

HE AND I



Gabrielle Bossis

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Translated and condensed by Evelyn M. Brown

Foreword by Kathryn J. Hermes, FSP



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*At the request of the translator, we are happy to dedicate this book
to our brothers and sisters of every color, creed, and race,
in the name of Emmanuel, God-with-us.*

*And with a special thought for all the divided Christian groups
united forever in the name of Jesus
in one, indivisible, and eternal Church.*

*“All of you one: one body, one soul, one prayer. . . .
Let us be one, all of us together.”*

— He and I

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Foreword

As a writer of spirituality, I have always been intrigued by people's concept of God. A young man once told me, "God is like this invisible force in the world." A friend struggled a long time wondering whether or not God was listening to her. I myself have wrestled with the invisibility of the unseen God, sensing some sort of veil that keeps God and me in separate compartments, a veil I've tried to tear away again and again. I often hear people say that they don't know how to pray. They are silently plagued with an unspoken low-grade spiritual desolation or feeling of guilt, resigning themselves to never having what their hearts know they were made for. People want to know that God *does* exist. Even people who aren't particularly religious want to know what God has to say! Something deep within us knows that God's words are a key to what it is to be authentically human and happy.

Enter the bestselling spiritual testament *He and I*, which reveals the words of Jesus to Gabrielle Bossis, a single woman, nurse, and, in her later years, playwright, who lived in France in the early twentieth century. Bossis documented her "simple talks" with Jesus in her journals, intimate conversations with Jesus that were real and personal. After her death these journals were made public. Here are Jesus' words to her on April 17, 1947:

The unfolding of My love in you is *My* personal happiness; I'm waiting for it. Everything that affects you touches *Me* personally. My friend, you are part of Me and I, your Christ, am part of you.

Then why should I alone *desire* this close union? Don't you also desire it? You see, it's quite distressing for a friend to have to say, 'Love Me. Think about Me. Serve My cause. Give Me your life.' Don't you think that the one who loves would prefer to have the other read his sentiments? And when this does happen, *He is so deeply touched. . .*" (p. 197)

With these words Jesus risks telling us he is in love with us and desires both our attention and our response. Jesus has a deep "friendliness" for us that he wishes we felt toward him. The simple talks in *He and I* between Jesus and Bossis hold the key to the development of this friendship with Jesus. No spiritual jargon, methods, or process. Just time spent with Jesus listening to his desire for us, his love for us, his suggestions for deepening a friendship.

I read the following message while sitting outside on a lovely summer day: "Keep in mind more often that I give you everything for nothing: all My heaven for your nothingness and for the mere pittance of your yearnings" (see p. 198). My eyes were suddenly opened to the beauty around me and in me. Yes. All of creation, the death and resurrection of Jesus, the sacraments and his Body and Blood given to me for food each Sunday or daily if I desire it, eternal life . . . all of this for the "mere pittance" of our yearnings for him. That yearning can stretch from "fulfilling our Sunday obligation," zipping in and out of Mass, or "writing a check for a charity," all the way to seeking Jesus present in everyone, every place, and everything. So many Christian lives, even when religious duties are meticulously fulfilled, are saddened because they lack the vibrant beauty of *desire*.

In reading the words of the Lord as recorded by Bossis, we discover that all Jesus is asking for is *desire*, which he defines simply as focusing our eyes on him no matter what we are doing. He teaches us how to be happy in quite simple ways: "Practice being more attractive for love's sake. You could do immense good with an

affectionate look and a smile. . . . If you go to meet people with delicate thoughtfulness, you bring peace and rest” (see p. 244).

As readers we have to wrestle with the reality that the messages in *He and I* are words to someone else. They weren't said to you or to me. We didn't hear the timber and tone of the Lord's voice, or sense his words deep in our hearts. But this is not really the point, is it? Jesus *does* have words for you. He desires to say them to *you*. He desires, in a sense, another book to be written: *He and YOU*. His hope is to surround you and me with the fragrance of his love.

