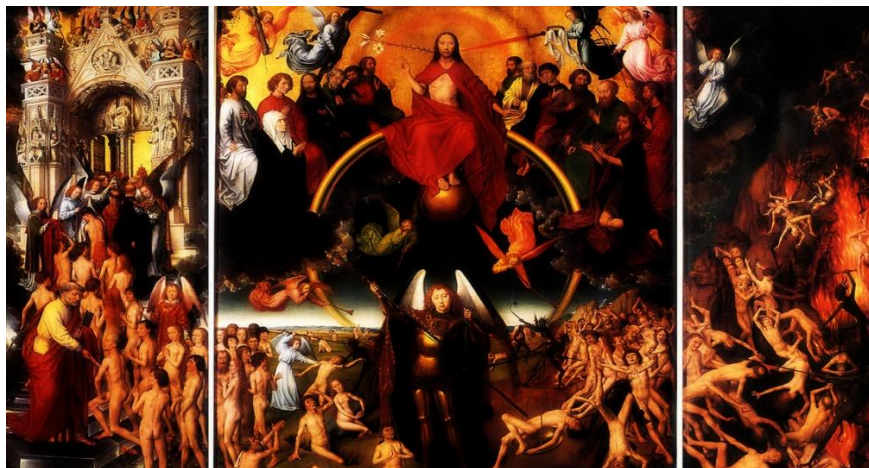




# The Crown and Completion of All Sanctity



*An introduction to the revelations on the Gift of Living in the Divine Will to the Servant of God Luisa Piccarreta, using only moratorium-free material*



Daniel O'Connor

**The Servant of God Luisa Piccarreta was a 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Italian mystic whose revelations from Jesus, encompassing thousands of pages of material, give amazing insight into a new gift of sanctity for the Church, namely, the Gift of Living in the Divine Will. In this book, you will find an introduction to just what this “Gift” entails, an explanation of how to receive this Gift yourself, and a theological defense of its orthodoxy as perfectly compatible with Catholic faith and morals.**

### **Explanation of Subtitle:**

There is currently a moratorium from the Archdiocese of Trani (which alone holds legal and canonical rights to Luisa’s writings) on the publication of Luisa’s writings, until a complete critical edition may be published. Although this does not restrict short excerpts from being published, nor does it restrict Luisa’s writings from personal use or in prayer groups devoted to the Divine Will, I have nevertheless chosen to present this book which, in order to fulfill the wishes of the faithful who desire to be as compliant as possible with this moratorium and take absolutely no

risk of disobedience to the Church, uses only excerpts from Luisa’s writings that are taken directly from Fr. Joseph Iannuzzi’s Doctoral Dissertation *The Gift of Living in the Divine Will in the Writings of Luisa Piccarreta*. Fr. Iannuzzi personally translated all of these excerpts from the original Italian of Luisa’s writings, and we can be assured of their orthodoxy. His dissertation furthermore enjoys full Ecclesiastical Approbation from the Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome, authorized by the Holy See.

### **Explanation of Cover:**

As you will see in reading this book, the mystery of the Annunciation contains within it the essence of Living in the Divine Will, and could be considered the most important event in history to meditate upon. I have chosen this particular painting by Leonardo Da Vinci because it is among the few that rightly depicts Our Lady as above the Archangel Gabriel – who, though referred to as an Archangel, nevertheless belongs to the highest (Seraphic) choir, and even still is far below the Immaculata. This inferiority was true even before Mary pronounced her Fiat and became

the true Virgin Mother of the Thrice Holy God, for from her Immaculate Conception in the womb of St. Anne, she was, is, and ever shall be the greatest of God’s creatures and the pinnacle of His handiwork. I have placed beams of light emanating, as it were, from this event to symbolize the fact that from it, (and from our “little incarnations” modeled after it – again, read on to understand more) God’s plan for all creation is realized and the way is made straight for Judgment Day.

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*To my wife, Regina, whose  
encouragement and support made this  
book possible.*

*And to my mother, Eileen A. O'Connor,  
who gave me my Catholic Faith, without  
which the Gift of Living in the Divine Will  
is nothing;*

*who from her conception shared life on  
this Earth for three months with Luisa  
Piccarreta, and who gave birth to her own  
first child on Luisa's 23<sup>rd</sup> heavenly  
birthday;*

*and who was recently diagnosed with  
terminal cancer and may have only  
months left on this Earth.  
May she rejoice with God forever.*

**ALL FOR THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS, THROUGH THE IMMACULATE  
HEART OF MARY, UNDER THE PROTECTION OF ST. JOSEPH, TERROR OF  
DEMONS AND PATRON OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH.**

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## Prologue

It was nearing sunset on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month of the year of Our Lord 2010, and I was panting and sweating after a day spent on my hands and knees scrubbing away with all my might. I had only a steel wire sponge at my disposal, with which I was attempting to scrape off years of grime that evidently had no intention of departing from its comfortable home on a wooden kitchen floor. I was preparing the old and dilapidated St. George's rectory to be converted into a transitional home for homeless young men, to be called the John Bosco House, where I later served as a live-in house father to the residents we welcomed.

That day's activities caused in me an especially appreciative reaction to the clock striking five, which heralded my hasty departure to St. Joseph & St. Patrick Church, the Parish located a convenient (even if highly unsafe - a fact undisputed by anyone familiar with the city of Utica) five minute walk away. I was simply off to attend daily Mass as I did each ordinary, uneventful day. Or so I thought.

Instead of seeing the usual priest, I saw whom I now know to be Fr. Joseph Iannuzzi in the Sanctuary. A moment later, I realized I had come not to the ordinary Friday evening Mass, but rather I had stumbled upon the beginning of a weekend-long retreat on a topic I had never before heard of: the Gift of Living in the Divine Will in the writings of the Servant of God Luisa Piccarreta. What followed were two days of utter holy amazement as I had never before, nor have I since, experienced.

The adventure of life went on, and I continued to both study the Gift of Living in the Divine Will and strive to receive this Gift myself. Almost one year later, Providence had me studying as a seminarian at Holy Apostles College & Seminary in Cromwell, CT. The Rector there, Fr. Douglas Mosey, is a holy man who is one of those rare administrators who does not succumb to a bureaucratic mentality; hence he declared one day each month a "Day of Recollection," in which the seminarians kept total silence as they prayed and attended a retreat given by a priest.

It was my first day of recollection as a seminarian, and I entered the Chapel that morning

eager to receive whatever edification it might be God's Will to impart through the priest's lips. As I looked towards the sanctuary, I saw to my great surprise a familiar face. I immediately knew I would not be disappointed, for the holy amazement I had received from this priest ten months earlier was alive and well.

In this book I wish to share that holy amazement with you, in order to do my small part in helping to fulfill Our Lord's prayer that His *Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven*. I am breaking somewhat from the expected, third-person, professionally-detached form in this theological work, for I wish to write to each of you as one friend introducing another to his greatest joy.

Daniel S. O'Connor  
March 4, 2015



*Adoration at Holy Apostles College & Seminary*



## Chapter I) Introduction

### Why Bother with These Writings?

Let us begin by discussing why you would even be interested in revelations given to us by Luisa; one who might seem to be just another obscure 20<sup>th</sup> century mystic – a person whom you would be more than happy to wait until heaven to get to know. For just as no man can count the grains of sand on the seashore, so it seems the various devotions, mystics, and private revelations vying for and at times demanding our attention are likewise innumerable. In some circles, everyone and his uncle is a self-proclaimed locutionist, and spares no expense in publishing and marketing his revelations, even compiling them in booklets that you may conveniently purchase, not for \$20, but for the much more reasonable price of \$19.99!

This brings us to the first reason why Luisa's writings are worth a chance: she did not seek out people to listen to her; quite the contrary, she wanted nothing but silence and solitude, and to be unknown and forgotten. The greatest penance of her life was writing down the revelations Jesus gave to her, for she wanted absolutely nothing to do with worldly recognition. Her humility in this regard was so heroic that it was only when her spiritual director, Fr. Gennaro Di Gennaro (who was appointed by the Archbishop specifically to be Luisa's director), commanded her under holy obedience to write did she in fact do so.<sup>1</sup> Lest you be concerned that this moment marked the end of her humility, know as well that she stopped writing in the later years of her life, when she was no longer told to do so under obedience. From the very onset of these revelations it is only thanks to the intervention of the Catholic Church that we have any record of Jesus' words to Luisa.

The next reason is that Pope St. John Paul II himself canonized a certain priest, Hannibal Mary Di

Francia, in the year 2004. St. Hannibal was a truly great man; a zealous worker of important apostolates, including starting a school, an orphanage, and two religious congregations dedicated to praying for vocations. In his

canonization homily, St. John Paul II said that St. Hannibal had a "...love for the Lord [that] moved him to dedicate his entire life to the spiritual well-being of others."<sup>2</sup> What you unfortunately will not see in any popular



*St. Hannibal and Melanie Calvat*

work on the life of St. Hannibal is the fact that he was appointed by his Archbishop<sup>3</sup> to be Luisa's spiritual director, extraordinary confessor, and censor librorum. St. Hannibal became so utterly convinced not only of the legitimacy of Luisa's revelations, but also of their dire urgency and importance, that towards the end of his life he completely devoted himself to their promulgation, writing four months before his death, "I want you to know that since I have totally dedicated myself to the great work of the Divine Will, I practically don't concern myself at all with my institutes."<sup>4</sup> He tirelessly worked to approve, publish, print, and disseminate her revelations.

There is much more that could be said about St. Hannibal. He is an incorruptible. He was renowned for his gift of discernment. One of the seers of La Salette, Melanie Calvat, was for a time a nun in the convent he started, and he knew her well.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, do we not even risk doing Pope St. John Paul II himself a disservice by failing to seek out knowledge on this greatest love of a priest whom he chose to canonize? For not only did this holy and great Pope – the true spark from Poland who prepared the

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Bernardino Giuseppe Bucci, OFM: *Luisa Piccarreta, A Collection of Memories* (Roma 52, San Ferdinando Di Puglia: Tipolitographia Miulli, 2000), Ch. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Homily given by Pope John Paul II, "Canonization of Six New Saints," May 16, 2004 (Libreria Editrice Vaticana).

<sup>3</sup> Archbishop Joseph Leo

<sup>4</sup> Letter of St. Hannibal to Luisa Piccarreta, dated February 14th, 1927

([http://www.divvol.org/luisa\\_piccarreta/en/hannibal\\_letters.html](http://www.divvol.org/luisa_piccarreta/en/hannibal_letters.html)).

<sup>5</sup> Gaetano Passarelli: *Father Annibale, A Heavenly Dream* (Transcribed into eBook format by St. Hannibal Rogate Center, 2011), Ch. 7.

world for Jesus' Second Coming<sup>6</sup> - choose to canonize St. Hannibal, but he even went so far as to make his own St. Hannibal's belief in the reality of this coming new holiness.

Seven years after beatifying Hannibal, and seven years before canonizing him, John Paul said in an address to the order that St. Hannibal founded, the Rogationists, "*in the 'Rogate' [St. Hannibal saw] the means God himself had provided to bring about that 'new and divine' holiness with which the Holy Spirit wishes to enrich Christians at the dawn of the third millennium, in order to 'make Christ the heart of the world.'*"<sup>7</sup> This is important not only because it demonstrates Pope St. John Paul II's clear and explicit endorsement of Hannibal's promulgation of the Divine Will message of Luisa,<sup>8</sup> but also because it touches on precisely how this will come about - namely, through priests, especially through the Eucharist that comes to us from their hands. "*The three foundational principles of St. Hannibal, or three buds you could say, that would blossom into this new springtime are: I. To put the Blessed Eucharist at the centre of personal and community life...II. To exist as a body in unity, in the unanimity of hearts that makes prayer acceptable to God. III. Intimate association with the suffering of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.*"<sup>9</sup> These principles will be expanded upon in later chapters.

Five years later, the Pope became even more bold, and in an address to the youth of Rome, made an explicit reference to "entering into" and Living in the Divine Will<sup>10</sup> (although the English translation of the address provided by the Vatican uses the term "dwell" instead of "live," nevertheless the same thing is being referred to.)

I will leave you with two quotes of St. Hannibal's. The first is from a letter he wrote to Luisa 26 days before he died, and the second is from a

forward he wrote before publishing Luisa's *Hours of the Passion*. Without going so far as to believe that saints are infallible, it is nevertheless important to remember that all of the writings of a saint are examined with a magnifying glass for any error before he is canonized. So let us look at the following excerpt of a letter from St. Hannibal to Luisa with this in mind:

"...*The doctors cannot cure this trouble. This is why I prayed you to ask for a miracle from Our Lord. Once you made one by resurrecting a young man who had been murdered... The letter you sent me arrived a few hours after I had written to Jesus, and I took it as an answer. It comforted me immensely... Your speaking is holy, just and perfect...*"<sup>11</sup>

And in speaking about Luisa, he wrote: "*It seems that Our Lord, who century after century increases the wonders of His love more and more, wanted to make of this virgin with no education, whom He calls the littlest one that He found on earth, the instrument of a mission so sublime that no other can be compared to it—that is, the triumph of the Divine Will upon the whole earth, in conformity with what is said in the 'Our Father': thy will be done be done on earth as it is in heaven.*"<sup>12</sup>

Already you have the bold words of a saint, and of the Pope who canonized him, in support of Luisa's writings. But this still only constitutes the very tip of the iceberg of reasons why - from Church authority - you should not be afraid of approaching her revelations (as many are due to the grandiose nature of their claims, the opposition to them by a few common names, or an incorrect understanding of the implications of the moratorium), but rather should be zealous to learn from them. Three sets of her works - amounting to thousands of pages of revelations from Jesus, which indeed contain the essence of the Divine Will message - were given an imprimatur by Archbishop Giuseppe (Joseph) Leo.<sup>13</sup> For those rightly

<sup>6</sup> Cf. St. Faustina, *Divine Mercy in my Soul*, Paragraph 1732

<sup>7</sup> Address of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to the Rogationist Fathers. Paragraph 6. 16 May 1997. Emphasis added.

<sup>8</sup> Although when we consider the context of this quote of Pope St. John Paul II's, it is clear that a reference is being made to Luisa's revelations, unfortunately this has not been noticed much in mainstream circles, despite this particular quote of his getting much note. For example, a wonderful book written by Fr. Kosicki, *Be Holy*, bears endorsements from at least three Bishops, including the late Cardinal George of Chicago. It devotes an entire Chapter to precisely this quote of the Pope's.

<sup>9</sup> "The Coming New and Divine Holiness." Mark Mallett. [www.markmallett.com/blog](http://www.markmallett.com/blog)

<sup>10</sup> Address of John Paul II to the youth of Rome preparing for world youth day. March 21st, 2002. Paragraph 5. [vatican.va](http://vatican.va)

<sup>11</sup> Letter of St. Hannibal to Luisa Piccarreta, dated May 5th, 1927 ([http://www.divvol.org/luisa\\_piccarreta/en/hannibal\\_letters.html](http://www.divvol.org/luisa_piccarreta/en/hannibal_letters.html)).

<sup>12</sup> Luisa Piccarreta: *The 24 Hours of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*. Preface.

<sup>13</sup> These writings were Luisa's *Hours of the Passion*, Volumes 1-19 of her diary, and *The Virgin Mary in the Kingdom of the Divine Will*

wary of how much error has been promulgated these past few decades in the name of imprimatur by those who assume that whatever has one contains only infallible words, remember that these imprimatur given to Luisa's works were granted almost a century ago. Most recently, an excellent book by Stephen Patton defending Luisa's revelations, *A Guide to the Book of Heaven*, received an imprimatur in 2013 by Bishop Jaime Soto of Sacramento.

When St. Hannibal took Luisa's *Hours of the Passion* to Pope St. Pius X (Fr. Hannibal was well known for his holiness and counted the Pope among his friends) and briefly read from it, the Pope said to him, "*Father, this book should be read while kneeling: it is Jesus Christ who is speaking!*"<sup>14</sup> The Pope proceeded to encourage him to have it printed and promulgated immediately.

St. Pio (Padre Pio) was known to say to pilgrims who came from Corato to see him, "*What have you come here for? You have Luisa, go to her.*"<sup>15</sup> Although these two never met in person (for Luisa was confined to bed), they nevertheless esteemed each other highly as a result of Padre Pio sending a convert of his, a man by the name of Federico Abresch, to go meet her. When Luisa's writings were condemned temporarily by the Holy Office, St. Pio even sent her consolation by way of Federico, saying "*Dear Luisa, saints serve for the good of souls, but their suffering knows no bounds.*"<sup>16</sup> Padre Pio's canonization, despite the great opposition it encountered, is yet another reason to give credit to Luisa's revelations, for this extraordinary Capuchin is now agreed upon as being among the greatest saints of modern times.

Above all, Luisa's revelations should be approached with confidence because Providence has blessed her cause for Beatification, as well as the canonical status of her writings, with great success. The public critics of Luisa's writings wrote the bulk of their arguments against Luisa and her revelations in the 1990s. Consider what has happened since then:

- November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1994, Cardinal Joseph

Ratzinger nullifies the previous condemnations of Luisa's writings, allowing Archbishop Carmelo Cassati to formally open Luisa's cause on the Feast of Christ the King of the same year.

- February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1996, Pope St. John Paul II permits the copying of Luisa's original volumes, which up until then had been strictly reserved in the Vatican Archives.
- October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1997, the beatification of Hannibal Di Francis by Pope St. John Paul II
- June 2<sup>nd</sup> & December 18<sup>th</sup>, 1997, Rev Antonio Resta and Rev. Cosimo Reho (theologians), respectively, submit evaluations of Luisa's writings to the Diocesan tribunal, affirming nothing contrary to Catholic faith or morals is contained therein.
- May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2004, the canonization of Hannibal Di Francia by Pope St. John Paul II.
- October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2005, the diocesan tribunal and the Archbishop of Trani, Giovanni Battista Pichierri, render a positive judgment on Luisa after carefully examining all of her writings and testimony on her heroic virtue.
- July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010, Pope Benedict XVI formally blessed and prayed next to a seventeen foot high statue of St. Hannibal.
- July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2010, both Theological Censors (whose identities are secret) appointed by the Holy See give their approval to Luisa's writings, asserting that nothing contained therein is opposed to Faith or Morals.
- April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2011, His Excellency Bishop Luigi Negri officially approves the Benedictine Daughters of the Divine Will (explicitly dedicated to Luisa's Divine Will spirituality) as a Pious Association of the Faithful.<sup>17</sup>
- November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012, the Archbishop of Trani writes a formal notice containing a rebuke of those who "*claim [Luisa's] writings contain doctrinal errors,*" stating that such people scandalize the faithful and preempt judgment reserved to the Holy See.
- November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2012, the faculty of the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome who reviewed Fr. Joseph Iannuzzi's

<sup>14</sup> Bernardino Giuseppe Bucci, OFM: *Luisa Piccarreta, A Collection of Memories* (Roma 52, San Ferdinando Di Puglia: Tipolitographia Miulli, 2000), Ch. 4.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., Ch. 3.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> [www.benedictinesofthedinivewill.org](http://www.benedictinesofthedinivewill.org)



Doctoral Dissertation defending these revelations give it unanimous approval, thereby granting its contents ecclesiastical approval authorized by the Holy See.

- 2013, the aforementioned Imprimatur on Stephen Patton's book was granted.
- 2013-14, Fr. Iannuzzi's Dissertation received the accolades of almost 50<sup>18</sup> Catholic Bishops, including Cardinal Tagle.<sup>19</sup>
- April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015, the Archbishop of Trani writes "I wish to let you know that the Cause of Beatification is proceeding positively... I have recommended to all that they deepen the life and the teachings of the Servant of God Luisa Piccarreta..."<sup>20</sup>

The fact becomes evident as you read these points - Luisa's cause is following the standard path of a great saint, not of an obscure mystic whose alleged revelations the Holy Spirit will permit to be forgotten!

## What is the Objective?

The *Gift of Living in the Divine Will* is the best and broadest name for this new sanctity, but it has many others. Among them are the continuous participation in the Trinity's one eternal operation, the *full* actualization of the soul's powers, the sharing in God's prime motion, the Divine and Eternal Mode of holiness, the greatest sanctity, and the Real Life of Jesus in the soul.

But what exactly is it? I must use great care in telling you what the Gift of Living in the Divine Will is, just as I would only with the utmost respect hand to you a spectacular diamond. Therefore I shall do so by posing three questions, followed by an explanation of the proper responses to them in light of the Gift of Living in the Divine Will. I bid you pause after reading each question to ponder how to truly answer it in the best and most complete possible way.

\*\*\*

First: what four humans are unlike all others? I do not mean merely by matter of degree; e.g. who is mentioned most in Scripture, or who was the wisest Doctor, or greatest Father, or noblest Patriarch. What I mean is, what four people were so radically above all others that it is impossible to compare them to anyone else, just as it is impossible to compare a grain of sand to a mountain? There is only one way to answer such a question: Adam, Eve, Jesus, and Mary. It is these four and these four alone who were created<sup>21</sup> in perfection, with sin playing no part whatsoever in them; their lives were products of the Divine Will as daylight is a product of the sun.<sup>22</sup> There was not the slightest impediment between the Will of God and their being, and therefore their acts, which proceed from being. The Gift of Living in the Divine Will then, open for the asking since Luisa's time to any soul in a state of grace, is that same state of sanctity as these four possessed (albeit with important distinctions). To Luisa, Jesus says of Adam, "*Before man sinned, My divinity was not concealed from him. By pulsating around the reflections of My light, he became My reflection and therefore My little light.*"<sup>23</sup>

Now the Blessed Virgin Mary is truly the quintessence of Living in the Divine Will and our model for it. For her dignity far surpasses that of Adam and Eve, and, furthermore, she remains a creature unlike her Divine Son. Through Our Lady, God demonstrates just what marvels of sanctity He is capable of working in a created human being. In Luisa's revelations we learn that it is not God's Will that Mary alone remain in such a lofty state of sanctity, merely for us to gaze upon from a nearly infinitely inferior position. On the contrary, it is His Will that we too rise up to her level, so that it can even be said of us, as it has long been rightly said of her, that *one of our acts can give God more glory and surpass in merit all of the acts of all other saints combined.*<sup>24</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Rev. Joseph L. Iannuzzi, STD, Ph.D. "Living in the Divine Will" Missionaries of the Most Holy Trinity (Nov. 2014-May 2015): Page 2.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Fr. Joseph Iannuzzi, ([www.ltdw.org](http://www.ltdw.org)), 2014.

<sup>20</sup> "Final Letter by the Archbishop" [www.luisapiccarretaofficial.org](http://www.luisapiccarretaofficial.org)

<sup>21</sup> Here I refer only to the created human nature/ human soul of Christ (as opposed to His Personhood and His Divine Nature). The Person of Jesus Christ is, of course, none other than the 2<sup>nd</sup> Person of the Trinity, and is uncreated.

<sup>22</sup>This perfection of course radically changed for Adam and Eve at the Fall

<sup>23</sup> Rev. Joseph L. Iannuzzi, "The Gift of Living in the Divine Will in the Writings of Luisa Piccarreta" Doctoral diss. (The Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome, Rome, 2013), 2.1.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. St. Louis de Montfort: True Devotion to Mary (Bay Shore, NY: Montfort Publications, 2006), paragraph 63.

It is important to note that no creature can ever come close to Mary in love and in sacrifice, nor can any other creature possibly receive the singular privileges that God has bestowed upon her, privileges which raise her up to a height of truly inaccessible glory, especially the privilege of being the Sovereign Queen of all Creation, the Mediatrix of all Grace, and above all, the Mother of God. For all eternity these attributes shall be hers and hers alone, and all creatures without exception will bow down before her. Nevertheless, through the Gift of Living in the Divine Will, our sanctity becomes like her own and glorifies God in a similar way.<sup>25</sup>

\*\*\*

Second: what is the greatest thing that has ever happened? Such a broad and fundamental question will likely confound any Christian, for there is no shortage of great things from which to choose! But in reality, the answer is simple and there is no close second: the Incarnation. In the Incarnation, the infinite entered into the finite and in so doing exalted it to the Divine Realm. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states (quoting Athanasius and Aquinas, respectively): “*For the Son of God became man so that we might become God.*” [and] “*The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods.*”<sup>26</sup>



Indescribably great as the Incarnation was, “*the Father of Mercies willed that the Incarnation should be preceded by assent on the part of the predestined*

*mother...*”<sup>27</sup> “*By pronouncing her ‘fiat’ at the Annunciation and giving her consent to the Incarnation, Mary was already collaborating with the whole work her Son was to accomplish.*”<sup>28</sup> How simple!

<sup>25</sup> Though even within that “similar way,” Mary remains supreme and unreachable

<sup>26</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 460, quoting St. Athanasius and St. Thomas Aquinas.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 488, cf. *Lumen Gentium*, Ch. VIII, Section 2, paragraph 56.

<sup>28</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraph 973.

<sup>29</sup> Rev. Joseph L. Iannuzzi, “The Gift of Living in the Divine Will in the Writings of Luisa Piccarreta” Doctoral diss. (The Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome, Rome, 2013), 3.1.1.

These clear, Magisterial teachings from the Catechism of the Catholic Church set both the framework and the foundation for understanding Mary’s Fiat in light of the Gift of Living in the Divine Will. And the understanding is this: God does not want only one “Fiat” in history to be so great and so pleasing to Him; rather, He wants all the acts of His creatures to be reflections of that perfect and quintessential Fiat of His beloved handmaid, so that, as her “Fiat” preceded the very Incarnation itself, so our “Fiats” may, as it were, cause as many incarnations as acts we undertake. If ordinary virtuous acts build up treasures of mansions and mountains in heaven, then these acts build up treasures of cities and continents.

But even that is not enough. Now that God has willed to bestow this Gift upon whoever desires it, He also calls us to spiritually “re-do” all the acts of creation - past, present, and future - *in the Divine Will*, as they would have been were the Fall to never have happened, and as He Himself did throughout His earthly life; for whatever He does as the Head, so must we do as His body. Jesus says to Luisa, “*There is nothing — no love, greatness or power — that can compare to My conception ... the immensity of My Will, enclosing all souls of the past, present and future, conceived ...the lives of all souls. And as My life developed, so did all lives develop within Me.*”<sup>29</sup>

The point is not to pretend that we can change the past; objective acts of the past cannot be changed<sup>30</sup> (not even by God) for “*that which has happened*” to become “*that which has not happened*” is simply a contradiction, like a four-sided triangle.<sup>31</sup> However, what God is in fact calling us to do with this Gift is to repair the relation between the acts of the past and eternity, to ensure that the present has the proper relation to eternity, and to prepare the future to have the proper relation to eternity, mystically taking it into ourselves. We do this by the intention with which we undertake all of the ordinary acts that form our days. In this way, Living in the Divine Will

<sup>30</sup> Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum I*, Q25, A4

<sup>31</sup> This is an extremely important point. The Christian Creed rests upon and requires the certainty of historical events having occurred in the past; e.g. The Incarnation. If you entertain the possibility that the past can change, this certainty vanishes, and your faith becomes merely conditional (which is not true Faith).

can be seen as the full realization of the Little Way of St. Thérèse of Lisieux. We also re-do the acts of creation through special prayers given to Luisa; namely, the “Rounds of Creation” and the “Hours of the Passion,” both of which will be discussed later.

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Third: How must “*Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven*” be fulfilled, if it is to be fulfilled in total? For Jesus Himself prayed this prayer, and it is impossible that supplication of the Son of God not be granted. Many unfortunately assume this third petition given by Our Lord in the prayer He taught us, and which we recite each day at the holiest part of the Mass, merely describes an ideal at which human history should aim, as opposed to offering a request that can actually be truly answered. This understanding, however, doubts the power and mercy of God, Who, according to Luisa’s revelations, will in fact ensure that (within the realm of time) His Will shall reign on earth as it does in heaven. This reign is referred to as the “Third Fiat” of Sanctification (third to Creation and Redemption). It is not a subtle rewording of a modified Millenarian or Joachimist heresy<sup>32</sup> that supposes a coming new Public Revelation, or a passing of the Age of the Church, or even a literal reign of the physical Jesus Christ on Earth before His final coming. Rather, this coming age that Jesus speaks of to Luisa entails a time when, instead of this Gift only being enjoyed by a few people, it is lived universally; and just as the consequences of sin are seen in the devastation of the physical world, so the consequences of this greatest grace being lived by all will be seen in the physical world. This Reign of the Divine Will on Earth is the best and fullest understanding of what is also referred to in other mystical revelations as the “Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary,”<sup>33</sup> the “Glorious Eucharistic Reign of Peace,” or the “Era of Peace.” Luisa’s revelations give no dates, but do indicate that this prophesied time is to come very soon. Just how soon largely depends upon our response.

The purpose of the times we are now living in

is to enable certain souls to receive this Gift as individuals in preparation for the time when the entire world will receive it. Consider the decades of wonder and anticipation that preceded the Fiat of Redemption that was fully consummated at the Last Supper;<sup>34</sup> when word spread slowly but surely regarding the amazing things that were happening, when “...fear came on all their neighbors. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea; and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, ‘What then will this child be?’ For the hand of the Lord was with him.”<sup>35</sup> When Simeon and Anna prophesied in the temple, when Herod knew the Savior was upon us and instituted a massacre in his demonically inspired, vain attempt to subvert the Will of God (is that what is happening today with abortion?), and when unprecedented and unfathomable wisdom poured forth from the mouth of a 12-year old boy in the Temple, and all were amazed. Those days are analogous to current times.

Now the total fulfillment of this Third Petition of the Our Father consists in this: living the very life of the Blessed in Heaven as far as holiness is concerned, while still retaining that which is intrinsic to life on Earth - the absence of the Beatific Vision, and the continued presence of the Veil.<sup>36</sup>

Jesus told Luisa, “*My daughter, the first Fiat was pronounced in creation with no intervention of a human creature. The second Fiat was pronounced in Redemption [...] Now, for the fulfillment of both, I want to pronounce the third Fiat [...] This third Fiat will bring to completion the glory and the honor of the Fiat of Creation, and will be the confirmation and development of all the fruits of the Fiat of Redemption. These three Fiats will be the Most Holy Trinity’s overshadowing of man on earth, and I will obtain My Fiat Voluntas Tua on earth as it is in heaven. These three Fiats will be inseparable, with each one constituting the life of the other.*”<sup>37</sup>

If, at this point, you find yourself worried about the orthodoxy of such massive claims, I fully

<sup>32</sup> These concerns are addressed in detail in the “Answers to Objections” Chapter

<sup>33</sup> Third Apparition at Fatima, July 13<sup>th</sup>, 1917. “In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph...”

<sup>34</sup> Cf. St. Faustina, *Divine Mercy in my Soul*, Paragraph 684. “*At the moment of Consecration, love rested satiated-- the sacrifice fully consummated. Now only the external ceremony of death will be*

*carried out-- external destruction; the essence [of it] is in the Cenacle.*”

<sup>35</sup> Luke 1:65-66

<sup>36</sup> Cf. 1 Corinthians 13:12

<sup>37</sup> Rev. Joseph L. Iannuzzi, “The Gift of Living in the Divine Will in the Writings of Luisa Piccarreta” Doctoral diss. (The Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome, Rome, 2013), 4.1.

understand. Feel free to skip to the “Answers to Objections” chapter. For now, it shall suffice to say that these assertions regarding the Divine Will can indeed be found elsewhere in good solid, orthodox Catholic spirituality.

## Similar Spirituality Elsewhere in Catholic Writings

While Luisa should be considered the true herald of this Gift and its primary secretary, nevertheless essentially the same message is delivered in the writings of a number of modern mystics. They are the same mystics who have written since Luisa herself first received the Gift in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>38</sup> thereby opening up the possibility of anyone who earnestly desires it to receive it. Fr. Joseph Iannuzzi argues well in his book entitled *The Splendor of Creation*, that many of the gifts received by and mentioned in the writings of well-known 20<sup>th</sup> century saints and mystics all refer to essentially the same thing as the Gift of Living in the Divine Will. These include the “Mystical Incarnation” of Venerable Conchita de Armida and Archbishop Luis Martinez, the “New Indwelling” of Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity, the “Assumption of Souls in Love” of St. Maximilian Kolbe, the “Divine Substitution” of Blessed Dina Belanger, as well as elements of the writings of St. Padre Pio, Bl. Teresa of Calcutta, St. Faustina, and others.<sup>39</sup>

To take just one of the aforementioned mystics and consider her revelations in greater depth, let us meditate on the following encounter between Jesus and Venerable Conchita, which took place on none other than the Solemnity of the Annunciation (March 25<sup>th</sup>) itself, in the year 1906: seventeen years after Luisa was given the Gift of Living in the Divine Will.

*...Ever waiting, year after year, I expected today, trembling, what the Lord had promised me...this sublime mystery of the Incarnation which, I know not why, ever filled me with wonder...before Mass, prostrate before the Tabernacle, I humbled myself as much as possible. I begged the Lord's pardon, I renewed my vows, I promised Him that I would never*

*let my heart be taken over by the things of the world as I had done up to now. Thus, my soul empty of all else, I received Him in Communion... I was taken over by the presence of my Jesus, quite close to me, hearing His divine voice which said to me:*

*“Here I am, I want to incarnate Myself mystically in your heart...”*

*...Lord, what You had promised me, what You had asked of me, was it marriage?*

*“That has already taken place. Now there is question of an infinitely greater grace.”*

*Would it be, my Jesus, spiritual marriage?*

*“Much more than that... [it is, rather] the grace of incarnating Me, of living and growing in your soul, never to leave it, to possess you and to be possessed by you as in one and the same substance... in a compenetration which cannot be comprehended: it is the grace of graces... It is a union of the same nature as that of the union of heaven, except that in paradise the veil which conceals the Divinity disappears... For you [now] keep ever in your soul my real and effective presence.”*

*...What to do, yes, what to do to correspond to it? Lord, Lord, what will I do but humble myself and beg Mary to thank You for me and imitate You, repeating in my lowliness and nothingness: ‘Behold the handmaids of the Lord. Be it done unto me according to Thy Word’<sup>40</sup>*

Hopefully it is clear that what Jesus describes to Conchita is precisely the same Gift that He describes to Luisa. Nevertheless, if you are still worried that the magnitude of the claims in Luisa’s writings may simply be too great, consider stopping here and researching some of the claims that are made by the other mystics mentioned earlier.

Many elements of the writings of saints throughout Church history have also hinted at this Gift and prepared us well for it; this notion of special devotion to the Divine Will did not appear ex-nihilo

<sup>38</sup> September 7<sup>th</sup>, 1889, to be precise

<sup>39</sup> Rev. Joseph Iannuzzi, *The Splendor of Creation* (McKees Rocks, PA: St. Andrew’s Productions, 2004), 3.5

<sup>40</sup> Fr. Marie-Michel Philippon, O.P. *CONCHITA: A Mother's Spiritual Diary*. Pages 57-58

in a vacuum. The first formal scholastic treatment of tension between the Divine Will and the human will occurred during the 12<sup>th</sup> century in the writings of Peter Lombard, who himself commented on a passage from St. Augustine. This observation set the stage for further development.<sup>41</sup> Later, St. Albert the Great taught that conformity to the Divine Will was the highest rule of moral action.<sup>42</sup> Finally, Thomas Aquinas definitively summed up what had been said on the matter by using the words of Our Lord: “*Not as I will, but as Thou wilt,*”<sup>43</sup> to build his case, saying “...*the goodness of the will depends on the intention of the end. Now the last end of the human will is the Sovereign Good, namely, God... Therefore the goodness of the human will requires it to be ordained to the Sovereign Good, that is, to God. Now this Good is primarily and essentially compared to the Divine Will, as its proper object.*”<sup>44</sup> Later in this same article, Aquinas speaks of conformity to the Divine Will on our part being limited in scope to mere imitation; in other words, *doing* the Divine Will. Nevertheless, from that point forward, conformity, or uniformity, to the Divine Will was very prevalent in the spirituality of the saints. Especially noteworthy is St. Alphonsus’ 18<sup>th</sup> century work entitled *Uniformity With God’s Will*.

At this point we should briefly pause our discussion of the development of Divine Will spirituality to consider that this limitation mentioned by Aquinas is precisely what Luisa’s revelations change.<sup>45</sup> We now have the ability not merely to *do* the Divine Will (by imitation), but to *live* it – to relate to the teaching of other Church Doctors, we are now capable of not only the human and Divine modes of prayer described by St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila, but now the *Eternal* mode of prayer that has not hitherto been experienced by any creature after the Fall other than Mary. In comparing these modes of prayer, Fr. Iannuzzi likens the human and Divine modes of prayer to going from tombstone to tombstone to in a cemetery to pray for the repose of each soul; whereas the Eternal mode of prayer would then be like flying over the cemetery in an

airplane and being capable of simultaneously praying for the souls of all those buried within it. “*Living in the Divine Will is to invite God’s one eternal operation into our finite prayers and actions, who bequeaths to them an eternal quality, whereby they impact all souls of the past, present and future concomitantly.*”<sup>46</sup>

Returning to the development of this doctrine in the Church, let us look *ad orientem*. Earlier in Church History, the concept of the Divinization or Theosis of Man, long spoken of primarily in Eastern Catholic Mysticism (most notably by Maximus the Confessor), though incapable of arriving fully at what it is suggesting or what it hints at,<sup>47</sup> speaks in a way that beautifully foreshadows Luisa’s revelations. Fourteen years after Pope Benedict XVI nullified the condemnation of Luisa’s writings (as Cardinal Ratzinger), he said this about Maximus:

“*St. Maximus tells us that, and we know that this is true, Adam (and we ourselves are Adam) thought that the "no" was the peak of freedom. He thought that only a person who can say "no" is truly free; that if he is truly to achieve his freedom, man must say "no" to God; only in this way he believed he could at last be himself; that he had reached the heights of freedom. This tendency also carried within it the human nature of Christ, but went beyond it, for Jesus saw that it was not the "no" that was the height of freedom. **The height of freedom is the "yes", in conformity with God's will. It is only in the "yes" that man truly becomes himself; only in the great openness of the "yes", in the unification of his will with the divine, that man becomes immensely open, becomes "divine".** What Adam wanted was to be like God, that is, to be completely free. But the person who withdraws into himself is not divine, is not completely free; he is freed by emerging from himself; it is in the "yes" that he becomes free; and **this is the drama of Gethsemane: not my will but yours. It is by transferring the human will to the divine will that the real person is born, it is in this way that we are redeemed.**”<sup>48</sup> As you can see, the overlap is*

<sup>41</sup> Peter Lombard: *Sentences Book I*, Distinction XLVIII. (Peter Lombard, Bishop of Paris, was a theologian who, though rarely spoken of today, was an enormous influence on western theology. He is referred to by Aquinas in the Summa simply as “the Master.”)

<sup>42</sup> *New Catholic Encyclopedia; Conformity to the Will of God*

<sup>43</sup> Matthew 26:39

<sup>44</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum I-II*. Q19, A9.

<sup>45</sup> Luisa’s revelations build beautifully on the foundation laid by 2,000 years of Catholic Tradition, and in no way do they contradict a

single Church teaching. Needless to say, however, they are not simply identical to all that came before. More on this distinction is contained in the “Answers to Objections” chapter.

<sup>46</sup> Fr. Joseph Iannuzzi. *Manual for Instructing Others on the Gift of Living in the Divine Will*. 2.2.4

<sup>47</sup> Since what it hints at is none other than the Gift of Living in the Divine Will, which God has reserved for our age.

<sup>48</sup> Benedict XVI. General Audience. June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008 (Libreria Editrice Vaticana). Emphasis Added.

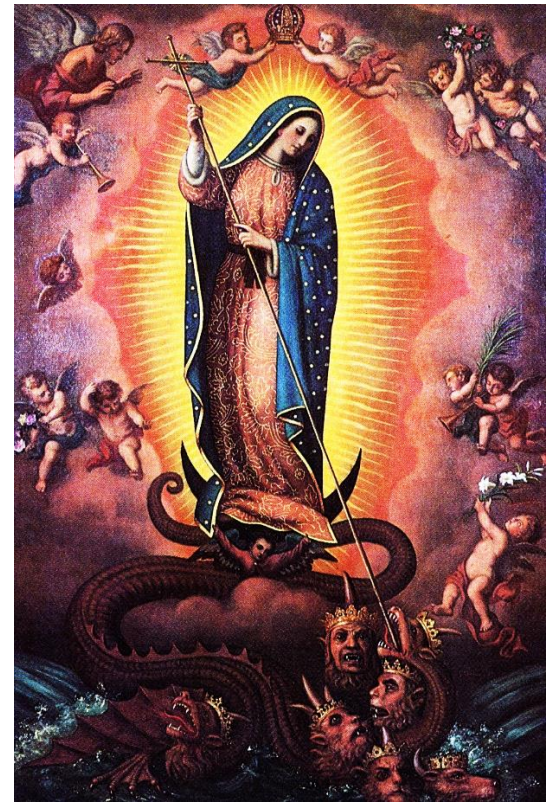


astonishing; to the point where it seems Pope Benedict here explicitly intends to guide us to Luisa's Divine Will spirituality.

