

Dolindo Ruotolo, Priest

**Who Dies Shall See.....**  
**Purgatory and Heaven**

Translated by Giovanna Invitti Ellis

Edited by:  
Rev. Christopher Rengers, O.F.M. Cap.  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Rev. Raymond Steffes, OSC  
Onamia, Minnesota  
United States

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casapater@gmail.com

# CONTENTS

First Preface - Second Preface

Introduction

Foreword

## **Part 1**        *Purgatory: The contest of love between God and the soul*

1.     - Where goes the soul when the soul leaves the body  
      - Like a silkworm coming out from its cocoon
2.     - The soul reaches eternal life  
      - The mystery of suffering  
      - The damned and the souls in Purgatory
3.     - The admirable logic of Purgatory  
      - Mary Most Holy – Song of the divine Love  
      - The Magnificat of the soul in Purgatory  
      - The telescope of Mount Palomar
4.     - The pains of Purgatory: the fire  
      - Suffrages  
      - What is the nature of the “fire” in Purgatory  
      - Purification is a need of the soul  
      - The damned soul hates God!  
      - How can a fire torment a spirit?
5.     - The different areas or the states of Purgatory  
      - The pain of loss  
      - The Eucharist and the pain of loss  
      - The pain of loss and the love of Most Holy Mary  
      - Attraction of love toward God  
      - The contemplation of God for the souls in Purgatory  
      - “I wish my body would dissolve and to be with Christ”  
      - The spiritual state of a soul in Purgatory
6.     - The pain of Purgatory to atone each sin  
      - Revelations of Saints  
      - The damned lost souls
7.     - The supernatural state of the souls in Purgatory and their charity toward us  
      - The souls in Purgatory pray for their dear people on earth  
      - Intimate activity of the expiating soul

- Faith – Hope – Charity in the soul in Purgatory
- We need to invoke the souls in Purgatory
- 8. - The joys of Purgatory
- St. Stanislaw
- St. Catherine of Genoa
- 9. - The Communion of the Saints and the comfort that the soul in Purgatory receives from the Angels, the Saints and especially from Most Holy Mary
- The Angels and Purgatory
- The intercession of the Saints
- The Bulla Sabatina (Saturday Bull)
- 10. - Duties to intercede for the souls in Purgatory
- Duties of Justice
- Duties of Charity
- Futility of visible pomp
- 11. - The suffrages for the souls in Purgatory
- Good deeds
- Heroic act of charity
- Alms
- Mortification and penance
- 12. - Suffrages for the Souls in Purgatory: Prayer
- The Prayer
- The Holy Mass
- The so-called “Gregorian Masses”
- The Indulgences
- 13. - The Souls in Purgatory protect us, in our bodily needs and in
- Our spiritual needs
- Graces, some miraculous, obtained by the intercession of the Souls in Purgatory
- The soul in Purgatory of Montefalco

## **PART 2**

### *Victory in the Contest of Love: Paradise*

- 1. - The joy of the soul in coming out from Purgatory
- Mary accompanies the soul to Paradise
- 2. - The ascension of the soul from time into eternity
- 3. - The star-filled firmament.... the power and wisdom of God
- 4. - In the regions of the Spirit: Among the Choirs of Angels
- The Cherubim, the Seraphim

5.     - The mountains of the earth and the angelic Thrones  
        - Powers – Dominations – Principalities – Virtues
6.     - The Archangels – The Angels – The Guardian Angels  
        - The voice of my Angel
7.     - In the glorious Choir of the Saints
8.     - In the splendor of Virginity
9.     - The Virgin of Virgins assumed into Heaven with Her body. She  
        Is a song of love, first immaculate fruit of the triumph of the  
        Virgins who shall resurrect
10.    - The Magnificat of the little innocents, flowers of Heaven
11.    - In the Choir of the souls who lived in the world
12.    - The ascension of the soul to its place of glory according to its merits  
        - In every soul the fullness of joy
13.    - The soul contemplates Mary in Her glory
14.    - The greatness of the merits of Mary  
        - The life of Most Holy Mary in union with the Word of God because  
        of Her maternity  
        - The merits of Mary during Her life on earth  
        - The praises of Elisabeth to Mary and the answer of Mary. Harmony  
        of two choirs of love  
        - The Magnificat of Calvary
15.    - The soul beholds Mary Mother of God and the  
        glorious Humanity of Jesus Christ  
        - In the light of the “Song of Songs”  
        - The soul in the presence of God  
        - From the haze of the earth to the Light of Truth  
        - O how wretched are we on earth!
16.    - The soul in the ineffable glory of the Most Holy Trinity  
        - From the shadow of faith, the soul beholds the infinite light of God,  
        One and Triune  
        - God respects the human personality  
        - The Trinity in the shadows of the Old Testament  
        - In the New Testament the shadows became Light  
        - The Most Holy Trinity in Creation

- On earth, the torment of doubts
- In Heaven the Halleluiah of Love
- The meeting with the Immaculate Mary
- The applause of the Blessed
- Save us, Jesus, take us to Paradise!
- My farewell to earth

## **Preface**

JMJ January 4, 2008

Fr Dolindo Ruotolo paints a picture for us of how human soul, fresh departed from the body, experiences its entry into life beyond earthly existence.

We usually sum up this tremendous experience a short way, we say perhaps, “the soul sees God face to face.” Or we say, “the soul sees itself in a new way.” Fr Ruotolo tries to bring in the great variety of details that make up the one supreme moment of entering Purgatory and Heaven after judgment. He also tries to show the soul that sees itself as it really is, judges itself and recognizes its place in the next life.

To paint this picture demands a good background in theology, a poetic imagination and a mystical bent of mind. Fr Ruotolo evidently has these native and acquired abilities, and has painted a convincing picture in his native Italian.

The translator is always at a disadvantage in trying to retain the force and the beauty of the original language. Those who read the English version here can rest assured that the translation is faithful in a literal way to the original. But readers need reflection and meditation to penetrate to and enjoy the story of a human soul going through judgment and entering Purgatory and Heaven. It is the ultimate in adventure. Let’s hope the English version of Fr. Ruotolo lights a spark for its readers that will allow a glimpse of the great adventure.

Rev. Fr Christopher Rengers OFM cap.

## **Second Preface**

Crosier Community  
Onamia, Minnesota  
April 13, 2008

As a member of the Roman Catholic Canons Regular of the Order of the Holy Cross, known as the Crosier Fathers, I was a member of our Maryland community. It was there that I became acquainted with Giovanna Invitti Ellis and she introduced me to the book entitled, “Chi Morrà, Vedrà. Purgatorio e Paradiso” (Who Dies Shall See. Purgatory and Heaven) by Father Dolindo Ruotolo, on the so-called last things: death, judgment, heaven, hell and purgatory.

Giovanna has been translating the text into English and has asked me to help with her English translation. I feel privileged to be part of this project.<sup>1</sup>

In the course of this work, I have been impressed with Father Dolindo’s sound theology, his ability to apply Sacred Doctrine, and his obvious concern that our Catholic Faith is understood and appreciated.

May God bless our efforts!

Rev. Father Raymond Steffes OSC

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<sup>1</sup> Fr. Steffes has edited, along Fr. Christopher Rengers OFM cap, also the book of Fr. Dolindo Ruotolo “Meditation on the Holy Rosary”. It is interesting that the Luminous Mysteries of the ‘Meditation’, give a glimpse of the colossal work of Don Dolindo on the Comment to the Sacred Scripture with passages from the Gospels of St. Luke and St. John that became necessary to add after Pope John Paul II announced them.

## Introduction

When a book of Don Dolindo is presented to the public it is difficult not to repeat oneself. However even if this may happen, since his works are so highly interesting, it is easy to be forgiven. Don Dolindo is guided by only one impulse: *his ardent love for the Lord*. Don Dolindo cannot contain this love for himself, he feels it is his duty to share it among his fellowmen with his word and his writings.

Even if I know very well his books already printed, and those that are in the process to be edited and be ready for publication, I remain always surprised by the extraordinary number of his books. How did Don Dolindo find the time needed for such an incredibly huge amount of works?

Everyday he received scores of people who wanted to ask his advice and the comfort of his inspired word; he dedicated long hours to prayer and the reading of the Holy Fathers; in the last ten years of his life his arthritis and his paralysis made it very difficult for him even the physical ability to write. And yet he could multiply time in a marvelous way, he gave non-stop, like “acqua che d’alta vena preme” (water flowing down from a rich source).

Friends, faithful and admirers of this holy Priest and exceptional Neapolitan writer, have spoken over and over again about his stupendous amount of comment on all the Sacred Scriptures. This work alone of thirty-three volumes fills a library! At the same time other works of his have been published, the most inspiring and beautiful “Letters to Priests” in two volumes; “Three young women in the streets”, narrated by the young women themselves because of a very inspiring apostolate of Don Dolindo; this book is so highly inspired that I would recommend reading it to everybody. It is also an easy reading, almost like a fiction. The happenings seem so unusual as to be almost unbelievable and instead they are real happenings, very much alive with a description so accurate as to remain indelible in the mind, more so than a movie. Not to mention the exceptional books on the Blessed Mother, among which the famous three volumes are outstanding: “A profound conversion of heart at the school of Mary”, “Mary, who really are you?” just now going to print, and the beautiful booklet for the month of May.

Recently this book on Purgatory and Heaven that Don Dolindo wrote in 1959, has finally been printed. The topic may seem not too agreeable to most, because it is a subject that is rather overlooked than read about and studied. And yet it is a fact of life, a reality. This book of Don Dolindo on Purgatory and Heaven has taken immediately first place among the most advanced and modern studies on this subject. It is a highly original work. Certainly in it is found the assertion on the existence of Purgatory, and how absurd it is not to believe in it for all those who believe in God. In this book are well expressed the specific biblical assertions and the divine plan, the teaching of the Church, and also the logic of reason assisted by faith.

The strong and profound meditations offered by Don Dolindo in this book converge on a genial statement that is the leitmotif of these chapters: “The contest of love between God and the soul”: Purgatory and “Victory in the contest of love”: Heaven.

The book brings out the doctrine and the general notions on Purgatory, which support the necessary existence of Purgatory. It speaks of the traditional belief on the ‘fire of purification’. It is an absolute new way of presenting this reality that makes possible to understand better the whole subject. Don Dolindo’s book abounds with

references to physics and physical phenomena to emphasize the importance and the understanding of the subject. Even if his examples are not to be considered proof, nevertheless give undoubtedly a good orientation for a better understanding. Amid other topics, is also presented the consideration on venial sins, too often overlooked, and their grave danger to the soul. Even if very briefly, what Don Dolindo writes on the damned souls is very incisive.

Most beautiful is the passionate cry of God to His creatures at the end of the fourth chapter.

Vast is the narrative that Don Dolindo reports in his book of actual events of souls in Purgatory. Nobody is obliged to believe his descriptions, because we only believe in the Word of God and in what the Church has pronounced. However, the events reported are accurately registered and kept in the places in which they occurred. Of particular interest are the visions of St. Francesca Romana and her description of the three areas in Purgatory, *in relation to the responsibility of the people in the life of the Lord*. Apparently, there is an area reserved only to lay people, another to the clergy not ordained, and a third for Priests and the Bishops, which encloses also a section for Religious men and women. Famous is the episode in the life of St. Stanislaw of Krakow. There are many similar episodes of holy souls of Purgatory and Don Dolindo writes about them to explain the need they have of our prayers for them and how grateful they are to us as well as the good that here on earth we can receive from them. They are always full of gratitude for our prayers. The invaluable help that the souls in Purgatory receive from the Holy Mass, as it is also for us, who are still wayfarers on earth, is also made plain.

When Don Dolindo writes about Heaven, he seems almost personally involved in an ecstasy caused by the view of the splendor of Heaven, the glorious Choirs of Angels but especially by the Blessed Mother. He seems to forget everything when he describes the glorious Virgin Mother. Faith, biblical poems, canticles and songs of Christian centuries become unified in the lyric expression of his intense devotion to Her. Don Dolindo has sublime expressions for the soul that finally arrives before the Most Holy Trinity, only and supreme source of light, joy and love.

This book is certainly a good opportunity to increase our contact with our brothers and sisters who have reached their eternal life. I would especially recommend praying for deceased Priests and Religious. Don Dolindo explains, also with detailed examples and very clearly that far too often they are forgotten, and instead God lets them have the most severe purification because of the glorious place they are destined to receive in Heaven as His faithful servants. Personally I always pray for the ministers of God who are on the other shore and I must confess that many times I have received their gratitude and invaluable help, even though I never saw any of them.

It is my hope that whoever shall read this book will find themselves closer to their relatives and friends who “have gone home” and now they live in a home where the happiness in God is without end.

Msgr. Vittorio Costantini, Bishop of Sessa Aurunca  
Sessa Aurunca (Naples), November 1, 1982



## Foreword

When we talk about Purgatory, it is often presented as an inexorable or at least cruel act of Divine Justice.

Certainly Purgatory is a place of most painful torments and in comparison all suffering on earth are like wild flowers surrounded by thorns. However the pains in Purgatory, even if most excruciating, are a loving purification, which makes possible for the soul to reach the full bliss and happiness in Heaven.

It is a true contest of love: God, who loves the soul, purifies it because He loves it. The soul who loves God and longs for Him, is happy to be purified even in the midst of excruciating pain because it meditates with all seriousness on the gravity of its own sins that hinder it from the full delight to be united with God.

It is therefore a real exercise of love between God and the soul, I repeat, that makes it necessary to eliminate our personal ideas of Purgatory. It is not the revenge of Divine Justice, a frightful prison where the soul moans as if in a merciless galley-slavery.

Who could call cruel the woman who prepares a bride for her happy nuptials while at the same time involuntarily hurting her? Or who would call her the slave of a cruel destiny, the bride who needs the place and the instruments that make her beautiful? Or, who could delight in a most beautiful landscape if he has bleary eyes or if a tiny speck troubles and clouds his eyes? Would that be a cruelty, to put in the eyes drops that actually burn or painfully move the eyelid to remove the speck? Who would happily sit down at a banquet with a grievous heartburn? And who would call cruel, a man, who, in order to help another, gives him a disagreeable medicine that will make him able to come and eat at the table?

God is love. He is of infinite mercy and if we the travelers in this vale of tears do not think of Him in this light of infinite love, it means that we do not truly love Him.

The fear of the Lord, which is the gift of the Holy Spirit, Who is Eternal Love, when it is not inspired by love, does not generate love in the soul but only dread.

Therefore, this treatise considers Purgatory in the marvelous light of the Love of God for the soul and of the soul's love of God, leading on to the meeting of the soul with God after purification, in the glory and happiness of Heaven.

We want to show, with our poor and unclear human light, the nature of this dazzling victory in the contest of love between God and the soul in Purgatory. It is because of love, more than because of its fear of excruciating pain, that the soul should feel its duty to live a holy life, which it may be found worthy of the divine embrace in eternal happiness.

The author  
Napoli, Italy, August 1959

## Part I

*Purgatory:  
The contest of love between God and the soul*

## Chapter I

### **Where goes the soul When the soul leaves the body**

Death is the punishment of sin, inflicted by God in the Garden of Eden, and it is common to all of us. Even if someone does not want to believe in God, it is impossible for him to escape death. We all shall die and we know it. Yet rarely we find someone who worries about it, even people approaching their very old age.

I am an old man, 77 years of age. I know I am close to death yet I do not feel death within me. I feel life, even when I realize that I do not have anymore the strength to do many things. The reason of this internal phenomenon is the soul and its immortality. We each have an immortal soul and as such it is always young.

Perhaps you have noticed, we have within us the impression of a double personality: when we think about ourselves, we notice a face and body very different in our older age. If we look at ourselves in the mirror or in a picture, we are shocked to see the decline and the inexorable decay of our body. It is an aspect of ourselves very different than the one we feel internally. And this is also proof of the reality of our immortal soul.

The body is an instrument of the soul, just as the tools we work with are instruments of the hands that maneuver them and of the soul that directs the action. When the instrument is corroded and does not work well, we try to fix it. When it does not work at all, we throw it away. For example, in times gone by we used to write with wooden pens with steel point. The point was composed of two parts joined together. We would dip the point in the ink and then write on the paper. Everything was fine as long as the pen point worked. But when the point became old, it began to scratch on the paper and the two parts began to split from each other. Attempts were made to keep them together and it continued to write for a while longer with real effort. But after some time and many attempts to fix it, the point could not hold the ink anymore or it would even break. At this point what else? It was thrown into the garbage where it would rust. It could be possible that it would become a good pen point again, if it were put into a furnace among other pieces of steel. That would be like a resurrection after death.

This explains what our natural death is like. The body, as tool of the soul, loses its vigor and starts to decay. We try to cure the body and it is still usable, but less so than before. After some time it decays even further until little by little all the organs are affected, and it follows that the soul cannot make anymore use of the body. Then it abandons the body and death results. Our faith tells us that the resurrection of the body will come, and it is our hope that the Divine Power will recover even the smallest residue like the seed of a dead plant. And life will flourish again from that residue, as does a new sprout.

Efforts to escape death, with doctors and medicines, often only accelerate death, just as too many attempts to fix a pen point end up in breaking it. The body becomes more and more unable to perform the activities of the soul. It begins to die, part by part, as the internal organs fail to function and decay. The heart begins to weaken, circulation slows and breathing becomes difficult, because the lungs do not have the strength and

find it hard to breathe. An accumulation of carbonic acid follows and the body collapses and dies its inevitable death.

What happens then to the soul? Because it is a partner of the body, of each and every part of it, it will remain in the body and with the body as long as there is even one single cell alive, which can be still activated by the soul. Later, when this last one cell fails and the body begins its total decay, the soul finally separates from the body.

Every pain of the sick body is the result, not only on the sensitivity of the organs, which flows to the brain through the nervous system, and through the brain to the soul which gives it life, but the pains are also the result of the lack of action of the soul, when it cannot move completely through the organs of the body. These pains are like a partial death, which can go from pain to spasm, as for example, when we have to remove a rotten tooth.

Death, then, is the total pain and the separation of the soul from the body is a terrible spasm, which it is mitigate only by the agony of it.

It might seem to be a paradox but it is true: lack of air increases in the lung and therefore in the body. The carbonic acid has an anesthetic function, which mitigates the pain.

It is a big mistake to give a dying person a stimulant injection to revive him, for example a camphor injection. It may cause terrible spasms for the dying person, by the reawakening of the sensitivity that can bring him to despair.

### **Like a silkworm coming out from its cocoon**

The soul is spirit and it comes out of the body in the fullness of life of the Spirit, like a silkworm comes out of its cocoon and then abandons it. The soul enters, intellect and will alike, into the eternal youth of immortality pursuing its object: eternal Truth and eternal Good. The soul is outside the world and, like a rocket, springs upward and tends only toward God, its only end.

The soul, however, is not as God created it when He infused it into the body; nor it is as Jesus redeemed it. The soul has within its own initiatives. They appear to it at the very instant in which it leaves the body, not in the dimmed light of the conscience, but in the splendid light of the Eternal Truth.

Our conscience is flexible and tends to make excuses that do not correspond with reality. This is because we always try, with our natural pride, to justify ourselves, to appear honest, even holy. In my Italian hometown, Naples, we have a saying: the conscience is “comme ‘a pellecchia, cumma ‘a tira accussì se stennecchia”. Translated it means: “The conscience is like skin: as it is stretched so does it stay.” In the light of the Eternal Truth, however, the soul recognizes itself for what it is, with a clarity that cannot find excuses or justifications.

It is a shocking surprise to see the soul in the state of mortal sin because sin makes it horribly, disfigured. It is even a shameful surprise when the soul, in the grace of God, is stained by venial sins and deformed by the imperfections.

The lost soul is like a weight that plunges itself down toward the abyss, even if it has a natural drive toward God; the soul in His grace is like a rocket pushed upward but with a thrust that cannot bring it to God because it is out of order. It is hampered and it

does not explode. Nor does the soul tend toward the abyss, which is the opposite of glory, but tends to purify itself and sees this purification, a gift, even with its excruciating pains.

The soul in mortal sin is so far away from God that it is left in a state of spiritual death. It falls into the abyss as into a new frightful life. In this life it only finds the vermin of its own faults enveloping and tormenting it. Therefore a hate is born in the soul and the seven deadly sins make it feel totally rejected because they pursue the soul as if it were dressed with a new body, full of all sicknesses. It keeps nonetheless the natural urge of the creature that would aim toward God, but since this natural urge cannot reach its goal it becomes frustrating and upsetting for the soul and it is left with its own despair and eternal horror. It is like a decayed substance that changes its condition it is not anymore a sweet cream but a worm-infested mass.

The soul in the state of grace, however, still stained by the sins it has committed, is like a dove with broken wings that cannot fly but aims toward God with love. Since its nature is attracted to Him, it does its best to cleanse itself, imploring His mercy.

The lost soul is a wretched traveler that has reached its eternal destination. The soul in the state of grace is a traveler that has reached the end of its life on earth but because of the need of purification, the soul is granted to be still a traveler, in order to cleanse itself in a painful pilgrimage of love.

The lost soul is in eternal pain; the soul in Purgatory is still in its pilgrimage, still in time and it waits the blessed day when it will be in its everlasting joy, in the glory of God and full union with God.

For this reason Purgatory is still in time and the cleansing is measured in a temporal way.

## Chapter II

### **The soul reaches eternal life**

The soul, in leaving the body, going to Purgatory has a surge toward God but is like a person swayed by a current that cannot reach the shore.

The soul rushes toward God but its imperfections are like a current that sways it far away. In the illusions of its earthly life the soul already had put itself in a current that was taking it away from the Divine Love. When it comes out of the body, the sensory illusions become a whirl for the sins that have stained it and therefore the soul finds itself swept away from God in the same desire that aims toward Him with all the strength of a mighty love due to being in the state of grace. The soul is outside its body but carries in it the responsibilities of its own miseries almost as though followed by a dead body: *opera enim illorum sequuntur illos* (their deeds follow them). It is a most profound expression, and denote both the good deeds to which the soul is connected and the bad deeds that follow together with the good deeds. The soul in Purgatory is like someone who is forced to jump into the water of a whirling current, wearing heavy clothes that plunge him down when he needs to remain floating and working with all his strength to continue to swim toward the peaceful and blooming shores.

### **The mystery of suffering**

The soul in its earthly life always had a leaning toward the goodness of the Lord. Sometimes it even had complaints especially confronted by the mysteries of suffering, providence, evil, human freedom and so on. We all have or had these complaints. At best we try to drive them away as temptations and we try, with great effort, to do opposite acts or an occasional and weak act of faith. We do not live in the radiant light of God but in the darkness of our mind, which does not want to reason, or of our heart that does not love with tenderness what appears to the soul as harshness and severity. Our soul rather than loving our Lord, tries not to oppose Him and not to be submerged by unbelief, in the dark waves of fatalism and blind destiny. As soon as the soul is outside of the body, it finds itself before the infinite goodness of God and sees its own miseries.

As soon as the soul is out of the body, it finds itself in front of the infinite goodness of God and sees its own miseries and its own complaints in the light of the divine goodness even if it does not contemplate, nor it can contemplate yet, that ocean of love. It is still unable to immerse itself in this unequalled bliss. The soul remains, to give a faint example, like someone who treated a king in disguise as a villain, or a Cardinal as a sacristan or even worse a thief disguised as a priest. Such thing happened to two policemen in Venice one night, when they stopped Pope St. Pius X mistaking him for a thief while he was carrying on his shoulders a mattress for a very poor pregnant mother.

“You, wretched thief – shouted to him from a distance the two policemen – stop there! Where did you steal the mattress? Put it down. Put out your arms that we can handcuff you!”

When they were closer to him, on dragging him down they recognized the angelic face of the holy Patriarch. Who can describe the confusion that they felt? This is a very

poor comparison to the surprise of the soul at the first encounter with the Lord finding itself in the presence of His infinite goodness and infinite love. Even without seeing Him face to face, because the soul is not yet glorified, it feels the goodness of God because of its state of grace.

And there is more: the soul in the light of God, becoming aware of His perfection and greatness, finds itself stained and unadorned. It feels so ashamed that its only wish is to move away from the Lord to purify itself.

It might have happened to you to have a nightmare in which you were going out in the street in bare clothes or even naked. What an embarrassment! You tried to hide in the entrance of buildings. Looking around it seemed to you that all passers-by were staring at you and you felt panic-stricken. You only started to breathe again when you woke up and saw that it was only a nightmare: Thank you, Lord, that it was only a bad dream! But the soul who comes in the presence of God, and sees all its stains, is not having a nightmare; it instead wakes up from its proud selfish dreams of its earthly life in which it judged itself in hasty benevolence. The soul now sees how deceived it was in the Divine Light.

During a reception a young lady feels a sharp pain in her side. Not wanting to make a show of it, she does not even touch herself where she felt the pain, because it is a very elegant affair. Finally the pain is such that she seeks out the ladies room. When she begins to undress with horror she sees a small mouse jumping out from her. The soul in the light of God sees with horror all those actions to which it did not pay any attention in its life. A great embarrassment and suffering takes hold of it realizing that those shortcomings were not as simple as it had believed. Instead they were gnawing rodents of its conscience. It now longs only to get rid of them, withdrawing from the Heavenly Reception to Purgatory.

The withdrawing from the Heavenly Reception causes it excruciating pains because of its state of grace. It seems a paradox, but that is what it is.

### **The damned and the souls in Purgatory**

The damned soul, passing to its eternal life finds itself in a state of utter wretchedness and because of the loss of the grace of God it does not have an outburst of love toward Him, like the purgative soul, and in addition it hates and flees from Him.

It is awful, no doubt, however it is a state of life that cannot be changed and that the damned soul *does not want to change*, even if it could, even if the Divine Mercy would. The damned soul is now in a state of damnation. It also has freedom in such a state, which makes it free to hate and to do evil, a heinous pain because of the misuse of its freedom in its earthly life, for its own fault, not because of the implacability of the justice of God.

Just as an impulse of motion continues without any other push, because of that law of physic called *inertia*, so also the sin and the degradation of the life of the damned continue in Hell, with no hope ever to be changed because it is the *state* of the damned, just as in its earthly life it was the state of the sinner.

The soul in Purgatory, outside its body is not in a *state* for it is still a pilgrim. Because it is in grace, now the soul longs for God with an immense love but it cannot yet

reach Him. For this reason we can see, through all the revelations received from souls in Purgatory, that their purification is taken into account in our time: ten, twenty, a hundred years. The damned soul is like a heavy weight that falls into the eternal abyss and there stays. It remains there.

The soul in Purgatory is like a space capsule that slowly drifts upward, awaiting the final stage of the buster-rocket's explosive upward thrust. It is not capable of anything but suffering because only suffering is able to give remedy to its own faults. Its outbursts of love are like a blazing fire, bringing pain and the grieving of love that makes the soul thankful to have the grace to be purified.

The dead is dead and does not long, so to speak, for life but to rot away. This is the lot of the damned soul. The sick person instead longs for health, imposes on himself hard treatment while he suffers willingly, even if he laments and begs for help to be relieved. This is the lot of the soul in Purgatory: it is like a sick person. Its painful medicines are purification in the fire, in the distress of being away from God and in the torments of each of her faults.

For a person sick in body, his relief is the anesthetic, the painkiller and the loving care of the people who help him. Relieves for the soul in Purgatory are intercessory prayers and sacrifices offered for it.



## Chapter III

### **The admirable logic of Purgatory**

We should not be surprised at the torments that a soul suffers in Purgatory. We consider our faults by our standard and they appear to us as nothing special. On the other hand, we believe our good actions to be almost heroic acts. We overlook how much purification our poor actions really need before becoming jewels of immortal glory.

Let me explain with a comparison of a current event. Sometime ago the United States launched a rocket toward the moon. This launch did not succeed. The path of the launch had shifted by a thousandth of a millimeter. This fraction of a millimeter on earth seemed so negligible that the projectionists of the launch did not notice it. However the thousandth of a millimeter upward became hundreds of miles for the angle produced by the shifting on the side of the path. The angle is an almost invisible speck, but the sides of it, when they are opened, are not a speck anymore. And if they are opened toward the Infinite, they become part of the Infinite.

All venial sins seem to us a trifle and in fact we commit venial sin easily and carelessly. However, our actions are not limited to the earth nor are they computed by earthly standard. They are projected toward God because they are the price of our eternal happiness. Sin shifts the path of action toward the selfishness of pleasure, or the stupid satisfaction of spite, or impatience, or an omission. And the action is always projected toward the God on High, and makes an angle of deflection and hinders the impulse of love toward God.

The venial sin, then, is no longer, according to our standards, a negligible imperfection, but actually is a deflection from the love of God. This deflection in Purgatory needs correction and purification, in order for the soul to enter in the most pure orbit of love and to reach God in its eternal happiness.

Another comparison: A fault is like a false note in the harmony of love.

Another example: a fault is like a false note in the harmony of love. A violin with a string off tune cannot be part of a most sweet string orchestra if it is not first tuned. The string of the violin may be out of tune either because it is loosened from its peg or because of a crack in the sound box of the instrument. It is necessary either to stretch it with an effort or to repair the sound box and both would be painful for the instrument if it had sensitivity. The strings of a violin are four: G – D – A – E; three in one, all tuned on one keynote: the “A” of the diapason. If a string moves from the keynote, then the entire violin is out of tune. The same is true of the soul when it does not tune its life perfectly on God, loving Him above all things.

God is the beginning and the end. A soul that does not aim toward Him, even for a trifle, and goes away from His love, it must tune in again to Him. Suffering, pain and the fire of Purgatory give it the anxious desire to go to God, because now He is all its love and life. This anxious desire is love, because of its state of grace; just as for the damned it is hate and horrible desperation. Also in our earthly life suffering inclines us toward relief, rest and deliverance, and we make all kind of effort to have it. He who finds himself in stormy waters, by instinct looms for the shore. If someone is burned, he aims for the coolness of water; if he is exceedingly hungry, he aims for food with

vehemence. Fire and the pains of Purgatory are obvious consequences, having in themselves their reason to be, just as they are obviously the truth by faith. Our nothingness must tune with the Infinite Love and must become that love.

### **Mary Most Holy** **Song of the divine Love**

Mary Most Holy, full of grace and Mother of the Word incarnate, made a statement about her soul in the form of a canticle: *Magnificat anima mea Domini*. My soul magnifies the Lord. She was so full of faith, by the merits of Jesus, given to her beforehand in the Immaculate Conception and flowing in Her as a harmony of sanctity, that Her blessed soul exulted in Him, saying *Exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo*. My spirit exulted in God my Savior. It was a song of exultation in the harmony of the grace that sanctified Her.

God is infinite and his creature can be in harmony with Him only through humility. The first point of a circle can complete the circle only when it contacts the last point. If the soul does not humble itself and instead becomes proud, it diverts and makes a scrawl, just as someone, with a little bump, diverts a bit from the line of the circle. Sin is like a bump in the loving line that unites our nothingness to His all. Mary Most Holy was the most humble of all creatures and for this reason the Infinite God united Himself to Her, looking at Her with infinite love: *Respexit humilitatem ancillae suae*, He gazed on the humility of His handmaid. And She became the Mother of His Infinite Word made flesh. She is the most admirable sign of beatitude between the desolate generations of our poor earth: *Ecce enim, ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes*. Behold all generation call me blessed.

The power of the Redeemer raised Her to the height that exalted Her to the Most Holy Trinity; Her holiness made her a saint when He became incarnate in Her, His life in Her maternal life: *Fecit mihi magna qui potens est, et sanctum nomen eius*. He who is mighty has done great things for me and holy is his name. Hence She became the source from whom flows the mercy of the Redemption, so that all peoples would receive: *Et misericordia ejus a progenie in progenies timentibus eum*. His mercy is from age to age to those who fear Him) Redemption was the power of the arm of God, the destruction of the kingdom of Satan and his followers, the shattering and ruin of the thrones of pride. The exaltation of Mary derives from the humility of her created nature, to the humiliation of the Word made Flesh: *Fecit potentiam in brachio suo, dispersit superbos mente cordis sui. Deposuit potentes de sede et exaltavit humiles*. He wrought power in His arm and put down the proud by the intention of His heart. He deposed the powerful from their seat and rose up the lowly.

The Word, the eternal song of praise in the glory of eternal generation, was a song of praise in Mary, for the humiliation of the Incarnation, in His Passion and Death.

Whoever unites himself to Him in humility<sup>2</sup> is rich in Him. It is as if he were saturated with goodness, but whoever turns away from Christ Crucified, priding himself

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<sup>2</sup> (The notes marked by asterisk are by the Bishop who introduced this work) Often the word “humility” bothers some people because it is misunderstood, almost as if humility is a lessening of character. Humility instead is truth, and it is a peaceful, well-balanced recognition that every person has his limitations, as only

in his sin, is left to himself with his misery and void of God Most High and the only Good: *Esurientes implevit bonis, et divites dimisit inanes*. The hungry He has filled with good things; the rich he has sent away empty.

This is the way to fulfill the promises of God, it is the way to gather together the multitude of the People of God, for the accomplishment of the Divine Mercy: that souls receive the Redemption and the promise of God to Abraham and his descendents is accomplished: Count the stars of heaven if you can and count the sand in the seas. That many I will give to you and your descendents: *Suscepit Israel puerum suum, recordatus misericordiae suae; sicut locutus est ad patrem nostros, Abraham et semini ejus in saecula*. He has helped Israel his servant, remembering his mercy, according to his promise to our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever.

### **The Magnificat of the soul in Purgatory**

The soul in Purgatory in the midst of its pains humbles itself. In suffering the soul longs for God. Its anxious desire of love tunes it to Him and in its words and its cry, it sings with Mary: *My soul magnifies the Lord in His loving justice and His holiness*. The soul sings this way, because it does not see its miseries and its imperfections anymore in the measure of its superficial conscience, with which it has been measuring itself in its earthly life, but in proportion to the sanctity of God.

It can be better understood with a modern scientific comparison: The atomic scientists put the nucleus and the electrons of the atom on a scale. To put an architectural plan, for instance, the plan of a future building, on a scale, it is important to determine the balance between the plan and the building. In the plan one millimeter is equivalent, for instance, to ten meters of the building. Then the builder knows how many meters are needed to make a wall, a column, and so on. Now let us pretend, that the measure of an atom is of one millimeter, although in reality, it is invisible to the naked eye, and can be calculated only in a mathematical context. The electrons that turns around the atom are ten meters, and the millimeter is calculated as one thousand kilometers, that is, two times the length around the earth. What will a sin, or an imperfection, be in comparison to, or I would say, on a scale with the sanctity of God, that the soul aims to reach? It amounts to a frightful proportion, with a hint of the infinity. The soul sees, feels, lives this proportion and therefore does not lament its sufferings but finds them justified. Since it is fully in love with God, the soul cries and sings to God in its desire to purify itself and reach Him.

How can we regard as nothing a venial sin?<sup>3</sup>

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God is great and only God is perfect. Hence to recognize our own reality with our merit and defects leads a person to have respect for everybody and have the availability to listen and help others. If one nurtures these interior feelings, one will not have the fever to be first at all costs, nor to nurture in his soul envy toward those who achieve better than himself. Rather he keeps his sense of duty towards God who gives to each person special talents. Hence to serve and love God shines in one's understanding and love toward others, which we must be involved, in our earthly life, a service due to our Creator.

<sup>3</sup> It is worthwhile to notice the convincing tone of the author in speaking of venial sins and rightly so. Because whoever commits a grave sin, a so called "mortal sin", if it is not confessed, does not go to

How can we believe that the justice of God in the pain of Purgatory is too severe? It is not a punishment but a needed purification. It is the desire of the soul who, appreciating the light of God in proportion to its own miseries, longs to purify itself, even at the cost of excruciating pain. The soul knows what it means to see and delight in God, and this delight would be a torment as long as there is even the tiniest sin in it. Could it be an exaggeration, the intensity and the length of the purification of the unclean soul? Not at all, because the soul has such a desire to see God and delight in His unutterable joy, that every spot, even the tiniest, would keep it from the vision of love that will render it similar to God, like a pure crystal bathed in sunshine and transformed into the radiant sun.

### **The telescope of Mount Palomar**

Let me explain with a scientific example. On Mount Palomar, in the United States, is located the largest telescope in the world.

It brings the stars in the sky closer to the eyes that peer into it, by millions *light years*. The distance of the stars in the sky is not measured in meters or kilometers. They are measured by the speed of light, that is, 300.000 kilometers per second. In one minute the speed is 18 million kilometers. In one hour a day, or in one year, how many kilometers will be covered? It is a measure that is mind-boggling.

Now to get the eyes closer to the stars in the sky this gigantic telescope was needed. The lens has a diameter of 200 inches. The instrument is mounted in a dome larger than that of St. Peter's Church in Rome, and opens to the sky. To make this lens pure and crystal clear, without any imperfection, not even the smallest speck, twelve years of labor was needed to purify it, and seventy tons of a very special abrasive were used. After long purification, to transport the lens to the mountain, without damaging it in any way, it was necessary to build a large tunnel in the mountain, with special bridges and roads. Finally the lens was put in the telescope and fixed toward the stars in the sky through an opening of the dome. Then the observations started, however no one was allowed to enter the dome, with the exception of the scientist, because even the breath of a single person, not withstanding the vast area, could interfere with the clear observation of the star.

