

Nothing concerning Fatima in the history of the last years had such a repercussion as the controversy that curiosity of some and precipitation of others raised around the declarations of Fr. Fuentes and the subsequent denial of Sr. Lucia. From everywhere poured telegrams and letters asking for an explanation, a clearing up of the supposed conflict. The reaction grew into a chain, in every gamut and nuance. There were people who performed acts of faith, sure that a worldly chastisement of apocalyptic proportions would come forth in 1960; some who inferred that it was necessary to start a new and more intense crusade of prayers to draw away the threat of Heaven; and still others, even in the Church, who condemned the interest that Fatima's Message awakens in the souls, reputing fraudulent and dangerous the threats and prophecies contained in the words of Our Lady. For all these reasons, it seemed to us opportune to come down to the lists in order to try to define the question and help the cause of truth.

THE FACTS

1960

On the 26th December 1957, at 9.30 a.m., a well constituted, strong figure entered the locutory of St. Therese's Carmel in Coimbra, lowered the veil and drew the curtain of black cloth which always accompanies the characteristic iron rail of the carmelite convents.

It is Sr. Mary Lucy of the Immaculate Heart, the former Lucy of Jesus. She is 50 years old and was in the begining of this century the principal witness of the apparitions of Our Lady in the Cova da Iria.

On the other side of the railing stands a foreign priest, Rev. Agostin Fuentes, D.D., of the archdiocese of Vera Cruz (Mexico) whom the Bishop of Leiria had appointed Roman Postulator of the Causes of Beatification of Jacinta and Francisco. It was precisely on account of that task that Fr. Fuentes requested and obtained from the Holy Office permission to interrogate the seer, on condition he should not talk to her about the secret.

During 2 hours the Sister answers plainly to the questions made by the Postulator about the heroicity of the companions of her childhood and relates -as it was impossible to avoid- some scenes of the apparitions.

Fr. Fuentes, being a Mexican, speaks Spanish. But Sr. Lucia does need no interpreter because she spent several years in the neighbouring Nation and speaks Spanish fluently. It is even known a small poem written by her in that language. Either because it came by the way or because she really wanted it, Lucia slightly hinted at the secret, without, of course, going into details or concreteness of any sort.

Expressing her personal opinion, she said, in short, that the world is not fulfilling the Message of Fatima and that, if it continues like that, the secret will be a very sad thing for us all. There is still time, she continued, to avoid that "sad thing". And, practically, she add nothing else.

According to these declarations and other knowledge about Fatima, Fr. Fuentes elaborated a lecture which he repeated in several cities of Mexico, in the capital, Vera Cruz, Sonora, Mazathan, Toluca, Tulancingo, Puebla, etc. The lecture was translated and published in several languages, especially in America and Europe. The substance of its contents about the secret is summed up by what is above exposed: if the world does no penance, the secret of 1960 will be something sad.

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The feverish imagination of the journalists began then acting. And while some wondered if that "sad thing" could be a war, others pushed forward to the certainty of a worldly collision and even towards the nearing end of the world.

When, about 2 years afterwards, the question arrived at Lisbon, there were immediately people who inquired if that was not precisely the contents of the third part of the secret. And facts and witnesses were added in confirmation of this and other hypothesis, equally unfounded. The result could not be otherwise: little by little the conviction generalised that Lucia has prophesied indeed a great punishment, a positive punishment for 1960. Hence the disturbance the sensationality, and then the communication of the Curia of Coimbra falling over everything like an unexpected and real pail of cold water.

Moderated for a few moments the sickly curiosity of the prophets of the first hour, who several other times had already shown themselves eager of mys-



terry and sensation (for instance propagating revelations condemned by the Church) another pleid o apostles appeared, not less dangerous, claiming for justice to Earth and Heaven against the causes of the misunderstanding. And if some attacted Fr. Fuentes saying he had exaggerated and lied because he never was nor could be the Roman Postulator of the Causes of Jacinta and Francisco, others aimed at Sr. Lucia and spoke of possible confusions, mistakes or forgetfulness, of ecstasies she could have afforded on the occasion of the interview.

THE OPPOSITION BETWEEN FR.FUENTES AND SR. LUCIA

But, after all, where is the so proclaimed opposition between the declarations of Fr. Fuentes and Sr. Lucia?

We have not received power of attorney from the one or the other part for the respective defense. It seems however to be of the most elementary justice to explain that there is no opposition between what both Fr. Fuentes and Sr. Lucia have said.

Lucia denied that she had revealed the contents of the secret and added that she knew nothing or said nothing about the future punishments. But she did not deny to have spoken about the secret, however only "per accidens"; she did not deny that, in her opinion, the world forgets the message of Fatima and she did not deny either that the secret would be "something sad" if the world goes on in the same way. This seems to have been the apple of discord; so we will develop it somewhat more.

The question is evidently about an under condition future and not an absolute future. Lucia affirmed that if the world does no penance until 1960, chastisements from God will happen. This she never denied, nor could she do it without a grave error. But this is no news at all! We all knew it! The Bible is full of advices and examples teaching and repeating that sin attract always the punishment of Heaven. If there is sin - as really there is - and there is no penance, surely there will be chastisement.

That the secret of 1960 "will be something sad" if the world does not amend itself, Lucia has not denied it and she could not do it. If she did, she would contradict her own declarations and those of Jacinta and Francisco, in 1917. Here but two excerpts of the inquiries left to us by Dr. Formigão:

On the 11th October 1917 to Jacinta:

Dr. Formigão - "If the people knew the secret would they be sad?"
Jacinta - "Yes".

On the 13th October 1917 to Francisco:

Dr. Formigão - "Would the people be sad if they knew it (the secret)?
Francisco - "They would."

The only difference between the declarations of 1917 and those of 40 years later is the following: the first referred to the whole secret; the last ones only to the third part. Even so, nothing justifies the alarm caused about something new that, after all, was known 42 years ago.

Repeating all we have said, above, we stress that according to the declarations attributed by Fr. Fuentes to Sr. Lucia, the secret will be "something sad" only if the world continues not to do penance.

It is a punishment under condition as it was the Second Great War, as, besides, all of God's chastisements are. They do not depend of the so-called destiny, nor fortune. They depend on us, only. We can draw them away, like the inhabitants of Nineveh drew away the threats of Jonas, or we may not believe and not amend our living, like the men in the times of Noah.

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The false newsx that Fr. Fuentes was not the Roman Postulator of the Cause of Francisco and Jacinta is only due to the precipitation of the N.C.N. whose correspondent in Rome only got information through the Sacred Congregation of the Rites. An official of that Dicastery told him not to be aware that there was any postulator for those causes. The truth is that they still are in the preliminary phase in Leiria. Only when passing to the Roman phase - and only then- Fr. Fuentes will start his action as Postulator or official Defender, function appointed to him by the regretted D. José Alves Correia da Silva. He was confirmed in these functions by the present Bishop, D. João Pereira Venâncio, with the approval, as it is obvious, of his own Prelate, Mgr. Manuel Pio Lopez, Archbishop of Vera Cruz.

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