal secretary of John XXIII. As Socci recounted, in July of 2006 Capovilla was interviewed by an Italian Fatima researcher, Solideo Paolini, concerning the existence of the posited second text of the Third Secret. During that interview Paolini asked the Archbishop whether there was an unpublished text of the Secret, and the Archbishop replied evasively: “I know nothing. (*Nulla so!*)” Note well: he did not answer simply “No!” That answer puzzled Paolini, who expected that the Archbishop, “among the few who know the Secret, would have been able to respond to me that this is a completely impracticable idea and that everything had already been revealed in 2000. Instead he answered: ‘I know nothing.’ An expression that I surmised he wished ironically to evoke a certain *omertá* [code of silence].”⁴³

Paolini’s impression was confirmed by subsequent events. After his meeting with Capovilla, Paolini received from Capovilla by mail a package of papers from his files, along with a perplexing cover letter advising him to obtain a copy of *TMF*, which Capovilla must have known that Paolini, a student of Fatima, would already possess. Was this not, thought Paolini, “an invitation to read something in particular in that publication in relation to the documents sent by the same Archbishop?” That intuition was correct. Among the documents Capovilla had sent was a stamped “confidential note” by him, dated May 17, 1967, in which he had recorded the circumstances of a reading of the Third Secret by Pope Paul VI on June 27, 1963, only six days after his election to the papacy and before he had even been seated officially at the coronation

⁴⁰ Archival tape-recording of remarks during Q&A session of the press conference of June 26, 2000.

⁴¹ *Fourth Secret*, p. 82.

⁴² *Fourth Secret*, pp. 63-64.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

Mass (which took place on June 29). But according to the Vatican's widely disbelieved "official account" in *TMF* and elsewhere, Paul VI did not read the Secret until nearly two years later: "Paul VI read the contents with the Substitute, Archbishop Angelo Dell'Acqua, on March 27, 1965, and returned the envelope to the Archives of the Holy Office, deciding not to publish the text."⁴⁴

The glaring discrepancy between the date recorded by Capovilla and that set forth in *TMF* prompted Paolini to telephone Capovilla, at precisely 7:45 p.m. on the same day he received the documents, to ask the Archbishop to explain the discrepancy. Capovilla protested: "Ah, but I spoke the truth. Look I am still lucid!" When Paolini politely insisted that, still, there was an unexplained discrepancy, Capovilla offered explanations that suggested "eventual lapse of memory, interpretations of what he had intended to say," whereupon Paolini reminded him that he had recorded the date of the reading by Paul VI in a stamped, official document. Capovilla then gave this reply: "But I am right, because perhaps *the Bertone envelope is not the same as the Capovilla envelope.*"

Stunned, Paolini then asked the decisive question: "Therefore, both dates are true, because there are two texts of the Third Secret?"⁴⁵ After a brief pause, the Archbishop gave the explosive answer that confirmed the existence of a missing envelope and text of the Third Secret of Fatima: "Exactly so! (*Per l'appunto!*)"⁴⁶

The "confidential note" completely corroborated Capovilla's testimony.⁴⁷ According to the note, on the date Pope Paul read the Secret (June 27, 1963), Monsignor Angelo Dell'Acqua—the same "Substitute" referred to in *TMF*—telephoned Capovilla to ask: "I am looking for the Fatima envelope. Do you know where it is kept?"⁴⁸ The note records that Capovilla replied: "It is in the right hand drawer of the writing desk called Barbarigo, *in the bedroom.*" That is, the envelope was in the former bedroom of John XXIII, which was now the bedroom of Paul VI; it was *not* in the Holy Office archives, where the text of the vision was lodged.

The existence of two different texts comprising the entirety of the Third Secret of Fatima—the text of the vision and the text in the papal writing desk—now stood confirmed beyond any conceivable doubt. And Socci had announced that fact to the entire Catholic world in a book that could not simply be dismissed as the feverish ranting of "Fatimists."

The Secretary of State Defaults to the "Fatimists"

The publication of Socci's stunning conclusions—a development directly attributable to the persistent work of Father Gruner's apostolate—forced the Secretary of State to engage in rather frantic efforts at damage control. Those efforts began in May 2007, when Rizzoli—the same publisher that had published Socci's *Fourth Secret*—rushed

⁴⁴ *Il Quarto Segreto di Fatima*, p. 141; and citing *TMF*, p. 15 (English print edition).

⁴⁵ It would appear that Paolini became acquainted with the thesis of two companion texts comprising the entire Third Secret in the work *The Devil's Final Battle*, a publication of the Fatima Center.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁴⁷ The Italian original and English translation of the stamped "confidential note," dated May 17, 1967, are reproduced in Appendix I of *The Secret Still Hidden*.

⁴⁸ Notice Dell'Acqua evidently presumed that the envelope was somewhere in the papal apartment, not in the Holy Office archives, of which Capovilla was not the custodian. Otherwise, Dell'Acqua would have asked the custodian of the archives, Cardinal Ottaviani, where the "Fatima envelope" was, rather than Capovilla, Pope John's former personal secretary.

into print a book by Cardinal Bertone entitled *L'Ultima Veggente di Fatima* ["The Last Visionary of Fatima"] (*Last Visionary*).⁴⁹

Last Visionary, appearing in bookstores less than six months after *Fourth Secret*, was essentially a 100-page interview of the Cardinal concerning various Fatima-related subjects, followed by another 50 pages of appendices. This mass of verbiage surrounded a mere nine pages of comment comprising a purported response to the claims of Socci, who was never mentioned by name, and the "Fatimists," including Father Gruner, whose name was specifically mentioned in the text. The interviewer was a layman, Giuseppe De Carli, a Vaticanist (reporter on the Vatican beat) and ardent admirer of the Cardinal, whose fawning questions not only posed no real challenge to Bertone's now-discredited "official version" of the Third Secret, but actually attempted to assist him in promoting what Socci had derisively described as "the official reconstruction." But *Last Visionary*, which never mentioned Socci or his book by name, utterly failed to address the substance of Socci's case. The eyewitness testimony of Archbishop Capovilla was simply ignored—a telling omission in a book that was supposed to have been an answer to Socci's explosive revelations.

On May 12, 2007, Socci published in his widely read Internet column this astonishing challenge to Bertone: "Dear Cardinal Bertone: Who—between you and me—is deliberately lying?"⁵⁰ Socci was responding to the Cardinal's veiled suggestion in *Last Visionary* (without mention of Socci's name) that Socci had misled the Catholic faithful in *Fourth Secret*. The significance of this public challenge to the credibility of the Vatican Secretary of State by one of Italy's most prominent laymen could not be overestimated; nor could Bertone afford to ignore it.

A Mountain of Evidence

By the time Socci's book was published, Cardinal Bertone, the new custodian of the Party Line, was facing a public relations crisis provoked by the same growing mountain of evidence that had changed Socci's mind and caused him to publish his breakthrough book affirming the existence of a hidden text of the Secret. We note here some of the key points developed by the sources Socci had studied, which had been cited by the Fatima Center and in Socci's independent work on the subject:

- Sister Lucia revealed that a text of the Secret is in the form of a letter to the Bishop of Fatima, but the text describing the vision is not a letter.
- Our Lady clearly had more to say following the momentous "etc," which clearly begins another, and thus the third, part of the Great Secret, but the text of the vision published by the Vatican as the entire text of the Third Secret contains not a word from Her.
- Our Lady explains everything in the vision contained in the first part of the Great Secret, but we are asked to believe that there is absolutely no explanation from Her concerning the vision in the third part—i.e., the Third Secret.
- Father Schweigl revealed that the Third Secret has two parts: one concerning the Pope, and the other "a logical continuation, of the words 'In Portugal the

⁴⁹ Bertone, Cardinal Tarcisio, *The Last Visionary of Fatima* (Milano: Rai and Eri Rizzoli, 2007). All English translations from this point on are Christopher A. Ferrara's.

⁵⁰ Article of May 12, 2007 in archive at <http://www.antoniosocci.it/Socci/index.cfm>; see English translation at <http://www.fatima.org/news/newsviews/052907socci.asp>.

dogma of the faith will always be preserved etc’,” but the text of the vision does not contain that logical continuation of the Virgin’s words.

- The Vatican-initiated press release from 1960, announcing suppression of the Secret, describes the suppressed text as “*the letter*” that “will never be opened,” containing “*the words* which Our Lady confided as a secret to the three little shepherds...”, but the text of the vision is not a letter and contains no words spoken by Our Lady, confided by Her as a secret.
- Cardinal Ottaviani, who read and had custody of the Secret, revealed that it involved a “sheet of paper” bearing 25 lines of text recording “what Our Lady *told her* [Lucia] to tell the Holy Father...”, but the vision spans 62 lines, and in it the Virgin does not tell Sister Lucia anything at all.
- A text of the Secret was kept in the papal apartment during the pontificates of Pius XII, John XXIII and Paul VI, and at least at the beginning of the pontificate of John Paul II, even though Bertone’s “official account” speaks only of a text in the Holy Office archives.
- John XXIII read a text of the Secret that was so difficult it required a native Portuguese speaker to provide an accurate translation into Italian, yet he also read another text pertaining to the Secret, in the following year, that he could comprehend perfectly without the aid of a translator.
- The text of the vision *contains no particularly difficult Portuguese expressions*.
- There are two different Italian translations of the Secret: the one prepared for John XXIII, and the one prepared in 1967, neither of which we have been allowed to see.
- Three different Popes (John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul II) read texts of the Secret on two different dates—years apart—during their respective pontificates, but all three of these second readings are mysteriously omitted from the “official account.”
- Those who have read the Secret have revealed that it speaks of a coming state of apostasy in the Church as well as a planetary crisis, but the vision standing alone says nothing of apostasy in the Church or of a planetary crisis.
- Cardinal Ratzinger revealed that the Third Secret refers to “dangers threatening the faith and the life of the Christian, and therefore of the world,” and further revealed a correspondence between the Message of Fatima and the Message of Akita, in which Our Lady, *in Her own words*, warns of a coming crisis in the Church accompanied by a fiery chastisement of the world. The text of the vision standing alone, however, contains no such warning from Our Lady.
- When pressed to explain in 2000 what text of the Secret John Paul II reportedly read in 1978, given that Bertone claimed John Paul did not read the Secret until 1981, Bertone was evasive and finally said merely that “in my opinion” John Paul did not read a text in 1978, when it would have been a simple matter to ascertain this from innumerable sources at his disposal, including the Pope himself—an omission clearly suggesting that Bertone knew the report was true.
- Archbishop Capovilla, personal secretary to John XXIII, confirmed to Solideo

Paolini the existence of two texts and two envelopes relating to the Third Secret, one envelope and text of which, bearing his (Capovilla's) handwriting on the outer envelope and kept in the papal apartment, had never been produced. The exterior of this "Capovilla envelope" contains his name and the names of others who had read its contents at the instruction of Pope John XXIII, as well as the Pope's dictation: "I give no judgment."

- Capovilla had never retracted his testimony to Paolini, even though he had had every opportunity to do so.
- Bertone, in the process of producing *Last Visionary*, had evidently not even asked Capovilla to retract what he had revealed to Paolini, or had sought a retraction but was refused.
- Bertone had failed and refused to produce the reopened and resealed Capovilla envelope.
- The Vatican had issued no official denial of the allegations in Socci's book, even though Socci had literally accused Bertone of covering up the very words of the Mother of God.
- On the contrary, Pope Benedict XVI had sent Socci a note "concerning my book, thanking me for 'the sentiments which have suggested it,'" without the slightest indication that the book is in error.⁵¹

A Televised Disaster

With his "official version" still in ruins even after publication of *Last Visionary*, which had effectively conceded Socci's entire case for a cover-up by ignoring it, Bertone was reduced to the unprecedented step of appearing on the Italian talk show *Porta a Porta* ["Door to Door"] on May 31, 2007. The show was entitled "The Fourth Secret of Fatima Does Not Exist"—a clear reference to the title of Socci's book. Socci, most tellingly, was not invited to defend himself. Yet, although the field had been left open for Bertone to kick a goal into an undefended net, he fumbled the setup completely, not only failing to refute Socci but providing further devastating admissions and revelations, as Father Gruner's apostolate noted in its publications.⁵²

This was the risk Bertone had no choice but to take, however, for had he remained silent in the face of Socci's book, he would have conceded the existence of a cover-up and his own complicity in it. On the other hand, if he made this unprecedented appearance on television, there was the potential for further slip-ups and inadvertent revelations. And that is exactly what ensued. The details of this televised disaster for Bertone's account are set forth elsewhere.⁵³ Here, a summary of key points will have to suffice:

- During the telecast Bertone, under mounting public pressure, finally revealed on camera that there are actually *two* identical sealed envelopes of Lucia's, bearing the "express order of Our Lady" that the contents were not to be

⁵¹ An exhaustive discussion of these and other points of evidence is to be found in Christopher Ferrara's *The Secret Still Hidden* (Pound Ridge, New York: Good Counsel Publications, 2008). Cf. Chapters 3-10 (also at <http://www.secretstillhidden.com/book.html>).

⁵² See, e.g. *The Secret Still Hidden*, Chapter 8, for a detailed analysis of Cardinal Bertone's disastrous appearance (also at <http://www.secretstillhidden.com/pdf/ensshch8.pdf>).

⁵³ Ibid.

revealed until 1960. Yet Bertone had been representing for the past seven years that there was only one envelope, and moreover had propagated the blatant falsehood that Lucia “confessed” she had never received any order from the Virgin linking the Secret to 1960 and forbidding its disclosure until then.

- Thus Bertone had been caught in two demonstrable falsehoods: that there was only one sealed envelope of Lucia’s pertaining to the Third Secret, and that the Blessed Virgin had never connected the Secret to the year 1960. Even more devastating, both falsehoods had been exposed *by the very evidence Bertone himself displayed on camera*, although he acted as if he did not appreciate the significance of his own revelation.
- Bertone further revealed a *third* envelope of Lucia’s, unsealed and addressed to Bishop da Silva, which, together with the bishop’s outer envelope, would make a total of *four* envelopes the faithful were supposed to believe had all been created for only one text of the Secret. Clearly, however, the proper configuration of the four envelopes was an inner sealed envelope and an outer unsealed envelope for each of two texts: the text of the vision published in 2000 and the text of the Virgin’s explanation of the vision’s meaning, which has yet to be revealed.
- The “official account” was further undermined by a historical fact that took on great significance after the revelations on *Porta a Porta*: When he held up Bishop da Silva’s outer envelope to a bright light, auxiliary Bishop Venâncio saw only *one* envelope inside, and took exact measurements of both the envelope and the single sheet of paper within it, which contained 20-25 lines of text, just as Cardinal Ottaviani testified.
- The measurements of the envelope and the sheet of paper taken by Bishop Venâncio are entirely different from the measurements of the envelope and the sheet of paper revealed by Bertone on *Porta a Porta*.
- Only weeks before his appearance on *Porta a Porta*, Bertone himself had revealed in *Last Visionary* that in April 2000 Sister Lucia “authenticated” *sheets* of paper pertaining to the Secret. But during the *Porta a Porta* telecast Bertone revealed only *one* sheet, folded to make four sides, which contained the text of the vision.
- In *Last Visionary* Bertone had also revealed that there was an outer envelope, not Lucia’s, bearing the note “Third Part of the Secret,” but this envelope was not produced during the appearance on *Porta a Porta* nor has it been seen since then.
- During the telecast Bertone admitted that Cardinal Ottaviani had indeed testified “categorically” (“*categoricamente*”) to the existence of a text of the Secret spanning only one page and 25 lines, whereas the text of the vision displayed on camera spanned four pages—four sides of a folded-over sheet of paper—and 62 lines. After a commercial break, Bertone offered the lame explanation that Ottaviani had somehow miscounted the 62 lines of the vision to arrive at 25 lines.
- Confronted with mounting evidence of a cover-up, Bertone adopted on *Porta a Porta* the new line of referring repeatedly to an “authentic” text of the

Secret, an “authentic” envelope, and the “only folio that exists in the Holy Office archives,” when he knew full well that there was a text and envelope in the papal apartment, thus suggesting, as Socci would note,⁵⁴ that he deems a second text of the Secret “inauthentic” and that, under a mental reservation, he feels free to conceal the existence of this “inauthentic” text.

