

Chapter 11

A FALSE FRIEND BECOMES A TRUE FRIEND

From May 3-7, 2010, the famous Ergife Hotel in Rome was the venue for a conference entitled “The Fatima Challenge,” sponsored by Father Gruner’s Fatima Center. The event would prove to be perhaps the most productive in the apostolate’s history—what Americans call a “game-changer,” although the matter involved is hardly a game. A major reason for this outcome was the appearance of none other than Giuseppe De Carli as a speaker on the second day of the conference. What he said in the course of his remarks underscored dramatically the reasons for worldwide skepticism concerning Bertone’s version of events. Indeed, immediately after the conference the mainstream Italian media, following the lead of the Pope himself in another May development, would declare that the case of the Third Secret had been “reopened.”

A Remarkable Appearance at a Remarkable Conference

To his everlasting credit, by appearing at the conference De Carli did something no one in the Vatican party had ever done before during all the years of the Third Secret controversy: engage face-to-face with the “Fatimists” and respond to some of their objections to the “official” version of events. De Carli had agreed to appear for the stated purpose of introducing a second edition of *The Last Visionary of Fatima* [*L’Ultima Veggente di Fatima*] bearing the new title *The Last Secret of Fatima* [*L’Ultimo Segreto di Fatima*], a copy of which he held in his hand (the book had just come off the press that morning). By the time his appearance was over, however, it had become something far more significant than the introduction of essentially the same book he and Bertone had already published once.

After De Carli’s prepared remarks and the showing of an inconsequential film on Sister Lucia and her life in the convent at Coimbra, something quite unexpected happened. De Carli remained at the podium to take questions from the audience, despite his earlier indications outside the conference hall that he would have no time for Q & A after his presentation. For more than an hour, De Carli would field questions (in Italian) from this author, Father Gruner and the Catholic attorney and apologist John Salza, all of whom were speakers at the conference. The results of this encounter (along with the conference as a whole) were most fruitful, as the Italian media would immediately recognize.

De Carli’s three questioners knew this face-to-face encounter with Bertone’s close collaborator in promoting the “official” account

was an opportunity that probably would never present itself again. Given the limited window of opportunity, the questioning focused primarily on facts that were undeniable and which De Carli would have no choice but to admit. For one, there was the existence of the yet-to-be-seen Capovilla envelope and the text it contained, lodged in the papal apartment rather than the Holy Office archive, where the text of the vision was kept. Bertone's failure to produce that envelope and its contents were unanswerable evidence of a cover-up.

The Capovilla Envelope

Accordingly, this author repeatedly pressed De Carli (in Italian) to explain why the Capovilla envelope had never been produced. In response, De Carli repeatedly suggested, contrary to all the evidence, that the Capovilla envelope and the "Bertone envelope" displayed on *Porta a Porta*—namely the Bishop of Fatima's outer envelope—were one and the same. The first question and answer were as follows:

Ferrara: Hello, Mr. De Carli, I am constrained by the limits of my Italian, but it seems that there are some obvious problems with your presentation. One problem is this: It is established as a fact that there is a so-called "Capovilla envelope" on which, outside of which, was written the name of Archbishop Capovilla, the heads of the Vatican departments, the judgment of John XXIII—to not give a judgment. And this critical envelope was in the papal apartment. So, a simple question: Where is this envelope?

De Carli: The Bertone envelope is the Capovilla envelope; there is *no difference*. The Capovilla one is the one that ended up in the papal apartment. If you read the [Capovilla] interview in detail [i.e., the transcript presented during the "Cardinal Bertone Show" in 2007]... it explains how the envelope ended up in the hands of Paul VI, who was very interested—but a few days after his election, not months later—he wanted to read the text immediately. *Then the envelope remains there*. This is recounted by Msgr. Capovilla, who is a credible witness, the only living one. If you wish, you can give credit to what has been published by others, who are no longer with us. I give credit instead to a living person who, before me, recorded his testimony.

De Carli's answer was flatly contradicted by the very evidence he himself had presented during the "Cardinal Bertone Show": the envelope in the papal apartment is simply not the envelope produced on *Porta a Porta*, since the Capovilla envelope bears the Archbishop's handwritten list of the names of those who had read the contents and the dictation of John XXIII concerning his decision not to render

any judgment on the text. Furthermore, all the envelopes Bertone *did* produce on camera—including the Bishop of Fatima’s outer envelope, inside of which were the three envelopes prepared by Lucia—came from the archives of the Holy Office, now called the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, not the papal apartment.

