

MARIA VALTORTA READERS GROUP

Postal address: 162 Burke Road, Glen Iris, Victoria, 3146 Australia
Phone: (03) 9885 9710 E-mail: catherine @valtorta.org.au Website: <http://www.valtorta.org.au>

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The theme for this Supplement is Fatherhood from the writings of Maria Valtorta as the Celebration of God the Father and Father's Day take place around this time.

Maria and her father, Giuseppe Valtorta

'I was crazy about my father. I told him everything and asked him everything, and he listened to it all...He never treated me like a child as regards intelligence, but was a supremely good master. I felt sure with him and trusted him, his words, his affection, his understanding. As a little girl, I began to understand clearly what "God is a Father" means just by looking at my father. I obtained the measure of goodness, knowledge and love of God the Father by comparing my earthly father to my Heavenly Father. And I have loved God because I have grasped what it means to be the Father.' (*Autobiography, p. 25*)

'During vacations,, father sounded reveille at dawn to take me along the seashore or up to the Apennine slopes to let me marvel at the beauty of creation...of God who made it, to have me pray together..But the joy of going out with father and the joy of the beauty I breathed in with all my human and super human senses were so grand that they made me see those early morning risings as a holiday...' (*Autobiography p. 37*)

'Father had lived as a just man. Nothing disturbed his soul on the subject of passing. He had lived benefitting many...he bought up young people entrusted to him with goodness...he had always done his duty with patience, gentleness and charity at all times, forgiving offences, returning good for evil...Oh my poor dad, who had only me to love you and did not have me near you in your last days and in your extreme hour!' (*Autobiography pp. 375-6*)

Maria and God the Father

Jesus says: 'The Father is looking at you. As a little bird remains warm and safe under the watchful care of its parents, so remain under the eye of God, who looks at you with love. The Eternal God, our Father, remains upon you. See and feel this power spreading over you from the summit of the heavens, this laughter filling you with supernatural joy, this light warming you and leading you. You need to see it with the mind's eye so as to be able to make it your bread today. Other food will be given to you. And quite bitter. But this will so nourish your spirit as to make that bitterness unable to kill.' While I was correcting the typewritten sheets, I suddenly received this communication. I got it in the moments when I was reading pages, which were anything but joyful or personal. They were dictations of general and tremendous severity. And at the same time 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. And if, when speaking at a certain point of Mary Most Holy, I said I saw the spiritualized body of Mary as an emanation of light in the light, yet still in the form of a body, 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 splendor 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. Poor words of mine, how much pity you arouse in me over your insufficiency in describing! Moreover, what is absolutely indescribable is what my Jesus calls "the laughter" of the Father. It is an act without a voice, but possessing in itself all the most comforting words. And I, just like a little bird until that moment trembling with loneliness and fear, with cold and faintness, feel myself being penetrated, warmed, and made safe by it. Blessed be the Most High, who allows me to comprehend his most holy paternity towards a poor creature like me.' (*The 1943 Notebooks, p.484*)

Mary and Her father, Joachim

[Mary is 3 years of age and speaking to her parents]

'Tell Me, mummy, can one be a sinner out of love of God?'

'But what are You saying, my dear? I don't understand You.'

'I mean: to commit a sin in order to be loved by God, Who becomes the Saviour. Who is lost, is saved. Isn't that so? I would like to be saved by the Saviour to receive His loving look. That is why I would like to sin, but not to commit a sin that would disgust Him. How can He save Me if I do not get lost?'

Anne is dumbfounded. She does not know what to say.

Joachim helps her. He has approached them walking noiselessly on the grass, behind the low hedge of vine-shoots. 'He has saved You beforehand, because He knows that You love Him and You want to love Him only. So You are already redeemed and You can be a virgin as You wish' says Joachim. 'Is that true, daddy?' Mary embraces his knees and looks at him with Her clear blue eyes, so like Her father's and so happy because of this hope She gets from Her father.