Jesus tells Gabrielle Bossis how close he is to her, “I am in you and you are in Me—two foreheads touching; no, one inside the other” (p. 208). Whenever I pray now, these words, which startle by their frank physicalness, transport me into a place of shared listening and loving. Prayer becomes an exquisite awareness and delicate sensitivity to the feelings of my Friend.

For a world starving for the comfort of God's presence or the assurance of his existence, this book is a page turner. I encourage you, however, to resist the temptation to read through it quickly. Instead, take the time to let the messages that fill these pages resound within you. Allow Jesus to whisper these words directly to you. Replace Gabrielle's Bossis's name with your own. Stop at those points where you feel a response welling up inside you. Allow yourself to feel. Savor the desire that emerges from deep within the soil of your soul, breaking through the crust of modern-day callousness, indifference, or boredom.

Jesus asks you, wherever you are, at this moment, as he asked Gabrielle Bossis: “Tell Me now, do you want Me to knock at *your* door?” (p. 243)

SR. KATHRYN J. HERMES, FSP
Beginning Contemplative Prayer, author

Preface

“A fresh restatement, that is the point,”¹ was Father McCorry’s appeal in his challenging article on the state of spiritual writing in the post-conciliar year of 1967. And taking a case in point, he went on to say, “The vital religious problem of prayer is discussed and discussed yet again; and can anyone remember when he encountered an original and truly helpful suggestion in the matter?” I can. There are several in the pages of this volume, translated from a series of books entitled *Lui et moi*, alleged to contain the words of Our Lord to a French woman called Gabrielle Bossis. Here is one of them: “Give yourself a rest from saying prayers so that you may enjoy My love.”

I meditated on these books for four years, dreaming all the time of translating them before I was chosen to undertake the work. And now that it is done, I am more than ever convinced of the timeliness of this document and its significance in our religious-scientific age, when in the physical-spiritual world man is exploring the vast reaches of outer space, ever seeking to widen the bounds of light.

It was the triumph of the twentieth century that man has set foot on the moon. But the journey toward its light is only a symbol of the one he must take toward the Light of Christ within him. And only the astronauts of the spiritual world who incarnate Jesus, the Way-shower, can lead us there. They are the *avant-gardists* who venture

1. “No Laughing Matter,” *America*, February 11, 1967.

forth audaciously on the promises of God into another dimension, and they alone can guide us to that Sea of Tranquility before the throne of God within us: to the New Jerusalem whose replica is in the human heart.

The conquest of all sidereal space is before man, but this is only a faint and far-off image of what awaits him when, through the conquest of himself and an ever-increasing awareness of his divine origin and destiny, he emerges “from the man-kingdom into the God-kingdom.” Yet man’s true evolution is not on a horizontal plane at the mercy of time, but an ascension from grace to grace into the many mansions of the Christ-consciousness; and the point of departure is humility. That is why the recorded dialogue with God of a little, somewhat sentimental French woman born in the last century is of more value to us in our creative outreach than the record of the three dauntless men who reached the moon in 1969.

Man has spent his best efforts in the release of the atom in the mineral kingdom, but this is only a puny achievement compared with the release of the atomic energy of his own soul: the God-Power as both revealed and hidden in the pages of this volume.

In this book, there are hints of knowledge that will be better understood tomorrow than today. There are moments of heartbreaking beauty for the attentive reader. But he must listen to the voice, to the silence too; for “our estranged faces” are ever wont to “miss the many splendor’d thing.” And it is not literary French that I have been translating; it is the language of the mystics in a French woman’s mother tongue, so treacherously simple, of such utter limpidity, that inattentive minds may miss the unfathomable depths that put it beyond all suspicion of personal invention.

