

Chapter 15

THE PARTY LINE IN RETREAT

In Chapters 11 and 12 we saw how in the immediate aftermath of the “Fatima Challenge” Conference staged by Father Gruner’s apostolate in May 2010, which featured the momentous participation of Giuseppe De Carli, the Pope went to Fatima and made the explosive declarations that negated the Vatican Secretary of State’s entire “official account” of the Third Secret and the Fatima prophecies in general. The Party Line would suffer further reversals just before and just after the apostolate’s 2011 conference in Rome under the title “Consecration Now!” (an allusion to the demand for “Sainthood Now” respecting John Paul II), held from May 9 to May 13. That conference would include important interventions by two of Italy’s most prominent Vaticanists: Andrea Tornielli and Paolo Rodari. Their very appearance at the conference signaled a tectonic shift in public opinion on Fatima by which the “Fatimist” position, based on unanswerable evidence, had found acceptance in the Vatican press corps, much to the consternation of the false friends of Fatima, who were accustomed to exclusive possession of the mantle of respectability.

Papal Doubts About the Consecration

On Good Friday 2011, April 22, Pope Benedict made an unprecedented appearance on Italian television, not to deliver an address, but to answer selected questions from the faithful—something no Pope has ever done, even in the age of television, much less on Good Friday. Note well: these questions were selected by the Pope; he did not have to address them at all. But the Supreme Pontiff chose to address *this* question, which represents the concern that has animated the writing of this book and the entire movement for the accomplishment of what the false friends of Fatima have labored so hard to prevent: “And, on the subject of entrusting, do you intend to renew a consecration to the Virgin at the beginning of this new millennium?” The Pope’s answer reveals significant doubt—if not indeed a conviction he feels unable to state explicitly—that Russia has never been consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Consider very carefully the emphasized words:

And so we arrive at the meaning of entrusting ourselves: the Popes—whether it was Pius XII, or Paul VI, or John Paul II—have made a great act of entrusting the world to the Madonna and *it seems to me*, as a gesture before humankind,

before Mary herself, that it was a very important gesture.... I *think* that the great, public act has been made. *Perhaps* one day it will be necessary to *repeat* it again, but at the moment it *seems* more important to me to live it, to make it real, to enter into this entrusting so that it might truly be our own.... For example, at Fatima I saw how the thousands of persons present truly entered into this entrustment. In themselves, for themselves they entrusted themselves to her; they made this trust real within them. It thus becomes a reality in the living Church and thus also the Church grows. The common entrustment to Mary, letting ourselves be penetrated by this presence, creating and entering into communion with Mary makes the Church, makes us together with Mary, truly the Bride of Christ. Thus, *at the moment*, I do not intend to make a *new act of public entrustment*...³⁶⁵

Notice how the Pope carefully avoided any definitive statement that the Consecration of *Russia* as such has been effected. Rather, he referred indifferently to the ceremonies by Pius XII, Paul VI (who consecrated the world to the Immaculate Heart during Vatican II) and John Paul II, not declaring that any of them was a Consecration of Russia or that any was more in accord with what Our Lady of Fatima requested. The Pope opined only that “it seems to me” that all three ceremonies were “a very important gesture”—that is, a consecration of the world. But Pope Benedict *never relates any of these papal ceremonies to the Virgin’s request for Russia’s consecration*. The Pope merely *thinks*, but does not declare, that the “great, public act has been made,” but never states or even implies that the act in question was a consecration of Russia. In fact, as we have seen, *no Pope* has ever declared that the Consecration of Russia has been accomplished, despite the contrary intimations of the false friends of Fatima, hewing obediently to a Party Line that does not come from the Pope in the first place, and which the Pope himself had fatally undermined the previous year.

