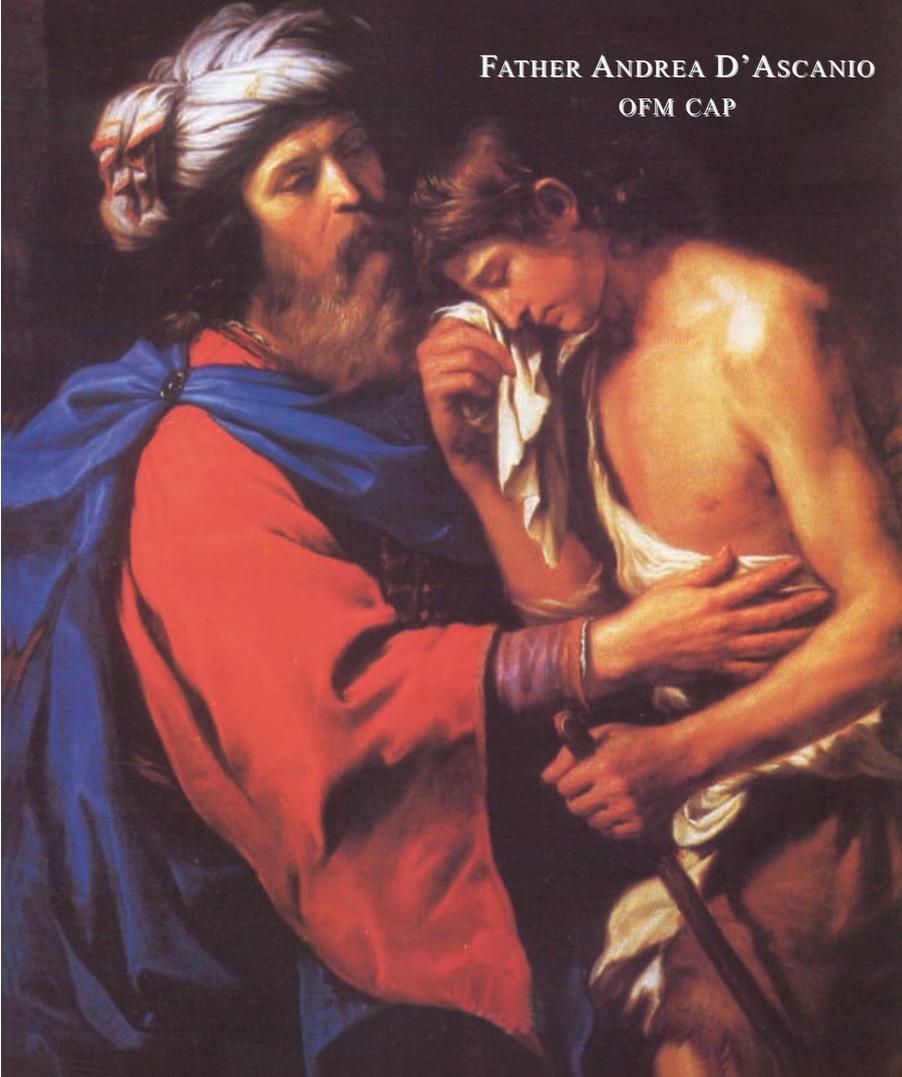


THIS IS THE HOUR OF MERCY

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J. Galot

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by Father Andrea D'Ascanio ofm cap

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INTRODUCTION

We are constantly being bombarded with alarming messages from all sides: two thirds of the earth will disappear, floods, earthquakes, hunger, plagues, civil wars, local wars, third world war, schisms in the Church with popes and antipopes, all sorts of catastrophes...

Many messages are of trustworthy origin, and I believe it is neither fair nor wise to ignore them. After all, we are all familiar with Scripture, and it is not the first time that streams of purifying chastisement fall upon the earth. Considering the thickness of evil of these times, we can easily be convinced that many prophets of calamity are right, because they echo what is described in Revelation and in reliable revelations such as La Salette and Fatima.

