

Chapter 8

The Cover-up Collapses

Porta a Porta (“Door to Door”), on the Rai Uno channel, is one of Italy’s most popular television shows. Hosted by Bruno Vespa, Italy’s equivalent of Phil Donahue, the show has provided a forum for both Italian and world celebrities of all stripes. On May 31, 2007 the show would provide a forum for the Vatican Secretary of State in his continuing effort to answer Antonio Socci without really answering him. The publicity for the broadcast had promised that it would include the on-camera display of the “authentic” Third Secret. For this reason alone, millions of Italians were tuned in.

This was another unprecedented development in the Third Secret controversy: Seated in a gilded chair at the Apostolic Palace, the Vatican Secretary of State was appearing by remote feed on national television in response to the stunning, and thus far entirely conceded, accusations of a prominent lay Catholic who is himself a television celebrity. Surrounded by the trappings of authority, Bertone would not actually impose anything he was about to say on the faithful, nor would he have any message from the Pope concerning the controversy. Despite the trappings, he was appearing like any other guest involved in a controversial current event.

An open net, but no goal

That this episode of *Door to Door* would be anything but a fair debate between Socci and Bertone was evident from the very title of the program: “The Fourth Secret of Fatima Does Not Exist”—a direct attack on the title of Socci’s book, projected in huge letters on the right-hand side of the stage set. That the program would not, in fact, be a debate at all was evident from Vespa’s astounding failure to invite Socci to defend his own book. As Socci states in his comment on this travesty: “The title shot explicitly at my book [yet] Vespa called only Cardinal Bertone and not the undersigned, who is the target, but not invited.... Thus Cardinal Bertone was

offered, on a silver platter, the possibility of attacking me without any contradiction...."²³⁶

Yet, as Socci observes, Bertone did on television precisely what he did in *Last Visionary*: "avoided all of my contentions: he did not give even one answer. On the contrary, he did more: He offered the proof that I am right." Not only did Bertone fail to kick a goal into the empty net on Socci's side of the field, he "scored the most sensational goal against himself: he demonstrated (involuntarily) that as a matter of fact the explosive part of the 'Third Secret of Fatima' exists yet is well hidden.... For this service to the truth (although indirect) it is necessary to thank the Cardinal. And to encourage him now to tell everything because—as the Gospel explains—"the truth will make you free.'" The Cardinal's seemingly smooth but actually disastrous performance on *Door to Door* showed that Socci is not boasting but, if anything, is understating the magnitude of what took place before millions of viewers.

A ludicrous opening

The debacle began with Bertone offering the ludicrous contention that "the two Popes [John XXIII and Paul VI] decided not to publish it because they did not hold so significant, probably, for the life of the Church, the publication of the Third Secret."²³⁷ If the Secret was "not so significant" for the life of the Church, then why had the Vatican placed it "forever under absolute seal" in 1960, an action that only fueled speculation and worry about its "not so significant" contents? Why had Cardinal Ottaviani described it as "so delicate" that it could not be allowed to fall "even accidentally, into alien hands"? Why had Cardinal Ratzinger told us the Third Secret warns of "dangers threatening the faith and the life of the Christian and therefore of the world" and clearly explosive "details" that could cause "disequilibrium" in the Church? And why did John Paul II say that the Secret had not been revealed because it could be "badly interpreted," as he put it to Sister

²³⁶Antonio Socci, "Bertone in the 'Wasp's Nest' of the Polemics," *Libero*, June 2, 2007.

²³⁷All quotations from the telecast are based on an Italian transcript prepared for this author by Alessandro Fuligni, a professional translator in Rome, compared with my own repeated viewing of the Italian video, and my own translation of the key statements during the telecast. The nuances of the Italian language and even the loose oral syntax of the Cardinal's remarks have been fully respected.

Lucia during their conversation in 1982? Here again we see the blatantly self-contradictory theme of the “official reconstruction”: the Secret that is “so delicate,” but “not very significant”; the secret that is a “prophecy,” but “adds nothing” to what we already know and depicts events we have already seen; the Secret that must not be allowed to lead to “sensationalism,” but “reveals no great mystery.”

A devastating slip of the tongue?

Moving on to the old saw that Fatima is just a “private revelation,” Bertone made a very revealing, if not devastating, choice of words. He said that while we are dealing with a “private revelation,” there are elements of the apparitions Sister Lucia would always remember, so that, regarding the Third Secret, “the perception of *the words* from 1917 to 1944—because she wrote the Secret in 1944—she therefore memorized and registered indelibly in her memory, this perception and this *interior locution*.”

What *words*? What “interior locution”? Interior locution is a theological term for spoken *words* from an external source that register in the mind and are directed specifically to the hearer, as in the Second part of the Great Secret, in which Our Lady speaks directly to Lucia and Jacinta.²³⁸ The only spoken words in the Third Secret vision are the angel’s admonition: “Penance, Penance, Penance!,” which is actually one word repeated three times, and this one word is *not* directed to the seers specifically; that is, the angel is not conversing with them, as Our Lady does in the second part of the Fatima message. Lucia hardly needed supernatural assistance to remember one word repeated thrice by the angel, whereas the rest of the vision consists entirely of Sister Lucia’s *own* words describing what she saw, not words she heard from the Virgin.

Was this not an inadvertent disclosure by Bertone that the Third Secret involves a discourse by the Virgin whose precise verbal content was indelibly engraved in Sister Lucia’s memory?

²³⁸Locution means “word, phrase, or expression.” *American Heritage Dictionary*. An *interior* locution, in Catholic theological parlance, means literally a voice speaking internally and directly to the subject, *not* a mere vision the subject sees, such as the vision of the “bishop dressed in white.”

Avoiding Socci's evidence

The show continued with a voiceover asking: "Has the text of the [Third] Secret of Fatima been published entirely? Or has a part of it been omitted?" In a slight departure from the usual demagoguery (no doubt thanks to Socci's breakthrough book) the voiceover acknowledges: "Such doubts seem to be advanced not only by the Lefebvrists and the Fatimists but also some [!] orthodox Catholics, who suspect that there has been concealed part of the Secret in which is announced internal struggle and apostasy in the Church. Antonio Socci has given voice to these doubts, through a complex investigation in a recently published book entitled *The Fourth Secret [of Fatima]*."

What followed in the voiceover was only a partial statement of Socci's thesis: that there is a missing text of the Secret that concerns a crisis of faith and apostasy in the Church, a battle between the devil and the Virgin as seen in St. John's Apocalypse; that John XXIII and Paul VI decided not to publish the text in order to "avoid furnishing arguments to the critics of Vatican II"; and that John Paul II and then Cardinal Ratzinger "arrived at a compromise" by which the essential contents of the text would be revealed indirectly in John Paul II's sermon at Fatima on May 13, 2000, which links the Message of Fatima to Chapter 12, verses 3 and 4 of the Apocalypse. This compromise, the voiceover concludes, would permit the Vatican "to say to the Church that the Third Secret was revealed, but without an integral publication that would have caused a great shock in the Christian community."

That was the extent of the program's presentation of what the voiceover itself described as Socci's "complex investigation." Missing from the voiceover's superficial summary, of course, were the following crucial matters, among others:

- the decisive testimony of Archbishop Capovilla (already conceded by Bertone's silence in *Last Visionary*) on the existence of two envelopes containing two different texts pertaining to the Secret—the "Capovilla envelope" and the "Bertone envelope";
- the evidence (including the testimony of Capovilla, Mother Pasqualina, Robert Serrou, and photographs in *Paris-Match* magazine) for the location of "the Capovilla envelope" in the papal apartment during the pontificates

of Pius XII, John XXIII, Paul VI and probably John Paul II;

- the evidence that John Paul II, Paul VI and John XXIII each read two different texts of the Secret on two different dates, years apart, including a 1978 reading by John Paul II of a text that did not come from the Holy Office archives – *three years* before the Vatican claims the Pope first read the text of the vision of the bishop in white, brought to him from the archives;
- the testimony of papal emissary Father Schweigl that the Third Secret “has two parts: One part concerns the Pope. *The other part* is the logical continuation – though I may not say anything – of *the words*: ‘In Portugal, the dogma of the Faith will always be preserved etc.’”;
- the Vatican’s suspicious and systematic refusal to address the mysterious “etc.,” which interrupts words of the Virgin that are logically the beginning of the Third Secret;
- the numerous references to the content of the Secret by the Vatican itself (in the 1960 press release), Father Schweigl, Cardinal Ratzinger, Father Alonso, Father Fuentes, Cardinal Ciappi, Cardinal Oddi, John Paul II and Sister Lucia, among others, which show beyond doubt that the Secret must contain *words of the Virgin* and disturbing “details” concerning a crisis in the Church, and consequently the world, of apocalyptic proportions, related to the Book of the Apocalypse pointedly cited by John Paul II in his sermon at Fatima in 2000.

If Bertone had any answers to these points, this was his grand opportunity to provide them without fear of contradiction on camera. Instead, he avoided every point. And so did Vespa and the other guests on the show: Marco Politi, the renowned Vaticanist and biographer of John Paul II; Giulio Andreotti, the former Prime Minister of Italy; Paola Rivetta, a Roman journalist; and a positively sycophantic Giuseppe De Carli, who was there to heap praise on the Cardinal and defend his own role in the Cardinal’s attack on Soggi in *Last Visionary*.

Pretending Capovilla does not exist

The first point Bertone had to address was the testimony of

Archbishop Capovilla, which the Cardinal had ducked in *Last Visionary*. Again, failure to address the testimony of this living eyewitness that there are two envelopes and two texts comprising the totality of the Third Secret would be to concede that the testimony is true. Not only did Bertone once again fail to address the testimony, there was an evident tacit agreement of all the participants in the show that they would act as if Archbishop Capovilla did not exist! The failure of any participant even to mention Capovilla during the 100-minute telecast was not only a concession to the truth of his testimony, but also evidence of a veritable conspiracy of silence designed to protect Bertone and the crumbling official account.

For this reason alone Bertone's appearance had only served to vindicate Socci and the "Fatimists" completely. But there was much more to come by way of vindication. Practically every statement by Bertone for the remainder of the broadcast represented a setback for the official account.

A curiously weak "denial"

Bertone's few comments concerning the voiceover that had selectively summarized Socci's case were strangely tentative and elusive. Concerning Socci's claim that the Vatican is holding back an explosive text of the words of the Virgin under the mental reservation that the Secret has "essentially" been revealed by John Paul II in his sermon at Fatima in 2000, Bertone issued no firm denial, but rather stated only "it seems to me a phantasmagorical reconstruction..."²³⁹

It *seems* to him? Wouldn't he know this for certain if it were really the case? Further on Bertone employed the phrase "a little problematic." *Problematic*? How about libelous and outrageous, if Bertone really thought Socci's grave public accusations were utterly false and without foundation?

