

The Poem of the Man-God by Maria Valtorta (no longer in print)

The following is a subset of the text from Volume 5 which includes:

- The Last Supper
- The Passion
- The Resurrection
- The Assumption of Mary
- Comments by Jesus on the reasons for the "Work" (this book)

The *identical text* is in Volumes 9 and 10 of the *replacement books* entitled

The Gospel as Revealed to Me by Maria Valtorta

The section numbers for the included texts vary as follows:

- The "Poem" Volume 5 sections 597-616 are in the "Gospel" as sections 599-620 (Volumes 9 and 10)
- The "Poem" Volume 5 sections 645-648 are in the "Gospel" as sections 649-652 (Volume 10)

Note: The dates shown in each section are the dates that Maria *received* the vision which were then later arranged in *chronological order* by instructions from Jesus to Maria. Also note that the following pages showing the Index includes ALL the sections in Volume 5 of the Poem whereas only the sections identified above are included in this document. Also, Jesus refers to Luisa as "Mary" (i.e. rather than "Maria") and as "Little John" (i.e. compared to John the Evangelist - the author of the Gospel of John).

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597. The Thursday Evening before Passover. Arrival at the Supper-Room and Farewell to the Mother.

17th February 1944.

1 I see the supper-room where the Passover is to be consumed, I can see it distinctly. I could enumerate all the rough spots on the walls and the cracks in the floor.

It is a large room that is not perfectly square, but it is somewhat rectangular. The difference between the longer side and the shorter one is, at most, a metre or a little more. The ceiling is low. Perhaps it appears to be so, because the height of the room does not correspond to its size. It is slightly vaulted, that is, the two shorter walls do not form a right angle with the ceiling, but it is roundish.

In the two shorter walls there are two large low windows, facing each other. I cannot see what they look onto, a court-yard or a street, because the shutters are closed. I said: shutters. I do not know whether it is the right word. They are window coverings made of boards and they are firmly closed by iron bars across them.

The floor is made of large square bricks of baked clay discoloured by age. From the centre of the ceiling hangs a multi-arm oil lamp.

In one of the two longer walls there is no opening, in the other, instead, there is a small door in one corner and it is reached by means of a small staircase of six steps with no bannisters, ending on a landing of one square metre. On the landing and against the wall there is another step, at whose level the door opens. I do not know whether I have made myself clear.

The walls are just whitewashed without decorations or borders. In the centre of the room there is a long rectangular table, very long as compared to its width, it is placed parallel to the long walls and is made of very plain wood. Along the long walls there are some seats. Against the short walls, under the window, on one side there is a kind of chest with some basins and amphorae on it, and under the other window there is a long low sideboard, on top of which there is nothing at present.

And that is the description of the room in which Passover will be consumed. I have seen it distinctly all day long, in fact I have been able to count the steps and observe all the details. And now that it is getting dark, my Jesus is taking me to the rest of the contemplation.

2 I see that the large room leads, by means of the six-step staircase, to a dark vestibule on the left side of which, with respect to me, there is a door that opens onto the street; the door is wide, low and very solid, reinforced with metal studs and bars. Facing the little door that leads from the supper-room into the vestibule, there is another door that opens onto another room, which is not so large. I would say that the supper-room has been obtained from the difference in level between the ground and the rest of the house

He blesses and dismisses them. He blesses also the disciples. He keeps only Isaac and Stephen. He kisses and dismisses the others. And when they have gone, He is the last to go out, with the two and He goes with them, along the most solitary and already dark lanes, to the house of the Last Supper. And when He arrives there, He embraces and blesses Isaac and Stephen with particular fondness, He kisses them, He blesses them once again, He watches them go away, then He knocks at the door and goes in...

17 Jesus says: «You will put here the visions of the farewell to My Mother, of the Supper-room and of the Supper. And now let the two of us, you and I, make the true Passover commemoration. Come...»

and the street, it is like a basement, a sort of cellar that has been cleaned up or adapted, but is still sunken for a good metre in the ground, probably to heighten it and proportion it to its vastness.

In the room that I see now, there is Mary with other women. I recognise the Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, Judas and Simon. They seem to have just arrived, led by John, as they take off their mantles and lay them folded on the stools scattered about the room, while they greet the apostle, who goes away, and a woman and a man, who have rushed there upon their arrival, and I am under the impression that they are the owners of the house and disciples or sympathisers of the Nazarene, because they are full of attention for and of respectful familiarity with Mary. She is wearing a deep blue dress, a deep indigo blue. On Her head She has a white veil that appears when She takes Her mantle off, as it covers also Her head. She looks worn out and aged. She is very sad, although She smiles kindly. She is very pale. Also Her movements are tired and hesitating, like those of a person engrossed in thought.

3 Through the door left ajar I can see the landlord coming and going in the vestibule and in the upper-room, which he illuminates completely lighting the remaining flames of the large oil lamp. He then goes to the main door and opens it and Jesus comes in with the apostles. I can see that it is getting dark, because the shadows of the night are already descending in the street closed between high houses.

He is with all the apostles. He greets the landlord with His usual salutation: «Peace to this house», and then, while the apostles go down into the supper-room, He enters the room where Mary is. The pious women greet Him with deep respect and then go away, closing the door and leaving Mother and Son free.

Jesus embraces His Mother and kisses Her forehead. Mary first kisses the hand of Her Son and then His right cheek. Jesus makes Mary sit down and sits beside Her, they are sitting on two stools close to each other. He makes Her sit down, taking Her to the stools, holding Her by the hand, and He continues to hold Her hand also when She has sat down.

Jesus also is engrossed in thought and sad, notwithstanding that He strives to smile. Mary studies His expression anxiously. Poor Mother, Who through grace and love realises what this hour means! Painful spasms appear across Mary's face and Her eyes dilate at an interior vision of deep grief. But She does not make a scene. She is as solemn as Her Son.

4 He speaks to Her. He greets Her and implores Her to pray for Him.

«Mother, I have come to get strength and comfort from You. I am like a little baby, Mother, who needs the heart of his mother for his grief, and his mother's breast for his strength. In this hour I have become Your little Jesus of a long time ago. I am not the Master, Mother. I am only Your Son, as in Nazareth when I was a little boy, as in

Nazareth before departing from My private life. I have but You. Men, at the present moment, are not friendly with and loyal to Your Jesus. They are not even brave in doing good. Only the wicked are constant and strong in doing evil. But You are faithful to Me and You are My strength, Mother, in this hour. Support Me with Your love and Your prayers. Among those who more or less love Me, You are the only one who knows how to pray in this hour. You know how to pray and to understand. The others are concerned with the festivity, they are engrossed in joyful thoughts, or in criminal thoughts, while I am suffering from so many things. Many things will die after this hour, and among them their humanity, and they will be able to be worthy of Me, all of them, except him who got lost and whom no power can bring back at least to repentance. But for the time being they are unconscious men who do not perceive that I am dying, while they are rejoicing thinking that My triumph is more than ever close at hand. The hosannas of a few days ago have intoxicated them. Mother, I have come for this hour and from a supernatural point of view it is a joy to see it arrive. But My Ego is also afraid of it, because this chalice bears the name of betrayal, abjuration, ferocity, blasphemy, abandonment. Support Me, Mother. As when with Your prayers You drew the Spirit of God upon Yourself, and through it You gave the world the One Expected by peoples, draw now upon Your Son the strength that may help Me to accomplish the deed for which I came. Mother, goodbye. Bless Me, Mother; also on behalf of the Father. And forgive everybody. Let us forgive together, as from this moment, let us forgive those who torture us.»

While speaking, Jesus has slid down on His knees at the feet of His Mother and He looks at Her embracing Her by the waist.

5 Mary weeps silently, Her face slightly raised for an internal prayer to God. Tears stream down Her pale cheeks and fall on Her lap and on the head of Jesus, Who then rests it on Her heart. Then Mary lays Her hand on Jesus' head, as if She wished to bless Him, She then bends, kisses His hair and caresses it, She caresses His shoulders and arms, She takes His face in Her hands and turns it towards Herself, She presses it to Her heart. She kisses Him again, shedding tears, on His forehead, His cheeks, His sorrowful eyes, She cuddles that poor tired head, as if He were a baby, as I saw Her lull the divine New-born in the Grotto. But She does not sing, now. She only says: «Son! Jesus! My Jesus!» but in such a voice that breaks my heart.

Then Jesus stands up. He adjusts His mantle, remains standing in front of His Mother, Who is still weeping, and He blesses Her in His turn. Then He turns His steps towards the door. Before going out He says to Her: «Mother, I will come again before consuming My Passover. Pray while waiting for Me.» And He goes out.

598. The Passover Supper.**9th March 1945**

1 The suffering of Maundy Thursday is beginning.

The apostles, there are ten of them, are bustling about preparing the Supper-room.

Judas, who has climbed on the table, is watching whether there is oil in all the lamps of the big chandelier that looks like the corolla of a double fuchsia, because its stem is surrounded by five lamps in small vessels similar to petals, and under them, there is another circle or crown of small flames, and finally, there are three thin lamps hanging from tiny chains resembling the pistils of the bright flower. He then jumps down on the floor and helps Andrew to lay the tableware in an artistic style on the table, on which a very fine table-cloth has been spread.

I hear Andrew say: «What a wonderful linen tablecloth!» And the Iscariot says: «One of Lazarus' best ones. Martha insisted in bringing it.»

«And what about these chalices and these amphorae?» remarks Thomas, who has poured some wine into the precious amphorae and is admiring them, looking at himself in their slim bellies, and he caresses the chiselled handles with the eye of a connoisseur.

«Phew! I wonder how much they are worth!» exclaims Judas Iscariot.

«It is worked by hammer. My father would go mad for it. Silver and gold-foils are shaped easily when heated. But done with such craft... Everything can be spoiled in a moment. One wrong blow is enough. It takes strength and a light hand at the same time. See the handles? They have been shaped out of the block. They are not soldered. Things for rich people... Just consider that all the filings and cast-off parts are lost. I don't know whether you understand me.»

«Phew! I understand you very well. In short, it is like sculpture.»

«Exactly.»

They all admire and then go back to their work. Some arrange the seats, some prepare the sideboards.

2 Peter and Simon come in together.

«Oh! You have come at last! Where have you been again? After you came with the Master and us, you ran away again» says the Iscariot.

«We had another errand before supper-time» replies Simon briefly.

«Are you suffering from depression?»

«I think there is every reason to be so, considering what we have heard these past days,

and from those lips that we have never found to be false.»

«And with that stench of... Well, be quiet, Peter» grumbles Peter between his teeth.

«And you as well!... You seem to have gone mad for some time. Your face is like that of a wild rabbit that realises it is being chased by a jackal» replies Judas Iscariot.

«And your face is like the snout of a weasel. You have not been very handsome either, these last few days. You look in such a way... You are even cross-eyed... What do you expect or do you hope to see? You seem to be self-confident, you want to appear so, but you look like one who is afraid» retorts Peter.

«Oh! With regard to being afraid!... You are not a hero either!»

«None of us is, Judas. You have the name of the Maccabee, but you are not such. I, with my name, say “God grants graces”, but I swear to you that I tremble like a man who knows that he brings mischance and above all that he has lost God's favour. Simon of Jonah, renamed “the stone”, is now as soft as wax near a fire. He no longer gets the weather-gauge of his own free-will. And yet I have never seen him frightened in the most violent storms! Matthew, Bart and Philip look like sleep-walkers. My brother and Andrew do nothing but sigh. The two cousins, who are grieved because of their family ties and of their love for the Master, look at them. They already look like old men. Thomas has lost his cheerfulness. And Simon seems to have become again the exhausted leper of three years ago, so much is he worn out by grief, I would say that he is worn away, deathly pale, dejected» John replies to him.

3 «Yes. He has influenced us all with His melancholy» remarks the Iscariot.

«My cousin Jesus, my Master and Lord and yours, is and is not melancholy. If you mean, by that word, that He is sad because He is being excessively grieved by the whole of Israel, as we are aware, and because of the other hidden sorrow that He alone sees, I say to you: “You are right.” But if you use that word to say that He is mad, I forbid you to do so» says James of Alphaeus.

«And is a fixed melancholy idea not madness? I have studied also profane matters and I know. He has given too much of Himself. Now He is mentally tired.»

«Which means insane. Is that right?» asks the other cousin Judas, who is apparently calm.

«Exactly! How right was your father, a man of blessed memory, whom you resemble so much in justice and wisdom! Jesus, the sad destiny of an illustrious family now too old and struck by psychic senility, has always had a disposition to this illness. Mild at first, then more and more aggressive. You have seen how He attacked Pharisees and scribes, Sadducees and Herodians. He has made His life impossible, like a road strewn with quartz splinters. And He spread them Himself. We... we have loved Him so much that

our love veiled our eyes. But those who did not love Him in an idolatrous manner – your father, your brother Joseph and at first also Simon – saw right... When we heard their words we should have opened our eyes. Instead we were all enticed by His meek charm of a sick person. And now... Who knows!»

Judas Thaddeus, who is as tall as the Iscariot, and is standing just in front of him and seems to be listening to him peacefully, has an outburst of rage and, with a mighty backhanded blow, knocks Judas down with his back on one of the seats, and with anger repressed in his voice, bending over the face of the coward who does not react, as he is probably afraid that Thaddeus may be aware of his crime, he whispers: «This is for His insanity, you reptile! And only because He is in the other room, and this is Passover evening, I will not strangle you. But remember this, and remember it carefully! If any evil befalls Him, and He is not there to check my strength, no one will save you. The halter is as good as round your neck, and these strong honest hands of mine, the hands of a Galilean artisan and of a descendant of Goliath's slinger, will do the job for you. Get up, you spineless debauchee! And watch how you behave.»

Judas stands up, he is livid, but does not react in the least. And, what amazes me, no one reacts to the new gesture of Thaddeus. On the contrary!... It is obvious that they all approve of it.

4 The room has just become calm again when Jesus come in. He appears on the threshold of the little door, through which His tall person can just pass, He sets foot on the small landing, and with His meek sad smile He says, opening His arms: «Peace be with You.» His voice is tired, like that of one who is languishing physically and morally.

He comes down. He caresses the fair-haired head of John, who has rushed towards Him. He smiles at His cousin Judas, as if He did not know anything, and He says to His other cousin: «Your mother asks you to be kind to Joseph. He asked the women after you and Me a little while ago. I am sorry I have not greeted him.»

«You will do it tomorrow.»

«Tomorrow?... I shall always have time to see him... Oh! Peter! We shall be together for a little while at last! Since yesterday you seem a will-o'-the-wisp. I see you, then I no longer see you. Today I can almost say that I lost you. And you, too, Simon.»

«Our hair, which is more white than dark, can assure You that we were not absent craving for flesh» says Simon gravely.

«Although... at all ages it is possible to suffer from that hunger... The old! Worse than the young...» says the Iscariot offensively.

Simon looks at him and is about to reply. But Jesus also looks at him and says: «Have

you a toothache? Your right cheek is swollen and red.»

«Yes, it is aching. But it is not worth worrying about.»

The others do not say anything, and the matter dies away.

5 «Have you done everything that was to be done? You, Matthew? And you, Andrew? And you, Judas, have you seen to the offer for the Temple?»

Both the first two and the Iscariot say: «Everything You said was to be done today, has been done. Do not worry.»

«I took the early fruits of Lazarus to Johanna of Chuza. For the children. They said to me: “Those apples were better!” They had the savour of hunger, those ones! And they were Your apples» says John smiling and dreaming.

Jesus also smiles at the recollection...

«I have seen Nicodemus and Joseph» says Thomas.

«You have seen them? Did you speak to them?» asks the Iscariot with excessive interest.

«Yes, I did. What's strange about it? Joseph is a good customer of my father.»

«You never mentioned it before... That is why I was amazed!...» Judas tries to make up for the impression, he had given previously, of his worry about Thomas' meeting with Joseph and Nicodemus.

«It seems strange to me that they have not come to venerate You. They did not, neither did Chuza, nor Manaen... None of...»

But the Iscariot laughs sneeringly, interrupting Bartholomew, and he says: «The crocodile hides itself at the right moment.»

«What do you mean? What are you insinuating?» asks Simon aggressively as never before.

«Peace, peace! What is the matter with you? It is Passover evening! We have never had such a worthy display for the consumption of the lamb. So let us consume the supper in the spirit of peace. I see that I have upset you considerably with My instructions of these last evenings. But, see? I have finished! Now I will not upset you any more. Not everything has been said of what refers to Me, but only the essential part. The rest... you will understand later. You will be told... Yes. There will come Who will tell you! 6 John, go with Judas and somebody else to get the basins for the purification. And then let us sit at the table.» Jesus is heartrendingly kind.

John with Andrew, Judas Thaddeus with James, bring the large basin, they pour water

into it and offer the towel to Jesus and to their companions, who do the same for them. The basin (which is a metal wash-hand-basin) is placed in a corner.

«And now to your seats. I here, and here (at His right side) John, and on the other side My faithful James. The first two disciples. After John My strong Stone, and after James he who is like the air. He is never noticed, but is always present and comforting: Andrew.

Beside him, My cousin James. You are not sorry, My kind brother, if I give the first place to the first ones? You are the nephew of the Just One, whose spirit palpitates and quivers over Me this evening, more than ever. Have peace, father of My childish weakness, oak-tree in whose shadow the Mother and Son had solace! Have peace! ... Beside Peter, Simon... Simon, come here a moment. I want to fix My eyes on your loyal face. Later I shall not see you well, because others will cover your honest face. Thank you Simon, for everything» and He kisses him.

Simon, when he is left free, goes to his seat, covering his face with his hands for a moment, with a gesture of distress.

«Facing Simon, My Bart. Two honest wise men reflecting each other. They match very well. And beside him, you, Judas, My brother. So I can see you... and I seem to be at Nazareth... when some festivity gathered us all together round one table... Also at Cana... Do you remember? We were together. A party... a wedding party... the first miracle... water changed into wine... Also today a festivity... and also today there will be a miracle... the wine will change its nature and will be...»

Jesus becomes engrossed in His thoughts, His head lowered and isolated in His secret world. The others look at Him and do not speak.

He raises His head again and stares at Judas Iscariot, to whom He says: «You will sit in front of Me.»

«So much You love me? More than Simon, since You always want me in front of You?»

«So much. As you said.»

«Why, Master?»

«Because you are the one who has done more than everybody for this hour.»

Judas casts an ever-changing glance at the Master and at his companions. At Jesus with ironical commiseration, at the others with an air of triumph.

«And near you, on one side Matthew, on the other Thomas.»

«So, Matthew on My left and Thomas on My right side.»

«As you wish, as you like» says Matthew. «It is enough for me to have my Saviour in front of me.»

«Last, Philip. Now, see? Who is not beside Me in the place of honour, has the honour of being in front of Me.»

7 Jesus, standing in His place, pours wine into the large chalice placed in front of Him (they all have tall chalices, but He has a much larger one, in addition to one like those of the others. It must be the ritual chalice). He pours wine into it, He raises it, He offers it and lays it on the table.

Then all together they ask in the tone of a psalm: «Why this ceremony?» A formal question, obviously, a ritual one.

To which Jesus, as head of the family, replies: «This day reminds us of our liberation from Egypt. Blessed be Jehovah Who created the fruit of the vineyard.»

He takes a sip of the wine He has offered and passes the chalice to the others. He then offers the bread, He breaks it into morsels and hands it round with the herbs dipped in the reddish sauce contained in four sauce-boats.

When this part of the meal is over, they sing some psalms, all together.

The large tray with the roasted lamb is brought from the sideboard to the table and placed in front of Jesus.

Peter, who acts as... first voice of the chorus, if you wish so, (1) asks: «Why this lamb, as it is?»

«In remembrance of the time when Israel was saved through the sacrificial lamb. No first-born died where the blood shone on doorposts and lintels. And afterwards, while the whole of Egypt, from the royal palace to hovels, was mourning the dead first-born males, the Hebrews, led by Moses, moved towards the land of liberation and of the promise. With their sides girded, their feet shod, the pilgrim's staffs in their hands, the people of Abraham started off promptly, singing hymns of joy.»

They all stand up and intone: «When Israel came out of Egypt and the house of Jacob from a barbarous people, Judah became his sanctuary» etc. (if I have found the right one, it is psalm 113).

Jesus now cuts the lamb, He pours wine into the chalice again, and He passes it round after drinking of it. Then they sing also: «Children, praise the Lord, blessed be the Name of the Eternal now and forever throughout ages. From east to west it is to be praised» etc. (but I cannot find it).

Jesus hands out the portions, ensuring that everybody is well served, just like a father of a family among his children who are all dear to him. He is solemn, somewhat sad, when

He says: «I have longed to eat this Passover with you. *It has been the desire of My desires since, from eternity, I was "the Saviour".* I knew that this hour precedes that one. And the joy of giving Myself, brought this relief, in advance, to My suffering... *I have longed to eat this Passover with you, because never again shall I taste the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God has come. Then I will sit again with the elect at the Banquet of the Lamb, for the wedding of the Living Ones with the Living One.* But only those who have been lowly and pure in heart, as I am, will come to it.»

8 «Master, a short while ago You said that he who has not the honour of the seat, has that of being in front of You. So, how can we know who is the first among us?» asks Bartholomew.

«*Everybody and nobody.* Once... we were coming back and we were tired and... nauseated at the bitter hatred of the Pharisees. But you were not so tired as to be prevented from discussing among yourselves who was the greatest... A little boy ran up to Me... a little friend of Mine... And his innocence mitigated My disgust for so many things. Your obstinate humanity not being the last. Where are you now, little Benjamin gifted with the wise reply, that came to you from Heaven because, as you were an angel, the Spirit spoke to you? Then I said to you: "*If anyone wants to be the first, he must be the last and the servant of everybody.*" And I gave you the wise boy as an example. Now I say to you: "The kings of nations dominate them. And although the peoples oppressed hate them, they acclaim them and kings are called 'Benefactors', 'Fathers of the Fatherland'. But hatred smoulders under the false homage." But do not let it be so with you. *The greatest must be like the smallest, the head like him who serves.* Who is in fact greater? He who sits at the table, or he who serves? It is he who sits at the table. And yet I serve you. And before long I will serve you even more. You are the ones who have been with Me in My trials. And I will arrange a place for you in My kingdom, in the same manner as I shall be King in it according to the will of the Father, that you may eat and drink at My eternal table and you may sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. You have remained with Me in My trials... This is the only thing that makes you great in the eyes of the Father.»

«And what about those who will come? Will they have no place in the Kingdom? We alone?»

«Oh! How many princes in My House! *All those who have been faithful to the Christ in the trials of life, will be princes in My Kingdom.* Because those who have persevered to the end in the martyrdom of life will be like you, who have remained with Me in My trials. I identify Myself with those who believe in Me. *The Sorrow that I embrace for you and for all men, I give it as insignia to those who are particularly chosen. He who is faithful to Me in Sorrow will be one of My souls in bliss, My beloved.*»

9 «We have persevered until the end.»

«Do you think so, Peter? And I tell you that the hour of trial is still to come. Simon, Simon of Jonas, Satan has asked to sift you all like wheat. I have prayed for you, that your faith may not vacillate. When you have recovered, strengthen your brothers.»

«I know that I am a sinner. But I will be faithful to You until death. I do not have that sin and I will never have it.»

«Do not be proud, My Peter. This hour will change an infinite number of things, which previously were so and will now be different. How many!... They bring and impose new necessities. You are aware of that. I have always said to you, even when we were going along remote places infested by highwaymen: "Be not afraid. No evil will befall us, because the angels of the Lord are with us. Do not worry about anything." Do you remember when I used to say to you: "Do not worry about what you must eat and about your clothes. The Father knows what we need"? I also used to say to you: "Man is much more than a sparrow and a flower that today is grass and tomorrow is hay. And yet the Father takes care both of the flower and of the little bird. So can you doubt that He will not take care of you?" I also used to say: "Give to anyone who asks, and if anyone offends you, offer him the other cheek as well." I also used to say: "Take no bag or stick". Because I taught love and trust. But now... Now the times have changed. Now I say to you: "Have you ever been short of anything so far? Have you ever been offended?"»

«Nothing, Master. You alone were offended.»

«So you can see that My word was true. But now the angels have all been recalled by their Lord. It is the hour of demons... With their golden wings the angels of the Lord are covering their eyes and enveloping themselves and they regret that the colour of their wings is not a gloomy one, because it is time of mourning, of cruel sacrilegious mourning... *There are no angels on the Earth this evening.* They are near the throne of God, to drown the blasphemies of the deicide world and the weeping of the Innocent. And we are alone... You and I: alone. And the demons are the masters of the hour. So we shall now take the appearances and the measures of poor men who do not trust and do not love. Now, he who has a purse should take also a haversack, he who has no sword should sell his cloak and buy one. Because this also is said of Me in the Scriptures and must be fulfilled: "He has been counted among the wicked." Truly everything that concerns Me has its purpose.»

10 Simon, who has got up and gone to the chest where he put his rich mantle – because this evening they are all wearing their best clothes, and so on their sumptuous belts they are carrying daggers, damaskened but very short ones, more like knives than daggers – takes two swords, two real, long, slightly bent swords and returning to Jesus with them he says: «Peter and I have armed ourselves this evening. We have these, but the others have only short daggers.»

Jesus takes the swords, examines them, He unsheathes one of them and tests its edge on His nail. It is a strange sight, and even more strangely impressive to see that cruel weapon in Jesus' hands.

«Who gave them to you?» asks the Iscariot, while Jesus is examining them and is silent. And Judas seem to be on tenter-hooks...

«Who? I remind you that my father was a noble and mighty man.»

«But Peter...»

«So? Since when have I to give an account of the presents that I want to give my friends?»

Jesus raises His head after sheathing the sword again. He hands it back to the Zealot.

«All right. They are enough. You did well in taking them. **11** But now, before drinking the third chalice, wait a moment. I told you that the greatest is the same as the smallest and that I am acting as a servant at this table, and I will serve you even more. So far I have given you food. A service for your bodies. Now I want to give you food for your spirits. It is not a dish of the ancient rite. It belongs to the new rite. I wanted to be baptised before being the "Master". That baptism was sufficient to spread the Word. Now His Blood will be shed. Another ablution is required for you, although you have been purified by the Baptist, in his days, and also today in the Temple. But it is not yet sufficient. Come, that I may purify you. Interrupt your meal. There is something more elevated and necessary than the food given to the stomach to fill it, even if it is holy food as the present one of the Passover rite. And it is a pure spirit, ready to receive the gift of Heaven, which is already descending to make its throne in you and give you the Life. To give the Life to those who are pure.»

Jesus stands up, He makes John stand up to come out of His place more easily, He goes to the chest and takes off His red tunic and folds it placing it on His mantle, which is there already folded, He girds Himself with a large towel and He goes towards another basin, which is empty and clean. He pours some water into it, He takes it to the middle of the room, near the table, and puts it on a stool. The apostles look at Him dumbfounded.

«Are you not asking Me what I am doing?»

«We do not know. I tell You that we are already purified» replies Peter.

«And I repeat to you that it does not matter. My purification will serve him, who is already pure, to become purer.»

He kneels down. He unties the Iscariot's sandals and washes his feet, one at a time. It is easy to do so, because the couches are made in such a way that the feet are in the outer

side. Judas is astonished and does not say anything. Only when Jesus, before putting the sandal on the left foot and getting up, makes the gesture of kissing his right foot, that has already been shod, Judas withdraws his foot violently and with the sole strikes the divine mouth. He does so unintentionally. It is not a strong blow. But it grieves me so much. Jesus smiles, and to the apostle who asks Him: «Did I hurt You? I did not intend to... Forgive me», He says: «No, My friend. You did it without malice and it does not hurt.» Judas looks at Him... A worried elusive look...

Jesus passes on to Thomas, then to Philip... He goes round the narrow side of the table and arrives at His cousin James. He washes his feet and when getting up He kisses him on his forehead. He passes on to Andrew, who blushes with shame and makes efforts not to weep, He washes his feet and kisses him like a baby. Then there is James of Zebedee, who goes on grumbling: «Oh! Master! Master! Master! You are lowering Yourself, my sublime Master!» John has already untied his sandals and while Jesus is bent drying his feet, he kisses His head.

But Peter!... It is not easy to convince him to submit to the rite! «You want to wash my feet? Do not even think about it! As long as I live, I will never allow You to do that. I am a worm, You are God. Each to his own place.»

«You cannot understand now what I am doing. Later you will understand. Let Me do it.»

«You can do anything You like, Master. Do You want to cut my neck? Do so. But You will never wash my feet.»

«Oh! My Simon! Do you not know that if I do not wash you, you will take no part in My Kingdom? Simon, Simon! You are in need of this water for your soul and for the long journey you have to take. Do you not want to come with Me? If I do not wash you, you will not come to My Kingdom.»

«Oh! my blessed Lord! Then, wash all my body! Feet, hands and head!»

«Anyone who, like you, has had a bath, needs only to have his feet washed, as he is completely pure. The feet... Man walks with his feet on filth. And it would not be much either, because, as I told you, it is not what enters and comes out with food that dirties, and it is not what settles on his feet on the roads that contaminates man. But it is what smoulders and matures in his heart and comes out from it, which contaminates his actions and limbs. And the feet of a man with an impure spirit go to orgies, to lust, to illicit business, to crimes... Therefore, among the various parts of the body they are the ones that have much to be purified... with the eyes and mouth... Oh! man! man! A perfect being for one day: the first one! And then so corrupted by the Seducer! And there was no malice in you, man, no sin!... And now? You are all malice and sin, and there is no part in you that does not sin!»

Jesus has washed Peter's feet, He kisses them, and Peter weeps and takes Jesus' two hands in his own big ones and he rubs them against his eyes and then kisses them.

Simon also has taken off his sandals, and without one word he lets Jesus wash his feet. Then, when Jesus is about to pass on to Bartholomew, Simon kneels down and kisses His feet saying: «Cleanse me from the leprosy of sin, as You cleansed me from the leprosy of my body, that I may not be confused in the hour of judgement, my Saviour!»

«Be not afraid, Simon. You will come to the heavenly City as white as mountain snow.»

«And what about me, Lord? What are You going to say to Your old Bart? You saw me in the shade of the fig-tree and You read my heart. And now what do You see, and where do You see me? Reassure a poor old man, who is afraid he may not have strength and time to become what You want him to be.» Bartholomew is deeply moved.

«You must not be afraid either. I then said: “Here is a true Israelite in whom there is no deceit.” Now I say: “Here is a true Christian worthy of the Christ.” Where do I see you? On an eternal throne, dressed in purple. I shall always be with you.»

It is Judas Thaddeus' turn. When he sees Jesus at his feet, he cannot control himself, he rests his head on his arm laid on the table and weeps.

«Do not weep, My sweet brother. You are now like one who must endure the extirpation of a nerve and you think that you will not be able to stand it. But it will be a short pain. Then... oh! you will be happy, because you love Me. Your name is Judas. And you are like our great Judas: like a giant. You are the one who protects. Your actions are those of a lion and of a young roaring lion. You will rouse the impious who will withdraw when you face them, and the wicked will be terrified. I know. Be brave. An eternal union will strengthen and make perfect our kinship in Heaven.» He kisses his forehead as well, as He did for His other cousin.

«I am a sinner, Master. Not me...»

«You were a sinner, Matthew. You are now the Apostle. You are one of My “voices”. I bless you. How far have these feet walked to come more and more forward, towards God... Your soul urged them and they left every way that was not My way. Proceed. Do you know where the path ends? On the bosom of your Father and Mine.»

Jesus has finished. He takes the towel off and washes His hands in clean water, He puts His clothes on, goes back to His seat, and while sitting down He says: «You are now pure, but not all of you. Only those who wanted to be so.»

He stares at Judas of Kerioth, who feigns he does not hear Him, intent as he is on explaining to his companion Matthew how his father decided to send him to Jerusalem. A useless conversation, the only purpose of which is to give an attitude to Judas, who,

however bold, must feel ill at ease.

12 Jesus pours wine into the common chalice for the third time. He drinks and makes the others drink. He then intones, and the others sing in chorus: «I love because the Lord hears the voice of my prayer, because He turns His ear towards me. I will invoke Him throughout my life. The throes of death had surrounded me» etc. (Psalm 114, I think).

A moment's pause. He then resumes singing: «I had faith, that is why I spoke. But I was deeply humiliated. And in my dismay I said: “Every man is untruthful.”» He looks fixedly at Judas.

My Jesus' voice, which is tired this evening, regains vigour when He exclaims: «The death of holy people is precious in the eyes of God» and «You have broken my chains. I will sacrifice a victim of praise to You invoking the name of the Lord» etc. (Psalm 115).

Another short pause and He then resumes: «Praise the Lord, all nations, praise Him, all peoples. Because His mercy has been asserted upon us and the truth of the Lord lasts forever.»

Another short pause and then a long hymn: «Sing praises to the Lord because He is good, because His mercy lasts forever...»

Judas of Kerioth sings so much out of tune, that twice Thomas brings him back into tune with his powerful loud baritone voice and stares at him. The others also look at him, because he is generally in tune, and I have had the impression that he is proud of his voice as he is of everything else. But this evening! Certain sentences upset him so much that he sings false notes, and certain glances of Jesus underlining those sentences have the same effect. One of them is: «It is better to confide in the Lord than to confide in man.» Another one is: «When I was pushed, I staggered and was about to fall. But the Lord supported me.» Another is: «I shall not die, I shall live and narrate the deeds of the Lord.» And finally, these two, that I am going to relate now, strangle the Traitor's voice in his throat: «The stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone» and «Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord!»

When the psalm is over, while Jesus is cutting and handing the lamb round again, Matthew asks Judas of Kerioth: «Are you not feeling well?»

«No. Leave me alone. Don't worry about me.»

Matthew shrugs his shoulders.

John, who has heard, says: «The Master is not well either. What is the matter with You, my Jesus? Your voice is weak, like the voice of a sick person or of one who has wept much» and he embraces Him, resting his head on Jesus' chest.

«He has only spoken a lot, as I have only walked a lot and got cold» says Judas nervously.

And Jesus, without replying to him, says to John: «You know Me by now... and you know what makes Me tired...»

13 The lamb is almost consumed. Jesus, Who has eaten very little, and has only had a sip of wine at each chalice, but to compensate for that, has drunk a lot of water, as if He were feverish, resumes speaking: «I want you to understand My gesture of a short while ago. I told you that the first is like the last, and that I am going to give you a food that is not corporeal. I have given you a nourishment of humility, for your spirits. You call Me: Master and Lord. You are right, because so I am. *So if I have washed your feet you should wash each other's feet.* I have given you an example, so that you may do what I have done. I tell you solemnly: *no servant is greater than his master, no apostle is greater than He Who appointed him.* Try to understand these things. *Then, if you understand them and put them into practice, you will be blessed.* But not all of you will be blessed. I know you. I know whom I chose. I am not speaking of everybody in the same way. But I say what is true. On the other hand, what has been written concerning Me, is to be fulfilled: “He who eats the bread with Me, rebels against Me.” I am telling you everything before it happens, that you may have no doubts about Me. When everything has been accomplished, you will believe even more that I am I. He who receives Me, receives Him Who sent Me: the Holy Father Who is in Heaven; and he who receives those whom I send, will receive Me. Because I am with the Father and you are with Me... But now let us finish the rite.»

He pours more wine into the common chalice and before drinking of it and letting the others drink, He stands up, and everybody stands up with Him, and He sings one of the previous psalms again: «I had faith and that is why I spoke...» and then He sings a psalm that never comes to an end. Beautiful... but eternal! I think I have found it, by its beginning and its length, as psalm 118. They sing it as follows. They sing one part in chorus. Then, in turns, one recites a couplet, and the others in chorus sing another part, and so forth till the end. No wonder they are thirsty at the end!

14 Jesus sits down. He does not lie down. He sits as we do. And He says: «Now that the old rite has been accomplished, I will celebrate the new one. I have promised you a miracle of love. It is time to work it. That is why I have longed for this Passover. From now on this is the Victim that will be consumed in a perpetual rite of love. My beloved friends, I have loved you throughout the whole life of the Earth. *I have loved you for the whole eternity, My children. And I want to love you till the end. There is nothing greater than this.* Bear that in mind. I am going away. But we shall remain forever united through the miracle that I will now work.»

Jesus takes a loaf still entire and places it on the chalice that has been filled. He blesses and offers both, He then breaks the bread and takes thirteen morsels of it, and gives one

to each apostle saying: «*Take this and eat it. This is My Body. Do this in remembrance of Me, Who am going away.*» He gives the chalice and says: «*Take this and drink it. This is My Blood. This is the chalice of the new alliance in My Blood and through My Blood, that will be shed for you, to remit your sins and give you the Life. Do this in remembrance of Me.*»

Jesus is very sad. There is no smile, no trace of light, no colour on His face. It is already an agonizing face. The apostles look at Him utterly anguished.

15 Jesus stands up saying: «Do not move. I shall be back at once.»

He takes the thirteenth morsel of bread and the chalice, and He goes out of the Supper-room.

«He is going to His Mother» whispers John.

And Judas Thaddeus says with a sigh: «Poor woman!»

Peter asks in a very low voice: «Do you think She knows?»

«She knows everything. She has always been aware of everything.»

They all speak in very low voices, as if they were in front of a corpse.

«But do you think that really...» asks Thomas, who does not want to believe yet.

«And do you doubt it? It is His hour» replies James of Zebedee.

«May God grant us strength to be faithful» says the Zealot.

«Oh! I...» says Peter who is about to speak. But John, who is on the look-out, says: «Silence! He is here.»

Jesus comes back in. He has the empty chalice in His hands. Only at its bottom there is a trace of wine, and in the light of the chandelier it looks just like blood.

Judas Iscariot, in front of whom is the chalice, looks at it as if he were enchanted, then he averts his eyes. Jesus watches him and shudders, and John, leaning as he is on His chest, feels it. «Why not say so! You are shivering...» he exclaims.

«No. I am not shivering because I am feverish... **16** I have told you everything, and I have given you everything. I could not have given you anything else. I have given you Myself.»

He makes His usual kind gesture with His hands, which, previously joined, now separate and stretch out, while He bows His head as if He wished to say: «Excuse Me if I cannot give you more. It is so.»

«I have told you everything and I have given you everything. And I repeat. The new rite

has been accomplished. Do this in remembrance of Me. *I have washed your feet to teach you to be humble and pure like your Master.* Because I solemnly tell you that disciples must be like their Master. Remember that, bear it in mind. Also when you are in high offices, remember that. There is no disciple greater than his Master. As I washed you, do the same to one another. *That is, love one another like brothers, helping and respecting one another, setting an example to one another.* And be pure, to be worthy of eating the living Bread that descended from Heaven, and have the strength, in yourselves and through It, to be My disciples in the hostile world that will hate you because of My Name. But one of you is not pure. One of you will betray Me. My Spirit is deeply perturbed by that... The hand of him who will betray Me is here with Me on this table, and neither My love, nor My Body and Blood, nor My word make him mend his ways and repent. I would forgive him going to My death also on his behalf.»

The disciples cast terrified glances at one another. They scrutinise one another suspiciously. Peter stares at the Iscariot in a revival of all his doubts. Judas Thaddeus in his turn jumps to his feet to look at the Iscariot above Matthew's body.

But the Iscariot is so sure of himself! In his turn he looks at Matthew, as if he suspected him. He then looks fixedly at Jesus and smiling he asks: «Is it I perhaps?» He seems to be the one who is most certain of his honesty and to say so, not to let the conversation drop.

Jesus repeats His gesture saying: «You are saying so, Judas of Simon, not I. You are saying so. I have not mentioned your name. Why are you accusing yourself? Ask your internal warner, your conscience of a man, the conscience that God the Father gave you that you might behave as a man, and listen whether it accuses you. You will be the first to know. But if it reassures you, why do you utter a word and speak of a deed that is anathema even to mention or to think of as a joke?»

Jesus is speaking calmly. He seems to be supporting a proposed thesis as a learned man may do with his pupils. The confusion is great, but Jesus' calm appeases it.

17 But Peter, who is the most suspicious of Judas – perhaps Thaddeus also is so, but he does not look so, disarmed as he is by the Iscariot's easy manners – plucks John's sleeve, and when John, who has pressed against Jesus upon hearing Him speak of betrayal, turns round, he whispers to him: «Ask Him who it is.»

John takes his previous position again, he only raises his head slightly, as if he wanted to kiss Jesus, and in the meantime he whispers in His ear: «Master, who is it?»

And Jesus in a very low voice, kissing him, in His turn, on his head, says: «It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread dipped in the dish.»

And taking another entire loaf, not the remains of the one used for the Eucharist, He detaches a large morsel, He dips it into the lamb's sauce left in the tray, and says:

«Take it, Judas. You like this.»

«Thank You, Master. I do like it» and unaware of what that morsel is, he eats it, while John, horrified, closes even his eyes not to see the horrid smile of the Iscariot, as he bites the accusing bread with his strong teeth.

«Well. Now that I have made you happy, go» says Jesus to Judas. «Everything has been accomplished, here (He lays much stress on the word). What is still left to be done elsewhere, do it quickly, Judas of Simon.»

«I will obey You at once, Master. Then I will join You at Gethsemane. You are going there, are You not? As usual?»

«Yes... I am going there... as usual.»

«What has he got to do?» asks Peter. «Is he going by himself?»

«I am not a baby» says Judas scoffingly, as he puts on his mantle.

«Let him go. He and I know what must be done» says Jesus.

«Yes, Master.» Peter is silent. Perhaps he thinks he has committed a sin suspecting his companion. Resting his forehead on the palm of his hand, he becomes pensive.

Jesus presses John to His heart and whispers again through his hair: «Say nothing to Peter for the time being. It would be a useless scandal.»

«Goodbye, Master. Goodbye, friends» says Judas greeting them.

«Goodbye» replies Jesus.

And Peter says: «Goodbye, boy.»

John, his head almost on Jesus' lap, whispers: «Satan!» Jesus alone hears him and sighs.

Everything comes to an end here, but Jesus says: «I am interrupting the vision out of pity for you. I will give you the end of the Supper later.»

(1) addressed to Maria Valtorta's spiritual adviser Fr. Migliorini)

18 (the Supper continues)

There are a few moments of dead silence. Jesus has lowered His head, caressing John's fair hair mechanically.

Then He rouses Himself. He raises His head, He looks around, and He smiles in such a way that encourages the disciples. He says: «Let us leave the table and sit all close to one another, like many children round their father.»

They take the couches that were behind the table (those of Jesus, John, James, Peter, Simon, Andrew and His cousin James) and they put them on the other side.

Jesus sits on His own, still between James and John. But when He sees that Andrew is about to sit in the place left by the Iscariot, He shouts: «No, not there.» An impulsive shout, that His great prudence does not succeed in preventing. He then modifies His expression saying: «We do not need so much room. If we sit down, we can stay only on these. They are enough. I want you to be very close to Me.»

Now, with respect to the table, they are placed in a U shaped disposition, with Jesus in the centre and the table, on which there are no victuals now, and Judas' place in front of Him.

James of Zebedee calls Peter saying: «Sit here. I will sit on this little stool, at Jesus' feet.»

«May God bless you, James! I wanted it so much!» says Peter and he presses against his Master, Who is now squeezed by John and Peter, with James at His feet.

Jesus smiles and says: «I see that the word spoken earlier is beginning to work. Good brothers love one another. James, I also say to you: “May God bless you.” Also this action of yours will not be forgotten by the Eternal, and you will find it up there.

19 I can obtain everything I ask for. You have seen that. A desire of Mine was sufficient for the Father to allow His Son to give Himself in Food to man. The Son of man has been glorified by what has happened now, because the miracle that is possible only to God's friends is a witness of power. The greater the miracle, the surer and deeper is this divine friendship. This is a miracle that, because of its form, duration and nature, and of the extremes and limits it attains, is so great that a greater one cannot possibly exist. I tell you: it is so powerful, supernatural, inconceivable by proud men, that only very few will understand it as it is to be understood, and many will deny it. So what shall I say? Condemn them? No. I will say: have mercy on them!

But the greater the miracle, the greater the glory of its author. It is God Himself Who says: “See, My beloved wanted it, had it, and I granted it, because great is His grace in My eyes.” And here He says: “His grace has no limits, as infinite is the miracle performed by Him.” The glory that from God comes to the author of the miracle is the same as the glory that from the author returns to the Father. Because every supernatural glory, as it comes from God, returns to its source. And the glory of God, although it is already infinite, increases and shines more and more through the glory of His saints. So I say: as the Son of man has been glorified by God, so God has been glorified by the Son of man. I have glorified God in Myself. In His turn, God will glorify His Son in Himself. He will glorify Him shortly.

Exult, o spiritual Essence of the Second Person, Who are going back to Your See!

Exult, o Body Who are going to ascend again after such a long exile in degradation. And not Adam's Paradise, but the sublime Paradise of the Father is about to be given to You as Your abode. If it has been said that the amazing order of God, given through the lips of a man, stopped the sun, what will happen among the stars when they see the wonder of the Body of the Man ascend and sit at the right hand of the Father in the Perfection of His glorified being?

20 My little children, I will remain with you for a short time. And afterwards you will be looking for Me as orphans look for their dead parent. And weeping, you will go about speaking of Him and in vain you will knock at His silent tomb, and you will also knock at the blue gates of Heaven, with your souls elevated in suppliant search for love, saying: “Where is our Jesus? We want Him. Without Him there is no more light in the world, no joy, no love. Either give Him back to us, or let us come in. We want to be where He is.” But for the time being you cannot come where I am going. To the Judaeans also I said: “Later you will look for Me, but you cannot come where I am going.” I say the same to you.

Think of My Mother... Neither can She come where I am going. And yet, I left the Father to come to Her and become Jesus in Her immaculate womb. And yet, I came from the Inviolable Woman in the bright ecstasy of My Birthday. And I was nourished with Her love, that became milk. I am made of purity and love, because Mary nourished Me with Her virginity fecundated by the perfect Love Who lives in Heaven. And yet, I have grown up through Her, costing Her fatigue and tears... And yet, I ask of Her such heroism as no one has ever accomplished, and in comparison with which the heroism of Judith and that of Jael are the heroisms of poor women quarrelling with the rival at the village fountain. And yet, no one loves Me as She does. And, notwithstanding all that, I will leave Her and go where She will come only after a long time. *The commandment I give you: “Sanctify yourselves year by year, month by month, day by day, hour by hour, to be able to come to Me when it is your hour” does not apply to Her.* She is full of grace and holiness. She is the creature who has had everything and has given everything. There is nothing to be added or to be taken away. She is the most holy witness of what God can do.

But in order to be sure that you are able to join Me and to forget the grief in mourning the separation from your Jesus, *I give you a new commandment. And it is: love one another. As I have loved you, you must love one another.* By this love it will be known that you are My disciples. When a father has many sons, how does one know that they are such? Not so much by their physical appearance – because there are men who are in everything like another man, with whom there is no blood-tie and they are not even of the same country – as by their common love for the family, for their father and for one another. And even when the father dies, a good family does not break up, because one is their blood and it is the same they had from the seed of their father, and it ties in knots that not even death loosens, because love is stronger than death. Now, if you love

one another after I have left you, everybody will acknowledge you as My children, and therefore as My disciples, and as brothers to one another, having had only one father.»

21 «Lord, but where are You going?» asks Peter.

«I am going where at present you cannot follow Me. But you will follow Me later.»

«And why not now? I have always followed You since You said to me: “Follow Me.” I left everything without regret... Now, to go away without Your poor Simon, leaving me without You, Who are everything to me, after that for Your sake I left the little property I had previously, is not fair or nice of You. Are You going to Your death? All right. I will come as well. We shall go to the next world together. But I will have defended You before that. I am ready to give my life for You.»

«You will give your life for Me? Now? Not now. I solemnly – oh! I do solemnly tell you – before the cock crows, you will have disowned Me three times. This is the first watch. Then the second will come... and then the third. Before the cock crows loudly, you will have disowned your Lord three times.»

«Impossible, Master! I believe everything You say, but not that. I am sure of myself.»

«Now, at present you are sure. Because you still have Me. You have God with you. Before long, the Incarnate God will be caught, and you will no longer have Him. And Satan, after making you heavy – your very certainty is a trick of Satan, ballast to weigh you down – will frighten you. He will insinuate to you: “God does not exist. I do.” And as you will still be able to reason, although made dull by fear, you will understand that, when Satan is the master of the hour, Good is dead and Evil is active, the spirit is dejected and the human is triumphant. You will then be like warriors without a leader, chased by the enemy, and in the dismay of being defeated you will bow your necks to the conqueror, and in order not to be killed you will disown the fallen hero.

22 But, please do not let your hearts be upset. Believe in God. And believe also in Me. Believe in Me, against all appearances. Let him who remains and him who runs away believe in My mercy and in the Father's. Both he who is silent and he who moves his lips to say: “I do not know Him.” And likewise believe in My forgiveness. And believe that, whatever your actions may be in future, in Good and in My Doctrine, consequently in My Church, they will give you equal places in Heaven. In the house of My Father there are many abodes. If it were not so, I would have told you. *Because I am going ahead, to prepare a place for you.* Do good fathers not do likewise when they have to take their little children elsewhere? They go ahead, they prepare the house, the furnishings, the provisions. They then go back to get their dearest ones. They do so out of love, so that the little ones may lack nothing and may not be uncomfortable in the new place. I do the same and for the same reason. I am going now. And when I have prepared a place for each of you in the celestial Jerusalem, I will come again and take you with Me so that you may be where I am, where there is no death or mourning, no tears, no shout-

ing, no hunger, no pain, no darkness, no parching thirst, but only light, peace, happiness and singing. Oh! song of the Highest Heavens when the twelve chosen ones will sit on thrones with the twelve patriarchs of the tribes of Israel and in the ardour of the fire of spiritual love, standing upright over the sea of beatitude, they will sing the eternal song accompanied by the arpeggio of the eternal alleluia of the angelical host... **23** *I want you to be where I shall be. And you know where I am going and you know the way.*»

«But, Lord! We know nothing. You are not telling us where You are going. How can we know the way to be taken to come towards you and curtail the wait?» asks Thomas.

«*I am the Way, the Truth, the Life.* You have heard Me say so and explain it several times, and really some people, who did not even know that there is a God, have walked ahead, along My way, and they are already ahead of you. Oh! where are you, lost sheep of God, brought back to the fold by Me? And where are you, whose soul has been raised?»

«Who? Of whom are you speaking? Of Mary of Lazarus? She is in the other room, with Your Mother. Do You want her? Or do You want Johanna? She is certainly in her mansion, but if You wish so, we will go and call her for You...»

«No. Not them... I am thinking of the one who will be revealed only in Heaven... and of Photinai... They found Me. And they have never left My way again. To one I pointed out the Father as the true God and the Spirit as a Levite in this individual adoration. To the other, who did not even know she had a soul, I said: “My name is Saviour, I save whoever has the good will to be saved. I am the One Who looks for those who are lost, I give Life, Truth and Purity. Those who look for Me, will find Me.” And they both found God... I bless you, weak Eves who have become stronger than Judith... I am coming, I am coming where you are... You comfort Me... May you be blessed!...»

24 «Show us the Father, Lord, and we shall be equal to them» says Philip.

«I have been with all of you for such a long time, and you, Philip, still do not know Me? *He who sees Me, sees the Father.* So, how can you say: “Let us see the Father”? Can you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you, I do not say them by Myself. *It is the Father, living in Me, Who accomplishes all My work.* And do you, all of you, not believe that I am in the Father and He is in Me? What must I say to make you believe? If you do not believe My words, believe at least in My deeds. And I say to you and I truly say to you: *he who believes in Me will perform the deeds that I do, and will perform even greater ones, because I am going to the Father.* Whatever you ask of the Father in My name, I will do it, so that the Father may be glorified in His Son. And I will do anything you ask in behalf of My Name. My Name is known for what it really is, only to Me and to the Father Who generated Me and to the Spirit Who proceeds from Our love. *And everything is possible*

to that Name. He who thinks of My Name with love, loves Me and obtains. *But it is not sufficient to love Me. It is necessary to keep My commandments in order to have true love. Feelings are testified by deeds.* And because of your love I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, so that He may remain with you forever, One against Whom Satan and the World cannot act cruelly, *the Spirit of Truth*, Whom the world cannot receive or strike, because it cannot see Him and does not know Him. The world will deride Him, but He is so sublime that derision will not be able to offend Him, while being so merciful as to exceed all limits, He will always be with those who love Him, even if they are poor and weak. You will know Him, because He already dwells with you and will soon be in you.

25 *I will not leave you orphans.* I have already told you that I will come back to you. But I will come before it is time to come to take You and go to My Kingdom. I will come to you. Before long the world will no longer see Me. But you see Me and will see Me. Because I live and you live. *Because I will live and you will live.* On that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you are in Me and I in you. *Because he, who accepts My precepts and observes them, loves Me, and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father and will possess God, because God is love, and he who loves has God in himself.* And I will love Him, because I shall see God in him, and I will show Myself to him, making him acquainted with the secrets of My love, of My wisdom, of My Incarnate Divinity. They will be My returns among the children of man, whom I love notwithstanding that they are weak and even hostile. But these will be only weak. And I will fortify them; I will say to them: “Rise!”, I will say: “Come out!”, I will say: “Follow Me”, I will say: “Listen”, I will say: “Write”... and you are among them.»

«Why, Lord, are You showing Yourself to us and not to the world?» asks Judas Thaddeus.

«*Because you love Me and you keep My words.* He who does that will be loved by My Father, and we shall come to him and make our home with him, in him. *Whereas he who does not love Me, does not keep My words and acts according to the flesh and the world.* Now remember that what I said to you is not the word of Jesus of Nazareth, but it is the word of the Father, because I am the Word of the Father Who sent Me. I told you these things, speaking to you thus, because I want to prepare you Myself for the complete possession of the Truth and Wisdom. But you cannot yet understand or remember. But when the Comforter, the Holy Spirit Whom the Father will send to you in My name, comes to you, then you will be able to understand, and He will teach you everything, and He will remind you of what I told you.

26 *I leave you My peace. I give you My peace.* I give it to you not as the world gives it. And not even as I have given it to you so far: the blessed greeting of the Blessed One to the blessed ones. The peace I am giving you now is more profound. In this farewell I communicate Myself, My Spirit of peace to you, as I communicated My Body and My

Blood to you, so that you may have strength for the imminent battle. Satan and the world are stirring up a war against your Jesus. It is their hour. Have Peace within you, My Spirit, which is spirit of peace, because I am the King of peace. Have it so that you may not be too forlorn. *He who suffers with the peace of God within himself, suffers, but does not blaspheme and does not despair.*

Do not weep. You have also heard Me say: “I am going to the Father and then I will come back.” If you loved Me beyond the flesh, you would rejoice, because I am going to the Father after such a long exile... I am going to Him Who is greater than I am and Who loves Me. *I have told you now, before it takes place, as I informed you of all the sufferings of the Redeemer, before going to them, so that, when everything is fulfilled, you may believe more and more in Me.* Do not be so upset! Do not be frightened. Your hearts are in need of balance...

I have not much more time to speak to you... but I have so much to say! Now that I have come to the end of My evangelization, I feel that I have not said anything yet, and that there is still so much to be done. Your mood increases My feeling. So, what shall I say? That I failed in My task? Or that you are so hard-hearted that My work has been of no avail? Shall I be in doubt about you? No. I rely on God and I entrust you, My beloved ones, to Him. *He will complete the work of His Word.* I am not like a father who dies without having any other light but the human one. *I hope in God.* And, although within Myself I feel the urgency of all the advice, of which I see you are in need, and I realise that time flies, *I am going towards My destiny with a quiet mind.* I know that the dew is about to descend on the seeds sown in you and it will make all of them spring up, then the sun of the Paraclete will come and they will become mighty trees. The prince of this world, with whom I have nothing to do, is about to come. And if it were not for the purpose of redemption, he would not have had any power over Me. *But that is happening so that the world may know that I love My Father and I love Him so much that I will obey Him even to death, and I will, therefore, do what He ordered Me to do.*

27 It is time to go. Stand up. And listen to My last words. *I am the true Vine. The Father is the Vinedresser.* Every branch that bears no fruit He cuts, and the one that does bear fruit He prunes, to make it bear even more. You are already purified by My word. Remain in Me and I will remain in you to continue to be so. The branch cut off from the vine cannot bear fruit. The same applies to you, if you do not remain in Me. I am the Vine and you are the branches. *Whoever remains united to Me bears fruit in plenty.* But if one is cut off, one becomes a dry branch and is thrown on the fire and burns there. Because, if you are not united to Me, you can do nothing. *So remain in Me and let My words remain in you, then ask for whatever you want, and it will be done to you.* My Father will always be the more glorified, the more you bear fruit and are My disciples.

As the Father has loved Me, so I have loved you. Remain in My love that saves. By

loving Me you will be obedient, and obedience increases mutual love. Do not say that I am repeating Myself. I am aware of your weakness. And I want you to be saved. I have told you this so that the joy I wanted to give you may be in you and may be complete. *Love one another, love one another! This is My new commandment. Love one another more than each of you loves himself. There is no greater love than that of a man who lays down his life for his friends.* You are My friends and I will lay down my life for you. Do what I teach and order you to do. I will no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know what his master does, whereas you know what I do. You know everything about Me. I have made known to you not only Myself, but also the Father and the Paraclete, and everything I heard from God. You did not choose yourselves. But I chose you and I elected you, so that you may go among peoples and you may bear fruit in yourselves and in the hearts of those who are evangelized, and your fruit may remain, and the Father may give you everything you will ask of Him in My name.

28 Do not say: “So, if You chose us, why did You choose a betrayer. If You know everything, why did You do that?” Do not even ask who he is. He is not a man. He is Satan. I said so to My faithful friend and I let My beloved son say so. He is Satan. *If Satan, the eternal mimic of God, had not become incarnate in human flesh, this possessed man could not have escaped My power of Jesus.* I said: “possessed”. No. He is much more: he is annihilated in Satan.»

«Since You have driven demons away, why did you not free him?» asks James of Alphaeus.

«Are you asking that for your own sake, fearing that you are the one? Be not afraid of that.»

«I, then?»

«I?»

«I?»

«Be quiet. I am not mentioning that name. I am being merciful, do likewise.»

«But why did You not defeat him? Could You not do that?»

«I could. But in order to prevent Satan from taking bodily form to kill Me, I should have had to exterminate the human race before Redemption. So what would I have redeemed?»

«Tell me, Lord, tell me!» Peter has fallen on his knees and he shakes Jesus phrenetically as if he were a prey to frenzy. «Is it I? Is it I? Shall I examine my own conscience? I do not think so. But You... You said that I will disown You... And I am quivering... Oh' how horrible if it is I!...»

«No, Simon of Jonah. It is not you.»

«Why are You depriving me of my name “Peter”? So am I Simon again? See? You are saying so!... It is I! But how could I? Tell me tell me, all of you When was it that I became a traitor?... Simon?... John?... Tell me!»

«Peter, Peter, Peter! I am calling you Simon because I am thinking of our first meeting, when you were Simon. And I am thinking how you have always been loyal since the first moment. It is not you. I, the Truth, am telling you.»

«Who, then?»

«It is Judas of Kerioth! Have you not yet understood that?» shouts Thaddeus, who can no longer restrain himself.

«Why did you not tell me before? Why?» shouts Peter as well.

«Silence. It is Satan. He has no other name. Where are you going, Peter?»

«To look for him.»

«Leave that mantle and that weapon at once. Or shall I drive you away and curse you?»

«No, no! Oh! my Lord! But I... but I... Have I become delirious, have I? Oh! Oh!» Peter has thrown himself on the ground and is weeping at Jesus' feet.

29 «I give you My commandment: *love and forgive one another.* Have you understood? *Even if in the world there is hatred, let only love be in you. For everybody.* How many traitors you will find on your way! But you must not hate them and return evil for evil. Otherwise the Father will hate you. I have been hated and betrayed, long before you. And yet, as you can see, I do not hate. The world cannot love what is different from it. Therefore it will not love you. If you belonged to it, it would love you; but you are not of the world, as I took you away from the world. And that is why you are hated.

I said to you: a servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted Me, they will persecute you as well. If they have listened to Me, they will listen to you, too. But they will do everything because of My Name, since they do not know, they do not want to know Him Who sent Me. If I had not come and I had not spoken, they would not be guilty. But now their sin has no excuse. They have seen My deeds, they have heard My words, and yet they have hated Me, and the Father with Me. *Because the Father and I are one Unit only with the Love.* But it was written: “You hated me for no reason.” But when the Comforter comes, the Spirit of Truth Who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me, and you also will witness for Me, because you have been with Me since the beginning.

I am telling you this so that, when the hour comes, you may not be depressed and scandalised. The time is about to come when they will expel you from synagogues, and those who kill you will think that they are doing a holy duty for God. They have not

known either the Father or Me. That is their excuse. I have not told you these things so extensively, before this hour, because you were just like new-born babies. But the mother is now leaving you. I am going away. You must become accustomed to other food. I want you to know.

Not one of you has asked Me again: “Where are You going?” Sadness is making you dumb. And yet My going away is a good thing also for you. Otherwise the Comforter will not come. I will send Him to you. And when He has come, through the wisdom and the words, the deeds and the heroism that He will infuse into You, He will convince the world of its deicide sin, and of justice with regard to My holiness. *And a clear cut will divide the world into reprobates, enemies of God, and believers.* The latter will be more or less holy, according to their will. But judgement will be passed on the prince of the world and his servants. I cannot tell you more, because you are not yet able to understand. But He, the Paraclete, will give you the whole Truth, because He will not speak as from Himself. But He will tell you everything He heard from the Mind of God and will announce the future to you. He will take what comes from Me, that is, what is still of the Father, and will tell you.

30 There is still a short time to see one another. Then you will no longer see Me. And then a short time later you will see Me.

You are grumbling among yourselves and in your hearts. Listen to a parable. The last one of your Master.

When a woman has conceived and the hour of delivery comes, she is in great distress, because she suffers and groans. But when her little child is born and she presses it to her heart, all her pain comes to an end and her sorrow changes into joy, because a man has come into the world.

The same applies to you. You will weep and the world will laugh at you. But later your sorrow will change into joy. A joy that the world will never know. You are sad now. But when you see Me again, your hearts will be filled with a joy of which no one will ever be able to deprive you. Such a full joy, that it will obliterate every need of yours to ask for anything for your minds, hearts and bodies. You will feed on seeing Me again, and you will forget everything else. And just from that moment you will be able to ask for anything in My name, and it will be given to you by the Father, so that your joy may be greater and greater. Ask, do ask. And you will receive.

The time is coming when I shall be able to speak to you of the Father in plain words. That will happen because you will have been faithful in the trial and everything will have been overcome. So your love will be perfect, as it will have given you strength in the trial. And what you are short of, I will add it for you, taking it from My immense treasure and saying: “Father, as You can see, they have loved Me believing that I came from You.” Having descended into the world, now I leave it and I am going to the

Father, and I will pray for you.»

31 «Oh! now You are explaining things clearly. Now we know what You mean and that You know everything and that You give answers without being questioned by anybody. You really come from God!»

«Do you believe now? At the last hour? I have spoken to You for three years! But the Bread that is God and the Wine that is Blood that did not come from man is already working in you, and is giving you the first thrill of deification. *You will become gods if you persevere in My love and in My possession.* Not as Satan said to Adam and Eve, but as I say to you. *It is the true fruit of the tree of Good and of Life.* Evil is defeated in him who feeds on it, and Death is dead. *He who eats of it will live forever and will become “god” in the Kingdom of God. You will be gods if you remain in Me.* And yet now... although you have this Bread and this Blood in yourselves, as the hour is coming in which you will be scattered, you will go away on your own account and will leave Me all alone... But I am not alone. I have the Father with Me. Father, Father! Do not abandon Me! I have told you everything... To give you peace. *My peace.* You will still have trouble. But have faith. I have conquered the world.»

32 Jesus stands up, He opens His arms out crosswise and with His face shining brightly He says the sublime prayer to the Father. John quotes it integrally.

The apostles are shedding tears more or less openly and noisily. As a last thing, they sing a hymn.

Jesus blesses them. He then says to them: «Let us put on our mantles now. And let us go. Andrew, tell the owner of the house to leave everything as it is, as I want that. Tomorrow... you will be pleased see this place again.» Jesus looks at it. He seems to be blessing walls, furniture, everything. He then puts on His mantle and sets out, followed by the disciples. Beside Him there is John on whom He leans.

«Are you not saying goodbye to Your Mother?» Zebedee's son asks Him.

«No. Everything has already been done. Furthermore, make no noise.»

Simon, who has lit a torch at the chandelier, illuminates the wide corridor that leads to the door. Peter opens the main door cautiously and they all go out into the street, and then, working a gadget, they close the door from outside. And they start off.

17th February 1944.

33 Jesus says:

«In addition to the consideration on the love of a God Who becomes Food for men, four

main teachings stand out from the episode of the Supper.

The First: the necessity for all the children of God to obey the Law.

The Law prescribed that a lamb was to be consumed at Passover according to the ritual given to Moses by the Most High, and I, the true Son of the true God, did not consider Myself exempted, because of My divine quality, from the Law. I was on the Earth: Man among men and the Master of men. I had, therefore, to do My duty towards God as and better than anybody else. Divine favours do not dispense from being obedient and from making an effort towards a greater and greater holiness. If you compare the most sublime holiness with divine perfection, you will always find it full of defects, and consequently it is obliged to strive to eliminate them and achieve a degree of perfection as similar as possible to God's.

34 The second: the power of Mary's prayer.

I was God Who had become Flesh. A Flesh, that being without stain, had the spiritual strength of dominating the flesh. And I do not refuse, on the contrary I implore the help of the Full of Grace, Who in that hour of expiation would have also found Heaven closed over Her head, that is true, but not to the extent that She should not succeed in detaching an angel from it, since She is the Queen of angels, to console Her Son. Oh! Not for Herself, poor Mother! She also has tasted the bitter abandonment by the Father, but by means of that suffering offered for Redemption, She obtained and made it possible for Me to overcome the anguish of the Garden of Olives and to bring the Passion to completion in all its multiform bitterness, each of which aimed at cleansing a form and a means of sin.

35 The third: self-control and endurance of offences, the sublime charitable attitude towards all offences, as can be possessed only by those who make the Law of Charity the life of their lives, as I had proclaimed. And I had not only proclaimed it, but I had really practised it.

You cannot imagine what it was for Me to have the Traitor at My table, to have to give Myself to him, and humiliate Myself before him, to have to share with him the ritual chalice, and put My lips where he had put his, and make My Mother do the same. Your doctors have discussed and still discuss the rapidity of My end and they say it originated in a heart lesion brought about by the blows of the scourging. Yes, My heart was injured also by those blows. But it had already been damaged at the Supper. I was heart-broken by the effort of having to endure the Traitor at My side. It was at the Supper that I began to die physically. What followed was only an increase of an already existing agony. What I was able to do, I did it because I was all one with the Love. Also when the God-Love withdrew from Me, I was able to be love, because I had lived of love during my thirty-three years. It is not possible to reach perfection, as is required to forgive and put up with our offender, if one has not acquired the habit of love. I had

acquired it, and I was able to forgive and bear that masterpiece of an Offender, which was Judas.

36 The fourth: the more one is worthy of receiving a Sacrament, the greater is its effect. That is: if one has become worthy of it through persevering good will, that subdues the flesh and makes the spirit sovereign, mastering concupiscences, directing one's being towards virtues, bending it like a bow towards the perfection and above all of Love.

Because, when you love, you are inclined to make the person you love happy. John, who loved Me as nobody else did, and who was pure, received the utmost transformation from the Sacrament. He began as from that moment to be the eagle, that is accustomed to soaring easily in the High Heaven of God and staring at the eternal Sun. But woe to him who receives the Sacrament without being worthy of it, and who, on the contrary, has increased his human unworthiness with mortal sins. Then instead of being the germ of preservation and life, it becomes the germ of corruption and death. Death of the spirit and decomposition of the flesh, whereby it "bursts", as Peter says with regard to Judas. It does not shed blood, the vital liquid always beautiful in its purple hue, but its entrails burst out, blackened by lechery, rottenness pouring out of the decomposed body, as out of the carrion of an unclean animal, a disgusting sight for passers-by.

The death of the profaner of the Sacrament is always the death of a desperate person who, therefore, does not know the placid passing away peculiar to those who are in grace, or the heroic death of the victim who suffers intensely but looks fixedly at Heaven and feels certain peace in the soul. The death of one in despair is marked dreadful contortions and terror, it is a horrible convulsion of the soul already gripped by the hand of Satan, who chokes it to detach From the body and suffocates it with his nauseating breath. That is the difference between those who pass away after being nourished with love, faith, hope and every other virtue and heavenly doctrine and with the angelical Bread that accompanies them with its fruit – better still if with its real presence – in the last journey, and those who pass away, after the life of a brute, with the death of a brute that Grace and the Sacrament cannot comfort. The former is the serene end of a saint, to whom death opens the eternal Kingdom. The latter is the frightful fall of a damned soul, that feels it is falling into eternal death and in a moment knows what it wanted to lose and for which it can no longer find any remedy. Acquisition and joy for the former; despoilment and terror for the latter.

This is what you give yourselves, according to whether you believe and love, or you do not believe and you deride My gift. And it is the lesson of this contemplation.»

THE PASSION

599. The Agony and the Arrest at Gethsemane.

10th February 1944.

1 Jesus says:

«And now come. Although this evening you are like one who is about to breathe his last, come, so that I may lead you towards My sufferings. Long is the way that we shall have to cover together, because I was not spared any sorrow: neither the pain of the flesh, nor the grief of the mind, of the heart, of the spirit. I tasted all of them, I fed on all of them, I quenched My thirst with all of them, to the extent that I died of them.

If you laid your lips on Mine, you would taste the bitterness that they still retain of so much sorrow. If you could see My Human nature in its appearance, which is now refulgent, you would see that that refulgence emanates from the countless wounds that like a garment of living purple covered My limbs, lacerated, exsanguinated, beaten, pierced for your sake. My Human nature is now refulgent. But one day it was like that of a leper, so fiercely it had been struck and humiliated. The Man-God, Who had in Himself the perfection of physical handsomeness, being the Son of God and of the immaculate Woman, to those who cast loving, curious, or scornful, or evil glances at Him, seemed a “worm”, as David says, the scorn of mankind, the jest of people.

My love for My Father and for My Father's children led Me to abandon My body to those who struck Me, to offer My face to those who slapped Me and spat at Me, to those who thought they were doing a meritorious deed by tearing My hair and My beard, piercing My head with thorns, making the earth and its fruits accomplices of the tortures inflicted on their Saviour, dislocating My limbs, laying bare My bones, tearing off My garments, thus offending My purity in the most cruel manner, nailing Me to a piece of wood and lifting Me up like a slaughtered lamb on to the hooks of a butcher, and barking around Me, while I was in agony, like a pack of ravenous wolves made even wilder by the smell of blood.

