

Review of *On the Third Secret of Fatima*, authored by Kevin J. Symonds, ISBN: 978-0-9988940-5-8, published by En Route Books and Media, 2017.

Although Jeff Langan recently wrote a review of Symonds' book for *Culture Wars*' July-August issue, I asked Mike Jones if I could do a counter-article on Symonds' book. Whereas Mr. Langan's review was more or less positive, mine is rather critical, but as you will see, for good reason. Perhaps some in the *Culture Wars* audience may not like or agree with my approach, but I think we should all at least be aware of what is commonly called, 'the other side of the story.'

The Missing Ingredient

Upon reading Symonds' book, I was impressed that a Franciscan University graduate produced a book as detailed and comprehensive as his book appears to be in its almost 600 pages of prose. It was granted a Nihil Obstat by Fr. Randy Soto at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, but does not include an Imprimatur. A Nihil Obstat literally means, "nothing stands in the way," whereas "imprimatur" is only given by a bishop and means "let it be printed." In general, either label means that the book does not contain any outright heresy.

Unfortunately, the good impression I had of this seemingly studious book was soon deflated in the first few pages when Symonds tells us concerning the consecration of Russia, "We shall not discuss these aspects of the message of Our Lady at any great length..." (p. 21). In the rest of his book, Symonds is true to his word, since he discusses everything else except whether the consecration of Russia has been properly completed. So I am forced to turn the tables and begin with a quote from Cardinal Journet when he was remarking on a book that refuted Fr. Edward Dhanis' treatment of Sr. Lucia's visions: "The imprimatur can protect you from heresies, but it is powerless against stupidity."¹

The lacuna concerning Russia is quite ironic since almost every unresolved controversy about Fatima that Symonds attempts to tackle in his book could be answered, or become irrelevant, if we know up front whether the consecration of Russia was actually performed or not. As a result, Symonds' book is a rather obvious attempt at an apologetic for the Vatican's handling and interpretation of Fatima against its mounting detractors (perhaps something we should expect from Franciscan university's tradition). As such, it is quite easy to guess why Symonds ignored not only any in depth coverage of the consecration of Russia but also chose not to add any rigorous discussion of the very person responsible for whether it was completed, namely, John Paul II. It is the rare Catholic apologist that will look at the pontificate of John Paul II with any sufficient scrutiny. In many eyes, he can do no wrong. I intend to look at John Paul II's role much more critically since his 1984 consecration is the lynch pin of the whole affair.

Symonds' reticence to cover this controversial aspect of Fatima is revealed, rather subtly, in the opening pages when he recounts the history of the attempted consecrations of Russia performed by Pope Pius XII. He writes: "His successor, Pius XII, twice attempted the consecration (1942 and 1952 respectively) but it was not done as specified by Our Lady" (p. 37). Symonds assures us his conclusion is accurate when he adds a footnote about Pius XII's failure from another respected source, the biography of Sr. Lucia titled *Um Caminho sob o Olhar de Maria*. At this point I almost closed the book, since I sensed immediately what Symonds was determined to cover up, which then made the rest of the book a rather pedantic analysis of issues that were adiaborous compared to the elephant and his rider that Symonds had just placed in the room. Follow my logic, if you will.

The records show that Sister Lucia told Pius XII: “If this [consecration of Russia] is done, Our Lady promises to convert Russia and there will be peace.” So Pope Pius XII did a consecration in 1942, but he failed to obey Heaven’s explicit request to consecrate Russia. Instead, for some odd reason not discussed much in the literature, he consecrated the “world.” After Heaven’s chastisement for the next ten years for the pope’s failure, Our Lady gave him another chance. In May 1952, Sister Lucia reported that Mary appeared to her again seeking the consecration of Russia. Our Lady stated to her: “Make it known to the Holy Father that I am always awaiting the consecration of Russia to My Immaculate Heart. Without the consecration, Russia will not be able to convert, nor will the world have peace.”² Obviously, then, Our Lady did not accept Pius’ 1942 consecration of the “world” to suffice for a consecration of Russia. But this time, in 1952, although obeying Our Lady to consecrate Russia, Pius XII failed to do the consecration in union with the Catholic bishops of the world, which requirement had been stipulated to him several times by Sister Lucia.

Now, since Symonds, by his own admission, agrees that Pius XII committed these two blunders, it is rather easy to see why this self-appointed apologist for the Vatican’s interpretation does not cover either the consecration of Russia or the attempts by John Paul II to perform said consecration. The undeniable fact is, John Paul II made the same two blunders as Pius XII. In fact, John Paul II made both of Pius XII’s blunders during the same consecration, since in 1984 he deliberately left out the name of Russia and instead consecrated the “world,” as well as failing to involve the bishops of the world. (If I were a bishop and read the prepared text of the pope’s speech and saw that only the “world” was going to be consecrated and not “Russia,” I wouldn’t be inclined to participate either). Yet John Paul II did so knowing full well that Our Lady had rejected Pius XII’s consecration of the “world” in 1942. But we get no such connecting of the dots between Pius XII and John Paul II from Symonds’ book, not a peep. I think the reason is obvious. There is no apologetic that Symonds can muster in his 600-page book to answer the failure of John Paul II, especially since Symonds had already indicted Pius XII for doing the same thing.

So the only thing a Vatican apologist can do at this point is, as Symonds tells us himself, “...not discuss these aspects of the message of Our Lady at any great length...” True to form, Symonds has no reference to John Paul II in his table of contents, but has two references to Joseph Ratzinger and Pope Benedict XVI, respectively, the person around whom Symonds’ seems to center his book. Likewise, in his Index, Symonds has no references to John Paul II, but has four references to Joseph Ratzinger. In the remaining 600 pages, there are only a few passing references to John Paul II. It is as if Symonds has deliberately put John Paul II into the Witness Protection Program so that he cannot appear in court to testify for Symonds’ opponents.

