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THE ROOTS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II'S DEVOTION TO MARY*

In a world threatened by nuclear holocaust and ecological disasters, its monetary system tottering under the weight of unpayable debts, and masses of people growing restive under inequitable economic systems and repressive governments, with starvation threatening the poorer nations and terrorism disturbing the wealthy, Pope John Paul II proclaimed 1987/88 a Marian Year. This appeared to some as the futile gesture of a sentimental man out of touch with the problems of the real world and its centers of power.

But such a view hardly fits a man who endured the Nazi occupation of Poland during his youth and then spent most of his adult life contending effectively with a Communist regime propped up by the Russians.

While employed during the day in the Solvay chemical plant, Karol Wojtyla prepared for the priesthood by studying theology clandestinely at night so as to avoid the Gestapo. His first years as a priest came when governmental attacks on the Church were ferocious. In 1948, when he returned from Rome to Poland, 400 priests were either in prison or in Siberian concentration camps. Four years later there were 1,000, that is to say, about one-tenth of the Polish clergy. In 1953, Bishop Kaczmarek of Kielce, after having been imprisoned without a hearing for thirty-two months, was subjected to a show-trial, in which he accused himself of numerous crimes against the state, as well as incriminating the memory of two great Polish Catholic heroes,

*I want to express my gratitude particularly to Fathers Arthur Calkins and James McCurry, O.F.M. Conv., for their generosity in furnishing information and expert criticism that considerably enriched this paper.

Cardinals Sapieha and Hlond. For this he was sentenced to twelve years imprisonment; and when Cardinal Wyszyński protested, he in turn was placed under house arrest.¹

After living through such years, the young Bishop Wojtyła dared to joust with the rulers of Poland, and often did so successfully. Under his leadership, the people of Nowa Huta built a church in spite of the determined resistance of the authorities. He gave strong support to Lech Wałęsa, leader of Solidarity, the only independent trade union to emerge in a Communist state. Revisiting his country as Pope, he boldly reaffirmed the rights of the laboring man and the need for solidarity, in disregard of the evident indignation of General Jaruzelski. In a geographical area completely new to him, he mediated successfully in the age-old dispute between Chile and Argentina over the Beagle Islands. With that barely settled, he did not flinch from expressing his displeasure over Chile's violations of human rights under Pinochet. On visits to Poland, Chile and the Philippines, he frustrated maneuvers by both Jaruzelski, the Communist, and Pinochet and Marcos, the rightist dictators, aimed at co-opting his presence as a support for their regimes. Even the simple fact that he has visited the nations of the world, both before and after being elected Pope, as few other people have done, contributes not a little to putting him in closer touch with the realities of modern life than perhaps anyone else in the world.

He likewise moves with great ease in rigorously intellectual spheres. He "traveled widely at the request of various universities around the world, giving technical lectures on modern philosophical problems. He has spoken in Australia and New Zealand, as well as in the United States at such universities as Harvard and Princeton."² His book *The Act-*

¹Most of the details in this paragraph are found in Mary Craig's *Man from a Far Country* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1982), chapters four and five. Generally speaking, however, I will not footnote biographical details except for those of particular importance.

²Francis X. Murphy and Norman Schaefer, *John Paul II: A Son from Poland* (South Hackensack, NJ: Shepherd Press, 1978), 15.

ing Person (1969) is a serious contribution to the philosophy of man. His writings have been published by international journals of philosophy. His essay, "The Transcendence of the Person in Action and Man's Self-Teleology," was accepted by the *Analecta Husserliana* before he was elected Pope.³ His encyclicals, *Laborem exercens* and *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, deal constructively and creatively with basic social problems.

Finally, it is not to be overlooked that, after being shot and critically wounded by Mehmet Ali Agca, he has continued boldly to greet crowds all over the world, even in very dangerous situations and even though further attempts have been made on his life. All that is to say that this is not the sort of man you would expect to find sitting in his room composing valentines. If he has summoned the Church to devote a year of renewing its devotion to Mary, he must be taken seriously.

* * *

Most of the recent popes have been very devoted to Mary, but none has promoted this devotion as strongly and insistently as John Paul II. Pius XII defined the Assumption, issued the encyclical *Fulgens Corona*, consecrated the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and instituted several Marian feasts. However, he lived when Marian devotion was at its peak of fervor, and had only to direct and foster it.

John XXIII captivated the world by his warm and jovial heart, and fascinated the minds of the thoughtful by sum-

³This essay was published in Anton Gronowicz' *God's Broker* (New York: Richardson and Snyder, 1984), 203-213.

Among the other more significant writings of Karol Wojtyla, Gronowicz cites the following: "Propaedeutics of Marriage," "The Role of a Woman in the Church," "Human Nature as a Basis for Ethical Formations," *Love and Responsibility*, "Bringing Up Love," "Thomistic Personalism," "Observations on the Inner Life of Young Intelligentsia," and other essays on psychology and poems on religious and social themes.

moning the Second Vatican Council. But his simple, faithful devotion to Mary, expressed by his daily rosary and his pilgrimage to Loreto at the opening of the Council, were little noticed.

Paul VI came at a time when Marian devotion was on the course of precipitous decline. His efforts to sustain his devotion played a considerable role in turning the enthusiasm with which he was originally welcomed into animosity and obloquy. At the close of the Council, when he proclaimed the title, *Mother of the Church*, which the Theological Commission, after much discussion, had omitted from the chapter on Mary, a small but ominously prophetic storm of protest broke out.⁴ His letter on Marian devotion, *Marialis Cultus*, was largely ignored.

John Paul I was also a man of deep Marian piety, but his short term of office precluded any noteworthy public acts expressive of it.⁵

When John Paul II took office, with Marian piety at its lowest ebb since the Enlightenment, he immediately set about fostering it. He began by quiet, unobtrusive, but insistent reminders and personal example, without any particularly noteworthy action. In his first appearance on the balcony of St. Peter's, he declared that he accepted the responsibility of the papal office, "in a spirit of obedience to the Lord and total trust in His Mother, our most holy Lady."⁶ Since then, his Marian sermons, prayers, consecrations, and weekly Angelus messages have become countless. All of his encyclicals and nearly all of his major allocutions, excepting

⁴Ralph M. Wiltgen, *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber* (New York, NY: Hawthorn, 1967), 157-8; 243.

⁵As Cardinal Archbishop of Venice, however, he composed a charming little explanation of the Rosary: "My Rosary," published in the diocesan review of Venice, 7 October 1973. An English translation was published in *Soul Magazine* (Sept.-Oct. 1984). And in 1978, he wrote a short account of a visit he had had with Sister Lucia on the occasion of a pilgrimage to Fatima. Published originally in *Il Cuore della Madre* (1978), it was translated into English as "My Meeting with Lucia," *Soul Magazine* (July-August 1987): 8.

⁶*Origins*, 26 Oct. 1978, p. 289.

those in which it would be obviously inappropriate, contain (usually towards the close) an invocation of Mary or a brief but strong exhortation about her. Even his minor addresses and letters often allude to her.

On his pastoral visits, the Pope regularly consecrates to Mary the nation he is visiting. In the first five years of his papacy, for example, he did this for Mexico, Poland, Ireland, the United States, Zaire, Ghana, Brazil, Germany, the Philippines and all of Asia, Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Argentina, Spain, Honduras and all of Central America, Haiti, France and Austria.

Besides these there are the acts of entrustment/consecration to Mary which he makes in the shrines of Italy . . . and the habitual, almost innumerable, expressions or wishes of entrustment to Mary by which he concludes the "ad limina" visits of groups of bishops and special audiences of all kinds.⁷

Another regular feature of his pastoral visits is a pilgrimage to the chief Marian shrine of the country visited, where he will invariably preach an ardent exhortation. He has been not only to the famous shrines of Lourdes, Fatima, Guadalupe and Czestochowa, but also to lesser-known ones, such as Ephesus in Turkey, Altötting in Germany, the Miraculous Medal chapel in Paris, Baclaran in the Philippines, Notre Dame du Cap in Canada, Saragossa in Spain, Santo Domingo in the Caribbean, Aparecida in Brazil, Maipú in Chile, and others too numerous to mention. His first visit to the United States included a service at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. At these places, the Holy Father likes to represent himself as a fellow pilgrim with the others who are there.

During the Marian Year, he visited the major Marian churches of Rome⁸ and frequently used the Sunday Angelus

⁷Arthur B. Calkins, "John Paul's Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary: Christological Foundation (Part I)," *Miles Immaculatae*, 23, No. 1-2 (1987): 93 ff.

