

# Why Read *The Mystical City of God*?

by Timothy A. Duff

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Our Lady's words: *O how happy, my daughter, is the man who during the short instant of his life seeks to anticipate the divine science which he is so soon to possess by experience! This is true wisdom, not to wait to know the end until the end, but rather to run toward it at the beginning of the race, not with so many doubts but with some security of attaining it.* (Coronation par. 608)

The holy Gospels are, as it were, necessarily quite reticent when it comes to the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, containing what was necessary for the revelation of her Divine Maternity (along with a few other incidents). The reason for this is it was more important for the early Church to be firmly rooted in the mysteries of the Most Holy Trinity, the Incarnation of the Son of God in her womb, the Redemption He wrought for the human race, and the establishment of His Church. Moreover, the prevalence of idolatry at that time would have exposed early converts to the danger of looking upon Her as some sort of goddess, as was expressed by St. Dionysius the Areopagite.

Yet the great mysteries of the Mother of God *are indeed* in Scriptures, locked away in various books of the Old and New Testaments, such as Proverbs 8 and 31, Canticles, Ecclesiasticus 24, and Apocalypse 12 and 21. Would these mysteries remain hidden to the Militant Church? Would the revelation of her Life, She who was Herself the perfect *Imitation of Christ*, come only in the beatific vision? If this was the case, then how would souls gain the merit and happiness of knowing, loving, serving and imitating Her more deeply upon earth as her faithful children, thus glorifying God in His chosen tabernacle?

Since Our Lady herself during her life desired only to serve her Son in obscurity, hidden from the world, Almighty God reserved the revelation of her History and Life for the last ages of the Church when so many of her children would turn away from Jesus Christ our Lord to serve His enemies. This revolt has now come to fruition in the Great Apostasy, the denouement of which we are witnessing in our day.

As a remedy for this catastrophe the most holy Trinity decreed to reveal the History and Life of most holy Mary to a humble Spanish Franciscan nun, Ven. Mary of Jesus of Ágreda (1602-1665). She was gifted with infused science and repeated revelations over many years to prepare her to write this History, known popularly as *The Mystical City of God*. Through this book we are permitted to walk with Our Lady through her daily life, and at her feet learn how to imitate her virtues and those of Jesus Christ her Divine Son. These revelations are not mere opinions, or the result of discursive thought, or merely copied from other writers, but given directly by God, Our Lady, and the Holy Angels to Ven. Mary through what is called *intellectual vision*, a very high form of vision which bypasses the senses and the imagination entirely, placing the truth directly into the intellect. Ven. Mary wrote them down the best she could within the limitations of spoken language, being as it were *the secretary of Our Lady* who inspired the work from beginning to end.

The book was first published in Spanish in 1670 by Most Rev. José Jiménez de Samaniego, the religious superior and biographer of Ven. Mary. A *false French translation* was condemned by Rome in 1681 by Pope Bl. Innocent XI; moved by the King and Queen of Spain he read an authentic copy of the book for himself, and in the same year allowed the book to be read by all the faithful until the book could be studied by Rome and a definitive decision reached. This final decision was rendered by Pope Benedict XIII when considering the beatification of Ven. Mary, and may be found to this day in the archives of the Congregation of Rites. It is as follows, and was signed by His Holiness:

“It is ordered that the cause of the above-mentioned Servant of God shall be continued before the holy Congregation of Rites without further examination of the *Mystical City of God*, and these books can be retained and read. March 14, 1729.”

It was truly appropriate for this great Pope to give final approval, since he himself was such an avid devotee of the book that when he was Archbishop of Benevento he gave a series of sermons taken from it.

Hence *The Mystical City of God* is fully approved by the Catholic Church and may be kept and read by all the faithful. Yet despite this absolute and final decision with which all Catholics must abide, opposition to the book has swirled through the ages right down to our own day. I recently had an email exchange with a well-known traditional priest illustrating this. Having presented to him the *New English Edition*, which contains a summary of the Church’s decision taken from official Magisterial documents, and inviting him to read this evidence, he simply stated the book is “condemned” and that he had done his own research using what he called “reliable sources” which confirm the book is “condemned”. When I asked him what sources could be more reliable than Magisterial documents he gave no answer.

Since it is not possible for the Magisterium to contradict itself in both approving and condemning a book, the “evidence” upon which this priest (and all others like him) bases his belief is merely private judgment, permitted to no one of whatever position once the Holy See has given its final judgment. Hence all Catholics are permitted to obtain and read *The Mystical City of God* despite anything to the contrary they might have heard or read from others, including priests. My goal in stating this is not to stir up controversy, for truly there is no objective controversy regarding this book since *Rome has spoken*; it is merely to reassure the reader the book is fully, and I would say signally, approved by the Church.