Well then, will we just stock up on blessed candles, provisions and firewood for the famous three days of darkness, interrupting all our activities (as is happening in some places) as we await the catastro-

phes? Or will we move to Switzerland, where everything has the comic “security” of the atomic shelter? Is there really no hope of stemming the evil which is about to explode?

*We have much more than a hope. We have the certainty that God is our Father and He wants to deliver us from evil, from all evil. That is why Jesus taught us to ask Him **“Deliver us from evil!”**.*

*If we say that there is nothing more to be done, it means that we haven’t understood what Jesus came to reveal to us and we are thus nullifying the gift of the Father’s Love which is **“more powerful than evil, sin and death”** (John Paul II’s *Dives in Misericordia*).*

So let us examine the situation in order to make a concrete decision on what we can and must do.

I

“FATHER, DELIVER US FROM EVIL”

The first evil we must be delivered from is the great trap Satan has laid for us by making us see God as a master, instead of a Father. The *fear of God* (Jn 3:10) is the new sentiment which is born in the heart of man as the first dramatic consequence of sin. This fear hinders our trust in Him who alone can save us, and thus makes us a prey to the “master” who makes us fall into his clutches.

The second evil is the *fear of our brothers* who Satan himself presents to us as “wicked” and therefore as dangerous enemies we must attack. In reality we are “wicked” only etymologically, that is we are prisoners of Satan who first enslaves us, and then manifests himself in us by making us attack each other.

This is the current situation: first the enemy draws us away from the Father with sin and, to prevent us

from turning back to Him, he instils in us a “fear” of Him; then he leads us to attack each other by making us believe that the other is the cause of all our problems, and for this reason we must attack him in order to be freed from the evil that torments us.

These are the dynamics which have always made the white man attack the black man, husband attack wife, employee attack boss, north attack south... each one is convinced he is right, each one is in search of a liberation which – in that moment – he sees only in the other’s destruction.

Therefore, in addition to the suffering of no longer believing in the Father’s smile, there is also the suffering of no longer seeing others as our brothers, but as enemies who hate us. It is the death of Love, it is solitude and despair. It is hell anticipated.

In order to get out of this infernal trap there are some premises we must believe without the least doubt. The first is that God is Father, only Father and therefore only Love, and that only his Love can deliver us from the greatest evil which is non-Love. Coherently with this conviction, we must bring our relationship with Him back to a true dimension.

The second is that our “captive” brothers cannot be freed by themselves, and that the Father allows

them to attack us so that we may free them with our forgiveness. In this way we will also save our relationship with our brothers.

II

GOD IS MY GOOD DADDY

The first thing we must do is to recreate inside of us the paternal image of God which Satan has deformed, by replacing the figure of a loving Father with that of an unyielding and revengeful judge. In order to do this we must be converted, that is we must no longer tend towards the outside but towards our inner self, in our inner depths, where the Father lives. We must restore the Trinitarian imprint in us.

Man is Trinitarian: his soul is the Father, his body is the Son and the Spirit is the reality that proceeds from the harmony that exists between body and soul. Just like in the Trinity, in whose image and likeness man was created.

We must restore the Trinitarian harmony in us, by totally submitting the body to the soul through penance, fasting and prayer. This is the first stage, the

purifying stage, which frees us from the attraction to false external lights and permits us to perceive the fascinating Light which shines in the depths of our soul, a light buried by all our selfishness.

Thus we begin to breathe a breath of fresh air and live moments of peace which the Father alone can give.

When our body has submitted itself to the soul harmoniously, the soul lets out its own Light and the Father's smile pierces us and gives us a new spirit.

Our anxiety, our violent anger and our despair give way to serenity, peace and joy. Our spirit is expressed with a smile, the most authentic expression of God. This is the second stage, the illuminative stage, which prepares us for the great encounter with the Father on the *unitive* way.

