

## Description of Hell by Mystical Souls

- 1- Josefa Menendez, « *Un appel à l'amour* », Éditions de l'Apostolat de la Prière, Toulouse, France, 1938, 729 pages.
- 2- Père Marie-Eugène de l'Enfant-Jésus, « *Je veux voir Dieu* », Éditions du Carmel, 84210 Venasque, France, 1998, 1158 pages.
- 3- Sœur Faustine, « *Petit journal de Sœur Faustine* », Éditions Jules Hovine, France, 1985, 704 pages.
- 4- Sœur Bèghe, « *Dieu et les Hommes* », Éditions Résiac, France, 1992, 107 pages.

### Description of Hell by Josefa Menendez (1890-1923)

#### In « *A Call to Love* », page 243-245

« In the night of Wednesday to Thursday, march 16, towards ten o'clock, she writes, I began to hear, as in the last days, a confused noise of cries and chains. I got up, dressed and trembling with fright, I knelt down near my bed. The uproar was approaching. I left the dormitory, not knowing what to do, I went to the cell of our Blessed Mother, and then I returned to the dormitory. The same terrifying sounds were all around me. Suddenly, I saw the devil in front of me, he shouted: « Tie her feet ... bind her hands...»

« Instantly, I lost sight of where I was and I felt myself tightly bound and being dragged away. Other voices roared: « It is no good to bind her feet; it is her heart that you must bind ! »

« And the devil answered, it does not belong to me ! »

« Then I was dragged along a very dark and long passage, and on all sides resounded terrible cries. On opposite sides of the walls of this narrow corridor were niches out of which poured smoke, though with very little flame, and which emitted an intolerable stench. From these recesses came blaspheming voices, uttering impure words. Some cursed their bodies, others their parents. Others reproached themselves with having refused grace, and not avoided what they knew to be sinful. Finally, it was a medley of confused screams of rage and despair.

«... I was dragged through that kind of endless corridor. Then they gave me a violent blow, which doubled me in two, and forced me into one of the niches. I felt as if I were being pressed between two burning planks and pierced through and through with scorching needle points. In front of me, beside me, souls were blaspheming and cursing me. What caused me most suffering ... And with which no torment can be compared, was the anguish of my soul to find myself separated from God...

« It seemed to me that I spent long years in that hell, continue the notes, and yet it lasted only six or seven hours... Suddenly I was withdrawn violently and found myself in an obscure place where the devil, having struck me, disappeared and left me free ... How can I describe what I felt in my soul when I realized that I was still alive and that I could still love God !

«... I do not know what I am not ready to endure to avoid hell, in spite of my fear of pain. I see clearly that all the sufferings of the world are nothing in comparison with the horror of no longer being able to love, for in the place all breathes only hatred and thirst to damn other souls !

Since then, Josepha frequently feels this mysterious pain. All is mystery, indeed, during these long sessions in the tenebrous hereafter. Each time she is warned of the oncoming of the friends by the noise of chains and distant yells, but they come nearer and nearer and finally surround and overwhelm her. She tries to fly, to distract her mind by work, to escape the hail of blows which in the end overcomes and throws her to the ground. She has just time to take refuge in her little cell before losing all consciousness of her surroundings. She began first by finding herself in what she described as "a dark place," faced by the demon that triumphs over her and seems to believe that she is definitely in his power forever. He boisterously commands her to be thrust into her fiery niche; and Josefa, tightly bound, will fall into the chaos of fire, the dolorous abode of rage and despair.

Her notes are written objectively, and in the simplest terms she tells things just as she sees, hears, and experiences them.

On the outside, only a slight tremor made known her mysterious abduction. Her body instantly becomes entirely soft and supple, like one whose soul has just departed. Head and limbs are no longer under her control, though her heart beats normally ; Josefa is as one alive, yet dead !

This state is prolonged more or less according to God's Will, who thus delivers her over to hell, but holds her still in His very safe Hand.

