

Who is the “Bishop Dressed in White?”

Speculations Abound As We Approach the Centenary of Fatima

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The Vatican’s *The Message of Fatima* released on June 26, 2000 was another chapter in the ongoing assault on Fatima since 1960 (the year Lucia’s letter containing the missing words of Our Lady was to be released). *The Message* demotes the famous “etcetera” clause to a footnoted annotation, declares that Lucia fabricated the 1960 date, and pretends that Our Lady gave no explanation to the seers of the mysterious and obscure vision of the “Bishop dressed in White.” The document even attempts to persuade us to believe the execution of the “Bishop in White” and other clerics and faithful, brought about by soldiers who fire bullets and arrows at them in a city in ruins, was actually fulfilled in the failed assassination attempt of John Paul II in 1981 by a lone gunman in a perfectly intact St. Peter’s Square. Absolute nonsense.

Until the Vatican finally releases the missing text of the Third Secret, we continue to ask: Who is this “Bishop in White”? Is he a Pope? An anti-pope? A “Pope Emeritus”? Let’s explore these questions by examining the curious words Lucia used in describing the vision:

And we saw in an immense light that is God: ‘something similar to how people appear in a mirror when they pass in front of it’ a Bishop dressed in White ‘we had the impression that it was the Holy Father.’ Other Bishops, Priests, men and women Religious going up a steep mountain, at the top of which there was a big Cross of rough-hewn trunks as of a cork-tree with the bark; before reaching there the Holy Father passed through a big city half in ruins and half trembling with halting step.” Afflicted with pain and sorrow, he prayed for the souls of the corpses he met on his way. Having reached the top of the mountain, on his knees at the foot of the big Cross he was killed by a group of soldiers who fired bullets and arrows at him.”¹

Needless to say, the manner of Lucia’s initial description of the “Bishop in White” is peculiar, and the Vatican document offers no commentary on it. This method of explanation could be interpreted to mean the children saw only an image of the Pope who was not really the Pope (just like an image of someone reflected in a mirror is not the actual person who “passes in front of” the mirror). This may also explain why Lucia writes that “we had the *impression* that it was the Holy Father.” Why would Lucia say it was only their “impression” if it actually was the

¹ While this author presumes the text of the Third Secret released by the Vatican is authentic, he also acknowledges the possibility that it may not be. After all, given the Vatican’s many and repeated deceptions concerning Fatima over the years (e.g., fake letters and phony interviews), issuing another fraudulent text would be consistent with its *modus operandi*. The vision’s ambiguity (“impressions,” “appearances,” “bishop in white”) is also distinguishable from the clarity of the first two parts of the Secret (vision of hell, ending of WWI, beginning of WWII, reign of “Pius XI”). Moreover, it is very odd that Lucia would say the Pope prayed for the souls of the “corpses” (Portuguese, *cadáveres*). In her prayers for those in Purgatory, the Church never uses the term “corpses” or “cadavers” to describe the dead. This is because such terminology is reserved for those beings without eternal souls (e.g., animals). It is inexplicable why Lucia would use such a foreign term which has no basis in Catholic tradition.

Holy Father? Again, the use of “mirror images” and “impressions” may be Lucia’s way of describing someone in the vision who was not really who he appeared to be.

That this person is referred to as a “*Bishop* in White” suggests he is a true bishop. Could he be a possible Vatican prelate who seized the papal throne under false pretenses? That the bishop is “*dressed* in White” suggests that these vestments operate to mask his true identity and ecclesiastical position (a bishop or cardinal but not the true Pope). Until the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI, among the cardinals and bishops in the Vatican, only the Pope wore white vestments outside of liturgical rites (now, of course, both Pope Francis and Pope Emeritus Benedict wear the white cassock). As such, it seems superfluous to describe the Pope as a “Bishop dressed in White” if he were really the Pope, just as it would be superfluous to describe the Green Bay Packers’ quarterback as a “man wearing number 12, dressed in green and gold” if he were really Aaron Rodgers. Rather, one would use these descriptions to describe a deceiving imposter.

