



*Servant of God*

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## *The Life of Mother MARY MAGDALENE of the Incarnation*

*Sisters of Perpetual Adoration,  
San Francisco, California*



SAN PABLO



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*The Life of Mother*  
**MARY MAGDALENE**  
*of the Incarnation*

Sisters of Perpetual Adoration,  
San Francisco, California

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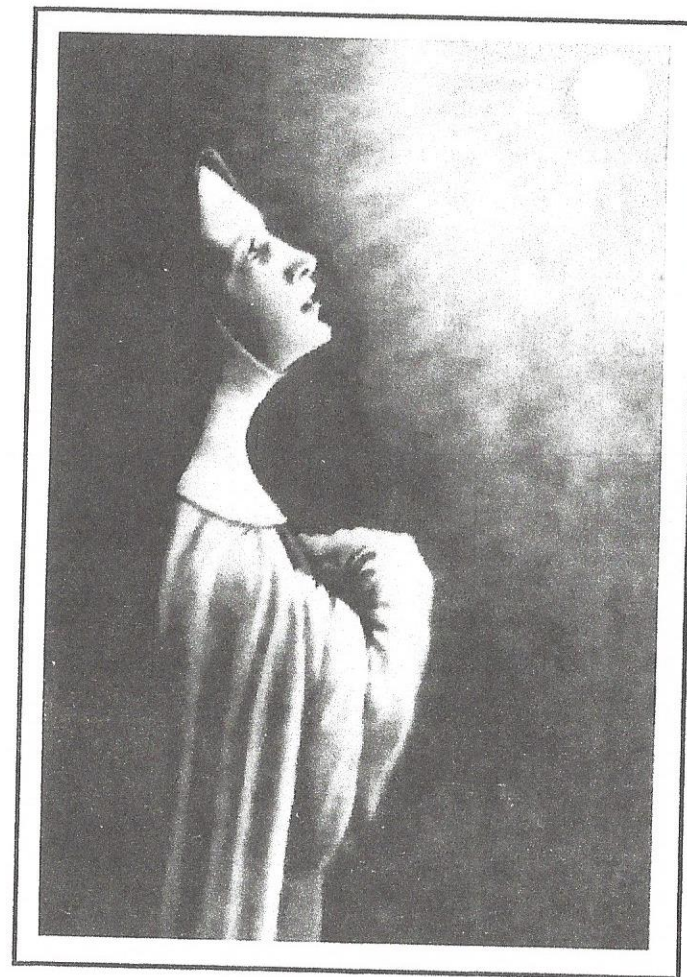
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Mother Mary Magdalene

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## *Introduction*

Caterina Sordini was born in Italy towards the end of the 1700s. She developed a vocation to the religious life and first became a Franciscan nun of the Third Order. Her ardent devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar gradually led her to think of founding an order devoted to perpetual adoration. She was finally able to do this through the advice of her confessor, the cooperation of her local bishop, and the approval of several popes. It was called the Order of Perpetual Adoration and its foundress was known in religious life as Mother Mary Magdalene of the Incarnation.

After the death of the mother foundress, the Order spread from Italy through Europe and crossed the Atlantic to the Western Hemisphere, and there are at present houses in both North and South America as well as Europe and Africa.

In 1928 a group of Perpetual Adorers came from Mexico to San Francisco through the friendly services of Father Dennis J. Kavanagh, S.J. In the following decade Mrs. Andrew Welch built the nuns a beautiful chapel on Ashbury Street, where the community still lives in this year of 2005. The chapel was dedicated in 1937.

The following chapters are only a sketch of Mother Mary Magdalene's very saintly and very interesting career, but this brief narrative rests upon solid historical sources. Not many years after her death, in 1824, her confessor, Father Giovanni Baldeschi, who knew her soul best of all the world, published a biography of his famous penitent. Later, the postulator of her cause for beatification, Monsignor Gaetano Renzetti, wrote still another biography which recounted, among other things, her great fame throughout Italy and the large number of cures and other miracles which were alleged to have been performed through the intercession of her prayers. The following pages narrate the principal events and developments in the life of an extraordinary woman.

## I *Vocation*

Caterina Sordini came into this world on April 16, 1770 in the little Italian seaport called Porto Santo Stefano. The town clusters on the northern edge of a peninsula which thrusts west into the Mediterranean Sea. The southern shore rises to a crest of more than two thousand feet and is called Monte Argentario. Fifty miles northwest floats the small island of Elba, where Napoleon, who was to cause much trouble in Italy and to Caterina Sordini after she became a nun, lived in exile for a few months in 1814.

The Sordinis were well known in Porto Santo Stefano. They were among the more prosperous families and were admired and loved for their genuine Christian virtue. The mother was a woman of deep piety, and the father's dying words to his children were: "Be good to the poor." Therefore, when Caterina was born on that April night of 1770, the glad



news spread rapidly over the village. She was the fourth child. Nine in all were born into this home, but only four survived, and the human race is the better for the fact that one of those who was not snatched away so soon by death was Caterina. At baptism in the village church, this baby received one of those multiple names which Italians and Spaniards seem to delight in: Caterina Maria Francesca Antonia.

Caterina grew up as a lively little girl, full of buoyancy and play. She was as spontaneous and carefree as most children and, like most children, she got into adventures, dangerous or merely troublesome, as the case might be. Once, with her parents, she visited the monastery of the Passionist Fathers which sat upon the slopes of Monte Argentario; she was then three years old. Unnoticed, Caterina strayed into the woods which partly surrounded the monastery. Her mother was distraught, and an eager search was begun. The little girl was soon found engaged in the childlike amusement of picking wildflowers and berries.

At five, Caterina had another adventure, this time more serious. She had been to Mass with her father and sister. On returning home (one of those four-story buildings facing the sea), our little lady did not enter the house immediately, as her father had told her to, but

lingered in the street to watch a group of boys playing. Suddenly were heard the clattering hoofs of a runaway horse. The children ran wildly for safety, but Caterina was knocked down by the animal and perhaps stepped upon. She was badly hurt, and the doctors feared for her recovery. Her good father got the whole village to pray; the Blessed Sacrament was even exposed, and the townspeople made a pilgrimage of prayer to the church that the child might recover. And recover she did, in due course. The good villagers felt that a miracle had been wrought.

The girl grew in health and began taking lessons at the home of a teacher who lived nearby. One morning when her mother was after her to be off to her lessons, Caterina asked for a pineapple which lay on the fireplace mantelpiece near the head of the stairs leading down to the street. The mother said no and went about her household work, but Caterina, seeing her mother's back turned, took the pineapple, hid it under her blouse and turned to run down the stairs, but she tripped and fell. The poor mother saw the child sprawled at the foot of the stairs bleeding from one eye; the pineapple had become dislodged and while Caterina was falling, it was thrust into one of her eyes with such force that the eye emerged from its socket.

Great was the anxiety of the Sordini household and terrific was the pain of Caterina. A physician was called; the eye was replaced, but there was danger of infection because invisible splinters or dirt from the pineapple's rough outer shell might have lodged in the socket, and the physician said she might lose it.

The poor mother was in agony once again. The girl was put to bed and the eye was carefully bandaged. Caterina's arms were pinned down so that she would not try to scratch or loosen the bandages. But the pain was frightful. One day, Caterina succeeded in loosening one of her arms and pressed upon the bandage. The pressure loosened a clot of blood in which a splinter from the pineapple shell was expelled. This was just what was needed. When the doctor returned later, he saw that the inflammation had gone down and told the mother that the eye was saved and that the child would soon be well. So it happened, but Caterina suffered an injury to her right arm which she carried through life.

All of this goes to show that Caterina was a normal child with few inhibitions and a lively and impetuous nature. The pious mother, while thanking God for this fresh recovery, probably wondered what would happen next or what would become of this girl of such vivacious and independent impulses.

This last escapade of hers, which almost proved calamitous, sobered Caterina. She was obedient to her parents from then on; she acquired a certain stability and appeared to be developing consideration and wisdom. She went with her mother to church more often on weekdays, and her prayer was noticed to be thoughtful and mature. The grace of God was working in her spirit, enriching it and deepening it; faith and love were uniting her soul with God. Just what divine sweetness the spirit of this child was now experiencing in prayer are not, of course, recorded, and it would be rash to try to describe them because every soul is different and the varieties of prayerful or mystical experience are almost as multitudinous as the sands of the sea.

The gifts of the father were now seemingly enriching the daughter. Signor Sordini was an exceptionally pious man. It was his custom to have the Blessed Sacrament exposed at his expense on special feasts and more importantly at Carnival time just before Lent. This he did in reparation for what was sometimes the boisterous sinfulness of those days. In that period of the late 1700s, Signor Sordini was doing his part to increase devotion to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, which fully manifested in later centuries as more frequent



communion, Eucharistic Congresses, and additional congregations given up wholly to perpetual adoration. It was fitting that Caterina, who was to be the foundress of such an Order, should be the child of so pious a father. Though he did not know it then, the father was preparing the way of the Lord. During Carnival, members of the Sordini family would take turns in keeping watch before the exposed Blessed Sacrament, and the townspeople followed their good example. Caterina used to be delighted at these exercises of devotion and wanted every day to be like Thursday in Carnival.