Do you understand? To observe a star, such absolute purity in the lens is needed, as well as such a prolonged time of purification, and such pains on the part of the workmen!<sup>4</sup>

Our soul does not have to focus on a star but on God; does not have to focus with a lens but with the light of glory and this light cannot enlighten it if it remains in the soul even the tiniest speck that can blur it. On the basis of these considerations, that are strictly

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Purgatory but unfortunately to eternal perdition. It is also very good to note for all of us who easily undervalue venial sin, that it always consists of a lack of love toward God and impedes spiritual growth.

<sup>4</sup> Today even though the Palomar Telescope will be considered one of the most important inventions of human science, as it happens to all inventions, progress has given other better instruments to discover the magnificence and beauty of the sky. Other instruments, for sure, will be invented that will allow us to delve into the universe and discover other marvels that were made by God.

and rigorously scientific, who would dare to lament the Divine Justice? It is not as much as Justice, it is Mercy. Never as in Purgatory Justice and Mercy embrace each other in a kiss of love. Never the love of a creature in grace has longed to be perfect as a soul in Purgatory. It is a bath of love that the soul must perform, and it does not find it long or unfair, because it must present itself perfect to the eternal nuptials of the eternal bliss.

## Chapter IV

### **The pains of Purgatory: the fire**

The pains of Purgatory are for us a great mystery, even if we believe we know something about it because of the testimonies of the many apparitions of souls in Purgatory. Today have become scientific realities, even for scientists who to their disgrace, are unbelievers.

It is a fact, perhaps little known, that nowadays the reality of the afterlife, namely Hell, Purgatory and Heaven, is a new science, as much a science as psychoanalysis, chemistry, physics and so on. It is not an empirical or metaphorical science, but it is a *positive* science. Since the consistency of the natural phenomena makes for positive physical science, in the same way, the consistency of the evidence for the afterlife makes this science positive, for those who research on it and study it.

Also, those scientists who are unbelievers are forced to accept this new science. On the other hand, they research that evidence, which gives witness the afterlife, with much more diligence than Catholics do, precisely because their prejudicial mind are opposed to all that is supernatural. Catholics know by faith, and faith is the science of sciences. They know the soul is immortal and that it exists in the afterlife. The soul is most unhappy if it passes on as an obstinate sinner; it is purified, if it passes on stained but in the grace of God; and it is most happy if it passes on holy. Knowing by faith these great truths, Catholics do not give excessive importance to the positive manifestation of the afterlife. On the contrary, many still maintain the disbelief, which they breathed in the environment of past centuries. They believe the afterlife to be a tale of some supernatural or preternatural occurrences. Instead these are historical and these are scientific realities.

### **Suffrages**

The pains of Purgatory are pains of the afterlife. They are totally different from the pains of earthly life and they are the torments of the souls that suffer them exceedingly. The corporal or spiritual pains of our present life flow back into the soul but in an imperfect way because from the senses they pass to the nervous system and from this to the brain, which perceives the sensation. From the brain the pain passes on to the soul. When the pain exceed the capacity of the senses to suffer, the nervous system on the brain fails to perceive the pains anymore, and the soul does not perceive them either, because it leaves the body. The local or total anesthesia, which is done before a surgery, makes the senses, so to speak, asleep or unable to transmit the pain to the soul.

In Purgatory, it is the soul that perceives directly and totally the pain of purification and these pains are not mitigated by any anesthesia. We shall see how it can be mitigated only by the suffrages that are paid by people on earth, who apply the merit of Jesus Christ to the souls in Purgatory. In so doing they make atonement by their prayers and sacrifices, taking away from the souls in Purgatory either partially or completely the responsibilities that weigh them down.

The suffrage is like the removal of a malignant tumor that makes whole the part of the body, that was previously sick, and does not suffer anymore. They are like a loving payment that condones the debt of the soul in Purgatory and excuse it from paying to the last cent, eliminating the pains for the debt incurred.

There is, therefore, no comparison between the pains of souls in Purgatory and the pains of our temporal life, enriched by Divine Mercy, through corporal and spiritual care. We can only have an idea from the analogies and comparisons that are as far different from each other as the explosion of an atomic bomb and the spark of a struck match.

The torment of Purgatory that we can more easily understand is *fire*, because of the numberless apparitions of souls in Purgatory that have given witness to us, showing visible marks of the fire that torments them. These marks also show the extreme difference between the earthly fire and the fire of Purgatory.

To give an example, in the life of Father Stanislaw Choscoa, a Dominican Priest (Brovius, History of Pologne, 1590), we read of this happening. One day while this saintly religious was praying for the deceased, he saw a soul burning in a raging fire. While praying for this soul, he asked it if the fire was as piercing as the fire on earth.

*“Alas!”- Cried out the poor soul – all the fire of the earth, comparing that of Purgatory, is like a fresh breeze.”*

The religious insisted: *“How is it possible? I would like to try it, on one condition that this would be accounted to me one day as part of the pains that I will have to suffer in Purgatory.”* Then without hesitation he stretched out his hand. The soul let fall on him one drop of his sweat or some kind of liquid that looked like it. At the touch of this, the religious gave out excruciating shouts and then fell on the ground unconscious from the spasm of the pain he felt. His confreres run to revive him and did all they could. Full of terror, he told them what had happened and showed them his hand, on which there was now a most painful wound. He remained bedridden with excruciating pain for over a year and half, unable to get up. Finally he died, urging his confreres to do their utmost to avoid even the most insignificant fault so that they would not have to suffer those terrible torments.

Similar happenings have been numberless and it is illogical and rash to doubt of the reality of the fire in Purgatory.<sup>5</sup>

### **What is the nature of the “fire” in Purgatory**

What is the nature of this fire and how can it torment the soul that is spiritual? This is a great question and a huge mystery, which could be made clearer with the new atomic discovery.

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<sup>5</sup> We cannot stress too much this reality that can be found in some popular old-time prayer book with well-documented details. It is a fact that there are many of such events, historically documented, involving signs and traces of fire. It has nothing to do with the faith, but they are actual facts. (For instance in the city of Foligno can be found a door with the mark of scorching fire made by a hand which is attributed to a soul in Purgatory). When we consider all together the many apparitions of the deceased, we find to be a precious invitation to consider more the truth of our faith about the existence of Purgatory. This truth of faith has its foundation in the Holy Scriptures and in the infallible teaching of the Magisterium of the Church.

Our ancestors used to get fire by rubbing together two sticks of a pine tree, or another resinous plant, very quickly. In so doing they had fire from wood with this friction. It took quite a while to ignite a furnace. Later, we got fire from flint that, upon being struck by friction, produced sparks and transmitted the sparks to a fuel, usually some kind of sponge. This fuel slowly, little by little became ignited, just as one could ignite a piece of stubble and transmit the fire to the wood. The wood, once the fire was out, would become charcoal or burning coals. These coals became the aliment of the fire.

When the sulphur-matches were invented, it was a humble but very useful discovery because, rubbing them against a rough surface, would spark and produce a flame. The flame burns because the burning wood produces gas and it is the gas that feeds the flame. After that we relied on the gas that was ignited by the coals.

Then, electricity was discovered and it was found that a carbon filament and after that a metallic filament became incandescent when an electric current went through it and it found resistance. In this way we had an electric fire. Each of these ignitions of fire produced a blaze of greater intensity and heat. For instance the electrical oven have a power of heating much more intense than the fire of wood and the fire of gas.

Today with atomic science, we can have a better idea of the fire both of Hell and Purgatory. The whole substance of the world is made of atoms, equally built but different in nature, depending on the different mineral or physical body. Therefore we have the atom of uranium, the atom of plutonium, the atom of hydrogen and so on.

Every atom is like an infinitesimal solar system: it has a central nucleus around which turn electric corpuscles called for these reason electrons. It is a harmony like the one of the sun and the planets that turns around it. The nucleus can be divided by electric blows done with special, powerful instruments, for instance, the cyclotron. Then the atom, from the division of the nucleus, develops a most powerful heat. In comparison, the normal fire disappears like a shadow. Matter changes into burning energy, which can burn and destroy everything in its powerful radius, which deafens and terrorizes.

On the basis of this discovery, there were built the first atomic bombs, because often man turns to evil the gifts that Our Lord lavishes on him to make his life easier.

The first bombs were small compared to what they build today. The first bomb that was exploded, as an experiment, on the sandy desert of New Mexico, developed such an intense heat, that it melted down the sand to a depth of eight meters, reducing it to a light blue crystal that is still there to be seen. Two bombs of that power were dropped in Japan, on Nagasaki and the other on Hiroshima, during World II, completely destroying those two flourishing cities.

Modern bombs have a power of destructive fire immensely more violent. It is calculated that a bomb of the atom of Hydrogen a so-called H-bomb (H is the initial capital letter of the chemical word Hydrogen), if it were to explode in the centre of Italy, would destroy it completely. Its water would be turned to waste, like dried blood. It would make impossible any form of life, because the radioactivity that would be spread.

According to the formula of the famous Jewish mathematician, Albert Einstein, matter changes into energy. As an analogy, we can get an idea of the fires of Hell and Purgatory: the soul compared to God is less than an atom, but aims powerfully towards God. Its faults are like a bombardment that separates the soul from God, completely if it is damned, or temporarily, until the sins of the soul are cancelled by expiation.



For the damned, since the soul is entirely separated from God, the expiation is not possible because of the absence of grace. The damned soul, as we said before, falls into a state from which it does not want to be freed. Its will is fixed in evil and that is where it wants to stay.

For the soul in Purgatory, the state of grace in which it exists makes the soul desire God with love, and it yearns to get out of its condition through expiation.

Separation from God, as it happens in the splitting of the nucleus of the atom, generates a terrible fire, unquenchable for the damned but gradually quenchable for the soul in grace, as its faults are purified by its loving anxiety to reach God, as that is the cause of its torment.

It is obvious, as any of the truth of our faith is obvious: the soul being in the grace of God, loves Him immeasurably. Its love for Him increases the more pure it becomes. This love makes the soul appreciate the infinite greatness and perfection of God, and His infinite charity. In this light and anxiety to love, the soul sees clearly its own imperfections that make possible for it to go to God. It is far away from Him and it is inflamed by the fire, which is ignited by its own love.

Every sin is like a nucleus of an atom, broken and separated from God and it is like the universe of the Einstein formula. According to this formula, matter changes in energy. With the soul's spiritual formula, the changing matter is the fire burning and tormenting the soul in its anxiety of love. It purifies it because it increases the soul's desire, its appreciation and love of God making it gradually more prepared for the Beatific Vision.

### **Purification**

#### **is a need of the soul**

To believe that purification is an act of severity on the part of God is absurd because God is love and since the soul is in a state of grace, God loves her immeasurably. The purification is a need of the soul.

The adoring appreciation it now has of God makes the soul reflect on His infinite holiness and it does not want to attain Him if it is not completely purified.

It would be for her a torment and not a joy to go to Paradise, as it is a torment for a sick eye the light and vision of a landscape, or for a sick stomach to digest rich food, or for a person dressed in poor unclean clothes to enter a royal festivity.

For the infinite love that attracts the soul and for its desire of purification, it is easy to understand that God wants that the soul be aided by the suffrages to be purified. The soul appeals to the militant Church, rich in the treasures of the mercy of God, for the merits of Jesus, Mary Most Holy and of the Saints.

It is obvious that, because the soul cannot yet go to God and is still a wayfarer outside its earthly life, it is to be purified and must draw from the wells of the pilgrim Church.

God does not want to purify the soul as an act of mercy, but rather I would as an act of perfection.

The person who pays out of his own pocket or through someone to whom he is associated in life is happier and feels more fulfilled of someone that does not pay but is acquitted of his debt as an act of charity. God seems harsh when He says that it is

necessary to pay till the last quadrant but in truth God is good because He does not want a soul to enter into heaven as a debtor, even of a cent. Instead it is to enter Heaven as a queen in her own right.

We are used to the superficiality of our appreciation of the goodness of the Lord. We are completely ignorant of the marvelous harmony of His love. Therefore it is difficult for us to understand the divine goodness in His most loving justice when He let us moan and suffer both here in earth and in our life after death.

### **The damned soul hates God!**

For the lost soul things are very different. Since it is not in the grace of God, a lost soul chooses out of its own will and with determination, a state of total separation from Him. It is completely self-absorbed because of its pride. The damned soul hates God because its own pride is in competition with His infinite greatness. It is fixed in evil and in hate considering to be its setting and its domain, it refuses all mercy as harm to its pride, it is entrenched in evil, it is entrenched in hate, and from this hate generates excruciating despair and obstinacy in the soul and yet it does not want to depart from it because in its state against God, whose majesty and love it recognizes, the damned soul consider its own damnation to be a spite against Him.

A son who hates his father, knowing his love toward him, deals the most spite drifting far away from his love and becoming lost among corrupt people. He is in an abyss of pain but he stays there and does not want to come out of his state because of the hate he feels for his father. He can give at least the sorrow to have lost his son. Because of this hate toward God, the devils and the damned try to ruin other souls and long to attract them to their own wretchedness. The depraved person wants other people depraved as he is; the thief wants thieves as he is. Also on earth evil is widespread and aims to proliferate and scandalize. The perverted want the ruin of others who live in peace and harmony out of the secret terrible envy they feel for the happiness of others.

If people would only consider what Hell really is, they would not be so insane to fall into it and to be hopelessly damned for all eternity!

### **How can a fire torment a spirit?**

In regard of the fire of Purgatory as well as that of Hell, we encounter a very difficult problem: how is it possible that fire can torment a soul, the damned and the devils who are of a spiritual nature? From the evidence of the apparitions of souls in Purgatory or in Hell, from the traces of burns that they left as a sign of their presence, it becomes clear that fire has something material about it.

Hence, how it can torment a spirit?

Let me suggest this answer. We know scientifically, that painful sensation come to a human through the senses, arriving at the brain and then reaching the soul. It is in the soul, and through the soul, that they are perceived. The dead body does not feel pain because it has no soul. A person under total anesthesia does not feel pain, because the

senses, being dulled by the anesthesia, do not transmit the painful sensations to the brain, and therefore to the soul. The soul is virtually outside the body, because it cannot make use of it. The anesthesia is like a temporary death: the body lives, yes, but only mechanically, since the organs of life are not yet decomposing, but they are as deeply asleep.

The fire in Purgatory, originating in the soul itself, like the split nucleus of the atom, *is in the very core* of the soul. It does not need the senses and the nerves to reach the body. It is a total and terrible expression of all corporal pain, without mitigation.

This is why the fires of Purgatory and Hell do not have any resemblance to earthly fire, which the soul in Purgatory refers to as “*very refreshing air*”, in comparison to the fire that is purifying it.

This is also the reason why the fires of Purgatory give the soul a fully opposite sensation of pain: the awful extremes of cold and heat, the sensation of being hungry as a wolf, or the overwhelming desires, the idleness, the unrest, and so on, all according to the sins that must be expiated. It can be said that all the senses of the body come alive again in the soul, but in an extremely intense way, because they are so total.

We have a little example of this in the scientific phenomenon called “*In reference to the senses*”. A person who has a foot amputated, for instance, feels the same painful sensation after the surgery as he had before, even though the foot is not there anymore. The sensation is completely in the soul, in a kind of inertia; it continues to relate to that wounded part, which it was tending to beforehand. This phenomenon also happens to the removal of a tooth, so that a person feels the pain in that part of the gum, where the tooth used to be. These phenomena are as acute as they were, before the surgery, or when the weather changes, or when there is a heavy thunderstorm, and so on.

The soul in Purgatory had its body in its earthly life and this body, even though it is now dust, is destined to resurrect and always belongs to the soul, who possess it. The soul maintain this constant relationship to the body it informed, and unfortunately, this is the reason behind and the instrument of the sins, which its body committed, and for which it is now in the fire. The reference to the body, which the soul had in its earthly life, is not the simple scientific relationship of which we spoke above. It is a relationship of deep sorrow for its great love toward God, in having offended Him with the sins committed with its body, and the desire to make reparation. The fire that torments the soul now has become for it a body in expiation, and therefore, can torment the spirit in its relationship to the body that it had on earth.

This terrible reality helps to explain the reverence that all people have had, and they have at the present time toward the bodies of the deceased. Vases, coins, food put beside the dead body, flowers, Rosaries, embalming, and the very strict laws against the desecration of graves, and so on, give witness to the unconscious belief, that the body is still in relationship to the soul, just as when the person was alive. From this belief comes the most beautiful Christian custom of burial in a sacred place, of blessing and of appealing for Divine Mercy on the soul. This is why the moving prayers of the Church over the corpses are recited, imploring on them the mercy of God, almost as if they are still pilgrim. The cremation of corpses is truly a barbaric practice. It is almost like inflicting cruelty on the body that was the temple of God. It is a miserable expression of

disbelief and it is the highest degree of desecration of the body.<sup>6</sup> Also, the modern practice of not putting the bodies in the ground, but in boxes made of zinc, soldered and put into niches, free of decay and worms. It is a bad practice and to be reproached. The Christian burial is in sacred ground, where the body decomposes, but in doing so, it proclaims the greatness of God, in its coming back to dust, from where God took him, according to the will of the Holy Spirit.

In Purgatory the fire tormenting the soul is lessened by the love and the hope of eternal glory. The soul suffers like the saints suffered on earth, completely united to the Divine Will and, we dare say, full of joy for every sin that put it through the painful fire while it makes it grow in its love and desire for God, the Infinite Love.

Also on earth a person, who takes a deep dive in the ocean, even enduring the shock of the cold water, feels so good that he even expresses it aloud.

In Hell, on the other hand, the fire torments the damned in a dreadful despair, because the fire is their very life, freely chosen with obstinacy. Since that frightful pain excites them to a terrible wrath, the damned lives out a dreadful hate, tormenting each other.

Suffering that expiate generates order and peace. Hopeless suffering generates disorder and eternal horror, as Jesus taught.

For myself, I cannot imagine a soul being lost, a damned soul. I feel an immense sorrow for it. I beg you, never say: I am damned; I am going to Hell. For the love of God, my children, for the love of God I beg you, you must save yourself! With all the vehemence of His heart, for this reason Jesus said: "If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body thrown into Gehenna. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body thrown into Gehenna. (*Mt 5:29-30*). Let us save ourselves, my children. It is a matter of choosing eternal joy or eternal desperation!...

Let us save ourselves, my children. It is a matter of choosing eternal joy or eternal desperation!

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<sup>6</sup>The Church does not forbid the cremation of the bodies as long as it does not have the meaning of rebellion and opposition to the Christian tradition. Burial inside the ground, *the interment*, to use a French word, has a much clearer significance, as waiting for the resurrection. The body, like a seed, is put in the ground and, like a seed, it will decompose, in the hope of coming to life again. In fact the place where the dead are interred is called "cemetery", that is a place where the body sleeps in Christ waiting for the resurrection.

## Chapter V

### **The different areas or the states of Purgatory**

According to the revelation of Saints and we might even say according to logic, Purgatory is divided into *different areas*, depending on the degree of purification that the soul has to endure in proportion to the sin committed. It is like a school, for example, for a purification and elevation of the mind. It is necessary to be divided into several classes, from kindergarten where the mind begins to open up to university, where the mind has matured...or it should have matured, in a chosen branch of learning.

Saint Francesca Romana saw Purgatory divided into three distinct parts: in the *upper region* are the souls who suffer only the *pain of loss*, that is the lack of the vision of God or some small pain and short stay, which prepares them for the vision and enjoyment of God. In the *middle region* in which the Saint saw written "Purgatory", suffer the souls who committed venial sins or those, we might add, who must atone for the punishment due to mortal sin already forgiven. At the bottom of the abyss, close to Hell, the Saint saw the third region, which she calls the "*lower Purgatory*", filled with a clear and penetrating fire, different from that of Hell, where is dark and gloomy.

This third region she saw divided in three further areas where the pain increases according to the responsibility of the soul and the degree of glory and happiness they are destined to reach. The *first* is for the laity; the *second* for the non-ordained Clergy; the *third* for the Priests and Bishops. It should be understood that this third area has an even lower level reserved for members of Religious Orders: men and women, who had higher means of sanctification and light from God and now have to bear greater responsibility for their faults and, therefore, a greater need of expiation.

Both Priests and Religious, called to the greatest sanctity, are called to a very high state of glory. Hence they need specific purification and that makes their state more painful in Purgatory. Also, purification for them is not vindictive severity on the part of God, but a contest of love.

It is a fact that the largest numbers of appearances of the souls in Purgatory, who suffer excruciating pains, are the souls of Priests and Religious. It is also logical to be so, just as it is logical that the person who has called to a higher level of study or art must have a deeper and more thorough preparation. In consequence, their pains are likewise stronger and lengthier.

### **The pain of loss**

We have meditated on the pain of the fire in Purgatory and we spoke of the kinds into which they are divided, but we cannot understand nor describe the suffering of the souls in that fire, and the different stages through which they go, because in our earthly life we have no suffering that can give us a notion of that kind of suffering. We can say nevertheless that the intensity of the pain is in exact proportion to the sins committed and

that it is intensely dominated by the *pain of loss*, which is the sense of abandonment by God and the desire to possess Him, because of the intensity of love that the souls feel for Him and the even more intense love that God has for the souls.

That is why we call Purgatory "*a contest of love*". The Lord is not very severe with souls. Instead, He is very loving and He purifies them since He wants perfect happiness for them. The soul realizes this love of God and, even more, it soars toward Him: it yearns and groans for His love; it is aware of the dark fog that envelops it, knowing that it is loved and the soul loves in return. It begs for help to come out of this state, that it may be shortened. Yet it cannot shorten the time with its own merits being unable to acquire merits. All this anxiety it has it is love.<sup>7</sup>

The groaning of love the soul has for God and the attraction to the Divine Love, feeling that God wants its happiness, is the *pain of loss* and the contest of love. We could also say that it is a suffering that mitigates the pain of the fire and of the senses. It seems like a paradox but it is actually like that. The contest of love itself makes the soul look at each purifying pain as a step that brings it closer to the Supreme Good and to its eternal happiness.

A woman, who wants to have a beauty treatment, in order to participate in a royal feast, is willing to undergo much pain and suffering, which become tolerable for her because she then achieves her desires. A 'torturer' with tweezers tears away her eyebrows, painfully pulls her hair, putting on hair clips and covering her head with a heavy hot hairdryer obliging her to stay there for hours. Further he may continue to oppress her with pain, which takes her breath away, tightening her hips and breast and even cuts in the muscle of her calf. This woman will toss and turn desperately. However if all the above is done to give to her an elegant style, a beautiful look that will win the admiration and the love of the king, she will suffer everything for the love of the king. Her suffering will be mitigated and become bearable for love. This is a very faint example of the pain of the senses for the souls in Purgatory, especially when the purification brings them closer to God. Coming out of their fog, the souls now understand the infinite beauty and infinite goodness as an increasing meditation and contemplation.

Of this contest of love between God and the soul we can say that, in the deeper stages of Purgatory, where the soul burns in the fire that purifies it, the pain that shows the soul's faults and imperfections increases within the soul the pain of loss. The soul in fact, purified with pains in respect to each sin, does not look at the loss of God in its anxiety of love. But in a spasm of sorrow for the sins committed, the soul has a terrible remorse for being separated from the Almighty Love because of its foolish and miserable satisfaction on earth. This is the *worm* of the soul of which Jesus speaks. For the damned *it does not die*, because it is eternal. In the soul in Purgatory the worm is the remorse of

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<sup>7</sup> All these considerations are good and useful. However it is not necessary to dwell solely on them or to reflect for long time on their details because the modern mentality may then distort the understanding of the basic idea of Purgatory. Let's not forget that we do not have either the appropriate words or perfect knowledge in regard to how our life develops later on when we are on the other shore, the eternal shore. From what has been revealed to us and in the light in which we can, let us consider God. These slaves of sin, presented to Him, redeemed by the Blood of Christ, are now His children and His friends. They are destined to be the princes in the Heavenly Kingdom. He wants them to be most beautiful and splendid with their own dignity and for the joy of the other blessed who delight in their splendor and exult at those brothers, shining "like the stars in the eternal vault of Heaven".

love, it is an increasing appreciation of God, hence it increases the anxiety of love in the growing knowledge of God's goodness, who loves the soul and wishes it to be His.

Also in the deep abyss, almost bordering Hell, pain and expiation are the contest of love.

### **The Eucharist and the pain of loss**

The Eucharist, that is the veiled presence of Jesus, immeasurably *mitigates the pain of loss* for all souls, especially for those closer to glory. For this reason we know from a multitude of revelations that while a Mass is being for a soul, that soul does not suffer or at least its pain is greatly alleviated for the presence of Jesus on the altar.

When the Mass is celebrated for a soul, God applies Jesus' suffering to the suffering soul, insofar as the virtue of justice permits. The soul comes back, as a pilgrim of love to the place where the Mass is being offered. It is united to the militant Church; it partakes of the heavenly Eucharistic treasures and finds itself with an immense feeling of love, near to Jesus. The soul adores Him most lovingly through the veil of the Sacred Host, Jesus, Who is now its entire love and its life. No creature on earth can truly adore the Eucharist like a soul in Purgatory who participates to a Mass offered for it or which is in union with the prayer of the adoring Church with Jesus present in the consecrated Host.

We have a beautiful example in the revelations to St. Gertrude. A nun died at peace with God at a very young age. She appeared to this Saint shortly after she died. She had spent her entire young life in constant adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament and appeared to St. Gertrude in a blaze of heavenly light, kneeling in front of the Divine Teacher. Jesus sent five blazing rays from His glorious wounds which touched very sweetly the five senses of the holy nun. In spite of this, it seemed as though a cloud of deep sorrow dimmed her head. St. Gertrude, utterly amazed, asked Jesus how could it be that, while He was favoring His servant in such a special way, she did not seem to enjoy perfect happiness. Jesus answered: *"Up to now this soul was judged worthy to contemplate only my glorified humanity in consideration of her devotion toward the Eucharistic mystery. However she cannot be admitted to the beatific vision because of some little faults she committed in practicing the Rule."* Since Saint Gertrude interceded in her behalf Jesus made known to her that without many prayers this soul could not complete her sufferings. The dead nun also indicated to St. Gertrude that she did not want to be freed unless her debt was fully paid. The love she had for God now increased her desire to appear before Him most pure. The love she had on earth for the Blessed Sacrament allowed her to contemplate His Divine Humanity as she contemplated Him veiled in the Sacred Host.

The following is another example that indicates to us how the Divine Eucharist alleviates the pain of loss and the separation from God for the souls in Purgatory<sup>8</sup>. On all Saints Day a young girl full of rare virtues and modesty, received the apparition of an elderly lady whom she knew had died recently. This soul told her that she not only suffered the privation of God, but that the pain was so intense that it was impossible to describe the torments. The lady appeared to her several times after that and almost all the

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<sup>8</sup> See Peter Louvret, 'Purgatory'.

time, when the young girl was in Church. This soul, since it could not contemplate God face to face, was allowed to alleviate its pain contemplating Him at least under the Eucharistic Species.

It would be impossible to describe the outburst of adoration and the humble respect the soul had in front of the Sacred Host. When in soul the older lady was present at the celebration of the Sacrifice of the Mass, at the moment of the elevation, her face was like a face of an angel. The young girl said that she had never seen a more beautiful sight. Every time the girl received the Holy Communion, the soul of the older lady would accompany her to the altar and remain near her for the full length of her thanksgiving, rejoicing in her happiness, near the Blessed Sacrament alive in the girl.

### **The pain of loss and the love of Most Holy Mary**

The pain of loss is extraordinarily mitigated in the souls who *are particularly devoted to Mary*. This most sweet Mother comes to console them and because *She is Purity of Eternal Light and Mirror without blemish*, She shows Herself to souls as the reflected splendor of the glory of God. The soul of the elderly lady, accompanying the young girl participating in the joy of adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, always wore a white robe and had a long Rosary in her hand, as sign of devotion to the Blessed Mother. This soul appeared quite consoled also in view of the images of Mary Most Holy. One day the young girl was in Church with her friends piously decorating the altar of the Blessed Virgin. In reverencing the Statue with her friends, she decided to genuflect two times, once for herself and once for the deceased lady. Whereupon the lady appeared to her very joyful and thanked her with great affection.

Out of love that the soul in Purgatory has for God, the pain of loss becomes more intense since the sublime contest of love between the soul and God increases. This is logical because the soul, coming out of the dark, is like a piece of iron; as it gets closer to the magnet, is more attracted to it and is drawn to it with more force. This attraction to God makes the faults, which keep the soul far from Him, appear more revolting and the worm of conscience gnaws into the depth of the soul.

### **Attraction of love toward God**

While we are in our material body there is suffering that we cannot understand, because our love of God is very weak and miserable. We would have to understand what God means for us and what love means for a soul in the grace of God. Therefore, we find in ourselves the obstacles that prevent us from going to the Lord, to love Him in the intimacy of an eternal and most happy union.

Many times we have heard that “blood attracts”. For this reason a baby turns first of all to his parents since he has their blood and their life. If you take him away from them, he cries, he moves restlessly, stretches his tiny arms until he comes back to them. In his mother he finds his nourishment and rest, in his father he finds his support and the one who tenderly fondles him. The baby cannot understand, at that age, the sacrifices his



father makes for him but he understands the small gestures and he feels his love for him. This relationship of the child to his parents is at first a fundamental appreciation of them and he feels attracted to them, even without comprehending the reason. The child delights in the joy of the sweet softness of his mother when she breastfeeds him and the joy of the strength and security when he is in his father's arms. It cannot be said that in a child this is selfishness because he needs to go back to the source of his life for the development of his own life. The more a child knows his parents the more familiar they become to him and he loves them more as he appreciates them more. His appreciation is not the fruit of his consciousness or subconsciousness. It is the natural attraction of blood to blood and of life to the source of its life.

We are creature of God and we are attracted to Him because He created us.

He created the first person from the dust of the earth. He lovingly blew into him the breath of life and He gave back to him the supernatural life of the grace when he lost it. Since here on earth we are so miserable that we cannot recognize Him and so we concentrate on ourselves, and often on the worst part of ourselves, we are caught in all sorts of sins. As soon as we are outside our earthly life we want to soar toward Him. The blood of those who gave him life attracts a baby, and we are attracted by the same infinite greatness of the One who created us.

This most loving greatness is what the soul feels in full for its state of grace, purifying itself in Purgatory. When the soul falls in Hell it feels instead a terrible revulsion. The souls in Purgatory are pulled upward toward God; the lost souls are pulled away from Him, even if they feel that He is their last end. With the souls in Purgatory the loss of God results in love; in the lost souls the result is hate and their natural relationship with God becomes for them an indescribable torment.

### **The contemplation of God for the souls in Purgatory**

Here on earth we know God by faith and we barely see Him for what He is, in the mystery of His most simple nature, in His Unity and His Trinity. The soul in Purgatory contemplates Him through a veil of love that is the fruit of its state of grace; the lost soul perceives Him through the terrible haze of hate, because, voluntarily and with obstinacy it separated itself from Him. The fire and the pain of Purgatory are like a lens that brings Him closer, because the soul, suffering in its purification, sees Him as the source of its life. The fire and the pain of hell are like a terrible darkness and fog that keep the soul away from God. For this reason, in the revelations of the Saints, it is reported that the fire of Purgatory is bright and the fire of hell is gloomy.

This, then, is the *contemplation of God for the soul in Purgatory*. In the state of grace it is united to God and it feels the sublime peace of the infinite simplicity of God, a thousand times more than the souls who contemplate God here on earth. The soul is as though in front of a most beautiful landscape of which it cannot see any limits; it is as enchanted by a most tender melody, the wonderful harmony of God's Unity and Trinity. It does not see God but contemplates Him in the harmony of grace by which it now lives supernaturally in Him.

It is a most sweet and distant view, which nevertheless increases in the soul the love-filled longing to reach God. Because of this longing, which is love appreciating the divine, the soul feels that God desires to have her. Also in this appreciation there is a most sweet encounter of love that brings pain and purification for the soul along with love.

Let us explain it a little better with a poor comparison.

A man is invited to a very important reception, where he knows the host is waiting for him with love. However through his own fault, he is late. Maybe he got distracted because he was playing at his favorite hobby and he lost track of his time in useless things: he stopped “*to eat pumpkin seeds*”. He did not feel adverse to attending the reception nor did he not want to offend the person who invited him. He was just overtaken by his passion for his hobby, his curiosity, or else some minor acts of gluttony distracted him. At a certain point he is jolted and he recognizes his own unkindness and silliness. Full of sorrow, he hurries to try to remedy his delay. Much to his dismay, at distance he hears the music of the reception that has already started; he hurries on but the road seems endless; he checks his invitation and he considers and actually feels the affectionate longing of the person who had invited him. He tries to run even faster but his foot trips and he falls. He looks for help and immediately receives it from a kind person who approaches him and offers to bring him to the reception with his car. Finally he arrives. The man who invited him is eagerly waiting for him and watches him going up the last staircase breathless and sorry for his own negligence. The breathlessness and sorrow are like the last purification that makes him welcome. His breathless run ends in an embrace and a kiss by the host and the joy to be at the reception. His longing makes up for his negligence, when, at the distance, he finally sees the wonderful festivity and the longing eagerness of the one who was waiting for him.

**“I wish my body would dissolve  
and to be with Christ”**

Many contemplative souls have felt somewhat the loving longing of souls in Purgatory and have left us an idea of what they felt.

They do not see God by intuition but they feel and appreciate His love by means of profound and exhilarating joy, which the mystics call “*touches of God and rapture of love*”. They feel like they are in a sea of peace, they have a glimpse of the eternal peace, the longing to reach God. They wish to die in order to be free from any obstacle to love! *Cupio dissolvi et esse cum Christo* (I wish to be dissolved and to be with Christ). It was the cry of St. Paul in one of his blessed moments of contemplation.

The contemplative soul reaches this moment of spiritual height after a long purification, which the mystics call “*active and passive cleansing of the spirit*”, amidst physical sufferings: external and internal pain, painful aridity and moment of near-forsakenness by God. This is Purgatory in its first most painful stage for a soul. Purified, the soul rises to God, contemplating His beauty, His greatness and His love. The contemplation since it is not by intuition causes a painful yearning of love, which is reflected in the body as a purification of its own love.

On this account, the back rib of St. Philip Neri became bent; the hands, the feet and the back rib of St. Francis of Assisi were torn and his eyes became almost blind with

the loving tears of his soul. It was for this reason that an Angel pierced the heart of St. Therese of Jesus, as still can be seen today, because she yearned to enlarge it in order to support the vehemence of the love that God poured in her heart and that caused her excruciating pain.

### **The spiritual state of a soul in Purgatory**

From what we have said, which corresponds to the highest logical truth, how can anyone ever consider Purgatory as an inexorable and almost unmerciful condemnation of the justice of God? Who can live so disorderly and miserably in the spirit, as we, in fact, live? Who could ever grudge a prayer for the soul, longing for God in its love?

If Purgatory were, as many believe, only a terrible place of suffering, where would the state of grace be for the deceased and where would the infinite love of God be that God has for the soul?

It is not easy for us earthly people to have an idea of the spiritual state of a soul in Purgatory because not only must be its state of suffering considered, but also its state of grace in which resides the greatest and deepest friendship of God and with God.

We already mentioned the soul's contemplative state. We will try now to delve into what brings about an immense peace, while at the same time, the soul is in excruciating pain.

Even in the first stage of purification, which is the fire, the soul is contemplative, just as the Saints on earth are purified by physical suffering as well as those of the spirit. Here again the logic is marvelous. The soul separated from the body, with that scientific phenomenon of "*reference*" which we discussed before, still feels the influence of the body to which it continues to make reference, since its love for life makes its death a terrible experience. It can be said that in the same moment of death, the soul aims to its resurrection with the longing of someone who sees a precious object broken into pieces or a work of art ruined.

For this reason the deceased wants to be interred in a sacred and blessed place or near the bodies of Saints already glorified in Heaven. The sacred place is already like a promise of the resurrection according to the words of Jesus: "*I am the Resurrection and the Life*", and again, "*Who eats my Body and drinks my Blood has eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day*". The body fades away, but the words of Jesus are of comforting reassurance for the soul. To be next to the body of a Saint, already in the glory of God, because of their saintly life and the seal of the divine promise, is a reassurance of life through the Communion of Saints. The merits of those who have been glorified cover the faults of the deceased like a compassionate veil, hiding their shortcomings and interceding for their soul.

In the first stage of purification, the soul still perceives the consequences of its body, as the instrument and the cause of its imperfections. Hence, the contemplative state of the soul is more obscure.

In the last stage of the purification, the soul is much further from the body, which informed it in its earthly life. It does not feel anymore the terrible pain of the senses, caused by the fire. Therefore, the soul is less concentrated in itself, it is more spiritual and its contemplation is clearer and more transparent, like the Saints in ecstasy experience outside their senses.

The soul sees God only through a veil and perceives everything that manifests His glory.

