

LUIS E. DUFAUR

La Salette

AND ITS PROPHECIES



AUSTRALIA NEEDS FATIMA

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La Salette and Its Prophecies
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AUSTRALIA NEEDS FATIMA

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La Salette and Its Prophecies

PROLOGUE

A Part of Our Lady's Urgent and Loving Warnings

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OUR LADY appeared in La Salette in 1846. That very important fact was widely reported. But many are ignorant of what took place there and of what the Queen of Heaven and earth said there. For at La Salette Our Lady left a message, mostly as a secret.

That secret was revealed by the seers in the year indicated by the Mother of God, 1858, the same year as the apparitions at Lourdes. That was not a mere concordance of dates but formed two links of the same chain: La Salette and Lourdes are outstanding milestones in a series of apparitions by Our Lady.

All of Our Lady's apparitions — obviously only the authentic ones — are marked by kindness and pardon and invite us to admiration and veneration for the ineffable Mother of God.

But at Rue du Bac in 1830, when She manifested herself to St Catherine Labouré, Our Lady inaugurated a special cycle of revelations that have something new about them.

In that cycle She acts like a mother who sees that her son is misbehaving. The son represented humanity. She gave a first warning at the Rue du Bac: If mankind — France in the first place — did not do penance and convert, terrible chastisements would come upon it.

In that apparition, as an extremely loving mother, she gave men a powerful supernatural instrument to strengthen them not only for

conversion but also for a profound, suave and attractive change of life: the Miraculous Medal.

There followed spectacular conversions and an incalculable profusion of graces. Torrents of grace descended and continue to descend upon those who wear that medal with devotion.

But France and mankind considered as a whole have not changed their ways. Rather, they have gone even farther along the paths of perdition.

Sixteen years later, in 1846 at La Salette, the Mother of God with tender solicitude returned to insist on conversion. Like the mother who sees her son sinking deeper and deeper and calls out for him, she makes a long and loving appeal showing in detail how he is going astray and all the misfortunes that he is attracting upon himself.

This is the essence of the long secret of La Salette, with its severe and solemn warnings.

At that same time Our Lady wished to make an unimaginable gesture of love and pardon by communicating new effusions of supernatural assistance so that her erring children might mend their ways. She appeared at Lourdes in the same year in which the secret of La Salette became public, 1858. She established a permanent miracle at Lourdes, always seeking the repentance and conversion of sinners, reinvigoration of the Church and the restoration of Christendom.

But that was not enough. The world continued in its immorality and revolutionary egalitarianism.

Our Lady appeared once again, but no longer in France. This time it was at Fatima, Portugal. Like a mother who perceives that her previous warnings to her erring children have gone unheeded, she spoke in a more preemptory tone. She showed hell, announced that whole nations would disappear, but She also showed that her Wise and Immaculate Heart would triumph over a converted mankind.

Rue du Bac, La Salette, Lourdes and Fatima form an inseparable whole. They are parts of an organized series of merciful appeals by Our Lady warning maternally against the same colossal tragedy. This tragedy balloons over all men who do not wish to give up their bad ways. Yet, men have clung to sin and egalitarianism, shown in the false ideals of the French Revolution and communism that culminate in the anarchic and libertarian chaos that has spread all over the world since the Sorbonne Revolution of May 1968, with its counterparts at Berkeley and other campuses.

The apparition of La Salette, to which this book is dedicated, occupies a special place in that logical, cohesive and harmonious series of warnings by Our Lady.

In its public message and especially in its secret, La Salette contains the most extensive and detailed explanation of the evils that are attracting the coming chastisements, as well as of the celestial pardon promised to those who do penance. La Salette is not limited to our times. It goes farther. It describes a panorama of history all the way to the end of the world that emphasizes the importance of the part of the secret that applies to our days.

An appeal like that of La Salette should be preached with all the force of sacred eloquence, with all apostolic zeal and all the authority of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. It was preached like that under the leadership of Blessed Pius IX, then happily reigning.

Nonetheless, the apparition of La Salette was actively opposed. After all the vicissitudes narrated in this work, a mantle of silence descended over La Salette. The extremely serious appeal of La Salette even appeared to have been buried forever.

But at the beginning of this 21st century, the obstacles preventing the disclosure of that secret disappeared. And La Salette resurfaced in all its authenticity.

The veil of silence was lifted and the secret of La Salette rose up again out of the night of silence more expressive than ever. Yes, in the 21st century.

That secret, dear reader, is now in your hands. Read it well. It can bring about very important events in your life, now and in the near future.

One of several statues erected at the Shrine of La Salette



CHAPTER 1

A Forgotten Village in the French Alps



LA SALETTE-FALLAVALUX is a tiny village in the foothills of the Alps in the Diocese of Grenoble, France. Its peaceful church, surrounded by a certain number of houses, calls to mind Our Lord's pointing out the hen that protects her chicks under her wings. A little above it, on the mountain, lies an even smaller hamlet called Les Ablandens, a part of La Salette.

It is an austere and grandiose panorama that dazzles by its beauty. The Alps surround the valley. Its higher peaks are covered with snow in the winter and glitter in the sunshine. In the spring the snow melts on the lower part of the mountains and the natural meadows appear once again. The inhabitants of La Salette have for a long time taken their flocks there to pasture and hire people to watch over them.

Accordingly, on September 14, 1846, Melanie Calvat, 14, and Maximin Giraud, 11, went up the slope of La Salette known as Sousles-Baises. Neither one of them was from La Salette. Their families lived in Corps, a small village located in the warmer and more accessible part of the valley. Their homes were poor. The little stone house where Melanie was born and lived still stands and can be visited. Its poverty is emphasized by the fact that it has not been restored. The stone house of Maximin's family is a little better but has now been turned into a store.

The two children had to work to help their families. That is why they worked as shepherds for local cattlemen. Melanie took care of the herd of Baptiste Pra, a farmer at Les Ablandens; Maximin herded the cattle of Pierre Selme, of the same village. The work was not difficult. It was suited to their ages. At the time of the apparition there were about 40 shepherds working in similar conditions on the nearby mountains.

The First Meeting between Melanie and Maximin

Melanie and Maximin did not know each other. She was taken up with domestic tasks or chores given by her mother. Maximin would play with boys his age. They first noticed each other on September 18, 1846, eve of the apparition. It was according to divine plan that the two should witness the apparition of Our Lady at La Salette together and become privileged instruments to spread the message She was about to reveal.

When Melanie was going up the hill, she noticed a boy coming toward her. It was Maximin.

"Listen, I'm going with you, I'm from Corps too."

At first, Melanie did not agree. "I don't want anyone with me, I'd rather be alone," she answered.

Melanie liked solitude, silence and prayer, and the boy would get in her way. She was used to being by herself talking with "the little flowers of the good God" that covered the slopes of the mountains in summer. That was her favourite way to pray, and was related with extraordinary experiences of her early infancy. But nobody knew anything about that.

Maximin was lively and loquacious. He kept insisting. Melanie moved away from him, making signs that she did not want him

near her. Maximin followed from a distance. When she would start speaking to “the little flowers of the good God,” he would come up to listen. And he insisted: “Take me with you! I will behave myself. My boss told me to take care of my cows along with yours. I am also from Corps.”

When he added that he would be left all alone and become very bored, Melanie felt sorry for him.

She ended up by extracting from Maximin a promise to keep quiet and not disturb her in her contemplation. Maximin gave his word and left her alone. But just like the child he was, he quickly forgot his promise and began to ask her what she was saying to the flowers. And he insistently asked Melanie to teach him a game.

After a while they heard the bell from the little church of La Salette ringing for the Angelus. She nodded to Maximin to remove his hat and they prayed. Afterwards she offered a piece of bread to the boy and invented a game for him. The day ended calmly.

View of La Salette in the French Alps



CHAPTER 2

Climbing the Mountain



THE NEXT MORNING, Maximin accompanied Melanie again. It was a beautiful day, the sky was cloudless and the sun shone intensely. They climbed the hill at La Salette to an altitude of over a mile, unable to imagine the supernatural event that they were going to witness.

Maximin wanted to play. She proposed to him her favourite entertainment: to build what she called a “paradise.” That is, a little stone house all covered with garlands of wild flowers that blossom at those heights.

When they reached a concavity of the mountain protected from the winds, they began to build the “paradise.” There was much slate in the area and the flat pieces were excellent for their game. A little brook called Sezia coming from the melting snow flows through there and gives the place of the apparition its name. There was also a spring that appeared from time to time. The shepherds were used to taking their cattle to drink from that spring but ever since the apparition it has never stopped running. You can drink from it and many people have received graces doing so. Many miracles have taken place there.

The “paradise” had a ground floor and a second story covered with a larger stone. They collected bunches of flowers, made them

into garlands and spread them over the “paradise.” After much work on that construction, the “paradise” was ready and all flowery. The two admired their work but felt sleepy. They moved off a little ways, laid down on the grass and fell asleep.

A Light More Brilliant than the Sun

Maximin told what happened next: “Our cows drank and scattered. Since I was tired I laid down on the grass and fell asleep. A few moments later I heard Melanie’s voice calling me:

“Memin! [little Maximin] Come here! Come now! Let’s go see where the cows are!’ I jumped up, grabbed my staff and followed Melanie who was my guide. We crossed the Sezia and rapidly climbed the slope of a little hill. On the other side we perceived that our animals were resting tranquilly. We were returning to our stone bench where we had left our lunches when Melanie suddenly stopped. Her staff fell from her hands and she turned to me startled, saying: ‘Do you see that great light down below?’”

“Yes, I see it. But go, pick up your staff!

“And then, brandishing my staff in a threatening way, I said:

“If it touches us, I’ll hit it hard!

“That light, compared to which the sun seemed pallid, appeared to open up and we made out inside it the shape of a Lady even more brilliant. She looked like a deeply afflicted person. She was sitting on one of the rocks of the little bench with her elbows resting on her knees and her face covered with her hands.”¹

It was September 19, 1846. The children had no idea of the magnitude of what was happening.

CHAPTER 3

What Our Lady was Like



MELANIE AND MAXIMIN at that moment were at a higher spot and went down at first intrigued, and then enthralled. Maximin continues his account:

“When we were about 20 yards away we heard a sweet voice that sounded as if it came from a mouth very near our ears, saying: ‘Come, my children, don’t be afraid. I am here to tell you great news.’ The respectful fear holding us back disappeared. We ran up to Her as if we were going to a good, excellent mother.”

Our Lady’s Appearance

Melanie was always more meticulous with her descriptions. She recorded what she saw and heard in more detail. She recounts:

“The dress of the Most Holy Virgin was silvery white and all brilliant. It had nothing material about it. Rather, it was made up of light and glory that varied and scintillated. There are no expressions on earth or comparisons one could use ...

“The most holy Virgin had a yellow apron. Why do I say yellow? She had an apron that was more brilliant than many suns together. It was not made of a material cloth; it was composed of glory; and that glory was scintillating and enchanting in its beauty. Everything

in the Holy Virgin attracted me powerfully and inclined me to adore and love my Jesus in all the states of his mortal life.

“The crown of roses that she had on her head was so beautiful, so brilliant that you simply can’t imagine. The roses, with their many colours, were not of this earth. It was a gathering of flowers surrounding the head of the Blessed Mother like a crown. But the roses changed and replaced each other, because from out of each rose came a light that fascinated and gave the roses a splendid beauty. Out of the crown of roses came rays of gold and a great quantity of other little flowers mixed with diamonds. The whole thing formed a most beautiful diadem that just by itself shone more than our sun on earth.

“Her shoes (because I have to say shoes) were white, but of a brilliant silvery white. There were roses around them. Those roses were of a fulgurating beauty. And from the centre of each rose came a beautiful and very agreeable looking flame of light. On the shoes were buckles of gold, not the gold of the earth, but the gold of paradise.”

Melanie tells that Maximin attempted to grab one of those roses but was unable to.

The Chains and the Crucifix on Her Bosom

“The holy Virgin had a very beautiful cross hanging around her neck. It looked gilded, but I say gilded, nay, even gold-plated ... and someone was crucified on that very brilliant cross. It was Our Lord with his arms extended over the cross. Near the ends of the crossbar there was a hammer on one side and a pair of pincers on the other. The skin of the crucified had a natural colour but shone with great brilliance. And the light that spread from his whole body resembled

very brilliant darts that pierced my heart through and through with the desire to melt into him. At times, Christ appeared dead. His head was inclined and his body was leaning forward, as if He was going to fall, were it not for the nails holding him to the cross.

“At other moments, Christ appeared alive. His head was raised, his eyes open, and He appeared to be on the cross of his own will. And sometimes he seemed to speak.”

Generally, the hammer is interpreted as a symbol of those who, by their evil lives, scorn for divine law, and even by their hatred, nail Our Lord to the cross even more. In that conception, the pincers represent those who by their good actions diminish the pains of Our Lord and try as much as they can to take him down from the cross.

“The Blessed Mother,” Melanie continues, “was wearing two chains, one a little larger than the other. The cross to which I refer was hanging from the smaller chain. Those chains were very brilliant rays of glory, not a fixed but a glittering one.”

The Gaze of the Mother of God

“The eyes of the most holy Virgin, our tender Mother, cannot be described by the human tongue. It would require a Seraphim; it would require the language of God Himself, of that God who created the Immaculate Virgin, the masterpiece of His omnipotence. The eyes of the august Mary seemed a thousand times more beautiful than diamonds and the most sought-after precious stones. They shone like suns. They were sweet, made of sweetness itself, and luminous like mirrors. In her eyes we could see paradise. They attracted us to her. She wanted to give herself and to attract. The more I looked at her, the more I wanted to see Her. The more I saw her, the more I loved her with all my strength.

“The eyes of the beautiful Immaculate One were like the gate of God, whence one could see everything that can inebriate the soul. When my eyes encountered those of the Mother of God and my mother, I felt inside me a happy revolution of love, a promise of loving her and of dissolving myself in love. When we looked at each other, our eyes conversed in their own way. I loved her so much that I would have liked to kiss her between the eyes. They filled my soul with tenderness and drew me to become one with her. Her eyes inculcated a suave temblor in my whole being. I feared any movement that could have displeased her, however little it might have been.

“Just the sight of the most pure Virgin’s eyes would have made the heaven of one of the blessed. It would have been enough for a soul to unite itself completely with the will of the Most High, persevering like that in spite of all the vicissitudes of mortal life. It would have been sufficient to make such a soul practice continuous acts of praise, thanksgiving, reparation, and expiation. This simple vision concentrates the soul in God and turns the person into, as it were, a ‘living dead’ who considers all things on earth, even those that seem most serious, as mere children’s toys. The soul would want nothing but to hear about God and all things pertaining to His glory.”

The Tears of the Queen

Melanie also described the weeping of Our Lady: “The Blessed Mother cried almost the whole time she was speaking. Her tears ran slowly down to her knees and disappeared like sparks of light. They were brilliant and full of love. I wanted to console her, so that she would weep no more. But it seemed to me that she had a need to show her tears to better evince her love forgotten by men. I wished to throw myself into her arms and tell her: My dear Mother, do not

weep! I want to love you for all the men on earth! It seems to me that She said: ‘There are so many who do not know me.’

“The tears of our tender Mother, far from diminishing her air of majesty as Queen and Lady, appeared to make it even more beautiful, more powerful and more loving, maternal and enchanting. I might have swallowed some of her tears, which made my heart tremble with compassion and love. It is understandable that on seeing such a mother weep, one would wish to employ every imaginable means to console her and transform her pain into joy.”

The Light and Voice of Our Lady

“The Holy Virgin,” Melanie continues, “was surrounded with two brilliant auras. The first, closer her, came all the way to us. The second spread a little farther around the beautiful Lady and we found ourselves inside it. That light was immobile in the sense that it did not scintillate. But it was much more brilliant than our poor sun. Those lights neither harmed our eyes nor tired our sight.

“Beyond all those lights and splendour, bundles of light came out of the Blessed Mother and her clothing.

“The beautiful Lady’s voice was suave. It enchanted, fascinated and did good to the heart. It satiated the soul and smoothed over all obstacles. She seemed to want to nourish me with her beautiful voice. My heart seemed to dance or to wish to go meet her to melt into her.”

