

MARIA VALTORTA READERS GROUP

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'Lord, I do not ask You for the glory of Your visions, but for the grace to love You more and more.' (*Notebooks 1944*, p. 439)

*'When we pray, we speak to God,
But when we read, God speaks to us.'*
– St Jerome



'Publish this work as it is... whoever reads it will understand...'
– Pope Pius XII

PRAYING WITH MARIA VALTORTA

Prayer to Our Lady of Sorrows. Save us, O Mary from the fury of our enemies! Save our churches and our houses. [...] From your pierced Heart, let fall on us the grace of salvation for this little village, for our country, and for the entire world that is dying amid the ruins that were brought about by its rejection of Heaven. Holy Mary, pray for us.

(*Maria Valtorta Prayers*, pp.24-5)

MARIA VALTORTA'S MISSION

Jesus says: 'Do you know what you are doing by writing? My Will. The will for the mission I want you to perform. *Even if a single soul, one alone, were to find the way through this effort of yours willed by Me, the exertion, which to human sight seems inhuman, would be justified.*' (***Notebooks 1943*, p. 229**)

EDITORIAL

Dear Maria Valtorta Readers,
Since the 1960s when evil truly started to manifest itself more openly, the media has presented this lack of morality under the guise of human rights, individual freedom or informed conscience. Furthermore, the media that presents lifestyle and fashion as a celebration of how far society has come also presents religion as outdated or irrelevant. Regarding COVID-19, the media has been reporting its impact from different perspectives. Here in Melbourne, Australia, we are back to a more severe stage 4 lockdown. Among other things, there are no Masses, no sacraments for the many babies that are still being born and no sacraments for the dying. When I read an international report on Melbourne's situation, once again, it appeared to be an attempt to criticise Melbourne's leadership or to deflect the attention away from their own country's government handling. In both situations, the media was either celebrated for presenting the 'truth' or criticised for censoring the 'truth'. In my mind, it was no

coincidence that the RE unit we were studying was also about the media and it how presented God. However, I hope you find the content of the **Catherine's Classroom** column uplifting in this regard. **Supplement:** The theme is the Rosary because our priests and various apostolates are inviting and beckoning people to pray either a rosary, a full rosary or the 54-day rosary in these times. However this edition will not focus on Maria Valtorta's scriptural references of each mystery which has already been presented. This edition presents passages on Maria & the Rosary, and **Our Lady's commentary & explanation** on many of the Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries.

Growing in faith,
Catherine Loft (catherine@valtorta.org.au)

DAVID'S JOURNEY - CONTINUES

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

About 17 years ago I compiled a booklet of passages from Maria Valtorta's writings entitled *Marriage and Family Life*. Since then, some 500 copies of this 80-page booklet have been purchased by Valtorta readers in Australia and other countries. Before its publication, I attended a Seminar here in Australia on the Scriptural basis for Marriage conducted by an American Jesuit professor who teaches in Rome. I found that all of the Scriptural passages he listed were referred to in the text of my little booklet.

One particular feedback was received by a Jesuit priest in Singapore – the (now late) Father Tom O'Neill - who said that he was giving copies of the booklet to participants in marriage preparation courses he conducted.

The booklet explored a number of themes on marriage, highlighting some fundamental ideals of marriage – especially in its Sacramental basis. These include departures from these ideals, role models to be guided by (especially Mary and Joseph), and the fruits of marriage (particularly its

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children). A passage which helps to summarise the booklet's teachings is what Jesus tells us:

'Marriage is a grave and holy act. And to prove that, I took part at a wedding and worked My first miracle there (*Jn 2:1-11*). But woe if it degenerates into lust and whim. Let marriage, the natural contract between man and woman, be elevated to a spiritual contract, by which the souls of two people who love each other swear to serve the Lord in reciprocal love, offered to the Lord in obedience to His order of procreation, to give children to the Lord.' (**The Poem, Vol. 5, p. 846; The Gospel, Vol. 10, p. 417**).

