

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

MARIA VALTORTA READERS' GROUP

THE SUPPLEMENT No. 98 – JUNE 2020



SAINT JOSEPH - PART TWO

[Ed: In most cases, the sorrows and joys of St. Joseph have been presented from his perspective. However, there were two occasions when St. Joseph's feelings were not directly described but mirrored by Mary's words or actions.]

SAINT JOSEPH'S SEVEN SORROWS

First Sorrow

St. Joseph resolves to leave Mary quietly

(Jesus is explaining the early life of Joseph and Mary to Simon Peter and the apostles).

'The seal of God closed Mary's lips. And Joseph became aware of the prodigy only when Mary came back from the house of her relative, Zacharias and appeared a mother to the eyes of her spouse.'

'And what did he do?' [asks Simon Peter of Jonas]

'He suffered... and Mary suffered.'

'If it had been I...'

'Joseph was a saint, Simon of Jonas. God knows where to lay His gifts... He suffered bitterly and he decided to desert her, taking upon himself the reputation of an unfair man.' (*Poem, Vol.1, p.745; Gospel, Vol. 2, p.408,*)

(Mary says:) 'The three days of Joseph's passion were short in number but deep in intensity.'

(*Poem, Vol.1, 125; Gospel, Vol. 1, p.157*)

Second Sorrow

The Poverty of Jesus' birth

They hurry to the 'den'. It is really a den. Among the ruins of an old building, there is a hole beyond which there is a grotto: an excavation in the mountain, rather than a grotto. It seems to consist of the foundations of the old building with the roof formed by rubble supported by coarse tree trunks.

There is hardly any light and, to see better, Joseph pulls out tinder and flint, and he lights a little lamp that he takes out of the knapsack. [...] Joseph has hung the little lamp on a nail of one of the supporting trunks. They see the vault covered with cobwebs, the soil stamped ramshackle earth, with holes, rubbish, excrement - the soil is strewn with straw. In the rear, an ox turns its head round and looks with his large quiet eyes while some hay is hanging from its lips. [...] Mary, goes near the ox. She is cold. She

puts her hands on its neck to feel its warmth. [...] Joseph pushes it aside to take a large quantity of hay from the manger and make a bed for Mary [...] Joseph then takes possession of a bunch of twigs in a corner and he tries to sweep the floor with it. He next spreads the hay and makes a bed with it near the ox, in the most sheltered and dry corner. But he realizes that the poor hay is damp and he sighs. He then lights a fire, and with the patience of Job, he dries the hay, a handful at the time, holding it near the fire.

'Sleep now,' he says. 'I will, sit up and watch that the fire does not go out.'

I still see the inside of the poor stony shelter where Mary and Joseph have found refuge, sharing the lot of some animals.

Joseph rouses. He notices that the fire is almost out and the stable almost -dark. He throws a handful of very slender heath on to the fire and the flames are revived. He then adds some thicker twigs and finally some sticks because the cold is really biting: the cold of a serene winter night that comes into the ruins from everywhere.[...] [When Mary hands Jesus to Joseph], he bends down to kiss His tiny feet and feels them cold. He then sits on the ground, and holds Him close to his chest and, with his brown tunic and his hands, he tries to cover Him and warm Him, defending Him from the bitterly cold wind of the night. He would like to go near the fire but there is a cold draft there coming in from the door. It is better to stay where he is. No, it is better to go between the two animals which serve as a protection against the air and give out warmth. Thus, he goes between the ox and the donkey with his back to the door, bending over the New-Born to form with his body a shelter, the two sides of which are a grey head with long ears, and a huge white muzzle with a steaming nose and two gentle soft eyes.[...]

'Where shall we put Him now?' asks Mary.

Joseph looks round, thinking [...] 'Wait' he says. 'Let us move the animals and their hay over here, we will then pull down that hay up there and arrange it in here. The wood on the side will protect Him from the air, the hay will serve as a pillow and the ox will warm Him a little with its breath.'

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>

Joseph makes up the fire, without economy this time to have a good blaze, and he warms the hay. And as it dries up, he keeps it near his chest so that it will not get cold. Then, when he has gathered enough to make a little mattress for the Child, he goes to the manger and sorts it out as if it were a cradle. 'It is ready,' he says.