Further, why would the Pope say that “*perhaps* one day it will be necessary to *repeat* it [the “entrustment” to Mary] again” if the prior consecrations or “entrustments” definitively fulfilled Our Lady of Fatima’s request? And why say “*at the moment*, I do not intend to make a new act of public entrustment” unless the Pope was suggesting that it may well be necessary to try again. And why would the Pope go out of his way to broach the suggestion in response to a question he did not even have to address in the first place, unless he knows or at least suspects that something is lacking in the ceremonies John Paul II

³⁶⁵ “Pope Benedict Answers Questions on Special Television Broadcast,” April 22, 2011, <http://www.radiovaticana.org/en1/Articolo.asp?c=480959>.

performed after—as Bishop Cordes admitted—he “abandoned” the idea of Russia’s consecration “at the suggestion of his collaborators”? (See Chapter 3.)

Bertone’s Further Retreat

On April 30, 2011, eight days after the Pope’s remarks had introduced the specter of doubt concerning the adequacy of prior consecration ceremonies, Cardinal Bertone retreated from his long-maintained position that the Third Secret of Fatima and the Fatima prophecies in general depict only events that “belong to the past,” culminating in the failed attempt on the life of John Paul II in 1981. Appearing on Italy’s Radio 1 station, Bertone stated: “The third mystery of Fatima is fulfilled *in part* in the description that was given by Sister Lucia [the vision published in 2000]. But, as then Cardinal Ratzinger has said, the triumph of the Immaculate Heart *will* happen. It is necessary to cultivate hope and not be catastrophists.”³⁶⁶

Now, if the Third Secret has been fulfilled only “in part” in the vision Sister Lucia recorded, where would one find mention of the remainder to be fulfilled? Quite suddenly, and clearly in response to the turning point of the Pope’s linkage of the Secret to “future realities” in the Church a year earlier during the papal pilgrimage to Fatima, Bertone had quietly abandoned the very core of his own Party Line. Andrea Tornielli was quick to note the significance of the development:

Words fully in harmony with what was affirmed by Benedict XVI on the flight that brought him to Portugal, a year ago, as well as in a passage of the homily for the Mass celebrated at Fatima. Concerning 2000, when there was offered a reading of the vision of Fatima turned solely toward the past, there is therefore *a major caution* (“is fulfilled in part”), and thus is left open the possibility that not all of the prophecy—understood in a Biblical sense and not as a film that describes the future—is yet accomplished.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁶ <http://www.grr.rai.it/dl/grr/notizie/ContentItem-af44bb70-17aa-4c04-8c0b-077d28ffab92.html>: “Il terzo mistero di Fatima è compiuto in parte nella descrizione che è stata fatta da suor Lucia, ma come ha detto (l’allora) cardinale Ratzinger il cuore immacolato di Maria trionferà. Bisogna coltivare la speranza e non essere catastrofisti.”

³⁶⁷ “The Third Secret is Not Fulfilled,” <http://2.andreatornielli.it/?p=1562>. (“Parole in piena sintonia con quanto affermato da Benedetto XVI sul volo che lo portava in Portogallo, un anno fa, come pure in un passaggio dell’omelia della messa celebrata a Fatima. Rispetto al 2000, quando della visione di Fatima venne offerta una lettura rivolta soltanto al passato, c’è dunque maggiore cautela (‘è compiuto in parte’) e dunque si lascia aperta la possibilità che non tutta la profezia – da interdersi in senso biblico e non come un film che descrive il futuro – sia ancora compiuta.”)

Another Fateful Conference

At the *Consecration Now!* conference, the addresses by both Rodari and Tornielli at the Ergife Hotel signaled a whole new climate surrounding the Third Secret affair. What was once considered an unseemly conspiracy theory was now accepted as a real possibility by some of Italy's most prominent Catholic voices.

