

## Chapter 9

# Desperate Measures

Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone is nothing if not an intelligent man. A man of Bertone's intelligence could not fail to see that the official account has been thoroughly discredited by his own attempts to defend it. That result, as I have shown, is not due to any incompetence on Bertone's part, but rather the impossibility of denying convincingly that which, as Socci puts it, "is certain." What is certain is that there is a text of the Third Secret containing the precious words of the Virgin Mary that must explain the meaning of what the former Cardinal Ratzinger himself called the "difficult to decipher" vision of "the Bishop dressed in white."

If the claims that such a text exists were "pure ravings," as Bertone would have it, then the Cardinal would be content to allow that fact to speak for itself, to let the ravers rave on. Yet the Cardinal will not let the matter drop, precisely because he is an intelligent man. He knows too well that there is now a mountain of evidence, to which he himself has contributed mightily, that the posited missing text, to quote Socci again, "exists yet is well hidden"—well hidden by those who have persuaded themselves that the text is "not authentic" and declare that they have revealed what they call the "authentic" Secret.

Thus, Bertone has felt compelled to continue attempting to manage the Third Secret controversy since his disastrous appearance on *Door to Door*. He is still trying—privately and unofficially—to bring closure to a matter that will not be closed. Bertone's efforts have taken on the aspect of a personal crusade in defense of his own reputation and credibility. Meanwhile, the Vatican, especially the Pope, continues to maintain a wall of silence, without a single official reply to Socci's contentions or the testimony of Archbishop Capovilla.

*A revealing radio appearance*

On June 6, 2007, only a few days after his appearance on *Door to*

*Door*, Cardinal Bertone made a brief appearance on Vatican Radio to continue lobbying for an end to the controversy. The online transcript of the interview is tendentiously entitled: “There do not exist unrevealed parts of the Secret of Fatima: to our microphones, Cardinal Bertone recalls his meetings with Sister Lucia, described in the book ‘The Last Visionary of Fatima.’”<sup>275</sup> In answer to questions by the interviewer, one Giovanni Peduto, Bertone only inflicted major new damage to the official account.

To begin with, Bertone described Sister Lucia as “a sister who had *memorized with a meticulous perfection* everything that ‘Our Lady’, as she called the Madonna, had communicated to the three shepherds and in a particular way to her, because she—compared to Francisco and Jacinta—was the most mature and would thus have had the mission of communicating the famous three secrets of Fatima.” Bertone failed to explain why Sister Lucia’s meticulous memorization of what the Virgin communicated to her had failed completely when it came to the “express order of Our Lady,” which Lucia had inscribed on two separate envelopes, that the Third Secret could only be revealed in 1960.

Next, in reply to Peduto’s question: “What was Sister Lucia’s impression of the attempt on John Paul II of 1981, that Pope Wojtyla always connected to the vision of the Secret of Fatima?”, Bertone gave this answer, in pertinent part:

.... I explicitly questioned Sister Lucia on her first reaction to the attempt precisely in connection with the third part of the Secret, and she replied: “I thought immediately of the bishop dressed in white,” in that wording of the Third Secret which had already stated: “We had the impression that it was the Pope.” And therefore she herself connected the thing, from the beginning—even before Pope John Paul II, because John Paul II connected the attempt to the mystery of the Secret of Fatima after he had brought to himself the text of the third part of the Secret. I would say that she from the beginning connected this terrible event to the prophecy of Fatima....

With this remark Bertone provided no less than his *sixth* different version of Lucia’s alleged “acceptance” of Sodano’s/

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<sup>275</sup>Radio Vatican broadcast, June 6, 2007; transcript available at <http://www.radiovaticana.org/it1/Articolo.asp?c=137631>. All translations are based on this transcript.

Bertone's "interpretation" of the vision. Recall that in the fifth of the five versions set forth in the comparative table in Chapter 8 (see Table 4), that being the version Bertone presented during the telecast of May 31, 2007, the Cardinal claimed: "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..." On Vatican Radio only days later, however, Bertone has suddenly retreated to the claim that "I would say" Lucia merely "connected" the assassination attempt to the Secret. He has abandoned his claim, days earlier, that Sister Lucia "thought that this was the moment of the realization of that terrible prophecy, and that he [John Paul II] was the Pope of the Third Secret." Bertone revealed yet again that his accounts of "my meetings with Sister Lucia" are extremely "fluid" and wholly unreliable.

