

Editor's Note: Since the appearance of [Part I](#) of this series last month, a noteworthy development has taken place. On Sept. 11, 2018, during a lecture in Rome on the occasion of the release of Rod Dreher's *The Benedict Option* in Italian, Archbishop Georg Gänswein, Prefect of the Papal Household, publicly mentioned Benedict XVI's [response to journalists while en route to Fatima in 2010](#) and connected it to then-Cardinal Ratzinger's [2005 lamentation](#) about "filth...in the priesthood" (see [here](#) for Archbishop Gänswein's full speech). This very same connection was made over two months prior in "[Sexual Abuse and the Third Secret](#)", the article with which Kevin Symonds took issue [on his blog](#). Thus, it now seems that the Prefect of the Papal Household agrees with the "Fatimists" in that the Third Secret pertains to much more than a failed assassination attempt. In other words, it 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 XVI, May 11, 2010).

Last month, I began my formal reply to the challenge issued by Kevin Symonds, author of *On the Third Part of the Secret of Fatima*, who has gained some notoriety over the past 18 months or so for his "charitable critique" of the paranoid, misguided "Fatimists" (e.g. Fr. Nicholas Gruner, Christopher Ferrara, Antonio Socci, etc.). In his book, Mr. Symonds asserts that those who reject the Vatican Party Line (that the entire Third Secret was published in 2000) cling needlessly to a "hermeneutic of suspicion and conspiracy," implying that such individuals (myself included) should have faith in corrupt Vatican bureaucrats like Cardinals Sodano and Bertone (both [indicted](#) by Archbishop Viganò) who assure us that there is no "missing text" containing the actual words of Our Lady.

Holding to his own "hermeneutic of naïveté and denial," as I call it, Symonds is apparently satisfied with "Fatima Lite" (personal prayer and penance) and chooses to associate with and defend those who promote it, most notably, the World Apostolate of Fatima. He also seems to regard himself as one of the new leading lights in the field. For example, he states in his book's Introduction, "If one is looking for exaggerations that grossly mischaracterize Our Lady's call [presumably a dig at "Fatimists"], then this book will be of no help. It is intended for *serious* study of Fátima and the third part of its secret."[\[1\]](#) We shall see if this assertion stands up to scrutiny.

Casting Doubt and Suspicion

Troubling connections and self-aggrandizement aside, we will now begin examining the substance of Symonds' book. It is divided into thirteen chapters, followed by a litany of appendices (three of which are articles of his). After providing a decent history of the Secret

in Chapter One (subdivided into five distinct time periods from 1917–the present), Symonds spends the remaining twelve chapters discussing in minute detail the major arguments against the Vatican Party Line (one per chapter, except for Thirteen, which is a hodgepodge), basically, in an effort to cast doubt and *suspicion* (how ironic) on the evidence.

He declines, however, to examine the crucial “Capovilla envelope” (housed in the papal apartments, as opposed to the Holy Office archive[\[2\]](#)), citing four reasons:

- “An in-depth examination of [Dr. Solideo] Paolini’s claim [that then-Archbishop Loris Capovilla revealed to him the existence of a second, unpublished text in 2006] requires extensive work in Italian. Little time and my capacity with this language prohibit a fair assessment of Paolini’s works.
- “I have made attempts to communicate with Dr. [Robert] Moynihan [of *Inside the Vatican* magazine, who likewise says Capovilla personally confirmed for him the existence of another text]. He has, to date, made little effort to engage me on the topic of [his own conversation with Capovilla](#) [which took place in early 2007]...
- “Cardinal Capovilla died in 2016 having attained to 100 years of age. His death means that time must pass for his affairs to be settled.
- “The Italian journalist Giuseppe de Carli claimed in 2010 to have a private letter from Capovilla that denied Paolini’s story. De Carli himself died shortly after making this admission.”[\[3\]](#)

(For the record, De Carli made his claim at the Fatima Center’s [2010 Rome conference](#) during an impromptu debate with Fr. Gruner, Christopher Ferrara, and John Salza. During that exchange, while speaking about Cardinal Bertone’s 2007 *Porta a Porta* TV appearance and the envelopes displayed on air by Bertone, De Carli admitted that “they [i.e. Bertone & Co.] could have tricked me,” referring to “the Capovilla envelope” being “equal to the Bertone envelope.”[\[4\]](#) Furthermore, before departing the conference, De Carli “warmly embraced Father Gruner and said: ‘Thank you, Father Gruner, for the great work you are doing.’”[\[5\]](#))