If this does not belie a hidden agenda behind Symonds’ book, I don’t know what does. In my experience, it shows what I have seen over and over again among modern Catholic apologists regarding John Paul II, especially the Franciscan variety. That is, he is to be protected at all costs, even if it is as obvious as the nose on your face that he was less than circumspect, not only about Fatima, but many other issues as well. But if Symonds can unashamedly indict Pius XII for causing or facilitating the horrendous death and destruction we experienced in the 20th century, then he should also do so against John Paul II. That Symonds didn’t do so clearly reveals his book is biased; and it makes his critics’ arguments against him that much more worthy. It is an undeniable fact that because of their Fatima failures both popes should be considered the direct cause of the countless lives lost in war in the 20th century and beyond, as well as

countless souls lost to hell, for those two results are precisely the outcome Our Lady prophesied if they failed to consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary with the bishops of the world. This is serious business, and we should treat it as serious business. According to Our Lady, obedience to the Fatima revelations is nothing less than a matter of life and death. Either that fact is true or it is not true. There is no middle ground. What is also true is that since both Pius XII and John Paul II attempted their respective consecrations means that they knew full well what their responsibilities were and the consequences for failing to do them.

No Peace for John Paul II

The consequence of Symonds' subterfuge is that we will never get anywhere in resolving the Fatima controversy unless we decide to remove the myth surrounding John Paul II and allow ourselves to see what he actually did for what it actually was. This was someone who, not once, not twice, not three times, but four times decided not to include the name of Russia in his consecrations nor involve the bishops of the world (1981, 1982, 1983 and 1984). For all intents and purposes, his consecrations were nothing but a show of disobedience to Heaven. The result of this disobedience was clear. Instead of a period of peace that John Paul II should have seen for his four consecrations if they were done properly, he witnessed more wars and conflicts in his 26-year pontificate than at any comparable time in world history. No less than fifty-two (52) wars and conflicts were going on during John Paul II's pontificate. Anyone can verify these facts by doing a Google search.³ Moreover, the Church basically fell apart, not only by reducing to 25% the number of seminaries, priests, nuns, Catholic schools and Catholic orders that we had in 1965, but in the wake of the worst humiliation in the Church's recorded history, the homosexual and pedophile scandal, about which John Paul II did virtually nothing to stop and which is still with us today and gaining steam under Pope Francis. It was almost as if Heaven was saying, 'not only will you have no peace for your feigned efforts to do the consecration, you will have more wars and scandals than any pope in Christian history.' If you can't believe God would respond in this way, I suggest you read a few passages from the Old Testament to see what God did when leaders decided to do things their way instead of God's way (Num 11:18-20; 11:34-35; 20:11-12, and many others). As St. Paul says in 1Cor 10:6,11, those passages were written so that we would not do the same things and suffer the same punishments.

John Paul II became quite aware that he wasn't seeing peace after his 1984 consecration. Wars and rumors of wars filled our newspapers. If John Paul had seen peace, then he wouldn't have called all the religions of the world to Assisi in 1986, just two years after his 1984 consecration, to have them pray to their various gods for the very "world peace" that Heaven offered way back in 1929. Perhaps John Paul II decided that Heaven had not fulfilled its part of the bargain, so he decided to fix it by his unprecedented Assisi meetings with African animists, Buddhists and Zoroastrians—an act that many in the hierarchy saw as a direct violation of the First Commandment. Or maybe he decided that Our Lady should work through all the pagans of the world instead of all the bishops of the world. Who knows what was working in his mind?

It may not be coincidental that John Paul II also favored the Medjugorje apparitions (or "Gospa") and curtailed Bishop Zanic's attempts to silence them. The probable reason for John Paul II's intervention was that various things alleged to be stated in the Gospa supported his belief that the religions of the world were accepted and encouraged by Heaven. The Gospa dossier on Medjugorje that John Paul II obtained from Bishop Zanic in May 1986 contained such statements as, "Peace, peace, peace...nothing but peace.

Be reconciled. All religions are the same before God. God commands in all these religions as a King does in his realm.”⁴ In reading these words, John Paul II would obviously consider them very comforting since at the same time he was planning his Assisi prayer meeting that took place just five months later in October 1986.

Whatever the case, the consecration of Russia was not performed, and thus John Paul II never advanced beyond the blunders of Pius XII. In a desperate attempt to show himself right, however, John Paul II looked to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 as his proof in the pudding. But even then, his castle in the sky came crashing down the very next year. Stanislaw Dziwisz, the author of *A Life with Karol* and the personal secretary to the pope, tells us that in 1990 President Bush “did not alert the Pope” when he bombed Iraq, even though “at seven o’clock the evening before, Tauran [the Vatican foreign minister] had received the American ambassador without hearing a single word about the invasion.” Dziwisz, acting as an apologist for the pope, interprets Bush’s act of war as a “genuine insult to a fundamentally meek, peace-loving man who followed the way of non-violence...a slap in the face for a Pope who was a witness to the God of peace...He was saddened—profoundly so, in fact.”⁵

But Dziwisz then tells us the real motive for the “sadness.” John Paul II is quoted saying: “I have done all that was humanly possible,” adding that the Pope “immediately called together his collaborators from the Secretariat of State in order to decide what steps to take on the humanitarian and diplomatic level” for war “presaged tragic suffering for the civil population.”⁶

