

# The Devotion and Promotion of Stigmatics in Europe, c. 1800–1950

Between Saints and Celebrities

Tine Van Osselaer

*in collaboration with*

Andrea Graus, Leonardo Rossi & Kristof Smeyers



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## The Devotion and Promotion of Stigmatics in Europe, c. 1800–1950

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J'ai vu des choses fort extraordinaires, ce qu'on appelle vulgairement des miracles: je le raconte.

ANTOINE IMBERT-GOURBEYRE, *Les stigmatisées*. Vol. 1, 1873, I





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# Abbreviations

AAM	Archief Aartsbisdom Mechelen
ABP	Archiv des Bistums Passau
ABS <sub>p</sub>	Archiv Bistum Speyer
ACDF	Archives of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith
ADB	Archives diocésaines de Bordeaux
ADL	Archives diocésaines de Lyon
ADM	Arxiu diocesà de Mallorca
ADR	Archives diocésaines de Rouen
ADT	Archivo diocesano de Toledo
ADV	Archives départementales de Vaucluse
AEK	Archiv Erzbistum Köln
AEL	Archives de l'évêché de Liège
AEM	Archiv des Erzbistums München und Freising
AGP	Archivo General de Palacio
AHDN	Archives historiques du diocèse de Nantes
AHN	Archivo Histórico Nacional
AN	Archives Nationales
APDF	Archives de la Province Dominicaine de France
AST	Archives du Séminaire de Tournai
BAM	Bistumarchiv Münster
BAT	Bistumsarchiv Trier
BayHStA	Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv
BNF	Bibliothèque Nationale de France
BP	Bibliothèque du Patrimoine
BsBCQ	Biblioteca Civica Queriniana Brescia
BSB	Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München
Civ. Cat.	La Civiltà Cattolica
CL	Censurae librorum
Dev.V.	Devotiones Variæ
DocC	Documentatiecentrum
EBAP	Erzbistumsarchiv Paderborn
GAKE	Gedenkstätte Anna Katharina Emmerick
GStAPK	Geheimes Staatsarchiv, Preussischer Kulturbesitz
KBR	Koninklijke Bibliotheek/Bibliothèque Royale Brussel
LAV NRW	Landesarchiv Nordrhein Westfalen Abteilung Westfalen
M.D.	Materia Diversæ

Rer.Var.	Rerum Variorum
RI	Ruusbroec Institute
SAE	Staatsarchiv Eupen
SO	Archivum Sancti Officii Romani
St.St.	Stanza Storica
StA	Staatsarchiv Amberg





# Stigmatics

*Tine Van Osselaer, Leonardo Rossi and Kristof Smeyers,  
in collaboration with Andrea Graus*

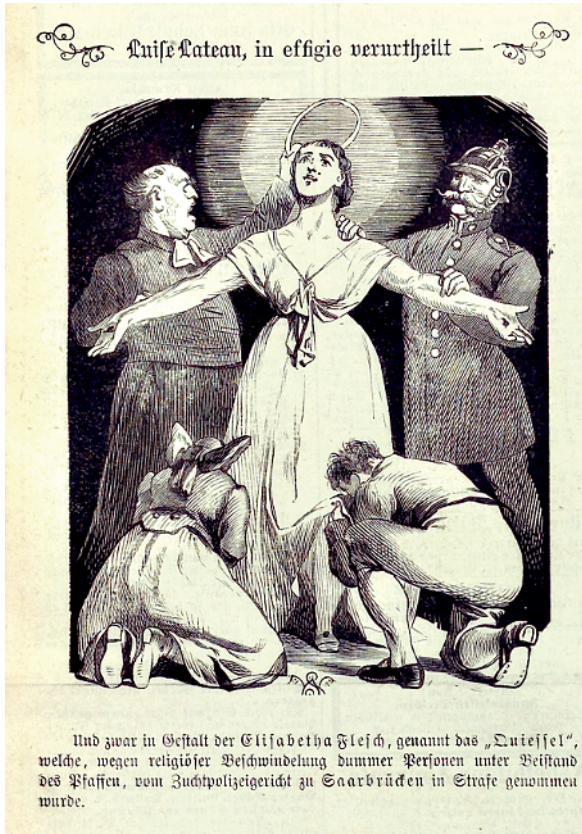


FIGURE 1.1  
“Luise Lateau, in effigie  
verurtheilt,” *Beiblatt  
zum Kladderadatsch*, 28.51  
(7 November 1875):  
1. “Louise Lateau  
condemned in effigy – in  
the figure of Elisabeth  
Fleisch, known as the ‘bigot,’  
who was arrested by the  
police court in Saarbrücken  
for religiously swindling  
credulous people with the  
help of the clergy”  
HEIDELBERG UNIVERSITY,  
*BEIBLATT ZUM  
KLADDERADATSCH*, 28.51  
(7 NOVEMBER 1875): 1,  
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## 1 Introduction

In November 1875, the German anti-Catholic periodical *Kladderadatsch* published a cartoon of a young woman, her arms outstretched, bleeding from her hands and feet. On the left, a priest holds an aureole over her head, raising her to a saintly level. Two devotees praying at her feet support this impression

of her as an object of devotion. On the right, a police officer (bearing no small resemblance to Otto von Bismarck himself), personifying the public authorities, attempts to lead her away from the scene.<sup>1</sup> The cartoon contains all the stock images used for visual warfare during the culture wars, and illustrates the Bismarckian ideal of the liberal-rationalist nation with no place for Catholic wonders. What is more surprising here are the caption and the description next to the cartoon. The caption described Elisabeth as a “bigot” who had been arrested by the Saarbrücken police court “for religiously swindling credulous people with the help of the clergy.” The title, “Louise Lateau condemned in effigy,” suggests that the negative verdict on Elisabeth Flesch (c.1821–?) also reflected negatively on Louise Lateau (1850–1883). With this verdict, the *Kladderadatsch* suggested that the court had in fact also rejected the Belgian Lateau, with Elisabeth Flesch standing for, or as a representative image of, Lateau. Similarly, in the same issue we read: “[T]he ‘bigot’ Elisabeth Flesch, who played the stigmatic following the model of Lateau, was convicted for fraud.”<sup>2</sup> The cartoon and short article aptly capture some of the ideas we address in this book. In the description of the court case against Elisabeth Flesch, it appears that the phrase claiming she “played the stigmatic” did not need further explanation, nor did the name “Lateau.” However, what was a “stigmatic”? Why did the Belgian stigmatic Louise Lateau feature as a point of reference?

We cannot address these questions without first introducing some caveats concerning the word “stigmatic.” We will discuss its use in more detail towards the end of this chapter, but for our purpose here, it is important to know that its use was more rare than we expected, and more complex. It was more rare because, while the equivalents of “stigmatic” seemed to be well-known and well-used words in nineteenth-century French (“stigmatisé”), German (“Stigmatisierte”) and Dutch (“gestigmatiseerde”) sources, in Italian (“stigmatizzato/a”) and Spanish (“estigmatizada”), the word was not used until the late nineteenth century and, even then, its use remained limited (e.g. in reference to an international stigmatic). This meant that what we thought would be a study of “stigmatics” and their reception in different countries, in fact needed to start with a more thorough reflection on what a “stigmatic” actually was and who referred to them as such. In other words, we needed to study the historical use of a word that had never really been questioned by scholars who

1 On the importance of Louise Lateau in the German *Kulturkampf*, see Van Osselaer, “Stigmata.”

2 “Im Kreise Ottweiler ist das ‘Quiessel’ Elisabeth Flesch, welche sich nach dem Recept Lateau als Stigmatisierte ausspielte wegen Betrugs verurtheilt worden.” The article had the title, “Für Majunke,” a reference to the German priest and journalist who was a major promotor of the Belgian stigmatic Louise Lateau (See Chapter 4, and Van Osselaer, “Stigmata, prophecies”). “Für Majunke,” *Kladderadatsch* (1875): 203.

had studied “stigmatics.”<sup>3</sup> Secondly, as we studied its use, it became clear that it was more complex than expected, since “stigmatic” seemed to refer to two different phenomena: a specific category of mystics (with different profiles but all reportedly carrying the stigmata) and a particular type of “stigmatic,” the stereotypical stigmatic of the nineteenth century. It is the latter that caught our interest and became the central topic of this book.

In this book, we argue that the Lateau-like “stigmatic” developed as a new type of mystic in the nineteenth century. The word referred to a young woman who displayed the physical stigmata – wounds of Christ – on her body and relived Christ’s Passion. Although these women might have experienced other mystical phenomena, the fact that they were carrying Christ’s wounds was their defining feature. People carrying the stigmata have been heralded since the first reports of St Francis (who received the stigmata in 1224). Thus, if the phenomenon is much older, why do we situate the development of the “stigmatic” in the nineteenth century? As we will demonstrate in the following chapters, we believe that the development of the type and its popularity had much to do with the fact that during the period in question stigmatics could be regarded as “saints” and religious “celebrities,” where both categories were historically contingent.<sup>4</sup> The stigmatic type was aligned with contemporary popular ideas of what sanctity was – although these were not the ideas of the Church – with a focus on the miraculous body as proof of the divine. They were the religious celebrities of their time. Their fame was marketable and knowledge about them spread through the modern media. Moreover, because of the publicity given to the type, they became increasingly well known, recognizable and a phenomenon that could be imitated.

In order to fully grasp the meaning of the “stigmatic” (as a category and type), we adopted an inclusive approach and looked at sources produced at different levels in the Catholic communities. We were as interested in “religion as prescribed” as we were in “religion as practised.”<sup>5</sup> Who was talking about “stigmatics”? We looked at the top of the Catholic hierarchy in the decisions of the Vatican congregations, ventured into the diocesan archives and studied sources produced by the local clergy, as well as addressing the ideas and

---

3 However, its use as a category of historical analysis has been questioned. Liliana Billanovich prefers not to use it and calls for a more inclusive approach to mystical women, arguing that we should not single out the stigmata, as this risks diminishing the other phenomena that were attributed to these women. Billanovich, *Una nuova ‘invasione mistica,’* 38. This book, however, addresses the “stigmatic” as a historical category (used by contemporaries) and a specific type of mystic, the stereotypical stigmatic.

4 We discuss this in Chapter 2.

5 Christian, *Local Religion*, 178.

practices of Catholic laymen and women. Our investigations showed that the “stigmatic” was not used as an organizational category in the Vatican files that discussed the women who displayed the stigmata (these files concerned religious deviance, beatification and canonization processes). In fact, the Vatican congregations (*in casu* the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith<sup>6</sup> and the Congregation for the Causes of Saints<sup>7</sup>) were quite critical of the phenomenon of stigmatization and preferred, for example, not to mention the stigmata (or mystical epiphenomena in general) when announcing the beatification or canonization of some of these women.<sup>8</sup> We will discuss this more thoroughly in our chapter on the Vatican response (Chapter 7), but for our introduction to the concept of the “stigmatic” here, this means that we cannot start our discussion of the use of the word and of the development of the stereotypical “stigmatic” at the top of the Catholic hierarchy.

So, where did we find the word? As the following chapters and our discussion of the “stigmatic” as a category and type will show, the term was used by Catholics with different backgrounds and professions: Catholic writers, doctors, journalists, priests, farmers and others. Moreover, its use was not limited to Catholic discourse: we also found it in anti-Catholic sources, such as the *Kladderadatsch* article cited at the start of this chapter. Consequently, if we wanted to understand the use of the word and the meaning and impact of a stigmatic, we could not limit ourselves to religious sources. Therefore, we approached its circulation as part of “popular culture” in the way Gordon Lynch understands this: “as the shared environment, practices and resources of everyday life.”<sup>9</sup> Within Catholic sources, we could see a difference in the use of the word. “Stigmatic” as a category featured in expert<sup>10</sup> narratives, such as lists of stigmatics (some of which we will discuss in this chapter). In non-Catholic sources or non-expert Catholic sources, the word primarily referred to the stigmatic type.

By distinguishing between the Vatican at the top of the Catholic hierarchy and the rest of the Catholic world in the use of the word “stigmatic,” we did not want to create the impression of two Catholicisms, an elite version and a popular one, or describe popular Catholicism as an archaic residue.<sup>11</sup> As noted, Catholics of different rank and profession used the word “stigmatic.” Nevertheless,

6 Former Roman Inquisition, 1542–1908 and Holy Office, 1908–1965.

7 Former Sacred Congregation of Rites, 1888–1969.

8 This did however not mean that the Vatican did not believe in the possibility of the wounds (see Chapter 7). As we will see, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, the unofficial periodical of the Vatican, published articles criticizing the rationalist approach.

9 Gordon Lynch, *Understanding Theology and Popular Culture* (London: Routledge, 2005, 15), cited in Schofield Clark, “Why study?,” 15.

10 Here, this means anyone who focused on the phenomenon of stigmatization.

11 On the use of “popular” religion and its problems, see e.g. Dawson, “The concept”; Possamai, “Popular and lived religions.”

researching stigmatics in Europe meant studying a hierarchically organized Catholic culture, and we could not ignore the fact that cases of stigmatization not seldom involved moments when the hierarchical order of the Catholic Church was evoked and confirmed. In this regard, it is important to note that the enthusiasm for “stigmatics” – the devotions that developed around them – emerged from the bottom up. Similar to the modern Marian apparition movements that Peter Jan Margry has studied, these stigmatic-focused movements were “grassroots movements,” had an informal character, occurred outside the usual framework of the Roman Catholic Church and each operated “in practice ... independently.”<sup>12</sup> Margry thus situates these movements “in an ecclesiastical no-man’s land. In this devotional ‘open territory’, manifestations and revelations can be shaped, appropriated, idiosyncratically crafted, and spread according to the wishes of the visionaries and their following of devotees.”<sup>13</sup>

Various ecclesiastical authorities (such as the Vatican congregations, bishops) responded to the stigmatic movements. The following chapters include episodes in which the church authorities intervened, declaring the stigmatic not worthy of veneration; as counter to phenomena the ecclesiastical authorities would approve or wish to communicate; or rejecting enthusiasm for a stigmatic as “religious deviance.”<sup>14</sup> In these discussions, we follow Peter Jan Margry’s approach to “deviancy” as something that relates to the “‘mainstream’ that is regarded as not deviant, and which some people see as the norm or normal (in this case the Roman Catholic Church). But norms change over time and what was once deviant may at some stage lose its status of deviancy.”<sup>15</sup> Such definitional boundaries were, in Joseph Laycock’s opinion, not self-evident but “exercises of power.”<sup>16</sup> As Peter Jan Margry has noted concerning apparition

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12 Margry, “New transnational religious cultures,” 205: “deviant devotions”: “These devotional manifestations occur outside of the usual formal framework of the Roman Catholic Church, bore or bare a strong personal or private character, and, moreover, are of relatively recent nature. As a rule, (ibid. 206) these modern devotions have an informal character, and are not recognized by the Church, are still being investigated by ecclesiastical authorities, or have been entirely rejected.” Ibid. 211: “they are not shaped within official ecclesiastical structures, but spiritually and in terms of devotional rituals are shaped, profiled and propagated from the bottom up, in an informal manner, with the aid of visionaries, their own cult leadership, and groups of devotees.” Margry, “The global network,” 667. While these contemporary apparition movements seem to share many characteristics with the movements we studied, our movements seem less critical of the vested Church institutions, and would not qualify as “countermovements.”

13 Margry, “The global network,” 673.

14 On such moments of intervention, see McGuire, *Lived Religion*, 23–4.

15 Margry, “The global network,” 668.

16 Laycock, *The Seer*, x. For Laycock, 197: “The future of religious historiography” lies in “becoming more attentive to how and why the boundaries of imagined communities are challenged, policed, and negotiated. Church authorities tend to exert power over these boundaries through encyclicals, letters, and proclamations.”

movements, they were seldom fully excommunicated, since the Catholic Church was “relatively tolerant leaving some space for ‘experiments’, and practices an active ‘ignore policy.’” “The Church,” as he notes, “is prepared to channel and control and start an investigation only if the movement becomes too big, showing a tendency towards major heresy, or attracts a great deal of public attention, but it remains eager in such cases to smother the movement nonetheless.”<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, we should be wary of assuming that all members of the clergy were critical of or even opposed to stigmatics. As we will see, some of them (including bishops and other high-ranked dignitaries) supported some of the stigmatics and even participated in their promotion. Moreover, posthumous enthusiasm for a stigmatic differed from the enthusiasm that a living stigmatic triggered. The *fama sanctitatis* (reputation of sanctity) and a miracle linked to the cult were necessary for the beatification of a stigmatic.<sup>18</sup> As scholars working on the beatification and canonization of “folk saints” have shown, the Catholic Church’s official endorsement of a cult could in fact invigorate the Church. Official approval was not only about controlling the enthusiasm of the followers but also concerned the value of a particular case as a potential charisma boost for the Pope.<sup>19</sup>

However, the fact that these movements (and enthusiasm in general) developed around a living individual explains both the grassroots character of the movement and the unease of the Church authorities (as veneration of a living person is not allowed). While devotion to a stigmatic was not unlike enthusiasm for an ecstatic or a fasting girl, it was inherently different from the devotions that were officially approved and/or popularized by Rome (such as the Sacred Heart devotion, the cult of the popes, and the Virgin of Lourdes). The enthusiasm also differed from apparition movements, as these sacralized the apparition sites, not the living or dead visionary.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, official support for an apparition could follow relatively quickly after the initial events. The ecclesiastical authorities could approve of the religious enthusiasm that

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17 Margry, “The global network,” 669.

18 More on this, see Chapter 7.

19 “Die sancti ‘von oben’ fungieren in dieser Sicht nicht nur als Charismenkontrolle, sondern auch als Charisma-Akku für den Papst oder als Umspannstation für die charismatische Energie der Heiligen auf den Papst.” Lüdecke, “Heiligsprechung,” 247; Bienfait, “Zeichen,” 19.

20 Hence, the name of the apparitions refers to the sites rather than the visionaries: for example, the apparitions of Fatima, La Salette and Beauraing. Notable exceptions of modern visionaries who were canonized: Bernadette Soubirous (Lourdes, 1858) and Francisco and Jacinta Marto, the young visionaries of Fatima (1917).

developed at a site (e.g. approval of the apparition) even during the lifetime of the visionaries.<sup>21</sup>

Since the stigmatic movements were grassroots movements, they were anchored in specific local contexts and thus showed great diversity.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, they developed in the context of a global Catholic Church, with a shared tradition, hierarchy and normative framework.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, some of these movements (especially if they developed in the same region and around the same time) had overlapping devotee support and could thus be considered part of a network.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, as we will discuss in more detail in the second chapter, it was not uncommon for a stigmatic to generate transnational interest and for intense press coverage to spread their fame at the regional, national and even international levels. While we are aware that much of the enthusiasm for stigmatics was religiously motivated, we do want to highlight that the religious framework did not function in isolation. As we will discuss in the following pages and chapters (e.g. Chapter 2 on celebrities and saints), the “stigmatic,” considered generally, was a public religious phenomenon shaped in interaction with other cultural circuits (such as the mass media and the commercial circuit).<sup>25</sup>

It is important to recall here that we did not want to impose a preconceived idea of what a “stigmatic” was on our sources, but aimed to understand what

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21 Laycock, *The Seer*, 12: “Different circumstances, however, have inspired Church authorities to embrace devotional culture in order to channel popular support against an outside threat.” On similar efforts at the Marian apparition shrine in Lourdes to “institutionalise popular worship” and to “domesticate grassroots devotion by imposing a sense of Catholic orthodoxy on both the physical appearance of the site [...] and the ritual activities that took place there,” see Kaufman, “Les miraculées,” 521.

22 Christian, *Local Religion*, 178: “local religion is localistic.”

23 Laycock, *The Seer*, 8: “But despite these differences, Catholics are able to understand themselves as part of a global polity unified through such institutional symbols as apostolic succession, the body of canon law, and, especially, the office of pope and authority of the magisterium.” Referring to Leonard Primiano (*ibid.* 8), who claimed that “‘official’ religion does not, in fact, exist,” Laycock argues that “normative religion exists only in the abstract. This situation in which vernacular practices are united by an imagined normative ideal is especially true of Catholicism, which has countless varied and local expressions throughout the world.” On the geographical diversity of Catholicism: see McGuire, *Lived Religion*, 25, Christian, *Local Religion*, 178.

24 Margry, “The global network,” 669. See e.g. the cases studied in Chapter 4.

25 In this respect, our approach follows in the footsteps of e.g. Suzanne Kaufman, Sophia Deboick and Donn James Tilson. Kaufman, “Miraculées,” 518: “The Catholic Church was quick to adopt and even innovate the tools of modern industrial society (newspapers, advertising, photography, and later, film) to promote devotional models of sanctity for a mass audience of Catholic consumers”; Tilson, *The Promotion*, 4; Deboick, “Céline Martin’s images.”



it meant to contemporaries, and to study this use and development. We maintain that the Louise Lateau-type developed into the stereotypical “stigmatic” in the nineteenth century, but also suggest that caution should prevail. While “the stigmatic,” following “the recipe of Lateau,” became a type in the nineteenth century, this did not exclude reports of other types of mystics carrying stigmata. In fact, in the modern era, stigmatic experts traced reports on stigmata (in all their variations) in the past and present and grouped under the category of “stigmatic.” Before focusing on the Louise Lateau-like “stigmatic” type, this chapter first addresses the instances in which people with stigmata were singled out, and examines the reasons why this happened. We will look at retrospective lists, but also at moments and locations in which there was an increase in interest. Thus, rather than examining individual cases of stigmatization, as other scholars have done,<sup>26</sup> the focus here is on the phenomenon itself: on those people who contemporaries regarded as stigmatics; and on the fact that stigmata became the selection criterion. In order to do so, we adopted a transnational and comparative approach. As the second part of this chapter will show, this approach has inspired questions about the category itself and about the use of the word “stigmatic.” Reflecting on the category of the stigmatic helped us delineate the specificity of the “stigmatic” type.

## 2 Tracing Stigmata

### 2.1 *Retrospective Lists. On the Reinvention of “Stigmata”*

In her article on stigmata in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Xenia von Tippelskirch reflected on the list of stigmatics identified as such by the French doctor Antoine Imbert-Gourbeyre (1825–1888) in his *magnum opus*, *La stigmatisation* (1894). Examining the seventeenth-century cases he listed, she remarked that many of them were only singled out as a case of stigmatization in the nineteenth century, that their listing was an example of the “reinvention of stigmata,”<sup>27</sup> and his inclusion of them implied a retrospective interpretation of their cases.<sup>28</sup> For Imbert-Gourbeyre, carrying the stigmata

26 See e.g. Kane on the American stigmatic Sister Thorn (*Sister Thorn*); Priesching on Maria von Mörl (*Maria von Mörl*); Seeger on Theresa Neumann (*Resl von Konnersreuth*); Heimann on Teresa Higginson (“Medical and mystical opinion”).

27 Von Tippelskirch, “Schmerzen,” 161; and von Tippelskirch, “Ma fille,” 260.

28 “l’interprétation retrospective” in Von Tippelskirch, “Ma fille,” 275. For the origin of the word “stigma,” its use in antiquity as a mark impressed on one’s body and its history, see Adnès, “Stigmates,” c. 1211–1213.

became the most important characteristic, on the basis of which mystics with different profiles could be grouped together.<sup>29</sup>

In this book, we continue in this vein and postulate that the increased emphasis on stigmata resulted in a specific subcategory of mystics who became known as stigmatics. The main structuring feature, the selection criterion for this group, was bearing the wounds of Christ. In arguing this, we do not want to suggest that Imbert-Gourbeyre invented the stigmatic. The word “stigmatisée” was used long before the release of Imbert-Gourbeyre’s book, and one of the stigmatics that caught his attention was Louise Lateau (1850–1883), already known as “la stigmatisée de Bois d’Haine.”<sup>30</sup> What we do want to suggest is that his use of the word “stigmatisé[e]” and the creation of a list of alleged stigmatics points to an increasing interest in them. This interest was a reflection of, or reflected in, a rise in the number of reports about such cases in the nineteenth century and the development of a stereotypical stigmatic image. Tellingly, the nineteenth century has been called the “golden era” of stigmatization in Europe.<sup>31</sup> New cases were reported and older cases were reinvented in extensive lists. Studying these lists, we came across hundreds of names of individuals who allegedly carried the wounds, from the middle ages up until the twenty-first century. What became increasingly clear however is that each of these lists had its own logic. If we wanted to study the phenomenon, we needed to reflect on this material first: what information were the lists providing us with?

“Stigmatics” became an increasingly specific and relevant category singled out in the prosopographical lists that were compiled beginning in the early nineteenth century. Interestingly, the frames of reference of their creators differed considerably and we find such lists, for example, in religious and medical contexts. One of the oldest relevant texts is the overview of “stigmatics” throughout the centuries provided by Joseph von Görres in the second volume of his *Die christliche Mystik* which included an entire chapter on them (1837).<sup>32</sup> This text, in which stigmata are perceived as a divine gift, addressed all types of stigmatics. Görres’s work became well known and featured as a source of reference for other lists, such as *Die Stigmatisierten des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*

29 This selection logic was in fact also apparent in the title of Imbert-Gourbeyre’s first two-volume book on the topic, *Les stigmatisées* (1873).

30 Anonymous, *La stigmatisée de Bois-d’Haine* (1871).

31 Bouflet, *Les stigmatisés*, 89; Pahud de Mortanges, “Irre,” 203.

32 Görres wrote about stigmata as part of his long series, *Die christliche Mystik* (1836–1842), and visited Maria von Mörl in Tyrol. An English extract of *Die christliche Mystik* was published posthumously, with additions on Lazzari and Lateau made by the translators. See Görres, *Stigmata*.

(1877), published by an anonymous “Curatprieſter” in the miſt of the German *Kulturkampf*.<sup>33</sup> The latter liſted ſhort hagiographical biographies intended to provide the devotees with a new ſource of comfort and the non-believers with a new reaſon to deſpair. The German booklet not only drew upon Görres’s work, but alſo made reference to, for example, the compilations created by Dr Antoine Imbert-Gourbeyre.<sup>34</sup> As noted above, Imbert-Gourbeyre provided a liſt of ſtigmatics with his books *Les ſtigmatisées* (1873) and, eſpecially, *La ſtigmatisation* (1894), in which he adopted a more hiſtorical approach and included nearly 300 caſes ſince St Francis. Theſe liſts have nourished all kinds of compilations on ſtigmatics ſince, with authors adopting a number of different approaches.

In conſidering why different authors decided to publiſh theſe compilations on ſtigmatics we need to take into account the politico-religious and ſcientific background in which their liſts appeared. In the caſe of Imbert-Gourbeyre, his books were publiſhed during the anticlerical Third Republic and following traumatic events ſuch as the French defeat in the Franco-Prussian war and the Paris Commune. As ſcholars ſuch as Thomas Kselman have pointed out, after ſuch turmoil, Catholics in France became increasingly concerned with the need to atone for the ſins committed againſt religion, for which they thought their nation was being puniſhed.<sup>35</sup> Stigmatics incarnated this type of ſpirituality and received the ſupport of the ultramontane and the Catholic ariſtocracy, who had loſt their privileges after the French Revolution. As a reſult of the ſupport received, many ſtigmatics in France, but alſo abroad, began to prophesize about a reſtoration of the monarchy and the return of the *Ancien Régime*. Being a fervent Legitiſt, Imbert-Gourbeyre became eſpecially cloſe to Palma Matarrelli and Marie-Julie Jahenny (1850–1941), who prophesized the riſe of Henri V, the triumph of Pope Pius IX (the “prisoner of the Vatican”) and the reſtoration of a “Catholic Kingdom.”<sup>36</sup> According to Joachim Bouflet, the ſucceſs of Imbert-Gourbeyre was partly linked to the Catholic and Legitiſt hopes that theſe and other living ſtigmatics incarnated. In addition, what turned *Les ſtigmatisées* into a beſtſeller was the journaliſtic ſtyle he uſed in the (hi)ſtories of the ſtigmatics he chronicled.<sup>37</sup>

33 On the political context and the reference to ſtigmatics, ſee Van Oſſelaer, “Stigmata.”

34 For a biographical note, ſee Forthomme, “Imbert-Gourbeyre de la Touche.” Some of Imbert-Gourbeyre’s papers can be found in: Fonds Paul LeBlanc, BP Clermont-Ferrand, A70199.

35 Kselman, *Miracles*, 109–110.

36 Sandoni, “Political mobilization,” 20–24.

37 Bouflet, “Avant-propos,” 9.

With regard to the scientific context, the nineteenth century is renowned for a medicalized approach to allegedly supernatural phenomena. As Jan Goldstein has demonstrated, this pathologizing also had political and secularizing intentions. In her words, “[t]he redefinition of the supernatural as the natural-pathological went further and had the effect of debunking religion; it was consonant with the frenetic crusade for laicization which marked republican politics in this era.”<sup>38</sup> Jacques Maître described it as a battle between “scientism” and “miraculism,” where the liberals and republicans fought the ultramontane and aristocrat intent to promote a Catholic monarchic restoration through the use of the supernatural.<sup>39</sup> In response to the pathologizing campaigns, Imbert-Gourbeyre’s *La stigmatisation* explicitly argued “against the free-thinkers of the Salpêtrière.” He thus confronted rationalist authors such as Alfred Maury, who in 1855, after the fervour created by stigmatics in Tyrol, published an essay in the *Annales médico-psychologiques* debunking stigmatization since St Francis.<sup>40</sup>

Despite Imbert-Gourbeyre’s attempt to refute the materialist approach to the stigmata, the medical context continued to inspire compilations on stigmatics at the *fin-de-siècle*, embedded in the above-mentioned quest for political and social emancipation from the Church. Following the trend set by medical case studies to debunk popular stigmatics such as Louise Lateau,<sup>41</sup> psychiatrists and physicians enlarged the scope to create lists of past and present stigmatics, making retrospective diagnoses of St Francis or Catherine of Siena, and explaining contemporary cases from the psychopathological point of view. Here, again, the criterion for selecting the cases was merely the bearing of the wounds understood in general terms. “Medical lists” of stigmatics included many cases of alleged stigmatization taking place in asylums, such as the famous Madeleine Lebouc (1853–1918), the “hysterical” patient of Pierre Janet at the Salpêtrière.<sup>42</sup> The late nineteenth century was the heyday of hypnotism in Europe and many physicians acknowledged the power of suggestion to provoke “holy” wounds, as had been allegedly proven in experiments

38 Goldstein, “The hysteria diagnosis,” 236.

39 Maître, “De Bourneville à nos jours,” 769–770.

40 Maury, “Les mystiques extatiques,” 181–232. See also: Maury, *La magie et l’astrologie*, 339–414.

41 Bourneville, *Science et miracle*, 26–64.

42 Janet, *De l’angoisse à l’extase*. On Madeleine Lebouc and Janet see Maître, *Une inconnue célèbre*. Another psychiatrist we can cite is the German Walter Jacobi (1889–1937), later a member of the SS, who was also convinced that medicine could explain the medieval and modern stigmatics, Jacobi, *Die Stigmatisierten*, 1–2.

by Burot and Bourru.<sup>43</sup> A representative “medical list” recording this trend was that of the French doctor Maurice Apte, who analysed the maladies of medieval and contemporary stigmatics in his medical doctorate, advancing theories of suggestion, dermatographism and hysteria.<sup>44</sup> Not all medical lists were as pathologizing, but their interest remained in analysing stigmatics throughout history from the psychophysiological perspective, without pointing at a specific type.<sup>45</sup>

The medical interest in stigmatics also stimulated the creation of what we might call a Catholic counter-list. From 1888 onwards, for example, a series of articles on mystical phenomena appeared in *La Civiltà Cattolica*, the Jesuit-led unofficial periodical of the Vatican. “Le estasi, la medicina e la Chiesa” (“The ecstasies, the medical profession and the Church”) introduced the famous contemporary ecstasies (among which were several stigmatics), Alexandrine Lanois, Marie Bergadieu (1829–1904, stigmata 1874), Maria von Mörl (1812–1868, stigmata 1834) and especially Louise Lateau (1850–1883, stigmata 1868),<sup>46</sup> and criticized medical experts such as Charcot, Maury and Warlomont (who had examined Louise Lateau).<sup>47</sup> The articles emphasized that the Church only sanctified its heroes after confirming the heroic virtues of the candidate and not because of their display of extraordinary phenomena. The latter were viewed with suspicion and carefully analysed by special committees in relation to both their theological and scientific aspects. From the medical-pathological point of view, they supported the contrasting opinions of doctors who, like Ferdinand Lefebvre,<sup>48</sup> asserted the scientific inexplicability of the cases. A year later, in 1889, *La Civiltà Cattolica* opposed the rationalist approach anew and included a study focusing solely on stigmata (defined as one of the most important gifts of God, with only ecstasy outranking it). This time there was no mention of the sanctification processes, the purpose of the article was to demonstrate the “historical and factual reality,” or at least the potential divine origin of stigmata, through the case of Louise Lateau. The Jesuits, however, included

43 Bourru and Burot, *Variations de la personnalité*, Chapter 6, esp. 113. On hypnosis and stigmatization: Imbert-Gourbeyre, *L'Hypnotisme et la stigmatisation*.

44 Apte, *Les stigmatisés*, esp. 8–9.

45 For example, the Belgian doctor Albert Bessemans left open the question as to whether science would succeed in explaining all cases of stigmatization, and linked the belief in the stigmata to the faith of those who examined them. Bessemans, *De stigmatisatie*, 46.

46 “Le estasi, la medicina e la Chiesa (I–IV),” *Civ. Cat.* 39, 11 (1888), 267–281, 533–547.

47 “Le estasi, la medicina e la Chiesa (V–IX),” *Civ. Cat.* 39, 12 (1888), 33–50, 400–413; “Le estasi, la medicina e la Chiesa,” *Civ. Cat.* 40, 1 (1889): 8–24.

48 Klaniczay, “Louise Lateau.”

her in a long Catholic tradition of over 50 cases, starting with St Francis (with Görres featuring as a point of reference).<sup>49</sup>

The medical approach to the stigmata declined by the late 1930s, when theories of hysteria and hypnosis lost credibility in psychiatric practice.<sup>50</sup> As a result, publishing overviews of stigmatics from the medical point of view ceased to be a novelty.<sup>51</sup> The political context had also changed: France, the champion in the pathologizing of religion, had enacted the triumph of laicism with the 1905 law of the separation of Church and State.<sup>52</sup> By the mid-twentieth century, lists of stigmatics were published mainly by Catholic scholars, with the intention to either revive the Catholic belief in stigmatics or, on the contrary, to restrain the penchant for the supernatural.

Some of the lists published at the time attempted to direct the attention of the Church to the positive impact that stigmatics had on Catholic faith. They did not intend to highlight a type of stigmatic in particular, but to recognize the Catholic mission of the bearers of the wounds throughout history. By way of example, we can mention the German Catholic writer and publisher, Johannes Höcht (1901–1966), who defended the edifying role of the stigmatics' suffering for Catholicism and criticized Imbert-Gourbeyre for focusing his attention on the wonders of stigmatics rather than their virtues.<sup>53</sup> Höcht's book was first published in 1951 and has had several new editions since (the sixth was published in 2004), illustrating the continuing interest in the phenomenon and list-making. New biographies were added to Höcht's original list even after the death of the author.<sup>54</sup>

49 "Luisa Lateau o l'estatica stigmatizzata di Bois-d'Haine," in "Le estasi, la medicina e la Chiesa. Estasi e stigmatate. Le stigmatate nella storia della mistica cristiana," *Civ. Cat.* 40, 1 (1889), 669–682, 673–683. See e.g. St Francis, Catherine of Racconigi, Veronica Giuliani, Isabella Hendrickx, Maria von Mörl, LL. *La Civiltà Cattolica* explained the more cautious position of the Church in an article about mystical phenomena in 1888–1889. "Le stigmatate classiche della mistica cristiana," *Civ. Cat.* 40, 3 (1889): 669–683, 680.

50 Micale, "On the 'disappearance' of hysteria," 496–526.

51 An exception is Lhermitte, *Mystiques et faux mystiques*, 77–97.

52 Haupt, "Religion and nation in Europe," 81.

53 Höcht, *Träger der Wundmale Christi*, 1951 edition, 6.

54 For a present-day example of such lists, see that of Michael Freze, a Franciscan tertiary. In addition to narrating the best-known cases of stigmatization in history, from St Francis to Marthe Robin, Freze made a small inquiry into alleged living stigmatics, which confirmed to him the Christian "mystery" of the stigmata, Freze, *They bore the wounds of Christ*, 255–289. Using a similar style, the German Catholic writer Michael Hesemann dedicated his book to John Paul II and examined the life and afterlife of "classic" stigmatics such as Emmerick. To keep the phenomenon alive, Hesemann also mentioned recent cases of stigmatization that physicians could not explain, Hesemann, *Stigmata*, 11–23.

Höcht and other Catholic authors publishing enthusiastic compilations on stigmatics, such as the British clergyman Montague Summers (1880–1948), were known for their unshakable faith in other supernatural phenomena, such as Marian apparitions.<sup>55</sup> As a result, such works were said to lack a critical approach, which was provided by more sceptical Catholic scholars, notably the British Jesuit priest Herbert Thurston (1856–1939). Thurston was renowned for his scepticism and his exposure of popular myths in the life of saints.<sup>56</sup> In his opinion, apart from St Francis, there were no conclusive cases of stigmata, although he remained undecided in some cases as regards the nature of their wounds. Popular stigmatics such as Marie-Julie Jahenny and Therese Neumann (1898–1962) were to him merely “religiously obsessed” or “neurotic” women, victims of what he called a “crucifixion complex.”<sup>57</sup> His works, *The Physical Phenomena of Mysticism* (1952) and *Surprising Mystics* (1955), sat alongside those of other priests who wished to express caution with regard to popular beliefs about mysticism, but also with regard to alleged supernatural phenomena outside Catholicism, such as poltergeists and clairvoyance.<sup>58</sup> Functioning almost as the “devil’s advocate” in canonization causes, their aim was to restrain popular enthusiasm over dubious cases, including all kinds of stigmatics (religious and lay, male and female) and support the vigilant attitude of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in acknowledging extraordinary phenomena.<sup>59</sup>

To conclude, as mentioned above, the authors of lists of stigmatics selected their cases based on a general “category” of the stigmatic as the bearer of the holy wounds, visible or invisible. In the works of authors such as Imbert-Gourbeyre and Höcht, it is clear that they attempted to collect as many cases as possible that fulfilled this general criterion.

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55 Summers also based his list (1950) on Imbert-Gourbeyre’s findings, but including the stars of his time: Padre Pio and Therese Neumann. He vindicated the authenticity of their cases, and claimed to have confidential information about other living stigmatics, Summers, *The Physical Phenomena of Mysticism*, 247.

56 He had the same attitude towards spiritualist phenomena, which he investigated as a member of the Society for Psychical Research. Heimann, “Thurston, Herbert.”

57 Other stigmatics acknowledged by the Church, such as Emmerick, were not spared similar judgements. Furthermore, he justified the caution the ecclesiastical authority showed with regards to Padre Pio, Thurston, *The Physical Phenomena*, 96, 109; Thurston, *Surprising Mystics*, 83, 163.

58 See, e.g. Father Staehlin’s work *Apariciones*. Staehlin’s papers are kept at the Archives of the Society of Jesus in Alcalá de Henares (Madrid). However, those concerning stigmatics and other mystical phenomena are not yet accessible.

59 About the figure of the devil’s advocate, see Vidal, “Miracles.”

We have drawn on these lists in our exploratory work, and created our own “list” of stigmatics as an appendix.<sup>60</sup> In particular, we focused on the frequent reports of stigmatization in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in countries that, according to Antoine Imbert-Gourbeyre (and others), produced the largest numbers of stigmatics: Italy, France, Germany, Spain and Belgium.<sup>61</sup> Mapping these and putting them on a timeline allowed us to ask questions about stigmatics as products of their time and place. We will specifically ask about which time and what place they were reported.

### 2.2 *Moments of Increased Attention? The Place and Time of Stigmata*

What does it mean to regard someone claiming to suffer from stigmata as a “stigmatic”? The term, as it was conceptualized during the nineteenth century, did not inhabit a historically stable and ideologically neutral position, but was rather constructed and determined in relation to shifting cultural frames of reference. When Antoine Imbert-Gourbeyre depicted Palma Matarrelli as a “stigmatic” in *Les stigmatisées*, he inadvertently launched the notion of a transnational republic of stigmatized mystics, in which the Italian city of Oria in Puglia and the Belgian village of Bois-d’Haine were connected through the holy wounds: “Palma has known Louise [Lateau] for three years: she sees her, she calls her by her name when in ecstasy [...] On Good Friday last year, Palma was particularly surprised to see Louise having come to resemble the Crucified One, with swollen lips, pallid face, bleeding wounds, etc.”<sup>62</sup> In accounts such as *Les stigmatisées*, in the purported words of the stigmatics themselves, and in publications that placed nineteenth-century stigmatics such as Matarrelli and Lateau side by side with stigmatized mystics of the Middle Ages, these divinely blessed figures were linked together across the boundaries of space and time. The link with the Middle Ages falls outside the present scope, but of note here is how this connection was presented either as a disruption of nineteenth-century religion, or as illustrative of longstanding continuity. These varying

60 For such an approach, see the work of Joachim Boufflet: the historian of religion and mysticism expands the list to include the stigmatics of the twentieth century. We are grateful to Joachim Boufflet for having shared his list with us.

61 Imbert-Gourbeyre, *La stigmatisation*, 571; Boufflet, *Les stigmatisés*, 21, the names of the countries are the same for the two centuries, their ranking is not. We will discuss the consequences of this selection below.

62 This connection was made explicit by Matarrelli herself. See Imbert-Gourbeyre, *Les stigmatisées. II. Palma d’Oria*, 3–4: “Depuis trois ans, Palma connaît Louise, elle la voit, elle l’appelle par son nom dans l’extase [...] Le Vendredi Saint de l’an dernier surtout, Palma fut fort étonnée de voir Louise devenue semblable au Crucifié, ayant les lèvres enflées, le visage comme livide, les plaies sanglantes, etc ...” For an examination of Imbert-Gourbeyre’s relationship with Matarrelli, see Klaniczay, “The stigmatized Italian visionary.”



representations naturally influenced how – and even *if* – mystics were singled out because of their stigmata. For the historian, it does not suffice to speak of “modern” stigmata solely in terms of continuity with the Middle Ages; one must also trace the fissures and fault-lines in the phenomenon’s development.

Two broader reflections on geography and chronology are therefore necessary at this stage. Imbert-Gourbeyre’s publication of *Les stigmatisées* in 1873 was motivated by the precarious, and in his eyes, severely unjust, situation in France after the humiliation at Versailles and the antireligious violence of the Paris Commune.<sup>63</sup> Stigmata, ecstasy and political prophecies could indeed be weaponized – sometimes successfully, sometimes quixotic – in quests (by others) against an array of perceived enemies of an intransigent Catholicism, from liberal politics to mechanized godless modernities. Of importance for our intentions here is how Imbert-Gourbeyre, in singling out stigmatics and situating them within a transnational community of supernaturally inclined mystics, laid the foundations for subsequent attempts at explaining stigmatics as manifestations of cultural anxieties bubbling to the surface in certain places, and at certain times.

Matters of geography and chronology have long posed methodological and narrative challenges for the historian of the religious supernatural. Epiphenomena such as stigmata, but also ecstasy or visions, are no longer the “lost souls of historiography” they were 30 years ago.<sup>64</sup> In recent decades, Western European religious history of the period under consideration in this book has turned its attention to religious phenomena. However, historians sometimes still maintain a certain reluctance to engage with them as *topoi* of religious beliefs and practices; and they do at times deploy “rituals of distancing,” to borrow a term Diane Purkiss used when reviewing the historiography of early modern witchcraft.<sup>65</sup> Distancing, in this context, implies that scholarship has focused on explaining away beliefs in epiphenomena or bypassing them entirely to focus instead on the circumstances in which epiphenomena such as stigmata could occur, rather than on the devotional meanings invested in them by the stigmatics themselves and their believers. This has resulted in a historiography characterized by an emphasis on the contested, symbolic spaces into which stigmatics were injected,<sup>66</sup> or on the scientific and pathological ramifications.<sup>67</sup>

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63 Sandoni, “Political mobilizations.”

64 Blackbourn, *Marpingen*, 13.

65 Purkiss, *The Witch*, 54.

66 For example, in the culture wars of the late nineteenth century, see Chapter 4.

67 Marques, “Experiencing Religion.”

One consequence of this approach is that, despite the overwhelming majority of female stigmatics, the focus is often on men (it was mostly men) who went to observe them and the opinions that they formed, and on those experts (also men) who took it upon themselves to record “superstitions,” feeding into narrative myths of the “stigmatic chaser” (Imbert-Gourbeyre) or other “privileged curious” as great male scientists in the nineteenth century. In this regard, the scholarly attention that Imbert-Gourbeyre and his *Les stigmatisées* have received compared to Matarrelli is illustrative.<sup>68</sup> Both approaches emphasize the stigmatic in the largely passive role assigned to them by their contemporaries: as a symbol or as an object of science. The symbolic significance attributed to stigmatics has proven to be a particularly compelling framework for explaining why they rose to the fore in certain circumstances. Religious epiphenomena have predominantly been explained as products of their “environment,” which takes on both a geographical and a chronological form. Locations and moments of particular socio-political and religious anxieties created a meaningful backdrop for religious supernatural epiphenomena to rise to public prominence.