Paolo Rodari took to the podium and reviewed the evidence of Archbishop Capovilla's admission of the existence of two texts and two envelopes pertaining to the Third Secret as if it were now a commonplace beyond serious dispute. He then observed, as the previous chapters suggest, that "2010 is a turning point with respect to all the questions that are still outstanding"—meaning the Pope's pilgrimage to Fatima. "And I think it's significant," he continued, referring to the radio interview just mentioned, that "just a few days ago Cardinal Bertone... said that the Third mystery of Fatima has been partly fulfilled... *This makes quite a difference*, because it wasn't said in 2000. So here also we find *a contradiction*. So perhaps here there's a will, *a will to say something*."

The Pope's revelations that the Secret pertains to "future events" that "progressively unfold" in the Church and that "the greatest persecution does not come from the external enemies but arises from the sin that springs from within the Church," Rodari called "quite surprising, and unprecedented, unexpected." And, in a clear reference to the machinations of the Secretary of State, Rodari remarked that "some authorities within the Roman Curia, the Holy See, try to avoid or downplay—water down—these explicit statements made by the Pope *so that they may not be understood in their full scope*. But the scandal of pedophilia has brought to the fore this great lesson of the Pope: *never fear the truth*, even when the truth is painful, and even when it's shameful for the Church."

"Is there such a thing as a Fourth Secret," Rodari queried? While the vision has been "automatically linked to the attack of 1981," he concluded, "many questions remain unanswered." One cannot overestimate the importance of these remarks coming from a Vaticanist of the first rank.

Tornielli's brief address was no less portentous of bad times for the Party Line and its defenders. Referring to the remarks of Cardinal Ratzinger at the press conference back in 2000, when the vision of the "Bishop dressed in White" was published, Tornielli stressed that "These words are very important: *there's no official interpretation of the vision of Fatima*—Ratzinger said this, *there is no such thing*." Note well: *no* official interpretation—*no* such thing. And this from perhaps the most renowned Vaticanist in the world.

Tornielli noted that Monsignor Rino Fisichella, who had served

as a consultant to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, had written a commentary on the vision published in 2000 which stated “at one point that ‘we might think that the Fatima prophecy has not been fulfilled.’...” In a telling reference to the impact the efforts of the so-called Fatimists had had on the Third Secret controversy since 2000, Tornielli commented that “It is interesting to note that ten years after the release of the text of the Secret, *the Pope and even Cardinal Bertone are saying the same: basically the prophecy cannot be considered fulfilled entirely.*”

Tornielli then spoke of a revelation by Archbishop Pasquale Macchi, personal secretary of Paul VI, that “When Paul VI spoke about ‘Satan’s smoke,’ he was actually referring to the priests who challenge the Church, who are not faithful, who are not true to their identity, who are not true and faithful to their celibacy. And he refers to disobedience toward the Magisterium of the Church. *The Pope connects these phenomena to the Secret of Fatima.*” Paul VI, Macchi further revealed, had wept over the mountain of requests for dispensation from the clerical state presented for his signature, calling it “my Calvary...” It is very interesting what Macchi wrote, “*that the Pope associated these phenomena, that so many priests wanted to leave the Church, with the Secret of Fatima...*” The implications were devastating for the Party Line: not only Benedict XVI, but also Paul VI, had linked the Third Secret to mass defections and rebellion among the Catholic clergy, *when nothing of the kind is depicted in the vision standing alone.* Where did this come from if not another text pertaining to the Secret—the one Paul had read in 1963 as opposed to the one he had read in 1965, the year given in the “official account”?

In fact, what Monsignor Macchi revealed concerning Paul VI was quite in line with the Message of Akita, already noted (see Chapter 7). Tornielli made that very point, quoting from the text of the Akita apparitions: “the work of the devil will infiltrate the Church in such a way that cardinals shall be pitted against other cardinals, bishops against other bishops. And the priests who venerate Me shall be despised and rejected by their own brothers. Altars shall be sacked, churches shall be teeming with people who accept compromises.” Noting that then Cardinal Ratzinger had recognized the authenticity of the Message of Akita as head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Tornielli cited the testimony of the former Philippine Ambassador to the Holy See, Howard Dee, that Ratzinger had revealed to him that the Message of Akita and the Message of Fatima are “basically one and the same.” (See Chapter 13.)

