

The Secret of Fatima

Is It A Message Of Hope Or Doom?

By FATHER HENRY ATWELL

Will the "Secret of Fatima" foretell the end of the world? Are we in for another World War? Is a frightening invasion about to take place from another planet? Is 1960 the deadline of world history?

Rumors and more rumors pretend to predict that Sister Lucy's sealed secret will shock the world when its message is revealed, according to yet another rumor, on May 13, 1960 — forty-third anniversary of the Blessed Virgin Mary's apparition at Fatima.

To set at rest devout minds disturbed by such rumors, the Catholic Courier Journal presents this specially written factual report.

Here, for the first time in print, is the record of an interview with Father Joseph Cirincione, of St. Francis of Assisi parish, Rochester, and well-known for his highly Rosary for Peace radio broadcast, had in 1950 with two Portugal Bishops who are closest to knowing the "Secret of Fatima."

Both Bishops have held in their hands the sealed envelope with the message. Both know Lucy personally.

Both state emphatically that no one but Lucy knows the secret.

Neither of them has any inkling that the secret is a threat of doom.

They are confident that an all-merciful God and the prayers of the loving Mother of the Saviour spell blessings rather than calamities for the world.

The two prelates point to the motto chosen by Sister Lucy herself when she changed, in 1948, from the convent of the Sisters of St. Dorothy to the more secluded life of a Carmelite nun, "I love the Immaculate Heart of Mary and I trust in her protection."

This, the Bishops state, reveals peace, not terror; joy, not fright; confidence, not despair. The two prelates, though not relatives, both have the same last name — da Silva — a very common surname in Portugal.

Dom Manoel Maria Ferreira da Silva, an archbishop, heads his country's Propagation of the Faith Society. His position is comparable to Bishop Sheen's in this country. He has known Lucy, now 52 and sole survivor of the three children who saw our Lady at Fatima, since 1921.

Dom Jose Alves Correia da Silva, who died in 1937, was named Bishop of Leiria — in whose territory is the village of Fatima — in 1920, three years after the apparitions took place. Dom Jose previously was a seminary professor and taught the young Dom Manoel and the two remained close friends over the following years.

Dom Jose, in 1921, arranged for the fourteen-year-old Lucy dos Santos to enter a school conducted by the Sisters of St. Dorothy at Villar, a suburb of Oporto north of Fatima, where Dom Manoel taught a catechism class once a week and where he then became acquainted with the young girl who had seen the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Dom Manoel's priestly career included his being named rector of the cathedral at Oporto and then, in 1931, he became auxiliary bishop to the Archbishop of Goa, India, where he served eight years.

He returned to Portugal, and in 1949 was named a titular archbishop, and assigned as head of the Propagation of the Faith Society in Portugal, the position he still holds.

Father Cirincione first met Dom Manoel when making a pilgrimage to Fatima in 1948 and has visited with him on subsequent trips there in 1949, 1950, 1954 and again last July, 1958. The two have continued to correspond regularly.

Dom Manoel arranged for Father Cirincione to meet the Bishop of Leiria-Fatima during the 1950 visit to Portugal.

On that occasion, Sept. 17, 1950, at Bishop Jose da Silva's summer home, Father Cirincione asked him these specific questions:

1. Is it true Pope Pius XII was given the



BISHOP DA SILVA (left) and SISTER LUCY (right) held it in his hands. Sister Lucy could say nothing.

secret message and did she faint when he read it?

The Bishop answered, "Absolutely no. The sealed letter has remained in my chancery office since Sister Lucy wrote it."

2. Has Bishop Dom Jose da Silva read the message?

"No. The letter has never been opened."

3. When would the letter be opened?

"Sister Lucy said it could be opened in 1960 if I wished to open it. I am not sure if I will or not."

(Bishop Jose da Silva died in 1937. His successor, Bishop John Wamann, in a press statement in April, 1959, refused to reveal whether he intends to open the letter next year or not.)

4. Did Bishop Dom Jose da Silva think our Lady's requests for devotion to the Rosary and better Christian living were being fulfilled?