In further support for this thesis, it is possible to interpret Lucia’s words as making a distinction between the seers’ uncertain impression of the “Bishop dressed in White” as the Pope in the first part of the vision and the certain identification of the “Holy Father” in the second part of the vision (who is “killed by a group of soldiers”). Lucia only describes the “Bishop dressed in White” as a “mirror image,” giving an “impression” of his identity. Lucia never says he *is* the “Holy Father.” On the other hand, when Lucia describes the Holy Father’s pass through the city in ruins, his prayers for the dead and ultimate execution, she does not use the equivocal language; she simply says he is the Holy Father.²

Perhaps that is because the vision is a revelation of an anti-pope reigning during the persecution of the true Church. Anne Catherine Emmerich, the Augustinian stigmatist, described from her prophetic visions a counterfeit ecumenical church – which she called the “false church of darkness” – that would be ruled by an anti-pope. The secular world will recognize this anti-pope as the legitimate Pope while the true Pope and Church are driven underground. This false Church will unite with the other religions of the world into one universal Masonic amalgamation while the true Church suffers its greatest persecution in history.³ According to Emmerich’s prophecy, the anti-pope will not be an enemy of the world. Rather, he will be loved by the world as he embraces the Church’s enemies while ridiculing true Catholics and undermining Catholic doctrine and morals. In so doing, he will unite his church of darkness to the false religions and ideologies of the world, thereby creating a one-world religion of Freemasonic brotherhood (a false “image” or “impression” of the true and universal Catholic religion). This will happen while the true Pope is exiled until he is finally captured and murdered, as in the vision of St. Pius X.

Is it Benedict? Francis? Or Someone Else?

Could the vision of the “Bishop in White” be connected to the shocking and unexpected resignation of Pope Benedict XVI on February 28, 2013? Questions continue to abound

² Of course, Lucia may have used this language (“we had the impression that it was the Holy Father”) simply because she was seeing a future Pope but obviously didn’t know his name. This is another reasonable explanation of her words. But the other possibilities are indeed intriguing and, given the current situation in the Vatican and the approaching centenary of Fatima, compelling.

³ See Fr. Paul Kramer, “The Imminent Chastisement for Not Fulfilling Our Lady’s Request,” *The Fatima Crusader*, Issue 80, p. 32.

concerning the propriety of this resignation of a Pope who still had his full mental faculties and no grave physical illness other than the normal pangs of old age. The gravity of these inquiries has intensified in light of the study published by Stefano Violi (Professor of Canon Law at the Faculty of Theology in Bologna and Lugano) and further examined by Italy's esteemed writer Vittorio Messori, who hypothesize that Pope Benedict did not intend to renounce the Papal office but only the active exercise thereof; as well as Antonio Socci's new book *Non e' Francesco: La Chiesa Nella Grande Tempesta (It's Not Francis: The Church in a Great Tempest)*, in which Socci argues that Pope Benedict's resignation is invalid based on canonical irregularities during the Conclave that may have been leaked by Bergoglio himself. In his new book called *Team Bergoglio*, Dr. Austen Ivereigh also shows that there was a highly organized team of European Cardinals (including Walter Kasper) already active during the 2005 Conclave, that had formally conspired to get Bergoglio elected in 2013, and which contributed to Ratzinger's decision to resign the Pontificate.

Is Pope Benedict's resignation valid? Was he finally driven out against his will by the "wolves" he publicly admitted he feared during his own coronation ceremonies? If Benedict resigned under duress and undue influence, the validity of his resignation – and the subsequent election of Pope Francis – would indeed be null and void, giving rise to this very Pope/anti-pope scenario. That God struck St. Peter's Basilica with a bolt of lightning – not once, but twice – just hours after the Pope announced his resignation on February 11, 2013 only increases the angst and trepidation of our current situation.⁴

It is conceivable, though frightening, to still see the fulfillment of the Third Secret vision in Pope Benedict XVI/Joseph Ratzinger, who remains alive in the Vatican. First, Ratzinger's choice of the name "Benedict" automatically connects him to the Fatima Message. It was Pope Benedict XVI's predecessor, Benedict XV, who prayed for the Virgin to come and end World War I (Our Lady of Fatima appeared eight days later, on May 13, 1917). Pope Benedict XVI's name choice reveals his own belief in a connection with the Fatima prophecies, if not a culmination of them during his lifetime.