In these histories that seek to explain the nineteenth and twentieth-century miraculous – inspired by materialist, sociological and cultural methodologies – certain components return again and again. They speak of socio-economic destitution of local communities, of religious (anti-Catholic) persecution, of regime changes and war, and of a range of cultural anxieties – a widespread mood of desperation. These instabilities, which profoundly disrupted daily life, to some extent help explain why stigmatics (and other epiphenomena) were singled out, and situate such events within larger social dynamics, whether the outbreak of a far-reaching economic crisis and the *Kulturkampf* in the 1870s or the political instability and Great Depression of the interwar period.<sup>69</sup>

These components – wars, Church-State conflicts, socio-economic anxieties – need to be factored into the emergence in the nineteenth century of the archetypical “stigmatic” as a young, impressionable woman in an impoverished and devoutly Catholic rural setting, often in contested borderlands between emerging European nations where different forms of authority – regional, national and ecclesiastical – competed with each other. When charting occurrences of stigmata in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it indeed quickly becomes possible to distinguish trends that ground the phenomenon firmly in wider cultural contexts. It is certainly obvious that stigmata were not merely

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68 Sandoni, “Political mobilizations”; Klaniczay, “The stigmatized Italian visionary.”

69 Blackburn, *Marpingen*; Christian, *Visionaries*.

“religious” in the general sense of a transcendent manifestation of an inner life, but were embedded in and interacting with their surroundings and times.

To create our corpus of cases of stigmatization, we drew upon lists of stigmatics (e.g. created by Antoine Imbert-Gourbeyre and Joachim Boufflet) and added new names we found through cross referencing, and published and unpublished sources. We thus followed the same logic as the creators of the original lists and used “stigmatic” as a category (thus references to alleged stigmatization, visible or invisible, as selection criteria).<sup>70</sup> We found 245 stigmatics (as a general category)<sup>71</sup> and we used their biographical information to create a chronological chart (see Fig. 1.2) and a map (see Fig. 1.3). Throughout the period under examination in this book, three notable waves can be observed, during which stigmata and their bearers became publicly visible. All of them markedly coalesce with times that were clearly demarcated as moments of political and economic upheaval; moreover, they seem at first glance to be concentrated in regions characterized by particular instability and/or Catholic devotional impulses:

- (1) The first “advent” of stigmatics (as a general category not a specific type) occurred in the 1830s–1840s. It was primarily concentrated in the borderlands of the Italian States, the Habsburg Empire and the southern German states.<sup>72</sup>
- (2) In the 1870s–1880s, we notice a second surge, running parallel to what was at the time dubbed the “Great Depression,” a prolonged period of global economic crisis that lasted until 1896.<sup>73</sup>
- (3) A third wave crashed over Europe in the political and economic turmoil of the interwar period, although its momentum began with the onset and trauma of the First World War.<sup>74</sup>

As this succinct chronological overview shows, it may be tempting to overlay waves of reports of supernatural events (similar chronologies of rises and falls have previously been constructed for other phenomena, most extensively for

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<sup>70</sup> See the list, with biographies, at the end of the book.

<sup>71</sup> For a chart including the numbers of stigmatics as a type, see Fig. 1.4, which we discuss below.

<sup>72</sup> See Gißibl, *Frömmigkeit*, 12: rise in occurrences in the episcopacy of Munich Freising in this period.

<sup>73</sup> Blackbourn similarly saw in the economic conditions of the newly unified German nation the main explanation for the cluster of Marian apparitions in Marpingen. Blackbourn, *Marpingen*.

<sup>74</sup> The Great War has in recent years received bountiful attention from scholars of religion and the supernatural. See, e.g. Davies, *A Supernatural War*.

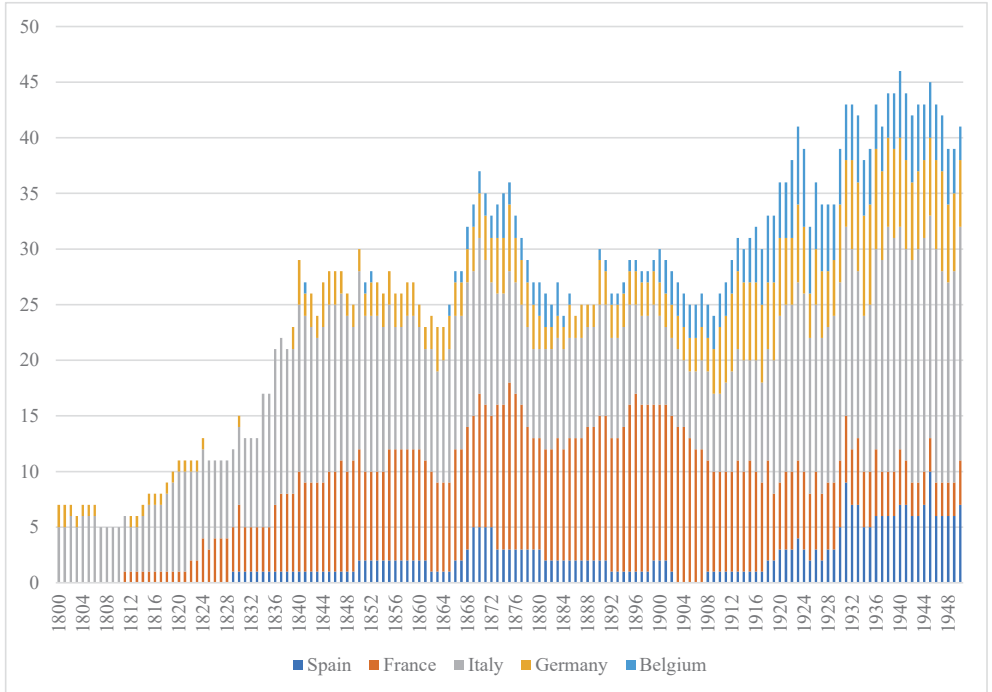


FIGURE 1.2 Total number of people bearing the stigmata per country, 1800–1950. The borders of nations changed dramatically over the course of the period under consideration; those cases of stigmatization in regions that changed hands, such as Apollonia Filzinger near Strasbourg, have been included in the data for the country within today's borders

Marian apparitions) with historical political and economic events during the period and/or place. There is indeed a substantial rise in numbers of politically oriented prophecies and visions in periods and locations of crisis. To the comfortable observer, history accelerates in certain moments, when different developments converge to create historical currents in which people might have felt as if they were being swept away. A timeframe that was felt to be catastrophic or even apocalyptic, then, necessitated widespread sentiment that hope could be found in unlikely places. People blessed with Christ's wounds offered such hope.

The beginning of the nineteenth century is generally considered such a watershed moment: "[A]fter the French Revolution, the Napoleonic wars, the decline of the *Ancien Régime* and the impact of secularisation processes," as Nicole Priesching writes, "many people felt uncertain about the poor state of the world. The decline of the old and an emerging modernity were experienced

by many as catastrophic, as a divine punishment.”<sup>75</sup> Several scholars of stigmata have, like Priesching, made the same connection between the currents of history and the resurgent “waves” of supernatural phenomena.<sup>76</sup> Others have chosen to emphasize how stigmatics were embedded in wider cultural tides and have situated them, for example, in the context of a vibrant, religious Romanticism.<sup>77</sup>

Other evolutions also deserve mention in this context, such as the development of the press and mass media, and changes in the public sphere and public opinion. If the supernatural emerges as a more powerful religious and cultural register in times of perceived unease and discomfort, the careful historian must be wary about imposing cultural concepts such as “Romanticism” or “feminisation”<sup>78</sup> on it. We should also resist the temptation to explain away the ebb and flood of the attraction of stigmata under blanket categories, without taking into account the developments in reporting on these phenomena. This is a matter of hermeneutics: shifts in press and public opinion, for example, have determined our sources. Although some stigmatics explicitly stated (or are *reported* to have stated) that they regarded their stigmatization as supporting Church campaigns against liberalism or “modernity,” or were directly linked to socioeconomic conditions, these conclusions cannot be extended to other stigmatics who did not make such links but who were nonetheless written about in such terms by their contemporaries, or understood in these ways by posterity.

Did these anxieties and developments create the “right” circumstances for a stigmatic and did religious manifestations such as the wounds of Christ tend to emerge above the surface in moments of perceived crisis, or did they emerge because, in these moments, the surface became permeable to signs of divine intervention? In other words, do crises shape a more appreciative atmosphere – a “mood of desperation” – for stigmatics to be recognized and elevated to positions of mystical (and other) authority?<sup>79</sup> Are the three waves of stigmatics indicative of people who were simply in the right place at the right time, where and when there was an expression of cultural yearning for divine signs, whether apparitions, visions, or stigmata? Or, were they presented as reactive only because polemicists and authorities saw in them powerful

75 Priesching, “Mystikerinnen,” 93.

76 See, e.g. Weiß, “Stigmata,” 117, who also designates the beginning of the nineteenth century as the moment of change because of a Catholic crisis in modernization.

77 On Romanticism and increased interest in/popularity of St Francis, see, e.g. Raab, “Joseph Görres,” 354.

78 Weiß, “Stigmata,” 117.

79 Christian, “Afterword.”

instruments for their campaigns (either positively, against, for example, the liberal nation-state or “secularisation,” or negatively, against, for example, the Church or Catholic nation-states)? Although in many ways these questions may read like a chicken-or-egg issue, it is important to disentangle the different parameters that establish a “stigmatic chronology” if we are to avoid reducing stigmatics to merely signs of the times.

This is not to say that stigmatics did not inhabit roles of scientific, economic or political significance, as we will see, nor that their actions and impact were not informed by their contextual environment. On the contrary, while often confined to their bedroom, many stigmatics nevertheless positioned themselves explicitly *in* the larger outside world. To depict them, therefore, as a reactive phenomenon, and as repositories of meaning in this sense, would be to take a certain kind of “authoritative” source at face value, which often follows a logic of opposition, control and marginalization. In fact, such sources focus precisely on the stigmatic’s pathology or poverty, or frame them within the context of a region’s politics, “superstition” or their relationship with the Church. Such moves towards contextualization in the stigmatic’s time and space are, then, not the invention of social and cultural historians of the past decades; they actually set the tone in many of our scientific, ecclesiastical and civil sources. These sources are the residue of a response: they exist because the stigmatic with which they were concerned posed a perceived mystery, problem or risk. They are, therefore, particularly useful indicators in the study of why stigmatics were singled out or grouped together; however, in the end, they reveal more about the signifier and their preoccupations than about the signified.

The same is true when we look at stigmatic geographies. To speak of a top five “stigmatic countries” is misleading, not only insofar as it is constituted predominantly on the basis of traits that determined whether someone with stigmata was included or excluded, which in turn were influenced by the ulterior motives of those who drew up lists of stigmatics such as Imbert-Gourbeyre. A top five is also problematic because it skirts around issues of locality; first and foremost, in its definition of countries. Nineteenth-century processes of nation-building complicate local and regional sensibilities, especially when following the idea that religious epiphenomena occur predominantly in regions of contestation and borderlands. To take the first chronological wave of stigmatics as an example: is it fair to speak of the many stigmatic women in the Tyrol as an Italian phenomenon, more than 30 years before the conclusion of the Risorgimento? Should some be qualified instead as Austrian?

Second, the top five poses hermeneutical problems because it disavows dynamics between regions within one country, as pointed out, for example, in the

differences between northern and southern Germany. Elke Pahud de Mortanges highlighted this geographical divide through the lens of Enlightenment traditions in the German states, and claimed that in those states where an early formation of a Catholic “environment” took place, “the number of stigmatisations increased.”<sup>80</sup> In some regions, the harsh light of the Enlightenment cast longer shadows than in others. Whereas in the southern German states and the Tyrol stigmatics were tolerated or even warmly welcomed by local communities and Church authorities, in contrast, as Bernward Schulze points out, in Prussia, with its Protestant and Enlightened traditions (firmly institutionalized by the State), Catholic miracles encountered an organized administrative response, as Anna Katharina Emmerick (1774–1824) discovered at the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>81</sup>

Subsequently, the binary between rationality and the “hallucinations of mysticism” has provided critics and sceptics with powerful ammunition to paint other regions as superstitious and backward. In a much-cited opinion piece from 1854, Alfred Maury expressed the view that inclinations to epiphenomena were closely intertwined with national mentalities:

In France, the cooling down of beliefs explains how, since the previous century, ecstatic mysticism has become an ever rarer phenomenon; but in those regions where, by contrast, Catholic faith has maintained its fervour, such aberrations still occur in rapid succession. In Bavaria, in the Tyrol, along the banks of the Rhine, Catholic mysticism thrives. The German spirit is predisposed to contemplation and illuminism.<sup>82</sup>

A third geographical issue is also concerned with dynamics across borders – not between regions but transnationally. Stigmatics who were becoming a public sensation could be transformed into internationally known saintly celebrities, sometimes over the course of a few months; a process aided by the explosion of print reporting and the yellow press. When writing the history of stigmatics, we must bear in mind how different levels of geography are interconnected and how stigmatic reputations (be they saint, celebrity or disgrace) can travel

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80 “[...] häufen sich die Stigmatisierungen.” Pahud de Mortanges, “Irre,” 210. Konstanz and Baden versus Prussia and Rhineland.

81 Schulze, “Die ‘angeblich’ stigmatisierte Theresia Winter,” 139–140.

82 “En France, le refroidissement des croyances explique comment, depuis le dernier siècle, le mysticisme extatique devient un phénomène de plus en plus rare; mais dans les contrées au contraire où la foi catholique est restée pleine de ferveur, ces aberrations se produisent encore à des intervalles peu éloignés. En Bavière, dans le Tyrol, sur les bords du Rhin, le mysticisme catholique est très florissant. L’esprit allemande est porté à la contemplation et à l’illuminisme.” Maury, “Des hallucinations,” 475.

from the local to the international level and from countryside to city – and back. Local village phenomena such as Maria Domenica Lazzeri (1815–1848) or Maria von Mörl (1812–1868) gained international fame and, in turn – in what we can consider a case of “trickle-down mysticism” – inspired local emulation in the Tyrol and elsewhere. Throughout this volume, the dynamic between microhistory and transnational history, between cradle and world, is palpable.



Stigmatics were the products of their environment: their time and space. Outsiders understood or framed them in terms of their surroundings, from mental health to economic conditions to political upheaval; from hysteria to Great Depression to *Kulturkampf*. The moment and location of their occurrence, as we have argued, must be thematized by the careful historian of stigmata. However, the circumstances – geographical and chronological – in which someone with stigmata became known and seen as a “stigmatic” must still be addressed in one way or another if we are to redress the balance in favour of the stigmatic and their believers.

To return to the Tyrol, the “holy land” of stigmata in the early nineteenth century: its cluster of stigmatics was taken up by serial publications in German, French and English, but notably not in Italian (as such again undermining the argument for their inclusion in boosting Italy’s place in the top five, a boost arguably not needed to assure the country of its high ranking). Tyrol could best be seen as an independent, religious entity, as Priesching has also argued, characterized by a “movement toward religious renewal” steeped in baroque piety that one could also see in other places with strong regional identities, and that manifested itself – in the case of Tyrol and Bavaria – in the form of clusters of stigmatics.<sup>83</sup> However, Tyrol’s status as “holy land” was lost in the Austrian *Kulturkampf*, another indication that its geographical position is defined by its fluidity rather than by its boundaries.

In reconstructing the geographical and chronological circumstances in which stigmatics emerged, we must be careful not to ignore or dismiss the stigmatic’s own agency in the many roles that could be assigned to them. Although bedridden and suffering, they were nonetheless active in shaping and transforming their own image, and made attempts to influence events rather than merely undergoing them, often in the arena of politics or culture war. Stigmatics engaged with the world (and let their voice be heard) by prophesizing the restoration of a monarchy or the outbreak of a war, as did Matarrelli,

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83 “Religiöse Erneuerungsbewegung,” Priesching, *Maria von Mörl*, 17. See also Schulze, “Die ‘angeblich’ stigmatisierte Theresia Winter,” 139–140.





FIGURE 1.3 Map of cases of stigmatization reported in present-day Belgium, Germany, Italy, France and Spain (1800–1950)  
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or by giving voting advice to devotees, or by taking on the suffering of their local communities when they were swept up by the tidal waves of national or international politics. By doing so, they inadvertently contributed to post-hoc interpretations that explained stigmatics in terms of the crisis with which they associated themselves.

Rather than focus on how the environment can explain the why and how of the frequencies of occurrences of stigmata, we argue that cultural shifts and geographical and chronological specificities may help clarify why stigmatics were problematized in certain places and moments and not in others. To do so, we will shift our attention to the stigmatic and their community and attempt a holistic approach that hopefully shows a “total context,” in which stigmatics can be situated as an integral dimension of the environment, rather than as merely reactive or a by-product. This might complicate previous neat understandings of stigmata – in which, for example, Matarrelli equates with 1871, which equates with the Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune – but deepens our understanding of why stigmatics inhabited so powerful and persistent a place in the imagination and devotion of people across Europe. Perhaps most importantly, this approach allows for the excavation of the stigmatic’s voice from under the sediment of discourse and pathology.

Below we propose an open-ended framework for scholarship on stigmata that consists of three historical and analytical categories, and which may help sketch out the chronological and geographical circumstances, thereby

integrating beliefs and practices grounded in experience without minimizing the miraculous and its affectionate intimacy – for the stigmatic and for their community.

- (1) Frames of reference. As already hinted at, stigmata were generally considered to be a “concurring phenomenon,” that is, fitting into broader profiles of supernatural mysticism. Nevertheless, they were singled out as a problematic category and as a devotional attraction in their own right in certain times and places. That did not, however, lead to their bearers being defined as stigmatics by the public, who wielded their own frame of reference in naming the subject of their devotion or curiosity. Stigmatics were variously called “the ecstatic (with the stigmata),” “the prophet,” “the living saint,” “the miracle girl,” and so on. For “stigmatic” to function as a type means that the term corresponded to certain expectations, encouragements and rejections, which may have been shared by some, but were never universal. At any given point, different understandings of “stigmatic” co-existed, directed by emotional, religious, cultural and somatic registers available to people.
- (2) Authority. Such as ecclesiastical opposition/support. As we will discuss in more detail in Chapter 7, the Church always had a suspicious attitude to living stigmatics and mystics. It actively supported the canonized saints (e.g. St Francis), while submitting contemporary cases to the Inquisitional Court and forbidding the publication of the most controversial books dedicated to them (through the tribunal of the *Index* or the denial of *imprimatur* by the bishop). The head of a religious order could put a stop to all promotional efforts to enhance the popularity of a member of his/her order (such as in the case of Padre Pio, for example). Similarly, public authorities also intervened (see Chapters 5, 6 and 7), and the power to intervene and evaluate was challenged by other initiatives.
- (3) Experience, or the question of authenticity. Understood here both as the veracity of the stigmata as something to be tested empirically and scientifically, and as the authentic experience of visiting a stigmatic in person, “authenticity” arose as a modern notion and one which determined not only the medical diagnosis of a stigmatic and verdicts of fraud, but also lay at the core of belief systems and informed sensibilities or public awareness; for example, spikes in media reporting on stigmatics.<sup>84</sup> (See Chapters 3, 5 and 6).

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84 Media landscapes also differed across the countries studied in this volume. On experience as an “interpreted experience” (“gedeutete Erfahrung”), see Priesching, *Maria von Mörl*, 26.

Considered in combination, these analytical categories provide us with a toolbox to study stigmatics. Chronological “waves” and geographical “clusters” are of course thoroughly entangled. More importantly, these categories are themselves unstable: the regional cluster of Tyrolean stigmatics sparked an international wave in the 1830s and 1840s, yet was itself relatively short-lived, being so closely associated with the figures of Maria von Mörl and Maria Domenica Lazzari. They were indeed the reference models for a dozen other alleged young stigmatized women gifted with divine charisms, who lived in the same decade, all within a few square kilometres. Lazzari’s death in 1848 and von Mörl’s retreat into confined living marked the beginning of the end for the “holy land” of stigmata.

In contrast, Palma Matarrelli can best be placed within a wave and within a region only when observing that region for a length of time that includes several upsurges of stigmatics. However, she was not emulated in her time, with her dark character and, above all, the severity of Vatican censorship probably a disincentive for other mystical aspirants to follow her lead, and not incur the same fate. Puglia, unlike the Tyrol, in which there were numerous but chronologically circumscribed cases of stigmatization, is a region in which the phenomenon proliferated for a long time, continuing beyond the life of Palma (see Padre Pio in the twentieth century).<sup>85</sup> Other centres, such as Rome and Naples, were places with a high intensity of stigmatics, in which the spatio-temporal coordinates were of significance in their perception by contemporaries.

Space and time – the moment and location of a stigmatic manifestation – are not easily untangled; they are interwoven but, as we have shown, both are comprised of different layers, and perhaps it is more meaningful to speak of a *space-time* or “devotional arena” in which expressions of a particular form of religiosity were evoked and enabled that would in other areas be dismissed as inappropriate or unviable.<sup>86</sup>

The framework suggested here is comprised of categories that question and complicate a stigmatic’s chronology and geography – within and beyond the top five stigmatic countries, and within and outside the historicized canon of stigmatics from the Middle Ages to the twenty-first century. It can be used to question lists of archetypical nineteenth and twentieth-century stigmatics as well as the series of historical cases from St Francis of Assisi to Padre Pio; and to delve into issues of legacy, remembrance and ongoing or renewed devotion to certain stigmatics “after the facts” for a range of possible different reasons (see below).

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85 See Chapter 7.

86 Seymour, “Emotional arenas.”

“Stigmatic” is therefore a term best used with caution, and also to be read carefully in our sources, where it sometimes seems to have been used to refer to miraculous epiphenomena other than stigmata as such, perhaps because other phenomena were more interesting for the public in a particular place. When Görres wrote to Brentano about Filzinger, for example, he characterized her as “a new stigmatic that does not eat.”<sup>87</sup> Finally, we must keep in mind that such characterizations and definitions are not the monopoly of the stigmatic chaser, such as Imbert-Gourbeyre, but subject to an interlocked dynamic between stigmatic chasers, the stigmatized and their audience of devotees and sensation seekers. This dynamic itself shifts and changes depending on specific national, regional and temporal cultural contexts.

### 3 The Invention of “Stigmatics”

#### 3.1 *Defining the Stigmatic*

While exploring some of the cases that have been traced, it became increasingly clear that “stigmatic” was not only used as a general category denoting all individuals who carried the stigmata (visible or invisible) – perhaps among other charismata – but that the term also referred to a specific type of stigmatic – one for whom the stigmata were a most defining feature. The book focuses on this “stigmatic” type, which emerged in the nineteenth century and became stereotypical, although there continued to be a wide variety of people who allegedly carried the wounds of Christ. The stereotypical stigmatic was a young woman bearing the visible wounds of Christ and drawing attention to herself because of the bleeding stigmata.

Before we start exploring the development of this type, we need to recall the caveats concerning our use of the word “stigmatic.” Interestingly, the term did not develop in all of the languages in which our sources were written, or at least not at the same time. We opted for the English word, although it was not frequently used in English-language sources in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>88</sup> Its relative rarity contrasts with the use of the German

87 “[...] es ist wieder eine Stigmatisirte, die nicht isst,” cited in Raab, “Joseph Görres,” 363.

88 We do find it, for example, in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (Poulain, “Mystical Stigmata”), but we could trace no consensual deployment of the term. Particularly in media sources from the mid-nineteenth century onward, the French “stigmatisée” seems to have been the most common signifier. We thank Kristof Smeyers for pointing to the relative rareness of the word in English sources.

“Stigmati/e/rte,” and Dutch “gestigmatiseerde.”<sup>89</sup> The term was also adopted in Spanish (“estigmatizada”) and Italian (“stigmatizzato/a”), although these seem to be later creations.<sup>90</sup>

While we agree with Xenia von Tippelskirch that it is important to ask when and where stigmatization is presumed and to examine how the phenomenon is described,<sup>91</sup> our focus is on the stigmatics and what they came to mean to their contemporaries. Like other categorizing words, nouns such as “stigmatisée” or “Stigmatisierte” imply hierarchy (stigmata as the most important feature), exclusion (a subset of “mystics”) and ideology. The meaning shifts and varies, and runs parallel with changes in the definitions of stigmatization and stigmata.

Two examples from German lexicon definitions may help demonstrate what is meant here. In both instances, the description of stigmatics was included in the explanation for the lemma “stigma” and in both cases it was the first time the lexicon included a description of stigma in a religious sense and not just as a reference to its meaning as a branding mark in antiquity. Tellingly, these first instances occur more than twenty years apart.<sup>92</sup> The *Herder Conversations-Lexikon* already included a reference in its first edition. In 1857, the fifth volume of the lexicon – from a Catholic publishing house – read as follows:

Finally, stigmatization appears historically for the first time with St Francis of Assisi and consists of the imprint of the five wounds of the crucified Saviour. While the Church has up until now only recognized a few cases as real wonders, they have not yet been adequately explained in a natural way, but have ever so often been spurned, in our days they are not even that seldom a fact. It is remarkable that among the stigmatics there are almost solely persons of the female sex, such as, recently,

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89 Or a description such as “kruiswonddragende,” Anonymous, *Louisa Lateau of de kruiswonddragende van Bois-d’Haine* (1869).

90 We will discuss this below.

91 Von Tippelskirch, “Ma fille,” 261.

92 On these lexica, see Frevert, “Gefühle definieren,” 16–17. It is interesting to note how Émile Durkheim, the father of sociology, who also initiated the semantic transfer of “stigmatization” from theology to the social sciences, gave importance to the religious element when explaining deviant behaviour, “Imagine a society of saints, a perfect cloister of exemplary individuals. Crimes or deviance, properly so-called, will there be unknown; but faults, which appear venial to the layman, will there create the same scandal that the ordinary offense does in ordinary consciousnesses. If then, this society has the power to judge and punish, it will define these acts as criminal (or deviant) and will treat them as such,” Durkheim, *The Rules*, 68–69.

the nun Anna Katharina Emmerick, the three Tyrolean ecstatic women (Maria v. Mörl, Domenica Lazzari und Crescenz Stinklutsch [sic!]) and Juliana Weiskircher from Ulrichskirchen near Vienna. Of the fact that also in the field of miraculous stigmatization fraud and deceptions exist, Görres provided examples in his *Christian Mysticism*.<sup>93</sup>

Brockhaus, the other famous German *Conversations-Lexikon*, only included a reference to the religious connotation of “stigma” and stigmatics in 1879, thus years after its first publication in 1809 and after several new editions.<sup>94</sup> We have already pointed at the importance of the political-historical context in the reception of stigmata, so for now let it suffice to point out that these were the years of the culture wars when reports on stigmatics (and other mystics) were used as political ammunition in discussion between Catholics and their fellow citizens in the still rather young Protestant Bismarckian German nation.<sup>95</sup>

In the Catholic Church, stigmatic refers to those persons on whose bodies the five wounds of Christ appear and bleed from time to time, the most well known are Francis of Assisi and in recent times Katharina Emmerick from Dülmen, Maria von Mörl and especially Louise Lateau [...] Studies have shown that such bleedings can easily be produced in an artificial way.<sup>96</sup>

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93 “Als letztere erscheint die S.tisation historisch zuerst beim hl. Franz von Assisi und besteht in der Einprägung der 5 Wundenmale des gekreuzigten Heilandes. Von der Kirche bisher nur in einzelnen Fällen als wirkliches Wunder anerkannt, wurde sie auf natürliche Weise noch nie genügend erklärt aber desto häufiger weggeleugnet, ist jedoch noch in unsern Tagen eine nicht einmal allzu selten vorkommende Thatsache. Beachtenswerth bleibt es, daß unter den S. tisirten sich fast lauter Personen weiblichen Geschlechtes befinden, so neuestens die Nonne Anna Katharina Emmerich, die 3 Tyroler ekstatischen Jungfrauen (Maria v. Mörl, Domenica Lazzari und Crescenz Stinklutsch), dann Juliana Weiskircher von Ulrichskirchen bei Wien. Daß auch im Gebiete der wunderbaren S.tisation Betrügereien und Täuschungen mit unterlaufen können, dafür lieferte Görres in seiner *Mystik Beispiele*.” “Stigma,” *Herders Conversations-Lexikon*, vol. 5, 1857, 338.

94 No references in 1809, 1817 (2), 1818, 1820 (5), 1824 (6), 1827 (7), 1836 (8), 1843–1848 (9), 1851–1855 (10), 1868 (11). The description of the lemma became even more elaborate in the thirteenth edition of 1886, when it included references to neuropathology.

95 The Belgian stigmatic, Louise Lateau, for example, became a symbolic figure. See Van Osselaer, “Stigmata.”

96 “In der katholischen Kirche werden als Stigmatisirte solche Personen bezeichnet, an deren Leibe sich die fünf Wundmale Christi zeigen und zeitweilig bluten sollen; am bekanntesten sind Franz von Assisi und in der neuen Zeit Katharina Emmerich zu Dülmen, Maria von Mörl und insbesondere Luise Lateau [...] Forschungen haben ergeben, daß derartige Blutungen sehr leicht auf künstlichem Wege erzeugt werden können [...]” “Stigma,” *Conversations-Lexikon*, vol. 14, 1879, 125.

There were some similarities in the descriptions given by the two lexica: both referred to the visible stigmata that were an imitation of Christ's wounds (and thus ignored the invisible, or figurative stigmata), and they both mention St Francis and contemporary examples, indicating that it was not solely a phenomenon of the past. In fact, it was "not even that rare a fact" ("eine nicht einmal allzu selten vorkommende Thatsache"). Both texts cautioned against frauds (due to the emphasis on the physical wounds) and mentioned the Catholic Church, suggesting that the phenomenon was Catholic. In both lexica, the descriptions became more elaborate over the years: a later edition of the *Brockhaus Lexikon* (13th edition, 1886), included a few extra lines on the pathological nature of the stigmata in some of the cases.<sup>97</sup> The German definitions were similar to what we find in Dutch and French sources from the mid and late nineteenth century. All refer to the visible wounds and to the same examples.<sup>98</sup>

So, why do we refer to general lexica and dictionaries here, rather than, for example, Catholic encyclopaedia and theological treatises of the time? The descriptions in the specialized publications are more complex and nuanced and include, for example, historical overviews, different types and interpretations of the phenomenon. What interests us here, however, is whether non-experts were using the word (and they did) and what they were referring to when they used "Stigmatisierte," "stigmatisée" or a similar word. As the examples in the lexica show, they were predominantly referring to women who exhibited the visible wounds: Anna Katherina Emmerick (1774–1824, Dülmen), Maria von Mörl (1812–1868, Kaltern), Maria Domenica Lazzeri (1815–1848, Capriana), Krescenzia Niglutsch (1816–1855, Tschermers),<sup>99</sup> Juliana Weiskircher (1824–1862, Ulrichskirch-Schleinbach) and Louise Lateau (1850–1883, Bois-d'Haine). They were all young women who displayed the physical wounds, drew public attention and received many visitors in their homes as a result. This summary description comprises two important changes that took place in the nineteenth

97 For this medical interest, see Chapter 4. The Herder edition of 1907 included a more complex description of the wounds and differentiated between the invisible and the visible ones (in all their diversity), adding other corporeal phenomena that were linked to stigmatics, and while there are references to the same stigmatics, such as Emmerick, there is mention of more than 300 stigmatics, "Stigmatisation," *Herders Konversation Lexikon*, vol. 8, 1907, c.165–166.

98 "Stigma," *Winkler Prins*, vol. 13, 1880, 382; "Stigmatisé, ée," *Dictionnaire de la langue Française*, vol. 4: Q–Z, 1873, 2046.

99 The historians are not unanimous about the village of her birth: Tschermers, Lana, Cana, San Leonardo in Passiria. On this topic, see Ludovico Maria Gadaleta, "Rosmini e l'Addolorata di Capriana," *Rivista Rosminiana di filosofia e di cultura*, 108 (2014), 2–3, 79–149, 102–103.

century: (1) a change in the profile of stigmatics and, in parallel with this, but not completely identical, (2) the development of a new type of mystic.

In her work on the visitors to modern stigmatics, Paula Kane has noted how the majority of the cases that drew most public attention involved lay women and took place outside the convent walls. "Hence, what had flourished since the Middle Ages among nuns and sisters as a personal mystical experience in a cloistered setting, was suddenly exposed to the public gaze, and even sought out by the public."<sup>100</sup> Although stigmatization was not a gender-exclusive phenomenon, the number of female stigmatics rose significantly in the nineteenth century.<sup>101</sup>

Nicole Priesching considers that the rise of this type of young female stigmatic occurred in the context of the development of a new type of female mystic, the "ecstatic woman" ("ekstatische Jungfrau"), in the nineteenth century. Although cases of mystical ecstatic women with stigmata have been reported from the Middle Ages and early modern period, this trend became predominant in late modernity. One of the characteristics of this new type was the importance of the corporeal aspects, such as ecstasy: "it was primarily because of these epiphenomena that their environment identified them as mystics."<sup>102</sup> While these women were heirs of older traditions of Passion and bridal mysticism,<sup>103</sup> the corporeal was more important than the intellectual and these women were most often not the authors of spiritual texts. Many of them had their first mystical experiences in puberty (often demonic attacks). The semi-hagiographic narratives on these mystics presented them as exemplary of the three main virtues of single women: humbleness, chastity and obedience. Often the idealization of these virtues seems to have been translated into specific corporeal practices, such as fasting, self-flagellation and specific prayer positions. Those who failed to live up to one of the virtues (e.g. obedience) could be disregarded altogether. Priesching notes that while these women came from various social backgrounds, they often had a difficult childhood (accidents and illnesses; deaths in the family), which confirmed their victim role.<sup>104</sup>

Elke Pahud de Mortanges created a similar list of characteristics of stigmatized women from the nineteenth century. Commenting on the corporeal

100 Kane, "Stigmatic Cults," 106. She refers thereby to the work of Herbert Thurston, *Surprising Mystics*, 167.

101 Pahud de Mortanges, "Fromm," 159.

102 "Es gehört aber zum Typus dieser Jungfrauen, dass ihre Umwelt sie vor allem über diese Begleiterscheinungen als Mystikerinnen identifizierte," Priesching, "Mystikerinnen," 81.

103 See Chapter 3.

104 "Demut, Keuschheit und Gehorsam," Priesching, "Mystikerinnen," 95–97.



aspect she notes how bearing the wounds was not the only exceptional phenomenon that was reported: the ability to go without food (or survive on only a little) was also reported for several of them. She sees two models of stigmatics: on the one hand, there were women who “merely” displayed the stigmata (either constantly or at specific moments) and, on the other hand, there were women who also had visions and uttered prophecies and therefore functioned as a sort of medium delivering messages.<sup>105</sup> Two aspects touched upon by Pahud de Mortanges should be mentioned here, although we will treat them more elaborately in the following chapters. Firstly, the important role that male protectors played in the lives of these women cannot be overestimated: “They contributed to their popularization and publicity, but they also held, as individuals or as ‘pressure group’, a protective hand over them.”<sup>106</sup> Secondly, these women were familiar with the stories and representations of older cases of stigmatization.<sup>107</sup>

As noted, the descriptions in the general dictionaries and lexica suggest that it was this type of stigmatic that contemporaries were thinking about when they talked about them. This might have something to do with their relative visibility in comparison with other types. Contrary to stigmatized cloistered nuns, for example, news about the stigmatization of a young laywoman was far more difficult to contain. Once word got out, it was almost impossible to stop devotees, the curious and sceptics from travelling to see these women for themselves. Newspaper articles and other publications document this interest. In some cases, the interest developed into a mass phenomenon.<sup>108</sup> Joachim Boufflet refers to this as a change in the socio-ecclesiastical status of the stigmatic: because of new developments in the means of communication and transport, it became much easier to go and see the phenomenon. He mentions Anna Katharina Emmerick as one of the earliest examples,<sup>109</sup> who, as noted above, also featured in the lexica and dictionaries as a prototypical stigmatic, receiving the wounds in 1812.

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105 Pahud de Mortanges, “Fromm,” 162; and Pahud de Mortanges, “Irre,” 209.

106 “Sie trugen zur Popularisierung und Publizität bei, sie hielten aber auch als Einzelne oder als ‘pressure group’ schützend die Hand über sie.” Pahud de Mortanges, “Fromm,” 166. For this aspect, see Chapter 5 on material culture.

107 Pahud de Mortanges, “Fromm,” 165.

108 Pahud de Mortanges, “Irre,” 209. See also the work of Rudolf Muhs on Karoline Beller (1833–1863), a stigmatic in Prussian Westphalia in 1845, who drew the attention of more than 20,000 people, not just Westphalians, but also from Hessen, Braunschweig, Hannover and Thüringen, Muhs, “Die Stigmata,” 127.

109 Boufflet, *Les stigmatisés*, 90. For a similar view, see Klaniczay, “Louise Lateau,” 291.

However, as both Otto Weiß and Paula Kane have noted, the attention she drew was relatively limited and not really a mass mobilization. She triggered the interest of many people (lay and religious) when the news of her stigmatization first became public, but after the episcopal authorities intervened only a few visitors were allowed to see her. The majority of them belonged to elite circles, for whom it was almost fashionable to have visited the nun from Dülmen.<sup>110</sup> While the stigmatic from Westphalia (Germany) certainly fits the type, and was mentioned among the examples in the lexica, it was a series of other cases of stigmatization that had a catalysing effect and inspired imitation. The group of Tyrolean stigmatics and ecstasies,<sup>111</sup> the “crusade of the delighted” (“Kreuzzug der Verzückten”), as one contemporary called it,<sup>112</sup> was not just a local phenomenon, as the names of Maria Domenica Lazzeri and Maria von Mörl became known throughout Europe. The number of people who wanted to see them was impressive. According to the German writer Joseph von Görres: “From the end of the month of July [1833] up until 15 September of that year probably 40,000 people, or more, from all classes, thronged around her.”<sup>113</sup> Joseph von Görres had a particular interest in stigmatics. His work, *Die christliche Mystik* (1836–1842), was one of the early nineteenth-century examples of a more extensive study of stigmatization.<sup>114</sup> According to Bernhard Gißibl, it was Görres writing about Maria von Mörl and his visit to her in 1835 that stimulated

110 “fast zum guten Ton gehörte” Weiß, “Seherinnen,” 60; Kane, “Stigmatic Cults,” 120–121.

111 These nouns are used interchangeably, we will discuss this below. Weiß, “Seherinnen,” 63, mentions ten ecstasies and stigmatics in South Tyrol and cites Höcht, who even claims there were about 110 “Leidenspersonen.” See Priesching (2007) for sources on these women; and Priesching *Maria von Mörl*, 92. The series included Hieronyma Stroble (Kalter), Ursula Mohr (Eppan), Schusterkind von Jenesien, Theresia Steiner (Taisten im Pustertal, 1813–862), and the already mentioned Maria Domenica Lazzeri, Maria von Mörl and Krescenzia Niglutsch.

112 A quotation of the Tyrolean Benedictine Beda Weber, cited in Priesching, *Maria von Mörl*, 92.

113 “Mit Kreuz und Fahnen machten sich ... die Gemeinden nacheinander auf und wallfarteten nach Kaldern, und der Zulauf wurde ungeheuer. Vom Ende des Monats Julius [1833] bis zum 15. September jenes Jahres mögen wohl 40.000 Menschen, und darüber, aus allen Ständen sich zu ihr gedrängt haben.” (“With cross and flags the communities mobilized one after another and made a pilgrimage to Kaldern, the turnout became uncanny.”) Görres, *Die Christliche Mystik*, 500.

114 Joseph von Görres (1776–1848) mentioned, among others, Anna Katherina Emmerick. According to Weiß, stigmata were, for Görres, the “externalisation of the inner outmost participation of the soul in the suffering of Christ.” “So sind denn auch die Stigmata für Görres die ‘Verausserlichung’ der inneren ‘übergrosse Teilnahme’ der Seele am Leiden des Erlösers,” Weiß, “Seherinnen,” 66. On Görres, see Sbalchiero, *Dictionnaire*, 322–324.

interest in her.<sup>115</sup> Maria was not the first stigmatic that Joseph von Görres had met. Ten years earlier, in 1825, he had visited Apollonia Filzinger in Homerting (near Saverne, 1801–1827, stigmata 1824). His travel companion on both trips, the romantic poet Clemens Brentano (1778–1842), was not unfamiliar with the phenomenon of stigmatization either, for he had spent five years at the bedside of that other famous stigmatic, Anna Katherina Emmerick, and would later publish her visions.<sup>116</sup> The visit to Maria von Mörl in Kaltern in 1835 seems to have left a good impression on Joseph von Görres and he included an extensive description of her in his book on Christian mysticism. It is important to consider what Nicole Priesching has noted on this study and Maria von Mörl's role in it. She remarked that since there had been precursors of ecstatic and stigmatized women in the Catholic tradition, and the number seemed to be on the rise again in the nineteenth century, there was probably a shared knowledge of the basic type (*Grundtypus*) of “ecstatic woman,” who could display a certain diversity of phenomena. Görres' work, *Die christliche Mystik*, listing different cases throughout the centuries, attempted to integrate this diversity into a typological system. Maria von Mörl was the living realization of this system for the onlooker. The way she performed her “role” was defining for her contemporaries' view of the “ecstatic woman,” and became more so the longer she received social recognition. The way Maria von Mörl (and her father confessor) behaved while she had visitors, influenced their perception of what a “real” stigmatic was.<sup>117</sup>

In relation to the series of ecstatic stigmatized women reported in Bavaria in the late 1830s, it seems to have been the Tyrolean wave – and Maria von Mörl in particular – that inspired these imitations.<sup>118</sup> The Tyrolean stigmatics were obviously not very distant (in time or geographically) from their Bavarian

115 On the role of Görres's work for the reputation of von Mörl, see Gißibl, *Frömmigkeit*, 52. He refers to Binder, “Maria von Mörl,” 450.

116 Engling, *Die Wende*, 56, 96. It was Brentano who urged his friend Joseph von Görres to write his *Die Christliche Mystik* and study stigmatization more thoroughly, Raab, “Joseph Görres,” 365. Görres first response was a study of St Francis, “Der Heilige Franziskus von Assisi, ein Troubadour,” in *Der Katholik*, 20 (1826), 14–55. Brentano himself saw a link between the two stigmatics. As Clemens Brentano wrote to his brother, 15 March 1826, the twenty-year-old orphan Filzinger, received the wounds during Lent 1824, thus shortly after the death of Anna Katharina Emmerick. Cited in Engling, *Die Wende*, 56.

117 Priesching, *Maria von Mörl*, 407 and 273 (on the institutionalization of Maria von Mörl as a process of typification [Typisierungsprozess] cfr. Berger/Luckmann).

118 Bernhard Gißibl has shown how there was a series of ecstatic women in Bavaria in the late 1830s who explicitly referred to Maria von Mörl as an example, Gißibl, *Frömmigkeit*, 57. See also Priesching, “Mystikerinnen,” 83.

fellow mystics, and this helps to explain why they functioned as examples. However, we should probably not underestimate the international media attention they also received and the publications they inspired; for example, Antonio Riccardi's *Le tre mirabili vergini* (1836)<sup>119</sup> and Leon Boré's *Les stigmatisées du Tyrol* (1843).

Whether inspired by Emmerick or the Tyrolean cases or not, in the following years we find new reports of such stigmatics,<sup>120</sup> referred to as "the stigmatic of" Lütgeneder (Karoline Beller, 1845),<sup>121</sup> of Gendringen (Dorothea Visser, 1844),<sup>122</sup> and of Wolpertswende (Viktoria Hecht, 1869).<sup>123</sup> It was a long-lasting legacy, with one of the most famous examples, the stigmatic of Konnersreuth (Therese Neumann, 1926), living nearly 80 years later.<sup>124</sup>

The fact that it was this type of stigmatic – the young woman displaying visible wounds and visited by many – that caught widespread attention and came to be synonymous with the term "stigmatic," can be linked to greater public knowledge of the type. Some visitors might have seen other stigmatics or read about them in the newspapers. In other words, because of the publicity given to the type, it became increasingly well known and recognizable. Consequently, what William A. Christian has noted with regard to the reception of Marian apparitions, holds true for the cases of stigmatization as well. Cases that resembled others might have a better chance of surviving the first reception phase of sceptical family members, friends and villagers if they exhibited similar characteristics known from other cases.<sup>125</sup>

119 The first version of "Le tre mirabili vergini" was probably published in the Catholic journal, *Cattolico Giornale religioso-letterario*, 9 (15 November 1836), vol. 2, 193–213.

