

ARNAUD DE LASSUS

A SIGN IN THE HEAVENS: FATIMA

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(This study was first published by ACTION FAMILIALE ET SCOLAIRE in 1987 under the title "*Un Eclair dans le ciel: Fatima*". In offering it to English-speaking readers we are not unmindful that 1987-88 has been declared a Marian year by the Holy Father; but even if this had not been so, we should still have wanted to print it. The significance of Fatima transcends any single year; it will continue to be topical, indeed urgent, until we - and the whole Church - have fully responded to Our Lady's message. Geoffrey Lawman [Translator]

[Although this work was published prior to the 'revelation' of the so-called 'Third Secret of Fatima' there is nothing in the official version of the latter which would make us reconsider any of the conclusions already drawn by M. de Lassus. This article is now posted on the *Apropos* website at www.apropos.org.uk A.S. Fraser, Editor, *Apropos*, September, 2013].

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INTRODUCTION

WHY STUDY FATIMA?

The Church has recognised as authentic a number of apparitions of the Blessed Virgin in this century; among these that of Fatima is by far the most important. Two popes have made pilgrimages to Fatima, Paul VI in 1967 and John Paul II in 1982, and the pilgrim statues of Fatima have made the round of the whole world. Despite this, it is evident that great numbers of faithful are virtually unaware of Fatima, and even those who have heard of it tend often to have only a rather incomplete understanding of what it was and what it asks of us.

Our first motive for studying Fatima is our conviction that an event of such crucial importance for the life of the Church, the existence of Catholic nations and the lives of the faithful demands more of us than half-truths and partial knowledge.

Prayer is the primary form of action and its primary strength. "*Without me you can do nothing*" said Our Lord. And St. Alphonsus de Liguori echoed this in his famous saying; "*The soul that prays is saved; the soul that does not pray is lost*". Since prayer ought to play a vital role in our lives, we are led to attach special importance to the forms of prayer and the particular devotions Our Lady asked the faithful to offer when she appeared in 1917 at Fatima. Prayer, then, is the second reason for our interest in Fatima.

The Fatima message has a prophetic aspect, in that it forecast future events which have in fact taken place since then, and it also prophesied yet other events as certain to come about, events cheering in their nature, and whose fulfilment we can hasten by our prayers. In a period like ours, disheartening in so many ways, the comfort and reassurance that Fatima promises us should not be neglected. This third reason would be enough in itself to justify us making a serious study of the events and message of Fatima.

* * *

Our aim in this study is to provide a basic introduction to Fatima, dealing briefly with the following points:

- I. **Earlier apparitions, forerunners of Fatima** - (Paray-le-Monial - The Rue du Bac - La Salette - Lourdes);
- II. **The history of Fatima** before, during and after 1917;
- III. **The message of Fatima;**
- IV. **Its political consequences;**
- V. **Its implications for our daily lives.**

* * *

[DOCUMENTARY SOURCES Translator's Note.

Monsieur de Lassus quotes from a number of works in French for which we have been unable to trace English translations or equivalents. Here we have provided our own translation of the passages quoted. Chief among these sources are those found in the footnote below.^{1]}

¹ Toute la Vérité sur Fatima, by Bro. Michel de la Sainte Trinité. (TVF)

Sainte Marguerite-Marie, sa vie écrite par elle-même. (SMM)

Vie et œuvres de la bienheureuse Marguerite-Marie. (VOM)

Sœur Marie de la Croix, bergère de La Salette, by the Abbé Paul Gouin. (GOU)

Les Messages de la Vierge Marie - Quand le Ciel s'adresse à la Terre, by the Abbé Roger Rebut.(REB)

PART ONE

EARLIER APPARITIONS, FORERUNNERS OF FATIMA

We are confining ourselves to the apparitions of the Sacred Heart at Paray-le-Monial and those of the Blessed Virgin in the Rue du Bac, at La Salette and Lourdes.

I. PARAY-LE-MONIAL (1673-1689)

As Fr. Joseph de Sainte-Marie points out (FTP, p.4), the Fatima message "*can be summed up in a few words: God wishes to establish devotion to Mary's Immaculate Heart throughout the world.*"

The devotion to her Immaculate Heart being of necessity complementary to that to her Son's Sacred Heart, a brief reminder of the apparitions of the Sacred Heart at Paray-le-Monial will make an appropriate introduction to Fatima. Moreover, Cardinal Cerejeira, for long Archbishop of Lisbon drew the parallel between Fatima and Paray-le-Monial in his speech to the Madrid Marian Congress in May 1948.

"I repeat what I have often said: Fatima will play the same role for the cult of Mary's Immaculate Heart as Paray-le-Monial did for the cult of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Fatima is in a sense the continuation, or better, the conclusion, of Paray-le-Monial: Fatima links those two Hearts whom God Himself united in the divine work of the Redemption."

A. HISTORY

Born in Burgundy in 1647, Margaret Mary Alacoque was the youngest of seven children of a well-to-do peasant family, though her father had become a royal notary. She died in 1690, and was canonised in 1920.

As a nun in the Visitation convent at Paray-le-Monial she experienced, between 27th December 1673 and the end of 1689, a series of apparitions of Our Lord, and received important revelations about the devotion to the Sacred Heart.

B. MESSAGE

It emphasizes *the importance of the reparatory devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus*, which had already been proclaimed in the Church by the German nun St. Gertrude (1255-1301) and the French priest St. John Eudes (1601-80).

Part of the message is addressed to individuals, families and communities, and hence takes the form

Fortunately, English versions do exist for many of the sources used by the author, including a great deal of the material he draws from Bro. Michel's book noted above. We have thus been able to quote directly from the following works:

Fatima in Lucia's Own Words, pub. Postulation Centre, Fatima. (LOW)

Fatima: 20th Century Prophecy, by Rev. Joseph de Sainte-Marie. (FTP)

The Third Secret of Fatima, by Bro. Michel de la Sainte Trinité. (TSF)

In referring to these eight documents in the text we have used the 3-letter abbreviations in brackets above. A fuller bibliography is supplied at the end of this study.]

of promises.

These promises are scattered through St. Margaret Mary's autobiography and the 142 letters we have from her hand. We have rearranged them under subject headings for greater clarity.

**PROMISES
of Our Lord to Saint Margaret Mary
in favour of those devoted to His Sacred Heart**

1. For those working for the salvation of souls:

My divine Master has told me that those who work for the salvation of souls will be successful and will master the art of touching the most hardened hearts if they have a tender devotion for his Sacred Heart, and if they work to inspire and establish this devotion everywhere. (Letter 141)

2. For communities:

He has promised me that he will spread the mild sweetness of his burning charity over all communities that honour him and place themselves under his special protection; that he will turn aside all the blows of divine justice and restore them to grace when they have fallen away from it (Letter 37).

3. For those living in the world:

Those living in the world will find, through this lovable devotion, all the help they need according to their position in life; that is to say, peace in their families, relief in their labours, the blessings of Heaven on all that they undertake, consolation in their miseries; and it is precisely in this Sacred Heart that they will find a place of refuge throughout their lives and especially at the hour of death. Ah! How sweet it is to die after having had a tender and constant devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ! (Letter 141)

4. For houses where a picture of the Sacred Heart is prominently placed and honoured:

He assured me again that he derived particular pleasure from being honoured in the figure of that heart of flesh, whose picture he wanted to be prominently displayed in public, in order, he added, to move the unfeeling hearts of men; promising me that he would abundantly spread in the hearts of all those who honoured it all the treasures of grace with which he is filled, and that, wherever this picture is displayed for particular honour, it will draw down on those houses all sorts of blessings. (VOM, vol.II p.244.)

5. Promise of salvation for all those dedicated and consecrated to it:

He told me in an unmistakable manner that he derived particular pleasure in being known, loved and honoured by his creatures, and that this pleasure was so extreme that it seemed to me that he then promised me that all those who were dedicated and consecrated to (his Heart) would not perish finally. (Letter 49)

6. Promise of a holy death for those who receive communion on nine successive First Fridays of the month:

One Friday, during Holy Communion, He pronounced these words to his unworthy slave, if she is not mistaken: "I promise you, in the boundless mercy of my Heart, that its omnipotent love will

grant to all those who receive communion on nine successive first Fridays of the month, the grace of final repentance; they will not die deprived of my grace or of the sacraments; my divine Heart will assuredly grant them a heavenly refuge at their last moment." (Letter 87)

7. Promise of the reign of the Sacred Heart:

Have no fear, I shall reign despite my enemies and those who try to oppose this (VOM vol. II p.104).

To these promises we may add Our Lord's particular demand respecting the Holy Hour. Addressing St. Margaret Mary, Our Lord said to her:

Each night between Thursday and Friday I will make you participate in that mortal sadness I was willing to undergo on the Mount of Olives, a sadness that will reduce you, without your being able to understand it, to a sort of agony harder to bear than death. And in order to bear me company in that humble prayer that I then offered to my Father in the midst of all my anguish, you will rise between 11 o'clock and midnight to prostrate yourself for an hour with me, your face to the ground, both to appease the divine wrath by asking for mercy for sinners, and to alleviate in some measure the bitterness I felt at my abandonment by my apostles, which obliged me to reproach them for their inability to watch a single hour with me; and during this hour you will do what I shall instruct you. (VOM vol. II p.72-73).

It was while Sister Lucia of Fatima was carrying out the exercise of the Holy Hour on the night of the 13th to 14th June 1929 that she witnessed the apparition of Tui that we shall discuss later in this study.

The message has a political aspect:

On June 17th 1689, on the feast of the Sacred Heart, which was by then already being celebrated in the Visitation Convent at Paray-le-Monial, St. Margaret Mary wrote to Mother de Saumaise setting out the plans of the Sacred Heart for France and its king. Referring to the Sacred Heart, she wrote:

It is his desire, it seems to me, to enter with pomp and magnificence into the house of princes and kings, to be honoured there to the same extent as he was insulted, despised and humiliated in his Passion, and so that he may receive as much pleasure in seeing the great ones of the world abased and humiliated before him as he felt bitterness in seeing himself reduced to nothing at their feet. And these are the words I heard on this subject: "Tell the eldest son of my Sacred Heart - speaking of our king - that, just as his birth into this world was obtained by devotion to the merits of my holy Childhood, so will he obtain his birth into grace and eternal glory by consecrating himself to my adorable Heart, which desires to triumph over his own, and through his mediation, over those of the great ones of this world. It (i.e. the Sacred Heart) desires to reign in his palace, to be depicted on his banners and engraved in his arms so as to make them victorious over all his enemies, bringing those proud and arrogant heads down at his feet, and to give it the victory over all the enemies of holy Church." (Letter 100, in SMM p.158.)

In a later letter addressed to the same nun, St. Margaret Mary wrote:

The eternal Father, in his desire that the bitterness and anguish suffered by the adorable Heart of his divine Son in the house of the princes of this world, among the humiliations and outrages of his Passion, should receive reparation, desires to establish his supremacy in the court of our great monarch, to whom he wishes to entrust the carrying out of his plan, namely the construction of a

building in which the picture of this divine Heart may receive the consecration and homage of the King and all the court... (Letter 107, SMM, 28th August 1689).

C. NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THE DEMANDS ADDRESSED TO THE KING

We know that this part of the message was not fulfilled. In his '*Toute la Vérité sur Fatima*' (vol. II p.346), Bro. Michel de la Sainte Trinité gives the following details:

The Fatima message makes it possible finally to solve the tricky historical question of the transmission of the message of the Sacred Heart to King Louis XIV. Certain historians point to the absence of any contemporary document attesting to the king having in fact been informed, and conclude that the message never reached him. Our Lord's words to Sister Lucia in 1931 and 1936² brought a definitive solution to this question; the king had in fact been told of the demands, but "he was not willing to listen to them", and "he delayed their application".

The king's refusal to listen to the demands of the Sacred Heart was to have tragic consequences for France and for the Bourbon dynasty. From 1689, Louis XIV's fortunes changed for the worse. Despite his courage and genius, he was unable to overcome his enemies. His successors (the Regent, and then Louis XV) allowed the establishment in France of the masonic lodges whose methodical preparations would later lead to the Revolution.

And, on June 17th 1789, a century to the day after that feast of the Sacred Heart on which St. Margaret Mary, "following the impulse given her that very instant", had written down the great designs of Heaven for the king's attention, the rebellious Third Estate declared itself a Constituent Assembly and thus, at that moment, overthrew the monarchy. (TVF vol. II p.349)

² See below, page 30 (footnote 16).

II. APPARITIONS OF THE RUE DU BAC THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL (1830)

I. HISTORY

Catherine Labouré was born in Burgundy in 1806, the fifteenth of the seventeen children of a working farmer; she died in 1876 and was canonised in 1947. It was while she was a novice with the daughters of Charity in the Rue du Bac in Paris that she had apparitions of Our Lord and Our Lady:

- 6th June 1830..... First apparition
- 19th July 1830 Second apparition - fall of the monarchy foretold.
- 27th November 1830 ... Apparition during which the Miraculous Medal was described in detail.
- December 1830 Last apparition.

2. MESSAGE

As at Paray-le Monial, this has a personal and a political aspect.

- **Personal aspect**
 - Emphasis on prayer: Rosary, recourse to the Immaculate Conception.
 - Devotion to the two Hearts of Jesus and Mary (both represented on the Miraculous Medal).

Here is how St. Catherine Labouré herself recounts the apparition of November 27th 1830:

"A picture took shape around the Blessed Virgin, somewhat oval, on which these words appeared in a semi-circle beginning at the height of the right hand, passing above the Blessed Virgin's head and ending at the level of her left hand: "O Marie, conçue sans péché, priez pour nous qui avons recours à vous" (O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you), written in letters of gold. Then a voice was heard, saying to me: "Have a medal struck according to this pattern; everyone who wears it when it has been indulgenced and who piously says this short prayer will receive great graces by wearing it round his or her neck: those who wear it with confidence will have abundant graces...."

At that moment the picture seemed to me to turn round. I saw on the other side of the medal Our Lady's monogram, consisting of the letter M. the two hearts of Jesus and Mary, which I could distinguish from each other since one was surrounded by a crown of thorns and the other pierced by a sword.

I was perplexed as to what should be inscribed on the reverse of the medal, but one day during my meditation I seemed to hear a voice saying: "the M and the two hearts say enough." (REB p.44)

- **Political aspect:** the overthrow of the monarchy is forecast.

In the course of the apparition of July 19th 1830, the Blessed Virgin addressed St. Catherine Labouré in these terms:

*'...The times are very bad, misfortunes will pour down over France, **the throne will be overturned**, the whole world will be overwhelmed by calamities of all sorts (the Blessed Virgin looked very sad as she said that). But **come to the foot of this altar**, there graces will be poured out on all who ask for them with confidence and fervour; they will be poured out on great and small...'* (REB p.40)

A few days later, as a result of the so-called "insurrection of the three glorious days" (July 27, 28, 29 1830), King Charles X of France was forced to abdicate.

III. LA SALETTE (1846)

1) HISTORY

On Saturday 19th September 1846, the eve of the feast of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows, the Virgin Mary appeared at La Salette in the Isère (S.E. France) to two children, Mélanie Calvat (15) and Maximin Giraud (11), who were pasturing cattle in the mountains. She was crowned with roses, and wept almost continuously as she spoke to Mélanie.

The apparitions of La Salette were given canonical approval on November 16th 1851 by the diocesan bishop, Msgr. de Bruillard, Bishop of Grenoble. Mélanie Calvat died in 1904 after a life of tribulations, but of fidelity to the mission entrusted to her, that of transmitting Our Lady's message

2) MESSAGE

The message of La Salette falls into four parts:

- one which was revealed immediately after the apparitions, and consisting of a warning to Christians because of their blasphemies and their forgetfulness of the commandments of God and the Church;
- one entrusted to Maximin Giraud; it was transmitted to Pope Pius IX in 1851 and has not been revealed;
- a section entrusted to Mélanie Calvat; it was transmitted to Pope Pius IX in 1851, and was revealed by Mélanie from 1860 on (the Virgin had authorised its publication from 1858 on) and printed in 1879;
- a fourth section entrusted to Mélanie containing the Rule for a new religious order.

In this message, the Virgin Mary predicted temporal punishments caused by the sins of Christians; she foretold also (in the secret part of the message, entrusted to Mélanie Calvat) a series of events that can be summed up as: disloyalty of priests and persons consecrated to God, "a terrible crisis in the Church", "a universal laxity in all that concerns the service of God;" divine punishments thus provoked, a return of peace and reconciliation between God and men; finally the arrival of the Antichrist and associated tribulations.

IV. LOURDES (1858)

Bernadette Soubirous, to whom the Blessed Virgin appeared in the grotto at Lourdes in 1858, was born in 1844, died in 1879 and was canonised in 1933. The eighteen apparitions at Lourdes took place between February and July 1858, the last occurring on July 16th, the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

Four facts stand out particularly in these apparitions:

- 1° - Our Lady's assertion of her title;
- 2° - the spring as symbol of the heart of Jesus;
- 3° - the call to repentance;
- 4° - the weapons Our Lady gives us to struggle against the adversary.

1° - OUR LADY'S ASSERTION OF HER TITLE

'The Church had just (in 1854) defined the immaculate Conception as a dogma of faith. The most holy Virgin affirms this title as being a definition of what she is in substance. She is "the woman clothed in the sun", absolute purity. "Immaculate Conception" is her name, the name she will bear for all eternity....' (REB pp.94-5)

2° - THE SPRING AS SYMBOL OF THE HEART OF JESUS

'There is no doubt that when Our Lady invites us to come to the grotto, that is, "to the rock", to "the spring", it is into her Son's heart that she wants us to come. From his opened side "there came forth blood mixed with water" (Jn. 19). We must be washed in that blood for our sins to be forgiven. We must drink that water so that the Spirit, the sanctifier and enlightener, may enable us to unmask "the snares of the devil" and to walk in the truth....' (REB. pp.95-97)

3° - THE CALL TO REPENTANCE

'In a society barely aware of the evils preying on it, and which veiled its miseries and injustices under a prosperous, brilliant and uncaring exterior, the spotless Virgin, untouched at any moment by sin, appeared to an innocent child. With motherly compassion she gazed around a world redeemed by her Son's blood, but in which, alas, the ravages of sin were growing constantly graver, and three times she repeated her urgent appeal: "Repentance, repentance, repentance!" Expressive actions even are called for: "Go and kiss the ground in penitence for sinners". And the action must be accompanied by supplication: "You will pray to God for sinners".' (Pius XII, in his encyclical *Le pelerinage de Lourdes* for the centenary of the apparitions, 2nd July 1957.)

4° - THE WEAPONS GIVEN US BY OUR LADY.

These are: the Sign of the Cross - the Rosary - the Scapular. (See REB, p.98.)

Many of the elements present in these earlier apparitions reappear in the Fatima message, and in particular the following: the importance of reparation and penitence; certain privileged forms of

prayer and devotions (the Rosary, the scapular of Mount Carmel, the reparatory devotion to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary); the announcement of a crisis of faith and a crisis in the Church, and the forecast of a coming reign of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

PART TWO

THE HISTORY OF FATIMA

I. THE WORLD SITUATION IN 1917.

Since the great Marian apparitions of the 19th century (after those of La Salette and Lourdes came those of Pontmain in 1871 and Pellevoisin in 1876), the world situation had grown progressively worse.

1. The rise of atheistic materialism

In the wake of Marx and his disciples, atheistic materialism and the concept of class struggle had made great strides in Europe. Lenin had developed and refined Marx's thought. In the application of Marxist-Leninist theory, the working masses, increasingly rootless and skilfully manipulated, were beginning to be used as a striking force for the destruction of western society.

2. The undermining of Christian order

Throughout the 19th century and during the earlier 20th century, the application of the principles of 1789 had resulted in a progressive secularisation of the Christian nations, a phenomenon described by Cardinal Billot in these words:

*"These principles, reduced to their simplest expression and understood in their most exact sense, proclaim the independence of earthly affairs from the divine, the freeing of civil institutions from any subordination to religious law, the separation of temporal government from that authority that seeks our last and supreme destiny, in a word, the transfer of human society into a special sphere where divine jurisdiction is not applicable, and where man is no longer obliged to recognize God or to worship Him..."*³

In this process of decline France, eldest daughter of the Church, had betrayed its vocation, and set a bad example, in particular, by its separation of the Church and the schools system under the education laws of the Third Republic, the secularisation of so many public activities between 1880 and 1900, its mass expulsions of religious in 1880 and 1902, and its separation of Church and State by the so-called 'Law of Separation' of 1905.

In his condemnation of that law, Pope St. Pius X clearly pointed out the reversal of Christian order involved in this secularisation of the State.

*"How can we not condemn this law when it reveals its malignant intent in its very title and thus condemns itself? Its aim, Venerable Brothers, is to effect a violent breach between State and Church. It thus tends, by its very nature, to cast contempt on the eternal and most high God, since it maintains that the State has no obligation to worship Him. Now God is not Lord and Master just of individuals, but also of nations and states; nations and those who govern them too have therefore a duty to recognise, respect and venerate Him publicly,"*⁴

³ In his treatise *De Ecclesia*. A Jesuit theologian, Fr. Billot was created a cardinal by St. Pius X in 1911.

⁴ St. Pius X, allocution to the Consistory, 21st February 1906

3. 1917, a turning point in history

In 1917 the First World War (1914-1918) was entering its fourth year; practically every nation in the world was involved (with the exception of Spain, Latin America, China and one or two small countries). Portugal had been at war for two years.

It was on the 2nd November 1917 that the British government published the 'Balfour Declaration' in favour of a Jewish National Home in Palestine which was to become the State of Israel 31 years later.

It was on the 6th November 1917 (24th October in the old Russian calendar) that the 'October Revolution' broke out in St. Petersburg, and so power passed to the Bolsheviks.