"Yes. There are many signs to indicate this. It is true not everybody in the world has complied but certainly many more Rosaries are being said now than perhaps ever before in Church history. And there are so many frequent communions, at least here in Portugal."

(Since this interview, the 1953 relaxation of the ancient Eucharistic law and permission for evening Masses has, in many areas, doubled the number receiving Holy Communion.)

5. Was Bishop Dom Jose da Silva curious about the secret?

"No. So much talk about it comes from people who will tell anything or who seek to use the secret as a whip to drive people into church."

"Sister Lucy has never intended people should consider her a prophetess. She turned the secret over to me in 1952 simply because I asked her to. She had no intention of stirring up excitement about it. Her great desire was to be forgotten by the world and to lead an ordinary nun's life in obscurity and silence."

Confirming these statements of the Leiria-Fatima Bishop was a reply Lucy made this month when Church officials asked her about a widely circulated story of Father Augustin Fuentes who alleged that she predicted the world was about to be severely punished.

Lucy replied, "I know nothing and could therefore say nothing about such punishments as has been falsely attributed to me."

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LAST WEEK'S PAID CIRCULATION

Cardinal Says America On Moral Skid

Los Angeles — (NC) — The U.S. is undergoing a decline in morality as dogma is disregarded, yet the rank and file of Americans are increasingly hungry for truths to believe.

This appraisal was made here by Cardinal McIntyre of Los Angeles in an exhortation to priests of the archdiocese at their annual retreat.

The Cardinal said a summary analysis of current conditions presented conclusions "that must be attended with some apprehensions."

Among matters singled out as alarming by the Cardinal were the increasing indifference to God and religion — especially in education — marital immorality, divorce, growth of communist atheism, and a general laxity in principles, convictions and moral conformity.

In the face of this situation, he said leadership is needed in the exposition of dogmatic and moral truths, in virtue and example, in social conduct and in ethical viewpoints and public relations.

Indifference to God and religion, the Cardinal stated, "has been fostered now for many years in secular education. It has been festering in the minds and the hearts of the American people."

Family Bill Advances In Wisconsin

Madison — (RNS) — A "Family Code" bill aimed at tightening marriage and divorce laws was passed by the state Senate, 26 to 2. It was sent back to the Assembly for consideration of three Senate amendments.

In its original form, passed unanimously by the Assembly, the bill raised the marriageable age of young women from 15 to 16 and designated a "cooling off" period of 90 days after divorce proceedings are started to avert hasty action.

As amended, the measure retains these provisions but would restore the so-called doctrine of comparative recidivism in divorce cases, which was recommended in the original bill but knocked out by the Assembly.

Vatican Scores U. S. Race Bias



Ground Broken For Dansville School

TURNING THE SOU for the new Guardian Angel School in Dansville last Sunday are: (from left) Rev. John C. O'Donnell, former pastor of St. Patrick's Church; William G. Burt, chairman of the school fund raising campaign; and Rev. John Merklinger, pastor of St. Mary's and St. Patrick's Churches. Pledges amounting to \$275,000 were raised in the spring campaign.



Pope Blesses Thruway Statue

Vatican City — (RNS) — Pope John XXIII blessed a 30-foot all-bronze statue of Our Lady of Fatima here which will be erected on the campus of Our Lady of Good Counsel College in White Plains, N.Y.

Its location on the college campus will be on a 100-foot cliff overlooking the new York State thruway. It will rest on a 15-foot granite pedestal.

Next year the college plans to erect a Way of the Cross, consisting of 14 marble stations, which will lead through the campus to the statue's base.

Prelate Confirms Traffic Victim

Liverpool — (NC) — Archbishop John C. Heenan of Liverpool knelt in the street here in full episcopal regalia to confirm a boy injured in a traffic accident.

The boy, seven-year-old Bernard Latham was on his way to Our Lady of the Assumption church here to be confirmed when the accident occurred. The Archbishop was told of the mishap and went to the scene at once.

Later, when Bernard regained consciousness in the hospital, he said: "I've got to get to church." Nurses told him he had already been confirmed.

