

Chapter 13

FATHER APOSTOLI'S *FATIMA FOR TODAY*: PROPPING UP THE PARTY LINE

Although the Pope himself had publicly negated the Party Line on Fatima during his Fatima pilgrimage of May 2010, the Secretary of State was sticking to his story; and there were still apologists willing to ignore all the evidence and defend his discredited version of events. One of these was Father Andrew Apostoli, a founding member of the “Franciscan Friars of the Renewal” (what renewal?) and a celebrity of the Eternal Word Television Network, whose mixed bag of appalling novelty, modernist theology, crass pop culture, and elements of traditional Catholic piety has been the subject of a book-length exposé.²⁶²

In October 2010, four months after the Pope’s explosive remarks during the Fatima pilgrimage, Apostoli published a book entitled *Fatima for Today (FFT)*, as if to address in a great hurry what the Pope had said. *FFT* is a perfect example of the *modus operandi* of “Operation False Friends” regarding Fatima, which is to remove from the apparitions all prophetic content at odds with the program of the party of the innovators, while avoiding any disturbance of the faithful by a direct attack on the Fatima event. *FFT* is the same sort of work as Bertone’s *Last Visionary*, retitled and rehashed as *Last Secret*. Like Bertone’s efforts, Apostoli’s book is a seeming tribute to the Message of Fatima, filled with pious statements about prayer and penance and the life and writings of Sister Lucia. But this material thinly conceals an overriding polemical intent revealed in key passages: to advance the Party Line that the Fatima prophecies belong to the past and all that remains of Fatima for the faithful is a summons to say their prayers and do penance. The Consecration of Russia and the Third Secret are to be forgotten forever. As a prophecy, Fatima is finished.

But Why?

Why would Fr. Apostoli publish a book that perpetuates the Vatican Secretary of State’s clearly discredited campaign to bury Fatima when no one has any obligation to heed his opinion and the Pope himself had rejected it months before? What is going on here? Only one answer seems reasonable: the Secretary of State is behind the publication *Fatima for Today*. Like Bertone’s books, Fr. Apostoli’s

²⁶² Cf. Christopher A. Ferrara, *EWTN: A Network Gone Wrong* (Pound Ridge, NY: Good Counsel Publications, Inc., 2006). For a full-length treatment on this subject, read Christopher A. Ferrara, “*Fatima For Today: A Response*”, on the web at <http://www.fatima.org/news/newsviews/fatima-for-today-a-response.pdf>.

book is yet another exercise in “damage control” by Cardinal Bertone.

That conclusion is supported by the enlistment of a high-ranking Vatican prelate to give *FFT* the false appearance of authority: a preface by Cardinal Raymond Burke, Prefect of the Apostolic Signatura, the Vatican’s canonical high court. Like the Secretariat of State, however, the Signatura has nothing to do with Marian apparitions and has no more competence in this matter than the Secretary of State does. Yet Cardinal Burke had lent his name to what was clearly yet another effort by Fatima’s false friends in the Vatican bureaucracy to strip the Message of Fatima of its prophetic content. The strategy at work in the production of *FFT* seems obvious enough: Since Bertone had lost all credibility concerning Fatima, perhaps the faithful would believe Cardinal Burke if he uttered the same incredible things.

Continuing Bertone’s cavalcade of the incredible, Cardinal Burke, citing one Fr. C.C. Martindale, S.J., who died about 50 years ago and had no knowledge of recent Fatima research, asserts in his preface that there is nothing new in the Third Secret because, after all, “the first two parts of the secret contain nothing new” inasmuch as hell is not a novel doctrine and thus the vision of hell contains “no novel or startling *information* [emphasis in original]...” (p. xv). But it seems the Cardinal has overlooked a few pieces of “novel or startling information” in the first two parts of the Great Secret: (1) the imminent end of World War I; (2) the commencement of World War II after the appearance of a strange light in the night sky during the pontificate of Pius XI (identified by name); (3) the spread of Russia’s errors throughout the world; (4) the loss of souls, further wars and persecutions of the Church, the martyrdom of the faithful, the suffering of the Pope, and the annihilation of nations; and (5) the express connection of these future events to an ultimatum: they will all take place unless Our Lady of Fatima’s specific requests are granted, including the Consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart and the Communions of Reparation on the Five First Saturdays.

According to Cardinal Burke, however, the Consecration of Russia and the Third Secret are mere “controversies” that have “distracted from Our Lady’s maternal instruction and have hindered others from attending to it.” (p. xiv). But the Consecration of Russia is at the very heart of Our Lady’s “maternal instruction,” while the Third Secret undoubtedly foretells the consequences of failing to heed that instruction, including “various nations will be annihilated.” It is, therefore, the Party Line, not “controversies” among the faithful, that has hindered obedience to the instructions our Mother gave us at Fatima.

Yet promoting the Party Line is really what this book is all about. Hence, in his preface Cardinal Burke also expresses the opinion—of course binding on no one—that “Pope Benedict concludes that the Secret is, in the end... ‘the exhortation to prayer’... and, likewise, ‘the summons to penance and conversion.’” (p. xv) In other words, the Cardinal states the Party Line: The Message of Fatima no longer concerns future events. Catholics must now think only of prayer and penance when they think of Fatima. No other thoughts are permitted, as these are mere “distracting controversies.”

With all due respect, the Cardinal's reference to the Pope is misleading. He is not quoting Pope Benedict, who had rejected the Party Line months before, but rather the former Cardinal Ratzinger, writing eleven years ago in his theological commentary on the Secret in *The Message of Fatima* (*TMF*), the booklet the Vatican published together with the vision. For some reason never explained, *TMF* parroted the Party Line even though the Secretary of State manifestly had no competence or authority to dictate it to the Church: “First of all,” wrote the former Cardinal Ratzinger in *TMF*, “we must affirm with Cardinal Sodano: ‘... the events to which the third part of the ‘secret’ of Fatima refers now seem part of the past.’” We must affirm with Cardinal Sodano? But why must we affirm with Cardinal Sodano? No reason has ever been given, because none exists. Quite to the contrary, as already noted, during the very press conference at which the vision and *TMF* were published the same Cardinal Ratzinger was at pains to note: “It is not the intention of the Church to impose a single interpretation.”²⁶³

During his pilgrimage to Fatima, Pope Benedict declared that the Secret relates to “future realities of the Church which are little by little developing and showing themselves.” In view of that papal affirmation, one would think the Party Line would be discarded once and for all, even by those who had defended it until now. Yet the author of *FFT* presses ahead with the latest propaganda on behalf of the Secretary of State, assisted by another Vatican cardinal with no competence in the matter, who—quite contrary to everything the Pope had said only four months earlier—would have us believe that there is nothing new or startling in the Message of Fatima.

The Promotion of a Demonstrable Falsehood

FFT's arguments in favor of the Party Line—the standard litany of long-since-refuted contentions—begins with its unquestioning adoption of the claim by Cardinal Bertone, already mentioned, that

²⁶³ See “Vatican Issues Text of Third Secret of Fatima,” *New York Times*, June 27, 2000, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/06/27/world/vatican-issues-text-of-third-secret-of-fatima.html>.

radically undermined Bertone's credibility and rendered his entire version of events unworthy of belief. Echoing Bertone, *FFT* asserts that "Because *Sister Lucia had chosen the year 1960* as the time to reveal the Third Secret... curiosity and even dread about what the message might contain had heightened significantly over the years..." (p. 211). According to Bertone—in three conflicting versions of his story given between 2000 and 2007²⁶⁴—Sister Lucia "confessed" to him during conveniently unrecorded interviews that she, not Our Lady, had fixed the year 1960 for disclosure of the Secret and that Our Lady had never said anything to her about this.

Recall that for seven years Bertone maintained that Our Lady had never told Lucia that revelation of the Secret was connected to the year 1960, which happens to be the year following John XXIII's announcement of the Second Vatican Council. Then, during the *Porta a Porta* telecast of May 31, 2007, the Cardinal blithely revealed to the world not one, but two, sealed envelopes recording in Lucia's own handwriting that "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."²⁶⁵ Only one conclusion is possible: Bertone's claim that Lucia "confessed" that Our Lady had never said anything to her about 1960 is simply a lie. For it is impossible that the visionary would have taken it upon herself to decide when the Secret would be revealed, invented an "express order of Our Lady" justifying her arbitrary choice, recorded that express order on the outside of the two envelopes, and then allowed the Church and the world to believe for decades that, as she told Cardinal Ottaviani in 1955, the Virgin did not wish the Secret to be revealed before 1960 "because then it will be clearer (*mais claro*)." Or, as she told the Bishop of Leiria-Fatima, "because the Blessed Virgin wishes it so." Or, as she told Canon Barthas: "Our Lady wills that it can be published beginning in 1960."²⁶⁶

Either Sister Lucia, the visionary chosen by Heaven itself, was a serial liar on a fundamental point or it is Bertone who has misled us. No argument is needed to establish which is the case. The envelopes speak for themselves. Yet *FFT* uncritically accepts and promotes Bertone's demonstrable falsehood—a falsehood clearly intended to negate the Virgin's linkage of the Secret to 1960 so as to support Bertone's "interpretation" of the vision as culminating with the 1981

²⁶⁴ See *The Secret Still Hidden*, p. 145 for a comparative chart of the conflicting versions, complete with ever-changing "quotations" respecting Lucia's alleged "confession."

²⁶⁵ See *The Secret Still Hidden*, pp. 124-148 for a discussion of Bertone's changing story concerning Lucia's "confession" and the photographs of the envelopes negating Bertone's claim.

²⁶⁶ Cf. *The Devil's Final Battle* (2010 edition), Ch. 4, pp. 30-31 (one-volume version), pp. 21-22 (two-volume version).

assassination attempt. Even more important for the Party Line,²⁶⁷ however, is that any connection between the Secret and 1960 would raise questions about the completeness of the Vatican's disclosure in 2000, as there is nothing about the vision *standing alone* that would be clearer (“*mais claro*”) in that year. Hence Sister Lucy had to “confess” that there was never any such connection and that she had simply made the whole thing up. The claim is an insult—both to the seer and to the intelligence of the faithful.

