THE VALTORTA ENIGMA

Jean-François Lavère[1]

PREFACE[2]

Our times abound as never before in books! A list of them would be quickly made from the causes they defend, the best and the worst, always with an expression of thought which is communicated in serious words, in order to transmit to others and convince them that what one shares is important for the author and the reader. The goal for the author here is clearly apologetic: to demonstrate scientifically that a work is inspired by God, that this God is the God of Christian revelation, and that this Christian revelation is addressed today to our contemporaries in order to deliver an important message which the Catholic Church should hold of great importance, since it is a charism which many times accompanies and illumines her own history.

This book is admirable in more than its title because, with scientific circumspection, it considers one of the great enigmas, too unknown, of our times: the case of Maria Valtorta, probably the greatest visionary in the history of Christianity! The consequences of this are considerable, because the fundamental light that Jean-François Lavère brings into this work rests on objective facts which are accessible to exact science tied to the most recent and primarily archeological discoveries. For the reader, the conclusions speak for themselves!

This remarkable work could not have been done fifty years ago. Maria Valtorta died in 1961; it was during the blackest years of the War that she was inspired with *l'Evangile tel qu'il m'a été révélé* [*The Gospel as it was Revealed to Me*]. Pope Pius XII, Sovereign Pontiff reigning at that time, issued on this publication a positive discernment: "*Publish this work as it is. There is no need to give an opinion as to its origin, whether it is extraordinary or not; those who read will understand.*" The word of a Pope is not without value and is based on the sentiment that the Pontiff shared with his contemporaries, that this text is orthodox. Pius XII, better than anyone, is the guarantor that the Work [of Valtorta] does not betray in any way the Canonical Gospels and the Magisterium of the Catholic Church; he therefore recommends this reading... Pius XII, however, prudent as befits his functions, specifies: "*There is no need to give an opinion as to its origin, whether it be extraordinary or not.*" The Holy Father did not have at his disposal then an objective tool of analysis which would permit him to affirm the supernatural origin of the Work. However he did not, for all that, close the door to this hypothesis, and even moved in a direction revealing his own intimate sentiments: "*those who read will understand.*"

Today, things have greatly changed. Science has progressed in an incredible way in half a century, and the computer has overturned research in all domains, unifying knowledge, classifying, coordinating analytical data. This has permitted immense progress, notably for the

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[1] Jean-François Lavère, a retired engineer has, for more than ten years, cataloged and meticulously analyzed Valtorta's writings and revelations. *The Valtorta Enigma* is the fruit of his research. *—Trans.*

[2] This Preface by Bishop Johanan-Mariam de Cazanave is excerpted and translated here from pp. 11-17 of Lavère's *The Valtorta Enigma. —Trans.*

phenomena which concern us here: archeology and astronomy. For fifty years, let's say from the end of the last (sic!) war, the state of Israel has encouraged excavations in all directions on most Jewish and Christian sites of its territory, precisely there where Jesus and His apostles tread two thousand years ago. A much more advanced knowledge of these sites has emerged than was available fifty years ago, giving us a multitude of places and new contexts, and details of life styles in what specialists call "Late Antiquity".

It is precisely this which forms the power of the prodigious and patient work of Jean-François Lavère. This work in fact gives evidence of an astonishing agreement between the recent discoveries of science and the visionary descriptions of Maria Valtorta which are spread over thousands of pages: without erasures, without contradictions and in a unity of times and places as demonstrated by very rigorous research. All that, a half century ago: from the depth of her bed of suffering, without documentation and with no connection to a scientific community, this woman "sees" in real time and by a kind of shortcut: describing what some scholars would much later laboriously deduce from archeological data two thousand years old! Names of villages in Aramean, cities and monuments that disappeared and then are found again today, a knowledge of manners and customs, of scenery, attire...a whole context whereby the author of this Work amply demonstrates that this tour de force is impossible if one leaves no place for what the "seer" herself affirms: it is God who shows her, it is Jesus who dictates to her the instructions which accompany [His] illustrating the Gospels without ever betraying them: in their cultural context and often with moving poetry, consecrating the union of the True, of the Good, and of the Beautiful which rises from Christ like water from its source.