"I don't want to enter into polemics," said Bertone. But entering into the polemic on the Third Secret is precisely what he had done by appearing on *Door to Door*. Yet Bertone continued to concede

²³⁹By his choice of word Bertone evidently meant to connote something surreal or unrealistic. "Phantasmagorical: fantastic sequence of haphazardly associative imagery, as seen in dreams or fever." *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language*, Fourth Edition.

Socci's most telling points by failing and refusing to address them.

A curious new emphasis on an "authentic" text

Further commenting on the voiceover, Bertone introduced the idea of an "authentic" text of the Third Secret, as if there were an inauthentic text at issue. "John XXIII and Paul VI," said Bertone, "had read the text of the Secret, the *integral, authentic* text and the only text written by Sister Lucia..."—the only "authentic" text, that is. Leaving no doubt that he was signaling a new emphasis on an "integral" and "authentic" text, Bertone made this major revelation: "When John Paul II made the decision to publish the Secret—I was present at the time of the meeting—he decided to publish *all that actually existed in the archives of the Holy Office...*"

The choice of words was very careful: Bertone did not say simply that the Pope decided to publish the Third Secret. Qualifying his statement in a very strange way, he said only that the Pope decided to publish "all that actually existed *in the archives.*" Bertone knew full well of Socci's allegation and Capovilla's testimony that there is (or was) another text pertaining to the Secret in the papal apartment. Hence, in the context of the developing controversy, Bertone's sudden emphasis on "all that actually existed *in the archives*" clearly implied the existence of a document related to the Secret that was *not* in the archives: the text Capovilla and other witnesses had located in the papal apartment; the text that John Paul II evidently read in 1978 (contrary to the official account in *Message*); the text that Paul VI read in 1963 (contrary to the official account). What about *that* text? For now, at least, Bertone continued to observe a studious silence in the face of overwhelming evidence that the text in the papal apartment exists—evidence he could easily have refuted before millions of viewers if the evidence were false. His continued silence on this burning issue spoke volumes to viewers with any knowledge of the matter.

Bertone's new emphasis on an "authentic text" "that actually existed in the archives" could only have been a response to the enormous pressure Socci's book had brought to bear on the Vatican apparatus. Given Socci's wide publication of Archbishop Capovilla's testimony—testimony Bertone was not prepared to mention, much less deny on camera—it was understandable that Bertone was forced to retreat to the affirmation that the Vatican had produced an *authentic* text from the *archives*, as opposed to

whatever text Capovilla was talking about. This subtle rhetorical retreat, however, was little short of a concession that Socci had discovered the truth.

As Socci points out in his post-broadcast reply to Bertone, the theme of the “authentic” text of the Third Secret—the text that “actually existed in the archives”—is a road to the truth that was first opened by the currently reigning Pope himself: “In the end, the Pope, in the letter published by Bertone, opens the road to the truth when he says that in 2000 there were published ‘the authentic words of the third part of the Secret.’ Suggesting clearly that there exist words of the secret held ‘not authentic.’ Courage then: publish everything. ‘The truth will make you free.’”²⁴⁰

In the course of the broadcast Bertone also revealed inadvertently why he and his collaborators would view a text of the words of Our Lady concerning apostasy in the Church as “not authentic.” Bertone seems to think that apostasy in the Church is impossible: “[T]here is an obstinacy in this expectation of a prophecy of apostasy in the Church. It seems to me a little problematical, this expectation, almost an aspiration that there exists a prophecy of the Madonna, Mother of the Church, she who extends her maternal hand over the life of the Church, the Auxiliatrix, who accompanies the Church on her road in time, that there exists a prophecy of apostasy in the Church.”

But while Bertone might find it impossible to see how the Mother of God could warn of apostasy in the Church, that is exactly what she did in other recognized Marian apparitions, including Akita—which, to recall the former Cardinal Ratzinger’s statement to the Philippine ambassador to the Vatican, is “essentially the same” as the Message of Fatima. Socci rightly observes that Fatima is part of a “tragic escalation” of Christian history as foretold in a “prophetic cycle” of Marian apparitions.²⁴¹ Moreover, as I have already noted, Scripture itself predicts precisely such an apostasy, which must take place before the Last Times.²⁴²

Thus, it is precisely *in* her capacity as Mother of the Church that Our Lady would give such a warning—and *has* given it before and after Fatima. But it seems that Bertone has *a priori* excluded

²⁴⁰“Bertone in the ‘Wasp’s Nest’ of the Polemics,” loc. cit.

²⁴¹Socci, *Fourth Secret*, p. 67.

²⁴²See, e.g. “Let no man deceive you, for it [the Last Times] will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition” (II Thess. 2:3).

such disturbing truths from the realm of possibility. Therefore, any text of the Fatima message in which the Mother of God warns of apostasy in the Church would not, according to this very mentality, be an “authentic” part of the Message—especially if the apostasy predicted in the conveniently “inauthentic” text is taking place on the watch of Bertone and his fellow Vatican prelates.

But now to the most explosive moment of the telecast: Bertone’s own confirmation of the “two envelopes” theory.

The envelope, please!

A full 50 minutes into the 100-minute broadcast, host Vespa uttered the words the viewers had been waiting to hear: “Now, Eminence, the envelope.” Over the next ten minutes Cardinal Bertone, while never appearing to miss a beat, would nullify the “official reconstruction” of the Third Secret, completely vindicate the claims of Socci and the “Fatimists,” and confirm the well-founded suspicions of millions of Catholics around the world.

Our examination here must be meticulous, but the effort will be rewarding. First, we will examine the fatal problems for the official account posed by the envelopes Bertone produced during the telecast. Then we will consider how Bertone’s revelations concerning the contents of the ultimate envelope, the text of the vision of the bishop in white, only provided further substantiation (if that were necessary) for the existence of a missing text of the words of the Virgin explaining the vision.

First, the envelopes. Recall that in June 1944 Bishop da Silva finally received from Sister Lucia a sealed envelope containing her handwritten text of the Secret, which she had written down six months earlier, and the Bishop placed Lucia’s envelope in a larger envelope of his own, also sealed with wax, on which he wrote the following instruction:

This envelope with its contents shall be entrusted
to His Eminence Cardinal D. Manuel [Cerejeira],
Patriarch of Lisbon, after my death.

Leiria, December 8, 1945
† Jose, Bishop of Leiria²⁴³

²⁴³Ibid: *Este envelope com o seu conteúdo sera entregue a Sua Eminencia O Sr. D. Manuel, Patriarca de Lisboa, depois da minha morte.*
Leiria, 8 Dezembro de 1945
† Jose, Bispo de Leiria

Thus, the historical record shows that the “packaging” of the Secret involved an assemblage of two envelopes: the sealed envelope of Sister Lucia and the outer sealed envelope of the Bishop of Fatima. What Bertone produced during the telecast, however, was dramatically different; and the differences fatally contradicted the official account of the previous seven years, while revealing the long-hidden truth.

“First I will show you the orange envelope,” Bertone began. This was not the envelope containing the purported Third Secret, but rather “the Italian translation of the Third Secret of Fatima, March, 6, 1967. We are in the times of Paul VI: this is the envelope that always accompanied the envelope, the older *authentic* envelope, that contains the original of the Third Secret...” (Notice the reference to an “authentic” envelope, as if some “inauthentic” envelope were in the picture.) Questions immediately abounded.

What was the point of showing an Italian translation of the purported Secret dated March 6, 1967? That translation did not even exist until two years after Paul VI had already read the Secret, according to the official account (on March 27, 1965), and nearly four years after Pope Paul read a text of the Secret (the one in the papal writing desk called “Barbarigo”) on June 27, 1963, as confirmed by Archbishop Capovilla’s testimony—which, of course, everyone on the show was in the process of ignoring. Further, this translation was dated nearly *eight* years after the date John XXIII had read a text of the Secret (August 17, 1959) with the aid of a translation by Monsignor Tavares.

Obviously, then, according to everyone’s account, the 1967 translation was not prepared for the personal use of Paul VI or John XXIII in reading and understanding the Secret. Who, then, was it for? We can gather that Cardinal Ottaviani used it for the plenaria of Cardinals on the Third Secret, because the date of the translation is only days after his February 11, 1967 address to the Fifth Mariological Conference on the same subject, as we also saw in Chapter 3. It is reasonable to conclude, then, that the Third Secret plenaria, whose existence Bertone himself had just revealed during the telecast, must have been in March of 1967. Bertone himself appeared to confirm this on camera when he stated, in response to Vespa’s question about whether there was a typewritten transcript of the Secret: “Yes, certainly, it was transcribed and then it was translated into Italian for the convenience of the cardinals of the plenaria.” But Bertone neither opened the orange envelope nor

discussed any further its contents. The transcript and translation have never been produced, although they would have been quite helpful to the Italian audience watching the show. This was another circumstance that could not fail to arouse suspicion.

Why, then, bother with the orange envelope at all? Perhaps this was a case of showing more envelopes than necessary to give the impression of “transparency.” But the result was not favorable to the official account. Bertone held the orange envelope up to the camera long enough to allow one to see exactly what is written on it; and what one could see raised more questions.

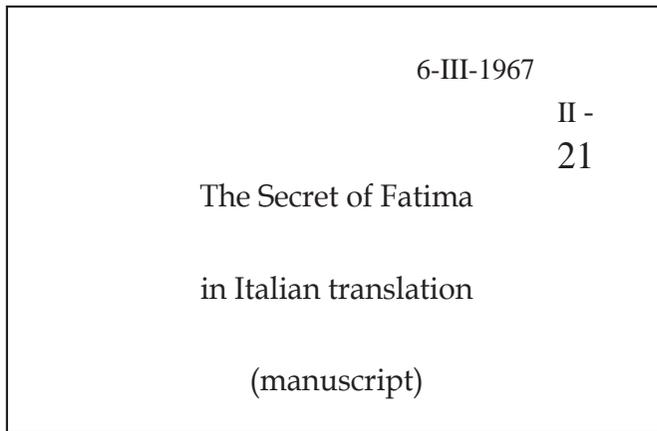


Figure 1

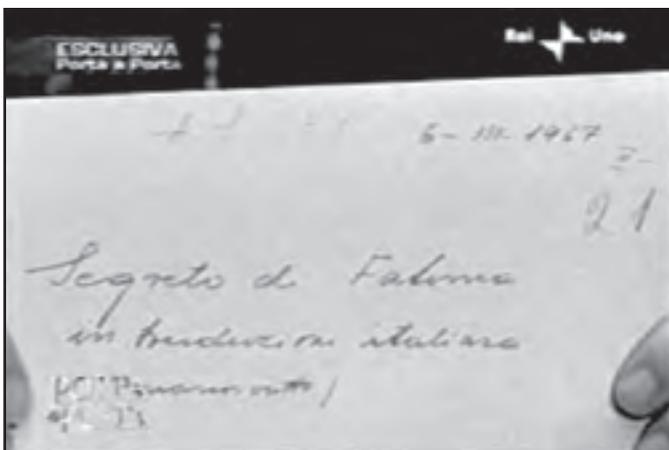


Figure 2

Why does the envelope state “manuscript” in parentheses? Is it not obvious that an Italian translation of “The Secret of Fatima” is a manuscript? Or is it not the case that inside is the Italian translation of the manuscript portion of the Third Secret, the four-page description of the vision of the bishop in white comprised of 62 lines? So that, in another envelope, one would find the Italian translation of the letter portion of the Secret: the “letter to the Bishop of Leiria,” wherein Lucia said she had related the contents of the Secret; the one-page text of 25 lines testified to by Cardinal Ottaviani. Does not the Roman numeral “II” on the right-hand side of the envelope indicate that it is the second of two related documents? Admittedly, based on the evidence of the orange envelope alone, this is far from certain, but Bertone’s following disclosures would only confirm the suspicion.