Before leaving this topic, we should also consider these words of St. Louis de Montfort: that great Marian priest and prophet so revered and promoted by Pope St. John Paul II. For although he did not specifically develop doctrine on the Divine Will, he did prophesy precisely what era we are now in the midst of thanks to the great Gift of Living in the Divine Will; and he rightly recognized that this will be mediated by the hands of Mary, who will clothe us with *her very own holiness*, which is none other than the Gift. *"...the greatest saints, those richest in grace ... [will look] up to [Mary] as the perfect model ... this will happen especially towards the end of the world, and indeed soon, because Almighty God and his holy Mother are to raise up great saints who will surpass in holiness most other saints as much as the cedars of Lebanon tower above little shrubs... These great souls filled with grace and zeal will be chosen to oppose the enemies of God who are raging on all sides. They will be exceptionally devoted to the Blessed Virgin. Illumined by her light, strengthened by her food, guided by her spirit..."*<sup>49</sup>

Finally, as the fits of demons can be very informative regarding the hidden workings of grace (the unclean spirits were in fact among the first to recognize Jesus), we should also examine Satan's revolt against this development of Divine Will theology in the most twisted form of philosophy to ever enter mainstream thought: that of Friedrich Nietzsche. This German philosopher died at the onset of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and provided the ideological inspiration for its massacres (above all those undertaken by the Nazis), which continue more silently to this very day in the scourges of abortion<sup>50</sup> and euthanasia. He taught the diametric opposite of Luisa's revelations: the will to power. *"This world is the will to power-and nothing besides! And you yourselves are also this will to power-and nothing besides!"*<sup>51</sup> was his mantra. It was precisely the same decade when Nietzsche had descended into insanity and was on death's doorstep - having proclaimed God

as dead and he himself the Antichrist - that lowly Luisa, under the obedience of her spiritual director, began to write. Luisa's writings are to Nietzsche's as the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is to a Satanic ritual.



<sup>49</sup> St. Louis de Montfort, *True Devotion to Mary* (Bay Shore, NY: Montfort Publications, 2006), paragraph 47.

<sup>50</sup> To Luisa it is revealed that abortion is the sin that cries out most to God. It was in the 1920s that abortion really started entering into the mainstream of the world stage.

<sup>51</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche: *The Will to Power*, final paragraph.

## Chapter II) Introduction to the Gift

This chapter is described as a mere “introduction” because it would be downright foolish to pretend that, in these several pages, the spirituality of Luisa’s revelations and writings (which amount to more than all of the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas put together) could be adequately conveyed in their totality.

This limitation raises an essential point that should be covered at the onset, regarding our approach to Luisa’s revelations; we must do so as poets, not as logicians. G.K. Chesterton shared great insight when he said, *“The poet only asks to get his head into the heavens. It is the logician who seeks to get the heavens into his head. And it is his head that splits.”*<sup>52</sup> What is laid down for you in this book is, please God, sufficient that if you follow it, you may indeed accomplish (or rather, God may accomplish in you) the important thing: receiving the Gift and advancing in it. But when you actually delve into Luisa’s writings, or the more in-depth explanations of them, do not expect everything to fit neatly together into a simple structure. Expect to feel overwhelmed if you take the approach of a logician; striving to master these revelations the same way you study the material in a textbook before the final exam of an important class. There are seemingly endless analogies, modes, explanations, applications, and so on. How they all fit together will not be readily apparent.

I do not in the least wish to discourage reading Luisa’s writings due to these difficulties. Rather, I merely wish to encourage reading them with the approach of the poet, saying to yourself as you approach them, *“I will not worry about trying to memorize this or trying to categorize it according to how I already understand her revelations. I will simply read this for the same reason I listen to a beautiful symphony; to be spiritually built up by the impressions it leaves upon my soul rather than to methodically analyze it, writing down the succession of notes and*

<sup>52</sup> G.K. Chesterton. *Orthodoxy*. Chapter II

<sup>53</sup> Gnosticism is essentially the heresy of the “doctrine of salvation by knowledge,” whereby those who are privileged enough to have these certain bits of knowledge are superior, and the only elect.

<sup>54</sup> Then why am I writing this book? Because specific knowledge of what is desired is a great benefit. This is why missionaries preach

*determining precisely what instruments are used.”*

These writings certainly must be analyzed by theologians, indeed! I am not attempting to exempt Luisa’s revelations by stealth from doctrinal scrutiny. But thanks be to God we have a Church to do the theological analysis for us, and we do not need to do it all ourselves. Furthermore in these revelations, as in all mystical literature, the will runs ahead of the intellect, in a certain sense. To take everything contained in them as literal truth at their face value without qualification would be a recipe for disaster. Remember that Scripture, Tradition, and Magisterium are never to be judged by Luisa’s revelations, but rather it is these permanent, unchangeable, and unquestionable foundations of Faith that are to judge, qualify, and specify Luisa’s revelations. If it seems to you that something you read in Luisa’s writings contradicts something you read in the Catechism, then you must absolutely choose submission to that which you read in the Catechism, and seek out someone learned and orthodox to explain to you the seeming contradiction. It may even be an actual contradiction, for bad translations of Luisa’s revelations abound. Recall that in order to ensure doctrinal safety in this book, I have chosen to only include excerpts from her writings that are contained in Fr. Iannuzzi’s Dissertation.

## **Receiving the Gift: Renunciation of Self-Will**

The most important thing to know from the onset, and to continue to remind yourself throughout the process of growth in the Gift, is that there are no special formulas, no magical procedures, and no Gnostic<sup>53</sup> secrets. Jesus Himself says precisely this to Luisa in her revelations, and insists that what matters is simply the soul’s desire for the Gift.<sup>54</sup> The Gift of Living in the Divine Will is a grace, and it is given in the same manner as is all grace: based upon the humble, pure, sincere receptivity of the one who desires it. If all you are left with once you are finished

Christ; not because it is objectively impossible to be saved without explicit Faith in Him while on earth - see *Lumen Gentium* paragraph 16 -, but because that clear, explicit Faith is an enormous benefit to salvation.

with this book is the reminder to earnestly ask, with trust, that God bestow upon you the greatest union with Him possible, then that is enough. Such a prayer is not only clearly permissible to speak, but it would even be lamentable for a Catholic to forego such a prayer, for that would entail a false humility that simply fails to recognize the love that God has for His creatures. Nevertheless, God cannot, as it were, give us the gift of His Will if we insist upon clinging to our own wills. Hence, the need for renunciation of the self-will.

So let us begin our discussion of this renunciation by meditating upon several teachings from the great Saints of the Church on the disposition needed to receive this Gift. These saints were perfectly disposed for the Gift of Living in the Divine Will, even though they did not live in the time that God, in His inscrutable wisdom, deigned to grant this Gift to mankind.<sup>55</sup> The Gift of Living in the Divine Will, and indeed Luisa's revelations in general, do not dispense us from one iota of the traditional means of pursuing sanctity that have developed so beautifully throughout two thousand years of Catholic tradition (if anything, we are now obliged to pursue these means *more* zealously, as was the insistence of St. Hannibal, who said "[Those who seek to live in the Divine Will] must also have all the virtues, and in heroic degree, of ancient Saints..."<sup>56</sup>).

- St. Alphonsus Liguori, Doctor of the Church: "The essence of perfection is to embrace the will of God in all things, prosperous or adverse...It is certain and of faith, that whatever happens, happens by the will of God...Let us will always and ever only what God wills; for so doing, he will press us to his heart."<sup>57</sup>
- St. Catherine of Siena, Doctor of the Church: "...like the burning coal that no one can put

out once it is completely consumed in the furnace, because it has itself been turned into fire. So it is with these souls cast into the furnace of [God's] charity, who keep nothing at all, not a bit of their own will... They have been made one with [God] and [God] with them."<sup>58</sup>

- St. John of the Cross, Doctor of the Church: "The entire matter of reaching union with God consists in purging the will of its appetites and emotions so that from a human and lowly will it may be changed into the divine will, made identical with the will of God."<sup>59</sup>
- St. Therese of Lisieux, Doctor of the Church: "In Heaven, God will do all I desire, because on earth I have never done my own will."<sup>60</sup>
- Bl. Mother Teresa of Calcutta: "To be a saint means...I will renounce my will, my inclinations, my whims and fancies, and make myself a willing slave to the will of God."

The common thread in these quotes is clear, and it is identical to the necessary disposition to receive the Gift of Living in the Divine Will: the total renunciation of the self-will.

What exactly is the total renunciation of the self-will? First I must establish that it is diametrically opposed to the heresy of Quietism (ironically the very thing a few accuse Luisa's revelations of promoting), for "*The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away.*"<sup>61</sup> Quietism teaches a simple passivity and indifference to all things; by this false teaching, the only negative thing is to exert the will whatsoever. There is not one page of Luisa's writings that fails to dispute Quietism.<sup>62</sup> It has long been understood that self-renunciation, or "abandonment," can be misinterpreted in a quietist fashion,<sup>63</sup> so it should not be surprising that some confuse the two as intrinsically linked, which would necessarily lead

<sup>55</sup> See the Answers to Objections chapter for more on this point

<sup>56</sup> Fr. Joseph Iannuzzi. *Splendor of Creation*. Page 121

<sup>57</sup> St. Alphonsus Liguori, *Uniformity with God's Will*.

<sup>58</sup> St. Catherine of Siena: *The Dialogue*, p. 147.

<sup>59</sup> St. John of the Cross: *Ascent of Mt Carmel*. Book III, Ch. 16, Paragraph 3.

<sup>60</sup> St. Therese of Lisieux: *Counsels and Reminiscences*, p. 23.

<sup>61</sup> Matthew 11:12

<sup>62</sup> Pope Innocent XI wrote an Encyclical against Quietism, *Coelestis Pastor*, in which forty three propositions are condemned. The 12<sup>th</sup> condemned proposition gives a particularly good insight into what the heresy of Quietism is, as it states "*He who gives his own free will*

*to God should care about nothing, neither about hell, nor about heaven; neither ought he to have a desire for his own perfection, nor for virtues, nor his own sanctity, nor his own salvation-the hope of which he ought to remove.*" Luisa represents the very opposite of this approach; for one example, when she learns of her mother's death, she incessantly begs Jesus to deliver her mother from Purgatory until He finally does so!

<sup>63</sup> For example, the 1914 Catholic Encyclopedia article on Abandonment states "*It is also misused to express a quietistic condition of the soul, which excludes not only all personal effort, but even desires, and disposes one to accept evil with the fatalistic motive that it cannot be helped.*"

them to wrongly accuse Luisa's writings of Quietism.

In truth, rather, the total renunciation of the self-will taught by Catholic tradition and insisted upon in Luisa's writings is a vigorous battle that we must fight every moment of every day. It involves both the moral and the supernatural virtues, a spirit of constant prayer and thanksgiving, absolute trust in Providence no matter the situation, mortification of flesh, and profound humility.<sup>64</sup>

The first thing we should consider in the renunciation of the self-will is how we respond to those crosses that are already a part of our lives. Jesus tells Luisa that this response is what differentiates the elect from the reprobate. St. Faustina said, "I often felt the Passion of the Lord Jesus in my body, although this was imperceptible [to others], and I rejoiced in it because Jesus wanted it so. But this lasted for only a short time. These sufferings set my soul afire with love for God and for immortal souls. Love endures everything, love is stronger than death, love fears nothing..."<sup>65</sup> Whether or not you pursue mortification of flesh and a life of penance, you will suffer. But the question is: what will you do with this suffering? Dwell on how annoyed you are at it and whatever or whomever caused it? Lament it and complain about it? Endlessly ponder how you could have avoided it to try to ensure you won't have to feel it again? Stop at nothing to try and be rid of it? These attitudes do not conform to God's will or the necessary trust we must have in it. Therefore we must honestly take stock of how we react to suffering. If you are one of the types to react in the ways mentioned, it might be rather hard, and maybe even impossible, to receive the Gift.

If, however, you unite all suffering that God's Will permits you to undergo with Christ's passion, and meditate upon His own sufferings, then this achievement can powerfully inflame your love and desire and dispose you to receive the Gift, and God will say to you what He said to Faustina:

***"Host pleasing to My Father, know, My daughter, that the entire Holy Trinity finds Its special delight in you, because you live***

<sup>64</sup> This is not to put Luisa's writings on the opposite extreme of Jansenism. Jesus also firmly dispels that heresy to Luisa, insisting to her, for example, that forgiven sin should not be dwelt upon, and admonishing her against neglecting to receive Communion over scruples regarding trifles, temptations, and fears.

***exclusively by the will of God. No sacrifice can compare with this.*** 'After these words, the knowledge of God's will came to me; that is to say, I now see everything from a higher point of view and accept all events and things, pleasant and unpleasant, with love, as tokens of the heavenly Father's special affection. The pure offering of my will will burn on the altar of love. That my sacrifice may be perfect, I unite myself closely with the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. When great sufferings will cause my nature to tremble, and my physical and spiritual strength will diminish, then will I hide myself deep in the open wound of the Heart of Jesus, silent as a dove, without complaint. Let all my desires, even the holiest, noblest and most beautiful, take always the last place and Your holy will, the very first. The least of Your desires, O Lord, is more precious to me than heaven, with all its treasures. I know very well that people will not understand me; that is why my sacrifice will be purer in Your eyes."<sup>66</sup>

If you were to quickly leaf through St. Faustina's diary, one thing especially would strike you: an entire page with a large "X" over it along with the words "From today on, my own will does not exist."<sup>67</sup> She wrote this in her own diary - reproduced faithfully in the printings of it - because Jesus had specifically directed her to do precisely that. This direction occurred after she had prayed "I beg You, by all the love with which Your Heart burns, to destroy completely within me my self-love and, on the other hand, to enkindle in my heart the fire of Your purest love..."<sup>68</sup> Jesus responded, "you will cancel out your will absolutely in this retreat and, instead, My complete will shall be accomplished in you."<sup>69</sup>

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Precisely what does a complete "cancellation" of the self-will entail? We must be completely practical and honest: first, it means following the Commandments, no matter our temptations, desires, inclinations, or whatever else. But there also must be mortification of flesh. The beginning of Luisa's writings especially is full of invitations from Jesus to mortify her inclinations; in food, in comforts, in conversation, in amusements and enjoyments, etc. There is no use looking to Divine Will Spirituality as

<sup>65</sup> St. Faustina, *Divine Mercy in my Soul*, Paragraph 46.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 955-957.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 374.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 371.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 372.

a shortcut around the ascetical life. If anything, it is an ever-deeper invitation into it!

Why? Because a spiritual cream puff will always do the self-will. Laxity and lenience in the spiritual life will never succeed. The fallen aspect of our nature, which hates growth in the spiritual life, makes sure we always have plenty of excuses if it is not overcome by discipline. Please do not think you have this area of the spiritual life covered just because you have two small meals and one big meal on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday! St. Josemaría Escrivá said that the day you have eaten a meal without at some point during it mortifying the flesh by holding back from completely indulging the appetite is the day you have eaten like a pagan. St. Faustina said it is so important to undertake small sufferings willingly each day so that we are prepared for the big ones when they come. Of course, only God's grace will get us through difficulties, but let us not forget that grace also builds upon nature, and we are not thereby dispensed from doing our part. God understands, yes — He is well aware of the weakness of our flesh. He is also well aware of the strength of the spirit He has put in us! We mustn't presumptuously suppose He will be pleased by the refusal to exercise it.

Fasting from food is perhaps the most important form of mortification. This discipline is largely frowned upon today by those who say that "fasting" from other things will suffice. That is a not true! Fasting, in the most literal possible terms, is more direly needed today than ever before; in so many apparitions Our Lady is begging us to fast. This should be a part of our weekly routine in whatever form and to whatever extent we discern we are called.

Some will say that mortification should only occur under the close supervision of a spiritual director, but that is not always realistic. Spiritual direction is very important, and you should indeed pray that God sends you a spiritual director, as well as seek one out (one who ideally will be a holy and orthodox priest). But even with that diligence, some will take years to find a spiritual director, and mortification must not be put off for years. Try small but consistent mortifications (and tell no one, lest they merely become bragging points). In this way we work, slowly but surely (which is often the best way) at canceling the self-will. I am most definitely not

advocating for a stoic approach to life. Remember that God wants us to be happy and partake in wholesome enjoyments as well! But mortification must be a regular - daily - part of our lives. Just be sure to be constantly on guard against pride, and keep the mortifications small enough that you are not at all tempted to brag (even to yourself) about them.

When it comes to the larger mortifications, penances, and sacrifices, great care must be taken. God needs victim souls, yes, and we should indeed offer ourselves as these. But consider that a sacrifice which is holy and pleasing in God's sight is in fact one that causes less suffering than would its absence. This simple truth was demonstrated all throughout Luisa's life. When she was deprived of the sufferings that she wished to undertake for Jesus (perhaps because holy obedience, to which all in her life was submitted, directed otherwise), it was this deprivation that caused her more anguish than the suffering itself! We should apply that to our own lives as well. For example, if you feel called to take on a daily holy hour at nocturnal adoration from 3am-4am as a sacrifice, then you may indeed well be. But pause to ensure that you do so not out of a sense of external imposition, but out of a sense of internal attraction (incidentally, this is the key to discernment in general). For if such a sacrifice is to be pleasing in God's sight, then it is a response to a desire He has put on your heart, and the refusal of that desire causes you more suffering (often in the form of restlessness, anxiety, and frustration) than would dragging yourself out of bed at 2:30am each day.

To illustrate the same concept in more human terms, imagine your closest loved one stuck in her car in a snow bank on the side of the road many miles away from any sign of life. It will be a long time until help can come and she will be cold, hungry, and thirsty. Wouldn't you rather be with her than merely be comfortable at home? Wouldn't partaking in the cold, hunger, and thirst along with her be better than bearing the sorrow of knowing that your loved one suffers alone?

And now consider an everyday example. You arrived at a busy event early enough to reserve for yourself a nice comfortable seat. As the event begins, you recognize an elderly woman struggling to remain standing in the aisle. Wouldn't you yourself, taking



her place and bearing the discomfort of a long duration of standing, involve less suffering than seeing her in pain as you sit comfortably?

This is how we must suffer redemptively. If we have no desire to suffer redemptively (or, in other words, to offer ourselves as victim souls) then we have a problem that we must work to resolve, and not a mere lack of a calling to be victim souls! A healthy young man really *must* give up his seat for that struggling elderly woman. It is not a matter of discernment, but as you can see, it requires love. I will discuss this in more detail in the section on the *Hours of the Passion*. In these writings of Luisa, we learn a profound truth about redemptive suffering on our part; in other words, about being victim souls. We learn that it is really about simply being close to Jesus, and not primarily about experiencing a certain degree of pain. We are not supposed to go about intentionally making our lives miserable in an effort to be victim souls! That would amount to masochism, or at best a misguided stoicism. Rather, we are to be utterly close to Jesus, to meditate upon His sufferings, to be with Him in them (especially by being with Him as long as possible in adoration of the Eucharist, in which all of His Acts – including those of His passion – are present), and to be completely open to whatever He may give us. So long as this openness is genuine and sincere, it can itself be just as meritorious as the suffering of one with miraculous visible stigmata, even if this openness has only so far resulted in smaller sufferings (which none of us are free from), nevertheless borne with gratitude, joy, love, and patience.

We know that the beautiful and still urgently necessary Sacred Heart devotion given to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque has its Scriptural basis in St. John resting his head on Jesus' chest at the Last Supper. In Luisa's *Hours of the Passion*, we learn that Jesus, after observing Judas choosing damnation, was so devastated, that He was in need of consolation from a soul that would let Him save him. Jesus therefore took the beloved apostle and placed his head on His own Most Sacred Heart. Herein lies the essence of the consolation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and therefore of redemptive suffering in general: being

close enough to Him that He – and you – can delight in the fact that you have said, and firmly intend to, say “yes” to Him – *Fiat*. It is good that you are willing to carry Christ's cross with Him, and carry it you must, to whatever extent He permits. But in reality, you could not carry one microscopic splinter of that cross. He does it all; and Living in the Divine Will makes that even truer. Your duty is simply to be near Him, even in your imperfection, and to be unafraid of His wounds, for that means the world (and more) to Him. In addition to the Eucharist, it is also essential to find this closeness to Him through His Word: Sacred Scripture (by way of *Lectio Divina*), and through His mystical body, the Church, especially in her suffering and poor members. By constantly being among these three presences of Christ, we develop the openness needed in order to be victim souls and help bring to fruition God's plan for our times.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, God told Sr. Mary of the Holy Trinity (whose writings also exhibit the same fundamental sanctity as Luisa's Gift of Living in the Divine Will)<sup>70</sup> “*I desire an army of apostolic souls... not to expiate the sins of others by extraordinary trials; no... I desire a great army of victim souls who will join me in the apostolate of My Eucharistic Life... I desire these victims to be everywhere: in the world and in the cloisters; in every occupation... in families... everywhere... I want souls to know that by the Vow of Victim they enter into a life of union with Me... It is thus that society will be reconstituted.*”<sup>71</sup>

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So offering one's self as a victim soul is perhaps the single most powerful means of the renunciation of the self-will. But there are more things we can consider to this end.

For example, another way to begin the renunciation of the self-will is to (without succumbing to a form of Providentialism that amounts to neglect of duties and commitments) develop a preferential option for both the opinions and preferences of those around us and for the direction given by the circumstances we find ourselves in – over and above the plans we may have

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Fr. Iannuzzi. *Splendor of Creation*. Page 113

<sup>71</sup> Sr. Mary of the Holy Trinity, excerpted from *They Bore the Wounds of the Christ: The Mystery of the Sacred Stigmata* by Michael Freze. Pages 66-67.

made - to guide our days. Ponder ways you can make yourself more docile to the workings of the Holy Spirit through the people and circumstances around you. Perhaps you simply need to add some serenity to your days. Constantly being in a rush is one of the most effective ways of making this docility impossible. There is no time to relish the moment, no time to respond to the needs of those you pass, no time to evangelize, and no time to pray carefully, if you are rushing. Try leaving for things earlier and spacing out your events more prudently, and you can watch all of the opportunities for grace that Providence has wanted to shower upon your life open up before you; and see things that you used to have to strive with such difficulty to achieve happen naturally.

Renunciation should also be seen as an essential aspect of the Imitation of Christ, for He “emptied himself, taking the form of a slave...becoming obedient even unto death; death on a cross.”<sup>72</sup> In its commentary on French Spirituality, the New Catholic Encyclopedia says the following: “In the complete possession of Christ’s humanity by the divinity wherein the humanity of Christ lacks its own subsistence, its own personality, they saw the absolute condition of self-renouncement and clinging to God. From this state of ‘infinite servitude’ they drew the most fundamental characteristic of their spirituality—the deep, total renunciation of self that is at the same time total adherence to Christ and being possessed by Him.”<sup>73</sup> Earlier we settled that the Incarnation was the greatest event in history. But let us now consider how much of a self-renunciation it was for the Second Person of the Thrice Holy God to so infinitely empty Himself as to be born in the likeness of sinful flesh. He, the almighty and eternal God, “infinitely perfect and blessed in himself,”<sup>74</sup> Who needs nothing and from Whom all good things proceed, deigned to descend a greater distance than you would if you were to become an ant, or rather, a speck of dust. This is not to mention the unimaginable emptying of self through the scandal of the Cross that this omnipotent Son of God undertook. He Who could have unmade the universe with a thought instead submitted Himself to an unheard of torturous, public, humiliating death. Confronted with such an unspeakable and indescribable

renunciation of self, how could we – who are nothing – dare hold onto even the smallest morsel of our own puny and pathetic self-wills?

Summing up the importance and the effects of the renunciation of the self-will is a beautiful soliloquy written by an 18<sup>th</sup> century Jesuit priest, Jean-Pierre de Caussade. I present it here in its entirety because of how spot-on it is with what we are aiming for in becoming disposed to receive the Gift of Living in the Divine Will:

*“If, besides, [souls that tend towards sanctity] understood that to attain the utmost height of perfection, the safest and surest way is to accept the crosses sent them by Providence at every moment, that the true philosopher’s stone is submission to the will of God which changes into divine gold all their occupations, troubles, and sufferings, what consolation would be theirs! What courage would they not derive from the thought that to acquire the friendship of God, and to arrive at eternal glory, they had but to do what they were doing, but to suffer what they were suffering, and that what they wasted and counted as nothing would suffice to enable them to arrive at eminent sanctity: far more so than extraordinary states and wonderful works. O my God! how much I long to be the missionary of Your holy will, and to teach all men that there is nothing more easy, more attainable, more within reach, and in the power of everyone, than sanctity. How I wish that I could make them understand that just as the good and the bad thief had the same things to do and to suffer; so also two persons, one of whom is worldly and the other leading an interior and wholly spiritual life have, neither of them, anything different to do or to suffer; but that one is sanctified and attains eternal happiness by submission to Your holy will in those very things by which the other is damned because he does them to please himself, or endures them with reluctance and rebellion. This proves that it is only the heart that is different. Oh! All you that read this, it will cost you no more than to do what you are doing, to suffer what you are suffering, only act and suffer in a holy manner. It is the heart that must be changed. When I say heart, I mean will. Sanctity, then, consists in willing all that God wills for us. Yes! Sanctity of heart is a simple “fiat,”*

<sup>72</sup> Philippians 2:7

<sup>73</sup> *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, “Spirituality, French School of.” Page 450

<sup>74</sup> The First Paragraph of the Catechism of the Catholic Church

*a conformity of will with the will of God.*<sup>75</sup>

Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary as taught by St. Louis de Montfort as well as St. Maximilian Kolbe and others, is an especially powerful means to renounce the self-will and open ones' self to the Gift of Living in the Divine Will. For by way of this devotion, we give all that we have, not merely physical and temporal, but even all of our intentions and all of our good works, to our Heavenly Mother. She, like her Divine Son, is never outdone in generosity, and she will exchange our meager merits with her own perfect merits and clothe us with her own splendor. We must remember that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the Mediatrix of All Grace, and that the Gift of Living in the Divine Will is a grace! Therefore if we desire this gift, we must consecrate ourselves to Mary, from whom we will receive it, and ask her for it. Those well versed in St. Louis' True Devotion will likely find Living in the Divine Will the logical extension of what is promised therein; for indeed, St. Louis rightly tells us that when we consecrate ourselves to Our Lady, she gives us her own virtues and merits. Now, few have any trouble realizing that her virtues and merits are precisely those described as proceeding *from the Divine Will*, and therefore it follows that we ourselves must also be given the grace of living and acting *in the Divine Will*, if Our Lady is to be fully true to her promise as St. Louis describes it (which of course she will be).

*“Once this good Mother has received our complete offering ...She clothes us in the clean, new, precious and fragrant garments of [her Son Jesus Christ]... she is the treasurer and universal dispenser of the merits and virtues of Jesus her Son. She gives and distributes them to whom she pleases, when she pleases, as she pleases, and as much as she pleases...She imparts new perfume and fresh grace to those garments and adornments by adding to them the garments of her own wardrobe of merits and virtues. ... Thus all her domestics, that is, all her servants and slaves, are clothed with double garments, her own and*

<sup>75</sup> *Abandonment to Divine Providence* (also known as The Sacrament of the Present Moment). Jean-Pierre de Caussade. Section IX.

<sup>76</sup> St. Louis de Montfort. *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*. Paragraph 206

<sup>77</sup> In another sense of the word, “Abandonment” can also referred to the feeling that one is forsaken by God, as in the Dark Night of the Soul. Additionally, beware of false notions of abandonment that entail an act of surrender to things that are intrinsically contrary to His Will; e.g. sacrificing your very salvation for the sake of

*those of her Son.*<sup>76</sup>

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There is so much more that can be said on the renunciation of the self-will, but the bottom line is that it is a battle that must be continually fought. There is no difference between the renunciation of the self-will in Luisa's writings and those of any of the saints (referred to also as abandonment,<sup>77</sup> surrender, abnegation, or emptying), so feel free to pursue this end by means of whatever orthodox Catholic spirituality you feel drawn to. St. Francis de Sales, often known as the doctor of the spiritual life for the laity, is also referred to as the “Doctor of Self-Abandonment,”<sup>78</sup> and his works are very much worth reading in pursuing this.<sup>79</sup> I will end this discussion with a quote from Bl. John of Rusbroeck, a concrete piece of advice for you to act on, and a brief list of potential next steps. *“By renouncing self-will in doing, in leaving undone, and in suffering, the material and occasion of pride are wholly cast out, and humility is made perfect in the highest degree. And God becomes the Lord of the man's whole will; and the man's will is so united with the will of God that he can neither will nor desire in any other way. This man has put off the old man, and has put on the new man, who is renewed and made according to the dearest will of God. Of all such Christ says: Blessed are the poor in spirit - that is to say, those who have renounced self-will - for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.”*<sup>80</sup>

Perhaps, then, you could attempt the following simple spiritual exercise. Place yourself, sitting or kneeling, in front of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Strive to be as close to Him as possible; at least ensuring that no one is in-between you and Him. Remain there for a time with arms at your side or resting on your lap, and with palms facing up toward the Tabernacle or Monstrance.<sup>81</sup> In this posture, meditate upon everything you hold dear; not just possessions, not just friends, not just family, but even your intentions, your plans for the future, your desire

abandonment. That is a contradiction, the very opposite of true renunciation of the self-will, and is a form of Quietism.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Self-abandonment, Spiritual Page 884

<sup>79</sup> Particularly noteworthy among his works are: *Introduction to the Devout Life* and *Finding God's Will for You*.

<sup>80</sup> *Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage*. 14

<sup>81</sup> This same exercise is efficacious in front of a Divine Mercy image.

to avoid certain things and pursue other things, your temporal hopes, your good works, your very self, *everything* - meditate on simply dumping it all out in front of the Tabernacle for Jesus to do with as He wishes. Envision this being like casting the small pebble of your will into the immense sea of Christ's Divinity which dwells in all its fullness mere feet in front of you. Tell Him that you do this with all of your freedom, with all of your love, and with all of your desire to be filled with nothing but His Divine Will. Most importantly in this act, converse with Him in your own words, as you would with a trusted friend. You could also use words to the effect of "*Jesus, I am nothing, You are everything. Take all that I am and all that I have. Give, in return, all that You are and all that You have. For I wish to have no will but Yours.*" And "*The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the Name of the Lord.*"<sup>82</sup>

Other practices that help us to renounce the self-will include:

- Obeying even when we can get away with disobeying (for example, submitting to non-infallible but nevertheless Magisterial statements<sup>83</sup> that we feel like opposing).
- Bearing insults and all sorts of persecution with complete silence, and praying for whomever they come from.
- Giving alms generously and taking care to not be noticed.
- Performing works of mercy.
- Meditating each day on the Four Last Things<sup>84</sup> - especially as we fall asleep.
- Confessing our sins regularly in the Sacrament of Penance in a heartfelt and open manner, after a thorough and prayerful examination of conscience.
- Clearing worldly clutter that breeds attachment from our homes, cars, daily routines, etc., and instead living frugally and simply.
- Performing a regular life *examen*<sup>85</sup> to remind

ourselves that the self-will has never before given us the happiness it promised.

- Praying each day with our families at home (especially the Rosary) so as to help ensure these relationships are grounded in God and lead us toward God instead of causing inordinate attachment to creatures.
- Remaining silent even when we are right.
- Taking measures to not be noticed or thanked for good deeds and pious practices.
- Doing all we can to help ourselves *enjoy* prayer more than anything else we do: going on Rosary walks in a beautiful place in God's creation, taking time to say our prayers slowly enough to relish them, seeking out Masses that are said reverently, having always at hand a favorite holy hymn, Scripture passage, Psalm, etc., to recite when we find ourselves slothful, and other such measures.<sup>86</sup>

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Merely to oppose an evil,<sup>87</sup> however, is a dead end; no one has the strength to fight this battle successfully if he is not inflamed with love and desire of the opposite good. Buddhism and other eastern Pagan religions erroneously teach the elimination of all desire as the necessary thing; with the corresponding emptying of self as an end in itself. Christianity, on the other hand, entails the precise opposite: the emptying of self as a mere step in being filled with the Holy Spirit, and ardent desire as the means by which this goal is attained.

These two ends - renunciation of self-will and desire for the Gift of Living in the Divine Will - must be pursued simultaneously, as it is unlikely that you will soon arrive at the point where you can realistically say you have either end mastered.

## Receiving the Gift: Desire

spiritual commitments and regimens whether or not we're in the mood on any given day. We should also do works of mercy that are in no way enjoyable in and of themselves; for example, praying outside a Planned Parenthood despite being heckled for it, or visiting those in nursing homes despite overwhelmingly bad odors.

<sup>87</sup> The human will is not an evil, rather only the "self-will," meaning the movement of the human will that resists or opposes the Divine Will, is evil.

<sup>82</sup> Job 1:21

<sup>83</sup> Whatever teachings are contained in Encyclicals, Apostolic Exhortations, Council Documents, etc. are necessarily Magisterial; even if not every statement in them qualifies as an infallible proclamation on Faith or Morals.

<sup>84</sup> Death, Judgment, Hell, Heaven

<sup>85</sup> The Examen is an exercise in Ignatian Spirituality whereby we prayerfully reflect on God's presence and activity in our lives

<sup>86</sup> Just do not let this become an insistence on *always* enjoying yourself with prayer. We must remain faithful to our prayer and other

To receive the Gift of Living in the Divine Will, we must fan the flames of our desire for it into a roaring fire. Pay special attention to St. Faustina, whose revelations on the Divine Mercy not only overlap with the Gift of Living in the Divine Will, as will be discussed more in the following section, but also serve as the greatest preparation for receiving the Gift of Living in the Divine Will by her descriptions of the type of holy desire, especially in the Eucharist, that we must have.

## Desire in the Eucharist

St. Faustina often referred to the Blessed Sacrament as a “living host,” until one day when her desire for union with Christ became so great, she wrote in her diary, “*When I had received Jesus in Holy Communion, my heart cried out with all its might, ‘Jesus, transform me into another host! I want to be a living host for You. You are a great and all-powerful Lord; You can grant me this favor.’*” As soon as she made this request, He responded that she was indeed, at that moment, a living host.<sup>88</sup> In other words, she had received the Gift of Living in the Divine Will. Here then is the vital disposition in receiving the Gift: a burning desire for the greatest possible union with God imbued with a firm trust that - in His omnipotence and mercy - He can and will grant it. Faustina displayed this perfectly, and therefore He readily gave her that Gift, despite her not having specific knowledge of it through Luisa’s writings. But specific knowledge of this Gift’s precise and complete explication (which is only found in Luisa’s revelations) is extraordinarily helpful nevertheless, and can partially make up for (though *never* dispense from the whole-hearted pursuit of) what an ordinary soul may lack in the heroic virtue that Faustina possessed. In either case, the grace flows from the Eucharist, and this is how we too should enkindle our desire for the Gift.

In another excerpt from her diary, which emphasizes the particular beauty of the desire for the

Gift of Living in the Divine Will, we see more evidence of the primacy of the Eucharist. “*Most sweet Jesus, set on fire my love for You and transform me into Yourself. Divinize me that my deeds may be pleasing to You. May this be accomplished by the power of the Holy Communion which I receive daily. Oh, how greatly I desire to be wholly transformed into You, O Lord!*”<sup>89</sup> As stated in Vatican II, reiterated by the Catechism, and emphasized by countless great men and women of Faith, the Eucharist is the Source and Summit of the life of a Christian. In a real way, the Eucharist is the Divine Will, for the Divine Will is God, and the Eucharist is God. In terms of enkindling our desire for the Gift, preparing ourselves to receive the Gift, and growing in the Gift of Living in the Divine Will, there is absolutely no close second to Eucharistic devotion. Luisa’s entire life demonstrated this, and St. Faustina recognized it, as evidenced by this excerpt from her diary. Lengthy Eucharistic adoration and frequent Communion, approached with unbounded reverence, fervency, trust, and love, will be the sure means of calling down the Divine Will upon your soul.<sup>90</sup>

Pope St. John Paul II himself agreed, saying “*This sublime and demanding reality [following God’s will] can only be grasped and lived in a spirit of constant prayer. This is the secret, if we are to enter into and dwell in God’s will. Thus what are extremely helpful are the initiatives of prayer - especially **Eucharistic adoration** - that young people are spreading in the Diocese of Rome as a result of your work.*”<sup>91</sup> The emphasis is from the original.

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The devil recognizes this connection, and has been working at a frantic pace recently to wreak havoc upon this primary means of the coming of the Reign of the Divine Will, a Reign that is equally validly considered Eucharistic. Satan’s victories (temporary though they will be) are sadly all too clear. He has convinced most Catholics to not even attend Mass regularly, and even among those that do, most communions appear sacrilegious.<sup>92</sup> Instead of consoling Jesus, sacrilegious Communion scourge

<sup>88</sup> St. Faustina, *Divine Mercy in my Soul*, Paragraph 1826.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 1289.

<sup>90</sup> Confusions regarding comparisons between the Eucharist and the Gift of Living in the Divine Will are discussed in the “Answers to Objections” Chapter

<sup>91</sup> Address of John Paul II to the youth of Rome preparing for world youth day. March 21st, 2002. Paragraph 5. vatican.va

<sup>92</sup> That is, as a simple analysis of the facts suggests, most Catholics who receive Communion nevertheless live in a state of objective grave sin and do not go to confession, nor do they even believe in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. Such an analysis makes no attempt to ascertain their culpability, which God alone knows, but is still an important analysis to make, lest we simply bury our heads in the sand.



Him all over again and sabotage His plan on Earth. Restricting our consideration now to those who appear to receive worthily, they often (if not usually) nevertheless treat Him as a dead object,<sup>93</sup> approaching reception of Communion as just another box to check off on the to-do list. They have less reverence than they would have at any serious secular event, and less love than they have in pursuing their hobbies. Even at daily Mass, many parishes seem to be not places of prayer, but rather places of socialization, where discussing the details of the day's errands seems far more important than prayerfully preparing for, or giving thanks for, receiving the Almighty and Eternal God in the Eucharist (and this is not to mention the far worse utter disregard for reverence and silence at many Sunday Masses). More emphasis is placed on the fellowship aspect than on the fact that here creatures gather to worship their Creator in His Real Presence, a presence far greater than even Moses had access to in the Tent of Meeting, and we know that there was rightly no frivolity in the latter. If there is any significant amount of true Faith in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, then this is certainly not evidenced in the least in the deeds and demeanors of average Churchgoers.

The devil has furthermore convinced all too many pastors that they are not shepherds, but rather mere buddies, whose job it is only to facilitate whatever inclinations his parishioners might have. Therefore, as with a businessman competing for patrons, so here with the pastor correction is never given, and worldliness defines the direction of his flock. And far from merely refusing to issue fatherly correction, his own choices also become defined by the same worldliness. The safety of the gold candlesticks becomes more important than keeping the Church open so that his flock may be with their Eucharistic Lord in prayer, at any time.<sup>94</sup> In this we can see that the Tabernacle becomes Jesus' prison within a prison; and not only that, but one in which visitors are not allowed. Homilies become rambling, platitudinous story-telling times devoid of any truly edifying content, or, even worse, explicitly contain convenient heresies, encourage lukewarmness, and stifle grace. The Creed and the prayers of the Liturgy

of the Eucharist are then sloppily rushed through, and only the bare minimum is included - that is, if the prayers are even obediently said as contained in the Missal at all, which (especially given the new translation) does not happen in the case of a priest who wants at all costs to avoid giving the congregation any sense of the power that flows from the Eucharist, preferring it to be seen as a "communal meal" and nothing more. The Confiteor, Collects, Prefaces, Antiphons, etc. are completely ignored. Familiarity, silliness, superficial joviality, effeminacy, and childishness begin then to permeate everything; whether in the Sanctuary, in the pews, or in the sacristy. These sacristies begin to sound like coffee shops before and after Mass instead of places of prayerful preparation and thanksgiving. Confession is offered for half-an-hour a week; in other words, it is practically non-existent. Any attempt from an inspired parishioner to initiate perpetual adoration, Benedictions, devotions, processions, evangelization efforts, vigils, and the like are met with tepidity at best, but even more often with downright rejection, as such things are foreign to the culture that has conquered the parish. The list goes on and on.

As you can see, the devil is terrified of what will come if the graces of the Eucharist are unleashed upon the Church and the world; hence, in every way he can, he strives to put a stranglehold on these channels of grace.

This discourse is no mere aside to the focus of this book. I am concentrating so much on the issue because a rediscovery of the Eucharistic source and summit of Catholicism is the only way we can hope to live in the Divine Will as individuals *and as a Church*; for we must make no mistake that God is calling us to this latter end as well. As a dog on a chain,<sup>95</sup> the devil has no power over us, and we do not need to let him succeed in his efforts. Our duty is to be signs of contradiction against this Eucharistic irreverence and neglect that he has insinuated into the Church; not with the slightest hint of judgment or in ostentation, but in silent, meek, perseverant witness.

While tradition should always be our

<sup>93</sup> Jesus complains of this to St. Faustina, *Cf. Divine Mercy in my Soul*, paragraph 447, 1385.

<sup>94</sup> Pope Francis calls the many reasons parishes give for locking their doors "excuses," and insists that the doors should be open - literally. See also *Evangelii Gaudium*, paragraph 47.

<sup>95</sup> Attributed to Padre Pio

foundation as Catholics, it would nevertheless be wrong to boil this issue down to a “Latin Mass vs. Novus Ordo” debate. The real issue is far deeper and its implications far less subject to a rigid one-size-fits-all solution. What is essential is that our hearts - and our actions that proceed from them - are formed by the simple fact that the Eucharist is truly Jesus Christ. When it comes to the details, remember that God has the angels for perfect worship, and we need not let our hearts be troubled by every Liturgical imperfection we witness. Focus on the fundamental attitudes and approaches to the Eucharist.

But how exactly do we fight this battle? We must do so by choosing the path of Mary, not the path of Peter in the garden. Peter reacted with violence and anger at His Lord being disrespected, and became consumed by it. As the path he chose was devoid of grace, since it was not God’s will, he did not even have the strength to remain close to Jesus, and instead denied Him. This is the path chosen by no small number of Catholics today who, seeing the sorry state of the Church and especially how the Eucharist is treated, become increasingly caustic in their language, wrathful in their hearts, enclosed in their circles, joyless in their demeanor, rigid on what is optional, and in a word, completely lacking the doctrinally-defined Twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit, which are the sure evidence of God’s presence in the heart.

