



Abbaye Saint-Joseph de Clairval

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Transfiguration of Our Lord

Dear Friend of Saint Joseph Abbey,

“ **D**OES a ‘Savior’ still have any value and meaning for the men and women of the third millennium ? Is a Savior still needed by a humanity which has reached the moon and Mars... ? ... Despite humanity’s many advances, man has always been the same : a freedom poised between good and evil, between life and death. It is there, in the very depths of his being, in what the Bible calls his ‘heart,’ that man always needs to be ‘saved.’ ... Who can defend him, if not the One who loves him to the point of sacrificing on the Cross His only-begotten Son as the Savior of the world ? ... Do not be afraid, open your hearts to Him and receive Him, so that His Kingdom of love and peace may become the common legacy of each man and woman ” (Benedict XVI, Urbi et Orbi Message, Christmas 2006). The Saints, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, see clearly how much the world needs a Savior ; the reign of JESUS in the human heart is their primary concern. And so it was with Mother Marie of JESUS Deluil-Martiny, who wrote, “ *He must reign ! ... For His is the kingdom for all ages ; all nations are His inheritance. He must reign ! ... our JESUS, our Brother, our Savior, our Friend, our Spouse ! He must fully reign in us, with nothing held back. He must reign in the world and in our hearts. And to achieve this, we will pray, we will offer up, we will sacrifice ourselves, we will die each day ! ...* ” Who was this woman in whom burned such a fire of divine love ?

Marie Deluil-Martiny was born in Marseilles, France, on May 28, 1841, and was baptized the same day. The eldest of five children, she inherited from her father, a deeply Christian lawyer, the courage that allowed her to overcome the difficulties of life. From her mother she received an ardent faith combined with a great gentleness of heart. Nevertheless she had a proud and domineering temperament. When the time came for her first Communion, to ensure her proper preparation her parents sent her as a boarder to the Visitation Convent in Marseilles. One day during recreation, Marie all of a sudden stopped her playing and, taking a friend aside, said, “Imagine, Angelique, at this very moment the Blood of JESUS is flowing at the Altar for the world !” And for several moments she remained absorbed by this thought that had flashed across her mind. Marie made her first Communion on December 22, 1853, and received the sacrament of Confirmation on January 29, 1854 at the hands of Saint Eugene de Mazenod, the bishop of Marseilles. Around the age of 15, while still at school, she gathered together a group of students called the “Oblates of Mary,” that she thought of as a little religious order, complete with rule, novitiate, and profession. The group was discovered by the Superiors and dissolved.

At the end of her studies, Marie made a retreat that was decisive for her vocation. “JESUS CHRIST is the only One to love,” she wrote in her journal. “At my death, I would like to have loved no one but Him. ... To live

properly in the world, I must abhor sin and flee its occasions, hate the world and what is of the world ... *Come and follow me*, JESUS said. O God, how beautiful these words are ! ... It is mine if I want it !” It was around this time that she had the grace of meeting the Curé d’Ars, Saint John-Marie Vianney, and of speaking to him about her vocation. She felt very clearly that JESUS was calling her to be entirely His, and so refused several proposals of marriage.

Interior trials

This chosen soul needed to be purified. So Our Lord allowed her to endure many interior trials, including a serious crisis of scruples. Seeing sin everywhere, she feared being separated from Him Whom she loved above all else : “Living with the thought of being on bad terms with You, O JESUS,” she wrote, “is to die a thousand times. It’s so hard, sweet Master, never to feel You fully and to wait for Heaven to possess You !” Thanks to the help of a wise confessor, Marie managed to emerge from this agonizing situation. In 1859, Clemence, the youngest of her sisters, died of an illness, after having received first Communion. Her two other sisters as well as her brother would die in the years that followed. Marie alone was left in her family home with her parents, who were ill and tried by a reversal of fortune.

In 1864, she learned about a new association, started by a nun from the Visitation Convent in Bourg-en-

Bresse, called the “Honor Guard of the Sacred Heart of JESUS.” Its purpose was to glorify, love and console the Sacred Heart through the offering of oneself with Him in a life of prayer, penance, and charity, in reparation for the sins of the world. Marie soon received from it the title “First Zealot” for the work she did in spreading its printed materials, pictures, and medals throughout the world to many souls, including bishops.