But isn’t this precisely the problem? John Paul II did only what was “humanly possible” (e.g., “humanitarian and diplomatic” maneuvers), instead of doing what was *divinely mandated* – the proper consecration of Russia with the bishops. Wasn’t it a “slap in the face” to Our Lady when John Paul II essentially told Her that he had a better way to take care of business (i.e., political diplomacy that depended on the good will of Russia and other nations) as opposed to saying the simple words, “I consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary,” which would have instead targeted Russia as the world’s main villain? Wasn’t it a “tragic suffering for the civil population” when John Paul II and his papal predecessors refused to do a proper consecration for five straight decades, which failure, as Heaven itself warned, forced God to use Russia as His arm of wrath against the Church and the world, which is precisely what we saw in most of the twentieth century? To deflect his sole responsibility, the pope instead blamed the U.S. president for starting another war, but in reality it was the pope’s disobedience against Heaven that paved the way for that war and all the others we experienced afterward.

The castle in the sky suffered a further blow as Dziwisz describes the next series of events:

The Gulf War [1990] might have seemed like a distant incident on the periphery, a situation that would have no significant impact on the general climate of stability. But the war that broke out almost simultaneously in the former Yugoslavia and dragged on for years like a spreading cancer dispelled any illusion that the world had set out on the road to peace.⁷

Here we have one of the closest men to the pope admitting that the peace the pope believed was on the horizon in 1989 was, in fact, merely an “illusion.” As such, the first thought that should have entered the pope’s mind is: ‘I don’t have peace in the world because I didn’t do a proper consecration in 1984’ or ‘I don’t have peace because I mistakenly believed that my Assisi prayer meetings with pagans was going to

be blessed by God.’ What we have instead is Dziwisz proceeding to do his blind apologetics for the pope. Even then Dziwisz shows his own duplicity by downplaying the “contradiction between the Holy Father’s absolute opposition to the Gulf War and his insistence on the right to ‘humanitarian intervention’ in the fierce ethnic conflict that was tearing apart Bosnia-Herzegovina” with Dziwisz claiming that “the two situations were radically different.”⁸ Perhaps Dziwisz wants us to believe that Our Lady promised no more war except, perhaps, a few here and there so as not to make Her triumph so obvious.

Instead of doing some serious introspection and in turn discovering that the best laid plans of mice and men had come to naught, Dziwisz tells us that the Pope decided to up the ante. He writes:

What was needed after the fall of the Berlin Wall was the creation of a new international order. The UN should have focused on putting out the many brushfires that threatened what was already a very fragile peace. But nothing was done.⁹

Thus instead of repenting of his disobedience and admitting he had not done what Heaven had commanded over six decades ago in 1929 (the clock now registering 61 years of disobedience), the pope seeks for a *human* solution – a “new international order” of secular power to *force* peace on the world. Apparently, the pope’s logic was, if Heaven isn’t going to give him the promised peace, he would make it himself. But obviously he would need something even more powerful than the United Nations, which institution everyone at that time admitted had been a total failure since its inception (but which Pope Paul VI, another pope who avoided Fatima, once said was “the last best hope of mankind”).¹⁰

Following his papal apologetic in typical fashion, even while the thought of a secular international police force was in the pope’s plans, Dziwisz tells us that the pope kept his options open:

John Paul II foresaw the new turmoil that was about to appear on the world scene. This was a stroke of Providence, as was his realization that laying the foundations for a true peace would require beginning with the basic pillar of religion. He believed that the religions of the world needed to reclaim their decisive role in promoting a culture of peace and in fostering the growth of a genuine solidarity among peoples.¹¹

This dependence upon the religions of the world instead of all the bishops of the world led to several more Assisi like meetings in the 1990s, with the grand finale in Assisi in 2002 when Buddhists were placing their idols on Catholic altars and sending incense to Heaven in the name of Buddha. This unprecedented display of what has been traditionally understood as idol worship, came just a year after one of the largest catastrophes in world history, the demolition of the World Trade Center, which then led to the second Iraq war and the deaths of millions more. At his death in 2005, the Iraq war was still raging and John Paul II saw not an ounce of the peace he had been striving for since his reign began in 1979.

Logically then, since Pius XII had not seen any peace in the world in his twenty-year pontificate, and Symonds admits that this lack of peace was because Pius XII had not obeyed Heaven’s request to do a proper consecration, what form of distorted logic could anyone offer to make us believe that the same lack of peace during the whole pontificate of John Paul II was not for the same reason that Pius XII saw no peace? You would have to be totally blind not to see this obvious connection of the dots. It is my contention that, in fact, most Catholic apologists today, especially those of the Franciscan University

variety, are willfully blind, since none of them want to face the fact that the pope they want to believe is one of their most beloved is actually one of the Church's weakest. I would also add that their willful blindness makes them complicit in the evils that are upon our world. As noted earlier, you can set your watch by the fact that God will continue to bring wars and persecutions until the consecration is done as specified. As we see in the Old Testament, He is not a God you want to fool with. Those who ignore this non-neutral God will see their children and grandchildren die horrible deaths and see themselves and their loved ones verging on the pit of hell. Fortunately, Our Lady told us that someday, "the pope will do the consecration and the world will be granted a period of peace." Unfortunately, we may have to suffer hell on earth to get to a pope who finally sees the light.

