

**MARIA VALTORTA READERS' GROUP, AUSTRALIA
SUPPLEMENT TO BULLETIN # 73**

Transcript of Interview on "Spirit of Life": Geraldine Lee talks with Stephen Austin about Maria Valtorta, her writings, and his detailed e-book about her extraordinary work. This episode went to air on Melbourne Channel 31 on 12th of February 2014.

Watch the interview here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDmyVciCPn4>

Download his e-book here:

<http://www.valtorta.org.au/Defence/Maria%20Valtorta%20Summary%20%26%20Encyclopedia.pdf>

(If you have trouble locating these links with your Internet search engine, you can find them on the Home Page of the Readers' Group web-site: www.valtorta.org.au)

Note that there are several endnote numbers **in the interview transcript below** which are linked to comments by Stephen Austin given after the transcript

Hello, welcome to Spirit of Life. I'm Geraldine Lee, your host, and our guest is Stephen Austin. Welcome to the show. Could you tell me a bit about your background and how you came about reading and writing books about Maria Valtorta?

Okay. I have an honors civil engineering degree, and I spent a year in the seminary; and during the past couple of years I have done extensive research into Maria Valtorta, and I actually wrote a very large e-book about it.

Fantastic. Can you tell me more about Maria Valtorta?

Maria Valtorta was an Italian Catholic mystic, famous both for her personal holiness as well as her extensive writings, the most notable of them being *The Gospel as Revealed to Me*, which is revelations about the entire Gospel of Jesus. And she was born in Caserta, Italy in 1897 and started receiving these revelations when she was at the age of 46.

What were some of these revelations that she got?

98.5% of all the Gospel passages in the canonized Gospels she had visions of, where she heard the spoken dialogue of Jesus and over 500 different personalities of His time, and she reported these in meticulous detail in her writings.

Wow. And she's a mystic, I hear?

Yep. She's an Italian Catholic mystic. She actually had some personal experiences with St. Padre Pio. A lot of people are familiar with him. He's one of the most famous mystics of the Church. So mystics are often given revelations or visions or dictations from God for the benefit of the general population.

And what was her mission in life?

Her mission in life was to pray and offer up her sufferings for the good of souls, as well as to receive these revelations for the benefit of everybody, Catholics and non-Catholics. The fruits of it has been tremendous conversions to the Catholic Faith and conversions of people who have lived a sort of lukewarm life and wanted to become more fervent.

And how has she inspired or influenced you?

She completely changed my life: absolutely. I could write an entire book about how she has inspired me. She deepened my relationship with God. She has *completely* expanded my knowledge of the Scriptures, my knowledge about anything that has to do with theology – even philosophy – because her writings are so deep and amazing: they captivate you. And they draw you in as if you were *there* with Christ 2000 years ago be-

cause you actually *hear* what He said, you actually see what He did, and it's just absolutely amazing.

Yes, and how does that help young adults? Cuz I know you're a young adult and inspired. Why do you think her works would inspire young adults like you?

It's a movie script. Many young adults are turned off by – most – a lot of the theological works out there because they find it dry or boring, it doesn't really touch them personally, they don't feel like they can apply it to their everyday life. Maria Valtorta just completely goes against the grain... because it is like a movie script, it's like you're there. You can *live* with Christ, you can see what He said, you can see how He responded to His friends and His enemies. You can see what He taught and how He lived and it just draws you in, like you would watching a documentary or a movie, and I think that that's really important for our audio-visual age, where most people grew up watching television and movies.

How has she made a difference in your life and your faith?

I feel called to a mission to spread her writings and to make people aware of the *truth* about her revelations and how *powerful* and how *wonderful* it can change people's lives. And so I'm devoting my life to spreading her writings and to spreading the good it can do. So that's the way it's changed my life. But personally, it's changed my life by enabling me to bear suffering in life better, enabling me to love people better, to not judge people, to, it just... It's hard to put it into just a few sentences. It has transformed *every* area of my life.

Wow. I heard that you were actually trying to actually go against your brother because he was a follower of her.

Oh yeah. I'm your traditional skeptic. Especially when it comes to visions, apparitions, miracles, locutions. I want to – I'm a skeptic. And so, originally I set out to prove how she's wrong. You go on the Internet, 80% of the websites are against her.¹ However, I researched it, and found the primary sources – the best sources, things in Italian, the original testimonies of high clerics in Rome who have analyzed her writings – and they converted me to the opposite attitude. I was able to find out how to prove how her writings are authentic and are very acceptable, and – I believe that they are 100 percent true.

Fantastic! Yes, and what have your family – what do they think about what you're doing?