We see clearly that the reserve of Pius XII: "*There is no need to give an opinion as to its origin, whether it be extraordinary or not,*" has no longer any place here fifty years later: this Work is of an extraordinary origin. Without that it is simply inexplicable and even unthinkable for scientific objectivity. It is indeed astonishing to note that science could be so rigorous that, in order to remain consistent—and if it wants to remain honest—it must posit as a hypothesis the existence of a supernatural origin to a series of phenomena where the law of causality on which all science is based, is not called into question, but seen to be defective by the very facts which it analyzes. Every miracle enters into this type of process. In the case of Maria Valtorta, after a reading of this brilliant Work, science—which is a tool all the more effective as it gives rise to new facts unrecognized for two thousand years—sees itself, not immersed in epistemological subtleties, but confronted by a brutal contradiction of its own experience: How had this simple woman been able to know what was buried for two thousand years and which emerged again a half-century after her!

This true enigma joins two other great enigmas of Christian history in this domain: one, related to Christ Himself, and the other to the Holy Virgin, His Mother: I mean the Holy Shroud of Turin and the "Tilma" of Our Lady of Guadalupe. There again, it was necessary to await our time for the scientific tools and precision to stumble against facts extremely resistant to the logic of phenomena. Science exhausts itself in refining the analysis of the facts, and the more it advances the more it stumbles on its own contradiction in the demands of its own logic. A moment comes when, to escape absurdity, it is quite necessary to posit the hypothesis of the supernatural and the intuition of its emergence in the field of experience.

Yes, our time is fascinating and complex! The development of the sciences and of technology has brought us the best, but also the worst: well-being, but also the forgetfulness of God which it very often engenders. It has even been said in the West that "God has died"... Many churches are empty. The Christian influence has little by little been marginalized by a certain humanism cut off from its Gospel roots. And yet there remain the great enigmas of Christianity with all the power of a Divine Providence that accompanies the people of believers: the Holy Shroud of Turin does not prove the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and yet it resists a more and more keen scientific investigation, like a permanent question mark postulating a "space", a "beyond", which makes of this prestigious relic an acceptable witness to fortify the Christian faith in the face of the World. The Tilma of Our Lady of Guadalupe also witnesses to us—thanks to contemporary science incapable of explaining phenomena which resist its analysis like an impenetrable wall—that the Mother of Jesus is legitimately the Mother of Saints and of sinners. Mary will probably one day be recognized as co-redemptrix of men through the grace of Her Son. In the framework of the communion of Saints, She is invested with a particular mission till the end of time, as Saint John announces in the Apocalypse.

As for the "enigma", the third one: that of Maria Valtorta, and still for our own time, fifty years after her death it will remain an enigma for science, a witness to the Supernatural which has raised up this magisterial work for us. Yes, for us who await the Return of Christ in the difficult times which must precede it, when "the faith of a great number will grow cold," when a time of persecutions predicted by numerous prophets must come. This witness of a simple and humble soul is offered to us as a journey twenty centuries back in time, to allow us to find again the roots of our faith in the tracks of Him Who walked upon the earth and the water, and Who today walks in our steps, always Living, always there, Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah, Son of David and Savior of men.

Finally, may I still be permitted to evoke the judgment of [St.] Padre Pio, he himself a living miraculous witness of the Christ that he carried within him. This Saint had no need of science or advanced technology to advise those he directed about *l'Evangile tel qu'il m'a été révélé* [*The Gospel as it was Revealed to Me*]: "*not that you can read it, you must read it*"![3] Illumined by the Holy Spirit, could [St. Padre Pio] have advised the reading of a Work which did not come from God? And if it comes from God, should not His "instrument" [i.e., Valtorta] be attentively and quickly examined by the Church as being an authentic witness of Jesus? Should not the Church be the privileged transmitter of the Word of Christ—which continues to incarnate Itself again in our troubled time—by manifesting her solicitude for the charisms? Whereas Pope Benedict XVI recently asked Christians to find again the spirit of Christianity of the Primitive Church, would it seem unreasonable to do it also through the Work of Maria Valtorta, when we know that this [Work] was ordered by Paul VI for the Vatican library? And since we know that Cardinal

