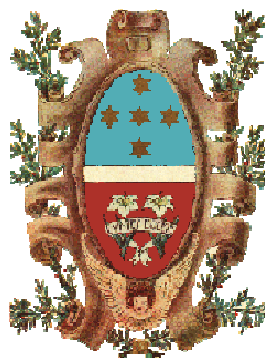


TWO LILIES OF WINTER



Rev. Joseph Charles Henchey, CSS

The Feast of the Holy Spouses, Mary and Joseph - 2009

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Fr. John B. Zaupa [+ January 25, 1958]¹, Novice Master of the Province of the Holy Spouses for several years, was three times elected Superior General: 1922; 1928; 1940. One of the memories that he shared verbally with the Novices, regarding those years when he did so much to develop the formation programs throughout the Congregation, was that 'when the three Novenas were over, spring was coming to Rome!' These 'three Novenas' would have been: that of Christmas sung in the General Curia Church, of St. Agatha's in Rome; that of the Holy Espousals January 23rd – and then the preparation for the celebration of the Stigmata, in those years observed the Friday before Ash Wednesday, usually in February.

In the Stigmatine Seal² which he authorized, there are two lilies representing Mary and Joseph. They are found under the five stars in the field of a blue sky and sea, representing the Sacred Stigmata. The lilies flourish in the part of the seal colored red: the liturgical color for the Holy Spirit, the Apostles, martyrs and may be reminiscent of charity. There has been noted a link between the Infancy narratives where the Shepherds came out of the hills announcing that ***Christ the Lord is born*** [Lk 2:11] – and that Jesus went down to Nazareth and was '**subject**' to them [cf. Lk 2:51, f.; cf. Rm 12:1, ff.]. In the Easter narratives Jesus had not come to do His own will, for His own glory, or to say His own Word – but, that of the Father. The ultimate Easter message by the fishermen apostles is: ***Christ the Lord is risen as He said!***

It is particularly in the second chapter of the ***Song of Songs***, interpreted in the Christian tradition where the lilies blossom and are often understood of Christ:

... I am the flower of the field, and the lily of the valleys. As the lily among the thorns... for winter is now past, the rain is over and gone ... [cf. Sgs 2:1, 2, 11].

In Sirach's classical picture of the splendidly vested Great High Priest of his own childhood years, Simon, is described almost liturgically reflecting the altar of incense. We read:

... And as the rainbow giving light in the bright clouds, and as the flower of roses in the days of the spring, and as the lilies that are on the brink of the water, and as the time of sweet smelling frankincense in the time of summer, as a bright fire, and frankincense burning in the fire... [cf. Si 50:8, ff.].

The great High Priest of Mercy Who is coming, and His Reign is to be a greater and more wise than Solomon in all his splendor:

¹ cf. his Necrology on [Stigmatine web site](#). Cf. also *idem*, ***Brief Chronicle, Volume II, Parts 1 & 2 [1890-1941]***.

² The Stigmatine Seal was authorized in 1923 by our late Father General [cf. **BERTONIANO** of that year], the Very Rev. Fr. John B. Zaupa, CSS.

... Consider the ravens, for they sow no ... and how much are you more valuable than they? ... Consider the lilies, how they grow; they labor not, neither do they spin. But, I say to you not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these... how much more you, of little faith...? [cf. Lk 12:24, ff.]

Earlier Sirach [cf. 39:19, ff.] describes the Lord sharing the Wisdom of His Word in almost liturgical terms:

... By a voice, he says: Hear me, you divine off-spring, and bud forth as the rose planted by the brooks of waters. Give a sweet odor as frankincense. Send forth flowers, as the lily, and yield a smell and bring forth leaves in grace, and praise with canticles, and bless the Lord in His works. Magnify His Name, and give glory to Him with the voice of your lips, and with the canticles of your mouths, and with harps, and in praising Him, you shall say in this manner: 'All the works of the Lord are exceeding good...!'

Indeed, Mary has complied in her great Canticle of Mercy:

... My soul does magnify the Lord and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. Because He has regarded the humility of His handmaid...His mercy is from generation unto generations ... He has received Israel His servant, being mindful of His Mercy... [cf. Lk 1: 46, ff.].