- Regarding this new notion of an “authentic” text, Bertone referred during the telecast to a document that “actually existed in the archives,” insisting that “there was only this *foglio* (sheet of paper) in the archives of the Holy Office in 1957, when by order of Our Lady and the Bishop of Leiria, Sister Lucia accepted that the Secret be brought to Rome from the archives of the Patriarch of Lisbon. . . .” Yet the document in question *was never in the archives of the Patriarch of Lisbon*. It is an undeniable historical fact that in 1957 copies of all Lucia’s writings and the envelope containing the Secret were personally delivered by auxiliary Bishop Venâncio directly from the chancery in Leiria to the Papal Nuncio in Lisbon, Msgr. Cento, who took the documents directly to Rome.⁵⁵

Socci posted on his website a reply to the telecast from which he had so suspiciously been excluded—a reply widely publicized by the Fatima Center. He observed that despite the absence of any real challenge to Bertone’s version of the facts by the host or guests who participated in the telecast, the Cardinal had only succeeded in demonstrating that the doubt Pope John professed to have concerning the supernatural origin of the Third Secret at the time he decided to bury it

could not refer to the text of the vision revealed in 2000, that does not contain anything “delicate.” But only to that “fourth secret” that—as Cardinals Ottaviani and Ciappi revealed—spoke of apostasy and the betrayal by the upper ecclesiastical hierarchy. That “fourth secret” of which John Paul II, in 1982, said that it “had not been published because it could be badly interpreted.” That “fourth secret” of which Cardinal Ratzinger, in 1996, said that at the moment certain “details” could be harmful to the faith...⁵⁶

That “fourth secret,” moreover, which concerns “dangers to the faith and the life of the Christian, and therefore the world,” as Cardinal Ratzinger had revealed in 1984 was not mentioned in the June 26, 2000 revelation. Bertone’s every effort to answer Socci had only dug a deeper pit for him and the other defenders of the Party Line. As Socci had said in defense of himself, Bertone had “offered the proof that I am right,” that there is indeed a missing text of the Secret. This disaster prompted yet another unprecedented initiative by the Secretary of State.

The Cardinal Bertone Show

On September 21, 2007, with the “official account” irretrievably wrecked, Cardinal Bertone staged his own personal television show in an auditorium at the Pontifical

⁵⁴ See “Bertone nel ‘vespaio’ delle polemiche” [“Bertone in the ‘Wasp’s Nest’ of the Polemics”], June 2, 2007, <http://www.antoniosocci.com/2007/06/bertone-nel-%E2%80%9Cvespaio%E2%80%9D-delle-polemiche/>. See also *The Fatima Crusader*, No. 86 (Summer 2007), pp. 43-48, at <http://www.fatimacrusader.com/cr86/cr86pg43.asp>

⁵⁵ Cf. *The Whole Truth About Fatima*, Vol. III, pp. 480-481.

⁵⁶ Antonio Socci, “Bertone nel ‘vespaio’ delle polemiche” [“Bertone in the ‘Wasp’s Nest’ of the Polemics”], loc. cit.

Urbaniana University in Rome near the Vatican. The pretext was the “introduction” of *Last Visionary*, which had already been published and introduced at a press conference months before. Like the appearance on *Porta a Porta*, this spectacle only confirmed the existence of the very thing Bertone was attempting to conceal. Here, too, a summary of the key elements of this debacle will have to suffice:⁵⁷

- During the telecast Bertone continued his mysterious failure to address a single question that would penetrate to the heart of any of the matters he knew to be in controversy. In particular, he avoided like the plague any questions about the “etc,” the text in the papal apartment, the testimony of Solideo Paolini concerning the admissions by Archbishop Capovilla, the never-produced Capovilla envelope, and the mysterious sudden appearance of multiple envelopes never mentioned before.
- Called as a witness by Bertone, Bishop Seraphim of Fatima, who purportedly witnessed Lucia’s authentication of the text of the vision in April 2000, made the heavily nuanced declaration on camera that “the Secret of Fatima has been revealed in an *authentic* and integral way,” declining to affirm simply that the Third Secret had been revealed entirely and that nothing had been withheld.
- Unable to avoid any longer the subject of Archbishop Capovilla’s explosive testimony, Bertone broadcast a heavily edited video interview of Capovilla conducted, not by an official Vatican representative, but by Giuseppe De Carli, the malleable journalist who had collaborated with Bertone on *Last Visionary*. The interview *never once addressed Capovilla’s admissions to Solideo Paolini*, and De Carli never asked Capovilla to retract them.
- Quite the contrary, during the interview *Capovilla fully confirmed the existence of the Capovilla envelope* and the reading of its contents by John XXIII and Paul VI on dates different from those provided in the “official account” for the reading of the text of the vision published in 2000.
- Despite this devastating revelation, De Carli—but, most tellingly, *not Capovilla himself*—declared on camera that the “Capovilla envelope” (which the Vatican has never produced) and the “Bertone envelope” containing the text of the vision, are one and the same envelope. But this was a manifest absurdity from which De Carli would retreat during his later appearance at the 2010 Fatima conference sponsored by Father Gruner’s Fatima apostolate in Rome (to be discussed below).

While this new disaster was unfolding in the auditorium, Socci and Paolini, who had waited outside in the hope of confronting Cardinal Bertone with a key question about the Third Secret, relating to the famous “etc”, were forcibly ejected from the premises by security guards. Before they were ejected, however, they were able to play for the other journalists present an audiotape of a subsequent meeting between Paolini and Archbishop Capovilla during which the Archbishop states:

“Besides the four pages [of the vision of the bishop in white] there was also something else, an attachment, yes.”

As the reporter from the prominent Italian newspaper *Il Giornale* concluded,

⁵⁷ For a more complete explanation, see Ferrara, *The Secret Still Hidden*, Ch. 10, pp. 167-197 (also at <http://www.secretstillhidden.com/pdf/ensshch10.pdf>).

Capovilla’s statement “would confirm the thesis of the existence of a second sheet with the interpretation of the Secret. The mystery, and above all the polemics, will continue.” Tellingly, Bertone has never denied the existence of this “attachment,” even though *Il Giornale* had declared that it “would confirm the thesis of the existence of a second sheet with the interpretation of the Secret.”⁵⁸

The final speaker on “The Cardinal Bertone Show” was Bertone himself. This was the Cardinal’s moment to answer the many concerns raised by Socci and Catholics the world over concerning his version of events. But, as he had done for the past seven years, Bertone continued to duck every issue. Even in the act of doing so, however, he made another serious misstep: “On the famous Third Secret, on the truth of the Third Secret, I will not return. Certainly, if there had been some further element, of commentary, of integration, it would have appeared in her [Lucia’s] letters, in her thousands of letters—something that isn’t there.”

It seems that every time he opened his mouth to speak on the subject, the Cardinal could not help but raise further doubts about the veracity of his account. Why would he say that *if* there were a missing part of the Third Secret it would have appeared in Sister Lucia’s correspondence with various people around the world, rather than in a text she wrote specifically at the direction of the Virgin? Why would Lucia reveal an element of the Third Secret in her letters to third parties when, as we know, the Secret was transmitted in two envelopes which state they “can only be opened in 1960 by the Cardinal Patriarch of Lisbon or the Bishop of Leiria”? Did the Cardinal mean to direct our attention away from the two envelopes, or the never-produced “Capovilla envelope” bearing the dictation of John XXIII? And on what basis did he assert that there was nothing pertaining to the Secret in Lucia’s thousands of letters? Had he read and studied them all?

Wikipedia Notes Bertone’s Cover-up

Cardinal Bertone’s every effort to salvage the credibility of his account since becoming Secretary of State had had the opposite effect. And the role of Father Gruner’s apostolate in bringing about that state of affairs was implicitly acknowledged even by Wikipedia as a commonplace of current events in the Church. The Wikipedia biography of Bertone contains a reference to one of the Fatima Center’s major publications on the Third Secret affair: *The Secret Still Hidden* by Christopher Ferrara, published in multiple languages, which carries forward and further develops Socci’s exposé:

After Bertone’s book [*Last Visionary*] was published, Italian journalist Antonio Socci published an article entitled, “Dear Cardinal Bertone: Who—between you and me—is Deliberately Lying?” Catholic attorney Christopher Ferrara wrote an entire book called *The Secret Still Hidden* (content available online) aimed at exposing and debunking the claims of Cardinal Bertone with respect to Fatima. The book contains an appendix entitled, *101 Grounds for Doubting Cardinal Bertone’s Account*.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ “The Fourth Secret of Fatima does not exist,” *Il Giornale*, September 22, 2007.

⁵⁹ “Tarcisio Bertone,” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tarcisio_Bertone. The Fatima Center circulated 70,000 copies of this work in English, 35,000 in Italian, 20,000 in Spanish, 4,000 in Portuguese and 5,000 in French—not to mention the thousands more people who read it on-line (English: <http://www.secretstillhidden.com>; Italian: <http://www.ilsegretoancorancostoit>; Spanish: <http://www.elsecretotodaviaocultado.es>; Portuguese: <http://www.secretstillhidden.com/pt>).

Chapter 26

A Fateful Roman Encounter

Even after the Secretary of State's "official account" had crumbled during the period 2007-2010, the Fatima Center continued its massive worldwide campaign of conferences and publications promoting the authentic Consecration of Russia and full disclosure of the Third Secret. The efforts of the Secretary of State to interfere with the Center's international conferences met with little success compared with earlier heavy-handed interventions in 1994 and 2001. Following the conferences of 2006, 2007 and 2008 already noted, in 2010 the Fatima Center staged a conference in Rome itself that would be a landmark event in the saga of the Third Secret.

From May 3-7, 2010 the famous Ergife Hotel was the venue for "The Fatima Challenge," whose theme was a direct challenge to the Secretary of State's "official reconstruction" of the Third Secret. The conference would become what Americans call a "game-changer," although the matter involved was hardly a game.

A major reason for this outcome was the appearance of none other than Cardinal Bertone's lay collaborator, Giuseppe De Carli, as a speaker on the conference's second day. What De Carli said in the course of his remarks underscored dramatically the reasons for worldwide skepticism concerning Bertone's representations. Indeed, immediately after the conference the mainstream Italian media, following the lead of the Pope himself in another May development, would declare that the case of the Third Secret had been "reopened."

A Remarkable Appearance at a Remarkable Conference

To his everlasting credit, by appearing at the conference De Carli did something no one in the Vatican party had ever done before during all the years of the Third Secret controversy: engage face-to-face with the "Fatimists" and respond to some of their objections to the "official" version. De Carli had agreed to appear for the stated purpose of introducing a second edition of *Last Visionary* bearing the new title *The Last Secret of Fatima [L'Ultimo Segreto di Fatima]*, a copy of which he held in his hand (the book had just come off the press that morning). By the time his appearance was over, however, it was something far more significant than the "introduction" of essentially the same book he and Bertone had already introduced twice.

After De Carli's prepared remarks and the showing of an inconsequential film on Sister Lucia and her life in the convent at Coimbra, something quite unexpected happened. De Carli remained at the podium to take questions from the audience, despite his earlier indications outside the conference hall that he would have no time for Q & A. For more than an hour, De Carli would field questions (in Italian) from Father Gruner, Christopher Ferrara, and the Catholic attorney and apologist John Salza, all of whom were also speakers at the conference. The encounter was most revealing, as the Italian media would immediately recognize.

De Carli's three questioners knew a face-to-face encounter with Bertone's close collaborator in promoting the "official" account was an opportunity that probably would

never present itself again. Given the small window of opportunity, the questioning focused primarily on facts that were undeniable and which De Carli would have no choice but to admit. For one, there was the existence of the yet-to-be-seen Capovilla envelope and the text it contained, lodged in the papal apartment rather than the Holy Office archives, where the text of the vision was kept. Bertone's failure to produce that envelope and its contents were unanswerable evidence of a cover-up.

The Capovilla Envelope

Accordingly, Ferrara repeatedly pressed De Carli to explain why the Capovilla envelope had never been produced. In response, De Carli repeatedly suggested, contrary to all the evidence, that the Capovilla envelope and the "Bertone envelope" displayed on *Porta a Porta*—namely the Bishop of Fatima's outer envelope—were one and the same. The first question and answer were as follows:

Ferrara: Hello, Mr. De Carli, I am constrained by the limits of my Italian, but it seems that there are some obvious problems with your presentation. One problem is this: It is established as a fact that there is a so-called "Capovilla envelope" on which was written the name of Archbishop Capovilla, the heads of the Vatican departments, the judgment of John XXIII—to not give a judgment. And this critical envelope was in the papal apartment. So, a simple question: Where is this envelope?

De Carli: The Bertone envelope *is* the Capovilla envelope; there is *no difference*. The Capovilla one is the one that ended up in the papal apartment. If you read the [Capovilla] interview in detail [i.e., the transcript presented during the "Cardinal Bertone Show" in 2007]... it explains how the envelope ended up in the hands of Paul VI, who was very interested—but a few days after his election, not months later—he wanted to read the text immediately. *Then the envelope remains there*. This is recounted by Msgr. Capovilla, who is a credible witness, the only living one. If you wish, you can give credit to what has been published by others, who are no longer with us. I give credit instead to a living person who, before me, recorded his testimony.

De Carli's answer flatly contradicted the very evidence he himself had presented during the "Cardinal Bertone Show" of September 21, 2007 discussed earlier: the envelope in the papal apartment was simply not the envelope produced on *Porta a Porta*, as the Capovilla envelope bears the Archbishop's handwritten list of the names of those who had read the contents and the dictation of John XXIII concerning his decision not to render any judgment on the text. And while De Carli further asserted that Capovilla's handwriting might be found on the back of one of the envelopes Bertone had displayed during his appearance on May 31, 2007, Bertone had shown the front and back of each of those envelopes to the cameras and no writing was present on the back of any of them.

Furthermore, the text of the vision Bertone displayed came from the archives of the Holy Office, now called the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith—not the papal apartment, where the Capovilla envelope and its contents were located. Pressed again on this point, De Carli made a stunning observation:

Ferrara: I understand, but *living people* said that there is an envelope [the

Capovilla envelope] there [in the papal apartment]—

De Carli [interrupting]: It doesn't appear that way to me—

Ferrara:—But *we never saw the envelope*.

De Carli: *I saw the envelope, and I said that what's reproduced in here [indicating the book, *Last Secret*, formerly *Last Visionary*] is exactly what I had photographed by my own photographer, and not by the one for the Holy See, because **I did not trust them completely**. I asked Bertone: "Seeing that we are here, would you let me go look at the Capovilla envelope?"... It is the same envelope. The Bertone envelope corresponds with the Capovilla envelope.*

De Carli's distrust of the Vatican's photographer was understandable,⁶⁰ but his personally commissioned photograph of what he claimed was the Capovilla envelope does not appear in *Last Secret*. Under repeated questioning on how he could maintain that the never-produced Capovilla envelope was the same as the Bertone envelope, De Carli finally conceded defeat:

Ferrara: The document of Archbishop Capovilla⁶¹ said clearly that there is an envelope on the outside of which is found my [Capovilla's] writing. On *Porta a Porta*, Cardinal Bertone did not show this envelope. It is a fact. Therefore, there are two envelopes. With all due respect, you haven't answered my question.

De Carli: *Yes, these are useful precisions.* However, do not fasten yourselves on these things, which are important but not critical. I personally went to see the writing on the envelope there. When Cardinal Bertone showed it on *Porta a Porta* it is not like he didn't want us to see it. *He took the envelope in his hands, which was simply turned to the other side.* And if you go back to listen to the recording, *Cardinal Bertone at one point read the sentences that Pope John XXIII dictated to Msgr. Capovilla to write on the envelope, but he did not turn it around to the camera so that we could see it.* But these are small things. The envelope is the same, it is the same. Then again, **they could have tricked me**, showing me something different. But my clear *impression* was that the envelope is the same: the Capovilla envelope is equal to the Bertone envelope.