'Take my mantle,' says Mary. '[...] The mantle is soft and warm. I am not cold at all. Don't let Him suffer any longer!' Joseph takes the wide mantle of soft dark blue wool, he double folds it and lays it on the hay, leaving a strip hanging out of the manger. The first bed for the Saviour is ready. (**Poem, Vol.1,pp.136-42, Gospel, Vol. 1,pp.171-7**)

Third Sorrow The Circumcision

9Mary speaks:) 'Once You fell in the kitchen garden in Nazareth and You hurt Your forehead. Only a few drops of blood. But I, felt I was dying when I saw the drops of Your Blood at the Circumcision, and Joseph had to support Me as I was shaking like one who is dying, I thought that tiny cut would kill You and I cured it more with My tears than with water and oil, and I was not at peace until I saw that it no longer bled.' (**Poem, Vol.5.p.657; Gospel, Vol.10, p.183**)

Fourth Sorrow The Prophecy of Simeon

(Maria speaks:) He is Jesus but still a child, and whatever moves in front of Him draws His attention so that He wants to get hold of it to see what it is. Mary and Joseph smile and so do all the others who praise the beauty of the Child. I hear the words of the holy old man [Simeon] and I see the astonished gaze of Joseph, the deeply moved look of Mary as well as the glances of the little crowd, partly surprised and moved, partly laughing at the words of the old man. ...Mary's smile fades into paleness when Simeon mentions sorrow. Although she knows, that word pierces her soul. She goes closer to Joseph, to be comforted... (**Poem, Vol. 1, p.163; Gospel, Vol 1, p.200**)

Fifth Sorrow The Flight into Egypt

It is night. Joseph is sleeping in his little bed in his very small room: the peaceful sleep of a man after a hard day's honest and diligent work. [...] He is lying on one side and is smiling at some vision he sees in his dream. But his smile turns into an expression of anxiety. He is now sighing deeply as if he had a nightmare and he awakes with a start. [...] It is the dead of night [...] He knocks very gently [...] but Mary is not sleeping.

[Joseph says] in an excited voice: 'We must go away from here at once. It must be at once. Prepare the coffer and a sack with everything you can put in them. I'll prepare the rest. I'll take as much as I can. [...] We will flee at dawn. I would go even sooner but I must speak to the landlady...' 'But why this flight?'

'I will tell you later. It's because of Jesus. An angel said to me: "Take the Child and His Mother and escape into Egypt." Don't waste any time. I'm going to prepare what I can. [...] Take as much as You can. We will lose the rest. [...] Things will be useful because [...] we will have to stay away for a long time, Mary!'

Joseph is very sad in saying so [...] and sighing deeply. Joseph ties the blankets with a rope and while doing so,

he says: 'We will leave the quilts and the mats. Even if I take three donkeys I cannot overload them. We will have a long and uncomfortable journey, partly in the mountains and in the desert. Cover Jesus well. The nights will be cold both up in the mountains and in the desert. I have taken the gifts of the Magi because they will be very useful down there. I am going to spend all the money I have to buy two donkeys [because] we cannot send them back. I'll go now, without awaiting dawn. I know where to find them. You finish preparing everything.' And he goes out...

Joseph comes back. 'Are you ready? Is Jesus ready? Have you taken His blankets and His little bed? We can't take His cradle but He must have at least His little mattress: poor Baby, whose death they are seeking!'

'Joseph' shouts Mary, while she grasps his arm.

'Yes, Mary, His death. Herod wants Him dead... because he is afraid of Him: because of his human kingdom, he is afraid of this innocent Child. I do not know what he will do when he realises that He has escaped. But we will be far away by that time. I don't think he will revenge himself by seeking Him as far as Galilee. It would be very difficult for him to find out that we are Galileans, least of all that we are from Nazareth and who we are precisely. Unless Satan helps him to thank him for being his faithful servant. But if that should happen, [...] God will help us just the same. Don't cry, Mary. To see you crying is a greater pain for me than having to go into exile.'