II. THREE KEY DATES: 1517, 1717, 1917.

Let us pause for a moment to consider the connection between these three dates.

- In **1517**, Luther's breach with Rome opened the great **religious revolution** of modern times.
- **1717** saw the setting up in London of the modern organisational framework of Freemasonry, destined to be the chief organ of **political revolution** in the world.
- **1917**: the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, the so-called *October Revolution*, brought about the organisation of a second revolutionary apparatus, complementary to the previous one: the **Communist machine**.

While he was a theology student in Rome in 1917, St. Maximilian Kolbe witnessed demonstrations organised in commemoration of the second centenary of Freemasonry. The Freemasons set up their banner on St. Peter's Square, under the windows of the Pope, the 'prisoner of the Vatican'; against its black background it portrayed Lucifer treading the archangel St. Michael underfoot, and it bore the motto: "Satan must reign in the Vatican, the Pope will be his slave".

This sacrilegious sight so shocked Father Kolbe that it led him to found the 'Militia of Mary Immaculate'. This had its first meeting on 17th October 1917, and its goal was "*to combat the Freemasons and other henchmen of Lucifer*" and to pray for the conversion of the Church's enemies⁵

In the face of these enemies of God brandishing their "*Non serviam*", Father Kolbe raised the banner of Her who, by her "*Fiat*", her willing acceptance of God's plan for her, became the Mother of Christ, the Mother of God, the Mother of all of us.

It was in 1917, too, that the Blessed Virgin was to intervene in a decisive fashion at Fatima.

⁵ Cf. Maria Winowska, '*Le Secret de Maximilien Kolbe*', (edit. St. Paul), pp.44 and 50.

III. CHRONOLOGY OF FATIMA

I. FATIMA

Fatima is a little Portuguese town, 120 kilometres north of Lisbon. 3 kilometres away, at the spot known as '*Cova da Iria*', the Virgin appeared in 1917 to three children, Jacinta Marto (7), her brother Francisco (9) and their cousin Lucia dos Santos (10). (These apparitions had been preceded by apparitions of an angel.)

2. CHRONOLOGY OF THE APPARITIONS

Three periods must be distinguished in the Fatima phenomenon:

Prior to 1917: Apparitions of the Angel

- 1915: Three apparitions of the Angel of Portugal to Lucia and 3 of her companions.
- 1916: In spring, summer and autumn, three further apparitions of the Angel of Portugal to Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco.

1917: the six apparitions at Fatima. These took place on 13th May, 13th June, 13th July, 19th August, 13th September and 13th October.

Post-1917: (Apparition and revelations which Lucia dos Santos has continued to receive (she was still alive at the time of translation, in 1988):

Here we shall note principally the apparitions of Pontevedra and Tuy:

- On December 10th 1925 the Child Jesus and his mother appeared at Pontevedra **in Spain** (promise linked to the reparatory devotion of the Five First Saturdays).
- On 15th July 1926, apparition of the Child Jesus at Pontevedra.
- On 13th June 1929, apparition of the Blessed Trinity and Our Lady at Tuy **in Spain**. Demand and promise concerning the consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.
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3. FURTHER ELEMENTS IN THE CHRONOLOGY OF FATIMA

- 4th April 1919 Death of Francisco.
- 20th February 1920 Death of Jacinta
- 13th October 1930 Canonical approval of the Fatima apparitions by the bishop of Leiria, Msgr. da Silva.
- 13th May 1931 Consecration of Portugal to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by all the country's bishops (following its consecration to the Sacred Heart

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| | of Jesus on —the feast of Christ the King in 1928). |
| • Dec. 1940 – Aug. 1941 | On the order of her superiors, Lucia revealed the first two parts of the Secret. |
| • 31st October 1942 | Consecration of the world to Mary's Immaculate Heart by Pope Pius XII. |
| • 30th Oct. - 8th Nov. 1950 | Pius XII witnesses the miracle of the sun. |
| • 7th July 1952 | Pope Pius XII consecrated Russia to Mary's Immaculate Heart. |
| • 13th May 1967 | Pilgrimage of Paul VI to Fatima. |
| • 13th May 1982 | Pilgrimage of John Paul II to Fatima. |

IV. SOME DETAILS ABOUT EVENTS AT FATIMA (AND LATER IN SPAIN)

The general outline of the events narrated below is that given by Brother Michel de la Sainte Trinité in his *Toute la Vérité sur Fatima* (TVF). The quotations, unless otherwise stated, are drawn directly from Lucia's memoirs, *Fatima in Lucia's Own Words* (LOW), but retaining Bro. Michel's sub-titles.

I. APPARITIONS OF THE ANGEL (1915-1916)

- **First apparition to Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco** (Spring 1916):

"We were surprised, absorbed, and struck dumb with amazement. On reaching us, he said: 'Do not be afraid. I am the Angel of Peace. Pray with me.

Kneeling on the ground, he bowed down until his forehead touched the earth. Led by a supernatural impulse, we did the same, and repeated the words which we heard him say:

'My God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love You! I ask pardon of You for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope and do not love You!'

Having repeated these words three times, he rose and said:

'Pray thus. The Hearts of Jesus and Mary are attentive to the voice of your supplications.' Then he disappeared." (LOW p.151)

- **Second apparition** (Summer 1916) :

"...we were playing on the stone slabs of the well. Suddenly, we saw the same Angel right beside us. 'What are you doing?' he asked. 'Pray! Pray very much! The Hearts of Jesus and Mary have designs of mercy on you. Offer prayers and sacrifices constantly to the Most High.'

'How are we to make sacrifices?' I asked.

'Make of everything you can a sacrifice, and offer it to God as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and in supplication for the conversion of sinners. You will thus draw down peace upon your country. I am its Angel Guardian, the Angel of Portugal. Above all, accept and bear with submission, the suffering which the Lord will send you.'" (LOW, p.62, 151-2)

- **The third apparition** (late September or October 1916):

"As soon as we arrived there, we knelt down with our foreheads touching the ground, and began to repeat the prayer of the Angel.

'My God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love You...' I don't know how many times we had repeated the prayer, when an extraordinary light shone upon us. We sprang up to see what was happening, and beheld the Angel. He was holding a chalice in his left hand, with the Host suspended above it, from which some drops of blood fell into the chalice. Leaving the chalice suspended in the air, the Angel knelt down beside us and made us repeat three times:

'Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I offer You the most precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles of the world, in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges and indifference with which He Himself is offended. And, through the infinite merits of His most Sacred Heart, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg of You the conversion of poor sinners.'

Then, rising, he took the chalice and the Host in his hands. He gave the Sacred Host to me, and shared the Blood from the chalice between Jacinta and Francisco, saying as he did so:

'Take and drink the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, horribly outraged by ungrateful men! Make reparation for their crimes and console your God.'

Once again, he prostrated on the ground and repeated with us, three times more, the same prayer 'Most Holy Trinity...', and then disappeared." (LOW p.63)

2. APPARITIONS OF THE VIRGIN IN 1917

These took place on 13th May, 13th June, 13th July, 19th August, 13th September and 13th October, all bar one at the *Cova da Iria* (3 kilometres from Fatima), the exception being that of 19th August, which took place at *Valinhos*.

We quote again from Lucia's own memoirs.

- **First apparition** - 13th May 1917

'A Lady...more brilliant than the sun'

"High up on the slope in the Cova da Iria, I was playing with Jacinta and Francisco at building a little stone wall around a clump of furze. Suddenly we saw what seemed to be a flash of lightning.

'We'd better go home,' I said to my cousins, 'that's lightning; we may have a thunderstorm.'

'Yes, indeed!' they answered.

We began to go down the slope, hurrying the sheep along towards the road. We were more or less half-way down the slope, and almost level with a large holmoak tree that stood there, when we saw another flash of lightning. We had only gone a few steps further when, there before us on a small holmoak, we beheld a Lady all dressed in white. She was more brilliant than the sun, and radiated a light more clear and intense than a crystal glass filled with sparkling water, when the rays of the burning sun shine through it.

We stopped, astounded, before the Apparition. We were so close, just a few feet from her, that we were bathed in the light which surrounded her, or rather, which radiated from her. Then Our Lady spoke to us:

'Do not be afraid. I will do you no harm.'

'Where are you from?'

'I am from heaven.'

Our Lady's Rendezvous

'What do you want of me?'

'I have come to ask you to come here for six months in succession, on the 13th day, at this same hour. Later on, I will tell you who I am and what I want. Afterwards, I will return here yet a seventh time.'

Who will go to Heaven?

'Shall I go to heaven too?'

'Yes, you will.'

'And Jacinta?'

'She will go also.'

'And Francisco?'

'He will go there too, but he must say many Rosaries.'

Then I remembered to ask about two girls who had died recently. They were friends of mine and used to come to my home to learn weaving with my eldest sister.

'Is Maria das Neves in heaven?'

'Yes, she is.' (I think she was about 16 years old).

'And Amelia?'

'She will be in purgatory until the end of the world.' (It seems to me that she was between 18 and 20 years of age).

The vocation to suffering

'Are you willing to offer yourselves to God and bear all the sufferings He wills to send you, as an act of reparation for the conversion of sinners?'

'Yes, we are willing.'

'Then you are going to have much to suffer, but the grace of God will be your comfort.'

The vision "in God"

As she pronounced these last words '*...the grace of God will be your comfort*', Our Lady opened her hands for the first time, communicating to us a light so intense that, as it streamed from her hands, its rays penetrated our hearts and the innermost depths of our souls, making us see ourselves in God, Who was that light, more clearly than we see ourselves in the best of mirrors. Then, moved by an interior impulse that was also communicated to us, we fell on our knees, repeating in our hearts:

'O most Holy Trinity, I adore You! My God, My God, I love You in the most Blessed Sacrament!'

The Queen of Peace

After a few moments, Our Lady spoke again:

'Pray the Rosary every day, in order to obtain peace for the world, and the end of the war.'

'Can you tell me if the war will last long or if it will soon end?'

'I cannot tell you that yet, until I have also told you what I want'.⁶

"Heaven opening"

Then she began to rise serenely, going up towards the east, until she disappeared in the immensity of space. The light that surrounded her seemed to open up a path before her in the firmament, and for this reason we sometimes said that we saw heaven opening.' (LOW p. 156-160)

Second apparition - 13th June 1917

6. This last question and answer, about the duration of the war, is not found in LOW; I have therefore translated it from Bro. Michel's text as printed in TVF, vol.1 p.177-178. (Trans.)

As soon as Jacinta, Francisco and I had finished praying the Rosary, with a number of other people who were present, we saw once more the flash reflecting the light which was approaching (which we called lightning). The next moment, Our Lady was there on the holmoak, exactly the same as in May.

Our Lady's three demands

'What do you want of me?' I asked.

'I wish you to come here on the 13th of next month, to pray the Rosary every day, and to learn to read. Later, I will tell you what I want.'

I asked for the cure of a sick person.

'If he is converted, he will be cured during the year.'

Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary

'I would like to ask you to take us to heaven.'

'Yes. I will take Jacinta and Francisco soon. But you are to stay here some time longer. Jesus wishes to make use of you to make me known and loved. He wants to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart.'