More Excuses for Failure

As I was reading Symonds' book and hoping that John Paul II would be critically analyzed, nothing appeared until page 333 when the subtitle, "When Did Pope John Paul II Read the Secret?" suggested Symonds was about to spill the beans. But my hopes were soon dashed. The only thing Symonds tried to do is solve a contradiction in the dating of the pope's reading to save face for him and his underlings. As Symonds puts it:

"In short, the argument holds that Bertone contradicted himself on the dates. He states that the Holy Father requested the text of the third part of the secret be brought to him in the hospital and that he received it on or around July 18, 1981. Yet as Socci notes, Bertone also discusses how the Pope thought of consecrating the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on June 7, 1981 based on his reading of Sr. Lucia's text...The above is a good question and the anachronism is certainly glaring."

Bear with me as I extrapolate. Symonds then verifies these words for us by typing out the original Italian text of *The Message of Fatima* issued by the Vatican in 2000. He also gives an English translation on the next page, which says, in part:

"John Paul II, for his part, asked for the envelope containing the third part of the 'secret' following the assassination attempt on 13 May 1981....As is well known, Pope John Paul II immediately thought of consecrating the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and he himself composed a prayer for what he called an 'Act of Entrustment,' which was to be celebrated in the Basilica of Saint Mary Major on 7 June 1981."

So, as Symonds acknowledges that the Third Secret influences the pope to think of the Second Secret where, as everyone agrees, it speaks only of consecrating *Russia* to the Immaculate Heart of Mary not the *world*, we wonder how Symonds cannot then wonder how John Paul II could possibly come to the conclusion that he was to "consecrate the *world* to the Immaculate Heart of Mary" instead of consecrating Russia? Symonds just skips right over this anomaly. The same happens in Symonds' failure to question how a pope could "immediately think of consecrating" but then plan only for an "Act of Entrustment."

Again, I believe the reason these apologists can't see their own contradictions glaring in their face is, as Sr. Lucia herself stated, due to a "diabolical disorientation" occurring in the twentieth century. The Catholic masses have been so brainwashed into accepting John Paul II's consecration of the "world" in 1984 as equal to or sufficient for a consecration of Russia, that hardly anyone even questions it any

longer, which leads Symonds to skip right over the contradiction as if it didn't exist, even though he had already admitted in the beginning of his book that Pius XII's consecration of the "world" was rejected, verbatim, by Our Lady in 1952. Nevertheless, proceeding on with his blind apologetics, Symonds then tries to solve the apparent contradiction in the dating and comes up with an ingenious solution. He writes:

"The Italian word, however, is *consacrazione*, which is a noun, not a participle. A more accurate translation of this first phrase, then, would be, 'As is known, Pope John Paul II thought immediately to the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary...' *Consacrazione* read properly as a noun with its article 'to the' (*alla*) immediately restores the sense of the passage. Bertone is saying that after reading the third part of the secret in July, the Holy Father *thought back to the consecration* he had already done back on June 7, 1981 in light of what he had just read. In other words, John Paul II was beginning to reflect more deeply upon the message of Fatima and it is clear that he wanted to be more explicit...with the consecration than he had been in his 'Entrustment' of June 7, 1981."

As we will see, Symonds' correction to the Italian grammar only digs his and the Vatican's proverbial hole even deeper. First it makes John Paul II's June 1981 act into a *consecration* rather than an "Act of Entrustment," with neither Symonds nor the Vatican noticing the difference. Second, and more important, is what Symonds interprets as the big payoff for his grammatical correction of a participle to an infinitive. He writes in the next paragraph:

"In the corrected translation, it is clear that Bertone was talking about what the Holy Father had realized in July, 1981 after reading the third part of the secret. John Paul II realized that his Act of Entrustment from the previous June *the prayer of which he himself had composed* [Symonds' emphasis] *was insufficient to what Our Lady had specified*" [my emphasis].

Do we really need to say anything more? Symonds has just advocated an apologetic for John Paul II that shows precisely why what was specified by Our Lady in the Second Secret (the consecration of Russia) was never done and why we never advanced beyond the blunders of Pius XII. Symonds candidly admits that the 'Entrustment,' or, if you will, the '*Consacrazione*,' of June 7, 1981 [since Symonds insists on having *entrustment* and *consacrazione* refer to the same event], "was insufficient to what Our Lady had specified" in the Second Secret.

So, if on the one hand, Symonds wants to argue that John Paul II realized that his June 1981 Entrustment was "insufficient to what Our Lady had specified" because he only did an entrustment and not a consecration, then the same problem persists, since both an entrustment to the "world" and a consecration to the "world" would be "insufficient to what Our Lady specified," since neither act consecrated Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

If, on the other hand, Symonds wants to argue that John Paul II realized that his June 1981 act of either entrustment or consecration (whatever Symonds wants to call it) was "insufficient to what Our Lady specified" since neither act consecrated Russia but instead entrusted or consecrated the "world," then obviously it means that John Paul II did not heed his own realization of what the Second Secret required, since in 1982, 1983, and especially in 1984, he ignored "what Our Lady specified" and continued to consecrate the "world" instead of Russia. In either case, Symonds is trapped.

But the worst part about these two scenarios is that Symonds isn't even aware of his contradiction. He should have jumped on this colossal contradiction with both feet and spared no pressure until he emptied this vessel of every vestige of lies and deceit that it contained. But so brainwashed has he become to the "Franciscan apologetic" of believing that John Paul II can do no wrong, that he skips right over the fact that this pope totally misread or totally distorted Our Lady's actual words, even when he knew his previous "*consacrazione*" was not sufficient. One would think that the leader of Christendom and the example to whom everyone looks; the one who came within seconds of losing his life from the gun of a madman, would have every impetus and motivation to read the words of Our Lady very, very, carefully before he did his next *consacrazione*. Those who are not under the "diabolical disorientation" can readily see that he did precisely the opposite of what he was told, and the result is that he had more wars and scandals in his pontificate than any previous pope or potentate in history. How sad. But it is even sadder to see a purported scholar like Symonds not see it, since he and his colleagues will continue to perpetuate a myth and lead us farther down the blind alley.