The contemplative Saints perceived the greatness and the love of God, immersing themselves in the beauty of a landscape, or the dawn and setting of the sun, or a field in bloom, in the immensity of the night filled with stars, or in the vast expanse of the ocean, or in the silence of an arid and barren desert, in the heights of the mountains or in the mysterious depth of a canyon, or in the sweet harmony of a musical instrument, and the saints arose to Him.

The soul in Purgatory contemplates the glory of God through a deeper knowledge that it now has of His works. Grace does not remain inactive in it, that most sweet contest of love with God, Who desires the soul and calls it to its eternal happiness. For example, a sick eye needs to become used to the light little by little. It goes from darkness to shadow, from shadow to dawn, from dawn to daybreak and finally to the splendor of the sun. In the same way, the soul passes from the darkness of its earthly life, where so often it badly judged the Providence of God, to the shadow of its pains, and now it recognizes the greatness of God in earthly matters and perceives the admirable harmony inherent in them. While, in its earthly life, it perceived them as disconcerting disorder, now it lives in loving admiration that urges it on toward the highest. It lives the word of the Prophet: *“Everything You have done on the earth in Your wisdom is full of Your providence and dominion.”*

It is a surprise of love for the soul who ignored during its earthly life the mystery of the creation. It is a surprise of loving reparation for the soul who knew only very little through the arduous research of human science. Oh, how much this soul will prostrate in humility, asking forgiveness to the Divine Mercy for its ineptitude, and in this humiliation it will remedy its own presumptuousness!

From the contemplation of the great creation of God on earth, the soul, purified by love, immerse itself into the contemplation of the skies with all the stars. In its admiration of these marvels the soul rises up even higher toward God.

It is not a routine contemplation, made by the abstruse calculations of an astronomer. It is, so to speak, a concise contemplation that becomes one single act of love for God and an ardent possession of the beatific vision of God. Then the soul perceives, like in a great harmony, the canticles of praise of the Angelic Choirs who are at the source of the work of God; the mysterious Cherubim of Ezekiel, who held up the throne of the Divine Glory, whose wheels Ezekiel saw *full of eyes inside and outside*: eyes which are full of adoring admiration for the Power, Wisdom and Love of God, One and Triune.

The soul has an intense yearning for God but its yearning does not make it possible to reach its destination if even one single imperfection makes it still incapable of the eternal glory. Its sighs are like those flaming missiles that man sends toward the moon, or toward the planets or the sun, which do not reach their destination and are not able to get into orbit, due to some imperfection in the mechanism of the carrier rocket, which pushes them beyond earth's atmosphere.

The soul then suffers in the longing of love that inflames it. It feels more attracted to God who calls it. It turns to Jesus who died for it on Calvary. It becomes immersed in the mystery of the Incarnation, Passion and Death of the Redeemer like a very thirsty person seeks the fountain of reparation and mercy for its life. This richness of reparation

and mercy is renewed every day on the Altars of Sacrifice. Therefore *the Holy Mass is offered every day for the dead* and it is for them, as we shall see, the highest suffrage they can receive.

How lovingly the soul recalls the details of the Passion of Jesus, with what deep sorrow it feels its own responsibility, and how grateful and lovingly it contemplates them recognizing in each of the pain of Jesus its own faults!

In the body pathological agents, producers of sicknesses are assaulted by leucocytes in the blood and they find refuge in the thermal area that is located in the central part of the brain, causing an increase of heat in that area and therefore fever in the body. This fever, more than a sickness, is a warning that moves the human will to identify the sickness that affects a person and try to cure it. In the same way, in the light of the Passion of Jesus, Who has fought against and overcome the sins of all with infinite love, the soul sees, in retrospect, all its imperfections and all its faults and seeks reparation and mercy in Him. The heat rises up in the soul, like a fever of love, that makes it bow in deep humility, seeking the divine medicine in the suffrages to change that fever to the gradual conquest of attaining its eternal happiness.

## Chapter VI

### **The pain of Purgatory to atone for each sin**

When a car does not work, we check all the gears that are part of the broken mechanism and we try to fix it. Each device then has to undergo a specific mechanical treatment that we can perhaps consider as its 'special torment'. One piece must be soldered in the fire, another needs to be filed, another screwed and so on.

The faults are true breaks of the soul because they prevent the soul to reach God and take delight in Him. These breaks can only be fixed through suffering because they are produced either by the disorders of the senses that want immediate forbidden enjoyment in material things or by the abiding disorder of the faculties of the soul that are miserably lost in earthly desires.

The damned soul is like a car broken beyond repair because the soul that is not in the grace of God runs away by itself from reparation, transfixed as it is in its proud and obstinate perversion. It remains as it was when it fell into Hell.

The soul in Purgatory, instead, because of its state of grace, aims to be purified and therefore it needs for each fault particular reparation. Every fault is a debt, a damaged part, and a disorder. The debt must be paid in full, the damage must be repaired, and the disorder must be eliminated.

It is not easy for us human beings to have an idea of the pain of the soul in proportion to each fault. Dante Alighieri in his "Divine Comedy" thought of circles or stations in Purgatory, with special torments according to the special offenses to be expiated. His imagination has a foundation in reality. However it does not suppose tortured souls but bodies revived by the soul, tied to logs, crashed by heavy weights, moaning in idleness and so on. This description of the poet Dante, however, as much as it shows the painfulness, does not give an idea of the true torments of a soul expiating each own sin.

The Saints, who had special revelations from souls in Purgatory, are not too far from the imaginary concepts of Dante. They have seen souls like earthly creatures and they consider their torments as physical torments. The souls that in fact appeared to them, were in corporeal form and they gave testimonies of their pains in corporeal guises: scorching sweats, frost-biting ice, fire truly burning and so on. In Rome there is a museum of signs left by souls in Purgatory and nobody would be so foolish or rash to deny the reality and authenticity of all of them.

The corporeal manifestations of the soul in Purgatory can be perhaps explained by a scientific fact that was first observed in Japan when the atomic bombs destroyed two cities: Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Six months after the destruction, a group of Americans went to visit those territories in order to study the effect of the radioactivity left by the atomic bombs. They ascertained a happening that surprised and terrorized them: in the debris could be seen ghostlike bodies of people running terror-stricken. Because of the radioactivity, as in a motion picture the bodies were sketched as if they were the bodies of those wretched people at the moment in which they were hit, while running away. They appeared to be real bodies. Can it be said that the corporeal manifestations are due

to the radioactivity of the body in the act of their death or in the consumption of the decay? Who can tell with scientific certitude?

It is a fact that the human body has electricity. It is possible that it can also have a dormant radioactivity not yet discovered.

When someone wears a cloth with nylon, which is formed by glass fibers, sometimes when it is taken off there is a spark of electricity, a light, maybe burning or at least scalding. This can also be seen on hairs, when a nylon scarf covers the head, they become so full of electricity that they raise up attracted to the comb, because of the scientific fact that two different poles of electricity are attracted to each other.

Does an electrical phenomenon actually reach the intensity of a radioactive radiation, after death, to the point of reproducing the body of a deceased, when the soul manifests itself, to reach the soul who is in Purgatory? We believe that this is very possible.

The soul in fact, detached from its body, keeps the reference to its own body that must resurrect. The terrible humiliation of the death and the tomb is mitigated by the assurance of the resurrection. When God allows a soul to appear on earth, it has the immediate relation with what remains, almost vital, of the body it informed, that is with the radioactivity still emitted by the body, gathering it, and making a reproduction, or a ghostlike figure as in a picture or in a movie, and it may, through it, become visible, speak and operate almost as it were alive again.

A soul in the glory of Paradise appears in the same way but it shows in the relic of its body the light of glory and the happiness that makes it blessed. It appears most beautiful and speaks with a tone of voice that gives joy.

In the blessed surfaces the blessed glory; in the soul in Purgatory surfaces the pains that purifies the soul and therefore the particular pains due to its own faults typically of her life and her personality.

The soul must change almost in a new creature and the specific pains that she suffers for her particular condition, purifies it with a spiritual reaction to bring it toward God. Also in this mysterious suffering there is a sweet contest of love. The soul recognizes, so to speak, its rags and wants to change them into glorious vestments for the love of God who will receive it in the eternal happiness. At the same time God, purifying the soul dress it and prepares its nuptial dress for the eternal banquet of life.

If we cannot see Purgatory, particularly in the pain of each sin, in the light of this loving preparation, Purgatory will seem a merciless vengeance and an even more merciless cruelty and this would be an absurd since God is eternal and infinite Love.

### **Revelations of Saints**

Revelations given to us by Saints cannot be seen in the thick fog of our materiality and sensibility that is more selfish than logical. We need to meditate on them in the reality of a world and a life of purification so much different from our world and our earthly life.

In this light of love, we are going now to narrate a revelation given by Saint Mary Magdalene de Pazzi'.

One evening the Saint was walking with a group of Sisters in the garden of the convent when she fell into ecstasy. The nuns heard her shouting a few times: “Yes, yes, I’ll follow You” – these words were directed to her Guardian Angel and she was agreeing to his invitation to visit Purgatory.

The Sisters, walking with her, looked at her in admiration and terror. She then started that sorrowful walk about which, later on, she wrote a detailed report.

Now and then she would move around the garden bent to the floor like a person crushed under a very heavy weight, while with gestures and the expression of her face she alternatively showed horror and compassion at what the Angel was showing her. Sometime she would shout with high cries: “Oh, what a torment! Mercy, my God, mercy!” The Angel took her into the deepest part of Purgatory. There she saw Priests and Religious. At that she shouted: “What! Priests and Religious in this horrid place! Oh, my God have mercy! How great is their torments!” and while she so highly lamented she was seen trembling and in great pain herself.

From the place of purification of the Priests, she was taken to the one where there were simple souls, children and unlettered souls whose faults were mitigated by their ignorance. She saw ice and fire and souls who would go alternative from one place to the other. They looked like they were in torment and at the same time they looked happy because they knew that such torments were their way to their eternal joy with God. In another place she saw a great number of loathsome demons piercing those souls who in their earthly life had been vain and hypocritical to benefit from others. In another place she saw a huge crowd carrying very heavy weights pushed toward a place where they all ended crushing on the ground and she was told that those souls during their life had been impatient and disobedient. She entered the place of the liars, which was very close to Hell. There souls were immersed in an icy pond and demons poured liquid lead into their mouths. She saw the souls of the miserly almost melted by this fire, which was almost like lead in a furnace. She saw the place of impure souls who had their sins forgiven but did not expiate them sufficiently when they lived on earth. Their place of expiation was filthy and rotten. The mere sight of it aroused horror and excruciating pains.

She saw the prison of ambitious souls and she saw them suffering excruciating pain in thick darkness. On seeing them she shouted: “Oh how miserable they are! They wanted to be over others and now they are condemned to suffer in this darkness!” As she went on, she saw the souls who never had been grateful to God, being hard of heart. These souls had never known the meaning of their Creator, Redeemer and loving Father. She could see them plunged in a lake of liquid lead in pain for having left the fountain of grace remain sterile in them because of their ungratefulness. Finally in the last prison she was shown those souls who even without any special vice, committed numberless of venial sins and for this reason they had to endure the punishment for them due to the real vices but in smaller proportion.

It is clear that the kind of pain seen by Saint Mary Magdalene de’ Pazzi for the different sins that the souls expiate in Purgatory were *symbols of a most painful reality* that cannot have comparison with the pains on earth. God could only show to an earthly creature an image of the pains of Purgatory, for each state of sin or imperfection of the souls.

The ice and the fire that the Saint saw for those souls, reflected the cold-hearted state of those souls, who did not love God and did not know Him out of ignorance; the



fire meant the burning longing they have to know and love Him. The piercing suffered by the souls who had been vain in their life represented the strong pangs of regret of their spirit, shown as needles because they penetrated deeply in them who had sought instead creaturely pleasures. The heavy weights on the souls who had been impatient and disobedient stood for the oppression they felt in being held over the fire and enclosed by the flames. The liquid lead poured into the throats of the liars and the icy pond in which they were plunged was in reality symbol of the expiation for the lies. Their opposition to the Eternal Truth was like a fire that causes destruction and the cold for the spirit far from the Eternal Truth. The liquid lead where she saw the miserly seemed to be melting was their tormenting expiation for being so much attached to money. The filth where the unchaste souls stay represented the conditions of their soul and the filth of their shameful acts. The darkness of the ambitious soul was the expiation for their ardent desire to shine with earthly glory.

Every sin in fact, every imperfection stains the soul. It becomes for the soul like a cloth, a nature, a way of living, so much so that we spontaneously do not say the vice is a man, but we personify it; we do not say: “*This man sin of avarice*” but we say: “*He is a miser*”. The vice covers him altogether and the expiation also covers the soul too and the soul is like lead that melts; it becomes then free from the dross and takes a new form, so to speak, a form of justice that makes the soul longing for the richness of the Eternal Life.

The pride becomes humility, in the humiliation of the pains that weigh over the soul; the avarice, detachment from earthly things in the longing to own the Eternal Goodness; the lewdness, filth cloth of filthy passions, becomes like a penitential cloth that cleans the soul. The state of rage becomes a habit of patience because the soul endures with love the pain that balance her with the peace. The gluttony slowly through the expiation acquires a taste for eternal things. Envy becomes charity for the yearning that all suffering souls may enter into the eternal glory. Sloth becomes strong leaps toward the Lord through the expiation that purifies the soul, awaking it from the dullness in which it lived on earth.

The soul is almost like a silkworm: first it has an earthly life with earthly longings similar to a silkworm before becoming a butterfly, famish eating of the mulberry tree. The soul enters Purgatory like a slime and revolting worm like the silkworm in the cocoon. Being once in the sphere of Purgatory, the soul acquires almost a new nature until it becomes the butterfly that flies toward God in its eternal happiness.

If we would consider the damage we do to ourselves with our venial sins and the poor satisfaction of passing moments, we would not be so foolish to follow so easily the impetus of our passion and the pleasures of the senses. We would constrain ourselves and live as much as possible in the grace of God!

Instead we are like very foolish and bad children who for a tantrum during a game hurt themselves and for the miserable pleasure of lighting a small flame end up causing a fire!

### **The damned lost souls**

The miserable damned souls who fall in Hell, without the grace of God, are not in a state of purification. Their torments are awful but they suffer in the state in which they chose to be. It is as their life was before, it is their nature, their habits, without any light,

in an eternal dreadful hate and desperation. They only wish evil and they only desire evil. They hate God and wish that all souls wayfaring on earth would become lost! What a horror! Who on earth is so foolish to want to be lost?

## Chapter VII

### **The supernatural state of the souls in Purgatory and their charity toward us.**

Before performing the miracle of the man born blind, Jesus said these words: “I have to do the works of the one who sent me, while it is day. Night comes when no one can work.” (Jn 9:4)

The day of which Jesus is talking is the earthly life. The night is the death of the body.

As long as we live down here, we can earn merit for our eternal life but after death we cannot earn anything anymore. The time of trial is over when our earthly life ends with our death and ends the time to acquire merits. To earn merit belongs to the earthly life and it is given by the efforts and sacrifices done in love. For this reason the sufferings on this earth are gifts of God, just as it is a gift for a workman to become tired after an overtime job when later on he is going to be rewarded with a high paid salary. It is also logical that the soul in Purgatory with its suffering pays back the debt contracted. It is like a person who pays his debt and he does not earn or buy anything with his payment. He must sorrowfully pay for the debt contracted.

Also the Saints in Heaven cannot acquire merits because their actions being done in the happiness they possess, miss the essential elements of merit and satisfaction, which are effort and sacrifice. The person who has plenty of everything and is completely satisfied, does not produce anything but enjoys what he has.

The soul in Purgatory keeps all the activity of its mind; actually its intellect has a wider possibility of knowledge because it is not hindered by the body which prevents a deeper contact with the work of the Lord.

First of all, the soul in Purgatory *gathers the harvest of its remembrances*, because it keeps the faculty of its memory. The soul in fact keeps in itself the memory of its earthly life without amnesia or oversight; even the smallest detail of its everyday life on earth is written on its conscience with indelible letters. It remembers every word, every thought, act of the will, every action, everything is fully alive in its memory. It would be necessary for the soul to be separated from itself and change its essence in order to forget a detail or the smallest reminiscence of its past life.

From this can be clearly understood the absurdity of those people who, before informing its body when it becomes separated by its death, pretend foolishly that the soul lived another life in another time, which the soul has completely forgotten and of which it is not conscious.

### **The souls in Purgatory pray for their dear people on earth**

The memories that the souls have of their earthly life give them *sorrow for the sins committed*. They pray for their beloved on earth. The soul of the deceased knows our condition and is aware of what we do for it. In its torments and in the light of Heaven,

the soul has the same nature and the same relation of knowledge keeps with the world.

All the events of earthly life are known to the living in Heaven and also to the soul in Purgatory. The people we lost and for whom we may still be grieving do not abandon us completely. Instead now that they are incorporeal and do not have a problem with location or distance, they are closer to us, they are clear-sighted, see us and follow us step by step with a love that becomes more and more pure; they look at us with a sensitivity that becomes more and more sweet and surround us with their attention and thoughtfulness.

How much they long to pass on to us the warm love that inflames them and the confidence to be saved that makes them feel blessed!

This is the opinion of the theologian I.A.Collet, author of “Our Deceased”, shared by many other theologians. The reason for it is clear: *What God has united nobody can separate*, as Jesus said about marriage. It is a valid expression for everything God has united. The family is God’s creation and Divine Providence unites all members of a family by the same blood. The bonds of charity through friendship are bonds of love sanctified by God, hence they are ties set by God cannot be broken. By reason of such ties, with God’s permission, many souls have appeared to people they loved in God and for God, as, for example, the souls of the same religious Community.

Through the charity that binds the souls in Purgatory to us, they may, for the light they receive from God, inform us about future dangers, so that we may avoid them and they help us in those we might have met. Of such communication by deceased souls there are numberless examples.

To mention only one, Queen Claudia, wife of Francis I of France appeared to Blessed Catherine Racconigi. She announced to her that the French army, led by their King, would go down to Italy. The King, however, would be defeated and at the city of Pavia he would be taken prisoner: as in fact happened a few months later.

Usually the souls reveal themselves in sleeping through the activity of the fantasy of a person, which even in sleep remains active. They may show themselves either as they were on earth or with imaginative symbols, almost, I would say, like a hieroglyphic speech so that the person waking up from his sleep can understand and solve.

They choose the time of sleep in order not to frighten and to communicate a warning or a prophecy of an event. In doing this they use images formed in the fantasy of the person that they direct. They awaken in the sleeping person, so to speak, latent allusions he already has, using them like a typewriter who hits the letters of the alphabet on a keyboard. As the letters and the words formed by the letters become understandable for the knowledge one has, also the allusionary symbols of the dream become understandable by the virtue of the meaning given to them either by their own experience or by people who are expert in deciphering them. We could almost call it stenography of the soul, foretelling a sorrow or a joy.

### **Intimate activity of the expiating soul**

Let’s consider first of all *the intimate activity of a soul who is expiating sin*. First of all, it is a holy soul, and its holiness is everlasting because it is confirmed in grace; it cannot sin anymore and it exercises the most beautiful Christian virtues.

It is not a painful exercise done with painful effort, and as we said before, it cannot acquire merits. It is the soul's life in union with God, the supernatural way in which it now lives. It loves God and it prefers all the virtues that bring it to Him. For these reasons it happily accepts the purification of its imperfections in perfect peace and love.

Because of its union with God, being free from its body, the soul learns at once by the intellect in one glance the relations of everything with their Creator. It clings irrevocably to God and sees everything that reveals the power, the wisdom and the love of God in creatures. Hence, it loves God with the *love of a contemplative*, far more than any contemplative Saint here on earth. This contemplation is like the faith it has, the eye of its spirit, who does not yet see God intuitively.

To understand what this mean, it is necessary to consider what faith means in those souls still united with their bodies on earth. Man has bodily eyes to see what surrounds him; he can empower them with lens, binoculars, and telescope, and microscope lenses. Hence he sees much more and discovers many more marvels of Creation, always though within material limits. It can include a certain elevation of the mind from the mathematical calculations and the knowledge of the laws that govern material phenomena.

Man can also rise above the sensible world by the grace of God with his faith in the supernatural world. Faith is a gift of God; it is like the eye of the soul. It looks into the dimness of the mysteries and, in believing them, it sees them in the evidence of the intellect and of the reason, in union with God, revealing the mysteries of eternity.

Let us explain with an example. The so-called infrared rays can show what is in darkness as if it were daytime, without being perceived.

During World War II, the Japanese had prepared an ambush to the Americans in the thickest part of the forest and in the depth of the night. The Americans, who had an infrared ray machine, saw them in full light, surrounded them and destroyed them. The infrared eye could see in the darkness.

Faith is similar to the infrared eye of the pilgrim soul, which enables the soul in the darkness to perceive the mysteries and allows it to see what it cannot see with its intellect, not to mention the eyes of the body. The soul remains in darkness, yet believing, it sees the light of God to whom it adheres saying: *I believe*.

The soul in Purgatory is not limited by the body, it is in a much more intense natural light because of the more enlightened perception it has of the works of God and therefore contemplates His greatness and majesty in the dimness of its state of purification. The soul does not see the harmony and the evidence of the supernatural world but believes that it does exist, and more than a pilgrim soul, lives adoring Him and contemplating Him.

The faith of the soul is like the infrared eye that allows seeing the truth, even while it is in the darkness of its state of purification.

Because of this interior eye, the soul in Purgatory cannot help but love God. The soul loves all the virtues that He loves and brings them to Him. The soul accepts His commandments and His adorable Will; it loves in itself the work of God in His creatures and neighbors as images of God.

We are describing here what seems almost a paralysis of human freedom after the death of the body, since in Purgatory the soul cannot choose between good and evil,

virtue and sin, the more perfect and the less perfect, to choose one way better than another. However is not like that, because *the will is the faculty for choosing goodness*, and when it turns toward evil, it does it acknowledging it as an inferior good; it is deceived by a false light, tempted by a diabolic impulse, that is in contrast to the grace of God, which enlightens and helps the will to choose goodness.

In Purgatory this deception is not possible because the soul is in the grace of God and it is confirmed in the grace of God. Its intellect is enlightened and it sees things as they are; in the view of the intellect evil is evil and goodness is goodness. The seducing fog that conceals evil and produces something like a vertigo that makes the will surrender, is cleared away. The soul instead now lives, through its pain, the sorrowful result of even the littlest evil and the smallest imperfection it committed. It is free, but since its freedom is now enlightened by grace and by the experience it lives, the soul does not want to look at anything but what it is good; the soul cannot choose evil because now it sees clearly that evil is evil. This is a wonderful improvement for freedom.

Is it not a clear eye, which is not obstructed in its visual faculty, more perfect than an eye that is clouded? The keyboard of a piano is there free to be used; however it is not there for banging keys in a disorderly and out of tune way. Is not an artist who cannot strum and freely play harmonious melodies less free than someone who strums and uses the free keys only to maim Bach's music? The soul in Purgatory has its art full of the harmony of goodness. The soul is not a slave and nobody is forcing it; the soul is free in its flight to go straighter and straighter toward God, its light and its love.

On the other hand, God also is free, infinitely free. In fact He is the essential freedom. Nevertheless it is impossible for Him to want evil or imperfections. His infinite freedom, all in act, is the infinite power of goodness; a love that unites to Himself the Word; a charity and goodness that turns to His creatures, benefiting them.

### **Faith – Hope – Charity in the soul in Purgatory**

The soul in Purgatory *practices its faith in an admirable degree*, not yet arrived at the intuitive vision of God, which clears away all fog and makes it live in the eternal light. He *practices the virtue of hope*, which can be considered the principal virtue of Purgatory, because the soul, not knowing the end and the limits of its purification, yearns unceasingly for God. The soul has such an intensity of love that we cannot even imagine it. The love of the greatest Saints on earth for God is a small thing compared to the love of a soul in Purgatory. I believe that this is the reason why many Saints, before ascending to Heaven, went through Purgatory, at least for a little while, as we have come to know by the many manifestations to holy people. As the rocket launched in orbit around the earth, needs a final blast of the booster rocket to overcome its gravity and weight, pushing it into orbit, so also the holy and pure soul needs a last outburst of love that can blast it to God, and this outburst can only be in Purgatory.

Saint Catherine of Genoa in her marvelous treatise on Purgatory gives us the reason for it. She says: "The Lord in Purgatory imprints on the soul the impetus of such an inflamed drive of love, that it is enough to annihilate the soul, were it not immortal. This love and this drive act powerfully and unceasingly on the soul so much so that if the soul could find another Purgatory with more excruciating pains than the one in which it

is, it would eagerly throw itself into it, moved by the impetus of this love, to free itself as fast as possible from everything that separates it from the Highest Goodness.” (Treatise on Purgatory- chapter 9).

The holy soul is powerfully attracted to God, who loves it immeasurably and the human mind cannot measure the power of the attraction, I would say, like the infinite magnet that attracts the tiny atom of iron. The holy soul, attracted in this manner, remains only a little while in Purgatory, *not in the fire of purification but in the fire of an immense love*, which is like the outburst that pushes the soul forever to God, who attracts it. It is then, that the soul has a full union to the Will of God, Eternal and Infinite Love, in which it is totally transformed and becomes able to be united with God eternally. The attraction to God and the outburst of the soul sets in motion a *profound feeling of humility*, similar to how an artificial satellite, if it could reason, would be attracted in orbit around a colossal planet in the immensity of space. If it could reason, it would see itself immensely small and yet it would feel attracted and drawn to the immensely big. And it would revolve not because of the arrogance of the man who pushes it, believing itself to be triumphant over the planets, but with the humility of the smallest that revolves because it is attracted by the immensely big.

### **We need to invoke the souls in Purgatory**

In the light of faith, hope and charity and of its own littleness enraptured in love, the soul considers with immense compassion the wandering creatures here on earth. Hence the soul is full of charity toward them, it does the utmost to be helpful, to assist them when it is asked, and especially it has gratitude, when people offer suffrages for them, hastening their purification and their union with God.

It is therefore extremely helpful to invoke the souls in Purgatory in our difficulties and our needs. Numberless are the happenings that show the protection of the souls in Purgatory for those who invoke and do suffrages for them.

I will mention an event that happened to a jeweler, a distant relative of mine.

He was coming home one night, carrying with him his most precious jewels, fearing a visit of thieves into his shop. It had become very late in the night and fearful of being assaulted along the road he recommended himself to the souls in Purgatory, reciting the Rosary for their repose. It was about midnight when he finally entered the alley that took him to his house. He had just started to enter the alley, when full of terror, he saw some sinister-looking persons lying in waiting. Even more earnestly he invoked the souls in Purgatory to protect and defend him. Nearby, at the entrance of the alley, there was a little Church. All of a sudden the Church opened and a procession of confreres in white sack and hood on their heads went by singing as though accompanying a funeral. The hood was like the older kind that today we do not use anymore: completely covering the head and the face. It only had three openings, two for the eyes and one for the mouth. The jeweler could not find anything better then to join the procession that could be very well seen by those sinister persons hiding in the dark.

The jeweler's wife, very worried because of the late hour, was at the window to watch the arrival of her husband. When he finally was home, still very scared for the fear of the thieves, he told her of the providential meeting of the procession that had saved

him. He repeated to her what had happened. She was even more surprised than her husband, because watching from the window, she had seen him coming alone. He kept insisting on having walked among the people in the procession while she told him that at that hour of the night, past midnight, no procession for the deceased was ever being done. It was then that finally both understood that those confreres of the funeral procession were souls in Purgatory, who had come to defend him. My mother told me of this event, handed down in my family. The jeweler himself told my mother this story, about the souls in Purgatory who benefited him in his walk while he was praying for them.



## Chapter VIII

### The joys of Purgatory

Purgatory is a marvelous contest of love between God and the soul and in a contest of love there is no space for anything that is hard and ruthless. The One who purifies with suffering, purifies for love and therefore looks for all ways to mitigate as best as possible the suffering that purifies; the one who is purified suffers but the love that ties him to the One who purifies it makes the suffering more acceptable. The surgeon who treats a patient looks in every way to alleviate the pain, and the patient who suffers finds relief in the thought that though he has pain, he will be cured and he suffers with patience.

It is not a surprise, then, to recognize that in Purgatory there are *joys, comforts and relief*. In this we see the love of God toward those souls who are purified, and the love of the souls who, longing to be purified, contemplate with love the harmony between justice and divine mercy. *The souls want to suffer*, it is a need of their own love that drives them toward God; in their pains they feel the comfort of God, who cannot refuse their being purified because of the happiness they will receive in their eternal glory; but in every way He alleviates and comforts them, like a mother kisses and caresses her child who must have an operation.

If God cries over the lost souls who willingly and with a relentless hate separate themselves from Him, how much more is He moved because of those souls who love and long for Him?

We are too used to consider God as a most severe judge and we separate his justice from his mercy and his love, which in Him are one and the same, and only one love as in the union of a kiss: *Iustitia et pax osculatae sunt*: Justice and Peace have kissed.

The first joy of the souls in Purgatory is to feel *confirmed in grace*. Now they are sure of their eternal salvation and their happy incapacity to sin; they consider all the horror of sins committed and the pain for which they suffer now make them feel an immense sorrow and they truly repent of them.

It is a joy that we cannot easily evaluate because we live carelessly in the uncertainty of our eternal salvation. It is a fact confirmed by many revelations and historical facts, that the souls in Purgatory prefer to remain in the pain of Purgatory with the assurance of being saved and without sin, instead of going back to earth with no assurance of being saved. Those dead that some Saint brought back to life (with a miracle) always chose to go back to death and return to Purgatory.

### St. Stanislaw

In confirmation of what we just said, we report a famous well known event that happened in 1070 to St. Stanislaw, Bishop of Crakow.

The wicked Prince Boleslao was persecuting the Bishop. Among the many persecutions against the Saint, he succeeded in exciting against him the rage of the heirs of a certain Peter Miles, who had died three years before. The dead man had left to the Church some of his land. The heirs, sure of the protection of the Prince, sued him and

while subordinating or intimidating some witnesses, obtained that the Saint be obliged to return the lands.

The Saint, when he saw that the court would not issue a just sentence, appealed with trust to the justice of God. He had the hearing and the sentence suspended and promised to bring as witness the very deceased maker of the will, who was already three years in the tomb. His proposal was received and accepted, in the midst of sharp ridicule as an absurd proposal.

After three days of fasting and prayer, the holy Bishop went with some clergymen and people to the tomb of Peter Miles and ordered it to be opened. Of course they found there were only a few bones among the dust. The enemies of the Saint exulted, certain of their victory. However the Saint ordered those bones to resurrect in the name of Jesus, who is life and resurrection. At that command those bones, under the eyes of all the people present, gathered and joined together, filled out with flesh and the dead man came out of the tomb. Peter Miles gave his hand to the Bishop and with him, with the clergymen and the flabbergasted people, went to Boleslaw. He certified the truth to him of the donation he had given. After that St. Stanislaw asked him if he wanted to go back to the tomb or live a few more years on earth, but the resurrected man answered that, even though for the many sins he had committed he was still in Purgatory in the midst of excruciating pains, he rather would go back there than to live on earth, without the assurance of being saved. He only implored the Bishop to pray and do suffrages for him that he may soon be freed from all his suffering. He was taken back to the tomb in a great procession and the Bishop blessed him. He lay down inside and quickly he went back where he was found.

This reported fact is historical and witnessed by a thousand people.<sup>9</sup>

The second joy that the souls in Purgatory feel is their very own *expiation*. Because they love God in a perfect way and long for Him, they are heartily sorry for having offended Him and desire to expiate and make amends. On earth, there are souls, truly repenting of their sins who feel the need to add to the sacramental penance also most severe penances such as a hair shirt, scourges, fasting and discomforts of all kind and they rejoice in their inner spirit because they suffer for love. The souls in Purgatory, having a perfect knowledge even of their smallest sins, rejoice in expiating them.

### **St. Catherine of Genoa**

Saint Catherine of Genoa had special revelations about the joys of Purgatory. She says: “ I see the souls to be eagerly in the pains of Purgatory for two reasons: the first is because they consider the mercy of God. They understand that even only one sin would merit a thousand hells, if His goodness would not mitigate justice with mercy, satisfying it with the most precious Blood of Jesus Christ. The souls in Purgatory in fact perceive

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<sup>9</sup> As we mentioned in other places, we do not have to believe these episodes in faith, nor is faith based on these events. They only are a confirmation of what we believe and know: the reality of a wonderful interest and a mysterious wireless telephone, so to speak, that unite us to our deceased.

with a special light the greatness and the sanctity of God. They suffer but at the same time they rejoice in adoring his greatness and recognizing his sanctity. Their joy is similar to the martyrs who suffered to adore and give witness to the living God and Jesus the Savior; however, for the souls in Purgatory, in a much higher degree.

Another reason, says the Saint, for the souls in Purgatory to rejoice is *expiation*. The souls in Purgatory see themselves doing the Will of God, and they delight in what the love and mercy of God works in them. God impresses these two attributes on their minds in an instant, and because they are in grace, they hear it and understand it according to their own capacity, with great joy. This joy also increases the more they get closer to God. The smallest indication, in fact, that it is possible to have of God, is much more than any pain and happiness that man can conceive on earth. This is why the souls in Purgatory accept with joy the pains that, purifying them, make them closer to God and little by little, they see the obstacle diminishing, that hinders them from possessing and delighting in Him.

The third joy of the souls in Purgatory is the *comfort of love*, because love makes everything easier. *Where there is love there is no labor, or if there is labor, the labor is loved* – says St. Augustine. The souls in Purgatory are in an ocean of love, because Purgatory is a contest of love. It is love that gives pain to the souls, but the pain is mitigated by love, much more than the suffering of St. Laurence, who was martyred, roasted alive on a burning grill. *The coals*, he exclaimed, *are for me like roses*; and yet they were so hot that he told the tyrant: *I am already burned on this side, turn me on the other side*.

## Chapter IX

### **The communion of the Saints and the comfort that the soul in Purgatory receives from the Angels, the Saints and especially from Mary Most Holy**

One of the most consoling dogmas that we confess in the recitation of the Creed is the Communion of Saints.

The Catholic Church is not limited to this earth, but has boundless and immense boundaries because it embraces the Blessed in Heaven, the souls in Purgatory and on earth we pilgrims in the trials of life. It is only one great family, where everything is put together in perfect communion: joys and sufferings, the triumph of the Saints, the suffering of Purgatory and the trials of mortal men.

Here on earth, in the midst of our difficult life, we rejoice in the glory of the Saints who went before us, in their eternal happiness and we are full of compassion for the souls in Purgatory; on their part the Saints, from their place of glory, have compassion at the thought of the dangers in which we live and when they lower their gaze from above, to the desolate places of Purgatory they are moved with immense pity and they comfort the poor souls like a healthy man has compassion on and comforts the one who needs to have a painful surgery, that he may return to health and rejoice in his reacquired good health.

The souls in Purgatory, because of the Communion of the Saints, do not feel abandoned and understand even more the immense love of God and their suffering is not a revenge of justice but a need of love. God never chastises in the way we conceive a punishment, where we do not separate the idea of wrath, indignation and revenge.

There is no sentence more ugly and less true than to say: *Wrath of God* and to mention a calamity or an unusual condition we say: *It is the wrath of God*.

What a mistake! God is charity! He is all love and He only operates in love. When we do not keep this love in mind, our soul becomes confused and does not love God because it considers God as a Power that annihilates, a Wisdom that has no compassion but calculates to the pennies our weaknesses, a Love that does not connect with us, but remains a mystery of the union of the Word to the Father and the Father to the Word. Instead, the love of God extends to all His creatures, and remembers even the number of the hair on their head, or takes care of the sparrows that fly in the air.

### **The Angels and Purgatory**

As a consequence of the Communion of Saint, the *Angels* have a loving relationship with the souls in Purgatory.

The souls in Purgatory in fact are destined to replenish the immense void produced by the Angelic choirs in the fall of Lucifer and the rebellious angels. Hence the Angels regard them as their own. Besides, each one of those souls was given to the care of a Guardian Angel, who cannot abandon the soul, and wants to complete its mission accompanying it in Heaven.

On the Feast of St Michael the Archangel, the Church has expressions that confirm the assistance of the Angels to the souls in Purgatory: *Archangel Michael I constitute you prince over all souls who will be received in Heaven* (Antiphon 3 Lauds). In the 5<sup>th</sup> Responsorial of the Morning Prayers, the Church exclaims: *To this Archangel God entrusted the souls of the Saints, to guide them to Heaven exulting*<sup>10</sup>.

St. Michael, Prince of Purgatory and therefore Prince of the Angels who care for the souls in their pain, intercedes for them, as it is said in the 4<sup>th</sup> Responsorial of the Morning Prayers: *The prayer of this Archangel brings the souls into the Kingdom of Heaven*.

The assistance of the Angels to the souls in Purgatory is confirmed by many revelations. We shall mention one of them in Naples, Italy, in the monastery of St. Catherine, reported by Father Rossignoli.

In that monastery the nuns used to recite, every night, before going to bed, the Vespers of the Dead, so that, before giving rest to their body, they gave relief to the souls in the pain of Purgatory. It happened that one night, after a long day of work, the tired nuns decided to skip it for this one time. Suddenly, the nuns saw a host of Angels come down from Heaven and rest in the choir of the monastery, where they recited the Vespers of the Dead, omitted by the nuns.