Having retreated to the position that it was his "clear *impression*" that the two envelopes were the same, while admitting "they could have tricked me," De Carli here made a devastating slip, attributable (one must assume in charity) to the pressure of the moment as opposed to any preconceived intent to deceive. For, as noted in the

⁶⁰ In May 2011, while in Rome, Father Gruner attended a Wednesday papal audience. He, along with the pilgrim statue of Our Lady of Fatima, was permitted to enter the private viewing area behind Pope Benedict to receive his personal blessing after the audience. The Pope approached the private viewing area in the popemobile and blessed those people. According to official Vatican photos taken at the time, the photographer took six pictures in rapid succession (only seconds apart) which captured the Pope blessing Father Gruner and the statue. However, the photos published on the photographer's web site reveal that five of the photos had been edited to remove Father Gruner from the picture! One photo shows Father Gruner standing behind a cleric dressed in brown, but the very next photo—taken only a few seconds later—does not show Father Gruner at all. In this photo, a part of Fr. Gruner's black cassock, not fully erased, can still be seen against the brown cassock, of the cleric standing in front of him.

⁶¹ His "confidential note" of 1967. See, *The Secret Still Hidden*, Chapters 6 and 10, and reproduction of the original typewritten text (English and Italian) at Appendix I, pp. 217-221.

preceding chapter, on the *Porta a Porta* video it is clearly seen that Bertone *did* turn the envelope he displayed “around to the camera” to reveal *no writing on the other side*. Evidently, De Carli had retreated in confusion in his attempt to deny what was undeniable: that the Capovilla envelope is not the Bertone envelope, and thus the contents of the Capovilla envelope must remain well hidden in the Vatican.

The Virgin’s “express order” concerning 1960

De Carli was also asked to address another element of incontrovertible proof of cover-up: that Bertone had misled the Church and the world concerning the Virgin’s “express order” regarding revelation of the Third Secret in the year 1960 as indicated on *both* of the sealed envelopes Bertone had finally revealed on *Porta a Porta*. Here John Salza took the lead with a question that produced another staggering misstep:

Salza: According to Cardinal Bertone, Sister Lucy never received any indication from the Virgin Mary that the Secret should have been revealed in 1960. Yet Cardinal Bertone said that Sister Lucy had confessed to him that she (Sister Lucy) chose that date, without direction by the Virgin. However, on *Porta a Porta*, Cardinal Bertone showed the two envelopes of Sister Lucy to the cameras, evidencing that it was a fact that it was by explicit order of the Virgin that the Secret should not be disclosed before 1960. And so how can we reconcile this testimony? Is it possible that the account of Cardinal Bertone is not true?

De Carli: No. This 1960 question is one that *I have also posed to myself many times*, because Sister Lucy wrote on the envelope that “you must open it in 1960.” But I think the answer by Cardinal Bertone is a convincing answer[!] Please note that we are dealing with a Sister *who could neither read nor write*. *She began to read and write when she was about 30, 35 years old—so 15 years, if not 20, after the apparitions*. She began to understand the value of words, but she never had a good understanding of time.

So, De Carli’s attempt at an explanation was that Sister Lucia did not know how to write when she *wrote* on both of her sealed envelopes: “By express order of Our Lady, this envelope can only be opened in 1960 by the Cardinal Patriarch of Lisbon or the Bishop of Leiria.” De Carli added the demonstrably false assertion that Lucia did not learn to read or write until she was thirty or thirty-five years old. In fact, the seer had achieved literacy while still a teenager. And this achievement was also by “express order” of the Virgin during the second Fatima apparition on June 13, 1917—*precisely so that Lucia could make the Message of Fatima known to the world in writing*. Thus we see Lucia writing to her bishop as early as 1922, when she was only fifteen years old.⁶²

This notion of an ignorant, illiterate peasant girl who had no idea what she was

⁶² Lucia wrote a letter on June 21, 1921 to her mother only several days after she had left Fatima on June 16, 1921. Contrary to what De Carli affirmed, she had learned to read and write when she was only 14 years old or less. Lucia wrote additional letters to her mother on July 4, July 17, October 2, October 23 and December 18 of 1921, followed by letters to her mother and others on January 2, February 2, April 16 and June 4 of 1922. She was only 15 years old at this time and wrote quite well. Frère Michel de la Sainte Trinité quotes excerpts of some of these letters in *The Whole Truth About Fatima*, Vol. II, pp. 217-221. Lucia wrote her first account of the apparitions in a letter to her confessor on January 5, 1922 (before she was 15). See Father António Maria Martins, S.J., *Cartas da Irmã Lúcia*, (printed by Fraternidade Missionária de Cristo-Jovem, Samerio-Braga, 1978) pp. 80-84. This 4 1/2-page handwritten letter is photographically reproduced on pp. 468-476 of *Documentos de Fatima* (Porto, 1976).

doing when she wrote the Virgin's express order on the two envelopes is part of what Father Gruner described to De Carli as "fables told by those who do not believe in Fatima. The Fatima documentation is very well done, and it negates the theory according to which Sister Lucy did not know what she wrote. This is a fabrication." When Father Gruner pressed De Carli further on the matter, De Carli had to admit that he had no real explanation for why Bertone had claimed the Virgin never said anything to Lucia about the Secret being linked to 1960:

De Carli: *I do not know what to say.* That mystery of 1960 remains. There's an explanation that, in my opinion, is plausible and I think could be accepted, which is that, in my opinion, Lucy saw that date of 1960 as very far from her, so it was like saying: "Open this in the next century." She imagined that in 1960—remember that she wrote it in 1944, so 1960 is sixteen years after that date—she would probably no longer be.

Father Gruner: Yes, but she said "according to *the explicit order of Our Lady.*" In this writing she denies that it was her idea and says that it was the order of the Madonna. *Why did Bertone say that Lucy confessed to him that it was just her idea?*

De Carli: I collected only what Cardinal Bertone told me. I cannot invent things. I write what I hear, what I see, what I think, and what I record. You can think whatever you wish....

The faithful would indeed think whatever they wished. They would think that Bertone has misled the faithful for years about the intrinsic connection of the Secret to 1960, the year in which the world awaited not only the revelation of the Third Secret but also the commencement of the ill-starred Second Vatican Council in 1962.

The Discrepancy of the Envelopes

On the question of the revelation by Bertone on *Porta a Porta* of not one, but *two* envelopes bearing Our Lady's "express order" concerning 1960, Father Gruner asked De Carli to explain why, in *Last Visionary* (now *Last Secret*), Bertone recounted having had Lucia authenticate only *one* such envelope. Perhaps not realizing that he was treading in a minefield planted by Bertone himself, De Carli provided an explosive answer:

De Carli: I don't recall this detail, sorry, I just don't have recollection of that, that part of the book has not been changed. I myself saw that document. I took my photographer with me, who photographed it for me. *And there is an envelope which has written on it: "For delivery to the Bishop of Fatima," and a second envelope on which had been written: "to be opened after 1960."*

Note well: At the time his photographer took a photograph of the document published in 2000 (the vision), *De Carli was shown only one envelope bearing the Virgin's order concerning 1960.* Yet, on *Porta a Porta*, two such envelopes suddenly "jumped out of the top hat," to employ a phrase of Soccì's. Thus it seems that De Carli was deceived in this matter, just as he had, apparently, been sold a bill of goods about Sister Lucia's ignorance and illiteracy. The truth of his own words—"They could have tricked me"—and his repeated expressions of distrust in Vatican photographers here stand confirmed. Given his evident lack of knowledge of the documentation on the historical details of the Third Secret controversy and the life of the seer, De Carli would have been particularly susceptible to being misled by those who wished to use him for their purposes.

The Secret “belongs to the past” canard

Still another patently indefensible element of the “official” position is that the Third Secret “belongs to the past,” according to Cardinal Bertone, following Cardinal Sodano. De Carli’s answer to the pertinent question was clearly at variance with Bertone’s version of the facts, as De Carli himself seemed eager to note:

Father Gruner: ... I do not understand why Cardinal Bertone told us that the age of lust for power and evil is over now—that is, on June 26, 2000, with the decision to reveal the Third Secret. We’re seeing that this time of evil and lust for power for mankind *is not over yet!*

De Carli: *This is certain.* By reading the Third Secret, we understand that the Third Secret is also valid today. *It is not just relegated to the past. I tried to show this in the book with a reflection by Cardinal Bertone, who then arrives at my thesis.* Read it carefully. The Third Secret *is not something that concerns only an event of the past, but is something that concerns us today, as well.* It has, therefore, a power that goes far beyond a mere historical memory.

While De Carli, at least, was willing to admit that the Third Secret does not belong to the past, contrary to what De Carli had suggested in his answer, Bertone’s *Last Secret* does not reveal any such change of position by Bertone himself, but only his nebulous “reflection” (in a newly added chapter) that “it is good, therefore, that they [the events of Fatima] are consigned to the collective memory, leaving behind traces not deprived of meaning.”⁶³ Otherwise, Bertone obstinately reaffirmed his “interpretation” that the Secret “is realized in the past...”⁶⁴

Archbishop Capovilla’s “Confidential Note”

Yet another piece of incontrovertible evidence brought to De Carli’s attention was the “confidential note” by Archbishop Capovilla, wherein he recorded that on June 27, 1963 Paul VI had read a text of the Third Secret retrieved from the Barbarigo writing desk in the papal bedchamber of John XXIII—a fact radically at odds with the “official” account, which asserts that Paul VI read the Secret for the first and only time on March 27, 1965, and that the text he read came from the Holy Office. Recall that during the “Cardinal Bertone Show” on September 21, 2007, De Carli had attempted to explain away this devastating discrepancy by leading Capovilla to suggest during his interview of the Archbishop that Pope Paul read the same text twice—in 1963 and 1965—even though Capovilla himself demolished that contention *in the same interview* by stating that after the reading in 1963 “the envelope was resealed [*richiude* in Italian; “resealed” or “reclosed”] and *it was not spoken of further.*”⁶⁵

But this “testimony” refutes itself. For if, as Capovilla himself affirmed, the contents of the envelope resealed in 1963 were “not spoken of further” after that year, *then how could he have known whether the envelope had been reopened yet again in 1965 and read for a second time?* Clearly, he could not have known this, and the attempt to suggest that he did, by putting words in his mouth via De Carli’s leading question, was simply a deception. Here we see what invariably happens when one attempts to reconstruct a lie that has fallen apart by making additions to the lie’s original structure: new and

⁶³ *The Last Secret of Fatima*, p. 40.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁶⁵ Cf. *The Secret Still Hidden*, pp. 189-190.

even more embarrassing defects appear in the edifice of falsehood, and it collapses even more dramatically upon close examination.

Thus Capovilla's own testimony, far from supporting Bertone's contrivance, ruled out a second reading in 1965, which would have required reopening the resealed (or "reclosed") envelope. What did De Carli have to say about this, now that he could be questioned directly? Curiously, his earlier reliance on Capovilla as the only reliable living witness was suddenly replaced by skepticism about the Archbishop's testimony:

Father Gruner: Just one other point: Socci, referring to the interview by Solideo Paolini on this subject, said, "How come there are two dates: that of June '63 and the other one of March '65?"

De Carli: This, too, is in my book. Because I wondered why there were two dates, but only one recorded officially. The fact is that we are not sure about the second date, the only one who gave us two dates is Mons. Capovilla. Now, he is a precise man and has marked that date in his diary, but it doesn't appear in the official archives. I don't have the certainty arising from the record of audiences of what was done by Paul VI, which in this case does not correspond to the archives of the Secretary of State and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. And if this is coming only from one man, even if it's his [John XXIII's] secretary, then I do not think it can be considered official. It has to be included in the interview [shown on the "Cardinal Bertone Show"], but we still consider the official date June 26 or 27, 1963 [sic]. I'm a little confused myself, too, with the dates.

Notice, first of all, De Carli's admitted confusion about the dates: he gave June 26 or 27, 1963 as the "official" date for the reading of the Secret by Paul VI, rather than March 27, 1965 (according to *TMF*, the "official" Vatican booklet published in June 2000). Clearly, he lacked a command of the most basic facts concerning the controversy, even though Bertone had employed him to produce a book about it. As for the claim that Capovilla's note does not "correspond to the archives of the Secretary of State and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith," it should have been obvious to De Carli that there is more to the story than what is contained in those archives, for Capovilla categorically places a text of the Secret in the papal apartment.

Here De Carli effectively conceded that he had no answer to this evidence other than *to cast doubt on the testimony of the very witness he had pronounced most reliable only moments before*. Worse, while defending Capovilla's memory as reliable when it appears to (but does not really) serve the "official account," De Carli had cast doubt on the reliability of a *contemporaneous written record* of what the Archbishop had witnessed and concerning a reading of a text of the Third Secret by Paul VI in 1963, two years before the date given in the "official" account.

In dramatic departure from *Last Visionary, Last Secret* "adjusts" the "official" account to claim that Paul VI must have read the same text in 1963 that he read in 1965: "[he] read it two times, according to what has been reported by Monsignor Capovilla. Certainly on March 27, 1965, and he opted for its non-publication."⁶⁶ But Monsignor Capovilla had reported no such thing. Rather, during the edited interview televised in September 2007, De Carli put this "report" into Capovilla's mouth by asking a blatantly leading question designed to extract the answer De Carli (and Bertone) needed in order to

⁶⁶ *Last Secret*, p. 70.

address this gaping hole in the official version: “Paul VI read the same Message two times. Is that so?”⁶⁷ With good reason are such questions deemed improper in legal proceedings, for the leading questioner is essentially telling the witness what to say, thus rendering the answer worthless as proof of anything.

At any rate, why would Paul VI open again the very envelope he had *resealed* in 1963? Clearly, the envelope he read in 1965 was other than the one he had read two years earlier. From which it followed, as all the other evidence showed, that there are two companion texts pertaining to the Third Secret of Fatima.

Capovilla’s testimony to Paolini

We have seen that at no time was Archbishop Capovilla asked by Bertone, De Carli or anyone else to deny specifically his admission to Solideo Paolini—“Exactly so!”—in response to the question whether there were two different envelopes and two different texts pertaining to the Third Secret. Confronted on this telling point, De Carli not only declared that Paolini was a liar who invented his conversation with Archbishop Capovilla, but also claimed to have in his possession yet another secret document the Vatican is not allowing anyone to see:

Father Gruner: ... Why did he [Capovilla] not deny what Paolini said?

De Carli: No, easy now, no. Let us speak of how that interview was obtained. It was a meeting, this Solideo Paolini, who went to Mons. Capovilla. It was a simple chat, and then he pulled from it an interview that truly and properly did not exist, *and much of that interview was invented wholesale.*

Ferrara: Why did no one ask Archbishop Capovilla “yes or no” regarding the fact that he answered Paolini “Precisely so!” as an answer to his question if “There are two texts of the Third Secret of Fatima?” Why has no one asked him this?

De Carli: Look, I have in hand [*i.e.*, available to him] a letter by Mons. Capovilla sent to the Secretary of State and to the Holy Father in which he denies he ever responded in such way to Solideo Paolini. He denies it. So either this Solideo Paolini is a liar, and has profited from it, or Mons. Capovilla is a liar. *I believe Solideo Paolini is a liar.*

Ferrara: May I have a copy [of the letter]?...

Salza: Why have you not published this letter from Capovilla, if it could answer all the questions?

De Carli: Because it’s private correspondence, I can’t; I’m sorry.

In sum, De Carli publicly accused Paolini of being a liar and then refused to publish his evidence for the charge, claiming it was a “private” missive to the Pope and the Secretary of State! Yet he was in possession of a copy of that same “private” letter, and was now dangling its alleged existence before the entire world while refusing to produce it. Nor had the Vatican seen fit to publish Capovilla’s denial, if such it was. It is telling indeed that *Last Secret* makes no mention of this secret but not-so-secret letter, even though De Carli, the co-author of *Last Secret*, had freely revealed its existence in connection with his promotion of that very book at “The Fatima Challenge” conference.

⁶⁷ *The Secret Still Hidden*, pp. 189-190.

What about the “etc”?