A description of Caterina's habits during this period of her youth has been left us by one of her older brothers: "Very early in the morning, I would accompany her to the first Mass. She would go to confession and remain in Church for about two hours. Upon her return home, she diligently applied herself to household duties. She gave not the least trouble to our parents; rather, she was always considerate of them and devoted. I have seen no shortcomings in my younger sister, and the whole neighborhood has held her in high esteem." These are much like the words of Father de Ribera, when he tried to describe the serenity and goodness of the great Teresa of Avila.

It can be understood that Caterina's father idolized her. His dreams for her future were bright. His thoughts turned to his daughter's former little playmate, the Cacece boy, now grown up like Caterina. The two became engaged. Soon, it was hoped, Porto Santo Stefano would see one of its most brilliant weddings. There would be some delay, however. Young Alfonso Cacece was obliged by his family to undertake a long sea voyage to attend to some family affairs in Constantinople.

One Sunday morning, not long after the departure of Alfonso and after she had already been to Mass, Caterina resolved to return dressed in her finest and wearing the jewels which the young man had recently given her. It was one of those impetuous and rash impulses to which she sometimes succumbed. She entered the church just as the High Mass was ending and stood by the holy water font where all could see her.

Word of it got to her father, who strode right over to the church. Caterina was still there, perhaps praying, now that the people were gone. She was scolded because she had gone out thus alone, all decked out in finery and jewels, and because she had stood before the departing congregation as if to make a show of herself. She was ordered home.

And then an extraordinary thing happened. She surely had not done much wrong, nor was she aware of anything very amiss, and so she stood before the mirror in her room to admire once more the fine things which made her apparel so beautiful. As she looked, the image of herself began to blur and change, and soon there appeared in her mind's eye the image of her crucified Savior hanging from the cross. At that moment, a deep, stirring, and irresistible voice spoke within her spirit and called her to a life of exclusive love and devotion. The experience was too much to endure, and she fell in a faint to the floor.

When Caterina returned to her senses, she was a different person. Divine love had spoken strongly and dramatically to her spirit and, as we have abundantly seen, she was a person of good will and deep faith, possessed of a strong and ardent temperament. So distinct an invitation to a special service to God, to what Catholics refer to as the religious life, would not go unheeded. As often happens, when one becomes certain of such a call, Caterina shed in a single moment any attachment which she formerly may have harbored to worldly things—to her own beauty, to social activities in the village, to all her finery.

Her parents understood the girl up to a point. They did not object to her piety and prayer, the five credos she used to say with outstretched arms, and the like. But they were worried about her austerities, though they probably were not aware of all the corporal penances which she performed.

The months slipped by and Caterina would soon be eighteen years of age. Decisions had to be made and she needed a spiritual director, so she found occasion to visit once again the wooded slopes of Monte Argentario. She called at the monastery and asked to see one of the Passionist Fathers. She was fortunate in contacting a man with many years of experience in the religious life. She laid before him her dilemma: engaged to earthly nuptials, her spirit longed for those of Heaven. The man of God recognized at once a chosen soul. Caterina's clear and sudden call was proof of the graces she had received. He told her the engagement with Alfonso could be broken off, and he urged her to do exactly what she desired: enter a cloistered congregation. The priest recommended the community of the Passionist Sisters at Corneto.

Caterina was overjoyed and returned home to Porto Santo Stefano walking on air. Her spirit had been drawn to the more hidden and cloistered life, and now her spiritual father advised just that. It is no wonder that her happiness was exultant.



There is nothing so satisfying to the young as to realize that their life work stands certified and lies clearly ahead; when this career is one of dedication to God, the inner glow of grace can be experienced in exquisite happiness and joy.

Caterina's father, however, had one objection. He did not want his daughter to do exactly what she desired in this matter. The cloistered Passionist Sisters, he thought, led a life too secluded and austere for his daughter, or rather for what he wanted his daughter to endure. So he suggested another religious congregation. Caterina, only seventeen, did not want to go against her father's will, but she had need of still further direction. She went, therefore, once again to Monte Argentario to seek advice from her spiritual father. He understood the situation and suggested a compromise. The religious life, yes, but not so austere an order. He suggested the Franciscan tertiaries of the convent of Saints Philip and Joachim in the little town called Ischia di Castro on the mainland a few miles east of Porto Santo Stefano and just within the northern boundary of the Papal States. With this arrangement Caterina's father was content. At Caterina's first visit to the convent, she determined to remain, so attracted was she by the quiet and prayerful atmosphere. The nuns were willing to keep her, and her father did nothing to stop her.

## II

### *Religious*

Caterina entered the religious life the year before the French Revolution changed the face of Europe. She did not immediately receive the veil. A period of probation, then as now, preceded the more formal acceptance by ecclesiastical authorities. During this period the young girls are called postulants, requesting admission as nuns in a given convent. During these months, postulants may leave at any time according to their desire or if they have discovered that the life is not suited to their psychology. But Caterina did not so desire.

During these months Alfonso Cacece, now returned from Constantinople, came to call on her, and he was so impressed with her happiness and the strength of her calling that he himself began to develop a desire for the religious life. He entered the Passionist Order and was later ordained to the priesthood.

Caterina's period of probation was shortened, and she was allowed to become a novice before the usual time for the termination of the postulancy. On her part, she was only too happy to become more closely linked to this Franciscan community and to don the coarse brown habit and white sash of these nuns of Ischia di Castro. Caterina found only joy in offering her blond curls to the shears and her skin to the discomfiture of rough and heavy wools. At first, perhaps, it would be a penance, but her body would soon adjust and she would no longer feel the discomfort of the habit at all. The ceremony of her clothing took place on October 26, 1788 and, of course, she was then given her religious name: Mary Magdalene of the Incarnation.

The spring of 1789 came around and with it the season of Carnival just before Lent. During these days, Sister Magdalene missed what would have been a solace to her heart and a supernatural warming of her spirit. She suffered a certain nostalgia for those glorious days of her young girlhood when, at Carnival, she used to spend hours before the exposed Blessed Sacrament. During the Carnival days of this February 1789, Sister was homesick for the King of her eternal dwelling place and for His Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament.

It so happened that Sister Magdalene on that Sexagesima Thursday was put in charge of the refectory. Novices, and other nuns too, are given such tasks in convents. Sister was engaged in sweeping the dining hall, her mind concentrating on the tabernacle beyond the refectory wall where the convent chapel was, becoming more and more absorbed.

At one moment, her superior, the Mother Abbess, entered to speak with her: "Sister Mary Magdalene, have you had anything to eat?" "No, Mother," the novice replied. At this point, the Abbess took a slice of bread from a container and gave it to Sister Mary Magdalene to eat for her morning meal. In thanking the Abbess, Magdalene seemed to become wrapped in spirit and unconscious of her surroundings, her eyes now fixed in the direction of the tabernacle where dwelt her Beloved. To her spirit and her eyes, the wall had vanished and she beheld the Sacred Host in transcendent glory.

The superior stood aghast at the evident ecstasy of her young novice and realized as never before that here was a chosen and extraordinary soul. The Mother Abbess left the novice for a while and returned to find her still absorbed. The superior shook her again and again to bring her back to consciousness, but without success. Then the Mother resorted to



that means often before employed in similar cases: she commanded the novice in the name of holy obedience to come back to her senses. This had the desired effect, and Sister Magdalene was her usual self again.

Some time later, the novice was asked in the presence of the Mother Abbess and the provincial superior, called the Mother Vicar, to explain what she had seen during those ecstatic moments. Sister Magdalene then revealed what had happened. She had had a vision of a new order that she would be called upon by God to establish, a contemplative order dedicated to the continuous adoration of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. It would be called the Order of Perpetual Adoration, the supreme fulfillment of her lifelong devotion to the Holy Eucharist. The persons who would aid her in this work were at that time revealed to her, as well as the difficulties which she would encounter. The Mother Vicar asked if she herself would live to see the establishment of the new foundation, and the novice, revealing a prophetic knowledge, replied, "Yes, you shall see it, Mother, but not so Reverend Mother Abbess. She will see it only from Heaven."

The Sisters of the Order of Perpetual Adoration, not without reason, consider this ecstasy of the novice, Sister Mary Magdalene,

as the first move of Divine Providence which eventually led to the establishment of their foundation. Magdalene's latest biographer, herself a nun of the Order of Perpetual Adoration, elaborates upon the ecstatic vision as follows: "As Sister Mary Magdalene was asking herself in dismay how she, helpless and alone, could possibly provide such an oasis of repose for the Divine Lord, and how she could multiply it around the globe so that the number of the few but powerful intermediaries between the Divinity and a pagan-like society might increase, the persons were revealed to her who would offer the means necessary for the accomplishment and maintenance of such a work; there were revealed the first lines of the foundation itself, together with the difficulties to be overcome in the process of its establishment."

