

The eBook, My Best Book,
by Maria Concepcion Zuniga Lopez

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MY BEST BOOK

By
Maria Concepcion Zuniga Lopez

My Best Book

The Book Presented by Maria Concepcion Zuniga Lopez
to Pope Paul VI in 1963

Contents

Chapter I: Predestination
Chapter II: First Revelations
Chapter III: In the Solitude of the Cloister
Chapter IV: The Hand of God
Chapter V: First Efforts
Chapter VI: God's Great Trial
Chapter VII: In My Captivity
Chapter VIII: A Marvelous Conversion
Chapter IX: The Holy Liberty of the Children of God
Chapter X: A Prediction Fulfilled
Chapter XI: A Manifestation of Divine Providence
Chapter XII: The Death of Our Pastor

Introduction

What a great Pope God has given us in these
times that are the beginning of the final days!

We must have the year 1963 engraved in our minds,
because this great Pontiff was elevated to the
papal throne, and still is in it. His pontificate... ah!
Only God knows this secret. What is certain is that,
on his initiating his ecclesial government, he entered
a tunnel, that only God and he know of. What do I wish
to indicate by these words? I can only say that I had

the good fortune of going to Rome in those days when he had just ascended his pontifical throne, and I could observe his gentle appearance, his optimism, his great kindness.

I spoke with him in an audience for those who speak Spanish, and I put in his hands a book, a little book that I wrote for him, which is entitled: "My Best Book." At that moment when I was delivering my book, this great supreme Pontiff was caressing my cheeks, smiling and amiable like a good father. And later on I was able to speak with him alone for just a few moments. At that time Paul VI was like a child who was ignorant of the fact that behind him there was a phantom: the group of Masonic cardinals, that became publicly known later. And when I returned to Rome in the year 1969, Paul VI was wan, exhausted, afflicted; and when also I was able to speak with him alone, he said to me, crying: "Preguen per me, my daughter, preguen per me!" (Pray for me, my daughter, pray for me!)

We are therefore now going to publish "My Best Book," and we beg all those good Catholics, faithful children of the holy, apostolic Roman Catholic Church, to pray for this beloved Vicar of Christ our Lord; and also, let us pray for his enemies.

May it be for the glory of God!

Mary Conzulo

My Best Book

With profound respect and veneration, and with all my filial affection, to His Holiness Paul VI.
In the first year of his Pontificate.

May it be for the glory of God!

Author: Maria Concepcion Zuniga Lopez

Begun in Mexico City on August 27, 1963

Prologue

Most Holy Father, Pope Paul VI

With all respect I beg your pardon for my boldness in taking up your attention with these pages. But I humbly beg Your Holiness to deign to read them, in the presence of God Our Lord and of His Most Blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary.

I have called these pages "My Best Book," and I am going to explain this. Since childhood I have been occupied with writing. God gave

me the gift of loving words. But for a while I was dedicated to this role of publishing almost professionally. I publish sporadically, in newspapers and magazines, articles and commentaries on modern topics: narrations, truthful stories, and, in one social magazine I write answers in a section called "Human Problems," by means of which I am able to carry out a true apostolate, oriented to some souls.

In private I maintain a certain index of materials that I will undoubtedly leave unpublished at death, if God does not dispose otherwise. It is in view, therefore, of living dedicated to writing that I called these pages: "My Best Book." It is my best book, because, in it, I am going to transmit to Your Holiness a divine message, an explicit message, exclusively for Your Holiness; in such a way that in these pages, indeed, I realize my objective. For which I give God munificent thanks, and I feel filled with happiness. At the feet of your Holiness I will begin, first, to refer briefly to the history of my life.

I wish to note in this prologue the purpose of this book, in order to emphasize its importance. Precisely today (August 27, 1963) it is two months since His Excellence, the Bishop of Zamora, Michoacán, gave me the good news that he would take me to Rome shortly, inasmuch as he had to go to the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council that your Holiness was kind enough to continue, when you succeeded John XXIII.

Since that day, in which I had such happy news, I began the proceedings conducive to organizing my trip. For two months I have run untiringly; I was hopeful, since at present, God our Lord permitted me to be totally poor, and thus, to make the trip to Europe with this expense, it was necessary to ask the charity of some persons. The task was arduous and pressing, the days and weeks were passing, and it seemed that I was not going to be left with a sufficient margin of time to prepare my documents with tranquillity, above all, the one that I want to bring to the holy hands of the Vicar of Christ our Lord on earth, and that forms the essence of the divine message. Nevertheless, two months were sufficient in the plans of the Lord, to permit me to have my ticket for Rome; and today, the 27th of August (the 27th, dedicated to the Most Holy Virgin of Perpetual Help, who is

the Patroness of this mission), tranquilly
I begin my writing.

Another consideration I must set down for
Your Holiness in this prologue: the date
since which there exists in my soul a
fervent longing to go to Rome to bear
this Divine Message, dates back to the
pontificate of His Holiness, Pius XI, in
the year 1932, the date on which I, most
holy Father, received it from my beloved
Jesus. Since then, it has been something
like a divine urging, a type of hidden
spiritual martyrdom. Several times I
insisted that my superiors give me
permission to send petitions. At times
it was granted to me, and God always
permitted it to be impeded.

Thus, Your Holiness, you must understand
my immense joy, on seeing that it is Your
Holiness, PAUL VI, to whom God wished that
I pour out my soul and transmit His message.
May God grant, and may I know how to do it
fittingly, and may He give Your Holiness
all the light that one day He promised me
He would give you, so that, what I may not
explain well because of my dullness, He may
furnish, giving Your Holiness that
illumination, and so that understanding
may be established, or rather, harmony.

Most Holy Father: in the presence of God
Our Lord, of the Blessed Virgin, the
Co-Redemptrix, of the Holy Apostles,
of our Father St. Joseph and our Father
St. Francis of Assisi, I swear to tell
the truth in everything that I must
relate in these pages, at the feet of
Your Holiness.

May it be for the glory of God! Amen.

Chapter I

Predestination

I believe, Most Holy Father, that God Our
Lord deigned to predestine me for His holy
service. I believe that predestinations in
this respect are, in a way, a divine charism
that no one, least of all a person as unworthy
as I, can merit. That explains how I, being an
ordinary child, when I made my first communion,
received the first divine grace, setting me on
the path for the mission of my life. I was the
daughter of an honorable family, but not a
very Christian, much less pious, one. The

environment of my paternal home was one of vanity, luxury and comfort. Life was spent for the body, and little or nothing was for the soul. My father was an unbeliever, a man of the Government, a revolutionary since 1910. My virtuous mother, although a Christian, was afraid of my father in this sense, and let herself be influenced, to some extent, by his theories. She took us to Mass only on Sundays; at home she taught us to pray, and, hidden from my father, each year we fulfilled the precepts of the sacraments of confession and communion. My first communion, therefore, was similarly concealed from my father, a sober day in its exterior. But interiorly God our Lord permitted me to hear his first call, inspiring me to offer myself to Him, to unite myself to His Redemption, in the role of a victim. It was a simple inspiration, and I did it, for the conversion of my father; for it grieved me deeply to know he was estranged from God.

The night of that magnificent day I had a symbolic dream: I saw a great book in the sky, a book that I understood was sacred, and a white and delicate hand wrote, in my presence, these words: "The Prophecies of Sister Matiana." But, before seeing this book, I saw that I was in the parish church of my town, which was filled with people, and a priest preached from the pulpit. I was in front of a statue of the Immaculate Conception. All of a sudden, the statue of the Blessed Virgin bowed toward me, extending its arms to me; then I arose with longing to seize her arms; but at that moment I felt that all the people were rushing at me, and then the Blessed Virgin withdrew her hands and said to me: "Leave the church, and go to your home to pray, and when the Church is destroyed, My Son will come and carry you away on His shoulders."

I left the church, crossing the main square, and arrived at my house; I entered, knelt down in the garden at the foot of a tree called the paradise tree. Dawn was breaking; in the sky the stars still shone, but now dawn was breaking in the little clouds. It was while in this attitude of prayer that I witnessed the book mentioned earlier, with the words: "The Prophecies of Sister Matiana," and while contemplating these words, I felt that a hand touched me on the right shoulder; I turned to see who it was, and it was Christ-majestic! In a nimbus of light! At that moment, I awakened,

my soul remaining with a holy restlessness,
but an immense joy.

I understood that it had not been a simple dream. Reservedly, I asked my father later what were "the prophecies of Sister Matiana," and he said to me only: "A book that speaks of future events." With such a superficial answer, I did not know how to explain anything of that dream to myself. I could never forget it, and I thought that when the years of the questioning of youth that were perturbing me had passed, perhaps God would put something good in my path.

But the environment in my surroundings was, in a certain manner, worldly. My parents were jealous of their daughters, they were excessively tender, but nevertheless, with the luxury, the outings and amusements, I felt incited to the vain things of the world. On the other hand, I was ignorant of religion, almost to the point of being illiterate. My parents, in general, were refractory to the idea that their daughters should have any higher education. After the primary years, they permitted me only to take a course in business. I longed to study science and many things, religion, literature and the rest; but they did not permit me to do so. In such a way that in my religion, I was extremely ignorant.