The “official” account had always been fatally compromised by its glaring failure to ask Sister Lucia a single question about the very heart of the Third Secret controversy: that momentous “etc” Sister Lucia had placed at the end of the recorded Great Secret in her Fourth Memoir to indicate the beginning of its third and final part, consisting of the spoken words of the Virgin. We have seen that the only reasonable deduction is that the Virgin clearly foretells a crisis within the Church involving “the dogma of the Faith,” which “will always be preserved” in Portugal but evidently not elsewhere. Pressed on the cover-up of the telltale “etc”, De Carli pleaded a lack of memory:

De Carli: *I do not remember this.* When I’m not sure I do not answer. With regards to that “etc”—following the phrase “Portugal will not lose the Catholic faith and Catholic nations etc” [sic], what’s in that “etc”?—I said to Bertone: “Look, many have imagined that behind that ‘etc’ is another text which doesn’t exist.” And he answered—*I don’t recall any longer what he answered to me. I am sorry, on this point I do not have a precise recollection.*

Pressed again to comment on the “etc” controversy, De Carli conceded—thus rejecting the “official” account—that the words embraced within the telltale “etc” did indeed represent the beginning of the Third Secret of Fatima:

De Carli: The “etc” was by Sister Lucia. She had suspended that etcetera *because she had yet to write the last part of the Secret.* That etcetera said: “leave it for me.” But that etcetera gathered a lot of attention by the bishops, by her confessors—not to mention journalists, “doomsayers” and apocalypse-sayers. And when Sister Lucia was finally pressed, put on the ropes, *she filled in the etcetera with the Third Secret.*

Now, if the “etc” represents something that Lucia later “filled in... with the Third Secret”—which indeed it was—then it is obvious that what Lucia “filled in” could only have been the *words* of the Virgin Mary following Her reference to the preservation of dogma in Portugal, *because the “etc” interrupts a sentence in which She was speaking,* not a vision that She was conveying, such as the vision published in 2000. Yet De Carli claimed a lack of memory about what Bertone told him concerning this utterly crucial point.

What could one say? Ten years after the controversy over the completeness of the Vatican’s disclosure of the Third Secret began, there was still no answer from the Vatican party to the one question that would reveal the truth of the matter: *What are the words of Our Lady which conclude the Great Secret of Fatima by completing its third and final part?* It seems that the plan was to keep those words from the faithful forever, were it possible. Thus it had always been essential to the plan that the “etc” of the Fourth Memoir be avoided like the plague, which required the Vatican to employ the less complete Third Memoir in its commentary on the Message of Fatima in 2000. There was no other reasonable explanation for this behavior.

The testimony of Cardinal Ottaviani

Confronted by Father Gruner with the testimony of the late Cardinal Ottaviani that the text of the Third Secret he had in view was 25 lines in length, not the 62 lines of the vision, De Carli joined Bertone in affirming that *this was indeed Ottaviani’s testimony,* but offered the “thesis” (as had Bertone) that Ottaviani had somehow mistaken a 62-

line text for one with 25 lines:

Father Gruner: On television, on the *Porta a Porta* [telecast] of May 31, 2007, there was a Vaticanist who asked: “But Cardinal Ottaviani said that the text consists of 25 lines, why then has this text 62 lines?” And Cardinal Bertone affirmed that Cardinal Ottaviani had said this, trying to explain how he had erred. I do not know—in your book is there an answer to this question?

De Carli: Yes, this is also in my book. The thesis—since I cannot interview him because he is in the embrace of God—the thesis is that Ottaviani was wrong to say 25 lines, he was wrong.

Pressed further on the point, De Carli admitted that he had no real answer to the glaring discrepancy between what was published in 2000 and what Cardinal Ottaviani had clearly described:

Father Gruner: But this explanation by Cardinal Bertone, who said that perhaps Ottaviani had not looked at the other side, and the fact that even adding these two sides the sum is... 31-32... not 25 lines—how could he be so wrong? And how is it that the Bishop of Fatima [who] looked up to the light—one can only say that there are [according to him] two envelopes [not four]—and said that there were 25 lines, how come this text has 62 lines instead? Bishop Venâncio put everything in writing. It’s in the archives of Fatima.

De Carli: *I cannot answer this*, and when I cannot answer I do not answer. I have the notes of the meeting between the Cardinal and Sister Lucy. Bertone showed to Lucy the 64 lines of text, which she then turned, turned again, examined; and the precise question is: “Sister Lucy, is this the text that you wrote in 1944, which was then placed in the envelope?” “Yes, it is my text.” “And this is your envelope?” “Yes, this is my envelope.”

De Carli’s reference to Lucia’s authentication of a *single* envelope, when Bertone had displayed *three* envelopes of Lucia’s on *Porta a Porta*, prompted the next series of questions, with answers that highlighted dramatically the untrustworthiness of the “official” account.

A convenient “correction”

When Sister Lucia authenticated the text of the Third Secret in April of 2000, she told Bertone: “Yes, these are my *sheets* of paper (*fogli*) and the envelope is mine; they are the *sheets* (*fogli*) that I used and this is my writing. This is my *envelope*, this is my writing, this is my text.”⁶⁸ Recall that on *Porta a Porta*, on May 31, 2007, Bertone had displayed a *sheet* of paper and three *envelopes* prepared by Lucia: her unsealed outer envelope and the two sealed envelopes bearing the Virgin’s express order concerning 1960. Yet, according to Bertone’s/De Carli’s *Last Visionary*, published several weeks earlier (on May 10, 2007), Lucia had authenticated *sheets* of paper (*fogli*) and only *one* envelope—*exactly the opposite* of the document ensemble Bertone displayed weeks later on camera.

This enormous and never-explained discrepancy prompted questions that revealed another “adjustment” of the words Bertone had attributed to Sister Lucia, as allegedly

⁶⁸ *The Last Visionary of Fatima*, p. 37; see also, *The Secret Still Hidden*, Chapter 8, pp. 128, 136.

recorded in his remarkably adaptable “notes”:

Salza: But in your book with Cardinal Bertone, he said that Sister Lucy said: “Yes, these are my *sheets* [fogli]”—using the plural form. But what was shown on *Porta a Porta* was only one sheet. Where are the other sheets?

De Carli: This is better explained here [in *Last Secret*] because we went back to check at the Archives, which is one of the reasons why we did a second edition. There are two sides. The book reports it exactly because I repeat it several times: 4 pages on 2 sheets—two on one side and the other two on the other side. Because in the Cardinal’s notes—keep in mind that when I wrote that book [*Last Visionary*] we were in 2006, Cardinal Bertone was moving to Rome, he had shelves full of books and had these diaries, at least 50 pages of his diary notes, we read them a bit faster.⁶⁹ So back then we relied on the 64 lines count, but now it is clear that there are two sheets (*fogli*) [!] of four pages.

Father Gruner: My Italian is not perfect, but in English we speak about a “sheet” like this [holding up one sheet of paper]. You can fold this sheet, but it is only one sheet. When Sister Lucy said that these are my sheets, she said that there was another piece of paper besides this.

De Carli: You are right to point out this thing. I should find the text. I cannot find it now [in the copy of *Last Secret* he is holding]. But the book specifies, in almost a maniacal manner, this thing about the sheets that Sister Lucy had in her hand. It is no longer multiple sheets, but a single sheet, divided into 4 sides, a single sheet exactly like he [Father Gruner] showed here—in half, 2 sides and 2 sides. It is repeated twice.

Salza: So you were wrong when you said that there are two sheets, and now you’re saying that there is only one? We must be exact, here, because you have already said [here] that there are two sheets, and so the question is: Is there just one sheet or two?

De Carli: I’m looking at the text [of my book], because I can’t remember all these details. Here is what is in the book: We talked about a large envelope, stamped with the seal of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. On the envelope [written in 1944] is the writing about 1960, and which contained another envelope, with a single sheet with lines, folded in two, and four sides handwritten by Sister Lucia.

Ferrara: The first book talks about sheets!

Salza: This is a change!

De Carli: We did a second edition of the book just to clarify better, also from an Italian point of view with regards to different language translations. And

⁶⁹ The excuse that Bertone was moving to Rome and that he and De Carli were only able to read Bertone’s notes in haste, and thus somehow mistook multiple pages for one page, lacks all credibility. Bertone was fully installed as Secretary of State by September 15, 2006. Soggi’s book was published on November 22, 2006, and De Carli did not begin to write his book in collaboration with Bertone until after Soggi’s book had appeared. There was more than ample time to read the notes carefully. Even if the notes had been read in haste, however, that still would not explain how they could have been so misread as to refer to multiple sheets of paper if they had stated that there was only one sheet. De Carli’s excuse appears to have been an improvisation under the pressure of the moment.

what we *wanted* to say is that it is a *single* lined sheet, folded in two, and four sides.

Salza: Therefore you made a mistake when you said that it was “sheets,” in plural, right?

De Carli: I was wrong. Can’t I make mistakes? Aren’t we human?

Salza: But [today] you said this, two or three times, specifically.

De Carli: One can make a mistake. In fact, I wanted to check again the text [of the book] because it was important to clarify this point: a lined sheet, folded in two, written on four sides. But Fatima—it is not just a sheet written on four sides. Fatima is the marvelous secret of Mary who appears to the three shepherds! This is what really counts.

De Carli’s statements were fraught with disaster for the “official” account. For one thing, even in the midst of attempting to explain that the Secret involved only one sheet of paper, he referred to *two* sheets,⁷⁰ evidencing his confusion on the matter. Further, the “mistake” about the number of sheets involved—one, rather than two or more—could not have been *his* mistake because, according to Bertone in *Last Visionary*, it was *Sister Lucia* who had referred to *sheets* of paper (*fogli*) and Bertone had provided, as noted above, a purported *verbatim quotation of the seer* to that effect. But, as has happened so often in the annals of the “official account,” the words of “Sister Lucy” were altered to meet current exigencies. So, whereas in *Last Visionary* she is quoted as having said “these are my *sheets* of paper (*fogli*) ... they are the *sheets* (*fogli*) that I used,” in *Last Secret* “Sister Lucy” now says “Yes, yes, this is my *paper* [*carta*].” As De Carli had put it: “it is *no longer* multiple sheets, but a single sheet...”

In other words, when it is necessary to change the “official account” to meet serious objections, what “Sister Lucy” said before is expediently revised, now that she is conveniently dead. Simple! But not so simple. For in his noncommittal letter of introduction to *Last Visionary*, reproduced without change in *Last Secret*, none other than Pope Benedict XVI relates that in preparing the “theological commentary” on the Secret when he was Cardinal Ratzinger (see Chapter 4 of *The Secret Still Hidden*) he had “prayed and meditated deeply on the authentic words of the third part of the Secret of Fatima, contained in the *sheets* [*fogli!*] written by Sister Lucia.” Or, in the original Italian: “le parole autentiche della terza parte del segreto di Fatima contenute nei *fogli* scritti da Suor Lucia.”⁷¹

So, *the Pope himself* reveals that the Third Secret involves *multiple* sheets of paper, whereas Sister Lucy, who once said this as well, “no longer” said it—at least according to Bertone and De Carli, now that the visionary was no longer alive to contradict them. But not even Bertone would dare to claim that *the Pope* was mistaken when he wrote *fogli* instead of *foglio*! Nor was Bertone in any position to “correct” the papal letter of introduction. He was stuck with it, and thus with the glaring discrepancy it revealed—the umpteenth—in his ever-changing story.

⁷⁰ See question by Salza and answer by De Carli at page 38.

⁷¹ *The Last Secret of Fatima*, p. 10.

Why did he appear?

After having submitted to questioning that only demonstrated, yet again, why the “official account” had been deprived of all credibility, De Carli excused himself and left the conference. The net impression of his appearance was that of a decent man who, years earlier, had entered into a battle for which he was poorly prepared (as he himself admitted), had raised his flag for the wrong side, and now, perhaps, had begun to entertain serious doubts about the version of the facts he had been expected to defend. “They could have tricked me” is a phrase that could not be more revealing of a man having second thoughts.

In tribute to De Carli we must agree with the commentator who wrote: “As his case collapsed in one exchange after another, Mr. De Carli never displayed any sign of irritation or animosity, as usually occurs when a person’s claims are radically challenged. He patiently listened and tried to reply to all questions, and gave the impression of an honest man, now rather confused, who had perhaps been drawn into an orchestrated deception of which he was unaware at the time.” The same commentator noted that as De Carli was departing the conference, Father Gruner extended his hand, but instead of merely shaking hands with “the Fatima priest” De Carli “embraced Father Gruner and thanked him for the work he was doing.”⁷²

All in all, De Carli’s appearance at the conference had contributed to making the event as a whole a tipping point for handling of the Third Secret affair within the Vatican. The Pope himself would soon make this dramatically apparent during his trip to Fatima from May 11-14, 2010.



The attendees of the “Consecration Now!” conference at the Vatican in procession in St. Peter’s Square on May, 2011.

⁷² Edwin Faust, “The Latest Chapter in the Story of Fatima,” http://www.fatima.org/exclusives/pdf/epilogue_summary.pdf

Chapter 27

Breakthroughs for Fatima

“The Fatima Challenge” conference was yet another example of Father Gruner’s almost superhuman persistence; and, once again, that persistence would be rewarded. On May 11, 2010, four days after the conference had ended, Pope Benedict journeyed to Portugal for a pilgrimage to the Fatima Shrine at the Cova da Iria on May 13, the anniversary of Our Lady’s first apparition at the Cova. The Fatima Center’s technical team had detected monitoring of the conference proceedings from an IP (Internet Provider) address within the Vatican. Surely, Cardinal Bertone had watched some or all of the proceedings, including De Carli’s appearance on his behalf. And it is probable that the Pope himself had seen or been informed of the proceedings—a conclusion well supported by what the Pope said on the papal plane en route to Portugal.



The Pope himself had seen or been informed of the proceedings—a conclusion well supported by what the Pope said on the papal plane en route to Portugal.

The Pope Reopens the Third Secret “Dossier”

Speaking calmly and deliberately to reporters on the plane, the Pope reopened the entire Third Secret controversy by expressly rejecting—at last!—the by now universally doubted Sodano/Bertone “interpretation” of the Third Secret as merely a visional depiction of past events. Rather, said the Pope, the Secret prophesies what is happening in the Church today, is not at all limited to “the past,” and predicts *future* events in the Church *that are still developing day-by-day*. The Pope addressed the question on camera as Bertone literally loomed over him from behind:

Lombardi: Holiness, what significance do the apparitions of Fatima have for us today? And when you presented the text of the Third Secret, in the Vatican Press Office, in June 2000, it was asked of you whether the Message could be extended, beyond the attack on John Paul II, also to the other sufferings of the Pope. Is it possible, according to you, to frame also in that vision the sufferings of the Church of today for the sins of the sexual abuse of minors?

Pope Benedict: Beyond this great vision of the suffering of the Pope, which we can in substance refer to John Paul II, *are indicated future realities of the Church which are little by little developing and revealing themselves*. Thus, it is true that beyond the moment indicated in the vision, it is *spoken*, it is seen, the necessity of *a Passion of the Church that naturally is reflected in the person of the Pope; but the Pope is in the Church, and therefore the sufferings of the Church are what is announced....*

As for the novelty that we can discover today in this message, it is that

attacks on the Pope and the Church do not come only from outside, but the sufferings of the Church come precisely from within the Church, from sins that exist in the Church. This has always been known, but today we see it ***in a really terrifying way***: that the greatest persecution of the Church ***does not come from enemies outside, but arises from sin in the Church***.⁷³

The content of the Pope's remarks amounted to a bomb that destroyed the "official" account. First of all, it is critical to note that the Pope's remarks were not off-the-cuff, but rather were in answer to a question *selected beforehand* by the Pope himself. As the *National Catholic Reporter* observed, the Pope "was hardly caught off-guard. The Vatican asks reporters traveling with the Pope to submit questions for the plane several days in advance, so Benedict has plenty of time to ponder what he wants to say. If he takes a question on the plane, *it's because he wants to talk about it, and he's chosen his words carefully*."⁷⁴

The significance of the Pope's carefully chosen words cannot be overstated. The Pope went out of his way to bring up the Third Secret of Fatima, ten years after the subject was supposedly laid to rest by Sodano and Bertone; and he did so because he wished to speak of the Secret and its relation to the *current* and *future* state of the Church: "*future realities of the Church which are little by little developing and revealing themselves*."

Note well: *Future* realities, developing *little by little* and revealing themselves *today*, not merely "in the past." Here the Pope spoke of something *not seen in the vision* of the bishop in white: "attacks on the Pope and the Church ... *from within the Church*" which show in "***a really terrifying way***" that "the greatest persecution... arises from sin *in the Church*." This went well beyond even the pedophilia scandal to a generalized assessment of the state of the Church in light of the Secret; it was a frontal attack on Bertone's and Sodano's position, which in fact had never been anything but their already widely rejected opinion in the matter.

