

(Photo: The International Pilgrim Virgin Statue that shed tears in 1972 during a visit to New Orleans, Louisiana. See [here](#) for more details.)

Last week Tuesday (June 26, 2018) marked the eighteenth anniversary of the release of [The Message of Fatima](#), a booklet published by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) in which the Vatican claims to have revealed the entire [Third Secret of Fatima](#) - that is, the third part of the Secret entrusted to the three shepherd children by Our Lady on July 13, 1917.

The CDF booklet provides Sister Lucia's description of a mysterious vision (previously unpublished) concerning "a Bishop dressed in White" who passes "through a big city half in ruins" and is eventually "killed by a group of soldiers" atop "a steep mountain" near "a big Cross", followed by "the other Bishops, Priests, men and women Religious, and various lay people of different ranks and positions" who were following the Holy Father and are killed in the same manner. What is missing, however, is *the continuation of Our Lady's words* (recorded by Lucia in her Fourth Memoir), "In Portugal the dogma of the Faith will always be preserved etc." - a key phrase of the Blessed Virgin consigned to the status of a footnote at the back the booklet. [Correction: In the hard-copy booklet, the footnote in question is found at the bottom of page 16 (English text), not "at the back of the booklet." The author consulted the [online version](#) of *The Message of Fatima*, which lists all footnotes at the end of the document. - Ed.]

As Providence would have it, I gave a Fatima-themed talk at a local parish on June 26 and, towards the beginning, I chose to emphasize the following words of Pope Benedict XVI during his May 13, 2010 [homily](#) at Fatima: "We would be mistaken [lit. 'One would be deceiving himself' in the original [Italian](#)] to think that Fatima's prophetic mission is complete." Although the theme of my talk was the Five First Saturdays (based on a [conference talk](#) I gave last May), I took the opportunity to stress that Fatima - including its "prophetic mission" - is not only relevant but *vital* for us here and now, contrary to what certain men in the Church would have us believe. We need look no further for the vital relevance of Fatima than the recent headlines announcing more despicable crimes on the part of Catholic clergy.

Sins That Cry to Heaven

Roughly a week before my parish talk, news broke that Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, Archbishop Emeritus of Washington, D.C. (retired since mid-2006), has been forbidden by the Holy See to exercise public ministry due to a "credible and substantiated" allegation of sexual abuse. Both McCarrick and Cardinal Donald Wuerl, the current D.C. Archbishop, released [statements](#) on the incident, as did [Cardinal Timothy Dolan](#), Archbishop of New

York, who was tasked with overseeing the investigation (the incident of abuse occurred some 45 years ago, when then-Father McCarrick was a priest of the Archdiocese of New York).

For the record, this “credible and substantiated” case is not the only incident in Cardinal McCarrick’s past (far from it, as Steve Skojec of *OnePeterFive* demonstrated in his [initial report](#), quoting the formerly Catholic journalist [Rod Dreher](#) at length). Later in the day on June 20 (date of the McCarrick announcement), other prelates [admitted](#) to knowing about [other allegations](#) of “sexual behavior with adults” involving the now-disgraced cardinal, two of which resulted in “settlements”.

This is the same Cardinal McCarrick, by the way, who [stated](#) in 2007 that he would not feel “comfortable” denying Holy Communion to openly pro-abortion politicians, despite being clearly [admonished otherwise](#) in 2004 by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, then-Prefect of the CDF and the future Pope Benedict XVI. It is also the same Cardinal McCarrick who proudly [admitted](#) to having “talked up” (i.e. lobbied for) Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio among his fellow cardinals prior to the 2013 Conclave that elected Bergoglio as Pope Francis.

Just a week after the McCarrick announcement, *LifeSiteNews* [reported](#) that “[a] priest and diplomat who served at the Vatican’s embassy in Washington, D.C.” – note the location (McCarrick’s turf) – “has been convicted of possession and distribution of child pornography, according to the Holy See.” The report goes on to explain, “The Vatican City State tribunal declared [Msgr. Carlo Alberto] Capella specifically guilty of ‘publishing, transmitting, offering, and holding’ child pornography in the form of cartoons, photos, and videos, which he had downloaded on his phone,” while also observing, “The conviction of Capella follows several high-visibility scandals that have troubled Pope Francis and the Vatican in recent months” – most notably, the case of [Bishop Juan Barros](#), a Chilean prelate appointed by none other than Pope Francis.

