

MARIA VALTORTA READERS GROUP

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MARIA VALTORTA READERS' GROUP

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

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



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

PRAYING WITH MARIA VALTORTA

Holy Mary, pray for us mortals. O Mother, without you, our life is like a lost swallow with wings tired from the extreme effort from a voyage that was too long, or of a small boat which the fury of the unleashed waves shakes in every direction, in every way. You who are the star of the sea, calm my storm above the raging waves in our life, and even more in the hour when for us, the lights will be extinguished in the obscurity of death. You, Virgin and Mother, open the eternal gates for us and lead us to God.

(*Maria Valtorta Prayers*, p. 16)

MARIA VALTORTA'S MISSION

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

EDITORIAL

Dear Maria Valtorta Readers,

Bulletin: For those of you who feel the whole world should be reading these works, more people are, in fact, looking into them. Our team member, Johnny, has given us our yearly report on the Maria Valtorta Readers' Group website (valtorta.org.au) and there are so many new people who have been visiting (under the expertise and true dedication of Stephen Austin, our webmaster). It appears that Stephen Austin's *The Summa & Encyclopaedia to Maria Valtorta's Extraordinary Work* has drawn in the most people, particularly the seven - page list of Approvals and all the refutations. Furthermore, the videos, along with David Murray's *Praying the Rosary with Maria Valtorta*, also have a high number of hits too. This information is important because it informs the team as to what people are looking for in their spiritual journey and what they need in order to affirm their decision to read these works. As May was also the month of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Our

Lady's presence will also be felt throughout this edition.

Supplement: During this quarter, we celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of the Angels (2 August). In #100, the Archangels were the theme which resulted in so many welcomed responses, so perhaps it is timely to have the Guardian Angels as the focus in this Supplement.

Growing in faith,

Catherine Loft (catherine@valtorta.org.au)

DAVID'S JOURNEY CONTINUES

LISTENING AND THE ONION

This instalment continues the story 'From the Depth of a Soul' from the previous Bulletin. It begins with a personal reflection developed when I was teaching personal communication skills to students at The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), and to other groups of people here in Melbourne. This was the concept of an Onion, mirroring the creation and development of a soul. Little did I know that some years later in discovering the writings of Maria Valtorta – and producing the little booklet 'The Genesis and Activity of a Soul' – this would add further to my understanding of the life of a Soul. The following describes my initial discovery, and adds to its later development...

A CONCEPT OF THE ONION

*I believe that one of the greatest gifts we can give to another - especially when the other is troubled - is to **listen**. Many years ago, I became aware of a concept which I have often found very helpful.*

The human heart (let's call it "the onion") has an inner core* which is completely covered by its outer layers. Its layers – or rings - are successively there to protect, and their removal makes the heart exposed and vulnerable. But while the layers can be productive, they can also stifle understanding and growth, (such as with "old tapes", prejudices, fear and lack of trust). To be a good listener is a labour of

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love. I believe that the following process may help another person (with a problem) to peel off some of the layers in his or her onion - when these layers are getting in the way. Ask Jesus, Mary and both people's Guardian Angel for guidance and assistance. Then think of the three H's:

1. **I'm Here.** Be present for the other person.
2. **I'm Hearing.** Show that you are trying to understand. A poster I have has the following words:
**'Don't walk in front of me – I may not follow.
Don't walk behind me – I may not lead.
Just walk beside me – and be my friend.'**
3. **I'm Helping.** More often, just **being there** is enough for the other person.

The **'Serenity Prayer'** might help here.

'God, grant me the **Serenity** to accept the things I can't change, the **Courage** to change the things I can, and the **Wisdom** to know the difference.'

I believe this can be a growing process. It is an exercise in faith, hope and love, and in using the free choice that God has given to us to ask for or to ignore His help. We show our trust by acceptance of His help and His will in the light of His infinitely better knowledge and judgement of what's good for our souls.

