

26. Letters and Memoirs (1930 - 1942)

The following Spring (May, 1930), Lucia wrote written responses to a brief interrogation concerning the apparitions at Pontevedra and Tuy. The interrogator was Father Gonçalves, her spiritual advisor. He forwarded Lucia's responses to Bishop da Silva, and found a way to get the substance of Lucia's answers to His Holiness, Pope Pius XI.¹

It was hoped the Holy Father would respond to the Blessed Virgin's requests for reparatory devotions and the Consecration of Russia to Her Immaculate Heart. None was forthcoming. A year passed. Sister Lucia took ill and was sent to recuperate at Rianjo, a small coastal town near Pontevedra. There she received a communication from Heaven which she wrote Bishop da Silva about:

"My confessor orders me to inform Your Excellency of what took place a little while ago between the Good Lord and myself: as I was asking God for the conversion of Russia, Spain and Portugal, it seemed to me that His Divine Majesty said to me:

"You console Me a great deal by asking Me for the conversion of those poor nations. Ask it also of My Mother frequently, saying: Sweet Heart of Mary, be the salvation of Russia, Spain, Portugal, Europe and the whole world. At other times say: By Your pure and Immaculate Conception, O Mary, obtain for me the conversion of Russia, Spain, Portugal, Europe and the entire world.

"Make it known to My ministers that given they follow the example of the King of France in delaying the execution of My request, that they will follow him into misfortune. It will never be too late to have recourse to Jesus and Mary."²

(Lucia included a slightly different part of the message of

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this last paragraph a few years later: "They did not want to heed My request. Like the King of France they will repent and do so, but it will be late. Russia will already have spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions of the Church. The Holy Father will have much to suffer!"³⁾

The references to the King of France concern the requests made to Louis XIV to consecrate France to the Sacred Heart in the Seventeenth Century. This was not done, and the French Revolution was the result one hundred years later. "My ministers" is probably a reference to Pope Pius XI and his advisors, and perhaps to subsequent popes as well.

Sister Lucia made a perpetual profession of her religious vows in Tuy on October 3, 1934, the feast of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus. Bishop da Silva was present, and he and Lucia talked afterwards. Lucia wrote Father Gonçalves about the conversation:

"His Excellency the Bishop of Leiria promised me that next year he will promote the reparatory devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary...As for the Consecration of Russia, it seems unbelievable, but I forgot to mention it to the bishop. Patience! I am sorry to see it stay like this, because I don't think that our good Lord likes it, but I can't do more than to pray and sacrifice myself for His love..."⁴

Maria Rosa dos Santos also made the trip to Tuy to see Lucia. Daughter said to mother:

"You said that you would let me go in order to see whether, once I had gone away, the whole (Fatima) story would come to an end. It is thirteen years now since I left and I have never been back. So has it all come to an end?"

"Not a bit of it! It just gets worse and worse!"

"So you see, I'm not there now to deceive people: it's God and Our Lady who are there!"

Maria Rosa answered: "If I could be quite sure that it was Our Lady who appeared to you, then I would be only too glad to give Her the Cova da Iria and everything else that I have. But I'm not sure!"⁵

Sister Lucia

The two hugged each other and said good-bye, not knowing it was the last time they would see each other.

Another year passed. Jacinta's body was exhumed from her grave in Ourem and transferred to the Fatima cemetery. Bishop da Silva sent Lucia pictures that showed Jacinta's face was incorrupt.

"Thank you very much for the photographs," Lucia wrote back. "I can never express how much I value them...I was so enraptured! My joy at seeing the closest friend of my childhood again was so great...She was a child only in years."⁶

Something about Lucia's letter gave Bishop da Silva an idea. He asked Lucia to write down everything she remembered about Jacinta. Lucia did so in a fortnight, completing the work on Christmas Day, 1935. The finished product was Sister Lucia's First Memoir. It dealt chiefly with Jacinta — the apparitions were mentioned in the course of Lucia's narrative.

