

Various Documents

Father Ferreira's Public Letter Regarding the Fatima Apparitions

Father Ferreira, the parish priest of St. Anthony's church in Fatima, was suspected of helping the Administrator of Ourem to kidnap Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta on August 13, 1917. This was a plausible theory, given that Father Ferreira was skeptical of and relatively negative towards the events at the Cova da Iria. Moreover, the Administrator, Arturo Santos, had taken the children to Father Ferreira, and kidnapped them as they left the rectory after talking to the priest.

After a short appearance by Our Lady on August 13, a large, angry crowd confronted Father Ferreira with their suspicions. In hindsight, it does not appear that Father Ferreira was involved in the kidnapping. He was merely used as a foil by the Administrator to seize the children.

But tempers remained hot, and Father Ferreira was threatened numerous times. This prompted his public letter, in which he sought to exonerate himself from complicity in the kidnapping. In doing so, he inadvertently affirmed the apparitions, something he had never done, publicly or privately. The letter was published in the *Ordem*, of Lisbon, and the *Ouriense*, of Ourem.

TO BELIEVERS AND NON-BELIEVERS:

Reluctantly, as a Catholic priest, I beg to make known and to declare the following before all those who may know or hear rumors – infamous and damaging to my reputation as parish priest – that I was an accomplice in the imprisonment of three children in my parish who assert that they have seen Our Lady.

I make this statement on the authority of the parents and for the satisfaction of the 5,000 to 6,000 persons who came many miles and with great sacrifice to see and speak with them. I deny this infamous and insidious calumny, and declare before the whole world that I had nothing whatever to do, directly or indirectly, with this impious and sacrilegious action.

The Mayor (Arturo Santos, also known as the Administrator, and "the Tinsmith") did not confide his intentions to me. And if it was providential – which it was – that he acted secretly and without any resistance on the part of

the children, it was no less than providential that the excitement to which this diabolical rumor gave rise was calmed, or the parish would certainly have had to mourn the death of its priest as an accomplice in the crime. That the Devil did not succeed in this, was due certainly to the Virgin Mother. The Mayor, after a protracted interrogation in their own houses, had the children brought to mine under the pretext of collecting more accurate information about the secret which they had refused to reveal to anyone. Then, at the time when he judged it opportune, he ordered them into the carriage, and telling the parents that he was taking them to the Cova da Iria, in fact took them to Vila Nova de Ourem. Why did he choose my house from which to act? In order to escape the consequences of his action? In order that the people should riot, as they did, and accuse me of complicity? Or for some other reason?

I do not know. I only know that I deny all responsibility in the matter, and leave judgment to God. No one can prevent a work of God.

Thousands of eyewitnesses can attest that the presence of the children was not necessary for the Queen of Heaven to manifest Her power. They themselves will attest to the extraordinary phenomena which occurred to confirm their faith. But now, it is not a trio of children, but thousands of people of all ages, classes and conditions who have seen for themselves. If my absence from the Cova, as parish priest, gave offense to believers, my presence as a witness would have been no less objectionable to unbelievers. The Blessed Virgin has no need of the parish priest, in order to manifest Her goodness and the enemies of religion need not tarnish their benevolence by attributing the faith of the people to the presence or otherwise of the parish priest. Faith is a gift of God and not of the priests. This is the true motive of my absence and apparent indifference to such a sublime and marvelous event. This is why I have not replied to the thousand questions and letters, which have been directed to me. The enemy is not asleep, but like a roaring lion. The Apostles were not the first to announce the Resurrection. I abstain from any narration of the above-mentioned facts on account of the length of this letter, and because the Press will most certainly have given its own accounts.

I am, yours faithfully,

Fr. Manuel Marques Ferreira

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Note: Father Joseph Pelletier remarks: "Notwithstanding the tone of this letter, all authors agree that the pastor did not believe in the apparitions. If the letter is read carefully it will be found that it does not contain one single explicit affirmation of belief in the reality of the apparitions. It was carefully worded because of the explosive nature of the situation, so as not to indicate his disbelief" (Pelletier, *op. cit.*, p. 152, fn 5).

Masonic Pamphlet circa 1918

To all Liberal Portuguese. Reaction let loose!!

