Secrets of Fatima



John Paul II in Fatima on 13th May 2000

The heart of the Virgin Mary's Messages is contained in what has come to be known as the "Secret", which she confided to the three child seers in July 1917. The Secret consists of three parts.

The first part was a horrifying vision of hell "where the souls of poor sinners go" and contained an urgent plea from Our Lady for acts of prayer and sacrifice to save souls.

The second part specifically prophesised the outbreak of World War II and contained the Mother of God's solemn request for the Consecration of Russia as a condition of world peace. It also predicted the inevitable triumph of Her Immaculate Heart following Russia's consecration and the conversion "of that poor nation" to the Catholic Faith.

The last part of the Secret (often called the "Third Secret") was written down by Lucia Dos Santos in 1944 and has been in the possession of the Vatican since 1957.

On May 13, 2000, Pope John Paul II visited Fatima for the beatification of Jacinta and Francisco Marto. At the end of the ceremonies the Pope asked Cardinal Angelo Sodano to read a message in Portuguese to the congregation, which revealed the third secret of Fatima in general terms.

This third secret had been the subject of intense speculation among Catholics for decades. The content had been known only to the Pope, his predecessors, and (then) Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

The secret details a vision of a "bishop dressed in white" who is caught up in a battle against an atheistic system that oppresses the Church. That bishop "falls to the ground, as if dead, after a

volley of gunfire." Sister Lucia, the last surviving Fatima seer, confirmed that the "bishop dressed in white" was the Pope.

Since surviving the attempt on his life, which occurred on the feast of Our Lady of Fatima, Pope John Paul II repeatedly said that he believed the Virgin Mary was responsible for his survival.

Relevance of Fatima message today

Even if the events to which the third part of the secret of Fatima refers now seem part of the past, Our Lady's call to conversion and penance, issued at the beginning of the 20th century, remains timely and urgent today.

The Lady of the message seems to read the signs of our time with special insight. The insistent invitation of Our Lady to penance is the manifestation of her maternal concern for the fate of the human family, in need of conversion and forgiveness.

The Vatican has since officially endorsed the Fatima Message "as worthy of belief". Five successive popes have publicly indicated their approval and belief in the validity of the Fatima apparitions.

Several popes have visited Fatima on solemn pilgrimage. A year after the assassination attempt, John Paul II stated that "the message of Fatima is more relevant and more urgent today than even when Our Lady first appeared".

Litany of Our Lady of Fatima