



Dolorosa

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

SEPTEMBER 2018

THE PERFECT EFFORT



Father Paul Krug, C.S.P.V

Among Our Lady's various apparitions to her earthly children, perhaps the most well-known are her apparitions at Lourdes in 1858 and at Fatima in 1917. One apparition, however, that does not receive as much publicity, so to speak, is Our Lady's appearance at La Salette in 1846. Despite this lack of popular recognition, Our Lady's words at La Salette 172 years ago, nonetheless, bear great importance in our own day.

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On September 19, 1846, eleven-year-old Maximin Giraud and fifteen-year-old Melanie Mathieu were tending cattle on the slope of Mount Gargas. Mount Gargas is a mountain that rises above the village of La Salette in southeastern France. Towards the noon hour, the children decided to play a game. They began collecting stones and using them to build a sort of house or castle. After they finished, Maximin and Melanie grew tired and dozed off for a nap in the field.

A few hours later, the children returned to tending the cows. It was then that Melanie noticed something that frightened her. Enveloping the house that she and Maximin had constructed was a dazzling light. She called Maximin and directed his attention to the mysterious light. While the children gazed in awe, the light opened, as it were, and the children saw a woman seated on the stones that made up their little house.

In his book *The Woman Shall Conquer*, Don Sharkey writes, "The Lady's elbows rested on her knees, her face was buried in her hands, and she was weeping" (35). At length, the Lady, having seen the children staring, rose to her feet and crossed her arms. She then said in the sweetest of voices, "Come near, my children; do not be afraid. I am here to tell you important news." Eased by these words, the children slowly approached her.

As Maximin and Melanie drew nearer to the Lady, they noticed how beautiful her face was, though her eyes were filled with tears. They observed as well that she wore white shoes encircled by roses. Her apron was gold-colored and fell to the bottom of her white robe. Over her shoulders, the mysterious Lady wore a white cape bordered with roses. Around her neck hung a thin chain with a crucifix suspended from it. Upon her head was a white headdress with

a royal diadem above it, wreathed with roses of many colors. "Her beauty was so radiant, so dazzling," writes Don Sharkey, "that the children could scarcely look at her" (35). In fact, they later testified that nothing they saw afterward, no matter how beautiful, could begin to compare with her beauty.

The Lady spoke again in an even sweeter tone, as tears continued to fall from her eyes. "If my people will not submit," she said, "I shall be forced to let go the hand of my Son. It is so strong, so heavy, that I can no longer withhold it."

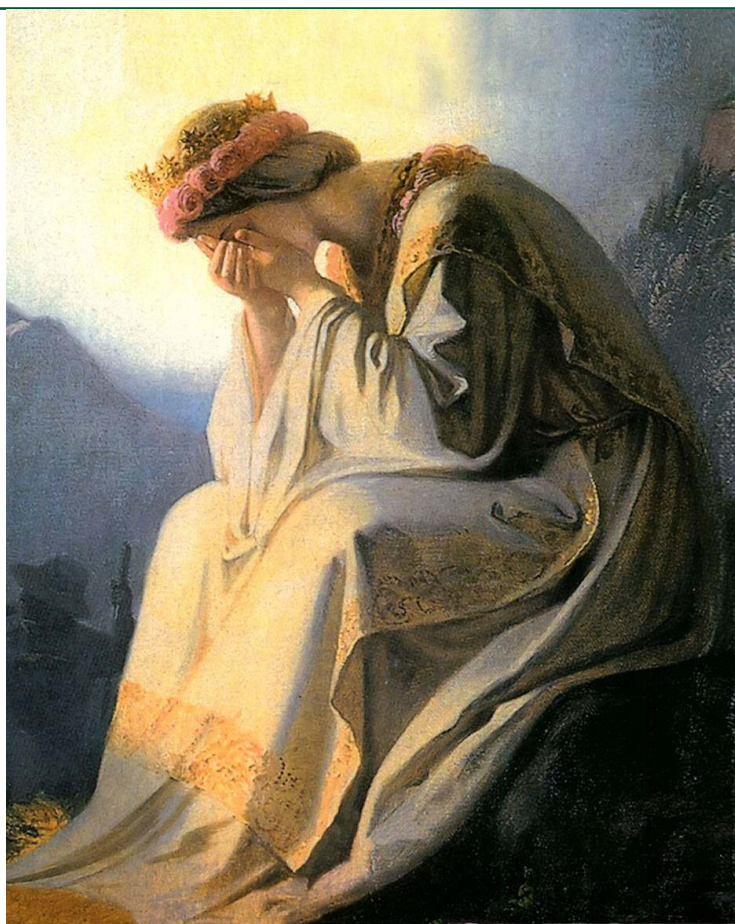
What the Lady said next, as related by the children, is perhaps best recounted by Don Sharkey. He writes that the Lady continued with these words:

