

FATIMA -THE FIRST SECRET

Beginning in the late 1920's and into the 1930's Lucy maintained a repetitive correspondence with her superiors in attempt to obtain fulfillment of the directives she received during the Apparitions. Her immediate spiritual directors, fully recognizing the sincerity and spirituality of Lucy, also felt a necessity to obey those instructions. A serious difficulty arose because those directives invoked the highest Church authorities and policy actions on a global scale. Respecting the magnitude of the requests, and recognizing a lack of proper preparatory foundation, Father Jose Bernardo Goncalves urged Lucy to write an abbreviated version of the Secrets to Pope Pius XII.

She wrote two letters. Both still exist. The first was a heart-touching draft, expressing her faithfulness to the revelation. The second was a version of the first, stiffly edited by Bishop da Silva, thus losing its heart-felt appeal and altering portions of the text. See Brother Michael's *The Whole Truth About Fatima*, Vol. II, pg 736ff. The first letter was dated October 24, 1940; the second, dispatched to the Vatican, was dated December 2. Following are limited portions of the text to illustrate the editing.

October 24, 1940

The Blessed Virgin announced the end of the war that was then afflicting Europe, and predicted a future one that would begin in the reign of Pius XI. To prevent this war She said: "I will come to ask for the consecration of Russia to My Immaculate Heart and the Communion of reparation on the first Saturdays. If they listen to My requests, Russia will be converted and there will be peace. If not she will spread her errors throughout the world, promoting wars and persecutions of the Church. The good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, various nations will be annihilated. In the end, My Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to Me, and it will be converted, and a certain period of peace will be granted to the world."

December 2, 1940

The Blessed Virgin revealed the end of the war then afflicting Europe, and predicted another forthcoming, saying that to prevent it She would come and ask for the consecration of Russia to Her Immaculate Heart as well as the Communion of reparation on the first Saturday. She promised peace and the conversion of that nation if Her request was attended to. She announced that otherwise this nation would spread her errors throughout the world, and there would be wars, persecutions of the Holy Church, martyrdom of many Christians, several persecutions and sufferings reserved for Your Holiness, and the annihilation of several nations.

I offer part of the texts here to show how officialdom will modify important revelations to fit social and political purposes. God's revelations are not subject to the wishes of men; altering them can only lead to further perversion.

Note that Bishop de Silva removed remarks about the reign of Pius XI, expressions in the third person instead of the direct words Lucy placed in the mouth of the Apparition, "*martyrdom of many Christians,*" instead of "*The good will be martyred,*" and so on.

Perhaps for reasons of space in an already long letter she omitted the vision of hell, (see below), confined herself to the Second Secret, and did not mention the Final (Third) Secret, *The Whole Truth About Fatima*, (TWTAF), Vol. III, pg 54. The Pope had no reliable way to know the full revelation from that letter.

Note that these letters were written eight months before Lucy composed the Third and Fourth Memoirs containing the First and Second Secrets.

On October 7, 1941 Bishop da Silva and his confidant, Canon Galamba, visited Lucy for a painstakingly prepared interrogation. Galamba appealed several times in the strongest terms for the Bishop to directly order Lucy "*to write everything, absolutely everything,*" and "*to say everything, everything, and to hide nothing.*" But the Bishop responded, "*No I will not command that! I will have nothing to do with the matter of secrets.*" Lucy responded to this conflict by stating, "*With the exception of that part of the Secret which I am not permitted to reveal at present, I shall say everything.*" See TWTAF, Vol III, Pg 36.

Not until Lucy wrote the following texts from October to December 1941 did anyone have an official glimpse of the content of the revelation.

As stated by Lucy, the first part (First Secret) was a vision of hell. She offered two versions, nearly the same, but not quite.