FFT's adoption of Bertone's blatant misrepresentation undermines the credibility of Apostoli's book as much as it does Bertone's account itself, concerning which there are 101 reasons for doubt, of which this is but one.²⁶⁸

The Alleged “Silence” of Our Lady Regarding the Vision

FFT begins its defense of the Sodano/Bertone Party Line with a discussion of the apparition of July 13, 1917, during which Our Lady of Fatima confided the three parts of the Great Secret. Fr. Apostoli writes: “In the first two parts of the July apparition, Our Lady spoke. In the third part [i.e., the Third Secret] *she did not speak at all*, rather the children saw a series of images that unfolded before them.” (*FFT*, p. 81).

Without even examining the massive contrary evidence, this affirmation is dubious on its face. Why would Our Lady narrate the first two parts of the Secret, carefully explaining even something as obvious as the vision of hell, only to fall silent during the enigmatic third part? Why would She leave us with the vision of a “Bishop dressed in White” being executed by soldiers outside a devastated city littered with bodies, but no indication of how, why, where and when the catastrophic events depicted occur? Why would She leave it to Cardinal Sodano, of all people, to provide more than eighty years after the fact a “symbolic interpretation” that blatantly fails to correspond to what the vision depicts?

The answer is that Our Lady did not do so. Quite the contrary, Lucia's Fourth Memoir, her most complete written record of the Fatima apparitions, records that *after* the Blessed Virgin had revealed the first two parts of the Secret, She *continued to speak*:

“In Portugal the dogma of the faith will always be preserved etc. Tell this to no one. Yes you may *tell it* to Francisco.”

Lucia added “etc” to indicate the Virgin's continuing discourse, which quite clearly begins another part of the Secret: the third and the final part, which is the Third Secret of Fatima. This is clear because

²⁶⁷ For an explanation of what a Party Line is, see pp. 41-42.

²⁶⁸ See, *The Secret Still Hidden*, Appendix II, pages 233-235.

the reference to Portugal and dogma has no evident connection to the first two parts of the Great Secret, and yet it clearly *is* part of the Secret as a whole. Thus the Virgin's continuing discourse, marked by Lucia's "etc", must logically connect the third part—the Third Secret—to the first two parts so that all three comprise a unified whole. The Mother of God did not appear on earth to utter stray irrelevancies.

Note that *after* revealing the entire Great Secret, including the portion of the third part indicated by the "etc", Our Lady grants Lucia permission to *tell* all of it to Francisco. That permission was necessary because, as we know, Francisco could not hear what was *said* during the apparitions, although he could see their visional aspect—that is, the vision of hell and the vision of the "Bishop dressed in White." Now, if the vision of the white-clad bishop were all there was to the Third Secret, Our Lady would not have said: "You may *tell* it to Francisco," for he had already *seen* the vision. Therefore, what Lucia was given permission to tell Francisco could only have been *the words he had not heard*, including the Virgin's reference to Portugal and Catholic dogma and what follows, as indicated by the telltale "etc".

In the face of these inescapable inferences, the Vatican commentary in *TMF* very conspicuously avoids the Fourth Memoir, suggesting that the "etc" merely involves some unimportant "annotations" by Lucia:

For the account of the first two parts of the "secret", which have already been published and are therefore known, we have chosen the text written by Sister Lucia in the Third Memoir of 31 August 1941; some *annotations* were added in the Fourth Memoir of 8 December 1941.²⁶⁹

But why "choose" the Third Memoir when *TMF* itself admits that Lucia, under orders from her bishop, wrote the Fourth Memoir *for the sake of completeness*? As *TMF* states:

In the 'Fourth Memoir' of 8 December 1941 Sister Lucia writes: "I shall begin then my new task, and thus fulfill the commands received from Your Excellency as well as the desires of Dr. Galamba. With the exception of that part of the Secret which I am not permitted to reveal at present, *I shall say everything*. I shall not knowingly omit *anything*, though I suppose I may forget just a few small details of minor importance."²⁷⁰

Given the Vatican's own acknowledgment that Lucia wrote the Fourth Memoir in order to "say everything" she was permitted to say about the apparitions, there is only one reasonable explanation for this curious avoidance of the more complete record: Cardinal Sodano

²⁶⁹ *TMF*, pp. 3-4.

²⁷⁰ *TMF*, footnote 6, p. 15.

and his collaborators in *TMF* wanted to avoid having to discuss the “etc” and what it so clearly indicates: further words of the Virgin.

But *why* would they wish to avoid this subject? There can be only one reasonable explanation: there is something to hide. For if there were nothing to hide, why not simply address what Our Lady said to the seers in the place held by the “etc”? Why not simply explain the relationship between the mysterious dangling phrase concerning Portugal and the Message of Fatima as a whole? Why not simply ask Lucia to provide that explanation and then convey it to the public in order to lay all speculation to rest?

Instead, however, *TMF* characterizes the Virgin's very words as having originated with Lucia: “In the ‘Fourth Memoir’ Sister Lucia adds: ‘In Portugal, the dogma of the faith will always be preserved, etc. ...’”²⁷¹ That representation is both misleading and an implicit slur on the visionary. Lucia did not *add* anything to what the Mother of God had revealed to her; she merely recorded what she saw and heard during the apparitions, including “everything” Mary *said* to her with permission to *tell* Francisco. And in 1944—also under orders from her bishop—Lucia would write down everything the Virgin had *told* her, including the rest of the words She had confided to the seer and given her permission to *tell* Francisco concerning the Third Secret of Fatima.

Fr. Apostoli and all those who deny that something has been hidden, something embraced within the mysterious “etc”, must confront these questions:

- If there is nothing to hide, why does the Vatican commentary avoid the Fourth Memoir, which it admits is the more complete record of the Message of Fatima?
- If there is nothing to hide, why does *TMF* mischaracterize as “annotations” by Lucia, or something she “added,” what is patently a direct quotation of the very words of the Mother of God?
- If there is nothing to hide, why have Sodano and Bertone steadfastly refused to answer any questions concerning the “etc”?
- If there is nothing to hide, why did both Sodano and Bertone fail and refuse to put to Sister Lucia a single question regarding the “etc”, even though they were both well aware that it stands at the very heart of the Third Secret controversy and they had unrestricted access to the seer until her death in 2005?

²⁷¹ *TMF*, footnote 7, p. 16.

Indeed, Fr. Apostoli's very reliance upon Sodano's "interpretation" of the vision is a proof that something is missing from the Vatican's disclosure in 2000. For it can hardly be the case that the Mother of God envisioned a future Vatican functionary—much less Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the aider and abettor of scandal—as the authentic interpreter of Her message. Nor can it be the case that Our Lady would have permitted Her message to become the subject of *eight different interpretations* that contradict each other, as I have noted elsewhere.²⁷² Therefore, the Virgin's own explanation of the vision must exist and must have been withheld for some reason. The words of the Mother of God for which we seek can only be those which follow the "etc" that both Sodano and Bertone have avoided like the plague in a maneuver that would otherwise be inexplicable.

What Sort of Oracles Are These?

Having been deprived of the Virgin's own explanation of what the vision revealed in the year 1917 means, we are asked to rely on Cardinal Sodano's "interpretation" in the year 2000—an objectively ludicrous proposition given the immense magnitude of the Message of Fatima as an urgent prophecy conveyed to the whole world by the very Mother of God. Recall that this is the same Cardinal Sodano who was instrumental in covering up the Father Maciel scandal for decades. The very idea that this ecclesiastical politician and "fixer" has some special authority to tell us the meaning of the Fatima event is a mockery of the Mother of God and Her divine Son.

Yet, Fr. Apostoli writes: "Cardinal Sodano said that the children saw a 'prophetic vision,' which must be understood as symbolic..." (p. 81). Cardinal Sodano said? *Must*? But Cardinal Sodano has no authority at all in the matter, much less authority to tell us how we "must" understand the vision. *FFT* takes no notice of this fact. Instead, this privately published book, marketed on Amazon.com by an American publisher, labors to create the false impression that it is presenting official Church teaching on the meaning of the vision. But why is Fr. Apostoli not sounding the alarm that something must be gravely amiss because as of 2011 *we have no authoritative interpretation of the vision*, nearly a century after the Virgin conveyed it to the seers? Does anyone, even the author of *FFT*, really believe the Mother of God left us in this perilous situation?

Continuing to quote the former Secretary of State as if he were a Fatima oracle, *FFT* cites his mere opinion that the vision "does not

²⁷² See "Is There a Missing Text of the Third Secret?", http://www.fatimachallenge.com/index.php?Itemid=15&catid=25&id=67:is-there-a-missing-text-of-the-third-secret&option=com_content&view=article (video presentation).

describe photographically the details of future events” and “must be interpreted in a symbolic key.” (p. 82). According to this “symbolic key,” says Fr. Apostoli—quoting the former Cardinal Ratzinger’s non-binding theological commentary, which in turn follows Cardinal Sodano’s non-binding “interpretation”—the vision depicts only the threat of nuclear war, and the Angel with the flaming sword is only a symbol for nuclear weapons: “man himself, with his inventions, has forged the flaming sword.” (p. 83).

So, despite what the vision clearly depicts, we are asked to believe that: (a) there is no Angel with a flaming sword, (b) there is no future execution of a Pope, bishops, priests and laity by soldiers on a hill, and (c) there is no half-ruined city filled with corpses from which a hobbling Pope escapes before he is executed. Instead there is only a symbolically depicted threat of nuclear war. The Church and the world are supposed to rely with complete tranquility on the Secretary of State’s assurances that the vision does not foretell a divine chastisement, but only man’s inhumanity to man. Yes, as Fr. Apostoli would have it, *Sodano and his successor Bertone are literally the oracles we must consult on the fate of the world in light of Fatima!* Does anyone, even Fr. Apostoli, take that claim seriously?

