

# *Fatima For Today: A Response*

**In his book on what he calls “the Urgent Marian Message of Hope” Father Andrew Apostoli advances the Vatican Secretary of State’s “Party Line” on Fatima. The result is not “an urgent message of hope” but yet another attempt to bury the Third Secret and defend the refusal to consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.**

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## **Introduction**

In my book *The Secret Still Hidden*, I examined the evidence that has proven beyond all serious dispute the existence of a text of the Third Secret of Fatima that accompanies and explains the vision of “the Bishop dressed in white,” published by the Vatican on June 26, 2000. As I show in my book, the claim that the vision standing alone is all there ever was to the Third Secret—a claim advanced by the Vatican Secretary of State in his attempt to end the Third Secret controversy—was in doubt from the very beginning.

Within a year of the vision’s publication even a figure as prominent as Mother Angelica, foundress of the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN), declared on live television: “I happen to be one of those individuals who thinks we didn’t get the whole thing.”<sup>1</sup> And, having examined the evidence with an open mind, even a figure as skeptical as Antonio Socci, the renowned Italian public intellectual, author and writer on Catholic themes, ended up abandoning his original conviction and making this declaration in his own book on the subject, *The Fourth Secret of Fatima*: “[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.”<sup>2</sup>

In the eleven years that have elapsed since publication of the vision, the evidence for a companion text has mounted to the point where an Italian journalist of the prominence of Andrea Torielli, speaking to a television audience of millions on Italy’s largest privately-owned TV network, could declare flatly that “the existence of two texts in two different places seems to me now a well established fact.”<sup>3</sup> Indeed it is.

Among many other things that have come to light since 2000 is the testimony of Archbishop Loris F. Capovilla, the still-living personal secretary to John XXIII. Capovilla revealed in 2006 that there was an envelope containing a text of the Secret, kept in the papal apartments in a writing desk called “Barbarigo,” on the outside of which John XXIII had ordered to be written the names of all those who had read its contents and a notation of his decision to leave it to others to determine what to do with the text inside.

<sup>1</sup>“Mother Angelica Live,” May 16, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Antonio Socci, *The Fourth Secret of Fatima*, p. 173.

<sup>3</sup>“Fatima: An Unfinished Business,” Rete 4, Mediaset, June 23, 2010.

Thanks to Capovilla's eyewitness testimony and his written records of the event, we know that Paul VI retrieved the "Capovilla envelope" from the Barbarigo desk and read its contents in 1963—two years *before* Pope Paul read the text of the vision, according to the Vatican's account.

Thus, Paul VI read two texts, not one. When confronted with this discrepancy in the dates by the Italian scholar Solideo Paolini, who asked whether it indicated two different envelopes and two different texts pertaining to the Third Secret, Archbishop Capovilla answered: "Exactly so!" [*Per l'appunto!*"] Further, in a tape-recorded admission—reported in the Italian press and never denied by Capovilla—the Archbishop revealed there is an "attachment" to the text of the vision, which we have never seen. The Secretary of State has since been forced to admit the existence of the "Capovilla envelope" with its telltale notations, yet has failed and refused to produce it. The Secretary of State has never denied the existence of the "attachment" revealed by Capovilla.

All of this, and much more, is documented in my book as well as Socci's book. Most of this evidence is now common knowledge in the Catholic world and will not be rehashed here. Suffice it to note, as I do in an appendix to this article, that there are at least thirty-three reasons indicating the existence of a suppressed text that explains the vision of the "Bishop dressed in white" and thus forms an integral part of the Third Secret of Fatima.

## I.

### PROMOTING THE PARTY LINE ON FATIMA

Although the cat has been out of the bag for a long time now, the Secretary of State is sticking to his story; and there are still apologists willing to ignore all the evidence and defend his version of events. One of these apologists is Father Andrew Apostoli, who has written a book called *Fatima for Today (FFT)*.

*FFT* is the same sort of work as *Last Visionary of Fatima (LVF)*, the book-interview by the current Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone. Both works are seeming tributes to the Fatima prophecies, filled with pious statements about prayer and penance and the life and writings of Sister Lucia. But this material thinly conceals an overriding polemical aim found in key passages of the book: to persuade the reader to abide by the Secretary of State's "party line" on Fatima. This party line, first dictated by the preceding Secretary of State, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, has three elements:

First, that the Third Secret has been revealed entirely in the form of the enigmatic vision of the "Bishop dressed in White" as "interpreted" for us by none other than the Secretary of State, who assures us that the vision relates only to events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century culminating in the failed attempt on the life of John Paul II in 1981 and that it contains no prophetic warnings for the Church or mankind.

Second, that the consecration of Russia was accomplished in 1984 by means of a ceremony that made no mention of Russia but which, insists

the Secretary of State, complies with Our Lady of Fatima's request for Russia's consecration.

Third, that since the Secret has been revealed and the consecration done, the prophetic content of the Message of Fatima now belongs to the past and "what remains" is only "the summons to penance and conversion."<sup>4</sup> To recall Sodano's announcement at Fatima on May 13, 2000 concerning the impending publication of the vision on June 26, 2000: "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 start of the twentieth century, remains timely and urgent today."<sup>5</sup>

In short, the party line is that "Fatima is finished." We are even expected to believe that the current state of Russia represents the "conversion" of that nation and the current state of the world the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart that Our Lady promised as the heavenly reward for Russia's consecration to Her.

### **By What Right?**

The question that immediately presents itself to the thoughtful Catholic is this: By what right does the *Vatican Secretary of State*, who has no pastoral authority over the universal Church, purport to issue dictates concerning the Fatima event and its meaning for the Church and the world? The answer, of course, is by no right at all. The Secretary of State's views on Fatima bind no one. The Secretary of State is merely the Vatican prelate who "manages" political and diplomatic activities of the Vatican city-state. His office is neither doctrinal nor theological in scope. He is not the Pope, and any attempt by him to exercise doctrinal or theological authority over the Church would be a usurpation of papal authority. The opinions of the Secretary of State on Fatima are, therefore, simply and only the opinions of the Secretary of State.

That is precisely why the former Cardinal Ratzinger, during the press conference at which the vision was published in 2000, made it clear that despite Cardinal Sodano's opinion on what the vision means, "*It is not the intention of the Church to impose a single interpretation.*"<sup>6</sup> Note well: the Vatican Secretary of State *does not speak for the Church in this matter*. We are free to reject his position. And, in fact, the former Cardinal Ratzinger himself has done just that since becoming Pope.

### **The Pope Rejects the Party Line**

The Pope himself pronounced emphatically against the Secretary of State's party line during his pilgrimage to Fatima in May of 2010, making it clear that the Third Secret is very much a part of the Church's present *and* future. During the flight to Fatima the

<sup>4</sup>*The Message of Fatima* (2000), "Theological Commentary," [www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_20000626\\_message-fatima\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000626_message-fatima_en.html)vatican. va.

<sup>5</sup>"Announcement by Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Secretary of State" in *The Message of Fatima* (TMF).

<sup>6</sup>See "Vatican Issues Text of Third Secret of Fatima," *New York Times*, June 27, 2000, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/06/27/world/vatican-issues-text-of-third-secret-of-fatima.html>.

Pope answered a question he had personally selected concerning whether the Third Secret pertains in any way to the sexual scandals now convulsing the Church—a telling question indeed, given that no such thing is depicted in the vision standing alone. Speaking in Italian, the Pope gave this explosive answer:

...[B]eyond this great vision of the suffering of the Pope, which we can in the first instance relate to John Paul II, are indicated *future realities of the Church* which are little by little developing and showing 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....

As for the *new things* that we can discover *in this message today*, there is also the fact that attacks on the Pope and the Church *do not come only from the outside, but the sufferings of the Church come precisely from inside the Church*, from the sin that exists in the Church. This too we have always seen, but *today we see in a really terrifying way* that the greatest persecution of the Church does not come from external enemies, but is born of sin in the Church, from the sin that exists in the Church...<sup>7</sup>

Here the Pope clearly hints at the existence of a missing companion text to the vision, whose existence Antonio Socci has courageously declared despite his friendship with both the Pope and Bertone. This text would go “*beyond the moment indicated in the vision*” to *speak* (“it is spoken”) of attacks on the Pope and the Church by *internal* enemies. There must be such a text because in the vision *there is no indication whatsoever of attacks on the Church from within*. Quite the contrary, the vision depicts only an *external* attack: i.e., the soldiers who kill a future Pope outside a half-ruined city and then proceed to martyr bishops, priests, religious and laity.

As if to make clear beyond any doubt that the Message of Fatima is not consigned to the past, as the party line would have it, on May 13, before an audience of 500,000 pilgrims, the Pope issued this dramatic pronouncement during his homily in the very sanctuary of the Fatima shrine:

“One *deceives himself* who thinks that the prophetic mission of Fatima is concluded.”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup>“...[O]ltre questa grande visione della sofferenza del Papa, che possiamo in prima istanza riferire a Papa Giovanni Paolo II, sono indicate realtà del futuro della Chiesa che man mano si sviluppano e si mostrano. Perciò è vero che oltre il momento indicato nella visione, si parla, si vede la necessità di una passione della Chiesa... Quanto alle novità che possiamo oggi scoprire in questo messaggio, vi è anche il fatto 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 si è sempre saputo, ma oggi lo vediamo in modo realmente terrificante: che la più grande persecuzione della Chiesa non viene dai nemici fuori, ma nasce dal peccato nella Chiesa...” See [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/speeches/2010/may/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20100511\\_portogallo-interview\\_it.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2010/may/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20100511_portogallo-interview_it.html) (paragraph breaks added).

<sup>8</sup>“Si illuderebbe chi pensasse che la missione profetica di Fatima sia conclusa.” From *OMELIA DEL SANTO PADRE BENEDETTO XVI* (Homily of the Holy Father Benedict XVI), [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/homilies/2010/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_hom\\_20100513\\_fatima\\_it.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2010/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20100513_fatima_it.html).

This clear papal negation of the party line prompted Socci to declare, in an article entitled “Why the Pope *Contradicts Bertone*,” that the Pope has “reopened the dossier” on the Third Secret and is now “engaged in a great ‘Operation Truth’ on Fatima, at the cost of *contradicting the version* of the Vatican Secretary of State.”<sup>9</sup> In a related article, entitled “Advice to Bertone: Mea Culpa and Penance,” Socci noted that the Pope has expressed “the exact antithesis” of Bertone’s position and he called upon Bertone to consider “dedicating himself to prayer and meditation on the warnings and the maternal solicitude of the Queen of Heaven.”<sup>10</sup>

### **An Ecclesiastical Politician**

At this point the reader might be wondering: How did the Vatican Secretary of State become involved in this controversy in the first place? Here it is opportune to note the markedly political function the Secretary of State has been performing since the “reform” of the Roman Curia following Vatican II, which effectively converted the office into a kind of ecclesiastical prime minister. The “prime minister” of the Vatican city-state has adopted a general “damage control” policy designed to serve the aims of “dialogue,” “ecumenism,” and relations with worldly powers.

It was Cardinal Sodano who feted Mikhail Gorbachev at the Vatican the day after the press conference at which the vision was published and (so Sodano thought) Fatima was consigned to the past. From the Secretary of State’s perspective the Fatima event in general and the Third Secret in particular, with its probable indictment of catastrophic failures of the upper hierarchy during the post-Vatican II crisis in the Church, is not a matter of our heavenly Mother’s prophetic warning to the Church and mankind but rather a public relations problem calling for a public relations solution: bury it and hope the public will forget it ever existed.

But this is not the first time the Secretary of State has tried to bury the truth. None other than Sodano was instrumental in protecting for decades the now-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 observes: “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.”<sup>11</sup> All-powerful indeed—so powerful that he took control of the Message of Fatima, although 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 presented in an exposé in *National Catholic Reporter*:

<sup>9</sup>“Perché il Papa smentisce Bertone (e Messori),” May 13, 2010, at <http://www.antoniosocci.com/2010/05/perche-il-papa-smentisce-bertone-e-messori/>.

<sup>10</sup>“Consiglio a Bertone: mea culpa e penitenza,” May 15, 2010, <http://www.antoniosocci.com/2010/05/consiglio-a-bertone-mea-culpa-e-penitenza/>

<sup>11</sup>Austen Ivereigh, “Will Sodano Resign Over Maciel?,” *America*, April 13, 2010, [http://www.americamagazine.org/blog/entry.cfm?entry\\_id=2749](http://www.americamagazine.org/blog/entry.cfm?entry_id=2749).

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.<sup>12</sup>

By late 2004, however, the future Pope Benedict XVI had had enough. 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 Benedict, he approved the order that Maciel abandon ministry for a 'life of penitence and prayer.'"<sup>13</sup> 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. I quite agree with the opinion expressed by the journal *First Things*: "Cardinal Sodano has to go. The Dean of the College of Cardinals [is]... an ongoing embarrassment to the Church he serves."<sup>14</sup> Yet he remains Dean of the College of Cardinals.

Now, on the question of Fatima, the former Cardinal Ratzinger has again broken with Sodano. Yet Fr. Apostoli persists in his promotion of the party line Sodano first laid down eleven years ago with his absurd "interpretation" of the Fatima prophecies. He seriously suggests that the Church and the world entrust their fate to an ecclesiastical politician who was helping to cover up a sex scandal at the very moment—without the least authority—he purported to speak for the Mother of God on the meaning of Her precious message to humanity. This outrage demands a reply, which is why this piece has been written.

### Why This Book?

Why would Fr. Apostoli publish a book that perpetuates the Vatican Secretary of State's clearly discredited campaign to bury Fatima when no one has any obligation to heed his opinions? What is going on here? Only one answer seems reasonable: the Secretary of State is behind the publication *Fatima for Today*. Like Bertone's *Last Visionary*, Fr. Apostoli's book is yet another exercise in "damage control" by the Vatican bureaucracy.

<sup>12</sup>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>.

<sup>13</sup>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>.

<sup>14</sup>Joseph Bottum, "The Cost of Maciel," *First Things*, May 12, 2010, <http://www.firstthings.com/onthesquare/2010/05/the-cost-of-father-maciel>.

That conclusion is supported by the enlistment of a high-ranking Vatican prelate to give *FFT* the appearance of authority in the form of a preface: namely, Cardinal Raymond Burke, Prefect of the Apostolic Signatura, the Vatican's canonical high court. Like the Secretariat of State, the Signatura has nothing to do with Marian apparitions and has no more competence in this matter than the Secretary of State. Yet Cardinal Burke lends his name to what is clearly an effort to strip the Message of Fatima of any prophetic content that should concern us.

Quoting one Fr. C.C. Martindale, S.J., the Cardinal assures us that there is nothing new in the Third Secret because, after all, “the first two parts of the secret contain nothing new” inasmuch as Hell is not a novel doctrine and thus the vision of Hell contains “no novel or startling *information* [emphasis in original]...” (p. xv). But it seems the Cardinal has overlooked a few pieces of “novel or startling information” in the first two parts of the Great Secret: (1) the imminent end of World War I; (2) the commencement of World War II after the appearance of a strange light in the night sky during the pontificate of Pius XI (identified by name); (3) the spread of Russia's errors throughout the world; (4) the loss of souls, further wars and persecutions of the Church, the martyrdom of the faithful, the suffering of the Pope, and the annihilation of nations; and (5) the express connection of these future events to an ultimatum: they will all take place unless Our Lady of Fatima's specific requests are granted, including the Consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart and the Communions of Reparation on the First Saturdays.

According to the Cardinal, however, the Consecration of Russia and the Third Secret are mere “controversies” that have “distracted from Our Lady's maternal instruction and have hindered others from attending to it.” (p. xiv). But the Consecration of Russia is at the very heart of Our Lady's “maternal instruction,” while the Third Secret undoubtedly foretells the consequences of failing to heed that instruction, including “various nations will be annihilated.” It is, therefore, the party line that has hindered obedience to the instruction our Mother gave us at Fatima.

But promoting the party line is really what this book is all about. Hence in his preface Cardinal Burke also expresses the opinion—of course binding on no one—that “Pope Benedict concludes that the Secret is, in the end... ‘the exhortation to prayer... and, likewise, ‘the summons to penance and conversion.’” (p. xv) In other words, the Cardinal states the party line: The Message of Fatima no longer concerns future events. Catholics must now think only of prayer and penance when they think of Fatima. No other thoughts are permitted, as these are mere “distracting controversies.”

With all due respect, the Cardinal's reference to the Pope is misleading. He is not quoting Pope Benedict, who has recently rejected the party line, but rather the former Cardinal Ratzinger, writing eleven years ago in his theological commentary on the Secret in *The Message of Fatima (TMF)*, the booklet the Vatican published together with the vision. For some reason never explained, *TMF* parroted the party line even though the Secretary of State manifestly had no competence or authority to dictate it to the Church: “First of all,” wrote the former Cardinal Ratzinger in *TMF*, “*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.’*” We must affirm with Cardinal Sodano? And why must we affirm with Cardinal Sodano? No reason has ever been given, because no reason exists. Quite to the contrary, as already noted, during the very press conference at which the

vision and *TMF* were published the same Cardinal Ratzinger was at pains to note: “It is not the intention of the Church to impose a single interpretation.”<sup>15</sup>

But Pope Benedict has declared that the Secret relates to “*future realities of the Church* which are little by little developing and showing themselves.” In view of that papal affirmation, one would think the party line would be discarded once and for all, even by those who had defended it until now. Yet Fr. Apostoli presses ahead with the latest propaganda on behalf of the Secretary of State, assisted by another Vatican cardinal with no competence in the matter, who would have us believe that there is nothing new or startling in the Message of Fatima.