What is "The Dogma of the Faith?"

I hope you can see from this blatant protectionism of one of the key players in the Fatima controversy why I almost closed the book after I got to page 37 of Symonds' treatise. Since Symonds' failure to reveal John Paul II's intimate involvement and failures was so obvious, I then began to wonder what other kinds of blind apologetics Symonds was going to dump on us. Sure enough, after the bulk of the book went into tedious and mind-numbing discussions of such things as: what Cardinal Ottaviani really said in 1967; to how many lines of text were actually in the Third Secret; to whether Edward Dhanis was legit to question Sister Lucia's accounts; to whether Fr. Döllinger remembered correctly his recounting of when Ratzinger told him that the whole Third Secret had not been released in 2000; to what Ratzinger really meant when he often seemed to contradict himself from year to year on the meaning and relevance of Fatima, Symonds then ventures into explaining what is meant by the most studied and most controversial sentence in the secret of Fatima. That sentence, stated by Our Lady, is: "In Portugal, the dogma of the faith will always be preserved, etc..." recorded in Sr. Lucia's Fourth Memoir. As we all know, the most salient issue concerns the origin of the typographical "etc" and what it represents. Most of Symonds' book deals with these two questions in one way or another. As expected, Symonds does his best to make the "etc" innocuous and thus nothing to worry about. He consistently refers to those who see the "ect" as giving a clue to the fact that there is much more to the Third Secret than what has been revealed as "conspiracy theorists." To quell these conspiracies, Symonds give us his own interpretation of the controversial sentence, He writes:

"Having established the deleterious effect of war and crisis on the faith and good morals of a society, perhaps we can assess better the placement of the phrase on Portugal and the Faith. At the time of World War II, Portugal did not enter into the war. According to Sr. Lucia, this fact was due to the consecration of the country to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by the Portuguese Bishops. Thus this country was spared the horrors and atrocities of the war and, presumably, the effect these would have had upon the Portuguese people. The Catholic faith remained firm throughout, in other words the dogma of the Faith was preserved in Portugal...Thus, it is entirely plausible that the phrase we have heretofore been discussing can be interpreted as belonging to the second part of the secret of Fatima. See in this light, Our Lady was predicting the eroding of the Faith in the world as a result of the spread of Russia's errors, the primary, or,

perhaps, the most effective means of which would be the proliferation of wars, the sowing of hatred and violence, etc.” (pp. 213-214).

So let's point out a few anomalies to Symonds' thesis. The first is that by Symonds' acknowledgement that a voluntary consecration of Portugal to the Immaculate Heart of Mary provided that country a sparing of the atrocities of war means that Symonds must also acknowledge that the performing of the mandatory consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary would have provided the same sparing of the atrocities of war. In fact, Pius XII should have realized this same logic. Since he was privy to the fact that the Portuguese bishops had done a consecration of Portugal, and since he saw that the direct result of this consecration was that Portugal was spared the atrocities of war, he could easily reason that if he had done a proper consecration of Russia either in 1942 or 1952, he would have seen the same results Portugal had seen. Likewise, John Paul II, who was no stranger to the results of Portugal's consecration, should have seen the same benefits as Portugal if he had done a proper consecration in 1984. So, in essence, Symonds' reference to the incident in Portugal even further indicts popes Pius XII and John Paul II for not doing what heaven told them to do to avoid the atrocities of war.

Second is the fact that, on the one hand, Symonds wants to argue that the faith of the Portuguese bishops led them to perform a consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, which then saved Portugal from the “atrocities of war,” which lack of war, he claims, continued to preserve their faith. On the other hand, Symonds wants to argue that the means by which the world would lose its faith and thus not have its faith preserved is due to their sufferings from the atrocities of war. So instead of seeing war as a punishment from God that is supposed to lead men to repentance and faith, Symonds sees war as *the cause* for lack of faith. The reality is that Symonds has it backwards. It was the lack of faith and repentance from the world that led to the wars in the world. Our Lady herself said so in the Second Secret, “The war is going to end: but if people do not cease offending God, a worse one will break out during the Pontificate of Pius XI.”

Having established this crucial point, we should also add that it was the lack of faith of both Pius XII and John Paul II that led them to do the exact opposite of what Our Lady requested. In the case of John Paul II, he was being pressured by his cardinals that a consecration of Russia would make Russia angry at the Vatican and lead Russia to attack. Instead of John Paul II telling them: “Get thee behind me Satan; you are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men” and thus teaching them that only Satan could twist Heaven's story to make it appear that consecrating Russia would make Russia more evil than it was, John Paul II capitulated to the lie, and Satan further tightened the noose around the Church, leading to even more wars and scandals.

So we see that it was precisely the popes' lack of faith that led to their failed consecrations, which then led to the prophesied wars. Contrary to Symonds, it wasn't the wars that led the popes to a lack of faith. If anything, the popes should have seen the wars as a direct fulfillment of Our Lady's prophesy, which would have strengthened their faith in Her and of what She warned them, which then would have led them to doing a proper consecration.

The upshot is that Symonds' new interpretation of the Portugal sentence of the Fatima secret is just another specious attempt to be a Vatican apologist who will do almost anything to get John Paul II and his papal colleagues, both before and after him, off the hook.

