



This picture shows a nearly 30 years old Maria Valtorta in Viareggio, just before she finally got bedridden



PRAYER

Asking God for the Public Legitimacy of Maria Valtorta's virtues:

O God, endless and eternal Mercy, who in Maria Valtorta, your humble creature, you have manifested the wonders of your love.

Exalt this daughter of Yours who accepted to join your Son's Passion till her complete consumption in a bed of pain.

O Lord of inexhaustible goodness, may the example of your hand-maid's life, her heroic testimony, her perseverance, even offering her whole life to convert the hearts of sinners to light up the love of the tepid, surge charity in everyone.

O Lord, who united to Christ, the Man-God, that crucified bride, Maria Valtorta, may the holy Church recognize her virtues and her mission, and offer it to all the faithful as a model to imitate, and to seek intercession through her within You.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen

Maria Valtorta Newsletter

Edited by Fondazione Maria Valtorta — MAY 15, 2017 — Newsletter N° 24

PROBLEMS OF THE PRESENT TIME

MARIA VALTORTA AND THE LIVING JESUS OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI.

I do not consider the apparitions of St. Francis of Assisi to Maria Valtorta (just thirty in 1944) and not even what he says, as for what it's written on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola. In other words, I do not want to linger miserably over the details. I just want to see if there is any global similarity, and if so, should it be so profound, among what Jesus was for St. Francis and what Maria Valtorta urges to be each reader toward Jesus, with her writings.

Let us then try to understand "that" Jesus of Saint Francis. Yes, but first of all, let us get rid of those awful clues that films kept on submitting us about him. They tried to make him look like a knowledgeable ecologist; a banal nature's praiser; almost an ecumenical new ager, "ante litteram" without a doctrine system. St. Francis was not any of the above.

Two authors in some ways very far away from each other, have arrived at the same conclusion. The first one is Father Raniero Cantalamessa of the Friar Minors, preacher of the Pontifical Household, and he writes like this:

«It is on this text [testament of Saint Francis] that the historians are rightly based on, but with a limit which is impossible to overcome for them. Even the best intentioned and most respectful historians of St. Francis' background peculiarity, as Raoul Manselli was among the Italian men, cannot grasp the ultimate reason for his radical change. They remain still at their origins out of respect for their methods, speaking of a «secret of Francis» which is meant to remain so forever. [...] What you can see, the historians say, is Francis' decision to change his social state. From belonging to the wealthy class, which counted in the city for nobility or wealth, he chose to place himself at the opposite end, sharing the life of the last, of those who did not count anything, the so-called "minors", afflicted by all kinds of poverty. [...] Historians rightly insist on the fact that Francis, at the beginning, did not choose poverty, nevertheless pauperism; he chose the poor! The change is motivated more by the commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself," than by the advice: "If you want to be perfect, go, sell everything you have and give it to the poor; then come and follow me". [...] This is all true, but still does not solve the problem. It is the effect of the change, not its cause. [...] The profound reason for his conversion is not of a social nature, but evangelical. Once for all Jesus formulated the law with one

of the most solemn and certainly most authentic phrases of the Gospel [...] Francis, disavowed himself by kissing the lepers in what was more “bitter” and repugnant to his own nature. He has done violence to himself. [...] Francis did not go to the lepers on his own moved by human and religious compassion. He writes: «the Lord led me among them». [...] All this encourages us to correct a certain image of Francis made popular by the late literature and embraced by Dante in the Divine Comedy. The famous metaphor of Francis’s wedding with Madonna Poverty which left deep traces in the Franciscan art and poetry can be misleading. We do not fall in love with a virtue, even if it is poverty; we fall in love with a person. Francis’ wedding has been, like in other mystics, a marriage with Christ. [...] One evening, his fraternity brothers asked him if he intended to take a wife. Seeing him strangely absent and luminous in his face, young Francis replied: «I will take the most noble and beautiful bride that you have ever seen». This answer is usually mal-interpreted. From the context it is clear that the bride he meant was not the poverty, but the hidden treasure and the precious pearl: Christ Himself. Blessed Tommaso da Celano, Franciscan Friar Minors, reports the episode by saying he embraced the true religion, and the kingdom of Heaven is the hidden treasure that he sought. [...] Francis did not marry poverty nor did he the poor. Just to say so, he married Christ and because of Him he married “in second marriage”, our Lady Poverty. Therefore as far as Christian Sanctity, it will always be like that. Basically among poverty and poor there must be love for Christ, otherwise poor people will be exploited one way or another. Poverty will easily become either a polemical matter against the Church, or an ostentation of greater perfection as competing in the same Church. All this unfortunately happened among some of the followers of the Poverello».