It is even stated that Sister Magdalene then saw the habit which the sisters of her future foundation were to wear: "a white, graceful robe, well becoming the spiritual regality of the new court, with a red scapular signifying the individual's consecration to love, and a sash carrying the symbols of the passion, presages of mystical martyrdom. Over the head a black veil to remind them that love is nourished with sacrifices and that to ascend to the Holy Mountain, one must first die inwardly to the earth's creature comforts."

On October 28, 1789, at the time when beyond the Alps the National Assembly of France was swinging into full revolutionary stride, Caterina pronounced her vows in the presence of the Mother Abbess as representative of the authority of the Church. Sister Mary Magdalene has left nothing in writing concerning her spiritual condition at this time, so we can only guess at the devotional and emotional enrichment with which her spirit was favored. She had all the enthusiasm of youth, she had enjoyed a distinct and an extraordinary call, and she had already been favored with an ecstatic vision. So if all youth is more than ordinarily happy at the pronouncement of the vows, we can perhaps be able to guess at Sister Magdalene's inner glow of joy.

We can understand that Magdalene practiced those virtues which are common to young and ardent religious persons. From what has come down to us concerning this period of her life, she was noted for Christian poverty and even carried it to extremes. She had a fine sense of charity towards her neighbor, and because of this she was given charge of the sick of the community. Her devotion was returned by the respect and affection in which they held her.

Sister Mary Magdalene had to pass through some rather heavy trials during the early years of

her religious life. Her mystical experiences were not always understood by her superiors, and she had an elderly priest for a confessor who did not understand her either. She set before him her desire to found a new order dedicated uniquely to the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, but he discouraged her and, more than that, was harsh with her because he thought her spirit should be tried and tested as if by fire.

Magdalene was at first confounded by such treatment. She suffered temptations, doubts, and misgivings. Almost unable to bear it any longer, she prostrated herself at the feet of the crucifix and let forth a cry which was a plea for help and mercy. She had come to another crisis in her spiritual development, and this time again her Divine Lord came to her aid. He actually spoke to her words of reassurance. They were either spoken audibly or made clear to her spirit. "Fear not, I am always with you. Carry on. With the help of my grace you will conquer. Live happily in your present sorrow, for soon I shall give you one to guide you on the road to virtue and to help you in the great work of Perpetual Adoration of my Eucharistic Sacrament." Then Our Lord manifested to her the name of the young priest He was going to send across her path: Father Giovanni Baldeschi.



The account of this particular visitation and of the later manifestations and signs of divine approval we have from the pen of Father Baldeschi himself, who years later included these particulars in a biography he composed about the career of his former penitent. Father Baldeschi was the only one who could know the mystical phenomena which he related, and he was not given to exaggerations and uncritical enthusiasms. The sober life he wrote of Sister Magdalene bore the title (translated from the original Italian): *A Short History of the Foundation of the Religious of the Perpetual Adoration of Jesus in the Divine Sacrament of the Altar*. The work was published in Naples in 1839.

The mystical visitation just mentioned receives further confirmation from the pen of Monsignor Gaetano Renzetti who, as postulator of the cause for beatification, had access to the documentary evidence accumulated during this process. The Monsignor published in Italian a sketch of the life of Mother Magdalene in 1929. Its title (translated into English) is *A Eucharistic Soul*.

Sister Magdalene arranged to get in touch with Father Baldeschi, who resided in the little town of Ischia di Castro. Father was gradually able to gain a complete and sympathetic understanding of her spirit and her desires. He

was evidently the instrument sent by Divine Providence to aid her in the difficulties of establishing a new order within the Church. Other graces and blessings followed fast upon this discovery of a good and intelligent confessor. The misunderstandings Sister had passed through on the part of some of her community gradually wore away. A visiting Passionist Father, while giving Holy Communion to the nuns, seemed to see a radiance in her countenance which was extraordinary, and he mentioned this to her Superior. Esteem of the other nuns grew for her, and when the term of the incumbent superior ran out, Sister Mary Magdalene was elected, so that she was then called Mother Abbess.

Love had now become her very life; faith had torn away the veil of time so that she lived largely in another world. She was conscious of being exceptionally loved by Him who is the source of all love and beauty. Even natural beauty attracted her and at times almost fascinated her. She knew that all the fragrances, colors, and forms which the earth can produce are but the reflection of the eternal and uncreated beauty. "O Beauty so ancient and yet so new," wrote the appreciative Augustine. And so it was with Magdalene. A flower, the song of a bird, green hills in spring, the rustling

of leaves in autumn vibrantly awakened her emotions of joy and led her spirit into deeper feelings of divine affection.

Miracles were attributed to Mother Magdalene. Both her confessor, Giovanni Baldeschi, and Monsignor Renzetti write of cures, replenishment of supplies, and the unaccountable presence of money in a supposedly empty till. When Mother's cause comes up for beatification, these matters will be carefully examined by the Holy See as to their authenticity. Fame of Magdalene's sanctity, together with the report of miracles, went abroad over the countryside, so that the people from the neighboring towns began coming to Ischia di Castro to see Mother, to converse with her, and perchance to be cured in body or in soul. Viterbo, Narni, Spoleto, Foligno, and Terni—it was from such towns not far from Ischia according to our American distance (for Europe is small) that people rode west toward the coast to visit our venerable Mother to be consoled spiritually and perhaps to be cured physically.

### III

## *A New Religious Order*

*We* now come to the autumn of 1806. It has been eighteen years since Mother Magdalene stepped across the threshold of the cloister at Ischia di Castro, to reside there permanently and to pass through the postulancy and novitiate until she was admitted to her vows two years later. Beyond all initial expectations, she had first been elected Superior of the convent in 1802 and was now about to begin the second year of her second three-year term as Superior. She had become mature through the numerous and various trials we have mentioned, mature both spiritually and in the understanding of human nature. It was time now that the great work within the Church of God, of which she had had a vision on the Thursday of Carnival week thirteen years earlier, should be taken in hand. In her mind, the initial steps could not be put off any longer, and she was able to persuade her confessor, Father Baldeschi, to accept her point of view.



If a new Order was to be founded within the Church, two things were necessary at the start. First was the adoption of a set of rules and constitutions. The second was to obtain the approval of local and ecclesiastical superiors and ultimately of Rome.

Mother Magdalene was giving this matter a great deal of thought during the years she was Superior, and she decided that the ancient rule of St. Augustine was mild and practical enough for her purposes and sufficiently adaptable to act as a foundation upon which to raise her edifice. As for those details which were to be added to the ancient rule, Mother fell back upon the regulations she herself had thus far been living up to, namely, those of the Third Order of St. Francis as practiced in the monastery at Ischia di Castro. With these older formulas as a base, Mother drew up the constitutions of her own proposed establishment.

In this delicate and important business, she received aid from her prudent advisor, Sister Mary Marianna, who acted at the same time as secretary. Mother herself wrote very little, for the injury to her arm which she had received from falling down the flight of stairs as a little girl was still with her and prevented facility in handling a pen. We can easily guess

her action when the rules and constitutions were finished: she went to the convent chapel and before the crucifix, she dedicated them to God.

The next step was to show them to her confessor, Father Baldeschi. On going over the constitutions, he found that he disapproved of certain details and of certain matters of form, and so, with Mother's consent, he recast them. It was now in order to carry them to the local ecclesiastical superior, the Bishop of Aquapendente, Monsignor Pieriono, to obtain his official approval. Thereafter, someone (the bishop, the confessor, or the nun herself) took them to Rome for papal approval. Carefully and conscientiously, aided by his Vicar General, the Bishop went over these constitutions. He approved. "The hand of God is here," he judged. The Bishop was, moreover, in sympathy with a new foundation within the Church given over entirely to the perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

The good Bishop made a decision favorable to Mother Magdalene. He decided to go himself to Rome and present these constitutions personally to Pope Pius VII. Aquapendente was but a few miles north of Ischia di Castro, just off the northern banks of the Lago de Bolsena, and it was but a mere seventy-five mile jaunt south to the Holy City.

Mother Magdalene was delighted, of course, that the Bishop was going. She told Father Baldeschi just what would happen in Rome, and the priest, in turn, relayed it to the Bishop. Later, Magdalene seems to have told the same thing to the Bishop himself.

Here is what Mother predicted: Bishop Pierloni would readily obtain an audience with the Holy Father. But Pope Pius, while approving the whole idea and the rules and constitutions in which it was encased, would raise some objections in view of the complete lack of financial means for the establishment of the Order. The Bishop would persist in pressing for the desired approbations and would say to the Pope: "Holy Father, the Mother Superior assures me that she has on her side a great Lord with a well-filled purse." At that the Pope would laugh and after renewed assurances on the part of the Bishop, he would grant the desired provisional approbation. This is exactly what happened.