'Am I to stay here alone?' I asked sadly.

'No, my daughter. Are you suffering a great deal? Don't lose heart. I will never forsake you. My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God.'

The vision "in God"

As Our Lady spoke these last words, she opened her hands and for the second time, she communicated to us the rays of that same immense light. We saw ourselves in this light, as it were, immersed in God. Jacinta and Francisco seemed to be in that part of the light which rose towards heaven, and I in that which was poured out on the earth.

The Revelation of Mary's Immaculate Heart

In front of the palm of Our Lady's right hand was a heart encircled by thorns which pierced it. We understood that this was the Immaculate Heart of Mary, outraged by the sins of humanity, and seeking reparation.

The little secret of 13th June

You know now, Your Excellency, what we referred to when we said that Our Lady had revealed a secret to us in June. At the time, Our Lady did not tell us to keep it secret, but we felt moved to do so by God. (LOW pp.160-161)

Third apparition - 13th July 1917

A few moments after arriving at the Cova da Iria, near the holmoak, where a large number of people were praying the Rosary, we saw the flash of light once more, and a moment later Our Lady appeared on the holmoak.

The miracle foretold

'What do you want of me?' I asked.

'I want you to come here on the 13th of next month, to continue to pray the Rosary every day in honour of Our Lady of the Rosary, in order to obtain peace for the world and the end of the war, because only she can help you.'

'I would like to ask you to tell us who you are, and to work a miracle so that everybody will believe that you are appearing to us.'

'Continue to come here every month. In October I will tell you who I am and what I want, and I will perform a miracle for all to see and believe.'

I then made some requests, but I cannot recall now just what they were. What I do remember is that Our Lady said it was necessary for such people to pray the Rosary in order to obtain these graces during the year.

Reparatory sacrifice

And She continued:

'Sacrifice yourselves for sinners, and say many times, especially whenever you make some sacrifice: O Jesus, it is for love of You, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.'

The Vision of Hell

As Our Lady spoke these last words, she opened her hands once more, as she had done during the two previous months. The rays of light seemed to penetrate the earth, and we saw as it were a sea of fire. Plunged in this fire were demons and souls in human form, like transparent burning embers, all blackened or burnished bronze, floating about in the conflagration, now raised into the air by the flames that issued from within themselves together with great clouds of smoke, now falling back on every side like sparks in huge fires, without weight or equilibrium, amid shrieks and groans of pain and despair, which horrified us and made us tremble with fear. (It must have been this sight which caused me to cry out, as people say they heard me). The demons could be distinguished by their terrifying and repellent likeness to frightful and unknown animals, black and transparent like burning coals.

(And here, in her 3rd Memoir, [LOW p.104], Sister Lucia added):

This vision lasted but an instant. How can we ever be grateful enough to our kind heavenly Mother,

who had already prepared us by promising, in the first Apparition, to take us to heaven. Otherwise, I think we would have died of fear and terror.

At this point Sister Lucia reported Our Lady's words constituting the 1st and 2nd parts of the "**secret of Fatima**". (We shall deal with this on pp. 29-30). The apparition ended with this demand by Our Lady:

Rosary Appeal for the salvation of souls

'When you pray the Rosary, say after each mystery: O my Jesus, forgive us, save us from the fire of hell. Lead all souls to heaven, especially those who are most in need.'

After this, there was a moment of silence, and then I asked:

'Is there anything more that you want of me?'

'No, I do not want anything more of you today.'

Then, as before Our Lady began to ascend towards the east, until she finally disappeared in the immense distance of the firmament. (LOW pp.162-165)

Fourth apparition - 19th August 1917

This apparition took place on the 19th August rather than the 13th, and at a place called Valinhos, not at the Cova da Iria; this is because of the harassment undergone by the children at the hands of the local administrator in charge of the Vila Nova de Ourem district in which Fatima lies. This man, Arturo de Oliveira Santos, a notorious freemason, had had the three children arrested on the 13th and had kept them in prison in Ourem. Before their liberation on the 15th they had been threatened with death and subjected to long and intimidating interrogations.

Meanwhile, Francisco and I saw the flash of light, which we called lightning. Jacinta arrived, and a moment later, we saw Our Lady on a holmoak tree.

'What do you want of me?'

'I want you to continue going to the Cova da Iria on the 13th, and to continue praying the Rosary every day. In the last month, I will perform a miracle so that all may believe. [If you had not been taken to the town, the miracle would have been better known. St. Joseph will come with the Child Jesus, to give peace to the world. Our Lord will come to bless the people. Our Lady of the Rosary and Our Lady of Sorrows will come too.' ⁷]

Solemnity of Our Lady of the Rosary

'What do you want done with the money that the people leave in the Cova da Iria?'

'Have two litters made. One is to be carried by you and Jacinta and two other girls dressed in white; the other one is to be carried by Francisco and three other boys [dressed in white albs (6)].'

⁷ The two passages in square brackets do not appear in 'Fatima in Lucia's Own Words'; we have therefore translated them from Bro. Michel de la Sainte Trinité's text as printed in TVF, vol.1, p.259.

The money from the litters is for the "festa" of Our Lady of the Rosary, and what is left over will help towards the construction of a chapel that is to be built here.'

'I would like to ask you to cure some sick persons.

'Yes, I will cure some of them during the year.

Then, looking very sad, Our Lady said:

'Pray, pray very much, and make sacrifices for sinners; for many souls go to hell, because there are none to sacrifice themselves and to pray for them.'

And she began to ascend as usual towards the east. (LOW p.166-167)

Fifth apparition - 13th September 1917

25 to 30 thousand persons were present at this apparition. We are again using the text of *Fatima in Lucia's Own Words*, expanded (for the passages in square brackets) by that of the Ferreira Report.

At last, we arrived at the Cova da Iria, and on reaching the holmoak we began to say the Rosary with the people. Shortly afterwards, we saw the flash of light, and then Our Lady appeared on the holmoak.

'What do you want of me?'

'Continue to pray the Rosary in order to obtain the end of the war. In October Our Lord will come, as well as Our Lady of Dolours and Our Lady of Carmel. Saint Joseph will appear with the Child Jesus to bless the world. God is pleased with your sacrifices. He does not want you to sleep with the rope on, but only to wear it during the daytime.' (...)

The Chapel

['The people would like to have a chapel here.

*'With half of the money received so far, let them make the processional litters, and carry them at the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary; use the other half towards building the chapel (...)]
In October I will perform a miracle so that all may believe.*

Then Our Lady began to rise as usual, and disappeared. (LOW p.168 and TVF vol.I p.273-4.)

Sixth apparition - 13th October 1917

On this date a crowd of some 70,000 had gathered at the Cova da Iria.

We reached the holmoak in the Cova da Iria. Once there, moved by an interior impulse, I asked the people to shut their umbrellas and say the Rosary. A little later, we saw the flash of light, and then Our Lady appeared on the holmoak.

'What do you want of me?'

'I want to tell you that a chapel is to be built here in my honour. I am the Lady of the Rosary. Continue always to pray the Rosary every day. The war is going to end, and the soldiers will soon return to their homes.'

'I have many things to ask you: the cure of some sick persons, the conversion of sinners, and other things...'

'Some yes, but not others. They must amend their lives and ask forgiveness for their sins.'

Looking very sad, Our Lady said:

'Do not offend the Lord our God any more, because he is already so much offended.'

Then, opening her hands, she made them reflect on the sun, and as she ascended, the reflection of her own light continued to be projected on the sun itself.

Here, Your Excellency, is the reason why I cried out to the people to look at the sun. My aim was not to call their attention to the sun, because I was not even aware of their presence. I was moved to do so under the guidance of an interior impulse. (LOW 168-170)

Vision of the Holy Family

After Our Lady had disappeared into the immense distance of the firmament, we beheld St. Joseph with the Child Jesus and Our Lady robed in white with a blue mantle, beside the sun. St. Joseph and the Child Jesus appeared to bless the world, for they traced the Sign of the Cross with their hands.

Vision of Our Lady of Dolours

When, a little later, this apparition disappeared, I saw Our Lord and Our Lady; it seemed to me that it was Our Lady of Dolours. Our Lord appeared to bless the world in the same manner as St. Joseph had done.

Vision of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

This apparition also vanished, and I saw Our Lady once more, this time resembling Our Lady of Carmel. (LOW pp. 168-170)

While the three children were contemplating Our Lord, Our Lady and St. Joseph, there occurred the miracle announced three months earlier (during the apparition of 13th July 1917), and which constitutes the divine guarantee of the apparitions and the message.

We reproduce this account of the miracle of the sun, as reported by a contemporary journalist, from *Toute la Vérité sur Fatima*, vol.1, pp. 317-318:

"Here are the facts, briefly reported by a journalist whom no one could suspect of partiality, and rightly so, for he is Avelino de Almeida, editor-in-chief of O Seculo, the great 'liberal' Lisbon daily, anti-clerical and masonic in its convictions:

'From the road, cluttered up by carriages, and where hundreds of people had remained for lack of the courage to adventure across the muddy ground, one can see the huge crowd turn towards the sun, now at the zenith and clear of clouds.

It looks like a disc of matt silver, and it is possible to look straight at it without any discomfort. It does not burn one's eyes. It is not dazzling. It is as though an eclipse is taking place.

But then an immense clamour breaks out, and those who are nearest to the crowd can hear the cries of "Miracle! Miracle!...Marvel ! ...Marvel ... ! "

Before the astonished eyes of these people, whose attitude transports us back to biblical times, and who, stupefied, their heads uncovered, are gazing into the blue of the sky, the sun has trembled, the sun has made sudden and unwanted movements, quite outside all cosmic laws, 'the sun has danced', to use the typical expression of the peasants... ' ⁸.

Violently attacked for this report by the whole of the anti-clerical press, Avelino de Almeida repeated his testimony a fortnight later in his own review, the *Ilustração Portuguesa*. This time he illustrated his account with half a score of photographs showing the immense and ecstatic crowd, and punctuating his article with repetitions of "I saw... I saw... I saw". Let us quote his conclusion:

*"What else did I see on the heath at Fatima that was even stranger? The rain stopped falling at the hour foretold in advance; the thick mass of clouds clearing; and the kingly sun - a disc of unpolished silver - appearing at the zenith and beginning to dance with a violent and compulsive movement that a great number of witnesses compared to a serpentine dance, so beautiful and glowing were the colours that appeared successively on the sun's surface." And the reporter ended his account with admirable objectivity: "Was it a miracle, as the people cried? Or was it a natural phenomenon, as the scientists maintain? For the time being I am not concerned with the answer, but merely with insisting on **what I saw**....The rest is for science and the Church to decide."*

3. APPARITIONS AFTER 1917

The most important of these took place at Pontevedra (10th December 1925, 15th February 1926) and at Tuy (13th June 1929) in Spain, where Sister Lucia was a nun in the Dorothean Order.

Apparitions at Pontevedra

In the evening of Thursday 10th December 1925, after supper, our young postulant - she was then only 18 - had retired to her cell. It was there that she was visited by the Virgin and the Child Jesus. This is how she described it ⁹.