How long a time have I suffered for you! If I would not have my Son abandon you, I am compelled to pray to Him without ceasing. And, as to you, you take no heed of it.

However much you pray, however much you do, you will never recompense the pains I have taken for you. (36)

The Lady then went on to tell the children what exactly it was that caused her so much grief. As related in the booklet *Apparition of the Blessed Virgin on the Mountain of La Salette*, this is what Our Lady said to Maximin and Melanie:

I gave you six days to work, I kept the seventh for myself, and no one wishes to grant it to me.



This is what weighs down the arm of my Son so much. Those who drive carts cannot speak without putting the name of my Son in the middle. These are the two things which weigh down the arm of my Son so much (8).

After this heartfelt plea for people to stop offending her Son by the desecration of the Sunday and by the taking of her Son's name in vain, Our Lady foretold a few of the calamities that would befall that part of the world if people did not change their ways. She then confided a secret message to each child separately. At the same time, she made it clear that the terrible things she had prophesied would happen only if people persisted in their sins.

After encouraging Maximin and Melanie to say their prayers well each day, Our Lady emphasized the importance of morning and evening prayers. Then, after lovingly complaining once more about how few people attended Mass on Sunday, she said goodbye to the children. The last words she spoke contained an admonition to make her message known. "Well, my children," she said, "you will make this known to all the people."

Saying this, the Lady moved along the tips of the grass and ascended the mountain for a short distance. She then rose from the ground, lifted her gaze toward heaven, lowered it to the earth, and then disappeared.

“If my people will not submit, I shall be forced to let go the hand of my Son. It is so strong, so heavy, that I can no longer withhold it. How long a time I have suffered for you!”

When Our Lady appeared at Lourdes and at Fatima, she repeatedly asked for prayers and sacrifices for sinners. At La Salette it was no different. However, at La Salette Our Lady was very particular about some of the sins that offend her Divine Son most: the desecration of the Lord’s Day and the use of God’s name in vain. Yet, perhaps the most striking words the Mother of God spoke at La Salette were contained in the secret message she gave to Melanie.

Five years after this apparition, Pope Pius IX asked both children to write down the secrets that had been given to them, for he desired to know them. Maximin and Melanie agreed provided the messages were placed in sealed envelopes and given directly to the Holy Father.

On July 18, 1851, the sealed envelopes were delivered to the Pius IX. He read Maximin’s first. As he read, a slight smile formed on his lips, and the priests who had delivered the messages took this as a sign that the message was one of mercy and consolation. Then, he began to read Melanie’s message. “As he read,” writes Don Sharkey, “the Pope pressed his lips more tightly together and puffed out his cheeks” (39). His smile was gone. It was clear that the message was indicative of what was to come. After he finished reading Melanie’s secret, the Pope declared, “It is not without reason that the Church is called militant, and here [touching his chest] you see her leader” (39).

