

11
From Susan Lowndes Marques, Praca Jose Fontana 12-1, Lisbon, Portugal.
5/8/59

BISHOP OF LEIRIA ON FATIMA "SECRET".

1459

FATIMA, Portugal. August 5th - "Tell the people not to pre-occupy themselves with that, but to do what Our Lady has already told us to do," said Bishop Pereira Venancio of Leiria in answer to a question as to when the sealed envelope containing the third part of the "secret" confided to Lucia by the Blessed Virgin at Fatima, was going to be opened.

1960 is the year fixed by Lucia herself for this opening, but the Bishop refuses to say at what period of the year the "secret" will be revealed, neither will he say who will open the envelope, which I understand is still locked up in a drawer of his desk.

Not one, not even the late Bishop of Leiria, Msgr Correia da Silva, who was the confidant and friend of Lucia for so many years, has read this document, on which is written in Lucia's painstaking handwriting, the last part of Our Lady's message, which She gave to the world at Fatima. For Lucia only learned to read and write when she left her parents house at the age of 14 in 1921, to go to school at the convent of the Sisters of St Dorothy in Oporto.

What is certain is that this last part of the Fatima message will not consist of threats or prophecies of woe for Lucia herself, now a strictly enclosed Carmelite nun at Coimbra, the old Portuguese University town some fifty miles north of Fatima, has recently denied that she foretold terrible punishments for the world.

BISHOP OF LEIRIA ON FATIMA "SECRET".(continued)

shape of new wars and the destruction of whole cities.

The first two parts of the message which the Blessed Virgin gave to Lucia at Fatima on July 13th, 1917, were only divulged after the 2nd World War had broken out, as before then her confessors did not allow her to speak or write of them.

On August 31st, 1941, Lucia at the request of Bishop Correia da Silva of Leiria, wrote him a full account of the first parts of this message or "secret". This MSS, the third which Lucia wrote for the Bishop about the Apparitions, is in the Episcopal Archives at Leiria. None of them have yet been published in their entirety, but accurate typewritten copies of them exist and have been seen and read by your Correspondent.

This account was written from the convent of the Sisters of St Dorothy in Tuy, Spain, where Lucia was then a lay sister, having entered the Congregation in 1928. Only twenty years later in 1948 did Lucia realise her girlhood wish, when she finally transferred to the Discalced Carmelite Order and entered their convent in Coimbra.

In this MSS, Lucia says clearly to the Bishop, "the secret consists of three distinct things, two of which I will tell you." The first was the vision of Hell, which the three children saw on that July day in 1917, and which made such a fearful and profound impression on them that from that day forward they all made continual sacrifices and did penance for the conversion of sinners.

The second referred to devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary which the Apparition said would be the means of saving many and giving peace to the world. It was then that Our Lady a

BISHOP OF LEIRIA ON FATIMA "SECRET" (continued)

the consecration of Russia to Her Immaculate Heart and Communions of Reparation on the 1st Saturdays of each month. This second part of the message after foretelling the war and the persecution of the Church, ended on a more hopeful note that in the end, "My Immaculate Heart will triumph... Russia will be converted and the world will enjoy a period of peace."

This theme of the final conversion of Russia, runs all through the Fatima revelations from this Apparition in July 1917, when the Russian Revolution of October of that same year, was still in the future, to the visions which she has since had as a nun, and of which she has also written under obedience.

The general feeling at Fatima itself is that this final "secret" must refer to something we already know, but in plainer terms than before, though it should be remembered that Lucia herself wrote that the three parts were distinct.

What is certain is, that whatever we shall hear next year, the fundamental Fatima message of Penance and Prayer including the Rosary, will still be the primary one, as Bishop Pereira Venancio indicated in his words quoted at the beginning of this article.

In vain will you found missions
and build schools, if you are not
able to wield the offensive and
defensive weapon of a loyal
Catholic Press.-Pope St. Pius X.

FOREIGN

We have found real satisfaction
in noting the truly outstanding
role played in recent years by
the N. C. W. C. News Service.
A powerful beacon. A service
which merits praise and support.
- Pope Pius XII

N. C. W. C. NEWS SERVICE

ISSUED BY THE PRESS DEPARTMENT, NATIONAL CATHOLIC WELFARE CONFERENCE

1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N. W.

