

# What Is The Fatima Secret?

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By FATHER PASCHAL BOLAND, O. S. B. (N.C.W.C. News Service)

On December 4, 1957, Bishop Jose Alves Correia da Silva of Leiria, Portugal, died at the age of 85. For 18 years he had been the guardian of a sealed envelope containing the third secret of Fatima.

According to recent reports, the document is now supposed to be in the possession of His Eminence Manuel Cardinal Goncalves Cereleira, Patriarch of Lisbon.  
The only living person who knows the contents of this third message is Lucia Abobora, 50, the last of the three shepherd children who witnessed the apparitions of Our Lady at Fatima in 1917. She is now Sister Lucia, a Carmelite nun in Coimbra.

From time to time reports have been circulated stating that the third secret has been revealed—Bishop Correia da Silva is said to have opened the envelope. Sister Lucia is supposed to have gone to Rome to tell Pope Pius XII the secret!

BOTH THESE reports have been denied, yet the wildest rumors about the envelope's contents have been spread abroad. These include:

- Adolf Hitler was to have taken the Holy Father prisoner and, by diabolical means, to have made him a Nazi puppet.
- Italian communists will capture, torture and kill the Pontiff.
- The Pope will abandon Rome and transfer the See of Peter across the ocean.
- If and when the contents of the third message are made public in 1960, the thoughtful Christian or average Catholic might wonder about the credibility of such extraordinary matters.
- Is it wrong for one not to accept such revelations as true? Does one sin by doubting them? What is the teaching of the Church?
- Although certain visions and revelations have been approved by the proper ecclesiastical authorities as being of supernatural origin, the Church teaches that Catholics are not obliged to accept them as matters of faith.
- JUST AS ALL Catholics are required to keep the Ten Commandments but are not required to follow the evangelical counsels of absolute poverty and perfect virginity, so also are Catholics required to accept the dogmas of the Faith that are divinely revealed and which are termed "public" revelation, but they are not bound to accept "private" revelations.
- The Church does not guarantee that private revelations predict future events which take place when if these predictions are made by very holy and saintly persons.
- In the Bible can be found the classical example of the prediction of a future event by a holy man—a prophet of God—that did not take place. It is the story of Jonas the prophet who was commanded by God to tell the people of Nineveh that their city would be destroyed in 40 days.
- ANOTHER WELL-known example is that of St. Vincent Ferrer who spent his last 21 years (1398-1419) announcing that the end of the world and Last Judgment were about to take place, and to convince his hearers of its truth, he worked many genuine miracles.
- The explanation of these two cases is that the fulfillment of



Bishop Jose Alves Correia da Silva of Fatima, who died last month, guarded the sealed envelope containing the third secret of Fatima for 18 years. The envelope is not to be opened before 1960. The only living person who knows the secret is Sister Lucia Abobora, the last of the three children who witnessed the apparitions of Our Lady at Fatima in 1917. Bishop Correia da Silva is pictured at the Fatima Shrine, shortly before his death, at the age of 85. He was an invalid. (NC Photos.)

the Pacific Ocean; the entire city of Chicago will slowly sink, as though built on quicksand and disappear—and a bloody persecution of Catholics will break out in Milwaukee.

To return to the secrets of Fatima, the Blessed Virgin appeared to three children who herded sheep in the fields near Fatima and Aljustrel, six times during 1917. She gave them three secrets when she appeared in that year. Ten years later, in 1927, Sister Lucia was allowed to reveal the first two:

The children had been given a terrifying vision of hell.

The Blessed Virgin had given them a message and a mandate to establish devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and she prophesied the punishment to be meted out to mankind for its sin if her mandate was not fulfilled.

The punishment which she foretold was that Russia would spread her errors throughout the world, promoting wars and persecuting the Church; the good would be martyred; the Holy Father would have much to suffer, and various nations would be annihilated.

WHEN SISTER LUCIA was gravely ill in 1939, she obtained permission from Our Lady at the insistence of Bishop Correia da Silva, to write out the third secret and seal it in an envelope marked "Not to be opened until 1960."

What is this third secret? Will it foretell a worldwide victory of communism? Will it predict the destruction of large segments of the world through nuclear warfare? Will it tell of a revolution in nature when all the elements of the earth seem to become disorganized as oceans spill over their boundaries, the seasons change their cycle, and winds, rain, sleet and snow cover the earth?

Or will it reveal that the requests of the second secret having been fulfilled by so many devout and faithful people that the reward of a period of peace is near and that Russia has at long last returned to the one, true fold of Christ?

Dramatically awakened to Christ as being 50 or 60 years before the year 2000.

OTHER PURPORTED mystics have made the following predictions: the west coast will suffer a great earthquake and a large area containing Hollywood and Reno will disappear forever into

their impending doom and the cause of it, the people of Nineveh reacted to the prophet Jonas' warning by wholeheartedly donning sackcloth and ashes while fasting from all food and drink to show repentance for their sins.

