

Friendly Reflections?

An article and a widely circulated booklet by one Antonio A. Borelli, purporting to “clarify” the debate over the Third Secret of Fatima and the Consecration of Russia, together comprise what is actually a study in obfuscation. But, as the following commentary shows, Borelli inadvertently demonstrates what has become morally certain: that part of the Third Secret—the explanatory words of the Virgin—has yet to be revealed, and that the Consecration has yet to be done.

A Commentary by Christopher A. Ferrara

Introduction

I was recently asked by the Fatima Center to review and comment upon an article on the Third Secret controversy by one Antonio A. Borelli, entitled “Some Friendly Reflections for the Clarification of a Debate.” Thereafter I was also provided, for the same purpose, a booklet by Borelli entitled *Fatima: Past or Future?* (hereafter, *FPF*).

FPF, written as a popular account of the Fatima event in general, purports to have been in circulation since the late 1960s, but was updated in 2007 to include certain contentions which are the primary focus of the “friendly reflections” article, also published in 2007. For purposes of this commentary, the two documents will be considered together.

The “friendly reflections” article has attracted little attention since its first appearance in the obscure Italian journal *Lepanto*, published by the Italian wing of the Brazilian organization Tradition, Family and Property (TFP), of which Borelli is an adherent. But the updated version of *FPF*, also published by TFP, has apparently received some level of international distribution, if one accepts at face value the booklet’s statements that the 2007 edition represents the 243rd printing and that “[n]early five million copies of it have been distributed worldwide.” (Evidently the booklet has been used as a “giveaway” for TFP fundraising purposes.) The potential of the book and the article, taken together, to mislead and confuse the faithful on the matters presented warrants a formal public response by way of this commentary.

Since the “friendly reflections” article has more to say on the issues addressed here than the 2007 edition of *FPF*, this commentary will respond primarily to the “friendly reflections” with such references to *FPF* as are needed for a complete critique of Borelli’s position. Thus the following section numbers correspond to the section numbers of the “friendly reflections.”¹

Borelli’s Polemical Aim: Refute Socci, Defend Bertone

In a scant fourteen pages of discussion, much of it taken up with quibbling over relatively minor points, Borelli’s “friendly reflections” purport to refute the entire case for the existence of a yet-to-be published text of the Third Secret of Fatima, a text that contains the words of the Blessed Virgin explaining the otherwise deeply ambiguous vision of the “Bishop dressed in white” published by the Vatican on June 26, 2000.

Borelli asserts that there are no good grounds to believe that such a text exists, despite

¹ All of the following quotations from the “friendly reflections” are from a manuscript version that Borelli, or others acting on his behalf, circulated privately, including to the Fatima Center. Citations to *FPF* will include the page number of the booklet.

a mountain of evidence to the contrary—evidence so overwhelming that the Italian Catholic intellectual Antonio Socci was forced to reverse his own opinion on the matter and admit in his book *The Fourth Secret of Fatima* (2006) that the “Fatimists” were correct in their contention that this text has been withheld from the faithful. “In the end,” writes Socci, “I had to surrender.... Here I recount my voyage into the greatest mystery of the 20th century and set forth the result I honestly reached. A result that sincerely contradicts my initial convictions...”² As Socci concludes: “that there is a part of the Secret not revealed and considered unspeakable *is certain*.”³ And today—having decided to deny its existence—the Vatican runs the risk of exposing itself to very heavy pressure and blackmail.”⁴

Yet, despite his stunning accusation against the Vatican, and in particular its Secretary of State, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Socci received a note from Pope Benedict XVI himself “concerning my book, thanking me for ‘the sentiments which have suggested it,’” a note Socci says is “comforting before the insults and coarse accusations” that Bertone has hurled at him during the Third Secret controversy.⁵ Moreover, to this day (despite certain private initiatives by Bertone discussed herein), neither the Pope nor the Holy See has denied, condemned or even criticized Socci’s explosive contentions.

While *FPF* never mentions Socci, Borelli’s “friendly reflections” are plainly an attempt to rebut Socci’s *Fourth Secret*, which presents the “Fatimist” position Socci had set out to refute only to find that it was irrefutable. In my own book on the subject, *The Secret Still Hidden*,⁶ I further review and systematically present the same evidence that persuaded Socci, focusing on the decisive developments of 2006-2007, including the many revealing slip-ups and inadvertent disclosures of Cardinal Bertone and the explosive admission by the personal secretary of Pope John XXIII that there are indeed two envelopes and two texts pertaining to the Third Secret, one of which was lodged, not in the Holy Office archives where the text of the vision was kept, but in the papal apartment from the time of Pius XII through at least the beginning of the pontificate of John Paul II.

Having devoted years of research to this subject, I am in a position to demonstrate that Borelli’s attempt to refute Socci is a complete failure. Borelli provides the mere appearance of a rigorous analysis, delivered in a rather smug *faux* professorial style (complete with impressive Latin terminology) and with a truly irksome condescension toward Socci, who towers above Borelli in both literary and analytical ability. But Borelli’s superficial discussion avoids the real substance of Socci’s profound analysis, and in several places descends to mere sophistry.

And it is certainly grounds for concern that Borelli, who purports to be a member of the “traditionalist ranks” of Catholics concerned about the Message of Fatima and its relation to the post-conciliar crisis in the Church, especially in matters liturgical, seems determined to ignore the evidence that so impressed Socci, who is not known as a “traditionalist” and was in fact highly skeptical of what he calls “the traditionalist literature” on Fatima before he began to study it with an open mind.

² Antonio Socci, *Il Quarto Segreto di Fatima* [*The Fourth Secret of Fatima*] (Milano: Rizzoli, 2006), English ed., p. 4; popular ed., p. 11; Italian ed., p. 14. All quotations of this work are taken from the Italian hardcover edition as translated by this writer.

³ Henceforth all emphasis in quotations is added, unless otherwise indicated.

⁴ Socci, *The Fourth Secret of Fatima*, English ed., p. 162; popular ed., p. 111; Italian ed., p. 173.

⁵ Antonio Socci, “Dear Cardinal Bertone: Who—Between You and Me—is Deliberately Lying?,” May 12, 2007, at <http://www.antoniosocci.com/2007/05/caro-cardinal-bertone-chi-e'-fra-me-e-lei-che-mente-sapendo-di-mentire-e-lasciamo-stare-la-massoneria.../>

⁶ Christopher A. Ferrara, *The Secret Still Hidden* (Pound Ridge, New York: Good Counsel Publications, 2008).

Beware the “friendly” polemicist.

It is only natural to be wary of a polemicist who wants to tell us how very friendly he is toward the subject of his attack. Borelli is such a one. He entitles his article “Some Friendly Reflections...” and assures us in the opening paragraphs that, in writing his “friendly reflections” on Socci’s book, “we wish to emphasize from the beginning the friendly tone with which we do so.” (Notice also Borelli’s reference to himself with the royal “we” in a short piece authored only by him.)

Now, a polemicist who *tells* you his tone is friendly is indubitably well aware that it isn’t. And there is nothing friendly in Borelli’s suggestion that Socci is irrationally “absorbed by the idea that there are two texts,” that he “imagines” things, that he is guilty of “wishful thinking,” and that his book has drawn the faithful “into a futile hope of new disclosures,” causing a “lamentable loss for the cause of Fatima.” Nor is there anything friendly about a polemic—and that is all Borelli’s article is—that caricatures the opponent’s argument to make it easier to “refute” while ignoring or dismissing key evidence, which Borelli does at every turn, as the following discussion will demonstrate.

Borelli rather regally proclaims: “We are moved by the desire not to split but rather to unite those who have become imbued with the importance of the message that Our Lady came to transmit...” Quite the contrary, as I will show, Borelli’s aim is clearly to *disrupt* a growing consensus among informed Catholics on this subject: that something is missing from the Vatican’s disclosure of June 2000. As even Mother Angelica of the Eternal Word Television Network declared on live television a year after the vision was published: “As for the Secret, well I happen to be one of those individuals who thinks we didn’t get the whole thing.... Because I think it’s scary.”⁷

In fact, I have not met anyone fully informed on this subject who *doesn’t* believe that the Vatican has withheld a text that accompanies and explains the vision. Socci’s book and Mother Angelica’s frank comment before millions of viewers only reflect what Catholics around the world, both “traditionalist” and “mainstream,” have been forced to conclude by an “official version” of events that simply doesn’t add up.

Borelli, therefore, is no promoter of unity. Rather, as we will see, he is a kind of stealthy apologist for Cardinal Bertone’s account of the disclosure of the Third Secret, which (as Socci puts it) “seems to leak water from every part.”⁸

§1. An inadvertent admission that something is missing.

Borelli begins by attempting to poison the reader’s mind against the very “traditionalist ranks” he purports to “unite” with his “evaluation” of Socci’s *Fourth Secret*. He writes that some in the “traditionalist ranks” have accepted “the revelation of the third part of the Secret by the Holy See on June 26, 2000... with a submissive spirit, without however penetrating in general its very rich and profound meaning,” while “others, disappointed at the content which they consider innocuous, refuse to accept the idea that the Secret had been published in its entirety...”

Translation: those who accept that the Third Secret has been fully revealed are good “submissive” Catholics, while those who do not accept this are rebels against “the Holy See”—meaning Cardinal Bertone and the Vatican Secretariat of State, the Vatican department that

⁷ “Mother Angelica Live,” May 16, 2001.

⁸ Socci, *The Fourth Secret of Fatima*, English ed., p. 53; popular ed., p. 42; Italian ed., p. 62.

has “managed” the entire Third Secret affair since publication of the vision in 2000. Further translation: Antonio Socci and those who agree with him lack the “submissive” Catholic spirit and are causing division among the faithful.

Borelli states, with a magisterial flourish, that he will attempt to “heal this division” with “an effort to clarify, *to the degree that the available documentation permits*, the obscure points so that all may have at their disposition the necessary elements to clear away their doubts.” Notice the devastating implicit admissions here: Borelli is reduced to “an effort to clarify” the problem of the Third Secret, limited by “the available documentation,” which will involve “penetrating” the “rich and profound meaning” of the vision published in 2000.

But who appointed Borelli to this task? Why should we need “interpreters” of the Third Secret in the first place? Why is the “available documentation” incomplete? And why is the vision so little understood by the faithful, when the rest of the Message of Fatima is crystal clear? The answer, of course, is that discovered by Socci and millions of other Catholics: *We do not have the words of the Virgin Mary which explain the vision of “the Bishop dressed in white,” just as She explained to the seers the first two parts of the Great Secret, even including the patently evident vision of hell.*

We will see that Borelli’s entire analysis is plagued by the difficulty of having to “explain” a vision that should have required no explanation at all beyond that of the Virgin of Fatima Herself. Thus, from beginning to end, Borelli’s “friendly reflections,” like Bertone’s “interpretation” of the Secret, are an implied admission that something is missing, as is Borelli’s “commentary” on the “meaning” of the vision in *FPE*.

§§ 2-9. Demolishing a straw man.

A classic debating tactic is to reduce an opponent’s position to a caricature and then refute the caricature. In §§ 2-9 of his article, Borelli addresses what he claims is “the main line of his [Socci’s] reasoning” concerning the missing text of the Secret, which Borelli reduces to the following syllogism:

- a) Certain facts or declarations by personalities regarding Fatima indicate that the Third part of the Secret must contain elements that would be terrifying for mankind in general and for the holy Church in particular.
- b) now, the text revealed by the Vatican does not contain such terrifying elements;
- c) therefore, the Third Secret must have a complement not yet divulged which contains those terrifying elements.

Anybody who has even a working knowledge of the Third Secret controversy can see that Borelli has unfairly framed the issue in a way that guarantees that his “friendly reflections” will win the debate, for all he need do is show that the vision *does* contain terrifying elements in order to falsify the minor premise b), and thus the conclusion c).

Having framed the issue in his favor, Borelli shows from Socci’s own statements in *Fourth Secret* that the vision does contain terrifying elements: a Pope being executed outside a half-ruined city filled with dead bodies, followed by the execution of bishops, priests and lay faithful, an avenging angel whose sword casts flames of destruction toward the earth, a possible world war or other post-apocalyptic scenario, etc. He then announces triumphantly that since Socci sees these elements in the vision, “his whole syllogism is broken down [and] his hypotheses about the existence of a non-revealed part of the Secret end up in an inexorable *nihil concluditur.*”

But Borelli's contention is false for the very reason he himself exposes: that what Socci is actually arguing is precisely that there *are* terrifying elements in the vision standing alone, *but* that we do not know how or when they come to pass, precisely what they mean, or how they can be reconciled with certain statements by prelates, who have read the Secret, to the effect that it predicts a great apostasy in the Church as well as a planetary catastrophe. Hence Socci's true argument, as opposed to Borelli's caricature, is more fairly stated thus:

- a) Certain facts or declarations by personalities regarding Fatima (e.g. Cardinal Ratzinger, Cardinal Ottaviani, Cardinal Oddi, Father Alonso, Father Schweigel, and even John Paul II and Sister Lucia herself) indicate that the Third part of the Secret must contain a prophecy of a twin chastisement: an unprecedented crisis of faith and discipline in the Church amounting to widespread apostasy, as well as a material punishment of the whole world;
- b) now, the text revealed by the Vatican does appear to depict some kind of post-apocalyptic scenario, but without any explanation by the Virgin—the very messenger of God—of how and when the scene of death, devastation, and the papal demise will come about, or how it relates to a coming crisis in the Church disclosed by those who have read the Secret;
- c) further, Cardinal Sodano, Cardinal Bertone and certain other Vatican personages insist that the vision depicts nothing more than 20th Century events culminating in the failed attempt on the life of John Paul II in 1981—an interpretation that has provoked widespread skepticism among the faithful, producing confusion and disunity Our Lady of Fatima could not possibly have intended when She delivered Her Message to the Church and the world;
- d) **therefore**, the Third Secret must have a complement, not yet divulged, which contains the explanatory words of Our Lady of Fatima Herself, for only Her words—not Bertone's or anyone else's "interpretation"—can establish once and for all the full meaning, precise significance and historical context of the vision.

Thus fairly stated, Socci's true argument has not even been touched by Borelli. Recognizing as much, Borelli shifts ground: Socci does recognize the vision's terrifying elements, but objects that we lack any clear indication of the *meaning* of the vision in its historical context. Borelli quotes Socci thus: "What is the meaning of this vision that is so enigmatic and of these predicted events?"

Having contradicted himself by conceding that Socci does recognize the "terrifying elements" in the vision which, only a few lines before, he had accused Socci of not recognizing, Borelli resorts to another debating ploy: the equivocal use of a key term in a debate, in this case "the *meaning* of the vision."

Here Borelli makes another triumphant pronouncement: "Now then, *the meaning of the vision is precisely that: a great chastisement that looms over humanity and the Church!* [Borelli's emphasis]." In *FPF* (pp. 73-84) Borelli adds his personal "commentary" on the vision, which declares that it depicts "a supreme chastisement," and "a scene which could fittingly be called apocalyptic." Borelli even speculates in *FPF* that in the vision we see that "Our Lady's intervention prevented a total destruction, but not a partial one," and that the vision depicts what he calls the "grand return of humanity to God," which will parallel the *Grand Retour* (Grand Return) of souls to the Church in France as part of a great Catholic movement during and after World War II.

But this is nothing more than Borelli's opinion, in support of which not a single word of

the Virgin is adduced, because the Virgin says nothing at all about the meaning of the vision *in* the vision itself. Borelli, then, is literally putting *his* words into the Virgin's mouth in an attempt to supply explanatory content that is clearly missing.

Since, according to Borelli, we know the “meaning” of the vision—because he has just “explained” it to us!—Socci's entire thesis falls. But Borelli deliberately uses the term “meaning of the vision” equivocally to signify a *general* meaning that *he* deduces as a matter of opinion, yet without the least precision as to time, place and other critical details of a kind that are present in the first two parts of the Great Secret, wherein the Virgin predicts specific historical events down to the very name of the Pope who will reign at the commencement of World War II.