'It is true, my little darling. Look! I was just bringing You this little sparrow, that at its first flight landed near the spring. I could have left it there but its weak wings did not have enough strength to fly off again, and its tiny legs could not hold it on to the slippery moss stones. It would have fallen into the water. But I did not wait for that. I took it and now I am giving it to You. You will do what you like with it. The fact is that it was saved before it fell into the danger. God has done the same with You. Now, tell me, Mary: have I loved the sparrow more by saving it beforehand, or would I have loved it more saving it afterwards?'

'You have loved it now, because you did not let it get hurt in the cold water.'

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'And God has loved You more, because He has loved You before You sinned.'

'And I will love Him wholeheartedly. Wholeheartedly. My beautiful little sparrow, I am like you. The Lord has loved us both equally, by saving us... I will now rear you and then I will let you go. And you in the forest and I in the Temple will sing the praises of God, and we shall say: "Please send the One You promised to those who expect Him". Oh Daddy, when are you taking Me to the Temple?'

'Soon, my dear. But are You not sorry to leave Your father?'

'Yes, very much!'

'And will You remember us?'

'I always will. After the prayer for the Emmanuel, I will pray for you. That God may give you joy and a long life... until the day He becomes the Saviour. Then I will ask Him to take you to the celestial Jerusalem.'

The vision ends with Mary tightly clasped in Her father's arms. *(The Poem Vol. 1 pp.40-1; The Gospel Vol. 1 pp.53-4)*

Jesus and His foster-father, Joseph

'They say that Joseph was My foster-father. Oh! If, being a man, he could not feed Me with milk, as My Mother Mary did, he worked very hard indeed, to give Me bread and comfort, and he had the loving kindness of a real mother. From him I learned - and never had a pupil a kinder teacher - I learned everything that makes a man of a child, and a man who is to earn his own bread. If My intelligence, that of the Son of God was perfect, you must consider and believe that I did not want to deviate from the attributes and attainments of My own age group ostentatiously. Therefore, by lowering My divine intellectual perfection to that of a human intellectual perfection I submitted Myself to having a man as My teacher, and to the need of a teacher. If I learned quickly and willingly, that does not deprive Me of the merit of submitting Myself to man, neither does it deprive the just man of the merit of being the person who nourished My young mind with the ideas which are necessary to life. Not even now that I am in Heaven can I forget the happy hours I spent beside Joseph, who, as if he were playing with Me, guided Me to the point of being capable of working. And when I look at My putative father, I see once again the little kitchen garden and the smoky workshop... Joseph was the head of the family, and as such, his authority was undisputed and indisputable: before it the Spouse and Mother of God bent reverently, and the Son of God submitted Himself willingly. Whatever Joseph decided to do, was well done: there were no discussions, no punctiliousness, no oppositions. His word was our little law. And yet, how much humility there was in him! There never was any abuse of power, or any decision against reason only because he was the head of the family. His Spouse was his sweet adviser. And if in Her deep humility She considered Herself the servant of Her consort, he drew from Her wisdom of Full of Grace, light to guide him in all events.

And I grew like a flower protected by vigorous trees, between those two loves that interlaced above Me, to protect Me, and love Me. No. As long as I was able to ignore the world because of My age, I did not regret being absent from Paradise. God the Father and the Holy Spirit were not absent, because Mary was full of Them. And the angels dwelt there, because nothing drove them away from that house. And one of them, I might say, had become flesh and was Joseph, an angelical soul freed from the burden of the flesh, intent only on serving God and His cause, and loving Him as the seraphim love Him. Joseph's look! It was as placid and pure as the brightness of a star unaware of worldly concupiscence. It was our peace and our strength.

Many think that I did not suffer as a human being when the holy glance of the guardian of our home was extinguished by death. I was God, and as such, I was aware of the happy destiny of Joseph, and consequently, I was not sorry for his death because after a short time in Limbo, I was going to open Heaven to him. As a Man, I cried bitterly in the house now empty and deprived of

his presence. I cried over My dead friend, and should I not have cried over My holy friend, on whose chest I had slept when I was a little boy, and from whom I had received so much love in so many years? Finally, I would like to draw the attention of parents to how Joseph made a clever workman of Me, without any help of pedagogical learning. As soon as I was old enough to handle tools, he did not let Me lead a life of idleness, but he started Me to work and he made use of My love for Mary as the means to spur Me to work. I was to make useful things for Mother. That is how he inculcated the respect which every son should have for his mother and the teaching for the future carpenter was based on that respectful and loving incentive. *(The Poem Vol. 1 pp.196-7; The Gospel Vol. 1 pp. 240-2)*

