

29.

The Father Jongen Interrogation

The Dorothean Order is an active Order, and Sister Lucia may have been the most active Dorothean, with many visitors and much correspondence concerning Fatima. Then limits were put on her visitors and her correspondence. As she wrote to Father Aparicio in January, 1946:

“I did not speak to him and I have not answered the others, and for this I have been much grieved, since it concerns the conversion of Russia. I have not been able to do it because more than ever, I have strict orders in regard to correspondence and visits.

“This does not surprise me. The works of God are always persecuted. What grieves me solely, is that the devil has used a Father of the Society of Jesus...the poor man, let us leave him! I believe that he thinks he is doing a good thing. The good God will know how to draw His own glory out of everything.”¹

Sister Lucia’s reference is most likely to a Belgian Jesuit, Father Edouard Dhanis, who had launched an offensive against Fatima from within the Church. In response, Father Jongen, a Dutch Montfort Father, visited Sister Lucia, to interrogate her and use the results to refute Dhanis.

On his stay at Tuy, Father Jongen observed that Sister Lucia

“Does not receive any stranger, unless authorized by the Bishop of Leiria or of Tuy. Lucia does a great deal of good for the children and for all who approach her. There is nothing which attracts attention to her in the convent. She has wit, she loves gaiety. If she distinguishes herself despite everything, it is perhaps for her attitude during prayer, the punctual observance of the rule and her love for the Holy Virgin...”²

Sister Lucia

Here is one of the interviews between Father Jongen and Sister Lucia.³

Concerning the Angel

Father Jongen (FJ): Are you absolutely sure that the Angel appeared to you?

Sister Lucia (SL): I saw him.

FJ: The total silence of you three children concerning these apparitions prevents many from giving them credence.

SL: It is not true that we never spoke to anyone about them.

FJ: To whom then did you reveal the apparitions?

SL: First to the Dean of Olival. I trusted him and did not hide anything from him. He advised me to keep them secret.

FJ: Did you follow his advice?

SL: Yes, and we revealed them only to the Bishop of Leiria.

FJ: What did he say?

SL: He too advised secrecy.

FJ: Why did you not speak to anyone about the Angel at the time of the apparitions?

SL: I and the other girls saw the Angel vaguely in 1915. Francisco and Jacinta were not with us. I did not speak of this apparition to anyone but the other girls did and people mocked us. It was a lesson which I had not forgotten when the Angel appeared to us in 1916. We decided to keep it secret.

FJ: That is natural, but the priest who interviewed you recently on the matter finds it hard to explain the fact that three children so young could have kept a secret for so long.

SL: He would not if he had gone through all we did.

FJ: What do you mean?

SL: After hearing through Jacinta of Our Lady's first apparition, many plagued us unceasingly with detailed and captious questions. As they ridiculed everything, we decided to say only that we had seen Our Lady. If they asked us what Our Lady said, we would answer that She desired that everyone say the Rosary and we added nothing else.

FJ: That was a good reason for not divulging the apparitions but only for a while. Why were they not made known before 1936?

SL: The Dean of Olival, the Bishop of Leiria, circumstances,

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everything urged us to be silent. Shouldn't I wait until the bishop made me speak?

Concerning the Secret

FJ: When did you receive permission from Heaven, as you say in your Memoirs, to reveal the Secret?

SL: It was in 1927, here in Tuy, while in the Chapel.

FJ: Did you tell your confessor about it?

SL: Immediately.

FJ: What did he say?

SL: He told me to write the Secret with the exception of the third part. I think he did not read it; he returned it to me. A little later, I had another confessor who ordered me to burn it. Then he told me to write it again.

FJ: It is regretful that the Secret was not published before the war, for then Our Lady's prediction would have had more value. Why did you not make it known before?

SL: No one asked me for the Secret.

FJ: To whom else did you reveal the Secret before the war?

SL: To Mother Provincial, the Bishop of Leiria, and the Reverend Joseph Galamba.

FJ: Did you reveal everything without exception?

SL: I cannot remember.

FJ: Did you give only the general sense of what Our Lady told you, or did you quote Her words literally?

SL: When I speak of the apparitions, I limit myself only to the general sense of the words. When I write, on the contrary, I take care to quote literally. And so I wanted to write the Secret word by word.

FJ: Are you sure you kept everything in your memory?

SL: I think so.

FJ: Were the words of the Secret revealed in the same order they were communicated to you?

SL: Yes.

Concerning the Consecration

FJ: According to the text of the Secret, Our Lady said: 'I shall come to ask for the Consecration of Russia to My Immaculate Heart and the Communion of Reparation on the

Sister Lucia

First Saturdays.' Has She truly come to ask for the Consecration?

SL: Yes.

FJ: Did Our Lady in Her apparition of 1925 speak of the Consecration of Russia to Her Immaculate Heart?

SL: No.

FJ: Then, when did that apparition take place?

SL: In 1929.

FJ: Where did it happen?

SL: At Tuy, while in the chapel.

FJ: What did Our Lady ask?

SL: The Consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by the Pope, in union with all the bishops of the world.

FJ: Did She ask for the consecration of the world?

SL: No.

FJ: Did you inform the Bishop of Leiria about Our Lady's desires?

SL: Yes, in 1929 I transmitted Our Lady's desire to my confessors, the Reverend Joseph Gonçalves, and the Reverend Francisco Rodrigues. Father Rodrigues told me to write it, gave a full account of it to the Bishop of Leiria, and had it brought to the attention of the Holy Father, Pius XI.

In the letter which I wrote by order of my spiritual directors to the Holy Father in 1940 (Pius XII), I exposed the exact request of Our Lady. I also asked the consecration of the world with a special mention of Russia. The exact request of Our Lady was that the Holy Father consecrate Russia to Her Immaculate Heart, ordering that this be made at the same time and in union with him by all the bishops of the Catholic world.

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After the interview, during which Sister Lucia sharpened Father Jongen's pencil, she said: "That Jesuit priest could write to my confessors to ask them what I communicated to them around 1927." He also invited Father Dhanis to speak with Sister Lucia personally. Father Jongen's impression of Sister Lucia was: "Here is what characterizes her: an ardent devotion for the truth. Her veracity goes together with her disdain for human respect."⁴

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Notes

1. FIJWE, Book Four, op. cit., p. 9.
2. Ibid., pp. 10-11.
3. Taken from John de Marchi, I.M.C., *The Crusade of Fatima*, English translation, P.J. Kenedy & Sons, New York, 1948, pp. 168-171.
4. FIJWE, Book Four, op. cit., p. 11.