Now, of course it is reasonable to conclude that the vision in *some* way depicts “a great chastisement that looms over humanity and the Church.” No knowledgeable Catholic, least of all Socci, would deny this. The real issue, however—the issue Borelli avoids by playing interpretive games with his personal “commentary”—consists in the many questions the vision standing alone raises but leaves unanswered, such as:

- Who is the “Bishop dressed in white” that is executed?
- If it is the Pope, which Pope is it?⁹
- Who are the executioners, and on whose orders did they carry out the execution?
- What city is “half in ruins”? Is it Rome? Or is it perhaps a Portuguese city, given that the Pope is executed on a hill before a wooden Cross apparently made from a cork-oak tree, which is widely cultivated in Portugal?¹⁰
- Is it just one city that is in ruins or is it the whole world?
- Who is the Angel whose beams of destruction radiate toward the earth, and what event or events in particular have provoked this expression of divine wrath?
- Does the Virgin succeed in repelling the rays of destruction, or do they ultimately reach their destination at some point, producing the scene of devastation depicted in the vision?¹¹
- Does the vision depict the aftermath of a world war or other global calamity in which “various nations will be annihilated,” to use the Virgin's own phrase?
- What is the precise nature of the catastrophe that ends with the half-ruined city filled with cadavers, the execution of the Pope, and then the execution of innumerable members of the hierarchy and laity?¹²
- *When* will the events that precede and culminate in the vision take place, bearing

⁹ Tellingly, the text of the vision contains Lucia's interjection that “we had the *impression* that it was the Holy Father.” But why would Our Lady create an “impression” without clearly explaining what is seen, just as She does with the vision of Hell? The text of the vision itself points to the crying need for explanatory words from the Virgin. *See* text of the vision on the Vatican website at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000626_message-fatima_en.html.

¹⁰ The text of the vision records that the “Bishop dressed in white” is executed after climbing haltingly up a “steep mountain, at the top of which there was a big Cross of rough-hewn trunks as of a *cork-tree* with the bark...” There are no cork trees outside of Rome, to this writer's knowledge.

¹¹ The text of the vision states: “. . . we saw an Angel with a flaming sword in his left hand; flashing, it gave out flames that looked as though they would set the world on fire; but they died out in contact with the splendour that Our Lady radiated towards him from her right hand...”

¹² The text of the vision states that the “Bishop dressed in white... having reached the top of the mountain, on his knees at the foot of the big Cross he was *killed* by a group of soldiers who fired bullets and arrows at him, and in the same way there died one after another the other Bishops, Priests, men and women Religious, and various lay people of different ranks and positions.”

in mind that Our Lady of Fatima was quite specific about when the events predicted in the first two parts of the Message would occur, even specifying that World War II would commence “*When you see a night illumined by an unknown light...*”

- How does the apparently post-apocalyptic scene in the vision relate to the crisis of faith and discipline in the Church mentioned by so many personages who have read the Third Secret in its entirety?

The unanswered questions the vision raises could be multiplied, but the point is made: we have only *some* idea of what the vision means, but without *the Virgin’s own explanation* we have *no* idea of what *exactly* it means. In consequence, there is now endless debate over the vision’s “interpretation,” which is hardly the outcome Heaven could have intended for the reception of something as vital to the Church and the world as the Third Secret of Fatima.

This is the very problem Socci identifies. But Borelli simply pretends there is no problem, declaring that the meaning of the vision is “perfectly clear”—again using words equivocally to signify only a relative clarity about a gross event devoid of details: some sort of chastisement of the Church and the world at some unknown time in the future, to which he adds his theory of the “Grand Return.”

An enormous problem for Borelli’s thesis of the “perfectly clear” vision is that it flatly rejects Cardinal Ratzinger’s contention at the time of publication in 2000 that the vision presents “a scene described in a language which is symbolic and *not easy to decipher*.”¹³ In fact, in *FPF* (p. 126), unlike in his “friendly reflections,” Borelli *agrees* with the former Cardinal that the vision is “difficult to decipher.”

So, which is it: “perfectly clear” or “difficult to decipher”? Borelli apparently wishes to have it both ways.

Further, even as he tries to “refute” Socci by showing that the vision is a “perfectly clear” prediction of a future chastisement of the Church and humanity, Borelli implicitly rejects both Bertone’s “interpretation” of the vision as a mere depiction of past events culminating in the 1981 assassination attempt (an interpretation he inherited from Cardinal Sodano) and Cardinal Ratzinger’s supporting affirmation in the Vatican’s published commentary on the vision, *The Message of Fatima (TMF)*, that “No great mystery is revealed; nor is the future unveiled,” but only “the Church of the martyrs of the century which has just passed.”¹⁴

But not even Borelli believes this! So, contradicting himself, Borelli joins the very rebellion he accuses Socci and the “traditionalist ranks” of fomenting with their “hypotheses” *contra* the Vatican line. For even Borelli poses an interpretation of the vision diametrically opposed to the “official interpretation” as involving only past events—an “official” interpretation, I hasten to add, that Cardinal Ratzinger was at pains to stress was only an *attempt* to “decipher” the “difficult to decipher” vision and thus cannot bind the faithful.¹⁵

The confusion in Borelli’s position mounts in *FPF*, where, at one and the same time, he advances his personal “commentary” on the vision as a future “supreme chastisement” of humanity by Heaven (represented by the angel)—again, clearly at odds with the Vatican’s non-binding interpretation—while also appearing to *agree* with the Vatican’s interpretation!

¹³ See, “Theological Commentary”, *The Message of Fatima (TMF)*, (June 26, 2000) on the Vatican website, www.vatican.va, loc. cit.

¹⁴ *The Message of Fatima* (2000), Italian edition, p. 32; English edition, p. 32.

¹⁵ “Before attempting an interpretation, the main lines of which can be found in the statement read by Cardinal Sodano on 13 May of this year...”, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, “Theological Commentary”, *TMF*, Italian ed., p. 32; English ed., p. 32. Also as Cardinal Ratzinger stated during the June 26th press conference: “*It is not the intention of the Church to impose a single interpretation.*” See “Vatican releases additional Fatima information,” United Press International, June 27, 2000.

In *FPF* (pp. 124-125) Borelli argues that he is free to offer his commentary on what he thinks the vision means because during the press conference on June 26, 2000 Cardinal Ratzinger “emphatically affirmed” that the Sodano/Bertone/Ratzinger interpretation “was not an ‘official interpretation’ and that, therefore, the Holy See by no means intended to impose it as such.” But then, in the same booklet (p. 76), he appears to agree with the former Cardinal’s reduction of the flaming sword in the avenging angel’s hand to man-made nuclear weapons: “man himself, with his inventions, has forged the flaming sword.” (citing *TMF*, Italian ed., p. 39; English ed., p. 40). In other words, in the vision the angel is merely a symbol for man’s inventions, not Heaven’s direct chastisement!

Borelli further subscribes (*FPF*, p. 80) to Ratzinger’s reduction of the Pope executed by soldiers outside the half-ruined city to “a convergence of different Popes... from Pius X up to the present Pope, [who] all shared the sufferings of the century and strove to go forward through all the anguish along the path which leads to the Cross.” In other words, there is no Pope of the future who is executed by soldiers, but only past Popes, including John Paul II, who were *not* executed!

Borelli (*FPF*, p. 80) specifically *agrees* that the vision is “a montage of various scenes of persecution of the Church and destruction (wars) which take place during the century...” He even agrees with Cardinal Sodano (p. 82) that the soldiers who execute the Pope merely symbolize “human agents of... violence and destruction” in the form of “all the atheistic political systems of the twentieth century.” So, there are no soldiers who carry out the execution of a Pope in the future, but only Twentieth Century communist regimes that executed no Pope.

All told, between the “friendly reflections” and *FPF*, it seems Borelli has created at least eight different *a la carte* menu options for “interpreting” the Third Secret:

- (1) the vision is “perfectly clear;”
- (2) the vision is “difficult to decipher;”
- (3) the vision is about the future destruction of much of the world by an avenging angel;
- (4) the vision is about man threatening to destroy himself with nuclear weapons;
- (5) the vision depicts a Pope being executed by soldiers outside a half-ruined city;
- (6) the vision depicts the persecution of the Church and past Popes, not the execution of a particular future Pope;
- (7) all of the above; or
- (8) some of above: i.e., options 2, 4, 6 to yield a Secret with no definite prophecy of future apocalyptic events but only a tableau of past events—the Vatican line—or options 1, 3, and 5 to yield the prophecy of a coming “supreme chastisement” by Heaven in which the world is partially destroyed.

In *Fourth Secret* Socci asks the question that Borelli’s own confusion presents to us: “Is it possible that Our Lady would appear in such a spectacular manner at Fatima to give us a message/warning that is so important yet however remains incomprehensible, confusing or susceptible of different and contrary interpretations?” The answer is, obviously, a resounding No! Borelli’s own confused attempt to demonstrate that the vision is “perfectly clear” proves that something is missing: the explanatory words of the Virgin Herself, which the Vatican has decided for whatever reason to withhold. It is precisely because we lack those precious words that the vision, standing alone, is *not* easy to decipher—indeed, is *impossible* to decipher with any degree of certitude.

Here I must digress briefly to address an obvious objection: Are you accusing Bertone

and his collaborators of a deliberate and malicious fraud upon the Church? As I note in *The Secret Still Hidden*, I cannot address such a question of motive, as it would involve reading the mind and heart of a man, which only God can do. But it is entirely reasonable to suppose that Bertone, Sodano and the other Third Secret “managers” in the Secretariat of State had conveniently deemed the suppressed text “inauthentic,” so that (under a mental reservation) they could represent that the “authentic” text of the Secret—implying the *whole* Secret—had been revealed.

Both Socci and I so argue in our respective books. And as I show in my book, during his famous appearance on the Italian TV talk show *Porta a Porta* on May 31, 2007, an appearance designed to blunt the impact of Socci’s damning indictment of a Vatican cover-up, Bertone makes telling references to “the only *authentic* folio [sheet of paper],” “the *authentic* text,” the “*authentic* envelope that contains the Third Secret,” and “the only folio that existed in the *Archive of the Holy Office*” (knowing full well there was also a text in the papal apartment). As I also show in my book, Bishop Seraphim of Fatima, who purportedly witnessed Lucia’s authentication of the text of the vision during Bertone’s April 2000 visit to the convent in Coimbra, employed the even more nuanced declaration that “the Secret of Fatima has been revealed in an *authentic* and integral way” when he appeared on a television show that Bertone staged on September 21, 2007 in a vain attempt to quell doubts about his version of events. (That telecast is further discussed below.) Such suspiciously hedged language prompted Socci to observe that those who employ it are “[i]mplying clearly that there exist words of the Secret held ‘not authentic’. Courage, then. Publish everything. ‘The truth will make you free’.”¹⁶

To return to the matter at hand, Borelli, shifting ground again, makes another straw man argument: that since the meaning of the vision is “perfectly clear”—which, manifestly, it isn’t—Socci is really only concerned with “the *reason* for this punishment.” On the contrary, as I have just shown, Socci is concerned with *both* the precise meaning and significance of the “difficult to decipher” vision *and* the reason (or reasons) behind the catastrophic events it seems to depict.

Having falsely reduced the question to a mere debate over the reason for the chastisement seemingly predicted in the “perfectly clear” vision, Borelli archly advises us to “read the daily newspaper... to see that the chalice of abomination is overflowing on every side all over the world.” In other words, Borelli is contending that the Third Secret of Fatima is nothing more than a visual reinforcement of Our Lady’s warning in the second part of the Great Secret that “various nations will be annihilated,” without any connection to future historical events. Or what is the same thing: that there is really no *Third* Secret at all, but rather only a vision illustrating the Second Secret. And that is precisely the line adopted by Cardinal Sodano, Cardinal Bertone and the Vatican Secretariat of State, which has no competence in the matter of “interpreting” Marian apparitions but has somehow arrogated this function to itself.

Now, why should anyone accept Borelli’s opinion over Socci’s? Borelli has failed to demonstrate any reason for doing so, but rather has only highlighted the divergence of views over the meaning of the vision and thus the urgency of uncovering the still-buried text containing the Virgin’s explanation of it—the *only* explanation that can bind us to belief. *The very existence of a situation in which there is no definitive explanation of what the vision means tells us that something is missing from what the Vatican disclosed in 2000.*

In sum, on this point Borelli has not provided the “clarification of some of the burning

¹⁶ Antonio Socci, “Bertone nel ‘Vespaio’ delle Polemiche” (“Bertone in the ‘Wasp’s Nest’ of Polemics”), June 2, 2007, <http://www.antoniosocci.com/2007/06/bertone-nel-“vespaio”-delle-polemiche/>.

issues of the polemics that are now underway” but only another polemic—and a most unhelpful one at that. He simply has no answer to Socci’s unanswerable objection that Our Lady could not possibly have intended a situation in which Her precious Message to the Church and the world would be the subject of a war of interpretations, pitting the Vatican’s non-binding “attempt” against the views of various commentators (including Borelli!), with the result that the rank-and-file faithful have no definitive idea of what the vision means.

Finally, in another bit of sophistry, Borelli argues that Socci cannot solve the problem of “where to fit the ‘fourth’ Secret of Fatima” because the vision is the Third Secret which would make any text containing the words of the Virgin explaining the vision a “fourth” secret. Here one might be permitted an exasperated “Oh, come on!” Socci does not contend that there is *literally* a Fourth Secret of Fatima. That is only the ironic title of his book, as *Borelli himself concedes* by observing that, in his view, Socci’s title “make[s] lighter a matter of such great seriousness.”

What Socci actually contends is that the vision and the accompanying text of the Virgin’s explanation of the vision *together* comprise the Third Secret in its entirety. Borelli suggests that this idea is outlandish, but he ignores the composition of the first two parts of the Great Secret in precisely that way: a vision accompanied by the Virgin’s words of explanation: “You have seen hell, where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart,” and so forth through all the detailed historical predictions, prescriptions, promises and warnings Our Lady conveys to the seers.

What is really outlandish is Borelli’s contention that the Virgin would have absolutely *nothing* to say about the vision of a “Bishop dressed in white,” whose meaning, standing alone, is so uncertain that, as Borelli himself demonstrates, it can be viewed eight different ways, some of them mutually exclusive of each other.

Which brings us to what Borelli rightly calls “the enigma of the ‘etc.’” Here it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Borelli is not really interested in the “authentic union on the basis of truth” he professes to seek, but rather in a “union” based upon an agreement simply to forget inconvenient facts which happen to have divine implications.

§ 10. A curiously incurious detective.

As we know, in her Fourth and more complete memoir Sister Lucia added this momentous phrase to the integral text of the Great Secret revealed on July 13, 1917: “In Portugal, the dogma of the faith will always be preserved etc.” Fatima scholars have been unanimous in concluding that the “etc” holds the place for words of the Virgin that Lucia was under constraint (by the Virgin) not to reveal at that time—that is, the words of the Third Secret, of which the reference to Portugal and the preservation of dogma in that country (versus others) are an introduction.

In a move that can only engender suspicion, however, the commentary in *TMF* conspicuously neglects the Fourth Memoir and cites the less complete Third Memoir, consigning the Fourth Memoir’s reference to Portugal to a footnote and dismissing it as “some annotations... added in the Fourth Memoir of 8 December 1941.” Hardly annotations! These are the very words of the Mother of God! The only reasonable conclusion to draw from this strange avoidance of the Fourth Memoir—otherwise completely inexplicable—is that there is something involved in the reference to Portugal and Catholic dogma that Sodano, Bertone and the other “managers” of the “revelation” of the Third Secret wished to evade at all costs.

In §10 of his “friendly reflections,” even Borelli admits that the telltale “etc” raises “a

point which constitutes *the very heart* of the question: What precisely did Sister Lucia mean by that ‘etc?’” He also admits that “Analyzed by itself, the expression would indicate a loss of faith so great in the other nations that it would justify Our Lady’s emphasizing that it would be preserved in one nation, Portugal” and that therefore the phrase appears to predict “a crisis of Faith [which] implies in consequence a crisis in the Church, the hierarchy, clergy and people.”

Further, in *FPF* (pp. 64-69) Borelli argues—and here one must agree with him—that the reference to Portugal and Catholic dogma “is about a great crisis of faith (of religion) that would affect the whole world. This is deduced from the fact that Our Lady found it worth noting that Portugal would be remarkable for keeping the dogma of the Faith.” He goes on, quite rightly, to link this Marian prophecy of a loss of Faith within the Church to the astonishing admission by Paul VI (during his Allocution of December 8, 1972) concerning a “‘process of self-destruction’ set in motion in the Church during the post-conciliar crisis” and Pope Paul’s even more astonishing admission (in his Allocution of June 29, 1972) that “the smoke of Satan has penetrated the temple of God through some crack.” (*FPF*, p. 66) Borelli also refers to the “leftist infiltration in Catholic milieus” after Vatican II, before concluding, in agreement with virtually all Fatima scholars of repute, that Our Lady’s reference to the faith being kept in Portugal “unveils the crisis in the Church.” (*FPF*, p. 67.)