At the moment decreed by Him, a slight almost imperceptible tremor once more, and her abandoned body regains life.

She is not, thereby wholly freed from the grip of the demon that still holds her under his blows. In this dark place where she sees only him, he overwhelms her with threats before she escapes from his power.

When at last he relinquishes his hold, she slowly returns to herself; the hours spent in hell seemed like centuries. She is only able to resume contact by degrees with the places and people that surround her. « Where am I? Who are you? Am I still alive?...» she asks herself. Her poor eyes seek to find a life which at the moment is so distant. At times, tears silently run down her cheeks, and her face bears the impress of a sorrow difficult to describe. At last, and very gradually, she succeeds in realizing the actuality of sensible objects and persons ; how could one depict the feelings of intense emotion that overwhelms her when she suddenly becomes aware that she can still love !

She has described it several times in words of passionate fervor that cannot be interpreted :

« Sunday, march 19, 1922, the third sunday of lent. I once more go down into the abyss, and it seems to me that I remain there for long years. I suffer much, but the greatest of my torments is in believing that I can no longer love Our Lord. When I come back to life, I

am simply mad with joy. I think my love has increased tenfold and I feel ready to endure for love of Him whatever He wishes. As to my vocation, I esteem and love it to folly ! »

She adds a few lines further : « What I see gives me great courage to suffer. I understand the value of the smallest sacrifices : Jesus gathers them up and uses them to save souls. It is a great blindness to avoid pain even in very small things, for it's not only of great worth to ourselves, but it serves to guard many souls from such great torments. »

In « A Call to Love », page 688

Josefa also records the accusations made against themselves by these unhappy souls : « Some yell because of the martyrdom of their hands. Perhaps they were thieves, for they say, « Where is our loot now?... cursed hands ! .... Why do I want to possess what does not belong to me, and what in any case I can keep ... only for a few days? ... »

« Others curse their tongues, their eyes...whatever was the occasion of their sin : « Now, O body, you are paying the price of the delights you granted yourself !... and you did it of your own free will !...»  
(April 2, 1922)

« It seems to me that the majority of souls accuse themselves of sins of impurity, of stealing, of unjust trading ; and that most of the damned are in Hell for these sins.  
(April 6, 1922)

I saw many wordly people fall into the abyss and no words can render their horrible and terrifying cries : « Damned forever ! ... I deceived myself ... I am lost...I am here forever ... there is no remedy possible ... a curse on me ! ... »

« Some accused people; others circumstances; and all execrated the occasion of their damnation !  
(September 1922)

«Today, I saw a great number of souls fall into the fiery pit... They seemed to be worldlings and a demon cried vociferously: « Now the world is ripe for me ... I know the best way to seize souls ! ... is to excite in them the desire to enjoy ... No! ... Me first ... Me first of all! ... Especially no humility, but enjoy life ! This is what gives me victory, which makes them fall here in great number !  
(1 October 1922)

In « A Call to Love », page 693-696

As in the previous descents into hell, Josefa never accuses herself of any specific sin that might have led to such a misfortune. Our Lord means her only to feel what the consequences would have been, if she had merited such a punishment. She continues :

« Instantly, I found myself in Hell, but not dragged there as before. The soul precipitates itself there, as if to hide from God in order to be free to hate and curse Him !

« My soul fell into abysmal depths, the bottom of which cannot be seen, for it is immense... At once, I heard other souls rejoicing at seeing me share their torments., It was martyrdom enough to hear the terrible imprecations on all sides, but what can be compared to the thirst to curse that seizes on a soul, and the more one curses, the more one wants to ! I had never experienced this. Formerly, I had been oppressed with grief at

hearing these horrible blasphemies, though unable to produce any act of love. But today, it was just otherwise !