Pressed again on this point, De Carli made a stunning observation:

Ferrara: I understand, but *living people* said that there is an envelope [the Capovilla envelope] there [in the papal apartment]—

De Carli [interrupting]: It doesn’t appear that way to me—

Ferrara:—But *we never saw the envelope*.

De Carli: *I saw the envelope, and I said that what’s reproduced in here [Last Secret, formerly Last Visionary] is exactly what I had photographed by my own photographer, and not by the one for the Holy See, because I did not trust them completely.* I asked Bertone: “Seeing that we are here, would you let me go look at the Capovilla envelope?”... It is the same envelope. The Bertone envelope corresponds with the Capovilla envelope.

De Carli’s distrust of the Vatican’s photographer was understandable, but his personally commissioned photograph of what he claimed was the Capovilla envelope does not appear in *Last Secret*. Under repeated questioning on how he could maintain that the never-produced Capovilla envelope was the same as the Bertone envelope, De Carli finally conceded defeat:

Ferrara: The document of Archbishop Capovilla²⁴⁸ said clearly that there is an envelope on the outside of which is found my [Capovilla’s] writing. On *Porta a Porta*, Cardinal Bertone did not show this envelope. It is a fact. Therefore, there are two envelopes. With all due respect, you haven’t answered my question.

De Carli: *Yes, these are useful precisions.* However, do not fasten yourselves on these things, which are important but not critical. I personally went to see the writing on the envelope there. When Cardinal Bertone showed it on *Porta a Porta* it is not like he didn’t want us to see it. *He took the envelope in his hands, which was simply turned to the other side.* And if you go back to listen to the recording, *Cardinal Bertone at one point read the sentences that Pope John XXIII dictated to Msgr. Capovilla to write on the envelope, but he did not turn it around to the camera so that*

²⁴⁸ His “confidential note” of 1967. See, *The Secret Still Hidden*, Chapters 6 and 10, and reproduction of original typewritten text (English and Italian) at Appendix I, pp. 217-221.

we could see it. But these are small things. The envelope is the same, it is the same. Then again, **they could have tricked me**, showing me something different. But my clear *impression* was that the envelope is the same: the Capovilla envelope is equal to the Bertone envelope.

Having retreated to the position that it was his “clear *impression*” that the two envelopes were the same, while admitting “they could have tricked me,” De Carli here made a devastating slip, attributable (one must assume in charity) to the pressure of the moment as opposed to any preconceived intent to deceive. For, in fact, on the *Porta a Porta* video, it is clear that Bertone *had* turned the envelope he displayed “around to the camera” to reveal that there was *no seal or writing on the other side*. Clearly, at this point De Carli was reeling in confusion in his attempt to deny the undeniable: that the Capovilla envelope is not the Bertone envelope, and thus contents of the Capovilla envelope remain well hidden in the Vatican.

The Virgin’s “express order” concerning 1960

De Carli was also asked to address another element of incontrovertible proof of cover-up: that Bertone has misled the Church and the world concerning the Virgin’s “express order” regarding revelation of the Third Secret in 1960 as indicated on *both* of the sealed envelopes Bertone had revealed on *Porta a Porta*. Here John Salza took the lead with a question that produced another staggering misstep:

Salza: According to Cardinal Bertone, Sister Lucy never received any indication from the Virgin Mary that the Secret should have been revealed in 1960. Yet Cardinal Bertone said that Sister Lucy had confessed to him that she chose that date, without direction by the Virgin. However, on *Porta a Porta*, Cardinal Bertone showed the two envelopes of Sister Lucy to the cameras, evidencing that it was a fact that it was by explicit order of the Virgin that the Secret should not be disclosed before 1960. And so how can we reconcile this testimony? Is it possible that the account of Cardinal Bertone is not true?

De Carli: No. This 1960 question is one that *I have also posed to myself many times*, because Sister Lucy wrote on the envelope that “you must open it in 1960.” But I think the answer by Cardinal Bertone is a convincing answer. [!] Please note that we are dealing with a Sister *who could neither read nor write*. *She began to read and write when she was about 30, 35 years old—so 15 years, if not 20, after the apparitions*. She began to understand the value of words, but she never had a good understanding of time.