FLOW, pg 108	FLOW, pg 167
<p>Our Lady showed us a great sea of fire which seemed to be under the earth.</p> <p>Plunged in this fire were demons and souls in human form, like transparent burning embers, all blackened or burnished bronze, floating about in the conflagration, now raised into the air by the flames that issued from within themselves together with great clouds of smoke, now falling back on every side like sparks in a huge fire, without weight or equilibrium, and amid shrieks and groans of pain and despair, which horrified us and made us tremble with fear.</p> <p>The demons could be distinguished by their terrifying and repulsive likeness to frightful and unknown animals, all black and transparent.</p> <p>This vision lasted but an instant.</p>	<p>We saw, as it were, a great sea of fire.</p> <p>(It must have been this sight which caused me to cry out, as people say they heard me.)</p> <p>The demons could be distinguished by their terrifying and repellent likeness to frightful and unknown animals, black and transparent like burning coals.</p>

The children firmly believed they were shown a vision of hell, FLOW pgs 109-110, and were equally firm that the Lady identified the apparition as hell. This caused them extreme anguish, and resulted in immediate wide propagation of the descriptions, related verbally by the children, with all the attendant possibilities of exaggeration, error, or the substitution of familiar religious images, that then became "truth."

Jacinta especially was burdened by this vision; it may have influenced her early death. She often lamented that she desired to go to heaven.

The remarkable spiritual nature of Jacinta is shown by a special revelation she had. She asked her companions if they had seen a vision of the Holy Father. They replied they had not. Jacinta then went on to describe what she saw, FLOW pg 112:

I don't know how it was, but I saw the Holy Father in a very big house, kneeling by a table, with his head buried in his hands, and he was weeping. Outside the house, there were many people. Some of them were throwing stones, others were cursing him and using bad language.

. . . Can't you see all those highways and roads and fields full of people. who are

crying with hunger and have nothing to eat? And the Holy Father in a church praying before the Immaculate Heart of Mary? And so many people praying with him?

But a serious question has arisen concerning the conceptual range of the children, FLOW, pg 113.

"One day, two priests recommended us to pray for the Holy Father, and explained to us who the Pope was. Afterwards, Jacinta asked me: "Is he the one I saw weeping, the one Our Lady told us about in the Secret?" "Yes, he is."

It is clear that the term "Pope" had to be explained to the three children. How much did they truly understand?

We should remember that the peasant population of this region of Portugal was generally illiterate. They could not read Bibles, or other publications, and had to depend on the village Priest and others for information. Was the concept of the Holy Father as a distinct personality known to the children? Did this young child of seven years of age understand, on her own, that she saw a vision of someone who was important in the Church, or did she merely see a man praying in a large house, and had to ask who he might be? Had the Holy Father been specifically taught to her prior to the vision? Or was this term used later by family and friends to identify him? Was the term then consequentially used by Lucy in her reports, after she became educated, but was not thus used initially by Jacinta?

Our understanding of all of Lucy's writings is conditioned by such elements. This evidence is important because we do not know for certain how the descriptions from the children were conditioned by their earlier ignorance. We do not know how much Lucy's later writings are influenced by traditional religious images and the manner in which her seniors influenced the phrasing of her reports. Further, we do not know how much of her descriptions were conditioned by her post-experience religious expectations. Did she slant her descriptive choices accordingly?

Our attempts to penetrate these "Secrets" must give due regard to those elements. They were some of the justification for Eduoard Dhanis to denounce the accuracy of the descriptions, the unpolished descriptions of "Fatima I," and these more polished descriptions he termed "Fatima II."

But the big secret contained in Jacinta's remarks, and revealed to their families and friends, was the idea of the Pope being somehow persecuted. When Jacinta asked if she could tell others of this vision, Lucy cautioned her against it. *'No! Don't you see that is part of the secret? If you do, they'll find out right away,'* FLOW pg 113.

We can see why Lucy was concerned about exposing Jacinta's private revelation. It was part of the Third Secret that was not to be revealed. Time had to unfold; God wanted

mankind to bring his own judgment. The Pope would become an object of attack. He would mislead God's people, and fail them. Masses of people would suffer hunger, torture, and death because the leaders of the Church, and leaders of the world, did not believe, and would suppress holy revelations.

The extreme urgency the children felt over the conversion of the world, and the huge masses of human kind who would go to hell, is indicated by the following remark from Jacinta. When Lucy saw her in deep thought she asked Jacinta what she was thinking about. She replied:

About the war that is coming. So many people are going to die, and almost all of them are going to hell! Many homes as for you, when you see the light which the Lady told us would come one night will be destroyed, and many priests will be killed. Look, I am going to heaven, and before the war, you run up there too.