Not one envelope, but four!

“And we come to the white envelope,” Bertone continued, as he put down the orange envelope and held up another. “This is the first envelope, very large, you can see, with the writing of Bishop Jose da Silva, Bishop of Leiria. An envelope written by the Bishop of Leiria that *contains the other envelopes* until [sic] the *authentic envelope* that contains the Third Secret.” The other envelopes? Once again, the historical account of the “packaging” of the Third Secret in 1944 speaks of Sister Lucia’s *lone envelope* inside the Bishop of Fatima’s outer envelope—two envelopes in all. Now, suddenly, Bertone was introducing the notion of a series of nested envelopes—envelopes within envelopes. This alone caused fatal problems for the official account, as I will discuss presently. Notice also the second peculiar reference to “the *authentic envelope*,” as if there were some inauthentic envelope floating around.

The envelope Bertone was now displaying—we shall call it Envelope #1—appeared to be the one in which Bishop da Silva had placed Lucia’s own sealed envelope containing “the letter” to which Lucia, the Vatican itself (in the 1960 press release) and various witnesses already mentioned had referred; the letter in which Lucia confided to the Bishop contents of the Secret. Bishop da Silva allowed this envelope to be photographed for *Life* magazine, taking it out of his safe for that purpose.²⁴⁴ The photographs

²⁴⁴See *The Whole Truth About Fatima* (WTAF), Vol. III, p. 52 and photograph at photo insert section circa p. 426.

from the 1940s corresponded to the envelope Bertone was now showing on television, which contained the Bishop's handwritten instructions on how to handle the Secret in the event of his death. Envelope #1, as Bertone showed the camera, had been sealed with a large blob of wax, although its top edge had long since been slit open with a letter opener. So far, then, no apparent problem for the official account.

From this large outer envelope, however, Bertone withdrew a smaller, yellowed envelope "with the handwriting of Sister Lucia"—Envelope #2—on which was written the name and title of Bishop da Silva. Envelope #2, said Bertone, is "without seals because it was put inside the large sealed envelope" of Bishop da Silva (Envelope #1). Note well: Bertone had just admitted to millions of viewers that an envelope inside a larger, sealed envelope *does not require a seal of its own*. That admission would have a telling impact a few moments later.

Question:

Why is it that neither Message nor Last Visionary nor any other statement by Bertone and his collaborators over the past seven years has mentioned the yellowed envelope with the Bishop of Fatima's name on it in Lucia's handwriting, which Bertone had just now produced?

Answer:

It may well be the outer envelope for the text we have yet to see.

Next, Bertone withdrew from the unsealed yellowed envelope "a further envelope, *with seals*, and with the writing of Sister Lucia, the *authentic* writing of Sister Lucia, where she speaks of the year 1960..." This envelope—Envelope #3 in the series—had three wax seals on the back, but, like Envelope #1, its top edge had long ago been slit open. At this moment Bertone, for the first time ever, finally revealed that Sister Lucia had written on the outside of this envelope, which he displayed for the camera and read aloud, the following:

*"By express order of Our Lady, this envelope can only be opened in 1960 by the Cardinal Patriarch of Lisbon or the Bishop of Leiria."*²⁴⁵

²⁴⁵"Por ordem expressa de Nossa Senhora este envelope só pode ser aberto em



Figure 3

Not once in the years between June 26, 2000 and the telecast of May 31, 2007—not in his Introduction to *Message*, not in his entire book attempting to respond to Socci, not in his many interviews and other statements on the subject—had Bertone ever revealed that Sister Lucia had written on the envelope an *express order* of the Virgin that the Secret should be opened in 1960. All references to the precise wording of what can be called the “1960 order” from the Virgin had been carefully avoided on the occasions when Bertone was alleging (in *Message*, his book and elsewhere) that Sister Lucia “confessed” to him that she never had any communication with the Virgin concerning 1960. It was now apparent to millions, however, that all the while Bertone was telling the world Sister Lucia had never heard from the Virgin regarding 1960, he was in possession of an envelope stating *precisely the opposite* in Sister Lucia’s own handwriting. Yet Bertone acted as if nothing were amiss, as if everyone had known all along that an “express order of Our Lady” concerning 1960 had been inscribed on Envelope #3. In a moment, however, Bertone would make an even more explosive disclosure.

The second Third Secret envelope appears!

After displaying Envelope #3, Bertone made the disclosure that, in and of itself, destroyed the credibility of the official account and confirmed once and for all the truth of the “two envelopes” theory (as if Capovilla’s testimony were not enough). Bertone withdrew from Envelope #3, not the text of the vision which the official account claims is the whole of the Third Secret, but rather *Envelope*

1960, por Sua Ex.^{cia} Rev.^{ma} o Senhor Cardeal Patriarca de Lisboa ou por Sua Ex.^{cia} Rev.^{ma} o Senhor Bispo de Leiria.”

#4—a second sealed envelope, on the outside of which was a second, identically worded “1960 order” in Sister Lucia’s handwriting:

“By express order of Our Lady, this envelope can only be opened in 1960 by the Cardinal Patriarch of Lisbon or the Bishop of Leiria.”

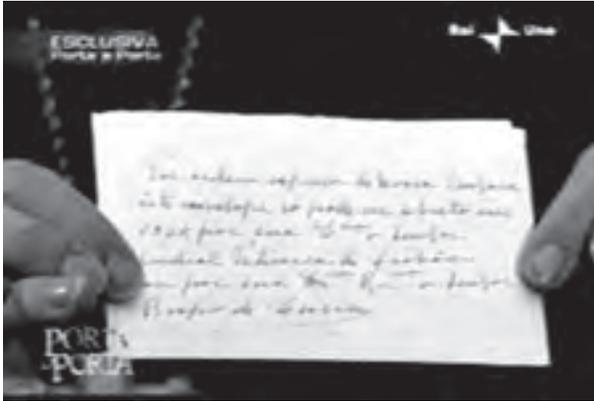


Figure 4

Figures 3 and 4 are the two Third Secret envelopes produced on camera by Cardinal Bertone during the telecast of May 31, 2007. Note the differing lineation of the Portuguese words “Nossa Senhora” (Our Lady) in the first two lines of each envelope.

Bertone had, incredibly, just blithely confirmed that there are indeed two envelopes pertaining to the Third Secret, each with three wax seals of its own and each with its own separate “1960 order”! An order Sister Lucia had twice recorded in her own handwriting, despite Bertone’s now demonstrably false representation that Lucia “confessed” she had never received any such order from the Virgin. Yet neither *Message*, nor Bertone, nor anyone else at the Vatican had ever made reference to these identical twin envelopes before. On the contrary, in *Last Visionary*, published weeks before the telecast, Bertone told De Carli there was only *one* internal envelope referencing 1960, enclosed in an outer envelope that was *not* Sister Lucia’s:

De Carli: More than one envelope there were *two*.
 Bertone: Yes. An external with the note “Third part of the Secret” and an internal of Sister Lucia with the date ‘1960’.²⁴⁶

Moreover, Bertone’s account in *Last Visionary* has Sister Lucia

²⁴⁶Bertone, *The Last Visionary of Fatima (Last Visionary)*, p. 49.

“authenticating” the text of the Secret by touching her sheets of paper and only one envelope during the purported April 27, 2000 meeting with him:

Yes, these are my sheets of paper and the *envelope* is mine, they are the sheets of paper that I used and this is my writing. This is my *envelope*...²⁴⁷

Thus, during the alleged “authentication,” only *one* “1960” envelope prepared by Sister Lucia was shown to her, not the two Bertone had just produced on camera. (This is not even to mention Lucia’s yellowed, unsealed envelope, also not shown to her in 2000.) In fact, Sister Lucia herself reported that she had placed a text of the Secret into a sealed envelope, not *two* sealed envelopes. To recall Sister Lucia’s earlier mentioned statements in 1943-44:

As reported by Father Alonso:

“They [Bishop da Silva and Canon Galamba] tell me either to write it in the notebooks in which I’ve been told to keep my spiritual diary, or if I wish, to write it on a sheet of paper, put it in an *envelope*, close it and seal it up.”²⁴⁸

From Lucia’s letter to Bishop da Silva of January 9, 1944:

“I have written what you [Bishop da Silva] asked me; God willed to try me a little, but finally, this was indeed His will: it [the Secret] is sealed in an *envelope* and it is in the notebooks...”²⁴⁹

Question: Why was the second sealed “1960” envelope not shown to Lucia during the “authentication” in 2000 if, as Bertone was now claiming, *the two belonged together, one inside the other?*

Answer: The two envelopes did not belong together, but were used for two different but related texts of the Third Secret.

Question: Why had Bertone never mentioned Sister Lucia’s second “1960” envelope to the public between 2000 and the television appearance on May 31, 2007?

Answer: He did not want the public to know that there were two

²⁴⁷Ibid.

²⁴⁸Father Joaquin Alonso, *La verdad sobre el Secreto de Fátima*, p. 39; quoted in *WTAF*, Vol. III, p. 44.

²⁴⁹Father Alonso, *Fátima 50*, October 13, 1967, p. 11; quoted in *WTAF*, Vol. III, pp. 46-47.

such envelopes, because that would indicate that there were two parts to the Third Secret, each with its own "1960" envelope, one of which is (or was) lodged in the papal apartment and "officially" does not "exist."

Question: Where is the external envelope bearing the note "Third Part of the Secret?" that Bertone identifies in *Last Visionary* as the outer envelope that held only *one* sealed internal "1960" envelope from Sister Lucia?

Answer: Impossible to say. This is just another of the major inconsistencies that riddle Bertone's telling and retelling of the story. But it does indicate that Bertone withheld on camera an envelope he had earlier mentioned in print.