The words of Our Lord? Whatever the reader may or may not believe concerning the voice that speaks to Gabrielle Bossis in these words too shockingly tender, too anti-traditional for some good Christians for whom orthodoxy is still strictly bound to the old

order of things, no one fully aware of God as the great lover and who has therefore had a deep, personal experience of His action in his life will doubt the truth of what the historian Daniel Rops wrote in his preface to *Lui et moi*: “. . . here we breathe the sweet fragrance of Christ.”

The fact that this French woman heard, or thought she heard a voice, a voice that smiled, and pleaded more persuasively and poignantly than the nightingale in the woods beyond her garden, should not be a reason for us to doubt the authenticity of the experience. If we can admit that Christ does speak in the soul, can we deny the possibility of a voice or at least of the impression of a voice? Gabrielle herself had doubts. The reply to one of them reveals her own suspicions: “And if these words do come from your own human nature, didn’t I create that nature?” As Daniel Rops pointed out: “. . . truly what better answer?” Indeed, what better answer from the one who is transcendence and immanence?

“Sometimes you doubt that it is I speaking to you,” says the voice on another occasion, “it all seems so simple, so like yourself. But aren’t we one?” . . . “The Spirit also adopts the language of the little ones.” Surely it is a mark of the divine simplicity that the uncreated light should transfigure the soul as sunlight does a stained glass window—in terms of the colors presented to its rays?

“The language of the little ones.” It is not everyone who can comprehend the doctrine of the elaboration of the Mystical Body of Christ. But even the smallest child of God can understand the science of love, can drink from the clear flowing fountain of the same truth in this brief dialogue:

“I was giving Him a sacrifice,” wrote Gabrielle Bossis, “and I said, ‘It’s a flower that I’m pinning to your robe.’”

The voice: “Give Me these flowers often. (*Smiling*). It’s as though you added to My beauty. You see, when you become more beautiful, I become more beautiful. Oh! My little child, how *one* we are!”

“Fall in love with Me over and over again,” says the voice. And I believe that divine love in all its seductive beauty would be irresistible were we for one fleeting moment to get a clear picture of the infinitely tender Father-Mother God, who would ransack the whole of His beautiful universe to find us a needed joy or love; or would suffer our suffering of untold fears and pains and losses to bring us the joy imperishable; to satisfy the craving of our truer, deeper selves, using our very wounds to open out a way “whence the imprisoned splendor may escape.”

It is because we lose sight of the immensely tender heart of the God-Man—this Christ who is exuberance of life, this Christ described as “the most humanly human of all men,” that we complicate the spiritual life. Instead of it being, as it was for Gabrielle Bossis, a voyage of discovery of a love surpassing all human loves, to many it has become what Father McCorry described as “a grim business.”

A fresh restatement, yet that is our crying need. New terms for the unknowable that we may know and love Him more and better, terms that will “stab the spirit broad awake.” Yet it is not a case of discovering something new, but of rediscovering something old, of freeing ourselves from the shackles of an outworn religious terminology that time and travesty have rendered worse than inadequate, and from all that man has done in the name of religion to disfigure the adorable face of the Father. It is a case of rediscovering the Word made flesh in the sacrament of man himself. Above all it is a case of rediscovering the divine tenderness.

“Come to this wellspring of My love,” says the voice, “come draw living waters of constant union and levitating joy.”

Here in the pages of this book, which Daniel Rops classed among “the most authentic masterpieces of spiritual literature,” is the perfect answer to our needs in this age when we are breaking through the artificial forms of theology to a deeper knowledge of the Divine

being, to a new awareness of the ever-living Person of Christ and all the vastly unexplored possibilities of our atonement with Him.

Theology is the science of religion, but it is a far cry from the knowledge we gain from such science to that of faith's *knowing*.

"I am God," said the Indian disciple of Ramana to Lanza del Vasto, "but I do not know it."

"Since you do not know it," replied Lanza del Vasto, "why do you say that you are God?"