Again we can see how Jacinta was haunted by the vivid images she saw.

While many believe this was a prediction of World War II, we should pay attention that the war shown to the children is the nuclear war that is now coming down on our heads.

It is too late now to pray.

I will return to a detailed discussion of the Light the children were told about. This is a crucially important item in coming events.

One time, when asked about her unusual memory, FLOW pg 102, Lucy remarked that the Lord *'has allotted to me this little portion --- my memory . . . As far as I can see there is a difference between natural and supernatural things . . . These supernatural things are even more deeply engraved on the soul . . .'*

With full acknowledgement of the spiritual unction under which Lucy lived, day by day, we should understand the above Secret as an interpretation of images perceived by a ten-year old girl, and recorded twenty years later. Even though burned into Lucy's mind, it is not a divine dictation. Time dilutes all human mental images.

As Lucy said, FLOW, pg 116:

God usually accompanies His revelations with an intimate and detailed understanding of their significance. But I do not venture to speak of this matter, for fear of being led astray, as all too easily happens, by my own imagination. Jacinta seemed to have this understanding to quite a remarkable degree.

Here Lucy explicitly admits that Jacinta's understanding was better than hers. We can see the doubt that loomed in Lucy's mind that perhaps she did not understand correctly. She specifically mentions the possibility that her own imagination might condition the

description of the vision. She is an honest person. We must regard her doubts as a warning. We should not assign to her descriptions and interpretations literal and perfect accuracy. But she adds remarks that clarify matters for us.

On October 7, 1941 Father Galamba asked Lucy what parts of her pronouncement were from herself and what were revealed to her. She replied, FLOW, Pg 123:

I think, Your Excellency, that, in such cases, I never speak or write anything at all that comes from myself alone. I have to thank God for the assistance of the Divine Holy Spirit, whom I feel within me, suggesting to me what I am to write or say. If, at times, my own imagination or understanding suggests something to me, I at once feel the lack of the divine unction, and I stop what I am doing, until I know in my inmost heart what it is that God wants me to say instead.

However, she also states how the divine influence from the earlier apparitions faded with time, FLOW, Pg 128:

Little by little, the atmosphere of the supernatural faded away, and by the 13th of May, we were playing with almost as much enjoyment and freedom of spirit as we had done before.

Lucy describes a spiritual conditioning that resulted in decisions about revealing her Secrets:

However, with regard to the light communicated to us, when Our Lady opened her hands, and everything connected with this light, we experienced a kind of interior impulse that compelled us to remain silent, FLOW, Pg 129

Instead of difficulty in speaking, we felt certain communicative enthusiasm. Despite these feelings, however, we felt inspired to be silent, especially concerning certain things.

Whenever I was interrogated, I experienced an Interior inspiration which directed me how to answer, without either failing in truth or revealing what should remain hidden for the time being, FLOW, Pg 158

Some persons have noted the deep and simple sincerity of Lucy. In no way do I denigrate her experience. But we must be practical in our attempts to understand these revelations. Others may argue that a human agent would not distort a divine presentation. Lucy would be faithful to the pictures painted for her. This goes back to the superstitious idea of biblical perfection. All human beings are imperfect lenses through which divine revelations become distorted, unless the human vehicle directly records heavenly dictations.

For comparison consider the biblical prophets. Numerous remarks in the Old Testament show that celestial agents spoke directly with, and dictated to, human beings. See Gen 18, Isa 38:4 and Jer 1:2. We also know that heavenly or prophetic scenes were projected to some of those men and required interpretation, as with Lucy. Refer to Isa 6:1 and Ezek 1:1, or Ezek 43:3. Especially vivid were the prophetic scenes presented to John and described in his Apocalypse. Even though these olden people were mature adult men, who could verbalize far better on their experiences, still, with time, corruptions crept in. We just simply do not have perfect revelations preserved for us.

Hell.

Since the image of hell was so important in Lucy's report, we must examine this concept.