Continuing to explain away what the vision plainly depicts, Fr. Apostoli—faithfully hewing to the Party Line—asserts that when Mary is seen repelling the destructive flames emanating toward the world from the Angel’s flaming sword, this means only that “Our Lady’s intervention is powerful enough to stop the chastisement of war.” (p. 83). Well, of course Our Lady *is* powerful enough to stop the chastisement of war, but the problem for Fr. Apostoli and the Party Line he defends is that in the vision we see that the chastisement depicted *has not been averted*. On the contrary, the city *is* in ruins and filled with bodies; the Pope *is* killed by a band of soldiers on the hill outside the ruined city; bishops, priests, religious and lay people *are* killed by the same band of soldiers.

Further, while we see that the flames emanating from the sword of the avenging Angel “died out in contact with the splendour that Our Lady radiated towards him from her right hand,” this happens in the context of the devastation, death, and martyrdom that do take place in the same vision. It would thus appear that the vision shows either that Our Lady obtains a stay of a divine chastisement that is nonetheless ultimately inflicted, or that She mitigates it in order to spare the rest of the world from destruction. But we cannot be certain of this because, in the absence of the missing explanatory text that must exist, we have only the opinions of two Vatican prelates with absolutely no competence in the matter. Once again: the claim

that the Mother of God left us in this situation of depending upon Sodano and Bertone for an understanding of this vision is a complete absurdity.

Based on the oracular Sodano/Bertone “interpretation”, we are also expected to consider “part of the past” Our Lady’s dire warning, in the second part of the Great Secret, that if the Consecration of Russia is not accomplished “The good will be martyred; the Holy Father will have much to suffer; *various nations will be annihilated.*” In fact, a scenario suggesting a future annihilation of nations *is exactly what we see in the vision*, as well as the Message of Akita that Cardinal Ratzinger described as “essentially the same.” But we must ignore the grim future the vision appears to depict and trust in Cardinal Sodano and Cardinal Bertone, says Fr. Apostoli—even though the Pope himself says we have no such obligation. Truly astonishing.

Concerning the execution of “a Bishop dressed in White” by a band of soldiers outside the city in ruins, Fr. Apostoli, aping the Party Line, reduces this event to John Paul II *not* being executed by a band of soldiers and *escaping* death at the hands of a lone assassin in the perfectly intact city of Rome. After all, he argues, the Pope “lost six pints of blood” and (quoting Bertone) “It was *as if* he had died, and then been snatched back from the jaws of death.” (p. 90). Close enough for government work! That is, the government of the Vatican city-state as exercised by Sodano and his successor Bertone, who had to wait patiently for Sodano the Fatima oracle to vacate his luxurious apartments after being replaced as Secretary of State.

To be serious, Cardinal Sodano patently falsified what the vision depicts when he first advanced this “interpretation” back in 2000. According to him, the Pope in the vision “makes his way with great difficulty towards the Cross amid the corpses of those who were martyred (bishops, priests, men and women Religious and many lay people), he too falls to the ground, *apparently* dead, under a hail of gunfire.”²⁷³ But this was plainly a deception. The Pope does not fall to the ground “*apparently*” dead. Rather, he “*was killed* by a group of soldiers who fired bullets and arrows at him...” Moreover, the Pope is not killed “amid the corpses of those who were martyred,” but rather the martyrdom of bishops, priests, religious and lay people occurs *after* he is killed and at the hands of *the same band of soldiers who kill the Pope*. As the text of the vision states: “and in *the same way* there died one after another the other Bishops, Priests, men and women Religious, and various lay people of different ranks and positions.”

On the other hand, the victims the Pope encounters as he hobbles through the half-ruined city are not martyrs, as Sodano falsely

²⁷³ Ibid.

suggests. Rather, they have all died *before* the martyrs on the hill *outside* the city, including the Pope, are slain by the soldiers: “before reaching there [the steep hill] the Holy Father passed through a big city half in ruins and half trembling with halting step, afflicted with pain and sorrow, he *prayed for the souls of the corpses* he met on his way.” Further, it is highly implausible that all the dead in the ruined city are martyrs. But even if the vision depicted a city full of dead martyrs, versus the martyrs on the hill that Sodano glosses over, they would not need the Pope’s prayers, for they would have entered immediately into the Beatific Vision.

In short, Sodano twisted the vision to suit his polemical aim of consigning the Message of Fatima to the past. To put it mildly, his “interpretation” has been met with widespread incredulity among the Catholic faithful. To put it bluntly, the interpretation is a joke. But Fr. Apostoli insists that we take it seriously and indeed that we literally *bet our lives and even our souls on it*.

Here it seems no absurdity is large enough to arouse Fr. Apostoli’s skepticism concerning Sodano’s twisted interpretation. Addressing the insurmountable objection that “John Paul II could not have been the Pope of the Third Secret because he did not die,” he asserts (without evidence) that John Paul “recognized himself as the Pope who was slain in the vision...” (p. 212). A *living* Pope recognizes himself as a *slain* Pope? Fr. Apostoli further asserts that John Paul “knew about this objection, which is the reason he said he came to the very threshold of death and should have died, but Our Lady prevented him from doing so.” (p. 212) But he fails to quote any statement by John Paul that the vision depicts the failed assassination attempt and that he is thus the Pope in the vision. That is because no such statement exists.

Fr. Apostoli adds his own gloss to the Sodano/Bertone “interpretation” with even more absurd results. Having contended only a few lines earlier that the Pope who is killed in the vision is John Paul II, who was *not* killed, he attempts to explain the subsequent mass execution of martyrs seen in the vision: “Just as the Holy Father was killed [?] in the vision, so were all those who followed *after him*. These were the men and women who died as martyrs because of their love for the Church. We have already seen the tremendous number of martyrs in Russia. There were countless others who sacrificed their lives as well.” (p. 81). So, the author of *FFT* seriously proposes that the 20th century martyrs in the Soviet Union, who died *before* the assassination attempt in 1981, somehow died *after* John Paul II “died” but did not die. And while the deaths of the 20th century martyrs are to be taken literally, the “death” of John

Paul is to be taken figuratively—in one and the same vision!

It seems Sodano’s “symbolic key” is an amazingly rubbery device, bending in any direction in which one wishes to twist it. But here Fr. Apostoli contradicts Sodano/Bertone, who would have us believe that the martyrs in the vision die *before* the Pope, not after. Well, which is it? Does the Pope in the vision “die” figuratively before or after the martyrs die literally? Either or both, apparently. Self-contradictions do not matter so long as the Party Line is maintained. The vision “means” whatever it needs to mean in order to relegate the Fatima prophecies to the 20th century and their culmination to the year 1981 according to the preconceived intention of the Secretary of State, who has somehow usurped control over the Message of Fatima.

Clearly, the Church and the world are most urgently in need of the Virgin’s remedy for this utter nonsense: Her own words explaining the events in the vision and their historical context, just as She explained to the children a vision of hell far less ambiguous than the vision of the “Bishop dressed in White.” Fr. Apostoli’s own contortions demonstrate that the Virgin’s precious explanation is, as Socci says, “well hidden” somewhere in the Vatican.

Obscuring Pope Benedict’s Revelations

Since *FFT* was published four months after Benedict’s explosive statements during his pilgrimage to Fatima, during which he repudiated the Party Line, Fr. Apostoli had to confront that development. The approach *FFT* takes is to pretend the Party Line remains intact despite Benedict’s clear rejection of it, which *FFT* studiously avoids mentioning, although Socci has proclaimed it to the world. Worse, *FFT*’s discussion of the Pope’s remarks deliberately obscures their import. For one thing, *FFT*’s quotation of the Vatican’s English translation of the Pope’s remarks during the flight to Fatima departs from the Vatican text and is suspiciously cropped as shown by the italics:

Vatican Translation

As for the new things which we can find in this message today, there is also the fact that attacks on the Pope and the Church come not only from without, but the sufferings of the Church come precisely from within the Church, from the sin existing within the Church.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁴ “Interview of the Holy Father Benedict XVI with the Journalists During the Flight to Portugal,” May 11, 2010, at www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2010/may/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20100511_portogallo-interview_en.html. In the original Italian remarks: “*Quanto alle novità che possiamo oggi scoprire in questo messaggio è anche che non solo da fuori vengono attacchi al Papa e alla*

Translation in FFT

Attacks on the Pope and the Church do not come only from the outside, but the sufferings of the Church come precisely from within the Church, from the sin existing within the Church. (p. 215)

Notice that the key phrase “As for *the new things* which we can find *in this message* [the Third Secret] today, there is also the fact that...” is removed and the sentence is made to begin with the word “Attacks”. This neatly eliminates the Pope’s explicit linkage of “new things which we can find in this message” to attacks on the Pope and the Church by *internal* enemies, not the band of soldiers seen in the vision—a clear indication that there is more to the Secret than the vision alone.

That internal enemies of the Church are involved in the events foretold by the Secret must be why Benedict chose the words: “*beyond the moment indicated in the vision, it is spoken, it is seen, the necessity of a passion of the Church...*” [“*oltre il momento indicato nella visione, si parla, si vede la necessità di una passione della chiesa...*”]. If the Secret involves something *spoken* beyond the moment indicated in the vision, it could only be in a text that accompanies the vision since the vision does not *speak* about attacks on the Church by enemies within nor make *any reference at all, even symbolically*, to such attacks. In fact, there are no spoken words in the vision save the thrice-repeated admonition of the avenging Angel: “Penance, Penance, Penance.” As for what the vision depicts wordlessly, it is exactly the contrary of an internal attack upon the Church: an external attack by a band of soldiers. The conclusion is inescapable: the Pope must have learned of the Fatima prophecy concerning internal subversion of the Church from another source related to the Secret, a source not yet revealed: i.e., the Secret Still Hidden.

FFT does concede that the Pope “linked the suffering caused by these accusations [of sexual abuse] and the terrible sins committed by some priests *with that seen in the vision*.” (p. 215). But Fr. Apostoli avers that the Pope has merely “further interpreted the Third Secret...”—meaning the vision standing alone. (Ibid.) Once again we encounter the notion that the vision is something to be “interpreted” without guidance from Our Lady, including such “further” interpretation as might emerge at any given moment. Thus the Third Secret, reduced to the vision alone, becomes an endless work-in-progress whose current meaning depends upon the eye of

chiesa, ma le sofferenze della chiesa vengono proprio dall'interno della chiesa, dal peccato che esiste nella chiesa.”

the beholder, like some piece of modern art in a museum. This is surely not what the Mother of God conveyed to the seers.