"On December 10th 1925, the most holy Virgin appeared to her, and by her side, elevated on a luminous cloud, was a child. The most holy Virgin rested her hand on her shoulder, and as she did so, she showed her a heart encircled by thorns, which she was holding in her other hand. At the same time, the Child said:

'Have compassion on the Heart of your most holy Mother, covered with thorns, with which ungrateful men pierce it at every moment, and there is no one to make an act of reparation to

⁸ O Seculo of 15th October 1917.

⁹ ...in an account written in 1927 in which Lucia speaks of herself in the 3rd person.

remove them.”
(LOW p.195)

At a later moment in this apparition the Blessed Virgin gave details of what has been called 'the great promise of Mary's Immaculate Heart', a promise linked to the reparatory devotion of the 5 First Saturdays of the month, with which we deal below (on page 25).

Apparition at Tuy.

Sister Lucia has left us the following account of this apparition, which occurred on June 13th 1929.

The Holy Hour of Reparatory Adoration

I had sought and obtained the permission of my superiors and my confessor to perform a sacred hour from 11 o'clock to midnight in the night of Thursday to Friday of each week.

Finding myself alone one night, I knelt down near the balustrade in the middle of the chapel, and prostrated myself to recite the prayers of the Angel.

Feeling tired, I straightened up and continued to recite them with my arms outstretched in a cross. The only light was that of the (sanctuary) lamp.

A grandiose vision of the Trinity

Suddenly the whole chapel was filled with a supernatural light and, on the altar, appeared a cross of light going right up to the ceiling.

In a brighter light I saw on the upper part of the Cross a man's face and body, down as far as the belt; on his breast was a dove, it too shining, and nailed to the cross was the body of another man.

A little below the waist (of the latter), hanging in the air, one could see a chalice and a great Host onto which were falling drops of blood flowing from the cheeks of the Crucified and from a wound in his breast. Flowing over the Host, these drops fell into the chalice.

Below the right arm of the Cross stood Our Lady with her Immaculate Heart in her hand... (It was Our Lady of Fatima with her Immaculate Heart...in her left hand... without either sword or roses, but bearing a crown of thorns and flames...)

Below the left arm (of the Cross), large letters, seeming as though of crystal-clear water pouring down onto the Altar, formed the words "Grace and Mercy".

I realised that I was being shown the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, and I received inner light on this mystery that I am not permitted to reveal.¹⁰

It was in the continuation of this apparition that the Blessed Virgin revealed the details of the demands and promises concerning the consecration of Russia, its conversion and peace in the world. (See below p. 34).

¹⁰ We owe this text to Lucia's own spiritual director, Father Gonçalves, as quoted in TVF, pp. 292-293.

PART THREE

THE MESSAGE OF FATIMA

I. HOW IT WAS REVEALED

Three stages need to be distinguished in the revelation of the message.

I. WHAT WAS REVEALED AT THE TIME OF THE 1917 APPARITIONS OR SHORTLY AFTER

An important part of the Fatima message was revealed by the three children in 1917 or soon thereafter. The chief documentary sources of this part are the following:

The earliest source is the report of Father Ferreira, parish priest of Fatima, who questioned the children in the days following each of the Apparitions. His extreme reserve, not to say his open hostility, are a firm guarantee of his objectivity.

The detailed interrogations carried out by Canon Formigão on September 27th, October 11th, 13th and 19th and November 2nd 1917, are still of the highest interest.

It was on January 5th 1922 that Lucia first wrote down her account of the six apparitions, no doubt at the instigation of her confessor at the Asilo de Vilar, Msgr. Manuel Pereira Lopes. This document, of the greatest importance for the critical assessment of the evidence, was first published in 1973.

Details about the 1917 apparitions can also be found in various letters of Sister Lucia to her confessors.

It should be said, also, that although of much later date, the most complete account, and even the most reliable from the critical point of view, are those found in Sister Lucia's own Memoirs¹¹.

2. WHAT WAS REVEALED IN OCTOBER 1940 AND AUGUST 1941

On the orders of her superiors, Sister Lucia revealed, at first in incomplete form (in her letter to the pope of 24th October 1940), and then completely (in her 3rd Memoir of July-August 1941) the first two parts of the Secret entrusted to her by the Virgin on 13th July 1917. As Michel de la Sainte Trinité says:

"As far as I can tell, it was in her 3rd Memoir, written in July-August 1941, that Sister Lucia first mentioned the division of the Secret into three distinct parts: *"The Secret comprises three distinct things,"* she wrote, *"and I shall unveil two of them"*. And she then transcribed, again for the first time, the complete text of the first two parts of the Secret. In doing so, she was certain that she was carrying out the will of God, who had told her that *"the moment had come to reveal the first two parts of the Secret"*. She *"had at that time an inner conviction that it was the moment chosen by God..."*¹²

3. WHAT WAS KNOWN IN DETAIL ONLY FROM THE 1970s ON

Here we are concerned mainly with the detailed accounts of the revelations made during

¹¹ TVF, vol.1. p.175.

¹² TVF, vol.III, p.31.

the apparitions of Pontevedra (1925-6) and Tuy (1929). Michel de la Sainte Trinité lists these accounts for us (in TVF, vol.II p.154), as far as Pontevedra is concerned.

"The message of Pontevedra was for long almost entirely unrecognised, or considered as of little importance. Canon Barthas' large-scale 'Fatima 1917-1968', published in 1969, devotes only 2 pages (pp.211-12) to it! It was only in 1973 that all the important documents were included in Fr. Alonso's excellent study 'Fatima and the Immaculate Heart of Mary' (....) But nothing can take the place of the more complete, though still short, work published by the same author in 1974: 'The Great Promise of Mary's Immaculate Heart at Pontevedra'. A small pamphlet gives considerable extracts from this in French: 'The Fatima Message at Pontevedra' (translated by Fr. Simonin). But to consult all the sources one needs to go to the Portuguese publications 'Documentos' and 'uma Vida' ('A Life')."

The chief source of information for the apparition and message of Tuy is Father Antonio Maria Martins S.J.'s *'Fatima Documentos'* (Oporto 1976), which enters into full details, but which has not yet been translated into French.

4. WHAT IS STILL UNKNOWN, OR ONLY PARTIALLY KNOWN

The 3rd part of the Secret communicated to the three children on 13th July, 1917 has still not been revealed.

The story of this 'Third Secret of Fatima', a detailed enquiry into what we can deduce of its content - these are the objects of the third volume of Michel de la Sainte Trinité's *'Toute la Vérité sur Fatima'* (TVF), and of the same author's summarized treatment of the subject in his address to the Rome Conference of the International Fatima Rosary Crusade in November 1985 ¹³.

To break the message down into the successive stages in which it was revealed would have a certain interest historically. But our purpose is a more practical one, and so we propose here to deal with the message as a whole, at least so far as this is possible in the present state of our knowledge.

II. ESSENTIAL POINTS OF THE MESSAGE

1. The initial warning ¹⁴

The danger threatening the world as a result of sins (souls going to hell, destruction of whole nations).

2. The evangelical justification for Mary's appeal

Mary is our mediatrix: *"She alone can help you"*, she said, in reference to herself, when speaking to the children on 13th July 1917. (FTP p.10)

13. Printed in an unaugmented version as 'Fatima: The Mystery of the Third Secret', a supplement to *Approaches* No.93 (TSF).

14. This point is brought out strongly in Fr. Joseph de Sainte-Marie's *'Fatima, salut du monde'*, published as a supplement to *Approches* No.77 under the title 'Fatima, 20th Century Prophecy' (FTP).

3. The salvation of souls through devotion to Mary's Immaculate Heart (First part of the Secret).

The first part, the '1st Secret', was the terrifying vision of Hell and the marvellous proposition of the Immaculate Heart of Mary as a sovereign remedy offered by God to humanity for the salvation of souls: *"You have seen Hell where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved..."* (LOW p.162.)

4. Peace among nations through the consecration of Russia (Second part of the Secret).

The second part, the '2nd Secret' "was the great prophecy concerning the miraculous peace which God wishes to grant to the world, through the consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and the practice of making reparatory Communions on the First Saturdays of each month: *'If my requests are fulfilled, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace...'* Terrible punishments were announced, too, if people persisted in not obeying her will." (TSF p.4)

5. The Crisis of faith in the Church (Third part of the Secret).

Announcement of a spiritual punishment: crisis of faith in the Church, diabolical disorientation, the deficiencies of pastors.

CONCLUSION: "But in the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph "

"... we shall witness then the triumph of her Immaculate Heart preparing for the universal reign of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Russia, delivered from her devils, by a striking miracle of conversion, will return to the fold of Roman unity. A period of peace will be granted to the world. The Catholic Faith will be preached to all nations..." (TSF p.27).

III. DETAILS ON THE FIRST PART OF THE SECRET

(The alternative: Heaven or Hell - Mary's Immaculate Heart, salvation of souls)

Revelation of 13th July 1917 (Fatima)

In her account of this apparition, Sister Lucia described the vision of Hell shown to the children, and immediately afterwards, added:

"You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace. The war is going to end; but if people do not cease offending God, a worse one will break out during the pontificate of Pius XI." (LOW p.162.)

Revelation of 10th December 1925 (Pontevedra)

We have already mentioned this apparition (on pages 27 and 28), and these words addressed by the Child Jesus to Sister Lucia:

"Have pity on the Heart of your most holy Mother covered with thorns with which ungrateful men pierce it at every moment, and there is no one to make an act of reparation to remove them" (LOW p.195).

And Lucia continued her account (speaking of herself in the third person):

"Then the most holy Virgin said: 'Look, my daughter, at my Heart, surrounded with thorns with which ungrateful men pierce me at every moment by their blasphemies and ingratitude. You, at

least, try to console me and say that I promise to assist at the hour of death, with the graces necessary for salvation, all those who, on the first Saturday of five consecutive months, shall confess, receive Holy Communion, recite five decades of the Rosary, and keep me company for fifteen minutes while meditating on the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary, with the intention of making reparation to me." (LOW p.195).

IV, DETAILS ON THE SECOND PART OF THE SECRET (Mary's Immaculate Heart, salvation of nations)

Revelation of 13th July 1917 (Fatima)

We have already quoted the first section of Sister Lucia's account of this apparition:

"If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace. The war is going to end, but if people do not cease offending God, a worse one will break out during the pontificate of Pius XI." (LOW p.162).

The account continues:

"When you see a night illumined by an unknown light, know that this is the great sign given you by God that he is about to punish the world for its crimes by means of war, famine and persecutions of the Church and of the Holy Father.

To prevent this, I shall come to ask for the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart, and the Communion of Reparation on the First Saturdays. 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. The good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, various nations will be annihilated. ¹⁵ In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me, and she will be converted, and a period of peace will be granted to the world..." (LOW p.162.)