That time was an era of religious persecution in our country; services in the churches had ceased, for which reason I was ignorant even of the existence of religious communities, until the year 1927, when I studied business with some Carmelite nuns that were giving classes in secret. But, before knowing of this type of life, solely by the inspiration of God, I thought of leaving the world; I consulted a priest, desiring to go to do penance in some desert, and that was when he informed me of the religious state, and almost simultaneously I knew of the Carmelites, this news filling me with joy.

I was inclined by nature, it seems, to piety, and I enjoyed being in prayer better than in other occupations, and since childhood, I realized that while kneeling and meditating, I was not aware that entire nights passed as I knelt, my arms in the form of a cross. When I realized it, I felt in my soul a most unspeakable sweetness, that was causing me to dedicate myself more and more to prayer. Thus the good God made Himself my Teacher; He was leading me and teaching me in the secret of

my soul, many things of which I was ignorant. When I consulted that priest about this for the first time, he assured me that I was being made the object of special graces, and I had an obligation to respond to them and to be grateful to His Divine Majesty. He was a wise and virtuous priest, who knew how to guide me to my vocation. He was named Salvador Moran, of the diocese of Guadalajara, for I did not say that I am from Ocotlán, Jalisco, a town near the capital of the state, Guadalajara, and at that time, I was living there at the side of my parents.

The cessation of religious services in my country inflamed me even more, and that was when I decided to give myself up completely to God. But in my home, everyone chided me for such an inclination, and I had a great deal to suffer immediately for having decided to be God's. But He, in the measure in which I was persecuted by my own, lavished Himself on my soul, as I will relate throughout this narrative.

Chapter II

First Revelations

God Our Lord does not permit Himself to be surpassed in generosity, for scarcely had I promised to be all His, to seek only His greater glory and to consecrate my life to His service, and He was lavish with me in every sense.

At the end of 1927 the religious persecution in my country was intensified, and the priests had to take refuge in the great capitals, in such a way that I found myself deprived of the visits to my confessor, but he arranged for me to send my notes of conscience to Guadalajara (with a person specifically assigned to take his correspondence to him), and he answered in writing as well. Thus, the years until 1930 were long ones. All that time, secluded in my paternal home, without liberty to do anything, I was suffering the martyrdom of the most ardent zeal which God had infused in me, and on the other hand, the impossibility of doing anything, objectively. I could only pray, and even to do this, I had to await the silence of the night, for my mother chided me if I absented myself from the family during the day, and that is why I spent my nights in prayer.

What I learned by myself in this exercise of prayer, Holy Father, is indescribable. It seems as if God Our Lord deigned to make himself my Teacher and my Consoler. And I longed to know my religion to the depths, and I had no books, no teachers; but in prayer, I got to know everything. I had only Father Ripalda's catechism, little, without, explanations; but it was in prayer that it was explained to me, in a strange way, extraordinary; it was a most sweet voice that resounded in the depth of my soul, and was explaining everything, even the most obscure dogmas. And I understood at the same time that He was enkindling me in zeal and love, and securing me in my faith. My Father Director was awed, since he knew well my ignorance and the lack of religion in my family, and he was confirming to me in his replies, although brief, that it was the Holy Ghost who was instructing me thus, that I was obliged to be grateful and to respond. But a day came when they were no longer intellectual voices, but rather, voices that I began to hear in my ears, and things that I began to see with my own eyes.

It happened that the desire in me to go to some holy retreat was increasing, to go where I could devote myself to prayer and to be able to follow the divine motions, that is: to live completely for Him; for, in my house, each day the obstacles increased; they chided my inclination, and were trying to dissipate me in the things of the world. In such a way that I was informed by my Father Director of some religious communities, although he himself told me that, since my family was going to be opposed when the hour would come for asking them their permission to enter as a nun (and for this we were waiting until the services in the country would resume), it was fitting for me to adapt myself to the circumstances that God Himself would permit in my surroundings, that is, to be a religious in the world. Despite protesting to Jesus my unconditional will to do that of His own holy will, I was longing to hide in some cloister of the Capuchin nuns. I was attracted to the austerity, the Franciscan poverty, the isolation from the world in order to live in prayer and recollection; the spirit of humility characteristic of that Order, whose founder I was able to know by means of a biography that, at that time, was published

in a daily paper in Mexico. Therefore, in the dilemma of choosing opportunely the Order to which I should aspire to enter, I begged God a great deal in prayer to enlighten me, or that He might make known His express will.

On the other hand, at that time, there arose in me a certain doubt, that the Divine Will, in the matter of religion, could be divided among Protestants and other sects that, I knew, were virtuous, perhaps much more so than some Catholics. This doubt was a type of temptation, or a test that God permitted for my soul, for it made me suffer, and as I was ignorant of the history of the Church, nor did I have books that might explain it to me, nor much less apologetics, although I was making acts of faith, each time more intense, protesting to God my adherence to the Catholic faith. Nevertheless, as my father who was a man of culture, did not profess any religion and was apt to argue strongly against the Catholic religion, it happened that in those days, God Our Lord granted me a very beautiful vision concerning the only true Church founded by Him.

And it was thus: He let me see a most beautiful Church that later I recognized as St. Peter's Basilica, of which at that time I was ignorant. I saw the Church inside and out simultaneously. Within, filled with lights, canticles and festivities, and by its high walls, there were a multitude of little ladders, by which the faithful were ascending easily toward the apex, where I could see something as if it were: GLORY! That is: His Divine Majesty was showing me in that vision what I now understand: the Church Militant united with the Triumphant, but it was not only this. On the outside it was enveloped in the blackest darkness, on the surface itself of the walls of that Church was seen the abyss; and in the bottom of this abyss, flames and people, that is: it was Hell, no more, no less. By the walls of the Church many people were battling to ascend, too, in order to peep through the high windows filled with light, but they could not reach them, because outside there were no ladders, the walls were flat and slippery, and thus, all were falling into the abyss that surrounded that Church. Then it was said to me: "Write, daughter, that only one is My Church: the Apostolic, Roman Catholic, and only one My representative and chief: the Pope, My beloved vicar!"

Holy Father, from that moment my soul never again had doubts about the true Church of Christ, rather it was inflamed in love and zeal to make it known and loved by all souls,

and I felt, forever, a filial, intense love for the Vicar of Christ, and in him I see my Jesus, living! That is why now that He grants me the privilege of going to Your Holiness' feet, I am filled with joy!

But I am going to continue my narrative. It was during those same days, simultaneously, that Our Lord revealed many beautiful things to me. I already said how I was perplexed about choosing the religious Order that I should enter when the opportune moment came, and so it was that my beloved Jesus said to me one day: "There will be a new house in which you will enter."

Soon I had an opportunity and I wrote telling my Father Director. He answered me, saying to me that, at that time, a spiritual daughter of his was carrying out the proceedings for a religious work, awaiting only the renewal of services to establish it. That I should ask Our Lord if He referred to that Work. But my Jesus took a new occasion to grant me most exalted revelations. He said to me: "No," that He was referring to "a new Order, the most beloved of His heart."

And, as I asked Him which it would be, he answered that it would be called: "the Order of the Franciscan Minims of the Perpetual Help of Mary," that "it would be for men and for women." That, "They would not be two different orders, but a single order." That: "The first foundation would be in Rome, the second in Mexico." Textually, those were Jesus' words, but I must declare that I understood that, on His saying "first" and "second" he was referring to the men and women respectively. That is: that the foundation of the Minim nuns would be in Mexico, and that of the Minim brothers in Rome.

Then, to my great astonishment He continued speaking to me for several days, now not only when I was at prayer, but even while occupied in other things. He continued speaking to me about that very beloved Work of His, and He said to me, textually, that its principal purpose would be: "Atonement to Divine Justice. That each member of this order would have to offer himself as I had offered myself, as He had inspired me, on the day of my first communion; as a victim in union with Him, but: in atonement for all the sins of all the world." Then He told me that "all the houses of this Order should be called Houses of Atonement. That they should have the same constitutions. That the children of this order should be very much devoted to the Pope and to the holy Church. That the men should be gratuitous and untiring missionaries at

the disposition of the diocese where they are established. That the women should carry out a life more contemplative than active; but with a certain participation in the apostolate, that would help to raise the morals of women socially, above all, of youth. That they should keep the holy Franciscan Rule, but in its primitive purity, above all in holy poverty. That the Blessed Virgin in Her invocation of Perpetual Help should be the Patroness. And the members of this order should wear Her garments as a holy habit, being for the women of the same color and style in dress as in this image of hers. And the men, in darker colors and in the style of the habit of the Friars Minor. That they should consider the Blessed Virgin herself as Mother General of the order and the Pope, His beloved Vicar, as Father General." (Textual words of Jesus) "That they should not have fasts nor abstinences other than those ordered by the holy Church." These, Most Holy Father, were the first revelations of our Lord with respect to this; later, He was lavish in explaining to me, so that I myself could write the Constitutions of His Work. But on that same first occasion, He also told me that: "This order had been asked with urgency of other souls by the Blessed Virgin; but it had not been realized, because they withdrew from the rules and from their mandates."