I was accused, condemned, killed, betrayed, disowned, sold. I was abandoned even by God, because I was burdened with the crimes I had taken upon Myself. They made Me poorer than a beggar spoiled by highwaymen, because they did not even leave Me My tunic to cover My livid nakedness of a martyr. Even after My death I was not spared the insult of a wound and the slander of enemies. I was overwhelmed by all the dirt of your sins, I was hurled down as far as the bottom of the darkness of sorrow, deprived of the light of Heaven that might reply to My dying eyes, and of the divine voice that might answer My last invocation.

2 Isaiah explains the reason for so much grief: “He has really taken our evils upon Himself and ours are the sorrows He has carried.”

Our sorrows! Yes, I carried them on your behalf! To relieve yours, to mitigate them, to cancel them, had you been faithful to Me. But you did not want to be so. And what did I gain by it? You “looked at Me as if I were a leper, one struck by God.” Yes, the leprosy of your infinite sins was upon Me, it was on Me like a garment of penance, like a cilice; but how did you not see God shine forth, in His infinite love, from that garment worn on His holiness on your behalf?

“He was wounded through our wickedness, and pierced through our crimes” says Isaiah, who with his prophetic eyes saw that the Son of man had become one huge sore to heal those of men. If they had only bruised My body!

But what you most wounded, was My feelings and spirit. You made a laughing stock and butt of both; and you struck Me in the friendship that I had given you, through Judas; in the loyalty that I hoped to receive from you, through Peter who disowned Me; in the gratitude for My favours, through those who shouted at Me: “death to Him!”, after I had cured them from so many diseases; through love, because of the torture inflicted on My Mother; through religion, calling Me a blasphemer of God, whereas out of zeal for the cause of God I had put Myself in the hands of man by becoming incarnate, suffering throughout My life and surrendering to human ferocity without uttering a word or complaining.

A glance would have been sufficient to incinerate accusers, judges and executioners. But I had come spontaneously to accomplish the sacrifice, and like a lamb, because I was the Lamb of God and I shall be so forever, I allowed men to take Me to be stripped and killed, so that I might make a Life for you of My Flesh.

When I was lifted up, I was already consumed by sufferings with no name, with all the names. I began to die at Bethlehem, seeing the light of the Earth, so distressingly different for Me Who was the Living Being in Heaven. I continued to die in poverty, in exile, in flight, in work, in incomprehension, in fatigue, in betrayal, in torn affections, in torture, in falsehood, in blasphemy. I had come to re-unite man to God, and that is what man gave Me!

3 Mary, look at your Saviour. He is not dressed in white, and His hair is not fair. His eyes are not the sapphire hue that you know. His garment is stained with blood, it is worn out and covered with dirt and spittle. His face is tumefied and twisted, His eyes are veiled with blood and tears, and He looks at you through the crust formed by them and by the dust that makes His eyelids heavy. My hands – can you see them? – are one big sore and are awaiting the last Wounds.

Look at Me, little John, as your brother John looked at Me. My footprints are stained with blood. Perspiration washes away the blood that drops from the wounds made by the scourges, and that is still left after the agony in the Garden. Words come out of My parched bruised lips in the painful panting of My heart that is already dying through all

kinds of torture.

From now on you will often see Me like this. I am the King of sorrows and I will come in My regal dress to speak to you of My sorrow. Although you are in agony, follow Me. As I am the Merciful One, I shall be able to put also the scented honey of more serene contemplations before your lips, poisoned by My sorrow. But you must still prefer these ones, smeared with blood, because it is through them that you have the Life, and you will be able to take the Life to other people. Kiss My bleeding hand and be vigilant when meditating on Me, the Redeemer.»

I see Jesus as He describes Himself. This evening I have really been in agony as from 1900 hours (it is 1. 15 a.m. of the 11th, by now).

4 Jesus says to me this morning, the 11th February, at 7.30:

«Yesterday evening I wanted to speak to you only of Myself, a prey to suffering, because I have begun the description and visions of My sorrows. Yesterday evening it was the introduction. And you were so exhausted, My friend! But before the agony comes back again, I must reproach you gently.

Yesterday morning you were selfish. You said to your spiritual Father: “Let us hope that I shall be able to hold out, because my fatigue is greater.” No. His is greater, because it is hard and is not compensated by the bliss of seeing visions and of having Jesus present, as you have Him, also in His holy Human nature. Never be selfish, not even in the least things. A woman disciple, a little John, must be very humble and charitable, like her Jesus.

And now come and stay with Me. “The flowers have appeared... the pruning time has come... the voice of the little turtle-dove has been heard in the country... “ And they are the flowers that have come up in the pools of Blood of your Christ. And He Who will be cut off like a pruned branch is the Redeemer. And the voice of the turtle-dove, calling the bride to a sorrowful holy wedding banquet, is Mine, for I love you.

Rise and come, as today's Mass says. Come to contemplate and suffer. It is the gift that I grant My beloved one.»

16th March 1945.

5 There is dead silence in the street. In so much silence there is only the noise of a little fountain, the water of which falls into a stone basin. On the eastern side, along the walls of the houses it is still dark, whereas on the other side the tops of houses are beginning to grow white in the moonlight, and where the street widens out into a little square, the

milky silvery moon-beams shine on it, embellishing the stones and the earth of the street. But under the many archivolt linking one house to another, like drawbridges or buttresses supporting the old houses with very few openings on the streets, and which are now all locked and dark as if they had been abandoned, there is complete darkness and the reddish light of the torch held by Simon becomes particularly bright and even more useful.

In the red mobile light faces stand out in neat relief and each shows a different mood. The most solemn and calm is Jesus', although tiredness makes it look older, furrowing it with wrinkles that usually are not there and already show the future image of His face recomposed in death. John, who is beside Him, looks around at everything he can see with a surprised sorrowful countenance. He looks like a child who has been terrorised by a story he has heard or by a frightening promise and implores help from someone who is more experienced than he is. But who can help him? Simon, who is on Jesus' other side, looks reserved, gloomy like a man who is turning over dreadful thoughts in his mind. And he is the only one who, after Jesus, looks dignified.

6 The others, in two groups that continuously change in formation, are all in a ferment. And now and again the hoarse voice of Peter and the baritone one of Thomas are raised resounding strangely. They are then lowered, as if they were afraid of what they say. They are discussing what is to be done, and some suggest one thing, some another. But all proposals are dropped, because “the hour of darkness” is really about to begin, and the opinions of men are obscure and confused.

«I should have been told earlier» says Peter worriedly.

«But no one has spoken. Not even the Master...»

«Never! He would never have told you. Brother! You do not seem to know Him!...»

«I felt there was some trouble. And I said: “Let us go and die with Him.” Do you remember? But, by our Most Holy God, if I had known that it was Judas of Simon...» shouts Thomas in a thunderous threatening voice.

«And what did you want to do?» asks Bartholomew.

«Me? I would do it even now, if you helped me!»

«What? Would you go and kill him? Where?»

«No. I would take the Master away. It is easier!»

«He would not come!»

«I would not ask Him whether He wants to come. I would abduct Him as one abducts a woman.»

«It would not be a wicked idea!» says Peter. And he goes back impulsively, he joins the group of Alphaeus' two sons, who with Matthew and James are whispering to one another like conspirators.

«Listen, Thomas says that we should take Jesus away. All together. We could... from Get-Samni through Bethphage to Bethany and from there... to some other place. Shall we do that? Once He is in a safe place, we will come back and wipe out Judas.»

«It is useless. The whole of Israel is a trap» says James of Alphaeus.

«And now it is about to go off. It was understandable. Too much hatred!»

«Matthew! You make me angry! You had more courage when you were a sinner! Philip, tell us what you think?»

Philip, who is coming all alone and seems to be talking to himself, looks up and stops. Peter joins him and they whisper to each other. They then arrive at the previous group and Philip says: «I would say that the Temple is the best place.»

«Are you mad?» shout the cousins, Matthew and James. «But it is in there that they want Him dead!»

«Hush! How much clamour! I know what I am saying. They will look for Him everywhere. But not there. You and John have good friends among Annas' servants. A handsome present... and it is all settled. Believe me! The best place to hide one who is wanted is the jailors' house.»

«I will not do it» says James of Zebedee. «But listen also to what the others say. John, first of all. And if they should arrest Him? I don't want anybody to say that I am the traitor...»

«I had not thought of that. So?» Peter is at a loss.

«Well, I would say that it is compassionate to do one thing. The only thing we can do. Take away His Mother...» says Judas of Alphaeus.

«Of course!... But... Who will go? What shall we tell Her? You should go, as you are a relative of Hers.»

«I am staying with Jesus. It is my right. You can go.»

«I!? I have armed myself with a sword to die like Eleazar of Saura. I will pass through legions to defend my Jesus, and I will strike without restraint. If I get killed by a more numerous force, it does not matter. I will have defended Him» proclaims Peter.

«But are you really sure that it is the Iscariot?» Philip asks Thaddeus.

«I am certain. None of us has the heart of a snake. He only... Matthew, go to Mary and

tell Her...»

«I? Deceive Her? See Her beside me while She is unaware, and then?... Ah! no. I am ready to die, but not to betray that dove...»

Their voices mingle in a whisper.

7 «Do You hear? Master, we love You» says Simon.

«I know. I am not in need of those words to know. And if they give peace to the Christ's heart, they wound His soul.»

«Why, my Lord? They are words of love.»

«Of an entirely human love. Truly, in these three years I have done nothing, because you are even more human than at the first hour. This evening, all the filthiest ferments are rising in you. But it is not your fault...»

«Save Yourself, Jesus!» says John moaning.

«I am saving Myself.»

«Are You? Oh! My God, thank You!» John looks like a flower that had withered through excessive heat and becomes fresh again standing straight on its stem. «I will tell the others. Where are we going?»

«I am going to My death. You to Faith.»

«But did You not say just now that you were going to save Yourself?» The beloved apostle loses heart again.

«Yes, I am in fact saving Myself. If I did not obey My Father, I would lose Myself. I obey Him. So I save Myself. But do not weep so! You are not so brave as the disciples of that Greek philosopher, of whom I spoke to you one day. They remained with their teacher, who was dying having taken a potion of hemlock, and they comforted him with their manly sorrow. You... you look like a little boy who has lost his father.»

«And is it not so? What I am losing is more than the loss of a father! I am losing You...»

«You are not losing Me, because you will continue to love Me. He is lost who is separated from us by oblivion on the Earth and from God's Judgement in the hereafter. But we shall never be separated. Neither by this one or by that one.»

But John will not listen to reason.

8 Simon comes closer to Jesus and in a low voice confides to Him: «Master... Simon Peter and... I were hoping to do a good thing... But... Since You know everything, tell

me: within how many hours do You think You will be arrested?»

«As soon as the moon is at the summit of her arc.»

Simon makes a gesture of grief and impatience, not to say of anger. «Then it was all useless... Master, I will now tell You. You almost reproached Simon Peter and me for leaving You so alone these last days... But we were away on Your behalf... For Your sake. Peter, frightened by Your words, came to me on Monday night while I was sleeping and he said to me: “You and I, I can trust you, must do something for Jesus. Judas also said that he wants to attend to it.” Oh! why did we not understand then? Why did You not say anything to us? But, tell me, did You not tell anybody? Really? Perhaps You became aware of it only a few hours ago?»

«I have always known about it. Even before he became a disciple. And I tried in every way to send him away from Me so that his crime might not be perfect, both from the divine and human points of view. Those who want My death are the executioners of God. This disciple and friend of Mine is also the Traitor, the executioner of man. My first executioner, because he has already killed Me through the effort of having him beside Me, at the table, and having to protect him by Myself against you.»

«And does no one know?»

«John does. I told him at the end of the Supper. But what have you done?»

«And what about Lazarus? Does Lazarus really not know anything? We went to him today, because he came early in the morning, he offered his sacrifice and went back without even stopping at his mansion or going to the Praetorium. Because he always goes there, following a habit of his father. And, as You are aware, Pilate is in town these days...»

«Yes. They are all here. There is Rome: the new Zion, with Pilate. There is Israel with Caiaphas and Herod. There is the whole of Israel, because Passover has gathered the children of this people at the foot of the altar of God... 9 Have you seen Gamaliel?»

«Yes, I have. Why are You asking me? I have to see him again tomorrow...»

«Gamaliel is at Bethphage this evening. I know. When we arrive at Gethsemane, you will go to Gamaliel and say to him: “You will shortly have the sign that you have been awaiting for twenty-one years.” Nothing else. Then you will come back to your companions.»

«But how do You know? Oh! my Master, my poor Master, Who has not even the comfort of not being aware of deeds of other people!»

«You are right! The comfort of not knowing! Poor Master! Because evil deeds are more numerous than good ones. But I see also the good ones and I rejoice at them.»

«Then You know that...»

«Simon, it is the hour of My passion. To make it more complete, the Father is withdrawing His light from Me, as it gets nearer. Before long I shall have but darkness and the contemplation of what is darkness: that is, all the sins of men. *You cannot, none of you can understand.* Nobody, except who will be called by God for this special mission, will understand this passion in the great Passion, and as man is material even in loving and meditating, there will be who will weep and suffer because of the scourging and the torture of the Redeemer, *but this spiritual torture that, believe Me you who are listening to Me, is the most atrocious one, will not be measured...* So speak, Simon. Guide Me along the paths where your friendship went for My sake, because I am a poor man who is becoming blind and sees ghosts, not real things...»

John embraces Him and asks: «What? Can You no longer see Your John?»

«I can see you. But the ghosts rise from the fogs of Satan. Visions of nightmares and sorrows. This evening we are all enveloped in this hellish miasma. *It is striving to create cowardice, disobedience and sorrow in Me.* It will create disappointment and fear in you, in other people, who are neither fearful nor criminal, it will bring about delinquency and fear. In others, who already belong to Satan, it will give rise to supernatural perversion. I am saying so because their perfection in evil will be such as to exceed human possibilities and achieve the perfection which is always in the supernatural. 10 Speak up, Simon.»

«Yes. As from Tuesday we have done nothing but go around to find out, to prevent, to look for help.»

«And what have you been able to do?»

«Nothing. Or very little.»

«And that little will be “nothing” when fear paralyses your hearts.»

«I became irritated also with Lazarus... It is the first time that it happens to me... I was irritated because he seems to be slothful... He could take action. He is a friend of the Governor. He is always Theophilus' son! But Lazarus rejected every proposal of Mine. I left him shouting at him: “I think that you are the friend of whom the Master speaks. You fill me with horror!” and I did not want to go back to him any more... But this morning he sent for me and he said: “Can you still believe that I am the traitor?” I had already seen Gamaliel and Joseph and Chuza, Nicodemus and Manaen, and finally Your brother Joseph... and I could no longer believe that. I said to him: “Forgive me, Lazarus. But I feel that my mind is more deranged now than when I was condemned myself” And it is so, Master... I am no longer myself... But why are You smiling?»

«Because that confirms what I said just now. The fog of Satan envelops and upsets you.»

What did Lazarus say in reply?»

«He said: “I understand you. Come today, with Nicodemus. I must see you.” And I went, while Peter went to the Galileans. Because Your brother, who is so far away, is more informed than we are. He says that he was informed by chance, speaking to an old friend of Alphaeus and Joseph, a Galilean who lives near the market.»

«Oh!... yes... A great friend of the family...»

«He is there with Simon and the women. There is also the family from Cana.»

«I have seen Simon.»

«Well, Joseph was told by this friend of his, who is also a friend of one of the Temple, who has become his relative on women's side, that they have decided to arrest You, and he said to Peter: “I have always opposed Him. But I did it out of love and while He was still Strong. But now that He has become like a child and is a prey to His enemies, I, a relative who has always loved Him, am with Him. It's my duty by blood and by love.”»

Jesus smiles, showing for a moment the serene face of joyful hours.

«And Joseph said to Peter: “The Pharisees of Galilee are wicked like all the Pharisees. But Galilee is not all Pharisees. And many Galileans are here who love Him. Let us go and tell them to gather together to defend Him. We have nothing but knives. But also clubs are weapons when they are handled properly. And if the Roman troops do not come, we will soon get the better of those cowardly cads of the Temple guards.” And Peter went with him. In the meantime I went to Lazarus with Nicodemus. We had decided to convince Lazarus to come with us and to open his house to be with You. He said to us: “I must obey Jesus and remain here. To suffer twice as much...” Is it true?»

«It is true. I gave him that order.»

«But he gave me the swords. They belong to him. One for me, the other for Peter. Chuza also wanted to give me some swords. But... What is the use of two bits of steel against the whole world? Chuza cannot believe that what You say is true. He swears that he knows nothing and that at the court they think of nothing but enjoying the feast... A revelry as usual. So much so that he told Johanna to retire to one of their houses in Judaea. But Johanna wants to remain here, closed in her mansion, as if she were not there. But she will not go away. Plautina, Anne, Nike, and two Roman ladies of Claudia's household are staying with her. They weep, pray and make innocents pray. But it is no time for prayers. It is time for blood. I feel the “zealot” becoming alive in me and I am eager to kill in revenge!...»

«Simon! If I had wanted you to die as a damned soul, I would not have freed you from your desolation!...» Jesus is very severe.

«Oh! forgive me, Master... forgive me. I am like an inebriated raving man.»

«And what does Manaen say?»

«Manaen says that it cannot be true, and if it were, that he would follow You to the scaffold.»

«How you all rely on yourselves!... How much pride there is in man! And what about Nicodemus and Joseph? What do they know?»

«Nothing more than I do. Some time ago in a meeting Joseph was angry with the Sanhedrin, because he called them killers as they wanted to kill an innocent, and he said: “Everything is illegal in here. He is right when He says that there is abomination in the house of the Lord. This altar is to be destroyed because it has been profaned.” They did not stone him, because he is Joseph. But since then they have kept him in the dark about everything. Only Gamaliel and Nicodemus have remained friendly with him. But the former does not speak. And the latter... Neither he nor Joseph have been summoned any more to the Sanhedrin for the really important decisions. It meets illegally here and there, at different hours, for fear of them and of Rome. Ah! I was forgetting!... The shepherds. They are with the Galileans as well. But we are few! If Lazarus had only listened to us and had come to the Praetor! But he would not listen to us... That is what we have done... Much... and nothing... and I feel so depressed that I should like to go around the country howling like a jackal, becoming brutal in an orgy, killing like a highwayman, if only to get rid of this idea that “everything is useless”, as Lazarus said, as Joseph and Chuza and Manaen and Gamaliel said...» The Zealot no longer seems himself...

«What did the rabbi say?»

«He said: “I do not exactly know what Caiaphas' purpose is. But I tell you that what you say is prophesied only for the Christ. And as I do not recognise the Christ in this prophet, I see no reason to be excited. A good man, a friend of God will be killed. But of how many like him has Zion drunk the blood?!” And as we insisted on Your divine Nature, he stubbornly repeated: “When I see the sign, I will believe.” And he promised to abstain from voting for Your death and, on the contrary, if possible he will try to convince the others not to condemn You. That, and nothing else. He does not believe! He will not believe! If only nothing happened till tomorrow... But You say it is not so. **11** Oh! what shall we do?!»

«You will go to Lazarus and you will try to take as many as possible with you. Not only the apostles. But also the disciples that you will find wandering about the roads in the country. See if you can find the shepherds and order them to do so. The house in Bethany is more than ever the home in Bethany, the house of kind hospitality. *Those who do not have the courage to face the hatred of a whole population, ought to take shelter there. And wait...»*

«We will not leave You.»

«Do not part... Divided, you would be nothing. *United, you will still be a power.* Simon, promise Me that. You are calm, loyal, you can speak to and influence even Peter. And you have a great obligation towards Me. I am reminding you of it for the first time, to make you obedient. Look, we are at the Kidron. From there you, a leper, climbed up towards Me and you departed cleansed. *Give Me that, for what I gave you. Give the Man what I gave man. I am the leper now...»*

«No! Do not say that!» say the two disciples moaning.

«It is so! Peter and My brothers will be the most depressed. My honest Peter will feel like a criminal and will have no peace. And My brothers... They will not have the courage to look at their mother and at Mine... I recommend them to you...»

«And what about me, Lord, to whom shall I belong? Are You not thinking of me?»

«O My child! *You are entrusted to your love. It is so strong that it will guide you as a mother.* I give you neither order nor guide. I leave you on the waters of love. They are such a calm and deep river in you, that they raise no doubt in Me about your future. Simon, have you understood? Promise Me, do promise Me!» It is painful to see Jesus so distressed... He resumes: «Before the others come! Oh! thank you! May you be blessed!»

12 They all gather together again in a group.

«Let us part now. I am going farther up, to pray. I want Peter, John and James with Me. You, remain here. And if you should be overwhelmed, call us. And be not afraid. Not a single hair of your heads will be hurt. Pray for Me. Lay aside hatred and fear. It will only be a moment... and then it will be full joy. *Smile. That I may have your smiles in My heart. And once again, thank you for everything, My friends. Goodbye. May the Lord not abandon you...»*

Jesus parts from the apostles and goes ahead, while Peter makes Simon give him the torch after the latter has lit with it some resinous dry twigs, that burn crackling on the edge of the olive grove, spreading a smell of juniper. It grieves me to see Thaddeus cast such an intense and sorrowful glance at Jesus, that the Latter turns round to see who has been looking at Him. But Thaddeus hides behind Bartholomew biting his lips to control himself.

With His hand Jesus makes a gesture, which is of blessing and farewell at the same time, and goes on His way. The moon, now very high, with her light encircles His tall figure and seems to make it even taller, spiritualising it, making His red garment brighter and His golden hair paler. Behind Him Peter holding the torch and Zebedee's two son hasten their steps.

They go on until they reach the edge of the first escarpment of the rustic amphitheatre of the olive-grove, the entrance to which is a small irregular plain, and the tiers the several escarpments that rise up the mountain in groups of olive-trees. Jesus then says: «Stop, wait for Me here, while I pray. But do not fall asleep. I may need you. And, I ask you this out of charity, pray! Your Master is very depressed.»

He is in fact already in a state of deep depression. He already seems overburdened by a weight. Where is now the virile Jesus Who spoke to the crowds, handsome, strong, with eyes of a ruler, a calm smile, a beautiful resonant voice? He already seems breathless. He is like one who has run or has wept. His voice is tired and exhausted. Sad, sad, sad...

Peter replies on behalf of everybody: «Do not worry, Master. We will keep awake and pray. All You have to do is to call us, and we will come.»

And Jesus leaves them, while the three stoop to gather leaves and twigs and light a little fire to keep them awake, and as a remedy against the dew that is beginning to fall plentifully.

13 Turning His back to them He walks eastwards, so that the moons shines on His face. I see that a deep sorrow dilates His eyes even more, perhaps it is the dark rings of tiredness that enlarge them, or it is the shadow of the eyebrows. I do not know. I know that His eyes are more open and deeper set. He climbs with His head lowered, only now and again He raises it with a sigh, as if He had difficulty in doing so and were panting, and then He casts His eyes, that are so sad, around the peaceful olive-grove. He climbs up a few metres, He then goes round an escarpment that thus remains between Him and the three apostles left farther down.

The escarpment, a few centimetres high at the beginning, rises continuously and is soon more than two metres high, so that it protects Jesus completely from being noticed by more or less discreet or friendly eyes. Jesus goes on as far as a huge rock, that at a certain point blocks the path and has probably been put there to support the slope, that on one side descends more steeply and bare as far as a desolate heap of ruins preceding the walls beyond which is Jerusalem, and on the other rises with more escarpments and olive-trees. An olive-tree, all knots and twisted, dangles right above the huge rock. It looks like a bizarre question mark, placed there by nature to ask some questions. The leafy branches on the top of it answer the questions of the trunk, at times saying yes by bending towards the ground, at times no, swinging from left to right, in a light breeze, which blows through the branches, and at times carries the smell of the earth, at times the bitterish scent of olive-trees, at times the mixed perfume of roses and lilies of the valley, that one wonders where it comes from. Beyond the little path and beneath it, there are more olive-trees and one of them, just under the rock, that has survived although split by lightning, or cleft by some other agent unknown to me, of the original trunk has made two trunks that have come up like the two strokes of a huge block-letter V, with the foliage of one appearing on one side of the rock and that of the other on the

other side, as if they wished to see or veil it at the same time, or form a peaceful silvery grey base for the rock.

14 Jesus stops there. He does not look at the town that is visible down there, all white in the moonlight. On the contrary, He turns His back to it and prays with His arms stretched out crosswise, His face towards the sky. I cannot see His face because it is in the shade, as the moon is almost perpendicular over His head, that is true, but there is also the thick foliage of the olive-tree between Him and the moon, that with difficulty filters through the eaves with tiny rings and needles of light in perpetual movement. A long fervent prayer. Now and again He sighs and utters a word more clearly. It is neither a psalm nor the Our Father. It is a prayer rising from His love and His need. A true conversation with His Father. I understand it through the few words I grasp: «You know... I am Your Son... Everything, but help Me... The hour has come... I no longer belong to the Earth. Stop all need of help for Your Word... Make the Man satisfy You as the Redeemer, as the Word was obedient to You... As You wish... I ask You to have mercy on them... Will I save them? That is what I ask of You. This I want: that they be saved from the world, from the flesh, from the demon... May I make further requests? It is a fair question, Father. Not for Myself. For man, who was created by You, and who wanted to soil also his soul. I will throw that dirt into My sorrow and into My Blood, so that the incorruptible essence of the spirit, which is pleasing to You, may be reinstated... And it is everywhere. He is the king this evening. In the royal palace and in houses. Among soldiers and in the Temple... The town is full of it, and it will be hell tomorrow...»

Jesus turns round, He leans with His back against the rock and folds His arms. He looks at Jerusalem. Jesus' face becomes sadder and sadder. He whispers: «She looks like snow... and she is all sin. And how many I cured in her! How much I spoke!... Where are those who seemed loyal to Me?»

Jesus lowers His head and looks fixedly at the ground covered with short grass shining with dew. But although His head is lowered, I understand that He is weeping, because some tears shine when falling from His face on the ground. He then raises His head, He unfolds His arms, He joins them holding them above His head, shaking them while they are so united.

15 He then sets out. He goes back towards the three apostles, who are sitting round the little fire of twigs. And He finds them half asleep. Peter is leaning with his back against a tree trunk, and, with his arms crossed on his chest, he nods in the first drowsiness of a profound sleep. James is sitting, with his brother, on a large root that emerges from the ground and on which they have spread their mantles in order not to feel its ruggedness so much, but although they are not so comfortable as Peter, they are also dozing. James has rested his head on the shoulder of John, who has inclined his on the head of his brother, as if doziness had immobilised them in that posture.

«Are you sleeping? Have you not been able to keep awake for one hour only? And I need your comfort and your prayers so much!»

The three wake up with a start and are utterly confused. They rub their eyes. They murmur an excuse, blaming their poor digestion as the cause of their drowsiness: «It's the wine... the food... But it will soon be over. It was only a moment. We did not feel like speaking, and that made us fall asleep. But we will now pray in loud voices and it will not happen again.»

«Yes. Pray and be on the alert. For your own sake as well.»

«Yes, Master. We will obey You.»

16 Jesus goes away again. The moon, now shining on His face so brightly in her silvery light, that it makes His red garment seem paler and paler, as if she were spreading it with a veil of white shiny dust, shows me His depressed, sorrowful, aged face. His eyes are still dilated, but they seem clouded. His mouth is twisted with tiredness.

He goes back to His rock more slowly and stooping more. He kneels resting His arms on the rock, which is not smooth, but at half its height it has a kind of protrusion, as if it had been placed there deliberately, and a little plant has grown on it. I think it is a plant of those little flowers, like lilies, that I have seen also in Italy, with small pulpy leaves, round but with indented edges and tiny little flowers on very thin stems. They look like small snowflakes spraying the grey rock and the little dark green leaves. Jesus lays His hands near them, and the little flowers tickle His cheek, because He rests His head on His joined hands and prays. Shortly afterwards He feels the coolness of the little corollas and raises His head. He looks at them. He caresses them. He speaks to them: «You are here as well!... You comfort Me! These little flowers were also in My Mother's little grotto... and She loved them because She used to say: "When I was a little girl, My father used to say: 'You are a little lily like these and you are completely full of heavenly dew'"... My Mother! Oh! My Mother!» He bursts into tears. His head on His joined hands, a little reclined on His heels, I see and hear Him weep, while His hands squeeze His fingers tormenting them. I hear Him say: «Also at Bethlehem... and I brought them to You, Mother. But these ones, who will bring them to You now?...»

17 He then resumes praying and meditating. His meditation must be really sad, full of anguish rather than sadness, because, to divert His attention, He stands up, He goes backwards and forwards, whispering words that I do not grasp, raising His face, then lowering it, gesticulating, rubbing His eyes and His cheeks with mechanical agitated movements of His hands, running His fingers through His hair, as is typical of one who is in great anguish. To mention it is nothing. To describe it is impossible. To see it is to share His anguish. He makes gestures towards Jerusalem. Then He begins to raise His arms again towards the sky, as if He wanted to invoke help.

He takes off His mantle, as if He were warm. He looks at it... But what does He see?

His eyes see nothing but His torture, and everything serves to increase that torture. Even the mantle woven by His Mother. He kisses it and says: «Forgive Me, Mother! Forgive Me!» He seems to be asking it of the cloth spun and woven by motherly love... He puts it on again. He is a prey to torment. He wants to pray to get out of His state. But recollections, concern, doubts, regrets come back to Him with His prayer... It is an avalanche Of names... towns... people... events... I cannot follow Him because He is fast and desultory. It is His evangelic life that passes in front of Him... and brings Judas, the traitor, back to Him.

18 His anguish is such that, in order to overcome it, He shouts the names of Peter and John. And He says: «They will come now. They are really loyal!» But “they” do not come. He calls them again. He seems to be terrorised, as if He saw I wonder what.

He runs fast towards the place where Peter and the two brothers are. And He finds them comfortably fast asleep round a few embers, which are now dying out and show only some red zigzags among the grey ashes. «Peter! I have called you three times! What are you doing? Are you still sleeping? Do you not realise how much I am suffering? Pray. That the flesh may not win, that it may not overwhelm you. None of you. If the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. Help Me...»

The three wake up more slowly, but at last they are successful, and with dull eyes they apologise. They get up, sitting up at first and then standing.

«Just fancy!» murmurs Peter. «It had never happened to us! It must have been that wine. It was strong. And also this cold air. We covered ourselves not to feel it (in fact they had covered also their heads with their mantles), we did not see the fire any more, we were no longer cold, and so we fell asleep. Did You say that You called us? And yet I did not seem to be so fast asleep... Come on, John, let us get some twigs, let us get a move on. We shall soon be wide-awake. Do not worry, Master, because now!... We will stand up...» and he throws a handful of dry leaves on the embers, and he blows until the flame revives, and he tends the fire with the shrubs brought by John, while James brings a big branch of juniper, or of a similar plant, that he cut off a bush not far away, and he adds it to the rest.

The fire blazes gaily, lighting up the poor face of Jesus. A face that is really so sad that one cannot look at it without weeping. All the brightness of that face is cancelled by a deadly tiredness. He says: «I feel an anguish that is killing Me! Oh! yes! My soul is sad even unto death. My friends!... My friends!» But even if He did not say so, His aspect would make one understand that He is really like a man about to breathe his last, and in the most distressing and desolate abandonment. Every word sounds like a sob...

But the three are too heavy with sleep. They almost seem to be drunk, so much they stagger about with their eyes half closed... Jesus looks at them... He does not humiliate them by reproaching them. He shakes His head, sighs and goes away to the place where

He was previously.

19 He prays once again standing, with His arms stretched out crosswise. Then on His knees, as before, His face bent on the little flowers. He is pensive. Silent... Then He begins to moan and sob loudly, almost prostrated, so much has He relaxed on His heels. He calls His Father, more and more anxiously...

«Oh!» He says. «This cup is too bitter! I cannot! I cannot! It is above My power. I have been able to bear everything! But not this... Father, take it away from Your Son! Have mercy on Me!... What have I done to deserve it?» He then collects Himself and says: «But, Father, do not listen to My voice, if what I ask is against Your will. Do not remember that I am Your Son, but only Your servant. Let Your will be done, not Mine.»

He remains thus for some time. Then He utters a stifled cry and raises His face, looking very upset. Only for a moment, then He drops on the ground, with His face really on the earth, and remains thus. A worn-out man overburdened by all the sins of the world, struck by all the Justice of the Father, oppressed by the darkness, the ashes, the bitterness, by that tremendous, terrible, most dreadful thing that is the abandonment by God, while Satan torments us... It is the asphyxia of the soul, it is to be buried alive in this prison that is the world, when we can no longer feel any tie between us and God, it is to be chained, gagged, stoned by our very prayers, which fall back on us bristling with sharp points and spread with fire, it is to butt against a closed Heaven, which neither the voice nor the appearance of our anguish can penetrate, it is to be the “orphans of God”, it is madness, agony, the doubt of having been deceived so far, it is the persuasion of being rejected by God, of being damned. It is hell!...

Oh! I know! and I cannot, I really cannot bear the sight of the cruel suffering of my Christ, knowing that it is a million times more dreadful than the pain that consumed me last year and that still upsets me, when I think of it...

Jesus moans, having the death-rattle in His throat and sobbing like one in agony: «Nothing!... Nothing!... Away!... The will of My Father! His will! Only His will!... Your will, Father. Yours, not Mine... In vain. I have but one Lord: the Most Holy God. One Law: obedience. One love: redemption... No. I no longer have a Mother. I have no life any more. I have no divinity any longer. I no longer have a mission. In vain you tempt Me, devil, through My Mother, My life, My divinity and My mission. Mankind is My Mother and I love it to the extent of dying for it. I am giving My life back to Him Who gave Me it and Who is now asking Me for it, the Supreme Master of all living beings. I assert My Divinity, as it is capable of this expiation. I am fulfilling My mission through My death. I have nothing else, except to do the will of the Lord My God. Be off, Satan! I said so the first and the second time. I repeat it for the third time: “Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass Me by. But let Your will be done, not Mine.” Be off, Satan. I belong to God.»

Then He speaks no more except to say, panting: «God! God! God!», He calls Him at each heart-beat, and at each beat blood seems to flow out of Him. The cloth on His shoulders gets soaked through in it and becomes dark, notwithstanding that the clear moonlight illuminates it completely.

20 A brighter light appears above His head, hanging about a metre above Him, it is so bright that even the Prostrate Master can see it filter through His wavy hair, already weighed down by blood, and notwithstanding the veil of blood covering His eyes. He raises His head... The moon shines on His poor face, and more brightly shines the angelic light, which is like the white-blue diamond of the star Venus. And all the dreadful agony appears in the blood transuding from His pores. His eyelashes, hair, moustaches, beard are sprinkled and covered with blood. Blood trickles from His temples, blood spouts from the veins of His neck, His hands drip blood, and when He stretches His hands towards the angelic light and His wide sleeves slide back towards His elbows, Christ's forearms can be seen sweating blood. Only His tears draw two neat lines in the red mask of His face.

He takes off His mantle again and wipes His hands, face, neck and forearms. But His sweat continues. He presses the cloth against His face several times, holding it pressed with His hands, and every time He changes its position, clear impressions appear on the dark-red cloth, and as they are damp, they seem to be black. The grass on the ground is red with blood.

Jesus seems on the point of fainting. He unties the neck of His tunic, as if He felt that He was suffocating. He takes His hand to His heart and then to His head and He waves it in front of His face, as if He wanted to fan Himself, with His mouth half open. He drags Himself towards the rock, but closer to the edge of the escarpment, and He leans with His back against it, His arms hanging along His body, as if He were already dead, His head bent on His chest. He moves no more.

The angelic light slowly fades away. Later it seems-to vanish in the clear moonlight. Jesus reopens His eyes. He raises His head with difficulty. He looks around. He is alone. But He is less anguished. He stretches out one hand. He draws to Himself the mantle that He had left on the grass and wipes His face, hands, neck, beard and hair again. He takes a large leaf, which had grown on the edge of the escarpment, and is all wet with dew, and He continues to clean Himself with it, wetting His face and hands and then drying Himself again. And He does the same several times with other leaves, until He wipes out the traces of His dreadful sweat. Only His tunic is stained, particularly on the shoulders and at the folds of the elbows, at the neck, waist and knees. He looks at it and shakes His head. He looks also at His mantle. But He sees that it is too stained. He folds it and lays it on the rock, where it forms a cradle near the little flowers.

With difficulty, owing to weakness, He turns round and kneels down. He prays resting

His head on His mantle, on which He had already laid His hands. Then leaning on the rock He stands up, and still staggering a little, He goes to the disciples. His face is very pale. But it is no longer upset. It is a face full of divine beauty, although it is deadly pale and much sadder than usually.

21 The three are sleeping soundly, all enveloped in their mantles, lying down near the fire, which is out. They can be heard to breathe deeply as they begin to snore loudly.

Jesus calls them in vain. He has to bend and shake Peter vigorously.

«What is it? Who is arresting me?» the apostle asks as he emerges from his dark green mantle looking bewildered and frightened.

«Nobody. It is I calling you.»

«Is it morning?»

«No. It is almost the end of the second watch.»

Peter is completely benumbed.

Jesus shakes John, who utters a cry of terror when he sees the face of a ghost – it is as white as marble – bending over him. «Oh!... You looked like dead to me!» He shakes James, who, thinking that his brother is calling him, says: «Have they arrested the Master?»

«Not yet, James» replies Jesus. «But get up, now, and let us go. He who is going to betray Me is close at hand.»

The three, still drowsy, get up. They look around... Olive-trees, the moon, nightingales, a light breeze, peace... Nothing else. But they follow Jesus without speaking.

Also the other eight are more or less asleep around a fire that has gone out. «Get up!» orders Jesus in a thunderous voice. «As Satan is arriving, show him, who never sleeps, and his children, that the children of God are not asleep!»

«Yes, Master.»

«Where is he, Master?»

«Jesus, I...»

«But what happened?»

And amid muddled questions and answers they put on their mantles again...

22 Just in time to appear in order to the guards headed by Judas, as they burst into the little square lighting it up sinisterly with many torches. It is a horde of bandits disguised as soldiers, who look like jail-birds and grin like devils. There is also an odd champion of the Temple.

All the apostles jump to one corner. Peter in front, the others behind him in a group. Jesus remains where He was.

Judas approaches Jesus, enduring the glance of His eyes, which have become the flashing eyes of His best days. And he does not lower his face either. On the contrary, he approaches the Master with the smile of a hyena and kisses His right cheek.

«My friend, what have you come for? Are you betraying Me with a kiss?»

Judas bends his head for a moment, then raises it... insensible to reproach as to every invitation to repent.

Jesus, after the first words uttered with the majesty of a Master, speaks in the sorrowful tone of one who resigns oneself to a misfortune.

The guards, shouting, come forward with ropes and clubs and try to get hold not only of Christ, but also of the apostles, with the exception of Judas Iscariot, of course.

«Who are you looking for?» asks Jesus calmly and solemnly.

«Jesus the Nazarene.»

«I am He.» His voice is thunderous. Before the murderous world and the innocent one, before nature and the stars, Jesus bears this clear, loyal, certain witness to Himself, I should say that He is happy to be able to bear it.

But, if He had thrown a thunderbolt, He could not have done more. They all fall to the ground like mown sheaves of corn. No one remains standing except Judas, Jesus and the apostles, who take fresh heart again at the sight of the overthrown soldiers, so much so that they approach Jesus, threatening Judas so explicitly that the latter makes a leap just in time to avoid a masterly stroke of Simon's sword. In vain pursued by the stones and sticks thrown at him by the apostles not armed with swords, he escapes beyond the Kidron and disappears in a dark lane.

«Stand up. Who are you looking for? I ask you once again.»

«Jesus the Nazarene.»

«I have told you that I am He» says Jesus kindly. Yes, kindly. «So, let these others go. I will come. Put away swords and clubs. I am not a brigand. I have always been among you. Why did you not arrest Me then? But this is Satan's hour and yours...»

But, while He is speaking, Peter approaches the man who is holding out the ropes to tie Jesus and gives a clumsy blow with his sword. If he had struck him with the point, he would have slaughtered him like a ram. Whereas all he does is to cut off part of his ear that remains hanging down shedding much blood. The man shouts that he is dead. There is chaos because some want to come forward, while some are afraid seeing

swords and daggers shine. «Put those weapons away. I order you to do that. If I wanted, I could have the angels of My Father to defend Me. And you, be cured. In your soul first of all, if you can.» And before stretching out His hands to be roped, He touches the ear and cures it.

The apostles shout very unbecomingly Yes. I am sorry having to say so, but it is the truth. Some say one thing, some another. Some shout: «You have betrayed us!», and some: «He is mad!», and some say: «And who can believe You?» And those who do not shout run away and Jesus is left all alone He and the guards. And His way begins.

15th February 1944.

23 Jesus says:

«You contemplated the sufferings of My spiritual agony on Thursday evening. You saw your Jesus collapse like a man struck mortally, who feels his life flee through the wounds bleeding him, or like a person overwhelmed by a psychic trauma exceeding his strength. You saw the growing phases of the trauma culminate in the shedding of blood brought about by the circulatory unbalance that had been provoked by the effort of controlling Myself and withstanding the burden that had fallen upon Me.

I was, I am, the Son of the Most High God. But I was also the Son of man. *I want this double nature of Mine, equally complete and perfect, to emanate very clearly from these pages.*

My word, which has accents that only a God can have, bears witness to My Divinity . *My necessities and passions, and the sufferings that I show you and I suffered in My flesh of a true Man, and that I propose to you as an example for your humanity, as I teach your spirits with My doctrine of true God, bear witness to My Humanity.*

Both My most holy Divinity and My most perfect Humanity, in the course of ages, through the breaking up action of “your” imperfect humanity, have resulted disparaged and distorted in their explanation. You have made My Humanity appear unreal, inhumane, as you have made My divine figure look small, denying so many parts of it, because it was not convenient for you to recognise them or that you could no longer recognise with your spirits impaired by the tabes of vice and atheism, of humanism, of rationalism.

I am coming, in this tragic hour, a prodrome of universal misfortunes, *to call My double-figure of God and of Man back to your minds, so that you may know it for what it is, you may recognise it after so much obscurantism, with which you have concealed it from your spirits, and you may love it and go back to it and save yourselves by means of It. It is the figure of your Saviour and he, who knows it and loves it, will be saved.*

24 In these past days I have made you acquainted with My physical sufferings. They tortured My Humanity. I have made you acquainted with My moral sufferings, as connected, interlaced, blended with My Mother's, as are the inextricable lianas of the equatorial forests, which cannot be parted in order to cut only one, but it is necessary to break them with a single stroke of a hatchet to force one's way through, killing them all together; just like the veins of a body, one alone of which cannot be deprived of blood, because only one liquid fills them all; better still, as it is not possible to prevent the creature that is forming in its mother's womb from dying, if its mother dies, because it is the life, the warmth, the nourishment, the blood of the mother that, with a rhythm responding to the movement of the mother's heart, penetrates through the internal membranes, as far as the baby-to-be, making it a complete living being.

She, oh! She, My pure Mother, bore Me not only for the nine months during which every woman bears the fruit of man, *but for all Her life*. Our hearts were united by spiritual fibres and they always beat together, and no motherly tear ever fell without leaving a trace of its salt on My heart, and there has never been any internal moaning of Mine that did not resound in Her, awakening Her grief.

You feel sorry for the mother of a son destined to death by an incurable disease, for the mother of a man condemned to death by the rigour of human justice. But think of My Mother Who, from the moment She conceived Me, trembled considering that I was the Condemned One, think of this Mother Who, when She gave Me Her first kiss on the delicate rosy flesh of Her new-born baby, felt the future wounds of Her Child, think of this Mother Who would have given Her life ten, a hundred, a thousand times to prevent Me from becoming a Man and arriving at the moment of the Sacrifice, think of this Mother Who was aware of and had to desire that dreadful hour to accept the will of the Lord, for the glory of the Lord, out of kindness towards Mankind. *No, there has been no agony that lasted longer and ended in a greater grief than My Mother's.*

25 *And there has been no greater and more complete sorrow than Mine.* I was One with the Father. He had loved Me from eternity as God alone can love. He had taken delight in Me and had found His divine joy in Me. And I had loved Him as a God alone can love, and in My union with Him I had found My divine joy. The ineffable relationship that ab aeterno ties the Father to the Son cannot be explained to you even by My Word, because while it is perfect, your intelligence is not, and you cannot understand and know what God is until you are with Him in Heaven. Well, like water that rises and presses against a dam, I felt the rigour of the Father grow hourly towards Me.

As evidence against brute-men, who did not want to understand who I was, during the time of My public life, He had opened Heaven three times at the Jordan, at the Tabor and in Jerusalem on the eve of My Passion. But He had done that for men, not to give relief to Me. I was already the Expiator.

Many times, Mary, God makes men become acquainted with one of His servants, so

that through him they may be roused and dragged to Him, but that happens also through the suffering of that servant. *It is he who, by eating the bitter bread of God's rigour, pays personally for the comfort and salvation of his brothers.* Is it not so? The victims of expiation know the rigour of God. Then comes the glory. But after Justice has been appeased. *It is not the same as happens with My Love, that kisses His victims.* I am Jesus, I am the Redeemer, He Who has suffered and knows, by personal experience, how painful it is to be looked at by God with severity and be abandoned by Him, and I am never severe, and I never abandon anyone. *I consume just the same, but through the fire of love.*

26 The more the hour of expiation approached, the more I felt the Father move away. The more I was separated from the Father, the less My Humanity felt it was supported by the Divinity of God. And because of that I suffered in every possible way. *The separation from God brings fear, attachment to life, languor, tiredness, boredom.* The deeper it is, the stronger are its consequences. *When it is total, it leads to despair.* And the more he who, by God's decree, experiences it, without having deserved it, the more he suffers, because the living spirit feels the excision from God, as live flesh feels the excision of a limb. *It is a sorrowful prostrating stupor that one, who has not experienced it, cannot understand.*

I experienced it. I had to know everything in order to be able to plead with the Father for everything in your favour. *Even for your despair.* Oh, I experienced what it means to say: *"I am alone. Everybody has betrayed and abandoned Me. Even the Father, even God no longer assists Me."* And that is why I work mysterious wonders of grace in poor hearts overwhelmed by despair, and I ask My beloved ones to drink the cup of so bitter an experience, so that they, those who are shipwrecked in the sea of despair, may not decline to accept the cross that I offer as anchor and salvation, but they may grasp at it and I may take them to the blessed shore where only peace reigns.

27 On Thursday evening, I alone know whether I needed My Father! I was a spirit already in agony because of the effort of having to overcome the two greatest sorrows of a man: *to say goodbye to a beloved mother, to have an unfaithful friend close by.* They were two sores that scorched My heart: the former with Her tears, the latter with his hatred.

I had to share My bread with My Cain. I had to speak to him in a friendly manner in order not to denounce him to the others, *as I was afraid they might react violently, and in order to avoid a crime,* which in any case would have been useless, as everything was already written in the great book of life: both My holy Death and Judas' suicide. Any other death was useless and disapproved of by God. No other blood but Mine was to be shed, and was not shed. The halter strangled that life, shutting up his impure blood, which had been sold to Satan, in the filthy sack of the traitor's body, blood that was not to be mixed, falling on the Earth, with the most pure blood of the Innocent.

Those two sores would have been sufficient to make Me suffer agony in My Ego. But I was the Expiator, the Victim, the Lamb. A lamb, before being sacrificed, experiences the red-hot brand, it suffers blows, it endures being shorn and sold to a butcher. And finally it feels the cold of the knife that cuts its throat, bleeds it and kills it. First it must leave everything: the pasture where it was brought up, its mother at whose breast it was nourished and warmed, the companions with which it lived. Everything. I, the Lamb of God, experienced everything.

28 That is why Satan came, when the Father was retiring in Heaven. He had already come at the beginning of My mission, to tempt Me in order to divert Me from it. He was now coming back again. It was his hour. The hour of the satanic sabbath.

Crowds and crowds of devils were on the Earth that night, to accomplish the seduction of hearts and make them willing to request the killing of the Christ the following day. Each member of the Sanhedrin had his own, Herod had his, so had Pilate, and every single Judaeon who would invoke My Blood upon himself. *Also beside the apostles there were their tempters*, who made them drowsy while I was languishing, and who prepared them to be cowardly. *Take notice of the power of purity.* John, the pure disciple, was the first among all of them to free himself from the demoniac claws, and he came at once near his Jesus and understood His unexpressed desire, and brought Mary to Me.

But Judas had Lucifer, and I had Lucifer. Judas in his heart, I beside Me. We were the two main characters of the tragedy, and *Satan was attending personally to both of us.* After leading Judas to the point from which he could not withdraw, he turned towards Me.

With perfect artifice he showed Me the torments of the flesh with unsurpassable realism. Also in the desert he had started from the flesh. *I defeated him by praying.* The spirit dominated the fear of the flesh.

He then showed Me the uselessness of My death, and the usefulness of living for My own sake, without worrying Myself about ungrateful men, leading a rich happy life full of love. Living for My Mother, ensuring that She did not suffer. Living so that by means of a long apostolate I could take back to God many men, who, if I had died, would forget Me, whereas, if I had been their Master not for three years, but for many many years, would end up by becoming one with My doctrine. His angels would help Me to seduce men. Could I not see that the angels of God were not intervening to assist Me? Later, God would forgive Me seeing the crowds of believers that I would lead back to Him. Also in the desert he had tried to convince Me to tempt God through imprudence. *I defeated him by praying.* The spirit dominated moral temptation.

29 *He showed Me My abandonment by God. He, the Father, no longer loved Me. I was laden with the sins of the world. I disgusted Him.* He was absent and was leaving Me to

Myself. He was surrendering Me to the mockery of a cruel crowd. And He would not even grant Me His divine comfort. I was alone, all alone. In that hour there was but Satan near the Christ. God and men were absent, because they did not love Me. They hated Me or were uninterested. *I prayed to cover the satanic words with My prayers. But My prayer no longer ascended to God.* It fell back on Me, like stones of lapidation and crushed Me under its rubble. My prayer, that had always been for Me like a caress given to the Father, a voice that ascended and was answered by a fatherly caress and word, was now dead, heavy, uttered in vain to a closed Heaven.

I then tasted the bitterness of the bottom of the cup. The flavour of despair. It was what Satan wanted: to lead Me to despair, to make Me a slave of his. I overcame despair and I overcame it only with My power, because I wanted to defeat it. *Only with My strength of a Man.* I was nothing but the Man. And I was nothing but a man no longer helped by God. *When God helps you, it is easy to lift even the world and hold it up like a child's toy.* But when God does not help us any more, even the weight of a flower is a burden to us.

I defeated despair and Satan, its creator, in order to serve God and you, by giving you the Life. But I became acquainted with Death. Not with the physical death of crucifixion – that was not so dreadful – *but with the total conscious Death of the fighter who falls after triumphing*, with a broken heart and blood pouring out of him in the trauma of an effort exceeding all endurance. And I sweated blood. I sweated blood to be faithful to God's will.

30 That is why the angel of My sorrow showed Me the hopes of all those who have been saved through My sacrifice, as a medicine for My dying.

Your names! Each name was a drop of medicine instilled into My veins to invigorate them and make them function, each of them was for Me life coming back, light coming back, strength coming back. During the cruel tortures, to avoid shouting My grief of Man, and in order not to despair of God and say that He was too severe and unjust to His Victim, *I repeated your names to Myself*, I saw you. *Since then I blessed you. Since then I have carried you in My heart.* And when the time came for you to be on the Earth, I leaned out of Heaven to accompany your coming, rejoicing at the thought that a fresh flower of love was born in the world and would have lived for Me.

Oh! My blessed ones! The comfort of the dying Christ! My Mother, the Disciple, the pious Women were present at My death, *and you were there as well.* My dying eyes saw, with the tormented face of My Mother, *also your loving ones*, and they closed thus, happy to be closed because they had saved you, *who deserve the Sacrifice of a God.»*

600. The Various Trials.

16th February 1944.

1 Jesus says:

You have by now become acquainted with all the sorrows that preceded the Passion proper. I will now let you know the sorrows of My actual Passion. Those sorrows that affect your minds more when you meditate on them.

But you meditate very little on them. *Too little.* You do not consider how much you have cost Me and what torture your salvation involved. You complain of a scratch, of knocking against a corner, of a headache, but you do not consider that My body was one big sore, that those sores were envenomed with many things, that things themselves served to torture their Creator, because they tortured the already tormented God-Son, without any respect for Him Who, Father of Creation, had formed them.

But things were not guilty. *The guilty one was still and always man.* Guilty since the day he listened to Satan in the earthly Paradise. The things of Creation, up to that moment, had no thorns, no poison, no cruelty for man, the chosen creature. God had made that man king, He made him in His own image and likeness, and in His fatherly love He did not want things to be insidious to man. Satan laid the snare. In the heart of man first of all, then, with the punishment of sin, it brought spines and thorns

2 So I, the Man had also to suffer things and be grieved not only by people but also by things. The former insulted and tortured Me; the latter served as their weapons.

The hand that God had made for man to distinguish him from brutes, the hand that God had taught man how to use, the hand that God had coordinated with man's mind making it the executor of the commands of the mind, this part, which is so perfect in you and which should have had nothing but caresses for the Son of God, by Whom it had only been caressed and cured, if it was diseased, turned against the Son of God and struck Him with slaps and blows, it armed itself with scourges, it became pincers to tear hair and beard and hammer to drive nails.

Man's feet, which should have run nimbly only to worship the Son of God, were swift to come to arrest Me, to push and drag Me along the streets towards My executioners, and kick Me in such a way as would be unfair even with a restive mule.

Man's mouth, which should have used words, the endowment given only to man among all animals created, to praise and bless the Son of God, filled with curses and lies and hurled them with its slaver at My person.

Man's mind, the proof of his celestial origin, exhausted itself devising tortures of refined rigour.

Man, the whole man made use of himself, in his individual parts, to torture the Son of God. And he called the earth, with its forms, to assist him in torturing. Of the stones of torrents he made projectiles to wound Me; of the branches of trees, clubs to strike Me; of twisted hemp, ropes to drag Me, cutting into My flesh; of thorns, crown of stinging fire for My tired head; of minerals, an exasperating scourge; of a cane, an instrument of torture; of the stones in streets, a snare for the unsteady foot of Him Who was going uphill, dying, to die crucified.

And things of the sky combined with the things of the earth. The cold at dawn for My body already exhausted by the agony in the garden, the wind that irritates wounds, the sun that increases parching thirst and one's temperature and brings flies and dust, that dazzles tired eyes, which fastened hands cannot protect.

And the fibres granted to man to cover his nakedness combine With the things of the sky: with leather, that becomes a scourge, with the wool of a garment that sticks to the sores made by the scourges and causes a rubbing and lacerating torture at each movement.

3 Everything served to torture the Son of God. He, for Whom all things had been created, in the hour in which He was the Victim offered to God, had everything against Him in a hostile manner. Your Jesus, Mary, had no comfort from anything. Everything that exists turned against Me, like fierce vipers, to bite at My flesh and increase My suffering.

This is what you ought to think of when you suffer, and comparing your imperfection with My perfection and My sorrows with yours, you ought to admit that the Father loves you as He did not love Me in that hour, and therefore, you should love Him with your whole selves, *as I loved Him notwithstanding His rigour.*»

22nd – 25th March 1945.

4 The painful journey begins along the stony lane leading from the clearing, where Jesus was arrested, to the Kidron, and thence, along another lane, to town. And gibes and torture begin at once.

Jesus, His wrists and even His waist tied as if He were a dangerous madman, the ends of the ropes entrusted to energumens intoxicated with hatred, is tugged here and there like a rag abandoned to the rage of a pack of puppies. But, if those who behave thus were dogs, they could still be excused. But they are men, although they only have the appearance of men. And it is to give Him greater pain, that they have thought of tying Him with two opposed ropes, one of which serves only to fasten His wrists and it scratches and cuts into them with its coarse friction, and the other, the one round His waist, compresses His elbows against His thorax, and cuts into and oppresses His upper

abdomen, torturing His liver and kidneys, where there is a huge knot and where, now and again, those holding the ends of the ropes, lash Him with them saying: «Gee-up! Away! Trot, donkey!», and they kick Him at the same time, striking the back of the knees of the Tortured One, Who vacillates and does not fall on the ground only because the ropes hold Him up. But that does not prevent Him from knocking against low walls and tree trunks, while He is tugged to the right by the man holding the rope fastening His wrists, and to the left by him holding the rope round His waist, and He falls heavily against the parapet, as a result of a more violent jerk when crossing the little bridge on the Kidron. His bruised mouth is bleeding. Jesus raises His tied hands to wipe away the blood soiling His beard, but does not say anything. He is really the lamb that does not bite its torturer.

Some people in the meantime have gone down to the gravel-bed to get pebbles and stones and from below a shower of stones strikes the easy target. As progress is slow on the narrow insecure little bridge, on which people crowd hindering one another, the stones hit Jesus' head and shoulders. They hit not only Jesus but also His torturers, who react throwing back sticks and the same stones. And it all serves to knock Jesus again on the head and neck. But they are soon on the other side of the bridge and the narrow lane casts shadows on the fray, because the moon, which is beginning to set, does not illuminate the twisted lane and many torches have gone out in the turmoil. But hatred acts as light to see the poor Martyr, Who is exposed to torture also because of His high stature. He is the tallest among all of them, so it is easy to strike Him, to seize Him by the hair compelling Him to throw back His head violently and to fling on it handfuls of filthy stuff, which by force goes into His mouth and eyes, causing nausea and pain.

5 They begin to go through the suburb of Ophel, in which He dispensed so much good and so many caresses. The shouts of the crowd awake people who rush to their doors, and while women utter cries of sorrow and run away struck with terror seeing what is happening, men, who have also been cured and assisted and have received friendly words from Him, men either lower their heads remaining indifferent, simulating carelessness to say the least, or they pass from curiosity to hatred, to sneering, to threatening gestures or they follow the procession to join in torturing Him. Satan is already at work...

A man, a husband who wants to follow Him to insult Him, is grasped by his howling wife, who shouts at him: «Coward! You owe Him your life, you filthy man full of rottenness. Remember that!» But the woman is overwhelmed by the man, who beats her in a beastly manner throwing her on the ground and then runs to join the Martyr, Whose head he strikes with a stone.

Another woman, an old one, tries to obstruct the path of her son who is rushing looking like a hyena and holding a stick to strike Him, and she shouts at him: «As long as I live, you shall not be the killer of your Saviour!» But the poor wretch is struck by her son

with a brutal kick at the groin and she collapses on the ground shouting: «Deicide and matricide! May you be cursed for rending my womb for the second time and for injuring the Messiah!»

6 The scene becomes more and more violent the closer they get to town.

Before arriving at the walls – the Gates are already open, and the Roman soldiers, fully armed, are observing where and how the tumult is evolving, ready to interfere should the prestige of Rome be injured – there is John with Peter. I think they have arrived there by a short cut, which they have taken crossing the Kidron upstream of the bridge, and rushing ahead of the crowd, which is proceeding slowly, so much people are hindering one another. They are in the half-light of an entrance-hall, near a little square before the walls. They have covered their heads with their mantles to conceal their faces. But when Jesus arrives, John drops his mantle and shows his wan upset face in the clear moonlight that still shines there, before the moon sets behind the hill, which is beyond the walls and which I hear is named Tophet by the hired ruffians who arrested Jesus. Peter dares not show his face. But he comes forward to be seen.

Jesus looks at them... and He smiles with infinite kindness. Peter turns round and goes back to his dark corner, covering his eyes with his hands, stooping, aged, already in very poor spirits. John remains bravely where he is, and only when the howling crowd has gone by, he joins Peter, he takes him by the elbow and he guides him as if he were a boy leading his blind father, and they both enter into the town behind the clamouring crowd.

I can hear the stupid, derisory sorrowful exclamations of the Roman soldiers. Some of them curse as they had to get out of their beds because of that «stupid blockhead»; some mock the Jews as being able «to arrest a poor little woman»; some pity the Victim Whom «they have always known to be kind»; and some say: «I would have preferred to die a violent death rather than see Him in those hands. He is a great man. I have two objects of veneration in this world: Him and Rome.»

«By Jove!» exclaims the one of highest rank. «I don't want trouble. I'll go to the ensign. Let him inform who is to be informed. I don't want to be sent to fight against the Germans. These Jews stink and they are snakes and trouble. But life is safe here. And I am about to finish my military service, and near Pompeii I have a girl!...»

Jesus Before Annas

7 I Miss the rest as I follow Jesus, Who proceeds along the street that forms a bend uphill to go to the Temple. But I see and realise that Annas' house, where they want to take Him, is and is not in the labyrinthic aggregation which is the Temple, and covers the whole of the Zion hill. The house is at its extremities, near a series of massive walls, which seem to be the boundaries of the town here, and from this place they stretch along the side of the mountain with porches and yards, until they reach the enclosure of

the Temple proper, that is, where the Israelites go for their several celebrations of cult.

A tall iron door opens in the massive wall. Some voluntary hyenas rush towards it and knock loudly. And as soon as the door is slightly opened, they burst inside, almost knocking down and trampling on the maid-servant who had come to open it, and they open it wide, so that the bawling crowd, with the Prisoner in the middle of them, may go in. And as soon as they are in, they close and bolt the door, probably because they are afraid of Rome or of the followers of the Nazarene. His followers! Where are they?...

They go along the entrance hall and then they pass through a wide yard, a corridor, another porch and another yard, and they drag Jesus up three steps, compelling Him almost to run along a porch built onto the yard, in order to arrive sooner at a richly furnished hall, where there is an elderly man wearing the robes of a priest.

«May God comfort you, Annas» says he who seems to be the officer, if the rascal who has been in charge of those brigands can be called so. «Here is the culprit. I entrust Him to your holiness, so that Israel may be cleansed of the sin.»

«May God bless you for your sagacity and your faith.»

Fine sagacity! Jesus' voice had been enough to make them drop to the ground at Gethsemane.

8 «Who are You?»

«Jesus of Nazareth, the Rabbi, the Christ. And you know Me. I have not acted in darkness.»

«No, not in darkness. But You have led the crowds astray with obscure doctrines. And it is the Temple's right and duty to protect the souls of the children of Abraham.»

«The souls! Priest of Israel, can you say that you have suffered for the soul of the least or greatest person of this people?»

«And what about You? What have You done that may be called suffering?»

«What have I done? Why do you ask Me? The whole of Israel speaks about Me. From the holy city to the poorest village, even stones speak to say what I have done. I have given sight to blind people: the sight of their eyes and of their hearts. I have opened the ears of deaf people: to the voices of the Earth and of Heaven. I have made cripples and paralytics walk, so that they might begin marching from the flesh towards God and then proceed with their spirits. I have cleansed lepers of the leprosy pointed out by the Mosaic Law and of that which makes man polluted in the eyes of God: sin. I have raised the dead, but I do not say that it is a great deed to call a body back to life, but it is a great thing to redeem a sinner, and I have done that. I have helped the poor, teaching

greedy and rich Hebrews the holy precept of love for our neighbour and, remaining poor, notwithstanding that a stream of gold passed through My hands, I have wiped more tears by Myself than all of you, who possess riches. And, finally, I have given a wealth that has no name: the knowledge of the Law, the knowledge of God, the certainty that we are all equal and that in the holy eyes of the Father tears and crimes are the same, whether they are shed or committed by the Tetrarch and by the Pontiff, or by the beggar and the leper who dies on a cart-road. That is what I have done. Nothing else.»

9 «Do You realise that You are accusing Yourself? You say: the leprosy that makes one polluted in the eyes of God and is not pointed out by Moses. You are insulting Moses and *are insinuating that there are some lacunae in his Law...*»

«Not his: God's. *It is so.* More than leprosy, which is a misfortune of the flesh and comes to an end, *I declare grave*, and it is so, *sin*, which is an eternal misfortune of the spirit.»

«Do You dare say that You can remit sins? How can You do it?»

«If with a little lustral water and the sacrifice of a ram it is lawful and credible to cancel a sin, expiate it and be cleansed of it, *why will My tears, My Blood and My will not be able to do so?*»

«But You are not dead. So where is the Blood?»

«I am not yet dead. *But I shall be, because it is written.* In Heaven before Zion existed, before Moses existed, before Jacob existed, before Abraham existed, since the king of Evil gnawed at the heart of man and poisoned it in him and in his children. *It is written on the Earth in the Book that contains the voices of the prophets.* It is written in hearts. In yours, in Caiaphas', in the hearts of the members of the Sanhedrin who do not, no, those hearts do not forgive Me for being good. *I have absolved anticipating through My Blood. I will now accomplish absolution with a purifying bath in it.*»

«You say that we are greedy and we ignore the precept of love...»

«Is it perhaps not true? Why are you killing Me? *Because you are afraid that I may dethrone you.* Oh! be not afraid. My Kingdom is not of this world. I leave you the masters of all power. The Eternal knows when to utter the “Enough” that will make You drop thunder-struck...»

«Like Doras, eh?»

«He died of a fit of anger. *Not because he was struck by heavenly lightning.* God was waiting on the other side to strike him.»

«And You are repeating that to me? A relative of his? How dare You?»

«I am the Truth. *And the Truth is never cowardly.*»

«Proud and foolish!»

«No: *sincere*. You accuse Me of offending you. But do you all not hate? You hate one another. And now your hatred for Me unites you. But tomorrow, when you have killed Me, you will hate one another once again, and more fiercely, and will live with this hyena behind your backs and this snake in your hearts. *I have taught love. For the world's sake. I taught people not to be greedy, to have mercy.* **10** *Of what do you accuse Me?»*

«Of preaching a new doctrine.»

«O priest! Israel is swarming with new doctrines: the Essenes have theirs, the Sadochites and the Pharisees have theirs; everybody has his secret one, which for one is named pleasure, for another one gold, for another one power; and everybody has his idol. *Not I.* I have resumed the down-trodden Law of My Father, of the Eternal God, and *I have gone back to repeating the ten commandments of the Decalogue in a simple way*, talking Myself hoarse to make them enter the hearts that no longer knew them.»

«Horror! Blasphemy! How dare You say this to me, a priest? Has Israel no Temple? Are we like the exiles in Babylon? Reply to me.»

«That is what you are, and even more. There is a Temple. Yes. A building. *But God is not in it.* He has fled before the abomination that is in His house. *But why ask Me so many questions, since My death has already been decided?»*

«We are not murderers. We kill if we have the right to do so for an evident fault. **11** But I want to save You. Tell me, and I will save You. Where are Your disciples? If You hand them over to me, I will let You go free. The names of all of them, and the secret ones more than the known ones. Tell me: is Nicodemus one of Yours? And Joseph? And Gamaliel? And Eleazar? And... But with regard to this one, I already know... It is not necessary. Speak. Speak up. You know that I can kill You and save You. I am powerful.»

«You are filth. I leave to filth the business of the informer. I am Light.»

A bravo lands a blow in His face.

«I am Light. Light and Truth. I have spoken openly to the world, I have taught in synagogues and in the Temple, where the Judaeans meet, and I have said nothing secretly. I repeat it. Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard what I have said. They know.»

Another bravo gives Him a slap in the face shouting: «Is that how you reply to the High Priest?»

«I am speaking to Annas. Caiaphas is the Pontiff. And I am speaking with the respect

due to the old man. But if you think that I have said something wrong, prove it to Me. If not, why do you strike Me?»

«Leave Him alone. I am going to Caiaphas. Keep Him here until I tell you otherwise. And make sure He does not speak to anybody.» Annas goes out.

Jesus does not speak. Not even to John, who dares to stay at the door defying the crowd of hired ruffians. But Jesus, without saying a word, must have given him an order, because John, after a sorrowful glance, goes away and I lose sight of him.

Jesus Before Caiaphas

12 Jesus remains with the torturers. Blows with ropes, spittle, insults, kicks, the tearing of His hair, is what is left for Him, until a servant comes to say that the Prisoner is to be taken to Caiaphas' house.

And Jesus, still tied and ill-treated, goes out again under the porch, walks along it as far as a lobby, and then passes through a yard in which many people are warming themselves near a fire, because the night has turned cold and windy in the early hours of the Friday. Peter and John are also there, mingled among the hostile crowd. And they must be really brave to stay there... Jesus looks at them and a faint smile appears on His lips already swollen because of the blows received.

A long walk across porches, halls, yards and corridors. But what kind of houses did these people of the Temple have?

But the crowd does not go into the enclosure of the pontiff's house. It is pushed back into Anna's entrance-hall. Jesus proceeds alone, among bravoes and priests. He goes into a large hall that seems to lose its rectangular shape because of the many seats placed in horse-shoe shape along three sides, leaving an empty space in the middle, beyond which there are two or three seats placed on platforms.

When Jesus is on the point of going in, rabbi Gamaliel arrives at the same time, and the guards give the Prisoner a strong pull, so that He may give way to the rabbi of Israel. But the latter, as stiff as a statue, with a stately attitude slackens his pace and, hardly moving his lips, without looking at anyone, he asks: «Who are You? Tell me.» And Jesus kindly replies: «Read the prophets and you will have the answer. They contain the first sign. The other one will come.»

Gamaliel gathers his mantle and goes in. Jesus enters behind him. While Gamaliel goes to one of the seats, Jesus is dragged to the middle of the hall, in front of the Pontiff: the true figure of a criminal. And they wait until all the members of the Sanhedrin arrive.

13 Then the session begins. But Caiaphas notices that two or three seats are vacant and he asks: «Where is Eleazar? And where is John?»

A young man, a scribe I think, stands up, he bows and says: «They refused to come. Here is their letter.»

«Keep it and make a note of it. They will answer for that. What have the holy members of this Council to say with regard to this man?»

«I will tell you. He infringed the Sabbath in my house. God bears witness that I am not lying. Ishmael ben Fabi never lies.»

«Is it true, defendant?»

Jesus is silent.

«I have seen him live with well-known prostitutes. Feigning He was a prophet, He turned His haunt into a brothel, and with heathen women of all people. Sadoc, Callascebona and Nahum Annas' trustee, were with me. Am I telling the truth, Sadoc and Callascebona? Give me the lie, if I deserve it.»

«It is true. Quite true.»

«What do You say?»

Jesus is silent.

«He missed no opportunity to deride us and have us ridiculed, Common people no longer love us through His fault.»

«Do You hear them? You have profaned the holy members.»

Jesus is silent.

«This man is possessed. After He returned from Egypt He has practised black magic.»

«How can you prove it?»

«On my faith and on the tables of the Law.»

«A grave charge. Prove Your innocence.»

Jesus is silent.

«Your ministry is illegal, You know that. And liable to death. Speak up.»

«This session of ours is illegal. Stand up, Simeon, and let us go» says Gamaliel.

«Rabbi, have you gone mad?»

«I respect formulae. It is not lawful to proceed as we are doing. And I will make a public charge against it.» And rabbi Gamaliel goes out, as stiff as a statue, followed by a man about thirty-five years old, who looks like him.

14 There is a little turmoil and Nicodemus and Joseph take advantage of it to speak in favour of the Martyr.

«Gamaliel is right. The time and the place are illicit, and the charges are not consistent. Can anybody accuse Him of having notoriously despised the Law? I am a friend of His and I swear that I have always found Him to be respectful of the Law» says Nicodemus.