⁸E.g., St. Mary Major on 5 August 1987.

and Regina Coeli messages to commemorate particular Marian shrines from all over the world.⁹

The Marian Year of 1987-88 and the encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*, which introduced it, are the first major Marian acts of Pope John Paul II. They did not come until nine years of his pontificate had elapsed, but they are the natural culmination of a quiet but insistent policy that dates from its beginning.

* * *

The Holy Father's devotion to Mary has some characteristic traits and emphases deriving from four factors that have contributed notably to it: Czestochowa, St. Louis de Montfort, Vatican II and Fatima.

1. Czestochowa

Czestochowa, the greatest Marian shrine in Poland, developed around an ikon of the Virgin and Child, the origins of which were shrouded in legend. In the fourteenth century, this ikon of Byzantine origin¹⁰ was brought to the mountain, Jasna Gora, by Prince Wladyslaw, and put in the care of the monastery founded there by him. The unexpected victory of Polish forces over the invading Tatars in 1382 was credited to this sacred ikon, and the anniversary of this victory has been celebrated ever since.¹¹ In 1655, when the Swedish army had conquered the rest of Poland, the besieged monastery withstood a forty days' siege. This victory revived the

⁹It would be tedious to list them all. These messages are reported each week in *L'Osservatore Romano* (English edition—hereafter *ORE*). The Angelus message of 21 June 1987 announced that the shrines would be commemorated throughout the Marian Year.

¹⁰Henrietta I. Bolton, *The Madonna of St. Luke* (New York: Putnam, 1963) and Ean Begg, *The Cult of the Black Virgin* (London: Arkana, 1985).

¹¹When Hussites attacked the monastery in 1420 and stole Our Lady's rich crown of gold and precious jewels, they left two sword slashes that have characterized this ikon ever since.

courage of the nation to drive out the invader. In gratitude, King Jan Kazimierz dedicated the whole country to Our Lady, Queen of Poland. Thus Our Lady of Czestochowa came to represent Mary's special care for the Polish people, and particularly protection against enemies. Thereafter, pilgrims began to throng to the shrine and devout families invoked Mary daily under the title of Queen. After World War II, this devotion was greatly stimulated. On August 26, 1956, the third centenary of the original consecration, more than a million people took the "Jasna Gora oath of consecration," composed by Cardinal Wyszynski while under house arrest.¹²

The Marian devotion of the Polish people is, of course, directed to Mary herself, not to the shrine as such. Czestochowa is simply the principal national symbol of this devotion, giving it a certain national coloring. The Wojtyla family had more actual contact with the local shrine of Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, with its ikon of Our Lady of the Angels. They went there several times a year, and Cardinal Wojtyla would later return there regularly for retreats and days of recollection. But for the purposes of this paper, Czestochowa can be viewed the focal point of Karol's Marian devotion.

He was only nine when his mother died, and his grieving father took the boy for a visit to Czestochowa. In high school, he belonged to the Sodality of Mary. When Halina Krolikiewicz, his acting partner in the Rhapsodic Theater, fell in love with him, their mutual friend Tadeusz Kwiatkowski told her that she did not have a chance, because Karol was already wedded to the Madonna of Czestochowa.¹³ Later he became part of a Living Rosary group. As a seminarian, he made it a practice to inscribe a cross ac-

¹²Peter Hebblethwaite, "The Black Madonna," in John Whale *et al.*, *The Man Who Leads the Church: An Assessment of Pope John Paul II* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), 33. Poland has been consecrated to Mary six times in the present century: in 1920, 1946, 1956, 1966, 1971 (to Mary, Mother of the Church) and 1976. Cf. Calkins, "John Paul's Consecration (Pt. I)," 103-112.

¹³Gronowicz, *God's Broker*, 87.

accompanied by the letter M on his notebooks—a design that now appears on his papal coat of arms.¹⁴ When he became Archbishop of Cracow, Czestochowa was one of his suffragan sees and he preached there often, seldom missing the great annual celebration of Mary's queenship. As Pope, he still recites the "call of Jasna Gora," an evening prayer recited throughout Poland since 1957, as part of a preparation for the millennium of its conversion: "Mary, Queen of Poland, I am near you, I am mindful of you, I keep vigil."¹⁵

2. *St. Louis de Montfort*

There was a period in his adolescence when young Karol was concerned that Mary would detract from the place due to Christ in his life. Then he discovered St. Louis de Montfort's *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, of which he said later:

The reading of this book was a decisive turning-point in my life. I say "turning-point," but in fact it was a long inner journey which coincided with my clandestine preparation for the priesthood. It was at that time that this curious treatise came into my hands. The *Traité* is one of those books that it is not enough to "have read." I remember carrying it on me for a long time, even at the sodium factory, with the result that its handsome binding became spotted with lime. I continually went back to certain passages. . . . As a result, my devotion to the Mother of Christ in my childhood and adolescence yielded to a new attitude springing from the depths of my faith, as though from the very heart of the Trinity and Jesus Christ.¹⁶

From St. Louis, Karol learned that, rather than interfering

¹⁴George Hunston Williams, *The Mind of John Paul II: Origins of His Thought and Action* (New York: Seabury, 1981), 280.

¹⁵*ORe*, 3 August 1987, p. 3. See also his moving discourse delivered at Czestochowa on 12 June 1987, after the "Call of Jasna Gora," *ORe*, 3 August 1987, p. 3.

¹⁶Andre Frossard, *Be Not Afraid!: John Paul II Speaks Out on His Life, His Beliefs and His Inspiring Vision for Humanity* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 125.

with devotion to Christ, Marian piety springs from it and fosters it. St. Louis counsels us to do everything with Mary, for Mary, by Mary and in Mary—to turn everything we have over to her so that she can present it to Jesus.¹⁷ That became the aim of the young Karol Wojtyła, which he has maintained ever since. His motto, "*Totus tuus*" ("All yours"), comes from a prayer which St. Louis recommends addressing to Mary before Communion: "I am all yours, and all that I have belongs to you."¹⁸

Wojtyła adopted this motto when he became bishop. Later, in his inaugural address as Pope, he declared:

In this grave hour which gives us trepidation, we can do no other than turn our mind with filial devotion to the Virgin Mary, who always lives and acts as a Mother in the mystery of Christ, and repeat the words, "*Totus tuus*," which we inscribed in our heart and on our coat of arms twenty years ago on the day of our episcopal ordination . . .¹⁹

The idea of making oneself a voluntary slave to Mary, as taught by De Montfort and others, provoked some criticism in Poland and elsewhere. Speaking to a group of Polish bishops on December 17, 1987, the Pope interpreted and defended this tradition.²⁰

It is natural to wonder whether Maximilian Kolbe may not have had a similar influence on the young Wojtyła. During the first eighteen years of the latter's life (and therefore well before he discovered de Montfort), Kolbe was one of the most widely read religious writers in Poland. His month-

¹⁷*True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, no. 121. I use the magnificent new edition of the Saint's collected works, *God Alone* (Bay Shore, NY: Montfort Publications, 1988).

¹⁸*True Devotion*, no. 266. The formula is also found in Latin in the oration concluding the "Little Crown" (*Oeuvres Complètes de St. Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort*, 2nd ed. [Paris: Seuil, 1982], 839).

¹⁹*ORE*, 26 October 1973, p. 4. The translation of his speech given in *Origins*, 26 October 1978, inexplicably omits this and the last four paragraphs of the address.

²⁰*ORE*, 18 Jan. 1988, p. 11.

ly magazine, *The Knight of the Immaculata*, had attained an astonishing circulation of 750,000 when it was halted by the Nazi occupation of Poland, and his daily newspaper, *The Little Journal*, 137,000.²¹ Nevertheless, there is no definite evidence of any direct influence of Kolbe on Wojtyla.

As to Archbishop Wojtyla's role in promoting the cause of Kolbe's canonization, Father James McCurry, O.F.M. Conv., one of the best Kolbe authorities in this country, checked the several volumes of testimonies and related documents from the canonical process, and "concluded that Wojtyla's role in the diocesan enquiry was minimal, since most of that work was completed before he became Archbishop of Krakow in 1962. His predecessors, Cardinal Sapieha and Archbishop Banaziak would have been the responsible parties on that score. Since Kolbe's place of residence, Niepokalanow, had been in the Warsaw Archdiocese, Cardinal Wyszynski assumed a large role in the late 1960s and 1970s vis-à-vis the canonical process."²²

3. *Vatican II*

Pope John XXIII announced the project of Vatican II in January, 1959, just four months after Karol Wojtyla's ordination as bishop (September 28, 1958). Already known and esteemed in Rome, even by the Pope himself, Wojtyla was made a member of two commissions designated to prepare the constitution on the Church. Later, he was to be appointed to the commission responsible for drafting *The Church in the Modern World*. He was particularly active on the latter project, and was named to the subcommittee charged with its final redrafting. (It was he who proposed that it be desig-

²¹Boniface Hanley, *No Greater Love* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1982), 40.

