

Vatican Police Protect the Pope... From Fatima!

by Christopher A. Ferrara
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It happened on the afternoon of Saturday, October 12, 2013, a day before Pope Francis conducted a public “entrustment” to the Blessed Virgin Mary whose object was unclear, but which certainly did not specify Russia.

Father Gruner was praying the Rosary in his reserved seat, not far from where the Pope would be for ceremonies in Saint Peter’s Square the day before the “entrustment.” Fatima Center associates Lenny Cecere and Michael Longval had reserved seats alongside him.

It was then, at 4:45 p.m., while Father Gruner was praying his Rosary, that two plainclothes security men, dressed as ushers, appeared before Father Gruner. One of the plainclothes men then questioned him: “Are you Father Gruner?” Father Gruner replied: “Yes”. The security man then said: “Come with me please.” Father Gruner complied.

Mr. Cecere saw what was happening and began to follow Father Gruner, but was prevented from doing so by an armed member of the *Carabinieri*, Italy’s national police force, who ordered him to “Sit down!” Father Gruner was not aware that Mr. Cecere was being prevented from assisting him.

As the two security men were escorting Father Gruner down the stairs off the platform, they were met by a third security man in plain clothes who said: “I have to ask you to leave.” Father Gruner questioned: “Why?” The response was: “Are you not under canonical penalty?” Father Gruner responded: “No!” The security man insisted: “Aren’t you suspended *a divinis*?” Father Gruner again responded: “No!”

Father Gruner added: “I’ve been saying Mass every single day for the past 37 years.” The man paused and seemed hesitant. At this point, Father wondered if the man might have read the false report published in the September 2001 issue of *L’Osservatore Romano*, which asserted that Father Gruner has received a “suspension” for unspecified reasons. Knowing that no such document had ever been issued, Father Gruner declared: “I’ve received no such document, ever!”

The third security man replied: “I am not a canonist. I do not know canonical processes, my job is security.” Upon which he decided to let Father Gruner remain and told him: “I don’t intend to interrupt your prayers.” But then he issued this telling warning: “*Don’t go near the Pope* at the end of the ceremony.” He later added: “At least in this territory [Vatican City], I expect our rules to be followed.”

Don’t go near the Pope? Why? Was Father Gruner a suspected assassin? “Why not?” Father Gruner asked. “I have no weapons on me, you can search me.” The security

man responded: “If I thought you were dangerous I would have had you evicted before now.”

Father Gruner inquired into the man’s authority to issue such an order, and he replied: “I am Dominic Gianni.” Father Gruner then replied: “And so?” Gianni responded: “I am the head of Vatican Security.”

So, the very head of Vatican Security had personally gone out of his way to single out Father Gruner in a crowd of tens of thousands of people, brought two other security people with him, and then ordered Father Gruner not to go near the Pope, even though this man admitted that Father Gruner posed no danger to His Holiness. Father Gruner thought to himself: “How is it that there is a separate rule for me, a priest who is not suspended or under any canonical penalty? Why is it that I alone, among all these people, am ordered not to go near the Pope after the ceremony even though they know that the Pope has nothing to fear from me?”

Father Gruner realized that this incident had nothing to do with any alleged “suspension,” but rather everything to do with Fatima — as usual. For him there has always been “a law for one man” — a rule that applies to Father Gruner alone, and thus is not a law at all but an abuse of power.

It was perfectly obvious that the “Father Gruner rule” had been applied again on this day for one reason only: the Vatican police *were “protecting” the Pope from Fatima*. They were afraid of what Father Gruner might say to Pope Francis about the consequences of the longstanding failure to consecrate Russia to Mary’s Immaculate Heart. *They were afraid that he might implore the Pope simply to do what Our Lady requested*. What other explanation was there?

And, as usual, it appears it was the Vatican Secretary of State who was behind the maneuver. Three days later, Father Gruner would learn that Dr. Gianni’s appointment to his post had been the personal choice of the Secretary of State Cardinal Bertone.

“And tomorrow, don’t be seated up here,” Gianni warned, pointing to the section of seats close to the Pope for which Father Gruner already had a ticket. Incredible. The very head of Vatican Security had sought out Father Gruner in a vast crowd for the specific purpose of preventing Father from being anywhere near the Pope — to whom he admittedly posed no threat whatsoever.

What did all of this have to do with Vatican Security? Nothing. But it had everything to do with keeping the Pope “secure” from any suggestion that he break with the Secretary of State’s Party Line and actually do what Our Lady of Fatima had requested. Was Cardinal Bertone still pulling the strings despite his announced retirement and almost immediate replacement (in only three days’ time)?

But the day’s surprising events were not over. Less than an hour later, at 5:40 p.m., at the end of the Pope’s “The Way of Mary” ceremony, Father Gruner handed Mr. Cecere a copy of the apostolate’s *L’Osservatore di Fatima* and instructed him to attempt

to hand it to the Pope. Mr. Cecere was unable to get close enough. Although he was in front of the crowd at the railing, only people on his left were allowed through. Was he too, by being associated with Father Gruner, a marked man to be kept as far as possible from the Pope?

Mr. Cecere rejoined Father Gruner and Michael Longval and they began walking down the regular pathways to leave the square. It was then that two Vatican policemen in uniform, wearing peculiar round hats with flat tops, stopped Father Gruner and demanded that he go with them. Realizing how naïve it had been of him to allow himself to be taken away alone less than an hour before, Father Gruner said: “Why should I go with you?” The Vatican police insisted repeatedly that he go with them without ever answering Father Gruner’s question, whereupon Father Gruner finally replied with outward calm: “I see no reason to obey you.”