### **The intercession of the Saints**

From many revelations, we now also know how much the *Saints* intercede for the souls in Purgatory, by the virtue of the Communion of Saints that makes very strong ties of love toward them.

The founders of Religious Orders always kept a most tender fatherly affection toward those who were their children. Saint Philip Neri, after he died, was seen in a large group of Religious of his Congregation that he had freed from Purgatory. St. Francis of Assisi promised to his friars to go down to Purgatory to free them, as long as they had been faithful to the Rule, especially to the saint's poverty. It was Jesus himself who had privileged him with this gift as well as many others, as can be read in the *Chronicle of the Minor*,<sup>11</sup> that clearly confirm it. We also know that when Saints die, going to Heaven they bring sometimes with them many souls from Purgatory, to whom God applies the merits and sacrifices of the Saint when he was on earth.

### **The Bulla Sabbatina (Saturday Bull)**

If the Saints can comfort the souls in Purgatory, can we imagine what Mary Most Holy does, She who is always our most loving Mother?

We read in some revelations of Saints that Saturdays, days dedicated to the Blessed Virgin (Bulla Sabbatina), are special feast days in Purgatory, because on Saturdays this Mother of Mercy descends to that painful prison to visit and console her

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<sup>10</sup> The author writes in 1959 therefore he refers to the Breviary before the reform of Vatican II

<sup>11</sup> See: The Little flowers of St Francis (Fioretti di San Francesco); Consideration on the Stigmata of St. Francis – Franciscan Fonts (Fonti Francescane) numbers 1920,1953,1955

sons and daughters. By virtue of the privilege of the *Bulla Sabbatina*, the people who wore the scapular of the Virgin of Carmel, and have fulfilled certain obligations attached to it, will be freed from Purgatory on the first Saturday after their death. In the feast days of Mary, especially on the Assumption, the Blessed Mother descends in Purgatory and frees a multitude of souls in Purgatory.

St. Peter Damian attests to this with the following true event.

There was the custom in Rome, Italy, when St. Peter Damian was on earth, to visit the Churches with lighted candles on the night of the Vigil of the Assumption. A lady, kneeling in the Basilica of Santa Maria in Aracoeli on the Capitol, was very surprised to see a woman going by in front of her. She was one of her relatives who had died a few months before. She ran to the entrance of the Church and as the woman approached she grabbed her hand, took her aside and asked her:

*“Sorry, but are you not my godmother Marozia who held me at the Baptismal font?”*

*“Yes”* the woman replied, *“it is I”*.

*“How does it happen then that you are among the living, since it is already several months that you are dead? And what happened to you in the other life?”*

*“Up to today”* the soul answered, *“I remained in a fierce fire in pain for my many sins of vanity which I did especially in my youth. Today, on the occasion of this great festivity, the Queen of Heaven descended to Purgatory in the midst of the fire and freed many souls and myself to allow us to enter into Heaven on the day of the Assumption. Every year our divine Lady renews this miracle of mercy, and the numbers of the souls that are freed are as many as about the whole population of Rome (in that time there lived in Rome about 200,000 people). In gratitude of this grace, we go this night to all the Sanctuaries consecrated to Her. You only see me, but we are here in great number.”*

The soul seeing that the woman remained surprised and doubtful, added: *“As proof that I am telling you the truth, I tell you that you will die one year from now on this very same feast day.”*

St. Peter Damian tells that this woman all through the year prepared herself to die in the grace of God, practicing all virtues. She fell ill a few days before the Assumption and died on the very Feast day, as her godmother had told her.

Many other writers, as for instance, Gerson, Teofilo Reynand, Rossignoli, St. Alphonsus Liguori, Faber, and so on, confirm this belief, based on a great number of special revelations. We notice that today in the atmosphere of unbelief in which we live, when we talk about revelations, we receive expressions of indifference or even contempt, almost as if we are talking about fairytales. It is a stupid attitude to have toward proved revelations because the true supernatural witnesses have much more value than any opinion of critical writers. The true and proved revelation is a *positive fact*, opinion, instead, is simple conception of a mind more or less enlightened, that could also be wrong.

The triumphant Church, with the Queen at her head, the most sweet Mother Mary, looks instead lovingly to the Church of Purgatory, relieves her, consoles her and helps her to enter as soon as possible into the eternal glory. Sweet and consoling brotherhood of souls, prerogative of the divine Catholic Church that makes everybody members of one same family, be they pilgrims on earth, suffering in Purgatory or crowned in Heaven,

unites all as children of the same Father, all longing to be one day in the eternal happiness of Heaven.

## Chapter X

### Duties to intercede for the souls in Purgatory

In regard to the Communion of Saints, we have duties toward the souls in Purgatory: duties of justice and duties of charity, even though the duties of charity can be called of justice because charity calls for a duty.

#### Duties of justice

In regard to the duties of justice *per se*, and concerning the suffrages that the deceased provided after his death, from his riches or from the fruit of his work, we have to recognize that the world does serious wrongdoings. Families who inherit an estate, sometimes extraordinarily rich families, bargain shamefully for the little suffrages that the deceased did reserve for this purpose. When, in addition, a document is not clear or the cunning of lawyers bends the civil laws, the family tries its best to make null the will of the deceased.

This one of the most outrageous thefts, that is punished by God with most severe punishment and history is full of stories in which houses have been demolished or become uninhabitable, with serious problems for the owners; their lands devastated by hail; their cattle decimated by contagious sicknesses; families who once were happy and in good situations were hit by great calamities because they did not satisfy the obligations due to the souls in Purgatory.<sup>12</sup>

It is a duty of justice not only to carry out the will of the deceased, but also to carry it out immediately, just as it would be equally unjust and cruel to keep the money of a sick man and let time go by, instead of alleviating him of his suffering. Sometimes the bequests of pious donations that the deceased appoints for its own suffrage is due for damages done to others and he wanted to repay in this way without revealing this faults. To suppress or neglect these suffrages is not only an act of injustice toward the deceased but also toward those to whom they had done damage.

We must recognize that modern States have very serious responsibility, for the numberless injustices done for the abolishment of Religious Orders and the appropriation of their property, destined by the benefactors to alleviate poor people and the souls in Purgatory. For these crimes and for so many others, disguised by twisting the law with infamous decrees, many modern States find themselves in thousands of difficulties and have no peace.<sup>13</sup>

It is a strict duty of children to intercede for their parents, not only with prayer, sacrifices and Holy Masses but also with an exemplary Christian life, because the children are like the flower and the fruits of their parents and the holy life that they live is

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<sup>12</sup> God allows these calamities to help the exploiters to awaken from their wrongdoings, and meditate on the injustice of their actions that gives damage to their neighbors and their own souls.

<sup>13</sup> It can be read in the biography of Saint John Bosco about the prophecies of many calamities announced by the Saint to the Court Sabaudia of Turin, Italy. The Saint had told the King not to sign the decree that would abolish the Religious Orders. The King, instead, signed it and the bereavement at the court came in regular succession, as the Saint had prophesied.



a return to the responsibility of their parents for educating them. A son, debauched, not religious and far from the Sacraments is a tormenting thorn for the souls who gave him his bodily life.

It is also the parents' duty to pray for their deceased children. It is true that the sorrow for the loss of a son, many times, melts the parents in inconsolable tears, however even though they are to be commiserated, the tears are of no avail to the deceased; instead it can even hurt them if this cry impedes the crying person from the full union with the Will of God.

A certain man named Catimprè told us a story about his grandmother who had lost one of her sons for whom she had a great love and great hopes. She kept crying day and night inconsolably, without ever thinking to pray for the soul of the deceased who was suffering in Purgatory. God, who had mercy on this soul, one day sent a vision to his disconsolate mother. She saw a big group of youth who in happy procession were walking toward a magnificent city. She looked very carefully to see if her son was among them but, alas, she saw him walking far from the others, apart and alone and very tired, with his clothes soaked with water. She asked him why he was all alone and did not join the others to take part to the festivity. The young man answered: "*Alas, dear mother, your tears are what delays my walk and wet all my clothes. If it is true that you love me, I beg you to stop your useless sorrow and raise my soul with prayers, sacrifices and alms.*" The same can be said for the inconsolable tears of the children for their deceased parents, if prayers and works of intercession do not accompany them.

It is a duty of justice, like that of the children toward their parents, to pray for deceased Priests, especially for those who directed our souls. They have for us a true spiritual fatherhood, because they gave us the life of the spirit, which is a thousand times more precious than the life of the body. If we consider that Priests are often among the most forgotten by all the faithful, our duty to pay suffrages for them hopefully will increase.<sup>14</sup>

### **Duties of charity**

Finally we have the duty to intercede in general *for all souls*, also for those for whom we do not have a duty of justice because *of a duty of charity* that, as we said before, can be understood also as a duty of justice. By the virtue of the Communion of Saints, in fact, the souls in Purgatory are part, as we are, of the great family of Jesus Christ; hence their needs and their pains are also ours. The need they have of us is immense, because of their excruciating pains. The cry of the souls in Purgatory to our charity is non-stop even though we do not hear it. The simple fact that everyday thousands of people die must be for us a call to help those souls who every day fall into Purgatory. We have an immense possibility of helping them and not to help them is a lack of charity.

If it is a duty of charity to aid those who are sick, in the Day of Judgment will not Jesus see what we have done as our duty of charity for love of Him? Is it not the charity we owe to help the souls in Purgatory a matter of rigorous exam for us? They are starving for happiness, they thirst for God, lacking merits, sick in the pain that oppresses

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<sup>14</sup> Usually the souls of deceased Priests are among the most forgotten. The devotion to pray and do work of mercy in suffrage of deceased Priests is very much welcomed by the Lord who fills with graces and benedictions those people who cultivate it.

them, they are prisoners in Purgatory, pilgrims who seek the hospitality of Heaven; they are members of the Mystical Body of Christ, who also suffers and laments in them, as He suffers and laments in us who are pilgrims on earth. Should we neglect the souls in Purgatory without deserving a bitter reproach on the Day of Judgment? We have also to add differently that, pilgrims on earth, so often ungrateful sinners, are hence disfigured images of Jesus Christ; the souls in Purgatory are holy, confirmed in grace, predestined to glory, beloved by God who purifies them for pure love and longs to have them in Heaven to enrapture them of Himself, to make them similar to Him and to have Him seen face to face in an eternal banquet of love. Therefore, to intercede for the souls in Purgatory and hasten their union with God is an act of charity, inspired by divine love, much more than any help given to people who suffer on earth.

The Saints, who understood very well this divine law of charity, were always very eager to help the souls in Purgatory and often they made themselves victims for them, to shorten their sufferings.

### **Futility of visible pomp**

Many people believe that they have to manifest their own sorrow and their love for the deceased with showy visible pomp.<sup>15</sup> Very expensive flowers wreaths, a train of people walking or in cars, farewell speeches, shaking of hands, impulsive weeping, more or less felt, moved by the emotions of the moment, caused by the tears of others. Sometimes, I would say often, people shout, make desperate gestures, blasphemies, imprecations, even acts of violence against holy images for not having listened to the prayers of the person who was imploring for the life of the deceased. Sometimes people make the decision not to go to Church anymore, not to receive the Sacrament of Confession and Holy Communion; they stop going to Mass, saying the Rosary and never pray anymore.

All these exterior forms of sorrow are useless and even tragic for the soul of the deceased. A simple decent funeral, a small homage of flowers represents a kind act of sorrow and affection but even that is absolutely useless if it is not done in union with prayer, Holy Communion and with the intent to live a Christian life, in the face of death and the eternal life. Christian people cannot and must not ignore that we are on earth for our eternal life and that the death of a dear person, though a great sorrow, cannot leave out of account the view of eternity. Christian people know, or must know, that death is not a seal put on life, almost like falling into a void; it is a sleep in which a person waits to be awakened in the final resurrection.

Therefore every profanation done to the body destined to resurrect should be condemned. The cremation of the body is a profanation, as we said before, and by the same token at least the use of niches where the corpse is closed and sealed, and putrefies

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<sup>15</sup> These ostentations of which Don Dolindo speaks were very often seen in Naples, Italy, at the time he was writing (1959). Nowadays these cases of exhibition are rather infrequent, yet they still exist, especially in very extravagant flower wreaths in long car processions. It would be so much better for the deceased if the funeral would be simple and at least part of the expenses were put aside for alms and donations to the poor or to Institutes.

without possibility of corrupting in the soil should be considered ugly. This way of burying has all the appearance of wanting to forget the deceased forever. Christian burial is in the humility of the ground, where man recognizes he is dust and waits for the final trumpet that will awaken him to immortal life.<sup>16</sup>

We see the Cemeteries full of funereal monuments and tombstones of remembrance, with inscriptions of praise or sorrow, tokens of respect and enduring memory, but only humanly speaking. If we were to open those tombs we would find only bones without flesh, resting among spider webs. The best memory of a deceased person *is the one who does not die*, but is remembered for his virtues and his Christian life. The best monument that it is possible to elevate on the desolation of death is a saintly life; it is the life of the Saints, whose earthly remains are kept in reliquaries, more or less rich, big or small tomb of a body sanctified by the grace of God. A niche, a tomb, a monument can also be a kind gesture of loving remembrance but must be enlightened with the light of Jesus Christ, who is Resurrection and Life, and with clearly visible and triumphant sign of the Cross and expression of faith in the eternal life.

We should get inspiration by the inscriptions in the Catacombs, simple and brief, which give a sober feeling of faith, hope and peace. For instance, *Candida Metella, in the peace of Christ. She lived 20 years, six months and seven days*. What can we say about those tombs of the so-called *famous men*, without a Cross and the least remembrance of faith? These are tombs that bear, sorry to say, and we hope such is not the case, the countersign of the eternal refusal, among the proud overblown eulogies and titles that are only a mockery!

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<sup>16</sup> This is the way that Pope Paul VI wanted to be buried.

## Chapter XI

### The suffrages for the souls in Purgatory

The word “suffrage” *per se* has the meaning of a relief given to someone who suffers and a satisfaction or a payment done for someone who is in need or in debt. We can offer a satisfaction or a payment either with spiritual means or with the riches that Jesus Christ gives to the Church and we are free to apply them to the souls in Purgatory.

Our means are our good deeds, our alms, penances, and prayers. The riches of the Church at our disposal are the Holy Mass, which is the best of the suffrages, and the Indulgences, with which we can apply to souls in Purgatory the numberless riches of Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints. There is also one act, that usually is called “*the heroic act*” and it is the complete surrender of our personal spiritual merits and of all spiritual riches that we can use to pay for our own debts and save ourselves from the pains of Purgatory. It is an act of spiritual charity that by itself has a great value and embraces all the single suffrages we can offer.

#### Good deeds

We explain now a little of what our possibilities of suffrage are:

Good deeds.

Our good deed, as long as we live, can be *meritorious, suppliant and satisfactory*. According to our merits, they give us a right to a new degree of glory in Paradise or they move God to give us a special grace or they take away, in a more or less degree, some part of the pain we have to expiate in this or in the other world for the sins we have committed.

It is of faith that every good deed, done under the usual conditions, is *meritorious* in Heaven.

The promises in the Gospel are very clear and absolute in this regard: “*The good servant who was faithful in small things will receive his reward.*” (Mt 25,23). In the Day of Judgment the elect will enter in possession of eternal glory for their deeds of charity: “*I was hungry and you gave me to eat*” (Mt 25,35). Jesus, in order that we would not believe that only great deeds would be rewarded, added: “*Whoever gives only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones to drink because he is a disciple - amen, I say to you, he will surely not lose his reward.*” (Mt 10,42).

The good deeds can be *suppliant*, like a prayer done to obtain a grace, and the prayer consists in doing a good deed for the love of Jesus. If for instance there is a person who gives a gift to someone, and indeed he does it for the love of him, however he reserves, delicately, something of his gift even without really requesting it. This loving interested gesture is love, but not pure love because it attracts the loving attention of the good person to his own needs. For instance, in the Bible we read that Judith and David fasted and distributed alms; the former because she wanted to obtain success in her endeavor against Holofernes and David because he wanted to obtain the healing of his son. Jesus himself teaches us *to fast if we want to get rid of impure demons*.

Many times our prayers are sterile even if they are accompanied by good deeds. An act of avarice, for example, a persistent hostility toward a person, an act of selfishness

that suppresses charity and so on, can be fatal obstacles to the prayers that we address to God, to Mary Most Holy and the Saints.

Other times we may make vows, in order to obtain graces that are promises or an intention to do a good deed for the love of God; these are uniquely strong supplications.

Finally, our good deeds are also *satisfactory*, that is payment and amendment for our sins. This is of faith. In fact every good deed entails a sacrifice and it has always a penitential character, even though the fervor of charity makes it easy and consoling. St. Thomas Aquinas says that satisfactory virtues increase as the charity that inflames us to do the good deed becomes more perfect. (*In suppl.* 3p,q 15,art.2)

It is evident that we cannot pass on the merits of our good deeds, because by nature they are personal and inalienable, but we can apply to the souls in Purgatory the suppliant and satisfactory values of our good deeds. If we can obtain graces, healings and comfort for our living brothers, and we can make atonement for their sins, we can also do that for the souls in Purgatory. It is a most pure act of charity to deprive us of the advantage of helping ourselves, and instead helping others and the souls in Purgatory with prayers, good deeds and penitential deeds. Besides, this act of charity, if perfect, purifies our soul with the love that inspires us.

The conditions that are required that a good deed can be applicable to the souls in Purgatory are the following:

1. When it is done in a supernatural way, that is for the love of God;
2. When it is done in a state of grace, because if a man has a mortal sin on his soul no good deed can be satisfactory for himself or for others;
3. When it is done with the intention of applying it to the souls in Purgatory.

### **Heroic act of charity**

*The so-called heroic act, of which we spoke before, is this: to transfer to the souls in Purgatory all the expiatory riches of our good deeds, and all the riches of the Church that we could keep for our advantage.*

It is an act of charity very welcomed by God and very advantageous to us, inviting the mercy and the divine generosity toward us and at the same time inviting the souls in Purgatory to pray for us and come to our aid.

To show the pleasure of God with this act of charity, I will mention something that happened to me in my youth.

In 1890, Father Salvatore De Filippis, a Jesuit, who had been teacher of math to my father, came to visit us. He spoke to us of many spiritual things and especially about the heroic act, exhorting us to do it. I was eight years old, a young and stupid child but this talk about the heroic act made quite an impact on me and I decided to do it and I convinced my older brother Matthew, who was 10 years old, to do it too. But how could I do it? I understood the beauty of this act but I did not understand how to do it. In my littleness I told Jesus: “ I wish so much to have a booklet that could explain it to me, one for me and one for my brother!” and with that I went to sleep.

Next morning my mother went to the nearby Church, called Church of Purgatory, for her daily Mass and Holy Communion. I went with her. At the time I had not yet made my First Communion. We lived at 26 Vico Nilo, near little Piazza Corpo di Napoli. It was about 4:30 am and it was raining hard. Vico Nilo was a narrow alley without

sidewalks and the water was running down like a stream. We walked closer to the wall of the alley careful not to fall. While walking this way, I saw something white colored that the water was sweeping down. Out of curiosity I got closer and grabbed it. It was a small package with two booklets in it and much to my surprise their title was: *Explanation of the heroic act for the souls in Purgatory*. Exactly two booklets, one for me and one for my brother! It was certainly not a coincidence that in that early morning in the rain a little package was swept away by the water and in it there were those two booklets, exactly two booklets! I believe it was the Lord who wanted to grant my prayers and from that time on I did the heroic act for the souls in Purgatory.

## Alms

We can help the souls in Purgatory generally speaking not only with good deeds, but also with certain good deeds that are for them a healthy balm. In the Sacred Scriptures among all other evangelical acts of charity almsgiving is insistently recommended to us. "Almsgiving— the Angel said to Tobit — saves one from death and expiates every sin and helps us find mercy and life everlasting." (Tobit 12,9) Ecclesiastes says, "*Water quenches a flaming fire and alms atone for sins.*" (Eccl 3,33) The New Testament speaks of charity and alms in a way that makes it seem that only those who practice this virtue shall be rewarded and the Last Judgment has for its main concern charity and almsgiving. Therefore to do almsgiving with the intention of applying the fruit of the supplication and satisfaction to the souls in Purgatory is of great comfort to those souls. People that are poor have almost an intuition of the comfort that alms give to souls in Purgatory and they ask alms in their name and they thank the person who gives to them in words that are like the comfort of the satisfaction given to souls in Purgatory. In Naples, Italy, for example, poor people say: "*Signuri, refrescate ll'anema d'ò Purgatorio*" (Sir, give cool air to your souls in Purgatory). And when they receive the alms, they say: "*Frisch'all'anema e tutt'e muorte vuoste*" (May the souls of all your dear deceased receive cool air) or similar words.

The comfort given to souls in Purgatory increases also with the prayers that the poor make for their benefactors; prayers that God has promised to grant in a special way: "*The Lord hears the cry of the poor*" (Ps 2,37). People who do almsgiving also receive comfort from these prayers, even when they live in mortal sin and therefore cannot acquire merits, because the prayer of the poor becomes a supplication for their conversion and therefore for their eternal salvation.

When we say poor, we do not mean those beggars who are not poor but exploiters of charity. However a Priest when he walks on public streets should bear in mind that he must give alms also to those he knows are beggars, in order to be a good example to others. There is in fact the prejudice that the Priests do not give alms and so their alms will be a denial of this slanderous prejudice. In that case the alms given to the beggar will glorify Jesus by a public act of charity. There are also people who want to give alms but when they have something in mind to give they put the beggar on trial to decide what he will do with his alms, and often they will end in not doing it. Generosity comes always from a heart full of love; it is never over-particular in giving because of the love of Jesus. If a poor person is unworthy to be helped or he is ungrateful toward those who help him,

Jesus, who always must be the reason of all almsgiving, is always infinitely worthy to be aided, and He is infinitely generous in recompensing the giver.

### **Mortification and penance**

Another way to help the souls in Purgatory is doing *mortification and penance*. These are the satisfactory works *par excellence* because they are the direct ransom for the sins committed and are a payment for the sins committed by the souls in Purgatory. It is very sad that in our time the value of mortification and penance is quite unknown to the faithful and even to souls consecrated to God. Lent, a holy time of the year, for instance, that used to attract great mercy on sinful mankind, has disappeared and the liturgy of the Holy Mass seems a mockery. The Priest, in fact, during Mass prays in several ways to sanctify fasting *that we do not do anymore* and begs the Divine Mercy to consider our mortification *that we do not practice anymore*. It is the fault of the faithful if the Church has almost completely abolished fasting to avoid other sins, since it is not followed anymore. And yet Jesus said that if we do not do penance, we shall die (Lk 13,3). Sins have not decreased, actually most sorrowfully they have terribly increased and cause on earth continuous calamities.

Maybe the remembrance to come to aid of the souls in Purgatory through mortification and penance, could move many to this practice of the love that unites them to their dear deceased.

Our days on earth are rich in opportunities to practice these virtues and we need to take advantage of them if we want to expiate our numberless sins and give satisfaction to the souls in Purgatory. Being careful to be earnest in getting up in the morning, without growing lazy in bed, for instance, the pain of cold in winter and heat in summer, the aversion eating something we do not like, pain for the sickness we have to bear, patience in adversities, the moral sufferings that cause us agony and similar things are precious opportunities to do penance and to give suffrage to the souls in Purgatory. It is stupid to bear our suffering with impatience and lamenting them as a fatality, let alone to have feelings of rebellion against God, or the Blessed Mother and the Saints. By the same token, it is foolish to look always for ways to enjoy and have fun and stray into the vanities of the world because they might bring the soul to its eternal damnation. Let us pick up our cross with great resignation, for the love of God, without lamenting, cursing, and our cross will make us capable of helping the souls in Purgatory and moving us on toward our eternal joy. We must not satisfy all the demands of our selfishness but keep under tight control our corrupt and rebellious nature through penance. We will have the joy to rule over ourselves, to enjoy the freedom of the spirit, while reducing at the same time the very suffering of our life, because union with the Divine Will, and patience itself, are balm to all the suffering of our life.

Anxiety, lamenting, rebellion, and despair are only *amplifiers* of the pain and the suffering in our life.

## Chapter XII

### **Suffrages for the Souls in Purgatory: Prayer**

Among the work of suffrage for the souls in Purgatory these three are that have a marvelous effect on them: Prayer, the Holy Mass and Indulgences.

Prayer is in our power, the Holy Mass is the loving power of Jesus to alleviate their suffering, and Indulgences are the riches of the Church offered to the souls in Purgatory.

### **The Prayer**

Prayer is like refreshing dew that starts from our soul, rises to Heaven and like dew and welcome rain, falls on the souls in Purgatory. A simple desire, a short prayer, an act of love to God, they all have an extraordinary power of suffrage.

Father Rossignoli, in his book on Purgatory, writes of a Religious man who had the habit of reciting a *Requiem aeternam* every time he went by a cemetery. One day, immersed in his serious thoughts he forgot this prayer. Suddenly he had the impression that all the deceased came out from their tombs and followed him singing verse 8 of Psalm 128: *And they that passed by have not said: The blessing of the Lord be upon you.* Hearing these words this Religious, sorrowful and mortified, answered with other words of the Psalm: *We bless you in the name of the Lord.* Then he had the impression that all the deceased, assisted by this invocation, went back to their tombs.

If a short prayer was of help to those souls, a constant and persevering prayer is not only a moment of intercession for them but enriches them and shortens their time of purification.

Those who pray in the grace of God become intermediaries between the souls in Purgatory and God. God, for the love He has for the soul in Purgatory, accepts the prayer as reparation offered in exchange, and as a partial payment of debt of the soul in Purgatory and its purification that prepares the soul in Purgatory for the immense grace of its eternal happiness. The people who pray for the deceased must however be in the grace of God, otherwise they cannot be mediators between the souls in Purgatory and God.

Among the prayers that we can recite for the dead, those that have most value and efficacy are those of the Church. They are presented to God not only in the name of the person who prays but also in the name of the whole Church, being her expression and desire.

Among these prayers the most important one is the *Office of the Dead*, as long as it is said with deep conviction and piety. Therefore it is better for people who do not know the Latin language to say it in their own language. Nowadays there are very good translations that make it easier to perform this pious practice. If the Office of the Dead is not available, the recitation of the *De profundis* is also a beautiful intercession for the dead, because it is like the *Requiem aeternam*, the prayer that is consecrated by the Church for the souls in Purgatory.

A prayer of great efficacy for the Indulgences attached to it, because it contemplates the Passion of Jesus Christ, is the *Via Crucis* (the Way of the Cross). Another prayer that is very much welcomed by the Lord and Mary Most Holy is the *Holy Rosary*, and both prayers have been enriched by most precious Indulgences. Also the



prayer called the *Rosary of Requiem*, said for the souls in Purgatory, is a very refreshing gift for them.

There are special days of prayer for the dead, which are the third, seventh and 30th day, after their death. There is also a pious popular belief that Mondays and the month of November are times dedicated to the dead. In addition to all these prayers and other personal ones, it is necessary that whoever loved them offers their Holy Confession and Holy Communion for the deceased. It is also necessary, when a dear one passes away that all the relatives receive the Sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion for the benefit of his/her soul. It is a most beautiful testimony of sincere affection for a dear deceased to put ourselves in the grace of God or to increase it in our soul with absolution and to receive Jesus, making up with our own love, what the deceased missed, especially those who were not very faithful during their earthly life.

### The Holy Mass

Amongst the suffrages, the greatest is the *Holy Mass*, the true renewal though bloodless of the sacrifice of the Cross that saved the world. Notwithstanding the moral and spiritual decadence of the people in our evil times, the Holy Mass is of a great value for souls, either by arranging to have it celebrated or simply to be present.

Only one Mass, for its infinite value, would be enough to completely empty Purgatory, just as the immolation on the Cross was enough for the redemption of all generations of mankind. It is the unutterable justice of God that puts a limit to the application of the Sacrifice.

The theologians divide the fruit of the Mass into three parts. They teach that one part goes to the treasury of the Church and all its members receive it. Another goes to the Priest who celebrates the Mass and to the faithful present at the Mass as participants to the Sacrifice, especially if they carefully follow the liturgy and receive Communion. The Priest in fact becomes united to the people when he exhorts them to pray: “*Pray, my brothers and sisters that my Sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the Almighty Father.*” The faithful reply all together or through the altar server: “*May the Lord receive the Sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his Name, for our good and the good of all his Holy Church*”.<sup>17</sup> The third part of the fruit of the Mass goes to the person for whom the Mass is celebrated. This third part, in a measure known only to God, is applicable to the souls in Purgatory or a dear soul for whom it was requested.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Don Dolindo anticipated the times of the liturgical reform.

<sup>18</sup> The Will of God is surely the supreme reason for the application (of suffrages) to the deceased. The Theologians, on the basis of revelations, give a very sound explanation. When we participate at the Holy Mass or other religious practices, not everybody receives the same merits. To receive merits, more or less it does not depend on the source, that is infinite and from whom flows always water, it depends on the vessel that we put out to collect the mysterious water of graces. The person better prepared, who has a stronger faith, participating with more attention and devotion to the prayers, receives larger quantities of grace. This is a good thought for us and should stimulate us to engage ourselves to participate in the Holy Mass with great faith and be more attentive in praying.

It is the same for the dead. The time to merit ends with the end of earthly life. A falling tree, as Scripture says, stays where it falls. The deceased, through suffrages for them, keep open the possibility to receive the water of graces like they had during their lifetime and as much as they used to receive. The Sacrifice of the

Because of the limits that God imposes in His justice in the application of the suffrages to the souls in Purgatory, it is not enough to celebrate only one Mass for the deceased but it is necessary to celebrate many Masses. The reason is clear, when we consider that the Holy Mass must purify the soul and must, so to speak, refine it, orient it, elevate and make it capable of eternal glory. The hand even of the most famous sculptor cannot with only one blow refine the marble and make a statue out of it worthy of being shown in a museum. This is not because of the lack of his ability but because of the resistance and the roughness of the marble detached from the mountain and destined to become a masterpiece of sculpture.

The soul, detached from the body by death, but in the grace of God, is predestined to the glory of Heaven. However it still has the imperfections and the miseries contracted in its earthly life. They are numberless. If we were to see it in that condition, it would be so loathsome to us, even more than to see a leper. The appearance of a soul seen in the light of infinite sanctity and perfection of God is revolting. The Divine Mercy that allows a soul to be purified is truly infinite.

Also in this there is a contest of love: God loves the soul that comes to Him in his grace from the present life. He wants to give to the soul, because of love, happiness without shadows, tears, mourning, with no regret for the past and therefore He purifies, renews and makes the soul beautiful. The soul loves God, it feels a very powerful impulse toward Him, but it sees itself defiled and it cannot go to Him without purification.<sup>19</sup>

The torments and the pains of Purgatory are like the sorrowful exposition of our own miseries, because they are in proportion to the sin committed. In this sorrowful exposition there is reparation for the offences against God and by the mercy of the suffrages, there is marvelous beautifying of the soul. In a work of art the beautifying cannot be accomplished without first its restoration. Maybe this work of art was ruined by neglect or by vandalism and yet still bears the lines of a valuable work that can be restored. For example the restoration of a painting by Rafael can be done, according to the artists, first by freeing it from the defilement that profaned it and after that ferreting *out* with patience the original design and the original colors. It is not a work that can be done in only one shot. The soul is a deteriorated masterpiece. The soul needs to become free from the defilement of its sins. The soul in Purgatory needs the work of God to shine in it, his grace to redeem it and his mercy to forgive it, to avoid perishing like a dirty rag.

The Holy Mass is like the patient touch of the artist that concentrates on restoring a work of art with great care, but can only do this little by little.

This is the reason why one Holy Mass is not enough to restore the soul to its splendor of grace and sanctity to make it capable of eternal happiness. Only one Mass offered for the soul, only lightly touches the soul, so to speak, because it found in it a huge amount of miseries to purify. The soul in Purgatory is cleansed a little at a time because the Divine Mercy is always delicate and does not force the soul.

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Holy Mass is an inexhaustible fountain, but the deceased can receive all that their vessel can contain, so to speak, to remain in like manner.

<sup>19</sup> In God's view, people prestige, science and all the pleasures of the earthly life have no meaning. Only goodness and love are important. Whoever has more love toward God and his neighbors, he shall receive a higher flow of heavenly waters from the Heart of Christ in the presentation of the Sacrifice of the Cross that Jesus repeats on the altar for the life of all the world.

As an expert surgeon does not tear off the bandage from a wound all at once but first softens it and then little by little removes it and starts to disinfect the wound, also the mercy of God, with the Holy Mass, does not remove all at once the wounds of the soul when the soul, owing to the debts incurred by the justice of God, is not yet capable of a complete purification.

It is not possible for a sick eye to have much light all of a sudden. Instead slowly, with delicacy, it becomes used to a little light and gradually goes forward. With only one Mass, the soul is simply raised up; with another it begins to change in the light of the justice of God and begins to have the strength to become sorry for its own responsibility; with the third Mass it begins to move free from the coldness of its own soul and begins to grow in the love of Jesus who takes possession of it through the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. For every Mass celebrated for a soul in Purgatory, the soul feels free from one of its debts and little by little it begins to wear its nuptial gown to take part in the eternal banquet of love.

How are the three parts of the Mass, of which the Theologians speak, distinguished to decide the fruit of each Mass? It is not easy to say, not have the Theologians decided about its nature and limits. The Mass is one only Sacrifice, infinite in value, and it is not possible to understand all of a sudden how it can be divided into three parts.

Herewith there is a possible explanation of this theological distinction.

The Mass is the great treasure *of the Church*, it is the Sacrifice that the Church offers to God and obviously it is the testimony of adoration, thanksgiving, expiation and prayer of the whole Church, because in it is Jesus Christ who offers himself. This could be called the first part of the fruit of the Mass.

Jesus accomplishes the Holy Sacrifice through the Priest who celebrates the Mass, and it is right that the Priest is the first to enjoy its special fruit before all other participants of the Mass. This is the reason why it is a grave mistake to celebrate the Mass poorly, rushing it, or even worse, to celebrate it in sin. In that case the Priest does fulfill the Sacrifice, because it is Jesus who fulfills it for him, but he does not receive the fruit, rather he receives condemnation. He is far away from God, a stony and worn dry earth, in which water cannot sink. He is like a donkey, full of sores, that carries a treasure but is not rich himself. The Priest, who celebrates in sin, brings with the Sacrifice the sublime adoration of Jesus but does not participate to this divine act of adoration because, even after calling Jesus on the Altar, he does not have His life. He is his enemy. For the sacrilege that he commits, he is in a state of blasphemy and how could he collect the divine fruit of the adoration of Jesus? In this wretched state the Priest does not participate in the divine thanksgiving of Jesus because he is in disgrace before God, he is ungrateful to the utmost. He is like Judas, who was at the table of Jesus, but betrayed him for 30 silver coins even though Jesus, with the predilection of grace, had called him to the apostolate! The blasphemous Priest offers Jesus with the atoning sacrifice *par excellence*, but not only does he not partake of it, he aggravates his responsibility with his most awful sin. Finally, the blasphemous Priest is not the mediator begging Jesus for the souls, but he is a most wretched mercenary and an obstacle to the outpouring of the mercy of God.

From what we have said, it is easy to understand that the part of the Mass that the theologians assign to the Priests who celebrate the Mass is this intimate participation in the life of Jesus who adores, thanks, expiates and prays. And it is logical, because it is the

Priest who calls Jesus on to the Altar. Because of his holy character, the Priest determines the sublime Sacrifices in which he participates intimately.

The third part of the Mass, the theologians say, is the only part that can be assigned to the living and deceased, it is first of all the treasures of the liturgical prayers of the Mass, that the Church offers especially for those who, with their donations, determine, so to speak, that this sacred action will be united in a more intimate way to their intention. Also in the old Law the person who offered an animal in sacrifice was, because of his offering, so to speak, the first cause to determine that sacrifice. The alms that the faithful give for the Mass, is given for the sustenance of the Priest but especially to glorify God with that sublime action and therefore a particular merit and particular participation into the four fruits of the Sacrifice: *adoration, thanksgiving, expiation and petitions*, as a benefit to those who ask to have a Mass celebrated for their intention and the souls in Purgatory.

Strictly speaking, *the Mass then is not divided into three parts, but it outpours in three ways, the infinite treasure of Jesus*, on the Church, on the Priest and on the faithful, living or deceased.

When a person who asks for the Mass is in mortal sin, he is not able to receive merits and therefore to receive the fruit of the Mass. It is only Jesus who in his infinite mercy, directly relieves the souls in Purgatory. The Sacrifice does not lack anything of its efficacy, even if the Priest or the faithful who ask for the Sacrifice are in mortal sin. It is Jesus in the person of the Priest who offers himself. However they it lacks the accidental fruit that depends on the disposition of the Priest or the faithful who requested the Mass when they are in sin.

### **The so-called “Gregorian Masses”**

Let us say a word about “*Gregorian Masses*”. They are thirty consecutive Masses celebrated for someone deceased. It is only a pious practice and it cannot be said for sure that they have an infallible efficacy for the deliverance of a soul, because only God in his justice, applies the suffrage to the souls, as we said before.