So, De Carli's attempt at an explanation was that Sister Lucia did not know how to write when she *wrote* on both of her sealed envelopes: "By express order of Our Lady, this envelope can only be opened in 1960 by the Cardinal Patriarch of Lisbon or the Bishop of Leiria." To this nonsensical proposition, De Carli had added the demonstrably false assertion that Lucia did not learn to read or write until she was thirty or thirty-five years old, when in fact she had learned when she was still a teenager—also by "express order" of the Virgin during the second Fatima apparition, on June 13, 1917, *precisely so that she could make the Message of Fatima known to the world in writing*. It is a documented historical fact that Lucia was writing to her bishop as early as 1922, when she was only fifteen years old.²⁴⁹

This notion of an ignorant and illiterate peasant girl who had no idea what she was doing when she wrote the Virgin's express order on the two envelopes is part of what Father Gruner called "fables told by those who do not believe in Fatima. The Fatima documentation is very well done, and it negates the theory according to which Sister Lucy did not know what she wrote. This is a fabrication," he told De Carli.

When Father Gruner pressed him further on this issue, De Carli had to admit that he had no real explanation for why Bertone had claimed the Virgin never said anything to Lucia about the Secret being linked to 1960—and thus the opening of the Second Vatican Council and the crisis that followed—when the two envelopes confirm exactly the opposite:

De Carli: *I do not know what to say.* That mystery of 1960 remains. There's an explanation that, in my opinion, is plausible and I think could be accepted, which is that, in my opinion, Lucy saw that date of 1960 as very far from her, so it was like saying: "Open this in the next century." She imagined that in 1960—remember that she wrote it in 1944, so 1960 is sixteen years after that date—she would probably no longer be.

Father Gruner: Yes, but she said "according to *the explicit order*

²⁴⁹ Lucia wrote a letter on June 21, 1921 to her mother only several days after she had left Fatima on June 16, 1921. Contrary to what De Carli affirmed, she had learned to read and write when she was only 14 years old or less. Lucia wrote additional letters to her mother on July 4, July 17, October 2, October 23 and December 18 of 1921, followed by letters to her mother and others on January 2, February 2, April 16 and June 4 of 1922. She was only 15 years old at this time and wrote quite well. Frère Michel de la Sainte Trinité quotes excerpts of some of these letters in *The Whole Truth About Fatima*, Vol. II, pp. 217-221. Lucia wrote her first account of the apparitions in a letter to her confessor on January 5, 1922 (before she was 15). See Father António Maria Martins, S.J., *Cartas da Irmã Lúcia*, (printed by Fraternidade Missionária de Cristo-Jovem, Samerio-Braga, 1978) pp. 80-84. This 4 1/2-page handwritten letter is photographically reproduced on pp. 468-476 of *Documentos de Fatima* (Porto, 1976).

of Our Lady.” In this writing she denies that it was her idea and says that it was the order of the Madonna. *Why did Bertone say that Lucy confessed to him that it was just her idea?*

De Carli: I collected only what Cardinal Bertone told me. I cannot invent things. I write what I hear, what I see, what I think, and what I record. You can think whatever you wish....

The discrepancy of the envelopes

On the question of the revelation by Bertone on *Porta a Porta* of not one, but *two* envelopes, bearing Our Lady’s “express order” concerning 1960, Father Gruner asked De Carli to explain why, in *Last Visionary* (now *Last Secret*), Bertone recounts having had Lucia authenticate only *one* such envelope. Perhaps not realizing that he was treading in a minefield planted by Bertone himself, De Carli provided an explosive answer:

De Carli: I don’t recall this detail, sorry, I just don’t have recollection of that, that part of the book has not been changed. I myself saw that document. I took my photographer with me, who photographed it for me. *And there is an envelope which has written on it: “For delivery to the Bishop of Fatima,” and a second envelope on which had been written: “to be opened after 1960.”*

That is, De Carli himself was shown only **a** second envelope—only one—bearing the Virgin’s order concerning 1960 when his photographer took a photograph of the document (the vision) published in 2000. Yet, on *Porta a Porta* a *second* such envelope suddenly “jumped out of the top hat,” to employ a phrase of Socci’s. Thus it seems that De Carli himself was deceived in this matter, just as he had, apparently, been sold a bill of goods about Sister Lucia’s ignorance and illiteracy. The truth of his own words—“They could have tricked me”—and his repeated expressions of distrust in Vatican photographers here seem to be confirmed. And, given his evident lack of knowledge of the Fatima documentation and the historical details of the Third Secret controversy and the life of the seer, De Carli would have been particularly susceptible to being misled by those who wished to use him for their purposes.