What were the contents of this message that changed the Pope’s smile to a look of concern and even fear? What did Our Lady say to the fifteen-year-old Melanie that moved Pope Pius IX to utter the following warning several years later? “Do you wish to know the secret?” he asked. “This is it: Unless you do penance, you shall all perish” (40).

On November 15, 1879, Melanie’s account of the apparition and the prophecy bequeathed to her were published with the approval of Bishop Zola, the bishop of Lecce. Here are some of the Blessed Virgin’s more alarming revelations as recorded by Melanie and related in the booklet *Apparition of the Blessed Virgin on the Mountain of La Salette*:

Melanie, what I am about to tell you now will not always be secret.



The priests, ministers of my Son, the priests by their wicked lives, by their irreverence and their impiety in the celebration of the holy mysteries, by their love of money, their love of honors and pleasures, the priests have become cesspools of impurity. . . . Woe to the priests and to those dedicated to God who by their unfaithfulness and their wicked lives are crucifying my Son again!

Churches will be locked up or desecrated. Priests and religious orders will be hunted down, and made to die a cruel death. Several will abandon the faith, and a great number of priests and members of religious orders will break away from the true religion; among these people there will even be bishops.

In the year 1864, Lucifer together with a large number of demons will be unloosed from hell; they will put an end to faith little by little, even in those dedicated to God. . . . several religious institutions will lose all faith and will lose many souls.

Evil books will be abundant on earth and the spirits of darkness will spread everywhere a universal slackening in all that concerns the service of God.

The Vicar of my Son will suffer a great deal, because for a while the Church will yield to large

persecution, a time of darkness, and the Church will witness a frightful crisis.

The true faith to the Lord having been forgotten . . . all justice [will] be trampled underfoot and only homicides, hate, jealousy, lies and dissension [will] be seen without love for country or family.

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

The Church will be in eclipse, the world will be in dismay. (10-19)

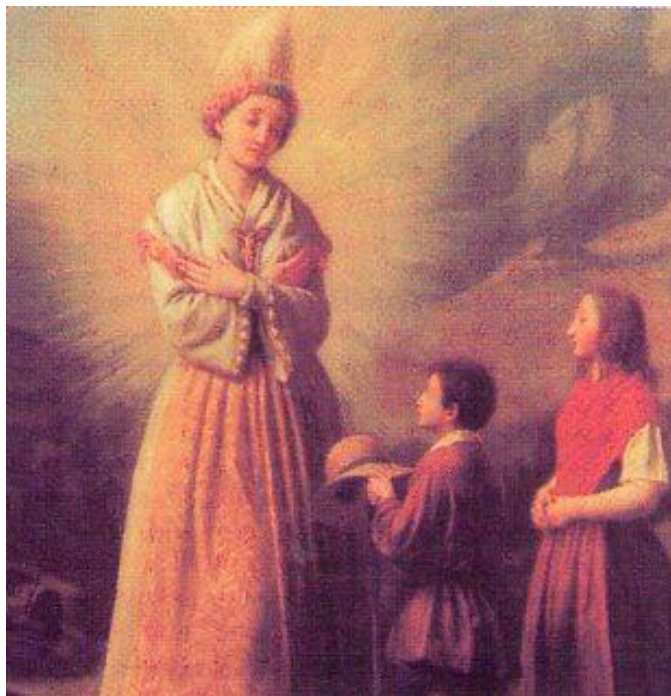
Our Lady then included a prophecy of hope. After speaking of the coming of the Antichrist and of the calamities that will strike the world, she encouraged her faithful children. She said:

The children of the holy Church, the children of my faith, my true followers, they will grow in their love for God and in all the virtues most precious to me. . . . I shall fight at their side until they reach the fullness of years. (17)

“ . . . the children of my faith, my true followers, . . . I shall fight at their side until they reach the fullness of years.”