And, finally, it is Borelli himself who notes—again, quite rightly—that the year 1960 was “indicated by Sister Lucia [under explicit orders from Our Lady, as discussed below] for the revelation of the Secret.” As Sister Lucia told Cardinal Ottaviani, and as he revealed to the Fifth Mariological Conference in the great hall of the Antonianum in Rome: “The message was not to be opened before 1960. I asked Sister Lucia, ‘Why this date? She answered, “Because then it will seem clearer (*mais claro*).””¹⁷ In answer to the same question from Canon Barthas (a renowned Fatima expert), Lucia replied simply: “Because Our Lady wishes it so.”¹⁸

Borelli, addressing the question “What would make the Secret clearer in 1960?”, states precisely what Socci and the “Fatimists” have long asserted: that 1960 was “remarkably close to the convocation of the Second Vatican Council” and its decision to undertake “an opening of the Church to the modern world,” and that this “opening” did not cause “a pleasant incense to spread through the Church” but rather “what happened was the contrary. As Paul VI himself observed, the pestilence of the world—*the smoke of Satan*’ [Borelli’s emphasis] penetrated through some crack into the temple of God...” (*FPF*, pp. 126-128.)

So, Borelli admits that Our Lady’s reference to Portugal is “at the very heart” of the Third Secret controversy, that the reference clearly points to a coming crisis in the Church, and that this crisis is linked to 1960 and the Second Vatican Council and the years following. All true. But in admitting the truth of these things, Borelli himself indicates the grounds for moral certainty that the Vatican is hiding part of the truth about the Third Secret.

First of all, the “Vatican line” maintained by the Secretary of State implicitly *denies* that Our Lady’s reference to Portugal came from Our Lady, which is why *TMF* avoids the Fourth Memoir, wherein Our Lady’s momentous words appear, and demotes Her statement to mere “annotations” by Lucia, ignominiously consigning the Mother of God to a footnote.

Secondly, the Vatican line rejects any connection of the Secret to 1960, and the Cardinal Secretary of State, Bertone, has evinced a steely determination to destroy that connection.

¹⁷ *Documentation Catholique*, March 19, 1967, Col. 542; cited in Frère Michel de la Sainte Trinité, *The Whole Truth About Fatima - Vol. III: The Third Secret* (hereafter *WTAF*, Vol. III), (English edition, Immaculate Heart Publications, Buffalo, New York, U.S.A., 1990, republished in 2001) p. 721.

¹⁸ Barthas, *Fatima, merveille du XXe siècle*, (Fatima-Editions, 1952), p. 83.

For seven years prior to his appearance on *Porta a Porta*, beginning with his Introduction to *TMF* in 2000, when he was Archbishop Bertone, Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, he had been representing to the public, in ever-changing versions of the story,¹⁹ that Sister Lucia “confessed” to him (his word) that she never received any directive from the Blessed Virgin that the Secret was not to be opened until 1960, but rather had simply invented the date herself.

As I explain in my book, it was imperative for the “managers” of the Third Secret to break the connection between the Secret and 1960 precisely because, as Borelli admits in *FPF*, it pointed toward the Second Vatican Council and its disastrous aftermath and away from the widely ridiculed Sodano/Bertone “interpretation” of the vision as culminating in the 1981 assassination attempt. As if a wounded Pope who fully recovers from an attempt on his life by a lone assassin—even returning to the ski slopes!²⁰—were the same as a Pope being killed by a band of soldiers outside a half-ruined city filled with corpses. Further, there is nothing in the vision standing alone that links it to 1960, from which it follows that the Virgin must have explained that otherwise inexplicable connection in a missing companion text. If that text was to be buried, the telltale connection of the Third Secret to 1960 had to be “eliminated.”

But, during his famous appearance on *Porta a Porta* in May 2007, Bertone himself revealed two sealed envelopes bearing a notation in Lucia’s own handwriting of the “express order of Our Lady” that “this envelope can only be opened in 1960.” So, either Sister Lucia misled the whole Church and the world for decades concerning the express order from Our Lady, or Bertone misled us by claiming for seven years that Lucia had “confessed” to him that she never received such an order from the Virgin. The reader, I suspect, will have an easy time deciding which of the two parties to believe. As I point out in *The Secret Still Hidden*, Bertone’s demonstrably false claim that there was never any directive from Our Lady linking the Secret to 1960 is reason alone to discard his entire account as unworthy of belief.

Thirdly, as Borelli further concedes in his “friendly reflections”—thereby conceding the obvious—Sister Lucia’s use of “etc” “naturally... indicates a continuation of the sentence that precedes it.” In other words, Borelli admits that *the Blessed Virgin had more to say as part of the Great Secret*, evidently in its third part, but that we have not been provided with these words of the Virgin. And this fact squares with what we already knew from numerous sources long before the vision was published in 2000: that the Third Secret involves not only a vision but also *words* spoken by the Virgin *to the seers*. To cite a few of the uncontested examples from the vast literature on this subject:

- The Vatican-initiated press release from ANI news agency in 1960, announcing that the Secret would not be revealed in that year as promised: “[I]t is most likely that *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 in the Cova da Iria.”²¹
- Canon Barthas, who interrogated Sister Lucia concerning the Third Secret on October 17-18, 1946: “The text of *the words* of Our Lady was written by Sister Lucia and

¹⁹ See Ferrara, *The Secret Still Hidden*, p. 145, for a chart detailing Bertone’s three radically different versions of the same story.

²⁰ According to John Paul II’s biographer, George Weigel: “The first 15 years of his pontificate [i.e., until 1993, 12 years after the assassination attempt] he took breaks to go skiing, and the miracle about that was the Italian paparazzi actually left him alone.” Quoted in “The Pope Was Once a Terrific Sportsman,” April 2, 2005, NBC Sports online, http://nbcsports.msnbc.com/id/7367962/ns/sports-other_sports/.

²¹ Obviously humiliated, Cardinal Cerejeira publicly declared concerning the decision by Pope John XXIII not to reveal the Third Secret: “I affirm categorically that I was not consulted.” *Documentation Catholique*, June 19, 1960, Col. 751-752; cited in *WTAF*, Vol. III, pp. 586-587.

enclosed in a sealed envelope.”²²

- Father Schweigl, sent on mission by Pius XII to interrogate Sister Lucia concerning the contents of the Secret in 1952: “I cannot reveal anything of what I learned at Fatima concerning the Third Secret, but can say that it has *two parts*: One concerns the Pope. The other, logically—although I must say nothing—would have to be the continuation of *the words*: ‘In Portugal, the dogma of the Faith will always be preserved.’”²³
- Cardinal Ottaviani, who interrogated Sister Lucia on the Secret three years later, also during the reign of Pius XII: “She wrote on a *sheet* of paper [*foglio* in Italian] what Our Lady *told her* to tell the Holy Father.”²⁴

As even Borelli concedes in his “friendly reflections,” there is “no connection between that phrase [concerning Portugal] and the text that was revealed” in 2000, which contains not a single word from the Virgin, even though we know that the Secret involves words spoken by Her. Having made that concession, Borelli should also in honesty concede that it is only natural to conclude that something is missing from the Vatican’s disclosure of the Third Secret. For it can hardly be the case that the Mother of God would toss off a phrase about Portugal which, as Borelli himself notes, “seems to be left hanging in the air” without any apparent connection either to the vision of the “Bishop dressed in white” or to the Great Secret in its three parts as a whole.

On the other hand, if the posited missing text predicts in the Virgin’s own words a crisis of Faith outside of Portugal, thus continuing the sentence interrupted by the “etc”—precisely as Father Schweigl revealed—and then goes on to speak of an attendant chastisement of all humanity, leaving Rome (or some other city) in ruins and the Pope/“Bishop dressed in white” at the mercy of his executioners, then, and *only* then, would the vision be “perfectly clear” as Borelli maintains. But once again, it is precisely that guarantee of perfect clarity that we do not have, even though it is precisely what the Mother of God would *want* us to have. Hence, it must be found in a text not yet revealed.

So, the words embraced within the “etc” are “at the heart” of the Third Secret. The Virgin had more to say following Lucia’s “etc.” What Our Lady did say before the “etc” points to a crisis in the Church connected to the year 1960 (despite Bertone’s efforts to destroy the connection), and this crisis is connected in turn to the Second Vatican Council, which had been convoked by 1960, and the changes in the Church that followed the Council, which represented “the smoke of Satan” entering the Church. All of this Borelli admits!

And yet, confronted with a “smoking gun” concerning the crucial omitted words of the Virgin about a coming crisis in the Church, Borelli allows only that “It was important to clarify the matter with Sister Lucia while she was still alive.” To say the least! In both the “friendly reflections” and *FPF* he reveals that in September 2001 he himself sent a registered letter to Bertone (then Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith), urging him to seek “clarification” from the seer on the “important” question of the “etc.” This Bertone had rather mysteriously failed to do during his interview of Sister Lucia on April 27, 2000 in preparation for publication of the vision and *TMF*, to which he wrote an introduction.

But, it is Borelli himself who notes that during Bertone’s subsequent interview of the seer, on November 17, 2001, which was precisely an attempt to dampen growing skepticism about the completeness of the Vatican’s disclosure, the Archbishop “*did not wish* or could not

²² Quoted in Laurent Morlier, *The Third Secret of Fatima*, (Éditions D.F.T., 2001) p. 196.

²³ *WTAF*, Vol. III, p. 710.

²⁴ Father Joaquin Alonso, *The Secret of Fatima: Fact and Legend*, p. 65. Cardinal Ottaviani’s phrase “to tell the Holy Father” appears to be an extrapolation of his, which if anything would highlight the importance of the Secret.

present to Sister Lucia the specific questions about the ‘etc’ and the connection of the Second with the Third Secret.” The suggestion that Bertone “could not present” Lucia with specific questions about the “etc” is absurd. Of course he could; he need only have opened his mouth to make the necessary inquiries during the suspiciously unrecorded two hours of conversation he claims to have had with the seer on this occasion. Which leaves only the conclusion that Bertone “did not *wish*” to ask questions about the “etc.” But there is only one reason he would not have wished to do so: that the answers to those questions were something he was determined to hide, because the answers would reveal the missing content of the Third Secret of Fatima of *which he was already well aware*.

In *FPF*, Borelli offers an even more ridiculous excuse for Bertone’s conspicuous failure to address “the very heart of the question” when he had the perfect opportunity to do so during the interview of November 2001: “Unwilling to prolong a conversation which had already gone on for over two hours, Msgr. Bertone was understandably unable to clarify other subjects of importance, if only to nip in the bud the unwholesome conjectures which we called to mind in our letter of consultation to the Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith [Bertone].” (*FPF*, p. 71.)

What! They spoke for more than two hours, yet Bertone never reached what Borelli admits is “the very heart of the question”? There was no more time to discuss the missing words of the Mother of God about a coming crisis of faith in the Church which would cause Paul VI to lament that “the smoke of Satan” had entered the temple of God and that a “process of self-destruction” had followed Vatican II? *No time to ask the one thing everyone wanted to know*, the mystery that was fueling all the skepticism about the completeness of the Vatican’s disclosure on June 26, 2000: What did Our Lady say after She said “In Portugal the dogma of the faith will always be preserved”?

Please! There is no reasonable explanation besides something to hide for Bertone’s failure and indeed *refusal* to inquire into a matter of such immense importance—a matter even Borelli urged Bertone to address precisely in order to allay the justified suspicion that failure to address it would reasonably engender.

If there were nothing to hide, Bertone would have had no motive to avoid pursuing the “etc” either during the November 2001 interview or at any other time before Lucia’s death in 2005. Indeed, if there were nothing to hide it would have been *irrational* for Bertone not to clarify the matter in order to dispel all suspicion once and for all by posing a few simple questions to the seer. But since Bertone is certainly not an irrational man, his avoidance of the “etc” issue could only have been according to a *rational* motive: that of keeping hidden *what he already knew*, because it is contained in the very text of the Secret he and his collaborators had decided to keep from the faithful.

Now, what does Borelli propose we do about the “enigma of the ‘etc’”? Incredibly enough, his “friendly reflections” boil down to this: *Forget the whole thing*. He writes: “It is a great disappointment that it has not been possible to resolve the question of the ‘etc,’ but we have to work with that concrete unavoidable fact.” Unavoidable? Nothing a Vatican prelate does is irreversible, and the faithful have every right to demand and receive the whole truth about the Third Secret. Indeed, as Cardinal Bertone admits in his own book, it was pressure from the faithful all over the world, including Father Gruner’s apostolate, that led to disclosure on June 26, 2000 of the vision in the first place.

In *FPF* Borelli even proposes—on his own authority—that Our Lady’s reference to Portugal and Catholic dogma ending in Lucia’s “etc,” “should be taken as the last sentence of the second part” of the Great Secret, meaning the end of the Second Secret. (*FPF*, p. 65.) But why

should we do that if, in fact, the “etc” is *not* part of the Second Secret but rather the beginning of Third? Apparently, Borelli thinks this is best. But one may be permitted to doubt that the Mother of God left it to Antonio Borelli to tell us which of Her words belong to which part of Her message.

We should further assume, says Borelli, that with the reference to Portugal and the faith “Our Lady did not deem it necessary to explain the crisis [in the Church] in detail,” but rather “left us a simple phrase from which not only experienced theologians, but also the simple faithful, could deduce the existence of a crisis of faith—a crisis in the Church—and open our eyes to this fact.” (*FPF*, p. 67.) But what about the “etc,” which even Borelli admits is an indication that Our Lady left us with more than a “simple phrase” and that She continued to speak on the subject as part of the Great Secret? As he does in the “friendly reflections,” Borelli, apparently in all seriousness, tells us essentially to *pretend* that the Great Secret of Fatima ends with “etc.” He even goes so far as to declare—in bold type, no less—that the words embraced by that telltale “etc” **“will remain forever an inexplicable mystery.”** (*FPF*, p. 150, Borelli’s emphasis.)

So, as Borelli would have it, *we should put out of our minds forever the very words of the Mother of God*, even though Borelli himself puts those words at “the very heart of the question” whether the Third Secret has been revealed entirely. We should forget these words of the Virgin Mary, he argues, simply because Bertone and his collaborators have decided not to reveal them to us!

Further, he argues, rather than worrying about what the Mother of God had to tell to us in those suppressed words from Heaven, we should be content to accept at face value the elliptical ten words concerning the Third Secret that Bertone attributes to Sister Lucia from the unrecorded interview of November 2001: “Everything has been made public; nothing is secret any more.”²⁵

According to Borelli, we must consider the whole controversy resolved based on these ten words, even though (a) they are deprived of any context in the more than two-hour interview from which they were purportedly extracted, (b) not even the question that supposedly elicited the words was published in Bertone’s communiqué concerning the interview, (c) the communiqué, allegedly approved by Lucia, is in Italian, a language she could not speak, (d) there is no audiotape, videotape, transcript or any other independent record of the interview, which thus lacks, *as even Borelli states*, “the most elementary precautions to guarantee its exactitude.”

But not to worry, says Borelli, for “the simple fact of neglecting recommendable precautions for an act of such importance does not take away from it all documentary validity.” *All* documentary validity? So the cropped quotation of ten words in a language Lucia never spoke has only *some* documentary validity? And based on this questionable quotation of “some” validity—attributed, moreover, to a cloistered nun trained to obey her superiors and never allowed to speak to us directly before she died—all the faithful are expected to forget forevermore the “enigma of the etc” and consider the matter closed? Ridiculous, obviously, but that is Borelli’s position.

If, as Socci rightly describes it, the Third Secret controversy is “a detective mystery in the Vatican,” we have in Borelli a curiously incurious detective. A detective who advises us to forget a major clue in the investigation even though he himself places it at “the very heart” of the case. A detective who tells us to swallow our “great disappointment” that this clue of clearly decisive importance can never be pursued—because the “suspects” will not allow us

²⁵ Communiqué from the Press Office of the Holy See, December 20, 2001.

to pursue it!

Borelli, therefore, dares to advise us to surrender our claim to the very words Our Lady of Fatima meant us to have, which is to say the words that *God Himself* meant us to have. But, of course, Catholics can do no such thing. They have a duty before God and His Blessed Mother to demand the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth about the “Secret still hidden.” Surrender is not an option. Surrender, in fact, would be a dereliction of our duty as members of the Church militant and defenders of the very cause of the Gospel.

How ironic it is that Borelli presents himself as the member of a militantly Catholic organization, and what is more a champion of Our Lady of Fatima on the model of TFP’s founder—a layman he describes as “the greatest advocate and apostle of the Reign of Mary in the Twentieth Century” (thus slighting the memory of the canonized priest and concentration camp martyr who truly deserves that encomium: Saint Maximilian Kolbe, known to the Church precisely as the 20th Century “Apostle of Mary”). Borelli, the “champion” of Our Lady, is prepared to allow the completion of Her mission—the conveyance of a vital message-warning to the Church and the world *in its entirety*—to be impeded by a few Vatican bureaucrats who have contrived to bury the “etc” and all that it contains. With “champions” like Borelli, Our Lady does not need opponents, although many She has.