«And I, too. And in order not to assent to a crime, I cover my head, not for Him, but for us, and I go out.» And Joseph is about to come down from his seat and go out.

But Caiaphas shouts: «Ah! Is that what you say? Then let the sworn witnesses come. And listen to them. Then you will go away.»

Then two jail-bird figures come in. Elusive looks, cruel sneers, sly ways.

«Speak up.»

«It is not lawful to listen to both at the same time» shouts Joseph.

«I am the High Priest. I give orders. Be silent!»

Joseph strikes the table with his fist and says: «May the fire of Heaven fall upon you! As from this moment be aware that Joseph the Elder is an enemy of the Sanhedrin and a friend of the Christ. And I am going at once to inform the Praetor that a man is being sentenced to death here without the approval of Rome!» and he rushes out giving a violent push to a young thin scribe who would like to hold him back.

Nicodemus goes out more calmly without saying a word. And when going out he passes in front of Jesus and looks at Him...

Another turmoil. They are afraid of Rome. And Jesus is always the expiating victim.

«See, all this is happening through Your fault, You corrupter of the best Judaeans. You have prostituted them.»

Jesus is silent.

15 «Let the witnesses speak» shouts Caiaphas.

«Yes, He was making use of the... the... We knew... What is the name of that thing?»

«The tetragram, perhaps?»

«That's it! You have said it! He evoked the dead. He taught people to rebel against the Sabbath and to desecrate the altar. We swear it. He said that He wanted to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days with the assistance of demons.»

«No. He said: it will not be built by man.»

Caiaphas comes down from his seat and approaches Jesus. Small, excessively fat, ugly, he looks like a huge toad close to a flower. Because Jesus, although wounded, bruised, dirty and unkempt, is still so handsome and solemn. «Are You not replying? What horrible charges they are bringing against You! Speak, to clear Yourself of such shame.»

But Jesus is silent. He looks at him but does not speak.

«Reply to me, then. I am Your Pontiff. I adjure You by the living God. Tell me: are You the Christ, the Son of God?»

«You have said it. I am. And you will see the Son of man, sitting on the right hand of the power of the Father, come on the clouds of the sky. Moreover, why do you ask Me? I have spoken in public for three years. I have not said anything secretly. Ask those who have heard Me. They will tell you what I have said and what I have done.»

One of the soldiers who is holding Him, strikes His mouth, making it bleed once again, and he shouts: «Is that how you reply, O satan, to the High Pontiff?»

And Jesus replies meekly to this one as He had replied to the previous one: «If I have spoken the truth, why do you strike Me? If I have said something wrong, why do you not tell Me where I am wrong? I tell you once again: *I am the Christ, the Son of God. I cannot lie. I am the High Priest, the Eternal Priest.* And I alone wear the true Rational, on which it is written: Doctrine and Truth. And I am faithful to both, even to death, ignominious in the eyes of the world, holy in the eyes of God, and until the blissful Resurrection. *I am the Anointed One. Pontiff and King I am.* And I am about to take My sceptre and with it, as with a winnowing-fan, I will clear the threshing-floor. This Temple will be destroyed and it will rise again, new and holy. Because this one is corrupt and God has abandoned it to its destiny.»

«Blasphemer!» they all shout in chorus.

«Will You do that in three days, You silly possessed man?»

«Not this one. *But Mine will rise again, the Temple of the true, living, holy, three times holy God.*»

«Anathema!» they howl again in chorus.

Caiaphas raises his clucking voice, he tears his linen garments with affected horror, and he says: «What else have we to hear from witnesses? He has blasphemed. So what shall we do?»

And all in chorus: «He deserves to die.» And with disdainful scandalised gestures they go out of the hall, leaving Jesus to the mercy of the bravoes and of the mob of false witnesses, who with slaps, blows, spitting, blinding His eyes with a rag and then pulling

His hair violently, drive Him here and there with His hands tied, so that He knocks against tables, chairs and walls, while they ask Him: «Who hit You? Guess.» And several times they trip Him and make Him fall flat on His face, and they split their sides with laughter seeing how hardly able He is to stand up again, His hands being tied.

16 Some hours go by so and the tired torturers decide to have a little rest. They take Jesus to a closet, making Him go through many yards among the insults of the mob already numerous in the enclosure of the Pontiff's house.

Jesus arrives in the courtyard where there is Peter near a fire. And He looks at him. But Peter escapes His notice. John is no longer there. I cannot see him. I think he has gone away with Nicodemus...

Dawn is breaking and the sky looks greenish. An order is given: the Prisoner is to be taken back to the Council Hall for a more legal trial. It is just the moment in which Peter for the third time denies that he knows the Christ, when the latter is passing by, already marked by sufferings. And, in the greenish dawn light, His bruises look even more dreadful on His wan face, and His eyes more sunken and glassy: a Jesus made dull by the sorrow of the world...

A derisory sarcastic mischievous cock-crowing rends the air just beginning to stir at dawn. And at this moment of deep silence brought about by the appearance of the Christ, only Peter's harsh voice is heard to say: «I swear it, woman, I do not know Him»: a resolute decided statement, to which replies at once, like a sneer, the cheeky crowing of the cockerel.

Peter gives a start. He turns round to run away and he finds himself facing Jesus, Who looks at him with infinite compassion, with such sad deep sorrow that breaks my heart, as if after that I should see my Jesus vanish forever. Peter sobs and he goes out staggering as if he were drunk. He runs away behind two servants, who go out into the street, and he disappears down the semi-dark street.

17 Jesus is taken back into the hall. In chorus they repeat the captious question: «In the name of the true God, tell us: are You the Christ?» And when they receive the same reply as the previous one, they sentence Him to death and they give orders to take Jesus to Pilate.

Jesus, escorted by all His enemies, except Annas and Caiaphas, goes out, passing once again through those courts of the Temple, in which so many times He had spoken, helped and cured people, and through the embattled enclosure He goes into the streets of the town, and more dragged than led, He descends towards the town, which is turning pinkish in the first announcement of dawn.

I think that for the only purpose of torturing Him longer, they make Him take a long tedious walk round Jerusalem, passing on purpose by the markets, the stabling, the

hostels full of people at Passover. And both the waste vegetables in market places, and the excrement of animals in stables, become projectiles for the Innocent, Whose face shows larger and larger bruises and small bleeding cuts, and is veiled by the various dirty things spread over it. His hair, already weighed down and slightly stretched by blood sweat, looks duller and hangs uncombed, strewn with bits of straw and dirt, falling over His eyes, because they ruffle it to veil His face.

The people at market places, buyers and vendors, leave everything to follow the Poor Wretch, but not out of love. Grooms and inn-servants come out in groups, deaf to the calling and orders of their mistresses, who, to tell the truth, like almost all the other women, are, if not all against the insults, at least indifferent to the tumult, and they withdraw grumbling at being left alone with so many people to serve.

So the howling train grows bigger every moment and minds and features seem to change nature, through a sudden epidemic, as the former become the minds of criminals, and the latter masks of ferocity in faces green with hatred or red with anger; hands become claws and mouths take the shape and howling of wolves, and eyes look sinister, red, squinted like those of madmen. Jesus only is always the same, although by now He is covered with dirt spread all over His body, and His features are disfigured by bruises and swellings.

18 At an archivolt that narrows the street like a ring, while everything becomes obstructed and slows down, a cry rends the air: «Jesus!» It is Elias, the shepherd, who tries to make his way by swinging a heavy club. Old, powerful, menacing and strong, he almost succeeds in approaching the Master. But the crowd, defeated by the first assault, closes its ranks and separates, drives back and overwhelms the solitary disciple who struggles against a whole crowd. «Master!» he shouts, while the vortex of the crowd absorbs and rejects him.

«Go!... My Mother... I bless you...»

And the procession passes through the narrow spot. And like water that finds an open space after a dam, it pours uproariously into a wide avenue, built above the hollow between two hills, with wonderful buildings of wealthy people at its ends.

I see the Temple once again on the top of its hill, and I realise that the vicious circle they made the Convict go round, to expose Him to the ridicule of the whole town and allow everybody to insult Him, while the insulters increase at each step, is coming to its end by going back to where it started.

19 A horse-man comes out of a building at a gallop. The purple caparison on the white Arab horse and the magnificence of its appearance, his sword brandished naked and landed with its flat or edge on backs and heads that begin to bleed, make him look like an archangel. When in a caracole, in a prance of the horse that curvets, using its hooves as a weapon to defend itself and its master, and as the best means to make its way

through the crowd, it makes the rider's purple and gold veil fall from his head, where it was held tight by a gold strip, I recognise Manaen.

«Back!» he shouts. «How dare you disturb the Tetrarch's rest?» But that is only an excuse to justify his intervention and attempt to reach Jesus. «This man... let me see Him... Stand aside, or I will call the guards...»

The people, because of the hail of blows with the flat of the sword, of the kicks of the horse and of the threats of the horse-man, open out and Manaen can reach the group of Jesus and of the Temple guards who are holding Him.

«Go away! The Tetrarch is more important than you are, you filthy servants. Back. I want to speak to Him» and he is successful by charging the most ruthless jailor with his sword. «Master!...»

«Thank you. But go away! And may God comfort you!» And, as best He can with His tied hands, He makes a gesture of blessing.

The crowds hiss from afar and, as soon as they see Manaen withdraw, they take vengeance for being driven back by throwing a hail of stones and rubbish on the Convict.

20 Along the avenue, which is uphill and already warm in the sunshine, they go towards the Antonia Tower, the mass of which is already visible in the distance.

The shrill cry of a woman rends the air: «Oh! my Saviour! My life for His, O Eternal!»

Jesus turns His head round and on the high flowery loggia surrounding a beautiful house He sees Johanna of Chuza, among maids and servants and with little Mary and Matthias around her, raise her arms towards the sky. But Heaven does not listen to prayers today! Jesus raises His arms and makes a gesture of farewell blessing.

«Death! Death to the blasphemer, the corrupter, the devil! Death to His friends» and hisses and stones are slung towards the high terrace. I do not know whether anybody is injured. I hear a very shrill cry and then I see the group break up and disappear.

And on, on, going up... Jerusalem displays her houses in the sunshine, empty, emptied by the hatred that drives the whole town, with its real inhabitants and the temporary ones who have come here for the Passover, against a defenceless man.

21 Some Roman soldiers, a whole maniple, run out from the Antonia with their lances pointed at the mob, who disperse shouting. In the middle of the street there is Jesus left with the guards, the chief of the priests, of the scribes and of the elders of the people.

«This man? This sedition? You will answer to Rome for this» says a centurion haughtily.

«He is liable to death according to our law.»

«And since when has the “*jus gladii et sanguinis*” been given back to you?» asks once again the senior centurion, a real Roman, with a severe face and a cheek marked by a deep scar. And he speaks with the contempt and disgust with which he would speak to lousy galley-slaves.

«We are aware that we do not have that right. We are loyal subjects of Rome...»

«Ha! Ha! Ha! Listen to them, Longinus. Loyal! Subjects! Rotters! I would reward you with the arrows of my archers.»

«Too noble a death! The backs of mules want nothing but the lash!...» replies Longinus with ironic coolness.

The chief priests, scribes and elders are foaming with poison. But they want to attain their object and are silent, they swallow the insult without showing that they have understood it, and bowing to the two officers, they ask that Jesus be led to Pontius Pilate so that «he may judge and condemn with the well-known honest justice of Rome.»

«Ha! Ha! Listen to them! We have become wiser than Minerva... Here! Give Him to us! And march ahead of us! One never knows. You are stinking jackals. It is dangerous to have you behind our backs. Go on!»

«We cannot.»

«Why not? When one accuses one must be before the judge with the defendant. That is the rule of Rome.»

«The house of a heathen is unclean in our eyes, and we are already purified for Passover.»

«Oh! poor little things! they become contaminated by coming in!... And the murder of the only Hebrew Who is a man, and not a jackal and a reptile like you, does that not pollute you? All right. Then remain where you are. Not one step forward or you will be pierced by the spears. Let a decury stand round the Defendant. The others against this rabble that smells of badly washed billy-goat.»

Jesus Before Pontius Pilate

22 Jesus enters into the Praetorium in the middle of the ten soldiers who are armed with lances and form a square of halberds around His person. The two centurions go on.

While Jesus stops in a large entrance-hall, beyond which there is a court-yard that can be seen indistinctly behind a curtain moved by the wind, they disappear behind a door.

They come back in with the Governor, who is wearing a snowwhite toga with a scarlet mantle on top of it. Perhaps that is how they dressed when representing Rome official-

ly. He comes in lazily, with a skeptical smile on his shaven face, he rubs some leaves of lemon-scented verbena and smells them voluptuously. He goes to a sun-dial and comes back after looking at it. He throws some grains of incense into the brazier placed at the feet of a deity. He has citron water brought to him and he gargles his throat. He gazes at his hair completely wavy in a mirror of highly polished metal. He seems to have forgotten the Convict, Who is awaiting his approval to be killed. He would make even stones fly into a rage.

Since the front of the hall is completely open and is raised by three high steps with respect to the lobby, which opens onto the street and is three more steps higher than it, the Jews can see everything very well and they are fretting and fuming. But they dare not rebel as they fear the lances and javelins.

At last, after going round and round the large hall, Pilate goes straight towards Jesus, he looks at Him and asks the two centurions: «This one?»

«Yes, this man.»

«Let His accusers come» and he goes and sits on the chair placed on the platform. Above his head the insignia of Rome interlace with the golden eagles and their powerful initials.

«They cannot come. They become contaminated.»

«Phew! Better so. We shall save streams of essences to remove their goatish smell from this place. Make them come nearer, at least. Down here. And make sure they do not come in, as they do not wish to do so. This man could be a pretext for a sedition.»

A soldier departs to take the order of the Roman Procurator. The others draw up in front of the entrance-hall at regular distances, as handsome as nine statues of heroes.

23 The chief priests, scribes and elders come forward and they bow servilely and stop in the little square which is before the Praetorium, beyond the three steps of the lobby.

«Speak up and be quick. You are already at fault for disturbing the peace of the night and having the Gates opened with violence. But I will have that verified. And principals and mandataries will answer for disobeying the ordinance.» Pilate has gone towards them, remaining in the hall.

«We have come to submit our verdict on this man to Rome, whose divine emperor you represent.»

«What charges do you bring against Him? He seems innocent to me...»

«If He were not an evil-doer, we would not have brought Him to you.» And in their eagerness to accuse Him they come forward.

«Repel this populace. Six steps beyond the three steps in the square. The two centuries to arms!»

The soldiers obey promptly, one hundred draw up on the top outer step with their backs to the entrance-hall, and one hundred in the little square, onto which the main door of Pilate's abode opens. I said main door, I should say huge portal or triumphal arch, because it is a very wide opening delimited by a gate, now wide open, which admits into the hall through the long corridor of the lobby at least six metres wide, so that what takes place in the raised hall is clearly visible. Beyond the wide lobby one can see the beastly faces of the Jews look threateningly and diabolically towards the inside, beyond the armed barrier that, side by side, presents two hundred sharp-pointed spears to the chicken-hearted killers.

«I ask you once again, which charge are you bringing against this man?»

«He has committed crimes against the Law of our forefathers.»

«And have you come to bother me about that? Take him and judge Him according to your laws.»

«We cannot sentence anybody to death. We are not learned. Jewish jurisprudence is a mentally deficient child as compared with the perfect Law of Rome. As ignorant people and subjects of Rome, the mistress, we are in need...»

«Since when have you become honey and butter?... But you have spoken the truth, o masters of falsehood! You are in need of Rome! Yes. To get rid of this man Who causes trouble to you. I see.» And Pilate laughs, looking at the clear sky that is framed like a rectangular sheet of dark turquoise among the marble snow-white walls of the hall. «Tell me: which crimes has He committed against your laws?»

«We have found out that He was causing disturbances in our country and was preventing people from paying the tribute to Caesar, saying that He is the Christ, the king of the Jews.»

24 Pilate goes back to Jesus, Who is in the middle of the hall, left there by the soldiers, tied but without escort, so obvious is His meekness. And he asks Him: «Are You the king of the Jews?»

«Are you asking this of your own accord, or through the insinuation of other people?»

«And what do You expect me to care for Your kingdom? Am I a Jew? Your country and its leaders have handed You over to me, that I may judge You. What have You done? I know that You are loyal. Speak. Is it true that You aspire at reigning?»

«My Kingdom does not come from this world. If it were a kingdom of this world, My ministers and my soldiers would have fought to prevent the Jews from arresting Me.

But My Kingdom is not of the Earth. And you know that I do not seek power.»

«That is true. I know. I have been told. But You do not deny that You are a king?»

«You assert it. I am a King. That is why I came into the world: to bear witness to the Truth. Those who are on the side of the Truth listen to My voice.»

«What is the Truth? Are You a philosopher? It does not serve when facing death. Socrates died just the same.»

«But it served him in his lifetime, to live honestly. And also to die well. And to enter into the other life without being called a traitor of civic virtues.»

«By Jove!» Pilate looks at Him for some moments full of admiration. Then he resumes his skeptical sarcasm. He makes a gesture of boredom, turns his back on Him and goes towards the Judaeans. «I find no fault in Him.»

The crowd riots, seized with the panic fear of losing the prey and the spectacle of the capital punishment. And they shout: «He is a rebel!», «A blasphemer», «He encourages libertinism», «He instigates people to rebel», «He refuses respect for Caesar», «He feigns that He is a prophet», «He practises magic», «He is a devil», «He stirs up the people teaching all over in Judaea, where He came from Galilee teaching», «Death to Him!», «Death to Him!»

«Is He a Galilean? Are You a Galilean?» Pilate goes back to Jesus: «Do You hear how they accuse You? Prove Your innocence.» But Jesus is silent.

Pilate is pensive... And he decides: «Let a century take Him to Herod to be judged. He is Herod's subject. I acknowledge the right of the Tetrarch and I assent to his verdict in advance. Tell him. Go.»

25 And Jesus, surrounded like a rascal by one hundred soldiers, passes through the town again and once more He meets Judas Iscariot, whom He had already met near a market. I forgot to mention this before, disgusted as I was with the brawl of the populace. The same merciful glance at the traitor...

It is now more difficult to strike Him with kicks and clubs, but there is no shortage of stones and rubbish and, if the stones hit the Roman helmets and armour resounding without injuries, they do leave marks when they hit Jesus, Who is proceeding with only His tunic on, as He left His mantle at Gethsemane.

When entering Herod's sumptuous palace, He sees Chuza... who cannot look at Him and runs away not to see Him in that state, covering his head with his mantle.

Jesus Before Herod

26 He is now in the hall, in front of Herod. And behind Him, there are the scribes and

Pharisees, who feel at their ease here, and who come in to make their false charges. Only the centurion and four soldiers escort Him towards the Tetrarch.

Herod descends from his seat and walks round Jesus, while listening to the accusations of His enemies. And he smiles and flouts.

He then feigns compassion and respect, which do not upset the Martyr, as his raillery did not perturb Him. «You are great. I know. I enquired about You and I was pleased that Chuza was Your friend and Manaen Your disciple. I... the worries of the State... But how anxious I was to say that You are great... to ask You to forgive me... John's eyes... his voice accuse me and are always before me. You are the saint who cancels the sins of the world. Absolve me, o Christ.»

Jesus is silent.

«I heard that they accuse You of rebelling against Rome. Are You not the promised rod to strike Assur?»

Jesus is silent.

«They told me that You predict the end of the Temple and of Jerusalem. But is the Temple not eternal as a spirit, since it was wanted by God Who is eternal?»

Jesus is silent.

«Are You mad? Have You lost Your power? Is Satan preventing You from speaking? Has he abandoned You?» Herod is laughing now.

27 He then gives an order. And some servants rush in carrying a greyhound, which has a broken leg and is yelping sorrowfully, and a stable-man, who is dull-witted, with a big empty head, a slavering mouth, an abortion, the laughing stock of the servants. The scribes and priests run away, shouting at the sacrilege, when they see the stretcher of the dog.

Herod, false and mocking, explains: «It's Herodias' pet. A gift of Rome. It broke its leg yesterday and she is weeping. Order it to be cured. Work a miracle.»

Jesus looks at him severely and is silent.

«Have I offended You? This one, then. He is a man, although he is little more than a wild beast. Give him intelligence, since You are the Intelligence of the Father... Is that not what You say?» And he laughs offensively.

Another more severe glance of Jesus, Who is still silent.

«This man is too abstinent and is now stunned by scorn. Bring wine and women here. And untie Him.»

They untie His hands. And while a large number of servants bring amphorae and cups, some dancers come in... covered with nothing: a many-coloured linen fringe is the only garment girding their thin waists and hips. Nothing else. As they are Africans they are of bronze complexion and are as agile as young gazelles, and they begin a silent lascivious dance.

Jesus refuses the cups and closes His eyes without speaking. Herod's courtiers laugh at His disdain.

«Take the woman You wish. Live! Learn how to live!...» suggests Herod.

Jesus seems a statue. With folded arms, closed eyes, He does not stir even when the lewd dancers touch Him lightly with their nude bodies.

«Enough. I treated You as God, and You did not act as God. I treated You as a man, and you have not acted as a man. You are mad. A white garment. Clothe Him with it so that Pontius Pilate may know that the Tetrarch took his subject to be mad. Centurion, please tell the Proconsul that Herod humbly presents his respect to him and venerates Rome. Go.»

And Jesus, tied once again, goes out, with a linen tunic reaching down to His knees, on top of His red woollen garment.

28 And they go back to Pilate.

Now, when the century with difficulty squeeze through the crowd, which did not get tired waiting in front of the proconsular building – and it is strange to see so many people in that place and its neighbourhood, while the rest of the town seems to be empty Jesus sees the shepherds in a group and they are all there, that is, Isaac, Jonathan, Levi, Joseph, Elias, Matthias, John, Simeon, Benjamin and Daniel, together with a small group of Galileans, among whom I recognise Alphaeus and Joseph of Alphaeus with two more whom I do not know, but judging by their hair-style, I should say they are Judaeans. And farther away, He sees John, who has slipped into the hall, half-hidden behind a column, with a Roman, who I think is a servant. He smiles at this one and at those... His friends... But what are these few people and Johanna, and Manaen, and Chuza, in the middle of an ocean boiling with hatred?...

29 The centurion salutes Pontius Pilate and reports.

«Here again?! Phew! Cursed be this race! Make the mob come forward and bring the Accused here. Oh! what a nuisance!»

He goes towards the crowd, stopping again in the middle of the hall.

«Jews, listen. You have brought me this man as an instigator of the people. I have examined Him in your presence and I have not found in Him any of the crimes of which

you accuse Him. Herod did not find more than I did. And he has sent Him back to us. He does not deserve death. Rome has spoken. But, in order not to displease you, depriving you of the amusement, I will give you Barabbas. And I will order Him to be given forty lashes. That is enough.»

«No, no! Not Barabbas! Not Barabbas! Death to Jesus! And a dreadful death! Release Barabbas and condemn the Nazarene to death.»

«But listen! I said I will have Him lashed. Is that not enough? I will have Him scourged, then! It is terrible, you know? He may die through it. What wrong has He done? I can find no fault in Him. And I will set Him free.»

«Crucify Him! Crucify Him! Death to Him! You are the protector of criminals! Heathen! You are Satan, too!»

The crowd advances and the first formation of soldiers wavers, as they cannot make use of their lances. But the second line, descending one step, swing their lances and free their companions.

«Let Him be scourged» Pilate orders a centurion.

«How many blows?»

«As many as you like... In any case the matter is over. And I am bored. Go.»

The Scourging at the Pillar

30 Jesus is led by four soldiers to the court-yard beyond the hall. In the middle of that court-yard, which is all paved with coloured marbles, there is a high column like the one in the porch. At about three metres from the floor it has an iron bar protruding at least a metre and ending with a ring, to which Jesus is tied, with His hands joined above His head, after He has been undressed. He has on only short linen drawers and sandals. His hands tied at His wrists are raised up as far as the ring, so that, although tall, He rests only the tips of His toes on the floor... And even that position is a torture.

I have read, I do not know where, that the column was low and that Jesus was bent over it. That may be. I say what I see.

Behind Him stands one who looks like an executioner, with a clear Jewish profile; in front of Him, another man, looking like the previous one. They are armed with scourges, made of seven leather strips tied to a handle and ending with small lead hammers. They begin to strike Him rhythmically, as if they were practising. One in front and one behind, so that Jesus' trunk is in a whirl of lashes and scourges. The four soldiers, to whom He has been handed, are indifferent and are playing dice with other three soldiers who have just arrived. And the voices of the players follow the rhythm of the sound of the scourges, which hiss like snakes and then resound like stones striking

the stretched skin of a drum. They beat the poor body, which is so slender and as white as old ivory, and then becomes covered with stripes that at first are a brighter and brighter pink shade, then violet, then it displays blue swellings full of blood, then the skin breaks letting blood flow from all sides. They redouble their cruelty on His thorax and abdomen, but there is no shortage of blows given to His legs, arms and even to His head, so that no fragment of His skin may be left without pain.

And not a moan... If He were not held up by the rope, He would fall. But He does not fall and does not groan. Only His head hangs over His chest, after so many blows, as if He had fainted.

«Hey! Stop! He must be alive when He is killed» shouts a soldier scoffingly.

The two executioners stop and wipe their perspiration.

«We are exhausted» they say. «Give us our pay, so that we may have a refreshing drink...»

«I would give you the gallows! But here you are...» and a decurion throws a large coin to each executioner.

«You have done a good job. He looks like a mosaic. Titus, do you mean that this man was really Alexander's love? We must let him know, so that he may mourn over His death. Let us untie Him.»

31 They untie Him, and Jesus falls on the floor like a dead body. They leave Him there, pushing Him now and again with their feet shod with caligae, to see whether He moans. But He is silent.

«Is He dead? Is it possible? He is a young man and a handicraftsman, so I am told... and He looks like a delicate lady.»

«I will take care of Him» says a soldier. And he sits Him with His back against the column. Clots of blood appear where He was... He then goes towards a fountain gurgling under the porch, he fills a tub with water and pours it on Jesus' head and body. «That's it! Water is good for flowers.»

Jesus draws a deep sigh and tries to stand up, but His eyes are still closed.

«Oh! good. Come on, darling! Your dame is waiting for You!...»

But Jesus in vain presses His hands against the floor trying to stand up.

«Come on! Quick! Are You weak? Here is some refreshment» says another soldier sneeringly. And with the shaft of his halberd he delivers a blow to Jesus' face striking it between the right cheekbone and the nose, that begins to bleed.

Jesus opens His eyes and looks round. His eyes are veiled... He stares at the soldier

who struck Him, wipes the blood with His hand, and then, with much effort, He stands up.

«Get dressed. It is immodest to stay like that. You lewd man!» They all laugh standing around Him.

And He obeys without speaking. But when He bends – and He alone knows how much He suffers when stooping to the ground, contused as He is, as His wounds open even more when the skin is stretched, and more are formed as the blisters burst – a soldier gives a kick to His garments and scatters them, and every time Jesus reaches them, staggering to where they lie, a soldier pushes them away or throws them in a different direction. And Jesus, suffering bitterly, goes after them without uttering a word, while the soldiers deride Him obscenely.

He can dress Himself again at last. And He can put on also the white tunic, which was left in a corner and is still clean. He seems to wish to conceal His poor red garment, which only yesterday was so beautiful and now is filthy with rubbish and stained with the blood sweated at Gethsemane. Furthermore, before putting on His short vest, He dries His wet face with it, cleaning it of dust and spittles. And the poor holy face looks clean, marked only by bruises and small cuts. And He tidies His hair which is hanging ruffled, and His beard, out of an inborn need to be personally tidy.

Then He squats in the sunshine. Because my Jesus is shivering... Fever begins to torture Him with its cold shivers. And He feels weak because of the blood He has lost, of fasting and walking so much.

The Crowning with Thorns

32 They tie His hands once again. And the rope begins to cut into His wrists, where the excoriated skin has left a mark like a red bracelet.

«And now? What shall we do with Him? I am bored!»

«Wait. The Jews want a king. Now we will give them one. Him...» says a soldier.

And he runs out to a court that is in the back, from which he comes back with a bunch of branches of wild hawthorn, still flexible, because springtime keeps the branches relatively tender, whilst the long sharp thorns are hard. With a dagger they remove leaves and buds, they bend the branches forming a circle and they place them on His poor head. But the cruel crown falls down on His neck.

«It does not fit. Make it narrower. Take it off.»

They take it off and scratch His cheeks, risking to blind Him, and they tear off His hair in doing so. They make it smaller. Now it is too small, and although they press it down, driving the thorns into His head, it threatens to fall. They take it off once again, tearing

more of His hair. They adjust it again. It now fits. At the front there are three thorny cords. At the back, where the ends of the three branches interweave, there is a real knot of thorns that penetrate into the nape of His neck.

«Do You see how well You look? Natural bronze and real rubies. Look at Yourself, o king, in my cuirass» says the inventor of the torture scoffingly.

«A crown is not sufficient to make a king. Purple and sceptre are required. In the stable there is a cane and in the sewer there is a red chlamys. Get them, Cornelius.»

And once they have them, they put the dirty red rag on Jesus, shoulders, and before putting the cane in His hands, they beat His head with it, bowing and greeting: «Hail, king of the Jews» and they roar with laughter.

Jesus does not react. He lets them sit Him on the «throne»: a tub turned upside-down, certainly used to water horses, He lets them strike and scoff at Him, without ever uttering a word. He only looks at them, casting glances of such kindness and such atrocious sorrow that I cannot bear them without feeling heart-broken.

Ecce Homo

33 The soldiers stop sneering at Him only when the harsh voice of a superior orders them to take the guilty prisoner to Pilate. Guilty! Of what?

Jesus is taken back again to the entrance-hall, which is now covered with a precious velarium because of the sun. He still has the crown, the chlamys and the cane.

«Come forward, that I may show You to the people.»

Jesus, although exhausted, straightens Himself up with dignity. Oh! He really is a king!

«Listen, Jews. Here is the man. I have punished Him. But now let Him go.»

«No, no! We want to see Him. Out! That we may see the blasphemer!»

«Bring Him out. And make sure they do not take Him.»

And as Jesus goes out into the lobby and is visible in the square formed by the soldiers, Pontius Pilate points to Him with his hand saying: «Here is the Man. Your King. Is that still not sufficient?»

The sun in a sultry day is shining almost perpendicular, because it is between the third and the sixth hour and it lights up and makes eyes and faces conspicuous: are those people human beings? No: they are rabid hyenas. They shout, they shake their fists, they want His death...

Jesus is holding Himself upright. And I assure you that He never had such a noble bearing as now. Not even when He performed the most wonderful miracles. Nobility of

sorrow, but so divine as to suffice to mark Him with the name of God. But, in order to say that Name, it is necessary to be at least men. And Jerusalem has no men today. But only demons.

Jesus looks around at the crowd and in the sea of rancorous faces he looks for and finds some friendly faces. How many? Less than twenty friends among thousands of enemies... And He lowers His head, struck by such abandonment. A tear falls... and another... and another... The sight of His tears does not engender compassion, but gives rise to fiercer hatred.

34 He is taken back to the hall.

«So? Let Him go. It is justice.»

«No. Death to Him. Crucify Him.»

«I will give you Barabbas.»

«No. The Christ!»

«In that case, take Him yourselves. And crucify Him by yourselves, because I find no fault in Him to do that.»

«He said that He is the Son of God. Our Law inflicts death on whoever is guilty of such blasphemy.»

Pilate becomes pensive. He goes back in and sits on his little throne. He rests his forehead in his hand and his elbow on his knee and scrutinises Jesus. «Come near me» he says.

Jesus goes to the foot of the platform.

«Is it true? Tell me.»

Jesus is silent.

«Where do You come from? Who is God?»

«He is the All.»

«And then? What does the All mean? What is the All for one who is dying? You are mad... God does not exist. I do.»

Jesus is silent. He has let the great word drop and then He envelops Himself in silence.

35 «Pontius, Claudia Procula's freedwoman asks permission to come in. She has a note for you.»

«Domine! Women also now! Let her come in.»

A Roman woman comes in and kneels down handing a waxed tablet. It must be the one with which Procula begs her husband not to condemn Jesus. The woman withdraws backwards, while Pilate reads.

«I am advised to avoid Your being put to death. Is it true that You are more than a haruspex? You frighten me.»

Jesus is silent.

«Do You not know that I have the power to free You or to crucify You?»

«You would have no power, if it were not given to you from Above. Therefore, he who handed Me over to you is more guilty than you are.»

«Who is it? Your God? I fear...» Jesus is silent.

Pilate is on tenterhooks. He would like and he would not like to... He is afraid of God's punishment, he is afraid of Rome, he fears Judaeen revenges. For a moment he overcomes the fear of God. He goes to the front of the hall and in a thundering voice he shouts: «He is not guilty.»

«If you say so, you are no friend of Caesar's. He who proclaims himself king, is his enemy. You want to free the Nazarene. We will inform Caesar of that.»

Pilate is seized with the fear of man.

«So, you want Him dead? Let it be so. But the blood of this just man is not to stain my hands» and having a basin brought to him, he washes his hands in the presence of the people who appear to be seized with frenzy while they shout: «His blood on us. His blood be on us and on our children. We are not afraid of Him. Crucify Him! Crucify Him!»

36 Pontius Pilate goes back to his little throne and he calls the centurion Longinus and a slave. He orders the slave to bring him a board on which he places a notice and has the words written on it: «Jesus Nazarene, King of the Jews». And he shows it to the people.

«No. Not so. Not king of the Jews. But that He said that He is king of the Jews.» Many of them shout so.

«What I have written, I have written» says Pilate severely, and standing upright, he stretches his hand forward with its palm turned down, and he orders: «Let Him go to the cross. Soldier, go. Prepare the cross.» And he descends from his throne without even looking towards the uproarious crowd or at the wan Condemned Man. He leaves the hall...

Jesus is left in the middle of it, guarded by the soldiers, awaiting the cross.

Friday, 10th March, 1944.

37 Jesus says:

«I want you to meditate on the point concerning My meetings with Pilate.

John, who is the most accurate witness and narrator, as he was almost always present, or at least very close, relates how I was taken to the Praetorium when I left Caiaphas' house. And he specifies "early in the morning". In fact you saw that it was daybreak. He also specifies: "they (the Jews) did not enter in order not to be contaminated and thus be able to eat the Passover." Being hypocritical as usual, they thought that it was dangerous to trample on the dust of a Gentile's house, as they might be contaminated, but they did not consider it a sin to kill an Innocent, and with their spirits satisfied with the crime they had accomplished, they were able to enjoy their Passover even more.

They have many followers even nowadays. All those, who do wrong internally, but externally profess respect for religion and love for God, are like them. *Formulae, formulae, but not true religion!* I regard them with disgust and disdain.

As the Jews would not go into Pilate's house, Pilate came out to hear what the bawling crowd wanted and, experienced as he was in governing and judging, at a glance he realised that not I, but that population intoxicated with hatred was guilty. By looking at each other, we read each other's heart. I judged the man what he was. He judged Me for what I was. I felt pity for him, because he was weak. And he felt pity for Me, because I was innocent. He tried to save Me from the very beginning. And as the right to administer justice with regard to criminals was remitted and reserved to Rome, he tried to save Me by saying: "Judge Him according to your Law".

38 Hypocrites for the second time, the Jews refused to condemn Me. It is true that Rome had the right of justice, but when, for instance, *Stephen was stoned*, Rome still ruled over Jerusalem and notwithstanding all that, *they passed sentence and had the capital sentence executed disregarding Rome.* With regard to Me, Whom they hated and feared and did not love – *they would not believe that I was the Messiah, but did not want to kill Me materially, in case I were* – they acted in a different way and accused Me of being an instigator against the power of Rome (you would say a "rebel") in order to get Rome to judge Me. In their ill-famed court of justice, and several times in the three years of My ministry, they had accused Me of being a blasphemer and false prophet, and as such I should have been stoned or killed in any way. But now, to avoid committing the crime materially, as by instinct they felt they would be punished for it, they made Rome do it, accusing Me of being a criminal and a rebel.

When the crowds are perverted and the leaders have become devils, there is nothing easier than accusing an innocent to give vent to their thirst for ferocity and usurpation, and to get rid of those who are an obstacle and a judgement. *We have gone back to those days.* The world, after an incubation of perverted ideas, explodes now and again

in such displays of perversion. Like a huge pregnant woman, the crowd, after nourishing its monster in its womb with doctrines of wild beasts, gives birth to it so that it may devour. *So that it may devour the best people first, and then itself.*

39 Pilate goes back into the Praetorium and calls Me near him. And he questions Me. He had already heard people speak of Me. Among his centurions there were some who repeated My Name with grateful love, with tears in their eyes and smiles in their hearts, and who spoke of Me as of a benefactor. In their reports to the Praetor, when they were questioned about this Prophet, Who attracted the crowds to Himself and preached a new doctrine which mentioned a strange kingdom, inconceivable to a heathen mind, they had always replied that I was a meek kind man who did not seek the honours of the Earth, and that I inculcated and practised respect and obedience to those who are the authorities. *More sincere than the Israelities, they saw and witnessed the truth.* The previous Sunday, when his attention was attracted by the shouts of the crowd, he had leaned out of the window and he had seen a disarmed man pass by riding a little donkey and blessing, surrounded by children and women. *He had realised that that man could certainly not be a danger to Rome.*

So he wants to know whether I am a king. In his ironic pagan skepticism he wanted to have a little laugh at that royalty that rides a donkey, that has bare-footed children, smiling women and common men as courtiers, at that royalty that for three years has preached that it has no interest in riches and power and that speaks of no conquests but those of the spirit and the soul. What is the soul for a heathen? Not even his gods have souls. And can man have it? Also now this king with no crown, with no palace, with no court, with no soldiers, repeats to him that His kingdom is not of this world. So much so that no minister and no army rises to defend their king and free Him from His enemies.

Pilate, sitting on his seat, scrutinises Me, *because I am an enigma to him.* If he cleared his soul of human cares, of the pride of his office, of the error of heathenism, he would understand at once Who I am. *But how can light enter where too many things obstruct the openings preventing light from entering?* It is always like that, My children. Even now. How can God and His light enter where there is no more room for them, and doors and windows are closed and defended by pride, by humanity, by vice, by usury, by so many guards at the service of Satan against God? Pilate cannot understand what My kingdom is. And what is more painful, he does not ask Me to explain it to him. To My invitation to know the Truth, he, the untameable heathen, replies: "What is the truth?" and with a shrug of his shoulders he lets the matter drop.

Oh! My children! Oh! My Pilates of the present times! You also, like Pontius Pilate, let the most vital matters drop with a shrug of your shoulders. *You consider them useless old-fashioned things.* What is the Truth? Money? No. Women? No. Power? No. Physical health? No. Human glory? No. Then forget about it. It is not worth running after a chimera. *Money, women, power, good health, comforts, honours are the real*

useful things that one must love and attain at all costs. That is how you reason. And, worse than Esau, you barter eternal goods for coarse food that is harmful both to your physical health and to your eternal salvation. Why do you not persist in asking: "What is the Truth"? It, the Truth, asks for nothing but to be known in order to teach what it is. It is before you as it was for Pilate, and looks at you with eyes full of suppliant love, imploring you: "Question me. I will teach you." Did you notice how I looked at Pilate? I look at all of you in the same way. And if I look with serene love at those who love Me and ask for My words, I cast glances of sorrowful love at those who do not love Me, do not seek Me, do not listen to Me. But it is always love, because Love is My nature.

40 Pilate leaves Me where I am, without asking more questions, and he goes towards the wicked people who speak in coarser voices and impose themselves through their violence. And he, a real wretch, listens to them, whilst he did not listen to Me and shrugging his shoulders he declined My invitation to become acquainted with the Truth. He listens to Falsehood. *Idolatry, whatever its form may be, is always inclined to venerate and accept Falsehood, whatever it may be. And Falsehood, when accepted by the weak, leads the weak to crime.* And yet Pilate, on the threshold of crime, still wants to save Me and he tries twice. It is at this point that he sends me to Herod. He knows very well that the shrewd king, who keeps in with both Rome and his people, will act in such a way as not to damage Rome and not irritate the Jewish people. But, like all weak people, he puts off for a little while the decision that he does not feel like taking, hoping that the plebeian rising will abate.

I said: "When you speak say 'Yes' if you mean yes, 'No' if you mean no." But he did not hear that, and if somebody repeated it to him, he shrugged his shoulders as usual. In order to succeed in the world, to have honours and profits, it is necessary to be able to make a no of a yes and a yes of a no, according to what common sense (read: human sense) advises. How many Pilates there are in the twentieth century! Where are the Christian heroes who said yes, constantly yes, to the Truth and for the sake of the Truth, and no, constantly no, to Falsehood? *Where are the heroes who are able to face danger and events with brave strength and tranquil quickness and do not postpone, because Good is to be accomplished at once and evil shunned at once, without "buts" and "ifs"?*

41 On My return from Herod, there is Pilate's fresh compromise: scourging. And what did he expect? Did he not know that the crowd is a wild beast that becomes merciless when it begins to see blood? But I had to be crushed to expiate your sins of the flesh. And I am crushed. There is not a shred of My body that has not been struck. I am the Man of Whom Isaiah speaks. And to the torture that had been ordered, there is added another that was not ordered, but was created by human cruelty: that of the thorns.

Men, do you see your Saviour, your King, crowned with sorrow to free your heads of so many sins fermenting in them? Do you not consider the pain that My innocent head

suffered to expiate, on your behalf, your sinful thoughts that are more and more dreadful and are transformed into deeds? You, who feel offended even when there is no reason for feeling so, look at your offended King, and He is God, with His ironic mantle of torn purple, with a cane as His sceptre and the crown of thorns. He is already dying, and they slap His face with their hands and with mockery. And you are not moved to pity. Like the Jews, you continue to show Me your fists, shouting: "Away, we have not other God but Caesar", o idolaters, who do not worship God, but yourselves and those who are more overbearing among you. *You do not want the Son of God. He gives you no help for your crimes. Satan is more obliging. So you want Satan.* You are afraid of the Son of God. Like Pilate. And when you feel Him impend over you with His power, and stir within you with the voices of your consciences that reproach you in His name, like Pilate, you ask: "Who are You?"

You know Who I am. Also those who deny Me, know what and Who I am. Do not lie. There are twenty centuries around Me and they illustrate who I am and they make you acquainted with My miracles. Pilate is more excusable. You are not, as you have a heritage of twenty centuries of Christianity to support your faith or to inculcate it in you, but you will not hear of it. And yet I was more severe with Pilate than with you. I did not reply. *I do speak to you.* And even so, I do not succeed in persuading you that it is I and that you owe Me adoration and obedience. *Even now you accuse Me of being My own ruin in you, because I do not listen to you. You say that you lose your faith because of that. Oh! liars! Where is your faith? Where is your love? When do you pray to Me and live with love and faith? Are you great people? Remember that you are such because I allow it. Are you anonymous in the crowd? Remember that there is no other God but I. No one is greater than I am and no one is ahead of Me. So give Me that cult of love that is due to Me and I will listen to you, because you will no longer be illegitimate children, but the sons of God.*

42 And here is the last attempt of Pilate to save My life, if it were possible to save it after the cruel endless flagellation. He shows Me to the crowd: "Here is the Man!" I arouse human pity in him. He hopes in collective pity. But before the resisting harshness and the advancing threats, he is not capable of accomplishing a supernaturally just deed, and therefore a good one, saying: *"I am setting Him free because He is innocent. You are guilty people, and if you do not disperse, you will become acquainted with the severity of Rome."* That is what he should have said, had he been a just man, without taking into account the future detriment that would befall him.

Pilate is a false good man. Longinus is good, because although he was less powerful than the Praetor and less defended, in the middle of the street and surrounded by few soldiers and a hostile multitude, he dares to defend Me, help Me, grant Me a rest, to be consoled by the pious women, be assisted by the man from Cyrene and finally to have My Mother at the foot of the Cross. He was a hero of justice and so he became a hero of Christ.

Be aware, o men who worry only about your material welfare, that God intervenes also in its favour, when He sees you behave faithfully towards justice, which is emanation of God. *I always reward those who act righteously. I defend those who defend Me. I love them and succour them.* I am always the One Who said: "He who gives a glass of water in My name will be rewarded." To those who give Me love, the water that quenches the thirst of My lips of the divine Martyr, I give Myself, that is protection and blessings.»

601. Death of Judas of Kerioth. The Behaviour of Mary towards Judas Cancels Eve's Bearing towards Cain.

31st March 1944. Friday in Passion Week, 2 a.m.

1 Here is my very painful vision in these early hours of Passion Friday, as it appeared to me while I was saying the prayers of the Hour of Our Lady of Sorrows; in fact I had thought that spending the night before my Profession in the company of the Virgin of Seven Sorrows was the best preparation for the Profession.

I see Judas. He is alone. He is dressed in light yellow with a red cord round his waist. My internal warner informs me that Jesus has been captured a short time ago and that Judas, who had run away after the arrest, is a prey to contrasting ideas. In fact the Iscariot looks like a furious wild beast hunted down by a pack of mastiffs. Every breath of wind rustling among leaves, any noise in the streets, the gurgling of a fountain make him start and turn round suspiciously and with terror, as if an executioner had caught up with him. He looks round with his head lowered, his neck twisted, rolling his eyes like one who wants to see but is afraid of seeing, and if a play of moonlight forms a shadow with a human appearance, he opens his eyes wide, jumps back, he becomes more livid than he normally is, he stops for a moment and then runs away headlong, retracing his steps, slipping away along other narrow streets, until another noise, another play of light makes him stop or run away in a different direction.

In his crazy running he goes towards the centre of the town. But the clamour of people makes him realise that he is near Caiaphas' house, and then, pressing his head with his hands and stooping as if those shouts were stones lapidating him, he runs away. And in doing so he runs along a lane that takes him straight towards the house where the Supper was consumed. He becomes aware of that when he is in front of it, because there is a little fountain that trickles just there. The drops of water that fall into the small stone basin and the light whistle of the wind, that blowing along the narrow lane produces a kind of repressed groan, must sound to him like the tears and the moaning of the betrayed tortured Master. He covers his ears with his hands in order not to hear and runs away with his eyes closed in order not to see that door, which he had entered with

the Master a few hours earlier, and from which he had come out to go and get the armed guards to arrest Him.

2 While running so blindly, he bumps against a stray dog, the first dog I have seen since I had visions, a big grey hairy dog that moves to one side snarling, ready to hurl itself upon the disturber. Judas opens his eyes and meets the two phosphorescent ones staring at him, and he sees the white uncovered fangs that seem to be laughing in a diabolic manner. He gives a shriek of terror. The dog, that perhaps takes it for a cry of menace, rushes upon him and they both roll in the dust: Judas underneath, paralysed by fear, the dog on top of him. When the animal leaves the prey, perhaps considered unworthy of a struggle, Judas is bleeding because of two of three bites, and his mantle is badly torn.

One bite has injured Judas' cheek, exactly where he kissed Jesus. His cheek is bleeding and the blood stains the neck of Judas' yellowish garment. It forms a sort of collar of blood soaking the red cord that fastens the garment round the neck, making it even redder. Judas, touching his cheek with his hand and looking at the dog that is going away, but he looks at it from the opening of a door, whispers: «Beelzebub!», and with a fresh shriek he runs away chased by the dog for some time. He runs as far as the little bridge near Gethsemane. Here, either because it was tired of chasing him or because it was rabid and the water turns it away, the dog abandons the prey and goes back snarling. Judas, who had rushed into the torrent to get stones to throw at the dog, when he sees it go away, looks around and realises that the water reaches half-way up his calves. Without bothering about his garments, which are getting wetter and wetter, he bends down as far as the water and drinks, as if he were parched by fever, and he washes his cheek that is bleeding and must be painful.

3 In the light of daybreak he climbs out of the gravel-bed, on the other side, as if he were still afraid of the dog and did not dare to go back towards the town. He walks a few metres and finds himself at the entrance to the Garden of the Mount of Olives.

He shouts: «No! No!» when he recognises the place. Then, I do not know through which irresistible force or through which satanic criminal sadism, he proceeds in that place. He looks for the place where Jesus was arrested. The earth of the path trampled on by many feet, the grass ruffled at a certain point and some blood on the ground, perhaps Malchus', make him understand that there he pointed out the Innocent to the executioners.

He looks and looks... and then he utters a hoarse cry and jumps backwards. He shouts: «That blood, that blood!...» and he points it out... to whom? with his hand stretched out and his forefinger pointed to it. In the increasing light his face is ashen and ghastly. He looks like a madman. His eyes are wide open and shiny as if he were delirious, his hair, ruffled by his running and his terror, looks shaggy on his head, his cheek, which is swelling, twists his mouth in a grin. His tunic, torn, covered with blood, wet, muddy, because the dust that had stuck to the wet cloth has become mud, makes him look like a

beggar. His mantle, which is also torn and muddy, hangs down from one shoulder like a rag, and he gets caught in it when, continuing to shout: «That blood, that blood!» he steps back, as if that blood had become a sea that rises and submerges.

Judas falls back and hurts the back of his head against a stone. He moans with pain and fear. «Who is it?» he shouts. He must have thought that somebody had made him fall to strike him. He turns round terrified. There is no one! He stands up. Blood is now dripping also at the back of his neck. The red circle widens on his garment. It does not fall to the ground, because there is not much of it. His garment absorbs it. The red halter now seems to be already round his neck.

4 He walks. He finds the traces of the little fire lit by Peter at the foot of an olive-tree. But he does not know that it is Peter's work and he must think that Jesus was there. He shouts: «Away! Away!» and with both hands stretched out in front of him, he seems to be driving back a ghost that torments him. He runs away, and ends up just against the rock of the Agony.

By now daybreak is clear and one can see well and immediately. Judas sees Jesus' mantle left folded on the rock. He recognises it. He wants to touch it. He is afraid. He stretches out his hand and withdraws it. He wants and does not want. But that mantle fascinates him. He moans: «No. No.» He then says: «Yes, by Satan! Yes. I want to touch it. I am not afraid! I am not afraid!»

He says that he is not afraid, but his teeth are chattering with terror, and the noise made above his head by a branch of an olive-tree, that is blown by the wind against the nearby trunk, makes him shout once again. And yet he makes an effort and gets hold of the mantle. And he laughs. The laughter of a madman, of a demon. A hysterical, broken, lugubrious, never ending laughter, because he has overcome his fear. And he says so:

«You do not frighten me, Christ. I am no longer afraid. I was so much afraid of You, because I thought that You were a God and a strong man. Now You no longer frighten me, because You are not God. You are a poor madman, a weakling. You did not know how to defend Yourself. You did not reduce me to ashes, neither did You read betrayal in my heart. My fears!... What a fool! When You spoke, even yesterday evening, I thought You knew. But You knew nothing. It was my fear that gave the tone of Prophecy to Your common words. You are nothing. You have allowed Yourself to be sold, pointed out, caught like a mouse in its hole. Your power! Your origin! Ha! Ha! Ha! Buffoon! Satan is the strong one! Stronger than You. He defeated You! Ha! Ha! Ha! The Prophet! The Messiah! The King of Israel! And You subjugated me for three years! With fear always in my heart! And I had to lie to deceive You subtly when I wanted to enjoy life! But even if I had stolen and fornicated without all the cunning I used to employ, You would not have done me anything. Faint-hearted! Fool! Coward! Take this! Take this! Take this! I was wrong in not doing to You what I am now doing

to Your mantle to revenge myself for the time You kept me the slave of fear. Fear of a rabbit!... Take this! Here! Take this!»

At each «take this!» Judas bites the cloth of the mantle and tries to tear it. He rumples it with his hands. But in doing so, he unfolds it and the stains wetting it appear. Judas stops in his fury. He stares at those stains. He touches them. He smells them. It is blood... He spreads out the whole mantle. The impression left by the two hands stained with blood, when Jesus pressed the cloth against His face, is clearly visible.

«Ah!... Blood! Blood! His... No!» Judas drops the mantle and looks around. Also on the rock, where Jesus leaned with His back when the angel comforted Him, there is a dark mark of blood that is clotting. «There!... There!... Blood! Blood!...» He lowers his eyes in order not to see, and he sees the grass all stained with the blood that has dropped on it. As it has been diluted by the dew, it looks as if it had just dripped. It is red and shines in the early sunshine. «No! No! No! I don't want to see it! I cannot look at that blood! Help!» and he holds his throat with his hands and gropes about, as if he were drowning in a sea of blood. «Back! Back! Leave me! Leave me! Cursed! But this blood is a sea! It covers the Earth! The Earth! The Earth! And on the Earth there is no room for me, because I cannot look at that blood that covers it. I am the Cain of the Innocent!» I think that the idea of suicide entered his heart at this moment. Judas' face is frightening.

5 He jumps from the terrace and runs away through the olive-grove without going back the way he came. He looks like one chased by wild beasts. He goes back to town. He envelops himself in his mantle as best he can and he tries to cover his wound and his face as much as possible. He turns his steps towards the Temple.

But while going there, at a crossroad he finds himself in front of the rabble who are dragging Jesus to Pilate. He cannot withdraw, because other people press him from behind, as they flock to see. And, tall as he is, he dominates forcibly and sees. And he meets Jesus' eyes... They exchange glances for a moment. Then Jesus, tied and beaten, passes by. And Judas falls on his back, as if he had fainted. The crowds trample on him pitilessly, and he does not react. He obviously prefers to be trodden on by the whole world, rather than meet those eyes.

6 When the deicide pack has gone by with the Martyr, and the street is empty, he stands up again and runs to the Temple. He bumps against and almost overthrows a guard on duty at the gate of the enclosure. Other guards run to prevent the frantic man from entering. But like a furious bull, he routs them all. One of them, who clings to him to prevent him from going into the hall of the Sanhedrin, where they are all still gathered discussing, is seized by the throat, strangled and thrown down the three steps, if not dead, certainly at the point of death.

«I don't want your money, may you be damned» he shouts, standing in the middle of the hall, just where Jesus was previously. He looks like a demon who has come out of

hell. Bleeding, unkempt, in a state of delirious fury, slavering, his hands like claws, he shouts and seems to be barking, so shrill and hoarse is his howling voice. «I don't want your money, you cursed ones. You have ruined me. You have made me commit the gravest sin. I am cursed like you! I have betrayed innocent Blood. May that Blood and my death fall upon you. Upon you... No! Ha!...» Judas sees the floor stained with blood. «Even here, is there blood even here? Everywhere! His blood is everywhere! But how much blood has the Lamb of God, to cover the whole Earth like this without dying? And I have shed it! Through your instigation. Cursed! May you be cursed forever! Cursed be these walls! Cursed be this profaned Temple! Cursed be the deicide Pontiff! Cursed be the unworthy priests, the false doctors, the hypocritical Pharisees, the cruel Judaeans, the sly scribes! May I be accursed! Curse me! Keep your money and may it strangle your souls in your throats, as the halter strangles me» and he throws the purse in Caiaphas' teeth and goes away howling, while the coins tinkle spreading out on the floor after striking Caiaphas' mouth and making it bleed. No one dare stop him.

7 He goes out. He runs along the streets. And he fatally meets with Jesus twice again, as He goes and comes back from Herod.

He departs from the town centre, taking the poorest lanes at random and he ends up again at the house of the Supper. It is all closed as if it were abandoned. He stops. He looks at it. «The Mother!» he whispers. «The Mother!...» He is undecided... «I have a mother as well! And I have killed a son of a mother!... And yet... I want to go in... To see that room again. There is no blood in there...»

He knocks at the door. He knocks again... and again... The mistress of the house comes to open and half -opens the door. Ajar... And seeing the man so agitated and altered beyond recognition, she utters a cry and tries to close the door again. But Judas opens it wide with a push of his shoulder and, knocking down the terrified woman, he goes in.

He runs towards the little door that lets into the Supper Room. He opens it and goes in. A beautiful sunshine enters through the wide-open windows. Judas breathes a sigh of relief. He proceeds. Everything is calm and silent here. The dishes are still as they were left. One understands that nobody has taken care of them. One might think that they are about to sit at the table.

Judas goes towards the table. He looks whether there is any wine in the amphorae. There is. He drinks greedily out of the amphora itself, lifting it with both hands. Then he sits down and rests his head on his arms folded on the table. He does not notice that he has sat just where Jesus was seated and that in front of him there is the chalice used for the Eucharist. He remains still for some time, until his panting after so much running calms down. He then looks up and sees the chalice. And he realises where he has sat down.

He stands up as if he were possessed. But the chalice enchants him. A little red wine is

still in the bottom of it and the sun, shining on the metal (it looks like silver), inflames the liquid. «Blood! Blood! Blood also here! His Blood! His Blood!... “Do this in memory of Me!... Take this and drink it. This is My Blood... The Blood of the new testament that will be shed for you Ha! I am cursed! It can no longer be shed for me to remit my sin. I do not ask to be forgiven, because He cannot forgive me. Away, away! There is no place where the Cain of God may find peace. Death! Death to me!...»

8 He goes out. He finds himself in front of Mary, Who is standing at the door of the room where Jesus left Her. Hearing a noise, She has looked out, hoping perhaps to see John, who has been away such a long time. She looks as pale as if She had lost all Her blood. Grief has made Her eyes resemble even more those of Her Son. Judas meets those eyes that look at him with the same sorrowful conscious knowledge with which Jesus looked at him in the street, and uttering a frightened «Oh!» he leans against the wall.

«Judas!» says Mary, «Judas, why have you come?» The same words as Jesus'. And they are spoken with sad love. Judas remembers them and shouts.

«Judas» repeats Mary «what have you done? To so much love have you replied by betraying?» Mary's voice is a trembling caress.

Judas is about to run away. Mary calls him with a voice that should have converted a demon. «Judas! Judas! Stop! Stop! Listen! I am telling you in His name: repent, Judas. He forgives...» Judas has run away. Mary's voice, Her appearance, have been the coup de grace, or rather of disgrace, *because he resists Her.*

He goes away precipitately. He meets John who is going towards the house to get Mary. The sentence has been passed. Jesus is about to go to Calvary. It is time to take Mary to Her Son. John recognises Judas, although there is little left of the handsome Judas of not long ago. «You here?» John says to him with obvious disgust. «You here? May you be cursed, you killer of the Son of God! The Master has been condemned. Rejoice, if you can. But get out of the way. I am going to get the Mother. Do not let Her, the other Victim of yours, meet you, you reptile.»

9 Judas runs away. He has enveloped his head in the tatters of his mantle, leaving only a small opening for his eyes. People, the few people who are not near the Praetorium, avoid him, as if they saw a madman. And that is what he looks like.

He wanders about the country. Now and again the wind carries an echo of the clamour made by the crowds who follow Jesus cursing Him. Every time such echo reaches Judas, he howls like a jackal.

I think that he has really gone mad, because he continuously knocks his head against the low stone walls. Or he has become hydrophobic because every time he sees a liquid – water, milk carried in a vessel by a child, oil dripping from a goatskin – he howls and

shouts: «Blood! Blood! His Blood!» He would like to drink at streams and fountains. But he cannot, because water seems blood to him, and he says so: «It's blood! It's blood! It is drowning me! It is burning me! I am on fire! He gave me His Blood yesterday, and it has become fire in me! May I be accursed, and You, too!»

He goes up and down the hills around Jerusalem. And his eyes are irresistibly attracted towards Golgotha. And twice from afar he sees the procession wind uphill. He looks and howls.

It is now on the top. Judas also is on top of a little hill covered with olive-trees. He has gone in by opening a rustic paling, as if he were the owner or at least well acquainted with the place. I am under the impression that Judas did not have much consideration for other people's property.

Standing upright under an olive-tree on the edge of a terrace, he looks towards Golgotha. He sees the crosses being erected and he realises that Jesus has been crucified. He cannot bear to see or hear. But his mental derangement or an act of witchcraft by Satan make him see and hear as if he were on the top of Calvary.

He looks and looks like one bewitched. He struggles: «No! No! Don't look at me. Don't speak to me. I cannot bear it. *Die, die, You cursed one! Let death close those eyes that frighten me, that mouth that curses me. But I also curse You. Because You did not save me.*»

His face is so troubled that one cannot look at it. Two fine streams of slaver run down from his howling mouth. The cheek that was bitten is livid and swollen, and so his face looks twisted. His sticky hair, his very dark beard that has grown on his cheeks during these hours, make his face look dismal. And his eyes!... They roll, are squint and phosphorescent. The eyes of a real demon.

10 He tears away from his waist the cord of thick red wool that encircles it three times. He tests its solidity by winding it round an olive-tree and pulling it with all his strength. It resists. It is solid.

He chooses a suitable olive-tree. Here it is. This one, protruding beyond the terrace with its ruffled foliage, is all right. He climbs on the tree. He fastens a noose solidly to the strongest branch hanging out over the empty space. He has already tied a slip-knot. He looks at Golgotha for the last time. He then puts his head into the slip-knot. He now seems to have two red necklaces round the bottom part of his neck. He sits on the terrace. Then with a jerk he lets himself slip into the empty space.

The knot squeezes his throat. He struggles for some moments. He rolls his eyes strangely, he becomes black with suffocation, he opens his mouth, the veins of his neck swell and become black. He kicks the air four or five times in his last convulsions. Then his mouth opens and his dark slobbery tongue hangs out, his eye-balls remain

uncovered, protruding, showing the whitish globes stained with blood. The irides disappear in the upper part. He is dead.

The strong wind, that has risen with the impending storm, makes the macabre pendulum swing and whirl like a horrible spider hanging from the thread of a cobweb.

The vision ends thus. And I hope I shall soon forget all this, because I can assure you that it is a dreadful vision.

11 Jesus says:

«Dreadful, but not useless. Too many people think that Judas did something of little importance. Some even go to the extent of saying that he is well deserving, because Redemption would not have taken place without him, and that he is therefore justified in the eyes of God.

I solemnly tell you that, if Hell did not already exist and was not perfect in its torments, it would have been created even more dreadful and eternal for Judas, because of all sinners and damned souls, he is the most damned and the biggest sinner, and throughout eternity there will be no mitigation of his sentence.

Remorse could have also saved him, if he had turned remorse into repentance. But he would not repent and, to the first crime of betrayal, still compatible because of the great mercy that is My loving weakness, he added blasphemy, resistance to the voices of Grace, that still wanted to speak to him through recollections, through terrors, through My Blood and My mantle, through My glances, through the traces of the institution of the Eucharist, through the words of My Mother. *He resisted everything. He wanted to resist. As he had wanted to betray. As he wanted to curse. As he wanted to commit suicide.*

12 *It is one's will that matters in things. Both in good and in evil. When one falls without the will to follow, I forgive.*

Consider Peter. He denied Me. Why? Not even he knew why. Was Peter a coward? No. My Peter was not cowardly. Facing the cohort and the guards of the Temple he had dared to wound Malcus to defend Me, risking his own life thereby. He then ran away, without the will to do so. Then he denied Me, without the will to do it. Later he did remain and proceed on the bloody way of the Cross, on My Way, until he reached death on a cross. And then he bore witness to Me very efficiently, to the point of being killed because of his fearless faith. *I defend My Peter. His bewilderment was the last one of his human nature.* But his spiritual will was not present at that moment. Dulled by the weight of his humanity, it was asleep. When it awoke, it did not want to remain in sin, but it wanted to be perfect. I forgave him at once.

Judas did not want. You say that he seemed mad and hydrophobic. He was so through satanic fury. His terror in seeing the dog, a rare animal particularly in Jerusalem, was a consequence of the fact that, from time immemorial, that form was attributed to Satan to appear to men. In books of magic it is stated that one of the forms preferred by Satan to appear to men is that of a mysterious dog or cat or billy-goat. Judas, already a prey to terror brought about by his crime, being convinced that he belonged to Satan because of his crime, saw Satan in that stray animal.

He who is guilty, sees shadows of fear in everything. It is his conscience that creates them. Then Satan instigates such shadows, which might still bring a heart to repent, and turns them into horrible ghosts that lead to despair. *And despair leads to the last crime: suicide.* What is the use of throwing away the price of the betrayal, when such deprivation is only the fruit of wrath and is not corroborated by a righteous will of repentance? Only in such case the act of divesting oneself of the fruits of evil deeds becomes meritorious. But he did not do that. A useless sacrifice.

13 My Mother, and She was Grace that was speaking and My Treasurer that was granting forgiveness in My name, said to him: "Repent, Judas. He forgives..." *Oh! I would have forgiven him! If he had only thrown himself at the feet of My Mother saying: "Mercy!"* She, the Merciful Mother, would have picked him up as a wounded man, and on his satanic wounds, through which the Enemy had imbued him with the Crime, She would have shed Her tears that save and She would have brought him to Me, to the foot of the Cross, holding him by the hand, so that Satan might not snatch him and the disciples might not strike him. *She would have brought him so that My Blood might fall first of all on him, the greatest of all sinners.* And She would have been the admirable Priestess on Her altar, between Purity and Guilt, because She is the Mother of virgins and saints, *but She is also the Mother of sinners.*

But he did not want. Meditate on the power of free will, of which you are the absolute arbiters. *Through it you can have Heaven or Hell.* Meditate on what persisting in sin means.

The Crucified, He Who is holding His arms stretched out and nailed, to tell you that He loves you, and that He does not want and cannot strike you, because He loves you, and prefers to deprive Himself of the possibility of embracing you, His only sorrow in His being nailed to the cross, rather than have the freedom to punish you. Christ Crucified, the object of divine hope for those who repent and want to abandon sin, becomes for the unrepentant the object of such horror that makes them curse and be violent against themselves. They become the murderers of their spirits and bodies through their persistence in sin. And the sight of the Meek Saviour, Who allowed Himself to be sacrificed in the hope of saving them, takes the appearance of a horrifying ghost.

14 Mary, you complained of this vision. But, My dear daughter, this is the Friday of Passion Week. You must suffer. To the sufferings you endure because of Mary's

sufferings and Mine, you must add your own, *caused by the bitterness in seeing sinners remain sinners. That was our suffering. It must be yours.* Mary suffered, and still suffers, because of that, as She suffered because of My tortures. So you must suffer that. Rest now. In three hours' time you will be completely Mine and Mary's. I bless you, sweet little violet of My passion and passion-flower of Mary.»

2nd April, 1944. Palm-Sunday.

15 Jesus says:

«*The couple Jesus-Mary is the antithesis of the couple Adam-Eve.* It is the one destined to cancel all the behaviour of Adam and Eve and take Humanity back to the point in which it was when it was created: *rich in grace and in all the gifts granted to it by the Creator.* Humanity has undergone a complete regeneration through the deeds of the couple Jesus-Mary, Who have thus become the new Founders of the Human Family. *All the previous time has been cancelled.* The time and story of man are reckoned as from this moment in which the new Eve, through a complete change and inversion of creation, and through the deed of the Lord, from Her immaculate womb generates the new Adam.

But in order to cancel the behaviour of the two First Parents, the cause of deadly illness, of perpetual mutilation, of impoverishment, even more: of spiritual indigence – because after their sin Adam and Eve found themselves completely despoiled of everything, and it was infinite wealth, the Holy Father had given them – *these two Second Ones had to act in everything in a manner completely opposed to the way of dealing of the two First Parents.* So they had to carry their obedience as far as the perfection that lowers itself and sacrifices itself in its flesh, feelings, thoughts and will, in order to accept everything that God wants. *So they had to carry their purity to the degree of absolute chastity, whereby the flesh... what was the flesh to Us two pure ones?* A veil of water on the triumphant spirit, the caress of the wind on the sovereign spirit, a crystal that isolates the spirit-lord and does not corrupt it, an impulse that elevates and not a weight that oppresses. That is what the flesh was to Us. Less heavy and sensitive than a linen garment, a light substance placed between the world and the brightness of the ego that had become superhuman, *the means to work what God wanted. Nothing else.*

16 *Did we possess love? We certainly did.* We possessed the "perfect love". *Men, the hunger for sensuality* that urges you to eagerly glut yourselves with the flesh, *is not love. It is lust. Nothing else.* So much so that by loving one another thus – you think it is love – *you are unable to bear with each other, to help and forgive each other. So what is your love? It is hatred.* It is nothing but paranoiac frenzy that drives you to prefer the flavour of putrid meals to the wholesome corroborating food of chosen sentiments. *We possessed the "perfect love", We, the perfect chaste ones.* This love embraced God in

Heaven and, being united to Him, as branches are to the tree trunk nourishing them, it spread and descended lavishing rest, shelter, nourishment, comfort on the Earth and its inhabitants. *No one was excluded from this love*: neither our fellow-creatures, nor the inferior beings, nor the vegetable nature, nor the waters and stars. *Not even the wicked were excluded from this love*. Because they also, although dead limbs, were still limbs of the great body of Creation, and therefore we saw in them the holy image, although disfigured and soiled by their wickedness, of the Lord, Who had formed them in His image and likeness.

Rejoicing with good people; weeping over people who were not good; praying (active love that expresses itself by impetrating and attaining protection for those whom one loves) praying for good people that they might become even better in order to be even more able to approach the perfection of the Good Lord, Who loves us from Heaven; praying for those wavering between goodness and wickedness, so that they might be fortified and thus be able to persevere on the holy path; praying for the wicked, that Goodness might speak to their spirits, and might even strike them with the thunderbolt of His power, but might convert them to the Lord their God, We loved. As nobody else loved. *We carried love to the summits of perfection, so that with our ocean of love we might fill the abyss excavated by the lack of love of the First Parents, who loved themselves more than they loved God, as they wished to have what it was not lawful to have, in order to become superior to God.*

So to the *purity, obedience, charity, detachment from all the riches of the Earth* (sensuality, power, riches: the trinomial of Satan, opposed to the trinomial of God: *faith, hope, charity*); so to hatred, lust, wrath, pride (the four perverted passions, antitheses of the four holy virtues: *fortitude, temperance, justice, prudence*), We had to add a constant practice of everything that was the opposite to the way of acting of the couple Adam-Eve. And if it was easy for us to do quite a lot, through our good limitless wills, *only the Eternal knows how heroic it was to fulfill that practice in certain moments and in certain occasions.*

17 I want to speak of one only now. Of My Mother, not of Myself. Of the new Eve, Who since Her most tender years had rejected the blandishments used by Satan to induce Her to bite the fruit and taste its flavour that had made Adam's companion insane; of the new Eve, Who had not confined Herself to rejecting Satan, but had defeated him by crushing him under such a vast will of obedience, love, chastity, that he, the Cursed one, was overwhelmed and subjugated. *No! Satan will not rise from under the heel of My Virgin Mother!* He slavers and foams, he roars and curses. But his slaver dribbles downwards, and his howling does not touch the atmosphere that surrounds My Holy Mother, Who does not smell the demoniac stench or hear the hellish cachinnation, and does not see, does not even see the revolting slaver of the eternal Reptile, because celestial harmonies and scents dance lovingly around Her beautiful holy person, and because Her eyes, which are purer than lilies and more

loving than those of a cooing dove, look fixedly only at Her Eternal Lord, *Whose Daughter She is, as well as Mother and Spouse.*

18 When Cain killed Abel, the mouth of their mother *uttered curses*, that were suggested by her spirit, separated from God, against her closest neighbour: the son of her womb, profaned by Satan and soiled by an indecent desire. *And that curse was the stain in the kingdom of human morals, as Cain's crime was the stain in the kingdom of human animals.* Blood on the Earth, shed by a brotherly hand. The first blood that like an age-old magnet attracts all the blood shed by man's hand, drawing it from man's veins. Curse on the Earth, uttered by man's mouth. As if the Earth were not sufficiently cursed because of man's rebellion against his God and if it had not had to become acquainted with spines and thorns and the hardness of the soil, with drought, hail, frost, dog-days, whilst it had been created perfect and equipped with perfect elements in order to be a comfortable beautiful abode for man, its king.