Revelation of 13th June 1929 (Tuy)

In her account of this apparition, Sister Lucia wrote:

*"Then, Our Lady said to me: 'The moment has come when God asks the Holy Father, in union with all the bishops in the world, to **consecrate Russia to my Immaculate Heart**, promising to save it by this means". (TVF vol.II, p.293.)*

In a letter to Father Gonçalves, received by him on 29th May 1930, Sister Lucia goes into further detail on this point:

"The good God promises to end the persecution in Russia if the Holy Father is ready to make, and orders the bishops of the Catholic world to join him in making, a solemn and public act of reparation and consecration of Russia to the most holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and if His Holiness promises, in return for the end of that persecution, to approve and recommend the practice of the reparatory devotion indicated above." (TVF, vol.II, p.294.)

15. It is at this point that one would logically expect to find the 3rd part of the Secret, written down by Sister Lucia at the end of 1943 and not yet revealed. (Footnote by Bro. Michel de la Sainte Trinité in TVF, vol.I, p.224.)

Revelation of August 1931

Lucia's first reference to this revelation occurs in a letter dated 29th August 1931 to Msgr. da Silva, bishop of Leiria.

'My confessor orders me to communicate to your Excellency what took place recently between the good Lord and myself. As I was asking God for the conversion of Russia, Spain and Portugal, it seemed to me that his Divine Majesty said to me: "You console me greatly in asking me for the conversion of these poor nations (...)

Tell my ministers, given the fact that they are following the example of the King of France by delaying the carrying out of my requests¹⁶, that they will follow him into misfortune. It will never be too late to have recourse to Jesus and Mary.' (TVF, vol.II, p.344.)

In her detailed account of the apparition at Tuy, written in 1936, Sister Lucia spoke once again of Our Lord's reproach revealed in August 1931.

"Later, in an inner communication, Our Lord said to me in reproach: 'They were not willing to listen to my requests!... Like the King of France, they will repent this and will comply with it, but it will be late. Russia will already have spread her errors in the world, provoking wars and persecutions of the Church: the Holy Father will have much to suffer'". (TVF, vol.II, p.345.)

V. DETAILS ON THE THIRD PART OF THE SECRET

This forms the subject of the third volume of Bro. Michel de la Sainte Trinité's '*Toute la vérité sur Fatima*', and of his own summary of this last in '*Fatima: the Mystery of the Third Secret*' (TSF), from which we draw the following extracts:

"... since the Secret is composed of three coherent but distinct parts, with different dates set by heaven for their publication, we can be sure that the third part of the Secret is not going to repeat the same thing as the second, a few lines further on." (TSF p.16)

A Spiritual punishment

*No doubt it is a question principally of a spiritual punishment, much worse and more formidable than famine, wars and persecution, for it concerns souls, their salvation or their eternal loss. The late Father Alonso, appointed as an official expert on Fatima by Msgr. Venancio, has shown this in one of the volumes of his great critical 14-volume study which, unfortunately, he was forbidden to publish! All the same, before his death on December 12th, 1981, he was able to make known his conclusions, in various booklets and numerous articles in theological reviews. My own research has enabled me simply to clarify, complement and formalise his thesis, which new documents have confirmed. Here is the most important: on September 10, 1984, Msgr. Cosme do Amaral, the present Bishop of Leiria-Fatima, declared in the aula magna of the technical university of Vienna, during a session of questions and answers: 'The Secret of Fatima speaks neither of atomic bombs, nor nuclear war-heads, nor SS-20 missiles. Its contents [he insisted] concern only our faith. To identify the Secret with catastrophic predictions or a nuclear holocaust, is to distort the sense of the message. **The loss of faith in a continent is worse than the annihilation of a nation; and it is a fact that the faith is in constant decline in Europe.**' (...)*

16 (This is a reference to Louis XIV, who did not carry out the requests expressed by the Sacred Heart at Paray-le-Monial. See above pp. 6-7.)

Such are the essential facts, and I shall now confine myself to going over the main stages of my demonstration of the real contents of the Third Secret. (TSF pp.16-17.)

The loss of faith

In the first chapter, I set out the reasons which prove that the Third Secret does speak of the loss of faith. The main reason is the portion of the Third Secret which we know already. In fact, we know more than just its context. Sister Lucia took care to tell us its first sentence: **'In Portugal, the dogma of the faith will always be preserved, etc.'** This little sentence which the seer added, assuredly on purpose, in her fourth Memoir, when she drew up the Secret for the second time, is certainly significant. It, very discreetly, provides us with the key to the Third Secret.

Here is the judicious commentary of Father Alonso: **'In Portugal, the dogma of the faith will always be preserved'**: the sentence manifestly leaves it to be understood that the faith will be in a critical situation in other nations, that is, there will be a **crisis of faith**; whereas Portugal will save her faith.... Therefore, adds Father Alonso, in the period preceding the great triumph of the Heart of Mary, terrible things will happen, which are the subject of the third part of the Secret. What things? **'IF, "IN PORTUGAL, THE DOGMAS OF THE FAITH WILL ALWAYS BE PRESERVED"... WE MAY OBVIOUSLY DEDUCE FROM THIS THAT, IN OTHER PARTS OF THE CHURCH, THESE DOGMAS WILL EITHER BE OBSCURED OR EVEN LOST.'**

(...) Let us add that Cardinal Ratzinger himself has spoken in this sense to Vittorio Messori, saying that the Third Secret concerned **'the dangers which threaten the faith and the life of Christians'**. Lastly, as we have said, the present Bishop of Fatima is even more explicit. He gives us to understand that it is a question of a crisis of faith of such dimensions as to affect several nations and entire continents... Such a defection has a name in Holy Scripture: apostasy. It is possible that this word is to be found in the very text of the Secret. (TSF, p.18).

The deficiencies and punishments of pastors

In a second chapter, I show there is something else: the Third Secret certainly emphasizes the heavy responsibility of consecrated 'souls, priests, bishops and popes themselves, in this unprecedented crisis of faith which has afflicted the Church for twenty-five years. I give several proofs and very clear indications of this. I can do no more here than quote Father Alonso: **'Hence, in all probability', he writes, 'the text of the Third Secret makes concrete references to the crisis of faith in the Church, and to the negligence of the pastors themselves.'** Further on he speaks of **'internal strife within the Church itself and grave pastoral negligence on the part of the upper hierarchy', of 'deficiencies in the upper hierarchy of the Church'**. (...)

In a letter to a friend who was active in the defence of Marian devotion, Sister Lucia wrote: **'The rosary should be recited every day. That is what Our Lady said repeatedly in all her apparitions, AS IF TO FOREWARN US OF THESE TIMES OF DIABOLICAL CONFUSION, SO THAT WE MIGHT NOT BE DECEIVED BY FALSE DOCTRINES. Unfortunately, the great majority of ordinary people are ignorant in religious matters and allow themselves to be swayed in all directions. Hence, the great responsibility of the one who has the task of leading them... DIABOLICAL CONFUSION IS INVADING THE WORLD AND DECEIVING SOULS! IT MUST BE RESISTED.'** (TSF, pp.19 and 20-21.)

The hour for the decisive battle between the Virgin and the Devil

In a third chapter, I show that Sister Lucia has undoubtedly echoed the theme of the Third Secret in some of her words or letters, in which she lays stress upon the unleashing of the devil in our times. As long ago as 1957, she confided to Father Fuentes: 'THE MOST HOLY VIRGIN HAS TOLD ME THAT THE DEVIL IS WAGING A DECISIVE BATTLE WITH THE VIRGIN ...AND, AS HE KNOWS WHAT OFFENDS GOD MOST, AND WHAT WILL ENABLE HIM RAPIDLY TO WIN OVER THE GREATEST NUMBER OF SOULS, HE DOES EVERYTHING HE CAN TO GAIN CONSECRATED SOULS FROM GOD, FOR, IN THIS WAY, HE LEAVES SOULS DEFENCELESS AND SO HE WILL LAY HOLD OF THEM MORE EASILY.' (TSF, p. 19-20).

On September 16th, 1970, she wrote to a nun friend: The poor Lord, He has saved us with so much love and He is so little understood! So little loved! So badly served! It is painful to see such great confusion, and sin in so many persons who hold positions of responsibility!... For our part, we must, as far as we are able, try to make reparation, by uniting ourselves more and more intimately with the Lord... It pains me to see what you tell me, that this is now happening here!... The fact is that the devil has succeeded in infiltrating evil in the guise of good, and the blind proceed to lead others like themselves, as the Lord tells us in His Gospel, and souls let themselves be deceived. Willingly, I sacrifice myself and offer my life to God, for the peace of His Church, for priests and all consecrated souls, especially those who are so much deceived and in error!' (TSF, p. 21.)

Dangers threatening the Faith, loss of faith by many souls; the negligence and deficiencies of pastors; the Devil's campaign to mislead the faithful, and the decisive battle between him and the Virgin - we may be confident that all these are contained in the third part of the Fatima Secret.

PART FOUR

POLITICAL ASPECT OF THE MESSAGE OF FATIMA

I. POLITICAL CONTENT OF THE MESSAGE

Two aspects must be distinguished here: the salvation of *nations* seen *globally* through the consecration of Russia to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary - (so long as it has not been so consecrated, Russia will continue to spread its errors and provoke wars) , and *the salvation of individual nations* through the consecration of each of these to Mary's Immaculate Heart.

I) SALVATION OF NATIONS SEEN GLOBALLY.

◦ A salvation linked to the consecration of Russia

In Part Three of this study (pp. 27-32) we have quoted the principal texts referring to this point. It is worth recalling here the most explicit of these, from Sister Lucia's letter to Father Gonçalves of 29th May 1930:

"The good Lord promises to end the persecution in Russia if the Holy Father is ready to make, and orders the bishops of the Catholic world to join him in making, a solemn and public act of reparation and consecration of Russia to the most holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and if His Holiness promises, in return for the end of that persecution, to approve and recommend the practice of the reparatory devotion indicated above." (TVF, vol.II, p.294).

◦ The consecration of Russia as requested at Tuy has not been made.

It is important to dispel the widely held but mistaken belief that the consecration of Russia to Mary's Immaculate Heart has already been carried out in accordance with Our Lady's requests.

This is not so. In 1942, 1952, 1964, 1982 and 1984 consecrations were indeed carried out, either by a pope alone, or by the pope together with a certain number of bishops. None of these consecrations conforms to the conditions laid down by the Virgin Mary herself. This conclusion emerges both from an examination of the facts and from Sister Lucia's own statements.

At the end of an article entitled: *Sister Lucia of Fatima's thinking in regard to the consecration of Russia*, the Abbé P. Caillon, present superior of the Blue Army in France summed up the question as follows:

"After each great attempt at consecration, in 1942, 1952, 1964 and 1982, a great number of people, and sometimes very highly-placed ones, believed and declared that the consecration had taken place. But the small voice from Portugal said no. Likewise, after the great attempt in 1984, very many believed and proclaimed that, this time, it had taken place. But the same small voice from the Carmel of Coimbra still said no. When I say 'consecration', I mean of course the consecration of Russia.