(Father RANIERO CANTALAMESSA o.f.m, *In love with Christ. The secret of Francis of Assisi*, Zenit Books, Rome 2014, pp. 10-17).

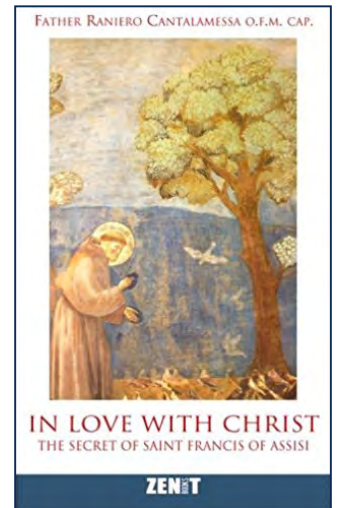
Not poor, nor lepers, nor birds or ripe and golden wheat fields mixed with a multitude of blooming poppies, but Christ Jesus is the one Saint Francis chooses.

Getting out of this option is not enough in order to be able to understand St. Francis and all true Franciscanism.

Another author, Don Divo Barsotti, deeply and further more examines, in a mystical sense, the fundamental choice operated and lived by St. Francis:

«The whole world is empty like a desert, for Francis, if he does not find Jesus there. He is not searching for anybody else but Him, he does not love nor he wants anybody else but Christ. Christ Himself lives back to the origin of the Church. All Saints are friends of the Christ, but there is no such a direct relationship in any Saint, toward Christ which transcends every method and every system; a personal and vivified relationship among Francis and Jesus. [...] Francis’ relationship with Christ the Savior is more immediate, is more suffered, is more alive; [...] There is absolutely no one in the whole history of Christianity like Francis for whom Jesus alone was worth it; nor the doctrine, nor the spirituality, the theology, but the living Jesus, the Son of God made Man. He did not want to know anybody else. [...] Nothing stops him, nothing binds him. Francis does not attributes Christ back to a system; he does not even see Him like a hidden vault arch of a theology.

IN LOVE WITH CHRIST The secret of Saint Francis of Assisi



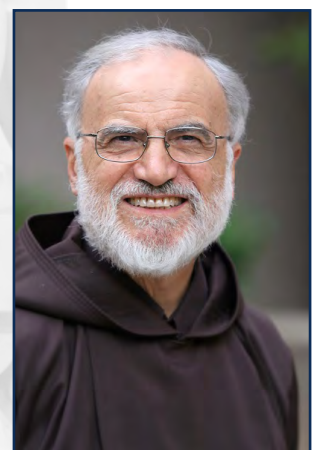
Francis is the universal man; in life he spoke to everybody, lettered and ignorants, even to birds and wolves, according to the Franciscan legend.

We can only speak about him in a “franciscanly” simple, direct and, poetic way, if you will.

One day suddenly Friar Masseo addressed to Francis a very well known question:

“Why is everybody running after you? Why is the whole world coming after you?”

The above question is arisen from all over the world. It doesn’t belong only to Friar Masseo’s little world from central Italy any longer, but includes believers and followers of different religions.

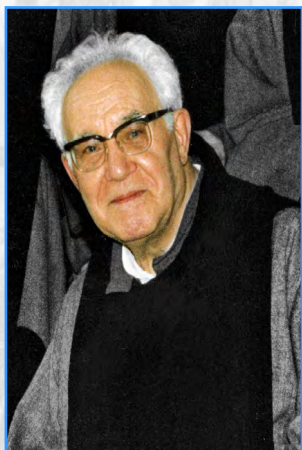


Father **Raniero Cantalamessa** O.F.M. Cap. (Colli del Tronto, July 22, 1934) is an Italian presbyter, theologian and preacher of the Order of the Friar Capuchin. Since 1980 he is a preacher of the Pontifical House. In this role he has been serving Pope st. John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis.



The volume brings together some texts, previously published separately (*Prayer in St. Francis; Praise to God Most High; This is my testament; Prayer*).

We are able to find right in the middle of it, St. Francis' mysticism and prayer, his immersion in the mystery of Christ that brings him praising the pure joy of love. In his Testament Saint Francis speaks about his life as a living Gospel, as the only rule to follow in a true prayer animated by the Holy Spirit. Finally we consider Saint Francis' prayer as participation at Christ's Trinitarian life in the docility of the Holy Spirit and in the love relationship with the Word made flesh, dead and risen for us. Father Divo, a contemporary mystic brings interest into the new interpretation of the volume concerning the knowledge of a great mystic of the past.