Peter was not there for Jesus – not in the way that Jesus actually wanted of him. Jesus wanted prayer, and Peter wanted sleep, and we know whose will prevailed in that case. Peter was, however, ready and willing to throw a fit when things started going wrong. Is that what we are like? Are we doing what Jesus is clearly asking of us now - that is, what He is asking us through Scripture, through the Magisterium, through apparitions of His mother, and through His Vicar, the Pope? Are we adoring the Eucharist and receiving it as often as possible with love and reverence, performing works of mercy, going out to the peripheries, evangelizing, living and spreading the Divine Mercy devotion, fulfilling Our Lady’s requests at Fatima, fasting and sacrificing, etc.? Or are we, like Peter, sleeping through all of these clear calls from heaven, even though we are quite ready to complain, criticize, and gossip about the sins and bad decisions of individual priests, bishops, and others in the Church?

Do not follow that path. If you do, then you will fall like Peter did, because Jesus loves you far too much to see you go along that path for long. In your fall, you will be humbled, and you will need to start anew. But why not recognize that, and start anew right now?

Therefore take heart, and let us not be like Peter but rather like Mary, at the foot of the cross, enduring not only the passion of her Son, but also the raucous debauchery of the drunken soldiers around her. She did not judge even them, and they did not feel judged by her. But, even while on earth, not one of them forgot her witness, for it was emblazoned upon their memories like a flash of lightning illuminating a landscape. Similarly, the cowardly apostles no doubt felt no judgment from Mary, even though they felt ashamed of their own cowardice due to her example of strength and trust.

We must, therefore, first of all pray earnestly and frequently for our priests, without a hint of judgment on them. Remember that the demons, knowing that their most lethal strategy is to strike the shepherds, focus far more of their attention on tempting them than upon tempting lay people. Remember also that they gave up their lives to bring you the Sacraments. We must never be critical or gossipy, but instead persevere as silent, strong, humble witnesses to love of, and reverence for, the Eucharist. Remember that Mary, Mother of the Eucharist, is ever our patroness and intercessor in this struggle.

We must spare no expense to ensure that the Eucharist is truly the source and summit of our lives as Christians. This means attending Mass as often as possible and taking each one as seriously as if it were the last Mass ever to be said. If Catholics had the slightest notion of the graces given by the Eucharist, each daily Mass would be just as crowded as Sunday Mass. It means approaching Mass not as an errand, not as a mere stop on the itinerary, but rather, it means approaching each and every Mass with a true sense of pilgrimage; coming early to prepare, and staying late to give thanks, and even leaving only with a sense of regret. It means focusing every morsel of our attention upon it, and fighting off mercilessly any and all distractions in our minds, whether they be

from other things or people in the Church, or merely from the drifting of our thoughts.<sup>96</sup>

We must spend more time than we think we can spare with Him in the Eucharist; whether in the Tabernacle, or exposed in the Monstrance - whichever we have access to. Today more than ever there is a plethora of worldly needs and distractions ever demanding our immediate attention. Jesus has the answer to that: *“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.”*<sup>97</sup> Do not say you don’t have time. There is always, *always* time for what we love. Is anyone busier than the Pope? Is there really a higher demand on anyone’s time than there is on his? Pope Francis (as did Pope St. John Paul II before him, and most likely Pope Benedict XVI as well) spends two hours each day with Jesus in the Eucharist before morning Mass (and that is only what we know of). Adoration of the exposed Eucharist is of course the ideal, and perhaps if there is no perpetual adoration chapel in your parish or city, you could even work to start one!

We must then bring the graces of the Eucharist out into the world. To this end I recommend especially the approach of the Divine Will Missionaries of Mercy,<sup>98</sup> which is applicable not only to actual missionaries, but to anyone who would like to live with the spirit of one. The approach is essentially to turn your endeavors after Mass each day into a quasi-Eucharistic procession into the world. (More information can be found on their website.)

## Desire through St. Faustina’s Writings

Returning to St. Faustina’s writings, and in addition to understanding the Eucharistic devotion we must have from them, let us also use these writings to inflame our desire for the Grace of All Graces by meditating upon a few of those excerpts from her Diary that most clearly refer not merely to desire, as

already discussed, but directly to the Gift of Living in the Divine Will itself. These are especially powerful means to enkindle our longing because we can approach St. Faustina’s writings with an enormous degree of confidence, for these writings have been approved by the Church in the greatest possible ways. Therefore a brief discussion is in order to demonstrate the grounds for this confidence.

Pope St. John Paul II said, when speaking about his Encyclical *Dives in Misericordia* (which was greatly inspired by his reading of the Divine Mercy Diary): *“Right from the beginning of my ministry in St. Peter’s See in Rome, I consider this message [“Divine Mercy”] my special task. Providence has assigned it to me in the present situation of man, the Church and the world. It could be said that precisely this situation assigned that message to me as my task before God.”*<sup>99</sup> He also spoke of the Divine Mercy Message as *“forming the image of [his] pontificate.”* Lest anyone be concerned he was merely speaking of Divine Mercy in general, and not intending to allude to Faustina’s writings, he also said that he had a *“burning desire”* that this particular message of St. Faustina’s be proclaimed *“to all the peoples of the earth.”*<sup>100</sup> On Divine Mercy Sunday of 1993, he beatified Faustina; on Divine Mercy Sunday of 2000, he canonized Faustina and declared that day a Feast of the Universal Church; on the vigil of Divine Mercy Sunday of 2005, he entered into his eternal reward; and on Divine Mercy Sunday of 2014, he was declared a saint. Divine Mercy Sunday of 2015 was Luisa Piccarreta’s 150<sup>th</sup> birthday as measured by the Liturgical Feast on which it occurred - the Second Sunday of Easter (though not the actual exact same day of April). Pope St. John Paul II’s insistence upon St. Faustina’s Divine Mercy revelations could be the topic of a book of its own; here I just present a small morsel.

Later his successor, Pope Benedict XVI, in his very first message as the Vicar of Christ, said: *“Dear friends, this deep gratitude for a gift of Divine Mercy is uppermost in my heart in spite of all. And I consider it*

<sup>96</sup> One method I find helpful in this effort is, when distractions arise, briefly meditating upon the world ending immediately after Mass is over. It is a theoretical possibility – perhaps our eschatological timeline is mistaken! So why not use it to help you focus and appropriate as much grace as possible from the Mass? For if that were to occur, it would be immediately obvious that no distraction is worth entertaining, but rather, all that matters is the perfect worship of God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, in that moment.

<sup>97</sup> Matthew 6:33

<sup>98</sup> www.DWMoM.org

<sup>99</sup> Pope John Paul II, Angelus Address to Collevaenza on November 22nd, 1981.

<sup>100</sup> Homily at Mass of Dedication of the Divine Mercy Shrine on August 17th, 2002.

a special grace which my Venerable Predecessor, John Paul II, has obtained for me. I seem to feel his strong hand clasping mine; I seem to see his smiling eyes and hear his words, at this moment addressed specifically to me, 'Do not be afraid!'"<sup>101</sup> The following Divine Mercy Sunday, he said: "The words [John Paul II] pronounced on that last occasion [Dedication of the Divine Mercy Shrine] were as a synthesis of his Magisterium, evidencing that devotion to Divine Mercy is not a secondary devotion, but an integral dimension of a Christian's faith and prayer."<sup>102</sup> The next month he said the following: "Sr Faustina Kowalska, contemplating the shining wounds of the Risen Christ, received a message of trust for humanity which John Paul II echoed and interpreted and which really is a central message precisely for our time."<sup>103</sup> And later, during the homily at Mass on the third anniversary of the death of John Paul II, he said, "God's mercy, as [John Paul II] himself said, is a privileged key to the interpretation of his Pontificate. He wanted the message of God's merciful love to be made known to all and urged the faithful to witness to it. This is why he desired to raise to the honor of the altars Sr Faustina Kowalska, a humble Sister who, through a mysterious divine plan, became a prophetic messenger of Divine Mercy."<sup>104</sup>

Pope Francis' words are no less supportive of precisely this message of Divine Mercy from St. Faustina. He said to a gathering of the priests of Rome: "[We are here] to hear the voice of the Spirit speaking to the whole Church of our time, which is the time of mercy. I am sure of this. It is not only Lent; we are living in a time of mercy, and have been for 30 years or more, up to today. [St. John Paul II] sensed that this was the time of mercy, [he said] '... the light of Divine Mercy, which the Lord in a way wished to return to the world through Sr Faustina's charism, will illumine the way for the men and women of the third millennium' It is clear. Here it is explicit... Today we forget everything far too quickly, even the Magisterium of the Church! ... we cannot forget the great content, the great intuitions and gifts that have been left to the People of God. And Divine Mercy is one of these. It is a gift which he [JPII] gave to us, but which comes from above. It is

up to us, as ministers of the Church, to keep this message alive."<sup>105</sup>

Pope Francis later took the enormous step of declaring an Extraordinary Jubilee – a Holy Year of Mercy – taking its inspiration from none other than St. Faustina. In formally proclaiming this Holy Year, Pope Francis wrote, "I am especially thinking of the great apostle of mercy, Saint Faustina Kowalska. May she, who was called to enter the depths of divine mercy, intercede for us and obtain for us the grace of living and walking always according to the mercy of God and with an unwavering trust in his love..."<sup>106</sup> More amazing still, it appears Pope Francis chose to structure this Holy Year in a way that prophetically emanates from Jesus' words to St. Faustina. For Jesus said to Faustina: "...before I come as a just Judge, I first open wide the **door of My mercy**. He who refuses to pass through the **door of My mercy** must pass through the **door of My justice**..."<sup>107</sup> and in this Holy Year of Mercy, Pope Francis has called for a literal, physical, "Door of Mercy" to be opened at each Cathedral in the world. He said, "I will have the joy of opening the Holy Door on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. On that day, the Holy Door will become a **Door of Mercy**..."<sup>108</sup>

Three Popes in a row now have expressed their most heartfelt, zealous, and unflinching support for this message of St. Faustina. They have unabashedly asserted that she is indeed a Prophet of God, bringing God's own message to us. Her diary, of course, remains a private revelation; it is not the inerrant Word of God that Scripture alone contains, nor can it be approached as an infallible guide to Faith and Morals like the Magisterium. But consider what you have just read – you can see that it is, nevertheless, absolutely trustworthy. It is simply beyond question that whatever St. Faustina's revelations teach us comprises a true and undeniable call from Heaven, which is why her writings serve as a most powerful means of enkindling our desire for the Gift of Living in the Divine Will.

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<sup>101</sup> First Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI. Wednesday, April 20th, 2005.

<sup>102</sup> Pope Benedict XVI. Regina Coeli Address at St. Peter's Square. April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2006.

<sup>103</sup> Benedict XVI. General Audience. May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2006.

<sup>104</sup> Benedict XVI. Homily. St. Peter's Square. April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008.

<sup>105</sup> Pope Francis. Address to the Priests of Rome. March 6<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>106</sup> Misericordiae Vultus. Bull of Indiction. Paragraph 24.

<sup>107</sup> St. Faustina, *Divine Mercy in my Soul*, Paragraph 1146. Emphasis added.

<sup>108</sup> Misericordiae Vultus. Bull of Indiction. Paragraph 3. Emphasis added.

Therefore, we can now delve into the treasure chest of overlap of *Divine Mercy in my Soul* with Luisa's own revelations on the Divine Will. Approach what follows without the slightest hint of doubt, and from that absence of doubt let proceed a blazing fire of desire for what is described.

The following quotes from Faustina's diary contain added emphasis to draw special attention to the references to the Gift of Living in the Divine Will:

*"However, the soul receiving this unprecedented grace of union with God cannot say that it sees God face to face, because even here there is a very thin veil of faith, but so very thin that the soul can say that it sees God and talks with Him. It is "divinized." God allows the soul to know how much He loves it, and the soul sees that better and holier souls than itself have not received this grace. Therefore, it is filled with holy amazement, which maintains it in deep humility, and it steepes itself in its own nothingness and holy astonishment; and the more it humbles itself, the more closely God unites himself with it and descends to it... in one moment, [the soul] knows God and drowns in Him. It knows the whole depth of the Unfathomable One, and the deeper this knowledge, the more ardently the soul desires Him."*<sup>109</sup>

St. Faustina describes Living in the Divine Will here with the term "unprecedented grace." Despite knowing nothing of Luisa and not herself being the one instructed by God on the Gift, Faustina here in fact answers the very first concern that most people have about the Gift of Living in the Divine Will, namely "How could I, who am so unworthy, receive a gift so much greater than what was received by the saints of days past who dwarf me in virtue?" We must be amazed at the offer that God extends to us. The more we learn, the more amazed and desirous we must become, for what is known more can be loved more. The more we receive, the more humble we must become; for we recognize that, despite being unworthy servants,<sup>110</sup> and far inferior in ourselves to the saints of ages past, we have been given such a

greater Gift.

*"My beloved child, delight of My Heart, your words are dearer and more pleasing to me than the angelic chorus. All the treasures of My Heart are open to you. Take from this Heart all that you need for yourself and for the whole world. For the sake of your love, I withhold the just chastisements, which mankind has deserved. A single act of pure love pleases Me more*



*than a thousand imperfect prayers. One of your sighs of love atones for many offenses with which the godless overwhelm Me. The smallest act of virtue has unlimited value in My eyes because of your great love for Me. In a soul that lives on My love alone, I reign as in heaven. I watch over it day and night. In it I find My happiness; My ear is attentive to each request of its heart; often I anticipate its requests. O child,*

*especially beloved by Me, apple of My eye, rest a moment near My Heart and taste of the love in which you will delight for all eternity."*<sup>111</sup> And very similarly, Faustina herself said to Jesus "The veils of mystery hinder me not at all; I love You as do Your chosen ones in heaven,"<sup>112</sup> and later, "I live Your divine life as do the elect in heaven..."<sup>113</sup>

Here we see Jesus revealing to Faustina that her acts are more meritorious - more pleasing to Him - than all of the angels. By referring to the "angelic chorus," He refers to all Nine Choirs; not merely to "an" angelic chorus, which one could argue only refers to the lowest of the nine choirs. This is what the Gift of Living in the Divine Will does - it makes our acts truly unlimited in their value, as Faustina here says, which means that even the angels cannot hope to please God as we can. It allows God to reign in our souls just as He reigns in the souls of the blessed in Heaven. But it still gives us the benefit of the veil,<sup>114</sup> so that we can

<sup>109</sup> St. Faustina, *Divine Mercy in my Soul*, Paragraph 771.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. Luke 17:10

<sup>111</sup> St. Faustina, *Divine Mercy in my Soul*, Paragraph 1489.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 1324.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 1393.

<sup>114</sup> In and of itself, the veil is no benefit; but in so far as God permits it temporarily so that we may use it to build up treasures in Heaven, it is indeed a benefit.



continue to build up merit as we suffer in Faith and in union with His passion.

*“When a reluctance and a monotony as regards my duties begins to take possession of me, I remind myself that I am in the house of the Lord, where nothing is small and where the glory of the Church and the progress of many a soul depend on this small deed of mine, accomplished in a divinized way. Therefore there is nothing small in a religious congregation.”*<sup>115</sup>

In this excerpt, we learn in a very clear way that the most mundane, boring, and seemingly unimportant duties can (and must!) be *Divinized*. How great a thought – and how true – that the “glory of the Church” and “the progress of many a soul” depend upon doing the laundry in the Divine Will (that is, Divinized)! St. Faustina ends this paragraph by saying that nothing is small “in a religious congregation.” This is because in those settings, it is expected that everything is done as a prayer. Sadly outside such places, we tend to see our duties as mere “necessary evils” that we rush through with no peace, so that we can get to what we like. But it does not have to be that way! The life of prayer and work that is the expected norm in a religious congregation can, and should, be lived everywhere, especially now that we are offered this incredible gift of *Divinizing* even the smallest acts – doing them *in the Divine Will*.

*“O Divine Will, You are the delight of my heart, the food of my soul, the light of my intellect, the omnipotent strength of my will; for when I unite myself with Your will, O Lord, Your power works through me and takes the place of my feeble will. Each day, I seek to carry out God's wishes.”*<sup>116</sup>

Although it may at first glance appear that this is an ordinary meditation on the importance and the glory of doing God’s will, it is in fact more. For here St. Faustina insists that the Divine Will “*takes the place of [her] feeble will.*” It is this Divine Substitution that we receive in the Gift of Living in the Divine Will. Before Luisa, this union with God’s will was limited to imitation, as Aquinas’ teaches in the Summa (cited in

the previous chapter); now the union becomes far greater than that.

*“Neither graces,<sup>117</sup> nor revelations, nor raptures, nor gifts granted to a soul make it perfect, but rather the intimate union of the soul with God. These gifts are merely ornaments of the soul, but constitute neither its essence nor its perfection. My sanctity and perfection consist in the close union of my will with the will of God.”*<sup>118</sup>

St. Faustina was always conscious of her nothingness and misery, but she was certainly not one to succumb to false humility. She was aware of the sanctity and perfection of her soul, and yet she attributed it all to the union of her will with God’s will. That union, which finds its epitome in the Gift of Living in the Divine Will, is the most complete response to Our Lord’s insistence that we “be perfect, as our Father in Heaven is perfect.”<sup>119</sup>

Early in the Diary, St. Faustina describes a profound turning point in her life. While at the convent, she was asked by Jesus to give her consent to being a victim soul: *“And the Lord gave me to know that the whole mystery depended on me, on my free consent to the sacrifice given with full use of my faculties. In this free and conscious act lies the whole power and value before His Majesty. Even if none of these things for which I offered myself would ever happen to me, before the Lord everything was as though it had already been consummated. At that moment, I realized I was entering into communion with the incomprehensible Majesty. I felt that God was waiting for my word, for my consent. Then my spirit immersed itself in the Lord, and I said, “Do with me as You please. I subject myself to Your will. As of today, Your holy will shall be my nourishment”...Suddenly, when I had consented to the sacrifice with all my heart and all my will, God's presence pervaded me. My soul became immersed in God and was inundated with such happiness that I cannot put in writing even the smallest part of it. I felt that His Majesty was enveloping me. I was **extraordinarily fused with God**...A great mystery took place during that adoration, a mystery between the Lord and myself. ...*

<sup>115</sup> St. Faustina, *Divine Mercy in my Soul*, Paragraph 508.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid. 650

<sup>117</sup> Here, “graces” must not be understood in the common sense of the word which refers to the accident of God’s action in a soul, but rather merely as charismatic graces.

<sup>118</sup> St. Faustina, *Divine Mercy in my Soul*, Paragraph 1107

<sup>119</sup> Matthew 5:48

*And the Lord said to me, You are the delight of My Heart; from today on, every one of your acts, even the very smallest, will be a delight to My eyes, whatever you do. At that moment I felt **transconsecrated**. My earthly body was the same, but my soul was different; **God was now living in it with the totality of His delight**. This is not a feeling, but a conscious reality that nothing can obscure.*<sup>120</sup>

“Transconsecration” is not a word you will often hear! And yet it is a wonderful name for the Gift of Living in the Divine Will. By using this word (and it appears she may have been the first), St. Faustina dares to say that what occurs to the host during the Mass, has indeed occurred in her soul as well. Jesus tells Luisa the same. This particular passage from St. Faustina’s Diary gives a powerful instruction on receiving the Gift because of the buildup to it: I heartily recommend opening her diary to this passage. In it we learn how pleasing and necessary offering one’s self as a victim is to God, and how, so long as this offering is truly free and entire, it is infinitely meritorious even if the openness does not wind up resulting in anything at all happening.

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But now for the most perfect reference of all to the Gift of Living in the Divine Will. St. Faustina refers to a “great secret” in her writings. This great secret is referred to most clearly here: *“In this seclusion, Jesus himself is my Master. He himself educates and instructs me. I feel that I am the object of His special action. For His inscrutable purposes and unfathomable decrees, He unites me to Himself in a special way and allows me to penetrate His incomprehensible mysteries. There is **one mystery which unites me with the Lord, of which no one-not even angels-may know**. And even if I wanted to tell of it, I would not know how to express it. And yet, I live by it and will live by it for ever. This mystery distinguishes me from every other soul here on earth or in eternity.”*<sup>121</sup>

Great scholars of St. Faustina’s writings puzzle over this passage and others like it in the Diary.<sup>122</sup> In my humble opinion, this is a direct reference to the Gift of Living in the Divine Will. I am not thereby imputing deceit to St. Faustina because

she said no one will ever know of this great union; she knew nothing of Luisa Piccarreta, and therefore Faustina could only have thought that what was uniting her to the Lord was so utterly great and mysterious that it would not be possible for anyone to ever know of.

Now, the whole point of this section is to present instances in St. Faustina’s writings which do in fact refer to the Gift; I am not here denying that the other references are valid! I am simply saying that the full reality of the Gift of Living in the Divine Will hit her in such a profound way when she wrote this entry (and similar ones) that she felt compelled to portray its utter mysterious transcendence of words, as indeed Luisa herself would often do.

If nothing else, this passage should make it abundantly clear that St. Faustina was given a far greater sanctity than even the greatest sanctity commonly known of in her time (namely, Spiritual Marriage), otherwise she would not have asserted that *“no one-not even angels-may know [it].”* Knowing that what she had was simply not expressed in any commonly known mystical writing to date, she was forced to say that this union “distinguishes” her from every other soul, and that it was a “secret.” This is perfectly compatible with Luisa’s revelations, which refer to the same essential thing – but explicitly. For in them, Jesus tells Luisa that *not even the angels* are permitted to comprehend what glory is bestowed upon acts performed in the Divine Will by humans here on Earth.

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It would be possible to continue on in this manner for many pages, but I would not want to risk causing you to think that you need not read St. Faustina’s entire Diary yourself. I cannot recommend *Divine Mercy in my Soul* enough to anyone who feels drawn to Luisa’s revelations. Faustina’s revelations should truly come first, as they dispose us perfectly for the Gift of Living in the Divine Will, and as Providence has deemed they should receive Ecclesiastical approbation first.

Now in a word, the essence of the Divine Mercy devotion is this: *Jesus, I Trust in You*. And the

<sup>120</sup> St. Faustina, *Divine Mercy in my Soul*, Paragraph 136-7

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 824.

<sup>122</sup> For example, “*What Was St. Faustina’s Big, Mysterious Secret?*” Dr. Robert Stackpole. [www.thedivinemercy.org](http://www.thedivinemercy.org). Nov. 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011

essence of the Divine Will devotion is this: *Thy Will be Done*. The former disposes us for the greatest possible result of the latter. These two devotions, in my opinion, constitute God's final and greatest efforts in this world for salvation and sanctification, respectively (though at their very core they are the same mission).

## Desire Holiness

It is impossible to truly desire the Gift of Living in the Divine Will if we do not also desire – as our foundation – the same holiness the saints have always had. For Our Lord said, “*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.*”<sup>123</sup>

What else could you possibly want? “*There is only one tragedy, ultimately; not to have been a saint.*”<sup>124</sup> Everything else is nothing. Even other people, whether friends, parents, children, or even your very own spouse, except insofar as they accept the mercy of Christ so that they may attain salvation, are nothing but dust, and to dust they shall return. “*Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ.*”<sup>125</sup>

Considering these stunning realities, what analogy suffices? In this book and elsewhere, this desire that we must have is repeatedly likened to a blazing fire as the only comparison that comes close; yet even those words utterly fail unless you happen to be near one so as to be reminded of its intensity. The almighty, eternal, uncreated, perfect God of the Universe offers His very own life to you, who are nothing. He promises that this life, which can be formed in you here and now, is what shall then sensibly constitute your existence when, in the twinkling of an eye, this fleeting world passes and you embark upon the life of eternity.

And when you find yourself in that eternity, the breadth of your joy, your glory, and your closeness to God is no accident: it is decided by (and indeed

proceeds from) the holiness you attain to *here and now*. In building a house, how zealously do you attend to the details of its construction so as to ensure it is tailored to your needs for the short few decades you will reside in it? And yet, the holiness you will enjoy in Heaven will scarcely have begun after countless trillions of centuries have passed. There, the love you now expand your soul to accommodate will be the food you eat, the water you drink, and the splendor of the Kingdom you find yourself in. There, the degree of union with God you now arrive at will be the garment you wear forever. “*There*” might be “*here*” for you in a decade, a year, a month, a day, or a minute. There is absolutely no time to waste.

“*The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.*”<sup>126</sup>

Spare no expense. Go all in. Hold nothing back. Put all of your eggs in one basket.

*Lord, teach me to serve you as you deserve;  
to give and not to count the cost,  
to fight and not to heed the wounds,  
to toil and not to seek for rest,  
to labor and not to ask for reward,  
save that of knowing that I do your will.*  
-St. Ignatius of Loyola

## Receiving the Gift: Ask for It

“*My Jesus, penetrate me through and through so that I might be able to reflect You in my whole life. Divinize me so that my deeds may have supernatural value. Grant that I may have love, compassion and mercy for every soul without exception.*”<sup>127</sup>

“*Everlasting love, pure flame, burn in my heart ceaselessly and deify my whole being.*”<sup>128</sup>

We must have the boldness that St. Faustina here demonstrates; the boldness to ask Jesus to *Divinize* us and our deeds; to deify our *whole being*. (This is precisely what the Gift of Living in the Divine Will does.)<sup>129</sup>

<sup>123</sup> Matthew 5:6

<sup>124</sup> Debated origin. Perhaps Charles Peguy

<sup>125</sup> Philippians 3:8

<sup>126</sup> Matthew 13:45-6

<sup>127</sup> St. Faustina, *Divine Mercy in my Soul*, Paragraph 1242

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid*, 1523

<sup>129</sup> I included the last sentence of that excerpt because of how inseparable it is from the Gift. We must never forget to have mercy

Each and every day we must explicitly ask God for the Gift of Living in the Divine Will. This request should at least be made upon rising, along with your usual morning prayers. In Luisa's writings, this is referred to as the "Prevenient Act."<sup>130</sup> With this short prayer, we make a morning offering in the Divine Will, where we state our intention to live and act only in His will, and likewise firmly affix our purpose on the same. There are many ways to do this, and you may feel free to search online for one that suits your preferences. Here is one that I use in addition to the aforementioned prayers of St. Faustina:

Good morning, Blessed Mother, I love you. Come, help me to offer my first act of the day as an act of love in the Divine Will of God.

Most Holy Trinity, setting my will in Yours, I affirm I want only to live and act in Your Will, and I set all of my acts of the day in order in You. O Jesus, through, with, and in the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I consecrate and give my will to You in exchange for Your Divine Will. I truly want Your Divine Will to generate Its Divine Life in me this day - to think in all my thoughts, to speak in all my words, and operate in all my actions for the glory of our Heavenly Father and to fulfill the purpose of Creation. Abandoned in Your arms, my Jesus, I invite all the angels and saints, especially Mary Most Holy, to join in all the Divine Will does in me today, and I am confident that You will not fail to give me the grace to be always faithful and attentive to Your action within me so that my own will dare not interfere with Your freedom to form Your Real Life in me. O my Jesus, I love You with Your own Will and thank You

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for all souls. Therefore, a thorough examination of conscience is essential. We can ask ourselves "to whom are we refusing mercy? What daily or weekly habits have we been unwilling to expose to the Light for fear of their imperfect nature being revealed? Have we become satisfied with reflecting Jesus in only a portion of our lives; even if that portion is almost our whole lives, but not our whole lives?" Many are those willing to write God a very generous check,

profoundly for the knowledge and Gift of the Divine Will.

Saint Joseph, be my protector, the guardian of my heart, and keep the keys of my will in your hands. Keep my heart jealously, and never give it to me again, that I may be sure of never leaving the Will of God.

My Guardian angel, guard me; defend me; help me in everything so that I may be an instrument to draw all people into the Kingdom of the Divine Will. Amen.

After the "Prevenient act" above come the "present acts" throughout the day. As the "righteous man falls seven times"<sup>131</sup> so we, until we are very advanced in the Divine Will, likely will not succeed at remaining perfectly and continuously anchored in it.<sup>132</sup> Because of this fluctuation, we must reaffirm our desire to enter into the Divine Will continuously throughout the day; and we do this through our "present acts," which are really just ejaculatory prayers that we should offer up regularly. How exactly this is done is not important; but you can feel free to use pieces of your Prevenient act, or words of your choosing, or any other prayer.

Just as importantly, always ask Jesus to do with you, through you, and *in* you whatever you are doing at the moment. This first of all serves as a continual examination of conscience throughout the day; for Jesus cannot sin, and therefore whatever you do that is sinful in any way, shape, or form, cannot possibly be done in the Divine Will. The "practice of the presence of God" is an essential precursor to this. It also bears a great resemblance to, and serves as a beautiful development of, the sanctification of the ordinary, as taught in the "Little Way" of St. Therese of Lisieux as well as the spirituality of St. Josemaría Escrivá and

but He has no use for generous checks. He only has a use for blank checks.

<sup>130</sup> "Prevenient" simply means "coming before."

<sup>131</sup> Proverbs 24:16

<sup>132</sup> Bear in mind that nothing in these revelations dispense a soul from the ordinary means of grace for Catholics. Serious sin must always be confessed to a priest, and indeed regular confession is an invaluable means for receiving and growing in the Gift.

## Opus Dei.

But don't let your consideration of Jesus acting in you stop at merely asking "*is this sinful? If so, I better not do it, since Jesus then could not do it in me.*" Let this consideration instead permeate even those behaviors of yours that you are accustomed to dismissing as irrelevant to the spiritual life – for truly, *nothing* is irrelevant to the spiritual life. Apply it to posture, tone, comportment, dress, conversations, recreation, demeanor, attitude: everything. "*Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.*"<sup>133</sup>

To develop this way of life, we must consider practical ways of turning the ordinary acts of our day into prayer. Jesus asks us to pray constantly, as St. Paul instructs, in order to live in the Divine Will. Jesus tells Luisa "*What I ask of you is a spirit of continuous prayer. The continuous effort of the soul to converse with Me — with its heart or with its mind, with its mouth or with a simple intention — renders it so beautiful in My sight that the notes of its heart harmonize with the notes of My heart. I feel so drawn to converse with this soul that I manifest to it not only the operation ad extra of My humanity, but I keep manifesting to it something of the operation ad intra, which My divinity accomplished in My humanity.*"<sup>134</sup>

So ask yourself honestly: what is your mind usually doing? Is it reciting a worldly song that is stuck in your head, strategizing about finances, or pondering the To-Do list? Is it indulging in the anticipation of some upcoming physical enjoyment (e.g. the next meal, the next social gathering, getting home from work, going to bed), plotting out the next career move, worrying about loved ones, or anything of the sort? We must say *no* to such thoughts constantly invading our minds and hearts. We must instead implement practical ways of ensuring that we are constantly in a state of recollection, peace, and prayer. Keeping good company is a first and obvious step. Turning off the worldly vanity is essential as well. In all things, say "*Jesus, I trust in You. Thy Will be Done.*" Whenever you find yourself with a free moment, start praying a Rosary or Divine Mercy Chaplet. Constantly ponder (with great joy!) the

Truths of our Faith as you slowly recite the Creed, dwelling on each statement. Try praying the Divine Office – you will find that the Psalms are always on your lips and in your mind throughout the day as a result. Simply converse with God continually, speaking to Him each and every moment about anything whatsoever. Strive to frequently slip into meditation and contemplation. These are just a few suggestions; you must find your own ways to ensure that you are truly in a state of continual prayer, for it is an absolutely essential disposition to receive the Gift of Living in the Divine Will, to grow in the Gift, and to perform all of your acts truly *in* the Divine Will.

With respect to continuous prayer, we must also ensure that we truly give thanks to God in all things. Scripture insists upon this: "*Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*"<sup>135</sup> First, you can try to do a better job of offering up (perhaps for the salvation of souls and the deliverance of the holy souls in purgatory) every single suffering, irritation, and dislike you experience throughout the day. Do so without making any excuses or exceptions, and with the gratitude of being given the opportunity to exercise that one ability of ours which the angels envy us for: our potential to suffer for Christ. God loves a cheerful giver. Do a better job of giving thanks to God not only for every good thing that happens to you, but also every bad thing, in so far as it is a means to grow and part of His permissive, perfect Will. Make these things into such habits that they become second nature, and each night before bed examine your conscience and ask yourself if you have achieved them throughout the preceding day.

Once we are praying in and through the ordinary acts of our days, we can raise them to the even greater dignity of being acts done in the Divine Will. Jesus tells Luisa that He re-did each of our lives during His thirty years of hidden life on Earth; this "re-done" version of our life, in the Divine Will, remains suspended in God, awaiting our entrance into the Divine Will to claim these acts for our own by doing all that we do truly in His Will. Fr. Iannuzzi explains "*Because Adam's withdrawal from the Divine*

<sup>133</sup> Romans 13:14

<sup>134</sup> Rev. Joseph L. Iannuzzi, "The Gift of Living in the Divine Will in the Writings of Luisa Piccarreta" Doctoral diss. (The Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome, Rome, 2013) 4.1.10

<sup>135</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:18

*Will interrupted within his humanity and that of other humans the formation of God's aforesaid kingdom, Jesus assumed a humanity like that of Adam and, within himself, enclosed a kingdom for each creature. This kingdom was made up of all the divine acts that all humans were to have accomplished if Adam had not sinned. These divine acts were formed within Jesus' humanity, whose human will took possession of the Divine Will and vice-versa... For Jesus' divine acts were ordered to the divinization of human nature and to empowering souls to accomplish the same divine acts that he accomplished. Indeed, from the time of man's creation, the divine acts that God had prepared for all souls, and that await their actualization, were already present to the Son of God and their number established.”<sup>136</sup>*

Jesus tells Luisa that when we perform these acts we form suns that, though small in themselves, nevertheless invest all creation with the light and heat of their splendor; just as the sun, which appears small in relation to the sky it inhabits, gives life to all the earth.

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I would like to suggest one more way you may ask for the Gift of Living in the Divine Will: as a means to the end of spreading God's grace to others. Consider how readily God dispenses grace to those whom He sees will put it at the service of others. When Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law, she arose to wait on them.<sup>137</sup> When He “called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority,”<sup>138</sup> He did so immediately before sending them out, and in order to grant their ministry success. When He “breathed on them”<sup>139</sup> (and in so doing gave them the Holy Spirit), it was in order to allow them to forgive sins of others.

This is the approach of the apostolate mentioned previously, the Divine Will Missionaries of Mercy - to take the grace received through the Eucharist at Mass out on to the streets, by way of the Gift of Living in the Divine Will. Before setting out, the following prayer is said after Mass. I believe it is a powerful means of asking God for the Gift.

Most Holy Trinity, You Who now dwell

<sup>136</sup> Rev. Joseph L. Iannuzzi, “The Gift of Living in the Divine Will in the Writings of Luisa Piccarreta” Doctoral diss. (The Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome, Rome, 2013) 3.1, 3.1.1.1

inside my body in all of Your Divinity, nothing is beyond Your power. Therefore I come before you and say *Fiat Voluntas Tua*. I rebuke my self-will, and instead seek only Your Will. As You have held nothing back from me, let me likewise hold nothing back from You.

I fervently beg You to miraculously preserve the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist within me, so that You may make of me a living Monstrance, that my walk today may be a true Procession through this city's streets. Make of me a living Host, that all who see me truly gaze upon Your face.

Let the Transubstantiation of the Host within me effect the Transubstantiation of my very self, that I may receive the Gift of Living in the Divine Will, so that Jesus may walk in my walking, speak in my speaking, pray in my praying, and indeed substitute His Divine and Eternal operations for all of my acts, and through me re-do all of the acts of Creation, past, present, and future - in the Will of God, offering them back to the Father with the seal of my *Fiat*, which I pray may become an echo of Jesus and Mary's perfect *Fiat*.

Dear Jesus, let all of my sufferings on this walk serve as atonement for my sins and those of the whole world, and be perfectly united with Yours in Your Passion. Let my hunger and thirst be Your own as You fasted in the desert; let any fear or anxiety that assails me be Your own in the Garden; let my fatigue and exhaustion be Yours in Your journeys of ministry; let whatever heat or cold I feel be united to what You felt in the desert and on the mountains; and let any ridicule, reviling, persecution, or dismissal I endure be Your own rejection by Your people.

Let all who see me that lack Faith be as Longinus, and acknowledge You are the Son of God. Let all who see me that lack works be as Dismas, and receive the grace of perfect contrition, hope, and trust. Let all who see me that live in sin be as Magdalene, and amend their ways.

Let all who see me that suffer from wounds of spirit be healed of them, and in place

<sup>137</sup> Cf. Matthew 8:15

<sup>138</sup> Matthew 10:1

<sup>139</sup> John 20:22



of any darkness or despair, be filled with peace and joy, as You preached the good news to the poor. Let all who see the image of Your Mercy that I wear venerate it and therefore receive the promise You entrusted to Faustina, so they may not perish. Let all who see the weapon of Your Mother that I carry receive grace through her intercession, that she may crush the head of the serpent in their lives.

Do not restrict these graces to only those few who see me, but let them be extended to all who dwell in the buildings I pass, all who walk the same streets I walk, all who meet with those who see me, all the friends and family of these, and continue in this manner until they reach the furthest ends of Earth, Heaven, and Purgatory.

I call upon the intercession of all the angels, saints, and Holy Souls in Purgatory to present these prayers before the Throne of God. Above all I entrust and consecrate myself entirely to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, Queen of all Creation, and Mediatrix of all Grace.

Dear Mother, you never gave life to the self-will, and as such you lived perfectly in the Divine Will from the moment you were Immaculately Conceived in the womb of St. Anne. As I have given all to you, I trust that you will not permit me, your loving child and willing slave, to refuse God the least sign of love. Clothe me in your virtues and cover me with your mantle, so that when I stand before God, it may not be my own feeble works and merits that I give Him, but rather your own.

And if, Dear Lord, in Your perfect will, You see fit to bless this work with success, do not permit me to receive the credit, but to Your Name give the glory. Let my own small role be unnoticed, for You alone are good, and I am an unworthy servant.

As I depart from this Church, do not depart from me, Lord. Let my adoration remain unbroken, fixated upon Your Eucharistic Presence within me, so that even as I walk these streets, my soul may remain as I am now - kneeling before You in silence.

I firmly trust and believe that You can do all of these things, for I ask in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Whether or not you feel called to be a Divine Will Missionary of Mercy, you can - and should - still strive to approach all of your endeavors with this demeanor and this intention, and you can modify the above prayer however you like to fit what you will be doing after Mass.

## Growing in the Gift: Purify your Intention

The intention with which we desire and ask for the Gift of Living in the Divine Will must continually be purified. Do not despair if you find this the most difficult thing, for it is supposed to be the most difficult thing. Anyone can genuflect the body in front of a Tabernacle; far fewer truly strive, much less succeed, in submitting their hearts to our Eucharistic King. God is well aware not merely of the weakness of our flesh, but also of the concupiscence of our spirit. Even St. Francis, toward the end of his life, lamented that he felt that all he had done, he had done merely for vain glory; and yet we know full well that he is high up in Heaven now and among the greatest saints of the Church. So a continual, heartfelt effort at the purification of our intention is what God asks of us, and it is what pleases Him so very much if we make it.

## Against Pride

We must, first of all, be delivered from all pride. The Gift of Living in the Divine Will is the greatest gift that God can give. Do you think He will give it to the proud? Of course not. He will, rather, "*scatter the proud in their conceit.*"<sup>140</sup> If you desire that people think of you as having the Gift, you will not receive it. If, in having the Gift, you would think yourself as above any other soul, you will not be given it. It would behoove us to remain anchored in daily reading of the lives of the saints; especially a traditional compilation of them, such as Butler's. In so doing we are not only encouraged to strive after their example, but we are reminded of our own nothingness. These great souls, who thought nothing of themselves, nevertheless surpassed us in virtue like

<sup>140</sup> *The Magnificat*; Cf. Luke 1:51

an Olympian surpasses a toddler just learning to walk. Praying the Litany of Humility<sup>141</sup> daily is also a wise step in purging ourselves of pride.

A desire for and pursuit of hiddenness is among the most powerful means to abide in the humility required for the Gift. This hiddenness was a defining factor of Luisa's own life. In like manner, you must be very careful where you permit your thoughts to wander. In doing good, do you daydream about people finding out? Or better yet, finding out while still thinking you wanted no one to find out? Cease such thinking, and remember that your thoughts are not your own any more than your actions are your own; God must be sovereign over them all. Foster in your heart a sense of holy embarrassment at the thought of anyone admiring you, for you know how weak and miserable you are. Perhaps only you, your confessors, and God alone know just the extent of it.

Is growth in holiness for you really a means to some vain end, perhaps getting this or that person to respect you more, or rising in the ranks of your parish, order, school, diocese, or other institution? Plot out practical ways to ensure that other people are thanked for your efforts. Have in mind a way of responding to any compliment that will give the credit where it is due; namely, to God, and to others. Ponder how to do so in a way that you are not just making sure you get the credit for the good deed, and for the apparent humility in crediting God! Remember that humility is nothing other than truth - when you see God, you will be humbled before Him, no matter how great your virtue becomes. It is best you prepare yourself for that now.

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Consider as well that how you treat other people is the measure of the extent to which pride has been removed from your life. It has been said, rightly so, *"That your love for God is measured by your love for the one in this world whom you love least."* A proud person cannot love others as he must, for he does not see Christ in them. What a waste (and worse) this book has been if it shifts your focus away from Our Lord's command to love one another as He has loved us, and towards simply asking God for a certain grace

of union (even if it is the highest one). You must therefore analyze your life carefully. Charity begins in the home. How do those with whom you live, work, and pray, feel about your demeanor towards them? Of course there will always be slanders, misunderstandings, and the like; but generally, if you hold charity in your heart and in your deeds towards others, they will recognize it and acknowledge it. If you cannot recall them doing so recently, then you likely need to reevaluate your behavior towards them. Do you go beyond this, though, and regularly perform works of mercy; not in the hopes of being repaid or noticed, but out of the pure desire to serve the needy in whom Christ dwells? Do you have a disposition of openness to whatever needs of others Providence might present to you throughout the day, or are you dead set in following - no matter what - the plan you have in your head for the next ten minutes of your life, wherever you find yourself?