On the occasion of the beatification of the seer of Paray-le-Monial, Sister Marguerite-Marie Alacoque, in June 1865, Marie was invited to make a retreat at the Visitation of Bourg, during which she received precious lights. Towards the end of December 1866, she heard a Jesuit priest, Father Jean Calage, preach on the blood and water that gushed forth from the Heart of JESUS. Inspired to make contact with this priest, she revealed to him her desire to enter religious life. “You are called,” the holy religious answered her, “that is for certain. But the time is not yet come. Entering religious life at the present time would disrupt God’s plans. He has special plans for your soul... You must prepare yourself through detachment from yourself.” Thus he urged her to give herself completely to Our Lord, which she did the first Friday of May 1867.

The gravest evil

In order to know the Lord’s plans for her, Marie spent long hours in prayer before the Tabernacle. She understood that JESUS sought souls prepared to offer Him perpetual homage in reparation for the wounds made to His Divine Heart. But what is meant by “reparation”? Sin is an offense against God, but it also wounds humanity: “To the eyes of faith no evil is graver than sin and nothing has worse consequences for sinners themselves, for the Church, and for the whole world” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, CCC, 1488*). In His all-powerful mercy, God could have wiped out all our offenses without demanding reparation. But divine revelation teaches us that He willed complete reparation. To expiate sins, He sent His Son: *If anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, JESUS CHRIST the Righteous; and He is the expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world* (1 Jn. 2:1-2). According to Saint Thomas Aquinas, the Father thus demonstrates an even greater mercy—knowing that man is incapable of making reparation for sin himself, He sent His own Son to make satisfaction in his place. “It is love *to the end* (Jn. 13:1) that confers on Christ’s sacrifice its value as redemption and reparation, as atonement and satisfaction. He knew and loved us all when He offered His life” (*CCC, 616*). JESUS’ offering on Calvary is renewed at every Mass, and Christians are invited to share in it. Saint Paul wrote to the Colossians: *I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions*

for the sake of His body, that is, the Church (Col. 1:24). This is why the Sacred Heart seeks generous souls who, like MARY, the Mother of JESUS, wish, in uniting themselves to His Sacrifice renewed at each Mass, to cooperate in His redeeming work and add their drop of water to the chalice of His Passion.

“He must reign!...”

The first Saturday of September, 1867, Marie was in prayer in a church when JESUS spoke to her: “I am not known, I am not loved... I wish to make souls for Myself who understand Me... I am a torrent that wants to overflow and whose waters can no longer be held back!... I wish to make Myself cups so as to fill them with the waters of My love... I am thirsty for hearts who appreciate Me and who enable Me to fulfill the goal for which I am here! I am insulted, I am desecrated. Before the end of time, I want to be compensated for all the insults I have received... I want to distribute all the graces that have been refused...!” Marie was deeply saddened by the world’s refusal of JESUS. She wrote, “The world no longer wants Him. Today, some blush at Him, while others hate Him and scorn Him. They try to chase Him from hearts and from society. To these dishonors, scorn, and satanic profanities, let us answer loud and clear: *He must reign!*” In this spirit, Pope John Paul II urged the faithful to adore the Blessed Sacrament: “Let us take the time to kneel before JESUS present in the Eucharist, in order to make reparation by our faith and love for the acts of carelessness and neglect, and even the insults which our Savior must endure in many parts of the world” (Apostolic Letter *Mane Nobiscum*, October 7, 2004, no. 18).

On December 8, 1867, Marie made, with the permission of Father Calage, the vow of virginity. In September 1868, in front of a statue of the Virgin of La Salette in tears, she received this inspiration: “The Blessed Virgin wants victims who, in union with her pierced Heart and with JESUS sacrificed, interpose themselves between the crimes of men and the Justice of God...” The following month, she made this beautiful prayer: “O JESUS, receive me from the hands of the Most Blessed Virgin and offer me with You, sacrifice me with You... I offer myself for this sacrifice as much as You wish and my weakness allows... I will consider all the crosses, all the sufferings that Your Providence sends me as proofs that You have accepted my humble offering.” At the start of 1869, Marie put into writing a complete summary of her future work: “Just as MARY on Calvary, united to the Eternal Priest, offered her Divine Son, and then renewed this offering through the hands of Saint John, the Daughters of the Heart of JESUS, united with all the priests in the world, will offer the Eucharistic JESUS sacrificed on every altar. They will especially offer the Blood and Water that came forth

from the divine wound of the Sacred Heart. They will be the adorers of the Eucharist solemnly exposed in the chapels of their convents, and will dedicate themselves to surrounding Him with the most profound signs of respect and love. This will be their life, their reason for being...”

