

LOVING WHILE BEING LOVED

LEARNING TO LOVE

from the Flame of Love Spiritual Diary

Part I

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Passages quoted from the Flame of Love Spiritual Diary were translated by Klára Harsányi

(based on *Szeretetláng Lelki Napló 1961-1983* edited by Szent István Társulat, Budapest 2010)

Bible passages are quoted from The New Jerusalem Catholic Bible translation <http://www.catholic.org/bible>

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RECOMMENDATION

Originating from Hungary, the Flame of Love spirituality is now known in 70 countries worldwide. Within the past half century, it has changed the lives of millions of people with the help of the Blessed Mother, turning them to the Lord Jesus.

The Flame of Love is a gift of grace given by God to humanity drowning in the sea of sin, as kind of a spiritual life belt.

If Jesus or, as so often in our days, the Blessed Virgin speaks to us through private revelation, it is always the Divine Revelation concretized, illustrated, giving motivation to the necessary implementation of the Catholic faith at a certain period of time and age. Instead of adding anything to the truths of the Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition, it shows the way, helping God's people put Gospel teaching into practice and life. The Flame of Love is such a lifegiving spiritual way in our days.

Grace is God's free gift helping us to salvation. It is a manifestation of His mercy and love, so it is never received on the basis of our merits. Many think therefore about God's grace in a way that we are standing before the Lord like those meant for death, yet He does not condemn us but gives us mercy.

In the traditional Biblical languages, however, the concept of grace has a much wider meaning. One expression used for it in the ancient Hebrew language referred to *family and tribal relations*. It used to mean a person's *faithfulness* and consequently his *permanent reliability through a net of love within the family*. It is on this basis that the Bible says God is faithful to us, that is, He *grants us grace*.

There is another Hebrew word for grace, which means *justice, reliability*. Interestingly, this word is also connected with the word *mother*; more precisely, it refers to the gesture with which *a mother holds her baby in her arms*. This means that the basic words of the Old Testament translated as grace refer to the net of love within the family, and the holy writers used these words to express also God's grace towards us.

The private revelations of our age often speak about impending punishment, which mankind has in fact deserved. Yet, the idea of the effect of grace of the Flame of Love should not primarily evoke the image of a condemning God but that net of love within the family

with which our heavenly Father embraces us all. And of course, the image of the Blessed Virgin as well, called by the angel *full of grace*, who indeed, through the gift of her Flame of Love, carries and holds us in her arms as a mother holds her child. May more and more of our brothers and sisters come to feel this motherly love in today's world sinking into darkness, loneliness and emptiness.

I believe that the thoughts of Fr. Domonkos Mészáros may help us find happiness – the Happiness, Jesus Christ, who is constantly calling us, waiting for all of us to become united with Him in the Sacrament of His Love, the Eucharist.

Budapest, 8th December 2015, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Győző KINDELMANN,

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INTRODUCTION

Why is Christmas still such a great feast? Because it is the feast of love. We all want to feel loved. It was brought to us by the Creator of the Universe, by Him, in person. This is suggested by the second part of the title of this book: *being loved*. This love must then be returned, which means we must *love*. But in how many ways a loving smile can be hindered! Is it sincere? Superficial? Lasting? Or falling like ornaments?

We need to learn how to return love and how to give it to others. It is He who instructs us. That is why He has started it over and over again, at so many points of time and space in history.

Mary perfectly accepted love with her Yes. She did it also in our name, that is, in the name of humanity! She was full of joy, yet her life turned into sacrifice like that of her Son. She is making another initiative, awaiting our response.

On 6th June 2009, I attended the solemn Mass at Kispest, where the announcement by Cardinal Péter Erdő concerning the approval of the Flame of Love Movement was celebrated with spontaneous loud clapping for several minutes, among tears of joy, by the faithful of a fully packed church. Way back in time, working at the Székesfehérvár Diocesan Bishop's

Office, Péter Erdő had already become familiar with the Flame of Love Spiritual Diary. The Blessed Mother has always been mentioned in his homilies with deep veneration. His joy is now our joy as well.

What a great gift to have among us Győző Kindelmann, the grandson of Elizabeth Kindelmann! Partly because remembering the way the spirituality of the Flame of Love had been lived out in their home in everyday life, he is able to realistically appraise our comments. At the same time the outpouring and activity of grace at the Flame of Love Festivals and other occasions have been a new discovery for him, too, which he has followed with attention. On the other hand, he was elected to be the International Coordinator of the Movement at the International Flame of Love Meeting in Columbia, which is now a fact of historical significance.

Above all this, the greatest joy must have been that of Fr. Gábor Róna SJ, the most prominent apostle of spreading the Flame of Love in Ecuador, Chile, Brazil, Mexico and other South and North American countries until now.

My earlier reluctance regarding the Flame of Love was defeated by an excellent work: the *Evaluation by the Theological Censor of the Flame of Love Spiritual Diary*, written by Dr. Zoltán Kovács and published in the 2009 issue of Magyar Sion and also as an appendix

attached to the critical edition of the Flame of Love Spiritual Diary published by Szent István Társulat [the official publisher of the Holy See in Hungary] in 2010. Reading and contemplating the book meant a deep mental and spiritual experience; so I decided I had to commit myself to the issue of the Flame of Love. Of course, the book was not rewarded by my choice since the world does not revolve around me, but this decision has been necessary for my growth and fulfilment. What a pity I really got to know the Flame of Love when I was over 50! Counting with human measures, however, the case of Elizabeth receiving the messages of the Flame of Love was the same.

My God, how long had you been waiting for me and how many inspirations of yours had I wasted throughout my life! How many people had expected from me the love which was not mine but yours, and I expressed myself with materialistic reflexes, withholding precisely the spiritual expressions of love from myself and others! How many people had I hurt or deprived of God, in His very name – but lacking in His expressions. But I must not regret too much, for by doing so I may miss listening to the Lord and performing the service of transmission.

I was afraid of fasting. Can I do it without harming my health? What are my confreres going to say? I requested and received Fr. Prior Rajmund's permission to fast with bread and water on Thursdays and Fridays for 12 weeks. I received it on condition that it was not to cause health problems. In the beginning my anxiety was stronger than being accustomed. The four hours of adoration accompanying fasting were more or less successful, at least I did my best besides doing the services of my duty. I must say that I experienced afresh the joys and insights I had received around the time of my priestly ordination. I was profoundly moved. At times when I just took the

Spiritual Diary randomly, I read something referring to some current personal issue, with utmost simplicity and wisdom. I was happy with my new vision.

It is amazing how God Himself keeps me from haste, lest I should hurriedly transmit some half-digested material. An attitude of "*Lord, what do you say to it?*" and "*Lord, how should I do it?*" must always be put to the first place. Similar caution is needed in the dialogue with people while conveying the Flame of Love, as well as an awareness of the recipients' spiritual needs and capacity. With these unmapped, even the most wonderful words are futile. Jesus often *inquired* first, "*What do you want?*". Without this, listeners' lives lack an awareness of a philosophy which requires faith or which without faith is merely a human solution with empty, unanswered problems and suffering. Even our encounters with God are tempted by this materialistic, *self-centered* thinking, "*what can I profit from this?*" Without admiration, the secret of our lives, "*I am loved*" is not going to open up to us. The same is true for reading the Spiritual Diary. Even criticism from outside can lack objectivity and be materialistic if it misses the point: Jesus is thirsting for us!

The Lord repeatedly expresses this when Elizabeth is alone in the church, where Love is so often abandoned by so many: "*I thirst for the love of humans.*" Suddenly I realize before Him: I am loved! And after so many joyful prayers in unity with the Lord, empty hours can pass again because I need to learn everyday expressions of *returning love*. This is exactly the expression so brilliantly presented in the Diary: continuously walking together, thinking together, feeling together with Jesus.