Now I want to tell of a personal experience relating to marriage. Back in 1992, I first heard about Maria Valtorta from a group I joined while on a pilgrimage to Medjugorje, Half of the group members were avid readers of her writings, so back in Australia I started to read *The Poem of the Man-God*, and as a university researcher I began taking notes. My first reading of the five volumes took about nine months, and enraptured, I read them again – taking about six months. Then I realized something which changed my life.

As a lapsed Catholic and then in a second marriage – outside the church – I realised that I had not even taken a single note of the many passages in the books which indicated that for a Catholic, a marriage outside the Church is not Sacramental, and is considered invalid. After a further 18 months in that relationship, I faced that situation with my wife and, at that very time, she told me that she needed "space" from me, to deal with some childhood events in her life which she had begun to remember.

In mutual agreement, we decided to end our relationship. Subsequently, an extraordinary discovery was revealed to me. From our previous marriages, my wife and I each had five children, and the genders of my children were mirrored in those of my wife's: I had a son, a daughter, then three sons. She had three daughters, a son and then a daughter. Also, a certain vital characteristic possessed by my youngest son was mirrored in my wife's eldest daughter.

It seems that in the pursuit of my second marriage, with the "discovery" of what I found in Maria Valtorta's writings, I had been given a second chance – to rectify the marriage disorder which had occurred!

Finally, I am happy to report that the friendship with both my first and second wives are both in good order. Thanks be to God!

David Murray (david@valtorta.org.au)

[Ed: Supplement # 88 is also on the theme of Marriage. This is available on our website archives http://www.valtorta.org.au/Newsletters/MVRG_Supplement_088.pdf]

CATHERINE'S CLASSROOM

With my RE class of 13-year-olds, we researched all the names, symbols and images of God the Father in Scripture of which there were so many. Then we looked at how God was depicted visually through which the class began to understand why artists would interpret God in that way - always with a kind and loving gaze but generally elderly. We read that God the Father was the creator, the loving parent, the provider, all powerful, eternal, the light, faithful and unchanging but we still did not know what God looked like so I read them an excerpt from Maria Valtorta's work where she describes the closest she was shown of God the Father's image which Jesus told her she needed 'to see with the mind's eye.'

Maria says: I received the intellectual vision of the 'love of the Father'. I say 'love of the Father' because I could not say I have seen the Eternal Father just as I see the Son: humanly. But I really did see Him. [...] I could now say I have seen an immense Light, of incomparable joy, from which there shone forth an *idea of a face*. I say 'idea' because it was as if the immense light were concealing it with layers and layers of splendour so as to make me able to see it with my poor human eye. A face leaning over me and two arms extended as if to protect me and embrace me. Nothing else. What I glimpsed was of incomparable beauty. The living gaze of a perennial youthfulness, also infused with the dignity of mature age and the goodness of the look of an old man. The visage was equally majestic, but without signs of old age or excessive youth. A face perfect in age and form. [...] And I [...] feel myself being penetrated, warmed, and made safe by it. Blessed be the Most High, who allows me to comprehend his most holy paternity [...]. (**Notebooks 1943, pp.484-5**)

Then it was time to examine how the media presented God the Father. Oh, how I wanted to show them an episode of *Highway to Heaven* where Jonathan helps people and always looks up knowingly at God with a warm grin for His loving hand in each episode. Or *Touched by an Angel* where Monica in her angelic glow always begins with 'I have been sent to tell you that God loves you...' Instead, the movie **Evan Almighty** was set on the course. I knew that this would be too difficult to watch together through remote learning because we were back in lockdown so I emailed the parents inviting them to watch it with their sons. In preparation, we first examined the Scriptural account of Noah's Ark closely. Then they were asked to watch the movie. In the class that was to follow, they pointed out the similarities and differences. However, the main question was whether or not the movie presented anything that may show disrespect towards God or may be offensive to believers through the language, images or content. The students thought long and hard and answered in the