They support it. My brother's in the seminary and he's the one who introduced me to her writings, and for his sake I set out to prove how it's false and wrong, and in my search I found out that it's true and great. And so him and I have a close collaboration in reading her writings and discussing it.

Yes, and has it been approved by the Church; like what she's writing?

Definitely. Viewers can find out more information in my e-book, but it's been approved by 28 bishops, it's received multiple imprimaturs – which means it's an *official* approval by a bishop – multiple popes have spoken highly of it. Definitely it's approved. When you actually get to the nitty-gritty of the true information that's out there, no one can deny that it's free of errors in faith and morals and just very good for souls; there's nothing bad in it or any reason why anyone can't read it or benefit from it.

And she has been described as a victim soul. What does that mean? In my mind, it sort of brings out things like torture, but what does it mean?

Alright. Countless saints in the history of the Church were so-called victim souls, which means that they suffer to gain merit and grace to help souls convert and to save their soul. As well as to placate God's Justice because of all the sin in the world. The greatest victim soul was Our Lord at the Crucifixion. And followers of Him often, the greatest saints have often had the stigmata or various diseases or other afflictions by which they gain merit to help souls. And so they call them victim souls. It's always a voluntary offering of their own free will out of love of God. They want to suffer to help others. And so that's what a victim soul is.

Stephen, I'd like to know more about the scientific proof, because I hear that when she writes The Poem of the Man-God that it's actually been historical facts that she's written about. Could you tell me more about that?

Oh yeah, sure. Research has been done into 8,000 pieces of data in her writings in a whole diverse number of fields: astronomy, geography, topography, history, cultures... you name it. And it has corresponded to authoritative sources with 99.6% accuracy. And it just blows your mind when you get to the depth of the amount of research done. A Harvard university graduate professor at Purdue University published on the Purdue University Engineering website an article where he analyzed her writings for the moon phases and the constellations that she described.² And he said that to correlate *all* of those mentions in all of her visions with her chosen dates and dating system is so complex that it would require a modern computer to do it. But she wrote these visions in the 1940's and failed mathematics in high school. So time and time again there's all these extraordinary unexplainable "coincidences" or proofs. She described in great detail 62 places which were either unknown or not discovered archaeologically until after her death. She described in great detail a tremendous number of locations that were verified later by archaeological digs. It begs the question: *how?* She didn't consult atlases, she was bedridden the entire time she wrote them, she couldn't have gotten this information from other people; especially because she wrote it in 3½ years. How in the world did that happen? And she affirms: "I know these things by supernatural means, and only by supernatural means."

You said Maria was bedridden. For how long was she bedridden?

28 years.

28 years. Wow. Why?

Basically, it started out, she was hit in the back with an iron bar – believe it or not – by an anarchist, just randomly one day in the street. And that set in motion what would eventually make her immobile years later. And she also contracted numerous terrible illnesses; like a tumor, she had heart problems, she had paralysis from time to time that would come and go: a *mine* of health problems. But even so, she offered it up in a spirit of gratitude to God, love of God, and joy, because she offered herself up, her sufferings up, to help other souls – to save souls. And that's part of what's so amazing about her writings is that she wrote 15,000 handwritten pages that astound world-renowned biblical scholars, and yet she did it all within a five-year period while bedridden.

So did people come to visit her, what was her life like? Did she have family life? What sorts of things like that?

She lived in the environment of a common household. Her mother lived with her. She had visitors from – priests, nuns, lay people, university-educated laymen... She was visited by some

top Church officials, believe it or not, like Archbishop Carinci, the head of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, said Mass for her three times in her bedroom, wrote letters back and forth with her: 32 letters which have been published.³ So she has been visited by quite a few people.

She sounds like she had a full life in spite of being bedridden for 28 years.

Definitely.

Now what about her life has really touched you?

I read her autobiography, and personally, it's the most amazing autobiography I've ever read in my life, and I've read many autobiographies: St. Therese of the Child Jesus – her autobiography is world-famous – Saint Augustine's *Confessions*. It's so amazing because she suffered so much, and she offered so much to God without holding anything back, that it just blows your mind.

Yes, and what about the writings? Does anything really specific that you can think of that really has touched you?

What amazes me most is Christ's speeches. You'll read His speech in the Gospel: His parables or His preaching in the Temple. And *The Gospel as Revealed to Me*, her major written work, will expand it; like 2 sentences in the canonized Gospels will be *pages and pages* in her revelation. And they perfectly conform to the Gospels. But it's just *absolutely* amazing, and what He says to the Pharisees and scribes, what He says to His friends, what He says to skeptics, it just blows your mind: the *wisdom*, the *power*, the *authority*, the *love*, the *mercy* in His words is just incomparable!