Divo Barsotti (1914 - 2006) was a presbyter, monk and Italian writer, founder of the Community of the Sons of God. He was fecund in his literary Works and preacher of spiritual retreats.

Jesus is a living Person that he loves, and nothing else. Altogether because he loves Him with total adoration, loves Him with a special love that he is not able to give anyone else but to God.

The danger of modern spirituality is that Christ becomes an excuse to join the community. And I don't care about the whole community. Creation it's worth to me only because it's made by Him; [...] I don't care about mankind and the whole Church [...] Never mind the cosmic Christ; I only know the Word God made flesh for me. It is in Him that humanity is saved, I am safe just because of Him. And Francis more than anybody else lived this personal relationship. For no-one, the living Jesus was as real as for him. [...] San Francis wanted to meet Him in his flesh, in his holy humanity, in his living human nature, in his real, concrete person. [...] We are not able to find out how deep Saint John evangelist's friendship and intimacy has been with Jesus, whereas all Francis' life has constantly been the evidence of this love. Tommaso da Celano asserted that Francis was crazy about Christ, he was always searching for Him, he refused everybody else but Him. Christ's love gushed forth, his ears, his eyes were full of Christ, only Him. If he spoke, his words were about Him, his thoughts were about Jesus. Only Jesus alone was the meaning of his life. Francis is not just an idea, but a real lover of a living Person. [...] According to him everything is a sign of His presence. [...] His eyes do not recognize others but Christ's face, as well as Francis' mouth is not able to say a word without Him. Here is what makes Francis really a great man. He is the one who impersonated the living God as example for every christian».

(DIVO BARSOTTI, *Saint Francis living prayer*, Editions San Paolo s.r.l., Cinisello Balsamo (MI), 2014² .pp. 243-246).

Discovering these two writings impressed me even more, without being surprised at all, as far as Valtorta's Works. As for St. Ignatius of Loyola (previous newsletter) it's necessary to feature Valtorta's Works as a whole without stopping at this particular or that fragment note. In order to reach this condition we need to have had read them thoroughly till the very end, not in a hurry, and maybe not even only one time. And not only... but if we did, and for those who did it, the Franciscan pattern jumps right glaring at our eyes. In chap. 652 of the *Gospel* there are seven reasons why the Work has been written. This does not mean that there could be more and implicit ones to me. I am adding more reasons up, because the blending union that St. Francis wanted with Jesus made me understand the fathomable and thickness of her Major Work. Let's point out authors like J. Aulignier, J. F. Lavère, L. De Caro, E. Matricciani, F. La Greca as absolutely important into witnessing the scientific basis that add value to the Valtorta's Works as a treasury repository container in which you can either find a great novel or an "historical miracle", according to whoever is willing to accept Father Divo Barsotti and Father Raniero Cantalamessa's invitation to "thoroughly go to the core" of the similarities among St. Francis and Valtorta's Works. I have often spoken of the "new evangelization" of which various popes have been talking about, and which was also anticipated and written by Maria Valtorta (see *The Workbooks of 1945-1950*, topics disclosed on the Apocalypse, pp. 520-522). We must though understand the meaning of this motto: "new evangelization" does not mean

new doctrine, but new enthusiasm for the same doctrine. Maria Valtorta has not used them as an instrument to introduce a new doctrine (we are not talking about the fifth gospel!), but just a new way to support more enthusiasm for the same Truth suitable for our times. Many persons have written the life of Christ Jesus making incredible confusion about the Gospel. There is a great amount of books that overload shelves: Esotericists, New Agers, more or less inspired novelists, classical Spiritists, channeling Spiritists and all sorts of Theologians. No one has ever captivated readers like the Valtorta's Works have. Certainly many have involved a great number of persons, let's just think of the Abbot Giuseppe Ricciotti (*The life of Christ*), Romano Guardini (*The Lord*), Pope Ratzinger with the three volumes about Jesus Himself. But there is always the impression that everyone has attempted to interpret, to tell, to comment, and to try any possible thing. It is as if they had wrapped Jesus Christ into a doctrine, in a theological, exegetic, intellectualistic vision. Nor even the writings of the venerable Mary of Jesus of Ágreda or those of Blessed Catherine Emmerich, for different reasons, get closer to Maria Valtorta's Works. The Jesus she describes with extreme simplicity, avoiding any doctrinal interpretation, is exactly in her daily routine, the same Jesus of the Church. Let us ask ourselves the reason for this unfathomable involvement I am able to experience even with Radio Maria's listeners on the Radio program I host. Each single radio auditor who is able to get through the telephone lines, is so enthusiastic about having discovered a new Jesus never ever met this way before.