More specifically, some compare Benedict XVI to St. Pius X, not only in intellect but also in their similarities of short stature, white hair, and first name (Joseph). When St. Pius X had the vision of the martyred Pope, he feared it was him in the vision. If the bishop in the vision is indeed a short, white-haired man named Joseph, we cannot rule out Ratzinger from the prophecy until he dies. After all, if his resignation is valid, he is no longer Pope or a Cardinal, but a Bishop, and yet he continues to wear a "white" cassock and bear the papal coat of arms, and goes by the titles "Pope Emeritus" and "His Holiness" while living inside the Vatican. These completely unprecedented actions surrounding an equally unprecedented resignation explain how Benedict/Ratzinger could be the "Bishop in White" in the vision, who gave the seers the "impression" and "image" of the Holy Father. On the other hand, if Benedict's resignation is invalid, then Francis could be the "Bishop in White" in the vision, who is not the Pope but a Bishop only (after all, he even calls himself the "Bishop of Rome"). In either scenario, we currently have two Bishops in white in the Vatican – only one of them is the true Pope, while the other only gives that "impression."

⁴ The curious connections between Pope Benedict XVI, Fatima and Russia increased on February 15, 2013, when a meteorite exploded over central Russia, raining fireballs over a vast area which caused significant property damage and injured over 1,200 people, just days after Pope Benedict announced his resignation. See, for example, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/15/us-russia-meteorite-idUSBRE91E05Z20130215>.

We also note that Pope Benedict was preoccupied with martyrdom during his reign. As Antonio Socci astutely observed, “Benedict seems to have given his pontificate the horizon of martyrdom.”⁵ While many examples could be provided, we note his comments on April 24, 2005, at his Coronation Mass as Pope, when he said: “When the shepherd of all humanity, the living God, Himself became a lamb, He stood on the side of the lambs, with those who are downtrodden and killed. This is how he reveals himself to be the truth shepherd: ‘I am the Good Shepherd...I lay down My life for the sheep’...Pray for me, that I may learn to love His flock more and more...Pray for me, that I may not flee for fear of the wolves.”⁶

Given the solemn occasion of his first Mass as Pope, these were striking statements to be sure, and the Pope’s unprecedented resignation suggests that he finally succumbed to his fear. Our Holy Father revealed that he was surrounded by wolves and needed our prayers to confront and defeat them. Perhaps our prayers were too weak and infrequent, for the Pope has indeed fled the pasture. Scripture reveals the internal threat of these wolves. Jesus warned His apostles, “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Mt 7:15). St. Paul also warns, “after my departure, ravening wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock” (Acts 20:29). These Scriptures reveal that the wolves appear good, but they work to destroy the Church *from within*. Hence, even in light of his resignation, the Pope’s plea for prayers for fear of the wolves at his very Papal Coronation Mass connects him in a special way to the Fatima Message, which he himself in 2010 said reveals an internal attack on the Church from corrupt clergy, and why Our Lady revealed the Pope “will have much to suffer.”

In that light, there seems to be an even deeper and more profound connection between Benedict XVI and Fatima. Wolves try to kill the sheep, and the shepherd must lay his life down to protect them. Because Benedict feared the wolves, his expression reveals to us that he believed his life was in danger during his reign. He was alone in the Apostolic Palace and surrounded by men (the corrupt clergy of the Fatima prophecy) who wanted to kill him (and who may still want to kill him) for having brought a semblance of orthodoxy back to the Church.⁷ Pope Benedict surely suffered a “white” martyrdom during his reign, much more than his immediate predecessors who were favored by both friends and enemies of the Church. Having liberated the Tridentine Mass of St. Pius V (which, as a matter of Divine Law, can never rightly be suppressed), Pope Benedict put himself at odds with the Vatican II church. Having rehabilitated Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, Bishop Castro de Mayer and the four bishops they consecrated (by lifting their unjust “excommunications”), Pope Benedict made immediate enemies within the Roman Curia. Given the aggressive opposition the Pope faced “from the wolves” in making these decisions perhaps portended of a “red” martyrdom by the hands of these same wolves if he decided to consecrate Russia to Our Lady’s Immaculate Heart.

Perhaps Benedict’s fear of execution at the hands of the wolves led him to abdicate his office. Did he fear he was the “Bishop in White”? Did he resign to avoid his own execution? Or is he connected to some other scandal in the Church that his enemies would make public if he stayed in office (e.g., his handling of the Marcial Maciel case)? Is this why he has now locked himself up within the Vatican completely cut off from the world? And would Benedict’s plan of

⁵ Ibid, p.36.

⁶ *The Fourth Secret of Fatima*, pp. 35-36. Pope Benedict repeated the theme of martyrdom in his first consistory as Pope (March 24, 2006) and at one of his Wednesday audiences at Castel Gondolfo (August 10, 2011).

