

Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque

1647 - 1690

PARADISE

Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, the visionary mystic known for her visions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, had an experience of Paradise, as she herself recounts: “One time that I let myself go in a rush of vanity speaking about myself, my God, how many tears and how many wailings this misdeed caused me! In the moment we were left alone, He reprimanded me in this way with a severe look on His face: ‘What have you, dust and ashes, to be able to glorify yourself, seeing as how you have nothing of your own if not nothingness and misery, that you must never lose sight of, in this same way – you yourself can never exit from the abyss of your own nothingness? And to do in a way so that the greatness of my gifts does not make you forget who you are, I want to put in front of your eyes the picture.’ And immediately He showed me that horrendous picture, where there was a summary of that which I am. This surprised me greatly, and it provoked in me much disgust that, if He had not held me up, I would have fainted from the grief. I was not able to understand the excess of such a great goodness and mercy, which had not yet made me plunge into Hell and was able to support me, while I was not able to support myself. And

this was the torture through which He punished in me the slightest acts of vain smugness, thereby constraining me to say to Him: ‘Oh my God! Woe is me! Let me die or hide this picture from me, because I cannot live seeing it’.... And how much He made me suffer on one All Saints’ Day, in which it was said to me in an intelligible way: ‘Nothing filthy in innocence, nothing is lost in Strength, nothing occurs in that blessed sojourn, All is consumed in love.’ The explanations given with regard to these words, kept me busy for a long time. ‘Nothing filthy in innocence,’ that is – I could not have any blemish on my soul or in my heart. ‘Nothing is lost in Strength’ namely – I had to give everything and abandon everything to Him, who was Strength itself; because in giving Him everything, one loses nothing. Insofar as the other two verses, they were referring to Paradise, there where nothing occurs, because all is eternal and there we are consumed in love. And since in that same instant it was shown to me a small taste of this glory, my God, in which the enthusiasm of all that joy and desire carried me away! I was in retreat and passed the entire day immersed in these inexplicable pleasures, of which it



seemed to me that nothing else could be done but to quickly go out and enjoy them. But the other words made me understand that I was quite far from the truth. Here they are: ‘In vain your heart sighs, to enter there as you believe. It is necessary only to aspire to go there, through the way of the Cross.’ After which I was shown how much I needed to suffer in my life and my whole body was shaken by a quiver, although at the time I did not understand it was because of that picture, as I then understood it for the outcomes that were derived in me.”