Simon the Zealot being a father to Jesus

It is evening and the country becomes silent. Simon watches the peasants irrigating their fields. Jesus has not moved from the place where He was sitting. He then gets up, goes round to the back of the house, and walks along the orchard. He wants to be alone... Jesus hides behind the thicket. He kneels down. He prays... and then He bends down with His face on the ground, on the grass and He weeps. I realise that He is crying because of His deep, interrupted sighs. A disheartened crying, without sobs, but so sad. Some time passes thus. It is now twilight. But it is not yet so dark as to prevent seeing. And in the faint light Simon's disfigured but honest face suddenly appears above a bush. He looks round for something and sees the crouched figure of the Master, completely covered by His dark blue mantle which confuses Him with the dark ground. Only His fair hair and His hands joined in prayer catch the eye: His hands protrude above His head which rests on His wrists. Simon looks at Him with his large kind eyes. He understands that Jesus is sad because of His sighing and he utters: 'Master', with his thick almost purple lips. Jesus looks up. 'Are you crying, Master? Why? May I come near You?' Simon's expression is one of astonishment and sorrow. He is definitely not a handsome man. In addition to his disfigured features and his dark olive complexion, he bears the deep bluish marks of the scars caused by his disease. But his glance is so gentle that his ugliness disappears. 'Come, Simon, My friend.' Jesus is sitting on the grass. Simon sits beside Him. 'Why are You sad, Master? I am not John and I am not capable of giving You what John gives you. But I would like to give You every possible comfort, and I am only sorry that I am not able to do so. Tell me. Have I displeased You these last few days to the extent that it depresses You to stay with me?' 'No. My good friend. You have never displeased Me since the first moment I saw you. And I think you will never cause Me to shed tears.'

'Well then, Master, I am not worthy of Your confidence. But, on account of my age, I could be Your father and You know how anxious I have always been to have children... Allow me to caress You as if You were my son and let me be a father and mother to You in this hour of pain. It is Your Mother that You are in need of to forget so many things...' 'Oh! Yes! It is My Mother!' 'Well, while waiting to have comfort in Her, grant Your servant the joy of consoling You. You are crying, Master, because someone has displeased You. For several days Your face has been like the sun darkened by clouds. I have been watching You. Your goodness hides the wound, that we may not hate him who wounds You. But the wound is a painful and abhorrent one.' *(The Poem Vol. 1 pp.446-7; The Gospel Vol. 2 pp.45-7)*

Simon Zealot being a father to Judas Thaddeus and James

'We love him... but he [their father, Alphaeus] no longer understands us... he no longer believes us.' Judas bends his arm and cries, his head resting on the bench. James is stronger. But his internal torture can be read on his face.

'Do not cry, Judas. And you [James]... do not suffer.'

'Oh, Jesus! We are his children... and he cursed us. But even if that tears our hearts, no, we are not turning back! We belong to

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You and we will remain Yours, even if they threaten us with death to detach us from You!' exclaims James.

... Jesus caresses them. But they are suffering. The stony vault resounds with Judas' crying...Simon Zealot, Oh! How much I like his gesture! He leaves his corner and comes near the two distressed men. He lays one hand on Judas' head and with his other arm he embraces James' waist and says: 'Don't cry, son. Jesus did say to us, to you and to me: "I am uniting you: you who are losing your father because of Me, and you who have a father's heart, without having any children". And we did not understand how much of a prophesy there was in His words. But He knew. Now: I beg you. I am old and I always dreamt of being called "father". Accept me as such, and I, as a father, will bless you every morning and evening. Please accept me as such.' The two brothers nod in assent sobbing more loudly. *(The Poem Vol. 1 pp. 537-8; the Gospel Vol 2 pp. 156-7)*