Vital Relevance of Fatima

You may well be wondering: *How do these cases of clergy sexual abuse/pastoral negligence have anything to do with Fatima?* Well, do you recall what Benedict XVI stated back in 2010? “One would be deceiving himself to think that Fatima’s prophetic mission is complete.” He uttered those words on May 13; two days prior, while en route to Fatima, he uttered even more explosive words in response to an equally controversial question, one directly related to clergy sexual abuse.

On May 11, 2010, during the [flight to Portugal](#), Benedict fielded a small number of pre-selected questions from the media that were presented to him by Fr. Federico Lombardi,

S.J., then-Director of the Holy See Press Office. The third and final series of questions reads as follows:

"... Your Holiness, what meaning do the Fatima apparitions have for us today? In June 2000, when you presented the text of the third secret in the Vatican Press Office, a number of us and our former colleagues were present. You were asked if the message could be extended, beyond the attack on John Paul II, to other sufferings on the part of the Popes. Is it possible, to your mind, to include in that vision the sufferings of the Church today for the sins involving the sexual abuse of minors?" (Emphasis added)

Here, in part, was Benedict's explosive answer:

"... In 2000, in my presentation, I said that an apparition – a supernatural impulse which does not come purely from a person's imagination but really from the Virgin Mary, from the supernatural – that such an impulse enters into a subject and is expressed according to the capacities of that subject. ... Consequently, I would say that, here too, beyond this great vision of the suffering of the Pope, which we can in the first place refer to Pope John Paul II, an indication is given of realities involving the future of the Church, which are gradually taking shape and becoming evident. So it is true that, in addition to moment [sic] indicated in the vision, there is mention of, there is seen, the need for a passion of the Church, which naturally is reflected in the person of the Pope, yet the Pope stands for the Church and thus it is sufferings of the Church that are announced. The Lord told us that the Church would constantly be suffering, in different ways, until the end of the world. ... As for the new things which we can find in this message today, there is also the fact that attacks on the Pope and the Church come not only from without, but the sufferings of the Church come precisely from within the Church, from the sin existing within the Church. This too is something that we have always known, but today we are seeing it in a really terrifying way: that the greatest persecution of the Church comes not from her enemies without, but arises from sin within the Church, and that the Church thus has a deep need to relearn penance, to accept purification, to learn forgiveness on the one hand, but also the need for justice. Forgiveness does not replace justice." (Emphasis added)

Although he did not give a simple "yes" in response, Benedict clearly implied an affirmative

answer to the question concerning “the sufferings of the Church today for the sins involving the sexual abuse of minors”. By emphasizing that the Third Secret concerns “the future of the Church”, and more specifically, “a passion of the Church” resulting “from sin within the Church” that is manifesting itself “today...in a really terrifying way”, Benedict unmistakably affirmed that the Third Secret deals with much more than a failed assassination attempt. (The idea that anyone familiar with the facts and in their right mind could buy such an absurd explanation is both insulting and comical.)

Yet Benedict’s lengthy answer in 2010 begs a further question: Where in Sister Lucia’s description of the vision do we see *anything* about “sin within the Church”? Simply put, *there is no indication of it whatsoever*, which obviously means, in the words of Mother Angelica, that “we didn’t get the whole thing.”[1]

The Third Secret Speaks of Apostasy

Thankfully, due to the testimony of several key witnesses and scholars – and the efforts of men like [Fr. Nicholas Gruner](#) and [John Vennari](#) (*may they rest in peace*), who worked tirelessly to spread this crucial testimony – we know the substance of Our Lady’s still-hidden words, which can be summarized by a single word: *apostasy*. Here is a brief sampling of the testimony to that effect, most of which can be found in Volume 3 of [The Whole Truth About Fatima](#) by Frère Michel de la Sainte Trinité[2]:

- “I cannot say anything of what I learned at Fatima concerning the third Secret, but I can say that it has two parts: *one concerns the Pope*. The other, logically – although I must say nothing – would have to be **the continuation of the words: *In Portugal, the dogma of the Faith will always be preserved.***”[3] (Emphasis added) – [Fr. Joseph Schweigl, S.J.](#), d. 1964 (interrogated Sister Lucia about the Third Secret on behalf of Pope Pius XII on Sept. 2, 1952)[4]
- **“In the period preceding the great triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, terrible things are to happen.** These form the content of the third part of the Secret. What are they?