Now, the vision says nothing at all about a crisis involving attacks upon the Church and persecution of the Church *from within her* on account of the sins of her own members. On the contrary, the vision depicts an external persecution of the Church in the midst of a post-apocalyptic scenario wherein a future Pope is executed outside a half-ruined city by soldiers who are not internal enemies. There is only one way to reconcile the Pope's remarks with the tableau in the vision; it is the same way both the "Fatimists" and Socci have proposed and this book itself proposes: There is a

⁷³ "Oltre questa grande visione della sofferenza del Papa, che possiamo in sostanza riferire a Giovanni Paolo II sono indicate realtà del futuro della chiesa che man mano si sviluppano e si mostrano. Cioè è vero che oltre il momento indicato nella visione, ***si parla***, si vede la necessità di una passione della chiesa, che naturalmente si riflette nella persona del Papa, ma il Papa sta nella chiesa e quindi sono sofferenze della chiesa che si annunciano. Il Signore ci ha detto che la chiesa sarà per sempre sofferente, in modi diversi fino alla fine del mondo. L'importante è che il messaggio, la risposta di Fatima, sostanzialmente non va a situazioni particolari, ma la risposta fondamentale cioè conversione permanente, penitenza, preghiera, e le virtù cardinali, fede, speranza carità. Così vediamo qui la vera e fondamentale risposta che la chiesa deve dare, che noi ogni singolo dobbiamo dare in questa situazione. Quanto alle novità che possiamo oggi scoprire in questo messaggio è anche che non solo da fuori vengono attacchi al Papa e alla chiesa, ma le sofferenze della chiesa vengono proprio dall'interno della chiesa, dal peccato che esiste nella chiesa. Anche questo lo vediamo sempre ma oggi lo vediamo in modo realmente terrificante che la più grande persecuzione alla chiesa non viene dai nemici di fuori, ma nasce dal peccato nella chiesa." Transcript by Paolo Rodari, www.corriere.it/esteri/10_maggio_11/vecchi-parole-papa_fa994a90-5ce9-11df-97c2-00144f02aabe.shtml, confirmed by this author, who watched the video of the Pope's remarks.

⁷⁴ "On the crisis, Benedict XVI changes the tone," *National Catholic Reporter*, May 11, 2010.

missing text related to the vision in which the Virgin explains in Her own words how an internal crisis of faith and discipline in the Church is accompanied by a chastisement of the whole world, including the bishops, priests and laity who are executed, “one after another,” by the same soldiers who have already executed the Pope on the hill outside the destroyed city.

The Pope himself appeared to confirm the existence of precisely such a text when he said that “*beyond the moment* indicated in the vision, ***it is spoken***, it is seen [*si parla, si vede*] the necessity of a Passion of the Church, which naturally is reflected in the person of the Pope, but the Pope is in the Church and therefore what is announced are the sufferings of the Church.”

Note well: The Pope refers to a prophecy *beyond the moment indicated in the vision*, involving both words and images relating to sufferings in the Church caused, not by the soldiers seen in the vision, but rather by the Church’s internal persecution on account of the sins of her own members.

The Vaticanist Paolo Rodari was quick to recognize the significance of the Pope’s words, asking the question: “Was Socci right?” Wrote Rodari:

It is true that the Pope did not speak of a fourth secret explicitly. But to read the response he gave today to the journalists, one cannot but think of Socci, who has always linked the contents of a hypothetical fourth secret to the corruption of the Church and to the sin which is born within the Church and is presently operative. Reading what the Pope said today, it seems that for him Fatima is not reducible only to the past and thus only to the text of 2000.⁷⁵

If there were any doubt of this, the Pope all but extinguished it two days later on May 13 when, during his homily at the Mass to commemorate the anniversary of the first Fatima apparition, His Holiness declared:

“One would be deceiving himself who thinks that the prophetic mission of Fatima is concluded.” [*“Si illuderebbe chi pensasse che la missione profetica di Fatima sia conclusa.”*]

This was another direct attack on the “official” version, and indeed on Bertone and Sodano personally for having promoted it as the Party Line: “*he would be deceiving himself*” meant particular individuals, and it was clear that both prelates had promoted assiduously and precisely the fiction that the prophetic mission of Fatima had been concluded or “fulfilled” with the failed assassination attempt, and that publication of the Third Secret—as Bertone had so absurdly contended in *TMF*—“brings to an end a period of history marked by tragic human lust for power and evil.”

That the Pope had made this declaration on the most solemn possible occasion—his homily during the Mass at the Fatima Shrine—gave it the force of a teaching of the Church’s universal pastor. Some 500,000 souls in the Cova alone—not counting the millions who followed him on live television—heard the Roman Pontiff say that

⁷⁵ Paolo Rodari, “Fatima. Aveva Ragione Socci? [“Fatima. Was Socci Right?”], <http://www.ilfoglio.it/palazzoapostolico/2675>. As Rodari wrote in the original Italian: “E’ vero il Papa non ha parlato del quarto segreto esplicitamente. Ma a leggere la risposta che ha dato oggi ai giornalisti non si può non pensare ad Antonio Socci il quale ha sempre legato il contenuto di un ipotetico quarto segreto alla corruzione della chiesa e al peccato che nasce all’interno della chiesa ed agisce nel presente. Leggendo oggi il Papa sembra che anche per lui Fatima non sia riconducibile al solo passato e dunque soltanto al testo del 2000.”

whoever thinks (and thus asserts, as Bertone did) that the prophetic mission of Fatima is concluded has deceived himself.

It was only typical of Vatican bureaucratic maneuvering, however, that the English translation of the Italian homily neutered the Pope's words to read: "We would be mistaken to think that the prophetic mission of Fatima is concluded." No! It is not "we" who would be "mistaken." The Pope said that *he* who thinks Fatima is finished would be engaged in *self-deception*, not merely "mistaken." There was no doubt who the Pope meant by "he." Nor was there any doubt about who had been deceived and was leading others into deception.

In short, with a few well-chosen words the Pope had utterly negated the Sodano-Bertone "interpretation" of the Secret. It now joined other pseudo-official pronouncements in the discard bin of the post-Vatican II era in the Church. Even more dramatically, the Pope had not only repudiated Bertone's and De Carli's suggestion that *Last Visionary* (and later *Last Secret*) represented the "official position" of the Church, but also *his own former adherence to the "party line" dictated by the Secretary of State* when the Pope was still Cardinal Ratzinger. The same man who, as Cardinal Ratzinger, had written that "we must affirm with Cardinal Sodano: ... the events to which the third part of the 'secret' of Fatima refers now seem part of the past"⁷⁶ had completely reversed himself as Pope Benedict and adopted the "Fatimist" position. Thus did Father Gruner's persistence earn its reward.

Socci on Pope Benedict's "Operation Truth"

The Pope's momentous declarations during his pilgrimage to Fatima prompted a rapid-fire series of articles from Antonio Socci on the theme of the patent vindication of the "Fatimist" cause, which, as we have seen, became his cause once he had considered the evidence.

Writing in *Il Libero* on May 12, 2010, in an article entitled "So there was a Fourth Secret after all...", Socci exclaimed that the Pope's statements "bring back again into the mainstream news the whole dossier on the Third Secret. His words upset the 'official version' given in 2000, which was never considered official—neither by Ratzinger nor by Pope John Paul II." Referring to *Fourth Secret* and the "cheap shots" he had had to endure for writing it, Socci noted that Pope Benedict "reopens the discussion in the direction that I tried to investigate and that the documents themselves suggest." By declaring that the Third Secret concerns "realities of the *future* of the Church, which unfold and reveal themselves day by day" and which we "now see in a really terrifying way," the Pope, Socci continued, "reinforces the belief" that what he said about filth and corruption in the Church during his Way of the Cross meditations as Cardinal Ratzinger on March 25, 2005 was "perhaps, indeed, the revelation (even if not declared as such) of *the part of the Third Secret that was not revealed in 2000*. The part which contains *the words of Our Lady Herself*, as a comment on the vision."

On May 13, also in *Il Libero*, Socci published a searing commentary on the Pope's demolition of Bertone's/Sodano's entire position. It was now a matter of black and white, Socci wrote, that "*The 'fourth secret' (that is, a part of the Third Secret which has not been published yet) exists, and the words of the Pope on the pedophilia scandal are the proof.*" The Pope, he continued, is "performing a great truth-telling work, even if

⁷⁶ *The Message of Fatima*, p. 43.

this means *contradicting the interpretation given by the Vatican Secretaries of State.*” Sodano’s contention that the events depicted in the vision “seem to” belong to the past—from which Bertone had removed the words “seem to,” converting Sodano’s opinion into a pseudo-dogma—had been rejected by Pope Benedict, “who explains to us *the complete opposite*, which is that the Third Secret regards events which came *after* the assassination attempt of 1981... and even events which are still in our future.” In fact, he added, “the assassination attempt of 1981 *is nowhere to be found in Benedict’s words*, therefore it is not pointed out as ‘the’ fulfillment of the Third Secret.”

Socci concluded that the Pope has “reopened the Fatima file in such a precise and obvious way that everyone who, in these past years, rushed to give his praise to the Curial version is now caught in a panic when confronted with the Pope’s words...” Even Vittorio Messori, generally a reliable partisan of the Vatican line, expressed embarrassment that “Now, in the vast party of the ‘Fatimites’ [vast!] there will be excitement, to demonstrate that Pope Benedict XVI has betrayed himself...” But, wrote Socci, aiming directly at Bertone and his collaborators, the Pope:

wants us to understand... that we must never be afraid of the truth, even when it is embarrassing or painful. *Because we do not serve God with lies.* When we lie with pretense that we are doing it for God, we are actually doing it for ourselves. *God does not need our lies to defend and build His Church.* It is better to do a *mea culpa*, because God is stronger and bigger than any of our sins. Obviously, *this behavior is not understood in the Curia*, not even by the ‘Ratzinger fans.’

In a postscript to his article, Socci noted the remarkable about-face by Messori as well, “who, three years ago, had rushed to praise Bertone’s version,” but on an episode of *Porta a Porta* broadcast on May 12, 2010 had “without even batting an eyelash... said the complete opposite of what he has said so far.” Messori had freely admitted that, quite contrary to Bertone, Pope Benedict “does not see the fulfillment of the Third Secret in the assassination attempt of 1981” and “does not consider it part of the past, but sees it projected into the future, because he is now considering a new fact—the pedophilia scandal—as part of the Secret (and it is obvious that the Pope cannot make all this up: *he must have taken this from the complete text of the Secret...*.)” Yet Messori “did not show even the least sign of recognizing that he had been mistaken all these years, nor did he treat the consequences of what he himself had said. Same for the confident Bertone.”

As Socci concluded: “Either Bertone is right (and the prophecy was fulfilled in 1981 and was concluded in the past) or Benedict XVI is right (and therefore the text of the Secret is wider, the prophecy still open and the martyrdom of a Pope and of the Church are still in our future). You cannot pretend that both versions can co-exist; it would not be logical. It would be desirable that love for truth would prevail, as well as a loyal recognition of our own mistakes... The call of the Pope for repentance, self-critical examination, and penance should be taken much more seriously.”

So, almost overnight, Bertone now found himself an *opponent* of the papal view of the Secret, and rightly subject to public rebuke from the very man (Socci) he had tried to portray as a knave for disputing his patently incredible version of the facts. So much for the “official version” Bertone had labored for so long to impose upon the Church.

In yet a third article on these developments, published on his blog on May 15,

Socci wrote of the *mea culpa* that Bertone now owed the Church. The article, entitled “Advice to Bertone: *mea culpa* and penance,” focuses on the Pope’s homily at Fatima and his resounding declaration to the whole Church that “He would be deceiving himself who thinks that the prophetic mission of Fatima is concluded.” In light of the papal homily, even *Il Corriere della Sera* had announced in a headline: “The Fatima prophecy is not accomplished; there will be wars and terrors.”

The Pope’s words at Fatima, said Socci, “contain a warning to whoever does not wish to hear and does not wish to understand. Words of Benedict XVI that... are *the exact antithesis of the lies that, sadly, Cardinal Bertone has been spreading about for years* (caught above all by me). Here in fact is what he [Bertone] has said: ‘The prophecy is not open to the future; it is realized in the past.’ Thus he wrote on page 79 of his book [*Last Visionary*], repeating it a thousand times in those pages and also in interviews with journalists and on TV, where he has not hesitated to insult the one who simply spoke the truth and called for love of the truth and of the Holy Virgin, Mother of God.”

“Now,” Socci added, “finally the Pope has spoken and everyone can understand. That Bertone, in the face of the evidence (and the bad impression he gives of himself), has precipitously reached out to the Vaticanists to attempt a tragicomic reverse march (without a *mea culpa*), only adds to the sadness. Writes Tornielli in *Il Giornale*: ‘now Bertone has *adapted his words*, stating that the prophecy can also be extended to the 21st century.’ In a little while he will say that he has always said this... Any comment is useless.”

And then this withering assessment of Bertone’s tenure: “Except to note the many problems the current Secretary of State has caused the Pope, who deserves to have alongside him collaborators worthy of the task at this historical moment. Collaborators (I speak also of bishops) who will aid him in his mission. Collaborators humble and competent like him, not arrogant and inadequate. Collaborators he evidently has not found. This speaks to the drama of the situation of the Church and the solitude of the Pope.”

Bertone, he concluded, could profit from reaching the age of retirement by “dedicating himself to prayer and meditation on the warnings and maternal solitudes of the Queen of Heaven. In fact, the things of this world soon pass, and forever (including power and, above all, lies). Only the truth remains, which is Jesus Christ. That is, the Truth made flesh. And Who has said: ‘There is nothing hidden that will not be revealed. Nothing secret that will not be brought into the light.’”

From the Vatican, there was only silence on the part of Cardinal Bertone. There was nothing he could say against Socci’s well-deserved rebukes. For Socci was right to declare that the Pope has “reopened the file” on the Third Secret and that His Holiness is “trying to prepare the Church for this immense trial... entrusting everyone to the hands of the Madonna of Fatima. These are extraordinary hours.” Indeed they are.

The Media Awaken

If it is reasonable to think that “The Fatima Challenge” conference and De Carli’s appearance there had contributed to the Pope’s inauguration of what Socci calls “Operation Truth” concerning the Third Secret, there is no question that what happened at the conference had prompted the Italian media to begin an Operation Truth of their own. On June 23, 2010 several major figures in the Italian press, including no

less than Andrea Tornielli, appeared on the “Top Secret” television show on Rete 4, a channel operated by Mediaset, the largest commercial broadcasting company in Italy. The show discussed recent developments in the Third Secret controversy under the title “Fatima: An Unfinished Business”—*the very title of one of the talks delivered at “The Fatima Challenge” conference.*

As the show opened, the narrator declared: “The mystery about the Third Secret does not end with the publication of the Secret. Forty years of silence and reticence have led many people to believe that the Message contains something shocking. There are many questions which still remain open. If the prophecy refers to the failed attempt in 1981, why keep it hidden for 20 years? Those who cast doubts about the interpretation given... think that the Message of Our Lady is actually pointing to the future and would describe apocalyptic scenarios related to the crisis of the faith and the end of the Church.”

During the broadcast there was an extraordinary exchange between Tornielli and Claudio Brachino, a Mediaset journalist, which reflected the very themes Father Gruner’s apostolate had been enunciating in its literature and conferences:

Brachino: There are interesting elements in what John Paul II said during various interviews and declarations. In Fatima he spoke about the apostasy—we should tell the public what apostasy is.

Tornielli: Yes, it’s the “expulsion from the faith,” the loss of faith, the ultimate and most terrible thing, because it means that we no longer believe. It should be noted that in his document *Ecclesia in Europa* John Paul II spoke about the apostasy in Europe, a term that indicates *the precise and heavy secularization of the Church, and the fall of any relationship with the absolute.*

Brachino: We will discuss this and the apocalyptic vision, but I must insist on this important element: Even among the Catholics, all over the world, *there is suspicion about the official revelation; we’re not talking about the secular world or protesters who want to challenge or dispute the Church’s policy. We’re talking about the so-called Fatimites and other parts of the world’s clergy, who do not believe the official version.*

Here we see the widening scepticism regarding the “official” account that had arisen—in large part due to Father Gruner’s educative efforts. The conviction that the whole and entire Third Secret relates to apostasy in the Church could no longer be considered unacceptable for Catholics.

