

Rome Symposium in May 2010:

“The Fatima Challenge”

Father Gruner explains the necessity of settling, once and for all, the various opposing opinions on the Message Our Lady gave the world at Fatima. And the time is NOW. Today, the wars, the threats of a major war – perhaps WWII – the worldwide global financial crisis, famine, other tragedies, and worse, the loss of souls, looms over our heads.

Yet the ONE way out, the ONLY solution – fulfilling the requests of Our Lady of Fatima – is still, amidst all this, ignored or argued into silence. God sent His Mother to warn us and save us. God gave the world a Miracle so all would believe.

Some say it is too late, but Our Lord, tells us: “It is never too late to have recourse to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary.” With our Rosary in hand, NOW is the time to meet the opposition to Fatima in a charitable and conscientious open debate.

We must implement Our Lady’s solution. We must prayerfully and humbly ask Her help so that the Fatima experts can agree in truth and unity so that Her full Fatima Message and requests will be known, understood, respected, appreciated and obeyed very soon.

To bring about this meeting of hearts and minds, the Fatima Center has called all to attend *The Fatima Challenge*. In this interview with *The Fatima Crusader*, Father Gruner explains this further.

An Interview with Father Nicholas Gruner

Q: What is “The Fatima Challenge”?

“The Fatima Challenge” is a five-day symposium we will hold in Rome starting May 3, 2010. It is our goal to gather writers, experts, publishers, etc., on the Fatima Message.

Now there are points on which Fatima writers agree, and there are points on which they do not agree.

Practically everyone who deals with Fatima accepts

that Our Lady appeared six times in 1917; that She spoke to the children; that She asked us to pray the Rosary every day, etc.

What is not agreed upon is whether the Consecration of Russia has been done according to the requests of Our Lady; whether the Vatican has released the full Third Secret; and whether the Message of Fatima is still urgent for our time.

Our position is well known: that the Consecration of Russia is not done; that the Third Secret is not fully revealed; and that the Message of Fatima is more urgent than ever. We have repeatedly documented these facts.

There are other Fatima writers who take the opposite view. They claim the Consecration is accomplished; the Third Secret is fully revealed; and the urgency of Fatima belongs to the past. Many people listen to these Fatima commentators, including priests and bishops. They do not really look into the matter themselves, but just choose a Fatima expert, as they regard him, to follow.

Thus, the purpose of "The Fatima Challenge" is to invite those who are held as Fatima experts to gather in an atmosphere of charity and civility to see if we can't come to an agreement, particularly regarding the Third Secret and the Consecration of Russia.

We see the symposium consisting of three main themes:

1. Has the Third Secret been fully released?

2. Has the Consecration of Russia been accomplished according to the exact requests

of Our Lady of Fatima?

3. Is the Fatima Message still urgent today?

Of course, there will be a number of sub-themes discussed, that flow from these three main points.

Q: Who is coming?

We have invited Pope Benedict XVI's Commission on Fatima; Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, the Vatican Secretary of State; along with all Catholic bishops and a number of priests; and representatives from various Fatima apostolates to participate in the forum and to present their views. Whether they choose to come remains to be seen, but they are certainly invited.

So far, speakers representing our position are: Father Paul Kramer, Christopher Ferrara, Edwin Faust, Dr. Peter Chojnowski, Michal Semin, Cornelia Ferreira, John Vennari and myself. Others have been invited and new participants will be announced at a later date.

May 2010 marks 10 years since the first announcement was made in Fatima (May 13, 2000) that the vision of the Third Secret would be released; and that the Third Secret was nothing



“In the end, My Immaculate Heart will triumph.”

more than a prediction of the failed May 13, 1981 assassination attempt against Pope John Paul II, an interpretation even the secular press found ludicrous.

Q: Why is it important that we get to the truth about the full Third Secret?