Bertone's self-inflicted wounds were further aggravated by his answer to this curiously worded question: "Notwithstanding publication of the third part of the Secret, there are still numerous criticisms and objections on the part of those who maintain that in reality not everything was revealed: what is your *opinion* on this point?" Opinion? Has the existence of a hidden text of the Third Secret suddenly become debatable even for the Cardinal? Incredibly, the Cardinal suggested precisely that in his answer:

I have also presented in a television broadcast the *authentic* text, the four little pages, that is the only *folio* compiled by Sister Lucia. The words of the Third Secret are contained in that *folio* and there are not other words written by Sister Lucia regarding the Third Secret. The other words have been invented, formulated by other persons, but do not correspond to the writings of Sister Lucia. Therefore, *I am firmly convinced* by the documentation that was in the *Secret Archive of the Holy Office*, which was brought—as is known—in 1957 to Rome; and by the explicit declarations of Sister Lucia in the presence of the Bishop of Fatima, that there is nothing else: the Third Secret is this, from the first to the last word.

He is "*firmly convinced*" that there is no other text of the Third Secret? Why is this suddenly a matter of the Cardinal's personal *conviction* as opposed to a matter of cold, hard *fact* he could

have verified simply by *asking Sister Lucia* the questions he had steadfastly refused to ask over years of controversy: Is there a text containing the words of the Virgin indicated by your “etc” following the phrase “In Portugal, the dogma of the faith will always be preserved etc.”? Is there a text in which the Virgin *explains* the “difficult to decipher” vision of the bishop in white?

It seems that at this point in the controversy Bertone is feeling the enormous pressure of the weight of evidence in favor of the existence of a missing text—a text of which he cannot or will not speak—and that he has responded to the pressure by retreating into the safe harbor of a personal “conviction” on the matter, as if in the apprehension that sooner or later the whole truth will come out. And notice that here again Bertone placed conspicuous verbal emphasis on an “authentic” text of the Secret located in the Holy Office archive, while ignoring once again the burning issue of the text located in the papal apartment.

Notice also Bertone’s curious reliance, not on anything Sister Lucia said directly to him in answer to a direct question, but rather an allusion to “explicit declarations of Sister Lucia in the presence of the Bishop of Fatima.” *What* declarations? These newly revealed “explicit declarations” of Sister Lucia—still another posthumous “surprise”—have never been reported in any part of the official account over the past seven years, nor did Bertone provide any details during the radio broadcast.

Recall that in Chapter 5 we saw that since 2000 the *only* specific “declaration” on this point ever attributed to Sister Lucia consists of the following nine words, presented in Bertone’s patently incredible December 2001 communiqué concerning his alleged interview of the seer at Coimbra on November 17, 2001: “Everything has been published; there are no more secrets.” But as we have already seen, these alleged nine words were *not uttered in the presence of the Bishop of Fatima*.<sup>276</sup> As Bertone himself states in the communiqué, the interview was conducted “in the presence of Rev. Luis Kondor, SVD, Vice-Postulator of the cause of Bl. Francisco and Bl. Jacinta, and of the Prioress of the Carmelite

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<sup>276</sup>Furthermore, when appearing on Cardinal Bertone’s television show on September 21, 2007, the retired Bishop of Fatima, Serafim de Sousa Ferreira e Silva, would conspicuously fail to attest to *any* declaration by Sister Lucia to the effect that the vision of the bishop in white is all there is to the Third Secret and nothing remains to be published. Rather, he would make it a point to affirm before the camera that he was testifying to “*only one fact*”: that Lucia had authenticated the text of the vision, which is not even in dispute. See Chapter 10.

Convent of St. Teresa, to obtain explanations and information directly from the only surviving visionary.” I note once again that *neither Father Kondor nor the Prioress has ever come forward to authenticate Bertone’s purported quotation*—an omission made all the more telling by the fact that Bertone’s alleged quotations of the seer have a demonstrated tendency to change dramatically over time.<sup>277</sup>

Where, then, can we find the alleged “explicit declarations of Sister Lucia in the presence of the Bishop of Fatima” concerning whether there is a yet-to-be-revealed text of the Third Secret of Fatima? What exactly did the Bishop ask her, and what exactly did she answer, if anything? Add this to the list of inadvertent disclosures and glaring omissions that undermine the credibility of the official account.