Lastly, let's deal with Symonds' apologetic that the sentence, "In Portugal the dogma of the faith will always be preserved" means that the faith of the Portuguese people is that which was preserved. First, Symonds, using what we might call an *a posteriori* or after-the-fact approach, claims that because the Portuguese people were not the victims of war, then their faith was preserved, implying that war decimates faith. Whether or not that rationale is true does not negate the fact that Our Lady said, in the case of Fatima, it is the lack of faith and repentance that leads to war, and war is a chastisement for the purpose of leading people back to faith and repentance.

Second, and more important, Our Lady did not say, in Portugal *the faith* of the people will always be preserved. She said the *dogma* will always be preserved. Dogma refers to the official doctrines the Church has taught in her history, with the word "dogma" often used to represent the doctrines which are infallible. Whether the Portuguese people at large obeyed the dogma is a matter of debate, since it is a fact that not the whole populace either had faith or was obeying the dogma. This is an important distinction because in the twentieth century, especially in Europe, it was precisely the dogma of the Christian faith that was not being preserved. Europe had been invaded by liberal theology both from the Protestant and Catholic ranks since the late 1700s. The liberal Protestants, beginning with the old German and French schools from the 1700s, had only gotten worse by the 1800s and continued unabated in the 1900s, all under the "Enlightenment" banner.

The Onslaught of Liberal Theology

Some of the more common Protestant names attacking the dogma of the faith were Paulus, Kierkegaard, Ritschl, Harnack, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Schweitzer, Bultmann, Tillich, Bruner, Barth and Bonhoeffer, with dozens more that could be added. These theologians decimated the rudiments of Protestantism and their teaching spread by means of Europe's universities and seminaries. They denied such things as the inspiration of Scripture; the prophecy of Scripture; the Virgin Birth; the final resurrection; the Second Coming; and the miracles of Scripture. For them, Jesus' walking on water was merely an incident when he walked on the beach in shallow water, but which his disciples embellished by turning it into a miracle in order to make Christianity thrive by awe and fascination. As for prophecy, the liberals removed any hint of divine intrusion into the mind of the prophet and replaced it with the claim that the prophet was merely recounting what happened in the past and wrote to make it look like he was predicting the future, again, all to impress people to read their prophecies.

Catholics took over the liberal Protestant onslaught with the likes of de Chardin, Messenger, Paquier, and several others in the late 1800s and it began to spread like wildfire, prompting Pope Pius IX to write the "Syllabus of Errors" in 1864 and Pius X "Lamentabili Sani" in 1907, both of which condemned liberalism and modernism. But Catholic liberalism just seemed to get stronger as the decades moved on and was reaching unprecedented heights in the 1930s and 1940s. The floodgates opened further when Pius XII (the same pope who failed to do the consecration of Russia in 1942), wrote the encyclical, *Divinae Afflante Spiritu* in 1943, which, although good in some respects, allowed these liberals and modernists to use, without being censored, the historical criticism forged from liberal Protestant scholarship—the very scholarship that was used to deny the traditional doctrines of Christianity. Soon popular names such as Kung, Rahner, Schillebeeckx, Maritain, Murray, McBrien, Brown, Crossan, DeLubac, and hundreds more, were doubting or denying the same dogmas of the faith that the liberal Protestants had denied a hundred

or so years earlier. In fact, what it took the Protestant liberals about two hundred years to accomplish, the Catholic liberals did in about fifty years, since most of the work had already been done for them.

But since the liberal Protestants and liberal Catholics more or less forged a new religion by denying or doubting basic doctrines of the Christian faith, they were able to have a common goal and viewpoint, which fostered ecumenical dialogue between the two religions. It is no surprise that almost all ecumenical dialogue in the twentieth century was composed of liberal Protestants and liberal Catholics who were trying to figure out how they could further water down Scripture to accommodate their desires. Since there was little left to divide them, it was easy to be ecumenical. Unfortunately, many of the popes in the twentieth century were influenced, to one degree or another, by these liberal ideas, and the devastating results in doctrinal upheaval that we saw in the twentieth century speak for themselves.

For example, we can see a direct influence of Protestant liberalism in John Paul II. Returning to our review of Stanislaus Dziwisz who was the biographer for John Paul II, he writes:

“The Pope also treasured an old dream of Bonhoeffer’s: a world assembly of Christian churches that would forthrightly proclaim ‘Christ’s peace to a world insanely bent on self-destruction.’ Bonhoeffer never lived to see his idea realized...”

This tells us that the pope did not have the capability to discern that, according to traditional standards past down to him, the Protestant liberal, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, was a heretic of the first order. As much as Bonhoeffer wanted peace in Europe during the Nazi reign, it was precisely because of the heterodox Christianity that he and his liberal colleagues (*e.g.*, Bultmann, Bruner, Barth, and many others) were teaching in Protestant European universities that God unleashed the Nazi reign of terror. Liberal theology was permeating Europe. Bonhoeffer and his cohorts denied everything from the deity of Christ to the Second Coming, and just about anything else that was sacred in Christian tradition. It was all myth and legend to them. Yet, of course, all of them claimed to be “Christian.” But God was certainly not going to give Bonhoeffer peace, for Bonhoeffer never embraced the real peace God wanted to give through Jesus Christ. By the same token, God wasn’t going to give John Paul II peace either. Like Bonhoeffer, he had also ignored Heaven’s commands.

At the present time we have a pope who has learned his trade from his modern predecessors quite well. After the Bible was decimated and the theological foundation of liberalism was built, our present pope is now seeking to overturn Catholic moral doctrine by allowing invalidly married Catholics and avowed homosexuals to take communion, downplaying the disgusting sin of sodomy and in some cases raising it to the level of sacramental marriage. Obviously, the dogma was not preserved, and is still not being preserved. Where will it all end?