For Maximin, Our Lady’s splendour and voice were like “a light very different from all others. They went directly to my heart without passing through my ears. Nevertheless, they did so with a harmony that even the most beautiful concerts could not reproduce; nay, with a flavour that the sweetest liqueurs cannot muster.”

Our Lady Draws the Curtains on a Vast Scenario

The words of Our Lady had an outstanding effect: They produced what they signified. The children saw with their eyes what her words meant to say. It was as if the imposing amphitheatre of that celestial spot had vanished and in its place was a huge screen where the shepherds saw unfold the events that Our Lady was describing. There they contemplated the whole universe, from the least creatures all the way to God Himself.

Melanie explained: “The holy Virgin pronounced all the words, both of the secrets and rules that She revealed. And the only reason I was able to make out or penetrate the remainder of what she said was that a great veil had been lifted. The events successively unfolded before my eyes and in my imagination as she pronounced each word. And a great scene took place before me. I saw events, people’s changing attitudes on earth, and I saw God, immutable in His glory, gazing at the Virgin inclined to speak to two shepherds ...

“Those people who say that the most holy Virgin does not speak so much would do well to understand — and they would understand better what the books teach, if teach they do, that the words of Heaven are not merely words. That is to say, the person who hears them does not stick to the letter or the words, but each word develops. And future action takes place at the moment ... and one enters into the spirit of the scenes being shown. If it is a sad scene, one is sad; and if it is a joyful one, scene feels joy. We see the plots that are made; we see the kings of the earth, each having many guardian angels; we see them become agitated, do and undo. We see the envy of some, the ambition of others, and so on and so forth. And all of this in a single word that slips from the lips of her who makes hell tremble, the Virgin Mary.”

And Melanie continues: “Our writing, so to speak, expresses very much and at the same time very little. It is impossible to say it all ... I am a great ignoramus, but if I were one of the wisest of scholars I could write nothing of the things from on high, for the expressions of the great wise men do not even touch a shadow of the truth of the expressions employed there. The intuitive and immediate language up there is made up of movements, yearnings and impulses of the soul; and the living eyes of the soul understand them.”

And she added: “I saw the whole world, I saw the eye of the Eternal One.” It was a picture in motion. I saw the blood of those who were slain, and the blood of the martyrs.”²

Our Lady’s splendour and voice were like “a light very different from all others” (Maximin)



CHAPTER 4

A Dethroned Queen



A LADY, rather, a beautiful Lady. So was the image of the most holy Virgin imprinted on the children. A grand Lady. Melanie paid much attention to the clothing and symbols that she wore, which made it possible for artists to make statues of Our Lady at the place of the apparition. They served as models for others all over the world.

She was a Lady crowned with flowers whom Melanie and Maximin found seated on their “paradise” weeping with her face in her hands. Our Lady, although she merited all the thrones on earth, appeared to have only found that flowery bench of stone to seat herself. She appeared like a Queen who had been dethroned, who goes about her kingdom in tears looking for whomever wishes to be faithful to her.

The little shepherds approached her with enthusiasm and candour. They had no idea what they would hear. Much of what Our Lady dealt with had never even occurred to their infantile minds until that moment.

Our Lady Tries to Hold Back Our Lord's Arm

They quickly went down the short distance that separated them from the Lady. At the same time, Our Lady stood up and took a few

steps toward the children. She hovered about four inches above the grass and began by saying: “Come, my children, do not fear. I am here to give you grave news. If my people will not submit, I will be obliged to allow my Son’s arm to strike. It is so heavy and so serious that I can no longer hold it back.

“I have been suffering for a long time for your sake. If I want my Son not to abandon you I am forced to pray to Him continuously for your sake. But you pay no attention. He gave you six days to work and reserve the seventh for Himself. But you do not wish to dedicate it to Him. This is what makes my Son’s arm so heavy.”

A Sign of the Vision's Veracity: Harvests Will be Lost

Our Lady at La Salette gave a proof to attest to the authenticity of the apparition and the seriousness of her announcements:

“Also, the carriage drivers do nothing else but blaspheme the name of my Son. These are two things that make his arm so heavy.

“If the harvest spoils it will be because of you. I made you see that last year with the potato crop. But you did not pay attention. On the contrary, when you found the potatoes spoiled you swore and blasphemed the name of my Son. They are going to continue to spoil until none will be left at Christmas.”

With these words, Our Lady referred to events known to the children.

In fact, in that region and all over France there was a crop failure that even served as a pretext for popular uprisings. Our Lady made clear to the seers that the true cause of that misfortune was two particular sins: In the first place, the violation of the Commandment that orders us to rest and not work on Sundays. In the second place, the generalised vice of blasphemy. And if men did not cease those

offenses the situation would become increasingly worse until the end of the year.

Our Lady Switches Language to Be Better Understood

At that moment, Melanie did not understand the word “potatoes,” because Our Lady was speaking French. The children did not understand it very well, for their everyday language was the patois of the region, a French dialect mixed with local expressions.

Our Lady perceived their difficulty and said: “Ah! You don’t understand French, my children. I am going to speak to you in another way.” And she repeated *in patois* what she had already said.

And Maximin exclaimed:

“Oh no, my Lady! That cannot be true!”

“Yes, my son, you are going to see.”

And she continued:

“Let him who has wheat not plant it, otherwise the animals are going to eat it. And if some of it still grows, when they thresh it, it will turn to dust. A great famine will come. Before it comes, children younger than seven will begin to tremble and die in the arms of their families. The older people will do penance with famine. The grapes will rot and the nuts will be ruined.”

Our Lady shed abundant tears as she made these sad announcements.

The Secret

These warnings were fulfilled to the letter and served as a proof of the authenticity of the apparition of Our Lady and of the secret that she communicated in that apparition.

It was in that vision that Our Lady transmitted to each of the shepherds a message that was to be revealed only twelve years later, in 1858.

Maximin explained how the beautiful Lady gave the secret. Although she continued in the same tone of voice, “when she spoke to Melanie I did not hear anything. And when she confided the secret to me, Melanie was completely deaf.”

Each of them saw that Our Lady was moving her lips speaking to the other, but understood nothing.

After She had confided the secret to each of them, the two began hearing everything again.

Our Lady of La Salette: “I have been suffering for a long time for your sake”



CHAPTER 5

The Public Part of the Message is Revealed



ACCORDING TO Maximin's account, Our Lady continued: "If they convert, rocks will turn into wheat and potatoes will be found already planted."

Then she asked us: "My children, do you say your prayers well?" We answered: "No my Lady, not too well."

"Ah my children, it is necessary to say them well at the end of the day and in the morning. When you do not have time, say an *Our Father* and a *Hail Mary*. When you have time, it is necessary to pray more. Only a few aged ladies go to Mass, others work throughout the summer and go to Mass in winter, but do not take Religion seriously. During Lent they go to the butcher store like dogs."

Then she asked: "My children, haven't you seen the spoiled wheat?"

I answered: "No my Lady, I never saw it."

And the beautiful Lady replied: "But you, my son, should have seen a man tell your father, when you were with him in Coin: See how my wheat is spoiled. You went, and your father picked up two or three ears of wheat in his hands, rubbed them and they turned into dust. Then you got back on your way and you were a half-hour away from Corps when your father gave you a piece of bread, saying: "Take, my son, eat this year for I don't know who will have anything

to eat next year if the wheat continues to spoil like that." I answered: "It is quite true, my Lady, but I did not remember."

She finished her explanation in French, with these words: "Well then, my children, you will pass this on to my whole people."

The Farewell

Having said that, Our Lady walked forward, passed next to the two and climbed up a little knoll without looking at them. They ran after her.

Our Lady's feet barely touched the tips of the grass, without bending them. Having reached the top, she stopped and looked at the seers with tender kindness. And she began to rise until she was about three feet from the ground. She remained there only for a moment, enough time for her to look at the sky, the earth, to her right and to her left.

Then she turned to the children and set upon them her eyes, "so sweet, kind and good that I thought she would attract me to go inside her, and it seemed as though my heart was opening to hers," said Melanie.

And in a final goodbye, Our Lady said to them: "Well, then, my children, will you pass it on to all my people?"

As soon as she had pronounced these words, the light that surrounded her became more intense and hid little by little her virginal body. The light formed a kind of globe that became smaller as it went up. It rose suavely toward the right and disappeared from the beloved children's visual horizon.

The two kept looking at the sky for a long while. When they came to themselves, they turned to each other. They were unable to pronounce a single word. Now they looked at the sky, now at the

ground or around themselves, to see if they still could make out the beautiful Lady. But Our Lady was gone.

Melanie broke the silence: “Memin, it must have been the good God or the Holy Virgin of my father, or some great saint.”

“Ah,” Maximin answered, “if I had known I would have asked her to take me to Heaven with her.”

That was the sole apparition of La Salette, and it contains everything.

The sun began to set. The cows grazed peacefully. Melanie broke her staff in two and made a cross that she planted at the exact place where Our Lady stood.

Melanie and Maximin first returned to their respective employer’s houses. There they told everything except, of course, for the secret. For their part, their pious bosses were moved and took the two to see the parish priest of La Salette. When Melanie started talking with the priest she was surprised at the fact she was actually speaking French, a language she did not master before the apparition.

CHAPTER 6

France is Deeply Affected by the Apparition



Commotion among Clergy and People

THE TWO NARRATED the whole thing to Fr Jacques Perrin, pastor of La Salette. Upon hearing it, he was moved to tears and beat his chest, saying: “My children, we are lost, God will punish us! Oh my God, it was the Blessed Mother that appeared to you.”

At that point the bell rang for the beginning of Mass. He then made a sermon that deeply touched the parishioners.

Then the seers went back to their families. Maximin went back right away but Melanie stayed at the house of her employer. They were thus separated and did not see each other for three months. That was providential, since they were unable to talk to each other. In this way, family members and friends were able to compare what the two were saying, independently from each other, and ascertain that everything they said agreed perfectly and the children had not made it up.

The day following the apparition the seers’ employers questioned them and wrote a report. Two days after the event, Pierre Peytard, mayor of La Salette, did the same with Maximin. Those inquiries were the first of a long series that the seers underwent with great ease. A town hall commission also made a strict investigation. Each

of the council's members wrote a report on what each seer had said by himself. These reports would play an immense role in the initial dissemination of the event at La Salette.

The news spread like a powder trail through much of France. Soon the whole country was aware of the supernatural development and took a position about it. People vied for manuscript copies of the inquiries, particularly the reports. Five months later, the first book on the apparition appeared in Paris, and one of its editions totalled 300,000 copies.

Bad Catholics Feel Caught

While nationwide public interest in La Salette was spurred by grace, it also had natural explanations.

France was divided from the religious and political standpoint. There were those who called themselves liberal or social Catholics. They were the forerunners of the movement now sowing disorder in the Church, also known as progressivism. They were in cahoots with activists of the libertine, secularist and anti-Catholic egalitarianism of the French Revolution of 1789.

They favoured and exploited class struggle and sought to subvert the Church from the inside. They relativised Church morals and insisted on social issues, which they greatly distorted. On that point they echoed the arguments of socialists, communists or Marxists, even though at times claiming to oppose them. In politics they advocated convergence with a revolutionary, secularist, egalitarian, immoral and viscerally anti-Christian democracy, a daughter of the French Revolution.

In his Encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*, and particularly in the Apostolic Letter *Notre Charge Apostolique*, St Pius X condemned

the errors of those bad Catholics. As a matter of fact, those liberal Catholics felt caught and denounced by the message of La Salette in their hidden, revolutionary side.

On the other hand, there were pious and authentic Catholics who defended all forms of legitimacy. On learning about the message of La Salette, they saw it as a confirmation of all that their faith and fidelity to the Church inspired them.

At the time, the best representatives of French Catholicism looked with horror at the governments in power — the illegitimate monarchy of Louis Phillipe, the second and third French Republics, as well as the empire of Napoleon III. Those governments did not hide their hatred for La Salette, above all that of Napoleon III, whose duplicitous game the apparition denounced.

Thus, the message of Our Lady was salt in the wound of France's religious, political and ideological problems, analogous to those of the Catholic West at the time.

The First of Our Lady's Warnings are Fulfilled

Violation of the Sunday repose through manual work and commercial activities and the vice of cursing and blaspheming were deeply rooted in French society. That decadence was made possible by religious laxity. Nothing seemed able to contain those bad customs, and that was not all. It was no wonder that the first painful warnings made by Our Lady began to be fulfilled.

Potato crops and vineyards rotted and the wheat was destroyed by a weird plague. The failure of the harvests brought hunger.

"It is pitiful to see the inhabitants of the region," wrote the wife of the mayor of Aspres-les-Corps, "nearly all of whom lack bread and potatoes. Every day they roam the fields to harvest thistles and other

wild cardoons to make soup, which in most cases is taken without butter and at best with a little milk. Our homes are surrounded with people who think we should be supplied with everything. And every day we have to distribute money, butter, bread and truffles to ten, fifteen and even twenty beggars.”⁴

The lack of food supplies assailed all of France.

Another terrible warning of Our Lady was also fulfilled; children under 7 died at rates much above average. In 1847, 39 children died in Corps alone, while the average of previous years was about 4. In neighbouring cantons, child mortality nearly doubled.

Fr Pierre Melin, parish priest of Corps, always cautious in his judgements, observed: “Taking a look at society in our days, it is not necessary to conceive a great future or place oneself very high to note that it is quite bad in its actions and very sick in its principles. Our cities in general make a sad spectacle to religion and its ministers ... The spirit of God has withdrawn from society. It has become carnal, looks for nothing but bread and does not even believe it is God who gives it. Could it be that the good and merciful God is threatening precisely with hunger in order to open its eyes and make it aware of its error?”⁵

Opening one’s eyes to the cause of evil, repenting and reforming one’s life in the sense opposed to those evils is the essence of penance. And this is what Our Lady wanted by allowing those calamities to take place.

Penitential Pilgrimages and Conversions

Inspired by the apparition of La Salette, the people of the area understood the situation and, at least in the beginning, reacted well. The lack of food and the unusual death rate among children were

decisive in moving souls to penance. But above all, everyone had a presentiment that the events were a sign of much graver chastisements to come.

The number of penitential pilgrimages grew and conversions multiplied. The pastor of Corps himself describes that movement inspired by divine grace:

“The mountain appears to become flatter and its roughness is smoothed over. Children, the elderly and pregnant women flock to the place arriving sweaty and gasping, drink of the fountain and descend happy and content. ... Overcoming human respect, our men, including those with a hardened conscience, forget what they are and become Christians.”⁶

Seeing this spectacle of penance and conversion, after much reflection Fr Melin concluded that those chastisements had ended up by doing a lot of good. If even more painful and general punishments were to come and produce a proportional effect, it was the case to desire them, he thought.

“I now desire with all my heart,” he wrote, “that it [the chastisement announced by Our Lady] come true. It is better to have a powerful commotion that shakes and purifies the flame of the faith, than to see it disappear under the dust and ashes that are burying it. Society is becoming lost and the world cannot go on like this any longer. In the parishes, the parish priests are lowering their arms out of sheer weariness. This is also the case with travelling preachers. Without being a prophet, one could still announce we are on the eve of great events.”⁷

The churches filled to capacity, couples regularized their situation, Sunday rest came to be rigorously observed, no more blasphemies were heard, and immoral or frivolous parties and shows ended for good. Maximin’s father converted and received communion.



We believe that the apparition of the Blessed Virgin to the two shepherds on September 19, 1846 on a mountain of the Alps situated in the parish of La Salette of the archbishopric of Corps has all the characteristics of the truth and that the faithful have reason to believe in it as certain and beyond doubt.

This is why, to bear testimony before God and the glorious Virgin Mary of our heartfelt gratitude, we authorize the veneration of Our Lady of La Salette. We permit that it be preached and that the practical and moral consequences that emanate from this great event be drawn ...

BISHOP BRUILLARD

There took place an unimaginable and rapid correction of bad customs, helped by grace in a suave and vigorous way. That was the penance, the beginning of the conversion Our Lady had asked for.

