

MARIA VALTORTA READERS GROUP

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What Mary looks like & Our Lady of Sorrows

What Mary Looks like

[Maria writes:]

Mary Most Holy, [...] (Entirely Lovely, the Lily of Paradise in her appearance as Mary Immaculate, indescribable Light which is flesh possessing the immaterial - no, not immaterial, for it is a real body - or, rather, the transfigured, ideal beauty of glorified bodies), descended today, [...] and became Mary of Nazareth, the pure, lovely, delicate, motherly, humble Mary who lived in Palestine twenty centuries ago.

She came to my bedside, dressed in white, with a light linen veil of thin-woven cloth over her blonde hair, parted at the top of her head, just as I had seen her so many times in the visions. She was gentle, but slightly sad. Resting her very lovely hands on the edge of my bed, though, she said: 'I am here. So that you can contemplate me, study my features from very close up once again, and grasp where the difference lies between what I was like on earth and what I am now like in Heaven.

'In Lourdes, in Fatima, and in the apparitions in general, I appear as I am now in Heaven, and my appearance already possesses the indescribable luminous beauty of glorified bodies. The beauty which the seers of *those* apparitions never grasp entirely, in all its details. Note that they are able to mention the clothing I wear, the rosary I hold, the rock or tree where I stand, the gestures I make, and the expression on my face, but they are always uncertain - and, *involuntarily*, they are never truthful about describing my face and the colour of my eyes and hair and skin. They make an effort to do so, they try but they cannot do so.

'None of the souls of the seers has seen me to the extent that you have seen me, as a Girl, Spouse and Mother on earth, and as the Queen of Heaven. And

every time you say to yourself, "It is still Her? But how different She is as the glorious Queen of Heaven, taken up in body and soul among the angels, from the time when She is the humble Mary of Nazareth." Look at me carefully, daughter, and soothe your pain. Look at me. Am I Mary of Nazareth?'

I observed her carefully, close as she was to my face. I examined her skin, of a warm magnolia paleness suffused with a tenuous pink on her cheeks, her appropriately distended red lips, her thin, straight nose, her perfectly proportioned, clear sky-blue eyes under her lofty, smooth brow, the perfect oval face of a girl... I don't know why her face always makes me think of a white flame or a lily bud about to open - the curves are so gentle in their oval. I looked at her beautiful mildly blonde hair - fine, soft and slightly wavy. I considered that if, instead of being clasped into heavy braids extending over her head, they were hanging loose, the waviness would have been more marked... And, above all, I got lost perceiving the tenuous colour of her body breathing close to me and her fragrance - her characteristic scent, the smell of Mary, the smell of the Virgin...

[...] She then said, 'And now look at me.' She became transfigured, rising from the ground, separating herself from my bed, supported by a silver cloud bathed in her extremely white light. Her body shone and her robe, turning from white to 'white light,' shone. Her face shone, growing sharper, as if the light were spiritualizing it. Her enraptured gaze shone. The light was so bright that the pale blue of her eyes became a 'ray,' and the gold of her hair was almost no longer distinguishable as such - it seemed dark in comparison to the light emitted by the glorified Body of the Mother of God.

She lowered her eyes towards me and smiled, asking, 'Is it me?'

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'Yes.'

'But am I the same as the woman who was Jesus' Mother?'

'Yes ... and no,' I answered intrepidly, for intrepidity is needed to make certain comparisons and confessions.

'And yet it's me. You see. I am like this in Heaven. I appeared like this in Lourdes and Fatima where the seers saw me most clearly, since they were innocent like you, my daughter. The more innocent creatures are, the more they see me as I am and describe me exactly, insofar as they can as creatures, and have my likeness sculpted, insofar as an image can resemble me.'

She came back to me in human form... She asked, 'Is your torment being calmed?' I wept. She caressed me. I cried because since I had read that she had appeared to Bruno Cornacchiola (I now know his name) [from Our Lady of Tre Fontane] with dark hair of an oriental type, I had thought I was deceived in saying Mary was blonde. And yet she is. A *pale* blonde, moreover, nearly straw-coloured, almost pure gold. I was seeing it clearly. She was here, with her head less than thirty centimetres away from my eyes!