"I know it by hearsay," replied the disciple, "I know it in words; I believe it, but I do not know it as he knows it."²

People of deep faith have always heard the music of eternity beyond the mathematics of theology, but what has only kindled fires of love in the pure in heart has often proved to be a crematorium for the spiritually dead. There is a perennial and universal truth in the statement of the Upanishads, "All philosophical doctrines, all theses and principles paralyze the mind and lead it away from the profound truth."

The profound truth . . . "This gospel of an unchanging world beyond our senses. We Christians have always known about it," writes Lanza del Vasto, "but it has remained among us so transcendent, so strangely contrary to all that we have learned from the world and from men, that we did not know what to make of it; we imprisoned it between church walls and in the shadowy places of the heart." How true this is; we have always kept our treasures in earthen vessels; but it is overflowing, as it has always overflowed. For love is vehement.

"I am in everything and I am all love," says the voice. "Be imbued with this thought."

It has been a thrilling adventure to translate *Lui et moi*, to listen to the still small voice above the rumors of our restless and rapidly

2. *Le Pelerinage aux Sources*, Lanza del Vasto.

changing world, above the babel of voices in a church in a state of glorious but tumultuous transition. But I needed an education for this work; there was much to learn, much to unlearn. Above all I had to learn to exchange any ludicrous sense of responsibility for what has aptly been called “response-ability.” This done, every thread for the weaving came to me unsought.

One great source of insight and inspiration to me, one that prepared me for the full joy and import of parts of this dialogue was the whole beautiful science and philosophy of light, knowledge concerning the cosmic rays and particularly the seven major color rays or the rainbow. From this I saw how the Light of lights ensouling matter has given an esoteric as well as an exoteric meaning to all cosmic phenomena. For I not only came across a wealth of information of scientific interest but a beautiful illuminated version of the communion of saints and one more striking illustration of the divine unity and simplicity revealing facet after facet of the Christ-Prism of truth.*

The reader will easily see these references to the rays. He may not, however, be aware of the profound metaphysical significance

* This and the following paragraph could lead to confusion in the reader's mind, the rainbow being now the symbol used by the New Age movement. Evelyn Brown, the translator of *He and I*, wrote this preface in 1968, at a time when the New Age was not as widespread as it is today. Besides, she was not familiar with this movement and has always been a fervent and orthodox Catholic.

Consequently, Evelyn Brown's remarks—like the content of the book in general—were directly in the line with Christian theology, that of Saint Paul especially. The spirit, the conscience, and the energy radiating from these pages are those of the Risen Christ of whom the cosmos is now the “seamless tunic.”

When the expression “the coming of a new age of enlightenment” is mentioned here, it must be understood as follows: the conscience of Jesus radiating its light on the New Jerusalem, of which the human heart is the replica, is, for the Christian reader, an allusion to Pentecost, the “new age” of the Spirit who makes everything new. When the author of the preface wrote these lines, she certainly did not wish to confuse divine transcendence, his Providence in the world, and his presence through participation in the human heart. Being an authentic Christian, she believed that the pantheistic vision of the New Age is miles away from the Christian theology of creation.

of this revival we see today in the higher consciousness of the human race of the rainbow bridge. Radiant symbol of the dawn of a new age of enlightenment to which man is again called to rise, it shines like the secret smile of God above the present deluge of tribulation and unfaith in which our planet is seemingly submerged. And if we delve deep into its meaning, we will discover the dove with the olive leaf—harbinger of “the new heavens and the new earth which He has promised us, and in which nothing but good shall live.”³

“Everything in nature is only an image and a sacrament,” says the voice.

Oh, everything is a sacrament, an outward and visible sign of an inward, invisible grace, and the entire universe is of the same authentic weave—the resplendent aura, the colorful seamless robe of the Christ of the Cosmos. To understand this is to breathe freely in our faith. It is to awaken to the voice when It says, “Enter more gaily into your Savior-God.” It is to have that “more saved expression” that Nietzsche sought in vain among the Christians he knew.