120 See also the example of Walburga Zentner, from Waalhaupten, who claimed to be stigmatized in 1830 and easily fit the profile, as the following description of her illustrates (she never became well-known): "a single woman [...] who displayed the five wounds of the Saviour on her body via periodically bleeding cuts" to whose house "the people of the area started to go to" ("eine ledige Weibsperson [...], welche an ihrem Körper die fünf Wunde Male des Heilandes durch periodisch blutende Einschnitte darstelle, und das die Bewohner der Gegend anfangen nach ihren Wohnorte zu wandern"), Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv (BayHStA), MK 719, religiöse Schwarmerei der Walburga Zentner, letter to king by "königliche General, Kommissär und Regierungs Präsidenten," 24 October 1830.

121 Anonymous, *Kurze Nachricht über die Stigmatisierte zu Lütgeneder* (1845).

122 From the Netherlands, but she also drew attention in Germany. Welscher, [J.B.] te, *Die Stigmatisierte zu Gendringen. Nach genauen Beobachtungen herausgegeben* (1844).

123 Rauch, *Die Stigmatisierte von Wolpertswende* (1907).

124 Wunderle, *Die Stigmatisierte von Konnersreuth: Tatsachen, Eindrücke, Erwägungen* (1927).

125 Christian, "Afterword." See also Nicole Priesching on the expectations (built up through own experiences or communications by others, e.g. the Church) of the visitors confirmed, modified or disappointed during the visit. Priesching, *Maria von Mörl*, 21.

However, caution should prevail. Firstly, we should not overemphasize the novelty of the type. There are examples of women with the visible stigmata who drew the attention of visitors in previous eras as well. What changed – as we will see – seems to have been the meaning attached to the stigmata, their status so to speak, and the ideals of femininity linked to physical and emotional suffering. Secondly, as noted in the discussion of Imbert-Gourbeyre’s work and other lists, the interpretation of the stigmatic could be much broader. Imbert-Gourbeyre attempted to find as many stigmatics (different types) as he could and therefore his list of “stigmatisées” had a different logic from that of Leon Boré, who described a specific wave and a specific type.<sup>126</sup> For both authors, however, having the stigmata was the defining feature. Thirdly, the emergence of the type of stigmatic described in the dictionaries and lexica did not exclude the existence of other types. In fact, other types – such as the invisibly stigmatized women religious, or the charismatic, prophetic leader – continued to be reported, yet they seem not to have drawn so much attention, or the stigmata did not feature as prominently in their profiles. The continuation of other types is apparent in Fig. 1.4, where we chart the “stigmatic” type against the total number of cases of stigmatization that we could trace in the period under investigation. We selected those individuals who fit the “stigmatic” type. This offered us the opportunity to see whether the absence of the word reflected a different stigmatic landscape in Spain and Italy. The chart shows that the “stigmatic” type did not represent the majority of cases (8 out of 22 in Belgium, 19 out of 46 in Germany, 7 out of 31 in Spain, 17 out of 59 in France, and 29 out of 87 in Italy).<sup>127</sup>

This brings us to another point of caution, we must also reflect on the use of the word “stigmatic” in the sources that we study. The use of “Stigmatisierte,” “stigmatisée” and “gestigmatiseerde” seems to confirm the importance attached to the wounds during the nineteenth century; however, it did not eclipse the use of other words to denote these women. The Spanish and Italian examples seem to suggest that there was no “need” for a more specific word singling out those who had the stigmata – or at least not in the first half of the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, the moment the words start appearing in the Spanish sources, the texts refer to “stereotypical” stigmatics: Louise Lateau (“estigmatizada”) and the German Therese Neumann (in the 1930s, when the word was

126 Although there was diversity as well. For differences between Maria von Mörl and Maria Domenica Lazzeri, see Schubach, “Visiting.”

127 We address this in “Different countries/Different stigmatics”, p. 41. and “Building blocks”, p. 46.

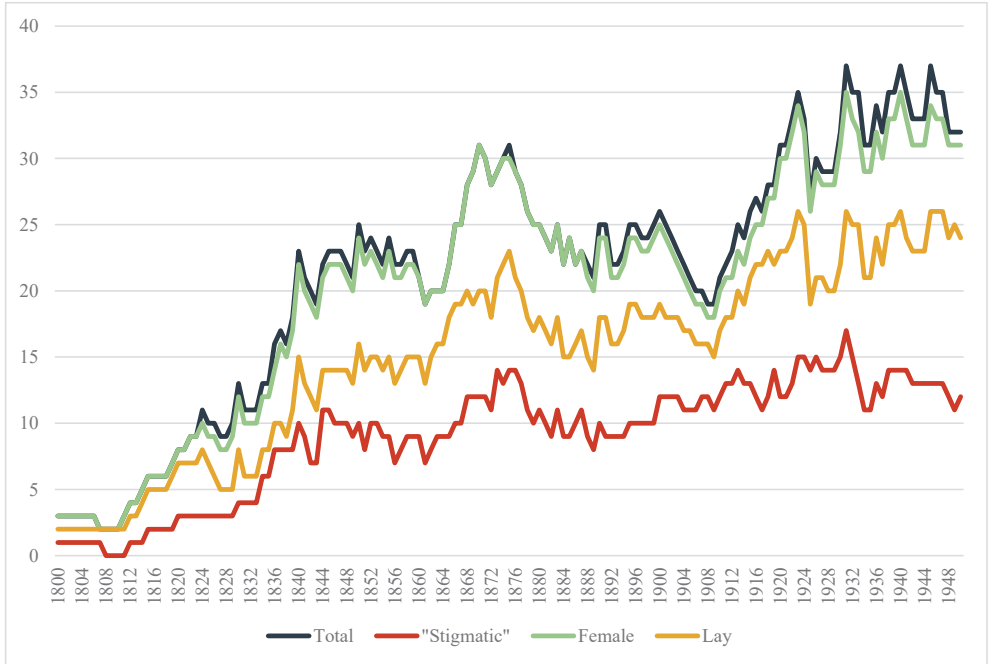


FIGURE 1.4 The “stigmatic” relative to the total number of stigmata cases and to its main selection criteria (in the five countries under consideration), 1800–1950

used more frequently).<sup>128</sup> Similarly, the Italian word “stigmatizzata” was used in book titles on Louise Lateau<sup>129</sup> and for publications on Therese Neumann. Thus in both cases the development of the word seems to have been linked to the popularity of two stigmatics from abroad (Belgium and Germany) whose mediatised fame travelled across their national borders to Spain and Italy.

In summary, “stigmatic” seems to have developed into an organizing categorization and a specific type in the nineteenth century. In books such as

128 A search in press digital databases, such as that in the Biblioteca Nacional de España, shows that the word “estigmatizada” (as a noun equivalent to “stigmatic”) appears in articles about Louise Lateau from the 1870s, but not in relation to previous famous cases, such as Sor Patrocinio, where “estigmatizada” is used as an adjective “stigmatized.” See e.g. “La célebre estigmatizada belga Luisa Lateau,” *El Criterio Médico*, December 10, 1875, 552; “Tribunales del Reino,” *Gaceta de los tribunales*, April 14, 1841, 162–164. “Estigmatizada” as a noun is commonly used in articles referring to Neumann from 1928 onwards, and appears in contemporary publications that mention a few Spanish stigmatics, such as María Luisa Zancajo (1911–1954). See e.g. W.K. Jaschke, “La estigmatizada de Konnersreuth,” *La Luz del Porvenir*, April (1928): 116–117; Callejo and Iniesta, *Testigos del prodigio*.

129 Van Looy, *Luisa Lateau la stigmatizzata di Bois-d’Haine* (1876). A translation of the original French.

Görres' *Die christliche Mystik* and Imbert-Gourbeyre's *Les stigmatisées*, mystics are grouped together precisely because they bore the stigmata (even if it was not their most important characteristic) – which Xenia von Tippelskirch refers to as a reinvention of stigmatization. The number of stigmatics was on the rise in the nineteenth century and what we see in dictionaries and titles of publications is that a specific type of stigmatic, the young women displaying physical wounds and attracting visitors, became the stereotypical stigmatic – the figure that people thought of when they heard the term, and that Boré and others listed in their books.

### 3.2 *Stigmatic: An Unstable Category*

Not all people who had the holy wounds were in fact called stigmatics. In our five countries, the concept seems widespread in France, Germany and Belgium, but the Italian and Spanish contexts seem quite different. Moreover, other terminology continued to be used in each country. Nineteenth-century stigmatics were also called “miracle girl” (“Wundermädchen,” “mirabile vergine”),<sup>130</sup> “ecstatic” (“Ekstatikerin”),<sup>131</sup> “sufferer” (“Addolorata,” “Dulderin”),<sup>132</sup> “atoning

130 The term was used, for example, in reports on fasting girls in the sixteenth century (e.g. Margaretha Weiss). We find the term throughout our period, from the late eighteenth up to the early twentieth century. Anna Katharina Emmerich is compared to the miracle girl from Osnabrück, Anne Marie Kinker (1783–1812, 1798). See also the description of Maria Gertrud Galles (1852) and the ultimate “miracle girl,” Therese Neumann. Alternative versions are the French description “living miracle” (“miracle vivant”), “miracle girl” (English: 1860s: on Louise Lateau). Landesarchiv Nordrhein Westfalen- Abteilung Westfalen (LAV NRW), Regierung Münster, nr. 17709, Die Wundergeschichte der stigmatisierten ehemalige Chorschwester Emmerich zu Dülmen, 24 January 1817: letter from the Ministerium des Innern, Münster. Archiv Erzbistum Köln (AEK), Generalia I. 31. Religiöse Umtriebe und Missbräuche, 31.6.1. Sog. Wunderbare Erscheinungen, Frömmelien etc. (1852–1935), “Verhandlungen betreffend die angeblich stigmatisierte Maria Gertrud Galles zu Giesenkirchen und den Vikar Schrammen derselbst” Kirchenvorstand of Giesenkirchen, 9 May 1852 to Archbishop Johannes von Geissel; O.T., “Vorgängerinnen des Wundermädchens von Konnersreuth: Stigmatisierungen im vorigen Jahrhundert,” *Deutsche Tageszeitung* (Berlin), Nr. 437, 16/09/1927.

131 In the Tyrolean series, “ecstatic” and “stigmatic” seem to have been used interchangeably, at least in the northern European literature. As Nicole Priesching has noted, stigmata were regarded as the next step after a mystical phenomenon (ecstasy as the experience of God) that in itself was puzzling enough to draw people's attention. The designation “ecstatic” did not disappear the moment the stigmata developed, Priesching, *Maria von Mörl*, 93.

132 The German words “Leiderin” and “Dulderin,” and the Italian “Paziente” and “Addolorata” refer to the women who patiently accepted and suffered through the pain and hardships God had been willing to send them. Within a religious setting, the term could also be used for women who did not carry the wounds of Christ but suffered from inner pains (e.g. the

soul” (“Sühneseele”),<sup>133</sup> or “living saints,” “saintly virgin” (“santa viva,” “sainte vierge”), “divinely blessed” (“Gottbegnadete”), or were included in the ranks of the “mystics” (“Mystikerin,” “mystieke”) or related nouns, such as “visionary” (“Seherin,” “visionnaire,” “visionaria”).

Must we assume that the different vocabulary used to refer to the alleged bearers of the Lord’s wounds means that there were different types of stigmatics? The answer is complex. On the one hand, we can see that there were different types and categories of stigmatics. The differences lay in their social status (male or female, secular or religious, virgin or married, public or anonymous figure, alleged saint or fraud) or the form of their stigmata (visible, invisible, imitative, etc.). On the other hand, the same subjects could be defined differently in different contexts. By “context,” we not only mean the geographical and chronological framework, but the connotations of a specific community or social group. The example of Palma Matarrelli may help to explain this point.

The French doctor Antoine Imbert-Gourbeyre thought of her as “the most extraordinary woman of our age.”<sup>134</sup> He saw in her stigmata – even more than in the other religious epiphenomena such as ecstasy, inedia, demonic attacks – similarities with the other stigmatic he had studied, Louise Lateau. Therefore, for the French doctor, the wounds were the primary point of interest, and this explains his description of Palma as a stigmatic. For the latter’s confessors, however, the point of reference was different. Palma bore the wounds of Christ, but rather than speak of *alter Christus* (e.g. as the biographer of St Francis did), they preferred to refer to her as “Veronica, true image of Christ.”<sup>135</sup>

In contrast to Imbert-Gourbeyre, for Matarrelli’s confessors, her stigmata were only one part of her religious persona. For the regional clergy, that is for

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invisible stigmata) or illnesses in the belief that it was God’s will and their pain had meaning. Ana Nasl, for example, was called “Dulderin” and “Eine Sühneseele im Geiste der heiligen Theresia vom Kinde Jesu,” Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München (BSB), Nachlass Lama, Friedrich von (1876–1944), Ana 445, file 2.

133 In the case of the stigmatics, the words linked to pain and suffering also refer to the Christian teachings on atonement. Stigmatics are described as “Sühneseele,” “Opferseele,” “anima” or “vittima sacrificale” (sacrificial or victim souls). These nouns hint at the sacrifices the women made to appease the anger of God, and to atone for the sins committed by their fellow human beings.

134 “la femme la plus extraordinaire de notre époque.” Imbert-Gourbeyre, *Les Stigmatisées, II, Palma d’Oria*, 3.

135 ACDF, C.L. 1875, *Les Stigmatisées par le Docteur A. Imbert-Gourbeyre*, f. 4r. In three volumes of manuscripts, Father Vincenzo de Angelis collected the virtues, prodigies, and the steps taken by the mystic Palma-Veronica, ending with the “perfect mystical union with the divine.” The Holy Office became aware of the Matarrelli case because of De Angelis. He sent his manuscript to the Vatican Index Congregation hoping to obtain the *imprimatur* for the publication. ACDF, *Censurae Librorum*, 1875, P. II CL 1875 5 vol II.



the clergymen who did not have a direct relationship with her but who were constantly informed by her confessors, she was famous as the “Estatica’ d’Oria,” an epithet that was also attributed to Maria von Mörl.<sup>136</sup> For these clergymen, the term “ecstatic” referred to a whole series of supernatural prodigies. For the faithful and the community members of Matarrelli’s village, she was simply “La Beata Palma” (the Blessed Palma), even if she was still alive and could therefore – according to canon law – not be blessed and had in any case not received any approval from the Vatican authorities. The people worshipped Matarrelli for her alleged miraculous abilities, and saw in her stigmata the visible confirmation of her sanctity, but the wounds did not monopolize their attention. In the 1870s, Matarrelli became famous in the international press for her prophecies. *L’Univers* of 17 March 1872 reported on the “voix prophétiques” of the “voyante d’Oria.”<sup>137</sup> Whether she had stigmata or not, was not so important for the media. What counted were her apocalyptic visions concerning the death of Emperor Napoleon III, famines and pestilences in Italy, Spain and France, and the exile of the pope from Rome. Ultimately, in the papers kept in the Archives of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith (the modern name for the former Holy Office and former Roman Inquisition), Palma has been catalogued as a false saint, guilty of the crime of “affettata santità” (“simulated holiness”).<sup>138</sup>

So, who was Matarrelli? A stigmatic, a mystic, an ecstatic, blessed, an important citizen, a prophetess, a false saint? Basically, she was all of these. The bearers of the holy wounds were not “specialized” solely in stigmata. They were in fact endowed with a series of other charisms (such as ecstasies, prophetic and thaumaturgical powers, levitation, bilocation, polyglossia), had mystical conversations (with Christ, the Virgin Mary, saints, souls in purgatory), were continually tempted by the devil, and could not eat (inedia) or sleep for years.<sup>139</sup>

The lack of “specialization” in stigmata helps to explain why there were alternative names with which “stigmatics” such as Matarrelli could be labelled. However, it does not explain why the term was not used in Spain or Italy as it was in the other countries (where alternative options also existed). In this regard, we want to suggest three hypotheses about the late development and limited use of the word, which might be linked to: 1) the difference in the typology

136 ACDF, C.L. 1875 5, ff. 39 r–41 v. Letter from Francesco priest of Ostuni to Cardinal Lavalletta, 25/05/1872.

137 Imbert-Gourbeyre, *Les Stigmatisées*, II, 30–31, 84–93.

138 ACDF, C.L. 1875, 5, ff. 71 v and 81 v.

139 Similar to Palma d’Oria, Maria Domenica Lazzari was associated with a long list of supernatural phenomena and many epithets (Maria Domenica was called: “L’Addolorata di Capriana,” virgin, ecstatic, suffering patient, “La Meneghina,” “santarella,” etc).

of stigmatics reported in the different countries; 2) the influence of religious authority; 3) a negative connotation to the word in Italy and Spain.

### 3.2.1 Different Countries/Different Stigmatics?

Can the difference in the terms used in Italy and Spain be explained by the difference in the type of stigmatics that were reported there? What, if any, were the substantial differences between the cases reported in the five countries? The first noticeable difference is the proportions of lay and religious stigmatics. While in Belgium (19 cases out of 22 in total, 17 women) and Germany (40 out of 46, 38 women) the prevalence of lay stigmatics is clear, in Spain the numbers are equal (15 lay and 16 religious, all women). In Italy (53 lay of 87 in total, 51 women) and France (36 lay of 59 in total, all women) there is a small lay majority. However, there seem to be more similarities than differences between the countries. For example, the common trend was that the majority of stigmatics were women (95.5% of cases<sup>140</sup>), who also had other charisms, had achieved *fama sanctitatis* especially in the local context (village or small community), and showed visible signs of the Passion.

Moreover, it is important to note that even in Spain and Italy stigmatics that would be defined as “stereotypical” for this period could also be found. There is, however, a difference in chronology. In Spain, the stereotypical stigmatics were primarily reported in the first decades of the twentieth century (1918–1945). The start of the twentieth century was a blooming period in Italy, too, but there we also find reports from the nineteenth century (e.g. Lazzeri and Matarrelli). Furthermore, Italian and Spanish stigmatics were also included in the lists compiled by Görres and Imbert-Gourbeyre.

So, if Palma Matarrelli and Maria Domenica Lazzeri were “stigmatisées” in the eyes of Antoine Imbert-Gourbeyre and Léon Boré, why did their followers not call them “stigmatizzata”? It can be argued that, if the mystic bearers had the same characteristics throughout the continent, what differentiated them was the interpretative lens, moral values and presuppositions and judgements with which their contemporaries perceived them, as well as the different social-cultural-religious environments.

### 3.2.2 Religious Conditioning: The Taboo of Stigmata

In the countries under discussion, Church and State were separate but there were major differences in the histories and impact of these divisions. For example, the Kingdom of Italy was founded in 1861 and Rome became the official capital in 1871, while Catholicism was officially declared the only State religion

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<sup>140</sup> In two cases the gender of the stigmatic could not be defined.

as late as 1939.<sup>141</sup> A completely different situation characterized France, where the relationship between the civil and religious authorities was clarified in 1790 with the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. With regard to the Church's policy of social control in the southern states, we can see a significant difference. Throughout Europe, bishops were called to intervene in their dioceses if there were religious problems. In some countries, for example Germany and Belgium, public authorities also intervened. In southern Europe, however, it was very rare that the civil authorities became involved in such matters. In Spain and Italy, for centuries local inquisitorial tribunals had regulated the behaviour of the faithful in various matters in several cities.<sup>142</sup> Especially in Italy, the clergy and the Roman Inquisition claimed superior competence. In Spain, even if the inquisition was closely linked with the royal court, clergymen dealt with "beatas" ("living saints")<sup>143</sup> suspected of "santidad fingida" (pretense of holiness).<sup>144</sup> In other countries, however, civil law, science and the debate in the media had the same level of importance and equal authority to state opinions on the issue.

Moreover, as addressed in more detail in Chapter 7, on the Vatican response, stigmata were considered by the Church to be the wounds impressed on Christ's body which, over the centuries, had been shared by only a limited number of saints (e.g. St Francis and St Catherine). The Vatican clergymen seldom accepted them as "real" and only if they fulfilled specific criteria. Firstly, knowledge of the wounds could not be widespread during the life of the bearers. The divine gift was regarded as *gratia gratis data* and as the last step on the path of *imitatio Christi*. Hagiographers and supporters of modern stigmatics were aware of the ecclesiastical suspicions and concerns about visible evidence of mysticism. While the faithful and visitors did not hesitate to speak about the Fridays of Passion of the "living saints," basically no one openly wrote about the stigmata of these people or defined them as stigmatics.

After all, their goal was to promote the fame of the mystic and attempt to open a process of beatification. How would that have been possible without the bishop's *imprimatur* and *fiat*? The bishops were called to give their opinion on the candidate's virtues and prodigies before the Vatican clergy engaged in an evaluation. Presenting them as stigmatics – at least in Italy and Spain – was certainly not a wise decision. Since the sixteenth century – the time of

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141 Miccoli, "Chiesa;" and Traniello, *Religione*.

142 The Spanish Inquisition, compared to Italian diocesan tribunals, was not directly dependent on Rome but on the sovereigns, and therefore linked to civil power.

143 Giordano, "Beatas."

144 Jacobson Schutte, "Finzione;" and Jacobson Schutte, *Aspiring Saints*.

the Council of Trent (1545–1563) and the foundation of the Roman Inquisition (1542)<sup>145</sup> – miracles, charisms and pretended divine gifts had raised suspicions in the Church.<sup>146</sup> It saw in alleged mystics possible charismatic counter-powers to its traditional leadership. Moreover, in the eighteenth century, canonization proceedings were reviewed, as were the mechanisms of investigation for contemporary cases. The Holy See's functioning was influenced by Enlightenment tendencies, and every investigation – both post-mortem for candidate saints or during their lifetime for people under investigation – was based on certain proofs and acts, while omitting inexplicable and miraculous elements.<sup>147</sup> The result was the exclusion of the paranormal aspects, and above all the stigmata. Consequently, these aspects were not included in hagiographies.

If supporters deemed it wise not to link potential or already recognized saints with mystical phenomena and stigmata, this was even more important for the “living saints” who wanted to avoid ecclesiastical suspicions. Defining them as stigmatics meant, according to an unwritten code, attracting Vatican doubt and criticism rather than positively promoting their fame. As mentioned above, stigmata in themselves had no sacred value. On the contrary, they triggered members of the clergy to question their nature, and were most often judged as a sign of demonic possession or fraud.

### 3.2.3 Negative Examples for Negative Cases?

Is it a coincidence that the anonymous author of *Le tre mirabili vergini viventi nel Tirolo* used the word “stigmatic” to refer to only one of these wonderful virgins reported in that region?<sup>148</sup> In the light of the discussion so far, perhaps not. The book,<sup>149</sup> probably written by the priest Antonio Ricciardi (certainly the author of Maria von Mörl's life), intended to depict the “Holy land Tyrol”<sup>150</sup> as the new holy land of stigmatization.<sup>151</sup> The author studied the three most famous cases in detail: Maria von Mörl (1812–1868, stigmata 1834), Maria Domenica Lazzari (1815–1848, 1834) and Krescenzia Niglutsch (1816–1885, 1836). As noted above, Maria became a celebrity in the summer of 1833, when 40,000 people went to Kaltern to see her incredible ecstatic state (the stigmata appeared the following

145 Jacobson Schutte, “Finzione di santità,” 601–604; Giordano, “Beatas, Spagna,” 161–165.

146 Gotor, *I beati del papa*, 25–41 and 285–290.

147 Woodward, *Making saints*, 393; Barro, *Economics of sainthood*, 195–196 and Prosperi, “L'elemento storico,” 89–91.

148 Anonymous (Antonio Ricciardi?), *Le tre mirabili vergini viventi nel Tirolo* (1837<sup>2</sup>).

149 The first edition was published in 1836, Anonymous, *Memorie intorno a tre mirabili vergini viventi nel Tirolo* (1836).

150 Priesching, *Maria von Mörl*, 32–33.

151 Gadaleta, “Rosmini,” 100–111.

year). Maria Domenica Lazzeri, who became famous as the “Addolorata,” was ill and displayed the visible stigmata from December 1834. Krescenzia Niglutsch, however, was found to be “as ecstatic as Mörl. She is a stigmatic like the first one (von Mörl) and like Lazzeri; is Krescenzia therefore also obliged to stay in bed? Of course not.”<sup>152</sup> With this seemingly random turn of words, the author clearly states that the *trait d'union* of the three young women were stigmata, but textually he only gives Krescenzia the label of “stigmatic.” In the lives written on the other two women, who both received famous epithets, such as “Estatica” or “Addolorata,” the term never appears. Interestingly, the fate of the three virgins was not the same, with Maria von Mörl and Maria Domenica Lazzeri never condemned by the local religious authority, in spite of the ecclesiastical investigations. Niglutsch, however, was publicly reprimanded by the Bishop of Trent for being “disobedient” – we do not know the exact reason – and her contemporaries accused her of having a liaison with her father confessor (which explained to them the disappearance of her visible stigmata).

The Niglutsch case is not isolated. In the history of the Inquisition, the term “stigmata” also appears during the early modern age and never assumes a positive value. This is evident in the condemnation of the seventeenth-century text, *De notis, et stigmatibus in corpore personarum de maleficio accusatarum repertis, [etc.]*,<sup>153</sup> and in the case of Lucrezia Gambarà (1704–1737), a stigmatic from the eighteenth century.<sup>154</sup> In both examples, the prodigious signs were considered by the Vatican to be the result of the devil’s intervention or fraud. Beyond the Italian borders, in Spain of the 1830s, a stigmatized nun was at the centre of a black legend founded on political intrigue and false supernatural phenomena.<sup>155</sup> The infamy of the Sor Patrocinio (1811–1891) affair (1835) spread far beyond the national court, as had occurred 30 years earlier in another case of an Italian abbess with false stigmata. After years of charismatic leadership and collaboration with the court of the Savoy, Maria Rosa Serra (1766–after 1806) was unmasked by the bishop and admitted the falsity of her prodigies, provoking a ferocious debate between critics and the faithful.<sup>156</sup>

Can we explain the limited diffusion of the word “stigmatic” in Italy and Spain by linking the traditional sceptical attitude of the Holy See concerning stigmata and visible mystical phenomena with these concrete cases of public condemnation and exposure of stigmata? This apparent social-cultural-religious

152 Anonymous, *Le tre mirabili vergini*, 35.

153 ACDF, St.St. O 2 m 14, ff. 243 r–244 r.

154 ACDF, St.St. C-3-g, fasc. Lucrezia Gambarà, ff. 1–43 and BsASD (Diocesan Archive of Brescia), Processi 11, 1720–1796, 10, 20, 1729, Lucrezia Gambarà “Illusa” di Alfianello, ff. 1–45.

155 Graus, “Wonder nuns.”

156 Rossi, “Religious virtuosi.”

divergence between the countries of southern and northern Europe seems to gain confirmation in the different attitude of the Vatican to the two volumes of Imbert-Gourbeyre's book. Although the doctor was ordered "as a good Catholic to not disseminate that work [the second volume] and not publish it in a new edition,"<sup>157</sup> the overall verdict on his work was, however, that "the book [the first volume] presents nothing dangerous, or immoral."<sup>158</sup> The inquisitor Fathers made a precise decision: they explicitly condemned the section dedicated to Palma Matarrelli and forbade the spread of her fame, while for the Belgian, Louise Lateau, the judgement was substantially suspended. This attitude is also found in the investigative files kept at the Vatican congregation archive: a simple collection of information on the Belgian stigmatic,<sup>159</sup> a complete investigation of the Italian one.<sup>160</sup>

A series of questions still arise: why was its stance so undefined in the first case and much harder and severe in the second one? Did the different geographical latitudes and nationalities of the two women have substantial weight in this different treatment?<sup>161</sup> As we will see in the following chapter, the Vatican's cautious stance contrasted to no small extent with the enthusiasm with which many of the Catholic faithful welcomed reports on new "stigmatics."

#### 4 Building Blocks

As a golden era of stigmatization in Europe, the nineteenth century witnessed the reinvention of stigmata and the invention of the stigmatic, with the stigmata becoming a defining feature. When we reflect on the use of the word, a few elements stand out. Firstly, the Vatican congregations avoided using the term "stigmatic" as an analytical category and were not supportive of claims of stigmatization. Thus, while we are interested in how the Vatican responded to

157 ACDF, C.L. 1875 5, f. 187 r.

158 ACDF, C.L. 1875 5, f. 186 v.

159 ACDF, St.St. C 4–f, g *Pretesa stigmatizzata Louise Lateau*.

160 ACDF, C.L., 1875, n.5, *Oria; Decreta Sancti Officii*, 1878; C 4 q; M.D. R.V. 1886 1 7; M.D. R.V. 1886 1 7 1.

161 However, it must be said that in the Italian publications, Louise Lateau was more famous as the "Ecstatic Bois-d'Haine" rather than as a "stigmatic." In three publications which spread throughout the country in the 1870s, only the Italian translation of the French book by Henri van Looy had the term stigmatic in the title. In her case, Pellicani and Trecco preferred to use, perhaps to escape Vatican censorship, the phrase, "ecstatic with stigmata." See Pellicani, *Luisa Lateau* (1872); Van Looy, *Luisa Lateau* (1876, it. translation); Trecco, "Apparizioni della Salette" (1879).

the “stigmatics” and address this in detail in Chapter 7, our study of the meaning and standardization of the type cannot start there. Secondly, experts who “collected” cases of stigmatization set the stigmatics apart as a specific category of mystics (bearing the wounds) and traced them in the past and present. Thirdly, apart from the more general meaning of the word – having stigmata – “stigmatic” also became primarily linked to a specific type: someone whose visible wounds were the main point of attraction (e.g. in contrast to a mystic who had invisible wounds, among other charismata) and, as such, someone who followed “the recipe of Louise Lateau.” We found this use of the term primarily in non-Catholic and Catholic non-expert sources. This indicated that the type was also known beyond Catholic circles and thus was not only part of the vocabulary of Catholics. We found equivalents for “stigmatic” in French, German and Dutch, indicating that the stigmatic was, or rather became, part of a shared vocabulary. The Italian and the Spanish cases suggest that the use of the word “stigmatic” for this type of mystic was a later introduction. In Italian, we found some traces of references to the “stigmatic” type increasing. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, we have almost no references – only one incidental use in the negatively evaluated Krescenzia Niglutsch. This changed at the end of the nineteenth century, when the word was linked to international celebrity stigmatics and more positively evaluated (this also occurred in Spanish). Only at the start of the twentieth century – with cases such as Gemma Galgani (1878–1903) – was the word more commonly used for Italian stigmatics (this was also the moment when the number of “stigmatics” was on the rise in Italy).<sup>162</sup>

The stereotypical “stigmatic” did not represent the majority of the cases we traced in this period. Thus, why did this type of “stigmatic” become stereotypical rather than one of the other types; for example, the cloistered nun who received the invisible wounds that only her father confessor knew about? We believe two elements were of major importance in this respect: (1) the visibility and (2) the appeal of the “stigmatic.” As discussed above, visibility related to two aspects: the visibility of the wounds and the visibility of the “stigmatic.” We will discuss the visibility of the wounds in more detail in Chapter 3, but for our discussion here it might suffice to say that there was a difference in the importance of the wounds in comparison with previous generations of mystics. While for the eighteenth-century predecessors, their suffering, rather than their wounds, was central in the descriptions of their mystical lives, for our

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<sup>162</sup> See Leonardo Rossi, *Holiness and Sanctity. Italian Stigmatics and the Holy Office in the nineteenth and early twentieth century*, unpublished PhD (2020).

nineteenth-century “stigmatics,” the wounds were the major point of attraction and the reason why the people identified them as mystics.

With respect to the visibility of the stigmatic, we follow scholars such as Paula Kane and Joachim Boufflet, who have shown that there was a change in the profile of the stigmatic in the nineteenth century, as they became “exposed to the public gaze.” This exposure took place in different ways: people came to see them (travelling became easier because of the improved means of transportation) and they were mediatized, commercialized and politicized (these aspects will be further addressed in the following chapters). What we are arguing here is that it was this type that became the stereotypical “stigmatic.” We can postulate several hypotheses for this reduction. Firstly, they would be the stigmatics that one heard about through media coverage, for example. Secondly, because of this celebrity, they were used as examples of “stigmatics” (e.g. in lexica) and as points of comparison (“the new Louise Lateau,” “the new Therese Neuman”). Their fame influenced the filtering process in new cases: those who resembled them had a better chance of being accepted as “stigmatics.” Finally, they inspired imitation beyond the local level.

With respect to the appeal of the type, this is an issue we will address in more detail in the following chapters. If the Vatican congregations adopted a rather critical stance towards stigmatics, why did the latter trigger such a positive response among many other Catholics? What did these figures mean to them? In the following chapters, we will show that the popularity of the “stigmatic,” had much to do with them being regarded as “living saints” and religious celebrities. We will argue that the standardization of the type built on its appeal and visibility. We will also look into the religious practices that developed around their visible wounds and the accessibility of the stigmatics (who could be visited at home). In addition, we will examine the material culture (highlighting their stigmata) and visualizations (abstractions of the type),<sup>163</sup> as well as studying the meanings that were attached to them and how they developed into commodities. In brief, we will address the enthusiasm for “stigmatics” from a bottom-up perspective, considering what stigmatics meant to individual Catholics,<sup>164</sup> including the movements that developed around

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163 On the need to go beyond textual sources, see Laycock, *The Seer*, 197: “Historians are fond of texts and this may explain why one half of the dance has received disproportionate amount of analysis. Lay practitioners are more likely to exert their influence through material culture, performance, and embodied practices. While prayers, ritual, songs, and images have just as much power to define a religious culture, they do not leave the same kind of archival record.” Meyer, “Material mediations,” 2 and 7.

164 McGuire, *Lived Religion*, 12: “The term ‘lived religion’ is useful for distinguishing the actual experience of religious persons from prescribed religion of institutionally defined beliefs



them, while also paying attention to the top-down response (e.g. condemnation or approval by ecclesiastical authorities).

Did the visibility of the stigmatics – their wounds as well as the media and other forms of attention they received – also make them easily traceable? As we demonstrated in this chapter, “stigmatic” is not an easy concept to work with. Sources on the prototypical modern stigmatics, the lay women who displayed the visible wounds and whose suffering attracted many visitors to their homes and bedrooms, are not sparse, but one needs to know how to look. We found, among other places, sources in religious archives (Vatican archives, diocesan archives, parish archives, archives of religious orders) and state and city archives under headings related to their reception, for example as “religious enthusiasm” (“religiöse Schwärmerei”), “so-called miraculous phenomena, pieties” (“sogenannte wunderbare Erscheinungen, Frömmeleien”) and “alleged miraculous phenomena” (“angebliche Wundererscheinungen”), or related to the books that discussed them (censorship and *imprimatur*<sup>165</sup>), rather than the name of the stigmatic.

The collections of what we might call “stigmatic chasers” were a good starting point as they often contained information about stigmatics who never made it to the official lists. Excellent examples include the collections of: Jan Nulens,<sup>166</sup> a priest who gathered material on the Belgians stigmatics; Robert Ernst,<sup>167</sup> another priest who was not only interested in stigmatics but also collected material on other events such as apparitions; and the German layman Friedrich Ritter von Lama.<sup>168</sup> Similarly, present-day organizations and memorial houses were a means to gather information about the material culture that has been preserved, with examples being the memorial house of Louise Lateau in Bois-d’Haine and the Gedenkstätte for Anna Katharina Emmerick in Dülmen.

Studying different countries broadened the set of sources for those stigmatics who triggered interest (and commotion) beyond their regional and national borders. Furthermore, the stereotypical stigmatic was inherently part

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and practices. [...] it depicts a subjectively grounded and potentially creative place for religious experience and expression. Although lived religion pertains to the individual, it is not merely subjective. Rather, people construct their religious worlds together, often sharing vivid experiences of that intersubjective reality.”

165 ACDF, *Res Doctrinales, Censurae librorum* 1875, P.I. Oria, Les stigmatisées par le Docteur A. Imbert; Boëns Hubert, Louise Lateau ou les mystères de Bois d’Haine dévoilés; BAT, Abt. R-BGV 9 Nr.229, Imprimatur 1957, “Warnung: Goebel Anna Maria, die stigmatisierte Opferseele von Bickendorf (Eifel).”

166 Antwerp, Ruusbroec Institute, Fonds Jan Nulens.

167 Eupen, Staatsarchiv Eupen (SAE), Archiv Rektor Robert Ernst.

168 München, BSB, Nachlass Lama, Friedrich von (1876–1944).

of the public sphere, and, as we have noted in the previous pages, we were particularly interested in the ways in which the fame of the modern stigmatics spread via modern (mass-produced) means (booklets, images) and newspapers, which helped to turn them into religious celebrities and “living saints.” We found some of these in special collections (e.g. those on Louise Lateau), while others were scattered throughout different libraries. Often the booklets provided references to other publications, for example, at the end of the booklet on Louise Lateau and Maria von Mörl the publisher noted that a book on Maria Domenica Lazzari and Anna Katharine Emmerick was “also on sale.”<sup>169</sup>

While we do not want to mute the voices of the stigmatics or minimize the impact of their personality, the book is not so much about the individual cases as it is about the concept of the “stigmatic” and how the reputation of these women as saints and celebrities built on them bearing the wounds of Christ. The concepts of the religious celebrity and saint, and their compatibility are the topic of the next chapter. The succeeding chapters are organized thematically, but also have a chronological logic, as they follow the expansion and continuation of initial enthusiasm to the official approval or disapproval. The following two chapters focus on the devotees travelling to the homes of the stigmatic. In Chapter 3, we address their perception of the suffering of these women and examine how they could be singled out as “living saints”; while in Chapter 4 we study the practice of visiting the stigmatic, and show how the devotees helped to confirm this saintly image through their actions and campaigns. The subsequent two chapters look at how the reputation of these stigmatics spread from their houses and homes into the wider world. Chapter 5 addresses the visual and material culture, and studies the ways in which the devotees co-created the saintly and celebrity status of the stigmatics through these images and objects. Chapter 6 focuses on the public arena and shows how the idea of the stigmatic was used for political causes and featured as a symbol for Catholic causes. Finally, Chapter 7 looks into the response of the Vatican and studies how they could develop from unofficial into official saints, as well as the Vatican unease about these cases and the ways in which they were integrated into the cults of saints. In Chapter 8, we summarize our findings, focusing on the development of the type and the role that modern media and consumer culture played in this process.

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169 Anonymous, *Louisa Lateau of de kruiswonddragende van Bois-d'Haine*: “Ook te koop: Maria Dominica Lazzari of de kruiswonddragende van Capriana, in het Italiaansche Tyrol gevolgd door de wonderbare levensschets van Anna Catharina Emmerich religieuze der orde van den H. Augustinus van het klooster van den Agnetenberg, te Dulmen overleden in 1824.”



FIGURE 1.5 "The Addolorata of Capriana" (Maria Domenica Lazzeri)  
ANTWERP, PRIVATE COLLECTION © KRISTOF SMEYERS



FIGURE 1.6  
"The Estatica of Capriana" (Maria  
von Mörl)  
ANTWERP, PRIVATE  
COLLECTION © KRISTOF  
SMEYERS

## Saints and Celebrities

*Tine Van Osselaer*

In Autumn 1871, the French doctor Antoine Imbert-Gourbeyre embarked on a journey to visit Palma Matarrelli (1825–1888). In a description of this visit, he insisted that he had seen her forehead bleed spontaneously, and that he had witnessed two miraculous communions and the divine fire twice. According to Imbert-Gourbeyre, none of these phenomena could be simulated, it was all supernatural in origin and he was willing to testify about what he had seen.<sup>1</sup> He was not alone in his enthusiasm as Matarrelli was famous throughout Italy and abroad, and many thought of her as divinely “blessed.”

Four years later, in 1875, Imbert-Gourbeyre’s enthusiasm faced the cold Vatican reality when the verdict of the book censors left no doubt about the fate of *Les stigmatisées, volume II: Palma d’Oria*, his hagiography of Matarrelli. “[He must] behave as a good Catholic, and make sure that his work no longer circulates and does not appear in a second edition.” With this condemnation, the book fared worse than the first volume of *Les stigmatisées*, which had focused on the Belgian stigmatic, Louise Lateau (1850–1883). According to the censors, the first volume did “not present anything dangerous, or immoral, only extravagant and partially admissible things [...]”<sup>2</sup> Although the Vatican generally adopted a critical stance towards stigmatics, the censorship of the French doctor’s book was exceptional, as only a few books on stigmatics caught the Vatican’s attention.<sup>3</sup> However, Imbert-Gourbeyre’s enthusiasm for Louise

1 Imbert-Gourbeyre, *Les Stigmatisées: Palma d’Oria*, 3, 28, 62. Nevertheless, he did seem to believe that in these matters the final decision was up to the Vatican, as he quoted Palma on how she disapproved of the experiments performed on Louise Lateau by “common individuals” (“simples particuliers”) as only Rome had the power to judge in these matters.

2 “L’opera nulla presenta di pericoloso, o d’immorale, ma cose stravaganti ed in parte non ammissibili.” “La mente è che venga egli informato segretamente sui fatti di Palma d’Oria. Egli deve essere istruito in proposito, e lo ecciti a procurare come buon cattolico, che non sia diffusa la di lui opera e che non ne faccia una nuova edizione.” Archives of the Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith (ACDF), Censurae librorum (C.L.)1875, Oria 1875, f. 186 and 187 r. Full title of the second volume published in 1873 in Paris, *Les stigmatisées, vol. II: Palma d’Oria, examen de la thèse rationaliste, liste historique des stigmatisés*. We thank Leonardo Rossi for this reference.

3 See also ACDF, C.L., 1875, Boëns Hubert, Louise Lateau ou les mystères de Bois d’Haine dévoilés.

Lateau and Palma Matarrelli was certainly not unprecedented. In the following chapters we aim to demonstrate that the popularity of the stigmatics had much to do with the fact that while they might not have reflected the Vatican's concept of a saint, for their lay contemporaries they did accord with their ideas of both a saint and a religious celebrity. In order to understand these dynamics, this chapter reflects on: (1) the concepts of celebrity and sanctity, (2) the specificity of the period that we are studying when addressing these concepts, (3) the compatibility of the two and (4) finally, the practices and narratives that produced them.

## 1 Saints in the Spotlight

Thanks to the daily press, the young girl was soon well known to the masses of the public and the name of Louise Lateau travelled from mouth to mouth. Here and there one could read in some “trivial facts” that compact crowds gathered from all sides, from Belgium and abroad, to attend, on Friday, the scenes that took place in the cottage in Bois d’Haine.<sup>4</sup>

There can be no doubt that Louise Lateau's fame extended far beyond the boundaries of her small village. From the first reports of her stigmata (1868) until her death in 1883 at the telling age of 33, she continued to attract attention (from the press and visitors). In June 1874, *L'Écho du Parlement*, a Brussels liberal newspaper, commented on her popularity in Germany and mockingly called her a “new celebrity,” who would make a “tour of the Catholic world.”<sup>5</sup> This notion of “celebrity” is what interests us here. Until now, religion has gained little attention in celebrity studies.<sup>6</sup> Those religious figures who have been singled out, Padre Pio, Mother Theresa and Thérèse of Lisieux,<sup>7</sup> have explicitly been linked to the mass media of the twentieth century. However, as the above quotation shows, some stigmatics were perceived as “celebrities” as

4 “Grâce à la presse quotidienne, la jeune fille fut bientôt connue de la masse du public et le nom de Louise Lateau courait de bouche en bouche. Ça et là on pouvait lire dans quelques ‘faits divers’ que des foules compactes accouraient de tous côtés, de la Belgique et de l'étranger, pour assister, le vendredi, aux scènes qui se passaient dans la chaumière de Bois d’Haine,” Anonymous, *Louise Lateau devant l'Académie Royale de Médecine de Belgique* (1876), 4–5.

5 “... tour du monde catholique,” V.G., “Une nouvelle célébrité,” *L'Écho du Parlement* (24 June 1874), 3.

6 See also our themed issue on Catholic celebrities of *Journal of Religious History*, 42.4 (December 2018).

7 Krass, “Stigmata und yellow press;” Margry, “Merchandising and sanctity;” Alpion, “Media and celebrity culture;” Deboick, “Céline Martin's images.”

early as the nineteenth century;<sup>8</sup> people were as interested in buying images of the stigmatics,<sup>9</sup> learning about their lives and eager to obtain their autographs.<sup>10</sup>

A caveat needs to be added here, however, as we must be careful not to assume that twentieth-century celebrities such as Mother Theresa were the same as Louise Lateau. The concept of “celebrity” is historically contingent, and as Lenard Berlanstein, summarizes: “Rather than positing a constant meaning, it would be better to approach celebrity culture as something that has been continuously reinvented and that appealed to different groups – including elite ones – as the culture changed.”<sup>11</sup> While the term “celebrity” is about 160 years old, “the phenomenon itself – the combination of renown, visibility, and fascination with a personality – is much older.”<sup>12</sup> As we will see in Chapter 5, the type of celebrity associated with some of our stigmatics was like that of people whose fame spread through the modern media and became marketable – they were “carefully constructed religious commodities”<sup>13</sup> whose acts, lives and image drew the public’s interest.<sup>14</sup> Mediatized fame has a different logic to it than, for example, the word of mouth promotion of the *fama sanctitatis* of a local “holy” person to whom people turned for help.