If ‘in Portugal the dogma of the Faith will always be preserved,’ ... it can be clearly deduced from this that in other parts of the Church these dogmas are going to become obscure or even lost altogether.

Thus **it is quite possible that** in this intermediate period which is in question (after 1960 and before the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary), **the text makes concrete references to the crisis of the Faith of the Church and to the negligence of the pastors themselves.**"[5] (Emphasis added) - [Fr. Joaquin Alonso, C.M.F.](#), d. 1981 (Cleratian priest and official Fatima archivist for over sixteen years; had unparalleled access to Sister Lucia)

- **"The Secret of Fatima** speaks neither of atomic bombs, nor nuclear warheads, nor Pershing missiles, nor SS-20's. **Its content concerns only our faith.** To identify the Secret with catastrophic announcements or with a nuclear holocaust is to deform the meaning of the message. **The loss of faith of a continent is worse than the annihilation of a nation;** and it is true that faith is continually diminishing in Europe." [6] (Emphasis added) - [Bishop Alberto Cosme do Amaral](#), d. 2005 (former bishop of Fatima-Leiria; remarks made in Vienna, Austria on Sept. 10, 1984)
- "It [the Third Secret] has nothing to do with Gorbachev. **The Blessed Virgin was alerting us against apostasy in the Church.**" (Emphasis added) - [Cardinal Silvio Oddi](#), d. 2001 (Vatican diplomat and personal friend of Pope John XXIII, from whom he knew certain details concerning the Third Secret)[7]
- "In the Third Secret it is foretold, among other things, that **the great apostasy in the Church will begin at the top.**" (Emphasis added) - [Cardinal Mario Luigi Ciappi, O.P.](#), d. 1996 (personal theologian to Popes John XXIII-John Paul II)[8]

But perhaps the most compelling testimony of all is that of Sister Lucia herself, who related the following to [Fr. Augustine Fuentes](#) during a Dec. 26, 1957 interview:

"Father, the devil is in the mood for engaging in a decisive battle against the Blessed Virgin. And the devil knows what it is that offends God the most, and which in a short space of time will gain for him the greatest number of souls. Thus the devil does everything to overcome souls consecrated to God, because in this way the devil will succeed in leaving the souls of the faithful abandoned by their leaders, thereby the more easily will he seize them.

That which afflicts the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Heart of Jesus is the fall of religious and priestly souls. *The devil knows that religious and priests who fall away from their beautiful vocation drag numerous souls to hell. ... The devil wishes to take possession of consecrated souls. He tries to corrupt them in order to lull to sleep the souls of laypeople and thereby lead them to final impenitence.* He employs all tricks, even going so far as to suggest the delay of entrance into religious life. Resulting from this is the sterility of the interior life, and among the laypeople, *coldness (lack of enthusiasm) regarding the subject of renouncing pleasures and the total dedication of themselves to God.*

... Hence from now on we must choose sides. *Either we are for God or we are for the devil. There is no other possibility.*"[9] (Emphasis added)

Apostasy and Moral Corruption

Once again, you might be asking: *What does apostasy (loss of faith) have to do with clergy sexual abuse?* More than we might think, precisely because *purity of faith* and *purity of heart* (and, ultimately, of conduct) are profoundly interrelated. St. Augustine of Hippo (A.D. 354-430) touches upon this truth at the end of his treatise [*On Faith and the Creed*](#) (Ch. 10, 25), where he explains:

"This is the faith which in few words is given in the Creed to Christian novices, to be held by them. And these few words are known to the faithful, to the end that in believing they may be made subject to God; that being made subject, they may rightly live; that in rightly living, they may make the heart pure; that with the heart made pure, they may understand that which they believe."[10] (Emphasis added)

If our minds are not subject to God through "obedience to the faith" (Rom. 1:5; cf. 16:26), then our wills inevitably stray from following the dictates of His law. And vice versa, if we choose to commit grave sins – especially sins of the flesh – and thus form a deep-seated habit of sin, our interest in the truths of Faith will eventually be snuffed out, just as "the end of the commandment" – that is, the result of keeping God's law – "is charity from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and an unfeigned faith" (1 Tim. 1:5). By choosing to sin, we become "lovers of pleasure more than of God: Having an appearance indeed of godliness but denying the power thereof" (2 Tim. 3:4-5) – namely, *the power of grace to change sinful behavior.*

Does this not fittingly describe men like Cardinal McCarrick, those who have lived for decades with “an appearance of godliness” which was, in fact, a rather thin veneer covering a disgusting habit of unnatural vice?