Good Effects and Changes of Life in Other Regions

Good effects were soon felt in neighbouring dioceses as well. Thus, on February 9, 1847, the Bishop of Gap, Msgr Ireneus Dépery, gave this testimony: “I have also collected information, and to me the fact of the apparition appears indisputable. God appears to confirm it with prodigies ... The water of the fountain has restored health to many people, among them an acquaintance of mine. The effect this event has produced in the neighbouring areas, even in my diocese, is prodigious. Cursing and Sunday work have ceased entirely. Churches and the sacraments are frequented in a most edifying manner. You need to be impious to deny that God has the power and will to act in this way to attract the people to his law. The Holy Scriptures are filled with similar events.”⁸

By December of the year of the apparition, about one hundred and fifty pilgrims would arrive at La Salette daily. The number continued to grow. The seers would go up the hill with them even twice a day, to the place where Our Lady appeared. And they would recount the apparition over again with the same unpretentiousness, seriousness and dedication.

From the outset, the stones of the ‘paradise’ vanished, taken by the pilgrims. They were taken as relics and shared with other devotees and friends. The Cure of Ars received one of them and shared it with others, to whom he recommended devotion to Our Lady of La Salette. They also took the grass upon which Our Lady had hovered without touching it.

On May 31, 1847 five thousand penitents went up to the place of the apparition. On the first anniversary of the apparition, thirty thousand according to some, and one hundred thousand according to others, went to the site. The multitude improvised a moving ceremony of collective penance by defying the rain and the cold night of that still remote location.

The diocesan bishop thus summarized the marvellous moral transformation that had occurred: “That which the preceding jubilees, missions and the zeal of religious had been unable to attain, the voice of two shepherds on behalf of the Queen of Heaven has obtained.”⁹

Catholic associations of reparation inspired by the apparition of La Salette flourished throughout the country. Priests and bishops came from all over France and other countries. All that in less than a year.

First Miracles

Soon the first miracles came to light. On April 16, 1847 in Avignon, seven months after the apparition, Sister Saint-Charles was miraculously cured while saying a novena to Our Lady of La Salette.

On May 14 of the same year, also in Avignon, Sister Saint-Antoine Granet, a religious of the Blessed Sacrament, was also miraculously cured. She suffered from several illnesses verified by different physicians. The cure took place at the end of a novena during which she drank water from the fountain of La Salette.

On March 4, 1849 the Archbishop of Sens, Mellon Jolly officially proclaimed the miraculous cure of Antoinette Bollenat. That was an outstanding supernatural prodigy. Most miracles are not proclaimed canonically because their beneficiaries are unable to gather all the

proofs and scientific certifications of the miracle, examinations, diagnoses and other documents about the state of their health before and after the marvellous cure. At times they either do not have that documentation or fail to present it to the competent ecclesiastical or medical authorities for scrutiny. That was not the case with Antoinette Bollenat, in which documentation and testimonies existed and were gathered and delivered to the doctors and the archbishopric. Archbishop Jolly issued a judgement canonically recognizing the miracle.

Here are the archbishop's words in the act proclaiming the miracle: "We declare for the glory of God, the glorification of the Blessed Virgin and the edification of the faithful, that the cure of Antoinette Bollenat, worked on November 21, 1847 after a novena to the Blessed Mother of God invoked under the name of Our Lady of La Salette, presents all the conditions and characteristics of a miraculous cure and constitutes a miracle of the third order."¹⁰

In nearly identical terms, on August 1, 1849 the bishop of Verdun, and on January 12, 1855 that of La Rochelle, officially recognised two more miraculous cures due to Our Lady of La Salette.

Newspapers Unleash Publicity Uproar against La Salette

While this moral regeneration was taking place, the enemies of La Salette, both liberal Catholics and anti-Catholics, became ever more uncomfortable.

At first, the secularist and anticlerical newspapers of the time tried to smother the issue. But with so many pilgrimages and miracles, it was impossible to keep silent. There soon came to light distorted or caricatured versions of the miracle and even virulent attacks against La Salette and the Church. *Patriote des Alpes* was the first newspaper

in Grenoble that published offensive lines about the apparition: "A stupid invention welcomed by the imbecility of some and exploited by the brazen charlatanism of others," it insolently wrote.¹¹

It would soon be imitated by other newspapers in Paris and Lyon. These publications generally refused to publish any rectifications or simple testimonies by their readers to the truth of the events of La Salette.

It was not so with Catholic legitimist newspapers, labelled ultramontane or counterrevolutionary. They were numerous but did not have the huge circulation of anticlerical papers.

Ministry of Justice Plots Repression

In May 1847, the Ministry of Justice prepared a threatening report opposing La Salette. The document was addressed to Justice Minister Hébert, hostile to religion and to La Salette.

The document summarized police reports describing the spread of devotion to La Salette throughout the country. In order to propose a persecution, it used as a pretext Our Lady's announcement that if France did not convert there would be hunger and a high rate of child mortality.

"Such passages," the perfidious report said, "are such as to effectively produce, and have already produced, harmful impressions upon the ignorant populations. At this time of hunger, they could even disturb public tranquillity. However, one does not find in the Penal Code, or in press laws, or in the laws about grains, any penal qualification that could be imputable to them. There is no incitement to disobedience of the law, or attempt to disturb the public peace by inciting scorn or hatred against one or several classes of people, etc."

In simpler words, the police recognised that there was no evil at all in the devotion to La Salette. The report gathered information from the hostile press and recommended that the minister put pressure on the bishops who supported La Salette to put an end to the dissemination of the apparition of Our Lady. Thus they would have stopped what the report called the dangerous effects of the celestial warning.¹²

Minister Hebert acted accordingly by sending a letter to the bishops who supported La Salette. He cynically demanded that the Bishop of Grenoble, Msgr Philibert de Bruillard, “promptly halt the progress of the evil [the diffusion of the message of La Salette] by making the truth known to the population and defeating culpable manoeuvres.”

Bishop Bruillard answered with the authority and superiority proper to his office. He made known to the minister that his requests were fatuous and told him the whole truth about the events of La Salette.¹³

The following year, even though the illegitimate monarchy of Louis Philippe fell, the secularist offensive against La Salette did not stop. The press continued to harp on the same point about the “immoral prediction spread by some rumour mongers” that served only to take money from the faithful who went to La Salette seeking help and pardon.”¹⁴

These episodes show how hardened were the hearts of those who had fallen away from the Church, and how admirable was the wisdom of Our Lady as she firmly castigated the malice of the time.

CHAPTER 7

Official Recognition by the Church



BISHOP BRUILLARD, of Grenoble, opened a canonical inquiry with a commission of 16 experienced priests of the diocese, who questioned the seers, their neighbours, clergy and laity, authorities and ordinary citizens. It looked into aspects that might run counter to the supernatural event. It attentively heard favourable and contrary opinions. It held sessions to debate the event, also in the presence of the bishop. Finally, all the possible doubts, objections or discrepancies were resolved. The commission issued a pronouncement for the authenticity of the apparition.

However, the Archbishop of Lyon, Louis Cardinal de Bonald, immediate superior of the Bishop of Grenoble and a leader of the liberal Catholics, actively opposed that conclusion to the point of abusing his power. The diocesan bishop then ordered the seers, separately, to write all over again, and very carefully, the events and words of Our Lady, including the secret that would be read only by the happily reigning pope, Blessed Pius IX.

Pope Pius IX's Favourable Reception

The diocesan bishop, Msgr Philibert de Bruillard, sealed the manuscripts with the reports of the two seers. When Melanie deliv-

ered her secret to the prelate, he withdrew immediately to his room to read it. “He returned red-faced, in tears, moved, and gave it to be sealed without saying anything,” eye-witnesses recount.¹⁵

A commission presided by the honorary vicar general of the diocese, Canon Pierre-Joseph Rousselot and Canon Gerin took the secret to the Vatican. They personally delivered the documents to Pius IX.

At the Vatican, the Holy Father discerned the transcendence of the message. He opened the seals in the presence of the message’s bearers. He began to read and said: “This has the candour and simplicity of a child.” He then stood up and walked closer to the window to read with more light and attention.

His lips contracted and his cheeks swelled, as he became visibly moved. When he finished reading, the Pope told those present: “It deals with scourges which are threatening France. But France is not the only guilty one. Germany, Italy and all Europe are as well and deserve the chastisements. I have less to fear from Proudhon [the socialist theoretician] than from religious indifference and human respect. Your soldiers kneel down when they see me, but only after looking right and left to make sure no one sees them.”

And with the firm voice he always had, while speaking he raised his hand to his chest and added: “It is not without reason that the Church is called militant and that here you see her Captain.”¹⁶

He sent the documents to Msgr Frattini, promoter of the Faith, together with his written opinion that “they were fine, he was happy, and they exhaled the truth.”¹⁷ Msgr Frattini issued an opinion favouring the apparition. The Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, Cardinal Lambruschini, found that the documents “left nothing to be desired” and approved the “edifying and entirely praiseworthy rigour” with which Bishop Bruillard had acted.

At the Vatican, Canons Rousselot and Gerin were alerted to the anti-La Salette manoeuvre of liberal Catholics, notably Cardinal de Bonald. They returned to Grenoble satisfied at having accomplished their mission and to bring back the Pope’s precious approval.

The Bishop Recognises Apparition as Certain and Beyond Doubt

Strengthened by the approval of the Pope and the Roman Curia, the Bishop of Grenoble officially recognised the apparition and publicly praised it to clergy and faithful. For this reason, La Salette is one of the rare apparitions canonically recognised by the Church.

In the document proclaiming the authenticity of the apparition, titled *Commandment*, Bishop Bruillard, after narrating the history of events and the subsequent canonical inquiries, states:

“*Article 1.* We believe that the apparition of the Blessed Virgin to the two shepherds on September 19, 1846 on a mountain of the Alps range situated in the parish of La Salette of the archbishopric of Corps has all the characteristics of the truth and that the faithful have reason to believe in it as certain and beyond doubt.

“*Article 2.* We believe that this fact acquires a new degree of certainty by virtue of the immense and spontaneous flocking of the faithful to the place of the apparition, as well as by the multitude of prodigies that have followed the said event, a large number of which it is impossible to doubt without violating the rules of human testimony.

“*Article 3.* This is why, to bear testimony before God and the glorious Virgin Mary of our heartfelt gratitude, we authorize the veneration of Our Lady of La Salette. We permit that it be preached and that the practical and moral consequences that emanate from this great event be drawn ...

“Article 5. We expressly forbid the faithful and priests of our diocese to come out in public, in word or writing, against the event that we proclaim today, which from now on requires the respect of everyone ...

“We exhort you, beloved brethren: Be docile to the voice of Mary who calls you to penance and who, on behalf of her Son, threatens you with spiritual and temporal evils if you remain insensitive to her maternal warnings and harden your hearts.”¹⁸

Pastoral Letter Exhorts the Clergy and Faithful to follow La Salette

On May 1, 1852, the same prelate published a pastoral letter taking up once again the essential topics of the message of La Salette.

“It is not in vain,” he wrote, “that the Mother of Mercy has deigned to visit the children of men. It is not in vain that, facing the disorders that excited the wrath of her Son, she somehow came to take refuge in our mountains, to shed tears, warn us of the chastisements in store for us if we do not convert, reminding us of the fear of God, respect for his Holy Name, sanctification of the Sunday, and observance of all the Commandments of God and of his Church. Words coming from on high must have an immense echo and be heeded by all nations ...

“Remember the epoch in which Mary appeared upon the mountain of La Salette. Wasn’t that apparition, on September 19, 1846, like a prelude to greater events? Look at the people’s unrest, thrones overthrown, Europe shaken, society sliding into the abyss of ruin. Who has preserved us and will still preserve us from greater calamities but She who, coming from on high, descended upon our mountains to plant here in some way a sign of reunion and salva-

tion, a luminous beacon, a bronze serpent to which pious souls have raised their eyes to ward off heavenly ire and cure us of incurable wounds?”¹⁹

In the same pastoral letter, Bishop de Bruillard ordered the construction of the shrine that now stands at the place.

Pope Pius IX and the diocesan bishop, Msgr Philibert de Bruillard, recognised the authenticity of the apparition



CHAPTER 8

The Long Story of the Secret



IF OUR LADY'S MESSAGE were of little transcendence, Rome's decision and the solemn and exceptional recognition of the apparition by the diocesan bishop would have put an end to the polemics. But the storm, far from subsiding, came back with a vengeance.

Seeing that Our Lady's work was advancing with the pope's blessings, the bad Catholics, both churchmen and laity, went on to openly contest and defame La Salette with intrigue and slanderous writings. Though a minority, they were very active and had powerful accomplices in government and in the anticlerical dens.

The New Bishop of Grenoble Turns against La Salette

Bishop de Bruillard defended the authenticity of the apparition and the diffusion of the message. But due to his advanced age, he had to renounce the diocese. Emperor Napoleon III and Cardinal Jacques Mathieu, leader of the Galican bishops who contested irrevocable prerogatives of the Holy See, imposed their candidate for the succession: Msgr Jacques Ginoulhiac.

As soon as the Vatican was informed, it disapproved the nomination of the new bishop and urged the Apostolic Nuncio in Paris to prevent his installation. Unfortunately, the Concordat of that time

granted the civil government privileges regarding the designation of bishops; later those privileges were abolished. The new prelate took over the diocese before the veto from Rome had arrived.

Pius IX had extremely grave reasons to disapprove the designation: Msgr Ginoulhiac was a liberal leader. Later he was a great opponent of the proclamation of the dogma of papal infallibility, to the point that he left Rome to avoid participating in the glorious promulgation of that dogma at Vatican Council I. He was also a very bitter enemy of the message of La Salette.

Not too long after the new bishop was installed, two churchmen of the diocese published, without license, a defamatory libel against the two seers signed by more than 50 priests. The pope exhorted Bishop Ginoulhiac to remain within the bounds of Canon Law and consequently to defend La Salette. Msgr Ginoulhiac condemned the libel and seemingly accepted the papal request. But he remained committed to smothering the message and silencing the little shepherds.

Liberal Catholics, the civil powers and anti-Catholic associations were keenly aware that if the message were well received the cause of the Revolution would be lost.

To complicate the picture even further, several pseudo-seers began to spread false messages similar to La Salette's. A self-proclaimed mystic, Countess Pauline de Nicolay, claimed to have revelations that morally disqualified the shepherds. She proposed sibylline theories avidly endorsed by the liberal archbishop suggesting that Melanie and Maximin had already played out their role before 1858, year in which they should reveal the secret in its entirety. According to that false seer, they should be removed and forbidden to talk about La Salette ever again. In this way they would never be able to reveal the secret as Our Lady had asked.

Furthermore, veiled enemies of La Salette, adventurers and opportunistic politicians placed confused and adulterated versions of the message in circulation. They were seeking to justify political positions they had already taken or simply demoralize the words of Our Lady.

Just narrating the vicissitudes of this controversy would require writing another book.

Opposition Grows Even More after Secret Is Divulged

Right after the publication of the secret took place on the prescribed date, opposition by the enemies of La Salette was exacerbated even further.

The polemic among Frenchmen reached such a confusion that the Holy See, by a decree of the Holy Office of December 21, 1915, forbade the publication of any version of the secret. Nevertheless, that decision in no way discouraged devotion to Our Lady of La Salette.

On May 9, 1923, an edition of the secret with an imprimatur from the bishopric of Lecce, in Italy, dated November 15, 1879 was placed on the *Index* of forbidden books.

So it appeared that our century would not know the secret revealed at La Salette. In order to resolve the controversy, it was indispensable to consult the original documents of the seers. Nevertheless, an apparently insurmountable difficulty arose: The originals written by the seers and sent to the Holy See had disappeared in the Vatican itself. And the Vatican prohibition was based precisely on the impossibility of comparing the versions in circulation with the authentic originals. With that, it seemed as if any publication of the secret would be blocked, perhaps forever.

A Marvellous and Unexpected Discovery

At the end of the 20th century, the French priest, Fr Michel Cotteville was preparing his doctoral thesis, and he had chosen La Salette as the topic of his dissertation. Having been informed that the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith had cleared public access to the archives previous to the death of Pope Leo XIII on November 20, 1903, he obtained authorization to research among them. However, the information he received from Vatican librarians was discouraging. The documents on La Salette which he was looking for had been definitively lost! Fr Cotteville, then, changed the focus of his research.

On October 2, 1999 Fr Cotteville opened one more box containing old folders and tied up bunches of papers. The outside of one of the boxes bore dates of the pontificate of Leo XIII. But inside — O surprise! — were folders from the time of Pius IX. And one of them contained the whole dossier of La Salette with all its original documents, including the several manuscripts of the secret.

