

33.

Father Fuentes Interview

Four years after Sister Lucia entered Carmel, the Blessed Virgin appeared to her and said:

“Make it known to the Holy Father that I am always awaiting the Consecration of Russia to My Immaculate Heart. Without this consecration, Russia will not be able to convert, nor the world have peace.”¹

This message was made known to Pius XII, and his “Apostolic letter to the peoples of Russia” may have been in response to the Blessed Virgin’s words, for in his letter the Holy Father declared: “Today we consecrate and in a most special manner we entrust all the peoples of Russia to this Immaculate Heart...”² But he made no effort to order the world episcopate to join him in the consecration.

Sister Lucia was sent a press clipping of the event, and commented in a letter: “I am pained that it still has not been done as Our Lady requested it. Patience...Let us hope that Our Lady will deign to accept it, as a good Mother.”³

The extent of the Vatican’s interest in Sister Lucia’s reaction came to light during the Second Vatican Council, where an Austrian Jesuit named Father Schweigl revealed that one month after the publication of Pius XII’s letter, the Pope sent him to Coimbra to interrogate Lucia “with thirty-one questions concerning the conversion of Russia.”⁴

The results of the interrogation were never released by the Holy Office, perhaps because Sister Lucia told Father Schweigl that Pius XII’s consecration had not been complete. None of the other very occasional guests to Carmel had the authorization to question Sister Lucia on such matters. As early as 1946, Sister Lucia told John Haffert, leader of the Blue Army, that “I am not permitted to speak of anything which happened after 1917.”

Haffert then informed Sister Lucia that Bishop da Silva

Sister Lucia

had told him about some apparitions Lucia had received from the Blessed Virgin, and Lucia appeared confused, not knowing what to do. Haffert asked her:

“When Our Lady still appears to you, does She always look the same?” A most wonderful, yet pitiable look of wistfulness and loneliness seemed to come over her, and she almost whispered the answer: ‘Yes...Yes, always the same.’”⁵

Lucia longed with her whole heart to be in Heaven with the beautiful Lady, and her cousins. But it was not to be. “You are to stay here some time longer,” the Blessed Virgin told her. “Jesus wishes to make use of you to make Me known and loved.”

It also appears to have been the divine Will that Sister Lucia live a cloistered life at Carmel, a vocation that would seem to conflict with Lucia making the Blessed Virgin known and loved. But Heaven’s ways are not ours.

In 1955 Cardinal Ottaviani, then prefect of the Holy Office (later renamed the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, or CDF), visited Sister Lucia. Two years later the Holy Office requested the chancery of Coimbra to send to Rome copies of all of Sister Lucia’s writings, including the Third Secret. Bishop da Silva refused to read the Secret before passing it on to Rome, but his auxiliary, Bishop Venancio, held the envelope containing the Third Secret up to the light. He saw “an ordinary sheet of paper with margins on each side of three quarters of a centimeter. He took the trouble to note the size of everything. Thus the final Secret of Fatima was written on a small sheet of paper.”⁶

This would become important in 2000, when it was discovered that what the Vatican claimed to be the Third Secret was four pages long. A shorter Third Secret not only coincides with Bishop Venancio’s observations, it fits with the entire Fatima Secret, which is terse in its economy of words.⁷

At any rate, Sister Lucia’s writings and the Third Secret were received by the Vatican on April 16, 1957. On December 4, 1957, Bishop da Silva died. On the day after Christmas, 1957, Sister Lucia was interviewed by Father Augustine Fuentes, postulator for the beatification causes of Francisco

Apostle of Mary's Immaculate Heart

and Jacinta Marto. It was in this capacity that he was authorized to visit Sister Lucia.

Because of the content of the interview, Father Fuentes felt in conscience that it must be publicized. His version of the interview was published with the approval of his bishop, Don Manuel Anselmo Sanchez, Vicar General of Veracruz.

"I met her in her convent," Father Fuentes said. "She was very sad, very pale, and emaciated. She said to me:

"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 is going to chastise the world and it will be in a terrible manner. The celestial chastisement is imminent.

"Father, how much time is there before 1960 arrives? It will be very sad for everyone, no rejoicing if the world does not first pray and do penance. I cannot give any other details, since it is still a secret. According to the will of the Most Holy Virgin, only the Holy Father and the Bishop of Leiria would be allowed to know the Secret, but they have chosen to not know it so that they would not be influenced. It is the third part of the message of Our Lady which will remain secret until 1960.