Mary has to cancel Eve. Mary sees the second Cain: Judas. Mary knows that he is the Cain of Her Jesus, of the second Abel. She knows that the blood of this second Abel has been sold by that Cain and is already being spread. *But She does not curse. She loves and forgives. She loves and calls back.*

Oh! Maternity of Mary Martyr! Maternity as sublime as Your virginal divine Maternity! God presented You with the latter! But You, holy Mother, Co-Redeemer, presented Yourself with the former, because You alone, in that hour, with Your heart torn to pieces by the scourges that had torn My flesh to pieces, *You alone were able to speak those words to Judas, and You alone, in that hour, when You felt the cross break Your heart, were able to love and forgive.*

19 *Mary: the new Eve. She teaches you the new religion, that urges love to forgive him who has killed a son.* Do not be like Judas, who closes his heart to this Mistress of Grace and despairs saying: "He cannot forgive me", questioning the words of the Mother of Truth, and consequently My words, which had always repeated that I had come to save and not to lose, to forgive those who came to Me repentant.

Mary, the new Eve, had also a new son from God "in place of Abel killed by Cain". But She did not have him in an hour of brutal enjoyment that soothes sorrow with the fumes of sensuality and the tiredness of satisfaction. She had him in an hour of complete sorrow, at the foot of a cross, among the death-rattle of the Dying Man Who was Her Son, among the insults of the deicide crowd and an undeserved total grief, because even God no longer comforted Her.

The new life for Mankind and for individual men begins from Mary. Her virtues and Her way of living are your school. And in Her grief, in which all aspects appeared, also that of forgiveness for the killer of Her Son, is your salvation."»

20 Jesus says:

«One day I will tell you more about Cain and the First Parents. There is much to be said and to be meditated on.»

602. Other Teachings on the First Parents and on the Parallelism between Cain and Judas.

5th April 1944.

1 Jesus says:

«In Genesis we read: "Then Adam named his wife Eve, because she is the mother of all those who live."»

Oh! yes. Woman was born of the "Virago" whom God had formed as a companion for Adam, building her from the rib of man. She was born with her sorrowful destiny, because she had wanted to be born in that way, that is with her sorrowful destiny. Because she had wanted to know what God had concealed from her, reserving for Himself the joy of giving her the joy of posterity without any debasement of sensuality. Adam's companion had wanted to become acquainted with the good concealed in evil, and above all with the evil concealed in good, in apparent good. *Because enticed as she was by Lucifer, she had craved for knowledge that God alone could possess without any danger, and she had made herself creatress.* But by using such power of good unworthily, she had corrupted it into an evil deed, because it was disobedience to God and malice and greediness of the flesh.

By this time she was the "mother". Infinite lamentation of things over the innocence of their profaned queen! And desolate lamentation of the queen over her desecration, of which she understands the importance and its impossible annulment! If darkness and cataclysms accompanied the death of the Innocent, darkness and storm also accompanied the death of Innocence and Grace in the hearts of the First Parents. *Grief was born on the Earth.* But God's providence did not want it to be eternal, as after years of sorrow He gave you the joy of coming out of sorrow to enter joy, if you know how to live with righteous minds.

2 Woe to man if he had had to make himself the master of life in a human way! And if he had had to live with the memory of his crimes and the continual increase of them, because it is more impossible for you to live without sinning than it is to live without breathing, you creatures who had been created to know the Light and whom Darkness has poisoned making you its victims. *Darkness! It circumvents you continuously. It entangles you awakening what the Sacrament has cancelled, and as you do not oppose*

it with the will of being of God, it succeeds in corrupting you again with its poison, that Baptism had made harmless.

As the signs of man's disobedience were evident, God the Father removed him from the place of heavenly delights, so that he might not sin once again and more gravely by raising his thieving hand to the tree of Life. *The Father could no longer trust His children, neither could He feel safe in His Earthly Paradise.* Satan had entered it once to lay snares for His dearest creatures, and if he had succeeded in inducing them to sin when they were innocent, with greater ease he would be able to do it again now that they were no longer innocent.

Man had wanted to possess everything, not leaving to God the treasure of being the Generator. Let him therefore go away with his riches acquired through violence, and let him take them with him to the land of his exile to remind him always of his sin, a downcast king despoiled of his gifts. *The paradisiac creature had become an earthly creature. And ages of sorrow had to go by, until the Only One, Who could stretch out His hand to the fruit of Life, should come and pick that fruit for all Mankind.* And He should pick it with His pierced hands and give it to men, so that they might become again coheirs to Heaven and possessors of the Life that lives forever.

3 Genesis says also: "Adam then had intercourse with his wife Eve".

They had wanted to know the secrets of good and of evil. It was fair that now they should also experience the pain of having to reproduce themselves in flesh, *having God's direct help only for what man cannot create, the spirit,* the spark that departs from God, the breath that is infused by God, the seal that on the flesh affixes the sign of the Eternal Creator. And Eve gave birth to Cain.

Eve was burdened with her sin. At this point I will draw your attention to a fact that escapes most people. *Eve was burdened with her sin. And pain had not yet been suffered in a manner sufficient to diminish her sin.* Like an organism laden with toxins, she had conveyed to her son what abounded in her. And Cain, Eve's first son, was born hard, envious, quick-tempered, lascivious, wicked, little different from wild animals with regard to instinct, much superior with regard to the supernatural, because in his fierce ego he denied respect to God, Whom he considered an enemy, believing that it was lawful for him not to have a sincere cult for Him. Satan instigated him to deride God. *And he who derides God does not respect anybody in the world.* Therefore those who are in touch with the deriders of God are acquainted with the bitterness of tears, because *they have no hope of respectful love from their offspring, no certainty of faithful love in their consort, no certainty of honest friendship in friends.*

Abundant tears streamed down Eve's face and her heart swelled with bitter tears because of the hardness of her son, and those tears sowed the germ of repentance in her heart, and *they obtained a diminution of her fault, as God forgives because of the*

sorrow of those who repent. And Eve's second son had his soul washed in his mother's tears, and he was kind and respectful to his parents, and devout to his Lord, Whose omnipotence he perceived shine from the Heavens. He was the joy of his impoverished mother.

But the way of Eve's sorrow was to be long and painful, proportionate to her way in the experience of sin. In the latter, thrills of senses. In the former, shivers of pain. In the latter, kisses. In the former, blood. From the latter, a son. From the former, the death of a son. Of the one dearest to her because of his goodness. Abel becomes the means of purification for the guilty mother. *What a painful purification!* With her howling she filled the Earth terrified by the fratricide and she mixed the tears of a mother with the blood of a son, while he, who had shed it out of hatred for God and for his brother loved by God, was running away chased by remorse.

4 The Lord says to Cain: "*Why are you angry?*" If you fail in your duty towards Me, why do you grow angry because I do not look at you benignly?

How many Cains there are on the Earth! Their cult for Me is derisory and hypocritical or is non-existent, and yet they want Me to look at them with love and to fill them with happiness.

God is your King. Not your servant. God is your Father. But a father is never a servant, if one judges according to justice. *God is just. You are not.* But He is. As He exceedingly fills you with His favours, if you only love Him a little, He cannot certainly avoid punishing you, since you deride Him. *Justice does not follow two paths. One is its path. As you do, so you receive.* If you are good, you receive good. If you are wicked, you receive evil. And, believe Me, the good you receive is always much more than the bad you should have, for your way of living, rebelling against the divine Law.

God has said: "*Is it not true that if you do good you will have good and if you do wrong, sin will be immediately at your door?*" In fact good leads to a constant spiritual elevation and makes one more and more capable of performing greater and greater good deeds, till one reaches perfection and becomes holy. Whereas it is enough to yield to evil to degrade oneself and deviate from perfection, becoming acquainted with the power of sin that enters hearts and by degrees makes them descend to greater and greater guiltiness.

"But" God also says "*under you lies the desire of it and you must control it.*" Yes. God did not make you slaves of sin. *Passions are under you. Not above you.* God has given you intelligence and strength to control yourselves. Also to the first men, struck by God's severity, He left intelligence and moral strength. And now, since the Redeemer has consumed the Sacrifice on your behalf, you have the streams of Grace to assist your intelligence and strength, and you can and must dominate evil desires. *Through your will fortified by Grace you must do it.* That is why the angels at My Birth sang to the

Earth: "*Peace to men of good will.*" I had come to bring Grace back to you, and through its union with your good wills, Peace would come to men. *Peace: the glory of God's Heaven.*

5 "And Cain said to his brother: 'Let us go out' ". A lie concealing a murderous betrayal under a smile. *Delinquency is always mendacious, both with regard to its victims and to the world it tries to deceive.* And it would like to deceive even God. *But God reads hearts.*

"Let us go out". Many centuries later one said: "Hail, Master" and kissed Him. The two Cains concealed their crimes under harmless appearances, *and vented their envy, anger, arrogance, and all wicked instincts on the victim, because they had not controlled themselves,* but had made their spirits the slaves of their corrupted egos.

In her expiation Eve rises. Cain descends towards hell. Despair seizes him and makes him fall into the abyss. And, with despair, comes the physical cowardly fear of human punishment, the last deadly blow to the spirit already languishing because of its crime. *No longer a being mindful of Heaven, man with a dead soul is an animal that trembles with fear for his animal life.* Death, whose appearance is a smile for the just, because through it they go to the joy of possessing God, is terrifying for those who are aware that to die means to pass from the hell of one's heart, to the Hell of Satan, forever. And like people entranced, they see revenge everywhere ready to strike them.

6 But you must know, I am speaking to the just, you must know that, if remorse and the darkness of a guilty heart allow and foster the hallucinations of a sinner, no one is allowed to set himself up as judge of his brother, and least of all as executioner. *Only one is the Judge: God.* And if the justice of men has created its law-courts, the task of administering justice is to be remitted to them, and woe to those who profane that name and judge instigated by their own passions or pressed by human powers. *Malediction upon him who makes himself the private executioner of one of his fellows! But a greater malediction upon him who, not through the influence of rash wrath, but out of cold human interest, unjustly sends a man to death or to the disgrace of jail.* Because, if he who kills a man who has killed, will be given a punishment seven times greater, as the Lord said would happen to anybody who struck Cain, *he who condemns without justice, through enslavement to Satan in the capacity of human Overbearingness, will be struck seventy-seven times by God's severity.* You should always bear that in your minds, men, particularly at the present moment, *since you kill one another to make of those who have fallen the base of your triumph,* and you do not realise that you are digging under your feet the pit into which you will fall cursed by God and by men. *Because I have said: "You shall not kill".*

7 Eve rises on her way of expiation. Repentance grows deeper in her before the proofs of her sin. She wanted to know good and evil. And the remembrance of the good she had lost is for her like the remembrance of the sun for someone who has become

suddenly blind; and evil is in front of her in the mortal remains of her murdered son, and around her because of the void left by her homicide fugitive son. And Seth was born. And Seth begot Enos. The first priest.

Your minds swell with the rivers of your science and you speak of evolution as of a sign of your spontaneous generation. The animal-man, evolving, will become the super-man. That is what you say. Yes. It is so. But in My way. In My field. Not in yours. Not by passing from the state of quadrumana to that of men. *But passing from the state of men to that of spirits. The more the spirit grows, the more you will evolve.*

You who speak of glands, and fill your mouths speaking of hypophysis or of the pineal gland, and place in it the seat of life, taken not in the time in which you live but in the days that preceded and that will follow your present life, must know that your true gland, the one that makes you the eternal possessors of Life, *is your spirit. The more it develops, the more you will possess divine lights and will evolve from men to gods, to immortal gods*, and so, without contravening God's desire, His order concerning the tree of Life, *you will obtain the possession of this Life, exactly as God wants you to possess it*, because on your behalf He created it eternal and bright, a beatific embrace with His eternity that absorbs you in Itself and communicates Its properties to you.

The more your spirits are evolved, the more you will know God. To know God means to love Him and serve Him, and thus be able to invoke Him on your own behalf and on behalf of other people. *It means to become the priests who from the Earth pray for their brothers.* Because who is consecrated is a priest. *But also the convinced, loving, faithful believer is a priest. And a priest above all is the victim soul that sacrifices itself out of an impulse of charity.* God does not look at the garment, but at the mind. And I solemnly tell you that My eyes see many tonsured people who have nothing sacerdotal except their tonsures, and *they see many laymen in whom the Charity that possesses them and by which they allow themselves to be consumed is the Oil of ordination that makes them My priests*, unknown to the world but known to Me, and I bless them.»

603. John Goes to Get Mary.

10.30 a.m. Good Friday 1944 (7th April 1944).

1 My internal warner tells me that that was the time when John went to Mary.

I see the favourite apostle who looks even paler than when he was in Caiaphas' courtyard with Peter. Perhaps because the light of the fire there gave a reflection of heat to his cheeks, which now look hollow, as if he had suffered from a serious disease and were bloodless. His face emerges from his lilac tunic like that of a drowned man, so

deathlike is it. His eyes also are dimmed, his hair is dull and ruffled, his beard, which has grown during these hours, lays a veil of a light shade on his cheeks and chin, and as it is very fair, it makes him look even paler. There is nothing left in him of the kind joyful John, or of the angry John who shortly before, his face flushed with indignation, with difficulty restrained himself from manhandling Judas.

He knocks at the door of the house and, as if from inside someone, fearing he might find Judas in front of him again, were asking who was knocking, he replies: «It is I, John.» The door is opened and he goes in.

He also goes into the Supper-room, without replying to the mistress who had asked him: «But what is happening in town?»

He locks himself in and falls on his knees against the seat in which Jesus had sat and he weeps calling Him sadly. He kisses the tablecloth on the spot where Jesus had joined His hands, he caresses the chalice that He held with His fingers... Then he says: «*Oh! Most High God, help me! Help me to tell the Mother! I have not got the heart!... And yet, I must tell Her. I must tell Her, because I am the only one left!*»

He stands up and is pensive. He touches the chalice again, as if he wished to draw strength from that object that the Master had touched. He looks around... In the corner in which Jesus had placed it, he sees the purificator used by the Master to dry His hands after washing the apostles' feet, and the other one with which He had girded His waist. He takes them, folds them, caresses them and kisses them.

He stands perplexed in the middle of the empty room. He says: «Let us go!», but he does not go towards the door. On the contrary, he goes back to the table and takes the chalice and the bread, a corner of which had been broken off by Jesus to give a morsel to Judas, after dipping it in the dish. He kisses them, he takes them and with the two purificators he presses them to his heart like reliefs. He repeats: «Let us go!» and sighs. He walks towards the little staircase and climbs it with stooping shoulders and dragging his reluctant feet. He opens the door and goes out.

2 «John, you have come?» Mary has reappeared at the door of Her room, leaning on the door-post as if She did not have enough strength to stand up by Herself.

John raises his head and looks at Her. He would like to speak, and he opens his mouth, but he does not manage. Two large tears stream down his cheeks. He lowers his head, ashamed of his weakness.

«*Come here, John. Do not weep. You must not weep. You have always loved Him and made Him happy. May that comfort you.*»

These words open the floodgates to the tears of John, who cries so loud and noisily, that the mistress appears with Mary Magdalene, Zebedee's wife and the other women...

«Come with Me, John.» Mary departs from the door-post and takes the disciple by the wrist, and drags him into the room, as if he were a little boy, and She closes the door gently, to be alone with him.

John does not react. But when he feels Mary's trembling hand rest on his head, he falls on his knees laying on the floor the objects he was holding against his heart, and with his face on the floor, holding the edge of Mary's mantle pressed on his excited face, he says sobbing: «Forgive me! Forgive me! Mother, forgive me!»

Mary, Who is standing and is utterly distressed, with one hand pressed against Her heart and the other one hanging by Her side, says in a heart-rending voice: «What must I forgive you, My poor son? What? Forgive you!»

John raises his face, showing it as it is, with no longer any trace of manly pride, the face of a poor weeping child, and he shouts: «For abandoning Him! For running away! For not defending Him! Oh! my Master! O Master, forgive me! I should have died, rather than abandon You! Mother, Mother, who will ever rid me of this remorse?»

«Peace, John. He forgives you, He has already forgiven you. He has never taken your bewilderment into consideration. He loves you.» Mary speaks with pauses between the short sentences, as if She were panting, holding one hand on John's head and pressing the other to Her poor heart that is throbbing with anguish.

«But even yesterday evening I was not able to understand... and I slept while He was asking us to be awake and comfort Him. I left my Jesus all alone! And then I ran away when that cursed man came with the rascals...»

«John, do not curse. Do not hate, John. Let the Father judge that. **3** Listen: where is He now?»

John falls again with his face on the floor, weeping louder.

«Tell Me, John. Where is My Son?»

«Mother... I... Mother, He is... Mother...»

«He has been condemned, I know. I am asking you: where is He just now.»

«I did everything in my power so that He might see me... I tried to apply to the mighty ones to obtain compassion, to make Him... to make Him suffer less. They have not hurt Him very badly...»

«Do not lie, John. Not even out of pity for a mother. You would not succeed. And it would be useless. I know. Since yesterday evening I have followed Him in His sorrow. You cannot see it, but My flesh is bruised by the same scourges as His, the same thorns are piercing My forehead, I felt the blows... everything. But now... I no longer see. Now I do not know where My Son is, Who has been condemned to the cross!.. to the cross!...

to the cross!... Oh! God, give Me strength! He must see Me. I must not feel My sorrow while He feels His. Then when everything... is over, then let Me die, o God, if You so wish. Not now. No, for His sake. So that He may see Me. Let us go, John. **4** Where is Jesus?»

«He is leaving Pilate's house. This clamour is the crowd shouting around Him, tied as He is, on the steps of the Praetorium, awaiting the cross, or already on His way to Golgotha.»

«Inform your mother, John, and the other women. And let us go. Take that chalice, that bread, those linens... Put them here. We shall find solace in them... later... and let us go.»

John picks up the objects left on the floor and goes out to call the women. Mary waits for him, rubbing Her face with those linens as though She wanted to find the caress of Her Son's hand in them, and She kisses the chalice and the bread, and places everything on a shelf. And She envelops Herself in Her mantle, which She lowers as far as Her eyes, over the veil that wraps Her head and is folded round Her neck. She does not weep, but She is trembling. And She seems to be short of breath, as She pants so much with her mouth open. John comes back in, followed by the weeping women.

«My dear daughters! Be silent! Help me not to weep! Let us go.» And She leans on John, who guides and supports Her as if She were blind.

The vision ends thus. It is 12.30, that is 11.30 solar time.

604. The Way of the Cross from the Praetorium to Calvary.

26th March 1945.

1 Some time goes by so, not more than half an hour, perhaps even less. Then Longinus, who is entrusted with the task of superintending the execution, gives his orders.

But before Jesus is taken outside, into the street, to receive the cross and set out, Longinus, who has looked at Him twice or three times, with a curiosity that is already tinged with compassion and with the expert eye of one who is accustomed to certain situations, approaches Jesus with a soldier and offers Him a refreshment: a cup of wine, I think. In fact he pours a light blond rosy liquid out of a real military canteen. «It will do You good. You must be thirsty. And the sun is shining outside. And the way is a long one.»

And Jesus replies to him: «May God reward you for your compassion. But do not deprive yourself of it.»

«I am healthy and strong... You... I am not depriving myself... And even if I were... I would do it willingly, to give You some solace... A draught... to show me that You do not hate heathens.»

Jesus no longer refuses and takes a draught of the drink. As His hands are already untied and He no longer has the cane or the chlamys, He can do it by Himself. But He refuses to take more, although the good cool drink should be a great relief to His fever, which is already showing itself in the red streaks that inflame His pale cheeks and His dry lips.

«Take some, take it. It is water and honey. It will give You strength and quench Your thirst... I feel pity for You... yes... pity... It was not You Who was to be killed among the Jews... Who knows!... I do not hate You... and I will try to make You suffer only what is necessary.»

But Jesus does not drink any more... He is really thirsty... The dreadful thirst of those who have lost much blood and are feverish... He knows that it is not a drink with narcotics, and He would drink it willingly. But He does not want to suffer less. But I realise, as I understand what I am saying through an internal light, that the compassion of the Roman is of greater solace to Him than the water sweetened with honey.

«May God reward you with His blessings for this solace» He then says. And He smiles again... a heart-rending smile with His swollen wounded lips, which move with difficulty, also because the severe contusion between His nose and His right cheek-bone, caused by the blow with a cudgel He received in the court-yard after the flagellation, is swelling consider ably.

2 The two robbers arrive, each surrounded by a decury of soldiers. It is time to go. Longinus gives the last instructions.

A century is set out in two lines, at about three meters from each other, and moves thus into the square, where another century has formed a square barrier to drive the crowd back, so that it may not obstruct the procession. In the little square there are already some mounted soldiers: a cavalry decury with a young non-commissioned officer who commands it and has the ensign. A foot-soldier is holding the bridle of the centurion's black horse. Longinus mounts and goes to his place, about two metres in front of the eleven mounted soldiers.

The crosses are brought. Those of the two robbers are shorter. Jesus' is much longer. I say that the vertical stake is not less than four metres long.

I see that it is already assembled when they bring it. With regard to this matter, I read, when I used to read... that is, years ago, that the cross was assembled on the top of Golgotha and that along the way the condemned men carried only the two poles bundled together on their shoulders. Everything is possible. But I see a true cross, well

formed, solid, perfectly mortised at the crossing of the two arms and well reinforced with nails and screw bolts at the junction. And in fact, if one considers that it was destined to support a substantial weight, such as the body of a grown-up person, and had to sustain it also in its last convulsions, one understands that it could not be assembled there and then on the narrow uncomfortable top of Calvary.

Before giving the cross to Jesus, they tie the board with the inscription «Jesus Nazarene King of the Jews» round His neck. And the rope that holds it, gets entangled with the crown, which is moved and scratches where it is not already scratched, and pierces new parts, causing fresh pain and making fresh blood spout. The people laugh with sadistic joy, they abuse and curse.

They are now ready. And Longinus gives the order of march. «First the Nazarene, behind Him the two robbers; a decury around each of them, the other seven decuries positioned on the flank as reinforcements, and the soldier who allows the condemned men to be wounded mortally will be held responsible.»

3 Jesus comes down the three steps that from the lobby take one into the square. And it is immediately clear that Jesus is in an extremely weak condition. He stragglers coming down the three steps, hampered by the cross weighing on His shoulder all covered with sores, by the board of the inscription that sways in front of Him cutting into His neck, by the oscillations caused to the body by the long stake of the cross, which bounces on the steps and on the uneven ground.

The Jews laugh seeing Him stagger along like a drunk man and they shout to the soldiers: «Push Him. Make Him fall. In the dust the blasphemer!» But the soldiers do only what they have to do, that is, they order the Condemned One to stay in the middle of the road and walk.

Longinus spurs his horse and the procession begins to move slowly. And Longinus would also like to make haste, taking the shortest route to Golgotha, because he is not sure of the resistance of the Condemned One. But the unrestrained mob – and it is even an honour to call it so – does not want that. Those who are more cunning have already run ahead, to the crossroads where the road forks, going towards the walls along one way, and towards the town along the other and they riot, shouting, when they see Longinus try to take the way towards the walls. «You must not do that! You must not! It is not legal! The Law prescribes that condemned men are to be seen in the town where they sinned!» The Jews at the rear of the procession realise that at the front they are trying to defraud them of a right, and they join their shouts to those of their colleagues.

For peace sake Longinus turns along the way that takes towards the town and goes a short distance along it. But he beckons to a decurion to approach him (I say decurion because he is the noncommissioned officer, but perhaps he is what we would call an

orderly officer) and he says something to him in a low voice. This man trots back, and as he meets each decury commander, he conveys the order. He then goes back to Longinus to inform him that it has been done. And finally he goes to the place where he was previously, in the line behind Longinus.

4 Jesus proceeds panting. Each hole in the ground is a trap for His staggering feet, a torture for His shoulders covered with wounds, and for His head crowned with thorns, also because the sun, which is exceedingly warm, although now and again it hides behind a leaden awning of clouds, shines perpendicular on it. So even it is concealed, it still burns. Jesus is congested with fatigue, fever and heat. I think that also the light and the howling must be a torture for Him. And if He cannot stop His ears in order not to hear so much coarse shouting, He half closes His eyes not to see the road dazzling in the sunshine... But He must also reopen them, because He stumbles over stones and holes, and each stumble is painful, as it jerks the cross, which knocks against the crown, which rubs against the wounded shoulder, widening the sores and increasing the pain.

The Jews cannot hit Him directly any longer. But odd stones and blows with cudgels still strike Him. The former, particularly in the little squares crowded with people. The latter, instead, at bends, along the narrow streets with frequent steps going up or down, at times one, at times three, at times more, because of the continuous variations of the ground. The procession is compelled to slow down at such places, and there is always some volunteer (!) who challenges the Roman lances if only to add a finishing touch to the masterpiece of torture that Jesus is by now.

The soldiers defend Him as best they can. But they strike Him as well, while trying to defend Him, because the long lances waved about in such narrow spaces, knock against Him and make Him stumble. But upon arriving at a certain spot, the soldiers make a perfect manoeuvre and, notwithstanding shouts and threats, the procession deviates abruptly along a street that goes directly towards the walls, downhill, a good short cut to the place of the execution.

Jesus is panting more and more. Perspiration is streaming down His face, together with the blood that trickles from the wounds of the crown of thorns. And dust sticks to His wet face leaving queer stains on it. Because also the wind is blowing now. Continual gusts at long intervals, during which the dust falls after being raised in whirlwinds by each gust, and is blown into eyes and throats.

Many people have already assembled at the Judicial Gate, that is, those who providently and in good time have chosen a good place to see. But shortly before arriving there Jesus almost falls. Only the quick intervention of a soldier, on whom He almost falls, prevents Him from falling on the ground. The rabble laugh and shout: «Leave Him! He used to say to everybody: “Rise”. Let Him rise now...»

Beyond the Gate there is a stream and a little bridge. Walking on the uneven boards is a

new fatigue for Jesus, as the long stake of the cross bounces on them even more violently. And there is a new mine of projectiles for the Jews. The stones of the stream fly and hit the poor Martyr...

5 The ascent to Calvary begins. A barren road, without the least shade, paved with uneven stones, that goes straight up the hill. Here again, when I used to read, I read that Calvary was a few metres high. It may be so. It is certainly not a mountain. But it is a hill, not certainly lower than the mount of the Crosses is, with respect to the Lungarni, where the Basilica of Saint Miniato is in Florence. Someone may say: «Oh! not much!» Yes, for one who is healthy and strong it is not much. But it is enough to have a weak heart to feel whether it is much or little!... I know that after I began to suffer from heart trouble, even if only in a mild form, I could no longer go up that hill without suffering a great deal and I was compelled to stop now and again, and I had no load on my shoulders. And I think that Jesus' heart must have been in a very bad state after the flagellation and sweating blood... and I take only these two things into consideration.

So Jesus suffers tremendously in climbing, also because of the weight of the cross which, being so long, must be very heavy. He finds a protruding stone and as He is exhausted, He can lift His feet only a little, so He stumbles and falls on His right knee, but He can hold Himself up with His left hand. The crowd howls with joy...

He gets up again. He proceeds, bending and panting more and more, congested, feverish... The board that swings in front of Him obstructs His sight; His long tunic, the front part of which trails on the ground, as He now walks bending, hampers His steps. He stumbles again and falls on both knees, hurting Himself where He is already wounded; and the cross, which slips out of His hands and falls, after striking His back violently, compels Him to bend to pick it up and to toil painfully to put it back on His shoulder. While He does so, one can clearly see on His right shoulder the wound made by the rubbing of the cross, which has opened the many sores of the scourges, making them all into one, from which serum and blood transude, so that spot of His white tunic is all stained. The people even applaud for the joy of seeing Him fall so badly...

Longinus urges to make haste and the soldiers, striking with the flat of their daggers, press poor Jesus to proceed. He sets out again more and more slowly, despite all solicitations. Jesus seems completely intoxicated, as He sways so much, knocking against one or the other lines of soldiers, wandering all over the road. And the people notice it and shout: «His doctrine has gone to His head. Look, look, how He staggers!»

And others, and they are not of the people, but priests and scribes, say with a grin: «No. It is still the fumes of the banquets in Lazarus' house. Were they good? Take our food now...» And other sentences of the kind.

6 Longinus, who turns round now and again, feels sorry for Him and orders a few minutes' stop. And the rabble insults him so much that the centurion orders the soldiers

to charge them. And the faint-hearted crowds at the sight of the shining threatening lances, run away shouting and hurling themselves here and there down the mountain.

It is here that, among the few people who have remained, I again see the small group of the shepherds appear from behind some ruins, probably of a collapsed low wall. They are desolate, upset, dusty, in rags, and with the power of their glances they attract the Master's attention. He turns His head round, He sees them... He looks at them fixedly as if they were the faces of angels, He seems to quench His thirst and fortify Himself with their tears, and He smiles... The order to resume the march is given and Jesus passes just in front of them and He hears their anguished weeping. With difficulty He turns His head round from under the yoke of the cross and He smiles once again... His solace... Ten faces... a rest in the burning sun...

And immediately afterwards, the pain of the third fall, a complete one. And this time He does not stumble. He falls because of a sudden lack of strength, due to a syncope. He falls headlong, knocking His face on the uneven stones, and He remains in the dust under the cross that falls on Him. The soldiers try to raise Him. But as He seems to be dead, they go and inform the centurion.

While they go and come back, Jesus comes to Himself, and slowly, with the help of two soldiers, one of whom lifts the cross and the other helps the Condemned One to stand up, He puts Himself in His place again. But He is really exhausted.

«Make sure that He dies only on the cross!» shout the crowd.

«If you let Him die beforehand, you will answer to the Proconsul, bear that in your minds. The culprit must arrive alive at the execution place» say the chief scribes to the soldiers. The latter cast withering glances at them, but discipline prevents them from speaking.

7 But Longinus is just as afraid as the Jews that the Christ may die on the road, and he does not want to have troubles. Without needing to be reminded, he knows what is his duty as officer responsible for the execution and he takes action.

He takes action disconcerting the Jews who have already ran ahead along the road that they have reached from all over the mountain, sweating, scratching themselves to pass among the few thorny bushes of the bare burnt mountain, falling on the rubble encumbering it as if it were a dump for Jerusalem, without feeling any pain except that of missing the panting of the Martyr, one of His sorrowful glances, a gesture, even an involuntary one, of suffering, and with no other fear but that of not being successful in having a good place. So Longinus gives the order to take the longer road that winds up the mountain and is therefore not so steep.

This road seems a path that by dint of being used by many people has changed into a rather comfortable road. This crossroad is situated about half-way up the mountain. But

I see that farther up, the straight road is crossed four times by this one, which climbs with a slighter slope and to compensate for this is much longer. And many people are going up this road, but they do not participate in this shameful uproar of people possessed, who follow Jesus to take delight in His tortures. They are mostly women, weeping and veiled, and some small groups of men, very small ones indeed, who are much ahead of the women and are about to pass from sight, when going on their way, the road turns round the mountain.

Calvary here looks somehow pointed in its odd structure, which is snout-shaped on one side, whilst on the other side it drops sheer. The men disappear behind the stony point and I lose sight of them.

8 The people following Jesus are shouting with rage. It was more pleasant for them to see Him fall. While hurling obscene imprecations at the Condemned One and at those leading Him, some follow the judicial procession, and some go on almost running up the steep road, to make up for the disappointment received, by having a very good position on the top.

The women, who are proceeding weeping, turn round upon hearing the shouts, and see the procession turn towards them. Then they stop, leaning against the mountain, lest they should be pushed down the slope by the violent Jews. They lower their veils on their faces even more, and there is one completely covered with her veil, like a Muslim, leaving only her very dark eyes free. They are sumptuously dressed and they have a strong old man to defend them, but all enveloped as he is in his mantle, I cannot see his face clearly. I can only see his long beard, which is more white than dark, stick out of his very dark mantle.

When Jesus arrives near them, they weep more loudly and bow low to Him. Then they move forward resolutely. The soldiers would like to drive them back with their lances. But the one who is all covered like a Muslim moves her veil aside for a moment before the ensign, who has just arrived on horseback to see what is the cause of this new hindrance, and he orders the soldiers to let her pass. I cannot see her face or her dress, because the shifting of the veil is done with the speed of a flash, and her dress is all concealed under a heavy mantle that reaches down to the ground and is completely closed by a set of buckles. The hand that comes out from there for a moment to shift the veil, is white and beautiful. And it is the only thing, in addition to her very dark eyes, that can be seen of this tall matron, who is certainly influential if she is so promptly obeyed by Longinus' adjutant.

9 They approach Jesus weeping and kneel at His feet, while He stops panting... and yet He still knows how to smile at those compassionate women and at their escort, who uncovers himself to show that he is Jonathan. But the guards do not let him pass. Only the women.

One of them is Johanna of Chuza. And she is more haggard than when she was dying. Only the traces of her tears are red, all her face is snow-white with her kind dark eyes, which, dimmed as they are, seem to have become a very dark violet shade like certain flowers. In her hand she has a silver amphora and offers it to Jesus. But He refuses it. In any case, He is so breathless that He would not even be able to drink. With His left hand He wipes the sweat and blood that trickles into His eyes and that, streaming down His purple face and neck, the veins of which are swollen through the laboured throbbing of His heart, wets all His tunic at the chest.

Another woman, who is accompanied by a young maidservant holding a small casket in her arms, opens it and takes out a square piece of very fine linen cloth, and offers it to the Redeemer. He accepts it. And as He cannot manage by Himself with one hand only, the compassionate woman helps Him to take it to His face, watching not to knock against His crown. And Jesus presses the cool linen cloth to His poor face and holds it there, as if He felt a great relief.

He then hands the linen cloth back and He says: «Thank you, Johanna, thank you, Nike,... Sarah,... Marcella,... Eliza,... Lydia,... Anne,... Valeria,... and you... But... do not weep... for Me... daughters of... Jerusalem... But for your sins... and for those... of your town... Bless... Johanna... for not having... more sons... See... It is God's mercy... not... not to have sons... because... they suffer... for this... And you... too, Elizabeth... Better... as it was... than among deicides... And you... mothers... weep for... your sons, because... this hour will not pass... without punishment... And what a punishment, if it is so for... the Innocent... You will weep then... for having conceived... suckled and for... having more... sons... The mothers... of those days... will weep because... I solemnly tell you... that he will be lucky... who then... will be... the first... to fall... under the ruins. I bless you... Go... home... pray... for Me. Goodbye, Jonathan... take them away...»

And in the midst of the loud noise of weeping women and cursing Judaeans, Jesus sets out again.

10 Jesus is once again completely wet with perspiration. Also the soldiers and the other two condemned men are perspiring, because the sun this stormy day is as burning as flames, and the side of the mountain, very warm by itself, increases the heat of the sun. What this sun must feel like on Jesus' woolen garment placed on the wounds of the scourges, one can easily imagine and be horror-stricken at the idea...

But He never moans. But although the road is not so steep as the other one and it is not strewn with uneven stones, which were so dangerous to His feet that He is now dragging, Jesus is staggering more and more, and once again He knocks first into one line of soldiers and then into the other and is bent more than previously.

They decide to overcome the difficulty by passing a rope round His waist and holding the two ends as if they were reins. It does in fact support Him, but it does not make His

load any lighter. On the contrary the rope, knocking against the cross, shifts it continuously on His shoulder and makes it strike the crown, which by now has turned Jesus' forehead into a bleeding tattoo mark. Further, the rope rubs against His waist, where there are many wounds, and it certainly makes them bleed again, in fact His white tunic is tinged with pale red at the waist. So, in order to help Him, they make Him suffer more.

11 The road continues. It goes round the mountain, it comes back almost to the front, towards the steep road. Here, there is Mary with John. I should say that John has taken Her to that shady place, behind the slope of the mountain, to give Her some relief. It is the steepest part of the mountain. There is no other road going round it. Above and under it the slope rises or descends steeply, and that is why the cruel people have abandoned it. It is shady there, because I should say that it is the north, and Mary, leaning as She is on the mountain side, is protected from the sun. She is leaning against the slope, standing, but already exhausted, panting, as white as death, in Her very dark blue dress, which is almost black. John looks at Her with desolate pity. He has no trace of colour on his face either, and he looks wan, with wide-open tired eyes, unkempt, and his cheeks are sunken as if he were suffering from a disease.

The other women – Mary and Martha of Lazarus, Mary of Alphaeus and Mary of Zebedee, Susanna from Cana, the mistress of the house and some more whom I do not know – are all in the middle of the road looking to see whether the Saviour is coming. And when they see Longinus arrive, they rush towards Mary to inform Her. And Mary, supported by John who is holding Her by the elbow, departs from the hillside, stately in Her grief, and places Herself resolutely in the middle of the road, moving aside only at the arrival of Longinus, who from the height of his black horse looks at the pale Woman and at Her blond wan companion, whose meek eyes are blue like Hers. And Longinus shakes his head while passing by followed by the eleven soldiers on horseback.

Mary tries to pass through the dismounted soldiers, who, being warm and in a hurry, strive to drive Her back with their lances, all the more that stones are thrown from the paved road, as a protest against so much compassion. It is the Jews, who once again curse because of the halt brought about by the pious women and say: «Quick! It is Easter tomorrow. Everything must be accomplished by this evening! You are accomplices who deride our Law! Oppressors! Death to the invaders and to their Christ! They love Him! Look how they love Him! Well, take Him! Put Him in your cursed Eternal City! We surrender Him to you! We don't want Him! Let rotters be with rotters! And leprosy with lepers!»

12 Longinus gets tired and followed by the ten lancers he spurs his horse against the reviling pack of hounds, who run away for the second time. And in doing so he sees a cart standing still, which has certainly come up from the vegetable-gardens at the foot

of the mountain and is waiting for the crowds to pass, so that it may go down towards the town with its load of greens. I think that curiosity has made the man from Cyrene and his sons go up there, because it was not necessary for him to do so. The two sons, lying on the top of the green pile of vegetables, look and laugh at the fleeing Judeans. The man, instead, a very strong man, about forty-fifty years old, standing near the little donkey, which is frightened and tries to draw back, looks attentively at the procession.

Longinus looks him up and down. He thinks that he can be useful and says to him in a commanding voice: «Man, come here.»

The man from Cyrene feigns he has not heard. But one cannot trifle with Longinus. He repeats the order in such a way that the man throws the reins to one of his sons and approaches the centurion.

«Do you see that man?» he asks. And in doing so, he turns round to point out Jesus and he sees Mary, Who is imploring the soldiers to let Her pass. He takes pity on Her and he shouts: «Let the Woman pass.» He then resumes speaking to the man from Cyrene: «He cannot proceed further laden as He is. You are strong. Take His cross and carry it in His stead as far as the summit.»

«I cannot... I have the donkey... it is restive... the boys cannot hold it...»

But Longinus says: «Go, if you do not want to lose your donkey and get twenty blows as punishment.»

The man from Cyrene dare no longer react. He shouts to the boys: «Go home and be quick. And say that I am coming at once» and he then goes towards Jesus.

13 He reaches Him just when Jesus turns towards His Mother, Whom only now He sees coming towards Him, because He is proceeding so bent and with His eyes almost closed, as if He were blind, and He shouts: «Mother!»

Since He began being tortured, it is the first word that expresses His sufferings. Because in that cry there is the confession of everything, and all the dreadful sorrow of His spirit, of His morale, of His body. It is the heart-broken and heart-breaking cry of a little boy who dies all alone, among torturers and the most cruel tortures... and who goes so far as to be afraid of his own breathing. It is the wailing of a raving little boy tormented by nightmare visions... and wants his mummy, his dear mummy, because only her fresh kisses soothe the ardour of his fever, her voice dispels phantoms, her embrace makes death less fearful...

Mary presses Her hand against Her heart, as if She had been stabbed, and She staggers lightly. But She collects Herself, quickens Her step and while going towards Her tortured Son with outstretched arms, She shouts: «Son!» But She says so in such a way that whoever has not got the heart of a hyena, feels it is breaking because of so much

grief.

I notice signs of compassion even among the Romans... and yet they are soldiers, accustomed to slaughters, marked by scars... But the words: «Mother!» and «Son!» are always the same for all those who, I repeat it, are not worse than hyenas, they are understood everywhere and they raise waves of compassion everywhere...

The man from Cyrene feels such pity... And as he sees that Mary cannot embrace Her Son because of the cross, and that after stretching Her arms out, She lets them drop, convinced that She is unable to do so – and She only looks at Him, striving to smile with Her smile of a martyr to encourage Him, while Her trembling lips drink Her tears, and He, turning His head round, from under the yoke of the cross, tries in His turn to smile at Her and send Her a kiss with His poor lips, wounded and split by blows and fever – he hastens to remove the cross, and he does so with the gentleness of a father, in order not to give a shove to the crown or rub against His sores.

But Mary cannot kiss Her Son... Even the lightest touch would be a torture for His torn flesh, and Mary refrains, and then... the most holy feelings have a profound modesty and they exact respect or at least compassion, whilst here there is curiosity, and above all, mockery. Only the two anguished souls kiss each other.

The procession, which sets out again under the pressure of the waves of the furious people, divides them, pushing the Mother against the mountain, to be sneered at by all the people...

Behind Jesus there is now the man from Cyrene with the cross. And Jesus, freed of that weight, is proceeding more easily. He is panting violently, He often presses His hand against His heart, as if He had a great pain or a wound there, in the sternum-heart region, and now, since His hands are no longer tied and He is able to do so, He pushes His hair, which had fallen forward and is sticky with blood and perspiration, behind His ears, to feel some air on His cyanotic face, He unties the cord round His neck, as it makes Him suffer in breathing... But He can walk better.

Mary has withdrawn with the women. She follows the procession once it has passed, and then, along a short cut, She turns Her steps towards the top of the mountain, defying the insults of the cannibalistic populace.

14 Now that Jesus can walk freely, the last stretch of the road around the mountain is soon covered, and they are already close to the top crowded with shouting people.

Longinus stops and orders his men to inexorably repel everybody farther down, so that the top, the place of the execution, may be free. And one half of the century carries out the order, rushing to the spot and mercilessly driving back whoever is there, making use of their daggers and lances to do so. The hail of blows with the flat of swords and clubs makes the Jews run away from the top, and they would like to stop in the open space

below. But those already there do not give in and the people begin to brawl fiercely. They all seem to be mad.

As I told you last year, the top of Calvary is shaped like an irregular trapezium, slightly higher on the right side, after which the mountain descends steeply for more than half of its height. In this little open space there are already three deep holes, lined with bricks or slates, that is, built for a special purpose. Near them there are stones and earth ready to prop the crosses. Other holes instead are full of stones. It is obvious that they empty them each time according to the number required.

Under the trapezoidal summit, on the side of the mountain that does not descend steeply, there is a kind of platform that slopes down gently forming a second little open space. Two wide paths depart from it going round the top, which is thus isolated and raised at least two metres in height on all sides.

The soldiers, who have driven the people away from the top, with convincing blows of their lances subdue quarrels and make room, so that the procession may pass without any hindrance on the last stretch of the road, and they remain there forming a double hedge while the three condemned men, surrounded by the soldiers on horseback and protected behind by the other half of the century, arrive at the spot where they are stopped: at the foot of the natural raised platform that is the summit of Golgotha.

15 While that takes place, I see the Maries, and a little behind them there is Johanna of Chuza with the other four ladies mentioned previously. The others have withdrawn. And they must have gone by themselves, because Jonathan is still there, behind his mistress. The one we call Veronica and whom Jesus called Nike, is no longer there and also her maidservant is absent. And also the one, who was all covered with a veil and was obeyed by the soldiers, is no longer there. I can see Johanna, the old woman named Eliza, Anne (the mistress of the house where Jesus went for the vintage in the first year of His public life), and two more whom I cannot identify.

Behind these women and the Maries I can see Joseph and Simon of Alphaeus, and Alphaeus of Sarah with the group of the shepherds. They have scuffled with those who wanted to repel them insulting them, and the strength of these men, increased by their love and grief, has been so powerful that they defeated their opponents, forming a free semicircle at which the very pusillanimous Jews dare only to hurl cries of death and shake their fists. But nothing else, because the crooks of the shepherds are knotty and heavy, and these valiant men lack neither strength nor the ability to aim accurately. And I am not wrong in saying so. It takes real courage for a few men, known as Galileans or followers of the Galilean Master, to oppose a hostile population. It is the only place on the whole of Calvary in which Christ is not cursed!

The mountain, on the three sides on which the slopes descend gently towards the valley, is all crowded with people. The yellowish barren earth can no longer be seen. In the sun

that appears and disappears, it looks like a flowery meadow with corollas of all colours, so numerous and close together are the headgears and mantles of the sadists standing there. More people are beyond the torrent, on the road, and more beyond the walls. And there are more on the terraces, which are closer. The rest of the town is deserted... empty... silent. They are all here. All the love and all the hatred. All the Silence that loves and forgives. All the Clamour that hates and curses.

16 While the men responsible for the execution prepare their instruments, finishing emptying the holes, and the men condemned await in the middle of the square formed by the soldiers, the Jews, who have taken shelter in the corner opposite the Maries, insult them. They insult also the Mother: «Death to the Galileans. Death! Galileans! Galileans! Curse them! Death to the Galilean blasphemer. Nail on the cross also the womb that bore Him! Away from here the vipers that give birth to demons! Death to them! Clear Israel of the females who copulate with the billy-goat!...»

Longinus, who has dismounted, turns round and sees the Mother... He orders his men to stop the uproar... The fifty soldiers who were behind the condemned men charge the rabble and clear the second esplanade completely, as the Jews run away along the mountain, treading on one another. Also the other soldiers dismount, and one takes the eleven horses, in addition to that of the centurion, and takes them to a shady spot, behind the ridge of the mountain.

The centurion sets out towards the top. Johanna of Chuza moves forward and stops him. She gives him an amphora and a purse. She then withdraws weeping, and goes towards the edge of the mountain with the other women.

17 Everything is ready on the summit. They make the condemned men go up. And once again Jesus passes near His Mother, Who utters a groan, which She tries to stifle, by pressing Her mantle against Her lips.

The Jews notice it, they laugh and deride. John, the meek John, who has one arm round Mary's shoulders to support Her, turns round and glares at them. Even his eyes are phosphorescent. If he did not have to protect the women, I think that he would grip one of the cowards by the throat.

As soon as the condemned men are on the fatal platform, the soldiers surround the open space on three sides. Only the one that drops sheer is empty.

The centurion orders the man from Cyrene to go away. And he goes away, unwillingly now, and I would not say out of sadism, but out of love. In fact he stops near the Galileans, sharing with them the insults that the crowds give liberally to these haggard believers of the Christ.

The two robbers throw their crosses on the ground swearing. Jesus is silent.

The sorrowful way has come to its end.

605. The Crucifixion.

27th March 1945.

1 Four brawny men, who look like Judaeans, and Judaeans more worthy of the cross than the condemned men, certainly of the same category as the scourgers, jump from a path onto the place of the execution. They are wearing short sleeveless tunics, and in their hands they are holding nails, hammers and ropes, which they show to the condemned men scoffing at them. The crowd is excited with cruel frenzy.

The centurion offers Jesus the amphora, so that He may drink the anaesthetic mixture of myrrhed wine. But Jesus refuses it. The two robbers instead drink a lot of it. Then the amphora, with a wide flared mouth, is placed near a large stone, almost on the edge of the summit.

2 The condemned men are ordered to undress. The two robbers do so without shame. On the contrary they amuse themselves making obscene gestures towards the crowd, and in particular towards a group of priests, who are all white in their linen garments, and who have gone back to the lower open space little by little, taking advantage of their caste to creep up there. The priests have been joined by two or three Pharisees and other overbearing personages, whom hatred has made friends. And I see people I know, such as the Pharisees Johanan and Ishmael, the scribes Sadoc and Eli of Capernaum...

The executioners offer the condemned men three rags, so that they may tie them round their groins. The robbers take them uttering the most horrible curses. Jesus, Who strips Himself slowly because of the pangs of the wounds, refuses it. He perhaps thinks that He can keep on the short drawers, which He had on also during the flagellation. But when He is told to take them off as well, He stretches out His hand to beg for the rag of the executioners to conceal His nakedness. He is really the Annihilated One to the extent of having to ask a rag of criminals.

But Mary has noticed everything and She has removed the long thin white veil covering Her head under Her dark mantle, and on which She has already shed so many tears. She removes it without letting Her mantle drop and gives it to John so that he may hand it to Longinus for Her Son. The centurion takes the veil without any objection and, when he sees that Jesus is about to strip Himself completely, facing the side where there are no people, and thus turning towards the crowd His back furrowed with bruises and blisters, and covered with sores and dark crusts that are bleeding again, he gives Him His Mother's linen veil. Jesus recognises it and wraps it round His pelvis several times,

fastening it carefully so that it may not fall off... And on the linen veil, so far soaked only with tears, the first drops of blood begin to fall, because many of the wounds, just covered with blood-clots, have reopened again, as He stooped to take off His sandals and lay down His garments, and blood is streaming down again.

3 Jesus now turns towards the crowd. And one can thus see that also His chest, legs and arms have all been struck by the scourges. At the height of His liver there is a huge bruise, and under His left costal arch there are seven clear stripes in relief, ending with seven small cuts bleeding inside a violaceous circle... a cruel blow of a scourge in such a sensitive region of the diaphragm. His knees, bruised by repeated falls that began immediately after He was captured and ended on Calvary, are dark with hematomas and the knee-caps are torn, particularly the right one, by a large bleeding wound.

The crowds scoff at Him in chorus: «Oh! Handsome! The most handsome of the sons of men! The daughters of Jerusalem adore You...» And in the tone of a psalm they intone: «My beloved is fresh and ruddy, to be known among ten thousand. His head is purest gold, his locks are palm fronds, as silky as the feathers of ravens. His eyes are like two doves bathing in streams not of water, but of milk, in the milk of his orbit. His cheeks are beds of spices, his lips are purple lilies distilling precious myrrh. His hands are rounded like the work of a goldsmith ending in rosy hyacinths. His trunk is ivory veined with sapphires. His legs are perfect columns of white marble on bases of gold. His majesty is like that of Lebanon; he is more majestic than the tall cedar. His conversation is drenched with sweetness and he is altogether delightful»; and they laugh and shout also: «The leper! The leper! So have You fornicated with an idol, if God has struck You so? Have You mumbled against the saints of Israel, as Mary of Moses did, if You have been punished so? Oh! Oh! the Perfect One! Are You the Son of God? Certainly not. You are the abortion of Satan! At least he, Mammon, is powerful and strong. You... are in rags, You are powerless and revolting.»

4 The robbers are tied to the crosses and they are carried to their places, one to the right, one to the left, with regard to the place destined to Jesus. They howl, swear, curse, particularly when the crosses are carried to the holes, and they hurt them making the ropes cut into their wrists, their oaths against God, the Law, the Romans, the Judaeans are hellish.

It is Jesus' turn. He lies on the cross meekly. The two robbers were so rebellious that, as the four executioners were not sufficient to hold them, some soldiers had to intervene, to prevent them from kicking away the torturers who were tying their wrists to the cross. But no help is required for Jesus. He lies down and places His head where they tell Him. He stretches out His arms and His legs as He is told. He only takes care to arrange His veil properly. Now His long, slender white body stands out against the dark wood and the yellow ground.

5 Two executioners sit on His chest to hold Him fast. And I think of the oppression and

pain He must have felt under that weight. A third one takes His right arm, holding Him with one hand on the first part of His forearm and the other on the tips of His fingers. The fourth one, who already has in his hand the long sharp-pointed quadrangular nail, ending with a round flat head, as big as a large coin of bygone days, watches whether the hole already made in the wood corresponds to the radius-ulnar joint of the wrist. It does. The executioner places the point of the nail on the wrist, he raises the hammer and gives the first stroke.

Jesus, Who had closed His eyes, utters a cry and has a contraction because of the sharp pain, and opens His eyes flooded with tears. The pain He suffers must be dreadful... The nail penetrates, tearing muscles, veins, nerves, shattering bones...

Mary replies to the cry of Her tortured Son with a groan that sounds almost like the moaning of a slaughtered lamb; and She bends, as if She were crushed, holding Her head in Her hands. In order not to torture Her, Jesus utters no more cries. But the strokes continue, methodical and hard, iron striking iron... and we must consider that a living limb receives them.

The right hand is now nailed. They pass on to the left one. The hole in the wood does not correspond to the carpus. So they take a rope, they tie it to the left wrist and they pull it until the joint is dislocated, tearing tendons and muscles, besides lacerating the skin already cut into by the ropes used to capture Him. The other hand must suffer as well, because it is stretched as a consequence, and the hole in it widens round the nail. Now the beginning of the metacarpus, near the wrist, hardly arrives at the hole. They resign themselves and they nail the hand where they can, that is, between the thumb and the other fingers, just in the middle of the metacarpus. The nail penetrates more easily here, but with greater pain, because it cuts important nerves, so that the fingers remain motionless, whilst those of the right hand have contractions and tremors that denote their vitality. But Jesus no longer utters cries, He only moans in a deep hoarse voice with His lips firmly closed, while tears of pain fall on the ground after falling on the wood.

6 It is now the turn of His feet. At two metres and more from the foot of the cross there is a small wedge, hardly sufficient for one foot. Both feet are placed on it to see whether it is in the right spot, and as it is a little low and the feet hardly reach it, they pull the poor Martyr by His malleoli. So the coarse wood of the cross rubs on the wounds, moves the crown that tears His hair once again and is on the point of falling. One of the executioners presses it down on His head again with a slap...

Those who were sitting on Jesus' chest, now get up to move to His knees, because Jesus with an involuntary movement withdraws His legs upon seeing the very long nail, which is twice as long and thick as those used for the hands, shine in the sunshine. They weigh on His flayed knees and press on His poor bruised shins, while the other two are performing the much more difficult operation of nailing one foot on top of the other,

trying to combine the two joints of the tarsi.

Although they try to keep the feet still, holding them by the malleoli and toes on the wedge, the foot underneath is shifted by the vibrations of the nail, and they have almost to unnailed it, because the nail, which has pierced the tender parts and is already blunt having pierced the right foot, is to be moved a little closer to the centre. And they hammer, and hammer, and hammer... Only the dreadful noise of the hammer striking the head of the nail is heard, because all Calvary is nothing but eyes and ears to perceive acts and noises and rejoice...

The harsh noise of iron is accompanied by the low plaintive lament of a dove: the hoarse groaning of Mary, Who bends more and more at each stroke, as if the hammer wounded Her, the Martyr Mother. And one understands that She is about to be crushed by such torture. Crucifixion is dreadful, equal to flagellation with regard to pain, it is more cruel to be seen, because one sees the nails disappear in the flesh. But in compensation it is shorter, whereas flagellation is enervating because of its duration.

I think that the Agony at Gethsemane, the Flagellation and the Crucifixion are the most dreadful moments. They reveal all the torture of the Christ to me. His death relieves me, because I say: «It is all over!» But they are not the end. They are the beginning of new sufferings.

7 The cross is now dragged near the hole and it jerks on the uneven ground shaking the poor Crucified. The cross is raised and twice it slips out of the hands of those raising it; the first time it falls with a crash, the second time it falls on its right arm, causing terrible pain to Jesus, because the jerk He receives shakes His wounded limbs.

But when they let the cross drop into its hole and before being made fast with stones and earth, it sways in all directions, continuously, shifting the poor Body, hanging from three nails, the suffering must be atrocious. All the weight of the body moves forward and downwards, and the holes become wider, particularly the one of the left hand, and also the hole of the feet widens out, while the blood drips more copiously. And if that of the feet trickles along the toes onto the ground and along the wood of the cross, that of the hands runs along the forearms, as the wrists are higher up than the armpits, because of the position, and it trickles down the sides from the armpits towards the waist. When the cross sways, before being fastened, the crown moves, because the head falls back knocking against the wood and drives the thick knot of thorns, at the end of the prickly crown, into the nape of the neck, then it lies again on the forehead, scratching it mercilessly. At long last the cross is made fast and there is only the torture of being suspended.

They raise the robbers who, once they are placed in a vertical position, shout as if they were being flayed alive, because of the torture of the ropes that cut into their wrists and cause their hands to turn dark with the veins swollen like ropes.

Jesus is silent. The crowd instead is no longer silent. The people resume bawling in a hellish way.

Now the top of Golgotha has its trophy and its guard of honour. At the top there is the cross of Jesus. At the sides the other two crosses. Half a century of soldiers, in fighting trim, is placed all round the summit; inside this circle of armed soldiers there are the ten dismounted soldiers, who throw dice for the garments of the condemned men. Longinus is standing upright between the cross of Jesus and the one on the right. And he seems to be mounting guard of honour for the Martyr King. The other half century, at rest, is on the left path and on the lower open space, under the orders of Longinus' adjutant, awaiting to be employed in case of need. The indifference of the soldiers is almost total. Only an odd one now and again looks at the crucified men.

8 Longinus, instead, watches everything with curiosity and interest, he makes comparisons and judges mentally. He compares the crucified men, and the Christ in particular, and the spectators. His piercing eye does not miss any detail. And to see better, he shades his eyes with his hand, because the sun must be annoying him.

The sun is in fact strange. It is yellow-red like a fire. Then the fire seems to go out all of a sudden, because of a huge cloud of pitch that rises from behind the chains of the Judaeen mountains and soars swiftly across the sky, disappearing behind other mountains. And when the sun comes out again, it is so strong that the eye endures it with difficulty.

While looking, he sees Mary, just under the slope, with Her tormented face raised towards Her Son. He calls one of the soldiers who are playing dice and says to him: «If His Mother wants to come up with the son who is escorting Her, let Her come. Escort Her and help Her.»

And Mary with John, who is believed to be Her «son», climbs the steps cut in the tufaceous rock, I think, and passes beyond the cordon of soldiers, and goes to the foot of the cross, but a little aside, to be seen and see Her Jesus.

The crowd showers the most disgraceful abuses on Her at once, associating Her with Her Son in their curses. But with Her trembling white lips, She tries only to comfort Him, with an anguished smile that wipes the tears, which no will-power can refrain.

9 The people, beginning with priests, scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians and the like, amuse themselves by going on a kind of roundabout, climbing the steep road, passing along the elevation at the end, and descending along the other road, or viceversa. And while they pass at the foot of the summit, on the second open space, they do not fail to offer their blasphemous words as a compliment to the Dying Victim. All the baseness, cruelty, hatred and folly, which men are capable of expressing with their tongues, is amply testified by those infernal mouths. The fiercest are the members of the Temple, with the assistance of the Pharisees.

«Well? You, the Saviour of mankind, why do You not save Yourself? Has Your king Beelzebub abandoned You? Has he disowned You?» shout three priests.

And a group of Judaeans shout: «You, Who not more than five days ago, with the help of the Demon, made the Father say... ha! ha! ha! that He would glorify You, how come You do not remind Him to keep His promise?»

And three Pharisees add: «Blasphemer! He said that He saved the others with the help of God! And He cannot save Himself! Do You want us to believe You? Then work the miracle. Hey, are You no longer able? Your hands are now nailed and You are naked.»

And some Sadducees and Herodians say to the soldiers: «Watch His witchcraft, you who have taken His garments! He has the infernal sign within Himself!»

A crowd howls in chorus: «Descend from the cross and we will believe You. You Who want to destroy the Temple... Fool!... Look at it over there, the glorious and holy Temple of Israel. It is untouchable, o profaner! And You are dying.»

Other priests say: «Blasphemous! You the Son of God? Come down from there, then. Strike us by lightning, if You are God. We are not afraid of You and we spit at You.»

Others who are passing by shake their heads saying: «He can but weep. Save Yourself, if it is true that You are the Chosen One!»

And the soldiers remark: «So, save Yourself! Burn to ashes this suburra of the suburra! Yes! You are the suburra of the empire, you Judaeen rabble. Do so! Rome will put You on Capitol and will worship You as a god!»

The priests and their accomplices say: «The arms of women were more pleasant than those of the cross, were they not? But, look, Your... (and they utter a disgraceful word) are already there waiting to receive You. You have the whole of Jerusalem as Your match-maker.» And they hiss like snakes.

Others throw stones shouting: «Change these into bread, since You multiply loaves.»

Others mimicking the Hosannas of Palm Sunday, throw branches and shout: «Curses on Him Who comes in the name of the Demon! Cursed be His kingdom! Glory to Zion that cuts Him off the living!»

A Pharisee stands in front of the cross, he raises his hand in an indecent gesture, and says: «"I entrust You to the God of Sinai" did You say? Now the God of Sinai is preparing You for the eternal fire. Why don't You call Jonah so that he may repay Your kindness?»

Another one says: «Don't ruin the cross with the strokes of Your head. It is to be used for Your followers. A whole legion of them will die on Your cross, I swear it on Jehovah. And Lazarus will be the first one I'll put there. We shall see whether You free

him from death, now.»

«Yes. Let us go to Lazarus. Let us nail him on the other side of the cross» and parrot-like they speak slowly as Jesus did, saying: «Lazarus, My friend, come out! Unbind him and let him go.»

«No! He used to say to Martha and Mary, His women: “I am the Resurrection and Life” Ha! Ha! Ha! The Resurrection cannot drive death back, and the Life is dying!»

10 «There is Mary with Martha over there. Let us ask them where Lazarus is and let us look for him.» And they come forward, towards the women, asking arrogantly:

«Where is Lazarus? At his mansion?»

And while the other women, struck with terror, run behind the shepherds, Mary Magdalene comes forward, and finding in her grief the ancient boldness of her days of sin, she says: «Go. You will already find the soldiers of Rome in the mansion, with five hundred armed men of my land, and they will castrate you like old billy-goats destined to feed the slaves of millstones.»

«Impudent Is that how you speak to priests?»

«Sacriligious! Filthy! Cursed! Turn round! On your backs, I can see them, you have tongues of infernal flames.»

Mary's assertion sounds so certain that the cowards, who are really struck with terror, turn round; but if they have no flames on their shoulders, they have the sharp-pointed Roman lances at their backs. In fact Longinus has given an order, and the fifty soldiers, who were resting, have come into action and they prick the buttocks of the first Judaeans they find. The latter run away shouting and the soldiers stop to block the entrances to the two roads and protect the open space. The Judaeans curse, but Rome is the stronger.

The Magdalene lowers her veil again – she had raised it to speak to the revilers – and goes back to her place. The other women join her.

But the robber on the left hand side continues to insult from his cross. He seems to have summarised all the curses of the other people and he repeats them all, and ends by saying: «Save Yourself and save us, if You want people to believe You. You the Christ? You are mad! The world belongs to crafty people, and God does not exist. I do. That is true and everything is permitted to me. God?... Nonsense! Invented to keep us quiet. Long live our egos! Man's ego alone is king and god!»

The other robber, who is on the right hand side with Mary almost near his feet, and looks at Her almost more than he looks at Jesus, and for some moments has been weeping murmuring: «My mother», says: «Be silent. Do you not fear God even now

that you suffer this pain? Why do you insult Him Who is good? And His torture is even greater than ours. And He has done nothing wrong.»

But the robber continues to curse.

11 Jesus is silent. Panting as a result of the effort He has to make because of His position, because of His fever and heart and breathing conditions, the consequence of the flagellation He suffered in such a violent form, and also of the deep anguish that had made Him sweat blood, He tries to find some relief by reducing the weight on His feet, pulling Himself up with His arms and hanging from His hands. Perhaps He does so also to overcome the cramp that tortures His feet and is revealed by the trembling of His muscles. But the same trembling is noticeable in the fibres of His arms, which are constrained in that position and must be frozen at their ends, because they are higher up and deprived of blood, which arrives at the wrists with difficulty and trickles from the holes of the nails, leaving the fingers without circulation. Those of the left hand in particular are already cadaveric and motionless, bent towards the palm. Also the toes of the feet show their pain, especially the big toes move up and down and open out, probably because their nerves have not been injured so seriously.

And the trunk reveals all its pain with its movement, which is fast but not deep, and tires Him without giving any relief. His ribs, wide and high as they are, because the structure of this Body is perfect, are now enlarged beyond measure, as a consequence of the position taken by the body and of the pulmonary oedema that has certainly developed inside. And yet they do not serve to relieve the effort in breathing, all the more that the abdomen with its movement helps the diaphragm, which is becoming more and more paralyzed.

And the congestion and asphyxia increase every minute, as is shown by the cyanotic colour that emphasises the lips, which the fever has made bright red, and by the red-violet streaks, which tinge the neck along the turgid jugular veins, and widen out as far as the cheeks, towards the ears and temples, while the nose is thin and bloodless, and the eyes are sunken in a circle, which is livid where no blood has trickled from the crown.

Under the left costal arch one can see the throbbing imparted by the point of the heart, an irregular but violent palpitation, and now and again, owing to an internal convulsion, the diaphragm has a deep pulsation, which is revealed by a total stretching of the skin, for what it can stretch on that poor wounded dying Body.

The Face already has the aspect we see in photographs of the Holy Shroud, with the nose diverged and swollen on one side; and the likeness is increased by the fact that the right eye is almost closed, owing to a swelling on this side. The mouth, instead is open, with the wound on the upper lip by now turned into a crust.

His thirst, caused by the loss of blood, by the fever and by the sun, must be burning, so

much so that He, with automatic movements, drinks the drops of His perspiration and His tears, as well as those of blood, that run down from His forehead to His moustache, and He wets His tongue with them...

The crown of thorns prevents Him from leaning against the trunk of the cross to help the suspension on His arms and lighten the weight on His feet. His kidneys and all His spine are curved outwards, detached from the cross from His pelvis upwards, owing to force of inertia that makes a body, suspended like His, hang forward.

12 The Judaeans, driven beyond the open space, do not stop insulting, and the unrepentant robber echoes their insults.

The other one, who now looks at the Mother with deeper and deeper compassion, and weeps, answers him back sharply, when he hears that She also is included in the insult. «Be silent. Remember that you were born of a woman. And consider that our mothers have wept because of their sons. And they were tears of shame... because we are criminals. Our mothers are dead... I would like to ask mine to forgive me... But shall I be able? She was a holy woman... I killed her with the sorrow I gave her... I am a sinner... Who will forgive me? Mother, in the name of Your dying Son, pray for me.»

The Mother for a moment raises Her tortured face and looks at him, the poor wretch who through the remembrance of his mother and the contemplation of the Mother moves towards repentance, and She seems to caress him with Her kind gentle eyes.

Disma weeps louder, which raises even more the mockery of the crowd and of his companion. The former shout: «Very well. Take Her as your mother. So She will have two criminal sons!» The latter aggravates the situation saying: «She loves you because you are a smaller copy of Her darling.»

13 Jesus speaks for the first time: «Father, forgive them because they do not know what they are doing!»

This prayer overcomes all fear in Disma. He dares to look at the Christ and says: «Lord, remember me when You are in Your Kingdom. It is just that I should suffer. But give me mercy and peace hereafter. I heard You speak once and I foolishly rejected Your word. I now repent. And I repent of my sins before You, the Son of the Most High. I believe that You come from God. I believe in Your power. I believe in Your mercy. Christ, forgive me in the name of Your Mother and of Your Most Holy Father.»

Jesus turns round and looks at him with deep compassion, and He smiles a still beautiful smile with His poor tortured lips. He says: «I tell you: today you will be with Me in Paradise.»

The repentant robber calms down, and as he no longer remembers the prayers he learned when a child, he repeats as an ejaculation: «Jesus Nazarene, king of the Jews,

have mercy on me; Jesus Nazarene, king of the Jews, I hope in You; Jesus Nazarene, king of the Jesus, I believe in Your Divinity.»

The other robber continues cursing.

14 The sky becomes duller and duller. Now the clouds hardly ever open to let the sun shine. On the contrary they cluster on top of one another in leaden, white, greenish strati, they disentangle according to the caprices of a cold wind, which at times blows in the sky, then descends to the ground, and then drops again, and when it drops the air is almost more sinister, sultry and dull than when it hisses, blowing biting and fast.

The light, previously exceedingly bright, is becoming greenish. And faces look strange. The profiles of the soldiers, under their helmets and in their armour, which were previously shining and have now become rather tarnished in the greenish light and under an ashen-grey sky, are so hard that they seem to be chiselled. The Judaeans, the complexion, hair and beards of whom are mostly brown, seem drowned people, so wan are their faces. The women look like statues of bluish snow because of their deadly paleness, which is accentuated by the light.

Jesus seems to be turning ominously livid, because of a beginning of putrefaction, as if He were already dead. His head begins to hang over His chest. His strength fails Him rapidly. He shivers, although He is burning with fever. And in His weakness, He whispers the name that so far He has only uttered in the bottom of His heart: «Mother! Mother!» He murmurs it in a low voice, like a sigh, as if He were already lightly delirious and thus prevented from holding back what His will would not like to reveal. And each time Mary makes an unrestrainable gesture of stretching Her arms, as if She wished to succour Him. And the cruel people laugh at such pangs of Him Who is dying and of Her Who suffers agonies.

Priests and scribes climb up again as far as the shepherds, who, however, are on the lower open space. And as the soldiers want to drive them back, they react saying: «Are these Galileans staying here? We want to stay here as well, as we have to ascertain that justice is done to the very end. And from afar, in this light, we cannot see.»

In fact many begin to be upset by the light that is enveloping the world and some people are afraid. Also the soldiers point to the sky and to a kind of cone that seems of slate, so dark it is, and that rises like a pine-tree from behind the top of a mountain. It looks like a water-spout. It rises and rises and seems to produce darker and darker clouds, as if it were a volcano belching smoke and lava.

15 It is in this frightening twilight that Jesus gives John to Mary and Mary to John. He lowers His head, because the Mother has gone closer to the cross to see Him better, and He says: «Woman, this is Your son. Son, this is your Mother.»

Mary looks even more upset after this word, which is the will of Jesus, Who has

nothing to give His Mother but a man, He Who out of love for man, deprives Her of the Man-God, born of Her. But the poor Mother tries to weep only silently, because it is impossible for Her not to weep... Tears stream down Her cheeks notwithstanding all the efforts to refrain them, even if on Her lips there is a heartbroken smile to comfort Him...

Jesus' sufferings increase more and more. And the light fades more and more.

16 It is in this sea-bottom light that Nicodemus and Joseph appear from behind some Judaeans, and they say: «Step aside!»