Then He added very graphic expressions, like these: "Daughter, the foundation of this order of victims is the greatest desire of My Heart. My order will extend the reign of My Vicar on earth. The Pope is the representative of Christ the King. All the foundations of this order will have the Pope for Father General, and they will be at his disposition as faithful soldiers in his kingdom." And He told me textually: "Try to lead everyone to the veneration of the Pope, gathering all souls in the Church."

During those same days, one night it seemed to me I was dreaming this: I was inside an enormous house that seemed to be a convent; but it was demolished, with the cloisters in pieces, the columns fallen. And, feeling a great sadness at that demolished house, my soul ascended to Heaven, begging an explanation, and, at that moment a mysterious woman appeared among the columns of the cloisters, and came toward me in the center of the patio. It seemed to me she was a nun, by her monastic garb. Without saying a word, she sat on a

piece of column next to me, and took from beneath her mantle, a red book with golden edges. I knelt in front of that mysterious woman, who opened the book and showed me, with her index finger, some lines of great strokes that said: "The Prophecies of Sister Matiana." This made a great impression on me, but that woman in mourning, without saying a word, got up hastily to return to the place from which she had come amid the semi-darkness; but in the midst of my anguish, I cried to her, saying: "And I, what must I do?" Then that woman, impassible and tranquil, turned toward me, pointed to the destroyed cloisters and said to me: "Repair the house!" And immediately I awoke, afflicted, confused. I began to pray, and Jesus told me that all that was a warning on His behalf for my soul. I began to petition in prayer to my God, to let me know what He wanted me to do to serve Him. And He let me understand that this dream was related to the first one, the one on the day of my first communion. I remembered that first dream, and I longed to know what it would be and what that book, The Prophecies of Sister Matiana, might contain. And I believe, Holy Father, that the woman in mourning whom I saw in my second dream, may have been the Prophetess of that book. But at that time, I remained in the most absolute perplexity with respect to this. Moreover, my confessor was telling me to abandon all uneasiness, and to let myself be led by the hand of God, in peace. And so I did, and the years passed, and events made manifest later all those seemingly mysterious things!

Chapter III

In the Solitude of the Cloister

It would be too long to relate here all that followed after those first divine revelations. And much more, what I had to suffer and to wait, to attain my desire of entering the cloister. I can only say, Holy Father, that all that was providential, as Sacred Scripture tells us of the passage through the Red Sea. I was transported, almost by the hands of angels, from the world to the silence of a cloister of Capuchin Adorers of the Blessed Sacrament, at the beginning of the year 1930. The religious services had recently resumed in my country. As my father was a man of the government and an enemy of the Church,

and I being a minor in age, it seemed my entrance would be impossible, unless, to achieve it, unexpectedly, God moved wills, of secular people as well as of religious and ecclesiastics, and I was received in the postulancy of the Capuchin Adorers of the Blessed Sacrament of Tlalpan, in the Federal District, at the very time that they had scarcely been reinstalled in their convent, after having been sent away from their cloister by the persecutors. For that community was precisely that of the Rev. Mother Concepción Aceveda de la Llata, who, exactly when her community was receiving me, was serving her sentence (certainly as a victim) in the Penal Colony of Islas Marias.

I was accepted with affection and with a dispensation of my dowry and of the permission of my parents, in view of the fact that His Excellency, the Auxiliary Bishop of the metropolitan see, who was at that time Monsignor D. Maximino Ruiz Flores, gave me his permission. I was able to confide my soul entirely to him, and he assured the community and myself, that my vocation was completely from God. And we faced the risks that the community's accepting me carried with it. And I left my home furtively on February 2, 1930, for a hiding place in an honorable home, remaining hidden 13 days in a closet. Only at night, when the hour was well advanced, did the lady of the house take me to a room to sleep, because no one besides her, neither her father nor her brothers and sisters, nor the servants, were to know of my stay in that house. This house was located in the same town (Ocotlán, Jalisco), previously arranged by His Excellency the bishop himself, and thus God our Lord manifested Himself in favor of the same desires that He was enkindling in my soul. And I was happy, thinking of never again leaving that holy place, of consecrating my life to prayer and penance there, and in regard to the Work of God, that of Atonement, I thought it would suffice to tell everything to my superiors, and so I did.

At that time the Abbess of the community was a religious from another house, the Rev. Mother Mercedes Vasquez Castillon, a holy nun who received me maternally.

The Father Director of the community was Felix de Jesus Rougier, the Founder of the Missionaries of the Holy Ghost, and

the chaplain was the Rev. Father Angel Onate, of the same congregation. But Father Felix did not want me to relate those revelations that I had confided to him, but rather to another religious whom he disposed: the Rev. Father Jose Quijada, who at that time was scarcely a novice in the congregation; but the Rev. Fr. Felix had great confidence in him, because--he said--he possessed the gift of discerning spirits. This Rev. Fr. Quijada entered the congregation after having been a priest for many years past. This was, then, the priest chosen by God, to receive from me the most exalted things that God at that time continued revealing to me, something indescribable! Holy Father! Something that I have noted on separate sheets and that I will show to your Holiness.

It seemed that my beloved Jesus had transplanted me to that place for no other reason but to finish and perfect in my mind and in my soul, what He wanted to form, so that it might serve Him in carrying out His Work of Atonement.

That is why, when one day I was complaining that so many revelations and visions and extraordinary things that were happening to me were going to impede my vocation as a Capuchin, He answered me: "Now in the solitude of your heart, I will show you the depths of mine."

He said this, because Our Lord began to complain to me of the infinite number of sins of the world; of the clergy, of the religious communities and seminaries, telling me to take note how, in His new order, He wanted perfection.

I was at that time, much tested by God and by my superiors, and persecuted by the devil, and an infinite number of extraordinary things happened to me, that I must not relate here, because it would be burdensome for Your Holiness to read it now. Fortunately of all those religious and ecclesiastical superiors that I mentioned, Father Quijada is still living, and he was witness to all these things that happened to me.

There Jesus and the Blessed Virgin completed perfecting in me the knowledge of the Work of Atonement, and I was submitted to spiritual examinations, and God deigned to give signs that the things of His confided to my miserable person were certain. In June, 1931, with the permission of my superiors, I was presented to the very Reverend Archbishop at that time: Monsignor Pascual Diaz Barreto, in whom I found, not only the understanding and consolation that I longed for and needed,

but in whom I found an identity of ideals,
as I will mention hereafter.

But first, I must relate (in a separate chapter) some of the most outstanding things of that epoch, when I was a postulant and novice in that community of Capuchins, above all, the test that my superiors put me to, and to which God Our Lord responded in an irrefutable manner, disposing that I would leave my sweet religious retreat and engage in laboring for His Work!

Chapter IV

The Hand of God

I call what I am going to relate to you, Most Holy Father, the "Hand of God." The Hand of God!... because I was so happy in my cloister, and that environment was such for me that, short of a miracle, nothing could have made me abandon it. Besides, the Superiors who were observing the extraordinary things that were happening to me were so suspicious, that everything might have been a clever game of the enemy to upset my vocation and my regular life, that they submitted me, certainly with prudence, to hard tests.

I myself came to the point of asking Our Lord how it was that He wanted me there as a Capuchin, and then submitted me to an order of things that was disturbing my life. And on one occasion He answered me in this manner: "I have brought you to this house not to rest, but to work." And He emphasized to me then that the Franciscan observance there was very pleasing to Him, that He wanted it thus, to give me practical lessons in the observance and type of life that He wanted for His Work of Atonement. And He ordered me to make notes of everything of the Holy Rule and customs of that house.

Similarly, He told me expressly, of some details that did not please Him. But, as I was relating everything to my Superior, who, after the Rev. Mother Mercedes Vásquez Castillon, was the Rev. Mother of the Holy Ghost, and to my Father Director, and also to the Rev. Father Director General who was, as I already stated, the founder of the Missionaries of the Holy Ghost, Felix de Jesus Rougier, I remained tranquil, when they ordered me to do the contrary. To the extent that, on one occasion they ordered me not to listen to words nor to admit to seeing any visions, in short: to repel all that, for it would make me leave my tranquil life as a Capuchin novice. I obeyed, and

Jesus Himself taught me to obey, for He left me in peace. But one day, in prayer, a strong impulse to cry came to me, and then He manifested Himself to me in an intellectual vision, as in a dungeon with His hands tied, and He said to me: "Obey, daughter. See how I Myself let them tie My hands, through obedience."

With this, I complied perfectly. But, physically, He Himself was disposing in me a very rare illness. I had no appetite, I could not digest, I could not sleep; and in my system a complex of illnesses was forming, and over a span of two months worsening, with the most refined medical attention being unable to cure me. This happened from March of 1931, when the prohibition of my superiors to receive the divine words came, and in May I was prostrate in bed, and I was put in the infirmary, for I was seriously ill.

The Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was approaching, and our Rev. Mother Abbess, on visiting me was consoling me, telling me that it was preferable to die a victim of obedience, but within the house of God, rather than to expose myself to the loss of my vocation, perhaps through diabolic cleverness!