Is it not because, as Teilhard de Chardin has pointed out, we have been “incapable of grasping the all,” of seeing matter in “its sacred mystery and incomparable majesty” that only too often we have unconsciously worshiped a God made in our own small and trivial image? But when we realize fully that even “heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him”⁴ we shall believe more readily in His imprisonment in the tabernacles of our altars. For it is only when we recognize how great He is in the great things that we see “how immense He is in the very little ones.” When we have gathered up the fragments of the broken bread of mankind’s entire spiritual heritage that nothing be lost; when we find that we feed upon Christ in

3. 2 Peter 3:13.

4. 2 Chronicles 6:18.

the vast universe, we shall feed upon Him with more fervor and joy in the Holy Eucharist. When we have learned to marvel at the seven sacraments of the rainbow and the miracle of the water turned into wine in the flowers of our fields, we shall become more naturally supernatural and accept the mysteries of our faith as simply as a child accepts love. “For what is a miracle,” says the voice, “but a token of love’s simplicity.”

This is a book of a Door, of doors, of many doors. I was tempted to open them for you; I have even left the door to the rainbow ajar, but I realize that no one can open these doors for another. Noah could never have seen the rainbow if it had not already been in his mind and heart. For “in Thy light shall we see light . . .”⁵

“As you read these words that I have spoken to you,” said the voice, “go deeper, ever deeper into their profound meaning.”

It has been my joyous duty as well as an unspeakable privilege to do this. But it is not easy to translate a document of this kind from French, a language so transparent, so full of light that it seems to have been created expressly as the language of the Spirit. It is important to me therefore to let my readers know how scrupulously careful I have been in this work. All passages touching on subtle points of doctrine as well as liberties I should normally take quite happily have been submitted to one or more bilingual theologian. With their approval, here and there, when even the best possible translation failed to convey the full charm or impact of the words, I have resorted to a scriptural word or phrase. I have also submitted for their approbation all important decisions concerning the vocabulary, especially the replacing of traditional terms by others simpler, more modern, and closer to their pristine meaning.

While the work of condensing was infinitely more painful than would be the condensation of a Beethoven symphony, for as the

5. Psalms 36:9.

voice says, “Love never repeats”: all anxiety was removed from this too by the sure knowledge that a Mind was thinking me.

“Take care in setting down My words,” says the voice, “so that what springs from My heart may be light and joy easy to capture. . . .” Having done this, I can only hope and trust that the reader may find what I have found in these pages—what the voice describes as “a never-ending beginning again of the joy of hearing Me.”

E.M.B.

Biographical Sketch of Gabrielle Bossis

The youngest child of a family of four children, Gabrielle Bossis was born in Nantes, France, in 1874.

From an extremely shy, fearful, and tearful little girl, more often found by herself in corners than playing with other children, she grew up into a graceful, happy, high-spirited young girl, very socially inclined, though then, as from her childhood, possessed of a secret yearning for God and the things of the spirit, which led to frequent contemplation.

As her father belonged to the wealthy middle class, there was no need for Gabrielle to earn her living. Her early years passed peacefully in her home at Nantes or at her family's summer residence in Fresne on the Loire River. Yet she was always very active. She obtained a degree for nursing, helped out in various parish projects, embroidered church ornaments for missions, and practiced the fine arts of the day: music, painting, illuminating, and sculpture, while still finding time for her favorite sports, horse riding, dancing, and many social activities.

When the hidden treasure of her unusual inner life came to the notice of the Franciscan priest who was directing her, he felt convinced that she had a vocation for the convent and brought pressure to bear to induce her to become a nun. But Gabrielle resisted his suggestion with great determination, feeling led by an interior guidance more impelling than this, to remain in the world. No doubt it

was this same guidance and the supreme attraction of a love surpassing all human loves that led to her refusal of the many proposals of marriage that came to her.