⁷ If Pope John Paul I was murdered by members of his own Curia (and the evidence supports this conclusion), Pope Benedict was certainly aware of this precedent and the mortal danger he faced from the “wolves.”

avoiding a prophecy he believed applied to him really surprise us, given that the conciliar Popes seem to believe they can prevent the Fatima chastisements from occurring by their own human machinations (burying the Third Secret, consecrating the “world” and not Russia, perhaps even abdicating the papal throne)? These are troubling questions indeed, and reveal, at a minimum, a Pope who did not have the fortitude and perseverance to follow his Master as St. Peter did.

Or, perhaps, Pope Benedict’s fear was more supernatural. That is, he feared not temporal death, but eternal death. Perhaps he feared the ultimate judgment of God for failing to consecrate Russia, which would come upon him if he were killed in office. After all, Fatima continued to prick this Pope’s conscience throughout his pontificate, more than any of his predecessors. This is demonstrated by his sending Archbishop Hilarion Capucci in 2007 to Russia to meet with Alexy II, the patriarchate of the Russian orthodox, to see whether they would be offended by the consecration; by his complete reversal on May 11, 2010 of the Vatican’s June 26, 2000 official position on Fatima in *The Message* and connecting the Secret to the sexual corruption of the Catholic hierarchy; by his May 13, 2010 sermon in which he said “He who believes the prophetic mission of Fatima is over would be deceiving himself”; and by his April 22, 2011 admission that a future consecration to Our Lady may be necessary.

If Pope Benedict knew he was too weak to overcome the internal opposition to the consecration of Russia, then he may have wanted to give that responsibility to a more courageous successor, both for the good of the Church and his own soul. Perhaps Pope Benedict believed God would judge him less harshly if he transferred the responsibility of the consecration of Russia to his successor, especially if it would increase the likelihood of the consecration. While we had initially hoped that Pope Francis would be able defeat the wolves that Pope Benedict evidently could not, it now sadly appears that Francis is one of those wolves.

Pope Francis and the Consecration of Russia

Will Pope Francis finally be the one to consecrate Russia? While Francis does not appear to have any Catholic sensibilities whatsoever, much less a devotion to Our Lady and Her dire message at Fatima, “no word shall be impossible with God” (Lk 1:37). When the Roman stigmatist Antonio Ruffini was asked twenty years ago whether John Paul II would consecrate Russia, he said: “No, it’s not John Paul II. It will not be his immediate successor either, but the one after that. He is the one who will consecrate Russia.”⁸ That, of course, is not Pope Benedict XVI but his immediate successor. Of course, if Benedict’s resignation is valid, then his immediate successor is Pope Francis.⁹ However, if Benedict’s resignation is invalid, then his immediate successor remains for the future.

If Ruffini’s prophecy is correct and Francis is the Pope (and assuming the “Bishop in White” and the “Holy Father” of the vision are different persons), then three scenarios are possible: (1) Francis consecrates Russia and is executed as a martyr, presumably during a war on Rome, perhaps World War III (he would be the “Holy Father” of the vision whose blood is gathered up with “the blood of the Martyrs”) while Benedict would be the “Bishop in White.” We note that some of the private revelations of a future war against the West (Aiello; Emmerich) suggest that the consecration will occur during a devastating, blitzkrieg of a war, possibly

⁸ Fr. Paul Kramer, “World War II and Worse?,” *The Fatima Crusader*, Issue 82, Spring 2006, p. 11.

⁹ Pope Pius XII authorized the blessing of a chapel on the spot where Ruffini received the stigmata on the Via Appia (Father Tomaselli, the miracle worker, also wrote a book about Ruffini).

involving Rome (Lucia's vision reveals a Cross made of bark from a "cork tree," which trees are indigenous to Rome) and likely culminate in the "Holy Father's" merciless execution as seen in the vision. Or, (2) Francis consecrates Russia and Benedict, who is the "Bishop in White," is executed, perhaps as a punishment for his abdication and failure to consecrate Russia which brought on the war. Or, (3) Francis consecrates Russia and no one is executed, the consecration preventing these material chastisements from occurring as Our Lady ushers in the period of peace.