During the radio broadcast Bertone continued to bungle his attempt to explain the testimony of Cardinal Ottaviani that there is a one-page text of the Secret, comprising 25 lines. In Chapter 8 we saw how during his appearance on *Door to Door* Bertone flubbed Marco Politi’s polite challenge concerning this testimony. On the radio Bertone did no better. He simply repeated his blatantly contrived “attempt at an explanation” on television days before:

There are 62 lines [in the text of the vision]. Here, if you like, 25 lines from one side of the folio—as is cited by Cardinal Ottaviani, *who spoke of a folio of 25 lines*, I have also attempted perhaps to interpret, to explain, to justify *this affirmation of Cardinal Ottaviani*; and then the other lines—16 plus 16—from the other part of the folio and therefore there is nothing else! Now, *I cannot accept* that there are other secrets, that there is a fourth secret.

So, once again Bertone argued that 25 lines of text on two pages is the same thing as 25 lines on one page, and that Cardinal Ottaviani somehow failed to realize the document he was referring to consisted of four pages (on one folio) rather than a single page. But, of course, *none* of the four pages of the folio on which the vision is written contains 25 lines, nor is there any combination of

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<sup>277</sup>We must recall that even the isolated statement of nine words allegedly uttered before Kondor and the Prioress is not supported by any transcript of the interview, and that we have no way of knowing the precise question alleged to have elicited the cropped quotation, or its crucially important context within the purported two-hour interview.

two pages yielding 25 lines, as Bertone had now falsely suggested twice. Bertone's arithmetic here was just as fishy as it was during the telecast.

Even if Bertone could offer the excuse that he seized upon this flimsy explanation under the pressure of the moment on TV—and he could not, as he had more than enough time during the four-minute commercial break to make an accurate count of the lines on each page of the folio—he could hardly offer that excuse a week later during the radio broadcast. Why, then, would Bertone persist in what he had to know was a patently false “explanation” of Cardinal Ottaviani's decisive testimony? Why would he once again fail to suggest politely that Cardinal Ottaviani must have been mistaken, that there is no one-page text and never has been? Again, the only reasonable answer is that Bertone knows that Ottaviani was *not* mistaken, because there is indeed a one-page text of 25 lines pertaining to the Secret—a text now conveniently deemed “inauthentic” and thus not part of the Third Secret; a text that was not “in the archives” but rather in the papal apartment.

Most telling of all were Bertone's remarks concerning the “etc” issue, with which he concluded his answer to Peduto's request for his “opinion” about the claim of a missing text:

...That famous phrase “In Portugal the faith will always be kept intact” [*serberà intatta la fede*] is contained in *another writing* of Sister Lucia and *closes with ellipses* [*puntini*], as we know, a part of the memoirs of Sister Lucia. Enough: there is nothing else!

Aside from misquoting the key phrase—“In Portugal the *dogma of the faith* will always be *preserved*”—the Cardinal has evidently decided to *eliminate the telltale “etc” altogether* by replacing it with ellipses, representing to his audience that “we know” the phrase ends in an ellipsis. Of course, what “we know” is that Bertone was deliberately misleading his listeners. There can be no other reasonable conclusion, as it is quite impossible to believe that after seven years of controversy precisely over the “etc”, the Cardinal has suddenly forgotten the “etc” exists and now believes there is only an ellipsis, which would mean that the words of the Virgin to the seers simply trailed off in mid-sentence or that Lucia's “meticulous memorization”—the Cardinal's own words!—of what the Virgin told her suddenly became sketchy toward the end of

the Virgin's momentous opening reference to the preservation of dogma in Portugal.

Attention must be paid to Bertone's attempt to demote what are plainly the opening words of the Third Secret to the status of "another writing of Sister Lucia... a part of the memoirs of Sister Lucia," as if to say the words in question are mere scribbblings of Lucia in her "memoirs," rather than a direct quotation of the Virgin. Bertone conveniently failed to mention that what he dismissed on the radio as "another writing" and mere "memoirs" of Lucia are *the very source of the text of the Message of Fatima*, and that *he himself* had relied on Lucia's "memoirs"—the Third Memoir, to be exact—for the text of the first two parts of the Great Secret published by the Vatican in *Message*. Nor did Bertone mention that he (and his collaborators) knowingly avoided the more complete Fourth Memoir for the very reason that it contains what they so earnestly seek to avoid: the "etc" that is the gateway to the missing text. It will be helpful here to set forth again the pertinent portion of the Fourth Memoir:

...In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me, and she will be converted, and a period of peace will be granted to the world. *In Portugal the dogma of the Faith will always be preserved etc. Tell this to no one. Yes you may tell it to Francisco.*

Cardinal Bertone knows full well that the words represented by the "etc" are situated within the integral message conveyed by the Virgin, which Sister Lucia *meticulously memorized*, but that the seer could not commit these particular words to paper because she did not yet have the Virgin's permission to reveal them. Why, then, would the Cardinal take the risk of going on the air to make the demonstrably false claim that the "etc" is an ellipsis and that the phrase at issue is merely some unimportant "other writing" of Lucia's? The answer is clear: he took the risk because he feels that he must, at any cost, remove the "etc" from everyone's memory, as the "etc" points directly to the text he and his collaborators have hidden from the Church and the world.