After the Pope's approval, it was then necessary to obtain money for the purchase of a provisional motherhouse in Rome. Providence was with Mother Magdalene, for a benefactor was found, and not nearby, but in faraway Spain. Someone had evidently spoken to the Papal Nuncio in Spain about the proposed new order, and the Nuncio began looking for

a wealthy and charitable Spaniard. He found such a one in the person of the Marquis of Campo de Alange. The Marquis agreed to send over to Italy funds for the beginning of the foundation. The amount needed was estimated as seventeen thousand scudi and the Marquis, as a pledge of his good will, immediately sent over one thousand. Soon, in bills of exchange, the remaining sixteen thousand arrived. It was then decided that Mother Magdalene should go to Rome to set up the provisional motherhouse of the new Order. In the spring of 1807, all was ready for her departure.

On May 31, two coaches left the Franciscan convent at Ischia di Castro bound for the Eternal City. They carried fourteen women, the first nucleus of the Order of Perpetual Adoration. These included Mother Magdalene herself; the Vicar or secretary, Sister Marianna; a lay sister, Benardina; and a young professed choir nun of the convent of Ischia, Clotilda. Sister Clotilda's name, like that of Mother Mary Magdalene, would be introduced years later for beatification by the Church. We may yet live to see the day when we can call them both "Blessed."

Besides these four, there were ten young women, in fact, very young women. Today in America we would call most of them teenagers. Some were from Ischia di Castro, others from



nearby towns. They had applied for the honor of being the first to enter the Order from the outside; they wanted to be the first postulants of the Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. They looked forward to donning the habit of a postulant of the foundation: a white robe. One of these girls was a niece of Father Baldeschi. Mother accepted the young people even though she foresaw that during the troubles and dispersal caused by Napoleon's Italian tyranny, they would not persevere. These fourteen women were accompanied by Bishop Pierloni and by our old friend, Father Baldeschi. And so, on the morning of May 31, 1807, the sixteen rode out of the little town of Ischia di Castro.

The afternoon of the fourth day, the party rode through the Roman countryside, which they beheld spread out before them in all its somber beauty. From Monterosi, a hamlet thirteen miles from Rome, they set out on their last lap for the Eternal City. Through the gathering dusk, they could descry from afar the "vast and wondrous" dome of St. Peter's, and after night had fallen, the carriages from Ischia entered the Holy City. Here, the group was met by churchmen and a devout crowd of Romans. Torches lit their way to the night's lodging. It was the convent of Santa Lucia of the Augustinian Sisters. These nuns were thoughtful enough to have the Blessed

Sacrament exposed in their little chapel in order that Mother Magdalene and her group might be received in happiness, holiness, and joy.

This provisional arrangement was bound to cause difficulties if it went on too long. Some persons, both inside and outside of the cloister, became discontented or annoyed and appealed to the Pope. He gave orders that a separate home be found as soon as possible for the Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. Father Baldeschi took this task upon himself, and after a prolonged search for suitable quarters, he found an abandoned monastery in which Spanish Carmelite nuns had formerly lived. The house and property, together with an adjoining church, was purchased for 7,070 scudi. The monastery was called Saint Anne at the Four Fountains, and Mother Magdalene and her little group shortly moved there. The rules and constitutions of the New Order were further clarified and on February 2, 1808, the little community received glad tidings: the Order of Perpetual Adoration had been temporarily approved. Peace and joy reigned within the hearts of all, and gratitude to God was manifested in hymns of thanksgiving.

IV

## *Frustration and Dispersion*

Napoleon, by 1807, had become master of Europe. In the War of the Third Coalition (1805-1807), Napoleon crushed the armies of the allies, namely those of England, Sweden, Austria, Prussia, and Russia, who had united to oppose the tyrant. These things were accomplished in the greatest and most famous battles Europe had ever seen up to that time. The new enthusiasm of the French, whipped up first by the revolution of 1789 and then by the unparalleled personality and extraordinary ability of Napoleon Bonaparte, swept everything before it. A potent Austrian army was defeated at Ulm (October 1805); an Austrian and Russian army was scattered at Austerlitz (December 1805); Prussia went down at Jena in October, 1806, while Russia, the last and potentially greatest power, was decisively overcome at the battles of Eylau and Friedland in 1807. A peace was made towards the end of



that year, the peace of Tilsit, between Napoleon and Russia, in which the Emperor and the Tsar divided Europe between them.

But, because Pope Pius VII would not join Napoleon's Continental System for the boycotting of England and because of other complications, Rome and our newborn community were in for trouble. Napoleon decreed the dissolution of the Papal States; the French occupied Rome; Pius VII was taken prisoner and carried to France; and the communities of the religious houses were dispersed. This was the end, for the time being, for Mother Magdalene and her Perpetual Adorers in Rome. The young postulants all went back to their homes and Mother Magdalene, after a brief stay at Porto Santo Stefano, was forced to leave for Florence with Sister Clotilda and remain there until the times were more quiet. Two of the older nuns, Marianna and the lay sister Bernardina, were allowed to stay as caretakers in the convent in Rome. It was the spring of 1809.

Faith sustains souls that are really united to God, and courage is fortified. Mother Mary Magdalene, in the face of this seeming frustration of all her work, did not lose heart; she did not even lose that bright, cheerful manner which was one of the attractions of her personality. Mother had become known in Rome to ladies of

noble families, including the Florentine Princess Rospigliosi. This lady and two others, the Princesses Verazzani and Corsini, befriended her in Florence. Then, after the passing of a few days, the Borgi family took Mother and Sister Clotilda into their home as permanent guests.

Mother Magdalene's reputation spread throughout the city. Her devotion to the Blessed Sacrament was well known. The austerity of her life, too, brought her a reputation for sanctity. The ideal of perpetual adoration spread among her admirers. Certain young women caught her enthusiasm and asked to be admitted into a group which would follow her ideals. Mother thought it well to accede to their request, so before long there were a half dozen young women living under guidance and, though uncloistered, following as far as circumstances permitted the rule of the Order of Perpetual Adoration which Mother and Father Baldeschi had perfected in Rome. This new group, besides their daily devotion, performed charitable and social works in Florence for the poor and the neglected. These women became a fresh nucleus which in better days would recreate the Order.

It would not be long now. In 1812 Napoleon made one of his fatal mistakes. He invaded Russia. His Grande Armée, the largest armed force which Europe had ever

seen, plodded its way towards Moscow and arrived at the beginning of an early and unbearable winter. Then the Russians set fire to their capital; there were no winter quarters remaining for Napoleon's gigantic force, so it could do nothing but retreat. The Emperor of the French arrived safely back in France to whip up still another fighting force while the Grande Armée was perishing on the steppes of frozen Russia. This was the beginning of the end for him. He was defeated in the battle of Leipzig, called "the Battle of the Nations." Other defeats followed, and finally, in 1814, he was forced to surrender to the English.

With the tyrant fallen, all Italy, together with other nations of central and western Europe, could rejoice. The Pope was then free to return to Italy from his imprisonment in France, and Mother Mary Magdalene was free to return to Rome. After five years' sojourn in Florence, the city gilded by the memory of some of the world's greatest geniuses and perfumed by the residence therein of many saints, Mother returned to her former convent in Rome. She was accompanied by her brother Giovanni, Father Baldeschi, and the young women who had joined her and who wanted to be the first to take their vows in the new foundation. Pope Pius VII entered his capital city two months later at the end of May, 1814, amidst a blaze of enthusiasm.

Mother Magdalene could then set about the spiritual formation to the contemplative life of her group of young postulants and could continue with the older sisters their formation in the spirit of the Order she was in the process of founding. A spirit of atonement entered into this formation, atonement for the insults and sacrileges suffered by Jesus in His Sacrament of the Altar.

A continual round of prayer was to mold this spiritual life. There is extant amidst the early documents of the Order a list of the practices which Magdalene set down for her first enduring community in Rome during those early days. In addition to the adoration of the Host, three different offices were recited each day: those of the Holy Cross, of the Most Holy Sacrament, and the Office of the Dead. To all of this was to be added the recitation of the seven penitential psalms. The above recitations represented a rather heavy daily load of prayer and it was found, through experience, to be too much. The only daily office now required is the same as that for priests, and it is chanted in the choir. In common, too, are recited the five decades of the ordinary rosary and the Rosary of the Seven Sorrows. The Office of the Dead is chanted now only on special occasions.



Material things began to develop in a satisfactory manner. Within five months, and just before the Feast of the Assumption, the church attached to the convent of Saint Anne was again opened to the public and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament took place there every day. The devout Romans again began coming to adore Christ exposed all day in the golden monstrance in order to unite their hearts to His and to ask of Him special blessings.

Finances needed to be sufficient, too, and they were once again stabilized on a solid basis. True, the Marquis of Campo de Alange had lost his fortune during political troubles which Napoleon had caused in Spain. But Mother was ever grateful to him, and she invited him to come to Rome to spend the rest of his days near her little flock. He started out on his journey to join them, but he was elderly and weak and died on the way.