§§ 11-15. Ignoring or Explaining Away the Evidence

At this point, we may leave *FPF* behind and focus entirely on the “friendly reflections” article, as *FPF* has nothing to say on the matters I will now address.

In §§ 11-15 of his article, our incurious detective reveals not merely a lack of curiosity about decisive clues, but also a positive intention to ignore or explain away *all* evidence for the existence of a suppressed text of the Third Secret. He even tries to explain away *the direct admission of an eyewitness that there are two texts!* Let us examine this strange display of invincible incredulity by one who professes to be “friendly” to Socci and the “traditionalist ranks” to which he claims to belong.

The “it is in the notebooks...” controversy

To begin with, Borelli devotes nearly four pages to a laborious discussion of whether Sister Lucia meant to say that she had written the Secret in *both* a letter contained in a sealed envelope *and* in her notebooks, or whether, instead, she meant only that the text contained in the sealed envelope had been placed inside a notebook that served merely as a carrier for delivery of the envelope to the Bishop of Gurza in June of 1944, who in turn delivered it to Bishop da Silva, then the Bishop of Fatima-Leiria.

I emphasize, first of all, that Lucia recorded having sent to Bishop da Silva a text in *letter form*. She herself described it as “*a letter* to the Bishop of Leiria.”²⁶ On this point we also have the testimony of Father Hubert Jongen, a Dutch Montfortian, who traveled to Fatima to conduct research in order to defend the authenticity of the Fatima apparitions against attacks by the modernist Dutchman, Fr. Edouard Dhanis. During questioning of Sister Lucia on February 3-4, 1946, Father Jongen had the following exchange with the seer:

“You have already made known two parts of the Secret. When will the time arrive for the third part?” “I communicated the third part *in a letter* to the Bishop of Leiria,”

²⁶ Revue *Mediatrice et Reine*, October 1946, pp. 110-112; see also *WTAF*, Vol. III, p. 470.

she answered.²⁷

Moreover, thirteen years later Pope John XXIII's diary would note the following, according to the Vatican's official account: "Audiences: Father Philippe, Commissary of the Holy Office, who brought me *the letter* containing the third part of the secrets of Fatima...."²⁸ A year after this entry, the Vatican's announcement concerning suppression of the Third Secret, noted above, would refer to "*the letter... in which Sister Lucia wrote down the words which Our Lady confided as a secret to the three little shepherds in the Cova da Iria.*" There is no question, then, that the Secret involves a document in letter form containing the *words* of the Virgin.

But, as we know, the text of the vision is not in the form of a letter, but rather is written on what appears to be ruled notebook paper of a kind that Lucia would have used for her well-known spiritual diaries. In fact, during his famous appearance on the Italian talk show *Porta a Porta* in May of 2007, to be discussed at length below, Cardinal Bertone was pressed on this very question by the host, Bruno Vespa, who asked: "To whom is it addressed? Is it a kind of diary?" Bertone's revealing reply was: "It is a declaration. *It is not addressed to anybody...*" Hence, by Bertone's own admission, the text of the vision could not possibly be the "letter to the Bishop of Fatima" that Sister Lucia mentioned repeatedly. But it could be, and very probably is, what Vespa called it on the same occasion, and what it so plainly appears to be: "a folio from a diary" that Lucia had kept in notebook form.

And, indeed, when writing in 1944 about the order she had been given by Bishop da Silva to commit the Secret to paper, Lucia revealed: "They tell me either to write it in the *notebooks* in which I've been told to keep my *spiritual diary*, or if I wish, to write it on a sheet of paper, put it in an envelope, close it and seal it up."²⁹ For reasons that will become apparent as this discussion progresses, Socci and the "Fatimists" logically concluded that Sister Lucia ultimately provided *both* a text from her notebooks (the vision) *and* the yet-to-be-seen letter to the Bishop of Fatima (containing the words embraced by the "etc" and explaining the vision).

Concerning this point, Borelli dwells on an alleged English mistranslation from the French of Lucia's phrase in her famous letter to Bishop da Silva of January 9, 1944, five months before the Bishop of Gurza received the text: "[the text] is sealed in an envelope and *it* is in the notebooks..." (*le texte est cacheté dans une enveloppe et celle-ci est dans le cahiers...*). Borelli argues that the "it" refers to the envelope, not to the Secret, so that the phrase should be read thus: "the text is sealed in an envelope and the envelope is in the notebooks"—meaning, therefore, only one text of the Secret, the one in the sealed envelope.

First of all, even if the phrase is read to mean "the text is sealed in an envelope and the envelope is in the notebooks," that would not be inconsistent with a part of the Secret also being found in the notebooks. Otherwise, why provide the notebooks along with the text in the envelope? And, as we now know, the text of the vision is indeed written on what appears to be a folio of ruled *notebook paper*, folded in half to make four pages on its two sides, on which 62 lines of text are written (as opposed to the text of 25 lines attested to by Cardinal Ottaviani, discussed below). Four connected pages of notebook paper are hardly the "*letter* to the Bishop of Leiria" that Lucia described.

But none of this quibbling over the French translation of a phrase in one of Lucia's letters

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ *The Message of Fatima*, Italian ed., p. 4; English ed., p. 4.

²⁹ Father Joaquin Alonso, *La verdad sobre el Secreto de Fatima* (Madrid: Centro Mariano, 1976), p. 39; quoted in *WTAF*, Vol. III, p. 44.

matters,³⁰ for that phrase is no longer of any importance to the overwhelming proof for the existence of a second text. As we will see, Borelli fails to make the slightest dent in this mountain of evidence, especially the frank admission of Archbishop Capovilla that there are two envelopes and two texts comprising the whole Third Secret and Bertone's own concession (discussed below) that the mysterious "Capovilla envelope," containing a text of the Secret, does indeed exist and was indeed kept in the papal apartment, *yet has never been produced*.

The "sheet of paper" controversy

Another indication of the existence of two texts is a key phrase in Sister Lucia's declaration, already quoted in full above: "They tell me either to write it in the notebooks... or if I wish, to write it on a sheet of paper..."³¹ This statement coincides with the aforementioned statement by Cardinal Ottaviani: "She wrote on a *sheet* of paper [*foglio* in Italian] what Our Lady told her to tell the Holy Father."³²

Since the text of the vision as photo-reproduced by the Vatican in *TMF* spans *four* pages, not a single page, it was reasonable to conclude, as Socci does, that there is a missing text contained on "a sheet" of paper comprising one page. Borelli, however, thinks he has the answer: Since, during the famous telecast of May 31, 2007³³ on the Italian talk show *Porta a Porta*, Bertone showed that the vision is written on a single folio (again, *foglio* in Italian) of ruled paper, folded in half to make four pages containing 62 lines of text, what we have is "a single sheet in four pages, and the contradiction which alarms Socci is resolved."³⁴

But Borelli has failed to examine the evidence with the thoroughness required of someone who proposes to "clarify" the issues in this matter. First of all, we now have the conclusive admission of Cardinal Bertone, during the same telecast on which Borelli relies, that Cardinal Ottaviani, who has read the Third Secret, also testified that the "sheet of paper" on which Lucia wrote the Secret contained *only 25 lines*, not the 62 lines of the four-page vision. When confronted with Ottaviani's testimony on camera, Bertone stated: "To me, it was a little amazing that Cardinal Ottaviani *had said categorically a sheet of 25 lines...*"³⁵ Categorically! Bertone not only does not deny the "Fatimist" documentation of this decisive testimony, he affirms that Ottaviani gave it *categorically*.

Granted, following a commercial break during the telecast Bertone attempted what I show in *The Secret Still Hidden* to be a patently ridiculous "explanation" of Ottaviani's "categorical" testimony: that Ottaviani had somehow conflated two pages of the four-page text of the vision into a one-page 25-line text, while overlooking the other two pages and 37 lines. But, as I noted in my book, no two pages of the vision add up to 25 lines, but rather only 32 or 30 lines. Thus, Bertone's explanation was clearly an on-the-spot contrivance he had to know was unbelievable.³⁶

Also, it was quite telling that during the telecast Bertone offered the following comment. I urge the reader to study and ponder these words very carefully:

³⁰ The translation issue is addressed in detail in *The Devil's Final Battle* (Second Edition), 2-volume version, pp. 17-18; 1-volume version, pp. 24-26; and footnote 61.

³¹ Father Joaquin Alonso, *La verdad sobre el Secreto de Fatima*, p. 39; quoted in *WTAF*, Vol. III, p. 44.

³² Fr. Joaquin Alonso, *The Secret of Fatima: Fact and Legend*, p. 65.

³³ *The Porta a Porta* ["Door to Door"] show on the RAI Uno channel. See my *The Secret Still Hidden*, Chapter 8 for an exhaustive analysis of this television show based on a complete transcript and multiple viewings of the telecast.

³⁴ It is one of the many telling "little" facts in this case that although the *Porta a Porta* episode was entitled "The Fourth Secret Does Not Exist"—a direct attack on the title of Socci's book—Socci himself was not invited to participate and defend his own work. There could only be one reason for this: Bertone was terrified of the questions Socci might ask.

³⁵ Ferrara, *The Secret Still Hidden*, p. 141.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 140-142.

[I]t *may be* that he [Ottaviani] had given a rather hasty summary [of the Secret], that he was mistaken.³⁷ I don't *believe* that this element is *so convincing* as to say that there exists a sheet of paper (*foglio*) of 25 lines respecting the other of around 60 [*sic*] lines.

Maybe Ottaviani gave a hasty summary of the Secret's contents? *Maybe* he was mistaken? Bertone doesn't *believe* Cardinal Ottaviani's testimony is an "element" that is "so convincing"? As I ask in *The Secret Still Hidden*: "Are these the words of a man who is quite certain Ottaviani's 'categorical' statement had to be wrong? Or, rather, are they the words of a man who has adopted the rhetorical posture of appearing to be perplexed by something he knows or has reason to suspect is true?"

As I further observed in that passage of my book, Bertone had the resources to demolish Ottaviani's "categorical" statement about the text of 25 lines if it were really untrue, and yet by the time of the telecast he was completely unprepared to do so. As I wrote:

Consider that, as Vatican Secretary of State, Bertone had ready access to witnesses or documentation that could have refuted Ottaviani's statement conclusively, if such witnesses or documents existed. For example, at any time between 2000 and 2007 Bertone could have inquired of any of the still-living cardinals who attended the Third Secret plenaria [on March 7, 1967] presided over by Ottaviani; or, if not the cardinals, then any still-living members of their staffs. It would have been a simple matter to ask these witnesses if they had ever seen in Ottaviani's hands or heard him describe a document of 25 lines pertaining to the Secret, or if they had seen such a document themselves. Bertone could also have consulted the minutes of the plenaria and the personal papers of Ottaviani himself. Or he could have made inquiry of any number of other witnesses in the Vatican, from the Pope on down, as to whether they or anyone else had ever seen or heard of the text whose existence Ottaviani had "categorically" affirmed.

Yet Bertone had appeared on national television totally unprepared to refute Ottaviani's "categorical" statement undermining the official account. Why? Because *there is no refutation*. Cardinal Ottaviani was telling the truth.

After a four-minute commercial break to think this problem over, however, Bertone offered an improvised "attempt at an explanation" which demonstrated that he was prepared to "fudge" the facts in order to save the official account from demolition.³⁸

Borelli has missed something else of decisive importance in his "friendly reflections." If, as he argues, we are dealing after all with only a single text of four pages on *one sheet* of paper, and there is no additional text in letter form, he will have to explain the revelation by Cardinal Bertone in his book *L'Ultima Veggente di Fatima* ["The Last Visionary of Fatima"³⁹] (*Last Visionary*). This work, co-authored as part of Bertone's strange ongoing, unofficial collaboration with the lay journalist Giuseppe De Carli, purports to answer Socci's *Fourth Secret* but in fact fails to answer a single point Socci made, as Socci was quick to note on his website.⁴⁰ According to Bertone's account in *Last Visionary*, when he brought the text of the vision to Lucia for authentication in April of 2000, she stated as follows:

³⁷ In the Italian: "*può darsi che* abbia fatto un calcolo sommario, che sia sbagliata..." The phrase "*può darsi che*" means "it may be," "perhaps" or "perchance." See *Oxford Paravia Concise English-Italian, Italian-English Dictionary* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2002).

³⁸ Ferrara, *The Secret Still Hidden*, pp. 142-143.

³⁹ The title of Cardinal Bertone's book (the Italian original) translates "The Last Visionary of Fatima", but it was published in English with the title "The Last Secret of Fatima".

⁴⁰ Socci, "Dear Cardinal Bertone: Who—Between You and Me—is Deliberately Lying?," May 12, 2007. See footnote 5.

Yes, these are my *sheets* of paper (*fogli*) and the envelope is mine, they are the *sheets (fogli)* that I used and this is my writing. This is my envelope,⁴¹ this is my writing, this is my text.

So, Bertone himself confirms (however inadvertently) that the Third Secret involves *sheets* of paper. (He will also reveal in May of 2007, on *Porta a Porta*, that it involves multiple *envelopes* of Lucia's, not merely the one envelope she purportedly authenticated in April of 2000). Yet, as Borelli would have it, only *one* sheet of paper is involved. The testimony of Ottaviani and the revelation by Bertone are enough to extinguish Borelli's claim that the mystery is solved.

Hence we need not spend much time with another element of Borelli's "friendly reflections": his elaborate attempt to explain away the famous account of Frère Michel relating the investigation by Bishop Venâncio, then the auxiliary Bishop of Fatima. In 1957, just before he delivered the Third Secret and other documents of Lucia's to the papal nuncio in Lisbon (apparently on the order of Pope Pius XII), Venâncio held Bishop da Silva's outer envelope under a bright light, which enabled him to "look at the envelope [containing the Third Secret] while holding it up to the light. He could see inside a little sheet whose exact size he measured. We thus know that the Secret is not very long, probably twenty to twenty-five lines...."⁴² Borelli even augments that testimony by noting that Frère Michel later revealed in a lecture at the Augustinianum in Rome—during a conference organized by none other than Father Nicholas Gruner—that "Bishop Venâncio *told me himself* on February 13, 1984, that he... could see inside it [the envelope] a small *sheet* whose exact form he measured."

Addressing this evidence, Borelli argues that Frère Michel merely surmised that the single sheet of paper seen through the envelope contained only 20-25 lines of text based on the number of lines one would be able to write on a single page. But Frère Michel was relating what Bishop Venâncio had "*told me himself*" about what the Bishop had seen inside the envelope, and it is hardly fair to suppose that he simply invented the datum concerning the number of lines.

At any rate, Borelli is refuted by the "categorical" testimony of Cardinal Ottaviani that the text indeed comprised 25 lines, which he does not even mention in his "friendly reflections" and which Bertone failed utterly to refute during the telecast of May 31, 2007. But there is more, and Borelli has overlooked it all.

A telling discrepancy of measurements

Borelli unwittingly further undermines his position by providing additional details of what Bishop Venâncio saw when he held Bishop da Silva's outer envelope up to the light. Borelli cites a document from the Fatima sanctuary archives (kept there since 1982) in which Venâncio records in his own handwriting the precise measurements of what he saw under the "shining light": inside da Silva's outer envelope was Lucia's sealed inner envelope, measuring 12 x 18 centimeters (cm), within which was a text of the Third Secret on a piece of paper

⁴¹ As discussed below, Lucia's reference to a *single* envelope on this occasion is also devastating to Bertone's version of the facts, since during the telecast of May 31, 2007 Bertone revealed that Lucia had prepared *two* sealed envelopes for the Secret, the second having never before been mentioned by Bertone and the other Third Secret "managers" in the Vatican bureaucracy, as well as a third envelope addressed to the Bishop of Fatima. As also discussed below, Borelli passes over the sudden appearance of two sealed Third Secret envelopes—yet another indication of two companion texts—as if it were a mere oddity of no immediate importance.

⁴² Frère Michel de la Sainte Trinité, *The Secret of Fatima ... Revealed*, (Fort Erie, Canada: Immaculate Heart Publications, 1986) p. 7.

that was “a little smaller [than the envelope], 3-4 cm less above and to the right...”⁴³ That is, Venâncio saw a sheet of paper inside Lucia’s envelope measuring 8-9 cm in width and 14-15 cm in height.