In 1985, Frère Michel and I were together in Rome inside Vatican City at the Augustian hall for a symposium which the Fatima Center had organized. We had gathered together world famous Fatima experts, including Hamish Fraser, Frère Michel – author of *The Whole Truth About Fatima* – Father Pierre Caillon and myself. Frère Michel had just completed his book on the Third Secret. It was his opinion that since the Vatican had publicly insulted Our Lady in refusing to reveal the Secret in 1960, then God would not give the grace of the Consecration of Russia until reparation was made for this insult. And the only reparation he believed Our Lord would accept is the actual releasing of the full Third Secret by the Vatican.

Now I must stress, this is Frère Michel's *opinion*, not part of the revealed Fatima

Message. But I also acknowledge that he may be right. We know the Consecration of Russia is the apex of the entire Fatima prophecy, for when that happens, Russia will be converted and the world will receive the promised “period of peace.” So if Frère Michel is right, it is essential to release the Third Secret so that we receive the grace for the Consecration of Russia.

Another reason the full Third Secret must be released is that we need to know the *words* of Our Lady contained in the yet-to-be revealed portion of the Secret. When Our Lady speaks – when we know it is Her words – these words will carry a weight and an authority far beyond any of our own words. If we have Our Lady's words – if we have She Herself – explaining the very dangers to the Faith, it would be a moment of grace for the Church.

Father Alonso said that when the Secret is released, the progressivists will howl, and it will bring to a grinding halt the progressivist elements in the Church; that they will be angry at Fatima. That's what he said. And other than Sister Lucy (and those who have actually read

the still hidden text), if anyone had knowledge of the true contents of the Secret, it would be he.

Q: Why would Father Alonso know?

Because Father Alonso was the official archivist at Fatima for 16 years. He was one of the few who had access to Sister Lucy after she was silenced in 1959. He was a man of integrity.

Q: How does Father Alonso's revelations about the Secret correspond to what Cardinal Ratzinger said in 1984?

In 1984, Cardinal Ratzinger said the Third Secret speaks of the "dangers threatening the Faith and the life of the Christian and therefore (the life) of the world."

Likewise Father Alonso said of the Secret: "It is therefore completely probable that the text makes concrete references to the crisis of faith within the Church and to the negligence of the pastors themselves [and the] internal struggles in the very bosom of the Church and of grave pastoral negligence of the upper hierarchy."

Father Alonso further said, "Does the unpublished

text speak of concrete circumstances? It is very possible that it speaks not only of a real crisis of the faith in the Church during this in-between period [the period starting from 1960 up to the time of the Consecration of Russia and the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary], but like the secret of La Salette, for example, there are more concrete references to the internal struggles of Catholics or to the fall of priests and religious. Perhaps it even refers to the failures of the upper hierarchy of the Church. For that matter, none of this is foreign to other communications Sister Lucy has had on the subject."

Q: Moving on to the Consecration of Russia: What do you say to those who claim the "fall" of the Berlin Wall in 1989 is proof that Pope John Paul II's consecration of the world in 1984 fulfilled Our Lady's request.

I want to start by noting that Our Lady's call for the Consecration of Russia was perhaps the most formal request She ever made.

In 1917, Our Lady preannounced that She would return to ask for the

Consecration of Russia. Then 12 years later, in 1929, She appeared to Sister Lucy to formally make this request, but She did not appear by Herself. At Tuy, when She made this request, She appeared with the Most Holy Trinity.

Now, Catholic Theology tells us we cannot paint, or cannot actually portray the Godhead *in Itself*, but Catholic iconography and theology tell us we can have a painting or an image of the Holy Trinity: *that is, there can be a painting that depicts the three Divine Persons of the Most Holy Trinity.*

In the vision of Tuy, we see God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Holy Trinity appears in Their individuation; thus it is the most formal apparition *of Our Lady anywhere and anytime.* This goes beyond Guadalupe, Lourdes or anything that happened on the soil of Fatima. We have the vision of the Most Blessed Trinity with each of Its Persons.

The fact that Our Lady made this request in the presence of a manifestation of the Holy Trinity tells us the force and magnitude of this Message. Nothing like this has ever happened before in

the history of the Church.