On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Our Lady said to St. Faustina: *"I desire, My dearly beloved daughter, that you practice the three virtues that are dearest to Me-and most pleasing to God. The first is humility, humility, and once again humility..."*<sup>142</sup> Although humility is neither a moral virtue,<sup>143</sup> supernatural virtue, gift of the Holy Spirit, nor fruit of the Holy Spirit, it is nevertheless a shortcut - an elevator, almost - to all of them. It is the key to receiving grace. Of all perfections of the soul one can pursue, humility will yield the greatest results the most quickly. St. Faustina later refers to humility as *"the most precious of the virtues,"* and proceeds to ask God to *"reduce me to nothingness in my own eyes that I may find grace in Yours."*<sup>144</sup>

In commenting on Luisa's writings, Fr. Iannuzzi says the following regarding humility, and other virtues attached to it: *"Among the virtues Luisa addresses, the following merit particular attention. The virtue of trust enlivens faith and attracts God's mercy and blessings. The virtue of humility requires confidence and exalts God the most. For without confidence humility lacks that which renders it meritorious. Humility, moreover, provides the soul with the garment of profound calm and inspires it to respect the good in others. The virtue of patience*

<sup>141</sup> See Appendix I

<sup>142</sup> St. Faustina, *Divine Mercy in my Soul*, Paragraph 1415

<sup>143</sup> Although it is considered to be annexed to the moral virtue of temperance.

<sup>144</sup> St. Faustina, *Divine Mercy in my Soul*, 1436

*disposes the soul to fortitude, perseverance and stability, and it strengthens all the virtues. Luisa maintains that patience plays a preeminent role, inasmuch as it engenders and safeguards purity. Purity is not a naturally bestowed gift but a grace that one must attain. The soul that operates with a pure intention allows Jesus to operate in it with his own virtues and aids in the conversion of other souls.*<sup>145</sup>

Therefore we can see that, in seeking the grace of a pure intention, patience is also essential.

## Against Anxiety and Agitation

Instead of a demeanor of anxiety and agitation, we must have one of patience and peace. Patience is evidence of trust, and its absence is likewise evidence of a lack of the same. One who is impatient is, in his impatience, asserting the self-will against the Divine Will.

We should defer to the life of Luisa, for she is the example par excellence of the form of patience we must have, even with respect to the very thing we are desiring: the Gift of Living in the Divine Will. Though it may appear superficially that desire and patience are in competition, they truly are not. We must ardently desire the Gift, as already discussed. But how exactly we progress in this is not up to us. It is up to God.

And so we must strive to exercise patience to a heroic degree. St. Padre Pio is often quoted as saying that the greatest and most difficult application (but likewise the most necessary for a devout soul) of patience is its application with respect to one's own growth in holiness. As you are not the cause of your growth in holiness, you do not answer for its pace; you only answer for your openness and your response. It is the same with pursuing the Gift of Living in the Divine Will.

St. Faustina wrote *"I have learned that the*

*greatest power is hidden in patience. I see that patience always leads to victory...*"<sup>146</sup>

Similarly, Luisa wrote: *"We must be attentive to all of our internal movements, for good Jesus will ask us to suffer at one moment and to pray at another. He will put us in a certain state of soul at one moment and in a different state later on, so that he may repeat his own life in us. Let us suppose that Jesus places us in a situation in which we have to exercise patience. He receives so many offenses from souls that he feels driven to chastise them. It is here, then, that he gives us the occasion to practice patience, and we should honor him by enduring everything with patience, just as he endured it. Our patience will strip from his hands those chastisements that other souls force into them. After all, it is within us that he exercises his very own divine patience. This not only applies to the virtue of patience, but to all the other virtues as well. Loving Jesus exercises all the virtues in the Sacrament. From him we draw strength, meekness, patience, tolerance, humility, obedience and all the other virtues ... In a word, everything we do must serve to nourish Jesus and, in so doing, we must have the intention of nourishing creatures in Jesus."*<sup>147</sup>

This patience, in which we nourish and offer reparation to Jesus, is essential in all things both small and large, both specific and general. Do you find that you are frustrated with your pace of growth in the spiritual life? That is a true martyrdom of love! For not loving Jesus as much as you want to love Him is indeed a martyrdom, and a greatly meritorious one so long as you never give up striving to love Him more.<sup>148</sup> Or are you merely tempted to annoyance at the pace of traffic during your morning commute? Either way, hand it all over to God and say: *"Nothing but your Will can happen, O Lord. I trust in You. Thy Will be done."*

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Patience and peace go hand in hand. But in order to have a true and deep peace, we must as our very first step consider how we view God's mercy; for only trust in this mercy can bring about peace. Do you

<sup>145</sup> Rev. Joseph L. Iannuzzi, "The Gift of Living in the Divine Will in the Writings of Luisa Piccarreta" Doctoral diss. (The Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome, Rome, 2013) 4.1.30.1

<sup>146</sup> St. Faustina, *Divine Mercy in my Soul*, Paragraph 1514

<sup>147</sup> Rev. Joseph L. Iannuzzi, "The Gift of Living in the Divine Will in the Writings of Luisa Piccarreta" Doctoral diss. (The Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome, Rome, 2013) 4.1.31.3

<sup>148</sup> Cf. Sister M. De L.C., "An Unpublished Manuscript on Purgatory" *"...love is a true martyrdom. The soul that really tries to love Jesus finds that notwithstanding all its efforts it does not love Him as much as it wants to, and that is for that soul a perpetual martyrdom..."* (Undergoing this type of martyrdom on Earth can itself dispose one to forego Purgatory entirely)

truly trust in God's mercy, knowing that it will be there for you no matter how great or numerous your falls, or do you really view it as just a safety net for you if your own human efforts prove insufficient? Know well that God's mercy is the only hope for any of us, even the greatest of saints. St. Faustina was known to genuinely respond to anyone who mentioned her as being saintly with: *"if it were not for God's mercy, I would perish just like any sinner."* Our attitude must be the same, no matter how virtuous we become, and certainly no matter how highly others view us. In pursuing this attitude, strive to remind yourself, whenever you meet a poor soul mired in the dissolution and a life of mortal sin, *"there but for the grace of God go I."* Your own efforts were not the cause of your current state, nor will they be the cause of your preservation in grace; God is sovereign over both. Have no fear of evil news, for the same God who now nourishes you with everything you need will still be there no matter what happens to you. *"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life...Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith?"*<sup>149</sup>

God wants to pour His grace into our lives; we prevent Him by preferring anxiety to peace. Jesus also said directly to St. Faustina, *"My child, know that the greatest obstacles to holiness are discouragement and an exaggerated anxiety. These will deprive you of the ability to practice virtue."*<sup>150</sup>

Sin, therefore, is not the greatest obstacle to holiness. Though this may at first seem heretical or groundbreaking, it is, in fact, neither. Consider that if sin was the greatest obstacle to holiness, then any serious Catholic would be utterly insane to do anything but find a good monastery (utterly devoid of any occasion of sin) and join it. That is indeed a great calling, but it is truly not the genuine calling of most of us. So heed the words of Pope Benedict XVI, *"Dear friends, may no adversity paralyze you. Be afraid neither of the world, nor of the future, nor of your weakness. The Lord has allowed you to live in this*

*moment of history so that, by your faith, his name will continue to resound throughout the world."*<sup>151</sup>

But often the cause of anxiety is servile fear, which likewise must be purged.

## Against Servile Fear

We must as well be delivered from all fear, for perfect love casts out fear,<sup>152</sup> and Living in the Divine Will requires perfect love. Now I speak here of servile fear: the fear of punishment. This is the type of fear that must be cast out. Filial fear - Holy Fear - the Seventh Gift of the Holy Spirit, must never be cast out; this fear we maintain for all eternity, and this Fear of the Lord even Jesus Himself had, as it is written of Him: *"The Fear of the Lord shall be His delight."*<sup>153</sup> This is the fear that is described as awe and reverence. It is due to God absolutely and unconditionally.

Furthermore, this suggestion is not made to those deliberately living in sin; for them, even servile fear can have a positive effect, for it will help convince them that it really is worth repenting, and it is the height of foolishness to expect death-bed repentance. They might not have death beds, and if they do, they might at that point have lost even the desire to repent. Holy affections must be acted on precisely when they are received, for they cannot be counted upon to continue or return. Do not too readily dispense yourself from the consideration of whether you are living in sin – especially if you are new to the devout life; we live in an age where even pulpits rarely instruct on just what those thoughts, words, deeds, and omissions are that indeed comprise objective grave contraventions of God's law. Search online for a good, traditional, *thorough*, and detailed Examination of Conscience and consider it carefully.

But these suggestions are made to you who love God and, if you fall (even if these falls are not rare and not small), repent, truly intend to not fall again, confess your sins to a priest, and receive sacramental absolution. Now I am sure you do not love God enough – we all have room to love Him more! But do not bother fretting and being anxious over whether

<sup>149</sup> Matthew 6:25,30

<sup>150</sup> St. Faustina, *Divine Mercy in my Soul*, Paragraph 1488.

<sup>151</sup> Benedict XVI. Homily at World Youth Day. August 20, 2011.

<sup>152</sup> Cf. 1 John 4:18

<sup>153</sup> Isaiah 11:3

you love Him. One of Luisa's harshest rebukes from Jesus occurred when - likely thinking she was being humble - she complained to Jesus that she did not love Him. He told her, in the strongest of terms, that *of course* she did love Him. So you do love Jesus. Just keep trying to love Him more, never being satisfied with where you are.

Now consider an illustration. On a walk in the park, my wife has no fear of me. She loves me and she knows that I love her. That fact does not mean she is thereby asserting that no pain could possibly come to her from my hands. She knows full well that if a truck came hurdling towards her, I would push her out of the way with all of my might - to such a degree that it would certainly cause her pain. But she knows that I would only do so out of love, and if it were necessary and for her good, therefore when we are together, again, she has nothing but complete comfort, and an absence of fear. This is how we must be with God, but much more so of course. Do not act out of fear of hell, or pain, or purgatory, or anything of the sort. Act only out of love of God.

With respect to hell: Perhaps you are in grace now, but you fear what might happen at the end of your life. But do you really think God will abandon you at the final moments of your life? That is to doubt His goodness, which pains Him much. Trust in Him, and trust in His promises, for He has issued you so many salvation-ensuring promises. Remember that hope, being a supernatural virtue, has no corresponding vice of excess. What I mean is that it is possible to be "too courageous," in a sense; for you could become reckless. You can likewise be "too prudent" in a sense; for you could become paralyzed. You cannot, however, be too hopeful. You cannot have too much confidence in God. That is impossible. Therefore, await your salvation with the joy that a faithful bride has as she awaits the return of her bridegroom who is on a long journey; not wondering if this return will be joyful or miserable, but knowing it will be the former. Now every worldly bridegroom is imperfect, and from that imperfection proceeds at least some lack of perfection of the trust in him that his bride has. But you await your heavenly reunion

with the perfect Bridegroom, the Lamb of God, Who is perfectly faithful so long as God is God.

I do not mean to coax you into laxity. Quite the contrary, I would be the first to ask you continue to work and pray with the same degree of fervor, ardency, and zeal as if you could indeed lose your salvation in those final moments (for you pray on behalf of the whole Church, and there are many who may indeed be lost, but many of those will be saved depending upon your prayer). Here and now, I mean only to help rid you of that servile fear that is not compatible with the perfectly pure love of God that you must have.

Perhaps you fear the assaults of the devil in your final agony. This threat, too, is nothing to fear. All is permitted by the most holy and perfect Will of God for your good.<sup>154</sup> These final assaults of the demons are only permitted (if they are permitted at all in your case) because the last moments of your life are the last moments you will ever have to earn merit for heaven, and God wants to give you as many chances for that as possible - and nothing is more meritorious than direct combat with the devil. That is the sole reason this occurs, not because your salvation might actually be lost in that strife.<sup>155</sup> It will not be, for it cannot be.

Perhaps then you fear Purgatory. Regarding this, St. Therese said to one of her fellow religious, "*You are not sufficiently trusting, you fear God too much. I assure you that this grieves Him. Do not be afraid of going to purgatory because of its pain, but rather long not to go there because this pleases God who imposes this expiation so regretfully. From the moment that you try to please Him in all things, if you have the unshakable confidence that He will purify you at every instant in His love and will leave in you no trace of sin, be very sure that you will not go to purgatory.*"<sup>156</sup>

If it winds up that you will have to go to Purgatory (and dare not resign yourself to this), then it will be out of desire. God will not push you in there kicking and screaming; you will dive head-first into it

<sup>154</sup> Cf. Romans 8:28

<sup>155</sup> Cf. Sister M. De L.C., "An Unpublished Manuscript on Purgatory" (e.g. "God never allows a soul that has been devoted to Him during life to perish at the last moment.")

<sup>156</sup> *Annales de Sainte Therese, Lisieux*. Nr. 610, February, 1982 (Citation from Father Hubert van Dijk, ORC. Translated from German.)

when you see it because you ardently desire to receive this purification before seeing the Lord face-to-face, just as a bride would not think twice about showering before her wedding, even if the temperature of the water was not to her liking. But as Therese has said, we can be sure even of bypassing purgatory so long as we strive to please God in all things and have absolute confidence in His love. Furthermore, we have that incredible gift of the Plenary Indulgence, which we may (and should) receive each and every day, to put an Ecclesiastical seal upon this confidence of avoiding Purgatory.<sup>157</sup>

Finally, perhaps there is a dark cloud hovering over all of these words of hope because you have stumbled upon the works of those who have gone to great lengths to compile, with the precision of a surgeon, just those out-of-context excerpts from the writings of Fathers of the Church and other saints that seem to indicate that the vast majority of people, including Catholics, will wind up in hell. You must be rid of this notion, for it is not true. Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, the foremost modern Thomist whose learnedness and orthodoxy no one would question, teaches a “benevolent supposition” regarding the relative amounts of the saved and the damned from no less authority than Scripture itself. He holds the following: of the Angels, only one-third fell; of the twelve Apostles, only one was lost; and even of the two thieves sentenced to death along with Jesus, one was saved.

Likewise, St. Faustina, the authority of whose revelations has already been well established in preceding pages, was given a vision of hell and observed, “...I noticed one thing: that most of the souls there [in hell] are those who disbelieved that there is a hell.”<sup>158</sup> In other words, at least simply believing in hell’s existence is itself a good indication that you will not be there, and there cannot be more than double the amount of souls in hell than souls who, on earth, did not believe in it. Later in the diary, Jesus speaks of those about to die in states of despair and darkness - who, by all external appearances, already have died -

nevertheless being saved by His mercy if they show so much as “*even a flicker of good will.*”<sup>159</sup> Even in Luisa’s own revelations, Jesus has nothing but rebukes for those who insist that His words in the Gospel that “*many are called, few are chosen*”<sup>160</sup> indicate most will wind up in hell and only a small number will go to heaven. He explains that people who say such things are really just exposing their own miserliness.

I must again say that the very last thing I want to do is coax anyone into laxity, lukewarmness, or some sort of false sense of security that damnation is only for unrepentant murderers, Satanists, and atheists. Make no mistake: many, many souls are in hell, many are falling into hell as you read this sentence, and many more will continue to fall into it. There is no greater tragedy imaginable, and this tragedy is no doubt greatly exacerbated by those who say there is no hell, or that we can “reasonably hope” that it will remain eternally empty of humans. Scripture, Tradition, the *Sensus Fidelium*,<sup>161</sup> the consensus of the Fathers, the consensus of the Saints, and the apparitions of Our Lady all repudiate this lie (and Luisa’s own revelations are no exception - Jesus makes it clear to her that not all are saved); a lie unfortunately promoted even by some well-known priests today.

What I do wish to do is to help you abandon the notion that only a scarce few will wind up in heaven. Though it appears to be a rigorous stance, it really only ironically breeds its own form of laxity. Consider what the devil said to St. Faustina: “*Do not pray for sinners, but for yourself; for you will be damned,*”<sup>162</sup> and likewise what Our Lord said to her, previously quoted, “*My child, know that the greatest obstacles to holiness are discouragement and an exaggerated anxiety. These will deprive you of the ability to practice virtue.*”<sup>163</sup> If you think that only a scarce few will make it to heaven, then you will indeed have exaggerated anxiety. Your pursuit of virtue will be seriously hampered, and you will be too afraid to pray for the world like Jesus wants you to. You will do *nothing* but beg God for mercy for yourself, which

<sup>157</sup> One plenary indulgence may be received for one’s self (or offered for a soul in Purgatory) for each Communion received within 8-20 days of Confession, along with detachment from all sin and, of course, the indulgenced act: such as Stations of the Cross, a Rosary prayed in Church or as a family, 30 minutes of adoration, or 30 minutes of Scripture reading.

<sup>158</sup> St. Faustina, *Divine Mercy in my Soul*, Paragraph 741

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, Paragraph 486

<sup>160</sup> Matthew 22:14

<sup>161</sup> The “Sense of the Faithful.” That which the Faithful believe by consensus.

<sup>162</sup> St. Faustina, *Divine Mercy in my Soul*, Paragraph 1465.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, Paragraph 1488.



God indeed wants us to do, but which (as we see above) the devil wants us to do *exclusively*. Your servile fear of God will result in a servile fear of sin, which will keep you from your missions and calling - callings which God desires of you, and which are the very things that will be your means of sanctification.

As a final cautionary note, however, I must warn strongly against fighting servile fear by eliminating filial fear. This, sadly, is the approach we see all over the modern Catholic landscape: Jesus - the Lion of the Tribe of Judah - being reduced to a teddy bear, a flaky buddy, a fun guy, or whatever else. Such an approach is analogous to drinking bleach in order to kill off a common cold virus, and its fruits are clear: modesty is thrown out the window; flippancy, giddiness, or silliness dominates demeanors; reverence disappears; growth in the spiritual life is put on the back-burner; avoiding occasions of sin is laughed at; and every compromise is considered okay. This is nothing but demon-inspired apery of a holy absence of servile fear. Flee from it.

## Growing in the Gift: Grow in Knowledge of It

As already noted, I cannot give you anything resembling a comprehensive summary of Luisa's revelations in this short book. That said, I will simply share with you three particular insights contained in her revelations that I have found inspiring and edifying. With this, I simply hope to set you off on a journey!

## The History of the Divine Will and the Human Will

Not until Luisa's revelations have we ever been able to so much as scratch the surface of knowledge regarding Adam as God originally created him. "...in prelapsarian Adam God the Father continuously operated in his will and heartbeat, the Son of God in his intellect and blood flow, and the Holy Spirit on his

*memory and breath.*"<sup>164</sup> The Divine Will was immediately placed within Adam's human will, thus from the moment of his creation, Adam gave God perfect glory. And the very first thing that Adam did after he was created was to say, "*I love you my God, my Father, the Author of my life.*"<sup>165</sup>

Jesus tells Luisa that He made physical creation to house man, but he made the soul of man to house God - the Divine Will. This was so deeply true that the Divine Will was the very principle of the life and action of Adam. Jesus tells Luisa, "*When God created Adam, he possessed such sanctity that the slightest one of his acts had such value that no [sanctity of any] saint either before or after My coming to earth can compare to his sanctity...For in My Divine Will Adam possessed the fullness of sanctity and the totality of all divine blessings. And do you know what fullness means? It means to be filled to the brim, to the point of overflowing with light, sanctity, love and all the divine qualities, whereby he was able to fill heaven and earth, over which he exercised dominion and through which he extended his kingdom.... For by the power of My Will, within which alone all such acts may be found, Adam was able to give Me the fullness and totality of all goods, whereas outside of My Will such acts do not exist. Thus Adam possessed all the riches and acts of infinite value that My Eternal Will communicated to him before the divinity.*"<sup>166</sup>

Now Adam continually consented - initially - to the operation of God within himself, but tragically he did not pass the test that would have confirmed him and all his offspring perpetually in this state.

Thus in Luisa's revelations we see that all of human history is the story of the Divine Will and the human will. Near the beginning of Bl. Anne Catherine Emmerich's own revelations,<sup>167</sup> we read these very mysterious words: "*I learned also at that moment what I cannot clearly repeat; namely, that the serpent was, as it were, the embodiment of Adam and Eve's will, a being by which they could do all things, could attain all things. Here it was that Satan entered.*"<sup>168</sup> While no attempt will be made here to fully grasp or interpret

<sup>164</sup> Fr. Joseph Iannuzzi. *Manual for Instructing Others on the Gift of Living in the Divine Will*. 2.3.2

<sup>165</sup> Rev. Joseph L. Iannuzzi, "The Gift of Living in the Divine Will in the Writings of Luisa Piccarreta" Doctoral diss. (The Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome, Rome, 2013), 2.1.2

<sup>166</sup>Ibid., 2.1.2.7

<sup>167</sup> It is worth noting that Emmerich was beatified by Pope St. John Paul II

<sup>168</sup> Bl. Anne Catherine Emmerich, *The Life of Jesus Christ and Biblical Revelations*, Volume 1 (Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1986), Page 15.

precisely what that means, I include it to demonstrate just how much agreement there is with Luisa's revelations, and how we see the ultimate question always has been, and indeed now is, *whose will shall be done?*

But before Adam sinned, according to Emmerich's revelations, the angel of the Lord seemed to take something out of Adam. You see, Adam was more like Christ than you might think at first: in a real way he contained within himself all of the generations to come. This is precisely what Jesus tells Luisa regarding Adam, as well. And what did the angel of the Lord take from Adam? He took the promise; the blessing. That promise survived the flood, being taken upon the Ark with Noah. That promise was given to Abraham. That promise was the Covenant in the Ark. But greatest of all, that promise became a human being in the womb of St. Anne. The promise is none other than the Blessed Virgin Mary; the only creature who never did her own will; the only one entirely immune from Adam's sin. Adam destroyed the Gift of Living in the Divine Will in himself, and therefore in the entire human race, of which he was designated head. Therefore, humanity had to mystically begin again, in the womb of the only one saved from Adam's stained inheritance before it ever so much as touched her. But much needed to transpire first.

Jesus dispenses profound wisdom to Luisa about Noah and Abraham. Noah's sacrifice was so incredibly powerful before God because of its duration; because each day for so many years, he labored tirelessly by Faith in obedience to God's command. This is why he merited so much for future generations. Jesus says that through his difficulties, labors, and sweat in building, he merited the very continuation of the human generations. Jesus reminds us that we have Noah to thank for the existence of the world today. In this we learn to value greatly our own long labors; the prayers we say day in and day out for conversion of souls, the duties of life that we continue to carry out - in the Divine Will - no matter our mood.

Jesus later speaks of Abraham's sacrifice being so great that, if he were to have carried it out in full without the Angel stopping him, it would have caused Abraham as well to immediately die with sorrow. So opposed to his nature, so opposed to his will, he

nevertheless became the Head and Father of human generations through it, for never has there been a more perfect type of God the Father's sending and sacrificing His own beloved, only-begotten Son. As Noah purchased the world with his sacrifice, Abraham purchased, as it were, the Messiah with his.

Thus for four thousand years since the fall, the chosen race - the people of God - prayed for redemption. Jesus tells Luisa that the closer and closer to the fullness of time it came, the more urgent and frequent God's letters to man, through the prophets, became; all to dispose His people to be ready. He wanted them to long for the gift and ask for the gift before giving it. Finally the prayers of the righteous of Israel reached the throne of God. They had at long last reached a sufficient degree of merit, and the earth was blessed with its greatest prodigy, the Immaculate Conception. Then God Himself came down to them in the womb of this Most Holy Virgin. Thus, the Fiat of Redemption.

But no one can deny that God's will still does not reign upon Earth, and two thousand more years have passed. Jesus tells Luisa *"My daughter, when Adam sinned God gave him the promise of the future Redeemer. Centuries passed and the promise did not fail, therefore human generations enjoyed the blessings of the Redemption. Now, by My coming from heaven to form the Kingdom of Redemption, I made another more solemn promise before departing for heaven: The Kingdom of My Will on earth, which is contained in the 'Our Father' prayer. ... So after I formed this prayer in the presence of My heavenly Father, certain that he would grant Me the Kingdom of My Divine Will on earth, I taught it to My apostles so that they might teach it to the whole world, and that one might be the cry of all: 'Your Will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' A promise more sure and solemn I could not make [...] My very prayer to the heavenly Father, 'May it come, may your kingdom come and your Will be done on earth as it is in heaven,' meant that with My coming to earth the Kingdom of My Will was not established among creatures, otherwise I would have said, 'My Father, may Our kingdom that I have already established on earth be confirmed, and let Our Will dominate and reign.' Instead I said, 'May it come.' This means that it must come and souls must await it with the same certainty with which they awaited the future Redeemer. For My Divine Will is*

*bound and committed to the words of the 'Our Father.' And when My Divine Will binds itself, whatever it promises is more than certain to come to pass. Furthermore, since everything was prepared by Me, nothing else is needed but the manifestation of My Kingdom, which is what I am doing.*"<sup>169</sup>

Jesus also tells Luisa that He is more pleased with the Church than He was with Israel; and furthermore, it is so much greater than Israel, that the prayers of this new People of God will suffice in being answered far more quickly than the four thousand years required leading up to His Incarnation. He moreover assures Luisa that every two thousand years He renews the world; two thousand after the Fall with the Flood, two thousand after the Flood with His very own blood, and two thousand more after that, with the full application of that most Precious Blood to the world in which it was shed - the Fiat of Sanctification. He says that what is coming now in individual souls and what is to come upon the world in the Third Fiat is the realization of the fruits of His Divinity, whereas what has been lived in the Church up to now is the realization of the fruits of His humanity. It is this third Fiat He now ardently desires to give to the world, but He is waiting for our response. He is waiting for us to sufficiently strive for it, pray for it, and yearn for it. He is waiting for us to live in His Will even now, and perform as many acts in His Will as we can, in order to prepare the ground for its universal Reign. He is waiting for us to sufficiently form and spread the Kingdom of His Will upon Earth now before its true triumph. But this true triumph, Jesus tells Luisa, will not come without chastisements preceding it - chastisements, Jesus says, which will amount to the world turning upside down. These are also what we are on the very verge of. Nevertheless preparation for them is still best made in the same way: Living in the Divine Will, doing all your acts in the Divine Will, and spreading the Divine Mercy.

## Insights into Demons

At one stage in life, having being attacked by demons constantly, day in and day out, for three years (both spiritually and physically), Luisa is among the

best situated to give insights into their workings. But Jesus Himself also taught her about how to deal with them. He said that the way to respond to them is to laugh at them, and consider them to be the ants they are. Jesus speaks of how utterly terrified demons are of a courageous soul who clings to Him, so much so that they would always flee in the presence of such a soul, were it not for the fact that the Will of God forces them to remain where they are for the merit of that soul. Jesus teaches her to - at the very onset of any temptation (which indeed is spiritual combat with demons) - proclaim before all Heaven, earth, and the demons themselves, that she would rather die than offend God and consent to any temptation from the devil. He tells her that, with this proclamation made, the mere memory of it afterwards will remind her that she need not scrupulously waste time worrying about whether or not she consented to intentionally offending God; and that she need not be disturbed, for she would not have made that proclamation if that were the case!

## The Moment of Death

Never before have I read in any writing of a saint or in any mystical revelation a description so beautiful of the moment of death as is contained in Luisa's writings. Jesus says to Luisa that this is His great daily catch; that moment when at long last He can show Himself to the creature. At that moment so many souls are saved (even though a lengthy purgatory will be required of many of them). In it, Jesus goes so far as to wrench, as it were, an act of repentance and love from them, and this He achieves successfully in all but those most obstinate souls who choose to condemn themselves. This daily catch occurs, Jesus says, at the very instant that separates a soul from time and eternity, and therefore is not dependent upon any external, earthly observation of repentance. He speaks of finally being able to allow His creatures to see His irresistible face, which, if they only accept it, will inundate them with love and save them from the perdition that they have been walking the path of for so many years.

The only revelation I know of that comes close

<sup>169</sup> Rev. Joseph L. Iannuzzi, "The Gift of Living in the Divine Will in the Writings of Luisa Piccarreta" Doctoral diss. (The Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome, Rome, 2013), 4.1.1

to this is St. Faustina's, which bears an enormous similarity in this regard (as with all others!) to Luisa's. To St. Faustina, Jesus reveals this encounter He has with despairing souls at the point of death: "O soul steeped in darkness, do not despair. All is not yet lost. Come and confide in your God, who is love and mercy. But the soul, deaf even to this appeal, wraps itself in darkness. Jesus calls out again: My child, listen to the voice of your merciful Father. In the soul arises this reply: "For me there is no mercy," and it falls into greater darkness, a despair which is a foretaste of hell and makes it unable to draw near to God. Jesus calls to the soul a third time, but the soul remains deaf and blind, hardened and despairing. Then the mercy of God begins to exert itself, and, without any co-operation from the soul, God grants it final grace. If this too is spurned, God will leave the soul in this self-chosen disposition for eternity. This grace emerges from the merciful Heart of Jesus and gives the soul a special light by means of which the soul begins to understand God's effort; but conversion depends on its own will. The soul knows that this, for her, is final grace and, should it show even a flicker of good will, the mercy of God will accomplish the rest."<sup>170</sup>

Jesus continues on in this manner to Luisa for some time; speaking of how if only people knew the excesses of His love that He pours out at the moment of death, they would not wait until that moment to receive it, but would love Him all their lives.

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So far we have discussed renouncing the self-will, enkindling our desire, asking for the Gift, purifying our intention, and growing in knowledge. All of these should be done along with reading and praying the three primary works given to Luisa outside of her diary; namely, *The Rounds*, *The Hours*, and *The Virgin Mary in the Kingdom of the Divine Will*. These three works each roughly correspond to one of the three equal divisions of her 36-volume diary.

## The Rounds of the Soul in Creation

My favorite prayer has always been the Nicene Creed. Some would say "that is not a prayer; it is merely a statement of Faith." I disagree! It is a prayer - a statement of Faith, yes, but so much more, if approached with the awe that is due to it. I have always felt like I am, in spirit, standing before the realities I affirm with my lips; gazing with wonder upon them and relishing the fact that I know of their validity with absolute certainty.

This, I believe, should define our approach to the Rounds of Creation, in which we spiritually "re-do" all the acts of creation - past, present, and future - in the Will of God. With the Gift of Living in the Divine Will we can do this by visiting (in a true bilocation of the soul, through our intention) all acts that have been done or will be done, and imprinting upon them our *Fiat Voluntas Tua*; that is, our "I love you, I adore you, I glorify you, God." In this, we subject all creation to the Divine Will, as is our right and our duty as members of the common priesthood of the baptized, in this era in which God is unleashing His greatest Gift. In this we cooperate with God in setting "creation free from its slavery to corruption."<sup>171</sup>

This duty perhaps sounds strange to you if you are new to such a spirituality, but it is by no means unique or unprecedented in Christian prayer. Consider first the canticle of Daniel's companions who were thrown into the fire by Nebuchadnezzar: "Sun and moon, bless the Lord; praise and exalt him above all forever. Stars of heaven, bless the Lord; praise and exalt him above all forever,"<sup>172</sup> and so forth. This is still in the public (official) Prayer of the Church in the Divine Office, the recitation of which is required of all clergy and religious. This particular canticle is proclaimed every Sunday, and it is therefore obviously still an extremely important prayer. For God desires that nothing be left out. Consider the wonder of physical creation; it is, of course, nothing compared to the wonder of the human soul, but it is nevertheless a reflection of God. In fact, each created thing reflects some aspect or attribute of God, and it is our duty to recognize this and love Him with, in, and through that reflection. Jesus tells Luisa that, for example, the stars manifest His Divinity and steadfastness, the sun His majesty, the wind His sovereignty, the sea His purity and refreshment, and the waves His

<sup>170</sup> St. Faustina, *Divine Mercy in my Soul*, Paragraph 1485.

<sup>171</sup> Romans 8:21

<sup>172</sup> Daniel 3:58-59

continuous love. Merely physical creation, however, is without reason; it is incapable of truly blessing God itself. It only exists for us to bless God by means of it. Furthermore, the angels, being purely spiritual beings, cannot assimilate physical creation as we can.

But we do not stop there. In like manner, we spiritually go through all acts and impress our *fiat* upon them. The most important acts we visit are the acts of redemption; those that Jesus undertook while on Earth, as He enclosed within Himself all things.

In one excerpt, Luisa describes the Rounds in Creation as such:

*“As that immense void presents itself before my mind, I fuse myself in the Supreme Will and, as the little child, I begin my round again and, rising up on high, I desire to requite my God for all the love he offered all creatures at the moment of their creation. I want to honor him as the Creator of all things and so, going around the stars and in each glimmer of light, I impress my “I love you” and “glory to my Creator”; in every atom of sunlight that descends, again I impress my “I love you” and “glory”; throughout the entire expanse of the heavens, ...I impress my “love” and “glory”; on the mountains’ peaks and in the depths of the valleys, I impress my “love” and “glory”; I wander throughout the hearts of every creature and, wanting to enclose myself within each heart, from within them I cry out, “I love you” and “glory to my Creator”. Then, as if I had united every act in such a way that everything returns love and glory to God for everything he did in creation, I go to his throne and say to him: “Supreme Majesty and Creator of all things, this little child comes into your arms in the name of all creatures to tell you that all creation gives you not only a return of love, but also the just glory for the so many things you created for love of us. In your Will, in this immense empty space, everywhere I journeyed, so that all things may glorify you, love you and bless you. And now that I have rejoined the bonds of love between you, our Creator, and all creatures that the human will had broken, as well as restituted the glory that everyone owed you, let your Will descend to earth that it may bind and strengthen all bonds between you, our Creator, and all creatures so that all things may return*

*to the original order you had established.”<sup>173</sup>*

St. Faustina was also keenly aware of the importance of this task of glorifying God on behalf of all creation, even though she obviously did not see it through the lens of Luisa’s revelations. Nevertheless, the same God inspired both of these mystic’s writings, and how He wishes for us to respond is thereby clear. Consider this form of the Rounds of Creation that Faustina herself composed after she wrote: “O my Creator and Lord, I see on all sides the trace of Your hand and the seal of Your mercy, which embraces all created things. O my most compassionate Creator, I want to give You worship on behalf of all creatures and all inanimate creation; I call on the whole universe to glorify Your mercy. Oh, how great is Your goodness, O God!”<sup>174</sup>

Be adored, O our Creator and Lord.  
 O universe, humbly glorify your God;  
 Thank your Creator to the best of your powers  
 And praise God's incomprehensible mercy.  
 Come, O earth, in all your fine greenery;  
 Come, you too, O fathomless sea.  
 Let your gratitude become a loving song,  
 And sing the greatness of God's mercy.  
 Come, beautiful, radiant sun.  
 Come, bright dawn which precedes it.  
 Join in one hymn, and let your clear voices  
 Sing in one accord God's great mercy.  
 Come, hills and valleys, sighing woods and  
 thickets,  
 Come, lovely flowers of morningtide;  
 Let your unique scent  
 Adore and glorify God's mercy.  
 Come, all you lovely things of earth,  
 Which man does not cease to wonder at.  
 Come, adore God in your harmony,  
 Glorifying God's inconceivable mercy.  
 Come, indelible beauty of all the earth,  
 And, with great humility, adore your Creator,  
 For all things are locked in His mercy,  
 With one mighty voice all things cry out; how  
 great is the mercy of God.  
 But above all these beauties,  
 A more pleasing praise to God  
 Is a soul innocent and filled with childlike

<sup>173</sup> Rev. Joseph L. Iannuzzi, “The Gift of Living in the Divine Will in the Writings of Luisa Piccarreta” Doctoral diss. (The Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome, Rome, 2013), 4.1.13.1

<sup>174</sup> St. Faustina, *Divine Mercy in my Soul*, Paragraph 1749

trust,  
Which, through grace, is closely bound to  
Him.<sup>175</sup>

In a word, the purpose of the Rounds, which should not be seen merely as a stand-alone prayer but rather as incorporated into the very essence of the Gift itself, is to give God *perfect glory* on behalf of the whole human family; past, present, and future, and to do so with each and every one of our acts – even our very heartbeat and breath. How? *By asking to and intending to.*

To further emphasize the thoroughly Christian nature of such a task, please allow me to present a somewhat lengthy quote from Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si'*. I am sure, in reading it, you will be struck by its congruence with Luisa's revelations on the Rounds of Creation.

The universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely. Hence, there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person's face....

...not because the finite things of this world are really divine, but because the mystic experiences the intimate connection between God and all beings... Standing awestruck before a mountain, he or she cannot separate this experience from God, and perceives that the interior awe being lived has to be entrusted to the Lord...

... Through our worship of God, we are invited to embrace the world on a different plane. ... all the creatures of the material universe find their true meaning in the incarnate Word, for the Son of God has incorporated in his person part of the material world, planting in it a seed of definitive transformation ...

It is in the Eucharist that all that has been created finds its greatest exaltation. Grace, which tends to manifest itself tangibly, found unsurpassable expression

when God himself became man and gave himself as food for his creatures. ... In the Eucharist, fullness is already achieved; it is the living centre of the universe ... The Eucharist joins heaven and earth; it embraces and penetrates all creation. The world which came forth from God's hands returns to him in blessed and undivided adoration: in the bread of the Eucharist, "creation is projected towards divinization, towards the holy wedding feast, towards unification with the Creator himself"....

... The world was created by the three Persons acting as a single divine principle, but each one of them performed this common work in accordance with his own personal property. Consequently, "when we contemplate with wonder the universe in all its grandeur and beauty, we must praise the whole Trinity."... the Trinity has left its mark on all creation. Saint Bonaventure went so far as to say that human beings, before sin, were able to see how each creature "testifies that God is three". The reflection of the Trinity was there to be recognized in nature "when that book was open to man and our eyes had not yet become darkened". The Franciscan saint teaches us that *each creature bears in itself a specifically Trinitarian structure, so real that it could be readily contemplated if only the human gaze were not so partial, dark and fragile. In this way, he points out to us the challenge of trying to read reality in a Trinitarian key.*<sup>176</sup>

Prayer in union with and on behalf of creation has now even powerfully (and prophetically) made its way into the Magisterium of the Church. This same encyclical ends with "*A Christian prayer in union with creation,*" and I will end this section with an excerpt from the same:

Father, we praise you with all your creatures. They came forth from your all-powerful hand; they are yours, filled with your presence and

<sup>175</sup> Ibid. 1750

<sup>176</sup> Pope Francis. *Laudato Si'*. May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Excerpts from Paragraphs 233-238



your tender love.  
Praise be to you!

Son of God, Jesus,  
through you all things were made.  
You were formed in the womb of Mary our  
Mother, you became part of this earth,  
and you gazed upon this world with human  
eyes.  
Today you are alive in every creature  
in your risen glory.  
Praise be to you!

Holy Spirit, by your light  
you guide this world towards the Father's  
love, and accompany creation as it groans in  
travail.  
You also dwell in our hearts  
and you inspire us to do what is good.  
Praise be to you!

Triune Lord, wondrous community of  
infinite love, teach us to contemplate you  
in the beauty of the universe,  
for all things speak of you.  
Awaken our praise and thankfulness  
for every being that you have made.  
Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined  
to everything that is.

God of love, show us our place in this world  
as channels of your love  
for all the creatures of this earth,  
for not one of them is forgotten in your sight.

...

O Lord, seize us with your power and light,  
help us to protect all life,  
**to prepare for a better future,  
for the coming of your Kingdom**  
of justice, peace, love and beauty.  
Praise be to you!  
Amen.<sup>177</sup>

## The Hours of the Passion

In this work, which corresponds loosely to the middle years of Luisa's writings, we go with Jesus and Mary through each and every hour of the Passion of

Jesus Christ; from its beginning, when He was last with His mother and departed from her after their exchange of blessings, to His burial. In detail we meditate upon each of the important aspects of this act of redemption.

Even if this were not a revelation from God and were simply made up by Luisa (and to say it is not from God is to disagree with Pope St. Pius X!), it would at the very least be the greatest meditation on the Passion that I have ever come across. In it we learn astounding things (things which, incidentally, line up very well with what is taught in Bl. Anne Catherine Emmerich's revelations on the Passion). We learn first of all that Jesus' words in the garden, "*If it be possible, let this chalice pass...*"<sup>178</sup> were not regarding His apprehension at the physical sufferings. No, those words had nothing to do with that. Unspeakably dreadful as the physical sufferings were, Jesus was about as afraid of them as you would be afraid of getting wet to go and rescue your drowning child from a swimming pool. These words of His referred, rather, to souls that, despite His love, would choose to condemn themselves to Hell. Unfortunately the modern apologetics approach to the reality of damnation leaves much to be desired: "*Well, God can't force a free will, that's why some people go to hell,*" is the essence of it. That is true enough, in a sense. But there is another sense in which it is not true. Man's free will is not greater than God's omnipotence, otherwise there would be no point in us praying for the conversion of sinners. And yet, pray we do, and pray we must. Omnipotence is capable of all things that are not contradictions, and this was the cause of Jesus' prayer in the garden. He knew it was possible for the Father to exercise such dominion that He could simply override even the most deformed will in order to force it into Heaven. And yet, in the ultimate act of submission to the Divine Will and as a model for us all, Jesus appended his petition with "*nevertheless not My Will, but Thine be done,*"<sup>179</sup> even knowing what He was about to suffer beyond any measure for them.

That is the extent of His love; that blood would burst forth from His very pores in agony over the loss of His children. It was the damnation of souls that caused Him to sweat blood, and to undergo a His

<sup>177</sup>Pope Francis. *Laudato Si'*. May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Paragraph 246. Emphasis added.

<sup>178</sup> Matthew 26:39

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

most horrible Passion there in the garden. Any suffering the soldiers could hope to inflict upon Him with their devices of torture amounted to nothing close to it. This, too, we learn from Luisa's revelations; that the external passion and pain was absolutely nothing compared to the internal passion and sorrow as He took upon Himself all the evil that had ever been done or would ever be done. He truly desired to empty out every drop of His blood, to offer every square inch of His flesh for laceration, and to feel every imaginable pain. His burning love knew no bounds, and the more He suffered, the more superabundant grace He won for His beloved creatures.