Fr. Dhanis and the Historical-Critical School

While we are here discussing the historical-critical exegesis of the liberal schools, let me say a few words about Edward Dhanis, the Jesuit priest who wrote a scathing critique of Sr. Lucia’s accounts of Fatima, concluding that she made up most of its contents. Dhanis’ book was published in 1944 and titled, *Apropos the Apparitions and the Secret of Fatima – a Critical Contribution*. The truth is, Dhanis was a thoroughgoing liberal in line with all the other aforementioned Catholic liberals. As noted, these men did everything they could to empty the Bible of its miraculous events and turn them into natural occurrences,

claiming that the biblical writers fabricated the miracles to sell the Gospel. Similarly, using the same “historical-critical” method, Dhanis did everything he could to empty Sr. Lucia’s visions and locutions of any vestige of the miraculous. As even René Laurentin admits in his 1961 book on Dhanis’ treatment of Sr. Lucia, “Father Dhanis...simply followed the rules governing historical criticism in any domain, even that of the holy scriptures.”¹² But as everyone knew, the quintessential goal of historical-criticism, which began in the 1700s with the movement known as “The historical quest for Jesus,” was to remove the miraculous events in the text (since most of these liberals didn’t believe in miracles) and make it look like the text was fabricated by the human author; although the liberal critic, in order to put a good face on his efforts, always hastened to add that such fabrications “were done in good faith and with good intentions,” as if that excuses the biblical author or Sr. Lucia from doing little more than lying to us.

Regarding the consecration of Russia contained in the Second Secret, Dhanis questions whether “the most holy Virgin could have asked for a consecration which, if interpreted according to the strict meaning of the words, was practically unrealizable” and thus concludes, “This question does seem to call for a negative response.”¹³ First, we wonder what is so “unrealizable” about consecrating Russia when all the pope has to do, with his bishops, is utter the words, “I consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.” The irony of the whole Fatima debacle is that Heaven wasn’t asking the pope to climb high mountains or tread deep seas or even sacrifice his son as Abraham was required to do, but merely to do a simple consecration with human words that would take less than ten seconds. A five-year old could do it.

Second, considering the very small and bucolic world in which Sr. Lucia lived in her youth and in her convent life, how could she possibly envision the consecration of a country that was thousands of miles away and of which she practically knew nothing? In fact, when Our Lady asked for the consecration of Russia, Lucia thought that Russia referred to a evil woman. A similar thing occurred when St. Bernadette was told by Our Lady, “I am the Immaculate Conception.” Bernadette didn’t have the slightest idea what Our Lady was talking about. Even the priest whom Bernadette told those immortal words replied that it was impossible for someone to be an immaculate conception. But we all know the end of that story.

Additionally, if Sr. Lucia was hallucinating or trying to deceive, wouldn’t it have been better to pick a country with which she and those around her were familiar and wasn’t so remote? By the same token, the choosing of Russia to consecrate should have instantly rung a bell in Dhanis’ brain that only Heaven could know and predict Russia as one of the worst tyrannies beginning from 1917 onward. But, of course, if Sr. Lucia was right then that would more or less show that often the historical-critical method of analyzing a document is little more than a pseudo-intellectual farce, and then Dhanis and his liberal colleagues would have had to leave their prestigious university positions and go to work in the saw mill.

Third, if Sr. Lucia made up a call for a consecration of Russia but Heaven never asked for it, then not only would she be a false prophet about which we should reject everything she said, she would be the worst of heretics and should have been excommunicated from the Church for attempting to deceive the whole world. Conversely, what we see in the case of Fatima is precisely what we see in the Bible. To authenticate the preacher, God allowed the prophet to perform astounding miracles (2Cor 12:12). Similarly, God made the Sun dance on October 13, 1917 in front of 70,000 people. Even the Portugal secular newspaper, *O’seculo*, did a write up of the astounding event. Now, why would God guarantee the testimony of Sr. Lucia with such a stupendous act only to have it turn out that Sr. Lucia was the most deceptive or deluded prophet in history? Is God stupid and naïve? No, it is Dhanis who is stupid and

naïve, as are most liberals. They are the ones who live in a fantasy world. The irony is that the very historical-criticism that they believed would peel away the fabrications and leave the reality, is the very method that turns its nose up at the reality and replaces it with fabrications.

So, the upshot is this. While most of Europe was being overrun by liberal theology and modernist thinking (including Dhanis' "historical-critical" review of Sr. Lucia; as well as the Marxist ideology from Russia), Portugal, since it courageously did a consecration to Our Lady in 1931 and renewed it in 1938, was spared this attack on Catholic dogma by Heaven itself. It was the preservation of this dogma by the bishops of Portugal that permitted the Portuguese people to remain in the faith. If the dogma had been desecrated, then the faith of the Portuguese would have certainly waned. So, contrary to Symonds' thesis, it was not the sparing from war that had anything to do with the Portuguese spiritual mentality. If their dogma was strong, then their faith would be strong, and no war would be able to take it away from them. It was the decision of Heaven itself to preserve the dogma because it was the very place where Heaven decided to do the Fatima apparitions. The preserving of the dogma in Portugal would be yet another sign to the world that the teaching (or "dogma") of the Fatima apparitions were also true and trustworthy and that Heaven wasn't kidding when it demanded that the popes consecrate Russia with all the bishops to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

We should also say that the consecration of Russia should be done whether we think Russia is evil, is good, turning good, or even if we really don't know for certain. It makes no difference, since Heaven never rescinded its command for the consecration. If Russia is evil, the consecration will turn her from it. If Russia turns good or is good, the consecration could foster one of the largest evangelical missions since the dawn of man so that a period of peace will result.