In all this, the prophecy of Hoseah is more than realized for the New People of God:

... I will be as the dew, Israel shall spring as the lily, and his root shall shoot forth as that of Libanus ... [cf. Ho 14:6, ff.]

St. Thomas Aquinas uses the symbol of the lily relatively often, usually in quotations³ - a number of texts might be cited:

- a philosophical text:

... Universal knowledge is a source of deception for us. For example, if we consider the whiteness of lilies, which is common to them and many other things, we are deceived into thinking that being white is identical with being a lily....⁴

- a Mariological text:

I answer that, The pains of childbirth are caused by the infant opening the passage from the womb. Now it has been said above (q. 28, a. 2, Replies to Objections), that Christ came forth from the closed womb of His Mother, and, consequently, without opening the passage. Consequently there was no pain in that birth, as neither was there any corruption; on the contrary, there was much joy therein for that God-Man "was born into the world," according to

³ Roy J. Deferrari, *A Lexicon of Saint Thomas Aquinas, based on the the Summa Theologica and selected passages of his Other Works*. Fitzwilliam NH/ Boonville NY: Loreto Publications/ Preserving Christian Publications 2004, p. 639.

⁴ De Malo, q, 16, a. 6, arg. 16

Isaiah 35:1,2: "*Like the lily, it shall bud forth and blossom, and shall rejoice with joy and praise.*"⁵

- a Soteriological text: interpretation of the Cross:

... and the writing was: 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews ..' [Jn 19:19]. These words certainly befit well the mystery of the Cross, for that which is written:

- **Jesus** which means 'Savior', befits the power of the Cross by which salvation has been realized for us: *And she shall bring forth a son: and you shall call His name Jesus. For He shall save His people from their sins...* [Mt 1:21].

- As for **of Nazareth** which is translated *in flower*, is what is related to the innocence of the One Who suffers: *... I am the flower of the field, and the lily of the valleys...* [Cant 2:1] - *... and a flower shall rise up out of his root...* [Is 11:1].

- As for the title: **King of Jews**, and this title is related to the power of the One Who suffers and to the power that He has merited by His Passion: *... For which cause, God has exalted Him ...* [Ph 2:9] - *He will reign and will be wise...* [cf. Jr 23:5] – *... He will sit on the throne of David and upon his kingdom...* [cf. Is 9:7].⁶

One interpretation of our Stigmatine seal might be: The **white lilies** indicate our Heavenly Patrons, Mary and Joseph - who were committed to the development of the corporal life of Jesus - these are the Models of service, total commitment, self-giving to Christ. For the Stigmatine, these heavenly intercessors are an inspiration for our **service of the Church through the Bishops**. White is the liturgical color for the Resurrection, the Eucharist, Pastors, Doctors and Doctoresses of the Church, as well as for Holy Men and Women - rich symbols all, challenges for each!

Canon Law 687 states:

... Religious life, as a consecration of the **whole** person, manifests in the Church the marvelous marriage established by God as a sign of the world to come. Religious thus consummate **a full gift of themselves**, as a **sacrifice** offered to God so that their **whole** existence becomes **a continuous worship of God in charity...**"

Fr. Bertoni often noted the imagery of changes of season to **the new spring-time** in his beloved Verona, as well as **the nuptial theme** as a means of indicating the union of believers with the Lord, the Eucharist – even though there are no explicit texts of his that speak of the Espousals of Mary and Joseph:

1479: ... THE FINAL END OF THE WICKED: *...and in the time of the harvest, the master will say to the reapers: Gather up first the cockle, and bind it in bundles to burn it...* [v. 30]. **GATHER IT:** This is the end of the wicked. They will first be gathered up, i.e., separated from the good. As long as this life lasts, the cockle and the grain will grow

⁵ III, q. 35, a. 6 c.

⁶ St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Joann.*, c. 19: 19, # 2420 [Marietti ed.]

together, much like *the lily among the thorns* [Ct 2:2]. But, when the Son of Man comes, He will separate the just from the wicked, the goats from the lambs [Mt 25:2] ⁷.

