

Time for the Truth

A Deeply Troubled Church

This essay will appeal to all Catholics of various opinions and ideas. It has been written in response to the recent book, *The Secret Still Hidden* and reflects on why all Catholics should be deeply concerned by the ongoing grave deception of the Cardinal Secretary of State, Cardinal Bertone, who claims there is no more to the Third Secret than what he and the Vatican have revealed so far.

These reflections should make Catholics of all shades of opinion unite together to respectfully request that the whole truth be published.

Special to The Fatima Crusader

Catholics today have plenty to worry about; their Church is in sorry shape. Despite continuing growth on a global basis, the ranks of the practicing faithful have shrunk dramatically throughout the former heartlands of Catholicism. Religious vocations have dwindled to the point where many monasteries, convents and seminaries have closed, and there is such a shortage of priests that many now struggle to serve several parishes at once.

To make a bad situation worse, thousands of parishes already in fragile condition have been morally and financially devastated by cases of sexual abuse among their clergy. The faithful have been scandalized again and again by the spectacle of priests being publicly convicted of crimes, while

bishops and Archbishops have been forced to resign in disgrace.

Under these conditions, perhaps it is not surprising that the Church also has serious problems with illicit misinterpretations of its doctrines and dogmas. Ever since Vatican II (with its dangerous ambiguities that led to these misinterpretations) the faithful have been divided into increasingly incompatible groups supporting or opposing various opinions of reforms and changes.

The once globally uniform Catholic Church now comes in a variety of forms, with different vernacular versions of the liturgy, as well as different approaches to basic matters of faith and morals. Many of the faithful and some of the clergy openly espouse positions contrary to official Church

teaching on such matters as contraception, divorce, and the ordination of women and the dangers of changing the Liturgy.

Bad News and Good News

Given this sad state of affairs, more bad news about trouble in the Church is certainly unwelcome. However, facing up to bad news can lead to good news, and that's what the new book by Christopher Ferrara, *The Secret Still Hidden*, hopes to achieve. The bad news it conveys is that the situation in the Vatican right now is probably worse than you think. But the good news is that the time to turn things around is fast approaching.

A Confrontation Develops

What has now emerged as a new crisis in the Vatican is the inescapable conclusion that the Third Secret is being withheld because of what it says.

Of course, all the evidence of this (as explained fully in *The Secret Still Hidden*) was already known to Fatima scholars. The Vatican's attempt to bury Fatima brought their story to the attention of millions of mainstream Catholics who knew little or nothing about it up to that point. Among them was Antonio Socci, an Italian Catholic writer and broadcast-

er, well-known for his knowledgeable and respectful coverage of Vatican affairs over many years.

Socci had accepted the Sodano-Bertone-Ratzinger revelation of June 2000 as the whole story at first, and actually sympathized with the Cardinals' evident desire to lay this matter to rest. But as a responsible journalist, he then did a little research into the background. What he found was the type of evidence found in *The Secret Still Hidden* and it changed his mind.

Contradictory Comments

Since it first arrived in the hands of Pope Pius XII in 1957, the key Third Secret document has been read by five Popes and numerous other high-ranking Cardinals in the Vatican. Many of them have made comments about its content, which Socci researched. More information came from interviews with the sole surviving seer, Sister Lucia, conducted by various priests and Cardinals over the years.

Through quotes from all these sources, Socci learned that the Third Secret foretells a "crisis of faith" and a "great apostasy" in the Church which "begins at the top." It's easy to understand why Vatican officials, including the pres-

ent Pope, might regard such a document as “not destined for public consumption.” Yet nothing of this controversial nature appears in the notebook description of a vision the Vatican has claimed since 2000 is the whole Third Secret.

Deeply disturbed by apparent Vatican deception, he decided to pursue the truth by writing a book. Published in November of 2006, *Il Quarto Segreto di Fatima* (The Fourth Secret of Fatima) caused an immediate sensation. Backed by conclusive evidence, Socci asserted that the existence of a still-hidden Third Secret document is a certainty. Under pressure in the Italian press, the Vatican had to respond.