Washington 5, D. C.

Tele. RE. 7-3556

Cable NACAWELCO

(NC) MEANS N. C. W. C. NEWS SERVICE

The N. C. W. C. News Service issues: A world-wide coverage of Catholic news; a Catholic Radio-TV Newscript; a Feature Service embracing the entire Catholic feature field; a Catholic Picture Service synchronized with its news; special syndications by noted authors.

EDITORS: A one-column illustration to accompany the following story is being released by NCPHOTOS in Friday special release of 8/14/59.

THIRD PART OF FATIMA 'SECRET'
TO BE OPENED IN 1960, BISHOP
SAYS; DISCOURAGES SPECULATION

8/17/59 - F.

By Susan Lowndes Marques
(N.C.W.C. NEWS SERVICE)

FATIMA, Portugal, Aug. 14--The Bishop entrusted with the third and final part of the Fatima "secret" disclosed that it will definitely be opened before the end of 1960.

Bishop João Pereira Venancio of Leiria said that the sealed envelope containing the account written by Lucy--sole survivor of the three children of whom the Blessed Virgin appeared here 42 years ago, and now a Carmelite nun--"is to be opened after Lucy's death or at the latest in 1960." He said that "therefore it shall be opened in 1960."

The final part of the Fatima message does not consist of threats or prophecies of woe. This is certain. Lucy herself, in her strictly enclosed Carmelite convent in Coimbra, the old Portuguese university town some 50 miles north of Fatima, has recently denied that she foretold terrible punishments for the world in the shape of new wars and the destruction of whole cities.

No one except Sister Lucy knows what the third part of the "secret" contains. But Bishop Pereira Venancio, whose diocese includes Fatima, discourages speculation about the message.

"Tell the people not to pre-occupy themselves with that, but to do what Our Lady has already told us to do," the Bishop said when asked when the sealed envelope containing the "secret" will be opened.

(MORE)

The year 1960 was fixed by Lucy herself for the opening. But the Bishop said he does not yet know at what time of the year or where the message will be opened. Neither does he say who is to open the envelope, which is understood to be still locked in a drawer of his desk.

No one, not even the late Bishop of Leiria, Bishop Jose Alves Correia da Silva, who was the confidant and friend of Lucy for so many years, has read the document.

The full account of the first two parts of the "secret" which the Blessed Virgin gave Lucy at Fatima on July 13, 1917, where divulged only at the onset of World War II. Before then, her spiritual directors did not allow her to speak or write of them for the public. To the world at large, the Fatima message known theretofore was simply that of prayer and repentance. But Lucy had made allusions to devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary from 1927 onward.

At the time of the Marian apparitions at Fatima--there were six, beginning on May 13, 1917, and ending the following Oct. 13--Lucy could not read or write. She learned to do so only after she left her parents' house at the age of 14, in 1921, to go to school at the convent of the Sisters of St. Dorothy in Oporto.

In 1941, Lucy--then a lay Sister in the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Dorothy--wrote at the request of Bishop Correia da Silva a full account of the first parts of the Fatima message or "secret." This manuscript, the third which Lucy wrote for the Bishop about the apparitions, is in the episcopal archives at Leiria. None of Lucy's accounts has yet been published in its entirety, but accurate typewritten copies of them exist and can be seen by persons whose business it is to know them.

The 1941 account was written in Lucy's painstaking handwriting at the convent of the Sisters of St. Dorothy in Tuy, Spain. Lucy had entered the congregation in 1926. It was 22 years later, in 1948, that she was able to realize her girlhood wish and transferred to the Discalced Carmelite Order, entering the Carmelite convent at Coimbra. It is there that she remains cloistered today.

In the 1941 manuscript, Sister Lucy states clearly to the Bishop: "The secret consists of three distinct things, two of which I will tell you." The first was the vision of hell, which the three children saw on July 13, 1917, and which made such a fearful and profound impression on them that from that day forward they all made continual sacrifices and did penance for the conversion of sinners.

(MORE)

(8/17/59 - F.)