²²Letter of Father James McCurry, O.F.M. Conv., to myself, 26 May 1988. Note that at Kolbe's beatification in 1971, an explanatory press conference was given by Cardinal Wojtyla. An English translation of it is published in *Immaculate Conception and Holy Spirit* by H.M. Manteau-Bonamy (Franciscan Marytown Press, 1977), xviii-xxiv.

nated a *pastoral* constitution, as a way to resolve a disagreement among members of the commission.) After the Council, as Archbishop of Cracow, he set about vigorously implementing the Conciliar decrees. He seems to have been the only one of all the Council fathers to have published a book synthesizing the Council teachings: *At the Bases of Renewal: A Study of the Realization of Vatican II*.²³ And his papacy can be understood chiefly as an energetic attempt to realize the aims of the Council.²⁴

Ironically, Wojtyla does not seem to have played any role in the composition of Chapter VIII of the Constitution on the Church, which is the most complete official statement of the Church's Marian belief ever promulgated. Originally the treatment of Mary had been planned as a distinct constitution in itself; it was drawn up by a different commission from that to which Wojtyla belonged, and was integrated into the Constitution on the Church rather late.²⁵

Once it had been decided that Mary should be treated in the context of the Constitution on the Church, twenty-two Council fathers recommended that the chapter on Mary be inserted as Chapter II, prior to the treatment of the Church as the People of God. Bishop Wojtyla was one of them, and in an intervention on September 18, 1964, he affirmed that locating this chapter at the end of the Constitution made it seem more like a corollary than an integral part. Recalling that Christ's work of redemption and salvation, which the Church perpetuates in the world, began when Mary gave birth to the Son of God, he argued that the chapter on Mary should be placed at the beginning of the Constitution, be-

²³Williams, *The Mind*, 183.

²⁴In his first speech as Bishop of Rome, 17 Oct. 1978, he began the exposition of the aims of his pontificate by saying, "Above all, we want to insist on the constant importance of the Second Vatican Council. . . . We consider, therefore, our primary duty that of promoting, with prudent but encouraging action, the most exact execution of the norms and the directives of the council." *Origins*, 26 Oct. 1978, p. 291.

²⁵For the complex history of this chapter, see "The Theological Context of and Introduction to Chapter 8 of *Lumen Gentium*" by Frederick Jelly, O.P., *Marian Studies* 37 (1986): 43-73.

tween the present chapters I and II.²⁶ Although this recommendation was not accepted by the Council, it illustrates Wojtyla's conviction about the essentially Marian character of the Church itself. Later, as Pope, he was to declare:

It is precisely Mary's faith which marks the beginning of the new and eternal covenant of God with man in Jesus Christ; this heroic *faith* of hers "*precedes*" the apostolic *witness* of the Church and ever remains in the Church's heart, hidden like a special heritage of God's revelation. All those who from generation to generation accept the apostolic witness of the Church share in that mysterious inheritance and *in a sense share in Mary's faith*.²⁷

But if Wojtyla did not leave any noticeable marks on Chapter VIII, this chapter had a strong influence on him. He published an essay, "On the Marian Inspiration of Vatican II" in a publication of the Catholic University of Warsaw (1976).²⁸ In the references to Mary which abound in his papal pronouncements, Chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium* is frequently cited. One of his reasons for calling the Marian Year was "to promote a new and more careful reading of what the Council said about the Blessed Virgin Mary."²⁹ His encyclical letter, *Redemptoris Mater*, is in large measure a commentary on the Vatican text, in which he seems particularly touched by the notion of Mary as archetype of the Church in its pilgrimage of faith, a note reiterated in countless addresses during the Marian Year.

4. *Fatima*

Fatima was in a sense thrust upon the Pope willy-nilly.

²⁶ *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II (Typis polyglottis Vaticanis)*, Vol. III, periodus III, pars II (1974), p. 178; see Jelly, "The Theological Context," 66.

²⁷ *Redemptoris Mater*, no. 27 (emphasis mine).

²⁸ "Inspiracja Maryjna Vaticanum II," *W Kierimku prawdy*, ed. Bokhdan Bejze (Warsaw Catholic Academy of Theology, 1976), 112-121.

²⁹ *Redemptoris Mater*, no. 48.

His biographies do not indicate that he had paid any special attention to the Fatima revelations previously. It is, of course, unlikely that, living under a Russian-imposed Communist government, he would not have been impressed by Mary's Fatima promise: "If my wishes are fulfilled, Russia will be converted and there will be peace. If not, Russia will spread her errors throughout the world, promoting war and persecution of the Church." At Fatima, Mary also spoke the words which were to take on a very personal meaning for John Paul II: "The Holy Father will have much to suffer, and various nations will be annihilated. But in the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me and it will be converted, and a time of peace will be conceded to the world."³⁰

Whether John Paul was mindful of these predictions at the beginning of his papacy is not clear. But they were forced on his attention by Mehmet Ali Agca's bullets, which ripped into the Holy Father's abdomen on May 13, 1981. According to Agca's own testimony, Bulgarian communists had equipped him for the assassination attempt. Agca had telephone numbers and other detailed information that lent credibility to his accusation; however, he behaved so crazily on the witness stand that the Italian courts declined either to convict or to exonerate the men he accused. Commentators have suspected that the Russian KGB, perhaps even its head, Yuri Andropov, who shortly thereafter became Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, had instigated the attempt.³¹

The Pope has never declared what he thinks about this Communist connection. He did, however, relate the at-

³⁰These statements can be found in almost every book on Fatima. For convenience, we cite them from *Lucia Speaks on the Message of Fatima* published by the Most Reverend John Venancio, Bishop of Leiria (Washington, NJ: Ave Maria Institute, 1968), 30f.

³¹Cf. Paul Henze, *The Plot to Kill the Pope* (New York: Scribner's, 1983); Claire Sterling, *The Time of the Assassins* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1983); Gordon Thomas and Max Morgan Witts, *Averting Armageddon* (New York: Doubleday, 1984).

tempted assassination to Fatima. During his convalescence, he asked for water from the Fatima shrine. Some was brought to him (about June 20) by his friend Bishop Hnilica, a Slovak residing in Rome. When the Pope drank it, he promptly recovered from a fever which the doctors had been unable to relieve. Then the Pope had some books on Fatima read to him.³² While still confined to his hospital bed, he made a consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary that was obviously a response to Mary's Fatima request, and the prototype of the major consecrations to be discussed below.³³ On the first anniversary of the shooting (May 13, 1982), he went on pilgrimage to Fatima to give public thanks to Mary for saving him, and pointed out the "mysterious coincidence" in the fact that the attempt on his life had occurred on the anniversary of the first Fatima apparition.³⁴

In reviewing the events of that traumatic year, the Pope himself made the following summary:

This year, in a special way, after the attempt on my life . . . my conversation with Mary has been . . . uninterrupted. I have repeatedly entrusted to her the destiny of all peoples: beginning with the act of consecration of 8 December (1981) . . . to the consecration to the Virgin of the countries visited . . . culminating in the pilgrimage to Fatima in Portugal . . . a personal act of gratitude to Our Lady, almost the fulfillment of a tacit vow for the protection granted me through the Virgin, and a solemn act

³²Pierre Caillon, *La Consécration de la Russie aux très saints coeurs de Jésus et de Marie* (Paris: Tequi, 1983), 25-29, mentions *Documentos Fatima* as one of the books. Cf. René Laurentin, "Les coeurs de Jésus et de Marie selon le Magistère," fn. 35bis 2, citing Fernandez, p. 26, who mentions Lucia's *Memoirs*. Fr. Laurentin's conference was delivered at the International Theological Symposium on the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, to be published by the Sanctuary at Fatima. (A resumé of the conference has been published by Arthur B. Calkins in *Soul Magazine* [May-June 1986]: 12 ff.)

³³This was on 7 June 1981 and renewed on 8 December 1981. Calkins, "John Paul's Consecration (Pt. I)," 91 ff.