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[3] St. Padre Pio's actual reply was: *"I do not advise you to, I order you to!"* [*"Non te lo consiglio, ma te lo ordino!"*]. This was his reply to a spiritual daughter, Elisa Lucchi, when she asked him in 1967**:** "Father, I have heard talk about the books of Maria Valtorta. Do you advise me to read them?" So too, Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta carried Valtorta's *The Poem of the Man-God* with her in her travels, according to her associate, Fr. Leo Maasburg, and told him multiple times to read it! [*cf.* Stephen Austin's "Summa and Encyclopedia to Maria Valtorta's Extraordinary Work"**:** http://www.valtorta.com.au/Defence/Maria%20Valtorta%20Summa%20%26%20Encyclopedia.pdf]

—Trans.

Stanislas Dziwisz testifies that he often saw one of the volumes of *l'Evangile tel qu'il m'a été révélé* [*The Gospel as it was Revealed to Me*] on the bedside table of Pope St. John Paul II?

In any case, many thanks to Jean-François Lavère for this considerable labor which has emphasized the reliability of the "revelations" of Maria Valtorta. Thanks to this indispensable work their supernatural origin seems here to be legitimately established, following upon the analysis of great theologians, like Msgr. Roschini, who have manifested the perfect orthodoxy of her revelations. As to their fruits, which according to Holy Scripture, permit us to judge the tree, they are numerous and of high quality, as received by those who testify that they have better understood the Love of Christ and benefitted from multiple graces in their contact with this Work, so clearly inspired... And that it leads to an authentic spirituality where rises again—the True Tradition—breathed into His first disciples by the Lord, and which we must absolutely find again now as the chaff threatens to smother the good grain! Numerous saints have announced a coming renewal: a return to a poor Church, modest and virtuous, manifesting a true unity far from those pitiable issues of nostalgia or rejection of the Church of our grandmothers! Christ manifested Himself to Maria Valtorta, not to invite us to stroll like a curious tourist, but rather to show us the way of this renewal!

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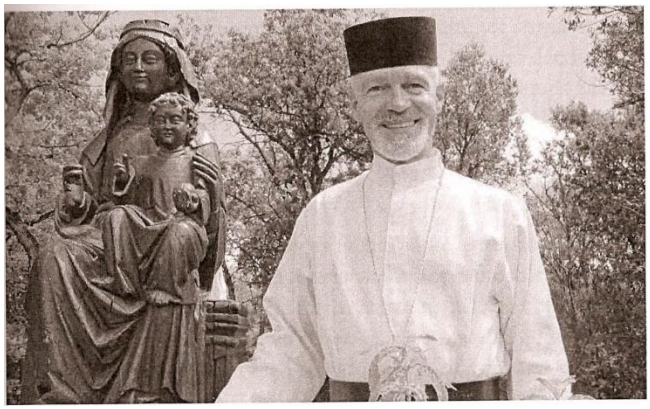
Ash Wednesday, 2012
Msgr. Johanan-Mariam

Msgr. [Bishop] *Johanan-Mariam de Cazenave is a graduate of the "Institut Catholique" of Paris, and of the Paris-Sorbonne University. Secretary of the Syro-French synod placed under the "homophorion" of his Eminence Mgr Joseph Koriloose IX, Major Metropolitan and dean of the Syrian-Orthodox church of the Indies of Malabar. This church, autocephalous since 1771, is under the egis of the orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and of all the East, His Holiness Ignatius IV Zakka, who signed, with His Holiness Pope John Paul II in 1984, some agreements of reconciliation, ending an old schism of 1500 years.* [*cf. L'Osservatore Romano*]