Having come to the extremes of her human strength, human capacity and prayers, Elizabeth receives a call. At first it was at the level of a simple desire while thinking of the exemplary life of an old Carmelite, then in deeper and deeper Eucharistic adorations while meditating the Lord's words. This call is *real*, it is not a consequence of psychological disturbances, as stated by Dr. Zoltán Kovács in the theological evaluation of the Spiritual Diary:

"Considering Elizabeth's faith, human and moral values, ascetic progress, health and psychological condition, as well as the contents and theological correlations of the messages, I declare the allocutions to be authentic, meaning their perception did not occur

on a subjective level (pathological sensation or diseased sensation lacking an object), but most probably they were the consequences of a real, objective influence of grace. The contents of the messages as well as the global extension of the spirituality built around it indicate that the communications referring to the Flame of Love have not only won the favour of the faithful (*placita fidelium*), but they have also moved the *sensus fidei*, which is a legitimate source of theology capable of providing a solid basis for the *consensus Ecclesiae* in future.”

In my book I often quote Tibor Begyik, who had known Elizabeth well, having frequently toured the country in order to build relationships or priestly and lay communities.

Note: I use quotation marks for quotes from Scripture and the Diary so they are clearly separated from my comments.

So many sick and lonely people are hungry for good words, for encouragement, for offering up their suffering. They will find it in the spirituality of the Flame of Love! Young people are entering the confessional saying, *“I have come, somehow I have been inspired”*. New vocations are starting without careful, organized preparations – the rest, of course, must not lack responsibility. Children are initiating Rosary prayers at home and in the car on the way to school. More and more new publications are born. On each 3rd Tuesday of every month, the Flame of Love Chapel in Budapest gets full with people praying together for the sanctification of families. One-day Flame of Love spiritual days have begun nationwide, not only in churches but also in cultural centers.

God is calling for spring. All the new leaves, blossoms and fruits of the new year are already hiding in the tree buds. What are we waiting for? Through the Rosary our nation, the peoples of Europe and the world can discover the emanation of grace and the gifts of the Incarnation enhancing souls.

What are we waiting for?

1. THE SCHOOL OF JESUS

"Yahweh is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

In grassy meadows he lets me lie.

By tranquil streams he leads me to restore my spirit.

He guides me in paths of saving justice, as befits his name."

(Psalm 23)

Nothing nicer or more pleasant about the good Shepherd and the helpful Blessed Mother can be conceived as recommendation than the words of this Psalm, in the light of the facts of our history, culture and faith. The Blessed Mother committed herself to us, for us. She chose us again, after Saint Stephen (István) and Saint Emery (Imre) in the late 20th century: *"I want to give a new tool into your hands. I kindly ask you to accept it with understanding because My Heart looks down at my country with grief"* – the Blessed Virgin says in the Flame of Love Spiritual Diary (1/37).

1.1. THE WAY JESUS INTRODUCES HIMSELF

God expresses special intimacy towards us in the Flame of Love Spiritual Diary. What a lot of attention is included in its short sentences! These are the words of the infinite God, the Creator of the Universe, to a speck of dust of a person and to us all. Such gentleness from God towards us could not be conceived nor supposed. Let us therefore allow these loving words to enter our hearts. The Flame of Love is *Jesus Himself*, joyful to be borne by us. How precious our lives can become if, recognizing this inner encounter, we respond to the Infinite!

I have been deeply touched by the short sentences of Jesus often calling Elizabeth and calling us, too. The infinite God is talking to

us, the One who is not megalomaniac but gentle like a mother or like a strong and tender father: “Do not forget that I am waiting for you in your little room because I am thirsty for your refreshing adoration and reparation!” (III/177).

This is a kind and intimate invitation to a small room. Her children having got married, Elizabeth gave them all the rooms in the nice large house, herself moving into a tiny cottage of hardly a few square meters in the back of her garden. She made this commitment for her children willingly, without rebellion or resentment. And waiting for her gently here, Jesus commits Himself to communion with her. All the ornament of this room is the refreshing adoration and reparation with Jesus. Does any home need more than that?

“Appreciate Me for Divine Love also appreciates and respects you” – Jesus tells Elizabeth on one occasion (III/194). Appreciating the Lord – this is something to be learned! This is a call for a task, for taking my vocation seriously. I must respond with human dignity, paying attention to Him and to the people, with love, with a desire to understand, with a readiness for acceptance in prayer as well as in everyday matters. It settles both my whole humanity and my relationships with others. Isn't this precisely what we lack in our relationships?

“We express our gratitude together, do we, My darling? May the thoughts of our minds be one!” (III/196). Expressing gratitude – something which many around Jesus failed to do even among those who had been healed. Then, driven by the crowd, they shouted „Barabbas”. Whereas gratitude leads to self-determination, freedom, faithfulness to values, and even to personal unity with Jesus.

“Just be collected so you can hear the ring of My Divine words in your soul!” (III/192). Jesus complains about the pious, who are satisfied with themselves after finishing their prayers, but whose further activities and encounters work according to bad inclinations and socialization opposite to prayer... Searching for their peace (a gift from Jesus) they start praying again and again, yet they are losing attention to truth, they are forgetting the *contemplative* praying of the Rosary, they are forgetting observance of God's teaching. Yet, according to the Spiritual Diary, the aim of collectedness is that we may “*hear the ring of My Divine words*”. The ring of the voice of

our heavenly Father sounds like our sweet mother tongue: “This is my beloved Son” (*Mt 3:17*)

“Come, just come! I can hardly wait for you coming! The more and greater sacrifice you take, the happier you make Me. *Believe Me*, you have your ways to bring joy to God!” (III/189).

1.2. RESTORING OUR IMAGE OF GOD

Of course, we are clever enough, or even cleverer, to know that we cannot make God’s perfect joy more perfect. Yet God’s compassion pertains not only to our pain but also to our joy. Thus, we are freed from our “*omniscient gloom*” or weariness. A mother or a father wants to give us joy – and God is a FATHER! If, aware of this, we are filled with joy, people will dare speak to us and they will not be afraid of us any more!

“...*And while we were talking, He emanated me with His intimate feelings.*” (II/48). We have concerns about being ascetic. We would not overdo it, in the name of sober-mindedness. In fact we are trying to suit those around us, while leaving Jesus alone. But He wants to attract us to Himself, and we are unable to experience that there is no sensation like this! “It is not everyone who can accept what I have said, but only those to whom it is granted” (*Mt 19:11*). Jesus *wants to meet with us in the silence in front of the Blessed Sacrament*, while we can learn how to accept the emanation of grace, to accept being filled – and to give thanks for it.

The atheistic remarks and views imposed on us have been fixed in our minds over time, creating false images of God in us. Therefore, we have grown dependent on the opinions of others. However, an inner encounter with God in love helps us gradually become liberated, more and more capable of formulating autonomous, free responses born of love. Our minds, thoughts and the quality of our human relationships change, our wounds begin to heal. This personal growth influences everything from our family to our service for society. That is why faith is no private matter but a gift related to everything! It is not an external system where the only important thing is the accomplishment of functions, while the individual is not

important at all, and if someone falls out or is removed, just “*next please*” and everything can go on.

God personally talks to each and every one of His creatures, inviting us, according to His

Trinitarian inner nature, into a communion of love where everyone has dignity and eternal life. *The quality relationship thereof is the Flame of Love.* It builds up the individual and the whole of society. Starting from below, from the individual, it builds families and communities of love according to the nature of Divine love. It creates, on the one hand, a just society; on the other, the eternal lives of individuals and their saintly communion sanctified by God since

He is accepted. “*The Kingdom of God is among you*” – Jesus announced the good news. Those who had eyes realized that this was not some vague kingdom made of fog, but the Holy Person of Jesus – and they gathered around Him.

