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News

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Vatican reveals 3rd secret of Fatima



Reuters

Sister Lucia dos Santos, the lone survivor of the three shepherds believed to have had visions of the Virgin Mary in 1917, kisses Pope John Paul II's hand Saturday at the holy shrine of Fatima.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

FATIMA, Portugal, May 13 — The Vatican disclosed Saturday that the so-called third secret of Fatima foretold the 1981 assassination attempt against Pope John Paul II, ending a mystery that some had feared was apocalyptic.

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NBC's Keith Miller reports on the secret the Vatican kept for most of a century.



The pope beatified two of the shepherd children Saturday during a 24-hour visit to Fatima. Beatification is the final step before sainthood.

BELIEVERS HOLD that the mother of Christ appeared before three shepherd children in 1917 in Fatima and gave them three prophecies, two of which have been reported: a vision of “hell,” interpreted as World War II, and the rise and fall of Soviet Communism.

After years of speculation, the Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Angelo Sodano said Saturday that the “third part of the secret of Fatima” speaks of a “bishop clothed in white” who “falls to the ground, apparently dead, under a burst of gunfire.”

Sodano recalled that John Paul has credited the Virgin of Fatima with intervening after he was shot by a Turkish gunman in St. Peter’s square on May 13, 1981 — the anniversary of the first reported vision of the Virgin of Fatima in 1917.

APPLAUSE AND DISAPPOINTMENT

The pope beatified two of the shepherd children Saturday during a 24-hour visit to Fatima. Beatification is the final step before sainthood.

About 600,000 people watched under the hot sun as the pope performed a 2½-hour ceremony to beatify Jacinta Marto and her brother Francisco, who said the Virgin Mary appeared to them and their cousin Lucia dos Santos above an olive tree six times here.

Many in the crowd applauded when they heard the long-awaited third secret, announced at the end of the pope’s Mass. Some said they were eager to hear more details, while others expressed disappointment that the secret did not foretell a momentous event, as many had speculated.

“What they said all happened in the past,” said Julio Estela, a 33-year-old car salesman from the northern Portuguese town of Trofa. “This isn’t a prophecy. It’s disappointing. I think there’s more.”