«You are not allowed. What do you want?» ask the soldiers.

«To pass. We are friends of the Christ.»

The chief priests turn round. «Who dare profess himself friend of the rebel?» ask the priests indignantly.

And Joseph replies resolutely: «I, Joseph of Arimathea, the Elder, and noble member of the Supreme Council, and Nicodemus the head of the Judaeans, is with me.»

«Those who side with the rebel are rebels.»

«And those who take sides with murderers, are murderers, Eleazar of Annas. I have lived as a just man. And now I am old and close to death. I do not want to become unjust, while Heaven is already descending upon me and the eternal Judge with it.»

«And you, Nicodemus! I'm surprised!»

«So am I. And of one thing only: that Israel is so corrupt that you cannot even recognise God any more.»

«You disgust me.»

«Move aside, then, and let me pass. That is all I want.»

«To become even more contaminated?»

«If I have not become contaminated being with you, nothing else will ever contaminate me. Soldier, here is the purse and my pass.» And he gives the decurion who is closest to him, a purse and a waxed board.

The decurion examines them and says to the soldiers: «Let the two men pass.»

And Joseph and Nicodemus approach the shepherds. I do not even know whether Jesus can see them in the thick fog that is getting thicker and thicker, and with His eyes that are already veiled by agony. But they see Him and they weep without any respect for public opinion, although the priests now abuse them.

17 The sufferings are worse and worse. The body begins to suffer from the arching

typical of tetanus, and the clamour of the crowd exasperates it. The death of fibres and nerves extends from the tortured limbs to the trunk, making breathing more and more difficult, diaphragmatic contraction weak and heart beating irregular.

The face of Christ passes, in turns, from very deep-red blushes to the greenish paleness of a person bleeding to death. His lips move with greater difficulty, because the overstrained nerves of the neck and of the head itself, that for dozens of times have acted as a lever for the whole body, pushing on the cross bar, spread the cramp also to the jaws. His throat, swollen by the obstructed carotid arteries, must be painful and must spread its oedema to the tongue, which looks swollen and slow in its movements.

His back, even in the moments when the tetanising contractions do not bend it in a complete arch from the nape of His neck to His hips, leaning as extreme points against the stake of the cross, bends more and more forwards, because the limbs are continuously weighed down by the burden of the dead flesh.

The people cannot see this situation very clearly, because the light now is like dark ashes, and only those who are at the foot of the cross can see well.

At a certain moment Jesus collapses forwards and downwards, as if He were already dead, He no longer pants, His head hangs inertly forward, His body, from His hips upwards, is completely detached from the cross, forming an angle with its bar.

Mary utters a cry: «He is dead!» A tragic cry that spreads in the dark air. And Jesus seems really dead.

Another cry of a woman replies to Her, and I see a bustle in the group of the women. Then some ten people go away holding something. But I cannot see who goes away so. The foggy light is too faint. It looks as we are immersed in a cloud of very dense volcanic ash.

«It is not possible» shout some of the priests and of the Judaeans. «It is a simulation to make us go away. Soldier, prick Him with your lance. It is a good medicine to give His voice back to Him.»

And as the soldiers do not do so, a volley of stones and clods of earth fly towards the cross, hitting the Martyr and falling back on the armour of the Romans.

The medicine, as the Judaeans say ironically, works the wonder. Some of the stones have certainly hit the target, perhaps the wound of a hand, or the head itself, because they were aiming high. Jesus moans pitifully and recovers His senses. His thorax begins to breathe again with difficulty and His head moves from left to right, seeking where it may rest in order to suffer less, but finding nothing but greater pain.

18 With great difficulty, pressing once again on His tortured feet, finding strength in His will, and only in it, Jesus stiffens on the cross, He stands upright, as if He were a

healthy man with all his strength, He raises His face, looking with wide open eyes at the world stretched at His feet, at the far away town, which one can see just indistinctly as a vague whiteness in the mist, and at the dark sky where every trace of blue and of light has disappeared. And to this closed, compact, low sky, resembling a huge slab of dark slate, He shouts in a loud voice, overcoming with His will-power and with the need of His soul the obstacle of His swollen tongue and His oedematous throat: «Eloi, Eloi, lamma scebacteni!» (I hear Him say so). He must feel that He is dying, and in absolute abandonment by Heaven, if He confesses His Father's abandonment, with such an exclamation.

People laugh and deride Him. They insult Him saying: «God has nothing to do with You! Demons are cursed by God!»

Other people shout: «Let us see whether Elijah, whom He is calling, will come to save Him.»

And others say: «Give Him some vinegar, that He may gargle His throat. It helps one's voice! Elijah or God, as it is uncertain what this madman wants, are far away... A loud voice is required to make oneself heard!» and they laugh like hyenas or like demons.

But no soldier gives Him vinegar and no one comes from Heaven to give comfort. It is the solitary, total, cruel, also supernaturally cruel agony of the Great Victim.

The avalanches of desolate grief, which had already oppressed Him at Gethsemane, come back again. The waves of the sins of all the world come back to strike the shipwrecked innocent, to submerge Him in their bitterness. And above all what comes back is the sensation, more crucifying than the cross itself, more despairing than any torture, that God has abandoned Him and that His prayer does not rise to Him...

And it is the final torture. The one that accelerates death, because it squeezes the last drops of blood out of the pores, because it crushes the remaining fibres of the heart, because it ends what the first knowledge of this abandonment has begun: death. Because of that, as first cause, my Jesus died, o God, Who have struck Him for us! Because after Your abandonment, through Your abandonment, what does a person become? Either insane or dead. Jesus could not become insane, because His intelligence was divine, and since intelligence is spiritual, it triumphed over the total trauma of Him Whom God had struck. So He became a dead man: the Dead Man, the Most Holy Dead Man, the Most Innocent Dead Man. He Who was the Life, was dead. Killed by Your abandonment and by our sins.

19 Darkness becomes deeper. Jerusalem disappears completely. The very slopes of Calvary seem to vanish. Only the top is visible, as if darkness held it high up to receive the only and last surviving light, laying it as an offering, with its divine trophy, on a pool of liquid onyx, so that it may be seen by love and by hatred.

And from that light, which is no longer light, comes the plaintive voice of Jesus: «I am thirsty!»

A wind in fact is blowing, which makes even healthy people thirsty. A strong wind that now blows continuously, and is full of dust, cold and frightening. And I think of what pain its violent gusts must have caused to the lungs, the heart, the throat of Jesus, and to His frozen, benumbed, wounded limbs. Everything has really combined to torture the Martyr.

A soldier goes towards a jar, in which the assistants of the executioner have put some vinegar with gall, so that with its bitterness it may increase the salivation of those condemned to capital punishment. He takes the sponge immersed in the liquid, he sticks it on a thin yet stiff cane, which is already available nearby, and offers the sponge to the Dying Victim.

Jesus leans eagerly forward towards the approaching sponge. He looks like a starving baby seeking the nipple of its mother.

Mary Who sees and certainly has such a thought, leaning on John, says with a moan: «Oh! and I cannot give Him even one of My tears... Oh! breast of Mine, why do you not trickle milk? Oh! God, why do You abandon us thus? A miracle for My Son! Who will lift Me up, so that I may quench His thirst with My blood, since I have no milk?...»

Jesus, Who has greedily sucked the sour bitter drink, makes a wry face in disgust. Above all, it must act as a corrosive on His wounded split lips.

20 He withdraws, loses heart, abandons Himself. All the weight of His body falls heavily on His feet and forward. His wounded extremities are the parts that suffer the dreadful pain as they are torn open by the weight of the body that abandons itself. He makes no further movement to alleviate such pain. His body, from His hips upwards, is detached from the cross, and remains such.

His head hangs forward so heavily that His neck seems hollowed in three places: at the throat, which is completely sunken, and at both sides of the sternum cleido-mastoid. He pants more and more and interruptedly, and it sounds more like a death-rattle. Now and again a painful fit of coughing brings a light rosy foam to His lips. And the intervals between one expiration and the next one are becoming longer and longer. His abdomen is now motionless. Only His thorax still heaves, but laboriously and with difficulty... Pulmonary paralysis is increasing more and more.

And fainter and fainter, sounding like a child's wailing, comes the invocation: «Mother!» And the poor wretch whispers: «Yes, darling, I am here.» And when His sight becomes misty and makes Him say: «Mother, where are You? I cannot see You any more. Are You abandoning Me as well?» and they are not even words, but just a murmur that can hardly be heard by Her Who with Her heart rather than with Her ears

receives every sigh of Her dying Son, She says: «No, no, Son! I will not abandon You! Listen to Me, My dear... Your Mother is here, She is here... and She only regrets that She cannot come where You are...» It is heart-rending...

And John weeps openly. Jesus must hear him weep. But He does not say anything. I think that His impending death makes Him speak as if He were raving and that He does not even know what He says, and, unfortunately, He does not even understand His Mother's consolation and His favourite apostle's love.

Longinus – who inadvertently is no longer standing at ease with his arms folded across his chest, and one leg crossed over the other alternately, to ease the long wait on his feet and is now instead standing stiff at attention, his left hand on his sword, his right one held against his side, as if he were on the steps of the imperial throne – does not want to be influenced. But his face is affected in the effort of overcoming his emotion, and his eyes begin to shine with tears that only his iron discipline can refrain.

The other soldiers, who were playing dice, have stopped and have stood up, putting on the helmets that had served to cast the dice, and they are near the little steps dug in the tufa, looking heedful and silent. The others are on duty and cannot move. They look like statues. But some of those who are closer and hear Mary's words, mutter something between their lips and shake their heads.

21 There is dead silence. Then in utter darkness, the word: «Everything is accomplished!» is clearly heard and His death-rattle grows louder and louder, with longer and longer pauses between one rattle and the next one.

Time passes in such distressing rhythm. Life comes back when the air is pierced by the harsh breathing of the Dying Victim... Life stops when the painful sound is no longer heard. One suffers hearing it... one suffers not hearing it... One says: «Enough of this suffering!» and then one says: «Oh! God! let it not be His last breath.»

All the Maries are weeping, with their heads leaning against the scarp. And their weeping is clearly heard, because the crowd is now silent again, to listen to the death-rattles of the dying Master.

22 There is silence again. Then the supplication pronounced with infinite kindness, with fervent prayer: «Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit!»

Further silence. Also the death-rattle becomes fainter. It is just a breath confined to His lips and throat.

Then, there is the last spasm of Jesus. A dreadful convulsion that seems to tear the body with the three nails from the cross, rises three times from the feet to the head, through all the poor tortured nerves; it heaves the abdomen three times in an abnormal way, then leaves it after dilating it as if it were upsetting the viscera, and it drops and

becomes hollow as is it were empty; it heaves, swells and contracts the thorax so violently, that the skin sinks between the ribs which stretch appearing under the skin and reopening the wounds of the scourges; it makes the head fall back violently once, twice, three times, hitting the wood hard; it contracts all the muscles of the face in a spasm, accentuating the deviation of the mouth to the right, it opens wide and dilates the eyelids under which one can see the eye-balls roll and the sclerotic appear. The body is all bent; in the last of the three contractions it is a drawn arch, which vibrates and is dreadful to look at, and then a powerful cry, unimaginable in that exhausted body, bursts forth rending the air, the «loud cry» mentioned by the Gospels and is the first part of the word «Mother»... And nothing else...

His head falls on His chest, His body leans forward, the trembling stops, He breathes no more. He has breathed His last.

23 The Earth replies to the cry of the murdered Innocent with a frightening rumble. From a thousand bugle-horn giants seem to give out only one sound and on that terrible chord there are the isolated rending notes of lightning that streaks the sky in all directions, falling on the town, on the Temple, on the crowd... I think that some people were struck by lightning, because the crowd was struck directly. The lightning is the only irregular light that enables one to see at intervals. And immediately afterwards, while the volley of thunderbolts still continues, the earth is shaken by a cyclonic whirlwind. The earthquake and the tornado join together to give an apocalyptic punishment to the blasphemers. The summit of Golgotha trembles and quakes like a plate in the hands of a madman, because of the subsultory and undulatory shocks that shake the three crosses so violently that they seem on the point of being overturned.

Longinus, John, the soldiers grab whatever they can, as best they can, not to fall. But John, while grasping the cross with one arm, with the other supports Mary Who, both because of Her grief and the unsteadiness, has leaned on his chest. The other soldiers, and in particular those on the side sloping downhill, have had to take shelter in the centre, to avoid being thrown down the precipice. The robbers howl with terror, the crowd howls even more and would like to run away. But it is not possible. People fall one on top of the other, they tread on one another, they fall into the fissures of the ground, they hurt themselves, they roll down the slope as if they had gone mad.

The earthquake and the tornado recur three times, then there is the absolute immobility of a dead world. Only flashes of lightning, without the rumble of thunder, still streak the sky illuminating the scene of the Jews fleeing in every direction, at their wits' end, their hands stretched forward or raised to the sky, at which they had so far sneered and of which they are now afraid. Darkness is mitigated by a dim light which, increased by the silent magnetic lightning, enables one to see that many are lying on the ground, I do not know whether they are dead or have fainted. A house is on fire inside the walls and the flames rise up straight in the still air, a bright red spot in the grey-green atmosphere.

24 Mary raises Her head from John's chest and looks at Her Jesus. She calls Him, as She cannot see Him well in the dim light and Her poor eyes are full of tears. She calls Him three times: «Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!» It is the first time that She calls Him by His name, since She has been on Calvary. Then, as a flash forms a kind of crown over the top of Golgotha, She sees Him, motionless, all bent forward, with His head hanging so much forward and to the right, that His cheek touches His shoulder and His chin rests on His ribs, and She understands. She stretches out Her hands in the dark air and shouts: «My Son! My Son! My Son!» She then listens... Also Her mouth is open, She seems to be wanting to hear also with it, as Her eyes are wide open to see... She cannot believe that Her Jesus is no longer...

John, who has also looked and heard and has understood that everything is over, embraces Mary and tries to take Her away saying: «He no longer suffers.»

But before the apostle finishes his sentence, Mary, who has understood, frees Herself, She turns round, She bends towards the ground, She covers Her eyes with Her hands and shouts: «I no longer have My Son!»

She then staggers and would fall if John did not hold Her against his heart, and he then sits down, on the ground, to sustain Her on his chest, more easily until the Maries, no longer held back by the upper circle of armed soldiers – because, since the Jews have run away, the Roman soldiers have gathered in the open space below, commenting on the event – replace the apostle near the Mother.

The Magdalene sits where John was, and she almost lays Mary on her knees, holding Her between her arms and her breast, kissing Her deadly pale face, which is reclined on her compassionate shoulder. Martha and Susanna, with a sponge and a linen cloth soaked in vinegar, moisten Her temples and nostrils, while Her sister -in-law Mary kisses Her hands calling Her in a heart-rending voice, and as soon as Mary opens Her eyes again and casts a glance that Her grief makes, so to say, dull, she says to Her: «Daughter, my beloved daughter, listen... tell me that You see me... I am Your Mary... Don't look at me so!...» And as the first sob opens Mary's throat and Her first tears begin to fall, the good Mary of Alphaeus says: «Yes, weep... Here with me, as if You were near a mother, my poor holy daughter»; and when she hears Her say: «Oh! Mary! Mary! have you seen?», she moans: «Yes, I have... but... but... daughter... oh! daughter!...» And the elderly Mary can find no other word and weeps. She weeps disconsolately, echoed by all the other women, that is, Martha and Mary, John's mother and Susanna.

The other pious women are no longer there. I think that they have gone away, and the shepherds with them, when that feminine cry was heard...

25 The soldiers are speaking in low voices to one another.

«Have you noticed the Judaeans? They were afraid, now .»

«And they were beating their breasts.»

«The priests were the most terrorised!»

«What a fright! I have seen other earthquakes. But never like this one. Look: the ground is full of fissures.»

«And a whole stretch of the long way has slid down over there.»

«And there are bodies under it.»

«Leave them! So many snakes less.»

«Oh! another fire! In the country...»

«But is He really dead?»

«Can't you see? Do you doubt it?»

26 Joseph and Nicodemus appear from behind the rock. They had certainly taken shelter there, behind the protection of the mountain, to save themselves from the thunderbolts. They go to Longinus. «We want the Corpse.»

«Only the Proconsul can grant it. Go quick, because I heard that the Judaeans want to go to the Praetorium to obtain permission to fracture His legs. I would not like them to disfigure His body.»

«How do you know?»

«A report of the ensign. Go. I will wait.»

The two men rush down the steep road and disappear.

It is at this moment that Longinus approaches John and in a low voice says something to him, which I do not understand. Then he makes a soldier give him a lance. He looks at the women, who are all attending to Mary, Who is slowly recovering Her strength. They have all their backs turned to the cross.

Longinus places himself in front of the Crucified, he ponders carefully how to deal the blow and he strikes it. The lance penetrates deeply from the bottom upwards, from right to left.

John, wavering between the desire to see and the horror of seeing, makes a wry face for a moment.

«It is done, my friend» says Longinus, and he ends: «Better so. As for a knight. And without fracturing bones... He was really a Just Man!»

A lot of water and just a trickle of blood, already tending to clot, drip from the wound. I

said drip. They only come out trickling from the neat cut that remains motionless, whereas, had there been any breathing, it would have opened and closed with the movements of the thorax and abdomen...

27 ...While on Calvary everything remains in this tragic situation, I join Joseph and Nicodemus, who are going down along a short cut to gain time.

They are almost at the bottom when they meet Gamaliel. An unkempt Gamaliel, with no headgear, no mantle, with his magnificent garment soiled with mould and torn by bramble. A Gamaliel who is running, climbing and panting, with his hands in his thin very grizzled hair of an elderly man. They speak to one another without stopping.

«Gamaliel! You?»

«You, Joseph? Are you leaving Him?»

«No, I am not. But how come you are here? And in that state?...»

«Dreadful things! I was in the Temple! The sign! The Temple door unhinged! The purple hyacinth veil is hanging torn! The Holy of Holies is open! There is anathema upon us!» He has spoken while running towards the summit, driven mad by the test.

The two men look at him go... they look at each other... they say together: «“These stones will shudder at My last words!” He had promised him!...»

They hasten their pace towards the town.

In the country, between the mountain and the walls and beyond them, many people looking idiotic are wandering, in the still dim light... They howl, weep and lament... Some say: «His Blood has rained fire!» Some exclaim: «Jehovah has appeared in the midst of the lightning to curse the Temple!» Some moan: «The sepulchres! The sepulchres!»

Joseph gets hold of a man who is striking his head against the walls and calls him by his name, dragging him as he enters the town: «Simon! What are you saying?»

«Leave me! You are dead, too! All dead! All outside! And they curse me.»

«He has gone mad» says Nicodemus.

They leave him and they hasten towards the Praetorium.

The town is a prey to terror. People roam beating their breasts. People who jump backwards or turn round frightened upon hearing a voice or steps behind them.

In one of the many dark archivolts, the apparition of Nicodemus dressed in white wool – because, in order to be quicker, he has taken off his dark mantle on Golgotha – causes a fleeing Pharisee to utter a cry of terror. He then realises that it is Nicodemus and he

clings to his neck with a strange effusion, shouting: «Don't curse me! My mother appeared to me and said: “Be cursed forever!”» and then he collapses on the ground moaning: «I'm afraid! I'm afraid!»

«They are all mad!» say the two men.

They arrive at the Praetorium. And it is only here, while waiting to be received by the Proconsul, that Joseph and Nicodemus understand the reason for so much terror. Many sepulchres had been opened by the earthquake, and there were people who swore that they had seen skeletons come out of them, and that for a moment they resumed human appearance and were going about accusing and cursing those who were guilty of the deicide.

28 I leave them in the entrance-hall of the Praetorium, which Jesus' two friends enter without so many stupid horrors and fears of contamination, and I go back to Calvary, joining Gamaliel, who by now exhausted, is climbing the last few metres. He is proceeding striking his breast, and when he arrives at the first of the two open spaces, he throws himself on the ground, face downwards, a long white form on the yellowish ground, and he says moaning: «The sign! The sign! Tell me that You forgive me! A whisper, even only a whisper, to tell me that You hear me and forgive me.»

I understand that he thinks that Jesus is still alive. And he changes his mind only when a soldier, pushing him with his lance, says: «Get up and be silent. It's of no use! You should have thought of that previously. He is dead. And I, a heathen, am telling you: this Man, Whom you have crucified, was really the Son of God!»

«Dead? Are You dead? Oh!...» Gamaliel raises his terrorised face, he tries to see as far up as the top, in the twilight. He cannot see much, but he can see enough to realise that Jesus is dead. And he sees the compassionate group that is consoling Mary, and John standing on the left side of the cross and weeping, and Longinus, standing straight on the right side, solemn in his respectful posture.

He kneels down, stretches his arms out and weeping says: «It was You! It was You! We can no longer be forgiven. We have asked Your Blood upon us. And It cries to Heaven, and Heaven curses us... Oh! But You were Mercy!... I say to You, I, the destroyed rabbi of Judah: “Your Blood on us, for pity's sake “. Sprinkle us with It! Because only Your Blood can impetrate forgiveness for us...» and he weeps. And then, in a lower voice, he confesses his torture: «I have the requested sign... But ages and ages of spiritual blindness are upon my interior sight, and against my present will rises the voice of my proud thought of the past... Have mercy on me! Light of the world, let one of Your rays descend on the darkness that did not understand You! I am the old Judaeon faithful to what I thought was justice, and it was error. I am now a barren land, no longer with any of the ancient trees of the ancient Faith, without any seed or stalk of the new Faith. I am an arid desert. Work the miracle of making a flower, that has Your name, spring up in

this poor heart of an old obstinate Israelite. Since You are the Liberator, come into my poor thought, which is a prisoner of formulas. Isaiah says so: "...He paid for sinners and took upon Himself the sins of many." Oh! also mine, Jesus Nazarene...»

He stands up. He looks at the cross which is becoming neater and neater in the light that is clearing up, and then he goes away, stooping, aged, destroyed.

And on Calvary there is once again silence, just broken by Mary's weeping. The two robbers, worn out by fear, no longer speak.

29 Nicodemus and Joseph arrive back running and they say that they have Pilate's permission. But Longinus, who is not too trustful, sends a horse-soldier to the Proconsul to learn what he has to do also with regard to the two robbers. The soldier goes and come back at a gallop with the order to hand over Jesus and break the legs of the other two, by will of the Jews.

Longinus calls the four executioners, who are cravenly crouched under the rock, still terrorised by what has happened, and orders them to give the robbers the death-blow with a club. Which takes place without any protest by Disma, to whom the blow of the club, delivered to his heart, after striking his knees, breaks in half, on his lips, the name of Jesus, in a death-rattle. The other robber utters horrible curses. Their death-rattles are lugubrious.

30 The four executioners would also like to take care of Jesus, taking Him down from the cross. But Joseph and Nicodemus do not allow them. Also Joseph takes off his mantle and tells John to do likewise and to hold the ladders, while they climb them with levers and tongs.

Mary stands up trembling, supported by the women, and She approaches the cross.

In the meantime the soldiers, having fulfilled their task, go away. And Longinus, before descending beyond the lower open space, turns round from the height of his black horse to look at Mary and at the Crucified. Then the noise of the hooves resounds on the stones and that of the weapons against the armour, and fades away in the distance.

The left palm is unnailed. The arm falls along the Body, which is now hanging semi-detached.

They tell John to climb up as well, leaving the ladders to the women. And John, after climbing up where Nicodemus was previously, passes Jesus' arm round his neck and holds it so, hanging completely on his shoulder, embraced at the waist by his arm and held by the tips of the fingers not to touch the horrible gash of the left hand, which is almost open. When the feet are unnailed, John has to make a great effort to hold and support the Body of his Master between the cross and his own body.

Mary has already placed Herself at the foot of the cross, sitting with Her back against it,

ready to receive Her Jesus in Her lap.

But the unnauling of the right arm is the most difficult operation. Despite all John's efforts, the Body is hanging completely forward and the head of the nail is deeply sunk in the flesh. And as they do not want to make the wound worse, the two compassionate men work hard. At last the nail is seized with the tongs and pulled out gently.

John has been holding Jesus all the time by the armpits, with His head hanging on his shoulder, while Nicodemus and Joseph get hold of Him, one at the thighs, the other at the knees, and they cautiously come down the ladders.

31 When on the ground, they would like to lay Him on the sheet that they have spread on their mantles. But Mary wants Him. She has opened Her mantle, letting it hang on one side, and She is sitting with Her knees rather apart to form a cradle for Her Jesus.

While the disciples are turning round to give Her Son to Her, the crowned head falls back and the arms hang down towards the ground, and the wounded hands would rub on the soil, if the pity of the pious women did not hold them up to prevent that.

He is now in His Mother's lap... And He looks like a big tired child who is asleep all cuddled up in his mother's lap. Mary is holding Him with Her right arm round the shoulders of Her Son and Her left one stretched over the abdomen to support Him also by the hips.

Jesus' head is resting on His Mother's shoulder. And She calls Him... She calls Him in a heart-rending voice. She then detaches Him from Her shoulder and caresses Him with Her left hand, She takes and stretches out His hands and, before folding them on His dead body, She kisses them and weeps on their wounds. Then She caresses His cheeks, particularly where they are bruised and swollen, She kisses His sunken eyes, His mouth lightly twisted to the right and half-open.

She would like to tidy His hair, as She has tidied His beard encrusted with blood. But in doing so, She touches the thorns. She stings Herself trying to remove that crown, and She wants to do it by Herself, with the only hand which is free, and She rejects everybody saying: «No, no! I will! I will!» and She seems to be holding the tender head of a new-born baby with Her fingers, so delicately does She do it. And when She succeeds in removing the torturing crown, She bends to cure all the scratches of the thorns with Her kisses.

With a trembling hand She parts His ruffled hair, She tidies it and weeps, speaking in a low voice, and with Her fingers She wipes the tears that drop on the cold body covered with blood and She thinks of cleaning it with Her tears and Her veil, which is still round Jesus' loins. And She pulls one end of it towards Herself and She begins to clean and dry the holy limbs with it. And She continually caresses His face, then His hands and His bruised knees and then reverts to drying His Body, on which endless tears are

dropping.

And while doing so Her hand touches the gash on His chest. Her little hand, covered with the linen veil, enters almost completely into the large hole of the wound. Mary bends to see in the dim light which has formed, and She sees. She sees the chest torn open and the heart of Her Son. She utters a cry then. A sword seems to be splitting Her heart. She shouts and then throws Herself on Her Son and She seems dead, too.

32 They succour and console Her. They want to take Her divine Dead Son away from Her and as She shouts: «Where, where shall I put You? In which place, safe and worthy of You?» Joseph, all bent in a respectful bow, his open hand pressed against his chest, says: «Take courage, o Woman! My sepulchre is new and worthy of a great man. I give it to Him. And my friend here, Nicodemus, has already taken the spices to the sepulchre, as he wishes to offer them. But I beg You, as it is getting dark, let us proceed... It is Preparation Day. Be good, o holy Woman!»

Also John and the women beg Her likewise and Mary allows Her Son to be removed from Her lap, and She stands up, distressed, while they envelop Him in a sheet, begging: «Oh! do it gently!»

Nicodemus and John at the shoulders, Joseph at the feet, they lift, the Corpse enveloped not only in the sheet, but resting also on the mantles which act as a stretcher, and they set out down the road.

Mary, supported by Her sister -in-law and by the Magdalene, goes down towards the sepulchre, followed by Martha, Mary of Zebedee and Susanna, who have picked up the nails, the tongs, the crown, the sponge and the cane.

On Calvary remain the three crosses, the central one of which is bare and the other two have their living trophies, who are dying.

33 «And now» says Jesus «pay attention. I spare you the description of the burial, which was well described last year: on 19th February 1944. So you will use that one, and P.M. at the end of it will put Mary's lamentation, which I gave on 4th October 1944. Then you will put the new visions you see. They are new parts of the Passion and are to be put very carefully in their places to avoid confusion and lacunae.»

606. The Burial of Jesus and the Spiritual Distress of Mary.

19th February 1944.

1 It is useless to say what I feel. It would only be a description of my suffering, and therefore with no value as compared with the suffering that I see. So I will describe it, without any comment on myself.

I am present at Our Lord's burial.

The little procession, after descending Calvary, at the foot of it finds the sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathea, hewn out of the limestone of the mountain. The compassionate disciples enter it with Jesus' Body.

I see the sepulchre made as follows. It is a room dug in the stone, at the end of a vegetable garden all in blossom. It looks like a grotto, but it is evident that it has been dug by man. There is the burial room proper with its loculi (they are different from those of the catacombs). These are like round cavities, that penetrate into the stone, like the cells of a beehive, to give an idea. At present they are all empty. The empty opening of each loculus looks like a black spot on the grey stone. Before this room there is a kind of anteroom, in the middle of which there is a slab of stone for anointing. Jesus is placed on it, enveloped in His sheet.

Also John and Mary go in. But nobody else, because the preparatory room is small, and if more people were in it, they would not be able to move. The other women are near the door, that is near the opening, because there is not a proper door.

2 The two bearers uncover Jesus.

While they prepare the bandages and spices on a sort of shelf in a corner, in the light of two torches, Mary bends over Her Son weeping. And once again She wipes Him with Her veil, which is still round Jesus' loins. It is the only washing that Jesus' Body has, this one with His Mother's tears, and if they are copious and abundant, they serve to remove the dust, sweat and blood of that tortured Body only superficially and partly.

Mary never tires of caressing those frozen limbs. With even greater delicacy than if She were touching those of a new-born baby, She takes the poor tortured hands, She clasps them in Her own, She kisses the fingers and stretches them, She tries to connect the gaping wounds, as if She wished to doctor them, so that they may not ache so much and She presses those hands, which can no longer caress, against Her cheeks, and moans and moans in Her dreadful grief. She straightens and joins the poor feet, which are so limp, as if they were deadly tired of walking so far on our behalf. But they have been displaced too much on the cross, and the left one in particular is almost flat, as if it had no ankle.

She then reverts to the body and caresses it, so cold and already stiff, and when once

again She sees the gash of the lance, which is now wide open like a mouth, as Jesus is lying on His back on the stone slab, and so the cavity of the thorax can be seen more clearly – the point of the heart can be seen distinctly between the breastbone and the left costal arch, and about two centimetres above it there is the cut made by the point of the lance in the pericardium and in the heart, a cut about a good centimetre and a half long, whereas the external one on the right side is at least seven centimetres long – Mary utters a cry again as on Calvary. A lance seems to be piercing Her, so much

She writhes in Her pain, pressing Her hands on Her heart, pierced like Jesus'. How many kisses on that wound, poor Mother!

She then attends to Jesus' head again and straightens it, because it is lightly bent back and much to the right. She tries to close His eyelids, which persist in remaining half-open, and His mouth, which has remained open, contracted and a little twisted to the right. She tidies His hair, which only yesterday was beautiful and tidy, and now has become a tangle heavy with blood. She disentangles the longer locks, She smooths them on Her fingers and curls them to give them back the form of the lovely hair of Her Jesus, so soft and curly. And She moans and moans, because She remembers when He was a little boy... It is the fundamental reason for Her grief: the recollection of Jesus' childhood, of Her love for Him, of Her carefulness, which was afraid also of the most wholesome air for Her little divine Child, and the comparison with what men have now done to Him.

Her lamentation makes me suffer. And when moaning She says: «What have they done to You, Son?», not being able to put up with seeing Him thus, naked, rigid, on a stone, She takes Him in Her arms, passing Her arm under His shoulders and pressing Him to Her heart with the other hand and lulling Him, moving exactly as in the grotto of the Nativity, Her gesture makes me weep and suffer, as if a hand rummaged in my heart.

4th October 1944.

The terrible spiritual distress of Mary.

3 The Mother is standing near the anointing stone caressing, contemplating, moaning, weeping. The flickering light of the torches illuminates Her face now and again, and I see large tear drops stream down the cheeks of Her ravaged face. And I can hear Her words. Every one of them. All of them, very clearly, although whispered between Her lips, a real conversation of a mother's soul with the soul of Her Son. I am told to write them.

«Poor Son! How many wounds!... How much You have suffered! Look what they have done to You!... How cold You are, Son! Your fingers are ice-cold. And how motionless they are! They seem to be broken. Never, not even in the sound sleep of a child, or in

the heavy sleep after working as an artisan, were they so inert... And how cold they are! Poor hands! My darling, My love, My holy love, give them to Your Mother! Look how lacerated they are! John, look what a gash! Oh! cruel men! Here, give Me this wounded hand of Yours. That I may dress it. Oh! I will not hurt You... I will use kisses and tears, and I will warm it with My breath and My love.

Caress Me, Son! You are ice-cold, I am burning with fever. My fever will be relieved by Your ice, and Your ice will be mitigated by My fever. A caress, Son! Only a few hours have gone by since You last caressed Me, and they seem ages to Me. For months I was without Your caresses, and they seemed hours to Me, because I was always waiting for You to come back, and I considered each day an hour, and each hour a minute, to say to Myself that You had not been away for one or more months, but only for a few days, for a few hours. Why is time so long now? Ah! inhuman torture! Because You are dead.

They have killed You! You are no longer on the Earth! No longer! Wherever I send My soul to look for Yours and embrace it, because finding You, having You, feeling You was the life of My body and of My spirit, wherever I look for You with the wave of My love, I no longer find you, I do not find You any more. Nothing of You is left to Me but these cold soulless remains!

O soul of My Jesus, o soul of My Christ, o soul of My Lord, where are You? O cruel hyenas joined to Satan, why have you taken away the soul of My Son? And why have you not crucified Me with Him? Were you afraid of committing a second crime? (Her voice is becoming stronger and stronger and more and more heart-rending). And what was it for you killing a poor woman, since you did not hesitate to kill God Incarnate? Have you not committed a second crime? And is letting a mother outlive her murdered son not the most nefarious crime?»

4 The Mother, Who with Her voice had raised also Her head, now bends again over the lifeless face and speaks in a low voice, to Him alone: «At least we would have been together in here, in the tomb, as we would have been together in the agony on the cross, and together in the journey beyond life and towards the Life. But if I cannot follow You in the journey beyond life, I can remain here waiting for You.»

She straightens Herself up again and says to those present in a loud voice: «Go away, all of you. I will stay. Close Me in here with Him. I will wait for Him. What are you saying? That it is not possible? Why is it not possible? If I had died, would I not be here, lying beside Him, waiting to be put in order? I will be beside Him, but on My knees. I was there when He, a delicate rosy baby, cried on a December night. I will be here now, on this night of the world, that no longer has the Christ. Oh! true night! The Light is no longer!... O ice-cold night! The Love is dead! What are you saying, Nicodemus? Shall I be contaminated? His Blood is not contamination. I was not contaminated even when I gave birth to Him. Ah! How you came out, You, Flower of

My womb, without tearing any fibre, just like a flower of scented narcissus, that blooms from the soul of the matrix bulb and yields a flower even if the embrace of the earth has not been on the matrix. A virginal blooming that can be compared with You, Son, Who came through a heavenly embrace and were born in the diffusion of heavenly splendour.»

Now the heart-broken Mother bends once again over Her Son, estranged to everything that is not He, and She whispers slowly: «But do You remember, Son, that sublime show of brightness that filled everything when Your smile was born in the world? Do You remember that beatific light that the Father sent from Heaven to envelop the mystery of Your flowering and to make You find this dark world less repellent, since You were the Light and You were coming from the Light of the Father and of the Paraclete Spirit? And now?... Now darkness and cold... How cold! I am shivering all over. More than that December night. Then there was the joy of having You to warm My heart. And You had two people loving You... Now... Now I am alone and I am dying, too. But I will love You for two: for those who have loved You so little that they abandoned You at the moment of sorrow; I will love You for those who have hated You, I will love You for the whole world, Son. You will not feel the chill of the world. No, You will not feel it. You did not tear My viscera to be born, but I am ready to tear them and enclose You in the embrace of My womb in order not to make You feel cold. Do you remember how My womb loved You, little throbbing embryo?... It is still the same womb. Oh! it is My right and My duty as a Mother. It is My wish. There is no one but the Mother Who can have it, Who can have a love as big as the universe for Her Son.»

5 Her voice has been rising, and now, with all its strength She says: «Go. I will stay. You will come back in three days' time and we will go out together. Oh! to see the world again leaning on Your arm, Son! How beautiful the world will be in the light of Your risen smile! The world thrilling in its Lord's steps! The Earth trembled when death extirpated Your soul and Your spirit departed from Your heart. But now it will tremble... oh! no longer with horror and spasm, but with a gentle throb, unknown to Me, but apprehended by My feminine insight that thrills a virgin when, after an absence, she hears the step of her bridegroom coming for the wedding. Even more: the Earth will tremble with a holy throb, as I was shaken in the deepest depth when I had the Lord One and Trine in Me, and the will of the Father with the fire of the Love created the seed from which You came, of holy Baby, My Son, all Mine! All of Your Mother! of Your Mother!...

Every child has a father and mother. Also an illegitimate boy has a father and a mother. But You had only Your Mother to make Your flesh of rose and lily, to make these embroidered veins, as blue as our streams in Galilee, and these lips of pomegranate, and this hair more graceful than the blond fleece of the goats of our hills, and these eyes: two little lakes of Paradise. No, more than that, they are of the water that comes from the Unique and Quadruple River of the Place of Delight, and carries with it, in its four

branches, gold, onyx, beryl and ivory, and diamonds, and palms, and honey, and roses, and infinite riches, o Pishon, Gihon, Tigris, Euphrates: way for the angels exulting in God, way for the kings adoring You, known or unknown Essence, but Living and Present even in the most obscure heart! Only Your Mother did that for You, by means of Her “yes”... I formed You with music and love, I made You with purity and obedience, My Joy!

6 What is Your Heart? The flame of Mine, that split to condense in a crown around the kiss given by God to His Virgin. That is what Your Heart is. Ah! (The shout is so heart-rending that the Magdalene hastens to succour Her with John. The other women dare not move and weeping and veiled, look stealthily from the opening). Ah! they have broken it! That is why You are so cold, and I am so cold! There is no longer inside You the flame of My heart, and I can no longer continue to live through the reflection of that flame, which was Mine and which I gave You to make Your heart. Here, here, here, on My breast! Before death kills Me, I want to warm You up, I want to lull You. I used to sing to You: “There is no home, there is no food, there is nothing but sorrow.” O prophetic words! Sorrow, sorrow, sorrow for You, for Me! I used to sing to You: “Sleep, sleep on My heart”. Also now: here, here, here...» And sitting on the edge of the stone, She takes Him in Her lap, passing one arm of Her Son round Her shoulders, resting His head on Her shoulder, and bending Her head on His, holding Him close to Her breast, lulling and kissing Him, heart-broken and heart-rending.

7 Nicodemus and Joseph approach Her, laying vases and bandages, and the clean Shroud, and a basin of water, I think, and what seem lint wads, on a kind of seat, which is on the other side of the stone.

Mary notices it and asks in a loud voice: «What are you doing? What do you want? To prepare Him? For what? Leave Him in the lap of His Mother. If I succeed in warming Him up, He will rise sooner. If I succeed in consoling the Father and in comforting Him for the deicide hatred, the Father will forgive sooner, and He will come back sooner.» The Sorrowful Mother is almost raving.

«I will not give Him to you! I gave Him once, I gave Him once to the world, and the world did not want Him. It killed Him, because it did not want Him. Now I am not giving Him any more! What are you saying? That you love Him? Of course! Then, why did you not defend Him? You have waited, to say that you loved Him, until He could no longer hear you. What a poor love yours is! But if you were so afraid of the world that you did not dare to defend an innocent, you should at least have handed Him back to Me, to His Mother, so that She might defend Her Son. She knew who He was and what He deserved. You!... You have had Him as your Master, but you have learned nothing. Is that not true? Am I perhaps telling lies? But do you not see that you do not believe in His Resurrection? You believe in it? No. Why are you standing there, preparing bandages and spices? Because you consider Him a poor dead man, cold

today, putrified tomorrow, and that is why you want to embalm Him.

8 Leave your pomades. Come and worship the Saviour with the pure hearts of the shepherds of Bethlehem. Look: in His sleep He is only one who is tired and is resting. How much He worked in His lifetime! He has worked more and more, not to mention these last hours!... Now He is resting. As far as I, His Mother, am concerned, He is nothing but a big Boy who is tired and is sleeping. His bed and room are really miserable! But neither was His first pallet more beautiful, nor was His first dwelling place more cheerful. The shepherds worshipped the Saviour in His sleep as an Infant. Worship the Saviour in His sleep as Triumpher of Satan. Then, like the shepherds, go and say to the world: “Glory to God! Sin is dead! Satan is defeated! Peace be on the Earth and in Heaven between God and man!” Prepare the ways for His return. I am sending you. I, Whom Maternity makes the Priestess of the rite. Go. I said that I do not want it. I have washed Him with My tears. And it is enough. The rest is not necessary. And do not think that you will put it on Him. It will be easier for Him to rise if He is free from those funereal useless bandages.

Why are you looking at Me so, Joseph? And you, Nicodemus? Has the horror of this day made you dull-witted or absent-minded? Do you not remember? “This evil and adulterous generation, which asks for a sign, will be given no other sign but that of Jonah... So the Son of man will be for three days and three nights in the heart of the Earth.” Do you not remember? “The Son of man is going to be handed over to the power of men, who will kill Him, but on the third day He will be raised again.” Do you not remember? “Destroy this Temple of the true God and in three days I will rebuild it.” O men, the Temple was His Body. Are you shaking your heads? Are you pitying Me? Do you think that I am insane? What? He raised the dead and will He not be able to raise Himself? **9** John?»

«Mother!»

«Yes, call Me “mother”. I cannot live thinking that I shall not be called so! John, you were present when He raised the young daughter of Jairus and the young man of Nain from the dead. They were really dead, were they not? It was not just a heavy sleep? Tell Me.»

«They were dead. The girl had been dead two hours, the young man a day and a half.»

«And did they rise at His order?»

«They rose at His order.»

«Have you heard that? You two, have you heard? But why are you shaking your heads? Ah! perhaps you mean that life comes back quicker in those who are innocent and young. But My Child is the Innocent! And He is the Always Young One. He is God, My Son!...» With tormented feverish eyes Mary looks at the two preparers, who,

depressed but inflexible, are laying the rolls of bandages already soaked in the spices.

Mary takes two steps. She has laid Her Son down again on the stone with the delicacy of one who lays a new-born baby in a cradle. She takes two steps, She bends at the foot of the funereal bed, where the Magdalene is weeping on her knees, She gets hold of her shoulder, shakes her and calls her: «Mary. Tell Me. These people think that Jesus cannot rise from the dead, because He is a man and He died of wounds. But is you brother not older than He is?»

«Yes, he is.»

«Was he not one big sore?»

«Yes, he was.»

«Was he not already putrid before descending into his sepulchre?»

«Yes, he was.»

«And did he not rise from the dead after four days of asphyxia and putrefaction?»

«Yes, he did.»

«So?»

10 There is a long grave silence. Then an inhuman howl. Mary staggers, pressing a hand against Her breast. They support Her. She repels them. She seems to repel the compassionate people. In actual fact She repels what She alone can see. And She shouts: «Back! Back, you cruel one! Not this revenge! Be silent! I do not want to hear you! Be silent! Ah! he is biting at My heart!»

«Who, Mother?»

«O John! It is Satan! Satan who is saying: “He will not rise. No prophet said that.” O Most High God! Help Me all of you, good spirits, and you compassionate men! My reason is wavering! I do not remember anything any more. What do the prophets say? What does the Psalm say? Oh! who will repeat to Me the passages that speak of My Jesus?»

It is the Magdalene who in her melodious voice recites David's psalm on the Passion of the Messiah.

Mary weeps more bitterly, supported by John, and Her tears fall on Her dead Son, wetting Him completely. Mary notices that and wipes Him saying in a low voice: «So many tears. And when You were so thirsty I could not give You even one drop. And now... I am wetting You completely! You look like a shrub under heavy dew. Here, Your Mother will dry You now, Son! You have tasted so much bitterness! Do not let also the bitterness and the salt of Your Mother's tears fall on Your wounded lips!...»

Then in a loud voice She calls: «Mary. David does not say... Do You know Isaiah? Repeat his words...»

The Magdalene repeats the passage on the Passion and she ends saying with a sob: «...He surrendered His life to death and was taken for a sinner, He Who took away the sins of the world and prayed for sinners.»

«Oh! Be silent! Death no! Not delivered to death! No! No! Oh! Your lack of faith, forming an alliance with Satan's temptation, makes My heart doubt! And should I not believe You, Son? Should I not believe Your holy Word?! Oh! tell My soul! Speak. From the far away shores, where You have gone to free those awaiting Your coming, cast the voice of Your soul to My anxious soul, to Mine which is here, all open to receive Your voice. Tell Your Mother that You are coming back! Say: “On the third day I will rise from the dead.” I implore You, Son and God! Help Me to protect My Faith. Satan is crushing it in his coils to strangle it. Satan has removed his mouth of a snake from the flesh of man, because You have torn that prey away from him, and now with his hooked poisonous teeth he is piercing the flesh of My heart paralysing its throbs, its strength and warmth. God! God! God! Do not allow Me to be distrustful! Do not allow doubt to freeze Me! Do not let Satan be free to lead Me to despair! Son! Son! Put Your hand on My heart. It will drive Satan away. Lay it on My head. It will bring the Light back to it. Sanctify My lips with a caress, so that they may be fortified to say: “I believe” even against a whole world that does not believe. Oh! how grievous it is not to believe! Father! Those who do not believe are to be forgiven much. *Because, when one no longer believes,... when one no longer believes,... all horror becomes easy.* I tell You,... I, Who am experiencing this torture. Father, have mercy on the faithless! *Holy Father, for the sake of this Victim Which has been consumed, and of Me, a victim which is still consuming, give them, give the faithless Your faith!*»

11 A long silence.

Nicodemus and Joseph beckon to John and the Magdalene. «Come, Mother.» It is the Magdalene who says so, trying to take Mary away from Her Son and to separate Jesus' fingers which are interlaced with Mary's, Who is kissing them weeping.

The Mother straightens Herself up. She is impressive. For the last time She stretches out the poor bloodless fingers and lays the inert hand along the side of the body. Then She lowers Her arms towards the ground, and standing upright, Her head bent lightly back, She prays and offers. Not a word is heard. But from Her whole appearance it is clear that She is praying. She is really the Priestess at the altar, the Priestess at the moment of the offertory. «*Offerimus praeclarae majestati tuae de tuis donis, ac datis, hostiam puram, hostiam sanctam, hostiam immaculatam...*»

Then She turns round and says: «You may continue. But He will rise from the dead. In vain you mistrust My reason and are blind to the truth He spoke to you. In vain Satan

tries to lay snares to My faith. *To redeem the world also the torture given to My heart by Satan defeated is required. I suffer it and I offer it for future men.* Goodbye, Son! Goodbye, My Child! Goodbye, My little Boy! Goodbye... Goodbye.. Holy... Good... Beloved and lovable... Beauty... Joy... Source of health... Goodbye... On Your eyes... on Your lips... on Your golden hair... on Your frozen limbs... on Your pierced heart... oh! on Your pierced heart... My kiss... My kiss... My kiss... Goodbye... Goodbye... Lord! Have mercy on Me!»

[19th February 1944]

12 The two preparers have finished preparing the bandages.

They come to the table and they denude Jesus also of His veil. They pass a sponge, I think, or a linen cloth, on the body in a very rapid preparation of the limbs dripping from countless parts. Then they spray ointments on all the Body. In fact they bury it under a layer of pomade. First they lift it up, cleaning also the stone slab, on which they lay the Shroud, more than half of which hangs from the head of the bed. They lay Him down again, on His chest, and spread the ointments on all His back, thighs and legs, on all the posterior part. Then they turn Him round delicately, watching that the pomade of spices is not removed, and they spread also the front, first the trunk, then the limbs. First the feet, then the hands, which they join on the lower belly.

The mixture of spices must be as sticky as gum, because I see that His hands remain in place, whereas before they always slid because of their weight of dead limbs. His feet do not slide. They remain in position: one is more straight, the other more stretched.

His head is the last. After spreading it diligently, so that its features disappear under the layer of ointment, they tie it with a chin-bandage to keep the mouth closed. Mary moans more loudly.

Then they lift the hanging side of the Shroud and fold it on Jesus. He disappears under the thick cloth of the Shroud. It is nothing but a form covered with a cloth.

Joseph ensures that everything is in order and on the Face he lays another linen sudarium and other cloths of the kind, similar to wide rectangular strips, that pass from right to left, above the Body, making the Shroud adhere to the Body. It is not the typical dressing as seen in mummies and also in Lazarus' resurrection. It is a rudimentary dressing.

Jesus is now annulled. Even His shape is confused under the linens. It looks like a long heap of cloths, narrower at the ends and wider at the centre, laid on the grey stone. Mary weeps louder.

[4th October 1944]

13 Jesus says:

« And the torture continued with periodic attacks until dawn on Sunday. In My Passion I had only one temptation. But the Mother, the Woman, expiated on behalf of woman, guilty, several times, of every evil. And Satan behaved mercilessly with infinite cruelty towards the conqueress.

Mary had defeated him. *The most atrocious temptation for Mary.* Temptation against the flesh of the Mother. Temptation against the heart of the Mother. Temptation against the spirit of the Mother. The world thinks that Redemption ended with My last breath. *No, it did not.* The Mother completed it by adding Her treble torture to redeem the treble concupiscence, struggling for three days against Satan, who wanted to induce Her to deny My word and not to believe in My Resurrection. *Mary was the only one who continued to believe.* She is great and blessed also because of that faith.

You have become acquainted also with that. A torture corresponding to My torture at Gethsemane. The world will not understand this page. But “those who are in the world without being of the world” will understand it and they will have an increased love for the Sorrowful Mother. That is why I gave it. Go in peace with our blessing.»

607. The Return to the Supper Room.

28th March 1945.

1 Joseph of Arimathea puts out one of the torches, he has a last look round and goes to the opening of the sepulchre, holding up high the remaining torch still lit.

Mary bends once again to kiss Her Son through His wrappings. And She would like to do so controlling Her grief, to contain it in a form of respect for the Corpse, which, being already embalmed, no longer belongs to Her. But when She is close to the veiled face, She is unable to control Herself and relapses into a new crisis of affliction.

They lift Her with difficulty and with greater difficulty they take Her away from the funeral bed. They rearrange the cloths that had been upset, and carrying Her rather than supporting Her, they take away the poor Mother, Who goes off looking back to see Her Jesus, Who is left alone in the dark sepulchre.

They go into the silent vegetable garden in the evening light. The faint light, that had cleared after the tragedy on Golgotha, is already growing darker, as night is falling. And in there, under the thick branches, although still bare of leaves and just adorned with the

white-pink buds of the blossoming apple-trees, strangely late in this orchard of Joseph, whereas elsewhere they are already all covered with open blossoms showing their tiny fruit, it is darker than in any other place.

2 They roll the heavy sepulchral stone into its lodging. Some long branches of a ruffled rose-bush hanging from the top of the grotto towards the ground seem to be knocking at the stone door saying: «Why are you closing before a weeping mother?» And they also seem to be weeping drops of blood, as they shed their red petals and their corollas lie along the dark stone, and the closed buds knock against the inexorable door.

But soon more blood stains that sepulchral door and more tears wet it. Mary, Who so far has been supported by John and has been sobbing rather quietly, frees Herself from the apostle and with a cry, which I think makes the very fibres of the plants quiver, throws Herself against the entrance, She gets hold of the protruding stone to shift it, She skins Her fingers and breaks Her nails without being successful and prizes the rough stone even with Her head. And Her cry sounds like the roar of a lioness that wounds herself struggling near the trap in which her little ones are closed, being compassionate and wild out of motherly love.

There is nothing left in Her of the meek virgin of Nazareth, of the patient woman, known so far. She is the mother. Only and simply a mother, attached to her child with all the fibres and nerves of her body and of her love. She is the most true «mistress» of that body, to which She has given birth, the only mistress after God, and She does not want to be robbed of Her property. She is the «queen» who is defending Her crown: Her Son.

All the rebellion and rebellious acts that in thirty-three years any other woman would have had against the injustice of the world for her son, all the holy and lawful fierceness that any other mother would have felt during those last hours to wound and kill the murderers of her son with her own hands and teeth, all such feelings, which out of Her love for mankind She has always subdued, now stir in Her heart, they boil in Her blood and, meek as She is even in Her grief that makes Her rave, She does not curse, She does not rebel. She only asks the stone to move aside, to let Her go in, because Her place is in there, where He is. She only asks men, who are pitiless in their pity, to obey Her and to open the sepulchre.

After striking and staining the unrelenting stone with the blood of Her lips and hands, She turns round, She leans against it with Her arms stretched out, gripping the two edges of the stone once again, and solemn in Her majesty of Our Lady of Sorrows, She orders: «Open it! Do you not want to? Well, I am staying here. Not inside? Well, here, outside. Here is My bread and My bed. Here is My abode. I have no other home, no other purpose. You may go. Go back to the world which is disgusting. I am staying where there is no avidity or smell of blood.»

«You cannot, Woman!»

«You cannot, Mother!»

«You cannot, Mary, my dear!»

And they try to detach Her hands from the stone, while they are frightened of those eyes, which they have never seen before flash in such a way that makes them look hard and irresistible, glassy, phosphorescent.

3 The meek, are not overbearing, and the humble do not persist in pride... And Mary's vehement will and imperious command soon vanish. Her eyes become meek again, like those of a tortured dove, Her gestures are no longer imposing and She lowers Her head in a beseeching attitude, and joining Her hands She begs them: «Oh! Do leave Me! For the sake of your dead relatives, for the sake of the living ones whom you love, have mercy on a poor mother!... Feel... Feel My heart. It needs peace to stop throbbing so fiercely. It began throbbing thus up there, on Calvary. The hammer went bang, bang, bang... and each blow wounded My Child... and each blow resounded in My brain and in My heart... and My head is full of those blows, and My heart is beating fast, as those blows did on the hands and feet of My Jesus, of My little Jesus... My Child! My Child!...»

She is overwhelmed again by Her torture, which seemed to have been appeased after Her prayer to the Father near the anointing table. They are all weeping.

«I need not to hear shouts or bangs. And the world is full of voices and noises. Every voice sounds to Me like the “great cry” that curdled the blood in My veins, and every noise sounds like that of the hammer striking the nails. I need not to see men's faces. And the world is full of faces... For almost twelve hours I have been seeing faces of killers... Judas... the executioners... the priests... the Judaeans... They are all killers, all of them!... Go away! Go away... I do not want to see anybody any more... In every man there is a wolf and a snake. Man disgusts and frightens Me... Leave Me here, under these quiet trees, on this flowery grass... Before long the stars will begin to shine... They have always been His friends and Mine... Yesterday evening they kept us company in our lonely agony... They know so many things... They come from God... Oh! God! God!...» She weeps and kneels down. «Peace, My God! I am left with nothing but You!»

«Come, my daughter. God will give You peace. But come. Tomorrow is the Passover Sabbath. We shall not be able to come and bring You food...»

«Nothing! Nothing! I do not want any food! I want My Child! I will appease My hunger with My grief, I will quench My thirst with My tears... Here... Can you hear how that horned howl is weeping? It is weeping with Me, and before long nightingales will be weeping. And tomorrow, in the sunshine, wood-larks and blackcaps and all the birds He loved will weep, and doves will come with Me to knock at this stone and say:

“Rise, my love, and come! Love, Who are in the large fissure of the rock, in the hiding-place of the ravine, let me see Your face, let me hear Your voice.” Ah! What am I saying! They also, the wicked killers, have called Him with the word of the Cantic! Yes, come, daughters of Jerusalem, to see your King with the diadem with which His Fatherland crowned Him on the day of His wedding with Death, on the day of His triumph as Redeemer!»

«Look, Mary! The guards of the Temple are coming. Let us go away, so that they may not scorn You.»

«The guards? Scorn? No. They are cowardly. Yes, cowardly. And if I, dreadful in My grief, should march against them, they would flee like Satan before God. But I remember that I am Mary... and I will not strike as I would be entitled to. I will be good... and they will not even see Me. And if they see Me and ask Me: “What do You want?”, I will say to them: “The charity of being allowed to breathe the balmy air coming out from this fissure.” I will say: “In the name of your mothers”. Everybody has a mother... also the pitiful robber said so...»

«But these men are worse than robbers. They will insult You.»

«Oh!... And is there still an insult of which I am not aware, after today's?»

4 It is the Magdalene who finds a reason capable of bending the Sorrowful Mother to obedience. «You are good, You are holy, and You believe, and You are strong. But what are we?... You are aware of it! The majority have run away. Those who have remained are trembling. The doubt, which is already in us, would overwhelm us. You are the Mother. You have not only duties and rights on Your Son, but also duties and rights on what belongs to Your Son. You must come back with us, among us, to gather us together, to reassure us, to infuse Your faith into us. You said so, after Your just reproach for our timidity and misbelief: “It will be easier for Him to rise, if He is free from these useless bandages.” I say to You: “If we succeed in being united in the faith in His Resurrection, He will rise earlier, We will evoke Him with our love... Mother, Mother of my Saviour, come back with us, since You are the love of God, to give us this love of Yours! Do You want poor Mary of Magdala to get lost again, after He saved her with so much pity?»

«No. I would be reproached for that. You are right. I must go back... and look for the apostles... the disciples... the relatives... everybody... And say... say: have faith. Say: He forgives you... Whom have I already told so?... Ah! The Iscariot... I will have to... yes, I will have to look also for him... because he is the biggest sinner...» Mary remains with Her head bent on Her breast, trembling as if She were disgusted, and then She says:

«John, you will look for him. And you will bring him to Me. You must do that. And I must do that. Father, let also this be done for the redemption of Mankind. Let us go.»

She stands up. They leave the half-dark vegetable garden. The guards look at them go out without saying anything.

5 The road, dusty and thrown into a mess by the stream of people who went along it, striking it with their feet, with stones and cudgels, runs round Calvary and arrives at the main road, which is parallel to the walls. And the traces of what has happened are even clearer here. Twice Mary utters a cry and She stoops to examine the ground in the feeble light, because She seems to see some blood and She thinks it is the blood of Her Jesus. But it is nothing but tatters of cloth torn off, I think, in the confusion of the flight. The little stream, that flows along the road, babbles softly in the deep silence which has fallen everywhere. The town seems to be forlorn, as nothing but silence comes from it.

They are now at the little bridge that leads to the steep Calvary road. And, in front of it, there is the Judicial Gate. Before disappearing in there, Mary turns round to look at the top of Calvary... and She weeps desolately. Then She says: «Let us go. But lead Me. I do not want to see Jerusalem, its streets, its inhabitants.»

«Yes, but let us be quick. They are about to close the Gates and, see? their guards have been reinforced. Rome is afraid of turmoils.»

«Quite rightly. Jerusalem is a den of tigers! It is a tribe of killers! It is a rabble of robbers! And those usurpers aim with their rapacious fangs not only at property, but also at lives. For thirty-two years they have laid snares for the life of My Child... He was a little lamb of milk and roses, with golden curly hair... He could hardly say “Mummy”, and take His first steps, and laugh with His few teeth between His lips of pale coral, when they came to slaughter Him... Now they say that He had blasphemed, and infringed the Sabbath, and incited people to revolt, and aimed at a throne, and sinned with women... But what had He done then? Which blasphemy could He have uttered, if He could hardly call his Mummy? What Law could He infringe, if He, the Eternal Innocent, then was also the little innocent child of man? What revolt could He stir, if He was not even able to be naughty? Which throne could He aim at? He had His throne both on the Earth and in Heaven, and He did not seek any other: in Heaven He had His Father's bosom, on the Earth My lap. He never cast a sensual glance, and you, young beautiful women, can confirm that. But then, but then... His senses were confined to the need of warmth and nourishment, He made love, yes, but to My tepid breast, to lay His little face on it and sleep so, and to My round nipple, from which My love flowed as milk... Oh! My Child!... And they wanted You dead! That is what they wanted to deprive You of: Your life! Your only treasure. They wanted to deprive the Mother of Her Son, and the Son of His Mother, to make us the most miserable and desolate people in the Universe. Why deprive the Living One of His life? Why unduly claim the right to remove this thing that is life: the gift of the flower and of the animal, the gift of man? My Jesus asked nothing of you. Neither money, nor jewels, nor houses. He had a house, a little holy one, and He left it out of love for you, you men-hyenas.

For your sake He had given up what even the young one of an animal has, and poor and alone He had gone through the world, without even the bed that the Just One had made for Him, without even the bread His Mother used to make for Him, and He had slept wherever He could and He had eaten as He was able. In the houses of kind people, like every son of man, or on the grass of meadows, watched over by the stars. Sitting at a table, or sharing the grains of corn or wild blackberries with the birds of God. And He did not ask you for anything. On the contrary, He gave you what He had. He only wanted to live, to give you the Life with His word. And all of you, and you, Jerusalem, have deprived Him of His life. Are you sated and fed with His Blood and His Flesh? Or are you not yet satisfied? And you, a hyena after being a vampire and a vulture, do you want to feed on His Corpse, and not yet satisfied with opprobrium and tortures, do you still want to be pitiless and take delight in disfiguring His remains and seeing once again His spasms, His sobs and convulsions in Me, the Mother of the Murdered One? 6 Have we arrived? Why are you stopping? What does that man want of Joseph? What is he saying?»

Joseph, in fact, has been stopped by one of the rare passers-by, and in the dead silence of the deserted town their words are heard very clearly.

«It is known that you have entered Pilate's house. You are a violator of the Law. You will answer for that. Passover is interdicted to you! You are contaminated.»

«And you, too, Helkai. You have touched me and I am all covered with the blood of Christ and with the sweat of His death!»

«Ha! horror! Away, away with that blood!»

«Be not afraid. It has already abandoned and cursed you.»

«And you as well, you cursed one. And now that you are flirting with Pilate, don't think that you can take the Corpse away. We have taken the necessary steps to ensure that the story comes to an end.»

Nicodemus has approached them slowly, while the women have stopped with John, leaning against a closed portal.

«We have seen that» replies Joseph. «Cowards! You are afraid even of a dead body! But of my vegetable garden and of my sepulchre I do what I like.»

«We shall see.»

«We shall see. I will appeal to Pilate.»

«Yes. Fornicate with Rome, now.»

Nicodemus moves forward: «Better with Rome than with the Demon, as you, decides, do! In any case, tell me: how come you are plucking up courage again? A moment ago

you were running away, a prey to terror. Are you recovering already? Is what you had not sufficient yet? Was your house not burnt down? Tremble! The punishment is not over, on the contrary it is coming. Like the Nemesis of the heathens it is impending over you. Neither guards or seals will prevent the Avenger from rising and striking.»

«Cursed!» Helkai runs away and goes and knocks against the women. He realises that and utters a dreadful insult against Mary. John does not say one word. With the leap of a panther he clings to him and knocks him down and, pressing him with knees and holding his hands round his neck, he says to him: «Ask Her to forgive you or I will strangle you, you demon.» And he does not relax his hold until the other, pressed and half choked by John's hands, utters gaspingly: «Forgive me.»

But his cry has attracted the attention of the patrol. «Halt there! What's happening? Further seditions? Stand still, all of you, or you will be struck. Who are you?»

«Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, who have been authorised by the Proconsul to bury the Nazarene Who has been put to death, and we are coming back from the sepulchre with His Mother, a son and women relatives and friends. This man offended the Mother and has been compelled to ask Her forgiveness.»

«Only that? You should have cut his throat. You may go. Soldiers, arrest that man. What else do these vampires want? Also the hearts of mothers? Hail Judaeans!»

7 «How horrible! But they are no longer men... John, be good to them. Take into consideration the memory of Me and of My Jesus. He preached forgiveness.»

«Mother, You are right. But they are criminals and they make me lose my head. They are sacrilegious, they offend You and I cannot allow that.»

«Yes, they are criminals. And they know that they are. Look how few there are in the streets, and how those few slink away. After committing a crime, delinquents are afraid. It horrifies Me to see them flee thus, enter houses and barricade themselves there, out of fear. I feel that they are all guilty of the Deicide. Look over there, Mary, at that old man. He already has a foot in the grave and yet, now that he is illuminated by the light of that door that has opened, I think I saw him march past accusing My Jesus, up there, on Calvary...»

He called Him a robber... My Jesus a robber!... That young man, a little more than a boy, uttered obscene blasphemies, invoking His Blood upon himself... Oh! the wretch!... And that man? So brawny and strong, will he have refrained from striking Him? Oh! I do not want to see! Look: the faces of their souls are superimposed on the faces of their bodies and... and they no longer look like men, but like demons... So fearless they were against the Man Who had been tied and crucified... And now they run away, they hide themselves, they shut themselves up. They are afraid. Of whom? Of a dead body. He is nothing but a dead body, as far as they are concerned, because

they deny that He is God. So, of what are they afraid? Upon whom are they shutting their doors? Upon remorse. Upon punishment. It is of no avail. Remorse is within you. And it will follow you forever. And the punishment is not a human one. And locks and sticks, doors and bars are of no use against it. It descends from Heaven, from God, the avenger of His sacrificed Son, and it penetrates through walls and doors, and with its heavenly flame it marks you for the supernatural punishment awaiting you. The world will come to the Christ, to the Son of God and Mine, it will come to Him Whom you have pierced, but you will be those marked forever, the Cains of a God, marked as the dishonour of the human race. I, Who was born of you, I, Who am the Mother of everybody, must say that with regard to Me, your daughter, you have been more than step-fathers and that, in the immense number of My children, you are the ones who impose the greatest fatigue on Me in receiving you, because you are soiled with the crime against My Child. Neither do you repent saying: “You were the Messiah. We acknowledge and worship You.” Here is another Roman patrol. Love is no longer on the Earth. There is no more Peace among men. And Hatred and War are agitated like those smoky torches. The rulers are afraid of the unrestrained crowd. By experience they know that, when that wild beast named man has tasted the flavour of blood, he becomes avid of slaughter... But be not afraid of these men. They are neither royal lions nor panthers. They are very cowardly hyenas. They rush upon defenceless lambs. But they are afraid of the lion armed with lances and authority. Do not fear these creeping jackals. The sound of your steps with hobnailed boots puts them to flight and your shining lances make them meeker than rabbits.

8 Those lances! One of the them slit the heart of My Son! Which of them? Their sight pierces My heart... And yet I should like to have them all in My trembling hands, to see which is the one that still has traces of blood, and say: “It is this one! Give Me it, soldier! Give it to a mother in remembrance of your far away mother, and I will pray for her and for you.” And no soldier would deny Me it. Because they, the men on the war-path, were the best during the agony of the Son and of the Mother. Oh! why did I not think of that up there? I was like one whose head had been struck. It was already stunned by those blows... Oh! those blows! Who will grant Me not to hear them any more, here, in My poor head? The lance... How much I would like to have it!...»

«We can look for it, Mother. The centurion seemed to be very kind to us. I do not think that he will deny us it. I will go tomorrow.»

«Yes, John. I am poor. I have only a little money. But I will deprive Myself of it, to the last farthing, to have that lance... Oh! why did I not ask for it then?»

«Mary, my dear, none of us were aware of that wound... When You saw it, the soldiers were far away.»

«That is true... Grief has made Me feeble-minded. And His clothes? I have nothing of what belonged to Him! I would give My blood to have them...» Mary weeps again

desolately.

9 And She arrives thus in the street where is the Supper room. And it is time, because She is exhausted and She drags Herself along like an old decrepit woman. And She says so.

«Pluck up heart. We have arrived now.»

«Arrived? So short the road that this morning seemed so long? This morning? Was it this morning? Not before? How many hours and how many ages have gone by since I came here yesterday evening and since I left it this morning? Is it really I, the fifty-year-old Mother, or a very aged woman, a woman of many years ago, laden with years on My bent shoulders and on My white hair? I seem to have lived all the sorrow of the world, and that it is all on My shoulders, which bend under its weight. An incorporeal cross, but so heavy! Of stone. Perhaps even heavier than My Jesus'. Because I carry My cross and His with the remembrance of His torture and with the reality of My torment. Let us go in. Because we must go in. But it is no consolation. It is an increase of sorrow. My Son came in through this door for His last meal. And He went out through it to face death. And He had to put His foot where His traitor had put it, when he went out to call those who had to capture the Innocent. I saw Judas at that door... I saw Judas! And I did not curse him. But I spoke to him as a mother whose heart was torn apart. Torn apart because of the good Son and of the wicked one... I saw Judas! I saw the Demon in him! I, Who have always held Lucifer under My heel, and looking only at God I never lowered My eyes on Satan, I recognised his face looking at the Traitor, I spoke to the Demon... And he ran away, because he cannot bear My voice. Will he have left him now? So that I may speak to that dead body and I, the Mother, may conceive him again with the Blood of a God and bring him forth to Grace? John, swear to Me that you will look for him and that you will not be cruel to him. I am not, although I should be entitled to...

10 Oh! let Me go into that room, where My Jesus had His last meal. Where the voice of My Child spoke His last words in peace!»

«Yes. We shall go. But now, look, come here, where we were yesterday. Have a rest. Say goodbye to Joseph and Nicodemus, who are withdrawing.»

«Yes, I will say goodbye to them. Oh! I say goodbye to them, I thank them. I bless them!»

«Come, do come. You will do so at Your leisure.»

«No. Here. Joseph... Oh! I have not known anybody with this name who did not love Me...»

Mary of Alphaeus bursts into tears.

«Do not weep... Joseph also... It was out of love that your son was mistaking. He wanted to give Me peace in a human way... But today!... You saw him... Oh! all the Josephs are kind to Mary... Joseph, I thank you. And you, Nicodemus... My heart prostrates itself under your feet which are tired because of the long way you have gone for Him... for the last honours paid to Him... I have but My heart to give you... and I give it to you, the loyal friends of My Son... and... and excuse a mother with a pierced heart for the words I spoke to you in the sepulchre...»

«Oh! Holy Mother! Do forgive us!» says Nicodemus.

«Be good, now. Rest in Your Faith. We will come tomorrow» adds Joseph.

«Yes, we will come. We are at Your disposal.»

«It is Sabbath tomorrow» objects the mistress of the house.

«The Sabbath is dead. We will come. The Lord be with you» and they go away.

11 «Come, Mary.»

«Yes, come, Mother.»

«No. Open. You promised to do so after the greetings. Open this door! You cannot close it to a mother. To a mother who is trying to breathe the smell of the breath, of the body of her child in the air of the room. But do you not know that I gave Him that breath and that body? I, Who carried Him for nine months, Who gave birth to Him, suckled Him, brought Him up and took care of Him? That breath is Mine! The smell of that body is Mine! It is Mine, and it has become more beautiful in My Jesus. Let Me smell it once again.»

«Yes, dear. Tomorrow. You are tired now. You are burning with fever, You cannot. You are not well.»