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negative. God the Father was shown in a respectful light. When they were asked if this movie would accurately inform people about God, if it would bring people back to God or bring people closer to God, then they really had a lot to say. They assured me that God was presented as omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. God was presented as having patience and a sense of humour. God was presented as knowing all about us since we were born. God was presented as truly being with us daily, trying to protect us. God kept His promise that He would not destroy the world again by water. They commented that people would not necessarily watch religious movies but this one would sneak into homes under the genre of comedy so people could come to know God if they were not believers. Others said that believers would be reminded of God and perhaps draw closer to Him. The class was right because the emails I received from parents after they viewed it were very warming saying the movie enhanced their family time and got them talking about God through the set questions.

I didn't mention the sacrilege and disrespect presented by the media, the arts and movies through the language and content on Jesus and Mary because they were young and, at this stage, it was more important for them to know that from the very beginning of human life in the Old Testament, God has always been a completely loving Father. However, until I would meet them again in RE classes in their later secondary years, I did end this lesson with a reminder to be always be mindful and alert of how all the three persons of God and Mary are presented in the media and in the world around them.

I planted the seed.

Catherine (catherine@valtorta.org.au)

MARIA VALTORTA GATHERING 2020

I deferred mentioning the possibility of the annual Maria Valtorta Gathering here in Melbourne, Australia for as long as I could but it is with heartfelt sadness it will not be taking place in October this year. So I ask that we have a Worldwide Spiritual Gathering 2020 instead. Please mark your Calendars for 12 October and pray a rosary for all Maria Valtorta Readers, for people who are suffering as a result of the COVID-19, and for our Churches to be re-opened for the spiritual and mental well-being of all Christians.

LETTERS

Thanks for another amazing bulletin. Those passages on St Joseph were so beautiful and really touched the heart. Regarding your segment 'Catherine's Classroom', I think you are planting seeds. Even if they don't practice the faith now for

whatever reason, you are giving them something to go back to if they should decide to do so later in life. I remember a bishop once saying that, and I've remembered it ever since ... we're at least giving the young ones something to go back to later on.

(Carmel, Australia)

I vaguely remember reading that Maria wrote something about Our Lord desiring something like a devotion to the 12 Sorrows of Mary...does this ring a bell? If so, has anyone ever thought of making a booklet on it?

(Terry, USA)

Ed: These are invaluable questions. Re: the booklet, Supplement #91 does cover the sorrows from the work but it would be difficult to do a booklet without breaking copyright laws as so much of the Passion, Death and Burial of Jesus would have to be included. Furthermore, taking excerpts and abridging it would mean being in danger of not presenting such a huge theme in context too as underlined below.)

Re: the number of Sorrows. You are quite right regarding a reference to more than seven sorrows – (Jesus says:) 'I want this set of texts to be arranged in the following way.

First Sorrow: The Presentation in the Temple (Simeon's prophecy)

Second Sorrow: The Stay in the Land of Egypt

Third Sorrow: My Disappearing in the Temple

Fourth Sorrow: The Death of St. Joseph

Fifth Sorrow: My Farewell in Nazareth. Then the dictation on February 10, 1944

Sixth Sorrow: The description of the vision on February 13 four points: the synagogue, the house in Nazareth, Jesus' preaching in the synagogue, and the conversation with his Mother after having fled from Nazareth)

Seventh Sorrow: The vision on February 14. Then the dictation on February 15. Then the dictation on February 16.

Eighth Sorrow: The Paschal Supper

Ninth Sorrow: The Passion, taking the vision on February 11, 1944 and connecting it with the one on February 18.

Tenth Sorrow: The Burial of Jesus (February 19). Then the vision and dictation on February 20. The vision and dictation on February 22 as far as the point which is marked in this way. The other dictation, on Jesus' being found again in the Temple, should be set in its proper place, under the heading of the Third Sorrow.