Because of this, we see, throughout His passion, Jesus actually burning with desire to suffer more and more. This desire was not like that of some crazed masochist, but as one so unspeakably inflamed with love that nothing, not even the greatest sufferings imaginable and more, could stand in His way. This love welled up as a consuming fire within Him that caused more suffering than the Passion itself, in its superabundance and in its need to expend and pour out itself entirely. And whenever His soul cried out in sorrow, it was not due to the internal or external pain, but due to seeing souls - past, present, and future - utterly refusing Him, hating Him, and choosing Hell simply to spurn Him. In *The Hours* we read that He saw these souls as He looked down upon chunks of His own flesh torn off by the scourging, and it was that sight that caused Him in anguish to cry out. We read that at the very height of agony, at His abandonment upon the cross, He entered into a conversation with these souls begging them not to choose Hell, begging them to go so far as to let Him suffer more and more if only they would permit Him to save them.

Nowhere else will you come across so brutal a description of His passion as you will in Luisa's *Hours of the Passion*, and yet you will not come across a more true and accurate one, either. Throughout these *Hours*, you will say, along with Luisa, with the angels, and with the saints, "Is such great love possible?" It is possible. And in Jesus, it is a reality.

Further, I do not believe you will ever come across a single other writing that so powerfully demonstrates God's love for His children as does Luisa's *Hours of the Passion*. In reading, praying, and meditating upon these *Hours*, we act as victim souls, suffer redemptively with Jesus, and foster our desire to give over our whole lives to Jesus as victims.

But in the *Hours of the Passion* we do far more than simply recall; we enter, rather, into each moment through the same bilocation of soul that occurs in the Rounds. We fuse each of our members with Jesus', kissing Him as we strive to endure His passion with Him, thus offering Him consolation and assuming the role of quasi-co-redemptrix along with Our Lady, the true Co-Redemptrix.

Regarding these *Hours*, Jesus told Luisa:

*"To repeat in the soul My Passion in act, is different from one who only thinks of My pains and pities them. The former is an act of My own life [in the Divine Will that the soul accomplishes], which takes My place and repeats My pains, whence I feel requited for the effects and the value of a divine life. [The latter,] in thinking of My pains and in offering Me pity, permits Me to experience only the soul's company. But do you know in whom I may repeat the pains of My Passion in act? In the soul who possesses My Will as the center of its life. My Will alone is one act without succession of acts. This single act is as though fixed to one point which never moves, and this point is eternity [...] Now, the soul who lives in My Will possesses this single act, and there is no wonder that it takes part in the pains of My Passion as if they were in act."*<sup>180</sup>

We also read "These hours are the most precious of all because they are the reenactment of what I did in the course of My mortal life, and what I continue to do in the Most Blessed Sacrament. When I hear these Hours of My Passion, I hear My own voice and My own prayers. In the soul I behold My Will, that is, My Will desiring the good of all and making reparation for all, whence I feel drawn to dwell in this soul to be able to do within it what the soul itself does. Oh, with what love I desire that at least one soul in each town meditate upon these Hours of My Passion!

<sup>180</sup> Rev. Joseph L. Iannuzzi, "The Gift of Living in the Divine Will in the Writings of Luisa Piccarreta" Doctoral diss. (The Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome, Rome, 2013), 4.1.17

*I would hear My own voice in each town, and My justice, greatly indignant in these times, would be placated in part.*<sup>181</sup>

Jesus gave enormous promises to Luisa with these *Hours*, promises that extend to whoever recites them. He promised that through them, the saint would become holier still, the tempted would find victory, the ill would find strength, and that, *for each word read*, the salvation of a soul would be granted. He said that an entire city could be spared chastisements if only one soul in it would continually pray these Hours – and this can be equally satisfied by a group of people together taking on a continual recitation of all 24 Hours of the Passion. This is known as “living clocks.”<sup>182</sup> Luisa also affirms that the same angels that ministered to Jesus in the garden assist the soul who now meditates upon these Hours.

## The Blessed Virgin Mary in the Kingdom of the Divine Will

In this work, our Blessed Mother takes us on her lap and teaches us lessons on how to truly live continuously in the Divine Will. This is the real design for the Gift; not that it be a passing thing, but that it define the entire life of the creature without the exception of a single moment. As *The Hours of the Passion* contain an entire 24 hour period, these lessons comprise one each day over the course of a month – namely, the month of May. Each day contains three lessons: one for morning, one for noon, and one for evening. Mary tells Luisa that her guidance in this book serves to train souls to continuously remain anchored in the Divine Will, as opposed to entering and leaving the Gift (as Luisa herself did in the beginning, and as most will do as they grow in the Gift). As previously mentioned, St. Louis de Montfort taught that Mary is the quickest, surest, and easiest way to Jesus. It is the same way with the Gift of Living in the Divine Will.

Also in this work, Mary promises strength for the weak, victory for the tempted, a hand to raise up those who have fallen into sin, comfort for the afflicted, a path to hope for the dejected, and, in sum, the bread of the Divine Will for those who are famished. She promises her company, and even promises to commit to bringing us happiness with her maternal presence.

So many sublime truths are given in this work in such exquisite beauty, that only the prayerful reading of them directly will suffice. Unfortunately there are few excerpts from this in Fr. Iannuzzi’s dissertation, so I cannot go into much more detail here other than to briefly whet your appetite for these most sublime teachings!

Our Lady here teaches that all of hell trembles at the mere utterance of the name of Jesus, and that we should reverently call upon this Most Holy Name when we find our human will weak and inconstant, and in so doing the Divine Will shall reign again in us.

She speaks of the immensity of grace – indeed, the totality of it – pouring out from the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, inundating her entire being, instantaneously at the very moment of her conception. Immediately she swore never to do her own will, and she tells Luisa how this promise makes all other sacrifices in history nothing but a shadow compared to it. She speaks of the Trinity immediately taking perfect delight in her.

Above all, she promises to form the life of her Son in those who trust her and follow her in abandoning the self-will and living in the Divine Will. Her instructions are simple, short, and straightforward. Let them be your sure guide to quickly receiving the Grace of Graces.

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<sup>181</sup> Rev. Joseph L. Iannuzzi, “The Gift of Living in the Divine Will in the Writings of Luisa Piccarreta” Doctoral diss. (The Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome, Rome, 2013), 4.1.17.1

<sup>182</sup> For more information, see <http://www.passioiesus.org/en/>

Before ending this chapter dedicated to receiving the Gift of Living in the Divine Will and growing in it, I wish to give once more the most important reminder: remaining continuously anchored in the Gift and growing in it requires precisely the same growth in virtue and holiness that is spoken of everywhere in good Catholic writings. So please do not neglect any of it. Do not go replacing your Catholic bookshelf with a thousand books on the Divine Will; you will still very much need all of the books you already have! In fact, you will still be

needing to dedicate the vast majority of your time to those “basics.” Consider how much more time and effort is put into making a host - growing and harvesting wheat, milling, baking, etc. - than is put into consecrating it. That is a fitting analogy to demonstrate the continued importance of the ordinary spiritual, moral, ascetic, virtuous life, even in light of Luisa’s revelations. Permit me to especially recommend the works of St. Alphonsus Liguori for their unrivaled practicality and potency in this regard.



## Chapter III) A Brief Overview of the Life of Luisa

*Please note that I will not be citing individual biographical facts contained in this chapter; rather, I simply refer you to the overview of Luisa's life contained in Fr. Iannuzzi's Dissertation, as well as the Book "Luisa Piccarreta" by Fr. Bernardino Giuseppe Bucci, who is the last living priest who personally knew Luisa. I recommend you to those works for more details.*

On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1865, which that year was the Second Sunday of Easter (a day we now know as Divine Mercy Sunday), Luisa was born into the world. The wonders that God chose to work in her life as confirmation of His message to the world through her began from this very day. Despite being born breech - a very dangerous medical condition - Luisa caused her mother no pain whatsoever during the delivery. Later, on that very same day, her father took her to the parish priest to have her baptized.

Luisa's desire for hiddenness was manifest at the earliest age; as a toddler her favorite spot was a hollow in a great tree, in which she would spend hours alone in prayer. When guests arrived at her house, she could not be found; for she passed all such times hiding behind a bed in prayer.

As was the case with countless saints, antics such as these concerned people around her, but when you learn of her interior life, these external habits make perfect sense. As a mere child, she suffered from terrible demonic nightmares. Instead of succumbing to the horror of them, these experiences were in fact what caused her to flee with such fervor to Jesus. This utter dependency on Christ was no doubt what disposed her, even before she had reached the age of reason, to be the perfect instrument in the hand of God.

From these details we can see why Jesus chose Luisa, for they demonstrate His reasoning for saying, regarding how He chose Luisa, *"I went around the*

*earth over and over again, and beheld all souls one by one to find the lowliest of all."*<sup>183</sup>

At twelve years of age, Luisa began to hear Jesus speaking to her interiorly. These locutions came to her in the most precious moments of her life: the moments after receiving Holy Communion. He would instruct her, correct her, and guide her. After a year of this occurring, there was a life-changing experience for Luisa which invited her to become a victim soul: she received a vision of Jesus below her balcony, carrying His cross, amidst great persecutions of a throng surrounding Him. He then stopped, looked up at her, and said *"Soul, help me!"* It was not long after this that her mystical life progressed exponentially; she was soon incapable of keeping down ordinary food, and began her lifelong Eucharistic fast. Jesus was *"...training her to live exclusively on the Divine Will, which, along with the Eucharist, would constitute her daily bread."*<sup>184</sup> Adding to this utter dependence upon God, another mystical phenomenon came to define her days: she was totally rigid each morning, incapable of being moved even by several strong people. It was not until a priest came to bless her that she was capable of moving.

For the next 64 years, this was her life. It was perhaps the simplest life the world has ever seen, and the most dependent upon God. Neither her bodily nourishment nor even her ability to move her very own limbs came from any source but God, through the hands of a Catholic priest.

In these same years, the basis for her religious education and formation was the Catechism of the Council of Trent, and at age 18, she became a Third Order Dominican, taking the name Sister Magdalene. The next year her Archbishop, Giuseppe Dottula, formally appointed Fr. Michael De Benedictis as her confessor, and she was visited daily by him. Thus began another defining factor of all of her remaining days: complete, total, unquestioning obedience to the Church through her priest directors (of which she had many), all of whom were appointed formally by her Bishops, with each director utterly convinced of the validity of her mystical phenomena.

<sup>183</sup> Rev. Joseph L. Iannuzzi, "The Gift of Living in the Divine Will in the Writings of Luisa Piccarreta" Doctoral diss. (The Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome, Rome, 2013), 1.1.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid, 1.5.



At this point it is worth mentioning what was never a part of her life until its final few days: illness. Her only illness was the pneumonia that took her life at the very end. This of course is nothing short of an enormous miracle, as anyone who is accustomed to the care of bed-ridden patients is well aware.

In the year 1898, she received a new confessor, Fr. Gennaro Di Genarro, and he served in this capacity for the next 24 years. However a mere one year into this ministry, he commanded Luisa, under holy obedience, to write down her revelations. So great was her humility that this was an enormous penance for her, but her obedience was always perfect, and so she wrote.

After Fr. Gennaro came Fr. De Benedictis, and after that, St. Hannibal Maria di Francia was appointed to be Luisa's censor librorum, a role he held until his death in 1927. More than a decade earlier, however, deeply convinced of the necessity of Luisa's revelations, he had been publishing the *Hours of the Passion*. He gave volumes 1-19 of Luisa's diary his Nihil Obstat and afterwards the Archbishop, Joseph Leo, gave them his imprimatur.

Fr. Benedict Calvi was Luisa's next, and final, confessor. He became a most zealous advocate and promoter of Luisa's writings, and he documented an overview of her daily life as follows:

*"Toward six o'clock in the morning the confessor was beside her small bed. Luisa was found all curled up, crouched over so tightly that when the sister or person of the house — in obedience to the confessor or the Bishop — had to sit her up in bed in her usual position, they could not move her on account of her weight. It seemed as if she were a huge piece of lead. ... Only when the confessor, or on certain occasions any priest, imparted to her his blessing by making the sign of the Cross with his thumb on the back of her hand, Luisa's body regained its senses and she began to move. ... Throughout the 64 years of being nailed [this figurative terminology likens Luisa's bed to the cross of Christ] to her small bed, Luisa never suffered any bedsores. Immediately afterwards, there followed the reading of that which Luisa had written during the*

*night concerning the sublime truths on the Divine Will, which was read only by her confessor beside her small bed. There was yet another extraordinary event. What was her food? Everything she had eaten, after a few hours, came back up completely intact. All of these events I observed, scrupulously controlled and subjected to careful examination by many doctors and professors of dogmatic, moral, ascetic and mystical theology ... [Each morning] After having awakened Luisa in the name of holy obedience, the confessor or another priest celebrated Holy Mass in her little room before her bed. Therefore, having received Holy Communion, she would remain there as though in a trance, in ecstasy and in intimate conversation with the Lord for two to three hours, but without her body becoming petrified or experiencing the absolute loss of its senses. However, many times throughout the day she would be with the Lord in a manner that engaged her senses, and on occasion the people that were in her company would notice it."<sup>85</sup>*



Luisa would work at sewing for the Church with her days, and altar cloths were what she mostly made. As noted above, though she truly fasted her entire life after becoming "nailed" to her bed, she was nevertheless commanded under obedience, from the Archbishop, to attempt to eat each day. This she would always do each afternoon, but a few minutes later after a small hiccup, all that she consumed would come up, perfectly intact. She would then work on her sewing until ten thirty at night, and at some point in the middle of the night (usually between midnight and 1am) she would enter into an ecstatic state like a petrified statue (even if the pillows behind her were not correctly in place), and thus her mystical experiences, as documented in her diary, ensued.

Such were all of her days. Intermixed with them were apparitions, locutions, introspection, bilocation,

<sup>185</sup> Rev. Joseph L. Iannuzzi, "The Gift of Living in the Divine Will in the Writings of Luisa Piccarreta" Doctoral diss. (The Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome, Rome, 2013), 1.8.



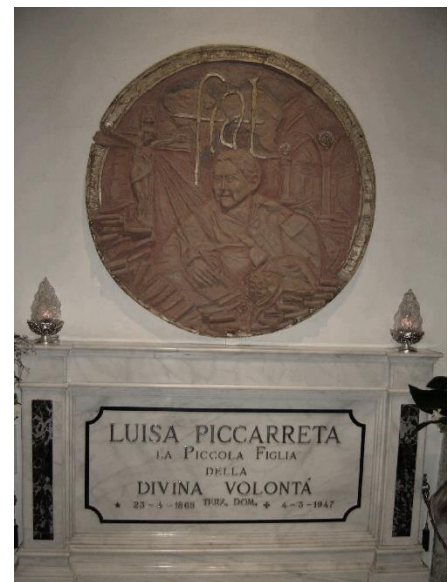
invisible stigmata, and countless other miracles, but little or nothing externally and visibly extraordinary. Especially noteworthy among Luisa's writings was the message given to her by Jesus on December 28<sup>th</sup>, 1908. He interiorly showed her an earthquake, and a mere five hours later the infamous Messina Earthquake struck, which killed 100,000 people. It was the most destructive and powerful earthquake in the history of Europe.<sup>186</sup> Jesus indicated to Luisa that this was just the beginning of the chastisements, and far greater ones are to come.

On August 31<sup>st</sup>, 1938, three of her works were placed on the Index of Prohibited Books. At this point in her life she was staying at a convent with the Sisters of Divine Zeal. She loved staying there, and had been there for ten years at that point. A mere month after her works were placed on the index, the superiors asked her to leave. Two months after that, she finished her last writing, as she was no longer bound under obedience to write upon its completion. One year later, World War II began.

Nine years later, on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 1947, she breathed her last, and throngs of thousands lined the streets to pay homage to "the saint of Corato."

*"My daughter, it is My absolute Divine Will that these writings on My Divine Will be made known. Despite the many incidents that may occur, My Will shall overcome them all. Although it may take years and years, My absolute Will knows how to dispose everything to accomplish its objective. The time in which these writings will be made known is relative to and dependent on the disposition of souls who wish to receive so great a good, as well as on the effort of those who must apply themselves in being its trumpet-bearers by offering up the sacrifice of heralding in the new era of peace, the new sun that will dispel the clouds of all evils."* - Jesus to Luisa.<sup>187</sup>

Forty seven years after that, her cause for beatification and canonization officially opened.



<sup>186</sup> This Day in History. Dec 28. General Interest. Information can be found on the History Channel.

<sup>187</sup> Rev. Joseph L. Iannuzzi, "The Gift of Living in the Divine Will in the Writings of Luisa Piccarreta" Doctoral diss. (The Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome, Rome, 2013), 1.11.6.

## Chapter IV) Answers to Objections

Before delving into answering specific objections, I must first make it abundantly clear that anyone who opens up Luisa's writings with a merely critical eye, having the sole intention of finding juicy details at which to scream "heresy!" will have no shortage of opportunities to do so. Certain internet blogs and forums are replete with those who have taken such a task upon themselves. No effort here will be made to address superficial, Pharisee-like objections. The only remedy to that malady is to unclench the fist and pray for humility.

The following objections, however, could easily be made in all genuineness by a Catholic who honestly is just seeking the truth, and doing his duty by testing and discerning an alleged private revelation before believing.

### **Important Catholic Content Missing from Luisa's Writings?**

**Objection:** Why doesn't Luisa talk more about the Rosary? About Eucharistic Adoration? About Consecration to Mary? About the need to do works of mercy for our neighbor, etc.?

**Answer:** One thing is very clear: Luisa's revelations are not sufficient, and they are not comprehensive. They are missing important things, even essential things. The Almighty decreed this so that it is clear to us that they are intended to fit within a structure that is itself complete; that is to say, within the spirituality of the Roman Catholic Church. This way, no one can justify trying to start a new "Luisan" religion or denomination. It is the heretics who constantly vie for an apparent sense of totality in their works; for drawing souls away from the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church is precisely their aim. Those who pursue evil ends (whether by malice of will or their own deception) often reveal the cloven hoof when they seek this completion and autonomy.

Consider, therefore, how important it is to not draw any conclusions from merely what is either apparently or actually lacking in Luisa's writings. For

example, there was quite some time in my own reading of her writings that I had not once (to my knowledge) come across an instance of Luisa mentioning the Rosary. However, when I finally did come across it (and this is still one of the only mentions of the Rosary I know of in Luisa's writings), it was in a letter in which she strongly admonished the recipient to *never* neglect praying it. How easily that one single letter could have not existed! Imagine, if it had not, what folly would have been committed by a devotee of Luisa's revelations who, upon realizing he never read about the Rosary in her writings, decided that this prayer must not be important. Due to the existence of that single letter, we now know that such a devotee would not only be committing a grave error, but would even be contradicting the very wish of Luisa herself.

Luisa wrote her many pages of revelations because she was commanded to write by her spiritual directors. They instructed her to write down what she received from Jesus; they did not say to her "*Luisa, write down a comprehensive overview of how a Catholic ought to behave in light of these revelations that Jesus is giving you.*" If that was what her directors said to her, and if that was her mission, then we would have every right to criticize her writings for what they lack. But Luisa had nothing but deference to the Catholic Church - and all of its traditions included - in all things. Her writings presuppose devout Catholicism in every way, shape, and form that it ordinarily takes.

### **Thy Will be Done on Earth as It Is in Heaven**

**Objection:** If the universal reign on earth of the Gift of Living in the Divine Will is what Jesus referred to by saying "*Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven,*" then why didn't He make it clearer? Surely if He intended so great a prophecy, He would have issued it in a similar fashion as, for example, that in which He issued the eschatological prophecies regarding famines, earthquakes, and the like in the Synoptic Gospels. He could have at least said, "*Thy Will be Lived on Earth as it is in Heaven*" instead!

**Answer:** It is certainly true that Our Lord could have been clearer regarding the coming fulfillment of the

third petition in the prayer He taught us, but this lack of clarity was His intent for the time, for He said, “*I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth...*”<sup>188</sup> This Scriptural ambiguity was also His intent with other great private revelations; for example, devotion to His Sacred Heart or the Immaculate Heart of His mother. Both of these do indeed have Scriptural basis, but only very tiny glimpses that no one would be able to realize the full actualization of without a new private revelation from Heaven. We know the Apostle John rested his head on Jesus’ breast at the Last Supper; we know blood and water flowed forth from it when pierced by a lance. But no one could from those verses conclude anything like what St. Margaret Mary Alacoque gave us in her Sacred Heart revelations. Likewise, we know that at the Presentation of Jesus in the temple and after the prophecy was given by Simeon, Mary “*kept all these things in her heart.*”<sup>189</sup> We do not thereby learn that, “*in the end, [her] Immaculate Heart will triumph,*”<sup>190</sup> even though that revelation at Fatima is truly an explication of the former Public Revelation in Scripture, just as Luisa’s revelations are an explication of the Scriptural basis for them.

Now the reason why He did not pray “Thy Will be lived on earth as it is in Heaven” is clear. Had He said it in this manner, it would have been utterly inapplicable to the following 2,000 years of Church history to come. That would have deprived millennia of Christians the joy of knowing that they are fulfilling this petition of the Lord’s Prayer. Since Living in the Divine Will certainly rightly falls under the category of doing God’s will (but the converse does not necessarily hold - doing God’s Will does not always amount to Living in the Divine Will), the wording of the Our Father is more generally applicable. Furthermore, “doing God’s will” is a far more intuitive concept than “living in God’s will,” as the latter requires explanation.

Nevertheless, the latter portion of this petition (*on earth as it is in heaven*) is indeed a reference to living in the Divine Will, and for 2,000 years it has served as a reminder that what we are

praying for simply has not yet come to pass. Jesus tells Luisa that it is impossible for God’s will to be done on earth as it is in heaven – that is, in the same manner the blessed in heaven do God’s will – without the Gift of Living in the Divine Will.

## On the “Greatness” of a Soul Living in the Divine Will

**Objection:** It is simply not credible to assert that mere desire and a state of grace can be sufficient to enable the reception of a Gift greater even than Spiritual Marriage, which was enjoyed by the most venerated canonized mystics of the Church. I am no St. Francis or St. Teresa of Avila and I know it, whether or not I receive “the Gift of Living in the Divine Will.”

**Answer:** First of all, there is one very important sense in which this objection is completely valid: you are correct - you are no St. Francis! You will not work the wonders that he worked, you will not fast like he fasted, you will not form a thriving religious order as he did, you will not inspire countless biographies, and you will not have a Pope named after you. But that does not mean you cannot receive a greater gift than St. Francis received.

A distinction must be made between the greatness of the gift and the greatness of the recipient. We likewise rightly do not say that a baptized baby, or a school girl returning from her First Communion, is greater than King David or Moses. But it would be a heresy to say that they did not receive a greater gift, and therefore whatever greater sanctity corresponds to it and is bestowed “*ex opere operato.*”<sup>191</sup>

Likewise, when we speak of Living in the Divine Will as the “greatest” sanctity, we cannot fully settle the matter of what that means in a cut and dry fashion without the important distinctions. By the very limitations of our current state as wayfarers,<sup>192</sup> when we refer to someone’s sanctity we refer only to the external evidence of it (or at least we can at best strive to refer to its internal reality by way of inference from the external evidence), for God alone sees the

<sup>188</sup> John 16:12-13

<sup>189</sup> Luke 2:19

<sup>190</sup> Apparition to the children at Fatima, July 13<sup>th</sup>, 1917.

<sup>191</sup> Meaning “from the work performed” Defined at Trent to indicate that the sacraments are true instrumental causes of grace; that by the

mere fact of them being validly administered, they do indeed confer the grace intended.

<sup>192</sup> That is, as opposed to “comprehensors,” or in other words, the blessed in heaven.

heart of man.<sup>193</sup> Now the Gift of Living in the Divine Will entirely flees the senses; there is nothing external about it. So there is no reason for us, even if Luisa's revelations are fully approved, to assert that -- due to the Gift - this or that saint who lived after Luisa's time is holier than this or that saint who lived before Luisa's time. When we attribute holiness to someone, we do so by way of that external evidence which neither indicates nor depends upon the Gift of Living in the Divine Will. So there is no need to alter our terminology of comparable holiness (not that comparing holiness is a particularly prudent thing to do, anyway!). If St. Francis had lived today, I am sure he would indeed be Living in the Divine Will, but that does not mean that his biography would look any different. So it is utterly confused and invalid to -- in the least - look down upon saints of the Church who lived before this age of the Divine Will. They were no less virtuous, no less sacrificing, no less in love with God, and no less mystically insightful. It is simply that an entirely invisible grace -- the Gift of Living in the Divine Will -- was not bestowed upon them on top of these things.

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There is another sense, however, in which we must indeed assert that one who receives the Gift of Living in the Divine Will is greater than all the saints who came before. If we are not willing to claim this (with the right distinctions, in the right context, and in the right sense) then there is no point in following Luisa's revelations at all.

Consider first what the writings of the saints teach us about the relative ease and rapidity with which one can attain the greatest degrees of sanctity. For example, St. John of the Cross taught: "*Yet I reply to all these persons [those who refuse to believe that the habit of charity of a certain soul in this life has become as perfect as in the next] that the Father of lights [Jas. 1:17], who is not closefisted but diffuses himself abundantly as the sun does its rays, without being a respecter of persons [Acts 10:34], wherever there is room - always showing himself gladly along the highways and byways - does not hesitate or consider it of little import to find his delights with the*

*children of the earth at a common table in the world [Prv. 8:31]. It should not be held as incredible in a soul now examined, purged, and tried in the fire of tribulations, trials, and many kinds of temptations, and found faithful in love, that the promise of the Son of God be fulfilled, the promise that the Most Blessed Trinity will come and dwell in anyone who loves him [Jn. 14:23]. The Blessed Trinity inhabits the soul by divinely illumining its intellect with the wisdom of the Son, delighting its will in the Holy Spirit, and absorbing it powerfully and mightily in the unfathomed embrace of the Father's sweetness.*"<sup>194</sup>

All St. John has here is well-grounded rebukes for those who choose to doubt the unfathomably great levels of sanctity quickly achievable by an ordinary soul who has been victorious over tribulations, trials, and temptations (and what devout Catholic today hasn't?). He goes so far as to utterly insist that not only can habitual charity - that is, sanctifying grace<sup>195</sup> - become in a soul as perfect in this life as in the next, but he also insists that this can be attained with ease because God "is not closefisted but diffuses himself abundantly."

Similarly, St. Faustina taught: "...how very easy it is to become holy; all that is needed is a bit of good will. If Jesus sees this little bit of good will in the soul, He hurries to give himself to the soul, and nothing can stop Him, neither shortcomings nor falls-absolutely nothing. Jesus is anxious to help that soul, and if it is faithful to this grace from God, it can **very soon** attain the **highest holiness possible** for a creature here on earth. God is very generous and does not deny His grace to anyone. Indeed He gives more than what we ask of Him."<sup>196</sup>

"Very soon" and "highest possible"- these phrases should give us great pause. How easy it would have been for St. Faustina to leave them out!

Relaying the same teaching, St. Therese of Lisieux wrote, "How can a soul so imperfect as mine aspire to the plenitude of Love? ...Alas! I am but a poor little unfledged bird. I am not an eagle, I have but the eagle's eyes and heart! Yet, notwithstanding my exceeding littleness, I dare to gaze upon the Divine Sun

<sup>193</sup> Cf. 1 Samuel 16:7

<sup>194</sup> John of the Cross, *The Living Flame of Love*. 1.15(2-3).

<sup>195</sup> 1914 Catholic Encyclopedia, *Christian and Religious Perfection*

<sup>196</sup> St. Maria Faustina Kowalska, *Divine Mercy in my Soul*, paragraph 291. Emphasis Added.

*of Love, and I burn to dart upwards unto Him! I would fly, I would imitate the eagles; but all that I can do is to lift up my little wings-it is beyond my feeble power to soar. ... With daring self-abandonment there will I remain until death, my gaze fixed upon that Divine Sun. Nothing shall affright me...*<sup>197</sup>

In demonstrating that the heights of perfection can be reached not only through precisely the same long and arduous journey that the great saints we read about took, but can also be achieved in a much easier and quicker way, Therese teaches the following:

*"You know it has ever been my desire to become a Saint, but I have always felt, in comparing myself with the Saints, that I am as far removed from them as the grain of sand, which the passer-by tramples underfoot, is remote from the mountain whose summit is lost in the clouds. Instead of being discouraged, I concluded that God would not inspire desires which could not be realised, and that I may aspire to sanctity in spite of my littleness. For me to become great is impossible. I must bear with myself and my many imperfections; but I will seek out a means of getting to Heaven by a little way-very short and very straight, a little way that is wholly new. We live in an age of inventions; nowadays the rich need not trouble to climb the stairs, they have lifts instead. Well, I mean to try and find a lift by which I may be raised unto God, for I am too tiny to climb the steep stairway of perfection. I have sought to find in Holy Scripture some suggestion as to what this lift might be which I so much desired, and I read these words uttered by the Eternal Wisdom Itself: "Whosoever is a little one, let him come to Me." Then I drew near to God, feeling sure that I had discovered what I sought; but wishing to know further what He would do to the little one, I continued my search and this is what I found: "You shall be carried at the breasts and upon the knees; as one whom the mother caresseth, so will I comfort you." Never have I been consoled by words more tender and sweet. Thine Arms, then, O Jesus, are the lift which must raise me up even unto Heaven. To get there I need not grow; on the contrary, I must remain little..."*<sup>198</sup>

A religious sister once wrote in order to Therese to tell her that her "little way" was truly a "great way," and that although Therese says she is just a fledgling little bird with a broken wing who cannot hope to rise up to the heights of the eagles (the great saints), she is in reality just another eagle soaring in the heavens. This view is likely shared by many Catholics when they are introduced to the Little Way of St. Therese - Catholics who say to themselves; "*ah! Interesting thing for a canonized saint who never committed a mortal sin to say! And a cloistered nun, no less! This couldn't possibly be less applicable to me.*" Therese rebuked this sister. It was no doubt arranged by God so that Therese could answer this same concern for us all. She said to this sister it was not so - that she truly did not have the greatness of the saints she spoke of. Therese insisted that it was confidence and *blind confidence alone* in God, and nothing else. No greatness of the eagle, not even of a subtle type.

As you can see, it is not the saints themselves who exhibit such hesitancy and refusal to believe that the highest levels of holiness are readily within reach of anyone. It is we - ordinary Christians - those who should be the most thankful for this accessibility, who paradoxically are the hesitant ones in this regard! Let us be utterly rid of that hesitancy, for it stems from a skewed, Pelagian perspective of grace. Furthermore, it stems from a cheap humility, for true humility disposes you to look up to some virtue in each and every person you meet here and now, even the most difficult of souls. Cheap humility is satisfied with relegating this acknowledgment of superiority to dead saints.

Nevertheless, do not expect a mere state of grace and desire for the Gift to long suffice. That temporary state is only the invitation; becoming stable in the Gift and growing deeper into it requires the same *pursuit* of virtue that all the saints engaged in. The present availability of the Gift does not exempt us from seeking heroic virtue any more than advanced weaponry exempts a modern soldier from the basics of boot camp. Recall that the words of Our Lord "*To whom much is given, much is expected*"<sup>199</sup> remain true. Our task is to respond to love with love; and if indeed

<sup>197</sup> St. Therese of Lisieux, *The Story of a Soul* (, New York: An Image Book, Doubleday, a division of Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc. 1989), Ch. XI.

<sup>198</sup> St. Therese of Lisieux, *The Story of a Soul* (New York: An Image Book, Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc. 1989), Chapter IX.

<sup>199</sup> Luke 12:48

Luisa's revelations are to be believed, then how much more so now must we love God?

A final note is in order on this objection to reiterate just what Living in the Divine Will does *not* do to the soul. For although the loftiness of the claims in Luisa's writings may at first glance seem without bound, there are of course very important limitations. The creature remains a creature; and whatever glories it participates in by way of Living in the Divine Will are purely by unmerited grace, not by nature. Furthermore, Stephen Patton explains "*Any involvement that the creature, in the divine will, might be said to have in the eternal, universal act of creation and redemption is entirely derivative, non-essential and participatory. Everything claimed in Luisa's diary about the value of the creature's acts in the divine will, regardless of how enormous, can nevertheless be understood within the parameters of these principles.*"<sup>200</sup>

## Living in the Divine Will and the Eucharist

**Objection:** It is heretical to assert that the Gift of Living in the Divine Will is greater than the Eucharist. God cannot give a greater gift than the Eucharist, and nothing can be called greater than that.

**Answer:** Which is greater: a truckload of bricks, or five miles?

That question makes precisely as much sense as the question of whether the Eucharist or the Gift of Living in the Divine Will is greater. The Eucharist is a substance, the Gift of Living in the Divine Will is an accident (for it is a grace, and grace is an accident).<sup>201</sup> This is not to say we cannot in any way compare the two, but from the onset we must understand that we are not making a literal comparison of greatness of one thing to the other in the same sense (as if, for

example, we were comparing the heights of two buildings).

Regarding the substance of the Eucharist, it is absolutely beyond question that nothing can be greater, for in this the Eucharist is, quite simply, God. For this reason it is often said of the Eucharist, rightfully so, that "God cannot give a greater gift." Of course He can't! He cannot give more than Himself. To this end, St. John Vianney would often beautifully proclaim, "*There is no reality greater than the Eucharist!*"

There are, however, two ways in which something may legitimately said to be greater than the Eucharist. The first way is on the part of the subjective effect on the recipient. For example, if one is in a state of mortal sin and is not perfectly contrite (but is indeed imperfectly contrite),<sup>202</sup> then the Sacrament of Reconciliation would be far greater *for him* than the Eucharist. The latter would only increase his condemnation,<sup>203</sup> whereas the former would restore him to sanctifying grace. Therefore in this respect it should be clear that, as there are no doubt many souls in hell, who while on Earth received the Eucharist, there can be greater things to desire for oneself than the reception of the Eucharist (for another example, confirmation in grace).

The second way a thing may be greater than the Eucharist is if, though similar in substance, its accidents correspond more fittingly to the substance than they do in the case of the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the sole example in the universe of a disconnect between the substance of a thing and its accidents. This disconnect enables Christ's true, substantial, physical<sup>204</sup> presence to remain with us always<sup>205</sup> without destroying us, thanks to the lowliness of the accidents. However, it is inherently imperfect for accidents to be so poorly conformed to the substance that underlies them, and this is why the Eucharist will cease to exist upon the consummation of the world - because of its imperfection. If the

<sup>200</sup> Stephen Patton. *A Guide to the Book of Heaven*. Page 48.

<sup>201</sup> This is meant in the scholastic philosophical sense of the word -- a category of being whose nature is not to exist in itself, but in another.

<sup>202</sup> Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraph 1453

<sup>203</sup> Cf. 1 Corinthians 11:29

<sup>204</sup> Unfortunately some today speak of Christ's presence in the Eucharist as "sacramental" but not "physical." Although it is true

that Christ is not in the Eucharist by way of quantitative extension in space, He nevertheless is indeed physically present in the Eucharist; for He is substantially present, and the substantial presence of a thing that has physicality necessarily implies that same physicality present at least qualitatively.

<sup>205</sup> Cf. Matthew 28:20

Eucharist, in its current form, was as great as possible, then the Second Coming of Christ would essentially be an evil, for it would directly cause the cessation of the greatest good. Such an assertion of course would be absurd, for we pray daily that Jesus may come soon. Eternity is something we eagerly await with unbounded joy, and not something we dread because the Eucharist will not exist there!

In this sense, Christ's final coming in glory will be greater than the Eucharist; not because there is any truly *substantial* difference, but because the accidents of the former will be more properly conformed to the substance; indeed, there will be no more disconnect. Likewise, the Incarnation of the Word is substantially identical to the Eucharist. At the Annunciation, Mary's womb was changed from an empty vessel to a tabernacle for the eternal, infinite, almighty God. At the consecration, the priest's hands go from holding a piece of bread, to holding the eternal, infinite, almighty God. But we rightly say that the Incarnation was greater still than the consecration we witnessed at Mass this morning. We say this for many reasons. First, the Incarnation was preceded by the greatest act of Faith in history: the *Fiat* of the Blessed Virgin. Secondly, in the Incarnation, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity assumed accidents more pleasing to Him than the accidents of bread and wine.

Scripture also teaches us that, upon being found by His parents after being lost for three days, Jesus continued to grow "*in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.*"<sup>206</sup> In a word, He became greater. And yet it goes without saying that He remained the same Person - the Word of God - from His conception onward. But it is far more fitting for the substance of God to be actualized in a full-grown man than in a baby, for childhood is a state of imperfection whose end is full maturity and adulthood.

In a comparable way, Jesus reveals to Luisa that He deems it more fitting to actualize His real life in the soul of a human creature than in the dead accidents of bread and wine. This revelation does not mean that the human being is literally transubstantiated in the precise same manner the Eucharist is! The creature remains a creature. The

substance of the human being is not replaced with the substance of God, as is the case in the Eucharist. Hence no human other than Jesus - even if by a special revelation of God the man or woman was known to have the Gift of Living in the Divine Will - can ever be worshipped. We worship God alone, which is why we worship Jesus in the Eucharist; for there is no *other* substance in the Eucharist along with Him,<sup>207</sup> therefore it is not an idolatrous object of worship.

Nevertheless, it is not illicit to consider in one respect the Gift of Living in the Divine Will greater than the Eucharist, so long as we are careful to issue these distinctions when we dare speak such words around those not already aware of the distinctions. Bearing all this in mind, we may read Jesus' words to Luisa with confidence:

*"My daughter, you too can form hosts and consecrate them. Do you know what the garment is that veils Me in the Most Blessed Sacrament? It is the accidents of the bread with which the host is formed. The life, which dwells in this Host, is My Body, Blood [, soul] and divinity. ... The unconsecrated host is material and purely human. You too have a material body and a human will. This body and this will of yours — if you keep them pure, upright and far from any shadow of sin — are the accidents, the veils that allow Me to consecrate Myself and live hidden within you. But this is not enough, lest it be like an unconsecrated host: My life is needed. My life is composed of sanctity, love, wisdom, power and all else, but the operation is entirely My Will. That is why, after you have prepared the host, you must make your will die within it; you must trample it asunder so that it may no longer re-emerge. Then you must let My Will permeate your entire being...Only in these living hosts do I find compensation for the loneliness, the hunger and all else that I suffer in tabernacles...I knew that many graces were needed since I was to operate the greatest miracle that exists in the world, namely, continuously living in My Will [...] This miracle surpasses even that of the Eucharist. Of themselves the accidents of the unconsecrated host possess no reason, will or desire that might otherwise oppose My sacramental life. So, the host contributes nothing, as the work of consecration is entirely Mine. If I so will it, I accomplish it. On the other hand, to accomplish the miracle of living in My Will, I have to bend the soul's*

<sup>206</sup> Luke 2:52

<sup>207</sup> As there is in a created person Living in the Divine Will



*reason, its human will, desire and love that are entirely free. And how much effort this takes! Indeed, there are many souls who receive Communion and take part in the miracle of the Eucharist while sacrificing little. Now, it requires more sacrifice to realize the miracle of My Will living in souls, and yet very few there are who dispose themselves to receive it.*"<sup>208</sup>

If you are still unconvinced, bear in mind that this notion is not at all without precedent. Rejecting the Divine Will revelations based on this objection would entail the rejection of many other revelations and teachings of saints as well. For example, as was mentioned in an earlier chapter, St. Faustina, after long referring to the Eucharist as a "living host," one day asked Jesus to make her very self into the same, to which He responded, "*You are a living Host, pleasing to the Heavenly Father.*" Also mentioned previously was Venerable Conchita, to whom Jesus revealed "*...to possess [Jesus] and to be possessed by [Jesus] as in one and the same substance...*"<sup>209</sup> In referring to being "one and the same substance," Jesus says to Conchita precisely what Jesus is saying to Luisa in the quote above. (Many other examples like this exist, and I again refer you to Fr. Iannuzzi's *Splendor of Creation* for more information.)

## Original Holiness vs. Christian Holiness

**Objection:** If the purpose of the Gift of Living in the Divine Will is merely to return our souls to the same state as Adam's before the fall, then this entails a rejection of the superior dignity of Christian holiness, and it would have simply been better if Adam never sinned in the first place. But God would not have permitted the fall if He were not to bring a greater good out of it, and in the Exultet of the Easter Liturgy, we pray "*O happy fault that merited such and so great a Redeemer!*" Furthermore, the Catechism teaches that the new creation in Christ exceeds Adam's state. Therefore any reference to a return to Adam's state is absurd, since ours as Christians is better in every way.

**Answer:** We must settle from the onset that not only is it not absurd to refer to a return to Adam's state, but even the Church herself uses such terminology in the prayer of the Mass, "*...it is right to celebrate the wonders of your providence, by which you call human nature back to its original holiness...*"<sup>210</sup> Therefore, it is clear that there is at least some aspect of Adam's holiness that even Christians must seek. We can be sure of this duty, as the prayer does not say "*you have placed human nature back into [or above] its original holiness.*" Rather, it refers to a *call* - in other words, something we must try to respond to even as Christians with sanctifying grace. From this premise we can conclude that all of us, even those who have Christian holiness, must still strive for something that Adam had before the fall. Since no one strives for what is below, it is manifest that at least some aspect of Adam's holiness was superior to Christian holiness.<sup>211</sup>

We also must submit unconditionally to the teachings in the Catechism, for I will again insist that in dealing with any apparent contradiction between Luisa's writings and the Catechism, it is the Catechism that must be favored absolutely. In it, we read that "*...the first man was not only created good, but was also established in friendship with his Creator and in harmony with himself and with the creation around him, in a state that would be surpassed only by the glory of the new creation in Christ.*"<sup>212</sup> It is not immediately clear from that excerpt whether the Church intends to teach that the new creation in Christ, *in and of itself*, is a superior state to Adam's before the fall, or if the glory of the new creation in Christ would at some point contain a greater glory than Adam's. In other words, we cannot be certain whether the Catechism is saying that Christian Baptism *itself* makes one holier than Adam, or merely disposes one to receive a greater holiness. Either interpretation, however, is compatible with Luisa's revelations, for even in the former interpretation we can simply look to whatever *aspects* of Adam's holiness was superior to ours.