The Association for Civil Registration and the Portuguese Federation of Free-Thinkers energetically protest against the ridiculous comedy of Fatima.

Citizens!

As if the pernicious propaganda of reactionaries were not enough, we now see a miracle trotted out in order further to degrade the people into fanaticism and superstition. There has been staged...an indecorous comedy in Fatima at which thousands of people have assisted a ridiculous spectacle in which the simple people have been ingeniously deceived by means of collective suggestion, into a belief in a supposed Apparition of the Mother of Jesus of Nazareth to three children jockeyed into this shameful spectacle for the commercial purposes of clerical reaction!

As if, however, the declarations of these poor little dupes who affirm they have seen a "Virgin" which, however, nobody else can see and hear, were not sufficient, it is affirmed, or rather invented, that the sun, at a certain hour on 13th October, 1917 (on the eighth anniversary of the assassination of Francisco Ferrer) and in the height of the 20th century, was seen to dance a fandango in the clouds!

This, citizens, is a miserable and retrograde attempt to plunge the Portuguese people once more into the dense darkness of past times which have departed never to return. The Republic and those citizens who are charged with the noble and thankless task of guiding it in the glorious paths of Civilization and Progress, cannot consent to the degradation of the people into fanaticism and credulity, for this would be an unpardonable failing in their primal duty, not only towards their country but to Humanity as a whole. It is therefore our duty to demand from the public authorities the most energetic and immediate precaution against the shameless plan by which reaction seeks to plunge the people once more into mediaevalism...

What shall be our means of cooperation with those from whom we claim the action necessary for the end we envisage? An intensive and tenacious propaganda, which

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will raise the mentality of our co-citizens to the realms of Truth, Reason and Science, convincing them that nothing can alter the laws of Nature, and that the pretended miracles are nothing but miserable tricks to abuse the credulity which is the child of ignorance...

Let professors in the schools and colleges educate their pupils in a rational manner, liberating them from religious preconceptions as from all others, and we shall have prepared a generation for the morrow, happier because more worthy of happiness.

Let us, then, liberate ourselves and cleanse our minds, not only from foolish beliefs in such gross and laughable tricks as Fatima, but more especially from any credence in the supernatural and a pretended Deus Omnipotente, omniscient and omni-everything, instrument of the subtle imaginations of rogues who wish to capture popular credulity for their purposes.

Citizens!

LONG LIVE THE REPUBLIC!

DOWN WITH REACTION!

LONG LIVE LIBERTY!

An Interview with the Tinsmith

Here is author Father Joseph Pelletier's account of his interview with Arturo Santos (*op. cit.*, pp. 153-154).

"I met the Administrator, Senhor Arturo de Oliveira Santos, at Vila Nova de Ourem on Sunday, July 30, 1950. By way of self-introduction he said: 'I am a Christian but don't go to Mass or Confession.' With him and another man, a member of the actual district administration, I visited the town hall where the three children of Fatima had suffered so much. The Tinsmith pointed out his old office where he had questioned the children. But he would not admit having put the seers in prison. Indeed, he always quickly diverted the conversation whenever the topic of the prison was mentioned. However, the government agent, seeing my interest in the matter, took me alone and showed the room directly across the hall from the Tinsmith's old office — which was used as a prison in 1917.

"While in his old office, which is still being used as an office by the actual district administration (circa 1950), the Tinsmith pointed to a recent copy of an Ourem newspaper which was on a desk. On the front page is carried a short article he had written. The article was signed *Joao de Ourem*, 'John of Ourem.'

"By the man's face which carried a two-days beard, his shabby suit, and neglected looking house for which he felt obliged to apologize, I gathered the impression that he was not very prosperous.

"I took several pictures of the Tinsmith, both in black and white and in color. He asked me to send him some of the pictures, and gave me a Lisboa address for that purpose. What he does in Lisboa I do not know. I talked with him for about thirty minutes in all. In the course of this time he rode with me in a taxi from the town hall to his own home, the same home where the children slept and ate when he kidnapped them.