Father Gabriele Roschini o.s.m. after having studied all the theological-dogmatic literature on the Madonna had to admit that:

«I feel, however, that I must candidly admit that the Mariology found in all of Maria Valtorta's writings - both published and unpublished - has been for me a real discovery. No other Marian writings, not even the sum total of everything I have read and studied, were able to give me as clear, as lively, as complete, as luminous, or as fascinating an image, both simple and sublime, of Mary, God's Masterpiece.

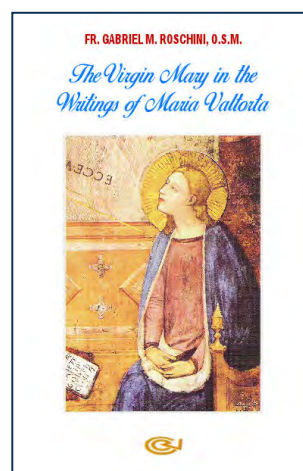
It seems to me that the conventional image of the Blessed Virgin, portrayed by myself and my fellow Mariologists, is merely a papier mâché Madonna compared to the living and vibrant Virgin Mary envisioned by Maria Valtorta, a Virgin Mary perfect in every way».

(Father GABRIEL M. ROSCHINI, *The Virgin Mary in the writings of Maria Valtorta*, Centro Editoriale Valtortiano, Isola del Liri (FR) 1986², p. 7).

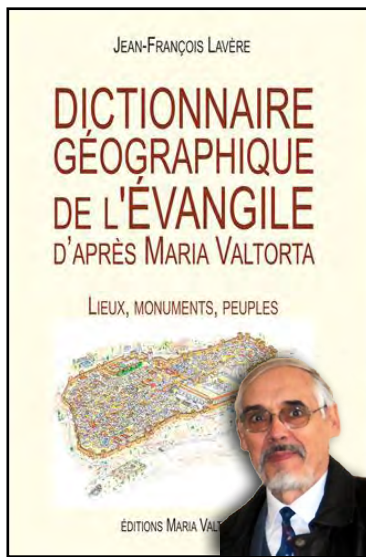
Perhaps the time has come to have the courage to say something similar about the figure of Jesus Christ in the Valtorta's writings.

The Jesus Christ presented by theologians is due to a series of speculative theological interpretation; the exegetes' figure is a meticulous research of linguistic-sociological-historical-theological interpretation; the novelists' figure ranges from dream to nightmare; the one of the filmmakers varies from the devotional postcard, to the frivolous and the actual dishonest one. The taste for the weird and the exaggeration comes from esoterism and new age, and is more misleading than ever. The true Jesus of history and faith, true man and true God, seems to disappear in these writers (here rules the literal modernism even if skillfully disguised).

The Virgin Mary in the Writings of Maria Valtorta



Father Gabriele Roschini, of the Order of the Servants of Mary, was a world-renowned Mariologist, professor and founder of the *Marianum* Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Rome in 1950, professor at the Lateran Pontifical University and a Consultant to the Holy Office. During the Pontificate of Pope Pius XII, he worked closely with the Vatican on Marian publications, and took part of the Vatican Council II as a consultant. He is considered by many to be one of the greatest Mariologist of the 20th century, was highly esteemed by all Popes during his Priestly life (especially Pope Pious XII) and was often referred to by Pope St. John Paul II as one of the greatest Mariologist who ever lived. Fr. Roschini had personally met Maria Valtorta, but admitted that, like many others, he was a respectful and condescending skeptic. However after carefully studying her writings for himself, he underwent a radical and enthusiastic change of heart, later declaring Valtorta to be "one of the eighteen greatest mystic of all times". In his last book of 395 pages, which he said was his most important, *The Virgin Mary in the Writings of Maria Valtorta*, he declared that the Mariology found in Maria Valtorta's writings exceeds the total sum of everything he has read, studied, and published himself (and he has published over 790 articles and miscellaneous writings, and 130 books, 66 of which were over 200 pages long – almost all of which are on Mariology). As suitable material for a course which he taught at the *Marianum* Pontifical Theological Faculty in Rome on the Marian intuitions of the great mystics, Fr. Gabriel Roschini used both Maria Valtorta's *The Poem of the Man-God* as well as her other mystical writings as a start up for his course.