³⁴Homily of 13 May 1987 (*ORe*, 17 May 1982, p. 2).

of consecration of the whole human race to the Mother of God, in union with the Church through my humble service.³⁵

Without going so far as to affirm the authenticity of the Fatima apparitions themselves, the Pope declared, "If the Church has accepted the message of Fatima, it is above all because that message contains a truth and a call whose basic content is the truth and the call of the Gospel itself."³⁶ Five years later, in speaking about "the seventieth anniversary of Our Lady's apparitions to the three children," the Pope alluded frequently to the apparitions as simple facts.³⁷

* * *

Public curiosity about Fatima has focussed on the "Third Secret," which Lucia wrote down for her bishop at the beginning of 1944,³⁸ with instructions that it was not to be made public before 1960. Transmitted to the Holy Office in 1957, her letter was opened (presumably for the first time) and read by Pope John XXIII in August of 1959.³⁹ But neither he nor his successors have seen fit to make it known.

John Paul II seems to have been questioned about the Third Secret on his visit to Germany, in November of 1980, during an informal interview at Fulda. His answer was reported in a small German Catholic bi-weekly periodical entitled, *Stimme des Glaubens* ("The Voice of the Faith").

The remarks there attributed to the Holy Father are sur-

³⁵*Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1979 ff.), V/2 (1982), 2442-43; Calkins, "John Paul's Consecration (Pt. I)," 93.

³⁶Homily of 13 May 1987 (*ORe*, 17 May 1982, p. 2).

³⁷*ORe*, 3 Aug. 1987, p. 12. See also the Pope's review of the pilgrimage, *ORe*, 24 May 1987, p. 1, and his Angelus message of 26 July 1987, *ORe*, 3 Aug. 1987, p. 12.

³⁸Some time between 25 December 1943 and 9 January 1944, according to Joaquin Maria Alonso in *The Secret of Fatima: Fact and Legend* (Cambridge: Ravengate, 1979), 47. The other details about this secret, except where another reference is given, are taken from the same work.

³⁹Alonso, *The Secret*, 49-51.

prising, first of all because of what many would call their indiscretion. Without expressly revealing the secret, they seem to hint at its contents. Secondly, they recall, on one point at least, the bogus "Secret of Fatima" circulated twenty-five years ago by another German newspaper, *Neues Europa*.⁴⁰ Finally, this supposed statement of the Holy Father's seems to have been largely ignored by the world press as well as most of the Catholic press.⁴¹ (This last point does not carry too much weight, however, since the press has tended to ignore all reports about Marian apparitions—at least until Medjugorje became such a big story that it forced itself on public attention.)

There is, therefore, serious reason to doubt the authenticity of the account given by this obscure periodical (*Stimme des Glaubens*). On the other hand, the remarks attributed to the Pope seem to have been confirmed by Cardinal Ratzinger as well as by the journalist, Vittorio Messori.⁴² Moreover,

⁴⁰On 15 October 1963, Ludwig Emrich published in *Neues Europa* a "secret message" supposedly given at Fatima after the Miracle of the Sun. Of Emrich's article, Alonso says, "Nothing in this text is either true or authentic" (*The Secret*, 116).

⁴¹I have found no allusion to these remarks of the Holy Father in the reports on the papal visit to Germany in the *ORE*, 1980, nor in those by Malinski, Tukrowicz and Nowakowski in *The Shepherd for All People*, ed. by Boleslaw Wierzabianski (New York: Bicentennial, s.d.), nor in *Documentation Catholique*, 1980, nor in *Herder Korrespondenz* for November or December, 1980, nor in Norman St. John-Stevs, *Pope John Paul II: His Travels and Mission* (London: Faber and Faber, 1982), nor in various other likely sources.

⁴²The journalist, Vittorio Messori, pointed out to Cardinal Ratzinger that the Holy Father, on his trip to Germany, seemed to confirm the disconcerting character of the Third Secret, and asked why the contents of the Secret had not been made public. Without challenging what had been attributed to the Pope, Ratzinger replied, "The Holy Father deems that it would add nothing to what a Christian must know from Revelation and also from the Marian apparitions approved by the Church in their known contents, which only reconfirmed the urgency of penance, conversion, forgiveness, fasting. To publish the "third secret" would mean exposing the Church to the danger of sensationalism, exploitation of the content." *The Ratzinger Report* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1985), 110.

George H. Williams, an acknowledged authority on the mind of John Paul II, says that the statement attributed to the Holy Father "is consonant with what I know of his views."⁴³

In conclusion, this report must be treated with great caution. It apparently is an echo of the Pope's remarks, but not one that can be relied on completely. In the opinion of Father Clemens M. Reischl, O.S.B., publisher of the newsletter, *IDU*, "*Stimme des Glaubens* cited the Pope from hearsay."⁴⁴ We give it therefore in a footnote.⁴⁵

⁴³George H. Williams, letter to the editor, *Queen of All Hearts* (Sept.-Oct. 1984): 31.

⁴⁴See excerpts from Father Reischl's letter to Professor George Williams, as found in *Queen of All Hearts* (Sept.-Oct. 1984): 31. *IDU* is published by Salterae Schriftenapostolat, A-2041 Maria Roggendorf, Austria.

Father Reischl adds that the report in *Stimme des Glaubens* provoked "an official refusal by German bishops." However, Fr. Heinrich Petri, Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Regensburg and President of the German Mariological Society, asserts that "Certainly neither the German Bishops' Conference, nor any individual bishops, have expressed themselves on the subject [of the *SdG* report]" (letter to me dated 18 July 1988).

⁴⁵*Editor's Note: Ordinarily, scholarship precludes the publication of a text of doubtful authenticity, in order to avoid giving the text credibility. (A subsequent issue of Queen of All Hearts [Sept.-Oct. 1984] attempted to clarify the report from Stimme des Glaubens by citing Fr. Clemens M. Reischl, O.S.B., editor of Salterae Schriftenapostolat. Fr. Reischl wrote: "Stimme des Glaubens cited the Pope from hearsay. I think it's a dubious way of citing John Paul II in such a delicate case." Fr. Roger Charest, editor of Queen of All Hearts, and Monsignor Daniel S. Hamilton have reached the following conclusion: "... any thoughts about the Pope's view on this matter is pure speculation, regardless of who the speculator is. Thus it would seem that no credence should be given to the supposed statement of the Holy Father in Fulda, 1980, on the Third Secret of Fatima.")*

Fr. O'Connor, however, feels that this text is among the "de facto elements of the discussion" and he wishes to make it "conveniently available for scholars studying the matter." Although he admits it is "not a completely trustworthy report," he believes "it does have to be considered." We publish the following text at Fr. O'Connor's insistence, even though we had requested that it be omitted.

The interview with the Holy Father was reported as follows:

The Question: "Holy Father, what has become of the 3rd Secret of Fati-

* * *

More important than this Third Secret is the matter of Russia. In her apparition of July 13, 1917, Mary said that she would come one day to ask for the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart and for the Communion of reparation on First Saturdays. "If people attend to my request,"

ma? According to Our Lady's instructions, wasn't it supposed to be revealed in 1960? And what will happen to the Church?"

The Holy Father's Response: "Because of the seriousness of its contents, [and] in order not to encourage the worldwide power of Communism to carry out certain coups, my predecessors in the Chair of Peter have diplomatically preferred to withhold its publication.

"On the other hand, it should be sufficient for all Christians to know this much: if there is a message in which it is said that the oceans will flood entire sections of the earth; that, from one moment to the other, millions of people will perish . . . there is no longer any point in really wanting to publish this secret message.

"Many want to know merely out of curiosity or because of their taste for sensationalism, but they forget that 'to know' implies for them a responsibility. It is dangerous to want to satisfy one's curiosity only, if one is convinced that we can do nothing against a catastrophe that has been predicted."

At this point, the Holy Father, took hold of his Rosary and said, "Here is the remedy against the evil! Pray, pray and ask for nothing else. Put everything in the hands of the Mother of God!"

Then he went on to say, "We must be prepared to undergo great trials in the not-too-distant future, trials that will require us to be ready to give up even our lives and a total gift of self to Christ and for Christ. Through your prayer and mine, it is possible to alleviate this tribulation, but it is no longer possible to avert it, because it is only in this way that the Church can be effectively renewed.

"How many times, indeed, has the renewal of the Church been effected in blood? This time again, it will not be otherwise.

"We must be strong, we must prepare ourselves, we must entrust ourselves to Christ and to His holy Mother, and we must be attentive, very attentive, to the prayer of the Rosary."