This is the final and most difficult and challenging aim, which can only be achieved if we comply completely with the Father's Will. It is the way which Abraham, our father and model of faith, walked in a continuous "yes" to all the Father's requests. It is the ascent to the great Mountain which we must all accomplish by denying our own "self": the beloved Isaac which each of us has inside. It is holiness.

Holiness

Holiness, that is the fullness of divine life in us, is not an extraordinary choice for a few willing people, but it is the inevitable goal which we must all reach:

“Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect!”
(Mt 5:48).

This “perfection” can only be reached by complying fully, to the point of totally denying one’s own “self”, with the Father’s Will. This is what Jesus accomplished in Gethsemane, at the price of the death of his own “self” which cost him the sweating of blood:

*“Abba, Father! All things are possible to you. Take this cup away from me, **but not what I will but what you will.**”* (Mk 14:36).

Gethsemane, that is the decisive impact of our “self” with God, is the path we must follow in order to walk the road of holiness. Once we cross this last barrier we are finally free and thus our relationship with God changes: we become His “friends”, and enter the

dimension of Mercy which is pure and gratuitous Love which goes beyond our principles of “justice”.

With this existential “yes”, with which we surrender ourselves totally to the sanctifying action of the Father, we cross the “sound barrier” of human barriers and get to the heart of the Trinitarian dynamics. We can “*see God face to face*” (1 Cor 13:12) and together with Him we determine the future of the world. Since we haven’t denied Him anything of our humanity, He will not deny us anything of His Divinity, to whom “*nothing is impossible*” (Mk 14:36) and He will grant us everything we ask of Him. Or rather, everything His Spirit asks through us.

Today holiness is accessible to everyone

Is it difficult to become a saint?

It isn’t easy to die to oneself. However, if we consecrate ourselves to Mary, everything becomes easier. For this reason the Mother of God and our Mother, She who must restore us to the new Life of grace, is present in our midst as never before in history.

These are the last times, the times of the final battle, the times of urgency: the times of infinite GRACE.

If we want to, today we can walk a spiritual journey which in the past involved a life of penance and desert.

Today our goal, which is very urgent, must be HOLINESS, which today is easier to achieve because these are times in which Heaven opens up and pours all its Light upon the earth:

“Come, without paying and without cost...”

(Is 55:1)

“To the thirsty I will give a gift from the spring of life-giving water.

The victor will inherit these gifts, and I shall be his God, and he will be my son”

(Rev 21:6)

In this new dimension of holiness, that is of total intimacy with God, there is no longer a quantitative relationship between good and evil, because a drop of divine Mercy weighs more than a sea of human misery. We must enter into this dimension, and as soon as possible. The salvation of the world can no longer come about by penance alone, because it could never balance the great amount of evil which increases day by day in an immoderate way.

Our wine ran out a long time ago, the Strength of a new wine must come into the world, the miraculous wine that will bring about a new dynamism of Grace.

This new wine will be given to us by the Father and it will be the miracle of the last hour, however we must ask Him for it in the name of Jesus and Mary, in the name of the martyrs and saints, in the name of the innumerable innocent children martyrs of these times.

We can also ask for it in the name of each one of us, whom the Father loves with infinite tenderness and who – in Grace – has become his son.

We can and must say to Him: **“Come, Daddy!”**

III

“COME, DADDY!”

Thanks to our Baptism, we are greater than Abraham. If we also allow grace to work in us totally by consecrating ourselves to Mary and the Father, the power of our intercession is infinite: we mustn't make the error of worrying about the narrow limits of our corrupted humanity, but the infinite power of Grace which we are given.

Our Father is infinite in Love, and we are very small. After a certain number of zeros we get caught up in commas, calculations, and ratios. Instead, He puts down an eight crosswise (infinity = ∞) and everything is resolved: before infinity all the numbers of this world no longer have any meaning.

Satan has locked us up in a cage and continues to terrorize us because he plays on our little faith and our weakness. We tremble before him because we feel we are helpless and unable to set ourselves free by our strength alone.