"I did not go into his house but he entered it and returned with two pictures that he showed me. When he talked it was with an affected air of grandeur, and I could not help feeling sorry for the poor fellow who seems to live in the past, when he was really somebody. People told me that I was extremely fortunate in finding the man so friendly and communicative because as a rule he absolutely refuses to talk of the Fatima events to anyone and he refuses with equal firmness to pose

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for pictures. Incidentally, he said that he was known all over the world 'and in Russia too.' I got the impression that it would not take too many prayers to bring the man back into the Church."

The Case of Father Fuentes

The following is the translation of the Imprimatur of Father Fuentes' bishop for the (Spanish) original of the May 22, 1958 conference he gave at the Mexican Motherhouse of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart and of Our Lady of Guadalupe, wherein he revealed the contents of his 1957 interview with Sister Lucia.

April 21, 1959

With great pleasure I give our authorization and permission for the printing of the conference called "The Message of Our Lady of Fatima" which the Reverend Doctor Augustine Fuentes has preached in various places in his capacity as the Roman postulator of the children of Fatima.

(Seal)(signed) Emmanuel Pius, Archbishop of Veracruz¹

The American publication *Fatima Findings* sought to publish an English translation of Fr. Fuentes' conference. They received a letter from Fr. Fuentes attesting to the accuracy of the translation, and the following letter (April 8, 1959) from Abbot M. Columban Hawkins:

Reverend and dear Father Ryan:

I am sending you herewith for publication the text of the conference by Father Fuentes. Father Fuentes is a Mexican priest in good standing in the Archdiocese of Veracruz. Besides being the Roman postulator of the cause of the two seers of Fatima, he is also postulator for several Mexican causes (martyrs of the Masonic persecution by President Calles).

With the approval of the hierarchy he has preached in various Mexican dioceses, including that of Mexico City, alerting the people to hearken to Our Lady of Fatima's requests; especially in view of this most recent message of Sister Lucia which she communicated to him in December 1957. He was privileged to have this interview by virtue of his office as Roman postulator for the cause of the beatification of the children of Fatima, Jacinta and Francisco Marto...

Devotedly yours,

Rt. Rev. M. Columban Hawkins, O.C.S.O.²

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After Father Fuentes' interview with Sister Lucia gained wide publicity, various apocryphal and exaggerated accounts of his interview were published which distorted the content of his interview. The anonymous press release from the Coimbra chancery, dated July 2, 1959, claimed Fr. Fuentes fabricated the interview, and condemned his interview and the apocryphal literature (which he was not responsible for) without distinguishing between the two. The press release reads in part:

"Father Augustine Fuentes, postulator of the cause of beatification of the seers of Fatima, Francisco and Jacinta, paid Sister Lucia a visit in the Carmel of Coimbra and spoke with her exclusively about matters concerning the process in question. But having returned to Mexico...that priest allowed himself to make sensational declarations of an apocalyptic, eschatological and prophetic character, which he affirms to have heard from the very mouth of Sister Lucia...

"To calm all those who...are alarmed and remain frightened by the cataclysms which, according to that documentation, will fall on the world in 1960 (a reference to apocryphal literature Father Fuentes did not write)...the diocesan curia of Coimbra makes public the words of Lucia, in response to some questions which were asked her, by legitimate authority:

"Father Fuentes has spoken with me as postulator of the cause of beatification of the servants of God, Jacinta and Francisco Marto. We have dealt only with matters which concern that subject. For the rest to which he refers, it is neither exact nor true. What (sic) I deplore, for I do not understand what good we can do to souls with things which are not based on God Who is the truth. I know nothing, and consequently I could not say anything about such chastisements which they have falsely attributed to me..."

The Diocesan Curia of Coimbra, July 2, 1959³

* * *

Although the Mexican Archbishops of Veracruz and Guadalajara defended Father Fuentes, his position as postulator was terminated, and on March 19, 1961, Father Luis Kondor, an Hungarian emigrant of the Society of the

Sister Lucia

Divine Word, was appointed to replace Father Fuentes.