“The Secret, It’s Terrible”

Let us recall once more the words of Benedict XVI:

“...the greatest persecution of the Church comes not from her enemies without, but arises from sin within the Church, and that the Church thus has a deep need to relearn penance, to accept purification, to learn forgiveness on the one hand, but also the need for justice. Forgiveness does not replace justice.”

“Be not deceived,” St. Paul warns us, “God is not mocked” (Gal. 6:7). And likewise, “Revenge is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord” (Rom. 12:19; cf. Deut. 32:35). The abominable crimes of men like Cardinal McCarrick – sins which are [overwhelmingly homosexual](#) in nature and cry to Heaven for vengeance – will not go unpunished. The frightening reality, though, is that the chastisement for such sins impacts the entire Mystical Body of Christ and the world at large.

With this in mind, let us reflect on one final piece of evidence concerning the Third Secret and its contents. It is found in a book written by Frère François des Marie des Anges, a confrere of Frère Michel, and relates to Cardinal Albino Luciani, who reigned for a mere 33 days as Pope John Paul I (Aug. 26-Sept. 28, 1978):

“In 1977, to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima, Cardinal Albino Luciani led a group of about fifty Italians from Venice to the Cova da Iria, among whom there were about a dozen priests. They went to the Carmel of Coimbra on July 11. The Patriarch of Venice, the future Pope John Paul I, celebrated Mass in the Convent Chapel. Then, on Sister Lucy’s request, he conversed with her for almost two hours. At the end of that interview, ‘the Cardinal appeared very pale, to the extent of leaving an impression on those individuals who were present.’

The photographs taken of him a few months later, in the beginning of the year 1978, when he preached on Lent in his native land, show him again ‘with an expression which was not habitual to him, extremely serious.’ During that

sojourn, his brother and sister-in-law, Edoardo and Antonietta Luciani, perceived that the Cardinal was strangely absorbed, pensive, and inscrutable. 'One evening,' relates Regina Kummer in her biography of John Paul I, 'during dinner, Antonietta suddenly noticed his extreme and anguished pallor. He excused himself and without giving further explanations, he took his breviary and withdrew into his bedroom. The same thing happened the next evening. As a good hostess, she asked him if the food was the cause of his discomfort. The Cardinal answered them: *I was just thinking of what Sister Lucy told me at Coimbra.*

Then he added: *The Secret, it's terrible.*"[\[11\]](#) (Emphasis added)

UPDATE (9/1/2018): A slightly enlarged version of this article, including more recent developments in the ongoing clergy sexual abuse crisis, is available in the Sept. 2018 print edition of CFN (click [HERE](#) to subscribe and gain E-Edition access).

UPDATE (9/13/2018): Earlier this week, Archbishop Georg Gänswein, Prefect of the Papal Household, publicly mentioned Benedict XVI's [response to journalists while en route to Fatima in 2010](#) (quoted in the article above) and connected it to then-Cardinal Ratzinger's [2005 lamentation](#) about "filth...in the priesthood". On Sept. 11, 2018 during a speech in Rome on the occasion of the release of *The Benedict Option* (Rod Dreher) in Italian, Archbishop Gänswein [stated](#):

I would therefore, if I may, like to complement the presentation of the "Benedict Option" by Rod Dreher with a few memorable words from the mouth of Benedict XVI during his ministry; words that I was reminded of when I read the book, for instance those of May 11, 2010, when he entrusted the following to the journalists accompanying him on the flight to Fatima:

"The Lord told us that the Church would constantly be suffering, in different ways, until the end of the world. ... As for the new things which we can find in this message [the third secret of Fatima, ed.] today, there is also the fact that attacks on the Pope and the Church come not only from without, but the sufferings of the Church come precisely from within the Church, from the sin existing within the Church."