Here it must be noted that in his Introduction to *Message* back in 2000, Bertone provided a version of the facts that departs from what he says in both *Last Visionary* and the telecast in 2007: "Before giving the sealed *envelope* containing the third part of the 'secret' to the then Bishop of Leiria-Fatima, Sister Lucia wrote on the *outside envelope* that it could be opened only after 1960 [failing, as always, to mention the 'express order of Our Lady']..."

So, according to Bertone's 2000 version of the facts in *Message*, rather than the *three* envelopes Bertone had just showed during the 2007 telecast, Sister Lucia prepared only *two* envelopes for transmission of the Secret: *one* "outside" envelope bearing a "1960 order", apparently *not* sealed, and *one* internal sealed envelope, apparently *without* a "1960 order." Thus, according to *Message* in 2000, there was only *one*, not two, "1960" envelopes. And, as we have just seen, *Last Visionary* likewise refers to only *one* "1960" envelope. Yet on camera Bertone had just displayed *two* such envelopes for the first time in the seven-year-long controversy.

Follow the bouncing envelopes

Clearly, something is gravely amiss with Bertone's ever-changing account of the envelopes pertaining to the Third Secret. All told, Bertone has given three conflicting versions of the "packaging" of the Secret. Depending on which version one consults, according to Bertone: (a) Lucia prepared one, two or three envelopes for transmission of the Secret; (b) either one or two of the envelopes she prepared was sealed; and (c) the total number of envelopes involved in transmitting the Secret, including those not prepared by Lucia, is either three or four.

The only thing common to all three versions is that there is at least one outer envelope prepared by the Bishop of Fatima, bearing his handwritten instructions for disposition of the text inside upon his death. Otherwise, Bertone's three versions of the facts are irreconcilable. This can be seen from a study of Table 2.

TABLE 2
BERTONE'S THREE VERSIONS OF SISTER LUCIA'S
"PACKAGING" OF THE THIRD SECRET

<u>June 26, 2000</u> (<i>Message</i>) ²⁵⁰	<u>May 10, 2007</u> (<i>Last Visionary</i>) ²⁵¹	<u>May 31, 2007</u> (telecast)
<p>Two envelopes from Sister Lucia:</p> <p>(1) Lucia's <i>unsealed</i> outer envelope with "1960 order" (<i>never produced</i>); and</p> <p>(2) Lucia's sealed inner envelope containing the Secret, but <i>no</i> "1960 order" (<i>never produced</i>).</p>	<p>One envelope from Sister Lucia, and another, not hers, of unknown origin:</p> <p>(1) An outer envelope, <i>not</i> Sister Lucia's, with the note "Third Part of the Secret" (<i>never produced</i>);</p> <p>(2) Lucia's sealed inner envelope, with "1960 order," containing the Secret.</p>	<p>Three envelopes from Sister Lucia:</p> <p>(1) Bishop da Silva's outer envelope;</p> <p>(2) Lucia's <i>first</i> inner envelope (the yellowed envelope), <i>unsealed</i>, bearing the Bishop's name in her writing, but no "1960 order" (not mentioned in <i>Message</i> or <i>Last Visionary</i>);</p> <p>(3) Lucia's <i>second</i> inner envelope, sealed, bearing a "1960 order" (not mentioned in <i>Message</i> or <i>Last Visionary</i>);</p> <p>(4) Lucia's <i>third</i> inner envelope, also sealed, bearing a "1960 order" (no mention in <i>Message</i> or <i>Last Visionary</i> of three inner envelopes, including two bearing a "1960 order").</p>

²⁵⁰The *Message of Fatima*, p. 29.

²⁵¹Bertone, *The Last Visionary of Fatima*, p. 49.

As the table makes clear, Bertone's differing accounts, when read together, point directly to the existence of one or more envelopes that have been withheld from the faithful. Despite the many inconsistencies in Bertone's story, however, there can be no doubt of what Bertone had just revealed on *Door to Door*: two sealed envelopes from Sister Lucia, each of which bear an express order from the Mother of God that its contents could only be revealed in 1960. The only logical explanation for the existence of these two envelopes is this: two texts, one for each envelope, just as Socci, the "Fatimists," millions of Catholics and, of course, Archbishop Capovilla maintain.

What all the envelopes mean

Seemingly oblivious to his own stupefying disclosure, Bertone was acting as if no one should think it the least bit strange that Sister Lucia would redundantly create two sealed envelopes inscribed with the identical "1960 order" for what he claimed was only *one* text, and then, just as redundantly, place one sealed envelope inside another sealed envelope. Of course, it would have been senseless for Lucia to prepare an envelope bearing an order that it could not be opened until 1960, only to place it inside *another* envelope bearing the same order. It would also have been rather strange for Lucia to place a sealed envelope *inside* another sealed envelope.

In fact, only moments before he revealed Lucia's two sealed inner envelopes—Envelopes #3 and #4—Bertone himself had been careful to note that Envelope #2—the yellowish outer envelope with Bishop da Silva's name on it in Lucia's handwriting—*had not been sealed* because *it was already inside sealed Envelope #1*, the outermost envelope inscribed with Bishop da Silva's instructions for disposition of the Secret upon his death. Following the very logic Bertone had indicated, if Lucia did not seal her yellowish envelope, Envelope #2, because it was placed inside the Bishop's sealed outer envelope, Envelope #1, then why would she have sealed Envelope #4, which allegedly was placed inside *sealed* Envelope #3?²⁵² On the other hand, if the yellowish envelope on which Lucia wrote the Bishop's name—again, Envelope #2—was intended to contain her

²⁵²While Bertone was careful to show that Envelope #1 *was* sealed, that Envelope #2 was *not* sealed, and that Envelope #3 *was* sealed, when it came to Envelope #4 he avoided pointing out the strangely redundant seal, which was revealed only inadvertently as Bertone handled the envelope on camera.

Envelopes #3 and #4, *then why was Envelope #2 not sealed to protect the two inner envelopes on their way to the Bishop of Fatima?*

From all of this one can only conclude that the four envelopes Bertone revealed on camera do not logically belong together in a single nested assemblage. Rather, it is obvious that the assemblage, logically arranged, would involve two outer envelopes each holding *one* of the two inner envelopes sealed with wax and bearing the "1960 order." *That, indeed, is precisely why Bertone's account in Last Visionary reflects only one inner envelope and one outer envelope.* Thus, in a possible arrangement of the envelopes produced on camera, Envelope #1, that of Bishop da Silva, would hold Envelope #3, the first sealed envelope bearing the "1960 order", while Envelope #2, Lucia's yellowish unsealed envelope, would hold Envelope #4, the second envelope bearing a "1960 order."

Still more inconsistencies

Add to these inconsistencies the facts revealed by the contemporaneous written account of Archbishop Capovilla, already discussed, that Pope John XXIII directed him to write on the "envelope" (*plico*) or "wrapping" (*involucro*) containing the Secret the phrase "I give no judgment," along with Capovilla's signature and the names of all those to whom Pope John deemed it necessary to disclose the Secret. Assuming this "wrapping" was some outer envelope and not the Third Secret envelope proper, Bertone failed to produce it during the telecast.

Question: Where is this outer envelope?

Question: Is it the same outer envelope Bertone mentioned in *Last Visionary* but has never produced, the envelope bearing the note "Third Part of the Secret"?

Question: Is this envelope not indeed the outer envelope for a text of the Secret that has not yet been produced?

In any event, there is a missing envelope whose existence Bertone himself revealed in *Last Visionary*. This is yet another disclosure that undermines the official account.

The official account demolished

The confusion concerning the envelopes is Bertone's to unravel, and the faithful have a right to hear his attempt at an explanation. But this much is certain: the official account has been demolished.

The never-before-mentioned “extra” sealed envelope with the “1960 order” could only have been prepared for a separate and distinct portion of the Secret that has not yet been produced. Once again, we know this because even according to Bertone’s account before the May 31st telecast—in *Message* and in *Last Visionary*—there was *no second sealed envelope* from Sister Lucia containing a “1960 order,” or indeed any other sealed envelope from her as part of the “packaging” of the text of the vision.

Therefore, the second sealed envelope produced during the telecast could only have been meant for another text—the very text that found its way to the papal apartment. No other explanation makes sense, especially in view of Bertone’s and the Vatican’s otherwise inexplicable failure to mention the “extra” envelope *at any time during the past seven years*.

Possible objections

In concluding our discussion of this point, it is necessary to consider certain objections that will present themselves to the thoughtful reader:

Objection: Why would Bertone display the second sealed envelope on camera and demolish his and the Vatican’s entire position, if that envelope really were a “smoking gun” that proves the existence of a second and related text of the Secret? Why would Bertone not simply hide the envelope and never produce it?

Answer: Bearing in mind that Bertone had indeed *never mentioned the second envelope* in the seven years preceding the telecast of May 31, 2007, only to introduce it *after* its existence was revealed by Capovilla, the answer to the objection seems clear: The existence of the two envelopes had been confirmed by an unimpeachable living eyewitness, Archbishop Capovilla, who was no less than the personal secretary of Pope John XXIII. Other evidence, no matter how compelling, could safely be ignored as the product of feverish “Fatimists,” but not Capovilla’s testimony. Since the Vatican could not refute or even comment on Capovilla’s testimony because it is true (the only reasonable explanation for the wall of silence concerning Capovilla), more and more members of the faithful, following Socci’s lead, would become convinced that there *are* two envelopes, one of which the Vatican is hiding from the world. The “two envelopes” problem, then, would never go away so long as the Vatican continued to deny the existence of two

envelopes while failing to answer Capovilla. There could be only one way out: *suddenly introduce the second envelope as if it had always been there*, but merely as one of two envelopes meant to shelter a single text—the text of the vision.

Only this would explain why, even a few weeks before the telecast, Bertone was still claiming in *Last Visionary* that (a) there was only *one* sealed inner envelope bearing a “1960 order;” (b) Sister Lucia had identified only *one* inner envelope as hers; and (c) the only outer envelope (aside from Bishop da Silva’s, which is not in dispute) was not Sister Lucia’s envelope, but one marked “Third Part of the Secret”—which, again, Bertone has never produced.

It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that sometime between the publication of *Last Visionary* and the telecast it was decided to reveal the second “1960” envelope as a mere “extra” envelope for the text of the vision. Hence, only a few weeks after negating the existence of a second “1960” envelope in his own book, Bertone suddenly introduced it on television for the first time in the history of the controversy.

This would also explain why Bertone was at pains to describe Envelope #4, the innermost envelope, as “the *authentic* envelope that contains the Third Secret.” Was there some *inauthentic* envelope in this regard? Were the other envelopes in the four-part assemblage he had just disclosed, including the never-before-mentioned “extra” envelope bearing the “1960 order,” *not* “authentic”?