Jean François Lavère, a retired engineer dedicated more than a decade to identify and analyze, in a methodical way, the truthfulness of thousands of data in Maria Valtorta's Major Work.

J. F. Lavère demonstrates in his works that Maria Valtorta supplied various details, only well known to few specialists, and in some occasion, information completely unknown the moment they were written, and confirmed later on. The first volume (*The Valtorta Enigma*) validated all verified scientific aspects; the second was extended to the biblical exegesis, and Eng. Lavère's collaboration to the "*Dictionary of the characters*", convalidates its historical accuracy. Finally nowadays we are able to find the "*Geographic Dictionary of the Gospel*", illustrating Maria Valtorta's perfect knowledge of this further discipline. Rev. Father Pierre Lafèvre of the French Maria Valtorta Association, stated: «after reading the *Geographic Dictionary*, it will be difficult to refuse Maria Valtorta's Works with a simple shrug!». A journey throughout the Palestine of 2000 years ago, its hills, its brooks, its villages, very precisely and correctly described by a bedridden Maria Valtorta in Viareggio.

When everything goes smooth there is a Jesus Christ extrapolated from history of his times, with the people with whom he lived, and very often the surroundings are extrapolated as well: cities, countries, environments, sources, fields and roads, ports and rivers of those years (not belonging to centuries ago); whereas Maria Valtorta describes us a weak and omnipotent Jesus altogether; alive, true, concrete, real, tangible, with historical-geographical coordinates, and exact space-time belonging to those years. No paper-mache, nor a more or less an approximate Jesus any longer. Only the real Jesus who walked on the ground getting dirty with dust and mud, a long way off sins. He also was also a true God capable of incredible miracles as well as equally incredible humility. We are facing the Valtorta paradigm, in view of the fact that this is definitely a paradigm: just a simple and mere description of the Gospel's events from the scenes she was taking part of, as far as the characters concerning, same procedure; just what she saw, heard and smelled, no personal opinions, nor individual interpretations. As far as the "*dictations*", they are written under Jesus assertions and remarks. This Valtorta "paradigm" validates the desire of all saints of all times; such as living with the authentic Jesus.

In the 652 chapters of the *Gospel*, anyone is capable of meeting St. Francis's Jesus. Father Divo Barsotti states that: «such a straight and immediate relationship with Jesus does not exit in any Saint at all just like the one in St. Francis».

Maria Valtorta gives every *Gospel's* reader the chance to get to this experience, if we have an open heart. No mediation; no wrapping garment that hides Him, nor a foggy Figure throughout the centuries; indeed a direct, basic, strong and an «almost» physical contact with the living and authentic Jesus. As the negative image of the Turin Shroud bares testament to the human figure of a lifeless Jesus, tortured in a thousand ways, so does Maria Valtorta in the *Gospel*. Jesus in flesh, bones and divinity is there waiting for us... if only we want to meet Him. None of the above writings I mentioned, are able to make people fall in love with Him on their own. They can make people understand better, so they can solve problems of exegetical, historical, theological or spiritual criticism and it is certainly a great deal, but still, a true falling in love with Jesus Christ remains difficult. In order to fall in love it's essential "to concretely know", to touch, to caress, to stroke, to feel... Jesus, all this is true in practice and in theory. Besides "technical books" written with this methodology, could make people fall in love or rather, honestly speaking, there is a high risk of ideology (with all its consequences that are just beyond the corner). Doubtlessly, it stands out the extremely detailed perceptive-physical cognitive value of the *Gospel*. The primary source is always the mere description of the facts as they appear from the outside, without considering exegesis, theology, spirituality and mysticism.

Saint Francis of Assisi is able to shows us his target: to fall in love with the Person of Jesus Christ and all His fulfillments; here is the right path: Maria Valtorta's *Gospel* and our goodwill, that is, to know see-hear-perceive the overwhelming and personal love that St. Francis lived and announced.

Father Ernesto Zucchini



fondazionemariavaltorta@gmail.com
Viale Carducci, 71 - 55049 Viareggio (LU)

A free Maria Valtorta Foundation's Newsletter is available by filling your information, clicking down below:
http://www.fondazionemariavaltorta.it/it/multimedia_newsletter.php