Interiorly, although I was of one will with that of my superiors, I confess that I could not relieve an intimate affliction that was consuming me, that of having to oppose God, to be a dike to His graces. But I was happy at the same time to die thus. One afternoon, the Father Director (Jose Quijada) was at my bed to give me Extreme Unction. Then he asked me if I did not have some request, and I could do nothing but say to him: "I entrust to you the work of God!" Then he answered me, very solemnly, "No! I do not want you to die, my daughter, but to live, so you may carry out the will of God!"

I was gravely ill, but I did not at once understand his words. I found them sententious; I foresaw in them an implicit permission to again occupy my soul in opening it to the revelations of God, but desiring to work in everything under strict obedience, through the nun who was nurse, I called our Reverend Mother, but she did not come. And I came to be obsessed in such a way, hearing the echo of the words of my Father Director, that again I was suffering a new type of incitement

that strongly impelled me to occupy myself with the work of God.

I wanted the presence of our Reverend Mother to consult with her on it, but for several days she did not happen to come! (Later she confessed to me that she did it intentionally, to let me react by myself.)

Finally one night she came to see me. My health was better, but I had not taken any nourishment for several days, and I was extremely weak; I could not even sit up in bed. I wanted to consult her, but she said no, that she was only going to give me permission to get up on the following day, if I could do it physically. She left. I remained awake all night, in prayer, and Jesus was repeating to me: that I should cease my rest, that I should labor for His Work, that He had taken me there, only temporarily, that the mission of my life must be--to seek victim souls for Him, to give Him a Legion of victims of atonement to His Divine Justice, a universal Atonement!

And He made me feel how, to remain there longer would be a loss of time, but a gain in His greater glory.

Desiring to ask advice about all that, I awoke another day. It was Sunday, June 9, 1931. When I tried to get up from my sick bed, where I had spent several weeks, I realized that nothing ailed me, and I felt as strong as if I had never been sick. I marveled, but it was not strange that Jesus should lead me by that path, and I went to the chapel on my own two feet, desirous of talking with my Superior later on.

But, as I was at Holy Mass, Jesus ordered me to leave! At that moment, the priest was explaining the Holy Gospel, and it said: "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His Justice, and all the rest will be given you."

That engraved itself in the depths of my soul, and it was like a light that I wanted to follow.

I do not know how it was! I remember that I asked Jesus one thing: "Lord, what then is my true vocation?" And He answered me: "Your true vocation is suffering!"

I believe, Holy Father, that during all that time that passed, from the night before, I was in ecstasy. I do not know how to explain how I walked to the porter's lodge, finding the door wide open, while it was yet dawn. I scarcely

left the house, it was raining, and when I set foot outside the Cloister, I came to myself, and I wanted to enter again, but the door was closed, as was the custom, and more so at that hour when the nun-portress was in the chapel with all the community.

Terrified, I began to run to the house of the Reverend Fathers of the Holy Ghost, and I asked to speak to my Father Director, but he was not there; he had gone to officiate outside the city. I approached a porch in the town plaza, and there were several beggars sleeping near some buses that said: Mexico City.

Then I began to reflect: Who had brought me out of my cloister? To what was I going except to Him? What was the only thing I was looking for? Certainly I was seeking nothing but one single thing: "The Kingdom of God and His Justice."

Then, since, after the great trial of three months of prohibition of my superiors, now they were setting me free, and I did not have even the quality of a nun, rather I was a simple postulant, I was a secular; I would have to go to Mexico, indeed, and speak to His Excellency, the Archbishop, about the Work; then this hierarchical Superior would order me to do what was conducive to continue. And so I did, Most Holy Father.

While still at the porch, I asked one of the beggars how much the fare was to go to Mexico, and he looked at me compassionately, saying to me: "Doesn't the little girl have money for her fare?" And taking out a coin, he said to me: "Take it!" I quickly got on the bus, and turned to the window to look out to thank the beggar, and now he was not there. Who gave me the alms? The hand of God was leading me!

I went then to the home of a family that I knew before, and from there I went the following day to see my Father Director, and my Superior, and I asked their pardon, and I told them, that I did not want to do anything but what they ordered me to do.

There were clarifications with the nun-portress, in that, if she had the door closed the morning before, as was customary, who then had opened it for me? Who had let me out of the cloister? And, unanimously, they decided it had been the hand of God!

Chapter V

First Efforts

I can still say that, afterwards, when, with the permission of my superiors, I installed myself in

the house of my uncle and aunt in Mexico City to carry out the Work of God, I cried torrents for having left the solitude of my cloister, where I was happy. But that was the will of God, manifested at first in an extraordinary form, confirmed later by all my superiors, who recommended me and helped me in my first efforts with His Excellency, the Archbishop, Pascual Diaz Barreto. First, they took me to introduce me to His Excellency, and to Carlos M. Mayer, a Jesuit Father: a very holy and wise man, prudent, who from that moment on, until his death, was my immediate Director.

Recommended in this manner, I finally arrived before His Excellency, the Prelate. In his paternal heart, unsurpassed until now for me, I found an identity of ideals. We both talked entire afternoons, in his residence; I, seated at his feet, related everything about my Jesus, and he deigned to confide in me that the Blessed Virgin had asked of him, too, some of the same things asked of me. In such a way that in this Prelate, I found the most clear manifestation of the Divine Will. I proposed to him at that time that the founders be of the community where I still felt I was, and thus they considered me a daughter, and our Reverend Mother Abbess loved the Work as much as I, as did four other nuns of the same community.

And His Excellency was receptive to my proposition, and offered to petition Rome for me for permission for the transfer of those nuns to this foundation. I was happy, for I would be the first postulant, and the Work would grow, supported by such an eminent Prelate, and endorsed by such a noted and holy Foundress. Besides, I would remain tranquilly in secret from everybody, living, as was my most fervent desire: all and solely for God!

After His Excellency, Diaz Barreto and I had spoken of everything confidentially and personally, at his own suggestion I sent my first official communication to the Sacred Metropolitan Chancery, offering the Work, for the purpose—as His Excellency told me—of taking the proper canonical path in the matter.

But God had other paths reserved for me that, at that time, I did not imagine, and thus it happened in another manner, as I will relate further on.

Earlier, His Excellency himself had disposed that my spirit be examined and His Excellency, the Rev. Bishop, Luis Benitez-Cabanas, at that time most worthy visitor of religious in Mexico and bishop of Tulancingo, was delegated for that task. This good priest and most virtuous prelate, when he had finished giving me the spiritual examination, assured me, in the name of God, that the Work

that I was beginning was indeed completely from God. And it was then, from him, that I came to know something related to those two dreams of my infancy and adolescence; because he placed in my hands a book entitled: "The Prophecies of Sister Matiana"! And that is a book composed of certain old and new predictions, above all, those of a lay sister of the nuns of St. Jerome, who was very holy, in the era of the Spanish conquest of Mexico; where it speaks of a foundation of Atonement, that the Blessed Virgin and Our Lord Jesus Christ had asked her to relate to her Superiors and that, it is noted there, they had wanted to realize many times over a long period of time, and it had not been attained. Which is identical to what Our Lord deigned to tell me at the beginning, and that I already told Your Holiness.

I was astounded at such a coincidence and such a divine manifestation on behalf of the project of the foundation that concerned me at that time, and I believed that the things predicted, in the prophecies, as well as to me in particular by Our Lord, were soon to be fulfilled. Although I have not told your Holiness, that from the first revelations of God Our Lord to my soul, He had warned me of one thing: that I would have to suffer a great deal; that there would be superiors who would be opposed; that they would brand me as deceived and crazy or a liar; but that I was to offer everything for His greater glory.

Besides, from that time on, He had told me, similarly, one thing: "Everything will be difficulties, until you succeed in these things reaching my beloved Vicar." With all that, I thought that perhaps the sufferings and tests had now passed, with those that I suffered in the cloister.

But, very quickly Our Lord let me see my rough path. First, there was a clear and concrete vision. He let me see a path filled with crosses on both sides, and at the end of that path was His Cross, that I recognized because the other crosses were bare, and His had the sheet hanging from its arms. Then he said to me: "This is your path."

This vision happened to me in October, and very soon, in November, adversity came to cut short this prosperity!

It happened, as I said at the beginning of my story, that I was in the cloister without my parents' permission, and thus it continued until, lodged in the home of my uncle and aunt, I was proceeding with the Work. My superiors had warned my uncle and aunt to keep the secret from my

parents, and they had offered to do so. But my parents were seeking me incessantly, and one day my uncle and aunt gave away the secret, thinking that they would leave me in peace! But very much to the contrary; one day, unexpectedly for me, my father came to Mexico City, and before presenting himself at the house where I was, he went to His Excellency, the Archbishop, and threatened him with jail, if he did not give me up in 24 hours! That was like a diabolical assault! At that time His Excellency had already told me to find a house where a trial of the Order could be made, giving me only a period of one week; if during that lapse of time I had a house, benefactors and fixtures, he himself would perform the installation of the nuns, and everything would begin to be realized. In such a way that, to cut off my liberty at that exact hour, was for me a final stroke that left me dying of grief.