'Forgive Me, Joseph. I am not crying for myself or for the few things I am losing. I am crying for you [...] You already have had to sacrifice yourself so much! And now once again, you will have no customers, no home. How much I am costing you, Joseph!'

'And I, having Jesus, have my native land, in which I had hope up to some months ago. I have my God. You can see that I lose nothing of what is dear to me above all things. The only important thing is to save Jesus, and then we have everything. Even if we should never see this sky again, or this country or the even dearer country of Galilee, we shall always have everything, because we shall have Him. Come, Mary, it is dawning. It is time to say goodbye to our hostess and load our things. Everything will be all right.'

(**Poem, Vol.1 pp. 179-83; Gospel, Vol. 1, pp. 220-5**)

Sixth Sorrow The Return from Egypt to Nazareth

(Jesus says) Prompt, complete obedience, to the point of not replying with a single word of contention and not even waiting for the morning to put it into practice. And this was not only the first time, when an hour's delay might have meant even 'death' for the Child, but also the second time, when the departure was less urgent, when, indeed, leaving the hospitable city (Egypt) meant losing his customers again and, therefore, his income and that minimum which by his work he had again recovered. Joseph did not know what he would find on going back to his country. But he departed because God so willed, and he went where God wanted him. (**Azariah, p.313**)

[Ed: Another passage back in Nazareth that could be described as a sorrow for Joseph is his brother Alphaeus' attempt to interfere in the schooling and upbringing of Jesus.]

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>

Alphaeus says: '[...] But this year, you also will have to send Jesus to school. It is time.'

'I will never send Jesus to school' says Mary resolutely. It is most unusual to hear her talk thus and above all to hear her talk before Joseph.

'Why? The Child must learn to be ready in good time to pass his exam when he comes of age...'

'The Child will be ready. But He will not go to school. That is quite definite.'

'You will be the only woman in Israel to do that.'

'I will be the only one. But that is what I am going to do. Isn't that right, Joseph?'

'Yes, that's correct. There is no need for Jesus to go to school. Mary was brought up in the Temple and she knows the Law as well as any doctor. She will be His Teacher. That's what I want too.'

'You are spoiling the Boy.'

'You cannot say that. He is the best boy in Nazareth. Have you ever heard Him cry, or be naughty, or be disobedient, or lack respect?'

'No. That's true. But He will do all that if you continue to spoil Him.'

'You do not necessarily spoil your children just because you keep them at home. To keep them at home implies loving them with good common sense and wholeheartedly. And that is how we love our Jesus, and since Mary is better educated than a teacher, she will be Jesus' Teacher.'

'And when Your Jesus is a Man, He will be like a silly little woman frightened even of flies.'

'He will not. Mary is a strong woman, and she will give Him a manly education. I am not a coward and I can give Him man-like examples. Jesus is a creature without any physical or moral faults. He will grow, therefore, upright and strong, both in His body and in His spirit. You can be sure of that, Alphaeus. He will not be a disgrace to the family. In any case, that is what I have decided, and that is all.'

'Perhaps Mary has decided, and you...'

'And if it were so? Is it not fair that two who love each other should have the same thoughts and the same wishes so that each may accept the wishes of the other as if they were his own? If Mary should wish silly things, I would say to her: "No". But she is asking for something which is full of wisdom and I agree, and I make it my own. We love each other, we do as we did the first day, and we shall go on doing so as long as we live. Is that right, Mary?' (*Poem, Vol.1, pp.202-3; Gospel, Vol.1, pp. 248-9*)

Seventh Sorrow

The Loss of the Child Jesus

Jesus says: 'See Mary's distress when she realised, after the groups of men and women had gathered together, that I was not with Joseph. [...] The pain that appears on Mary's face pierces Joseph's heart more than any bitter reproach. [...] But she leaves everything: [...] And she goes back. It is night, it is dark. It does not matter. Every step takes her back to Jerusalem. She stops the caravans and pilgrims and questions them. Joseph follows her and helps her. A long day's walk back to Jerusalem and then the feverish search in town. [...] No one in town knew anything of this Child. [...]