Father [Migliorini] shall first prepare the usual collection of texts for himself and for you, and you shall correct it so that *not even* one mistake will remain. He shall then prepare the copies he wants for others. Every vision should, of course, be accompanied by its dictation. (**Ed:** my emphasis both times) (Notebooks 1944, pp.167-8)

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Valtorta's writings have always given us more detail and have enhanced our understanding of our faith.

However, as we are now in the month of September during which we commemorate the Seven Sorrows of Our Lady on 15 September, I thought I would look into this **number** further.

Awareness of the sorrows of Mary was evident from the early years and the people focused on three but the devotion to the Sorrows of Mary properly appeared towards the middle of the fourteenth century. Blessed Henry Suso, a German mystic who lived 1295-1366, practiced devotions he called *the Five Joys of Mary and the Five Sorrows of Mary*. It eventually developed into to Seven Sorrows. However, two lists of Seven Sorrows were drawn up, one including the Infancy and Childhood of Jesus Christ, the other concentrating on the Passion. The present form of the Seven Sorrows was made popular by Father John de Coudenberghe, a parish priest in Flanders, who began preaching a devotion to the Seven Sorrows of Mary in 1482. The Servites have celebrated this feast since the 17th century. In 1814, Pope Pius VII made it universal, while Maria Valtorta's work has documented and uniquely captured the visual, emotional, physical and spiritual impact that these sorrows had on Our Lady to the very core.

I have no doubt that Mary suffered many more sorrows which may be one reason September is named the month of **Our Lady of Sorrows** which encompasses all of those listed and more. In light of there being a devotion to Seven Sorrows, I highly recommend watching this remarkable and meaningful 8-minute video by Dr. Taylor Marshall who reflects on how the Seven Sorrows of Our Lady correspond to the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uT5iqEK0SnU>

Ed: A recent conversation with another MV Reader prompted the following.

There are many people who read the bible and attempt to envisage the places that are mentioned with some degree of success thanks to the documentaries and movies made about Jesus.

There are many MV Readers who have particularly found merit in visiting the Holy Land after having read Maria Valtorta's work to see places mentioned in the bible which are described in more detail.

Il Bollettino Valtortiano #23 (The Italian Valtorta Bulletin from the Maria Valtorta Foundation in Italy) informs us that:

'The author [Maria Valtorta] sees the forks in the roads, the milestones that point the way, and the various crops depending on the kind of soil. She sees the many Roman bridges spanning several rivers or streams, as well as springs, running in certain seasons and dried up in others. She notes pronunciation differences between one region of Palestine and another, and a mass of other things

that bewilder the reader or at least cause him to be wrapt in thought. (Austin, S., *The Summa and Encyclopedia to Maria Valtorta's Extraordinary Work*, p.220)

Furthermore, *The Summa* also reports:

"There are hundreds of topographical names and details and of descriptions of places...which only the latest research and archaeological excavations have brought to light..." (Antonio Socci, Leading Journalist & TV Show Host) *The Summa*, p.1

In addition to this,

"The topography of Palestine in the days of Our Lord is no easy field. The many changes in Palestine due to human action and geological forces over the last two thousand years have made the location of many towns and places uncertain, despite many advances in the fields of history and archaeology." (Il Bollettino Valtortiano: #23.) *The Summa*, p.220

There were places that were rebuilt after the Roman War (such as Capernaum and Chorazin) but Bethsaida was never rebuilt.

Many wonderful videos have been produced about the Holy Land but here is a 12-minute video which is called ***The True Location of Bethsaida***.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9LKnQgirrvU>

We should be so grateful to archaeologists who are helping the world in their discovery of biblical places that we value so much and who seem to have the patience of Job while working on a site for weeks, months or even years.

THANK YOU

A special thank you to our readers who have bought items and who have had to wait so patiently within Australia and overseas because of the COVID-19 restrictions and its impact on Australia Post.

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- **Subscription for 2020 is due if ticked.**

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