We address stigmatics as celebrities in the era of the emerging mass media and mass production in Europe. In this period, the number of celebrities was increasing and the fame of the stigmatic could be cultivated through such sources as newspaper articles and cheap booklets. However, as noted, depending on your definition of celebrity, one can detect religious celebrities in other periods. Aviad Kleinberg, for example, suggests that celebrity and celebrity culture do not have to be related to marketing and mass media. Focusing on medieval popular saints, he noted that mass enthusiasm, admiration and the object of the admiration turning themselves into what the public wanted them

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8 See e.g. Louis Jourdan and Taxtile Delord, *Les célébrités du jour (The celebrities of the day)*, a work published in 1860–1861, they equated celebrity with public leaders or heroes, e.g. Garibaldi, but also included Pope Pius IX. Reference in Berlanstein, “Historicizing,” 72.

9 See e.g., Muhs, “Die Stigmata,” 25.

10 Priesching, *Maria von Mörl*, 401.

11 Berlanstein, “Historicizing,” 66–67.

12 Berlanstein, “Historicizing,” 67: “Leon Braudy posits that the conditions for a ‘democratization’ of fame proliferated in Western Europe by the early eighteenth century as print media developed and as people of high birth lost their monopoly over distinction.” Nevertheless, even before the arrival of mass media (after 1850), the number of celebrities was on the rise due to the expansion of newspaper readership, lithography and other media, and “a general democratization of culture and politics in the post-French revolutionary era,” Berenson and Giloi, “Introduction,” 2.

13 Deboick, “Céline Martin’s images,” 377.

14 Morgan, “Celebrity,” 98.

to be can also be detected in previous eras.<sup>15</sup> The parallels between the fame of saints and celebrities have been noted for more recent eras as well. Scholars such as Chris Rojek and Peter Jan Margry have pointed to similarities between modern celebrity culture and the cult of saints<sup>16</sup> and referred to cultic celebrity followers, who collected new “relics” (the celebrity photo) and went on new “pilgrimages” (celebrity graves and houses).<sup>17</sup>

The modern stigmatics were regarded as celebrities *and* saints by their contemporaries. Neither of these labels had a fixed meaning and what exactly a saint was, depended to no small extent on the context. In 1916, the German promoters of a Belgian stigmatic, Rosalie Put (1868–1919, stigmata 1890), addressed this issue, stating that: “If we call Rosalie *privatim* a blessed or holy person, we have the right to do this. No one can forbid us to do that. [...] We allow everyone the freedom to judge this, as their conscience tells them is right.” They explicitly defended their right to call her a saintly person and, in their opinion, their judgement was no different to that of other Catholic authors who wrote about the lives of exceptional people, considered them saints, or mentioned miracles that had occurred through their mediation after death – and sometimes even during their lifetime. They wrote in these hagiographic terms, despite the fact that “the Church had very often not yet officially declared them ‘saints’, yes not even ‘blessed’ and had not officially examined the reported miracles.” In other words, Rosalie Put’s supporters only claimed “human credibility” (“*menschliche Glaubwürdigkeit*”) for the phenomena and events they described.<sup>18</sup> Two elements are of importance here: firstly, the stigmatic’s supporters believed her to be a holy person; and secondly, they were well aware that whoever they might call saintly or blessed, might not necessarily be regarded as such by the Catholic Church.<sup>19</sup> This latter element is of central importance in our analysis of the popularity of “stigmatics.” We will address the Vatican’s response to some of the stigmatics in detail in Chapter 7, what interests us here is the reputation of holiness as Rosalie Put’s supporters understood this. The focus is on the unofficial level: people who were perceived as saints while they were still alive – the “living saints”<sup>20</sup> – and those

15 Kleinberg, “Are saints,” *passim*.

16 Rojek, *Celebrity*; Margry, “The Pilgrimage.”

17 Howells, “Heroes;” Schmitt, *Les saints*; Margry, “The Pilgrimage.”

18 A. Mons (= Theodor Timming), *Eine Gottbegnadete*, 27.

19 On this issue, see the PhD project of Leonardo Rossi, L. Rossi, “Embodied, feigned, canonized holiness. Stigmatics in late modern Italy (c. 1800–1950),” Ruusbroec Lecture, 14 June 2019.

20 These were “individuals considered saints by their contemporaries,” Kleinberg, *Prophets*, 1, who attracted a certain veneration, while the ecclesiastical authorities had not yet made a pronouncement on their case, Frijhoff, “Bedevaart,” 196.

whose reputation for holiness continued after their death without the official sanctioning of the Church – folk saints.<sup>21</sup> As we will see, we can find “stigmatics” in both groups of unofficial saints.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, rather than focus on stigmatics that have been canonized (and thus can be considered “official” saints), the book addresses sainthood from a broader, lay perspective by focusing primarily on stigmatics during their lifetime.<sup>23</sup> “Living saints,” had been part of the mystical tradition since medieval times. They were often lay women – not seldom tertiaries who lived what was known as a “mixed life” – who had attracted the attention of their contemporaries for their supernatural charisms, especially prophecies and miracles. The religious parallels of the lay “living saints” were the holy nuns (“monaca santa”). Through their heroic virtues and extraordinary prodigies, they deserved the title of blessed or saint despite being unrecognized. Their reputation for holiness often remained within a convent’s wall, but sometimes their fame also spread beyond the cloister. This religious type of stigmatic probably reached a peak in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but there were also several cases reported in the contemporary age, especially in Spain and Italy.

The type of sanctity that the modern stigmatics represented was more the saint as a “revelatory token” than the saint as a model of Christian life.<sup>24</sup> Often the stigmata formed the initial point of attraction,<sup>25</sup> while other qualities (such as the capacity to heal) were added to the stigmatic’s reputation in a later phase. The people who visited the stigmatics interpreted them to be powerful intermediaries between earthly and divine being: they asked the stigmatics to pray with them for their cause (e.g. conversion) and believed in a “shared pain” model (the stigmatic suffers as a substitute for the sick/afflicted).<sup>26</sup> After the death of these women, the cults sometimes lingered on, even without the support of the ecclesiastical authorities. This is illustrated, for example, in the following statement from a devotee of Anna Katherina Emmerick around 1892 (several decades after the death of Emmerick in 1824): “I could never venerate A.C., even if she is not canonized by the Church, as anything else than a saint, I already held several novenas to her with the greatest confidence and I have

21 “folk saints ... informal additions to the Catholic canon,” Graziano, *Folk Saints*, 29.

22 The supporters of Rosalie Put, for example, referred to the book of Kempf, *Die Heiligkeit der Kirche im 19. Jahrhundert*, therein we can find reference to, among others, Anna Katharina Emmerick, Gemma Galgani, Elisabetta Canori-Mora and Anna Maria Taigi. Although they featured in a book about sanctity, none of them were official saints at the time of publication (in 1913).

23 Klaniczay, “Louise Lateau,” 285; Frijhoff, *Heiligen*, 19–20; Ciappara, “Simulated sanctity.”

24 Walsh, “Pope John Paul II,” 435; Van de Port, “Not made by human hand.” On this aspect, see Chapter 3.

25 Seeger, *Resl von Konnersreuth*, 91.

26 Margry, “The passion,” 162; Seeger, *Resl von Konnersreuth*, 103. On this topic, see Chapter 3.



been heard several times.”<sup>27</sup> Ex-votos on the graves of some of stigmatics, such as Clara Jung and Louise Lateau, show how some were still perceived as mediators after their deaths. Of these stigmatized “folk saints,” some were called on for help for specific crises (e.g. financial issues – Clara Jung), while others had a more general profile.<sup>28</sup>

What is perceived as saintly by some is not necessarily regarded as such by others. The “saintliness” of the stigmatics was a communal, often renegotiated, construction, being the product of an interaction of the “saintly” person with his/her community, created through discourse and religious practices (e.g. rituals of veneration, but also the stigmatic’s public solo performance of Christ’s passion).<sup>29</sup> This symbiotic relationship between the stigmatic and the community resulted in local variations, with different communities and different times calling for different types of saints (living or dead).<sup>30</sup> What was perceived as sanctity in one country was not necessarily so in another. In 1931, a frustrated devotee of Anna Katherina Emmerick wrote to a fellow supporter that the Germans were too critical in these matters: “France would have put A.C.E., the great social benefactor, on altars long ago” (“Frankreich hätte A.K.E. die grosse soziale Wohltäterin längst auf den Altären”).<sup>31</sup>

Anna Katherina Emmerick is one of the few stigmatics of our period who gained official recognition from the Vatican: she was beatified in 2004. In many cases, the reputation for holiness (as well as that of false holiness) did not rely on proof of the extraordinary abilities of the mystic, but rather on the perception (positive or negative) of the community and other contemporaries. This term, therefore, has an essentially local and geographically determined value,

27 “Ich selbst könnte A.C., auch wenn sie von der Kirche nicht heilig gesprochen würde, nicht anders als eine Heilige verehren, ich habe schon manche neuntägige Andachte zu ihr und zwar mit großem Vertrauen gehalten und bin auch verschiedentlich erhört worden.” Bistumarchiv Münster (BAM), Sammlung Anna-Katharina-Emmerick und Louise Hensel (Emmerick/Hensel), 40. Stimmen über die Verehrung aus dem Volke, Gesammelt von P. Th. Wegener 1877–1883 (Stimmen). Abschrift aus Nr. 41; 81 S. (geheftet) und 8 Einzelblätter mit Konzepten, Namenslisten und Abschriften, alte Sign. IV.6, 19. Witwe Arkten in Rödder (pp. 25–27), Bauerschaft von Dülmen, 1820 geb. erzählt als sie 72 Jahre alt war.

28 This also holds true for official saints such as Maria Francesca of the Five Wounds. She lived before the era under discussion (she died in 1791), but she was beatified in 1843 and became a saint in 1867. Childless couples travelled to her in Naples and asked for her help (see: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/does-miracle-chair-help-fertility/>).

29 Wiethaus, “Bloody bodies,” 195; Scheer, “Das Medium,” 172.

30 Kleinberg, *Prophets*, 1 and 4.

31 BSB, Nachlass Lama, Friedrich von (1876–1944), Ana 445, file 2: letter from Essen-Ruhr, 6/5/31, Maria Vildhaut.

but this does not exclude the spread of the *fama sanctitatis* on different levels (regional, national, international). As we will see Chapter 7, Rome was rather reluctant to recognize stigmatics as saints and, if they did, their wounds were either minimized or ignored.

## 2 The Scale of Fame: Transnational and Comparative Approach

Ideas on sanctity and on celebrity are historically contingent.<sup>32</sup> Who or what they were or could be depended on the historical and geographical contexts and, in the modern era, the latter could be vast and multiple. Two important shifts took place in the nineteenth century that were not entirely unconnected and influenced the reception and construction of stigmatics as saints and/or celebrities: (1) the scale of their fame increased in the media due to the improvement and low cost of mass publication; and (2) the internationalization and centralization of Catholicism/Catholic devotional culture.

The nineteenth century was an era in which mass production of devotional objects and a growing Catholic internationalism enhanced the uniformization and internationalization of Catholic devotional culture.<sup>33</sup> Catholic pilgrims travelled to internationally attractive religious sites such as Lourdes and read books about mystics from other countries translated into their own language. This international and transnational perspective has primarily been adopted in research on popularized cults, such as Sacred Heart devotion or Marian or other apparition sites.<sup>34</sup> Unauthorized cults have fared less well in this respect even though, as we will show throughout the book, they also benefitted from the increasing media possibilities and transnational networks.

We do not want to suggest that the development of an unauthorized cult, or foreign visitors to such a site were the standard scenario in the life stories of stigmatics. The impact of the stigmatic varied from one case to another. In some cases, their fame did not travel beyond the local level.<sup>35</sup> In other cases, such as Louise Lateau and Therese Neumann, the news of their stigmatization spread worldwide. Given this reception beyond the local community, it is important to reflect on the broadening of the scale and/or speed of reception, as it also had an impact on the response to stigmatics and their devotion and

32 Similarly, as Nicole Priesching, "Mystikerinnen," 79, has noted, mystics are defined by the array of experiences and interpretations offered by their society, and differ accordingly.

33 Viaene, "International history."

34 See e.g. on Lourdes, Kotulla, "*Nach Lourdes!*"

35 See e.g. the case of Marie Cilissen (1883, Zichen) and Marianne Tekotte (1844, Althrede).

promotion. In his work on celebrities, Simon Morgan has warned historians that this:

[...] flow of goods, images, writings and celebrities themselves between countries and even continents means that historians must consider the international dimension of fame, and the complexities of examining the reception of particular individuals in different national contexts.<sup>36</sup>

Similarly, Jo Littler noted in her work on celebrity and the transnational that “[c]elebrities can, of course, be glocalized and consumed differently in different places, their meaning shifting alongside their geographical context.” She thereby referred to, among others, the work of Rana Gopal on Mother Theresa (of Calcutta), noting that she was never the type of celebrity in India that she was in Europe and the United States, where she functioned as a neo-colonial figure of compassion and care from the West.<sup>37</sup>

However, the difference lay not only in the perception of the religious celebrity, but also in the production of the celebrity persona (what a celebrity is/ can be).<sup>38</sup> Not all stigmatics developed into international celebrities, but in some cases – particularly those who recurred in the different lexica and lists (e.g. Louise Lateau) – it safe to call them world famous. Moreover, in the case of the twentieth-century German stigmatic, Therese Neumann, it is clear that the promoters had a broad international market in mind (see e.g. *La Chronique de Konnersreuth*, a French translation of the German original series by Friedrich Ritter von Lama).

The transnational aspect of the enthusiasm for stigmatics has been the topic of some recent in-depth studies by Kristof Smeyers and Leonardo Rossi. They studied the response of English Catholics to Maria von Mörl and Maria Domenica Lazzeri in the 1830s–1840s, and meticulously traced the networks involved, the routes that the pilgrims took and the meaning they attached to their visit.<sup>39</sup> In addition, they also looked into the reception and impact of the idea of the stigmatics in the British Isles.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, Tine Van Osselaer

36 Morgan, “Celebrity,” 110.

37 Littler, “Celebrity,” 1.

38 Littler, “Celebrity,” 1; Berlanstein, “Historicizing,” 68.

39 Leonardo Rossi and Kristof Smeyers, “Into the land of the living saints: travelling to see stigmata in Tyrol, 1830s–40s,” International Conference “Walking with saints: protection, devotion and civic identity,” Ronse, 24–26 May 2018. Smeyers and Rossi, “Tyrolean stigmata”.

40 Kristof Smeyers and Leonardo Rossi, “Tyrolean stigmatics in Britain and Ireland, 1841–1843,” Catholic Record Society Annual Conference, Cambridge, 24 July 2017.

has worked on the reception of another “canonical” stigmatic, Louise Lateau. She has shown how the Belgian stigmatic from Bois d’Haine became a symbolic figure in the culture wars in both Belgium and Germany. For the German Catholics, Louise Lateau’s suffering seemed to symbolize their political struggles in the 1870s.<sup>41</sup> Given the worldwide fame of stigmatics such as Lateau and Lazzeri, it is not so surprising to find sources on their cases in other countries. However, we also find such foreign interest in less well-documented cases, such as those of the Belgian Rosalie Put and the German Maria Göbl (1886–1941, stigmata 1923).

These latter cases show how the enthusiasm that developed beyond the borders of their own diocese and country provided specific challenges for the ecclesiastical authorities during the lifetime of the stigmatic *and* after their death. Rosalie Put was not popular in her own region at all, but triggered a lot of interest in German Westphalia. According to her parish priest, there were several reasons for this German interest: firstly, Rosalie Put had a sister in a cloister in Fauquemont. Most of the sisters there were German and they seem to have taken responsibility for the movement. Secondly, it seems that there were several propagandists in Westphalia who directed paying or other visitors to the Belgian stigmatic. In the opinion of *curé* Truyens, the best thing to do was to warn the clergy in Westphalia using “one or the other organ of publicity” (“une organe quelconque de publicité”), indicating that the visits should cease, as no proof of the supernatural origin of the phenomena had been provided and, on the contrary, everything seemed to point to a purely natural disease.<sup>42</sup>

It was a rather tricky situation, as Rosalie Put’s own bishop did not hold any authority over devotees of a German diocese, while the German bishops had no power over the Belgian stigmatic. The clergy of Westphalia did not really need to be warned about the dangers of this enthusiasm for the Belgian stigmatic. An initial first cry for help had reached the Bishop of Köln in 1901. While he contacted his Belgian colleague, the Bishop of Liège, there was no public statement. However, several years later, towards the end of 1909, the German complaints (this time by the Bishop of Münster) were heard in Liège. In late 1909 and early 1910, the Vicar General of Liège published a public statement in German diocesan periodicals, as well as in the popular press and the Belgian newspapers stating that, while within Rosalie Put’s own community there was “no misunderstanding” that the case involved “only strange, abnormal signs of illness,” “[f]rom afar, however, especially from some places in

41 Van Osselaer, “Stigmata.”

42 Antwerp, Ruusbroec Institute (RI), Fonds Jan Nulens, 1.1. letter of Curé Truyens, 23 March 1908 to “Monseigneur.”

Germany [...] many inexperienced and credulous people are attracted.”<sup>43</sup> The publication of the letter did not have the effect that was hoped for and German Catholics continued to travel to Put’s hometown in Lummen. Even after her death, her memory was kept alive through a number of sources, including the publication in German of the memoirs of Helene Hofmann, *Meine Besuche bei der belgischen Stigmatisierten Rosalie Püt (My visits to the Belgian stigmatic Rosalie Put, 1990)*.

In summary, to control the German enthusiasm for Rosalie Put, the Belgian episcopal authorities made good use of the outreach potential of the modern media, as did Put’s lay opponents. The power of the written word and the confusion that developed when a stigmatic drew attention beyond the borders of her own country, also played an important role in the post-mortem enthusiasm for the German stigmatic, Anna Maria Göbl. During her lifetime, Göbl’s own bishop (of Trier) warned “with emphasis” in April 1927, in a public letter read out loud in churches and published in church periodicals, “not to visit the mentioned sick person or to create propaganda for her.”<sup>44</sup>

While the visits continued and a booklet on Göbl was published in 1928 (Georg Priller, *Anna Maria Goebel. Die stigmatisierte von Bickendorf, Eifel*), the diocese of Trier did not get involved in the matter again. That is, until a priest from Eupen (in German-speaking Belgium), decided to publish a hagiography of her, and asked and received the *imprimatur* of the diocese of Liège (Belgium).<sup>45</sup> What followed was an intense correspondence between the Belgian and the German episcopal authorities in Trier, who could not understand how their Belgian colleagues had let this book through. In May 1957, the Vicar General published a statement in the church periodical of the diocese claiming that the ways in which the author represented the phenomena was not in line with the outcome of the examination by the episcopal commission. He advised that further circulation of the booklet was forbidden

43 “[...] dass nur eigenartige, abnorme Krankheitserscheinungen zu bestimmten Zeiten sich einstellen [...] sodass in der nächsten Umgebung kein Missverständnis mehr besteht und nur noch die Neugierde einige Anziehungskraft ausübt. Aus der Ferne aber, speziell aus einigen Orten Deutschlands, werden infolge einer nicht zu billigenden Mache immer noch zahlreiche unerfahrene und leichtgläubige Leute herangezogen,” “Zu dem Fall der im Pfarrdorfe Lummen wohnhaften Rosalia Püt” published, among others, in *Kirchlicher Anzeiger für Diözese Cöln*, December 18, 1909, *Echo der Gegenwart* (January 8, 1910), *Niederrheinische Volkszeitung* and *Het nieuws van den dag*, January 8, 1910.

44 “[...] warnt auf das eindringlichste die Katholiken, die genannte Kranke zu besuchen oder gar Propaganda für sie zu machen.” Bistumsarchiv Trier (BAT), Causa Göbel-Faber, BIII.12, 10 Bd. 3f, “Übernatürliche Erscheinungen an einer Kranken in Bickendorf” (10/4/1927).

45 Ernst, *Goebel Anna Maria* (1956).

and that the faithful who already had a copy in their possession needed to be warned.<sup>46</sup>

Transnational enthusiasm such as this seems to have flourished in a sort of grey zone of episcopal control. In order to temper the fervour, the bishops made use of the modern media, such as the press, whose outreach potential they were well aware of. If we want to adequately capture the enthusiasm for stigmatics we will thus have to address different levels of their reception and construction as saints and celebrities. They were as meaningful for devotees visiting their local “living saint” as they were to Catholic politicians looking for a symbolic figure who could appeal to many.

### 3 Religious Celebrities

Stigmatics such as Louise Lateau were not the first religious celebrities featuring in modern media. Scholars including Hans De Valk and Vincent Viaene,<sup>47</sup> who have studied the popes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, have shown how the Holy See consciously engaged in creating an emotionally laden public image of the Pope. The loss of political power – through Italian unification and the siege and loss of the Papal States – inspired an intense campaign to win the hearts of Catholics and thus also their loyalty for the “pope-martyr.” All means were mobilized as the Pope reached the hearts of the faithful through press sermons, pastoral letters, novenas and mass manifestations. Mass-produced signed images of the Pope circulated world-wide and enabled the faithful to feel a personal connection.<sup>48</sup> The recent book, *Popestar. Der Papst und die Medien*, explores this development and discusses the papal presence in the press, both as an object (he became one of the most photographed and publicly discussed figures) and as a subject, with his own publicity machine, including papal photographers, press speakers and newspapers.<sup>49</sup>

Similarly, as Claude Langlois and Ruth Harris (among others) have shown in their studies of Bernadette Soubirous, the Church used the means of modern industrial society (press and photography) to promote models of sanctity

46 BAT, Abt. R-BGV 9 Nr.229, Imprimatur 1957, “Warnung: Goebel Anna Maria, die stigmatisierte Opferseele von Bickendorf (Eifel),” *Kirchliches Verordnungsblatt für die Diözese Gurk* 15/5/1957, 45.

47 De Valk, “De cultus van de paus;” Viaene “Het Italiaanse Risorgimento.”

48 Viaene, “Het Italiaanse Risorgimento,” 264. See also Rusconi, Santo Padre, and Rusconi, “Santo Padre.”

49 Klimczak and Petersen (eds.), *Popestar*. On the media popes in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, see De Valk, “De cultus van de paus,” 335.

to a Catholic mass audience.<sup>50</sup> The promotional campaign of the visionary of Lourdes, who was the first saint to be photographed, had already begun during her lifetime. Postcards showed reenactments of the Marian apparitions with Bernadette Soubirous in the traditional dress of the Pyrenean region. This choice of wardrobe aimed to evoke her humble and rural background, seen as further confirmation of the authenticity of her apparitions. Portraying her modest background also made her accessible to the Catholic devotees, since she looked both “exceptional and ordinary.”<sup>51</sup> As we will discuss in more detail in the following chapters, this dynamic also seems to be at work in the representation of the stigmatics. For our discussion here, it is important to note that a humble background could be put to strategic use: celebrity came within reach of both the small and the mighty.

The ordinary lay faithful also made it into the spotlight. While often more short lived than the celebrity status of the Pope or a saint-to-be, temporary fame was within reach of the lucky few who were miraculously cured by the Virgin. In her work on Lourdes as a commercially attractive pilgrimage site, Suzanne Kaufman has addressed this production and marketing of *miraculées* as religious celebrities.<sup>52</sup> There was much to gain: for the Church these cures could function as proof of God’s continuing intervention on earth, while also becoming a major selling point for the pilgrimage site. “The process of transforming the otherwise-ordinary *miraculée* into a public figure”, as Kaufman notes, “was absolutely crucial to making Lourdes one of the most popular and visited pilgrimage shrines by the beginning of the twentieth century.”<sup>53</sup> The guidebooks, postcards, articles (e.g. in the weekly newsletter, *Le Pèlerin*) and overviews, such as Dr Boissarie’s *Les grandes guérisons de Lourdes* (1900), showed how unexceptional women could become objects of the miraculous, touched by the divine. Three reflections within Kaufman’s discussion of the celebrity of the *miraculées* should be kept in mind when studying the celebrity of the stigmatics.

Firstly, referring to the mass pilgrimage and commercialized media, she notes that while the celebratory practices might have been “more extensive than earlier forms of sacred celebrity,” they were also more fleeting, with most *miraculées* only enjoying a short moment of fame and glory.<sup>54</sup> While news of their cure radiated beyond the pilgrimage site (through commercialized

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50 Langlois, “Photographier,” 263; Harris, *Lourdes*, 145, 16. See also Taylor, “Images.”

51 Kaufman, “Les Miraculées,” 519.

52 Kaufman, *Consuming visions*, 148–161.

53 Kaufman, “Les Miraculées,” 519.

54 Kaufman, “Les Miraculées,” 519.

media), as well as the *miraculée*'s own town or village, and reached a national or even transnational level, the attention span was limited to "the duration of a given week's headline story in the religious press."<sup>55</sup>

Secondly, the *miraculée* emerged as a new kind of celebrity, someone who was worthy of attention "not because of anything that she actively achieved but rather for the extraordinary grace that she received."<sup>56</sup> This allowed her to continue to be perceived as a modest person during her rise to national or international fame. Moreover, her name might easily be replaced by that of another *miraculée*, she was "a fetishised commodity – a reproducible and disposable public figure."<sup>57</sup> The type of fame they gained, as Suzanne Kaufman nuances, was essentially different from that "of other nineteenth-century female notables. They did not look or act, for example, like the celebrated actresses of the Paris theatrical stage. Nor did they enjoy the sacred authority or popular recognition garnered by female saints or visionaries of the day."<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, in her public visibility, gained through press coverage, postcards and the crowds she attracted, the *miraculée* was similar to these modern commercialized celebrities (such as the female journalist or the Parisian actress).<sup>59</sup> This was "no small achievement in late nineteenth-century French society, where non-elite women still enjoyed few opportunities for recognition and self-expression in the public sphere."<sup>60</sup>

Finally, Kaufman shows how many of these *miraculées* actively contributed to the construction of their public image. In their testimonies concerning their cure, they presented themselves as modern martyrs and heroines of their own stories, who had kept faith although modern science had given up on them.<sup>61</sup> In their stories, pain could be redemptive and lead to God.

As the above examples show, a saintly reputation was not necessarily at odds with mass communication and a growing consumer culture.<sup>62</sup> The Church, clergy and lay faithful used modern means to fight aspects of modernity that they believed to be in conflict with Catholicism. Nevertheless, "such marriage

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55 Kaufman, "Les Miraculées," 543.

56 Kaufman, "Les Miraculées," 534.

57 Kaufman, "Les Miraculées," 543.

58 Kaufman, "Les Miraculées," 536.

59 Kaufman, *Consuming visions*, 161.

60 Kaufman, *Consuming visions*, 154.

61 Kaufman, *Consuming visions*, 137, 141, 147.

62 See e.g. the work of Sofie Lachapelle on the *Guide national et catholique du voyageur en France*. She shows how some of the *miraculées* were actually included in the Catholic guidebooks published by the Assumptionist order at the turn of the twentieth century, Lachapelle, "Touring a Once Pious Nation."



of piety and commerce was not without its tension or its detractors, coming from both secular and religious corners.”<sup>63</sup>

We must keep these reflections on modern religious celebrities in mind when discussing the celebrity status of the modern stigmatics. Some of them knew only temporary success on the local, national or even international levels, while others remained famous throughout their lifetime and beyond. Three aspects should be highlighted: (1) the fame and media attention paid to celebrity stigmatics had an impact on the representation of others; (2) some stigmatics actively engaged in creating their public image, while others merely accepted or even avoided public attention; and (3) the public image of those stigmatics who remained famous throughout a longer period could change over time.

In the first instance, among the stigmatics who became and remained international celebrities during their lifetime, the Belgian Louise Lateau and the German Therese Neumann stand out. In both cases, we find indications that their names in fact became synonymous with the “stigmatic” as a type. Publications with titles such as, “A New Therese Neumann” or “A Male Therese Neumann,” not only suggest that the readers were very familiar with her case and recognized her name, but also that they knew what features someone such as Therese Neumann would be likely to display.<sup>64</sup> In 1875, an article appeared in a liberal weekly journal of the Ypres region in Belgium, discussing “a new Louise Lateau.” Describing a new stigmatic in Bohemia, the author noted: “As you can see, a second Louise Lateau. We do not believe that it will end here. The branch of industry is good. It is still in its creation phase, and there is no doubt that what is happening in Bohemia will happen elsewhere as well. The only thing that needs to be feared is that the competition might become a little too great; if that should happen, and it is highly probable, perhaps the eyes of the good souls might open.”<sup>65</sup>

For others, these famous cases were also an occasion to discuss precedents in the past. This was the case for the booklet, *Anna Katharina Emmerich, Maria von Mörl und Domenika Lazzaris. Drei von Meisterhand entworfene Lebens- und*

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63 Lachapelle, “Touring a Once Pious Nation,” 42.

64 “Eene nieuwe Louise Lateau,” *De Toekomst. Gazette van 't arrondissement Ijperen*, 9/05/1875, 1; Ritter von Lama, “Zweite Therese von Konneresreuth,” 191–194; “Een mannelijke Therese Neumann,” *De Schelde*, 23/01/1928, p.1.

65 “Gelijk men ziet, eene tweede Louise Lateau. Dat het daarbij zal blijven, gelooven wij niet. De nijverheidstak is goed. Hij is nog maar in zijn ontstaan, en 't kan niet missen, of wat in Bohemen geschiedt, zal eerlang nog elders geschieden. Het eenigste wat te vreezen is, is dat de concurrentie wat groot zoude kunnen worden. Moest dat gebeuren, en 't is zeer waarschijnlijk, dan zouden de oogen der goede zielen wel eens kunnen opengaan.” “Eene nieuwe Louise Lateau,” *De Toekomst. Gazette van 't arrondissement Ijperen*, 9/05/1875, 1.

*Leidensbilder*, published by “ein Curatpriester” in 1874. The book opened with the message that since Rohling’s book on Louise Lateau was receiving so much attention,<sup>66</sup> it was a good moment to point out that she was not a unique case.

It is important to note that these expectations about their physical appearance also seem to have influenced the ways in which new cases were described. Let us return for one moment to Elisabeth Flesch, the German case with which we opened the book. In the cartoon and the article published in *Kladderadatsch*, she was explicitly compared to Louise Lateau. Interestingly, studying Flesch’s case more closely, it becomes clear that her corporeal phenomena were not really similar to those of Lateau. While the Belgian stigmatic bore the visible wounds of Christ on her hands and feet, Flesch sweat blood.<sup>67</sup>

The exemplary character seems to have worked on a more regional level as well. While Anna Katharina Emmerick had certainly not been an international media celebrity like Louise Lateau, she seems to have been well known in the region of Münster, and when a booklet on a new stigmatic from the area (in Dorsten), Theresia Winter (stigmata feast of St Francis 17 September 1844), appeared in 1846, its author compared her to Anna Katharina Emmerick. In fact, to be more precise, Father Heinrich Gossler described Theresia Winter with an image of Emmerick in mind, and he exaggerated the visibility of the wounds on her hands and feet as well as the crown of thorns, as in Winter’s case they were apparently barely visible.<sup>68</sup>

Theresia Winter’s case is an excellent example of the spiritual father and/or the stigmatic actively contributing to the creation of the public image, in this case by publishing a booklet on her visions and a lithograph showing the imprint of her head wounds (Fig. 5.1).<sup>69</sup> Nevertheless, following the distinction suggested in research on the papal presence in the media, most stigmatics were objects rather than subjects of media attention. One exception is Elena Aiello (1895–1961, stigmata 1923), an Italian case that has been studied in more detail by Leonardo Rossi. While she was primarily an object of media attention in the initial years of her stigmatization, she continued to build her religious reputation (e.g. by opening an orphanage) and gradually became more media-savvy. She sent letters to

66 Rohling, *Die Stigmatisierte von Bois d’Haine*. See also Riko, “Louise Lateau en andere mystieken.”

67 Freytag, *Aberglauben*, 344–351. Berlin, GStAPK, I.HA.Rep.77. Tit.500, nr. 44 Bd.1 die Maßnahmen gegen die durch die angebliche Wundererscheinungen eingetretenen Ruhestörungen, e.g. “Blutschwitzerin” in “Saarbrücken, 8. August,” *St. Johanner Zeitung*, 9 August 1877 (Nr. 183).

68 Schulze, “Die angeblich stigmatisierte Theresia Winter,” 153.

69 On this, see Chapter 5.

Mussolini and copies to the press, in which she warned him to keep Italy out of the war and submit to the Pope.<sup>70</sup>

In this matter, it is important to distinguish between two “circuits,” each with their own logic. As Suzanne Kaufman noted, there is a difference between “popular culture – which comprises beliefs, practices, and objects that are locally produced and shared – and mass culture, in which producers and consumers typically are distinct and in which cultural forms reflect and construct urban social life while also being shared by large numbers of people outside of urban centres.”<sup>71</sup> The difference between the two circuits was certainly not clear-cut and there were interactions and overlap. The most telling example is the story of the Dutch stigmatic Dora Visser (1819–1876) as narrated by Peter Nissen. He notes that it was in fact the publication of her story in the local newspaper that instigated the cult of the Dutch stigmatic about a century after her death.<sup>72</sup> The impact of the media on devotional culture should therefore not be underestimated.

Stigmatics functioned as objects of attention in both circuits, but their actions as subjects of attention, their efforts to create a public image, mostly relate to popular culture. A good example is the capuchin friar, Padre Pio, who had his own personal photographer and engaged in an extensive photoshoot shortly after he developed stigmata (in 1918).<sup>73</sup> These photographs were used in devotional booklets and cards during his lifetime. We should be wary of presenting such active engagement – like that of the *miraculées* of Lourdes – solely in a positive light. Attempting to enhance one’s public image and the product lines associated with this, did make stigmatics vulnerable to accusations of seeking attention or even commercial interest. Neither had a good effect on the saintly image of the stigmatic.<sup>74</sup>

Finally, it is important to stress that apart from geographic variations in the public image of the stigmatic (depending on the intended ‘consumer’), there were also chronological shifts in emphasis. This aspect is best explained by referring to the reception of Louise Lateau in Belgium. While she initially featured as a symbol for “all” Catholics, against the evil of “Liberalism”, by the late 1870s she had come only to represent the “ultramontane” Catholics (as

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70 The letters were written in the 1940s and published in 1956 in *Giornale d'Italia*. L. Rossi, “Elena Aiello,” in Stigmatics-database (<https://mediahaven-stigmatics.uantwerpen.be/>). Consulted on 5 July 2019.

71 Kaufman, “Les miraculées,” 542, footnote 59.

72 Nissen, “Het zalig lijden,” 105.

73 Krass, “Stigmata,” 378; Krass, “Kontrollierter Gesichtsverlust,” 80, see also Chapter 5.

74 See the case of Therese Neumann discussed in Chapter 5; see also the discussions of the photographs of Louise Lateau (Van Osselaer, “The affair”).

opposed to “liberal Catholics”) because of her explicit support for her former bishop against his “liberal” successor.<sup>75</sup> Likewise, as we will see in Chapter 7 (on the Vatican response), the Church’s post-mortem attitude to a stigmatic could be quite different from its previous stance and not seldom also comprised an image shift for the stigmatic involved.<sup>76</sup>

Such image shifts also characterize the post-mortem campaigns for beatification supported by both lay and religious devotees. In the case of Anna Katharina Emmerick, for example, there is a wonderful set of documents about celebrations on the occasion of the centenary of her death and about the popular devotion to her. They document how, in 1924, Emmerick had developed from a local saint and victim soul (atoning for people’s lack of morality during the Napoleonic era), into a symbol of hope for all German Catholics after defeat in the First World War and the hyperinflation of 1923. It was that image of her that Father Hunkemöller promulgated when he toured the United States in 1924 to mobilize the German immigrants to contribute to her cause (with signatures and financial donations).<sup>77</sup> The focus of this book, however, is primarily on the stigmatics during their lifetime.

#### 4 An Interactive Approach

“Most of the visitors, especially the women, also visit the parish church, venture behind the high altar and behind a crucifix that is hanging on the wall there placed open and sealed letters, and notes on which everything imaginable is written.”<sup>78</sup> In 1927, one year after Therese Neumann’s stigmata were first

75 On this matter, see Van Osselaer, “Stigmata.” For a change of profile of the Spanish Sor Patrocinio, see Chapter 6. See also Van Osselaer, Rossi and Graus, “Virgin mothers;” and Frijhoff, “Témoins de l’autre,” 43.

76 For changes in conceptions of official (post-mortem, Vatican-approved) sanctity, see e.g. Ciciliot, “Heritage talks,” Bienfait, “Zeichen.” De Palma, “Il modello,” and Maclaren, “Modernity.”

77 S.n., “Verehrung und Popularisierung,” website Stadtarchiv Dülmen: ([http://www.duelmen.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/duelmen.de/stadtarchiv/pr/ake/index.htm](http://www.duelmen.de/fileadmin/user_upload/duelmen.de/stadtarchiv/pr/ake/index.htm), consulted 14 January 2019). “Uns ist sie, wie es immer gewesen, unsere Heimatheilige, eine deutsche Heilige.” *Festgabe zur Erinnerung an den 100-jährigen Todestag der gottseligen Anna-Katharina Emmerick (9. Februar 1924)*, Dülmen: Laumann: 71. On the campaign that Father Francis Hunkemöller launched among German immigrants in the United States (1923–24), see Bistumarchiv Münster (BAM), Sammlung Anna-Katharina-Emmerick und Louise Hensel, 45. Kaplan Hunkemöllers Werbereise für Katharina Emmerich in Nordamerika 1923/24: Korrespondenz, Zeitungsausschnitte u.a., c. 1921–1924.

78 “Die meisten Besucher, besonders Frauen suchen auch die Pfarrkirche auf, begeben sich dort hinter das Hochaltar und stecken dort hinter ein an der Wand hängendes Kreuz

reported, her saintly reputation was for many devotees still beyond doubt. The faithful did not just want to see the stigmatic, they called upon her for help using these small notes. Therese Neumann allegedly read them and prayed for what they wished for (e.g. healing of a family member or conversion of a son). Depictions such as these are wonderful examples of how “saintliness” is created through such practices.<sup>79</sup> By putting these small notes behind the crucifix and putting their trust in the German stigmatic, these visitors showed that they believed in her power of intervention. The faithful thus participated in constructing the meaning of stigmatics using rituals and social interaction, and thereby referred to their own knowledge and traditions.<sup>80</sup>

Looking at these practices allows us to avoid an overly structuralist approach (the promotor’s idea of the stigmatic), and address the “audiences” (their gaze and needs) and their involvement in the creation of the stigmatic (as saint and celebrity). We will study the practices that developed in reference to the stigmatics in the following chapters, and we can draw on recent anthropological research and address the sensational forms adopted. Birgit Meyer describes these as the “relatively fixed modes for invoking or organizing access to the transcendental” that are shared and transmitted and always linked up with specific historical and social contexts.<sup>81</sup>

We will address these practices more elaborately in the following chapters, but for our purpose here it is important to note that some of the sources hint at components of a pilgrimage culture that have also been signalled at other – more officially sanctioned – places.<sup>82</sup> Apart from praying, gazing at and sometimes even touching the stigmatics, there are also reports of the collection of relics. More specifically, visitors collected “contact relics” – relics which owed

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Briefe offen und verschlossen, sowie auch Zettel, auf denen alles erdenkliche geschrieben steht,” Staatsarchiv Amberg (StA), 4169 Bezirksamt Tirschenreuth, Schreiben der Gendarmeriestation Konnersreuth an das Bezirksamt Tirschenreuth, 57: 16/9/1927.

79 Scheer, “Das Medium,” 172.

80 Davis and Boles, “Pilgrim apparition work,” 376. For a similar use of small notes, see e.g. the present-day custom of leaving small notes on the grave of Anna Katharina Emmerick in the Heilig Kreuz Kirche in Dülmen.

81 Meyer, “Mediation,” 29–30.

82 Journeys to stigmatics were also called pilgrimages. See e.g. “they made a pilgrimage to Kaldern” (“wallfahrteten nach Kaldern”) (to Maria von Mörl), Görres, *Die christliche Mystik*, 500. See e.g. the case of Anna Maria Göbl: “I have been told that nowadays a glass with holy water and a palm branch is put on the table, with which they bless the patient who is laying on the bed, similar to how one blesses a dead person” (“Mir wird erzählt, dass man jetzt auf dem Tische ein Glas mit Weihwasser mit einem Palmsträuschen aufgestellt hat, womit die im Bett liegende Kranke gesegnet wird, ähnlich wie man einen Toten segnet.”) BAT, BIII.12, 10 Bd.3a, Causa Göbel-Faber, Bickendorf, Hauptakten 1, April 1924–April 1927, Letter from Mayor Bickendorf to the Bishop, April 1927.

their powers to the claim that they had been touched by divine personalities.<sup>83</sup> Such relics could be almost any object, but particularly popular were pieces of cloth that had the blood of the stigmatics on them. By collecting these relics, the visitors demonstrate their trust in the special powers of the stigmatics. Furthermore, the “worship” of stigmatics was something that could also be cultivated at a distance. The letters of the devotees to the stigmatics asking for their prayers and those thanking them for their help, suggest that the devotees addressed these “living saints” as they would address any other divine person, and that the miracles attested to (e.g. cures) were “miracles at a distance.”<sup>84</sup>

Saintliness was co-created in reports on the effectiveness of the stigmatic’s prayers and relics through narratives about miraculous cures and conversion stories that circulated orally, but were also reported in periodicals such as the *Konnersreuther Jahrbuch*.<sup>85</sup> However, we should be wary of adopting a solely instrumental approach (demand and answer), as the stigmatics also functioned as exemplars of Christian virtues. We find these hagiographic accounts in the summary biographies that were published during their lifetime and after their death. A closer look at the publications concerning two celebrity stigmatics, Louise Lateau and Therese Neumann, shows how their cases were regarded as exemplary for Catholic readers. The fact that these biographies were also published in Catholic book series shows that they had become household names and could function as religious models. Several of these books were published in series intended to improve the morality and knowledge of Catholic teachings of the audience (e.g. “La bonne lecture”/“Good literature”, “Volksbibliothek”/“People’s library”, “Geloofsonderricht”/“Religious education”). The stigmatic’s virtuous life was presented as an example to the Catholic readers. This idealized interior life was something they could imitate – in contrast to the exterior aspects: the stigmata – and its presentation served the edification of the reader.<sup>86</sup> The authors encouraged the readers

83 Bynum, “The sacrality,” 10, n. 29, see also Walsham, “Introduction,” 11, 14–15.

84 As different from miracles near the shrine, Signori, “Die Wunderheilung.”

85 See e.g. “Eine Heilung,” *Konnersreuther Jahrbuch*, 1932, 55.

86 In his biography of Louise Lateau (1874), for example, Henri Van Looy focuses on the interior aspect: “[...] that is the principal part that needs to serve for the edification of the fellow human, revitalize their faith and bring them to glorify the Lord [...]”. (“[...] c’est là le côté principal, qui doit servir d’édification au prochain, ranimer sa foi et le porter à glorifier le seigneur [...]”) Van Looy, *Biographie*, 7. Or, on Therese Neumann: “Because this literature mostly has a beneficial effect on the reader and may thus be called an apostleship of the first category.” (“Omdat zulke lektuur in de meeste gevallen heilwerkend inslaat bij den lezer, en daardoor een apostolaat mag geheeten worden van eerste gehalte.”) Dewachter, *Therese Neumann*, 10.

to go to Communion frequently,<sup>87</sup> to learn about the power of suffering<sup>88</sup> and find their way back to God.<sup>89</sup>

In addition, some authors published accounts of their personal visits to Louise Lateau and Therese Neumann.<sup>90</sup> In doing so, they were the heirs of an older tradition, with Count Friedrich Leopold von Stolberg's narration of his visit (22 July 1813) to Anna Katharina Emmerick (1774–1824) having already been published several times in the early nineteenth century,<sup>91</sup> while John Talbot, the Earl of Shrewsbury, also published an account of his visit to the Tyrolean stigmatics in 1841.<sup>92</sup>

When we look at the publications on visits to Therese Neumann at the start of the twentieth century, it becomes clear that these books had very diverse profiles. Some were self-reflective texts in which the author linked their own experience of visiting the stigmatic to broader reflections on society in general.<sup>93</sup> Other books illustrate the dynamics that Suzanne Kaufman elaborately discusses in her study of the Lourdes pilgrimage site and Sofie Lachapelle in her work on the Assumptionists' Guide to Catholic France: the merging of consumerism and religious culture.<sup>94</sup> These publications are best described as combinations of self-reflective texts and tourist guidebooks. L. Parcot, for example, included a map with travel information in his *Ce que j'ai vu à Konnersreuth* (*What I saw in Konnersreuth*, 1937), while A. Huybers, elaborated on which trains to take in his *Naar en rond Konnersreuth. Persoonlijke indrukken en beschouwingen van onderweg en ter plaatse* (*To and around Konnersreuth: personal impressions and reflections on the road and on site*, s.d.).