But if we invoked the name of the Father we would be saved, because He would intervene immediately and break all our chains, as long as we said **“Daddy!”**.

This is what the Father says in the Message dictated to Mother Eugenia Elisabetta Ravasio and which the Church acknowledged as true after ten years of rigorous and thorough inquiry:

“All those who call me by the name of Father, even if only once, will not perish, but will be sure of their eternal life among the chosen ones”.

(from The Father Speaks to His Children)

Only the Father, by intervening with His Mercy, can save us. Satan knows this, and for this reason he doesn't want us to discover this infinite source of Love and continues to terrorize us with the image of impending “justice”.

The Father is coming full of Love and Light, but hell continues to lay out a blanket of fog which disfigures our image of the Father and therefore we are unable to say: **“Come, Daddy!”**

We must be prophets of Mercy

“The more the human conscience moves away from God and distances itself from the mystery of Mercy, the more the Church has the right and duty to appeal to the God of Mercy with loud cries.”

(John Paul II, Dives in Misericordia, VIII 15).

Today we feel the weight of hell which becomes more and more overwhelming, but we do not ask the Father to deliver us from this yoke. We want to be delivered from evil, but we forget that He alone can and wants to deliver us from evil. Why don't we call on Him? Why don't we say to Him with all our heart: **“Daddy, come to deliver us from evil!”** If we call on Him, He will come and evil will flee because it cannot coexist with his Love.

Abraham, our great father in faith, must be our model, and we must meditate on his story in order to fully understand the Heart of God who comes down to earth not so much *“to see whether in Sodom and Gomorrah the actions of man fully correspond to the cry against them that comes to him”* (Gen 18:21) – he knew the situation well! – but to find in his friend Abraham

an ally to put his Mercy into action, a Mercy which forgives, instead of “justice” which punishes. We know how things ended up: Abraham, who sensed God's desire, asked for 50 innocent people to be spared and he gradually got down to 10, and God always said “yes” to his requests. Abraham stopped at 10 innocent people, who couldn't be found, and Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed.

If Abraham had continued to lower the price and had said: *“Lord, for my sake spare those cities!”* the Father would have continued to say “yes”, because He always says “yes” to Love.

Sodom and Gomorrah weren't spared because of Abraham's imperfect trust or because of the Father's lack of availability, for his Heart is always open to forgiveness, whose greatest expression is Mercy.

Today we must let the Father's Love work in us totally and we must become his witnesses, his prophets of Love for all our desperate brothers who can only be set free by Mercy.

Mercy: *“Miseris cor dare”*, to give one's heart to the miserable, that is to his poor “captive” children and brothers.

IV

ALL MEN ARE MY “CAPTIVE” BROTHERS

Do you remember the episode in which Moses “struggles” with God after the people, having made the golden calf, “rose up to rebel”? (Ex 32:6). Let us read the passage together:

*“With that, the LORD said to Moses, “Go down at once to **your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt**, for they have become depraved. They have soon turned aside from the way I pointed out to them, making for themselves a molten calf and worshiping it, sacrificing to it and crying out, ‘This is your God, O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egypt!’ I see how stiff-necked this people is,” continued the Lord to Moses. “Let me alone, then, that my wrath may blaze up against them to consume them. Then I will make of you a great nation.”*

But Moses implored the Lord, his God, saying, “Why, O Lord, should your wrath blaze up against your own people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with such great power and with so strong a hand? Why should the Egyptians say, ‘With evil intent he brought them out, that he might kill them in the mountains and exterminate them from the face of the earth’? Let your blazing wrath die down; relent in punishing your people. Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, and how you swore to them by your own self, saying, ‘I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky; and all this land that I promised, I will give your descendants as their perpetual heritage.’”