THE CONCEPT'S FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

*(A most helpful teaching, about listening, was given to Maria Valtorta by her Guardian Angel, Azariah. It is one of my favourite passages. Here is an extract – I call it **'Soul to Soul'**).*

Azariah says: '...Many words are not needed. Sometimes none. To see one another - a glance. Your eyes gaze in a way that is no longer earthly. You look, but it is not you - Christ looks through you. You see: but you do not see the person in front of You. You see his soul with your soul. It is because of this looking with the soul - after you have filled your gaze with celestial light - that you do not look the way many others do. You listen to the stories of others, and often remain silent. But while your lips are silent, your soul loves. And by loving, it caresses and comforts the embittered, sick or irate soul speaking to you. You also speak sometimes and say commonplace words to commonplace listeners, from whom you want to keep your secret hidden. But, like the note of a song - which now and then escapes from a closed hall and fills the street with sweetness, and which the poor person gathers in and draws consolation from, now and then a spiritual gem falls from your lips. It is a spark escaping from the Fire possessing you. And the one speaking with you receives it and meditates upon it, and his soul awakens, reflects and sometimes decides. Nothing from the works of love is ever lost. Love is in you, and everything is thus active...' (*Book of Azariah*, pp. 270-1 (1993 Edition); pp. 280-1 (2007 Edition))

* I have since learnt to equate this "inner core" as our very soul, created in God's image and likeness (Gen. 1:26-7)

CATHERINE'S CLASSROOM

Especially in recent months where the freedom to travel had been impeded, I particularly enjoyed watching programs where people were House Hunting for homes in their own country or overseas. It gave me a glimpse of other people and other places. I shared this with my students, many of whom were familiar with the range of programs that were screened.

However, I pointed out to them that I was astounded and dismayed by the number of people who would inform the realtor that they wanted a home with a room, a balcony, a beachfront or an open-air garden space where they could do their yoga. It seems that the hosts of the show and the viewers never bat an eyelid at this. In fact, it is considered popular and an accepted way of life. NEVER does anyone tell the realtor that they would like space for a prayer room, or an open living area where they could set up a small shrine, a beachfront where they could walk and pray, or a garden to create a little Marian grotto. NEVER. The class laughed at my annoyance at this as well as the theatrical way I explained it. Are people too embarrassed to talk about their prayer life? Is it something Christians have to do in the secrecy of their homes now? Or has religion really been driven underground, abandoned and not to be mentioned on TV?

I wasn't going to let this slide, so I took this opportunity to explain the difference.

I informed them that people saw the benefit of doing yoga as a form of meditation which is New Age where the focus was internal, on the breath, on the self with a mantra where they had to empty the mind and centre just on themselves.

However, the Catholic Church has its own form of meditation where the focus is on the external, connecting to something heavenly - to the Creator, to Jesus and Mary, or extending to people outside of themselves. It was about drawing themselves outwards and experiencing a greater sense of understanding, love or warmth with God and others. May, the month of the Blessed Virgin Mary, contained the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima where Mary taught the three children how to pray the rosary correctly, one form of Catholic meditation.

It had already been explained to the class that you say one Our Father and 10 Hail Mary's for each Mystery but they did not yet fully grasp that these prayers were chanted quietly in the background while visually meditating on the mystery (with the help of the artwork, if necessary). After all, they had been taught to pray from the heart and to focus on the words. (No wonder these poor students were confused. I would be too.) So I suggested that they select one mystery. We carefully looked at the artwork on the leaflet and tried to imagine the scene coming to life. To highlight this further, I brought in the *Praying the Rosary booklet with the writings of*

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Maria Valtorta and we prayed one decade of one Mystery, so they were guided in what to visualise and think about during the Hail Marys.

In my junior class, we had been studying the Holy Spirit, so we went through the Third Glorious Mystery - the Descent of the Holy Spirit. With another, it was the feast of the Ascension, so we looked at the Second Glorious Mystery. And with another, we had been reading about a few Eucharistic miracles in amazement, so we prayed the Fifth Luminous Mystery - the Institution of the Eucharist. For some, it was their first shot at meditating the Catholic way but I wanted them to understand the fruit and purpose of Catholic meditation with which Our Lady and our Church has graciously gifted us for decades.

Whether I succeeded or not, who knows? But I planted the seed.