So, what does the suffering depicted in the vision, wherein soldiers execute a future Pope and then bishops, priests and laity after him, have to do with the suffering due to sexual abuse committed by priests? There is no apparent connection. Hence, as Socci has noted, the Pope's linkage of the vision to the priestly sexual scandals erupting in recent years must point to what we already know: that there is a text wherein the Virgin provides the missing connection. This text most probably foretells how a future Pope meets a violent end at the hands of soldiers outside a ruined city filled with corpses in the midst of a post-apocalyptic scenario related to an internal crisis in the Church, leading to a chastisement of both the Church and the world.

Here we must consider once again that the Message of Akita, which the former Cardinal Ratzinger has described as "essentially the same"²⁷⁵ as the Message of Fatima, predicts just such a twin chastisement on account of sin in the Church. Read carefully Our Lady's warning to Sister Sasagawa in an apparition approved as authentic after a diocesan investigation by Bishop John Shojiro Ito, the local ordinary:

As I told you, if men do not repent and better themselves, the Father will inflict a terrible punishment on all humanity. It will be punishment greater than the deluge, such as one will never have seen before. *Fire will fall from the sky and will wipe out a great part of humanity, the good as well as the bad, sparing neither priests nor faithful.* The survivors will find themselves so desolate that they will envy the dead. The only arms that will remain for you will be the Rosary and Sign left by My Son. Each day recite the prayers of the Rosary. With the Rosary, pray for the pope, the bishops, and the priests.

The work of the devil will infiltrate even the Church in such a way that one will see cardinals opposing cardinals, bishops against other bishops. The priests who venerate Me will be scorned and opposed by their confreres...churches and altars sacked, *the Church will be full of those who accept compromise and the demon will press many priests and consecrated souls to leave the service of the Lord.* The demon will be especially implacable

²⁷⁵ Howard Dee, former Philippine ambassador to the Vatican, revealed in a 1998 interview with *Inside the Vatican* magazine that "Bishop Ito was certain Akita was an extension of Fatima, and Cardinal Ratzinger personally confirmed to me that these two messages, of Fatima and Akita, are essentially the same." *Catholic World News*, October 11, 2001, www.cwnews.com/news/viewstory.cfm?recnum=20583. The Message has apparently since been disparaged by the Japanese bishops' conference, although the local ordinary, Bishop Ito, investigated the apparitions and found them worthy of belief.

against souls consecrated to God. The thought of the loss of so many souls is the cause of My sadness. If sins increase in number and gravity, there will be no longer pardon for them.

Given the recent geological and nuclear catastrophe in Japan, centered on the very diocese in which Our Lady of Akita appeared (the Diocese of Sendai), we ought to be alarmed by the connection between Akita and Fatima, between the words quoted above and what must be contained in the text of the Secret that predicts an attack on the Church by her own members sinning against her—the *one thing we do not see in the vision standing alone*.

Finally, *FFT* simply ignores the Pope's statement at the Fatima Shrine that "One deceives himself if he thinks that the prophetic mission of Fatima is concluded." There can be only one reason *FFT* so conspicuously fails to mention the Pope's dramatic admission: it refutes the lie that the Fatima prophecies "belong to the past" and that all that remains of the Fatima message is prayer and penance. But then nothing could be clearer than that *FFT* was written to defend the Party Line, no matter how untenable it has become. That is, it was written to promote precisely what the Pope called a deception "that the prophetic mission of Fatima is concluded." Thus, the Pope himself indicts the undertaking.

A Non-Answer to Objections

In a scant seven pages, an appendix to *FFT* (pp. 263-269) purports to answer all objections to the claim that the vision of the "Bishop dressed in White" is the entirety of the Third Secret of Fatima. Here we give the appendix the passing treatment it deserves. For rather than answering objections the appendix avoids them, addressing only four of a multitude, and those four only weakly:

Objection #1: "The original Third Secret was written on one sheet of paper." That is not a fair statement of the objection. Fairly stated, the objection is that *a* text pertaining to the Third Secret was written on a single sheet of paper, as the Auxiliary Bishop of Fatima could discern when he held the envelope containing it up to the light before it was transmitted to the Vatican. That sheet contains 25 lines of text—not the 62 lines of the vision. Cardinal Ottaviani attested "categorically" to a text of 25 lines, as Cardinal Bertone himself admitted on camera during his appearance on *Porta a Porta* while claiming (absurdly) that Ottaviani mistook the 62 lines for 25 lines. Evidently, we are dealing with two different texts, just as Archbishop Capovilla confirmed in his testimony, which *FFT* (like Bertone and Sodano) ignores.

FFT quotes *TMF* for the proposition that when Lucia was asked

to authenticate the Secret during a purported meeting with Bertone on April 27, 2000 she stated: “This is my letter,” and “this is my writing.” In the first place, the text of the vision is not a letter. *FFT* simply ignores that discrepancy. And here *FFT* commits the same fatal misstep as Bertone in *Last Visionary*, stating that during the purported authentication meeting in 2000 Bertone “presented two envelopes to Sister Lucia. The first or outer envelope contained the second envelope, which held the Third Secret.” (p. 264). As we know from the *Porta a Porta* telecast, however, Bertone produced *four* envelopes, *three* of which were prepared by Lucia: the Bishop of Fatima’s sealed outer envelope, Sister Lucia’s unsealed outer envelope, and the *two* sealed envelopes on which Lucia had recorded the “express order of Our Lady”—which Bertone concealed for seven years—that the contents of these *two* envelopes were not to be opened before 1960. Yet Bertone produced only *one* text pertaining to the Third Secret, that of the vision, but not the text of 25 lines. Moreover, he failed to produce the Capovilla envelope kept in the papal apartment, even though its existence is now admitted. *FFT* ignores these enormous and telling discrepancies as well.

FFT repeats uncritically the claim in Bertone’s second edition of *Last Visionary of Fatima* (2007), now entitled *Last Secret of Fatima* (2010), that Lucia supposedly told him the text she authenticated in April 2000 “is the Third Secret, and I never wrote any other.” But this purported statement of the visionary was never mentioned in *Last Visionary* or anywhere else in Bertone’s account over the previous ten years, including *TMF* in 2000. It suddenly “jumped out of the top hat” (to borrow Socci’s phrase) after Lucia was conveniently dead and could no longer contradict the words attributed to her for the first time in 2010. Like the claim that Lucia “confessed” that she invented the connection between the Secret and 1960—a demonstrable lie—this *post mortem* surprise revelation is unworthy of belief.

On this point it must be mentioned that while *Last Visionary* reveals that during the April 2000 authentication meeting Lucia purportedly stated “Yes, these are my *sheets* of paper [*fogli*]... they are the *sheets* of paper [*fogli*] that I used” in writing down the Secret, on *Porta a Porta* Bertone produced only *one* sheet of paper from a notebook on which Lucia had written the text of the vision. Hence at least one sheet of paper pertaining to the Secret is missing. Recall that when faced with this damning inadvertent admission, Bertone simply altered Sister Lucia’s statement in the later-published *Last Secret*. Now it reads: “this is my paper” instead of “these are my *sheets* of paper... these are the *sheets* I used.” Like Bertone’s other constantly morphing “quotations” of the visionary—none of which

are verifiably recorded in audio or video format—this one lacks all credibility.²⁷⁶

Objection #2: *FFT* purports to address the objection that “The text of the Secret contains no words attributed to the Blessed Virgin Mary.” The “answer” to this objection is the naked assertion that “the Third Secret was not conveyed in words by Our Lady, but in the various visions the children saw.” But that is no answer. Like Bertone and Sodano, *FFT* ignores the telltale “etc” at the end of Our Lady’s momentous reference to the dogmas of the Faith and their preservation in Portugal. Like Bertone and Sodano, *FFT* pretends that the “etc” does not exist and that Our Lady had nothing to say about the meaning of an enigmatic vision for which Sodano/Bertone have provided the “interpretation”, whose absurdities I have already examined. Like Bertone and Sodano, *FFT* asks no questions about what follows the “etc”—evidently because *FFT*’s author, like Bertone and Sodano, does not wish to explore the implications for the credibility of the Party Line.

Objection #3: “The Vatican’s copy of the Third Secret contains no information about a nuclear holocaust, a great apostasy, or the satanic infiltration of the Church.” In purporting to address this objection, *FFT*’s author ignores his own earlier argument that the vision depicts the threat of a nuclear holocaust. More important, he ignores Pope Benedict’s linkage of the Third Secret to events “*beyond* the moment indicated in the vision” which indicate precisely “satanic infiltration of the Church” by internal enemies whose attacks on the Pope and the Church are manifesting themselves in a “really terrifying way.”

FFT ignores as well the testimony of witness after witness who read the Third Secret in its entirety and revealed that it pertains to apostasy in the Church accompanied by a chastisement of the world at large.²⁷⁷ As no less than Cardinal Ratzinger revealed in 1984, for example, the Secret concerns “dangers *threatening the faith* and the life of the Christian, and therefore of *the world*” and reveals “things which correspond to what has been *announced* in Scripture and *said* again and again in many other Marian apparitions...”²⁷⁸ But the vision standing alone does not *announce* anything in Sacred Scripture, nor does it *say* anything that has been *said* in numerous other Marian apparitions—such as the one at Akita, in which Our

²⁷⁶ See *The Secret Still Hidden*, pp. 130 and 144-152 for comparative charts of Bertone’s ever-changing account of what Lucia is supposed to have said to him concerning the connection of the Secret to 1960, the envelopes and texts involved in the Secret, the Sodano/Bertone “interpretation” of the Secret, and the Consecration of Russia.

²⁷⁷ See *The Secret Still Hidden*, Chapter 3 for a chronological account of these testimonies.

