

On Antonio Socci's Book *The Fourth Secret of Fatima*

Some Friendly Reflections for the Clarification of a Debate

by

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*Translator's Note: This article was written for the Italian magazine **Lepanto**, and published in its October 2007 issue. For purposes of documentation the passages quoted from Antonio Socci's book in the original Italian are transcribed in the endnotes.*

The Italian journalist and writer Antonio Socci sustains in his book the thesis that there is a part of the Secret of Fatima “that is not revealed,” and which he calls – certainly to make lighter a matter of such great seriousness – *the fourth secret of Fatima* (*Il quarto segreto di Fatima*, Rizzoli, Milano, 2006).

On the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the first apparition of the most holy Virgin at Fatima, commemorated on the 13th of this last May, His Eminence Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone published the book *L'ultima veggente di Fatima – I miei colloqui con suor Lucia* [*The Last Seer of Fatima – My Colloquies with Sister Lucia*] (Rizzoli, 2007), in which, among other considerations, he aimed to refute the arguments of Antonio Socci's book. The latter immediately replied to the Cardinal in an article in *Libero* (May 12, 2007).

On the 31st of May, *Rai Uno* broadcast an interview with Cardinal Bertone on the program *Porta a Porta* [Door to Door] entitled *There Is No Fourth Secret of Fatima*, which was aimed once more at A. Socci's book. The latter rebutted in a new article in *Libero* of June 2, 2007.

In this form the polemics are developing and spreading all over the Catholic world, with new participants, mainly in the United States.

Obviously it would not be possible in this article to accompany that polemic step by step, analyzing one by one the arguments and counter-arguments which would make the article tiresome for the reader.

So it seemed wiser to us to publish the present *Reflections* just as they were finished toward the middle of April of this year [2007], and offer them as a contribution for the clarification of some of the burning issues of the polemics that are underway.

We only ask that we be permitted to add a very brief commentary about three new elements that have arisen during the development of the polemics regarding the central thesis of Mr. A. Socci's work. These three additions are found separated by three asterisks (* * *) at the end of topics 12, 13 and 14.

While offering these *Reflections* to friends who have asked us for an evaluation of Antonio Socci's book, *The Fourth Secret of Fatima*, we wish to emphasize right from the beginning the friendly tone with which we do so. We are moved by the desire not to split but rather to unite those who have become imbued with the importance of the message that Our Lady came to transmit to mankind at Fatima and dedicate themselves to spreading it.

1. A Step Forward: The Third Secret Is Authentic!

As is well known, the revelation of the third part of the Secret by the Holy See on June 26, 2000 produced a division in traditionalist ranks very connected to Fatima: Some accepted that revelation with a submissive spirit, without however penetrating in general its very rich and profound meaning; others, disappointed at the content which they consider innocuous, refuse to accept the idea that the Secret had been published in its entirety; others, finally, going even farther, reached the point of expressing the opinion that the text was purely and simply false; the authentic document, according to this opinion, was hidden by the Vatican.

Every initiative that tends to heal this division is wholesome. Nonetheless, an authentic union has to be on the basis of the truth. This gives rise to an effort to clarify, to the degree that the available documentation permits, the obscure points so that all may have at their disposition the necessary elements to clear away their doubts.

In this perspective we note with pleasure that A. Socci's book represents a true progress, for its author admits without hesitation (cf. p. 78) that the text revealed by the Holy See is authentic. With that we have gained an important point. Nevertheless, he adds, there must be a complement that was omitted by the Holy See because of its extremely disturbing character. The Holy See, led by that spirit of prudence which everyone recognizes in it, would supposedly not have wished to reveal that part of the Secret.

— How does the author arrive at that conclusion?

2. Syllogism

In order to present from the very beginning an overall opinion about the value of the argumentation adduced by the author, we shall simply outline the main line of his reasoning (arguments of another order will be analyzed further on), by synthesizing it under the form of a syllogism:

- a) Certain facts or declarations by personalities regarding Fatima indicate that the third part of the Secret **must contain** elements that would be terrifying for mankind in general and for the holy Church in particular;
- b) now, the text revealed by the Holy See **does not contain** such terrifying elements;
- c) therefore, the Third Secret **must have a complement** not yet divulged which probably contains those terrifying elements.

We shall limit ourselves to some examples (in the citations the boldface type and the clarifications between brackets are ours):

3. Sister Lucy's painful effort in writing the Secret

It is well known that Sister Lucy suffered an enormous interior trial when the bishop of Leiria asked her to write the third part of the Secret. That very great trial can only be explained, according to Socci, if the text had contained elements terrifying for mankind in general or for the Church in particular.

So it is that on page 140 he records the sentiments of the author Solideo Paolini (whose considerations Socci uses to a great extent): *"I thought about poor Sister Lucy . . . for months, also after having received the order [from the bishop of Leiria], she was not able to write down the text of the Third Secret, because she was so terrified!"*¹

On page 153: *"In fact — after two months of extremely difficult agony that had made it impossible for her to write that text (so dramatic was it) — in order to overcome the situation, to help Sister Lucy, an extraordinary apparition of Our Lady was required, which happened on Sunday January 2, 1944."*²

On pages 155-156: *"In order to transcribe this brief message of Our Lady — after having received the order from the bishop — Sister Lucy was impeded or prevented and blocked by that anguish for almost three months and, as has been said, was able to overcome this extreme difficulty only thanks to the intervention of Our Lady . . . But why that agony of Lucy? Why that obstacle? Was this due to possible prophecies of scary catastrophes that the message might have contained?"*³

On pages 158-159: *"Why did [Sister Lucy] in 1944 when she was commanded to do this, feel paralyzed and terrorized? . . . It seems possible to deduce that in those twenty lines [which is estimated to be the extension of the Third Secret], in those few words of Our Lady, something greater is contained, something unimaginable and unspeakable, that after having 'paralyzed' Sister Lucy for three months also 'terrorized' the popes leading them to not reveal those words."*⁴

The "not revealed" text of the Third Secret must therefore, according to Socci, contain elements which would justify the anguish that Sister Lucy had to overcome in order to write that part of the Secret.

4. The Surprising Declarations of Cardinal Ottaviani

In a celebrated conference at the Marianum in Rome in 1967, Alfredo Cardinal Ottaviani, then prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, explains why the Holy See had, in 1957, ordered the collecting of all the material relative to Fatima that could be found in the diocese of Leiria, including and mainly the Secret: *“In order to prevent that something so delicate and not destined for exposure to public curiosity (sic) might, for any reason, however fortuitous, fall into the hands of strangers”* (the “sic” is A. Socci’s) (p. 37).⁵

After observing that the first and second Secrets were published without interference from the Holy See, Socci observes: *“Why did the Vatican take to itself the Third Part of the text and make it secret? What unnamable content might it have? Is it possible that it was only the text of the vision revealed in the year 2000? That text does not seem to justify such alarm, nor so dramatic an intervention by the Holy See. Does it refer, then, to another text? Is the ‘dynamite’ in that other text? Evidently yes”* (p. 37).⁶

Socci’s syllogism, to which we are referring, is presented here in its entirety with its major premise “a” and minor premise “b,” and conclusion.

5. Cardinal Ratzinger fears Sensationalism

In a celebrated interview granted to the Italian journalist Vittorio Messori, published in the review *Jesus* (11-11-1984), and later “edited” and amplified in the book *The Ratzinger Report* (1985), Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger explains that if the Secret had not been revealed until then, it was to avoid its becoming the object of sensationalism among the public.

The words of the Cardinal in the interview differ somewhat from that revised text published in the book.

In the magazine: *“If [the Third Secret] is not published at least for now, it is to avoid mixing a religious prophecy with sensationalism.”*⁷

In the book: *“Publishing the ‘third secret’ would signify also exposure to the danger of sensationalist uses of its content.”*⁸

From this Socci concludes: *“If in 1984 Ratzinger spoke of the Third Secret as something that would create ‘sensationalism’ by means of the ‘religious prophecy’ that it contains, it leads one to think that one might speak of a Third Secret different from that one revealed in the year 2000 which seems ‘innocuous’”*⁹ (p. 99).

For Socci, therefore, the text revealed in 2000 is “innocuous,” and with this affirmation he makes explicit the minor premise “b” of his syllogism.

6. “Antithetical Judgments” by Cardinal Ratzinger

By the confrontation of that declaration of Cardinal Ratzinger with another that he made right in the beginning of his *Theological Commentary* on the Third Secret, in the booklet *The Message of Fatima*, Socci draws another argument for his thesis that a “not revealed” secret exists. Indeed, on page 32 (English ed.) of the aforementioned booklet, the Cardinal affirms: *“A careful reading of the text of the so-called third ‘secret’ of Fatima ... will probably prove disappointing or surprising after all the speculation it has stirred. No great mystery is revealed; nor is the future unveiled.”*¹⁰

Socci comments: *“It is improbable that the same Cardinal Ratzinger with respect to the same text would give two antithetical judgments.... Then either the prelate has totally reversed his judgment (one doesn’t see on what basis he might have done so) or the two different judgments have to do with two different texts, that of the vision and that with the mysterious words of Our Lady.”*¹¹ For Socci, therefore, there is a “not revealed” text made up of words of the most Holy Virgin.

It happens however that **the text of the Third Secret is absolutely not innocuous**, contrary to what Socci affirms and Cardinal Ratzinger appears to imply at the beginning of his *Theological Commentary*. And the one who takes charge of showing that is the author of *Il Quarto Segreto* himself.

7. Socci Recognizes that the Revealed Text Is Apocalyptic

Indeed, Socci recognizes in various passages of his book that the text published by the Holy See contains terrifying elements. For example:

1) on page 46 of his book he affirms (as always, the brackets and the bold type are ours; the parentheses within the quotation are by the author himself): *“It is evident that the apocalyptic event prophesied here [that is, in the third part of the Secret] by Our Lady of Fatima with such solemnity has such an absolutely unique gravity in the history (of the world and) of the Church where it does not lack persecution, immense massacres and even attacks on the life of*

the popes.”¹²

2) on p. 48: “...the pope of the prophetic vision ‘is killed’ and that is infinitely different from being wounded. As for the rest, **the whole scene of the vision of Fatima, which seems to evoke a situation of war and destruction, is nothing like the scene of the attack in St. Peter’s Square of May 13, 1981.**”¹³

3) on p. 67: “In the third part the vision shows a pope who is martyred (together with a large number of other Christians), **in the context of an apocalyptic trial for the Church.**”¹⁴

4) on p. 73: “At this point **the prophetic scene of Fatima brings to the fore an event that has yet to occur: The martyrdom of the pope and with him many priests and faithful in a context of frightful devastation. This is a foretelling therefore of a tragic situation for the world and for the Church.**”¹⁵

5) on pp. 82-83: “If Father Alonso knew the (whole) Third Secret then he must have known also this part that – it must be understood – **does not seem at all bloodless. Rather it leads one to think that the context is that of a warlike tragedy (from the angel of divine chastisement whose lightning bolts directed at the world are held back by the hands of the Virgin, to the city in ruins, with heaps of cadavers, to the soldiers who kill the pope and with him many bishops and faithful).**”¹⁶

6) on p. 172: “Perhaps the third part of the Secret – among the other things – foresees a Third world war into which humanity will fall if it is still obstinate in the way of evil. Deep down **the vision that was part of the Third Secret shows really a scenario of ruin and destruction. These are hypotheses, naturally. But it is certain that there is a part of the Secret not yet revealed which is deemed ‘untellable.’**”¹⁷

This last consideration of the author is interesting because at the very moment at which he launches the hypothesis that the “not revealed” part may contain a reference to a possible third world war, he affirms that the *vision*, which is in the revealed part, “**shows really a scene of ruin and destruction.**”¹⁸ We must always keep in mind, as has already been observed, that the author makes a distinction between the revealed part (which constitutes a *vision*) and the non-revealed part, which supposedly contains *words* of Our Lady explaining the vision.