To that end, let us examine what is already taught by the Church or agreed upon by theologians about Adam's state (also called "original holiness,"

<sup>208</sup> Rev. Joseph L. Iannuzzi, "The Gift of Living in the Divine Will in the Writings of Luisa Piccarreta" Doctoral diss. (The Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome, Rome, 2013), 4.1.22.1.

<sup>209</sup> Fr. Marie-Michel Philipon, O.P. *CONCHITA: A Mother's Spiritual Diary*. Pages 57-58.

<sup>210</sup> Roman Missal. Preface of Holy Virgins.

<sup>211</sup> It is obvious that Adam was superior in the senses of lacking concupiscence, having infused knowledge, etc., but that is not what I here refer to.

<sup>212</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraph 375.

“original innocence,” “original justice,” or “integral nature.”<sup>213</sup>)

Adam was created to be a true King over all the world. In addressing the question of whether Adam had mastership over all creatures, Aquinas says that *“Man in a certain sense contains all things; and so according as he is master of what is within himself, in the same way he can have mastership over other things.”*<sup>214</sup> Therefore, be well assured that the notion that Adam had a very special priestly and kingly calling is not some strange, Gnostic premise to a new-age spirituality! Especially in Luisa’s *Rounds of Creation*, we read about (and participate in) Adam’s office as priest of creation whose job it is to interiorly assume all things and glorify God in, with, and through them.

We must also not fall victim to believing that, since we now have the Public Revelation of Jesus Christ, our knowledge of God is superior to what Adam had before the Fall. Although this idea may at first glance sound pious and incarnational, it is not true. Again I will defer to the Angelic Doctor, who said, *“Nevertheless he [Adam] knew God with a more perfect knowledge than we do now. Thus in a sense his knowledge was midway between our knowledge in the present state, and the knowledge we shall have in heaven...”*<sup>215</sup> And, again, *“the first man was established by God in such a manner as to have knowledge of all those things for which man has a natural aptitude. ...moreover... the first man was endowed with such a knowledge of [...] supernatural truths as was necessary for the direction of human life in that state. But those things which cannot be known by merely human effort, and which are not necessary for the direction of human life, were not known by the first man; such as the thoughts of men, future contingent events, and some individual facts, as for instance the number of pebbles in a stream; and the like.”*<sup>216</sup>

It must be admitted that Aquinas held that the Incarnation of Christ was a contingent event, hence in his view Adam would not have known of it, but this idea is by no means Church Teaching. In Luisa’s writings we learn that Jesus would indeed have

become incarnate even had Adam never sinned;<sup>217</sup> not in order to be a suffering savior, but to be a glorious King to receive the sovereignty from Adam. This particular question vindicates the opinion of Bl. Duns Scotus, who insisted that indeed Christ’s Incarnation was not contingent. This is not to accuse the *Felix Culpa*<sup>218</sup> of the Liturgical prayer at Easter of error! The Exultet prayer is far older than Scotus, and he would never contradict it. However, the fault of Adam was in fact - historically - *the reason why* Christ did come (even though He would have come regardless), therefore it remains correct to say that this fault of Adam did indeed *“earn for us so great a Savior.”* Hence there is no contradiction between this opinion of Duns Scotus (and Luisa’s revelations), and this particular prayer of the Mass.

Suarez, that great 16<sup>th</sup> century Jesuit compiler and harmonizer of Aquinas and Scotus, also taught that Adam indeed had a belief in the Trinity and in the future Incarnation of the Word of God. There is no use in arguing against this position by saying “Nonsense. For with that knowledge, Adam would not have sinned.” You have that knowledge: has it prevented you from sinning? “No,” you may reply, “as I have concupiscence, and Adam did not.” But that too fails to satisfy, for it is highly unlikely that your sins are all explicable by mere weakness! Only the Beatific Vision (which indeed Adam did not have) is an absolute safeguard against the possibility of sin. Sins of pure pride or curiosity do not stem merely from concupiscence. It is utterly invalid - and un-Catholic - to assert that all of today’s sins are the mere result of concupiscence and nothing else.

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Adam’s knowledge could rightly be considered immense; perfect, in a real way. But we must also consider the degree of his merit. On this question, Aquinas teaches, *“We conclude therefore that in the state of innocence man’s works were more meritorious than after sin was committed, if we consider the degree of merit on the part of grace, which would have been more copious as meeting with no obstacle in human nature: and in like manner, if we consider the absolute degree of the work done; because,*

<sup>213</sup> John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them, A Theology of the Body* (Boston, MA: Pauline Books & Media, 2006), Address of September 19, 1979.

<sup>214</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum* 1 Q96, A2 Corpus.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, Q94, A1 Corpus.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, A3 Corpus

<sup>217</sup> Hence it is not “contingent,” or dependent upon some other precursor; i.e., The Fall.

<sup>218</sup> “Happy Fault”

*as man would have had greater virtue, he would have performed greater works. But if we consider the proportionate degree, a greater reason for merit exists after sin, on account of man's weakness; because a small deed is more beyond the capacity of one who works with difficulty than a great deed is beyond one who performs it easily.*" Aquinas is saying that Adam merited more in absolute terms (as a rich man can give more money than a poor man), but after sin man can merit more in proportional terms (as the poor widow in the Gospel, in giving two pennies, gave more than the Pharisees).<sup>219</sup> This beautifully succinct teaching of the Angelic Doctor suffices almost entirely in settling the question of Original Holiness versus Christian Holiness. Yes, Adam had a greater degree of holiness and merit than even a Christian saint could possibly attain. And yet, there is another sense in which a Christian saint has a greater degree of holiness than Adam could possibly attain.

This distinction provides the answer to the dilemma presented by the consideration that merely returning to a former unfallen state after a fall is not sufficient for God to even permit a fall in the first place. For we know that three conditions are necessary in order for God to so much as permit an evil: first, a good must come from that evil that could not possibly come without that evil; second, the good that comes must be different than good lost; third, the good that comes must be greater than the good lost. Only given these three conditions can the existence of any evil possibly be consistent with two great dogmatic truths regarding God; namely, His omnipotence, and His goodness. God created Adam with the highest category of holiness. God permitted Adam to fall because He foresaw a coming age in which Adam's highest category of holiness could be combined with Christian grace through the merits of the Incarnation and Passion of His Son. In that coming age, treasures could be built up in heaven that could not possibly have been without the fall - treasures that will make the blood, sweat, and tears of their attainment seem like nothing. These treasures embellish our celestial home, that which we are "called to by nature but cannot achieve by nature," whereas were Adam to have never fallen, although we would never have lost the terrestrial paradise and the

perfect state of our souls, the celestial paradise would not have received the same benefits and we would be eternally devoid of the glorious crowns that we now have the ability to merit if we so choose.

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Although the theological concerns contained in this objection have already been adequately addressed, it is still worth considering another important teaching on Adam: that given by the Fathers. After pointing out that it is already *defined doctrine* (implicitly at the Council of Trent) that Adam possessed sanctifying grace, Fr. John Hardon sums up the attitude of the Fathers on Adam's state of holiness as follows:

*"...the Fathers explicitly teach that the first man possessed sanctifying grace, which they called "deification" and which Adam lost by the fall. ...some of the Greek Fathers, like Basil and Cyril of Alexandria, believed that the supernatural sanctification of Adam is indicated in Genesis 2:7. They took spiraculum vitae to mean the grace of the Holy Spirit as a supernatural vital principle. Others, notably Ireneus, Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine, held that imago Dei referred to Adam's nature, while similitudo Dei described him as being in the state of sanctifying grace. Apart from their interpretation of the texts, the Fathers' common belief that Adam received both natural and supernatural life is a witness to Christian tradition."<sup>220</sup> On this same topic, Cardinal Schonborn - the editor of the new official Catechism of the Catholic Church - recently taught "Deification is located in the reestablishing of fallen man in his innate dignity."<sup>221</sup>*

Therefore we can see that there is no lack of foundation in Sacred Tradition for the lofty exaltation of Adam's prelapsarian holiness. But this great exaltation of Adam did not end with the Fathers.

Finally, we know that no evil can be attributed to God, and yet the proper definition of evil is "the absence of a due perfection." So the next question is: "what perfection is due in man, in his very nature?" For whatever perfection is due man in his nature must have been in Adam upon his creation, lest we attribute an evil to God, which would be abhorrent.

<sup>219</sup> Luke 21:3

<sup>220</sup> John A. Hardon, S.J., *God the Author of Nature and the Supernatural*. Thesis VIII. Part III.

<sup>221</sup> Cardinal Christoph Schonborn. *From Death to Life: The Christian Journey*. 1995. Page 50

Hence we arrive at the debate regarding the natural end of man. After a lengthy treatment of the various positions on this question, the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* states, “The present disagreement among Catholic thinkers concerning the natural end of man indicates that there is not yet a completely satisfactory resolution of this problem...”<sup>222</sup> Suffice it to say that there is a range of permissible opinions on this question within Catholic orthodoxy, but it is likely St. Augustine who will have the last word (as he ought) in his most famous words: “*Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee.*” And if it is true that, in the fullest and most literal sense of the word, God made human nature for *Himself*, then the answer to “what is the natural end of man?” is this: none other than Living in the Divine Will.<sup>223</sup> Therefore, Adam must have been made with the Gift of Living in the Divine Will (even if it does not follow that he must have been made with the Beatific Vision).

## A New Revelation?

**Objection:** Luisa herself states that she has received a “new revelation,” and that can only be diabolical. We have one, public revelation, and it is closed and finished.

**Answer:** Luisa’s writings do indeed contain a new “revelation.” So did those of St. Faustina, St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, St. Bernadette, and St. Catherine Labouré, to name a few. However, none of them offered a *new public* revelation, and neither does Luisa have a *new public* revelation.

Ironically the very paragraph of the Catechism that issuers of this objection cite is likewise the answer to their objection. Great precision must be used with our language. The Catechism states, “*Throughout the ages, there have been so-called “private” revelations ... They do not belong, however, to the deposit of faith... Guided by the Magisterium of the Church, the sensus fidelium knows how to discern and*

*welcome in these **revelations** whatever constitutes an authentic call of Christ or his saints to the Church.*”<sup>224</sup> Carefully reading this passage from the Catechism shows us that the Magisterium itself refers to these “private” revelations quite simply as *revelations*. The only thing we must be sure to avoid is any claimed *new public* revelation; meaning, any claim to modify the Deposit of Faith.<sup>225</sup>

It is also important to understand that, contrary to what sadly seems to have become a common notion today among Catholics, the preceding paragraph of the Catechism does not say that public revelation is “closed, ended, and fully understood.” Rather, the Catechism simply states that public revelation is “complete” and that no “new” public revelation is to be expected. When at once this is understood, it is easy to see that there is another sense in which public revelation is still unfolding - not in the sense that there will be any new public revelation, but certainly in the sense that it remains to be fully explicated, applied, and lived. To this end, God deemed it necessary to send us mystics like St. Francis, St. Dominic, Margaret Mary Alacoque, St. Catherine Labouré, St. Faustina, and yes, most definitely, the Servant of God Luisa Piccarreta.

The job of the Magisterium of the Church is not to convey to the faithful precisely what is coming upon the world and the Church. How easy it is to fall into the trap of yelling “heresy!” at any surprise. Against this, Pope Francis teaches that God is “...*the God of surprises. And God, many times, also had surprises in store for his people...this is why Jesus scolds the members of that generation, for being closed, for being incapable of recognizing the signs of the times, for not being open to the God of surprises, for not being on a journey toward the Lord’s triumphant finale, to the point that when he explains it, they think it is blasphemy.*”<sup>226</sup> Luisa’s revelations do indeed fit beautifully on the foundation of sacred Tradition, a fact that will be covered in the answer to a forthcoming objection. But they are not without their surprises for the Church, either. And how many

<sup>222</sup> *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. Second Edition. 2003. Man, Natural End Of. *Toward a Solution*.

<sup>223</sup> In “*Humani Generis*,” Pius XII implicitly condemns the notion (cf. Paragraph 26) that God cannot create intellectual beings without this entailing a calling to the supernatural order, saying such a notion “destroys the gratuity of the supernatural order.” Therefore we must take care not to imply some categorical impossibility for an

intellectual being lacking a natural call to the Beatific Vision. Rather, we must be careful only to argue that such a call is more in line with God’s goodness, which in fact acknowledges the very aspect of God that Pius sought to emphasize in this paragraph.

<sup>224</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraph 67.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, paragraph 66.

<sup>226</sup> Pope Francis. Homily on October 13, 2014.

there are who fall into the perennial trap of the Pharisee, thinking in fact that they have the remainder of Church history quite well figured out, and that they are perfectly disposed to reject at a whim whatever comes along that contradicts this master plan of theirs. Dr. Peter Kreeft summed it up well when he said something to the effect of “a subjectivist is one who says that knowledge cannot attain to the truth, a Pharisee is one who says that his knowledge is identical to the truth, and a Christian is one who knows Truth but stands in awe that the Truth is greater than his knowledge of it.”

## “Only” Private Revelation?

**Objection:** This is just another Private Revelation; the Catholic Faith is enough. I don’t need this private revelation, and I don’t feel particularly drawn to it anyway.

**Answer:** Although it is true that throughout this book I use the term “private revelation,” I do so with no small bit of regret. I use the term due to its commonness, not wanting to invent a new lexicon for this book. But truly there is no such thing as “private” revelation, in so far as by “private” is meant “only directed at a few” or “only intended to be heard and heeded by those who find themselves drawn to it.” We know from Scripture, rather, that “*he who prophesies edifies the church,*”<sup>227</sup> and that the extraordinary charisms of the Holy Spirit, of which prophecy is one, exist not for one’s own sanctification, but for the sanctification of the Church. The Catechism teaches, “*Whether extraordinary or simple and humble, charisms are graces of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefit the Church ... Charisms are to be accepted with gratitude by the person who receives them and by all members of the Church as well. They are a wonderfully rich grace for the apostolic vitality and for the holiness of the entire Body of Christ...*”<sup>228</sup> Take note that the Catechism does not say that charisms are to be accepted by “those members of the Church who find them agreeable,” but rather “by **all** members of the Church.”

The Catechism itself also seems to find the terminology unfortunate, entitling its section on the

topic “On so-called ‘private’ revelation,” putting the word *private* in quotes as if to imply that such a word really should not be said of a revelation from God, even if it is not one that is itself an element of the Deposit of Faith. Rather, as mentioned in the last objection’s answer, these really are quite simply *revelations*, so long as they are not confused with the Deposit of Faith - comprised of Scripture and Tradition, and authoritatively interpreted by the Magisterium. This Deposit of Faith is the absolute norm for judging all other revelations, Luisa’s included, and it alone demands and may receive the assent of Supernatural Catholic Faith. It alone deserves to be held in absolute certitude as opposed to held in human belief.

My hesitation with the term “private revelation” is that there is a risk of giving the impression that the response to it is entirely a matter of personal preference. This indeed has become a common notion among some Catholics today - that private revelation is a “whatever floats your boat” matter. Their argument is essentially as follows: “*since Private Revelation is never a matter of Catholic Faith, there can never be any moral obligation to heed it. It’s entirely a matter of preference and you should respond however you feel like.*” It seems that this is the attitude promulgated especially by a few well known lay apologists, but this contention ignores the simple fact that reacting to anything “however you feel like” is a recipe for disaster in this fallen world. Of course we never put Divine Faith in any Private Revelation, no matter how profound, approved, or seemingly certain. That does not mean we can never have any obligation in the matter! You and God both know what invitations He has extended to your heart, and on Judgment Day your eternal glory will be meted out by how you responded to Divine Invitations, and not just by whether you have Faith in the Deposit of Faith. That latter assertion would essentially be the Protestant “Salvation by Faith Alone” heresy. This heresy holds that the only question in salvation is whether one believed what one was required to believe with Supernatural Faith. Catholic dogma, of course, is very different. Consider what the Catechism says: “*In all he says and does, man is obliged to follow faithfully what he knows to be just and right.*”<sup>229</sup> It does not say “*only in those matters that the Catholic*

<sup>227</sup> 1 Corinthians 14

<sup>228</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraph 799-800.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.* 1778.

*Church teaches are true must man follow faithfully what he knows to be just and right.*” Furthermore, Vatican II teaches “*He is not saved, however, who, though part of the body of the Church, does not persevere in charity.*”<sup>230</sup> I repeat: it is an utterly invalid argument to wager that one is always and everywhere free to hold to whatever opinion he so desires so long as it does not involve the contradiction of the Catholic Faith.

On the contrary, the glorious history of the Catholic Church tells a radically different story from the “whatever floats your boat on private revelation” approach. A story in which whether Catholics respond faithfully to genuine “private revelations” determines the course of history - especially concerning the requests at Fatima to the children, the message to St. Faustina, the requests of Jesus for the Sacred Heart devotion, the requests of Our Lady of Guadalupe through St. Juan Diego, and the list goes on. Would God have taken no offense if the tens of thousands who witnessed the miracle at Fatima turned their backs on that “nonsense?” Would St. Faustina’s spiritual director have committed no sin if he ignored or opposed the promulgation of the Divine Mercy message instead of helping it? Would Bishop Zumarraga have been safe in the will of God by ignoring St. Juan Diego coming to him with the request of Our Lady of Guadalupe to have a church built? Did not King Louis XIV’s failure to respond to the Sacred Heart requests of Jesus through St. Margaret Mary result in disaster for France?

Considering these events and so many more like them, we can find a renewed appreciation for the advice regarding Marian apparitions of Pope Urban VIII who allegedly said that in “... *cases which concern private revelations, it is better to believe than not to believe, for, if you believe, and it is proven true, you will be happy that you have believed, because our Holy Mother asked it. If you believe, and it should be proven false, you will receive all blessings as if it had been true, because you believed it to be true.*”<sup>231</sup>

The apparition of Our Lady of Kibeho is especially noteworthy, as that is now an approved apparition of Mary.<sup>232</sup> But why did she come? She came to warn the people of an impending disaster and how to avert it. Twelve years later, the Rwandan Genocide occurred, in which one million innocent people were slaughtered by their own neighbors. It all could have been avoided if only we had listened to Our Lady’s plea in that private revelation. Before you respond “Ah, but that is an approved apparition,” bear in mind that the approval only came after the genocide took place. Never forget that “*The Marian dimension of the Church precedes the Petrine,*”<sup>233</sup> (although the two must never be seen as opposed). Similar stories and timelines exist for many now-approved apparitions. Even a cursory examination of the historical facts yields the unavoidable conclusion: Our Lady comes because we need to listen, not because she just wants to be another blog competing for our attention, which we may feel free to ignore.

Many will cite Therese of Lisieux or John of the Cross in their avoidance of private revelation; but they only use quotes of these great Doctors that apply to one desiring one’s *own* apparent revelations from God. And how true it is that revelations are certainly not something to be desired! For blessed is the one who believes without seeing.<sup>234</sup> We should give enormous thanks to God that we have been given the gift of Faith despite not being among those chosen to have great visions and revelations, and we should neither desire nor ask for this situation to change. However, this pious and true advice has no bearing on how we should react to the alleged private revelations of *others*, especially those whose revelations have received Ecclesiastical approbations and whose causes for beatification are going well!

Now, I do not wish to go to the opposite extreme in my attempts to rid you of a knee-jerk, lukewarm reaction to private revelation. For perhaps even worse would be to cause in you some sense of guilt and anxiety for not reading or following Luisa’s revelations if you simply do not feel ready, or do not feel at peace with such a pursuit. If you discern a spirit

<sup>230</sup> *Lumen Gentium* paragraph 14.

<sup>231</sup> Though a difficult quote to verify, I use it here due to the circumstantial possibility that it referred to the revelations of Mary of Agreda, which was a very contentious issue during his Papacy. However, great weight should not be given to this quote, as it is proving a very difficult one to verify.

<sup>232</sup> This approval was declared by Bishop Augustin Misago on June 29, 2001.

<sup>233</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraph 773, Cf. John Paul II “*Mulieris Dignitatem*,” paragraph 27.

<sup>234</sup> Cf. John 20:29

of disturbance in pursuing Luisa's writings, then by all means, cease! We must indeed test the spirits, and "hold fast what is good,"<sup>235</sup> and there is a subjective aspect to that. Take consolation in the Catechism and in Scripture - in that glorious, infallible, and sufficient Deposit of Faith. All I intend to do here is rid you of these notions that dispel urgency and anesthetize the workings of Holy Spirit. I do not wish to lay a heavy burden upon your shoulders. That burden would not be Christ's, for His is easy and light.<sup>236</sup> Do not be worried; your salvation does not depend upon Luisa's writings.

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In conclusion, let us consider curiosity. Curiosity can certainly be a bad thing, especially in so far as it is opposed to custody of the eyes, discernment of spirits, contentment with what God has given you, and the like. But there is at least one sense in which we can indeed refer to holy curiosity. On this, I leave you with the words of a Christmas homily of Pope Benedict XVI:

*"The shepherds made haste. Holy curiosity and holy joy impelled them. In our case, it is probably not very often that we make haste for the things of God. God does not feature among the things that require haste. The things of God can wait, we think and we say. And yet he is the most important thing, ultimately the one truly important thing. Why should we not also be moved by curiosity to see more closely and to know what God has said to us? At this hour, let us ask him to touch our hearts with the holy curiosity and the holy joy of the shepherds, and thus let us go over joyfully to Bethlehem, to the Lord who today once more comes to meet us."*<sup>237</sup>

These words should primarily be taken with respect to their admonishment to have that joy and holy curiosity in where we know we have Jesus: in the Eucharist, in the Gospel, and in the Church. But it can also be applied - prudently - to when the Spirit seeks to bless the Church with revelations.

## An Organic or an Artificial Development?

**Objection:** Even if nothing downright opposed to Church teaching is contained in Luisa's revelations, they should still be shunned due to how much disagreement there is in them with the writings of Doctors of the Church and other such lofty authorities on orthodox Catholic theology.

**Answer:** If Luisa's revelations do comprise an artificial degree of development of Catholic thought (in such a way that they do not fit comfortably and beautifully on the tradition handed onto us by two thousand years of saints), then they should indeed be shunned. For any development of doctrine to be valid, it must have stability on the foundation that precedes it. But it need not be without a single difference. Perhaps this distinction is best considered by way of an illustration.

God is seeking to build a beautiful Cathedral by Sacred Tradition's growth throughout history, not a box-shaped skyscraper. Each age in the Church on earth can count many members in two camps; on the one hand, those who disregard the foundation and strive to build a wing jutting out at a ridiculous angle. This new construction will fall in a short amount of time and cause the destruction of many souls. This is what occurred in the wake of the Second Vatican Council when so many priests and laity, interpreting the Council in an erroneous manner, rejected that Hermeneutic of Continuity so beautifully defended by Pope Benedict XVI, in favor of one of discontinuity. Modernism invaded as orders, parishes, seminaries, and Catholic schools emptied like never before seen in the history of the Church. This indeed is the greatest danger.

But in the other camp are those who insist that each successive level be identical to the one on which it rests. In so doing they declare themselves the architects instead of the laborers. But it is essential that we constantly strive to ensure that we are permitting the Holy Spirit to be the architect of history - Church history especially. Any architect who hired a builder to construct a Cathedral that was his life's masterpiece and found one day that only a warehouse was being built would fire this builder at once and demand an account. Such a builder has buried his talent in the ground, and as such has

<sup>235</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:21

<sup>236</sup> Matthew 11:30

<sup>237</sup> Benedict XVI. Homily at Christmas Vigil Mass. December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012 (Libreria Editrice Vaticana).



proved himself a worthless servant, worthy of only being cast into the outer darkness.<sup>238</sup>

No single cut-and-dry theological answer will suffice to settle whether Luisa's revelations comprise (as her detractors levy) an unstable wing, or if they amount to a magnificent solid gold steeple to finish off the Cathedral. But I am convinced that any learned Catholic who reads Luisa's writings, so long as this is done without the clenched fist mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, will be struck with how harmoniously they integrate with and build upon the great writings of the Church; especially those of the Fathers, Doctors, and Popes.

Remember that God reserves infallibility for His Church. He does not grant it to individual theologians. There is nothing pious or "safe" about a rigid insistence upon each and every opinion of this or that Doctor of the Church, not even upon those of the greatest (Thomas Aquinas). Some Thomists seem to forget one of the most important teachings in the entire *Summa*, namely "*we ought to pay as much attention to the undemonstrated sayings and opinions of persons who surpass us in experience, age and prudence, as to their demonstrations,*" with which he quotes Aristotle.<sup>239</sup> Thomas himself would never have wanted those in the scholastic school that he inspired to be so rigidly insistent upon each of his opinions.

Consider what moral of the story the historical facts convey regarding Aquinas. Indeed, that he gave us a truly perennial philosophy and theology, and we reject it at our own peril. But likewise it teaches against the opposite extreme. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Pope John XXII said Aquinas' teaching "*could only be miraculous.*" Pope St. Pius V declared him a Doctor of the Church in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, saying his works are "*the most certain rule of Christian doctrine.*" In that same century, the term "dunce" was coined, a take on the name of Bl. Duns Scotus; an insult whose flourishing no doubt had at least in part to thank the fact that Bl. Scotus disagreed so clearly with Aquinas on Mary's conception, with the former insisting it was utterly Immaculate. But no doubt many thought to themselves, "*How could the greatest Doctor of the Church, so exalted and insisted upon by the Roman Pontiffs, be wrong? I will advocate for his opinion on all things; it is more reliable.*" The

rest is history. Consider how foolish those Catholics who insisted upon a rigid adherence to each and every tenet of Aquinas' must have felt when, in 1854, Pius IX proclaimed infallibly that indeed Mary was Immaculately Conceived, free from all sin from the very moment of her conception. Worse still, consider how many graces they missed out on by not acknowledging Our Lady as the Immaculate Conception. They of course were not guilty of formal heresy (the Church had not yet extraordinarily defined the teaching), but that does not mean they lost nothing due to it. Let us be sure to not, in like fashion, miss out on the graces contained in Luisa's revelations.

(Note: for a deep analysis of this particular objection, I recommend the aforementioned book, *A Guide to the Book of Heaven*, by Stephen Patton.)

## On the Fundamental Possibility Itself of this Gift

**Objection:** I grant it is categorically possible that any creature be given the same *type* of holiness that the Blessed Virgin Mary has, for she too is a creature. But it remains simply impossible for any creature, even Mary, to have the type of union with God spoken of in Luisa's revelations, and the degree to which Luisa's revelations exalt Mary simply cannot be true.

**Answer:** While some objections focus on whether there can be anything higher than spiritual marriage, this particular objection contains what is really the more fundamental question to be answered. Even St. John of the Cross admits there is something higher than spiritual marriage, and his theology only needs to be modified slightly in order to permit on earth what he says only occurs in heaven; namely, the "perfect state of glory." Likewise, and as mentioned previously, God is certainly (at least categorically and hypothetically) capable of working the same type of holiness in anyone as He has already worked in the Blessed Virgin.

So it is ironic that, while some detractors of Luisa's revelations hinge their criticisms on Luisa being exalted too greatly in comparison to Our Lady, perhaps even more numerous detractors will simply

<sup>238</sup> Cf. Matthew 25:25-30

<sup>239</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum* I-II. 95. 2.

take issue with how much Luisa's revelations exalt Our Lady! And truly this exaltation is enormous. Jesus tells Luisa that Mary dominates Him, and that the least of her breaths and motions contained - and contain - enchanting marvels. He tells Luisa that, upon Mary's Assumption, the glories within her were so great that they filled heaven itself and therefore burst forth to fill all of creation as well, and that her beauty is so utterly unreachable and conquering that even the angels are speechless and cannot find words to describe what they observe in Mary.

This question hinges upon the proper interpretation of the Angel Gabriel's words to Mary, "full of grace." The canonization of Luisa and the full approval of her writings presupposes the continuation of authentic Marian theology which will need to leave behind an additional opinion of Aquinas.<sup>240</sup>

Aquinas asserts that this "fullness of grace" is actually proper to (meaning "only held by") Christ. He compares the words of the Angelic salutation to the words Scripture uses to describe St. Stephen, who is likewise said to be "full of grace..."<sup>241</sup> In the *Summa*, Aquinas writes, "*The Blessed Virgin is said to be full of grace, not on the part of grace itself-since she had not grace in its greatest possible excellence...*"<sup>242</sup>

This particular opinion of Aquinas must be set aside not only to heed Luisa's revelations, but also to heed the great bulk of development in good Marian theology; especially as taught by St. Louis de Montfort, St. Alphonsus Liguori, and St. Maximilian Kolbe. Now Thomas' philosophy and theology remain the best and surest norm for arriving at truths of Faith, but we should not be afraid to set aside just a few opinions of his thousands! Remember as well that Luisa, being a Third Order Dominican, no doubt naturally had a great deference to and respect for Aquinas.

Above all, this opinion of Aquinas appears to be contradicted by Pope Pius IX, in the very same Apostolic Constitution in which he defined the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, for in that the Pope teaches:

*"When...by order of God himself, [Mary was] proclaimed full of grace by the Angel Gabriel when he announced her most sublime dignity of Mother of God, they [the Fathers of the Church] thought that this singular and solemn salutation, never heard before, showed that the Mother of God is the seat of all divine graces ...To them Mary is an almost infinite treasury...Hence, it is the clear and unanimous opinion of the Fathers that the most glorious Virgin...was resplendent with such an abundance of heavenly gifts, with such a fullness of grace ...that she approaches as near to God himself as is possible for a created being..."*

Bear in mind that by saying "it is the clear and unanimous opinion of the Fathers..." he is not merely presenting an "opinion" to Catholics that they may likewise hold if they feel so compelled. Rather, that which is unanimously held by the Fathers of the Church is, by that very fact, a dogma of the Faith. For the Word of God is not merely Scripture, but Scripture *and* Tradition; and what is unanimously held by the Fathers cannot be anything other than Sacred Tradition. The First Vatican Council taught that "*It is not permissible for anyone to interpret Holy Scripture in a sense contrary to... the unanimous consent of the fathers.*"<sup>243</sup> The Council of Trent teaches the same thing.<sup>244</sup> Interpretation of Holy Scripture here does not refer to the limited scope that that phrase might imply in common speech today; rather it applies to the entirety of Faith. Consider that Aquinas did not primarily consider himself a "theologian," but rather a "commenter on the sacred page."

Therefore, we should regard these words of Pius IX as infallible; if not explicitly by their wording, then at least implicitly due to what they represent. And with these words, he strongly supports Mary as having the fullness of grace not merely on the part of the subject, as Aquinas asserts, but rather on the part of the object as well. For if, as he says, "*she approaches as near to God himself as is possible...*," then the "fullness" is attributed to the grace itself; for otherwise there would be nothing to prevent another

<sup>240</sup> That is, in addition to his opinion that Mary was not conceived immaculately.

<sup>241</sup> Acts 6:8

<sup>242</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum* III, Q7, A10.

<sup>243</sup> Decrees of the First Vatican Council. Chapter 2.9

<sup>244</sup> Council of Trent. Decree Concerning the Edition, and the Use, of the Sacred Books

creature from at some point in the future approaching closer to God than she, in which case he would have said merely that Mary *did approach* nearer to God than any other creature *had approached*. Furthermore, if Mary is, as he says, “*the seat of all divine graces...an almost infinite treasury...*” then there is no grace that is not within her. The fact that she did not do this or that good work on earth, or receive this or that sacrament,<sup>245</sup> does not any more diminish the fullness of grace in her than it does in her Son.<sup>246</sup>

A beautiful summary of the glories of Mary is given by Fr. Peter Damian Fehlner (quoting Aquinas, Thomas Cajetan, Conrad of Saxony, and Pius XII’s encyclical “*Ad Caeli Reginam*”, respectively ), saying that Mary, “*...in virtue of Her divine Maternity, enjoys a ‘certain infinite dignity,’ that ‘touches the limits of divinity,’ [and] that ‘God can make a greater world, but could not make a mother more perfect than the Mother of God,’ [and] that ‘the dignity of the Mother of God is most singular, sublime, and quasi-divine.’*”<sup>247</sup>

One could still attempt to argue that Mary did not have the fullness of grace due to such a thing being impossible, just as it is impossible to have the “biggest number.” But Aquinas answers this objection well in his very next Article of the Summa, for he says that the grace in Christ is in fact not infinite (but we know that he earlier argues rightly that Christ did indeed have the fullness of grace). This is due to the simple fact that grace, being an accident, inheres in the soul. But the Soul of Christ is not eternal; it was created at the Annunciation, and whatever is created cannot be infinite. As usual, however, the proper distinctions allow the situation to be phrased either way, for one can indeed validly say that the grace in Christ (and therefore also in Mary, or in one who has the Gift of Living in the Divine Will) is infinite in so far as that refers to “*{having} whatsoever can pertain to the nature of grace.*”

There are many more distinctions, qualifications, and specifications that could be made regarding fullness of grace and modes of infinitude, which would be well beyond the scope of this work. Suffice it to say that Mary indeed did, in a certain sense (beyond the sense in which Aquinas granted)

have the fullness of grace on the part of grace itself, and in a way had infinite grace, which is likewise something that can be attributed to a soul who lives in the Divine Will, albeit with additional important qualifications that would not apply to Mary or the Soul of Christ.

The fate of Luisa’s writings in the Church no doubt is largely bound up with the fate of Mary’s cause in the Church. The Fifth Marian Dogma awaits proclamation; let us pray it may come soon. As if by way of a parting gift, Pope Benedict XVI - despite never (to my knowledge) having used the term before - in some of his final words to us as our Holy Father, left us with a reference to Mary as “the Mediatrix of All Grace.” This is clearly the desire of the Holy Spirit. Let it be so!

## Millenarianism, Chiliasm, Legacy of Joachim of Fiore?

**Objection:** Luisa’s revelations posit a time of peace awaiting mankind on earth where the Divine Will shall reign universally and temporally. But this is modified-millenarianism (or Chiliasm), which is condemned by the Church, even in the Catechism where it says, “*The Antichrist’s deception already begins to take shape in the world every time the claim is made to realize within history that messianic hope which can only be realized beyond history through the eschatological judgment. The Church has rejected even modified forms of this falsification of the kingdom to come under the name of millenarianism*”<sup>248</sup>

**Answer:** The Church does indeed condemn Chiliasm, both in millenarianism and modified millenarianism, and therefore a Catholic must have nothing to do with these beliefs, even if he thought he saw them in Luisa’s writings. But in truth, her revelations do not posit anything close to what is condemned as even modified-millenarianism. She does not insist upon a literal interpretation of the thousand years of Revelation 20, and she definitely does not teach of a coming age when we are dispensed from the Deposit of Faith as authoritatively taught by the Magisterium of the Church<sup>249</sup> or from the Sacramental life of the

<sup>245</sup> E.g. Holy Orders

<sup>246</sup> E.g. Matrimony

<sup>247</sup> *Mary at the Foot of the Cross*, VII. Page 200

<sup>248</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraph 676

<sup>249</sup> Quite the contrary, she insisted that her works be utterly dismissed if anything be found in them opposed to Catholic teaching.

Church. She does not teach that only the spiritual life of a monastic is worthy (which was actually Joachim's most novel and dangerous doctrine, as he insisted that this coming third age meant everyone had to essentially be a perfect Franciscan monk),<sup>250</sup> or anything of the sort.

Unfortunately, however, some Catholic writers today have become so wary of the heresy of Millenarianism (which is understandable due to how much it flourishes in many non-Catholic Christian and quasi-Christian circles), that in their over-zealousness, they take it upon themselves to define the sense in which the Church intends the word "modified" as stated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in paragraph 676, and they go far beyond the sense in which the Church intends it. For example, the following excerpt contains another Magisterial reference to modified-millenarianism:

*"In recent times on several occasions this Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office has been asked what must be thought of the system of mitigated Millenarianism, which teaches, for example, that Christ the Lord before the final judgment, whether or not preceded by the resurrection of the many just, will come visibly to rule over this world. The answer is: The system of mitigated Millenarianism cannot be taught safely."*<sup>251</sup>

This decree of the Holy Office should immediately give pause to one who would interpret the Catechism's word "modified" to mean that any sort of glorious time to come is impossible! For here, (though the word "mitigated" is used, clearly the same intent is applicable) even "mitigated" Millenarianism still refers to the notion that a time will come when Christ will come to visibly rule over this world.

The Magisterium has also implied what is meant to be condemned by "modified Millenarianism" in a document published by the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith more recently. This document states that there is a "... rebirth of the tendency to establish an innerworldly eschatology.

*This tendency is well known in the history of theology, and beginning with the Middle Ages it constituted what came to be called "the spiritual heritage of Joachim de Fiore. This tendency is found in some theologians of liberation, who so insist on the importance of establishing the kingdom of God as something within our own history on earth that the salvation which transcends history seems to become of rather secondary interest."*<sup>252</sup>

As you can see, this particular condemnation by the CDF is directed primarily at Liberation Theology. I will not speak much of that here, as no one accuses Luisa's revelations of this particular heresy; her writings are about as other-worldly as possible and do not in the least confuse the coming Reign of Peace with some sort of man-made system of political justice. Even the Reign of Peace is not much spoken of in Luisa's writings - though it is certainly admitted and prophesied - for Luisa is far too busy concerning herself with the things of heaven, and thereby urging her readers to do likewise.

However, we should further discuss the teaching of Joachim of Fiore (or Flora) in order to recognize that Luisa's writings are far from this heresy as well. He erroneously taught that the days of the Old Testament were simply the days of the Father, the time since the Incarnation were the days of the Son, and that we now approach the days of the Holy Spirit in which we await a new Public Revelation (just as the ancient Jews, having received a valid covenant from God, nevertheless awaited a better one), as well as a new Deposit of Faith, and an end of the age of the Catholic Church. The bulk of his followers were known as the "Spiritual Franciscans," whom St. Bonaventure wrote against. Such beliefs amount not to Newman's Development of Doctrine, but rather amount to Evolution of Dogmas. This, however, as the name should hopefully make clear, is downright heretical, and was described as such by Pope St. Pius X in *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*.

Luisa's revelations are certainly nothing like the Millenarianism or the legacy of Joachim of Fiore

<sup>250</sup> His followers viewed any deviation whatsoever from the life St. Francis lead as a "surrender to the forces of the carnal institutional Church of a passing age" Cf. *New Catholic Encyclopedia* "Franciscans, First Order" p.901

<sup>251</sup> Henry Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma, A Translation of the Enchiridion Symbolorum* (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co.,

1957), "Millenarianism (Chiliasm) by the Decree of the Holy Office, July 21, 1944. Page 625.

<sup>252</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith. "Some Current Questions in Eschatology." 1992. Paragraph 2

condemned by the Church. In her writings, Jesus goes so far as to say that Heaven itself is veiled within the Catholic Church, of which the Pope is head. Jesus speaks to Luisa not of a time where this Church is laid aside, but where this Church, *whose head is the Roman Pontiff*, will acquire her full vigor. Luisa's own life was the example par excellence of obedience and submission to the institutional Catholic Church, and Jesus makes it clear that the life of Luisa is to be the model of those who come after her wishing to receive the Gift of Living in the Divine Will.

Having proven in the negative that Luisa's writings contain nothing opposed to Catholic faith with respect to their prophecies of what is to come, it would nevertheless be fitting for us to consider what the Magisterium and the Fathers of the Church themselves also have to say.

The Fathers of the Church held that the Seven Days of Creation were analogous to the seven millennia of human history to come. Just as with the days of the week, the last is reserved for rest, so the last millennia of life on earth would be one of "rest."<sup>253</sup> In speaking against the Reign of Peace, some dispute that the Fathers held that the Days of Creation were indeed analogous to the ages of time to come, but none other than Pope Benedict XVI taught this, saying, *"The Fathers of the Church considered the six or seven days of the Creation narrative as a prophecy of the history of the world, of humanity. For them, the seven days represented seven periods of history, later also interpreted as seven millennia. With Christ we should have entered the last, that is, the sixth period of history that was to be followed by the great sabbath of God."*<sup>254</sup> Later in the same address, Benedict had this to say to those who insist that history is doomed to simply become worse and worse as time goes on, until the Second Coming of Christ: *"Today too there are views that see the entire history of the Church in the second millennium as a gradual decline. Some see this decline as having already begun immediately after the New Testament. [On the contrary,] In fact, "Opera Christi non deficiunt, sed proficiunt": Christ's works do not go backwards but forwards..."*

As St. Augustine is the one Father most often cited in an attempt to discredit a Reign of Peace, one quote in-particular of his is especially helpful:

*"...as if it were a fit thing that the saints should thus enjoy a kind of Sabbath-rest during that period [of a 'thousand years'], a holy leisure after the labors of six thousand years since man was created... [and] there should follow on the completion of six thousand years, as of six days, a kind of seventh-day Sabbath in the succeeding thousand years... And this opinion would not be objectionable, if it were believed that the joys of the saints, in that Sabbath, shall be spiritual, and consequent on the presence of God."*<sup>255</sup>

As we can see, Augustine's only concern with the Millenarianists of his day were their carnal and literalistic views of that time to come. It is impossible to use Augustine to argue against a Reign of Peace (as the critics of such an idea do) if he himself has explicitly admitted there is nothing objectionable with such a view!

Furthermore, what follows is the very last paragraph in Augustine's famous treatment of eschatology, in which he says, *"And at or in connection with that judgment the following events shall come to pass, as we have learned: Elias the Tishbite shall come; the Jews shall believe; Antichrist shall persecute; Christ shall judge; the dead shall rise; the good and the wicked shall be separated; the world shall be burned and renewed. All these things, we believe, shall come to pass; but how, or in what order, human understanding cannot perfectly teach us, but only the experience of the events themselves."*<sup>256</sup> This quote further clarifies that Augustine obviously had no intent to categorically condemn the notion of a Reign of Peace upon the Earth before the end of time.