***So the Lord relented in the punishment he had threatened to inflict on his people”** (Ex 32:7-14).*

As at the time of Sodom and Gomorrah, even now the Lord God must intervene to stop an intolerable abuse, from which depends the destiny of the whole human race. As he did then with Abraham, He now goes to Moses, his “friend” on earth, and describes the situation to him in all its drama, revealing his plans for a purifying extermination.

In reality, the Lord is testing Moses, giving him full responsibility for the situation (“**Your own people, whom you brought out...**”) and assuring him, in any case, glory and honour (“*Then I will make of YOU a great nation*”).

Moses knows what God is up to and throws the ball back to the Lord (“**Your people, whom You brought out...**”) and uses the authority he was given by interceding for his people and recalling the Lord to his responsibility and to the promises He made to his forefathers.

This is what the Father was waiting for, and – having finally found in Moses the right echo to His Heart – “*he relented in the punishment he had threatened to inflict on his people*”.

God really never had a “plan” of extermination. This intervention of “justice” was requested by the great “*accuser of our brothers, who accused them before our God day and night*” (Rev 12:10).

Therefore the expression “*he relented in the punishment he had threatened to inflict on his people*” must be interpreted in this way: “*God, thanks to Moses, was able to absolve his people from the legitimate requests of the accuser who had called his people to justice*”.

If we have received the gift of faith; if we have given ourselves to the Father, through Mary, in an act of total immolation; if we have the grace to believe what the Father writes in his beautiful letter, Holy Scripture, then we have the duty to intercede for our brothers, like Abraham (perhaps with a bit more trust...), or like Moses.

V

“WHATEVER YOU ASK...”

We continue to believe that God is very far away from us and that he rules the world like Jupiter, a short-tempered and violent master who gave orders and cast lightning bolts when men didn't obey his orders immediately.

Instead, from the examples we have quoted, it clearly emerges that it is totally the opposite: God is an infinitely gentle Father, who at all costs tries to save his children from the consequences of their great sins.

However, in order to put his Mercy into action he needs someone who, on earth, will echo his Fatherly Heartbeats and intercede for his “captive” brothers.

If this was true in the Old Testament, the more so it is now, after the coming of his Son who has shown us the fullness of his Fatherly Heart, even though we haven't understood it yet. A typical example is found in the Liturgy, which invites us to pray the Our Father

during Mass with this prayer: “*Preceptis salutaribus moniti ...audemus dicere: Pater noster*”. Which we can freely translate as: “We have the courage to call you Father only because Jesus commanded us to”.

Fortunately God's *sense of humour* is infinite like all His other attributes.

The Father is on our side

Poor Jesus, how your message has been misunderstood! Poor Father who have sacrificed your only Son in order to embrace all your children again, to hear everyone call you “Daddy”! How unworthily we have welcomed the Love you came to give us, a Love that places itself at the service of its children to make them grow in Love!

“This is my Body, this is my Blood given up for you” (Mt 26:26).

“Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Mt 16:19).

“Whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give it to you!” (Jn 15:16).

*“If two of you agree on earth about **anything** for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father” (Mt 18:19).*

From these passages – and in Scripture there are many other similar ones – we can clearly affirm that GOD OBEYS MAN, if out of Love he asks Him for anything that is good for us. Because He is our Daddy, and if we ask Him for good things he is pleased to give them to us; in fact, it is his very Spirit that asks him for them through us (Rom 8:26).

This is the hour of Mercy

In the biography of the Curé d’Ars we read that one day the devil appeared to him and, very angrily, cried out: *“You have already snatched 70,000 souls from me!”* This was the result of the life he spent in the confessional, in constant prayer, a life based on boiled unseasoned potatoes.

In Sister Faustina Kowalska’s biography we read that, while she was embroidering she asked Jesus: *“Can you give me a gift? Can you save all those who will die today?”*. When Jesus objected, pointing out that what she was asking for was very great, the little nun remarked: *“Why, is there perhaps a limit to your power of Love?”*

Thus Jesus said his “yes”. He said “yes” to his own Spirit that prayed in little Faustina. Let us try to make a “rational” comparison: is there a relationship between the 70,000 souls saved by the Curé d’Ars with a life of extreme penance and the approximately 300,000 souls which Faustina saved in a brief dialogue?