In addressing these unofficial cults – the ideas, practices and media used – the majority of the following pages address focus on devotions that are outside the formal framework of the Catholic Church (i.e. not yet approved or disapproved).<sup>95</sup> We postulate that the faithful not only co-constructed the “saint” through religious practices and narratives about miraculous cures, but

87 Dewachter, *Therese Neumann*, 54.

88 Danemarie, *Le mystère*, 227.

89 On these books, see Van Osselaer, “Dor.”

90 See e.g., *Un pèlerinage à Bois-d'Haine* (1871); *Louise Lateau en 1877*.

91 E.g. in the *Hamburger Correspondent*, but also in Theodor Lutterbec's text, “Im Betreff der A.K. Emmerich” (1820). See “Zeitgenössische Resonanz”, Stadtarchiv Dülmen ([https://www.duelmen.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/duelmen.de/stadtarchiv/pr/ake/index.htm](https://www.duelmen.de/fileadmin/user_upload/duelmen.de/stadtarchiv/pr/ake/index.htm)). Consulted on 5 July 2019.

92 On his letter and its effect in England, see Smeyers and Rossi, “Tyrolean stigmata.”

93 E.g. the book by the Catholic convert Lars Eskeland, *Mijn bezoek aan Theresia Neumann* (*My visit to Theresia Neumann*) published in 1932.

94 See Kaufman, *Consuming visions*; Lachapelle, “Touring a once pious nation.”

95 Margry, “New transnational religious cultures,” 206.

also the “stigmatic.” Stories about celebrity stigmatics coloured expectations and influenced the narratives and depictions of new stigmatics (e.g. the visible bleeding wounds).

Studying our stigmatics as potential saints *and* celebrities at the same time allows us to aptly cover the changing media and devotional landscape of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The enthusiasm for the modern stigmatics shows how older traditions lingered on (and were reinvented), but also how the new means (and their production scale) posed new challenges to the ecclesiastical authorities. While stigmata might have been reported since the thirteenth century, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries they made the headlines.



# On Stigmata, Suffering and Sanctity

*Tine Van Osselaer*

## 1 Theodor Nolde's Visit

On 2 May 1910, Theodor Nolde from Buer (Westphalia in Germany) sent a letter to the episcopal office of Liège in Belgium. About three weeks before, he had travelled to Lummen in Belgium in order to witness the stigmatized Rosalie Put (1868–1919, stigmata 1890) suffer through Christ's Passion. He had seen her wounds and her ecstasy and, as he wrote, was “deeply moved by the suffering of Rosalie Put and found religious edification while there.” He believed Rosalie to be divinely inspired (“gottbegnadeten Person”) and wanted to ask the Bishop of Liège whether or not the Church really thought her to be a fraud, or even diabolical (“teuflisches Weib”), as he had heard.<sup>1</sup> Nolde explicitly described his visit as an edifying experience, but how could this be the case? Why would a Catholic such as Theodor Nolde want to see someone suffer through Christ's Passion in the first place? This chapter addresses the appeal of the stigmatic's suffering, and studies the ways in which devotees viewed the stigmatic's body in pain. What did the suffering of stigmatics mean to them?<sup>2</sup>

Rosalie Put's profile fits that of a typical stigmatic: she was a young woman who carried visible wounds and suffered through Christ's Passion in the presence of numerous visitors in a domestic setting. This chapter focuses primarily on the reception of such stigmatics in regions of Germany and Belgium. This geographical focus allows us to explore reports on stigmatics from the different waves we have detected, as well as look at some of the earliest examples (e.g. Anna Katharina Emmerick, 1774–1824, stigmata 1812). While we do not want to underestimate the importance of the specific historical contexts of these cases (i.e. assume that late nineteenth-century Belgian Catholicism and early twentieth-century German Catholicism provide the same background), we

1 “[...] und war dem leidenden Zustand der Rosalie Pütt tief ergriffen und habe mir dort religiöse Erbauung geholt. Ich halte die Rosalie Pütt für eine gottbegnadeten Person.” Archives de l'évêché de Liège (AEL), Rutton, Varia 284, Le cas de Rosalie Put, letter of Theodor Nolde, 2 May 1910.

2 On the role of religion in the interpretation of the body, see among others, McGuire, “Why bodies matter,” 290; De Soucey et al. “Memory,” 102. On the importance of the body in Catholic culture, see Corbin, “L'emprise,” 54.

believe that in relation to perceptions of pain and suffering, the reports on the stigmatics reveal some similarities.

An event that involves staring at a woman's body in the confines of her private, domestic sphere (bedroom), calls for a reflection on ideas of gender, corporeality and devotion.<sup>3</sup> We will show that the interest in visiting stigmatics,<sup>4</sup> witnessing their Passion and evaluating the visit as a religiously edifying experience, can only be understood if we take into account the shifting perceptions of pain and try to see how the faithful of the nineteenth and early twentieth century read a suffering body.<sup>5</sup> The bloody physical wounds were not only a sensational feature, drawing the attention of the curious, but also served as potential "proof" of God's intervention. By focusing on the faithful's pious devotion to the stigmatics' suffering and their wounds, we do not want to imply that the Catholic response was unanimously positive. Not everyone "believed" in the stigmatics, and the possibility of fraud, illness and diabolic intervention was left open.<sup>6</sup> In the following, we will first address the issue of the visibility and interpretation of the wounds and suffering, showing how these were linked to perceptions of the miraculous<sup>7</sup> and how the body of the stigmatic was set apart as a special body. We will then link these perceptions to the interpretation of pain, and the culture and gender of suffering, examining what effect such visits could have on the devotees.

## 2 The "Spectacle" of the Holy Wounds

### 2.1 *Visibility of the Stigmata*

Let us return to Nolde's letter about Rosalie Put cited above. While Nolde kept the description of his visit to the minimum, one thing he did deem necessary to mention was: "I saw the stigmatized wounds and ecstasy, attended

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3 Waltraud Pulz points to work on the intersection of the history of religion and the history of the body in the Middle Ages, and she calls for more research on the vitalization and reinvention of corporeal devotional practices in the nineteenth century, Pulz, "Vorbemerkung," 12.

4 For a more general reflection on visits to stigmatics, see Chapter 4.

5 Rather than focus on the autobiographical writings (letters and diaries) of the stigmatics about their pain and visions of Christ's Passion, this chapter addresses the experience of the visitors and the ways in which the suffering of the stigmatics was perceived by Catholic contemporaries. However, in focusing on the perceptions of the visitors, we do not intend to reduce the stigmatics to mere objects of observation with no agency. We agree with Monique Scheer that their patient suffering and acceptance of their pain and illnesses could have been empowering, and thus, a form of agency, Scheer, "Das Medium," 182.

6 Weiß, "Stigmata," 124.

7 See also, Pahud de Mortanges, "Fromm," 172.

the well-known events and was deeply moved by the suffering of Rosalie Put and found religious edification while there.”<sup>8</sup> For Nolde, the physical and visible phenomena – the stigmata, ecstasy and suffering – were enough to convince him that she was divinely inspired. He does not elaborate any further on Rosalie’s biography. As we will see, Nolde was not the first nor the only one to leave with this conviction.

The visibility of Put’s stigmata is of central importance here. As the previous pages have shown, stigmata were not a new feature in the early twentieth century. Since the attestation of St Francis’ (1181–1226, 1224) wounds in the early thirteenth century, stigmata have been reported throughout the eras. However, stigmatization did not always entail the materialization of the physical wounds. As the Franciscan-Dominican debates on the stigmatization of Catherine of Sienna (1347–1380, 1375) have shown, the wounds need not become visible.<sup>9</sup> What exactly these physical ‘wounds’ were also varied. While some stigmatics bled from their hands and feet (marks of the crucifixion), others also showed traces of the crown of thorns, flagellation and bruises on their shoulder (on which Christ had carried the Cross).<sup>10</sup> Some of these bloody marks were not an imitation of Christ’s wounds, but figurative (such as a Y-shaped cross)<sup>11</sup> or implied sweating or crying blood.

Carrying the visible wounds did not mean one was willing to show them to others, and St Francis took great care to hide the signs of his corporeal imitation of Christ.<sup>12</sup> The idea of hiding stigmata as a sign of *humilitas* also echoes through our sources from the modern era. The biographies of the nineteenth and twentieth-century stigmatics that we study frequently mention how the stigmatic prayed for the physical signs to disappear. These stigmatics only

8 “Ich habe die stigmatisierten Wunden und die Extase gesehen und den Ihnen jedenfalls hinlänglich bekannten Vergnügen beigewohnt und war dem leidenden Zustand der Rosalie Pütt tief ergriffen und habe mir dort religiöse Erbauung geholt. Ich halte die Rosalie Pütt für eine gottbegnadeten Person,” Archives de l’évêché de Liège, Rutten, Varia 284, Le cas de Rosalie Put, letter of Theodor Nolde, 2 May 1910.

9 Adnès, “Stigmates,” c.1225. On the debate about the stigmata of Catherine of Sienna, see Boufflet, *Les stigmatisées*, 36; Jungmayr, “Ekstase,” 71–74; Herzig, “Stigmatized Holy Women,” 156.

10 Boufflet, *Les stigmatisés*, 69.

11 See the image of the stigmata of Anna Katherina Emmerick, preserved in Leuven, Kadoc, Archief van de Jezuieten. Belgische en Vlaamse Provincie. 4.2.1.9. Archief van het provinciaal bestuur. Spiritualiteit en devotieel leven, 2261: A.K. Emmerick.

12 Vinken, “Via crucis,” 18, who contrasts this with the theatricality of martyrdom (that St Francis initially wished for himself) and asceticism.

wanted to feel the pain of the “invisible”/“interior”<sup>13</sup> stigmata (on their hands and feet, side and head) and participate in Christ’s Passion, they did not want to draw attention to themselves.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, displaying the wounds could also be interpreted in a positive way – as a sign of humility. Joachim Bouflet has noted that the female stigmatics of the Rheno-Flemish region, who succeeded Poverello in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, saw their visible stigmata as an opportunity for the edification of others. Their humility lay in their acceptance of being put on display.<sup>15</sup>

The high number of stigmatics carrying the visible wounds in the nineteenth century requires reflection, since it stands in stark contrast with the increasing distrust of visible stigmata in the previous centuries. As Antoinette Gimaret has noted, beginning in the seventeenth century, stigmata were increasingly contested as a sign of sanctity. They were regarded as too ambiguous, since they could be manipulated and imitated by false saints.<sup>16</sup> The pain that the stigmatics suffered was deemed more important than the physical signs; or, as Gimaret noted, “what was stigmatized was not the excess of devotion, but its spectacular expression.”<sup>17</sup> Xenia von Tippelskirch commented on this diminishing importance of the visibility of the wounds in her work on reports of stigmatization in France 1630–1730, postulating that this in fact

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- 13 Joachim Bouflet prefers this term, Bouflet, “Les stigmatés,” 147. On the topos of *humilitas*, see von Tippelskirch, “Ma fille,” 264.
- 14 AEK, *Generalia* I. 31. Religiöse Umtriebe, letter of Wilhelm Schrammen, the vicar of Giesenkirchen, “Bericht über die Eindrückung der Wundmale unseres Herrn Jesu Christi” (Charsamstag 1852).
- 15 Bouflet cites the Beguine Gertrude van Oosten (+ 1358), “J’accepterais d’être exposée en spectacle [...] de façon que tous puissent voir les signes des merveilles divines et qu’en les voyant ils louent et glorifient Dieu.” *Acta sanctorum*, Anvers, 1643, janv. T.I, 352, Bouflet, *Les stigmatés*, 31.
- 16 Gimaret, “Corps marqués,” 24: “Le siècle manifeste en effet une suspicion grandissante envers les signes visibles de la piété, considérés comme trop ambivalents car manipulables et reproductibles par des saints de fiction, comme le révèlent certains cas de ‘sainteté simulée’ mis en avant dans les tribunaux civils et religieux dès la fin du XVI<sup>ème</sup> siècle,” 257. There was a double danger linked to stigmata: if they were invisible, they could be doubted; if they were visible, their appearance might be reduced to a purely medical explanation.
- 17 Gimaret, *Extraordinaire*, 211: “Ce qui est stigmatisé n’est donc pas l’excès de dévotion, mais son expression spectaculaire.” Gimaret shows how this distrust stands in stark contrast with the situation at the start of the seventeenth century when, under the influence of the Counter-Reformation and the “mystic invasion,” the suffering bodies of the martyrs (of the religious wars) and the mystical religious featured prominently in hagiographic accounts (14–16). However, in Italy, the first trials of “feigned sanctity” in 1580–1590 stimulated an increasing marginalization of the miraculous in the process of canonization (202).

suggests a change in the status of pain. Reflecting on the emotional and corporeal outcomes of the meditation on Christ's suffering, she noted that even the "inner" experience of pain could be visible and witnessed by others (e.g. in cries of pain). In the seventeenth century, pain could have a signalling function ("Zeichencharacter") that could surpass even the bleeding wounds.<sup>18</sup> Reports on visible stigmatization also remained relatively rare in the eighteenth century. Under the influence of Enlightenment tendencies, the Catholic Church regarded the "miraculous" phenomena – including stigmatization – with distrust.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, how can we explain the upsurge in visible stigmata during the nineteenth century? Two elements seem to have been of importance here. First of all, the nineteenth century witnessed a reappraisal of the "miraculous" by the Catholic clergy and Church, which started to exhibit a more positive attitude towards popular piety (e.g. veneration of relics).<sup>20</sup> Nils Freytag and Diethard Sawicki have noted that the ultramontane Catholicism of the period was also characterized by an "almost obsessive craving for physical proof of the direct intervention of angels and demons in our world."<sup>21</sup> A second element of importance was the influence of developments within the medical field. As experimental, or scientific proof, gained validity, "visible" signs of the supernatural

18 Pain needs to be witnessed, as it can be a sign of sanctity, von Tippelskirch, "Schmerzen," 163.

19 Weiß, "Stigmata," 115. There were, of course, still cases reported, see, for example, the work of Lutz-y-Graf on the stigmatized Dominican nun from Hadamar, Magdalena Lorger ("Das Wunder im Dorf," 239). Gabor Klaniczay discusses a case of alleged sanctity linked to the stigmatization of Serafina Vincenti (1739, Florence) and mentions how at that time three examinations concerning the canonization of a stigmatic were ongoing. Klaniczay, "Louise Lateau," 279–280. Bouflet refers to several cases in the archives of monastic orders, Bouflet, *Les stigmatisés*, 73.

20 Ford, *Divided Houses*, 102; Clark, "The new Catholicism," 11, 17. Weiß called it symptomatic of the crisis of modernity in Catholicism in the nineteenth century. Faced with the challenges of the secularizing world, they sought shelter in the safety of what they thought was mysticism, Weiß, "Stigmata," 117–118. There was a new turn towards the supernatural, and not only within Catholicism in contrast to scientification, objectification, historicism and positivism. Priesching, *Maria von Mörl*, 17, links this to the rejuvenation of Baroque forms of piety and (for the Tyrolean case) a new generation of priests who trained at the recently reopened priest seminars.

21 "[...] einer fast schon obsessiven Begierde nach physisch greifbaren Beweisen für das direkte Hineinwirken der Engel und Dämonen in unsere Welt," Freytag and Sawicki, "Verzauberte Moderne," 17. Lachapelle, "Between miracle and Sickness," 79, "spiritual beliefs made tangible through physical evidence of the supernatural. Stigmatics, ecstasies, visionaries, and miraculously cured persons [...]." Kane, "Stigmatic cults," 106, "The desire for faithful Catholics to defeat secularists by constantly reaffirming the existence of the supernatural took high and low cultural forms [...] at the popular level, an explosion of reports of apparitions, miraculous cures, and stigmata, fed the taste for marvels."

became more important.<sup>22</sup> As these were phenomena that could be tested and rejected by the enemies of the Church, mystical epiphenomena such as visible stigmata became the focus of attention.

The Church called on experts to confirm or reject the authenticity of the wounds, or detect instances of fraud and simulation, which Barbara Vinken aptly described as “the inclusion of stigmata in the register of experimental research.”<sup>23</sup> Otto Weiß links this call for factuality – empirically provable signs of God’s intervention on earth – to the rise of historicism and positivism.<sup>24</sup> In his history of stigmatization, Joachim Boufflet mentions how trajectories such as those of Francis of Assisi and Catherine of Siena had become the exceptions. No longer miraculous signs of the transformation of a soul, stigmata were perceived as sensational epiphenomena, “proof” of the authenticity of a spiritual experience, which many stigmatics were happy to exhibit. This “tendency towards exhibitionism went hand in hand with the theatricalization of ecstasy.”<sup>25</sup>

The need for physical, visible – even tangible – proof and the central importance of the wounds in the reception of the stigmatics are amply documented in the testimonies of the faithful who saw them. A visitor to the famous German stigmatic, Anna Katharina Emmerick (1774–1824, stigmata 1812), described how he left “believing in the wounds” (“an die Wundmale glaubend”) after a visit in 1812:

When we arrived, she was completely in ecstasy [...] she looked as if she was dead. The Pater told me to take her hand, which I did, and I saw that her hand bled from her wounds and I felt they were ice cold. My brother, the Pater, revealed her chest and I saw the cross on her chest, more or less in the shape of the cross of the Lamberts church in Coesfeld. I saw the side wound and the bloody water that oozed out of the wound in small drops.<sup>26</sup>

22 von Tippelskirch, “Schmerzen,” 149 and “Ma fille,” 274–77. On this visibility as “proof,” see Albert, *Le sang*, 206. It was a period in which the divine became tangible in corporeal phenomena, a mystical era populated by stigmatics, ecstasies and visionaries, Lachapelle, “Between miracle and Sickness,” 79.

23 “die Einfügung der Stigmata in das Register experimenteller Forschung,” Vinken, “Via crucis,” 21, see also Menke, “Mund,” 273 and Brandstetter, “Reliquienberg,” 246.

24 Weiß, “Seherinnen,” 62 and 75.

25 “[...] tendance à l’exhibitionnisme, qui va de par avec la théâtralisation de l’extase,” Boufflet, *Les stigmatisés*, 39.

26 “Ich war aber sehr bewegt und ging an die Wundmale glaubend nach Hause” [...] “Als wir ankamen, war sie ganz in Verzückung, [...] Sie sah so aus, dass sie ich glaubte, sie sei tot. Der Pater sagte mir, ich sollte sie einmal bei der Hand fassen, welches ich dann auch that, und ich habe gesehen, dass die Hände an den Wundmalen blühten und fühlte, das

Visitors to the nineteenth and early twentieth-century stigmatics wanted to see blood – or so it seems. The importance of bloody wounds is amply illustrated by the story of Maria Fiechtner (1808–?). When she started to experience ecstasies on Fridays in 1839, she drew little attention. In 1841, her pastor commented on how she had managed to remain unknown. Only three priests had seen her in ecstasy, reliving the Passion, but there was no wonder to be seen, he asserted, adding that the world “wants blood” (“will Blut haben”): “As it is, only a small number of people will find there is something to see that might trigger their admiration.”<sup>27</sup> He preferred to keep things quiet. Bloody wounds were the culmination of what could be a series of preliminary phenomena (fits, feeling pain), and the wounds were a point of attraction to the visitors.<sup>28</sup>

In the case of Anna Perschl from Tyrlbrunn (stigmata 1840), the priest who had exorcised her and told her about famous stigmatics such as Anna Katharina Emmerick and Maria von Mörl “asked eagerly if she did not yet feel the wounds that would inevitably develop, as was the case with other people. He examined her hands in order to obtain what for him was so joyful a certainty. In that way, he was the one who gave the peasant folk the idea to let the wounds appear.”<sup>29</sup>

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sie eiskalt waren. Mein Bruder, der Pater, öffnete ihr die Brust und ich habe ein Kreuz auf ihrer Brust gesehen, ungefähr in der Form wie das Kreuz in der Lambertskirche zu Coesfeld. Ich habe die Wunde in der Seite gesehen und das blutartige Wasser in kleinen Tropfen aus der Wunde kam, habe ich gesehen,” BAM, Emmerick/Hensel, 40. Stimmen, testimony of Franz Limberg (1785–1867), he wrote his testimony (on his own initiative) in 1858.

- 27 “Ohnehin ist dabei für die wenigsten Menschen etwas zu sehen, was ihre Bewunderung in Anregung bringen könnte,” Archiv des Erzbistums München und Freising (AEM), Realia 923a, Erscheinungen-Einzelfälle, 1839–1845, Ausserordentlicher Zustand der Elisabeth Bartenhauser aus der Pfarrey Gaisach (Bartenhauser), Letter of Weinzierl to his Archbishop, 6 October 1841. It was only when cases such as that of Teresia Taubenberger, who was from the same region, started to draw attention that her case appeared once again.
- 28 This is similar to Görres's idea about full stigmatization (first the crown of thorns, side wound and then gradually the other wounds), Görres, *Die christliche Mystik*, 410–411; on Emmerick see, 453. A similar system of different phases in mystical phenomena (the ideas on mysticism of the Jesuit Giovanni Battista Scaramelli [1687–1752] in *Il direttorio mistico* were published in German in 1855) played a role in the evaluation of Maria von Mörl. Priesching, “Mystikerinnen,” 90.
- 29 “[...] fragte [...] sie fleißig ob sie dann die Wundmalen noch nicht in sich verspüre, die ja notwendig kommen mussten, wie bei den obrigen Personen. Er untersuchte ihre Hände um sich die für ihn so freudige Gewissenheit zu verschaffen. So war er es der die Lenzbauernleute auf der Gedanke brachte, auch die Wundmale erscheinen zu lassen.” AEM. Realia 923 a. Erscheinungen – Einzelfälle 1839–1845. 1840 Auffallende Erscheinungen an der Bauertochter Perschl zu Tyrlbrunn betr. (Perschl), Letter from the chaplain of the hospital in Munich (to which Anna Perschl was brought) to the Archbishop, 19 May 1840.

When Anna finally showed the physical signs, the response was impressive. In a letter to the Archbishop, a local pastor complained: "People flood in from all sides, partly out of curiosity, partly out of religious zeal towards Perschl, as if to a cult statue; they admire her and see her, if not as a complete then as a demi-saint."<sup>30</sup> In other words, the wounds were not only seen as a sign of divine intervention, they seem to have been linked to a perception of sanctity in which the saint functions as a revelatory token rather than as someone leading an exemplary Christian life.<sup>31</sup> A similar comment made by a fellow parishioner about Barbara Pfister, a late nineteenth-century stigmatic from Wattenheim, on seeing her around Christmas 1892: "The image remained as a truthful memory, how she lay there bleeding from her head, hands and feet, trembling and shaking, absent minded. I thought, that is a saint."<sup>32</sup>

## 2.2 *Spectacle: The Visibility of the Stigmatic*

Anna Katherina Emmerick (stigmata 1812), Anna Perschl (stigmata 1840) and Rosalie Put (stigmata 1890) all displayed the visible stigmata and received visitors who thought them special because of these wounds. In this respect, it is important to remember that this type of stigmatic differed from others. A report written in 1869 on two Belgian stigmatics may help to elucidate this aspect. The text compares the case of an anonymous stigmatized Carmelite nun from Tournai (stigmata 1851) with that of Louise Lateau (1850–1883, stigmata 1868), probably one of the most famous stigmatics in Europe at the time. The author notes that while the wounds displayed by the two women were similar, "what occurred during their moments of ecstasy was quite different. In Lateau's case there was an impressive scene-setting, full of emotions

30 "Von allen Seiten strömen Leute, theils aus Neugierde, und theils aus religiösen Eifer getrieben, zur Perschl wie zu einem Gnadebilde herbey, bewundern sie, sehen sie, wo nicht für eine ganze, doch für eine halbe heilige an," AEM, *Realia* 923a, *Erscheinungen – Einzelfälle 1839–1845*, Perschl, letter of Pfarrer Joseph Ostner to the Archbishop, 29 February 1840, 2 and 3.

31 For the difference between this bottom-up perspective on sanctity and the official stance, see Woodward, *Making Saints*, 158. For the Vatican response to stigmatics and the ways in which some managed to attain official sanctity (beatification, canonization), see Chapter 7 in particular.

32 "Das Bild blieb mir in treuer Erinnerung, wie sie blutend an Kopf, Händen und Füßen dalag, zitternd und bebend, geistesabwesend. Ich dachte, das ist eine Heilige," Archiv Bistum Speyer (ABSp), Dokumentation Barbara Pfister Karton 1–6, S5, M8 Befragungen von Pfarrangehörigen aus Wattenheim, Frau Balthasar Matheis (part of a series of testimonies, 1938–1939).



for the onlookers; more than once someone uttered the word ‘miraculous.’<sup>33</sup> The suffering of the Carmelite nun, on the contrary, took place in an enclosed setting and there seem to have been no spectators. “Scene-setting” (“mise en scène”) and “onlookers” (“spectateurs”) are the key words in the description of Lateau. It is this type of visibility, not that of the wounds – both of the women had visible stigmata – but that of the suffering and its public character that needs to be addressed here. The majority of the stigmatics who were reported in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, were not living in a cloister hidden from view or bound to a vow of silence about the phenomenon.<sup>34</sup> They were experiencing this in their family homes – domestic theatres of religious “spectacle.” Nevertheless, we should be careful in presenting this visibility as a completely new phenomenon. The Dominican tertiary, Lucia Brocadelli (1476–1544; stigmata 1496), who bled in “a rhythmic pattern every Friday, the day commemorating Christ’s crucifixion, when the pains that she felt were particularly strong,” also attracted visitors.<sup>35</sup> Thus, such regular public suffering can already be found in the fifteenth century. Interestingly, the “nun Lucia of Ferrara” was also mentioned in one of the articles written in 1817 concerning Anna Katherina Emmerick, indicating that the contemporaries of the famous nineteenth-century stigmatic also saw similarities with the Italian case.<sup>36</sup>

In addressing stigmatization as a “spectacle,” the following discussion draws on Sigal Gooldin’s approach to Victorian fasting women, a phenomenon that, like stigmatization, has been reported since the High Middle Ages, and which also bloomed again in the nineteenth century. Gooldin emphasizes that we need to distinguish between the “act” of fasting and the “spectacle” of fasting, “the appeared, performed, visible, ‘gazed at’ phenomenon of fasting” (interpreted by the spectator).<sup>37</sup> Each person who observed a fasting and/or stigmatized body was looking at it with a historically contingent mindset.<sup>38</sup> In the case of the stigmatics, two aspects seem to have influenced their perception

33 “[...] mais ce qui se passait pendant les extases était bien différent. Chez Louise, il y avait une mise en scène étonnante, pleine d’émotion pour les spectateurs; plus d’une fois on a prononcé le mot de miraculeux,” Leuven, Kadoc, Jezuïeten, Ludovicus Boeteman, anonymous report on a visit to a stigmatized Carmelite nun in 1851 and to Louise Lateau in 1869.

34 See Chapter 1.

35 Herzig, “Stigmatized holy women,” 171; Zarri, “Lucia da Narni;” Herzig, “Christ transformed.”

36 “Nonne Lucia” of Ferrara, Pascal, “Nichts Neues,” *Hermann. Zeitschrift von und für Westfalen*, 44. Stück, Hagen, 30.1817, 352.

37 Gooldin, “Fasting women,” 32.

38 Many of the stigmatics reported in the nineteenth and early twentieth century were famous for their inedia (e.g. Louise Lateau and Therese Neumann). It seems that the visible stigmata and ecstatic embodiment of Christ’s Passion are what drew thousands of people to their bedsides, rather than their ability to go without food (apart from the Eucharist).

or the “gaze”: ideas about the miraculous and wonder; and the cult of suffering (addressed more elaborately below).

Here, it is important to recall what Nils Freytag and Diethard Sawicki remarked about the pilgrims visiting Maria von Mörl. Rather than a visit to a long-established religious site, the main incentive for such trips was the ambition to experience real miraculous and spectacular events. These visions and strange corporeal phenomena documented the continuing existence of miracles.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, even in the case of von Mörl, there were resemblances with more traditional sites. As Elke Pahud de Mortanges has noted concerning the bodily comportment of von Mörl, her semi-floating stance, the way in which she presented herself, was in itself enough to turn her into a devotional image (“Andachtsbild”).<sup>40</sup> Having the opportunity to carefully observe the stigmatic was of central importance to the visitors and, as the quote by the Emmerick visitor above illustrates, touching was also significant. The fragment describes how during a visit to the stigmatic in 1812 he touched her hands and feet and felt that they were ice cold and truly bleeding. Here, touch was an extension of the eye.<sup>41</sup>

It is not difficult to see how visibility had its downsides. More than one stigmatic was accused of putting on a show and faking their reliving of Christ’s Passion in order to draw attention and create a commotion.<sup>42</sup> Even in the cases where the good faith of the stigmatic was not under discussion, allowing yourself to be gazed at was deemed problematic. How could it be reconciled with the ideal of humility? A case in point is Louise Lateau. In a letter to the Archbishop, a contemporary complained that her parish priest had gone to Bois-d’Haine and – as many others – had attended the Holy Communion of Lateau. “Should one not forbid that? [...] Long live the hidden life! How could L. not understand that and why has she not retired to a convent but instead surrendered herself to the gaze of men (“regards des hommes”)?”<sup>43</sup> The letter

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Older cases of combined inedia and stigmatization include: Elisabeth van Spaalbeek, Catherine of Siena and Veronica Giuliani, Lamot, “De heilige honger.”

39 Freytag and Sawicki, “Verzauberte Moderne,” 17.

40 Pahud de Mortanges, “Fromm,” 169.

41 We will discuss other aspects of the tactile experience in greater detail in Chapter 5 on material culture. On the importance of all the senses for the religious experience, see Macdonald, Murphy and Swann, *Sensing*, 3.

42 See the comments on Anna Perschl, AEM. *Realia* 923 a. *Erscheinungen – Einzelfälle* 1839–1845, Perschl, letter of Pfarrer Joseph Ostner to the Archbishop, 29 February 1840, “dass mir das ganze wie eine geistliche Komödie, als eine Profanation des heiligsten vorgekommen sey,” – “Aufsehen zu machen.”

43 “Ne devrait-on pas défendre cela? [...] vive la vie cachée! [...] ne s'est-elle pas retirée dans un couvent pour être délivrée des regards des hommes?” Archives of the Congregation

writer struck a nerve here for it was indeed a female body that was put on display in a public setting. Lateau's body was thereby not the only exceptional body to be scrutinized by medical experts (as were the bodies of the hysterics in La Salpêtrière),<sup>44</sup> or gazed at by the curious (as with other spectacles or fantasies) and the faithful (as with the bodies of those miraculously cured in Lourdes).<sup>45</sup>

Throughout the period under discussion there was a change in the setting of this public observation that needs to be highlighted here. In her article on stigmatic cults and pilgrimage, Paula Kane studied the cases of Emmerick, Lateau and Therese Neumann (1898–1962, 1926) and noted how the nature of such visits changed, evolving from an “intimate encounter to a public spectacle.”<sup>46</sup> She described how “the intimate duo of Brentano and Emmerich gave way to the tableau of Lateau surrounded by dozens of doctors, scientists, and journalists, which was succeeded by the immense weekly crowds at Konnersreuth who came to seem more touristic than spiritual.”<sup>47</sup> The setting, the number of visitors, the visibility and types of wounds, the way the Passion was embodied – all these factors could differ from one stigmatic to another and all had an influence on the way in which the devotees experienced their visit.

The visibility of their bodies was tied up with the “proof” status of the stigmata, as discussed above. As Barbara Vinken has summarized it: as these bodies became “the laboratory of science,” they also became the “stage of the Passion play.”<sup>48</sup> We will address what this Passion play was precisely comprised of and what effect it had on the visitors in the next section. Here, it is important to note that because of this “evidence” aspect, the ways in which and the accuracy with which this Passion play was performed, was also the object of scrutiny. As Sigal Gooldin remarked on the fasting women, “the ways in which one offers up ‘the body/the self’ to public consumption” were “assessed on

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for the Doctrine of Faith (ACDF), Archivum Sancti Officii Romani (SO), Stanza Storica (St.St.), Lateau C4F 1, report by Du Rousseaux, “Louise Lateau” Ctsse de Liminghe, 26/6/1883, from Gesves par Assesse, Introductory letter from Du Rousseaux, 3 August 1883 added to a letter by Mgr Du Rousseaux, 4 August 1883.

44 Didi-Huberman, *Invention*.

45 Kaufman, *Consuming Visions*, 139, 154; see also Harris, “Les miraculés.”

46 Kane, “Stigmatic cults,” 122.

47 Kane, “Stigmatic cults,” 124.

48 “Ihre Körper wurden, wie sie zum Labor der Wissenschaft wurden, zur Bühne eines Passionsspiels.” Vinken, “Via crucis,” 22. She refers to “der experimentelle Furor” and the female body under the male gaze (of the priest and of the medical expert) (23). Menke refers to the female body as a “stage of evidence” (“Bühne der Evidenz”), Menke, “Nachträglichkeiten,” 34.

the adequacy of the performance” and relied on the gaze of the spectators.<sup>49</sup> When Elisabeth Bartenhauser (1813–?, c. 1840), a stigmatic from the region of Oberbayern, made some “movements that were historically inaccurate at the very the least,” her pastor asked her not to perform such movements again and not to do anything that “did not match the biblical narrative.”<sup>50</sup>

### 3 The Meaning of Suffering

#### 3.1 *The Cult of Suffering*

Considering the existence of crucifixes, paintings of martyrs and the *Mater dolorosa*, the average Catholic of the nineteenth century would have looked at broken, suffering bodies and regarded them as meaningful. The nineteenth century witnessed a revival, or rather a reinvention, of a medieval devotional culture in which the suffering of Christ played a central role. The popularity of stigmatics in this period might be linked to this Christocentric emphasis. There was, however, a clear difference in tone: with its focus on the corporeal, the nineteenth-century “popular” mysticism that the stigmatics embodied was not similar to the intellectual (bridal and passion) mysticism of the Middle Ages.<sup>51</sup>

With an emphasis on the suffering Christ, the devotional context of the modern stigmatics was similar to that of the reports of stigmata in even earlier ages. Throughout the centuries, stigmatization has been associated with the rise and reinvention of a type of spirituality that emphasized the *imitatio Christi* and compassion.<sup>52</sup> St Francis’s stigmata (1224), for example, were reported at a time when the cult of the suffering, human Christ had become more popular, and inspired religious practices that aimed at more active participation

49 Gooldin, “Fasting women,” 36. On the careful monitoring of the movements of Louise Lateau (on 18 December 1869) by the pastor of Braine-l’Alleud, Ad. Hoofs, see Anonymus, *Louisa Lateau of de kruiswonddragende van Bois-d’Haine*, 7–8.

50 “Bewegungen bemerkt hatte, die wenigstens historisch ungetreu sind, so ermahnt ich sie, jener Bewegungen, und überhaupt Alles zu unterlassen, was von der biblischen Erzählung abweicht.” AEM (AEM), *Realia 923 a Erscheinungen-Einzelfälle 1839–1845*, Bartenhauser, letter to the Archbishop, 11 September 1840, Pfarrer Mathias Weinzierl.

51 On the difference in emphasis, see Priesching, “Mystikerinnen,” 97.

52 Von Tippelskirch, “Ma fille,” 264, “Un contexte de méditation religieuse ainsi qu’une rémémoration de la Passion du Christ – et ceci sur deux niveaux: d’une part, les lecteurs et lectrices de ces compte rendus en viennent à savoir que les stigmatisés s’étaient préparés à leurs expériences grâce à ces méditations, d’autre part ce contexte influence de manière décisive la réception de ces comptes rendus.”

in his suffering (e.g. through ascetic exercises).<sup>53</sup> Stigmatics of the fifteenth-century in the Rheno-Flemish area have been linked to the rise of the *Devotio Moderna* that had Christ's Passion as its primal focus point,<sup>54</sup> while the Italian stigmatized "sante vive" ("living saints") of the sixteenth century reflect a Catholic revivalist culture that lauded suffering, self-flagellation and starvation, which can be found in the biographies of devout women.<sup>55</sup> Similarly, the nineteenth century witnessed a rise in Christocentric devotions that emphasized his Passion, such as the Eucharistic devotions, the cult of the Sacred Heart and that of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, as well as religious practices such as praying the Stations of the Cross, meditations on the five wounds of Christ and praying the rosary (with the dolorous mysteries).<sup>56</sup> The emphasis in these devotions was on the suffering rather than the triumphant Christ.

There was a logic to the suffering, as Thomas Kselman remarked: "the prayers and suffering of those who believed could compensate for those who did not." This need to compensate was felt to be more urgent at a time in which secularization seemed to be increasing.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, Rome had added three women who carried the stigmata to the number of blessed and canonized: Veronica Giuliani was canonized in 1839; Maria Francesca of the Five Wounds of Our Lord Jesus Christ was beatified in 1843 and canonized in 1867, and the canonization of Claire de Montefalco took place in 1881.<sup>58</sup> Whilst popular perceptions of sanctity ("living saints") and official sanctity (beatification and sanctification) continued to differ (see Chapter 7), the

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53 On the emergence of a more emphatic *Imitatio Christi* in the eleventh and twelfth centuries as the foundation of St Francis's spirituality, see Klaniczay, "Illness," 119; Adnès, "Stigmates," c. 1213 and e.g. the Jesuit scholar J.H. Crehan, in his introduction to Herbert Thurston, *Surprising Mystics* (1955), x. On this active imitation of Christ's suffering, sometimes even leading to self-mutilation (e.g. Marie d'Oignies, 1177–1213, who wanted to share Christ's wounds), see Klaniczay, "Stigmatisierung," 139; Klaniczay, "Bodily signs," 30; Lochrie, *Margery Kempe*, 14; and Roodenburg (on the late-medieval *pathopoeia*), "Empathy."

54 Boufflet, *Les stigmatisés*, 41 and Cruz González, "Beyond the Bride," 107.

55 Mouchel, *Les femmes*, 8–16. He emphasizes how the tone of this genre differed from that of the Bulls of the Church, the sermons and paintings, where one would find a far more cautious approach. See also Boufflet, *Les stigmatisés*, 43. On how this trend in female stigmatics can be linked to the more democratic perception of stigmatization and participation in Christ's suffering among late medieval Dominicans (in contrast to Franciscans, who insisted on the uniqueness of St Francis), see Klaniczay, "Illness," 135; Zari, *Le sante vive*.

56 Schulze, "Die 'angeblich' stigmatisierte," 168; Corbin, "L'emprise," 55; Priesching, *Maria von Mörl*, 83.

57 We will discuss this in more detail in the next section, Kselman, *Miracles*, 103.

58 Klaniczay, "Louise Lateau," 290.

devotional context and knowledge of such older cases of stigmatization had an impact on modern stigmatics.

Observing a suffering body (Christ's) was an accepted practice – as was the ideal of the *imitatio Christi*. The report on the stigmatized Carmelite nun in Tournai (Belgium, 1851), as noted above, described how the nun had been seen “absorbed in prayer” before a crucifix that was capable of “seizing a pious soul.” Next to the cross, the author observed a “frame on which the stigmata of a saint were emphatically printed in red.”<sup>59</sup> According to the author, the nun was sent away to another cloister and recovered in this healthier environment, the stigmata disappeared and she subsequently returned to her old cloister. Religious practices like this were not solely the domain of women religious in the mid-nineteenth century, as the following two examples from Germany show. Particularly telling is the story of Karoline Beller (1830–1863), the young girl from Lütgeneder who displayed the stigmata in May 1845.<sup>60</sup> When she started to draw the attention of the press and visitors, she was isolated in a hospital and eventually confessed to being a fraud. A Vincentian nun at the institute to which the stigmatic was brought, told how the young girl had started to deceive everyone, claiming that Beller built on her prayer experiences:

She simply told me that when she was a child, during the procession of Sacrament's day, she and the other children had to recite poems related to the H. Sacrament with outstretched arms in front of the different altars. Ambition triggered her to do this in the most solemn way possible. She would then kneel in the hayloft and elsewhere, working herself into a higher state of tension. She continued to do this even after she had left school, and she became increasingly better at it.<sup>61</sup>

59 “absorbée dans la prière”, “propre à saisir une âme pieuse”, “un cadre dans lequel étaient fortement imprimés en rouge les stigmates de quelque sainte.” Leuven, Kadoc, Jezuïeten, Ludovicus Boeteman, anonymous report on a visit to a stigmatized Carmelite nun in 1851 and to Louise Lateau in 1869.

60 On the popularity of Karoline Beller and the eventual discovery that she was a fraud, see Muhs, “Die Stigmata.”

61 “Sie teilte mir einfach mit, sie habe als Kind bei der Fronleichnamspzession mit anderen Kindern vor den verschiedenen Altären mit ausgebreiteten Armen Gedichte, die sich auf 's hl. Sakrament bezogen, aufsagen müssen. Der Ehrgeiz habe sie gestachelt, möglichst feierlich das zu tun. Da habe sie denn auf dem Heuboden und sonst umhergekniert, sich ganz in eine höhere Spannung hineinarbeitend. Das habe sie denn auch noch viel getan, als sie der Schule schon entlassen gewesen, und sie habe sie es immer mehr gelernt.” Erzbistumsarchiv Paderborn (EBAP), Acta Specialia. Pfarrstelle zu Lütgeneder, Bd.1. 1827–1939, Bericht der Vinzenzianerin Theodora an den Pfarrer Happe in Lütgeneder über die

When her parish priest showed Beller an image of St Catherine of Siena and told her about the stigmata and her life, she wished she could become “a saint like that.” When she became ill (some sort of cramping in her spine, cataleptic attacks) she continued her prayer practices with outstretched arms and various gesticulations and realized that this “cramp” allowed her to be in complete control of herself (“Sinne”), so she started to maintain these prayer positions when others entered her room. Finally, when their housekeeper remarked, “My God, the only thing that is still missing is the holy wounds,” she started to create them herself.<sup>62</sup>

The fear of negative influence through the examples of famous stigmatics and an exaggeration of corporeal religious practices also echoes through the reports on other cases. We see a distrust in excessive devotional and ascetic enthusiasm in the list of questions that Pastor Weinzierl had to answer concerning the case of Teresia Taubenberger (?–?, c.1839) in 1842. He protested vehemently against accusations that he had led some women to a hypertensive (“überspannten”) religiosity and to petty devotions (“Andächteley”). He claimed that he had never singled her out for religious teachings, that he had actually discouraged Taubenberger from going to confession so often, and as soon as he found out that she was using the *cilicium* and flogging lash, he forbade it. Moreover, on hearing someone state that she wanted to visit Maria von Mörl, he advised against it.<sup>63</sup>

In all three mid-nineteenth-century cases (the Carmelite nun, Beller and Taubenberger), the reports about these women refer to the alleged stigmatic’s knowledge of famous – imitable – predecessors. Moreover, these sources

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angeblich stigmatisirte Caroline Beller in Lütgeneder 1863 (1846), typed copy of an original from 1863 (Bericht der Vinzenzianerin Theodora).

62 “Mein Gott, es fehlt doch nichts als die hl. Wunden.” EBAP, Acta Specialia. Pfarrstelle zu Lütgeneder, Bd.I. 1827–1939, Bericht der Vinzenzianerin Theodora. See also the medical report in which the physician noted how: “Only the stigmata were missing. They were wished for, intensely desired and since they did not appear, created” (“Nur die Stigmata fehlen. Sie werden gewünscht, inbrünstig verlangt, und da sie nicht erscheinen wollen, gemacht.”), Berlin, Geheimes Staatsarchiv, Preussischer Kulturbesitz (GStAPK), I.HA Rep.76. Kultusministerium VIII A Nr.2180: Acta betreffend die angeblichen Wunderkuren und Wunder-Krankheiten, 1821 Nov. 1904 Jan, report of Kreisphysikus Pieper, 6 June 1845.

63 AEM, Realia 923 a Erscheinungen-Einzelfälle 1839–1845, Bartenhauser, report of the dean of Osterwargau to the episcopal ordinariat, 13/12/1842 on the behaviour of Pastor Weinzierl. On accusations of creating a mystical atmosphere, see also: Kickertz and Flesch (1878). On Taubenberger, see: Gisibl, *Frömmigkeit*, passim. On the influence of the Franciscan father Heinrich Gossler in the case of Theresia Winter (1845), see Schulze, “Die ‘angeblich’ stigmatisierte,” 144. On the fear of exaggeration of religious practices such as flagellation, see Corbin, “L’emprise,” 75.

document a fear of an exaggerated, unhealthy, religious atmosphere not seldom thought to be created by the parish priest, her father confessor.<sup>64</sup> Apart from the distrust that emerges from these references, we also gain a glimpse of how religious practices focusing on the Passion of Christ, suffering and atonement called for specific “body techniques”<sup>65</sup> that could eventually – as in the case of Beller – be incorporated into the stigmatic’s embodiment of Christ’s Passion. Nevertheless, while there was a certain “common” devotional language and a list of stigmatized predecessors that could be referred to, each stigmatic functioned within a specific religious setting, which had its local preferences and emphasis depending, for example, on the presence of other denominations in the region.<sup>66</sup>

### 3.2 *Redemptive Suffering*

Pain is a subjective experience and a cultural construction, and how it is interpreted depends on the historical context.<sup>67</sup> Within Catholic and Protestant versions of Christianity, pain is equipped with a divine purpose. In her study on the history of pain, Joanna Bourke mentions, among other forms: “pain as the result of sin, a guide to virtuous behaviour, a stimulus to personal development, and a means of salvation.”<sup>68</sup> Since the stigmatics were reliving Christ’s Passion, their pain was a cleansing and reparatory suffering, through which they were atoning for the sins of others.<sup>69</sup>

The bodily movements and facial expressions of the stigmatic were carefully observed by the visitors and – if necessary – explained by a bystander (e.g. a supportive parish priest who explained which part of the Passion the visitors were witnessing). As we saw above, Elisabeth Bartenhauser failed to imitate

64 Muhs, “Die Stigmata,” 104, 119.

65 von Tippelskirch, “Schmerzen,” 154.