She caressed me to console me and said: 'Oh Maria, do not be afraid. The shadow of the grotto and the mantle greatly contributed to the mistake. And it was not necessary for me to reveal myself perfectly to a sinner, as with the innocent Bernarda, Lucy, Hyacinth, Francis, and the little John of my Jesus. But listen carefully. To you, who are a Servant of Mary, I say that the craftsman (who sculpted me in such a way that I do not recognize myself) would have done well to recall the statues of Lourdes and Fatima where I am depicted insofar as man can depict the image of the Mother of God... And, above all, he should have drawn inspiration from the face with which I am portrayed at Our Lady of the Annunciation in Florence - the face from which, if man and time had not altered the image, everyone could discern what I was like when the Spirit of God rendered me pregnant with God. The smoke from candles and time have darkened the colours, and men have done damage... But one can still see what God's Girl, Joseph's Betrothed, was like in that Springtime of her years, in that blooming Nazarene Springtime.

[...] 'Be at peace. The Triune Lord and I, starting on the earth, are drying all of your tears.'

I abandoned myself again to her motherly embrace.
(Notebooks 1945-50, pp. 456-8)

Our Lady of Sorrows

Mary says: 'Last Saturday I spoke to you about my joys. Today I shall speak to you about my sorrows - I

won't explain them to you. [...] But I shall bring you to comprehend them in their greatest meaning.

'As each joy was not for me alone, for this would have been selfishness, so each sorrow did not hurt me for my own sake alone, but because, in bearing all of you in myself as the Mother of all believers, I have felt in myself all the wounds of your spirits. And if the joys blossomed into roses for me only when the events took place, [...] the sorrows were thorns nailed into my heart from the first instant and never torn out.

'That is why those painting me did not depict me with seven roses budding from my heart, but with seven swords, and if there are some encircling it with roses, they do so in such fashion that the flowery band is itself torture, for the stems are full of thorns.

'I really am the Mystical Rose and do not have thorns on my leg because I am the One Full of Grace. But in my heart are all the thorns of the human sins which deprive me of my children and which cause offense to my Jesus.'

[The Prophecy of Simeon] '*The first sorrow* was not just because of my love as the Mother of God. I knew my destiny. I knew because I was not ignorant of the destiny of the Redeemer. The prophecies spoke of His great suffering. The Spirit of God, united to me, clarified for me even more than what was said by the prophecies. From the moment I had said, "I am the handmaiden of the Lord," I had embraced Pain together with Love. But how much pain to feel and *already* see that men would take Good, that had become Flesh, and turn Good into an Evil for themselves. In the mockery directed at Simeon, I saw the numberless acts of derision, the sacrilegious denials of an incalculable number of men. Jesus had come to bring peace. And men, in His name or going against His name, would have war in relation to Him and each other. All the schisms, all the heresies, and all forms of atheism were thus before me... and, like a carpet of swords, awaited me to lacerate my heart.'

[The Flight into Egypt] '*The second sorrow* [...] was not just because of the discomforts of flight, but was permeated with the bitterness of seeing that poor human power (Herod's), which remains as long as God permits, instead of making itself a shield for true Power and becoming 'great' by turning into a 'servant of God'. Through the concupiscence of power, it became an assassin and deicide. It kills the innocent. That was already a great sin. But to become the killer of God was a sin beyond comparison. And if the Eternal did not so permit, that did not keep the sin from being just as operative. For the desire to do evil and the attempt at carrying it out are barely a tenth of a degree below the

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consummated sin. And yet how many of the 'great' from then until the end of time would imitate Herod and trample on God in order to be 'gods'. I thus saw these jackals, who were killing to destroy God, and together with my Son I clasped to my heart all those persecuted for the sake of the Faith and heard their holy moans intermingled with the blasphemies of the overbearing. And, unable to curse, I wept... The road from Bethlehem to Egypt was marked by my tears.'

[The Loss of the Child Jesus in the Temple] *'The third sorrow.* I thus sought Jesus who was lost, not because of my failing or that of my husband. My Child had wanted to do this to make an initial appeal to hearts and say to them, "God's hour has come." But among the millions of beings who would exist, how many would lose God! One loses Him by one's own fault or through his will. When Grace dies, God is then lost. When God wants to take people to a greater Grace, He then conceals Himself. In both cases, there is desolation.