So why a *New English Edition*? The first English edition was published in 1912 by Rev. George J. Blatter, a diocesan priest in Chicago. I have been reading the book daily for over 33 years and have read all four volumes nearly a dozen times, and over 20 years ago I began to notice some errors of Scripture citation; these citations had been inserted as footnotes by Most Rev. Samaniego in his Spanish edition. The first example of such an error I noticed was “Jn. 1:291” when Jn. 1:29 was meant. I then consecrated my fifth reading of the set (which took five years) to looking up every single Scripture citation, and to my dismay I found some *two hundred* such errors! Moreover, I later began to find other mistranslations which actually involve Catholic doctrine. Thus over the course of 10 years or so I began to be moved to undertake a corrected edition, and started the project in the summer of 2007 when I was given an authentic copy of the original Spanish of Ven. Mary. Utilizing online translators I worked daily for eight years on the *New English Edition*, comparing Rev. Blatter’s edition with the original Spanish, and finally published it in May of this year. I had the most important retractions vetted by a traditional Catholic priest who is fluent in Spanish, and other than a few minor suggestions he found them to be quite correct.

Having entered into Rev. Blatter’s labors, I believe there are two main reasons for so many translation errors in his edition. The first is, as Thomas Nelson of TAN books once told me, Rev. Blatter was “a German who learned Spanish to translate into English.” The second reason is he worked alone on the project and never had his manuscript properly proofread (if it was proofread at all). I certainly have nothing but filial love and gratitude for the monumental work accomplished by him, yet at the same time I believe it pleases Our Lord and Our Lady to make a corrected and edited English version available.

The question then remains, why should you the reader purchase and read *The Mystical City of God*? I think there are three main reasons.

First, to learn about the magnificent perfections of Mary most holy in order to imitate them; in fact, the book could well be called *The Imitation of Mary*. Meditating upon this book will help you grow in personal happiness and holiness, and foster true devotion to Her, especially by the virtues of humility and gratitude. It is simply not possible to understand the humility of this loving Mother until you read how She reacted to the varied incidents

of her life. She herself stated in the *Magnificat* the Lord *hath regarded the humility of his handmaid* (Lk. 1:48). This book reveals the great mystery of her humility. And the more we learn about Her, about her Son, and about the Angels and Saints, the more we are moved to humble gratitude; and isn't gratitude really the only return we can make for all that has been done for our salvation? Yet we cannot be truly grateful for what we do not know.

The second is to unite traditional Catholics under the banner of Our Lady to destroy the works of wicked men. We are currently in most grave times when the Church of Satan, what Our Lady called the Church of Darkness, is trying desperately to bring legions of demons upon the earth to overwhelm and destroy the relatively few remaining true Catholics, and especially the good Catholic families which represent the remnant of why God created the human race. There is no doubt the ultimate goal of the Satanists and their minions is to utterly wipe out any semblance of divinely-ordained family life so they can make this world a playground for the wicked, and more specifically to corrupt children from the womb and make them slaves of evil. We must draw much closer to our heavenly Mother, and pray and labor especially to preserve the innocence of children.

The third is to bring about the true restoration of the Catholic Church by pleading for Our Lady to intercede with her Son for a true Pope who will, as St. Pius X stated, restore all things in Christ. Regarding this, how many times in your parish have you heard pleas and prayers for a true Pope? Our Lady was Mother of the Apostles, with touching examples of this in *The Mystical City of God*; hence She is certainly the Mother of their successors, the true bishops and Popes. In times past the Catholic world has suffered greatly due to lack of true devotion to Mary, and our times are no different. Let us read this book and pray the daily Rosary with the goal of pleading with Our Lady for the true restoration of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, our common Mother.

The *New English Edition* (soft-bound, 2801 pages) is available as a 4-volume set for the relatively low price of \$40. I have kept the price as low as possible (I am barely breaking even) in order to get the book into as many hands as possible. To order using a debit/credit card or PayPal, go onto my website [neemcog.com](http://neemcog.com) and click on the link at the upper right *Purchase the NEE*. You may there also purchase the Kindle version for \$19.99.

If you prefer, you may also send a check or M.O. for \$40 made out to Timothy Duff to 8711 N. St. Michaels Rd., Spokane, WA, 99217.

I have already sold out of the first printing of 100 4-volume sets, and am having a second printing done which should be available by the end of September.

Finally, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, feel free to email me at [neemcog@gmail.com](mailto:neemcog@gmail.com) and I would be happy to address them.