### **The Promotion of a Demonstrable Falsehood**

Before I discuss *FFT*'s arguments in favor of the party line—the standard litany of long-since-refuted contentions—I must first point out its unquestioning adoption of a claim by Cardinal Bertone, Sodano's successor, that radically undermined Bertone's credibility and rendered his entire version of events unworthy of belief.

Echoing Bertone, *FFT* asserts that “Because *Sister Lucia had chosen the year 1960* as the time to reveal the Third Secret... curiosity and even dread about what the message might contain had heightened significantly over the years...” (p. 211). According to Bertone—in three conflicting versions of his story given between 2000 and 2007<sup>16</sup>—Sister Lucia “confessed” to him during conveniently unrecorded interviews that she, not Our Lady, had fixed the year 1960 for disclosure of the Secret and that Our Lady had never said anything to her about this.

For seven years Bertone maintained that Our Lady had never told Lucia that revelation of the Secret was connected to the year 1960, which happens to be the year following John XXIII's announcement of the Second Vatican Council. Then, during the *Porta a Porta* telecast of May 31, 2007, the Cardinal blithely revealed to the world not one, but two, sealed envelopes on the outside of which the following appears in Lucia's own handwriting:

*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.*<sup>17</sup>

Only one conclusion is possible: Bertone's claim that Lucia “confessed” that Our Lady had never said anything to her about 1960 is simply a lie. For it is impossible that the visionary would have taken it upon herself to decide when the Secret would be revealed, invented an “express order of Our Lady” justifying her arbitrary choice, recorded that express order on the outside of the two envelopes, and then allowed the Church and the world to believe for decades that, as she told Cardinal Ottaviani in 1955,

<sup>15</sup>See “Vatican Issues Text of Third Secret of Fatima,” *New York Times*, June 27, 2000, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/06/27/world/vatican-issues-text-of-third-secret-of-fatima.html>.

<sup>16</sup>See *The Secret Still Hidden*, p. 145 for a comparative chart of the conflicting versions, complete with ever-changing “quotations” respecting Lucia's alleged “confession.”

<sup>17</sup>See *The Secret Still Hidden*, pp. 124-148 for a discussion of Bertone's changing story concerning Lucia's “confession” and the photographs of the envelopes negating Bertone's claim.



the Virgin did not wish the Secret to be revealed before 1960 “because then it will seem clearer (mais claro).” Or, as she told the Bishop of Leiria-Fatima “because the Blessed Virgin wishes it so.” Or, as she told Canon Barthas: “Our Lady wills that it can be published beginning in 1960.”<sup>18</sup>

Either Sister Lucia, the visionary chosen by Heaven itself, was a serial liar on a fundamental point or it is Bertone who has misled us. No argument is needed to establish which is the case. The envelopes speak for themselves. Yet *FFT* uncritically accepts and promotes Bertone’s demonstrable falsehood—a falsehood clearly intended to negate the Virgin’s linkage of the Secret to 1960 so as to support Bertone’s “interpretation” of the vision as culminating with the 1981 assassination attempt. Even more important for the party line, however, is that any connection between the Secret and 1960 would raise questions about the completeness of the Vatican’s disclosure in 2000, as there is nothing about the vision *standing alone* that would be clearer (“mais claro”) in that year. Hence Sister Lucy had to “confess” that there was never any such connection and that she had simply made the whole thing up. The claim is an insult—both to the seer and to the faithful.

*FFT*’s adoption of Bertone’s blatant misrepresentation undermines the credibility of the book as much as it does Bertone’s account itself, concerning which there are 101 reasons for doubt, of which this is but one. See Appendix B. Nevertheless, let us proceed to examine *FFT*’s standard arguments in defense of the party line, lest credulous readers of *FFT* be taken in by any of them.

## II.

### DEFENDING AN INDEFENSIBLE “INTERPRETATION” OF THE THIRD SECRET

#### The Alleged “Silence” of Our Lady regarding the Vision

*FFT* begins its defense of the Sodano/Bertone party line with a discussion of the apparition of July 13, 1917, during which Our Lady of Fatima confided the three parts of the Great Secret. Fr. Apostoli writes: “In the first two parts of the July apparition, our Lady spoke. In the third part [i.e., the Third Secret] *she did not speak at all*, rather the children saw a series of images that unfolded before them.” (*FFT*, p. 81).

Without even examining the massive contrary evidence, this affirmation is dubious on its face. Why would Our Lady narrate the first two parts of the Secret, carefully explaining even something as obvious as the vision of hell, only to fall silent during the enigmatic third part? Why would She leave us with the vision of a “Bishop dressed in White” being executed by soldiers outside a devastated city littered with bodies, but no indication of how, why, where and when the catastrophic events depicted occur? Why would She leave it to Cardinal Sodano, of all people, to provide more than eighty years after the fact a “symbolic interpretation” that blatantly fails to correspond to what the vision depicts?

<sup>18</sup>Cf. *The Devil’s Final Battle*, Ch. 4, pp. 30-31 (one-volume edition), pp. 21-22 (two-volume edition).

The answer is that Our Lady did not do so. Quite the contrary, Lucia's Fourth Memoir, her most complete written record of the Fatima apparitions, records that *after* the Blessed Virgin had revealed the first two parts of the Secret, She *continued to speak*:

“In Portugal the dogma of the faith will always be preserved etc. Tell this to no one. Yes you may *tell it* to Francisco.”

Lucia added “etc” to indicate the Virgin's continuing discourse, which quite clearly begins another part of the Secret: the third and the final part, which is the Third Secret of Fatima. This is clear because the reference to Portugal and dogma has no evident connection to the first two parts of the Great Secret, and yet it clearly *is* part of the Secret as a whole. Thus the Virgin's continuing discourse, marked by Lucia's “etc”, must logically connect the third part—the Third Secret—to the first two parts so that all three comprise a unified whole. The Mother of God did not appear on earth to utter stray irrelevancies.

Note that *after* revealing the entire Great Secret, including the portion of the third part indicated by the “etc”, Our Lady grants Lucia permission to *tell* all of it to Francisco. That permission was necessary because, as we know, Francisco could not hear what was *said* during the apparitions, although he could see their visual aspect—that is, the vision of hell and the vision of the “Bishop dressed in White.” Now, if the vision of the white-clad bishop were all there was to the Third Secret, Our Lady would not have said: “You may *tell* it to Francisco,” for he had already *seen* the vision. Therefore, what Lucia was given permission to tell Francisco could only have been *the words he had not heard*, including the Virgin's reference to Portugal and Catholic dogma and what follows, as indicated by the telltale “etc”.

In the face of these inescapable inferences, the Vatican commentary in *TMF* very conspicuously avoids the Fourth Memoir, suggesting that the “etc” merely involves some unimportant “annotations” by Lucia:

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.<sup>19</sup>

But why “choose” the Third Memoir when *TMF* itself admits that Lucia, under orders from her bishop, wrote the Fourth Memoir *for the sake of completeness*? As *TMF* states:

In the ‘Fourth Memoir’ of 8 December 1941 Sister Lucia writes: “I shall begin then my new task, and thus fulfill the commands received from Your Excellency as well as the desires of Dr. Galamba. With the exception of that part of the Secret which I am not permitted to reveal at present, *I shall say everything*. I shall not knowingly omit *anything*, though I suppose I may forget just a few small details of minor importance.”<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup>*TMF*.

<sup>20</sup>*TMF*, footnote 6.

Given the Vatican's own acknowledgment that Lucia wrote the Fourth Memoir in order to "say everything" she was permitted to say about the apparitions, there is only one reasonable explanation for this curious avoidance of the more complete record: Cardinal Sodano and his collaborators in *TMF* wanted to avoid having to discuss the "etc" and what it so clearly indicates: further words of the Virgin.

But *why* would they wish to avoid this subject? There can be only one reasonable explanation: there is something to hide. For if there were nothing to hide, why not simply address what Our Lady said to the seers in the place held by the "etc"? Why not simply explain the relationship between the mysterious dangling phrase concerning Portugal and the Message of Fatima as a whole? Why not simply ask Lucia to provide that explanation and then convey it to the public in order to lay all speculation to rest?

Instead, however, *TMF* characterizes the Virgin's very words as having originated with Lucia: "In the 'Fourth Memoir' Sister Lucia adds: 'In Portugal, the dogma of the faith will always be preserved etc. ...'"<sup>21</sup> That representation is both misleading and an implicit slur on the visionary. Lucia did not *add* anything to what the Mother of God had revealed to her; she merely recorded what she saw and heard during the apparitions, including "everything" Mary *said* to her with permission to *tell* Francisco. And in 1944—also under orders from her bishop—Lucia would write down everything the Virgin had *told* her, including the rest of the words She had confided to the seer and given her permission to *tell* Francisco concerning the Third Secret of Fatima.

Fr. Apostoli and all those who deny that something has been hidden, something embraced within the mysterious "etc", must confront these questions:

- If there is nothing to hide, why does the Vatican commentary avoid the Fourth Memoir, which it admits is the more complete record of the Message of Fatima?
- If there is nothing to hide, why does *TMF* mischaracterize as "annotations" by Lucia, or something she "added," what is patently a direct quotation of the very words of the Mother of God?
- If there is nothing to hide, why have Sodano and Bertone steadfastly refused to answer any questions concerning the "etc"?
- If there is nothing to hide, why did both Sodano and Bertone fail and refuse to put to Sister Lucia a single question regarding the "etc", even though they were both well aware that it stands at the very heart of the Third Secret controversy and they had unrestricted access to the seer until her death in 2005?

Indeed, Fr. Apostoli's very reliance upon Sodano's "interpretation" of the vision is a proof that something is missing from the Vatican's disclosure in 2000. For it can hardly be the case that the Mother of God envisioned a future Vatican functionary—much less Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the aider and abettor of scandal—as the authentic interpreter of Her message. Nor can it be the case that Our Lady would have permitted

<sup>21</sup>*TMF*, footnote 7.

Her message to become the subject of *eight different interpretations* that contradict each other, as I have noted elsewhere.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, the Virgin's own explanation of the vision must exist and must have been withheld for some reason. The words of the Mother of God for which we seek can only be those which follow the "etc" that both Sodano and Bertone have avoided like the plague in a maneuver that would otherwise be inexplicable.

### What Sort of Oracles Are These?

Having been deprived of the Virgin's own explanation of what the vision revealed in the year 1917 means, we are asked to rely on the Vatican Secretary of State's "interpretation" in the year 2000—an objectively ludicrous proposition given the immense magnitude of the Message of Fatima as an urgent prophecy conveyed to the whole world by the very Mother of God.

Fr. Apostoli writes: "Cardinal Sodano said that the children saw a 'prophetic vision,' which must be understood as symbolic..." (p. 81). Cardinal Sodano said? *Must*? But Cardinal Sodano has no authority at all in the matter, much less authority to tell us how we "must" understand the vision. Yet *FFT* takes no notice of this fact. Instead, this privately published book, marketed on Amazon.com by an American publisher, labors to create the false impression that it is presenting official Church teaching on the meaning of the vision. But why is Fr. Apostoli not sounding the alarm that something must be gravely amiss because as of 2011 *we have no authoritative interpretation of the vision*, nearly a century after the Virgin conveyed it to the seers? Does anyone, even the author of *FFT*, really believe the Mother of God left us in this perilous situation?

Continuing to quote the former Secretary of State as if he were the voice of authority, *FFT* cites mere opinion that the vision "does not describe photographically the details of future events" and "must be interpreted in a symbolic key." (p. 82). According to this "symbolic key," says Fr. Apostoli—quoting the former Cardinal Ratzinger's non-binding theological commentary, which in turn follows Cardinal Sodano's non-binding "interpretation"—the vision depicts only the threat of nuclear war, and the Angel with the flaming sword is only a symbol for nuclear weapons: "man himself, with his inventions, has forged the flaming sword." (p. 83).

So, despite what the vision clearly depicts, we are asked to believe that: (a) there is no Angel with a flaming sword, (b) there is no future execution of a Pope, bishops, priests and laity by soldiers on a hill, and (c) there is no half-ruined city filled with corpses from which a hobbling Pope escapes before he is executed. Instead there is only a symbolically depicted threat of nuclear war. The Church and the world are supposed to rely with complete tranquility on the Secretary of State's assurances that the vision does not foretell a divine chastisement, but only man's inhumanity to man. Yes, as Fr. Apostoli would have it, *Sodano and his successor Bertone are literally the oracles we must consult on the fate of the world in light of Fatima!* Does anyone, even Fr. Apostoli, take that claim seriously?

Continuing to explain away what the vision plainly depicts, Fr. Apostoli—faithfully hewing to the party line—asserts that when Mary is seen repelling the

<sup>22</sup>See "Is There A Missing Text Of The Third Secret?" [http://www.fatimachallenge.com/index.php?Itemid=15&catid=25&id=67:is-there-a-missing-text-of-the-third-secret&option=com\\_content&view=article](http://www.fatimachallenge.com/index.php?Itemid=15&catid=25&id=67:is-there-a-missing-text-of-the-third-secret&option=com_content&view=article) (video presentation).

destructive flames emanating toward the world from the Angel's flaming sword, this means only that "Our Lady's intervention is powerful enough to stop the chastisement of war." (p. 83). Well, of course Our Lady *is* powerful enough to stop the chastisement of war, but the problem for Fr. Apostoli and the party line he defends is that in the vision we see that the chastisement depicted *has not been averted*. On the contrary, the city *is* in ruins and filled with bodies; the Pope *is* killed by a band of soldiers on the hill outside the ruined city; bishops, priests, religious and lay people *are* killed by the same band of soldiers.

Further, while we see that the flames emanating from the sword of the avenging Angel "died out in contact with the splendour that Our Lady radiated towards him from her right hand," this happens in the context of the devastation, death, and martyrdom that do take place in the same vision. It would thus appear that the vision shows either that Our Lady obtains a stay of a divine chastisement that is nonetheless ultimately inflicted, or that She mitigates it in order to spare the rest of the world from destruction. But we cannot be certain of this because, in the absence of the missing explanatory text that must exist, we have only the opinions of two Vatican prelates with absolutely no competence in the matter. Once again: the claim that the Mother of God left us in this situation is a complete absurdity.

Based on the oracular Sodano/Bertone "interpretation" we are also expected to consider "part of the past" Our Lady's dire warning, in the second part of the Great Secret, that if the Consecration of Russia is not accomplished "The good will be martyred; the Holy Father will have much to suffer; *various nations will be annihilated*." In fact, a scenario suggesting a future annihilation of nations *is exactly what we see in the vision*. But we must ignore the grim future the vision appears to depict and trust in Cardinal Sodano and Cardinal Bertone, says Fr. Apostoli. It's all in the past!

Concerning the execution of "a Bishop dressed in White" by a band of soldiers outside the city in ruins, Fr. Apostoli, aping the party line, reduces this event to John Paul II *not* being executed by a band of soldiers and *escaping* death at the hands of a lone assassin in the perfectly intact city of Rome. After all, he argues, the Pope "lost six pints of blood" and (quoting Bertone) "It was *as if* he had died, and then been snatched back from the jaws of death." (p. 90). Close enough for government work! That is, the government of the Vatican city-state as exercised by Sodano and his successor Bertone.

To be serious, Cardinal Sodano patently falsified what the vision depicts when he first advanced this "interpretation" back in 2000. According to him, the Pope in the vision "makes his way with great difficulty towards the Cross amid the corpses of those who were martyred (bishops, priests, men and women Religious and many lay people), he too falls to the ground, *apparently* dead, under a hail of gunfire."<sup>23</sup> But this is plainly a deception. The Pope does not fall to the ground "*apparently*" dead. Rather, he "*was killed* by a group of soldiers who fired bullets and arrows at him..." Moreover, the Pope is not killed "*amid the corpses of those who were martyred,*" but rather the martyrdom of bishops, priests, religious and lay people occurs *after* he is killed and at the hands of *the same band of soldiers who kill the Pope*. As the text of the vision states: "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."

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

On the other hand, the victims the Pope encounters as he hobbles through the half-ruined city are not martyrs, as Sodano falsely suggests. Rather, they have all died *before* the martyrs on the hill *outside* the city, including the Pope, are slain by the soldiers: “before reaching there [the steep hill] 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.” Further, it is highly implausible that all the dead in the ruined city are martyrs. But even if the vision depicted a city full of dead martyrs, versus the martyrs on the hill that Sodano glosses over, they would not need the Pope’s prayers, for they would have entered immediately into the beatific vision.