Symonds’ avoidance of Dr. Paolini’s testimony due to lack of time and facility in Italian is

quite curious, seeing that he goes to great lengths in his book to dissect and analyze numerous texts in the original languages, despite having only a “modest background with Romance languages,” as he said during an [interview](#) with *Catholic World Report* last November. Here is one brief sample of such an exercise involving the controversial lecture given by Fr. Augustin Fuentes on May 22, 1958 (based on his Dec. 26, 1957 private interview with Sister Lucia) and subsequently published in Spanish, French, and English:

“A comparison between the French text of the third volume of Frère Michel’s study with the French text published by Téqui in 1979 reveals some differences either of style or omission. For an example of omission, the 1979 Téqui text relays the remark attributed to Sr. Lúcia about how the Pope and the Bishop of Fátima did not want to know the third part of the secret. It omits, however, the reason for this, which was ‘so as not to be influenced’ which was in the Spanish text. Frère Michel restored the remark.

...

In the English translation from *Fatima Findings*, the text is organized into fourteen paragraphs (going by indentation). The Spanish is ten. For easy referencing, we shall refer to these paragraphs in the order in which they appear and by number. It is not noted whether or not the English translator ordered the text into fourteen paragraphs or whether that was the choice of the editor of *Fatima Findings*. We leave this question open, taking at face value the ordering of paragraphs as they appeared in the publication.”[\[6\]](#)

(For those interested in the rather tedious paragraph-by-paragraph analysis that follows, you’ll have to buy the book.)

Lost in Minutia, Missing the Big Picture

The bottom line, however, is that Fr. Joaquin Alonso (d. 1981), the official Fatima archivist, *publicly defended* Fr. Fuentes and his text in 1976:

“What Father Fuentes says in the genuine text of his conference to the Mexican religious community in December, 1957, corresponds no doubt in its essentials to what he heard during his visit to Sister Lucy, for although the text is mingled with the preacher’s own oratorical embellishments, and although it is adjusted to

conform to a literary pattern, these texts say nothing that Sister Lucy had not said in her numerous published writings.”[\[7\]](#)

This is a prime example of how Symonds is often lost in minutia and misses the bigger picture. A crucial component of Fatima’s “big picture” is the Church’s external and *internal* war against Liberalism and Modernism – that is, against *apostasy* (the central theme of my “[Sexual Abuse and the Third Secret](#)” article) – which both *preceded* and *followed* Our Lady’s 1917 apparitions.

Longtime readers will recall that [John Vennari](#) (*requiescat in pace*) wrote a classic work on this subject for CFN, which was later published in booklet form as [The Permanent Instruction of the Alta Vendita](#). Therein, Mr. Vennari explains:

“Throughout the 19th century, society had become increasingly permeated with the liberal principles of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, to the great detriment of the Catholic Faith and the Catholic State. The supposedly ‘kinder and gentler’ notions of religious pluralism, religious indifferentism, a democracy which believes all authority comes from the people, false notions of liberty, separation of Church and State, interfaith gatherings and other novelties were gripping the minds of post-Enlightenment Europe, infecting statesmen and churchmen alike.”[\[8\]](#)

The fact the many churchmen embraced these heretical ideas was no accident. On the contrary, “An enemy hath done this” (Matt. 13:28), and the enemy is Freemasonry, as Vennari demonstrates:

“Few Catholics know of *The Permanent Instruction of the Alta Vendita*, a secret document written in the early 19th century that mapped out a blueprint for the subversion of the Catholic Church.[\[9\]](#) The *Alta Vendita* was the highest lodge of the *Carbonari*, an Italian secret society with links to Freemasonry and which, along with Freemasonry, was condemned by the Catholic Church. ...

In his book *Athanasius and the Church of Our Time*, Bishop Rudolph Graber quoted a Freemason who declared that ‘the goal [of Freemasonry] is no longer the destruction of the Church, but to make use of it by infiltrating it.’

...

The *Instruction* called for the dissemination of liberal ideas and axioms throughout society and within the institutions of the Catholic Church so that laity, seminarians, clerics and prelates would, over the years, gradually be imbued with progressive principles.

...