When Fr Cotteville marvelled at the old documents of the newly-opened package, the bell rang to close the period of consultations. And he returned to his residence with an inexpressible joy: he had just discovered the official documents of La Salette, which had been sent to Pius IX and to the Holy See on various dates.

From then on, Fr Cotteville was able to study those documents in detail and dispel all the doubts that lingered about the matter. The results of that work are part of the thesis he successfully defended at Rome's celebrated Faculty of Theology of the Angelicum, of the Dominican Order. That thesis, with more than one thousand pages, was initially published under the title *The Great News of the Shepherds of La Salette*.²⁰

The thesis was summarized in a book with the collaboration of Fr René Laurentin, titled *The Discovery of the Secret of La Salette*.²¹ The book carries the *Imprimatur* of Msgr Michel Dubost, Bishop of Evry, and *nihil obstat* from Dom Bernard Billet, of the Abbey of Notre Dame of Tournay.

It is through this work that we now can, in all tranquillity, read the complete secret of La Salette.

The Death and Resurrection of La Salette

As can be seen, the secret has a very special history. Before 1858, everything was done to prevent the seers from revealing it. After 1858, all hell broke loose to smother it. Its diffusion has been forbidden since 1915. Finally, in 1999, the providential find of Fr Michel Cotteville allowed it to be spread once again.

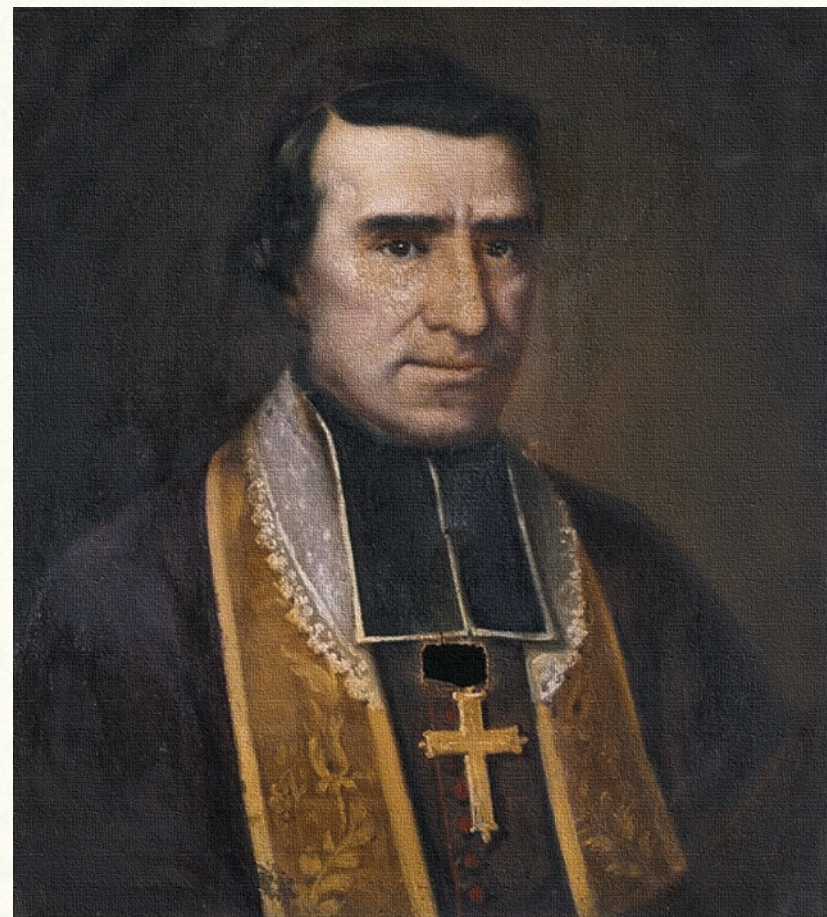
During her lifetime, Melanie witnessed a great part of the campaign that resulted in silencing La Salette. Nevertheless, she was certain that Our Lady's appeal would eventually "resurrect" and be made known again in spite of all difficulties, and that her plan would be realised.

In this sense, on January 21, 1885 Melanie said: "[The number of] pilgrims is always diminishing, now they are even fewer than last year. This is how it will be until the crisis ... La Salette will be, so to speak, dead and buried ... You will see it. When it is believed to have been extinguished and crumbled, it will reappear and revive, for the words of the Most Holy Virgin are not vain and because She is powerful enough to make them resurrect ... When you see all this, you will not doubt, but remain confident. As for me, I will see La Salette dead and buried, but I will not doubt. Mary is powerful. Men and devils can do nothing against her. She will triumph. People can

resist the appeal of grace, her appeal, but she can transport her great light and show it to others. Let us wait for her help, at her time. So be it."²²

This is the story of the secret that the reader now has in hand, at the hour when the message of La Salette resurrects from the ashes of oblivion.

The new diocesan bishop, Msgr Jacques Ginouliac, opposed the apparition and the diffusion of its message



CHAPTER 9

The Secret



Difficulties Transcribing the Vision

IN ORDER to be faithful to everything they had seen and heard Maximin and Melanie clearly received a special supernatural help. However, that did not prevent the complexity of the vision and the limited intellectual powers of the seers from creating difficulties in putting the apparition in writing.

Maximin was not a very able writer. In 1851 he had to rewrite everything due to ink stains in his writing. His poor intellectual resources can be seen in his writing.

The way the revelation took place also contributes to certain variations in the chronological order of the seers' report.

Several writings of the secret resulted from this effort of the seers at making explicit everything they had seen, particularly Melanie.

The Secret in Its Most Complete Form

The seers only agreed to reveal the secret before 1858 out of obedience and for the purpose that it be taken to the exclusive knowledge of the pope. This was the reason for the first official writing of the secret by Maximin on July 3, 1851, and by Melanie three days

later. In 1853 the new Bishop of Grenoble, Msgr Ginoulhiac ordered them to write the secret once again. All these writings were kept under seal at the Vatican.

In 1858, year of the apparition of Our Lady at Lourdes, the seers were freed from the obligation of silence and released the secret to the public. Melanie sent the pope, Pius IX, a more carefully handwritten text. For the rest of their lives, both Melanie and Maximin responded to countless consultations and requests for clarification.

We will now transcribe in full the version of the secret which Fr Cotteville deems the most complete. It is a longer text written by Melanie on November 21, 1878, and which she considered as definitive.

The two young seers of the apparition, Maximin Giraud and Melanie Calvat



CHAPTER 10

A Judgement of Today's World



Decadence of the Clergy will Attract Divine Vengeance

THE SECRET BEGINS thus: “Melanie, what I will now tell you will not remain a secret forever. You may publish it in 1858.

“The priests, ministers of my Son, by their bad life, irreverence and impiety in celebrating the holy mysteries, love of money, honours and pleasures, have become sewers of impurity. Yes, the priests attract vengeance, and vengeance hangs over their heads. Woe to the priests and persons consecrated to God who by their infidelity and bad life crucify my Son once again! The sins of persons consecrated to God cry out to heaven and clamour for vengeance. And behold vengeance is at their doors, for no one is found to implore mercy and pardon for the people. There are no more generous souls, no one worthy to offer the Immaculate Victim to the Eternal Father for the sake of the world.”

It was these initial words of the secret that caused the most controversy, above all the reference to bad priests who “had become sewers of impurity.”

It is not unusual to find, even in writings by saints and blessed, strong expressions like that about deplorable situations. Such is the case, for example, with the writings by Blessed Elizabeth Canori-

Mora. In her process of canonization, the ecclesiastical censor approved them saying: “Lamentations of this kind, at times expressed in even more vibrant language, are absolutely not a novelty in writings by Servants of God, for whom, if it was painful to see corruption in the people, it was much more so to have to deplore it among ministers of the sanctuary.”²³

Answering the difficulty of some who found it unlikely that terms such as “sewer of impurity” be applied to priests, in a letter to Fr Faure, Melanie wrote: “I have recognised ten of them!”²⁴

At the time of Melanie there were many saintly and virtuous priests whom she herself knew, and some of whom have already been canonised. Toward these priests, the secret employs an altogether different language. In the official version of July 6, 1851, Melanie wrote: “The priests, women religious and true servants of my Son will be persecuted, and many will die for the faith of Jesus Christ.”²⁵

Dimension of Punishments will Attract Divine Wrath

The secret continues: “God will strike in an unheard-of way. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth.

God will pour out his wrath and no one will be able to flee so many accumulated evils.

“The chiefs and leaders of the people of God have neglected prayer and penance. And the devil has obscured their minds. They have been turned into errant stars which the devil will drag with his tail to perdition. God will allow the old serpent to foment divisions among those who reign, in all societies and in all families. They will suffer physical and moral torments. God will abandon men to themselves and send successive chastisements for more than thirty-five years.

“Society is on the verge of most terrible scourges and paramount events. One must expect to be governed with an iron lash and to drink the chalice of God’s wrath.”

Warning to Pius IX against Napoleon III

Continuing further, the secret provides this clear instruction: “Let the Vicar of my Son, the Sovereign Pontiff Pius IX not leave Rome after the year 1859. But let him be firm and generous, combat with the arms of the faith and of love. I will be with him. Let him not trust Napoleon III. His heart is false and God will withdraw from him when he tries to become pope and emperor at the same time. He is like an eagle who, wishing to climb ever higher, will fall upon the sword which he wanted to use to oblige the nations to elevate him.”

Napoleon III was an astute politician who deceived Catholics. He personally but covertly worked against the pope and the Church. But he pretended to defend the interests of the papacy and kept troops to protect the Papal States. Many well-intentioned Catholics failed to perceive his sly manoeuvre. Our Lady had come to alert them as well.

In 1852, Napoleon III visited Grenoble. Melanie was then a nun at the Providence monastery in Corenc, today part of the metropolitan area. The other nuns heard her exclaim: “Oh ingrate! Oh traitor! Oh persecutor of religion!”

The fleeting reign of Napoleon III crumbled after a shameful defeat in the French-Prussian War of 1870. Napoleon III used the conflict as a pretext to withdraw the French troops protecting Rome. He thus left the way open for Italian revolutionaries to invade Rome and wrench the capital of Christendom away from the pope.

The secret of La Salette warned Pope Pius IX (left) not to trust the duplicitous Emperor Napoleon III (right)



Chastisements upon Italy

Let us continue with the secret: “Italy will be punished for her ambition to shake off the yoke of the Lord of lords. She will be given over to war, blood will flow everywhere. Churches will be closed or profaned. Priests and religious will be expelled. They will be delivered to death, cruel death. Many will abandon the faith, and great will be the number of priests and religious who will fall away from Religion. Even bishops will be found among them.” ★

False Prodigies on Earth

The secret continues: “Let the Pope be alert against miracle workers. For the time has come when the most unexpected prodigies will take place on earth and in the air.

“In the year 1864, Lucifer and a large number of demons will be released from hell. They will abolish the faith little by little, even among persons consecrated to God. They will blind them in such a way that, except for a special grace, they will acquire the spirit of those evil angels. Several religious houses will lose their faith entirely, and many souls will be lost.

“Bad books will be rife upon the earth, and the spirits of darkness will spread everywhere a universal laxity in everything related to God’s service. They will have a huge power over nature. There will be churches to worship these spirits. These evil spirits will transport people, and even priests, from one place to another, for they did not behave according to the spirit of the Gospel, which is a spirit of humility, charity and zeal for the glory of God. They will make the dead and just resurrect (that is, such dead will take on the image of just souls who lived on earth to seduce men even more; these supposedly resurrected dead will be nothing but the devil incarnated into those figures, and will preach a gospel opposed to that of the true Jesus Christ, denying the existence of heaven). Or they will be souls of reprobates.

“All these souls will appear as united to their bodies. In all places there will be extraordinary prodigies because the true faith has gone out and a false light illuminates the world. Woe to the princes of the Church, who will be concerned only with piling riches upon riches, safeguarding their authority and dominating with pride!”

★ From the perspective of the Fatima apparitions, the nations mentioned at La Salette are not the only ones to be punished.

Before she died, Blessed Jacinta recounted a vision about Portugal: “Our Lord is profoundly indignant with the sins and crimes being committed in Portugal. For this reason, a terrible social cataclysm threatens our country, and mainly the city of Lisbon. From what it seems, a civil war of an anarchist or communist nature will be unleashed and followed with looting, massacres, fires and devastations of all kinds. The capital will be turned into a true image of hell. On the occasion when offended Divine Justice inflicts such a horrible chastisement, let all those who can flee from that city.”

About Spain, Blessed Jacinta said: “If men do not amend, Our Lady will send the world a chastisement the likes of which have never been seen, and before other countries, to Spain.”

Still in relation to Spain, in 1943 Sister Lucia communicated a revelation from Our Lord: “I had ... to convey to the Archbishop of Valladolid a message from Our Lord to the bishops here in Spain and another to those in Portugal. God grant that all of them may heed the voice of the good God. He wishes the bishops of Spain to gather in a retreat and decree a reform of the people, clergy and religious orders; that some convents ...! and many members of others! ... Do you understand? He wants souls to be made to understand that the true penance He now wants and demands consists first of all in the sacrifice everyone must impose on himself to fulfil his own religious and material duties. He promises the end of the war soon because of what His Holiness deigned to do. But since his action was incomplete, the conversion of Russia was postponed. If you the bishops of Spain do not heed His desires, she will be once again the whip with which God punishes you” (Antônio A. Borelli Machado, **Our Lady of Fatima: Prophecies of Tragedy or Hope?**)

CHAPTER 11

The Pope and Rome



The Sufferings of Pius IX, Chaos and World Anarchy

“THE VICAR OF MY SON will have much to suffer, because the Church will be given over to great persecutions for a while. It will be a time of darkness and the Church will go through a horrible crisis.

“The holy faith in God having been forgotten, each individual will want to be his own guide and to be superior to his fellow men. Civil and ecclesiastical powers will be abolished. All order and justice will be trampled underfoot. One will see nothing but homicides, hatred, envy, lies and discord, without love of country or family.

“The Holy Father will suffer very much. I shall be with him until the end to receive his sacrifice. The evil ones will make various attempts against his life without being able to shorten his days, but neither he nor his successor ... will see the triumph of the Church of God.”

St John Bosco's Dream about the Pope and the Vatican

The gravity of these announcements is emphasized by their likeness to the dream of St John Bosco who appears to refer to the same

historic juncture. In 1873 the saint himself communicated it to Blessed Pope Pius IX:

“It was a dark night, men could no longer make out the way back to their countries, when a most splendid light appeared in the heavens which illuminated the steps of the travellers as if it were midday. At that moment was seen a multitude of men, women, old people, young people, monks, nuns, and priests with the pontiff at their head coming out of the Vatican lining up like a procession.

“But a furious storm obscuring that light somewhat appeared to start a battle between light and darkness. In the meantime I reached a little plaza covered with dead and wounded, many of whom cried out for help.

“The lines of the procession thinned out considerably. After having walked for a period of time which corresponds to two hundred mornings, everyone realised that they were no longer in Rome. Discouragement took over their spirits and everyone gathered around the pontiff to protect and assist him in his necessities.

“At that moment two angels were seen bringing a standard and delivering it to the pontiff, saying: ‘Receive the banner of Him who combats and scatters the most powerful armies on earth. Thine enemies have vanished and thy children implore thy return with tears and sighs.’

“When we raised our eyes to the standard we saw written on one side: ‘*Queen Conceived without Sin.*’ And on the other side: ‘*Help of Christians.*’

“The pontiff took the standard with joy but on seeing how small the number of those who had gathered around him were, he was most afflicted.

“The two angels added: ‘Go now to console thy children. Write to thy brothers dispersed in the various parts of the world that a



Similar to the secret of La Salette, St John Bosco's dream revealed a time of darkness where the Church will go through a horrible crisis

reform of men's morals is necessary. This can only be done by distributing the bread of the divine word to the peoples. Catechize the children, preach detachment from the things of the world. The time has come, the two angels concluded, when the poor will be the evangelizers of the peoples. The Levites will be surrounded with hoes, clubs and hammers so that the words of David may be fulfilled: God raised up the poor of the earth to place them on the throne of the princes of thy people.