²⁷⁸ “Here is Why the Faith Is in Crisis,” *Jesus* magazine, November 11, 1984, p. 79.

Lady *speaks* of a great part of the world being destroyed by heavenly fire if “men do not repent and better themselves.” Yet the same Cardinal Ratzinger has revealed that the Message of Fatima and the Message of Akita are essentially the same. If the two messages are essentially the same, something is missing from the essence of the Third Secret: the *words* of Our Lady of Fatima, which would comport with Our Lady of Akita’s *spoken prediction* of a coming apocalypse, as seen (but without explanation) in the vision of the white-clad bishop being executed outside a devastated city.

Only a missing text containing the words of the Virgin on the vision’s meaning would explain events occurring “beyond the moment indicated in the vision” of which Pope Benedict speaks, and “dangers threatening the faith and the life of the Christian, and therefore of the world” of which the former Cardinal Ratzinger spoke. And it is that very text whose existence Father Joseph Schweigl, sent by Pius XII to interrogate Sister Lucia in her convent at Tuy, confirmed long ago: “I may not reveal anything with regard to the Third Secret, but I am able to say that it has two parts: One part concerns the Pope. The other part is the logical continuation—though I may not say anything—of the words: ‘In Portugal, the dogma of the Faith will always be preserved etc.’”²⁷⁹

On this point *FFT* cites what it claims is a “clear and definitive statement” by Archbishop Capovilla, quoted in a news story, that there is no such missing text: “There are not two truths from Fatima, nor is there any fourth secret. The text which I read in 1959 is the same distributed by the Vatican...” (*FFT*, p. 267) But this “clear and definitive statement” is, on close reading, a carefully worded evasion of the real issue. No one denies that the text the Archbishop read in 1959 is an authentic part of the Secret. Nor does anyone claim that there is literally a “fourth secret” of Fatima. The issue, rather, is the existence of a text that *accompanies* the wordless vision in which Our Lady explains its meaning so that we do not have to rely on such people as a scandal-plagued Vatican Secretary of State to provide absurd and self-contradictory “interpretations” the better part of a century later.

Here *FFT* conveniently fails to mention what really is a “clear and definitive” statement by Capovilla: “Exactly so! [*Per l'appunto*]” in answer to the question whether there are two different envelopes and two different texts comprising the Secret in its totality. Nor does *FFT* mention Capovilla’s “clear and definitive statement”—captured on audiotape and published in the Italian press—that there was an “attachment” to the text of the vision that has never been revealed

²⁷⁹ *The Whole Truth About Fatima*, Vol. III, p. 710.

or even mentioned by Bertone/Sodano. Archbishop Capovilla *has never denied either statement*, yet *FFT* pretends these statements were never given.²⁸⁰

Further, *FFT* fails to mention that when asked during the video interview—an interview Bertone himself arranged—whether the vision of the white-clad bishop was the text he read in 1959, Capovilla hedged, stating: “I have said it, and I repeat it gladly now: that is the text. I don’t recall it word for word, but the *central nucleus* is the same.”²⁸¹ The *central nucleus*? What is that supposed to mean? Is it the same text he read or not? This was easy enough to confirm, as the text of the vision had been published to the world and Capovilla need only have examined it to refresh his recollection. Yet the Archbishop claimed a lack of memory regarding the exact contents of *a text at his very fingertips*. Small wonder: he had already confirmed the existence of the companion text in statements he has never denied and cannot deny because he knows the companion text exists and has himself revealed that there was an “attachment” to the text of the vision. Hence, the ambiguous reference to a “nucleus,” suggesting that something surrounding this “nucleus” has yet to be revealed.

Objection #4: The last objection *FFT* purports to address is that “The text released by the Vatican is not written in the form of a letter.” Here *FFT* descends to outright silliness. The author concedes that “some of the clerics who lived at the time the Third Secret was written mentioned it in terms of a letter,” yet he argues that “this was not an emphatic point they were making.” (p. 267) So the testimony of all the clerics who attested that the Secret involves a letter from Lucia²⁸² should be disregarded because they did not exclaim when so attesting: “This is an emphatic point!” Here, once again, Fr. Apostoli appears to forget what he himself had written in the earlier pages of his own book. In Chapter 16 of *FFT* he quotes the personal diary of John XXIII concerning the day the commissary of the Holy Office brought him a text of the Secret: “[he] brought me *the letter* containing the Third Part of the Secrets of Fatima. I intend

²⁸⁰ Recall that at *The Fatima Challenge* Conference at the Ergife Hotel in Rome in May 2010, the late Giuseppe De Carli, co-author with Bertone of both *The Last Visionary of Fatima* and *The Last Secret of Fatima*, claimed to be in possession of a letter in which Capovilla denies his testimony to Paolini about the existence of two envelopes and two texts comprising the Secret *in toto* (“*Per l'appunto!*”). But De Carli refused to provide a copy or even to quote from the letter, stating that it was “private correspondence.” An alleged secret denial of testimony never denied publicly is typical of the manner in which the Party Line is defended by its partisans. But every defense only adds to the grounds for suspicion.

²⁸¹ *The Secret Still Hidden*, p. 182.

²⁸² Cf. *The Secret Still Hidden*, pp. 17-18.

to read it with my confessor.” (p. 211) But as *FFT* would have it, we are not to make anything of this papal notation of a text of the Secret in epistolary form because John XXIII did not add: “and I note this emphatically.”

As it does with so many other key facts, *FFT* fails to mention Sister Lucia’s own testimony to Father Hubert Jongen: “I communicated the third part [i.e. the Third Secret] in a letter to the Bishop of Leiria...”²⁸³ In his evident determination to explain away all evidence contrary to the Party Line, Fr. Apostoli would no doubt argue that we should disregard even the visionary’s own statement that the Secret involves a letter because she did not state this with sufficient *emphasis*. Also conveniently overlooked is the revelation in the famous Vatican-initiated press release of 1960 that “most likely *the letter* will never be opened in which Sister Lucia wrote down *the words* which Our Lady confided as a secret to the three little shepherds” because (among other specious reasons) “the Vatican already knows the contents of *the letter*.”²⁸⁴

Quoting Bertone, *FFT* assures us that “the point about the document being written in the form of a letter is not very important. He [Bertone] said of some of his critics that ‘they look at everything through the magnifying glass of their own biases. They latch on to the most unbelievable things.’” (p. 268) Yes, what could be more “unbelievable” than a string of clerics, the Pope, the Vatican in 1960 and Sister Lucia herself attesting that the Secret involves a text in the form of a letter—a letter we have never seen. No, instead of turning our “magnifying glass” on such trivia as a missing letter from the last surviving Fatima visionary recording the words of the Mother of God, we should put on the blinders Fr. Apostoli prescribes for the faithful and place all of our trust in the Vatican Secretary of State.

According to EWTN—the veritable network of “Operation False Friends”—quoting the *National Catholic Register*, which EWTN now owns, *FFT* “answers every possible objection so thoroughly and so clearly with no detail or fact ignored or unexplained.”²⁸⁵ As we can see, however, *FFT* does not “answer” objections, but simply ignores them or covers them up. And the claim that “no fact or detail has been overlooked” is simply laughable. But at least we have here another admission of what *FFT* is really all about: not a tribute to the Message of Fatima, but rather another attempt to obfuscate the fatal infirmities in the Party Line by “answering objections” without answering them. *FFT* as a whole is typical of what has been called

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 18 and n. 43.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 26, quoting ANI press release.

²⁸⁵ See http://www.wafusa.org/the_message.html.

“Bertone’s Method.”²⁸⁶ Like Bertone, Fr. Apostoli makes a great show of responding to objections, but produces instead only evasions, inadvertent admissions and telling silences.

Defending the Consecration that Wasn’t

Unswervingly loyal to the Party Line, *FFT* also dutifully advances its claim that the consecration of Russia was accomplished by ceremonies from which any mention of Russia was *deliberately omitted* so that the Russian Orthodox would not be offended.²⁸⁷ We are expected to believe that the current condition of Russia under the Putin dictatorship represents its miraculous “conversion” and, even more improbably, that the current state of the world represents the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart that Our Lady promised if the Consecration of Russia were carried out in accordance with Her request. Recall here the keynotes of Sister Lucia’s decades of testimony that the Consecration of Russia needs to make mention of Russia specifically—as if this were a debatable proposition! (See Chapter 3.)

Like Sodano and Bertone, Fr. Apostoli does not deny that Sister Lucia gave the testimony set forth above. Rather, hewing to the Party Line, *FFT* argues that she changed her mind for some unknown reason. The book cites the usual “evidence” for this sudden about-face: computer-generated letters from “Lucia” that first began to appear in 1989. (*FFT*, p. 197) We are asked to believe that a cloistered nun switched to a word processor at the age of 82—but only when writing about the Consecration of Russia, while continuing to handwrite her other correspondence. These computerized “letters from Lucia” have long since been debunked as patent fakes.

FFT cites one such purported letter, from March of 1989, wherein “Sister Lucia” inadvertently makes the fatal concession that the 1984 consecration ceremony, which failed to mention Russia, involved only “those bishops who wished to associate themselves with His Holiness.” (p. 197) Thus *FFT* presents us with a collegial Consecration of Russia—called for by the very Mother of God—in which the bishops could participate if they felt inclined to “associate” themselves with the Roman Pontiff. Or perhaps they had more pressing business to attend to that day than obtaining world peace, the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart and the salvation of many souls. Ridiculous.

²⁸⁶ Cf. *The Secret Still Hidden*, Ch. 11.

²⁸⁷ Recall that Cardinal Tomko revealed to *Inside the Vatican* that “Rome [i.e. certain of the Pope’s advisors] fears the Russian Orthodox might regard it as an ‘offense’ if Rome were to make specific mention of Russia in such a prayer, as if Russia especially is in need of help when the whole world, including the post-Christian West, faces profound problems ...”.