The origin of the Gregorian Masses is the following. Saint Gregory the Great relates (*Dialogues* 4, 55) that a monk in his convent, whose name was Justus, exercised his medical activity, with the permission of his Superiors. One day he accepted, unknown to the Abbot, three gold coins. Such a thing was prohibited because it was a very grave sin against religious poverty and by the rule of poverty of the convent. A friar named Copiosus reproached him sternly and he was so much humiliated and afflicted to have incurred the punishment of excommunication that he became seriously sick for it but after repenting died in peace with the Lord. Nevertheless Saint Gregory wanted to inculcate on his Religious a healthy fear of that awful sin that harmed one of the most important vows of religious life. He did not take away from the deceased the effects of excommunication. He had him buried in a dung heap where the trash was kept and before the earth was put over him the monks cast the three gold coins over him crying out the words of Peter to Simon the Magician: “*Thy money go with thee to perdition!*” Feeling compassion and maybe because of a vision of the deceased, sometime later the holy Abbot called the prior of the monastery and told him: “*It is a long time that our deceased brother is tormented by the pain of Purgatory and our charity advises us to ask that he*

*may be released. Go, then, and see that from today the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is offered for him for thirty days. Let not single days pass without the saving Host being immolated for his absolution”.*

The Prior obeyed, but being engaged with other things he did not count the days as they passed. One night the deceased appeared to his Brother Copiosus in a vision and told him that he was free from the pain of Purgatory and received into the Communion of the Saints. Copiosus related this to the other monks in the monastery. The days from the beginning of the celebrations were counted. It was found that it was exactly the 30th day since the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass had begun to be offered for the deceased.

This custom is still on going in the Monasteries of the Benedictines, Trappists and Franciscans. Jesus, in many revelations, has expressed his pleasure for the “Gregorian Masses”.

### **The Indulgences**

Let us now talk about the third way to assist the souls in Purgatory, which are *Indulgences*.

The very name: *Indulgences* has the meaning of a benefit and a remission of mercy offered out of generosity.

The master in the Gospel who acquitted his servant of ten thousand talents the servant owed to him, granted an indulgence to him as a result of the humble and pitiful request of the servant: “*Be patient with me and I will pay you in full.*” The servant begged and that prayer obtained him the indulgence, because of the riches of his master. Certainly if his master had not been so rich, he would not have forgiven him ten thousand talents.

To understand the nature of the Indulgences that the Church grants from the power that Jesus Christ has empowered her *to dissolve or to tighten on earth* all debts that a soul has with God, the first thing we consider is the *Sacrament of Penance*. With this Sacrament all sins, grave or venial, are remitted, which means that the Church brings back a soul, guilty of grave sins, to the life of grace; if the soul is only weakened by venial sins, the Church increases in the soul its spiritual life. It is either the return of the prodigal son to the Father, or a more loving and sincere embrace of children that had not been too delicate and loving toward Him.

Every offence is a debt and needs reparation to receive atonement. For the mortal offence unrepented, the reparation is eternal. If it is forgiven, the reparation is a temporal pain, in order to bring again the soul into the equilibrium of love toward God.

Temporal pain is like convalescence after a serious sickness. It enables the body to be normal again. Sorrow for mortal sins, when it is sincere, brings back the soul into friendship with God. If it is not a full act of love, it leaves in life a loss that must change little by little with the sorrows of life or with a voluntary temporal and corporal penance. Temporal pain and penance are like the strengthening, in the soul, of the sorrow for sin and a desire to show to God one’s love, accepting the pain as the reaction and reparation for the unlawful pleasure of sin, to the detriment of the divine glory.

Normally, in our life we do this reparation spontaneously when we realize we have made mistakes in the activities of the natural course of life. A person, who realizes

he/she has forgotten something important and sees the bad consequences of it, may give a blow to their forehead as if for a punishment.

In the first centuries of its existence, the Church assigned temporal penances for the mortal sins committed made known by public Confession. For example it assigned Lenten fasting or humiliating punishments that, though severe, were still little reparation for the temporal pain that the soul would have deserved.

Out of compassion for human frailty and to make it easier for souls to return with zeal to the Christian life and divine love, the Church, to make up for the temporal pain that we should endeavor to expiate, prescribes some good acts through which she applies the merits and satisfaction of Jesus Christ, or of Mary Most Holy and the Saints.

The Indulgence, therefore, *is a remission of the temporal pain due to the sin committed, that the Church grants, under certain conditions, to the soul in grace, applying to it the merits and the superabundant satisfactions of Jesus Christ, the Virgin and the Saints, that constitutes the Church's treasure and for which the Church remits on earth all or in part, the debt of a soul, and in doing this on earth it becomes untied also in Heaven.*

Since we can help the dead, because of the Communion of the Saints, the Church gives us the power to apply to the souls in Purgatory her immense treasure of mercy, to reduce their sufferings with precisely the satisfaction of their temporal pain to which they did not pay attention in their earthly life. The Indulgences earned for the souls in Purgatory are a very desirable suffrage.

The Indulgence is plenary if it includes the remission of all temporal pain or partial if it remits only part of it.

It is an illusion, common to many Christians, to believe that it is possible to gain an indulgence by a quick prayer on the lips. It is necessary not only to speak word, but to be in the *state of grace*, to do an intimate *act of love to God* while reciting a prayer to which an indulgence is attached, an *interior will of not wanting to offend Him anymore*, and a *scrupulous faithfulness to the formula of the prayer*. To change a prayer with personal alterations, even if formulated with deep fervor, is certainly a prayer, however it does not receive the treasure of the Indulgence. For instance if a person recites: "*Sweet Heart of my dear and amiable Jesus, source of love, make me love You more and more*", he will indeed say a beautiful short prayer, but he will not gain the 300 days of Indulgence attached to the invocation: "*Sweet Heart of Jesus, make me love You more and more.*"<sup>20</sup>

When a person was given Confession and Communion as penance, the Church allows, for acquiring an Indulgence, to have Confession within the eight days either preceding or following the day requested for the Indulgence, and to receive Holy Communion on the vigil of that day or during its octave, while retaining the obligation to observe all the other prescriptions in the way and in the time which is established.

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<sup>20</sup> As it is known, after the Council, in order to avoid misunderstandings or mistakes in the mind of people not well instructed in the faith, the Church cancelled the words "days of Indulgence", and now we only say "plenary" and "partial" indulgence without any mention of the days. However it is good to remember that 100 days of Indulgence, for instance, never meant that the souls would have their time shortened by 100 days in Purgatory; it meant that the Church was donating from her spiritual treasure as many merits in suffrage for the souls in Purgatory as would be gained in 100 days of *public penance* according to the custom in use in the first centuries to expiate public sins.

The faithful who confess at least twice a month, or receive the Holy Eucharist daily, can gain the indulgence even without the prescribed Confession, with the exception of the Indulgences granted for the ordinary or extraordinary Jubilee. If a member of the faithful has a profession that obliges him to do works particularly good for others, he does not gain the indulgence without a special permission. For example, a nurse who must look after sick people does not gain the Indulgence, which is granted instead to those who visit a sick person for charity and love of God. When a penance is given to someone during Confession, and the penance is to do a work to which is attached an Indulgence, that work will also receive the Indulgence. However the state of grace, which is a needed condition to gain an Indulgence, is required at least at the end of the prescribed work. On the other hand, how could someone gain the remittance of a temporal punishment if he is an enemy of God and carries a sentence of eternal damnation? (*See Code of Canon Law*).

To gain an Indulgence the *intention* to gain it is also needed. *This intention can be expressed in the morning, with the resolution to gain the indulgences connected to all the prayers and the good work of the day.* This is also logical, because with this intention a person prays and works with the Church and in the Spirit of the Church, desiring to partake of her treasures.

We must also add that while in the same day it is possible to gain the same partial Indulgences many times with the repetition of the prescribed works or prayers, the plenary indulgence can only be gained once a day, even if the due conditions are repeated.

*Nobody can apply Indulgences to the living*, which is logical because nobody can give the remittance of the temporal pain to someone who does not do anything to deserve it. Instead all Indulgences are applicable to the souls in Purgatory unless stated otherwise.

As we can see from the above, Indulgences are a great treasure, both for us and for the souls in Purgatory and we must hold them in great esteem but we must also learn how to acquire them. It is not easy for many people to have their souls so united with God, and so far from sin, from venial sins and habitual neglect and imperfection in the Christian life, as to be able to gain the Indulgence.

In fact we cannot pretend to have the remittance of our own temporal punishment due to our sins, when we live in a way that we accumulate new debts demanded by the justice of God.

If the Christian people truly would gain Indulgences how much less evil and disgrace would we have in our life and in our world!

At least in view of our own temporal interest, we should have the diligence in gaining holy Indulgences, and we should appreciate their value and their advantage.

Sorrowfully instead nowadays there is even a lack of knowledge about the Indulgences among Christians; thus we are perfectly indifferent to them. Yet how many debts we have with God, how many misfortunes hang on our head, bad fruits of our sins.

In the difficult times of our life, how good it would be to go to Confession, to receive the Holy Eucharist, to seek in the treasures of the Church the riches to pay our debts and get free from the punishments that deserve and attract our spiritual misery and our sins.

## Chapter XIII

### **The souls in Purgatory protect us, in our bodily needs and in our spiritual needs**

Our diligence in offering suffrages for the souls in Purgatory is not only a duty of justice and charity for us, but it is also for our great advantage because the souls in Purgatory are very grateful to us for the relief we give to them and for this reason they pray for us and protect us. If we mortals, as imperfect as we are, feel the need to be grateful and to reply with a favor or a kindness to someone, who gives us something, even small, out of love, with how much more love and gratitude the souls in Purgatory repay us for the suffrages we offer for them. The souls in Purgatory are holy and very noble because they are predestined to be citizen of Heaven. We regard them to be more closely possessed by God, for whom they thirst and hunger, and we shorten the time of their unutterable pains, making it easier for them to gain their eternal happiness! Since our suffrages do that for them, certainly they answer by praying for us. They do not have the possibility to gain merit, because their time on earth is over for that, but as friends of God they can pray and consequently they do pray, especially for those from whom they receive benefit.

Their prayer is very efficacious because they are holy. They obtain for us immense benefits both for our bodily and spiritual life.

### **Graces, some miraculous, obtained by the intercession of the souls in Purgatory**

There are numberless examples of graces, some miraculous, obtained through the intercession of the souls in Purgatory. We can say that their care for our soul and our body is such, because they know by experience what damage a soul. Thus in their suffering they have a greater and loving pity for our suffering. They were also once pilgrims on earth, they know the dangers for the souls and what people suffer in their body. Being in a state of perfect charity, the souls in Purgatory, when they receive suffrages from someone on earth, feel the responsibility to help him much more and in a better way, because they have a greater feeling of compassion for him. For these reasons the souls in Purgatory not only pray with more efficacy for those who offer suffrages for them but, with the permission of God, they sometimes intervene personally in our sufferings and our dangers.

In 1649 a famous librarian of Cologne, William Freyssen, made a vow to distribute one hundred books on the souls in Purgatory in order to motivate the faithful to offer suffrages for them. Shortly after that, his son and his wife both gravely ill and close to death, were restored to health. (*Puteus Defunct*, book V, art.9).

In Paris in 1817 a poor maid, well educated in the Christian life, had the pious habit to have a Requiem Mass celebrated every month, notwithstanding her meager income, for the souls in Purgatory. She actually would be present at the holy Sacrifice, uniting her prayer to those of the celebrant Priest, to obtain a better deliverance for the soul in most need. One day she fell ill and had to go to the hospital. Since she could not work anymore, she lost her job and became unable to satisfy her pious habit for the lack



of money. On leaving the hospital she was left with only a few cents. She recommended herself to the Lord to take care of her and started looking for another position. In passing by a Church, she realized that it was the day that she usually would have a Mass offered for the souls in Purgatory. She presented her little money and asked to have a Mass celebrated. During the Holy Mass she prayed fervently for the souls in Purgatory and for Divine Providence not to abandon her. Then tired and anxious, she continued to go to places in search of work. Walking toward her along the street, a young nobleman, well dressed and very pale, stopped her and said:

*"You are looking for a maid job, am I right?"*

*"Yes, Milord"* she answered, surprised.

*"Very well, then go to this address. There is a lady there that will give you the job."* And he disappeared in the crowded street, without even giving her the time to thank him.

The good woman went immediately to the address the young man had given to her and while she went up the staircase to the house a maid was coming down, very upset, with a bundle under her arm. She asked her if the lady of the house was at home and the woman rudely told her to go and ask the lady herself, when she opened the door because as for her she was leaving for good. The woman knocked at the door and a noble lady came to open it. The woman told her what had happened to her and asked if she needed a maid. The lady was very surprised because she had just fired her maid a few minutes before due to her poor manners. She wanted to hear again what had happened and the woman repeated her story, looking around the room. On the mantelpiece she saw a picture and she said:

*"Here he is, madam, you have the picture of the young man who sent me here and gave me your address."*

On hearing this, the lady gave out a shout and lost her senses. When she recovered, she hugged the woman with joy and said:

*"My dear, from now on I shall consider you as my most dear daughter and not a servant. My son died two years ago and it was because of the Mass you had celebrated that he finally left Purgatory. May the Lord be praised. Stay with me and work in my house. We shall pray together for the souls in Purgatory that the Lord may deliver them soon and may enter the blessed Homeland of Paradise."*

We did a careful research on this story as well as many other cases that attest to the protection of the souls in Purgatory for those from whom they receive suffrages.

How great is their help for our bodily needs and how much they care *for our spiritual well being!* The results of their protection are not as visible as their protection in our physical needs, but how many good inspirations, holy thoughts, victory over temptations, miraculous conversions at the point of death are due to the fervent prayers of the souls in Purgatory for those from whom they received benefits.

How marvelous is the Communion of the Saints! What a marvelous view, says the Count De Maistre, it is to see *an immense city of souls with their three orders in relation with each other with no interruption:* the world militant is united to the suffering world holding tight to the triumphant world!

## The soul in Purgatory of Montefalco

Before finishing the mystery and the absolute reality of Purgatory, we will speak the manifestation of a soul in Purgatory, which happened in the town of Montefalco, in the Diocese of Spoleto, Italy, from September 2, 1918 to November 9, 1919. The following manifestations, with the evidence of witnesses highly respected for their faith, had the confirmation of an ecclesial trial requested by Msgr. Peter Pacifici, Bishop of Spoleto, Italy from July 27 to August 8, 1921. Herewith is what happened.

All the extraordinary manifestations, all together 28, happened in the Monastery of St. Leonard in Montefalco, where there lived a big Community of Poor Clares (The Poor Clares have their Monastery there to the present time).<sup>21</sup> On September 2 the doorbell rang in the sacristy and Sister Marie Therese of Jesus, Abbess of the Monastery, went to answer. A voice told her:

*"I must leave here this alms."*

The Sister turned the rotating table and found 10 liras on it. The Abbess asked the reason for the money, if it was for celebrating a special Mass for someone or for a Triduum or other prayers. The voice said: *"No reason."*

The Abbess asked: *"Excuse me, but may I ask who are you?"*

The voice said: *"It is not important to know."*

The voice sounded kind, but sorrowful, far and in a hurry, like someone in hiding.

This happened also on October 5, 1918, October 31, November 29, December 9, January 1 and 29, 1919, always in the same way. On the rotating table were left 10 liras and to the question of the Abbess, the voice answered: *"Prayer is always good."*

On March 14, 1919 when the Sisters were doing their examen of conscience, about 8pm, the bell rang two times. The Abbess went again to the door and in turning the table she again found 10 liras. However nobody answered to her questions. Surprised, the Abbess called a servant girl to go around the external part of their Church that was closed at that hour of the day and only the Nuns kept the keys, to search if there was anybody outside. Nobody was around and nobody was in Church either. From then on the Sisters began to suspect that whoever was giving the alms was not an earthly person.

On April 11, again like before, the 10 liras were found on the turning table, however this time the voice answered to the Abbess asking for prayers for a deceased.

On May 2 occurred the 10<sup>th</sup> manifestation.

A little before the time of silence, about 9:30 pm, the doorbell rang again. This time the Abbess went with three other Sisters, Sister Mary Francis of the Five Wounds, Sister Amante Mary of St. Anthony and Sister Angelica Ruggeri. They found on the turning table 20 liras in two pieces of paper of 10 liras each put down in the shape of a cross. Again nobody was in sight and nobody was in Church.

On May 25, June 4 and June 21 again were found 10 liras each time on the turning table but nobody answered or was in sight.

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<sup>21</sup> The Poor Clares are cloistered Nuns, that is, they do not go outside their Monastery and hardly do they see anyone even when someone wants to communicate with them. The Nuns talk to people through a small grating. To accept donations the Nuns have a turning table through an opening in the door. Donations are put on the turning table and the Nun turns the table to pick up the donation.

On July 7, about 2 pm, the doorbell rang. The Abbess thought that there were children in Church and because the Nuns were doing their retreat, she chose not to answer. She closed her eyes to rest a bit but a voice outside the room said:

*"The doorbell rang in the sacristy".*

She then went to the Sacristy and she heard the usual voice that said:

*"I leave here 10 liras for the prayers".*

*"In the Name of God, who are you?"* asked the Abbess.

The voice said: *"It is not allowed "* and no more words were heard.

The Abbess later asked the other Sisters if anyone of them had called her from the outside room. But nobody had called her.

On July 18, after the evening silence, about 9:30 pm, the Abbess went to close the door of the oven left open when the doorbell rang. She went to the sacristy and in saying the greeting: *"Praised be Jesus and Mary"*, she heard the voice answering: *"Amen"*, then she added: *"I leave here the alms for the usual prayers"*. The Abbess, gathering her courage, asked: *"In the name of God and the Holy Trinity, who are you?"*

The same voice answered: *"It is not allowed"*, and nothing else. Again nobody was around and the closed Church was empty.

On July 27, the Abbess found in the turning table 10 liras but she did not know who had put the alms there.

On August 12, about 8 pm, again the doorbell, again the 10 liras on the turning table. This time the Abbess had gone to the door with two other Nuns, Sister Mary Nazarena of the Sorrowful Mother and Sister Chiara Benedetta Josephine of the Sacred Heart. Again there was nobody in sight. The Reverend Father Alessandro Climati, Pastor of St Bartholomew's Church and Confessor of the Nuns was called in as well as Father Agazio Tabarrini, Pastor of Casale, Chaplain of the Monastery and Father Angelo, Guardian of the Franciscan Capuchins. They looked in the Church together with the servant girl. The Church was empty.

On August 19, about 6:30 pm, the doorbell rang again. The Abbess said the greeting *"Praised be Jesus and Mary"* and the voice answered: *"Amen"* and immediately said: *"I leave this alms for the prayers"*. The Abbess answered: *"We shall say the prayers, but keep your money and give it to someone who needs it more"*.

The voice in a sorrowful tone said: *"Oh no, please take it, it is an act of mercy"*. The Abbess asked: *"Is it allowed to know who you are?"* The voice answered: *"It is always me"* and nothing else was heard. 10 liras were left. The same happened on August 28 and September 4. The Abbess never got an answer. On September 16, about 9:15 pm the Abbess was locking the dormitory when she heard the doorbell ringing. She went to the door together with another Nun and they found 10 liras on the turning table. The Abbess decided not to take the money and was about to leave when she heard a voice saying: *"Take it, it is to satisfy the Divine Justice"*. The Abbess said: *"Repeat this short prayer: Be blessed the Holy, Most Pure, the Immaculate Conception, The most Holy Virgin Mary"*. The short prayer was faithfully repeated.

On September 21 on the turning table were found 10 liras but nobody was in sight. On October 3, about 9 pm, past the time of silence, the Abbess was looking out of her window in her room when she heard the doorbell. When the usual conversation took place, the Abbess refused to take the money saying that her Confessor was not pleased, because he thought that it was a diabolic manifestation. The answer came: *"I am a soul in*

*Purgatory. 40 years I have been in Purgatory because I squandered goods of the Church."*

On October 6, a Holy Mass was celebrated in suffrage of this soul. Shortly afterwards the doorbell rang and to the Abbess who went to the door, the voice said: *"Thank you very much. I leave here this alms."*

The Abbess wanted to talk some more but she received no more answers. The sacristy was closed but on the turning table was left 10 liras. The same thing happened on October 10. When the Abbess asked more questions about its identity, the usual voice said: *"The Judgment of God is right and just."*

*"But how is it possible. I had several Masses said for you, and only one is enough to free a soul and you are still in Purgatory?"*

The voice answered: *"I receive only a small part of it."* The voice did not answer any other questions. Also this time were left 20 liras.

On October 20, at 8:45 pm, the time of silence had just started and the Abbess with Sister Mary Rosalia of the Cross and Sister Clare Giuseppa of the Sacred Heart were going upstairs when the doorbell rang. The Abbess found the usual 10 liras but no one answered. She did not take the alms and left to go to close the door of the dormitory. The doorbell rang again. She went again to the door and to her greeting: *"Praised be Jesus and Mary"*, the voice said: *"Amen"*. Then an almost inaudibly the voice said: *"Please take this alms, it is an act of mercy."* After the Abbess had taken it, the voice said: *"Thank you!"*

On Oct 30, at 2:45 pm, the Abbess heard a voice from the next room saying: *"The doorbell rang"*. She went to open the grille of the door and to her usual greeting, the voice answered: *"Amen. I leave here the alms."* The Abbess without letting it finishes the words, immediately said: *"Sorry, by the order of my Confessor I cannot take your alms. In the name of God and by the order of my Confessor, tell me who you are. Are you a Priest?"*

The voice answered: *"Yes"*.

*"Did the goods that you squandered belong to this Monastery?"*

*"No, but I have the permission to bring the money here"*, was the answer.

The Abbess said: *"From where did you take this money?"*<sup>22</sup>

The soul said: *"The Judgment of God is right and just."*

The Abbess said: *"I do not believe that you are a soul, I believe you are someone who is making a poor joke."*

The soul said: *"Do you want a sign?"*

*"No"*, the Abbess answered, *"Because I am scared. I can go and call another Sister. I'll be right back."*

The soul said: *"I cannot wait. I do not have the permission."*

Most likely it was not permitted to this soul to give a sign in the presence of others for the fear and bustle that would have followed.

The Abbess took the 10 liras and the soul said: *"Now I enter the prayer."*

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<sup>22</sup> According to an inspiring suggestion of the English editor of the present book, Father Christopher Rengers, C.A.P.: "I was thinking too how this soul did get the money. My theory is that the priest had laid away bit by bit an unjust personal treasure. He had therefore been commanded to restore it little by little, just as he had accumulated it. So he was restoring the same identical coins he had unjustly hidden for private use later. It is just an imaginative theory and eliminates a need of other possible miracles."

Up to that day the soul had put on the turning table 300 liras. When the soul thanked the Abbess for taking the money, the Abbess said: *"Will you pray for me. For our Community and our Confessor?"*

The soul answered: *"Benedictus Dei qui..."* (The blessing of God who..). The voice spoke softly going away till it could not be heard anymore. However the voice this time did not seem to be as much in a hurry as the other times and was less hollow; while at other times it seemed to come from outside, now it seemed that it was talking into the right ear and when it left it was heard from the left ear.

On November 9 occurred the last of the manifestations. About 4:15 pm the Abbess from the dormitory heard the doorbell of the sacristy. At her greeting: *"Praised be Jesus and Mary"*, the usual voice answered: *"Be They praised forever. I thank you and all your Community because now I am out of all my suffering."* The Abbess replied: *"Thank also the Priests who said many Masses for you, wouldn't you? The Confessor, Fr. Luigi Bianchi, Father Agazio?"*

The voice said: *"I thank you all."*

The Abbess remarked: *"I would like to go to Purgatory where you were, in this way I would be more sure..."*

The soul answered: *"Do the Will of the Almighty"*.

The Abbess: *"Will you pray for me, for the Community, for my parents if they are in Purgatory, for the Confessor, Fr. Luigi Bianchi, for the Pope, for the Bishops, for Cardinal Ascalesi?"*

The soul said: *"Yes"*.

The Abbess: *"Bless me and the people I named"*.

The soul: *"Benedictio Domini super vos"*. (The Blessing of God be on you all).

The morning before this last manifestation Fr Luigi Bianchi S.J, celebrated a Holy Mass at the Privileged Altar in the Church of the Jesuits, the Church of Jesus in Rome.

At the beginning of the manifestations the voice of the deceased Priest was sad. As time went by, it became more and more cheerful and the last time it sounded very happy. The sound of the doorbell initially was sad and feeble. It seemed now to convey a feeling of peace and cheerfulness in the heart of those who heard it. After the first manifestations, all the nuns were praying for the deceased as soon as they heard him. With the 300 liras that the soul brought, were celebrated 38 Masses for him.

This account is authentic, written by the Poor Clare Sisters of the Monastery of St. Leonard at Montefalco, Italy.

It was reported immediately to the Archbishop of Spoleto, Msgr. Pietro Pacifici, to His Eminence Cardinal Pompili, Vicar of the Holy Father in Rome, to His Eminence Cardinal Ascalesi in Naples, Italy and to many other persons. One of the 10 liras notes serial numbers 041161 and 2694 was kept in remembrance.

On July 1921, Msgr. Pietro Pacifici wanted to institute a canonical trial and he called Msgr. Giovanni Capobianco who was the Judge of the Court from Rome. The original acts of the trial are kept in the Archive of the Archbishop's Curia in Spoleto. They are 200 pages in protocol. In it is the deposition of twelve witnesses requested by the Postulator. These are seven Nuns, the Rev. Fr. Agazio Tabarrini, Chaplain of the Monastery, Franciscan Capuchin Fr. Valentino da Giano, Millei Catherine, servant of the Monastery, Rev. Thomas Casciola, Associate Pastor at St. Bartholomew Church and Mr. Ponziani Vergari. Three additional dispositions were added *ex officio*: the most

Eminent Cardinal Alessio Ascalesi, Msgr. Climati and Dr. Alessandro Tassinari, medical doctor of Montefalco. In the appendix to the above, with other documents, are reported in the trial the acts of the first Investigation on the manifestations and the deposition of Fr. Luigi Bianchi SJ, certified by his Provincial because this Priest was unable to be present.

The result of the trial was positive hence the manifestations were juridical verified.

The sacristy in which the manifestations took place was made into a Chapel for the suffrages of the souls in Purgatory, especially of deceased Priests. It was blessed on February 25, 1924 and as of today, it is a center of very ardent charity for the sufferings of the poor souls.

A Confraternity of the Souls in Purgatory was established, particularly the souls of Priests.

## PART 2

Victory in the Contest of Love:

Heaven

## Chapter I

### **The joy of the soul in coming out from Purgatory**

The sum of the contest of love between God and the soul is the victory of love. The soul, after so much pain suffered with love, outside of its body and outside the earth, appreciates God immeasurably, its Supreme Good, supreme sanctity, and supreme goodness. God welcomes the soul with infinite love, in an embrace of incomparable joy. The soul conquers its celestial Home, Heaven, for all eternity.

No human mind can even begin to imagine or describe the exultation of that blessed moment in which the soul purified by expiation, rises to Heaven *as pure as when God created it* and happy to feel forever united to its Supreme Good in an ocean of happiness and peace.

No earthly mind is sufficient to give us an idea.

An exile who comes back to his own country after years being away and sees again his native land and embraces his dearest people, filled with joy in reacquiring his freedom and peace; the sick man, who comes back completely to good health and walks again through the rooms of his home, and starts his normal life again in peace, they cannot give us the slightest idea of the glorious and festive return of the soul to God and of the eternal joy of a life that it cannot be lost anymore.

We try to make for ourselves a faint idea of it and lead a saintly life, accepting the suffering of life in perfect union with the Divine Will, increasing our merits benefited by the riches that Jesus donates to us through His Church. The very intensity of the pains of Purgatory gives us a faint supposition of the intensity of the joy of a soul entering Paradise, because we measure our earthly joy with the suffering we feel. We have no satisfaction in drinking a good glass of cold water unless we are thirsty or to eat a tasty food if we are not famished, as well to take delight in a peaceful rest if we are not tired. The soul, therefore, is in ever tormented longing for happiness, with a love toward God that grows and increases the more it is purified; coming to the end of its purification, it hurls to Him, at his loving invitation, in its utmost gratitude for the pain suffered, more than a sick man could ever have for the pain inflicted on him by a surgeon.

### **Mary accompanies the soul to Paradise**

Mary Most Holy, the mother of all souls, accompanies the soul in Paradise and it is to Her, who is the first to give to it this joy, that the soul sings a canticle of gratitude: *My soul glorifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. For He has looked upon my lowliness and I enter the eternal beatitude, among the choirs of the Blessed, who call me blessed. The Mighty One has lifted me by His power alone and His sanctity raised me among the Saints, His mercy makes me worthy to be honored among the glorious generations, lifted by his infinite mercy.*

The soul feels its own sanctity from the mercy that enriched it by the merits of Jesus; it feels victorious *by the power of God*, who for the cross of His Son, *drove out the diabolical snares, annihilated the power of the devil* and lifts the soul to the Kingdom of Heaven *from the humility of the expiation suffered in Purgatory.*



*“He has filled me with good things –the soul sings to Mary in the fullness of its glory –He dispersed the arrogant who believed to be rich, He receives me like its own child in his infinite mercy, according to the promises made in his love, to those who love him and do his Will.*

The exultant voice of the soul free from Purgatory unites itself to the song of Mary, because Mary is the whole canticle of praise and love of God. Mother of the Word Incarnate, of the eternal and infinite glorification of God, She was almost as if incandescent in that flame of glory and all her life was a *Magnificat*, from the Incarnation of the Word in Her, from the very first motion of his new life of love to the visitation to Elisabeth, to the sorrowful cry of Calvary, and to the triumphant canticle of her assumption in Heaven. There, with the eternal harmony of the Word, She unites the melody of her glorious love to the names of all creatures: *Magnificat anima mea Dominum (My soul magnifies the Lord)!*

It is not just a supposition that the soul leaves Purgatory accompanied by Mary, singing with Mary, in exultation: to Her who is its Mother in the eternal salvation accomplished by her maternal care. It is the logical consequence of the universal motherhood that Jesus gave to his Mother before dying on the Cross at Calvary. If Mary is the sweetest mom of the soul, who is introduced to the glory of Paradise, to eternally glorify God, it is logical that She glorifies God in the victory of his merciful love for that soul, exulting in its definite salvation and sharing with it the canticle of gratitude, as a mother would teach her little girl the first words to the father who welcomes her. The soul, purified by Purgatory, is a flower of unutterable beauty, it is fragrant with grace, and it is reddened by the Blood of Jesus. Mary welcomes the soul in joyful love: *Magnificat anima mea Dominum*. She makes it exultant with her own exultation.

The soul, like an innocent little child, lives for the maternal smile; it exults in her maternal embrace and makes itself little on her maternal heart, happily rejoicing in the beats of her maternal heart. Embraced by Mary, it is as if enlarged by her grandeur, refulgent in her sanctity, sustained by her mercy, victorious with her brilliant victory that once more has crushed the infernal enemy, bringing the soul brilliant and beautiful to God, who created it in his infinite love, redeemed in his infinite mercy, purified with loving justice, carefully observing even the smallest spot to be purified and make it beautiful. An artist does not torture with vengeance his work of art, but carefully works on it, to refine it with the utmost scrupulous perfection, considering every little blemish that may disfigure it, judging it in the light of his art, eliminating it in the warmth of his love. This is the way God does with the soul, all with infinite love and the soul entering its eternal glory, recognizes Him with exceeding loving gratitude.

Together with Mary Most Holy, the first to welcome the purified soul, there is certainly the Guardian Angel of the soul and the Angels who are at the royal court of the Queen of Heaven and earth. Thus the soul leaving Purgatory already foretastes joyfully its eternal bliss, similar to a bride, who crowned with flowers, walks in her white dress to the Altar to carry out her dream of love.

## Chapter II

### **The ascension of the soul from time into eternity**

We do not know where Purgatory is. However, since the time of purification is certainly measured with time here on earth, as we have come to know from revelations of Saints, we may suppose that Purgatory is in the earth or in the sphere of the earth. The soul then ascending to Paradise must go beyond the earthly atmosphere and the starry skies. It ascends...what a joy for the soul to see earth, now far away, where it suffered so much, to be far away from Purgatory where it was purified! Everything that was temporary grows small around the soul, and everything that is eternal grows larger. The person that goes up in an elevator has the impression that each passing floor descends. In that way, more sublime and higher, the soul perceives that all that is in time diminishes under it while it ascends full of love toward the heights of eternity. It ascends in the light of God and sees all the order of divine Providence in human affairs. What on earth seemed to the soul a tangled mass of suffering, tyrannical abuses, mysteries, and injustices, now appear as a marvelous harmony of love. It is a surprise that attracts the soul even more lovingly to God, singing to Him with an outburst of a love without reserve: *You have done everything in wisdom...Magnificat anima mea Dominum! (My soul magnifies the Lord)*

Natural phenomena, the life of pilgrim souls, the history of the nations, the unfolding of past centuries, the history of the militant Church, everything appears to the soul without shadows, in the admirable embroidery of Divine Providence. For the soul it is like the joyful surprise of going from night into day, like the delight to see the rise of the sun from beyond the high peak of a mountain, on which before it had been ascending, with great difficulty in the darkness of the night, through stones, thorns and brambles. This is the first enjoyment of the soul, immensely greater than the joy of a scientist who discovers the admirable laws of order in phenomena, which before had seemed to be blind disasters of matter. The soul full of grace already has the light of glory, with which to come closer to God and see Him the way He is. This light fills the soul delving with wisdom into the harmony of earthly things as if it had hundreds of observation instruments, and knows hundreds and thousands facts of scientific knowledge, which make the soul now able to delve into the most obscure reasoning, both of the physical and the moral world.

## Chapter III

### **In the star-filled firmament..... the power and wisdom of God**

The soul ascends toward the vaults of Heaven from the shady earthly regions and here there is an amazing view that shows the soul the power, the wisdom and the love of God. Colossal beings cross in their orbits at dizzy speed in the immensity of the vastness of the universe in which nothing hinders their way, in the harmony of the wisest laws. What an astonishing marvel! No intellect has ever devised such powers, not even in our atomic age, in which man is playing with the formidable power of the atom! Man with very exhausting calculations stopped in sheer amazement before infinitesimal nuclei, infinitesimal dances of electrons, protons, isotope's...before the formidable explosions of this infinitesimal world, witnesses of the power, wisdom and love of God. In the firmament full of stars, however, there are not infinitesimal nuclei. Instead there are colossi that repeat in the harmony of boundless order the display of the tiniest atom. The soul hears in the star-filled firmament, as it with a formidable amplifier, the hymn of divine glory that filled the earth in the secret atomic laboratories that make researches with exhausting difficulty. The soul thus sings one more time with Mary, Queen of this colossal world of force, lights, harmony and perfect order: *Magnificat anima mea Dominum! (My soul magnifies the Lord)*.

How many of these celestial beings are there? Man could never count them: *Number the stars if you can*, God said to Abraham, and the little scientist of earth almost believed that he could refute the word of God when he raised his eyes to the sky, from the height of his wooden tower as did the primitive astronomers of the East. They counted thousands of them, but that was not the number. With the little telescope of Galileo Galilei, which at the time seemed a marvelous invention, the stars were counted by the millions, but that was not the number. With the gigantic telescope of Mount Palomar, in the United States, there were counted one hundred billion stars in our Galaxy alone, but this is not the number. Other skies far away from ours were discovered, other Galaxies embroidered by billions of stars, yet this is not the number because the latest electronic telescope has an eye even more powerful, delving into the skies...

How marvelous truly is the word of God when he states not only the existence of the sky but, when in glorifying his power, He speaks of the highest Heavens!

The soul beholds this majestic view, magnifying the power of God; it gazes amazed with it, as someone climbing toward a glorious city, surveys along the way the beauty of the meadows, the monuments, the superb arches, the bridges and all the works that indicate its grandeur but he does not stop there. The soul delights at the sight of the Heavens, but only has a look at it; it aims higher and higher, toward the sublime heights of the Eternal Love.

God does not do anything without mathematical order, from the smallest to the biggest; He does not do anything without a deep purpose, He does not create without assigning a fixed order and purpose for his creature.

Are these colossal beings in the heavens inhabited? Are they nebulas that develop through centuries after centuries, always listening to the word of God: formed as the firmament of the skies? Are those skies preparing for other creatures that shall come, like flowering buds for the divine *Fiat* that is still resounding in developing creation? Or instead are they seats of souls, thrones of the Angels, instruments of delights who eternally sing the praises of the Eternal God, everything in an eternal on-going performance, then become transformed and, like glorious vestments *veterascunt*, become old and dissolve? On and on, do they not praise the eternal and immovable simplicity of God, eternally in action: *Power, Wisdom and Love*, the adorable Trinity, the beginning and end of all?

The light of every star is music; it is a modern discovery that, in taking the picture of the light, sounds were obtained. Those bodies are the stupendous harmony of the sweetest sounds that musicians have yet to coordinate on the immense scales of the heavens; a mysterious music that *sings the glory of God*, according to the inspired word of the Psalmist. In past centuries it seemed like a poetic expression while instead it is a true, real expression.