“Having heard this, the pontiff started out and the lines of the procession began to swell. Later, when he set foot in the Holy City he began to weep at the desolation in which its inhabitants were found, many of whom had already perished. On re-entering St Peter's he intoned the *Te Deum* and a choir of angels responded singing: *Gloria in Excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis*.

“When the singing ended, all the darkness ceased and a most brilliant sun came out. “The population was much reduced in the cities and villages and the countryside. The land appeared to have been scourged by hurricanes, floods and hail. And people looked at one another deeply moved, saying: ‘[Indeed] there is a God in Israel.’”²⁶

The Abomination in the Holy Places

Back to the secret of La Salette: “The civil authorities will all have the same objective which will amount to abolishing and making disappear every religious principle to make way for materialism, atheism, spiritualism, and all kinds of vices.

“In the year 1865 the abomination will be seen in the holy places. In the convents, the flowers of the Church will be rotten and the devil will become, as it were, the king of hearts. Let the directors of religious communities be attentive about the persons they should

receive, because the demon will use all of his malice in order to introduce into the religious orders people who are given up to sin, for disorder and the love of carnal pleasures will be spread all over the earth.

“France, Italy, Spain and England will be at war. Blood will run in the streets, Frenchmen will fight against Frenchmen, Italians against Italians. Afterward there will be a horrendous general war. For a while God will no longer remember France or Italy, because the Gospel of Jesus Christ will be no longer known. The evil ones will spread all their malice. Even inside the houses people will kill and massacre one another.”

Both Fathers Cotteville and Laurentin emphasize the concordance between these descriptions and the desolate spectacle of the crisis through which the Catholic Church is going today. Paul VI went so far as to call it a “process of self-destruction” (*Allocution* of December 7, 1968 to the Students of the Lombard Seminary). The same pontiff also observed that “the smoke of Satan had penetrated the temple of God through some crack” (*Allocution* of June 29, 1972).

A Caution about Dates

When will this first and great apostasy and the subsequent universal chastisement described in such impressive general lines take place? When dealing with prophecies, dates as a rule are merely indicative or hypothetical, the reason being that the actual developments will depend on men’s correspondence or infidelity.

That is why Melanie would give no dates when she said “these things will happen when the moral disorder on earth is complete and the world is delivered up to its impious passions.”

CHAPTER 12

The Conversion of the World



Divine Intervention When All Seems Lost

AFTER OUR LADY had painted the picture of the sin and malice of men in our historic epoch, she went on to show the future conversion of mankind:

“At the first blow of his [God’s] shining sword, the mountains and all of nature will tremble with terror, because the disorders and crimes of men will have gone up through the dome of heaven. Paris will be burned, and Marseilles swallowed [by the waters]. Many great cities will be shaken and swallowed up by earthquakes. Everything will seem lost. The only thing in sight will be murders and all that will be heard is blasphemies and the clash of arms.”

The Destruction of Paris

The reference to the destruction the French capital obviously created a sensation. In the years 1847 and 1848 Melanie repeatedly let slip the moan: “Paris and the Pope! Paris and the Pope! Oh, unfortunate Paris!” In the official version of 1851, Melanie herself wrote: “Paris, that city defiled with every kind of crime will infallibly perish.”²⁷

Melanie was interrogated by engineer Benjamin Dausse the day she delivered the secret to the Bishop of Grenoble to be forwarded to Blessed Pius IX. The engineer pointed out that there were many good people in Paris and asked her: “Certainly God is omnipotent. Couldn’t he destroy one street, one house and save the one next to it?”

Dausse himself recorded the seer’s answer. He says: “Melanie made me see that it could not happen as I thought because of the manner in which the event would take place.”²⁸

Melanie confirmed that prediction on different occasions: “Let our prayers not cease. Otherwise I am horrified at seeing great cities being uprooted.”

Melanie explained that Marseilles will be swallowed up by earthquakes a little after the destruction of the capital. Curiously enough, the city suffered great floods on September 19, 2000, anniversary of the warning of La Salette. There is no report that the city took that providential warning seriously.

St John Bosco's Prophecy about Paris

At the feast of the Epiphany of 1870, St John Bosco had a prophetic dream in which he saw three successive chastisements fall upon Paris, and four upon Rome. In a letter delivered to Blessed Pius IX, Dom Bosco communicated the vision in these terms:

“On the vigil of the Epiphany of this year of 1870, I noticed all the material objects of my room disappear and found myself in the contemplation of supernatural matters ... Here is an idea of what I saw, with the word of God accommodated to the word of man ...

“The laws of France will no longer recognise the Creator and the Creator will make Himself known to her and will visit her three

times with the scourge of his fury. “On the first visit, He will humiliate her pride with defeats, sackings, and with the destruction of her harvests, animals and men. In the second visit, the great prostitute of Babylon, which the good will sadly call the harlot of Europe, will lose its leader and be plunged into disorder.”

“Paris, Paris ...! Instead of arming yourself with the name of the Lord, you surround yourself with houses of prostitution that you will tear to pieces. Your idol will be reduced to ashes to fulfil the saying that “*mentita est iniquitas sibi*” [iniquity has deceived itself]. Your enemies will surround you and bring you famine, terror, and make you the abomination of nations. But woe betide you if you do not recognise the hand that strikes you! I wish to chastise immorality, the dereliction and scorn of my law, says the Lord. “In the third visit you will fall into foreign hands. From a distance, your enemies will see your palaces engulfed in flames; your dwellings converted into a mountain of ruins, bathed with the blood of your once valiant men now lying dead.”²⁹

In fact, in 1871 Paris suffered enormous destructions as a consequence of the communist revolution of the Commune, the Prussian invasion and civil war between Communists (*communards*) and Republicans (*versailleurs*). It also suffered very much during the First World War.

During World War II, Hitler prepared the destruction of the French capital but did not bring it to completion.

However, all the above calamities fall short of the terms employed by Melanie in her answer to engineer Dausse — Paris will infallibly perish.

Paris’ immorality, and even graver, the errors spread from there such as the French Revolution or the Sorbonne Revolution of May 1968, continue their corrupting work today.

Melanie: "Paris [top] ... will infallibly perish ... Marseilles [below] will be swallowed up by earthquakes ..."



Maximin: "A great country in northern Europe [England], now Protestant, will convert."



Indeed, alluding to the French Revolution and the iniquitous principles that it spread throughout the world, in the writing of 1851 Maximin noted: “France has corrupted the universe and one day she will be punished. The faith will be extinguished in France, three-fourths of the country will no longer practice Religion, or barely any. The other fourth will practice it but not well.”³⁰ In a letter of January 7, 1872, after the devastations of the Commune of 1871, Maximin clarified that the announced chastisement upon Paris had still not arrived.

The Angels Intervene on Behalf of the Just

The secret continues: “The just will suffer much. Their prayers, penance and tears will rise up to heaven and the whole people of God will ask for pardon and mercy and for my help and intercession. Through an act of his justice and great mercy toward the just, Jesus Christ will order his angels to put to death all their enemies. All of a sudden, the persecutors of the Church of Jesus Christ and all men given over to sin will perish, and the earth will become like a desert.”

In the writing of 1851, after announcing the apostasy of three-fourths of France, Maximin wrote: “After that the nations will convert, the faith will rekindle everywhere. But before that comes about there will be great commotions in the Church and throughout the world.”

All things considered, together with the annihilation of the evil ones, the conversion of those who are saved will be completed. But how could such conversions take place amidst such a sinful and severely punished humanity?

Melanie confided that Our Lady enlightened her about this. However, she could not make it known. Questioned on why she

would not reveal this, she answered: “Because it contains such secrets of divine mercy that knowing them, men, instead of praying to ward off the events, will be in a hurry to have them come so they can enjoy the unheard-of triumph of the Church sooner.”³¹

The Conversion of a Great Protestant Nation

An outstanding part of this conversion will be that of a great nation of the north. In 1851, Maximin commented about it: “A great country in northern Europe, now Protestant, will convert. And through the support of that nation, all the other countries will convert.” In the version of 1853, Maximin wrote that country was England.

St John Bosco informed Pope Pius IX about a similar vision of St Dominic Savio about England’s return to Catholicism.

Venerable Bartholomew Holzhauser, celebrated for his prophetic gifts, also predicted that conversion. In 1665 he visited Charles II of England in Geisheim, when the king was returning to his country after the beheading of his predecessor, Charles I. He told Charles II that England would return to the Catholic faith and render to Religion services even greater than those that followed her first conversion.

The Triumph of the Church in Souls and the Reign of the Gospel

After that divine intervention, the secret says there will be an era in which the Church will reign over restored Christendom.

“Then peace will be established, the reconciliation between God and men. Jesus Christ will be served, adored and glorified. Charity will flourish everywhere. The new kings will be the right arm of

Holy Church, which will be strong, humble, pious, poor, zealous and imitate the virtues of Jesus Christ. The Gospel will be preached everywhere and men will make great progress in the faith, for there will be unity between the workers of Jesus Christ, while men will live in the fear of God.”

This prediction of the triumph of the Church is admirably consistent with the *Reign of Mary* prophesied by St Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort, a great Marian doctor of the 18th century:

“Thy divine law is transgressed. Thy Gospel is ignored, Thy religion abandoned,” exclaims the Saint in his Fiery Prayer. “Torrents of iniquity overwhelm the world, carrying away even Thy servants; the whole earth has become desolate; impiety is enthroned; Thy sanctuary is profaned, and abomination has reached even into the holy place ...

“Will Thou suffer this any longer, just Lord, God of vengeance? Will the end of all be like that of Sodom and Gomorrah? Will Thou be forever silent? Must not Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven? Must not Thy Kingdom come? Hast Thou not given to some of Thy friends a prophetic glimpse of the future renovation of Thy Church? Are not the Jews to be converted to the Truth? Is not this what Thy Church is awaiting? Do not all the Saints in heaven cry out to Thee: Justice, avenge Thyself? Do not all the just on earth say to Thee: Amen. Come, O Lord, for the time is at hand (Apoc. 22:20). Do not all creatures, even the most insensible, moan under the weight of the numberless sins of Babylon and call for Thy coming to re-establish all things?”³²

CHAPTER 13

New Decadence of Mankind



Crisis and Fall of the Reign of Mary

HOWEVER, like every historic era, the *Reign of Mary* will also have its end. It will be closed by a new decadence. The secret continues: “This peace among men will not last long. Twenty-five years of abundant harvests will make them forget that the sins of men are the cause of all calamities that take place on earth.”

What does Melanie mean when she says that peaceful epoch “will not be long”? She clarifies that this peace would last “a very great number of generations.” A generation is usually calculated as 25 years. What would be “a very great number” of them to Melanie? 20 generations? 30? 40? That is, 500, 750, 1000 years? So there is some uncertainty in this calculation about how long it will be, which is probably connected to greater or lesser fidelity of men to grace. The more faithful men are, the longer the era of peace will be.

The “25 years of abundant harvests” suggest that in the last phase of that happy era of Catholicism there will be years of extreme abundance in which everything will go so well that it will seem that there is no more need to fight against sin. That will be a mistake. Moral permissiveness would then take over the world in an easygoing and optimistic atmosphere amidst ill-used abundance. Melanie refers to

that historic transition a little further on when she says: “There will be a false peace in the world, no one will think of anything but enjoying himself, and the evil ones will give themselves up to all kinds of sins.”

Father Combe, who knew Melanie in the last years of her life, collected some statements from her: “The laws will continue to be Christian until the end of the world. There will not be any legal persecution. For many generations all men will be good Christians. But little by little they will let themselves become lukewarm, and then forget about God, and finally commit great crimes. The Christian laws, which the secular arm will have enforced with great severity, will little by little cease to be applied on account of a false mercy toward those who violate them. The good will no longer be protected. They will be made the butt of all kinds of humiliations and mockeries. They will suffer very much because of the situation in society and oppression by evil ones, and will be very few.”³³

Calamities at the Time of the Antichrist and the Perseverance of the Faithful

The secret continues: “A precursor of the Antichrist with troops from many nations will wage war against the true Christ, the only Saviour of the world. He will shed much blood and attempt to wipe out God’s worship to have himself adored as a god instead.

“The earth will be struck by all kinds of scourges (in addition to pestilence and famine, which will be generalised). There will be successive wars until a final one, fought by the ten kings of the Antichrist, who will have the same objective and be the only ones to govern the world. Before that happens, there will be a kind of false peace in the world. No one will think about anything but having a

good time. The evil ones will give themselves up to all kinds of sins.

“But the sons of Holy Church, the children of the Faith, my true imitators will believe in the love of God and in the virtues that are dear to me. Blessed are those humble souls led by the Holy Ghost. I will fight alongside them until they reach the fullness of their age.”

The Actions of the Devils and the Antichrist

“Nature will demand vengeance upon men and tremble with terror awaiting what must happen to an earth all defiled with crime. Tremble, O earth, you who professed to serve Jesus Christ, but who in your innermost heart adore yourself. Tremble, for God will give you up to your enemy because the holy places are immersed in corruption. Many convents are no longer houses of God but rather pastures to Asmodeus and his [demons]. During that time the Antichrist will be born of a Hebrew woman religious, a false virgin who will be in communication with the old serpent. And the master of impurity, his father, will be a bishop. He will vomit blasphemies and already have teeth when he is born. In a word, he will be the devil incarnate. He will howl with terrorizing screams, work prodigies, and nourish himself only with filth. He will have brothers and sisters who, although not incarnate demons like him, will be children of evil. By the time they turn twelve, they will be already famous for the brilliant victories they achieve. Each of them will soon be heading armies assisted by legions from hell.

“The seasons will change, the earth will yield only bad fruits, and the stars will stray from their orbits and the moon will give forth only a weak, reddish light. Water and fire will shake the globe with convulsive movements and horrible earthquakes that will swallow up mountains, cities and so on ...

“Rome will lose the faith and become the seat of the Antichrist.

“The demons of the air, in combination with the Antichrist, will work great prodigies on earth and in the air. Men will become ever more perverted. But God will take special care of his faithful servants and men of good will, the Gospel will be preached everywhere, and all the peoples and nations will know the truth.”

All of this part refers to events that will precede the end of the world, within an undefined number of centuries.

The secret of La Salette says that many scourges, successive wars, pestilence and famine will strike the earth



CHAPTER 14

The Envoys of God



Our Lady and the Apostles of the Latter Days

AFTER DESCRIBING the main lines of human events until the closing of history, Our Lady introduced a new element into the secret. She announced the appearance of the apostles of the latter days, a legion of saints or a unique religious order that Divine Providence will raise to combat and defeat revolutionary iniquity and sustain the coming *Reign of Mary*.

The secret says: “I direct a pressing appeal to the earth. I appeal to the true disciples of the living God who reigns in heaven. I appeal to the true imitators of Jesus Christ made-man, the only and true Saviour of mankind. I appeal to my children, my true devotees, those who gave themselves to me so that I may lead them to my divine Son, those whom I carry, as it were, in my arms, who live by my spirit. In a word, I appeal to the apostles of the latter days, to the faithful disciples of Jesus Christ who will live despised by the world and by themselves, in poverty and humility, in scorn and silence, in prayer, mortification, in chastity and in union with God, in suffering and ignored by the world. The time has come for them to go out and illuminate the earth. Go and show yourselves as my beloved sons. I am with you and in you, as long as your faith is the light that

illuminates you in these days of misfortune. May your zeal make you hunger for the glory and honour of Jesus Christ. On to the combat, sons of light, little company of those who see these things, for now is the time of times, the end of the end.”

Melanie considered that her mission was to pray, suffer and work for the coming of the apostles of the latter days, and that is what she did until the end of her life. She died conscious that she had not come to know them; but on the other hand, she had full certainty that they would arise. Who will they be?

St Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort and the Apostles of the Latter Days

A number of the greatest saints foresaw, in a prophetic way, the coming of the apostles of the latter days. But no one wrote about them as profoundly as St Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort.

In the *Fiery Prayer* already quoted, he asks God: “Remember, O Lord, remember Thy congregation which Thou did possess from the beginning and thought of from all eternity ... raise up the men of Thy right hand, such men as Thou hast shown in prophetic vision to some of Thy greatest servants — to St Francis of Paola, to St Vincent Ferrer, to St Catherine of Siena, and to many other great souls.”³⁴

In his celebrated *Treatise on True Devotion to the Most Holy Virgin*, St Louis de Montfort presents a divinely inspired vision of the moral profile of those apostles: “But who shall those servants, slaves and children of Mary be?