The Old Testament does not teach this concept. The Hebrew word exclusively is Sheol, comparable to the Greek word Hades, a symbolic representation of the abode of the dead. It should be translated as Grave, not an imaginary hell. Most modern scholars, educated to how ancient people regarded such concepts, recognize this literary entanglement and offer us more sensible translation. Many of us today talk about our dead companions, as though they are still alive. Olden people of the Near East and Greece were not any different except for their social tendency to invent graphic imagery. For example, Persephone is the daughter of Zeus and Demeter. After her abduction by Hades she became his wife and Queen of the Underworld. Tartarus was another realm, deeper than Hades. But none of those mythological places described an eternal torment in burning fire. Out of such folk fabrications arose elaborate views about the dead, and the abode where they lived. But that imaginary world did not make Sheol or Hades real.

The New Testament uses Hades as the abode of the dead in the same general sense. Added to this are other words to denote other destinations of those who have passed on. *Ge hinnom* in Hebrew, Greek Gehenna, was the name of a valley outside the walls of Jerusalem where trash was burned. From inference as an assignment to such material burning, but not legitimately, Gehenna was translated hell in older Bibles. Several passages in the Old Testament mention it as a valley of burning, where sacrifices were made or bodies burned. See II Kings 23:10, Isaiah 30:33 and Jeremiah 7: 31-33. Criminals who were crucified might not receive a normal burial but would be burned in Gehenna. Body parts lost in accidents or medical operations would be burned there. This is the sense in which Jesus used that word, Matt 5:22, 29, Matt, 18:9. From common folk notions then circulating, the word was extrapolated as a name for the place (or state) of everlasting punishment. See the remarks of Jesus in Matt 23:15 where he uses the word symbolically. Luke 16:20-26 is a striking scene of a rich man consigned to Hades but now embellished with a torment of flame.

The idea of an everlasting punishment in fire arose out of late (200-100 BC) apocryphal texts describing the fate of fallen angels. See the *Book of Enoch* and *Second Baruch*. (*The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, R. H. Charles, Oxford University Press, Vol 2, 1968.) The word fire is widely used in those texts to describe scenes for which the authors had no other words.

2nd Baruch 21:6 --- Thou that rulest with great thought the hosts that stand before Thee: also the countless holy beings, which Thou didst make from the beginning, of flame and fire, which stand around Thy throne.

Enoch 14: 8-23 --- And the vision was shown to me thus: Behold, in the vision clouds invited me and a mist summoned me, and the course of the stars and the lightnings sped and hastened me, and the winds in the vision caused me to fly and lifted me upward, and bore me into heaven. And I went in till I drew nigh to a wall which is built of crystals and surrounded by tongues of fire: and it began to affright me. And I went into the tongues of fire and drew nigh to a large house which was built of crystals: and the walls of the house were like a tessellated floor (made) of crystals, and its groundwork was of crystal. Its ceiling was like the path of the stars and the lightnings, and between them were fiery cherubim, and their heaven was (clear as) water. A flaming fire surrounded the walls, and its portals blazed with fire. And I entered into that house, and it was hot as fire and cold as ice: there were no delights of life therein: fear covered me. . . . And from underneath the throne came streams of flaming fire. . . . And the Great Glory sat thereon, and His raiment shone more brightly than the sun and was whiter than any snow. None of the angels could enter and could behold His face by reason of the magnificence and glory and no flesh could behold Him. The flaming fire was round about Him, and a great fire stood before Him, and none around could draw nigh Him: ten thousand times ten thousand (stood) before Him, yet He needed no counselor.

We can see how the word "fire" was used as generalized descriptive terminology for lack of better vocabulary. The word "fire" then was extended to describe the final judgment of rebel angels. Note that these are not statements about human mortals, nor are they descriptions of material fire.

Enoch 18:11-14 --- And I saw a deep abyss, with columns of heavenly fire, and among them I saw columns of fire fall, which were beyond measure alike towards the height and towards the depth. And beyond that abyss I saw a place which had no firmament of the heaven above, and no firmly founded earth beneath it: there was no water upon it, and no birds, but it was a waste and horrible place. I saw there seven stars like great burning mountains, and to me, when I inquired regarding them, the angel said: "This place is the end of heaven and earth: this has become a prison for the stars and the host of heaven."