Quite late in life she discovered that she had another talent—that of writing the kind of entertaining and thoroughly moral comedies so much in demand by church clubs, a task “not so easy as one imagines,” as Daniel Rops commented. Her first play, written for a club in Anjou, in which she acted the principal part, was such a success that before long her name became known throughout France and even in far distant countries. From this time on, right up until within two years before her death, she traveled extensively, producing her own plays and continuing to act the principal role. Those who remember her still remark on her extraordinary youth of mind and body, the golden hair that resisted the touch of time well on into her later years, the infectious laughter, and her unfailing charm.

On very rare occasions in her early life, Gabrielle had been surprised by a mysterious voice which she felt with awe, though sometimes with anxious questionings, to be the voice of Christ. It was only at the age of sixty-two, however, while traveling to Canada on the *Ile de France*, that this touching dialogue with the inner voice began in earnest, continuing until two weeks before her death on June 9, 1950.

The journal that she kept of her tour through Canada right to the Rocky Mountains is an extraordinary revelation of the double role she was called upon to play on life's stage—that of a contemplative and an exceptionally active woman exposed to all the hurly burly of life in the world. For the most part this document might be the travelogue of any happy, charming woman, much younger than she, possessed of a keen sense of humor, very much alive to every aspect of life around her, and delicately sensitive to beauty. It is all the more astonishing for the reader to come across those sudden interruptions when the voice recalls her to His ever-present Presence in words that touch the very

depths and heights of mystical experience, words so simple yet so august as to recall those lines from the Song of Moses: "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distill as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb and as the showers upon the grass."

At the instigation of the voice the travelogue ends with the Canadian tour. From there on, however, we can still trace her wandering footsteps by the colorful locations recorded with the sayings: Carthage, Tunis, Algiers, Constantine, and numerous places in France, Italy, and other parts of Europe. Most of the time the only retreat she had for contemplation was the inner temple of her soul, for it was on airplanes, trains, buses, on the metro during rush hour in Paris, on the busy streets of great cities, even on the stage in the midst of a performance that the voice spoke to her.

From the Word within her Gabrielle learned of her mission: to record and publish what she heard so that people might know that the life of intimacy with Christ was not reserved for those in cloisters but for every man, woman, and child no matter what his state in life might be. As the first volume of the carefully recorded sayings of *Lui et moi* was published anonymously in 1948, she lived to see its phenomenal distribution. No one guessed at the authorship and when, subsequent to her death and at the ever-increasing demand for more of her notes, a second volume prefaced by Daniel Rops revealed her identity, so well had she hidden her secret that her friends were utterly astonished. Three more volumes followed at the request of grateful and enthusiastic readers; then a sixth volume giving her biography, and at still further request, a seventh with more of the dialogue. "This little book will go to the ends of the earth," said the voice. And in recent years, more than ever we are seeing the fulfillment of these words as translation after translation is being published and distributed far beyond the boundaries of Europe.

Thomas a Kempis once said that those who travel a great deal rarely become holy, and Our Lord Himself said that it was easier for

a camel to go through the needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Yet Gabrielle traveled widely and was very wealthy. The voice had a remedy for both situations: "Don't talk about your travels any more; they are for Me," It said. And when she thought of giving some embroidered cloths for the altar: "Don't buy them; make them with your own hands."

Until the illness that carried her off, Gabrielle's health was impeccable. Yet when death came, she welcomed it as she had welcomed life—with the same high-hearted love and joy. "My heart is getting weaker every day," she wrote on May 9, 1950. "I have taken neither food nor liquid for three days. So I shall be leaving soon. Rejoice with me. Magnificat . . . and there will be no more partings."

When the moment of the "great Meeting" drew near on June 9, at the beginning of the octave of Corpus Christi, was she able, I wonder, to remember those prophetic words spoken to her by the voice on Corpus Christi just one year previously: "The last altar of repose, you know, is in heaven"?

As her testament she left us "the peaceable record of heaven." Heaven—from the Greek word *ouranos* or *expansion*—not for tomorrow in some far off Elysian field, but an eternal now, here as hereafter, by our at-onement with Him in the Christ-consciousness.

