

MARIA VALTORTA READERS GROUP

Phone: (03) 9885 9710 E-mail: catherine@valtorta.org.au Website: <http://www.valtorta.org.au>



MARIA VALTORTA READERS' GROUP

BULLETIN No.111 – SEPTEMBER 2023

'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)

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



PRAYING WITH MARIA VALTORTA

'Teach us to pray and to love, O Mary. Teach us to ask for and to deserve the peace that brings children back to their parents, husbands to their wives, fathers to their children, peace that makes us become good and hard working, the peace that permits nations, now divided, to become reunited under the sign of your Son who told us to love one another as brothers and who has Himself loved us like a brother by giving His life for us.'

(*Maria Valtorta Prayers*, p. 27)

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

Bulletin: While the MV Foundation prefers the use of the international title of this Work, *The Gospel As Revealed to Me*, the **Browsing the Summa** column has necessitated the use of, *The Poem of the Man-God* to avoid confusion with the synoptic Gospel comparisons, as you will appreciate. The **Reader's Choice** column this quarter ties in so well with a letter from another Reader which is very interesting! **Supplement:** Inspired by a Reader who is devoted to God's Will, this is the theme chosen to show, from Maria's writings, that everyone, from Jesus to Mary, from Jesus' followers to Valtorta herself, were aware of, or became aware of living in the Divine Will. I hope that after reading these passages, Readers will be able to understand that "Thy Will be Done" should be **the thought** to start the day, and **the thought** that should bring us consolation and peace when things seem to go wrong in our lives.

Growing in faith,

Catherine Loft (catherine@valtorta.org.au).

BROWSING THE SUMMA – VALTORTA'S WORK SOLVES APPARENT BIBLICAL CONTRADICTIONS

'[...] While faithful Catholics do not doubt in the least that Sacred Scripture and the Holy Bible are inspired by God, is historically accurate, and does not contain any errors

against faith or morals, many non-Catholics do not believe this, and they [...] try to argue against the authenticity and reliability of Sacred Scripture. [...] Catholic scholars have struggled with this for years too, attempting to explain these apparent contradictions. *The Poem of the Man-God* often solves problems amazingly well in the Gospel accounts that have been perpetuated throughout the centuries. This is one proof of the divine origin of this Work.'

David J. Webster, M.Div., discusses [five] prime examples of how the *Poem of the Man-God* resolves problems in the Gospel accounts. Quoting from his book, *Voiding the Voices of Heaven*, he states:

1.'Certain elements of the Resurrection story have frustrated scholars for centuries. Obviously, for the Gospel writers, the actual account was unnecessarily complicated for their purposes, so they simplified their accounts by telling only part of the story, or, as Matthew did, by blending the accounts. What has, up to now, been so unexplainable, and, frankly, almost impossible to believe is how at least three groups of women could separately visit and expect entrance to a sealed and guarded tomb in the darkness of an early dawn. [...] The account in *The Poem* not only untangles the five visits to the tomb (the first three groups of women, with the Magdalene visiting twice, and then one later group), but it explains very simply why the first three groups of women quite unintentionally ended up visiting the tomb separately, and why from the outset they were confident they could gain access to the tomb. (cf. **P5**, 704-12; **G10**, 242-52).

2. The Gospel account of the story of the crowing of the cock after Peter's denials has presented an equally challenging problem for those who have maintained the integrity of Scripture. Critics have, for centuries, pointed to this account as undeniable proof of error, and no biblical scholar has ever been able to satisfactorily explain the apparent discrepancies. [Did the cock crow once? Twice? In succession? Over a period of hours?] The account in *The Poem* solves this age-old problem by supplying the missing information. (cf. **P10**, 510, 555, 666; **G9**, 499, **G10**, 55, 194)

3. *The Poem* also offers clear evidence that could also settle the debate over the authorship of Hebrews and the important and logical reason this work was attributed to

MARIA VALTORTA READERS GROUP

Phone: (03) 9885 9710 E-mail: catherine@valtorta.org.au Website: http://www.valtorta.org.au

Paul, though language style shows he was not, at least, the primary author. *The Poem* gives evidence that none other than Gamaliel was its primary author. Gamaliel, who had always shown the highest respect for Jesus, becomes a firm believer in Christ at the Crucifixion, though he does not openly identify with the Church in Christian baptism until near his own death twenty-one years after the Ascension of Christ. The major clue that points to Gamaliel as the author is:

- A) its lofty Hebrew language style of writing,
- B) that Valtorta reports seeing Gamaliel with a wax tablet and parchment, recording the discourse of Jesus in the Temple
- C) that this discourse contains a whole series of thoughts and themes found in Hebrews. (Compare **P4**, 465-8; **G7**, 448-53 to that of Hebrews 1:5,6,13,14; 2:5,11,14-17; 7:2,3,11-13,15-17; 9:11,12; 10:9,10).
- D) that if this were the origin of Hebrews, then it would have been circulating long before the Gospels were compiled. That could, first of all, explain why this very important discourse of Jesus was not included in any of the four Gospels.
- E) that if Gamaliel were the author, it would only be logical that not wishing at the time to openly identify with the Church, he would have given this work to his former student Paul, who had converted by this time, to disseminate it.

4. Perhaps the most striking example of divine authorship I discovered, was puzzling over a **4½ month** ministry in Galilee. This was detailed in over 330 pages of *The Poem* but it was completely missing in the New Testament Gospels. [...] To my amazement, I discovered evidence substantiating this very missing sixth Galilean ministry, **hidden** in one single verse in Luke. That verse (Luke 17:11) comes right at the proper place at the tail end of what *The Poem* describes as the fifth ministry cycle. Luke admits this very point of skipping over a whole ministry in Galilee and Samaria by saying. "And it came to pass, as he was going to Jerusalem, **he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.**" [...] *The Poem* also clarifies the meaning of Luke's rather strange statement in the same verse that Jesus, throughout that 4½ month ministry in the north of Palestine, is actually "going to Jerusalem!" Going through Samaria and Galilee is certainly a strange way to go to Jerusalem! But, once again, the narrative in *The Poem* describing this ministry in Galilee and Samaria, shows us why Luke said what he did. In this ministry, Jesus was anticipating His final trip to Jerusalem for His Passion and Crucifixion. Everywhere He went, we see Him in *The Poem* bidding farewell.

5. The Trial of Jesus by Caiphas is discussed in all synoptic Gospels. However, the fact that some place it at night, while others refer to it after daybreak has, at times, been viewed in terms of a synoptic problem. Luke 22:66 states: "At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them." Luke thus places the trial after daybreak. However, both Matthew and Mark refer to the trial at night. Some biblical scholars have struggled with these facts [...] which state: "...It is difficult to reconcile much of Mark's picture with known Jewish judicial procedures: a secret court session, at night..." While the synoptic Gospels do not directly refer to the role of Gamaliel in the Trial of Jesus, *the Poem of the Man God* does. Indeed, Gamaliel (a leading authority in

the Sanhedrin) makes repeated appearances in Valtorta's narrative and in the episode that Valtorta wrote, there are two trials, one at night and the other after daybreak. The second trial is prompted by Gamaliel [...] who considered the time and place of the night trial against Jewish judicial procedures, and demanded a new trial after daybreak. (**P5,554; G10,55**) Thus Valtorta's episode makes any criticism of the Gospel of Mark's account of the Trial of Jesus unnecessary and produces an explanation that reconciles Mark 14 with Luke 22.

I could cite many other examples of the Poem's attention to such detail, but this should be sufficient evidence that we are dealing here with a most extraordinary treasure of unmistakable divine origin.'

(from David J. Webster, *Voiding the Voices of Heaven* researched and quoted in *The Summa & Encyclopedia of Maria Valtorta's Extraordinary Work*, pp. 318-20 by Stephen Austin)

ON WEeping STATUES

(Maria says:) I'm reading a newspaper reporting a decree of the Bishop of Arezzo about weeping statues. The decree says: 'In order to dispel superstitions and maybe also malicious rumours going around about what happens in this church [St. Francis in Arezzo], I **order** the removal of all statues and holy images from public sight, or else the closure of the church! It saddens me to speak this way but I order it today.' Signed Bishop Mignone.'

I turn to God for enlightenment.

The Lord says: 'The sword in the Heart of Mary and her desolate weeping are caused by *the behaviour of priests* in respect to her merciful apparitions for them and the faithful. [...] **Where there is true and lasting conversions, such as miracles of extraordinary and sudden cures, then there is God and His Virgin.** [...] **Especially those involving conversions of the soul.** Where hearts are touched by grace, it can only be through the action of Heaven.'