2nd Baruch 44: 14-15 --- These are they who have acquired for themselves treasures of wisdom, And with them are found stores of understanding, And from mercy have they not withdrawn, And the truth of the law have they preserved. For to them shall be given the world to come, but the dwelling of the rest who are many shall be in the fire.

2nd Baruch 59: 3 --- . . . promise of their reward, and to them that deny, the torment of fire which is reserved for them.

Enoch 10:7 --- And on the day of the great judgment he (angel) shall be cast into the fire.

Enoch 54: 6 --- And Michael, and Gabriel, and Raphael, and Phanuel shall take hold of them on that great day, and cast them on that day into the burning furnace, that the Lord of Spirits may take vengeance on them for their unrighteousness in becoming subject to Satan and leading astray those who dwell on the earth.

Enoch 67: 7 --- And through its valleys proceed streams of fire, where these angels are punished who had led astray those who dwell upon the earth.

We should understand that spirit beings, fallen angels, cannot be burned in material fire. Hence, use of the word fire must be resort to images for which the author had no other word. Note further that the writers did not extrapolate to human beings.

We see from 2 Peter 2:4 that current ideas did not always denote an everlasting punishment, but an assignment of "nether gloom" where the rebel celestial beings await the Judgment. For the concept of *tartaros* see Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, NT Definition #5020.

Thus the idea of a material hell seems to have been invented just prior to the Christian era by combining thoughts from folk stories about Hades, and this revealed material. It became part of common social concepts, now applied to human beings. It thus conditioned illustrations in the Gospels, as those authors thought and believed. They put words in the mouth of Jesus; Jesus did not himself say such things. As our Creator he certainly knew about such matters with perfect clarity.

To understand the confusion of some New Testament translations consider Rev 20:14-15.

Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire; and if any one's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

The older translations stated that Hell was thrown into the lake of fire. According to those views Hell was the lake of fire. How could Hell be thrown into itself? More recent translations recognize that Death and Hades will be thrown into this fire, meaning a celestial non-material fire which mankind, in that future earth, will no longer fear. As Jesus said, he will wipe away all tears, Isa 25:8, Rev 21:4.

(Unfortunately, we are further burdened by the fact that some of the images in John's Apocalypse are mythological, created by someone who edited and corrupted John's Great Revelation.)

From this evidence we can deduce that the ancient writers used the word "fire" for an action by God to do away with the celestial rebels and the sadness of this world.

Although the concept of eternal torture is implied in some of the writings, the word "punishment" actually denotes a judgment, an eternal annihilation.

The word gehenna (valley of Hinnom) is used 12 times in New Testament, Matt 5:22, 18:19, Luke 12:15, James 3:6, and so on. The word Hades is used 10 times. If these words had been transliterated, showing their Greek form, they would tell everyone the context of their use. But when the translators resorted to the word hell they conditioned everyone's thinking. Hell was a Teutonic word that literally meant *to cover up or hide*. It was used in the exact same sense as Hades or Sheol, a designator for the infernal regions, and then subject to similar mythical embellishments. (*Inferna* is the equivalent Latin word for the nether world; it did not denote fire.)

We should consider theological arguments. Would a merciful God invent a place of eternal torment? What kind of God would that be? If the torment is eternal does that mean that human beings would be in a physical body that somehow has become eternal? Would God then resurrect those human beings from decayed bodies that have returned to the dust of the earth and the oblivion of death in order to torture them? How would these physical bodies be sustained? Would hell have physical food to eat? Where would they go to excrete their bowels? If the image of Luke 16:24 is real it would mean that physical bodies in hell would be in demand of physical water, but that they would be deprived of water. They certainly could not be in spiritual bodies if they were in need of physical water. Or does this mean that physical bodies would somehow be sustained without physical food and water in order to bring physical torture? That is, God would invent eternal bodies that would have the cravings of physical bodies as we know them, but that would not have those cravings satisfied.

Such a God would be truly mad. He would be worse than the Devil who supposedly has command of those eternal furnaces. Those who believe in an eternal torment have not considered these very practical and theological problems.

Hell, in its traditional Christian imagery, does not exist. It was a creation deriving out of the folk myths of more superstitious minds. Only the untutored masses would believe in its existence.