If, then – as the author himself recognizes – these terrifying elements are to be found in the text published by the Holy See, his whole syllogism is broken down. **And therefore his hypotheses about the existence of a non-revealed part of the Third Secret end up in an inexorable nihil concluditur.**

8. A Necessary Explanation . . . for Someone Who Didn’t Understand!

Let us now consider other arguments that Socci adduces to support his central thesis. As has already been said, one of them is the affirmation that it would have been necessary for Our Lady to have explained the meaning of the vision that constitutes the Third Secret.

Socci writes: “**What is the meaning of this vision that is so enigmatic and of these predicted events? How are they explained? Is it possible that Our Lady would appear in such a spectacular manner at Fatima to give a message/warning that is so important yet however remains incomprehensible, confusing or susceptible of different and contrary interpretations? How could this vision, made known in 2000 by the Vatican, not be explained by the Holy Virgin?**” (p. 73).¹⁹

As one sees, Socci affirms implicitly that he had not been able to understand the meaning of the vision, which, nonetheless, he described two lines before that as forming “a context of frightful devastation”²⁰ and announcing “a tragic situation for the world and for the Church.”²¹

Now then, **the meaning of the vision is precisely that: a great chastisement that looms over humanity and the Church!** Therefore his problem seems to be another one – that of **the reason for this chastisement** – as he makes explicit promptly thereafter, citing for this end the opinion of Father Gerard Mura, professor of philosophy at the Seminary of the Sacred Heart in Zaitzkofen, Germany:

“We cannot avoid the impression that something is missing ... **We have come to know simply that this is an unprecedented and enormous punishment for the Church, the Faithful and the Hierarchy. We have not been given a single indication of why this unique punishment must happen to us now, nor how we can avoid it through conversion: Divine prophecy is usually characterized by a warning ... So there are a certain number of points that make us suspect and doubt that the text which we possess is complete**” (p. 73).²²

Therefore, the meaning of the vision is perfectly clear, both for Socci (although he alleges that he didn’t understand it) as well as for Father Mura: “An enormous and unprecedented punishment for the Church.”²³ What they did not understand is: “**why this unique punishment must happen to us now.**”²⁴

So then the problem changes from the *meaning of the message of Fatima* – which is perfectly clear: a punishment

– to the reason for this punishment. Now for that **it’s enough for us to read the daily newspaper – of any day, or anywhere in the world – to see that the chalice of abomination is overflowing on every side all over the world. If there is perplexity, it is of those who wonder why fire from heaven has still not fallen upon sinful mankind!**

So the conclusion that Socci and Father Mura draw from these considerations, that “*there are a certain number of points that make us suspect and doubt that the text which we possess is complete,*”²⁵ has no basis. We once again arrive at a *non conclusitur*.

There is another point in Father Mura’s declaration that cannot be passed over without an observation. He says that “*we have not been given a single indication*”²⁶ of what we must do to avoid the punishment, seeing that “*Divine prophecy is usually characterized by a warning.*”²⁷ Now all of that is developed in great detail in the second part of the Secret (which Socci himself analyzes at length in his own book). We believe that when he was writing this latter the professor of Zaitzkofen must have had a moment of distraction.

9. Where Would the Fourth Secret Fit In?

Socci does not analyze *ex professo* the problem of where to fit in the “fourth” Secret of Fatima, whose existence he advocates. But he does treat of the matter in passing here and there. On page 74 he dedicates a large part of note 97 to expound aspects of the question. Making reference to the book by Father Paul Kramer, *The Devil’s Final Battle* (pp. 186-188), he begins by citing one of his statements:

“Why would Our Lady have explained something so obvious as the vision of Hell, and then not have given a single word of explanation about this obscure passage published by the Vatican?”²⁸

“*The answer*” — continues Socci, summing up Father Paul Kramer’s book — “*could be the following: The vision does nothing more than illustrate the words just said by Our Lady, about the persecutions which constitute the Second secret. Kramer counters however that there are highly symbolic details in the vision that are not explained and that remain mysterious, for example that regarding the Angel and above all the assassination of the Pope, and the rest of the narration. Therefore the vision cannot be a representation of that which was foreseen in the Second secret.*”²⁹

And after having recalled that according to Sister Lucy the Secret is made up of only three parts, Socci goes on expounding the thinking of some traditionalists: “*There remained only one thing still hidden, the so-called Third secret, that is the vision of the ‘bishop dressed in white.’ If to this one also adds an explanation of Our Lady we would have four parts to the secret. The answer of the ‘traditionalists,’ however, proposes to consider as one thing the vision and the explanation that Our Lady gave of it.*”³⁰

As one sees, the traditionalists of Father Kramer’s current are embarrassed at an addition to the Third Secret that they don’t know very well where to fit in, without adding a fourth part to a Secret that has only three parts. For this reason they imagine that the addition would form only one whole with the vision published by the Vatican. They do not explain, however, how this could be since the revealed text is made up of only four pages with an initial title, a description and a final outcome, as well as a concluding date.

Therefore, the solution proposed by the traditionalists of that current is problematic. For this reason Socci is inclined to place the words “*still unknown*”³¹ of Our Lady in the place of the “*etc.*” that Sister Lucy placed at the end of the sentence “*In Portugal the dogma of the Faith will always be preserved*” (cf. p. 77, note 103).

This brings us to a point which constitutes the very heart of the question: What precisely did Sister Lucy mean by that “*etc.*”?

10. The Enigma of the “Etc.”

As everyone knows, the phrase, “*In Portugal the dogma of the Faith, etc.,*” is not found in the *Third Memoir*, but Sister Lucy added it in the *Fourth Memoir*.

Analyzed by itself, the expression would indicate a loss of faith so great in the other nations that it would justify Our Lady’s emphasizing that it would be preserved in one nation, Portugal. On the other hand, a crisis of Faith implies as a consequence a crisis in the Church, hierarchy, clergy and people. Fatima scholars have dealt at length with this question, and it is not the moment to enter into it in detail. But what does the “*etc.*” mean?

The first idea naturally is that it indicates a continuation of the sentence which precedes it. On the one hand, then, it would be an explanation about the crisis in the Church, as in fact the Fatima scholars have understood practically unanimously. On the other hand, one would deduce that the “*etc.*” would represent a link connecting it to the Third Secret, which Sister Lucy did not then have orders to reveal.

Once the Third Secret had been revealed on June 26, 2000, it was found that there was no connection between that phrase and the text that was revealed. How then should one interpret that enigmatic “*etc.*”?

Once the “*etc.*” is suppressed, the sentence “*In Portugal the dogma of the Faith will always be preserved*” seems

to be left hanging in the air. This is what we pointed out in our commentary on the Third Secret published in Brazil (*Catolicismo*, September 2000), and promptly translated into Italian and published that same year (*Fátima — Messaggio di tragedia o di speranza?* [Fatima – Message of Tragedy or Hope?], Luci sull’Est, Rome, 2000, note 11, p. 44). Socci uses practically the same expressions: “*That phrase ... remained therefore up in the air*”³² (p. 24) or analogous formulas (pp. 80, 89 & 90).

It was important to clarify the matter with Sister Lucy while she was still alive. Furthermore, as Socci rightfully observes, Archbishop Bertone should have already done so in the conversation he had with Sister Lucy on April 27, 2000. Since it did not occur to him on that occasion, once he was alerted in time he could have done so while the seer was still lucid and lively. This is what I considered my obligation to point out to the secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in my letter of September 25, 2001, received in the offices of the Congregation on October 17 (cf. Appendix). Exactly one month later, on November 17, 2001, Archbishop Bertone returns to Coimbra with a full agenda, because he considered it his obligation to clarify supposed warnings of Sister Lucy to the Pope on the basis of alleged new revelations of Our Lady, and correlated matters (among them once again the question of the validity of the consecration of Russia on March 25, 1984).

In the conversation that lasted more than two hours, Archbishop Bertone did not wish or could not present to Sister Lucy the specific questions about the “etc.” and the connection of the Second with the Third Secret, and limited himself to asking the seer what she thought of those who manifested “*a doubt over whether something about the third secret has been hidden.*”³³ To this question so simplified Sister Lucy responds categorically: “***Everything has been made public; nothing is secret any more***”³⁴ (Communiqué from the Press Office of the Holy See, 12-20-2001).

Socci expresses his consternation about the way this report was done, in that it omitted the most elementary precautions to guarantee its exactitude: There is no mention of any recording of the conversation on tape or video, nothing is said about what language it was carried on in, the text is written in Italian (a language that Sister Lucy did not master), and so on (cf. pp 115-125).

Hence he concludes that the report of the Press Office lacks credibility: “*The few words attributed to her [Sister Lucy] in the document cited above are such that objectively they have no credibility*”³⁵ (p. 125).

This seems to us to be an excessive conclusion. Just the simple fact of neglecting recommendable precautions for an act of such importance does not take away from it all documentary validity. Regarding the theme of this section of our work – the existence of an explanation of the text of the phrase “*In Portugal...*” – Sister Lucy’s answer is so categorical and inclusive that we cannot ignore it: “*Everything has been made public; nothing is secret any more.*”³⁶

It is a great disappointment for us that it has not been possible to resolve the question of the “etc.,” but we have to work with that concrete unavoidable fact. For this reason we make Socci’s words our own: “*The feeling, now that Sister Lucy is already dead, is that a tremendous opportunity has been lost to leave to posterity her own exhaustive and complete testimony about the most extraordinary apparition of Our Lady in the history of the Church*”³⁷ (p. 125).

11. Where Is the Proof of the Existence of Two Texts?

The historiography about Fatima, which in 2007 is nearly ninety years old, has investigated to the depth all the aspects of that marvelous Marian epopee. Today, for example, we know of details of Sister Lucy’s illness that took place before her writing the Secret, the date when she wrote it (1-3-1944), when she let her bishop know that the text was written and at his disposal (1-9-1944), the date when in fact she made it reach the hands of the bishop (6-17-1944) and of its being put away in the safe of the curia of Coimbra, its forwarding to the nunciature in Lisbon, the way to Rome, and so on.

These scholars pore eagerly over these details in order to figure out the congruences among them and scrutinize their significance. As could not fail to be the case, those data were analyzed with a magnifying glass in the course of the discussion about the authenticity of the Third Secret revealed by the Vatican, in order to find some breach where the presumably “*not revealed*” secret had slipped out. Not everyone will be avid for such minutia, but we must enter into them in order to elucidate the central thesis of the book we are analyzing.