This is the difference that exists between the spirituality of penance and the spirituality of Mercy.

VI

THE FATHER'S "REVENGE"

Today we are living times of great sin. We have already mentioned at the beginning that, even if there were many people doing penance, it wouldn't be sufficient to stop the power of evil which is rampant.

God's response to this spreading of evil is the extreme manifestation of His Love.

The Father's "revenge" is Mercy, and it will be manifested precisely in the period of greatest *spiritual darkness*, that of the days of darkness described by many present-day prophets of calamity and which we fear:

*"No longer shall the sun be your light by day,
nor the brightness of the moon shine upon you...
The Spirit of the Lord is upon me
because the Lord
has anointed me;*

*He has sent me to bring
glad tidings to the lowly,
to heal the broken-hearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives
and release to the prisoners,
to announce
a year of favour from the Lord,
and a day of vindication by our God,
to comfort all who mourn,
to place on those who mourn in Zion
a diadem instead of ashes,
to give them oil of gladness in place of mourning,
a glorious mantle instead of a listless spirit".*

(Is 60:19, 61:1-3)

"Jesus, Mary, I love you!"

You all know the wonderful prayer which Jesus dictated to the Capuchin nun Maria Consolata Betrone: "*Jesus, Mary, I love you. Save souls*".

This ejaculation is connected to the promise that a soul would be saved each time it was recited. It seemed like an insuperable promise in its munificence, if we think of the "thirty days of indulgence" which the Church usually granted for this kind of ejacula-

tion. Today, by means of a holy and humble German mystic, Jesus' promise has been "updated" by the Spirit insofar as the times in which we are living: Jesus has invited Justine Klotz to ask for the salvation of not one, but a thousand souls with her every breath:

*"Jesus and Mary, I love You!
Save priestly souls, save souls. We beseech you,
allow us to repeat this act of love **a thousand
times**, with our every breath, our every heart-
beat!"*

"We must excuse the world"

In one of the writings of the Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta, "Luisa the Saint", the little prophet of the highest spirituality which is that of the "FIAT" to the Father's Will, we read an interesting episode which is in line with the topic we are dealing with.

One day Jesus showed her the evil that exists in the world and the negative consequences it would bring about; Luisa begins a confrontation with Jesus, like Abraham did for Sodom and Gomorrah, and Jesus gives in to her requests. At another time the episode is repeated, but this time far more aggravated; Luisa in-

sists and wins this battle too. A third time Jesus shows her evil again, but to such a great extent that little Luisa doesn't feel like insisting, and she gives up her battle. Jesus withdraws and remarks: "*Do you see how depraved the world is: you yourself said it...*" Luisa is "*left speechless*" and cannot resign herself because "*instead of excusing the world*" she felt that she was the motive for which Jesus was angry with it.

My brothers, when will we understand that the Father loves us more than we can imagine, and that he wants our help in order to dissolve evil with the Power of his Love? When will we become convinced that he needs us and our mediation, in order to put his Mercy into action, which is more powerful than evil, than all evils; which is more powerful than sin, than all sins; which is more powerful than death, than every kind of death?

We have pointed out the way. The first step is to put our holiness into practice by complying totally and unconditionally with the Father's will: this is the only thing we can and must do, and we repeat that these times are particularly favourable. The second is to "fight" with God for the salvation of our brothers.

If, then, we don't want to commit ourselves to this rightful and urgent task, perhaps because we continue

to believe that it's not for us, let us play our last card: that of the **innocence of children.**

With regard to this, we quote an episode from the biography of Mother Eugenia Elisabetta Ravasio which we published 13 years ago:

“Father, for the sake of this innocence, save us!”

