

OBSERVANCE OF THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE APPARITIONS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY AT FATIMA, PORTUGAL

This Message is No Secret



Through the message of Fatima, the Lord conceals nothing. Yet there is this matter of the so-called “secret of Fatima” that Our Lady shared with the three visionaries in 1917. The secret comes in three parts. The first two parts were revealed to the world back in 1941 through the child visionary Lucia, who had become a Carmelite nun by then.

They include the terrifying vision of hell, the importance of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, a possible Second World War, and finally the prediction of the immeasurable destruction Russia would perpetrate in its embrace of atheism, Communism, totalitarianism, and military might.

The Church did not reveal Lucia’s account of the third part of the secret until 2000. It is this third part that can serve as the very key by which to comprehend our world today, says Pedro Valinho Gomes, a resident theologian at the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary, in Fatima, Portugal.

It speaks of a pilgrim people headed by a Bishop in white – the Holy Father. They climb a steep mountain, at the top of which is a big cross. Before reaching the top, the Holy Father passes through a city in ruins, filled with corpses and people in all manner of pain and sorrow, for whom he prays. Once they reach the top, the Holy Father and those with him are killed by soldiers. Two angels then appear, gather the blood of these martyrs, and with it, sprinkle the souls of those who were making their way to God.

“I cannot help but to think of St. Augustine and his famous allegory of two cities – this idea that we have this city of the world, whereby people live out of self-interest, which leads to destruction,” says Dr. Gomes. “Opposed to that, we have this other city, with people we can identify as the Church headed by the Bishop in white, the Pope. The origin of this other city is the Cross, meaning the giving of oneself for the sake of others, what we call love.”

The pilgrim people in this vision model Christ, says Dr. Gomes, in that “they don’t want this city in ruins [to] be condemned to its ruins. They pray for the people. I believe this is what we, the Church, are called to these days – that in a world where so many people feel hopeless, the first vocation of the Church has to be to present the hope found in the Cross, which means an attitude of self-giving and sacrifice. This is what the message of Fatima asks from us 100 years later – to look beyond ourselves, to others and the Cross – a place that may be uncomfortable.”

He says, “Fatima has been called the most political of apparitions. I believe it is in the sense that it’s a call to apply ourselves to the world.”

The secret of Fatima also suggests that those who lead lives faithful to God and His Commandments may not be the majority, and that the Church’s evangelization efforts may not always succeed. “Success can’t be gauged by numbers [the number of Christians], but rather by the fact that we continue to be witnesses of the Gospel that the world is missing.”

And as Our Lord makes known through Our Lady of Fatima, we can lift up others along the way through our prayers and by offering up our own sufferings to God, Who will use them for the conversion of poor sinners. As the third part of the secret of Fatima underscores, the blood of the martyrs is the seed of Christian renewal.

There is no question we live in an age of tension, violence, and self-destruction on both the macro and micro level. Our civilization lives as if there is no God. Meanwhile, old alliances are fracturing. We are a world at war. History didn’t end with the 1984 consecration of Russia made through St. John Paul II, following the request of Our Lady of Fatima. It didn’t end with the fall of Communism.

Our work is ahead of us. Man’s future is in God, and we are to be active and accountable allies in fashioning that future. It’s no secret.