The Secret “belongs to the past” canard

Still another patently indefensible element of the “official” position is that the Third Secret “belongs to the past,” according to Cardinal Bertone, following Cardinal Sodano. De Carli’s answer to the pertinent question was clearly at variance with the “official” version, as De Carli himself seemed eager to note:

Father Gruner: ... I do not understand why Cardinal Bertone

told us that the age of lust for power and evil is over now—that is, on June 26, 2000, with the decision to reveal the Third Secret. We're seeing that this time of evil and lust of power for mankind *is not over yet!*

De Carli: *This is certain.* By reading the Third Secret, we understand that the Third Secret is also valid today. It is not just relegated to the past. *I tried to show this in the book with a reflection by Cardinal Bertone, who then arrives at my thesis.* Read it carefully. The Third Secret is not something that concerns only an event of the past, but is something that concerns us today, as well. It has, therefore, a power that goes far beyond a mere historical memory.

While De Carli, at least, now admitted that the Third Secret does *not* belong to the past, a review of *Last Secret* does not reveal any such change of position by Bertone himself, but only his “reflection” (in a newly added chapter) that “it is good, therefore, that they [the events of Fatima] are consigned to the collective memory, leaving behind traces not deprived of meaning.”²⁵⁰ What is that nebulous remark supposed to mean? And notice that De Carli indicated that Bertone had supposedly “arrived” at *his* (De Carli’s) “thesis,” not that Bertone had actually admitted to an error of fact about the portent of the Secret.

Archbishop Capovilla’s “Confidential Note”

Yet another piece of incontrovertible evidence brought to De Carli’s attention was the “confidential note” by Archbishop Capovilla, in which he recorded that on June 27, 1963 Paul VI had read a text of the Third Secret retrieved from the Barbarigo writing desk in the papal bedchamber of John XXIII—a fact radically at odds with the “official” account, which asserts that Paul VI read the Secret for the first and only time on March 27, 1965. (See Chapter 6.) We have already seen (in Chapter 10) that during the “Cardinal Bertone Show” in September 2007, De Carli attempted to explain away this devastating discrepancy by leading Capovilla to suggest during his interview of the Archbishop that Pope Paul read the same text twice—in 1963 and 1965—even though Capovilla himself demolished that contention *in the same interview* by stating that after the reading in 1963 “the envelope was resealed [*richiude* in Italian; ‘resealed’ or ‘reclosed’] and *it was not spoken of further.*”

That is, according to Capovilla himself, *the envelope was not spoken of again* after the reading of its contents and its resealing in 1963. Capovilla’s own testimony, far from supporting Bertone’s

²⁵⁰ *The Last Secret of Fatima*, p. 40.

contrivance, rules out a second reading in 1965, which would have required reopening the resealed (or “reclosed”) envelope. What did De Carli have to say about this, now that he could be questioned directly? Curiously, his earlier reliance on Capovilla as the only reliable living witness was suddenly replaced by skepticism about the Archbishop’s testimony:

Father Gruner: Just one other point: Socci, referring to the interview by Solideo Paolini on this subject, said, “How come there are two dates: that of June ‘63 and the other one of March ‘65?”

De Carli: This, too, is in my book. Because I wondered why there were two dates, but only one recorded officially. The fact is that *we are not sure about the second date, the only one who gave us two dates is Mons. Capovilla*. Now, he is a precise man and has marked that date in his diary, but it doesn’t appear in the official archives. I don’t have the certainty arising from the record of audiences of what was done by Paul VI, which in this case does not correspond to the archives of the Secretary of State and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. And if this is coming only from one man, even if it’s his [John XXIII’s] secretary, then I do not think it can be considered official. It has to be included in the interview [shown on the “Cardinal Bertone Show”], but we still consider the official date June 26 or 27, 1963 [sic]. I’m a little confused myself, too, with the dates.