In short, Sodano mangled the vision to suit his polemical aim of consigning the Message of Fatima to the past. To put it mildly, his “interpretation” has been met with widespread incredulity among the Catholic faithful. To put it bluntly, the interpretation is a joke. But Fr. Apostoli insists that we take it seriously and indeed that we literally bet our lives and even our souls on it.

Here it seems no absurdity is large enough to arouse Fr. Apostoli’s skepticism concerning Sodano’s twisted interpretation. Addressing the insurmountable objection that “John Paul II could not have been the Pope of the Third Secret because he did not die,” he asserts (without evidence) that John Paul “recognized himself as the Pope who was slain in the vision...” (p. 212). A *living* Pope recognizes himself as a *slain* Pope? Fr. Apostoli further asserts that John Paul “knew about this objection, which is the reason he said he came to the very threshold of death and should have died, but our Lady prevented him from doing so.” (p. 212) But he fails to quote any statement by John Paul that the vision depicts the failed assassination attempt and that he is thus the Pope in the vision. That is because no such statement exists.

Fr. Apostoli adds his own gloss to the Sodano/Bertone “interpretation” with even more absurd results. Having contended only a few lines earlier that the Pope who is killed in the vision is John Paul II, who was *not* killed, he attempts to explain the subsequent mass execution of martyrs seen in the vision: “Just as the Holy Father was killed [?] in the vision, so were all those who followed *after him*. These were the men and women who died as martyrs because of their love for the Church. We have already seen the tremendous number of martyrs in Russia. There were countless others who sacrificed their lives as well.” (p. 81). So, the author of *FFT* seriously proposes that the 20<sup>th</sup>-century martyrs in the Soviet Union, who died *before* the assassination attempt in 1981, somehow died *after* John Paul II “died” but did not die. And while the deaths of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century martyrs are to be taken literally, the “death” of John Paul is to be taken figuratively—in one and the same vision!

It seems Sodano’s “symbolic key” is an amazingly rubbery device, bending in any direction in which one wishes to twist it. But here Fr. Apostoli contradicts Sodano/Bertone, who would have us believe that the martyrs in the vision die *before* the Pope, not after. Well, which is it? Does the Pope in the vision “die” figuratively before or after the martyrs die literally? Either or both, apparently. Self-contradictions do not matter so long as the party line is maintained. The vision “means” whatever it needs to mean in order to relegate the Fatima prophecies to the 20<sup>th</sup> century and their culmination to the year 1981 according to the preconceived intention of the Secretary of State, who somehow usurped control over the Message of Fatima.

Clearly, the Church and the world are most urgently in need of the Virgin's remedy for this utter nonsense: Her own words explaining the events in the vision and their historical context, just as She explained to the children a vision of hell far less ambiguous than the vision of the "Bishop dressed in White." Fr. Apostoli's own contortions demonstrate that the Virgin's precious explanation is, as Socci says, "well hidden" somewhere in the Vatican.

### **Obscuring Pope Benedict's Revelations**

Since *FFT* was published well after Benedict's explosive statements during his pilgrimage to Fatima, during which he repudiated the party line, Fr. Apostoli had to confront that development. The approach *FFT* takes is to pretend the party line remains intact despite Benedict's clear rejection of it, which *FFT* studiously avoids mentioning, although Socci has proclaimed it to the world. Worse, *FFT*'s discussion of the Pope's remarks deliberately obscures their import. For one thing, *FFT*'s quotation of the Vatican's English translation of the Pope's remarks during the flight to Fatima departs from the Vatican text and is suspiciously cropped as shown by the italics:

#### Vatican Translation

***As for the new things which we can find in this message today, there is also the fact that*** attacks on the Pope and the Church come not only from without, but the sufferings of the Church come precisely from within the Church, from the sin existing within the Church.<sup>24</sup>

#### Translation in *FFT*

Attacks on the Pope and the Church do not come only from the outside, but the sufferings of the Church come precisely from within the Church, from the sin existing within the Church. (p. 215).

Notice that the key phrase "As for *the new things* which we can find in *this message* [the Third Secret] today, there is also the fact that..." is removed and the sentence is made to begin with the word "Attacks". This neatly eliminates the Pope's explicit linkage of "new things which we can find in this message" to attacks on the Pope and the Church by *internal* enemies, not the band of soldiers seen in the vision—a clear indication that there is more to the Secret than the vision alone.

That internal enemies of the Church are involved in the events foretold by the Secret must be why Benedict chose the words: "*beyond the moment indicated in the vision, it is spoken, it is seen, the necessity of a passion of the Church...*" ["oltre il

<sup>24</sup>"Interview of the Holy Father Benedict XVI with the Journalists During the Flight to Portugal," May 11, 2010, at [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/speeches/2010/may/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20100511\\_portogallo-interview\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2010/may/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20100511_portogallo-interview_en.html). In the original Italian remarks: "*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.*"

momento indicato nella visione, si parla, si vede la necessità di una passione della chiesa...”]. If the Secret involves something *spoken* beyond the moment indicated in the vision, it could only be in a text that accompanies the vision since the vision does not *speak* about attacks on the Church by enemies within nor make *any reference at all, even symbolically*, to such attacks. In fact, there are no spoken words in the vision save the thrice-repeated admonition of the avenging Angel: Penance, Penance, Penance. As for what the vision depicts wordlessly, it is exactly the contrary of an internal attack upon the Church: an external attack by a band of soldiers. The conclusion is inescapable: the Pope must have learned of the Fatima prophecy concerning internal subversion of the Church from another source related to the Secret, a source not yet revealed: i.e., the Secret Still Hidden.

*FFT* does concede that the Pope “linked the suffering caused by these accusations [of sexual abuse] and the terrible sins committed by some priests *with that seen in the vision.*” (p. 215). But Fr. Apostoli avers that the Pope has merely “further interpreted the Third Secret...”—meaning the vision standing alone. (Ibid.) Once again we encounter the notion that the vision is something to be “interpreted” without guidance from Our Lady, including such “further” interpretation as might emerge at any given moment. Thus the Third Secret, reduced to the vision alone, becomes an endless work-in-progress whose current meaning depends upon the eye of the beholder, like some piece of modern art in a museum. This is surely not what the Mother of God conveyed to the seers.

So, what does the suffering depicted in the vision, wherein soldiers execute a future Pope and then bishops, priests and laity after him, have to do with the suffering due to sexual abuse committed by priests? There is no apparent connection. Hence, as Socci has noted, the Pope’s linkage of the vision to the priestly sexual scandals erupting in recent years must point to what we already know: that there is a text wherein the Virgin provides the missing connection. This text most probably foretells how a future Pope meets a violent end at the hands of soldiers outside a ruined city filled with corpses in the midst of a post-apocalyptic scenario related to an internal crisis in the Church, leading to a chastisement of both the Church and the world.

Here we must consider that the Message of Akita, which the former Cardinal Ratzinger has described as “essentially the same”<sup>25</sup> as the Message of Fatima, predicts just such a twin chastisement on account of sin in the Church. Read carefully Our Lady’s warning to Sister Sasagawa in an apparition approved as authentic after a diocesan investigation by Bishop John Shojiro Ito, the local ordinary:

As I told you, if men do not repent and better themselves, the Father will inflict a terrible punishment on all humanity. It will be punishment greater than the deluge, such as one will never have seen before. *Fire will fall from the sky and will wipe out a great part of humanity, the good as well as the bad, sparing neither priests nor faithful.* The survivors will find themselves so desolate that they will envy the dead. The only arms that will remain for you will be the Rosary and Sign left by My Son. Each day

<sup>25</sup>Howard Dee, former Philippine ambassador to the Vatican, revealed in a 1998 interview with *Inside the Vatican* magazine that “Bishop Ito was certain Akita was an extension of Fatima, and Cardinal Ratzinger personally confirmed to me that these two messages, of Fatima and Akita, are essentially the same.” *Catholic World News*, October 11, 2001, [www.cwnews.com/news/viewstory.cfm?recnum=20583](http://www.cwnews.com/news/viewstory.cfm?recnum=20583)



recite the prayers of the Rosary. With the Rosary, pray for the pope, the bishops, and the priests.

*The work of the devil will infiltrate even the Church* in such a way that one will see cardinals opposing cardinals, bishops against other bishops. The priests who venerate Me will be scorned and opposed by their confreres...churches and altars sacked, *the Church will be full of those who accept compromise and the demon will press many priests and consecrated souls to leave the service of the Lord.* The demon will be especially implacable against souls consecrated to God. The thought of the loss of so many souls is the cause of My sadness. If sins increase in number and gravity, there will be no longer pardon for them.

Given the still-unfolding geological and nuclear catastrophe in Japan, centered on the very diocese in which Our Lady of Akita appeared (the Diocese of Sendai), we ought to be alarmed by the connection between Akita and Fatima, between the words quoted above and what must be contained in the text of the Secret that predicts an attack on the Church by her own members sinning against her—*the one thing we do not see in the vision standing alone.*

Finally, *FFT* simply ignores the Pope's statement at the Fatima shrine that "One deceives himself if he thinks that the prophetic mission of Fatima is concluded." There can be only one reason *FFT* so conspicuously fails to mention the Pope's dramatic admission: it refutes the lie that the Fatima prophecies "belong to the past" and that all that remains of the Fatima message is prayer and penance. But then nothing could be clearer than that *FFT* was written to defend the party line, no matter how untenable it has become. That is, it was written to promote the deception "that the prophetic mission of Fatima is concluded." The Pope himself indicts the undertaking.

### **A Non-Answer to Objections**

In a scant seven pages, an appendix to *FFT* (pp. 263-269) purports to answer all objections to the claim that the vision of "the Bishop dressed in white" is the entirety of the Third Secret of Fatima. I will give the appendix the passing treatment it deserves. For rather than answering objections the appendix avoids them, addressing only four of a multitude, and those four only weakly:

**Objection # 1:** "The original Third Secret was written on one sheet of paper." That is not a fair statement of the objection. Fairly stated, the objection is that *a* text pertaining to the Secret was written on a single sheet of paper, as the auxiliary bishop of Fatima could discern when he held the envelope containing it up to the light before it was transmitted to the Vatican. That sheet contains 25 lines of text—not the 62 lines of the vision. Cardinal Ottaviani attested "categorically" to a text of 25 lines, as Cardinal Bertone himself admitted on camera during his appearance on *Porta a Porta* while claiming (absurdly) that Ottaviani mistook the 62 lines for 25 lines. Evidently, we are dealing with two different texts, just as Archbishop Capovilla confirmed in his testimony, which *FFT* (like Bertone and Sodano) ignores.

*FFT* quotes *TMF* for the proposition that when Lucia was asked to authenticate the Secret during a purported meeting with Berone on April 27, 2000 she stated: “This is my letter,” and “this is my writing.” In the first place, the text of the vision is not a letter. *FFT* simply ignores that discrepancy. And here *FFT* commits the same fatal misstep as Bertone in *Last Visionary*, stating that during the purported authentication meeting in 2000 Bertone “presented two envelopes to Sister Lucia. The first or outer envelope contained the second envelope, which held the Third Secret.” (p. 264). As we know from the *Porta a Porta* telecast, however, Bertone produced *four* envelopes, *three* of which were prepared by Lucia: the Bishop of Fatima’s sealed outer envelope, Sister Lucia’s unsealed outer envelope, and the *two* sealed envelopes on which Lucia had recorded the “express order of Our Lady”—which Bertone concealed for seven years—that the contents of these *two* envelopes were not to be opened before 1960. Yet Bertone produced only *one* text pertaining to the Third Secret, that of the vision, but not the text of 25 lines. Moreover, he failed to produce the Capovilla envelope kept in the papal apartment, even though its existence is now admitted. *FFT* ignores these enormous and telling discrepancies as well.

*FFT* repeats uncritically the claim in Bertone’s second edition of *Last Visionary of Fatima* (2007), now entitled *Last Secret of Fatima* (2010), that Lucia supposedly told him the text she authenticated in April 2000 “is the Third Secret, and I never wrote any other.” But this purported statement of the visionary was never mentioned in *Last Visionary* or anywhere else in Bertone’s account over the previous ten years, including *TMF* in 2000. It suddenly “jumped out of the top hat” (to borrow Socci’s phrase) after Lucia was conveniently dead and could no longer contradict the words attributed to her for the first time in 2010. Like the claim that Lucia “confessed” that she invented the connection between the Secret and 1960—a demonstrable lie—this *post mortem* surprise revelation is unworthy of belief.

On this point it must be mentioned that while *Last Visionary* reveals that during the April 2000 authentication meeting Lucia purportedly stated “Yes, these are my *sheets* of paper [*fogli*]... they are the *sheets* of paper [*fogli*] that I used” in writing down the Secret, on *Porta a Porta* Bertone produced only *one* sheet of paper from a notebook on which Lucia had written the text of the vision. Hence at least one sheet of paper pertaining to the Secret is missing. Faced with this damning inadvertent admission, Bertone simply altered Sister Lucia’s statement in *Last Secret*. Now it reads: “this is my paper” instead of “these are my *sheets* of paper... these are the *sheets* I used.” Like Bertone’s other constantly morphing “quotations” of the visionary—none of which are verifiably recorded in audio or video format—this one lacks all credibility.<sup>26</sup>

**Objection #2:** *FFT* purports to address the objection that “The text of the Secret contains no words attributed to the Blessed Virgin Mary.” The “answer” to this objection is the naked assertion that “the Third Secret was not conveyed in words by Our Lady, but in the various visions the children saw.” But that is no answer. Like Bertone and Sodano, *FFT* ignores the telltale “etc” at the end of Our Lady’s momentous reference to

<sup>26</sup>See *The Secret Still Hidden*, pp. 130 and 144-152 for comparative charts of Bertone’s ever-changing account of what Lucia is supposed to have said to him concerning the connection of the Secret to 1960, the envelopes and texts involved in the Secret, the Sodano/Bertone “interpretation” of the Secret, and the Consecration of Russia.

the dogmas of the faith and their preservation in Portugal. Like Bertone and Sodano, *FFT* pretends that the “etc” does not exist and that Our Lady had nothing to say about the meaning of an enigmatic vision for which Sodano/Bertone have provided the “interpretation” whose absurdities I have already examined. Like Bertone and Sodano, *FFT* asks no questions about what follows the “etc”—evidently because *FFT*’s author, like Bertone and Sodano, does not wish to explore the implications for the credibility of the party line.

**Objection 3:** “The Vatican’s copy of the Third Secret contains no information about a nuclear holocaust, a great apostasy, or the satanic infiltration of the Church.” In purporting to address this objection, *FFT*’s author ignores his own earlier argument that the vision depicts the threat of a nuclear holocaust. More important, he ignores Pope Benedict’s linkage of the Third Secret to events “*beyond* the moment indicated in the vision” which indicate precisely “satanic infiltration of the Church” by internal enemies whose attacks on the Pope and the Church are manifesting themselves in a “really terrifying way.”

*FFT* ignores as well the testimony of witness after witness who read the Third Secret in its entirety and revealed that it pertains to apostasy in the Church accompanied by a chastisement of the world at large.<sup>27</sup> As no less than Cardinal Ratzinger revealed in 1984, for example, the Secret concerns “dangers *threatening the faith* and the life of the Christian, and therefore of *the world*” and reveals “things which correspond to what has been *announced* in Scripture and *said* again and again in many other Marian apparitions...”<sup>28</sup> But the vision standing alone does not *announce* anything in Sacred Scripture, nor does it *say* anything that has been *said* in numerous other Marian apparitions—such as the one at Akita, in which Our Lady *speaks* of a great part of the world being destroyed by heavenly fire if “men do not repent and better themselves.” Yet, as already noted, the same Cardinal Ratzinger has revealed that the Message of Fatima and the Message of Akita are essentially the same. If the two messages are essentially the same, something is missing from the essence of the Third Secret: the *words* of Our Lady of Fatima, which would comport with Our Lady of Akita’s *spoken prediction* of a coming apocalypse, as seen (but without explanation) in the vision of the white-clad bishop being executed outside a devastated city.

Only a missing text containing the words of the Virgin on the vision’s meaning would explain events occurring “beyond the moment indicated in the vision” of which Pope Benedict speaks, and “dangers threatening the faith and the life of the Christian, and therefore of the world” of which the former Cardinal Ratzinger spoke. And it is that very text whose existence Father Joseph Schweigl, sent by Pius XII to interrogate Sister Lucia in her convent at Tuy, confirmed long ago: “I may not reveal anything with regard to the Third Secret, but I am able to say that it has two parts: One part concerns the Pope. The other part is the logical continuation—though I may not say anything—of the words: ‘In Portugal, the dogma of the Faith will always be preserved etc.’”<sup>29</sup>

On this point *FFT* cites what it claims is a “clear and definitive statement” by Archbishop Capovilla, quoted in a news story, that there is no such missing text: “There

<sup>27</sup>See *The Secret Still Hidden*, Chapter 3, for a chronological account of these testimonies.

<sup>28</sup>“Here is Why the Faith Is in Crisis,” *Jesus* magazine, November 11, 1984, p. 79.