(The Little Notebooks, pp. 121 & 133)

READER'S CHOICE

(This scene takes place in Gethsemane at the home of Mary and John given to them by Lazarus. It is night-time, and Lazarus, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea unexpectedly visit Mary and John.)

(Nicodemus is speaking) «Then, with regard to the Shrouds, since I am no longer a Hebrew and consequently no longer subject to the prohibition of Deuteronomy concerning carved images and castings, I was thinking of making a statue of Jesus crucified, as best I can - I will use one of my gigantic cedars of Lebanon - and of concealing one of the Shrouds inside it, the first one, if You, Mother, will give it back to us. It would always distress You too much to see it, because the filthiness with which Israel struck the Son of its God is visible on it. Further, certainly because of the shocks it received when descending from Golgotha, shocks that continuously shifted that tortured Head, the image is so confused that it is difficult to distinguish it. But that cloth, although the image is confused and it is dirty, is always dear and sacred to me, because on it there is always some of His blood and perspiration.

Hidden in that sculpture it will always be safe, because no Israelite of the high castes will ever dare to touch a sculpture. But the other one, the second Shroud, which was on Him from the evening of Preparation Day until the

MARIA VALTORTA READERS GROUP

Phone: (03) 9885 9710 E-mail: catherine@valtorta.org.au Website: <http://www.valtorta.org.au>

dawn of the Resurrection, must come to You. And - I am warning You so that You may not be too deeply moved in seeing it - and you must be informed that the more the days passed, the more clearly His image appeared, as He was after being washed. When we collected it from the Sepulchre, it seemed that it simply retained the impression of His members covered with the oils, and, mixed with them, the drainage of blood and serum from the many wounds. But either through a natural process or, which is much more certain, by a supernatural will, a miracle of Him to give joy to You, the more time passed, the more precise and clear the impression has become. He is there on the cloth, handsome, imposing, even if wounded, serene, peaceful, also after so many tortures. Have You the courage to see it?»

«Oh! Nicodemus! That was My supreme desire! You say that His appearance is peaceful... Oh! To be able to see Him thus, not with the tortured expression that is on Nike's veil!» replies Mary, joining Her hands against Her heart. Then the four shift the table to have more room; then, as Lazarus and John stand on one side, Nicodemus and Joseph on the other, they slowly unfold the long cloth. The dorsal side appears first, beginning from the feet; then after the quasi-junction of the heads, the front side. The lines are very clear, and clear are the signs, all the signs of the scourging, crowning with thorns, rubbing of the cross, bruises caused by blows received or by falls, and the wounds of the nails and of the lance.

Mary falls on Her knees, She kisses the cloth, She caresses those impressions, She kisses the wounds. She is distressed, but visibly happy to be able to have that supernatural miraculous image of Him.

When She finishes venerating it, She turns and says to John, who cannot be near Her, compelled as he is to hold one corner of the cloth: « It was you who told them, John. You alone could tell them because you alone were aware of this desire of Mine. »

«Yes, Mother, it was I. And I did not even have time to inform them of Your desire, that they agreed to it. But they have had to wait for a suitable moment to do so...»

«That is, a very clear night, in order to be able to come without torches or lamps, and a period of time without the festivities that assemble crowds and notables here in Jerusalem and nearby places. And that out of prudence...» explains Nicodemus.

«And I have come with them for greater safety. As the owner of Gethsemane, I was able to come and see this place without shocking the eyes of anyone... commissioned to watch everything and everybody» says Lazarus concluding.

«May God bless you all. But you have spent the money for the Shrouds... And that is not fair...»

«It is fair, Mother. I, from the Christ, Your Son, have received a gift that no money can buy: life given back to me after four days in a sepulchre, and before that, the conversion of my sister Mary. Joseph and Nicodemus have had from Jesus the Light, the Truth, the Life that does not die. And You... You, with Your sorrow of a Mother and Your love of the Most holy Mother for all men, have purchased for God, not a cloth, but the whole Christian world that will always be greater and greater. There is no money that can compensate You for what You have given. So take this, at least. It is Yours. And it is just that it should be so. Also Mary, my sister, thinks so. That has always been her opinion, since the moment that He

rose and even more since He left You to ascend to His Father.» Lazarus replies to Her.