On the steamboat which goes from Tangier to Marseille the sirens suddenly sound and the megaphone gives the order to go on deck. A boiler has burst and the ship has sprung a leak and is slowly starting to lean over. On board there is also Mother Eugenia who goes on deck and in vain tries to calm the throng which the passengers create around the life boats.

A mother holding her baby, stricken with terror, clings to her because she sees her so peaceful in such chaos. Mother Eugenia smiles at her and asks her to hand the baby over to her. The woman obeys her like a robot, subdued by the profound peace which radiates from this young nun who takes the baby, raises him up to heaven and with her melodious voice starts singing: *“I believe in You, Lord, I believe in you...”*

The baby's mother joins in the song, followed by many other people. The song becomes more and more

steady, and soon the whole deck becomes a big stage from which the most moving chorus which the angels have ever heard rises to the Father. Everyone sings together – passengers, officers and sailors; the terror which a few moments before was overwhelming everyone now seems centuries away.

*“Father,
for the sake of this child,
for the sake of this innocence, save us!”*

This is the prayer Mother Eugenia addressed to the Father for everyone, in everyone's name. And innocence, which has become a prayer in a hymn of faith, rends the heavens. Very slowly the ship resumes the waterline and keeps the sea until the port of Marseille. All the passengers and crew members – many of them barefoot – lead by mother Eugenia go to the sanctuary of Our Lady of the Guard to thank her.

Salvation will come...

Prophetic language is made up of words and gestures that strengthen the word and give it an eloquent and almost three-dimensional power.

Mother Eugenia is a prophet in the fullest meaning of the word, she is one of the greatest prophets of all times because she summarizes all the prophets in herself by giving man the most splendid message of God: **our heavenly Father has only plans of joy and life for us his children, we just have to call him “FATHER” and he will clothe us with light.**

This is what Mother Eugenia tells each one of us with the “word” of the Message “The Father speaks to his Children”. The baby she raises to heaven is the “gesture” with which the Message is made perfect, and it is addressed in particular to the Church.

The boat of Peter is in danger, it seems as if it were sinking: if, through Mary, the Church offers the innocence of children to the Father, his Fatherly Heart will open up and send forth a miraculous power which will transform everything into love.

For more than a hundred years Mary has been pointing out this way, by always appearing to children (La Salette, Pontmain, Lourdes, Fatima, Beauring, Banneux, etc.) and by asking them to “offer themselves” to the Father (Fatima) to bring an era of peace to the world.

May the Church finally accept Mary’s invitation. May the Church finally receive the Message of salvation which by means of Mother Eugenia the Father has given us in this hour of darkness.

Salvation will come, in superabundance, because of the innocence of children who, by offering themselves to the Father, will make the sea of his Mercy spring forth from his Most tender Heart.

“...I, the Father, day after day, try to win over my children. It is a slow and difficult journey, but it is also joyous because Mary is always next to Me. She is beautiful and with Her Smile she seems to say to me: “Courage, my Father, I am here and I love You, I have understood your love for man... let me take your place in your journey...Father, you rest and for a moment forget the earth, or, if you really can’t do it, look to where the children consecrated to You and Me are gathered and there, among the innocence which belongs to Us, rest your gaze and Your Heart; smile once again because humanity is safe in them, with them we will build new heavens and a new earth and when men are more evil, totally enslaved by Satan, I will know how to win the battle: I will take a child, the smallest child among those consecrated to Us and

I will raise him towards You and say to You: “For the sake of this innocent child who loves You and who has given himself to You, I beg You Father, loosen the heart of man who refuses me and who refuses to come back home”. And, for the sake of that child, You will have mercy and you will enflame that hardened heart which, recognizing you, will call you Father and will be saved.

My Father, trust in your Mother, trust in your Son, trust in the Angels: we will lead all men to you, one by one, because they are all your children”.

The Father, moved, smiles. He has seen the dawning of a new era of peace...

(from the III volume of “God is my Father, by Father A. D’Ascanio)

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