Gabrielle Bossis's name will never go down in history for anything she accomplished, but what was accomplished in her flows and will go on flowing to us when history has been lost in eternity. She was no one and she was everyone, for in her self-effacement and receptivity she became the little wind instrument through whom the voice speaks to each one of the readers of *He and I*. For we feel not so much that we are reading as that we are being read, watched, followed.

"*Each soul is My favorite,*" says the voice . . . "I choose some only to reach the others."

PART ONE



“Be assured by My loving-kindness that as others are blessed by these words, your cup of joy will overflow in the same proportion. Every reader too will receive the same measure of grace. And all will become members of one united family: the family of My intimate friends.”

— He and I

✧ 1936 ✧

August 22—*Aboard ship. During a concert of classical music I was offering Him garlands of sounds and all the fragrance flowing from them. Very tenderly He said to me as once before:*

“My little girl . . .”

August 23—*The piano was being used as an altar, and I was thinking of the seagulls and airplanes that sometimes alighted on the great liners.*

“This time it is the Christ.”

As the ship was rolling: “You know that everything is for You; so I don’t say so.”

“You must tell Me all the same because I love to hear it. Tell Me often. When you know that someone loves you it makes you happy when he tells you so.”

September 24—*Saint-Brieux, Canada.*

The chapel is near my room, and every time I pass by I smile at Him.

“Smile at everyone. I’ll make your smile a blessing to others.”

October 24—*Montreal. (In such a gentle voice.)*

“When you don’t go deep into the inner stillness you deprive Me.”

October 25—*Feast of Christ the King.*

This morning at Mass, Father Boulrier consecrated me to God, placing my profession of faith in the paten under the Host.

“Take care of My love. There isn’t an orphan more forsaken than I.”

November 3—*At Mass on the liner taking me back to France.*

“Believe that in My blood there is infinite power to purify.”

December—*In France, on the street.*

“I’m walking beside You.”

(Gently) “But you don’t talk to Me very much . . .”

December 14—“Try to be My smile and My kind voice for everybody . . .”

December 17—“Let us begin heaven. Moment by moment, love Me while I’m loving you.”

One evening.

“Wherever you find perfect beauty and perfect charm, you find Me.”

December 19—“Sometimes you doubt that it is I speaking to you. It all seems so simple, so like yourself. But aren’t we one?”

December 21—*As I was asking Him to give me and mine all the spiritual blessings that so many people refuse, He answered:*

“My blessings are given according to measure, but I am rich enough to give you still others. Am I not the infinite one? Be simple with Me, just as you are with your own family.”

December 24—“Be hard on yourself and gentle with others.”

December 25—“Hide in Me. Let your suffering feed the world. In this way you will be My bride.”

December 26—“Your imagination? It’s the house dog that wanders here, there, and everywhere. Is one severe with a dog that roams about? Just act as if you had never strayed away.”

December 28—“When you love Me, you purify yourself. Be my grace for everyone.”

“I transform your prayers into My prayers, but if you don’t pray . . . Can I make a plant that you haven’t sown bear blossoms?”

✧ 1937 ✧

January 1—“Here is your keynote for the year: Purely and simply.”

January 2—“Offer me each little moment as it passes. This will be enough, because then your whole year will be for Me.”

January 5—“Express your hope in Me. Come out of yourself. Enter into Me.”

February 7—“Can you doubt My love?”

February 12—“Of course . . . I know all your faults and failings because you are My little girl. If you only knew how touched I am by little things . . .”

February 14—*In a car.*

“You saw My kindness in the face of that young girl? Be like that always. If My followers were good to one another, the face of the world would be transformed.”

“Your longing to love—this is love . . .”

“In your soul there is a door that leads to the contemplation of God. But you must open it.”

February 17—“Don’t fail to give Me your sufferings. They help sinners.”

February 19—*Chateau C. . . .*

“You can’t come to receive Me for these three days that you are spending so far from any church. But I’ll meet you. Every morning when you awaken I’ll have an appointment with you.”