This was followed by no fewer than three film clips of Father Gruner himself enumerating reasons to doubt the “official version.” The narrator made the obligatory skeptical reference to “Fatimites,” but then observed as follows: “However, one can not help but notice some inconsistencies in the text, with regards to the 1981 event of Saint Peter’s Square. In the vision of the Third Secret, the ‘Bishop dressed in White’ falls, killed by a group of soldiers, and after him other men die. Pope Wojtyła, instead, was shot by a single killer, and survived. Is it possible, then, that the official interpretation of the Fatima text is wrong?”

After some typically dismissive comments by Vaticanist Giovanni Ercole about “extremists,” the narrator returned to the prevailing theme of reasonable doubt of the “official” version: “But there is another testimony that makes Fatima an unfinished

business: Father [Don] Luigi Bianchi, the priest of Gera Lario, in the province of Como, who was a friend of Sister Lucy and met her many times, when she was still alive.” In a video clip Bianchi reveals that “The most important thing that I asked Sister Lucy was what she thought we had to expect from this new world, considering that humanity today seems to be so hostile. She said: ‘The world is in serious danger.’” When asked by the narrator what precisely Lucia had told him about the Secret, Father Bianchi replied, “Sister Lucy told me that the Secret of Fatima is something *that is still in God’s plan*.” And that, as we have just seen, is precisely what the Pope said on the plane and during his homily at the Cova da Iria.

The narrator restated yet again the theme of a newly acceptable reasonable doubt: “So is it not yet possible to write the final word on the Fatima Secrets? The debate about the Third Secret of Fatima, which affected almost the entire 20th century, *seems not to be closed*, not even with the death of two of its greatest protagonists, John Paul II and Sister Lucy.” And with that introduction, Brachino and Tornielli conducted a discussion which simply *presumed the existence of two distinct but related texts* of the Third Secret, one of which, kept in the papal apartment, has never been revealed and has been deemed “inauthentic” by Bertone and company. This was precisely what Father Gruner and the “Fatimists” had maintained from the moment the vision was published without the plainly required explanatory words of the Virgin:

Brachino: [A]re there two texts of the Third Secret of Fatima? Or are there multiple interpretations of the revealed text? So, are there two—implying that the Church has only revealed one text or just one part of it?

Tornielli: *Well, certainly there are inconsistencies, there is evidence that shows the existence of two manuscripts. One that was kept in the apartment of the Pope and another one at the Holy See archives. I don’t think that we can call them two different texts of the Secret, because the Secret is what has been revealed, that is the vision; it is possible, however, given what Sister Lucy has sent to the Vatican during the years, that there might be an attachment, or an explanation to it... [I]t is clear that John XXIII and his successors didn’t consider it as being fully part of the Third Secret, but just as an interpretation given by Sister Lucy rather than being part of Our Lady’s apparition. In this sense it was declassified to a mere, personal interpretation.*

Brachino, stating that “I have to push on this point,” noted—adopting another “Fatimist” contention—that the famous “etc” indicated something was missing. To this Tornielli frankly replied: “Well, it *certainly gives you the idea of something that continues*. Indeed, in the same booklet published officially by the Vatican *there is no explanation to that sentence*, it remains suspended, and it seems to be referring to something else that *the published version of the Third Secret actually doesn’t contain*.” Tornielli’s deduction could have been lifted almost verbatim from any number of Father Gruner’s publications on the issue.

At this point in the proceedings Brachino introduced the testimony of Archbishop Capovilla as recounted “by Socci’s book on Fatima.” Capovilla, Brachino noted, had “*admitted to Solideo Paolini in 2006 the existence of two different but complementary texts of the Third Secret*. One was kept at the Holy Office archives, the other one in the apartment of the Pope...” We have already noted Cardinal Bertone’s conspicuous emphasis, during his appearance on *Porta a Porta*, on the text located in the archives,

and his equally conspicuous avoidance of any reference to the text that everyone now knows was located in the papal apartments.

After showing the same video interview of Capovilla by De Carli that Bertone had aired in September 2007, Tornielli simply dismissed it as unpersuasive and, in a massive setback for Bertone and his “official” version, declared that the existence of a second text of some sort pertaining to the Third Secret is now *well established*:

Tornielli: Yes, we have just seen the interview of Capovilla, in which he said that there is no fourth secret. *But we must remember one fact: Capovilla has repeatedly said that a text of the Secret, an “attachment,” has always been kept inside the desk of the Pope, and has stated that it was he who revealed to Pope Paul VI, just a few days after his election, the place where the Secret was located: he told him that the text was kept inside John XXIII’s desk called “Barbarigo”.* When John XXIII read the Secret in 1959, he decided not to publish it, and Capovilla wrote a note on the envelope (this is confirmed not only by Capovilla, but also by Paul VI, who found that note on Capovilla’s envelope). *Now, when it was shown on television in 2007 [on Porta a Porta], [Cardinal Bertone] showed the envelopes to the cameras, and there was no handwriting by Capovilla on it....* Not all the time when there is an evidence does it have to confirm a certain theory... ***But the existence of two texts in two different places seems to me now a well-established fact.***

Now the discussion was joined by Alessandro Banfi, a prominent Vaticanist, who praised “the reasoning that inspired Socci, with courage and great skill,” to question the official version, and then asked and answered his own question, with devastating impact to the credibility of Bertone’s position: “This is the matter which I think we should talk about: Is the successor of Peter in possession of a more complete version of the vision, with deeper and confidential information? *In my opinion it is quite credible.* But it was also more than possible a few weeks ago that this controversy could have never been solved. And now the Pope, as always, *has reopened the discussion about it!*” To which Brachino replied: “And he did indeed, as I said at the beginning of the transmission, in a very sensational way. Probably it was a decision that is part of Ratzinger’s overall project, his new ‘Operation Truth’ for a different attitude within the Church, even with regards to herself.”

These publicly administered hammer-blows to the Secretary of State’s version of events were followed by discussion of “the dramatic problem of the apostasy” (Banfi), “the abandoning of the faith, but by the members of the Church themselves” (Brachino), “the abandoning of the faith inside the Church. Exactly.” (Banfi). Then, following a video segment on Ali Agca and the 1981 assassination attempt, Brachino, Tornielli and Banfi took aim at the Sodano/Bertone “interpretation” that would require the events foretold in the Third Secret to “be interpreted as if they were referring to the past, and precisely to the assassination attempt against John Paul II on May 13, 1981, in St. Peter’s Square.” What Socci called the “preventative interpretation” was essentially deemed no longer operative, particularly in view of the Pope’s statement during his flight to Portugal:

Brachino: I want to ask Andrea Tornielli the following question: Between what is shown in the vision and what happened in St. Peter’s Square, I don’t think the two events coincide: in the vision the Pope died, but in 1981 he survived!

Tornielli: The big difference is that Pope John Paul II didn't die, he fell "as if dead", to use the same expression used by Cardinal Sodano in 2000. But we must also say, as Ratzinger himself said in the presentation of the official Secret, that these prophecies are not a "film about the future"... *but that inconsistency is there.*

Brachino: About this interpretation, Mr. Banfi, there are many things *that are actually leading us away from the true interpretation of the Third Secret that is being given now [by Pope Benedict]. If not everything has to happen afterwards, certainly not everything has happened already!*

Banfi: True, the plot that leads to the attack against John Paul II has not been clarified yet: Okay, Ali Agca was caught and imprisoned, but it is hard to understand any connection, any link between that event and Providence, its secret designs, as Sodano tried to imply in his interpretation of the Secret. *So there's more than one contradiction that leaves us perplexed.* Moreover, the vision speaks of arrows and shots, so not just a single gunshot, but a collective attack. ***The vision suggests a Vatican which seems to have been bombed and is now just a heap of rubble; the remaining faithful would climb the hill towards the cross, and those soldiers would attack them, and the Pope, with arrows and bullets, killing them all.***

Brachino, just before playing a video of Pope Benedict's stunning remarks on the papal plane, returned to the theme sounded by Socci, declaring: "On May 13, 2010, another Pope, Benedict XVI, made some remarkable statements *which reopened the case.* On May 13th, *a date that will remain forever in the history of Catholicism.*" Brachino punctuated the video with a comment that indicated that the Italian media, joining Catholics all over the world, now recognized that a new chapter had been opened in the Third Secret controversy in a book that would not be closed until the whole story is read, a chapter in which the Secret as a prophecy of apostasy in the Church is revealed: "Here Benedict XVI brings to mind the speeches of Paul VI about the '*smoke of Satan within the Church,*' and it seems also to echo the great writings of Charles Hodge, who spoke about Christianity after Christ and without Christ. What comes to our minds is the dramatic question, in the form of poetry, posed by T. S. Eliot: 'Is it the Church that has abandoned humanity, or is it humanity that has abandoned the Church?'"

The Mediaset broadcast demonstrated that, years after the Vatican Secretary of State had ventured to put an end to the Third Secret of Fatima and the Message of Fatima as a whole, there was an ever-growing awareness among the faithful that the prophecies and warnings of the Virgin Mother of God to Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco were more alive, and more urgent, than ever. The "official" version had been completely overturned in the court of public opinion.

An Untimely Passing

Less than three weeks after the critical dissection of the official account on Mediaset, Giuseppe De Carli, age 58, passed away unexpectedly at Gemelli Polyclinic in Rome, reportedly while undergoing radiotherapy for a suddenly discovered inoperable throat cancer. Gemelli was the same hospital in which John Paul II had called for the text of the vision in 1981 while recovering from the nearly fatal wounds Ali Agca had inflicted on him.

Did De Carli know about his terminal illness when he appeared at “The Fatima Challenge” conference, stepping from behind the Vatican’s stone wall of silence and evasion to encounter his fellow Catholics on the revealing ground of a free and open discussion in search of the truth? Or did he discover his illness after his appearance at the Ergife Hotel? We do not know. But we do know that, along with the conference as a whole, De Carli’s decision to appear and attempt a defense of Bertone’s indefensible position must have contributed to the impetus for Pope Benedict’s “Operation Truth,” an operation that, one must hope and pray, will lead at last to a full disclosure of the Virgin of Fatima’s message-warning to the Church and all humanity, while there is still time to avert the worst of what it foretells.

Giuseppe De Carli died on July 13, 2010, the very anniversary of the day on which the Mother of God revealed the Third Secret in its entirety to the seers of Fatima. There are no mere coincidences in the designs of Providence.



Pope Benedict XVI, at the end of his Papal Audience on May 11, 2011, went 50 yards from the podium to bless various statues including the Fatima Center’s Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Our Lady of Fatima. On the opposite angle of the camera, Father Gruner stands beside the statue with John Salza, who gratefully receive the Pope’s blessing. The Fatima Center’s Pilgrim Virgin Statue had also been blessed by Pope Paul VI at Fatima with the express purpose to travel and promote Our Lady’s Message.

Chapter 28

A Path to Victory

By April of 2011 it was apparent that the Pope was well aware of the Fatima Center's continuing initiatives and that, at least indirectly, he was responding to them. On April 22, 2011, Good Friday, the Pope made an unprecedented appearance on a TV call-in show to take selected questions from the viewers. The very last question he chose to answer included this query: "... And, on the subject of entrusting, do you intend to renew a consecration to the Virgin at the beginning of this new millennium?"

As with the pre-selected questions during the flight to Portugal a year earlier, this was clearly a matter the Pope wished to address. He replied in a manner that suggested at least some doubt whether the 1984 ceremony performed by John Paul II was the consecration Our Lady of Fatima had requested:

I think that the great, public act has been made. Perhaps one day it will be necessary to repeat it again, but at the moment it seems more important to me to live it, to make it real, to enter into this entrusting so that it might truly be our own.... Thus, at the moment, I do not intend to make a new act of public entrustment, but I would rather invite you to enter into this entrustment that has already been made...⁷⁷

The Pope "thinks" that the public act has been done, but he stops short of declaring this definitively. He stops short because he is not certain. Why else would His Holiness even entertain the possibility of repeating the "entrustment" of 1984 if, as the Secretary of State's Party Line insisted, the 1984 ceremony certainly complied with Our Lady's request? And why would His Holiness say "at the moment" he did not intend to perform another ceremony in obedience to the Virgin's request if he were not aware of the possibility that at a later moment—perhaps very soon—the reality of the situation in the Church and the world might compel him to try again, as it was apparent that the promised conversion of Russia and a period of peace in the world had never arrived?

Indeed, Pope Benedict has repeatedly made pronouncements that depart from the inexplicable "optimism" of the post-Vatican II era and return to the line of his pre-conciliar predecessors and their grave warnings for the Church and humanity. There is no longer any pretense of a "renewal" of the Church after the Council:

The darkness that poses a real threat to mankind, after all, is the fact that he can see and investigate tangible material things, but cannot see where the world is going or whence it comes, where our own life is going, what is good and what is evil. The darkness enshrouding God and obscuring values is the real threat to our existence and to the world in general.⁷⁸

In our days, when *in vast areas of the world the faith is in danger of dying out like a flame which no longer has fuel*, the overriding priority is to make

⁷⁷ vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2011/april/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20110422_intervista_en.html

⁷⁸ Homily for the Easter Vigil, April 7, 2012.

God present in this world and to show men and women the way to God. Not just any god, but the God who spoke on Sinai; to that God whose face we recognize in a love which presses “to the end” (cf. Jn 13:1)—in Jesus Christ, crucified and risen. The real problem at this moment of our history is that *God is disappearing from the human horizon*, and, with the dimming of the light which comes from God, *humanity is losing its bearings, with increasingly evident destructive effects.*⁷⁹

How many winds of doctrine we have known in recent decades, how many ideological currents, how many ways of thinking... The small boat of thought of many Christians has often been tossed about by these waves—thrown from one extreme to the other: from Marxism to liberalism, even to libertinism; from collectivism to radical individualism; from atheism to a vague religious mysticism; from agnosticism to syncretism, and so forth.... *We are moving towards a dictatorship of relativism* which does not recognize anything as certain and which has as its highest goal one’s own ego and one’s own desires.⁸⁰

In the Old and New Testaments, the Lord proclaims *judgment on the unfaithful vineyard*. The judgment that Isaiah foresaw is brought about in the *great wars and exiles* for which the Assyrians and Babylonians were responsible. The judgment announced by the Lord Jesus refers above all to the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70. *Yet the threat of judgment also concerns us, the Church in Europe, Europe and the West in general*. With this Gospel, the Lord is also crying out to our ears the words that in the Book of Revelation He addresses to the Church of Ephesus: “*If you do not repent I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place*” (2:5).⁸¹

Thus the Pope himself has repeatedly heralded a coming apocalypse—like that apparently seen in the vision of the “Bishop dressed in White.” He could not have put the matter more starkly: “a real threat to mankind” and “the real threat to our existence and to the world in general.” And yet the Consecration of Russia could avert the scene of devastation that the vision presents to us, albeit without the precise warning the Virgin must have attached to the vision in the words we have yet to see.

Pope Benedict is evidently gravely concerned about a link between the crisis in the Church and the growing civilizational crisis of a once Christian West. As Christopher Ferrara has observed in his work *False Friends of Fatima*, the Pope seems to harbor the intention “to reverse the Church’s course over the past forty years, to reverse its ruinous ‘new orientation,’ of which the ‘new’ Message of Fatima is a part.” For that reason, notes Ferrara, Pope Benedict has taken several steps to restore order in the Church: “[He] has ‘liberated’ the traditional Latin Mass, declaring that every priest in the Church is free to offer it. He has refused any longer to distribute Communion in the hand at papal Masses. He has called for a ‘hermeneutic of continuity’ between Vatican II and the Church’s constant teaching before the Council—in itself a devastating admission that something is wrong with the Council. He has lifted the ‘excommunication’ of the bishops of the Society of Saint Pius X, initiating theological discussions with the

⁷⁹ “Letter of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI to All the Bishops of the World”, March 10, 2009.

⁸⁰ “Homily for the Pro Eligendo Summo Pontifice Mass, 18 April 2005” (as Cardinal Ratzinger).

⁸¹ Pope Benedict XVI, “Homily for the opening of the 11th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops”, Rome, October 2, 2005.

Society's representatives precisely on the question of Vatican II's conformity with Catholic Tradition."