(*Poem, Vol.1, p. 220; Gospel, Vol. 2, pp. 269-70*)

To have God implies restraints, not only joy. And My father by love and My Mother by My soul and flesh suffered from restraints. [...] And that should clarify to many people who do not understand it, the twofold reason for the worry when I was lost for three days. The love of a Mother, the love of a father for the lost Child; fear of the guardians for the Messiah who might be revealed before the time; terror of having badly protected the Health of the world and the great gift of God. That is the reason for the unusual cry: "Son, why have You done this to us? See how Your father and I have been worried looking for You!" (*Poem, Vol.1, p. 747; Gospel, Vol. 2, p. 411*)

SAINT JOSEPH'S SEVEN JOYS

First Joy

St. Joseph's Annunciation

But the Angel descended and said to him: 'Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what is forming in her is the Son of God and she is a Mother by the deed of God.' (*Poem, Vol 1, p.745; Gospel, Vol.2, p. 408*)

(Mary clarifies:)

'Faith: Joseph believed the heavenly messenger's words unquestioningly. He wanted but to believe because he was sincerely convinced that God is good and that since he had hoped in the Lord, the Lord would not have reserved for him the torture of being betrayed, disappointed and sneered at by his neighbours. He asked for nothing but to believe in Me because, being honest, it was painful for him to think that other people were not honest.' (*Poem, Vol.1, p.129; Gospel, Vol. 1, p.161*)

Second Joy

The Birth of the Saviour

Mary calls: 'Joseph, come.'

Joseph rushes. And when he sees, he stops, struck by reverence, and he is about to fall on his knees where he is. But Mary insists: 'Come, Joseph' and she leans on the hay with her left hand and, holding the Child close to her heart with her right one, she gets up and moves towards Joseph who is walking embarrassed because of a conflict in him between his desire to go and his fear of being irreverent.

They meet at the foot of the straw bed and they look at each other, weeping blissfully.

'Come, let us offer Jesus to the Father.' says Mary. And while Joseph kneels down, she stands up between two trunks supporting the vault, she lifts up her Creature in her arms and says: 'Here I am. On His behalf, O God, I speak these words to You: here I am to do Your will. And I, Mary, and My spouse, Joseph, with Him. Here are Your servants, O Lord. May Your will always be done by us in every hour, in every event, for Your glory and Your love.'

Then Mary bends down and says: 'Here, Joseph, take Him', and offers him the Child.

'What! I?... Me?... Oh, no! I am not worthy!' Joseph is utterly dumbfounded at the idea of having to touch God.

But Mary insists smiling: 'You are well worthy. No one is more worthy than you are, and that is why the Most High chose you. Take Him, Joseph, and hold Him while I look for the linens.'

Joseph, blushing almost purple, stretches his arms out and takes the Baby who is screaming because of the cold. And when he has Him in his arms, he no longer persists in

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

the intention of holding Him far from himself, out of respect, but he presses Him to his heart and bursts into tears exclaiming: 'Oh! Lord! My God!' And he bends down to kiss His tiny feet...

(*Poem, Vol.1, pp.141-2, Gospel, Vol. 1, pp.176-7*)

Third Joy

The Holy Name of Jesus

The angel says [to Joseph in his dream], '...And when the Son is born, you will name Him Jesus, because He is the Saviour'. (*Poem, Vol.1, p. 745; Gospel, Vol.2, p.408*)

Fourth Joy

The Effects of the Redemption

(Joseph and Mary listen to the Prophetess, Anna's words who is moved by faith and charity after Simeon's prophecy).

[Mary] takes in the words of Anna of Phanuel who being a woman, has mercy on Mary's suffering and promises her that the Eternal Father will soothe the hour of sorrow with a supernatural strength. 'Woman, He who gave a **Saviour to His people**, will not lack the power to send His angel to console your tears.' (*Poem, Vol 1, p.164; Gospel, Vol. 1 p. 200*)

Fifth Joy

The Overthrow of the Idols of Egypt

[Ed: This verse from Isaiah is not mentioned in Maria Valtorta's works in reference to St Joseph.

