

## 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 Veracruz<sup>1</sup>

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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.<sup>2</sup>

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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, 1959<sup>3</sup>

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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

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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.”<sup>4</sup>

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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.”<sup>5</sup> 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.