66 For a more general reflection on the specificity of the devotional context, see e.g. the work of Mary Heimann on the limits of uniformization: Heimann, “Catholic revivalism;” and her work on the reception of the English stigmatic Theresa Higginson: Heimann, “Medical and mystical opinion.”

67 Or, as Louise Hide, Joanna Bourke and Carmen Mangion stated, “Pain has meaning, which is formed out of the complex interactions taking place between the body, mind and culture. As a result, it differs from person to person, social group to social group, and it changes over time and space. It is profoundly influenced by personal beliefs as well as social mores and temporal contexts,” Hide, Bourke, Mangion, “Introduction,” 1; Bourke, *The story of pain*, 6–8, 12; Boddice, “Introduction,” 2; von Tippelskirch, “Schmerzen,” 145; Moscoso, *Pain*, 2.

68 Bourke, *The story of pain*, 91; Kane, “She offered,” 87, “At least since the late Middle Ages, therefore, pain was something to be interpreted variously by Catholics as a punishment for sin, a trial from God, or a vehicle for transcendence.”

69 Albert, *Le sang*, 332; Kselman, *Miracles*, 103.



Christ's Passion accurately. In the case of Maria Fiechtner (cited above), who never developed visible stigmata and remained unknown, the resemblance of the timing of her corporeal phenomena to the Passion timeline itself threatened to give her away. Her parish priest noted that because he was visiting her on Thursdays and Fridays people in the village might start speculating and conclude that there might be a stigmatic in the house. The villagers were already familiar with the phenomena, as Bartenhauser, who was from the same region and was supervised by the same parish priest, went into ecstasy every Thursday evening when the church bells tolled "the fear of Christ" ("die Angst Christi lautet").<sup>70</sup>

The Biblical rhythm of suffering not only played a part on the hourly level. In some cases, suffering was thought to appear or increase on Catholic feast days linked to Christ's Passion (such as Holy Week, the Discovery of the Holy Cross) or St Francis (17 September, the day he received the stigmata).<sup>71</sup> The report on the anonymous Carmelite nun from Tournai mentioned that it was primarily during Holy Week and on some feast days related to the Passion that one could observe the marvellous effects.<sup>72</sup> While the initial point of reference was Christ's suffering, the pain the stigmatic showed could symbolize more than this. The intensity of the pain was thought to be closely linked to the liturgical calendar,<sup>73</sup> and to current political events concerning the Catholic Church. In other words, the bodies of the stigmatics not only referred to that of Christ and of stigmatized predecessors, but also symbolized the current state of society – they referred to both the past *and* the present.<sup>74</sup>

It is important to emphasize this latter aspect for, as Nicole Priesching has noted, "Even when mysticism in itself is timeless – since it is ultimately about

70 AEM, Realia 923a, Erscheinungen-Einzelfälle, 1839–1845, Bartenhauser, letter to the Archbishop from Pfarrer Mathias Weinzierl, 10 January 1840; idem, 6 October 1841, on Weinzierl's visits on Thursdays and Fridays; report of Dechant Gilbert Niedermayer to the Archbishop: the lights in the room were on until midnight, so people might have started guessing.

71 See the report on Maria Beatrix Schuhmann (stigmata 1853), Archiv des Bistums Passau (ABP) OA Varia I 17b II, correspondence box 2, letter of Seidl to Stadtkooperator, 15/7/1891; the report on Anna Maria Göbl, Priller, 1928, 60.

72 "C'était pendant la semaine sainte surtout et à quelques fêtes de la Passion qu'on observait ces effets merveilleux," Kadoc, Jezüieten, Ludovicus Boeteman, anonymous report on a visit to a stigmatized Carmelite nun in 1851 and to Louise Lateau in 1869.

73 Goslicka, *Die Kraft*, 62, "[...] Stigmatisation ist immer auch Wiederholung sozusagen re-enactment: des Lebens und der Passion Christ, der Abläufe der liturgischen und persönlichen Glaubenspraxis, der stigmatisierten Vorgängerinnen und Vorgänger."

74 They followed different time patterns: linear (echoing Christ and precursors) and referring to the present-day, and circular (liturgical calendar). In this respect, they are in fact the embodiment of the complexity of the experience of time as described by e.g. Wiesner-Hanks, "Introduction," 15.

the experience of what is beyond time (“des Überzeitlichen”) – the mystics themselves are not at all [timeless].<sup>75</sup> The roles they may take on and their interpretation depend on the historical setting. This historicity also had its effect on the devotees’ perception of the reparatory suffering. While the main idea – stigmatics atoning for the sins of others – more or less remained the same, what these women were suffering for changed. It is not possible to give a complete overview of all the causes with which the stigmatics have been associated, but it is easy to determine the major concerns of Catholics throughout the period by scanning the readings of their bodies. Some Belgian examples might illustrate this.

Louise Lateau’s suffering, for example, was said to have increased when the Roman States were under attack (September 1870), and during the profanations in Paris during Holy Week (1871).<sup>76</sup> Moreover, her pain was linked to that of the German Catholics, who were suffering under the anti-Catholic laws in the newly developing (Bismarckian, Protestant) German nation. Tellingly, some small booklets about her carried the title “Trosthüchlein” (Book of Comfort) for German Catholics.<sup>77</sup> Similarly, the Belgian stigmatic Clara Jung (1887–1952, stigmata 1939) was regarded as a “peace offering” (“zoenoffer”) for the horrors of the Second World War,<sup>78</sup> while the outcome of the Great War was due to Lucie Schmit-Klaer (1854–1924, stigmata 1916), at least according to her supporters.<sup>79</sup>

The political meaning of stigmatics will be discussed more elaborately in Chapter 6.<sup>80</sup> For our analysis here, it is important to note that in relation to the

75 “Auch wenn Mystik an und für sich zeitlos ist – es geht schließlich um die Erfahrung des Überzeitlichen – so sind es die Mystiker keineswegs. Sie sind vielmehr geprägt von den Erfahrungsräumen und Deutungsangeboten ihrer Gesellschaft. Sie übernehmen bewusst oder unbewusst je nach den Zeitumständen andere Rollen, werden auch anders inszeniert, drücken sich anders aus,” Priesching, “Mystikerinnen,” 79–80.

76 Van Looy, *Biographie*, 155; Thiéry, *Nouvelle Biographie*, vol. 2, 458–461; and vol. 3, 2, 535.

77 Anonymous, *Ein Besuch bei Louise Lateau* (1874<sup>2</sup>); Rebbert, *Anna Katharina Emmerick* (1878).

78 Borsbeek, DOCC, 245.7 Jung, Vijfentwintigste verjaardag van het overlijden van de gestigmatiseerde Clara Jung (20 May 1952–20 May 1977).

79 “Quel est le St François, le St Bernard qui nous fera comprendre et aimer la douleur? Qui sait si nous n’avons pas dû la victoire de 1918 à quelque stigmatisée inconnue, dans un cloître ignoré! Wallery-Radot La vie de souffrance de Madame Klaer, cloîtrée dans le mystère de sa solitude, répond à cette question. Une victime choisie par Dieu pour le salut du monde.” Archief Aartsbisdom Mechelen (AAM), Verschijningen, 20. Lucie Schmit-Klaer, new manuscript of ‘Vie de Madame Klaer, glorieuse servante de Dieu’, 1926?

80 See also Albert, *Le sang*, 343, “Ainsi au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, dans le contexte de l’émergence des nationalismes modernes, n’est-il pas rare de voir des stigmatisées considérées comme des victimes ‘nationales’, dont les souffrances préservent un peuple de catastrophes politiques ou militaires.”

various political events, the visible, bleeding stigmata and the suffering body of the stigmatic could function as a signpost in different ways. For Catholics in despair, it could be a sign of divine intervention, God's continuing presence, the 'truth' of their faith – in short, a beacon of hope. At the same time, the intensity of the suffering showed how much was wrong with the world, observing the body in pain inspired shame for the wrongs that had been committed against God and his Church. Interestingly, in order to be perceived as an expiatory victim, the life of a stigmatic had to be regarded as free of any blemish.<sup>81</sup> In other words, while the "sanctity" (on a non-official level) of the stigmatics was linked to their visible wounds – the idea of the saint as token – ideally, they also lived an exemplary life.

### 3.3 *Observing the Body in Pain: The Gender of Suffering*

Historians such as Paula Kane, working on the ideal of reparatory suffering, sacrifice and the heroic victim in the nineteenth century, have pointed out how these ideals were closely linked to ideals of femininity and the sacrifices women made on behalf of others. Suffering corporeally (whether self-inflicted, e.g. by fasting; or not, e.g. through illness) allowed these women to help others – they atoned for the sins of their fellow human beings. As Kane notes, "[o]bedient submission to suffering, rather than the suffering itself, is the redemptive act, in imitation of Christ's complete acceptance of God's will."<sup>82</sup> Tellingly, stigmatics were described in terms related to this exhibition of patience in suffering. The German words "Leiderin" and "Dulderin,"<sup>83</sup> and the Italian "Paziente" and "addolorata" denote women who patiently accepted and suffered through the pain that God had been willing to send them.<sup>84</sup> They were not only stigmatics. The term "Dulderin" seems to have had a broader meaning, referring to all women who suffered their hardships with serenity ("Gelassenheit").<sup>85</sup> Moreover, even within a religious setting, the term could be used for women who did not carry the wounds of Christ but did suffer through illnesses in the belief that it was God's will and their pain had meaning.<sup>86</sup>

In the case of the stigmatics, the words that were linked to their pain and suffering also referred to the Christian teachings on atonement. For example,

81 Albert, *Le sang*, 338.

82 Kane, "She offered," 83. See also Kselman, *Miracles*, 102; Burton, *Holy Tears*.

83 See e.g. Anna Schäffer (1882–1925) who was also called the "Dulderin von Mindelstetten."

84 See e.g. Talbot, *Letter from the Earl of Shrewsbury* (1841); Anonymous, *Ristretto della vita di Maria Domenica Lazzari di Capriana* (1840).

85 See e.g. definition in Adelung, *Grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch*, 1570.

86 See e.g. Ana Nasl called "Dulderin" and "Eine Sühneseele im Geiste der heiligen Theresia vom Kinde Jesu," BSB, Nachlass Lama, Friedrich von (1876–1944), Ana 445, file 2.

stigmatics were described as “Sühneseele” and “Opferseele.” These nouns hint at the sacrifices the women made to appease the anger of God, to atone for the sins committed by humankind. The ideal of sacrifice was embedded in ideals of Catholic femininity and sanctity.<sup>87</sup> As one contemporary recalled a few years after the death of Anna Katherina Emmerick: “She suffered and atoned for the debt (“Schuld”) of others and therefore also the sad and needy went to her.” She had suffered through everything “as a saintly patient” with “the greatest patience.”<sup>88</sup>

In the nineteenth century, as women were associated with their bodies, rather than the mind (as men were), it seemed to make sense to their contemporaries that their religious enthusiasm could find its expression through their bodies.<sup>89</sup> Nevertheless, as noted above in the discussion of the public setting of the spectacle of stigmatization, the femaleness of the body added to the unease about its visibility. However, when we look at the descriptions of the stigmatic’s body during the Passion, it is useful to recall what Grietje Dreesen has noted about medieval female mystics. She writes that while she agrees with Caroline Walker Bynum that these women often sought access to the divine via the human Christ and had a preference for corporeal experiences and expressions: a unison with his suffering meant an imitation of his exemplary (sinless) humanity and of his salutary suffering, and thus required the removal of all the attachments of the “flesh” that were linked to the original sin and of which the threat had been removed through the suffering, dying and resurrection of Christ (in his role as Saviour).

In other words, the “new flesh” was not female flesh and the salutary blood was not female blood – it was a rebirth in Christ.<sup>90</sup> The visitors may have been

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87 Kane, “She offered.”

88 “Sie hat gelitten und gesühnet für fremde Schuld darum sind auch Traurige und Hilfsbedürftige zu ihr gegangen”, “wie eine heilige Dulderin”, “der größten Geduld”, BAM, Emmerick/Hensel, 40. Stimmen, Abschrift aus No. 41; 81 S., alte Sign. IV.6, Theresia Uckelmann, 68 Jahre, geb. zu Dülmen 1824, Lehrerin in Warendorf, 31–36.

89 Weiß, “Stigmata,” 119. While it is difficult to retrace how the ideal of women’s somatic piety evolved throughout the centuries, scholars such as Monique Scheer, Nicole Priesching and Waltraud Pulz have shown that the nineteenth century witnessed a revival, if not the invention of, corporeal religion. Pulz, “Vorbemerkung,” 7–10; Scheer, “Das Medium;” Priesching, “Mystikerinnen.”

90 “Vereniging met Christus en zijn lijden betekende echter navolging van zijn voorbeeldige (zondeloze) menselijkheid en van zijn verlossend lijden, en vroeg dus allereerst om een afleggen van de gehechtheden van het ‘vlees’ die door de erfzonde waren ontstaan en waarvan de doem door het lijden, sterven en opstaan van Christus in principe was losgemaakt (daarin bestond juist zijn Verlosser-zijn),” Dreesen, “Is dit mijn lichaam,” 86 and 101.

looking at a female body but they were gazing at something that represented other bodies, someone else's pain – Christ's obviously, but not solely.

Reports on the visits to the stigmatics warn us to be wary of an overly superficial reading of the female stigmatic's embodiment of Christ's Passion. One visitor to Lateau, for example, described his impressions as follows: "There is nothing more moving than seeing the young girl unmoving and silent, permanently in ecstasy and in some way showing the facial features of the mother of sadness, as she has been depicted by one of our greatest painters."<sup>91</sup> In other words, for this observer, Lateau also incarnated the *Mater dolorosa* – the weeping Virgin at the foot of the Cross. Such references encourage us to have a more open view about the visitors' perceptions of the stigmatics (they did not solely see Christ) and on suffering: it was not only Christ's suffering that was of importance; it was not only his corporeal and emotional pain (e.g. of feeling abandoned by God) that was relevant, but also Mary's pain, as a mother who suffered her son's pain. Her compassion is as painful for the onlooker as the pain of the Son.<sup>92</sup>

The images evoked here are important. To ensure their readers understood what they were seeing, writers used images that were familiar to them from the Catholic culture of suffering. Thus, while, for example, the tears on the face of the stigmatic could have remained gender neutral, some of the writers chose to link them to the sorrow of the Virgin (in its pictorial rendering as the *Mater dolorosa*, or the literary equivalent, the *Stabat Mater*).<sup>93</sup> The type of suffering described, defined the gendered image that was adopted: in the descriptions of emotional compassionate pain, the *Mater dolorosa* was the point of reference; while in the elaborations of the physical horror, it was Christ on the Cross.<sup>94</sup>

Thus, when the banned Prussian priest, Fox, attempted to explain to his readers what he was seeing, he described Louise Lateau as a combination of the suffering son and his weeping mother: "Everything was calm and still, everyone was moved, for in Louise one could see the suffering Saviour and the

91 "Ook is er niets aandoenlijker dan het jong meisje onbeweeglijk en stilzwijgend, gestadig in opgetogenheid te zien en eeniger wijze de gelaatstreken verbeeldende van die moeder van droefheid, gelijk zij door eenen onzer grootste schilders is afgemaald geweest," Anonymous, *Louisa Lateau of de kruiswonddragende van Bois-d'Haine*, 8.

92 Van Osselaer, "Dor."

93 E.g. even citing the thirteenth-century poem, *Stabat Mater* (about the sorrows of the Virgin at the foot of the Cross). For a similar reference concerning Therese Neumann, see Staudinger, *Die Leidensblume*, 5; on an anonymous stigmatic from D. (1929).

94 See e.g. comments on Barbara Pfister: "Bei ihren Leidenszuständen was sie eine ganz andere, nicht mehr die Babet, sondern der sterbende Christus." Testimony of Maria Schmitt, 22 February 1939 in ABSp, Dokumentation Barbara Pfister, M7 Protokolle über Zeugenaussagen.

aching mother at the same time. O, what an image of suffering! I will never forget it.”<sup>95</sup>

In other words, stigmatics such as Lateau were suffering through Christ’s physical and emotional pain and the Virgin’s emotional pain – they were at the pinnacle of suffering. Thus, there seems to have been no clear-cut gender shift (to Christ’s suffering body). The visitors could see them as gendered images of pain, both with a male and a female point of reference. Such a combined image only makes sense if we regard the emotional suffering, the compassion, as being as important as the physical suffering. The visitors could see the body of the stigmatic as embodying both types of suffering: Lateau wept the Virgin’s tears and bled through Christ’s wounds.

#### 4 The Effect of Suffering on the Visitors

[...] since for those with weak nerves and especially for women, looking at the spastic conditions can have very negative effects.<sup>96</sup>

I blame the death of my wife solely on the visit to Therese Neumann and I am certain that she would still be alive if she had not seen Therese Neumann.<sup>97</sup>

The fragments cited above were written more than 50 years apart, but both warned about the effect that a visit to a typical stigmatic could have on the viewer, and particularly on women. The suffering and blood could be too much and possibly have a disastrous effect on the nerves. Comparing these negative lines

95 “Alles war ruhig und still; jeder war ergriffen; den in Louise sah man den leidenden Heiland und die schmerzhaftige Mutter zugleich. O, welch’ein Schmerzensbild! Nie werde ich dasselbe vergessen,” Fox, *Louise Lateau*, 89.

96 “[...] da für Nervenschwache und besonders für Frauenzimmer das Anschauen dieser krampfhaften Zuständen sehr nachtheilige Folgen haben kann.” “Aus Westphalen, den 12. August,” *Elberfelder Kreisblatt*, 18 August 1846, 2–3; in a file on Theresia Winter (1846), Münster, Landesarchiv NRW Abteilung Westfalen (Münster), Innere Verwaltung Oberpräsidium Münster. 123. Tätigkeit des Franziskanerpaters Henrich Gossler, no. 123.

97 “Ich führe den Tod meiner Frau ausschließlich auf den Besuch der Therese Neumann zurück und nehme bestimmt an, dass meine Frau noch am Leben wäre, wenn sie die Therese Neumann nicht gesehen hätte,” StA, 13038 Regierung der Oberpfalz, Kammer des Innern, Polizei-Amt Bayreuth, 15 October 27: 1. testimony of Nikolaus F. Similar: No. 7738 “Ins Referat 6.” (Regensburg, den 8. März 1928 Referat 3), “Der Wiederausbruch ihrer geistige, Erkrankung ist demnach mit Sicherheit und der Tod mit grosser Wahrscheinlichkeit auf den Besuch bei der Therese Neumann zurückzuführen.”

to the testimonies that we studied above, it becomes clear that the Catholic devotees were indeed looking at the stigmatics, the suffering and the blood, in their own specific ways. They were trained in Catholic views on pain and well acquainted with a devotional culture in which a suffering body made sense. The pain of the stigmatics was meaningful to them because their bodies were regarded as miraculous, as “proof” of God’s intervention.

Their exceptional bodies singled them out as “living saints” (with the saint as token) – whom Catholics could admire but not worship. At the same time, by focusing solely on the “wonder” we would overlook the referential quality of these “living crucifixes”<sup>98</sup> and only have a fragmented view of what the visitors were seeing. For them, the body of the stigmatic, the visible, bleeding wounds, had meaning and could even symbolize the state of society. The stigmatics, as Christ before them, were atoning for the sins of others.

The pain of the stigmatics not only had its effects on the level of the stigmatics themselves. Looking at their pain, as multiple sources on these visits testify, could have a “productive” effect on the visitors as well. Seeing the agony would call Christ’s Passion to mind, generating shame for one’s own sins, stimulating compassion and perhaps even encouraging people to change their lives.<sup>99</sup> The pain of the stigmatics also had an edifying function for them; ideally, inspiring them to lead a better life. Some of the visitors wrote about their experiences and encouraged their readers to follow the example of the stigmatics – not physically, but emotionally. They might reflect on Christ’s Passion through more traditional religious exercises, such as the contemplation of the crucifix or praying the stages of the Cross. Compassionate suffering was an ideal that all Catholics could attain.<sup>100</sup>

Thus, when Theodor Nolde wrote to the Belgian bishop in 1910, he already knew how to observe a stigmatic. He saw Christ in Rosalie Put, just as others had seen him in Louise Lateau and Anna Katherina Emmerick. For Nolde, the appeal of the suffering body was strong enough for him to cross the border, travelling from Germany to Belgium. As we will see in the next chapter, other Catholics made similar journeys.

98 Paraphrase of Paula Kane, “Stigmatic cults,” 108.

99 We might say that the devotees shared an emotional community that had its own specific ideas on emotional suffering and compassion. On emotional communities, see Rosenwein, “Worrying,” 824.

100 “Faire le chemin de la croix, honorer les souffrances du Christ, c’est aussi se procurer à soi-même soulagement et consolations dans les souffrances, les soucis et les peines. Car le Sauveur rend au centuple ce que l’on a fait pour lui,” Waitz, *Le message*, 45.



FIGURE 3.1 Bloodprint of the stigmata (crown of thorns) of Anna Katharina Emmerick. Dülmen, Gedenkstätte Anna Katharina Emmerick  
GEDENKSTÄTTE ANNA KATHARINA EMMERICK, © EMMERICK-BUND E. V., DÜLMEN



FIGURE 3.2 Bloodprint of the stigmata (hands) of Anna Katharina Emmerick. Dülmen, Gedenkstätte Anna Katharina Emmerick  
GEDENKSTÄTTE ANNA KATHARINA EMMERICK,  
© EMMERICK-BUND E. V., DÜLMEN



## Visiting Stigmatics and Their Promotion from the Ground Up

*The Devotees, the Unofficial Movements and the Episcopate in France*

*Andrea Graus*

Visiting typical stigmatics in their homes became a diversified practice in early nineteenth-century Europe. The phenomenon seemed to proliferate following the fame achieved by the stigmatics of the South Tyrol in the 1830s and 1840s and, as a consequence, the capacity that the stigmatics had to attract visitors has also drawn the attention of historians in recent years. Nicole Priesching has examined the pilgrim practices that formed around and in the houses of the Tyrolean stigmatics;<sup>1</sup> while Kristof Smeyers and Leonardo Rossi have traced the transcultural significance of international visitors to Maria von Mörl and Maria Domenica Lazzeri, as well as the impact of devotional tourism on the identity of local communities.<sup>2</sup> In addition, Paula Kane has reflected on the socio-cultural meaning of these “spiritual journeys” and the transformation of the homes of female “living saints” into semi-public spaces of faith;<sup>3</sup> while Sofie Lachapelle has shown how religious celebrities themselves functioned in the rise of religious tourism.<sup>4</sup> This chapter can therefore build on a vibrant historiography to analyse the role of stigmatics and their visitors in the French Third Republic (1870–1940), taking a *longue durée* perspective.

Although the Catholic Church is opposed to the worship of living individuals, popular enthusiasm turned many stigmatics into “living saints” long before or without the recognition of the ecclesiastical authorities. Indeed, those who visited stigmatics and were persuaded of the authenticity of the facts became their greatest advocates: they convinced other people to visit them, pleaded their case before the episcopate and sometimes organized themselves to defend the stigmatic from scepticism, accusations of fraud or lack of Church interest. With their promotion, moreover, these visitors were not only helping to

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1 Priesching, *Maria von Mörl*.

2 Smeyers and Rossi, “Tyrolean stigmata.”

3 Kane, “Stigmatic Cults.”

4 Lachapelle, “Touring a once pious nation.”

spread the fame of a particular stigmatic, but also justifying a certain “typical” profile of the stigmatic.

In this chapter, we focus on the ground-up construction of unofficial stigmatic cults during the French Third Republic, and show how this also shaped and defended an image of the prototypical stigmatic, both among the common people and before the diocesan authorities. This period is frequently remembered for the rise of anticlericalism and the positivist and secularist offensive against religion.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, it was also a time of Catholic revival within popular faith, in which stigmatic cults played a part. In the early decades of the Republic several typical French stigmatics began to appear, some carrying their wounds into the mid-twentieth century. At the start of their stigmatization, they were primarily influenced by prototypical cases such as Louise Lateau, whose fame helped spread the practice of visiting French stigmatics in their homes. As we will see, the experience that many visitors had during a “typical” Friday of Passion helped nourish ideas of what a *stigmatisée* looked like and what one might gain from such a visit – from recommendations to “relics.”

In France as well as in other European countries, the practice of visiting stigmatics was influenced by the development of transport and the media. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, visiting a stigmatic had become much easier, with the improvement of the railway system and the availability of tickets at reasonable prices; a change that also had a general effect on the number of pilgrimages within Europe.<sup>6</sup> “Sacred” places that used to be quite remote, such as the houses of many typical stigmatics, became more accessible for less wealthy people. In the French cases we will examine, one fact that contributed to the visits was the relative accessibility of the villages where they lived, which were not very far from significant towns such as Lyon, Bordeaux, Rouen or Nantes. This meant that visitors could get reasonably close by train.<sup>7</sup> All in all, easier and cheaper access to relatively remote stigmatics meant that regional cults could be more easily transformed into a national or even international phenomenon.

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5 See, e.g., Edelman, *Les métamorphoses*, 208–24; Goldstein, “The hysteria diagnosis,” 221–237; Lalouette, “Dimensions anticléricales,” 138–140.

6 Meldolesi, “Le chemin de fer;” Alison, “The pleasant,” 181.

7 For example, in the case of Marie-Julie Jahenny, most visitors went to Nantes by train, then took a cart or walked to the nearby village of Blain, and then walked three kilometres to the hamlet of La Fraudais, finally reaching Jahenny’s house. In the twentieth century, visitors to Jahenny and other stigmatics would also use their own car or buses. A bus driver recalled driving many people on their way to La Fraudais before the Second World War, some allegedly coming from Britain and Belgium, Graus, “A visit to remember,” 60.

The evolution of the media also had an effect on the growth in visits and the promotion of stigmatics. The reduction in printing costs and progress in education allowed different kinds of people to publish promotional brochures or travelogues about their visit. In the nineteenth century, these types of publications were still in the hands of a highly educated class, or the clergymen who supported a particular stigmatic. Such personalities became the authors of the main publications on stigmatics such as Anna Katharina Emmerick and those of the South Tyrol.<sup>8</sup> In France, the aristocratic and legitimist milieu was behind a few promotional works on some stigmatics (and their royalist prophecies).<sup>9</sup> Aristocratic, upper-bourgeois or clerical support contributed to the fame of stigmatics in ways that were unavailable to visitors from more humble classes, for whom the main means of promotion, especially in the nineteenth century, were private correspondence and word-of-mouth. This type of promotion, which was occurring through all layers of society, was very important in developing and sustaining the cults. As we will see below, personal communications, letters and journals of those who had witnessed the Fridays of Passion undergone by French stigmatics helped convince many others to visit the women.

In these and other cases, the visitors' experiences were fundamental to the development of a cult that went beyond individual expectations, and which could potentially create more or less cohesive interclass movements around the stigmatic. It was indeed after a visit to the German Therese Neumann that many joined what became known as the "Konnersreuth circle."<sup>10</sup> Similar associations of "friends" developed around the French stigmatics that we will examine below. Paula Kane refers to the notion of *communitas* or unstructured community, as used by the anthropologist Victor Turner, to analyse some of the cults surrounding stigmatics such as Lateau and Neumann – a *communitas* that could eventually be routinized by the Church, as occurred, for example, with the cults of canonized stigmatics such as Catherine of Siena and Padre Pio.<sup>11</sup> According to Ralph Gibson, the clergy in France were successful in

8 Among the most renowned accounts are those of the German poet Clemens Brentano on Emmerick, and those of Joseph von Görres and the Earl of Shrewsbury on the Tyrol stigmatics. On the visits to the stigmatics of the South Tyrol, especially von Mörl and Lazzeri, see, e.g., Priesching, *Maria von Mörl*; Rossi, "Religious virtuosi;" Rossi and Smeyers, "Into the land of the living saints."

9 See, e.g., Péladan, *Ma retraite du châtement* (1874), 14–15; Péladan, *Événements miraculeux de Fontet* (1878), 21–22; Péladan, *Dernier mot des prophéties* (1881), 85–100. On Péladan see Drouin, "Un légitimiste mystique."

10 O'Sullivan, "Disruptive potential," 69.

11 Kane, "Stigmatic cults," 107 and 124. On the formation and routinization of Catherine of Siena's cult, see Parsons, *The cult*, Chapter 1.

absorbing and shaping different forms of popular religion emerging from the Catholic revival, such as the Lourdes apparitions.<sup>12</sup> The stigmatic cults of the period discussed here, however, remained autonomous and unrecognized. As we will see, during the lifetime of some stigmatics, groups of lay visitors banded together to produce written records of the Way of the Cross in order to obtain (in vain) diocesan approval for “their” stigmatic. In defending their case, however, they were also attempting to vindicate the specific profile of a stigmatic that the woman incarnated.

In the following pages we begin by introducing “typical” French stigmatics of the period, the expectations of many of those who visited them, and how their experience during a Friday of Passion contributed to the shaping and spreading of the idea of the stigmatic type. Finally, we will examine the diocesan response to this grass-roots enthusiasm for stigmatics, and how this could trigger the formation of unofficial movements of visitors to defend the women.

## 1 French Stigmatics and Visitors’ Expectations

Paula Kane has examined the visits to typical stigmatics in their homes, with the three famous examples from the early nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century already mentioned in previous chapters: Anna Katharina Emmerick, Louise Lateau and Therese Neumann. Using these cases, Kane described the different dynamics of the visits: from an intimate spectacle, where only small groups of select visitors met Emmerick; to a “scientific specimen,” where Lateau was surrounded by doctors; to the “crowd spectacles” of 5,000 people, including journalists, at Neumann’s place in Konnersreuth after the Second World War.<sup>13</sup> These differences suggest that various types of visitors met the stigmatics at their homes and that the latter could thus also have a different impact on the former.

To understand the type of visitors that a stigmatic received, as well as the response that was triggered in the visitors, stigmatics need to be placed in their particular context. For example, the scientific interest in Louise Lateau was influenced both by the context of the pathologizing of religion in the nineteenth century and by the Church’s reliance on doctors to attest to modern miracles;<sup>14</sup>

12 Gibson, *A social history*, 156–157.

13 Kane, “Stigmatic cults,” 111, 114, 121.

14 In this way, she was turned into both an example of hysteria for positivist neurologists such as Désiré-Magloire Bourneville, as well as proof of the divine origin of stigmata for the Catholic doctor Antoine Imbert-Gourbeyre. See, e.g., Lachapelle, “Between miracle and Sickness,” 102.

while Neumann's sensationalism after the 1940s was part of the mass consumption and mass media developments of the mid-twentieth century.<sup>15</sup> The stigmatics of the French Third Republic lie between Lateau's rise to fame and Neumann's mass spectacle. Although they became relatively famous, with some also attracting scientific attention, they never became a mass phenomenon. In addition, unlike the cases which Kane examined, they did not receive diocesan support and their cults remained unofficial, propagated by regional groups of lay men and women who believed in them. As we will see in the section on the episcopal response below, the negative attitude of the diocese ultimately prevented clergymen from visiting these women, some of whom were thus denied a confessor, leaving them in the hands of lay believers.

The French Third Republic was both a period of defiance and of revitalization of religion. The traumatic events that inaugurated this period, such as France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune, left Catholics with the feeling that their nation was being punished. The rise of pilgrimages and Marian apparitions, and the popularity of redemptive devotions such as the Sacred Heart and the Via Crucis, were related to these national concerns.<sup>16</sup> The Catholic hopes, especially of the ultramontanes, relied on the restoration of the monarchy. A Royalist prophetic tradition developed, which spoke about the return of a "great king" who would save France.<sup>17</sup> It is within the context of these national concerns that several "typical" stigmatics began to have an effect.<sup>18</sup>

The first and most popular was Marie-Julie Jahenny (1850–1941, stigmata 1873–1941) from Brittany, who, according to scholars such as Jacques Marx, was regarded as a leading figure or role model for those who followed.<sup>19</sup> Among them we find Marie Bergadieu, alias Berguille (1829–1904, stigmata 1874–c. 1880), from Aquitaine, who was said to relive the Passion at the same time as Jahenny,

15 Kane, "Stigmatic cults," 124.

16 Albert, "Saintes et héroïnes," 115–116; Kselman, *Miracles*, 113–120.

17 Chantin, *Les marges*; Multon, "Prophétesses;" Sandoni, "Political mobilizations," 20–24.

18 On this topic we must mention the work that Elisabetta Lurgo is doing on another famous case of stigmatization – Théotiste Covarel (1836–1908), who was a political and symbolic figure in France at the time. Elisabetta presented her work, "Pazzie e più che pazzie: il sogno mistico di Cantianille Bourdois, 'sorella di Gesù', e Théotiste Covarel, la stigmatizzata della Maurienne", during the international conference, AISSCA (Sapienza Università di Roma and Pontificia Università Antonianum), Cantieri dell'Agiografia, 3rd edition, Rome 16–18 January 2019. As her monograph is forthcoming (2019), we will not discuss the Covarel case in this chapter. For a general overview of the case, see Multon, "Catholicisme," 125–132.

19 Marx, *Le péché*, 341.

the two being considered “sisters in suffering.”<sup>20</sup> In the 1880s, Laurentine Billoquet (1862–1936, stigmata 1881–1936) from the north, and Marie-Louise Nerbollier (1859–1908, stigmata 1885–1908) from the Rhône, also started bearing the wounds.<sup>21</sup> In line with the ultramontane prophetic tradition dominant in the nineteenth century, the women also became Royalist prophetesses advocating the monarchic restoration of France.<sup>22</sup> Later French stigmatics, such as Symphorose Chopin (1924–1983), would continue this prophetic tradition.

We must note that by the time these French stigmatics appeared, the fame of Louise Lateau, probably the most renowned stigmatic of the period, had spread across France, thus establishing an idea of the stigmatic type that these women probably attempt to emulate.<sup>23</sup> French stigmatics such as Jahenny and Bergadieu were often seen as successors of Lateau, especially after her death in 1883, and were frequently compared to her.<sup>24</sup> A visit to them was a way of meeting a French national version of the famous Belgian stigmatic and gaining direct experience of a *stigmatisée*. This was not in vain as the women incarnated the characteristics of typical stigmatics of the time: they were young laywomen from a humble background reliving the Passion in their small villages, usually in their bedroom in a farmhouse or thatched cottage.

This display of the holy wounds occurred especially during the period between 1870 and 1900. Of the cases mentioned, only Laurentine Billoquet and Marie-Julie Jahenny (who both lived longer) continued to relive the Passion until the mid-twentieth century, by which time they were attracting less attention than in the previous era, in which the interest in visiting typical stigmatics had reached its height.<sup>25</sup>

20 V. de Portets (pseudonym of Victor Lac de Bosredon), *La résurrection de Berguille* (1875), 28–29.

21 Billoquet was also said to be in spiritual contact with Jahenny, Maître, *Les stigmates*, 205.

22 Lachapelle, “Prophecies,” 57–61; Roberdel, *Marie-Julie Jahenny*, 37–52.

23 The press, the medical debate about her, as well as Imbert-Gourbeyre’s bestseller, *Les stigmatisées* (1873), all contributed to the fame of Lateau in France. Imbert-Gourbeyre called Louise Lateau and Palma Matarrelli “his stigmatics.” Letter from Antoine Imbert-Gourbeyre to Louis Veuillot, 11 March 1872, Correspondance et papiers de Louis Veuillot (1<sup>re</sup> série), NAF 24230, fol. 161–162, Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Richelieu) (BNF).

24 For example, a book of 1874 compared Berguille Bergadieu with Louise Lateau, see Charles Clauchai-Larsenal (pseudonym of Charles Chaulliac), *Berguille et Louise Lateau. Étude comparative*.

25 In Dijon, in the twentieth century, Billoquet also acted as a seer called Estelle Mary. Maître, *Les stigmates*, 227–228. Pierre Roberdel notes that Marie-Julie Jahenny’s stigmata became invisible when she turned 80. In: Roberdel, *Marie-Julie Jahenny*, 274.

Despite similarities in their profiles, the response to the stigmatics mentioned above was not always the same, with each achieving different levels of fame that could fluctuate over time. For example, only Marie-Julie Jahenny and Berguille Bergadieu became renowned outside France. The trigger for their fame was, it seems, a few promotional books that became known abroad,<sup>26</sup> including those by the savant and *chevalier*, Adrien Péladan, as well as Imbert-Gourbeyre's famous *La stigmatisation* (1894), in which he wrote about Jahenny.<sup>27</sup> The response to Laurentine Billoquet and Marie-Louise Nerbollier, on the contrary, was only on a national scale. They attracted some press attention at the beginning of their stigmatization.<sup>28</sup> Achieving a greater impact during their lifetime, however, did not mean that the likelihood of the survival of their cult was enhanced. For example, while the cult of Marie-Louise Nerbollier still attracts a small number of local supporters today,<sup>29</sup> those of Bergadieu disappeared before she passed away in 1904, probably as a consequence of diocesan restrictions, which we will discuss below.

During the lifetime of the stigmatics, the visitors were fundamental for the development of their cult. In many cases, the practice of visiting these women started as a regional and pious phenomenon. In France, it initially attracted Catholics of various social classes: from devout peasants to white-collar workers as well as the higher classes. In diocesan archives we find traces of professionals, such as lawyers, pharmacists and teachers, instances of peasants or farmers, as well as testimonies from barons and marquises.<sup>30</sup> Aristocrats

26 Sofie Lachapelle analysed the public debate concerning Berguille Bergadieu, about whom several brochures and books appeared at the start of the events in 1873. See Lachapelle, "Prophecies," 57–68. Some of these brochures were internationally received, according to the authors V. de Portets (pseudonym of Victor Lac de Bosredon) and Joseph Barrère. See, letter of Joseph Barrère, 5 January 1876; letter of Victor Lac de Bosredon, Verdélais, 23 July 1875, dossier Berguille Bergadieu, Archives diocésaines de Bordeaux (ADB); Barrère, *Berguille* (1875).

27 Imbert-Gourbeyre, *La stigmatisation*, II, 173–182.

28 On Nerbollier see, e.g., "La stigmatisée de Diémoz," *Le XIX<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, April 19, 1886, 4; "Le miracle de Diémoz," *Le Franc-Maçonn*, April 24, 1886, 1–2; "Miracle! Miracle!" *Le Républicain de la Loire et de la Haute-Loire*, April 23, 1886, 3; Adrien Péladan [A.P.] and S.B. *Une nouvelle voyante* (1886). In the case of Billoquet, see especially, Maître, *Les stigmatés*, 43–50.

29 In recent years, a devotee of Nerbollier collected a dossier of documents related to the stigmatic that she deposited in different diocesan archives. See Dossier Marie-Louise Nerbollier, 1.1911, Archives diocésaines de Lyon (ADL).

30 In the case of Jahenny, where archival sources are richer, we find many accounts signed by marquises and barons. There are also instances in the archives of Billoquet and Bergadieu; for example, in one letter, a baroness asked Bergadieu to pray to help her family overcome their difficult situation, and in Rouen a marquise wanted to take Billoquet, who was bedridden, to Lourdes. For accounts by members of the humble classes, we

in particular appeared to be instantly attracted to these women because they nourished their hope for a monarchic and Catholic restoration. As mentioned above, the support of the aristocracy increased the visibility of some of these cases; for example, by publishing the promotional books on Jahenny and Bergadieu, which enhanced their fame. Visiting one of the stigmatics sometimes aroused interest or inspired visits to others. In this way, a married woman from the village of Bar in the east, planned to visit both Bergadieu and Jahenny, while Thérèse Durnerin, a mystic and founder of a society of lay apostolate in Paris, decided to visit Nerbollier after witnessing Jahenny's Friday ecstasy in 1890.<sup>31</sup>

As these cults began to develop, the expectations of many visitors varied, although they appeared to follow similar lines, embedded within their personal histories and backgrounds. In the case of the stigmatics of the Third Republic, these expectations can be found in letters sent by several men and women from different social classes to the stigmatic or her spiritual director, and in the personal accounts they wrote about their visits. These records show that many visitors expressed their wish to witness the extraordinary events which they had heard of or read about.<sup>32</sup> Some had been encouraged by other visitors who had been persuaded of the authenticity of the events. For example, a shoemaker said he had been told to visit Jahenny on a Friday if he wished to be convinced of the miraculous, and a baron had been advised to witness the stigmatic's ecstasy because it was "such a dreadful, extraordinary spiritual and

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find some letters concerning Jahenny and Bergadieu in very poor handwriting and full of grammatical mistakes. They also do not follow the French formalities used in particular forms of correspondence, especially those addressed to ecclesiastical figures. See, e.g. Letter from the baroness of L'Épine (?) to the parish priest of Fontet, 30 June 1879, dossier Berguille Bergadieu, ADB. Letter from Father Hermier to the Vicar of Rouen, 24 July 1885, affair Laurentine Billoquet, box 791, Archives diocésaines de Rouen (ADR), "Madame la marquise de Senarport nourrit depuis un an au moins le projet de conduire Laurentine à Lourdes." For the peasants see, e.g., undated letter (c. 1875) from a woman (illegible name) from Fontet, probably a peasant, to the Cardinal of Bordeaux, ADB.

- 31 Letter from A. Babin (?) to the Bishop of Bordeaux, Bar-le-duc 18 September 1880, dossier Berguille Bergadieu, ADB. Hamez, *Une hostie vivante* (1908), 420–426. Durnerin bore the invisible wounds from 1894; however, her stigmatization remained unknown to almost everyone. On her case and the society she founded, see Graus, "A 'divine mission' to sanctify the laity."
- 32 For example, a man named Pierre Dutour had read about Bergadieu in one of the promotional brochures cited and wanted to visit her; as did a married woman who had heard there was a "saintly person" not far from Bordeaux; and another in La Fraudais (Jahenny), Letter of Pierre Dutour, Trojan, 16 September 1877; Letter from A. Babin, 18 September 1880, dossier Berguille Bergadieu, ADB.



physical state.”<sup>33</sup> In their cases, an idea of the “typical” stigmatic had been building in the back of their minds, as they had been told of a humble laywoman reliving the Passion in her bedroom on Fridays, and it was precisely for this reason that they, in turn, visited her on that particular day.

Other faithful visited stigmatics searching in particular for spiritual advice or to obtain grace, most frequently seeking recovery from an illness or the conversion of a non-believer, usually a family member.<sup>34</sup> Some visitors were allegedly successful in obtaining grace, which contributed to the fame of the woman and attracted more people.<sup>35</sup> Similar requests were made of other “typical” stigmatics of the twentieth century; for example, from the 1930s, Therese Neumann and Marthe Robin (1902–1981), the famous *stigmatisée de la Drôme*, acted as spiritual counsellors and healers.<sup>36</sup> Many visitors also expected to be included in the stigmatic’s prayers, hoping to gain God’s compassion through their recommendation.<sup>37</sup> In line with the parallels between typical French stigmatics and Louise Lateau, in 1880, a woman asked Jahenny to recommend her to the Belgian stigmatic, because she had been told the two were in spiritual contact.<sup>38</sup> This suggests that many regarded these women as “living saints” capable of interceding in different matters.