The Prophecy concerning Egypt

'1.The burden of Egypt. Behold the Lord will ascend upon a swift cloud, and will enter into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst thereof.' (Isaiah 19:1 Douay Rheims)]

Sixth Joy

Life with Jesus and Mary at Nazareth

Joseph appears at the door and, for some time, he stands very quietly watching the work of the Child and smiles. [...] Then, to prevent Jesus from getting more wet, he calls Him. Jesus turns round smiling and, when He sees Joseph, He runs towards him with His little arms stretched out. Joseph [...] kisses them. And then there is a sweet conversation between the two.

Jesus explains His work and His game and the difficulties He met in it. [...] He then proposes to make a small lake, [...] in which Jesus would be able to launch small real wooden boats which Joseph would teach Him how to make. Just then, Joseph was bringing Him some small working tools, suitable for Him, [...] which are all lying on the bench of a budding carpenter: a bench suitable for little Jesus' size... that He might learn to use them, without any fatigue.

'So I will be able to help you!' Jesus says, smiling.

'So You will help me, and You will become a clever carpenter.'

'See, to saw, You must put this piece of wood like that. You then take the saw like that, and making sure that You do not catch Your fingers, You start sawing. Try...'

And the lesson begins. And Jesus, blushing with the effort and pressing His lips together, saws the piece of wood carefully and then planes it, and although it is not perfectly straight, He thinks it is nice. Joseph praises Him and with patience and love, teaches Him how to work.

Mary comes back [...] and she looks in at the door. Joseph and Jesus do not see her because she is behind them. Mother smiles seeing how zealously Jesus is working with the plane and how loving Joseph is in teaching Him.

But Jesus must have perceived Her smile. He turns round, sees His Mother and runs towards Her, showing Her the little piece of wood not yet finished. Mary admires it, and She bends down to kiss Jesus. She tidies up His ruffled curls, wipes the perspiration on His hot face, and listens with loving attention to Jesus, Who promises to make Her a little stool so that She will be more comfortable when working. Joseph standing near the tiny bench, with one hand resting on his side, looks and smiles.

(*Poem, Vol 1, pp.195-6; Gospel, Vol 1, pp.239-40*)

Seventh Joy

The finding of the Child Jesus

Then, after three days, [...] Mary, exhausted, enters the Temple, [...] Mary is the Prudent Virgin but this time, anxiety overcomes prudence. It is a hurricane that demolishes everything. She runs to Her Son, embraces Him, lifting Him off the stool and putting Him down on the ground [...] For three days we have been looking for You. Your Mummy is dying with pain, Son. Your father is exhausted with fatigue.' (*Poem, Vol.1, pp.220-1; Gospel, Vol.1, p. 270*)

Joseph and Obedience

(Jesus speaks) 'Joseph who did not know all the mysteries which Mary stored up in her heart [...] wanted to teach the Child from the first glimmers of intelligence on, that God's orders must be obeyed, even if these orders mean exile, greater poverty, and pain. [...] What depth of virtue in these words, spoken ... concerning obedience in the name to be imposed on the Child!

"And Joseph, *getting up at night*, took the Child and the Mother and withdrew to Egypt, where he remained[...]' [And after another message from an angel] 'And he, getting up, took the Child and the Mother and returned to the land of Israel ... and, warned in a dream, he withdrew to Galilee.' [...]

Joseph had doubted only once, and concerning a creature. Never concerning God. Now, having progressed in virtue through closeness to Mary, he would not doubt-indeed, did not doubt even creatures. He accepted everything. And he told himself, 'I trust the Most High. He knows the hearts of men and will save me from the snares of the deceitful and wicked.' He had never doubted and did not doubt the heavenly voices. And he went.'

(*Azariah, pp. 312-3*)

MARIA VALTORTA'S PRAYER TO SAINT JOSEPH

Merciful Patriarch, St. Joseph,

in the extreme moment,

come to meet me and guide my soul

on the final journey to salvation.

May your look put the infernal tempter to flight,

and my soul take refuge in your arms,

which were a cradle for my Saviour,

and take flight from there towards Eternal Love.

St. Joseph, be my shield in the final battle

so that I may die in Christ.

(*Notebooks 1945-50, p.194*)