In the Tuy vision, you have God the Son on the Cross, you have God the Father above Him receiving His sacrifice, and you have the Holy Ghost between Them. It is quite theological in that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son together. You have the humanity of Christ, the sacrifice of the Cross, the Sacrifice of the Mass, and we know "Grace" and "Mercy" (also pictured) come from the Mass, and we have the Holy Eucharist, which is the fruit of that sacrifice.

Our Lady is standing on the altar, clearly representing Her role as Mediatrix of all graces. I am reminded of Pope Leo XIII who says that all grace comes from God the Father, through the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, through the hands of the Blessed Virgin Mary, through the Church, to us, in that order. And in the vision of Tuy, you see all of this true Catholic doctrine visually depicted.

Then during this most august vision of the Blessed Trinity, Our Lady says: "The moment has come" when *God asks* the Holy Father for the Consecration of Russia.



Jesus asked, “and you, what are you doing to spread devotion to My Mother?”

It is very clear that Our Lady is the ambassador of God telling us what *GOD* wants. Our Lady is not asking, it is God Who asks the Holy Father to do something – the Consecration of Russia *by name* to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The Holy Father must take this as a command from God Himself. Our Lady tells the Pope to *command* the Catholic bishops to make this Consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart, promising to save Russia by this means.

When we study what could be called the “instrumental” theology of St. Thomas Aquinas, we see that it is the actual words of the priest that he speaks over the bread (and then over the wine) that is the instrument that changes bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Our Lord. Of course, it is God’s power that does it, but the words of the priest are the *instrument* that effects this change. We have similar examples in the natural order. If you want to write a letter, you have to have a pencil or a pen or a typewriter or a computer – you have to have an instrument outside of yourself in order to write the letter. You may have the thought in your mind, but in

order to get it down on paper for someone else to read it, you must have a writing *instrument*.

And so Our Lady told us at Tuy *in June 1929 and again She told Sister Lucy in May 1952* that without this Consecration of Russia – without this instrument – Russia cannot be converted and the world cannot have peace. She has told us that there is no other way. And in case we didn’t get it in 1929, Our Lady returned in 1952 and told Sister Lucy:

“Make it known to the Holy Father that I am always awaiting the Consecration of Russia to My Immaculate Heart.

“Without the Consecration, Russia will not be able to convert, nor will the world have peace.”

It is the only way, the only channel. We must use the *instrument* by which God promises to deliver, which is the Pope consecrating Russia by name to the Immaculate Heart of Mary together with the bishops of the world.

Q: Consecration has a very precise meaning, does it not?

Yes. To “consecrate” means

to set aside for a holy purpose. We see examples of this in Scripture. In the Acts of the Apostles, there is the scene where Paul and Barnabas are praying with others in a room. The Holy Ghost speaks to one of the prophets at the time saying, "I want Paul and Barnabas set aside for My service." That's the word we use for making a bishop: we say Father (name) was consecrated a bishop. That is, Father (name) was made a bishop today. The bishop is consecrated for a holy purpose for the service of God. Notice, it was Paul and Barnabas, not the other people in the room. Paul and Barnabas were *chosen* and *set aside*, that is, *consecrated*.

We find a similar example in the Old Testament. David's father Jessie was told that God wanted to consecrate one of his sons. Bring your sons to me, says the prophet, and I will consecrate the one God wants me to. So Jessie brings his seven oldest sons, one by one, but the prophet chooses none of them. The prophet then asks Jessie if he has any more sons. Jessie responds there is one more, the youngest – David – taking care of the sheep. The prophet bids



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Jessie to bring him this son; and when the prophet sees David, he recognizes him as the one chosen by God and consecrates him alone. The prophet could not say, "well, I'll consecrate all the sons, no matter how many, and that would be fine." No, it had to be a specific consecration, not a generic one.

So if the Holy Father consecrates the world – as he did in 1982 and 1984 – it is not a specific consecration of a particular nation, and it is not

the consecration requested by God in the Fatima Message.