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- 33 Letter from Michel Lequex to the parish priest of Blain, 23 June 1881, Pin, Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, 5F2/100, Archives historiques du diocèse de Nantes (AHDN). Letter from the Baron de Baye to Father Audrian, 24 September 1880, 5F2/100, AHDN, “On me l’a conseillé et il s’agit d’un état spirituel et physique tellement affreux, tellement *extraordinaire*.” Emphasis in the original.
- 34 For example, one woman asked Bergadieu to inspire the conversion of her husband, and others asked her to pray for a sick person, undated letter (c. 1879) from Catherine Bacquelin and letter from Joséphine Manson to the parish priest of Fontet, 6 June 1879, Calvados, Dossier Berguille Bergadieu, ADB.
- 35 Several miraculous cures were attributed to Bergadieu during her lifetime, Portets, *La résurrection de Berguille* (1875), VI. One visitor (unknown gender) to Jahenny confirmed to the parish priest that he had obtained grace from the stigmatic and asked her to inspire the conversion of his sick brother, “les grâces que j’avais sollicitées par l’entremise de Marie Julie m’ont été accordées,” letter from (?) Loquin to Father David, 14 September 1879, Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, 5F2/100, AHDN.
- 36 Peyrous, “Conseils spirituels;” Wiethaus, “Bloody bodies,” 194–195.
- 37 Letter from Victoire Olivier (56 years old) to Marie-Julie Jahenny, 1880, “chère sœur priez beaucoup pour ma délivrance,” Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, AHDN, 5F2/100. One baroness wrote to the parish priest of Fontet asking to be included in Bergadieu’s recommendations, letter of the Baroness de l’Épine (unclear name), 30 June 1879, Dossier Berguille Bergadieu, ADB.
- 38 Letter from a woman (illegible name) to Marie-Julie Jahenny, Issoudun, 19 April 1880, 5F2/100, AHDN. Jahenny allegedly predicted the time that Lateau would die, and Lateau supposedly announced that Jahenny would take her place and continue her mission. Other famous female mystics, such as Mélanie Calvat, Marguerite-Marie Alacoque and

Of course, not all visitors had the same expectations or visited stigmatics for the above-mentioned purposes. Medical visitors, in particular, had their own agenda. That doctors examined stigmatics and published on them is well studied.<sup>39</sup> Our interest here lies in the fact that attention from the medical profession could contribute to the visibility of a stigmatic and increase their potential to attract visitors. Many physicians reported on the charismata attributed to these women, and mentioned the house or the family; that is, elements that many other people were expecting to see during their own visit. For example, it appears that the number of visitors to Laurentine Billoquet began to grow after a committee of physicians examined her in 1881, including the famous Salpêtrière neurologist Benjamin Ball. They concluded that she was a hysteric who took pleasure in simulating her ecstasies and in being admired. The medical report did not mention her name; however, being the only known stigmatic in the region, she was easily identified.<sup>40</sup> Apart from Billoquet, some other French stigmatics attracted scientific attention, although to a much smaller degree than that shown in the case of Louise Lateau. For example, Sofie Lachapelle has mentioned the medical interest in Berguille Bergadieu, which had already commenced when she was an “ecstatic mystic” (*extatique*), before she started bearing the holy wounds.<sup>41</sup>

As shown by scholars such as Jacques Maître and Hervé Guillemain, in the context of the pathologizing of religion in which these examinations took place, many physicians subscribed to the approach of the Salpêtrière and to that of rationalist doctors such as Alfred Maury, who, in 1855, after the fervour produced by the stigmatics of Tyrol, published an essay debunking religious stigmatization after St Francis.<sup>42</sup> In addition to hysteria, theories of

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Thérèse de Lisieux, sometimes appeared in Jahenny's prophecies. Bourcier, *Marie-Julie Jahenny*, 297–312; Roberdel, *Marie-Julie Jahenny*, 20 and 134.

39 For example, Sofie Lachapelle and Gábor Klaniczay analysed the medical visits and debate about Louise Lateau; Hervé Guillemain examined those especially concerning Marie-Julie Jahenny; and Jacques Maître analysed the case of the stigmatic of the Salpêtrière, Madeleine Lebouc. Guillemain, *Diriger les consciences*, 137–154; Klaniczay, “Louise Lateau,” 296–302; Lachapelle, “Between Miracle and Sickness,” 87–100; Maître, *Une inconnue célèbre*.

40 Benjamin Ball, “La stigmatisée de S.,” *L'Encéphale* 1 (1881): 361–368.

41 Lachapelle, “Prophecies,” 63–68. See several reports on Bergadieu, where the ecstasy and stigmata are interpreted as a nervous condition, Mauriac and Verdalle, *Étude médicale sur l'extatique de Fontet* (1875); Dr. Desmaisons, “Observations lues à la Société de médecine et de chirurgie de Bordeaux,” *Gazette médicale de Bordeaux* 5, n. 4 (1876): 61–71; A. Girard, “Rapport sur l'extatique de Fontet,” *Union médicale de la Seine-Inférieure* 15 (1876): 84–87.

42 He later developed his “rationalist theory” on stigmata and the imagination in a chapter of his book, *La magie et l'astrologie* (1860). According to Maury, stigmatics lived surrounded by images of the Crucified Christ and had long meditations about the Passion.

hallucination, suggestion and dermatological disease were the most common medical explanations.<sup>43</sup> Catholic doctors such as Antoine Imbert-Gourbeyre counteracted this pathological approach with his own publications.<sup>44</sup> The pious doctor submitted stigmatics such as Louise Lateau and Marie-Julie Jahenny to his own medical examinations, as did other doctors in the context of a diocesan inquiry (see the section on the diocesan response below). Ultimately, Imbert-Gourbeyre concluded they were not frauds. The medical tests did not essentially differ from those that were practised on Billoquet and others: the wounds were scrutinized to see if they were natural or self-inflicted, the pulse and breathing were measured during ecstasy, and the general physical and mental health of the stigmatic was determined.

In this and other medical cases, however, the examinations usually occurred without the presence of other visitors, as agreed with the stigmatic's family or the spiritual director, so as not to disturb the investigation.<sup>45</sup> Thus, medical visits usually differed from the more typical visits we will be examining below, which were the main arena for the formation of stigmatic cults. Imbert-Gourbeyre, for example, examined Jahenny on several occasions, but also attended around fifteen occurrences of ecstasy during more "typical" visits to her in the company of others. This included his daughter, who would also become a devotee and join Jahenny's unofficial movement in the early

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Fixing one's imagination on such images was sufficient to provoke the bleeding, especially in women, he said, who due to menstruation were naturally predisposed to bleed with frequency, Alfred Maury, "Les mystiques extatiques et les stigmatisés," *Annales médico-psychologiques*, 1.2 (1855): 181–232; Maury, *La magie et l'astrologie* (1860), 339–414. On Maury see Carroy and Richard, *Alfred Maury*.

43 Maître, "De Bourneville à nos jours," 765–768. This pathologizing of the religious experience continued well into the twentieth century, by psychiatrists such as Jean Lhermitte and his book *Mystiques et faux mystiques* (1952), in which he wrote about stigmatics such as Jahenny.

44 Especially in books such as the famous *La stigmatisation* (1894) and the lesser known *L'Hypnotisme et la stigmatisation* (1899), written as an attack on physicians provoking stigmata and "blood sweats" through suggestion. At the *fin de siècle*, the heyday of hypnotism, most physicians acknowledged the power of suggestion to provoke bleeding and "holy" wounds. Many stigmatics, however, refused to be hypnotized. Moreover, the Catholic Church warned about the loss of free will during hypnosis, a practice it deemed dangerous and for some time diabolic. Imbert-Gourbeyre, *L'Hypnotisme et la stigmatisation* (1908).

45 This was indeed the case for the medical examinations of Billoquet and Jahenny, as well as those practised by, for example, Lefèbvre and other doctors of Louise Lateau. Ball, "La stigmatisée de S.," 363; Roberdel, *Marie-Julie Jahenny*, 66; Klaniczay, "Louise Lateau," 296–297.

twentieth century, participating in the transcription of her ecstasies.<sup>46</sup> As we will see in the next section, the experience many people gained from their visit contributed to both reshaping their expectations about seeing a *stigmatisée*, and to spreading an informed idea of the appearance of the stigmatic type.

## 2 Inside the Fridays of Passion

Many of the expectations of the visitors were confirmed during visits on Fridays. Upon arrival at the stigmatic's village, many people simply asked for the house of "the saint," which demonstrates the reputation some of these women had achieved during their lifetime.<sup>47</sup> In many cases, the houses were "typical" thatched cottages (*chaumières*), where one could find stigmatics such as Louise Lateau or, early on, the Tyrolean stigmatics, and that would later be associated with cases such as Marthe Robin. Family, friends and, occasionally, a spiritual director – in the cases where he supported the woman – welcomed the visitors and chatted with them in the living room while the stigmatic remained in her bedroom waiting for the Way of the Cross to begin. The family or friends did not charge an admission fee and, allegedly, refused money.<sup>48</sup> Other famous stigmatics of the time, such as Palma Matarrelli in Italy, were also said to refuse donations.<sup>49</sup> Some people, however, accused stigmatics and their entourage of making a profit out of the "miraculous." For example, some locals noted that Jahenny's family had better clothes or that Bergadieu had bought a property using donations.<sup>50</sup>

In general, visitors were only allowed into the stigmatic's bedroom after the ecstasy had commenced.<sup>51</sup> This situation applied for other typical stigmatics

46 Boufflet, "Avant-propos," in Imbert-Gourbeyre, *La stigmatisation*, ed. Joachim Boufflet (1996), 7–18, esp. 17; Bruno, *Quelques souvenirs sur Marie-Julie* (1941), 13.

47 "Tu connais point la sainte the Blain ?" in Bouchet, "Marie-Julie Jahenny," 1. "La 'Sainte', c'est le nom qu'elle [Nerbollier] a laissé à Diémoz," Letter from J. Micon to the Vicar of Grenoble, 16 May 1940, Dossier Marie Louise Nerbollier, 1.1911, ADL. "La stigmatisée de Diémoz," *Le XIX<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, April 19, 1886, 4. "Est-ce ici qu'habite la Sainte de Blain," visitor cited in Roberdel, *Marie-Julie Jahenny*, 295.

48 For example, a family man from Médoc gave a silver coin to Berguille Bergadieu who threw it away. E. Fillastre, "Visite faite à Berguille le 9 Avril 1875," ADB.

49 Imbert-Gourbeyre, *Les Stigmatisées*, II, 97.

50 Roberdel, *Marie-Julie Jahenny*, 138. Letter from the parish priest to the Canon of Bordeaux, 17 January 1878, dossier Berguille Bergadieu, ADB.

51 "En favorisant l'entrée de certains pèlerins avant l'extase," letter from Amélie du (?) to a mademoiselle, Vitré, 28 June 1879, 5F2/63, AHDN. Marie des Brulais (teacher), "Un second

in Europe generally, before and after these cases in France.<sup>52</sup> This means that few visitors were given the chance to witness the start of the event. Many of the bedrooms were reported to be filled with crosses, devotional images and statues of the Passion, thus setting the mood for what visitors were about to witness (Figure 4.1).<sup>53</sup> As Paula Kane remarked, in accessing the bedroom of a stigmatic, visitors broke the barrier between the public and private domains.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, while welcoming visitors, stigmatics and their close assistants rendered this intimate, almost secret space, usually of a humble character, visible and communal; but this was accepted because the domestic spaces were believed to contain the presence of the divine, becoming the “theatre of so many wonders” – to quote one visitor.<sup>55</sup> Once the visitors had been admitted to the ecstasy, no one else was allowed into the room. In a letter of 1879, one woman wrote that she had been late for the “Friday ecstasy” and the family would not let her enter. Very disappointed, the woman asked to be included in the stigmatic’s prayers during her “interview with God.”<sup>56</sup>

The handwritten accounts of the visits to French stigmatics frequently describe the number of visitors present on the day of the stigmatization, which could range from two or three to around 30, depending on the day as well as on the size of the stigmatic’s room.<sup>57</sup> In Europe, anyone was permitted to witness the reliving of the Passion, including children and adolescents, as we can see in pictures and records of visitors to Jahenny, as well as in the accounts of visitors to other stigmatics not discussed here (Figure 4.2). For example, in the case of Marthe Robin, a woman recalled visiting her at the age of 16 during the Good Friday of 1946.<sup>58</sup> On specific occasions, such as Good Friday, larger

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voyage à Blain et à la Fraudais, 2 et 3 Septembre 1875,” 49, 5F2/88, AHDN. Anonymous, “Souvenirs de La Fraudais. 4e volume. 1878 à 1879,” 5F2/91, AHDN.

52 Kane, “Stigmatics Cults,” 121.

53 For Jahenny, see the picture of her bedroom (Figure 4.1); for Nerbollier, see Hamez, *Une hostie vivante*, 425.

54 Kane, “Stigmatic Cults,” 123.

55 On this issue, see also Chapter 3. Diary of an anonymous woman, 1881, “3ème et 4ème visite à la Fraudais à Marie Julie l’extatique de Blain,” Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, AHDN, 5F2/92, “Théâtre de tant de merveilles.”

56 Amélie du (?), 19 July 1879, Vitré, 5F2/63, AHDN, “le moment où elle s’entretiendrait avec Notre Seigneur.”

57 A visitor to La Fraudais recalls there were 25 to 30 people in Jahenny’s bedroom. See “Une visite à la Fraudais le Vendredi 16 septembre 1877,” 5F2/87, AHDN. Henri Legras, “Extase de Berguille du 16 juillet 1875,” dossier Berguille Bergadieu, ADB, “seize personnes.” See also the section on the visitors’ movements below.

58 Cited in Peyret, *Marthe Robin*, 187–188. For Jahenny, see the picture in Bruno, *Quelques souvenirs sur Marie-Julie*, 12; and a journal of a nine-year-old girl from Blain, transcribed in Roberdel, *Marie-Julie Jahenny*, 327–330.

crowds could appear, from a few hundred up to a few thousand; for example, on Good Friday in 1896, when Marie-Louise Nerbollier was expected to bleed more than on other Fridays, around 400 people attended.<sup>59</sup>

The increase in the number of visitors on these particular days clearly shows the expectations of witnessing the reliving of the Passion and the bleeding of the wounds. In the French cases, however, days with large crowds appeared to be exceptional and usually only small groups of people on a weekly basis were reported. This means that visitors rarely left the village without attending the stigmatic's ecstasy, thus gaining a full experience of the phenomenon. These Friday events thus never took the form of the "crowd spectacles" described by Paula Kane in the case of Therese Neumann after the Second World War, where weekly crowds of around 5,000 people were reported and each visitor was only allowed to view the stigmatic for 30 to 45 seconds.<sup>60</sup>

An anonymous manuscript journal entitled *Souvenirs de La Fraudais* (1878–1879) describes how events developed on a typical Friday *chez* Jahenny – a description that can also be applied to other cases:

The Way of the Cross began as usual. The three falls followed one another as in the past. The stigmata of the head, which before the ecstasy were not very prominent, are swollen, some of them bleed profusely. Those of the hands bleed too, but less. The blood, instead of following the common law, rises along the palm and falls on the back of the hand.

At each fall she lies with her face on the ground, and in a loud and singularly resonant voice, she addresses admirable prayers to God.<sup>61</sup>

Inside the stigmatic's bedroom, visitors observed the events and frequently remained in silence, especially if she was receiving a revelation, as occurred in many of the Third Republic cases. On other occasions, however, visitors would recite prayers during the stigmatic's ecstasy, with the atmosphere approaching that of a church and contributing to a feeling of community. Berguille

59 Report of Father Germanet, spiritual director, Diémoz, 4 July 1896, Dossier Marie-Louise Nerbollier, 1.1911, ADL.

60 Kane, "Stigmatic Cults," 121.

61 "Souvenirs de La Fraudais. 4e volume. 1878 à 1879," Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, 5F2/91, AHDN, "Le chemin de croix commença comme d'habitude. Les trois chutes se succédèrent comme par le passé. Les stigmates de la tête qui, avant l'extase, étaient peu saillants, se boursoufflent, quelques-uns saignent abondamment. Ceux des mains saignent aussi, mais moins. Le sang, au lieu de suivre la loi commune, monte le long de la paume et vient retomber sur le dos de la main. À chaque chute elle reste posternée le visage contre terre, et d'une voix forte et singulièrement timbrée, elle adresse à Dieu des prières admirables."

Bergadieu's bedroom in Fontet was reported to be transformed every Friday "into a real sanctuary. Candles are burned, psalms and hymns are sung, just like in a church."<sup>62</sup> As we will see in the next section, the "sacralization" of otherwise non-sacred spaces was problematic in the eyes of the episcopates. Although the visitors were usually not given any indication of what they were perceiving or how they should interpret it, occasionally the stigmatic's spiritual director, if present and supporting her, mediated the visitor's experience; for example, explaining the different stages of the Cross that the stigmatic represented or emphasizing the rigidity of her arms and suffering.<sup>63</sup> This mediated experience attempted to influence the visitors' perceptions and understanding of the events and has also been reported in cases occurring at later times, such as that of Therese Neumann.<sup>64</sup>

The gatherings and rituals around the French stigmatics reflect the diversity of their cults: the social classes and genders were mixed, with aristocrats standing beside peasants and white-collar workers. The meetings contributed to overcoming some class barriers, with conversations between well-off families and the non-privileged reported to take place before and after witnessing the ecstasy.<sup>65</sup> In the French cases, this alliance crystalized in unofficial movements, which also occurred elsewhere, as William Christian has mentioned in the case of the apparitions of Ezkioga (Spain, 1931), where a mixing of classes also occurred. In fact, this mixing of classes was an incentive for seers and believers, with religion forging "an interclass alliance of the devout peasantry, the regional bourgeoisie, and the monarchist aristocracy."<sup>66</sup> The mix of social classes is also found in other typical stigmatic cases outside France; for example, the bourgeoisie and peasants gathered around Margalida Amengual (1888–1919), the stigmatic from Mallorca, every Friday, and when she died they carried her coffin together.<sup>67</sup>

62 Letter from J.B. Miramont to the Vicar General, 19 March 1877, Dossier of Berguille Bergadieu, AHD B. "Chaque vendredi sa chambre se transforme en un véritable sanctuaire. On y voit brûler des cierges, on y entend chanter des psaumes et des cantiques, ni plus ni moins que dans une Église." Louise Lateau was another stigmatic where visitors recited prayers during the ecstasy, see Van Osselaer, "The affair," 790.

63 Marie des Brulais, "Un second voyage à Blain et à la Fraudais, 2 et 3 Septembre 1875," 49, Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, 5F2/88, AHD N.

64 Kane, "Stigmatics Cults," 121.

65 A teacher from Nantes recalls speaking with the aristocratic family of Lautrec during her visits. See "Un second voyage à Blain et à la Fraudais, 2 et 3 Septembre 1875," 49, Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, 5F2/88, AHD N.

66 Christian, *Visionaries*, 260–261.

67 Graus, "A visit to remember," 65. There is archival material on Amengual in: Arxiu diocesà de Mallorca (ADM), Margalida Amengual, 13.1.

The moment when the holy wounds bled was awaited with great expectation, as this was the main reason for people visiting on Fridays, the day of the stigmatization. In the previous chapter, we saw how the bleeding and suffering of stigmatics was deemed edifying according to the accounts of visitors to German and Belgian stigmatics of the nineteenth century. This was also the case for typical stigmatics in France, with many experiencing a sense of spiritual relief when they were with the women, and being convinced about the beneficial effects of seeing the bleeding wounds.<sup>68</sup> For example, one woman from Dijon is said to have been “edified” by the way that Laurentine Billoquet submitted to the “great sufferings she has endured with admirable courage.”<sup>69</sup> In Diémoz, the parish priest wrote of the visitors to Nerbollier: “seeing the blood from the young girl’s stigmata, and her painful ecstasies, they feel the need to become better people, and to return to the fulfilment of their duties too long forgotten”<sup>70</sup> (Figure 4.3).

When the bleeding of the stigmata began, those present attempted to touch the blood with all sorts of objects, including letters from family members who could not be there, a cross, rosaries, pious images and handkerchiefs. The objects would have been carefully selected before their visit and taken there with the explicit intention of staining them with the stigmatic’s blood. In an account of her trip, an anonymous young woman who was visiting alone but carrying objects from all of her family members, explained how she was able to transform her mother’s cross into a relic during Jahenny’s stigmatization:

Ah! She is bleeding ... Suddenly, her figure was transformed due to pain. Then on these poor hands, which had fallen down along her body, I press the base [of the cross], and blessed, [it] collects some drops of this precious blood; the feet also bleed. Then everyone comes in. They wipe her hands with images, but [the blood] has already dried out.<sup>71</sup>

68 See e.g., “Pèlerinage à La Fraudais,” Baron and Mademoiselle de la Tour du Pin, 25 June 1875, Fonds Marie-Julie, AHDN, 5F2/87.

69 Letter from J. Jobard to the Vicar General of Rouen, 17 March 1938, Dijon, Affaire Laurentine Billoquet, box 791, ADR, “Grandes souffrances qu’elle a supportées avec un courage admirable.”

70 Letter from Father Germanet to the Monsignor of Grenoble, July 4, 1896. Dossier Marie-Louise Nerbollier, 1.1911, ADL, “En voyant le sang des stigmatés de la jeune fille, et ses extases douloureuses, ils sentent tout le besoin de devenir meilleurs, et de revenir à l’accomplissement de leurs devoirs trop longtemps oubliés.”

71 Diary of an anonymous woman, 1881, “3ème et 4ème visite à la Fraudais à Marie Julie l’extatique de Blain,” Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, 5F2/92, AHDN, “Ah ! elle saigne ... sa figure dans l’espace de quelques instants s’était transformée sous l’action de la souffrance. Alors sur ces pauvres mains, qui étaient tombées le long de son corps, j’appuie mon



Many visitors to typical stigmatics especially intended to obtain such “relics.” The devotees would later use the objects to feel spiritually connected with the “living saint” or to obtain grace – in the next chapter we will discuss the healing power attributed to the bloody relics of Louise Lateau.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, the relics were sometimes used to argue for the reality of the phenomena before the episcopate; for example, a few years after the death of Laurentine Billoquet in 1936, some devotees sent handkerchiefs imprinted with the stigmata to the Bishop of Rouen, hoping, without success, to start her cause of beatification.<sup>73</sup> In this case, the relics had been passed down over generations (Figure 4.4). In sharing or showing them to their relatives and peers, devotees contributed to the people’s expectations as to what one could gain from visiting a typical stigmatic.

In addition to collecting the stigmatic’s blood on various objects, many visitors presented pious images to the stigmatic. The latter would bless them during their ecstasy, through the intercession of the Virgin or a saint. Berguille Bergadieu, for example, allegedly blessed images of the Sacred Heart with the intervention of Marguerite-Marie Alacoque, the Visitandine nun whose visions promoted the modern Sacred Heart devotion. Those visiting Jahenny frequently received a “blessed” image of the Virgin or one about the crucifixion.<sup>74</sup> This practice was controversial as it was a laywoman and not a priest who was in charge. However, the visitors did not seem to find these or other rituals taking place in the stigmatic’s bedroom problematic. On the contrary, many were convinced of the effectiveness of a visit to a stigmatic as a means to convert people or fortify their religious belief.<sup>75</sup> This is in line with Alphonse Dupront’s understanding of popular religion, where the lines between the sacred and the profane are blurred.<sup>76</sup>

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petit morceau de socle, et béni, recueille quelques gouttes de ce sang précieux ; les pieds saignent également. Alors tout le monde entre. On essuie ses mains avec des images, mais il a déjà séché.”

72 On this matter, see also Chapter 5.

73 Several had been passed from one generation to the next. On relics, see *Affaire Laurentine Billoquet*, box 791, ADR.

74 On the blessing of objects during Bergadieu’s ecstasy, see E. Fillastre, “Paroles recueillies pendant l’extase avec une exactitude très rigoureuse,” 9 April 1875, Fonds Jacques Maître, Archives Nationales (AN), EHESS/PR/750. Example of blessed pious image obtained from Jahenny in “Souvenirs de La Fraudais. 4e volume. 1878 à 1879,” Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, AHDN, 5F2/91.

75 Letter of J. Michel-de-Rienfret, 9 August 1876, dossier of Berguille Bergadieu, ADB; letter of a woman (illegible name), Tours, 5 August 1880, Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, AHDN, 5F2/63.

76 Dupront, *Du sacré*, 463.

On leaving a stigmatic's house, visitors shared their experience with their family and friends, as we can see in their private correspondence: "My dear cousin," wrote a woman named Amélie in 1879, "I arrived barely an hour ago from my trip to Blain very moved and impressed by what I saw there"; "What a sublime ecstasy!" was another comment; "The more we go there, the more we have the desire to return," explained one woman in a letter of 1880.<sup>77</sup> Some recorded their visits in writing, not in order to publish them but as a personal memory of the events. They would share these with their peers as proof of what they had witnessed.<sup>78</sup> Thus, even if a great majority of visitors never published an account of their experience, their letters and personal communications contributed to the spread of the idea of the typical stigmatic and what a visit to these women would be like. As mentioned above, this type of private promotion was particularly important for the development of stigmatic cults, and it nourished the belief in stigmatics for decades, sometimes even after their death, as we have seen with the example of Billoquet's relics. The success of such forms of promotion, however, was not without consequences. In the following section, we examine how such visits could become a problem in the diocese, and the ways the episcopate dealt with them.

### 3 The Diocesan Response to the Visits

Generally, the policy of the French dioceses dealing with stigmatics was to isolate and control the cases, rather than to open an official diocesan investigation.<sup>79</sup> Bishops attempted to stay informed about stigmatics through parish priests. For example, the priest of Diémoz sent an annual report to the Bishop of Grenoble explaining the events concerning Marie-Louise Nerbollier: from her stigmatization to her prophecies; while in Sauchay, the priest kept a

77 Amélie du (?), 19 July 1879, "Ma chère cousine, j'arrive il y a à peine une heure de mon voyage de Blain toute émue et toute impressionnée de ce que j'y ai vu." Illegible name (man), 10 February 1880, "Quelle sublime extase!" Illegible name (woman), Tours, 5 August 1880, "plus nous y allons, plus nous avons le désir d'y retourner." All in Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, AHDN, 5F2/59-70.

78 We have cited several such accounts, for example, "Visite faite à Berguille le 9 Avril 1875," Fonds Jacques Maître, AN, EHESS/PR/750; "Visite à La Fraudais," 16 July 1885, Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, AHDN, 5F2/66.

79 On the response of the French clergy to different forms of popular religion in nineteenth-century France, such as the cult of saints and Marian devotions, see Gibson, *A Social History*, 134-157.

journal on Lauretine Billoquet for three years (1883–1886).<sup>80</sup> One main concern of the priests was that with their Friday rituals and their admiration of a living person, visitors to stigmatics were contributing to the creation of alternative spaces for the sacred that challenged the official sites and practices of established religion. When reporting to the Cardinal of Bordeaux about the events concerning Berguille Bergadieu, the parish priest of Fontet wrote that the stigmatic's home had been "transformed into a true temple, where worship is regularly celebrated every Friday. And to think that all these things happen while the bell calls the faithful to the Church for Lenten exercises!"<sup>81</sup>

Faced with this, the episcopates decided to censor publications on the women and restrict visits in order to control the growth of the religious cult. At least three works on Jahenny were censored in the diocese of Nantes, and in 1878 the archbishopric of Bordeaux launched "a formal prohibition on anything to be published on Berguille [Bergadieu]."<sup>82</sup> Concerning the visits, French episcopates preferred to speak about restrictions rather than prohibitions because visits to stigmatics could not be officially banned since the women lived in lay society and not under the rules of a religious community. However, the stigmatics and their families and friends, as well as their spiritual director, were strongly advised not to allow people into the house.<sup>83</sup>

Furthermore, it was either indicated to clergymen that it was the bishop's "desire" that they, in particular, should not visit stigmatics, such as the cases mentioned here, or they were directly prevented from doing so.<sup>84</sup> This probably explains why the clergy appeared to be a minority among the visitors to French stigmatics, while they were quite numerous in relation to stigmatics

80 Report of Father Germanet, Diémoz, 4 July 1896, Dossier Marie-Louise Nerbollier, I.1911, ADL; Journal of Father Hermier, 1883–1886, Affaire Lauretine Billoquet, box 791, ADR.

81 Letter from J.B. Miramont to the Cardinal of Bordeaux, 19 March 1877, Dossier of Marie Bergadieu, AHDB, "est transformée en véritable temple, où le culte se célèbre régulièrement tous les vendredis. Et dire que toutes ces choses se passent pendant que la cloche appelle les fidèles à l'Église, pour les exercices du carême!"

82 "Défense formelle de publier quoique ce soit sur Berguille," 1 August 1878, Dossier Berguille Bergadieu, ADB. See the censored manuscript *La Stigmatisée de Blain* by Eugène Penel, 1876–1878, Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, 5F2/89, AHDN. Another censored book was that of a journalist writing for *Le Courrier de Saint-Nazaire*, Jacqueline Bruno, entitled, *Quelques souvenirs sur Marie-Julie, la stigmatisée de Blain*. A copy of the censored book can be found in the AHDN, 5F2/48. On Church censorship, see also Chapter 5.

83 Daurelle, *Les événements de Fontet* (1878), 113. Response of Father Audrian to a letter from a priest from Laval, 7 June 1895, 5F2/100, AHDN.

84 For Bergadieu and Billoquet there was a formal ban. Daurelle, *Les événements de Fontet*, 113; Maître, *Les stigmates*, 50. On Jahenny, see letter from the parish priest of Blain to Father P. Esbach, drafted in Esbach's letter, 31 August 1885, Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, 5F2/100, AHDN.

who had received some form of acknowledgment from a bishop, such as Louise Lateau. In France, however, those who supported a stigmatic found themselves in conflict with the bishop, as occurred to Father Daurelle, who wrote a non-commercial book about Bergadieu despite not obtaining ecclesiastical permission.<sup>85</sup>

Similar decisions to restrict visits were taken in relation to stigmatics outside France, which means that it was common practice to attempt to control the emergence of these cults. For example, in Spain, the local bishop restricted all visitors to Margalida Amengual in 1918, including the clergy, and in the 1870s in Italy, visitors such as Imbert-Gourbeyre needed to obtain the permission of the Vicar General to visit Palma Matarrelli.<sup>86</sup>

In the French cases we are examining, the lay devotees and stigmatics did not obey the restrictions. In Fontet, Berguille Bergadieu disregarded the episcopal advice and continued to allow visitors into her home. In his reports to the Vicar of Bordeaux, the parish priest of Fontet argued that Bergadieu went as far as re-scheduling the Friday ecstasy to coincide with the arrival of visitors – for example, if she knew that people were coming and the train to La Réole was late, the ecstasy would also be late.<sup>87</sup> In some cases, non-compliance with the restrictions obliged the episcopate to make its opinion public. In 1881, the diocese of Rouen released a statement in *La Semaine Religieuse* warning the faithful that visiting Laurentine Billoquet meant “obeying an unhealthy curiosity of which religion disapproves.”<sup>88</sup> Again, this was not an official ban, but it certainly put pressure on potential visitors who may have known about the stigmatic and were planning a trip.

85 A book by Father Daurelle, *Les événements de Fontet* (1878), also mentioned Jahenny and was censored. The clergy from Bergadieu's parish was openly against him. Letter from the parish priest of Fontet to the Canon Mourra, 17 January 1877, Dossier Berguille Bergadieu, ADB.

86 Munar, *Margarita de Costitx*, 143; Imbert-Gourbeyre, *Les stigmatisées*, Vol. II, 50. Imbert-Gourbeyre's work on Matarrelli, the second volume of *Les stigmatisées*, was not reprinted because the doctor was admonished by the Vatican, which did not support the stigmatic. Louis Veuillot from *L'Univers* warned him that “the Pope is not a *Palmaist* (*Palmaïste*).” Letter from Louis Veuillot to Antoine Imbert-Gourbeyre, 10 June 1872, emphasis on the original, Correspondance et papiers de Louis Veuillot (1<sup>re</sup> série), NAF 24222, fol. 300–301, BNF (Richelieu). On these issues, see Chapter 7, as well as Klaniczay, “The stigmatized Italian visionary.”

87 Letter from Father Miramont to the Vicar General, 18 July 1877, Dossier Berguille Bergadieu, ADB.

88 “Diocèse de Rouen,” *La Semaine religieuse du diocèse de Rouen*, October 15, 1881, 1007, “chercher en être témoin, c'est obéir à une curiosité malsaine que la religion réprouve.”

Following an episcopal restriction, parish priests would receive letters from laypeople and other priests asking for information or their authorization to visit the stigmatic. This created confusion, as there was no official policy for authorizing visits and some people were simply asking permission of the family or of spiritual directors favourable to the stigmatic, such as Father Germanet in Diémoz, who allowed people to come.<sup>89</sup> In a letter to the Cardinal of Bordeaux, one woman from Fontet complained that she had seen her neighbour attend Bergadieu's ecstasy on the previous Friday: "Why, if she has your permission Monsignor, can I not also obtain your support?"<sup>90</sup> Father Audrian, the priest of Blain and a Jahenny detractor, received many such letters and always answered that he could neither authorize nor forbid their visit. However, he did attempt to discourage them by suggesting that Jahenny should not receive visitors so as to avoid falling prey to the temptation of pride.<sup>91</sup>

With regard to other clergymen, the attitude was more severe. In a letter of 1889, a priest wrote to Father Audrian that his parishioners continued to enquire about Jahenny and, not knowing how to respond, he wanted to find out more about her. Father Audrian wrote his draft response in the letter received, which allows us to see the words he changed to moderate his tone: "I don't understand, unless you have been charged with it **officially**, why you need to satisfy the more or less supernatural curiosity of the people who consult you on this subject. You would do much better, in my humble opinion, to concentrate ~~on their affairs~~ less on the seer (*voyante*) of Blain."<sup>92</sup> His response was in line with the diocesan policy of isolation and control.

To overcome the episcopal restriction, stigmatics and their supporters attempted to convince the dioceses of the benefits of welcoming visitors. Arguments about Catholic conversion and an increase in religious practice and belief were among the most used. In the case of Bergadieu, a supporter

89 Report of Father Germanet, Diémoz, 4 July 1896, Dossier Marie-Louise Nerbollier, 1.1911, ADL. One woman asked permission from the family of Jahenny. See illegible name (woman), Tours, 5 August 1880, Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, AHDN, 5F2/63.

90 Undated letter from a woman (illegible name) from Fontet, probably a peasant, to the Cardinal of Bordeaux, ADB. "Pourquoi, si elle a la permission de vous Monseigneur, ne puis-je pas l'obtenir aussi votre soutien?"

91 Response of Father Audrian to the letter from the Baron de Baye, 24 September 1880, and to the letter from a woman (illegible name), 6 July 1891, Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, 5F2/100, AHDN.

92 Letter of the priest of Port-du-Salut and answer of Father Audrian, November 1, 1889, Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, AHDN, 5F2/100, "Je ne comprends pas, à moins que vous n'en soyez chargé **officiellement**, que vous ayez de satisfaire la curiosité plus ou moins surnaturelle des personnes qui vous consultent à ce sujet. Vous feriez beaucoup mieux, à mon humble avis, de s'occuper de ~~leurs affaires~~ moins de la voyante de Blain."

wrote to the vicar saying that he was “convinced that the more visits there are to Fontet, the more religion will gain from it.”<sup>93</sup> In a similar way, a female devotee of Jahenny told the parish priest that all non-believers should be given the means to visit “our victim,” because she was confident that on witnessing the extraordinary phenomena they would be converted.<sup>94</sup> Some devotees went as far as requesting a formal investigation of the events, convinced that this would change the attitude of the diocesan authorities.<sup>95</sup>

The only official diocesan investigation of a typical stigmatic of the Third Republic was that of Jahenny. It took place in 1873, shortly after she started displaying the stigmata. As Hervé Guillemain has shown, the investigation followed that of Louise Lateau in 1868 and was probably inspired by it, especially as Jahenny and Lateau were considered to be part of the same phenomenon.<sup>96</sup> Similarly to other diocesan inquiries involving the stigmata, the investigation was entrusted to Catholic doctors and theologians. In the case of Lateau, who had diocesan support, several priests concluded that the phenomena could be divine, and Doctor Ferdinand Lefèbvre, from the Catholic University of Louvain, considered that science may not be able to explain the stigmata. The Royal Academy of Belgium, which examined the stigmatic on its own initiative, refuted this thesis and advanced several scientific explanations: from it being the result of fasting to it being a possible effect of a neurosis.<sup>97</sup>

For Jahenny, on the contrary, the diocesan medical experts were negative and argued that she simulated the phenomena and suffered from a “nervous crisis,” an argument in line with the dominant pathologizing discourse of the time. The clergy supported the medical conclusion and deemed the diocesan investigation closed.<sup>98</sup> Similar conclusions were arrived at in the cases of other typical stigmatics in later periods, such as the Belgian Rosalie Put (1868–1919), who was dismissed by the Belgian and German episcopal authorities after a medical examination.<sup>99</sup> In the case of Jahenny, the report was never made public. A few months later, Imbert-Gourbeyre, who had just published

93 Letter of J. Michel-de-Rienfret, 9 August 1876, Dossier of Berguille Bergadieu, ADB, “Je suis persuadé que plus y aura de visites à Fontet, plus la religion y gagnera.”

94 Letter of a woman (illegible name), Tours, 5 August 1880, Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, 5F2/63, AHDN.

95 E. Fillastre, “Visite faite à Berguille le 9 Avril 1875,” Fonds Jacques Maître, AN, EHESS/PR/750.

96 Guillemain, *Diriger les consciences*, 137–154.

97 Lachapelle, “Between miracle and sickness,” 77–105; Klaniczay, “Louise Lateau,” 296–303.

98 “Crise nerveuse,” Report of Dr Jouon and Dr Vignaux, 29 March, 1873, Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, 5F2/27. Report of Father Audrian, 1873, Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, 5F2/27.

99 See Put’s biography in the Stigmatics database and the appendix; O’Sullivan, *Disruptive power*, 31–32.

his book, *Les stigmatisées* (1873), examined the case with the permission of the bishop, Monsignor Fournier. He concluded that the stigmata were supernatural and became a fervent devotee of Jahenny. It seems that Imbert-Gourbeyre was successful in convincing the bishop; however, Monsignor Fournier died shortly afterwards and was replaced by Monsignor Le Coq. This new bishop stuck to the initial report and Jahenny was never acknowledged.<sup>100</sup>

Jahenny's example shows that the politics of the episcopate, in line with the ideas of the ruling bishop, affected the way that a stigmatic was perceived at the diocesan level. In the cases of stigmatics in the Third Republic, none were recognized by their diocese.<sup>101</sup> In accordance with their policy of isolation, which we have seen reflected in the restrictions on visitors, some bishops replaced spiritual directors who were favourable to a stigmatic with those who were detractors. This was indeed the case for the confessors of Jahenny, Billoquet and Bergadieu. In addition, in an attempt to redress their behaviour, the stigmatics were not allowed to receive the daily Communion, or were not allowed to receive it at home – in cases where they were bedridden – and “miraculous” Communion took place. All these measures had a deep effect on the women, who felt abandoned by their diocese.<sup>102</sup>

We must note that the diocesan attitude towards stigmatics, in France as well as in other European countries, was generally cautious but not always that hostile, varying within particular contexts and sometimes evolving over time. For example, the Spanish stigmatic, Margalida Amengual, mentioned several times above, received the support of the Bishop of Mallorca and when she died in 1919 the episcopate decided to bury her with a certificate in Latin attesting to her charismata. The diocesan authorities today, however, do not seem interested in her case, even though she was declared Venerable in 2008.<sup>103</sup>

Furthermore, a favourable attitude of the diocese towards a stigmatic did not mean that they were willing to allow visits or promote her case during

100 Reports by Imbert-Gourbeyre, 5F2/37, AHDN. Imbert-Gourbeyre was mistakenly persuaded that he would only die after Jahenny. Letter of Elie Jalloustre, Clermont, 8 March 1912, Fonds Paul LeBlanc, Bibliothèque du Patrimoine (BP), Clermont-Ferrand. We are grateful to Gábor Klaniczay for this document. Roberdel, *Marie-Julie Jahenny*, 98–100.

101 It seems that Nerbollier initially obtained the support of Monsignor Fava, from Grenoble, but when he died in 1899, the new bishop, as well as the new parish priest, were not favourable to the stigmatic and denied her the sacraments, Hamez, *Une hostie vivante*, 424–426.

102 For example, “Elle [Bergadieu] est bien contrarié de l'état d'abandonne dans lequel on l'a laissée,” in E. Fillastre, “Visite faite à Berguille le 9 Avril 1875,” Fonds Jacques Maître, AN, EHESS/PR/750. On the miraculous Communion see, Maître, *Les stigmates de l'hystérique*, 9 and 54; Roberdel, *Marie-Julie*, 97 and 107.

103 Graus, “A visit to remember,” 67. On the Vatican response to stigmatics see Chapter 7.

her lifetime. As mentioned above, visits to Amengual were restricted, while in other cases where the bishop was supportive, such as that of Marthe Robin (who was declared Venerable in 2014), after 1943, visitors were required to obtain the bishop's authorization and were requested to remain silent about what they witnessed.<sup>104</sup>

Finally, not all alleged stigmatics who underwent a diocesan investigation were examined for their reliving the Passion. For example, in 1880, Édith Royer (1841–1924), née Challan-Belval and known as Madame Royer, underwent a diocesan inquiry in Dijon, but only for her alleged revelations of the Sacred Heart, which were deemed to be true.<sup>105</sup> Royer, however, was not a “typical” stigmatic as the wounds were invisible and, although she was deemed a “victim soul,” this was not her main feature. The ecclesiastical support, therefore, did not contribute to her reputation as a stigmatic.

With regard to more typical cases, such as those we have been examining, a hostile attitude from the diocese certainly had an effect. Jacques Maître has shown how, in part as a result of how the ecclesiastical hierarchy of Rouen negatively regarded Laurentine Billoquet, the stigmatic decided to move to Dijon around 1904, where she lived under a different identity.<sup>106</sup> As we will see in the next section, despite the attitude of the French episcopates, groups of visitors began to organize themselves in order to defend “their” stigmatic. In doing so, they were also defending the type of stigmatic that the women represented.

#### 4 The Visitors' Unofficial Movements

Those who visited stigmatics and were convinced about the supernatural origin of the phenomenon became their greatest advocates. Many wrote to the diocesan authorities under their own initiative to plead their case.<sup>107</sup> Sometimes visitors organized themselves into more formal groups or movements, usually called “friends of,” as with many lay associations today. As Pierre Roberdel noted in the case of Jahenny, these groups were not formal associations in the sense that they formally registered and drafted a statute.<sup>108</sup> On the contrary,

104 Muizon, *Marthe Robin*, 173.

105 Graus, “A ‘divine mission’ to sanctify the laity.”

106 Maître, *Les stigmatés*, 8–9.

107 For example, in one letter, a visitor (a man) asked the Cardinal of Bordeaux to visit Berguille Bergadieu once to be convinced about the events, “vous serez si convaincu qu’il vous sera impossible de résister plus longtemps,” Henri Legras to the cardinal of Bordeaux, 15 June 1876, Dossier Berguille Bergadieu, ADB.

108 Roberdel, *Marie-Julie Jahenny*, 95.



the movements were horizontal, more or less being spontaneously formed and organized, with people taking on different responsibilities according to the time they had available. The men and women collaborating were united in their belief in the stigmatic. Occasionally, they received the support of the spiritual director of the stigmatic and of other priests from other parishes.<sup>109</sup> Many came from the surrounding areas and visited the stigmatic frequently, thus often seeing each other on Fridays. It is probable that they decided to organize themselves as a result of these encounters. In this sense, even if the reputation of stigmatics such as Jahenny was international, the core of their cult remained regional.

The main goal of these unofficial movements was to promote and help acknowledge the stigmatic, above all to the episcopal authority, in order to acknowledge her sanctity. While some groups were founded after the death of a stigmatic, here we only analyse those that were already active during their lifetime. In France, this was an especially delicate time to promote stigmatics given the policy adopted by the dioceses. In the case of Marie-Julie Jahenny, she received the support of a group of visitors named the Amis de la Croix (Friends of the Cross). Some of the members liked to call themselves the “servants of the Cross” and referred to Jahenny’s house as the “Sanctuary of the Cross.”<sup>110</sup> The group was founded in 1873, shortly after Jahenny’s stigmatization. In the early years, the brothers Adolphe and Auguste Charbonnier, two white-collar workers from Nantes and Fontenay, were the leaders of the group. In the 1880s, Madame Grégoire from Blain became secretary to the stigmatic. She managed Jahenny’s abundant correspondence – between 20 and 30 letters a week – transcribing Jahenny’s dictated replies.<sup>111</sup> Imbert-Gourbeyre was in contact with Madame Grégoire and received many transcriptions describing Jahenny’s ecstasies. In addition, as mentioned above, his daughter became part of the Amis de la Croix in the early twentieth century.<sup>112</sup>

A similar thing occurred with the groups of *amis* of Berguille Bergadieu and Marie-Louise Nerbollier in Fontet and Diémoz. Although the information is scarce in these cases, it seems that Nerbollier’s group was led by Madame Piellat, an aristocrat, and Madame Abric, a merchant of Church ornaments and

109 As mentioned above, Father Daurelle, author of *Les événements de Fontet*, supported Bergadieu’s group.

110 Roberdel, *Marie-Julie Jahenny*, 95–96.

111 Corresponding with devotees was a daily activity for many stigmatics. During the 50 years Marthe Robin (1902–1981) bore the stigmata, she also received dozens of letters a week and had the help of a secretary to reply to them. Among her “pen pals” there were many prisoners, to whom she sent cigarettes, rosaries, the Bible and books. See Anonymous, *Marthe Robin*, 64.

112 Correspondence Madame Grégoire and Imbert-Gourbeyre, 5F2/98, AHDN.

Nerbollier's old boss. They received the support of Father Germanet, the parish priest of Diémoz.<sup>113</sup> In the case of Bergadieu, the parish priest of Fontet, a detractor, identified three men and one woman as those leading the movement, of which we can identify Henri Legras, a lawyer (it seems) from Bordeaux, Mr Boué, a veterinary who was there every Friday, and Mademoiselle Sylva, a 50-year-old woman from La Réole, whom the curate described to the Canon of Bordeaux as follows: "imagine the most ridiculous and eccentric person that you can meet."<sup>114</sup> Lauretine Billoquet does not appear to have received any organized support from visitors, probably because she left for Dijon before a movement could be formed.