Perhaps from his boy-hood years, with the recurring deaths in the Bertoni household, Fr. Bertoni developed a great sense of the rapid passing of time, as the Italians might say: its *fugacita'*:

583: Do we love honors? But, what greater honor is there than being Temples of God [1 Co 3:16], to glorify and to carry God in our mortal bodies, according to the phrase of the Apostle: [1 Co 6:20]. If so much honor is due to churches because they are the material temples of God's majesty, how much more should a living temple be honored both by the Angels and by other human beings? **Is not such a Temple all splendid, so interior, in which are conducted the most chaste espousals between God and the soul? This was already predicted by His Prophets: ... And I will espouse you to Myself forever... [Ho 2:19, ff.]. I will espouse you in faith, in justice, in charity, as these are the three precious gems with which He adorns her.**⁸...

647: ... *The time is short...* [1 Co 7:29] ... *for the fashion of this world passes away...* [v. 31]. We are taking giant steps forward every day and are preparing for a stable eternity. So, all that we still have to do should be done in great haste [Jn 13:27]. Should we wait for the night, perhaps, before setting down to work [Jn 9:4]? Should we await the arrival of the spouse, in order to provide our lamps which have almost gone out [Mt 25:1-13]? Should we wait until we are invited to the **nuptials** to prepare only then the **nuptial garment** [Mt 22:12]?

648: ... *Behold I come quickly...* [Apoc 22:12]. I am here among you and I bring My reward with me: [ib.]. How happy is that soul who will be adorned and disposed to receive Him Come, He will say, come, **My Spouse, receive the crown that your Lord has prepared for you forever** ⁹: ... *Blessed is that servant whom the Lord, when he comes, shall find watching...* [Lk 12:37]. ... *The Lord will say: well done, good and faithful servant, because you have been faithful over a few things, I will place you over many things...* [Mt 25:2]...*Enter into the joy of your Lord...* [v. 23].¹⁰

Evidently the summer of 1803 was a difficult one for the Veronese – Fr. Bertoni used the imagery to show the workings of grace in season and out of season, in the bright days of spirituality as well as its dark nights, on the sunny days, and the times of the 'soft rain' for the fields, images of how God responds to ardent prayer:

853: Therefore, **all through this year** God was in continuous operation within you, as well as outside. And do you not also think that He was active above you as well? Who is it Who sends

⁷St. Thomas Aquinas, *ibid.*, p. 186/1, about mid-way [this text is from Fr. Bertoni's . **PARISH SERMONS**] - the exposition of the Gospel of the Vth Sunday after Epiphany for the 24th Sunday after Pentecost. This was delivered in the Parish Church of Illasi, on November 8, 1801. It lasted 20 minutes.

⁸ **SERMON 8: The Holy House transferred into our Hearts: or, Our Hearts made Temples of God** Preached on the IIIrd Sunday of Advent, in the Church of St. Paul, Campo Marzio, in the year 1801, on December 13th, for the Solemnity celebrated by the Young Ladies of the Parish at the Translation of the Holy House of Loreto. It lasted 38 minutes.

⁹Liturgy of the Common of Virgins, Vespers.

¹⁰ **SERMON 11: On Devotion**: Preached on the Tuesday after Easter, in the Venerable Church of St. Paul's, Campo Marzio, in Verona, in the year 1801 [1802 ??], on April 20th.

down the timely dew? Who gives power to the sun to fecundate our earth? Who is it who gathers the clouds? And as you can also remember, **are these not greater when the need is the more, when the fields at first seem to be languishing?** Has it not also been so that very inconsiderately this moisture is sometimes absent from the sky, and for many days on end, there was denied that necessary, immediate relief because of the scarce rain?

854: The drought of this past summer lasted unbendingly for many months, scourged our region with fierce force. It seemed to be coming back again, and threatened even more sad and gloomy effects on the season that was not even yet adult and mature, but still tender and in the time of growing. With foreboding the farmers feared with pale face a terrible famine. It seemed to be coming down from the sterile ravines of the mountains. This image was one of a wan, black horse, riding across our plains, having the meager balance in hand, stammering forth severe edicts. It seemed to be already at the gates of this afflicted and unfortunate city, as though to wreak even further his much suffered evils.