Wow, you're very passionate about this. Most people your age are busy doing a career, but have you got thoughts about what you would like to do? Like are you going to travel the world with this message?

If God wills it.

Yeah, you've given quite a lot of your time writing – I hear about the e-book that you're writing. How's that going at the moment?

It's going very well. I call it *A Summa and Encyclopedia to Maria Valtorta's Extraordinary Work*. So it includes anything you could possibly want to know about Maria Valtorta. You name it, it's in there. It covers the 14 proofs of the divine origin [of her writings], it covers the position of the popes and the Holy Office on her writings, the statements of high-ranking clerics in Rome, it has a detailed analysis of her and her revelations according to criteria that you use to judge the authenticity of those things, it has resources: it has everything. And so it's over 1,000 pages. But it's designed so that someone can just look at one little section, read it, and glean from it the information they want to know, and move on. So it's useful for everybody, like an encyclopedia.

How is it for a layperson, is it for a cynic, or a believer, or...

It's for everyone.

Young people too?

Definitely. It's written so that your average layperson can read it and understand it. It's written very simply and very clearly. But it also has the amount of depth that a scholar could actually benefit from it, because I quote scholars, I quote all walks of people and all walks of life who have analyzed it. So it's an e-book for everybody really.

And how can people get it if they'd like to read your e-book?

Okay, it's hosted on multiple sites, including a few prominent sites; one of them has 80,000 annual visitors a year. But the

easiest way for viewers of this program to actually get it would be to simply e-mail me and then I would e-mail them the e-book as an attachment.

Stephen, you talked about it being like a movie script when she described the Gospels in her Poem of the Man-God. What do you mean by "like a movie script"?

Okay, when you read the Gospels; for example, let's just take the Wedding of Cana, for example, it might say a few sentences like "Jesus was present with His Mother and His apostles at the Wedding of Cana," and it describes the miracle He did and a few of the spoken dialogue between Christ and His Mother. In *The Poem of the Man-God* or *The Gospel as Revealed to Me* – they're synonymous titles – she describes *whole* conversations that are an elaboration of that. She describes the scenery in great detail, what the people were doing, when did Christ leave after He performed His miracle? How did He leave? Christ commented on the actual Gospel passages for modern man; He commented on what He said and why: what did He *mean* when He said to Our Lady, "What is there still between Me and you?" So in that sense it just sort of elaborates and gives greater detail. Maria Valtorta saw things as if she was actually there. She heard the actual words of Christ and the 500+ personalities in her work. She actually claims – and I believe it – that by a supernatural gift she was actually able to smell the smells there, to feel the environment as if she was actually there. And that's why she reports the events like she's a reporter, like she's actually there, and she can hear the dialogue and report it being actually there.

So she's actually getting the vision and writing while she's having the vision. It's not like she dreams and then she writes.

No. With *many* mystics, like Anne Catherine Emmerich and Mary of Agreda, they write down the vision onto paper after they come out of ecstasy. Maria Valtorta has what's called a partial ecstasy where she writes it *while* she's having her vision. Which means that her revelations are *much* more accurate in the written record compared to many other mystics, which is *why* science is actually proving that it's 99.6% accurate in scientific and historical fields, which is unprecedented. In fact, it's so amazing that I can already hear the chorus of skeptics just clamoring and saying, "Oh my gosh! that's impossible!" But when you actually look at the evidence and look at the authority of the scientists who have researched it, if they're *honest* and have an open mind, you can't deny that there's something extraordinary there.

And I hear also people who are very well known like Mother Teresa and Padre Pio and multiple popes have read her book and find it really great.

Oh yeah! Everybody knows Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta: everybody. And it's been said by trustworthy eyewitnesses that whenever she did her travels, she always carried with her two books: one of them is a book on Eucharistic devotion and adoration, and the other one was *The Poem of The Man-God*, or also known as *The Gospel as Revealed to Me*, by Maria Valtorta.⁴ So she was an avid reader of Maria Valtorta and it really inspired her life and her work, which is an amazing testimony. Padre Pio: most Catholics know who he is. He's one of the greatest saints of the 20th century. He was a mystic, he had the stigmata, he bi-located, there's countless accounts of miraculous healings and cures from him. So he's a witness of unimpeachable integrity. And a spiritual daughter of Padre Pio, which means she received spiritual direction from him directly, wrote a letter to Dr. Pisani, the publisher of Maria Valtorta's

works, and reported that another spiritual daughter who she knows, called Mrs. Elisa Lucchi, in 1967 went to Confession to Padre Pio and said, "Father, I have heard mention of Maria Valtorta's works, do you advise me to read them?" And St. Pio responded, "I don't advise you to, I *order* you to." And so anyone who believes that Padre Pio has some degree of credibility, when they hear that – and I believe that testimony is reliable – that should make them look a little bit more deeply into Maria Valtorta's revelations.