Peter and Marjiam

They are all wearing their best clothes. Peter, especially, is really magnificent. He is showing off brand new snow-white headgear, adorned with a galloon embroidered in red and gold. He is wearing his best tunic, a very dark garnet-red, adorned with a new belt identical in style with the decoration of his headgear... Marjiam's dress is pale red with a festoon in a darker hue round the neck, cuffs and hem. A similar galloon is embroidered round the waist and the hem of the mantle, which the boy is carrying on his arm and caresses happily. Now and again he raises his head, and his little face looks half smiling and half worried... Also Peter has a little parcel in his hand and he holds it very carefully. They go to the Temple. Marjiam turns rather pale and kisses Mary saying: 'Pray... pray for me!'

'Yes, My dear. Do not be afraid. You are so clever...' Marjiam then clings to Peter. He presses Peter's hand nervously and as he still does not feel safe, he would like to take Jesus' hand...A young man goes out and comes back almost at once with two men who are rabbis, or members of the synagogue, or scribes, I do not know...'What do you want, Joseph?' asks the senior examiner. 'I wish to present to your wisdom this son of Abraham who has reached the age prescribed to come under the Law and comply with it by himself.'

'Is he a relative of yours?' and they look at one another amazed. 'We are all relatives in God. But the boy is an orphan, and this man, whose honesty I guarantee, has adopted him as he does not wish to be without descendants.'

'Who is the man? Let him reply himself.'

'Simon of Jonas, from Bethsaida in Galilee, married with no children, a fisherman for the world, a son of the Law for the Most High.'

'And you, a Galilean, are taking this paternity upon yourself? Why?'

'It is written in the Law that we must take care of orphans and widows. That is what I am doing.'

'Can he possibly know the Law so well as to deserve to... But, boy, tell me. Who are you?'

'Jabez Marjiam of John, from the country near Emmaus. I was born twelve years ago.'

'Come here, child. Say the Decalogue' and the boy replies without any hesitation. 'Give me that roll. Read, if you can.'

'Where, rabbi?'

'Wherever you wish. Whatever comes first under your eyes.' says Asrael.

'No. Here! Give it to me.' says Jacob. He then unfolds the roll and says: 'Here.'

He then said to them secretly: 'Bless the Lord of Heaven, utter His praise before all the living, because He has been merciful with you. It is right to keep the secret of a king, but it is also right to reveal...'

'That is enough, quite enough! What are these?' asks Jacob, showing the fringes of his mantle.

'The sacred fringes, sir: We wear them to remember the precepts of the Most High Lord.'

'Is it lawful for an Israelite to eat any meat?...' asks Asrael.

'No, sir. Only the ones which are declared clean.'

'Tell me the precepts...'

And the docile child begins the string of: 'You shall not...'

'That is enough! As a Galilean, he knows even too much. Man, it is for you now to swear that the boy is of age.'

Peter, with the best grace of which he is still capable after so much rudeness: delivers his paternal speech: 'As you have ascertained, my son, at the prescribed age, knows how to conduct himself, as he knows the Law, the precepts, habits, traditions, ceremonies, blessings, prayers. Therefore, as you have verified, both he and I can ask you to declare him of age. In actual fact, I should have stated that before; but the custom has been infringed here, and not by us Galileans, and the child was questioned before the father. But I say this to you: since you have judged him competent, from this moment, I am no longer responsible for his actions, neither in the eyes of God nor of men.'

'Pass into the synagogue.'

The little procession passes into the synagogue, followed by the sullen looks of the rabbis, whom Peter has put in their place. While Marjiam is standing in front of the lecterns and lamps, they cut his hair, shortening it so that it covers his ears, whereas before it reached down to his shoulders. Peter then opens his little parcel and takes out of it a beautiful red woolen belt embroidered in gold-yellow and ties it round the boy's waist, and while the priests are tying little leather strips on his forehead and arm, Peter is busy fixing the sacred fringes on to the mantle which Marjiam has handed over to him. And Peter is deeply moved when he intones the hymn praising the Lord!...

The ceremony is over. They slip out quickly and Peter says: 'Thank goodness! I could not stand it any longer! '...'