Such was the trial that God wished to send me, and to which I had to submit, given the dangers that would have ensued against His Excellency, Diaz Barreto, and, ultimately, against the Holy Church. And it is that it was fitting that a Work of Atonement, of victims of Divine Justice, begin with that lot, lashed by tempests from Hell itself, and that I would bear everything, offering it to God, in union with Jesus, to attain His most exalted and wise goals.

Then I begged His Excellency, the Bishop, to deign to give his approval for the Work to be carried out, even though I would return to my parents' side; for the nuns mentioned earlier were disposed to do it. But His Excellency differed in opinion, saying that everything would remain pending until I would obtain my liberty and, authorized by my father, would return.

The trial was long, from December of 1931, until January of 1942, when I obtained that liberty!

Chapter VI

God's Great Trial

Although I already mentioned how that trial, the most sorrowful until then, came to me, on having to suspend the proceedings of the Work and having to return to my parents' home, where I knew they would submit me to temptations and malicious intentions to war against my vocation to the service of God, I want to pause a little at this event, exclusively, because it was one of those events that form an epoch in my life.

It was not only to evaluate the loss of time I was going to suffer in my parents' power; it was, moreover, to see the inflamed anger of my parents against my vocation, and ultimately, against holy things. I knew my parents' nature, and I could imagine what awaited me. Although my father had agreed before His Excellency that, once he realized there was a vocation in me, he would permit me to return, and although through the intercession of the bishop himself (who through his great wisdom and gift for handling people, tried to reconcile wills) we wrested from my father that he would permit me to carry out a life in conformance with my pious aspirations in the house, and would allow me to communicate with my spiritual superiors. I knew that my father would fulfill nothing of this, for I knew his refined attachment to his daughters; his bitter jealousy for them; his distrust of ecclesiastical things, and on the other hand, I knew that my mother would wage all-out war in opposing me with an environment propitious to the weakening of my spirit. This, then, cost me unspeakably to accept. I accepted it through obedience and docilely, offering it to my Jesus, as a proof of my great love for His designs, complete confidence in His Justice, but, in exchange I asked Him, from that time on, for one thing: "Souls... many souls," I told Him, "and that the first soul would be that of my own father!"

Then He was so lavish in promises, that I could not relate here all that was promised by Him.

Before returning home, with the permission of my father, I made some spiritual exercises in the cloister of the Capuchin nuns for two weeks. That was the time at which, with the permission of the superior, I began to write the Constitutions of the Work of Atonement, the Work of God. That was a time of absolute solitude with God, something unforgettable, that encouraged me to embrace the Cross! And when I returned to my parents' home, similar to when Jesus returned to His when he was lost from them in the temple in Jerusalem, I cannot express the spiritual communion between Him and my soul, because it is ineffable.

The sufferings and sorrows, the nostalgia and the sacrifices that Jesus asked of me at that time, for almost 12 years, are not to be written here below, but are to be sung as a Magnificat in thanksgiving for His having given His grace and His fortitude to a creature as fragile as I recognize myself to be. But, as those crosses and martyrdoms were measured, so were the charisms.

For that was a time of profuse words and divine revelations, that made me live more in Heaven than on earth. For everything, may God be blessed!

All those years, I repeat, I wrote many things; among them, the book of the Constitutions for the Work of God; the book of customs and other things, all dictated by the Lord. And they were written by me kneeling, as I promised Him I would do. It was during that time, Most Holy Father, that I received some particular messages for the Vicar of my Jesus. And I thought that it was at that same time that I had to transmit them, but He himself said to me: "Do not seek to transmit it immediately. Keep it in your heart, and I will reveal when and to whom you must tell it!" (I will write these messages, Holy Father, at the end of this little book, or rather, they will form the second part of it.)

After I place these pages in your holy hands, my Father, I can die in peace. Because I know from a good source, because Jesus told it to me: for this He brought me to earth: to be His messenger.

That is why, now that I am writing these things for Your Holiness, now that I am preparing for this trip to Rome, to Rome, where since then I have longed to go or to send the words of my beloved Jesus, it is, Most Holy Father, as if the happy end of my life is approaching, the apotheosis that Jesus had announced to me, something also like the final betrothal between Him and my soul, and—our wedding trip. Would to God that it were so!

(Continued in Genoa on October 1, 1963,
Feast of the Holy Guardian Angels.)

Chapter VII

In My Captivity

Holy Father: On coming to continue this "Best Book" of mine, many days of fatigue have passed on the trip that I began on the 10th in Mexico, with my having arrived at Genoa last night, through the charity of the Brothers of the Christian Schools of La Salle. Since leaving my country, good nuns have received me in the places where I had to make a stop on my journey, as in New York, where my Jesus gave me the surprise of being a guest with the Nuns of the Heart of Mary for one week, and now, since last night, with those of the Good Shepherd here in Genoa. My narrative continues then; but now I will regress a little. Since this surprise of lodging with the Nuns of the Good Shepherd makes me reflect that I omitted an episode in my narration. This was during the

epoch when Jesus granted me the favor of entering the Capuchin nuns. At that time, the religious communities in my country were being re-established, the religious persecution in my country having recently passed.

Because of this circumstance, when I arrived in the Capital of Mexico, the ecclesiastical authorities had to find lodging for me, while the Capuchin nuns put their house in order. And I was taken to the Convent of the Nuns of the Good Shepherd. They told me I would be there a week at most; but they left me there three months. It seemed that the Reverend Mother General wanted me to remain in that institute, and that is why she prolonged my stay with them. But I did not have that vocation; nevertheless, during the time that I was there, I acted as assistant to one of the nuns who was attending the group of young girls of preservation. There I had occasion to feel the necessity that souls have for religious who, having an accessible spirit, could win the hearts of the young that are brought in at times by force. And only with love and tenderness, and making oneself like them to open for them the door of confidence, can one succeed in making those rebellious souls remain in the refuge, really making progress.

It was there, too, in the House of the Good Shepherd, that God Our Lord deigned to reveal many things to me of what He suffers in the tabernacles, when He is left alone all day, perhaps because there were so few people. Finally, in spite of its being an institute inspired by Him, He gave me occasion to see how, when the members of an institution respond poorly to the fulfillment of their rules, He is offended. For in that house there were certain anomalies in the members of the teaching staff that Jesus showed me, in all the crudeness of its depravity, and He made me see how, everywhere, atonement to Divine Justice was lacking.

Now, on the other hand, again He brought me among the nuns of this institute, and it is noted that here He is served as He should be.

There is fulfillment of the Holy Rule, there is a spirit of charity, of sacrifice, of love for Him. This coincidence, Holy Father, has surprised me, and that is why I have noted it in my narrative.

Now: I continue. For I am going to speak to you of the epoch that I call my captivity, and which was the time that followed after my father took me by force to the paternal home, taking me away from the path of the service of God, as I had left it, just begun, in the last chapter.

I already said that I, in exchange, had asked Him (Jesus) for only one thing: SOULS. And so He

promised, and He kept His promise to me. Because, although I suffered a horrible captivity, and what I was carrying out as an apostolate was with enormous sacrifices, He let me feel the fruit, precisely, of sacrifice--until coming one day to say to me, that I should see what it is like on the Cross, where the great Works of Love are realized. Because, from that time on He gave me many crosses--but many souls! The conversion of great heretics, among them my father. The conversion of priests who were living for years past in hidden sins, the conversion of women of very sinful lives, but ultimately, it was something for which to praise God. It was in that epoch that Jesus made known to me in prayer the sins of some consciences, and then He ordered me to approach them and, it was to be by writing if they were far away, or personally speaking with them if they lived near me; I was to say to them, for example, that they should repent, because their death was near! And I had to do it, because I was consulting my Father Director, and he ordered me to do so; and through those divine messages, I suffered reprisals from the persons, and I passed through great conflicts; but the fruit was eminently good, because they repented and died in peace with God.

Due to this epoch of divine messages, one time I had to suffer a reprisal from a priest who spoke with me in the chancery of Guadalajara, and I was suspended from the Holy Sacraments. But my spiritual director, although residing in Mexico City while I was in Jalisco, a different diocese, defended me, communicating directly with the ecclesiastical superiors, and everything redounded in glory for God and for the good of souls.

In this way Jesus told me to see how suffering is the only thing that redeems souls, and the lesson was so beneficial for me; because I knew human misery to the depths, and I realized that without divine grace, one cannot be lifted in the least from sin, and my zeal and my charity for souls increased.

But I wanted, Holy Father, to refer to the conversion of my father's soul, which was, for me, the best fruit of that time of my captivity and of my great sufferings. For it happened that God permitted to be awakened in my parents and in my sister, who were all those of my house, a hate against me, almost diabolical, for it was diabolical!