« I saw Hell as always before, the long dark corridors, the cavities, the flames ... I heard the same execrations and imprecations, for and of this I have already written before, although no corporeal forms are visible, the torments are felt as if they were present, and souls recognize each other. They shouted: « Hullo, you here? And you are like us ! We were free to take those vows or not ... but now !...» And they cursed their Vows.

« Then I was pushed into one of those fiery cavities and pressed, as it were, between burning planks, and sharp nails and red-hot irons seemed to be piercing my flesh. »

Here Josefa is repeating the multiple tortures from which no single member of the body is excluded: « I felt as if they were endeavoring to pull out my tongue, but could not. This torture reduced me to such agony that my very eyes seemed to be starting out of their sockets. I think it's because of the fire which burns them so much ! There is not a single finger nail that escapes terrifying torments. One cannot even move a finger to gain some relief nor change posture, for the body seems flattened out and yet doubled in two. The ears are stunned by how horrible and confused cries not cease for an instant. A nauseating smell and a repugnant asphyxiation invades all, as if burning flesh in putrefaction burning with pitch, sulfur ... a mixture that cannot compare to anything in the world.

« All this, I felt as in the other occasions and, although these are terrible torments, would be nothing if the soul did not suffer, but it suffers so unspeakably to the deprivation of God. Until now, when I went down to Hell, I had intense pain because I thought that I had been damned for abandoning religious life. But this time, it was different. I was in hell and bore a special mark, a sign that I was a religious, that of a soul who knew and loved God, and there were others who bore the same sign. I cannot say how I recognized it, perhaps because of the especially insulting manner in which the evil spirits and other damned souls treated them. There were many priests too ! I am unable to explain what this suffering was, it was quite different from what I have experienced at other times, for if the souls of those who lived in the world suffer terribly, infinitely worse are the torments of religious. Unceasingly, these three words : Poverty, chastity and obedience are imprinted on the soul with poignant remorse. »

« - *Poverty* : You were free and you promised ! Why, then, did you seek that comfort? Why hold on to that object which did not belong to you ? Why did you give that pleasure to your body? Why allow yourself to dispose of the property of the Community? Did you not know that you no longer had the right to possess anything whatsoever, that you had freely renounced the use of those things?... Why did you murmur when anything was wanting to you, or when you fancied yourself less well treated than others? Why?

« *Chastity* ! You yourself vowed it freely and with full knowledge of its implications...You bound yourself.... You willed it. And how have you observed it? That being so, why did you not remain where it would have been lawful for you to grant yourself enjoyment and pleasures?

« And the tortured soul responds : « Yes, I vowed it, but I took it and I was free !..»

« What words can express the martyrdom of this remorse, » writes Josefa, and all the time the jibes and insults of other damned soul continue ! And she goes on :

« *Obedience !* Did you not fully engage yourself to obey your Rule and your superiors. Why, then, did you pass judgment on the orders that were given you? Why did you disobey the rules? Why did you dispense yourself from common life? Remember how sweet is the Rule ... and you would not keep it ! ... And now, vociferate satanic voices, you will have to obey us, not for a day or a year, or a century, but forever and ever; for all eternity ! ... It is your own doing... you were free !...»

« The soul constantly recalls how it chose its God for its spouse, and that once it loved Him above all things ... that for Him it had renounced the most legitimate pleasures and all what it held dearest on earth, that in the beginning of her religious life it had felt all the sweetness, purity and strength of this Divine Love, and now, for that inordinate passion ... it must eternally hate the God who had chosen it to love Him !

« This forced hatred is a thirst that consumes the soul... No passed joys can afford it the slightest relief....

« One of her greatest torments is shame that envelops her, adds Josefa. It seems to her that all the damned souls surrounding her are crying out unceasingly : «That we should be lost, we who had not the same help as you, how extraordinary? What did you lack? You who lived in the King's Palace... who feasted at the Table of the elect...»