In addition to these measures of true reform and restoration, will this Pope finally accomplish the definitive Consecration of Russia in the manner Our Lady requested? Throughout 2011 Father Gruner continued to work and pray for that outcome. And yet again his persistence would find a reward, if not in fact the fulfillment of Our Lady's request.

A New Frontier

On April 15, 2011, the Fatima Center entered an entirely new frontier in its campaign for the Consecration and full disclosure of the Third Secret. On that date the apostolate's latest initiative, Fatima TV, conducted its first digital TV broadcast on Channel 213 in Rome. That the channel number coincided with the date of Sister Lucia's death (February 13) was another of those "coincidences" that could not fail to suggest a providential intervention on the apostolate's behalf.

With the audacious initiative of acquiring a TV channel in Rome, the apostolate had introduced into the very heart of the Church a voice in the most powerful medium of social communication ever devised; and that voice would be a standing rebuke to the plans and policies of a Vatican apparatus that had for far too long impeded the accomplishment of the great mission the Mother of God had assigned to Her Church at Fatima.

About two weeks before the launch of Fatima TV, Father Gruner gave an interview in the studio of the new channel to representatives of Rai Uno, Italy's largest state-sponsored television network. Over the next two hours he provided the interviewer with a thorough overview of the entire Fatima affair, with special emphasis on Cardinal Bertone's role in the Vatican cover-up of the missing text of the Secret. That Rai Uno had deemed Father Gruner an authoritative source on Fatima in general and the Third Secret in particular, a source worthy of a primary interview on the subject, was itself a breakthrough for the legitimation of the "Fatimist" position. What was once dismissed as "Fatimist" extremism was rapidly assuming the character of respectable Catholic opinion even in the eyes of the formerly skeptical—even in Rome itself.

While only a few sound bites from the interview were included in Rai Uno's later program on Fatima, it was obvious that the network had confronted Cardinal Bertone with the substance of Father Gruner's contentions. On April 30, Cardinal Bertone appeared on the major Italian radio station, GR 1, for an interview with its director, Antonio Preziosi. In the course of the interview, which related primarily to the pending beatification of John Paul II, Bertone made an astonishing admission respecting both the Consecration of Russia and the Third Secret: "The third mystery of Fatima is accomplished *in part* in the description given by Sister Lucia, but as (then) Cardinal Ratzinger said, the Immaculate Heart of Mary *will* triumph. It is necessary to cultivate hope and not be catastrophists."⁸²

This was a statement ripe with implications decidedly at odds with the Party Line Bertone had hitherto been promoting. For "the description given by Sister Lucia" was none other than the vision published in 2000, so that if what the vision depicts is but

⁸² "Il terzo mistero di Fatima è compiuto in parte nella descrizione che è stata fatta da suor Lucia, ma come ha detto (l'allora) cardinale Ratzinger il cuore immacolato di Maria trionferà. Bisogna coltivare la speranza e non essere catastrofisti". Andrea Tornielli, "Il Terzo Segreto non è compiuto," <http://2.andreatornielli.it/?p=1562>.

a partial fulfillment of the Secret, then there must be more than the vision. Where is it? And if the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart remains an event that will happen in the future, and is thus not unfolding before us now, then what becomes of the Party Line that Russia was consecrated to the Immaculate Heart in 1984? The Blessed Virgin promised that Her Immaculate Heart would triumph precisely upon the moment of Russia's consecration; in fact, the Consecration is *part of that triumph*: "In the end My Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to Me, which will be converted, and a period of peace will be granted to the world." Yet, twenty-seven years after the 1984 ceremony, Bertone now admitted that the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart had not occurred, referring instead to the indefinite future. But he could hardly do otherwise, given the manifest failure of Russia to convert and a general state of world affairs that bespoke anything but a triumph for the Mother of God.

Moreover, the suggestion that one ought to cultivate hope instead of being a "catastrophist" was quite telling. Hope in what? Evidently, hope that the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart would *avert catastrophe*. But how could catastrophe be averted if Mary's triumph was still only an event in the indeterminate future? Had there been a valid consecration in 1984, as Bertone would have the public believe, there would be no need for hope in 2011 that catastrophes would be averted, for the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart would already be manifest and there would be no reason to fear any catastrophe. And just what did Bertone have in mind when he introduced the concept of catastrophe into the discussion? Does he know something the faithful do not know?

Andrea Tornielli did not miss the significance of Bertone's remark, linking it to the Pope's own explosive statements on the flight to Portugal during his pilgrimage of 2010. Noting that "there does not exist an official interpretation of that text [the vision published in 2000]"—another victory for the "Fatimist" position—Tornielli observed that Bertone's admission that the Secret had been accomplished only "in part" was "in full harmony with what was affirmed by Benedict XVI on the flight that carried him to Portugal... as well as in a passage of the homily for the Mass celebrated at Fatima."⁸³

Father Gruner's relentless pursuit of the truth had earned him the serious attention of Rai Uno and thus Bertone. That development had no doubt helped to provoke yet another chink in the crumbling edifice of Bertone's pseudo-official account of the Third Secret, which had already been jettisoned by the Pope himself at Fatima.

Pope Benedict Consecrates Italy to the Immaculate Heart

On the same date as the launching of Fatima TV (April 15), the Fatima Center commenced a massive publicity campaign for the Consecration of Russia. Among other initiatives, the Center's Rome headquarters arranged for the placement of a giant poster calling for the Consecration in Porta di Roma, the city's busiest shopping mall. An arresting image of Our Lady was accompanied by the words: "Only the Pope can save Rome! By a special prayer of only five-minutes." That is, the campaign tied the fate of Rome in particular to the fate of the world in general, failing Russia's consecration.

⁸³ Tornielli, loc. cit. ("Va qui ricordato che, come venne spiegato al momento della pubblicazione del Terzo segreto, nel giugno 2000, non esiste una interpretazione ufficiale di quel testo... Parole in piena sintonia con quanto affermato da Benedetto XVI sul volo che lo portava in Portogallo, un anno fa, come pure in un passaggio dell'omelia della messa celebrata a Fatima.")



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Pictured left, in English translation, is one of the 70 outdoor signs (13' X 9.75') displayed around Rome two weeks prior to the Conference.

All told, more than a million people saw the poster at Porta di Roma, and millions more saw posters at other locations in Rome or heard advertorials and radio advertisements for the Fatima Center's upcoming "Consecration Now!" conference (to be held May 9-13). Pilgrims attended the Pope's Wednesday audience on May 11, 2011 with a large "Consecration Now!" banner directly in the Pope's line of sight. Among those pilgrims were Father Gruner and John Salza, who received personal blessings from the Pope in the private viewing area behind the Pope's *sedia*. (In a censorship operation typical of the Secretary of State's tight control over information flowing both in and out of the Vatican, as noted above, however, in footnote 60, Father Gruner's likeness was digitally edited out of five of the six photographs of the blessings taken by the papal photographer.)

By linking the Message of Fatima to the welfare of Rome, the campaign brought Fatima home to Romans with astonishing effect. The Fatima Center's office at Piazza Risorgimento was flooded with phone calls. The callers were informed about Our Lady of Fatima's request concerning Russia and of the chastisements She warned would follow if Her request were ignored, including the "annihilation" of "various nations." But the tenor of these conversations was not gloom and doom. Rather, as the Center's newsletter noted, "we told them about the wonderful mercy of Our Lady, Who has given the Church and the world Her promise of protection in exchange for a simple act of consecration."

The publicity campaign had undoubtedly had its effect on the Pope, for only 11 days after saying he would do no Consecration, and only six days before the commencement of the "Consecration Now!" conference, His Holiness announced that he would "entrust" Italy to the Immaculate Heart—yet another substitute for what Our Lady requested! On May 26, 2011, Pope Benedict, together with the Italian bishops, would conduct a public "Act of Entrustment" of the people of Italy to the Immaculate Heart in the great Roman basilica of Saint Mary Major.⁸⁴

"Is the Pope preparing the world for THE BIG CONSECRATION?" the Center's newsletter later queried. Father Gruner offered this assessment: "I believe he is. I pray

⁸⁴ Cf. "Pope Entrusts Italy to the Virgin's Protection," May 27, 2011, Vatican Information Service, <http://visnews-en.blogspot.com/2011/05/pope-entrusts-italy-to-virgins.html>.

that he is. I will do all I can to encourage the Holy Father, as I know you will by your support for Our Lady's Apostolate, which is so crucial at this time." As Father Gruner astutely observed: "Pope Benedict has set a precedent. He has put it in the mind of the bishops that together they can consecrate a nation—by name—to Our Lady. If Italy, why not Russia?" Why not, indeed?

Another Breakthrough Conference

While the Pope was preparing to consecrate Italy to the Immaculate Heart, the Fatima Center's "Consecration Now!" conference, held at the Ergife Hotel in Rome from May 9-13, 2011, produced further unprecedented advances for the work of the apostolate. In attendance for the proceedings was no less than Cardinal Renato Martino, former Prefect of two Vatican Congregations and the Vatican's permanent observer at the United Nations. He had thus served directly under the very Secretary of State whose complicity in blocking the Consecration of Russia and concealing the yet-to-be disclosed text of the Third Secret were principal subjects of the addresses given. Yet this Vatican Cardinal listened attentively and appreciatively to those very speakers.

A veteran Vatican journalist also in attendance remarked to Father Gruner that "Something has changed in the Vatican." In a moment that indicated just such a historic shift, Father Gruner approached Cardinal Martino to thank him for his attendance, and the Cardinal, taking Father Gruner's hand, uttered one word in Italian that could not have been more significant: *Coraggio!* Courage. The implication being that Father Gruner was engaged in a cause that required precisely what he had exhibited for so many years: the courage of perseverance in the face of opposition that, humanly speaking, seemed impossible to overcome. But Father Gruner would be the first to point out that all things are possible with God, Who mediates His graces through Her Who had come to give both dire warnings and precious promises to the Church and the world at Fatima.

If further proof of the growing mainstream acceptability of the "Fatimist" position were wanting, it was provided by the attendance at the conference of two prominent Vaticanists: the world-renowned Andrea Tornielli and the rising star Paolo Rodari. These first-rank Italian journalists and commentators not only attended the conference but also addressed its participants, who once would have been dismissed as a "Fatimist" fringe group but were now being taken quite seriously as a legitimate constituency of the faithful.

Tornielli's address clearly linked the post-Vatican II crisis in the Church to the contents of the Third Secret of Fatima—a stunning assessment, coming from a Vatican-accredited journalist whose career revolves around access to the corridors of power and influence in the Vatican controlled by the Secretary of State. Referring to his biography of Paul VI, Tornielli dropped a bombshell: that Pope Paul had specifically linked the mass defection of priests after Vatican II to the Third Secret, and that this is what had prompted his papal pilgrimage to Fatima on May 13, 1967. It cannot have been a mere happenstance that Paul VI chose the occasion of his sermon at Fatima on this date to lament that the "renewal" of the Church after Vatican II was going wrong: "What an evil it would be if an arbitrary interpretation, not authorized by the Magisterium, transformed this renewal into a disquieting disintegration of her traditional structure and constitution, substituting for the theology of the true and great teachers, new and

particular ideologies intended to detach modern thought from the norm of faith...⁸⁵
The same Pope would famously lament five years later that

By some fissure the smoke of satan has entered into the temple of God: there is doubt, uncertainty, problems, unrest. Doubt has entered our consciences, *and it has entered through the windows which were meant to have been opened to the light.* This state of uncertainty reigns even in the Church. It was hoped that after the Council there would be a day of sunlight in the history of the Church. *Instead, there came a day of clouds, of darkness, of groping, of uncertainty.* How did this happen? We will confide Our thoughts to you: there has been interference from an adverse power: *his name is the devil...*⁸⁶

It was one year after this stunning admission that Pope Paul would further admit publicly that perhaps he himself had contributed to the debacle of what was being vaunted as the Church's long-overdue "opening to the world" following the Council: "the opening to the world became a veritable invasion of the Church by worldly thinking. We have perhaps been too weak and imprudent."⁸⁷

These historic papal admissions of the vast ecclesial disturbances following the Second Vatican Council were clearly consistent with Tornielli's revelation that Paul VI knew that the Third Secret related to the post-conciliar internal crisis in the Church. Yet the vision published in 2000, standing alone, clearly gives no indication of any such internal crisis. The only reasonable inference was that the text of the Secret that Pope Paul read in 1963—a reading not mentioned in the "official account," which refers only to a reading in 1965—must be the missing companion to the vision. That companion text must explain the vision's full significance, relating the catastrophe it depicts to a collapse of faith and discipline within the Church accompanying the attack by external enemies seen in the vision.

For his part, Rodari boldly outlined the serious contradictions in Cardinal Bertone's account of the Third Secret and noted that in recent days it appeared that, in the face of mounting evidence of a cover-up, there was now "a will to say something" in the Vatican, as indicated by Bertone's comment that the Third Secret—contrary to everything he had said before—has been fulfilled only "in part." Both Tornielli and Rodari admitted the possibility that Bertone was concealing a text containing the part of the Secret not disclosed by the vision alone, a suspicion that by now had ripened into a presumptive truth in the mainstream Italian media.

That a Vatican Cardinal and two Vaticanists of the first rank had appeared at this conference in a manner sympathetic to its themes marked a new stage in the progress of the cause for which the Fatima Priest had been laboring for decades. By the end of 2011, Father Gruner could discern the opening up of a broad new path toward victory for the cause. For now even respectable voices in the mainstream of public opinion, and even from within the Vatican apparatus, were acknowledging the absolute seriousness of the Fatima event and the failure of the upper hierarchy to fulfill the mandate the Virgin had given Her Church at that place nearly a century before.

⁸⁵ "Quale danno sarebbe se un'interpretazione arbitraria e non autorizzata dal magistero della Chiesa facesse di questo risveglio un'inquietudine dissolvitrice della sua tradizionale e costituzionale compagine, sostituisse alla teologia dei veri e grandi maestri ideologie nuove e particolari, intese a togliere dalla norma della fede quanto il pensiero modern..." Homily at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Fatima, May 13, 1967, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/homilies/1967/documents/hf_p-vi_hom_19670513_it.html.

⁸⁶ Paul VI, *Insegnamenti*, Ed. Vaticana, Vol. X, 1972, p. 707.

⁸⁷ Speech of November 23, 1973.

Chapter 29

A Last Chance

From May 13-18, 2012, the Fatima Center staged in Rome yet another Fatima conference in the Vatican's shadow. The theme, "Fatima: Your Last Chance," reflected the growing urgency of the Fatima Message at a time when even Pope Benedict was warning that "moral consensus is collapsing, consensus without which juridical and political structures cannot function. Consequently, the forces mobilized for the defense of such structures seem doomed to failure... *The very future of the world is at stake.*"⁸⁸ Here the Pope indicated a return to the line of sober realism concerning the so-called modern world that had characterized the teaching of all of his predecessors before the delusional "optimism" attributed to the Second Vatican Council.

An Extraordinary Intervention

It seemed that every conference staged by the Center since "The Fatima Challenge" in 2010 was destined to produce yet another breakthrough for the movement to bring about, at long last, a fulfillment of the Fatima mandate by a true and proper Consecration of Russia and complete disclosure of the Third Secret. The breakthrough this time was into the sphere of political activity. The Honorable Mario Borghezio, an Italian representative to the Parliament of the European Union, delivered an extraordinary address on a theme to which he had been drawn by the apostolate's work: the duty even of political authorities, for the sake of the common good of all men, to seek Russia's consecration to the Immaculate Heart. Borghezio made this stunning announcement:

I will ask the Catholic Members of the European Parliament (but nothing stops others from joining us in this initiative) to support and sign a motion in order to bring the Message of Fatima, through the European Parliament, to the attention of the over 400 million people of the European Union, represented by the 27 member States. Afterwards, I will also try to involve the Catholic members of the Europe-Russia Commission, of which I'm an effective member, to hear and obey the Message of Heaven to consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Borghezio noted that he was already deeply involved in opposition to the globalist and anti-Christian agenda of the EU Parliament itself, "which unfortunately is causing much suffering and disappointments with its decisions—decisions which I, together with other Members of Parliament, tried to oppose and resist." But now he was calling for a spiritual resistance movement led by the very Mother of God, thus breaking the pernicious and quite imaginary "wall of separation" between religion and politics demanded by the powers that be.

