

(English translation)

Rocca di Papa, December 8, 1971

Chiara to the Italian focolarini:

### “Jesus forsaken” (Part II)

He drew us to himself; we discovered him everywhere: in every physical moral or spiritual pain. They were shadows of his great suffering.

Yes, because Jesus forsaken is the *image* of the mute person. He can no longer speak; he does not know what to say except "*et nescivi*": “and I did not understand” (Ps 73/72:22).

He is the image of the blind; he does not see.

Of the deaf; he cannot hear.

He is the one who, exhausted, laments.

He seems on the edge of despair.

He is the one who is starved, starved for union with God.

He is the image of the disillusioned, of failure, of those betrayed.

He is fearful, bewildered.

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Jesus forsaken is darkness, melancholy, conflict, the image of all that is strange, indefinable, bordering on the monstrous, because he is a God who cries for help! He is the lonely one, the derelict. He appears useless, rejected, in shock.

Then we saw him in every neighbor who was suffering.

Approaching those who resembled him – and all were an expression of his pain – *we spoke to them* of Jesus forsaken. For all who recognized their similarity to him and accepted a share in his fate, this is how he turned out to be: speech for the mute, the answer for the ignorant, light for the blind, a voice for the deaf, rest for the weary, hope for the despairing, satisfaction for the hungry, reality for the deceived, fidelity for the betrayed, victory for the failure, daring for the timid, joy for the sorrowful, certainty for the uncertain, normality for the strange, company for the lonely, unity for the separated, that which is uniquely useful for the useless. The rejected felt chosen. Jesus forsaken was balance for the shocked, peace for the restless, a home for the evicted, and reunion for the outcast.

Because of him, people were transformed, and the senselessness of suffering acquired meaning.

We loved Jesus forsaken especially in sinners.

He is like an inclined plane to all human beings, even the most wretched.

Since he was abandoned by all, we thought that anyone in the world can say: he belongs to me, to us. To me, because no one wants him; he is rejected by the world and by heaven.

Jesus forsaken truly appeared as the precious pearl of great price for all people who, after all, are all sinners.

By making himself a curse, sin<sup>1</sup> though not a sinner, for the sake of all of us, he was the point of contact for every human being.

Every personal suffering also appeared to us as a countenance of Jesus forsaken to be loved and wanted in order to be with him and like him, so that through the death of ourselves loved and

<sup>1</sup> . “... by becoming a curse for us” (Gal 3:13) “For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor 5:21).

desired, he might give life to us and to many others.

He had cried out a "why" to which no one answered so that we might have the answer to all our questions.

The problem of human existence and therefore of our lives, was suffering. Whatever form it would take, however terrible it would be, we knew that Jesus had taken it upon himself.

Upon entering this path of unity we had chosen him alone. In a burst of love we had decided to suffer with him and like him. Well then, we have experienced that God, who is nothing but love, cannot be outdone in generosity, and through a divine *alchemy* he transforms pain into love.

We realized that as soon as we were glad to endure any pain – so as to be like him – and we continued to love him by doing God's will, the next moment, the pain, if it was spiritual, went away and, if physical, became a yoke that was light.

Our pure love, that is, our gladness to suffer, transformed any pain we encountered into love. In a certain sense, suffering was divinized as though Jesus' divinization of suffering, if we dare say so, continued in us.

After every meeting with Jesus forsaken, and we had loved him, we found God in a new way, more face to face, *in a unity that was more complete*. The fruits of the Spirit, light and joy, returned, and so did our peace – that special peace Jesus promised, and for which we felt it necessary to turn all torments, anguish, agonies of the soul, disturbances and temptations into an occasion to love God.

Moreover, Jesus forsaken seemed to us to be the expression of all loves.

He is *mother*: Could that cry, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" not be the labor pains of the divine birth of all of us human beings as children of God?

Von Balthasar says: "It is the labor pains of God's children."

Jesus forsaken is also *brother*, because in his passion he makes us all his brothers and sisters on a supernatural level

He is the *spouse* of our soul, because he is the principle of unity. He unifies; he fuses us into one.

He is *father*, for he brings about the new creation.

We also recognized any *painful occurrence* as a countenance of his.

For instance, whenever someone who used to help us was no longer present, we felt a little like Jesus who was without his Father's support; he who had said, "I am not alone, because the Father is with me" (Jn 16:32).

In moments like these, Jesus forsaken was our only support. We were happy to become a little like him, and he instilled new strength into us.

But Jesus Forsaken is not only our support, he also reminds us and is the image of all that is unforeseen or long-awaited, of accidents, surprises, doubts, accusations, condemnation, investigation, exile, excommunication, of being orphaned, widowed, divorced, of tragedy, drama, natural disaster, catastrophe.

In the vale of tears that this earth is, we will never finish discovering him.

Jesus forsaken was also the one who recomposed unity between us, any time it was weakened.

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In his testament Jesus had said: "With me in them and you in me, may they be so perfected in unity" (Jn 17:23). If Jesus was *in me*, if Jesus was in *the other*, and if Jesus was in all, at that moment we were perfected in unity.

But, I repeat, in order for Jesus to be in us we had to love Jesus forsaken in all the pains, voids, failures and sorrows of life.

This union filled us with God, so that when we met one another, we recognized ourselves

in one another because it was God in me and God in the other person and God in everyone. And only then did we feel that we were brothers or sisters.

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Jesus forsaken is the model of those who *love* God with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their strength, the model of those who are “in love” with God. Jesus forsaken loves God, in fact, at the very moment when God forsakes him.