<sup>29</sup> *The Whole Truth About Fatima*, Vol. III, p. 710.

are not two truths from Fatima, nor is there any fourth secret. The text which I read in 1959 is the same distributed by the Vatican...” (*FFT*, p. 267). But this “clear and definitive statement” is, on close reading, a carefully worded evasion of the real issue. No one denies that the text the Archbishop read in 1959 is an authentic part of the Secret. Nor does anyone claim that there is literally a “fourth secret” of Fatima. The issue, rather, is the existence of a text that *accompanies* the wordless vision in which Our Lady explains its meaning so that we do not have to rely on such people as a scandal-plagued Vatican Secretary of State to provide absurd and self-contradictory “interpretations” the better part of a century later.

Here *FFT* conveniently fails to mention what really is a “clear and definitive” statement by Capovilla: “Exactly so! [*Per l'appunto*]” in answer to the question whether there are two different envelopes and two different texts comprising the Secret in its totality. Nor does *FFT* mention Capovilla’s “clear and definitive statement”—captured on audiotape and published in the Italian press—that there was an “attachment” to the text of the vision that has never been revealed or even mentioned by Bertone/Sodano. Archbishop Capovilla *has never denied either statement*, yet *FFT* pretends these statements were never given.<sup>30</sup>

Further, *FFT* fails to mention that when asked during the video interview—an interview Bertone himself arranged—whether the vision of the white-clad bishop was the text he read in 1959, Capovilla hedged, stating: “I have said it, and I repeat it gladly now: that is the text. I don’t recall it word for word, but the *central nucleus* is the same.”<sup>31</sup> The *central nucleus*? What is that supposed to mean? Is it the same text he read or not? This was easy enough to confirm, as the text of the vision had been published to the world and Capovilla need only have examined it to refresh his recollection. Yet the Archbishop claimed a lack of memory regarding the exact contents of *a text at his very fingertips*. Small wonder: he had already confirmed the existence of the companion text in statements he has never denied and cannot deny because he knows the companion text exists and has himself revealed that there was an “attachment” to the text of the vision. Hence the ambiguous reference to a “nucleus,” suggesting that something surrounding this “nucleus” has yet to be revealed.

**Objection #4:** The last objection *FFT* purports to address is that “The text released by the Vatican is not written in the form of a letter.” Here *FFT* descends to outright silliness. The author concedes that “some of the clerics who lived at the time the Third Secret was written mentioned it in terms of a letter,” yet he argues that “this was not an emphatic point they were making.” (p. 267). So the testimony of all the clerics who attested that the Secret involves a letter from Lucia<sup>32</sup> should be disregarded because they did not exclaim when so attesting: “This is an emphatic point!” Here, once again, Fr.

<sup>30</sup>At the Fatima Challenge Conference at the Ergife Hotel in Rome in May 2010, the late Giuseppe De Carli, co-author with Bertone of both *Last Visionary of Fatima* and *Last Secret of Fatima*, claimed to be in possession of a letter in which Capovilla denies his testimony to Paolini about the existence of two envelopes and two texts comprising the Secret *in toto* (“*Per l'appunto!*”), but De Carli refused to provide a copy or even to quote from the letter, stating that it was “private correspondence.” An alleged secret denial of testimony never denied publicly is typical of the manner in which the party line is defended by its partisans. But every defense only adds to the grounds for suspicion.

<sup>31</sup>*The Secret Still Hidden*, p. 182.

<sup>32</sup>Cf. *The Secret Still Hidden*, pp. 17-18.

Apostoli appears to forget what he himself had written in the earlier pages of his own book. In Chapter 16 of *FFT* he quotes the personal diary of John XXIII concerning the day the commissary of the Holy Office brought him a text of the Secret: “[he] brought me *the letter* containing the Third Part of the Secrets of Fatima. I intend to read it with my confessor.” (p. 211) But as *FFT* would have it, we are not to make anything of this papal notation of a text of the Secret in epistolary form because John XXIII did not add: “and I note this emphatically.”

As it does with so many other key facts, *FFT* fails to mention Sister Lucia’s own testimony to Father Hubert Jongen: “I communicated the third part [i.e. the Third Secret] in *a letter* to the Bishop of Leiria...”<sup>33</sup> In his evident determination to explain away all evidence contrary to the party line, Fr. Apostoli would no doubt argue that we should disregard even the visionary’s own statement that the Secret involves a letter because she did not state this with sufficient *emphasis*. Also conveniently overlooked is the revelation in the famous Vatican-initiated press release of 1960 that “most likely *the letter* will never be opened in which Sister Lucia wrote down *the words* which Our Lady confided as a secret to the three little shepherds” because (among other specious reasons) “the Vatican already knows the contents of *the letter*.”<sup>34</sup>

Quoting Bertone, *FFT* assures us that “the point about the document being written in the form of a letter is not very important. He [Bertone] said of some of his critics that ‘they look at everything through the magnifying glass of their own biases. They latch on to the most unbelievable things.’” (p. 268). Yes, what could be more “unbelievable” than a string of clerics, the Pope, the Vatican in 1960 and Sister Lucia herself attesting that the Secret involves a text in the form of a letter—a letter we have never seen. No, instead of turning our “magnifying glass” on such trivia as a missing letter from the last surviving Fatima visionary recording the words of the Mother of God, we should put on the blinders Fr. Apostoli prescribes for the faithful and place all of our trust in the Vatican Secretary of State.

So much for *FFT*’s non-answer to objections. In keeping with its promotion of the party line, *FFT* ignores all of this evidence of a cover-up, and vastly more. I present the evidence exhaustively in my book, and it is surveyed as well in Socci’s breakthrough contribution to what he calls “Operation Truth” concerning the Third Secret of Fatima. For present purposes, Appendices A and B to this discussion provide a sufficient overview of the mountain of proof for the existence of a companion text to the vision containing the Virgin’s own words explaining it.

In sum, *FFT* does not “answer” objections to the completeness of the Vatican’s disclosure in 2002; it simply ignores them or covers them up. But this is only typical of what I have called “Bertone’s Method”: a great show of responding to objections but no real response at all—only evasions, inadvertent admissions and telling silences.<sup>35</sup> By the grace of God the truth has been revealed, however, despite the best efforts of Sodano, Bertone and their dogged defenders to pretend that all is well with the party line.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 18 and n. 43.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 26, quoting ANI press release.

<sup>35</sup>Cf. *The Secret Still Hidden*, Ch. 11.

### III.

#### DEFENDING THE CONSECRATION THAT WASN'T

Unswervingly loyal to the party line, *FFT* also dutifully advances its claim that the consecration of Russia was accomplished by ceremonies from which any mention of Russia was *deliberately omitted* so that the Russian Orthodox would not be offended.<sup>36</sup> We are expected to believe that the current condition of Russia represents its miraculous “conversion” and, even more improbably, that the current state of the world represents the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart that Our Lady promised if the consecration of Russia were carried out in accordance with Her request.

Here it suffices to recall oft-cited keynotes<sup>37</sup> of Sister Lucia’s testimony throughout her lifetime that Our Lady requested the Consecration of *Russia*, not the world, by the Pope and the world’s bishops acting together in a solemn public ceremony, and that compromise substitutes (designed to avoid offending certain people) would not suffice:

*1946:* On July 15, 1946 Sister Lucia gave the following testimony to the eminent author and historian, William Thomas Walsh, as recounted in his seminal history of the Fatima apparitions, *Our Lady of Fatima*, which sold over one million copies:

Lucia made it plain that Our Lady did not ask for the consecration of *the world* to Her Immaculate Heart. What She demanded specifically was the consecration of *Russia*.... She did not comment, of course, on the fact that Pope Pius XII had consecrated the world, not Russia, to the Immaculate Heart in 1942. But she said more than once, and with deliberate emphasis: “What Our Lady wants is that the Pope and all the bishops in the world shall consecrate Russia to Her Immaculate Heart on one special day. If this is done, She will convert Russia and there will be peace. If it is not done, the errors of Russia will spread through every country in the world.”<sup>38</sup>

*1952:* In *Il Pellegrinaggio della Meraviglie*, published under the auspices of the Italian episcopate, we read (as noted earlier) that the Virgin Mary appeared to Sister Lucia in May 1952 and said: “Make it known to the Holy Father that I am always awaiting the Consecration of Russia to My Immaculate Heart. Without the Consecration,

<sup>36</sup>As one of the Pope’s “closest advisors,” later identified to this author as Cardinal Tomko, told *Inside the Vatican* magazine, Russia was not mentioned in the 1984 ceremony because “Rome [i.e. certain of the Pope’s advisors] fears the Russian Orthodox might regard it as an ‘offense’ if Rome were to make specific mention of Russia in such a prayer, as if Russia especially is in need of help when the whole world, including the post-Christian West, faces profound problems ...” *Inside the Vatican*, November 2000. Tomko added: “Let us beware of becoming too literal-minded.” Evidently, Tomko and his collaborators thought themselves more prudent and less “literal-minded” than the Virgin Mary.

<sup>37</sup>What follows is a summary I have prepared for publication in various places. It will be familiar to readers of *The Fatima Crusader* magazine and *The Devil’s Final Battle*.

<sup>38</sup>William Thomas Walsh, *Our Lady of Fatima*, (New York: Image-Doubleday, *Imprimatur* 1947), p. 221 (emphasis in the original).

Russia will not be able to convert, nor will the world have peace.”<sup>39</sup> Thus, *ten years* after Pope Pius XII’s 1942 consecration of the world, Heaven itself informed Sister Lucia that Russia will not be converted, nor will there be peace, unless and until that nation is consecrated by name specifically.

1982: Thirty years later Sister Lucia’s testimony remains unchanged. On May 12, 1982, the day before the attempted 1982 consecration, the Vatican’s own *L’Osservatore Romano* published an interview of Sister Lucia by Father Umberto Maria Pasquale, a Salesian priest, during which she told Father Umberto that Our Lady had never requested the consecration of the world, but *only* the Consecration of Russia:

At a certain moment I said to her: “Sister, I should like to ask you a question. If you cannot answer me, let it be. But if you can answer it, I would be most grateful to you ... Has Our Lady ever spoken to you about the consecration of *the world* to Her Immaculate Heart?”

“No, Father Umberto! *Never!* At the Cova da Iria in 1917 Our Lady had promised: *I shall come to ask for the Consecration of Russia ...* In 1929, at Tuy, as She had promised, Our Lady came back to tell me that the moment had come to ask the Holy Father for the Consecration of *that country* (Russia).”<sup>40</sup>

Sister Lucia confirmed this testimony in a handwritten letter to Father Umberto, which the priest also published. (See photographic reproduction of the pertinent section of Sister Lucia’s letter below.) A translation of the letter reads:

Reverend Father Umberto, in replying to your question, I will clarify: Our Lady of Fatima, in Her request, referred *only* to the consecration of Russia ... — *Coimbra 13 IV - 1980 (signed) Sister Lucia*

<sup>39</sup>*Il Pellegrinaggio della Meraviglie*, p. 440, Rome, 1960. This same work, published under the auspices of the Italian episcopate, affirms that this message was communicated to Pope Pius XII in June. Also, Canon Barthas mentioned that apparition in his communication to the Mariological Congress of Lisbon-Fatima in 1967; See *De Primordiis Cultus Marianae, Acta Congressus Mariologici-Mariana In Lusitania Anno 1967 Celebrati* (Rome, 1970), p. 517; see also *Fatima: Tragedy and Triumph*, pp. 21 and 37.

<sup>40</sup> *L’Osservatore Romano*, May 12, 1982.

J + M.  
 Por. do Senhor F. Herculano  
 Profundado a sua perquir  
 ta esclareço:  
 Nossa Senhora, em Fatima, no  
 seu pedido, só se refere a coisa  
 graça da Rússia.  
 . . .  
 Coimbra 13 IV-1980  
 J. Herculano

1983: On March 19, 1983, at the request of the Holy Father, Sister Lucia met with the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Portalupi, a Dr. Lacerda, and Father Messias Coelho. During this meeting Sister Lucia confirmed that Pope John Paul's consecration of 1982 *did not fulfill the requests of Our Lady*:

In the act of offering of May 13, 1982, *Russia did not appear as being the object of the consecration*. And each bishop did not organize in his own diocese a public and solemn ceremony of reparation and consecration of Russia. Pope John Paul II simply renewed the consecration of the world executed by Pius XII on October 31, 1942. From this consecration we can expect some benefits, but not the conversion of Russia.<sup>41</sup>

On this occasion Sister Lucia flatly concluded: "The Consecration of Russia *has not been done as Our Lady had demanded it*. I was not able to say it because I did not have the permission of the Holy See."<sup>42</sup>

1984: On Thursday, March 22, 1984, three days before the consecration of the world at issue, the Carmel of Coimbra was celebrating Sister Lucia's seventy-seventh birthday. She received on that day, as was her custom, her old friend Mrs. Eugenia Pestana. After extending good wishes to her Carmelite friend, Mrs. Pestana asked: "Then Lucia, Sunday is the Consecration?" Sister Lucia, who had already received and read the text of the Pope's consecration formula, made a negative sign and declared: "That

<sup>41</sup>*Fatima: Tragedy and Triumph*, p. 165. See also "Sister Lucy's Recent Authorized Statements", *The Fatima Crusader*, Issue #13-14, Oct.-Dec. 1983, p. 3 (<http://www.fatimacrusader.com/cr13/cr13pg03.asp>); and "Fatima May 13, 1982—What Actually Happened? Was Russia Consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary?", *The Fatima Crusader*, Issue #16, Sept.-Oct. 1984, pp. 22-23 (<http://www.fatimacrusader.com/cr16/cr16pg22.asp>).

<sup>42</sup>Reported within an article by Father Pierre Caillon of Centre Saint Jean 61500 Sees, (Orne) France. This article was published by the monthly periodical *Fidelite Catholique*, B.P. 217-56402, Auray Cedex, France. English translation from *The Fatima Crusader*, Issue #13-14, Oct.-Dec. 1983, p. 3 (<http://www.fatimacrusader.com/cr13/cr13pg03.asp>); see also *The Fatima Crusader*, Issue #16, Sept.-Oct. 1984, pp. 22-23 (<http://www.fatimacrusader.com/cr16/cr16pg22.asp>).



consecration cannot have a decisive character.”<sup>43</sup>

1985: In *Sol de Fatima*, the Spanish publication of the Blue Army, Sister Lucia was asked if the Pope had fulfilled the request of Our Lady when he consecrated the world the previous year. Sister Lucia replied: “There was no participation of all the bishops, and there was no mention of Russia.” She was then asked, “So the consecration was not done as requested by Our Lady?” to which she replied: “No. Many bishops attached no importance to this act.”<sup>44</sup>

1987: On July 20, 1987 Sister Lucia was interviewed quickly outside her convent while voting. She told journalist Enrique Romero that the Consecration of Russia has not been done as requested.<sup>45</sup>

One could cite more of Lucia’s affirmations that the 1984 consecration of the world (and that of 1982) did not fulfill Heaven’s conditions, but the point is made.<sup>46</sup>

Like Sodano and Bertone, Fr. Apostoli does not deny that Sister Lucia gave the testimony set forth above. Rather, hewing to the party line, *FFT* argues that she changed her mind for some unknown reason. The book cites the usual “evidence” for this sudden about-face: computer-generated letters from “Lucia” that first began to appear in 1989. See *FFT*, p. 197. We are asked to believe that a cloistered nun switched to a word processor at the age of 82—but only when writing about the Consecration of Russia, while continuing to handwrite her other correspondence. These computerized “letters from Lucia” have long since been debunked as patent fakes.

*FFT* cites one such purported letter, from March of 1989, wherein “Sister Lucia” inadvertently makes the fatal concession that the 1984 consecration ceremony, which failed to mention Russia, involved only “those bishops who wished to associate themselves with His Holiness.” (p. 197). Thus *FFT* presents us with a collegial consecration of Russia—called for by the very Mother of God—in which the bishops could participate if they felt inclined to “associate” themselves with the Roman Pontiff. Or perhaps they had more pressing business to attend to that day than obtaining world peace, the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart and the salvation of many souls. Ridiculous.

The purported letter concludes with this manifestly dubious affirmation by “Lucia”: “Afterward people asked me if it [the Consecration] was made, and I replied: ‘Yes.’ From that time, it is made.” Really? But why would “Lucia” suddenly declare in 1989 that “it was made” when she had said over and over again before 1989 that it was *not* made—in either 1984 or 1982—because of the failure to mention Russia or to obtain the participation of the world’s Catholic bishops? No explanation is given. Like Sodano

<sup>43</sup>*Fatima: Tragedy and Triumph*, pp. 167-168; see also “The Requests of Our Lady of Fatima Are Being Deliberately Hidden,” *The Fatima Crusader*, Issue #31-32, March-May 1990, pp. 28-42, 54-55 (<http://www.fatimacrusader.com/cr31/cr31-32pg28.asp>).

<sup>44</sup>*Sol de Fatima*, September 1985.