Charles IV of Spain and his consort visited Rome at this time. They became interested in the new foundation and, in addition to gifts of money, they presented the community with a beautiful monstrance, valued at seven hundred ducats, for the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

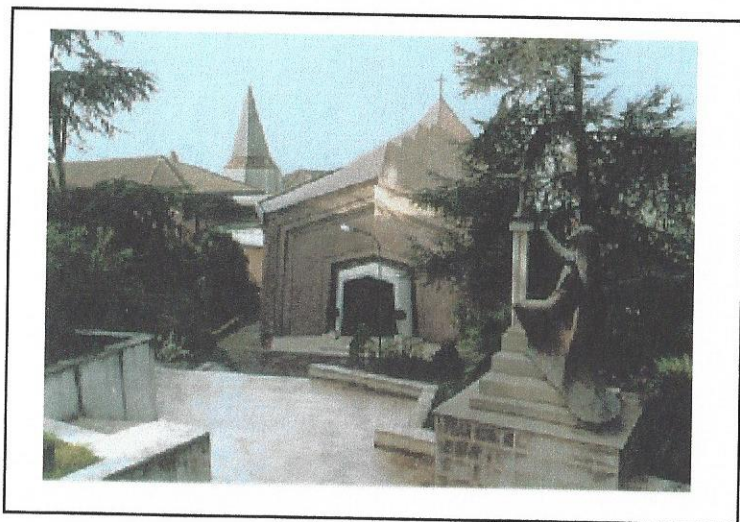
From Spain's neighbor, Portugal, came another source of revenue. The Marchioness of Minas had come into a splendid fortune through inheritance. The integrity of this lady was solid and absolutely upright. Therefore, when it was discovered in the family archives that many an outstanding debt had never been made good by her not too scrupulous forebears, she had a qualm of conscience concerning the use of that part of her inheritance that corresponded to debts and obligations that had never been met. She therefore wrote to the Holy Father asking him to suggest a means of satisfaction, since the creditors were long since dead and gone. Pope Pius, the good man, thought of the Order of nuns which he had so recently approved and told the Marchioness that she could well allocate these sums to the Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. This Portuguese noblewoman of such splendid integrity acted upon the Pontiff's advice and thus eased her own conscience while she relieved financial strain upon the Monastery of Saint Anne. The sum donated was large enough to pay off the mortgage upon the convent's property in the city and to acquire a farm outside of Rome. The revenues of this estate were to be applied, among other things, to the support of a chaplaincy for the convent.

The community at Saint Anne's prospered in still another way: postulants came to augment its numbers. Mother's little niece Luisa, who had become so attached to her during her brief sojourn at Porto Santo Stefano just prior to her move to Florence, was now grown up and, as Mother had predicted, wanted to become a Perpetual Adorer. She was admitted, of course, and was given the name of Maria Cherubina of the Passion. Then there was Angela Manetti, who had been greatly impressed by Magdalene when she met her at Ronciglione while Mother was on her way to Rome. This Manetti girl received the name of Maria Giacinta of St. Joseph, and there were three others besides. These postulants were given over to the care of the ever faithful and intelligent Clotilda for their training in the spiritual life and for their formation according to the spirit of the Order.

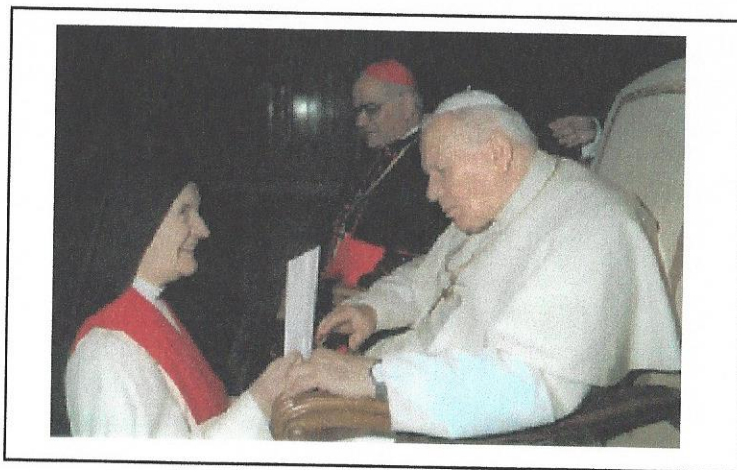
The year of Pius VII's return to Rome (1814), he did two notable things. He restored the Jesuit Order, suppressed since 1773, as a recognized body of religious within the Church, and he officially brought into being still another Order, Mother Magdalene's Perpetual Adorers. His previous approval had only been provisional. The nuns would keep their former name, the Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, or, using a common term, the "Adoratrices"

(Adorers). The document which formally and canonically set up the new congregation as a religious order was dated February 13, 1818.



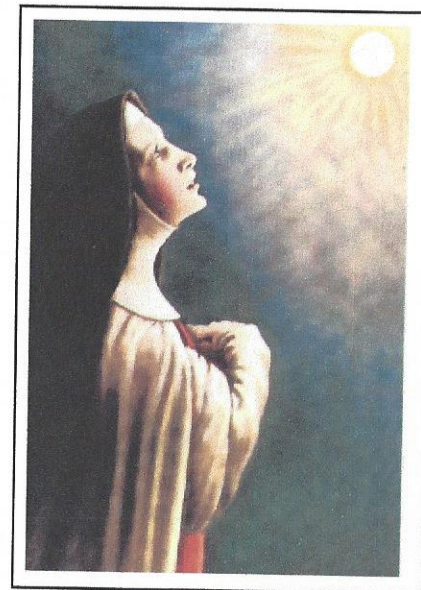


The Monastery of Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament in Rome, where the remains of Mother Mary Magdalene are venerated by the faithful



Meeting of Pope John Paul II with Sister Maria Castamabilis (president of the Perpetual Adorers in Italy) at which she received the letter confirming Mother Mary Magdalene's "heroic virtues" and declaring her "venerable" (Sistine Chapel; April 24, 2001)

## *Illustrations*

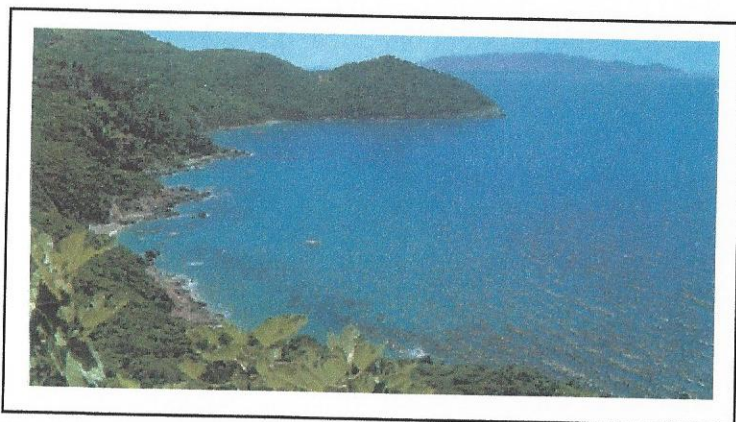


Mother Mary Magdalene

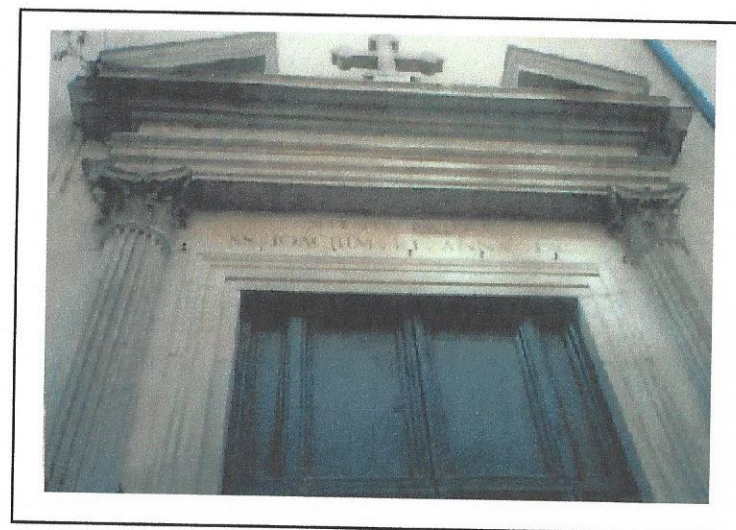


View of Ischia di Castro at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century