The task of defending the Vatican position fell to Cardinal Bertone, the newly-appointed Vatican Secretary of State. Ironically, it was then-Archbishop Bertone’s claims back in 2001 about his interview with Sr. Lucia that first kindled Socci’s doubts about the Vatican’s position. Bertone intended to remove doubts about the June 26, 2000 press conference at that time, but achieved the opposite effect. This time, in May 2007, Bertone chose to respond with a book of his own, *L’Ultima Veggente di Fatima* published in English

as *The Last Secret of Fatima*.

Cardinal Bertone’s book was supposed to be a refutation of Socci’s book, but readers searched its pages in vain for any serious response to any of Socci’s arguments. In fact, most of Socci’s points were completely ignored. Instead, the book contained rambling claims about several long interviews with Sr. Lucia, now deceased, including a number of self-contradictory statements attributed to her. According to his various renditions, Sr. Lucia seemed capable of revising and changing her own views whenever necessary to accommodate the Cardinal’s claims.

To make matters worse, the Cardinal also severely criticized Socci, as if he were an avowed enemy of the Church. In fact, Socci is a devout, practicing Catholic, and has expressed personal dismay and embarrassment at being obliged to disagree with Vatican claims he has found to be false.

Having been publicly called a promoter of falsehoods against the Church by Cardinal Bertone, Socci responded in his widely-read newspaper column by asking: “[Dear Cardinal Bertone: Who—between you and me—is deliberately ly-](#)

ing?" This unprecedented confrontation drew more public attention to the controversy than ever. Another attempt by the Vatican to bury Fatima had ended in achieving the opposite result.

Surprisingly, Cardinal Bertone chose to meet this challenge by appearing on *Porta a Porta* (Door to Door), one of Italy's most popular television shows, shortly after his book was published. Although the program was prompted by the Socci-Bertone controversy, Mr. Socci was not invited to participate. The Cardinal was thus free to attack Socci's book without rebuttal. He also chose to again evade all the essential questions that Socci raised. No refutation of Socci emerged, and during the program, the Cardinal inadvertently provided additional evidence for the existence of two separate, distinct and different documents, which, together, constitute the Third Secret. Yet, Cardinal Bertone has only released one of these documents and claims that he and the Vatican have released the whole Third Secret. This claim of his is obviously false. Yet another attempt to settle the matter of Fatima had backfired.

Undeterred by the failure of his book and television ap-

pearance, Cardinal Bertone returned to the airwaves in September of 2007 at a privately sponsored broadcast staged at a university near the Vatican. This program reiterated claims originally made in the Cardinal's book, but provided no new information, nor any other evidence explicitly contradicting or refuting the evidence and the assertions of Socci and others.

At this point, the Vatican's official position is in tatters. Socci's allegations have withstood everything Cardinal Bertone has had to say, and his burning questions remain unanswered. The unraveling cover-up has moved into a new phase, as more of what has gone on behind the scenes is emerging into the light of day.

Strange Decisions Explained

No one knows whether Pius XII would have revealed the Secret had he lived to the due date, because his death intervened in 1958. The fateful decision in 1960 was taken by John XXIII, and given what is now known about the Third Secret's potentially explosive content, his motive for withholding it is obvious.

The Second Vatican Council commenced in 1962, and plan-

ning for it was well under way several years earlier. If released as promised in 1960, the Secret would certainly have seemed to many to be a warning against proceeding with the Council. It might well have delayed, altered or even ended the Council project altogether. Rather than risk this, John XXIII chose to hide the Secret and to silence Sister Lucia.

When John XXIII died in 1963, his successor, Paul VI, chose to continue with the Council then in progress, and revealing the Secret at such a time would certainly have had a dampening effect on enthusiasm for Vatican II. He chose to keep it hidden not only until the end of Vatican II, but through the rest of his reign, which lasted until 1978. He also kept and continued the policy of enforcing silence on Sister Lucia during his whole pontificate.

His successor, John Paul I, had only 33 days in office to consider this and other matters. What he might have done about Fatima had he lived longer remains anyone's guess.

When John Paul II became the next Pontiff, many thought Fatima might at long last come to the fore again, and the Secret would finally be revealed. It was not to be.