'Let us go and tell the Master. For me... it is too great an honour!' says Peter humbly, but he is beaming with joy. They go through the ... hall of the Israelites where Jesus is present with His disciples. Peter goes to sacrifice the lamb, they all proceed through porches and yards to the first enclosure. How happy is Peter with his boy, who is now a perfect Israelite! ...It is only in the hall of Joseph's house, when the boy, who is asked the ritual question as to what he wants to do in future, replies: 'I will be a fisherman like my father' that Peter, weeping, remembers and understands. *(The Poem Vol. 2 pp.316-9;The Gospel Vol. 3 pp.355-6)*

A Parable

Jesus says: I will now tell you a parable. The father of a family had two sons. He loved them both equally and wanted to be their benefactor impartially. This father, in addition to the house in which his sons lived, owned some property in which great treasures were hidden. The sons were aware of such treasures, but did not know the way to go there because the father, for reasons of his own, had not revealed the road which led there, and that had been the situation for many years. But one day he called his sons and said: 'The time has now come when you ought to know where the treasures are, which I laid aside for you, so that you may go there when I tell you. You had better know the road and the signals, which I put on it, so that you may not go astray. So listen to me. The treasures are not in a plain where waters stagnate, where dog days scorch, where dust spoils everything, thorns and bramble suffocate, and where robbers can easily go and rob you. The treasures are on the top of that high rugged mountain. I put them on the top there and they are waiting for you up there. There is more than one path on the mountain. In actual fact, there are many. But one only is the right one. Of the others, some end up in precipices, some in caves with no exit, some in ditches full of muddy water, some in nests of vipers, some in craters of burning sulphur, some against insurmountable walls. The right road, instead, is a difficult one but it arrives at the top without any interruption of precipices or

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other obstacles. In order to enable you to recognise it, I placed along it, at regular intervals, ten stone monuments, on each of which is carved these three identification words: "Love, obedience, victory". Follow that path and you will reach the place of the treasure. I will come along another road, which is known to me alone and I will open the doors to you, so that you may be happy.'

The two sons said goodbye to the father who, as long as they could hear him, repeated: 'Follow the path I told you. It's for your own good. Do not yield to the temptation to follow the others, even if they seem better to you. You would lose both the treasure and me...'

They arrive at the foot of the mountain. The first monument was there, at the beginning of the path, which was in the middle of several paths radiating in different directions towards the mountain top. The two brothers began to climb the good path. At first, it was very good, although there was not the least shade. From the sky, the sun darted down on it, flooding it with light and heat. The brothers saw the white rock in which the path had been dug, the clear sky above them, and felt the warm sun embracing their bodies. But still, animated by good will, by the remembrance of their father and by his advice, they climbed joyfully toward the top. Then the second monument... and later the third one. The path had become more and more difficult, solitary, warm. They could not even see the other paths with grass, trees or clear waters, and above all, where the slope was more gentle because it was not so steep and the tracks were laid on ground and not on rocks.

'Our father wants us dead when we get there' said one of the sons on arriving at the fourth monument. And he began to slacken his pace. The other encouraged him to go on saying: 'He loves us as his very own and even more because he saved the treasure for us in such a wonderful way. He dug this path in the rock and it takes one from the foot of the mountain to its top without any risk of getting lost. And he put these monuments to guide us. Just consider that, my brother! He did all that by himself, for our sake! To give it to us! To ensure that we arrive there without the possibility of mistakes and without any danger.' They continued to walk. But the paths they had left down in the valley reappeared now and again close to the track in the rock and they did so more and more frequently as the cone of the mountain became narrower near the top. And how beautiful, shady and attractive they were!...'I think I will take one of those' said the discontented brother, when he arrived at the sixth monument. 'It goes to the top as well.'

'You cannot be sure of that... You cannot see whether it goes up or down...'

'There it is, up there!'

'You do not know whether it is this one. In any case, our father told us not to leave this good path.'

The listless brother continued to climb against his will. At the seventh monument he said: 'Oh! I am definitely going away.'

'Don't, brother!' They went on their way up the path, which was now very difficult, but the top was now close at hand... They arrived at the eighth monument and very close to it was the flowery path. 'Oh, you can see that this one goes up as well, although not in a straight line!'