855: But then, all of a sudden, as the danger was imminent, recourse was had to our good heavenly Father. He immediately heard these prayers, and repeatedly **bathed the land in good time**. The earth was then able to enrich us with the abundance of its products.

O supremely admirable, and truly lovable Providence of our most pious Benefactor!¹¹

Life is a continuing Advent, a promise of what is to come. The Eucharist is Real Presence, and a Memorial – but also the Promise – the acceptable time has come, listen, repent! As the days get longer, Advent is coming out of the darkness into the ever-expanding light:

961: And how did all of these pass from the melancholy abysses of sin to such luminous heights of holiness? The Word of God came and made Himself a man, to make of that blind gentility so filthy in its vices, **a most beautiful spouse, adorned with virtue and without stains**. First being announced to them, and then **there appeared the grace and gentleness of our savior, Christ**. And then there followed such a prodigious change, worthy of the right hand of the Most High. And who is there among us whose life is so desperate, that he would not take hold of himself in hearing of these great and supreme hopes? Could not anyone rise even higher by the savior's grace? Would it not also be possible for those who had fallen very low by their faults, as appears from **the fact of those early Christians**? Is it not so that among them abounded iniquity and then grace super-abounded?

962: And look, the acceptable time is approaching: there are the days of salvation that are drawing near. I can already note, beloved brothers and sisters, that a sweet and **joyful hope** has come to birth in your hearts. And the happy affections of your joy, love, desire are already moving your spirits. And so you make clear to me that I have already spoken sufficiently up to now. The greater part of you seem to approve this, and that you are waiting the joyful coming of the Savior, and that the time has come that I should descend into more specifics. And I will do

¹¹ **SERMON 21 The Divine Benefits:** For the last day of the year, 1803. - Preached on St. Stephen's Day, in the Venerable Church of St. Paul's Campo Marzio, in Verona, on the left bank.

this most willingly in a few more words. I do this to satisfy you and for your delight, making use of a symbol that sacred history affords me.¹²

The Eucharist is seen as **a nuptial banquet**, welcoming all the prodigal children of God to eternal joy in the Father's House:

1202: This is all well represented in the parable of the Prodigal Son, as was noted quite vividly by St. Ambrose¹³. In fact, when the sinner returned from his escapades quite repentant to the feet of his father, he said: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you'. That loving Father received him and he planted on his visage that mystical kiss of peace. He ordered nothing more than **the nuptial garment of charity and grace**. Put back on his hand **the ring, which is the pledge of faith and the seal of the Holy Spirit**. He prepared for him a super-substantial banquet: **the most pure flesh, the precious Blood of His Only Begotten Son and our Savior, Christ Jesus. With this, he nourishes, reinforces, and recreates him.**¹⁴

The new life provided by the Risen Lord takes some inspiration of **the new spring-time** that is coming after the long harsh winter:

1312: To cite still another example, CORNELIUS a LAPIDE¹⁵ relates the story of the Holy Count, Eleazar, immobile in his mountainous solitude, lived there a celibate life with his virgin wife, Delphina. She sent him letters to find out how he was getting along. He responded: I am healthy of body and safe. **If you wish to see me, look for me in the wound of the side of Christ. For it is there that I dwell; and here it will be easy to find me. You will search in vain in any other place.**

Do you see, my hearers, **the just idea of a person risen with Christ?** Could such a person even yearn for the lowly realities of this life? Could such a one seek for anything else in this life, other than the supernatural and heavenly goods, among which he will live eternally?

1315: We are much like the plants, dry on the outside, and without foliage, without honor, and without the appearance, or the luster of beauty. However, within we have **living roots: charity, planted in God, as in a vital, stable, and living earth**. The **summer** will appear, as the glory of Christ comes. And **the plants will be seen to come to life again, rising up, and once more give their fruits and vital foliage**. There will be the glorious traits of beatitude, both in the spirit as well as in the flesh. Come on now, exclaims St. AUGUSTINE [104], come now, most sweet Jesus, that this pact with You be a firm one for me: that I might die totally to myself so that You alone might dwell within me. Within, totally in recollection, I will keep silence, so that You alone might speak in me. I will be totally at repose, so that You alone might work in me. The Apostle cries out: ... **And I live now, not I; but Christ lives in me...** [Ga 2:20].¹⁶

¹² SERMON 25: The Advent of Our Lord Jesus Christ - For the Second Sunday of Advent, preached in St. Paul's of Campo Marzio, on December 9, 1804. Verona.