—Account taken from *Queen of All Hearts* (Sept.-Oct. 1983): 16, citing *Stimme des Glaubens* without further specification. I have not been able to find a copy of the original text. In fact, several enquiries directed to possible sources in Germany failed to reach anyone who had ever even heard of *Stimme des Glaubens*.

she said, "Russia will be converted and there will be peace."^{45b}

In 1925, Mary appeared to Sister Lucia at Pontevedra (Spain), asking for the Saturdays of reparation.⁴⁶ In 1929, she appeared again, this time at Tuy (Spain), saying:

The moment has come when God wants the Holy Father, in union with all the bishops of the world, to consecrate Russia to my Immaculate Heart, promising to save it by this means.⁴⁷

This request was communicated to Pius XI,⁴⁸ who seems to have done nothing about it.⁴⁹ Subsequently, it was transmitted several times to Pius XII, most notably by a letter which Sister Lucia herself wrote to him at the bidding of her directors in 1940.⁵⁰

This Pontiff made vigorous efforts to promote devotion to

^{45b}Sister Lucia says that, in keeping with Mary's instructions, this part of the message was kept secret until 1926, when she told her confessor about it. But the Bishop of Leiria did not publish Mary's request until 13 Sept. 1939 (*Memorias e Cartas de Irma Lucia*, 431-433); cited from Joseph Pelletier, *Exciting Fatima News Recently Revealed in Sister Lucy's Letters* (Worcester: Assumption, 1975), 26.

⁴⁶*Lucia Speaks*, 46. On 15 February of the following year, the child Jesus appeared to Sister Lucia, insisting that the devotion of reparation to Mary's Immaculate Heart be made known (*Lucia Speaks*, 47). Sister Lucia began at once to make efforts to propagate the devotion of reparation to the Immaculate Heart, but with little success at first. See Joseph de Sainte-Marie, O.C.D., "Réflexions sur un acte de consécration: Fatima, 13 mai 1982," *Marianum*, 44 (1982): 23. An English translation is available: *Reflections on the Act of Consecration at Fatima by Pope John Paul II on 13th May, 1982*, translated by W. Lawson (Chulmleigh: Augustine, 1983). My references are to the French original.

⁴⁷*Lucia Speaks*, 50.

⁴⁸Lucia mentions this in the draft of a letter she wrote for Pope Pius XII on 22 October 1940 (Pelletier, *Exciting Fatima News*, 26).

⁴⁹Caillon, *La Consécration*, 23.

⁵⁰Sister Lucia composed her letter 22 October 1940. However, the Bishop of Leiria had it modified and it was in its modified form that the letter was sent, dated 2 December 1940 (Pelletier, *Exciting Fatima News*, 25).

the Immaculate Heart of Mary.⁵¹ He established a feast in its honor (May 8, 1944). In 1942, he consecrated the diocese of Rome to the Immaculate Heart and, in 1948, asked that this be done annually in every diocese, parish and family. In 1954, he commanded the bishops of the Church to renew this consecration annually on the Feast of Mary's Queenship. Finally, he consecrated Russia to the Immaculate Heart three times, although not exactly in the way Mary had requested. In the midst of the Second World War, he twice consecrated the Church and the whole world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. He did this first on October 31, 1942, in a radio broadcast to the pilgrims at Fatima celebrating the silver jubilee of the apparitions. Addressing Mary, he said:

Give peace to the peoples separated from us by error or by schism, and especially to those who profess such singular devotion to you and in whose homes an honored place was ever accorded to your venerable icon (today perhaps often kept hidden to await better days) . . .⁵²

⁵¹The acts of Pius XII in this matter are summarized concisely in Pelletier, *Exciting Fatima News*, 30-35.

⁵²Radio broadcast to the world, 31 October 1942, see Calkins, "John Paul's Consecration (Pt. I)," 95; Francis Johnston, *Fatima, the Great Sign* (Rockford: TAN, 1980), 88. This consecration was renewed on 8 December 1942 (Joseph de Sainte-Marie, "Réflexions," 115 ff.).

Father Joseph de Sainte-Marie has argued convincingly that this consecration of 1942 responded directly to the request of another Portuguese mystic, Alexandrina Maria da Costa, rather than to that of Sister Lucia. Since 1935, Alexandrina had been receiving communications from Our Lord, asking for the consecration of *the world* to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In June of 1938, the Portuguese bishops requested this of Pope Pius XI. In October, 1940, they endeavored to associate Sister Lucia's testimony with that of Alexandrina, requesting a consecration of *the world*. Perplexed about this matter, Sister Lucia prayed and obtained from Our Lord the answer given below (at note 63).

Pius XI did not accede to the request. But his Secretary of State, Cardinal Pacelli, had been the direct recipient of some of the correspondence on this matter; and it was he, as Pius XII, who would make the consecration. (Joseph de Sainte-Marie, "Réflexions," 110-117. See also his Letter to the *Fatima Crusader* [October-December 1983]).

Ten years after this veiled but transparent allusion to Russia, Pius XII consecrated Russia explicitly to the Immaculate Heart in the Apostolic Letter, *Sacro Vergente anno* (July 7, 1952). However, he did this acting alone, and not with the concurrence of the bishops of the world.

During Vatican II, a petition to consecrate Russia in accordance with the Fatima request was presented to Pope Paul VI by 510 Council fathers. The Polish bishops in requesting an infallible definition of Mary's universal motherhood with the title, "Mother of the Church," recalled the two consecrations made by Pius XII. They asked that the consecration be renewed at the Council by all the bishops in union with the Pope.⁵³ However, the bishops of France and Germany, as well as Cardinal Bea, were opposed to such an action, which was not, in fact, carried out. In his famous address closing the Third Session, besides proclaiming Mary Mother of the Church, the Pope recalled the consecration made "surely by a heavenly inspiration" by Pius XII. Paul VI likewise entrusted (*committimus*) the entire human race to Mary's Immaculate Heart.⁵⁴ This could hardly be called a collegial act, however; for even though the bishops applauded the Holy Father's announcement vigorously, they were not called upon to consent actively to it.⁵⁵

In this same address, the Pope announced that, as a way of making a special commemoration of his predecessor's consecration, an envoy would soon be sent to carry the Golden Rose to Fatima. (The Golden Rose is a symbol of honor conferred by the Popes on the more important sanctuaries of the world.) One could hardly ask for a stronger linkage of his consecration to Mary's request. Finally, on May 13, 1967, the fiftieth anniversary of the apparitions, Paul VI went in person on a pilgrimage to Fatima, where he

⁵³Cardinal Wyszyński summarized their request in his intervention at Vatican II, 16 Sept. 1964 (*Acta . . . Vaticani II*, vol. III, pars I, 441-444).

⁵⁴Allocution, *Post duos menses*, 21 November 1964, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 56 (1964): 1007-1018; English translation given in *The Pope Speaks*, 10, No. 1 (1964): 131-141.

⁵⁵Wiltgen, *The Rhine*, 241.

invited Sister Lucia to stand beside him on the basilica platform.⁵⁶

Pope John Paul II has renewed the consecration five times. The first was from his hospital bed after the assassination attempt (June 7, 1981). The second was a repetition of the first on December 8 of that same year (cf. n. 33). The third was at Fatima on May 13, 1982, on the pilgrimage which the Pope made in thanksgiving for the sparing of his life the previous year. In the homily he preached while celebrating Mass at the shrine, he recalled the two acts by which "Pope Pius XII . . . consecrated the human race and especially the peoples of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary." The actual consecration came after the Mass. Kneeling before the statue of Our Lady (while the crowd, estimated at a million people, knelt behind him), the Holy Father began by declaring:

I am here, united with all the pastors of the Church in that particular bond whereby we constitute a body and a college. . . .

Again he recalled the acts of his predecessor:

Pius XII . . . entrusted and consecrated to your Immaculate Heart the whole world, especially the peoples for which you had particular love and solicitude. This world of individuals and nations I too have before my eyes today, as I renew the entrusting and consecration carried out by my predecessor in the See of Peter: the world of the second millennium that is drawing to a close, the modern world, our world today!

The actual consecration was formulated thus:

That is why, O Mother of individuals and peoples, you who "know all their sufferings and their hopes," you who have a mother's awareness of all the struggles between good and evil, between light and darkness, which are afflicting the modern world, accept the cry which we, as though moved by the Holy Spirit, address directly to your Heart. Embrace with the love of

⁵⁶Pelletier, *Exciting Fatima News*, 36.

the Mother and Handmaid, this human world of ours which we entrust and consecrate to you, for we are full of disquiet for the earthly and eternal destiny of individuals and peoples. . . .

In a special way we entrust and consecrate to you those individuals and nations which particularly need to be entrusted and consecrated.⁵⁷

Evidently it was his intention to comply with the request of Our Lady of Fatima, and to make the reference to Russia evident, while avoiding use of the name in the act of consecration itself.⁵⁸ During the Synod of 1983, the Holy Father repeated this consecration in essentially the same terms, while celebrating Mass with the Synod on October 17.⁵⁹ This was the fourth consecration.