We encounter His Person in the sacraments; this is the way our personal growth is continued. Mary lives in Him, giving Him to us so we may have life in Him. Material doubting is reluctant: it makes personal remarks, doubts, or slanders making its power felt. Openness which wants to discover, however, asks questions like the blind man healed in St. John’s Gospel: “Do you believe in the Son of man?” ‘Sir,’ the man replied, ‘tell me who he is so that I may believe in him.’ Jesus said, ‘You have seen him; he is speaking to you.’ The man said, ‘Lord, I believe,’ and worshipped him. (*Jn 9:35–38*). This is the kingdom of God like: a personal encounter with God – and this is how Mary bears Him.

Jesus became incarnate among men from an environment of perfect joy. He experienced among us many variations of refusal. Likewise, the fact that we have chosen Jesus, though joyful for us, often evokes disapproval among the people around us. Thus, after bringing joy, Christ’s compassion is also understandable. As God He cannot suffer, but as God-man, He does suffer with us; moreover, in this sense the meaning of *compassion* is broadened: Jesus *perceives* our suffering and *takes it upon Himself!* It is precisely because of this takeover of our suffering that Elizabeth writes in the Flame of Love Spiritual Diary: “the loss and the damnation of the souls is a horrible pain for Him [the sweet Saviour]” (*1/88*). For Him this can be like heartbreak of love is for us.

If we think of Jesus' pain this way, it is easier for us to understand why He asks us to enhance our desires to save souls: "Save their souls with your desires! You know, do you that there are three types of baptism: Baptism of Water, of Blood and of Desire. When saving souls, these three can save. From My Holy Heart blood and water ran out onto you and the immense desire by which I did it for you. Do you know what desire is? It is a wonderful and sensitive tool which is possessed even by the most helpless person, and that person can use it as a wonderful tool to save other souls. The only important thing is that they would unite their desire with the dear Holy Blood that is running out of My side." (I/88).

Instead of being a strenuous achievement of the human mind, the building up of our image of God takes a person's opening up to the acceptance of reality. A sensitive tool, *desire* admires the greatest work of love: Christ's sacrifice on the Cross for the whole world. Thus, it is that *desire* is united with the dear Holy Blood running out of the Lord's side. Uniting is our work – with His help.

Who can understand this? „Not many of you are wise by human standards, not many influential, not many from noble families. No, God chose those who by human standards are fools to shame the wise; he chose those who by human standards are weak to shame the strong, those who by human standards are common and contemptible – indeed those who count for nothing – to reduce to nothing all those that do count for something, so that no human being might feel boastful before God. (1Kor 1:26–29).

This is more than self-contained ethical behavior. Instead of measuring ourselves by our perfection, we measure ourselves with the real norm of the sacrifice of love. A conduct of faith is required for this, we must transcend ourselves.

1.2.1. Jesus teaches us how to adore

“After the adoration, as I was going home, He started to speak on the way: 'You liked my carefulness, did you? My little sister, whom shall I please if not you and all those who please Me, too. It is kind to Me if you come to My adoration and reparation because the offence of Our heavenly Father decreases this way.'” (III/197).

That is, while walking home, Elizabeth's desires and thoughts lightly wander around her

"Beloved". (Like with Mary: "His mother stored up all these things in her heart" – *Lk 2:52*) Walking together with grace has Divine, Fatherly perspectives in Jesus' teaching. How much of our time could be enriched with encountering God, and how many souls we could save instead of idly wasted hours (television, internet and other kinds of mental drugs)!

1.2.2. Getting tuned to God and immersed in Him

"Do you know that I like you now? Do you ask Me, why? Just *be industrious!* You know what your guardian angel said to you: enhance the adoration and the veneration to the holy majesty of God in yourself. You see that via your decision that you will have an examination of your conscience in every hour your soul *gets better and better tuned to immerse in God and adore God.* Your veneration to the holy majesty of God will also be enhanced in a great measure. This decision of yours demands that you would be greatly collected but *nothing is impossible for love.* I have provided you enough examples for this." (*III/121*).

Like a loving parent, Jesus teaches Elizabeth to be industrious in adoring, worshipping, getting tuned and immersed. It becomes natural, realistic, filling our various activities. Isn't this all-inclusive renewal precisely what we can learn from Mary?

1.2.3. Everyday life with Jesus

"I immersed in thanksgiving prayer *while I was doing the housework*" (*II/83*). This passage conforms with Saint Paul's words, "we too, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we are groaning inside ourselves, waiting with eagerness for our bodies to be set free." (*Romans 8:23*) For years after his conversion, Paul worked as a tentmaker in Tarsus, his hometown, staying away from the great events of the emerging Church. But his meaningful epistles written later reveal how often he contemplated and praised Jesus.

He was at home with Jesus in his heart, where there is no countryside or capital city. What Paul did in Tarsus, Elizabeth did in her tiny home in Budapest – and we, too, may join them while doing our housework.

Someone once asked the pragmatic question, “Is it OK to whistle holy songs while working?” Yes, it is! The tune conveys also the message and the atmosphere, making them present. Why would being so relaxed be sinful?

Another passage of the Flame of Love Spiritual Diary reads: “Then I was travelling on the tram *talking to Him*.” (II/111) “The road to *constant prayer* (cf. 1Thess 5) begins with practicing spending all possible time (while waiting, standing in queues, walking, driving etc.) with God – that is, praying. After some practice it can become quite natural in our lives. As progress is made in prayer, God will become a direct source of joy, and we will be connected with our Creator as a child with his father. The double fruit of reparation is sanctifying oneself and saving souls (*Tibor Begyik*).

The words of the Apostle Paul are analogous: “for what you received was not the spirit of slavery to bring you back into fear; you received the Spirit of adoption, enabling us to cry out, ‘Abba, Father!’ The Spirit himself joins with our spirit to bear witness that we are children of God.” (*Romans 8:15–16*). Conversing with God about all sensations, difficulties and joys at all times and places – beyond the level of obligations, this is the level of trust. What is more: it is the level of sighting the invisible One!

1.2.4. Our changing moods – with Jesus

“Are you tired? Are you exhausted? I shall grant you newer power by our souls that sense together, just serve me faithfully, with fidelity and *wish it to others as well*.’ I thought only of His words during my work. *His intimate request that I would serve Him faithfully, with fidelity, became my prayer*. I asked afterwards: ‘My beloved Jesus, accept me with all my *misery* and help me and a lot of others to really serve you faithfully and with fidelity.’” (III/177). This was accomplished through practicing, while Elizabeth deeply felt her misery. Practicing is taking a step out of the

„advice” of misery, of keeping distance, of the gravity of continuous stumbling. God gave Elizabeth this gift – and He gives it to us, too, for our journey.

Elsewhere in the Spiritual Diary we read: “My Elizabeth, do not get very surprised at my cuddling, accept My cuddling words. *It is no fantasy in you.* I beat My Heartthrob into your heart so that I would give a proof in advance. Draw even more power from the eulogies that I send to you.” (III/188).

The joy of God’s presence helps us understand the real place of our vocation, the unparalleled value presented by God’s presence. This grace from above can be experienced as reality. Values speak for themselves the joy and the identicalness of truth discovered in us. Accepting the experience of God’s presence brings about also the healing of our inner wounds. Constant thanksgiving exalts the gift of salvation, while it is also the fundamental attitude of our being re-created. It is no profit gain for the *ego*, since it invites us precisely to self-transcendence and self-giving.