<sup>45</sup>This testimony of Sister Lucia was reported in the early August (1987) edition of *Para Ti* published in Argentina. See “Sister Lucy States: ‘Russia Is Not Yet Properly Consecrated’”, *World Enslavement or Peace ... It’s Up To the Pope*, Father Nicholas Gruner (Fort Erie, Ontario: The Fatima Crusader, 1989), pp. 212-213; also online at <http://www.worldenslavementorpeace.com/e6cp10.asp>.

<sup>46</sup>For more testimony, see Chapter VI of *Fatima: Tragedy and Triumph*.

and Bertone, Fr. Apostoli simply asserts that Sister Lucia reversed herself—and don't ask why.

In yet another inadvertent admission, Fr. Apostoli surmises: “John Paul II chose to follow Pius XII's formula for consecrating Russia *not by name*, but by a *veiled reference*.” (p. 195). Evidently, he is referring to Pius XII's consecrations of the world on October 31 and December 8 of 1942, following which Sister Lucia revealed that while these acts had not fulfilled Our Lady's request, nevertheless Our Lord had promised her during Lent of 1943 that “the present distress [World War II] would be shortened,” which indeed it was. As Winston Churchill observed the history of the War, in early 1943—that is, almost immediately after the consecration of the world in December 1942—“the hinges of fate turned in favor of the Allies,” who won every major battle thereafter.

As already noted, however, in July of 1946 Lucia told Professor William Thomas Walsh, that: “What Our Lady wants is that the Pope and all the bishops in the world shall consecrate *Russia* to Her Immaculate Heart on one special day.”

Lucia's insistence on a public consecration of Russia *by name* in a ceremony involving the Pope and the world's bishops, acting jointly, was in keeping with what Our Lord Himself had revealed to her in 1936. In response to her question why He would not convert Russia without an explicit consecration of that nation to the Immaculate Heart, Our Lord replied: “Because I want My whole Church to acknowledge that consecration as a triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary so that it may extend its cult later on and put the devotion of the Immaculate Heart beside the devotion to My Sacred Heart.”

It seems Fr. Apostoli has failed to consider the implications of his own argument that a “veiled reference” to Russia by John Paul II sufficed: Given that Pius XII's “veiled reference” manifestly failed to produce the promised conversion of Russia, the end of the persecution of Catholics and world peace, what sense did it make for John Paul to *repeat the same inadequate formula* some 42 years later?

In this connection Fr. Apostoli has overlooked a major historical fact: On July 7, 1952 Pius XII, acting in response to petitions from the still-persecuted Catholics of Russia that he “consecrate the entire people of Russia, in the anxieties of the present moment, to the Immaculate Heart,” pronounced such a consecration in his apostolic letter *Sacro Vergente Anno*: “just as, a few years ago, we consecrated the whole world to the Immaculate Heart of the Virgin Mother of God, so today, in a very special way, we consecrate all the peoples of Russia to the same Immaculate Heart...”<sup>47</sup> There was also a private consecration ceremony in the Vatican in which only Pope Pius participated.

Yet not even this explicit mention of Russia by Pius XII produced the miracle promised by Our Lady because the participation of the bishops in a great public act of the whole Church was lacking. Unfortunately, it seems Pius XII was not made aware of what Lucia had insisted upon repeatedly and would continue to insist upon for decades following 1952: that what Our Lady had prescribed was that “the Pope and all the bishops in the world shall consecrate Russia to Her Immaculate Heart on one special day.”

In an appendix on this subject, *FFT* argues in favor of a “Consecration of Russia” that avoids mentioning Russia by contending that after the 1942 “veiled reference”

<sup>47</sup>*Sacro Vergente Anno* (1952), n. 9 (“... come pochi anni fa abbiamo consacrato tutto il mondo al Cuore immacolato della vergine Madre di Dio, così ora, in modo specialissimo, consacriamo tutti i popoli della Russia al medesimo Cuore immacolato...”).

ceremony by Pius XII, Lucia “never raised an objection...” (p. 251). Nonsense. I have already noted Lucia’s repeated testimony to numerous witnesses that the only consecration of Russia that would suffice is one that specifically identifies Russia as its object. Moreover, as just noted, Our Lord Himself warned Lucia that what Our Lady promised at Fatima would not be obtained without a public and explicit consecration of that nation, not a “veiled reference.” And history bears this out: Russia has not converted and the world does not have peace.

Fr. Apostoli concludes his argument for the consecration-that-wasn’t by quoting a purported statement by Lucia to Cardinal Bertone concerning whether Russia was properly consecrated in 1984: “I’ve already said [when? where?] that the consecration Our Lady wished for was performed in 1984, and that it was accepted by Heaven.” (p. 198). But the words attributed to Lucia are part of Bertone’s two-hour “interview” of the seer on November 17, 2001, as to which we have no transcript or audio or video recording, but only a communiqué from Bertone providing a scant 463 words from the seer out of two hours of alleged conversation with her, including exactly *nine* words concerning the very matter about which she was supposedly interrogated at length: the Third Secret of Fatima. I agree with Socci’s assessment of this so-called interview: “The few words attributed to her... are such as not to have objective credibility.”<sup>48</sup>

Bear in mind that the source of Lucia’s purported statement is the same Cardinal Bertone who claimed for seven years that she “confessed” to him that Our Lady had never linked disclosure of the Secret to the year 1960, only to reveal on camera in 2007 the two sealed envelopes on which Sister Lucia had written down precisely the “express order of Our Lady” that the envelopes were not to be opened before 1960. This is the same Cardinal Bertone who claims to have had a total of some sixteen hours of conversations with Lucia of which not a single word was recorded in any objectively verifiable manner. This is the same Bertone whose “quotations” of Lucia on key issues change every time he repeats them.<sup>49</sup> And this is the same Bertone whose account is so full of holes that there are literally 101 reasons to doubt its veracity. *See* Appendix B.

But let us suppose for argument’s sake that Lucia was finally induced to repudiate her own prior testimony on the necessity of Russia’s explicit consecration to the Immaculate Heart by the Pope and the bishops acting together. When a steady and reliable witness suddenly reverses her lifelong testimony without explanation, a reasonable observer can only conclude that the witness has been tampered with. Only this would explain why defenders of the party line have never offered any explanation for Lucia’s abrupt about-face on a matter so fundamental to the Message of Fatima. There is no need to decide the question, however, for no matter what Sister Lucia is alleged to have said toward the end of her life, the fact remains that Russia could not have been consecrated in ceremonies that deliberately avoided any mention of Russia for the specious reasons offered by the proponents of the “substitute” or “compromise” ceremonies. The “consecration of Russia” without mention of Russia is just more utter nonsense in defense of the party line.

Now, if our own experience confirms beyond doubt that we cannot obtain the promises of Our Lady of Fatima without a Consecration of Russia that fulfills two conditions—explicit mention of Russia *and* the participation the world’s bishops—why

<sup>48</sup>Socci, *The Fourth Secret of Fatima*, p. 179.

<sup>49</sup>Cf. *The Secret Still Hidden*, pp. 130 and 144-152.

persist in doing the wrong thing in 1982 and 1984? We have heard it attributed to various famous personages, from Ben Franklin to Albert Einstein, that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. It is not going too far to say that these repeated attempts to “consecrate Russia” without mentioning Russia are an insane approach to the simple task Our Lady of Fatima has set before the leadership of the Church.

But what is to account for this insane approach? We know the answer, already noted above: John Paul II’s advisors talked him out of a true and proper Consecration of Russia because, in their manifestly fallible judgment, it would offend the Russian Orthodox. Tellingly, *FFT* cites this purported statement by Lucia to Father Kondor (vice-postulator for the causes of canonization for Francisco and Jacinta), shortly before the 1984 consecration ceremony: “The reply she gave me was that now the Holy Father will do all that is in his power.” (p. 196). Regarding Father Kondor’s claim *FFT* asserts—without providing the least evidence—that “The Pope was happy with this reply [to Father Kondor]. After all, if the Pope did all he could and it was not enough, then the consecration could not be made by him or any other Pope.”

The Pope did “all that is in his power”? Was the mention of Russia by name beyond the power of the Supreme Pontiff? The Pope need only have opened his mouth to utter a single word. And yet he did not do so. He did not do so because his advisors—no doubt including the Secretary of State—were of the opinion that “the Russian Orthodox might regard it as an ‘offense’ if Rome were to make specific mention of Russia in such a prayer, as if Russia especially is in need of help when the whole world, including the post-Christian West, faces profound problems...” After all, what did the Mother of God know about diplomacy and ecumenical relations when She appeared at Fatima to ask for Russia’s consecration? She had not even bothered to consult the Secretary of State in such a delicate matter! As for the participation of the world’s bishops, how could a mere Pope be expected to command the bishops to do anything in the age of “collegiality” inaugurated by Vatican II?

### **A Most Revealing Statement**

In the aforementioned appendix *FFT* quotes Bishop Paul Josef Cordes to devastating effect—devastating, that is, to the party line:

I recall that [Pope John Paul II] thought, some time before [the Consecration], of mentioning Russia in the prayer of benediction. *But at the suggestion of his collaborators he abandoned the idea.* He could not risk such a direct provocation of the Soviet leader. The Pope also decided not to mention Russia directly *out of sensitivity to the Orthodox bishops* he had invited to join in the consecration prayer. So for good reasons, he followed the discreet approach of Pope Pius XII and of the bishops at the Second Vatican Council, where he himself was very prominent. (p. 251).

One could write a short book on the implications of this statement alone. Here a few salient remarks will have to suffice. First of all, the foremost of John Paul’s “collaborators” concerning the Consecration of Russia was no less than the Virgin Mary,

Mother of God. It was Her advice that should have been followed, not the advice of assorted ecclesiastical diplomats presiding over a Church in crisis in a world in crisis. To do exactly what Our Lady had requested was all the more incumbent on John Paul given that, as he himself acknowledged, She had saved his life during the 1981 assassination attempt.

The idea that consecrating Russia by name would be “a direct provocation of the Soviet leader” represents worldly wisdom at its worst. Consider that the second part of the Great Secret, known to the world long before 1984 and published by the Vatican itself in 2000 as part of the commentary in *TMF*, openly declares: “If My requests are heeded, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace; if not, *she will spread her errors throughout the world*, causing wars and persecutions of the Church...” If publication of this heavenly indictment of Russia’s role in the worldwide spread of error, war and persecution of the Church was not a “direct provocation of the Soviet leader,” why would the consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart “provoke” him? If anything, “the Russian leader” in 1984 (Konstantin Chernenko) would probably have found the ceremony amusing. The idea that, as *FFT* suggests, an explicit consecration of Russia would have caused “reprisals by the president of the Soviet Union” who would “send Russian tanks and troops into Poland” is ludicrous.

Furthermore, as already noted, in 1952 Pope Pius XII explicitly consecrated Russia by name in an apostolic letter published to the world, albeit without the necessary participation of the bishops in a public ceremony. Yet this mention of Russia did not “provoke the Soviet leader” at the time, the diabolical maniac Josef Stalin (who died in 1953). This fact alone dispels the fantasy of Soviet retaliation for any mention of Russia in the Consecration of Russia.

Putting aside the lack of any evidence for this preposterous theory, are we to believe that the Queen of Heaven would prescribe a ceremony that would provoke war with Russia instead of preventing it? Consider what *FFT* is arguing here: that what the Mother of God, *Virgo Prudentissima*, requested at Fatima was dangerous to the world unless amended by Vatican diplomats! But since the very effect of the Consecration was to be Russia’s conversion, how could it possibly have been the cause of war with Russia? Would the Mother of God and Her divine Son be powerless to restrain “the Soviet leader” if he were “provoked” by Russia’s explicit consecration? Evidently there is no limit to the size of the whoppers the faithful are expected to swallow for the sake of the party line.

As for Bishop Cordes’s claim that John Paul decided not to mention Russia “out of sensitivity to the Orthodox bishops” he had invited to participate in the 1984 ceremony—the first time we have heard of this invitation—this was not some social event at which one wishes to avoid offending the guests. This was supposed to be a dramatic public appeal to Heaven for nothing less than the conversion of those same Orthodox bishops and their reunification with Rome, the conversion of Russia as a whole, peace in the world, and the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart. It was to be, in sum, a miraculous manifestation of the immense spiritual power that God Almighty has deigned to place at the disposal of the Vicar of Christ. But, as *FFT* would have it, the paramount concern on this utterly momentous occasion was “sensitivity” to the feelings of some Orthodox bishops. Their feelings would be hurt! This argument would be a joke were its consequences not so serious for the Church and the world.

By the way, just what did the Orthodox bishops allegedly invited to participate in the 1984 ceremony think they were doing? If, as the defenders of the party line maintain, a “veiled reference” to Russia was quite sufficient to indicate Russia, why were the Orthodox bishops not offended by the “veiled reference”? Moreover, if they knew that the Pope “really” intended to consecrate Russia while avoiding any explicit reference to Russia, why would they have agreed to participate (if they did participate) in this disguised “offense” to their spiritual leadership?

Further, if “everyone knew” that Russia was being consecrated, why not simply say so openly? What sort of silly game was this? Or were the invited Orthodox bishops positively assured that Russia was *not* the object of the 1984 ceremony, only to learn afterwards that, according to the party line, Russia was the “veiled” object all along? But that would mean the Orthodox bishops were the victims of a cynical bait-and-switch—hardly the kind of trickery the sinless and Immaculate Mother of God would countenance.

At any rate, what evidence is there in the first place that the Orthodox would be “offended” if their nation were singled out for Mary’s special favor and intervention? Exactly none. Indeed, common sense indicates the contrary conclusion. As the Catholic scholar Cathy Pearson observed in her seminal article on the Consecration in *Inside the Vatican*:

A consecration of a country, after all, is not an anathema or an exorcism. It is an invocation of a special blessing and protection. That Mary should single out a particular nation for such a request is a sign of Her special maternal affection.... One might expect that any nation that honors the Blessed Mother would consider it an enviable privilege to be uniquely selected for such a dignity by Holy Mary Herself.... The Russian Orthodox do honor Mary, and while they may not accept the Fatima miracle and message as such, unlike some branches of Christianity they do believe that She can and does intervene personally in human history....<sup>50</sup>

On this point Fr. Apostoli demolishes his own position by reporting the putative remark of some unnamed Orthodox priests to an unnamed Catholic priest following the 1984 ceremony: “It was Our Lady of Fatima who saved our country.” (*FFT*, 259). So much for the fable that the Orthodox would be gravely offended by a true and proper consecration of their nation to Mary’s Immaculate Heart. Once this is really done, Russia will indeed be saved, the whole world will receive the divine benefits of that miracle, and the Orthodox, reunited with Rome, will be among the first to acknowledge it with gratitude.

Finally, we have Bishop Cordes’s reference to “the discreet approach of... the bishops at the Second Vatican Council.” This is perhaps the most damning admission in the bishop’s revealing statement. For here he is clearly referring to the Vatican-Moscow Agreement, rightly described as an act of “religious treason” by Jean Madiran. Under this shameful accord, negotiated between the Orthodox Metropolitan Nikodim and Cardinal Tisserant in Metz, France just before the Council, the Council would observe a

<sup>50</sup>Cathy Pearson, “Now is the Time: Consecrating Russia Will Help, Not Hurt, Catholic-Orthodox Dialogue,” *Inside the Vatican*, August-September 2008, p. 32.

“discreet” silence concerning the scourge of Soviet Communism to avoid offense to the Russian Orthodox observers in attendance at the Council, who were themselves tools of the Kremlin.

As Paul Joseph Schmitt, the Bishop of Metz, later revealed: “It was in our region that the ‘secret’ meeting of Cardinal Tisserant with Archbishop Nikodim occurred. The exact place was the residence of Fr. Lagarde, chaplain for the Little Sister of the Poor in Borny.... After this meeting, the conditions for the presence of the Russian church’s observers were established by Cardinal Willebrands, an assistant of Cardinal Bea.”<sup>51</sup> In a letter on the subject, Msgr. Georges Roche, the biographer of Cardinal Tisserant, confirmed: “That accord was negotiated between the Kremlin and the Vatican at the highest level.... Cardinal Tisserant received formal orders to negotiate the accord and to make sure that it would be observed during the Council.”<sup>52</sup>

And so it was. All entreaties from Council Fathers to condemn communism were kept from the Council hall, including an intervention by the Coetus Internationalis Patrum group involving 450 bishops. As I noted in my contribution to *The Devil’s Final Battle*, this major written intervention “was mysteriously ‘lost’ after being delivered to the Secretariat of the Council, and Council Fathers who stood up to denounce Communism were politely told to sit down and be quiet.”<sup>53</sup>

Thus the Council that declared it was reading “the signs of the times” would “discreetly” avoid offending Russia by failing even to mention, much less condemn, the most alarming sign of the times on display before its very eyes: the genocide and brutal persecution of Catholics in the very nation whose conversion Our Lady had appeared at Fatima to obtain. Madiran’s phrase “religious treason” is not too strong a description of this craven act of ecclesiastical “diplomacy.”

Can we not see how the Vatican-Moscow Agreement has been perpetuated to this very day by the party line of the Vatican Secretary of State, with its pathological determination to bury the Message of Fatima and prevent at all costs the “offensive” consecration of Russia? The parallel between the Council’s “discreet” failure to mention Russian totalitarianism and the “discreet” refusal to mention Russia in any consecration ceremony is too striking to be a mere coincidence. The two things represent the same policy in action, which goes by the name of *Ostpolitik* (“politics of the East”).