'The sinner dead to Grace is not happy. He seems to be but He is not. And even if he experiences moments of elation, which do not let him understand his state, hours are never lacking in which a call to life makes him feel his condition as one separated from God. And then there is desolation. The torture which God has his beloved ones experience so that they will be like his Word: saviours. You know what this is. Abandonment by God! A horror greater than death. And if it is a horror to those for whom it is only a *trial*, meditate on what it is to those for whom it is an authentic reality. My third sorrow was to see that many would have to drink from this chalice to perpetuate the work of redemption, and even more bitter was to see the great number who would perish in desperation. Oh, Maria! If only men were always able to seek Jesus', [then] the plant of desperation would cease to secrete its poison because it would die forever.'

[The meeting of Jesus and Mary on the Way of the Cross] *'The fourth sorrow.* I was a Mother, and to see my Child under the cross was a natural sorrow. But a greater, supernatural sorrow was to see the hatred, much more anguishing than the wood oppressing my Son.

'How much hatred! A boundless seal from that mob screaming blasphemies and mockery there would come, by spiritual filiation, all those hating the holy Martyr. If I had been able to take the cross away from Jesus and set it on my shoulders as a Mother, I would have suffered less than when seeing all the future crucifiers of their Saviour with the eyes of my spirit. Those who attempt to abolish Him so as not to encounter his throne as a Judge and who do not

know that for them He will be only a Judge and for the others, a Friend.'

[The Crucifixion] *'The fifth sorrow* was from the knowledge that his Blood, dripping like many rivulets of salvation from his lacerated members, would always be blasphemed. And yet that Blood spoke, and speaks. It cries out with a loving voice and calls. And men have not wanted and do not want to understand it. They crowded around the Messiah to request health for their illnesses and begged Him to say a word to them. And at the moment when He did not use the touch of His finger or dust or saliva, but gave His Life and His Blood to heal them from the one, true, indelible illness – "sin" - they fled from Him more than from a leper. And they flee from Him. "May that Blood fall upon us." Oh, it will fall on the Last Day to call them to account for their hatred and, since they did not want to love, will curse! And am I, the Mother, not to suffer on seeing that so many of my children have deserved to be cursed and cut off forever from the spiritual family of Heaven, in which I am the Mother and my Jesus is the Firstborn and the first Brother?'

[Taking Jesus down from the Cross - the sixth sorrow] *'When I received the lifeless remains* of my God and Son and could count his wounds, one by one, I felt my womb being lacerated. Oh, I did not experience the pain of childbirth. But I did experience this one, and there are no mother's labour pains which can be compared to this. All my pain as a believer and all my pain as a mother were fused into one single pain. And upon this, the base of my cross, as Calvary was of my Lord's cross, there was Pain. I did not see Jesus dead in your hearts. He does not die. But *your hearts dead to Him.* I saw in how many hearts He would be laid out as if on cold remains. For how many He would, to no avail, command, 'Rise up!' Man who *does not want* to live, who *does not want* to rise. The Sacrament of Life, refused or received sacrilegiously, even when the moments of your existence are numbered. The countless Judases who are unable to become worthy of receiving their wounded God by an honest conversion, and who would be healed by their repentance.

Look, Maria. Everything is preferable to being the new Iscariots. And yet, it is the sin committed with the most indifference. And not by the major sinners alone. But also by many who seem to be, and think they are, faithful to my Son. He calls them "the current Pharisees." You can distinguish them by their works. Contact with my Son does not make them better. But, rather, their life is *the negation of Charity* and thus of God. They are the dead, if not to Grace, *to its fruits.* They have no vitality. Jesus cannot act in

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them because on their part, there is no correspondence. *They are the ones* who, by a *single* degree, precede those who are Christians in name only. These are desecrated temples, profaned by the rottenness of all the vices, in whom the name, only the name, of Christ remains as the body of my Jesus remained in the tomb. They, too, are lifeless. And if in Gethsemane the knowledge of all those for whom the Sacrifice would be futile was the spiritual martyrdom of my Son, on kissing Jesus in the last farewell, this vision was my agony.