Eventually, a Pope would be elected from these ranks who would lead the Church on the path of 'enlightenment' and 'renewal.' They stated that it was not their aim to place a Freemason on the Chair of Peter. Their goal was to effect an environment that would eventually produce a Pope and a hierarchy won over to the ideas of liberal Catholicism, all the while believing themselves to be faithful Catholics."[\[10\]](#)

This is not a "conspiracy theory." It is a historical, observable *reality* that has rocked the Church to her very foundations, particularly since Vatican II, and now appears to be reaching a terrible climax under Pope Francis. Symonds demonstrates little to no understanding of this crucial history, despite the fact that it was *the driving issue* for the pre-conciliar Popes, from Gregory XVI (r. 1831-1846) to Pius XII (r. 1939-1958). Would he dismiss these venerable Pontiffs - including the great champion against Modernism, St. Pius X (r. 1903-1914) - as harboring a "hermeneutic of suspicion and conspiracy," as well?

Ignoring Crucial Testimony

For one who knows this history, it is not difficult to accept Cardinal Silvio Oddi's testimony that Our Lady of Fatima "was alerting us against apostasy in the Church," especially when it harmonizes perfectly with that of Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli (the future Pius XII) from 1931:

"I am worried by the Blessed Virgin's messages to little Lucia of Fatima. This persistence of Mary about the dangers which menace the Church is a divine warning against the suicide of altering the faith, in her liturgy, her theology and her soul. ... I hear all around me innovators who wish to dismantle the Sacred Chapel, destroy the universal flame of the Church, reject her ornaments and make her feel remorse for her historical past."[\[11\]](#)

Once again, this is *precisely what has occurred* in the Church, and yet it is *nowhere to be found* in the Third Secret text published by the Vatican in 2000. Neither does Symonds

discuss this crucial testimony. Here is the closest he comes to addressing the facts of enemy infiltration and apostasy:

“Between the text [of the Third Secret] not being revealed [in 1960], and the concerns over the orientations of John XXIII, the Abbé [Georges de Nantes] supported the idea that the third part of the secret referred to an apostasy in the Church. This theory would grow and come to influence other influential people who were gravely concerned about Communist infiltration.”[\[12\]](#) [Emphasis added]

Note well, however, that in footnote 82 (immediately following the phrase “apostasy in the Church”) Symonds declares: **“No statement is being made on the merits of this theory in the present book.”** And yet, he [wrote](#) on his blog concerning my “Sexual Abuse and the Third Secret” article: “It is not my intention here to issue a comprehensive response to Gaspers. Instead, **I defer interested readers to my book...**where most of Gasper’s [sic] points are already addressed in detail.”

What good is his book for addressing my article when, *by his own admission*, it offers *nothing* about the “theory” of apostasy in the Church (the core theme of my article)? Very confusing, indeed.

Notes

[\[1\]](#) Kevin Symonds, *On the Third Part of the Secret of Fatima* (En Route Books and Media, 2017), Kindle Locations 141-142.

[\[2\]](#) Cf. Christopher Ferrara, [The Secret Still Hidden](#) (Pound Ridge: Good Counsel Publications, 2008), Appendix I (pp. 217-221) and [Epilogue: Vindication](#).

[\[3\]](#) Symonds, *op. cit.*, Kindle Locations 126-133.

[\[4\]](#) Ferrara, *op. cit.*, [Epilogue: Vindication](#), p. 21.

[\[5\]](#) *Ibid.*, p. 37 (photo caption).

[\[6\]](#) Symonds, *op. cit.*, Kindle Locations 2510-2516, 2531-2535.

[\[7\]](#) 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), pp. 552-553.

[8] John Vennari, *The Permanent Instruction of the Alta Vendita: A Masonic Blueprint for the Subversion of the Catholic Church* (Rockford: TAN Books and Publishers, Inc., 1999), p. 11. This indispensable booklet is now back in print (Second Edition, 2017) and available from the Fatima Center (www.fatima.org) and the [CFN Online Store](#).

[9] As Vennari explains elsewhere, “The secret papers...fell into the hands of Pope Gregory XVI...[and] were published at the request of Pope Pius IX by Cretineau-Joly in his work *The Roman Church and Revolution*.” (*Permanent Instruction*, p. 5).

[10] Vennari, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-3; cf. also Ferrara, [False Friends of Fatima](#) (Pound Ridge: Good Counsel Publications, 2012), pp. 13-23.

[11] Msgr. Georges Roche, *Pie XII Devant L’Histoire* (Paris: Editions Robert Laffont, 1972), p. 52; quoted by Ferrara in [The Secret Still Hidden](#), p. 31.

[12] Symonds, *op. cit.*, Kindle Locations 465-469. As an aside, the Communist infiltration of the Church has long since been confirmed by former insiders such as Bella Dodd (cf. John Vennari, [The Revelation of the Holy Face of Jesus](#), pp. 39-43).