Humiliating trials followed, along with abundance of graces. Father Calage used the situation to ground Marie firmly in humility: “Strive to abase your spirit. Your soul is malleable, and you are obedient, but your spirit must be humbled... The ordinary means that God uses to humble the spirit are humiliations and temptations. They show you what you are without grace, something hideous and abominable...”

Dedicating oneself for priests

On August 14, 1872, Marie wrote, “The priest alone has the mission and power to sacrifice the Victim. He alone has the mission and power to offer Him as a sacrificer. The soul of the ordinary Christian must necessarily pass through the soul of the priest, merging with it to participate in the offering of the victim and glorify God as much as He can be glorified. O priest, I need you to glorify the Father... Give me the Son and He will be enough! ... Priests are the arms of the Church, always raised to sacrifice and offer; and the entire Church must unceasingly be united with them and offer sacrifice through their consecrated hands... The union at the altar, the union with the Sacrifice, this identification of an entire life with the Lord’s ministers so that they might celebrate more worthily, is pure Christianity. It is a sublime calling—to help priests, to dedicate oneself for them.” And again, “I send my Good Angel to assist all priests at the holy Altar. I send him to place my soul on every paten, to be offered there with JESUS CHRIST sacrificed.”

Pope Pius XII confirmed this intuition of Marie in his encyclical *Mediator Dei* (November 20, 1947): “It is because the priest places the Divine Victim upon the altar that he offers it to God the Father as an oblation for the glory of the Blessed Trinity and for the good of the whole Church. Now the faithful participate in the oblation, understood in this limited sense, after their own fashion and in a twofold manner, namely, because they not only offer the sacrifice by the hands of the priest, but also, to a certain extent, in union with him. It is by reason of this participation that the offering made by the people is also included in liturgical worship.” And the Second Vatican Council teaches, “Though they differ from one another in essence and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are nonetheless interrelated ... The ministerial priest, by the sacred power he enjoys, teaches and rules the priestly people;

acting in the person of Christ, he makes present the Eucharistic sacrifice, and offers it to God in the name of all the people. But the faithful, in virtue of their royal priesthood, join in the offering of the Eucharist. They likewise exercise that priesthood in receiving the sacraments, in prayer and thanksgiving, in the witness of a holy life, and by self-denial and active charity” (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 10).

Good windfalls

It took time for God’s plans for Marie to unfold fully. Finally, the moment came for them to be realized. But the political situation made a foundation in France impossible. Therefore, with the help of a Belgian prelate, Monsignor Van den Berghe, she founded the Society of the Daughters of the Heart of JESUS in Berchem-lez-Anvers, Belgium, on June 20, 1873. Taking the name Mother Marie of JESUS, she took the veil and a white habit on which were embroidered two red hearts surrounded by thorns. In the spirit of Our Lord’s message to Saint Margaret Mary, the goals of the new institute were the following: to make reparation for the sins committed against the Heart of JESUS, to offer Him a continual thanksgiving for all the graces He continues to lavish on the world, and to offer to the Most Holy Trinity the precious Blood of JESUS CHRIST so that His reign might come in the world. The best way to realize these aims would be the cloistered life, centered on the divine office and adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Every day, the nuns of the new institute would recite the seven last words of JESUS on the Cross, words of Redemption and a source of holiness for souls. To compensate for man’s ingratitude for divine graces, they would recite the *Magnificat* several times a day. Wanting to open the doors of religious life to those whose health could not endure the austerities of older orders, Mother Marie of JESUS placed less emphasis on bodily penances than on interior mortification and renunciation through obedience. She preferred the mortifications that appear on their own: “The sufferings caused by heat or cold,” she wrote, “are good windfalls for a mortified soul. To say nothing on these occasions is a precious mortification, because no one sees or notices it; everything is for JESUS alone.” Our Lady had told her: “For the future institute, the offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the celestial offering of the Divine Victim sacrificed on the Altar, will compensate most excellently for the corporal mortifications that some constitutions can no longer bear.” As John Paul II taught, “each Eucharistic consecration obtains the remission of sins for the world and consequently contributes to sinful humanity’s reconciliation with God. The sacrifice offered in the Eucharist is no simple sacrifice of praise, but rather, an expiatory or propitiatory sacrifice, as declared by the Council of Trent, for it renews the very sacrifice on the Cross in which Christ

expiated for all mankind and earned the forgiveness of humanity's sins" (Audience of June 15, 1983).

