

## 27. Obedient Silence and Speech

Sister Lucia's third and fourth Memoirs were bombshells. Rev. Dr. Galamba told Bishop da Silva: "She'll have to do the rounds of purgatory many a time for having kept silent about so many things!" Lucia's reply was almost tart:

"As for purgatory, I am not in the least afraid of it, from this point of view. I have always obeyed, and obedience deserves neither penalty nor punishment. Firstly, I obeyed the interior inspirations of the Holy Spirit, and secondly, I obeyed the commands of those who spoke to me in His name. This very thing was the first order and counsel which God deigned to give me through Your Excellency."

This was a reference to the strict silence imposed upon Lucia by Bishop da Silva. All the other priests and confessors Lucia had divulged portions of the Secret to, had likewise counseled strict silence. She continued:

"Happy and content, I recall the words I heard long ago from the lips of that holy priest, the Vicar of Torres Novas: 'The secret of the King's daughter should remain hidden in the depths of her heart.' Then, beginning to penetrate their meaning, I said: 'My secret is for myself.' But now, I can no longer say so. Immolated on the altar of obedience, I say rather: 'My secret belongs to God. I have placed it in His hands; may He do with it as best pleases Him.'"<sup>1</sup>

But Lucia is often misunderstood on this point. Some have gone so far as to claim she made up the Fatima apparitions after the war started. More often, it is lamented that Lucia did not divulge the Secret before the war started, as this could possibly have averted much bloodshed. She replied:

"This would have been the case if God had willed to

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present me to the world as a prophetess. But I believe that God had no such intention, when He made known these things to me. If that had been the case, I think that in 1917 when He ordered me to keep silence, and this order was confirmed by those who represented Him, He would, on the contrary, have ordered me to speak.

“I consider then, Your Excellency, that God willed only to make use of me to remind the world that it is necessary to avoid sin, and to make reparation to an offended God by means of prayer and penance.”<sup>2</sup>

It should be noted that after the visions at Pontevedra and Tuy, Lucia was quite active privately, trying to spread devotion to the Five First Saturdays, and working to get word of Our Lady’s request for the Consecration of Russia to Pope Pius XI. She did so under obedience to Heaven, just as, before, she kept silence under the same obedience.

Now she was asked to write Pius XII concerning the Consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. She wrote the Pope twice. The second letter was acted upon by the Pope. Unfortunately, this letter was amended by Bishop da Silva. It asked for a consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart, and suppressed the promise of the triumph of Mary’s Immaculate Heart.<sup>3</sup>

Pope Pius XII had been ordained a bishop on May 13, 1917, the day Our Lady first appeared to the three children. On October 31, 1942, he gave a radio address in which he consecrated the Church and the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, with a cryptic yet clear reference to Russia. Two years earlier Lucia had spent hours on her knees in front of the Blessed Sacrament exposed, and received this message:

“I will punish the nations for their crimes by war, famine, and persecution of My Church, and this will weigh especially on My Vicar on earth. His Holiness will obtain an abbreviation of these days of tribulation if he takes heed of My wishes by promulgating the Act of Consecration of the whole world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, with a special mention of Russia.”<sup>4</sup>

Pius XII’s consecration did seem to coincide with a turn of

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fortunes in the Second World War. Russian troops stopped the Germans' march through their country, and the tide of battle turned in favor of the Allies. This was all to the good, but it should not be mistaken for the conversion of Russia or the triumph of Mary's Immaculate Heart. Lucia confirmed this in a letter to her Reverend Father Superior, stating that God

“promises the end of the war shortly in answer to the act of consecration made by His Holiness. But since it was incomplete, the conversion of Russia will take place later...He wishes that it be made clear to souls that the true penance He now wants and requires consists of first of all the sacrifice that each one must make to fulfill his own religious and worldly duties...”<sup>5</sup>

Sister Lucia had done all she could as a witness to the beautiful Lady's words at the Cova da Iria. Her thoughts and prayers were with the Holy Father, but her heart turned towards her family. Lucia received a letter from her mother. Maria Rosa was very ill, and did not want to die without seeing Lucia one more time.

“I showed her letter to my superiors who, in spite of the fact that I belonged to a Congregation of active Sisters, told me that such a thing was out of the question, and that I was to write to my mother and urge her to offer the sacrifice (of not seeing me) to God.”<sup>6</sup>

Lucia did a rare thing for her. She wrote Bishop da Silva appealing her superior's decision — but got the same response. “Faced with this reply, and seeing in it God's will,” Lucia wrote, “I wrote to my mother, urging her to offer her sacrifice to God and telling her that I, too, was offering mine for her and asking God to alleviate her sufferings.”

“So they won't let her return to Fatima,” exclaimed Maria Rosa, “even to be present at my death! If I had known that that's how it would be, I would never have let her go there! However, I'll offer this great sacrifice to God so that He will keep her in His care and help her always to be good.” And she wept.

A few days later the end was at hand. Lucia's sister Teresa put a call in to the Dorothean convent so that Maria Rosa and

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Lucia could say good-bye over the phone. An unnamed Sister told Teresa that this was not allowed.

“When my mother heard this further refusal, she said between sobs:

‘This is the last drop the Lord kept for me at the bottom of the chalice and which I had yet to drink on earth. I’ll drink it for love of Him.’”

Maria Rosa asked to be moved to Lucia’s room, a request that was not denied. She died there on July 16, 1942, “the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel,” Lucia noted, “to whom she had always had such great devotion and whose scapular she wore. May she rest in peace.”

### **Notes**

1. Fourth Memoir, p. 149.
2. Second Memoir, pp. 110-111.
3. In Bishop da Silva’s defense, Father Alonso writes of da Silva’s “Praiseworthy desire of facilitating the realization of a consecration presented as being difficult to obtain on the part of the Holy See.” This is a reference to three responses of silence by Popes Pius XI and Pius XII regarding the consecration as requested by Our Lady. See TWTAf, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 746.
4. TWTAf, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 732.
5. *Documentos*, pp. 446-447.
6. Sixth Memoir, p. 193. All the following quotations in this chapter are from this source, pp. 193-195.