Interpretation of the Vision

From this background we see that the vision reported by Lucy had to pertain to some other phenomenon, misinterpreted by her and the other children according to their religious training. Lucy's later writings reflect that same religious misunderstanding.

I break down the elements of the vision.

a great sea of fire:

Lucy's own statements create serious doubts. Later she wrote:

"we saw **as it were** a sea of fire." FLOW pg 167.

Obviously, Lucy was uncertain how to describe the vision. Forced to be a seer by her compatriots she improvises an explanation.

Conchita at Garabandal offered a contribution to our understanding:

What is more, I have seen the punishment. What I can assure you is that, if it comes, it is far worse than if we were enveloped in fire; worse than if we had fire above us, and fire beneath.

Refer to my earlier discussion on the Garabandal revelations, Section V.

This is a vivid description of the nuclear fire that will envelope many cities in the Near East, in Israel, and in modern Great Babylon.

which seemed to be under the earth:

Over the many centuries great speculations have engaged the puzzle of the location of hell. Conchita's remarks cast light on the idea of being enveloped by fire, fire above, and fire beneath, and the dramatic nature of the planetary Judgment. These descriptions do not mean that the entire planet will be enveloped in fire, but that the locale of the nuclear explosions will. We can see from the above comparison of the remarks by Lucy that she was uncertain about the location of this fiery horror.

Plunged in this fire were demons and souls in human form:

Clearly the images Lucy remembers were of human beings. How did Lucy know they were "demons and souls" if they were in human form? This phrasing is an interpretation of the population of hell based on traditional images taught her as a child.

like transparent burning embers, all blackened or burnished bronze:

The images were stark as the result of burning in a great conflagration.

floating about in the conflagration, now raised into the air by the flames that issued from within themselves together with great clouds of smoke, now falling back on every side like sparks in a huge fire, without weight or equilibrium:

The imagery is truly appalling. At the center of the great nuclear explosions all materials and human beings will be evaporated. Farther out great windstorms will carry the nuclear heat and cause intense burning of materials and men. The material and human debris will be blown and tumbled. Most of us have seen movies of early atomic tests in which gross turbulence accompanies the explosions. Earlier I cited biblical passages on the great

clouds of smoke arising from the nuclear explosions. Compare biblical passages on the burning of people in these events.

Isa 9:19 -- Through the wrath of Yahweh of hosts the land is burned, and the people are like fuel for the fire.

Ezek 15:6-8 -- Therefore thus says the Lord Yahweh: Like the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give up the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And I will set my face against them; though they escape from the fire, the fire shall yet consume them; and you will know that I am Yahweh, when I set my face against them. And I will make the land desolate, because they have acted faithlessly, says the Lord Yahweh."

This is a clear prophecy on the coming nuclear destruction of Jerusalem.

Ezek 21:31-32

And I will pour out my indignation upon you; I will blow upon you with the fire of my wrath; and I will deliver you into the hands of brutal men, skilful to destroy. You shall be fuel for the fire; your blood shall be in the midst of the land; you shall be no more remembered; for I Yahweh have spoken.

Joel 2:30-31 -- And I will give portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, when the great and terrible day of Yahweh comes.

We can say with great certainty that the images presented to the three Fatima children were vivid exclamations of the judgment forecasts of biblical prophecy.

amid shrieks and groans of pain and despair:

Those who survive even a few hours will emit great groans, and shrieks of despair.

The demons could be distinguished by their terrifying and repulsive likeness to frightful and unknown animals, all black and transparent:

Lucy twice invokes images of transparent objects, in their black and charred condition. Here she states explicitly that the "demons" could be distinguished by comparison to animals, showing that she is interpreting according to her understanding. How could a child ten years of age understand the devastating results of nuclear explosions? Psychologically she was forced to familiar images. These then evolved in her mind for twenty years.

This vision lasted but an instant:

Although highly vivid, the vision was but a flash on the minds of the young children. Through time even the most vivid celestial vision will become dulled in human memory.

This natural erosion of Lucy's mental pictures, her interpretations of what she saw, and expectations from her religious training -- all conditioned her expressions. We should judge the material with those limitations.

We also should not fail to understand the meaning as a Great Planetary Judgment.