The purported letter concludes with this manifestly dubious affirmation by “Lucia”: “Afterward people asked me if it [the Consecration] was made, and I replied: ‘Yes.’ From that time, it is made.” Really? But why would “Lucia” suddenly declare in 1989 that “it was made” when she had said over and over again before 1989 that it was *not* made—in either 1984 or 1982—because of the failure to mention Russia or to obtain the participation of the world’s Catholic bishops? No explanation is given. Like Sodano and Bertone, Fr. Apostoli simply asserts that Sister Lucia reversed herself—and doesn’t ask why.

In yet another inadvertent admission, Fr. Apostoli surmises: “John Paul II chose to follow Pius XII’s formula for consecrating Russia *not by name*, but by a *veiled reference*.” (p. 195) Evidently, he is referring to Pius XII’s consecrations of the world on October 31 and December 8 of 1942, following which Sister Lucia revealed that while these acts had not fulfilled Our Lady’s request, nevertheless Our Lord had promised her during Lent of 1943 that “the present distress [World War II] would be shortened,” which indeed it was. As Winston Churchill observed regarding the history of the war, in early 1943—that is, almost immediately after the consecration of the world in December 1942—“the hinges of fate turned in favor of the Allies,” who won every major battle thereafter. As already noted in Chapter 3, however, in July of 1946 Lucia told Professor William Thomas Walsh that: “What Our Lady wants is that the Pope and all the bishops of the world shall consecrate *Russia* to Her Immaculate Heart on one special day.”

Lucia’s insistence on a public consecration of Russia *by name* in a ceremony involving the Pope and the world’s bishops, acting jointly, was in keeping with what Our Lord Himself had revealed to her in 1936. In response to her question why He would not convert Russia without an explicit consecration of that nation to the Immaculate Heart, Our Lord replied: “Because I want My whole Church to acknowledge that consecration as a triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary so that it may extend its cult later on and put the devotion of the Immaculate Heart beside the devotion to My Sacred Heart.”

It seems Fr. Apostoli has failed to consider the implications of his own argument that a “veiled reference” to Russia by John Paul II sufficed: Given that Pius XII’s “veiled reference” manifestly failed to produce the promised conversion of Russia, the end of the persecution of Catholics and world peace, what sense did it make for John Paul to *repeat the same inadequate formula* some 42 years later?

In this connection Fr. Apostoli has overlooked a major historical

fact: On July 7, 1952 Pius XII, acting in response to petitions from the still-persecuted Catholics of Russia that he “consecrate the entire people of Russia, in the anxieties of the present moment, to the Immaculate Heart,” pronounced such a consecration in his apostolic letter *Sacro Vergente Anno*: “just as, a few years ago, we consecrated the whole world to the Immaculate Heart of the Virgin Mother of God, so today, in a very special way, we consecrate all the peoples of Russia to the same Immaculate Heart...”²⁸⁸ There was also a private consecration ceremony in the Vatican in which only Pope Pius participated.

Yet not even this explicit mention of Russia by Pius XII produced the miracle promised by Our Lady because the participation of the bishops in a great public act of the whole Church was lacking. Unfortunately, it seems Pius XII was not made aware of what Lucia had insisted upon repeatedly and would continue to insist upon for decades following 1952: that what Our Lady had prescribed was that “the Pope and all the bishops of the world shall consecrate Russia to Her Immaculate Heart on one special day.”

In an appendix on this subject, *FFT* argues in favor of a “Consecration of Russia” that avoids mentioning Russia by contending that after the 1942 “veiled reference” ceremony by Pius XII, Lucia “never raised an objection...” (p. 251) Nonsense. We have already noted Lucia’s repeated testimony to numerous witnesses that the only consecration of Russia that would suffice is one that specifically identifies Russia as its object. Moreover, as just shown, Our Lord Himself warned Lucia that what Our Lady promised at Fatima would not be obtained without a public and explicit consecration of that nation, not a “veiled reference.” And history bears this out: Russia has not converted and the world does not have peace.

Fr. Apostoli concludes his argument for the consecration-that-wasn’t by quoting a purported statement by Lucia to Cardinal Bertone concerning whether Russia was properly consecrated in 1984: “I’ve already said [when? where?] that the consecration Our Lady wished for was performed in 1984, and that it was accepted by Heaven.” (p. 198) But the words attributed to Lucia are part of Bertone’s two-hour “interview” of the seer on November 17, 2001, as to which we have no transcript or audio or video recording, but only a communiqué from Bertone providing a scant 463 words from the seer out of two hours of alleged conversation with her, including exactly *nine* words concerning the very matter about which she was

²⁸⁸ *Sacro Vergente Anno* (1952), n. 9 (“... come pochi anni fa abbiamo consacrato tutto il mondo al Cuore immacolato della vergine Madre di Dio, così ora, in modo specialissimo, consacriamo tutti i popoli della Russia al medesimo Cuore immacolato...”).

supposedly interrogated at length: the Third Secret of Fatima.²⁸⁹ I agree with Socci's assessment of this so-called interview: "The few words attributed to her... are such as not to have objective credibility."²⁹⁰

Bear in mind that the source of Lucia's purported statement is the same Cardinal Bertone who claimed for seven years that she "confessed" to him that Our Lady had never linked disclosure of the Secret to the year 1960, only to reveal on camera in 2007 the two sealed envelopes on which Sister Lucia had written down precisely the "express order of Our Lady" that the envelopes were not to be opened before 1960. This is the same Cardinal Bertone who claims to have had a total of some sixteen hours of conversations with Lucia of which not a single word was recorded in any objectively verifiable manner. This is the same Bertone whose "quotations" of Lucia on key issues change every time he repeats them.²⁹¹ And this is the same Bertone whose account is so full of holes that there are literally 101 reasons to doubt its veracity.²⁹²

But let us suppose for argument's sake that Lucia was finally induced to repudiate her own prior testimony on the necessity of Russia's explicit consecration to the Immaculate Heart by the Pope and the bishops acting together. When a steady and reliable witness suddenly reverses her lifelong testimony without explanation, a reasonable observer can only conclude that the witness has been tampered with. Only this would explain why defenders of the Party Line have never offered any explanation for Lucia's abrupt about-face on a matter so fundamental to the Message of Fatima. There is no need to decide the question, however, for no matter what Sister Lucia is alleged to have said toward the end of her life, the fact remains that Russia could not have been consecrated in ceremonies that deliberately avoided any mention of Russia for the specious reasons offered by the proponents of the "substitute" or "compromise" ceremonies. The "consecration of Russia" without mention of Russia is just more utter nonsense in defense of the Party Line.

Now, if our own experience confirms beyond doubt that we cannot obtain the promises of Our Lady of Fatima without a Consecration of Russia that fulfills two conditions—explicit mention of Russia *and* the participation the world's bishops—why persist in doing the wrong thing in 1982 and 1984? We have heard it attributed

²⁸⁹ For a complete exposition of the details that render the "interview" completely incredible, see *The Secret Still Hidden*, Chapter 5.

²⁹⁰ Socci, *The Fourth Secret of Fatima*, p. 179.

²⁹¹ Cf. *The Secret Still Hidden*, pp. 130 and 144-152.

²⁹² Cf. Ferrara, *The Secret Still Hidden*, Appendix II; accessible online at <http://www.secretstillhidden.com/pdf/appendix2.pdf>.

to various famous personages, from Ben Franklin to Albert Einstein, that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. It is not going too far to say that these repeated attempts to “consecrate Russia” without mentioning Russia are an insane approach to the simple task Our Lady of Fatima has set before the leadership of the Church.

But what is to account for this insane approach? We know the answer: John Paul II's advisors talked him out of a true and proper Consecration of Russia because, in their manifestly fallible judgment, it would offend the Russian Orthodox (see Chapter 3). Tellingly, *FFT* cites the following purported statement by Lucia to Father Kondor (vice-postulator for the causes of canonization for Francisco and Jacinta), shortly before the 1984 consecration ceremony: “The reply she gave me was that now the Holy Father will do all that is in his power.” (p. 196) Regarding Father Kondor's claim, *FFT* asserts—without providing the least evidence—that “The Pope was happy with this reply [to Father Kondor]. After all, if the Pope did all he could and it was not enough, then the consecration could not be made by him or any other Pope.”

The Pope did “all that is in his power”? Was the mention of Russia by name beyond the power of the Supreme Pontiff? The Pope need only have opened his mouth to utter a single word. And yet he did not do so. He did not do so because his advisors—no doubt including the Secretary of State—were of the opinion that “the Russian Orthodox might regard it as an ‘offense’ if Rome were to make specific mention of Russia in such a prayer, as if Russia especially is in need of help when the whole world, including the post-Christian West, faces profound problems...” After all, what did the Mother of God know about diplomacy and ecumenical relations when She appeared at Fatima to ask for Russia's consecration? She had not even bothered to consult the Secretary of State in such a delicate matter! As for the participation of the world's bishops, how could a mere Pope be expected to command the bishops to do anything in the age of “collegiality” inaugurated by Vatican II?

A Most Revealing Statement

In the aforementioned appendix *FFT* quotes Bishop Paul Josef Cordes to devastating effect—devastating, that is, to the Party Line:

I recall that [Pope John Paul II] thought, some time before [the Consecration], of mentioning Russia in the prayer of benediction. *But at the suggestion of his collaborators he abandoned the idea.* He could not risk such a direct provocation of the Soviet leader. The Pope also decided not to mention

Russia directly *out of sensitivity to the Orthodox bishops* he had invited to join in the consecration prayer. So for good reasons, he followed the discreet approach of Pope Pius XII and of the bishops at the Second Vatican Council, where he himself was very prominent. (p. 251)

One could write a short book on the implications of this statement alone. Here a few salient remarks will have to suffice. First of all, the foremost of John Paul's "collaborators" concerning the Consecration of Russia was no less than the Virgin Mary, Mother of God. It was Her advice that should have been followed, not the advice of assorted ecclesiastical bureaucrats presiding over a Church in crisis in a world in crisis. To do exactly what Our Lady had requested was all the more incumbent on John Paul given that, as he himself acknowledged, She had saved his life during the 1981 assassination attempt.