Finally, what of the dispositive testimony of Archbishop Capovilla that there are indeed two separate envelopes and two separate texts pertaining to the Secret? As he had over the previous eight months since Socci published that testimony, Bertone acted

as if that testimony had never been given. He had not one word to say about Capovilla during the radio broadcast. This continued silence in the face of Capovilla's explosive revelations could not have been more revealing.

In sum, therefore, the radio interview, like Bertone's other private interventions, had only made it more apparent that the official account is not worthy of belief. Yet again an attempt at damage control had inflicted more damage. But *still* Bertone would not let the matter drop.

### *Capovilla under pressure*

Knowledgeable observers of this controversy knew that it was only a matter of time before Archbishop Capovilla came under immense pressure to "retract" his testimony to Solideo Paolini, just as Sister Lucia came under pressure to "retract" her testimony about the "express order of Our Lady" concerning 1960 and the necessity of an explicit consecration of Russia by name.

As of September 2007 Capovilla had voiced no objection to the account of his testimony in Soggi's *Fourth Secret*, published nearly a year before (November 2006). Moreover, Capovilla had voiced no objection to the even wider publicity his testimony received in a front-page story in November 2006 in the Italian newspaper *Liberio*, which published the testimony as part of a preview of *Fourth Secret*. Nor did Capovilla raise any doubts about his testimony in two meetings with Paolini after the Archbishop was aware that his testimony was to be published: a meeting in November of 2006, and another on June 21, 2007, which Paolini tape-recorded in anticipation of pressure on Capovilla to "retract."<sup>278</sup> There were, in fact, a total of four face-to-face meetings between Paolini and Capovilla: early April 2003; July 5, 2006; November 2006 and June 21, 2007. There was also a telephone conversation on July 18, 2006, and, beyond any possibility of "retraction," Capovilla's "confidential note" of May 17, 1967, a copy of which he provided to Paolini, as already discussed.<sup>279</sup> That note confirms every detail of the location of the never-produced "Capovilla envelope" in the

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<sup>278</sup>Solideo Paolini, "Report from Italy: My Meetings with Archbishop Capovilla and the Soggi-Cardinal Bertone Struggle," address at Fatima conference in Botucatu, Brazil, August 2007. See transcript at [http://www.fatimapeaceconferences.com/solideo\\_paolini\\_2007\\_en.asp](http://www.fatimapeaceconferences.com/solideo_paolini_2007_en.asp).

<sup>279</sup>Ibid. See also [Appendix I](#).

papal apartment of John XXIII and Paul VI.

In the meeting with Paolini on June 21, the Archbishop seemed “quite annoyed by the turmoil caused by his declarations,” and he revealed that he was under pressure from the Vatican as a result.<sup>280</sup> During the meeting Capovilla was in the process of “preparing a written report consisting of documents, photocopies, papers” and he told Paolini “there were things that I have to reply to...’ It seemed like the Vatican had asked him to give them his statements; it is as if they said to him: ‘What exactly did you say to him [Paolini]. And why?’”<sup>281</sup> Capovilla protested to Paolini that when he made his revelation of the existence of two texts and two envelopes he “was speaking in free-wheeling manner (*parlando a ruota libera*), which in Italian does not mean that what he said was not true, but that he had said too much.”<sup>282</sup>

Yet, during the same meeting Capovilla *amplified* his prior testimony by “hint[ing] at the existence of an attachment of some sort to the four pages published in the year 2000 [the vision of the ‘Bishop dressed in white’],” which attachment contains what Vatican authorities had characterized as “the thoughts of Sister Lucia” that she “might have thought—at least at the beginning—came from Our Lady!”<sup>283</sup> Was this Capovilla’s way of revealing that certain Vatican officials had decided to demote the words of Our Lady following the “etc” to “some annotations” of Sister Lucia, just as Bertone had suggested in *Message?* Would this not indicate a mental reservation, as suggested throughout this book, according to which Bertone and his collaborators could state that they had revealed the entirety of the Third Secret without having to mention Sister Lucia’s mere “annotations,” which she only “thought” were from the Virgin?