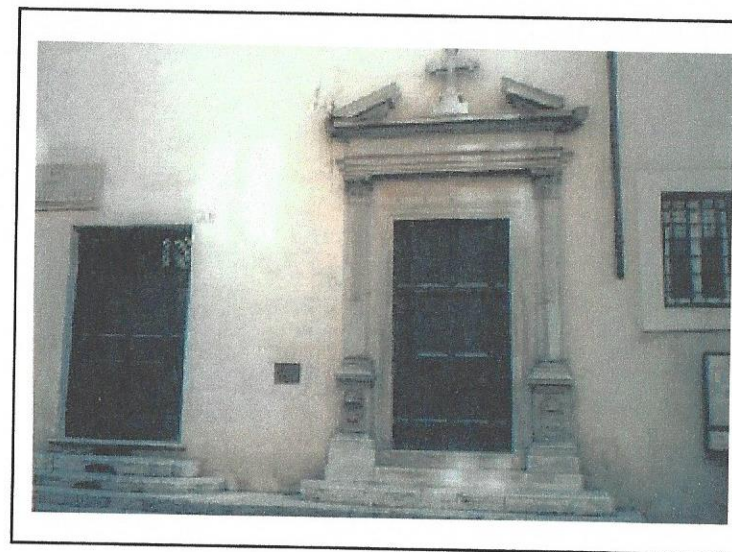
View of Monte Argentario



The entrance of the Monastery of Saints Joachim and Anne of the Four Fountains



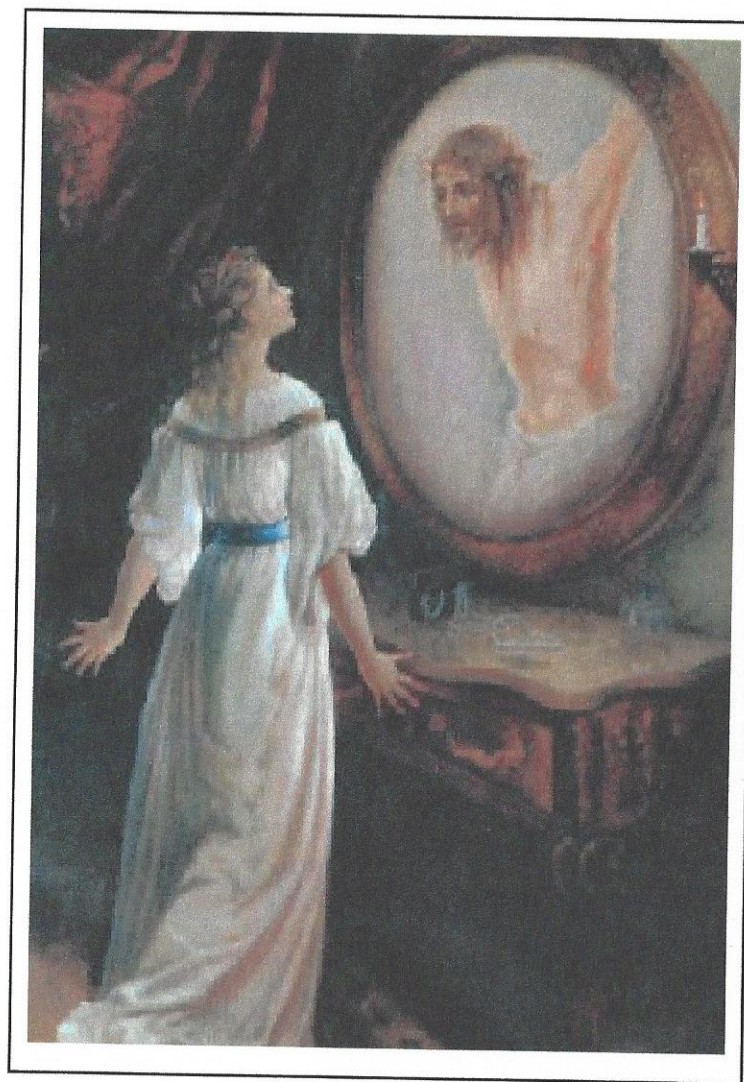
View of Porto Santo Stefano at the time of Mother Mary Magdalene





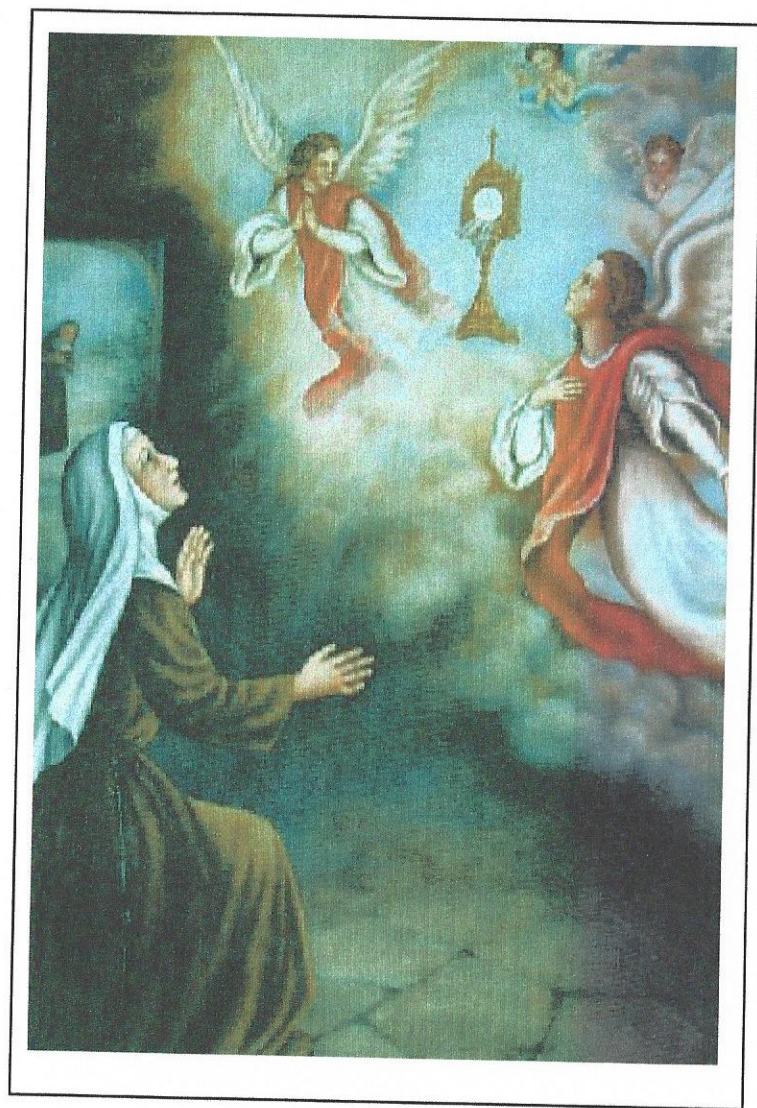


Mother Mary Magdalene of the Incarnation

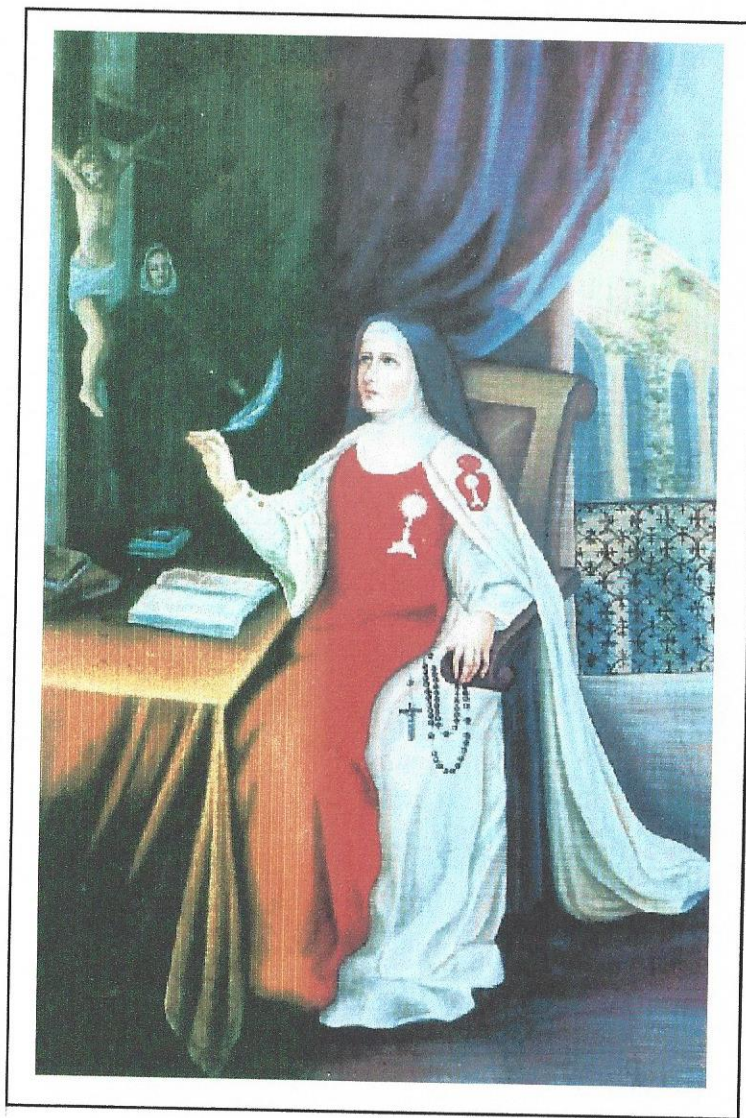


Caterina's vision of her crucified Savior





Vision of Mother Mary Magdalene in the refectory



Mother Mary Magdalene at the Monastery of Saint Anne of the Four Fountains



## *The Last Days*

*A*s the years passed, Mother's health began to fail. She suffered a heart condition and was afflicted with dropsy. Six years after her return to Rome, it became sorrowfully evident to those around her that Magdalene was not long for this world. As the months of the year 1824 slipped by, Mother herself realized that she would soon depart this world. Mother had said her soul would take its flight in the fall of that year. She expressed it poetically: "It will be at the falling of the leaves." As autumn came, Mother took a turn for the worse, and all knew that the end was not far off.