Monuments and markers for Holy Sepulchre. The better cheer to a shrine than a love way to choose a monument is by bouquet or long-lasting plant. Call Blanchard Florist, 53 Lake Ave. Baker 5-8494, or drop in at plan. FLORET BROS., 120 Mt. Hope, GB 3-3271. — Adv. recn. — Adv.

Vatican City — (RNS) — Roman Catholics in the United States were called upon by the Vatican Radio to "play a decisive role" in the elimination of racial discrimination in their country.

"It is of vital importance to act now and with decision," it warned. "Everything must be done calmly and with courage before it is too late."

Broadcasting a stinging commentary, the radio observed that the United States has not "provided an answer" to the problem of assimilating some 15,000,000 Negroes in that country with the rest of the population.

"The United States Constitution and the Declaration of Independence speak of the equal right of every citizen to life, work and participation in public life," it said, "but this is in striking and obvious contrast with the indisputable fact that there exists a tacit and profound racial discrimination in the U.S."

CONSEQUENCES of this discrimination, the broadcast declared, have repercussions in all areas of society — in religious, juridical, and educational fields and elsewhere.

The radio noted that the Roman Catholic Church in America has often spoken out against discrimination and has tried to correct any racial deviationism in the souls of the faithful.

It recalled that last November, the American hierarchy issued an appeal to all people in the U.S. regarding religious beliefs urging them "to grasp once and for all the sense of the racial question taking them away from the professional, terrorist and sectarian racialists."

"The importance of this appeal is self-evident in the matter of integration, particularly if it is borne in mind that it was addressed to 30,000,000 Catholics who by joint action can play a decisive role in the solution of this grave problem," the broadcast declared.

The station also pointed out that in 1949 the late Pope Pius XII in a message to the American hierarchy praised its mission to Negroes and Indians.

It quoted the Pontiff as saying then, "We confess that we feel moved by a particularly paternal affection undoubtedly inspired by God for the Negroes who live in your country because we know that they need special care which they greatly deserve in all matters pertaining to spiritual and religious assistance."

"We therefore invoke the blessings of God on all those who moved by generous charity show solicitude towards the Negroes."

Prayers Sought For Geneva

Berlin — (NC) — Berlin's Cardinal used the radio to urge a world-wide crusade of prayer and work for international understanding, which he said could smooth the way to the peace that is sought by the Geneva foreign ministers' conference.

Cardinal Doepfer of Bern made a special broadcast to his people on the morning of July 13, the day the Big Four foreign ministers resumed their efforts to solve the Berlin crisis at Geneva.

Cardinal Doepfer said: "The Geneva meeting has resumed. Let us resume our prayers too. All news of the misery of suppressed peoples longing for peace and of the difficulties in the negotiations in Geneva with the Russians, we should understand as a call to prayer."

CLOCKS: Electric or key wound, \$3.25 and up. William S. Thomas Jeweler, 313 Main St., East — Adv.

Riots in Kerala

Communist School Law Blamed



Kerala, India — (RNS) — A young Indian walls in anguish in front of the lifeless body of his wife. The Catholic woman, mother of five, was fatally wounded during clash between police and anti-Communist demonstrators in the Indian state of Kerala. Catholic women are more and more joining in campaigns organized by opposition political groups to force the ouster of the Communist regime.

New Delhi — (NC) — India's ruling Congress party charged here that the education law passed by Kerala's communist government pushed tension in that state to the point where anti-communists had no choice but to start their campaign of agitation.

Party leaders, headed by Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's daughter, issued a 14-page statement condemning Red rule in India's smallest and most literate state.

KERALA'S communist regime, which has been in office since the spring of 1957, has repeatedly tried to make it appear that the current unrest in the state was stirred by Catholics. The All-Congress party said in its statement, however, that the real cause of the trouble is communist misrule.

It said that if the Reds are allowed to remain in power for the full five-year term, it will prove the "end to all democracy in Kerala and a grave threat to it in the rest of the country."

The Congress leadership also asserted that a broad section of Kerala's population believes that the rule of the communists has amounted to subversion of all vital things for which democracy and the Indian Constitution stood.

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