They lashed me and they mocked me, and they said that I was possessed by a devil, in order to

cause war in our home! And they made common cause with the parish priest in my town, to take away my religious vocation, and they wanted me to marry. And my father even came on several occasions to try to kill me with a weapon. And...I suffered morally, seeing myself an orphan among my own. But Jesus reminded me how He suffered the same among His own, and He was exhorting me to bear everything for the love of His souls, and in this manner, after some years, one day, unexpectedly, my father felt the touch of grace, and wanted to return to Catholic doctrine. And returning to the faith, he humiliated himself profoundly and confessed and practiced his religion as a good Catholic, and two years after his conversion he died a holy death! Because my father had many natural virtues, and perhaps supernatural, for his mother was a very holy soul. But in him there was a very strong devil that Jesus taught me to know and He said: that I should see how certain devils cannot be cast from souls except by penance. Because, apart from what I was suffering at that time on their account, Jesus asked a great deal of penance of me at that time, in payment for what the conversion of their souls was costing. That is why He himself said to me: that preachers themselves are deceived at times, thinking that souls are saved by the word. He said: "They are not saved, except by prayer and penance." And so it was that He made me write for His Work of Atonement, that the children of His Order would be souls of intense prayer, if they wanted to save souls. And so He calls them to these ranks: to be victims--He says--it is necessary to suffer persecution, and to offer it with love for the persecutors themselves, following His example, persuading ourselves that, "they know not what they do," as He said it on the cross about those who crucified Him; and He wants that spirit for the victim souls of His divine Justice. And He says that only a legion of victim souls will save the world in the last hour of time; but He wants it initiated now, at this time, because, He says, that the reign of His Justice is not far off, and when the time has passed, then there will be no occasion for mercy, but rather, pure Justice. Then His victimhood will have to cease and to give way to His Divine Justice alone. That is why He says the Work of Atonement, the devotion of love and surrender to His Justice, is urgent now.

These, then, were the best lessons that I had in the time of my captivity, lessons that let me feel the fruit: souls...souls! The conversion of many souls, about which the victim of Divine Justice must think: without anything else mattering, whatever it may be, or the fatigue

that it costs him, for that will pass, and only the harvest will remain. It is clear--it does cost! And it costs a great deal to suffer it; but He helps much more than what you do, for at the end everything seems to be a game of reciprocity alone between the soul and divine grace, which in those cases, if the soul is faithful, is lavish. And that fidelity consists in not retracting in the moments of trial, but rather, giving oneself up to the Cross, as He taught us by His life and example. The rest, He does Himself, even to the fortitude that He gives to His souls that suffer, comes from no one but Him, from His grace. It is only necessary to surrender oneself with faith and confidence, and a great deal of love, love for Him and love and zeal for souls! Thus He left me convinced by that time of such suffering, giving me the harvest of souls and at the end, as I said, my liberty to serve Him, which was when, finally, I succeeded in founding the Pious Union of the Franciscan Minims of the Perpetual Help of Mary, the House of Atonement, in Zamora, Michoacán, the diocese of His Excellency, Manuel Fulcheri-Pietrasanta (may God grant him joy).

Chapter VIII

A Marvelous Conversion

Holy Father: Although I already announced the theme for this chapter, this is where I must explain the marvelous conversion of my father, because it includes noteworthy details for the praise of God, and in it is felt the vocation that He always offered me, and the work that He asks me to promote, and for which I would like only to be His messenger.

For the reasons I already mentioned, that of never being understood by my own, I never confided to them my intimacies, for Jesus Himself was telling and teaching me how I would have to be discreet and not expose His things to the mockery of those who did not have the light necessary to see them. Nevertheless, when my father died, I believe that he was illuminated to understand something of my path. For, at the moment of his death, there were unmistakable details due to the power of grace. His death was on the last day of the month of April, 1940. All that time, my father was telling me: "Daughter, I know that I must let you go in liberty to save souls and to serve God; but I am a cowardly man: I love my daughters in such a way that I cannot free my heart, and I want to die quickly to let you go free."

My father was crying; he was suffering in silence. And I was praying a great deal for him. But it seemed that it was contrary to his desires, because at that time I became ill to a very serious degree. I had a gastric ulcer that provoked in me two vomitings of blood and I was prostrate, seriously ill, in Lent of the year 1940. And I was in anguish, only because I would not see and realize the work of God, but I was happy to be dying, for I had always loved death that, for me, is not death, but the liberation of my soul and to be able to fly to God, the happy ending of my longing. But my father suffered seeing me consumed in the bloom of youth, and although he did not understand what was the mission of my life, rather he thought I longed only for the religious cloister, a spiritual disturbance was noticeable in him when he saw me so gravely ill, for all the best doctors had already predicted that I would not reach Easter alive. I had a perforation in my stomach, and they would not let me move from the bed, and I was like a skeleton, for I had suffered with that terrible illness for more than ten years. Then, one night, my father and my sister were watching me, for, by that time, all those in the house had changed with me, and they were pious and received Communion daily. And my father said to my sister: "My daughter--will she die?" And my sister answered: "Yes, the doctors are certain of it." And my father asked, thinking that I was not listening, but indeed, I heard: "Why has this child been so sick, being so young?" And my sister answered: "Because she lives always in contradiction; this is not her environment; she aspires to I-don't-know-what, she wants to leave us; she longs only for the convent." And my father cried and then said: "No, I do not want her to die, rather I should die, so as not to feel the pain of seeing her go, and neither do I want her longings not to be realized, for she has rights; I understand it."

And...my father was healthy. And, nevertheless, two days later, my father died.

And I, knowing of his grave condition, was able to get up and go to his bed, which was on the upper floor of the house, and to do everything, to call a priest, to help him to die well. And I was well, and everyone was astounded, my own family and strangers, to see how I had recovered so quickly, and my father who was well had died in less than three days. For he died of gangrene in two and a half days, gangrene in a leg that traveled to his heart. Because the doctor wanted

to amputate the leg, but he did not want it; he said: "I want to die; God is asking my life of me." And he did not explain his words, but from the moment when the condition presented itself until his expiring, he was seen to be immersed in a meditation that delighted him. Because the same priest to whom he had confessed on being converted to the faith, helped him in his last hour, and he said: "This soul has been as if confirmed in grace before dying; he is a great example." And my father, when he was in a coma, nevertheless had no fever, and he was lucid and courageous in the face of death, and he was saying beautiful things. He stated that the Blessed Virgin was there next to him and she said to him, that soon he would receive the sacred Viaticum, because if he did not receive it soon, he would not get well. And my mother thought it was the cure of his body, but he shook his head and said: "No, the cure of my soul." And at that moment he wanted us to go to call the priest, for it was three in the morning. And I ran through long streets to bring him and it caused me no harm. And the priest came and anointed him at five in the morning. And my father responded well to the entire ceremony of Extreme Unction and sacred Viaticum, with firmness, in spite of his tremendous sufferings he did not complain, and my mother and we, his daughters, knelt by his bed, and there, too, were relatives and friends, and the doctor and the priest, when he said words more beautiful than I had ever heard from mortals, and even more so, from a man like him, who had spent many years away from religion, and traversing battlefields. First, addressing my mother, he said: "How much I have loved this woman! She has been the perfect companion of my life." Then he said to his daughters: "My daughters, never be ashamed of the name of your father. Your father has never known any other woman than the one God gave him for a wife, nor has he had other daughters than those of his legitimate marriage. Nor have I ever stained my hands with a single penny of anyone else's." And the end was emotional to a superlative degree, because he stretched out his hand, quivering, and took mine and tried to raise it very high and to hold this position several times, in silence, praying, and my mother asked him what he meant by that, and he answered: "I beg God, by means of my daughter, to forgive me for having delayed her vocation for so many years, and I ask you to give her the liberty to realize her desires." Then, after a pause, he added: "If she wants to go to Rome, let her go there, and give her money for her journey. Do not detain her, so God may forgive me, because she has a mission

on earth."

And everyone, on hearing it, was crying, filled with emotion and looking at each other, as if my father were inspired at that time, and the priest said: "It is now that your father has been converted to God with all his heart." And so it was. At exactly five in the morning, he received the Sacred Host on his tongue, devoutly, almost ecstatically, looking toward Heaven, and when he had received it, he neither spoke nor moved, nor lowered his eyes, and thus he expired at five in the afternoon, in a state of coma, according to the doctor; and in the state of grace, according to the priest who saw him and heard his confession. And I was crying more from joy than from sorrow, intoning interiorly the Magnificat and the "Nunc dimittis" to Heaven as an act of thanksgiving. It was the feast of St. Catherine of Siena, intercessor of the dying, and of whom I have always been a good friend, and she has been my intercessor with God. Thus Jesus granted me the fulfillment of one of His great promises, that He was always making to me when I longed for the conversion of my father, thinking it would never come, and He was saying: "Trust in Me, and you will see the wonders of your beloved." And thus it has been, that I have seen His wonders over a long period of time, realized, as now, for I am going to Rome, a desire nourished in my soul for long years, for which I never tire of blessing the Lord.

Chapter IX

The Holy Liberty of the Children of God

Holy Father: Since my adolescence and almost since my childhood, God Our Lord has taught me to hold in great esteem the holy liberty of the children of God. This holy liberty consists not in an evil sense of uncontrolled vicious human libertinism, but rather, the will of the creature purified, to mold it in the Divine Will of its God, who wisely foreknew the path of His children. That is why since early in my life I longed to isolate myself from my family, because I saw that, following the impulse of the flesh and blood, souls are misled, and I understood that a misled soul is saved with difficulty, nor does it realize its vocation, understanding as a vocation precisely what God our Lord wanted to send to each one of us on earth.