But the folio on which the vision is written measures 12.6 cm wide and 18.5 cm long, as shown in the Vatican’s own actual size photo reproduction of the original document. Moreover, as we know from the *Porta a Porta* telecast, the folio containing the vision was not only folded in half to make four pages, but folded in half again to fit into the small inner envelope Bertone displayed on camera. The double-folded folio would thus still measure 12.6 cm wide (width being unaffected by a lengthwise folding) but only 9.25 cm long (half its original length of 18.5 centimeters). Therefore, the double-folded text of the vision, measuring 9.25 x 12.6 cm, cannot possibly be the text Bishop Venâncio saw inside Lucia’s envelope, which measured 9 x 15 or 8 x 14, and which, moreover, was *not double-folded* or indeed folded even once.

Also devastating to Borelli’s “friendly” attempt at a refutation of Socci is yet another fact he has missed, but which Socci astutely caught while watching the *Porta a Porta* show (from which he was so suspiciously excluded). When Bertone displayed and spoke of the envelope from which he withdrew the text of the vision: “he gave the measurements: ‘9 centimeters by 14.’” But, as we have just seen, the envelope Venâncio saw was 12 centimeters by 18, as shown in the very document from the Fatima archives Borelli himself cites as authoritative. Let Socci state the obvious conclusion:

The prelate [Bertone] evidently overlooked that since 1982 the Archive of the Sanctuary of Fatima has conserved a document by Monsignor Venâncio... [who] wrote down the exact measurements of the envelope of Lucia, which were 12 x 18 centimeters. Therefore, from the official records it follows that there was another envelope.⁴⁴

And, as I have just shown, it follows that there was another text *inside* that envelope whose measurements are radically different from what the Vatican has published.

In sum, Borelli’s labored but ultimately superficial arguments on this point founder on crucial evidence he has failed to consider in his “friendly reflections.” And, given the recent disclosures discussed here, his analysis is not only outdated, but worthless—like a police investigation that ignores all evidence received after a certain date. But, in any case, still other evidence places the existence of a second text beyond serious dispute. And Borelli doggedly attempts to explain all of it away.

Multiple envelopes revealed

Just how unhelpful Borelli’s “friendly reflections” are to his stated aim of “clarification of a debate” is glaringly apparent in his treatment of the explosive development I discussed at great length in *The Secret Still Hidden: Cardinal Bertone’s revelation on Porta a Porta* that Sister Lucia prepared not one, but *two* sealed envelopes pertaining to the Secret, on each of which she had written the identical warning: “*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.*”⁴⁵

⁴³ Quoting Aura Miguel, *Totus Tuus: Il Segreto di Fatima nel pontificato di Giovanni Paolo II [Totus tuus (I am all Thine): The Secret of Fatima in the Pontificate of John Paul II]* (Itaca: 2002), p. 14, n. 11.

⁴⁴ Socci, “Bertone nel ‘Vespaio’ delle Polemiche,” loc. cit: “Infatti della busta contenente il testo della visione ha dato le misure: ‘9 centimetri per 14.’ Il prelate evidentemente ignora che dal 1982 all’Archivio del Santuario di Fatima è conservato un documento di monsignor Venâncio il quale portò materialmente la busta col “quarto segreto” alla nunziatura per inviarlo a Roma. Il monsignore trascrisse le esatte misure della busta di Lucia che era di 12 centimetri per 18. Dunque dagli atti ufficiali risulta che quella era un’altra busta.”

⁴⁵ See, *The Secret Still Hidden*, pp. 124-132.

Here I must add that during the telecast Bertone also revealed a *third* envelope Sister Lucia had prepared: an unsealed outer envelope, brownish or yellowish in color, addressed to the Bishop of Fatima. Sister Lucia's three envelopes, plus the famous outermost envelope of Bishop da Silva,⁴⁶ make a total of *four envelopes* pertaining to the Third Secret of Fatima.

Borelli's "friendly reflections" have presumed up to this point—as did the whole Catholic world before Bertone's *Porta a Porta* appearance on May 31, 2007—that there was only one sealed envelope of Lucia's pertaining to the Secret. As I have already mentioned, Lucia herself wrote to Bishop da Silva on January 9, 1994 that "[the text] is sealed in *an envelope* and it [the sealed envelope] is in the notebooks..." Yet now it is apparent that by the time the Secret was consigned to the Bishop of Gurza for forwarding to Bishop da Silva five months later, a second *and third* envelope of Lucia's must have entered the picture, which we know because *Bertone showed them to us on camera*—even though (quite mysteriously) he had never hinted at their existence before, but on the contrary had implied that no other envelopes of Lucia's existed. (Recall Bertone's account in *Last Visionary*, quoted above, that when Lucia authenticated the text of the vision during his meeting with her in April of 2000 she said: "the *envelope* is mine... This is my *envelope*...").

Yet another revelation in *Last Visionary* undermines Bertone's account. Bertone states that during the same April 2000 "authentication meeting" with Sister Lucia, he had with him both "An external [envelope] with the note 'Third part of the Secret' and an internal of Sister Lucia with the date '1960'."⁴⁷ But where is this external envelope, not Lucia's, with the notation "Third Part of the Secret"—another envelope of which we had never heard before? Apparently it remains under lock and key in the Vatican, along with the "Capovilla envelope," discussed below, and the missing text of the Third Secret itself.

At any rate, during the April 2000 meeting with Bertone, Lucia spoke of one sealed envelope prepared by her in January 1944, and even Bertone states that she authenticated only one such envelope in April of 2000. But the indisputable fact is that now we have *two* sealed envelopes of Lucia's, *each warning separately* that by "express order of Our Lady" it was not to be opened before 1960. Since it would have been absurd for Lucia to have created *two* identical sealed "warning" envelopes for only *one* text—neither Lucia nor Bertone even suggested such a thing in all the years of the controversy—the only reasonable deduction is that the two envelopes were meant for two different but related texts comprising the Third Secret as a whole, only one of which (the vision) we have been allowed to see. The other could only be the "letter to the Bishop of Leiria" that Sister Lucia described at the time she first committed the Secret to writing.

Since we now know that a second sealed envelope exists, it is evident that the only reason Lucia did not mention it in January 1944 was that it was not prepared until later, during the five months that elapsed (between January 9, 1944 and June 17, 1944) before the Secret was placed into the hands of the Bishop of Gurza. Clearly, during that five-month interval what Father Schweigl revealed as a two-part Secret—one part pertaining to the Pope and the other "logically... the continuation" of *the words* 'In Portugal the dogma of the faith will always be preserved etc'"—found its way into two separate envelopes, one for each part. We have the part pertaining to the Pope: the vision of a future Pope being executed on a hill outside a

⁴⁶ See, *The Secret Still Hidden*, [photo section](#) at the center of the book, for a photograph of Bishop da Silva displaying his envelope to a *Life* magazine reporter in 1949. This is the same outermost envelope Bertone showed on camera during his appearance on *Porta a Porta*.

⁴⁷ Bertone, Cardinal Tarcisio, *L'Ultima Veggente di Fatima [The Last Visionary of Fatima]* (Milano: Rai and Eri Rizzoli, 2007), p. 49. Notice also the subtle misrepresentation here: that the envelope merely bore "the date 1960" when in truth it bore "the express order of Our Lady" that the Secret was not to be opened before 1960. At this point Bertone was still claiming that Lucia had "confessed" she never received any such order.

half-ruined city, published in 2000. But we do not have “the letter to the Bishop of Leiria” that must logically continue the Virgin’s words concerning Portugal and the dogmas of the Faith, the words about which Borelli is so curiously incurious.

The revelation of Sister Lucia’s *three* envelopes on *Porta a Porta*—again, two sealed “1960 warning” envelopes and one unsealed envelope addressed to Bishop da Silva—poses another insurmountable difficulty for Borelli’s “friendly reflections.” Recall that in 1957 Bishop Venâncio held up Bishop da Silva’s famous outer envelope to the light and saw inside only *one* sealed envelope of Lucia’s, within which he saw her “sheet of paper.” Obviously, Venâncio could not have seen that sheet of paper through the *four* different envelopes Bertone displayed on camera.

How can we explain this? Only one explanation makes sense: Bishop da Silva’s outer envelope and Lucia’s sealed inner envelope contained one text of the Secret, while Lucia’s second sealed envelope and her unsealed outer envelope addressed to Bishop da Silva (both of which were never seen or even mentioned before May 31, 2007) contained a companion text.

In view of all this, what does Borelli have to say about the explosive revelation of four different envelopes pertaining to the Secret, including two identical “1960 warning” envelopes and an outer envelope by Sister Lucia, making three envelopes from her in all? He calls this development “remarkable,” and describes the plainly preposterous use of four envelopes—two sealed and two unsealed—for only one piece of paper “an interesting scene” that “suggests very significant comments, which this is not the moment to develop.”

What? Is *that* all Borelli is prepared to say about this monumental development? But what of the patent impossibility of reconciling four envelopes with the clear and uncontradicted testimony of Bishop Venâncio, disputed by no one for more than fifty years, that under the “shining light” he saw an assemblage of only *two* envelopes pertaining to the Secret, only *one* of which was Lucia’s? Borelli will state only that this poses “one more difficulty for Bishop João Pereira Venâncio’s valuable investigation described above. The investigation should be reevaluated in light of these new facts.”

Come again? What is that supposed to mean? It is hardly *Bishop Venâncio’s* investigation that needs to be “reevaluated in light of these new facts,” but rather *Cardinal Bertone’s entire account of the Third Secret*. Yet, instead of recognizing the obvious, Borelli appears to suggest that perhaps it is the late Bishop Venâncio who misled us! Now our incurious detective not only seems determined to provide excuses for living “suspects” toward whom all the evidence points, and who had a clear motive to prevaricate—i.e., concealing an “inauthentic” text of the Secret that predicts an ecclesial debacle on their watch—but also to misdirect us toward another suspect, long dead,⁴⁸ who had no motive to deceive whatsoever.

It should be apparent to the reader at this point that Borelli’s professed intention to “clarify... obscure points so that all may have at their disposition the necessary elements to clear away all doubts” is a mockery.

But I cannot conclude this point without noting that, in *The Secret Still Hidden*, I addressed two obvious objections to the reconstruction of events set forth here:

First: Why would Bertone display Lucia’s second sealed envelope on camera and thereby demolish his and the Vatican’s entire position, if that envelope really were a “smoking gun”? Why would he not simply hide the envelope (along with Lucia’s unsealed outer envelope)

⁴⁸ Venâncio died in 1985.

and never reveal it?⁴⁹

Answer: By the time of Bertone's *Porta a Porta* appearance, the existence of what all of Italy was already calling "le due buste" (the two envelopes) had been confirmed by an unimpeachable living eyewitness, Archbishop Capovilla, as discussed below. Other evidence, no matter how compelling, could safely be ignored as the product of feverish "Fatimists," but not Capovilla's testimony. Since the Vatican could not refute or even comment on Capovilla's testimony because it is true—the only reasonable explanation for Bertone's utter silence concerning Capovilla in *Last Visionary*—more and more members of the faithful, following Socci's lead, would become convinced that there *are* two envelopes, one of which the Vatican is hiding from the world.

The "two envelopes" problem, then, would never go away so long as the Vatican continued to deny the existence of two envelopes while failing to answer Capovilla. There could be only one way out: *suddenly introduce the second envelope as if it had always been there*, but merely as one of two envelopes meant to shelter the same text, the text of the vision.

Only this reconstruction would explain why Bertone was still claiming in *Last Visionary*, published only a few weeks before his appearance on *Porta a Porta*, (a) that the Secret was contained in only *one* sealed envelope of Lucia's "with the date 1960," without mentioning a second sealed envelope of the same sort; and (b) that Sister Lucia had identified only *one* inner envelope as hers, when in fact there were *three* such envelopes: two sealed "1960 warning" envelopes "with the date 1960" and the unsealed yellowish envelope addressed to the Bishop of Fatima, all revealed on *Porta a Porta*.

It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that sometime between the publication of *Last Visionary* and the telecast it was decided to reveal the second "1960 warning" envelope (along with Lucia's unsealed outer envelope) as a mere "extra" envelope for the text of the vision. Hence, only a few weeks after impliedly negating the existence of a second "1960 warning" envelope in his own book, Bertone suddenly introduced it on television for the first time in the entire history of the controversy.⁵⁰

Second: What of the fact that the "extra" envelope bearing "the express order of Our Lady" regarding 1960 had not appeared in any account of the chain of custody of the Third Secret written over the previous 60 years?

Answer: But this is only proof that something is amiss! Since we know today that the "extra" envelope exists, the failure of any historical account to record its existence could only be the result of it having taken a hidden path to the Vatican—a hidden path that ended in the papal apartment. It is a documented historical fact that a text of the Secret was deposited in a wooden safe in the papal bedchamber of Pius XII that was photographed by a photographer for *Paris-Match* magazine.⁵¹ As we will see, it is evident that that same text was later moved to John XXIII's "Barbarigo" desk, from which Pope Paul VI retrieved it for reading, as Archbishop Capovilla has testified.

On this point Bertone made another inadvertent revelation on *Porta a Porta* when he stated—stressing yet again the new theme of the "authentic text" that "actually existed in the archives"—that "there was only this folio *in the archive of the Holy Office* in 1957, when by order of Our Lady and the Bishop of Leiria, Sister Lucia accepted that the Secret be brought

⁴⁹ The following few paragraphs are borrowed verbatim from the text of my book.

⁵⁰ This reconstruction would also explain why, on *Porta a Porta*, Bertone was at pains to describe the innermost envelope of Lucia's as "the *authentic* envelope that contains the Third Secret." Was there some *inauthentic* envelope in this regard?

⁵¹ See, *The Secret Still Hidden*, pp. 21-22, which cites Frère Michel's impeccable documentation of the facts, including a confirmatory letter from the photographer, Robert Serrou.

to Rome from the archives of the Patriarch of Lisbon....”

The archives of the Patriarch of Lisbon? But the document Bishop Venancio saw under “the shining light” was personally delivered by him *directly from the chancery in Leiria* to the papal nuncio in Lisbon, Msgr. Cento, who took it directly to Rome during the reign of Pius XII.⁵² So, whatever document came from the archives of the Patriarch of Lisbon, and ended up in the archive of the Holy Office, had to be a different document. Ergo, once again, there are two different documents comprising the totality of the Third Secret, one of which ended up in the Holy Office archives and the other in the wooden safe in Pius XII’s apartment, and then the Barbarigo desk of John XXIII, from which Paul VI retrieved it.

As conclusive as all this evidence is, the decisive testimony of Archbishop Capovilla, which we are about to discuss, confirms beyond any *reasonable* doubt the existence of not only two different envelopes, but two different *texts* comprising the same Third Secret. (Recall once again that Father Schweigl also confirmed this almost as directly with his revelation that the Third Secret has two parts, one of which contains words spoken by the Virgin. The words of the Virgin are, as I have said throughout, precisely what is missing from the picture.) Yet, here too, Borelli seems determined to ignore the evidence.

*The dispositive testimony of Archbishop Capovilla*⁵³

We come at last to the testimony of Archbishop Loris F. Capovilla, the still-living personal secretary of John XXIII. In § 14 of his “friendly reflections,” Borelli’s curious incuriosity reaches absurd extremes as he attempts to explain away even the admission of this key figure, a living eyewitness who has read the Third Secret, that there are indeed two different envelopes and two different texts comprising the Secret in its totality.

As Socci informed the world in *Fourth Secret*, in July of 2006 the Fatima researcher Solideo Paolini personally met with Capovilla concerning the existence of the posited second text. During that interview Paolini asked the Archbishop whether there was an unpublished text of the Secret, and the Archbishop replied evasively: “I know nothing. (*Nulla so!*)” Note well: he did not answer simply “No!” That answer puzzled Paolini, who expected that the Archbishop, “among the few who know the Secret, would have been able to respond to me that this is a completely impracticable idea and that everything had already been revealed in 2000. Instead he answered: ‘I know nothing.’ An expression that I imagined he wished ironically to evoke a certain *omertá* [code of silence].”⁵⁴ The Archbishop promised enigmatically that he would write to Paolini and send him “a phrase” about the matter, which only confirmed Paolini’s impression that the Archbishop had something to reveal. That impression was confirmed by subsequent events.

After the face-to-face meeting, Paolini received from Capovilla in the mail a package of papers from his files, along with a perplexing cover letter advising him to obtain a copy of *TMF*, which Capovilla must have known that Paolini, a Fatima researcher, would already possess. Was this not, thought Paolini, “an invitation to read something in particular in that publication in relation to the documents sent by the same Archbishop?”

That intuition was correct. Among the documents Capovilla had sent was a stamped “confidential note” by him, dated May 17, 1967, in which he had recorded the circumstances of a reading of the Third Secret by Pope Paul VI on June 27, 1963, only six days after his

⁵² *WTAF*, Vol. III, pp. 480-481.