God asked for the consecration of a specific country – Russia. Now, centuries ago, Russia was known as Holy Mother Russia. It had been, so to speak, consecrated to God, but the Catholics of that country fell into schism *not so much directly but through the bishops – between them and Rome. The Catholics of Constantinople fell into schism in 1054 and people from Russia followed suit over time.* They have been separated from the True Church ever since. Also, Russia was, in a sense, “consecrated” to the devil in 1917 to be the instrument of atheistic Communism and its worldwide war against God; to deny God’s existence, to fight God in every way.

Thus God calls for a public reparation, a solemn public ceremony by the Pope and the bishops of the world consecrating Russia to the Immaculate Heart – to call people back to the service of God. Our Lady told us this is *the only way* to the conversion of Russia, and to the period of peace. God laid down His conditions, and it is foolish for any of us to try to

change these conditions into anything else.

Now Pope John Paul II generically consecrated the whole world, not specifically Russia, to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In 1989, we may have had the fall of the Berlin Wall and other such things, but it is not the conversion of Russia to the Catholic Faith. Further, I’m on public record saying that the changes of Russia are more cosmetic than real.¹

Q: Is Russia a godless country?

There has been no conversion of that nation to the Catholic Faith, and that is what Our Lady means by conversion. This is not only a point of common sense, but is confirmed by Sister Lucy herself who said the conversion of Russia means conversion to the Catholic Faith. Though the government has undergone an apparent restructuring (*Perestroika*), we still have the political leaders in Russia promoting abortion, building up their military, and continuing a completely secular – that is, godless – approach to governing their nation. It is awash in pornography, alcoholism and other rampant

evils. The Pope himself is not even welcome to visit Russia.

Russia is not converted, and the people are not converted, now more than 25 years after Pope John Paul II's consecration of the world – a consecration that did not mention Russia. Further, there is no world peace. The facts speak for themselves.

Q: The third theme of “*The Fatima Challenge*” will address the question: Why is Fatima still important?

The Fatima prophecies do not simply refer to the past. Fatima is certainly still very important, especially when we consider Our Lady's words. She said that if Her requests are granted, “Russia will be converted”, “many souls will be saved”, and “there will be peace”. If Her requests are not granted, Russia will spread her errors throughout the whole world, raising up wars and persecutions against the Church, the good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, various nations will be annihilated.

There are two choices: *Do* Her requests, you get these benefits: world peace, conversion of Russia, salvation



Pope Leo XIII taught that the Catholic Church has nothing to fear from the truth.

of many souls. *Don't do* Her requests, and you get the annihilation of nations, the Pope having much suffering, the good being martyred, errors being spread, famine, war (which is a punishment for sin) and the annihilation of nations. We still have not fulfilled Our Lady's requests; therefore the threat of Our Lady's “either/or” still hangs over us.

Now God has ordained that He wants to establish in the world devotion to Our Lady's Immaculate Heart. He will not change His mind. We can reason through why God wants to establish this devotion.

First, the Immaculate Heart

of Mary is the heart closest to Christ, as Pope Benedict XVI acknowledges. Our Lady was Our Lord's consolation while on earth; She was with Him during His Passion and death. There is no creature closer to Our Lord than Our Lady. Thus we can reason that Our Lord wants to establish in the world devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary because She deserves it and because He wants everyone to love Her and to be grateful for all that She suffered for our salvation.

A second purpose for this devotion is the salvation of souls, which is also close to the Heart of Our Lord. The saints have pointed out that if a person is devoted to Our Lady, and perseveres in that devotion, he will not be lost. This is something all people should know. Yet even some devout Catholics, some extremely well-read Catholics, do not know this. I am surprised that people do not know this.