Notice, first of all, De Carli’s admitted confusion about the dates: he gave June 26 or 27, 1963 as the “official” date for the reading of the Secret by Paul VI, rather than March 27, 1965 (according to *TMF*, the “official” Vatican booklet published in June 2000). Clearly, he lacked a command of the most basic facts concerning the controversy, even though Bertone had used him to produce a book on it. As for the claim that Capovilla’s note does not “correspond to the archives of the Secretary of State and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith,” it should have been obvious to De Carli that there is more to the story than what is contained in those archives, for Capovilla categorically places a text of the Secret in the papal apartment.

Here De Carli effectively conceded that he had no answer to this evidence other than *to cast doubt on the testimony of the very witness he had pronounced most reliable only moments before*. Worse, De Carli had pronounced utterly reliable Capovilla’s memory that the text Pope John read in 1959 “corresponded” to the vision published in June 2000—which, once again, is not at issue—while casting doubt on *a written record* of what the Archbishop witnessed and confirms today concerning the reading of the Third Secret by Paul VI in 1963.

Here it must be noted that *Last Secret*, in a dramatic departure

from *Last Visionary*, “adjusts” the “official” account to claim that Paul VI “read it [the Secret] two times, according to what has been reported by Monsignor Capovilla. Certainly on March 27, 1965, and he opted for its non-publication.”²⁵¹ But we have seen that the claim of two readings of the *same* text in the *same* envelope is flatly contradicted by Capovilla himself, who testified that the envelope opened in 1963 by Paul VI was resealed and that, so far as he knows, it was not spoken of after that. And why would Paul VI open yet again the same envelope he had *resealed* in 1963? Clearly, the envelope he read in 1965 was other than the one he had read two years earlier; from which it follows, as all other evidence shows, that there are two companion texts pertaining to the Third Secret of Fatima.

Capovilla’s testimony to Paolini

We have seen that at no time was Archbishop Capovilla asked by Bertone, De Carli or anyone else to deny specifically his admission to Solideo Paolini—“Exactly so!”—in response to the question whether there were two different envelopes and two different texts pertaining to the Third Secret. Confronted on this telling point, De Carli not only declared that Paolini was a liar who invented his conversation with Archbishop Capovilla, but also claimed to have in his possession yet another secret document the Vatican is not allowing anyone to see:

Father Gruner: ... Why did he [Capovilla] not deny what Paolini said?

De Carli: No, easy now, no. Let us speak of how that interview was obtained. It was a meeting, this Solideo Paolini, who went to Mons. Capovilla. It was a simple chat, and then he pulled from it an interview that truly and properly did not exist, *and much of that interview was invented wholesale.*

Ferrara: Why did no one ask Archbishop Capovilla “yes or no” regarding the fact that he answered Paolini “Precisely so!” as an answer to his question if “There are two texts of the Third Secret of Fatima?” Why has no one asked him this?

De Carli: Look, I have in hand [*i.e.*, available to him] a letter by Mons. Capovilla sent to the Secretary of State and to the Holy Father in which he denies he ever responded in such way to Solideo Paolini. He denies it. So either this Solideo Paolini is a liar, and has profited from it, or Mons. Capovilla is a liar. *I believe Solideo Paolini is a liar.*

Ferrara: May I have a copy [of the letter]?...

²⁵¹ *The Last Secret of Fatima*, p. 70.

Salza: Why have you not published this letter from Capovilla, if it could answer all the questions?

De Carli: Because it's private correspondence, I can't; I'm sorry.

So, De Carli publicly accused Paolini of being a liar and then refused to publish his evidence for the charge—a purported letter from Capovilla to the Pope and the Secretary of State—claiming it was “private”! Yet he had been given a copy of that same “private” letter, and was now dangling its alleged existence before the entire world while refusing to produce it. Nor had the Vatican seen fit to publish Capovilla's denial, if such it was. It is telling indeed that *Last Secret* makes no mention of this secret but not-so-secret letter, even though De Carli, the co-author of *Last Secret*, had freely revealed its existence in connection with his promotion of that very book at *The Fatima Challenge* conference.

What about the “etc”?