⁵³ The following discussion is taken largely verbatim from my contribution to the second edition of *The Devil’s Final Battle*, 2-volume version, pp. 174-175; 1-volume version, pp. 245-247.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

election to the papacy and before he had even been seated officially at the coronation Mass (which took place on June 29). But according to *TMF* and the “official account” in general, Paul VI did not read the Secret until nearly two years later: “Paul VI read the contents with the Substitute, Archbishop Angelo Dell’Acqua, on 27 March 1965, and returned the envelope to the Archives of the Holy Office, deciding not to publish the text.”⁵⁵

The huge discrepancy between the date recorded by Capovilla and that set forth in *TMF* prompted Paolini to telephone Capovilla, at precisely 8:45 p.m. on the same day he received the documents, to ask the Archbishop to explain the discrepancy. Capovilla protested: “Ah, but I spoke the truth. Look I am still lucid!” When Paolini politely insisted that, still, there was an unexplained discrepancy, Capovilla offered explanations that suggested “eventual lapse of memory, interpretations of what he had intended to say,” whereupon Paolini reminded him that he had recorded the date of the reading by Paul VI in a stamped, official document. Capovilla then gave this reply: “But I am right, because perhaps *the Bertone envelope is not the same as the Capovilla envelope.*”

Stunned, Paolini then asked the decisive question: “Therefore, both dates are true, because there are two texts of the Third Secret?” After a brief pause, the Archbishop gave the explosive answer that confirmed the existence of a missing envelope and text of the Third Secret of Fatima: “Exactly so! (*Per l’appunto!*).”⁵⁶

The “confidential note” fully corroborated Capovilla’s testimony.⁵⁷ According to the note, on the date Pope Paul read the Secret (June 27, 1963), Monsignor Angelo Dell’Acqua, the same “Substitute” referred to in *TMF*, telephoned Capovilla to ask: “I am looking for the Fatima envelope. Do you know where it is kept?”⁵⁸ The note records that Capovilla replied: “It was in the drawer on the right hand side of the desk, named ‘Barbarigo,’ *in the bedroom.*” That is, the envelope was in the former bedroom of John XXIII, now the bedroom of Paul VI; it was *not* in the Holy Office archives, where the text of the vision was lodged.

The note further records that the “Fatima envelope” *was found in that desk*: “An hour later, Dell’Acqua telephoned me again. Everything is fine. The envelope has been retrieved.” Finally, the note records that in an audience the very next day Paul VI asked Capovilla directly: “Why is your name on the envelope?” Capovilla replied: “John XXIII asked me to inscribe a note concerning the manner of arrival of the envelope in his [Pope John’s] hands and the names of all those to whom he considered it necessary to make it known.”⁵⁹ Further, Pope John directed him to write on the outside of “the envelope” (*plico*) or “folder” (*involucro*): “I leave it to others to comment or decide.”⁶⁰ The Vatican *has never produced this envelope* with its historic notations. And yet, thanks to Archbishop Capovilla, we now know beyond any doubt that it exists, that it was *not* kept in the archives where the text of the vision was preserved, and that it contains another text pertaining to the Secret.

Confronted with this explosive direct testimony by an eyewitness, corroborated by the witness’s own contemporaneous document recording the events, Borelli—quite amazingly—

⁵⁵ *The Fourth Secret of Fatima*, English ed., p. 131; popular ed., p. 91; Italian ed., p. 141; and citing *TMF*, p. 15 (English print edition).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, English ed., p. 132; popular ed., p. 92; Italian ed., p. 142.

⁵⁷ The Italian original and English translation of the stamped “confidential note,” dated May 17, 1967, are reproduced in [Appendix I of *The Secret Still Hidden*](#).

⁵⁸ Notice Dell’Acqua evidently presumed that the envelope was somewhere in the papal apartment, not in the Holy Office archive, of which Capovilla was not the custodian. Otherwise, Dell’Acqua would have asked the custodian of the archive, Cardinal Ottaviani, where the “Fatima envelope” was, rather than Capovilla, Pope John’s former personal secretary.

⁵⁹ *The Fourth Secret of Fatima*, English ed., p. 133; popular ed., p. 93; Italian ed., p. 143.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, English ed., p. 133; popular ed., p. 93; Italian ed., p. 143. On another occasion, Capovilla rendered John XXIII’s comment on the Third Secret thus: “I give no judgment.” (Socci, Italian ed., p. 165.)

tries to explain it all away. First, he dismisses Capovilla's unequivocal "Exactly so!" in answer to Paolini's question whether there were two texts of the Secret, arguing that "in order to arrive at a conclusion of such import and with such grave consequences it would have been necessary for Paolini to have taken his verification of details to the very limits of clarity in his telephone call to Capovilla." In other words, according to Borelli, Paolini should have continued to press the Archbishop with follow-up questions.

Now, imagine a case in which a police investigator contacts a murder suspect and asks this direct question: "So, your wife has gone missing because you murdered her?" The suspect blurts out: "Exactly so!" What would one think if the investigator's supervising detective refused to seek an arrest warrant because the investigator had not "taken his verification of details to the very limits of clarity"? One would think the detective is intent on protecting the suspect instead of doing his job; that perhaps he is even the suspect's friend or wishes to court the suspect's favor. Such, it seems, is the incurious detective who has provided us with his "friendly reflections" on the Third Secret controversy.

Borelli belies his own claim to neutrality and "friendliness" by going to such great lengths to discount an answer as unequivocal as Capovilla's "Exactly so!" Ignoring the "Exactly so!", Borelli argues we should rely instead on Capovilla's earlier statement "*Nulla so*"—literally, "nothing I know"—when Paolini first inquired about the existence of the second text. Borelli declares that "sincerely, the response appears unequivocal to us: 'I know nothing [*Nulla so*]... with regard to an unpublished Third Secret."⁶¹ So, according to Borelli—who tells us this "sincerely"—the evasive "I know nothing"⁶² is perfectly clear, whereas the emphatic "Exactly so!" requires "clarification"! This laughable contention is but a further indication that our incurious detective is determined to pronounce dead a case teeming with live evidence.

But here Borelli deploys a convenient double standard for evaluating testimony. Recall his advice that we should accept at face value the purported testimony of Sister Lucia that "Everything has been made public; nothing is secret any more," even though we do not know the question asked or its context, the witness is now conveniently dead, Bertone's communiqué recording her purported statement is in a language she never spoke, and the entire interview is suspect because there is no independent record of it. Yet Borelli pronounces the purported words of Lucia "unequivocal" and does not contend that "in order to arrive at a conclusion of such import and with such grave consequences it would have been necessary for [Bertone] to have taken his verification of details to the very limits of clarity" by asking more precise questions concerning the "etc" and other evidence pointing to the existence of a second text.

How odd that our incurious detective, who professes that he seeks to "unite" us, seems so determined to negate the direct testimony of a living witness (Capovilla), while accepting uncritically plainly dubious and now completely unverifiable hearsay attributed to a dead witness (Lucia) by an interviewer (Bertone) who has every motive to prevaricate and who, moreover, has already been caught in the demonstrable lie that Sister Lucia never received an "express order of the Virgin" concerning 1960.

And Capovilla, it must be noted, *has never denied what he said to Paolini even though he has had every opportunity to do so*. Rather, he has acted as if the conversation with Paolini

⁶¹ Further, Borelli misses the point that "*Nulla so*"—"nothing I know"—is not the same as the more direct "*Non so niente*"—"I know nothing"—but rather, as Paolini notes, is suggestive of a self-imposed silence which implies: that is not something I wish to discuss. In any case, Capovilla's subsequent declaration "Exactly so!" when pressed again for an answer, leaves no doubt of the matter.

⁶² "*Nulla so*," meaning literally "nothing I know," is actually a Sicilian expression not common in the north of Italy where Capovilla resides. It suggests *omertà*, a code of silence prevalent in criminal organizations. It is more accurately rendered: "My lips are sealed," meaning in substance: that is not a subject on which he can speak.

never happened, while Bertone's lay collaborator, Giuseppe De Carli, conspicuously failed to ask Capovilla a single question about his statement to Paolini during a videotaped interview of the Archbishop, to be discussed below.

Consider also this inadvertent admission by Borelli: he attributes Capovilla's answer "Exactly so!" to his desire to "dodge Paolini's uncomfortable questions" because he was "embarrassed as Paolini asked him whether the difference between the two dossiers signified the existence of two texts of the Third Secret" and was "looking for a way out..." or a "good way to shake off an uncomfortable interlocutor."

Uncomfortable? Embarrassed? Looking for a way out? Looking to shake off Paolini's uncomfortable questions? But *why*, if the Archbishop had nothing to hide? Borelli's own revealing choice of words sinks his entire argument on this point. He himself describes a witness who was uneasy because his questioner was getting at the truth, but who (perhaps to his later regret) spontaneously provided the truth under the pressure of Paolini's inquiry.

In fact, after writing "Nulla so!" in response to Paolini's written question whether there is an unpublished text of the Third Secret, the supposedly "uncomfortable" Archbishop, who was supposedly "looking for a way out," actually *assisted* Paolini's inquiry by also providing the "confidential note" along with the advice to obtain a copy of *The Message of Fatima*. This allowed Paolini to put two and two together, thereby revealing the discrepancy in dates and prompted Paolini's fateful question whether there were two texts and two envelopes pertaining to the Third Secret.

But while the note corroborates that on June 27, 1963 Paul VI retrieved the "Capovilla envelope" from the Barbarigo desk in the papal apartment—once again, *not* from the Holy Office archives where the text of the vision was kept—Borelli argues with utmost implausibility (especially since Paul VI had asked for the envelope in the first place) that this does not mean that Paul VI actually *read* a text of the Secret on that date. Rather, according to Borelli, it meant only that "the pope wanted to be sure where the document was to be found" since Bishop Venâncio had been present that morning and the Pope wanted to "calm down the bishop" by showing him that the document was not lost.⁶³

Really, now! The suggestion that the Bishop of Fatima would journey all the way to Rome for an audience with the Pope, during which the "Capovilla envelope" was produced but its contents ignored, is preposterous on its face. Of *course* Paul VI read the text in the "Capovilla envelope" on that occasion, and *none other than Archbishop Capovilla has confirmed* this. The confirmation came in a heavily edited videotaped interview, conducted by De Carli, that Cardinal Bertone broadcast to the world during the aforementioned telecast of September 21, 2007, which he staged in an auditorium at the Urbanianum in Rome in an effort to control the massive self-inflicted damage his version of events had suffered on *Porta a Porta*.⁶⁴ Capovilla's statement to De Carli demolishes Borelli's position:

On June 27, 1963 I was, that evening, with the Sisters of the Poor in Via Casilina. A worried Monsignor Dell'Acqua telephoned me. The Fatima envelope could not be found. I replied that probably it could be found in the writing desk called "Barbarigo," because it belonged to Saint Gregory Barbarigo and was gifted to Pope John by Count della Torre. Pope John held it dear, in his bedroom, like a relic. There were on the right and on the left five or six drawers. Later, Dell'Acqua telephoned me and

⁶³ Capovilla's "confidential note" records that on June 27, 1963 "Paul VI in the early morning received, among others, Cardinal Fernando Cento [formerly the papal nuncio] and shortly afterwards the Bishop of Leiria Monsignor Joao Periera Venâncio."

⁶⁴ This broadcast is exhaustively analyzed in *The Secret Still Hidden*, Chapter 10.

communicated that the envelope had been found. On June 28 Pope Paul called me and asked who had dictated the lines on the envelope. I explained that it was the Pope himself who wanted to indicate the persons who had knowledge of the text. “Pope John did not say anything else to you?,” Pope Paul asked me. “No, Holy Father, he left it to others to decide.” “*I will also do as much,*” responded Pope Montini. ***The envelope was resealed*** and I don’t know if it was spoken of further.⁶⁵

So, we know from Capovilla’s own mouth—when called, moreover, as Bertone’s own witness!—that Paul VI *resealed* the “Capovilla envelope” after reading the text therein on June 27, 1963 and that Pope Paul told Capovilla personally that he, like his predecessor, would leave it to others to decide what to do about the text he had just read. Clearly, Borelli’s study of the documents has been superficial. He has overlooked a critical fact of which he should have been aware, as he himself cites the same interview for his own purposes. And what can Borelli say in response? That Pope Paul *opened* the “Capovilla envelope” and then *resealed* it without reading what was inside? Or that he declared his agreement with John XXIII to let others decide about the text in the “Capovilla envelope” *without even looking at it*? Nonsense. Given what we have seen of his “friendly reflections” thus far, however, Borelli might well be content with the ludicrous supposition that Pope Paul opened and resealed an envelope containing the Third Secret of Fatima without reading the Secret. But Bertone and his sidekick De Carli knew they had a problem on their hands with Capovilla’s testimony that Paul VI read a text of the Secret two years before Bertone’s account said he had. So, during the interview with Capovilla, De Carli used a blatantly leading question in an effort to prompt the Archbishop to speculate that Paul VI read the same text—the text of the vision—twice, in 1963 and 1965:

“...Paul VI read the same message two times.... Is that so? The first time was a few days after his election, June 27, 1963; the second, March 27, 1965?”

Capovilla never directly answered this rhetorical poke in the ribs, but merely surmised: “I have demonstrated this also.” He did not answer that he had actually *witnessed* such a thing because it is an undeniable fact that he could not have. As noted above, Capovilla effectively admitted that he had no way of knowing whether Paul VI read the same text again in 1965 because “The envelope was resealed *and I don’t know if it was spoken of further.*” Since Capovilla was no longer a member of the papal staff in 1965, he had no knowledge of the matter about which De Carli questioned him. De Carli’s leading question was mere trickery. But the very posing of that question destroys Borelli’s attempt to maintain there was only one reading of the Secret by Paul VI. *De Carli and Bertone clearly knew otherwise* and tried to use Capovilla to solve the problem by putting words in his mouth about a matter of which he knew nothing. The problems caused by this new strand in an already tangled web do not end there. At this point, for the convenience of the reader, I will repeat substantially my analysis from *The Secret Still Hidden* (pp. 192-195):

First of all, if it were really the case that Paul VI read the same text twice—in 1963 and 1965—Bertone would have said so long ago, thus clearing up the apparent mystery. He would have mentioned this in *TMF* back in 2000, or in *Last Visionary* or during his appearance on *Porta a Porta*. That Bertone says it now, only after the emergence of undeniable evidence of a text in the papal apartment, clearly suggests what the law calls a “recent fabrication”—a change of story designed to accommodate facts a witness did not think would come out: “You found a gun in my basement, detective? Oh yes, *that* gun. Of course, it was always there. The previous owner left it behind. Did I not mention this before?”

⁶⁵ See, *The Secret Still Hidden*, p. 187.

That tactic will not work here, however, because the evidence Bertone belatedly embraces and attempts to spin his way cannot fail to annihilate his “thesis.” As Capovilla revealed to Bertone’s own handpicked audience in the transcript quoted above, in 1963 Pope Paul’s subordinate, Monsignor Dell’Acqua, asked Capovilla where the “Fatima envelope” was, and Capovilla told him where in the papal apartment it could be found. That is, Dell’Acqua (who was at the time no less than the Substitute of the Secretary of State) *did not make inquiry of the Holy Office because the text Paul VI wished to read was not there*. Yet we know that, as the official account reveals, Pope John did return a text of the Secret to the Holy Office before his death in 1963, and that it was *this* text that Paul VI read in 1965, as opposed to 1963:

In fact Pope John XXIII decided to return the sealed envelope *to the Holy Office* and not to reveal the third part of the “secret”.

Paul VI read the contents with the Substitute, Archbishop Angelo Dell’Acqua, on 27 March 1965, and *returned the envelope to the Archives of the Holy Office*, deciding not to publish the text.⁶⁶

Nowhere does the official account state that in 1963 Paul VI retrieved from the Holy Office the text that John XXIII had returned there, and not even Bertone is claiming that now. Therefore, the text that Capovilla helped Dell’Acqua locate in Pope Paul’s apartment in June of 1963, the text kept in the late Pope John’s prized writing desk called “Barbarigo,” could not possibly have been the one Pope John returned to the Holy Office before he died. Bertone’s tactic has backfired, and there is no way out of the problem. His own witness has confirmed the existence of two separate but related texts of the Third Secret of Fatima: one in the Holy Office archives, the other in “Barbarigo”; one read by Paul VI in 1963—i.e., the text Pope John kept in “Barbarigo”; the other read by Paul VI in 1965—i.e., the text Pope John returned to the Holy Office.