«Yes. I am not well. Because in My eyes I have the sight of His Blood, and in My nose the smell of His Body covered with sores. Let Me see the table on which He leaned when He was alive and healthy, and let Me smell the scent of His youthful body. Open it! Do not bury Him for the third time! You have already concealed Him under spices and bandages, then you have shut Him up under the stone. Why now deny a Mother the possibility of finding again the last trace of Him in the breath He left beyond this door? Let Me go in. On the floor, on the table, on the seats, I will look for the traces of His feet, of His hands. And I will kiss them, I will kiss them until I consume My lips. I will search... I will search... Perhaps I shall find a fair hair of His head. A hair not encrusted with blood. But do you know what a hair of a son means for a mother? You, Mary of Clopas, you, Salome, are mothers. And do you not understand? John? John? Listen to Me. I am your Mother. He has made Me such. He did! You must obey Me. Open the door! I love you, John. I have always loved you, because you loved Him. I will love

you even more. But open the door. Open it, I say! Do you not want to? Do you not want to? Ah! So I no longer have a son!? Jesus never refused Me anything. Because He was My Son. You are refusing. You are not a son. You do not understand My grief... Oh! John, forgive... forgive Me... Open... Do not weep... Open... Oh! Jesus! Jesus!... Listen to Me... Let Your spirit work a miracle! Open to Your poor Mother this door that nobody wants to open! Jesus! Jesus!»

With clenched fists Mary knocks at the little closed door. It is a paroxysm of torture, until She turns pale and, while whispering: «Oh! My Jesus! I am coming! I am coming!», She collapses without strength into the arms of the weeping women, who support Her to prevent Her from falling at the foot of that door, and they carry Her thus into the room in front of it.

608. The Night of Good Friday.

29th March 1945.

1 Mary, assisted by the weeping women, comes to Herself and She weeps without having any other strength but that of shedding tears. It really seems that Her life must flow and be consumed completely in Her tears.

They want to give Her some refreshment. Martha offers Her some wine; the mistress of the house would like Her to take at least some honey; Mary of Alphaeus, kneeling in front of Her, offers Her a cup of lukewarm milk, saying: «I milked it myself from little Rachel's goat» (Rachel must be a daughter of the people who live in this house, I do not know whether as tenants or as keepers). But Mary does not want anything. She weeps. She can only weep. And She asks and hears them promise that they will look for the apostles and disciples, for the lance and Jesus' garments, and that at the break of the day, since they do not want to let Her go now, they will let Her go into the Supper room.

«Yes. If You calm down a little, if You rest a little, I will take You there» says Her sister-in-law. «We shall both go in, and on my knees I will look for every trace of Jesus on Your behalf...» and Mary of Alphaeus sobs. «But look! Here You have the chalice and the bread broken by Him and used by Him for the Eucharist. Is there a holier souvenir? See? John brought them for You this morning, so that You might see them this evening... 2 Poor John, he is over there and is weeping and is afraid...»

«Afraid? Why? Come here, John.» John comes out from the shade, because in the room there is only a little lamp placed on the table near the objects of the Passion, and he kneels at the feet of Mary, Who caresses him and asks: «Why are you afraid?»

And John, kissing Her hands and weeping replies: «Because You are not well. You are feverish and worried... And You are not tranquil. And if You continue so, You will die as He did...»

«Oh! I wish it were true!»

«No! Mother! Mama! Oh! It is more pleasant to say: “Mama”. As I say to my mother! Let me say so... But, as I find no difference between You and my mother, and I even love You more than I love her, because you are the Mother Whom He gave me and You are His Mother, so do not make too great a difference between the Son born of You, and the son who has been given to You... And love me a little as You love Him... If it were He Who said to You: “I am afraid that You may die”, would You reply: “Oh! I wish it were true”? No. You would not say that. On the contrary, You would be sorry to go away and leave Him, Your Lamb, in a world of wolves... And do You not grieve for me?... I am so much more a lamb than He was. Not through goodness and purity, but through stupidity and fear. If I am left without You, poor John will be torn to pieces by wolves without uttering a bleat that speaks of his Master... Do You want me to die so, without serving Him? As stupid in death as in life? No, You do not, do You? So, Mother, try to calm down... For His sake... Oh! do You not say that He will rise from the dead? Yes, You do, and it is true. Then, when He rises, do You want Him to find the house devoid of You? Because He will certainly come here... Oh! poor, poor Jesus, if instead of hearing Your cry of love He should hear our cries of grief, if instead of finding Your breast to rest His tortured glorious head on, He should find Your closed sepulchre... You must live. To greet Him when He comes back... I do not say “to our love”. We deserve all kinds of reproach because of our behaviour. But to Your love.

3 Oh! what meeting will it be? And what will He be like? Mother of Wisdom, Mama of the most ignorant John, since You know everything, tell us what He will be like, when He appears after rising from the dead.»

«The sores of Lazarus' legs were healed, but one could see their marks. And He appeared wrapped in bandages full of rotteness» says Martha.

«We had to wash him and wash him over again...» adds Mary.

«And he was weak, and we had to feed him by His order» ends Martha.

«The son of the widow of Nain looked bewildered and he was like a child unable to walk and speak without difficulty, so much so that He gave him back to his mother so that she might teach him to use the gift of life once again. And He Himself guided the first steps of Jairus' little daughter...» says John.

«I think that my Lord will send an angel to us to say: “Come with a clean garment”. And my love has already prepared it. It is in the mansion. I could not spin it. But I had it spun by my wet-nurse, who is no longer worried about my future, and does not weep

any more. I got the most precious linen and I received the purple from Plautina, and Naomi wove the border; and I made the belt, the bag and the taleth, embroidering them by night not to be seen. I learned from You, Mother. It is not perfect. But rather than by the pearls forming His name on the belt and on the bag, it is made beautiful by the diamonds of my tears of love and by my kisses. Every stitch is a throb of devoutness for Him. And I will take it to Him. You will allow me, will You not?»

«Oh!... I did not think that they would deprive Him of His garment... I am not familiar with the practises of the world and with its ferocity... I thought that I was aware of it... (and tears once again stream down Her pale cheeks) but I see that I did not know anything yet... And I was thinking: “He will have the garment made by His Mother also afterwards.” He liked it so much! He wanted it like that. And He had told Me such a long time ago: “You will make a tunic in such a manner. And You will bring it to Me for Passover... Because Jerusalem must see Me in the purple garment of a king...” Oh! that wool, whiter than snow, while I spun it was becoming red in the eyes of God and Mine, because My heart was wounded once again by that word... The other wounds, after years and months, if they had not healed, had dried up by dripping blood. But this one! Every day, every hour, turned the sword round in My heart: “One day less! One hour less! Then He will be dead!” Oh! Oh!... And the yarn on the spindle and on the loom became red... Then it was steeped in the dye for the world... But it was already red...»

4 Mary weeps again. They try to comfort Her speaking to Her of the Resurrection.

Susanna asks: «What do You say? What will He be like when He rises? And how will He rise?»

And Mary, bewildered and blinded in this hour of redeeming martyrdom, replies: «I do not know... I do not know anything any more... Except that He is dead!...»

She bursts into tears again and kisses the linen cloth that Jesus had round His hips, and She presses it to Her heart and lulls it as if it were a baby... And She touches the nails, the thorns, the sponge and shouts: «These are the things that Your Fatherland gave You! Iron, thorns, vinegar, gall! And insults, insults, insults! And among all the sons of Israel a man from Cyrene had to be chosen to carry the cross for You. That man is as sacred to Me as a spouse. And if I knew another one who has helped My Son, I would kiss his feet. So no one took pity on Him? Go out! Go away! It grieves Me even to see you! Because among all of you, you were not able to obtain even a less cruel torture. Useless and idle servants of your King, go out!» She is dreadful in Her outburst. Standing stiff, She looks even taller, with Her imperious eyes, Her arm stretched out painting at the door. She commands like a queen on her throne.

They all leave without reacting to avoid exciting Her more, and they sit outside the closed door, listening to Her moaning and to any noise She may make. But after the

noise of a chair pushed aside and of Her knees falling on the floor, because She kneels down with Her head against the table on which are the objects of the Passion, they can only hear Her weep unceasingly and disconsolately.

She whispers, but in such a low voice that those outside cannot hear Her: «Father, Father, forgive Me! I am becoming proud and bad. But You can see that what I say is true. There were crowds around Him. And all Palestine, during these festivals, is inside the holy walls... Holy? No. No longer holy... They would have remained such, if He had breathed His last within them. But Jerusalem rejected Him like a nauseating regurgitation. So only the Crime is in Jerusalem... Well, of all the people that followed Him, they were not able to gather a handful of men who could impose themselves, I do not mean to save Him, because He had to die to redeem, but to let Him die without so much torture. They remained in the shade, or they ran away... My heart revolts at so much cowardice. I am the Mother. So forgive My sin of proud harshness...» and She weeps...

...Outside the others are on tenter-hooks for many reasons.

5 The master of the house, who had gone out to stroll about curiously, comes back in and brings dreadful news. They say that many people died in the earthquake, many were wounded in scuffles between followers of the Nazarene and the Jews, that many have been arrested and that there will be more executions because of rebellions and threats to Rome; that Pilate has given orders to arrest all the followers of the Nazarene and the leaders of the Sanhedrin who are present in town or had already ran away through Palestine; that Johanna is dying in her mansion; that Manaen has been arrested by Herod, whom he insulted in the presence of all the Court as an accomplice of the Deicide. In brief, a pile of catastrophic news...

The women moan. Not so much out of fear for themselves, but for their sons and husbands. Susanna thinks of her husband, who is known as one of Jesus' followers in Galilee. Mary of Zebedee thinks of her husband, who is the guest of a friend, and of her son James, of whom she has had no news since the previous evening. And Martha says sobbing: «Perhaps they have already gone to Bethany! Who did not know what Lazarus was for the Master?»

«But he is protected by Rome» retorts Mary Salome.

«Oh! protected! Considering how much the chiefs of Israel hate us, who knows what charges they will make to Pilate against him... Oh! God!» Martha, not knowing which way to turn, shouts: «The arms! The arms! The house is full of them... and also the mansion! I know! This morning, at dawn, Levi, the guardian came, and he told me... But you know as well! And you told the Jews on Calvary... Fool! You have put in the hands of the cruel people the weapon to kill Lazarus!...»

«I said so. I did. I spoke the truth without knowing. But be quiet, you chicken-hearted woman! What I said is the safest guarantee for Lazarus. They will be wary of venturing

on searching where they know there are armed people! They are cowards!»

«Yes, the Jews are. But the Romans are not.»

«I am not afraid of Rome. She is just and peaceful in her provisions.»

«Mary is right» says John. «Longinus said to me: “I hope you will be left alone. But if you are not, come or send someone to the Praetorium. Pilate is benign towards the followers of the Nazarene. He was generous also towards Him. We will defend you.”»

«But if the Jews act by themselves? It was they who captured Jesus yesterday evening! And if they say that we are desecrators, they are entitled to capture us. Oh! My sons! I have four of them! Where will Joseph and Simon be? They were on Calvary and later they came down when Johanna was unable to resist. They came down to help and defend the women, they, the shepherds and Alphaeus... all of them! Oh! They will certainly have already killed them. Did you hear that Johanna is dying? It is certainly because she has been wounded. And before the mob could strike a woman, they must have defended her and were killed!... And Judas and James? My little Judas! My darling! And James as kind as a girl! Oh! I have no children left! I am like the mother of the Maccabean children!...»

All the women weep desperately, except the mistress of the house, who has gone to look for a hiding place for her husband, and Mary Magdalene, who is not weeping. But her eyes are full of fire and she has become the authoritative woman of days gone by. She does not speak. But she darts angry looks at her dejected companions and in her eyes one can read an epithet very clearly: «Cowards!»

Some time goes by so... Now and again one stands up, opens the door slowly, casts a glance and closes the door again.

«What is She doing?» ask the others.

And the person who has looked answers: «She is always on Her knees. She is praying»; or: «She seems to be speaking to someone.» And also: «She has got up and She is gesticulating walking up and down the room.»

[No date]

6 Lament of the Blessed Virgin.

«Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Where are You? Can You still hear Me? Can You hear Your poor Mother, Who is now shouting Your Name, after keeping it in Her heart for so many hours? Your holy blessed Name that has been My love, the love of My lips, which tasted the flavour of honey repeating Your Name, of My lips, which now, instead, when

they mention it, seem to be drinking the bitterness left on Your Lips, the bitterness of the terrible mixture. Your Name, the love of My heart that swelled with joy, when repeating it, as it had swelled to pour off its blood and receive You and clothe You with it, when You descended into Me from Heaven, so small, so tiny, that You could have rested in the calyx of wild mint, You, so great, the Mighty One, humiliated in the embryo of man for the salvation of the world. Your Name, grief of My heart, now that they have torn You away from the caresses of Your Mother, to throw You into the arms of the executioners, who have tortured You to death!

My heart has been crushed by Your Name, that I had to keep within Me for so many hours and whose cry increased more and more as Your sorrow increased, until it crushed it, as if it had been trodden on by the foot of a giant. Oh! My sorrow is a giant and it crushes Me, it shatters Me, and there is nothing that can alleviate it. To whom shall I mention Your Name? Nothing replies to My cry. Even if I shouted so loud that I split the stone closing Your sepulchre, You would not hear Me, because You are dead. You cannot hear Your Mother any more.

7 How many times have I called You, Son, during these thirty-four years! Since I learned that I was to be a Mother and that My Little one was to be named “Jesus!” You were not yet born and I, caressing My womb, in which You were growing, used to call in a low voice: “Jesus!”, and You seemed to move to say: “Mummy!” to me. I had already given You a voice and I dreamed of Your voice. I could hear it before it existed. And when I did hear it, as faint as that of a new-born lamb, tremble in the cold night in which You were born, I became acquainted with the abyss of joy... and I thought that I had become acquainted with the abyss of sorrow, because it was the weeping of My Baby Who was cold, Who was uncomfortable, Who was shedding His first tears of Redeemer, and I had neither fire nor cradle, and I could not suffer in Your stead, Jesus. I had but My lap as fire and cushion, and My love to worship You, My holy Son.

I thought that I had become acquainted with the abyss of sorrow... It was the dawn of that sorrow, it was the edge of that sorrow. Now it is the broad noon, now it is the bottom. This is the abyss, this which I am touching now, after descending into it during these thirty-four years, driven by so many things and prostrated today in the horrible bottom of Your Cross.

When You were a little baby, I used to lull You singing: “Jesus! Jesus!” Which harmony is there more beautiful and holy than this Name, which makes the angels smile in Heaven? To Me it was more beautiful than the song, so sweet, of the angels the night of Your Birth. I could see Heaven in it, the whole of Heaven I could see through that Name. And now, saying it to You Who are dead and cannot hear Me, and You do not reply to Me, as if You had never existed, I see Hell, the whole of Hell. See, now I understand what it means to be damned. It is to be no longer able to say: “Jesus!” Horrible! Horrible! Horrible!...

8 How long will this hell last for Your Mother? You said: “Within three days I will rebuild this Temple.” I have been repeating these words to Myself all day today, in order not to drop dead, to be ready to greet You when You come back and go on serving You... But how shall I be able to put up for three days with the knowledge that You are dead? You, My Life, for three days dead?

How come, You, Who know everything, because You are the infinite Wisdom, are not aware of the torture of Your Mother? Can You not imagine it, remembering the day I lost You in Jerusalem, and You saw Me squeeze through the crowd around You, looking like a shipwrecked person that touches the shore, after struggling so much with waves and death, with the countenance of a woman who comes out of a torture exhausted, almost bled to death, aged, heart-broken? And then it was possible for me to think that You were just lost. I could delude Myself that it was only that. But not today. Not today. I know that You are dead. No illusion is possible. I saw You being killed. And even if grief should make Me lose My memory, here is Your Blood on My veil and it says to Me: “He is dead! He is bloodless! These are the last drops that gushed out of His Heart!” Out of His Heart! Out of the Heart of My Child! Of My Son! Of My Jesus! Oh! God, merciful God, do not let Me remember that they split His Heart!...

9 Jesus! I cannot stay here, alone, while You are there, all alone. I, Who have never loved the roads of the world and crowds, and You know, after You left Nazareth, have more and more frequently followed You, in order not to live far from You. I could not live away from You. I faced oddities and derision, I do not take into account fatigue, because it was obliterated by the joy of seeing You, just to live where You were. And now I am here all alone. And You are there, all alone! Why did they not leave Me in Your sepulchre? I would have sat beside Your chilly bed, holding one hand of Yours in Mine, to make You feel that I was near You... No, to feel that You were close to Me. You do not feel anything any more. You are dead!

How often have I spent the night near Your cradle, praying, loving, taking delight in You! Shall I tell You how You slept, with Your little fists closed like two flower buds near Your holy little face? Shall I tell You how you used to smile in Your sleep and, certainly remembering Your Mummy's milk, You made the gesture of sucking, while sleeping? Shall I tell You how You woke up and opened Your eyes and laughed, seeing Me bent over Your face, and You stretched Your little hands joyfully, as You were anxious to be taken by Me, and how with a little cry as sweet as the trill of a blackcap You claimed Your food? Oh! I was happy when You clung to My breast and I felt the smooth tepidity of Your cheeks, the caresses of Your little hands on My mamma!

You could not stay away from Your Mother. And now You are alone! Forgive Me, Son, for leaving You alone, for not rebelling for the first time in My life and for not insisting on remaining there. It was My place. I would have felt less desolate, if I had remained near Your funereal bed, to arrange Your clothes, as in days gone by, and change them...

Even if You could not have smiled at and spoken to Me, I would have felt as if I had You again as when You were a baby. I would have held You to My heart, in order not to make You feel the chillness of the stone, the hardness of the marble. Did I not hold You also today? The lap of a mother is always capable of holding a son, even if he is grown-up man. A son is always a baby for his mother, even if he is one who has been taken down from a cross, covered with sores and wounds.

10 How many! How many wounds! How much sorrow! Oh! My Jesus, My Jesus so wounded! So wounded! So wounded! No. No. Lord, no! It cannot be true! I am mad! Jesus dead? I am raving. Jesus cannot die! Yes, He can suffer. But He cannot die. He is the Life! He is the Son of God. He is God. God does not die.

Does He not die? Then, why has He been named Jesus? What does “Jesus” mean? It means... oh! it means: “Saviour”! He is dead! He is dead because He is the Saviour! He had to save everybody losing Himself... I am not raving. No. I am not mad. No. I wish I were! I should suffer less! He is dead. Here is His Blood. Here is His crown. Here are the three nails. They have pierced Him with them!

Men, look with what you have pierced God, My Son! And I must forgive you. And I must love you. Because He has forgiven you. Because He told Me to love you. He made Me your Mother, the Mother of the killers of My Child! One of His last words, struggling against the death-rattle at His agony... “Mother, here is Your son... your sons!” Even if I were not She Who obeys, today I would have had to obey, because it was the order of a dying man.

So, Jesus. I forgive. I love them. Ah! My hearts breaks in this forgiveness and in this love! Do You hear that I am forgiving them and loving them? I am praying for them. Yes, I am praying for them... I am closing My eyes not to see these objects of Your torture, to be able to forgive them, love them and pray for them. Each nail serves to crucify a will of Mine not to forgive, not to love, not to pray for Your executioners.

I must, I want to think that I am near Your cradle. Also then I prayed for men. But it was easy then. You were alive and I, although I thought that men were cruel, I never went so far as to think that they could be so cruel to You, Who had assisted them excessively. I prayed and I was convinced that Your Word would make them better men. In My heart I said to them, looking at them: “You are bad, diseased, now, brothers. But before long He will speak, before long He will defeat Satan in you. He will give you the Life lost!” The life lost! It is You, You, You, Who have lost Your life for them, My Jesus! If, when You were in Your swaddling-clothes, I had seen all today's horror, My sweet milk would have turned into poison through grief!

Simeon said so: “And a sword will pierce Your heart.” A sword? A mass of swords! How many wounds did they inflict on You, Son? How many groans did You utter? From how many spasms did You suffer? How many drops of blood did You shed?

Well, each of them is a sword in Me. I am a mass of swords. There is not a strip of skin on You without sores. In Me there is not one that has not been pierced. They pierce My flesh and penetrate My heart.

11 When I was expecting You, I prepared Your swaddling-clothes and napkins, spinning the softest linen on the Earth. I did not mind the price, providing I had the softest cloth. How beautiful You looked in the swaddling-clothes made by Your Mother! Everybody said to Me: “Your Child is beautiful, Donna!” You were lovely! From the white linen there appeared Your rosy little face, Your eyes were bluer than the sky, and Your little head seemed enveloped in a golden mist, so fair and soft was Your hair. It smelt of blossoms of almond-trees. People thought that I put scent on You. No. My Darling had but the scent of the swaddling-clothes washed by His Mother, warmed and kissed by Her heart and lips. I was never tired of working for You...

And now? Now I have nothing more to do for You. For three years You have been away from home. But You were still the aim of My days. I thought of You. Of Your clothes. Of Your food: I kneaded flour and baked bread, I looked after the bees to give You honey, I took care of the trees, so that they might yield fruit for You. How much You loved the things that Your Mother brought You! No food of a rich table, no garment of precious cloth was for You like those woven, sewn, taken care of, picked by the hands of Your Mother. When I came to You, You looked at once at My hands, as You used to do when You were a little boy, and Joseph and I gave You our poor gifts, to make You feel that You were “our” King. You have never been greedy, My Child; it was love that You were seeking, that was Your food, and You found it in our attentions. Even now You found it and were looking for it, poor Son of Mine, so little loved by the world!

Now, nothing more. Everything has been accomplished. Your Mother will not do anything any more for You. You no longer need anything. Now You are alone... And I am alone... Oh! happy Joseph, who has not seen this day! I wish I had never seen it either! But in that case You would not have had even this comfort of seeing Your poor Mother. You would have been all alone on the cross, as You are alone in the sepulchre. All alone with Your wounds.

12 Oh! God! God! How many wounds has Your Son, My Son! How was I able to see them without dying, whereas I almost fainted every time You hurt Yourself when You were a child?

Once You fell in the kitchen garden in Nazareth and You hurt Your forehead. Only a few drops of blood. But I, Who 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 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. Another time, You were learning to work and You hurt Yourself with a saw. A slight wound. But I

felt as if the saw had cut Me in two. I had no rest until six days later, when I saw Your hand healed.

And now? And now? Now You have Your hands, feet, side ripped, now Your flesh is falling in pieces, Your face is bruised, that Face which I did not dare to touch lightly with a kiss, and Your forehead and the nape of Your neck are ulcerated. And no one gave You medicament or comfort.

13 Look at My heart, God, Who have struck Me in My Child! Look at it! Is it not as covered with sores as the Body of Your Son and Mine? The scourges have come down on Me like hailstones, while He was being lashed. What is distance for love? I suffered the torture of My Son! I wish I alone had suffered it, and that I alone were on the sepulchral stone! Look at Me, God! Is My heart not bleeding?

Here is the circle of thorns, I can feel it. It is a band that squeezes and pierces it. Here is the hole of the nails: three stylets driven into My heart. Oh! those blows! Those blows! How did Heaven not collapse because of those sacrilegious blows on the flesh of God? And not being able to shout! Not being able to rush forward and snatch the weapon from the killers and use it to defend My Child, Who was already dying. But having to hear and hear... and not do anything! A stroke on the nail, and the nail penetrates the living flesh. Another stroke, and it penetrates even more. And another, another one, and bones and nerves break, and the flesh of My Child is pierced, and the heart of His Mother! And when they raised You on Your Cross? How much You must have suffered, Holy Son! I can still see Your hand torn by the shock of the drop. And My heart is torn likewise.

I am bruised, scourged, stung, struck, pierced like You. I was not with You on the cross. But look at Your Mother. Is She different from You? No, there is no difference of martyrdom. On the contrary, Yours is over. Mine is still on. You no longer hear the false charges; I do. You no longer hear the horrible curses. I still hear them. You no longer feel the bites of thorns and nails, You are no longer parched or feverish. I am full of points of fire and I am like one who is dying of thirst and delirious fever.

14 If they had even allowed Me to give You a drop of water. My tears, if the ferocity of men denied the Creator the water created by Him. I gave You suck for a long time, because we were poor, My Son, and in our flight into Egypt we had lost so much, and we had to get a new house, furniture, clothes and food, and we did not know how long the exile would last, or what we would have found going back to our country. I gave You suck longer than the usual period of time, so that You might not feel the lack of food. Until we got the little goat, I was Your little goat, Child of Your Mummy. You already had so many little teeth, and You used to bite... Oh! what a joy to see You laugh in Your childish games!...

You wanted to walk. You were so healthy and strong. I held You up for hours and

hours, and I did not feel My back break being bent over You, Who were taking Your first steps and at each step You would say: “Mummy, Mummy!” Oh! what a beatitude to hear You sing that name! Also today You were saying: “Mother, Mother!” But Your Mother could only see You die! I could not even caress Your feet! Your feet? Ah! even if they had been within reach, I would not have been able to touch them, to avoid increasing Your torture. How much Your poor feet must have suffered, o My Jesus!

If only I could have come up to You and placed Myself between the wood and Your body, and prevented You from rubbing against the wood in the convulsions of the agony! I can still hear Your head knock against the wood in the last gasps. And that sound, that sound drives Me mad. It is in My head... like a hammer.

15 Come back, come back, My dear holy Son! I am dying. I cannot bear this desolation of Mine. Show Me Your face once again. Call Me again. I cannot think that You have no voice, no eyes, that You are a cold lifeless corpse. Oh! Father, assist Me! Jesus does not hear Me! Is His Passion not over? Is it not all accomplished? Are these nails, these thorns, this blood, these tears of Mine not sufficient? Is still more required to heal man?

Father, I am mentioning the instruments of His sorrow and My tears. But that is the least important. What made Him die tortured in a superhuman manner was Your abandonment. What makes Me shout is Your abandonment. I cannot hear You any more! Where are You, holy Father? I was the “Full of Grace”. The Angel said: “Hail, Mary, full of Grace, the Lord is with You and You are blessed amongst all women.” No. It is not true! It is not true! I am like a woman cursed by You for her sin. You are no longer with Me. Grace has withdrawn, as if I were a second Eve sinner.

But I have always been faithful to You. In what have I displeased You? You have dealt with Me as You liked, and I have always said to You: “Yes, Father. I am ready.” So, can angels lie? And Anne, who assured Me that You would give Me Your angel in the hour of sorrow? I am alone. I no longer have grace in Your eyes, I no longer have You, Grace, in Me. I no longer have an angel. So, do saints lie? In what have I displeased You, if they do not lie and I have deserved this hour?

And Jesus? What wrong has Your pure meek Lamb done? In what have we offended You to deserve the incalculable torture of Your abandonment, in addition to the martyrdom given by men? He, above all, He was Your Son and He called You with that voice that made the Earth shudder and shake in a sob of pity. How could You abandon Him all alone in such a torture?

Poor Heart of Jesus, Who loved You so much! Where is the sign of the wound of His Heart? Here it is. Look, Father, at this sign. This is the impression of My hand that entered the gash of the lance-thrust. Here... Here... It cannot be erased either by the tears or by the kisses of His Mother, Whose eyes are dry through weeping and Whose lips are consumed through kissing. This sign shouts and reproaches. This sign cries to

You from the Earth more than Abel's blood. And You, Who cursed Cain and revenged Yourself on him, did not intervene on behalf of My Abel already bled by His Cains, and You allowed this last outrage! You crushed His Heart with Your abandonment and You allowed a man to strip Him, so that I might see Him and be crushed. With regard to Me, it does not matter. It is for Him, for Him that I ask and call You to answer. You should not have done that...

16 Oh! forgive Me! Forgive Me, Holy Father! Forgive a Mother Who is mourning Her Child... He is dead! My Son is dead! Dead with His Heart rent! Oh! Father! Father, have mercy! I love You! We have loved You and You have loved us so much. How did You allow the Heart of Our Son to be rent? Oh! Father!... Father, have mercy on a poor woman! I am blaspheming, Father! I, Your servant, Your nonentity, dare reproach You! Have mercy! You have been good. You have been good. The wound, the only wound that did not hurt Him, is this one. Your abandonment served to make Him die before sunset avoiding other tortures.

You have been good. You do everything for a purpose of good. It is we creatures who do not understand. You have been good. You have been good! O My soul, repeat that word, to remove the sting of Your suffering from Your suffering. God is good and has always loved You, My soul. From Your cradle to the present moment, He has always loved You. He has given You all the joy of the time. All of it. He has given You Himself. He has been good. Good. Good. Thank You, Lord. May You be Blessed for Your infinite goodness!

Thank You. Jesus, I say “thank You” also on Your behalf. This wound at least was not felt by You, Son! I only felt it in My Heart, when I saw Yours opened. Your lance is now in My heart and it rummages and tortures. But it is better so! You do not feel it. But, have mercy, Jesus! A sign from

You! A caress, a word for Your poor Mother, Whose heart is torn to pieces! A sign, a sign, Jesus, if You want to find Me alive when You come back!»

[29th March 1945]

17 A loud knock at the door makes everyone start. The master of the house bravely runs away. Mary of Zebedee would like her John to follow him and pushes him towards the yard. The other women, with the exception of the Magdalene, press against one another moaning.

It is Mary of Magdala who goes straight and resolutely to the door and asks: «Who is it?»

The voice of a woman replies: «I am Nike. I have something to be given to the Mother.

Open! Quick. The patrol is around.»

John, who has freed himself from his mother and has rushed towards the Magdalene, busies himself with the many locks, which are well fastened this evening. He opens the door. Nike comes in with a servant and a brawny man who is escorting them. They close the door.

«I have a thing...» says Nike weeping and she is unable to speak..

«What? What?» They are all around her, full of curiosity.

«On Calvary... I saw the Saviour in that state... I had prepared a loincloth, so that He would not have to use the rags of the executioners... But He was so wet with perspiration, with blood in His eyes, that I thought I should give it to Him to wipe Himself. He did so... And He gave the cloth back to me. I have not used it again... I wanted to keep it as a relic with His perspiration and blood. And seeing the fury of the Jews, shortly afterwards, with Plautina and the other Roman ladies Lydia and Valeria, we decided to come back, for fear they might take this linen cloth from us. The Romans are brave women. They put the servant and me in the middle and they protected us. It is true that they are contamination for Israel... and that it is dangerous to touch Plautina. But one thinks of that in peaceful times. Today they were all drunk... At home I wept... for hours... Then there was the earthquake and I fainted... When I came to myself, I wanted to kiss that linen cloth and I saw... oh!... The face of the Redeemer is on it!...»

«Let us see! Let us see!»

«No. The Mother first. It is Her right.»

«She is so exhausted! She will not be able to resist...»

«Oh! don't say that! On the contrary, it will comfort Her. Tell Her!»

18 John knocks at the door lightly.

«Who is it?»

«It is I, Mother. Nike is here... She came during the night... She brought a souvenir to You... a gift... She hopes to comfort You with it.»

«Oh! one gift only can comfort Me! The smile of His Face...»

«Mother!» John embraces Her lest She should fall, and as if he were confiding the true Name of God, he says: «It is that. The smile of His Face, impressed on a linen cloth with which Nike wiped Him on Calvary.»

«Oh! Father! Most High God! Holy Son! Eternal Love! May You be blessed! The sign! The sign I asked of You. Let her, let her come in!»

Mary sits down, because She cannot stand any longer, and while John beckons to the women, who are peeping into the room, to let Nike pass, She recovers Herself.

Nike goes in and kneels at Her feet with the servant beside her. John, standing near Mary, holds his arm round Her shoulders, as if he wanted to support Her. Nike does not utter one word. But she opens the casket, takes the linen cloth out and unfolds it. And the Face of Jesus, the living Face of Jesus, the sorrowful and yet smiling Face of Jesus looks at His Mother and smiles at Her.

Mary utters a cry of sorrowful love and stretches out Her arms. The women echo Her cry from the door-space where they have crowded. And they imitate Her kneeling before the Face of the Saviour.

Nike cannot find words. She hands the linen cloth over to the motherly hands and she stoops to kiss its edge. She then goes out backwards without waiting for Mary to come out of Her ecstasy.

She goes away... She is already out, in the night, when they think of her... There is nothing to be done except to close the door, as it was before.

Mary is once again alone. In a conversation of Her soul with the image of Her Son, because they all withdraw again.

19 Some more time goes by. Then Martha says: «What shall we do for the ointments? Tomorrow is the Sabbath...»

«And we shall not be able to get anything...» says Salome.

«And we should do that... Many pounds of aloe and myrrh... but He was so badly washed...»

«We ought to have everything ready by dawn on the first day after the Sabbath» remarks Mary of Alphaeus.

«And what about the guards? What shall we do?» asks Susanna.

«We shall tell Joseph, if they do not let us go in» replies Martha.

«We shall not be able to shift the stone by ourselves.»

The Magdalene replies: «Oh! do you think that five of us will not be able? We are all strong... and love will do the rest.»

«In any case I will come with you» says John.

«Certainly not you. I do not want to lose you as well, son.»

«Don't worry about it. We shall be enough.»

«But in the meantime... Who will give us the spices?»

They are all depressed... Then Martha says: «We could have asked Nike whether it was true about Johanna... about the rebellions...»

«That is true! But we are dull-witted. We could have taken also the spices then. Isaac was at the doorstep when we came back...»

«In the mansion there are many small vases of essences, and there is some fine incense. I will go and get them.» And Mary Magdalene stands up from her seat and puts on her mantle.

Martha shouts: «You shall not go.»

«I will go.»

«You are mad! They will get you!»

«Your sister is right. Don't go!»

«Oh! what useless howling females you are! Jesus really had a fine group of followers! Have you already used up your reserve of courage? With regard to me, the more I use the more I get.»

«I will go with her. I am a man.»

«And I am your mother and I forbid you.»

«Be good, Mary Salome, and you, too, John. I will go by myself. I am not afraid. I know what it is like going round the streets at night. I have done that thousands of times for sinful reasons... and should I be afraid now that I am going to serve the Son of God?»

«But there is a revolt in town today. You heard what the man said.»

«He is faint-hearted. And you are like him. I am going.»

«And if the soldiers find you?»

«I will say: "I am the daughter of Theophilus, the Syrian, a faithful servant of Caesar." And they will let me go. In any case... A man before a beautiful young woman is a more harmless plaything than a stalk of straw. I know, much to my shame...»

«But how do you expect to find perfumes in the mansion if no one has lived in it for years?»

«Do you think so? Oh! Martha! Do you not remember that Israel forced you to leave it, because it was one of my meeting-places with my lovers? I kept everything there that served to make them even more crazy about me. When I was saved by my Saviour, in a

place known only to me, I concealed the alabasters and incenses that I used for my orgies of love. And I swore that only the tears shed on my sins and the adoration of the Most Holy Jesus would be the scented waters and the burning incenses of repentant Mary. And that I would use those signs of a profane cult of senses and of the flesh only to sanctify them on Him and to anoint Him. This is the hour. I am going. Remain here. And be calm. The angel of God will come with me and no harm will befall me. Goodbye. I will bring you news. And do not say anything to Her... You would increase Her worries...» And Mary of Magdala goes out sure of herself and imposing.

«Mother, let that be a lesson for you... And may it say to you: do not let the world say that your son is a coward. Tomorrow, no, today, because this is already the second watch, I will go looking for my companions, as She wants...»

«It is the Sabbath... you cannot...» objects Salome to detain him.

«"The Sabbath is dead." I also say with Joseph. The new era has begun. Other laws, other sacrifices and ceremonies for it.»

Mary of Salome bends her head on her knees and weeps without protesting any more.

«Oh! I wish we could have news of Lazarus» says Mary of Clopas with a moan.

«If you let me go, you will have news, because Simon the Cananean had instructions to take my companions to Lazarus. Jesus told Simon when I was present.»

«Alas! Are they all there? So they are all lost!» Mary of Clopas and Salome weep desolately.

20 More time passes while they weep and wait. Then Mary Magdalene comes back triumphantly, laden with bags full of small precious vases.

«See, nothing has happened to me. Here are oils of all kinds, and nard, and olibanum, and benzoin. There is no myrrh and no aloe... I did not want any bitterness... I am drinking it all now... In the meantime we will mix these and tomorrow we will get... oh! if we pay, Isaac will give them also on a Sabbath... We will get myrrh and aloe.»

«Did anyone see you?»

«No one. There is not even a bat around.»

«And the soldiers?»

«The soldiers? I think they must be snoring in their pallets.»

«What about the seditions... the arrests...»

«The fear of that man saw them...»

«Who is in the mansion?»

«Levi and his wife. As peaceful as children. The armed men have fled... ha! ha! fine brave men we have, honestly!... They ran away as soon as they heard of the death sentence. I tell you the truth: Rome is hard and uses the scourge... But by it she makes people fear her and serve her. And she has men, not cowards... Oh! yes! He used to say: "My followers will experience the same destiny as Mine." H'm! If many Romans become followers of Jesus, that may be true. But if there are to be martyrs among the Israelites! He will remain alone... Here. This is my sack. And this one is Johanna's, who... yes. We are not only cowards, but also liars. Johanna is only depressed. She and Eliza felt ill on Golgotha. One is a mother whose son died, and, as she heard the death-rattles of Jesus, she was badly upset. The other is delicate and not used to so much walking and exposure to the sun. But there are no wounds and no agonies. She certainly weeps, as we do. Nothing else. She regrets that she was taken away. She will come tomorrow. And she sends these spices. The ones she had. As ordered by Plautina, Valeria had remained with her, and now she has gone with the slaves to Claudia's house, because they have much incense. When she comes, because she, too, by the grace of Heaven, is not an ever trembling coward, don't start shouting as if you felt the dagger at your throats. Come on. Get up. Let us take the mortars and work. Weeping is of no avail. Or at least weep and work. Our balm will be mixed with our tears. And He will feel them upon Himself... He will feel our love.» And she bites her lips, not to weep and to give strength to the others, who are really depressed.

21 They work eagerly. Mary calls John.

«Mother, what is the matter?»

«Those blows...»

«They are pounding incenses...»

«Ah!... But forgive Me... Don't make that noise... they sound like the hammers...» In fact the bronze pestles striking the marble of the mortars make the exact noise of hammers.

John tells the women, who go out into the yard, in order not to be heard so much. John goes back to the Mother.

«How did they get them?»

«Mary of Lazarus went to her house and to Johanna's... Also some more will be brought...»

«Did anybody come?»

«Nobody after Nike.»

«But look at Him, John, how handsome He is also in His sorrow!» Mary is absorbed in contemplation, with Her hands joined, before the cloth, which She has spread out on a chest holding it with some weights.

«Handsome, yes, Mother. And He is smiling at You... Do not weep any more... Some hours have already gone by. There is less to wait for His return...» and in the meantime John weeps...

Mary caresses his cheek. But She looks only at the image of Her Son.

22 John goes out, blinded by his tears.

Also the Magdalene, who has come back to get some amphorae, is in the same state. But she says to the Apostle: «We must not let them see that we are weeping. Because, otherwise, the women over there will not be able to do anything. And we have to do...»

«...and we have to believe» concludes John.

«Yes. We must believe. If one were not able to believe, it would be despair. I believe. And you?»

«I, too...»

«You say so badly. You do not love enough yet. If you loved with your whole self, it would not be possible for you not to believe. Love is light and voice. Also against the darkness of denial and the silence of death it says: "I believe".» Wonderful is the Magdalene, so great and imposing, authoritative in her confession of faith! Her heart must be torn to pieces. And her eyes inflamed by tears confirm that. But her spirit is undefeated.

John looks at her full of admiration and whispers: «You are strong!»

«Always. I was so much, that I dared to defy the world. And I was, then, without God. Now that I have Him, I feel I know how to defy also hell. You, who are good, should be stronger than I am. Because sin disheartens, you know? More than consumption. But you are innocent... That is why He loved you so much...»

«He loved you as well...»

«And I was not innocent. But I was His conquest and...»

23 There is a loud knock at the door.

«It may be Valeria. Open the door.»

John does so without any fear, dominated by Mary's calm.

It is in fact Valeria with her slaves, who are carrying the litter, from which she comes

out. She goes in uttering the Latin greeting: «Salve.»

«Peace be with you, sister. Come in» says John.

«May I offer the Mother the homage of Plautina? Claudia also has contributed. But if it is not grievous for Her to see me.»

John goes in to Mary.

«Who is knocking? Peter? Judas? Joseph?»

«No. It is Valeria. She has brought some precious resins. She would like to offer them to You... if that does not grieve You.»

«I must overcome grief. He called the children of Israel and the heathens to His Kingdom. He called everybody. Now... He is dead... But I am here for Him. And I receive everybody. Let her come in.»

Valeria enters. She has taken off her dark mantle and she is all white in her stole. She stoops to the ground. She greets and speaks. «Domina. You know who we are. The first women redeemed from heathen obscurantism. We were dirt and darkness. Your Son has given us wings and light. Now He is... sleeping in peace. We know your customs. And we want also the balms of Rome to be spread on the Triumpher.»

«May God bless you, daughters of My Lord. And... forgive Me if I am not able to say more...»

«Do not make any effort, Domina. Rome is strong. But she can also understand grief and love. She understands You, Sorrowful Mother. Goodbye.»

«Peace be with you, Valeria! My blessing to Plautina, to all of you.»

Valeria withdraws leaving her incenses and other essences.

«See, Mother? The whole world is making offerings to the King of Heaven and Earth.»

«Yes» says Mary. «The whole world. And His Mother will have been able to give Him nothing but tears.»

24 A cock crows joyfully somewhere nearby. John starts.

«What is the matter, John?» asks the Blessed Virgin.

«I was thinking of Simon Peter...»

«But was he not with you?» asks the Magdalene who has gone back into the room.

«Yes. In Annas' house. Then I understood that I had to come here. And I have not seen him again.»

«It will soon be dawn.»

«Yes. Open the windows.»

They open the window coverings, and their faces look even wanner in the greenish dawn light.

The night of Good Friday is over.

609. The Redeeming Value of Jesus' and Mary's Sufferings. John Is the Head of Lovers.

[20th February 1944]

1 Now, it is already night-time, Jesus says:

«You have seen how much it costs to be Saviours. You have seen it in Me and in Mary. You have become acquainted with all our tortures and you have seen with what generosity, with what heroism, with what patience, with what meekness, with what perseverance, with what strength we have suffered them through our love to save you.

All those who want, who ask the Lord God to make them “saviours”, must thoroughly consider that Mary and I are the model and that those are the tortures they must share in order to save. Their torture will not be the cross, the thorns, the nails, the material scourges. They will be different, of a different form and nature. *But equally painful and equally consuming.* And only by consuming the sacrifice amid those sorrows can you become saviours.

It is an austere mission. The most austere of them all. The one compared to which the life of the monk or of the nun of the strictest rule is a flower compared to a mass of thorns. Because it is not a rule of a human Order. But the Rule of a priesthood, of a divine monastic life, of which I am the Founder, I, Who in My Rule, in My Order, consecrate and receive those elected to it, and impose My habit on them: *total Sorrow, even to sacrifice.*

2 You have seen My sufferings. *They have been applied to make amends for your sins.* No part of My body was excluded from them, because nothing in man is free from sin, and all the parts of your physical and moral egos – that ego that God gave you with the perfection of divine work and that you have depreciated with the sin of your first parent and with your tendencies to evil, with your bad will – are instruments of which you make use to commit sin. *But I have come to cancel the effects of sin with My Blood and My sorrow, washing your individual physical and moral parts in them, to cleanse and*

strengthen them against culpable tendencies.

My hands were wounded and imprisoned, after they had become tired carrying the Cross, to make amends for all the crimes committed by the hands of man. From the true and proper ones committed holding and operating a gun against a brother, turning yourselves into Cains, to those perpetrated stealing, writing false accusations, making gestures against the respect of your bodies and other people's, and idling in laziness, which is propitious ground for your vices. For the illicit freedom of your hands, I had Mine crucified, nailing them to the cross, depriving them of every movement more than lawful and necessary.

The Feet of your Saviour, after becoming tired and bruised on the stones of the Way of My Passion were pierced and immobilised, to make amends for the evil you do with your feet, making them means to go to your crimes, thefts, fornications. I marked the streets, the squares, the houses, the steps in Jerusalem, to purify all the streets, the squares, the houses, the steps of the earth from all the evil that had grown on and in it, sown in past and future centuries by your bad will, obedient to Satan's instigations.

3 My Flesh was bruised, contused, torn to punish in Me the exaggerated cult, the idolatry that you give to your flesh and to the flesh of those whom you love out of a sensual whim or also out of fondness, which is not blameworthy in itself, but you make it such by loving a parent, a husband, a son, a brother more than you love God.

No. *Above all love and every tie on the earth, there is, there must be the love for your Lord God. No other love is to be superior to it.* Love your relatives in God, not above God. *Love God with your whole selves.* That will not absorb your love to the extent of making you indifferent towards your relatives, *on the contrary it will nourish your love for them with the perfection attained from God,* because he who loves God has God in himself and, having God, has Perfection.

I turned My Flesh into one sore to remove from your flesh the poison of sensuality, of lack of modesty, of lack of respect, of ambition and admiration for the flesh destined to become dust again. It is not with the cult for the body that one makes it beautiful. *It is with detachment from it that one gives it the eternal Beauty in the Heaven of God.*

4 My Head was tortured with countless tortures: with blows, with exposure to the sun, with shouts, with thorns, to make amends for the sins of your minds. Pride, impatience, unbearableness, intolerance spring up like a mushroom-bed in your brains. I turned it into a tortured organ, enclosed in a casket decorated with blood, to make amends for everything that sprouts from your thought.

You have seen the only crown I wanted. The crown that only a madman or a convict can wear. No one, who is sound of mind (speaking from a human point of view) and is free to do what he likes, will put it on. But I was considered mad and mad I was from a supernatural divine point of view, as I wanted to die for you who do not love Me or

love Me so little, as I wanted to die to defeat Evil in you, knowing that you love it more than you love God, and I was a prey to man, his prisoner, condemned by him. I, God, condemned by man.

How often you lose your patience over trifles, you become incompatible through trivialities, you are unbearable because of light indispositions! But look at your Saviour. Consider how irritating it must have been to be continuously stung in different parts, to have the locks of My hair entangled in the thorns, to feel the crown move continuously without being able to move My head, and not being able to lean it anywhere without being tortured! But think of what the shouts of the crowds, the blows on My head, the scorching sun were for My tortured, aching, feverish Head! Consider what pain I felt in My poor brain, since I went to the agony of Friday aching all over because of the efforts made Thursday evening, in My poor brain, which was affected by the fever of My tortured Body and of the intoxications brought about by tortures!

And in My Head, My eyes, My mouth, My nose, My tongue, each had their torture. To make amends for your glances, so anxious to see what is evil and so forgetful of seeking God, to redress the too many, too false, filthy and lustful words that you utter, instead of using your lips to pray, to teach, to console; My nose and My tongue suffered their tortures to make amends for your gluttony and your sensuality of olfaction, through which you incur imperfections, which are the ground for graver sins, and you commit sins through the eagerness for superfluous food, without taking pity on those who are hungry, food which you can afford very often by having recourse to unlawful means of profit.

5 My organs were not exempted from suffering. Not one of them. Suffocation and cough for My lungs, contused by the cruel scourging, and suffering from oedema because of the position on the cross. Breathlessness and heart trouble as My heart was out of its place and had been injured by the merciless flagellation, by the moral grief that had preceded it, by the ascent under the heavy weight of the cross, by anaemia, the consequence of all the blood shed. Liver congested, spleen congested, kidneys bruised and congested.

You have seen the crown of bruises round My kidneys. Your scientists, to give proof to your incredulity with regard *to that evidence of My suffering, which is the Shroud, explain how the blood, the cadaveric perspiration and the urea of an overfatigued body, when mixed with the spices, can have produced that natural drawing of My dead tortured Body.*

It would be better to believe without the need of so many proofs to believe. It would be better to say: "That is the work of God" and bless God, Who has granted you an indisputable proof of My Crucifixion and of the tortures preceding it!

But as now you are no longer able to believe with the simplicity of children, but you

need scientific proofs – how poor is your faith, that without the support and the spur of science cannot stand up straight and walk – *you must know that the cruel bruises of My kidneys have been the most powerful chemical agent in the miracle of the Shroud.* My kidneys, almost crushed by the scourges, were no longer able to work. Like those of people burnt by fire, they were unable to filter, and urea accumulated and spread in My blood, in My body, bringing about the sufferings of uraemic intoxication and the reagent that oozed out of My corpse and fixed the impression on the cloth. But any doctor among you, or anyone suffering from uraemia, will realise what sufferings the uraemic toxins caused to Me, as they were so plentiful as to produce an indelible impression.

Thirst. What a torture thirst! And yet you have seen it. Among so many, there was not one who gave Me a drop of water. From the Supper onwards, I had no refreshment. And fever, sunshine, heat, dust, loss of blood, made your Saviour so thirsty.

6 You have seen that I refused the wine mixed with myrrh. I did not want any lenitive for My suffering. *When we offer ourselves as victims, we must be victims without pitiful arrangements, compromises, mitigations.* It is necessary to drink the chalice as it is offered. We must relish the vinegar and gall to the very end. Not the spiced wine that deadens pain.

Oh! the destiny of a victim is really severe. But blessed are those who chose it as their fate.

7 That was the suffering of your Jesus in His innocent Body. And I will not mention the tortures of My love for My Mother and for Her sorrow. That sorrow was required. *But for Me it was the most cruel torture.* Only the Father knows what His Word suffered in His spirit, His morale, His physique! Also the presence of His Mother, even if it was what My heart most wished, as it needed that comfort in the infinite solitude that surrounded it, infinite solitude coming from God and from men, was a torture.

She was to be there, an angel of flesh, to prevent despair from assailing Me, as the spiritual angel had prevented it in Gethsemane, She was to be there to join Her Sorrow to Mine for your Redemption, She was to be there to receive the investiture of Mother of mankind. *But to see Her die at each shudder of Mine was My greatest sorrow.* Not even the betrayal, not even the knowledge that My Sacrifice would be useless for so many people, these two sorrows, which shortly before had seemed so great as to make Me sweat blood, were comparable with this one.

8 But you have seen how great Mary was in that hour. Her torture did not prevent Her from being by far stronger than Judith. The latter killed. *The former allowed Herself to be killed through Her Child. And She did not curse, She did not hate. She prayed, She loved, She obeyed.* Always a Mother, to the extent of thinking, among Her tortures, that Her Jesus needed Her virginal veil on His innocent body, to defend His decency, She

was able to be at the same time the Daughter of the Father of Heaven and obey His dreadful will in that hour. She did not curse, She did not rebel. Either against God, or against men. She forgave the latter. She said “Fiat” to the Former.

Also later you heard Her say: “Father, I love You and You have loved us!” She remembers and She proclaims that God has loved Her and She renews Her act of love for Him. *In that hour! After the Father had pierced Her and deprived Her of Her reason for existing. She loves Him.* She does not say: “I do not love You any more because You have struck Me.” She loves Him. And She does not grieve over Her sorrow. But over what Her Son suffered. She does not shout because Her heart is broken, but because Mine is pierced. She asks the Father the reason for that, not for Her sorrow. *She asks the reason of the Father in the name of their Son.*

She is the Spouse of God. It is She who conceived through union with God. She knows that no human contact has generated Her Child, but only the Fire descended from Heaven to penetrate Her immaculate womb and lay there the divine Embryo, the Body of the Man-God, of the God-Man, of the Redeemer of the world. She knows, and both as Spouse and as Mother She asks the reason for that wound. The others were to be given. *But why this one, when everything had been accomplished?*

Poor Mother! There was a reason, which Your sorrow did not allow You to read on My wound. *And it was that men should see the Heart of God.* You have seen it, Mary. And you will never forget it.

But, see? Although Mary at that moment did not see the supernatural reasons for that wound, She immediately thinks that it did not hurt Me, and She blesses God for that. She does not mind that that wound hurts Her, poor Mother, so much. It did not hurt Me, and that is enough and serves Her to bless God Who sacrifices Her.

9 She only asks for a little comfort in order not to die. She is necessary for the dawning Church, of which a few hours previously She was created the Mother. *The Church, like a new-born baby, needs the care and milk of a mother.* Mary will give it to the Church supporting the Apostles, speaking to them of the Saviour, praying for it. But how would She be able to do so if She breathed Her last tonight? The Church, that only in a few days' time will be left without her Head, would be completely an orphan if also Mary died. And the destiny of new-born orphans is always precarious.

God never disappoints a just prayer and He comforts His children who hope in Him. Mary proves that through the comfort of Veronica. She, the poor Mother, had the image of My dead Face impressed in Her eyes. She cannot resist that sight. That is not Her Jesus, aged, swollen, with eyes closed not looking at Her, with lips twisted that do not speak to Her or smile. But here is a face that is the face of Jesus alive. Sorrowful, wounded, but still alive. Here His eyes are looking at Her, his lips seem to be saying: “Mother!” Here His smile still greets Her.

10 Oh! Mary! Look for your Jesus in your sorrow. He will always come and will look at you, He will call you and will smile at you. We will share sorrow, but we shall be united!

John, little John, you have shared sorrow with Mary and with Jesus. Be like John, always. Also in that. I have already said to you: "You shall not be great because of contemplations and dictations. They are Mine. But because of your love. *And the deepest love is in the sharing of sorrow.*" That gives you the possibility to know by insight the least desires of God and to turn them into reality despite all obstacles.

Look at the lively delicate sensitiveness of John's behaviour from the Thursday night to the Friday night. And further. But let us consider it during those hours.

A moment of dismay. An hour of dullness. But after he overcomes sleepiness through the excitement of the arrest, and the excitement through love, he comes, dragging Peter with him, so that the Master may have some comfort seeing the Head of the apostles and the Favourite apostle.

He then thinks of the Mother, to Whom some cruel person may shout that Her Son has already been captured. And he goes to Her. He does not know that Mary is already living the tortures of Her Son and that while the apostles were sleeping, *She was awake and was praying, agonising with Her Son.* He does not know. And He goes to Her and prepares Her for the news.

Then he goes to and fro from Caiaphas' house to the Praetorium, from Caiaphas' house to Herod's palace, and then again from Caiaphas' house to the Praetorium. And to do so that morning, elbowing his way through a crowd intoxicated with hatred, wearing garments that point him out as a Galilean, is not pleasant. *But love supports him,* and he does not think of himself, but of Jesus' and His Mother's sorrows. He could be stoned as a follower of the Nazarene. *It does not matter. He defies everything.* The others have run away, they are hiding, they are led by prudence and fear. *He is led by love,* and he remains and shows himself. He is pure. *Love thrives in purity.*

And if his pity and common sense of a man of the people persuade him to keep Mary away from the crowds and from the Praetorium – he does not know that Mary shares all the tortures of Her Son, suffering them spiritually – when he decides that the time has come when Jesus needs His Mother, and that it is not right to keep the Mother any longer away from Her Son, he takes Her to Him, he supports Her, he defends Her.

What is that handful of loyal people: a man all alone, unarmed, young, with no authority, leading a few women, with respect to a furious crowd? Nothing. A little pile of leaves that the wind can scatter. A small boat on a stormy ocean that can sink it. It does not matter. Love is his strength and his sail. He is armed with it, and with it he protects the Woman and the women until the end.

John possessed the love of compassion as no other person, except My Mother, possessed it. He is the Head of those who love with such love. He is your master with regard to that. Follow him in the example he gives you of purity and love, and you will be great.

Go in peace, now. I bless you.»

610. The Holy Saturday.

30th March 1945.

1 It dawns with difficulty. And daybreak is strangely delayed, although there are no clouds in the sky. But the stars seem to have lost all their brightness. And the sun, when it appears, is as pale as the moon was during the night. Opaque... Have they perhaps wept as well, as they look so dull, like the eyes of good people who have wept and still weep over the death of the Lord?

As soon as John realises that the Gates are open, he goes out, turning a deaf ear to his mother's entreaties. The women barricade themselves in the house, even more frightened now that also the Apostle has gone away.

Mary, still in Her room, Her hands resting in Her lap, looks fixedly out of the window, which opens on a not very large garden, but quite spacious and full of roses in bloom along the high walls and the bizarre flower-beds. The tufts of lilies, instead, are still without the stalks of the future flowers: thick and beautiful, but with nothing but leaves. She looks and looks, but I think that She does not see anything, except what there is in Her poor tired brain: the agony of Her Son.

The women go backwards and forwards. They approach Her, they caress Her, they beg Her to take some refreshment, and each time, as they come, there is a wave of a heavy, compound, stunning perfume.

And each time Mary thrills. But nothing else. She does not speak. She does not make a gesture. Nothing. She is exhausted. She is waiting. It is only a wait. She is the One Who awaits.

2 There is a knock at the door... The women rush to open. Mary turns round on Her seat, without standing up, and stares at the half-open door.

The Magdalene goes in. «Manaen is here... He would like to be useful in some way.»
«Manaen... Let him come in. He was always good. But I did not think that it was he...»

«Who did You think, Mother!...»

«Later... later. Let him come in.»

Manaen goes in. He is not as pompous as usual. He is wearing a very common tunic, of a brown shade which is almost black, and a similar mantle. No jewels and no sword. Nothing. He looks like a well-to-do person, but of the common people. He stoops to greet, first with his hands crossed on his chest, and then he kneels down as if he were in front of an altar.

«Stand up. And forgive Me if I do not reply to your bow. I cannot...»

«You must not. I would not allow that. You know who I am. So I beg You to consider me Your servant. Do You need me? I see that there is no man here. I heard from Nicodemus that they have all run away. There was nothing to be done. That is true. But at least we should have given Him the comfort of seeing us. I... I greeted Him at the Sixtus. And then I was no longer able, because... But it is useless to mention it. That also was wanted by Satan. Now I am free and I have come to put myself at Your service. Give me Your orders, Woman.»

«I should like to know and let Lazarus know... His sisters are worried, and also my sister -in-law and the other Mary. We should like to know whether Lazarus, James, Judas, and the other James are safe.»

«Judas? The Iscariot! But he betrayed Him!»

«Judas, the son of the brother of My spouse.»

«Ah! I will go» and he stands up. **3** But in doing so he makes a gesture of pain.

«Are you wounded?»

«H'm... yes. Nothing serious. An arm is aching a little.»

«Because of us, perhaps? Is that why you were not up there?»

«Yes. That is why. And that is the only thing I regret. Not the wound. The remainder of Pharisaism, of Hebraism, of Satanism that was in me, because the cult of Israel has become Satanism, has all come out with that blood. I am like a baby, that after the excision of the sacred umbilical cord, has no further contact with his mother's blood, and the few drops still remaining in the excised cord do not flow into him, obstructed as they are by the linen string. But they fall... by now useless. The new-born baby lives with his own heart and his own blood. So do I. Till now I was not yet completely formed. Now I have come to the end, and I come, and I was born to the Light. I was born yesterday. My Mother is Jesus of Nazareth. And He gave birth to me when He uttered His last cry. I know... Because I ran to Nicodemus' house last night. I should only like to see Him. Oh! when you go to the Sepulchre, let me know. I will come... I

do not know His Face as the Redeemer!

«It is looking at you, Manaen. Turn round.»

The man, who had gone in with his head so lowered and then had had eyes only for Mary, turns round almost frightened and sees the veronica. He throws himself on the floor, worshipping... And he weeps.

He then stands up. He bows to Mary and says: «I am going.»

«But it is the Sabbath. You know. They already accuse us of infringing the Law through His instigation.»

«We are on an equal footing, because they infringe the law of Love. The first and greatest. He said so. May the Lord console You.» He goes out.

4 Hours go by. How slow they are for those who are waiting...

Mary stands up and, leaning on pieces of furniture, She goes to the door. She tries to walk across the large entrance hall. But when She has nothing to lean on, She staggers as if She were intoxicated.

Martha, who sees Her from the yard, which is beyond the door open at the end of the hall, rushes towards Her. «Where do You want to go?»

«In there. You promised Me.»

«Wait until John comes.»

«Enough of waiting. You can see that I am calm. Since you have had the room locked from inside, go and have it opened. I will wait here.»

Susanna, as all the women have gathered there, goes away to call the master of the house with the keys. Mary in the meantime leans on the little door, as if She wished to open it with the power of Her will. The man arrives. Frightened and downcast, he opens the door and withdraws. And Mary, supported by the arms of Martha and Mary of Alphaeus, goes into the Supper room.

Everything is still as it was at the end of the Supper. The course of events and the instructions given by Jesus have prevented tampering. Only the seats have been put back in their places. And Mary, Who has not been in the Supper room, goes straight to the place where Her Jesus was sitting. She seems to be guided by a hand. And She looks like a sleep-walker, so stiff is She in Her effort to walk... She proceeds. She walks round the couch, She insinuates Herself between it and the table... She remains standing for a moment and then She collapses across the table in a fresh outburst of tears. She then calms down. She kneels down and prays with Her head resting on the edge of the table. She caresses the table-cloth, the seat, the dishes, the edge of the large tray on

which the lamb was, the large knife used to carve it, the amphora placed before that seat. She does not know that She is touching what also the Iscariot has touched. She then remains stupified, with Her head resting on Her arms crossed on the table.

All the women are silent, with the exception of Her sister-in-law who says: «Come, Mary. We are afraid of the Jews. Would You like them to come in here?»

«No. This is a holy place. Let us go. Help Me... You have done the right thing in telling Me. I would also like a chest, a beautiful large one with a lock, to close all My treasures in it.»

«I will have it brought to You from our mansion tomorrow. It is the nicest one in the house. It is strong and safe. I give it to You with joy» says the Magdalene promising it.

They go out. Mary is really exhausted. She staggers in climbing the few steps. And if Her grief is less dramatic, it is because it no longer has the strength of being so. But in its quietness it is even more tragical.

They go into the room in which they were previously, and before going back to Her seat, Mary caresses the Holy Face of the veronica, as if it were a face of flesh.

5 There is another knock at the door. The women hasten to go out and close the door.

In Her tired voice Mary says: «If it is the disciples, and in particular Simon Peter and Judas, let them come to Me at once.» But it is Isaac, the shepherd. He goes in weeping after some minutes and he prostrates himself at once before the veronica and then before the Mother, and he does not know what to say. It is Mary Who says: «Thank you. He saw you and I saw you. I know. He looked at you as long as He could.»

Isaac weeps louder. He can speak only when he has finished weeping. «We did not want to go away. But Jonathan begged us. The Jews were threatening the women... and later we were no longer able to come. It was... it was all over... Where should we have gone then? We scattered through the countryside and at dead of night we gathered together half way between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. We thought we would turn His Death away by going towards His Grotto... But then we felt that it was not right to go there... It was selfishness, and we came back towards the City... And we found ourselves, without knowing how, at Bethany...»

«My sons!»

«Lazarus!»

«James!»

«They are all there. Lazarus' fields at dawn were strewn with people who were wandering and weeping... His useless friends and disciples!... I... went to Lazarus and I thought I was the first... Instead your two sons were already there, woman, and yours, with Andrew, Bartholomew, Matthew. Simon Zealot had convinced them to go there.

And Maximinus, who had gone out in the country early in the morning, had found more. And Lazarus has helped them all. And he is still doing so. He says that the Master had ordered him to do that. And also the Zealot says so.»

«But Simon and Joseph, my other sons, where are they?»

«I don't know, woman. We had been together until the earthquake. Then... I don't know anything else precisely. Amidst the darkness and lightning and the dead who had risen and the quaking ground and the whirlwind, I lost my head. I found myself in the Temple. And I still wonder how I got there, beyond the sacred limit. Consider that between me and the altar of scents there was only a cubit... Imagine! I was where only the priests on duty are allowed to stand!... And... and I saw the Holy of Holies!... Yes. Because the veil of the Holy is torn from top to bottom, as if the power of a giant had torn it... If they had seen me in there, they would have stoned me. But no one could see any more. I met nothing but ghosts of dead and ghosts of living people. Because we looked like ghosts in the light of thunderbolts, in the bright light of fires, and with terror on our faces...»

«Oh! my Simon! My Joseph!»

«And Simon Peter? And Judas of Kerioth? And Thomas and Philip?»

«I do not know, Mother... Lazarus sent me to see you, because they had told him that... they had killed you all.»

«Well, go at once to reassure him. I have already sent Manaen. But you had better go as well and tell him... tell him that He alone has been killed. And I with Him. And if you see any of the other disciples, take them there with you. But I want the Iscariot and Simon Peter here.»

«Mother... forgive us if we did not do more.»

«I forgive everything... Go.»

Isaac goes out. And Martha and Mary, Salome and Mary of Alphaeus overwhelm him with prayers, recommendations, orders. Susanna weeps silently, because nobody speaks to her of her husband. And that reminds Salome of hers. And she weeps as well.

6 There is silence again, until there is a further knocking at the door.

Since the town is quiet, the women are not so frightened. But when through the half open door they see Longinus' clean-shaven face appear, they all run away as if they had seen a dead body enveloped in its shroud or the Devil himself. The master of the house, who is idling about the hall curiously, is the first to run away.

The Magdalene, who was with Mary, rushes there. Longinus, with an involuntary mocking smile on his lips, has gone in, and has closed the heavy main door himself. He

is not wearing a uniform, but he has on a short grey tunic under a mantle which is also dark.

Mary Magdalene looks at him and he looks at her. Still leaning against the door, Longinus asks: «May I come in without contaminating anybody? And without terrifying anyone? This morning at dawn I saw Joseph, the citizen, and he mentioned the Mother's desire to me. I apologise for not thinking of it myself. Here is the lance. I had kept it as a souvenir of a... of the Saint of Saints. Oh! He is indeed! But it is right that the Mother should have it. With regard to the garments... it is more difficult. Do not tell Her... but perhaps they have already been sold for a few coins... It is the right of the soldiers. But I will try to find them...»

«Come. She is in there.»

«But I am a heathen!»

«It does not matter. I will go and tell Her, if you wish so.»

«Oh! no... I did not think I deserved that.»

7 Mary Magdalene goes to the Blessed Virgin. «Mother, Longinus is out there... He offers the lance to You.»

«Let him come in.»

The master of the house, who is at the entrance, grumbles: «But he is a heathen.»

«I am the Mother of everybody, man. As He is everybody's Redeemer.»

Longinus goes in and on the threshold he salutes in the Roman way, with his arm (he has taken off his mantle) and then he greets Her saying: «Ave, Domina. A Roman greets you: the Mother of mankind. The true Mother. I would have liked not to be there at... at... at that affair. But it was an order. But, if I serve to give what You wish, I forgive destiny for choosing me for that horrible thing. Here» and he gives Her the lance enveloped in a red cloth. Only the steel head, not the shaft.

Mary takes it and becomes even wanner. Her very lips disappear in the pallor. The lance seems to open Her veins. And Her lips tremble as She says: «May He lead you to Himself. Because of your kindness.»

«He was the only Just Man I ever met in the vast empire of Rome. I regret I only knew Him through the words of my companions. Now... it is late!»

«No, son. He has finished evangelizing. But His Gospel remains. In His Church.»

«Where is His Church?» Longinus is slightly ironical.

«It is here. Today it is struck and scattered. But tomorrow it will gather like a tree that

tidies up its foliage after a storm. And, even if there were nobody else, I am here. And the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Mine, is all written in My heart. All I need do is to look at My heart in order to be able to repeat it to you.»

«I will come. A religion that has as its head such a hero can but be divine. Ave, Domina!»

And also Longinus goes away.

Mary kisses the lance where there is still the Blood of Her Son... And She does not want to remove that Blood. But She leaves it saying: «a ruby of God, on the cruel lance»...

8 The day goes by thus, amid clear spells and threats of storms.

John comes back only when the sun shining perpendicularly tells that it is midday. «Mother, I have not found anybody, except... Judas of Kerioth.»

«Where is he?»

«Oh! Mother! How horrible! He is hanging from an olive-tree, all swollen and black, as if he had been dead for weeks. Rotten. Horrible... Above him vultures, crows, I do not know what, are shrieking fighting atrociously... It was their brawling that called me in that direction. I was on the road of the Mount of Olives, and on a hillock I saw ugly black birds wheel round and round. I went... Why? I do not know. And I saw. How horrible!...»

«How horrible! You are right. But above Goodness there was Justice. In fact Goodness is absent, now... But Peter! But Peter!... John, I have the lance. But the garments... Longinus did not mention them.»

«Mother, I want to go to Gethsemane. He had no mantle on when He was captured. Perhaps it is still there. Then I will go to Bethany.»

«Go. Go for the mantle... The others are with Lazarus. So do not go to Lazarus. It is not necessary. Go and come back here.»

John runs away, without taking any refreshment. Mary also is without any. The women, standing, have eaten bread and olives, working all the time at their balms.

9 Then Johanna of Chuza comes with Jonathan. Her features are disfigured by tears. And as soon as she sees Mary, she says: «He saved me! He saved me and He is dead. Now I wish I had never been saved!»

It is Our Lady of Sorrows Who has to comfort this woman, who was cured but has remained morbidly sensitive. And She consoles and fortifies her saying: «You would not have known and loved Him, and now you would not be able to serve Him. How

much there is to be done in future! And we will have to do it, because you can see... We have remained, and the men have run away. The true giver of life is always the woman. In Good. In Evil. We will generate the new Faith. We are full of it, as it was deposited in us by the Spouse God. And we will generate for the Earth. For the welfare of the world. Look how handsome He is! How He smiles and begs for this holy work of ours! Johanna, I love you, you know that. Do not weep any more.»

«But He is dead! Yes. There He still looks as if He were alive. But He is no longer alive. What is the world without Him?»

«He will come back. Go. Pray. Wait. The more you believe, the sooner He will rise from the dead. That belief is My strength... And only God, Satan and I know how many assaults have been made upon this faith of Mine in His Resurrection.»

Johanna also goes away, weak and bent like a lily too saturated with water.

But once she has gone out, Mary relapses into Her torture. «I have to give strength to everybody. To everybody! And who gives it to Me?» And She weeps, caressing the Face of the image, because She is now sitting near the chest on which the veronica is spread.

10 Joseph and Nicodemus come. And they spare the women the trouble of going out to buy myrrh and aloe, because they have brought some little bags of them. But their strength yields before the Face impressed on the linen cloth and the ravaged face of the Mother. They sit in a corner after greeting Her and they become silent. They are grave, gloomy... Later they go away.

Mary has no more strength to speak. But the darker it gets, which occurs rather early because of a mass of sultry clouds, the more She is tortured. The shadows of the evening are also for Her, as for all those who suffer, a source of deeper grief.

The other women also become sadder. Particularly Salome, Mary of Alphaeus and Susanna. But at last they have some consolation as Zebedee, Susanna's husband, Simon and Joseph of Alphaeus arrive in a group. The first two remain in the hall, explaining that John found them as he was going through the Ophel suburb. The other two instead were found by Isaac while they were wandering through the countryside, undecided as to whether they should go back to town, or go to their brothers who they supposed were at Bethany.

11 Simon asks: «Where is Mary? I want to see Her» and preceded by his mother, he goes in and kisses his distressed relative.

«Are you alone? Why is Joseph not with you? Why have you parted? Are you still at variance with each other? You must not. See? The reason of the disagreement is dead!» And She points at the face of the veronica.

Simon looks at it and weeps. He says: «We have never parted again. And we will not part. Yes, the reason of the disagreement is dead. But not as You think. It is dead because Joseph, now, has understood... Joseph is out there... and he dare not come in...»