The next morning I was going to forget the rendezvous, when a little golden-crested wren perched on my window sill, and sang with such piercing insistence that I suddenly remembered.

March 1—*In the Rhone Valley. At the station.*

“You’re watching the direction in which the train will come. That’s the way My eyes are fixed on you, waiting for you to come to Me.”

In the train. “Always keep busy. You will honor Me in My constant work for your salvation.”

Watching the flooded Loire River.

“Always be serene and calm. The river reflects the sky only when it is calm.”

March 3—*In the train.*

“My sunsets are also My love. So few of My children look at them to praise Me . . . and yet My love is there.”

“If you didn’t have little trials, how could I give you big rewards?”

“I am the one who loves the most.”

In the evening. “Nothing is small for Me.”

Mid-Lent—*During the procession I went into a church to console Him. To my surprise, the organ was playing in the empty naves. Some musician had evidently profited by this solitude to practice. It was like an ineffably solemn ceremony, and He said simply:*

“I was waiting for you.”

“See Me in others. This will help you to be more humble.”

March 6—*Le Havre.*

As proof of the truth of His word in me, in the confessional He allowed me to hear His very words from the lips of Father A . . . de Saint-Francois:

“Begin heaven. Live with Him just as you do with your family. See Christ in others.”

March 9—*I was thinking of leaving at the Elevation. (In a tender voice) “Don’t go so quickly. I couldn’t give you all My grace.”*

March 10—*Crossing the Saint-Nicolas, Nantes.*

“I am no longer on earth, so take My place.”

March 15—*After the play at Brest I was thinking: ‘If circumstances had led me to film acting, my fame . . .’ Immediately, he interrupted me:*

“I’m keeping you for Me.”

March 16—*Notre Dame Church.*

“Be kind. Take the first step toward your neighbor, tenderly.”

“And if what you write makes only one soul stop and think!”

In the train. “Don’t say ‘Glory to the Father and to the Son’ in such a vague way, but wish for this glory in this and that action of yours.”

March 18—*In the Puy-de-Dôme, I was aching under the weight of my baggage after a night of jostling in the train, and as I climbed the steps of the metro I said, “I’m carrying my cross with You, but You had someone to help You.” And immediately a man walking behind me relieved me of my suitcase.*

March 20—*At the women’s detention hospital.*

“Be more kind and good than usual. The bride resembles her bridegroom . . . Listen to them. It does them good to talk and to have someone listen.”

Assisi.—*While someone was saying grace before our meal, I was very absentminded.*

“You think a blessing is a small thing? To Me it’s very important.”

Rome.—*Easter. The Minerva Church.*

I was thanking Him for His suffering.

“Never will your thanks be filled with as much love and joy as I had in suffering to save you.”

Taormina, Sicily.

I was watching the women who had husbands to help them in their little difficulties as they traveled.

“But since I am with you!”

March 23—*Genoa.*

Surrounded by people speaking in foreign languages.

“This week be one with Me in My silences.”

March 30—*Palermo.*

“You remember when you were little, you said to Me: ‘Incline my heart, O Lord, to the words of Your mouth.’”

“Listen and I’ll speak to you. Would you like to be My confidante?”

From Palermo to Monreale.

“There is more of Me in you than you.”

In the Kairouan-to-Sousse bus.

“You remember when you were little, I said to you, ‘Tell Me what you did today.’ But you didn’t believe that it was My voice.”

April 8—*Sousse.*

“Return good for evil. Don’t lose a single opportunity.”

April 9—*Tunis.*

“I’ll be your smile today.”

“Don’t get the idea that a saint is a saint at every moment. But there is always My grace.”

Gran. Convent of the Trinitarian Sisters. In my cell under the stairs.

“You must aim at perfection. But the perfection of your nature. This is the way you will please Me.”

And he made me understand that the work of perfection of one soul is not the same as that of another.