The “official” account had always been fatally compromised by its glaring failure to ask Sister Lucia a single question about the very heart of the Third Secret controversy: that fateful “etc” which Sister Lucia had placed at the end of the recorded Great Secret in her Fourth Memoir to indicate the beginning of its third and final part, which clearly related in some way to a crisis (among the faithful) regarding Catholic dogma outside of Portugal. Pressed on this patent evidence of a cover-up, De Carli pleaded a lack of memory:

De Carli: *I do not remember this.* When I'm not sure I do not answer. With regards to that “etc”—following the phrase “Portugal will not lose the Catholic faith and Catholic nations etc” [sic], what's in that “etc”?—I said to Bertone: “Look, many have imagined that behind that ‘etc’ is another text which doesn't exist.” And he answered—*I don't recall any longer what he answered to me. I am sorry, on this point I do not have a precise recollection.*

Asked once again to comment on the “etc” controversy, De Carli conceded that it did indeed represent the beginning of the Third Secret of Fatima:

De Carli: The “etc” was by Sister Lucy. She had suspended that etcetera *because she had yet to write the last part of the Secret.* That etcetera said: “leave it for me.” But that etcetera gathered a lot of attention by the bishops, by her confessors—not to mention journalists, “doomsayers” and apocalypse-sayers. And when Sister Lucia was finally pressed, put on the ropes, *she filled in the etcetera with the Third Secret.*

Now, if the “etc” represents something that Lucia later “filled

in... with the Third Secret”—which indeed it was—then it is obvious that what Lucia “filled in” could only have been the *words of the Virgin Mary* following her reference to the preservation of dogma in Portugal, because the “etc” interrupts a sentence in which the Virgin was speaking. And yet De Carli claimed a lack of memory about what Bertone told him concerning this utterly crucial point.

What can one say? More than ten years after the controversy over the completeness of the Vatican’s disclosure of the Third Secret began, we still have no answer from the Vatican party to the one question that would reveal the truth of the matter: What were the *words of Our Lady* which conclude the Great Secret of Fatima by completing its third and final part? It seems that the plan is to keep those words from the faithful forever, if it were possible.

The testimony of Cardinal Ottaviani

Confronted with the testimony of the late Cardinal Ottaviani that the text of the Third Secret he had in view was 25 lines in length, not the 62 lines of the vision, De Carli joined Bertone in affirming that *this was indeed Ottaviani’s testimony*, but offered the “thesis” (as had Bertone) that Ottaviani had somehow mistaken a 62-line text for one with 25-lines:

Father Gruner: On television, on the *Porta a Porta* [telecast] of May 31, 2007, there was a Vaticanist who asked: “But Cardinal Ottaviani said that the text consists of 25 lines, why then has this text 62 lines?” And Cardinal Bertone affirmed that Cardinal Ottaviani had said this, trying to explain how he had erred. I do not know—in your book is there an answer to this question?

De Carli: Yes, this is also in my book. The thesis—since I cannot interview him because he is in the embrace of God—the thesis is that Ottaviani was wrong to say 25 lines, he was wrong.

Pressed further on the point, De Carli admitted that he had no real answer to the glaring discrepancy between what was published in 2000 and what Cardinal Ottaviani described:

Father Gruner: But this explanation by Cardinal Bertone, who said that perhaps Ottaviani had not looked at the other side, and the fact that even adding these two sides the sum is... 31-32... not 25 lines—how could he be so wrong? And how is it that the Bishop of Fatima [who] looked up to the light—one can only say that there are [according to him] two envelopes [not four]—and said that there were 25 lines, how come this text has 62 lines instead? Bishop Venâncio put everything in writing. It’s in the archives of Fatima.

De Carli: *I cannot answer this*, and when I cannot answer I do not answer. I have the notes of the meeting between the Cardinal and Sister Lucy. Bertone showed to Lucy the 64 lines of text, which she then turned, turned again, examined; and the precise question is: “Sister Lucy, is this the text that you wrote in 1944, which was then placed in the envelope?” “Yes, it is my text.” “And this is your envelope?” “Yes, this is my envelope.”

De Carli’s reference to Lucia’s authentication of a *single* envelope, when Bertone had displayed *three* envelopes of Lucia’s on *Porta a Porta*, prompted the next series of questions, with answers that highlighted dramatically the untrustworthiness of the “official” account.