A Catholic Declaration of Independence

Given the dire moral, political and economic state of European and world affairs, Borghezio declared, Russia's consecration to Mary "is a duty of every single Catholic

⁸⁸ Benedict XVI, CHRISTMAS GREETING TO THE ROMAN CURIA, December 20, 2010.

politician because I believe that the Message of Fatima is addressed mostly and fundamentally to whoever has political responsibilities! In this period of history, there are dangers threatening peace—like a possible nuclear war, the problems with Iran and terrorism, from which Italy has suffered a huge blow just a few days ago—but also dangers that, at a superficial view, might seem less important. I’m talking about the financial and economic crisis.”

Borghезio’s landmark address concluded with an act of political courage almost unheard of in a “modern world” that has turned its back on God. He dared to condemn the betrayal of Europe’s Catholic heritage by its political and economic leaders, and to call upon the faithful to rise up against the traitors:

This is another very important point: the Europe of the Cathedrals, the Europe of the churches, the Europe of the humble Faith, the Europe of the people who work, pray, sacrifice and suffer and are now regrettably under control by the world banking system and its usury! Now, that Europe, the Europe of our people, is not dead, because WE are that Europe!

But Borghезio was not calling for any sort of revolution in the rebellious modern sense, but rather a spiritual turning about in the hearts and minds of both rulers and subjects that would, as Antonio Socci had put it in his exposé of the Third Secret cover-up, “overthrow the mentality dominating modernity.” The Message of Fatima, said Borghезio, “asks the world to open its eyes, mainly regarding freedom: terrorism, financial crisis, wars, even a nuclear one—God be merciful to us—three terrifying dangers that threaten humanity, and all three have to do with a fundamental point: freedom!”

What Borghезio had called for was nothing less than a Catholic declaration of independence from the powers that had for so long been dominating the modern world and arraying themselves in opposition to the Church’s salvific mission to all nations. Soon Borghезio would make good on his commitment to bring the Message of Fatima into the very nerve center of Europe’s aridly secularist, post-Christian regime: the EU Parliament. And Father Gruner would be a prominent part of that historic event.

A Key Endorsement from Beyond the Grave

Some three months after the “Last Chance” conference, evidence surfaced that another high-ranking member of the Secretariat of State had rejected the Secretary of State’s Party Line on Fatima, thus further corroborating the veteran Vatican journalist’s advice to Father Gruner that “something has changed in the Vatican.” The evidence was in the form of an endorsement of Christopher Ferrara’s *The Secret Still Hidden* by no less than Archbishop Pietro Sambi, who had served as Papal Nuncio to the United States and was thus a member of the Secretariat of State’s top tier. This endorsement appeared in the August 2011 issue of the prestigious Catholic review *Inside the Vatican*, a month after Sambi’s death. An article by editor-in-chief Robert Moynihan, entitled “Passing of a Friend,” pays tribute to Sambi and discusses some of his fond memories of the man. One of these was a discussion of the question whether the Vatican was concealing part of the Third Secret:

We were discussing the Third Secret of Fatima, the allegations that the Vatican has not published the entire text of the Third Secret as revealed to Sister Lucia, and the response of Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, the Vatican

Secretary of State, in a book where Bertone states that there is nothing more to be revealed.

Archbishop Sambi said, “Excuse me.” He got up, went out of the room, and came back with a book. “Here,” he said. “Do you know this book? You should read it.” It was Christopher Ferrara’s *The Secret Still Hidden*.

“Wait,” I said. “You are the Pope’s representative in the US, and *you are urging me to read a book that questions what the Secretary of State wrote?*”

Archbishop Sambi replied, “All I am saying is that there are interesting things worth reading in this book. And in the end, we are all after the truth, aren’t we? The truth is the important thing ...”⁸⁹

This stunning endorsement—from beyond the grave—of a meticulous indictment of the Secretary of State’s cover-up of the Third Secret, coming from one of the Secretary’s highest-ranking attachés, was yet another tribute to the work of the Fatima Center, whose driving force was a lone, persistent priest from Canada. The truth is indeed the important thing. And as the Year of Our Lord 2012 moved toward its conclusion, the truth about the Third Secret and the Message of Fatima as a whole was rising to the surface with irresistible force.

Zenit Abandons the Party Line

By the fall of 2012 it seemed that barrier after barrier was falling before the advance of the cause to which Father Gruner had first dedicated himself thirty years earlier. In yet another testament to Father Gruner’s perseverance, the prominent “mainstream” Catholic news agency Zenit, which boasts 520,000 subscribers and is semi-officially a press arm of the Vatican, ran a major story that implicitly endorsed the entire program of his Fatima apostolate.

The article by Edward Pentin must be considered a minor revolution in mainstream Catholic opinion, which for so long had belittled the “Fatimists” and their insistence that Russia had never been consecrated to the Immaculate Heart. Pentin remarked the coming 1700th anniversary of Emperor Constantine’s victory at the Milvian Bridge on October 28, 312, which the Emperor attributed to the miraculous intervention of Christ, prompting the Emperor’s conversion, which began the conversion of the entire Western world.⁹⁰ Pentin quoted Edmund Mazza, a professor of history and political science at Azusa Pacific University in Los Angeles, for the proposition that the so-called modern world “has forgotten its Christian origins ... People are concerned about saving the planet, global warming, and so forth, and there’s certain legitimate concerns here, but what we’ve lost is an awareness of the salvation of the soul.” As a result, “*we’re either nearing the End Times or we’re in the End Times*, because what we have is the disintegration of Christian civilization.”

Mazza specifically linked this situation to the unheeded Message of Fatima: “It [the Message of Fatima] foretold the Bolsheviks would take over Russia, institute a secular

⁸⁹ “Third Secret Breakthrough; *Inside the Vatican Reveals: Papal Nuncio to US Endorsed Chris Ferrara’s Book The Secret Still Hidden*,” *The Remnant*, August 6, 2011, remnantnewspaper.com/Archives/2011-0815-ferrar-nuncio-inside-vatican.htm; cf: “Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Pietro Sambi Endorses Christopher Ferrara’s Book: *The Secret Still Hidden*”, at <http://www.fatimacruser.com/cr100/cr100pg56.pdf>.

⁹⁰ Edward Pentin, “The New Evangelization of the Modern World,” October 11, 2012, <http://www.zenit.org/article-35701?l=english>.

socialism where government controls everything, tells everyone what to do, and where government contradicts the people's religion, Christianity in particular." "And what do we see today?" he asked. Answering his own question he noted,

In America, the Church is being persecuted now quite openly; individual Christians, let alone Church institutions, are going to be forced to pay for contraception and abortifacients, to go against their moral principles. It's Diocletian's persecution all over again: if you refuse to follow the norms of state, you're going to suffer.

Pentin ran with the Fatima theme, observing:

During the apparitions, Our Lady of Fatima talks about the 'errors of Russia,' meaning the errors of atheism and socialism which would lead to the deaths of 60 million people in the 20th century. 'Russia will spread her errors throughout the world,' She warned 'raising up wars and persecutions against the Church, the good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, various nations will be annihilated.

In this connection Pentin quoted Edward Lucas, a correspondent for *The Economist* who spoke at the same conference as Mazza, to the effect that "instead of spending millions of dollars on weapons as it did during the Cold War, Russia is now a state of espionage and deception, with a former KGB agent as its president—a remarkable reality if one imagines the Nazis had won World War II and then, after it had collapsed, they remained in power." In other words, Russia had clearly not converted; her errors continue to spread about the world. Here Pentin quotes Mazza to the effect that Russia's errors are like "a vampire that refuses to die. 'If you want to kill a vampire, you can't shoot it, you've got to use a wooden stake.'"

And what was the wooden stake that would kill the vampire? Here Mazza introduced the revolutionary change of opinion: "Jesus and Mary gave us the solution: *the Consecration of Russia.*" Mazza, Pentin noted uncritically, had observed that while John Paul II "consecrated the whole world in 1984... *Russia has still not been singled out for consecration.*" And then the amazing clincher—not from any "Fatimist," but from Mazza, a college professor in Los Angeles writing for perhaps the most widely read Internet Catholic news service:

The only thing that will kill the errors of socialism and the dictatorship of relativism that the Pope has talked about is this: *We need the Pope and the bishops to take five minutes of a public ceremony in which they consecrate Russia to Mary's Immaculate Heart.*

As John Vennari noted, Mazza's reference to "five minutes of a public ceremony" is one of the themes the publications of the Fatima Center had sounded often: a brief public ceremony that will change the world, if only the Pope and the bishops will make that minimal effort. In fact, the theme of "a five-minute prayer" was precisely that of the Center's Roman publicity campaign in 2011, which had clearly provoked the papal consecration of Italy in that year. And then another clincher, this time from Pentin by way of Zenit: "The Year of Faith may be the perfect time to do so."

Thus did a mainstream news service with close ties to the Vatican matter-of-factly present the view that only the Consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart could avert disaster for the West, that this Consecration has not yet been performed, and that

the Year of Faith proclaimed by Pope Benedict would be the perfect time to perform it. There could hardly have been a more resounding public validation of the primary aim of Father Gruner's apostolic work of the past thirty years.

Breakthrough at Strasbourg

But there was still another, even more dramatic, breakthrough into the wider world for the cause of Fatima. On October 23, 2012, Father Gruner and Christopher Ferrara appeared at the headquarters of the Parliament of the European Union in Strasbourg, France to speak in support of an absolutely unprecedented motion in modern political society: *a declaration by the EU Parliament calling upon Pope Benedict XVI to carry out the Consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary*. Two members of the Parliament, the Honorable Mario Borghezio and the Honorable Lorenzo Fontana, sponsored the motion and invited Father Gruner and Mr. Ferrara to speak in its support at the time of its official introduction.

The text of the historic measure refers to the threat of "great danger at the present time to world peace and the serenity of all European peoples" and notes that "the Blessed Virgin Mary has promised a long period of prosperity and peace, if and only if, the Holy Father will consecrate Russia in a solemn and public manner, as precisely specified by Her in the Message of Fatima." Accordingly, the motion provided for a declaration by Parliament formally requesting that "His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI... fulfill the will of the Queen of Heaven" by performing the Consecration in order to address European and world problems. Speaking before the international press corps in the parliamentary press hall, Father Gruner and Mr. Ferrara made presentations urging Parliament to pass the motion, including a discussion of the content, undeniable authenticity, and absolute urgency of the Fatima Message for the Church and humanity at large. The two speakers were introduced to the world press by MEP's Borghezio and Fontana, who appeared alongside them at the press conference. After the presentation, at least six more members of Parliament added their endorsements to the motion.

As of this writing, the EU Parliament has not acted on the motion, but even if it never comes before that body for a vote, its mere introduction was a dramatic and salutary provocation in one of the world's most important public forums. That the legislative nerve center of the New World Order in a post-Christian Europe was the site of this initiative, and that it came in the midst of an ever-deepening worldwide spiritual, moral, social and economic crisis, seemed to represent a final stage-setting for the conclusion of the drama that began almost a century before at the Cova da Iria.



Giuseppe De Carli, co-author of Cardinal Bertone's book *The Last Secret of Fatima*, was willing to come forward to try to defend his position at the "Fatima Challenge" conference in 2010. De Carli learned many facts from the conference that had apparently been withheld from him. On his departure from the conference he warmly embraced Father Gruner and said: "Thank you, Father Gruner, for the great work you are doing." Days after, on May 11 and 13, 2010 he heard Pope Benedict XVI tell him and the whole world, "He would be deceiving himself who thinks that the prophetic mission of Fatima is concluded." On July 13, 2010, Mr. De Carli passed away.

Chapter 30

The Final Act

If Father Gruner's Fatima Apostolate were a commercial corporation engaged in some profit-making enterprise, the graph of its gains over the years 2000-2012 would trend sharply upward and the board of directors would heartily approve a large raise and bonus for the CEO whose visionary leadership had led the company to ever-greater success. But the apostolate is no mere corporation, and its head has not reaped any financial rewards. Its mission statement aims at something far higher and nobler than a calculus of profit and loss.

Father Gruner would be the first to acknowledge that revelation of the Third Secret in its entirety, the Consecration of Russia, and the consequent Triumph of the Immaculate Heart are ends of infinite worth, so that anything less than their full accomplishment would be infinitely far from the mark. God does not bargain for less than what He has required through the prophets He sends to admonish and instruct men in each age of salvation history. Thus, where the Message of Fatima is concerned, better is not nearly good enough.

And yet, throughout a quarter-century of tireless labor, Father Gruner had demonstrated that determined leadership and the prudent use of the means of social communication could produce great gains for the spiritual cause to which he has devoted his priesthood since 1977. God has always deigned to employ human instruments to effectuate the designs of Heaven, and by God's grace Father Gruner had served with distinction as one such instrument. But he is only one small part of a grand design, conceived in Heaven before the beginning of the world, whose center and summit is the most exalted human instrument of all: Mary Immaculate, Mediatrix of All Graces—including the singular graces to be unleashed by the fulfillment of what She requested in His name at the Cova da Iria nearly a century ago.

As the year 2012 drew to a close, Father Gruner continued laboring, praying and offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the consummation of the divine design revealed to the Church and the world at Fatima. As this new edition of his biography appears, he continues to work seemingly endless days, managing the complex affairs of an international organization that has thrived despite all efforts to destroy or discredit it in places on high. He subsists on the plain food provided to him, and when sleep can no longer be deferred, he retires to the sparsely furnished bedroom of the modest old home his parents left him in the working class town of Fort Erie. He drives his unimpressive car or takes a plane to one meeting, conference or rally after another, and his stamina is repeatedly being taxed to the point of collapse. Those who come to hear him speak are likely to see him struggle to avoid weeping at the tragedy unfolding before the eyes of an unbelieving world, but weeping as well at the joy of the Heavenly promise whose inevitable fulfillment lies at the end of it all.

Only God knows whether the Fatima Priest will live to see the accomplishment of the mission of the Virgin of Fatima to a fallen and ever more rebellious world. But he has already lived at least long enough to witness the hastening approach of that glorious fulfillment. And no matter how much time God has allotted to Father Nicholas Gruner, history will record his part in what must be the final act of the drama that is Fatima.



On a chilly Tuesday morning, October 23, 2012, Father Nicholas Gruner is awaiting the arrival of the statue of Our Lady of Fatima to lead in procession to the European Parliament building. He is standing in front of the beautiful gothic cathedral in the center of Strasbourg, France—after offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass inside.

With him are three Members of the European Parliament (MEP) who give their formal support for the official European Declaration in favor of the Consecration of Russia – MEP Lorenzo Fontana (1st on the left); MEP Mario Borghezio (5th from left); and MEP Elisabetta Gardini (4th from the right).

Father Gruner, your life is in danger here in Fatima!

...Cardinal Padiyara

The layman blocking the stairway abruptly flew after and seized Father Gruner, throwing him against the wall. The shocking sound of a ripping priestly cassock marked the moment. A second assailant grabbed him, spun him around, and again threw him against the wall.

Father Pacheco demanded, “*Why are you doing this? This man is a priest! Who told you to do this? Did the Rector tell you to do this?*” The assailant nodded, “*Yes.*”

Cardinal Padiyara later told Father Gruner, “*Father Gruner, your life is in danger here in Fatima!*”

The Vatican’s tactics to silence Fr. Nicholas Gruner—and Our Lady of Fatima—have taken many forms, including physical assault in the very sacristy of the Fatima Shrine in Portugal.

Fatima Priest is the amazing story of the life and labors of Fr. Nicholas Gruner, who has devoted his entire priesthood to the service of Our Lady of Fatima. Having built the largest and farthest-reaching Fatima apostolate in the world, he stands as the remaining obstacle to Our Lady’s enemies, who want only to silence and bury Her Message forever. This Message—the world’s only hope for escaping enslavement and the annihilation of whole nations—has already been distorted and buried to such an extent that each of us is even now in the most extreme danger.

From Canada to Fatima, and from India to Mexico, and on to the inner workings of the Vatican bureaucracy in its pursuit of *Ostpolitik*, ***Fatima Priest*** is a global adventure more exciting than fiction ... and more deadly serious. Truly more serious than even most people imagine. The stakes in this battle are counted in the eternal loss of many human souls. The outcome of this global battle will mean the survival or end of Western civilization and all civilization. As Our Lady said,

“If My requests are not granted, ... various nations will be annihilated.

Only I can help you!”

...Our Lady of Fatima