The first question therefore is: After all, did Sister Lucy write one or two texts of the Secret? Because if it were certain that she wrote two texts, the documentary proof of their existence has been found, and the central thesis of the book demonstrated.

The first one to follow that line of reasoning was Andrew Cesanek in Father Nicholas Gruner’s magazine *Fatima Crusader* (no. 64, summer 2000), which radiates from Canada and the United States all over the world. Father Paul Kramer (*The Devil’s Final Battle*, The Missionary Association, Terryville, Conn., 2002, Advanced Reading Copy, 278 pp.) uses him, as well as Marco Tosatti, *Il Segreto non svelato* [The Non-Revealed Secret] (Piemme, 2002).

Let us see how Socci presents the case:

“*Sister Lucy, as she was about to put pen to paper, explained: ‘They have told me to write, either in the notebooks*

[sia nei quaderni] where I was ordered to keep my spiritual diary, or on a sheet of a notebook [sia su un foglio di quaderno] that would be put into an envelope sealed with wax.²⁴⁰ **Here then is how we find out that there are two texts. It seems strange to write the two parts of the Secret on different pages, one part in a notebook and one part on a piece of paper, but that which Sister Lucy communicates immediately afterwards to the Bishop of Leiria shows she has done that very thing: 'I wrote what has been asked of me; God has wished to put me to the test a little, but after all, this was actually His will: (the text) is in a sealed envelope and the envelope is in the notebooks'.**³⁸ (p. 152).

Socci confuses himself in several different ways here, one of which he realizes and seeks to save himself from in note 240. As he tries to do so he tangles himself up even more. Let's look at note 240.

²⁴⁰ FM [Frère Michel], vol. III, p. 36. To tell the truth about the same quote, taken from the book of Father Alonso, La verdad sobre el secreto di Fátima (p. 33), it was translated [into Italian] differently from the Italian edition of the book by Aura Miguel: 'They told me to write it either in the notebooks [o nei quaderni] where I compile my spiritual diary, otherwise, if I wished, on a piece of paper [oppure in un foglio], and then put it into an envelope, close it and seal it' (Totus tuus, cit., p. 129). **It is obvious that that 'sia...sia...' is the contrary of 'o...o....'** In order to resolve the controversy it is enough to know whether Sister Lucy, having said that she wrote the Secret, put it down on paper (in an envelope) or in a notebook. **Obviously she did both.**³⁹

This is total confusion. Let us undo it part by part:

a) We don't understand why, having in his hand Father Alonso's book, which he cites right down to the page number (33), he uses for his reference Frère Michel (vol. III, p. 36), and then starts to discuss which would be the better translation, that which he, Socci, made from the French, or that of Aura Miguel, who obviously used the original of Father Alonso. I am not going to be so presumptuous as to challenge his affirmation that in Italian, "It is obvious that the 'sia...sia...' is the contrary of 'o...o....'"⁴⁰ In Portuguese and Spanish it is equivalent. In the French translation Frère Michel uses adequately "soit...soit" [either...or], which perfectly corresponds to the disjunctive "o...o" [either...or] from the Spanish of Father Alonso. Since the disjunctive conjunction establishes an option between two possible solutions, there is no doubt about the meaning of the phrase "They tell me to write it either in the notebooks where they command me to write my spiritual diary or, if I should wish to do so, on a sheet of paper, and put it inside an envelope; close it and seal it" ['Me dicen que lo escriba o en los cuadernos donde me mandan apuntar mi diario espiritual o, si quisiere, en una hoja de papel, y meterlo dentro de un sobre; cerrarlo y lacrarlo'] (Father Alonso, p. 33): Sister Lucy could have opted for one of the two alternatives. It is entirely arbitrary to suppose that she used both. So Socci's conclusion does not fit: "Obviously she did both."⁴¹

b) Continuing with the translation that Socci makes of Frère Michel: Where the latter writes "*feuille de papier*" Socci translates with "*sheet of a notebook*,"⁴² consequently leading the reader to think that the Secret is written on "*a sheet of a notebook*," which is far from being unquestionable as we shall see further on.

c) Socci realizes that "*it seems strange to write the two parts of the Secret on different pages, one part in a notebook and one part on a piece of paper*,"⁴³ but says that this is to be deduced from what Sister Lucy wrote to the bishop of Leiria (9-1-1944): "*I wrote what has been asked of me: (the text) is in a sealed envelope and that envelope is in the notebook.*"⁴⁴

Now one absolutely does not deduce from that sentence that Sister Lucy wrote the Secret in two separate parts, "*one part in the notebook and one part on the piece of paper.*"⁴⁵ The sentence Socci cited is clear: "*(the text) is in a sealed envelope and the envelope is in the notebooks.*"⁴⁶ What is "*in the notebooks*"⁴⁷ is "*a sealed envelope*,"⁴⁸ and not another text!

How could such a false conclusion arise? – This time the mistake is in the interpretation of the English translation of Frère Michel's book, where one reads on page 47, vol III as follows:

"I have written what you asked me; God willed to try me a little, but finally this was indeed His will: (the text) is sealed in an envelope and it is in the notebooks...."

Cesaneck understood that the "it" of "*it is in the notebooks...*" refers to "*(the text).*" There would therefore be two texts: one in the envelope and another in the "*notebooks.*" The only thing is that that interpretation is mistaken!

Frère Michel's text in French is as follows: "*(le texte) est cacheté dans une enveloppe et celle-ci est dans les cahiers...*" ["(the text) is sealed in an envelope and the latter is in the notebooks..."]. So what is in the notebooks ["*cahiers*"] is "*the sealed envelope*" ["*l'enveloppe cachetée*"].

We pointed this mistake out to an American friend who has access to Father Gruner, and the latter probably had passed it on to the author of the article. So it is that Father Kramer, on inserting Cesaneck's article in his book (2002 ed.) then makes the translation explicit: "*(the text) is sealed in an envelope and it (the sealed envelope) is in the notebooks....*" He corrects the erroneous interpretation but not the conclusion, continuing to maintain that there are two documents!

Let us see Father Alonso's text in Portuguese:

*"I have written what you have commanded me: God wished to try me a bit, but after all that was His will: It is sealed [está lacrada, sic, in the feminine] inside an envelope and **the latter** is in the notebooks..."* (Fátima 50, 10-13-67, p. 11).

Why did Sister Lucy use the feminine on referring to the text which she wrote? As we shall show farther on, it was because she used a piece of letter paper for this, and through a process of metonymy she refers to the text as being a letter (figure of rhetoric by which one designates the content by the container).

The same metonymy appears in the report of the conversation of 4-27-2000, between Archbishop Bertone and Sister Lucy: *"At this point, Archbishop Bertone presented two envelopes to her: the first containing the second, which held the third part of the 'secret' of Fatima. Immediately touching it with her fingers, she said: 'This is my letter' and then while reading it: 'This is my writing'"* (The Message of Fatima, English ed. p. 28).

d) Another confusion of the various authors cited here (Cesaneck, Father Kramer, Socci, Tosatti) is to think that the notebook in which Sister Lucy placed the sealed envelope to be handed over to the titular bishop of Gurza was one of the notebooks where she recorded her spiritual diary. Let us read the narration of Frère Michel which agrees substantially with that of Father Alonso (*op cit.* p. 36):

*"[Sister Lucy] would entrust this envelope neither to the Post Office nor to any messenger. She waited several months for the opportune occasion to see that it reached Mgr. da Silva [Bishop of Leiria] in all dignity and safety. Finally, Mgr. Manuel Maria Ferrera da Silva ... titular Bishop of Gurza, came to Valença do Minho [Portuguese city bordering with the city of Tuy, in Spain, from which it is separated by the River Minho] on Saturday, June 17, 1944, on behalf of Bishop da Silva. He was accompanied by his brother, Mgr. José Manuel Ferreira da Silva and Father Vernocchi. For her part, on this Saturday morning in the octave of the Feast of the Sacred Heart, Sister Lucy had left Tuy. She was accompanied by one of her sisters, who of course was unaware of the true purpose of the meeting (as were the priests accompanying the [titular] Bishop of Gurza). They crossed the Minho and arrived at Asilo Fonseca around noon. **The seer discreetly handed the [titular] Bishop of Gurza the notebook in which she had slipped the envelope containing the Secret.** § "That same evening, the bishop placed the envelope into the hands of Bishop da Silva, who was then at his country home of 'La Formiguera,' not far from Braga. The bishop then transferred it to his episcopal palace of Leiria" (Vol. 3, English edition, p. 49; French edition, vol. III, p. 40).*

As one sees, Frère Michel says nothing about the destiny of the **notebook**; the titular bishop of Gurza delivered only the **envelope** to the bishop of Leiria. Since in her letter of January 9 to the bishop of Leiria, Sister Lucy said that she had placed the sealed envelope within the notebooks where she wrote down her spiritual diary, an association of ideas makes one think that **five months later** she took one of those notebooks, with the sealed envelope inside, and carried it to Valença do Minho. Now, it is difficult to imagine that Sister Lucy, who was so careful about maintaining the privacy of her interior life, could have delivered her spiritual diary into the hands of the titular bishop of Gurza and not have asked for it to be returned, since the objective of the meeting was to hand over the **envelope with the Secret**.

It is more reasonable to suppose that she took some notebook or other merely to disguise the envelope which would be delivered, since the whole narration of Frère Michel as well as that of Father Alonso emphasize that both the sister companion of Sister Lucy, as well as the two priests, who accompanied the titular bishop of Gurza, were unaware of the objective of the expedition.

And here enters another unlikely point of Cesaneck's argumentation (as well as that of the other authors who follow him): It does not make sense that it should have been agreed upon between the Bishop of Leiria and Sister Lucy that she should write the Secret, place it within an envelope and seal it, and then write another text about the Secret in the pages of her spiritual diary, and deliver it open to the titular bishop of Gurza! A secret written in an open notebook is only comprehensible if she were to have kept it close to her, far from the eyes of whomever might violate the Secret, which she had the obligation to preserve, even though its contents were, as Socci thinks, innocuous. For this reason Sister Lucy's Portuguese good sense made her opt for a sealed envelope.

So as we have already pointed out, Socci is right when he comments that *"it seems strange to write the two parts of the Secret on different pages, one part in a notebook and one part on a piece of paper."*⁴⁹ More than strange, we say, it is unbelievable!

Therefore the thesis that Sister Lucy might have written the Third Secret dividing it into two different documents has no support in the known facts.

12. A Sheet in Four Pages!

Nevertheless, the fact that the Third Secret is written on one single sheet of paper is well attested: Socci repeats the testimony of Cardinal Ottaviani, His Excellency João Pereira Venâncio, then auxiliary bishop of Leiria, and Father Alonso, all agreeing about that (cf. pp. 154-155). Whence Socci concludes:

“Here we already have explosive news: *The Third secret of Fatima is written on a single piece of paper. It is manifest to everyone that that single piece of paper is not the same Third Secret that was made public in 2000, which was written on four pages*”⁵⁰ (p. 154).

So then it appears that Socci has proved his thesis just fine!