Despite the fact that he was unquestionably a Fatima devotee, John Paul II seems to have been persuaded by others to still keep Sister Lucia herself silent and her secret letter locked up in the papal apartment. However, he did come closer to heeding part of the Message of Fatima than any other Pope, both in some of his important sermons, and in the partial revelations of the 2000 press conference, which he must have authorized. Still, his absence from the conference itself leaves open the question of whether or not he agreed with or approved of everything that was said there.

Pope Benedict Reveals a Different Secret

Benedict XVI, the present Pope, carries the burden of having been a major player in the 2000 press conference as then-Cardinal Ratzinger. This makes him seem unlikely to change the official position he helped to construct in the first place. Nevertheless, a close examination of his statements shows that he has never explicitly denied the existence of the still-hidden document in question, nor has he said anything to retract or alter statements about its content he made back on November 11, 1984.

On that day, Cardinal

Ratzinger's interview was published in *Jesus* magazine with his explicit permission:

"Because, according to the judgement of the Popes, it (the Third Secret) adds nothing (literally: 'nothing different') to what a Christian must know concerning what derives from Revelation: i.e., a radical call for conversion; the absolute importance of history; the dangers threatening the faith and the life of the Christian, and therefore (the life) of the world. And then the importance of the 'novissimi' (the last events at the end of time)."

"If it is not made public — at least for the time being — it is in order to prevent religious prophecy from being mistaken for a quest for the sensational."

"But the things contained in this 'Third Secret' correspond to what has been announced in Scripture and has been said again and again in many other Marian apparitions, first of all that of Fatima in what is already known of what its message contains. Conversion and penitence are the essential conditions for 'salvation'."

Ambiguous Position

The ambiguity of Pope Benedict XVI's position was heightened when Antonio Socci revealed a letter he had received from the Pope in 2007 thanking him for his 'Fourth

Secret' book. Anyone seeking to understand where Benedict XVI stands on this matter must reconcile this letter with an introductory letter he also provided for Cardinal Bertone's book, seeming to put himself on both sides of the controversy. Close examination of the wording of both letters, however, shows that the Pope avoids explicitly endorsing the Cardinal's claims, just as his letter to Socci endorses the author's motives, but not necessarily his conclusions.

Pope Benedict now faces a very awkward situation. He has played a role himself in the failed attempt to lay Fatima to rest, and now his Secretary of State has failed to reverse the original failure. What those with knowledge of the Third Secret have told us is that it foretells a "crisis of faith" and a "great apostasy" which "begins at the top." As such, it serves as a kind of indictment of those who have led the Church in recent times. It's easy to understand why these officials, including the present Pope, might regard such a document as "not destined for public consumption."

The Only Explanation

Hiding the Secret as the Vatican has done might be defensible if the Church had been

thriving as never before over the past half-century. An indictment of the pastors would then be inappropriate and meaningless. But quite the opposite is true. Since 1960, when this prophecy was due to be revealed, the Catholic Church has been both drastically reformed by Vatican II and devastated by mass defections of the faithful, clerical scandals and doctrinal disputes. The Church now seems to be suffering the dire consequences of altering the faith in her liturgy and her theology, just as the Secret predicted it would.

Of course, there is no way to prove that this is what guided Vatican decision-making, but there is no other explanation that makes sense of the Vatican's treatment of Fatima from 1960 onwards. The Third Secret was inconvenient then, and it is even more inconvenient today, now that much of its dire predictions seem to have been fulfilled in the wake of Vatican II.

Where does this leave worried Catholics looking for leadership and guidance from their pastors, and ultimately, from the Holy See? Can they disregard the whole Fatima controversy even if they think the apparitions were merely private revelations? Or does the

Vatican's handling of Fatima indicate something seriously wrong at high levels that every Catholic should be concerned about?