The second referred to devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, which the Blessed Virgin said in the apparition would be the means of saving many souls and giving peace to the world. It was then that Our Lady asked for the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart and that people receive Holy Communion in reparation on the first Saturday of each month. This second part of the message, after foretelling the war and the persecution of the Church, ended on a more hopeful note. It said that in the end "My Immaculate Heart will triumph...Russia will be converted and the world will enjoy a period of peace."

This theme of the final conversion of Russia, runs all through the Fatima revelation from the apparition in July 1917--when the Russian revolution of November of that same year, was still in the future--to the visions which Lucy has since had as a nun, and of which she has also written under obedience.

The general feeling now at Fatima itself is that this final "secret" must refer to something we already know, but it will spell it out in plainer terms than before. However, it should be remembered that Lucy herself wrote that the three parts are distinct.

The fundamental Fatima message of penance and prayer, including the Rosary, will still be the primary one, as Bishop Pereira Venancia indicates.

--3-em-dash--

FATIMA EXPERT SAYS 'SECRET'
WILL SIMPLY EXPLAIN MESSAGE

8/13/59 - F.

(Italic:)

The author of the following article is an Irish Dominican priest who was stationed in Portugal for 18 years. He was a close friend of the late Bishop Jose Alves Correia da Silva of Leiria, and one of the few people who has known Sister Lucy well enough to induce her to talk freely about the apparitions. He returned to Ireland three years ago and is now stationed in Sligo.

(End italic.)

By Father Gerard Gardiner, O.P.
(N.C.W.C. NEWS SERVICE)

The third part of the "secret" of Fatima is to be revealed in 1960. What will it be? Will it be some terrifying prophecy of the end of the world? Will it foretell some frightful global cataclysm?

These questions are being asked, with their implication that we can expect something sensational. It is natural that there should be curiosity about the "secret." Its existence, after all, was deliberately announced in 1927, 33 years before the date fixed for its revelation. But those who expect a sensation in 1960 not only face certain disappointment, they run the risk of missing the whole point of the message of Fatima.

(MORE)

(8/17/59 - F.)

This is the story of the "secret," as told to me by Lucy:

In 1917, the children were told by Our Lady to keep secret three of the revelations made to them. In 1927, Lucy, then a Dorothean novice, was accorded a private apparition, in which she was instructed to make known two of these revelations then, and the third in 1960. The two parts of the "secret" then revealed were the vision of hell which was granted to the children in the summer of 1917, and the announcement made by Our Lady on the same occasion that she would come later to ask for the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart.

Lucy had no reason to offer as to why these two revelations should have been kept secret for a time. With her usual unwillingness to add anything of her own to the message given to her, she would make no comment on my suggestion that to broadcast the vision of Hell might have distorted the message of Fatima, which is essentially an appeal and not a threat; while the second part of the "secret" could more fittingly wait until the need for prayer for the conversion of Russia had become obvious to the world--as it would not have been in early 1917.

Whatever the reason, the conclusion is obvious that, on the analogy of the two parts already revealed, we should expect the third part of the "secret" to contain some simple elucidation of, or addition to, Fatima's simple message of prayer and penance and amendment of life--and nothing more sensational than that. On one occasion looking for an authoritative answer which I could give when a long explanation would be impossible, I asked Lucy if she could put the message of Fatima for me in one phrase. After a moment's thought she answered: "Our Lady came to ask for the conversion of sinners and the return of souls to God."

That is the core of the message. The conversion of sinners and the return of souls to God is the end to which everything else--prayer, penance, the Rosary, the devotion of the Immaculate Heart--are the means. Whatever there is that is sensational in the Fatima story must be seen as God's way of vindicating the children's claim to be bearers of a message from heaven. Now that the need for vindication has passed, we should be missing the point of the story if we continued to seek sensation.

Perhaps next year's revelation will provide the final vindication by containing a reference to something that could not possibly have been known when the envelope was sealed. What my many talks with Lucy have made me feel, however, is that if the "secret" increases our urge to heed Our Lady's message of prayer and penance and amendment of life, it will be far more in the spirit of Fatima than if it merely provides us with some new sensation.

* * * *