Objection: What of the fact that the “extra” envelope bearing the “1960 order” has not appeared in any account of the chain of custody of the Third Secret written over the past 60 years?

Answer: Since we know the “extra” envelope exists, as Bertone himself showed us, the failure of any historical account to record its existence *must be the result of it having taken a more hidden path to (and within) the Vatican than the one taken by the envelope holding the text of the vision*—a more hidden path that ended in the papal apartment with no record in the Holy Office archives.

In any case, Archbishop Capovilla, in testimony Bertone would not answer or even mention, has confirmed the existence of not only two different envelopes, but two different *texts* comprising the same Third Secret. So did Father Schweigl, almost as directly, with his revelation that the Third Secret “has *two parts*: One part concerns the Pope. The other part is the logical continuation... of the words: ‘In Portugal, the dogma of the Faith will always be

preserved etc.”²⁵³ And no one has disputed Father Schweigl’s testimony either.

An explosive “folio”

We have examined sufficiently the fatal problems for the official account posed by the envelopes Bertone produced on the telecast. Let us now consider the contents of the last envelope in the series: Envelope #4, the so-called “*authentic* envelope that contains the Third Secret.” Notice, again, the curious description of this last envelope as “*authentic*,” as if there were some inauthentic envelope vying for our attention.

As was to be expected from the official account, Bertone withdrew from Envelope #4 the text of the vision of the bishop in white. But here too there was a stunning new revelation: the text of the vision was not written on four *separate* sheets of paper, as *Message* had made it appear in the photo-reproduction provided in 2000,²⁵⁴ but rather on four *attached* pages which clearly appeared to be a folio of ruled notebook paper. Here it must be noted that in English usage “*folio*” means “a *sheet of paper* folded once to make two leaves, or four pages, of a book or manuscript.”²⁵⁵ Likewise, the Italian word “*foglio*” means a “leaf, sheet” or “clean, loose *sheet of paper*.”²⁵⁶ Hence the English “*folio*” and the Italian “*foglio*” are equivalent—both mean “sheet of paper.” Bear this in mind as we continue.

Bertone identified the notebook folio on camera as follows: “the folio (sheet of paper)... the only *authentic* folio, the only folio in which is contained the Third Secret” (“il foglio... l’unico foglio *autentico*, l’unico foglio in cui è contenuto il terzo segreto”).²⁵⁷ Again we must ask: Is there an *inauthentic* folio somewhere of which Bertone has knowledge? A sheet of paper, perhaps, that did not “actually exist in the archives of the Holy Office,” but which might exist (or have existed) in the papal apartment? Why else this

²⁵³WTAF, Vol. III, p. 710.

²⁵⁴See *The Message of Fatima*, pp. 17-20, showing what appear to be four separate sheets of ruled paper, without explaining that they were all part of one notebook folio.

²⁵⁵*Random House Unabridged Dictionary*, © Random House, Inc., 2006.

²⁵⁶*Oxford Paravia Concise English-Italian, Italian-English Dictionary* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2002).

²⁵⁷Again, the Italian “*foglio*” means a two-sided sheet of paper, not a page in a book or manuscript.

harping on the “only *authentic*” folio?²⁵⁸

As the camera revealed, then, the text of the vision had been written on a folio of four ruled notebook-style pages, front and back. And, curiously, the four-page folio had been folded in half yet again in order to make it small enough to fit into Envelope #4. Why would Sister Lucia have done that, as opposed to using a larger envelope that would have allowed her to send the document flat? Bertone himself had just demonstrated that Sister Lucia had access to larger envelopes, two of which were part of his assemblage!

Neither *Message*, nor Bertone, nor any other Vatican official had ever before revealed that the vision was written on four *contiguous* pages that clearly comprised a single folio of ruled notebook paper. On the contrary, in *Last Visionary*, published a few weeks before his television appearance, Bertone points the reader away from this fact. Let us recall once again what Sister Lucia said, according to *Last Visionary*, during the purported “authentication” meeting in April 2000:

“Yes, these are my *sheets* of paper (*fogli*)... *they* are the *sheets* of paper (*fogli*) that I used....”²⁵⁹

Thus, according to Bertone’s own prior account of the “authentication” of the Secret in *Last Visionary*, the Third Secret was written on *sheets* of paper—not what Bertone called “the only authentic *sheet* of paper” (*l’unico foglio autentico*) during the telecast weeks later. Two conclusions are suggested by this major inconsistency, both destructive of the official account:

First, Sister Lucia did indeed refer to “my sheets of paper” during the April 2000 “authentication” meeting with Bertone, in which case *there is at least one missing sheet of paper* pertaining to the Third Secret, given that Bertone represented on television in May 2007 that what he was showing the camera was “the only authentic *sheet* of paper (*l’unico foglio autentico*), the only *sheet* of paper in which is contained the Third Secret.”²⁶⁰ This would mean

²⁵⁸During the telecast Bertone revealed that Lucia had to use a *magnifying glass* to read her own handwriting in order to “authenticate” it: “Then, looking carefully with a magnifying glass, because she was a little myopic [a little?], first with her eyeglasses and then with the magnifying glass...”

²⁵⁹Bertone, *Last Visionary*, p. 49.

²⁶⁰Compare the Italian text of Sister Lucia’s alleged statement in *Last Visionary* with Bertone’s statement on the telecast:

Lucia in *Last Visionary*: “sono i miei fogli...sono i fogli ch ho usato” (p. 49).

Bertone on TV: “il *foglio*... l’unico *foglio* autentico... l’unico *foglio* in cui è contenuto il terzo segreto.”

that sometime after Lucia had “authenticated” *two or more sheets of paper* as those she had used to write down the Third Secret, it was decided to reveal only *one* of them—the text of the vision on the notebook-style folio—while withholding the other, which contains the missing words of the Virgin.

Second, in the alternative, Sister Lucia did *not* speak of “sheets of paper” (*fogli*) as reported in *Last Visionary*, but only one sheet (*foglio*). In that case Bertone’s account in *Last Visionary* is unreliable—or his account is calculated to give the false impression that the vision was written on four separate sheets that did *not* comprise a folio of ruled notebook paper.

But why would Bertone want to give the impression that the vision was not written on four contiguous sides of one notebook folio, but rather on four separate sheets? What difference does it make? Here we must reexamine under a different aspect Sister Lucia’s revealing statements in 1943-44, quoted above:

As reported by Father Alonso:

“They [Bishop da Silva and Canon Galamba] tell me either to write it in *the notebooks* in which I’ve been told to keep my spiritual diary, or if I wish, to write it on *a sheet of paper*, put it in an envelope, close it and seal it up.”²⁶¹

From Lucia’s letter to Bishop da Silva of January 9, 1944:

“I have written what you [Bishop da Silva] asked me; God willed to try me a little, but finally, this was indeed His will: it [the Secret] is sealed in an envelope and it is in *the notebooks*...”²⁶²

That is, Sister Lucia herself revealed that she had written down the Secret *both* on a *sheet* of paper that she placed in a sealed envelope *and* in her diary, which was in *notebook* form. That is, she exercised *both* of the options given to her. What Bertone displayed on camera is what came from the *notebook*, whereas the sheet of paper in the sealed envelope—Lucia’s letter to the Bishop of

²⁶¹Father Joaquin Alonso, *La verdad sobre el Secreto de Fátima*, p. 39; quoted in *WTAF*, Vol. III, p. 44.

²⁶²Father Alonso, *Fátima 50*, October 13, 1967, p. 11; quoted in *WTAF*, Vol. III, pp. 46-47.

Fatima—has *not* been produced.

Thus, Bertone would have a good reason not to reveal that the text of the vision he displayed on camera is from a notebook: If he revealed that the text was from Lucia's *notebook*, this would call attention to the fact Lucia had also written a *letter* to the Bishop of Fatima, which was not being produced. After all, one does not write letters to bishops in a notebook! This might explain why Bertone's account in *Last Visionary* gives the impression that the vision was written, not in a notebook, but on four separate sheets of writing paper.

Objection: In January 1944 Sister Lucia referred to only one sealed envelope, and did not say that what was in her notebooks was in a second sealed envelope, so how can it be maintained that there are two sealed envelopes pertaining to the Third Secret?

Answer: Cardinal Bertone *showed* us two sealed envelopes! And, since Lucia's letter to Bishop da Silva on January 9, 1944 states that contents of the Secret were "sealed in *an* envelope"—not *two* envelopes, one inside the other, as Bertone was now claiming—it can only be the case that Sister Lucia later decided to place the folio from her diary into a *separate* sealed envelope bearing its own "1960 order." Since Lucia did not finally relinquish the Third Secret documents to Bishop Gurza for delivery to Bishop da Silva until six months after her January 9th letter to da Silva—again, Gurza received the documents from Lucia on June 17, 1944—her decision to use the second sealed envelope would not have been reflected in the January 9th letter and thus would be outside the historical record. Hence, what Bertone displayed during the telecast was the folio from Sister Lucia's diary, which had its own separate "1960" envelope. By process of elimination, whatever was in the sealed envelope referred to in the letter of January 9, 1944 has not been produced.

That Bertone had shown us a folio from Lucia's notebook/diary was apparent to host Vespa. After a commercial break, Vespa stated that Bertone had just shown "an extraordinary document, a letter, a document, a *folio from a diary*" and then asked Bertone: "To whom is it addressed? Is it a *kind of diary*?" Bertone's revealing reply was: "It is a declaration. It is *not addressed to anybody*..." Hence, by Bertone's own admission, the text of the vision could not possibly be the "letter to Bishop da Silva" that she sent inside of *one* sealed envelope. But it could be, and very probably is, what Vespa perceived it to be and what it so plainly appears to be: "a folio from

a diary” that Sister Lucia had kept in notebook form and which she ultimately transmitted in *another* sealed envelope—a sealed envelope that would otherwise be redundant.

On the other hand, if it is objected that the document Bertone displayed does not at all appear to be a folio from a diary and that the “Fatimists” are merely fitting the evidence to their preconceived conclusions, then one must answer the question why Vespa *twice* suggested that Bertone had shown a folio from a diary? Did Vespa have information from Bertone to which the viewers were not privy? Why did Vespa describe the document as *both* a letter *and* a folio from a diary and then ask Bertone if it was “a kind of diary”? Was he somehow aware that the Secret involved *both* a letter and a diary entry? Bertone, as he had with so many other issues, conceded this one by evading the question, stating that the document was “a declaration” addressed to no one, but failing to deny that it was from Lucia’s diary. There is no reason to doubt that Vespa’s perception was well founded, especially since Lucia herself wrote of committing the secret to “the *notebooks* in which I’ve been told to keep my spiritual *diary*...”