What neither Socci nor the authors who preceded him in this observation are aware of, is that in the first half of the twentieth century it was very common, at least in Portugal and in Brazil, to use a sheet of writing paper in the format of approximately 12x18 centimeters, which corresponded to an open sheet of about 24x18 centimeters, which on being folded in half formed exactly four pages with sixteen marked lines per page, such as those that Sister Lucy used to write the third part of the Secret!

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith did not specify that detail when it published the booklet *The Message of Fatima*, but an attentive analysis of the four pages leads one to think that that must have been exactly the case.

In fact one notices that Sister Lucy was squeezing together her handwriting starting on the third page of her manuscript. So it is that while on pages one and two the average number of letters per line is 25.9 and 26.9 respectively, on page 3 the average is 29.2 per line, and on page 4 30.6 per line. Anyone who used that type of paper would have recourse to exactly that expedient, in order to make what was left fit within the four pages at her disposition.

Furthermore on page 4 Sister Lucy uses up the sixteen lines that are available and writes two more lines after the last line. If she had been using a notepad with loose leaf pages, she would not have needed to squeeze her handwriting beginning on page 3, nor to have written two more lines outside the marks of the paper. It would have been enough to take another loose sheet and finish her account on that.

This hypothesis is not mere speculation. We ourselves used to use that type of letter paper in our adolescence (decade of 1940), and in the year 2000 we consulted an old employee of a stationery store who remembered that type of paper perfectly well and how it used to come very well packed in a cardboard box, from a well known São Paulo firm. At the same time we examined the correspondence of my father and my mother in the decade of the 1930s, and that was exactly what was used.

And, more important, in the critical documentation of Fatima, one very frequently finds the indication: “*Description of the document: a double sheet (four pages) of sixteen lines.*”

One sees then that that type of letter paper was one of the most common things to be found in the period taken in up to now in the critical documentation (the years 1917-1930).

If then the Third Secret is written down on a single sheet, as we have described it, folded in half, the two affirmations are true: **a single sheet in four pages**, and the contradiction which alarms Socci is resolved.

All of this long analysis could have been avoided if the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith had been less sober in describing the document containing the Third Secret of Fatima. Perhaps they thought that the simple photographic reproduction made in the booklet *The Message of Fatima* would obviate any discussion about the authenticity of the Third Secret.

That is the question for the Italian researchers who have greater ease of access to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith than a Brazilian researcher kept in his country by personal obligations.

* * *

The research suggested in the previous paragraph, as well as the laborious argumentation that preceded it, have now become superfluous.

In fact, in the television program *Porta a Porta* of May 31, 2007, Cardinal Bertone showed the general public for the first time the original text of the Third Secret written by Sister Lucy: It is made up of precisely one sheet doubled in half making a total of four pages.

So Socci’s argument, which by its palpable and concrete character had won over so many people and seemed irrefutable, is completely emptied.

* * *

13. The Length of the Third Secret: 20-30 lines or 62?

Long before the year 2000, many Fatima scholars estimated that the length of the Third Secret would be some twenty to thirty lines. Since the text revealed by the Holy See is 62 lines long, some concluded that there are two texts of quite different lengths. And this is what Socci adduces in favor of his thesis, even considering this discrepancy as

explosive news [“*notizia splosiva*”] (p. 154).

How did the estimate of twenty to thirty lines arise? As far as we know, the first to present it was Frère Michel de la Sainte Trinité in *Toute la vérité sur Fatima* (Vol. 3, 1985, p. 419; p. 626 in the English edition) where he makes that reference just in passing without any special justifications.

Andrew Cesanek mentions another text of Frère Michel in Fact #4 of his study in *The Fatima Crusader* of Summer 2000, which is somewhat longer: “Bishop Venâncio ‘looked at the envelope [containing the Third Secret] while holding it up to the light. He could see inside a little sheet whose exact size he measured. We thus know that the Third Secret is not very long, probably twenty to twenty-five lines . . .’” (*The Secret of Fatima Revealed*, Immaculate Heart Publications, Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada, 1986, 32 pages, p. 7).

Reading that, an unwary reader could think that the estimate of twenty to twenty-five lines is the result of Bishop Venâncio's investigation. Frère Michel however expressed his thought at greater length in a lecture he gave at the Augustinianum of Rome on November 24, 1985: “Bishop Venâncio told me himself on February 13, 1984, that he should have been satisfied in looking through the envelope. One could see inside it a small sheet whose exact form he measured. We also know that the Third Secret is not long, **probably** twenty to twenty-five lines, that is to say quite close to the length of the second secret” (Frère Michel, *Le Troisième Secret de Fatima*, La Contre-Réforme Catholique, no. 222, May 1986, p. 4).

So it is that, from what Bishop Venâncio said, Frère Michel deduces only that “*the Third Secret of Fatima is not very long.*” And from that he raises the conjecture: “**Probably** twenty to twenty-five lines, that is to say quite close to the length of the Second Secret.”

Everything indicates therefore that the estimate did not come from Bishop Venâncio but rather from Frère Michel, who by an association of ideas compares it to the length of the Second Secret (25 lines in Sister Lucy's *Fourth Memoir*).

The whole question of twenty to thirty lines is then an old conjecture that Fatima scholars used to cite before the Holy See revealed the Third Secret. But they did so merely as a curious observation suggested by the fact that the First Secret is nineteen lines long, and the second one twenty-five. So the Third Secret shouldn't be much beyond those dimensions. **This was obviously a mere conjecture.**

Now, since it is a simple conjecture it does not lend itself to the inference that a longer text would be necessarily false, nor that there should be another of only twenty-five lines. It could have a greater extension as long as that length was compatible with the dimensions of one sheet of paper.

In order to make this argument stick – that is, the certain existence of another text twenty to thirty lines long – it was necessary to transform the “conjecture” into the finding of a more concrete fact. For that reason Socci (p. 154), taking one step beyond Cesanek, positively affirms that it was a “calculation” made by Bishop Venâncio: “Within the large envelope of the bishop [José Alves Correia da Silva], he [Auxiliary Bishop Venâncio] sees the smaller envelope of Sister Lucy and inside it a regular sheet of paper. Now he also distinguishes Sister Lucy's writing **and calculates there are just a few lines, about twenty to twenty-five**, but he is unable to read any of it.”⁵¹

Socci draws all this information from the journalist Aura Miguel, who in his work *Totus Tuus: Il segreto di Fatima nel pontificato di Giovanni Paolo II* [Totus Tuus: The Secret of Fatima during the Pontificate of John Paul II] (Itaca, 2003, p. 130) relates the facts as follows: “*Bishop João Pereira Venâncio ... before leaving [the letter] at the nunciature, holds the mysterious document up against a lamp, seeing in it only a small page with a few lines written on it. Bishop João sees only the size of the small envelope and the shadow of Sister Lucy's writing, but is unable to read anything,*’ says Father Luciano Cristino, director of the Service of Study and Publicity of the Sanctuary of Fatima.”⁵²

So what Aura Miguel presents as Bishop Venâncio's vague finding – “**a few written lines**” – Socci transforms into a numeric computation – “**calculates there are just a few lines, about twenty to twenty-five.**”

In note 11, p. 141, Aura Miguel refers us at the end of the part cited above to an unpublished document:

“*The Department of Research and Information of the Shrine of Fatima (SESDI) has kept in its archives since 1982 a handwritten document by Bishop João Pereira Venâncio reporting with total precision what he saw through the outer envelope, before delivering the letter to the nunciature. Father Luciano Cristino agreed to reveal to us that unpublished document which, besides the writing of the old bishop of Leiria, included also two pages cut to the exact size of the two envelopes in question. Here is the transcription of the text*”⁵⁴:

“*I have given the letter to the nunciature at 12 o'clock on March 1, 1957. [The larger paper shows the size of the outer envelope, with date December 8, 1945 (14.5x22 cm); the second, of the inside envelope ‘seen’ through the shining light (12x18 cm). The letter — also seen through the shining light — is a little smaller, 3-4 cm less above and to the right, while on the other sides it coincided with the inner envelope. The external envelope has Bishop José's seal in red wax. Held up to the light one can see nothing within, but can intuit that it was sealed at the four corners].*

Leiria, March 1, 1957. + João, auxiliary bishop."⁵⁵

As one can see in the journalist's report (which Socci reproduces, with its essential elements, in note 244 of p. 154) there is no word about the "calculation" that Bishop Venâncio supposedly made of the 20/25 lines. It was a personal addition of Socci, probably led to do so by the current conjecture among Fatima scholars, whose origin he did not take the trouble to investigate.

Meanwhile, one could object that in Aura Miguel's testimony we read that Bishop Venâncio saw, inside Sister Lucy's envelope, "*a small page with a few lines written.*"

Note, in the first place, that he does not cite the source of his affirmation. Msgr. Cristino clarifies that Bishop Venâncio, beyond the size of the envelope, saw only "*the shadow of Sister Lucy's writing.*" Would this have been sufficient to deduce that there were "*few written lines*"?

In trying to mentally accompany Bishop Venâncio's investigation, the first reflection to make is that the Secret having been written on a piece of stationery, the latter must have been folded to fit inside the envelope. Upon looking at this piece of paper through two envelopes (whose thickness we don't know) Bishop Venâncio could have made out the lines written on one side of the paper, standing out against the lines on the other side, which would certainly have made the exact computation of the number of lines difficult.

If, furthermore, that sheet of letter paper was written on both back and front (as we suppose in the previous section), the situation becomes even more complicated for such down-home methods of investigation.

So we are inclined to think that the supposed twenty-five lines are not the result of any calculation, approximate as it might be, but remain what they always were, that is, a simple guess without value as proof.

Nevertheless, there is room here for an observation of an elementary character: When it is said that the Secret revealed by the Holy See is sixty-two lines long, one forgets the obvious fact that the length of a document depends on the width of the paper on which it was written. Now in the *Fourth Memoir* the nineteen lines of the First Secret and the twenty-five lines of the Second Secret have about 42.5 characters per line because the paper used was of a wider format. The format of the letter paper used for the Third Secret is narrower, only 28.5 characters in Sister Lucy's writing.

That being so, sixty-two lines of 28.5 characters each amount all together to 1,767 characters, which, if they were written in 42.5 character lines, would occupy about 41.5 lines. Therefore the disproportion of estimating twenty to thirty lines for the Third Secret is not as great as some people have claimed with much to-do. So there is no way to conclude that there are two different texts, whose lengths are greatly unequal.

* * *

It is remarkable – as Cardinal Bertone pointed out on the same program *Porta a Porta* – that the Third Secret was placed by Sister Lucy, not merely inside an envelope, but within three: the first, of 9x14 centimeters, that she sealed and put inside a second envelope, sealed as the first one (that is to say, with a triple seal, one in the middle, and the other two in the upper corners). On the front of each envelope, she wrote the same thing (the only variation being the breaking point in the sentences from one line to the next): "*By Our Lady's express orders this envelope can only be opened in 1960 by His Eminence the Cardinal Patriarch of Lisbon or by His Excellency the Bishop of Leiria.*"

Then Sister Lucy put the two envelopes inside a third one, a yellow envelope that she left open, simply addressing it to the Bishop of Leiria. He in his turn put everything inside a fourth envelope, sealed it and wrote on it: "*This envelope with its contents will be delivered to His Eminence Cardinal Manuel, Patriarch of Lisbon, after my death / Leiria, December 8, 1945. + José, Bishop of Leiria.*"

This is the envelope that appears in the photo of the Bishop of Leiria by reporter M. Pazen, of *Life* magazine, which published it on January 3, 1949 – coincidentally five years after the Third Secret was written (cf. Frère Michel, vol. III, p. 43; in English, p. 54).