¹³ St. Ambrose, *In De Poenit.* L. 2, 3, 17, ff. T. 2, pp. 419, ff.

¹⁴ SERMON 33: The Most Sweet Fruit of Penance -For the Fourth Sunday of Advent, the 22nd of December, in the year 1805, in St. Paul's. It lasted about one half hour. In Verona, on the left side of the Adige.

¹⁵ Col 3:3.

¹⁶ SERMON 38 The Spiritual Life: For Low Sunday, April 5th [98], of the year 1807, Verona, in St. Paul's of Campo Marzio.

For St. Gaspar Bertoni, devotion of prayer to Mary – the prayer for all seasons and stations in life - provides ‘bouquets to the Lord’:

1323: ¹⁷... *as the flower of roses in the days of spring...* [Si 50:8] ...*as a rose planted in Jericho ...* [Si 24:18]: full of grace. *By the odor; the King desired your beauty*¹⁸. - *We will run after you to the odor of your ointments...* [Ct 1:3].

In Tribulation: in the shadow of the rose bed - joyful the rose¹⁹.

A devotion common to all. *Come over to me, all you that desire Me* [Si 24:26]. The *Our Father* and the *Hail, Mary* belong to all: the wise, the ignorant, the nobles, the masses, beginners, the proficient. ‘All other (prayers) are not for all ages, nor for everyone; this prayer, however, fondles the infant, and does not offend the elderly; it exercises the lazy, and does not impede those who are busy; it attracts the powerful and the rich, it does not exclude the poor and the weak, and does not lead the tepid to boredom.’

1324: (The Rosary) is like a garrison for the Church. ‘They surround her with the flowers of the roses²⁰.’ ***Stay me up with flowers.*** [Ct 2:5].

Its excellence: may be derived) from its origin, nature, authority. Institution (by) Mary. Promulgated by St. Dominic, propagated by a religious Order. Its Purpose: to oppose it to heresies. Occasion: the most terrible heresy. Its result was the most fortuitous.

Its nature, various parts. The most excellent prayer is the *Our Father*, (taught) by Christ; the *Hail, Mary*, (taught) by the Spirit; the Mysteries (which are the) motive of being graciously heard, and the means.

In the early autumn of 1810, Fr. Bertoni preached a seminary retreat – in it, he shared his fundamental hope in the Risen Lord:

2632:²¹ **Prelude 1.** Our Lord Jesus arose on the third day to a glorious life and, after having remained on earth for forty days, appearing frequently to His own, in the end He ascended into heaven.

Prelude 2. Imagine that you see Him as He appeared to some of His disciples, so alive, luminous, and with **the scars of His Wounds**²², inviting you, too, to heaven, to where He is planning to return: ***I go to prepare a place for you.*** [Jn 14:2].

Prelude 3. To ask for the grace to participate in this immense joy of the Savior....

2647: **Point 3.** The condition and path to arrive at this.

Christ entered with the **scars of His wounds**²³: this is the price that I paid for this reign: not can it be had for anything less. St. Teresa cries out: It is impossible, just impossible to obtain it in any other way. What do I do for heaven? The life as a priest is a good cross. But if I do not carry out my exercises with that spirit that there should be in this, i.e., out of a motive of love for God,

¹⁷ Notes For Sermon 39: The Rosary

¹⁸ *In Annunt. B.M.V.*, Grad.; cf. Ps 44:2.

¹⁹ Cf. # 6945.

²⁰ In the Feast, Annunt., response. 2.

²¹ cf. The Autumn Seminary Retreat Verona - September 1810 [cf. SpEx, nn. 299; 312].

²² St. Gaspar Bertoni taps into the **integral mystery** of the Sacred Stigmata retained in the risen body of Jesus Christ.