Another major disclosure

The disclosure of the notebook folio, which the official account had presented as four separate sheets of paper for the past seven years, only added to the mountain of discrepancies and conceded testimony demonstrating the existence of a missing text of the Secret. But the debacle did not end with Bertone’s presentation of the envelopes and their contents. In another of his many revealing but inadvertent disclosures, Bertone—stressing yet again the new theme of the “authentic text” that “actually existed in the archives”—insisted that “there was only this folio *in the archive of the Holy Office* in 1957, when by order of Our Lady and the Bishop of Leiria, Sister Lucia accepted that the Secret be brought to Rome *from the archives of the Patriarch of Lisbon*....”

The archives of the Patriarch of Lisbon? But the document that concerns us *was never in the archives of the Patriarch of Lisbon*. It is an undeniable historical fact that in 1957 copies of all Lucia’s writings and the envelope containing the Secret were personally delivered by auxiliary Bishop Venancio *directly from the chancery in Leiria* to the papal nuncio in Lisbon, Msgr. Cento, who took the documents

directly to Rome.²⁶³ It was just before departing to make that very delivery that Venancio held Bishop da Silva's sealed outer envelope under the light to see Sister Lucia's envelope and the one-page text inside.

So, it would appear that the "authentic text" in the archives of the Patriarch of Lisbon is the same "authentic text" that "actually existed in the Holy Office archives" in 2000. But it is not the text we are looking for, which evidently took a different path to Rome: a path that went from Bishop da Silva to Monsignor Cento, the papal nuncio, and by him to the papal apartment of Pius XII—as Bertone has tacitly admitted by his resounding silence concerning the dispositive testimony of Archbishop Capovilla (not to mention to all the other witnesses who place a text of the Secret in the papal apartment).

No answer to Ottaviani!

By this point in the broadcast Bertone himself had demolished the official account. But the debacle was not entirely finished. Once the four-page folio of 62 lines had been presented on camera, Bertone received the one mild challenge he encountered during the 100-minute telecast. It concerned Cardinal Ottaviani's testimony that the Secret is a one-page document comprising 25 lines of handwritten text. In response to the challenge, Bertone, despite his calm appearance, floundered badly.

Marco Politi, while assuring Bertone that "we are in agreement with Cardinal Bertone that there do not exist other documents" (what better proof that the fix was in?), did remark that

However there are oddities, and also in the book by De Carli (*Last Visionary*). Cardinal Ottaviani said that, as far as the contents, it was 25 lines, while we have here a text of 62 lines. Papa Wojtyla, to a group of German intellectuals, hinted that the Secret of Fatima speaks of great trials that *await* Christianity... that it treats of huge catastrophes, of cataclysms, while instead, reading the text of the vision, it depicts persecutions of the Church that appear to have already passed [according to Bertone and the official account].

In response, Bertone ignored Politi's pointed reference to John

²⁶³*The Whole Truth About Fatima*, Vol. III, pp. 480-481.

Paul II's reported remarks at Fulda (in 1980) on the apocalyptic elements of the Secret, thus conceding the point (as he had so many others). Concerning Cardinal Ottaviani's testimony, Bertone not only failed to issue any firm denial, but instead offered an amazing affirmation which only substantiated Politi's objection: "To me it was a little amazing that Cardinal Ottaviani *had said categorically a sheet of 25 lines...*"

That is, Bertone himself had just acknowledged before millions of witnesses Cardinal Ottaviani's "categorical" testimony undermining the official account. Yet Bertone found this testimony only a *little* amazing? Why would it not be *hugely* amazing, even a cause for panic, requiring immediate public denials and corrections, given Bertone's "official" position that no such text has ever existed? Why would he not hasten to say, with all due respect to the late Cardinal, that Ottaviani could not possibly have been correct? Instead, Bertone offered another telltale affirmation about why he found the Cardinal's testimony "a little" amazing: "...because the Cardinal, then Pro-Prefect of the Congregation of the Holy Office, had in his hand physically and different times the Third Secret, also showing it himself to the plenaria of Cardinals..." But that is precisely why Ottaviani *knew what he was talking about* when he spoke "categorically" of a text of one sheet comprising 25 lines!

Bertone, on the other hand, was not an eyewitness to Ottaviani's handling of the Third Secret back in the 1960s. At that time, as a young priest, Bertone was at the Pontifical Salesian University of Rome, an association that he continued in various academic posts until 1991, when he was made Archbishop of Vercelli. Bertone could not, therefore, tell us of his own knowledge what document or documents Ottaviani had in his hands on various occasions, including the aforesaid "plenaria" (full assembly) of cardinals regarding the Secret—a newly revealed indication of its great importance and delicacy.²⁶⁴ Nor did Bertone cite the testimony of any actual eyewitness to rebut Ottaviani. Quite the contrary, his next statement revealed that *he knew nothing and no one that could contradict Ottaviani's decisive evidence*. Examine carefully these

²⁶⁴Bertone was a faculty member, dean and then rector of the Salesian University in Rome until 1991, when Pope John Paul II appointed him Archbishop of Vercelli. In June 1995 "the same pope asked him to return to Rome to be Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, whose Prefect was Cardinal Ratzinger." See "Cardinal Bertone prefers activity to study," Zenit, at permalink: <http://www.zenit.org/article-16979?1=english>. Bertone was not involved in the meanderings of the Third Secret documents in the hands of Cardinal Ottaviani and others in the 1960s.

words from the broadcast:

... *it may be* that he had given a rather hasty summary [of the Secret], that he was mistaken.²⁶⁵ I don't *believe* that this element is *so convincing* as to say that there exists a sheet of paper (*foglio*) of 25 lines respecting the other of around 60 lines.

Cardinal Bertone doesn't *believe* Cardinal Ottaviani's testimony is an "element" that is "so convincing" as to say there is a missing text of 25 lines respecting the published text of 62 lines? *Maybe* Ottaviani gave a hasty summary of the Secret's contents? *Maybe* he was mistaken? Are these the words of a man who is certain Ottaviani's "categorical" statement had to be wrong? Or, rather, are they the words of a man who has adopted the rhetorical posture of appearing to be perplexed by something he knows or has reason to suspect is true?

Consider that, as Vatican Secretary of State, Bertone had ready access to witnesses or documentation that could have refuted Ottaviani's statement conclusively, if such witnesses or documents existed. For example, at any time between 2000 and 2007 Bertone could have inquired of any of the still-living cardinals who attended the Third Secret plenaria presided over by Ottaviani; or, if not the cardinals, then any still-living members of their staffs. It would have been a simple matter to ask these witnesses if they had ever seen in Ottaviani's hands or heard him describe a one-page document of 25 lines pertaining to the Secret, or if they had seen such a document themselves. Bertone could also have consulted the minutes of the plenaria and the personal papers of Ottaviani himself. Or he could have made inquiry of any number of other witnesses in the Vatican, from the Pope on down, as to whether they or anyone had ever seen or heard of the text whose existence Ottaviani had "categorically" affirmed.

Yet, Bertone had appeared on national television totally unprepared to refute Ottaviani's "categorical" statement undermining the official account. Why? Because *there is no refutation*. Cardinal Ottaviani was telling the truth.

²⁶⁵In the Italian: "*può darsi che* abbia fatto un calcolo sommario, che sia sbagliata..." The phrase "*può darsi che*" means "it may be," "perhaps" or "perchance." See *Oxford Paravia Concise English-Italian, Italian-English Dictionary* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Some fishy arithmetic

After a four-minute commercial break to think this problem over, however, Bertone offered an improvised “attempt at an explanation” which demonstrated that he was prepared to “fudge” the facts in order to save the official account from demolition. Bertone suggested that Cardinal Ottaviani had somehow counted the lines of text on only *two* pages of the four-page folio:

An attempt at an explanation of the affirmation of Cardinal Ottaviani. Ottaviani, perhaps—one could find, if we calculate in the first page of the folio [*foglio* in Italian] first and last—maybe Cardinal Ottaviani held it in his hand like this [holding up one side of the folio on which the first and fourth pages appear], and one sees that there are, there would be in itself 16 lines [indicating the fourth page] plus 9 [indicating the first page]—remember that there are there 9 written lines on the first page. Therefore, 16 plus 9 are 25, without counting the following pages. This could be an explanation.

Could be? If this was the best the Cardinal could do to answer Ottaviani, then clearly he had no answer—not even this implausible one—because the total of the lines of text on the first and fourth pages of the folio is 32, not 25: 13 on the first page and 19 on the fourth; or 30 lines in total if one excludes the “J.M.J” on the first page and the dateline at the end of the fourth page.

Now, during the preceding four-minute break Bertone had ample time to count the lines on the two pages (I did this myself in less than 30 seconds), in which case he would have discovered immediately that his “explanation” was untenable. Thus, either the Cardinal counted the number of lines and deliberately misstated it on camera, or he never bothered to count them and simply ventured an imprecise guess as if it were a determined fact. In either case, the Cardinal showed himself to be a smooth operator willing to mislead millions of people if it served his purpose. Further, the idea that Cardinal Ottaviani could have overlooked two of the vision’s four pages was so ridiculous as to indicate that Bertone knew quite well Ottaviani was telling the truth and that only some hasty contrivance on camera could obscure this fact.

In sum, Bertone addressed the crucial matter of Ottaviani’s testimony—it was far more than the “oddity” Politi had called

it—as if he were in no better position to know the truth than the members of the viewing audience, even though he had access to anything and everything that could have refuted Ottaviani’s testimony. Yet all Bertone had provided was a patently misleading “attempt at an explanation.”

Only four conclusions are possible concerning Bertone’s affirmations, all of them unfavorable to the official account: (1) Bertone does not wish to look into the truth of Ottaviani’s testimony because he does not wish to learn that it *is* true, so that he can continue to pretend it is some mysterious “element” that “amazes” him “a little,” but is not “so convincing”; (2) Bertone knows very well that Cardinal Ottaviani spoke the truth and that the document he “categorically” identified does indeed exist, in which case Bertone is simply concealing the fact dishonestly; (3) under the posited “broad mental reservation,” the document Ottaviani identified, being in Bertone’s estimation “inauthentic” (since it speaks of apostasy in the Church, which Bertone excludes *a priori*) does not “exist”; or (4) under another mental reservation, the text at issue does not “exist” because it was not in the Holy Office archives, but only in the papal apartment, of which latter text Bertone will not admit to any knowledge until (as we will see in Chapter 10) September 2007.