Understanding that St. Augustine's teachings are certainly no impediment to the anticipation of a Glorious Reign of Peace, we should now consider the teachings of other Fathers on this topic. As the quotes explain themselves, I will simply list a few of them here for you. Remember that the point is not to advocate for this or that precise eschatological opinion of any one Father, but just to prove that the

<sup>253</sup> In this, "last" refers to the Sabbath of the Old Testament: Saturday. Hence Sunday, "the Eighth Day," is allegorical for the eternal new first day – heaven.

<sup>254</sup> Benedict XVI. General Audience. March 10, 2010

<sup>255</sup> St. Augustine, *City of God*, Book 20, Ch. 7.

<sup>256</sup> St. Augustine, *City of God*, Book 20, Chapter 30.

Fathers in general were certainly supportive of the notion of a Glorious Reign of Peace before the end of time. I am certainly not insisting upon the literal and complete validity of any one of these prognostications.

- St. Justin Martyr: *“I and every other orthodox Christian feel certain that there will be a resurrection of the flesh <sup>257</sup> followed by a thousand years in a rebuilt, embellished, and enlarged city of Jerusalem, as was announced by the Prophets Ezekiel, Isaias and others... A man among us named John, one of Christ’s Apostles, received and foretold that the followers of Christ would dwell in Jerusalem for a thousand years,<sup>258</sup> and that afterwards the universal and, in short, everlasting resurrection and judgment would take place.”*  
<sup>259</sup>
- Tertullian: *“But we do confess that a kingdom is promised to us upon the earth, although before heaven, only in another state of existence; inasmuch as it will be after the resurrection for a thousand years in the divinely-built city of Jerusalem...”*<sup>260</sup>
- St. Irenaeus: *“The predicted blessing, therefore, belongs unquestionably to the times of the kingdom, when the righteous shall bear rule upon their rising from the dead; when also the creation, having been renovated and set free, shall fructify with an abundance of all kinds of food, from the dew of heaven, and from the fertility of the earth: as the elders who saw John, the disciple of the Lord, related that they had heard from him how the Lord used to teach in regard to these times...and that all animals feeding [only] on the productions of the earth, should [in those days] become peaceful and harmonious among each other, and be in perfect subjection to man.”*<sup>261</sup>

Although there are many more writings of the Fathers on this topic, my purpose here is only to give you an introduction. But we should also consider Papal Statements regarding what is to come, for many of them have taught clearly that we should indeed hope for a coming Reign of Peace. Far more, they have

gone so far to issue, as it were, authoritative conditional prophecies. In reading these following quotes you will see that they insist that these times of Peace not only may come, but *will indeed* come, if only we do God’s will. And in all of these quotes it is abundantly clear that a temporal peace is referred to; a time to come before the end of history in which God’s blessings will pour out in the same abundance as He promised in Scripture.

- Leo XIII, Annum Sacrum:** *“It will at length be possible that our many wounds be healed and all justice spring forth again with the hope of restored authority; that the splendors of peace be renewed, and swords and arms drop from the hand when all men shall acknowledge the empire of Christ and willingly obey His word, and ‘Every tongue shall confess that our Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father”*
- Pius XI, Ubi Arcani Dei Consilii:** *“And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also I must bring.’ He cannot but rejoice in the wonderful prophecy which filled even the Sacred Heart of Jesus with joy. ‘And they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.’ May God, and We join with you and with all the faithful in this prayer, shortly bring to fulfillment His prophecy by transforming this consoling vision of the future into a present reality.”*
- Pius XI, Quas Primas:** *“When once men recognize, both in private and in public life, that Christ is King, society will at last receive the great blessings of real liberty, well-ordered discipline, peace and harmony... The result will be a stable peace and tranquility, for there will be no longer any cause of discontent... harmony, too, will result; for with the spread and the universal extent of the kingdom of Christ men will become more and more conscious of the link that binds them together, and thus many conflicts will be either prevented entirely or at least their bitterness will be diminished...Oh, what happiness would be Ours if all men,*

<sup>257</sup> Not a literal reference to the actual *Eternal* Resurrection (considering the indefinite article that precedes it) that Justin refers to in the following chapter

<sup>258</sup> Justin understands this to be symbolic

<sup>259</sup> Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*. Chapter 80.

<sup>260</sup> Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, Book 3. Chapter 25.

<sup>261</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book V. Chapter 33, Paragraph 3

*individuals, families, and nations, would but let themselves be governed by Christ! 'Then at length,' to use the words addressed by our predecessor, Pope Leo XIII, twenty-five years ago to the bishops of the Universal Church, 'then at length will many evils be cured; then will the law regain its former authority; peace with all its blessings be restored. Men will sheathe their swords and lay down their arms when all freely acknowledge and obey the authority of Christ, and every tongue confesses that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.'"*

- **St. Pius X**, *E Supremi*: "Then, at last, it will be clear to all that the Church, such as it was instituted by Christ, must enjoy full and entire liberty and independence from all foreign dominion; and We, in demanding that same liberty, are defending not only the sacred rights of religion, but are also consulting the common weal and the safety of nations. For it continues to be true that 'piety is useful for all things' - when this is strong and flourishing 'the people will' truly 'sit in the fullness of peace.'"
- **St. John Paul II**, "The tears of this century have prepared the ground for a new springtime of the human spirit."<sup>262</sup>

Noteworthy as well is the fact that St. Faustina herself prophesied that the Divine Mercy would triumph. Permit me to remind you that, in Chapter II of this book, the absolute trustworthiness of her revelations was firmly established. She said, "Today I saw the glory of God which flows from the [Divine Mercy] image. ... In spite of Satan's anger, The Divine Mercy will triumph over the whole world and will be worshiped by all souls."<sup>263</sup> Earlier she wrote that she prayed for the "triumph of the Church,"<sup>264</sup> and that she desired that this triumph be "hastened,"<sup>265</sup> which she would not have written if she did not believe such a triumph was desired by God.

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Finally, let us consider the theology of fittingness regarding what is to come upon the Earth. This section is purely speculative; God alone knows what is truly fitting, but that should not stop us from pondering it.

If, as the critics of a Reign of Peace suggest, history will simply follow a course of becoming more and more depraved until at long last, at the very depths of sin and error with only a few faithful left, Christ comes to judge the world, then what becomes of those who are to be saved by Divine Mercy in those last moments? It would be abhorrent to assume that, under such a scenario, Our Lord would simply - on the contrary - permit the vast, vast majority of humanity to descend into hell. But it would likewise be an affront to justice for all of the inhabitants of such a world - culpably mired in obstinate, blasphemous evil as they will be - to simply ascend to Heaven immediately with no ability to be purified in Purgatory. And yet this would be the only possibility, for it is a Dogma of the Faith that Purgatory ceases to exist<sup>266</sup> upon the General Resurrection and the Last Judgment.

This dilemma is best resolved by a Reign of Peace, whereby the just flourish upon earth, before the end of time. In this Era, those evildoers who nevertheless died repentant in the last moment amidst the great chastisements will have time for purification before the Beatific Vision. And likewise, those upon earth, living in a universal reign of the Divine Will, will not be in such a state as to necessarily require Purgatory after their deaths. While some medieval conceptions of Purgatory's time may have been literalistic, we must also not err in the opposite direction and say such foolish things as "in Purgatory there is no such thing as any form of time." Time passes differently there, but some type of time is still required for its existence and for the accomplishment of its effects.<sup>267</sup> Yet there will come a true and literal *time* - a certain number (known only by God) of hours from now - when Purgatory will be no more; namely, the Last Judgment.

<sup>262</sup> John Paul II. General Audience. January 24, 2001

<sup>263</sup> St. Faustina, *Divine Mercy in my Soul*, paragraph 1789

<sup>264</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 240

<sup>265</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 1581

<sup>266</sup> Cf. John 5:28-29

<sup>267</sup> Time, being the measure of the reduction of potency to act, clearly is necessary in some sense in Purgatory, where the perfect purity of the soul is only in potency, and the purging fires reduce it to act. This is certainly not to say that it is impossible for God to satisfy the purgation in an instant of earthly time; it is merely to say that it is more fitting if that need not be the case.



## On the Loftiness of Luisa's Own Calling

**Objection:** These alleged revelations exalt Luisa herself far too much, going so far as to call her a “second virgin,” saying that she is necessary to fulfill God's plan for the world from all eternity, and saying that her private revelation is the necessary precondition to the establishment of God's Third Fiat (that of Sanctification, which follows the first two: Creation and Redemption.)

**Answer:** Who is greater, the priest who consecrates the host, or the Deacon who - at a certain Liturgy - distributes it as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion? Obviously it is the priest; the dignity of his office is beyond compare with the dignity of the Deacon's, for the latter does not share in the order of priesthood and does not act *in persona Christi*, as the priest does. Furthermore, the greatness of uttering the words of institution with efficacy is radically above the simply picking up of a host, saying, “The Body of Christ,” and placing it on the communicant's tongue. Nevertheless, in this case it is the Deacon who is really the proximate instrumental cause of God's ultimate design with respect to the Eucharist: that He be received by His creatures in it. This is the same way we should view Luisa and the Blessed Virgin Mary; with the Blessed Virgin as analogous to the priest, and Luisa analogous to the Deacon.

It is with this analogous understanding that we should approach all claims that might seem to impute some sort of higher greatness to Luisa and her revelations than to Jesus and His ministry through the Sacraments, and to Mary in her role as Queen, Mediatrix, Co-Redemptrix, and Advocate. As already discussed in earlier chapters (and as Jesus also makes abundantly clear in His revelations to Luisa), Luisa is not comparable to Mary in any sort of fundamental way. First of all, even the greatest of all graces, the Gift of Living in the Divine Will, is still just that: *a grace*. Mary is sovereign Queen of all Creation, the sole Mother of God, and yes, the Mediatrix of All Grace, and therefore also the Mediatrix of the Gift of Living in the Divine Will itself. Luisa, on the other hand, is the one through whom we *know of* this Gift, a knowledge which disposes us to receive it (although

admittedly that certainly fails to fully express Luisa's mission!). Such a dynamic is similar to those missionaries who proclaim the Gospel, thereby serving as the instrumental efficient cause of salvation to flow through Christ's sacrifice for those who hear and believe. Jesus says to Luisa that no one can come close, in both love and sacrifice, to Himself and His Mother. *No one*, He repeats. The Gift of Living in the Divine Will does not change that in the slightest, not even for Luisa herself.

## Voluntarism: Intellect vs. Will

**Objection:** Thomas Aquinas teaches that, of the powers of the soul, the intellect is superior and deserves primacy. In Luisa's revelations, this is completely inverted and the will receives the primacy.

**Answer:** First and foremost, we must settle the fact that the human soul is utterly *simple*; meaning, it is not composed of parts. Whatever the soul does, it does *as* the soul. The body, on the other hand (though truly one with the soul), can be considered to only do something in or with one of its parts; for example, the eye sees, the stomach does not. Therefore, of the powers of the soul, it is very difficult to say, “*does the intellect do this, or does the will?*” Such questions are not wrong to ask, and I am not implying that we cannot or should not ponder them. I simply wish to begin this discussion with a recognition that, at the end of the day, the important thing is that we recognize the soul is one, and it must be entirely given to God, for the great and first commandment is this: “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind...*”<sup>268</sup> And along with love of neighbor, all the law and prophets depend upon it.

Now, it is certainly the case that Luisa's revelations emphasize the primacy of will among the powers of the soul, in contradiction to the opinion of Thomas. Let us therefore begin by considering several comparisons of the greatness of certain dichotomies. In and of themselves, none of these comparisons yield any sort of demonstrative or even good argument for the primacy of the will. However, taken together, they do present a case for it, and should sufficiently assuage any fears you may have that following Luisa's

<sup>268</sup> Matthew 22:37

revelations somehow amounts to succumbing to one of the heretical tenants of voluntarism. In what follows, the first item presented is what corresponds to the will, and the second item presented is what corresponds to the intellect. The correspondences in some of these cases may be rough, and furthermore I certainly do not intend to imply that there is the least bit of tension or competition between the things compared.

●Sacred Heart Devotion vs. Sacred Head Devotion

- These are two extremely important devotions for our time; I myself am quite fond of a particular prayer of an alleged recent private revelation which says, in part, *“May the Precious Blood that pours out from the Sacred Head of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Temple of Divine Wisdom, Tabernacle of Divine Knowledge and Sunshine of heaven and earth, cover us now and forever. Amen.”* Nevertheless, who can deny that it is really the Sacred Heart devotion that Heaven has mandated for our times as being preeminent?

●Charity vs. Faith

- Scripture settles this matter: *“And now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity.”*<sup>269</sup> Furthermore, of the three supernatural virtues, only Charity remains in heaven. (For you cannot have Faith in what you see, nor can you Hope for what you already have.)

●Piercing with the Lance vs. Crowning with Thorns

- Of these two great acts of the Passion, both are essential to be regularly meditated upon. But which has Heaven asked us to give more focus to? Jesus said to St. Faustina: *“When you say this prayer, with a contrite heart and with faith on behalf of some sinner, I will give him the grace of conversion. This is the prayer: ‘O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fount of Mercy for us, I trust in You.’”*<sup>270</sup> Additionally He said to

Faustina, regarding the pale and red rays of the Divine Mercy image, *“These two rays issued forth from the very depths of My tender mercy when My agonized Heart was opened by a lance on the Cross. These rays shield souls from the wrath of My Father. Happy is the one who will dwell in their shelter...”*<sup>271</sup>

●God is Love vs. God is Truth

- God absolutely is Love and Truth. But which requires particular focus? The former. The Catechism mentions both, but it mentions God as Love at least five times, and God as Truth only once. *“God is Love’ and love is his first gift, containing all others.”*<sup>272</sup>

●Saints of Charity vs. Saints of Intellect

- The Church is blessed with great saints, some of whom could (roughly) be categorized into these two groups, both of which are indispensable. But which is greatest? We must conclude the former. Great as the saints of the intellect are (e.g. Aquinas, Bonaventure, and Bellarmine), they simply have not been proven the instruments of *as much* grace as the great saints of the heart have been (e.g. Francis of Assisi, Therese of Lisieux, Teresa of Calcutta, and the many approved Marian visionaries).

●Jesus as Son of God vs. Jesus as Word of God

- Jesus Himself (not to mention the Creed) prefers the former title.

This primacy of the will, especially with respect to a focal point of Luisa’s writings (namely, the human means by which the Fall of Man occurred and how this Fall will be reversed), is taught well by Cardinal Schonborn in the same work previously quoted: *“Deification is located in the reestablishing of fallen man in his innate dignity. If it is clear that the fall was caused by a perversion of the human will, then it follows that the reestablishment must affect above all the act of human willing.”*<sup>273</sup>

Furthermore, no less authority than Pope Benedict XVI himself, though stopping short of

<sup>269</sup> 1 Corinthians 13:13

<sup>270</sup> St. Faustina, *Divine Mercy in my Soul*, paragraph 186-187

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, 299.

<sup>272</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraph 733.

<sup>273</sup> Cardinal Christoph Schonborn. *From Death to Life: The Christian Journey*. 1995. Page 50

Magisterially teaching that we must hold the primacy of will, nevertheless implicitly endorsed this view in an Apostolic Letter on Duns Scotus. He wrote, “*The primacy of the will sheds light on the fact that God is charity before all else. This charity, this love, Duns Scotus kept present when he sought to lead theology back to a single expression, that is to practical theology. According to his thought, since God ‘is formally love and formally charity,’ with the greatest generosity he radiates his goodness and love beyond himself.*” And in reality, it is for love that God ‘chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. He predestined us in love to be his adoptive sons through Jesus Christ’ (cf. Eph 1:4-5).”<sup>274</sup> Benedict ended this letter by invoking the heavenly intercession of Bl. Scotus.

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Now, the word “voluntarism” can mean many different things, but we most definitely need not hold (nor should we!) the erroneous notion that what is good is only good because God wills it, aside from any other sort of consideration of human nature itself. Even if some theologians held this (e.g. William of Ockham), it should be thoroughly repudiated by Catholics. The natural law - though confirmed by Divine Law and Revelation so that it may be held with certainty - can simply be correctly thought of as the result of right reason being applied to human nature. Supposing that natural law can be known only by revelation alone - and no other source - is essentially a tenet of the heresy of Fideism. Pope St. John Paul II taught well against both Fideism and Rationalism in his Encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, but clear, Magisterial condemnations of Fideism go back at least to the First Vatican Council (1870). Fideism is not the same as Voluntarism, but there is indeed an overlap.

All we must accept in order to hold fast to Luisa’s revelations is that the will is the superior power of the soul. This is taught by Bl. Duns Scotus, St. Augustine, and Franciscan theology in general; it is by no means an “unsafe” opinion for a Catholic to hold. A thorough treatment of the matter is beyond the scope of this work, but I will present a brief excerpt of Scotus’ teaching on the matter at the end of this section.

Bl. Duns Scotus’ entire spirituality focused upon love; for him, the primacy of will was essential for the primacy of love. He was considered the “ecstatic doctor” because, despite being such a prolific theologian of compilation (like Aquinas), he seemed to have a mystical life more like a Joseph of Cupertino! Fr. Stefano, a biographer of Scotus, writes the following:

“*St. Teresa [Avila], in fact, recounts that one day her confessor gave her a book for meditation, by Friar Minor Fr. Francis Ossuna. It was entitled ‘The Third Spiritual Alphabet,’ and it explained the life of prayer and meditation strictly according to the views of Blessed Scotus. And St. Teresa states: ‘I so esteemed that treatise that I decided to follow the way outlined there with the greatest diligence of which I was capable... So disposed, I entered that spiritual way with this book as teacher.’*”<sup>275</sup>

Central to the question of primacy of will or primacy of intellect is the consideration of which does the commanding of an act. In response to Aquinas’ assertion that commanding is essentially an act of reason that merely presupposes some act of the will, Scotus argues it is essentially the will, as follows:

“*...when the will intends and effectually wills the end, it orders the intellect to seek out and find means of getting to the attainment of that end and keeps the intellect employed in investigating these means until, by a practical syllogism, the deduction is reached that these are to be chosen and those passed over, as Augustine says (De Trinit. c.3, The will unites the parent to the offspring); moreover, the will gives commands to itself... no matter what dictate of reason is in place, the will freely chooses. Therefore the will alone commands itself and the intellect; so it belongs to the will alone to command the intellect and not the reverse, since, even when the ultimate sentence of practical deduction is in place, the will is able, by its dominating power over itself, to ignore that dictate and embrace worse counsels, or at least to suspend itself and refrain from any action. – Lastly, the intellect or intellectual virtue says that a thing is true or not true, whether in matters to be thought or in matters to be done: but the commanding will, or the will to*

<sup>274</sup> Pope Benedict XVI. *Apostolic Letter for the 7th Centenary of the Death of Blessed John Duns Scotus*. October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008

<sup>275</sup> Fr. Stefano M. Manelli, *Blessed John Duns Scotus: Marian Doctor*, p. 51

*command, says that the act which has been commanded as needing to be immediately done is to be carried into execution; therefore the act of commanding does not belong to reason dictating that this ought to be done but to the appetitive power ordering that what was intended be done.*"<sup>276</sup>

## Monothelitism and the Operation of the Human and Divine Will

*\*Please note that a primary objective of Fr. Iannuzzi's Doctoral Dissertation is to present a precise and thorough theological analysis of this very concern. Even a summary of this presentation, however, would go beyond the scope of this book. For now, just know that Luisa's revelations **do not** teach that the Gift of Living in the Divine Will implies that the free human will undergoes a literal annihilation, or ceases to operate; rather, know that both the human will and the Divine Will of God operate distinctly, but nevertheless perfectly of one accord, with the latter constituting the very life and principle of the former and indeed sublimating it. Those with a theological interest in this objection/concern would be well advised to read the Dissertation. See Appendix II for more information.\**

### Why now?

**Objection:** Why wouldn't God have revealed this secret in ages past to saints who so far exceeded Luisa in so many ways, such as St. Francis or St. Teresa of Avila? Today the Church is so sinful, so lax, and so devoid of great saints; of all possible times in Church History, why would God choose *now* to give such a gift?

**Answer:** Quite simply because, where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more,<sup>277</sup> and Jesus saves "the best wine for last."<sup>278</sup>

<sup>276</sup> Scotus. Oxon. 3 d.36; 4 d.14 q.2, d.49 q.4 (Citation Cf. aristoteloophile.com)

<sup>277</sup> Cf. Romans 5:20

<sup>278</sup> Cf. John 2:10

<sup>279</sup> Cf. Genesis 4:10

<sup>280</sup> This, again, makes no attempt to ascertain culpability, which God alone knows. Nevertheless the sins themselves are objectively evil,

But does sin really abound today? The world, and the Church, have been in dire straits before; is today any different?

Make no mistake about it: the evil of the day is absolutely unprecedented. Is it any surprise, then, that God is now giving unprecedented grace to combat it? Over the past 100 years, billions of children have been murdered through abortion. The entire Earth is literally saturated with this blood of innocents that cries out to God for vengeance.<sup>279</sup> Take a walk down any busy city street today and you will scarcely pass by a single person whose life is not utterly mired in objective, grave, intrinsic evil; whether it be in the form of fornication, artificial contraception, auto-eroticism, drug abuse, sodomy, intentional serious hatred and unforgiveness (especially of parents), viewing pornography, physical abuse, adultery, drunken debauchery, actual or de-facto atheism, occultism, or whatever else. What I have listed here are merely a few grave contraventions of the *natural* law; meaning the law that is inscribed in each person's heart and which no one has an excuse for disobeying. In other words, the vast, vast majority of God's children in this world are walking the path to eternal damnation.<sup>280</sup> And on this same walk down a typical city street, you will be inundated by a thousand advertisements, announcements, monuments to man, and idols of all sorts – but you will likely not stumble upon so much as a single mere acknowledgement of the fact that the Creator of all things became man 2,000 years ago and called us to follow Him, and that nothing has any meaning outside of Him.

And the gravest evils are not merely practiced by virtually everyone (that is, virtually everyone practices at least one of them, which is tantamount to practicing all of them<sup>281</sup>), but they are culturally and institutionally endorsed, promoted, and insisted upon.

All this occurs while a minority enjoys historically unheard of luxuries of all kinds, but

and are obviously committed by the vast majority of people. This is furthermore not to assert that the "vast, vast majority" of people today will wind up in hell – it is simply an honest assessment of their current state.

<sup>281</sup> Cf. James 2:10

hundreds of millions of children die from starvation or lack of basic medicine.

And now governments (and peoples, directly, through referendums) are even trying to re-define the most fundamental institution that exists – marriage – so that it incorporates and blesses perversion and disorder. If that is not a fulfillment of Our Lord’s words here, then what is? *“When therefore you shall see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place: he that readeth let him understand. Then they that are in Judea, let them flee to the mountains: And he that is on the housetop,<sup>282</sup> let him not come down to take anything out of his house...”<sup>283</sup>*

Never before have we seen anything remotely similar to this, except perhaps before the Flood, but even that pales in comparison to the evil of today.

But if looking out the window and seeing the spiritual devastation with your own eyes is not enough, consider what the Magisterium says. *“We were terrified beyond all else by the disastrous state of human society today. For who can fail to see that society is at the present time, **more than in any past age**, suffering from a terrible and deeprooted malady which, developing every day and eating into its inmost being, is dragging it to destruction? You understand, Venerable Brethren, what this disease is - apostasy from God...”<sup>284</sup>* Pope St. Pius X wrote that in 1903, in an Encyclical (an authoritative formal act of the Magisterium). Have things gotten better since then? Obviously they have gotten far, far worse. Sin is now on the verge of exhausting itself.

And therefore God is acting like never before.

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Nevertheless, be fully convinced that an attitude of asking *“but why wouldn’t God do it this other way?”* in response to what God, in His perfect plan and wisdom, has deemed fitting, is a sure way of making grace run off of you like water off of a rock.

Why didn’t God reveal the Sacred Heart or Divine Mercy devotions earlier, perhaps to St. Mary Magdalene? Why weren’t the Desert Fathers blessed with the Holy Rosary and its corresponding promises? Why was daily Communion not broadly permitted before the 20<sup>th</sup> century? God has predetermined His timeline, and it is not ours to question. It is only ours to ask, when an alleged revelation or development comes along, “is this from God?”

**\*Please note that many more questions (and not just objections) along with thorough theological answers, can be found on Fr. Iannuzzi’s website, [www.ltdw.org/questions-answers.html](http://www.ltdw.org/questions-answers.html). Above all, remember that all of Luisa’s writings have been thoroughly analyzed, multiple times, by Vatican-appointed theologians, and they have formally stated that no error has been found.\***

<sup>282</sup> To “flee to the mountains” is to go to the place of prayer, and to “remain on the rooftop” likewise refers to remaining in a state of fervent prayer, for both of these were understood in Jesus’ day to be places of supplication to God. In a following verse, Jesus says *“Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.”* Unfortunately some Bibles wrongly translate “eagles” as “vultures.”

But “eagles” is a reference to the contemplatives, and by saying “body” He is actually referring to His own Body in the Eucharist. Hence our calling today to be true contemplatives with Him in the Eucharist.

<sup>283</sup> Matthew 24:15-17

<sup>284</sup> *E Supremi* October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1903. Paragraph 3. Emphasis Added.

## **Chapter V) Advice to Current and Prospective Devotees**

Forgive the ridiculousness of my inclusion of this chapter! A chapter in which I, a mere novice (having only studied this for four years) and a layman, propose to advise those who are as above I in this Gift as a college professor is above a kindergartener. But if you have decided there is anything good in the pages preceding this, and if no good tree produces bad fruit, then please do not neglect the pages that follow. I will begin with several pieces of cautionary advice.

### **Be an Ordinary Catholic**

Consider what a blessing it is to be able to go anywhere and, by and large, the same Rosary is prayed, the same Mass is said, the same grace before meals is prayed, the same Divine Office is recited, and so on. Everywhere you go, serious, devout Catholics are zealous for the same things: the Mass, adoration, works of mercy, confession, the Rosary, Scripture, the pro-life cause, and other similar things.

Do not this unity that by insisting that, wherever you go and whomever you find yourself amongst, your prayers and discussions center on Luisa's writings, or that they only use terminology saturated with Divine Will spirituality.

Do not become an eccentric, disagreeable, and difficult-to-interact-with subgroup within Catholicism. We have far too many of them already, and while just about all of them have their good points, they only hurt the Church overall. They make unity difficult. Hurting the Church is identical to hurting Jesus, and how can this possibly advance the cause of the Divine Will?

### **Be Zealous, not Fanatical**

If fanaticism is a real danger even for the Deposit of Faith (and it certainly is),<sup>285</sup> consider how much more carefully we must avoid it with respect to

<sup>285</sup> This is not in the least to argue we must moderate our love of the Faith. I am only referring to the need to specifically moderate zeal in certain aspects of the Faith's promotion. *In medio stat virtus.*

Luisa's private revelations. With the way some Divine Will promoters comport themselves, I can only thank God that their types were not around in 90 A.D.; for they would have outlawed the word "father"<sup>286</sup> except referring to God, they would have required signed and witnessed statements of hatred against parents before ordination,<sup>287</sup> and maiming would be a prerequisite for absolution!<sup>288</sup>

Perhaps some modern-day Pharisees spew much venom over minor details in Luisa's writings that are easily seen to be - when simply read with the right lens and without a chip on the shoulder - not in the least contrary to sound Sacred Doctrine. But do not go to the opposite extreme by adopting ridiculous habits and behaviors based on little quotes here and there in Luisa's writings (e.g. Saying "JML" instead of "JMJ;" or believing we must not use the word "I," becoming a de-facto Providentialist or Quietest heretic; or even failing to remain more grounded in Scripture than in Luisa's writings. Unfortunately this list goes on and on).

Anti-Divine Will websites are replete with testimonies from those scared away from Luisa's revelations by bad devotees. You must consider that excessive zeal is not only self-defeating, but, specifically with respect to this devotion, is also the utmost example of lacking even the conformity and resignation to the Divine Will that is the indispensable disposition for receiving the. If Luisa herself utterly insisted upon her writings and all the revelations contained therein being absolutely submissive to the Magisterium - to the extent that she wanted anything in them to be modified as needed to ensure this submissiveness - then how much more so should you, a mere devotee, ensure that you are not overzealous about its specifics?

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So do not be a zealot, and do not be a fanatic. Do not fashion yourself Luisa's hero, and in so doing abrasively insist upon constant attention being drawn and credence being given to those most difficult individual excerpts from Luisa's writings. Can you imagine what would have come of the Divine Mercy devotion if its promoters, in the days before its

<sup>286</sup> Cf. Matthew 23:9

<sup>287</sup> Cf. Luke 14:26

<sup>288</sup> Cf. Mark 9:43

approval, focused on certain parts of the Diary? If they focused upon the more difficult-to-handle sayings? For example:

- Jesus' desiring to rest (in the host) in Faustina's hands; as if reception of Communion on the hand were being encouraged, which it was not.<sup>289</sup>
- Jesus' words to Faustina: "for your sake, I will bless the Earth,"<sup>290</sup> as if to imply Faustina was the new Savior, which of course she was not.
- Jesus telling Faustina, "I am uniting myself with you so intimately as with no other creature,"<sup>291</sup> as if to make Faustina exceed the Blessed Virgin Mary, which He did not intend to imply in the least.
- Jesus telling Faustina, "do not fear God's judgment, for you will not be judged,"<sup>292</sup> as if to imply Faustina would be dispensed from undergoing the particular judgment after her death and the general judgment at the end of time (opposing Catholic teaching), which, again, Jesus did not intend to imply.

That list could be much longer, but the moral of the story is clear: the Divine Mercy devotion never would have been able to reach its present glory - a glory, please God, also destined for the Divine Will message - if its early promoters had insisted upon focusing on the most potentially abrasive parts of Faustina's Diary. All private revelations have abrasive parts that require much explanation; Luisa's is no exception.

So do not focus only on how Luisa's revelations are completely different from the revelations given to other mystics, but focus as well on the similarity, which is enormous. Stop focusing only on the new prayers Luisa gives, and start focusing as well on how Divine Will spirituality can also work well as the intention of and approach to one's current prayer regimen. A serious Catholic should never be told that he must completely supplant his spiritual life with a new approach. Instead, all growth should be organic and proceed from interior desire, not external imposition.

In a word: do not become obsessed and do not insist upon obsession to those whom you introduce this devotion to.

Now I am like any serious adherent of Luisa's; I believe this is the ultimate private revelation, never to be surpassed, believing that it describes what truly is the greatest Gift God can give to man, and what His final plan is. That does not mean we are to go about replacing Sacred Tradition with what is contained in Luisa's writings! That would be confused at best, and diabolical at worst. Unfortunately, I see precisely this happening with some Divine Will devotees. They maintain appearances of keeping with tradition, they never contradict a doctrine, they continue going to Mass, etc. But really they think that is all just a show, and all that really matters is the prayers in Luisa's writings. They insist upon all, or the bulk of, one's reading being just what Luisa wrote. They insist upon an unhealthy degree of devotion to Luisa. They phrase each and every spiritual thing they talk about in Divine Will terminology, as mentioned previously. They insist that every book on one's shelf should pertain to the Divine Will. It is insanity! Now, this description only applies to a tiny minority of the overall body of Divine Will devotees, but it is such a very dangerous trap that we must exercise great caution to avoid it and help others to avoid it as well.

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If perhaps you are among those who have become inordinately centered on Luisa's writings in an unhealthy exclusive way, consider the following: not even did the New Testament - the public revelation of Jesus Christ in which God said all He has to say<sup>293</sup> - do to the Old Testament what overzealous Divine Will devotees want to do with our Sacred Tradition. For the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is an infinitely greater and more powerful prayer than all of the prayers of the Old Covenant. And yet it is precisely these "inferior" prayers that still comprise the bulk of the prayer life of a priest, deacon, or religious - the "inferior" prayers of the Psalms of the Divine Office.

More abstractly, consider the infinite superiority of the Supernatural Virtues to the Moral

<sup>289</sup> Cf. St. Faustina, *Divine Mercy in my Soul*, Paragraph 160.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, 431.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*, 707.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*, 374.

<sup>293</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraph 65



Virtues. Faith, Hope, and Charity are completely above prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. Does our knowledge of that fact dispense us from focusing time and attention on those latter four virtues? Of course not. Likewise, no Divine Will devotee should find his spiritual life bereft of those things that have become inarguably essential aspects of the spiritual life of a Catholic in light of Tradition: a focus on the Mass, Scripture, Confession, Fasting, as well as the Rosary and other devotions that God has gradually formed in His Church.

Similarly, do not constantly focus on the differences between the saints potentially in the Divine Will and the saints before Luisa. Is this what we do with the New Testament saints versus the Old Testament saints? No. In fact, there are many ways in which the saints of the Old Testament were greater. Were any saints of the New Testament found so righteous as to avert the Black Death, or the Hell-On-Earth that was the first half of the 20th century, as Noah was so incredibly righteous that it is only thanks to him that God chose not to destroy the world? Were any New Testament saints great enough to be the foster Father of the Incarnate Word, as was St. Joseph?<sup>294</sup> Were any New Testament saints great enough to compose prayers that even now comprise the largest chunk of the spiritual life of all the clergy and religious in the entire world, as did King David? Did any New Testament saints truly converse with God face-to-face, in the same degree as Moses? The answer to all of these questions is “no.”

In sum, do not go about with a spiritual chip on your shoulder. Do not go pushing the buttons that good Catholics have for a reason; God Himself put those buttons there so that Catholics can discern the activity of cults, heresies, schisms, and the like.

## Do not Compare Luisa to Jesus

I do not mean “avoid claiming that Luisa is a person of the Trinity,” for not even the most overzealous of Divine Will promoters would succumb to so blatant a heresy.

What I do mean is this: do not say things like “*well Jesus’ enemies said this or that thing about His revelations, so it makes perfect sense that people would say this or that thing about Luisa’s revelations.*” Jesus’ revelations are the Deposit of Faith. Luisa’s are not. You will be confronted with Catholics who are hesitant to approach Luisa’s writings, or who, even after being told about their tenants, simply refuse to have anything to do with them. Do not take a “shake the dust off your feet” attitude to their response, for it is not a response tantamount to refusing Jesus, as the rejection of the Apostles’ message was. It is furthermore useless to say things like “*well, when Jesus came, things changed also, and the Pharisees were wrong in opposing these things, so people must be wrong today in being opposed to the changes that come with Luisa’s revelations.*” Jesus had every right to change things, as He came with the new and everlasting covenant in order to bring to fulfillment the old and imperfect covenant. Now that we *have* that everlasting covenant, there can *never again* be a comparable scenario to that of Jesus’ mission on earth two thousand years ago.

To argue against this fundamental incomparability by saying, “But Luisa’s revelations say we are on the verge of the Third, and Greatest, Fiat of God!” is to misunderstand in what sense the term “greatest” is meant in that context. (And I must here again say that whenever there is confusion or apparent contradiction between Church Teaching and Luisa’s writings, you must *always* favor Church Teaching. I am not saying there are any *actual substantial* contradictions: I am simply saying that our inadequate minds’ understanding of the two will inevitably result in occasions when intellectual honesty – which can never be set aside – demands we favor one or the other. It is in such scenarios as these that we must always, without exception, favor Church teaching.) So, “greatest,” in its attribution to the Third Fiat, means finally achieving the ultimate goal for which the foundation was laid – a tree finally producing its fruit. It is not “greatest” in the sense of a new and better foundation being built, or a new species of tree being planted or grafted.

<sup>294</sup> St. Joseph is the “most dignified” saint after the Blessed Virgin Mary, cf. *Quamquam Pluries*, paragraph 3, Pope Leo XIII. This is Church teaching, and the Gift of Living in the Divine Will does not

change it. Though obviously he is in the New Testament, he nevertheless died before the birth of Catholicism; before he could ever even receive the Eucharist.

Let me offer an example of a similar concept. Consider a Catholic who, though in a state of Grace, only receives the Eucharist as a duty to be fulfilled and thinks little about it, taking no effort to appropriate the grace from the Eucharist, and not really changing his life based upon it. Finally, one day God gives him the grace to realize the full magnitude of what he has been doing for all these years and understand it as having been a mere routine. This man's whole life changes. He abandons all of his sins and even all of his imperfections, he submits himself entirely to God, and God goes so far as to impart upon him the Spiritual Marriage described by St. John of the Cross. Along with this, everything else in his life starts working out; relationships are healed, addictions disappear, and joy permeates his days. You could certainly in one sense say that these later workings of God in this man's life were greater than the workings of the Eucharist in his life during all those previous years. But in another sense, it would be utterly wrong to say that what God did for him was greater in those later years than what God did for him by giving Himself in the Eucharist; for God gave this man His whole Self in the Eucharist. Furthermore, the seeds of all that took place later were indeed there earlier, though not fully applied – not fully lived. But still, God desired to reign over that man's whole life, and He did not, even though that man received the Eucharist. Likewise God now desires to reign over this whole world, and when He raises His right hand to achieve this victory by way of the Third Fiat, what is accomplished will be, in a certain real sense, even greater than what was accomplished at the Fiat of Redemption.

If you find yourself incapable of carefully explaining such distinctions, then you should simply avoid any statements comparing the greatness of this Third Fiat to the greatness of Redemption, especially when speaking with people to whom you introduce Luisa's writings.

## Do Not Assume You Have the Gift

Remember that the Gift of Living in the Divine Will is a grace, and grace is imperceptible. The Gift entirely flees the senses. Not only that, but the Gift cannot be given to one who is not in a state of grace. The Church already teaches that, aside from a

special revelation from God, you cannot even know with certainty that you are in a state of grace! Obviously, uncertainty regarding a necessary precondition for the Gift of Living in the Divine Will yields uncertainty regarding the Gift itself. If one were to ask you if you have the Gift, let your response echo that of St. Joan of Arc's when she was asked whether she was in a state of grace. She said, *"If I am not in one, pray that God may put me in one. If I am in one, pray that God may preserve me in it."*

The worst damage to the cause of Luisa has been done by followers of hers who strut about with the invented confidence that everything they do is infallible and Divine, because, after all, "they continuously participate in God's one eternal act!" This of course is a perversion of Luisa's revelations, but it does not always stop those who see it (just like those who see bad Christians) from sealing themselves off from the grace therein. Knowledge of Luisa's writings is both a great privilege and a great responsibility; remember that you become a representative of this Third Fiat when you learn about it.

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Now that the cautionary advice has been taken care of, allow me to end this chapter on a happier note!

## Integrate Divine Will Spirituality into Your Current Spiritual Regimen

Do not let this great knowledge merely sit in your intellect and bear no fruit! It is quite possible, if not downright probable, that precisely this will be what happens if you do not, this day, take concrete measures to live in the Divine Will. In earlier chapters, I discussed how to live in the Divine Will in general; now allow me to conclude by suggesting a few practical and concrete baby steps you could commit – this very moment – to taking:

- Strive vigorously to ensure your first act of the will each day is made captive for Christ; that is to say, an act in the Divine Will. Do not lament the buzzing of the alarm, and do

not immediately engage your mind in the worries the day will bring. Rather, say – out loud or mentally – words to this effect: *“Good morning Jesus and Mary; I love you. Thank you for this new day. Setting my will in Yours, O Lord, I affirm I wish only to Live and Act in the Divine Will.”*

- Before each ordinary prayer of your day (whether it be the Rosary, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, the Divine Office, the Holy Mass, Lectio Divinia, or whatever else) at least let your intention be known to God that you desire to pray in the Divine Will. For example, your Rosary could begin with *“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. In the Divine Will, I pray: I believe in God...”*
- In the minutes after you receive Holy Communion, beseech Jesus in the Eucharist within you to make the Transubstantiation of the Host you consumed effect the Transubstantiation of your very self. Meditate upon the substance in your stomach - the Real Presence of Jesus – transforming you into Himself, with the accidents of bread and wine, which dissolve, being taken over by your own acts made in the Divine Will.
- As many times as you can remember throughout the day, in whatever you find yourself doing, simply ask Jesus to do it in, with, and through you, so as to accomplish in you what He accomplished in the 30 years of His hidden life in Nazareth. Ask yourself *“would Jesus do what I am doing, in the manner I am doing it?”* If not – change what you are doing! Perhaps at this moment you can simply choose one specific activity you frequently do: whether changing diapers, hammering in nails, scanning items at a cash register, doing the dishes, or whatever else, and commit to do it from now on in the Divine Will. This can be done by saying or thinking, before said activity, *“Jesus wishes to do \_\_\_\_, therefore we will do \_\_\_\_ together,”* and proceeding with deliberateness and a

spirit of prayer, recollection, and consciousness of God’s presence.<sup>295</sup> The more acts you do in the Divine Will, the deeper into it you enter and the more you restore creation.

- Wear or carry a crucifix – ideally a blessed and exorcised St. Benedict’s crucifix – to help you remain continually conscious of and uniting yourself to the Passion of Jesus, remembering especially Jesus’ words in *The Hours of the Passion*.
- When you behold the beauty of creation (whether out your window, in a park, at a cemetery, on a walk outside, in the night sky, or even just remotely in media), strive not merely to appreciate it, but to (through your intention) bi-locate your soul within it and impress your Fiat – your I love you, I adore you, I glorify you, God – upon it and offer it back to the Father from Whom it came.
- Read through the prayers in Appendix I of this book on a regular basis.
- Finally, just take note not to neglect the devotions God has asked of us through other private revelations. The Rosary, The Brown Scapular, the First Saturdays (and most importantly the at least monthly confession this implies) and Fridays Devotion, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, weekly fasting, the Miraculous Medal, daily prayerful Scripture reading, etc., all remain vital for our present day.