A minor religious function was coming up in honor of Our Lady (we are not told what it was), and Mother insisted on presiding over it from her sickbed. She knew, she said, that this little religious ceremony would be the last for her. On this occasion, Magdalene dedicated

herself in complete spiritual abandonment to Mary, the Mother of God, and her spiritual family did the same. Just as she possessed no worldly goods, not even a tiny coin to be given as alms for prayers for the repose of her soul, so she wanted to be in spirit completely surrendered to the things of Heaven.

On October 28, more than a month before her death, she begged to receive the Holy Viaticum. Father Baldeschi acceded to her request. In the convent's sacristy, the nuns assembled with lighted candles and, preceding Father Baldeschi, they slowly accompanied the Blessed Sacrament to Mother's cell. It was the scene of the passing of a saint, a moment of intense emotion.

Mother spoke, though with difficulty because of her illness. These words were a clear echo of the beauty of her soul. First she begged pardon for any fault she might have committed, and then she communicated to her spiritual family her last will and testament. Let her spiritual children cultivate love for the holy rule, let them possess a loyal affection for the spirit of the Institute. She exhorted them to detachment from worldly things, recommending a complete absorption in a life hidden in the love of God and devotion to Jesus Christ. Such a spirit, she said, was a guarantee

of peace against the supreme and solemn moment when all the illusions of life fade away. At that moment the only treasures are those of the spirit: the hidden virtues which one has practiced and, above all, the divine love which, unseen by others, glows within the soul. Lastly Mother recommended to her daughters love of the cross, the quiet acceptance of suffering with great love. As her nun biographer remarked: "Her bed of pain was indeed a very fitting pulpit from which to preach the excellence of suffering to the brides of Jesus."

Some days later, a crisis in her illness led Father Baldeschi to bring the Holy Viaticum to her once again. On this occasion, from behind the curtain of the other life, there came forth an extraordinary revelation. As the priest entered her room with the Blessed Sacrament, Mother's countenance glowed mysteriously. It was radiant as with a light from Heaven. Completely abstracted from her surroundings and seemingly unaware of the presence of the priest and of her community, she extended her hands and exclaimed: "O God! What do I see?!" Then she became serenely calm, and the Father placed upon her tongue the Blessed Sacrament.

In her last days, as the end was approaching, Mother Magdalene showed that her soul was attuned to the beauties and the changes of the



nature which God has made. She had said, "with the falling of the leaves." When nature would decline to winter, she would die to her body, the encasement of her soul. Her spirit would take its flight; only its husk or shell would remain. And so, during that November of 1824, every gust of wind caused a rustle in the trees and created a swirl of dropping leaves, of leaves that had yellowed and reddened in the fall. As the lay sisters worked in the convent garden, the leaves of late autumn would crackle beneath their feet. Sister Rafaella, one of the most devoted to Mother, was in almost constant attendance to her. She would look out from a balcony which gave onto the convent orchard and garden and note the falling of the leaves and the stripping of the trees. Though it made her heart heavy, she used to come to tell Mother of the falling leaves because Mother so desired it.

On the evening of November 28, Sister Rafaella stood once again at the balcony railing looking over the orchard trees. Not a single leaf was left upon a tree, and Mother Mary Magdalene had entered into her agony. This was to be her last night, and it was to be a night of intense suffering. Heavy and swollen with dropsy, she was sitting in an armchair so as to be able to get her breath, but the very effort to breathe sapped what little vitality she had left. In the early hours of the morning,

the physicians thought once again to try the cure which had thus far failed, the application of hot poultices, and so she was gently lifted back to bed by her spiritual children.

These poultices were an additional suffering to our dying Mother. Turning to Father Baldeschi, she said: "Must I really put them on again?" "It is a good thing to obey the doctor's orders," rejoined the priest. "All right, then, I shall die with them on." So the poultices were applied once again in the hope that they might at last bring relief.

It was just the opposite, for the patient's breathing became even more difficult. Mother's niece, Sister Cherubina, was now in attendance, and other nuns were about the bedside. Mother had requested that Cherubina recite the rosary, especially the sorrowful mysteries, when she was in her agony, for, she said, the Blessed Virgin had promised to obtain comfort and assistance for the dying upon the recitation of that prayer. Cherubina thought it was not yet the time, for Mother was then resting a bit more quietly with a serene countenance sweetened by a faint smile. Nor did Cherubina want to shock the surrounding sisters unduly by seeming to announce the imminent approach of death. So there was a delay in beginning the prayers which Mother Magdalene had requested.

Then Mother turned her eyes toward Cherubina and said: "The Rosary." It was begun at the hour of five in the morning. At the third mystery, Mother, as if wrapped in one of these ecstatic visions, fixed her eyes upon some distant object; her body went motionless, and she was gone. Her spirit had fled the encasement of her flesh and was placed beyond the reach of the vicissitudes of time.

## VI

*Growth of the Order*

Mother Mary Magdalene's body, after her death, was allowed to remain in her cell for the veneration of the faithful, and by permission of Pope Leo XII, many masses were celebrated there. Mother was finally buried in the convent church, in the chapel of Our Lady of Hope. For a long time, the chapel was visited by people from all walks of life who came to beg of God spiritual graces through her intercession. When the Roman community had to change its residence, the remains of the Mother Foundress were transferred to the little enclosed cemetery of the House of Saint Joachim, which was annexed to the church; they were again transferred in 1935 to the monastery church which now carries the names of Saints Joachim and Anna. There the relics were placed under the high altar of the Blessed Sacrament from Whom during life Mary Magdalene had received the graces



of her eternal beatitude. Finally, in 2004, her remains were transferred to the chapel of the Monastery of Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament in Rome, Italy, where many faithful have come to venerate her. A long list of favors has been attributed to the intercession of Mother Magdalene, such as cures of either body or soul and various other supernatural graces obtained through the faith and confidence of those devoted to her.

From heaven Mother continues to bless the Order which she had founded upon earth. Throughout the deserts of a secular world, spiritual oases continue to multiply, and the expansion of houses of the Order has not been halted by wars, persecutions, or spiritual indifference. Some convents have been partially destroyed, others have been sacked and their occupants dispersed, but the holy work has not been stopped. After troubles and dispersion came reconstruction and a renewal of Eucharistic life: hymns of praise, reparation, gratitude, and prayers of supplication. At the present time, there are twelve houses in Italy, four in Spain, one in Austria, one in Kenya, three in Chile, five in the United States, and more than sixty in Mexico, including three communities of Brother Adorers.

The Mother Foundress understood, with a fine spiritual intuition, the prime importance of the Eucharist as the living core of the Mystical Body of Christ. A religious of Perpetual Adoration, serving and consoling Jesus in His Sacrament of Love, finds in her vocation not only the path towards personal sanctification, but also and especially the means of an intensive and fruitful apostolate in the winning of souls for Christ. This missionary ideal, which was so admirably put into practice by Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus, constitutes an essential part of the life of a Perpetual Adorer. On her knees, humble and silent before the altar, she obtains those graces which can fertilize the arid wastes of incredulity and infidelity. But it may be asked, whence comes this great confidence of being heard? And is it not audacious for her, a sinner, thus to present herself before the Heavenly Father, to ask that He look benignly upon her, bless her, and through her bless the whole of humanity? Her whole confidence is in Jesus, who, upon our altars offers Himself every day to the Father. It is Jesus really present in the Host who receives these supplications. He takes these ardent and generous prayers, together with the hopes and the petitions of the whole Church, and He presents them to the Father. When Jesus presents these petitions, both as divine Victim and High Priest, He will most certainly be heard.

The Adoratrices should likewise be the mystic helpers of the clergy. Through the medium of the priesthood, the Church confides the Divine Treasure to the Adorers to guard Him when solemnly exposed during the day for public adoration and also when He is hidden in the tabernacle during the night, when impiety and paganism wound the Eucharistic Heart.

The Sisters of Perpetual Adoration wear a white habit and a red scapular with an image of the monstrance embroidered in white. They chant the Divine Office in the choir, praising God and offering Him the same prayers as the Church. The voices of the nuns, as well as their physical forms, are taken up with praising Jesus in the Sacrament of the Altar and, as a grain of incense in the sanctuary, they are thus consumed sweetly in prayer. Each sister, in turn, goes through her hour of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament during the night as well as during the day.

The Order enjoys the privilege of the solemn vows and of the papal cloister which are applied and practiced according to circumstances of time and place. Moreover, the Order can adopt itself to works of holy zeal for the good of its neighbors. Such works of the active life can be taken up when circumstances permit and according to the actual necessities

of the Church under the direction of the ecclesiastical superiors of the diocese; it is understood that such activity will not be a hindrance to holy contemplation according to the spirit and the rules of the Order and will be in conformity with recent papal decrees.