March of the multiple versions

Having flubbed the rather meek challenge from Politi, Bertone used the closing minutes of the telecast to continue his attempt to debunk the “express order of Our Lady” that the Secret could only be revealed in 1960. After De Carli pointed out that the connection of the Third Secret to the year 1960 “can present some problems” for the “interpretation” that the Secret culminates with the 1981 attempt on John Paul II, Vespa added: “But you, Cardinal, said [when reading aloud on camera the ‘1960 order’ on the two envelopes] that Our Lady said not before 1960.” Ignoring the two envelopes he had just produced on camera, Bertone, holding up his hand defensively, replied with his ready explanation that Sister Lucia had invented the date:

Yes, a prescription of the Virgin. *But I asked her:* “Is it *really* the Madonna who ordered that the envelope not be opened before 1960, or was it *you* who set that date?” And Sister Lucia answered me literally: “It was

I who set that date.” The Madonna did not want that the Secret be known. This is a firm point, even if she [Lucia] decided to write it with the permission of the Madonna, but to deliver it as a secret that could not be published. “It was I who thought that 1960 would be a term sufficient to be able to open the envelope.” And she said: “And I thought that perhaps I would be dead and not be involved in the Secret.”

“But I asked her” said Bertone, as if Sister Lucia had only been waiting to abandon a lifetime of testimony upon a single question from the Cardinal. Here, complete with alleged “literal” quotations, Bertone gives his *third* different version of Sister Lucia’s alleged confession that she had concocted the express order of Our Lady inscribed on the two envelopes. Bertone’s alleged question and Sister Lucia’s alleged answers had, yet again, been reworded completely. Let us put this third version alongside the two we have already compared.

TABLE 3
BERTONE’S THREE VERSIONS OF SISTER LUCIA’S ALLEGED
“CONFESSION” CONCERNING THE “EXPRESS ORDER OF OUR LADY”

<u>June 26, 2000</u> (<i>Message</i> , p. 29)	<u>May 10, 2007</u> (<i>Last Visionary</i> , p. 92)	<u>May 31, 2007</u> (telecast)
<p>Bertone: “Why only after 1960? Was it Our Lady who fixed that date?”</p> <p>Lucia: “It was not Our Lady. I fixed the date because I had the intuition that before 1960 it would not be understood, but that only later would it be understood.”</p>	<p>Bertone: “Was it the Madonna who suggested that date, to indicate a deadline so precise?”</p> <p>Lucia: “It was a decision of mine because I felt that 1960 would be a date very far from the writing of the ‘Secret’ in 1944 and because I had thought that I would be dead in that year, therefore the last obstacle to the interpretation and to the disclosure of the secret would have been taken away. The Madonna did not communicate anything to me in that regard.”</p>	<p>Bertone: “Is it <i>really</i> the Madonna who ordered that the envelope not be opened before 1960, or was it <i>you</i> who set that date?”</p> <p>Lucia: “It was I who set that date. It was I who thought that 1960 would be a <i>term sufficient to be able to open the envelope</i>. And I thought that perhaps I would be dead and not be involved in the Secret.”</p>

Notice that the alleged wording of the questions, the wording of "Sister Lucia's" alleged answers and the concepts she allegedly expressed in those answers are different in each version. Aside from the continuing problem of the shocking "liquidity" of the quotations Bertone attributes to Lucia, we see that in the third version Bertone has Lucia uttering the words: "It was I who thought that 1960 would be *a term sufficient to be able to open the envelope.*" This newly worded rationale of "Sister Lucia" for inventing heavenly orders and writing them on envelopes seems to savor of Bertone's own claim, expressed in *Last Visionary*, that Lucia arbitrarily selected 1960 because it provided "a sufficiently wide temporal arc for the comprehension of the sense of the vision."²⁶⁶ It appears that between early May and late May of 2007, Bertone's "sufficiently wide temporal arc" had blended conceptually with "Sister Lucia's" revised rationale of "a term sufficient to be able to open the envelope."

But, to repeat the question I posed earlier in discussing *Last Visionary*, why would exactly 16 years from 1944 be a "term sufficient to be able to open the envelope"? Why not 10 years, 15 years, or 20 years? Why would a date 16 years hence leap into Sister Lucia's head from out of nowhere? And why would Sister Lucia even think in the first place that the revelation of the Secret had anything to do with completion of a "temporal arc" or "sufficient term"? How would she know the Secret was "time sensitive" unless the Virgin had told her so? And if the Virgin *had* told her so, why would the Virgin not also have told her *when* the envelope could be opened? Bertone's claim was unbelievable on its face. Once again, if Sister Lucia had said such a thing to him, it could only have been a product of coercion or undue influence. Otherwise, the words attributed to Sister Lucia by Bertone were not hers but rather Bertone's fabrication.

As had so often happened before, however, Bertone's own statement undermined his position. Notice that in the above-quoted statement from the telecast Bertone says: "The Madonna *did not want that the Secret be known. This is a firm point, even if she [Lucia] decided to write it with the permission of the Madonna, but to deliver it as a secret that could not be published.*" So, according to Bertone, Our Lady did not want the Secret known or published, and would not even allow it to be written down without her

²⁶⁶Ibid.

permission, yet Sister Lucia, knowing this, decided on her own to have it published in 1960 and to forge on two envelopes a non-existent express order to that effect from the Virgin!

One must reject as nonsensical Bertone's suggestion that Our Lady merely gave some sort of grudging "permission" to write down a Secret that "could not be published." What would be the point of writing down a text that no one was allowed to see? Rather, the Virgin *directed* Lucia to write down a text that *was* to be published—in 1960. Yet the viewers were asked to believe that while the Blessed Virgin was giving Lucia an "express order" to write down the Secret,²⁶⁷ she had nothing to say concerning *when* the Secret was to be published. Even more implausibly, the viewers were expected to believe that Our Lady *never* said anything to Lucia about when the Secret was to be revealed to the world. It was all left up to Lucia's imagination, including her *ad hoc* calculation of "temporal arcs" and "sufficient terms."

Further undermining himself, Bertone gave this answer to Vespa's question why Sister Lucia had waited so long (from 1917 to 1944) to write down the Secret:

Because she had the prohibition: the Third Secret she had to preserve within herself and not reveal it to anyone. This was *the order of Our Lady*.

So, Bertone was quite ready to accept that Lucia had received "the order of Our Lady" for some purposes but not for others. As for the *express* order of Our Lady, written on two different envelopes and communicated to Lucia's bishop, the Cardinal Patriarch of Portugal, the whole Catholic Church and the entire world, well, that order was made up. A very convenient conclusion indeed, considering that a heavenly order linking the Third Secret to 1960 would not only destroy Sodano's/Bertone's "preventative interpretation" linking the vision of "the Bishop dressed in white" to a failed assassination attempt in 1981, but would also point directly at Vatican II and its aftermath as the focus of the Secret. The thoughtful viewer could only laugh at the sheer audacity of it all—and then become angry at this cavalier treatment of the deceased seer and her incomparably intimate relationship with the Mother of God.

The "march of the multiple versions" continued with Bertone's

²⁶⁷To recall, the order was given during the Virgin's apparition at Tuy on January 2, 1944. See *WTAF*, Vol. III, pp. 47-48.

latest assertion that Sister Lucia had “accepted” Sodano’s/Bertone’s “interpretation” of the vision: “When she heard the news of the attempt of May 13—all the convent had prayed all night—she thought that *this was the moment of the realization of that terrible prophecy, and that he was the Pope of the Third Secret*. She said: ‘Yes, I thought of that’—a further proof of the interpretation...” Compare this with the *four* prior versions of Bertone’s account set forth in Table 4, on the following page.

As we can see from a study of this table: (1) In the 2000 version of Bertone’s account, Lucia merely agrees that Mary’s maternal hand deflected the bullet that would have killed John Paul II, but she does not actually accept the “interpretation,” although Bertone is suggesting that she does. (2) Yet in the same 2000 version, Bertone cites a fragment from a letter purportedly sent by Lucia to the Pope in 1982 in which the seer makes no reference to the assassination attempt and warns that we have *not yet seen* the complete fulfillment of the Secret. (3) By December of 2001, however, Lucia “fully confirms” the interpretation that the Pope in the vision is John Paul II. (4) Yet, by early May 2007 Bertone admitted “not in these terms”—meaning, no—when asked directly whether Lucia accepted the interpretation. (5) Finally, during the telecast in late May 2007, only a few weeks later, Bertone suddenly has the deceased seer declaring positively that the assassination attempt was “the moment of the realization of that terrible prophecy, and that he [John Paul II] was the Pope of the Third Secret.” Notice, however, that in this fifth version the only words actually attributed to Sister Lucia are: “Yes, I thought of that.” Lucia’s alleged unequivocal statement in November 2001—“I fully confirm the interpretation...”—has long since been forgotten. Also forgotten is Bertone’s own citation in 2000 to the purported 1982 letter from Lucia to John Paul II, flatly contradicting the notion that the 1981 assassination attempt is the “realization” of the Third Secret.

Although the subject of the Consecration of Russia is not the focus of this book, Bertone’s comment on this subject during the telecast does provide another example of Bertone’s inability to quote Sister Lucia the same way twice on any subject on which he claims she spoke to him during his “meetings” with the seer. After Bertone observed that Sister Lucia “probably had other apparitions, so long was her life,” Vespa asked if she had ever spoken of these other apparitions with him. Bertone replied: “*She did not speak of that to me, but indirectly—I asked for verifications, or I tried to verify.*

TABLE 4
BERTONE'S FIVE VERSIONS OF SISTER LUCIA'S ALLEGED ACCEPTANCE
OF SODANO'S/BERTONE'S "INTERPRETATION" OF THE THIRD SECRET

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>June 26, 2000</u> (Message, p. 29 - reporting on the April 27, 2000 interview of Lucia by Bertone)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>June 26, 2000</u> (Message, p. 9 - reproducing purported letter from Lucia to Pope John Paul II on May 12, 1982)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>December 21, 2001</u> (communiqué re: the November 17, 2001 interview of Sister Lucia by Bertone, published in <i>L'Osservatore Romano</i>, p. 4)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>May 10, 2007</u> (Last Visionary, p. 65 - unspecified interview of Lucia by Bertone)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>May 31, 2007</u> (telecast - reporting unspecified interview of Lucia by Bertone)</p>
<p>“As regards the passage about the Bishop dressed in white, that is, the Holy Father... who is struck dead and falls to the ground, Sister Lucia was in full agreement with the Pope’s claim that ‘it was a mother’s hand that guided the bullet’s path and in his throes the Pope halted at the threshold of death.’”</p> <p>Note: Lucia merely agrees God deflected the assassin’s bullet; she does not actually agree with the interpretation.</p>	<p>Lucia purportedly declares, in fragment of letter allegedly addressed to Pope John Paul II in 1982, a year after the attempt: “if we have not yet seen the complete fulfillment of the final part of this prophecy, we are going towards it little by little ...”</p> <p>Note: The letter Bertone cites in <i>Message</i> contradicts his own suggestion in <i>Message</i> that the vision depicts the 1981 assassination attempt.</p>	<p>Lucia allegedly states to Bertone:</p> <p>“...I fully confirm the interpretation made in the Jubilee Year.”</p> <p>Note: “Lucia” allegedly “fully confirms” that the vision culminates in the 1981 assassination attempt. But her purported letter to the Pope in 1982, cited by Bertone himself in <i>Message</i>, states the opposite: “if we have not yet seen the complete fulfillment of the final part of this prophecy, we are going towards it little by little...”</p>	<p>De Carli: “All of this you explained to Sister Lucia and she accepted the interpretation?”</p> <p>Bertone: “Certainly, even if not in these terms. She insisted on the force of prayer and on the conviction, like granite, that the Hearts of Jesus and Mary cannot be deaf to our supplications.”</p> <p>Note: Lucia no longer “fully confirms” the interpretation.</p>	<p>Bertone: “When she heard the news of the attempt of May 13... she thought that this was the moment of the realization of that terrible prophecy, and that he was the Pope of the Third Secret. She said: ‘Yes, I thought of that’—a further proof of the interpretation...”</p> <p>Note: “Lucia” now allegedly “thinks” that John Paul was the Pope in the vision and that the vision was “realized” with the assassination attempt. But, again, her purported letter to the Pope in 1982 says the opposite: “if we have not yet seen the complete fulfillment of the final part of this prophecy...”</p>