One sheet or multiple sheets: a convenient “correction”

When Sister Lucia authenticated the text of the Third Secret in April of 2000, she told Bertone: “Yes, these are my *sheets* of paper (*fogli*) and the envelope is mine; they are the *sheets* (*fogli*) that I used and this is my writing. This is my envelope, this is my writing, this is my text.”²⁵² Recall once again that on *Porta a Porta*, on May 31, 2007, Bertone displayed a *sheet* of paper and three *envelopes* prepared by Lucia (her unsealed outer envelope and the two sealed envelopes bearing the Virgin’s express order concerning 1960). Yet, according to Bertone’s/De Carli’s *Last Visionary*, published on May 10, 2007, several weeks earlier, Lucia had authenticated *sheets* of paper (*fogli*) and only *one* envelope—*exactly the opposite* of the document ensemble Bertone displayed weeks later on camera.

This enormous and never-explained discrepancy prompted questions that revealed another “adjustment” of the words Bertone attributed to Sister Lucia, as allegedly recorded in Bertone’s remarkably adaptable “notes”:

Salza: But in your book with Cardinal Bertone, he said that Sister Lucy said: “Yes, these are my *sheets* [*fogli*]”—using the plural form. But what was shown on *Porta a Porta* was only one sheet. Where are the other sheets?

De Carli: *This is better explained here [in Last Secret] because we went back to check at the Archives, which is one of the reasons why we did a second edition. There are two sides. The book reports it exactly because I repeat it several times: 4 pages on 2 sheets—two on one side and the other two on the other side. Because in the Cardinal’s notes—keep in mind that when I wrote that book [Last Visionary] we were in 2006, Cardinal*

²⁵² *The Last Visionary of Fatima*, p. 37; see also, *The Secret Still Hidden*, Chapter 8, pp. 128, 136.

Bertone was moving to Rome, he had shelves full of books and had these diaries, at least 50 pages of his diary notes, we read them a bit faster. So back then we relied on the 64 lines count, but now it is clear that there are two sheets (*fogli*) [!] of four pages.

Father Gruner: My Italian is not perfect, but in English we speak about a “sheet” like this [holding up one sheet of paper]. You can fold this sheet, but it is only one sheet. When Sister Lucy said that these are my sheets, she said that there was another piece of paper besides this.

De Carli: *You are right to point out this thing.* I should find the text. I cannot find it now [in the copy of *Last Secret* he is holding]. But the book specifies, in almost a maniacal manner, this thing about the sheets that Sister Lucy had in her hand. *It is no longer multiple sheets, but a single sheet*, divided into 4 sides, a single sheet exactly like he showed her—in half, 2 sides and 2 sides. It is repeated twice.

Salza: So you were wrong when you said that there are two sheets, and now you’re saying that there is only one? We must be exact, here, because you have already said [here] that there are two sheets, and so the question is: Is there just one sheet or two?

De Carli: I’m looking at the text [of my book], because I can’t remember all these details. Here is what is in the book: We talked about a large envelope, stamped with the seal of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. On the envelope [written in 1944] is the writing about 1960, and which contained another envelope, with a single sheet with lines, folded in two, and four sides handwritten by Sister Lucia.

Ferrara: The first book talks about sheets!

Salza: This is a change!

De Carli: We did a second edition of the book just to clarify better, also from an Italian point of view with regards to different language translations. And what we *wanted* to say is that it is a *single* lined sheet, folded in two, and four sides.

Salza: Therefore you made a mistake when you said that it was “sheets,” in plural, right?

De Carli: I was wrong. Can’t I make mistakes? Aren’t we human?

Salza: But [today] you said this, two or three times, specifically.

De Carli: One can make a mistake. In fact, I wanted to check again the text [of the book] because it was important to clarify this point: a lined sheet, folded in two, written on four sides. But Fatima—it is not just a lined sheet written on four sides. Fatima is the marvelous secret of Mary who appears to the three shepherds! This is what really counts.