« All that I write, she concludes, is nothing but a shadow of what the soul suffers, for no words can express such torments. »  
(4 September 1922)

#### Description of Hell by Saint Teresa of Avila (1515-1582)

Contained in « *I want to see God* », page 151 and 152

«... if death separates a sinful soul from the body, it can no longer rid itself of "that pitch of sin" which is over the crystal of the soul. » The soul therefore remains eternally fixed in an attitude of remoteness of God. It's the eternal hell, the normal consequence of sin and the immutability in which the soul is fixed in eternity. Here below, the powers of the soul found in personal assets some satisfaction, which rendered the absence of God less painful or even indifferent. In eternity, there is no good apart from God. The soul is in a vacuum, and its powers, made to find their rest and nourishment in God, suffer from a deep and inextinguishable hunger and thirst in this void. It is the punishment of damnation or the absence of God, the main penalty of hell, created by sin itself and by the attitude of opposition which it has imposed upon the soul. This privation of God made St. Teresa shudder, who is exclaiming :

« O souls redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, take these things to heart; have mercy on yourselves ! If you realize your pitiable condition, how can you refrain from trying to remove the darkness from the crystal of your souls? Remember, if death should take you now, you would never again enjoy the light of this Divine Sun.

To this punishment of damnation is added the punishment by burning yet unconsuming fire, of an intelligent fire that measures its ardor to seriousness and the number of sins and varies its point of application according to the kind of sin.

A vision will enable Saint Teresa to illustrate this description. It's a vision of hell which, she tells us, was "one of the most praiseworthy graces the Lord bestowed on me" and which she recounts in the book of her Life :

«... I was at prayer one day when suddenly, without knowing how, I found myself, as I thought, plunged right into hell. I realized that it was the Lord's will that I should see the place which the devils had prepared for me there and which I had merited for my sins. This happened in the briefest space of time, but, even if I were to live for many years, I believe it would be impossible for me to forget it.

The entrance, I thought, resembled a very long, narrow passage, like a furnace, very low, dark and closely confined ; the ground seemed to be full of water which looked like filthy, evil-smelling mud, and in it were many wicked-looking reptiles. At the end there was a hollow place scooped out of a wall, like a cupboard, and it was here that I found myself in close confinement. But the sight of all this was pleasant by comparison with what I felt there. What I have said is in no way an exaggeration.

My feelings, I think, could not possibly be exaggerated, nor can anyone understand them. I felt a fire within my soul the nature of which I am utterly incapable of describing, while my body was going through intolerable torments. In addition, I saw that these sufferings had to be without respite and never-ending. And yet these ones are nothing by comparison with the agony of my soul who feels an oppression, an affliction and a suffocation so deeply felt, a sorrow so desperate and so profound that I cannot describe it. To say that, it is as if the soul was continually being torn from the body is very little, for that would mean that one's life was being taken by another; whereas in this case it is the soul itself that is tearing itself to pieces. The fact is that I cannot find words to describe that interior fire and that despair, which is greater than the most grievous tortures and pains. I could not see who was the cause of them, but I felt, I think, as if I were being both burned and dismembered; and I repeat : that interior fire and despair are the worst things of all.

In that pestilential spot, where I was quite powerless to hope for comfort, it was impossible to sit or lie, for there was no room to do so. I had been put in this place which looked like a hole in the wall, and those very walls, so terrible to the sight, bore down upon me and completely stifled me. There was no light and everything was in the blackest darkness. I do not understand how this can be, but, although there was no light, it was possible to see everything the sight of which can cause affliction.

At that time, it was not the Lord's will that I should see more of hell itself, but I have since seen another vision of frightful things, which are the punishment of certain vices. To look at, they seemed to me much more dreadful ; but, as I felt no pain, they caused me less fear.