'Nor does it cease. No. The swords are always in my heart because man continues to inflict upon it its seven sorrows. Until the number of the saved is completed, along with the glory of God in His blessed ones, I shall suffer in my twofold pain as the Mother seeing her Firstborn offended, and as a mother seeing too many children prefer eternal exile to the Father's dwelling. When you pray to me as the Lady of Sorrows, think of these words of mine. And in your sorrows, eliminate all selfishness so as to imitate me. I expanded my sorrows as the Mother of Jesus for all those born. I am the new Eve. Use your sorrows for all Your brothers and sisters. Take them to God. To me.'

(Notebooks 1944, pp.303-7)

[Placing Jesus in the Tomb - the seventh sorrow]

'When the stone took its place closing the tomb, I believe it was rolling on my heart and was crushing it while tearing it from my chest. I threw myself against it with my nails and mouth, to push it back away. The stone was separating me from Jesus, it was killing me a second time with a more profound death, with an even greater separation which even kept me from the mortal remains of my Son...But alas! All of that was for nothing. My nails and my teeth passed over the rock without changing anything. My fingers and my lips bled, but the rock remained closed in an inexorable way, like death.

'And along with the blood, there flowed my tears. This blood and these maternal tears were the first to wet this holy site, where God knew death to remove man from his death.

'They moved me from there because I would have continued to cling to this stone if I had been allowed. I would have stayed there at the foot of this door of stone like a beggar who is waiting for a mite. In effect, I was the most miserable of women, and to live I needed this mite: to see my Son! I was still less than a beggar. I would have laid there like a lamb without a shepherd, lost, starved, alone [...] because she no longer has anyone, and because of a world full of wolves, she has the impression that she is secure if she stays there where was once someone who loved her [...]

'They tore me from there...Oh men! How cruel they are sometimes, in their pity! What would these days

have been for me, in the midst of the tranquil vegetation, awaiting for the resurrection of my Jesus? Much, much less tearing than those I had to live elsewhere.

'In this place, [...] the plants, innocent and good, continued to flower to give glory to God. The birds, innocent and good, continued nesting and singing in obedience to their Lord. No hatred with them, no curses, no murder. [...]

'In this peace, I could have given my torment some respite. In this peace, I could have cried without spasms under the stars and in the light of day till the moment when Easter Sunday's dawn would have opened the doors for me and returned my Son.

'But I was torn from this place...And I had to return among men. Men! Men! This was the second Calvary of the Mother...'

(Maria Valtorta Prayers pp.107-8)

Our Lady of Sorrows

[Azariah says:]

'And now let us venerate the Blessed Woman with the Transfixed Heart. Maria, isn't this a gift? To see Her just as John gazed at Her at the foot of the Cross? Little John, take your place. Console your Mother. The Apostle, too, was tormented, and yet he consoled the Most Tormented One. For he had his own pain alone. She, all the present and future pains of the Co-Redemptrix. Including the ones which you know. Imitate John - you, little John, broken by *your* pain which is so great but is nothing in comparison to the pain of the Mother of Sorrows. The Mystical Rose - all the thorns of the immense rose garden which is the world - not excluding any kind - are pointed at her pure-white heart and turn it crimson... Drink in her weeping and remain under her mantle. She is your Mother. In Heaven you will discover how much.'

[Maria says:]

'And I see Our Lady of Sorrows... And I see a hand flinging a sheaf of thorns into her heart... And She turns her head in the opposite direction of that masculine, powerful, hooked hand - and weeps without sobbing... a rain of tears which fall to the right to the ground. The distress of Mary Most Holy. Oh, I cannot express all that I see! I forget my pain in the face of Hers, and I call Her with all the love I am capable of. I am a poor, little creature. But, Oh, Mother, increase my capacity to console you for all those who strike you - strike us this way!

'Mother! Is it not enough to have asked that every sweetness, every ecstasy of love be taken from me for their sake? When will I restore to them, then, the spirit that You would like in them? When will I die? May God's Will be done. But love me and be consoled by my love, Mother, Mother, Mother of Sorrows.'

(The Book of Azariah, pp.224-5)