De Carli's statements were fraught with disaster for the "official" account. For one thing, even in the midst of attempting to explain that the Secret involved only one sheet of paper, he referred to *two* sheets, evidencing his confusion on the matter. Further, the "mistake" about the number of sheets involved—one rather than two or more—could not have been *his* mistake because, according to Bertone in *Last Visionary*, it was *Sister Lucia* who had referred to *sheets* of paper (*fogli*) and Bertone had provided, as noted above, a purported *verbatim quotation of the seer* to that effect. But, as has happened so often in the annals of the "official account," the words of "Sister Lucy" were altered to meet current exigencies. So, whereas in *Last Visionary* she is quoted as having said "these are my *sheets* of paper (*fogli*) ... they are the *sheets* (*fogli*) that I used," in *Last Secret* "Sister Lucy" now says "Yes, yes, this is my *paper*." As De Carli had put it: "it is *no longer* multiple sheets, but a single sheet..." In other words, when it is necessary to change the "official account" to meet serious objections, what Sister Lucy said before is "no longer" what "she" says now, when she is conveniently dead! Simple!

Yet not so simple. For in his non-committal letter of introduction to *Last Visionary*, reproduced without change in *Last Secret*, none other than Pope Benedict XVI relates that in preparing the "theological commentary" on the Secret when he was Cardinal Ratzinger (see Chapter 4) he had "prayed and meditated deeply on the *authentic* words of the third part of the Secret of Fatima, contained in the *sheets* [*fogli*!] written by Sister Lucia." Or, in the original Italian: "le parole autentiche della terza parte del segreto di Fatima contenute nei *fogli* scritti da Suor Lucia."²⁵³ So, *the Pope himself* reveals that the Third Secret involves *multiple* sheets of paper, whereas Sister Lucy, who once said this as well, "no longer" says it—according to Bertone and De Carli, now that the visionary is no longer alive to contradict them. But not even Bertone would dare to claim that *the Pope* was mistaken when he wrote *fogli* instead of *foglio*! Nor was Bertone in any position to "correct" the papal letter of introduction. He was stuck with it, and with the glaring discrepancy it causes—the umpteenth—in his ever-changing story.

And notice the Pope's telltale reference to "the *authentic* words of the third part of the Secret" in said *fogli*, indicating yet again

²⁵³ *The Last Secret of Fatima*, p. 10.

what Socci (as we saw in Chapter 8) has called a “road to the truth” opened up by the Pope’s suggestion that “there exist words of the secret held ‘not authentic.’”²⁵⁴ That is, the Pope is hinting that there is indeed another text containing what someone has conveniently adjudged to be “inauthentic” words of the Virgin, and that he read this text as one of the *fogli* (sheets) to which he refers in his letter of introduction, although it is not considered part of what Bertone and Sodano have deemed the “authentic words” of the Secret. But, as Socci says: “Courage, then: publish everything. ‘The truth will make you free.’”²⁵⁵

Why did he appear?

After having submitted to questioning that only demonstrated, yet again, why the “official account” had been deprived of all credibility, De Carli excused himself and left the conference. The net impression one had of his appearance was that of a decent man who, years earlier, had entered into a battle for which he was poorly equipped, as he himself admitted, had raised his flag for the wrong side, and now, perhaps, had begun to entertain some serious doubts about the version of the facts he was expected to defend. “They could have tricked me” is a phrase that could not be more revealing of a man having second thoughts.

In tribute to De Carli we must agree with the commentator who wrote of his appearance: “As his case collapsed in one exchange after another, Mr. De Carli never displayed any sign of irritation or animosity, as usually occurs when a person’s claims are radically challenged. He patiently listened and tried to reply to all questions, and gave the impression of an honest man, now rather confused, who had perhaps been drawn into an orchestrated deception of which he was unaware at the time. When he departed the conference, Father Gruner offered to shake his hand; instead, Mr. De Carli embraced Father Gruner and thanked him for the work he was doing.”²⁵⁶

All in all, De Carli’s honesty had led him to become, however unexpectedly, a true rather than a false friend of Fatima. For his appearance at the conference had contributed to making the conference as a whole a tipping point for handling of the Third Secret affair within the Vatican. The Pope himself would soon make this dramatically apparent during his trip to Fatima from May 11-14, 2010.

²⁵⁴ Antonio Socci, “Bertone in the ‘Wasp’s Nest’ of the Polemics,” *Libero*, June 2, 2007.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ Edwin Faust, “The Latest Chapter in the Story of Fatima,” http://www.fatima.org/exclusives/pdf/epilogue_summary.pdf