Moved by their spirit of contrition and reparation, God did not carry out His threat to destroy them.

Likewise, the response of the people to St. Vincent Ferrer's incessant preaching, accompanied as it was by numerous miracles, seems to have averted the destruction of the world at the time of the Great Schism. Innumerable conversions took place among Catholics, heretics, Jews and Moslems wherever the saint appeared in Europe.

IN OUR OWN times there has been a tremendous response to the message of Fatima. Millions of people have participated in programs of prayer and penance throughout the world.

Catholics of most nations, under the leadership of their hierarchies, have consecrated themselves and their countries to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Observance of the First Saturdays of the month with confession, Holy Communion and prayers is becoming a common and universal devotion throughout the world.

Millions of rosaries are prayed by entire families as the result of national rosary crusades in various countries. Also to be considered are the numerous prayers and sacrifices offered during

## Leper Apostle Asks Plane Gifts From U.S. and Soviet

Paris — (NC) — A French Catholic nobleman has written to the governments of the U.S. and Soviet Russia asking for two bombers to be sold to raise money for lepers all over the world.

Raoul Follereau, founder of the Order of Charity, a group of laymen dedicated to the aid of lepers, wrote a letter to President Dwight Eisenhower and to Nikolai A. Bulganin, president of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union.

"If each of your countries will give up one of your bombers," the letter read, "we shall be able to care for all the lepers in the world... one plane from each of your camps would not seriously affect your strength. You could continue to sleep quietly... and millions of people would sleep without pain."

"Two bombers and we could buy enough medicine to care for all the world's lepers... You use the benefits of science to build your weapons and bombers, but a great Christian once wrote, 'That science is damned which does not rest on love.'"

Count Follereau has announced that the Fifth World Day for Leprosy Victims, sponsored by the Order of Charity, will take place on January 26. He has appealed to "all those who eat three meals a day and imagine that the rest of the world does so, too," to pray and contribute to the work for lepers.

The Frenchman, who is a Commander of the Order of the Holy wherever possible, people visit leper hospitals bringing reassurance and love to the patients.

the 1954 Marian Year and those that will be offered in observing the Lourdes centennial this year.

There have been many extensive relief drives to help the world's poor, especially the annual drive conducted by the American Bishops.

THESE FACTS should incline one toward the optimistic opinion that the remaining secret of Fatima concerns an era of peace because of the worldwide response that has been given to the message of Fatima by Catholics and other Christians.

It is true that prophecies of doom and terror have the effect of arousing the emotions and the fears of people, but it is the teaching of the Church that they are not matters of faith. Nor does anyone really know if particular predictions by the most saintly of men will actually be fulfilled. Only time will tell.

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Our missionaries in South India are doing heroic work for the salvation of souls but they need our help to carry on their apostolate. In the village of EROOZE-HAMKULAM they have already received 100 persons into the Faith and have many others under instruction. There is no Chapel in the village and they need \$2,500 to buy land and construct a modest Chapel. Please help us make their prayerful wish a reality. The Lord will not forget your kindness to this missionary work.

REMEMBER GOD AND HIS MISSIONS IN YOUR WILL.

**CHILDREN'S OCTAVE**  
It begins January 13th, feast of St. Peter's Chair, to pray for union of all with the successor of St. Peter, the Pope. While we pray for this intention, we think of a gallant band of young ladies, LAY AUXILIARIES, working for the same cause among the people living in the deserts of the Middle East. They have no one to beg for them and their work except the Near East Missions. Could you give them a bit of encouragement during the Octave? The smallest gift is most precious to them.

BE GOOD TO GOD AND GOD WILL BE GOOD TO YOU.

ENROLL A RELATIVE OR A FRIEND FOR \$1 a year or \$20 perpetually. FAMILY ENROLLMENT is \$5 a year or \$100 perpetually. These gifts are truly precious to our Holy Father to meet mission appeals. Living and deceased may be enrolled and share in 15,000 Masses yearly and in the prayers and good works of thousands of Near East priests and sisters.

MASS OFFERINGS ARE PRECIOUS TO OUR MISSIONARIES.

THE FRANCISCAN SISTERS IN LEBANON are hoping that some kind friend will adopt a young novice preparing for missionary work. Sister Marie George and Sister Marie Basile need \$160 for each of their two years' training. Could you adopt one of these young novices—for the salvation of souls and the glory of God? Blessings will be yours.

WHAT YOU PUT IN THE HAND OF OUR HOLY FATHER YOU PUT IN THE HAND OF CHRIST

THOMAS OR SEBASTIAN  
Both young seminarians have just begun their six years training at St. Joseph's Seminary in India. Their ambition is to serve as priests of God in the mission territories of India, where native priests are urgently needed. From poor families they need our help. We must find \$100 each year to support and educate them. Won't you adopt one by sending this yearly sum in any installments. God will not be outdone by your generosity.

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