Now God wants this truth to be known. He wants it established in the hearts of people. So He has ordained a means to do it, and that is the Consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

For when Russia is consecrated to the Immaculate Heart, and then Russia is converted, the whole world will see this and will make the very simple connection: Immaculate Heart of Mary, the conversion of Russia, we now have peace! This will be a dramatic happening recognized the world over, and people will conclude that there is something about the Immaculate Heart of Mary that we should be paying more attention to. **People will then know that it is through Her Merits, Her Prayers, Her Intercession before God that we have all these benefits, especially Worldwide Peace between all peoples and nations and domestic peace, too.**

Think of it: the authors of the attack on the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001 certainly caught the attention of the world. Everyone in North America, everyone in Europe, and it is safe to say, everyone the world over knows exactly what you are talking about when you mention "9/11" or "the Twin Towers" or the planes that crashed into the tallest buildings in New York City.

So if a group of conspirators can concoct an event

that the whole world knows about *for evil*, God can surely concoct an event the world will know about *for good*. The Consecration of Russia by the Pope in union with the bishops of the world in a public ceremony, which will bring about the dramatic conversion of Russia and world peace, is the event God wills. It is the condition for world peace. God will not change His mind. This consecration has not happened yet, so we do not have the conversion of Russia and we do not have world peace. Until this condition is fulfilled, Fatima is central to every man, woman and child on the face of the earth. So yes, Fatima is still very important. It is crucial. It is essential. Its importance cannot be exaggerated.

Q: What do you hope the Symposium will accomplish?

Pope Leo XIII said in one of his encyclicals, the Catholic Church has nothing to fear from the truth. And if the truth is on our side, which it is, then we have nothing to fear from the truth. St. Thomas talks about the truth as light. If you have a dark room, it is hard to see

your way, there are shadows, things are unclear. But if you turn the light on, then what was unclear becomes clear. The light of truth scatters the darkness of uncertainty.

So we are asking those who promote Fatima: if you are really sincere in promoting the devotion to Our Lady of Fatima *as She wants it*, if you are sincere in saying She has a message to tell us and if you say the Consecration has been done and we say that it hasn't been done, well then, you have nothing to fear from putting your cards on the table, and allowing the other side to question you on this or that point of your position.

Subsequently, the same rules apply to us. If we say the Consecration is not done as Our Lady requested, then you can ask how we come to this conclusion with certainty. We are inviting discussion. We can answer their questions and they can answer our questions.

Our Lord said: "Seek and you shall find." (Lk. 11:9)

The truth will emerge – if there is good will; if we love the truth more than our attachments to ourselves and our pleasures and material things; if we all do our part;

if we sincerely seek the truth; if we are not lazy in applying ourselves to look at the facts and draw the logical conclusions; if we do not allow our prejudices or our rash judgments of people and ideas to get in our way; if we are humble enough to acknowledge our past errors of judgment; if we are charitable in our dealings with those who oppose us – then I am certain Our Lord will bless our efforts with letting all who seek the truth to find the truth. The truth should surface. Hopefully it will be clear for all the public and especially for all the bishops to see on which side the truth lies.

Q: Is the public invited to this event as well?

We have a limited amount of space for those friends and supporters who may wish to attend “The Fatima Challenge” in Rome. We are still putting together the pricing, but the estimated cost to attend (including airfare, two meals per day, hotel and conference) will be around \$2100. Since time is short, those interested in attending should contact the Fatima Center as soon as possible. **Call toll-free: 1-800-845-3047.**

We will be broadcasting the Conference lectures and the questions and answer periods worldwide on the Internet. People all over the world will be able to follow “The Fatima Challenge” Symposium as it happens. The broadcast may not be live but it will be posted on our website on the same day the speeches are given.

We also plan to daily broadcast the talks and questions and answers on Rome TV to all the people of Rome in Italian. This is still subject to finalization.

Closing thoughts

Our supporters have made our fight for Fatima possible over the past 33 years of this apostolate and I wish to express my sincere gratitude to them. We also ask your prayers and support for this ambitious event we are organizing in Rome. We pray the Symposium will be effective for the greater glory of God; and that it helps hasten the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and world peace as promised at Fatima.



Note: 1. See *The Only Way to World Peace*, our 64-page booklet that explains this in detail. (Available from The Fatima Center. Contact information for ordering is on [page 63](#).)