Father Alonso, the Church-appointed historian of Fatima, initially took the side of the Coimbra chancery in the controversy. But in 1976, perhaps after speaking with Sister Lucia on the matter, it was evident Father Alonso had changed his mind:

“Who was right in this lamentable affair? Father Fuentes, the Coimbra diocesan spokesman, or Lucia? We would like to offer an explanation, giving our own modest opinion:

“What Father Fuentes says in the *genuine* text of his conference to the Mexican religious community in December, 1957, corresponds no doubt in its *essentials* to what he heard during his visit to Sister Lucia, for although the report is mingled with the preacher’s own oratorical embellishments, and although it is adjusted to conform to a literary pattern, these texts say nothing that Sister Lucia had not said in her numerous published writings. Perhaps the principal defect lay in the presentation of these texts *as coming from Lucia’s own mouth*, and formally and expressly given as ‘a message from her’ to the world. Sister Lucia did not have this intention.

“The genuine text, *the only one that can be justly attributed to Father Fuentes*, does not, in my opinion, contain anything that could give rise to the condemnatory notice issued from Coimbra. On the contrary, it contains a teaching most suited to edify the piety of Christians.

“The diocese of Coimbra, and through it Sister Lucia, have made no distinction between the genuine text which can alone be justly attributed to Father Fuentes, and the vast ‘documentation’ to which we have already referred. An error of judgment was thus committed, for everything was included in one single all-embracing condemnation.”⁴

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Father Luis Kondor also had the opportunity to speak with Sister Lucia concerning the Father Fuentes interview. In 1990 Kondor said only: “Father Fuentes had been blamed for his indiscretions.”⁵ Father Kondor did not say Fuentes made things up, or lied. He said Fuentes was “indiscreet”, a reference to his publicizing the interview between he and Sister Lucia. So it seems, many years later, Father Fuentes is vindicated of the charges of the Coimbra Curia. As for Sister

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Lucia's supposed affirmation of the Curia's charges against Father Fuentes, it is reasonable to conclude they are a fabrication.

Notes

1. As reproduced in *Fatima Findings*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, June 1959.
2. Ibid.
3. As quoted in FIJWE, Book Four, op. cit., pp. 30-31.
4. Alonso, op. cit., pp. 112-113, emphasis in original.
5. CRC 268, October 1990, p. 9, an interview of Kondor by David Boyce.

The Father Fuentes Interview

“I wish only to tell you about the last conversation which I had with Sister Lucia on the 26th of December last year (1957). I met her in her convent. She was very sad, very pale and emaciated. She said to me,”

“No One Has Paid Any Attention”

“Father, the Most Holy Virgin is very sad because no one has paid any attention to Her Message, neither the good nor the bad. The good continue on their way but without giving any importance to Her Message. The bad, not seeing the punishment of God actually falling upon them, continue their life of sin without even caring about the Message. But believe me, Father, God will chastise the world and this will be in a terrible manner. The punishment from Heaven is imminent.”

The Secret Not Revealed

“Father, how much time is there before 1960 arrives? It will be very sad for everyone, not one person will rejoice at all if beforehand the world does not pray and do penance. I am not able to give any other details because it is still a secret. According to the will of the Most Holy Virgin, only the Holy Father and the Bishop of Fatima are permitted to know the Secret, but they have chosen to not know it so that they would not be influenced.

“This is the third part of the Message of Our Lady which will remain secret until 1960.”

Russia, the Scourge of God

“Tell them, Father, that many times the Most Holy Virgin told my cousins Francisco and Jacinta, as well as myself, that many nations will disappear from the face of the earth. She said that Russia will be the instrument of chastisement chosen by Heaven to punish the whole world if we do not beforehand obtain the conversion of that poor nation.”

The “Decisive Battle” Between Mary and Satan: the Falling Away of Consecrated Souls and Priests

“Sister Lucia also told me: Father, the devil is in the mood

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for engaging in a decisive battle against the Blessed Virgin. And the devil knows what it is that most offends God and which in a short space of time will gain for him the greatest number of souls. Thus the devil does everything to overcome souls consecrated to God because in this way, the devil will succeed in leaving the souls of the faithful abandoned by their leaders, thereby the more easily will he seize them.