From these principles, so rooted in my conscience, it is easy therefore to understand the reason for my great joy later when, my father having died so well aided by the Holy Church, and with obvious indications of his eternal salvation, he left an express mandate that my family was not to detain me any more from going and serving God, who, on the other hand, was calling me irresistibly to found His Work of Atonement. I thought then, that the hour of my liberty had tolled; but it was not so. And the end of that battle without truce for a decade of years that had then passed since my father withdrew me from the path of God, was still reserved for me. And that time was not short, but rather long again, and perhaps the hardest, for it began with my father's death, which was in April of 1940, and it ended only in January of 1942. I am going to relate to you how those huge battles were, for they seemed to be, now not with flesh and blood, but against Satan in person. Because after the first days of sentimentalism and of condolences, when my mother offered to give me my liberty quickly, she returned then to her previous obstinacy. Since she became sick from the grief of her widowhood, she alleged that, for her restoration, it was necessary for me not to speak any more of sorrowful separations. In this, the doctor was an accomplice, and even the parish priest as well. I, following in everything divine inspiration, but subject to the legitimate obedience of my spiritual director, never rose in rebellion, but was maintaining my rights, asking with urgency for what I felt, in conscience, to be my duty: to leave in order to work on behalf of the mission commended to me by God. There was another adverse factor: my sister, who was a young woman older than I, for she was the firstborn and I the last of five children of the marriage, stated that she had the right to choose her state in life first, especially since she had spent many years in silence, and was engaged to be married, and she had abstained in order not to give that grief to my parents. My mother, then, supported her and not me. And my spiritual and ecclesiastical superiors advised me that,

if she chose her state before I was able to leave home, canon law prohibited my abandoning my mother, for she was alone and ill, although she had plenty of financial means, but she did not know how to avail herself of them to administer them, and she needed one of her daughters.

And I turned my heart to God and abandoned myself in His arms, in conformity to the Psalm: "Commit thy way to the Lord; delight in Him, and He will give thee the requests of thy heart." (Ps. 36:4). And thus it was realized with God once again working wonders on my behalf, demonstrating in it His predilection for the Work commended to me. It happened that, my sister being ready to marry, her fiance became ill with severe pneumonia, from which he did not die but was prostrate for more than two years as a result of the first illness, and the wedding ceremony had to be postponed exceedingly. Meanwhile I was able to proceed by means of correspondence written to some prelates, and I obtained an agreement with His Excellency Bishop Fulcheri of the diocese of Zamora, Michoacan, and he even indicated the path for me: he wanted me, with prudence, to leave my house, saying that I desired to enter, for a while, a religious school to study some subjects, and thus, morally, the separation for my mother was gentle. And in this manner I entered the school of the Nuns of the Sacred Heart. But the purpose was another, not properly to study in the college, but rather, to live in the same city as the prelate, in order to confer personally with him about the project, the Work, that I was proposing to him. In this manner, from January of 1942, Bishop Fulcheri made himself the trustee of the most exalted things of God our Lord. And he was studying them at leisure and they were ripening in his soul, and after three months of meditating on it, he gave me his permission to begin a trial of the religious life, and to see if Providence would respond, since the Work of Atonement was to be made without funds, solely from charity, so God might thus show His pleasure, sustaining it and making it grow in all senses, spiritually and materially. And I began to proceed first, with regard to the clergy, following in everything the indications of my Prelate, who was like a good father to me.

Holy Father: How can I express the ineffable? For that first moment in which the Work of my

God was finally going to begin was ineffable for me. But then many of my first superiors had already died: His Excellency, Bishop Pascual Diaz Barreto, Bishop Luis Benítez y Cabanas, those who were the first ones to know about the Work in 1931, and also I could not rely on the one who had been my superior in the Capuchins, for she was occupied in the reformation of a house of Poor Clares from which she could not move. The will of God concerning me, then, manifested itself, and I had to initiate everything, although in the role of a secular. That was when we used the prospectus that I left in the album for your consideration, and it was the means through which souls quickly came: many souls to give support to the Work.

Thus God our Lord manifested His providence and His power, bringing everything from nothing, giving me full liberty to serve Him, and I was exultant in joy.

Magnificat... anima mea!

Chapter X

A Prediction Fulfilled

Holy Father: When I began the Work in the diocese of Zamora, from the first day, I realized that a prediction that Jesus had made to me years earlier was going to be fulfilled. It concerned His saying: "There will be a bishop who will oppose you a great deal." Nevertheless, how far I was at that time from foreseeing the extent of that prediction. I am going to explain myself.

When His Excellency Bishop Fulcheri told me that the first thing I should do to carry out the trial of the Work was to see his clergy, he recommended that, in the first place, I should see his Auxiliary. He was at that time Bishop Salvador Martinez Silva. I did so immediately, and I thought I would find in him a patron, inasmuch as, in the college where I was studying at the time, he was visiting us. And at times he called me to the parlor to converse with me, demonstrating regard and sympathy toward me, for he explained to me that he was a sympathizer of pious and studious young people; and that if I desired to be a nun, he would help me to enter the Nuns of the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, who had their convent right there, and whose superior was a sister of his. He even

invited me on one occasion, with the permission of the nuns of the college, to go to his house and eat at his table. It was an honor I declined, fearful that he might then ask me about my motive for going to the bishop's residence three times a week, for he knew of it through the nuns, who were curious about it. But I avoided giving explanations, mentioning that Bishop Fulcheri was my confessor for some time past, for indeed, His Excellency himself had recommended for me to speak like that, through discretion. In such a way that, when he permitted me to reveal the true purpose that had brought me to Zamora, I was optimistic about seeing the Auxiliary Bishop, and with all simplicity, I related to him my happiness of having the approval of His Excellency, the diocesan prelate, hoping he, too, would give his blessing. But my surprise was most disconcerting, when I realized that Bishop Martinez Silva not only did not have the same opinion concerning the Work, but he became very angry, almost to the point of showing me out of his house, saying to me that if I already had the approval of the diocesan bishop, why did I want his? Besides, he inquired about the financial basis of the Work, and when he found out that it was Franciscan, and therefore of extreme poverty, he mocked my candor and said to me: "You will always have an enemy in me." I left confused, crying, but interiorly, I was thinking that it would be a trial that would pass. But it was not as I had desired, rather, the ill will of that prelate persisted, and always caused us great sorrow.

Whenever he came to our house, it was to humiliate us extremely; he saw everything with evil eyes; he censured everything and it seemed to him bad taste. But that was not all, rather, I was informed confidentially by Bishop Fulcheri himself, that when in chapter some matter related to our Work was discussed, he was apt to say: "As far as I am concerned, the Minim nuns would never exist. They produce nothing for the episcopal curia." Bishop Fulcheri said to me: "Do not let it concern you, my daughter, for if I love you and bless you, God loves and blesses you." But that lack of good will on the part of the auxiliary bishop was such that it had great influence on the clergy, in such a way that, on the one hand we had

priest friends, and on the other, enemies, and these, without cause. It happened with us as with Jesus: "They hated us for no reason at all."

But in the background of these circumstances I did not notice at the time that another prediction that Our Lord had made to me was being fulfilled, and it concerns this: He told me to write in the Constitutions how the communities of His work of Atonement would represent Him, and thus, each member of the community would honor a year of His age, so that the community as a whole, reaching its maximum number of 33 members, would represent Him, the Victim of Calvary, before Divine Justice. This being so, later I was able to see very clearly that it was fitting, then, that the Work, in His imitation, should live, work, bear fruit, and then be killed and buried, without having committed any sin other than offering itself for the salvation of others. And we cannot say that we owe the persecution nor the death of the Work to the machinations of Bishop Martinez Silva, because it is not certain. But it was obvious that, when our father and pastor died, and we were left orphans, there was no one to defend us. And the new Prelate was not aware of the sacrifices with which the Work had been founded, nor did he ever wish to give credit to what I told him about the divine origin of the inspiration of the Work. As a result, it was not possible for him to understand it, as did Bishop Fulcheri, who had studied things to their depth, as you, Your Holiness, will do with what I tell you now. But I must not speak in this chapter of the end, rather, relating the events in their order. In the trial of the Work, everything was done in conformity with canon law. First, the opening of the house with particular approval, was done by the parish priest of the neighborhood, delegated by His Excellency, the diocesan bishop himself, on June 24, 1942, with the attendance of society people in the city and with great solemnity. Soon we had the official diocesan approbation, issued in the bulletin of the diocesan chancery, on October 2, 1942. From that date, we had the Blessed Sacrament and the assistance of a chaplain and ordinary and extraordinary confessors.

On the part of the community, we had an apostolate from then on with groups of young girls and women to whom were imparted classes in family and doctrinal formation, and spiritual exercises were given to them.

All social classes showed great affection for the Work and responded with devotion and enthusiasm to whatever was suggested, and they were lavish in helping the community, in such a way that in this, too, the divine prediction was fulfilled.