“You believe that I love you very-very much, do you? The fierce pains of the previous days that you stood for Me, with Me, can certify you of My incessant love.” (III/187). Accepting cuddling is important for Elizabeth in order for her spiritual horizon not to be diminished by the fierce pains and for her heart to be able to keep trusting. This is *consideration*, that is, *an effort of the mind* and a *choice of the will*; it is part of one’s work for sound self-development and part of positive thinking encouraged by God. Also, Jesus builds upon this human basis that helps making a commitment to His constant love and faithfulness.

1.3. “TAKE THIS FLAME”

In a key sentence of the Flame of Love Spiritual Diary, the Blessed Virgin tells Elizabeth: “My daughter, take this flame I give you first. This is the Flame of Love of my Heart. Kindle yours at this place and pass it on!” (I/38).

Fr. Gábor Róna SJ called the attention to the fact that “*kindling yours at this place*” means catching flame from the Person of the Blessed Mother; i.e. it is a personal act of commitment. This is how we pass the Flame of Love with candles lit one by one from the Paschal Candle during the solemn celebration of Holy Mass at many different places in our country on 2nd February every year. This is how family members may pass it on to one another before gathering for the first time for prayer in the spirit of the Flame of Love; and this is how anyone can pass the Flame to anyone else, anywhere, so it can spread throughout the world gently, from heart to heart.

“My daughter, I let you feel this high display of power that I start for blinding Satan, first. I shall share the anxiety of My Heart with you until the day of your death. It is the love of your empathetic heart which makes you worthy to transmit My Flame of Love. And those who sense with Me, will all be entitled to this great grace with which we save the souls from eternal damnation.” (III/140).

It is a mother who can really sympathize with a mother. Mary shares in the feelings of suffering mothers keeping night vigils because of the whereabouts or the conditions of their sons and daughters. She takes their prayers to the Father, returning to them with her gift: the Flame of Love. Saint Monica’s tears brought back her son Augustin. Saint Rita helped her husband, an alcoholic, convert. Edith Stein’s sacrifice offered for her people, the chosen ones and for the Germans was completed in Auschwitz. But the offered lives of men, of martyrs were also accepted by God. With no human solution, misery, through carrying Christ’s Cross transforms our lives and the world.

“I want to release *the infinite love and worry of My motherly Heart* that threatens the whole world due to the split up of the family

sanctuaries, by you. I address My motherly cry for help to you [mothers], and I want to save the world united with you.” (III/140).

1.4. FATIMA AND THE MESSAGES OF THE FLAME OF LOVE

The Blessed Mother’s love for us was also manifested in the Fatima apparitions. She appeared to the three little seers in 1917 with a radiant beam of light emanating from her loving Heart. According to their reports, this gave them the joy of an extraordinary love, as if they had been in Mary’s Heart.

Blessed Mary asks us to pray the Rosary and offer reparation, prayers and sacrifices. The continuation of this service urging transformation has been repeatedly revealed in the Flame of Love.

Apparitions are God’s work; therefore, they are connected with one another. We may experience or get an impression of the reality of this wonderful Divine Love in prayer. This is what urges family members to reconcile and start again. They give one another the gift of renewed trust. Through their new attitude, spouses make up for their spoiled conversations of the past, they are not afraid to mutually express their feelings, helping one another instead of giving moral instructions.

I have been able to witness many examples. “I want to save the world united with you” – the Blessed Mother says, and God, too, asks for our cooperation this way. This is rescue. Bearing God becomes present, and this is the solution.

1.5. WHAT ARE WE INVITED FOR IN THE MESSAGES OF THE FLAME OF LOVE?

Of all creatures of Creation, the Blessed Mother is the one delighting in the beatific vision of God most perfectly and permanently. As a human being, Mary is hurt by humans being distant from God because of their sins. She also sees our unhappiness – and our lack of even realizing the opportunities we have been given. But the Flame of Love has presented mankind with a new and unrepeatable opportunity for conversion:

"The Virgin Mother spoke again: 'My little daughter, I shall expand the Flame of Love of My Heart onto *every folk and nation*. Not only onto those who live in the Mother Church but onto every soul who is signed by the sign of My Holy Son's blessed Cross and (moreover), also onto the ones who had not been baptized.'" (II/119). This is a worldwide work of love. Not some devotion for ourselves, but God's plan requiring courage and sacrifices.

Asked by Elizabeth, the Blessed Virgin gives the following definition in the Spiritual Diary:

"My Flame of Love is Jesus Christ Himself!" (I/107). Those who realize and understand this are invited by the Lord: "Your whole life shall also be yearning by sacrifices and prayers, as well as longing to aid in My redeeming work." (I/60). *"You shall want to participate in My redeeming work!* This should be the most important purpose of your life; this is the only value that you can bring before Me. *Seize every opportunity and way to save the souls! Make every effort to do so!"* (III/144).

2. OUR OWN WAY TO JESUS WITH THE BLESSED MOTHER

2.2. WHAT MUST WE DO SO THE FLAME OF LOVE MAY COME INTO OUR HEARTS?

We read the following words of Jesus in the Flame of Love Spiritual Diary: "My daughter, *have faith! Nothing should divert you! Your faith and trust in Me are going to save you. Not only your efforts because without your faith and trust in Me, you are weak indeed. But I have chosen you to be the mean of Our heavenly announcements so that the world could see the enforcement of the Divine will which We want to make public only by the weak. I shall not disturb or suspend the order of nature around you. I act according to My Divine wisdom and the necessity of the case.*" (III/149).

The pedagogy of the Psalms is to repeat a message with different words over and over again. Thus, it is fixed easier; moreover, the feelings of the heart turn more and more tuned to the message through repetition. The Lord uses the same tool with Elizabeth:

"The temptation of evil by which he disturbs your soul and mind, should not distract you from the path of faith and trust in Me. It is no trouble if you feel any weak, because neither the manifestation of your weakness, nor your incessant efforts can achieve our goal. The only and *main mean in your hands is your concealed humility that can help the case come to force.*" (III/149).

"*It is not the result you achieve that makes you saintly and that saves you and that keeps you close to Me, but incessant will. This makes your soul incessantly solemn as well.*" (III/150).

Results do not mean closeness to God; in fact, they pose the danger of becoming self-satisfied and remaining distant from God. The key is not even the permanence of emotions, since even a clear and definite experience of God's presence will pass, leaving uncertainty especially at the beginning of the spiritual life: "*what did I do wrong that I am left alone?*". The will –

"*your names are written in heaven*" – connects us with God, and solemnly. It requires a conscious, painstaking attitude striving for gentleness and listening to God in prayer as well as to humans. I am totally Yours, my Lord, You are everything – in the present.

It is edifying to note how spiritual dryness helped Elizabeth's attention turn toward an appreciation of grace. Varying from gentleness to severity, many different Divine actions can be identified in the Flame of Love Spiritual Diary. What we can experience is quite diverse, the story is far from being stereotyped.

2.2.1. Uncertainties and certainties

"My beloved Jesus, *was it my fantasy* that You stayed at me and emanated me with the joy of Your presence?' ... And as I was kneeling before Him in the silence of the night, the words of the Lord connected into my words: 'My daughter, *be calm!* You have no reason *to disturb the peace of your soul* with such a thing. It is Me who *enhances your pains by My love* and you nurture My love that I emanate on you by your continuous sacrifices. Tell Me, what do you find in this that would be fantasy? It is a natural though supernatural process. Understand this simplicity with which I approach to you, at last! I do this so that I would *grant you power to make your sacrifices* continuously. Because *it is not greatness that sustains* the abundant emanation of My graces *but the continuity* that you do not interrupt either. Is that clear to you? So that it would be, I will tell you my earlier teaching again: *Collect the tiny little mosaic stones, I am the master who creates a masterpiece of it.* Just be diligent and do not ponder how shapeless your shapeless are your acts that look colorless. Have a rest on the heart of Your Master!" (III/186).