This whole interesting scene suggests very significant comments, which this is not the moment to develop. We shall limit ourselves to note that the existence of four envelopes, not merely two, as people thought, was one more difficulty for Bishop João Pereira Venâncio's valuable investigation described above. The investigation should be reevaluated in the light of these new facts.

* * *

14. Per l'appunto! Two Texts after all. – Which ones?

A new item of information in Antonio Socci's book is a declaration by Solideo Paolini regarding contacts he had with Archbishop Loris Capovilla, personal secretary of John XXIII (Socci, pp. 139ff).

After a failed attempt to have a personal meeting with Archbishop Capovilla, Paolini sent some questions to the

prelate as had been agreed upon between them. Alongside the question “*about the existence of an unpublished text of the Third Secret that would still not have been revealed,*”⁵⁶ Archbishop Capovilla had simply jotted down, “I know nothing” [“*Nulla so*”] (Socci, p. 140). Paolini showed surprise, for if the prelate considered that everything had been revealed in 2000, he should have said so very clearly and straightforwardly and not in an answer that appeared to be evasive like: “I know nothing” [“*Nulla so*”]. Sincerely, the response appears unequivocal to us: “***I know nothing***” [“*Nulla so*”] ... **with regard to an unpublished Third Secret.**

The prelate also sent him a document on his episcopal stationery along with a personal note, dated July 14, 2006, drawn from the “*reserved notes of L. F. Capovilla,*”⁵⁷ telling him that on the 27th of June 1963 Msgr. Angelo Dell'Acqua had sought him out asking him, in the name of Paul VI (who had just received the bishop of Leiria, His Excellency João Pereira Venâncio, in audience), if he knew where the envelope with the Secret of Fatima was. “*There in the right-hand drawer of the Barbarigo desk in the bedroom,*” responds Archbishop Capovilla. The next day the pontiff himself interrogates him: “Why is your name on this dossier?” The prelate responds that he wrote there the notes that John XXIII had dictated to him.

It is not said, however, that Paul VI had read the Secret on that occasion. A Paul VI eager to read the Secret (he had been elected on the 21st and they hadn't even carried out the ceremony of coronation) is the last thing one would expect, considering everything Socci emphasizes, based on Jean Guitton, a friend of the Pope: “*According to his French friend, Paul VI had a sort of generic aversion to seers. He maintained that since revelation is already complete, the Church has no need of these things, to which an exaggerated importance is given*”⁵⁸ (Socci, p. 209, in an interview of Stefano Maria Pacci in *30 Giorni*, March 1990).

In spite of that, Socci understood that Paul VI had already read the Secret by that time, six days after being elected pope. But going by the report that Archbishop Capovilla sent to him, one can only deduce with certainty that the pope wanted to be sure where the document was to be found: That was enough for him to be able to calm the bishop of Leiria whom he had just received.

At any rate, even if Paul VI had read the Secret on that occasion, since the envelope was in his bedroom, there was no reason for that fact to have been recorded in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. In fact, in the registers of that Congregation it is reported that Paul VI read the Secret on March 27, 1965, as Archbishop Tarcisio Bertone says in the booklet *The Message of Fatima*, adding that the pontiff “*returned the envelope to the archives of the Holy Office with the decision not to publish the text*” (English edition, p. 4).

The expression “returned” implies that the document had already been there before, perhaps ever since Paul VI found it “*in the Barbarigo desk.*”

But for Socci the events did not take place in such a simple way. Always absorbed by the idea that there are two texts, one published and the other hidden, he imagines that the two readings that Paul VI is said to have made of the Secret (June 27, 1963 and March 27, 1965) were of two different texts. And he expounds a whole intricate theory that the “*explosive*” text was left unpublished in the pope's desk while the innocuous one, published in the year 2000, was left at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (cf. pp. 145-149).

And so we reach the Pontificate of John Paul II. There also appear diverse testimonies: Navarro Vals, the spokesman of the press office of the Holy See, reports that the pontiff read the Secret a few days after assuming the papacy in 1978 (cf. Socci, p. 146); and on the other hand we have the report of Archbishop Bertone in *The Message of Fatima* about the reading that John Paul II made of it in 1981 after the attempt on his life.

First let us see how Socci describes this last scene (he summarizes the text of Archbishop Bertone): “*John Paul II for his part asked to see the envelope containing the third part of the secret after the assassination attempt of May 13, 1981. The envelope — Socci continues — came from the Holy Office July 18, 1981 (while the Pope was still in the hospital because of the attack) and on the following August 11 it was returned to the Archives of the Holy Office*”⁵⁹ (Socci, p. 147 — emphasis ours).

Archbishop Bertone reports the same episode in a more complete form: “*John Paul II, for his part, asked for the envelope containing the third part of the ‘secret’ following the assassination attempt of May 13, 1981. On July 18, 1981, Cardinal Franjo Seper, Prefect of the Congregation, gave two envelopes to Archbishop Eduardo Martinez Somalo, Substitute of the Secretary of State: — one white envelope, containing Sister Lucy’s original text in Portuguese; — the other orange, with the Italian translation of the ‘secret.’ On the following August 11, Archbishop Martinez returned the two envelopes to the Archives of the Holy Office*” (*The Message of Fatima*, English edition, p. 5; emphasis ours).

It is known, therefore, since the year 2000 when the booklet by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith was published, that there are two envelopes, containing the same text although in different languages. Why would Socci have left out that important detail in his account?

So we return to Paolini: When he interpellated Archbishop Capovilla about the discrepancy of the dates of Paul

VI's reading described above (1963 or 1965), the prelate answered: "*But I explain that perhaps the Bertone dossier is not the same as Capovilla's*"⁶⁰ (Socci, p. 142). Paolini continues his narration: "*But I said immediately, interrupting him: 'So both of the dates are true because there are two texts of the third secret?' Here there was a brief pause of silence, then Archbishop Capovilla replied: 'Per l'appunto!' ['Exactly!']*."

Socci appears stupefied and exultant at the same time: "*A bombshell. That which until now we suspected is confirmed by a key testimony; there exists a Fourth secret, or indeed a part of the Third secret (evidently that which follows the words of Our Lady interrupted by 'etc.')* not yet revealed and that has taken a different route through the meanderings of the Vatican halls"⁶¹ (Socci, p. 142).

Now then, in order to arrive at a conclusion of such import and with such grave consequences it would have been necessary for Paolini to have taken his verification of the details to the very limits of clarity in his telephone call to Archbishop Capovilla.

And this is so in the first place because the final declaration of Archbishop Capovilla apparently contradicts what he had previously affirmed: "*Nulla so*" (regarding an unpublished Third Secret). Thus, it would be up to Paolini to clarify this possible contradiction with Archbishop Capovilla.

Furthermore, he would have done well to ask Archbishop Capovilla exactly which texts His Excellency was talking about: Were there two texts with a different content or two texts with the same content in different languages placed in distinct envelopes? Paolini, who claims to have studied *The Message of Fatima* very attentively, could not fail to know of the existence of these two texts and two envelopes.

This time, however, he did not want to go ahead with his research and was satisfied with Archbishop Capovilla's response, "*Per l'appunto!*," concluding without any more clarifications that there are two texts of the Third Secret whose content is different, one of which was revealed and another kept away from public knowledge by the Holy See.

Let us analyze Paolini's narration in more detail in consideration of the great importance that Socci gives to that argument.

The idea of two distinct texts, always present in Paolini's thought, leaped from his mind to his lips when Archbishop Capovilla raised the possibility that Bertone's dossier ("*plico*") was different from Capovilla's (Socci, p. 142). Now it goes without saying that the two dossiers were not identical since they served different functions in the Roman Curia. Therefore, it is not evident that the difference between these two dossiers implies all by itself the existence of two distinct texts of the Third Secret.

Nonetheless, Socci believes he can place the Third "*innocuous*" secret in "*Bertone's dossier*," and the "*explosive one*" in Capovilla's (cf. p. 146). In that case one cannot understand how Capovilla could have declared, "*I know nothing*," referring to a non-revealed text whose existence according to Socci was or had been part of his "*plico*." With the ease of one who had exercised such an important responsibility for the Holy Father, if he had been really conscious that there was a "not revealed" Third Secret, he certainly should have found a more evasive answer that would preserve his official Secret, and not a categorical "*I know nothing*," that he wrote by hand in the tranquility of his study.

Then, Archbishop Capovilla – who during the whole telephone call tried to dodge Paolini's uncomfortable questions – became embarrassed as Paolini asked him whether the difference between the two dossiers signified the existence of two texts of the Third Secret. Finally, after "*a brief pause*," he answered: "*Exactly!*" ["*Per l'appunto!*"].

What cogitations must have gone through Archbishop Capovilla's mind in that interim? Looking for a way out he could have thought of the two texts, one in Italian and the other in Portuguese, and considered that saying "*Per l'appunto!*" would be a good way to shake off an uncomfortable interlocutor.

Therefore, the prelate's exclamation does not necessarily have the scope that Paolini attributes to it. At any rate, Archbishop Capovilla took the initiative to declare during the telephone call that he was lucid, which indicates that he would still be able to be consulted about the matter. As long as that is not done, we remain limited strictly to the field of speculation.

* * *

The consultation suggested here (in April of 2007, when we finished writing this work), turned out to be very fruitful. Archbishop Loris Capovilla was interpellated precisely about that point during an interview with the journalist Giuseppe De Carli: "*Is the text that you have read equal to that which was presented to the world in June 2000 by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger and Archbishop Tarcisio Bertone?*"⁶² — The answer was categorical: "*But of course! I have said it and I gladly repeat it now: that is the text. I do not remember it word for word, but the nucleus is the very same.*"⁶³

At the journalist's insistence on the same question, and more specifically on the existence of a non-revealed "Fourth Secret," Archbishop Capovilla was emphatic: "*I will tell you more. When I heard talk about the 'Fourth Secret' I was astonished. It never occurred to me that a 'fourth secret' might exist. No one ever told me nor have I ever*

affirmed such a thing.”⁶⁴

The above-mentioned interview – that the Zenit news agency included in the news of September 23 and from which we draw the passages quoted – had already been published in a shorter version starting on the 12th of the same month, in Italy, from where it spread to the world.

The same interview was shown on a video, at the time of the launching of Cardinal Bertone’s book, *The Last Seer of Fatima*, at the Pontifical Urbanian University on the 21st.

Paolini and Socci, prevented from entering the meeting at the *Urbanianum*, and shocked by Archbishop Capovilla’s declarations, now try to compare them with his previous ones, so as to continue maintaining their thesis of a “not revealed Secret.”

Such is the *status quaestionis*, at the time when this work is delivered to the printer. We believe that, at any rate, without entering into the polemics that are getting hotter and hotter, the considerations made here justify the title we have used for this work, that is to say, “Some friendly reflections for the clarification of a debate.”