In sum, Bertone’s belated admission of the presence of the “Capovilla envelope” in the papal apartment, and his failure to produce it or to explain its non-production, are the final blow to his position. He himself has demonstrated conclusively that he is hiding something. Bertone’s contrivance—that Paul VI read the same text, contained in the same envelope, in 1963 and 1965—is riddled with gaping holes he cannot possibly explain:

- If Paul VI read in 1963 the same text he read again in 1965, and there is nothing to hide, then Bertone would have produced on television the envelope Paul VI resealed in 1963—the very “Capovilla envelope” on which, as Bertone’s own evidence proves, Capovilla wrote the words dictated by John XXIII, a list of names of those who had read the contents, and “a note concerning the manner of arrival of the envelope in his [Pope John’s] hands...”
- The “official account” 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 had read and placed back in the resealed “Capovilla envelope” 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—unless, again, there is something to hide.
- As Bertone has revealed 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

⁶⁶ *The Message of Fatima*, Italian ed., p. 4; English ed., p. 4.

envelope he had resealed in 1963 in order to read the *same* text again in 1965? He wouldn't.

- If Paul VI decided to reopen the envelope he had resealed in 1963 in order to give it 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?

But even if Bertone's/De Carli's leaky contrivance could hold water, not even Borelli can explain away papal spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls' revelation that John Paul II read a text of the Third Secret within days of assuming the papacy in 1978⁶⁷—three years before the date given in the official account (July 18, 1981)—or Pope John XXIII's reading of a text of the Secret on August 17, 1959, with the help of a written translation,⁶⁸ followed by a reading of a text of the Secret in 1960, which Pope John understood perfectly without a translation.⁶⁹

Here it must be noted that it was none other than Archbishop Capovilla himself who revealed long ago that when Pope John tried to read a text of the Secret in August of 1959, he was unable to do so because of “difficulty caused by expressions proper to the language,”⁷⁰ and “Portuguese dialect expressions,”⁷¹ and that the Pope had to wait for a translation to be prepared by Father Paulo Tavares, a native Portuguese translator attached to the Secretariat of State.⁷² But, as Socci demonstrates in *Fourth Secret*, the text of the vision *does not contain any particularly difficult Portuguese expressions*.⁷³ So, we have yet another indication of the existence of two texts.

But De Carli attempted to plug this gaping hole in the official account as well. Clearly acting under off camera prompting, Archbishop Capovilla stated during the De Carli interview: “I must add that, at times, I have said and written that in the text there were dialect expressions. In reality there were not. The fact is that I did not know the language, I misinterpreted. There came to be called a recordist [taker of minutes] from the Secretariat of State, the Portuguese Paolo Tavares, a very good and holy priest. They called him after one or two days. He made a translation. The Pope saw, read, considered, prayed.”

Why would Capovilla go out of his way to claim in 2007, nearly fifty years after the fact, that he was mistaken about the linguistic peculiarities of the text Pope John read in 1959? Here is the only sensible answer: Because the text John XXIII read in 1960 did *not* exhibit such peculiarities, and Pope John was able to understand it perfectly. And that fact points, along with so many others, to the existence of two different texts: the one the Vatican published in 2000, which contains “regular” Portuguese, and the one not yet published, which contains more difficult, idiomatic Portuguese expressions. It seems apparent, then, that in an effort to

⁶⁷ In *The Secret Still Hidden* I note Bertone's astonishing evasiveness when pressed repeatedly even by his ally De Carli to explain the longstanding question how John Paul II could have read a text of the Secret in 1978, when the “official account” claims the Pope did not read the Secret until after the assassination attempt in 1981. Bertone was reduced to arguing that “in my opinion” there was no reading in 1978. Yet all he had to do was check with Navarro-Valls or a host of other sources—including the Pope himself, who could have been consulted before his death! That Bertone failed to do so demonstrates that he already knew the answer: John Paul II *did* read a text of the Secret in 1978, just as Navarro-Valls revealed to the press, and this text was not the one published in 2000. For if it were, Bertone and the “official account” would readily have admitted that John Paul II first read the text of the vision in 1978. See, *The Secret Still Hidden*, pp. 94-96.

⁶⁸ See, *The Secret Still Hidden*, pp. 122-123.

⁶⁹ Cardinal Ottaviani reported that an envelope containing a text of the Secret, “[still] sealed... was taken later, in 1960, to Pope John XXIII. The Pope broke the seal, and opened the envelope. Although it was in Portuguese, he told me afterwards that he understood the text in its entirety.” *The Secret Still Hidden*, p. 180.

⁷⁰ *WTAF*, Vol. III, p. 556.

⁷¹ Socci, *The Fourth Secret of Fatima*, English ed., p. 139; popular ed., p. 96; Italian ed., p. 149; citing *Perspective in the World*, VI, 1991.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Socci, *The Fourth Secret of Fatima*, Appendix (linguistic analysis by Prof. Mariagrazia Russo).

rebut Socci's presentation, Capovilla was induced suddenly to "volunteer" that his consistent oral and written testimony, which had stood for a lifetime, was a "mistake" (but not a lie).

But Capovilla's excuse for his "mistake" makes no sense: "I did not know the language, I misinterpreted." If Capovilla did not know Portuguese, it would never have occurred to him in the first place to state that the text contained particularly difficult Portuguese expressions, since *all* Portuguese expressions would be difficult to him. Therefore, he could not have known that the text contained particularly difficult Portuguese *unless someone told him so*—either the Pope, whose personal secretary he was, or Father Tavares. Since Capovilla's testimony about the problematic Portuguese text could only have been based on the advice of others, his sudden declaration after fifty years that *he* was mistaken, that *he* misinterpreted, has the earmarks of an improvisation designed to explain away his prior statements, which seriously undermine Bertone's account, but without Capovilla having to call himself a liar. Nevertheless, Capovilla confirms the accuracy of reports by Frère Michel and other "Fatimist" writers concerning the Archbishop's crucial prior testimony on this point.

All told, the evidence, including Bertone's *own* evidence, shows that three different popes have each read texts of the Third Secret on two different occasions during their respective pontificates: John XXIII in August of 1959 and 1960; Paul VI in 1963 and 1965; John Paul II in 1978 and 1981. Apparently, Borelli is prepared to believe that all three Popes read the same text twice, but that by some incredible coincidence the Vatican's official records failed to note an historic second reading of the Third Secret by three successive Roman Pontiffs. Apparently, he is prepared to believe that although there are—

- two Third Secret envelopes bearing the "1960 warning" written on the envelopes by Sister Lucia,
- two written translations of the Third Secret into Italian,⁷⁴ neither of which has been made public by the Vatican, and
- two Third Secret readings in two different years by three consecutive Popes,

—there is only one text of the Third Secret of Fatima. And he expects us to believe this even though a living eyewitness has admitted there are two different texts!

In sum, Archbishop Capovilla's decisive testimony confirms beyond doubt the existence of two related texts comprising the Secret in its entirety. Which is why, one supposes, Capovilla had no choice but to answer "Exactly so!" to the direct question whether there are two texts comprising the Secret, one of which is contained in the "Capovilla envelope." And—it bears repeating yet again—we know from *both* Bertone and Capovilla that the Capovilla envelope, with its peculiar external notations, exists and that the Vatican has failed to produce it while *offering no explanation* for this failure. But Borelli, ever ready to explain away clearly incriminating facts, argues that "it follows that the two dossiers [Bertone's and Capovilla's] were not identical since they served different functions in the Roman Curia. Therefore, it is not evident that the existence of these two dossiers implies all by itself the existence of two distinct texts of the Third Secret." Different functions? What on earth does Borelli mean? He seems to be arguing that the "Bertone envelope" and the "Capovilla envelope" contained "merely the same content in different languages,"⁷⁵ but that is manifestly false since Capovilla

⁷⁴ As noted above, Father Tavares provided John XXIII with a translation of a text of the Third Secret in August 1959. But why make a second translation of the *same* text, only eight years later, in 1967? Answer: it was not the same text, but rather a second text pertaining to the Secret. As for the 1959 translation, it remains out of sight, along with the 1967 translation, the envelope labeled "Third Part of the Secret" revealed by Bertone in *Last Visionary*, the "Capovilla envelope," and, of course, the text of the Secret inside the "Capovilla envelope."

⁷⁵ Here Borelli apparently conflates the "Capovilla envelope," which we have never seen, with yet another envelope displayed by Bertone on *Porta a Porta*: a large orange envelope containing the Italian translation of a text of the Secret,

testified unequivocally that his envelope, kept in the Barbarigo desk, contained an *original text* of the Third Secret, not a mere translation, and that on the outside of his envelope he had written his own name, the names of all who had read the text inside, and John XXIII's dictation that he would "leave it to others to comment or decide." And it was this same envelope that Paul VI *opened and resealed*, after reaching the same judgment as his predecessor. So then, *where is this envelope?* That is the burning question. Borelli, oddly enough, is not only uninterested in the answer, but wishes to pretend, along with De Carli, that the Capovilla envelope *has* been produced. Borelli suggests, just as De Carli did during the September 2007 telecast, that the Capovilla envelope and what Bertone has produced are one and the same thing: "I conclude," said De Carli, "that there is not a Capovilla envelope to contrast to a Bertone envelope. The two envelopes are the same document." *De Carli* concludes? But what about the eyewitness, Archbishop Capovilla? Capovilla himself offered no such "conclusion" because he did not wish to make a fool of himself. How could the two envelopes be the same document, when what Bertone produced is manifestly *not* the annotated, sealed and resealed envelope to which Capovilla so clearly and unequivocally testified? De Carli's assertion was a brazen falsehood, yet Borelli seems quite prepared to make it his own. It would not be unfair to suggest that perhaps Borelli aspires to De Carli's role: that of lay friend of the powerful prelate, willing to curry the prelate's favor by providing an unquestioningly credulous defense of a crumbling "official version" of events.

A non-existent "retraction"

Given the devastating impact of Capovilla's testimony and the evidence he had revealed in the form of his "Capovilla envelope," Bertone and his collaborators had no choice but to attempt to obtain a retraction from the Archbishop. But they failed to do so, obtaining only the aforementioned heavily edited interview by De Carli used in the September 2007 telecast, wherein Capovilla not only never denies what he said to Paolini, but *confirms* the existence of the "Capovilla envelope."

Yet, here again, Borelli seems all too eager to declare the case closed. Citing the De Carli interview, Borelli contends that Capovilla was "interpellated [questioned] precisely" about the existence of two different texts when De Carli asked him this artfully ambiguous question: "The text that you read [*which text?*] corresponds to that [*why not simply is that?*] which was presented to the world in June 2000 by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger and by Monsignor Tarcisio Bertone?" Capovilla answered just as ambiguously: "But of course! 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 [the same as what?].*"

Now, besides the artful wording of the question and the answer, notice the evasive "I don't recall it word for word" and "the central nucleus is the same." The *central nucleus* is the same? Surely something is being revealed here other than a simple answer to a simple question that was never asked: Is the text of the vision published by the Vatican on June 26, 2000 *the one and only text of the Third Secret that Pope John read* during his reign? Yes or no?

Borelli also cites De Carli's artfully worded question: "Can we affirm, after what you have said, that the secret read by John XXIII is not the 'Fourth Secret,' but is, simply, the Secret published and discussed by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith?" To which Capovilla answered by *not* answering: "When I heard talk of a 'Fourth Secret' I was amazed. It had never passed through my head that there exists a fourth secret. No one has said that to me, neither have I affirmed anything of that kind." Notice that Capovilla's answer does not

dated March 6, 1967.

really address the question, but rather subtly deflects it by speaking only of his reaction to talk of a “Fourth Secret.” He never actually says *yes* to the proposition that the “secret read by John XXIII... is simply the Secret published and discussed by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.”

What is going on here? The astute reader will recognize that De Carli’s questions and Capovilla’s answers are a dance of ambiguity that carefully navigates around the real issue. Socci has never suggested that the vision of “the Bishop dressed in white” is not an authentic *part* of the Third Secret, or that it is not *one* of the texts Pope John read. Nor does Socci claim there is literally a “Fourth Secret of Fatima,” but rather that there is a second text completing the Third Secret. The real issue, rather, has always been the one both De Carli and Capovilla conspicuously avoided during the interview: Did Archbishop Capovilla tell Solideo Paolini “Exactly so!” in response to his question whether there are two different texts pertaining to the Third Secret, one of which was contained in the never-produced “Capovilla envelope”?

Most significantly, at no time during the interview by De Carli, nor at any other time before or since, did Capovilla deny his revelations to Paolini. Even more significantly, De Carli *never asked him to do so*, even though Socci had placed the Archbishop’s revelations before the world in his book and the De Carli interview would have been the ideal opportunity to negate Paolini’s account, if it were false. But then, the Archbishop could hardly deny outright that he had affirmed to Paolini there are two envelopes and two texts comprising the Secret, because he knows quite well that there are. That is why neither he nor De Carli could even *mention* Paolini during the interview Borelli wants us to believe has settled the whole controversy.

In this connection consider carefully Capovilla’s evasive locutions in response to the questions De Carli did ask: he does not recall the text he read “word for word,” but its “central nucleus” is the same as that of the vision. Something is very fishy here. Thanks to the publication of *TMF*, the *whole Catholic world* would have known *every word* in the text of the vision by the time of the De Carli interview. Thus it is hardly credible that Capovilla, of all people, would suffer from a lack of memory about precisely what the text says, when all he had to do to refresh his recollection was to pick up a copy of *TMF*, which no doubt was in his possession. The dubious memory lapse and the vague but telling reference to a “central nucleus” clearly suggest that the Archbishop was being “strategically” imprecise about which text or texts he read and what he learned about the Secret during the reign of John XXIII, as compared with what the Vatican published in 2000. Notice that, accordingly, De Carli never asked the Archbishop specifically: “Do you deny that there is a text which accompanies the vision and explains it in the Virgin’s own words?” or “Is there one, and *only one*, text of the Third Secret, that being the vision published in 2000?” or other such precise questions. The conspicuous avoidance of *any* question that would require a categorical affirmation that there is only *one* text of the Third Secret—the text of the vision and *no other*—cannot be an accident, given that everyone involved knew that the burning issue is precisely whether there is an unpublished companion text *whose existence Capovilla himself had admitted to Paolini*. For that matter, nowhere in his suspiciously unrecorded “interviews” of Sister Lucia did Cardinal Bertone ever ask the seer *any* of the questions that begged to be answered, such as: “What follows the ‘etc’ in the words of Our Lady recorded in your Fourth Memoir?” or “Is there a text containing the words of Our Lady which accompanies and explains the text of the vision of the Bishop dressed in white?” It is impossible to believe that in the midst of a raging controversy they were in a position to resolve definitively by simply posing the right questions, both Bertone and De Carli innocently “forgot” to do so every time they had the chance. *Another revelation by Capovilla*. Here I must mention further key facts Borelli overlooks. As Borelli admits, Socci and Paolini “were prevented from entering the meeting at the Urbanianum”—that is, the

auditorium where the September 2007 telecast was conducted. This is but another suspicious circumstance pointing to “the secret still hidden.” But Borelli fails to mention that Socci and Paolini were *physically ejected* from the premises by security guards after Bertone had ducked any questions from Socci by entering the auditorium through a service entrance. One of the questions Socci had wanted to ask Bertone before he was thrown out of the building was the one that Bertone (to recall Borelli’s telling phrase) “did not wish to ask” Lucia:

Your Eminence, are you ready to swear on the Gospel that the famous phrase of the Madonna contained in the Third Secret of Fatima noted by the Vatican in 2000—“In Portugal, the dogma of the Faith will always be preserved etc”, said the Madonna—is not followed by anything else?⁷⁶

Borelli also neglects to mention another explosive development that night: Before the guards threw Socci and Paolini out on the street, Socci was able to play for the assembled journalists an audiotape of Capovilla’s statements to Paolini during another meeting between the two on June 21, 2007. As the major Italian daily *Il Giornale* reported, on the tape Capovilla is heard to state: “Besides the four pages [of the vision] there was also something else, an attachment, yes.” This “attachment” to the vision might well explain why, when pressed by De Carli during the televised interview, Capovilla would not say simply that the vision is the Third Secret, but rather that “I don’t recall it word for word, but the central nucleus is the same.” The attachment might well also explain why, as revealed by Bertone in *Last Visionary*, Lucia declared during the April 2000 “authentication” meeting: “Yes, these are my *sheets* of paper... *they* are the *sheets* that I used,” even though Borelli insists that the vision involves only *one* sheet of paper folded in half.