A good flap of the wings

The constitutions of the new institute were approved in 1876 and, on August 22, 1878, the foundress and the first four Religious made their perpetual vows. Mother Marie of JESUS still had a desire to plant the institute in her native land. In June 1879, a foundation was established at "La Servianne," the property she had inherited from her parents, close to Marseilles. From then on, Mother Marie of JESUS' life was divided between the administration of her convents and a voluminous correspondence. Her natural kindness was enriched with a mother's tenderness; her solicitude watched over every detail of her Daughters' lives. If one of them was sick, she would spend entire nights by her bedside, caring for her with her own hands, suggesting pious thoughts to her. She wrote to one of her Daughters: "Isn't it ridiculous for us to spend our time thinking about ourselves, admiring ourselves, or complaining, getting upset over our little troubles which seem so big to us, limiting ourselves by groaning over our misfortunes, when the great plans of God and the salvation of souls are calling us, when we have a God to love and serve, and souls to help and save? We are like a man who, in the middle of a terrible fire that is burning down his house, and that is

going to kill his mother, his father, his children, instead of hurrying to put it out, is in a corner wailing that his clothes got soiled from carrying buckets of water, and is busy picking off, with lamentations, each bit of ash that got on his clothes. Oh! That is what we do when, in the midst of this unhappy world that is trying to burn down the Church and that insults JESUS CHRIST Our Lord, we spend our time complaining about our ills or our own trials, etc. We shrink in on ourselves when we could expand in embracing God, and become saints by serving His cause through our renunciations and sacrifices. A good flap of the wings and, with the aid of grace, let us rise up, let us leave the earth—above all, leave ourselves—and no longer see anything but JESUS!"

In November 1883, Mother Marie of JESUS hired an assistant gardener, twenty-one year old Louis Chave, to pull him out of poverty. But soon, he showed himself to be lazy, rude, and demanding, and moreover, was involved with the anarchists. On February 27, 1884, Ash Wednesday, he waited in ambush on the grounds of La Servianne, in a spot the Religious passed during their recreation. He sprang out and, as the Superior spoke a kind word to him, grabbed her head and shot her twice at point-blank range with a revolver. Wounded in the carotid artery, Mother Marie of JESUS collapsed, murmuring, "I forgive him... for the Institute!" She died shortly thereafter.

Buried in the family vault, then transferred to Berchem in 1899, her body was exhumed on March 4, 1989 for her beatification. It was found intact and flexible. Today, the Congregation of the Daughters of the Heart of JESUS has convents in France, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria, Italy, and a foundation in Croatia. After the foundress' death, the influence of her community led to the establishment of "the Association of Victim Souls," which has had thousands of members, including Saints Pius X and Maximilian Kolbe, and Blesseds Charles de Foucauld, Columba Marmion, Edouard Poppe and Marie-Joseph Cassant. During the beatification of Marie Deluil-Martiny, on October 22, 1989, Pope John Paul II summarized her spiritual journey in these words: "At a very early age, she was moved by the world's offenses against JESUS' love and Society's all too frequent refusal of God. At the same time, she discovered the greatness of the gift JESUS gave the Father to save mankind, the abundance of love that radiates from His Heart, the fruitfulness of the blood and water that flow from His open side. She was convinced that she must participate in the redemptive suffering of the Crucified in a spirit of reparation for the sins of the world."

Let us, for the salvation of the world, unite ourselves to JESUS' redeeming Sacrifice with MARY at the foot of the Cross.

Dom Antoine Marie
o.s.b.

P. S. This monthly letter is free of charge. We gratefully accept the addresses of other persons who may enjoy receiving it.

– Also available free of charge are: tract about the divinity of Jesus Christ; tract about the Truths of the Catholic Religion; scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, with explanatory notice; the promises of the Sacred Heart; the mysteries of the Rosary.

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