Lucia's superiors were intrigued by the Memoir, for what was said and for what Lucia seemed reluctant to disclose. In November, 1937, Bishop da Silva ordered her to write about the Fatima story. Lucia wrote thirty-eight pages in two weeks, in the little spare time she had at the convent. She made almost no corrections. Of her Second Memoir Lucia wrote: "No longer will I savor the joy of sharing with You alone the secrets of Your love, but henceforth, others too will sing the greatness of Your mercy...Behold the handmaid of the Lord! May He continue to make use of her, as He thinks best."⁷

In other words, Lucia had an aversion to writing her Memoirs, but complied out of obedience to her superiors, in whom she saw the will of God. It is interesting that Jacinta is the heroine in Lucia's Memoirs, while the author prefers being in the background — a difficult task since the apparitions consisted of the beautiful Lady and Lucia talking to each other.

Dr. Galamba had written a book about Jacinta the same year. In 1942 the third edition of his book, *Jacinta*, was about to be published. Lucia was asked to contribute. She wrote to her confessor, Father Gonçalves:

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"His Excellency the Bishop wrote to me about a forthcoming interrogation by Dr. Galamba. He requested me to recall everything I remember in connection with Jacinta, as a new edition of her life is about to be printed. This request penetrated to the depths of my soul like a ray of light, giving me to know that the time has come to reveal the first two parts of the Secret, and thus add two chapters to the new edition: one about hell and the other about the Immaculate Heart of Mary. But I am still in doubt, since I am reluctant to reveal the Secret."⁸

Despite her reluctance Lucia did reveal the first two parts of the Fatima Secret, and the effect they had on her little cousin. Again, Lucia stayed in the background — she was anything but a prophetess. This work became known as her *Third Memoir*, and Lucia's revelations of the angelic apparitions and the text of two thirds of the Fatima Secret startled and intrigued her superiors.

In October of 1941 Bishop da Silva and Rev. Dr. Galamba brought a copy of the *Third Memoir* to a meeting they had with Sister Lucia. She was ordered to expand on the angelic apparitions, to give a biography of Francisco, and a new account of the apparitions of Our Lady. Bishop da Silva urged to make Lucia "tell everything," but he wisely did not. Consequently, Lucia told everything but the third part of the Secret. Her version of the Secret was identical to the *Third Memoir* except for an ominous phrase Lucia added, perhaps unconsciously, perhaps as a hint: "In Portugal the dogma of the Faith will always be preserved etc."⁹

At the beginning of her *Fourth Memoir*, Sister Lucia wrote to Bishop da Silva: "Abandoning myself completely into the arms of our heavenly Father and to the protection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I therefore once again place in Your Excellency's hands the fruits of my one tree, the tree of obedience."

At the end Lucia wrote an epilogue to Bishop da Silva. In reading it, one realizes how difficult these disclosures were for Lucia.

"Whenever I found myself obliged to speak about them, I was careful to touch on the subject very lightly, to avoid revealing what I wanted so much to keep hidden.

Sister Lucia

“But now that obedience has required this of me, here it is! I am left like a skeleton, stripped of everything, even of life itself, placed in the National Museum to remind visitors of the misery and nothingness of all passing things. Thus despoiled, I shall remain in the museum of the world, reminding all who pass, not of misery and nothingness, but of the greatness of the Divine Mercies.

“May the Good God and the Immaculate Heart of Mary deign to accept the humble sacrifices which They have seen fit to ask of me, in order to vivify in souls the spirit of faith, confidence, and love.”

Notes

1. Lucia maintained this twice in writing, once in a letter to H.H. Pope Pius XII. See TWTAF, Vol. II, op. cit., pp. 530-531.
2. TWTAF, Vol. II, op. cit., pp. 543-544.
3. *Fatima In Lucia's Own Words*, op. cit., Appendix II.
4. *Documentos*, p. 411.
5. Sixth Memoir, p. 193.
6. First Memoir, p. 15 (Introduction).
7. Second Memoir, p. 49.
8. Third Memoir, p. 101.
9. Fourth Memoir, p. 162.