What must be done now? We must explain to everyone that, in this matter, we must totally dispense with the words 'world', 'human race', 'humanity', 'all nations', 'all peoples' and say quite simply 'consecration of Russia'. Let us try to obtain the approval and participation of all the bishops

to this consecration of Russia."¹⁷

2) THE SALVATION OF INDIVIDUAL NATIONS BY THE CONSECRATION OF EACH TO MARY'S IMMACULATE HEART

The message of Fatima contains other promises concerning not the nations of the world seen globally, but each nation seen individually. The conditions required are not the same. In the first case the mediation of the pope and the world's bishops was essential, whereas in the second, all that is needed is that of the episcopate of the nation concerned.

"Seven months before the declaration of war, on 6th February 1939, Sister Lucia wrote to her bishop, Msgr. da Silva. While warning him that war was imminent, she communicated a magnificent promise to him: in this horrible war, Portugal would be spared because of the consecration of the nation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary made by its bishops¹⁸ .

This element of the Fatima message is relatively little known, but of the highest importance in Sister Lucia's eyes, and one to which she constantly returns. For example, on 18th August 1940 in a letter to Father Gonçalves, writing on the subject of the request for the consecration of Russia in order to obtain its conversion and consequently peace in the world:

*"The proof that God gives us is **the special protection of Mary's Immaculate Heart for Portugal because of the country's consecration to her.** Those persons of whom you speak to me are right to be afraid (of war). All that would have happened to us if our prelates had not responded to our good Lord's demands, and from the bottom of their hearts implored his mercy and the protection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary."*

And Sister Lucia insisted on mentioning this prophecy of peace for Portugal in the letter she wrote to Pope Pius XII on the 2nd December 1940, an indication of the importance she attached to it within the general context of the Fatima message.

*"Most Holy Father (she wrote)... Our Lord promises our country **a special protection during this war,** in consideration of the consecration of the nation by the Reverend Prelates of Portugal to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. And this protection will be the **proof** of the graces that He would grant to other nations if, like our own, they were consecrated to it (the Immaculate Heart)."*

It would be hard to make a more precise, clearer and firmer prophecy. What did in fact happen? The prediction became reality in every detail." (TVF, vol.II, pp.270-71.)

II. THE FACTS CONFIRM THE MESSAGE: RUSSIA'S ACTION

"If my requests are heeded," (Our Lady had said on 13th July 1917), "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. The good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, various nations will be annihilated." (LOW p. 162.)

¹⁷ This article appeared in the February 1987 issue (No.213) of the review 'Stella Maris' (Editions du Parvis, CH-1631, Hauteville, Switzerland.

¹⁸ This consecration had been made on 13th May 1931.

Seventy years have passed since this warning was sounded; the facts have fully confirmed its exactitude. We shall mention some of them as illustrations.

I. Marxist infiltration into the Catholic world

The contamination of Catholic milieux by Marxism is one of the most surprising phenomena of the last forty years.

The situation in France

This can be illustrated by a passage from Father Fessard's "Church of France, look out or you will lose your faith":¹⁹

*'It cannot be denied that, since the end of Vatican II, the Catholic Church, especially in France, is undergoing a profound crisis of faith and morals, one which is sapping the authority of an episcopate incapable of overcoming it, handicapped as it is by what it calls its "collegiality" and prisoners of the pressure-groups that control the commissions created to serve it. Leaving to one side other aspects of this crisis, in themselves no less serious, I shall concentrate here on the exposure of **the increasing influence of Marxism in Catholic Action movements and among a section of the clergy**, and on showing why and how our bishops, far from opposing this, seem unconsciously to be backing it to the extent of adopting the same jargon as their opponents.'*

It is possible that the spread of Marxism may have slowed down since 1978, when Fr. Fessard wrote his book. But the CCFD affair²⁰, the welcome given in France to liberation theologians and their ideas, the reports emanating from the congresses of Catholic Workers' Action and the Young Catholic Workers show that the danger is still disquietingly present.

The situation in Latin America

We are all aware of how widespread the theology of liberation is in Latin America, a continent which by the end of the century will contain more than half the world's Catholic population.

Now 'liberation theology' can be defined as a Marxist ideology expressed in religious language (such language being necessary to make Marxism acceptable in countries with strong Catholic roots).

Such a 'theology' constitutes yet another way of 'marxising' Christian clergy and people.

2. The Rome-Moscow Agreement of 1962

Russia would not have been so successful in spreading its errors throughout the world if there had not been (as Jean Madiran put it) a sort of "unilateral disarmament on the part of the Holy See in the face of Communism" in the shape of the Rome-Moscow Agreement of 1962.

This agreement, so important and yet so little known, was revealed to the public by Jean Madiran in two issues of *Itinéraires* (No.280 of February 1984 and No.285 of July-August 1984), and by Hamish Fraser in a number of articles and supplements to *Approaches* (Nos. 84, 85, 86, 88).

¹⁹ *Eglise de France, prends garde de perdre la foi*, pub. Julliard, 1979. Fr. Fessard, a Jesuit, is a "poacher turned gamekeeper"; he was the author in 1941 of the first issue of *Témoignage Chrétien*, which for over 30 years has been peddling progressive Leftist views among French Catholics.

²⁰ The French Catholic aid agency accused (justifiably, it would seem) of funnelling the charitable gifts of donors to the support of Leftist subversion in the Third World. (Trans.)

It consisted of an agreement **concluded at Metz in 1962** between Cardinal Tisserant²¹ and Msgr. Nikodim²². Msgr. Georges Roche, who for 25 years had worked alongside Cardinal Tisserant in Rome, gave the background as follows (in *Itinéraires* No. 285) :

"It is a matter of general knowledge that this agreement was negotiated at the highest level between the Kremlin and the Vatican. Msgr. Nikodim and Cardinal Tisserant acted merely as spokesmen, the one of the master of the Kremlin and the other of the pontiff then gloriously reigning."

The content of the agreement was summarised thus by Jean Madiran:

"John XXIII had given the Soviet negotiator, Msgr. Nikodim, a promise not to attack either the Russian people OR THE REGIME of the country. The object was to persuade Moscow to allow Russian Orthodox observers to attend the Council. Ever since that time the Holy See considers itself as still bound by the engagements taken by John XXIII. COMMUNISM is no longer ever mentioned by name in any pontifical document." (Itinéraires No. 280, p.2.)

Consequences of this agreement

- Consequences for the Second Vatican Council:

*"That Council, which was to boast that it had looked the 'problems of our times' in the face and dealt with them in depth, was condemned from the outset to remain silent on the most serious and most dramatic of those problems, namely the continual expansion of Soviet Communism and the servitude it imposed on its people" (as Madiran expressed it in *Itinéraires* No. 285, p.158.).*

- Consequences for the post-conciliar period:

"The secret negotiations between the Holy See and the Kremlin did indeed take place. The agreement was indeed concluded. The engagement entered into by Rome has been kept. All the evidence shows that the pact is still in force, although it is no recent event, but goes back to 1962. For nigh on 22 years (Madiran was writing in 1984) the attitude of the Catholic Church world-wide towards Communism has been conditioned by the promise it then made to the Soviet negotiators." (Itinéraires No. 280, p.1).

Since 1984, when Jean Madiran wrote the above paragraph, certain documents of the Holy See have forcefully criticised Marxist **ideology**, in particular the *Instruction on certain aspects of the theology of liberation* issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on 6th August 1984. But none of them have renewed the condemnation of the Communist **régime** as this had been expressed by Pius XI and Pius XII, and which can be summed up by this statement of Pius XII in his Christmas message of 1955: *"We reject Communism as a social system by virtue of Christ's doctrine"*.

21 A Frenchman (1884-1972), he was Pro-prefect of the Vatican Library and Secretary of the Congregation for the Eastern Church

22 A Russian Orthodox prelate (1929-1978). At 31 he had become a bishop, and chief of the 'foreign affairs' department of the Moscow patriarchate; he was considered to be a KGB representative within the Church leadership. He would seem to have been converted by the time of his death in Rome.

3. SIXTY MILLION CHRISTIAN VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM

Sheltered as we are from the direct effects of Communism, we tend to forget the crimes committed in its name. An article in *Présent* of May 1st 1987 commented as follows:

"The sad record for persecution and massacre in this unfortunate 20th century is held evidently not by Nazism but by Communism, which, it too, not only persecuted and massacred Jews but also caused the deaths of something in the region of sixty million Christians."

...Christian victims of the Communists in Russia, eastern Europe, Spain, black Africa, central America, China and Vietnam...Victims about whom even Christians themselves no longer dare to speak.

Three of them - three Spanish Carmelite nuns killed by the Spanish revolutionaries at Guadalajara on July 24th 1936 - were beatified on March 29th 1987. They represent an immense army of Christian victims who, thanks to those three martyrs and the devotion that will be paid to them, will perhaps begin to emerge from oblivion.

III THE FACTS CONFIRM THE MESSAGE: THE EXAMPLE OF PORTUGAL

I. Chronology of Portuguese history from 1917 to 1944

There is no doubt whatever that Fatima marks a turning-point in the history of Portugal, a country which in 1917 was plunged in anarchy, religious persecution and economic disaster as a result of a century and a half of domination by Freemasonry.

13th October 1917	Last apparition of Fatima – miracle of the sun.
5th December 1917	Coup d'état by the former Freemason Sidonio Pais, restoring all its liberties to the Church.
14th December 1918	Sidonio Pais assassinated; the essentials of his work remain.
1926	National revival.
1928-1968	The Salazar government. For 40 years Portugal is governed by the most Catholic statesman of the period.
November 1928 Jesus.	Consecration of Portugal to the Sacred Heart of
13th October 1930	The Bishop of Leiria gives canonical approval the the apparitions at Fatima.
13th May 1931 the	The Portuguese episcopate solemnly consecrates nation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.
1936-1938 raging	Portugal escapes the communist revolution then in Spain.
1940-1944	Portugal is untouched by the Second World War.

2. ELEMENTS OF PORTUGUESE HISTORY

This short chronology can be better understood if we set it in the context of the following, more detailed notes on Portuguese history before and after 1917.

○ **Before Fatima**

The 15th, 16th and 17th centuries marked the high point in the history of Portugal as a Catholic, monarchical and missionary nation, which conquered and evangelised Brazil and a part of the Indies.

From the Methuen Treaty of 1703 the country fell more or less under English domination. Masonic influence soon became predominant under the marquis of Pombal, leader of a sectarian government which in 1759 expelled the Jesuits.

After three Napoleonic invasions Portugal found itself at the beginning of the 19th century under a liberal and masonic monarchy. The last king to try to put up a resistance to the Freemasons was assassinated in 1908.

In 1910 a masonic republic was set up, even more sectarian than the preceding régime; shamefully anti-clerical laws were passed with the aim of de-christianising the country.

In 1917 the country was on the brink of economic catastrophe, deep in anarchy, subject to open religious persecution. (There were 111 cases of churches and chapels pillaged in 1917 alone).

○ **After Fatima**

The last apparition took place on 13th October 1917. Less than two months later, the masonic government was overthrown in the coup d'état of Sidonio Pais, a former Freemason and courageous statesman, who fully restored the Church's liberty. He was assassinated in an attempted Masonic counter-coup on 14th December 1918.