Yeah, so, just for those people who don't know: the stigmata is the bleeding...

Oh yeah, St. Francis of Assisi is the greatest example in the history of the Church: he's the first saint to receive the stigmata. What it is, is you bear the wounds of Christ in your body, which is an offering to God to help souls; to help participate in Christ's Passion, just like St. Paul talked about in Scripture: "We fill up the measure of Christ's sufferings in our bodies."⁵ It's part of the Christian vocation for every soul, to offer up your sorrows, your pains, your sufferings to God.

And bilocation? What was that?

You can read about it on the Internet and in countless books about Padre Pio out there. Some saints in the history of the Church have had the very extraordinary gift of being able to actually be in two places at once supernaturally, and when they're in another place they may not be physically there, but they might appear to people. St. Teresa of Avila is reported to have done that, St. Padre Pio, various saints... And so that's definitely one of the...

And so that's great that she's inspired such great people; and popes too?

Oh yeah, definitely. Pope Pius XII: he read Maria Valtorta's work for a *year*, and this is substantiated by eyewitnesses who have personally handed him typewritten copies of *The Poem of the Man-God*, and a person saw a bookmark in his library [in those books] and it moved over time. After he read them, he called an audience with the three priests in charge of this work – and this audience was reported in the Vatican newspaper the next day as an historic event – and he told them, "There is no need to give an opinion as to whether this is of supernatural origin. Publish it just as it is. He who reads it will understand." Cardinal Gagnon, who is a high-up cleric in the Vatican, wrote to somebody clarifying and saying that his oral command has the same weight as an official imprimatur, which is like an approval of a bishop. So that carries a significant degree of weight. Pope Paul VI is reported to have read it and send the whole works to the seminary in Milan. The personal secretary of Pope John Paul II has written a preface for a book about Maria Valtorta, where he testifies that Pope John Paul II often read her work, her work was on his bedside table often.⁶ So there is a tremendous amount of testimony.

That's fantastic. You've written a lot of this in your e-book?

Oh yeah, it's all there.

And you have an e-mail. What was the e-mail called that people could get your e-book? What was your e-mail?

Okay, it's: DeoGratias15@gmail.com [Stephen then spelled it out slowly for viewers to write down]

Fantastic. You've been very inspiring and I'm keen to read the book myself, so I wish you all the best in your travels around Australia with spreading this and goodbye and God bless you!

God bless you too!

Follow-Up Comments and Notes from Stephen Austin

Please note that the following endnotes are linked to specific spots identified in the above interview transcript.

¹ I said that 80% of the websites are against Maria Valtorta. In actuality, that percentage may be much lower. There is definitely many websites against her, but, as Bishop Roman Danylak, S.T.L., J.U.D. (who granted the official imprimatur for the English translation of the *Poem of the Man-God* in 2001), wrote in a letter to EWTN about a seriously flawed "Question and Answer" about the *Poem*:

In a cursory glance at the Google listings on the Internet, you will find more than 200 websites dedicated to the writings of Maria Valtorta, in a variety of languages.

Bishop Danylak's letter to EWTN is viewable here:

<http://www.bardstown.com/~brchrys/DnlkEWTN.htm>

² Professor Lonnie Lee VanZandt, Ph.D.'s article "Astronomical Dating of the *Poem of the Man-God*" (dated November 1, 1994) is available on the official Purdue University College of Engineering website here: https://engineering.purdue.edu/~zak/Van_Zandt.pdf

³ The book *Lettere a Mons. Carinci (Letters to Archbishop Carinci)* is a collection of letters that Maria Valtorta and Archbishop Alfonso Carinci exchanged between January 9, 1949 and December 23, 1955. The book contains 39 letters in full written by Maria Valtorta to Archbishop Carinci and 21 letters in full written by Archbishop Carinci to Maria Valtorta, including photoscans of some of the original handwritten letters. In the book *Pro e contro Maria Valtorta*, on page 92 is a photocopy of the original signed handwritten letter of Archbishop Carinci, written on behalf of himself and 8 other prominent authorities, to be delivered to Pope Pius XII in an audience and which is dated January 29, 1952. It also has a very positive certification and review of her work (4 pages long when typed) written by Archbishop Carinci on January 17, 1952.