* * *

15. “Proof Based on Circumstantial Evidence”

We believe that we have presented a general view of Socci's argumentation sufficient to enable the reader to form his own opinion about the value of his thesis that there is a “Fourth not-revealed Secret,” or, more precisely, a “not revealed” part of the Third Secret.

This is the moment to say a word about the author's wishful thinking, that makes him leap from mere hypotheses or at times simple indications to a certain conclusion. It is he himself who alerts us to those leaps.

One of Cesanek's arguments (taken up again by Father Kramer, pp. 148-149) that there are two distinct texts of the Third Secret is that while Sister Lucy wrote the now known text of the Secret on January 3, 1944, she only informed the bishop of Leiria of that fact on January 9. What was the reason for that six-day delay? It is because, supposes Cesanek, during that time she was writing the text found in the notebooks... [a text which, as we have seen, does not exist!].

Perhaps for a mind with an Anglo-Saxon formation, accustomed to an admirable punctuality in correspondence, that delay of six days is incomprehensible. But for us, Latins, that perplexity merely raises a benevolent smile to our lips.

At any rate, this is again a mere supposition, for the bishop of Leiria's haste was for the sick Sister Lucy to write down the Secret as soon as possible. And there was not so much of a hurry about the forwarding of the text that took place only five months later, as we reported above.

Commenting on Cesanek's hypothesis (apud Father Kramer) Socci writes: “*The very authors of this thesis recognize that this is a ‘proof based on circumstantial evidence,’ that is, a deduction, although it seems well-founded and plausible. Beyond discussion on the contrary – at this point in our research – is the fact that the Third secret is made up of two different texts*” (p. 153).

And here we encounter the curious logic of Socci: He lines up in the course of his extensive “research” an endless series of hypotheses, often based on simple clues, and then leaps to the conclusion: “*Beyond discussion on the contrary....*”

On page 172 he writes, “*Naturally, these are hypotheses. But that there is a part of the Secret still not revealed and deemed ‘untellable,’ is certain.*” — “*These are hypotheses... but it is certain*”!⁶⁵

A careful reader would like for him to have been less precipitous in his conclusions.

16. Lucid and Opportune Commentaries

As we bring this article to its end we cannot fail to praise the undeniable dialectic gifts of Antonio Socci, lamenting only that he did not apply them in the interpretation of the revealed part of the Third Secret, which he nevertheless considers authentic (though incomplete).

If he had done so *keeping in view* the Secret of Fatima *as a whole* (for it constitutes a unique whole), he would have found sufficient basis to maintain almost all his **affirmations** – interesting, lucid and opportune as they are (at times with a bit too much of salt or pepper...) – **about the state of humanity in our days and particularly about the crisis of the Church**, especially the post-conciliar crisis with a particular emphasis on the liturgical reform, including the tragic banishment of the Tridentine rite, whose reestablishment he advocates (see pp. 211-212).

Therefore, we share with Socci his description of the painful, reluctant and incomplete heed of the ecclesiastical hierarchy for several decades to the requests of Our Lady of Fatima, especially regarding the consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary (pp. 182ff).

We are especially pleased with his reference to the Reign of Mary: “*In 1917, facing the century of darkness, at the hour of the monstrous assault on the Church and against humanity, God manifests his plan: to establish the reign of Mary in order to save the world from self-destruction, to save the Church from disappearing and mankind from eternal damnation*”⁶⁶ (p. 184). That idea which he could not fail to connect with St. Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort: “*Almost with the same words Our Lady announced at Fatima that the time predicted by St. Louis de Montfort had arrived: ‘God wishes to establish in the world the devotion to my Immaculate Heart’ and after a great struggle that is happening in our time, ‘In the end My Immaculate Heart will triumph’*” (p. 229).⁶⁷

At this point we lament that he may not have known and for that reason does not cite the work of Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, a Brazilian thinker and Catholic leader of worldwide renown, who was the greatest advocate and apostle of the Reign of Mary in the twentieth century, and who continuously referred and was always faithful to the message of Our Lady at Fatima.

It is for this reason that we consider that Socci would have done better by explaining the Third Secret just as it was revealed, thus benefiting the faithful who have been unable to grasp the profound meaning of its content. Instead, by inducing his readers to think that there *certainly is* a non-revealed part of the Secret, he draws them into a futile hope of new disclosures and, as a consequence, to ignore and not take advantage of the extremely significant symbolism of the vision which is the Third Secret. That is a deeply lamentable loss for the cause of Fatima!

Appendix

Consultation Concerning the Third Part of the Secret Presented to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

I — Letter to Archbishop Tarcisio Bertone

On 25 September, 2001, the author sent to His Excellency Archbishop Tarcisio Bertone S.D.B., DD. Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the following letter:

The whole Catholic world knows about the prominent participation of Your Excellency in the episodes culminating with the historic session of 26 June last year, when the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, at the behest of His Holiness John Paul II, communicated to the world the third part of the Fatima secret, that until then had not been revealed.

Your Excellency not only had a relevant role in that session, but was personally charged by the Holy Father to clarify personally with Sister Lucy certain points pertaining to the Message of Fatima that were indispensable, so that such a long awaited revelation might be done with all the necessary objectivity. Catholics the world over are grateful to Your Excellency for the seriousness and competence with which Your Excellency carried out this delicate mission.

Hence it seems to me proper and efficacious that I should address the enclosed consultation to Your Excellency, as the right person to provide the requested clarifications.

Your Excellency is certainly aware that some people have raised questions, some pertinent, others not, based on some still unclarified points concerning the Message of Fatima, which jeopardize the salutary effect the revelation of the Secret should otherwise produce. Hence my hope that once these points have been clarified – some of them being nearly academic in nature – the rumors surrounding this topic will cease, or at least provide conditions for Fatima authors to demonstrate to the general public how unfounded those speculations are.

It is with filial respect and trust that I place the enclosed consultation in Your Excellency’s hands, confident that the considerations therein adequately expound the scope of the questions raised.

Thanking Your Excellency in advance for whatever attention you may give this [letter], I am devotedly yours,

In Jesu et Maria,
Antonio Augusto Borelli Machado

II — A Consultation about the Third Part of the Secret

The unexpected and auspicious revelation of the third part of the Fatima Secret on 26 June 2000, by determination of the Holy Father, who entrusted the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to make all necessary arrangements, caused understandable jubilation among Catholics the world over. It was only natural that Fatima scholars – and even mere Fatima devotees – would pore over the text released and strive to discern its significance in order to attain a deeper understanding of Our Lady's Message and thereby more faithfully and speedily fulfill its recommendations and orientations.

Thus, Fatima-related literature – already voluminous before the revelation – expanded with new analyses and commentaries on the third part of the Secret (or "third Secret," as it is commonly called). It obviously began with the interpretation offered by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. For its part, this interpretation has been the object of detailed analyses. It seems, however, that the authors of such analyses do not always clearly distinguish between the interpretation made by the Vatican Congregation and the object of said interpretation, namely the text in which Sister Lucy describes the prophetic vision, which is essentially the "third Secret" and which is and always should be the primary object of the analysis.

The third part of the Secret constitutes, then, the keystone of the message of Fatima, which is thus presented as a consistent and complete whole in its essential lines, offering mankind a complete solution for the problems that afflict us.

It is perfectly legitimate, therefore, for Fatima scholars to try to discern and explain this consistency and entirety.

The witness *par excellence* to the apparitions is the surviving seer, Sister Lucy, to whom all Fatima devotees and scholars refer with the utmost veneration and reverence, as Our Lady's privileged confidante. Known for her extremely reliable memory, she was undoubtedly enriched and protected by the gifts of the Holy Ghost so as to become the trustworthy guardian of the Message.

Upon examining the texts of Sister Lucy with the utmost care and veneration, Fatima scholars have realized that, with the revelation of the third Secret, some points are not entirely clear and require an explanation. Such is the object of this consultation, which we respectfully submit to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to take the action it deems appropriate.

Where Does the Third Part of the Secret Fit?

1. At the end of her narration of the second Secret, Sister Lucy quotes Our Lady as saying, "Do not tell this to anyone. But you can tell this to Francisco." Did Our Lady say this before or after the vision that constitutes the third Secret?

What Is the Significance of the Omission, in the Third Memoir, of the Concluding Phrase of the Second Secret?

2. The phrase at the conclusion of the second Secret – "In Portugal the Dogma of the Faith will always be preserved" – appears in *Memoirs IV* but not in *Memoirs III*.

It is known that seers are often favored by a special regime of graces and inspirations of the Holy Ghost, be it for the good of the whole Church or for their individual spiritual good. Hence, for example, Our Lady permitted St. Bernadette, at a certain point after she had become a nun in the convent at Nevers, to lose all recollection of the apparitions, to the point of doubting whether she had in fact experienced them at all and that she had therefore deceived the whole world with her declarations! Fortunately, this was a fleeting trial, but Lourdes historians recount the fact. A curious phenomenon also befell St. Catherine Labouré: while her confessor was arranging for the coining of the medal later to be known as the "miraculous medal," he wanted to know exactly what to place on the back side. He asked the seer to make a complete description of the medal again. The seer sent word to him that at that moment all she remembered was precisely the back side! Her confessor, who until that moment had doubted the veracity of the apparitions, was very much impressed by that fact.

Bearing this in mind, two questions can be raised: (a) Could a similar spiritual phenomenon have befallen Sister Lucy, leading her to omit from her *Memoirs III* a phrase she would later include in her *Memoirs IV*? (b) What is the significance of this omission?

What Did Sister Lucy Wish to Signify with the "Etc. . . ." That She Included in the Fourth Memoir?

3. It is well known that the phrase added to her *Memoirs IV* ends with "etc. ..." That could perhaps mean two things: (a) that the third Secret was inserted at this point of the narrative; or (b) that the phrase continued with an explanation related to the third Secret. In both hypotheses, Sister Lucy was still bound to secrecy concerning the third part, which she was not then permitted to disclose. Which of the two hypotheses explains the "etc. ..." Sister Lucy wrote, or could there be a third hypothesis that does not occur to us?

SOME OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE RESULT OF THE CONSULTATION

1. Since it has not been possible to obtain a complete clarification of the matters consulted above during the life of Sister Lucy, as we have already mentioned earlier (cf. section 10 of the *Reflections*), the historical literature about Fatima will always suffer from an irreparable gap. All that Fatima scholars can now do is to work with the available documentation in order to present the message of Fatima in the most trustworthy possible way.

2. The reader will have noted that, in our consultation, we followed the "etc." with ellipses that do not, however, appear in the facsimile of the manuscripts of Sister Lucy (cf. *Memoir IV*, p. 340).

Where, then, did those ellipses come from? Fr. Joaquín María Alonso, CMF, was the one who put them in his valuable study, *La verdad sobre el secreto de Fátima* (p. 25). And in the article, "De nuevo el secreto de Fátima" ["The Secret of Fatima Once Again"] (published in the Spanish review, *Ephemerides Mariologicae*, Madrid, vol. XXXII, 1982, fascicle 1, p. 85), he explicitly points out: "**Note well: the 'etc and the ellipses' are from the manuscript itself.**" He repeats the same thing in the book, *Doctrina y espiritualidad del mensaje de Fátima* (Arias Montano Editores, Madrid, 1990, p. 276).