The Work was begun just as the birth of Jesus, in a humble portal. Thus the Work was born in an old house that had been a seminary, the property being rented because we had nothing of our own. But we were happy because there was something great among us: that is, fraternal union, for in truth, it could be sung: "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." (Ps. 132:1). Soon we were growing, like Jesus, in age (that is, in the number of sisters) and in the formation of the spirit that we were to have. The souls responded with vigor, and God was served and glorified and praised and recognized, and souls received grace, both those in the community and those outside. The Work was a like a luxuriant plane-tree that gave both shade and fruit, and this no one who saw it or approached it could deny.

Our confessor was almost always Canon Enrique Amezcua, who is still living, and he wished us well, and from him we received blessings and favors paternally. The parish priest, Canon Nabor Victoria, still lives. And another of the priests who understood and aided us still lives; and he is now Rector of the seminary, a most virtuous and wise priest, now a Canon as well: Francisco Valencia Ayala. These three priests are witnesses of our labor, as well as of what we had to suffer without any fault. Holy Father: I tell you truthfully, suffering does not terrify me, and I even experienced happiness in being disrespected by some, because thus we resembled our Model; but I did not believe that this prediction was going to reach even to the end of life itself and to burial, and that the wait for the glorious day of resurrection would be so greatly prolonged.

Chapter XI

A Manifestation of Divine Providence

Holy Father: It is fitting that I relate to you a full manifestation of Divine Providence on behalf of the Order.

I already related above, how, in my family home, my mother was sick and my sister about

to enter the state of matrimony. And how I left home prudently, saying I was going to study for a while as a boarding pupil in the nuns' school. But when the Work was founded it was obvious and logical that I, opportunely, would tell my mother and sister the truth of things. Well, my mother accepted it piously, but not my sister, for she was in a predicament, because, when married, she would have to live in another city and mother would remain alone; and mother did not want to move from the family home. Because of this circumstance so troublesome for my sister, she began to feel resentment against me. Her future husband, a lawyer of wisdom and of good family, was a judge in Guadalajara. And my sister assumed that, when she married, she would succeed in my being disinherited of my father's testamentary documents and other deeds for immovable goods. Because—she said—making use of certain expressions that my father at one time (when he was an unbeliever) had occasion to say: "Neither a monk nor nuns must be favored with my money." When I heard of it, it grieved me a great deal, not because money meant so much to me, for thanks be to God, I have always loved poverty, and I am convinced that, possessing God, one is immensely rich, because one has everything. Nevertheless, it grieved me for her sake, for her soul and for that of my father, for it could cause him harm in his spiritual state, now facing Divine Justice. I related my grief to His Excellency, Bishop Fulcheri, for he was my director and confessor, and my father and my everything after God, and he advised me to go one day to visit my mother, so that my sister and I might make peace. And I did so, and everything worked out well. My sister was persuaded that I had no guilt in having left the family before she did, for God had thus disposed it, and finally her nobility of soul inclined her in my favor.

When I made this visit to my house, my mother's health was poor; the doctor predicted grave illness soon. My sister continued postponing her wedding for that reason precisely, for, in justice: she was always the very loving daughter of her parents. For that reason, she was preferred by them, and I found this just, for she was my mother's consolation. During the visit, I did not wish to speak at all of inheritances. And neither my sister nor my mother offered me anything, not even the benefits of my goods, for my father had left exactly half of everything to each of his two daughters. At that time the Work had been founded two years and we were in need

of a larger house, and I wanted a part, at least, of my inheritance to furnish the annex for the apostolate, but, I repeat: I did not want to mention anything. I left it all to God.

As it happened, not two weeks had passed since my visit when my sister died unexpectedly in an illness of only hours, but His Excellency ordered me to go, and I reached her while she still lived. I was perplexed and confused by this divine design that did not permit my sister to realize her desire to marry, and also because, with her death, my mother was left alone and confined to bed, and needed me constantly at her side. After my sister's burial, I pleaded with my mother to let me take her to my convent to care for her, for the Bishop permitted it, but my family was too proud, Holy Father, and for more than a month my mother resisted following me, until aggravating her condition so that, when she yielded and I took her with me, she died the following week. In less than six weeks God liquidated my family, leaving me an orphan and completely alone in life. But also, free, indeed now absolutely free to serve Him with whatever I had in my hands: the economic patrimony from my house, the money that my father had said at one time would not be used by monks and nuns, was absolutely, entirely spent for buying and building the convent of the House of Atonement. God could not have spoken more clearly. In the midst of the grief of seeing one's mother and one's own depart, my soul always had the compensation of that divine manifestation in favor of the things He himself commended to me.

On the other hand, it is especially worth mentioning to relate to you that my mother died piously repentant, asking forgiveness aloud before the priest who assisted her at death, who was precisely the parish priest himself of Zamora, and before the entire community; crying, very humbly, she begged God's pardon and mine (my poor little mother) and had the benefit of the suffrages with her body present in the Chapel itself of the convent, and the Gregorian Masses offered by His Excellency Bishop Fulcheri.

With this manifestation of Divine Providence our prelate was astounded, although I, to offer still another sacrifice to God, when the deed was drawn up, did not want it to be in my name, but rather to remain free of goods,

the deed was drawn up in the name of a wealthy person of society, honorable and without heirs. The construction of the property was begun in the year 1945 or 1946 (I cannot be exact now), and it seems to me that the same year our very dearly mourned Prelate died, precisely the year in which he had intended to send petitions to Rome, asking the approbation of the Work, which I am going to relate for Your Holiness in a separate chapter, in order to emphasize some details of importance.

Chapter XII

The Death of Our Pastor

Holy Father: It was four years since the Work was founded, and it was flourishing like a plane-tree in the midst of waters, when God wished to test us with orphanhood, by the death of our paternal prelate.

That Easter, when he went away to rest on his vacation in Mexico City, he said to me: "My daughter, this year, God willing, we will send petitions to Rome. Prepare a portfolio with written narratives from the time you began to proceed with it, of your having founded it, finally, until my return, prepare something." But very soon, an urgent call on his behalf from Mexico City made me go and realize that he was dying. A bout of acute jaundice attacked him; he was another man: yellow, weakened, dying. I cried at his knees. He caressed me and said to me: "Go quickly to speak with His Excellency, the Archbishop Primate of Mexico; tell him that I ask him to compile quickly in his offices, some petitions in favor of your Work; and tell him, too, to come to see me. I want to ask him, if at my death my clergy continue being hostile toward you, to receive you in his archdiocese." I went, and did so, just as my beloved Pastor ordered me. His Excellency, Luis Maria Martinez, Archbishop Primate at that time, knew me well and seemed also to profess paternal affection for me, and at one time was my spiritual director, in such a way that, on that occasion, he was solicitous, and I myself accompanied him to the bed of pain of my sick Pastor. And in my presence he begged him, if at his death the clergy in Zamora continued being hostile to us, would he deign to receive us in his archdiocese, and His Excellency offered to do so. And I returned to Zamora, quickly, to bring the documents to annex to the Petitions. Your Holiness will find

and read in the documents that I have attached, a letter from the Rev. Fr. Angel Onate, who was the one assigned to compile the Petitions, who informed me that His Excellency Bishop Fulcheri did not survive, his death having come one week from the date on which Father Onate had been assigned to compile the petitions.

Holy Father: I revealed the events without embellishment, without comment. For my part I can only say that: I am accustomed to receiving crosses from the hands of my Lord and God, and the secondary causes, I see them as merely accidental ones. What was certain was that we were orphans and at the mercy of those who did not like us. The Pastor who was taken from us to Heaven was succeeded by His Excellency Bishop Jose G. Anaya, who has now offered to present me before the Sacred Congregation of Religious and to Your Holiness. Under his crosier, the Work lasted six more years, until October 23, 1951, when he himself judged it prudent to disband it and to nullify it. The causes? Truly, Holy Father, I do not even know them. But he is living; he will be able to tell you them.

In conscience I know I must say that I was deeply resentful of him, and that this resentment grieved me a great deal for a long time, because my conscience was not accustomed to resentments with anyone. But a day came when I manifested it to him, and since then it seems that there has now been a bit of understanding between him and me. I cannot deny that, in recent years, he has shown himself to be paternal, and has offered letters in favor of the Work, recommending it. With his recommendations, I presented myself three times before Bishop Miguel Dario Miranda, Primate of Mexico; but the prelate informed me that he does not have priests who could attend to the community spiritually. Thus, eleven long years have passed, without success in reestablishing the Work. Meanwhile, I have lived my secular life, taking shelter among some of the sisters of what was my community, whose photos I present to Your Holiness in the album, with some brief words, since they and I are the first sisters who founded in Zamora, Michoacan, the first house which was: a trial of the Work of the Franciscan Minims of the Perpetual Help of Mary, the House of Atonement.

Since, throughout the length of the path that I have related to Your Holiness, it is evident that some of Jesus' predictions have been

fulfilled, this, Holy Father, gives me hope of seeing the other part of those predictions fulfilled: the one in which Jesus says that, when I present His things to His beloved Vicar, he will approve them. With this confidence, I come, as always, optimistic, filled with faith, with zeal, with love. But if the result should be the opposite, still I will remain tranquil, because when the Vicar of my Jesus speaks, he will speak the truth in these things, and I will only respect that truth and that will, but assured now that God asks no more of me in this mission entrusted to me. Amen.

Ended in Genoa, October 2, 1963

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