The idea that consecrating Russia by name would be "a direct provocation of the Soviet leader" represents worldly wisdom at its worst. Consider that the second part of the Great Secret, known to the world long before 1984 and published by the Vatican itself in 2000 as part of the commentary in *TMF*, plainly declares: "If My requests are heeded, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace; if not, *she will spread her errors throughout the world*, causing wars and persecutions of the Church..." If publication of this heavenly indictment of Russia's role in the worldwide spread of error, war and persecution of the Church was not a "direct provocation of the Soviet leader," why would the consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart "provoke" him? If anything, "the Russian leader" in 1984 (Konstantin Chernenko) would probably have found the ceremony amusing. The idea that, as *FFT* suggests, an explicit consecration of Russia would have caused "reprisals by the president of the Soviet Union" who would "send Russian tanks and troops into Poland" is ludicrous.

Furthermore, as already noted, in 1952 Pope Pius XII explicitly consecrated Russia by name in an apostolic letter published to the world, albeit without the necessary participation of the bishops in a public ceremony. Yet this mention of Russia did not "provoke the Soviet leader" at the time, the diabolical maniac Josef Stalin (who died in 1953). This fact alone dispels the fantasy of Soviet retaliation for any mention of Russia in the Consecration of Russia.

Putting aside the lack of any evidence for this preposterous theory, are we to believe that the Queen of Heaven would prescribe a ceremony that would provoke war with Russia instead of preventing it? Consider what *FFT* is arguing here: that what the Mother of God, *Virgo Prudentissima*, requested at Fatima was dangerous to the world

unless amended by Vatican diplomats! But since the very effect of the Consecration was to be Russia's conversion, how could it possibly have been the cause of war with Russia? Would the Mother of God and Her divine Son be powerless to restrain "the Soviet leader" if he were "provoked" by Russia's explicit consecration? Evidently there is no limit to the size of the whoppers the faithful are expected to swallow for the sake of the Party Line.

As for Bishop Cordes's claim that John Paul decided not to mention Russia "out of sensitivity to the Orthodox bishops" he had invited to participate in the 1984 ceremony—the first time we have heard of this invitation—this was not some social event at which one wishes to avoid offending the guests. This was supposed to be a dramatic public appeal to Heaven for nothing less than the conversion of those same Orthodox bishops and their reunification with Rome, the conversion of Russia as a whole, peace in the world, and the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart. It was to be, in sum, a miraculous manifestation of the immense spiritual power that God Almighty has deigned to place at the disposal of the Vicar of Christ. But, as *FFT* would have it, the paramount concern on this utterly momentous occasion was "sensitivity" to the feelings of some Orthodox bishops. Their feelings would be hurt! This argument would be a joke were its consequences not so serious for the Church and the world.

By the way, just what did the Orthodox bishops allegedly invited to participate in the 1984 ceremony think they were doing? If, as the defenders of the Party Line maintain, a "veiled reference" to Russia was quite sufficient to indicate Russia, why were the Orthodox bishops not offended by the "veiled reference"? Moreover, if they knew that the Pope "really" intended to consecrate Russia while avoiding any explicit reference to Russia, why would they have agreed to participate (if they did participate) in this disguised "offense" to their spiritual leadership?

Further, if "everyone knew" that Russia was being consecrated, why not simply say so openly? What sort of silly game was this? Or were the invited Orthodox bishops positively assured that Russia was *not* the object of the 1984 ceremony, only to learn afterwards that, according to the Party Line, Russia was the "veiled" object all along? But that would mean the Orthodox bishops were the victims of a cynical bait-and-switch—hardly the kind of trickery the sinless and Immaculate Mother of God would countenance.

At any rate, what evidence is there in the first place that the Orthodox would be "offended" if their nation were singled out for Mary's special favor and intervention? Exactly none. Indeed, common sense indicates the contrary conclusion. As the Catholic scholar Cathy Pearson observed in her seminal article on the

Consecration in *Inside the Vatican*:

A consecration of a country, after all, is not an anathema or an exorcism. It is an invocation of a special blessing and protection. That Mary should single out a particular nation for such a request is a sign of Her special maternal affection.... One might expect that any nation that honors the Blessed Mother would consider it an enviable privilege to be uniquely selected for such a dignity by Holy Mary Herself... The Russian Orthodox do honor Mary, and while they may not accept the Fatima miracle and message as such, unlike some branches of Christianity they do believe that She can and does intervene personally in human history...²⁹³

On this point Fr. Apostoli demolishes his own position by reporting the putative remark of some unnamed Orthodox priests to an unnamed Catholic priest following the 1984 ceremony: "It was Our Lady of Fatima who saved our country." (*FFT*, p. 259) So much for the fable that the Orthodox would be gravely offended by a true and proper consecration of their nation to Mary's Immaculate Heart. Once this is really done, Russia will indeed be saved, the whole world will receive the divine benefits of that miracle, and the Orthodox, reunited with Rome, will be among the first to acknowledge it with gratitude.

Finally, we have Bishop Cordes's reference to "the discreet approach of... the bishops at the Second Vatican Council." This is perhaps the most damning admission in the bishop's revealing statement. For here he is clearly referring to the Vatican-Moscow Agreement, rightly described as an act of "religious treason" by Jean Madiran. As we saw in Chapter 2, under this shameful accord, negotiated between the Orthodox Metropolitan Nikodim and Cardinal Tisserant in Metz, France just before the Council, the Council would observe a "discreet" silence concerning the scourge of Soviet Communism to avoid offense to the Russian Orthodox observers in attendance at the Council, who were themselves tools of the Kremlin. As Paul Joseph Schmitt, the Bishop of Metz, later revealed: "It was in our region that the 'secret' meeting of Cardinal Tisserant with Archbishop Nikodim occurred. The exact place was the residence of Fr. Lagarde, chaplain for the Little Sisters of the Poor in Borny.... After this meeting, the conditions for the presence of the Russian church's observers were established by Cardinal Willebrands, an assistant of Cardinal Bea."²⁹⁴

²⁹³ Cathy Pearson, "Now is the Time: Consecrating Russia Will Help, Not Hurt, Catholic-Orthodox Dialogue," *Inside the Vatican*, August-September 2008, p. 32.

²⁹⁴ "Mystery of the Rome-Moscow Pact," *30 Dias*, October 1989, pp. 55-56, quoting a February 9, 1963 interview with the journal *Republicain Lorrain*. See also "The

In a letter on the subject, Msgr. Georges Roche, the biographer of Cardinal Tisserant, confirmed: “That accord was negotiated between the Kremlin and the Vatican at the highest level.... Cardinal Tisserant received formal orders to negotiate the accord and to make sure that it would be observed during the Council.”²⁹⁵ And so it was. All entreaties from Council Fathers to condemn Communism were kept from the Council hall, including an intervention by the Coetus Internationalis Patrum group involving 450 bishops. As noted in *The Devil's Final Battle*, this major written intervention “was mysteriously ‘lost’ after being delivered to the Secretariat of the Council, and Council Fathers who stood up to denounce Communism were politely told to sit down and be quiet.”²⁹⁶

Thus the Council that declared it was reading “the signs of the times” would “discreetly” avoid offending Russia by failing even to mention, much less condemn, the most alarming sign of the times on display before its very eyes: the genocide and brutal persecution of Catholics in the very nation whose conversion Our Lady had appeared at Fatima to obtain. Madiran’s phrase “religious treason” is not too strong a description of this craven act of ecclesiastical “diplomacy.”

Can we not see how the Vatican-Moscow Agreement has been perpetuated to this very day by the Party Line of the Vatican Secretary of State, with its pathological determination to bury the Message of Fatima and prevent at all costs the “offensive” consecration of Russia? The parallel between the Council’s “discreet” failure to mention Russian totalitarianism and the “discreet” refusal to mention Russia in any consecration ceremony is too striking to be a mere coincidence. The two things represent the same policy in action, the *Ostpolitik* (“politics of the East”) we discussed in Chapter 2.

In fact, Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kium has condemned the campaign by Vatican bureaucrats, led by Cardinal Bertone, to encourage the persecuted Catholics of the “underground” Church in China to abandon their opposition to the Red Chinese regime and join its pseudo-church, the Catholic Patriotic Association, which has consecrated more than a hundred captive bishops in defiance of Rome. In a letter to Chinese Catholics “Cardinal Bertone argues for careful efforts to cooperate with the ‘official’ Church,” while

Vatican Silenced by Moscow” (pp. 4ff), “The Catholic Church Betrayed” (pp. 7ff), and “Why the Vatican-Moscow Agreement Must be Repudiated” (pp. 11ff) in *The Fatima Crusader*, Issue 17, Feb.-April 1985, <http://www.fatimacrusader.com/cr17/toc17.asp>).

²⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 57.

²⁹⁶ Cf. *The Devil's Final Battle*, Ch. 6, “The Motive Takes Hold,” citing Father Ralph Wiltgen, *The Rhine flows into the Tiber*, (New York: Hawthorne, 1967; TAN, 1985) pp. 272-278.

Cardinal Joseph Zen's letter, "released a week later... argues that faithful Catholicism in China still requires heroic resistance against the encroachments of the government—including the Patriotic Association."²⁹⁷

Quite recently Cardinal Zen declared publicly that Vatican bureaucrats in the Congregation for Evangelization (no doubt under Bertone's oversight as Secretary of State) are undermining the Pope's 2007 instruction concerning the Church in China by pursuing "the *old 'Ostpolitik'*... This policy of *Ostpolitik*—which is compromise at any cost, to please the government always, to always avoid confrontation—led to the present situation..."²⁹⁸

The Cardinal was referring to November of 2010, when "the Chinese government ordained a bishop without the approval of the Holy See, at a ceremony in which several bishops loyal to Rome were reportedly forced to participate. In December, police officers rounded up a large number of bishops and escorted them to a state-sponsored meeting of an unauthorized 'bishops conference.'" This, said the Cardinal, "is completely against the doctrine of the Church. It was like a slap in the face of the Holy Father... But unfortunately, these people in the Congregation for Evangelization... still believe that they must carry on the policy of compromise." The Cardinal concluded with the scathing assessment that underground Catholic opposition to the Beijing regime "will be very difficult, because now the difficulty is not only to face a government, *but to face our own people, who are already more on the side of the government than on the side of the Church.* That's the very sad reality."²⁹⁹

Indeed it is, for the pernicious policy born in Metz with the Vatican-Moscow Agreement still operates, not only to neutralize the Church's opposition to Communist regimes, but also to turn Vatican prelates into *collaborators* with those regimes. And the regimes with which they collaborate have arisen precisely from the spread of Russia's errors throughout the world on account of the Vatican bureaucracy's unwillingness to "offend" Russia by consecrating it to the Immaculate Heart.