“They shall be the ministers of the Lord who, like a burning fire, shall kindle the fire of divine love everywhere.

“They shall be ‘like sharp arrows in the hand of the powerful’ Mary to pierce her enemies (Ps. 126:4).

“They shall be the sons of Levi, well purified by the fire of great tribulation, and closely adhering to God (1 Cor. 6:17), who shall carry the gold of love in their heart, the incense of prayer in their spirit, and the myrrh of mortification in their body. They shall be everywhere the good odour of Jesus Christ to the poor and to the little, while at the same time, they shall be an odour of death to the great, to the rich and to the proud worldlings.

“They shall be clouds thundering and flying through the air at the least breath of the Holy Ghost, who, detaching themselves from everything and troubling themselves about nothing, shall shower forth the rain of the word of God and of life eternal. They shall thunder against sin; they shall storm against the world; they shall strike the devil and his crew; and they shall pierce through and through, for life or for death, with their two-edged sword of the Word of God (Eph. 6:17), all those to whom they shall be sent on the part of the Most High.

“They shall be the true apostles of the latter times, to whom the Lord of Hosts shall give the word and the might to work marvels and to carry off with glory the spoils of his enemies. They shall sleep without gold or silver, and, what is more, without care, in the midst of the other priests, ecclesiastics, and clerics (Ps. 67:14); and yet they shall have the silvered wings of the dove to go, with the pure intention of the glory of God and the salvation of souls, wheresoever the Holy Ghost shall call them. Nor shall they leave behind them, in the places where they have preached, anything but the gold of charity, which is the fulfilment of the whole law (Rom. 13:10).

“In a word, we know they shall be true disciples of Jesus Christ, walking in the footsteps of his poverty, humility, contempt of the world, charity; teaching the narrow way of God in pure spirit, according to the holy Gospel, and not according to the maxims of the



Statue of St Louis de Montfort in
St Peter's Basilica, Rome

world; troubling themselves about nothing; not accepting persons; sparing, fearing and listening to no mortal, however influential he may be. They shall have in their mouths the two-edged sword of the word of God. They shall carry on their shoulders the bloody standard of the Cross, the Crucifix in their right hand and the Rosary in their left, the sacred Names of Jesus and Mary in their hearts, and the modesty and mortification of Jesus Christ in their own behaviour.

“These are the great men who are to come; but Mary is the one who, by order of the Most High, shall fashion them for the purpose of extending his empire over that of the impious, the idolaters, and the Mohammedans. But when and how shall this be? God alone knows. “As for us, we have but to hold our tongues, to pray, to sigh and to wait: ‘With expectation I have waited’ (Ps. 39:2).”

La Salette and the Treatise on True Devotion

The story of the *Treatise on True Devotion to the Most Holy Virgin* is similar to that of the apparition of La Salette. This is a masterpiece by one of the greatest Marian doctors in all history. It places voluntary slavery of love to the Most Holy Virgin at the heart of true devotion to her, and describes the apostles of the latter days as paradigms of that Marian slavery.

St Louis de Montfort wrote it at the beginning of the 18th century. But after his death in 1716 the manuscript disappeared and was forgotten. The saint himself foresaw that this was going to happen. That disappearance lasted for more than a century. The manuscript was found on April 22, 1842 as material was being gathered for the saint's beatification. It was first printed in 1843, just a few years before the apparition of La Salette. The recovery and publication of the *Treatise* providentially converged with the revelation of La Salette

about the apostles of the latter days. The messages of La Salette and the *Treatise* were disseminated at the same historic juncture. La Salette confirms the *Treatise* insofar as the apostles of the latter days are concerned. For its part, the *Treatise* provides a theological framework for Marian devotion, approved by the Church that perfectly fits with La Salette.

The *Treatise* today is a celebrated work much praised by the Holy See, so much so, that the popes have placed a statue of St Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort in the central nave of St Peter's Basilica in Rome.

Melanie, Maximin and the Apostles of the Latter Days

Melanie was the seer who spoke the most about the apostles of the latter days. She had a vision about those apostles and Our Lady dictated a rule for them to her. The distinctive note of the apostles of the latter days would be their spirit of combat against the moral evils so severely reprimanded by Our Lady at La Salette. Melanie tells us: "I saw and I understood that the good God wanted this order to fight against the abuses which led to the decadence of the clergy and the religious state as well as to the ruin of Christian civilization."³⁶

There were a number of failed attempts by Melanie and others to found or at least lay the foundations for the institute of apostles of the latter days. Nevertheless, until today there is no institute that fits the appeal of Our Lady. The persecution against La Salette certainly had a bearing on that. But when the moment comes for Providence to execute its great designs, all human opposition is futile.

Maximin wrote down just a few characteristics of the apostles of the latter days. In a letter of 1858 in which he declined the imposition of Bishop Ginoulhiac to be quiet about the secret of La Salette

under pain of being expelled from the seminary and not ordained a priest (as indeed happened), he wrote: "God would not give me a priestly vocation diametrically opposed to the vocation that came to me from Mary: to make her warnings to her people known everywhere and always according to the circumstances. And there is nothing else for me to do but to be a part of a new religious militia that combats willingly and without constraints but also faces risks and dangers without engaging the responsibility of the shepherds in any way."³⁷

At the End of the World, God Will Send Enoch and Elias

Immediately after announcing the apostles of the latter days, the secret emphasizes the role that Enoch and the Prophet Elias will play in the prophetic horizons alluded to at La Salette.

The Apocalypse teaches that at the end of times God will send two witnesses to fight the Antichrist (Apoc. 11:3 ff). According to an interpretation upheld by saints and traditional exegetes, those witnesses will be the Prophet Elias and the Patriarch Enoch. They are presumably kept in an unknown place and will be sent to earth for a final preaching before the end of the world.

The words of the Prophet Malachias can be invoked in favour of the idea that Elias will be one of the two witnesses: "Behold I will send you Elias the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers: lest I come, and strike the earth with anathema." (Mal. 4:5-6)

The secret then continues, referring to the witnesses: "The Church will be eclipsed; the world will be in consternation. But behold, Enoch and Elias, full of the spirit of God. They will preach

with the power of God, and men of good will shall believe in God and many souls will be consoled. They will make great advances by the power of the Holy Ghost and will condemn the diabolical errors of the Antichrist. Woe betide the inhabitants of the earth! There will be bloody wars and famine, pestilence, and contagious diseases. There will be rains made up of shocking waves of animals, thunderbolts which will shake whole cities, and earthquakes that will swallow up countries. Voices will be heard in the air. Men will beat their heads against walls. They will ask for death, and death will be their punishment. Blood will flow everywhere.

“Who could resist if God did not shorten the time of trial? But God will allow himself to be moved by the blood, tears and prayers of the just. Enoch and Elias will be slain. Pagan Rome will disappear. Fire from heaven will fall and consume three cities. The whole universe will be seized with terror and many will be seduced because they did not adore the true Christ living among them. The hour has come, the sun darkens, and faith alone subsists.

“The time has come, the abyss opens. Behold the king of kings of darkness, the beast with his subjects, claiming he is the saviour of the world. He will arise proudly in the air reaching for heaven. He will be smothered by the breath of St Michael the Archangel. He will fall; and the earth, which for three days will have been in continuous upheavals, will open its bosom full of fire. He will be forever submerged with all those who belong to him into the eternal abysses of hell. Then, water and fire will purify the earth and consume all the works of man’s pride; and everything will be renewed. God will be served and glorified.”

Here ends the secret, which we have transcribed in its entirety.

According to Fathers Laurentin and Cotteville, the image of the “rains made up of shocking waves of animals,” “may signify the dis-

creet but effective unleashing of the devil’s multifaceted actions in our days.” In fact, the image could be applied to the present chaos and the monstrous situations it generates, continuously besetting mankind like a heavy rain, as can be seen, for example, in the media.

Regarding the end of the Antichrist as he attempts to rise up to heaven, Melanie once told Fr Combe: “St Michael the Archangel will appear with an army of angels of unequalled splendour crying out: ‘*Quis ut Deus?* Who is like unto God?’ The devils will immediately lose their lustre and strength and will withdraw from the Antichrist who they were maintaining with their power. An immense flame will come out of the earth opening up at the feet of spectators in the first row where they are arranged according to their dignity and opulence. They will be engulfed along with the Antichrist and the devils by a vast crater which will then close over them.”³⁸

End of the Apparition: Our Lady Rises to Heaven

After those words that closed the secret, Our Lady communicated to Melanie the rule of the apostles of the latter days and continued with the public part of the revelation. Finally, before disappearing, the most holy Virgin confirmed the seers in their mission of spreading the secret: “Well then, my children, you shall communicate all this to my people.”

CHAPTER 15

After the Apparition



AT TIMES one can think that the life of someone who has seen Our Lady must be like heaven on earth, devoid of all struggles and trials. In the case of Melanie and Maximin, their lives undoubtedly were filled with manifestations of divine predilection. But they also suffered a great deal; they were persecuted by diabolical hatred and the action of revolutionary anti-Catholic associations. And it is painful to note, they were persecuted also by priests, bishops and even cardinals who adhered to the ideas that would come together to form the disturbing progressivism of our days, ideas which the Blessed Mother pointed out as one of the causes of God's wrath.

Here are some examples. In 1853, Fr C. J. Deleon, a priest under interdict, published two volumes without ecclesiastical authorisation attributing the apparition to a montage of a pious young lady, Constance Saint-Ferreol de Lamerliere, who was said to have deceived the children. The Church condemned his far-fetched book, and Constance went to court to have her name removed from it. All levels of the judiciary refused her petition without explanation. This makes clear that for the French judiciary La Salette was a religious fraud.³⁹

Cardinal Louis de Bonald, primate of France and a liberal leader went so far as to write that the apparition was a fraud because it

aimed to exploit commercially the waters of the fountain that began to flow uninterruptedly at the place of the apparition. When caught red-handed giving the Holy See false information about the case (to say the least), the cardinal went silent, but his insinuations and denials poisoned Catholic circles against the apparition and the seers.⁴⁰

Faithful Witnesses of the Vision

In the years following the apparition, the two children indefatigably repeated the public message of Our Lady to the pilgrims who went to La Salette. Those who knew them report that they acted their age but became transformed when they spoke about the apparition.

Two months after the apparition, more than two hundred ecclesiastics had already interrogated the seers in the very place of the heavenly event. Prudent observers were very well impressed with the naturalness and humility of the seers.

Canon Rousselot, honorary vicar general of the Diocese of Grenoble, was charged by the bishop to preside over the official investigations. He analysed at length the personality and character of Maximin and emphasized his unpretentiousness: "In a word, this child does not seem to perceive at all that he has been an object of the curiosity, solicitude, attention and accolades of a numerous public. He is totally oblivious of being a primary cause of the prodigious flocking of people that takes place in La Salette every day."⁴¹

Only God Can Give Children Such a Language

Fr Felix Repelin, professor of rhetoric at the minor seminary of Embrun, tried for three hours to see if the little seers would let

down their guard and tell something of the secret. For this end he suggested to Melanie that the figure that had appeared might have been a bad spirit wanting to sow disorder in the Church. Melanie responded immediately: “But sir, the devil does not wear a cross!”

The learned ecclesiastic insisted, by calling to mind that during the temptation in the desert the devil carried Our Lord to the top of the temple. “No, sir,” Melanie answered, “the good God would not allow his cross to be worn that way. It was by the cross that He saved the world.”

Later, Fr Felix wrote: “The self-assurance of this child, the profundity of her answer, whose full beauty she perhaps did not perceive, closed my mouth.”

But Fr Felix returned to the charge and asked: “Melanie, does your guardian angel know your secret?”

“Yes, sir.

“Well, then, someone knows it ...

“But my guardian angel is not part of the people.

“But if the guardian angels know it, we shall one day come to know it also ...

“Well then, have him tell it to you,” answered Melanie, smiling.

The same priest learned that Maximin was one day very much touched by a representation of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ; and that in subsequent days he let slip three or four times: “I saw something of my secret.”

Fr Felix recalled those words to Maximin, who acquiesced: “Yes sir, I did say that.

“Ah, then your secret has to do with the Passion of Our Lord!

“Ah, it refers to that and to something else!

“But it must have some relation with what you saw ...

“But sir, you don’t know what I saw before, during or after!

“I could come to know it by collecting information from the people ...

“Do your best.”

In the face of that precise and quick response, Canon Repelin wrote the bishop: “We don’t know what else to add. We see that it would be impossible to gather all the circumstances and separate those that might have some relation or other with their secret. It seems to us that only God could give children such language.”⁴²

In November 1846, Fr Pierre Chambon, rector of the minor seminary of Grenoble, makes a similar deposition: “Until the present these poor children have been admirably faithful to the secret. In spite of the candour and simplicity, we have been truly impressed by the surprising resources that they muster to defend themselves when pressed. They have easily defeated all our traps and tricks. It was impossible for us to get around them.”⁴³

Victorious Resistance

Those attempts came not only from well-intentioned churchmen acting out of duty. There were plenty of unbelievers or ill-wishers who tried to catch the children in contradiction or trick them into violating their obligation to secrecy. The supernatural showed so clearly in their answers that even the evil people were overwhelmed with a mixture of confusion and admiration.

An exemplary case was that of Fr Dupanloup. He was a French liberal leader who, during the First Vatican Council as Bishop of Orleans was a leader of the opposition to the proclamation of the Dogma of Papal Infallibility.

Father Dupanloup spent several days with Maximin trying to get the boy to confide the secret to him. He went so far as to put a pile

of gold coins on top of the table and offered them to him if he would violate his commitment with Our Lady. The coins dazzled Maximin because he had never seen such a thing, coming as he did from a family in misery. The pretext for him to accept it was that it would take him and his family out of their indigence. Maximin's reaction was one of such integrity that Fr Dupanloup left in confusion: "I saw that the dignity of that child was greater than mine," he wrote.⁴⁴

The city judge was another such case. He interrogated the two children separately and offered them money to betray the secret and deny the apparition publicly.

"Put your money away," Melanie answered, "I retract nothing and will not disclose my secret."

Then, the judge threatened her with imprisonment. "I'll go to prison," Melanie answered, "but my secret will go with me."

The judge then insinuated something that sounded like a death threat, and she responded: "Mr judge, one dies only once."⁴⁵ The would-be Pilate gave up his efforts.

CHAPTER 16

Maximin's Calvary



MAXIMIN entered the diocesan seminary, where he stood out for his seriousness and piety. A great friend of the French government and a bitter opponent of the apparition, the new bishop of Grenoble, Msgr Ginoulhiac imposed on Maximin as a condition of his being ordained that he never speak again of the apparition and keep silent about the secret forever.

Maximin answered in a letter: "If His Excellency Bishop Ginoulhiac intends to silence me in advance and let me neither act, speak nor write, whereas my mission as an apostle of La Salette makes it obligatory for me to do so, he should give it much thought before manifesting his opinion. Such an intention in my superior would be a positive sign that I do not have a vocation. God would not give me a priestly vocation diametrically opposed to the one that comes to me from Mary: that of disseminating her warnings to her people according to circumstances, always and everywhere."⁴⁶ The bishop then expelled him from the seminary.

Maximin tried to study and work in Paris and Le Havre. But wherever he went he was followed by slanders and hostility from anti-Catholic circles and liberal clerics. They spread rumours that he was ignorant, stupid, unstable, drunk and dissolute. Bishop Ginoulhiac went so far as to write to the anti-Catholic Minister of Public

Education accusing the seer of “spreading a bunch of voluntary lies.” The prelate boasted of having expelled him from the seminary as “an act of just severity” that made him “stop his prophetic fantasies.”⁴⁷

The vicar of St Germain l’Auxerrois, a famous parish in Paris, wrote a booklet accusing Maximin of living in concubinage with his adopted mother, a pious woman whose spiritual director, incidentally, was St Peter Julian Eymard.⁴⁸

Personal Messages to Political Figures and Influential Churchmen

Maximin sent personal messages to important figures of the time. He sent one to the Count of Chambord, the pretender to the crown of France, to dissuade him from reigning; another to the Archbishop of Paris, Msgr Darboy, warning he would die by firing squad, as he in fact did at the hands of the communist revolutionaries of the Paris Commune; and he warned Napoleon III that he would soon fall were he to abandon the pope, as indeed happened.