In fact, Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kium has condemned the campaign by Vatican bureaucrats, led by Cardinal Bertone, to encourage the persecuted Catholics of the “underground” Church in China to abandon their opposition to the Red Chinese regime and join its pseudo-church, the Catholic Patriotic Association, which has consecrated more than a hundred captive bishops in defiance of Rome. In a letter to Chinese Catholics “Cardinal Bertone argues for careful efforts to cooperate with the ‘official’ Church,” while Cardinal Joseph Zen’s letter, “released a week later... argues that faithful

<sup>51</sup>“Mystery of the Rome-Moscow Pact,” *30 Dias*, October 1989, pp. 55-56, quoting a February 9, 1963 interview with the journal *Republicain Lorrain*. See also “The Vatican Silenced by Moscow” (pp. 4ff) “The Catholic Church Betrayed” (pp. 7ff), and “Why the Vatican-Moscow Agreement Must be Repudiated” (pp. 11ff) in *The Fatima Crusader*, Issue 17, Feb.-April 1985, <http://www.fatimacrusader.com/cr17/toc17.asp>.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>53</sup>Cf. *The Devil’s Final Battle*, Ch. 6, “The Motive Takes Hold,” citing *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber*, Father Ralph Wiltgen, (New York: Hawthorne, 1967; TAN, 1985) pp. 272-278.

Catholicism in China still requires heroic resistance against the encroachments of the government—including the Patriotic Association.”<sup>54</sup>

Quite recently Cardinal Zen declared publicly that Vatican bureaucrats in the Congregation for Evangelization (no doubt under Bertone’s oversight as Secretary of State) are undermining the Pope’s 2007 instruction concerning the Church in China by pursuing “the *old ‘Ostpolitik’*... This policy of *Ostpolitik*—which is compromise at any cost, to please the government always, to always avoid confrontation—led to the present situation...”<sup>55</sup>

The Cardinal was referring to November of 2010, when “the Chinese government ordained a bishop without the approval of the Holy See, at a ceremony in which several bishops loyal to Rome were reportedly forced to participate. In December, police officers rounded up a large number of bishops and escorted them to a state-sponsored meeting of an unauthorized ‘bishops conference.’” This, said the Cardinal, “is completely against the doctrine of the Church. It was like a slap in the face of the Holy Father.... But unfortunately, these people in the Congregation for Evangelization... still believe that they must carry on the policy of compromise.” The Cardinal concluded with the scathing assessment that underground Catholic opposition to the Beijing regime “will be very difficult, because now the difficulty is not only to face a government, *but to face our own people, who are already more on the side of the government than on the side of the Church.* That’s the very sad reality.”<sup>56</sup>

Indeed it is, for the pernicious policy born in Metz with the Vatican-Moscow agreement still operates, not only to neutralize the Church’s opposition to communist regimes, but also to turn Vatican prelates into *collaborators* with those regimes. And the regimes with which they collaborate have arisen precisely from the spread of Russia’s errors throughout the world on account of the Vatican bureaucracy’s unwillingness to “offend” Russia by consecrating it to the Immaculate Heart.

### What Conversion?

Of course the consequence of failing to consecrate Russia is that Russia has not converted. Here too *FFT* parrots the party line: the fall of the Berlin Wall, *glasnost*, *perestroika*, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union are cited as evidence of the “conversion of Russia.” (pp. 255-258). So, as Fr. Apostoli would have it, Our Lady appeared at Fatima and produced the Miracle of the Sun in order to prophesy a mere regime change in Moscow.

Never mind that this regime change has given way to authoritarian rule under Vladimir Putin and the puppet president of the Russian Federation: national elections are a sham orchestrated from the Kremlin, governors of the Russian regions are appointed by Moscow without local elections, a free and independent press and mass media have all but ceased to exist, anti-government journalists have been murdered one after another, and key political opponents have all been arrested, jailed on trumped-up charges or targeted for assassination, as in the case of Alexander Litvinenko, former head of the

<sup>54</sup>“Vatican journalist sees key cardinals at odds on China policy,” Catholicculture.org, December 4, 2009.

<sup>55</sup>“Cardinal Zen: Vatican officials have blocked Pope's plan for Chinese Church,” EWTN News, April 12, 2011.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.



KGB (renamed the FSB under Putin), who was fatally poisoned with Polonium-210 slipped into his tea, and Viktor Andriyovych Yushchenko, the Ukrainian opponent of the Putin regime who barely survived an attempt to poison him with Dioxin.

Never mind that, in sum, “political rights and civil liberties have become so restricted in Russia that the country has been downgraded to ‘Not Free,’” as reported by the respected human rights organization Freedom House, which noted that “Russia was the only country to register a negative category change in 2004, moving from Partly Free to Not Free.”<sup>57</sup>

Never mind that Russia continues to lead the world in the per capita rate of abortions, has become the international hub of the child pornography industry that exploits Moscow’s 1 million street children,<sup>58</sup> and that its population, decimated by mass murder in the womb, alcoholism and premature death, is dwindling at the rate of 700,000 per year.

Never mind that Russia today is dominated by a corrupt plutocracy that has amassed billions upon billions in ill-gotten wealth in league with Putin while the great masses of common people suffer under Third World conditions.

Never mind that the Catholic Church clings to a minuscule and precarious existence in Russia under a 1997 law on “freedom of conscience” that has been used to expel numerous key Catholic clerics from the country and that requires the foreign-born priests (in Russia) who make up almost the entire priesthood in that nation to depart every 90 days in order to renew their visas, so that it has become impossible for the Church to develop a true and proper parish and diocesan system on Russian soil.

Never mind that today—irony of ironies—there are fewer Catholics, Catholic priests and Catholic parishes in Russia than at the time of the October Revolution in 1917.

What sort of “conversion of Russia” is this? It is no conversion at all, obviously. Undeterred by reality, however, *FFT* assures us that Russia is undergoing a “conversion process” involving “gradual changes.” (p. 254). So, according to Fr. Apostoli, Our Lady of Fatima promised the world a miracle that would proceed at the pace of a glacier, moving so slowly that no one can detect it. Today, some 27 years after the-consecration-that-wasn’t, there is not the least sign of any true religious conversion in “that poor nation,” as Sister Lucia called it. On the contrary, Putin’s Russia is sinking ever deeper into spiritual, moral, political and economic corruption, while allying itself militarily with Red China, producing a new and unprecedented threat to world peace.

Unable to deal convincingly with the evidence that makes a mockery of his glacial “conversion process,” Fr. Apostoli finally plays the trump card of all defenders of the party line: John Paul II was (so they claim) convinced that he had consecrated Russia—while deliberately avoiding any mention of Russia—so let that be the end of it. Fr. Apostoli writes: “Now if the Pope believed in his heart that he had made the

<sup>57</sup>“Russia Downgraded to ‘Not Free,’” Freedom House press release, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=70&release=242>.

<sup>58</sup>Cf. Irina Sandul, “Russia’s Trade in Child Pornography,” *Inside Russia Journal*, No. 146, February 2002 (“Some 20-30 percent of Moscow’s street children are involved in prostitution or child pornography, according to a study conducted in 2001 by the International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor [IPEC] under the aegis of the WTO. Russia’s Deputy Minister of Labor Galina Karelova said in an interview that the number of children on the street in Moscow is at least 1 million.”)

consecration properly, what are these people who still deny the consecration thinking?” (p. 260).

In other words, we should ignore the evidence of our senses and mindlessly maintain that Russia has been consecrated simply because the late Pope is *alleged* to have been convinced of it. Yet the fact is that John Paul never made any official papal declaration that the Consecration had been effected. Quite contrary, as many sources have noted, during and after the 1984 ceremony the Pope stated before thousands of witnesses that Our Lady was *still awaiting* the explicit consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart, referring pointedly to “those peoples for whom You Yourself *await* our act of consecration and of entrustment.” Hours after the ceremony, speaking to a vast crowd in Saint Peter’s Basilica, the Pope clearly alluded to the inadequacy of what he had done earlier that day: “We have been able to do all this according to *our poor human possibilities* and the measure of human *weakness*, but with immense confidence in Your maternal love and immense confidence in Your maternal solicitude.”<sup>59</sup>

Telling words indeed. They recall Fr. Apostoli’s own phrase: “the Pope did all he could.” That is, he did all he could *within the illicit restrictions imposed upon him* by his worldly-wise human advisors—restrictions Fr. Apostoli himself readily confirms as if they were helpful to his position, when in fact they are the very proof that the Consecration of Russia has been thwarted deliberately by the contrary plans of mere men.

In the end, there is no rational basis for the perverse refusal to mention Russia in the Consecration of Russia the very Mother of God requested. Not even those who so obstinately defend the party line can seriously propose that the Church and the world would suffer harm if the Pope were to utter the word “Russia” during the act of consecration. At the very least, there is nothing to lose. What, then, is to account for the bizarre decades-long campaign to prevent at all costs the utterance of that single word? Only one logical explanation presents itself: Those who have prevented Russia’s consecration by name *know or at least suspect that it would actually bring about Russia’s conversion*, and this they do not wish to see.

Let me be clear about what I am suggesting here: the longstanding refusal to consecrate Russia by name is ultimately diabolical in origin. This is not—I repeat: *not*—to say that those involved in the refusal are conscious agents of the devil. The point, rather, is that whatever their subjective intentions may be, they are lending themselves to what is objectively an evil end. The sheer irrationality of those who contrive specious arguments in defense of a “Consecration of Russia” that refuses to mention Russia is evidence of “diabolical disorientation” in the matter, to borrow Sister Lucia’s famous phrase concerning the crisis in the Church. For nonsense is always a sign of the Father of Lies at work in the minds of men, even those who might be convinced they are defending truth and justice.

The Father of Lies undoubtedly has one aim in mind concerning Russia: to confuse the issue of its consecration and delay it as long as possible, so as to delay as long as possible the consequent Triumph of the Immaculate Heart and the rout of diabolical forces that have provoked an epochal crisis in the Church and the world at large. Of course we have it on the infallible authority of the Virgin Herself that in the end Her Immaculate Heart will triumph, Russia will be consecrated to Her, and “that poor nation” will be converted for the good of the whole world. Yet the question before us is

<sup>59</sup>*Avvenire*, March 27, 1984; cf. *The Devil’s Final Battle*, Chapter 8.

how long Providence will permit the Vatican Secretary of State's party line, and those who defend it, to impede what will inevitably be done in God's good time. Meanwhile, those who are complicit in the impediment of Russia's consecration ought to ponder their accountability for the consequences to suffering humanity and a Church under attack from within, as Pope Benedict lamented in light of the Third Secret—that is, the *whole* Third Secret.

### Conclusion

What has Fr. Apstoli given us with *Fatima for Today*? He has given us, in short, what the Vatican Secretary of State would give us: a Fatima for yesterday. A Fatima that is over and done with. A Fatima that will not alter the disastrous ecclesial status quo over which the Vatican bureaucracy, controlled by the Secretary of State, has presided since Vatican II. A status quo Pope Benedict described with a single scathing word only days before he became the Vicar of Christ: "filth."

Fr. Apostoli has given us "an urgent Marian message of hope," as he calls it, that holds no urgency nor any hope for a restoration of the Church, peace in the world or the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart in our time because, as he and the Secretary of State would have it, the Message of Fatima has already been fulfilled and what we see is what we get.

"One deceives himself who thinks that the prophetic mission of Fatima is concluded." So said the Roman Pontiff himself only a few months ago. But Fr. Apostoli's seemingly pious tribute to the Fatima event fails to mention the Pope's historic declaration. The Pope's words are ignored because *Fatima for Today* was written to promote the very deception the Pope exposed. For far too long the Church has suffered from its consequences, imposed upon her by men who have usurped authority that does not belong to them and who think themselves more prudent than the Virgin Most Prudent. We have seen the fruits of their endeavors in a Church that now endures the worst crisis in her history. This crisis is no doubt foretold in the text they have kept from us, which links the apocalyptic scene in the vision to events within the Church instead of leaving us at the mercy of preposterous interpretations advanced by the same people who have suppressed the one and only interpretation on which we can rely: that of the Mother of God.

As the world rushes toward final disaster, we cannot allow human respect to keep us any longer from opposing publicly and without compromise those who have denied our right under God to the precious words the Virgin wishes us to know, and to that glorious triumph over adversity She promised us at the Cova da Iria. For the good of the Church and all of humanity, the travesty must end and the men responsible for it, no matter what their subjective intentions, must be seen for what they are objectively: not friends, but foes of the prophetic mission of Fatima.

## Appendix A

### **33 REASONS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF ANOTHER TEXT PERTAINING TO THE THIRD SECRET OF FATIMA**

1. Sister Lucia revealed that a text of the Secret is in the form of a letter to the Bishop of Fatima, but the vision is not a letter.
2. Those who have read the Secret have revealed that it speaks of a coming state of apostasy in the Church, but the vision says nothing of this.
3. 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 vision contains not a word from Her.
4. 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.
5. 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 dogma of the faith will always be preserved, etc.,” but the vision does not contain that logical continuation of the Virgin’s words.
6. 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 vision is not a letter and contains no words confided by the Virgin as a secret.
7. 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 Lucy anything at all.
8. Cardinal Bertone has admitted that Ottaviani stated “categorically a text of 25 lines,” and he was unable to refute that testimony, offering only a patently incredible “attempt” to explain that “maybe [!]” Ottaviani was “mistaken.”
9. 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.

10. John XXIII read a text of the Secret that was so difficult it required an Italian translation of the Portuguese, but also read another text, the following year, that he could understand perfectly without a translation.
11. The text of the vision contains no particularly difficult Portuguese expressions.
12. 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.
13. 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 Bertone’s “official account.”
14. When pressed to explain what text of the Secret John Paul II reportedly read in 1978, given that Bertone claims 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.
15. Archbishop Capovilla, personal secretary to John XXIII, confirmed that the text of the Secret kept in the papal apartment was contained in the “Capovilla envelope” on which he wrote his name, the names of all who had read its contents, and the judgment of John XXIII that he would “leave it to others to decide” what to do about the text.
16. On June 27, 1963, two years before the “official account” claims he read the Secret, Pope Paul VI opened the Capovilla envelope, which was retrieved from John XXIII’s Babarigo desk, read its contents, inquired of Capovilla about the notations on the outside, resealed the envelope, and said nothing further about it.
17. When asked by Solideo Paolini in 2006 whether this means there are two different envelopes and two different texts of the Third Secret—the “Bertone envelope” and the “Capovilla envelope”—Capovilla admitted to Paolini: “Exactly so!”
18. Capovilla has never retracted his statement to Paolini, even though he has had every opportunity to do so.
19. Bertone has not even asked Capovilla to deny what he said to Paolini, but rather has conspicuously avoided even mentioning Paolini.
20. Bertone has failed and refused to produce the reopened and resealed Capovilla envelope, even though he has finally admitted that it exists.

21. Yet Bertone, under mounting public pressure, finally revealed on the television show *Porta a Porta* 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 revealed until 1960, even though he had been representing for seven years that there is only one envelope, while falsely claiming that Lucia "confessed" she had never received any order from the Virgin linking the Secret to 1960 and forbidding its disclosure until then.
22. Bertone also revealed on *Porta a Porta* 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 we are supposed to believe were all created for only one text of the Secret.
23. Yet, 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.
24. 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*.
25. Bertone himself revealed, only weeks before his appearance on *Porta a Porta*, in his book *Last Visionary of Fatima*, that in April 2000 Sister Lucia "authenticated" *sheets* of paper pertaining to the Secret, even though on *Porta a Porta* Bertone revealed only one sheet, that containing the text of the vision.
26. In *Last Visionary* Bertone also revealed that there was also an outer envelope, not Lucia's, bearing the note "Third Part of the Secret," which likewise has never been produced.
27. Confronted with mounting evidence of a cover-up, Bertone adopted the 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 knows full well that there was a text and envelope in the papal apartment, thus suggesting (as Socci notes) that he deems a second text of the Secret "inauthentic."
28. 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, employed the even more nuanced declaration that "the Secret of Fatima has been revealed in an *authentic* and integral way," declining to affirm simply that the Third Secret of Fatima had been revealed entirely and that nothing had been withheld.
29. In an audiotape of a subsequent meeting with Solideo Paolini, Archbishop Capovilla further revealed that there is an "attachment" to the text of the vision, which has never been produced.

30. Bertone has never denied the existence of this “attachment,” even though the prominent Italian newspaper *Il Giornale* publicized its existence and declared that it “*would confirm the thesis of the existence of a second sheet with the interpretation of the Secret.*”
31. Bertone has failed and refused to ask Sister Lucia or Archbishop Capovilla a single question that would penetrate to the heart of any of these matters, which he knows to be in controversy, and in particular has 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.
32. To this day, the Vatican has issued no official denial of the allegations in Socci’s book, even though Socci literally accuses Bertone of covering up the very words of the Mother of God.
33. On the contrary, Pope Benedict XVI 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.