As the reporter from the respected Italian newspaper *Il Giornale* concluded, Capovilla’s revelation of the “attachment” to the vision “*would confirm the thesis of the existence of a second sheet with the interpretation of the Secret. The mystery, and above all the polemics, will continue.*”⁷⁷ Especially since Bertone has conspicuously failed to deny the existence of the attachment, despite the very prominent publicity given to it and the challenge thrown before him by *Il Giornale’s* comment that the mystery will continue.

The mystery will indeed continue. But not for the author of the “friendly reflections.” For him, the mystery is solved despite a mountain of contrary evidence staring him in the face.

A summary of the evidence Borelli ignores

Here it would be opportune to summarize some key points in the evidence for the existence of a second text pertaining to the Third Secret, which I have only sketched here but developed fully in *The Secret Still Hidden*:

1. Sister Lucia revealed that a text of the Secret is in the form of a letter to the Bishop of Leiria, but the text of 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 text of 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 text of the vision contains not a word from Her.
4. Our Lady explains everything in the vision contained in the first part of the Great

⁷⁶ Paolo Rodari, “On the Road to Fatima, Socci is Stopped by the Swiss Guards,” *Il Riformista*, September 22, 2007.

⁷⁷ “The Fourth Secret of Fatima Does Not Exist,” *Il Giornale*, September 22, 2007.

Secret, but we are asked to believe that there is absolutely no explanation from Her concerning the text of 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 “logically—although I must say nothing—would have to be the continuation” of the words ‘In Portugal, the dogma of the Faith will always be preserved etc.,” but the text of the vision does not contain that logical continuation of the Virgin’s words.
6. The Vatican-initiated press release from 1960, announcing suppression of the Third Secret, describes the suppressed text as “*the letter*” that “will never be opened,” containing “*the words* which Our Lady confided as a secret to the three little shepherds...”, but the text of the vision is not a letter and contains no words 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 text of the vision spans 62 lines, and in it the Virgin does not tell Sister Lucia 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 untenable “attempt” to explain that “maybe [!]” Ottaviani was “mistaken.”
9. A text of the Third 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 Third Secret in two different years of 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 establish his “opinion” as fact by simply consulting innumerable sources at his disposal, *including the Pope himself*—an omission clearly suggesting that Bertone knew the report was true and that his “opinion” was false.
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 comment or decide” what to do about the text.
16. On June 27, 1963, two years before the “official account” claims he read the Third

Secret, Pope Paul VI opened the Capovilla envelope, which was retrieved from John XXIII's Barbarigo desk, read its contents, inquired of Capovilla about the notations on the outside, resealed the envelope, and said nothing further about it to Capovilla.

17. When asked by Solideo Paolini in 2006 whether 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, 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* (fogli) 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 shown to the public.
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 Succi 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.

Borelli’s declaration that the existence of two different but related texts of the Secret “has no support in the known facts”—none, mind you!—is comical. Borelli simply does not have a mastery of the many facts of this controversy. He should not even have written on the subject, much less attempted to “clarify” it, until he had studied it sufficiently to offer an informed opinion.

§ 15. A grave misrepresentation.

It is typical of Borelli’s superficial approach that near the end of his “friendly reflections” he carelessly misrepresents Socci’s entire position. First, he quotes Socci’s statement in *Fourth Secret* that “Naturally these are hypotheses. But that there is a part of the Secret still not revealed, and deemed ‘untellable,’ is certain.” Based on this lone quotation, Borelli falsely represents that Socci admits he has built his whole case on hypotheses from which he illogically deduces certainty. As Borelli writes, mockingly and misquoting Socci: “*These are hypotheses... but it is certain.*”

But this is only a final sophistical flourish. For in context, what Socci is really saying is not that the existence of a suppressed text as such is based on hypotheses—that much is morally certain from all the evidence—but rather that the idea that the text *specifically foretells World War III*, as part of a “sequence” of world wars, is based on hypotheses. As Socci writes in the book I had the privilege (and the challenge) of translating from his elegant Italian:

In effect, the Secret confided by the Madonna in the apparition of July 13, 1917 could possibly follow this sequence of events: She begins the first part by asking for the recitation of the Rosary because the war—World War I—will end soon. Then, in the second part, She explains that if Her appeal is not heeded and there is not a turning toward God, “during the reign of Pius XI” there will commence “another worse” war. (That is exactly what happened: the Second World War.) Perhaps the third part of the Secret—among other things—foretells a Third World War into which

humanity will plummet if it remains obstinate in its way of sin. In the end, the vision which forms a part of the Third Secret shows precisely a scene of ruin and destruction.

*This involves an hypotheses, naturally. But that there is a part of the Secret not revealed and considered “unspeakable” is certain.*⁷⁸

I suppose the most charitable thing one could say here is that Borelli, reading in haste, missed the context and leapt to the wrong conclusion. But how is it that every single one of Borelli’s “friendly reflections” is so unfriendly to Socci’s well-documented investigation, yet so unflinchingly supportive of Bertone’s manifestly dubious account?

In the end, the “friendly reflections” are indeed friendly to Bertone, but not to the party Borelli purports to assist with an “effort to clarify” that, as I have shown, is actually an effort to obscure inescapable inferences from incontestable facts and even the direct admission of a still-living eyewitness, who has never retracted that admission.

§ 16. A final admission that something is missing.

In the sixteenth and final section of his “friendly reflections,” Borelli returns to where he began: with an implicit admission that the Vatican’s disclosure is incomplete, because the vision standing alone requires “interpretation.” He calls for “lucid and opportune commentaries” on the vision.

With an air of royal condescension, Borelli deigns to bestow his regal praise on some of what Socci has written: “we are especially pleased with his reference to the reign of Mary...” But, giving Socci a rhetorical pat on the head—“we cannot fail to praise the undeniable dialectic gifts of Antonio Socci”—he issues the royal lament that Socci did not apply his “dialectic gifts” to “the interpretation of the *revealed part* [!] of the Third Secret” and “the extremely significant symbolism of the vision which *is* the Third Secret.” Socci, he declares, “would have done better by explaining the Third Secret *just as it was revealed* [!], thus benefitting the faithful who have been unable to grasp the profound meaning of its content,” but instead has drawn the faithful into “a futile hope of new disclosures,” thus provoking “a deeply lamentable loss for the cause of Fatima!”

Now this is curious: Having reached the very end of an article that tries to negate all the evidence for a second text of the Secret, Borelli himself speaks of “the *revealed part* of the Third Secret” and “the Third Secret just as it was revealed.” Is he himself now implying that something has been withheld? It is impossible to say, as the “friendly reflections” end here.

But, by the very suggestion that Socci should devote his gifts to “the interpretation of the revealed part of the Third Secret... benefitting the faithful who have been *unable to grasp* the profound meaning of its content,” Borelli inadvertently demonstrates the truth. For in the first two parts of the Great Secret, Our Lady of Fatima confided a message that even three illiterate shepherd children could understand, yet Borelli now supposes that we need literary “interpreters” for the vision of “the Bishop dressed in white,” as if Our Lady suddenly decided to become a metaphorical obscurantist when it came to the Third Secret. This, obviously, is impossible.

And notice that here Borelli, forgetting himself, contradicts his own earlier confident assertion that the vision is “perfectly clear.” So, which is it: perfectly clear, or so difficult to understand that the faithful “are unable to grasp the profound meaning of its content” without Antonio Socci’s assistance? Standing alone, the vision really *is* impossible to grasp

⁷⁸ *The Fourth Secret of Fatima*, English ed., pp. 161-162; popular ed., pp. 110-111; Italian ed., pp. 172-173.

fully—“difficult to decipher,” to recall Cardinal Ratzinger’s words. And that is why, in the end, even Borelli implicitly concedes that we must be lacking an explanation from the Virgin Herself.

For, as Socci would be the first to say, it is not up to him, or Borelli, or a Vatican prelate, or anyone else, for that matter, to “interpret” the Third Secret of Fatima. If the faithful have been unable to grasp the Secret, it is only because they have been deprived of the words of Our Lady that make its meaning clear. To contend, as Borelli does, that Our Lady left the Church and the world with only an obscure text that Socci or a Vatican functionary must “interpret” for us more than ninety years later, is to make a mockery of the Third Secret, reducing it—and by implication the Message of Fatima as a whole—to a matter of speculation by every Tom, Dick and Harry who has an opinion on the subject, including Borelli.

Yet, in spite of himself, Borelli *has* clarified the debate over the Third Secret. His failed attempt to refute Socci and the “Fatimists” has made it clearer than ever that they are right. His closing call for “lucid and opportune commentaries” on the vision of the “Bishop dressed in white” confirms that the vision as it stands is in *need* of elucidation, as if the Blessed Virgin would have failed to provide this Herself, leaving us to our own devices.

But Our Lady certainly did not abandon us in the deplorable situation Borelli seems so willing to accept. Because the Third Secret comes from the Mother of God, who would never confuse us or leave us in the dark, the Secret in its entirety must be as lucid and as comprehensible as was the rest of the Message of Fatima to the three simple children who first received it by God’s command. That the vision alone is not such can only mean that something is missing, and that in consequence the Church and all of humanity are facing the gravest of perils for lack of the fullness of what Our Lady’s precious message-warning conveys to a rebellious world on the brink of an apocalypse. In failing to recognize this, the author of the “friendly reflections” joins the ranks of those who march confidently toward disaster.

APPENDIX

Borelli on the Consecration of Russia

Like his attempt to “clarify” the Third Secret controversy, Borelli’s discussion of the Consecration of Russia is a study in confusion. In the “friendly reflections” Borelli seems to suggest that the Consecration has yet to be done, praising Socci for his “description of the painful, reluctant and incomplete heed of the ecclesiastical hierarchy for several decades to the requests of Our Lady of Fatima, especially regarding the consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart.”

Further, in *FPF* (pp. 137-138) Borelli admits that Sister Lucia consistently maintained throughout her life that what Our Lady requested was a public Consecration of Russia by *name*, conducted by the Pope together with the Catholic bishops of the world, and that therefore the two attempted consecrations by Pope John Paul II, on May 13, 1982 and March 25, 1984, did not suffice because Russia was not mentioned in either ceremony and the worldwide episcopate did not participate. Here are some examples of Lucia’s unwavering testimony on this point:

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.’”⁷⁹

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, Russia will not be able to convert, nor will the world have peace.”⁸⁰ 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.

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

⁷⁹ William Thomas Walsh, *Our Lady of Fatima*, (Image-Doubleday, New York, *Imprimatur* 1947) p. 221 (emphasis in the original).

⁸⁰ *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*, 517, Rome, 1970; see also *Fatima: Tragedy and Triumph*, pp. 21 and 37.

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)."⁸¹

Sister Lucia confirmed this testimony in a handwritten letter to Father Umberto, which the priest also published. 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*

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.⁸²

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."⁸³ Attention: Sister Lucia would not publicly reveal the truth in this matter *because she did not have permission from the Holy See*. Her sense of obedience was stronger than her inclination to speak out. This would help explain why Sister Lucia might have been intimidated into silence or apparent capitulations attributed to her by Bertone.

1984: On Thursday, March 22, 1984, two days before the consecration of the world by Pope John Paul II, 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 consecration cannot have a decisive character."⁸⁴

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."⁸⁵

⁸¹ *L'Osservatore Romano*, May 12, 1982.

⁸² *Fatima: Tragedy and Triumph*, p. 165.

⁸³ Reported within an article by Father Pierre Caillon of Centre Saint Jean 61500 Sees, (Orne) France. This article was published by the monthly periodical *Fidélité Catholique*, B.P. 217-56402, Auray Cedex, France. English translation from *The Fatima Crusader*, Issue 13-14, (Oct.-Dec., 1983) p. 3.

⁸⁴ *Fatima: Tragedy and Triumph*, pp. 167-168.

⁸⁵ *Sol de Fatima*, September 1985.

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.⁸⁶

Having admitted Sister Lucia's testimony in this regard, however, Borelli abruptly does an about-face and declares that "Since about the middle of 1989, however, Sister Lucia came to recognize the validity of the consecration that John Paul made on 25 March 1984." But in support of what he himself calls "Lucia's brusque change of position" which has "left the experts perplexed," Borelli relies on then Archbishop Bertone's citation in *TMF* of the roundly debunked "letter of the seer of 8 November 1989 in which she affirms categorically: 'Yes, [the consecration] is done as Our Lady requested.'"

This purported "letter of the seer," whose addressee (a Mr. Noelker) was never mentioned in *TMF*, has long since been exposed as a fake. Generated by a computer at the dawn of the personal computer age, it contained a blatant error: a statement by "Sister Lucia" that Paul VI consecrated the world to the Immaculate Heart during his visit to Fatima on May 13, 1967, when in truth he had consecrated nothing at all on that occasion. Sister Lucia, who was present throughout the Pope's visit, would hardly have made such a mistake. Nor was it credible that an elderly cloistered nun, who had written thousands of letters by hand over her lifetime, would suddenly switch to a word processor at age 80 to peck out a half-page note to a Mr. Noelker, especially when even many business offices in Spain were without personal computers at that time.⁸⁷

Still more curious: the dubious "letter of 8 November 1989" was *the only evidence* Bertone cited even though, as *TMF* mentions, Bertone had just interviewed Sister Lucia on April 27, 2000, only two months earlier, and thus could have obtained her direct testimony on this question at that time—or indeed at any other time. The failure to cite *any* direct testimony by Sister Lucia, when such testimony was readily obtainable, speaks volumes. And, note well: Bertone *never asked Sister Lucia to authenticate the "Letter of 8 November 1989" at any time*, even though he had ready access to the seer until her death in 2005.

To Catholics who know the facts, it is not surprising that Bertone had been forced to rely entirely on a non-authenticated and previously debunked 11-year-old machine "letter" to an unidentified addressee. That purported letter was the only thing Bertone could pit against a lifetime of contrary testimony by Sister Lucia. Yet Borelli, who certainly knows the facts, if only from having read Socci's book, now reports as dispositive evidence of Lucia's "brusque change of position" a letter that objectively lacks all credibility.

Then again, Borelli seems to retreat from the suggestion that the controversy over the Consecration of Russia is settled, pronouncing the matter "too complex and extensive for us to resolve here," and noting that Sister Lucia was "expressing a personal opinion and not transmitting a supernatural revelation."

Indeed, Borelli also seems to call into question Bertone's claim in a 2004 interview that Lucia had a special apparition in which "Our Lady made clear to her" that the 1984 ceremony "was accepted with good will"—whatever that means. As Borelli points out, Bertone made no mention of this special apparition in *TMF*, published in 2000, wherein, as just noted, Bertone cited only the bogus "letter of 8 November 1989." What is more, in his communiqué concerning the interview of November 2001, Bertone declared that *Lucia had not had any*

⁸⁶ This testimony of Sister Lucia was reported in the early August (1987) edition of *Para Ti* published in Argentina. See Father Nicholas Gruner, *World Enslavement or Peace ... It's Up to the Pope* (The Fatima Crusader, Fort Erie, 1988), pp. 212-213.

⁸⁷ Flatly contradicting himself, Bertone would admit seven years later that Sister Lucia "never worked with the computer." See Antonio Socci, "Dear Cardinal Bertone....", loc. cit.

new apparitions: “To those who speak and write of new revelations she said: ‘There is no truth in this. If I had received new revelations I would have told no-one, but I would have communicated them directly to the Holy Father.’”

Here is Socci’s unsparingly frank assessment of Bertone’s sudden claim of a new apparition in which Our Lady “approved” the 1984 ceremony:

The motive was clear. Monsignor Bertone, in that meeting [in 2001] had to extract from Sister Lucia the approval of the consecration of 1984, despite the declaration that there had been no new revelations... [A]fter the death of Sister Lucia the ‘unpublished news’ of the 1984 apparition jumped out of the top hat.... The ‘unpublished news’ of the apparition of 1984, however, contradicted what was said [allegedly!] by Sister Lucia in 1984.⁸⁸

Here too, Borelli (unlike Socci) seems unperturbed by the evidence of fabrication. He simply opines that “it would be entirely advisable that this decisive fact be clarified with His Eminence [Bertone], who holds one of the highest posts in the Church’s hierarchy as Secretary of State.” (*FPF*, p. 141) And what if no “clarification” is forthcoming? No doubt Borelli would tell us to forget the whole thing, just as he advises us to forget the missing words of the Mother of God “at the very heart” of the Third Secret of Fatima.

And so, Borelli’s discussion of the controversy over the Consecration of Russia ends in the same way as his “friendly reflections” on the controversy over the Third Secret: in confusion, obscurity, and uncertainty, but with the Vatican Secretary of State’s plainly incredible version of the facts left unchallenged while the plainly vindicated “Fatimist” position is called into question. I doubt this is a mere coincidence.

⁸⁸ *The Fourth Secret of Fatima*, p. 124.