

John Paul II. *Meditation with the Italian Bishops from the Policlinico Gemelli*, *Insegnamenti*, vol XVII/1, 1994, p. 1061). On the occasion of a visit to Rome by the then Bishop of Leiria-Fatima, the Pope decided to give him the bullet which had remained in the jeep after the assassination attempt, so that it might be kept in the Shrine. At the behest of the Bishop, the bullet was later set in the crown of the statue of Our Lady of Fatima.

The successive events of 1989 led, both in the Soviet Union and in a number of countries of Eastern Europe, to the fall of the Communist regime which promoted atheism. For this too His Holiness offers heartfelt thanks to the



*Pope John Paul II and Sr. Lucia meeting together before the Beatification of Bl. Jacinto and Bl. Francisco Marto*

Most Holy Virgin. In other parts of the world, however, attacks against the Church and against Christians, together with the burden of suffering which they involve, tragically continue. Even if the events to which the third part of the Secret of Fatima refers now seem part of the past, Our Lady's call to conversion and penance, issued at the beginning of the twentieth century, remains timely and urgent today. "The Lady of the message seems to read the signs of the times - the signs of our time - with special insight... The insistent invitation of Mary Most Holy to penance is nothing but the manifestation of her maternal concern for the fate of the human family, in need of conversion and forgiveness" (Pope John Paul II, *Message for the 1997 World Day of the Sick*, N. 1, *Insegnamenti*, vol XIX/2, 1996, p. 561).

In order that the faithful may better receive the message of Our Lady of Fatima, the Pope has charged the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith with making public the third part of the secret, after the preparation of an appropriate commentary.

Let us thank Our Lady of Fatima for her protection. To her maternal intercession let us entrust the Church of the Third Millennium.

*Sub tuum praesidium confugimus, Sancta Dei Genetrix!*

**Source: Vatican Information Service**