Jesus forsaken is the model for those who *must build unity* with others. I cannot enter into another spirit if I am rich of my own. To love others I must constantly make myself so poor in spirit that I possess nothing but love. Love is empty of itself. Jesus forsaken is the perfect model of one who is poor in spirit. He is so poor that he has not even God, so to speak. He does not feel God’s presence.

Jesus forsaken is the model of *renunciation* and of *mortification*. He is not only mortified in every external sense because he is crucified, but mortified also in his soul. In his soul he renounces even what is most dear to him: his union with God. It is the renunciation of self of one who is God-Man.

He is the perfect model for those who wish to *lose their souls* in God; a model for persons, for instance, who must renounce not only their ideas but also their divine inspirations, in order to submit them to their superiors.

He is therefore the model of true unity with the one who represents God for us. As Jesus and the Father are one, so every person must be one with his or her own superior.

Jesus forsaken is the one who provides light to those who *hope against all hope*.

He is the model for those who *trust*. “Be confident,” he said, “I have conquered the world!” (Jn 16:33). In fact, nobody has had greater trust than he; forsaken by God, he trusted in God; forsaken by Love, he entrusted himself to Love.

Jesus forsaken is the model for those who wish to give *glory to God*. In his forsakenness annulling himself completely, he says God is all.

Jesus forsaken is the model of “the dead who die in the Lord” (Rev 14:13). He is mystically dead and in that state dies also physically in God. The Book of Revelations says: “Their good [works] go with them” (14:13). Jesus’ work was to give the Father many children, giving them new birth with his own life.

If we were to put into light *each exhortation* Jesus gave in the Gospels we would see that he lived all of them at the moment of his forsakenness.

Jesus forsaken relives in himself, at that instant, the words: “Anyone who comes to me without hating father, mother... and his own life too” (cf. Lk 14:26).

The Gospel says: “Unless the grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (Jn 12:24). It says: “dies.” Jesus forsaken is truly the figure of the grain of wheat that dies. But that grain of wheat does not remain alone because it bears the fruit of the People of God, the Church.

Jesus forsaken can apply all the *beatitudes* to himself. I’ll leave this for you to do, and you will see that it is true

The virtues are uniquely resplendent in Jesus forsaken: fortitude, patience, temperance, perseverance, justice, magnanimity....

In his forsakenness Jesus seems to be nothing but a man, and so never had he been as *close to us human beings* as in that moment and never, therefore, had he loved so much. At the same time, never had he been *so close to the Father*;<sup>2</sup> it is out of love for him that he dies in that way.

<sup>2</sup> . “To Catherine of Siena, after a grave temptation overcome with a supreme effort of will, Jesus crucified appeared and said: ‘My daughter Catherine, do you see how much I suffered for you? So do not be sorry to suffer for me.’ But she said, ‘My Lord, where were you when my heart was troubled with such temptations?’ And the Lord, ‘I was in your heart.’” (G. Joergensen, Santa Caterina da Siena [Turin, 1941], p. 49).

If “the Law and the Prophets” (Mt 7:12) consist in love of God and love of neighbor, Jesus here fulfilled completely *every desire and commandment* of God. Jesus forsaken is therefore the *direct path* to holiness, because he brings about unity with the Holy One.

So it was enough for us to look to him, to live like him in every moment, and we would have done everything.

We did this. Everything was simplified.

We strove to live the nothingness of ourselves so that he could live in us, and the nothingness of ourselves so that he might triumph among us as well.

On the background of this nothingness, when receiving holy communion, loved and rediscovered as a bond of unity, we asked Jesus, in the way known to him, to *unite* our souls.

And through a special grace we experienced what it means to be a *living cell* of Christ’s mystical Body. It meant being Jesus, and as him to be in the bosom of the Father. And “Abba Father!” (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6) sprang to our lips.

Religion, at this moment, appeared new to us. It now meant to put ourselves alongside Jesus, our brother, in loving the Father.

It was the beginning of an especially luminous period. Among other things, it seemed that God wanted to give us an intuition of some *plan of his* for our Movement.

We also understood better *many truths* of the faith, particularly who Jesus forsaken was for humanity and for creation – he who recapitulated all things in himself.

Our experience was so powerful, it made us think life would always be like that: light and heaven. But what followed instead was the reality of everyday life.

It was a rude awakening, so to speak, to find ourselves back on earth. Only Jesus forsaken gave us the strength to carry on living: Jesus forsaken, whom we found present in the world we had to love – a world which is what it is – namely, not heaven. In making a second and more conscious choice of the One who had called us to follow him, the now well-known decision sprang from my soul:

I have only one Spouse on earth:  
Jesus forsaken.  
I have no God but him.  
In him is the whole of paradise with the Trinity  
and the whole of the earth with humanity.  
Therefore what is *his* is mine and nothing else.  
And *his* is universal suffering, and therefore mine.  
I will go through the world  
seeking it in every instant of my life.  
What hurts me is *mine*.  
Mine the suffering that grazes me in the present.  
Mine the suffering of the souls beside me  
(that is my Jesus).  
*Mine* all that is not peace, not joy, not beautiful,  
not lovable, not serene,  
in a word, what is not paradise.  
Because I too have *my* paradise,  
but it is that in my Spouse’s heart.  
I know no other.  
So it will be for the years I have left:  
athirst for suffering, anguish, despair,

sorrow, exile, forsakenness, torment –  
for all that is him.

In this way

*I will dry up* the waters of tribulation  
in many hearts nearby  
and, through communion  
with my almighty Spouse,  
in many faraway.

I shall pass as a fire  
that consumes all that must fall  
and *leaves standing only* the Truth.

But it is necessary to be *like* him:  
to be him in the present moment of life.  
(Applause)