Since he is indisputably an authority in the matter, in 1966 he was named by the then Bishop of Leiria, João Pereira Venâncio, to "undertake the long desired critical history of Fatima" (cf. *Documentação Crítica de Fátima*, vol. I, p. VII), a work to which he dedicated himself until his death in 1981. Therefore, he must have had the original manuscripts of Sister Lucy where the above-mentioned ellipses would have been visible. If it were not so, it would not make sense for him to have made such a categorical affirmation. Curiously, moreover, there is a blank space in the manuscript where they would fit in perfectly (precisely between the words "dogma of the Faith etc." and "Do not tell this to anyone").

The fact is, as we have already said, that they do not appear in the printed reproductions offered to the public up until now. What could have happened? Could the ink on the manuscript have faded so much that the ellipses became invisible? That is a phenomenon that takes place frequently in old documents, whether due to the nature of the ink, of the paper, or the conditions in which the document is preserved. Since the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith did not enter into any technical aspect regarding the state of preservation of Sister Lucy's manuscripts, this important detail is left without clarification for the moment.

Now then, the existence of those ellipses is not irrelevant, for it would reinforce very much the idea, introduced by the "etc.," that the phrase "*In Portugal...*" was followed by an explanation, all the more so since without that sequence it seems to be left hanging in the air (cf. our book, *Fatima: Messaggio di tragedia o di speranza?* [Fatima: A Message of Tragedy or Hope?], Luci sull'Est, 2002, note 11, p. 2).

When we included the ellipses in our above consultation we were hoping that their existence would be explained, for on being asked about the line in question, Sister Lucy could perhaps have explained why she put them there. Since the question was not put to her, we are left in face of one more doubt – whether or not the ellipses existed – which only a technical study of the manuscript itself could eventually resolve.

3. After the death of Sister Lucy, the Carmel of Coimbra published a booklet entitled, *Como vejo a Mensagem através dos tempos e dos acontecimentos* [How I see the Message through time and events], by Sister Lucy (joint publication by the Carmel of Coimbra and the Secretariat of the Little Shepherds, Coimbra, 2006, 63 pages). It is a collection of commentaries on the Message of Fatima that Sister Lucy started writing in 1983 at the suggestion of the Carmelite Provincial, Fr. Jeremias Carlos Vechina. It was to be written as she found time, and the seer left them unfinished. Unfortunately, we do not know how much time the seer was able to consecrate to this work, nor in what year she wrote her last commentaries, which reach only to the fourth apparition of the cycle of 1917.

As far as this Consultation is concerned, it is worth noting that in that booklet Sister Lucy confirms the final line of the second part of the Secret – "In Portugal the dogma of the Faith will always be preserved" – although she suppresses the "etc." which she had placed in *Memoirs IV* (p. 340).

This confirmation and the subsequent suppression of the “etc.” are significant for two reasons:

a) Having observed that the line in question is found in *Memoir IV* and not in *III*, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith decided to reproduce the facsimile of *Memoir III*, leaving in a footnote the line “*In Portugal, the dogma of the Faith will be always preserved etc.*,” with the observation that it was added in *Memoir IV* (cf. *The Message of Fatima*, pp. 13-14, 16).

Since it was relegated to a footnote, the phrase could appear as being of little importance.

The fact that Sister Lucy repeats it once again in the booklet “*How I see the Message*” re-establishes its importance as the closing of the second part of the Secret and justifies all the commentaries that Fatimologists have deduced from its rich content (cf. our book *Messaggio di tragedia o di speranza?*, Luci sull’Est, 2002, nota 11, p. 29).

b) As for the suppression of the “etc.,” its significance could vary depending on whether it took place before or after the revelation of the third part of the Secret. If it was previous, Sister Lucy would be merely continuing her unflinching discretion regarding everything that might be related with the third Secret. If it was later, it could indicate that the line “*In Portugal...*” is not followed by any explanation that would make its sense explicit or that would constitute a connection with the third part.

Such a conclusion would be consonant with the categorical answer that she gave to the question of Archbishop Bertone, in the important conversation of 17 November 2001: “*To someone expressing the doubt that something of the ‘third secret’ had been hidden, Sister Lucy responds: ‘Everything has been published; there is no more secret’*” (Bulletin of the Vatican Press Office, 12-20-2001).

Note well that **Sister Lucy was questioned about the third Secret**. Even though there were indeed people who raised doubts about its being complete, **a contextual analysis would only permit a conjecture of that sort in relation to the final line of the second Secret**, as we point out in topic 3 of our consultation reproduced above. At any rate, one can understand that the answer of Sister Lucy – “*Everything has been published, there is no more secret*” – is comprehensive and also includes the second Secret. In this case, the hypothesis that the Secret is incomplete in any one of its parts would seem to be definitively ruled out.

Whatever conclusion one may draw from these considerations, the omission of the line “*In Portugal...*” in *Memoir III*, and its inclusion in *Memoir IV*, **will remain forever an inexplicable mystery**.

Such is the *status quaestionis* in which the passing of Sister Lucy leaves the Fatima issue.

He who is imbued with the transcendental importance of the matters already reviewed and published can perceive that they contain precious guidelines to orient the action of faithful Catholics in a secularized world arrogantly defiant of the precepts of the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ and of his Holy Church. In the sometimes pungent clashes that will occur as we follow her guidelines, we must never become discouraged: the Immaculate Heart of Mary will be our refuge and the way that will lead us to God (cf. *Second apparition*).

¹ “*Pensavo alla povera suor Lucia... per mesi, pur dopo averne ricevuto l’ordine, non riusciva a scrivere il testo del terzo segreto, tanto ne era atterrita!*”.

² “*In effetti — dopo due mesi di pesantissima angoscia che le avevano reso impossibili scrivere quel testo (tanta era la sua drammaticità) — a sbloccare la situazione, in aiuto di suor Lucia, era stata una ennesima apparizione della Madonna, avvenuta domenica 2 gennaio 1944*”.

³ “*Per trascrivere questo breve messaggio della Madonna — dopo aver ricevuto l’ordine del vescovo — suor Lucia fu attagliata e bloccata dall’angoscia per quasi tre mesi e, come si è detto, riuscì a superare la sua drammatica difficoltà solo grazie all’intervento della Madonna... Ma perché quella angoscia di Lucia? Perché quel blocco? Per eventuali profezie di spaventose catastrofi che possono esservi contenute?*”.

⁴ “*Perché nel 1944 [suor Lucia] si sarebbe dovuta sentire paralizzata e terrorizzata?... Sembra di poterne dedurre che in quelle venti righe, in quelle poche parole della Madonna, è contenuto qualcosa di più, qualcosa di inimmaginabile e indicibile, che dopo aver ‘paralizzato’ suor Lucia per tre mesi, ha ‘terrorizzato’ anche i pontefici inducendoli a non rivelare quelle parole*”.

⁵ “*Per evitare che una cosa tanto delicata, destinata a non essere data in pasto al pubblico (sic), venga, per una qualunque ragione, anche fortuita, a cadere in mani estranee*” (p. 37)

⁶ “*Perché mai per la ‘terza parte’ il Vaticano addirittura invocò a sé il testo e lo segreto? Quale innominabile contenuto poteva avere? Possibile che si trattasse solo del testo della visione svelato nel 2000? Quel testo non sembra giustificare tale allarme, né un intervento così drastico della Santa Sede. § Si referirà dunque a un altro testo? È lì la ‘dinamite’? Evidentemente sì*” (p. 37).

⁷ “*Si non lo si pubblica [il terzo Segreto], almeno per ora, è per evitare di far scambiare la profezia religiosa con il sensazionalismo*” (Socci, p. 99).

⁸ “*Pubblicare il ‘terzo segreto’ significherebbe anche esporsi al pericolo di utilizzazioni sensazionalistiche del contenuto*” (Socci, p. 102).

⁹ “*Se nel 1984 Ratzinger parlava del Terzo segreto come qualcosa che scatenerrebbe ‘sensazionalismo’ per la ‘profezia religiosa’ che contiene, viene da pensare che parlasse di un Terzo segreto diverso rispetto a quello rivelato nel Duemila che appare ‘inocuo’*” (p. 99).

¹⁰ “*Chi legge con attenzione il testo del cosiddetto terzo ‘segreto’ di Fatima, ... resterà probabilmente deluso o meravigliato dopo tutte le speculazioni che sono state fatte. Nessun grande mistero viene svelato; il velo del futuro non viene squarciato*” (p. 44, Italian edition).

¹¹ “*È improbabile che lo stesso cardinal Ratzinger, a proposito dello stesso testo, dia due giudizi antitetici.... Dunque o il prelato ha totalmente*