«Oh! no. I never frighten anybody. I am nothing but mercy. I would have forgiven also the Traitor. But it is no longer possible. He has killed himself.» And She stands up. She walks with a stoop and calls: «Joseph Joseph!»

But Joseph, overwhelmed with weeping, does not reply.

She goes to the door, as She had done to speak to Judas, and leaning on the door-post, She stretches the other hand out and lays it on the head of the eldest and most stubborn of Her nephews. She caresses him and says: «Let Me lean on a Joseph! Everything was peace and serenity as long as I had that name as king in My house. Then My holy man died... And all the human welfare of poor Mary died as well. The supernatural welfare of My God and Son has remained... Now I am the Forlorn wretch... But if I can be embraced in the arms of a Joseph I love, and you know whether I love you, I shall be less forlorn. I shall seem to have gone back in time. And that I can say: “Jesus is absent. But He is not dead. He is at Cana, at Nain, working, but He will soon be back...” Come, Joseph. Let us go in together where He is waiting to smile at you. He left His smile to us to tell us that He bears us no ill-will.»

12 Joseph goes in, held by the hand by Her, and as soon as he sees Her sat down, he kneels in front of Her, with his head on Her lap and sobbing says: «Forgive me! Forgive me!»

«It is not Me, it is Him you must ask.»

«He cannot forgive me. On Calvary I tried to attract His attention. He looked at everybody, but not at me... He is right... I have known and loved Him, as a Master, too late. Now, it is all over.»

«It begins now. You will go to Nazareth and say: “I believe”. Your faith will have an infinite value. You will love Him with the perfection of future apostles, who will have the merit of loving Jesus known only through the spirit. Will you do that?»

«Yes! I will! To make amends. But I should like to hear a word from Him. And I shall never hear it again...»

«On the third day He will rise and He will speak to those whom He loves. The whole world is awaiting His Voice.»

«You are blessed, since You can believe...»

«Joseph! Joseph! My spouse was your uncle. And he believed something that is much

more difficult to believe than this. He did believe that poor Mary of Nazareth was the Spouse and Mother of God. Why can you, the nephew of that Just man after whom you are named, not believe that a God can say to Death: “Enough!” and to Life: “Come back!”?»

«I do not deserve that faith, because I have been bad. I was unfair to Him. But You... You are the Mother. Bless me. Forgive me. Give me peace...»

«Yes... Peace... Forgiveness... Oh! God! Once I said: “How difficult it is to be the 'redeemers' .” Now I say: “How difficult it is to be the Mother of the Redeemer!” Have mercy, My God! Mercy!... Go, Joseph. Your mother has suffered so much during these hours. Console her... I am staying here... With what I have of My Child... And My solitary tears will obtain Faith for you. Goodbye, My dear nephew. Tell everybody that I want to be silent... to think... to pray... I am... I am a poor woman hanging from a thread over an abyss... The thread is My Faith... And your lack of faith, because nobody is capable of believing totally and holily, your lack of faith knocks continuously against My thread... And you are not aware of what exhaustion you induce in Me... You do not know that you are helping Satan to torture Me. Go...»

And Mary remains alone... She kneels before the veronica. She kisses the forehead, the eyes, the lips of Her Son and says: «So! So! To have strength... I must believe. I must believe. On behalf of everybody.»

Night has fallen. A starless, dark, sultry night. Mary remains in the shadow with Her sorrow.

The day of the Sabbath is over.

611. The Night of Holy Saturday.

31st March 1945.

1 Mary of Alphaeus goes in cautiously and listens. Perhaps she thinks that the Blessed Virgin has fallen asleep. She approaches Her and bends over Her. And she sees Her on Her knees, with Her face on the floor against the veronica. She whispers: «Oh! poor wretch! She has stayed like that!» She must think that She has fallen asleep like that or She has fainted.

But Mary, ending Her prayer, says: «No, I was praying.»

«On Your knees! In the dark! In the cold! With the window open! See? You are frozen.»

«But I feel so much better, Mary. While I was praying – and only the Eternal knows how exhausted I was after giving strength to so many wavering faiths and enlightening so many minds that not even His death had illuminated – I seemed to smell an angelical scent, a heavenly freshness, a caress of a wing... Only for a moment... Not longer. A drop of pacifying sweetness seemed to be instilled into the sea of myrrh that has been submerging Me furiously for three days now. The closed vault of Heaven seemed to open a little and a beam of bright love seemed to descend upon the Abandoned Mother. And I seemed to hear an incorporeal whisper, coming from an infinite distance, say: “It is really all over.” My prayer, so far desolate, has become more peaceful. It became tinged with the bright peace – oh! just a nuance! – with the bright peace that I used to experience in My contacts with God during My prayers... 2 My prayers!... Mary, did you love your Alphaeus very much, when you were his virgin bride?»

«Oh! Mary!... I rejoiced at dawn saying: “Another night has gone by. One less to wait.” I rejoiced at sunset saying: “Another day is over. Nearer is my entrance into his house.” And as the sun set, I used to sing like a skylark thinking: “He will soon be here.” And when I saw him come, looking as handsome as my Judas – that is why Judas is my favourite – but with the eyes of a deer in love like my James, oh! then I no longer knew where I was! And when he greeted me saying: “My sweet bride!” and I was able to say to him: “My Lord”, then I... I think that, if at that moment I had been crushed by a heavy cart or struck by an arrow, I would have felt no pain. And later!... When I became his wife... Ah!...» Mary is lost in the ecstasy of recollections. She then asks: «But why that question?»

«To explain to you what My prayers were for Me. Multiply your feelings by one hundred, raise them to thousands powers, and you will understand what prayer and the wait for the hour of prayer have always been for Me... Of course, I think that, even if I did not pray in the peace of the grotto or of My room, but I was intent on the work of a woman, My soul prayed incessantly... But when I was able to say: “Well, the hour to collect My thoughts in God is coming”, My heart would burn throbbing fast. And when I got lost in Him... then... No... I cannot explain this to you. When you are in the light of God you will understand... All that had been lost for three days... And it was even more heart-rending than not having My Son any more... And Satan worked on these two wounds, laid one on top of the other, the death of My Son and the abandonment by God, creating a third wound: the terror of the lack of faith.

3 Mary, I am fond of you and you are relative of Mine. Later, you will tell your sons, the apostles, so that they may persevere in their apostolate and triumph over Satan. I am sure that, if I had accepted the doubt, if I had yielded to Satan's temptation and I had said: “It is not possible for Him to rise from the dead” denying God – because to say that was the same as denying God with His Truth and Power – such a great Redemption would have come to nothing. I, the new Eve, would have bitten once again at the forbidden fruit of pride and of spiritual sense, and I would have destroyed the work of

My Redeemer. The apostles will be continuously tempted thus: by the world, by the flesh, by power, by Satan. Let them be firm against all tortures, and the corporal ones will be the lightest, so that they may not destroy what Jesus has done.»

«You, Mary, should tell my sons... What do You expect Your poor sister -in-law to say?! 4 Oh! however! If they had come! That they should run away at first, well!... But later!»

«You know that Lazarus and Simon were ordered to take them to Bethany. Jesus knows everything...»

«Yes... But... Oh! when I see them, I will reproach them severely. They behaved cowardly. That everybody else should behave so is understandable, but not them, my sons! I will never forgive them...»

«Forgive them, forgive them... It was a moment of dismay... They did not believe that He could be captured. He had said so...»

«That is why I will not forgive them. They knew. So they were already prepared. When one knows something, and believes the person who tells it, nothing surprises any more!»

«Mary, also to all of you He said: “I will rise.” And yet... If I could lay your breasts and heads open, on your hearts and on your brains I would see written: “It is not possible.”»

«But, at least... Yes... It is difficult to believe... But we remained on Calvary.»

«Through the gratuitous grace of God. Otherwise we would have run away as well. Longinus, did you hear him? He said: “horrible thing”. And he is a warrior. We, women, all alone with a boy, we resisted through God's direct help. So do not boast about it. It is no merit of ours.»

«And why was it not given to them?»

«Because they will be the priests of tomorrow. So they must know. They must know, having experienced it themselves, how easy it is for a follower of a Creed to lapse into abjuration. Jesus does not want priests like those who are so little so, that they have been His most obstinate enemies...»

«You speak of Jesus as if He had already come back.»

«See? You also admit that you do not believe. So how can you reproach your sons?»

Mary of Alphaeus does not know what to say in reply. She remains with her head lowered and mechanically moves some objects. She finds the little lamp and goes out with it and comes back in after lighting it, and she puts it in its usual place.

Mary is sitting once again near the stretched out veronica. The veronica, in the yellow

flickering little flame of the oil lamp acquires a particular liveliness, and the lips and eyes seem to move.

«Are You not taking anything?» asks Mary's sister-in-law, who is somewhat mortified.

«A little water. I am thirsty.»

Mary goes out and comes back... with some milk.

«Do not insist. I cannot. Some water, yes. There is no more water in Me. I think I have no more blood either. But...»

5 There is a knock at the door. Mary of Alphaeus goes out. People can be heard talking in low voices in the hall, then John looks into the room.

«John. Have you come back? Still nothing?»

«Yes. Simon Peter... and Jesus' mantle... together... At Gethsemane. The mantle...» John falls on his knees and says: «Here it is... But it is all torn and covered with blood. The marks of the hands are Jesus'. Only He had them so long and thin. But it has been torn by teeth, it is very clear that this is the mouth of a man. I think it must have been... it must have been Judas Iscariot, because near the spot where Simon Peter found the mantle, there was a piece of Judas' yellow tunic. He went back there... later... before committing suicide. Look, Mother.»

Mary has done nothing but caress and kiss the heavy red mantle of Her Son, but, pressed by John, She opens it and sees the marks of blood, dark against the red of the Blood, and the tears of the teeth. She trembles and whispers: «How much blood!» She does not seem to see anything but that.

«Mother... the ground is red with it. Simon, who ran up there in the early morning hours, says that there was still fresh blood on the leaves of the grass... Jesus... I do not know... He did not seem to me to be wounded... Where did so much blood come from?»

«From His Body. In the bitter anguish... Oh! Jesus total Victim! Oh! My Jesus!» Mary weeps so distressingly, with an exhausted lament, that the women appear at the door and look in and then they go away. «This, this while everybody was abandoning You... What were you doing, while He was suffering His first agony?»

«We were sleeping, Mother...» John weeps.

6 «Was Simon there? Tell Me.»

«I had gone to look for the mantle. I had thought of asking Jonah and Mark... But they have run away. The house is closed and everything has been abandoned. So I went down to the walls, to go along all the road we had gone on Thursday... I was so tired that evening, and so grieved, that now I could not remember where Jesus had taken off

His mantle. It seemed to me that He had it, then that He did not have it... On the spot where He was arrested there was nothing... Where we three were, nothing... I went along the path taken by the Master... And I thought that also Simon Peter was dead, because I saw him there, all crouched against a rock. I shouted. He raised his head... and I thought he had gone mad, so changed was he. He uttered a cry and tried to run away. But he staggered, blinded by his weeping, and I got hold of him. He said to me: "Leave me. I am a demon. I denied Him. As He said... and the cock crowed and He looked at me. I ran away... I ran here and there through the country, and then I found myself here. And, see? Jehovah made me find His Blood here to accuse me. Blood everywhere. Blood everywhere! On the rock, on the ground, on the grass. I had it shed. Like you, like everybody. But I denied that Blood." He seemed delirious. I tried to calm him and take him away. But he did not want. He said: "Here. Here. To guard this Blood and His mantle. And I want to wash it with my tears. When there is no more blood on the cloth, perhaps I will go back among the living, beating my breast and saying: 'I have denied the Lord!'" I told him that You wanted him. That You had sent me looking for him. But he would not believe me. Then I told him that You wanted also Judas, to forgive him, and that You were suffering as You were no longer able to do so, because of his suicide. Then he wept more calmly. He wanted to know everything. And he told me that there was still fresh Blood on the grass and that the mantle had been maltreated by Judas, of whose tunic he had found a piece. I let him talk and talk, and then I said: "Come to the Mother." Oh! how much I had to insist to convince him! And when I thought that I had succeeded in convincing him and I got up to come, he did not want to come any more. He came only when it was getting dark. But when he arrived beyond the gate, he hid once again in a desert vegetable garden saying: "I don't want people to see me. I bear written on my forehead the word: Denier of God." Now that it is completely dark, I have succeeded in dragging him here.»

7 «Where is he?»

«Behind that door.»

«Let him come in.»

«Mother...»

«John...»

«Do not reproach him. He is repentant.»

«Do you still know Me so little? Let him come in.»

John goes out. He comes back. Alone. He says: «He dare not. Try to call him Yourself.»

And Mary calls him kindly: «Simon of Jonah, come.» Nothing. «Simon Peter, come.»

Nothing. «Peter of Jesus and Mary, come.» A sharp burst of weeping. But he does not go in. Mary stands up. She leaves the mantle on the table and goes to the door.

Peter is crouched outside. Like a dog with no master. He cries so loud and all curled up, that he cannot hear the noise of the door that opens squeaking or the shuffling of Mary's sandals. He realises that She is there when She bends so low as to take his hand, pressed against his eyes, and She compels him to stand up. She goes back into the room dragging him like a little boy. She closes the door and locks it, and bent with sorrow, as he is with shame, She goes back to Her seat.

Peter kneels at Her feet and weeps without restraint. Mary caresses his grey hair, wet with the perspiration of sorrow. Nothing but such caress, until he calms down.

8 Then, when at last Peter says: «You cannot forgive me. So do not caress me. Because I have denied Him», Mary says:

«Peter, you have denied Him. That is true. You had the courage of denying Him in public. The cowardly courage of doing that. The others... Everybody, except the shepherds, Manaen, Nicodemus and Joseph and John, has only been cowardly. They have all denied Him: the men and women of Israel, except a few women... I will not mention the nephews and Alphaeus of Sarah. They were relatives and friends. But the others!... And they did not even have the satanic courage of lying to save themselves, or the spiritual courage of repenting, weeping, or the more elevated one of acknowledging their error in public.

Your are a poor man. Or rather, you were. As long as you relied on yourself. Now you are a man. Tomorrow you will be a saint. But even if you were not what you are, I would have forgiven you the same. I would have forgiven also Judas, to save his soul. *Because the value of a soul, also of one only, deserves every effort to overcome disgust and resentment, to the extent of being crushed thereby.* Bear that in mind, Peter. I will repeat it to you: "The value of a soul is such that, at the cost of dying through the effort of suffering to have it close to us, one must hold it so, in one's arms, as I am holding your grey-haired head, if one realises that, by holding it so, it can be saved." So... Like a mother who, after the father's punishment, presses the head of her guilty son to her heart, and more with the words of her distressed heart that beats with love and sorrow, than with the father's blows, reforms and achieves.

Peter of My Son, poor Peter who have been, like everybody, in the hands of Satan in this hour of darkness, and you were not aware of it, and you think that you had done everything by yourself, come, do come here, on the heart of the Mother of My Son's children. Here Satan can no longer harm you. Here storms abate, and while waiting for the sun, My Jesus, Who will rise to say to you: "Peace to you, My Peter", the morning star rises, pure, beautiful, and making everything it kisses pure and beautiful, as happens on the clear waters of our sea in the fresh spring mornings. That is why I have

wished so much to have you. At the foot of the Cross, I was tortured because of Him and of you and – how come you did not perceive it? – and I called your spirits so loud that I think they really came to Me. And closed in My heart, or rather, laid on My heart, like the loaves of the offering, I held them under the bath of His Blood and His tears. I was able to do so, because, in John, He made Me the Mother of all His progeny... How much I longed for you!... That morning, in that afternoon, at night and the following day... Why, poor Peter, wounded and trampled on by the Demon, did you keep a mother waiting so long? Do you not know that it is the task of mothers to tidy up, cure, forgive and lead their children? I will lead you to Him.

9 Would you like to see Him? Would you like to see His smile, to be convinced that He still loves you? Would you? Oh! then move away from My poor lap of a woman, and lay your forehead on His crowned forehead, your lips on His wounded lips and kiss your Lord.»

«He is dead... I shall never be able.»

«Peter. Reply to Me. Which do you think is the last miracle of your Lord?»

«The Eucharist. No. That of the soldier cured there... there... Oh! do not remind me!...»

«A faithful, loving strong woman met Him on Calvary and wiped His Face. And He, to tell us how much love can do, impressed the image of His Face on the linen cloth. Here it is, Peter. A woman achieved that, in an hour of hellish darkness and of divine wrath. Simply because she loved. Bear that in mind, Peter, for the hours in which the Demon will seem to you to be stronger than God. God was the prisoner of men, He was already overwhelmed, condemned, scourged, He was already dying... And yet, as God is always God even among the most cruel persecutions, and if the Idea is struck, God Who inspires it is untouchable, so God to deniers, to unbelievers, to the men of the foolish “whys”, of the guilty “it cannot be”, of the sacrilegious “what I do not understand is not true”, replies, without any words, with this cloth. Look at it. One day, you told Me, you said to Andrew: “The Messiah showed Himself to you? It cannot be true”, and then your human reason had to bend before the power of the spirit, that saw the Messiah where reason did not see Him. On another occasion, on the stormy sea, you asked: “Shall I come, Master?” and then, when you were half way, on the agitated water, you became doubtful saying: “Water cannot hold me” and, with your doubt as ballast, you were almost drowned. Only when the spirit that believed prevailed against human reason, you were able to find the help of God. On another occasion you said: “If Lazarus has been dead four days, why have we come? To die in vain?” Because with your human reason you could not suppose any other solution. And your reason was disproved by the spirit, that by pointing out to you, through the man raised from the dead, the glory of Him Who had raised him, showed you that you had not gone there in vain. Another time, many other times, upon hearing your Lord speak of death, and a cruel death, you said: “That will never happen to You!” And you can see how your

reason has been given the lie. I now wait to hear the word of your spirit in this last case...»

«Forgive me.»

«No. Another word.»

«I believe.»

«Another one.»

«I don't know...»

«I love. Peter, love. You will be forgiven. You will believe. You will be strong. You will be the Priest, not the Pharisee who oppresses and has nothing but formalism and lack of active faith. Look at Him. Dare to look at Him. Everybody has looked at Him and venerated Him. Even Longinus... And would you not be able? And yet you were able to deny Him! If you do not recognise Him now, through the fire of My motherly loving sorrow that joins you and reconciles you, you will never be able again. He rises from the dead. How will you be able to look at Him in His new splendour, if you do not know His face in the passage from the Master you know to the Triumpher Whom you do not know? Because sorrow, all the Sorrow of ages and of the world, has worked on Him with chisel and mallet in the hours from Thursday evening to the ninth hour on Friday. And they have changed His Face. Previously He was only the Master and Friend. Now He is the Judge and King. He has ascended on His throne to judge. And He has put on His crown. He will remain so. The only difference is that after His glorious Resurrection, He will no longer be the Man Judge and King, but the God Judge and King. Look at Him. Look at Him while Humanity and Sorrow veil Him, in order to be able to look at Him when He triumphs in His Divinity.»

10 Peter at last raises his head from Mary's lap and looks at Her, with his eyes red with weeping, in the face of an old child, who is desolate and surprised at the evil he has done and at all the good he finds.

Mary compels him to look at his Lord. Then while Peter, as if he were before a living face, says moaning: «Forgive me, forgive me! I do not know how it happened. What happened. I was not myself. It was something that made me be not myself. But I love You, Jesus! I love You, my Master! Come back! Come back! Do not go away like that, without telling me that You have understood me!», Mary repeats the gesture already made in the sepulchral room. Standing, Her arms outstretched, She looks like the priestess at the moment of the offerings. And as there She offered the immaculate Host, here She offers the repentant sinner. She is indeed the Mother of saints and sinners!

Then She makes Peter stand up and continues to console him. And She says to him: «I am now happier. I know that you are here. Go now where the women and John are. You

all need rest and food. Go. And be good...» as if he were a boy.

11 And while in the house, which is calmer this second night after His death and is inclined to go back to the human customs of sleep and food, and has the tired resigned appearance of dwellings where the survivors recover slowly from the blow of death, Mary alone wants to stay up, motionless in Her place, awaiting, in prayer. Always. Always. Always. For the living and for the dead. For the just and the guilty. For the return. The return. The return of Her Son.

Her sister-in-law wanted to stay with Her. But now she is sound asleep, sitting in a corner, with her head leaning against the wall. Martha and Mary go in twice, but then, sleepy as they are, they withdraw into a nearby room, and after a few words, they fall asleep as well... And farther away, in a room as small as a plaything, Salome and Susanna are sleeping, while, on two mats laid on the floor, Peter and John are sleeping noisily. The former still sobbing mechanically at intervals in his snoring, the latter with the smile of a child who is dreaming of a happy vision.

Life resumes its activity and the flesh its rights... Only the Morning Star shines wakefully, with Her love watching near the image of Her Son.

And the night of Holy Saturday passes by thus. Until the crow of a cock, at the first light of daybreak, makes Peter jump to his feet with a shout. And his frightened sorrowful cry awakes those who were sleeping. The truce is over for them and sorrow begins all over again. As for Mary, it only increases the anxiety of Her wait.

THE GLORIFICATION

612. The Morning of the Resurrection.

1st April 1945.

1 The women resume working at the ointments, which, during the night, in the cool of the court-yard, have become a thick pomade.

John and Peter think that they ought to tidy up the Supper-room, cleaning the tableware, but putting everything back, as if the Supper were just over.

«He told us» says John.

«He had also said: “Do not fall asleep”! He had said: “Do not be proud, Peter. Do you not know that the hour of the trial is about to come?” And... and He said: “You will deny Me...”» Peter weeps again, while with deep grief he says: «And I did deny Him!»

«Enough, Peter! Now you have collected yourself. Enough of this torture!»

«No, never enough. If I should become as old as the ancient patriarchs, if I should live the seven hundred or the nine hundred years of Adam and of his first grandchildren, I would never cease having this torture.»

«Do you not hope in His Mercy?»

«Yes, I do. If I did not believe in that, I should be like the Iscariot: a desperate man. But even if He forgives me from the bosom of His Father, where He has gone back, I will not forgive myself. I! I! I who said: “I do not know Him”, because at that moment it was dangerous to know Him, because I was ashamed of being His disciple, because I was afraid of being tortured... He was going towards His death... and I thought of saving my life. And to save it, I rejected Him, like a woman in sin, who, after giving birth to a child, rejects the fruit of her womb, which is dangerous to keep, before her unaware husband comes back. I am worse than an adulteress... worse than...»

2 Mary Magdalene, attracted by their shouts, comes in. «Do not shout like that. Mary can hear you. She is so exhausted! She has no strength left, and everything hurts Her. Your useless unseemly shouts renew Her torture of what you have been...»

«See? See, John? A woman can order me to be quiet. And she is right. Because we, the males sacred to the Lord, have only been able to lie or to run away. The women have been brave. You, a little more than a woman, so young and pure you are, were able to remain. We, the strong ones, the males, have fled. Oh! how the world must despise me! Tell me, tell me, woman! You are right! Put your foot on my lips that lied. On the sole of your sandal there is perhaps a little of His Blood. And only that Blood, mixed with the mud of the road, can give the denier a little forgiveness, a little peace. I must get accustomed to the scorn of the world! What am I? Tell me: what am I?»

«You are full of pride» replies calmly the Magdalene. «Sorrow? Also. But you must believe that out of ten parts of your sorrow, five, I do not want to offend you by saying six, five are of your sorrow of being one who can be despised. And I will really scorn you if you continue only to moan and get into a frenzy, just like a foolish woman! What is done is done. And no unseemly shouting can repair it or cancel it. It only serves to draw attention and beg for undeserved pity. Be manly in your repentance. Do not shout. Act.»

3 I... you know who I was... But, when I realised that I was more despicable than vomit, I did not fall into fits of convulsions. I acted. In public. Without being indulgent towards myself and without asking for indulgence. Did the world despise me? It was right. I had deserved it. The world said: “A new whim of the prostitute”? And it called blasphemy my recourse to Jesus? It was right. The world remembered my previous behaviour that justified such remarks. So? The world had to convince itself that the sinner Mary no longer existed. By means of facts, I convinced the world. Do the same

and be quiet.»

«You are severe, Mary» objects John.

«More with myself than with other people. But I admit it. I do not have the light hand of the Mother. She is Love. I... oh! I! I lashed my feelings with the whip of my will. And I will do so even more. Do you think that I have forgiven myself for being lustful? No, I have not. But I only say so to myself. And I will always repeat it to myself. I shall die consumed with this secret regret of having been my own corrupter, with this inconsolable sorrow of having profaned myself and not having been able to give Him but a trampled on heart... See... I have worked more than all the others at the balms... And with greater courage than the others I will uncover Him... Oh! God! what will He be like now! (Mary of Magdala grows pale at the very thought of it). And I will cover Him with fresh balms, removing those which are certainly all tainted on His countless wounds... I will do so, because the other women will look like convolvuli after a downpour... But it grieves me to have to do it with these hands of mine accustomed to caressing lustfully, and to have to approach His Holiness with this stained body of mine... I should like... I should like to have the hand of the Virgin Mother to accomplish this last unction...»

Mary is now weeping silently, without sobbing. How different she is from the theatrical Mary always shown to us! She is weeping noiselessly, as she did on the day of her forgiveness in the house of the Pharisee.

4 «Are you saying that... the women will be afraid?» Peter asks her.

«Not afraid... But they will be upset seeing His Body, which is certainly already rotten... swollen... black. And then, and this is certain, they will be afraid of the guards.»

«Do you want me to come? With John?»

«Ha! Certainly not! We women are all going. Because, as we were all up there, so it is fair that we should all be round His death bed. You and John will remain here. She cannot remain alone!...»

«Is She not coming?»

«We are not letting Her come!»

«She is convinced that He will rise from the dead... What do you think?»

«I, after Mary, am the one who believes more. I have always believed that that could be. He said so. And He never lies... Never!... Oh! before I used to call Him Jesus, Master, Saviour, Lord... Now, now I feel that He is so great that I do not know, I dare not give Him a name any more... What shall I say to Him when I see Him?...»

«But do you really think that He will rise?...»

«Another one! Oh! By dint of telling you that I do believe and of hearing you say that you do not believe, I will end up by not believing any more myself! I have believed and I do believe. I have believed and a long time ago I prepared a garment for Him. And tomorrow, as tomorrow is the third day, I will bring it here, to have it ready...»

«But if you say that He will be black, swollen, filthy?»

«Filthy, never. Sin is filthy. But... of course! He will be black. So? Was Lazarus not already putrid? And yet he rose. And his body was healed. But, if I say so!... Be quiet, you misbelievers! My human reason says also to me: “He is dead and will not rise.” But my spirit, “His” spirit, because I have received a new spirit from Him, shouts resounding like blares of silver trumpets: “He will rise! He will rise! He will rise!” Why do you hurl me like a little boat against the cliffs of your doubts? I believe! I believe, my Lord! Although torn by grief, Lazarus has obeyed the Master and has remained in Bethany... I, who know who Lazarus of Theophilus is, a strong man, not a fearful leveret, can appreciate the sacrifice he made by remaining in the shade and not near the Master. But he obeyed. And by such obedience he has been more heroic than if with weapons he had snatched Him from armed men. I have believed and I believe. And I am staying here. Waiting like Her. But let me go. It is daybreak. As soon as there is enough light, we will go to the Sepulchre...»

And the Magdalene goes away, her face flushed with weeping, but always brave.

5 She goes back into Mary's room.

«What was the matter with Peter?»

«A nervous fit. But he has got over it.»

«Do not be severe, Mary. He suffers.»

«So do I. But You know that not even once have I asked a pitying caress of You. He has already been cured by You... On the contrary, I think that You alone, Mother, are in need of a balsam. My holy, beloved Mother! But take heart... Tomorrow is the third day. We shall lock ourselves in here, the two of us: His lovers. You, the holy Lover; I, the poor lover... But I love Him as much as I can, with my whole self. And we will wait for Him... The rest, those who do not believe, we will lock them in over there, with their doubts. And I will put many roses here... I will have the chest brought here today... I will go to the mansion house and I will instruct Levi. All these horrible things must disappear! Our Resurrected Lord must not see them... So many roses... And You will put on a new dress... He must not see You so. I will comb Your hair, I will wash Your poor face disfigured by tears. Eternal maid, I will act as Your mother... I shall have, at last, the joy of taking motherly care of a child more innocent than a new-born baby!

Dear!» and with her emotional exuberance, the Magdalene presses to her breast the head of Mary Who is sitting, she kisses and caresses Her, she tidies the light locks of Her hair ruffled behind Her ears, with her linen dress she wipes the fresh tears that stream down Her cheeks again, again, always...

6 The women come in with lights and amphorae and large-mouthed vases.

Mary of Alphaeus is carrying a heavy mortar . «It is not possible to stay outside. There is a weak wind that blows out the lamps» she explains.

They place themselves on one side. They lay all their things on a long narrow table, then they give the final touch to their balms by mixing the already heavy pomade of essences in the mortar with a white powder, handfuls of which they take from a little sack. They mix working with all their energy and then they fill a large-mouthed vase. They place it on the floor. They repeat the same operation with another vase. Perfumes and tears fall on the resins.

Mary Magdalene says: «This is not the unction that I hoped I should be able to prepare for You.» Because it is the Magdalene who, being more skilled than the other women, has controlled and directed the composition of the perfume, which is so strong that they decide to open the door and leave the window ajar over the garden, which is just beginning to appear in the early light of dawn.

They all weep more loudly after the remark made by the Magdalene in a subdued voice.

They have finished. All the vases are full.

They go out with the empty amphorae, the mortar no longer useful, and many lamps. Two only are left in the little room and they tremble, they seem to be sobbing as well, with the flickering of their light...

The women come back again and they close the window, because it is a rather cold dawn. They put on their mantles and they take large sacks into which they put the vases of the balm.

7 Mary stands up and looks for Her mantle. But they all crowd round Her convincing Her not to come.

«You are not fit to stand, Mary. You have not had any food for two days. Only a little water.»

«Yes, Mother, We will do it quickly and well. And we shall soon be back.»

«Be not afraid. We will embalm Him like a king. Look what precious balm we have prepared! And how much of it!...»

«We will not neglect any part of the body or any wound and we will arrange Him

properly with our hands. We are strong and we are mothers. We will place Him like a child in a cradle. And the others will only have to close the place.»

But Mary insists: «It is My duty» She says. «I have always taken care of Him. Only these last three years that He was in the world, I surrendered the care of Him to other people, when He was far away from Me. Now that the world has rejected and disowned Him, He is Mine again. And I am once again His servant.»

Peter, who had approached the door with John, without being seen by the women, runs away upon hearing these words. He runs to some secluded corner to bewail his sin. John remains near the door. But he does not say anything. He would like to go as well. But he makes the sacrifice of remaining with the Mother.

Mary Magdalene takes Mary back to Her seat. She kneels in front of Her, she embraces Her knees raising her sorrowful loving face towards Her, and she promises: «With His Spirit, He knows and sees everything. But with my kisses I will tell His Body Your love and Your wish. I know what is love. I know what spur, what hunger it is to love, what nostalgia of being with whoever is our love. And that applies also to any base love that looks like gold, but is filth. And when she who has sinned can understand what is the holy love for the living Mercy, Whom men did not know how to love, then she can understand better what is Your love, Mother.

You know that I know how to love. And You know that He said so, that evening of my true birth, on the shores of our serene lake, that Mary knows how to love much. Now this exuberant love of mine, like water that overflows from a tilted basin, like a flowery rosery that streams down a wall, like a flame that finding timber spreads and grows, has poured onto Him, and from Him-Love has drawn fresh power...

Oh! my power of loving was not able to take His place on the Cross!... But what I was not able to do for Him – to suffer, and bleed, and die in His place, amid the mockery of all the world, happy, happy, happy to suffer in His place, and I am certain that the thread of my poor life would have been burnt more by the triumphant love than by the infamous scaffold, and from the ashes there would have sprung up the fresh snow-white flower of the new virgin life, unaware of everything that is not God – all that I was not able to do for Him, I can still do for You.... Mother, Whom I love with all my heart.

Rely on me. I, who in the house of Simon, the Pharisee, knew how to gently caress His holy feet, now, with my soul that opens more and more to Grace, with greater gentleness will be able to caress His holy limbs, to dress His wounds embalming them more with my love, with the balm taken from my heart wrung by love and sorrow, than with the ointment. And death will not spoil that body that has loved so much and is so much loved. Death will flee, because Love is stronger. Love is invincible. And I, Mother, with Your perfect love, with my total love, will embalm my King of Love.»

Mary kisses this impassioned woman who, at last, has been able to find so much

passion, and She yields to her entreaties.

8 The women go out taking a lamp. One only is left in the room. The Magdalene is the last to go out, after a last kiss to the Mother Who remains.

The house is all dark and silent. The road is still dark and solitary.

John asks: «Do you really not want me?»

«No. You may be useful here. Goodbye.»

John goes back to Mary. «They did not want me...» he says in a low voice.

«Do not feel mortified. They are with Jesus. You with Me. John, let us pray a little together. Where is Peter?»

«I don't know. Somewhere in the house. But I have not seen him. He is... I thought that he was stronger... I am suffering, too, but he...»

«He has two sorrows. You have only one. Come. Let us pray also for him.» And Mary slowly says the «Our Father».

Then She caresses John saying: «Go to Peter. Do not leave him all alone. He has been so much in darkness during these hours, that he cannot stand even the feeble light of the world. Be the apostle of your lost brother. Begin your preaching with him. On your road, and it will be a long one, you will always find people like him. Begin your work with your companion...»

«But what shall I say?... I don't know... Everything makes him weep...»

«Mention His precept of love to him. Tell him that he who fears only, does not yet know God sufficiently, because God is Love. And if he says to you: "I have sinned", reply to him that God has loved sinners so much that He sent His Only-Begotten Son for them. Tell him that we must reply with love to so much love. And love makes one trust in the very good Lord. That trust does not make us be afraid of His judgement, because through it we have recognised the divine Wisdom and Goodness, and we say: "I am a poor creature. But He knows. And He gives me the Christ as guarantee of forgiveness and as a supporting pillar. My misery is overcome by my union with the Christ." It is in Jesus' name that everything is forgiven... Go, John. Tell him that. I am staying here, with My Jesus...» and She caresses the veronica.

John goes out, closing the door behind him.

9 Mary kneels down, as She did the previous evening, face to face with the veil of the veronica. And She prays and speaks to Her Son. While She is strong enough to give strength to other people, when She is alone She bends under Her overwhelming cross. And yet, now and again, like a flame no longer oppressed by the bushel, Her soul rises

towards a hope that cannot die in Her. On the contrary it grows as hours pass. And She expresses Her hope also to the Father. Her hope and Her request.

10 (You can put here the prayer of last year, the lament of this Passover dawn, dated 21st February 1944, leaving it exactly as it is, because no change is to be made to it).

[21st February 1944]

11 «Jesus, Jesus! Are You not coming back yet? Your poor Mother can no longer put up with the idea that You are lying dead over there. You said it, but no one understood You. But I understood You! "Destroy the Temple of God and I will rebuild it in three days." This is the beginning of the third day. Oh! My Jesus! Do not wait till it ends to come back to life, to Your Mother, Who needs to see You alive in order not to die remembering that You are dead, Who needs to see You handsome, healthy, triumphant, in order not to die remembering You in that state in which I left You!

12 Oh! Father! Father! Give My Son back to Me! That I may see Him come back as a Man and not as a corpse, a King, not a condemned man. Later, I know, He will come back to You, in Heaven. But I shall have seen Him cured of so much evil, I shall have seen Him strong after so much weakness, I shall have seen Him triumphant after struggling so much, I shall have seen Him God after so much humanity suffered on behalf of men. And I shall feel happy even if I lose the possibility of being near Him. I shall know that He is with You, Holy Father, I shall know that He is forever free from Sorrow. Now, instead, I cannot forget that He is in a sepulchre, that He is there, killed because of all the sorrow they have given Him, that He, My Son-God, is sharing the destiny of men in the dark of a sepulchre, He, Your Living Son.

Father, Father, listen to Your servant. Because of that "yes"... I have never asked anything of You for My obedience to Your will; it was Your Will, and Your Will was Mine; I did not have to exact anything for the sacrifice of My will to Yours, Holy Father. But now, but now, for the sake of that "yes" that I said to the messenger Angel, o Father, listen to Me!

He is now free from tortures, because He accomplished everything with the agony of three hours after the tortures of the morning. But I have been for three days in this agony. You can see My heart and You hear its throbs. Our Jesus said that no feather falls off a bird without You seeing it, that no wild flower dies without its agony being consoled by You with Your sunshine and Your dew. Oh, Father, I am dying of this grief! Deal with Me as You do with the sparrow that You reclathe with a new feather, and with the flower that You warm and quench its thirst in Your pity. I am dying frozen by sorrow. I have no more blood in My veins. Once it became all milk to nourish Your

Son and Mine; now it has all turned into tears because I have no Son any more. They have killed Him, they have killed Him, Father, and You know how!

I have no more blood! I have shed it all with Him on Thursday night, on the sorrowful Friday. I am as cold as one whose veins have been severed. The sun no longer shines for Me, because He is dead, My holy Sun, My blessed Sun, the Sun born of My womb for the joy of His Mother, for the salvation of the world. I have no more refreshment, because I no longer have Him, the sweetest fountain for His Mother, Who drank His Word, Who quenched Her thirst with His presence. I am like a flower in dry sand. I am dying, I am dying, holy Father.

13 And I am not afraid to die, because He also is dead. But what will these little ones do, the little herd of My Son, so weak, so frightened, so fickle, if there is no one to support it? I am nothing, Father. But, by the desires of My Son, I am like a formation of armed men. I defend, I will defend His Doctrine and His heritage as a she-wolf defends her wolf-cubs. I, a ewe-lamb, will become a she-wolf to defend what belongs to My Son, and consequently, what is Yours.

You have seen it, Father. Eight days ago this town stripped its olive-trees, stripped its houses, stripped its gardens, stripped its inhabitants and became hoarse shouting: "Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed He Who comes in the name of the Lord." And while He was passing walking on carpets of branches, of garments, of clothes, of flowers, the citizens pointed Him out to one another saying: "He is Jesus, the Prophet from Nazareth in Galilee. He is the King of Israel." And while those branches had not yet withered and their voices were still hoarse through so much singing hosannas, they changed their cries into accusations and curses and requests for death, and of the branches cut off for the triumph they made cudgels to strike Your Lamb, Whom they were taking to His death. If they have done so much while He was among them and spoke to them, and smiled at them, and looked at them with His eyes that melt hearts, and even stones tremble when looked at by them, and He helped them and taught them, what will they do when He comes back to You?

His disciples, You have seen them. One betrayed Him, the others ran away. He was no sooner struck than they ran away like cowardly sheep, and they did not even stay around Him while He was dying. One only, the youngest, remained. Now comes the elder. But he already denied Him once. When Jesus is no longer here to watch him, will he persist in his Faith?

I am a nonentity, but a little of My Son is in Me, and My love supplies what I lack and annuls it. So I become something useful for the cause of Your Son, for His Church, that will never find peace and needs to strike deep roots in order not to be uprooted by winds. I am the one who will take care of it. Like a diligent gardener I will watch that it grows up strong and straight in its dawn. Then I shall not be worried about dying. But I cannot live if I remain any longer without Jesus.

14 Oh! Father, Who have abandoned Your Son for the welfare of men, and then You have comforted Him, because You have certainly received Him on Your bosom after His death, do not leave Me any longer in abandonment. I suffer it and offer it for the welfare of men. But console Me, now, Father. Father, mercy! Mercy, Son! Mercy, divine Spirit! Remember Your Virgin!»

[1st April 1945]

Later, prostrated on the floor, Mary seems to be praying with Her attitude as well as with Her heart. She is really a poor crushed thing. She looks like that flower parched to death of which She has spoken.

She does not even notice the shaking of a short but strong earthquake that makes the master and mistress of the house shout and run away, while Peter and John, as white as death, drag themselves as far as the threshold of the room. But as they see Her absorbed in Her prayer, inattentive, unaware of what is not God, they withdraw closing the door, and frightened as they are, they go back into the Supper room.

613. The Resurrection.

1st April 1945.

1 I see again the joyful and powerful Resurrection of Christ.

In the kitchen garden all is silent and glittering with dew. Above it the sky is becoming a clearer and clearer sapphire shade, after leaving its dark-blue hue studded with stars, that through the whole night had watched over the world. Dawn is driving back, from east to west, these still dark zones, like a wave that during the high tide advances more and more, covering the dark beach and replacing the grey-dark shade of the damp sand and of the reef with the blue sea water.

A few little stars do not want to die yet and peep more and more faintly through the wave of the white greenish light of dawn, a white shaded with grey, like the leaves of the drowsy olive-trees that form a crown on that not far away hillock. And then it is wrecked, submerged by the wave of dawn, like land overflowed by water. And there is a star less... And then also another one less... and another one, and another one. The sky loses its herd of stars and only over there, to the remote east, three, then two, then one remain to contemplate that daily wonder, which is the rising dawn.

And then, when a pink thread draws a line on the turquoise silk of the eastern sky, a

breath of wind passes over leaves and herbs and says: «Wake up. The day has risen.» But it awakes only leaves and herbs, that shiver under their dewy diamonds and rustle gently while the falling drops resound like arpeggios. The birds have not awakened yet among the thick branches of a very tall cypress that seems to dominate like a lord in his kingdom, or in the thick entanglement of a laurel hedge that shelters from the north wind.

The guards, weary, cold, sleepy, in various postures are watching over the Sepulchre, the stone of which has been reinforced round its edge, as if it were a buttress, with a thick layer of lime, on the opaque white of which stand out the large rosettes of red wax of the Temple seal, impressed with others directly on the fresh lime.

The guards must have lit a little fire during the night, because there are ashes and half-burnt fire-brands on the ground, and they must have played and eaten, because scattered around there are remains of food and some small clean bones, which have certainly been used for some game, like our dominoes or our children's games of marbles, which are played on a coarse board traced on a path. Then they became tired and left things as they are now, and they tried to find more or less comfortable postures to sleep or to keep watch.

2 In the clear sky, where to the east there is now a completely rosy zone, which is spreading out more and more widely, but where, however, there are no sunbeams as yet, a very bright meteor appears, coming from unknown depths, and it descends like a sphere of fire of unsustainable splendour, followed by a glowing trail, which perhaps is nothing but the persistence of its brightness in our retinae. It descends at a very high speed towards the Earth, shedding such an intense phantasmagoric light, frightful in its beauty, that the rosy light of dawn vanishes, outshone by such white incandescence.

The guards, astonished, raise their heads, also because with the light there comes a mighty, harmonious, solemn rumble that fills the whole of Creation with its roar. It comes from heavenly depths. It is the alleluia, the angelical glory, that follows the Spirit of the Christ, which is returning to His glorious Flesh.

The meteor clashes on the useless closure of the Sepulchre, tears it off, throws it on the ground, and it strikes with terror and noise the guards placed as jailors of the Master of the Universe, producing with its return to the Earth a new earthquake, as it had caused one when this Spirit of the Lord fled from the Earth. It enters the dark Sepulchre that becomes all bright with its indescribable light, and while it remains suspended in the still air, the Spirit is infused again into the Body motionless under the funereal bandages.

All this takes place not in a minute, but in the fraction of a minute, so fast have been the appearance, descent, penetration and the disappearance of the Light of God...

3 The «I want» of the divine Spirit to its cold Body is noiseless. It is uttered by the

Essence to the immobile Matter. But no word is perceived by the human ear. The Flesh receives the order and obeys it with a deep sigh... Nothing else for some minutes.

Under the Sudarium and the Shroud, the glorious Body is recomposed in eternal beauty, it awakes from the sleep of death, it comes back from the «nothing» in which it was, it lives after being dead. The heart certainly awakes and gives its first throb, it propels the remaining frozen blood through the veins and at once creates the full measure of it in the empty arteries, in the immobile lungs, in the dark brain, and brings back warmth, health, strength, thought.

Another moment, and there is a sudden movement under the heavy Shroud. It is so sudden that, from the moment He certainly moves His folded arms to the moment He appears standing, imposing, splendid in His garment of immaterial matter, supernaturally handsome and majestic, with a gravity that changes and elevates Him, and yet leaves Him exactly Himself, the eye has hardly time to follow the development. And now it admires Him: so different from what the mind remembers, tidied up, without wounds or blood, only blazing with the light that gushes from the five wounds and issues from every pore of His skin.

4 When He takes His first step – and in the movement the rays emanating from His Hands and Feet halo Him with beams of light: from His Head haloed with a garland, made with the countless little wounds of the crown, but they no longer bleed but only shine, to the hem of His tunic, when, opening His arms, that were folded across His chest, He uncovers the zone of very bright luminosity that filters through His tunic inflaming it like a sun at the height of His Heart – then it is really the «Light» that has taken a body. Not the poor light of the Earth, not the poor light of the stars, not the poor light of the sun. But the Light of God: all the heavenly brightness that gathers in one Being and grants Him its inconceivable azure as eyes, its golden fire as hair, its angelic whiteness as garment and complexion and all that exists, but cannot be described by human words, the supereminent ardour of the Most Holy Trinity, that outshines with its ardent power every fire in Paradise, absorbing Him in Itself to generate Him again at each moment of the eternal Time, Heart of Heaven that attracts and spreads His blood, the countless drops of His incorporeal blood: the blessed souls, the angels, everything there is the Paradise: the love of God, the love for God, all this is the Light that is, that forms the Risen Christ.

When He moves, coming towards the exit, and the eye can see beyond His brightness, two most beautiful brilliances, but similar to stars compared with the sun, appear to me, one on this side, the other on the other side of the threshold, prostrated in the adoration of their God, Who passes by enveloped in His light, beatifying with His smile, and He goes out, leaving the funereal grotto and going back to walk on the earth, that awakes out of joy and shines in its dews, in the hues of herbs and roseries, in the countless corollas of apple-trees, that open, by a wonder, to the early sun that kisses them, and to

the eternal Sun Who proceeds under them.

The guards are there, shocked... The corrupt powers of man do not see God, whereas the pure powers of the universe – the flowers, herbs, birds – admire and venerate the Mighty One, Who passes by in a halo of His own Light and in an aureola of sunlight.

His smile, His eyes that rest on flowers, on dead branches, that look up at the clear sky, everything becomes more beautiful. And more soft and shaded than a silky rosery are the millions of petals forming a flowery foam on the head of the Conqueror. And brighter are the diamonds of the dew. And of a deeper blue is the sky reflecting His refulgent eyes, and more joyful is the sun that with gladness paints a little cloud blown by a light wind, that comes to kiss its King with scents stolen from gardens and with caresses of silky petals.

Jesus raises His Hand and blesses and then, while the birds sing more loudly and the wind carries its scents, He disappears from my sight, leaving me in a joy that cancels even the slightest remembrance of sadness and sufferings and hesitancy for tomorrow...

614. Jesus Appears to His Mother.

[21st February 1944]

1 Mary is prostrated with Her face on the floor. She looks like a poor wretch. She looks like that withered flower of which She has spoken.

The closed window is opened with a violent banging of the heavy shutters, and with the first ray of the sun, Jesus enters.

Mary, Who has been shaken by the noise and has raised Her head to see which wind has opened the shutters, sees Her radiant Son: handsome, infinitely more handsome than He was before suffering, smiling, lively, brighter than the sun, dressed in a white garment that seems woven light, and Who is advancing towards Her.

She straightens Herself up on Her knees and crossing Her hands on Her breast, She says with a sob that is joy and grief: «Lord, My God». And She remains thus, enraptured in contemplating Him, with Her face all washed by tears, but made serene, pacified by His smile and by the ecstasy.

2 But He does not want to see His Mother on Her knees, like a servant. And He calls Her, stretching out His hands, from the wounds of which emanate rays that make His glorious Flesh even brighter: «Mother!» But it is not the sorrowful word of the conversations and the farewells before His Passion, or the heart-rending lament of the

meeting on Calvary and of the agony. It is a cry of triumph, of joy, of freedom, of rejoicing, of love, of gratitude. And He bends over His Mother, Who dare not touch Him, and He places His hands under Her bent elbows, and He lifts Her up, He presses Her to His Heart and kisses Her.

Oh! Mary realises then that it is not a vision, that it is Her Son Who has really risen, that it is Her Jesus, the Son Who still loves Her as a Son. And with a cry, She flings Her arms round His neck, and She embraces and kisses Him, laughing in Her weeping. She kisses His Forehead, where there are no longer any wounds, His Head no longer unkempt and bloody, His shining Eyes, His healed Cheeks, His Mouth no longer swollen. She then takes His Hands and kisses their backs and palms, their radiant wounds, and She suddenly bends down to His Feet and uncovers them from under His bright garment and kisses them. Then She stands up, looks at Him, but dare not.

But He smiles and understands. He uncovers His chest a little and says: «And this one, Mother, are You not kissing it, this one that grieved You so much and that You alone are worthy to kiss? Kiss My Heart, Mother. Your kiss will cancel the last remembrance of what is sorrowful and will give Me that joy, which My Joy of having risen from the dead still lacks.» And He takes the face of His Mother in His Hands and He lays Her lips on the lips of the wound of His Chest, from which streams of a very bright light are flowing.

Mary's face is haloed by that light, flooded as it is with its beams. She kisses and kisses, while Jesus caresses Her. She never tires kissing. She looks like a thirsty woman whose mouth is attached to a fountain and who drinks from it the life that was escaping her.

3 Jesus speaks now.

«It is all over, Mother. You no longer have to weep over Your Son. The trial is over. Redemption has taken place.

Mother, thanks for conceiving Me, for bringing Me up, for helping Me in life and in death.

I heard Your prayers come to Me. They have been My strength in My grief, My companions in My journey on the Earth and beyond the Earth. They came with Me on the Cross and to Limbo. They were the incense that preceded the Pontiff, Who was going to call His servants and take them to the temple that does not die: to My Heaven. They have come with Me to Paradise, preceding, like an angelical voice, the procession of the redeemed led by the Redeemer, so that the angels should be ready to greet the Conqueror, Who was returning to His Kingdom. They have been seen and heard by the Father and by the Spirit, Who smiled at them, as if they were the most beautiful flower and the sweetest song born in Paradise. They have been recognised by the Patriarchs and by the new Saints, by the new, first, citizens of My Jerusalem, and I bring You their thanks, Mother, together with the kisses of their relatives, with their blessings and

with that of Joseph, the spouse of Your soul.

The whole of Heaven sings its hosanna to You, Mother, Holy Mother! A hosanna that does not die, that is not a false one like the one given to Me a few days ago.

4 I will now go to the Father in My human appearance. Paradise must see the Conqueror in His appearance of Man, by means of which He defeated the Sin of Man. But I will come again. I must confirm in the Faith those who do not yet believe and are in need to believe to lead the others to believe, I must fortify the pusillanimous ones who will need so much strength to resist the world.

Then I will ascend to Heaven. But I will not leave You alone, Mother, can You see that veil? In My annihilation, I still exhaled the power of miracle on Your behalf, to give You that comfort. But for You I will work another miracle. You will have Me, in the Sacrament, as real as when You carried Me.

You will never be alone. But these past days You have been alone. But also that sorrow of Yours was required for My Redemption. Much is continuously to be added to Redemption, because much will be continuously created in the way of Sin. I will call all My servants to this redeeming participation. You are the one who by Yourself will do more than all the others together. But also this long abandonment was required.

Now no longer so. I am no longer separated from the Father. You will no longer be separated from Your Son. And, by having Your Son, You have our Trinity. A living Heaven, You will bring the Trinity to men on the Earth, and You will sanctify the Church, You, Queen of the Priesthood and Mother of the Christians.

Then I will come to get You. And no longer shall I be in You, but You will be in Me, in My Kingdom, to make Paradise more beautiful.

5 I am going now, Mother. I am going to make the other Mary happy. Then I will ascend to the Father. Thence I will come to those who do not believe. Mother, Your kiss as a blessing. And My Peace to You as a companion. Goodbye.»

And Jesus disappears in the sunshine that streams down from the early morning clear sky.

615. The Pious Women at the Sepulchre.

2nd April 1945.

1 The women, in the meanwhile, after leaving the house are walking close to the wall, shadows in the shade. They are silent for some time, all muffled up and frightened in so

much silence and solitude. Then, recovering confidence seeing that the town is completely calm, they group and dare to speak.

«Will the Gates be already open?» asks Susanna.

«Certainly. Look over there at the first market-gardener who is going in with vegetables. He is going to the market» replies Salome.

«Will they say anything to us?» asks Susanna again.

«Who?» inquires the Magdalene.

«The soldiers, at the Judicial Gate. There... only few people are going in and even fewer are coming out... We shall rouse suspicion...»

«So? They will look at us. They will see five women going towards the country. We could be also people who, after celebrating Passover, are going back to their villages.»

«But... In order not to attract the attention of any malicious person, why do we not go out by another Gate and then we can go round along the walls?...»

«We would go the long way round.»

«But we shall be safer. Let us take the Gate of the Water...»

«Oh! Salome! If I were you, I should choose the Eastern Gate! You would have to go a longer way round! We must make haste and go back soon.» It is the Magdalene who is so resolute.

«Then another one, but not the Judicial Gate. Be good...» they all beg her.

«All right. Well, since that is what you want, let us call on Johanna. She begged me to let her know. If we had gone straight there, we could have done without seeing her. But since you want to go a longer way round, let us call on her...»

«Oh! yes. Also because of the guards placed there... She is well known and respected...»

«I think we should call also on Joseph of Arimathea. He is the owner of the place.»

«Why not! To avoid attracting people's attention, we will form a procession! What a timid sister I have! Rather, do you know what, Martha? Let us do this. I will go ahead and have a look. You will follow me with Johanna. I will stand in the middle of the road, should there be any danger, and you will see me. And we will come back. But I can assure you that the guards, seeing this, I thought of it (and she shows a purse full of money) will let us do everything.»

«We will tell Johanna as well. You are right.»

«Go then, and let me go.»

«Are you going all alone, Mary? I will come with you» says Martha, who is afraid for her sister.

«No. You will go with Mary of Alphaeus to Johanna's. Salome and Susanna will wait for you near the Gate, outside the walls. And then you will all come together along the main road. Goodbye.» And Mary Magdalene cuts other possible comments short, as she goes away quickly with her bag full of balms and her money in her breast.

She flies, so fast she goes along the road, which is becoming more delightful in the first pink shade of dawn. She goes in by the Judicial Gate, to be quicker. And no one stops her...

2 The others watch her go, then they turn their backs to the crossroads where they were, and they take another one, narrow and dark, which near the Sixtus opens out into a wider road, where there are some beautiful houses. They part again, Salome and Susanna proceed along the road, while Martha and Mary of Alphaeus knock at the iron door and show themselves at the little window (judas-hole) half opened by the porter.

They enter and go to Johanna, who already up and all dressed in a very dark violet garment that makes her look even paler, is preparing some oils with her nurse and a maidservant.

«Have you come? May God reward you. But, if you had not come, I should have gone by myself... To find comfort... Because many things have remained upset after that dreadful day. And, in order not to feel alone, I must go against that Stone and knock and say: "Master, I am poor Johanna... Do not leave me alone, You, too..."» Johanna weeps silently but with deep desolation, while Esther, her nurse, makes large indecipherable gestures behind the back of her mistress, while putting a mantle on her.

«I am going, Esther.»

«May God comfort you!»

They leave the mansion house to join their companions. It is at this moment that the short but strong earthquake takes place, creating a panic again in the people of Jerusalem, still terrorised by the events of Friday. The three women retrace their steps precipitately, and they remain in the large hall, among maidservants and servants who are howling and imploring the Lord, fearing new shocks...

3 ...The Magdalene, instead, is just on the border of the path that takes one to the kitchen garden of Joseph of Arimathea, when she is caught in the powerful and also harmonious roar of this heavenly sign, while, in the faint rosy light of dawn, that is advancing in the sky, where to the west a persistent star still resists, and that makes fair the so far greenish light, a very bright light appears and descends like and incandescent

wonderful globe, cutting the calm air in a zigzag course.

Mary of Magdala is almost grazed and thrown on the ground by it. She bends for a moment whispering: «My Lord!» and then she straightens up like a stalk after the wind has passed by, and she runs towards the kitchen garden even faster.

She enters it quickly, and goes towards the sepulchre in the rock as fast as a bird that is chased and is looking for its nest. But, no matter how fast she runs, she cannot be there when the heavenly meteor acts as a lever and as a flame on the seal of lime, placed as a reinforcement for the heavy stone, or when with the final crash the stone door collapses, causing such a shake that joins the one of the earthquake, which, although of a short duration, is so violent that it knocks the guards down as if they were dead.

When Mary arrives, she sees the useless jailors of the Triumpher thrown on the ground like a sheaf of mown corn. Mary Magdalene does not associate the earthquake with Resurrection. But looking at the spectacle, she thinks it is a punishment of God for the desecrators of Jesus' Sepulchre, and she falls on her knees saying: «Alas! They have stolen Him!» She is really disconsolate and weeps like a girl who has come, being sure that she would find her father whom she was looking for, and instead finds the house empty.

4 She then stands up and runs away to go to Peter and John. And as she thinks of nothing but of informing the two, she forgets to go and meet her companions and remain on the road, but as fast as a gazelle she goes back the road she came, she passes through the Judicial Gate, and flies through the streets, which are a little more crowded, and she rushes against the door of the hospitable house and knocks at it furiously. The mistress opens the door to her.

«Where are John and Peter?» asks Mary Magdalene panting.

«There» says the woman pointing at the Supper-room.

Mary of Magdala enters and as soon as she is in, standing before the two astonished men, and in her voice, kept low out of pity for the Mother, there is more anguish than if she had shouted, she says: «They have taken the Lord away from the Sepulchre! I wonder where they have put Him!» and for the first time she staggers and is unsteady, and in order not to fall, she holds on whatever she can.

«What? What are you saying?» ask the two.

And panting she replies: «I went ahead... to buy the guards... so that they would let us go. They are there like dead bodies... The Sepulchre is open, the stone is on the ground... Who? Who did it? Oh! come! Let us run...»

Peter and John set out at once. Mary follows them for a few steps. Then she goes back. She seizes the mistress of the house, she shakes her, violent in her far-sighted love, and

she shouts in her face: «Mind you do not let anybody go to Her (and she points at the door of Mary's room). Remember that I am your mistress. Obey and be silent.» Then she leaves her aghast and joins the apostles, who are striding towards the Sepulchre...

5 ...In the meantime Susanna and Salome, after leaving their companions and reaching the walls, are caught in the earthquake. Frightened, they take shelter under a tree and remain there, torn between their desire to go to the Sepulchre or to run to Johanna's. But love overcomes fear and they go towards the Sepulchre.

They are still frightened when they enter the garden and see the senseless guards... they see a bright light come out of the open Sepulchre. Their fright increases and reaches its climax when, holding each other's hand to pluck up courage, they peep in from the threshold and in the dark sepulchral cave, they see a bright most beautiful creature, that smiling kindly greets them from the place where it is standing: leaning on the right hand side of the anointment stone, which, grey as it is, disappears behind so much incandescent brightness. They fall on their knees, utterly astonished.

But the angel speaks to them gently: «Be not afraid of me. I am the angel of the divine Sorrow. I have come to rejoice at its end. The sorrow of the Christ, His humiliation in death is over. Jesus of Nazareth, the Crucified Whom you are looking for, has risen from the dead. He is no longer here! The place where He was laid is empty. Rejoice with me. Go. Tell Peter and the disciples that He has risen and will precede you in Galilee. You will see Him there for a short time, as He said.»

The women fall with their faces on the ground, and when they raise them, they run as if they were chased by a punishment. They are terrorised and they whisper: «We shall die now! We have seen the angel of the Lord!»

They calm down a little in the open country and they consult with each other. What are they to do? If they relate what they have seen, they will not be believed. If they say where they come from, they may be charged by the Judaeans with the murder of the guards. No. They cannot say anything to friends or to enemies...

Fearful, dumbfounded, they go back home along a different road. They go in and take shelter in the Supper room. They do not even ask to see Mary... And in there they think that what they have seen is nothing but a deception of the Demon. Humble as they are, they conclude that «it is not possible that they have been granted to see the messenger of God. It is Satan who wanted to frighten them to send them away from there.»

They weep and pray like two little girls frightened by a nightmare...

6 ...The third group, that of Johanna, Mary of Alphaeus and Martha, when they see that nothing new is happening, decides to go where their companions are certainly waiting for them. They go out into the streets, whereby now there are frightened people, who comment on the new earthquake connecting it with the event of Friday, and see also

things which do not exist.

«It is better if they are all frightened! The guards may be so as well and will raise no objection» says Mary of Alphaeus. And they walk fast towards the walls.

7 But while they are going there, Peter and John, followed by the Magdalene, have arrived at the garden. And John, who runs faster, is the first to arrive at the Sepulchre. The guards are no longer there. Neither is the angel there any more.

John, timid and sorrowful, kneels down at the open entrance to venerate and get some indication from the things he sees. But he only sees, heaped on the floor, the linen cloths placed on the Shroud. «There is really nothing, Simon! Mary has seen accurately. Come, come in, look.»

Peter, who is breathless after so much running, goes into the Sepulchre. On the way he had said: «I will never dare to approach that place.» But now he thinks only of finding out where the Master may be. And he calls Him also, as if He might be concealed in some dark corner.

At this early hour in the morning it is still very dark in the deep Sepulchre, which receives light only from the opening of the entrance, where John and the Magdalene now cast a shadow... And Peter finds it hard to see, and has to help himself with his hands to ascertain what the situation is... He touches, trembling, the table of the anointment, and feels that it is empty...

«He is not here, John! He is not here!... Oh! come here! I have wept so much that I can hardly see in this poor light.»

John stands up and goes in. And while he does so, Peter discovers the sudarium in a corner, folded diligently and within it the Shroud rolled up carefully.

«They have really abducted Him. The guards were not here for us, but to do that... And we have let them do it. By going away, we have allowed that...»

«Oh! where will they have put Him?»

«Peter, Peter! This... is really the end!»

The two disciples come out looking annihilated.

«Let us go, woman. You will tell the Mother...»

«I am not going away. I am staying here... Somebody will come... Oh! I am not coming... There is still something of Him here. The Mother was right... To breathe the air where He was is the only relief left to us.»

«The only relief... Now you also can see that it was nonsense to hope...» says Peter.

Mary does not even reply to him. She crouches on the ground, close to the entrance, and weeps, while the others go away slowly.

8 She then raises her head and looks inside, and through her tears she sees two angels, sitting at the head and at the foot of the anointment stone. Poor Mary is so stupified in her fiercest struggle between hope that is dying and faith that does not want to die, that she looks at them like one whose mind is completely blank, without even being surprised. The strong woman, who has resisted everything like a heroine, has nothing left but tears.

«Why are you weeping, woman?» asks one of the two shining young boys, because they look like very beautiful adolescents.

«Because they have taken away my Lord and I do not know where they have put Him.»

Mary is not afraid to speak to them. She does not ask: «Who are you?» Nothing. Nothing amazes her any more. She has already suffered everything that can astonish a human being. Now she is only a broken thing that weeps without strength or reserve.

The angelical youth looks at his companion and smiles. And so does the other. And in a flash of angelical joy they both look outside, towards the garden all in bloom with millions of corollas that have opened at the first sunshine on the closely planted apple-trees of the orchard.

9 Mary turns round to see whom they are looking at. And she sees a Man, most handsome, and I do not know how she does not recognise Him at once. A Man Who looks at her pitifully and asks her: «Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?» It is true that Jesus is dimmed out of pity for the woman, whom emotions have exhausted and who might die from sudden joy, but I really wonder why she does not recognise Him.

And Mary sobbing says: «They have taken my Lord Jesus! I had come to embalm Him while awaiting His resurrection... I gathered all my courage, my hope and my faith around my love... and now I cannot find Him any more... Or rather, I put my love around faith, hope and courage to defend them from men... but all in vain! Men have abducted my Love and with it they have deprived me of everything... O my lord, if you have taken Him away, tell me where you have put Him. And I will get Him... I will not tell anybody... It will be a secret between you and me. Look: I am the daughter of Theophilus, Lazarus' sister, but I am on my knees before you to implore you, like a slave. Do you want me to pay you for His Body? I will do so. How much do you want? I am rich. I can give you as much gold and as many gems as it weighs. But give it back to me. I will not denounce you. Do you want to strike me? Do so. Until I bleed, if you wish so. If you bear Him a grudge, let me expiate it. But give Him back to me. Oh! don't make me wretched with this misery, my lord! Have mercy on a poor woman!... Do you not want to do it on my behalf? Then, do it for His Mother. Tell me! Tell me

where is my Lord Jesus. I am strong. I will take Him in my arms and I will carry Him like a child to safety. Lord... lord... you can see it... for three days we have been struck by the wrath of God for what was done to the Son of God... Do not add Desecration to Crime...»

«Mary!» Jesus shines in calling her. He reveals Himself in His triumphant brightness.

«Rabboni!» Mary's cry is really the «great cry» that closes the cycle of death. With the first one, the darkness of hatred enveloped the Victim with funereal bandages; with the second, the lights of love increased His brightness. And Mary stands up as her cry fills the garden, she rushes to Jesus' feet and would like to kiss them.

Jesus moves her away, hardly touching her forehead with the tips of His fingers: «Do not touch Me! I have not yet ascended to My Father in this appearance. Go to My brothers and friends, and tell them that I am ascending to My Father and yours, to My God and yours. And then I will come to them.» And Jesus disappears, absorbed by an unsustainable light.

10 Mary kisses the ground where Jesus was and she runs towards the house. She goes in like a rocket, because the main door is half open, to let the master pass, who is going to the fountain; she opens the door of Mary's room and drops on Her breast shouting: «He has risen! He has risen!» and she weeps happily.

And while Peter and John rush there, and Salome and Susanna, still frightened, come from the Supper room and listen to her narration, Mary of Alphaeus with Martha and Johanna come in, from the street, and out of breath they say «that they have been there as well, and they saw two angels, who said that they were the Guardian of the Man God and the angel of His Sorrow, and ordered them to tell the apostles that He had risen from the dead.» And as Peter shakes his head, they insist saying: «Yes. They said: "Why are you looking for the Living One among the dead? He is not here. He has risen from the dead, as He said when He was still in Galilee. Do you not remember? He said: 'The Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of sinners to be crucified. But on the third day he will rise from the dead.'"»

Peter shakes his head saying: «Too many things during these days! They have been upset.»

The Magdalene raises her head from Mary's breast and says: «I have seen Him! I have spoken to Him. He told me that He is ascending to the Father and then He will come. How handsome He was!» and she weeps as she had never wept, now that she no longer has to torture herself to oppose the doubt rising from every side.

But Peter and John are very doubtful. They look at each other and their eyes say: «Women's fancy!»

Then also Susanna and Salome dare to speak. But the very inevitable difference in the details of the guards that first are there like dead bodies and then are not there, of the angels that sometimes are one and sometimes are two and did not show themselves to the apostles, of the two versions concerning Jesus' coming here or His preceding His disciples in Galilee, makes the doubt, and more than that, the persuasion of the apostles grow stronger and stronger.

11 Mary, the blessed Mother, is silent, supporting the Magdalene... I do not understand the mystery of this maternal silence.

Mary of Alphaeus says to Salome: «Let the two of us go back there, Let us see whether we are all intoxicated...» And they run out.

The other women remain there, quietly derided by the two apostles, near Mary Who is silent, engrossed in a thought that each interprets in a personal manner, and no one realises that it is ecstasy. The two elderly women come back: «It is true! It is true! We have seen Him. He said to us, near Barnabas' kitchen garden: "Peace to you. Be not afraid. Go and tell My brothers that I have risen from the dead, and that they should go within a few days to Galilee. We shall be together again there." That is what He said. Mary is right, We must inform those who are at Bethany, Joseph, Nicodemus, the most faithful disciples, the shepherds, we must go and do, and do... Oh! He has risen!...» and they all weep happily.

«You are mad, women. Grief has upset you. The light has seemed an angel to you. The wind, a voice. The sun, the Christ. I do not criticise you. I understand you, but I can only believe what I have seen: the open empty Sepulchre, and the guards who have run away with the stolen Corpse.»

«But if the very guards say that He has risen! If the whole town is in a turmoil and the Princes of the Priests are mad with rage, because the guards have spoken while running away terrified! Now they want them to say something different and they are paying them for that. But it is already known. And if the Judaeans do not believe in the Resurrection, they do not want to believe, many other people do believe...»

«H'm! Women!...» Peter shrugs his shoulders and is about to go away.

12 Then the Mother, Who still has on Her heart the Magdalene, who is weeping like a willow-tree in a downpour, for her too great joy, and who kisses Her fair hair, raises Her transfigured face and says a short sentence: «He has really risen. I have had Him in My arms and I kissed His Wounds.» She then bends over the head of the passionate woman and says: «Yes, joy is even stronger than sorrow. But it is only a grain of sand compared to what will be your ocean of eternal joy. You are blessed because you made your spirit speak above reason.»

Peter dare not deny any longer... and with one of those sudden changes of the old Peter,

who is coming back to light again, he says and shouts, as if the delay depended on the others and not on him: «Then, if it is so, we must let the others know. Those spread out in the country... look for them... take action... Come on, get a move on. If He really should come... let Him at least find us», and he does not realise that again he confesses that he does not believe blindly in His Resurrection.

616. Comment on the Resurrection.

[21st February 1944]

1 Jesus says:

«*The fervent prayers of Mary have anticipated My Resurrection by some time.*

I had said: "The Son of man is about to be killed, but on the third day He will rise from the dead." I died at three o'clock in the afternoon of Friday. Whether you count the days by their names, or you count them by their hours, it was not the dawn on Sunday that was to see Me rise. With regard to the hours, they were only thirty-eight instead of seventy-two, in which My Body had remained lifeless. With regard to the days, it should have been the evening of the third day to say that I had been in the sepulchre three days.

But Mary anticipated the miracle. As when with Her prayers She opened the Heavens a few years in advance of the predetermined time, to give the world its Salvation, so now She obtains some hours in advance to give comfort to Her dying heart.

2 And I, at the beginning of dawn on the third day, descended like the sun and with My brightness I broke the human seals, so useless before the power of a God, with My power I prized open and overthrew the stone watched over in vain, with My apparition like lightning I knocked down the utterly useless guards placed as guardians of a death that was Life, that no human power could prevent from being such.

By far more powerful than your electric current, My Spirit entered like a sword of divine Fire to warm the cold remains of My Corpse, and in the new Adam the Spirit of God breathed life, saying to Itself: "Live. I want it."

I, Who had raised the dead when I was only the Son of Man, the Victim appointed to be burdened with the sins of the world, should I not have been able to raise Myself, now that I was the Son of God, the First and the Last, the eternal Living Being, He Who holds in His hands the keys of Life and of Death? And My Corpse felt Life go back to It.