We mortals know nothing of these mysteries of the heavens. Our scientists delve into the depth of the skies. They study the harmony, with the most complex mathematical calculations. They measure the orbits, the parallaxes, the speed, the physical constitution and even mass and weight, but cannot see more than that. The astronauts, playing with the bursting of the rockets, hope to reach the moon or the closest planets.<sup>23</sup>

Notwithstanding their studies, the scientists know very little about the skies. As for us, who only see “*a twinkling of golden dots and silver atoms*”, we feel the joy of that immense silence of peace, that moves us away from the deafening sounds of this earthly life and enchants us with the greatness of God.

The soul thus ascending to God, by the light of glory that already enlarges it, certainly sees the marvelous harmony of creation. The soul contemplates all with love, as a pale dawn in the eternal Kingdom toward which it ascends, as rosy dawn of the Eternal Sun rising for the soul. It is happiness without limits, a love that does not fear sunset. It is a joyful praise that springs up in loving gratitude to God and He calls the soul to receive His embrace, which has no mourning or weeping!

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<sup>23</sup>Man has gone on and has reached the moon. The considerations of Don Dolindo Ruotolo, written in 1959, make us understand better the technological process of this last four decades (1944-1984). We think that even more grandiose enterprises, almost science fictions, will happen in the near future even if they might seem impossible today. God has given man a display of His intellect to which there is no limit. God let the human intelligence always continue pursuing the stupendous laws that He established when creating the universe. The inventions of proper instruments, if used for the progress of culture and the healthy applications for the goodness of mankind, introduce man to the marvel of the universe.

## Chapter IV

### **In the regions of the Spirit: Among the Choirs of Angels**

The soul continues its ascension, away from the immense sea of the stars. It rises, further and further from matter; it rises in triumph toward the region of the spirit.

Below the soul are marvelous shootings of stars, an orderly dance of lights, a stupendous outburst of strength, with no crash, in the silent peace of the cosmic laws that are like an echo of the voice of God who orders them. It is like the sparkling of adoring bows, even in the unconsciousness of matter that follows the laws through which God rules them, but which nevertheless magnifies his omnipotence, his wisdom and his love.

The soul sings with the firmament the praise of God; it embraces, so to speak, those waves of light, on top of those splendid ripples that rise, bend, foam, return, flee, ripple, and calm down. Meanwhile its love expands into the power of the spirit, immeasurably superior to matter.

Finally it reaches the Heaven of God, the Eternal Heaven. Here the soul finds itself in a firmament of celestial spirits and glorious souls in a variety that calls to mind the stars...*stella differt a stella (star differs from star), a variety not of shining material but a variety of love* vibrating with intelligence in a harmony of praises, bursts of joy and peace, deepest peace.

Here there are the choirs of the angels, stupendous harmonies of love who came out of the hands of God, purest Spirit, as effusions most pure of his creative goodness. They are nine choirs, in order, as in an admirable scale of sound, a stupendous interlacing of harmonies, the blaring sounds blend with the quivering sounds and form the heavenly music. The soul is enchanted. It is spirit. It was created as an image of God. For the grace that enriches it, is itself an orderly vibration of the harmonies of love. The sight of the celestial Spirits is for the soul the first knowledge of God, the first entrance to the happiness of its spirit in God. Those celestial choirs reveal Him as the golden clouds in the horizon reveal the rising of the sun, but without dazzling. It seems that the soul is preparing its interior eye to meet God.

Each choir of angels is formed by myriads of spirits, each one different from the other, even more than one human countenance could differ from another, even though given character by the same light of the Choir to which they belong. It is an incredible marvel.

### **The Cherubim, The Seraphim...**

At the top of this harmonious ladder are the *Cherubim*, resplendent intelligences without body, as stars made golden by the light of the Infinite Word, generated by the Father, giving eternal glorification to God, the ever serene and peaceful Trinity. What a joy! Those sublime minds with no shadows, those intelligences vibrant like deep eyes,

they see God and dip into his most simple, infinite and unique nature. They praise Him, giving themselves out in a wonderful variety like waves of light. The soul is as though enveloped in that light and it recognizes the first rays of the Infinite that has neither beginning nor end.

Engulfed in the light of the choir above, is the Choir of the Seraphim, vibrant with love. They are flaming intelligences, as hearts in love that pour out their love. Loving God, they praise Him, and in glorifying Him they reveal the Divine Person, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. The soul is enflamed with love, longs for the Divine embrace that will espouse it with God for all eternity. What a joy this angelic flame that does not know selfishness, is not centered in itself but is all of God, enjoying His love. Oh how sweet is the harmony in the blazing spirit of the Cherubim! What unutterable joys God reserves for those who love Him and carry the cross of earthly trials for only a few years, compared to all eternity.

## Chapter V

### **The mountains of the earth and the angelic Thrones**

When a man sees mountains in front of him, he is delighted. Men are attracted by the height, the harsh beauty of the irregular summits rising to the sky. He loves that divine art that modern painters would call ...*impressionism*. It is not impressionism of stupid blots or even more stupid tangles of circles; it is the marvelous impressionism of the summits, lifted like enormous hands, stretched in prayer. In mountains there is a joyful and solemn mysticism. Down in the deep valleys the rule seems to be to measure the abyss of human littleness; in the rustling of the trees, clinging to the rocks, there seems to be a wave of life; in bird-songs there is a trill of love that raises the soul to God. Mountains so heavy and massive become a canticle and they seem to be the throne of God.

The soul now rises to the angelic Choir of the *Thrones*. They are like the mountains of the spirit, in their marvelous elevation of grace, and they are like valleys of love in their profound adoration of the majesty of God. They receive illumination from the Seraphim because, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, the superior angelic Choirs enlighten the inferior ones and this illumination from one Choir to the next is like a chain of light that unites all in a harmony of love, like embroidery of incredible beauty. The Angels are like worshippers, reciting the rosary in Heaven, in a harmony of praises to God One and Triune: Holy, Holy, Holy, and in a caressing wave of praises to Mary, the only creature that completely reflects the power of God who created her, of the Eternal Word that made her his Mother and of the Eternal Love that overshadowed her and filled her with Himself, as in the beginning *swept over the waters* (Gen 1,2) and fecundated Chaos, making it resplendent in marvelous beauty of order and life.

The Thrones are marvelously elevated in spirit with profound genuflections of adoration; thus they are the Thrones of the Divine Majesty and the Divine Glory. The soul is enchanted by those marvelous heights; it grows small, adoring those marvelous depths. It goes through them almost as like an arabesque, in loving submission to God, toward whom it rises, almost like the dripping of water through a rock makes candid or delicate laces of stalactites or stalagmites. The soul goes through it like a timid butterfly that pollinates and takes the perfumes on itself of the flowers of the mountains.

What enchantment is Paradise and what joys God has prepared for us, if we love Him and are faithful to Him on earth!

### **Powers - Dominations Principalities - Virtues**

Now the soul has reached the Choir of the Powers, who are reflections of the power of God; the Dominations, who sing of lordship over all creation; the Principalities who magnify the divine regality like sumptuously dressed vassals of His Thrones; the

Virtues, who magnify the most simple perfections and are like prisms who reflect simple light in the admirable variety of the iris. The soul adores the divine power among the Powers; it feels dominated by the Love who is calling it among the Dominations; it feels like a humble servant among the Principalities; it plunges in the rays of the Virtues, as if to crown its nuptial dress with flowers of lights.

We become enraptured in front of the power of physical phenomena in laboratories, and yet they are a small burst of spark...The Powers are stupendous spiritual forces that enrapture the soul in the manifestations of the divine power. The soul feels all the dominium of God among the Dominations, powerful spirits who keep the order and the harmony in creation, presiding over it in the name of God. The soul lives the divine majesty among the Principalities, who magnify His regality. The soul glorifies the sanctity of God in the choir of Virtues, who reflect His rays and gather His splendor.

The soul moves among the angelic Choirs in ascending to God but it moves in a way to help itself become used to the splendor of the Eternal Love. Thus it moves first among the highest Choirs who illuminate and inflame the soul and then among those who in their splendor give to the soul the perception of the greatness of God. It could be said that first the soul sees the greatness of God in a vivifying synthesis, Eternal Truth, Eternal Wisdom and Eternal Love and then in the lower Choir of Angels, in a luminous analysis, considers God's greatness and divine majesty.



## Chapter VI

### **The Archangels - The Angels – The Guardian Angels**

The soul goes through the Choir of the Archangels, messengers of God and of his marvelous designs of power and love. They are sublime servants, and among them seven are the most refulgent with light and, so to speak, the fastest of all. They are in front of the throne of God. Their leader is Michael, the triumphant defender of the divine glory against Satan and the other rebellious spirits who fell into Hell. The soul feels the triumphant harmony of these superior Spirits who come to meet the soul and announce to it its entrance to happiness.

The soul goes through the Choir of Angels, custodians of the work of God and his intelligent creatures. They are the custodians of the universal order and the spiritual order of the souls entrusted to them.

They are billions, all lights of attentive goodness, all filled with loving sweetness like mothers who come to the needs of their children, all messengers of mercy.

If they had wings, as we depict them as a sign of their spirituality and fastness, they would appear like the wheel of the carriage seen by Ezekiel, full of lovingly attentive eyes. They would appear like butterflies of love, flying among the flowers of the fields to pollinate them and making them fruitful. They bring the fragrance of the grace of God among insensitive creatures, keeping in order the laws that harmonize them and among the intelligent creatures, guiding them in harmony with Divine Law that directs them to glory.

If they had a voice like we do, they would sound like a placid zephyr caressing the flowers of God, that they may send to Him their perfume.

Nobody can understand the delicacy of their invitations, the sweetness of their advice, the maternal goodness of their scolding. If God respects the freedom of his creatures and treats them with *reverence*, as Scripture says, the Guardian Angels, radiating divine goodness and infinite elegance, deal with them with sweet respect, like placid lights among the darkness of the spirit that becomes disorder and sin. They are a kind and delicate support among those who move forward with great difficulty on the uneven roads of the earthly pilgrimage. If it could be seen with the eyes of our body how much care they have of us, they would appear to us as golden clouds stretching over us like protective shadows and as celestial dew dripping down graces.

### **The voice of my Angel**

When I was a young man of 14 years, I was an altar boy. I was given the task to take care of the lamp of the Blessed Sacrament lest it be quenched. The small oil-lamps they gave me were not working well and the flame became extinguished at different times, without giving me the opportunity to calculate how long they would last. During

the day I was on my guard, I would check the oil-lamp from time to time, but in the night how could I continue to check it?

I prayed with the simple faith young people have, to my Guardian Angel that he would wake me up one minute before the oil-lamp would be extinguished. *One minute*, because, shame on me, I did not want to waste my sleep. One minute was enough for me to run from my bed to the Chapel, where the Blessed Sacrament reposed. Every night, at different hours, according to the whims of the oil-lamps, I felt a delicate tap on my right shoulder like a soft hand and a most sweet placid voice calling me: "*Dolindo, the oil-lamp*". And I would get up and run downstairs and the oil-lamp was about to go out. I would snuff it out and go back to bed.

One night, a bad night, I was lazy. What a pain to remember it! I felt the hand on my shoulder and the voice calling me but disliking getting up, I thought that it was a mistake. I lay lazily in bed a minute longer but then I recovered. Maybe my Angel in that moment gave me a little light. Kindly he did not touch my shoulder nor did he speak, because I was already awake. I ran out of bed to the Chapel and I found the oil-lamp out but still smoking. My Angel had called me promptly one minute before it would go out.

My confreres, surprised that I could always make it in time in the night to snuff out the oil-lamp, asked me: "How do you know that the oil-lamp is about to go out if it is impossible to calculate how long it will last?" I said: "It is easy; I prayed to my Guardian Angel to wake me up one minute before and he does it." After that conversation, my Angel did not come anymore. Was it maybe for lack of that most delicate self-restraint we should have with supernatural things? Or was there in me some hint of vanity that impeded him to come anymore? I do not know. I was humiliated. These events took place during Holy week of 1897. After all these years I still can feel on my right shoulder the sweetness of that hand and the suave almost whispering voice: "*Dolindo, the oil-lamp*".

## Chapter VII

### **In the glorious Choir of the Saints**

The Angelic Choirs are like the iris of God's throne, according to the Prophets expression; thus, they are not like an ascending ladder but like a marvelous cloud, a resplendent semicircular swaddling band, so to speak. This is why the soul crossing the star-filled firmament, finds itself first among the Cherubim and at the end among the Guardian Angels.

The soul goes through the blessed souls to reach its place of glory and goes from light to light to reach God, as a member of the Church triumphant, as a loving creature in God's Kingdom.

And there is this enchanting view: the Apostles, reflecting on the power of the Redeemer, with a distinctive glory given to them, because they announced Him to the people. It is true that when they were around Jesus on earth they were very weak; however, the Holy Spirit changed them into new creatures, and when they were martyred, even the last shadows clouding their love fell from them. They are most beautiful in the light of the Incarnate Word, divine sun of the celestial Jerusalem.

There are the Martyrs, like splendid rubies in the Kingdom of love. They gave to God the supreme witness of love, sacrificing their life for Him. Each drop of their blood shines in the souls as flames of love in the divine embrace of eternal happiness. They are like a most sweet harmony of an eternal song of love, and their enjoyment is measured by their sufferings. The executioners cut off their limbs? They are full of activities of love. Plucked out their eyes? They see much more beautifully the glory of God. Pulled out their tongue? Their soul is a thrilling voice of the truth they sealed with their blood. Burned them in the fire? Their soul is a fire of love that will never end. Cut off their head? Their soul is crowned with glory. Were they cruelly crucified? They are resplendent with the wounds of Jesus of whom they wear the red seal. Were they given to be eaten by wild beasts ground by their teeth like wheat of God? Their souls have the sweet smelling fragrance of bread on the gold banquet table of the Temple. Were they sunk in the depth of sea? Their most pure souls shine like those standing in the baptismal font of love. Choked by the rope and hanged on the gallows, slaughtered by the human malice? Their souls have a much larger breath of love and are like golden fruit hanging in God's garden. They are wonderful in their beauty. Each pain they suffered is for them a glorious splendor, full of eternal happiness.

The soul that rises to God sees in themselves the sublime providence of their suffering, and blesses the Lord for each of its own pains it had on earth, and every pain it suffered in Purgatory. What a joy for those who cried in the suffering of the earthly pilgrimage!

The soul rises even more, in the ecstasy of its intimate possession of God.

There are the Confessors who spread the Kingdom of God on earth, successors of Peter, brilliant stars of sound faith in the midst of the raving aberration of errors. They are

resplendent with truth like the Cherubim, burning with love like the Seraphim; they are Thrones of the Eternal God for having defended the glory of truth.

The Confessors, rich in the power of the Redeemer in their priesthood, rich in their grace and humility if they were not Priests, they shine like brilliant eyes that delved into the high Heavens to discover the eternal truth. They are similar to a scientist who delves with his mortal eyes into the skies, through the telescope, scanning the way of the stars. They are the voice of faith that has become a voice giving evidence to their glory. They are commanders of souls, princes of the militant Church, light of virtues and perfection, messengers of God like the Archangels, custodians of souls like the Angels. What a symphony of love bursts from their spirits, elevated by sanctity, like chords played by the suffering of life, on the marvelous psalmody resounding in divine glory!

## Chapter VIII

### The splendor of Virginity

In joy the soul rises with longing for God, as someone who goes through triumphant arches and flowered gardens, among resplendent lights and loving music that send them into ecstasy.

There is the Choir of Virgins: how beautiful are they in their fragrant purity, white lilies in the garden of God, and red by the sacrifice of their virginal bodies, either by the sufferings of life or the tortures of martyrdom! They are the only ones surrounding the Lamb of God wherever He goes, singing a song that only they can sing, and the song of a love that made them immaculate brides of Jesus.

How enchanting is that shining purity of the souls who went through the swamps of the world! Together with the women virgins are also the virgin men, souls unblemished by the pleasures of the sense, they follow the Divine Lamb and sing with them the triumphant song of love, only for Jesus!

The ray of the infinite purity of God surrounds this choir of Virgins resplendent with an ineffable shining joy that erupts from love, in tender melody.

If the soul, who rises from Purgatory to Paradise, is also a virgin, it unites itself to this choir and shines also in the light of the Virgin of all Virgins, Mary, immaculate light, brilliant in the rays of the Eternal Love that overshadowed her and made her a marvel to be seen, the Virgin Mother.

That choir of uncorrupted purity sings with Her: *Magnificat anima mea Dominum* (My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord) and the soul ascending answers with them: *My spirit rejoices in God my Savior*, saving me from the miseries of the flesh.

Mary, in her deep humility, brilliant purity of the spirit, sings: *God has looked with favor on his lowly servant*; and the Choir responds with blessings, exulting in the magnificence of her glory.

*The Almighty, has done great things for me, and holy is his Name* sings Mary because the Divine power worked the miracle of her virginity, before, during and after the birth and his infinite sanctity filled her with graces. The virginal choir answers, magnifying *the mercy of God that, because of her is on every generation* and has made possible, that from the swamps of the world would sprout the lilies that send their perfumes to earth and to Heaven.

*He has shown the strength of his arm*, sings Mary, because virginity is the triumphant victory of God over the human fragility. The choir of Virgins answers: *He has scattered the proud in their conceit* because virginity is the complete victory of grace over impurity of the spirit, which is pride.

Mary continues to sing: *He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and has lifted up the lowly* because virginity is an elevation of love, a throne of glory in the face of the world that believes it to be a mutilation of life. It is the exaltation of the most pure

humility of the spirit against a world that judges it as an unnatural renunciation of the flesh.

Here, right here, in the choir of the Virgins is the triumph of life that yearns for joy and pleasure, love and fecundity, since no one more than these virgin souls can answer in exultation: *He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich he has sent away empty*. Mary sings in these souls of the hunger of love that brought them most purely to God in their earthly life. They were victorious over the flesh and able to love Him alone. Now he fills them with his love, because they are his brides, triumphant over the poor world that *believed itself to be rich* in pleasures and now in the face of such glorious happiness it *looks empty*.

God receives the virgin souls in a special embrace of love and they share the immeasurable glory of Mary who was overshadowed by Eternal Love in an embrace of divine fecundity that made her a sharer in the infinite and the most pure fecundity of the Father, in the eternal generation of the Word.

The glory of Mary makes them shining with a new splendor because her divine maternity makes Her also their mother; and she gives them to God as her beloved children. Her most sweet hand, by divine mercy, picked up these souls from the shore of the world, enriched them with graces and offered them to her Divine Son. It is Mary, only Mary, who is the secret of the love of all virgin souls. Thus it is natural that Mary guides them. They follow the Lamb wherever He goes, and His sacrifice gives everywhere the purest love to God. It is logical that the Virgin Choir also sings the canticle of the Virgin of the Virgins and the Martyr of Martyrs, who sacrificed herself in her sorrowful love to the Divine Lamb, flesh of her flesh and her Son, when He sacrificed Himself on Calvary. None but the choirs of the Virgins can sing it because only they are refulgent with glory of Mary's Virginity. It is a new canticle in the splendor of the triumphant Virginity as it was new in the glory of the Maternity, in the house of Elisabeth; it shall always be a new canticle in each of the actions in the admirable life of Mary. She was a whole glorification of God, from her Immaculate Conception to her glorious Assumption in body and soul in God: *Magnificat anima mea Dominum (My soul magnifies the Lord)*.

## Chapter IX

**The Virgin of Virgins is assumed into Heaven with her body.  
She is a song of love, first immaculate fruit  
of the triumph of the virgins who shall rise**

Mary was a whole canticle of virginal praise in every moment of her life. She is the Mother of the Infinite Praise of God. She is the Mother of the Incarnate Word, Who glorifies God from all eternity and wanted to glorify Him also among fallen mankind, taking from Her His human body, in the purity of her immaculate virginity. She became fruitful by the Infinite Spirit, who is purest and eternal Love. Mary, we might say, was an admirable *musical variation* with the perpetual theme of her virginal love. For this reason her body could not be kept on earth, not even uncorrupted, like that of some holy virgins whose virginal bodies were respected even after death. Her body had to be assumed with her soul into Heaven, because every fiber, every cell, every nerve, every drop of blood that enlivened her life-glorifying God, was like a loving chord resounding the glory of God for the Word, her Son: *Magnificat anima mea Dominum! My soul magnifies the Lord!*

The virginal choir thus sings with Her the canticle of her love, because virginity is not only wholeness of the body but it is a song of life, offering all to God, loving him, glorifying him on earth and in Heaven. Only the virginal body of Mary is in Heaven together with the virginal choir. Her virginity in fact was inseminated by the Infinite Love and her immaculate body could not be kept in the trail of death; it was all glorious as it was spirit, in all her fibers, like a chord vibrating in perfect purity for the Holy Spirit who overshadowed her: *Magnificat anima mea Dominum! My soul magnifies the Lord!*

*Anima mea (My soul)*. She was wholly *soul* because she was all love, all purity, as though made volatile by the Eternal flame: : *Magnificat anima mea Dominum! My soul magnifies the Lord!*

Her spirit, glorious from the beginning of her life on earth, because her heart was immersed in God, was all exultation in Him in the infinite happiness of the Eternal Word Who, preordaining her His mother, saved her from the corruption of the first sin and filled her with grace. Thus her body could not remain on earth, because it was all vibrating with happiness in the eternal happiness of God. Being a canticle of exultation, she was called to be the harmony of everlasting exultation.

What immense greatness is Mary!

*God looked at the humility of his servant*, she was all humility in her splendid virginity because she was all love in the highest appreciation of God. Virginity is appreciation of God, the highest good and only love; therefore her body was beatified in Heaven, among the hymns of the Angels and of the Saints, delighting in her glory. These

are the ones who proclaim her blessed, the angels and the generation of saints; joined by the generations of the people on earth, where her immaculate glory shines among us poor suffering pilgrims in exile.

The power and the sanctity of God shone in her and her virginal body came back to Him with her soul because the divine power, making her immaculate, destroyed death. The divine *sanctity* made her most holy virginal body able to be in the kingdom of sanctity. The mercy of God comes down through Her on every generation who, fearing and loving Him, because from her came the Redeemer, infinite mercy, who saved us. Since Mary gave Jesus the body of the immolation that conquered death and triumphed in the resurrection, also the body of Mary was brought to God in His triumph. For this reason the rising of the body of Jesus by His own power is called the Ascension; instead the body of Mary that was raised to Heaven by his triumphant Son is called the *Assumption*.

The triumph of the virginity of Mary by the assumption of her virginal body, is the most distinguished sign of the power of God: *He has shown the power of his arm*, it was the greatest triumph over human pride that by stupid thoughts, falls away in the impurity of the body. God dispelled the clouds that obscured pride with the triumph of the humble virginity of Mary. The thrones of the mighty were cast down in the face of this triumph and only Mary is the Queen of Heaven and earth. Sitting in the kingdom of eternal happiness with her glorious soul and body united, She who was full of exultation during her life has been assumed by Jesus, King of Love in fulfillment of the promises of God to Abraham and his children forever.

The virgin souls, glorious in Heaven, do not have their virginal bodies which they left on earth in the tomb, leaving them like the silkworms, who changing into white butterflies leave their disguises as worm, that they had on the flowered mulberry bushes. The virginal bodies shall resurrect and they shall be radiant with a stupendous light. Their physical being decayed with their body in the tomb, but the purity of their souls still engraves on that decay the mark of love that was only for God. Their souls shut the world off, as a garden guarded by walls. The souls were an enclosed fountain that did not receive the mud of the rushing flood of human passions, but only gushed up high toward the Eternal Love.

Who can possibly sing the merits of a virgin who loved only God? Who can proclaim the greatness of eyes that never looked on poor creatures? Who can give glory to hearts that exulted in their flesh only for God? *My heart and my body rejoiced in the living God.*

The disintegration of a virginal body is not the victory of death. It is the victory of the soul, because it is the last immolation of the flesh that rots in a last sigh to God to be reborn in Him, as a song of unblemished love in the resurrection. It is like a bulb buried in the ground that opens as a white lily on the long stem breaking away from the mud and opens in the light of the sun, a candid corolla among fruitful golden petals.



## Chapter X

### **The Magnificat of the little innocents, flowers of Heaven**

Together with the Choir of Virgins are the souls of the little boys and little girls who lived on earth without knowing the ugliness of it. They are like transparent dragonflies that just touched the thorns of earthly bushes, to fly away to the blue sky. They are petals of pink roses that on the sorrowful Calvary became red from the Divine Blood to receive, as a glorious dowry, the merits of their painful death, united with the death of their Redeemer. The world saw the children, little martyrs in the suffering of death, and did not understand the loving providence of that pain that even, being not aware of it, enriched them through the merits of Jesus and made them blessed in Heaven.

The world esteemed an injustice the suffering of the innocents, who had no sin to expiate and did not understand that, because of their Baptism, they were the purest parts of the mystical Body of Jesus. On Calvary, He bathed them with the dew of his Blood to adorn them with his love and bring them to Heaven, crowned like royal children who play with the crown of the King of Love and delight with the palms of His immortal triumph.

What a joy for the soul that ascends to God to view this virginal innocence, to see this infancy that understands and loves, this placid whirling of flowers of Heaven that *proclaims* the greatness of the Lord! He picked them when they were just about to open and they bloomed in the fullness of the divine glory, *exultant* for being saved by the Divine Blood of Jesus! *God looked with favor on their littleness* and received them, blessed among the Blessed. God *with his power* created them to *sanctify* them in the grace of Baptism, plunged them in a bath of *mercy* and put on them for their sufferings, the merits of their Redeemer, as a bath of galvanoplastic puts gold on a smooth rod that does not shine, but receives the brilliance of gold by the current that agitates it.

They are little but they are *victorious over human pride*, because they are humble creatures lifted beyond human arrogance. They are high above, on the *throne of glory*, *filled* with happiness. The Infinite Love picked them up before the illusions of life on earth would deceive them. Also these souls sing together with Mary and the virginal choir: *Magnificat anima mea Dominum !(My soul magnifies the Lord)*

The soul ascends among the suave, thrilling voices of those innocent little ones, pure iridescent drops in the infinite fountain. The soul ascends blooming with those little flowers, perfumed by the divine Blood.

What a joy is the innocence glorified!

## Chapter XI

### **In the Choir of the souls who lived in the world**

Now the soul goes among the souls who went through the turmoil of earthly life, married, widowed, men and women who lived in the world but kept their loving fidelity to God in the crosses of their life and the tribulation of their flesh. These are souls who shone like the moon in the obscure valleys of the world; like half moons because they could not give a light full of love, separated as they were by the needs of their life in the world. They bring with them nevertheless the palms of the sufferings they bore because the married life and their life in the world were for them immolation and sacrifice.

Who can reflect upon the sacrifices of a holy mother, a martyr because of her husband and a martyr because of her children? Who can value the agony of those hearts that were inflamed by the love of God and had to accept giving their love also to the creatures to which they were tied? The mercy of God covered with a mantle of graces and of conjugal chastity the love of the earthly union, transforming it into a Sacrament. They saw Jesus in the wretched light of a man who represented Him; they saw the Church, fruitful with souls, in the faded beauty of a woman who, because of the Sacrament, represented her. They had spiritual wings, but they were compelled to rummage on the threshing-floor, wings that spread to a flight always clipped, like the uncertain flight of chickens when they are frightened.

They loved God, but nevertheless their time was limited by the necessities of their life and a quarter of their time recorded the few hours on Tabor and numberless hours at Gethsemane and Calvary. However just those very hours made them rich in the sacrifice of the flesh and in distress of the spirit.

Many times they found themselves in the stress of human turmoil, almost without realizing it. They cried for their virginity but they changed the duties of their station in life into an immolation of love.

They were like butterflies attracted by the light of the world. They believed it to be the dawn but realized that it was a fire that burned the wings of their supernatural love and forced them to walk among the thorny bushes. Hence they immolated themselves, becoming the instruments of Providence during their life in a world that had to grow and multiply.

They cultivated the flowers of the Church, as people sowing in tears during a harsh winter; they helped the seeds to grow in God and become the fruits of eternal life; many times they saw the fruit cut off from their branches by the storms of the world; they saw them lying down in the muddy ground of the debased life, not to mature but to decay. Their most beautiful crown are their children in Heaven over whom they cried when they flew from earth before becoming contaminated.

How can the sacrifices of a father and a mother during their life be valued? People pity widows and widowers as plants cut short in the fullness of life; instead they are glorious souls, because their sorrow turned them only to God and there was born in them, chastity for the widowed, a late flower of spiritual virginity. They consecrated themselves to God in the cloisters, or in the Priesthood or in the loneliness of a full spiritual life. They are late fruit, matured in winter with the sun of Infinite Love, which developed them in the difficulties of their declining life.

Also this choir of the Blessed is a glorious delight and the soul ascending to Paradise is enchanted and magnifies the mercy of God. Do not we, living here on earth, find beautiful the scene of a flock grazing in the fields, or a flock of birds flying in the skies with trills of enchanting harmonies? The choir of the virgin souls is a choir of tender love moving to God like a cloudless blue sky of love; the choir of the soul which went through the world, is like a serene flock bleating to God in the sublime peace of glory and eternal happiness.

## Chapter XII

### **The ascension of the soul to its place of glory according to its merits**

The soul ascends from Purgatory, among the most brilliant lights of the Angels and the Saints, foretasting in them the divine beauty in a preliminary contemplation, almost like getting used to the Infinite Greatness. It ascends to present itself to God, waiting to receive from Him its due place in a choir, according to the order and the nature of its merits.

It is usually believed that a great number of the creatures saved, will fill the places of the choirs left empty by the fall of Satan and his rebellious companions. Many other spirits are part of other categories and according to their merits are closer to the Apostles, the Martyrs, the Confessors, the Virgins, the married, and the widows.

The Pope-saints, the Bishops, the priests, could be, for example, next to the Apostles who share the judicial power of Jesus Christ and who were the first propagators of his doctrine and his kingdom in the Church. However the allocation of the place that the soul has in its glory is a mystery known only to God. It is a fact that its place has nothing to do with the time more or less spent in Purgatory but it has only to do with the merits acquired during its lifetime. If the merits are great and the place due to the soul is of highest glory, its purification requires a more accurate perfection.

The person who wants to be professor in a University, for instance, needs a preparation greater than those who want to be kindergarten teacher. This is why in the revelation of souls in Purgatory, the souls most tormented are often holy souls, Popes, Bishops, Religious, Priests, all souls who walked the way to perfection and to whom is due a higher place of glory. It is sure, however, that glory is always in proportion to the merits acquired by the soul in its life on earth. In a long life it is possible to acquire many merits, and also it is possible to contract many debts. However, debts are paid with a temporal expiation while with a most insignificant merit there corresponds a new degree of glory, eternally indelible, which is an eternal reward.

With what diligence and care, then, during our life on earth, we must capture even the smallest occasion of merits, because God always gives to each merit an immense superabundant recompense: *Merce magna nimis (Enormous recompense for smallest things)*.

If God asks that the debts contracted during our lifetime be paid to the last cent, He does not do this out of severity but out of love. He wills the soul in Heaven to be free from the smallest defect; the smallest mole will diminish the fullness of joy in glory. Each act of justice of God toward the souls in Purgatory is always a contest of His ineffable love.

**In every soul  
the fullness of joy**

Another thing absolutely sure in the glory of eternal happiness is the following: notwithstanding how different the glory of each soul may be, nevertheless all souls are most happy according to their own capability. A little baby eats a small dish or drinks from a little glass and he is equally full and satisfied as an adult who eats from a large dish, in proportion to his appetite or drinks from a big glass, in proportion to his thirst. Ten, a hundred, a thousand glasses, all of different capacity, from the smallest to the biggest, they all are equally full when they are filled up to the brim.

In Heaven there are no regrets, nor envy toward those who have more glory. It is all a harmony of joy to the fullest; it is like a marvelous organ in which the smaller pipes are in perfect harmony with the bigger ones.

In Heaven therefore there are no tears, no lamentations, no regrets, even if thinking of the greater love that it could have given to God during its life on earth; not even considering that it had been possible to gain more by taking advantage of the suffering during earthly life. It is God who harmonizes all souls and is the happiness of each soul. The loving Will of God is satisfied in each degree of merit of the soul and rewards it, each in harmony with his plan of love and mercy.

In our foolishness we would say that every soul has its own destiny. However the place of a soul is not a destiny nor it is blind and inexorable. It is instead the delicate work of the Infinite Love who, following human freedom with loving reverence, marvelously embroiders with gold or silk or cotton threads, with long or short threads, and on the canvas of his loving design, shapes each of them in a marvelous embroidery and glorifies each thread in the embroidery, putting it there where they all together become a multicolored flower of power, wisdom and love shining before the Eternal Trinity.

## Chapter XIII

### **The soul contemplates Mary in her glory**

The soul, ascending to Heaven from light to light, almost as if to direct its spirit in the vision and the beatitude of its eternal union with God, contemplates Mary Most Holy, who accompanies the soul like a Mom to Paradise; it contemplates the most holy Humanity of Jesus who took shape in her by the Holy Spirit and was born from Her. Mary sits on her throne of glory, and her glorious body shines in an enchanting light of spiritual beauty.

I asked Bruno Cornacchiola, who had a vision of the Virgin Mary at Three Fountains in Rome, what was the beauty of her face and he answered me: *“It was a beauty beyond comparison, a most pure perfection of lines to which in comparison all human beauty and all masterpieces of art, disappear. Imagine – he said – a jewel-case filled with the most precious stones, shining in the most brilliant colors, a light that fills with happiness but does not dazzle, it changes at each effusion with new light and you still would not have the faintest idea of the beauty of Her immaculate countenance.”* Also here on earth the physical beauty only gives a glimpse of the real beauty of the soul. The face of a sinful creature, even if perfect in its artistic lines, always has something repellent and it deranges more than giving pleasure.

Mary is full of grace; her glorious body and each part of her figure is resplendent with the grace of God. Her face is lighted in the infinite light of the Most Holy Trinity. She has a most beautiful expression of regal power, of thoughtful peace reflecting profound Wisdom, of the gentlest love that she receives from the light of the Eternal Love. Who overshadowed her.

She is a delight always new, sweetness always gentle, goodness always effusive in the peace of her humility, beloved daughter of God, in her loving dedication as Mother of the Incarnate Word. She is most pure in offering herself as Spouse of the Holy Ghost. Mary is resplendent of greatness, a unique song of glory. She is a whole harmony of Love!

What a joy to contemplate Her, what a sweetness to feel Her as a Mom. What song of gratitude gushes forth from the soul in recognizing Her, the Mother who saved it from the ruin of its earthly life and by the mercy of God attracted it to Herself. She then brings the soul free from Purgatory and accompanies it to its eternal bliss!

The merits it gained during earthly life, as we said before, define the glorious state of the blessed soul and the state of glory makes it capable of a better fruition of God. Now the glory of Mary is immense, almost infinite, as almost infinite are her merits.

## Chapter XIV

### The greatness of the merits of Mary

#### a) *Her humble dedication to God*

Often we find people who make up a stupid difficulty and are without any respect for Most Holy Mary and on this the leading group unfortunately are the Protestants: *“Since the Virgin Mary has been elected from God to be the Mother of the Incarnate Word and therefore she was filled with graces; since in her life she received the beatific vision that made her sinless, what are her personal merits for which she should have a superior glory before all blessed Spirits and a greatness and beauty superior to all creation?”*<sup>24</sup>

This seems to be a grave difficulty and yet it is stupid. The clearest and most sublime answer was given by the Blessed Mother herself, when she appeared in Rome at the Tre Fontane and in France to another beloved soul: *“I am the one who lives in the Most Holy Trinity”*. She is, thus, in the infinite designs of God, that in Him are always in act and present, just as it is all in act His infinite nature and the adorable Trinity of the Persons.

As for the foreseen merits of the Redeemer, She was immaculate also for the foreseen merits of Her correspondence to the grace and the foreseen merits of her humility and her obedience to God; thus She was filled with grace. For her foreseen mission of Mother of the Redeemer and of mankind, She gathered the treasures of the Redemption, so to speak, like a reservoir (already deep in depth capacity) receives the water of a river, to distribute it to the parched lands and the thirsty people.

God foresaw the free dedication of Mary to Him, her humility and obedience, because He did not fill her with graces without her free consent since the freedom of the soul in doing good is the foundation for the merit<sup>25</sup> It is so very true that, before becoming incarnate, the Word of God sent St. Gabriel the Archangel to ask for her consent. Her consent was not demanded, so to speak, by an order. It was given, after a anxious question of Mary and after a reasoning that speaks of her free dedication to God, between her humble doubts on how to understand the praises of the Archangel, and the light of the manifested divine Will. She was found sublimely obedient, in her free and

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<sup>24</sup> The statement that Mary Most Holy enjoyed during her life the beatific vision is a supposition assumed by some theologians. It is not a common or revealed doctrine. The opposite seems true if anything. The fact that Mary loved the Lord immensely with the consequence of receiving ordinary and extraordinary graces, *full of graces*, does not bring as a consequence in this world the beatific vision. On the contrary according to an affirmation recognized by theologians, it can be said that all the Apostles, after the coming of the Holy Spirit, were confirmed in a state of grace but never did anybody say that they received the beatific vision on earth.