- capovolto il suo giudizio (ma non si vede in base a quali eventi) o i due diversi giudizi riguardano due testi diversi, quello della visione e quello con le misteriose parole della Madonna) (p. 100).
- ¹²“... profetizzato, con tale solennità, dalla Madona di Fatima ha **una gravità assolutamente unica nella storia (del mondo e) della Chiesa** dove pure non sono mancate persecuzioni, **massacri immensi** e anche attentati alla vita dei papi.”
- ¹³“... il papa della visione profetica ‘venne ucciso’ ed è infinitamente diverso dall’essere feriti. Del resto, **tutta la scena della visione di Fatima, che sembra evocare una situazione di guerra e distruzione**, non ha alcun punto di contatto con la scena dell’attentato di Piazza San Pietro del 13 maggio 1981.”
- ¹⁴“Nella terza parte la visione mostra un pontefice che viene martirizzato (insieme a una quantità di altri cristiani), **nel contesto di una prova apocallittica per la Chiesa.**”
- ¹⁵“A questo punto **il quadro profetico di Fatima** ci mette di fronte a un evento che deve ancora accadere: il martirio di un papa e con lui di tanti pastori e cristiani, **in un contesto di devastazioni spaventose**. Preannuncia **quindi una situazione tragica per il mondo e per la Chiesa.**”
- ¹⁶“Se padre Alonso conosceva (tutto) il Terzo segreto doveva conoscere anche questa parte che — a ben vedere — **non sembra per nulla incruenta**. Anzi, induce a pensare che **il contesto sia quello di una grande tragedia bellica** (dall’angelo del castigo divino le cui fulgori verso il mondo sono fermate dalla Vergine alla città in rovina, ai cumuli di cadaveri, fino ai soldati che uccidono il papa e con lui tanti vescovi e fedeli).”
- ¹⁷“Forse la terza parte del Segreto — fra le altre cose — prospetta una Terza guerra mondiale in cui precipiterà l’umanità se si ostina ancora sulla via del male. In fondo **la visione che fa parte del Terzo segreto mostra proprio uno scenario di rovine e distruzione**. § Si tratta di ipotesi, naturalmente. Ma **che vi sia una parte del Segreto non svelata e ritenuta ‘indicibile’ è certo.**”
- ¹⁸“**mostra proprio uno scenario di rovine e distruzione**”
- ¹⁹“**Qual è il senso di questa visione così enigmatica** e di questi prefigurati eventi? Come vengono spiegati? Possibile che la Madonna appaia così clamorosamente a Fatima per dare un messaggio-avvertimento tanto importante che però **resta incomprensibile, confuso** o suscettibile di diverse e contrapposte interpretazioni? Quella visione, resa nota nel Duemila dal Vaticano, non viene spiegata dalla Santa Vergine?”
- ²⁰“un contesto di devastazioni spaventose”
- ²¹“una situazione tragica per il mondo e per la Chiesa”
- ²²“Non possiamo sbarazzarci dell’impressione che qualcosa manchi... **Veniamo a sapere semplicemente di una punizione senza precedenti ed enorme per la Chiesa, fedeli e Gerarchia. Non ci è data nessuna indicazione sul perché questa punizione unica deve visitarci adesso, né come possiamo evitarla con la conversione: la profezia Divina normalmente ha un carattere di avvertimento...** Così ci sono un certo numero di punti che fanno sospettare e dubitare che il testo che possediamo sia completo.”
- ²³“una punizione senza precedenti ed enorme per la Chiesa”
- ²⁴“perché questa punizione unica deve visitarci adesso.”
- ²⁵“ci sono un certo numero di punti che fanno sospettare e dubitare che il testo che possediamo sia completo”
- ²⁶“non ci è data nessuna indicazione”
- ²⁷“la profezia Divina normalmente ha un carattere di avvertimento.”
- ²⁸“Perché la Madonna avrebbe spiegato un qualcosa di così ovvio come la visione dell’Inferno, mentre non avrebbe dato alcuna parola per spiegare quest’oscuro passaggio pubblicato dal Vaticano?”
- ²⁹“La risposta può essere la seguente: perché quella visione non fa altro che illustrare le parole appena pronunciate dalla Madonna, quelle sulle persecuzioni, quelle che costituiscono il Secondo segreto. Kramer controbatte però che vi sono particolari della visione altamente simbolici che non sono spiegati, che restano misteriosi, per esempio quello relativo all’Angelo e soprattutto l’assassinio del papa e l’insieme della narrazione. Perciò la visione non può essere la rappresentazione di ciò che ha predetto nel Secondo segreto.”
- ³⁰“Restava una sola cosa ancora celata, il cosiddetto Terzo segreto, ovvero la visione del ‘vescovo vestito di bianco’. Se a questa si aggiungesse anche una spiegazione della Madonna avremmo quattro parti. La replica dei ‘tradizionalisti’ però propone di considerare una cosa sola la visione e la spiegazione che ne dà la Madonna.”
- ³¹“ancora sconosciute”
- ³²“quella frase . . . restava dunque sospesa nell’aria” (p. 24)
- ³³“il dubbio che sia stato nascosto qualcosa del terzo segreto”
- ³⁴“**Tutto è stato pubblicato; non c’è più nulla di segreto**”
- ³⁵“Le poche parole a lei [Suor Lucia] attribuite nei documenti sopra citati sono tali da non avere obiettivamente credibilità” (p. 125)
- ³⁶“Tutto è stato pubblicato; non c’è più nulla di segreto.”
- ³⁷“La sensazione complessiva, ora che suor Lucia è ormai morta, è che **si è persa un’immensa occasione per lasciare ai posteri la sua testimonianza esauriente e completa** sulle più straordinarie apparizioni mariane della storia della Chiesa” (p. 125)
- ³⁸“Suor Lucia, in procinto di mettere tutto nero su bianco, spiega: ‘Mi hanno detto di scrivere, sia nei quaderni dove mi hanno ordinato di annotare il mio diario spirituale, sia su un foglio di quaderno da mettere poi in una busta sigillata con cera lacca’.²⁴⁰ **Ecco dunque come nascono i due testi. Sembra strano scrivere le due parti del Segreto in fogli diversi, una parte nel taccuino e una parte in quel foglio**, ma ciò che suor Lucia comunica in seguito al vescovo di Leiria mostra che proprio così lei ha fatto: ‘Ho scritto ciò che mi ha chiesto; Dio ha voluto mettermi un po’ alla prova, ma dopo tutto questa era in effetti la Sua volontà: (il testo) è in una busta sigillata e tale busta è nei quaderni’” (p. 152).
- ³⁹“240 FM [Frère Michel], vol. III, p. 36. A dire il vero lo stesso brano, ripreso dal libro di padre Alonso La verdad sobre el secreto di Fátima (p. 33), viene tradotto diversamente nell’edizione italiana del libro di Aura Miguel: ‘Mi dicono di scriverlo o nei quaderni dove mi fanno redigere il mio diario spirituale oppure, se voglio, in un foglio di carta e metterlo poi in una busta chiusa e sigillata’ (Totus tuus, cit., p. 129). **È evidente che ‘sia...sia...’ è il contrario di ‘o...o...’**. Per risolvere la controversia basta tener presente che suor Lucia, comunicando di aver scritto il Segreto, consegnerà sia il foglio (dentro la busta) che i taccuini. **Evidentemente li ha usati entrambi.**”
- ⁴⁰“è evidente che ‘sia...sia...’ è il contrario di ‘o...o...’”
- ⁴¹“Evidentemente li ha usati entrambi”
- ⁴²“foglio di quaderno”
- ⁴³“sembra strano scrivere le due parti del Segreto in fogli diversi, una parte nel taccuino e una parte in quel foglio”
- ⁴⁴“Ho scritto ciò che mi ha chiesto...: (il testo) è in una busta sigillata e tale busta è nei quaderni.”

- ⁴⁵ “una parte nel taccuino e una parte in quel foglio”
- ⁴⁶ “(il testo) è in una busta sigillata e tale busta è nei quaderni”
- ⁴⁷ “nei quaderni”
- ⁴⁸ “busta sigillata”
- ⁴⁹ “sembra strano scrivere le due parti del Segreto in fogli diversi, una parte nel taccuino e una parte in quel foglio”
- ⁵⁰ “Qui abbiamo già una notizia esplosiva: il Terzo segreto di Fatima è scritto su un unico foglio di carta. È a tutti evidente che quell'único foglio non è lo stesso Terzo segreto che è stato reso noto nel Duemila, il quale è scritto su quattro fogli” (p. 154).
- ⁵¹ “Dentro la grande busta del vescovo [D. José], [Mons. Venâncio] vede la busta più piccola di suor Lucia e dentro di essa un foglio normale. Scorge anche la scrittura di Lucia, **calcola che sono poche righe, circa 20-25, ma non riesce a leggere niente.**”
- ⁵² “Mons. Joao Pereira Venancio, ... prima di lasciarla [la lettera] nella nunziatura, guarda il misterioso documento in controluce, **intravedendo solo un piccolo foglio con poche righe scritte.** ‘Il signor vescovo Joao, in trasparenza, vide solo la grandezza della busta e la macchia delle parole scritte da suor Lucia, **ma non riuscì a leggere niente**’, racconta padre Luciano Cristino, direttore del Servizio di Studi e Diffusione del Santuario di Fatima.”
- ⁵³ “poche righe scritte,” “calcola che sono poche righe, circa 20-25”
- ⁵⁴ “Il Servizio di Studi e Diffusione del Santuario di Fatima (SESDI) dal 1982 conserva nei suoi archivi un **documento manoscritto di mons. João Pereira Venâncio che riferisce con esattezza quanto vide in trasparenza, prima di consegnare la busta in nunziatura. Padre Luciano Cristino accettò di rivelarci quel documento inedito che, oltre allo scritto dell'antico vescovo di Leiria, comprende anche due fogli ritagliati dell'esatta misura delle due buste in questione. Ecco la trascrizione del testo.**”
- ⁵⁵ “Ho consegnato la lettera in nunziatura alle 12 [ore] del 1° marzo 1957. [Il foglio maggiore indica la grandezza della **busta esterna**, con la data dell'8 dicembre 1945 (14,5x22 cm); il secondo, di **quella interna** ‘vista’ in trasparenza (12x18 cm). **La lettera — vista anch'essa in trasparenza — è un poco più piccola di formato, 3-4 cm di meno sopra e a destra, mentre sugli altri lati coincideva con la busta interna. La busta esterna recava sui bordi il sigillo del signor mons. José in ceralacca rossa. Per trasparenza non si vedeva niente dentro, ma si intuiva che era sigillata ai quattro angoli.] Leiria, 1° marzo 1957. + João, vescovo ausiliare.”**
- ⁵⁶ “circa l'esistenza di un testo inedito del Terzo Segreto che non sarebbe ancora stato rivelato”
- ⁵⁷ “Note riservate di L.F. Capovilla”
- ⁵⁸ “Secondo l'amico francese ‘Paolo VI aveva una sorta di generica aversione per i veggenti. Sosteneva che, poiché la rivelazione si è compiuta, la Chiesa non ha bisogno di queste cose, alle quali si dà un'importanza esagerata’”
- ⁵⁹ “‘Giovanni Paolo II, da parte sua, **ha richiesto la busta** contenente la terza parte del segreto dopo l'attentato del 13 maggio 1981'. **La busta arrivò dal Sant'Uffizio il 18 luglio 1981 (mentre il papa era in ospedale proprio per l'attentato) e l'11 agosto seguente fu restituita all'Archivio del Sant'Uffizio.**”
- ⁶⁰ “Ma io giustifico, forse il plico Bertone non è lo stesso plico Capovilla...”
- ⁶¹ “Una vera bomba. Ciò che finora sospettavamo adesso viene apertamente affermato da un testimone chiave; esiste un Quarto segreto, ovvero una parte del Terzo segreto (evidentemente il seguito delle parole della Madonna interrotte dall'etc') non ancora rivelata e che ha fatto un diverso percorso nei meandri delle stanze vaticane.”
- ⁶² “Il testo che lei ha letto corrisponde a quello che è stato presentato al mondo nel giugno 2000 dal cardinale Joseph Ratzinger e da monsignor Tarcisio Bertone?”
- ⁶³ “Ma certo! L'ho detto, e lo ripeto volentieri adesso: quello è il testo. Parola per parola non lo ricordo, ma il nucleo centrale è il medesimo”
- ⁶⁴ “Le dirò di più. Quando ho sentito parlare di ‘Quarto Segreto’ sono rimasto strabigliato. Non mi era mai passato per la testa che esistesse un ‘quarto segreto’. Nessuno me lo ha detto né io ho affermato una cosa del genere.”
- ⁶⁵ “**Si tratta di ipotesi, naturalmente. Ma che vi sia una parte del Segreto non svelata e ritenuta ‘indicibile’ è certo.**” — “Si tratta di ipotesi... ma è certo”!
- ⁶⁶ “Nel 1917, di fronte al secolo delle tenebre, nell'ora dell'assalto mostruoso contro la Chiesa e contro l'umanità, Dio manifesta il suo piano: **fondare il regno di Maria** per salvare il mondo dall'autodistruzione, per salvare la Chiesa dalla sparizione e l'umanità dalla dannazione eterna.”
- ⁶⁷ “Quase con le stesse parole la Madonna a Fátima annuncia che è arrivato il tempo predetto dal Montfort: ‘Dio vuole stabilire nel mondo la devozione al mio Cuore Immacolato’ e dopo un grande scontro che coincide con i nostri anni, ‘Alla fine il Mio Cuore Immacolato trionferà.’”

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