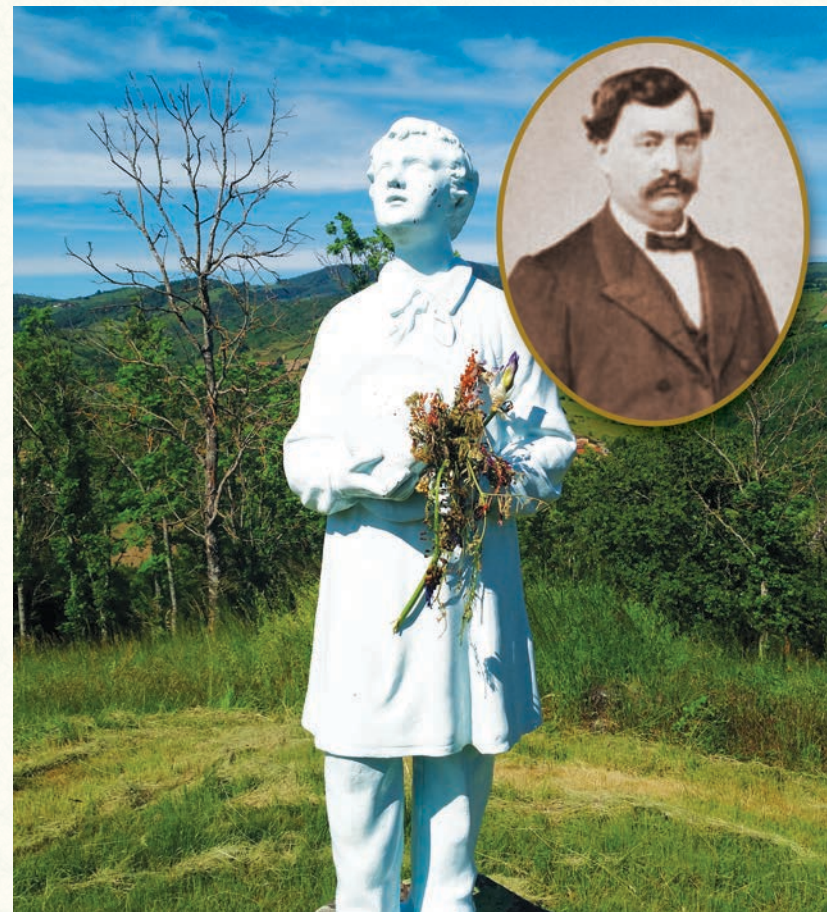
Maximin enlisted in the papal Zouaves, a regiment of volunteers at the service of the Roman Pontiff, but camp life did not correspond to his ideal. In the last years of his life he was taken in by a family in Paris until they lost their house in the communist revolution of the Commune in 1871.

He ended up sleeping in the open and thus contracted the illness that killed him. In his extreme indigence, Maximin asked Bishop Ginoulhiac a shelter where he could die with dignity, but the prelate refused his petition.

While the French government rewarded Bishop Ginoulhiac, “an incenser of the regime” with the primatial seat of Lyon, Blessed Pius IX never made him a cardinal, an honour given automatically to all the archbishops of Lyon.⁴⁹

In complete misery, on March 1, 1875 Maximin gave up his soul to God in his hometown of Corps, at age 39. He left the example of an upright moral life and an indomitable determination to do the will of Our Lady above that of men. His heart was placed in the basilica of La Salette and his body laid to rest in the small cemetery of Corps, where it remains.

A statue outside the Chapel of Our Lady of La Salette of Maximin Giraud, who would die in 1875 at age 39



CHAPTER 17

Melanie's Calvary



MELANIE entered the Sisters of Providence in Corenc, today part of the suburbs of Grenoble. She did not intend to become a cloistered nun because she wanted complete freedom to disseminate the secret of La Salette. The sisters were edified with her virtues and supernatural gifts. Melanie had received the stigmata at the age of four; and the Child Jesus, whom she called “my little brother,” appeared regularly to advise her. The sisters decided to accept her solemn profession.

However, Bishop Ginoulhiac demanded that she keep forever silent about the message of La Salette and not disclose the secret on the date set by the Blessed Mother. Since Melanie refused that imposition, on the day of her profession the bishop sent her to visit the Abbey of the Grand Chartreuse. On her way back, the seer noticed that her colleagues had made the vows and she had been left out. Bishop Ginoulhiac then advised her to enter the Carmel of Darlington, England. It was an exile, but Melanie accepted it in the spirit of obedience.

The Carmelites in Darlington were amazed at Melanie's uncommon supernatural gifts, as well as the constant siege she suffered from the devil. She made the vows with the indispensable reservations to guarantee the disclosure of the secret.

Melanie Calvat who died in 1904 aged 72 years



Melanie did not know it, but Bishop Ginoulhiac had ordered her spiritual director, under pain of interdiction, to give him her letters containing matters of conscience. When the appointed year of 1858 was drawing closer, she felt locked up in a prison and sent letters to the authorities in every way she could, even by throwing them over the walls of the cloister. Her enemies greatly exploited that fact, but the Bishop of Exham granted her the necessary permission and Pope Pius IX confirmed her exit from the cloister.

She returned to France but was unable to find tranquillity, being always under pressure not to divulge the message. In 1858, as Our Lady had ordered, she sent the full text of the secret to Blessed Pope Pius IX. She also provided for its publication in Marseilles in 1860. And in Lecce (Italy) it was published in 1879 with an imprimatur by the Servant of God, Msgr Zola. Threatened with excommunication by a bishop opposed to La Salette, Melanie established herself in southern Italy, where some bishops protected her.

Having to change from diocese to diocese brought even more slanders. She was accused of being proud, egocentric, hysterical, errant, deceitful, masochistic, anti-Semitic, living in concubinage with priests, and being seen in a house of prostitution.

In Italy, Melanie cofounded the women religious of Divine Zeal, who among other things are destined to pray for the coming of the Apostles of the Latter Days. The night of December 14 to 15, 1904, at age 72 she died in Altamura, province of Bari (Italy), alone in a room as she had predicted. That night her neighbours heard an angelic chant echo in her apartment.

Denied, vilified, defamed and persecuted by some but appreciated, defended and protected by virtuous persons and even saints, Melanie and Maximin appear at Our Lady's feet in the countless images of La Salette venerated throughout the earth.

CHAPTER 18

The Opinions of Contemporary Saints



Blessed Pius IX

WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN the categorical and touching reception Pope Pius IX gave the message in 1851. He defended it against the strongest onslaughts. That decisive support by Blessed Pius IX to La Salette became patent on August 30, 1854. On that date he sent Msgr Ginouilhac, then Bishop of Grenoble and an active opponent of the message, a letter exhorting him to defend devotion to Our Lady of La Salette and its message:

“It is manifest that by words and writings of unknown men, a suspicion of falsehood is now raised against the event of La Salette, and that even the veneration of Our Lady of La Salette practiced on that mountain is called into question ...

“Multiply your zeal, venerable brother, so that the filial piety and devotion to the Queen of Heaven and Sovereign of the world which so happily flourishes in your diocese is maintained and increased every day. And if the need arises, it is a duty of your office and your pastoral solicitude to inform your flock about the dangers that threaten this devotion and to caution it against them.”⁵⁰

An episode narrated by Canon A. Ferrier, from Grenoble, in a letter to Canon Pierre-Joseph Rousselot, of the same diocese, also

indicates very clearly the holy Pope's state of mind: "His Holiness spoke to me at length and with great interest regarding matters pertaining to La Salette. He himself told me about an extraordinary cure of a Roman lady by virtue of the water from La Salette. The Holy Father asked me if there still were opponents [of the message], to which I answered that it is proper to the truth to be contradicted, but that God appears to make use of such contradictions to his own advantage."⁵¹

Blessed Pius IX granted numerous indulgences and privileges to pilgrims and to the shrine of La Salette.

St Pius X

Melanie died in the beginning of the pontificate of Pope St Pius X. On that occasion, the semi-official Vatican daily, *L'Osservatore Romano*, published a great eulogy of the seer. The French religious press, dominated by the enemies of La Salette, censored the article. Here are some excerpts from that eulogy:

"[Like] A new Joan of Arc who, with a heavenly mandate from Mary freed her motherland from shameful servitude to foreigners, also she [Melanie] was given by Mary the task of leading her country, caught in the web of the infernal serpent, to the sweet empire of Jesus Christ, King of kings.

The secret — which together with her colleague Maximin she had never agreed to reveal by order of Mary Most Holy — she did reveal when the designated time came, though knowing she would attract the ire of those who, lost by their bad customs, had joined the ranks of the Masonic sect. The formerly timid damsel had no fear to fulfil the mandate; and like the prophets of perfidious Jerusalem, in exchange she received insults, persecutions, exile; and from that

moment onward she led an errant and suffering life in several countries of Europe ...

"As her death is announced, may her country, once so ardent in the faith, arise and listen to the celestial voice inviting it to salvation, and to destroy forever the yoke of the infernal sect that leads it closer to the bottom of the abyss every day!

"Melanie, now immersed in the torrent of God's eternal light, having left behind the pains suffered on account of her brethren, is now forever with Mary, the Heavenly Queen, imploring Her to come once again to the aid of her beloved country. Direct to us from heaven your benign gaze, O candid dove who we have known too late."⁵²

When Msgr Cecchini (bishop who presided over Melanie's funeral) visited St Pius X, the holy pope asked for news of the seer thus: "And what about our saint?"⁵³

St John Bosco

St John Bosco (1815-1888) published a book about the apparition of La Salette and its good effect on Catholics. In it he wrote:

"A certain and marvellous event confirmed by thousands of persons who can certify it even to this day, is the apparition of the Holy Virgin on September 19, 1846. This Mother full of love showed herself to two children in the form of a beautiful lady ... She revealed herself on a mountain of the Alps range ... for the sake of France ... and of the whole world.

"She did it to warn that the wrath of her Divine Son is inflamed against men, especially for three sins: blasphemy, profanation of Sundays and holy days of obligation, and the transgression of the laws of abstinence.

“Prodigious facts have confirmed that apparition and have been recorded in public documents or attested to by people whose sincerity and faith exclude all possibility of doubt about the case. These facts are precious to confirm the adhesion of the good to religion and to refute those who, perhaps out of ignorance, try to set limits on God’s power and mercy by saying this is no longer a time for miracles.

“Jesus promised that in his Church there would be miracles greater than those that He himself worked. He did not limit the number or the times when those miracles would be worked, so that as long as the Church exists we will always see the Lord’s hand manifesting his power through prodigies ... But these sensible signs of divine omnipotence always presage grave facts that manifest either the mercy and goodness of God or his justice and indignation; all this, always for his greater glory and the greater good of souls.

“Let us thus proceed so they be for us a source of graces and blessings, contributing to excite in us a lively and active faith that leads us to do good and avoid evil so we can become worthy of infinite mercy in time and in eternity.”⁵⁴

St John Maria Vianney

The celebrated Cure of Ars, St John Maria Vianney (1786–1859) was ordained priest in the cathedral of Grenoble, the diocese where the marvellous apparition took place. Slanderers accused him of being an opponent of La Salette.

On a certain occasion, Maximin was introduced to him in haste and a misunderstanding occurred that was used against both of them.

In order to dispel that confusion, the Bishop of Grenoble, Msgr Bruillard, sent the holy priest a letter asking him to deny the hearsay.

St John Maria Vianney responded with a letter manifesting his devotion to the apparition:

“Monsignor, I have great confidence in Our Lady of La Salette. I have them bring me water from the fountain. I bless and distribute large quantities of medals and images depicting that event. I distribute small pieces of the stone on which the Holy Virgin is said to have sat. I carry one of them with me and even had it set into a reliquary. I often speak about the apparition at church. It seems to me, Monsignor, that few priests in your diocese have done for La Salette as much as I have. (Ars, December 5, 1850)”⁵⁵

St Peter Julian Eymard

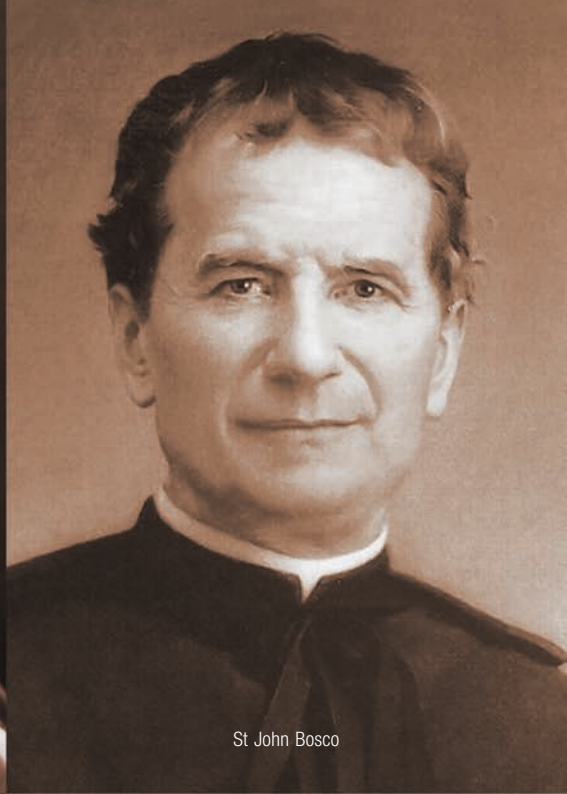
An ardent apostle of Eucharistic adoration, St Peter Julian Eymard (1811–1868) was born in La Mure, a city about 25 miles from La Salette. He was ordained a priest by the same Bishop de Bruillard and was a witness to the cure of Marguerita Guillot, who had invoked Our Lady of La Salette. He entered the Society of Mary (Marists) and later, after a pilgrimage to La Salette he founded the Congregation of Priests of the Blessed Sacrament. He knew Maximin and was the spiritual director of the seer’s adoptive mother.

He died in his native town on August 1, 1868. His last gesture was to press an image of the apparition against his chest.

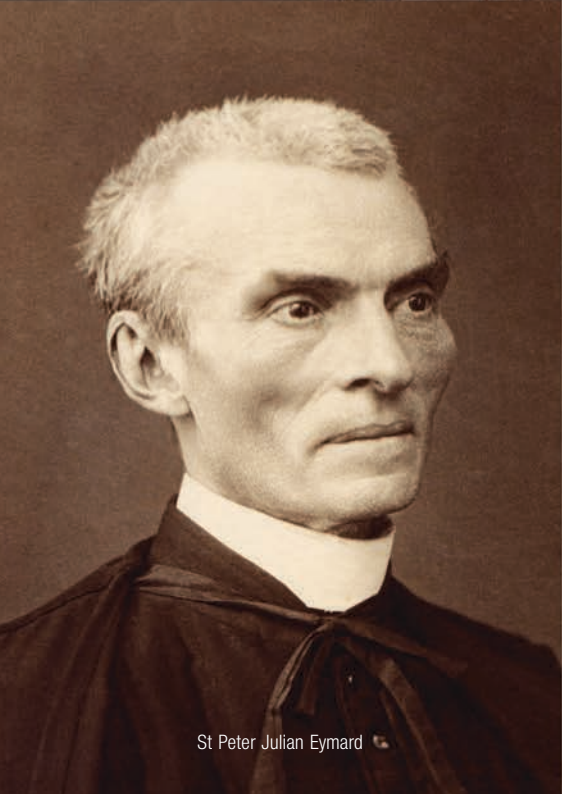
On the visitor’s book of the shrine of La Salette, he wrote: “I had the honour of being the first in Lyon to proclaim the miraculous fact of the apparition. And today I am happy to come and kiss this blessed land, this mountain of salvation with love and gratitude ... If I were not a Marist I would ask my bishop as the highest favour to consecrate myself, body and soul, to the service of Our Lady of La Salette.”



St Pius X



St John Bosco



St Peter Julian Eymard



St Anibal Maria Di Francia

St Anibal Maria Di Francia

St Anibal Maria Di Francia (1851-1927), the apostle of prayer for priestly vocations, considered Melanie as cofounder of his congregation, the Daughters of Divine Zeal of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, known as Rogationists. He wanted the prayers and sacrifices of the nuns for priestly vocations to prepare the coming of the apostles of the latter days.