When we read these words of Our Lady of La Salette as recorded by Melanie Mathieu, our thoughts are naturally drawn to the state of the world and of the Church today. Remember, Our Lady's words were a prophecy and thus they were meant to foretell a future time. Is it fair to say that she was speaking of today? In light of events in the past 60 years alone, this would certainly seem to be the case. Reading these few excerpts from Our Lady's prophecy is almost like reading a summary of what has been happening in the Church and in the world at large.

When people think of Our Lady's apparition at La Salette, they tend to think of the calamities foretold by the Mother of God. This is natural and normal because of the alarming message the prophecy contains.



Such people, however, tend to disregard the main part of Our Lady's message at La Salette: namely, that two of the sins that weigh down the arm of Our Divine Savior most are the desecration of the Sunday and the taking of God's name in vain.

And so, we must not let ourselves be distracted by the prophecy to the neglect of Our Lady's request. Rather, we must give a perfect effort in striving not to offend Our Lord by sin and in fulfilling Our Lady's message at La Salette: to make reparation for the desecration of God's holy name and to give God the honor and glory He desires on Sundays.

“I gave you six days to work, I kept the seventh for myself, and no one wishes to grant it to me. . . . Those who drive carts cannot speak without putting the name of my Son in the middle. These are the two things which weigh down the arm of my Son so much.”

Sadly, God's name is used in conversation today as commonly and as casually as the definite article *the*. It is often used as an interjection, and it is even frequently coupled with an expletive or curse. How this must grieve Our Divine Savior's Sacred Heart! How it must pierce His side anew! While we must be ever on our guard against following the ways of the world in this regard, we must at the same time strive to make reparation for these sins. We can do





— Sanctuary of Our Lady of La Salette. La Salette-Fallavaux, France.

this very simply by mentally praying a little invocation such as “My God I love Thee for those who do not love Thee!” whenever we hear someone use God’s name in vain. We can even pray such invocations throughout the day in reparation for these sins which are more than likely committed numerous times per minute when you consider the world as a whole.

“My God I love Thee for those who do not love Thee!”

As we strive to make reparation for the misuse of God’s name, let us also strive to keep the Sunday holy. In our modern society, Sunday has become just another day in the week. Shoppers flock to the malls on Sundays. Countless people set this day aside for lawn-cutting and yard work. Numerous others have made Sunday the day of grocery shopping. Thus, the day that the Lord has set aside for Himself has been changed into the “day to get things done”; the Sunday has become more man-centered than God-centered.

As Catholics with the one, true Faith, we must take a stand against this modern current. We must lighten the load that weighs down the arm of Our Lord and which Our Lady strives to hold back from striking this world which so justly deserves the divine wrath. This we must do in both a negative and a positive way.

The negative way we keep the Sunday holy is by refraining from unnecessary servile work and unnecessary shopping or business. The positive way we sanctify the Lord’s Day is by rendering Him honor and glory. This we do by fulfilling our obligation to attend the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass when it is available to us, and to attend it attentively and devoutly. We should also make it a point to sanctify the Sunday by praying our Rosary, by saying some extra prayers, and by doing a few minutes of reading from the life of a saint or from

some other spiritual book. Of course, such practices do not bind us under pain of sin, but when we consider the fact that God set aside one day of the week for His creatures to make a return to Him then we should be moved to do more than the bare minimum of attending Mass. In fact, when you really think about it—we make time for so many other things on Sunday, can we not give God more of this one day which has been intended for Him from the earliest times?

Let us persevere in our efforts to imitate Our Lady’s example and follow her instructions. May we, true sons and daughters of the Blessed Virgin Mary, be ever ready to answer the call to arms she made at La Salette—the call she made to us through Melanie to fight for her Divine Son:

I call on the true disciples of the living God who reigns in heaven; I call on the true followers of Christ made man, the only true Savior of men; I call on my children, the true faithful. . . . It is time they came out and filled the world with light. . . . I am at your side and within you. . . . Fight, children of light, you, the few who can see. For now is the time of all times, the end of all ends. . . . God will be served and glorified.