Catherine (catherine@valtorta.org.au)

BROWSING THE SUMMA

Maria Valtorta, Fr. Gabriel Roschini and the Blessed Virgin Mary.

One of the most noteworthy ecclesiastics who promoted Maria Valtorta's writings was Fr. Gabriel Roschini, O.S.M. (ordained in 1924). Fr. Gabriel Roschini was a world-renowned Mariologist, a decorated professor and founder of the Marianum Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Rome in 1950 under Pope Pius XII, [...] He is considered by many to be the greatest Mariologist of the 20th century, he was highly esteemed by all the Popes during his priestly life (especially Pope Pius XII), and was often referred to by Pope John Paul II as one of the greatest Mariologists who ever lived.

Fr. Roschini had also personally met Valtorta, but admitted that, like many others, he was a respectful and condescending skeptic. But 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 mystics of all time." In his last book of 395 pages, which he said was his most important book, *The Virgin Mary in the Writings of Maria Valtorta*, he declared that the Mariology found in Maria Valtorta's writings exceeds the sum total 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).

[...] Fr. Gabriel Roschini, O.S.M., wrote in his last book, *The Virgin Mary in the Writings of Maria Valtorta*: I have been studying, teaching, preaching, and writing Mariology for half a century already. To do this, I had to read innumerable works and articles of all kinds on Mary: a real Marian library. However, I must candidly admit that the Mariology found in all of Maria Valtorta's writings – both published or 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 paper-mache Madonna compared to the living and vibrant Virgin Mary envisioned by Maria Valtorta, a Virgin Mary perfect in every way. ...whoever wants to know the Blessed Virgin (a Virgin in perfect harmony with the Holy Scriptures, the Tradition of the Church, and the Church Magisterium) should draw from Valtorta's Mariology.

[Ed: To read the references and the footnotes cited, please refer to Stephen Austin: *The Summa & Encyclopaedia to Maria Valtorta's Extraordinary Work*, pp. 9, 89)]

STEPHEN'S UPDATE

Dear Valtorta Readers,

We have good news! Our team member Johnny has recently shared with Catherine, David, and I the statistics of the number of people who have visited our Readers' Group site last year in 2020. Despite covid derailing many aspects of people's life and many organizations, our site still managed to receive over 33,000 visits from 14,000 visitors. Deo Gratias! These people hail from the US, Australia, Canada, Ukraine, Great Britain, Italy, Russia, Germany, France, South Korea, the Philippines, India, Ireland, Sweden, Poland, China, Bangladesh, Brazil, Lebanon, the Netherlands, Romania, Indonesia, Spain, Mexico, and other countries.

Please continue to share our site with your friends and loved ones too and to share your experiences with Valtorta with other Readers' Group members in our newsletters!

God bless you,

Stephen (stephen@valtorta.org.au)

AUDIOS OF MARIA VALTORTA'S WORKS

I am receiving more and more requests for any audios available of the writings of Maria Valtorta.

The Readers' Group offers MP3 disks of just the Sunday Gospels which are also available on our free Maria Valtorta App or monthly on our website. There is an audio of the complete 10 volumes that is available from the Centro Editoriale Valtortiano in Italy. This is sold as an electronic version, not hardcopy disks. In the last edition, a reader, Niki from Montreal, Canada has been recording her readings in 20-minute segments. There is yet another reader, Zacchie Sea, who has recordings in 2-4 hour blocks or she breaks them down into 5-10 minutes chapter segments too. I hope this is helpful.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4HOCgjsFtPg-X0-Kc4n8bw/videos?app=desktop>

READERS' CHOICE

I read this passage which Maria sees on the feast of Our Lady of the Angels (2 August) and I was mesmerised, just like her. How grateful I am that

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Maria captured the vision so well, just using the human language with all its limitations in trying to capture something so heavenly. This allowed my all imperfect earthly surroundings to vanish and I too felt such awe from Maria's wonderful description of Our Lady's garments and the Angels – all so pure and white.