²³ A further reference of St. Gaspar Bertoni here to the integral Stigmata.

or for Paradise: I carry the Cross of Jesus Christ, but I do not follow Jesus Christ, nor will I ever arrive to where Jesus has now arrived.

In the history of the Church, the **Cross** of Jesus Christ has been thought of as the **Royal Throne of Christ the King – the Altar for the Oblation of the Merciful High Priest** – as well as the **Prophetic Podium for the God of Wisdom**. A very special source for Fr. Bertoni's Hope in His Devotions to the Espousals and the sacred Stigmata. may be found expressed in his 'Franciscan Panegyrics' – in which he clearly and repeatedly unites his Devotion to the **Lord's integral Stigmata** and to the **Holy Espousals** with the **Risen Lord**²⁴:

[Introduction: The Saint's Life]

1844: *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.* Mt 16:24.

In what would have been the last 'solemn' preaching invitation of his earthly sojourn would be this **Panegyric in Honor of St. Veronica Giuliani on the Occasion of her Solemn Canonization, delivered in the Church of the Reverend Capuchin Fathers, in Verona, on December 29, 1839**²⁵:

[The Stigmata of the Resurrection and the Eucharistic Espousals]

2131: She never gloried in the wonderful supernatural gifts bestowed on her totally gratuitously, as well as her common endowments, the customary testimonies regarding her holiness: prophecies, miracles, healing from illness. All these were ordained to her holiness, as were her visions, revelations, ecstasies, raptures, throughout her entire life. Hers were such singular gifts: such as the impression of the Cross on her heart, the Chalice of Jesus Christ, the crown of thorns, the wound in her heart with flowing blood, the stigmata, formal espousals with Jesus Christ, communion from the hand of Angels, of Mary the Virgin, of Jesus Christ [192], visible sufferings of the entire passion, an experience of Purgatory [203], a vision of the judgment [69], a vision of Hell [195]. She hid all these things to the best of her ability, in order to flee from the danger of being admired by her peers. And she was also very much afraid of deceptions, even to the very end. *But be zealous for the better gifts: And I show unto you yet a more excellent way.* 1 Co 12:31.

²⁴ Second Panegyric in Honor of St. Francis of Assisi -preached in St. Firmus' Major - Verona, Italy - October 4, 1808 [morning of the Feast?] ²⁴ [The Sorrowful Stigmata: The Joy of the Con-Crucified Spouse of Christ]

²⁵ This would have been St. Gaspar Bertoni's final public address - he took ill at this time and remained so until his death - June 12,1853 - an invalid and for the most part confined to his room. [NB: cf. recent studies on this Capuchin Mystic: Aa. Vv. *Testimonianza e messaggio di Santa Veronica Giuliani. Atti del Congresso Internazionale di studi su santa Veronica Giuliani*. Roma, Pontificio Ateneo Antonianum, 27-31 ottobre, 1982. Roma: Ed. Laurentianum - G.R.A. Km 68.800. 1983. 2 Voumes]. [The level of self-inflicted mortification as described would be considered excessive, in the minds of many, perhaps due to the significant advances made in the Church in the modern theology of saints and the body].

[1. Her Special Graces]

2135: - Better gifts:

- The impression of the Cross in her heart.
- The Chalice of Jesus Christ. When Veronica was 33 years old, the same age as the Divine Redeemer. Before He began His passion, He was comforted by the Angel, so Veronica was by Christ Himself.

- A Crown of Thorns: Christ Himself placed this on her head. This Crown served as a clear sign that she was **to be espoused with the Lord**. The thorns made it clear that she was being called to be the **Spouse of The Crucified God**²⁶.

[2. The Divine Espousals of the Eucharist and the Stigmata of Easter]

2136: - The Divine Espousals: which is a certain, most intimate union between the soul and God, by the most perfect charity. It has been pleasing to the Lord to initiate this with certain great souls and to manifest it with sensible signs, and with certain formalities which are customary in human marriages, as with St. Catherine of Siena and with some other Saints of the highest level. To dispose her the better for such an honor, God generously bestowed on her many graces and visions: those of Jesus Christ Who comforted her and stipulated the **Marriage Pact:** visions of the Virgin Mary. Who appeared to her on a magnificent throne, with St. Catherine and St. Rose, assuring her of her approaching **nuptials**, and showing her the **wedding ring**, and teaching her about the most sublime virtues. On Holy Saturday Jesus Christ also appeared to her, telling her of her **Nuptials on the following day [Easter]**, and showing her also the precious **ring**. He gave her a new rule of life, worthy of **His Spouse**. She spent the intervening night in prayer, and Jesus Christ appeared to her many times, in order to purify her spirit, and to endow her with rich endowments of His merits, given to her as a kind of **dowry**.