If Ruffini's prophecy is correct and Francis is not the true Pope, then Benedict's immediate successor (who remains for the future) consecrates Russia. In such case, the possibility of Benedict and Francis being the men in the prophecy seems more remote. But we can still imagine certain scenarios where this would be possible. Perhaps Benedict dies naturally and Francis "resigns" or is deposed as an anti-pope by the Cardinals, who then becomes the "Bishop in White" in the Vatican while Benedict's legitimate successor consecrates Russia (and is perhaps also martyred). Or, perhaps Francis dies naturally while Benedict remains alive (and who is the "Bishop in White"), whose successor consecrates Russia (and is perhaps also martyred). Or, instead of a natural death, either Benedict or Francis is executed during the war (the survivor being the "Bishop in White"), with Benedict's legitimate successor consecrating Russia. On the other hand, Ruffini may be wrong about John Paul II's second successor being the one to consecrate Russia, for many holy people have erred in their prognostications about the future, and we must be extremely cautious about such private prophecies. If Ruffini is not correct, the "Bishop in White" could still be Benedict or Francis, if not a future Pope.

These questions and legitimate speculations become all the more troubling as we approach the 100th anniversary the Fatima apparitions (2017). Of course, these events may relate to a future Pope and/or anti-pope, perhaps reigning closer to the centenary of the command to consecrate Russia (2029) when Benedict and Francis are likely dead. The unprecedented resignation of one Pope, and the almost immediate election of his successor – resulting in two "Bishops in White" living in the Vatican at the same time – could have also been a plan *arranged by the devil himself*, to deceive those into believing the Third Secret prophecy is unfolding right now, in order to undermine their confidence in the Fatima Message if the events (e.g., the execution of a Pope) don't soon materialize as they anticipate. After all, the devil is the author of the diabolical disorientation in the Church, and he has directed his attack primarily against the Popes and the Message of Fatima.

Whatever the case may be, only God knows, and time is short. We recall Our Lord's warning in 1931 at Rianjo, Spain: "Make it known to My ministers, given that they follow the example of the King of France in delaying the execution of My command, they will follow him into misfortune...They did not wish to heed My request. Like the King of France, they will repent and do it, but it will be late." What does this mean? On June 17, 1689, Jesus commanded King Louis XIV to consecrate France to His Sacred Heart. On June 17, 1789, exactly 100 years to the day of the request, God allowed the Masons of the French Revolution to strip his successor, King Louis XVI, of his legislative power and eventually murder him for failure to obey the consecration request (he was decapitated by the guillotine).

Just as the King of France was executed for failing to consecrate his country, the King of the Church will be executed if he fails to consecrate Russia in time. Just as the King of France was given 100 years to obey the request, the Pope would seem to have the same 100 years before "following him into misfortune." As we alluded to, Our Lady revealed the coming request in 1917 and formally demanded it in 1929. Whether the Pope has until 2017 or 2029 (or some other

year) to consecrate Russia is known by God alone. Certainly, God has not bound Himself to wait 100 years, and surely the consequences of failing to consecrate Russia have been far graver for the Church and the world than those in France in the eighteenth century. Whatever the timing, at Rianjo, Our Lord revealed the fate of the final Pope who disobeys His command: A brutal, public execution (as the vision depicts) which is God's chosen punishment for His Vicar's disobedience.

Is the "Bishop dressed in White" of the Third Secret of Fatima the true Pope? Or an anti-pope? Is the "Bishop in White" the same person as the "Holy Father"? Or are these different persons? If they are different persons, is the "Bishop in White" a vision of a "Pope Emeritus" who continues to wear white and live in Vatican City, thus giving the "impression" of the Holy Father? Or is he an anti-pope reigning over a "church of darkness" while the true Pope has been driven underground, perhaps by a coerced resignation? Who is the Pope who passes through a city in ruins (Rome?) devastated by its enemies (Russia?) and eventually martyred by those same enemies? The public will never know the answers to these and many other questions unless and until the Vatican releases the missing text of the Secret – or the conditional prophecies materialize, God forbid, due to the Church's ongoing failure to consecrate Russia. May God spare us from what we deserve, by moving the Pope to finally consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in union with all the bishops before it is too late.¹⁰

¹⁰ For more information, please see my book, co-authored with Robert Sungenis, called *The Consecration of Russia – How Seven Popes Failed to Heed Heaven's Command and Brought Turmoil to the Church and the World* (375 pages), as well as my book *A Little Catechism on Fatima* (120 pages), available at www.johnsalza.com.