At that time, he had already been pope for five years. More than five years earlier - on 25 March 2005 - Cardinal Ratzinger had already found the following words

at the 9th Station of the Way of the Cross on Good Friday at the Colosseum, before the dying John Paul II:

“Should we not also think of how much Christ suffers in His own Church? How often is the holy Sacrament of His Presence abused, how often must He enter empty and evil hearts! How often do we celebrate only ourselves, without even realizing that He is there! How often is His Word twisted and misused! What little faith is present behind so many theories, so many empty words! How much filth there is in the Church, and even among those who, in the priesthood, ought to belong entirely to Him! How much pride, how much self-complacency! What little respect we pay to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, where He waits for us, ready to raise us up whenever we fall! All this is present in His Passion. His betrayal by His disciples, their unworthy reception of His Body and Blood, is certainly the greatest suffering endured by the Redeemer; it pierces His Heart. We can only call to Him from the depths of our hearts: Kyrie eleison - Lord, save us.”

Notes

[1] Quoted by Christopher A. Ferrara in his book, [The Secret Still Hidden](#) (Pound Ridge: Good Counsel Publications, 2008), p. 68. In the Aug-Sept. 2011 issue of *Inside the Vatican* magazine, Dr. Robert Moynihan (founder and editor-in-chief of ITV) revealed that Archbishop Pietro Sambini, the Apostolic Nuncio to the United States who had recently passed away, [personally recommended](#) *The Secret Still Hidden* to Moynihan.

[2] Last May, during his [Rome Life Forum speech](#), Cardinal Raymond Burke praised Frère Michel's work as a “monumental study of the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima” and quoted from Volume 3 as follows: “In short, **the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary** undoubtedly refers much more to the third Secret than even the second. For the recovery of peace will be a gift from Heaven, but it is not, properly speaking, the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Her victory is of another order, supernatural, and then temporal by addition. **It will first be the victory of the Faith, which will put an end to the time of apostasy, and the great shortcomings of the Church's pastors.**” (Emphasis added)

[3] Quoted by Frère Michel de la Sainte Trinité in *The Whole Truth About Fatima*, Volume III: *The Third Secret* (1942-1960), trans. John Collorafi (Buffalo: Immaculate Heart Publications, 1990), p. 710.

[4] *Ibid.*, see pp. 337-338.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 687.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 677-678.

[7] See Maike Hickson, "[Cardinal Oddi on Fatima's Third Secret, the Second Vatican Council, and Apostasy](#)", *OnePeterFive*, Nov. 28, 2017.

[8] See "[Alice Von Hildebrand Sheds New Light on Fatima](#)", *OnePeterFive*, May 12, 2016.

[9] See *The Whole Truth About Fatima*, Vol. III: *The Third Secret*, pp. 505, 507.

[10] Philip Schaff (Ed.), *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, Vol. 3 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., fifth printing—January 2012), p. 333.

[11] Frère François des Marie des Anges, *Fatima: Intimate Joy, World Event*, Book IV *Fatima: Tragedy and Triumph* (Buffalo: Immaculate Heart Publications, 1994), pp. 143-144. Concerning the origins and purpose of this work, the author himself explains in his Preface: "When Brother Michael [aka Frère Michel] left our community [the Little Brothers of the Sacred Heart] in 1989, in order to consecrate himself to the contemplative life in Chartreuse [as a Carthusian monk], he had not yet drafted the fourth volume [of *The Whole Truth About Fatima*] announced as 'In the End My Immaculate Heart will Triumph.' Some months later our Father Superior [Abbé Georges de Nantes] asked me to pursue Brother Michael's studies on Fatima, in preparing a summary of the three volumes already in print, and of the fourth volume which is yet to appear. ... The last part of this work [Book IV of *Fatima: Intimate Joy, World Event*], abridged from the fourth volume [of *The Whole Truth About Fatima*] deals primarily with the period 1960-1991. Thus this book will show convincingly the actuality of the prophetic warnings contained in the great Secret of Fatima, as also the worldwide importance of the message of Our Lady in these last years of the 20th century." (pp. viii-ix)