By September of 2007, however, the undoubtedly heavy pressure on Capovilla had apparently begun to have its effect. On September 11, *Telegraph.co.uk* reported on an interview of Capovilla by none other than Bertone’s ally, Giuseppe De Carli, co-author of Bertone’s *Last Visionary*. According to the *Telegraph*, during this interview “Msgr. Capovilla, who witnessed Pope John XXIII opening the envelope of the third secret, said: ‘There are not

<sup>280</sup>Ibid.

<sup>281</sup>Ibid.

<sup>282</sup>“Declaration of Dr. Solideo Paolini”, ¶ 3(b), reproduced at <http://www.cfnews.org/Paolini-Sept18.htm>.

<sup>283</sup>Paolini, “Report from Italy,” loc. cit.

two truths from Fatima and nor is there any fourth secret. The text which I read in 1959 is the same that was distributed by the Vatican. I have had enough of these conspiracy theories. It just isn't true. I read it, I presented it to the Pope and we resealed the envelope."<sup>284</sup>

A close reading of the statement attributed to Capovilla shows that it actually denies nothing of his prior testimony. First of all, in saying that the text he read in 1959 is "the same that was *distributed* by the Vatican," Capovilla is *not* saying that the text he read in that year is the text of the vision published by the Vatican in June 2000. Quite the contrary, as we will see in Chapter 10, weeks later, in another failed attempt to defend his account, Bertone himself will reveal during his own television broadcast Capovilla's further statement that he does not consider the Third Secret to have been hidden because *certain select Vatican prelates* were allowed to read it in 1959—*not* because the text of the *vision* was published to the world in 2000. Thus, by the phrase "distributed by the Vatican" Capovilla could be signifying nothing more than that he and certain prelates in the Vatican read a text *distributed* to them in 1959.

Granted, there is a major ambiguity here. But the ambiguity arises because Capovilla—no doubt quite deliberately—has *not* been asked specifically to deny that there are two different texts and two different envelopes pertaining to the Secret; the "Capovilla envelope" and the "Bertone envelope," as he had called them when he informed Paolini of their existence. Capovilla does not even mention his revelations to Paolini in the *Telegraph* article. Instead, Capovilla denies what no one has claimed in the first place: that there are "two truths from Fatima" and literally a "fourth secret" of Fatima, which is merely the ironic title of Socci's book. The real question, of course, concerns the existence of two *parts* of the one Third Secret: the text of the vision and a text in which the Virgin explains its meaning. In the statement reported in the *Telegraph*, Capovilla does not deny that there are indeed two texts. His prior testimony remains completely intact.

As for Capovilla's purported remark: "I have had enough of these conspiracy theories," here too the Archbishop conspicuously fails to deny the precise information he provided to Paolini: that a text of the Secret was contained in an envelope kept in the right-hand drawer of Pope John's writing desk, called "Barbarigo". That

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<sup>284</sup>"Catholic Church isn't hiding apocalypse secret," *Telegraph.co.uk*, September 11, 2007. See also "Declaration of Dr. Solideo Paolini," loc. cit.

revelation was no “theory.” In fact, as we will also see in Chapter 10, weeks later Capovilla will confirm on Bertone’s own television show that this envelope exists, and Bertone *to this day has failed to explain why he has never produced it.*

In sum, the statement in the *Telegraph* seems to be a carefully worded attempt to give the *appearance* of a denial where none is actually stated. And, in a rather comical development, it turns out that the *Telegraph* article was derived from—of all places—a story in a *women’s lifestyle and fashion magazine* called *Diva e Donna*, which features breathless stories on the latest details of the lives of female Italian celebrities, along with pictures of scantily clad movie stars, songstresses and models. Strange business indeed: a non-denial from Capovilla in an interview published by a women’s magazine—*ten months* after the publication of *Fourth Secret*, which had presented Capovilla’s testimony to the world without the least objection from the witness. The choice of this bizarre forum to publish Capovilla’s non-denial was a classic public relations “trial balloon.” The Vatican, meanwhile, was continuing to observe a thunderous official silence regarding a witness whose testimony had extinguished the official account. Bertone had been left to fend for himself.

But Bertone had yet another stratagem to deploy in his private and unofficial campaign to put a damper on the controversy his own statements had helped fan into worldwide flames. Since his appearance on *Door to Door* had been a disaster, Bertone would produce his own television show!