"Tell them, Father, that many times the Most Holy Virgin told my cousins as well as myself, that many nations will disappear from the face of the earth, 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 (...).

"Sister Lucia also told me (Father Fuentes said): 'Father, the devil is about to wage a decisive battle with the Blessed Virgin, as he knows what it is that offends God the most, and which in a short space of time will gain for him the greatest number of souls.

Sister Lucia

Thus the devil does everything to overcome souls consecrated to God, because in this way he will succeed in leaving the souls of the faithful abandoned by their leaders, thereby the more easily will he seize them.

“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 that we noted in Her, penetrated our souls because of the offenses against God and the punishments which menace sinners....

“Father, that is why my mission is not to indicate to the world the material punishments which will certainly happen 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.

“(Sister Lucia also told 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 do penance to come from our bishops in our dioceses, 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.

“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 first reason is as follows: She told me that the devil is about to wage a decisive battle against the Blessed 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 in-between.

“The second reason is as follows: She said to my

Apostle of Mary's Immaculate Heart

cousins as well as to myself, that God is giving two last remedies to the world: the Holy Rosary and the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. These are the last two remedies which signify that there will be no others.

“The third reason is as follows: 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 has not heeded any of them ... He offers us with a certain trepidation the last means of salvation, His Most Holy Mother. Indeed if we despise and reject this last 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 Ghost. 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 evident 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.

“Two means for saving the world are prayer and sacrifice...Look, Father, the Most Holy Virgin, in these last times in which we live, has given a new efficacy to the recitation of the Rosary to such an extent that there is no problem, no matter how difficult it is, temporal or especially 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 lives 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.

“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 sure door of entering Heaven...”⁸

The publishing of this interview cost Father Fuentes his position as postulator. He was publicly portrayed as a liar by the Coimbra chancery, even though the interview had all the hallmarks of credibility (see “The Case of Father Fuentes” on pages 260-263 of this book for an analysis of this controversy).

What can one conclude about this interview? First, that Sister Lucia was expressly speaking of the Third Secret (“I cannot give any other details, since it is still a Secret”). Second, her emotion and anguish seem connected to another visit to her by the Blessed Virgin (“the most Holy Virgin is very sad because no one has paid any attention to Her message”). Since the Secret had been in Rome for eight months at the time of the interview, the lament of the Blessed Virgin over the lack of attention given Her message may have included the Vatican.

Third, the chastisement Sister Lucia dwells on, which evidently is linked to the Third Secret, is not a material chastisement, but a spiritual one. The greatest disaster for the world is not a poor economy, not wars, or changing political fortunes: the greatest disaster for the world is a weak Church that does not, cannot, or will not try to save souls. The conclusion is obvious: the Third Secret deals with a spiritual chastisement that necessarily involves the Church.

Fourth, Sister Lucia was asking Father Fuentes to broadcast their interview (“Tell them, Father...”). This may have been because of the silence imposed on Sister Lucia regarding Fatima. As 1960 neared, she may have felt impelled to warn the world, yet she was unable to do so herself.

Fifth, the remedy for all woes is the Rosary and devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Finally, nowhere in her impassioned remarks does Sister Lucia mention, or even hint, that the Third Secret primarily concerned a failed assassination attempt on a Pope.

Apostle of Mary's Immaculate Heart

Notes

1. This apparition was reported in an Italian book, *Il pellegrinaggio delle meraviglie*, published in 1960 under the auspices of the Italian episcopate. Canon Barthas also mentioned this apparition in a Marian conference in 1967. See FIJWE, Book Four, op. cit., p. 37, fn. 54.
2. TWTAF, Vol. III, op. cit., p. 333. The letter is better known as *Sacro vergente anno*.
3. Ibid., p. 337.
4. Father Schweigl distributed a four page typewritten letter concerning this matter to all the Council Fathers.
5. John M. Haffert, *Dear Bishop!*, AMI International Press, 1982, pp. 36-37.
6. TWTAF, Vol. III, op. cit., pp. 480-481.
7. See *The Devil's Final Battle*, edited by Father Paul Kramer [Terryville, Connecticut: The Missionary Association, 2002], Chapter 12: "Does the Third Secret Consist of Two Distinct Texts?"
8. FIJWE, Book Four, op. cit., pp. 26-30.