What Conversion?

Of course the consequence of failing to consecrate Russia is that Russia has not converted. Here, too, *FFT* parrots the Party Line: the fall of the Berlin Wall, *glasnost*, *perestroika*, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union are cited as evidence of the "conversion of Russia."

²⁹⁷ "Vatican journalist sees key cardinals at odds on China policy," Catholicculture.org, December 4, 2009.

²⁹⁸ "Cardinal Zen: Vatican officials have blocked Pope's plan for Chinese Church," EWTN News, April 12, 2011.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

(pp. 255-258) So, as Fr. Apostoli would have it, Our Lady appeared at Fatima and produced the Miracle of the Sun in order to prophesy a mere regime change in Moscow.

Never mind that this regime change has given way to authoritarian rule under Vladimir Putin—recently reelected as effectively “president for life” in an election stage-managed from the Kremlin, which controls the mass media. In the Russian Federation today national elections are a sham, governors of the Russian regions are appointed by Moscow without local elections, a free and independent press and mass media have all but ceased to exist, anti-government journalists have been murdered one after another, and key political opponents have all been arrested, jailed on trumped-up charges or targeted for assassination, as in the case of Alexander Litvinenko, former head of the KGB (renamed the FSB under Putin), who was fatally poisoned with Polonium-210 slipped into his tea, and Viktor Andriyovych Yushchenko, the Ukrainian opponent of the Putin regime who barely survived an attempt to poison him with Dioxin.

Never mind that, in sum, “political rights and civil liberties have become so restricted in Russia that the country has been downgraded to ‘Not Free,’” as reported by the respected human rights organization Freedom House, which noted that “Russia was the only country to register a negative category change in 2004, moving from Partly Free to Not Free.”³⁰⁰

Never mind that Russia continues to lead the world in the per capita rate of abortions, has become the international hub of the child pornography industry that exploits Moscow’s 1 million street children,³⁰¹ and that its population, decimated by mass murder in the womb, alcoholism and premature death, is dwindling at the rate of 700,000 per year.

Never mind that Russia today is dominated by a corrupt plutocracy that has amassed billions upon billions in ill-gotten wealth in league with Putin while the great masses of common people suffer under Third World conditions.

Never mind that the Catholic Church clings to a minuscule and precarious existence in Russia under a 1997 law on “freedom of conscience” that has been used to expel numerous key Catholic

³⁰⁰ “Russia Downgraded to ‘Not Free,’” Freedom House press release, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=70&release=242>.

³⁰¹ Cf. Irina Sandul, “Russia’s Trade in Child Pornography,” *Inside Russia Journal*, No. 146, February 2002 (“Some 20-30 percent of Moscow’s street children are involved in prostitution or child pornography, according to a study conducted in 2001 by the International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor [IPEC] under the aegis of the WTO. Russia’s Deputy Minister of Labor Galina Karelova said in an interview that the number of children on the street in Moscow is at least 1 million.”)

clerics from the country and that requires the foreign-born priests (in Russia) who make up almost the entire priesthood in that nation to depart every 90 days in order to renew their visas, so that it has become impossible for the Church to develop a true and proper parish and diocesan system on Russian soil.

Never mind that today—irony of ironies—there are fewer Catholics, Catholic priests and Catholic parishes in Russia than at the time of the October Revolution in 1917.

Never mind that there has been no diminution in Russia's preparations for war since the non-consecration of 1984. Quite the contrary, the situation in that regard has only grown more perilous. On May 3, 2012, for example, Russia's top military officer, Chief of General Staff Nikolai Makarov, warned that "Moscow would strike NATO missile-defense sites in Eastern Europe before they are ready for action, if the U.S. pushes ahead with deployment." Makarov declared publicly that "A decision to use destructive force preemptively *will be taken* if the situation worsens." As one commentator rightly observed: "That Makarov would make this kind of threat in a public forum is chilling."³⁰²

What sort of "conversion of Russia" is this? It is no conversion at all, obviously. Undeterred by reality, however, *FFT* assures us that Russia is undergoing a "conversion process" involving "gradual changes." (p. 254) So, according to Fr. Apostoli, Our Lady of Fatima promised the world a miracle that would proceed at the pace of a glacier, moving so slowly that no one can detect it. Today, some 28 years after the-consecration-that-wasn't, there is not the least sign of any true religious conversion in "that poor nation," as Sister Lucia called it. On the contrary, Putin's Russia is sinking ever deeper into spiritual, moral, political and economic corruption, while allying itself militarily with Red China, producing a new and unprecedented threat to world peace.

Unable to deal convincingly with the evidence that makes a mockery of his glacial "conversion process," Fr. Apostoli finally plays the trump card of all defenders of the Party Line: John Paul II was (so they claim) convinced that he had consecrated Russia—while deliberately avoiding any mention of Russia—so let that be the end of it. Fr. Apostoli writes: "Now if the Pope believed in his heart that he had made the consecration properly, what are these people who still deny the consecration thinking?" (p. 260)

In other words, we should ignore the evidence of our senses and mindlessly maintain that Russia has been consecrated simply because the late Pope is *alleged* to have been convinced of it. Yet the

³⁰² Shaun Waterman, "Russia Threatens to Strike NATO missile defense sites," *Washington Times*, May 3, 2012.

fact is that John Paul never made any official papal declaration that the Consecration had been effected. Quite contrary, as many sources have noted, during and after the 1984 ceremony the Pope stated before thousands of witnesses that Our Lady was *still awaiting* the explicit consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart, referring pointedly to “those peoples for whom You Yourself *await* our act of consecration and of entrustment.” Hours after the ceremony, speaking to a vast crowd in Saint Peter’s Basilica, the Pope clearly alluded to the inadequacy of what he had done earlier that day: “We have been able to do all this according to *our poor human possibilities* and the measure of human *weakness*, but with immense confidence in Your maternal love and immense confidence in Your maternal solicitude.”³⁰³

Telling words indeed. They recall Fr. Apostoli’s own phrase: “the Pope did all he could.” That is, he did all he could *within the illicit restrictions imposed upon him* by his worldly-wise human advisors—restrictions Fr. Apostoli himself readily confirms as if they were helpful to his position, when in fact they are the very proof that the Consecration of Russia has been thwarted deliberately by the contrary plans of mere men.

In the end, there is no rational basis for the perverse refusal to mention Russia in the Consecration of Russia the very Mother of God requested. Not even those who so obstinately defend the Party Line can seriously propose that the Church and the world would suffer harm if the Pope were to utter the word “Russia” during the act of consecration. At the very least, there is nothing to lose. What, then, is to account for the bizarre decades-long campaign to prevent at all costs the utterance of that single word? Only one logical explanation presents itself: Those who have prevented Russia’s consecration by name *know or at least suspect that it would actually bring about Russia’s conversion*, and this they do not wish to see.

Let us be clear about what is suggested here: the longstanding refusal to consecrate Russia by name is ultimately diabolical in origin. This is not—repeat: *not*—to say that those involved in the refusal are conscious agents of the devil. The point, rather, is that whatever their subjective intentions may be, they are lending themselves to what is objectively an evil end. The sheer irrationality of those who contrive specious arguments in defense of a “Consecration of Russia” that refuses to mention Russia is evidence of “diabolical disorientation” in the matter, to borrow Sister Lucia’s famous phrase concerning the crisis in the Church. For nonsense is always a sign of the Father of Lies at work in the minds of men, even those who might be convinced they are defending truth and justice.

³⁰³ *Avenir*, March 27, 1984; cf. *The Devil’s Final Battle*, Chapter 8.

A Fatima for Yesterday

What has Fr. Apsotoli given us with *Fatima for Today*? He has given us, in short, what the Vatican Secretary of State would give us: a Fatima for yesterday. A Fatima that is over and done with. A Fatima that will not alter the disastrous ecclesial status quo over which the Vatican bureaucracy, controlled by the Secretary of State, has presided since Vatican II. A status quo Pope Benedict described with a single scathing word only days before he became the Vicar of Christ: “filth.” That filth was covered up in large part by none other than Cardinal Angelo Sodano, who protected the sexual predator Father Maciel. Yet it is Sodano’s preposterous “interpretation” of the Third Secret that is now urged upon the faithful by Fr. Apostoli, a false friend of Fatima.

In sum, Fr. Apostoli presents “an urgent Marian message of hope” that holds no urgency nor any hope for a restoration of the Church, peace in the world or the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart in our time because, as he and the Secretary of State would have it, the Consecration of Russia was accomplished 28 years ago, and what we see is what we get. “One deceives himself who thinks that the prophetic mission of Fatima is concluded.” So said Pope Benedict XVI a few months before *FFT* made its appearance. How telling it is that Fr. Apostoli’s pious tribute to the Fatima event fails to mention the Pope’s momentous declaration. But then Father Apostoli, and those who think like him, do not wish us to link the Fatima message to what the Pope called “*future realities of the Church* which are little by little developing and revealing themselves... *in a really terrifying way...*” The mission of the false friends of Fatima is the opposite of Marc Antony’s: to bury what they come to praise.³⁰⁴

³⁰⁴ For a complete refutation of the Fatima revisionist contentions in Fr. Apostoli’s *Fatima for Today*, see Christopher A. Ferrara, “*Fatima For Today: A Response*,” at <http://www.fatima.org/news/newsviews/fatima-for-today-a-response.pdf>; or see his article at <http://www.fatimacrusader.com/cr99/cr99pg43.pdf> for a less complete version.