

MEETING WITH SR MARIA LUCIA

**Archbishop Tarcisio Bertone,
Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith**

In the Convent of Coimbra, Portugal, 17 November 2001

In recent months, especially after the sad event of the terrorist attack last 11 September, articles on alleged new revelations by Sr Lucia, announcements of letters of warning to the Pope and apocalyptic reinterpretations of the Fatima message have appeared in the Italian and foreign press.

The suspicion that the Holy See did not publish the whole text of the third part of the "secret" is being reaffirmed and certain "Fatimist" movements have repeated their accusation that the Holy Father has not yet consecrated Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

It was therefore considered necessary, with the agreement of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger and the Bishops of both Leiria-Fatima and Coimbra, that I meet Sr Lucia in the presence of Rev. Luis Kondor, SVD, Vice-Postulator of the cause of Bl. Francisco and Bl. Jacinta, and of the Prioress of the Carmelite Convent of St Teresa, to obtain explanations and information directly from the only surviving visionary.

The conversation that lasted for more than two hours took place on Saturday afternoon, 17 November. Sr Lucia, who will be 95 on 22 March this year, seemed in excellent form, lucid and vivacious. During the conversation, she professed her love for and devotion to the Holy Father, for whom, along with the whole Church, she very much prays. She was delighted with the distribution of her book, *"Os apelos da Mensagem de Fatima"* ("The Appeals of the Fatima Message"), now translated into six languages (Italian, Spanish, German, Hungarian, Polish and English), and for which she is receiving many letters of thanks.

Going on to discuss the problem of the third part of the secret of Fatima, she says that she has read attentively and meditated upon the booklet published by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and confirms everything it says.

She answers those who have voiced a doubt that some part of the 'third secret' might not have been revealed: *"Everything has been published, there are no more secrets."* To those who are talking and writing about new revelations, she says: "There is not a grain of truth in them. If I had had new revelations, I would not have spoken of them to anyone, but would have told them directly to the Holy Father!".

She then gladly recalled her youth and the difficulties she had encountered, first in becoming a sister; but even in gestures of kindness, as when she remembers the "holidays" in Braga in the years 1921-24, with Mrs Filomena Miranda, her Confirmation sponsor.

When asked: "What effect did the vision of 13 July have on your life before it was written down and presented to the Church?", she replied:

"I felt safe under the protection of Our Lady, who would watch carefully over the Church

and the Pope", and she adds a new detail to her account of the famous prophetic vision:

"During the vision, Our Lady, shining bright, held a heart in her left hand, and in her right, a Rosary". What does the heart in Our Lady's hand mean?

*"It is a symbol of love that protects and saves. It is the Mother who sees her children suffering and suffers with them, even with those who do not love her. For she wants to save them all and not to lose any of those the Lord has entrusted to her. Her Heart is a safe refuge. The devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary is the means of salvation for these difficult times in the Church and in the world. Cardinal Ratzinger's reflection at the end of his comment on the third part of the "secret" is very relevant: 'My Immaculate Heart will triumph'. What does this mean? The heart open to God, purified by contemplation of God, is stronger than guns and weapons of every kind. The fiat of Mary, the word of her heart, has changed the history of the world, because it brought the Saviour into the world-because, thanks to her 'Yes', God could become man in our world and remains so for all time. The Evil One has power in this world, as we see and experience continually; he has power because our freedom continually lets itself be led away from God. But since God himself took a human heart and has thus steered man's freedom towards what is good, the freedom to choose evil no longer has the last word. From that time, this is the final word: **In** the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have overcome the world" (In 16,33) is well founded. The message of Fatima invites us to trust in this promise".*

I asked her three more questions:

"Is it true that speaking to Rev. Luigi Bianchi and Rev. Jose dos Santos Valinho, you cast doubt on the interpretation of the third part of the "secret"?"

Sr Lucia answered: *"That is not true. I fully confirm the interpretation made in the Jubilee Year".*

"What have you to say about the stubborn assertions of Fr Gruner, who has been collecting signatures, asking the Pope to consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary at last, as if this has never been done?"

Sr Lucia replies: *"The Carmelite community has rejected the forms for the collection of signatures. I have already said that the consecration desired by Our Lady was made in 1984, and has been accepted in Heaven ".*

"Is it true that Sr Lucia is deeply upset by recent events, that she can no longer sleep and is praying night and day?"

Sr Lucia answers: *"It is not true. How could I pray during the day if I did not rest at night? How many things they are putting in my mouth! How many things they make me seem to do! Let them read my book: in it are all the recommendations and appeals that correspond with Our Lady's wishes. **Prayer and penance**, together with **great faith** in God's power, will save the world".*

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