St Anibal made the funeral eulogy of the seer at the cathedrals of Altamura and Messina, Italy, on the occasion of her burial. He also opened a house of the Daughters of Divine Zeal in Altamura to have her mortal remains buried in a chapel of the order. He prepared the seer's process of beatification but was unable to introduce it, as he himself was called to Heaven.

The testimony of St Anibal Di Francia is extraordinary, as he was the seer's spiritual director and confessor during the last years of her life. He knew many of her secrets of conscience and was able to analyse the qualities of her soul.

On September 19, 1920 St Anibal gave an historic sermon on the occasion of the transfer of Melanie's mortal remains to the monumental tomb he built for her in the Church of the Immaculate in Altamura, where they can be visited to this day.

Below are some excerpts of that sermon:

“You are aware of how, when she reached the age of 15, there occurred on the mountain of La Salette in France the famous apparition of the most holy Virgin Mary ... As soon as it became known, that apparition shook the two worlds with sacred terror. The threatening words of the Mother of God, the way she appeared, as a lady in tears immersed in the greatest sadness, the scourges she announced, the two mysterious secrets that she confided to the little shepherds,

all contributed to impress the souls of the faithful throughout the world, to move them deeply, and penetrate them with a salutary fear of God. In a short time, churches arose dedicated to the most Holy Virgin of La Salette in France, Italy, Austria, Spain and all of Catholic Europe and even in the faraway Americas.

“Stations and sacred images were made representing her in the three positions in which she had appeared: Seated upon a rock with her face between the palms of her hands, standing erect, speaking to the little shepherds; and rising up to heaven to disappear in a cloud of splendour. Quite soon, confraternities with the title of La Salette were formed, annual feasts were established, and holy shrines whence the glories of the dolorous lady of the French Alps shone forth ...

“But in the midst of all this spectacle of devotion and general love, a creature appeared before the eyes of all as an ideal of innocence that rises up to heaven, a creature that became transformed almost into an angel, as if reflecting the super human rays of the Queen of heaven and earth: Melanie! This name, which is so beautiful, sweet and suave to pronounce, was on everyone’s lips. A little shepherd that went alone up the inaccessible mountains of the solitary Alps on the slopes of Savoy, who herded and tended little lambs and cattle, was marvellously visited by the great Mother of God, who spoke to her, confided a secret to her, captivated her with her presence, and who stuck in her young heart a dart of the pain that pierces the sorrowful Mother of God and men.

“And this is how the faithful of the whole world see her, informed by the moving account of that sacred event. All of that, my brethren, attracted and ravished men’s hearts with sentiments of affection and a holy and intimate empathy with nothing profane about it, in relation to the privileged maiden.

“Oh how many long to see her, hear her speak, and kiss the hem of her dress! She said to me one day, with much simplicity: ‘I was told once that after the apparition I would be transformed into a sign of praise and admiration but I haven’t noticed anything!’ “Everyone believed that it was the apparition of the Holy Virgin that opened the mind of the humble daughter of Pierre Calvat to the knowledge of heavenly things. And for that very reason, after the apparition she was accepted into a school of nuns to be instructed. But they were mistaken.

Melanie Calvat, as she herself wrote in her memoirs under obedience, a text overflowing with the strictest truth, saw the Infant Jesus regularly from the tender age of one.

“She would go tottering out moved by a mysterious instinct, to nearby woods where she fell down and the child Jesus would lift her up and lead her back home. She didn’t understand anything of that but she understood it quite well when she reached the age of three. Expelled from her father’s house, she took refuge in the forest and remained there for twenty days. In a sublime vision the first night the Child God showed her a future full of thorns and crosses of all kinds that awaited her. It was in those woods that the Divine Master, calling her ‘sister of my Heart,’ nourished her by giving her violets to eat and instructed her in the rudiments of the Christian religion, beginning with the sign of the Cross.

“It was in that forest that He invited her to gather flowers. Again it was in that forest — listen well, my dear ones and be filled with amazement — it was in that forest that when she had not yet reached five years of age the Child Jesus appeared to her with the same age. After he had told her of his painful Passion and stirred up in her the most ardent desire to be crucified with him, she said: ‘Give me, give me my brother thy wounds and thy thorns.’ The Divine Mas-

ter crowned her with thorns and pierced her little hands, feet and heart with the sacred stigmata. What an admirable, singular, perhaps unique grace it is to receive those wounds of love at less than five years of age! ...

“Two years before the most holy Virgin appeared to her on the mountain of La Salette, she had a marvellous vision of the Blessed Trinity in which God the Son, in the presence of God the Father and the Holy Ghost, with the attendance of the blessed Virgin Mary and rows of angels, virgins and saints, put a wedding ring on her finger. At that moment she was kneeling in a remote field where the flock of her employer was grazing.

“But the apparition at La Salette tore her from her beloved solitude and exposed her to the sight of the whole world. A new kind of life opened up for her, one full of tribulations but also of new divine charisms ...

“We do not believe that our mission in relation to the pious servant of God has ended. We have been careful to make sure to bury the mortal remains of Melanie Calvat with all the rites required by Holy Church for those who die in the odour of sanctity, so that the informative process on the heroic virtues and prodigies of the servant of the Lord may begin.

“And the prodigies were not long in coming. It seems that Melanie had the gift of miracles during her lifetime and that she had it even after her death. She had already worked a spectacular miracle in Taormina, province of Messina, where we have an orphanage, on a girl who was dying of a grave ulcer in her stomach and had already received the Viaticum and extreme unction. She appeared in person, saying: ‘I am Melanie, and I come to cure you.’ She touched her and cured her instantly. That sudden and total cure was attested to by the two physicians in attendance. There are other prodigious graces ...

“Do not leave such a treasure in oblivion. Come to this tomb expecting something through the intercession of this servant of God. Know that all of France will be filled with a holy envy of us on the day when, as we hope, this tomb will no longer be glorified with your simple visits, those of town folks and future daughters of this pious institute, but also with the visits of pilgrims from various peoples other than the French who will come here to honour the blessed little shepherd of La Salette when Holy Church raises her to the altars surrounded with the luminous hallow of the saints.”⁵⁶

Venerable Leon Papin-Dupont

Leon Papin-Dupont (1797-1876), a French aristocrat known as the ‘holy man of Tours,’ promoted crusades of reparation for blasphemies in France and the construction of a basilica to house the tomb of St Martin of Tours, the patron of France. As a matter of fact, the ancient basilica had been devastated by the Protestants and the French Revolution later razed it and built a street over the tomb of the country’s patron to make sure he would be definitively forgotten.

On March 21, 1983 the Sacred Congregation for the Cause of the Saints proclaimed the heroic character of the virtues of Venerable Leon Dupont. In that decree, the apparition of La Salette appears as one of the events that led Venerable Dupont to grow in virtue and devote himself to the apostolate.

As soon as he heard of the apparition the venerable man urged the pastor of Corps to send him more and more news of it. “Our merciful Mother,” he wrote, “has appeared. Woe betide us! She will find hearts that are harder than the stone of La Salette. This is what one must fear when one knows the state of the world today. But at

the same time one must be sure that a great number of souls are going to find the light once again.”⁵⁷

Venerable Leon Dupont made a pilgrimage to La Salette and returned deeply touched by the spectacle of piety that he saw there. “All of that was positive,” he wrote to a friend, “and gives grounds to think that in the very near future a great blow will be struck against impiety.”⁵⁸

He promoted the creation of the Archconfraternity for Reparation of Blasphemies and Profanations of the Lord’s Day, canonically erected in the diocese of Langres. That association, drawing its inspiration from La Salette, aimed especially to make reparation to the outraged Holy Face of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed Pius IX himself joined the Archconfraternity, thus stimulating its rapid expansion. It was erected in 68 dioceses. The whole family of St Therese of the Infant Jesus joined it.

More Saints and Blesseds

The saints, blessed and virtuous souls who made pilgrimages to La Salette or were devoted to it are almost uncountable. Among them we can mention: St Louis Orione (Dom Orione, 1872-1940); St Leonard Murialdo (1828-1900); St Daniel Comboni (1831-1881); St Madeleine-Sophie Barat (1776-1865); St Marie-Euphrasie Pelletier (1796-1868); St Emily of Rodat (1787-1852); Blessed Jacob Cusumano (1834-1888); Blessed Antonio Maria Chevrier (1826-1879); Blessed Francesco Spinelli (1853-1913); and Blessed Eduardo José Rosaz (1830-1903).

CONCLUSION

Men Refuse to Heed Our Lady’s Call for Penance



THE READING of the complete message of La Salette according to the official texts of the Vatican archives leads us to make a vast series of considerations. When made in a spirit of unconditional fidelity to the Holy Church and respectful admiration for the ecclesiastical hierarchy instituted by Our Lord Jesus Christ they may inspire serious and pious reflections.

Penance ... How very often did the faithful and unbelievers hear this word from the lips of St Bernadette Soubirous at the time of the apparitions at Lourdes. It was already on the lips of Our Lady at the apparitions of Rue du Bac and it is the keynote of La Salette. What the Mother of Mercy said to the world at Rue du Bac, La Salette, Lourdes and Fatima is that prayer, penance and amendment of life placate the wrath of God and ward off wars and calamities. That is not achieved by fearful, shortsighted, or pragmatic concessions in the face of evil.

There is nothing better to calm the divine wrath than prayer and reformation of life in accordance with the Commandments of the Law of God and the good customs of Christian civilization, that is, penance.

How direly the world needs that reform! How insistently, maternally and lovingly Our Lady has been calling for it. And how many

times has it been refused to her. The world refuses that penance but it is never too late to put it into practice. Even late-coming petitions and sacrifices are never too late when addressed to the Mother of Mercy.

May Our Lady of La Salette obtain for us the courage to reject the insidious allurements of universal impenitence, increasingly immoral customs, progressivist subversion and the destructive effects of socialism and communism afflicting Holy Church, our country and the world with chaos and disorder.

At La Salette, Our Lady maternally and lovingly called the world to reform



NOTES

La Salette and Its Prophecies

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1. All the quotes from the message and the secret, as well as the description of the apparition, are drawn from: René Laurentin and Michel de Cotteville, *Découverte du secret de La Salette*, Paris, Fayard, 2002.
 2. Laurentin-Cotteville, op. cit. p. 45.
 3. Idem, p. 213.
 4. Jean Stern, *La Salette — Documents authentiques: Dossier chronologique intégral*, Editions Du Cerf, Paris 1984, vol. 2 p. 45.
 5. Jean Stern, *La Salette — Documents authentiques: Dossier chronologique intégral*, Desclée de
 6. Brouwer, Paris, 1980, vol. 1, p. 155.
 7. Stern, op. cit. vol. I p. 127.
 8. Idem, vol. 1 p. 209.
 9. Idem, vol. 1, p. 241.
 10. Idem, vol. 2, p. 241.
 11. Idem, vol. 2 p. 319.
 12. Idem, vol. 1, p. 217.
 13. Idem, vol. 2, pp. 57-59.
 14. Idem, vol. 2, pp. 92-95.
 15. Idem, vol. 2, p. 97.
 16. Idem, vol. 3, p. 184.

17. Laurentin-Cotteville, op. cit. p. 139.
18. *La Salette examinée à Rome, rélation de Monsieur Rousselot, selon L. Bassett, Les faits de La Salette*, Cerf, Paris, 1955, p. 227 apud 19.
19. Laurentin-Cotteville, op. cit. p. 139.
20. Jean Stern, *La Salette — Documents authentiques: Dossier chronologique intégral*, Editions du Cerf, Paris, vol. 3, 1991 pp. 197-208.
21. Stern, op. cit., vol. 3, pp. 209-218.
22. *La grande nouvelle des bergers de La Salette, vol. 1, L'apparition et le secret* (Pars Dissertatio ad Lauream Facultatis S. Theologiae apud Pontificiam Universitatem S. Thomae de Urbe, Rome, 2000), Téqui, Paris, 2001.
23. *Découverte du secret de La Salette*, Paris, Fayard, 2002.
Pour servir à l'histoire réelle de La Salette — Documents II, Nouvelles Editions Latines, Paris, 1964, p. 17.
24. Sacra Rituum Congregatione, Beatificationis et canonisationis Ven. Servae Dei Elisabeth Canori Mora. Prima positio super virtutibus, Ex Typographia Pontificia in Instituto Pio IX, Roma, 1914.
Iudicium Censoris Theologi super scriptis Ven. Servae Dei Elisabeth Canori Mora.
25. Laurentin-Cotteville, op. cit., p. 235.
26. Idem, p. 49.
27. Archivio Salesiano Centrale, Roma (AS 132 Sogni 1). Also in: P. Giovanni Battista Lemoine, SDB, *Memorie Biografiche del Venerabile Don Giovanni Bosco*, Tipografia S.A.I.D. Buona Stampa, Torino, 1917, vol. IX (Appendice B, pp. 999-1000).
28. Laurentin-Cotteville, op. cit. p. 49.
29. Stern, op. cit. vol. 3, p. 184.
30. *Biografía y escritos de San Juan Bosco*, Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, Madrid, MCMLV, pp. 393-395.

31. Laurentin-Cotteville, op. cit. p. 47.
32. Idem, p. 70.
33. (<http://www.themontfortacademy.org/Pages/FieryPrayerDay>)
34. Laurentin-Cotteville, op. cit. pp. 77 and 71.
35. St Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort, op. cit., idem, ibidem.
36. St Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort, op. cit. pp. 520-522.
37. Laurentin-Cotteville, op. cit., p. 168.
38. Idem, p. 75.
39. Idem, p. 71.
40. Stern, op. cit. vol. 1, pp. 27-28.
41. Idem, vol. 3, pp. 37 ff.
42. Idem, vol. 2, p. 169.
43. Idem, vol. 2, pp. 204-208.
44. Idem, vol. 1, p. 118.
45. Idem, vol. 2, pp. 284 ff.
46. Idem, vol. 2, p. 250.
47. Laurentin-Cotteville, op. cit., p. 75.
48. Stern, op. cit. vol. 3, pp. 227-229.
49. Laurentin-Cotteville, op. cit. p. 106.
50. Idem, p. 27.
51. Idem, p. 139.
52. *Pour servir à l'histoire réelle de La Salette — Documents I*, Nouvelles Editions Latines, Paris, 1963, pp. 38-39.
53. *L'Osservatore Romano*, Dec. 25, 1904, HYPERLINK "<http://www.melaniacalvatdifrancia.net/pdf/ARTOSROM.doc>" <http://www.melaniacalvat-difrancia.net/pdf/ARTOSROM.doc>
54. Laurentin-Cotteville, op. cit., p. 139.
55. *Apparizione della Beata Vergine sulla montagna di La Salette, con altri fatti prodigiosi raccolti JS pubblici documenti per Sacerdote Giovanni Bosco*, 3a. edizione editione, Tipografia ed libreria del Oratorio

di San Francesco di Sales, Torino, 1875.

56. Stern, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 161.

57. HYPERLINK “<http://www.melaniacalvatdifrancia.net/pdf/Monumento.doc>” [http:// www.melaniacalvat-difrancia.net/pdf/Monumento.doc](http://www.melaniacalvat-difrancia.net/pdf/Monumento.doc)

58. Stern, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 270.

59. Stern, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 112.



*Remember the epoch in which Mary
appeared upon the mountain of La Salette.
Wasn't that apparition, on September 19,
1846, like a prelude to greater events?
Look at the people's unrest, thrones overthrown,
Europe shaken, society sliding into the
abyss of ruin. Who has preserved us and will
still preserve us from greater calamities
but She who, coming from on high, descended
upon our mountains to plant here in
some way a sign of reunion and salvation,
a luminous beacon, a bronze serpent
to which pious souls have raised their eyes
to ward off heavenly ire and cure us
of incurable wounds?*

— BISHOP BRUILLARD —

FROM THE PASTORAL LETTER OF
BISHOP BRUILLARD, 1852

It is not in vain that the Mother of Mercy has deigned to visit the children of men. It is not in vain that, facing the disorders that excited the wrath of her Son, she somehow came to take refuge in our mountains, to shed tears, warn us of the chastisements in store for us if we do not convert ... Words coming from on high must have an immense echo and be heeded by all nations ...