Finally, although the consecration of Russia, as stipulated by Heaven, has never been done, we have the promise from Our Lady that someday a pope will do it and a period of peace will rest on Earth.

They did not wish to heed my request. Like the King of France, they will repent and do it, but it will be late. Russia will have already spread her errors throughout the world, provoking wars and persecutions of the Church; the Holy Father will have much to suffer.¹⁴

How late will it be? I don't know. But I would say that the clock is approximately at five minutes to twelve, give or take.

Robert Sungenis

¹ Journet, *Les Études*, July-Aug., 1967, pp. 81-82.

² *Il PellegrinaggiodellaMeraviglie*, Rome, 1960, p. 440.

³ 1. Afghanistan civil war, 1989-2001; 2. Albania civil war, 1997; 3. Angola war with UNITA, 1975-2002; 4. Bosnia civil war, 1992-1995; 5. Barundi civil war, 1993-2005; 6. Britain/Argentina conflict, 1982; 7. Central African Republic civil war, 1980-1990; 8. Congo civil war, 1997-1999; 9. Croatia/Serbia war, 1991-1995; 10. Ethiopia civil war, 1978-1991; 11. Ethiopia/Somalia war, 1998-1999; 12. Ethiopia/Eritrea war, 1998-2000; 13. Georgia civil war, 1990-1994; 14. Guinea Mano river war, 2000-2001; 15. Haiti civil war, 1990s; 16. India Sikh uprising, 1980s; 17. Iran/Iraq war, 1980-1989; 18. Israel intifada, 1987-1993; 19. Israel/Lebanon conflict, 1982-2000; 20. Israel Al-Aqsa intifada, 2000-2005; 21. Italy/Mafia conflict, 1980-1990; 22. Lebanon civil war, 1980-1990; 23. Liberia civil war, 1989-2003; 24. Libya/Chad war, 1980-1987; 25. Mozambique/Renamo war, 1970-1992; 26. New Caledonia conflict, 1980-1990; 27. Nicaragua/Contra war, 1980s; 28. North/South Korea conflict, 1980s; 29. Romania coup, 1989; 30. Russian ethnic conflicts, 1980; 31. Russia coup, 1991; 32. Russia Chechen uprising, 1994-1996; 33. Rwanda civil war and genocide, 1991-1996; 34. Sierra Leone civil war, 1990-2002; 35. Solomon Islands civil unrest, 1999-2003; 36. Somalia Red Beret terror, 1986-1990; 37. South Africa apartheid war, 1980-1994; 38. Soviet Union/Afghanistan war, 1979-

1989; 39. Sri Lanka riots, 1980-1984; 40. Sri Lanka Tamil uprising, 1983-2009; 41. Sudan civil war, 1983-2004; 42. Sudan Dafur conflict, 1983-2009; 43. Tajikistan civil war, 1992-1997; 44. Togo coups, 1980-1990; 45. Uganda war in the bush, 1980-1985; 46. Uganda civil conflicts, 1985-2000; 47. US bombs Libya, 1986; 48. US/Iraq war, 1990-1991; 49. US/Iraq war, 2003-2006; 50. US/Afghanistan war 2003-2011; 51. Western Sahara Polisario war, 1980-1991; 52. Yemen civil war, 1990-1994; There were also significant bombings and terrorist acts (partial list): 1. Assassination of Indira Ghandi, 1984; 2. Bombing of the US embassy in Beirut, 1983; 3. Columbine school massacre, 1999; 4. Demolition of World Trade Center, 2001; 5. Downing of Pan Am flight over Lockerbie, 1988; 6. India and Pakistan test nuclear weapons, 1998; 7. Massacre in China's Tiananmen Square, 1989; 8. NATO attacks Serbia, 1999; 9. Oklahoma City bombing, 1995; 10. Rwanda genocide, 1994; 11. Sarin gas attack in Tokyo, 1995; 12. US shoots down Iranian airliner, 1988; 13. USS Cole bombed, 2000; 14. World Trade Center bombed, 1993; 15. Yitzak Shamir assassinated, 1995.

⁴ <http://crc-internet.org/our-doctrine/catholic-counter-reformation/false-mysticism/the-stark-truth-about-medjugorje/2-the-judgment-of-the-church-on-medjugorje/>

⁵ *A Life with Karol*, p. 207.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Stated in a speech by Pope Paul VI to the United Nations on October 4, 1965, at which time he gave the papal tiara to the United Nations (seen as a gesture of the French Revolution in the writings of Freemason Albert Pike). Paul VI also said "We have trust in human reason...One day, reason will be the last word" (*Le Courier de Rome*, April 25, 1970). While giving a eulogy for Mahatma Ghandi, John Paul II also called for a "new world order" (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tRX-KEXBvYY>). See Cornelia R. Ferreira's informative essay "The United Nations: Chief Instrument of Russia's Errors" at: <http://www.catholicapologetics.info/modernproblems/currenterrors/unation.htm>.

¹¹ *A Life with Karol*, p. 210.

¹² *Fatima Revealed and Discarded*, Timothy Tindal-Robertson, Augustine Publishing, 1988, p. 137.

¹³ *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, p. 589.

¹⁴ *Fatima in Lucia's Own Words: Sister Lucia's Memoirs*, editor: Fr. Louis Kondor; Imprimatur: May 13, 1976, Postulation Center, Fatima, Portugal, p. 199. Also in Frère Michel de la Sainte Trinité, *The Whole Truth About Fatima*, Vol. II, pp. 464-465. See also *The Secret and the Church*, Buffalo, New York, Immaculate Heart Publications, 1989.