The fifth (and thus far the last) came two years later, on the Feast of the Annunciation (March 25, 1984). It took place in Rome, before a statue of Our Lady brought specially from Fatima for the ceremony.⁶⁰ The Pope had previously

⁵⁷The Portuguese text of both the homily and the act of consecration are given in *L'Osservatore Romano*, 14 Maggio 1983, p. 1.

The Italian translations, presumably the original on which the Portuguese is based, are given in the *Supplemento* of the same periodical, 15 Maggio, pp. vii and viii. The last paragraph of the citation reads thus: "In modo speciale Ti affidiamo e consacriamo quegli uomini e *quelle nazioni*, che di questo affidamento et di questa consacrazione hanno particolarmente bisogno."

An English translation of the homily appears in the *ORe*, 17 May 1982, p. 1; the act of consecration in the *ORe*, 24 May 1982, pp. 5 and 12. Another translation of the act, accompanied by a theological commentary, is given by Joseph de Sainte Marie, "Réflexions." A description of the day's events, as well as a commentary, can be found in Caillon, *La consécration*.

⁵⁸From Father Joseph Pelletier, A.A., who is always very careful and trustworthy in his reports, we have the following significant evidence: "One of the bishops who was with the Holy Father just after the consecration told John Haffert that a fellow bishop congratulated the Pope on the act of consecration of the world, and the Pope added 'and of Russia,' emphasizing his remark with an emphatic gesture of the hand," (*The Sun Danced at Fatima* [Image, 1983], 187).

⁵⁹*ORe*, 24 October 1983, p. 2.

⁶⁰This was the original statue of "Our Lady of Fatima" carved in 1918, and solemnly crowned by a representative of Pius XII in 1946. Cf. *Soul Magazine* (May-June 1984): 35.

sent a copy of his Act of Consecration to all the bishops of the world, asking them to join in it with him. This was obviously intended to give the act a collegial character, and thus fulfill Mary's request. In the course of the Consecration, the Pope addressed the following petition to the Mother of God:

Enlighten especially the people whose consecration and entrusting you are awaiting from us.

This expression, which was repeated on the afternoon of that same day, undoubtedly referred to Russia.⁶¹

These five "consecrations" reduce, for practical purposes, to two: those of May 13, 1982 and March 25, 1984. These two had a solemn and "official" character that the others did not. As for the others, the first two may be considered as prototypes of the third, and the fourth a repetition of it. Commentators are divided about whether Mary's Fatima request has been fulfilled by these various acts of consecration and entrustment by the Supreme Pontiff.

A preliminary question may be raised about the term *entrust/entrustment* which sometimes replaces that of *consecrate/consecration* in these acts, and sometimes is linked with it. Mary asked that Russia be *consecrated* to her by the Pope and Bishops. Pius XII usually spoke of consecrating the world, but occasionally added the term *entrust* to that of *consecrate*. John Paul II seems definitely to prefer the language of entrusting (especially *affidamento*, as in the documents cited below, usually translated awkwardly into

⁶¹*ORe*, 27 March 1984. "Illumina specialmente i popoli di cui tu aspetti, la nostra consacrazione e il nostro affidamento," *L'Osservatore Romano*, 26-27 marzo 1984, p. 6, par. 2; *Insegnamenti* VII/1 (1984), 776.

Father Arthur Calkins has drawn my attention to the fact that this line was not contained in the original text sent to the Bishops of the Church (cf. *Insegnamenti* VII/1 [1984], 420). However, the original version, like the one actually used, did contain the line, "In a special way we entrust and consecrate to You those men and those peoples that have a particular need of this entrustment and consecration."

English as *entrustment*). But at times (as in the text of December 8, 1985, cited below), John Paul also links *entrust* and *consecrate*.

Strictly speaking, *consecrate* would seem to refer to an authoritative act, whereas anyone can "entrust" someone to the care of another. But whether these terms are to be taken so strictly, and what meaning underlies the variation in the papal language, is too delicate a question to be treated here.⁶² I will assume that the terms are basically synonymous.

As for the essential question, whether or not the consecration has been made according to Mary's request, Sister Lucia seems to believe that it has not, although there is some problem as to what she actually said. In 1938, the bishops of Portugal had insisted that the Holy Father be asked to consecrate the entire world rather than just Russia (cf. note 52). After the Second World War had begun, Sister Lucia, concerned about whether the consecration in this form was satisfactory, received the following answer from Our Lord in prayer:

His holiness will obtain a shortening of these days of tribulation [=the war] if he fulfills my desires in consecrating the whole world to the Immaculate Heart, with a special mention of Russia.⁶³

This does not, it should be noted, declare that the Fatima request has been fulfilled. After Pius XII's consecration of the world in 1942, Sister Lucia wrote to her confessor that, "because [the act done by the Holy Father] was incomplete, the conversion of Russia will take place only at a later moment."⁶⁴

⁶²Calkins, "John Paul's Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary: Christological Foundations (Part II)," *Miles Immaculatae* 23, No. 3-4 (1987): 373, where the author promises a fuller study of the Pope's use of *entrust*. Cf. Joseph de Sainte-Marie, "Réflexions," 113.

⁶³Joseph de Sainte-Marie, "Réflexions," 112, citing *Documentos de Fátima*, ed. by A. M. Martins (Porto: L.E., 1976), 467.

⁶⁴Letter of 4 May 1943; *Memoirs*, 447; Pelletier, *Exciting Fatima News*, 32.

In 1952, when the encyclical *Sacro vergente anno* consecrated the world with explicit mention of Russia, but without the concurrence of the world's bishops, Sister Lucia wrote:

It pains me that the consecration of Russia has not yet been made according to Our Lady's request.⁶⁵

In preparation for the 1982 consecration made by Pope John Paul II at Fatima, Archbishop Portalupi, Apostolic Nuncio to Portugal, interrogated Sister Lucia for two hours at Coimbra, Portugal, March 21, 1982. Abbé Caillon reports her answer thus:

The Pope must select a date on which to order the bishops of the whole world to arrange for a public solemn act of reparation and of consecration of Russia to the Most Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, each in his own cathedral and at the same time as the act of consecration effected by the Pope.⁶⁶

Evidently knowing that this was not going to be done, Sister Lucia confided to some friends of hers: "Do not expect the conversion of Russia at this time. The Bishops of the world are not ready yet."⁶⁷

Sister Lucia had a private audience with Pope John Paul II for about twenty minutes on the morning of May 13, 1982, the day of his first consecration of Russia. She also gave him a written statement. The next day Bishop Hnilica and Don Luigi Bianchi asked her whether the consecration had been satisfactory. She replied:

⁶⁵Johnston, *Fatima*, 89; Laurentin, "Les coeurs," 23.

⁶⁶Pierre Caillon, "Fatima May 13, 1982. What Actually Happened? Was Russia Consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary?," *The Fatima Crusader* (Sept.-Oct. 1984): 22. The author adds that "in the text which we sent to the Holy Father by diplomatic bag, it was not spelled out that each bishop must, in his own cathedral, and on the same day as the Pope, arrange for a solemn public ceremony of the consecration of Russia. The Lisbon Nuncio informed Dr. Lacerda of this." Cf. Caillon, *La Consécration*, 30; Laurentin, "Les coeurs," 24bis.

⁶⁷Caillon, *La Consécration*, 42f.

No, for two reasons: the Bishops of the whole world did not make a public and solemn consecration, each in his own cathedral, at the same time as the Pope. Secondly, Russia does not appear clearly as the object of the consecration.⁶⁸

She confirmed this judgment on August 11 and August 15 of that same year.⁶⁹

Shortly thereafter, Sister Lucia was reported by *Soul Magazine* to have acknowledged that the consecration had been made in accordance with Mary's requests.⁷⁰ Not until five years later, was the source of this statement partially identified. Father Peter Leoni, S.J., President of the Blue Army of Canada, wrote:

What is Sister Lucia's opinion on this matter? At the Pope's request she was present at Fatima on May 13, 1982; and on that very day was interviewed by her relative, a member of the Blue Army from Brazil. . . . A few weeks later, I met with the interviewer in Montreal. He confirmed the following: *that Sr. Lucia was quite satisfied with the Holy Father's consecration at Fatima.* However, she did add, "*There is still a great deal of work to be done by the Blue Army. Russia will be converted, but not before causing a great many problems to the Christian world, as Russia has been allowed to go too far with its atheistic propaganda.*"⁷¹

⁶⁸Caillon, *La Consécration*, 44.

⁶⁹Laurentin, "Les coeurs," 25. According to Marlene J. Maloney, "The Fatima Controversy: Has the Consecration of Russia Been Made?" *Fidelity* (March 1988): 30.