“That which afflicts the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Heart of Jesus is the fall of religious and priestly souls. The devil knows that religious and priests who fall away from their beautiful vocation drag numerous souls to hell ... The devil wishes to take possession of consecrated souls. He tries to corrupt them in order to lull to sleep the souls of laypeople and thereby lead them to final impenitence. He employs all tricks, even going so far as to suggest the delay of entrance into religious life. Resulting from this is the sterility of the interior life, and among the laypeople, coldness (lack of enthusiasm) regarding the subject of renouncing pleasures and the total dedication of themselves to God.”

That Which Sanctified Jacinta and Francisco

“Tell them also, Father, that my cousins Francisco and Jacinta sacrificed themselves because in all the apparitions of the Most Holy Virgin, they always saw Her very sad. She never smiled at us. This sadness, this anguish which we noted in Her, penetrated our souls. This sadness is caused by the offenses against God and the punishments which menace sinners. And so, we children did not know what to think except to invent various means of praying and making sacrifices.”

“The other thing which sanctified these children was to see the vision of hell.”

The Mission of Sister Lucia

“Father, that is why my mission is not to indicate to the world the material punishments which are certain to come if the world does not pray and do penance beforehand. No! My mission is to indicate to everyone the imminent danger we are in of losing our souls for all eternity if we remain obstinate in sin.”

The Urgency of Conversion

“Sister Lucia also said to me: Father, we should not wait for an appeal to the world to come from Rome on the part of the Holy Father, to do penance. Nor should we wait for the call to penance to come from our bishops in our diocese, nor from the religious congregations. No! Our Lord has already very often used these means and the world has not paid attention. That is why now, it is necessary for each one of us to begin to reform himself spiritually. Each person must not only save his own soul but also help all the souls that God has placed on our path.

“The devil does all in his power to distract us and to take away from us the love for prayer; we shall be saved together or we shall be damned together.”

Last Times

“Father, the Most Holy Virgin did not tell me that we are in the last times of the world but She made me understand this for three reasons.”

The Final Battle

“The first reason is because She told me that the devil is in the mood for engaging in a decisive battle against the Virgin. And a decisive battle is the final battle where one side will be victorious and the other side will suffer defeat. Also from now on we must choose sides. Either we are for God or we are for the devil. There is no other possibility.”

The Last Remedies

“The second reason is because She said to my cousins as well as to myself that God is giving two last remedies to the world. These are the Holy Rosary and Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. These are the last two remedies which signify that there will be no others.”

The Sin Against the Holy Spirit

“The third reason is because in the plans of Divine Providence, God always, before He is about to chastise the world, exhausts all other remedies. Now, when He sees that the world pays no attention whatsoever, then, as we say in our imperfect manner of speaking, He offers us with ‘certain fear’ the last means of salvation, His Most Holy Mother. It is

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with '*certain fear*' because if you despise and repulse this ultimate means we will not have any more forgiveness from Heaven because we will have committed a sin which the Gospel calls the sin against the Holy Spirit. This sin consists of openly rejecting with full knowledge and consent, the salvation which He offers. Let us remember that Jesus Christ is a very good Son and that He does not permit that we offend and despise His Most Holy Mother. We have recorded through many centuries of Church history the obvious testimony which demonstrates by the terrible chastisements which have befallen those who have attacked the honor of His Most Holy Mother how Our Lord Jesus Christ has always defended the Honor of His Mother."

Prayer and Sacrifice, and the Holy Rosary

"Sister Lucia told me: The two means to save the world are prayer and sacrifice.

"Regarding the Holy Rosary, Sister Lucia said: Look, Father, the Most Holy Virgin in these last times in which we live has given a new efficacy to the recitation of the Holy Rosary. She has given this efficacy to such an extent that there is no problem, no matter how difficult it is, whether temporal or above all, spiritual, in the personal life of each one of us, of our families, of the families of the world, or of the religious communities, or even of the life of peoples and nations, that cannot be solved by the Rosary. There is no problem, I tell you, no matter how difficult it is, that we cannot resolve by the prayer of the Holy Rosary. With the Holy Rosary, we will save ourselves. We will sanctify ourselves. We will console Our Lord and obtain the salvation of many souls."

Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

"Finally, devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Our Most Holy Mother, consists in considering Her as the seat of mercy, of goodness and of pardon and as the certain door by which we are to enter Heaven."