Look: like a man who awakes after a sleep brought about by enormous labour, I breathe

deeply, and I do not open My eyes yet. Blood begins to circulate again, though not fast yet, in My veins, it brings thought again to the mind. But I come from so far! Look: like a wounded man, whom a miraculous power heals, blood comes back into My empty veins, it fills My Heart, warms My limbs, heals My wounds, bruises and sores disappear, strength comes back. But I was wounded so badly!

Look: Power works. I am cured. I am awake. I have come back to Life. I was dead. Now I live! Now I rise! I shake the linens of death, I cast off the covering of ointments. I do not need them to appear the eternal Beauty, the eternal Integrity. I clothe Myself with a garment that is not of this Earth, but is woven by Him Who is My Father and Who weaves the silk of the virginal lilies. I am dressed in splendour. I adorn Myself with My wounds, which no longer drip blood, but give off light. The light that will be the joy of My Mother and of the blessed souls, and the terror, the unsustainable sight of the damned and of the demons on the Earth and on the last day.

3 The angel of My life of man and the angel of My sorrow are prostrated before Me and worship My Glory. Both My angels are here. One to delight in the sight of Him Whom he guarded, and Who now no longer needs angelical protection. The other, who saw My tears, to see My smile; who saw My struggle, to see My victory; who saw My grief, to see My joy.

And I go out into the garden full of flower buds and of dew. And the apple-trees open their corollas to form a flowery arch over My Royal head and the grass makes a carpet of gems and corollas for My Foot, that treads again on the Earth redeemed after being lifted up on it to redeem it. And the early sun, and the sweet April wind, and the light cloud that passes by, as rosy as the cheek of a child, and the birds among branches, they all greet Me. I am their God. They adore Me.

I pass through the stunned guards, a symbol of souls in mortal sin, that do not perceive the passing of God.

It is Passover, Mary! This is really the "Passing of the Angel of God"! His Passing from death to life. *His Passing to give Life to those who believe in His Name.* It is Passover! It is the Peace that passes through the world. The Peace no longer veiled by the condition of man, but free, complete in its recovered efficiency of God.

4 And I go to My Mother. It is fair that I should go. It was fair for My angels. It is much more so for Her Who, besides being My guardian and comfort, gave Me life. Before going back to the Father in My glorified appearance of Man, I go to My Mother. I go in the splendour of My paradisiac appearance and of My living Gems. *She can touch Me, She can kiss them, because She is the Pure, the Beautiful, the Beloved, the Blessed Saint of God.*

The new Adam goes to the new Eve. Evil entered the world through a woman, and was defeated by the Woman. The Fruit of the Woman has detoxicated men of the slaver of

Lucifer. Now, if they want, they can be saved. She saved woman who had remained so fragile after the mortal wound.

5 And after showing Myself to the Pure One, to Whom by right of Holiness and Maternity it is just that the Son-God should go, I present Myself to the redeemed woman, to the file-leader, to the representative of all the female creatures, whom I have come to free from the sting of lust. So that she may tell them to approach Me to be cured, to have faith in Me, to believe in My Mercy that understands and forgives, to look at My Body adorned with the five wounds, in order to defeat Satan, who rummages in their flesh.

I do not let her touch Me. She is not the Pure One, who can touch, without contaminating Him, the Son Who goes back to the Father. She has still much to purify through penance. But her love deserves that reward. She was able to rise through her own will from the sepulchre of her vice, to strangle Satan who held her, to defy the world out of love for Her Saviour, she was able to divest herself of everything that was not love, she was able to be nothing but love that is consumed for her God. And God calls her: "Mary". Listen to her replying: "Rabboni!" Her heart is in that cry.

As she deserved it, I entrusted her with the task of being the messenger of Resurrection. And once again she will be somewhat derided, as if she were raving. But the judgement of men is of no importance to her, to Mary of Magdala, to Mary of Jesus. She saw Me raised from the dead and that gives her a joy that appeases all other feelings.

Do you see how I love also who was guilty, but wanted to come out of guilt? Not even to John did I show Myself first. It was to the Magdalene that I showed Myself. John had already received the state of son from Me. He could have it, because he was pure and could be not only a spiritual son, but also one who gave the Pure Mother of God and received from Her those needs and those cares which are connected with the body.

The Magdalene, the one revived to Grace, has the first vision of Grace Risen.

6 When you love Me to the extent of overcoming everything for Me, I take your diseased heads and hearts in My pierced hands and I breathe My Power on your faces. *And I save you, I save you, children whom I love. You become again beautiful, wholesome, free, happy. You become again the dear children of the Lord.* I make you the bearers of My Goodness among poor men, to witness My Goodness to them and convince them of it and of Me.

Have, have, have faith in Me. Love. Be not afraid. May what I suffered to save you assure you of the Heart of your God.

**The sections on the
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary follow.**

645. The Blissful Passage of the Blessed Virgin.

21st November 1951.

1 Mary, in Her solitary little room, on the high terrace, all dressed in white linen, both in the dress that covers Her body, and in the mantle that, fastened at the nape of Her neck, falls down Her back, and in the very thin veil that hangs from Her head, is arranging Her garments and Jesus', which She has always kept. She picks the best ones. And they are few. Of Her own She takes the dress and the mantle She had on Calvary; of Her Son's, a linen tunic that Jesus used to wear on summer days, and the mantle that was found at Gethsemane, still stained with the blood He shed with the bloody perspiration of that dreadful hour.

After folding these garments carefully and kissing Jesus' mantle stained with blood, She goes towards the chest, in which for years have been gathered and kept the relics of the Last Supper and of the Passion. She gathers all these things in one compartment, the upper one, and She lays the clothes in the lower one.

She is closing the chest when John, who had gone up to the terrace silently and had looked in to see what Mary was doing, perhaps worried because of Her long absence from the kitchen, as She had gone upstairs to spend the morning hours, makes Her turn round suddenly by asking Her: «What are You doing, Mother?»

«I have put straight what is to be kept. All the souvenirs... Everything that is witness to His infinite love and sorrow.»

«Why, Mother, do You reopen the wounds of Your heart by looking again at these sad things? You are pale and Your hand is trembling... So You suffer seeing them» John says to Her, approaching Her, as if he were afraid that, wan and trembling as She is, She might feel ill and fall on the floor.

«Oh! that is not why I am wan and I am trembling. It is not because they reopen My wounds... They, in fact, have never been closed completely. And yet peace and joy are in Me, and they have never been so complete as they are now.»

«Never as now? I do not understand... The sight of those things, full of cruel memories, awakens in me the anguish of those hours. And I am only a disciple. You are the Mother...»

«And you mean that as such I should suffer more. And from a human point of view, you are right. But it is not So. **2** I am accustomed to enduring the sorrow of being separated from Him. It was always sorrowful, because His presence and closeness were My Paradise on Earth. But I always suffered them willingly and serenely, because every

action of His was wanted by His Father, it was obedience to the divine Will, and so I accepted it, because I also have always obeyed the will and plans of God for Me. Every time Jesus left Me, I suffered. Certainly. I felt lonely. Only God has measured in its most real intensity My sorrow when He, a boy, left Me secretly, for the dispute with the doctors of the Temple. And yet, with the exception of the fair question that I, His mother, asked Him, as He had left Me in that manner, I did not say anything else to Him. Likewise I did not hold Him back when He left Me to become the Master... and I was already a widow, and therefore all alone, in a town that, with the exception of a few people, did not love Me. And I showed no surprise at His reply at the banquet in Cana. He was doing the will of His Father. And I was leaving Him free to do it. I could dare make a suggestion or a request. A suggestion for His disciples, a request for some poor wretch. But more than that, no. I suffered every time He left Me to go into the world, hostile to Him and so sinful that to live in it was a great suffering to Him. But how much joy every time He came back to Me! It was really, so intense that it recompensed Me seventy times seven for the sorrow of the separation. The sorrow of the separation following from His Death was heart-rending, but with which words could I describe the joy I felt when He, risen from the dead, appeared to Me? Immense was the pain of the separation, which would end only when My earthly life would be completed, when He ascended to His Father.

3 I am now rejoicing, immense is My joy as immense was My pain, because I feel that *My life is completed*. I have done what I had to do. I have completed My earthly mission. The other one, the celestial one, will have no end. God has left Me on the Earth until I also, like My Jesus, have accomplished everything of what I had to do. And I have in Me that secret joy, the only drop of balm in His extreme tortures full of bitterness, that Jesus had when He was able to say: *“Everything is accomplished.”*»

«Joy in Jesus? At that moment?»

«Yes, John. A joy incomprehensible to men. But comprehensible to the spirits that already live in the light of God and see the deep things hidden under the veils that the Eternal spreads over His secrets as King, thanks to that Light. I, so distressed, so upset by those events, associated with Him, My Son, in the abandonment of the Father, did not understand then. The Light was extinguished for the whole world in that hour, for the whole world that had not wanted to receive it. And also for Me. Not as a just punishment, but because, as I had to be the Co-Redeemer, I also had to suffer the anguish of the abandonment of divine comforts, the darkness, the desolation, the temptation of Satan of not making Me believe any longer that what He had said was possible, everything that He also suffered, in His spirit, from Thursday to Friday. But later I understood. When the Light, that had risen forever, appeared to Me, I understood. Everything. Also the secret extreme joy of the Christ, when He was able to say: *“I have accomplished everything that the Father wanted Me to accomplish. I have filled the measure of divine charity by loving the Father even unto the sacrifice of*

Myself, by loving men even unto dying for them. I have accomplished everything that I had to accomplish. I am dying happily in My spirit, although lacerated in My innocent flesh.” I also have accomplished everything that, ab aeterno, was written I should accomplish. From the generation of the Redeemer, to the help given to you, His priests, for your perfect formation.

4 The Church is now formed and strong. The Holy Spirit enlightens it, the blood of the first martyrs cement it and multiply it, My assistance has cooperated in making It a holy organism, that the love towards God and the brothers nourishes and fortifies more and more, and in which hatred, ill-feelings, envy, slander, wicked plants of Satan, take no root. God is pleased with that, and He wants you to know that from My lips, as He wants Me to tell you to continue to grow in love in order to grow in perfection, and so also in number of Christians and in power of doctrine. *Because the doctrine of Jesus is the doctrine of love. Because the life of Jesus, and also Mine, have always been guided and urged by love. We rejected nobody, we forgave everybody.* One only we did not forgive, because he, already a servant to the Hatred, did not want our love that had no limits. Jesus in His last farewell before His death, gave you the commandment to love one another. And He also gave you the measure of the love that you had to have for one another, saying: *“Love one another as I have loved you. From this it will be known that you are My disciples.”* *The Church in order to live and grow, needs charity. Charity above all in its ministers. If you did not love one another with all your strength, and likewise you did not love your brothers in the Lord, the Church would become sterile.* And difficult and scanty would be the restoration and the super restoration of men to their rank of children of the Most High and coheirs to the Kingdom of Heaven, *because God would cease helping you in your mission. God is love. Every action of His has been an action of love.* From creation to the Incarnation. From this to the Redemption. And from this to the foundation of the Church. And finally from this to the celestial Jerusalem, that will assemble all the just so that they may rejoice in the Lord.

5 I am telling you these things, because you are the Apostle of love and you can understand them better than the others...»

John interrupts Her saying: «Also the others love and love one another.»

«Yes. But you are preeminently the Loving One. Each of you had his peculiarity, as, after all, is the case of every creature. You, among the twelve, were always love, pure and supernatural love. Perhaps, no, certainly because you are so pure, you are so loving. Peter, instead, was always the man, the genuine impetuous man. His brother, Andrew, was as silent and timid as the other was not. James, your brother, was the impulsive one, so much so that Jesus called him the son of thunder. The other James, Jesus' brother, the just and heroic one. Judas of Alphaeus, his brother, the noble and loyal one, always. The Davidic extraction was obvious in him. Philip and Bartholomew were the traditionalists. Simon Zealot, the prudent one. Thomas, the peaceful one. Matthew,

the humble one, who mindful of his past, strove to be unnoticed. And Judas of Kerioth, alas! the black sheep of the flock of Christ, the snake warmed by His love, was the satanic liar, always. But you, who are all love, can understand better and can become the voice of love for all the others, for those who are far away, to give them this last piece of My advice. You will tell them that they are to love one another and everybody, also their persecutors, in order to be one thing with God, as I was, so as to deserve to be elected spouse of the Eternal Love, in order to conceive the Christ. *I gave Myself to God without limit, although I understood at once how much sorrow would come to Me for that.* The prophets were present in My mind, and the divine light made their words very clear to Me. So from My first “fiat” to the Angel I knew that I was consecrating Myself to the greatest sorrow a mother can suffer. But nothing placed a limit to My love, because I know that it is, for those who make use of it, strength, light, magnet that attracts upwards, fire that purifies and beautifies what it burns, transforming and transhumanising those caught in its embrace.

6 Yes. Love is really a flame. The flame, that although it destroys what is perishable, be it a wreck, some rubble, a poor wretch, makes a purified spirit of it, worthy of Heaven. How many wrecks, how many men stained, corroded, worn out you will find on your ways of evangelizers! *Do not despise any of them.* On the contrary, love them, so that they may reach love and be saved. Infuse love into them. *Many a time man becomes wicked, because no one ever loved him or loved him badly.* Do love them, so that the Holy Spirit, after the purification, may come to dwell again in those temples, that many things made empty and filthy. God, to create man, did not take an angel or choice materials. He took some mud, the most worthless material. Then infusing His breath into it, that is, His love again, He elevated the worthless material to the sublime rank of adoptive son of God. *My Son, on His way, found many wrecks of men who had fallen into filth. He never trampled on them despisingly.* On the contrary He gathered them and received them and He changed them into chosen souls of Heaven. Always bear that in your minds. *And do as He did.* Remember everything, the actions and the words of My Son. Remember His kind parables. Live them, that is, put them into practice. And write them, so that they may remain for future generations, to the end of time, and they may always serve as a guide for men of good will, to achieve life and eternal glory. You will certainly not be able to repeat all the bright words of the Eternal Word of Life and Truth. But write as many of them as you can. The Spirit of God, Who descended upon Me so that I might give the Saviour to the world, and Who descended also upon you a first and a second time, will help you to remember, and when you speak to the crowds, in order to convert them to the true God. You will continue that spiritual maternity that I began on Calvary to give many children to the Lord. And the same Spirit, speaking in the recreated children of the Lord, will fortify them so that it will be pleasant for them to die among tortures, to suffer exile and persecutions, to confess their love to Christ and join Him in Heaven, as Stephen and James, My James, have already done, and others as well...

7 When you are the only one left, save this chest...»

John, growing pale and becoming upset, even more than he blanched since Mary said that She felt that Her mission was accomplished, interrupts Her exclaiming and asking: «Mother! Why do You say that? Are You not well?»

«No. I am well.»

«Do You want to leave me, then?»

«No. I shall be with you until I am on the Earth. But, My dear John, prepare yourself to be alone.»

«Then You are not well, and You want to conceal it from me!...»

«No, believe Me. I have never felt so strong, at peace, joyful, as I do now. But I have such a jubilation, such a fullness of supernatural life, that... Yes, that I think that I shall not be able to endure it while continuing to live. I am not eternal, on the other hand. You must understand that. My spirit is eternal. My body is not. And it is subject, like the flesh of every man, to death.»

«No! No! Don't say that. You cannot, you must not die! Your immaculate body cannot die like that of a sinner!»

«You are wrong, John. My Son died! And I shall die as well. I shall not suffer the disease, the agony, the pang of death. But as far as dying is concerned, I shall die. In any case, bear in mind, son, that if I have a desire, all Mine and only Mine, and that lasts since He left Me, it is just this one. *This is My first, mighty desire, entirely Mine.* I can even say: My first will. *Everything else in My life was nothing but the consent of My will to the divine will.* The will of God, put in My heart of a little girl by God Himself, the will to be a virgin. His will: My marriage with Joseph. His will: My virginal divine Maternity. Everything in My life was done by the will of God and by My obedience to His will. But this desire, of wanting to join Jesus, is a will entirely Mine. To leave the Earth for Heaven, to be with Him forever and continuously! My desire of so many years! And now I feel it is on the point of becoming reality.

8 Do not be so upset, John! *Listen instead to My last wishes.* When My body, deprived of the vital spirit, will lie in peace, do not subject Me to the customary embalmment of the Hebrews. Because I am no longer a Jewess, but a Christian, the first Christian, if one considers the situation properly, because I was the first to have Christ, Flesh and Blood, in Me, because I was His first disciple, because I was Co-Redeemer with Him and His continuator here, among you, His servants. No living being, with the exception of My father and mother, and those who assisted at My birth, has seen My body. You often call Me: “The living Ark that contained the divine Word.” Now you know that the Ark can be seen only by the High Priest. You are a priest, and much holier and purer

than the Pontiff of the Temple. But I want only the Eternal Pontiff to see My body at the right time. So, do not touch Me. In any case, see? I have already purified Myself, and I have put on a clean dress, the dress of the eternal wedding...

9 But why are you weeping, John?»

«Because the storm of sorrow is stirring up in me. I know that I am about to lose You. How shall I be able to live without You? I feel my heart being torn to pieces at this thought! I shall not be able to stand this grief!»

«You will stand it. God will help you to live, and for a long time, as He helped Me. Because, if He had not helped Me, on Golgotha and on the Mount of Olives, when Jesus died and ascended, I would have died, as Isaac died. He will help you to live and to remember what I have told you before, for the welfare of everybody.»

«Oh! I will remember. Everything. And I will do what You wish, also for Your body. I understand as well that the Hebrew rites no longer serve for You, a Christian, and for You, the Most Pure Mother, Who, I am sure, will not be subjected to the corruption of the flesh. Your body, deified as no other mortal body, both because You have been exempted from the Sin of Origin, and even more because in addition to being the full of Grace, You contained in You Grace itself, the Word, whereby You are His most true relic, Your body cannot experience the decomposition, the rottenness of all dead flesh. This will be the last miracle of God on You, in You. And you will be preserved as You are...»

«Do not weep, then!» exclaims Mary looking at the upset face of the apostle, all washed by his tears. And She adds: «If I am preserved as I am, you will not lose Me. So, do not worry!»

«I shall lose You just the same, even if You remain incorrupt. I feel it. And I feel as if I were caught in a hurricane of sorrow. A hurricane that breaks me and knocks me down. You were everything for me, particularly since my relatives died, and the other brothers, both by blood and by mission, are far away, also beloved Marjiam, whom Peter has taken with him. I shall now be left alone, and in the strongest storm!» and John falls at Her feet, weeping even more bitterly.

10 Mary bends over him, She lays Her hand on his head shaken by sobs and She says to him: «No. Not so. Why are you grieving Me? You were so strong under the Cross, and it was an incomparable scene of horror, both because of the cruelty of His martyrdom and of the satanic hatred of the people! And you were so strong in comforting Him and Me, then! And today, or rather, this Sabbath evening, so serene and calm, and in front of Me Who am rejoicing for an imminent happiness of which I have a premonitory feeling, you are so upset?! Calm yourself. Imitate, even more, join what is around us and in Me. Everything is peaceful. Be at peace as well. Only the olive-trees, with their gentle rustling, break the absolute calm of this hour. But this gentle noise is so pleasant,

that it sounds like the flight of angels around the house. And they are, perhaps, really here. Because angels, one or many, have always been near Me, when I have been in a special moment of My life. They were at Nazareth, when the Spirit of God made My virginal womb prolific. And they were with Joseph, when he was upset and uncertain about My state and how to behave with Me. And at Bethlehem a first and a second time, when Jesus was born, and when we had to flee to Egypt. And in Egypt when they ordered us to come back to Palestine. And – if not to Me, because the King of the angels Himself had come to Me, as soon as He had risen – and angels appeared to the pious women at the dawn of the first day after the Sabbath and gave them the order to tell you and Peter what you had to do. Angels and light always at the decisive moments of My life and of Jesus'. Light and ardour of love that, descending from the Throne of God to Me, His maid, and ascending from My heart to God, My King and Lord, united Me to God and Him to me, so that what was written that was to be accomplished, should be accomplished, and also to create a veil of light spread over the secrets of God, so that Satan and his servants should not be aware of the accomplishment of the sublime mystery of the Incarnation, before the right time. Also this evening I feel the angels around Me, although I do not see them. And I feel a Light, an unsustainable light, grow within Me, like the light that enveloped Me when I conceived the Christ, when I gave Him to the world. A light that comes from an impetuosity of love more powerful than usual. Through a similar power of love, I snatched the Word from Heaven before time, so that He might become the Man and the Redeemer. Through a similar power of love, as the one that assails Me this evening, I hope that Heaven will abduct Me and carry Me where I long to go with My spirit to sing My imperishable “Magnificat” to God, for the things He has done to Me, His maid, with the people of the saints and the choruses of the angels, forever and ever.»

11 «Probably not only with Your spirit. And the Earth will reply to You, and with its peoples and nations will glorify and honour and love You until the end of the world, as rightly Tobias predicted of You, although covertly, because You are really the One Who carried the Lord in Herself, and not the Holy of Holies. You have given God, by Yourself, as much love as all the High Priests and all the others of the Temple have not given Him throughout ages. Ardent most pure love. Because of that God will make You Most blessed.»

«And He will satisfy My only wish, the only thing I want. *Because love, when it is so complete as to be almost perfect, as the love of My Son and God, achieves everything,* even what, according to human opinion, would seem impossible to achieve. Remember that, John. And inform also your brothers of that. Men will fight against you so much! All kinds of obstacles will make you be afraid of defeat, massacres by persecutors and defections of Christians of... Iscariotic morality will dishearten your spirits. Be not afraid. *Love, and be not afraid.* In proportion to how you love, God will help you and will make you triumph over everything and everybody. Everything can be achieved, if

one becomes a seraph. Then the soul, this wonderful eternal thing, which is the very breath of God, infused by Him into us, hurls itself towards Heaven, falls like a flame at the foot of the Divine Throne, speaks and is listened to by God, and obtains from the Almighty what it wants. If men knew how to love as is prescribed by the ancient Law, and how My Son loved and taught people to love, they would obtain everything. I love thus. That is why I feel that I shall cease to be on the Earth, I through excess of love, as He died through excess of sorrow. Well! The measure of My capacity of loving is full. My soul and My body are no longer able to contain it. Love overflows from it, it submerges Me and raises Me at the same time towards Heaven, towards God, My Son. And His voice says to Me: “Come! Come out! Ascend to our Throne and to our Trine embrace!” The Earth, what surrounds Me, disappears in the bright light that comes to Me from Heaven! Noises are drowned by this celestial voice! My moment for the divine embrace has come, My dear John!»

12 John, who had calmed down a little, although still somewhat upset, listening to Mary, and who at the last part of Her speech was looking at Her ecstatically, and almost enraptured as well, as pale in his face as Mary, Whose pallor, however, changes into a very white light, rushes towards Her to support Her, and in the meantime he exclaims: «You are like Jesus when He became transfigured on Tabor! Your flesh is shining like the moon, Your garments are as bright as a diamond sheet placed before a very white flame! You are no longer human, Mother! The heaviness and opacity of the flesh has disappeared! You are light! But You are not Jesus, He, being God, besides being Man, could stand also by Himself, there, upon Tabor, as He did here, on the Mount of Olives, when He ascended. You cannot. You cannot stand. Come. I will help You to lay Your tired blessed body on Your little bed. Rest.» And he lovingly leads Her towards the poor bed, on which Mary lies, without taking off even Her mantle.

Folding Her arms across Her breast, closing Her eyelids on Her kind eyes, bright with love, She says to John who is bent over Her: «I am in God. And God is in Me. While I contemplate Him and feel His embrace, say the psalms, and any other pages of the Scriptures becoming Me, particularly in this hour. The Spirit of Wisdom will point them out to you. Then say the prayer of My Son, repeat the words of the announcing Archangel and of Elizabeth to Me, and My hymn of praise... I will follow you with what I still have of Myself on the Earth...

John, struggling against the tears that rise from his heart, striving to control the emotion that upsets him, in his beautiful voice, which, as years have gone by, has become very like Jesus' – which Mary notices with a smile, saying: «I seem to have My Jesus beside Me!» – intones psalm one hundred and eighteen, which he says almost entirely, then the first three verses of psalm forty-one, the first eight of psalm thirty-eight, psalm twenty-two and psalm one. He then says the Our Father, the words of Gabriel and Elizabeth, the canticle of Tobias, the twenty-fourth chapter of Ecclesiasticus, from verse eleven to forty-six. Lastly he intones the “Magnificat”. But when he arrives at verse nine, he

notices that Mary does not breathe any more, although She is still natural in Her posture and appearance, smiling, peaceful, as if She had not noticed that life had stopped.

John, with a heart-rending cry throws himself on the floor against the edge of the bed, and calls and calls Mary. He cannot convince himself that She is no longer able to reply to him, that Her body is now deprived of the vital soul. But he has to surrender to evidence! He bends over Her face, still fixed in an expression of supernatural joy, and tears stream copiously from his eyes on that sweet face, on those pure hands so gently folded on Her breast. It is the only washing that Mary's body had: the tears of the Apostle of love and of Her son of adoption by Jesus' will.

13 When the first transport of sorrow is over, John, remembering Mary's wish, picks up the edges of Her wide linen mantle, which were hanging from the sides of the little bed, and those of the veil, which were also hanging from the pillow, and he spreads the former over Her body, and the latter on Her head. Mary is now like a statue of white marble, laid on the cover of a sarcophagus. John contemplates Her at some length, and more tears fall from his eyes as he does so.

Then he rearranges the room, removing all superfluous furniture. He leaves only the bed, the little table against the wall and he places the chest with the relics on it, a stool, that he places between the door leading to the terrace and the bed on which Mary is lying, and a shelf, on which there is a lamp that John lights, as it is beginning to get dark.

Then he hurries down to Gethsemane, to pick as many flowers as he can, and some branches of olive-trees, with olives already on them. He goes back up to the little room, and in the light of the lamp he arranges the flowers and the branches around Mary's body, as if it were in the centre of a huge wreath.

While doing so, he speaks to the body on the bed, as if Mary could still hear him. He says: «You have always been the lily of the valley, the sweet rose, the beautiful olive-tree, the fruit-bearing vineyard, the holy ear of wheat. You have given us Your perfumes, and the Oil of Life, and the Wine of the strong, and the Bread that preserves the spirits from death, for those who worthily feed on it. These flowers look lovely here around You, as they are simple and pure like You, adorned with thorns like You and peaceful like You. Now let us put this lamp closer. So, near Your bed, that it may watch over You and keep me company while I watch You, while awaiting for at least one of the miracles that I am expecting and for whose fulfillment I pray. The first one is that, according to his wish, Peter, and the others, whom I will get Nicodemus' servant to inform, may see You once again. The second one is that You, as in everything You had the same lot as Your Son, may wake up, like Him, within the third day, in order not to leave me an orphan twice. The third is that God may give me peace, if what I hope may happen to You, as it happened to Lazarus, who was not like You, should not take place. But why should it not happen? Jairus' daughter, the young man from Nain, Theophilus'

son, came back to life... It is true that then the Master acted... But He is with You, even if not in a manifest way. And You did not die of a disease like those who were raised by the deed of Christ. But are You really dead? Dead as every man dies? No. I feel it is not so. Your spirit is no longer in You, in Your body, and in that respect we could say it is death. But by the way Your passage took place, I think that Yours is only a temporary separation of Your soul, without sin and full of grace, from Your most pure and virginal body. It must be so! It is so! How and when the reunion will take place and life will come back to You, I do not know. But I am so certain of this that I will remain here, beside You, until God, either with His word, or with His action, will show me the truth on Your destiny.»

John, who has finished arranging everything, sits on the stool, placing the lamp on the floor, near the little bed; and he contemplates the body lying on it, praying.

646. The Assumption of Our Lady.

8th December 1951.

1 How many days have gone by? It is difficult to ascertain it. If one judges by the flowers that form a crown around the dead body, one should say that only a few hours have gone by. But if one judges by the olive branches on which the fresh flowers are lying, branches with leaves already withered, and by the other withered flowers lying like relics on the cover of the chest, one must conclude that some days have by now gone by.

But Mary's body is exactly the same as it was when She breathed Her last. There is no trace of death on Her face or on Her little hands. There is no unpleasant smell in the room. On the contrary an undefinable scent like that of incense, of lilies, of roses, of lilies of the valley, of mountain herbs, all mixed together, hangs in the air of the room.

John, who I wonder for how many days has been awake, has fallen asleep, overcome by tiredness, sitting on the stool, his shoulders leaning against the wall, near the open door that leads to the terrace. The light of the lamp, which from the floor shines upwards on him, allows one to see his tired face, which is also very pale, except around his eyes, red with weeping.

It must be already dawn, because in its faint light the terrace and the olive-trees surrounding the house are visible, a light that becomes stronger and stronger and that, penetrating through the door, makes more distinct also the objects in the room, of which, being far from the little lamp, it was previously possible to catch only a glimpse.

2 All of a sudden a strong light fills the room, a silvery light, shaded with blue, almost phosphoric, and it becomes more and more intense, making the light of dawn and of the lamp vanish. A light like the one that flooded the Grotto in Bethlehem at the moment of the divine Nativity. Then in this paradisiac light, angelic creatures show themselves, a light even brighter in the already strong light that appeared first. As it already happened when the angels appeared to the shepherds, a dance of sparks of all shades bursts forth from their gently moved wings, which emit a harmonious murmur, as sweet as if it were played by a harp.

The angelic creatures place themselves around the little bed, they bend over it, they lift the immobile body, and flapping their wings more vigorously, which increases the sound existing previously, through a passage opened miraculously in the roof, as miraculously Jesus' Sepulchre was opened, they go away, taking with them the body of their Queen, a Most Holy Body, it is true, but not yet glorified, and therefore still subject to the laws of matter, to which the Christ was not subject, because He was already glorified when He rose from the dead. The sound made by the angelic wings increases and it is now as powerful as the sound of an organ.

3 John, who, although still asleep, had moved twice or three times on his stool, as if he had been disturbed by the strong light and by the sound of the angelic wings, awakes completely because of that powerful sound and because of a strong current of air that, descending from the opened roof and going out through the open door, forms a vortex that shakes the covers of the bed, by now empty, and John's garments, blowing out the lamp and closing the door with a loud bang.

The apostle looks around, still half asleep, to realise what is happening. He notices that the bed is empty and that the roof is open. He understands that a wonderful event has taken place. He runs out on the terrace, and as if by spiritual instinct, or by a heavenly call, he raises his head, shading his eyes from the sun, in order to see, without being prevented from doing so by the rising sun.

And he sees. He sees the body of Mary, still deprived of life, and completely identical to that of a person asleep, that ascends higher and higher, supported by the angelic group. As a last gesture of farewell, a hem of the mantle and of the veil are agitated, probably by the wind caused by the rapid assumption and by the movement of the angelic wings; and some flowers, the ones that John had placed and renewed round the body of Mary, and that have certainly remained among the folds of the garments, rain on the terrace and on the ground of Gethsemane, while the mighty hosanna of the angelic group moves farther and farther away and thus becomes fainter.

John continues to stare at that body that rises towards Heaven and, certainly through a prodigy granted to him by God, to comfort him and to reward him for his love for his adoptive Mother, he distinctly sees Mary, enveloped now in the beams of the sun that has risen, come out of the ecstasy that had separated Her soul from Her body, become

alive, stand on Her feet, as She also now enjoys the gifts typical of bodies already glorified.

John looks and looks. The miracle granted to him by God enables him, against all natural laws, to see Mary as She is now, while She rapidly ascends towards Heaven, surrounded, but no longer helped to ascend, by the angels singing hosannas. And John is enraptured by that vision of beauty that no pen of man, or human word, or work of artist will be ever able to describe or reproduce, because it is of indescribable beauty.

John, still leaning against the low wall of the terrace, continues to stare at that splendid shining form of God – because Mary can really be said to be so, formed in a unique manner by God, Who wanted Her immaculate, so that She might be the form for the Word Incarnate – while it ascends higher and higher. And the God-Love grants a last supreme prodigy to His perfect loving disciple: to see the meeting of the Most Holy Mother with Her Most Holy Son, Who splendid and shining as well, handsome with indescribable beauty, descends rapidly from Heaven, arrives at His Mother, presses Her to His heart, and together, more refulgent than two major planets, returns with Her whence He came.

4 John's vision is over. He lowers his head. On his tired face are visible both his sorrow for the loss of Mary and his joy for Her glorious destiny. But by now joy exceeds sorrow.

He says: «Thanks, my God! Thanks! I foresaw that this would happen. And I wanted to be awake, in order not to lose any episode of Her Assumption. But I had not slept for three days now! Sleep, tiredness, joined to sorrow, overcame and defeated me just when Her Assumption was imminent... But perhaps You wanted that Yourself, o God, so that I should not upset that moment and I should not suffer too much... Yes. You certainly wanted it, as now You wanted me to see what, without a miracle of Yours, I could not have seen. You have granted me to see Her again, although already so far, already glorified and glorious, as if She were close to me. And to see Jesus again! Oh! most happy, un hoped for and not to be hoped for vision! O gift of the gifts of Jesus-God to His John! Supreme Grace! To see my Master and Lord again! To see Him near His Mother! He like a sun, She like a moon, both most splendid, because they were glorious and happy to be reunited forever! What will Paradise be like now that You both shine in it, You major planets of the heavenly Jerusalem? What is the jubilation of the angelic choruses and of the saints? It is such the joy that the vision of the Mother with Her Son has given me, a thing that cancels every pain of His, every pain of theirs, even more, also mine ceases, and peace takes over in me. Of the three miracles that I had asked of God, two have been accomplished. I have seen life come back to Mary, and I feel peace come back to me. All anguish of mine ends, because I have seen You reunited in glory.

Thanks for that, o God. And thanks for having made it possible for me to see, even for a most holy creature, but still human, what is the lot of saints, what it will be after the last

judgement; and the resurrection of the bodies, and their rejoining, their fusion with their spirits, that have ascended to Heaven at the moment of their death. I did not need to see to believe. Because I have always firmly believed every word of the Master. But many will doubt that, after ages and thousands of years, the flesh, that has become dust, can become a living body. I shall be able to tell them, swearing on the most sublime things, that not only the Christ became alive again, by His own divine power, but that also His Mother, three days after Her death, if death it can be called, came to life again, and with Her flesh joined to Her soul took up Her eternal abode in Heaven, beside Her Son. I shall be able to say: “Believe, O Christians, in the resurrection of bodies, at the end of time, and in the eternal life of souls and bodies, a blissful life of saints, horrible for unrepentant guilty people. Believe and live as saints, as Jesus and Mary lived, in order to have their same lot. I have seen their bodies ascend to Heaven. I can bear witness to that. Live as just people, so that one day you may be in the new eternal world, in body and soul, near Jesus-sun, and near Mary the Star of all stars.” Thank You again, o God!

5 And now let us put together what is left of Her. The flowers that fell from Her garments, the olive branches left on the bed, and let us keep them. They will serve... Yes, they will serve to assist and comfort my brothers, whom I have awaited in vain. Sooner or later I will find them... He picks up the petals of the flowers that had been shed in falling, he goes back into the room, holding them in a fold of his tunic. He then looks more carefully at the opening in the roof and exclaims: «Another miracle! And another wonderful proportion in the prodigies of the lives of Jesus and Mary! He, God, rose by Himself, and by His own will He overturned the stone of His Sepulchre, and only with His own power He ascended to Heaven. By Himself. Mary, the Most Holy Mother, but a daughter of man, by means of angelic help had the passage opened for Her assumption to Heaven, and always through angelic help She ascended there. In the Christ the spirit came back to animate His Body while it was still on the Earth, because it had to be so, to silence His enemies and to confirm all His followers in their faith. In Mary the spirit came back when Her most holy body was already at the threshold of Paradise, because there was no other need for Her. Perfect power of the Infinite Wisdom of God!...»

John now gathers in a piece of cloth the flowers and branches that were still on the little bed, he adds to them those that he had gathered outside, and lays them all on the cover of the chest. He then opens it and puts the little pillow of Mary and the coverlet of the little bed into it; he goes down into the kitchen, he collects other utensils used by Her – the spindle and distaff and Her kitchenware – and adds them to the other things.

6 He closes the chest and sits on the stool exclaiming: «Now everything is accomplished also for me! Now I can go freely wherever the Spirit of God will lead me. I can go! And sow the Divine Word that the Master gave me so that I may give it to men. And teach Love. Teach them so that they may believe in Love and in its power. Let them know what the God-Love has done for men. His Sacrifice and His perpetual

Sacrament and Rite, by means of which, until the end of time, we shall be able to be united to Jesus Christ in the Eucharist and renew the Rite and the Sacrifice as He ordered us to do. All the gifts of the perfect Love! Make them love the Love, so that they may believe in Him, as we believed and believe. Sow the Love so that the harvest and the catch may be abundant for the Lord. Love achieves everything, Mary told me in Her last conversation with me, whom She justly defined, in the Apostolic College, the one who loves, the preeminent loving one, the antithesis of the Iscariot, who was hatred, as Peter was impetuosity, and Andrew meekness, the sons of Alphaeus holiness and wisdom joined to nobility of manners, and so forth. I, the loving disciple, now that I no longer have the Master and the Mother to love on the Earth, will go and spread love among the nations. Love will be my weapon and my doctrine. And be means of it I will defeat the demon, heathenism and will conquer many souls. I will thus continue Jesus and Mary, Who were perfect love on the Earth.»

647. On the Passage, the Assumption and Royalty of the Blessed Virgin.

18th April 1948.

1 [Mary says:]

«Did I die? Yes, if you call death the separation of the choice part of the spirit from the body. No, if by death you understand the separation of the vivifying soul from the body, the corruption of the flesh no longer vivified by the soul, and before that, the lugubrious sepulchre, and before all these things, the pangs of death.

How did I die, or better, how did I pass from the Earth to Heaven, first with My immortal part, then with the perishable one? As it was fair for Her Who did not become acquainted with the stain of sin.

2 That evening, the Sabbath rest had already begun, I was speaking to John. About Jesus and His things. The evening hour was full of peace. The Sabbath had abated all noises of human works. And the hour was abating every voice of man and bird. Only the olive trees around the house were rustling in the evening breeze, and a flight of angels seemed to graze the walls of the solitary house.

We were speaking of Jesus, of the Father, of the Kingdom of Heaven. To speak of Love and of the Kingdom of Love, is to become lit with the living fire, consuming the bonds of matter to let the spirit free for its mystic flights. And if the fire is contained within the limits fixed by God to preserve creatures on the Earth, at His service it is possible to live and burn, finding in the ardour not the consumption, but the completion of life. But

when God removes the limits and gives freedom to the divine Fire to assail and attract the spirit to Itself without any measure, then the spirit, replying in turn without measure to the Love, detaches itself from matter and flies where the Love urges and invites it. And it is the end of the exile and the return to the Fatherland.

That evening, the incontainable ardour, the measureless vitality of My spirit was joined by a sweet languor, by a mysterious sensation that matter was moving away from what surrounded it, as if My body, tired, were falling asleep, whilst My intellect, even livelier in its reasoning, was sinking, into the divine brightness.

John, the loving prudent witness of every action of Mine, since he had become My adoptive son, according to the will of My Only-Begotten Son, kindly convinced Me to rest on the little bed and he watched Me praying. The last sound I heard on the Earth was the murmur of the words of John, the virgin apostle. They were for Me like a lullaby of a mother near a cradle. And they accompanied My spirit in its last ecstasy, too sublime to be describe. They accompanied Me as far as Heaven.

3 John, the only witness of this sweet mystery, arranged Me by himself, enveloping Me in My white mantle, without changing My dress or veil, without any washing or embalming. The spirit of John, as is evident from his words of the second episode of this cycle that goes from the Pentecost to My Assumption, already knew that I would not decay, and it taught the Apostle what to do. And he, chaste, loving, prudent with regard to the mysteries of God and his remote companions, decided to keep the secret and to wait for the other servants of God, so that they could see Me again, and draw comfort and assistance from that sight for the pains and hardships of their mission. He waited, as if he were certain of their coming.

But the decree of God was different. Good as always for the Favourite. Just as usual for all the believers. He made the eyes of the former heavy with sleep, so that he might be spared the torture of seeing also My body abducted from him. He presented the believers with a further truth that would encourage them to believe in the resurrection of the flesh, in the reward of an eternal blissful life granted to the just, in the most mighty and pleasant truths of the New Testament: My Immaculate Conception, My Divine virginal Maternity, in the divine and human Nature of My Son, true God and true Man, born not by human will but through divine nuptials and divine seed laid in My womb, and lastly, that they might believe that in Heaven there is My Heart of the Mother of all men, palpitating with anxious love for everybody, just people and sinners, eager to have you all with It in the blessed Fatherland forever.

4 When I was taken out of the little house by the angels, had My spirit already come back to Me? No. My spirit was not to descend again on the Earth. It was, adoring, before the Throne of God. But when the Earth, the exile, the time and the place of the separation from My One and Trine Lord were left forever, My spirit came back to shine in the centre of My soul, drawing the flesh from its sleep. So it is just to say that I

ascended to Heaven in body and soul, not through My own capability, as it happened for Jesus, but through angelic help. I awoke from that mysterious and mystic sleep, I rose, I flew finally, because by now My flesh had achieved the perfection of glorified bodies. And I loved. I loved My Son, Whom I found again, and My Lord, One and Trine, I loved Him as is the destiny of all the eternal living beings.»

5th January 1944.

5 Jesus says:

«When Her last hour came, like a tired lily that, after exhaling all its scents, bends under the stars and closes its snow-white calyx, Mary, My Mother, lay on Her little bed and closed Her eyes on everything surrounding Her, to collect Her thoughts in a last serene contemplation of God.

Bending over Her rest, the angel of Mary was anxiously waiting for the climax of the ecstasy to separate that spirit from the flesh, for the time decreed by God, and to separate it forever from the Earth, while the sweet inviting command of God was already descending from Heaven.

John, an earthly angel, bent, in his turn, over that mysterious rest, was watching the Mother Who was about to leave him. And when he saw that She had breathed Her last, he continued to watch Her, so that, not violated by profane curious eyes, She should remain, even beyond death, the Immaculate Spouse and Mother of God, so placid and beautiful in Her sleep.

6 A tradition says that only flowers were found in the urn of Mary, when it was opened by Thomas. It is a sheer legend. No sepulchre swallowed the corpse of Mary, because there never was a corpse of Mary, according to human sense, because Mary did not die as whoever lived dies.

By divine decree, She was only separated from Her spirit, and Her most holy flesh once again joined the spirit that had preceded it. By inverting the habitual laws, according to which an ecstasy ends when the rapture ceases, that is, when the spirit returns to its normal state, it was Mary's body that went to join the spirit, after a long rest on the funereal bed.

Everything is possible to God. I came out of the Sepulchre with no other help than My own power. Mary came to Me, to God, to Heaven, without experiencing the sepulchre with its horror of lugubrious rotteness. It is one of the most refulgent miracles of God. Not the only one, really, if we remember Enoch and Elijah who, being dear to the Lord, were abducted from the Earth, without experiencing death, and translated elsewhere, to a place known only to God and to the celestial inhabitants of Heaven. They were just, but always nothing as compared with My Mother, inferior, in holiness, only to God.

That is why there are no relics of the body or of the sepulchre of Mary. Because Mary had no sepulchre, and Her body was brought to Heaven.»

8th and 15th July 1944.

7 [Mary says:]

«The conception of My Son was an ecstasy. A greater ecstasy to give birth to Him. The ecstasy of ecstasies My passage from the Earth to Heaven. Only during the Passion no ecstasy made My cruel suffering endurable.

The house, from which I was abducted to Heaven, was one of the countless generousities of Lazarus, for Jesus and His Mother. The little house of Gethsemane, near the place of His Ascension. It is useless to look for its remains. In the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, it was devastated, and its ruins were scattered in the course of ages.»

18th December 1943.

8 [Mary says:]

«As the birth of My Son was an ecstasy to Me, and from the rapture in God that seized Me in that hour, I came to Myself and to the Earth with My Child in My arms, so My improperly called “death” was a rapture in God.

Relying on the promise I had received on the bright morning of Pentecost, I thought that the approaching of the last coming of the Love, to abduct Me with Him, should manifest itself with an increase of the fire of love that always burnt in Me. And I was not wrong.

As far as I was concerned, the more time passed, the more My desire to blend with the Eternal Love increased. I was urged by the desire to join My Son and by the certainty that I could never do so much for men as when I was at the foot of the Throne of God, praying and operating on their behalf. And with a motion more and more inflamed and rapid, I used to cry to Heaven with all the strength of My soul: “Come, Lord Jesus! Come, Eternal Love!”

9 The Eucharist, that was for Me like dew for a parched flower, was indeed life, but the more time passed the more it became insufficient to satisfy the irrepressible eagerness of My heart. It was no longer sufficient for Me to receive My Divine Creature in Me and carry Him within Me in the Sacred Species, as I had carried Him in My virginal body. My whole self wanted the God One and Trine, but not under the veils chosen by My Jesus to hide the ineffable mystery of the Faith, but as He was, is, and will be in the centre of Heaven. My Son Himself, in His Eucharistic transports, inflamed Me with embraces of infinite desire, and every time He came to Me, with the power of His love,

He almost eradicated My soul at first, then He remained calling Me with infinite fondness: “Mother!”, and I felt that He was anxious to have Me with Him.

10 I longed for nothing else. Even the desire to protect the newborn Church was no longer in Me, in the last days of My mortal life. Everything was cancelled by the desire to possess God, as I was convinced that one can do everything when one possesses Him.

Endeavour, O Christians, to arrive at such total love. Let all earthly things be of no value. Aim only at God. When you are rich in this poverty of desire, which is an immeasurable wealth, God will bend over your spirits, to teach them first, to take them later, and you will ascend with them to the Father, to the Son, to the Holy Spirit, to know them and love them for the blessed eternity and to possess their riches of graces for your brothers. Men are never so active for their brothers as when they are no longer among them, but they are lights reunited to the Divine Light.

11 The approach of the Eternal Love had the sign that I expected. Everything became devoid of light and colour, voice and presence in the brightness and the Voice that, descending from Heaven, open to My spiritual sight, were coming down upon Me to take My soul. People say that I would have rejoiced at being assisted, in that hour, by My Son. But My sweet Jesus was indeed present with the Father when the Love, that is the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Eternal Trinity, kissed Me for the third time in My life, with a kiss so powerfully divine that My soul exhaled, becoming lost in contemplation, like a drop of dew absorbed by the sun in the calyx of a lily. And I ascended with My spirit singing hosannas to the feet of the Three, Whom I had always worshipped.

Then, at the right moment, like a pearl in a setting of fire, assisted at first, then followed by the procession of the angelic spirits who had come to assist Me in My eternal celestial birth, expected by My Jesus even before the threshold of Heaven, and on its threshold by My just earthly spouse, by the Kings and Patriarchs of My stock, by the first saints and martyrs, I entered as Queen, after so much grief and so much humility of the poor maid of God, into the kingdom of infinite delight. And Heaven closed again on the joy of having Me, of having its Queen, Whose flesh, the only one among all mortal flesh, was acquainted with glorification before the final resurrection and the last judgement.»

1st May 1946.

12 [Jesus says:]

«There is difference between the separation of the soul from the body, through real death, and the temporary separation of the spirit from the body and from the vivifying soul, through ecstasy or contemplative rapture. *While the separation of the soul from*

the body brings about death, the ecstatic contemplation, that is, the temporary flight of the spirit outside the barriers of senses and matter, does not bring about death. And that because the soul does not become completely detached and separated from the body, but it does so only through its better part, that plunges into the fire of contemplation.

13 All men, as long as they live, have a soul within themselves, dead or alive as it may be, through sin or justice; but only the deep loving souls of God arrive at real contemplation.

This proves that the soul, that keeps the body alive while it is united to it – and this peculiarity applies to all men in the same way – *has in itself a more noble part: the soul of the soul, or spirit of the spirit*, which in just people is very strong, whereas in those who cease to love God and His Law, even if only through their tepidness and venial sins, it becomes weak, depriving the person of the capability to contemplate and know God and His eternal truths, as far as a human creature can do so, according to the degree of perfection achieved. *The more a creature loves and serves God with all its strength and power, the more the nobler part of its spirit increases its capacity to know, to contemplate and penetrate the eternal truths.*

14 Man, gifted with a rational soul, is a capacity that God fills with Himself. As Mary, after the Christ, was the most holy of all creatures, She was a capacity so full of God, of His graces, charity and mercy, as to overflow on the brothers in Christ of all ages and until the end of time.

She passed away submerged by the waves of love. Now, in Heaven, where She has become an ocean of love, She overflows Her waves of charity on Her sons faithful to Her and also on Her prodigal ones, for their universal salvation, as She is the universal Mother of all men.»

December 1943.

15 [Mary says:]

«My humility could not allow Me to think that so much glory was reserved for Me in Heaven. In My mind there was the almost certainty that My human flesh, made holy by carrying God, would not have experienced decay, because God is Life, and when He sates and fills a creature with Himself, this action of His is like an aroma that preserves from the corruption of death.

I had remained not only immaculate, not only I had been united to God with a chaste prolific embrace, but I was sated, even as far as My innermost recesses, with the emanations of the Divinity concealed in My womb and intent on being veiled with mortal flesh. But that the kindness of the Eternal Father had reserved for His maid the

joy of feeling again the touch of My Son's hand on My body, His embrace, His kiss, and of hearing again His voice with My ears, of seeing His face with My eyes, I could not think that this would be granted to Me, neither did I wish it. It would have been sufficient if these beatitudes had been granted to My spirit, and that would have filled My ego with blissful happiness.

But, in witness of His first creative thought concerning man, whom He, the Creator, had destined to live, passing away without death, from the earthly Paradise to the celestial one, in the eternal Kingdom, God wanted Me, the Immaculate, in Heaven, in body and soul, as soon as My earthly life ended.

I am the certain witness of what God had thought and wanted for man: an innocent life and unaware of sin, a placid passage from this life to eternal Life, whereby, like one who passes over the threshold of a house to enter a palace, man with his complete being, made of a material body and a spiritual soul, would pass from the Earth to Paradise, increasing the perfection of his ego, given to him by God, with the complete perfection, both of the body and of the spirit, which was, in the divine mind, destined to every creature who had remained faithful to God and to Grace. Man would have reached this perfection in the full light that is in Heaven and fills it, coming from God, the eternal Sun Who illuminates it.

16 God placed Me, elevated in body and soul to the glory of Heaven, before the Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Saints, the Angels and the Martyrs and He said:

“Here is the perfect work of the Creator. This is what I created in My truer image and likeness among all the sons of man, the fruit of a divine creative masterpiece, the wonder of the Universe that sees closed in one only being the divine, in the eternal spirit like God and like Him spiritual, intelligent, free, holy, and the material creature in the most holy and innocent body, to which every other living being, in the three kingdoms of creation, is compelled to bow. This is the witness of My love for man, for whom I wanted a perfect organism and a blissful destiny of eternal life in My Kingdom. This is the witness that I have forgiven man whom, by will of the Trine Love, I granted to be reinstated and recreated in My eyes. This is the mystic stone of comparison, this is the link of junction between man and God, it is She Who takes the times back to the early days and gives My divine Eyes the joy of contemplating an Eve as I had created her, and now made even more beautiful and holy, because She is the Mother of My Word, and because She is the Martyr of the greatest forgiveness. For Her Immaculate Heart that never knew any stain, not even the lightest, I open the treasures of Heaven, and for Her head, that never knew pride, I make a wreath of My brightness and I crown Her, because She is most holy to Me, so that She may be your Queen.”

There are no tears in Heaven. But in place of the joyful tears, that the spirits would have shed, if they were granted to weep – the liquid that trickles squeezed by an emotion – there was, after these divine words, a sparkling of lights, a changing of splendours into

more vivid splendours, a burning of charitable fires in a more ardent fire, an unsurpassable and indescribable playing of celestial harmonies, which were joined by the voice of My Son, in praise of God the Father and of His Maid forever blissful.»

**Jesus gives the Reasons for the "Work" of the visions
and comments given to Maria Valtorta.**

The Reasons for the Work. Farewell to the Work.

[28th April 1947.]

Jesus says:

“The reasons that have induced Me to enlighten and dictate episodes and words of Mine to Little John are, in addition to the joy of communicating an exact knowledge of Me to this loving victim-soul, manifold. *But the moving spirit of all of them is My love for the Church, both teaching and militant, and My desire to help souls in their ascent towards perfection. The knowledge of Me helps to ascend. My Word is Life.*

I mention the main ones:

1. The reasons mentioned in dictation dated 18th January 1947 and which Little John will put here integrally. This is the most important reason *because you are perishing and I want to save you*. The most profound reason for the gift of this work is that in the present time, when modernism, (the denial of the supernatural) condemned by My holy Vicar Pius X, becomes corrupted in more and more harmful doctrines, the Church, represented by My Vicar, may have further material to fight against those who deny:

- ◆ the supernaturalness of dogmas;
- ◆ the divinity of the Christ; the truth of the Christ God and Man, real and perfect both in the faith and in the history that has been handed down on Him (Gospel, Acts of the Apostles, Apostolic Letters, tradition);
- ◆ the doctrine of Paul and John and of the councils of Nicea, Ephesus and Chalcedon, as My true doctrine verbally taught by Me;
- ◆ My unlimited science, as it is divine and perfect;
- ◆ the divine origin of the dogmas of the Sacraments of the Church One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic;
- ◆ the universality and continuity, until the end of time, of the Gospel given by Me for all men;
- ◆ the perfect nature, from the beginning, of My doctrine that has not been formed,

as it is, through successive transformations, but was given as it is: the Doctrine of the Christ, of the time of Grace, of the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God in you, divine, perfect, immutable. The Gospel for all those thirsting for God.

Against the red dragon with seven heads, ten horns and seven diadems on its head, which with its tail drags a third of the stars from the sky and drops them – and I solemnly tell you that they drop even lower than the earth – and persecutes the Woman; to the beasts of the sea and of the earth that many, too many worship, allured as they are by their appearance and prodigies, I ask you to oppose My Angel flying in the middle of the sky, holding the Eternal Gospel well open, also with the Pages so far closed, so that men, through its light, may be saved from the coils of the huge serpent with seven jaws, that wants to drown them in its darkness, and upon My return I may find again faith and charity in the hearts of those who persevere, and they may be more numerous than the work of Satan and of men allow one to hope they may be.

2. To rouse a keen love for the Gospel and for everything pertaining to the Christ in priests and in laymen. First of all, renewed love for My Mother, in Whose prayers lies the secret of the salvation of the world. She, My Mother, is the Conqueress of the cursed Dragon. Assist her power by means of your renewed love for Her and of your renewed faith and knowledge of what pertains to Her. Mary has given the Savior to the world. The world will receive salvation again from Her.

3. To give spiritual masters and directors assistance in their ministry, by studying the different souls of the world in which I lived and the different methods used by Me to save them. Because it would be foolish to have only one method with all the souls. The way to attract to perfection a just person who spontaneously tends to it, is different from that to be used with a believer in sin, and from that to be used with a Gentile. You have many of them also among you, if you succeed in judging, as your Master did, as Gentiles the poor people who have replaced the true God with the idols of power and arrogance, or of gold, or of lust, or with the idol of the pride of their knowledge. And different is the method to be used to save modern proselytes, that is those who have accepted the Christian idea, but not the Christian citizenship, as they belong to separated Churches. No one is to be despised, and these lost sheep less than everyone. Love them and try to lead them back to the Only Fold, so that the desire of the Shepherd Jesus may be fulfilled.

Some people, when reading this Work, will object: “It does not appear from the Gospel that Jesus was in touch with Romans and Greeks, and consequently we reject these pages.” How many things do not appear from the Gospel, or can just be detected behind thick curtains of silence, drawn by the Evangelists on episodes, of which they did not approve, because of their unbreakable Jewish frame of mind! Do you think that you know everything I did?

I solemnly tell you that not even after reading and accepting this illustration of My public life will you know everything about Me. I would have killed My little John, in the fatigue of reporting all the days of My ministry and all the actions performed on each day, if I had made him acquainted with everything so that he might transmit everything to you! “Then there were other things done by Jesus, which if written one by one, I think that the world would not be able to contain the books that should be written” says John. Apart from the hyperbole, I solemnly tell you that if all My single actions had to be written, all My particular lessons, My penances and prayers to save a soul, it would have taken the halls of one of your libraries, and one of the largest, to contain the books speaking of Me. And I also solemnly tell you that it would be much more advantageous for you to burn so much useless dusty poisonous science, to make room for My books, than to know so little of Me and worship so much that press that is almost always soiled with lust and heresy.

4. To reinstate in their truth the figures of the Son of Man and of Mary, true children of Adam by flesh and blood, but of an innocent Adam. The children of the Man were to be like Us, if our First Parents had not depreciated their perfect humanity – in the sense of man, that is of a creature in which there is the double nature, spiritual, in the image and likeness of God, and the material nature – as you know they did. Perfect senses, that is, subject to reason even in their great efficiency. In the senses I include both the moral and the corporal ones. Therefore total and perfect love both for Her spouse, to whom She is not attached by sensuality, but only by a tie of spiritual love, and for Her Son. Most loved. Loved with all the perfection of a perfect woman for the child born of Her. That is how Eve should have loved: like Mary: that is, not for what physical enjoyment her son was, but because that son was the son of the Creator and out of obedience accomplished His order to multiply the human race.

And loved with all the ardour of a perfect believer who knows that that Son of Hers, is not figuratively but really the Son of God. To those who consider Mary's love for Jesus too affectionate, I say that they should consider who Mary was: the Woman without sin and therefore without fault in Her love towards God, towards Her relatives, towards Her spouse, towards Her Son, towards Her neighbor; they should consider what the Mother saw in Me beside seeing the Son of Her womb, and finally that they should consider the nationality of Mary. Hebrew race, eastern race, and times very remote from the present ones. So the explanation of certain verbal amplifications, that may seem exaggerated to you, ensues from these elements. The eastern and Hebrew styles are flowery and pompous also when commonly spoken. All the writings of that time and of that race prove it, and in the course of ages the eastern style has not changed very much.

As twenty centuries later you have to examine these pages, when the wickedness of life has killed so much love, would you expect Me to give you a Mary of Nazareth similar to the arid superficial woman of your days? Mary is what She is, and the sweet, pure, loving Girl of Israel, the Spouse of God. The Virgin Mother of God cannot be changed

into an excessively morbidly exalted woman, or into a glacially selfish one of your days.

And I tell those, who consider Jesus' love for Mary too affectionate, to consider that in Jesus there was God, and that God One and Trine received His consolation by loving Mary, Who requited Him for the sorrow of the whole human race, and was the means by which God could glory again in His Creation that gives citizens to His Heavens. And finally, let them consider that every love becomes guilty when, and only when it causes disorder, that is, when it goes against the Will of God and the duty to be fulfilled.

Now consider: did Mary's love do that? Did My love do that? Did She keep Me, through selfish love, from doing all the Will of God? Through a disorderly love for My Mother, did I perhaps repudiate My mission? No. Both loves had but one desire: *to accomplish the Will of God for the salvation of the world*. And the Mother said all the farewells to Her Son, and the Son said all the farewells to His Mother, handing the Son to the cross of His public teaching and to the Cross of Calvary, handing the Mother to solitude and torture, so that She might be the Co-Redeemer, without taking into account our humanity that felt lacerated and our hearts that were broken with grief. Is that weakness? Is it sentimentalism? It is perfect love, o men, who do not know how to love and who no longer understand love and its voices!

And the purpose of this Work is also to clarify certain points that a number of circumstances has covered with darkness and they thus form dark zones in the brightness of the evangelic picture and points that seem a rupture and are only obscure points, between one episode and another, indecipherable points, and the ability to decipher them is the key to correctly understand certain situations that had arisen and certain strong manners that I had to have, so contrasting with My continuous exhortations to forgive, to be meek and humble, a certain rigidity towards obstinate, inconvertible opponents. You all ought to remember that God, after using all His mercy, for the sake of His own honor, can say also "Enough" to those who, as He is good, think it is right to take advantage of His forbearance and tempt Him. *God is not to be derided*. It is an old wise saying.

5. To have an exact knowledge of the complexity and duration of My long passion, that culminates in the sanguinary Passion accomplished in few hours, *that had consumed Me in a daily torture that lasted for years and years, and that had increased more and more*, and with the passion of My Mother, *Whose heart was pierced by the sword of sorrow for the same length of time*. And urge you, through this knowledge, to love us more.

6. To show the power of My Word and its different effects according to whether the person receiving it belonged to the group of men of good will, or to that of those who had a sensual will, which is never righteous. The Apostles and Judas. Here are the two opposed examples. The former, very imperfect, rough, ignorant, violent, but with good

will. Judas, learned more than most of them, refined by living in the capital and in the Temple, but with evil will. *Watch the evolution of the former in Good, their ascent. Watch the evolution of the latter in Evil, and his descent*.

This evolution in perfection of the Eleven good ones should be watched above all by those who, through a visual mental fault, are accustomed to perverting the nature of the reality of saints, making of the man who reaches holiness by means of a hard, very hard struggle against heavy obscure powers, an unnatural being without incentives and emotions, and therefore without merits. *Because merit is really consequent on the victory over disorderly passions and temptations, a victory achieved through love for God and to attain the final aim: to enjoy God forever*. It should be watched by those who claim that a conversion should come only from God. *God gives the means to be converted, but He does not do violence to the will of man, and if man does not want to be converted, in vain he has what serves other people to be converted*.

Let those who examine the situation consider the manifold effects of My Word not only on the human man, but also on the spiritual man. Not only on the spiritual man, but also on the human man. *My Word, when it is received with good will, transforms both, leading to external and internal perfection*.

The apostles who through their ignorance and My humility treated the Son of Man with excessive familiarity – a good master among them, nothing more, a humble and patient master with whom it was permissible to take liberties at times excessive; but it was not irreverence on their part: it was ignorance, and it is to be excused – the apostles quarrelsome with one another, selfish, jealous of their love and of Mine, impatient with the people, somewhat proud of being "the Apostles", eager for stupendous capacities, which point them out to the crowds as gifted with an extraordinary power, slowly but continuously change into new men, bridling their passions first to imitate Me and make Me happy, then as they become more and more acquainted with My true Ego, changing manners and love so much as to see Me, love Me and treat Me as the divine Lord. At the end of My life on earth, are they still perhaps the superficial merry companions of the early times? Are they, above all after the Resurrection, the friends who treat the Son of Man as a Friend? No, they are not. They are the ministers of the King first. They are the priests of God, later. *They are completely different and completely transformed*.

This should be considered by those who will find the apostles' nature, which was as it is described, strong, and will judge it unnatural. I was not a difficult doctor and a proud king. I was not a master who judges other men unworthy of him. I was indulgent to people. I wanted to form using raw materials, and fill empty vases with all kinds of perfections, proving that God can do everything. He can raise a son of Abraham from a stone, a son of God, and from a nonentity a master to confuse masters proud of their science, which has very often lost the scent of Mine.

7. Finally: to make you acquainted with the mystery of Judas, that mystery which is the

fall of a spirit that God had favored in an extraordinary manner. A mystery that is repeated too often and is the wound that aches in the Heart of your Jesus.

To let you know how people fall changing from servants and sons of God into demons and deicides, who kill the God in them by killing Grace, so that such knowledge may prevent you from setting foot on the paths from which one falls into the Abyss, and it may teach you how to behave when trying to hold back the imprudent lambs that push on towards the abyss. Apply your intelligence to study the horrible and yet common figure of Judas, a complex in which are agitated like snakes all the capital vices that you find and have to fight in this or that person. It is the most important lesson to be learned by you, because it is the one that will be more useful to you in your ministry of spiritual masters and directors. How many people, in every state of life, imitate Judas giving themselves to Satan and meeting eternal death!

Seven reasons, as seven are the parts:

- 1) The Hidden Life.
- 2) The First Year of the Public Life
- 3) The Second Year of the Public Life
- 4) The Third Year of the Public Life
- 5) Preparation for the Passion...from the agony of Lazarus to the supper at Bethany
- 6) The Passion (from the farewell to Lazarus to My Burial and following days until dawn on Easter Sunday)
- 7) From the Resurrection to Pentecost

This division of the parts is to be kept as indicated above, because it is the right one.

And now? What do you say to your Master? You are not speaking to Me. But you are speaking in your hearts, and only if you may be able to do so, you speak to little John. But in neither of these two cases you speak with the justice that I should like to see in you. Because you speak to little John to grieve him, trampling on the charity for the Christian sister and the instrument of God. *I truly tell you once again that to be an instrument of Mine is not a placid joy: it is continuous fatigue and effort, it is sorrow in everything, because the world gives the disciples of the Master what it gave the Master: sorrow;* and at least priests, and in particular confreres, ought to help these little martyrs who proceed under their crosses... And because in your hearts, speaking to yourselves, you utter a complaint of pride, of envy, of incredulity and other things. But I will give you a reply to your complaints and to your scandalised surprise.

In the evening of the Last Supper, I said to the Eleven who loved Me: “When the Comforter comes, He will remind you of everything I told you.” When I spoke I always bore

in mind, in addition to those who were present, all those who would be My disciples in spirit, and with truth and a will to want. The Holy Spirit, Who already with His Grace instills the faculty of remembering God into you, freeing your souls from the hebetude of the Original Sin and relieving them of the obscurities that, because of the sad inheritance of Adam, envelop the brightness of the spirits created by God to enjoy His sight and spiritual knowledge, completes His work of Master by “reminding” the hearts of those who are led by Him and who are the children of God, of what I said, and which constitutes the Gospel. To remind here means to enlighten the spirit of it. *Because it is nothing to remember the words of the Gospel, if its spirit is not understood.*

And the spirit of the Gospel, which is Love, can be made understood by the Love, that is, by the Holy Spirit, Who, as He has been the true Writer of the Gospel, is also its only Commentator, because only the Author of a work knows the spirit of it and understands it, even if he does not succeed in making its readers understand it. But where a human author fails, because every human perfection is rich in deficiencies, the Most Perfect and Wise Spirit succeeds. So only the Holy Spirit, the author of the Gospel, is also He Who remembers and comments and completes it in the inmost parts of the soul of God's children.

“The Comforter, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send you in My Name, will teach you everything, will remind you of everything I told you.” (John 14:26)

“When the Spirit of Truth comes, He will teach you all the truth: because He will not speak by Himself, but will say everything He has heard and will announce to you the future. He will glorify Me, because He will take what is Mine and will announce it to you. Everything the Father has is Mine; that is why I said that He will receive what is Mine and will announce it to you.” (John 16:13-15)

Then if you object that, as the Holy Spirit is the true Author of the Gospel, one fails to understand why He did not remember what is mentioned in this work and what John makes one understand did happen, in the last words that close his Gospel, I reply to you that the thoughts of God are different from those of men, and are always just and not liable to criticism.

Further: if you object that the revelation was closed with the last Apostle, and there was nothing further to add, because the same Apostle says in Revelation: “If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him every plague mentioned in the book” (22:18) and that can be understood for all the Revelation, the last completion of which is the Revelation by John, I reply to you that with this work no addition was made to revelation, but only the gaps, brought about by natural causes and by supernatural will, were filled in.

And if I wanted to take pleasure in restoring the picture of My Divine Charity as a restorer of mosaics does replacing the tesserae damaged or missing, reinstating the

mosaic in its complete beauty, and I have decided to do it in this century in which mankind is hurling itself towards the Abyss of darkness and horror, can you forbid Me from doing so? *Can you perhaps say that you do not need it, you whose spirits are dull, weak, deaf to lights, voices and invitations from Above?*

You ought really to bless Me for increasing with new lights the light that you have and that is no longer sufficient for you to “see” your Savior. To see the Way, the Truth and the Life, and feel that spiritual emotion of the just of My time rise in you, attaining through this knowledge a renewal of your spirits in love, that would be your salvation, because it is an ascent towards perfection.

I do not say you are “dead”, but sleeping, drowsy. Like plants during their winter sleep. The divine Sun gives you its refulgence. Awake and bless the Sun that gives you itself, receive it with joy that It may warm you, from the surface to deep inside you, it may rouse you and cover you with flowers and fruits.

Rise. Come to My Gift.

“Take and eat. Take and drink” I said to the apostles.

“If you only knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you: 'give me a drink', you would have been the one to ask, and he would have given you living water” I said to the Samaritan woman.

I say also now: to doctors and to Samaritans as well. Because both extreme classes need it, and also those need it, who are between the two extremes. The former not to be underfed and deprived of strength also with regard to themselves, and of supernatural nourishment for those who languish with lack of knowledge of God, of the God-Man, of the Master and Savior. The latter because souls need living water, when they perish far away from the springs. Those in the middle, between the former and the latter, the great mass of those who are not big sinners, and also of those who are static in not making any progress, through laziness, tepidness, because of a wrong concept of holiness, those who are scrupulous of not being damned, of being observant, of becoming entangled in a labyrinth of superficial practices, but dare not take a step on the steep, very steep road of heroism, so that from this work they may receive the initial incentive to come out of that immobility and set out on the heroic way.

I tell you these words. I offer you this food and this drink of living water. My word is Life. And I want you in the Life, with Me. And I multiply My Word to counterbalance the miasmata of Satan as they destroy the vital strength of your spirit.

Do not reject Me. I am anxious to give Myself to you, because I love you. And My anxiety is inextinguishable. I ardently wish to communicate Myself to you to make you ready for the banquet of the celestial nuptials. And you need Me in order not to

languish, to dress yourselves with dresses adorned for the Wedding of the Lamb, for the great feast of God after overcoming the affliction in this desert full of snares, of brambles and snakes, which is the Earth, to pass through flames without suffering damage, to tread on reptiles and have to take poisons without dying, as you have Me in you.

And I say to you: “Take, do take this work and 'do not seal it', but read it and have it read 'because the time is close'.” Revelation 22:10. “And let those who are holy become holier” (22:11).

May the grace of your Lord Jesus Christ be with all those who in this book see an approach of Mine and urge it to be accomplished, to their defense, with the cry of Love: “Come, Lord Jesus.” (see Rev. 22:20-21, the last two sentences of the Bible).

And to me in particular then Jesus says...

And your fatigue is over. Now love remains and the reward to be enjoyed.

My soul, and what should I say to you? With your spirit lost in Me you ask Me: “And now, Lord, what will You do with me, Your servant?”

I could say: “I will break the clay vase to extract its essence and take it where I am.” And it would be the joy of both. But I need you for a short while, and a little more, here, to exhale your perfumes which are still the scent of the Christ dwelling in you. So I will say to you as I said to John: “If I want you to stay until I come to get you, what does it matter to you to remain?”

Peace to you, My little untiring voice. Peace to you. Peace and blessings. The Master says to you: “Thanks”. The Lord says to you: “May you be blessed”. Jesus, your Jesus, says to you: “I will always be with you because it is pleasant to Me to be with those who love Me.”

“My peace, little John. Come and rest on My Chest.”

And with these words also the suggestions for the drawing up of the work have come to an end and the last explanations have been given.

ViaReggio, 28th April 1947.

Maria Valtorta.