<sup>25</sup> Maybe on this point one should read the very useful book by Carlo Carretto: “Blessed are you who believed”. In spite of the fact that in this book there are ornate triumphs and controversial sentences in very poor taste, this book has marvelous and dramatic pages that enable us to understand better and more in reality the mystery of Mary. Many known things happened gradually in Her and with delicacy, as the Lord usually acts, without multiplying miracles unnecessarily and about which there is no mention in the Gospel.

humble consent: "*Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word*".

This attitude of Mary was her greatest merit, beyond any comparison, precisely because of the degree of humility that enveloped her and the luminosity of the mystery as it was announced to her, which asked of her the full abandonment to God, in full adoration of the Divine Will. It was a complete offer not for her own glorification, but for the development in Her of the design of God, which certainly included the mysterious prospect of suffering.

The most pure Virgin, already betrothed to St. Joseph by the Divine Will, to whom she did subdue with her *fiat* of full and meritorious abandonment to God, was asked to be and appear a mother without participation of man, the only man to whom she was married. This was, per se, a mysterious prospective of anguish and suffering, in a carnal world so far from the understanding of a conception accomplished by the virtue of the Holy Spirit. She, in fact, did not even talk about it with St. Joseph, whom she knew to be most holy and pure. For thus she handed over to God.

Who would dare to deny that this was one of Her greatest merits.

God, foreseeing the merit of his Incarnate Son and choosing her as His mother, made her immaculate. It is logical that God would choose a Mother Immaculate for His Word, generated *ab aeterno* in the most pure conception of His infinite mind. God chose her and elected her with the plan of not forcing her freedom. He foresaw the humility of his creature, the merit of her unconditional obedience and her dedication to His Will and He filled her with graces. The Will in God is the Eternal Love, it is the Holy Spirit. Since Mary, with her admirable obedient consent, offered herself to the Eternal Will of God, He attracted her to Himself, and she was made pregnant with the Word made man, by the work of the Holy Spirit.

Truly, this is a great mystery. However it does have the mark of all the divine mysteries: the truth and the logic of the truth.

#### b) The life of Mary Most Holy in union with the Word of God because of Her maternity

Who can say what the Incarnation of the Word brought into Mary? At the contact with the Eternal God her humility became a prodigy of loving self-abasement. For the divine insemination of the Holy Spirit, her life was all dedicated to the Incarnate Word, because He had become incarnate through her and she had to give Him life with her life.

In a normal maternity, mothers give their life to the children they carry in their womb, following the natural process of generation, most of the time almost without realizing it and without disengaging from the normal daily activities. With the exception of occasionally perceiving the life that grows within them, the joyous feelings of the first movements and seeing the growth of their bodies, mothers contribute to the generation in their life without a positive will, because they follow the natural development of the life of their child. The development does not depend on them, so to speak, but on nature or better on the provident laws of generation. Their free will was only in accepting the maternity. Their contribution to the development of the maternity is only in the careful care suggested by doctors in order not to hurt its growth.

In Mary it was different. She not only gave her life to her Son, but in giving it she lived the life of Him who was the true God. She gave herself in a continuous act of loving



dedication: the *Ecce Ancilla Domini* (*Behold the handmaid of the Lord*) she said to the Archangel Gabriel at the Annunciation, continued in her in a flame of love and unutterable feelings of humility, which by her continuous merits increased her fullness of grace. Her *fiat* was not only a simple consent; it was like a marvelous seed blooming into thousands of flowers of humility and love. This may be the reason why the Church applies to Mary the analogy of plants that develop, of fragrance venting their perfumes, She is compared to the cedar of Lebanon, to the cypress, olive tree, roses, cinnamon, to balm, because in truth all her maternal life was a blooming of love and virtues that increased her merits to an immeasurable value

The son, moreover, living the life of the mother pours his life into her, by growing. The circulation of the blood, the breath, and her maternal life are a continuous dedication to the son in the womb, and the life of the son is a continuous pouring forth into his mother. Now the Incarnate Word was true God and the life of Mary in entering into Him, with the circulation of her blood, which is in Him, was divine. It flew into her as divine reflux, giving to Her life a glorious love toward God, sharing with her the harmony of the eternal glorification that He, the Incarnate Word gives to the Father. It was a divine not a natural sharing. Thus, Mary was inflamed with love and glorified God with all her life. That is why she expressed to St. Elisabeth this interior marvelous life in those simple word full of extraordinary meaning: *"My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."*

The infinite poured forth into Mary, and Mary lived every moment her meritorious *fiat*, offering her own life to the Infinite, who became man in her. The fullness of grace, in Her, grew admirably and even if grace is always free, nevertheless it continued to increase in her, because of her merits or in proportion to the merit of her dedication to the Divine Word incarnate in Her.

On the other hand, it is theologically assured that, an increase of grace accompanies our meritorious corresponding to grace. This correspondence is an act of love; the grace is an effusion of divine love. It would be nonsense to think that God does not answer to the love of his creature.

The merits of Mary were therefore inestimable, as inestimable were the graces that in Her were almost infinite. How is it possible that anyone can say that Mary was as any other woman? It is a foolish and an evil heresy that can only come from the diabolical spirit.

### c) The merits of Mary during her life on earth

If we consider Mary during her life on earth, her merits are also seen to be immediately as immeasurable. Her humility made her remain hidden, however the references to her in the Gospel, even if very few, are enough to make her known.

Tradition tells us that by the time she was three years old she was consecrated to God in the Temple, and there she consecrated her virginity to Him. From then on, we could say, her soul began to sing the *Magnificat* of her love to God. Her soul glorified the Lord and her immaculate Heart, praying fervently for the advent of the Redemption of mankind, exulted in God the Savior who would come, that He may come soon, while she longed for the accomplishment of all the divine promises. In her, converged all the people

and the prophecies of the Old Testament, as one sole sigh of her Heart, imploring the Redemption: *Her spirit exulted in God the Savior.*

She was only a humble little girl, but from the Holy of Holies the Lord looked down on her, filling her soul with that beatitude that only comes from the ineffable love of God in prayer. This intimate beatitude shined through her like a light of beauty and grace, and even then it made her be seen as blessed. It was her first canticle of beatitude, the first key that later on developed among the peoples, like a loving orchestra of praises, unto the harmony of her triumph in Paradise in body and soul: *For He looked upon his handmaid's lowliness; behold from now on all ages will call me blessed.* The life of Mary in the Temple was an unending sigh of love, a perpetual dedication to God; therefore, she had a wealth of merits.

She married St. Joseph out of dedication to the divine plan, but she married him, looking not to the man but to God, and in truth she said to the Angel: *"I do not know man"*. She did not look at St Joseph as a man but as a most pure expression of the Divine Will. She pronounced her *fiat* to the Archangel, who announced to her the admirable mystery of the Incarnation of the Word, and in her *fiat* there was the sublime merit of her obedience to the Divine Will.

She lived hidden in Nazareth and she did all housework for pure love of God, glorifying Him in the humility of her family life.

She was a constant praise to God: *Magnificat anima mea Dominum (My soul magnifies the Lord)*, in a condition of silent humility that found favor with God: *Respexit humilitatem ancilla suae (He has respected the humility of his handmaid)* She was the handmaid of the Lord, while she was the handmaid of her own house, in the beatitude of a full and peaceful union to the Divine Will. Everything of her admirable life was full of merits, thus, everything she did glorified God: *"My soul magnifies the Lord!"*

She had faith in the annunciation of the Archangel, faith so full of merits that St. Elisabeth, herself full of the Holy Spirit, exclaimed: *"Blessed are you who believed"*. A faith so great and full of merits, and yet in contrast to her humility, that caused her to be troubled by the words of the Archangel who greeted her with praises. She accepted, because of faith, all the plans of the Divine Will; because of her faith, all the divine marvels that made her great were accomplished.

The discomfort during her travel to Bethlehem, done in obedience to God, in following the decree of Caesar Augustus, were great merits for her sacrifices, since she was very close to giving birth. Mary accepted the poverty and the wretchedness of a stable in Bethlehem with an outburst of love to the Divine Will, which was immolation for her soul, knowing that in her womb there was the King of Glory. Her flight to Egypt, her life in Nazareth, the sorrowful loss of Jesus for three days, when they traveled to the Temple, the separation from her Son when He started His mission, for whom she is called the Sorrowful Mother: all became for Mary like a precious necklace of merits that increased her grace in a marvelous way.

Her faith in Jesus shone also at the wedding in Cana, when she lovingly called on Him to show Himself with His first miracle. She showed the thoughtful charity toward the wedding couple in need, as she had toward Elisabeth, going to her in haste when she knew she was in need.

These episodes, only briefly mentioned in the Gospel, show us how thoughtful was her charity toward her neighbors and how much merit is attached to her charity.

Who can ever count the bounty of her merits in the Passion of her Son, whom She offered as victim for our Redemption, in the torment of her Heart, pierced by a fiery sword? Was not her faith as strong in the Annunciation as on Calvary? In the Annunciation the message of the Archangel was in contrast with the humility of her Immaculate Heart; on Calvary the crucifixion of her Son was in extraordinary contrast with His Divine Majesty and His Divine Power that even provoked the insults of the Scribes, the Pharisees and the Priests: “*If he is the chosen one, the Messiah of God, come down from the cross and we will believe in him.*” “*He saved others; he cannot save himself*”. And yet Mary believed in the word of the Archangel with her *Fiat* of loving submission and believed in the plan of the Redemption in the bloody sacrifice on Calvary, with the *fiat* of her most sorrowful offer. Also on Calvary she sang her *Magnificat* in the sobbing tone of her most sorrowful maternal Heart, in harmony with her Son, as she sang in exultation and humility in Ain Karin, in harmony with St. Elisabeth.

The sublime harmony of these two canticles, musical variation, I would say, in major and minor keys, of the canticle of her soul, show once more the greatness of the merits of Mary. It is necessary to distinguish this admirable harmony of love to remain enraptured, rather than listening to an orchestra of most sweet strings, trumpets and clashing cymbals.

d) The praises of Elisabeth to Mary and the answer of Mary.  
Harmony of two choirs of love.

St. Elisabeth greeting Mary, filled by the Holy Spirit, cried out with a loud voice: “*How does it happen to me that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?*” It was like a major key of praise and thankfulness. Mary answered with a tone of love and thankfulness to God: “*My soul magnifies the Lord.*” St. Elisabeth recognized the exultation of the baby she had in her womb to the sanctifying voice of Mary’s greeting, and Mary attached the exultation to the Divine Redeemer she had in her womb, who living of her and in her, had gone from the exultation of her maternal heart into Elisabeth’s baby, sanctifying him: “*Exulted my spirit in God my Savior*”.

The greeting of Mary to St. Elisabeth was surely a word of benediction and congratulation: “Be you blessed by God, with the child you are carrying in your womb”, and to this greeting St. Elisabeth, *with a loud voice*, in the exultation of the mystery that was realized in Mary, exclaimed: *Blessed are you among women, and blessed the fruit of your womb*. She recognized, by the light of the Holy Spirit, the Divine Word incarnate in Mary and she called her: *Mother of my Lord*; she recognized the fruit of exulting sanctification of her son at the blessing brought by the greeting of Mary. She recognized her greatness because she had believed: *Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled*. It was like a paean of glorification to which the humble canticle of Mary, responded: *God has looked upon the lowliness of His handmaid; behold from now on all ages will call me blessed*.

St. Elisabeth, with loud voice, as of one who is exultant in an enthusiastic greatness, exalted Mary, and Mary glorified God: *The Mighty One has done great things for me*, and what you see in me is the greatness of the power of God. The sanctification of your son, when you felt his exultation in your womb, is fruit of the grace that sanctifies, because the name of God is holy, and in His name extends all sanctity. *Blessed are you*

among women, St. Elisabeth said to Mary, and Mary claimed this benediction of the mercy of God that would pass on through Her *from age to age on those who fear Him* and have faith.

These words are like a synthesis of all the grace that through Mary would spread on earth during all centuries to come, and that would acclaim her blessed among all women. St. Elisabeth exalted the faith of Mary: Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.

The Archangel in the name of God announced the immortal Kingdom of the Son who was going to be born of Her, and Mary in her most profound humility, claimed only for God the victorious regality of her Son: *He has shown might with his arm, dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart. He has thrown down the rulers from their throne of pride but lifted up the lowly. The hungry of God he has filled with good things; the ones who believed themselves rich he has sent away empty of riches.* And Mary added that the kingdom of her Son would be the fulfillment of the promises given to the Patriarchs, to Abraham and his spiritual descendants forever.

The canticle of Mary before St Elisabeth was an exaltation of the Lord in the loving outburst of her Immaculate Heart. It is the synthesis of all her life, her being, dedicated to God and thus filled with merits.

### c) The Magnificat of Calvary

On Calvary Mary sang her canticle in the depth of her Heart, transfixed by the bitterest pain, in union with the immolation of her Son.

It is a sublime canticle of praise and reparation to God for the redemption of mankind. She had offered to the Word of God that divine body as victim of love; her sacrifice was her greatest glorification to God, the *summa* (greatest and sublime) act of love of Mary, at the foot of the Cross. She repaired the sin of Eve at the foot of that fateful tree. Eva saw the fruit of the tree pleasing to the eye and good for food; Mary saw her divine fruit all disfigured and most bitter to her maternal Heart, and she sang with Him, Who was sacrificing Himself, dripping blood. She sang dripping bitter tears: *My soul glorifies the Lord.*

On Calvary the Redemption was accomplished, by the offering and the merits of the Redeemer; at whose favor <sup>26</sup>She was delivered from original sin and conceived Immaculate. It was the sorrowful canticle of the love of the Redeemer, reaping the first fruit of His sacrifice, begging forgiveness for the crucifiers. The forgiveness would pass from age to age, as a wave of mercy, saving first among the others the thief crucified at His right. Mary, moaning, exulted in God her Savior, thanking Him with the very richness of his Blood and with the flow of her tears. God looked at the humiliation of His incarnate Son and by his sacrifice forgave sinners. Jesus looking at his Mother, in the deep humiliation of her sorrow, mother of a person condemned to the most infamous and humiliating death by men, made her the mother of mercy for all the ages that would call her blessed, for her maternal goodness.

And Mary sang, moaning: *He looks to my lowliness*, and for Him sacrificed, the children of all ages that He gives to me *will call me blessed*. Jesus made her great at that

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<sup>26</sup> *Intuiti meritorum Christi* (favored with the merits of Christ) says the Church, that is: For the merits of Jesus seen in the eternal light of God, almost as an anticipated price of the privilege of Mary.

time, and the new *fiat* of Mary enriched her with unequalled sanctity, because He enriched her with infinite merits. Therefore Mary sang in exultation the power of her Son who made her great and her sanctity that enriched her with grace for all mankind, to attract them to the mercy of God: *The Mighty One has done great things for me and holy is his name. His mercy is from age to age, to those who fear him.*

On Calvary, Jesus was reduced to a worm, bleeding naked in his immolation, defeated and powerless in His crucified helplessness, to the point of receiving mockery by His crucifiers. And yet right then He was the Power vanquishing, the King defeating the kingdom and the kingdoms of Satan. There He raised Mary as Queen.

He gave out a cry of pain, because he was reduced as *one forsaken by God*, but this *forsaken* Man reconciled mankind to God, Who had forsaken mankind because of sin. He made mankind rich, calling it back to Himself and taking it back to God, in the spasms of the scorching thirst of His body and His Heart. He ended His work with the drink of gall and vinegar. With that, the prophecies were completed and He sealed His mercy, as though drawing from the purulent wound of fallen man, the last drop of his bitter sorrow, commending His soul into the Hands of the Father and placing into Them the souls of all redeemed peoples. He poured over them, after His death, in the excess of His mercy, the last drops of the blood from his Heart, transfixed by the sword and the water from his side, which sanctified eternally the water that would make them reborn.

Mary lived this mystery of love in her immense affliction. In union with Jesus sacrificed on the cross, she raised hymns to God. She sang in tears the *power* of those arms crucified, that in the extreme pain and humiliation defeated the overbearing arrogance of sin. She exalted in tears those transfixed feet, raised as on a throne of excruciating spasmodic pain. She exalted the power of His kingdom of love and His humiliation that shattered the thrones of the powerful of the world who were in opposition to the Omnipotent Sovereignty of God: *He has shown might with his arm, dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart. He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones but lifted up the lowly.*

Mary magnified the richness of that fountain, opened from the pierced Heart of her Son, and glorified in the Blood and Water that poured forth, the Eucharist, that would satisfy the hunger of God and the purifying Baptism that generated the Church, multiplying her sons in the unity of the mystical Body, leaving empty in their wretchedness those who are believed to be rich in wisdom and civilization, a world filled with the wretched and boisterous multitude of the lost ones: *The hunger for justice he has filled with good things; and the rich he has sent away empty.*

On the Cross was accomplished the mystery of mercy that God foretold in the Garden of Eden; from the Cross Jesus formed His chosen people, the true Israel; through the Cross Jesus fulfilled the promise to our fathers, to Abraham and to his descendants forever: the Catholic Church. Israel and Abraham were figures, prophetic shadows of the Redeemer. On Calvary, that shadow became reality and love: a tree with the bloodied fruit that was the second Adam, Jesus. A woman who picked up the fruit of Heaven, by the work of the Holy Spirit, brought it to maturity with her maternal life, matured on Calvary. Mary picked it up in her immense sorrow. She was the new Eve. In her sorrow, she became the mother of all the living in Jesus and for Jesus. She expiated the false sweetness of the previous Eve, who fell because she was tempted by the beauty and the appeal of the fruit. The infernal snake was also on Calvary, defeated by the sacrifice of

Jesus, crushed in his arrogant head by the humility of Mary. For this reason Mary ended her canticle in tears, just as she had ended it in exultation before St. Elisabeth when the mystery of the love of a God Who was offering Himself to the world, had begun to blossom in her womb: *He has helped Israel his servant, remembering his mercy according to his promise to our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever.*

In the face of this mystery of dedication, love and sacrifices, who would not believe in the admirable merits of Mary? St. Elisabeth exalted her because *she had believed* in the Archangel and her faith was of great merit. But on Calvary her faith had a greater merit because she believed and hoped against all human hope, much more than Abraham. In her anguish and sorrow for His death, she was the only creature who believed in His kingdom and in His resurrection. And She saw Him resurrected, she saw Him ascending into Heaven and her love ardently longed to go after him, yet she accepted to remain on earth for many more long years to assist the newborn Church. If to us the death of a dear one leaves emptiness in our life, for Mary to remain on earth was an incomparable loving sacrifice, immensely rich in merits.

Her prayers attracted the Holy Spirit to the Church; with her prayers and maternal assistance She gave strength to the Apostles in their Mission. When she was seventy-four year old, she did not look old but spiritualized and thus she was assumed in body and soul into Heaven by the love of her Son.

## Chapter XV

### **The soul beholds Mary Mother of God and the Glorious Humanity of Jesus Christ**

The soul in Purgatory brought by her out of Purgatory, felt that Mary was its most loving Mother. Once in Paradise, it contemplates her as the Queen, in the splendor of her glory.

Mary is all adorned by her merits, which in Her are the radiant splendor of incomparable beauty. The soul sees Her in her glory as Mother of God. In Her the glory of the Holy Spirit is still shining. He made her Mother of the Incarnate Word, and the power of the Most High *overshadowed* her; because of her divine maternity, in Her is overshadowed, the eternal procreation of the Word of God.

The Archangel, in fact, announcing to her the mystery of the Incarnation in her of the Word, told her two distinct things, in answer to the difficulty that Mary laid on him: that is, She could not bear a son because *she did not know man*. The Archangel told her that She would not have Him by a man, but by the work of the Holy Spirit and, in this miraculous maternity, the eternal paternity of God, who begets *ab aeterno* (eternally), the Eternal Word, would *overshadow* her. *The power of the Most High will overshadow you*.

Nobody can estimate the glory of Mary in Heaven, because of her divine maternity. The soul, seeing her, is enraptured; it rejoices, and in that light of most high perfection and incomparable beauty, understands better what it is the purest glory of God, toward which the soul itself aims with the most ardent love, that it may possess Him in eternal happiness.

Mary in Heaven is inseparable from Her Son, because in Heaven the bonds of love are not broken but they are bound in the divine light. She sits with her glorious body to the right of her Son, Who with His glorious Body, the Victor over death, on the right of His Father. The soul contemplates the Humanity of Jesus Christ in the splendor of His glory, the last step, so to speak, before its ascension to meet God, in the peaceful glory of the Most Holy Trinity.

Jesus even on earth was the most handsome among the sons of men. He always loved to be called *Son of man*, not only to affirm that He was true man just as He was also true God, but also to call to mind, with divine gratitude, His Mother from whom He had taken His humanity. He was in fact *only son of Mary* in His humanity, conceived without human intercourse, by the work of the Holy Spirit, and calling Himself *Son of man*, He could only be *Son* of Mary. He wanted forever to glorify His mother in perpetual gratitude, refuting, with that unique expression, the miserable heresy of those who infringe on the glory of His Mother.

It is typical of the regal manner of God to recompense every small thing done for Him by one of His creatures. Thus the Word of God, becoming man for love of fallen man, could not fail to recompense Mary, who gave Him His humanity, nor to recognize, during His life on earth, with regal gratitude, the gift that Mary gave of herself to Him with her admirable *fiat*. This is why He called Himself Son of man, He who was the Son of Mary.

The soul that ascends to God, finds itself before the glorious Humanity of Jesus. In Jesus, mankind was raised to the highest. Man was made new again, as he was, when God created him in Eden, dressed again not in clothes but in grace and glory. First fruit of those sleeping in death that will be resurrected, Jesus is the leader of the redeemed people, glorified in Paradise, availing themselves of all the fruit of the redemption. In Him and in His Humanity, hypostatically united in love to the Divine Person, man can recognize himself as *similar to God*, not in the proud arrogance of sin, but in full obedience to God, and dedication to Him, in the full immolation of self. For this reason Jesus keeps in His glorious Body His five wounds, as five shining suns, five arrows of love toward God and men.

In those wounds the soul recognizes the love that He has for the soul, because He was crucified for all His creatures and for each one in particular, just as the sun shines on everybody, but gives itself to each in particular. This sublime vision gives to the soul an ardent love of deepest gratitude, and a most loving humility, while preparing it to meet God in the most pure glory of the sovereign Trinity.

How handsome is Jesus in His glory!

His body is the most perfect work of art of the Eternal Love, conceived in the immaculate womb of the only creature, *the all beautiful*, grown in her bosom like a lily of the fields, bathed in celestial dew, caressed by the purest zephyr of the Eternal Love. How beautiful is Jesus! His hair is golden, His blue eyes, brilliant like stars, express the most tender love; from His side, cut open for love, His purest body radiates the infinite purity of His Heart. What beauty! He is an expression of all charity; He has the sweetness of a honeycomb, He is all love! *He is the Man-God*. In His Humanity and from His humanity, the attributes of God shine forth. They are like rays of His beauty; He is *omnipotent power*, yet He is all goodness; His majesty is love. He as *infinite Wisdom* who ordained everything in His creation, but His penetrating look, of infinite intelligence, is most pure simplicity. His doctrine shines forth, in that look, like the blooming of little lilies of the fields, in His humility, and little edelweiss in the Alps, at incomparable height, as they were on earth His parables and His teachings.

What an incomparable beauty is His! There is in Him the splendor of the love that made Him food for the souls in the Eucharistic gift, and His Humanity: Soul, Body, Blood and Divinity, life that He offers to enliven the soul and makes it rejoice. The veil of the white Host, that concealed Him, is now cleared like the curtain opening on a marvelous scene. It is the Eucharist of Paradise: the Body is offered, the Soul embraces, the Blood enliven, the Divinity exalts. What a marvel of love is Paradise!

### **In the light of the “Song of Songs”**

The soul sees Jesus, it is enraptured, benefits and delights in Him. The soul is with Him, lives *of* His love, and lives *in* His love: it is the Song of Songs but in a loving reality. On earth this love was covered, like a flower, by the sepals and the scales of the pale human love; like a flower concealed in the humid soil of exile. In Heaven it blooms most pure in all its colors and comes forth, in the sweetest odor of love that offers itself in the bliss of the eternal nuptials.



The soul sighs after the sight of that most enrapturing beauty: *Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth: for thy breasts are better than wine, smelling sweet of the best ointments* (Sg 1,1-2). In this elation of love the soul calls Him: Jesus! Jesus!

How many times the soul called Him on earth, but the harmony of his cry had so many false notes, of distrust, embittered cries, disappointed hopes, fears, harshness. Now it calls: Jesus! And *that name is as oil poured out*, all sweetness that spreads in it all caresses of love. The soul understands why He was loved by holy souls, sacrificed on earth because of love, a name that they pronounced among the tears of the sacrifices: *oil poured out is your name therefore the young maiden loved you* (Sg, 2). This observation rouses its love and makes it sigh: *Draw me: we will run after thee to the odor of thy ointments* (Sg, 3). And the perfumes are the warmth of His goodness that radiates from His majestic and sweetest countenance. The blessed soul is with Him, it possess Him; it is in His kingdom of love and full of joy consoles itself because now it is in His love: *The divine King has brought me into his storerooms: ... rejoice...exult...remembering with gratitude his caresses* He gave me on earth, making known to me his Passion, *caresses better than wine*, because now they give to me the joy to delight in Him. The soul understands completely the loving providence of the suffering and the tests of its earthly life, and why *the righteous love thee* and those still pilgrims on earth *love Him* (Sg 3-4).

The soul purified by the suffering of its earthly life and by the expiation of Purgatory, is now beautiful before the Divine Bridegroom. He is pleased with the soul, which journeyed faithfully on its way on earth, like *the company of chosen horsemen in Pharaoh's chariots* journeyed on the plains of Egypt, land that was exile and sorrow for the people of God. *Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtledove's* in the simplicity of your love; you are adorned with merits as the neck of a bride is adorned *your neck in jewels*, so I shall adorn you with glory, *will make pendants of gold inlaid with silver...*

The soul feels the welcome of the Divine Bridegroom, nothing else retains it from loving Him, *my nard sent forth its fragrance...* in the sweetness of love, it possesses Him in the joy of its spirit: *My beloved is to me a bundle of myrrh, a cluster of cypress my love is to me in the vineyards of Engaddy*, like those flowers in cluster, because He gifts me in so many ways, in His complete love, pleased with the beauty of the grace that adorns me.

*Behold you are fair, O my love, behold you are fair...* cries out the Bridegroom, now your look does not have even a shadow of doubt, you are Mine, in the simplicity of a love that has no reservations... *thy eyes are as those of doves* and the soul feels itself full of love pouring forth in Him. *Behold you are fair*, my beloved, it says to Him, *full of grace, lily of the valley* blooming from the earth for me, infinite sweetness; *his emblem over me is love, his left hand is under my head and his right hand shall embrace me...I am languishing with love* (Sg 1,8-15; 2 1-6). *My beloved to me, and I to him* (Sg 2,16) ....*I found him whom my heart loves, I took hold of him and would not let him go...*(Sg 3,4)...*O voice of my Beloved, O Eternal Word, Who came to us springing across the mountains* of your glory, and now you give Yourself to me...Oh joy of eternal happiness!...*The winter of the life on earth is gone, the rain of suffering has stopped ...Everything is blooming...* My Beloved to me, and I to Him, O happiness of a love without reservation.... O Paradise!

The Angels, the Saints, the blessed souls all exult with the soul for the outpouring of its love, bygone are the sorrows of life and the purification of Purgatory: *What is it that is coming up by the desert* of the world and the misery of Purgatory, *like a column of*

*smoke, of aromatical spices of myrrh for all that it suffered, and frankincense for the prayers elevated to God and of all the powders of the perfumer for the virtues that it practiced in life, the ardent love it had in Purgatory, a love yearning for God? It has been taken, victorious, as Solomon has made him a carriage surrounded with great strength; it overcame the fears in the night of earthly life and for the grace that adorn it in its triumph, it is as though on a throne of glory, it is like the seat of gold of Salomon, incorruptible like the wood of Lebanon, raised to purity as on a column of silver, resplendent of love as a roof of gold, its seat of purple cloth for the flame that kindles its love, and in the midst, in the heart, its framework inlaid with ivory decked with jewels for the merits during the suffering of its life. Thus in triumph the soul rises to Jesus, the true Salomon, in His glorious Humanity, that is like the diadem wherewith his Mother crowned him, in the day of his espousal with mankind, when He became man, on the day of the joy of his Heart, because He became man for love (Sg 3,6-11)*

The soul triumphant in glory makes the Heart of Jesus rejoice, and the Divine Heart, that radiates love from its wound pours forth in the soul, welcoming its beauty and says: *How beautiful art thou, my love, how beautiful art thou.* The soul looks at Him with loving simplicity and deep humility, radiant with love, as if covered by a veil that makes it more beautiful. The Divine Bridegroom is pleased with it: *thy eyes are doves' eyes, beside what is hidden within.* Your loving thoughts, as hair of your spirit, as hair that makes your head comely; they are full of peace, *Thy hair as a flocks of goats, which come up from mount Gilead* at the sun breeze. You are all a desire of love, all rich in merits, all sighs of charity as of words enlightened and most sweet, and all devotion to charity. (Sg.4, 1)

*You are all beautiful, my spouse, and there is not a spot in thee* <sup>27</sup>. You are all purified, *come: thou shalt be crowned, come,* you have passed all the trials; you defeated the enemies of your soul, who *as lions and leopards* assailed you during life. *Come, thou hast wounded my Heart,* O sister, my spouse. *Come, the sweet smell of your ointments* of virtue and grace are *above all aromatical spices.* The world cannot ruin you; its misery cannot penetrate you. *My sister, my spouse is a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up, you are all perfumes of virtue and of love.*

The soul recognizes each of its beauties from Jesus, because He is the one Who gives to His creatures the water that gushes forth to eternal life.

*You are a fountain of gardens: inexhaustible well of living waters* that made my *enclosed garden* bloom, which has gushed forth in my heart. If you are pleased with me *let my beloved come into his garden and eat the fruit of his apple trees.*

Jesus, in fact gathers from the soul the fruits of His divine grace, He gathers *my myrrh* the pains He suffered for the soul, and that made it beautiful; He gathers His *aromatical spices*, because His love perfumed the soul with graces; He gathers in His Divine Heart the soul *as honeycomb with my honey*, for the sweetness of the charity that He gave to it, and He gathers all the soul's love, *almost inebriating wine*, He gathers it *as his milk* because He fed it of Himself with the Eucharist and made it all beautiful. (Sg 5, 1)

The soul remembers its infidelities only to love Him the more. It remembers the times when Jesus left, thus to purify the soul. How many times Jesus knocked at its heart, how many times He showed Himself, full of passionate love: *Open to me, my sister, my*

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<sup>27</sup> In these expressions are synthesized and paraphrased the expressions of the Sacred Text that exalt the beauty of the bride, and have an all-spiritual meaning.

*love, my dove: for my head is full of dew and my locks of the drops of the night*, that is, I made Myself man for you and gathered the suffering of the night of the world to adorn you. But the soul so many times did not respond to His love. Jesus made Himself heard, *put his hand through the keyhole*, touching its heart, the only chance He had, through which He could still enter in it: compassion for its suffering. The soul was *moved*, was sorry, and wanted to open to Jesus with *hands dripping with myrrh*, crying. But Jesus, in order to purify the soul, withdrew. The soul, in its dark night, felt hurt; *they struck me: and wounded me: the keepers of the wall of God*, the Priests who did not understand it and judged the soul derelict, imaginative, stupid, while it was languishing with love and it prayed the souls of the heavenly Kingdom; *I adjure you, O daughters of Celestial Jerusalem, tell him that I languish with love* because in my darkness I desire only his love. (Sg 5,2-8).

The soul is completely purified of the past infidelities, fruit of foolhardiness, because it did not know the beauty of the love of Jesus, distracted by its earthly life. Now it sees Him, possesses Him, loves Him, with no shadows, He is its only goodness: *My Beloved is white and ruddy*, white in the splendor of His glory more than on Tabor, ruddy for His wounds of love, *chosen out of thousands*, its only good. *His head is as the finest gold...His eyes as doves upon brooks of waters*, because they pour forth grace. *His cheeks are as beds of aromatical spices*, because they breathe sweetness, *His lips are as lilies*, because they effuse purity; *His hands are most beautiful, are turned and as of gold*, full of grace, *full of hyacinths* ruddy, for their wounds. *His body as of ivory, is set with sapphires*, representing his Heart that appears through the open wound. *His legs rise as pillars of marble that is set upon bases of gold*, as pillars of a Temple in their majesty, because His body is the radiant Temple of the glory of the Father. *His form is that of Lebanon*, because of the height of His incomparable majesty; *it is excellent as the cedars*, because He stretches His arms as flowered branches, for the charity that embraces all in His love: *His mouth is sweetness itself and he is all lovely*. (Sg 5,10-15).

The soul contemplating the glorious Humanity of Jesus, contemplates His infinite kindness and it measures His love on what St. Paul calls *the dimensions* of charity (Eph 3,8-19): *the height, the depth, and breadth and the length*. These are, says St. Paul, the dimensions of the charity of the faithful, in the interior life, roused by the Holy Spirit: *the height*, because it reaches God; *the depth*, because it goes down to the poorest of the people; *the breadth* because it embraces all; *the length* because it lasts forever, steadfast at all times. The charity of Jesus, adds St. Paul, *is unsearchable riches*, hence it has in an outstanding way these dimensions, that enraptures the soul: the height, because He descended from Heaven in His infinite love; the depth, because He made Himself man, and took upon Himself all the sins of men to redeem them; the breadth, because He embraces all with no discriminations; the length because He embraces all centuries and lasts eternally for all the saved souls.

These dimensions of His love were overshadowed by the Cross itself, on which He offered His life, for the glory of God and the salvation of men. The longest arm of the Cross, in fact, is pointed toward Heaven, almost as an antenna transmitting to God the ineffable reparation and ardent love of His Son, immolated for His glory. The Cross was grounded on earth with the inferior part of the branch, to spread the treasures of the charity of the Heart of Jesus on earth and on the men He redeemed. The transverse pole was like two arms open in charity and on it lay the arms of Jesus in a charity that was an

embrace of mercy and peace. His arms were set toward East and West because His love covered all men and for all centuries, even into eternity.

Christ, exclaimed St. Paul, *yesterday, today and in all centuries*, and His charity is never ending: *Yesterday*, on the Cross, *today* in the Eucharist, *in the centuries*, for the eternal glory that He gives to the souls.

This is the mystery of love that the soul contemplates in the glorious Humanity of Christ, and therefore it does possess Him and belong to Him with no hindrances, because it is pure as a field of lilies; the love of Jesus is all effused in the soul, He is pleased with it, because it is a perfume of all grace and purity: *My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the bed of aromatical spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies. I to my Beloved, and my beloved to me, who feedeth among the lilies.* (Sg 6,1-2)

### **The soul in the presence of God**

The soul, contemplating the Humanity of Jesus, Eternal Son of God, ascends for Him to God, One and Triune. It finds itself immersed as in the clearest ocean of truth. It sees Him *face to face*, as He is; it is all enfolded in His light, as a crystal is inundated by the sun, or as a mirror that, even being small and limited, reflects the sun. What a marvelous surprise of love! The soul is not anymore in time but in eternity, it does not look at the past or the future, but it is before the Eternal, all in act, all present; it is welcomed by Him in happiness, according to its own capacity, however, small or big, it is all full of His glory, and it is all in Him.

God, God! ...The soul knew Him in faith, it recognized Him in His work of power, wisdom and in His love. It did confess Him, love Him, so that it could not become lost in the darkness but now it sees Him, possesses Him, and loves Him. What a joy!

God! The soul knew Him among the aberrations of poor human reason; it imagined Him, among the scrawls of man and the caricatures of Satan. The ideas that man fashioned for himself about God, were scrawls that claimed to be designs, or idols, in the horror of their shapes among the fetishists, or were in the shape of naked humanity, or material beauty, as among the ancient Greeks and the pagans. They were only diabolical caricatures of God. Satan, in his hate against God, since he could not remove the idea of God in man, made it either awful, or imaginative, or confined to the depravity of impurity, or reduced to the poor proportion of the human body. Where he saw that man was looking at the sun, the moon, the stars, in order to prevent him from going to the idea of the true God, beyond the sky, he stopped them at the adoration of the heavenly bodies, he stopped them at the sun, the moon, the stars...What a shame!

When the idols fell in the part of the world enlightened by Christianity, bathed in rivers of blood, Satan who, deceitfully, was making man adore himself in all the idols, then tried to keep his stupid lordship, extinguishing with persecutions, torments and cruel deaths, the voices of love who preached and confessed the reality of God. When he realized that those torments and deaths bore stronger witness to those voices of truth; he found his way in the poor concepts of the human mind, and among errors and heresies, tried to obliterate the truth, in the choking fog of the proud thought of man, who believed himself able to read, in the reflection of his muddy interior, the shining reflections of the

eternal Light and the eternal Truth. The errors against the faith mushroomed since the beginning of the Christian era, as poisonous fungus on the high poplars of truth.