Pais was thus in power for only a year, but recovery had begun, and his work was to last. It made possible the decisive national revival of 1926 and the accession to power of Salazar in 1928. For 40 years the destiny of Portugal was in the hands of this outstanding statesman, a close friend of another great Portuguese, Cardinal Cerejeira, Patriarch of Lisbon. These two men brought about a proper cooperation between Church and State (without confusing their distinct spheres of competence), and thus laid the foundations of a Christian restoration of their country, a restoration that the cardinal attributed to Our Lady of Fatima.

• **Political revival**

From 1928 Salazar methodically pursued his policy of national recovery. He straightened out the disastrous financial situation, and thus led the way to economic revival. He vigorously opposed Communism and Freemasonry (the latter was dissolved in 1935), and in 1940 signed a concordat with the Holy See.

He left full and entire liberty to the Church and backed its efforts in Portugal itself and in the overseas territories. He amended marriage legislation so as to conform more closely to Catholic doctrine and canon law.

He summed up the main lines of his policy in the following declaration:

"We have tried to restore the comforting assurance of the great certainties to souls distressed by the doubt and negativism of this century. We have not seen those certainties as fit subjects for

destructive debate, and so we have not entered into critical discussion on God and virtue, on our motherland and its history, on authority and its prestige, on the family and its morality, on the dignity of labour and the duty to work.

...We want to build a social and corporative State in a close relationship with the natural constitution of society: families, parishes, communes and corporate bodies..." (TVF, vol. II, p.263).

○ **Religious revival**

This began to be felt soon after the apparitions; figures for vocations to the priesthood and religious life give us some idea of its extent.

- between 1917 and 1933 the number of **seminarists** rose from 18 to 201 in the diocese of Portalegre, and in the small diocese of Leiria (in which the seminary had been closed up to 1917) from 0 to 75.
- From 1933 to 1964 the number of **secular priests** increased by an average of 25%.
- Male **religious** had been expelled by the revolution of 1910; they remained legally forbidden until 1926; in 1934 they counted 370, and had risen to 1321 in 1941. The number of **women religious** showed a similar upward trend.

This rise in the number of secular clergy and religious was accompanied by what Cardinal Cerejeira called an "*admirable and prodigious renewal of religious life in souls*" (in his Pastoral Letter for the Jubilee of the Apparitions in 1942).

A few months after the canonical approval of the apparitions on 13th October 1930, the Portuguese bishops, together with Salazar as head of the government, gave official recognition to the message of Fatima on 13th May 1931 by solemnly consecrating Portugal to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

○ **Protection against the Communist revolution**

Concerned by the revolutionary events then taking place in Spain, the Portuguese bishops, on 13th May 1936, made the promise "*to come on 13th May 1938 at the head of a national pilgrimage to offer solemn thanksgiving to the Most Holy Virgin, Mother of God, in the name of the whole nation, if she obtains for Portugal victory over atheistic Communism and the benefits of peace...*" (Extract from their joint pastoral of Easter 1938).

Portugal did indeed escape the revolutionary infection. On 13th May 1938, the episcopate fulfilled its vow of two years earlier and renewed its consecration of the nation to Mary's Immaculate Heart. On that occasion Cardinal Cerejeira made the following declaration:

"Since Our Lady of Fatima appeared in 1917... a special blessing from God has been poured out on the land of Portugal... If we look in particular at the two years that have elapsed since we made our vow, we cannot escape the conviction that God's invisible hand has been protecting Portugal, holding at bay the scourge of war and the leprosy of atheistic communism.

The benefit of peace, for which the Church prays so urgently in its liturgy, and for which we prayed with confidence at Fatima, **has been granted us in an almost miraculous manner."** (TVF, vol.II, p. 269).

◦ **Protection against the world war of 1939-1945**

Seven months before the outbreak of war on February 6th 1939, Sister Lucia wrote to her bishop, Msgr. da Silva of Leiria. She told him that war was imminent, but at the same time communicated to him a magnificent promise: *in that horrible war, Portugal would be spared as a result of the Consecration of the nation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary made by its bishops.*

And in fact, despite Hitler's plans to the contrary, Portugal was not dragged into the world war. On May 7th 1945 Salazar expressed his gratitude for the divine protection from which his country had benefited in these words:

"Providence, in its lofty designs, has permitted us to pass through the conflict without being involved in a direct and active fashion..." And he ended with the words: "Let us bless the victory! I shall say no more. At such a solemn, not to say sacred moment, I can feel within myself only a lively impulse of gratitude to Providence for its Mercy, and I pray that its Light may enlighten all those responsible for the destinies of the world".

When in 1946 an American journalist questioned him about Russia, Salazar made this striking reply, which takes us right into the heart of the Secret of Fatima:

"From what we know of conditions inside Russia, a revolution there seems unlikely in the near future. But there is one hope for peace: and that is that Providence will do for Russia what it has done here in Portugal".

In his homily of 13th May 1942, Cardinal Cerejeira pointed out that the example of Portugal was *"...a harbinger of what Mary's Immaculate Heart has in store for the world"*.

"Fatima speaks not only to Portugal but to the whole world. We believe that the apparitions of Fatima are the opening of a new era, that of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. What has happened in Portugal can hardly be seen as other than a miracle, and one that is a harbinger of what Mary's Immaculate Heart has in store for the world." (TVF, vol. I I, p.276).

PART FIVE

CONSEQUENCES OF FATIMA FOR OUR DAILY LIFE

We shall not go into details on this question, but merely reproduce some characteristic texts of Sister Lucia that bring out the main points. For a fuller treatment, readers may refer to the titles listed in our bibliography.

I. Focus everything on the salvation of souls

(...) it is not my mission to warn the world of the material punishments which will certainly take place if it does not first pray and repent. No. My mission is to point out to everyone the imminent danger we run of losing our souls forever if we remain obstinate in sin.

Father, do not wait for Rome to issue an appeal to repentance from the Holy Father addressed to the whole world. Do not expect such an appeal to come from our bishops in their dioceses, or from the religious congregations either. No. Our Lord has very often used these means already and the world has paid no attention to them. That is why each one of us must now begin his own spiritual reform. We must each of us not only save our own soul, but the souls of all those whom God has placed on our road (...) The demon is doing all he can to distract us and to remove our taste for prayer; we shall either save ourselves or damn ourselves together." [From Lucia's conversation with Father Fuentes, 26th December 1957].

2. Penitence through fulfilling the duties of our state

God's heart can and will be softened, but he complains bitterly and sadly at the limited number of souls in a state of grace, ready to renounce self so as to observe His law. This is the penitence God calls for today: it is the sacrifice which we must each impose on ourselves so as to live a holy life in the observance of his law.

And he wants us to explain this way clearly to souls, for many understand the word 'penitence' only in the sense of dramatic austerities, and as they do not feel strong or courageous enough for those, they become discouraged and slip back into a life of lukewarm faith and sin.

When I was in the chapel with the permission of my superiors at midnight between a Thursday and Friday, Our Lord said to me "The sacrifice that demands that each of us carry out his own duties and observe my law, this is the penitence I ask for and demand now." [From Lucia's letter to Father A.M. Martins, 28th February 1943].

3. Two remedies: Rosary, devotion to Mary's Immaculate Heart

Let us remember that the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary involves:

- the reparatory devotion of the First Saturdays;
- consecration of the faithful, families, groups and societies) to Mary's Immaculate Heart.

"(The Most Holy Virgin) said, to my cousins as well as to me, that God was giving two last remedies to the world: the holy Rosary and the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and, these being the two last remedies, that means that there will not be any others (...).

The Most Holy Virgin, in these last days in which we are living, has given a new efficacy to the recitation of the Rosary. So much so that there is no problem, however difficult, temporal or above all spiritual, connected with the personal life of each of us, of our families, of the families of the world, of religious communities, or indeed with the life of peoples and nations - there is no problem, I say, however difficult, which we cannot resolve through the prayer of the Holy Rosary. With the Holy Rosary we will save ourselves, we will sanctify ourselves, we will console Our Saviour and obtain the salvation of many souls." [Lucia in conversation with Father Fuentes, 26th December 1957.]

4. We must pray that the Catholic hierarchy will comply with Our Lady's requests²³

In our prayers for the Pope and the hierarchy, our particular intention must be for them to comply with the requests made to them at Fatima: their consecration of Russia and their support and encouragement for the reparatory devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Prayer for the Holy Father was a constant preoccupation of the three children of Fatima: *"From that time on, there was not a prayer or sacrifice that we offered to God which did not include an invocation for His Holiness"*, Lucia tells us in her Second Memoir (LOW p.81). We should follow the children's example, and understand its implications.

The Church is hierarchical in its structure. In it the pope and bishops have their specific functions, of particular importance, and which no one else can carry out in their place. Hence our duty to pray for pope and bishops, and especially during periods when their failure to give adequate leadership afflicts us all so distressingly.

On this very point, the Virgin Mary gives us a further lesson. On 13th June 1929, in the apparition at Tuy, she declared: *"The moment has come when God asks the Holy Father, in union with all the bishops in the world, to consecrate **Russia to my Immaculate Heart**, promising to save it (i.e. Russia) by this means"* (TVF, vol. II p.293).

We know that this urgent request, expressed in those words 58 years ago, has not been complied with. And we have seen the dire consequences predicted by the Virgin if her requests were not listened to actually taking place: worldwide war, immense disorders, Russian errors spread throughout the world, the massacre of millions of Christians.

Faced with these misfortunes, what does the Virgin do? She waits, waits for the responsible authorities (pope and bishops) to do what is asked of them. It is **her will** that the necessary action should be taken by the hierarchy of the Church instituted by her Son. Whatever the inadequacies of the legitimate hierarchy, the Virgin does not call for its replacement by a parallel hierarchy. As Father Joseph de Sainte-Marie explains in his booklet 'Fatima: 20th Century Prophecy': *"(Mary) does not in any way suppress the ecclesial mediations of the pope, bishops, hierarchy (...). Nor does she pretend to replace the Church and its institutions"*. (FTP p.11). The lesson is one that we should bear in mind; it is of universal validity.

* * *

²³ Monsieur de Lassus' published text ends with this sub-title. He has expanded the point elsewhere, in his address to the 2nd Congress of Action Familiale et Scolaire of 11th October 1987 (in itself a shortened version of the present enquiry), and we print his expansion here as the natural conclusion to his study. (Trans.)

In conclusion, Fatima is the bulwark and the salvation of Christendom. We can see that our political hope for a return to a Christian peace, for a society based on truly Christian principles is based on Fatima, on the fulfillment of the requests of Fatima.

This hope is not a fanciful one. Our Lady herself has said: "*The pope will consecrate Russia to me, it will be converted, and the world will be granted a certain period of peace*".

We are therefore sure that this will in fact come about. We do not know the date, but we can hasten its coming by our prayers and by faithfully carrying out our responsibilities as Christians and members of society. This is the chief political significance of Fatima. The prospect is a magnificent one. We should be doing our utmost to make it known and understood around us.

Arnaud de Lassus

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