Joe Burns, editor of *Mary's Mantle* (newsletter of a Marian apostolate in Peoria, Ill.), wrote to Lucia in January (1983?) asking, "Was the consecration made by Pope John Paul II at Fatima on May 13, 1982, the exact consecration that Our Lord and Our Lady requested at Fatima for the conversion of Russia?" Lucia replied to him in Portuguese, "Regarding your question, I'll tell you that, as you asked it, not yet. It takes a lot of work to unite the people of God, represented by their leaders. We all form a people that walk by the times of the country."

⁷⁰*Soul Magazine* (July-August, 1982).

⁷¹*Soul Magazine* (July-August, 1987): 28. Italics in the original article.

It has been suggested that this "reply" may have been nothing more than a misunderstanding of the sister's embarrassed attempts to fend off indiscreet questions.⁷²

Evidently intending to settle the issue, Archbishop Portalupi again questioned Sister Lucia for two and a half hours on March 19, 1983, in the company of Dr. Lacerda and Father Messias. Sister gave them a written statement saying:

The consecration of Russia has not been made as Our Lady asked. I could not say so because I did not have the permission of the Holy See.⁷³

There do not seem to have been any public statements by Sister Lucia about the consecration of 1984. However, her judgment about the consecration of 1982 provides us with criteria for supposing that she would not be satisfied with that of 1984 either. And while it would be a mistake to assume that her interpretations are infallible, and a disorder to imagine that she has the charism for judging what, in the concrete order of things, ought to be done by the Pastor of the universal Church, nevertheless, she is surely one of the most important interpreters of the sense of Mary's request.

Among theologians who have dealt with the question, whether the consecration has been made according to Mary's requests, opinions are divided. Laurentin cites Alonso, Caillon, Joseph de Sainte Marie and Simonin as saying no.⁷⁴ To those we could add Father Arthur Calkins, who has compiled a list of eight texts in which the Holy Father speaks as though the consecration were still being awaited.⁷⁵ With authority of a different order from that of the theologians, Father Stefano Gobbi reports a locution from

⁷²Caillon, "Fatima," 22.

⁷³Caillon, "Fatima," 22. The authenticity of this interview with Archbishop Portalupi was acknowledged by *Soul Magazine* in its issue of March-April, 1986.

⁷⁴Laurentin, "Les coeurs," 33-34a.

⁷⁵See Father Calkin's compilation of texts of the Holy Father in "John Paul's Consecration (Pt. I)," 91 ff.

Our Lady on June 10, 1987, which implies that Mary is still waiting for the consecration she asked for:

It is . . . particularly important for the development of the great events which have been foretold to you by me that during this year [i.e., the Marian Year, 1987-88] there be carried out my request, made by my daughter Sister Lucia of Fatima, that Russia be consecrated to me by the Pope together with all the bishops of the world.⁷⁶

As holding (with different nuances) that the consecration has been duly made, Laurentin cites José G. Freire, Abbé Richard, and Fernandez. Laurentin himself seems to favor the view that Mary's request has been fulfilled by all the papal acts taken cumulatively.⁷⁷

In this country, two magazines published by promoters of the Fatima devotion, *Soul Magazine* (the official organ of The Blue Army) and *The Fatima Crusader* have meanwhile gone to war over the question. The former holds that Mary's request has been fulfilled by the acts of Pope John Paul; the latter (since December, 1983), that it has not. It is my own opinion that Mary's request has not yet been fulfilled, but my reasons are different from those of *The Fatima Crusader*, and I dissociate myself completely from the accusations, insinuations and invective employed by the latter in pursuing its cause.

I am not sure how much weight should be attached to naming Russia explicitly. In her statement of May 14, 1982, Sister Lucia indicated that Russia must appear clearly as the object of the consecration.⁷⁸ And since the conversion of

⁷⁶Published in *The Marian Movement of Priests, Brief no. 17*. Cf. the locution of 25 March 1984: "Unfortunately the invitation was not welcomed by all the bishops; particular circumstances have not yet permitted the explicit consecration of Russia which I have requested many times."

⁷⁷Laurentin, "Les coeurs," 34b.

⁷⁸See the text above at note 68. Moreover, on 13 April 1980, Sister Lucia wrote to Father U. Pasquale, "In her requests at Fatima, the Blessed Virgin referred solely to the consecration of Russia." (See Joseph de Sainte-Marie, "Réflexions," 116.)

Russia is intended, in Jesus' own plans, to be recognized by the whole world as a triumph of the Immaculate Heart,⁷⁹ it seems indeed appropriate that Russia be named explicitly. However, there is no doubt who was meant by the Pope's expression, "the people whose consecration and entrustment you are awaiting from us." If there is good reason not to name Russia explicitly (and this must be left to the judgment of the Holy Father), perhaps an implicit reference would not invalidate the consecration.

The reason why the Holy Father has so carefully and systematically avoided mentioning Russia by name has been explained by Bishop Paul Cordes, vice-rector of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, after a conversation with the Pope himself:

[The Holy Father] wanted to name Russia expressly in the [1982] act of consecration, but he had to forego this for fear that the Soviet authorities would take it as an act of provocation. This was above all the case because the assassination attempt had aroused suspicions, some people blaming it on Moscow. This renunciation pained the Holy Father very much; however, his concern was partially relieved when he learned that the Orthodox bishops proposed to make the consecration on their own. The Pope was overjoyed at this news.⁸⁰

Collegiality, however, is a more serious issue. "God wants the Holy Father, in union with all the bishops of the world, to consecrate Russia to my Immaculate Heart," is what Mary said at Fatima. In the act of 1982, the Pope declared that he was acting "in union with all the pastors of the Church." This was obviously a discreet invitation to them to join with him; but it was not an act of theirs. In 1984, the Pope expressly requested the bishops to join with him in making the consecration; but his request was so widely ignored that it seems to me that the act by no means fulfilled the collegiality Mary wants.

⁷⁹See the text cited below at note 82.

⁸⁰Laurentin, "Les coeurs," 26 ff.

Many will object that this is quibbling, that something so grave as the conversion of a people could not be made to depend on a technical or canonical point. Without formally adopting this objection, Laurentin eloquently voices it: "How could the Blessed Virgin be so picky about such trifling details?" It would, he suggests, give the consecration the character of a magic formula.⁸¹ Similar objections were voiced from the floor at the 1988 convention of the Mariological Society of America.^{81b}

But the difference between a collegial act and one performed by the Pope himself is not just a canonical formality. A collegial act expresses the sentiment of the whole episcopate. And when pastors and flock are in full accord, as is ideally the case, a truly collegial act becomes in effect an ecclesial act, an act of the whole Church. This is what Mary seems to be waiting for. There has been no shortage of devout Popes—to say nothing of many other devout individuals—who call upon her fervently, but that does not suffice. She wants, or rather Jesus wants, the whole People of God to turn to her in this critical moment and commend to her motherly heart the Russian people, afflicted by atheistic Communism, and in turn the instrument of the affliction of others. In answer to Sister Lucia's anguished question to Jesus about why Russia could not be converted without the Holy Father's making the consecration, Jesus replied:

I want my entire Church to acknowledge that consecration as a triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in order later to extend its cult and to place the devotion to this Immaculate Heart alongside the devotion to my Sacred Heart.⁸²

If I read him rightly, the language used by the Holy Fa-

⁸¹Laurentin, "Les coeurs," 34b.

^{81b}*Editor's Note: The objections expressed at the MSA convention questioned the specificity of the requirements for the consecration of Russia, as stipulated by Sr. Lucia, and the accuracy of the interpretation of the words of Sr. Lucia, as reported in interviews.*

⁸²Sister Lucia's letter of 18 May 1936, cited in Pelletier, *Exciting Fatima News*, 4; Caillon, *La Consécration*, 19.

ther himself discreetly acknowledges that the consecration has not yet been accomplished as requested by Mary. During the homily which he prerecorded from his bed in the Gemelli hospital, June 7, 1981, about the time that the Fatima documents were being read to him, he prayed:

Embrace with the love of Mother and Handmaid of the Lord those who most await this embrace, and also those whose act of entrustment you await in a particular way.⁸³

The present tense of "you are awaiting" suggests that Mary is still waiting.

Without pressing the point, I would also propose that the phrase, "in a particular way," suggests the "particular way" in which Mary wants Russia to be consecrated. Grammatically, of course, the phrase modifies "you are awaiting," and could be nothing more than an indication of the eagerness with which Mary desires that consecration. But "in a particular way" is not a very precise way to express eagerness or intensity (the term *maggiormente*, "greatly," from the text of December 8, 1985, is far more appropriate). And it would not be out of keeping with John Paul's habitual style of language for the modifiers of one term to reflect the coloring or resonate with the echoes of what pertains strictly to another term in the sentence. But whatever be the merits of this consideration, it is secondary to the fact that Mary is said to be waiting *in the present tense*.