2.2.2. Kindle the desire

When we are unwilling for something, we immediately say: I am not good at it, I am not skilled enough, I am not suitable for it, I am not worthy of it, I am not so religious... The following passage shows clearly how the Lord, though perfectly aware of our

excuses and their motives, still invites us, even as we are trying to withdraw, to follow Him and thus to create the conditions so the Flame of Love may set our hearts aflame:

“Close this great grace you received from Me, to the depth of your heart. This is a special gift of God. He venerates you so, you little soul. Is there anything more glorious for you than this? Learn from Me. *I have chosen you since you are little and miserable.* My daughter, never be tired to suffer for Me. Be even more industrious by My graces.” And the Sweet Savior asked me to pray His wishes.” (1/63).

Desiring God’s wishes – this is what Jesus asks of each one of us. Ödön Nemes SJ often used to say, if you have no motivation, if you suffer from experiencing yourself senseless, ask God to grant you the desire to desire. I am thus helped to move out of concentrating on my ineptitude and lack of emotions. I do not want to conform with others any more; my attention is concentrated on the Lord.

The Lord Jesus dictated me this":

May our feet journey together,
May our hands gather in unity,
May our hearts beat in unison,
May our souls be in harmony,
May our thoughts be as one,
May our ears listen to the silence together,
May our glances profoundly penetrate each other,
May our lips pray together to gain mercy
from the Eternal Father. (May 4, 1962)

After asking me that, the Savior told me this, too: ‘This prayer, too, is a tool in your hands because those who collaborate with me this way, thereby, too the Satan will be blinded, and by its blindness the souls will be freed from sin.’” (1/63).

2.2.3. Filling our empty moments

“I took the Monstrance to the Holy Spirit Parish Church from the little chapel (empty). And as

I was carrying it, I was talking, adoring and conciliating Him on the way, too. He said to me, moved: *'You are My living monstrance.* The Father sent Me like His one-begotten son to save you. *But you also have to take your shares in my redeeming work* which you should call from the depth of your soul. It is dormant there, just do not be sluggish and keep waking it up and nurture yourselves with My Holy Blood! I ask you not to be angry that I have disturbed you for so long in your siesta, but there is no one else near Me and I longed for so much to have a heart-to-heart talk with someone. *My little sister, serve Me according to My liking!'*" (III/18788).

The central message of the Flame of Love is presented here. When Christ was made man, the second Divine Person was continually present in Jesus' human nature. He was one with the Father (*Unio hypostatica*). The Blessed Mother was in perfect bodily union with the second Divine Person for nine months. This created also full spiritual union between them, so Mary was the first *Monstrance* or *Bearer*.

Jesus uses the same name for Elizabeth: *"You are My living monstrance"*, which means the Lord wants to continue the unity presented in the incarnation with all men and women after Mary. He wants to fill each minute and all our activities with His Divine presence. This, however, is not automatic: *"you also have to take your shares"* in it. With love, *"call it from the depth of your soul. It is dormant there."*

The great purpose of our lives is creating continuous union with Jesus. It begins with adoration: *"nurture yourselves with My Holy Blood"*. That is, He gives us the gift of His love through His Blood and His sacrifice on the Cross. We contemplate Him, we accept in Him the washing of our sins through His Blood. We realize this as Jesus' constant self-giving, alive up to our day: "I longed for so much to have a heart-to-heart talk with someone" – He says in the Spiritual Diary.

This inspires us for constant acceptance. The desire in our souls for bearing the living presence of Jesus becomes uninterrupted. It involves continuous effort starting over and over again: *"you should call ...nurture"*.

Jesus accompanies every moment of our lives with loving attention: “*I ask you not to be angry that I have disturbed you for so long in your siesta*”, that is, He is present all the time.

It is not us who generate the relationship with strenuous effort – that would make the Flame of Love pitiable. We would easily take pity and excuse ourselves. This is a materialistic view that has infiltrated our thinking. We must work a lot indeed to become normal. “*My little sister, serve Me according to My liking!*”

2.2.4. The timeliness of Holy Communion in our age

“Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in that person” (*Jn 6:55*). Why do people cease to celebrate Sundays or abandon Holy Mass, confession and Holy Communion after their first Communion, confirmation or wedding?

My mother said, you know, if I skip it *once* I miss it, and I miss it for the *second* or the *third* time – but for the *fourth* time I begin to not miss it.

Conscience gets sluggish, the sweet experience fades, the soul gets closed with daily tension and anguish. For 50 years of Communism we controlled ourselves lest any of our Christian practices should be noticed. With constant attention we made sure we cut Jesus’ presence.

Thus we cut ourselves from God’s values enriching us – we became devalued. Just by themselves, many do not find their way back to God. That is why the solution offered by the Flame of Love Spiritual Diary is so timely: “you also have to take your shares in my redeeming work which you should call from the depth of your soul” (*III/187*).

Those who wish to lead those seeking the Lord back to Him need compassionate love towards the spiritual conditions of the seekers. The secrets of unity are: it is precisely by the Holy Blood, e.g. in praying the way of the Cross, that the heartless ways of those attacking souls become manifest. And mercy: God the Father who sends His Son: “For our sake he made the sinless one a victim for sin, so that in him we might become the uprightness of God.” (*2Kor 5,21*).

How many people cry for joy after confession, experiencing a retrieved peace of soul! Love is not just one of God's characteristics among many others (*accidentalis*), but He Himself is Love (*substantialis*)!

A 21-year-old man got baptized three days before he died. He said, „Since you baptized me, Jesus has been standing here by my bed. I have had no fear, no pains, and I have been as full of joy as I had never been.” With his transition, his life was completed.

Is this what we are afraid of?

2.2.5. Reparation involves constant attention to saving souls

„I have *chosen* you to *make reparation* for Kertváros [area of your town]. Do you know what it means? It is almost of *priestly honor*. Receive in place of them many spiritual Communion. Do not forget about the sick. Beware that *no soul should be damned!*” “My beloved Jesus, *I will ask for them that Your Kingdom come.*” He continued the conversation:

“My daughter, with this mission I have topped up all your childhood dreams. I knew you then, as well, I know you always longed to mission. Do you know why it was not possible to do it before? *You had to become mature for this great job within your family.* Do not forget that *your greatest missionary task is still your family.* It was not possible to entrust you with it before, I did not want you to stop midway. (I/103).

Where am I right now with regard to praying for others? “My own problems are enough” – I often hear. But I have seen others with five children, or attending a bedridden family member, who still care for others as well. God returns their love, removes the narrow-sightedness of their own problems, their lives become more youthful and they are joyful. Why are we afraid of this? Transcending our measures?

“There will be a time when you are going to proceed in the holy case alone and abandoned” (II/95). It occurred indeed. How many doors Elizabeth knocked on in vain? Some did not even read her Diary. Unfavorable news spread unfoundedly preceded her. Those with their commission were afraid. Yet on her trip to Rome, Providence

arranged her schedule in minutes, her received passports and accomplished meetings were miraculous synchronicities... Yes, the Blessed Mother helped, and she offers her help for us, too! We give excuses: it is not for us, I am a sinner... Elizabeth, too, remembered her sinfulness, but how did she manage this? "I do not write it down each time but following His kindly words, I prostrate before Him with the feeling of *incessant repentance*" (II/95).

So... what direction am I running in?

2.2.6. strengthening – „get immersed in me!”