### **From the haze of the earth to the Light of Truth**

The Church has been the unbending custodian of the truth. She saw the slaughters of souls instead of the slaughters of bodies as in the first persecutions. As the diabolical snares progressed, She saw slaughters of souls and slaughters of bodies. Today in infamous Communism, Satan tries to suppress the idea of God, and with the Protestant invasion, tries to distort Christ, just as somebody who presumes, with stupid brush-strokes to distort a highly artistic painting. Satan tries to break the vine-shoots of true life with the denial of Confession, Eucharist, and the Blessed Mother; to change souls into barren scrubs, doomed to fire; he rises up against Mary, just as God said in Eden: *I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.*

Even the most simple and ignorant soul went through its earthly life, even unknowing it, among these diabolical stench and if it was not completely unconsciously choked, it was upset.

The simplicity of the faith in many souls is lost because of the pressure of the perverted press and the deceitful spread of errors that poison them. In so many souls there is a kind of concealed resentment against God and His providence. In every suffering He is regarded as the one responsible to the point that there are people who even adopt the horror of blaspheming. The poison of the doubt sneaks into many souls, instilled by Satan, and makes souls perplexed, to say the least, about the loving reality of God, because they are attracted by the flow of errors and the aberrations of vices. Therefore people only consider the material aspect of life.

The soul went from the darkness of life to the light of the truth, through death. It found itself in the reality of the eternal life, in the evidence of the reality. Full of sins, it found in Purgatory, the reality of God. There, the soul saw the reality of God but as a loving justice and mercy, who in order to give Himself to it, had first to purify it. The soul did not have resentments but love in its torments of purification and it could not have the joy of infinite happiness. Now, completely purified, oriented in its ascension to God by the marvelous visions of Paradise, welcomed by Mary, enraptured by the vision of the Humanity of Jesus, bride of Him, it ascends for Him to God, to Him in His infinite reality, all in act, all present, all beauty without equal and it adores Him. Fully inflamed with love, it calls Him: O infinite Truth, O Infinite Wisdom, O Infinite Love!

On earth it only called Him with one word: *God, my God*. Satan made a generic word to include idols.

The Jews called Him *El-Elyòn, El-Shaddai*, that is the Highest, the Omnipotent; God called Himself *The One who is, Yahweh, the cause of all being, I Am, infinite and eternal*. He was invoked by the Jews the *God of the camps of Israel, Lord of Hosts: Yahweh èlohè Sabaoth* and by the Prophets with the expression: *God of celestial beings*, almost an army of His power arrayed in Heaven, God of the Angels, marvelous army of

His glory, instrument and manifestation of His omnipotence...God was invoked: *Adonai, Lord*, to mean His supreme dominion over all.

In the New Testament He is called, *Father, Abba, Pater*; He is recognized *Supreme King, Beginning and end of all things*, with a Greek expression: *Alpha et Omega*, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.

The soul in seeing Him, with the light of the glory that illuminates the vision of its intellect and enables it to see Him *face to face as He is*, adores Him in His Essence and in His Persons. Longing for Him it calls Him: *Love, my Love*, in the embrace of His infinite love.

The soul calls Him to be united to Him, and it contemplates Him for Who He is: *the Living Being*, according to the word of God Himself: *Ego sum qui sum*, (I am the One Who is), the One in whose essence is being. In fact the Living Being is *most simple, most perfect*, because He is the *Living Being*. He has all the perfection of being and therefore there is in Him all the perfection of His completely simple nature. He is in Himself *the Supreme Goodness*. He is in Himself the *infinite immutability, eternity, union, intellect, omnipotence, and beatitude*.

The soul is flooded in happiness, it sees the reality of its faith, that in its life on earth only saw it as a little shadow in its consent given to the faith of the Church: *I believe in everything that the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Mother Church believes and teaches*. The faith of the Church on the nature of God, proclaimed by the First Vatican Council, that the soul received by the union and its submission to the teachings of the Church even without realizing it, is the light that shines on the soul in the splendor of the truth, and makes its faith a heavenly delight.

The First Vatican Council (Section. 3, Ch 1 and following) expressed itself in the infallible way: *the Church believes that there is one true and living God...almighty, eternal, immeasurable, incomprehensible, infinite in will, understanding and every perfection. Since He is one, singular, completely simple and unchangeable spiritual substance, He must be declared to be in reality and in essence, distinct from the world*.

It is an incredible ray of light, before which all the stupid beliefs of pantheism disappear, and all the heresies that confused God with the world, making Him an indeterminate being, with no personality, practically a vague idea, with no real substance. The soul sees Him in His reality, truly alive. It contemplates Him in His infinite perfections, only truth, only reality, before Whom all creatures are as nothing, little speckles of lights that cannot be confused with Him. The soul sees Him in His infinity: *He is*, the living Being, Who has in Himself the being and the reason to be, completely simple, completely perfect, supreme goodness because He is Being itself, therefore the all of every perfections.

The mathematical axiom has, so to speak, the being and the reason of its own being, and its perfection are not distinguished from its being, because they are within in the boundaries of its existence, simple in the evidence of truth. In the same way God appears to the soul as an infinite axiom, who has in Himself the being and the reason of His being, in an infinite perfection that gives the soul the possibility of seeing a loving beatitude that never ends and enables to contemplate it, in the loving joy of those infinite perfections that inflame its love.

As the Theologians to form an idea about Him, consider the attributes of God in distinct ways, even if they are all together one thing in the essence of God and as the

mystics to inflame themselves with His love, contemplate each single attribute and perfection of God, the soul now does, delighting in God in an inexpressible beatitude, that encloses all satisfaction, enjoyment, happiness.

When people look at a view in nature, for example, the rising of the sun, they see it always different, and each time it is a new delight. The soul sees God in a way that allows it more and more to contemplate and love Him, and yet it is something always new, an ineffable delight, filled with love. It sees Him in His *simplicity*, without any composition, incorporeal, purely spiritual, infinite spirit, most pure, most perfect, in a way that in Him there is no composition of the essence or the attributes.

We say that human creatures have life, wisdom and so on. However God Himself is *wisdom*, He is *life*, He is *light*, He is *purity*; hence the soul does not contemplate Him as when contemplating some artistic property in an object, but it is immersed in an ocean of wisdom, life and of truth, in an ocean of light and purity. Contemplating the infinite most completely perfect simplicity, the soul contemplates His *immutability*, both as *substance*, and as *knowledge and will*. He knows all and He cannot know anything new, because He knows everything and He has decreed everything with His Divine Will. The soul contemplates Him *eternal*, with no beginning and no end, because God has in Himself *existing being* and the reason of the being; all *in the present act*, with no past nor future; *immense*, because He is present in everything and in every place, because He *knows everything*, He holds everything *with His power*, He embraces everything with *His essence*. The soul contemplates Him infinite, *completely infinite*, because He has the fullness of the being and the fullness of all perfections. It contemplates Him most holy, most merciful, most just of everything He disposes; *providence beyond measure*, because He takes care of everything, even the smallest things, *infinite love* that sees everything and provides for everything, even though it seems to us that He abandons some of His creatures.

### **O how wretched are we on earth!**

Here on earth we are so wretched in judging Divine Providence, because we ignore the motives of the Divine Love in each creature. However when the soul sees God in His infinite charity, then it understands the delicacy of His providence that disposes every human being toward its own eternal salvation, and all material creatures in perfect order. Only in Paradise can this order be understood and contemplated. O how poor are our ideas on God and His providence, living here on earth! O how small and stupid is our knowledge based on human science that has so much pride of itself in its thoughts and in its success!

Who did not hear the expression, for instance, that mathematics is an *exact science*, that cannot make mistakes and gives absolute assurance? The books of mathematics seem to transcend the personal opinion of the author himself, and they seem to be written with rigorous objectivity. And yet today, we sorrowfully recognize that the number of mistakes done by mathematicians is beyond imagination. Mr. Lecat, a Belgian mathematician, made public a collection of them in which he makes evident the poverty and the misery of the human intellect. So many times, like Satan, the soul dares to rise against God, even to deny His existence! (Article in the newspaper “*Il Popolo*” (“The People”) May 18, 1959 by Alcide Lari)

The theory of universal gravitation regarded as a scientific dogma, according to the latest research in the upper atmosphere also appears wrong. And if this happens in the branch of science that was believed infallible, what will it be in other poor human sciences?

The idols raised by human pride fall one after another before the infinite majesty of God, when the soul contemplates His reality, His perfection and glory. Does not this world appear to us, living here on earth, an accumulation of confusion, injustices, and blind fatality, violent phenomena that have the characteristic of irresponsible freaks? The soul instead, contemplating God in His divine attributes and His most wise providence, sees all the order, understands the reasons and recognizes the marvelous harmony. There is not one single atom that can be perceived as disorder; the same happens in regard to the moral order, where God, respecting the human freedom, allows so much evil. The soul sees the reason and the order of the divine permission and sees that all is love.

Do not the different works in the fields look like disorder and disgusting confusion for those who do not know the consequences? Here there are trees, tortured by the pruning, as if a massacred. There are heaps of trash and excrement left as a horror in the fields. The soil tilled and sowed by drills seems to be scars of careless nature. Instead all is the work of divine providence: the pruning renews the trees; trash and excrements become precious compost that fortify and feed the fields and enable them to produce flowers and fruits; in the drill holes are thrown the seeds that bloom and fill the fields with its crop.

Who can understand the goodness of God in the entire universe and even more in each event of our life? The blessed soul is all enlightened, therefore it can only adore and love. What a joy, what happiness!

Why do we not do on earth, during our mortal life, what we shall do in our eternity? Instead of lamenting about God, why do we not unite ourselves to the Divine Will and adoring Him, gather crops of merits that shall give us in Heaven a greater joy?

O my God, O infinite Charity, I bless you and I adore You in every suffering of my life!



## Chapter XVI

### The soul in the ineffable glory of the Most Holy Trinity

The soul, becoming closer to God and contemplating Him, has a new surprise that prepares it for the intimate union with God in eternal bliss: the soul finds itself in the light of the Most Holy Trinity. It arrived there by His mercy, the soul is now a temple of God, a temple of the Most Holy Trinity; it is a friend of God and due to sanctifying grace, it already possesses the loving rays of the Most Holy Trinity: the soul is the adoptive son of the Father, it is redeemed by the Son and sanctified by the Holy Spirit and now it loves Him with a love without any impediment. *If anyone love Me*, says Jesus (Jn 14,23) *my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and we will make our abode with him.* This happens on earth when our love for God is so poor, it happens much more in Paradise, when the love of the soul toward God is perfect, because it is all for God, with no impediments.

The soul in glory, contemplating God *as He is, face to face*, sees Him in the marvelous light of the Most Holy Trinity, only One in substance but triune in Persons. The soul believed in the most Holy Trinity by faith on earth and by the faith of the Church knew this great mystery. *We firmly believe and openly confess-* said the Church in the Forth Lateran Council (1215) *that there is only one true God, eternal and immense, omnipotent, unchangeable, incomprehensible, and ineffable, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; three Persons in truth, but one substance, or nature absolutely simple; the Father proceeding from no one, the Son from the Father only, and the Holy Ghost equally from both, always without beginning and end. The Father begetting, the Son begotten, and the Holy Ghost proceeding; consubstantial and coequal, co-omnipotent and coeternal,* This profession of faith for the soul is the very definition of the Most Holy Trinity, a mystery that it had to know for its own salvation: *the Most Holy Trinity is the mystery of the three divine Persons and each one of them singly. This Holy Trinity in its common essence undivided and in personal properties divided, the Father proceeding from no one, the Son from the Father only, and the Holy Ghost equally from both, always without beginning and end; the Father begetting, the Son begotten, and the Holy Ghost proceeding; consubstantial and coequal, co-omnipotent and coeternal through Moses, the holy prophets, and other servants gave to the human race at the most opportune intervals of time the doctrine of salvation.*

The soul even if it could not reach this theological definition, knew by the Catechism that there *is only One God, in three persons equal and distinct, called Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.* The soul believed it firmly, even without comprehending it. It believed the mystery like a student believes scientific definitions, because of the authority of the scientists who reveal it to him, and this faith is the reason why the students wants to learn it, introducing him to the light of science. The soul, from the very definition of the Most Holy Trinity, believes by the authority of God who revealed it and of the Church that teaches it. It is introduced by the marvelous light of Faith. The soul was baptized *in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit;* it was confirmed in the same adorable Name, its sins were forgiven and received great graces in the same Name; hence it is logical that it knows and believes the mystery of this Name.

## **From the shadows of faith, the soul beholds the infinite light of God, One and Triune**

It is not enough to have faith *in a God, in a Supreme Being*, as those often say who fancy they have a faith outside the Church. It is not possible to have a vague and foggy idea of God but *it is necessary to have the knowledge of the only and true God, God is true and only God only in the mystery of the Trinity*.

Also the Church, during the solemn times of the liturgy, that is the most shining expression of her faith, does not ask one to genuflect, or to bow one's head, as a sign of adoration simply because the name of God is mentioned, but only at the name of the Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

From the shadow of the faith received on earth, the soul beholds the infinite light of God One and Triune. It sees His splendor, beholds His reality, understands His logic, because every truth of faith, by the light of the mind that believes, and in the splendor of the reality that contemplates in Paradise, has these two key notes that enchant the soul in unsurpassable happiness: truth and logic.

In itself and in all creatures with reason, the soul had certain knowledge of the *person*, which vaguely studied in its earthly life. Does not every rational creature, even every little child repeat: *I*? And does not the child in speaking with others say: *You*? At the end, *I and You*, are expressions of our own and the others personality.

The 'persona' of man can be defined: *a unique substance, complete, in its own right and gifted with intellect*. It is called 'unique' substance, not universal nor abstract, that as such, is rather in the mind. It is called a '*complete substance*', that is, it does not need another substance to operate. It is referred to be a substance '*in its own right*', because living incommutably in himself and to himself, to whom in fact, are referred and ascribed every tasks he carries out. It is described as '*gifted with intellect*' because the person understands, and is the owner of his tasks, through his free will. Hence a person is one who works in his human nature and is distinguished by the nature, because he is the one who operates and the one to whom the operations are attributed.

## **God respects the human personality**

The crime of the communist heresy is to suppress the human personality, and to reduce man to poor and material parts of a monstrous State, centralizer of every intelligence, of the will and of every freedom: it is an horrible evil, illogical and contrary to human nature. Concentrating everything in the State, Communism becomes a concentration of everything together into the foolish ideas and ghastly will of one man only. God respects the human personality and human freedom, dealing with man, as Scripture says, with *extreme reverence*; instead atheist and brutal Communism reduce men to the most hopeless slavery! It is awful!

*God is truly Being* (St. Thomas, Sum Theol.1 q.29), not in the same way as a human being, but an *analogous* way and infinitely greater.

In the Divine Persons there is a real distinction that consists in the relation of the origin: the Father, the Son generated by the Father, the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son, as from one only essence. Therefore the Theologians say that the

person in God is a *Living relation*. The Son, for example, has the *relation of sonship, living*.

In more simple words, more appropriate for all kinds of intelligence: God, knowing Himself generates the Word, and the Word is not such as we see, a thought that we generated and finished, but, being infinite, lives, therefore He is a distinct person. God, knowing Himself, loves Himself, He infinitely loves Himself, and His love lives infinitely; thus the Holy Spirit is a real person, distinct from the Father and from the Word in one only, infinite nature. This is a most high mystery, which we could never have known without revelation by God Himself.

For the blessed soul the Trinity is an ocean of immense joy and eternal happiness.

### **The Trinity in the shadows of the Old Testament**

On earth, from the oldest times, this mystery was foreshadowed by a certain plurality of the only God. God, creating man said: *Let us make man to our image* (Gn 1,26). Reproaching Adam for his prevarication, God Said: *Behold, Adam is become as one of us* (Gn 3,22). God, punishing the pride of those who were building the Tower of Babel, said, as one who speaks to a gathering of people: *Come, let us go down, and there confound their tongue* (Gn 11,7). In the expression of benediction that we find in the Book of Numbers, the name of Yahweh is repeated three times (Nm 6,23-26). In the prophet Isaiah God is invoked three times: *Holy, Holy, Holy* (Is 6,1-9). Abraham, in the vale of Mambre had a manifestation of God in three persons who came close to him, and in them he adored the One True God (Gn 18).

The Jews had a perfect *monotheism*, believing in one God, and yet, in their holy books, they speak of the second person Whom they called *Messiah, Wisdom*. The Messiah is announced by the Prophets, He is called *Emmanuel*, that is *God is with us* and divine origin is attributed to Him, supreme majesty and other divine attributes that belong to the Incarnate Word. The Wisdom of God is indicated in the Old Testament as a divine person. The *Spirit of God* is often revealed in the Old Testament, and it is revealed as essence of life, from Whom is renewed the face of the earth, and He is revealed as distributor of celestial gifts.

### **In the New Testament the shadows became Light**

These shadows in the Old Testament became the light of truth in the New Testament, and will become the splendor of truth in the glory of Paradise.

The soul is before God, the infinite and most simple Being, *divine fountain*, as theology calls Him; with no beginning, because He is infinite Being in himself, and has in Himself the being and the reason to be. God, sempiternally intelligent, cannot but know Himself, because He is everything. Knowing himself infinitely generates the Word, infinite and living, hence a *Person*. Knowing Himself, He loves Himself immensely, because He knows Himself to be *Summum Bonum*, (The Highest Good), supreme

goodness, supreme perfection, and His infinite knowledge, His own Word, who is a living person, loves Him infinitely. There is one only essence of love between Father and Son from which the *Eternal Love* infinite and living proceeds, and therefore is a distinct Person.

It is a sublime marvel that the soul can see reflected in itself imperfectly. The soul, intelligent, understanding generates an idea, a concept, a mental word, which is not alive because it is finite. Pleased with its understanding, the soul loves it, it loves it so much that it remains attached to it; the soul lives, thinks and loves, one only spiritual nature in three manifestations. God is, understands and loves infinitely, one most simple nature, not in three acts, as in the case of man, but in one living triune Nature. Man is, understands and wants, because he wants what he loves. God is, understands, and loves, and His infinite Love is His Will.

### **The Most Holy Trinity in creation**

Man acts when he conceives an idea that he loves, and he acts on this idea, and carries out with his will. God spreads his goodness and creates for His infinite Word, and He does the creation by His infinite Will. He lives in creation, so to speak, by the rays of the Trinity. The soul contemplates the glory of the adorable Trinity, in His evidence, and enjoys almost seeing His reflection in creation just as a little girl would enjoy seeing the reflection of the sun among the leaves of a tree and the drops spraying from the fountain of a silent park, with a sweet west wind and the perfume of flowers. It is a sight for which the soul exults in God, One and Triune, giving Him glory and love.

Here it is the universe in its vast expanse, here is the mystery in which the little human mind becomes lost, believing it to be eternal, or confusing it with God, or throwing itself into the dark clouds of doubts. The soul sees in the universe the power of God, who creates it for the Word, and makes it harmonious for His Love: In the beginning God created heaven, and earth. *And the earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God moved over the waters. (Gn 1,1-2).* Then came light: it entered almost at the source, shone and radiated in its purity, a most sweet creature that has a source, it is emanation of the source, a light that made things clear: one in three and three in one: *God said, Be light made. And the light was made. (Gn 1,3)*

At His omnipotent voice, the waters were separated, and God created the firmament that is called Heaven. Power of unconceivable hurricanes, which sang the power of God, order that obeyed the Word of His infinite Wisdom, serenity of loving peace floating on gigantic waves: one in three and three in one (Gn 1,6-8). God gathered the water of the earth in basins, and had the earth rise from the waters: the earth, the sea and the shores that embraced it, in the order of its banks: one in three and three in one (Gn 1,9-10). God said to the wet land: *Let the earth bring forth green herbs, and such as may give seed, and fruit trees yielding fruits after its kind, which may have seeds in itself upon the earth (Gn 1,11)* And there sprang up from the virgin and fertile earth the gigantic primitive forests: soil that germinates, trees that wave their tops, fruits that renew themselves: these are one in three and three in one.

God said: *Let there be lights in the firmaments of heaven, to divide the day and the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years to shine in*

*the firmament of heaven and give light upon the earth. And so it was done. And God made two great lights: a greater light to rule the day; and a lesser light to rule the night, and the stars. And He set them in the firmament of heaven to shine upon the earth, and to rule the day and the night, and to divide the light and the darkness (Gn 1,14-18).*

In these seas of light, order and motions, how many splendors of the Power, Wisdom and Love of God: one in three and three in one!

God created the fish in the waters, the birds in the air, and the animal on the land. One animal life in three categories. And He created them male and female that they may grow and multiply. A principle generating, one generated and one love in the generation: *three in one and one in three*. All creation is full of the glory of God, One and Triune. The soul is in ecstasy and once more, by the light of glory immerses itself, so to speak, in the mystery of God: infinite Being per se, infinite Wisdom and infinite Love.

### **On earth, the torment of doubts**

Maybe many times the soul asked itself, in the anxiety of doubts and in the dark temptations of Satan: From whom is God? For which merit this God is most happy? What was His past, when nothing existed of what He Himself created?

The soul is bewildered, lost in the conceptions of its poor mind, just as a little girl seeing a spark, could understand the light of the sun, or for the trembling flickering of a little flame she would understand the course of the stars!

Evidence of God is in the soul. It sees Him in His infinite reality, infinite Being, by Himself, eternal, in act, all love. If the soul, in seeing someone who in himself had as his own, the nature of the father and the mother, would he ask him: "Where are you from?" He would understand that the person could not come from others but himself.

Merit is an act of virtue, and for a merit a reward is given. For instance, an act of charity has its reward, and the reward is the happiness it gives. God does not have, so to speak, the merit of an act of charity, *God is charity*, the whole essence of charity; *He is love, goodness, He is Wisdom, He is the sanctity by its own excellence*, He is whole in act in His infinite perfection. His very nature, most simple and infinite, is His eternal happiness. He exists in His eternity, gives His goodness creating, creates His reasoning creatures to whom He shows Himself in action, descends even to His creatures and makes Himself a man, receiving, suffering and death in His assumed humanity. We might say that He wanted to show Himself in action and in suffering, that man might not envy His greatness and His eternal happiness. Thus He gave Himself to man.

When nothing was there of what He created, there was everything in the prototypes and designs of His loving Will. His supreme life, supreme perfection, and His supreme Love, *He is Charity, Deus caritas est*. The soul, in the ocean of light that enfolds it, cannot help loving Him in His eternal bliss. It is God Himself who invites the soul. How can the soul doubt of God if now it can see Him? How could it lose itself in the idea of a being without a beginning, if it contemplates Him in His infinite reality, having in Himself the reason of His infinite Being? How could it confuse Him with created things, almost as though a fate and a matter were covering all things and permeating all matter as a blind force with very blind destiny, a very dark whim of molecules and atoms, whirling electrons, infinitesimal and colossal heavenly bodies, whirling in the void of boundless

space? Did not God make the souls to His image and for love of man made Himself a man, to be easier for His creature to comprehend Him?

### In Heaven, the Hallelujah of love

The soul contemplates God Himself; it sees Him in the reflections that from Him are effused in itself. The soul also is spirit, it also understands, wants, loves; it also lives and it has in itself the reason of its life, because grace, that is the Most Holy Trinity, lives in the soul, continuously sustaining it. God continues in it His creative act, which is the reason for its immortal being. The soul is embraced by the infinite love of God, Who welcoming the soul, descends upon it, is pleased with it who is His own image, just as *ab aeterno* He was delighted in Himself through His infinite Word.

What a mystery of love envelops the soul; what a light of charity by which the soul is fully penetrated! How could it not understand the reality of God, and yet remain in the shadow of anxieties of its earthly life, if the soul is with Him, Who fondles it in a nuptial love? Which little girl caressed and fondled by her mother with embraces of love, could have doubts about her or ask her: Where are you coming from, who made you be born, who made you good, who made you beautiful? The soul immerses itself in God, and God gives Himself to it. It is an embrace of love that does not have any other beginning but love, does not have any other irrefutable certainty but love, does not have any other searching investigation but love and love does not investigate, but lives in the happiness of the evidence!

God embracing the soul says: *Thou art beautiful, O my love, sweet and comely as Jerusalem: terrible as an army set in array* (Sg 6,3), *Beautiful* because of grace, *sweet and comely as Jerusalem* because you are His living temple, *terrible as an army set in array* because victorious over the evil and reaching the Eternal Love. *Turn your eyes from me*, your eyes full of love, because *they torment me*<sup>28</sup> (Sg 4-6). And God praises the soul as a bridegroom in love praises the beauty of the bride (Sg 6, 5-8).

*Come to me*, Come up from the darkness of your earthly life and the dark shadow of Purgatory, *she that comes forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in array* (Sg 6,9). Come to me, my love, *as morning rising*, that begins to shine for me, sun of love; *as moon* that shines amid the darkness of the night of its past; *as sun* that shines in my light, with the strength of the loving conquest; Come! *How beautiful and comely, my dearest...you are like a palm tree waving in triumph, as clusters of the vine* distilling sweetness, *in the perfume* of the grace that enriches you, intoxicated and intoxicating with love (Sg 7, 1-9)

And the soul dashes toward God, giving itself to Him: *I to my beloved, and his turning is toward me...Come my beloved...let us go forth into the fields...let us abide...I will take hold of thee...His right hand shall embrace me...put me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm...the lamps thereof are fire and flame. Many waters cannot quench charity...A wall...built upon bulwarks of silver, divides me from the miseries of my past life, ...a door joined together with boards of cedar, incorruptible is forever*

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<sup>28</sup> The Vulgate says, “*Turn your eyes from me, for they make me flee away*” which in loving terms mean: “*the strong emotion is too much for me*”, in the emotion of love.

*closed on time...I found in you, my God, peace, I am with you forever, singing to You the eternal alleluia of eternal happiness...Hallelujah! (Sg 7,10; 8, 1-14)*

The soul is completely happy, its joy is boundless and to his loving song all Paradise echoes, praising and loving God. This is the feast in Heaven, about which Jesus spoke, for a soul that is saved. All is light in Paradise, everything is most clear in the infinite glory of God. The sufferings on earth that so often clouded the soul, appear like corymbs of flower that begin to bud, or as a bunch of matured fruits in the splendor of eternity. What a joy! Did the sacrifices of the animals in the old Law not resemble cruelty on earth, and did not the sacrifice of the Cross look terrible and almost merciless? Yet in Heaven it appears that all the sacrifices were a shadow and a figure of that greatest testimony of love of God toward His creatures, and the sacrifice of the Cross was the accomplishment of this love. On account of the sacrifices of animals, creatures without reason were also elevated, and their immolation changed the poor animal life into a canticle, a most sweet sound just as if taken out from a poor chord. All is light, all is reason of eternal happiness; all is order for justice, all is effusion of mercy and ecstasy of love. Hallelujah! It is not a blind praise, it does not pour out anymore like a strained sound, from the anguish of the heart and the shadow of faith. It is an infinite praise that brings in the infinite reality of God, in His power, wisdom and His love. Hallelujah!

### **The meeting with the Immaculate Mary**

If this is the encounter of a soul with the adorable Trinity, if this is the triumphant happiness of a soul who was once blotted by original sin, a sinner redeemed by the Blood of Jesus, stained by so many miseries and purified in Purgatory, what must have been *the encounter of Mary with the adorable Trinity*? She is not only the immaculate, but She is *the Immaculate Conception*, all pure, all beautiful; She is the most resplendent reflection of the infinite purity of God. She is not only before God, *She is into the Most Holy Trinity*, as She said appearing on earth: Chosen by God the Father, chosen by eternal decree, Mother of the Incarnate Word, Bride of the Holy Spirit. She is not a spark of a fire of love, She is the flame of love in the infinite flame; She is the hosanna praises in the infinite glory of God; She is a creature but completely overshadowed thus resplendent in the light of the Holy Spirit: *Magnificat anima mea Dominum (My soul doth magnify the Lord!)* All the fruits of the Redemption shine in Her. She is all in the light of the Incarnate Word, and the Incarnate Word is all hers because She is His mother: *My spirit rejoices in God my Savior*. She is humble and the highest of all creatures, and God rejoiced in her sublime littleness and completely united her to Himself: *He looked upon His handmaid's lowliness*. She is in ecstasy in the embrace of the Infinite Love, and all the Heavens, rejoicing in her, acclaim Her blessed: *from now on will all ages call me blessed*. The Power of God shines forth in her and His sanctity that made her great and most holy. She is the light reflecting the infinite power and sanctity of God. She makes rejoice all those who have attained full comprehension of the eternal majesty of God: *the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is His name*.

Mary gathered in her Heart the mercy of God on Calvary, she effused it on all generations, and makes it resplendent in all the souls saved by the mercy of God: *His mercy is from age to age to those who fear God*. She represents the victory of God over

Hell: *He has shown might with his arm, dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart.* The arrogant and miserable thrones of the proud are destroyed, the humility in Her is exalted to the highest glory and God crowns Her, Queen of Heaven and Earth: *He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones and lifted up the lowly.* He exalted humility in Her, because her greatness has no boundary, in loving and adoring God; She is not simply humble, She is the humility itself. In Her were accomplished all the promises of God; all the figures and all the prophecies were accomplished in her Maternity, all the aspirations of the ages were accomplished in her Son. She is not only a blessed in eternity, She is the Queen in the beatitude of Paradise. She is the Queen of maternal mercy for all those still wayfarers on earth. She is the loving Queen of all the souls who are in the purification of Purgatory. God embraces her, with the triumphant embrace over death, because her body is assumed with her soul into Heaven.

Mary, once more gives herself in deep humility, as the handmaid in the plan of His Infinite Love in creation and in all ages: *Here is the handmaid of the Lord, Ecce ancilla Domini;* and the happiness of Mary becomes the joy and happiness of the Angels and the Saints in the most grand feast in Paradise, a triumphant harmony that invites to the praise of the Lord.

The Word, eternal praise of God, becoming man in Her, made her soul the praise of God: *Magnificat anima mea Dominum, My soul magnifies the Lord.* The harmony of this praise of the highest chosen creature spreads as an invitation to love for every creature. In heaven, on earth, and in every corner of the universe: *Praise the Lord from the heavens: give praise in the heights. Praise him all his angels: praise him all his hosts* marvelous display of His power. *Praise him, O sun and moon: praise him stars and light. Praise him heavens of heavens, praise Him and let the waters that are above the heavens* and all the phenomena that come true, and all creatures that live, *let them all praise the name of the Lord, for he spoke, and they were made: he commanded and they were created.*

Give praise *You lightning, and hail, snow and clouds, storm winds that fulfill his command; Give praise You mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars; Give praise You animals wild and tame, you creatures that crawl and fly; Give praise you kings of the earth and all peoples: princes and all judges of the earth; Give praise young men and women too; old and young alike. Praise the name of the Lord: for his name alone is exalted. The praise of the Lord is above heaven and earth: and he has exalted the horn of his people to the glory of all his faithful, all the people near to their God. (Ps 148)*

The exultant voice of love of the Blessed in Heaven is like a resounding concert, *a blast upon the horn, with harp and lyre; like crashing cymbals, and melodious hosannas, like resounding cymbals, everything that has breath give praise to the Lord! (Ps150).*

### **The applause of the Blessed**

The applause of the Blessed is like a loving canticle to the mercy of God, to his infinite goodness that fills them all with the greatest rejoicing!



All the shadows that on earth covered the divine goodness are dispelled by the vision of his infinite goodness; all the joys won are fruit of His mercy. A canticle of praise bursts from all the choirs of the Blessed, in gratitude for the goodness and the mercy of God for all His most loving Providence:

*Praise the Lord, who is good, for his mercy endures forever.*

*Praise the God of gods, for his mercy endures forever.*

*Praise the Lord of lords, for his mercy endures forever.*

*Who alone has done great wonders, for his mercy endures forever.*

*Who skillfully made the heavens, for his mercy endures forever.*

*Who established the earth above the waters, for his mercy endures forever.*

*Who made the great lights, for his mercy endures forever.*

*The sun to rule the day, for his mercy endures forever.*

*The moon and stars to rule the night, for his mercy endures forever.*

*Who struck down the firstborn of Egypt, for his mercy endures forever.*

*For he was mindful of us in our affliction: for his mercy endures forever.*

*And he redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy endures forever.*

*And gives food to all flesh: for his mercy endures forever.*

*Give glory to the God of heaven: for his mercy endures forever. (Ps 136)*

The canticle of the Blessed to the mercy of God is the act of loving gratitude to the Infinite Love that gives them an overwhelming happiness, with no fear of any evil. Time is past; all painful memories have evaporated as fog before the sunshine. The joy is full, the glory is immortal, and the happiness is eternal. Halleluiah!

### **Save us, Jesus, take us to Paradise!**

We are still wayfarers in this earthly exile, and we cry among so many dangers, save us, O Jesus!

You came on earth to save us and you enriched us with the precious gift of your Blood, you are with us in the Sacrament of Your love, You keep watch like a loving mother in Your Tabernacle, do not allow us to be ungrateful toward your love, save us, O Jesus!

Save us, O Jesus, bring us to Heaven! Help our weakness, dry our bitter tears, console our heart full of sorrows, free us from the dangers of our soul, save us, save us, bring us to Heaven!

To you, O Mary, we were entrusted on Calvary, we are your children, you are our Mother, do not abandon us because we are ungrateful children, embraced by you we cannot perish, because you are the mother of mercy. Save us, Mary, bring us to Paradise!

O my Jesus, O Mother Mary, we are in this vale of tears. Allow us to live united to your Divine Will, that our vale may bloom with flowers, our tears may become gems, and our desolate heart may expand in eternal hope. Save us, bring us to Paradise!

## My farewell to earth

Now, not knowing when the last day of my life will be, I anticipate with all my heart, united with your Divine Will, my farewell to earth, on which I walked with so much pain and where I was a poor nothing. I have been always fully aware of my nothingness. Poverty and humiliation have been my constant companions, even in my early youth. I worked for You among thousands of difficulties, trusting always in You and in the help of my most dear Mother Mary.

Good-bye! Good-bye, O poor earth ravaged by thousands of miseries, good-bye; may the blessing of God descend upon you. May the Lord be praised in every corner of the earth, in every house may peace reign. Good-bye! I shall see you from afar, up above, like an atom floating in space, and still I shall bless you. Good-bye!

Good-bye, O holy, Roman Catholic, Apostolic Church, mother of mine and mother of souls. When I was born, you generated me to grace, when I shall die, you shall conceive me into glory by the infinite mercy of God. Good-bye to all of you, who are still wayfarers on this earth, hail to you, holy souls triumphant in Heaven, to whom I hope to be joined at my death.

Good-bye, O christening font, that made a Christian out of me, a son of God, brother of Jesus, temple of the Holy Spirit, son of Mary. Good-bye!

Good-bye, O holy confessional, where over and over again grace was renewed in me and increased the embrace of Divine Mercy!

Good-bye, Tabernacle of my Church, waiting for me every morning, and every morning opening for me. You are depository of my joys and sorrows, of my poor love and my filial trust, my sighs and my hopes... good-bye!

Good-bye, O holy Church in which I was consecrated Priest... Good-bye house in which I was educated into the divine love and where I reached the dignity of the priesthood.... Good-bye, sweet memories of my humiliated life, the best life I could ever have on earth, consecrating myself totally to God.

Good-bye, poor home of mine, poor little room of mine, where among the moans of pain, in my high and deepest humiliation, I worked for the glory of God. Good-bye little hermitage in which I meditated over my nothingness and my misery; where I made amends with Jesus and for Jesus for the sins of the souls and the sins of my own soul. Good-bye!

Good-bye, streets on which I walked every day in my youth and later on, bent down in my old age, I offered myself to Jesus and brought Jesus to souls. Good-bye!

I leave this earth with my soul full of love for Jesus and for souls. I never had a feeling of grudge or dislike toward who ever hurt me. I never had the need to forgive, because the only one who needed to be forgiven was myself. I loved all those who hampered my way in glorifying God, thinking that they were right to get in my way, who was such an unworthy being, of such ignorance and misery, thus they made me always well aware that I was the most miserable of all.

I shall die!...At the sound of the sorrowful bell, there will not be anything of me but my poor mortal remains, the last song of my insignificance to the glory of God, who is everything! ..*Only God!* I shall say with my death... *I Trust in You*, I shall say in my decay, in the hope of the final resurrection... Good-bye forever my life on earth... Good-bye!

They shall close me in a casket, and I would like it to be very poor, made of raw wood. Maybe it shall be wet from the tears of charity of those who put up with me and had compassion on me during my life. The cover shall be lowered on that casket as for a last good-bye... and I shall disappear from all human eyes to be received by a poor grave.

If you shall knock on my tomb - *[as of today, in 2008, faithful by the thousands go to the tomb of Don Dolindo, knocking and asking his intercession.]* – I shall still say: *I trust in God! Trust in God!*

Be eternal glory to You, my God, only to You in my nothingness!

When my casket shall be blessed, smile on me, O Jesus, from your Tabernacle, embrace me still with your mercy, seal me still with your love; tell me, Jesus, *I am the resurrection and the life!*

And let every cell of mine, decomposing in the ground, sing my nothingness and Your glory!

Don Dolindo Ruotolo, Priest

Naples, Italy 1959