« Then let it be so. I will go and get the other one. It, in fact, grieves Me so much to see it... This one is different. This one gives peace! Because here He is serene, in peace by now. In His mortal sleep, He already seems to be feeling the Life that is coming back and the glory that no one will ever be able to strike and demolish. I now wish nothing else, apart from being reunited to Him. But that will happen when and as God has predisposed. I am going. And may God give you one hundred times as much joy as you have given Me.»

She takes the Shroud reverently, after the four have folded it, She goes out of the kitchen and quickly climbs the little staircase... And She soon comes down again and comes in with the first Shroud, which She hands to Nicodemus, who says to Her: «May God reward You, Woman. We are going now, as it is almost dawn, and it is wise to be home before its light spreads and people come out of their houses »

The three venerate Her before going out...

VIC LUND, CANADA (P 5, 903-4; G10, 489-91)

AN UPDATE ON MARIA VALTORTA'S CAUSE & A WORK THAT SPREADS ITSELF

The first step in any canonisation process is to be declared **Venerable**, where the relevant authority (the CDF) has to examine absolutely everything Maria wrote and everything that was said by her or written about her. Maria wrote letters to a Carmelite nun who was her confidante and these have been published and viewed. Maria also wrote to Monsignor Carinci, and their exchange of letters has also been published and viewed. However, Maria had a very close interaction with Fr. Corrado Berti (a Servite priest) and Fr. Romualdo Migliorini (a Servite priest and Maria's spiritual director) both of whom wrote about, and communicated with, Maria Valtorta. The problem is that when they died, the people that have authority over their personal property have not made this communication public to date. They have been approached on numerous occasions and have refused. So until these authorities give permission to allow the CDF to look at their personal letters and note the content of their interaction with Maria, her cause is, and will remain, at a standstill. This holding back is not at all a reflection on what could have been said negatively of Maria's character, but it is more probable that it has not been made public so as to protect the character of these two very priests who not only loved the Work but whose personal efforts and actions impeded the Work of Maria being approved from the very beginning.

In his *Memorie e Testimonanze* series, Dr. Pisani states that the Work has miraculously spread by its own power. When it was first approved by Pope Pius XII in 1948 to 'publish it as it is', the first edition was published anonymously. It did not carry Maria's name anywhere and yet, it had made its way around the world to so many countries for about 10 years without any promotion whatsoever.

After the CEV was given formal written approval to print it in 1992 by the CDF, the second edition carried Maria Valtorta's name on the cover. As Dr. Pisani puts it: 'This **Work** even refused any help from the Publishing House' which tried to promote it, albeit unsuccessfully, through advertising. Another attempt was made through the Turin

MARIA VALTORTA READERS GROUP

Phone: (03) 9885 9710 E-mail: catherine@valtorta.org.au Website: <http://www.valtorta.org.au>

Book Fair which didn't achieve any results, nor the many articles and advertisements that the Publishing House placed in newspapers. Dr. Pisani states that 'We tried everything. Nothing worked. It seemed to spread **by its own power alone. The Work spread from mouth to mouth, from ear to ear, from heart to heart, from spirit to spirit.** It spread to all four corners of the world.'

With an amused yet gentle tone, Dr. Pisani points out: 'It brings to mind that [a much-loved and world-renowned] Pope John Paul II had visited most countries around the world but he had a great desire to visit China and Russia. Unfortunately, he failed to be accepted onto Russian and Chinese soil. And yet, our little-known Maria Valtorta had "travelled" to 30 nations and her presence entered quietly into both China and Russia...through her writings, that is.' Regarding Maria Valtorta the person, an attempt had also been made to start the beatification process in roughly the year 2000, on the initiative of the Tuscan Community of the Servants of Mary (the Servite Priests) but this journey then became 'shipwrecked'. In his video *Memories and Testimonies*, Dr. Emilio Pisani from the Centro Editoriale Valtortiano (Publishing House) has further stated that another problem is that **the Bishops cannot agree on the matter: they are divided.** So this is, and has been, a hindrance too.

According to Dr. Pisani, this is a topic that resurfaces very often but everything is at a standstill at the moment.