"I thought with sorrowful soul: 'My beloved Jesus, The Virgin Mother has planted Her Flame of Love into such a sinful family where You have so many offences'. The Lord Jesus said this with gentle and comforting words: '*I have not come to get the upright but sinners*. That is why I died a horrible death. I have chosen you, too among My redeeming peers. Compassion with Me as I have told you: up to *martyrdom!*'" (II/95).

"Do you know which the *greatest pain* is? It is the one which I am emanating you. It is the *lack of understanding*. No pain is greater than this. This will be the pain of your soul until the day of your death. I also suffered by this throughout my whole life. My daughter, do not be superior to Me. May our souls sense together and our lips beg the Eternal Father for mercy together! My soul is kept in great drought by suffering which seems to me completely nonsense, invaluable and tasteless." (II/95).

Enough passages are found in the Spiritual Diary to prove Elizabeth's smallness, suffering and fervent prayers for souls. Yet, service or sacrifice are not always 100 percent perfect – not even with her. "The Lord Jesus said: 'I must *gently reproach* you. How difficult it is for you to grab the value and sense of your pains though *suffering is only meritorious if the soul accepts it with complete self-denial*. 'My Jesus, You know, do You that my might is not sufficient for what You demand of me. My soul is incessantly ready to serve You but You know, do You, that the body is an incessant field for fights.' In the spiritual drought and darkness, I can never see clearly the holy will of God." (II/96).

We, too, experience such times of spiritual dryness. While doing our duties, suffering cannot be avoided, therefore we think we are hopeless with spiritual life. It is good to know that it is hard for others, too. So I am not alone. How good to have an example who – at the price of no small sacrifices, as a widow with six kids – still managed to get over it all. Then it is possible for me, too! We must be thankful for the the Flame of Love Spiritual Diary. These struggles accord with the lives of housewives, mothers, or the lonely.

Am I cooking alone? What are my thoughts? Let us see Elizabeth: “It was while I was cooking. ‘I ask you that from now on do not think of yourself. Your thought shall be one: Us! If you think of Me, just think that *the two of Us are one. Nothing shall get between Us!* I fill in the deficiencies of your soul by My graces and you should give up yourself so that you still live *but I already live in you and you live by Me.*’ Then He repeated again: ‘My daughter, how much We love you!’ After a few days (He said). ‘I tell you, now you should not speak about yourself, self should diminish in you completely. There would only be Me for you! This is your real life.’” (II/96).

Joy and sorrow alternate. Priestly life is no cloudwalking, either. While doing one’s duties, bad moods, preconceptions, lack of attention may occur. When the human soul comes to the limits of the bearable, we do well to read the following paragraph of the Spiritual Diary:

“In the morning I knelt before the altar, on the stairs of communion in vain. Because it was only me, the priest did not let me receive Holy Communion. I said: ‘Ouch, it has caused such dissatisfaction to us’. ‘It is true’ – He said, too. ‘May Our joy and grief be one, too. We both feel ignorance now and it hurts Us, does it? Let Us bear this yearning together! So, it is easier now.’ And while we were talking, He emanated me with His intimate feelings. ‘You are my little drop of water! Immerse in the ecstatic wine, vital power and odor of My infinite Divinity and emanate it by Me so that My odor would spread around you. So, others will lean to Me by Me and by you. You see, this is how We have to be one.’” (II/96). This dialogue with Jesus is for Elizabeth as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

And it is! It could be so natural for us, too... What would I have said after such an incident of not receiving Communion? I would have left it all and gone away. But what is Jesus saying

“intimately” to Elizabeth – and to us? *“Get immersed in Me”*. And Elizabeth does not brood the event any more. She moves on, accepting listening to Jesus, completely.

“Do you know that it is the wonderful grace of *relying on Me* that gives you such power in your tormenting pains that the *despair* approaching your soul *cannot be in force even at the peak of suffering*. My daughter, write down My words and pray them back in the hard hours.” (II/48).

“You do not doubt anymore that *I have chosen you among the workers of redemption*, do you? Neither many missionary priests can do anything more than you. The incessant renewal of your sacrifices and your continuous efforts are very kind to Me. As well as it is *your living faith in Me*, this is what keeps your soul in permanent freshness and *makes it receptive* to the abundance of graces. So, my daughter, serve only Me!” (II/108).

Jesus makes Elizabeth and all of us aware of our mission this way: “It is not you who made yourself worthy, I, your God make you worthy of it and I love you elatedly.” (III/185).

“Appreciate Me for Divine Love also appreciates and respects you” (III/194).

Many more passages of the Spiritual Diary might be quoted regarding how Jesus instructed Elizabeth among the difficulties of everyday life and the joys of prayer. The obstacles she suffered, however, are often considered as *limits* in our lives, and we do not even realize that at such times we need to push the *ego* behind, giving place for Divine grace. So we, too, can attend God’s school.

2.3. SAYING YES AS THE BLESSED VIRGIN DID

Mary visits Elizabeth, who rejoices with her visit, asking “why should I be honored with a visit from the mother of my Lord?”

It is the Lord who presents Himself in Mary and through Mary: The King of the whole world and the Creator of the Universe! How did Mary become the Mother of the Lord? First, through God’s choice, which depended exclusively on God’s favor. In His Divine wisdom

and sanctity, through His and Creator's will, He chose Mary to become the Mother of Jesus.

Mary is faithful to her own creation when she is faithful to the Lord. Saying Yes to the angel, she makes the most positive decision of her life.

Being offered to God is the excellency of her virginity. That is: I belong to the Lord completely. "*You see before you the Lord's servant...*" The Greek original of the word can also mean a slave, but Mary is a *voluntary* servant of God. And God never makes a service miserable. Mary participates in a perfect relationship – like a petal, like the blue of the sky, the cleanness of water, the buildup of atoms, or the variations of compounds, amazingly presenting God's fingerprints in His creation and inviting to His service!

The Mother of the Lord is the Virgin Mother with her attention, will, acceptance, service due to God above all – until death. Visiting her aunt Elizabeth, Mary already bears Her Holy Son in Her womb. Not only the Lord as a Child in the womb is presented, but also the human relationship originally fitting the Lord. This quality relationship makes John the Baptist as a child in the womb rejoice. He, too, since the womb, shares in the quality relationship like that of Mary and Her Child. This relationship with the Holy Spirit will accompany the whole life also of John the Baptist: filled with the Holy Spirit. Even Herod appreciated John the Baptist, because the original desire and appreciation for the *true* appears in him, too. Yet, at a "*party*", if we want to use a contemporary word for it, he gives the order for John to be murdered, with regard to his promise and the people around him. This is also the fall of all human power: not appreciating his inner realization, failing to be faithful to it, he is carried away by those around him, by the condition of those gathered for sinful entertainment, from which he could rise if he just listened to appreciation and the Divine relationship.

2.3.1. Goodwill: do we really want to follow God?

The shepherds hurrying to see the newborn Jesus are enthused by the appearance of the angels, but in fact they join Mary's devotion and prayer to little Jesus and Joseph's serving love. Mary's virginity, her life dedicated to God, and God's generous love which

also makes Her a Mother, are united with the adoration of the shepherds and the angels – and with that of each one of us, according to our particular vocations and tasks: “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace for the good willed”. The Spirit is praying in them.

Goodwill prompts the shepherds to follow the angel’s call and start. We are led by the same Holy Spirit. Our will decides if we want and follow the believable Divine call.

The original reason belongs to God, who has appeared. Human reason follows it, which, however, requires goodwill. There are many life examples: when the three wise men arrive, “where is the newborn King of the Jews”, all Jerusalem is startled. As chosen ones, they expect the Messiah, their reason can see but their will is reluctant, because they are afraid of Herod. No coincidence. Herod wanted to have the Child killed, because his will is dirtied by power, by his impure will listening not to God. He does not follow the spiritual path of virginity with the chosen people. The wise men, however, venerated Jesus. It is the veneration of their intellect, knowledge and wisdom (their systematic knowledge). They do not lose the first joy of recognition, they are no slaves to boasting of their knowledge, but their knowledge gives honor to its source, to God whom they venerate and adore. They are free for truth, adoring the Savior King. Far from taking their joy, this veneration fulfils it! Their intellect adores the Source of their existence like a never drying, living fountain. Their knowledge stays always alive and good willed through their constant relationship remaining in God. That is, veneration helps their intellect remain “*virgin*”, i.e. pure.

2.3.2. Being pure, being a virgin: being free for a life according to God

“Truth sets you free” (*Jn 7:31*) – Jesus says (who is a virgin). Virginity is not a taboo, or some idol, or an ideal alien from what is normal. For example, there is a close connection between the Blessed Mother living her vocation, and the simple, true shepherds.

How many young people complain about it: this is a value we are afraid of? There is a pressure from society suggesting that virginity is abnormal. Although it is related to suffering and renouncement, but it leads to an inestimable value: *to God*, moreover, in *live encounter*. We are meant to believe that by this we become deprived of something. Whereas at the point where our freedom meets God's love, Life begins – and everyone has been called to this.

We may not articulate enough a child's purity and love towards God, but because of the burdened social patterns of recent times (those suffering from sinful, disordered relationships in crisis-afflicted families) I use this word: The Child Jesus is a virgin, absolutely pure and attentive to God. Some sweet childhood stories of young Jesus are expressed in our most beautiful Church feasts like Christmas or His Presentation in the Temple. This is the love we long for. This is the theme of the prayer of the Rosary, which nurtures our lives during contemplation.

Again, we may consider the 12-year-old Jesus in the Temple to be a virgin, i.e. one dedicated to God. „*And all those who heard him were astounded at his intelligence and his replies.*” (Lk 2:47) They take over the veneration for the Father, present in Jesus' heart, and thus God's desire for his people is accomplished in the hearts of His servants at the Temple. What a gift this astonishment is! And they go on correctly by asking questions and listening to Jesus. Just a child, they are not yet afraid of Him. He is not a rival yet. That is why Jesus' words can reach their hearts. With astonishment, the secret becomes present, requiring further steps: silence and prayer in the inner room. In some hearts it gets conceived, in some others it does not. Later on the same priests are afraid of Jesus: “*What authority have you for acting like this? And who gave you this authority?*” (Mt 21:23) – they ask Him, but not with goodwill any more.

2.4. A NEW BEGINNING: OPENING OUR HEARTS

If we as adults open our hearts, we will continue or restart what Jesus revealed and confirms, applying it to our age, in the Flame of Love Spiritual Diary. After rediscovering his faith, a young person

said, “How many of us would be joyful were we just told how the new beginning can become a reality for us!”

The Bible shows us this renewed life through everyday incidents. Sometimes they are not exemplary at all: Mary Magdalene rushing into Simon Pharisee’s house and throwing herself at the feet of Jesus who is a guest there. A great sinner, she still venerates Him. Squeezed by her great sins, nowhere can she feel permanently well. She yearns for something truer, something for her indeed. For peace. Crushed to pieces in sin, she longs for true relationships with God and the people. Jesus is the only One to understand this thirst for the Fountain and the related desire for purity. The Pharisees do not get to seeing what is in the hearts. Prisoners of their power, pride and conceit, they remain distant from Jesus and also from repentant sinners. They do not understand either contrition or mercy.

Jesus can be rediscovered in regret and tears! Magdalene weeps, but while doing so she gradually surrenders to the unknown taking dominance over her soul, the purity desired and received from Jesus. It is not just that she finds some rest – that would not mean transcending herself. She receives a greater gift than what she had been hoping for. She regains her virginity, the gift a second virginity, so to say, in forgiveness. Not as if nothing had happened. Yet it is real because Jesus can grant it to her – and to each one of us. Magdalene retrieves her original relationship with God and humans. Her healing becomes complete when she is able to look back upon all that had happened with thanksgiving and learning the lessons. She follows her Master, and, what is more, she will become the first witness of Jesus’ resurrection! A re-created witness!

2.5. GROWTH – BEGINNING TO SEE DIFFERENTLY

Jesus indicates that inappropriate understanding of reality or corruption of human relationships do not occur by chance. We are the cause: “Listen to me, all of you, and understand. Nothing that goes into someone from outside can make that person unclean; it is the things that come out of someone that make that person unclean. ...

For it is from within, from the heart, that evil intentions emerge: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, malice, deceit, indecency, envy, slander, pride, folly.” (Mk 7:15.21-22).

Just a few examples to illustrate how these things work. At one time Jesus heals ten lepers. The tenth man returns and bowing down thanks Him. But He asks: “The other nine, where are they? ... go on your way. Your faith has saved you.” An accepted and returned relationship is presented here: the healed person *does not want to walk alone any more, but with God and in God.*

This is in accordance with Jesus’ words in the Flame of Love Spiritual Diary: “My daughter, what has once been attracted to a loadstone, will not be set loose anymore because it would be against the law of nature. I will not set you or anyone loose because it would be against My Divine laws, My tenderness. I have accepted you, I have closed you into My Heart and I offer you the permanent love of My Heart by the abundant nutriment of My graces” (III/179). Perpetuated confidence encourages: “I should go on revealing the hardships of my soul sincerely afterwards, as well and evil will not be able to manage his temptations.” (III/181). The healed leper returns to Jesus not because of regulations (according to these, one needed to show himself to the priests so he might be declared clean after a certain time in quarantine). Without being ordered, he bows down before Jesus urged by his heart, and follows Him – like wedding guests follow the groom (the Savior of the people)

Or a similar Gospel story: the man who was born blind bows down before Jesus (Jn 9) after being healed. The Pharisees are scandalized – that is, they do not bow down even at the sight of a miracle, so Jesus turns to them saying, “It is for judgement that I have come into this world, so that those without sight may see and those with sight may become blind. If you were blind, you would not be guilty, but since you say, ‘We can see,’ your guilt remains.” People who merely observe religious laws do not see the point which is faith, which urged the thankful, healed blind man to bow down.

Quote from the Spiritual Diary: “the Holy Virgin started to speak in the meantime, complaining in a beseeching voice: ‘You are a mother, too, and I am sharing with you the sea of sorrows and passions. I know that you empathize with my motherly pains. Imagine what pains you would have if your six children were damned! And

me? Oh, the torments with which I have to see when the lot of souls fall to hell! Help, My daughter! My child!” (II/50).

2.6. SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT, THE GIFT OF RECOGNIZING TRUTH

The discernment of spirits depends on practical, personal prayer life, on what we accept or refuse regarding our inner inspirations, insights, sensations and desires. As an example, let us take the incident when Jesus is asked where His authority comes from. He replies: “And I will ask you a question... John's baptism: what was its origin, heavenly or human?” In Jesus' Person it is God asking this, the Lawgiver Himself, who is without sin or error. He is the Creator of all the laws of the Universe, so He should be recognized, especially by the geniuses and the leaders of His people. John the Baptist recognized his mission was coming from Him, and gives witness of the Savior. Here and now the Pharisees and the Scribes should commit to communion with the Baptist and with the Messiah. But they give an evasive response. In a manner of politicians, they postpone the moment of decision.

In fact, what becomes clear from it is that they have no relationship with God. They are trying to place Jesus in their knowledge system, but not with their inner, unique and individual hearts. That is why they are provoking Him with their questions. Doubtless, they are pressed hard by Rome, by the Caesar of the Empire, and Herod, while they, too, are expecting the coming of the Messiah, but with their special expectations and human desires.