## Appendix B

Among other things, *The Secret Still Hidden* has surveyed in detail the evidence that convinced Antonio Socci that it “is certain” Cardinal Bertone and his collaborators are hiding a text of the Third Secret of Fatima containing “the words of the Madonna [which] preannounce an apocalyptic crisis of the faith in the Church starting from the top” and 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.”<sup>60</sup>

This appendix, rather than reviewing the evidence as a whole, focuses on the specific grounds for doubting the veracity of Cardinal Bertone’s account, according to which: (a) the vision published in 2000 is the entirety of the Third Secret; (b) the Virgin had nothing to say about the vision’s meaning; and (c) Heaven left the “interpretation” of the vision to Bertone and his predecessor, Cardinal Sodano. As the reader will see, many of the grounds for doubt arise from Bertone’s own statements and omissions over the past seven years.

### **Bertone evades the testimony of Archbishop Capovilla and the evidence presented by Antonio Socci.**

1. In July 2006 Archbishop Loris Capovilla, the personal secretary to Pope John XXIII reveals to Solideo Paolini:
  - that there are two different envelopes and two different texts pertaining to the Third Secret: the “Capovilla envelope” and the “Bertone envelope”;
  - that the “Capovilla envelope” was kept in the papal apartment of John XXIII, in a desk called “Barbarigo,” located in the papal bedchamber;
  - that after Pope John read the text of the Secret inside that envelope in August 1959, he placed the text back into the envelope, resealed it, and instructed Capovilla to write on the outside “I give no judgment,” along with the names of all those Pope John had asked to read the Secret;
  - that Paul VI retrieved the “Capovilla envelope” from the same desk where Pope John left it (“Barbarigo”) and read its contents in 1963—*two years before* the date Bertone says Pope Paul read the Third Secret for the first time—and then resealed the envelope, as had John XXIII.
2. The “Bertone envelope,” on the other hand, was always kept in the Holy Office archives, and Pope Paul, according to Bertone’s account, read its contents in 1965—*two years after* Pope Paul had read the contents of the “Capovilla” envelope.

<sup>60</sup>Socci, *The Fourth Secret of Fatima*, p. 82.



3. In the face of Capovilla's explosive testimony proving the existence of another envelope and text of the Secret, Cardinal Bertone remains silent, even after Antonio Socci publishes that testimony to the world in November 2006 as part of his book *The Fourth Secret of Fatima*.
4. Bertone fails to deny or even to mention Capovilla's testimony *even when Giuseppe De Carli brings it to his attention* while interviewing Bertone for *Last Visionary of Fatima*.
5. *Last Visionary* fails to address a single point Socci raises in *Fourth Secret*, including the testimony of Capovilla, even though *Last Visionary* is supposed to be a rebuttal of *Fourth Secret*, wherein Socci presents massive evidence of a cover-up of a text of the Secret.
6. During his television appearance of May 31, 2007 on the Italian television show *Door to Door*, a few weeks after *Last Visionary* is published, Bertone continues to avoid any discussion of Socci's points, including Capovilla's testimony, even though the very title of the show ("The Fourth Secret of Fatima Does Not Exist") is a direct attack on the title of Socci's book.
7. Although this installment of *Door to Door* is an attack on Socci's book, Socci is not invited to participate in the show or even to submit questions to Bertone.

**Bertone evades, then blatantly misrepresents,  
Lucia's telltale "etc"—the gateway to the Third Secret.**

8. For the past seven years of an ongoing controversy, Bertone has refused to answer any questions about the words following Lucia's "etc" in the momentous declaration of the Virgin: "In Portugal, the dogma of the Faith will always be preserved etc.", which Lucia recorded in her Fourth Memoir as part of the integral text of the Great Secret revealed by Virgin on July 13, 1917, and which Fatima scholars unanimously regarded as the opening words of the Third Secret.
9. Bertone, collaborating in *Message of Fatima* (2000), the Vatican commentary on the vision of "the Bishop dressed in white," falsely describes the Virgin's words ending in Lucia's "etc" as merely "some annotations" by Lucia, when he knows the phrase is part of the integral text of the Great Secret as spoken by the Virgin herself and recorded in the Fourth Memoir.
10. To avoid the momentous words of the Virgin recorded in the Fourth Memoir, which they would have to explain to the faithful, Bertone and his collaborators use the less complete Third Memoir, offering no explanation for this strange decision other than the demonstrably false claim that the Virgin's words in the Fourth Memoir are mere "annotations" by Lucia.

11. Yet, in another context, Bertone himself quotes from the Fourth Memoir *precisely because it is more complete than the Third*.
12. During the press conference of June 26, 2000, at which *Message* was published, Bertone states to the press: “It is difficult to say if it [the “etc”] refers to the second or the third part of the secret [i.e., the Great Secret of July 13, 1917]... it seems to me that it pertains to the second.” Hence *Bertone does not deny that the “etc” could in fact be part of the Third Secret*, which would mean that the Third Secret includes the Virgin’s *spoken words*.
13. Bertone refuses to address the “etc” issue, even though he himself makes a mocking reference to the issue in *Last Visionary*, only to avoid answering any questions about it.
14. Despite what he claims are ten hours of unrecorded interviews with Lucia concerning the Third Secret and the Message of Fatima in general, Bertone mysteriously fails to ask her whether there are any words of the Virgin following the famous “etc”, even though he knows this matter is at the very heart of the Third Secret controversy. In the alternative, Bertone does ask Lucia about what is contained within the “etc”, but he conceals her answer.
15. During the same ten hours of interviews Bertone mysteriously fails to ask Sister Lucia if the Virgin ever explained what *Message* calls the “difficult to decipher” vision of “the Bishop dressed in white,” and if so, whether there is a text of the Virgin’s explanation. In the alternative, Bertone does ask Lucia if the Virgin ever explained the vision, but conceals her answer.
16. During a radio broadcast on June 6, 2007, Bertone falsely states that the Virgin’s words in the Fourth Memoir end with ellipses (...), not with an “etc” added by Lucia to indicate further spoken words of the Virgin, even though Bertone certainly knows the mysterious “etc” has been at the heart of the Third Secret commentary for decades and throughout his entire tenure as a Vatican official, and could not possibly have mistaken the “etc” for an ellipsis.
17. During the same broadcast Bertone falsely suggests that the telltale words of the Virgin concerning the preservation of dogma in Portugal (but evidently not elsewhere) are not important because they are merely part of Lucia’s “memoir,” which he characterizes as “another writing,” when he knows that Lucia’s memoirs are the source texts of the integral Message of Fatima, and that *he himself used the less complete Third Memoir* to obtain the text of the Great Secret the Vatican published in 2000.

**Bertone demolishes his own position  
on national television.**

18. During the appearance on *Door to Door* in May of 2007, Bertone himself finally reveals—after seven years of failing to mention it—that Sister Lucia prepared *two different sealed envelopes* for transmission of the Third Secret, each bearing the notation “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.”
19. Bertone himself thus verifies the “two envelopes, two texts” theory of Socci and the “Fatimists,” since it could hardly be the case that Lucia would use two sealed envelopes, with the “1960 order” on each, for one text.
20. Contrary to what he revealed on television, Bertone reports in *Last Visionary* that during his purported interview of Lucia on April 27, 2000, he asked her to identify only *one* sealed envelope as hers.
21. During the same appearance on *Door to Door* Bertone also reveals for the first time that the text of the vision of the bishop in white *is not a letter* to the Bishop of Fatima—which is how Lucia described the text of the Secret she had transmitted to the Bishop—but rather is written *on four contiguous pages of her notebook*, comprising *a single sheet of folio paper*.
22. Bertone himself thus confirms the contention of Socci and the “Fatimists” that, just as Sister Lucia herself revealed, the Secret was contained *both* in her notebooks *and* in her letter to the Bishop of Fatima.
23. Contrary to what he says on television on May 31, 2007, in *Last Visionary*, Bertone asserts that during the meeting of April 27, 2000 Lucia authenticated *sheets* (“fogli” in Italian) of paper pertaining to the Secret, not the single sheet he produced on *Door to Door* and which he described as “the folio (sheet of paper)... the only *authentic* folio (“l’unico foglio autentico”), the only folio in which is contained the Third Secret.”
24. During the appearance on *Door to Door*, Bertone makes it a point to display an envelope containing a 1967 translation of a text of the Secret (while failing to display the translation inside), but he does not display or even mention the 1959 translation of a text of the Secret, *especially prepared for John XXIII*, whose existence Archbishop Capovilla himself later reveals during a television broadcast staged by Bertone in September 2007.
25. Bertone inadvertently reveals during his appearance on *Door to Door* that the Third Secret involves “words” and an “interior locution” that Lucia committed indelibly to memory, when the vision of the bishop in white contains no words of the Virgin, but only Lucia’s own words describing the vision, and no interior locution.

26. Bertone also finally admits during the *Door to Door* appearance that Cardinal Ottaviani affirmed “categorically” that there is a one-page text of the Secret comprising 25 lines, as opposed to the four-page text of 62 lines setting forth the vision of the bishop in white. Yet, in *Last Visionary*, Bertone claimed that he did not know what the Cardinal was talking about.
27. Curiously, Bertone says that he is “a little amazed” by Ottaviani’s testimony, instead of denying it outright and producing witnesses or documents that could readily disprove the testimony, if such witnesses and documents existed.
28. Bertone further declares to the TV audience that he does not find Ottaviani’s testimony about a one-page, 25-line text of the Secret “*so convincing* as to say that there exists a sheet of paper (*foglio*) of 25 lines...”, as if the matter were open to debate, when he would not speak this way if he were quite certain Ottaviani was wrong.
29. In a contrived attempt to explain away Cardinal Ottaviani’s testimony, which he cannot deny or refute, Bertone falsely suggests on *Door to Door*, and in a radio broadcast during the following week (June 6, 2007), that Ottaviani could have counted 25 lines on two pages of the four-page text of the vision—somehow thinking the two pages were one page!—when Bertone knows very well that the two pages he indicated on both occasions contain 32 lines of text and could not possibly have been mistaken for one page of 25 lines.

**Bertone fails to obtain a retraction from Capovilla,  
finally admitting to the existence of the never-produced  
“Capovilla envelope.”**

30. When, at Bertone’s request, De Carli finally interviews Capovilla in August 2007, *he fails to obtain a retraction* of any element of Capovilla’s testimony to Paolini as recounted by Socci in *Fourth Secret*.
31. An earlier version of De Carli’s interview of Capovilla—also devoid of any retraction—is first published in *a women’s magazine*, indicating an attempt to “float” an unofficial “trial balloon” that will be passed off as a change of Capovilla’s testimony, when no change has in fact occurred.
32. According to De Carli’s transcript of his August 2007 interview of Capovilla, Paolini is *not even mentioned* during the interview, nor is Socci’s publication of Paolini’s account of what Capovilla told him.
33. The deliberate avoidance of any discussion of Paolini’s report of what Capovilla told him can only mean that Capovilla is not willing to deny or even modify what he said to Paolini.

34. During the interview with De Carli, Capovilla not only fails to deny or modify his testimony to Paolini, he *confirms the existence of the “Capovilla envelope”* containing the Third Secret, kept in the papal apartment in the desk called “Barbarigo” and bearing the words Capovilla had written on the outside at the direction of John XXIII.
35. Although his own witness now confirms its existence, *Bertone fails to produce the “Capovilla” envelope or to give any explanation for its non-production, which he would certainly do if there were an innocent explanation.*
36. Having failed to obtain a retraction of Capovilla’s testimony, De Carli, at Bertone’s behest, tries to supply (during the telecast Bertone stages in September 2007) the conclusion he could not extract from the witness: “I [De Carli!] conclude, therefore, there is not a Capovilla envelope to contrast to a Bertone envelope. The two envelopes are the same document.”
37. Yet, Bertone and De Carli both know that Capovilla himself said no such thing to De Carli, but on the contrary—according to De Carli’s own transcript of his interview of the Archbishop—Capovilla confirmed there is a “Capovilla envelope” bearing the Archbishop’s notations, *which Bertone has never produced.*
38. Bertone thus falsely represents to the public (through his agent De Carli) that there is no distinct “Capovilla envelope,” when his *own evidence* now demonstrates that it exists but has not been produced.
39. After seven years of having failed to reveal its existence, Bertone (through De Carli) now concedes that an envelope containing a text of the Third Secret and bearing Capovilla’s notations was kept in the papal apartment during the pontificates of John XXIII and Paul VI, even though, in *Last Visionary*, he scoffs at the claim that there was an envelope in the papal apartment as distinct from the Archives of the Holy Office.

**Bertone changes his story on the text in the papal apartment,  
thereby creating many new discrepancies in his account.**

40. Forced by Capovilla’s testimony to concede that there was, after all, an envelope containing a text of the Third Secret in the papal apartment, not the archives, and that Paul VI read this text in 1963, not 1965 as Bertone had claimed, Bertone has De Carli ask Capovilla leading questions during the August 2007 interview which suggest—for the first time in seven years of controversy—that Paul VI read the same text twice, in 1963 and 1965, and that the text Pope Paul read in both years was merely the text of the vision the Vatican published in June 2000. This suggestion is “floated” during the *Telepace* broadcast, staged by Bertone in September 2007.

41. Bertone's attempt to change his account to fit the evidence—evidence whose existence he had previously denied or appeared to deny—creates the following fatal discrepancies:

- If Paul VI read in 1965 the same text he read in 1963, then that text would be the one *inside the “Capovilla envelope”, which Bertone has never produced*; for as Capovilla told De Carli, after reading a text of the Secret in 1963, *Paul VI placed it back in the “Capovilla envelope” and resealed the envelope.*
- If there is nothing to hide, then Bertone would have produced the “Capovilla envelope” on television.
- The “official account” has never mentioned that Paul VI read a text of the Secret in 1963, even though that reading was a momentous historical event.
- There would have been no reason for the official account *not* to mention this momentous historical event *unless* the text Pope Paul read in 1963 was (and is) being hidden.
- If Paul VI read in 1965 the *same* text he read 1963, the official account of the 1965 reading would have mentioned this also—unless, again, there is something to hide.
- As Bertone himself now reveals through Capovilla, Paul VI resealed the envelope containing the text he read in 1963, stating that he would “do as much as” Pope John had, meaning leave it to others to judge the text. Why, then, would Paul VI *reopen* the envelope he had *resealed* in 1963 in order to read the same text again in 1965?
- Even if Paul VI decided to reopen the envelope he had resealed in 1963 in order to give its contents a second reading in 1965, how is it that neither his diaries, nor the records of the members of his staff, nor any Vatican document whatsoever, reflect that the pope decided to revisit the same text he had previously decided to leave to others to judge?
- According to De Carli's own transcript, Capovilla stated that after the 1963 reading of a text of the Secret by Paul VI “The envelope was resealed *and I don't know if it was spoken of further.*” Thus Capovilla, contrary to what Bertone suggests (via the leading questions posed by De Carli), *could not have known* whether Pope Paul reopened the same envelope and read the same text again in 1965.

**Bertone feigns ignorance of whether  
John Paul II read a text of the Secret in 1978.**

42. In *Last Visionary*, Bertone states he is “convinced” and it his “opinion” that John Paul II did not read the Secret in 1978, within days of his election, even though papal spokesman Navarro-Valls so reported to the press—a report that indicates a text in the papal apartment, not yet disclosed.
43. Confronted with the testimony of Navarro-Valls, Bertone mysteriously declines simply to ask Navarro-Valls, the Pope himself (while he was still alive) or any number of other knowledgeable witnesses if the report is true, even though he had ample time to do so in connection with his written interview in *Last Visionary*. Alternatively, Bertone does verify the report and has hidden the fact that John Paul II did indeed read a text of the Secret in 1978, three years before the date given in Bertone’s account.
44. Despite repeated questioning even by De Carli, his handpicked interviewer, Bertone claims that John Paul II, the very “Pope of Fatima,” waited until the third year of his pontificate (1981) to read the Third Secret, when Paul VI read it within days of his election.
45. Pressed by De Carli for the third time during the interview in *Last Visionary*, Bertone incredibly suggests John Paul II was too busy “reevangelizing the world” to read the Third Secret in 1978.
46. Nos. 42-45 suggest Bertone’s determination not to admit that John Paul II read the Secret in 1978, when there would be no reason not to admit it unless there is something to hide concerning that earlier reading.

**Bertone defends a patently untenable “interpretation”  
of the vision of the bishop in white.**

47. Bertone, following the lead of his predecessor, Cardinal Sodano, insists that the vision of a pope being executed by soldiers outside a half-ruined city signifies Pope John Paul II escaping death at the hands of a lone assassin in 1981—an “interpretation” even the Vaticanist Vittorio Messori categorically rejects as untenable during Bertone’s appearance on *Door to Door*.
48. Bertone fails to explain why, if that is all the vision signifies, it was kept under lock and key in the Vatican for nearly 20 years after the attempt.
49. Yet, Bertone asserts preposterously that the mere decision to publish the vision in 2000 “brings to an end a period of history marked by tragic human lust for power and evil...”—in which case, why was the decision not made sooner?