2137: When the moment came for **Holy Communion**, in which **the Espousals** were to be celebrated, she was given the grace of hearing the Angels singing a very sweet melody: **'Come, o Spouse of Christ!** In her rapture, she saw two magnificent thrones, one for Jesus, and one for Mary. She saw the immense Heavenly Court: the two Saints were standing at the fore, as maids of honor. St. Catherine and taught her the ritual of that august function. These two saints led her to the throne and vested her in precious garments over her religious habit: the final outer garment was a white dress richly embroidered. Jesus Christ then began: **Come, o Spouse of Christ!** The Blessed Virgin then picked up with the following: 'Accept the crown...', etc. and with these words, St. Catherine began to remove the other garments, and left her in her religious habit. And there was shown to her the excellence of the regular life.

[3. The Wedding Ring from the Glorious Sacred Side]

2138: Then He indicated to His Mother that she should be vested in the wedding garment: and this was a most rich mantle covered with gems. Mary handed this to St. Catherine, and she vested Veronica in it. Jesus Christ then **drew the Wedding Ring from His Side:** the ring, with a gem on which was the Name of Jesus: Jesus Christ with His Mother then slipped it on her

²⁶ This is the title of a very insightful modern theologian's book - cf. Jurgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God*. NY; Harper & Row 1973.

finger: then He blessed it. There ensued the celestial harmony. There was imposed the new rules of a more perfect life. Among its stipulations was that from now on her life would be totally crucified. He made her the mistress of all His treasures, the merits of His actions and sufferings.

2139: - Wounded in her heart, on Christmas, by the Baby Jesus, with a kind of arrow, the blood issued forth, and this was noted various times by the other nuns.

- **The Stigmata**, and the renovation of these at different times, and a prodigious odor which permeated throughout the entire monastery. The Sisters would know from this when the **Stigmata** were being renewed, and the bandages which covered these, gave this sweet odor to the garments in the laundry.

- A Participation in the other sufferings of the Passion.

[a. **Sublime Gifts lived in Charity**]

2140: *But be zealous for the better gifts. And I will show you yet a more excellent way. 1 Co 12:31...*

2142: And Veronica certainly had every human reason to glory for these reasons. She was endowed with such grace.

And she did not glory in those gifts that render one graces: sanctifying grace, holiness: she was endowed with grace from the time of her swaddling clothes. She maintained innocence of life until her death. She was educated by the Virgin Mary and by Jesus Christ, and she was always instructed and moved by them right up until her very last day.

Her infused, theological virtues: in her faith, she yearned for Martyrdom; hope in which she desired death for the assurance of being united with Christ: ***I am having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ*** Ph 1:23. This was so needed in order to overcome the most horrible temptations. She would intercede with God in order to provide miraculously for the monastery. His Charity was so ardent that it extended even to the conversion of her enemies, sinners and the common folk.

CONCLUSION

The Eucharist in its integral understanding is the Memorial of the entire life of Jesus up through the culmination of His Paschal Mystery in the Resurrection and Ascension – leading the liturgical procession of the life of the Church to the Celestial sanctuary in praise of the Mercy of God forever. The Lord descends on our altars as the fulfillment of the New Creation – it is the sweet odor of His abiding presence among us – as well as leading us to offer our spiritual sacrifices made acceptable to God through Jesus Christ [cf. 1 P 2: 4, ff.]. Peter reminds us, in what may be the first Encyclical to the Church:

... For all humanity is grass, all its beauty is like the wild flower's. As grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of the Lord remains forever. [cf. Is 40:6-8]. And this Word is the Good News that has been brought to you! [cf. 1 P 1:26, f.].

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