Jesus is different. They are scandalized by His poverty, by the fact that He talks to sinners, by His teaching of the universality of mercy and charitable love, by the quality observance of the First Commandment, and later by His abandonment in suffering and by the crucifixion – organized by themselves. The charges they bring when Jesus is condemned go directly against truth and their own mission. There's a lot at stake.

The criteria for accepting or refusing the Flame of Love are similar. Recognizing the Flame of Love can happen with a somewhat lesser but similar grace as the one affecting the Apostle

Peter confessing his faith: “You are the Messiah.” Jesus openly discerns: “Because it was no human agency that revealed this to you

but my Father in heaven.” So there exists a recognition by grace in our everyday lives as well.

The visceral refusal of the Flame of Love can be likened to another utterance by Peter. When Jesus prophesies His imminent suffering, Peter protests: “Heaven preserve you, Lord, this must not happen to you.” But Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle in my path, because you are thinking not as God thinks but as human beings do.” (*Mt 16:23*). Human choices and doubts appear also when Jesus visits His hometown Nazareth: “he could work no miracle there, except that he cured a few sick people by laying his hands on them. He was amazed at their lack of faith.” (*Mk 6,5*).

Jesus says about John the Baptist’s execution: “they have treated him as they pleased.” How? By following uncontrolled human impulses. Thereupon we may state: not all human expressions are in accordance with God. Neither are they so in expressions of opinions against the Flame of Love. Making a decision on this issue is great responsibility.

The Spiritual Diary speaks clearly: “Your whole life shall also be yearning by sacrifices and prayers, as well as longing to aid in My redeeming work.” (*1/60*). That is, the call comes from Jesus and acceptance is the human continuation of His grace. “I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to little children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do” (*Mt 11:25*) – Jesus says. Accordingly, in the Diary: “Close this great grace you received from Me, to the depth of your heart. This is a special gift of God. He venerates you so, you little soul. Is there anything more glorious for you than this? Learn from Me. *I have chosen you since you are little and miserable.*” (*1/63*).

3. THE FOUNDATIONS AND THE PRESENT OF THE FLAME OF LOVE MOVEMENT

3.2. THE BEGINNINGS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE FLAME OF LOVE MOVEMENT

3.2.1. Elizabeth's example

A mother with a hard life, Elizabeth realizes at a certain point: she, too, must start it all over again, and wholeheartedly. In a critical situation of her life, she regained hope and faith through the memory of an exemplary old man. This man was so important for her because he was close to God. He used to pray a lot. One could tell it just by looking at him.

Elizabeth realized: if the old Carmelite made it, she, too, could make it! From then on, she attended Mass regularly, made special adorations, started fasting, prayed the Rosary while on her way, at home, or cooking meals. She allowed for the grace in her heart, so it evolved.

All this can be read in the Flame of Love Diary. At first the Lord designated its bearers in a narrow circle, then in wider circles. Thus, there appeared the circle of souls, priests and lay people dedicated to God, *the twelves*.

3.2.2. The call: Transcend your measures!

"On 1 January 1981 I received the repeated request from the Lord Jesus... *'You should step out from your measures! You all should step out from your measures!* Look at the three Wise Men who made superhuman sacrifice. They did step out from their measures. This should be done *first of all by the priests, the people devoted to God and all the faithful!*" Above the regular and used prayers and sacrifices, they have to enhance the prayers and sacrifices to the end in order to save the souls." (IV/27).

It is interesting to consider how Saint Paul saw it and how he, too, transcended his own measures: "Is it possible that God abandoned his people (to whom, ages ago, he had given recognition)? Out of the question! I too am an Israelite, descended from Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. What I am saying is this: Was this stumbling to lead to their final downfall? Out of the question! On the contrary, their failure has brought salvation for the gentiles, in order to stir them to envy." (*Rom 11:1–11*).

This passage is not an outsider's criticism. Saint Paul belongs entirely to Christ and to his Jewish people at the same time. He always began his apostolic journeys visiting the synagogues. Then, having been thrown out, he turns to the pagans with his evangelization. In his heart he feels universally for everyone, desiring to pass on the understanding and the joy the crucified Christ means for him. He begins a new life, giving his life for everyone. Instead of providing information, he gives us his heart and faith, tuning us, too, to „insider" service.

This is what it means to transcend our measures, impulses, social patterns, and to enter the universal measures of love.

3.2.3. In the first place: asking for and granting forgiveness

Pope John Paul II said in Budapest on 18th August 1991 (part of his speech): "Our gaze now turns from the past to *a future of reconciliation in justice*. Once again, I deplore and condemn, together with you, the wickedness which made you suffer and which brought about the death of so many others. Of course we must try to 'purge the evil from our midst' (cf Deut 17:7), but what concerns us now is not desire for revenge on the wicked, since it is fitting to leave the supreme judgment to God, but a commitment to ensure that never again can selfishness and hatred sow suffering and death. We must ensure that justice reigns at least in that part of the world over which we can exercise a certain influence, beginning in the first place with our own hearts, our families and those who are close to us.

This fight against hatred and selfishness is *a necessary requirement of fidelity to God's law*. The precept 'You shall love your

neighbor as yourself' (Lev 19:28), concerns in the first place the mutual relationship between the children of Israel, but it does not allow indifference to others. 'The Lord your God... loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. Love the sojourner therefore; for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt' (Deut 10:17-19). The hard quest for justice, love and peace must begin with ourselves. It would be a mistake to think that the dark force of selfishness and hatred remains totally outside our lives and does not in some way tarnish our very existence. 'The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth' (Gen 8:21), says the Lord. And this inclination finds an echo in our ways of behaving. Therefore, with God's powerful help, true liberation from evil is a continuous crossing of the Red Sea, and involves a patient struggle, through which we have to progress by means of a daily conversion of heart, or *Teshuvà*, in repentance, fasting, and works of mercy.

Let us join therefore in a sincere quest for goodness and peace, within us and about us, day after day, so that thanks also to our commitment the wickedness which we detest may be more radically conquered, and that the kingdom of justice, love and peace which corresponds to the Creator's intention may be spread ever more widely within us and about us. 'Love for the one same God must be translated into concrete action in favour of man... in the quest for social justice and peace, at the local, national and international levels'"

In His teaching about the neighbor, Jesus presents the example of the merciful Samaritan. A man of little importance by birth or ancestry becomes exemplary even for the Pharisees because of the ethical value of his actions. Hiding it in a parable, Jesus speaks about His own Divine mercy, setting the universal standards of the appreciation of mercy for everyone and the value of each person in need of mercy and saved by it if accepted with faith. Without reconciliation we cannot find our starting point towards ourselves or one another. This is God's free gift. As a sacrifice, it is continued in a small way in ordinary people and their stories. It is the Blessed Mother who helps Elizabeth realize this mission: "Only a mother can really feel compassion with Me, and these numerous kinds of pains have matured you." (III/185).

The married couples of the MÉCS/FIRES community invited priests to attend a Priest Encounter retreat they would present. We priests were doubtful: what can people living in different circumstances, in their families, tell us about the priesthood. They, on the other hand, were somewhat afraid of our criticism... But we were surprised: instead of giving us wise instructions, or teaching us about ideals, they shared with us their lived experiences with regard to priests – with great love and compassion, without criticising us. We laughed and wept together. What a lot of suffering and prayers it took them to cope with our weaknesses and sins they had experienced! We received their fatherly and motherly love in return. Finally, they thanked us for having accepted our calling from God. It was worth! We lived our communion with the couples as one family.