



The Holy See

***PRESENTATION OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
OF THE BOOK WRITTEN BY CARDINAL TARCISIO BERTONE
"THE LAST SEER OF FATIMA"***

*To His Eminence
Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone
Secretary of State*

Venerable Brother, you have entrusted so many memories to the pages of your book, "*L'ultima veggente di Fatima*", in order that they may not be just a precious baggage of personal emotions but might be consigned to the collective memory as meaningful traces of the Church's age-old history, since they deal with events which marked her in the last part of the 20th century.

In fact, we both lived the chapter that addresses the publication of the third part of the secret of Fatima in that memorable time of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000: I, in my capacity as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and you, as Secretary of the same Dicastery.

John Paul II, the great Pontiff who preceded me, who was a font of prophetic inspirations and was personally convinced that it was "the motherly hand" of the Virgin who had diverted the bullet that might have killed him, realized that the time had come to dispel the air of mystery which shrouded the last part of the secret that the Virgin has entrusted to the three little shepherd children of Fatima. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which preserved the precious document written by Sr Lucia, was made responsible for doing so.

It was time for illumination, not only so that the message could be known by all, but also so that the truth could be revealed amid the confused apocalyptic interpretations and speculation that were circulating in the Church, disturbing the faithful rather than inviting them to prayer and penance.

Nevertheless, on the other hand, it was possible to see around the impressive Shrine the comforting development of Marian piety. This authentic source of Christian life, which had sprung

up in Fatima and in every part of the world where devotion to the Virgin under the influence of the apparitions at Fatima was deeply rooted in the popular faith, was an invitation to men and women to consecrate themselves to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

The conversations between the seer, the last survivor of the three little shepherds, and you as the Bishop sent by the Pope, were not only an important ascertainment of the truthfulness of the events but also an opportunity for you to become acquainted with Sr Lucia's transparent soul and her heartfelt intelligence typical of her femininity, which had been translated into a strong Christian faith. In addition, through the experiences of this humble Sister, the role of the Virgin Mary shines forth, who gives Christians a motherly hand in the trials and tribulations of life.

I myself wrote the Theological Commentary on the event, after having prayed intensely and meditated profoundly on the authentic words of the third part of the secret of Fatima contained in the pages written by Sr Lucia. I was impressed by the comforting promise of the Virgin Most Holy, as a synthesis and a precious seal to it: "My Immaculate Heart will triumph" (*L'Osservatore Romano* English edition, 28 June 2000, p. VIII).

As I wrote: "The *fiat* of Mary, the word of her heart, has changed the history of the world, because it brought the Saviour into the world - because, thanks to her *Yes*, God could become man in our world and remains so for all time".

And further, "But since God himself took a human heart and has thus steered human freedom towards what is good, the freedom to choose evil no longer has the last word" (*ibid.*, p. VIII). The message of Fatima is a further proof of this.

I invoke upon all who approach the testimony offered in this book, the protection of Our Blessed Lady of Fatima, and I impart my Apostolic Blessing to you, Your Eminence, and to Dr Giuseppe De Carli, who shared with you the toil of drafting these memoirs.

From the Vatican, 22 February 2007

BENEDICT XVI

© Copyright 2007 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana