

# MYSTIC OF THE HOLY WOUNDS

THE LIFE AND REVELATIONS OF  
SISTER MARY MARTHA CHAMBON

*By the*  
Visitation Sisters of Chambéry, France

*Translated from the French by*  
Ryan P. Plummer



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Cover image: sketch of Sister Mary Martha Chambon as remembered by her contemporaries, featured in book's original French edition.

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## CHAPTER 6

### THE CHOSEN ONE OF JESUS CRUCIFIED

**I**N the month of September 1867, the cholera had swept down on our land of Savoy, claiming everywhere, but especially in the city of Chambéry, very numerous casualties.

It was at this time, in order to welcome the poor little orphans left by the epidemic, that Canon Costa de Beauregard—this big-hearted priest whom the public regards as a saint and whose cause is being introduced—founded Le Bocage Orphanage.<sup>1</sup>

At the Visitation, it was not without apprehension that we anticipated the day set for the students' return. Our Mothers charged Sister Mary Martha with the task of praying to the Divine Redeemer to preserve the Community. Jesus, inclining towards the docile mediatrix, confided her this benevolent response: "Fear nothing. You are in the monastery as in the ark of Noah. The plague will come to the door, but it shall not penetrate inside. As for the students, you must not delay their return. They will not bring the plague and, once inside the House, they shall be protected."

In fact, the Superior noted that many students came that year, and that we had no problems.

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<sup>1</sup> This admirable work is currently [in 1928] directed by Fr. Ernest Costa de Beauregard, nephew of the founder. (See the very interesting biography *Une âme de Saint: le Chanoine Camille Costa de Beauregard*, by Ernest Costa de Beauregard, p. 64.)

In giving these assurances, Our Lord requested certain penitential practices and, in particular, prayers in honor of the Holy Wounds.

For some time, in fact, the Divine Savior had called Sister Mary Martha to the magnificent task of offering up the merits of His Passion: “He urged her to offer up at each moment His Holy Wounds to God the Father for the needs of Holy Church and of the Community, for the conversion of sinners, and principally for the souls in Purgatory” (Manuscript).

“With My Holy Wounds,” Jesus said, “you have all the riches of Heaven to rain down upon the earth.

“You must offer up the wealth of My Holy Wounds. You must not remain poor, for your Father is truly rich. Your riches—they are My Holy Passion.

“Something pains me,” He added, “it is that there are souls who regard devotion to My Wounds as strange, as contemptible, as something inappropriate... that is why it falls and is forgotten.

“In Heaven, I have Saints who had a great devotion to My Holy Wounds, but on earth there is almost no one who honors Me in this way.”

This complaint is only too well-founded! In a world where “enjoyment” appears to be the only preoccupation, how many people, Christians even, have lost the sense of sacrifice! Too few souls understand the Cross! Too few endeavor to meditate on the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, what St. Francis de Sales so rightly calls “the true school of love, the sweetest and most violent incentive to piety.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Treatise on the Love of God*, bk. 12, chap. 13.

Now Jesus does not want this inexhaustible mine to stay unexploited, that the fruits of His sufferings should remain forgotten and lost.

To accomplish His designs of love on the world, He chose—  
Is this not His custom?—the humblest of instruments.

From the end of 1866, this great devotion of Sister Mary Martha's had become apparent. In September 1867, during a Triduum of graces, the "mission" that was to imprint such a distinctive character on her life, and which she gladly called her "task," appeared more clearly to her.

On the twenty-fifth of that month, as our Sister was feeling very unwell at the morning Obedience,<sup>3</sup> the Superior ordered her to go to bed. She had hardly done so when the voice of Our Lord made itself heard in her soul: "I want you to observe three days here in honor of the three Divine Persons."

And this was, for the dear Seer, three days of exceptional graces. All the splendor of Heaven came to illuminate the narrow cell, upon which the Holy Trinity descended.

**The Glory.** – On the twenty-sixth, at the time of the *Sanctus* of the Mass, Sister Mary Martha went into ecstasy. God the Father presented Himself to her gaze above a magnificent altar and, showing her Jesus, said to her, "I give you Him Whom you offer to Me so often. I associate you with my Angels. Know that you have more power than they, for you can unceasingly offer Me the Wounds of My Divine Son for sinners and they can only contemplate them."

The Seraphim surrounded their Creator. The angelic host appeared exclusively occupied in serving God. She saw all of

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<sup>3</sup> The "morning" Obedience was held around noon. See also chap. 4, n. 1.

the Saints prostrate in profound adoration... whilst she tasted a little of “what the eye of man has not seen, what the ear has not heard, and what the human mind cannot understand.” Our Sister did not find the words to explain this.

**The Manger.** – On the second day, Sister Mary Martha was transported in spirit to the interior of Bethlehem’s stable. The Child Jesus appeared to her lying in the manger, with St. Joseph and the angels contemplating Him in silent adoration.

The Most Blessed Virgin took Him and placed Him in her arms, saying, “My daughter, I give Him to you as I gave Him to the world.”

Her soul then received vivid lights about the ravishing mystery of the Nativity, about the poverty of Our Lord, the model of religious souls, about the self-divesting God requires of His Spouses; about the generosity He demands of them to advance on this path of poverty and renunciation: “They must be naked, completely naked. The religious life is not a life of enjoyment; it is all poverty, obedience, and suffering.”

At that moment, the manuscripts state, in words we shall quote verbatim, two paths appeared before our Sister’s eyes.

“The first is that of the soul who abandons itself to Our Lord’s will. Love has crucified it, and after having traveled the same path as Jesus, it goes straight to Heaven. The second one is that of souls who travel out of compulsion. They perform their actions because they have to do them... It is not love that drives them. They have much trouble and hardly advance.

“To enter the first path, two things are necessary: first, the opening up of the heart and simple obedience; secondly, fidelity in not resisting any lights from one’s conscience.



“My daughter, ask of Me this grace for all religious souls.”

**The Cross.** – On the third day, Sister Mary Martha then saw, in a new rapture, the Heavenly Court surrounding the three Divine Persons.

God the Father, drawing from Himself His Spirit like a ray of fire, imparted it to her soul. “Herein,” He declared, “are light, suffering, and love!... The love shall be for Me, the light for discovering My will, the suffering for suffering from moment to moment...”

Then, inviting her to contemplate the Cross of His Son, the Heavenly Father gave her to better understand the Wounds of Jesus for her personal good. At the same time, in a ray of light that shot out from earth to Heaven, she clearly saw her “mission” and how she was to offer up the merits of Jesus’s Wounds for the entire world.

God the Father also gave her to understand the significance of these visions. The last two, which were figures of the hidden life and the crucified life, were in order to show her the path to the first: eternal glory.

One can easily understand how, at the end of these three days, the dear Seer, illuminated by divine lights, could only with difficulty open her eyes to the sight of earthly and sensible things. Her soul remained immersed in an interior contemplation which nothing could distract! In the words of our Very Honorable Mother, “she had only her body on the earth.”

Three days later, on October 2, Sister Mary Martha was present at a “taking of the habit” when, the vault of Heaven opening, she saw the same ceremony unfold in a quite otherworldly splendor. All of the Visitation in Heaven were present to welcome the young novice, prophesying that she

would become a fervent religious.<sup>4</sup> St. Modesta<sup>5</sup> was there as well, very pleased to have the new fiancée as her protégée.<sup>6</sup>

Our first Mothers, addressing themselves to Sister Mary Martha, said to her joyfully, “The Eternal Father has given our Holy Order His Son in three manners: firstly, Jesus Christ Crucified, the Cross, His Holy Wounds, to this House more particularly; secondly, His Sacred Heart; and thirdly, the Child Jesus.”

These are family possessions. In going back to the origins of the Institute, we find in the life of Mother Anne-Marguerite Clément,<sup>7</sup> a contemporary of St. Jane de Chantal, these three devotions, which marked all Religious formed by her.

Perhaps this soul, as we would like to believe, was equally privileged, who, together with our Holy Mother Foundress, came to recall these things to the chosen one of God, especially emphasizing the Passion and Wounds of the Savior.

On the following October 23, the Very Honorable Mother Marie-Pauline Deglapigny insisted on this same point. Appearing to her former daughter, she confirmed to her this gift of the Holy Wounds: “The Visitation always had great riches, but they were not complete. Therefore, blessed was the day I left the earth, because instead of having only the Heart of Our Lord to honor, you will have (as a sensible object of your devotion)

<sup>4</sup> This was our dear Sister Marie-Modeste d’Agoût.

<sup>5</sup> Virgin and martyr, whose holy body rests in a reliquary beneath the main altar of the Visitation church.

<sup>6</sup> Modeste, already identified in note 4 above as the name taken by the novice, is the French equivalent of the name Modesta.—Trans.

<sup>7</sup> See Auguste Saudreau, *Les tendresses du Seigneur pour une âme fidèle, ou Vie de la Mère Anne-Marguerite Clément, première supérieure des monastères de la Visitation de Montargis et de Melun, 1593-1661* (Paris: Charles Amat, 1915).

all of His Holy Humanity, that is to say His Sacred Wounds. I have asked for this grace.”

St. Francis de Sales, our blessed Father, who very often visited his dear daughter to paternally instruct her, did not fail to confirm her in the certitude of her mission: “God has chosen you to complete the devotion to the Sacred Heart; the Heart was shown to Blessed Margaret Mary and the Holy Wounds to my little Mary Martha!... It is a joy for my paternal heart that this honor be rendered by you to Jesus Crucified!”

The Most Blessed Virgin also came on one feast of the Visitation to confirm the young Sister in her path. Accompanied by the Holy Founders and St. Margaret Mary, she said with kindness, “I give my Fruit to the Visitation as I carried Him to my cousin Elizabeth. Your Holy Founder reproduced the works, meekness, and humility of my Son; Holy Mother de Chantal, my generosity, in overcoming all obstacles to unite herself to Jesus and to doing His Holy Will; your Blessed Sister Margaret Mary reproduced the Sacred Heart of my Son to give it to the world... And you, my daughter, you are chosen to hold back the Justice of God, by offering up the merits of the Passion and Holy Wounds of my only beloved Son Jesus.”

But from Our Lord especially His humble Servant received, multiple times, the assurance that she was truly called to revive devotion to the redeeming Wounds: “I have chosen you to reawaken devotion to My Holy Passion in the unfortunate time in which you are living.” Then, showing her His Holy Wounds as a book He wanted to teach her to read, the good Master added, “Do not move your eyes from this book and you will learn from it more than the greatest scholars. Prayer to the Holy Wounds encompasses everything.”

He asked her to unceasingly offer His Divine Wounds for the salvation of the world: “My daughter, the world will be more or

less troubled according to whether you accomplish your task. You are chosen to satisfy My justice.

“I desire, through this devotion, that not only the souls with whom you live be made holy, but many others still.

“I have chosen you to offer up the merits of My Holy Passion for all; but I desire that you still be hidden. It is for Me to make known later that it is by this means that the world shall be saved—and also by the hands of My Immaculate Mother.”

To stir up Sister Mary Martha’s zeal, Our Lord was pleased to disclose to her the benefits of this devotion, the inestimable treasures of these founts of life.

“My daughter, each time that you offer My Father the merits of My Divine Wounds, you gain an immense fortune.

“My Father delights in the offering of My Sacred Wounds and of My Holy Mother’s sorrows. To offer Him My Wounds is to offer Him His glory, it is to offer Heaven to Heaven.

“One of my creatures betrayed Me and sold My blood; but you can so easily repurchase it drop by drop!... A single drop suffices to purify the earth and you do not think of it! You do not know its value!”

Showing His Beloved these “fountains of salvation” as suspended between Heaven and earth, He said: “My daughter, recognize the treasure of the world... The world does not want to recognize it...”

Jesus urged her—and urges us along with her—to come with confidence to this treasure: “He who is in need, let him come with faith and confidence, let him continuously draw from the treasure of My Passion.

“Behold what pays for all those who have debts.

“One must not fear showing My Wounds to souls. The way of My Wounds is so simple and so easy for getting to Heaven.

“In the contemplation of My Wounds, one finds everything for oneself and for others.”

Jesus redoubled the encouraging promises:

“I will grant everything asked of Me through devotion to the Holy Wounds. Those who honor them shall have a true knowledge of Jesus Christ.

“My daughter, where were the Saints made, if not in My Wounds? From My Wounds come fruits of holiness. Just as gold that is purified in the crucible becomes more beautiful, in the same way you must put your soul and those of your Sisters in My Sacred Wounds—there they shall be perfected like gold in the furnace.”

The Holy Wounds have a wondrous efficacy in converting sinners.

One day, Sister Mary Martha, seized with anguish at the thought of the earth’s crimes, exclaimed, “My Jesus, take care of your children, do not look at their sins.”

The Divine Master, answering her appeal, taught her the following aspiration: “My Jesus, pardon and mercy through the merits of Thy Holy Wounds.” Then he added, “Many people will experience the efficacy of this invocation.”

“I desire,” He stated another time, “that Priests often give it to their penitents in the Holy Tribunal.

“The sinner who says the following prayer will obtain conversion: ‘Eternal Father, I offer Thee the Wounds of Our Lord Jesus Christ to heal the wounds of our souls.’”

The Holy Wounds are a balm and a consolation in suffering: “This aspiration must be repeated often with those who are ill: ‘My Jesus, pardon and mercy through the merits of Thy Holy Wounds.’ This prayer will relieve soul and body.”

The Holy Wounds ensure a good death: “There will be no death for the soul who expires in My Wounds, they give true life.”