

Killer Pride

August 1, 2009

I love "The Poem of the Man-God" by Maria Valtorta. It is, in the English edition, five Volumes of visions of the life, death and resurrection of Our Lord, mostly the three years of his public ministry, as seen during the last years of the Second World War by a crippled Italian woman, unmarried, nailed to her sick-bed by an injury suffered many years before in her youth. As a visionary she was always scared of being deceived by the Devil. The fruits of the "Poem" in edification and conversions strongly indicate rather that her visions were a true gift from Heaven.

The "Poem" does not appeal to everybody. It has severe critics. Some find it sentimental. I find it full of sentiment, but a sentiment objective and not self-indulgent. Some find it undoctrinal. I find it questionable perhaps in a few details, but generally the doctrine is astonishingly rich and accurate (the foot-notes in the Italian edition help). Some find the "Poem" too earthy. I find it a marvellous presentation of Our Lord as true God and true man Might these last critics be wishing the Incarnation had been less incarnate? Christ took flesh.

Here is one sample amongst thousands of the concrete reminders of the "Poem" on how human nature works, unrecognized today. To overcome the evil impulses that Judas Iscariot recognizes in himself, he has asked the Mother of God if he can stay with her for a while in Nazareth. As "Refuge of Sinners" she asks Our lord if she may render this service to Judas. Our Lord replies that he is not against, only he knows that it will be useless:—

"Judas is like someone drowning who although he feels he is drowning rejects out of pride the rope being thrown to him to pull him to the bank. He lacks the will to reach the bank.

Every now and again the terror of drowning makes him seek and call out for help, which he clutches hold of, but then pride takes over again, he drops the help and pushes it away, as he wants to manage by himself, but all the while he is getting heavier with the muddy water that he is swallowing. However, so that nobody can say I left any remedy untried – go ahead, poor Mamma” (“Poor,” because she has no taste for this rescue attempt).

Every soul in Hell – alas, would that it were empty! – has chosen to be there, as the only alternative to submitting to God. Any submission diminishes my sense of my own excellence. Pride is the sin of sins. From our hidden pride, O Lord, deliver us!

Kyrie eleison.