Dr. Pisani shares his personal thoughts and conviction that 'Maria Valtorta was profoundly Catholic and a very obedient daughter of the Church. However, she was more Catholic in the sense that she was truly "universal", more so than the universality of Catholicism because Maria Valtorta was accepted by everyone - the Protestants and even a Rabbi converted. I think that if Maria Valtorta were proclaimed a saint, maybe people from other religions would move away or distance themselves more but as a laywoman, she has been accepted.'

Dr. Pisani continues: 'I would also like to think that one day there will be a Pope who will proclaim her a saint **motu proprio**: using his own initiative to signify his special interest in the subject without the formal canonical processes. I believe that one day there will be a priest who will become pope: a priest who already deeply knows Maria Valtorta and would make her a saint. In fact, there are priests who already exist in our times that say: "If I were Pope, I would make Maria Valtorta a saint immediately."' Dr. Pisani ends with the thought that: 'Only those priests who have read the Work, who have absorbed it, and have understood what it is, will know it won't need a canonical process - it will override everything.'

And doesn't this sentiment mirror and echo the words of Pope Pius XII and all of us Readers worldwide when he said: "Whoever reads it will understand."

ERRATA

In Supplement #109 on Limbo, a reference was incorrectly titled on page 3. This letter from Syntyche was, in fact, referring to John of Endor (whom she was taking care of till his death), and not St. John the Baptist because Jesus confirms that John the Baptist did not go to Limbo: '...the Baptist was pre-sanctified before he was born, **and was glorified before the shedding of Christ's Blood**, but always in the light of the shedding of the divine Blood.'

(*The Little Notebooks*, p. 141)

LETTERS

Thank you very much for the MV Supplement where I came across a wonderful and life-touching article "Order and Chaos". On 5-8 July, we have our Catechist Retreat here in one of our local communities. I am the Priest that facilitates the Retreat, and from my reading and analysis of the material "Order and Chaos", I formulated a theme from it which I entitled "Carrying our Ministry in the Divine Order of God". My emphasis to the Catechists was that if we carry our duty in the divine order of God, we can be sure that we will do it well. Otherwise, we can be deceived by our pride and own will, like Adam and Eve. Our Catechists appreciated the ideas most in their own sharing.

FR. ALBERT KALU, SOLOMON ISLANDS

Around two years ago, I started an investigation into the sculpture made by Nicodemus (mentioned in the **Reader's Choice** column). Regarding the two Shrouds: the first is a cloth that was used to carry Jesus' body from the cross to the tomb. On this one, the image is blurred and full of filth. I don't remember where it is preserved exactly, but I know it still exists. The second shroud is the one used to wrap the body of Jesus in the tomb and it is preserved in the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Turin, Italy.

Maria Valtorta notes that Nicodemus says he wanted to put the first shroud inside a sculpture made from the cedar of Lebanon (**P5, 903-4; G10, 489-91**) which could include a rear cavity. This carved wooden crucifix is maybe the one located in Lucca (an old, historical town near Viareggio, where Maria Valtorta lived many years. What a coincidence!). In Lucca, Tuscany, the name Santo Volto (Holy Face) is given to a carved wooden crucifix, which is an object of public veneration. This wooden crucifix is made from the cedar of Lebanon, a peculiar plant.

It is kept in the Cathedral of San Martino in Lucca. The Santo Volto has been honoured for one thousand two hundred years. This Crucifix is attributed to Nicodemus, who was a disciple of the Divine Master. He and Joseph of Arimathea lowered Jesus from the Cross after His death and gave Him burial honours. Having practised the art of carving, Nicodemus set out to reproduce this by carving the mystery of the Man-God suspended and elevated on the Cross. To reproduce the form of Christ, he had only to refer to his recent memories.

The way the wooden crucifix arrived in Lucca is itself a miracle. I hope to investigate its connection to Nicodemus further and any possible doubts more deeply in the future.

A READER FROM SWITZERLAND

[Ed: The 4-minute video link has been researched by an Australian, Allan Roberston. No mention is made of a cavity or a shroud within the sculpture during that journey in time. (see image on p.1)

Watch The Holy Face of Lucca/ Il Santo Volto di Lucca. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsKGFYvbW8o>

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. Newsletters are sent every three months. [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.]