Father Arthur Calkins has collected seven other texts in which approximately the same language is used of Mary's waiting for the consecration.⁸⁴ Three of them come from

⁸³"*Abbraccia con l'amore della Madre e della Serva del Signore coloro che questo abbraccio più aspettano, e insieme coloro il cui affidamento Tu pure attendi in modo particolare.*" *Insegnamenti* IV/1 (1981), 1246. (Italics belong to the original.)

⁸⁴I take them from his letter to me of 14 June 1988; I presume that they will appear in conjunction with his doctoral dissertation. The translations are from the *ORE*, although, with the aid of Father Bernard Ransing, I have modified them slightly.

December 8 of that same year. The prayer in the Piazza di Spagna used language identical with that of June 7, except for saying "those peoples" instead of simply "those."⁸⁵

In the homily in the Church of St. Mary Major, which we have cited above, after recalling the consecration made by Pius XII, the Pope declared:

This act is also a testimony of hope which the Church, in spite of all the threats, wishes to announce to all peoples: to those that wait for it most, together with those whose consecration the Mother of God herself seems to await in a particular way.⁸⁶

Finally, in the very Act of Consecration (or Entrustment), the words used in the Piazza were repeated.⁸⁷

On May 9, 1982, shortly before leaving for Fatima, during his Regina Coeli address, the Pope used the same formula again, except that instead of "those peoples," he said, "those men and those peoples."⁸⁸ On March 25, 1984, after the second major Act of Consecration, before the statue of Our Lady of Fatima was removed from St. Peter's Basilica, the Holy Father prayed:

We wanted to choose this Sunday, the third Sunday of Lent of the year 1984, still within the Holy Year of the Redemption, for the act of entrusting, of consecrating, the world, the great human family, all peoples—especially those who have such need of this consecration, this entrustment, those peoples for whom

⁸⁵ *"Abbraccia con l'amore della Madre e della Serva del Signore i popoli che questo abbraccio più aspettano, e insieme i popoli il cui affidamento Tu pure attendi in modo particolare."* *Insegnamenti* IV/2 (1981), 869.

⁸⁶ See the original text above, at note 57.

⁸⁷ *"Abbraccia con l'amore della Madre e della Serva del Signore i popoli che questo abbraccio più aspettano, e insieme i popoli il cui affidamento Tu pure attendi in modo particolare."* *Insegnamenti* IV/2 (1981), 878.

⁸⁸ *"Abbraccia con l'amore della Madre e della Serva del Signore i popoli che questo abbraccio più aspettano, e insieme i popoli il cui affidamento Tu pure attendi in modo particolare"* (*Insegnamenti* IV/2 [1981], 878). Note, however, that this language does not appear in the Act of Consecration at Fatima itself.

you yourself await our act of consecration and entrustment. All this we have been able to do in the measure of our poor human capabilities, within the limits of our human weakness, but with enormous confidence in your motherly love, with enormous confidence in your motherly care.⁸⁹

Finally, in closing the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, December 8, 1985, he prayed:

To you we entrust the entire Church and all humanity, thinking especially of those men and those peoples that have particular need of it, and whose entrustment and consecration you most desire.⁹⁰

The fact that essentially the same formula is repeated over and over indicates that it has been very deliberately chosen. The slight modifications introduced in the course of time suggest that the formula is still being pondered and re-touched. In all cases, the language seems to suppose that the Blessed Virgin is still awaiting the consecration or entrustment, which the Pope has made "as far as he is able" (which is to say, not yet completely).

Partisans of the consecration are sometimes dismayed that the Pope is reluctant to use more vigorous means to compel the world's bishops to concur with him; but this, I think, misses the point of Mary's request. A mechanical and forced compliance is not what she desires. She wants the pastors of the Church to make this consecration willingly, as an act of devotion and an expression of faith. It is towards this, I believe, that the Holy Father (like his predecessor) is tactfully leading them.

Moreover, it is not just the bishops who are accountable here. Mary has asked all the faithful to honor her Immacu-

⁸⁹*Insegnamenti* VIII/1 (1984), 779.

⁹⁰"A Te affidiamo tutta la Chiesa e l'intera umanità, con speciale pensiero per quegli uomini e per quei popoli che ne hanno particolare bisogno e il cui affidamento e la cui consacrazione Tu maggiormente desideri" (*Insegnamenti* VIII/2 [1985], 1462).

late Heart and make reparation for the offenses done to her. The bishops are to act as pastors of the Church, but it is the whole Church that Mary wants to see converted and devoted. If her request has not yet been fulfilled, our responsibility is to do what we can to respond to her in our own life and in that of those we can influence, not to complain about the negligence of our pastors. As regards the Holy Father, rather than pressuring him to perform an act which he judges inopportune, the faithful should manifest their support and concurrence in the path along which he is evidently trying to lead the Church.

Conclusion

I have dealt with four factors influencing the Pope's devotion to Mary. No doubt there are others, but these four seem to me to be the most important, judging from the evidence that can be documented. As a child, Karol Wojtyła was nourished on that Marian devotion symbolized by Our Lady of Czestochowa. As a youth, he was strengthened by St. Louis de Montfort. As a young bishop, he had his theology reshaped by Vatican II. His papal policies have been strongly affected by Fatima.

Because of the complexity of the issues involved, the last point has occupied the greatest part of this presentation, but that does not mean that it had the greatest weight in influencing the Pope's Marian devotion. More probably the first two factors were the most important. Czestochowa nurtured in him a simple, childlike trust in Mary. St. Louis de Montfort instructed his enquiring mind about the doctrinal principles of the devotion, at the same time making him realize the need for deliberate, firm and total commitment to her. Vatican II made him conscious of the "ecclesio-typical" vision of Mary, which he articulates above all as the *pilgrimage of faith* on which Mary goes before the People of God. Finally, Fatima drew his attention to the concrete, providential role of Mary as the Church's bastion in its mortal combat with Communism, which is the present and per-

haps culminating phase of that perennial enmity between the Woman and the Serpent, between the children of Mary and the followers of Lucifer, of which St. Louis de Montfort has written.⁹¹

In fact, the latter's depiction of the Apostles of the Latter Times fits our Holy Father so aptly that we can close with it:

But what will they be like, these servants, these slaves, these children of Mary?

They will be ministers of the Lord who, like a flaming fire, will enkindle everywhere the fires of divine love. They will become, in Mary's powerful hands, like sharp arrows, with which she will transfix her enemies.

They will be as the children of Levi, thoroughly purified by the fire of great tribulations and closely joined to God. They will carry the gold of love in their heart, the frankincense of prayer in their mind and the myrrh of mortification in their body. They will bring to the poor and the lowly everywhere the sweet fragrance of Jesus, but they will bring the odor of death for the great, the rich and the proud of this world.

They will be like thunder-clouds flying through the air at the slightest breath of the Holy Spirit. Attached to nothing, surprised at nothing, troubled at nothing, they will shower down the rain of God's word and of eternal life. They will thunder against sin, they will storm against the world, they will strike down the devil and his followers and, for life and for death, they will pierce through and through with the two-edged sword of God's word all those against whom they are sent by almighty God.

They will be true apostles of the latter times to whom the Lord of Hosts will give eloquence and strength to work wonders and carry off glorious spoils from his enemies. They will sleep without gold or silver and, more important still, without concern, in the midst of other priests, ecclesiastics and clerics. Yet they will have the silver wings of the dove enabling them to go wherever the Holy Spirit calls them, filled as they are with the resolve to seek the glory of God and the salvation of

⁹¹ *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, nos. 51-54.

souls. Wherever they preach, they will leave behind them nothing but the gold of love, which is the fulfillment of the whole law.

Lastly, we know they will be true disciples of Jesus Christ, imitating his poverty, his humility, his contempt of the world and his love. They will point out the narrow way to God in pure truth according to the holy Gospel, and not according to the maxims of the world. Their hearts will not be troubled, nor will they show favor to anyone; they will not spare or heed or fear any man, however powerful he may be. They will have the two-edged sword of the Word of God in their mouths and the blood-stained standard of the Cross on their shoulders. They will carry the crucifix in their right hand and the rosary in their left, and the holy names of Jesus and Mary on their heart. The simplicity and self-sacrifice of Jesus will be reflected in their whole behavior.

Such are the great men who are to come. By the will of God Mary is to prepare them to extend his reign. . . .⁹²

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⁹²*True Devotion*, nos. 56-59.