[Maria Valtorta says:] 'This morning I have sunk [...] into heaps of heavenly snow, as if I were on boundless, extremely white snow fields against the clearest blue. The snow is formed by numberless hosts of angels: living pearls flying through the sapphire of the sky. Angels and angels and angels: light and harmony. Lights compared to which the whitest pearls and the clearest diamonds are dull and sullied; harmonies compared to which the most perfect and sweetest singing on earth is a discordant clamour.

Festive circles of snowy light, circles around the even brighter, more splendid light of the Most Blessed Mother of God. Such a sparkling light that I see Mary's face and hands as if they belonged to suns beaming out rays that are almost unbearable to the eye, in such fashion that her beloved face and dear hands joined in prayer are visible to me only with difficulty behind the veil of light which radiates out from them and surrounds them with a halo, a gossamer screen of glorious luminosity. But, half closing the eyes of my soul before such brilliance, I perceive Mary's blessed smile, her gentle gaze, humble and chaste, so loving, with her eyes turned downwards - towards the poor earth and the poor Maria who I am - half concealed by her eyelids. The gaze of a humble, modest virgin, happy with her feast, but not proud of it. With her act, She seems to be repeating the Magnificat, which, if it is recognition of God's gifts to Her, is, above all, praise of God.

I see nothing else except the festive angels and the Mother and Queen, standing upright on her shining underpinning (light in what is different from light rising to envelop Her in light), most beautiful in her dress of pearls turned into cloth, turned into light which is brighter than the light enveloping Her, and in her face and hands, which are so blazing that they surpass all luminosity

What radiance is that our Mother! My soul has become white and fresh, as if, as I said at the beginning, I were on boundless snow fields and saw nothing but immaculate snow against a clear sky and under a bright sun.

Oh, Paradise...! (Notebooks 1944, pp. 486-7)

FROM THE VALTORTA FOUNDATION IN ITALY

The Italian newsletter, 'Il Bolletino' contained this article written by Emilio Pisani, Publisher of the Maria Valtorta Foundation in Italy (CEV- Centro Editoriale Valtortiano) which I hope you find interesting.

VALTORTA-BOCELLI: A CULTURAL PARTNERSHIP

'[...] I read Andrea Bocelli's interview in the monthly publication, "Il Timone" (The Helm) (April, 2021). What could this tenor have said to surprise me? This man who is known world-wide? Certainly not his passion for music, nor the success of his concerts, nor the production of millions of his records. It was the story of his relationship with his faith, nourished by reading the work of Maria Valtorta, which he defines as "food from God".

What surprised me was that Andrea Bocelli not only welcomes and listens to [Maria Valtorta], but he is interested in her story just as much as he is passionate about literature and drawn to popular songs. An openness to knowledge distinguishes a cultured person from the scholar who only confines himself to his own information. More and more, I am finding that those who refuse to approach Valtorta's work are those who love learning but lack "goodwill and humility," which Bocelli suggests one must have. This interview with Bocelli was released along with an article on the background [and setting] of Maria Valtorta, a writer known the world over for her work, just as Andrea Bocelli is an artist known for his voice. Behind the literary work that conquers, as well as behind the voice that fascinates, there is a person who reveals something edifying about themselves. We are impressed by Maria Valtorta when we learn that she has also added her personal [literary] culture to the service of the spiritual elevation [of others such as Andrea Bocelli].

LETTERS

You chose some beautiful excerpts. Good news for me as my youngest son, who has just in the last weeks returned to the Faith, is now reading the *Poem* Volume 1 and he loves it! He is 27 and four of his other siblings have read or are reading it! I suggested he start at the beginning and not rush to the Passion as the full impact of Christ's sacrifice is realised after reading the previous volumes.

A reader from Victoria

† REST IN PEACE †

Please pray for the soul of

Maria Bowditch

A long-time Maria Valtorta Reader

Maria Valtorta Readers' Group

This group is an online non-profit organisation, which retails publications of Maria Valtorta's writings and offers other supporting materials to its members and to other interested persons. Bulletins are sent every three months. A subscription of \$10.00 per year is requested (no charge for priests and religious). Email copies of the bulletins, supplements and catalogue are free and are also available online at our website. [The material in this publication is not intended to represent the opinion of the Church. The editor affirms submission to the official judgment of the Church regarding the information contained herein.]