For example, after the famous act of consecration of John Paul II to the Immaculate Heart, she told me that the Madonna told her that that was the consecration she was awaiting and that she was content, and we are in 1984.” That statement varied dramatically from Bertone’s statement in *La Repubblica* two years earlier in which he said: “Lucia had a vision in 1984, the last ‘public’ one, of which it has never been spoken, during which the Madonna thanked her for the consecration in his [God’s!] name...”²⁶⁸

Bertone’s latest version of Sister’s Lucia’s alleged about-face on the inadequacy of a consecration of the world departed from the account of his purported interview with the seer on November 17, 2001, during which Lucia is alleged to have stated: “I have already said that the consecration desired by Our Lady was made in 1984, and has been accepted in Heaven.” There was no claim back in 2001, as Bertone was now claiming on television in 2007, that the Madonna personally “told her that that was the consecration she was awaiting and she was content.” So, the 2007 television version of what Lucia allegedly told Bertone departed from the versions Bertone had given in 2000 (in *Message*), 2001 (the alleged interview of Lucia) and 2005 (the statement in *La Repubblica*), all of which departed from each other. Let us compare Bertone’s four different versions of Lucia’s alleged testimony on this point. (See Table 5 on the following page.)

An absurd finale

In the closing minutes of the telecast, Politi, at least, served the truth by rejecting the “preventative interpretation,” flatly declaring that the vision of the bishop in white “certainly is not connected to the attempt on the Pope.” Sitting in a gilded chair, but without any real authority in the matter, Bertone could offer nothing more than his contrary opinion:

I don’t think one can affirm, as Politi categorically affirms, that the Third Secret does not have any reference to the [assassination] attempt. But how can he say this? It refers exactly to the attempt, the bishop dressed in white, ‘we had the impression it was the Holy Father.’ I interviewed Sister Lucia. Now we must dwell also on what Sister Lucia said, then we can discuss as much as we wish....

²⁶⁸*La Repubblica*, February 17, 2005; quoted in *Fourth Secret*, p. 123.

TABLE 5
BERTONE’S FOUR VERSIONS OF SISTER LUCIA’S ALLEGED
“APPROVAL” OF THE 1984 CONSECRATION OF THE WORLD

<p><u>June 26, 2000</u> (Message, p. 8)</p>	<p><u>December 21, 2001</u> (communiqué re: November 17, 2001 “meeting” with Sister Lucia)²⁷⁰</p>	<p><u>February 17, 2005</u> (La Repubblica)²⁷¹</p>	<p><u>May 31, 2007</u> (telecast - Door to Door)</p>
<p>Sister Lucia allegedly personally “confirmed” that the 1984 ceremony sufficed.</p>	<p>Lucia allegedly says: “I have already said that the consecration desired by Our Lady was made in 1984, and has been accepted in Heaven.”</p>	<p>Bertone claims “Lucia had a vision in 1984, the last ‘public’ one, of which it has never been spoken, during which the Madonna thanked her for the consecration in his [God’s!] name...”</p>	<p>Bertone claims that while Lucia <i>did not tell him</i> directly of other visions, “[S]he told me that the Madonna told her that that was the consecration she was awaiting and [that] she was content...”</p>
<p>Note: No statement by Our Lady to Lucia “approving” the 1984 ceremony, and no statement by Lucia to Bertone, but only a debunked letter to an unknown addressee, created by a computer Lucia never used.²⁶⁹</p>	<p>Note: First alleged reference by Lucia to a communication from “heaven,” but still no statement or apparition of Our Lady. (“If I had had new revelations, <i>I would not have spoken of them to anyone</i>, but would have told them directly to the Holy Father!”)</p>	<p>Note: Heaven’s alleged “acceptance” is now a full-blown apparition of the Virgin Mary in 1984, “of which it has never been spoken,” during which the Virgin allegedly expresses thanks for the 1984 ceremony in God’s name.</p>	<p>Note: Bertone drops his claim in 2005 that Our Lady appeared to Lucia in 1984 to convey a divine “thank you” in God’s name.</p>

As we have already seen, by the date of the telecast Bertone had given five different versions of what “Sister Lucia said” regarding his “interpretation” of the vision, in the fourth of which Bertone admits “not in these terms,” when asked outright if Lucia accepted the interpretation. Lucia, it seems, was no more

²⁶⁹As already noted, Bertone admitted in *Last Visionary* that Lucia “never worked with the computer.” See footnote 158.

²⁷⁰See “Incontro di S.E. Mons. Tarcisio Bertone con Suor Maria Lucia de Jesus e do Coração Imaculado,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (Italian edition), December 21, 2001, p. 4; and “Archbishop Bertone met Sr. Lucia: Convent of Coimbra, Portugal, 17 November 2001,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (English edition), January 9, 2002, p. 7.

²⁷¹*La Repubblica*, February 17, 2005; quoted in *Fourth Secret*, p. 123.

persuaded than Politi. What strikes one in watching—again and again, as I have—this televised debate over the meaning of the vision of the bishop in white is the utter absurdity of the situation: a Vatican cardinal bantering with a journalist on a talk show about the meaning of what the Mother of God conveyed ninety years ago for the good of all humanity. We are asked to believe that the only One who had nothing to say about what the vision means is the very One who confided it to Lucia with instructions to reveal it in 1960! As Socci rightly asks: “Is it possible that the Madonna appeared so sensationally at Fatima to give a message-warning so important that nevertheless remains incomprehensible, confused or susceptible of various and opposing interpretations?”²⁷² Could anyone possessed of his faculties still believe, especially after the Cardinal’s performance on *Door to Door*, that there is *no* text containing words of the Virgin explaining the vision?

A final objection

One final objection must be addressed, an objection encompassing this entire discussion: If Bertone and his collaborators were really engaged in a plan to conceal a text of the Third Secret containing such terrible prophetic words of the Virgin, would they have executed that plan as clumsily and with as many blunders as these pages have presented? Are we not confronted here with a kind of bumbling honesty as opposed to cunning?

The answer is that, on the contrary, Bertone and his collaborators are not bumlbers but highly intelligent men with advanced academic degrees. Yet in this controversy they were faced with a classic Hobson’s choice: Say nothing and run the risk of Socci and the “Fatimists” persuading too many of the faithful that there has been a cover-up, with a consequent loss of credibility on the part of the Vatican apparatus. Or, respond to Socci and “the Fatimists” and thereby incur the even graver risks of being evasive, of making public statements demonstrably at variance with known facts, of self-contradiction and further unintended revelations, thereby suffering an even greater loss of credibility. Bertone and company chose the latter course, and the outcome was inevitable. As Scripture says: “He that diggeth a pit, shall fall into it...”²⁷³

²⁷²Socci, *Fourth Secret*, p. 73.

²⁷³Ecclesiastes, 10:8.

Embarrassing beyond the Tiber

The Cardinal's performance had been smooth, charming, pleasing to the eye. He was, after all, an "ottimo telecronista"—a great television commentator—as De Carli had called him during the telecast. But to anyone able to think critically, the performance was, as Socci put it, "embarrassing beyond the Tiber." Embarrassing, that is, throughout the world. For Bertone had refuted nothing, avoided every major issue, and yet had revealed much—first and foremost, the sensational disclosure of the two envelopes and the diary folio—that only confirmed what Socci and "the Fatimists" had suspected and had already proven independently.

As Socci concluded in his reply to the telecast from which he had so suspiciously been excluded, despite the absence of any real challenge to Bertone's version of the facts the Cardinal had only succeeded in demonstrating that the doubt Pope John professed to have concerning the supernatural origin of the Third Secret

could not refer to the text of the vision revealed in 2000, that does not contain anything "delicate." But only to that "fourth secret" that—as Cardinals Ottaviani and Ciappi revealed—spoke of apostasy and the betrayal by the upper ecclesiastical hierarchy. That "fourth secret" of which John Paul II, in 1982, said that it "had not been published because it could be badly interpreted." That "fourth secret" of which Cardinal Ratzinger, in 1996, said that at the moment certain "details" could be harmful to the faith....²⁷⁴

And that "fourth secret," one must add, that Cardinal Ratzinger, in 1984, described as a warning of "dangers threatening the faith and the life of the Christian and therefore of the world," which contains "things" that "correspond to what has been *announced* in Scripture and has been *said* again and again in many other Marian apparitions...", but "is not published, at least for now... to avoid confusing religious *prophecy* with *sensationalism*." And, finally, that "fourth secret" which prompted the future Pius XII to declare, in 1931, in words very similar to Ratzinger's in 1984: "I am worried by the Blessed Virgin's messages to little Lucia of Fatima. This persistence of Mary about the dangers which menace the Church

²⁷⁴Bertone nel 'Vespaio' delle Polemiche" ("Bertone in the 'Wasp's Nest' of the Polemics"), loc. cit.

is a divine warning against the suicide of altering the faith, in her liturgy, her theology and her soul..."

Thus far, Bertone's every effort to answer Socci had only dug a deeper pit for him and the other defenders of the official account. Just as Socci had said in defense of himself, Bertone had "offered the proof that I am right"—that there is indeed a missing text of the Secret. And that text, as Socci puts it, remains "well hidden." With the dramatic collapse of the cover-up on live television, Bertone and his collaborators found themselves in a desperate position. Soon they would launch further attempts to rescue the official account from the damage they themselves had inflicted upon it. In keeping with the pattern that has developed throughout this controversy, however, those attempts would only further confirm that something is being hidden.