The saint finishes her description : I was terrified by all this, and, though it happened nearly six years ago, I am still as I write these lines that fear seems to be freezing the blood in my veins right here...She concludes :

Since then, I repeat, everything has seemed to me of the slightest importance by comparison with a single instant of the tortures that I then endured. I am even surprised that, after having often read books which give some insights into the pains of hell, I have not feared them as they deserve, and for not having made myself an accurate idea on them. »

Description of Hell by Sister Faustina, in « *Small Diary of Sister Faustina* »  
Editions Jules Hovine, 1985, p. 277 and 278

« Today, I was led by an angel into the Chasms of Hell. It is a place of great torture. And its extent is terribly great. The kinds of suffering I saw :

- The first suffering that constitutes hell is : the loss of God.
- The second is : the perpetual remorse of conscience.
- The third is : the fate of the damned will never change.
- The fourth is : the fire will penetrate the soul without destroying it. It is a terrible suffering, for it is a purely spiritual fire, lit by the wrath of God.
- The fifth suffering is the continual darkness, a terrible, stifling odor. And, in spite of the darkness, devils and souls of the damned see each other and all the evil, both of others and their own.
- The sixth suffering : horrible despair, hatred of God, curses and blasphemies.

These are the tortures suffered by all the damned together, but that is not the end of the sufferings. There are special tortures destined for particular souls. These are the torments of the senses. Each soul undergoes terrible and indescribable sufferings related to the manner in which it has sinned. There are caverns and pits of torture where one form of agony differs from another. I would have died at the very sight of these tortures if the omnipotence of God had not supported me.

Let the sinner know that he will be tortured throughout all eternity, in those senses which he made use of to sin.

I am writing this at the command of God, so that no soul may find an excuse by saying there is no hell, or that nobody has ever been there, and so no one can say what it is like there ! I, sister Faustina, by the order of God, have visited the abysses of hell so that I might tell souls about it and testify to its existence. I cannot speak about it now ; but I have received a command from God to leave it in writing. The devils were full of hatred for me, but they had to obey me at the command of God. What I have written is but a pale shadow of the things I saw. But I noticed one thing : that most of the souls there are those who disbelieved that hell existed. When to regain consciousness, I could hardly recover from the fright. How terribly souls suffer there ! Consequently, I pray even more fervently for the conversion of sinners. I incessantly plead God's mercy upon them. O my Jesus, I would rather be in agony until the end of the world, amidst the greatest sufferings, than offend you by the least sin. »

Description of Hell by Sister Beghe in « God and Men »  
Editions Résiac, 1992, pages 64 and 65.

« Hell is much more than the place and condition of devils and human souls in eternal revolt and death; it is also the place of the destruction of the soul and of all life. Hell is the opposite of creative work; hell is the destructive work of the creature that never stops destroying, ruining, demolishing and killing. Hell is the place of the most monstrous, cruel, hateful and pitiless war. Hell is the place of the unleashed, disfigured, distorted, deformed and discarnate creature. Hell is the most terrible place that exists because it's the result of the revolt against perfect Love and perfect beauty. Life, however, that does not want to reach the goal of its life, goes on existing ; The life that does not cease to exist, while rejecting the source of its life, can only continue its existence in death. The death of life is the opposite of life, and it's a mistake to confuse the existence in death with the absence of existence. Death is existence in the rejection of life, while life is existence in God. Hell is not the work of God, hell is the abandonment of the thought of God. Hell is the most horrible, the most terrible and the most detestable realization of the creature, who voluntarily, implacably and untiringly forges the misfortune to which it is linked and into which it locks itself in all the lucidity of his depraved will. Hell is the absence of all goodness, all pity, all love, all friendship, all compassion, all affection, all affinity. Hell is the kingdom of hatred, revolt, detestation, prevarication, defamation and deprivation. The souls and demons that have made their home there become ever more hateful, more revolting, more detestable, more prevaricating, and more defamatory. The development of their feelings is proportionate to their ardor in evil in the same way that the saint will be more and more holy and will draw from God new expressions of holiness in the infinite and inexhaustible holiness of perfect holiness. »

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