A Corporate Analogy

To answer this question, put yourself in the shoes of a shareholder in a corporation that has fallen on hard times. After making a series of changes in products and services, there has been a massive loss of market share among the corporation's core customers, along with a steep drop in revenues, a major deterioration of quality control, and a sharp increase in costs to settle law suits arising from criminal behavior by employees. Then it's discovered that, back in 1960, a report was delivered to the then-CEO warning against making the changes then being planned, and predicting dire consequences if they were made. Rather than releasing the report, the CEO buried it, and proceeded with his planned changes. The next CEO took over in mid-stream, and chose to continue implementing changes, though negative results were already appearing. Three more CEOs followed, each of whom read the 1960 report and buried it again. None wanted to face the embarrassment of admit-

ting that the corporation had the right advice in hand when it was needed, but it was ignored, and disaster ensued. And each CEO since that fateful day has compounded the problems, keeping the report carefully hidden while watching matters go from bad to worse.

What would the shareholders do in this situation? First, they would take immediate court action to force the release of the long-hidden report. Then they would fire the CEO, and perhaps take legal action against him and some of his predecessors, either for ignoring the report in the first place, or for hiding it and lying about it afterwards.

A Matter of Trust

Unfortunately, this is what shareholders can do when the managers they trust fail them, but it's not what Catholics can do when the Church leader they trust does something very similar. Most Catholics know they can't choose to not believe that their Pope is the Vicar of Christ. With regard to Fatima and the issues it raises, the present Pope has behaved, and is still behaving, in a manner inconsistent with that status.

The handling of Fatima reveals a Vatican bureaucracy

with characteristics disturbingly similar to those of some of the Third World's most autocratic and repressive governments: secretive, opaque decision-making processes that lead to cryptic, anonymous announcements, illicit official actions against which there appears to be no legal remedies, and adamant refusals to explain actions, answer reasonable questions or address criticisms in open forums.

Far from communicating openly, the Vatican has mastered the techniques of manipulating the media pioneered by the world's dictators. This Fatima cover-up shows that obfuscation, spin-doctoring and issuing disinformation have all become part of the Vatican arsenal of public relations tactics. Cardinal Bertone has provided the latest examples with his orchestrated attempts to give the appearance of open communication about Fatima, while in fact offering carefully-crafted evasions and statements which appear to mean one thing while technically or legalistically saying another. These are the techniques of devious politicians and propagandists, and it is alarming to find them being practiced within the ranks of the senior hierarchy of the

Catholic Church.

A Call for Healing Within the Church

At the heart of the structure of the Church is the matter of trust. When members of the clergy and various religious orders take their vows of obedience, they do not first of all rely on laws and courts to preserve their human rights. They entrust their well-being to the benevolence and moral rectitude of their hierarchical superiors. The Catholic clergy is bound together by this trust, and the faithful are bound to their clergy by similar bonds of trust. Sometimes, as we all know only too well, people who are trusted this way turn out to be unworthy. When this happens, appropriate action is necessary to restore the trust that has been breached. The Church has healed many such wounds in the past, and is healing more today. But at the top, the wound of Fatima continues to fester.

Even if, for the sake of this discussion, we could consider the apparitions at Fatima to be entirely private, the Vatican's handling of them reveals standards of behavior that fall far short of what all Catholics have a right to expect from the Holy See. The faithful should not have to analyze and parse

Vatican announcements as if they were issued by the Cold War Kremlin. Nor should they find Vatican officials affirming things with words while denying them with actions. Least of all should they find themselves facing active attempts at deception. If the Vatican cannot be trusted to tell the truth about something as central to the Catholic Faith as a Marian apparition, then who on earth can be trusted?

This isn't a question about Fatima, it's a question about today's Vatican itself, and it's one every Catholic should be asking today. After half a century of contradictory vacillations, contrived misrepresentations and deliberate deceptions, the Catholic faithful need some straight answers, and the sooner the better. Only Benedict XVI can now address the questions hanging over the whole Church about the still-hidden Third Secret of Fatima.

All Catholics can agree that the time for this healing, this trust-building, this fullness of the truth-telling is NOW more than ever. Let us pray that Pope Benedict XVI leads the way by revealing the whole Third Secret — NOW!

' «” &’|µ· &¬ fi-\$\$”± is the most comprehensive treatment of the Third Secret of Fatima to date. For more information see [back cover](#).