'You don't know if it is the same one.'

'I do. I recognise it.'

'You are mistaken.'

'No. I'm going.'

'Don't. Think of father, of the dangers, of the treasure.'

'They can all go to the dogs! What am I going to do with the treasure if I will be as good as dead when I get up there? Which danger is greater than this path? And which hatred is stronger than our father's, who fooled us with this track to let us die? Goodbye. I will arrive before you, and alive...' and he jumped on to the adjacent path, and disappeared with a joyful exclamation behind the tree trunks shading it. His brother went his way sadly... Oh, the last part of the track was really dreadful! The

man was exhausted. He felt worn out with fatigue and heat! At the ninth monument, he stopped panting, leaning against the carved stone and reading the engraved words mechanically. Nearby there was a shady path with water and flowers...'I almost... No! It is written there, and it was my father who wrote it: "Love, obedience, victory". I must believe in his love, in his truthfulness, and I must obey to show my love... Let us go... May love support me. 'He is now at the tenth monument... Exhausted, burnt by the sun, he walked stooping, as if he were under a yoke... It was the loving holy yoke of faithfulness, which is love, obedience, strength, hope, justice, prudence, everything... Instead of leaning on the monument, he sat down in the narrow shade which it cast on the ground. He felt that he was dying... From the nearby path came the gurgle of streams and the smell of forests... 'Father, help me with your spirit, in this temptation... help me to be faithful until the end!'

From afar, the joyful voice of his brother shouted: 'Come, I will wait for you. Eden is here... Come.'

And shouting loud: 'Does it really go to the top?'

'Yes, come. There is a cool tunnel which takes one up. Come! I can already see the top beyond the tunnel, in the rock.'

'Shall I go? Shall I not?... Who will help me?... I will go. He pushed his hands on the ground to help himself get up and while doing so, he noticed that the engraved words were not as clear as those on the first monument. 'At each monument the words were less distinct... as if my father, being exhausted, had found it difficult to engrave them. And... look!... Here also is the dark red mark, which has been visible as from the fifth monument... The only difference is that here it fills the hollow of each letter and it has overflowed, furrowing the rock as if it were dark tears, tears... of blood. With a finger, he scratched a blotch as large as two hands. And the blotch crumbled into dust leaving uncovered and clear these words: "Thus I loved you. To the extent of shedding my blood to lead you to the Treasure."

'Oh! Oh! Father! And I was thinking of not obeying your order?! Forgive me, father. Forgive me'. The son wept leaning on the rock, and the blood filling the words became fresh and as bright as a ruby, and the tears became food and drink and strength for the good son... He stood up... Out of love, he called his brother aloud... He wanted to tell him of his discovery... of their father's love, and say to him: 'Come back!'. But no one replied...

The young man resumed his way, almost on his knees on the hot rock because his body was exhausted with fatigue, but his spirit was serene. There was the top... and his father. 'Father! 'My beloved son!'

The young man threw himself on his father's breast. His father embraced him and kissed him fondly. 'Are you alone?'

'Yes... But my brother will soon be here.'

'No. He will never arrive. He left the way of the ten commandments. He did not come back to it after the first warning disappointments. Do you want to see him? There he is. In the abyss of fire... He persisted in his error. I would have forgiven and awaited him if, after realising his mistake, he had retraced his steps and, although late, he had passed where love had passed first, suffering to the extent of shedding the best part of his blood, the dearest part of himself for you.'

'He did not know.'

'If he had looked with love at the words engraved in the ten monuments, he would have understood their true meaning. You read it as from the fifth monument and you called his attention to it when you said: "Our father must have injured himself here!" and You read it in the sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth... clearer and clearer, until by instinct you discovered what was under my blood. Do you know the name of that instinct? "Your true union with me." The fibres of your heart, blended with my fibres, startled, and they said to you: "You will have here the measure of how much your father loves you." Now, since you are affectionate, obedient, forever victorious, take possession of the Treasure and of me.' That is the parable. (*The Poem Vol. 4 pp.220-4; The Gospel Vol. 7 pp.148-52*)