And, in a major surprise, Tornielli revealed that it was his own question on the Third Secret that had prompted Pope Benedict’s explosive comments during the flight to Portugal concerning the

Secret's revelation of "future realities in the Church" involving an attack upon her by enemies within—again, not what is seen in the vision published in 2000 standing alone. Here Tornielli cited Pope Benedict's exhortation during the Mass inaugurating his pontificate: "Pray for me, that I do not flee for fear of the wolves."³⁶⁸ Thus it was not a "Fatimist" but the world's foremost Vaticanist who had prompted the Pope to "reopen the file" (as Socci had put it) on the Third Secret of Fatima.

Pope Benedict Consecrates Italy

There is no doubt the Pope was fully aware of the *Consecration Now!* proceedings, especially given the participation of Rodari and Tornielli. And the Pontiff was probably also aware, if only second-hand, of the giant sign positioned above the central escalator bank at Porta di Roma, the largest shopping center in the City of Rome, from April 15 to May 13, 2011—seen by half a million pedestrians a week—and the seventy other massive signs placed throughout the city, all saying the same thing: "*Solo il Papa può salvare Roma, con una preghiera speciale di 5 minuti.*"—"Only the Pope can save Rome, with a special five-minute prayer." And, while this publicity was having its effect, the apostolate's Rome branch commenced 24/7 television programming on April 15 on a new Roman channel: Fatima TV.

Romans concerned about the state of Italy and its teetering economy must have been bombarding Vatican offices with telephone calls concerning this "special prayer" and suggesting that it be done as soon as possible. On May 3, 2011, reversing his own declaration of April 22, 2011, noted above, that he did not contemplate any further ceremonies of "entrustment" to Mary, the Pope caused it to be announced that he would consecrate/entrust the nation of Italy to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. And so he did, along with the entire Italian episcopate, in a ceremony conducted at Saint Mary Major Basilica on May 26, 2011—less than two weeks after the *Consecration Now!* conference had ended.³⁶⁹

Commenting on the apparent success of this campaign, Father Gruner remarked: "I was once struck by the logic of an article arguing that only if the medical profession were forced by public pressure to accept the health benefits of a certain natural 'panacea' would they begin to include it in their medical practice. Why should the faithful not exercise their God-given right to petition the Pope

³⁶⁸ "MASS, IMPOSITION OF THE PALLIUM AND CONFERRAL OF THE FISHERMAN'S RING FOR THE BEGINNING OF THE PETRINE MINISTRY OF THE BISHOP OF ROME," http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2005/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20050424_iniziopontificato_en.html.

³⁶⁹ Cf. text of proceeding at <http://magisterobenedettoxvi.blogspot.com/2011/05/affidamento-del-popolo-italiano-alla.html>.

by the only means available, given his isolation in the Vatican—publicity—for resort to the ‘panacea’ of consecration to Mary? And so we did. But we limited our petition to something Roman citizens could understand and support themselves: their own local problems and the crises threatening the very existence of the Italian nation today, which have their common root in the problems afflicting the world at large: apostasy from God and His Holy Church.”³⁷⁰

Thus did the year 2012 signal new hope for the cause of Our Lady of Fatima, despite the best efforts of Her false friends to impede accomplishment of the mission She launched at the Cova da Iria in 1917. “May the seven years which separate us from the centenary of the apparitions *hasten the fulfilment of the prophecy of the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*,” said the Vicar of Christ at Fatima on May 13, 2010 during the apostolate’s Rome conference of that year. The Pope, like the true friends of Fatima everywhere, was looking to the year 2017 as an obvious historical landmark respecting the Fatima prophecies. The question is: What will the Church and the world be witnessing when that landmark is reached? Will it be triumph or disaster?

³⁷⁰ Telephonic interview with author, Holy Saturday 2012.