The hours of adoration alternate with the usual spiritual activities of vocal prayer. There are the rosary and the beads of the Seven Sorrows; there are the Stations of the Cross and visits to the Blessed Sacrament, in addition to Mass, meditation, and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament followed by benediction in the afternoon. There is spiritual reading in both public and private, and there are also domestic duties. Active work takes on various forms, such as painting, sewing, embroidering, and making vestments and altar breads. Thus it is that while the Perpetual Adorer labors in such activities of the convent as are assigned by superiors, she is also engaged in her perpetual adoration. She can do this through her interior spirit of prayer which animates her manual labors, and because she is a member of an Order which never fails, during all the hours of the day and night, to provide an adorer who kneels at the foot of the altar. At fixed hours of the day, the whole community assembles in the chapel for prayer. People living in the world can share



because petitions for prayers are continuously received. The necessities and intentions of these people are immediately included in the purposes for which the community prays. There is also an association called the Pious Union which is made up of lay people. Through this association, members enjoy many indulgences and spiritual privileges.

When a young woman wishes to enter the Order, she spends one year in "postulancy." After this period, she receives the habit of a novice. After two years in the novitiate, the first of which is the critical "Canonical Year," the novice is ready to pronounce her three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, which are taken for a three-year period. After this, the young religious, full of generosity and enthusiasm, is ready for her perpetual vows.

For admission into the Order, a girl should have a real vocation for the contemplative life and good health and should generally be between the ages of 18 and 30. For further information, visit our website at [www.adorejesus.org](http://www.adorejesus.org) or contact the Mother Superior of the Monastery of Perpetual Adoration, 771 Ashbury Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-4013.

### *Postscript: For the young woman of noble sentiments*

*C*ome as an adorer who stands always before the Blessed Sacrament, as a lamp which burns continuously but silently. While consuming herself in prayer, she says within her heart, "God is there—Come let us adore Him."

Have you sometimes felt the call of Jesus to this kind of religious life? Have you sometimes heard the whisper of a very quiet voice saying, "Come and follow Me?" If you have heard so gentle a murmur, do not close your eyes to this voice which comes to seek you out in order to draw you close to His Heart and teach you there the secrets of His love, a love which is often despised and unrequited. He calls you that you may be one of those who can assuage these wounds by your perpetual adoration. Perhaps the world allures you with all its attractions and beckons you to enjoy its seeming charms. Turn your back on it and go to

your Savior who will place you before Himself and show you real happiness and joy, namely the glory of suffering with Him and, in the midst of these sorrows, of rejoicing with Him in time and in eternity. Go forward, and be not unappreciative of so happy a calling.

Rev. Father Peter Dunne, S.J.  
San Francisco, California

*Aspirations of Divine Love  
Venerable Mother Mary Magdalene  
of the Incarnation*

1. My Beloved, my heart ardently desires to live  
agonizing for You and then to die loving You.



2. My Beloved Jesus, come to Your spouse who  
does not desire anything else but that her eyes  
see You always!



3. Oh Jesus, my Jesus, Your beautiful name warms  
and kindles my poor and cold heart!





4. *My Beloved Good, I search in my chest for my heart and find it imprisoned in Your chains!*



5. *My Sweet Good, in this valley of tears, everything irritates me and weighs down on me. I desire nothing; I only sigh and ardently desire to unite myself to You soon!*



6. *Your spouse, oh Jesus, invokes You and cries to You: Calm yourself, My Beloved Good, from so much wrath!*



7. *The ungrateful world goes on offending You. Listen, My Highest Good, to this soul that dies agonizing for You!*



8. *Oh Seraphs of Heaven, who love so much, calm the wrath of God!*



9. *Oh my Jesus, may Your own piety lead You to forgive us and turn You mercifully towards my desires.*



10. *Oh my Love, You who can do everything, inflame all hearts with love of You!*



11. *Oh Jesus, my Good, occupy the first place in my miserable heart and be the only Lord of all my affections.*



12. *My Supreme Good, I want to love You valiantly, confidently, tenderly, effectively.*



13. *My amiable Jesus, I want to breathe nothing but love; I want to live only of love; I want to be consumed by and die of the sweet violence of pure love.*



14. *Jesus, My Supreme Good, I want the whole world to love You even at the cost of my many hardships and of my life.*



15. *Oh here, yes, oh my Jesus, may my affections not be dissipated, my feelings not be distracted, and my sighs not be agitated.  
The only witness of our love is this lamp.*



16. *Oh my Jesus, with all liberty I call You a thousand times My Treasure, My Happiness, My Confidant, My Friend, My Companion, My Consolation, My Father, My Supreme Good, My Sweet Spouse, My Everything!*





17. *Oh Jesus, You are the only true love of all my loves!*



18. *My Sweet Good, I show You my poor heart,  
weak, ill, and sometimes dejected, perplexed and  
timid, discouraged. Look at it, amiable eyes  
of My Supreme Good.*



19. *Oh My Solitary Love, look at me, but with a  
tender, merciful, and loving gaze.*



20. *Oh My Supreme Good, if I were worthy of only  
one glance from You, I would not complain of other  
worries, but rather my prolonged sighs would be of  
tenderness, gratitude, and love.*



21. *If I love you, oh Jesus, I am therefore enough for  
Your heart. How could You, My Good, not then be  
enough for my own miserable heart?*



22. *Oh my beloved spouse Jesus, if You still desire  
more, say it because my heart is ready!*



23. *Oh my sweet Jesus, You are all mine and I am all of Jesus. Jesus is all of my heart and I am all of Jesus's ardent heart.*



24. *Oh Beloved Jesus, You are here for me hidden and solitary in this silent Tabernacle.*



25. *Oh Sacred Bird, beloved of my soul, listen to the sighs of your turtledove!*



26. *Unfortunately, My Good, as of now I have not yet learned to love You with that strong, valiant, tender, and ardent love which You deserve.*



27. *Oh My Solitary Love, You are the only satisfaction of this heart of mine. You will transform my loneliness into Paradise, the night into bright light, the silence into sweet nectar.*



28. *Oh, my Good, when will I see You, Oh Light of My Eyes, Oh My Love and My Happiness?*



29. *When will that happy day arrive on which my soul will unite to You, Eternal Beauty?*



30. *Oh my Jesus, when will the moment come in which my love will be perfected, united to You, Center of My Repose?*





31. Oh my Jesus! My soul searches for You and is in love with You; when will I be able to see You face to face? Love obliged me and taught me to bear this anxiety of suffering.



32. Lord of this heart, with You I am rich; without You, I am poor. With You, I am full of goodness; without You, I lack everything.



33. Come, oh my Jesus, to this poor soul of mine. Let us love and possess each other forever, without separating from each other ever again. Reign in me, and I will live forever in You, my Only Good, My Bliss, and My Everything.



34. Oh my amiable Jesus! Grant that my glory and my crown will be to suffer with You! Oh Love of My Soul, oh Life of My Life, when will I truly love You?



35. Oh my Jesus, Joy of My Soul, what consolation could I look for apart from You? And what else can truly console me except You? I can do everything with You, Oh my God and My Strength, My Defense and My Health!



36. Oh my Jesus, if only the fire of Your love could in the end consume all at once in me the corruption of men on earth!



37. Grant, oh my Jesus, that I live and die for You,  
for You, and for You.



38. Grant, oh my Jesus, that I find you no less  
beautiful in Your humiliation than in Your glory.  
Grant, oh my Jesus, that I follow You, obey You, and  
embrace You with equal tenderness when You come  
to me with the cross and when You come to me with  
all the blessings of Your gentleness.



39. I ask not that You grant me freedom from the  
pains that I suffer; I ask You only the strength to  
endure them for Your love. I only ask You the grace  
of living and dying on the cross.



40. Oh Jesus, Life and Hope of My Soul, come to me.  
I will protect You; I will embrace You. I want to die  
for You and to be Yours in life and in death.



41. When, oh my Jesus, will this heart of mine be  
changed and will I be free of myself and possessed  
only by Your love?



42. Oh my Jesus, when will You break the bonds  
that keep me tied to myself and separated from You?



43. Oh my beloved Jesus, what would have become  
of me if I had never given my heart only to You, oh  
Love of my Soul, oh My Hope?





44. *Oh my Jesus, when will I see my heart changed,  
oh Infinite Goodness, and have You continually  
before my eyes, oh Spouse of My Soul,  
so that I may imitate You in all things?*



45. *Enter, oh Divine Jesus, into this soul that is  
Yours, take possession of this heart that belongs to  
You for so many reasons, because You made me for  
You, oh my God, and I will never find, oh Jesus,  
true repose but in You.*



46. *My Jesus, reign only in this soul that You have  
redeemed with Your blood.*



47. *I love You, oh my Jesus, and my greatest and  
most ardent desire is to be consumed by Your love.  
Don't burn alone in this divine fire; grant, oh my  
Jesus, that I may live with You.*



48. *Oh my Jesus, grant that I live in You, become  
like You, desire only You, and breathe only for You.*



49. *Oh Jesus, King of Glory, oh if I could never lose  
sight of You and have my eyes and the desires  
of my soul fixed on You!*





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