Mr. Cecere interjected: “I’m not going to let Father Gruner go without me coming with him.” The two Vatican policemen assented, whereupon they began to escort Father Gruner, Mr. Cecere, Mr. Longval and another volunteer from the scene while the volunteer took photographs of what was happening.

The group came to an opening where they could turn right. It appeared that the two Vatican policemen were leading Father Gruner to the bronze door that leads inside the Vatican. Unexpectedly, the two policemen were stopped by a plainclothes man. It was Alexandrino, one of the two plainclothes men who had earlier been assisting Gianni, the chief of Vatican Security. Alexandrino approached Father Gruner and, out of the blue, requested his phone number. Although Father Gruner knew he was under no obligation to comply with such an order, he nonetheless supplied his cell phone number. Alexandrino then said: “Tomorrow, we will find these documents for you” — meaning the non-existent document evidencing Father Gruner’s non-existent “suspension.”

Clearly, Father Gruner’s earlier challenge to provide documentary proof of his “suspension” had struck a nerve. “I met you before,” said Father Gruner. “Yes,” Alexandrino responded, “I was with the chief of security.”

“Are you coming tomorrow?” Alexandrino asked. “I hope to,” said Father Gruner. “Well don’t sit up there!” Alexandrino replied, pointing to where Father Gruner had been sitting earlier. “I will sit where I have tickets for,” Father Gruner replied, without mentioning that his ticket for Sunday’s “entrustment” ceremony entitled him to sit even closer to the Pope — the very area Gianni had earlier deemed off limits for the “Fatima Priest.”

In view of these rather stunning developments, Father Gruner prudently calculated that he ought to avoid sitting where the Vatican police would be expecting him. He had just succeeded in distributing 50,000 copies of the apostolate’s special *L’Osservatore di Fatima* publication. And *Il Tempo*, read by 225,000 Italians, had just devoted four pages to articles by members of the apostolate. Father Gruner did not want to risk undoing that massively favorable publicity for the cause of Fatima by subjecting himself to the possible public scandal of being arrested for sitting where anyone else who

had a ticket was entitled to sit. The press might portray him as some sort of dangerous crank who had tried to get close to the Pope and had to be arrested in order to insure the Pope's safety. The cause was infinitely more important than his personal appearance in the VIP section. Father Gruner gave away his ticket.

The following morning, at 9:15 a.m., Father Gruner and Mr. Cecere were in St. Peter's Square near where our volunteers and some local youths were holding up two large Fatima Center banners: one of Our Lady of Fatima, the other with the message "Now Consecrate Russia." Father telephoned the volunteers to tell them that he and Mr. Cecere were having difficulty reaching them due to barriers around the square. The volunteers with each banner were in different sections of the square, separated from each other by these barriers. Father and Mr. Cecere attempted to find an opening without success. They were blocked by one of the mobile barriers being closed by several policemen. They waited for about fifteen minutes, along with many pilgrims who were very upset about being barred from the square. One woman, obviously very devoted to Our Lady of Fatima, was crying. She was devastated.

Then a Rome city policeman standing near the barrier for some time finally turned to Father Gruner and asked: "Where are you from?" Father Gruner responded: "Canada." A few minutes later the barriers opened, Mr. Cecere started ahead, but the same police officer stopped Father Gruner: "You stay here!"

Father called out to Mr. Cecere, who could not hear him. Not seeing Father Gruner, Mr. Cecere came back, and the two of them waited until another city police officer came over to Father Gruner: "Don't you want to go down this pathway here?" — indicating the path that had been opened further into the square. "Yes," said Father Gruner, "but this policeman won't let me." The two officers exchanged meaningful glances and then ceased speaking to Father Gruner. A few moments later, Alexandrino — the same Vatican Security man who had confronted Father Gruner the day before — suddenly appeared. Father reached out and shook his hand. Alexandrino seemed disconcerted by this friendly gesture. "You, of course, can go to the ceremony today," he said. "If I need to give you documents, I will be able to find you" — another reference to the non-existent documentary proof of Father Gruner's supposed "suspension." Alexandrino then repeated his earlier warning: "But don't try to approach the Holy Father!"

Alexandrino then escorted Father Gruner and Mr. Cecere to meet with the apostolate's volunteers in the crowd. Later, the volunteers advised Father Gruner that the Vatican police had been trying to get rid of the apostolate's second banner with the message "Now Consecrate Russia," but that the youth holding it were very "street smart" and were able to avoid it being confiscated. *No other banners in the entire square had been targeted for this treatment.*

Despite all their earlier attempts to intimidate Father Gruner and prevent him from having any access to the Pope, neither Alexandrino, nor Gianni, nor anyone else associated with Vatican Security or the Vatican police, nor the Rome police, nor the Carabinieri approached him again. And no document regarding his "suspension" was

ever presented to Father Gruner, there being no such document.

Once again, however, the Vatican apparatus had done its job. The Pope had been “protected” from the Message of Fatima. The consecration of Russia had been thwarted for another day. But no one who knows Father Gruner would expect him to be silenced by such tactics. He and his apostolate will continue to speak out on the subject of Fatima for as long as God permits it. And, God willing, he will live to see the day when Russia is at long last consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary — despite the schemes of wayward men.