In the interview, I made a slight mistake. I said that Archbishop Carinci said Mass three times for Maria Valtorta in her bedroom, but in reality he did so only once (he *did* visit her three times, however, and that's where I got that idea of "three times" in my head). Here are the facts, as related by Prof. Brodeur, Ph.D. in *The Holy Shroud and the Visions of Maria Valtorta*, pp. 218-219:

We could list several Church personalities who highly esteemed Valtorta's work. Let us mention only Archbishop Alphonso Carinci, Secretary of the Congregation of Rites, where he was in charge of the causes of beatification. ... He began reading some of her writings before 1948, and corresponded with her. Three times he traveled from Rome to Viareggio and visited her: in April 1948, June 1952, and January 1958. In 1952, since Valtorta was paraplegic and bedridden, he said Mass, with two Servite priests, in her bedroom. He wore the ornaments for a great feast, having borrowed them from the Santissima Annunziata basilica in Florence. Marta Diciotti, Maria Valtorta's homemaker, knew Most Rev. Carinci, and said that he "entertained no doubts as to Maria Valtorta and her writings." Diciotti says that he used to comfort Valtorta with these words: "He is the Master. He is the Author." And Diciotti explains: "He used to say 'the Author' and write 'the Author' with a capital A." Such is the witness of a great archbishop, who knew in depth the discernment of spirits, since its role is fundamental in the beatification procedures.

⁴ I said that whenever Blessed Mother Teresa did her travels, she always carried with her two books. She is actually reported to have carried four books with her in her travels. When I said two books, I was thinking of those books of hers outside of the Bible and Breviary, the latter of which is required for her as a religious and which she

would have to carry with her in all her travels anyway. Hence, the testimonies about these two books (a book on Eucharistic devotion and Maria Valtorta's work) are recounted below.

The first account is an Extract from *Christian Magazine*, No. 218 of 03/15/2009, page 5:

Mother Teresa (1910-1997)

Beatified by John Paul II

According to a report by Fr. Leo Maasburg, national leader of the missions in Vienna, Austria and an occasional confessor of Mother Teresa for 4 years, she always traveled with three books: The Bible, her Breviary, and a third book. When Fr. Leo asked her about the third work, she said to him that it was a book by Maria Valtorta. Upon his [multiple] inquiries about the content of it, she told him, "read it" and simply repeated that.

Recently interviewed by *Christian Magazine* on the advice of Mother Teresa on the work of Maria Valtorta, Fr. Leo Maasburg simply confirms: "For what is the attitude of Mother Teresa about Valtorta, I clearly remember her positive reaction without recalling more details".

So you may ask, what is this other book Stephen is talking about that she carried with her in addition to Maria Valtorta's work? I've had a book for years entitled *Come to Me in the Blessed Sacrament* (ISBN-13: 9780972351225) which has a message from Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta on the second page. It is as follows:

Message from Mother Teresa of Calcutta:

Wherever I travel and wherever I go, I carry this prayer and meditation book with me because it is a constant source of light and inspiration for me. It has been my daily companion. *Loving Jesus with the Heart of Mary* is my daily prayer and meditation book. It is a most beautiful book because each page helps us to see ever more clearly how much Jesus loves us in the Blessed Sacrament. I recommend *Loving Jesus with the Heart of Mary* and *Come to Me in the Blessed Sacrament* to everyone I meet. I would like the whole world to read these books to help everyone realize that Jesus wants all of us to come to Him in the Blessed Sacrament. He is really there in Person waiting just for you."

Mother Teresa, MC

⁵ The Scripture passage I was referring to: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for his body, which is the Church:" (Colossians 1:24, Douay-Rheims Bible)

⁶ In the interview I said that Pope John Paul II's personal secretary testified that he often saw one of the books of *The Gospel as Revealed to Me* on the Pope's bedside table. This testimony is related in the preface of a book which I quote below, but I mistakenly said in the interview that the Pope's personal secretary wrote the preface. He didn't actually write it but his testimony was documented and recounted in it. The preface was written by Bishop Johanan-Mariam Cazenave (the Secretary of the Syrian-French Synod) in the Preface to *L'Énigme Valtorta [The Valtorta Enigma]*, a book by Jean-François Lavère, RSI Publishers, 2012. On page 16, the bishop writes:

While Pope Benedict XVI recently asked Christians to recover the spirit of Christianity of the Primitive Church, does it seem unreasonable to do so also through the work of Maria Valtorta when we know that it was commissioned by Paul VI in the Vatican library and **Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz [the personal secretary of Pope John Paul II] testified that he often saw one of the volumes of *The Gospel as it was Revealed to Me* on the bedside table of the holy Pope John Paul II?** [emphasis added]

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