## Foster and Follow a Holy Hunger for More Knowledge of the Divine Will

Jesus gives to Luisa great promises for each new truth one learns regarding His Divine Will; promises so great that all of heaven rejoices upon the entrance of a soul into it due to each and every piece of knowledge on this great Gift which that soul brings to paradise with it. Luisa’s writings are absolutely

<sup>295</sup> And hopefully this will serve as a beginning to doing each and every one of your acts in the Divine Will, so that all that you do, even unconsciously, might give God infinite glory. *“O Most Holy Trinity! As many times as I breathe, as many times as my heart beats,*

*as many times as my blood pulsates through my body, so many thousand times do I want to glorify Your mercy.”* – St. Faustina’s Diary, paragraph 163.

chock full of these teachings – all of the over 8,000 pages!

Luisa's writings may be licitly read by anyone who has them, and may be licitly given to anyone associated with a prayer group devoted to her spirituality. Find (or start, under the direction of a priest) such a group, and dive into these readings! You need not submit to some rigorous process of documentation, promise-making, and initiation; you can simply make the connection. Archbishop Pichierri wishes for Luisa's writings to spread in an organic way under the auspices of the Catholic Church, and from one devout Catholic to the next, instead of haphazardly blasted out by email to each person in the world, who will then interpret them and apply them however he wishes! It is very important for Luisa's writings to spread in a human and personal way at least for now, before the critical edition is completed, as all currently circulated English translations of Luisa's writings contain errors.

Remember that what you have read here is nothing but a very unworthy work written by a very unworthy author. It is a desperately inadequate overview of Luisa's writings; hence my insistence that I only here present an *introduction* to the Gift of Living in the Divine Will, although really I am not sure I can say I have even succeeded in that. So please continue this good work you have begun of learning more and more of these most sublime truths of His Divine Will! Dive into her writings, seek out true experts, seek out Divine Will prayer groups, conferences etc.

## Spread This Knowledge

Now that you know these most sublime mysteries of the Divine Will, it is imperative that you not keep them to yourself!

It goes without saying that one should not cast pearls before swine. If you know that a certain person always struts about with a theological chip on his shoulder, ready to denounce any private revelation that has the slightest abrasion with any of his own opinions and preferences, then do not bother. It is also utterly imperative to never present Luisa's spirituality to a non-Catholic (or lapsed, or lukewarm

Catholic) as some sort of alternative to Catholicism. But there is no reason not to share Luisa's spirituality with any practicing Catholic who has an openness to mysticism and private revelation. Even if someone you know is not a practicing Catholic, or perhaps not even a Christian, but you nevertheless sense a strong openness in him and spirit of true seeking, you could carefully share Luisa's spirituality with him, in such a way that he realizes it goes along with and presupposes being a devoutly practicing Catholic.

To Luisa, Jesus likens those who now spread knowledge of this Third Fiat to His very own apostles. There are indeed ways in which our duty now is even more exciting and privileged; for what they longed for, we are now truly on the cusp of attaining. At what time that is attained, and who shares in its attainment, is dependent upon our response.

What sacrifice, then, is too great to spread this Kingdom of His on earth? What vanity, now clung to, is not worth casting aside for the sake of the Reign of His Will? What risk, now feared, is not worth taking to be able to participate in the very initiation of the Third Fiat of the Eternal One? Patriarchs, Prophets, Martyrs, Fathers, Doctors, and yes, even the Angels, envy you for the invitation that God now extends freely to you. Take it.

**GO, FORTIFIED BY MY GRACE, AND FIGHT FOR MY KINGDOM IN HUMAN SOULS; FIGHT AS A KING'S CHILD WOULD; AND REMEMBER THAT THE DAYS OF YOUR EXILE WILL PASS QUICKLY, AND WITH THEM THE POSSIBILITY OF EARNING MERIT FOR HEAVEN. I EXPECT FROM YOU, MY CHILD, A GREAT NUMBER OF SOULS WHO WILL GLORIFY MY MERCY FOR ALL ETERNITY. MY CHILD, THAT YOU MAY ANSWER MY CALL WORTHILY, RECEIVE ME DAILY IN HOLY COMMUNION. IT WILL GIVE YOU STRENGTH...**

**~JESUS TO ST. FAUSTINA**

*(Divine Mercy in my Soul, Paragraph 1489)*

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## Epilogue

What if I'm wrong?

What if these revelations to Luisa are nothing but the fantastical, decades-long imaginings of a pious, old Italian woman?

Well first of all, please know that I admit that is a hypothetical possibility. I am convinced of the validity of Luisa's revelations, as I hope you are too now that you have read about them. But this conviction remains on a human level - I am not pretending to have supernatural Faith in them. That would be idolatrous, for as I have already pointed out, only the Deposit of Faith (that public revelation which was made complete at the death of the Apostle John) can legitimately be the object of Supernatural Faith. Now, I am no Church Historian, but I do know a few things about the topic and I certainly have a hard time thinking of a single event in Church History that would amount to such a deception; that is, a Servant of God - admired by saints and popes, whose writings enjoy many Ecclesiastical approbations, who lived a life of the greatest degree of virtue, whose legacy has not been marred despite decades passing since death, and whose days were inundated with miracles - turning out to be a fraud, lunatic, or demon-inspired false mystic.

But I do indeed still wish to answer the question posed above: "What if, after all, I am wrong?" Well, I'd be disappointed, but in all honesty, it wouldn't even ruin my day. I can still lay my head on my pillow at night with absolute certainty in the Deposit of Faith. I can still recite the Nicene Creed and find indescribable joy in the knowledge that it will only be proven false when someone can draw a triangular circle... a Creed which contains Sacred Mysteries of such an incredible magnitude that I will never come close to comprehending them, blessings beyond any possible human description that God Himself freely bestows upon me.

Would, however, I at least regret this time and effort I have given over to Luisa's writings? The answer is no, I would not even regret that! I am sure there are many things I will regret on Judgment Day: lukewarmness, sins of omission, missed opportunities for grace and mercy, and many more

things. But I do not think that studying, praying, and promoting Luisa's writings will be one of them, even if these writings somehow turn out to not be truly from heaven. Whether or not they are from heaven, they have inflamed my love for the Eucharist, they have given me a greater appreciation of Jesus' Passion than anything else, they have reminded me of my duty (and ability!) to pursue and reach the highest levels of holiness, they have explicated the writings of St. Faustina, they have reminded me to strive to do all that I do as a prayer (thereby empowering my devotion to Therese' "Little Way" and Opus Dei's spirituality), they have provided me with countless pages of objectively edifying material, and the list goes on.

But allow me to end this book by asking you one simple question:

How often, in salvation history and the history of the Church, has doubting the greatness of what God can and will do proven the opinion that is vindicated?

## **Appendix I) Prayers**

*\*Unless otherwise noted, the prayers contained in this appendix were not written by me, nor are their copyrights owned by me. I have simply compiled them from miscellaneous sources that are free and public online, which I credit along with each.\**

### **Divine Will Consecration**

**Prayer** *(This particular prayer, though written by Luisa, was written at the direct request at St. Hannibal and is not specifically contained in the writings that the Moratorium applies to. Furthermore, it is taken from Fr. Iannuzzi's website, ltdw.org)*

O Adorable and Divine Will, here I am, before the immensity of your light. May your eternal goodness open to me the doors of the Divine Will, so that I may enter and form my entire life in You, Divine Will. Therefore, O Adorable Will, prostrate before your light I, the least of all, join the little group of the first children of your Supreme Fiat. Prostrate in my nothingness, I beseech and implore your endless light to invest me and eclipse all that which opposes You. In this way, I may only look to You, desire only your knowledge and live only in You, Divine Will. You shall be my life, the center of my intelligence, the enrapturer of my heart and the captivator of my entire being.

In my heart the human will shall no longer have a life of its own, for I will banish it forever and entreat the Divine Will to form in me the new Eden of peace, happiness and love. With the Divine Will I shall always be happy; I shall possess a unique strength and holiness that sanctifies all things and conducts all things to God.

I reverently prostrate myself and invoke the help of the Most Holy Trinity: [Father, Son and Holy Spirit]; I implore You, my God, to admit me to live in the cloister of the Divine Will and to restore in me the original order of creation that You established in the first human soul You created. Heavenly Mother, Sovereign Queen of the Divine Fiat, take me by the hand and enclose me in the light of the Divine Will. Tender mother, be my guide; guard me, your child,

and teach me to live in and maintain myself in the order and boundaries of the Divine Will.

Heavenly Queen, to your Heart I entrust my entire being, as I desire to be your little child of the Divine Will. If you teach me how to live in the Divine Will, I shall be attentive to your lessons. Cover me with your blue mantle so that the infernal serpent dare not enter into this sacred Eden to entice me and make me fall into the maze of my human will.

Heart of my greatest good, Jesus, let me share in the flames with which your Sacred Heart is consumed for love of us, so that these flames may set my heart ablaze, consume me, nourish me, and form in me the life of the Supreme Will.

Saint Joseph, I entreat you to be my protector, the guardian of my heart and to keep the keys of my will in your hands. Jealously hold onto my heart and never give it back to me, so that I may be sure never to leave of the Will of God. Amen.

My Guardian Angel, I implore you to watch over me, defend and assist me in all things, so that my Eden may flourish and dispose the whole world to live in the Divine Will. Heavenly Court, come to my assistance; I promise you that I shall always live in the Divine Will. Amen.

### **Steps to Live in the Divine Will as Taught by Mary, Our Mother.** (ComingOfTheKingdom.org)

Day or Step 1: To adore your Creator in all your acts! To know Him and to love Him. This places you in the order of creation and you come to know Who created you! Keep your will sacrificed in honor of your Creator.

Aid or Help: Place your will in the hands of your Mother and ask Her to make the sacrifice of your will to your Creator. Go before Her all day asking Her to enclose the Divine Will in your soul so that It can take Its prime place in your soul.

Day or Step 2: You must empty yourself of your own will. Constituting the Divine Will as the principal life in your soul calls attention to the Holy Trinity to

pour Themselves out upon you. The Divine Will is life, support, and strength of your human will.

**Aid or Help:** Climb upon the knees of your Heavenly Mother, at least, three time this day, giving your will to Her and asking Her to exchange it with the Divine Will. Go before Her all day asking Her by right of Her being the Sovereign Queen of the Divine Will to command your will to decrease, so that the Divine Will can find a place to increase in your soul.

**Day or Step 3:** When you decide with a firm purpose to no longer give life to your will, all evils die, all goods come to life and all creation will welcome the newly arrived child into the Kingdom.

**Aid or Help:** Look at all of creation, unite yourself with all that the universe contains, and recite at least three times today the “Glory be” thanking God for having mandated Our Lady Queen of everything!

**Day or Step 4:** Never refuse God anything, even if it means sacrifices to last your whole life. The big test – never sway in the test that God wants from you. Your fidelity is to call Divine Designs upon you to become the reflections of His Virtues!

**Aid or Help:** Climb upon the lap of your Mother at least three times today, bringing Her all the pains, hurts, and sorrows of your soul, asking Her to infuse in your soul the strength, light, and grace necessary to pass the test. Ask your Mother, all day today, to take you in Her arms and write the “Fiat” in your Heart!

**Day or Step 5:** Triumph over the test and make a gift of your will to God. This is the most pure love and the greatest sacrifice we can offer to God. He and Mary will give you everything and will be at your disposal for anything. Remember – God’s Holy Will will be reigning in you – whatever God wants, you want!

**Aid or Help:** Place every act you do today into your Mother’s hands praying to Her that in place of your will, She will give the great grace of making flow the Divine Will in each of your acts. Pray all day today to your Heavenly Mother to take your will away and to give you the Divine Will!

**Day or Step 6:** Once the Divine Will is reigning in your soul, you take possession of all Divine properties! You will have Divine strength, and power. All things will be converted into sanctity, love, and Divine beauty. All beautiful, all holy, all pure is our Mother!

**Aid or Help:** Pray the “Glory Be” at least three times today in thanksgiving for establishing the Kingdom of the Divine Will in our Mother, and for giving Her possession of all. Go into the Heart of the Most Holy Trinity and making Their voice yours, say to our Mother, “All beautiful, all holy, all pure is my Mother!”

**Day or Step 7:** God can now rest and He sees the beauty of His creation! He has now the joy of returning to the Original State of Justice one of His beloved children that loved Him so much as to sacrifice Her will for that of her Father’s. How rewarded will this soul be in Eternity!

Pray always for perseverance, strength, courage, and fortitude to endeavor in this greatest of all graces!

## **Opening Prayer for Divine Will Groups** (From ltdw.org)

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, Mother and Queen of the Divine Will, I entreat you, by the infinite merits of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and by the graces God has granted to you since your Immaculate Conception, the grace of never going astray

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, I am a poor and unworthy sinner, and I beg of You the grace to allow our mother Mary and Luisa to form in me the divine acts You purchased for me and for everyone. These acts are the most precious of all, for they carry the Eternal Power of your Fiat and they await my “Yes, your Will be done”. So I implore you, Jesus, Mary and Luisa to accompany me as I now pray:

I am nothing and God is all, come Divine Will. Come Heavenly Father to beat in my heart and move in my Will; come beloved Son to flow in my Blood and think in my intellect; come Holy Spirit to breathe in my lungs and recall in my memory.



I fuse myself in the Divine Will and place my I love You, I adore You and I bless You God in the Fiats of creation. With my I love You my soul bilocates in the creations of the heavens and the earth: I love You in the stars, in the sun, in the moon and in the skies; I love You in the earth, in the waters and in every living creature my Father created out of love for me, so that I may return love for love.

I now enter into Jesus' Most Holy Humanity that embraces all acts. I place my I adore You Jesus in your every breath, heartbeat, thought, word and step. I adore You in the sermons of your public life, in the miracles You performed, in the Sacraments You instituted and in the most intimate fibres of your Heart.

I bless You Jesus in your every tear, blow, wound, thorn and in each drop of Blood that unleashed light for the life of every human. I bless You in all your prayers, reparations, offerings, and in each of the interior acts and sorrows You suffered up to your last breath on the Cross. I enclose your life and all your acts, Jesus, within my I love You, I adore You and I bless You.

I now enter into the acts of my mother Mary and of Luisa. I place my I thank you in Mary and Luisa's every thought, word and action. I thank you in the embraced joys and sorrows in the work of Redemption and Sanctification. Fused in your acts I make my I thank You and I bless You God flow in the relations of every creature to fill their acts with light and life: To fill the acts of Adam and Eve; of the patriarchs and prophets; of souls of the past, present and future; of the holy souls in purgatory; of the holy angels and saints.

I now make these acts my own, and I offer them to You, my tender and loving Father. May they increase the glory of your children, and may they glorify, satisfy and honour You on their behalf.

Let us now begin our day with our divine acts fused together. Thank You Most Holy Trinity for enabling me to enter into union with You by means of prayer. May your Kingdom come, and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Fiat!

## Invocation to the Divine Will In All Our Actions

(www.divinewilltallahassee.com)

I am nothing, God is All, Father I love you;  
Come Divine Will,

- To think in my mind.
- To circulate in my blood.
- To look with my eyes.
- To listen in my ears.
- To speak in my voice.
- To breathe in my breathing.
- To beat in my heart.
- To move in my motion.
- To suffer in my suffering; and may my soul consumed and fused with your will be the living crucifix immolated for the Glory of the Father.
- To pray in me, and then offer this prayer to yourself as mine to satisfy for the prayers of all and to give to the Father the Glory that all creatures should give Him
- To infuse in me the Faith of Mary most Holy in order to possess You as she possessed You
- To infuse in me the Hope of Mary most Holy in order to desire You as she desired You.
- To infuse in me the Charity of Mary most Holy in order to love You as she loved You.
- To adore in me. And since Your Will multiplies acts to the infinite, thus I intend to give You the satisfaction as if all had assisted at Holy Mass, and give to all the fruit of the sacrifice and impetrate salvation for all.

O Supreme Will, come to reign upon the earth.  
Invest all generations win and conquer all!  
And do not delay any longer. Amen.

## Litany of the Divine Will

(www.divinewilltallahassee.com)

Father, in Your Will Illuminate us  
Son, in Your Will Transform us  
Holy Spirit, in Your Will Sanctify us

(Response for the following is *Thy Kingdom Come*)

- Divine Will, luminous beacon of the Father ...
- Divine Will, redemptive beacon of the Son ...
- Divine Will, sanctifying beacon of the Holy Spirit ...
- Creating FIAT, support of creation ...
- Redeeming FIAT, in Jesus our salvation ...
- Sanctifying FIAT, that molds us in the Sanctity of the Trinity ...
- Supreme FIAT, that transforms the human into Divine ...
- Conquering FIAT, that captivates the human will ...
- Divine FIAT, that reunites the Divinity with humanity ...
- Divine Will, transformer of hearts ...
- Divine Will, depository of the Divine Will in souls ...
- Divine Will, invincible strength ...
- Divine Will, Light of humanity ...
- Most Holy Trinity, essence of sanctity ...
- Divine Will, operating part in the Trinity ...
- Divine Will, star that reflects the Divinity ...
- FIAT Divine, order of creation ...
- FIAT reigning in peaceful souls ...
- FIAT redemptive with the descent of the Word ...
- FIAT triumphant in the Virgin Mary ...
- FIAT speaking in all creation ...
- FIAT operating in the silence of hearts ...
- Divine Will, star of the Divinity ...
- Divine Will, model of the Supreme Being ...
- Divine Will, dispenser of the Divine attributes ...
- Divine Will, Divine echo of all creation ...
- Divine Will, tabernacle of Mary Most Holy ...
- Divine Will, mirror of Divine Sanctity ...
- Most Holy Trinity, font of unity ...
- Most Holy Trinity, perfect union of will ...

Pray for us Queen of the Divine Volition so that the Divine Will can reign on earth as [It does] in Heaven.

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory be for the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff

## A Brief Way of the Cross Supplement for the Reign of the Kingdom of the Divine

(ComingOfTheKingdom.org)

O my Jesus, fused in your Holy Will and for your Kingdom to come, I make my way with You on your Via Dolorosa. Allow my company to give You rest and comfort your most Sacred Heart from the many agonies it suffers now and for all Eternity. I love You, my God! I love You, my Jesus! I love You, the Savior of my life!

First station: Jesus Is Condemned to Death. O Jesus, for your Kingdom to come, teach me to always be resigned to your Most Holy Will in all things in my life and in the life of those I love and for whom I pray!

Second station: Jesus Picks Up His Cross. O Jesus, for your Kingdom to come, for the love of You and for the benefit of all mankind, give me strength and perseverance to always carry my cross with the same love and joy that You carried Yours.

Third station: Jesus Falls the First Time. O Jesus, for your Kingdom to come, please allow me the grace necessary to never fall out of your Most Holy Will!

Fourth station: Jesus Meets His Mother. O Jesus, for your Kingdom to come, may there be no attachment dear enough to keep me from ever doing your Most Holy Will in all things!

Fifth station: Simon the Cyrenian Helps Jesus Carry His Cross. O Jesus, for your Kingdom to come, please allow me the great grace of being with You in carrying your Cross, and to help all my brothers and sisters carry theirs, in your Most Holy Will, with patience and joy.

Sixth station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus. O Jesus, for your Kingdom to Come, may your Most Holy Will be indelibly stamped in my heart, mind, and soul as your Most Beautiful Face was on Veronica's veil.

Seventh station: Jesus Falls a Second Time. O Jesus, for your Kingdom to come, please preserve me

from anything that offends You, most especially all sins of pride and egoism.

Eighth station: Jesus Consoles the Women of Jerusalem. O Jesus, for your Kingdom to come, may I go with You through all the world, in your Will, consoling all souls because of the terrifying times in which we live.

Ninth station: Jesus Falls For the Third Time. O Jesus, for your Kingdom to come, may I give You all the glory and honor You are due, and console You for all the abuses You have suffered, from all your Consecrated souls – past, present and future.

Tenth station: Jesus Is Stripped of His Garments. O Jesus, for your Kingdom to come, I plead for the great grace of being stripped of anything that may offend you in the least way!

Eleventh station: Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross. O Jesus, You are nailed to the human will, which is hard and unforgiving. Please nail me to your Most Holy Will which is most forgiving and so full of love!

Twelfth station: Jesus Dies on the Cross. O Jesus, for your Kingdom to come, You died on the Cross in reparation for those who will not die to their human wills. Please grant me the immense grace of always dying to my will in all things!

Thirteenth station: Jesus Is Taken From the Cross. O Jesus, for your Kingdom to come, I thank you for the great gift of your Mother. May She take me into Her arms with You so that I may console Her from Her many sorrows. May She keep me there to help me to never fall out of your Most Holy Will.

Fourteenth station: Jesus Is Placed in the Sepulcher. O Jesus, for your Kingdom to come, allow me the great grace to totally die to myself to live always buried in your Most Holy Humanity and in your Most Holy Will!

## **The Chaplet of the Divine Will** (Given by St. Hannibal)

The Chaplet, or Little Rosary, of the Divine Will begins with the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be, on the three small beads and continues by praying

on every “Hail Mary” bead: “*Thy Will be done on earth as It is in Heaven.*” A “Glory Be” is prayed on every “Our Father” bead, and at the end pray:

*“Lord Jesus, we praise You, we love You, we bless You, and we thank You Who are God with the Father and the Holy Spirit in Your Holy and Eternal Divine Will. Amen”*

## **Mass Prayers in the Divine Will**

*(One beautiful way of thinking about living and acting in the Divine Will, is (figuratively and spiritually) turning your whole life into the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The New Translation (that is, the third edition of the Roman Missal) feels like it is tailor made for this; its majesty and beauty are perfectly conducive to Divine Will spirituality. Therefore let these prayers always be on your lips. I recommend simply downloading the entire Roman Missal, which can be found online (linked to in Appendix II). Here are a few of my favorites.)*

### **Collect for the Solemnity of Christ the King**

Almighty ever-living God,  
whose will is to restore all things  
in your beloved Son, the King of the universe,  
grant, we pray,  
that the whole creation, set free from slavery,  
may render your majesty service  
and ceaselessly proclaim your praise.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the  
Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

### **Preface for the Solemnity of Christ the King**

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,  
always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.  
For you anointed your Only Begotten Son,  
our Lord Jesus Christ, with the oil of gladness  
as eternal Priest and King of all creation,  
so that, by offering himself on the altar of the Cross  
as a spotless sacrifice to bring us peace,  
he might accomplish the mysteries of human  
redemption  
and, making all created things subject to his rule,

he might present to the immensity of your majesty  
 an eternal and universal kingdom,  
 a kingdom of truth and life,  
 a kingdom of holiness and grace,  
 a kingdom of justice, love and peace.  
 And so, with Angels and Archangels,  
 with Thrones and Dominions,  
 and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven,  
 we sing the hymn of your glory,  
 as without end we acclaim...

### **Collect for the Solemnity of the Holy Trinity**

God our Father, who by sending into the world  
 the Word of truth and the Spirit of sanctification  
 made known to the human race your wondrous  
 mystery,  
 grant us, we pray, that in professing the true faith,  
 we may acknowledge the Trinity of eternal glory  
 and adore your Unity, powerful in majesty.  
 Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
 who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the  
 Holy Spirit,  
 one God, for ever and ever.

### **Preface for the Solemnity of the Holy Trinity**

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,  
 always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
 Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.  
 For with your Only Begotten Son and the Holy  
 Spirit  
 you are one God, one Lord:  
 not in the unity of a single person,  
 but in a Trinity of one substance.  
 For what you have revealed to us of your glory  
 we believe equally of your Son  
 and of the Holy Spirit,  
 so that, in the confessing of the true and eternal  
 Godhead,  
 you might be adored in what is proper to each  
 Person,  
 their unity in substance,  
 and their equality in majesty.  
 For this is praised by Angels and Archangels,  
 Cherubim, too, and Seraphim,  
 who never cease to cry out each day,  
 as with one voice they acclaim:

### **Excerpt from Eucharistic Prayer for Reconciliation I**

Help us to work together  
 for the coming of your Kingdom,  
 until the hour when we stand before you,  
 Saints among the Saints in the halls of heaven,  
 with the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God,  
 the blessed Apostles and all the Saints,  
 and with our deceased brothers and sisters,  
 whom we humbly commend to your mercy.  
 Then, freed at last from the wound of corruption  
 and made fully into a new creation,  
 we shall sing to you with gladness  
 the thanksgiving of Christ,  
 who lives for all eternity.

### **Preface I of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,  
 always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
 Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God,  
 and to praise, bless, and glorify your name  
 in veneration  
 of the Blessed ever-Virgin Mary.  
 For by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit  
 she conceived your Only Begotten Son,  
 and without losing the glory of virginity,  
 brought forth into the world the eternal Light,  
 Jesus Christ our Lord.  
 Through him the Angels praise your majesty,  
 Dominions adore and Powers tremble before you.  
 Heaven and the Virtues of heaven and the blessed  
 Seraphim  
 worship together with exultation.  
 May our voices, we pray, join with theirs  
 in humble praise, as we acclaim...

**The Divine Will Gloria** (From the  
 Mass. Meditations, added by Daniel O'Connor, for  
 use in private prayer outside of Mass)

**Glory to God in the highest,  
 and on earth peace to people of good will.**  
**We praise you,** in the immense beauty of  
 creation (*Here pause to fuse your will to the Divine  
 Will and impress your FIAT upon all things of creation  
 – from the stars of heaven to the ground below and  
 everything in-between, however the Holy Spirit guides  
 you.*)

**we bless you**, in the unfathomable love of redemption (*Here pause to fuse your will to the Divine Will and impress your FIAT upon all the acts of Redemption - from Our Lady's Immaculate Conception all the way to Our Lord's Ascension into Heaven, and everything in between, especially the Passion, however the Holy Spirit guides you.*)

**we adore you**, in Your remaining with us always in the Eucharist (*Here pause to fuse your will to the Divine Will and enclose yourself within all the consecrated hosts, tabernacles, and Holy Masses in the world, offering them back to the Father with the seal of your FIAT - offering reparation to Him for all the scourging He receives up to this very day in the Eucharist, yet also uniting yourself, in the Divine Will, to all of the consolation in adoration He receives in it as well.*)

**we glorify you**, in Your great mercy, for forming Your very own Divine Life in the soul of Luisa so that all of Your children might also share in it (*Here pause to unite yourself with Luisa and beseech her to intercede for you in obtaining from God the same grace of union with Him that she herself received. Strive to enter into the very center of the Divine Will and in doing so, emptying yourself of all glory and handing it all over to God, along with every last morsel of the self-will.*)

**we give you thanks for your great glory**, in Your immense and incomprehensible purity as perfect Trinity and undivided Unity (*Here pause to bask in the inaccessible light of God, which will continue to illuminate us to greater and greater degrees throughout all eternity, never to be exhausted. Meditate upon the immeasurable magnitude of this love between the Three Persons of the One Divine Nature, and your own calling and destiny to dwell within this very same Love for endless ages. Conscious of your own nothingness and unworthiness of this gift that is nevertheless promised to you, let your thanksgiving increase without bound.*)

Lord God, heavenly King,

O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,

Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,

you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us;

you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer.

you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father.

Amen.

## Prayer for the Glorification of the Servant of God Luisa

**Piccarreta** ([luisapiccarretaofficial.org](http://luisapiccarretaofficial.org)) *To be used especially in requesting Luisa's intercession; ideally as a novena. Be sure to report favors and graces received to [luisapiccarretaofficial.org](http://luisapiccarretaofficial.org) (or by directly emailing [info@luisapiccarretaofficial.org](mailto:info@luisapiccarretaofficial.org)).*

Oh august and Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we praise and thank You for the gift of the holiness of your faithful servant Luisa Piccarreta. She lived, Oh Father, in Your Divine Will, becoming, under the action of the Holy Spirit, in conformity with Your Son, obedient even to death on the cross, victim and host pleasing to You, thus cooperating in the work of Redemption of mankind. Her virtues of obedience, humility, supreme love for Christ and the Church, lead us to ask You for the gift of her glorification on earth, so that Your glory may shine before all, and Your kingdom of truth, justice and love, may spread all over the world in the particular charisma of the *Fiat Voluntas tua sicut in Caelo et in terra*.

We appeal to her merits to obtain from You, Most Holy Trinity, the particular grace for which we pray to You with the intention to fulfill your Divine Will. Amen.

Three Glory be's, Our Father  
Queen of all Saints, pray for us.

## The Cantic of Daniel in the Divine Will

([sojmq.com](http://sojmq.com) Cantic from the Divine Office/Book of Daniel, Chapter 3)

All you servants of the Lord, sing praise to him (Revelation 19:5).

*I place my "I love you", "I adore and worship you," I become part of each of these prayers in all I do with my Three powers of Intellect, Memory and Will.*

*Lord, gather together all who have prayed your Praises in Time and multiply these in the Divine Will for your Glory.*

Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.  
 Praise and exalt him above all forever.  
 Angels of the Lord, bless the Lord.  
 You heavens, bless the Lord,  
 All you waters above the heavens, bless the Lord.  
 All you hosts of the Lord, bless the Lord.  
 Sun and moon, bless the Lord.  
 Stars of heaven, bless the Lord.  
 Every shower and dew, bless the Lord.  
 All you winds, bless the Lord.  
 Fire and heat, bless the Lord.  
 Cold and chill, bless the Lord.  
 Dew and rain, bless the Lord.  
 Frost and chill, bless the Lord.  
 Ice and snow, bless the Lord.  
 Nights and days, bless the Lord.  
 Light and darkness, bless the Lord.  
 Lightnings and clouds, bless the Lord.  
 Let the earth bless the Lord.  
 Praise and exalt him above all forever.  
 Mountains and hills, bless the Lord.  
 Everything growing from the earth, bless the Lord.  
 You springs, bless the Lord.  
 Seas and rivers, bless the Lord.  
 You dolphins and all water creatures, bless the Lord.  
 All you birds of the air, bless the Lord.  
 All you beasts, wild and tame, bless the Lord.  
 You sons of men, bless the Lord.  
 Israel, bless the Lord.  
 Praise and exalt him above all forever.  
 Priests of the Lord, bless the Lord.  
 Servants of the Lord, bless the Lord.  
 Spirits and souls of the just, bless the Lord.  
 Holy men of humble heart, bless the Lord.  
 Hananiah, Azariah, Mishael, bless the Lord.  
 Praise and exalt him above all forever.  
 Let us bless the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.  
 Let us praise and exalt him above all for ever.  
 Blessed are you, Lord, in the firmament of heaven.  
 Praiseworthy and glorious and exalted above all for ever.  
 Ant. To you, Lord, be highest glory and praise for ever, alleluia.

## Psalm 148 in the Divine Will

(sojnj.com /Psalm 148)

Praise and honor, glory and power for ever to him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb (Revelation 5:13).

*I place my "I love you", "I adore and worship you", I become part of each of these prayers in all I do with my Three powers of Intellect, Memory and Will. Lord, gather together all who have prayed your Praises in Time and multiply these in the Divine Will for your Glory.*

Praise the Lord from the heavens,  
 praise him in the heights.  
 Praise him, all his angels,  
 praise him, all his host.  
 Praise him, sun and moon,  
 praise him, shining stars.  
 Praise him, highest heavens  
 and the waters above the heavens.  
 Let them praise the name of the Lord.  
 He commanded: they were made.  
 He fixed them for ever,  
 gave a law which shall not pass away.  
 Praise the Lord from the earth,  
 sea creatures and all oceans,  
 fire and hail, snow and mist,  
 stormy winds that obey his word; all mountains and hills,  
 all fruit trees and cedars, beasts, wild and tame,  
 reptiles and birds on the wing;  
 all earth's kings and peoples,  
 earth's princes and rulers,  
 young men and maidens,  
 the old men together with children.  
 Let them praise the name of the Lord  
 for he alone is exalted.  
 The splendor of his name  
 reaches beyond heaven and earth.  
 He exalts the strength of his people.  
 He is the praise of all his saints,  
 of the sons of Israel ,  
 of the people to whom he comes close.  
*All the suspended acts of all souls not giving Glory to the Father, are gathered up now in Time Past, Present and Future and given to Our Lady, Luisa and Holy Exemplars for the Glory of the Father.*

**Prayer of St. Francis in the Divine Will** (St. Francis' connection to God's creation serves as a beautiful foreshadowing of Luisa's Rounds of Creation. Pope St. John Paul II pointed out that "*Saint Francis invited all of creation - animals, plants, natural forces, even Brother Sun and Sister Moon - to give honour and praise to the Lord.*"<sup>296</sup> Reproduced here is simply St. Francis' commonly known Canticle of the Sun.)

Most High, all-powerful, all-good Lord, All praise is Yours, all glory, all honour and all blessings.

To you alone, Most High, do they belong, and no mortal lips are worthy to pronounce Your Name.

Praised be You my Lord with all Your creatures, especially Sir Brother Sun, Who is the day through whom You give us light.

And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendour, Of You Most High, he bears the likeness.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars, In the heavens you have made them bright, precious and fair.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air, And fair and stormy, all weather's moods, by which You cherish all that You have made.

Praised be You my Lord through Sister Water, So useful, humble, precious and pure.

Praised be You my Lord through Brother Fire, through whom You light the night and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.

Praised be You my Lord through our Sister, Mother Earth who sustains and governs us, producing varied fruits with coloured flowers and herbs.

Praise be You my Lord through those who grant pardon for love of You and bear sickness and trial.

Blessed are those who endure in peace, By You Most High, they will be crowned.

Praised be You, my Lord through Sister Death, from whom no-one living can escape. Woe to those who die in mortal sin! Blessed are they She finds doing Your Will.

No second death can do them harm. Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks, And serve Him with great humility.

## Exhortation Prayer to St. Michael (Lynne Bauer, sojnj.com)

Saint Michael, protector of the Children of God. Send forth your angels to defeat the work of the Enemy. Help teach us who we are in the Divine Will and be thankful to our Father in Heaven for such a sublime Gift of the Divine Will. Our Lady, Victorious Queen of the Divine Will, show us your power. Empower us to be true Ambassadors of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth as in Heaven. Come Lord Jesus! We ask with true humility to be admitted into the inner cloister of the Divine Will. We confess our sinfulness and request your Mercy and Light to be totally free of the kingdom of self. Fill us with your Light and take us by the hand to your Holy Mother to be taught. Yes, Jesus, we want the work of the hand of the Father to restore us to the original beauty of the Divine Will and ask you to do your work of re-creation now. Holy Spirit of God, take this prayer of your eternal tongue to all of Heaven.

FIAT. All honor, power, glory, power, wisdom, strength be to the Lamb of God.

## The Litany of Humility

O Jesus! meek and humble of heart, Hear me.  
 From the desire of being esteemed,  
**Deliver me, Jesus.**  
 From the desire of being loved...  
 From the desire of being extolled ...  
 From the desire of being honored ...  
 From the desire of being praised ...  
 From the desire of being preferred to others...  
 From the desire of being consulted ...  
 From the desire of being approved ...

<sup>296</sup> Message of his holiness Pope John Paul II for the celebration of the world day of peace 1 January 1990. Paragraph 16



From the fear of being humiliated ...  
 From the fear of being despised...  
 From the fear of suffering rebukes ...  
 From the fear of being calumniated ...  
 From the fear of being forgotten ...  
 From the fear of being ridiculed ...  
 From the fear of being wronged ...  
 From the fear of being suspected ...

That others may be loved more than I,  
**Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.**

That others may be esteemed more than I ...  
 That, in the opinion of the world,  
 others may increase and I may decrease ...  
 That others may be chosen and I set aside ...  
 That others may be praised and I unnoticed ...  
 That others may be preferred to me in  
 everything...  
 That others may become holier than I,  
 provided that I may become as holy as I  
 should...

and in all hearts, and in all times—past, present and  
 future—while remaining on Earth.

8. Taking the love of the Father, and of the  
 Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and making it ours, and  
 then giving it back to Them as our own.

9. Forming as many Jesus's as acts that we do  
 in the Divine Will.

10. Allowing God to mold us as soft wax into  
 whatever He wants to make of us.

11. Possessing God and all His goods and  
 being possessed by God—whatever is His is mine,  
 and whatever is mine is His.

12. Jesus living His Real Presence in us, not  
 only for fifteen minutes as in the Eucharist, but  
 always.

13. Living the same life as the saints in  
 Heaven while still here on Earth, except for the veil  
 not being removed—enjoyment of the Beatific  
 Vision.

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## The Divine Will Reminders

(Source uncertain.)

We should regularly remind ourselves – even  
 as a prayer - of just what Living in the Divine Will  
 entails, so as to not neglect memory, one of the three  
 powers of the soul. By regularly reminding ourselves  
 of these great overarching summary truths of the  
 Divine Will, we help ourselves to live in it and pray in  
 it.

### **Living in the Divine Will is:**

1. Fusing our wills with the Will of God so as  
 to operate as one Will—that of God's.
2. Letting Jesus live His Divine Life in us by  
 consciously invoking the Divine Will to enter into  
 each and every one of our acts.
3. Not doing any act alone, but rather letting  
 the Divine Will do it in us and with us
4. The Creator working in the creature.
5. Reciprocating our little “I love You, I adore  
 You, I praise You” to God's “I love you” in the  
 Creation, Redemption, and Sanctification of man.
6. Abandoning our human ways of acting for  
 those of the Divine.
7. Penetrating within the Divine Will,  
 embracing its immensity, multiplying ourselves with  
 Jesus and penetrating everywhere—even in Heaven

## Appendix II) Resources

*\*As of June 2015, all of these links are working. If any link does not work upon attempting to access it, simply enter relevant search terms for the same into a search engine, such as Google.com\**

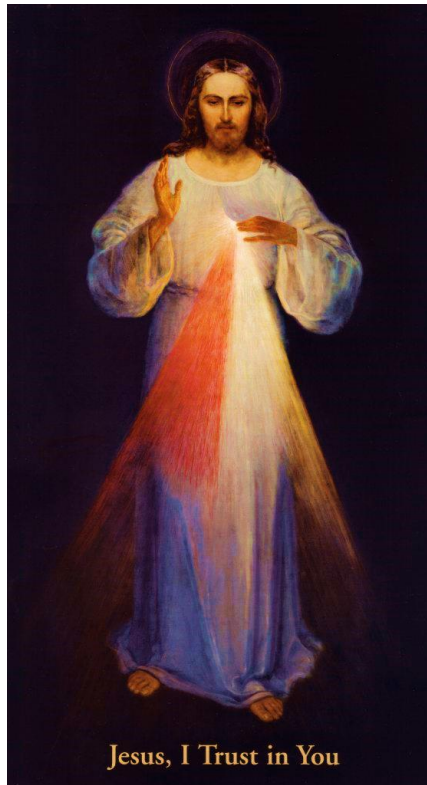
- Official website for the cause of Luisa Piccarreta: <http://www.luisapiccarretaofficial.org/>
  - Please consider donating to Luisa's Cause for Beatification. Donations may be made at this website.
- Fr. Iannuzzi's Website on the Divine Will: <http://www.ltdw.org/>
  - Manual for instructing others on the Divine Will: [http://www.ltdw.org/uploads/2/5/1/5/25153387/manual\\_for\\_priests\\_on\\_ldw.pdf](http://www.ltdw.org/uploads/2/5/1/5/25153387/manual_for_priests_on_ldw.pdf)
  - Fr. Iannuzzi talk on the Divine Will [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWjluQU\\_pyw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWjluQU_pyw)
  - Much of Fr. Iannuzzi's Dissertation may be obtained for free from Google Books: <https://books.google.com/books?id=rpUUAgAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover>
  - Also, *The Splendor of Creation*: <https://books.google.com/books?id=wnqAAgAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover>
- Benedictine Daughters of the Divine Will (religious order dedicated to Divine Will Spirituality) <http://www.benedictinesofdivinewill.org/>
- Fr. Robert Young OFM talks on Living in the Divine Will from Radio Maria [www.divinewilltallahassee.com/radio-archives](http://www.divinewilltallahassee.com/radio-archives)
- Saints in the Divine Will, by Fr. Sergio Pellegrini (authorized and commissioned directly by Archbishop Pichierri): [www.DSDOConnor.com/DivineWill](http://www.DSDOConnor.com/DivineWill)
- Biography of Luisa Piccarreta written by Fr. Bucci (authorized promoter and last living priest to have personally known Luisa): [www.DSDOConnor.com/DivineWill](http://www.DSDOConnor.com/DivineWill)
- Third Edition of the Roman Missal [https://mbreal23.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/roman\\_missal\\_third\\_edition.pdf](https://mbreal23.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/roman_missal_third_edition.pdf)
- Divine Mercy in My Soul (the Diary of St. Faustina) <http://www.faustyna.pl/zmbm/en/diary-full-text/>
- Official Biography of Luisa Piccarreta. Keep an eye out for the upcoming English translation of this, which was recently released in Italian. <http://www.libreriaeditricevaticana.va/content/libreriaeditricevaticana/it/novita-editoriali/il-sole-della-mia-volonta-.html> This release should occur at some point during summer 2015.

## About the Author



Daniel O'Connor obtained his M.A. in Theology from Holy Apostles College & Seminary in Cromwell, CT. He teaches high school Mathematics, Physics, and SAT preparation. He operates his own internet blog on Catholic issues ([www.DSDOConnor.com](http://www.DSDOConnor.com)), and is the founder of the Divine Will Missionaries of Mercy ([www.DWMoM.org](http://www.DWMoM.org)). He is also a mechanical engineer by training (receiving his B.S. from RPI), and does work on the side with his own basement-run company, St. Joseph Mechanical Solutions, LLC. He lives in Albany, NY with his wife, Regina, and his son, Joseph. He may be reached at [Daniel@DSDOConnor.com](mailto:Daniel@DSDOConnor.com)

*Please Note: Current Ecclesiastical guidelines (promulgated by the Archbishop of Trani) only permit a select few priests to give public talks on Luisa's revelations. As long as these guidelines remain, Daniel will not be available to give talks, presentations, or retreats on the topic of this book. He does, however, recommend further pursuing this topic by reading the works and listening to the talks of Fr. Joseph Iannuzzi and any other priest who has been approved by the Archdiocese of Trani, and reviewing the resources listed in Appendix II of this book.*



# THY WILL BE DONE