

## Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith The Message of Fatima

### *Introduction*

As the second millennium gives way to the third, Pope John Paul II has decided to publish the text of the third part of the “secret of Fatima”.

The twentieth century was one of the most crucial in human history, with its tragic and cruel events culminating in the assassination attempt on the “sweet Christ on earth”. Now a veil is drawn back on a series of events which make history and interpret it in depth, in a spiritual perspective alien to present-day attitudes, often tainted with rationalism. . . .

Fatima is undoubtedly the most prophetic of modern apparitions. The first and second parts of the “secret”—which are here published in sequence so as to complete the documentation—refer especially to the frightening vision of hell, devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the Second World War, and finally the prediction of the immense damage that Russia would do to humanity by abandoning the Christian faith and embracing Communist totalitarianism.

In 1917 no one could have imagined all this: the three *pastorinhos* of Fatima see, listen and remember, and Lucia, the surviving witness, commits it all to paper when ordered to do so by the Bishop of Leiria and with Our Lady's permission.

For the account of the first two parts of the “secret”, which have already been published and are therefore known, we have chosen the text written by Sister Lucia in the Third Memoir of 31 August 1941; some annotations were added in the Fourth Memoir of 8 December 1941.

The third part of the “secret” was written “by order of His Excellency the Bishop of Leiria and the Most Holy Mother ...” on 3 January 1944.

There is only one manuscript, which is here reproduced photostatically. The sealed envelope was initially in the custody of the Bishop of Leiria. To ensure better protection for the “secret” the envelope was placed in the Secret Archives of the Holy Office on 4 April 1957. The Bishop of Leiria informed Sister Lucia of this.

According to the records of the Archives, the Commissary of the Holy Office, Father Pierre Paul Philippe, OP, with the agreement of Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani, brought the envelope containing the third part of the “secret of Fatima” to Pope John XXIII on 17 August 1959. “After some hesitation”, His Holiness said: “We shall wait. I shall pray. I shall let you know what I decide”. (*From the diary of John XXIII, 17 August 1959: “Audiences: Father Philippe, Commissary of the Holy Office, who brought me the letter containing the third part of the secrets of Fatima. I intend to read it with my Confessor”.*)

In fact Pope John XXIII decided to return the sealed envelope to the Holy Office and not to reveal the third part of the “secret”.

Paul VI read the contents with the Substitute, Archbishop Angelo Dell'Acqua, on 27 March 1965, and returned the envelope to the Archives of the Holy Office, deciding not to publish the text.

John Paul II, for his part, asked for the envelope containing the third part of the “secret” following the assassination attempt on 13 May 1981. On 18 July 1981 Cardinal Franjo Šeper, Prefect of the Congregation, gave two envelopes to Archbishop Eduardo Martínez Somalo, Substitute of the Secretariat of State:

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