50. Bertone's "interpretation" of the vision makes the 1981 assassination attempt the very culmination of the Message of Fatima, even though the Pope recovered from his wounds, resumed an active life of skiing, hiking and swimming for the next twelve years, and died nearly twenty-five years after the attempt from the complications of Parkinson's disease.
51. In 2001, in the communiqué concerning his alleged interview of the seer in November 2001, Bertone claims that Lucia "fully confirms" his interpretation of the vision. But in May 2007, in *Last Visionary*, Bertone says "not in these terms" when asked directly by his own chosen interviewer, De Carli, if Lucia had accepted the interpretation.
52. All told, Bertone has given *six different and inconsistent versions* of Lucia's alleged statement to him that she "accepted" his "interpretation" of the vision.
53. Bertone asks the faithful to believe that the Virgin Mary had no words of explanation concerning a vision he has "interpreted" in a manner plainly at odds with what the vision depicts.
54. Bertone asks the faithful to believe that the Virgin left it to him and his predecessor to explain the meaning of the vision to the Church and the world, some 83 years after the Virgin confided it to the seers, and that Lucia herself consented to be guided, not by the words of the Virgin delivered from Heaven, but by two Vatican cardinals (Bertone and Sodano) who have no competence in the matter whatsoever.

**Bertone accuses Lucia of inventing the Virgin's order  
that the Secret was not to be revealed before 1960**

55. Over the course of seven years Bertone claims repeatedly—in *Message*, in *Last Visionary*, and during his television appearance on *Door to Door*—that Lucia "confessed" to him during unrecorded interviews that the Virgin never told her the Third Secret was not to be revealed until 1960, and that she (Lucia) arbitrarily selected that year for the revelation of the Secret.
56. Throughout the seven years he makes this claim, however, Bertone fails to reveal (until the appearance on *Door to Door* on May 31, 2007) that he has in his possession not one, but *two*, envelopes on which Lucia had written: "*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.*"
57. Bertone has an obvious motive to obtain Lucia's "confession" that she invented the "express order" of the Virgin regarding 1960: the Virgin's linkage of the Secret to 1960 destroys his ridiculous "interpretation" linking the vision of the bishop in white to the failed 1981 assassination attempt as the culminating Fatima prophecy, and further points to a relation between the Secret and events around



1960, including the Second Vatican Council, which John XXIII had announced in 1959.

58. Bertone gives three different and totally inconsistent versions of the “confession,” based on his unrecorded “interviews” of the seer:

- In the first version Lucia allegedly says: “I had the intuition that before 1960 it would not be understood, but that only later would it be understood.”
- In the second version the “intuition” disappears, and Lucia allegedly says: “I felt that 1960 would be a date very far from the writing of the ‘Secret’ in 1944 and because I had thought that I would be dead in that year, therefore the last obstacle to the interpretation and to the disclosure of the secret would have been taken away.”
- In the third version Lucia allegedly says: “It was I who set that date. It was I who thought that 1960 would be a term sufficient to be able to open the envelope. And I thought that perhaps I would be dead and not be involved in the Secret.”

59. All three versions of the “confession” are patently incredible for the following reasons:

- As a child, Lucia would not reveal the Secret without Our Lady’s permission, even under threat of death.
- Sister Lucia would never, on her own, make a “decision” when to reveal the Secret Our Lady had ordered her to “tell no one” except Francisco.
- The seer chosen by the Mother of God would not simply invent an “express order” from Mary and then forge it on two envelopes, thus misleading her superiors, the Church and the whole world for over 60 years.
- 1960 was not “very far” from 1944 (the year the Virgin ordered her to write down the text of the Secret); and even if it were, that a date was “very far” from 1944 was not a logical reason for Lucia to “decide” that *this* date, of all dates, would be a good time to reveal the Secret she was (at that time) under heavenly orders *not* to reveal.
- Of all the years that elapsed between 1944 and her death in 2005, Sister Lucia had no reason arbitrarily to “choose” 1960 as the year to reveal the Secret—*sixteen* years from 1944—rather than a round number like ten or twenty years from 1944.
- If, as Bertone himself admits, the Virgin directed Lucia to write down the Secret in 1944, the Virgin could not have failed to direct also the date for its

revelation

- Sister Lucia could not have had the premonition that she would be dead in 1960 when she lived to the advanced age of 97, and nowhere in any of her writings do we find the least suggestion that she anticipated dying before her 53<sup>rd</sup> birthday.
- Sister Lucia could not have thought that she, the very recipient of the Third Secret, the chosen seer of God, was an *obstacle* to its disclosure and “interpretation.”
- In *Last Visionary* Bertone claims he was sent to Coimbra to interview Lucia in April 2000, just before publication of the vision and the commentary in *Message*, because the Pope “had need of a definitive interpretation on the part of the religious.” Yet, in the same book, Bertone asks us to believe that Sister Lucia viewed her very existence on earth as “the last *obstacle*” to the Secret’s interpretation.

60. No independent witness has ever corroborated Bertone’s claim that Lucia “confessed” to fabricating the Virgin’s “express order,” even though witnesses were supposedly in attendance during the “confession.”

**Bertone relies on unrecorded, uncorroborated “interviews” and ever-changing “quotations” he attributes to the seer.**

61. Bertone conducts an alleged ten hours of interviews of the seer in order to substantiate his account, but fails to make a videotape, an audiotape or even a written transcript of these historic encounters, and does not even provide a signed statement by Lucia in her own language (Portuguese).
62. From ten hours of alleged interviews with Lucia, which would comprise thousands of spoken words, Bertone “quotes” exactly *nine words* attributed to Lucia concerning the contents of the Third Secret—the very matter in controversy—and no witness has come forward to corroborate even those nine words, although witnesses were allegedly present.
63. Bertone claims he has signed, edited “minutes” of his meetings with Lucia, but he has never produced them.
64. Bertone has never quoted Sister Lucia the same way twice on the same subject, and the fragmentary “quotations” allegedly drawn from his never-produced “notes” change every time he repeats them. In particular, Bertone has given:
- *Six inconsistent versions* of his claim that Lucia told him she “agrees” with his “interpretation” of the vision of the bishop in white. No independent witness has corroborated this claim.

- *Four inconsistent versions* of his claim that Lucia told him the consecration of Russia was effected by a consecration of the world in 1984. No independent witness has corroborated this claim.
- *Three inconsistent versions* of Lucia’s “confession“ that she invented the “express order of Our Lady” regarding 1960. No independent witness has corroborated this claim—not even the retired Bishop of Fatima, who attended the meeting of April 27, 2000 at which Lucia allegedly “confessed,” yet conspicuously fails to confirm Bertone’s account of the “confession” during his appearance on the *Telepace* telecast.
- *Three inconsistent versions* of the configuration of envelopes involved in the transmission of Third Secret, wherein the following telling discrepancies, among others, appear:
  - None of the three versions mention the “Capovilla envelope” his own witness (Capovilla, as interviewed by De Carli) identifies, but which Bertone has never produced and whose non-production he fails to explain.
  - Bertone variously claims that Lucia personally prepared one, two or three envelopes for transmission of the Secret, depending on which version one considers, yet not until the TV appearance of May 31, 2007 does Bertone mention *two* sealed envelopes bearing the “express order of Our Lady” that the envelopes not be opened until 1960.
  - One of the versions mentions an outer envelope bearing the notation “Third Part of the Secret”—another envelope Bertone has failed to produce, and perhaps a reference to the never-produced “Capovilla envelope.”

65. Bertone claims that during the interview of November 2001 Lucia told him she agrees with everything in *Message*, a 44-page document, even though *Message*

- as accurately reported by the *Los Angeles Times*, “gently debunks” Lucia’s account of the Third Secret;
- suggests that Lucia concocted the vision of the bishop in white from images she had seen in devotional books;
- accuses her of inventing the “express order of Our Lady” concerning revelation of the Secret in 1960; and
- cites as an eminent expert on Marian apparitions the modernist Jesuit, Edouard Dhanis, who declared that Sister Lucia invented the entire *Message* of Fatima except for its call to prayer and penance.

66. Bertone claims that during the same November 2001 interview Lucia uttered verbatim as her own statement a 165-word passage from *Message*, written by Cardinal Ratzinger.
67. In May 2007, only after Lucia has died and Capovilla has revealed the existence of a second text of the Third Secret, Bertone suddenly announces—for the first time in seven years of controversy—that during one of his alleged interviews of the seer she declared: “Yes, this is the Third Secret, and I have never written other.” Yet Bertone fails to identify which of the interviews contains this never-before-mentioned statement or to provide any transcript or other independent verification of the purported quotation, and no independent witness corroborates it—even though Bertone names Bishop Serafim, the retired Bishop of Fatima, as a witness to the alleged statement.
68. When Bishop Serafim does appear during Bertone’s telecast on *Telepace* in September 2007, he conspicuously fails to corroborate Lucia’s alleged statement, even though he was brought to Rome for the very purpose of defending Bertone’s position.
69. As to all of the contested statements Bertone attributes to Lucia during ten hours of interviews he never recorded, Bertone is literally *the only witness in the world* who claims to have heard the statements.

**Bertone suddenly shifts to an emphasis on an “authentic” text  
and a mere personal “conviction” that all has been revealed.**

70. After Socci shows conclusively that there is (or was) a text of the Secret located in the papal apartment, Bertone, during his appearance on *Door to Door*, begins to harp on an “authentic” text in the Holy Office *archives*, while ignoring or refusing to answer all questions about a text in the *papal apartment*, whose existence he will finally admit (through De Carli) in September 2007.
71. Instead of stating forthrightly on *Door to Door* that he has revealed the entire Third Secret of Fatima and that there are no other texts related to it (whether or not deemed “authentic”), Bertone states only that he and his collaborators “decided to publish *all that actually existed in the archives of the Holy Office...*”, when he knows very well that the burning issue in the controversy is precisely the text that was *not* in those archives but in the papal apartment.
72. During the radio broadcast of June 6, 2007, Bertone states he is “firmly convinced” there is no other text pertaining to the Secret, even though *if* he had really asked Sister Lucia, and *if* she had really told him categorically that there is no other text besides the text of the vision, he would hardly have expressed his remark as a mere personal conviction.

73. During the same radio broadcast Bertone states his “conviction” that there is no other text of the Secret is based on “the documentation that was *in the Secret Archive of the Holy Office*”—again focusing on what was in the archives, when, again, he knows very well there was a text in the papal apartment, that being the text contained in the “Capovilla envelope” he has never produced, and whose existence is not recorded in the archives.
74. During the radio broadcast Bertone also purports to base his “firm conviction” on what he calls “explicit declarations of Sister Lucia in the presence of the Bishop of Fatima”—declarations Bertone has never mentioned during the previous seven years; and he fails to quote any such “explicit declarations.”
75. During the radio broadcast Bertone fails to mention his earlier claim (suddenly announced in *Last Visionary*, published after Lucia’s death) that Lucia told *him* on some unknown date that “Yes, this is the Third Secret, and I have never written other”; Bertone now relies instead on the never-before-mentioned (and still not quoted) “explicit declarations” of Lucia in the presence of Bishop Serafim.
76. Yet when Serafim appears during the *Telepace* broadcast on September 21, 2007, *he fails to corroborate any “explicit declarations” by Lucia* regarding the alleged non-existence of another text of the Secret; reading from a prepared text, he pointedly remarks that he has “nothing, almost nothing” to say, and carefully notes that he will testify to “*only one fact*”: that Lucia confirmed that the text of the vision is authentic, which is not in dispute.
77. Regarding the existence of another text, Serafim does affirm mysteriously that the Third Secret has been revealed “in an *authentic* and integral way”—thus joining Bertone in emphasizing an “authentic text” rather than simply declaring forthrightly that absolutely no other text pertaining the Secret exists, either authentic or “inauthentic.”

**Bertone relies on a bogus “letter from Lucia”  
that he conspicuously fails to ask her to authenticate.**

78. In *Message*, Bertone fails to cite any direct testimony of Lucia that the 1984 consecration of the world sufficed for a consecration of Russia, even though he had just “interviewed” Lucia weeks before *Message* was published (the purported interview of April 27, 2000) and could readily have obtained such testimony if Lucia had been willing to provide it.
79. Instead, *Message* in 2000, and *Last Visionary* in 2007, rely on a computer-generated letter from 1989 to an unnamed addressee, even though that letter is widely known as a patent fabrication because it contains factual errors Lucia could not have made, and because Lucia never used a computer to write letters (especially back in the dawn of the personal computer age).

80. Bertone *never asks Lucia to authenticate this letter* during any of his three alleged interviews of the seer, spanning ten hours. Or, alternatively, he did ask her to authenticate it, she declined to do so, and Bertone has concealed this fact.
81. As if to authenticate the letter, Bertone stated in 2005 that “at the end Lucia even used the computer,” only to state in 2007 (in *Last Visionary*) that Lucia “*never worked with the computer.*”

**Bertone provides deceptive translations of  
Lucia’s purported 1982 letter to the Pope.**

82. In *Message* Bertone and his collaborators publish a fragment from a purported letter of Lucia to John Paul II in 1982 regarding the content of the Third Secret; nothing in the fragment indicates that it was addressed to the Pope, and neither the salutation nor the signature page is provided.
83. The phrase in the Portuguese original of the fragment “The third part of the secret, *that you are so anxious to know...*” proves that the purported letter could not possibly have been addressed to the Pope, for the Pope could not have been “so anxious to know” the Secret he had already read as of 1982.
84. Knowing this, Bertone and his collaborators systematically delete “that you are so anxious to know” from every translation of the fragment, without using ellipses to indicate the deletion.
85. Nevertheless, the purported letter fragment demolishes Bertone’s “interpretation” of the vision of the bishop in white as culminating in the 1981 assassination attempt, because the fragment, written a year *after* the attempt, not only says nothing about the attempt, but informs “the Pope” that “*we have not yet seen the complete fulfillment of the final part of this prophecy, we are going towards it little by little...*”

**Lucia is never allowed to speak in person.**

86. Although Bertone claims there has been nothing further to reveal concerning the Third Secret since publication of the vision on June 26, 2000, he and his collaborators never allow Sister Lucia to testify in person on any of the matters at issue at any time.
87. Sister Lucia is not permitted to participate in the press conference at which the vision was published, and is not even permitted to watch it on television.

**Lucia's book fails to corroborate  
any of Bertone's claims.**

88. When Sister Lucia writes an entire book on the Message of Fatima to “answer multiple questions in a global manner, not being able to answer every person individually,” the book fails to answer a single question concerning the Third Secret controversy (or the Consecration of Russia), and does not even mention the Third Secret (or the Consecration).
89. Sister Lucia's book fails to corroborate a single statement attributed to her by Bertone based on his alleged ten hours of unrecorded conversation with the seer.

**Bertone speaks often, but avoids all issues  
and all independent questioners.**

90. Despite having written a book and made two television appearances and a radio appearance in an attempt to defend his account, Bertone has never once personally and directly addressed in his own words *any* of the crucial points in the Third Secret controversy, set forth above.
91. Bertone never, in his own words, explicitly denies that there is a text containing the words of the Virgin Mary pertaining to the Third Secret which explain the vision and/or provide what is indicated by Lucia's “etc.”
92. Bertone refuses to answer questions on the controversy from *any* independent journalist, even though the Pope himself takes questions from the press.
93. Bertone will not even speak to Socci about the controversy at the time when Socci, his personal acquaintance, was intent on defending Bertone's position.
94. Socci, one of the most prominent and respected Catholics in Italy, is physically removed from the premises of the *Telepace* telecast like a common trespasser, after Bertone literally flees from his question by a side entrance to the auditorium.
95. Having failed for seven years to provide direct answers to any of the major questions in the controversy—and, in fact, having only provided further proof of a cover-up—Bertone maintains that he has laid all questions to rest.

**The Holy See and the Pope decline to give  
official support to Bertone's account or to criticize Socci.**

96. The Holy See offers *no* official response to the testimony of Capovilla, the reported testimony of Cardinal Ottaviani, or the internationally publicized contention of Antonio Socci that there has been a Vatican cover-up of a text of the Third Secret.

97. The Holy See offers *no* official defense of Bertone's position, which he has defended on his own by way of private interventions: his book, his two TV appearances and his radio broadcast.
98. The Pope gives *no* statement, official or otherwise, regarding the testimony of Capovilla, the reported testimony of Cardinal Ottaviani, or Antonio Socci's public accusation of a Vatican cover-up.
99. The Pope does, however, write Socci a personal letter thanking him for his book and "the sentiments which have suggested it" (while also providing a letter introducing Bertone's book but avoiding any details of the Third Secret controversy).
100. The Pope's letter to Socci does not even suggest that Socci has made false accusations, even though Socci has publicly called into question the veracity of Bertone's entire account and charged Bertone and his collaborators with hiding from the Church and the world a text that contains the very words of the Mother of God.
101. Neither the Pope nor the Holy See has provided *any* statement, official or unofficial, declaring that the text Socci contends exists and is being hidden does not exist, or any statement even *mentioning* the controversy between Socci and Bertone.