We have previously mentioned that some supporters published on stigmatics during their lifetime. The groups of *amis*, however, were aware of the attitude of the French episcopate and, given the restrictions and censorship applied when the cults became popular, they preferred to operate cautiously. The strategy was a logical choice because, ultimately, their objective was to have their "own" stigmatic recognized in the diocese, with the hope that one day she would become an official saint. While the stigmatic was alive, the main task of the devotees involved in these groups was to collect material to prove her authenticity before the episcopate. In cases where they were successful, this material might eventually be helpful in opening a cause of canonization – although this never took place in the cases of the French stigmatics discussed here.

To convince the ecclesiastical authority, the emphasis of the groups was on the comprehensive manner in which the stigmatic relived the Passion. To this end, the groups generated written records of the Way of the Cross, which they considered to be proof of the stigmatic's sanctity and divine gifts. The records were written in situ and sometimes copied in more legible form. They followed a similar structure and style, which consisted of describing the different phases of the stigmatic's ecstasy hour by hour, following the different stages of the Cross, and sometimes using titles such as "Carrying of the Cross" and "Crucifixion" for the purpose of clarity.<sup>115</sup>

113 Report of Father Germanet, Diémoz, 4 July 1896, Dossier Marie-Louise Nerbollier, 1.1911, ADL. See also, "Miracle ! Miracle !," *Le Républicain de la Loire et de la Haute-Loire*, April 23, 1886, 3.

114 Letter from the parish priest of Fontet to the Canon of Bordeaux, 17 January 1877, ADB, "figurez vous la personne la plus ridicule et la plus excentrique qu'on puisse rencontrer." See also, Letter from the parish priest of Fontet to the Cardinal of Bordeaux, 19 March 1877, ADB.

115 See, e.g., Henri Legras, "Extase de Berguille du 16 juillet 1875," dossier Berguille Bergadieu, ADB. "La Passion de Marie Julie" by Marie des Brulais, in "Voyage a Blain le 7 août 1874," Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, 5F2/86, AHDN.

If the stigmatic had revelations, as was usually the case with the Third Republic stigmatics, the groups would transcribe the “divine messages” as quickly as they could, attempting to include everything. Some records signalled missing words with ellipses (“...”).<sup>116</sup> Many of these records produced by the Amis de la Croix for Jahenny are stored in the diocesan archives of Nantes; while, for Bergadieu, a few transcriptions have been preserved under suggestive titles such as, “Spoken words recorded during the ecstasy with a very rigorous accuracy,”<sup>117</sup> with the authors insisting on the “accuracy” of the accounts in an attempt to convince the ecclesiastical authority they had not falsified or added their own impressions.

It is important to note that even if the groups were defending a particular case, their emphasis on the reliving of the Passion by these laywomen in their own homes meant they were nevertheless advocating a specific stigmatic type. The implicit message of their records, and the general task of collecting proof of the ecstasies, was that these mystics in particular were worthy of diocesan attention, as they could potentially be saints. In this way, they felt they were justifying the importance of these women to the Church, and did not consider their task to be against ecclesiastical interests, as the reluctant episcopates seemed to think.

As an example of this type of material, we can cite the extensive records produced by a woman named Marie des Brulais, a teacher from Nantes and one of Jahenny’s *amis*. One record of 1874 entitled, “The Passion of Marie-Julie,” is particularly comprehensive, with 67 manuscript pages re-transcribed into a notebook. Des Brulais described Jahenny’s reliving of the Passion in two columns, one recording Jahenny’s words, the other describing her actions. She remarked that many other attendees, including well-off people, were “writing in a hurry” during the Way of the Cross and they compared their accounts at the end to ensure nothing was missing.<sup>118</sup> The task was thus a collective one even if one person was in charge of the final transcription.

We must note, however, that the majority of the records were not so comprehensive. For example, those produced by Henri Legras and other friends of Bergadieu were between five and ten pages long. They usually only transcribed

116 Letter from A. Charbonnier to the Bishop of Nantes, 1877, Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, 5F2/103, AHDN. “Je ne me contentais pas d’écouter Marie Julie, j’écrivais aussi rapidement que possible ses paroles.”

117 E. Fillastre, “Paroles recueillies pendant l’extase avec une exactitude très rigoureuse,” 9 April 1875, Fonds Jacques Maître, AN, EHESS/PR/750.

118 “La Passion de Marie Julie” by Marie des Brulais, in “Voyage à Blain le 7 août 1874,” Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, 5F2/86, AHDN. Des Brulais produced a similar record in, “Un second voyage à Blain et à la Fraudais, 2 et 3 Septembre 1875,” 5F2/88, AHDN.

some of Bergadieu's words during the Way of the Cross, noting the time and providing some descriptions of the stigmatic's actions – for example: "her arms fall back in a cross. Always the same rigidity. Breathing is difficult. Always looking up to the sky. Her lips are moving again. [Transcription of her words]."<sup>119</sup>

The records sometimes mention those who were present on a particular Friday.<sup>120</sup> The idea was to gather as much support as possible. On several occasions, the attendees were asked to sign a statement acknowledging the facts, which would later be included as part of the transcript. As an example, we can cite the testimony of a pharmacist from Rennes involved in various lay Catholic movements, including the Comité Catholique and the Société de Saint Vincent de Paul, who visited Jahenny in 1877 and, upon his return, wrote to the Bishop of Nantes:

I attended the Way of the Cross, in all similar to the first 3 I had seen and I signed the minutes (*procès-verbal*), drawn up during the meeting, [about] the persistence of the phenomena of La Fraudais. This seemed necessary to me; since the ecclesiastical authority of the diocese was not represented there.<sup>121</sup>

The quote above points to the previously mentioned fact that Jahenny, as well as the other stigmatics, had been abandoned by the diocese, leaving their cases in the hands of their supporters. The groups would later send copies of their transcripts to the episcopate, attempting to convince the ecclesiastical authority to acknowledge the stigmatic. For example, in 1874, Henri Legras sent a copy of a record of Bergadieu's Way of the Cross to the Cardinal of Bordeaux, adding that he had attended 22 other ecstasies and that he was convinced of the events.<sup>122</sup> In the case of Jahenny, the Charbonnier brothers argued that they considered the records as a mere "deposit" from the stigmatic that belonged,

119 "Ses bras retombent en croix. Toujours la même rigidité. Respiration pénible. Toujours les yeux vers le ciel. Ses lèvres s'agissent de nouveau," in "Paroles recueillies pendant l'extase avec une exactitude très rigoureuse," 9 April 1875, E. Fillastre, Fonds Jacques Maître, AN, EHESS/PR/750.

120 A priest visiting La Fraudais recalls being asked to be inscribed by the Charbonnier brothers, "Une visite à la Fraudais le Vendredi 16 septembre 1877," 5F2/87.

121 Statement by G. Lebesconte (pharmacist) to Monsignor Lecoq, Bishop of Nantes, 7 August 1877, Rennes, Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, AHDN, 5F2/100, "J'ai assisté au chemin de croix, en tout semblable aux 3 premiers que j'avais vu et j'ai signé dans un procès-verbal, dressé séance tenante, la persistance des phénomènes de la Fraudais. Cela me semblait nécessaire ; puisque l'autorité ecclésiastique du diocèse n'y était pas représentée."

122 Henri Legras to the Cardinal of Bordeaux, 17 June 1876, Bordeaux, Dossier Berguille Bergadieu, ADB.

above all, to the bishop.<sup>123</sup> As we can see from these examples, the groups contacted the episcopal authorities directly, without the intercession of the parish priest. The Amis de la Croix, in particular, refused to give their records to the curate (a detractor) because they did not trust him.<sup>124</sup>

Jahenny's group would continue to produce similar records of her undergoing of the Way of the Cross until her death in 1941. While some transcriptions were still handwritten, others benefited from technological developments and were transcribed using a typewriter. The reports still mention small groups of attendees, usually around ten people, notable lay men and women of the region, including the names of aristocratic families who had been following the stigmatic from the beginning; thus, it seems that the composition of her unofficial movement remained quite stable.<sup>125</sup> Unfortunately, we do not know how the episcopal authorities responded, if at all, to the presentation of these and other records of the stigmatics' ecstasies, but the fact that the material has been preserved in the diocese shows that it was deemed important enough to be kept, although not necessarily examined.

Not all of these unofficial cults survived, at least not with the same intensity. Nevertheless, some devotees continued to make claims concerning their case after the stigmatic's death. We have previously mentioned how visitors to Billoquet sent the "relics" obtained during Fridays to the episcopate after she had passed away in 1936. Furthermore, when Nerbollier was exhumed in 1939 because no one had renewed the grave concession, her body appeared to be uncorrupted. The parish priest and seven other people, old "friends" of Nerbollier, made a statement concerning the exhumation for the episcopate of Grenoble as proof of the stigmatic's sanctity.<sup>126</sup>

In the case of Jahenny, after her death, the Amis de la Croix became a society called the Association Le Sanctuarie de Marie-Julie et de la Fraudais, which bought the stigmatic's house to preserve her bedroom intact and built a shrine in the living room without the approval of the diocese.<sup>127</sup> To collect donations to buy the house, they encouraged those who had visited not to allow "this endearing relic" to disappear.<sup>128</sup> Today, Jahenny's association is still active, and

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123 "J'en ai formé un volumineux manuscrit que je ne regarde que comme un dépôt entre mes mains et appartient de droit à votre Grandeur." Letter from A. Charbonnier to the Bishop of Nantes, 1877, Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, AHDN, 5F2/103.

124 Roberdel, *Marie-Julie*, 126–127.

125 "Rapport de l'extase de Marie-Julie à la Fraudais le 14 Juin 1932," and "Témoignages de la famille de Maurice Lucas" Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, AHDN, 5F2/70 and 5F2/44.

126 See minutes on Nerbollier exhumation in 1939, dossier Marie-Louise Nerbollier, 1.1911, ADL.

127 Graus, "A visit to remember," 62. On the houses of stigmatics see Van Osselaer, "Valued most highly," 94–101.

128 For documents on lay associations founded after Jahenny's death, see AHDN, 5F2/49.

some devotees of Nerbollier continue to plead her case. They have embraced the internet as a new way to promote them, and without abandoning their claims before the episcopate.<sup>129</sup>

Before concluding, it is worth mentioning that other typical stigmatics of the twentieth century also received the support of groups of lay visitors. For example, Marthe Robin received support from an association called Foyers de charité, which she and her spiritual confessor founded in 1936 after the stigmatic received a “divine mission.” However, unlike the unofficial movements we have examined, Robin’s association was much more than a group attempting to promote her. The Foyers de charité survive to this day. They are houses (today, there are still more than 76 worldwide) where men and women undertake six-day spiritual retreats, sharing their material possessions and engaging in a silent prayer with the help of a preacher named “the Father” of the *foyer*, who may be a lay man or woman. Although the movement remained unacknowledged during the lifetime of the stigmatic, it nevertheless received some diocesan support. After Robin’s death, and coinciding with the start of her cause of beatification in 1986, it was recognized by the Church as an “Association of the Faithful.”<sup>130</sup> The cult of Robin was thus authorized, unlike the stigmatics we have examined, who remained unacknowledged.

## 5 Conclusions

Examining the visitors’ encounters with stigmatics in the French Third Republic, as expressed in their personal accounts and correspondence, has allowed us to see how stigmatic cults could be created from the ground up and be actively sustained by the men and women who believed in them, even in opposition to an episcopal policy that aimed to isolate and control these cases. It was during the visits that these cults began to develop, when people from different backgrounds and with different ideas were confronted with the actual stigmatic, as opposed to an image of a typical stigmatic that many had already heard or read about. In France, their image had been spreading due to popular cases such as Louise Lateau and the French stigmatics who followed her, notably Marie-Julie Jahenny, who also seemed to “inspire” other French cases.

The extraordinary capacities attributed to these laywomen: from their reliving of the Passion to the possibility of obtaining recommendations, “bloody

129 The website of Jahenny’s association can be found at: <http://www.marie-julie-jahenny.fr> (accessed February 13, 2019).

130 Clément, *Pour entrer chez Marthe*, 274–278; Donneaud, “Marthe Robin;” Graus, “A ‘divine mission’ to sanctify the laity.” On the Vatican response to stigmatics, see Chapter 7.

relics” and grace from them, was a strong focus of attraction. Many of these expectations were confirmed during the visits, where further elements related to typical stigmatics took actual form: from the humble houses and pious bedrooms, through to the family or friends receiving those visiting, and to the ecstasy of the Passion transmitted from the bed every Friday. Witnessing such events confirmed a growing imaginary about stigmatics, which was also contributed to by doctors who, while organizing their visits as medical investigations, would often refer to the events in their reports. After their visits, many people would share their experience with their peers, thus not only contributing to the fame of a particular stigmatic, but also spreading this imaginary about the stigmatic type. Interest in this particular profile would then increase, with others expressing their wish to witness the events of which they had been told.

The dioceses were not unaware of this phenomenon, as parish priests or the stigmatic’s spiritual director would inform the bishops. The grass-roots enthusiasm for stigmatics, represented in the weekly Friday meeting around the women, was contrary to the Church’s position on the admiration of a living person. In France, typical stigmatics faced diocesan hostility the moment the cults, with their Friday rituals and their unauthorized worship, began to challenge official spaces and the practice of established religion. As in other cases, measures were taken, such as the restriction of visits and the removal of spiritual directors who were sympathetic to the stigmatic. However, the ecclesiastical abandonment of stigmatics contributed to the formation of more or less organized and unofficial movements of believers, some surviving after the death of the stigmatic and becoming formal associations. While their claims were related to particular cases, they were also based on the idea that these types of mystics were worthy of the Church’s attention, as they were potential saints. The records of the Way of the Cross they produced, however, did not serve to convince the episcopates.

While it was not the aim of this chapter, we should note that other devotee associations were founded years after the deaths of other “typical” stigmatics, usually with the aim of initiating a cause of canonization or to assist in its progression.<sup>131</sup> Among these, we can name the Association Symphorose, which supports the French stigmatic Symphorose Chopin (1924–1983);<sup>132</sup> the Amici

131 On the Vatican response to stigmatics, see Chapter 7.

132 Symphorose Chopin was miraculously healed in Lourdes around 1958. She received many graces, including the stigmata. She died alone in a hospital with a reputation of sanctity. Her cause of beatification began in 2012, thanks in part to the Association Symphorose (Paris). Boufflet, Peyrous and Pompignoli, *Des saints*.

della Meneghina (Friends of the Meneghina), supporting Maria Domenica Lazzeri (1815–1848); and the Association des amis d'Ephèse et d'Anne Catherine Emmerick, which included members from 18 different countries and had the scholar Louis Massignon (1883–1962) as the secretary-general.<sup>133</sup> These groups were mainly the initiatives of lay believers rather than priests, some of whom had visited the stigmatic during her lifetime, which again reveals the role of the faithful in nourishing and sustaining the cults. As seen in the case of Marie-Julie Jahenny, in addition to preserving the spiritual heritage of a stigmatic, these associations also aimed to preserve their material heritage. In the following chapter, we will examine the importance of this material culture for stigmatics.



FIGURE 4.1 Marie-Julie Jahenny's bedroom in La Fraudais  
ARCHIVES HISTORIQUES DU DIOCÈSE DE NANTES, 5F2/45

<sup>133</sup> Around 1952, the year of its foundation, it had about 183 adherents from France, Belgium, Italy, England, the United States, Morocco, Turkey, Switzerland, Portugal, Algeria, Afghanistan, Senegal, Austria, Canada, Australia, Egypt, India and Japan. In 1913, Massignon made a pilgrimage to Emmerick's grave in Dülmen, where he decided to marry his partner, and in 1926 he visited a lesser known stigmatic named Philomène Bertho from Binic (Côtes-d'Armor), who started bearing the wounds around the same time as Jahenny. See Fonds Louis Massignon, NAF 28658, box 119 and 120, BNF (Richelieu) (BNF).





FIGURE 4.2  
Visitors waiting in the living room of  
Marie-Julie Jahenny's thatched cottage,  
and inside her bedroom  
ARCHIVES HISTORIQUES DU DIOCÈSE  
DE NANTES, 5F2/45, 48



FIGURE 4.3  
Marie-Louise Nerbollier reliving the Passion  
ARCHIVES DIOCÉSAINES DE LYON, I,1911



FIGURE 4.4 Handmade "reliquary" from a devotee of Laurentine Billoquet, containing  
a handkerchief imprinted with the blood of a heart-shaped holy wound  
ARCHIVES DIOCÉSAINES DE ROUEN, BOX 791

## Selling Sensation, Creating Sanctity

### *The Visual and Material Culture of “Stigmatics”*

*Tine Van Osselaer*

#### 1 In the Public Eye

The core of the decision on whether or not the plaintiff’s complaint is grounded, can be found in the answer to the question of whether or not the plaintiff can be counted among those people who have triggered a general interest of cultural importance in the public sphere, and as the events of recent years are well-known to the broadest public this question can be answered affirmatively.<sup>1</sup>

In November 1932, there seemed to be no doubt about the public status of Therese Neumann at a court case concerning a series of photographs taken of her. The German stigmatic had no right to hinder their circulation and had to forfeit every right to the use of her image:

The plaintiff herself seems to be aware that she belongs to the personalities of contemporary history, since she indicates in her complaint that half the civilized world knows about the unexplainable events. In the daily press and in the literature of recent years, the case of Therese Neumann plays a big role. Some books that only address “Konnersreuth” have already been published.<sup>2</sup>

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1 “Der Kernpunkt der Entscheidung darüber, ob der von der Klägerin geltend gemachte Anspruch begründet ist, ist in der Beantwortung der Frage zu finden, ob die Klägerin zu den Personen zu zählen ist, die im öffentlichen Leben aus kulturellen (Interessen) Belangen ein allgemeines Interesse wachgerufen haben, diese Frage ist aber nach den in der breitesten Öffentlichkeit bekannten Vorgängen der letzten Jahre unbedingt zu bejahen.” StA, Amtsgericht 1 Waldsassen 441: Therese Neumann, Konnersreuth, gegen A.H., wegen Verletzung am Bilde 1932–1935 (Neumann/A.H.). Der Oberamtsrichter: Neumayer, Verkündet am 15. November 1932.

2 “Die Klägerin selbst scheint (dieses) zu fühlen, dass sie zu den Personen der Zeitgeschichte zählt, weil sie in der Klageschrift anführen lässt, dass der halben zivilisierten Welt die ungeklärten Vorgänge bekannt sind. In der Tagespresse und in der Literatur der letzten Jahre spielt der Fall Therese Neumann eine große Rolle. Es würden bereits Bücher veröffentlicht,

It was not the first time that Therese Neumann had filed a complaint against the circulation of photographs. In the summer of 1927, she had accused the same photographer who was on trial in 1932, of circulating, without her approval, the pictures he had taken when she had first started to show the visible traces of physical stigmata. While he had been granted permission to take photographs, one of the major conditions had been that he signed an agreement indicating that he would only use the pictures in accordance with the Pfarramt's instructions.

In her statement of 20 August 1927, Therese Neumann had already forbidden him to sell the pictures and claimed that the photographer was acting against her will and that of the priest. She knew that if the court judged her case to be of cultural significance in the realm of contemporary history, she did not have the right to protest against the circulation of the images.<sup>3</sup> However, she also believed that the second paragraph of the law concerning the right associated with such images actually supported her case, as their circulation could lead to accusations that she was looking for fame and profit. There was also a risk that her facial features would be used for commercial purposes (to enhance the sale of books and newspapers) and that people who held different opinions, religious or otherwise, would mock her and the Catholic faith and its institutions. Moreover, she claimed that such images increased the number of visitors who came to see her stigmata, and since the pictures had started to circulate, she had received more requests by painters and photographers for similar favours and could no longer cross the street in peace.<sup>4</sup>

While the first court case ended in her favour, the second, in the winter of 1932, concerned who had the right to the circulation of photographs taken by others, and the judge ruled differently. The Neumann family responded by appealing to a higher court. At this stage, Therese and her father, Fernand Neumann, addressed the question of whether or not she was a person of public interest and argued that one only belonged to contemporary history when

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die sich ausschließlich mit 'Konnersreuth' befassen." StA, Amtsgericht I Waldsassen 441: Neumann/A.H. Der Oberamtsrichter: Neumayer, Verkündet am 15. November 1932.

3 Reichsgesetz 9.1.07, § 23 I.1: "Ohne die nach § 22 erforderliche Einwilligung dürfen verbreitet und zur Schau gestellt werden: 1. Bildnisse aus dem Bereiche der Zeitgeschichte": "Gesetz, betreffend das Urheberrecht an Werken der bildenden Kunst und der Photographie," January 9, 1907, *Reichs-Gesetzblatt* 3 (1907): 7–18.

4 StA, Amtsgericht I Waldsassen 440: Therese Neumann, Konnersreuth, gegen A.H., Waldsassen, wegen einstweiliger Verfügung, 1926–1933. This idea of "figures of contemporary history" ("Personen der Zeitgeschichte") was a new feature in the copyright legislation of 1907: private citizens remained in control of the rights to their portraits, while such public figures lost the right to reproduction of their portraits to the photographer. For these legal changes and the impact it had on the image policy of Kaiser Wilhelm II, see Giloi, "Copyrighting," 417.

“making history” oneself; that is, when one entered “one way or another the public sphere and thus gave the public sphere the right to know one’s person.” Following this logic, it was clear that Therese Neumann had never entered the public sphere, and had never deliberately become part of contemporary history. On the contrary, the most outspoken characteristic of the plaintiff was exactly her “complete lack of activity.” She had done everything to stay out of the public eye, and if she had become a figure of interest, it was against her wishes.<sup>5</sup>

In their opinion, she had a legal right to protest when events of personal, domestic and family life were made public. Moreover, they argued that the pictures – showing her in ecstasy in a distorted or kitschy style – were not simple “natural” images, but were designed to trigger interest and the public’s need for sensation. Countering the criticism that more than one million people had already come to see her, their argument referred to the fact that the diocesan authorities were handing out permissions, and therefore that not everyone, and certainly not the entire public sphere, was at liberty to see her: “The circulation of the images, however, created the illusion that the plaintiff had surrendered to the public sphere.”<sup>6</sup> When it became clear that it was unlikely that she would win this case, Therese Neumann withdrew her complaint.<sup>7</sup>

These two court cases and similar complaints that Therese Neumann and her father filed in the interwar period, offer us exceptional illustrations of the celebrity status of the German stigmatic, the problems it caused and the media that helped to create the phenomenon. This chapter addresses these topics in more detail. Given the celebrity focus of this chapter, many of the cases we will explore relate to the canonical stigmatics – the names that were mentioned as exemplary in the lexica that we studied in the introduction (e.g. Anna Katharina Emmerick, Louise Lateau). However, rather than focus on the specific public personalities, we will look at: (1) how the “machinery” functioned,<sup>8</sup> or how

5 StA, 440 Amtsgericht/Waldsassen, Therese Neumann, Konnersreuth, gegen A.H., Waldsassen, wegen einstweiliger Verfügung, 1926–1933, Reference to Das Kammergericht Berlin – JW. 1928, S.421 § 23 Abs. 1, Ziff.1 Kunstgesch. G.

6 “Durch die Bildverbreitung wird das aber illusorisch gemacht und die Klägerin der Öffentlichkeit preis gegeben” statement Neumann’s lawyer, 21 April 1933. StA, Amtsgericht I Waldsassen 441: Neumann/A.H.

7 Similar cases were filed and settled in July 1932, most of them ending with the accused promising not to further circulate the images of Therese Neumann. StA, Amtsgericht I Waldsassen 442: Therese Neumann, Konnersreuth, gegen F.K., Konnersreuth, wegen Verletzung des Rechts am Bilde 1932; 443, Therese Neumann, Konnersreuth, gegen F.W., Konnersreuth, wegen Verletzung des Rechts am Bilde 1932; 444, Therese Neumann, Konnersreuth, gegen M.S., Waldsassen, wegen Verletzung des Rechts am Bilde 1932.

8 Morgan, “Review.”

the stigmatics were “surrendered to the public sphere” (changing technologies of printing, development of photography) and the interaction of commerce and devotion; and (2) how their fame built upon their image as “stigmatics.” Combining these two aspects will allow us to see how the category of stigmatic “worked” on a commercial/promotional and a devotional level (and, as we will see, these two are not necessarily separate). Thus, rather than stepping into the private quarters of the stigmatics, as we did in the previous chapters, here, we will look into how they, or rather their image, ventured into the world.

## 2 Commerce and Devotion

### 2.1 *Tensions and Interactions*

As we noted in Chapter 2, scholars such as Chris Rojek and Peter Jan Margry have pointed to similarities between celebrity culture and the cult of saints.<sup>9</sup> If we think of the use of material culture, it is easy to find examples of this resemblance: fan memorabilia have been compared to relics, and in the writing of fan letters we can see similar tendencies to create virtual intimacy,<sup>10</sup> as in the cults of saints. Moreover, for celebrities and saintly figures alike, memorial houses/museums have been created documenting the value attached to material possessions and to the locations linked to the deceased.<sup>11</sup>

There is also an alternative interpretation. As demonstrated in the previous chapters, the stereotypical stigmatic often easily fit both profiles: that of celebrity and of “living” saint. In other words, the visual and material cultures surrounding them fit the logic of the two subfields: Catholic devotional culture and celebrity cult. Some of the prototypical stigmatics were the “celebrities” of their time, becoming a marketable commodity, or as Simon Morgan has noted, “the point at which a person becomes a celebrity is the point at which a sufficiently large audience is interested in their actions, image and personality, to create a visible market for commodities carrying their likeness and for information about their lives and views.”<sup>12</sup>

When we look at the work on stigmatics, the scholars who have focused on the interaction between media and popular religion have studied extremely popular twentieth-century stigmatics such as Padre Pio (1887–1968, visible

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9 Rojek, *Celebrity*; Margry, “The Pilgrimage.”

10 Morgan, “Celebrity,” 99, 109.

11 Van Osselaer, “Preserved.”

12 Morgan, “Celebrity,” 98.

stigmata 1918)<sup>13</sup> and Therese Neumann (1898–1962, stigmata in 1926). In the case of the latter, Christiane Köppl has suggested that the rapid development of the media in the twentieth century had much, if not everything, to do with the development of her cult (as a “living saint”). Never before could such events be so well documented and promoted.<sup>14</sup> The press coverage of the Italian Capuchin friar certainly rivalled that of the German stigmatic. As Urte Krass has noted, the swift development of the popularity of Padre Pio and the extent of the fame of the Capuchin father (beyond the local sphere), was only possible due to modern propaganda and marketing methods, in which his fingerless gloves (covering his stigmata) developed into a marketing brand (in the words of Sergio Luzzatto).<sup>15</sup>

In this respect, we might postulate that the fixed dress code that Therese Neumann observed after her stigmatization, a black dress and white headscarf, might be part of her “branding” as well. In both cases, we find efforts to control the public image of the stigmatic. Therese Neumann’s court cases against the circulation of her photographs are exemplary and there were similar initiatives in Pio’s case. In 1919, the abbot of his cloister in San Giovanni Rotondo forbade the Capuchin friar from making contact with journalists and photographers, and in 1924 he forbade a series of photographs to avoid creating the impression that they were commercially exploiting the cult. Padre Pio had his own personal photographer, so the control in his case was primarily about the

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13 Margry, “Merchandising;” Krass, “Stigmata;” Krass, “Kontrollierter Gesichtsverlust.” More on Padre Pio in Chapter 7.

14 Köppl, *Mystik*, 9. In the case of Therese Neumann, two publications seem to have had a major impact on her popularity. Firstly, there was the article that her parish priest published in a local newspaper (*Grenzzeitung*) shortly after the stigmata first appeared (and before informing the diocesan authorities, 21 April 1926). Warning people to stay away, the article in fact had the opposite effect. Secondly, an article by the famous journalist Erwein von Aretin in November 1927 also provided a boost in Therese Neumann’s popularity. Sent to Konnersreuth by the “serious” newspaper, the *Münchener Neuesten Nachrichten*, he wrote a positive report on his trip that was reprinted no less than four times in the next ten days and translated into 32 languages. Köppl, *Mystik*, 53.

15 “wobei die fingerlosen Handschuhe, unter denen er die Wundmale seiner Hände zumeist verbarg, von Sergio Luzzatto zu Recht als sein ‘Markenzeichen [...] auf dem christlichen Glaubensmarkt des 10. Jahrhunderts’ bezeichnet worden sind.” Luzzatto cited in Krass, “Stigmata,” 366; 374: “Auch im Falle Pios hat eine ‘Medienmaschinerie’ dafür gesorgt, dass sich abseits offizieller Kirchenpolitik ein wundergesättigter Kult entwickelte und so mächtig wurde, dass die Kirche ihn schließlich nicht mehr ignorieren konnte.” On gloves as ‘trademark’, see also: Van Osselaer, Rossi, Smeyers and Gabel, *Wonde(r)*, 37.

selection and creation of the image and – on the level of distribution – a canalization of the mass of images.<sup>16</sup>

The media campaigns around Padre Pio and Therese Neumann both started at the beginning of the twentieth century, and this might create the impression that the commodification and impact of the media on the popularity of a stigmatic are a quite recent phenomena. There were, however, ample examples of earlier cases in which “living saints” were deemed marketable commodities, as we can find references to such commodifications in previous and sometimes lesser known cases of stigmatization. One such example is that of the fourteen-year-old Karoline Beller (1830–?, 1845). When she first started to draw people’s attention, a local bookshop owner had 500 copies of her image printed and also published a booklet on her. Unfortunately, the young girl confessed to being a fraud and all of the images and books were subsequently confiscated.<sup>17</sup>

A similar and most probably one of the most extreme examples of commercial investment in a stigmatic is the case of the Belgian Catharina Vingerhoedt, “Heilig Trientje van Stabroek” (1855–1932). When her stigmata (c. 1900) started to attract the interest of visitors, a merchant from Antwerp decided to invest in her case. He first convinced his son to marry a good (and wealthy) friend of Trientje who lived next door to her. After the marriage, the merchant built a sanctuary there, including a Lourdes style grotto and some small shops selling rosaries and the image of Trientje. The parish priest, alarmed by what he saw, warned the episcopal authorities and told Trientje to no longer receive visitors. Her “cult” seems to have diminished after that even though she continued to “die” every Friday.<sup>18</sup>

The examples above were primarily cult-related. It is important to note that not all “products” that developed around the stigmatics had a devotional purpose. The sensational aspect of the visible wounds and the ecstatic body seems to have also held sufficient appeal for non-devotees to be willing to pay to see a version of the exceptional bodies for themselves. One of the most telling examples are the wax statues of some of the most famous stigmatics: the Belgian Louise Lateau (1850–1883) and the German Therese Neumann (1898–1962). Neither of these statues was on display in a religiously inspiring setting, with Louise Lateau’s image on display in an anatomical museum in

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16 Krass, “Stigmata,” 378; Krass, “Kontrollierter Gesichtsverlust,” 80 (on 6 April 1924: letter to all Capuchin cloisters: forbidding pilgrimages, or any writings or talk about him in public or the spread of his image).

17 On her case, see Chapter 3, and Muhs, “Die Stigmata,” 124.

18 Langley, *Elfde gebod*, 139–154; Cornelissen, “Trientje,” Geerts, “Een Stabroekse Pseudo-heilige.”

Liverpool and later in Louis Tussaud's Wax Museum in Blackpool.<sup>19</sup> In the case of Therese Neumann, in September 1927, the staff of the police station (Gendarmeriestation) of her hometown of Konnersreuth reported that "the Neumann was – with entrance fees – put on display as a wax figure for the Oktoberfest in Munich." To make the situation even worse: wax figures of robbers and mass murders were on display next to her. The local legal authorities soon intervened and started a procedure to have her bust removed from the exhibition.<sup>20</sup>

The impact of publications and commercialized images on the popularity of a stigmatic was clearly also a topic of discussion in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>21</sup> Below, we will address some of the occasions in which the ecclesiastical authorities decided to intervene. Such moments of conflict inform us about the type of media against which they responded – allowing us to glimpse the nature of the media of the time – and their reasons for responding, their fears and points of reference.

## 2.2 *Monitoring an Expanding Field*

According to Gëzim Alpion and others, fame underwent important denotative and connotative changes as early as in the first half of the seventeenth century with the emergence of newspapers. From the nineteenth century onwards,

19 For the wax figure of Louise Lateau on display as a curiosity in an anatomical museum in late nineteenth century Liverpool, see "Something like a miracle: Louise Lateau," *Descriptive catalogue of the Liverpool Museum (1877?)*, 47–48 (The collection moved to Blackpool in 1938 and was on display in Louis Tussaud's Wax Museum). On such wax figures and their exhibition in museums and at fairgrounds, see Ebenstein, *The Anatomical Venus; Kermis of kennis*. On the response to celebrity stigmatics like Louise Lateau and stigmata in general in the British Empire, see the ongoing PhD project of Kristof Smeyers.

20 "dass die Neumann auf dem Oktoberfest in München gegen Eintrittsgeld als Wachfigur zur Schau ausgestellt ist." StA, 4169 Bezirksamt Tirschenreuth, Schreiben der Gendarmeriestation Konnersreuth an das Bezirksamt Tirschenreuth, 24/9/1927; StA, 13038 Regierung der Oberpfalz, Kammer des Innern, "Das Geschäft um Konnersreuth," *Grenz-Warte*, 1/10/1927 (nr. 117).

21 Polemical press coverage in general will not be addressed in this chapter. For this topic, see Chapter 6. On the influence of such press coverage on the visibility of the stigmatic, see the files on Barbara Pfister in ABSp, Bischöfliches Ordinariat, Älteres Archiv, Nr. 197, letter of Pfarrer F. Weber, 14/1/1891 to the Bishop; letter of Pfarrer Joh. Stamer. Similarly, one of the devotees of the German stigmatic Anna Henle (1871–1950) warned her correspondent not to inform Friedrich Ritter von Lama about her case, for "Annele should not become popular and Ritter von Lama, a zealous promotor of such cases, writes whenever he gets his hands on something." ("Annele dürfe nicht populär werden, u. Ritter von Lama ein eifrigere Förderer solcher Sachen schreibt, wenn er so etwas in Händen hat darüber.") BSB, Nachlass Lama, Friedrich von (1876–1944), Ana 445, Schachtel 2, Brief 5/1/1938, letter to Schmegler.



thanks to the development of technologies such as the “dye-plate, photography, telephone, phonograph, the roll film, radio, motion pictures,” being “famous in the industrialized world gradually came to mean mainly being in the public eye.”<sup>22</sup> For our focus here, it is not only important to look at the type of celebrity that these media developments created, but also to study the impact of such developments on lived religion.

Episcopal interference in the media of new “cults” was nothing new. As Urte Krass has shown, attempts to control specific media in order to hinder the development of a cult have been reported in relation to other eras as well (e.g. woodcut prints of the new child martyr Simon of Trente, 1472–1475, in the fifteenth century).<sup>23</sup> What was new, however, was the diversity of “products” and the scale of the reception. News travelled fast and far, and images, booklets and even periodicals on the stigmatics could be produced on a massive scale at relatively low cost.<sup>24</sup> This also meant new challenges for the ecclesiastical authorities involved. They intervened regularly, and because of the public character of these cults and the enthusiasm for them, so did the public authorities.<sup>25</sup>

Many of the images, texts and other means had devotional purposes and were meant to stimulate religious enthusiasm surrounding the stigmatic and her wounds. As such, it is no surprise that the ecclesiastical authorities of Münster responded to the “fast and wide” circulation of lithographs (Fig. 5.1) depicting the drops of blood from the crown of thorns of the German stigmatic Theresia Winter (stigmata 1844) and the booklet on her visions called *Die Dornenkrone mit Biblisch-katholisch-kirchlichen Auslegungen oder das zeigende und zeugende Zeichen in Dorsten bei Münster in Westphalen* (*The crown of thorns with biblical-Catholic-ecclesiastical explanations or the demonstrating and edifying sign in Dorsten near Münster in Westphalia*).<sup>26</sup> Given its religious content, they complained to the public authorities, arguing that the

22 Alphonse, “Media,” 541. On the material aspect of this celebrity culture, see Van der Linden, “Medals,” 23, “The rise of a public sphere shaped by print culture made new notions of celebrity and notoriety possible. As the century progressed, the rise of a consumer culture and technical innovations – such as the mezzotint printing technique and transfer printing, which allowed images to be printed on ceramics – meant that this culture of celebrity took also a more distinctly material turn (with actors figuring on snuffboxes, tiles etc.)”

23 Krass, “Stigmata,” 380.

24 For this change in the production process (e.g. mechanization of printing and the spread of wood-pulp paper) and its implications, see Stieg Dalton, *Catholicism*, 206.

25 Margaret Stieg Dalton has addressed the Catholic views on censorship in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, focusing primarily on questions of morality, Stieg Dalton, *Catholicism*, 207–209.

26 Dorsten, Verlag von Franz Ahn.

booklet should never have been approved by the government's censor.<sup>27</sup> They wanted to stop "the manifold irritations that were created by the brochure that had been spread fast and wide in such a reckless and unlawful way" and remove both Theresia Winter and her father confessor (who was responsible for the publications) out of sight of the public. They asked "in the interest of the Church [...] that the further spread of the brochure would not take place."

In Theresia Winter's case, the verdict was negative, but even when the episcopal authorities were not completely opposed to the stigmatic and what she represented,<sup>28</sup> too much attention could still be deemed problematic and potentially negative with respect to any ambition of turning the "living saint" into an official canonized one after her death. This seems to have been the case in 1877 when the Bishop of Tournai ordered the return of all photographs of the Belgian stigmatic Louise Lateau (1850–1883). Interestingly, the Bishop had permitted that particular photoshoot himself in order to have photographic documentation of the case (portraits and photographs of the ecstasy), but later feared that commercial misuse could be made of the series by the people who had been involved.<sup>29</sup>

The episcopal authorities, however, not only responded to media that had an outspoken religious purpose. In fact, as several interventions concerning the popularity of Theresia Neumann might show, the ecclesiastical authorities seemed to have feared the impact of entertainment based on the phenomena just as much. For example, in October 1927, the archdiocese warned the government of Oberpfalz and Regensburg concerning a play about Konnersreuth that was about to be staged by the Süddeutsche Volksbühne in Uffenheim, and which had been announced as "new and sensational." It was described as certain to damage the confessional peace and to be regarded as "gross mischief" and a "performance [that] is certainly only intended to serve commercial goals and its own needs."<sup>30</sup>

27 Münster, LAV NRW. Innere Verwaltung, Oberpräsidium Münster, 123. Tätigkeit des Franziskanerpaters Heinrich Gossler, Fol.63: letter of Gen.Vik. 15/2/1846.

28 "Die vielfältigen Aergernissen, welche diese so unvorsichtiger als unrechtmässiger Weise schnell und weit verbreitete Broschüre bewirkte" "im Interesse der Kirche [...] dass die fernere Verbreitung der Broschüre nicht stattfinden möge." Münster, LAV NRW. Innere Verwaltung, Oberpräsidium Münster, 123. Tätigkeit des Franziskanerpaters Heinrich Gossler, Fol.63: letter of Gen.Vik. 15/2/1846. On the symbolic function of the stigmatic for political causes, see Chapter 6, on their religious meaning see Chapter 3.

29 On this episode, see Van Osselaer "The Affair."

30 "[...] ein allgemeines Verbot dieses Theaterspieles erlassen, da dies Stück sicherlich den konfessionellen Frieden gefährdet und als grober Unfug bezeichnet werden müsse. Seine Aufführung soll doch gewiss nur gewinn- u. selbstsüchtigen Zwecken dienen." StA, 13038 Regierung der Oberpfalz, Kammer des Innern, Das Erzbischöfliche Ordinariat Bamberg

Interest in the stigmatics often went beyond the local region and sparked enthusiasm in other dioceses and countries as well. When exponents of the “foreign” stigmatic cults were imported into other dioceses, the bishops of the receiving diocese could respond – and they did. In February 1931, the *Konnnersreuther Sonntagsblatt* created unease beyond Therese Neumann’s own diocese. Although there was interest in the stigmatic nationwide (and beyond), when the owner of a bookshop in Trier decided to include the new periodical in his selection, the local episcopal authorities forbade him:<sup>31</sup> “Since the ‘Konnnersreuther Sonntagsblatt’ concerns itself with the events in Konnnersreuth in an exaggerated way, we have to make a negative response to your demand for publicity for the periodical. We also discourage you from spreading such literature, as it influences the population in an unhealthy way.”<sup>32</sup>

Albert Angerer, creator of the *Konnnersreuther Sonntagsblatt*, heard of this verdict and wrote to the Trier episcopal ordinariate himself.<sup>33</sup> He claimed that he could not understand why they would not want to fight the irreligious press with a Catholic publication that had been submitted to ecclesiastical censorship and had been approved by the ordinariate of Regensburg.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, he did not accept the reason that the Trier diocese gave for its rejection (that there were already three Sunday newspapers),<sup>35</sup> asking whether it did not have more to do with their own stigmatic in Bickendorf. Perhaps they were afraid that by introducing this Sunday newspaper, the interest in this local case might be

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an die Regierung von der Oberpfalz & Regensburg, K.d. I. Regensburg. Betreff: Die Vorkomnisse in Konnnersreuth, 22 October 1927. In this respect they resembled the actions of the public authorities concerning the play, “Therese Neumann oder das Wunder von Konnnersreuth.” StA, 13038 Regierung der Oberpfalz, Kammer des Innern, Bezirksamt Burglengenfeld an die Regierung der Oberpfalz und von Regensburg, Kammer des Innern, in Regensburg, Betreff: Therese Neumann von Konnnersreuth, Berichtstatter: Bezirksamtmann Fritzsche, 26 November 1927; 16 February 1928: Strafanzeige; Bezirksamt Burglengenfeld an die Regierung der Oberpfalz und von Regensburg, Kammer des Innern, Regensburg, 14 July 1928.

31 The *Konnnersreuther Sonntagsblatt* existed alongside another weekly paper: StA, 13038, Regierung der Oberpfalz, Kammer des Innern “Die Konnnersreuther Zeitung”, Volkswacht f. Oberpf. U. Niederb., 21 October 1927, Nr. 242.

32 “Da das ‘Konnnersreuther Sonntagsblatt’ sich in überspannter Weise mit den Konnnersreuther Vorgängen befasst, haben wir auf Anfrage uns gegen die von Ihnen gegebene Reklame für dieses Blatt erklären müssen. Wir raten auch Ihnen von der Verbreitung solcher Lektüre ab, weil durch diese die Bevölkerung in ungesunder Art und Weise beeinflusst wird.” BAT, B111.12, 10 Bd.3f, letter to Josef Först, 23 February 1931.

33 BAT, B111.12, 10 Bd.3f, letter Albert Angerer, Waldsassen (Bayern) 12 March 1931.

34 BAT, B111.12, 10 Bd.3f, letter Albert Angerer, Waldsassen (Bayern) 12 March 1931.

35 BAT, B111.12, 10 Bd.3f, letter Albert Angerer, Waldsassen (Bayern) response to the letter of Angerer 12/3/1931 “braucht nicht revidiert zu werden 4 February 1932: to Gen.Vik.” by the Schriftleiter of the K.S.

rekindled, he conjectured.<sup>36</sup> The Trier Vicar General did not budge, claiming that they had the right to teach their own devotees and pronounce their views on newspapers. He admitted that it was true, however, that the Bickendorf case made the situation precarious and that this had also been the reason for forbidding a series of lectures on Konnersreuth.<sup>37</sup> Similar motivations also played a part in the decision of the archdiocese of Munich-Freising to forbid a series of lectures on Konnersreuth in November 1928. The correspondence explicitly mentioned that the decision had everything to do with the Bavarian bishops' attempts to reduce the number of visitors to Therese Neumann, and that this was why they "could not permit such promotional lectures silently mobilizing mass visits."<sup>38</sup>

As this overview shows, the ecclesiastical authorities responded to all types of cultural products (including booklets, images, theatre, periodicals and lectures) for various reasons, such as safeguarding the confessional peace and countering ideas that were not in line with religious teachings. What is most important for our discussion here, however, is that by forbidding lectures or the publication of a periodical and the circulation of photographs, they wanted to deflect the interest of the people and avoid accusations of commercialization (just as Therese Neumann did when she pleaded her case in court). The previous examples might create the impression that the episcopal authorities only reacted to products that had a potential commercial aspect, but this was only part of the story.

"Stigmatics" were religiously meaningful to the faithful, and the promotional campaigns that developed around them therefore also fit the visual and material logic of a Catholic culture in which relics played an important role. As such, it is telling that the Archbishop of Mechelen, Du Rousseaux, reported to the Vatican in August 1883 that devotional cards with drops of blood from Louise Lateau were circulating, with the signature of her parish priest vouching for their authenticity, and he asked what he could do about this.<sup>39</sup> Moreover,

36 BAT, BIII.12, 10 Bd.3f, letter Albert Angerer, 16 February 1932.

37 BAT, BIII.12, 10 Bd.3f, letter to Albert Angerer 20 February 1932.

38 "[...] deshalb nicht dulden, dass durch solche Reklamevorträge stillschweigend zum Massenbesuch aufgefordert wird." AEM, Nachlass Faulhaber, 5945 (1926–32): Therese Neumann von Konnersreuth, Anna Nassl, letter R. Hindringer to Mayrhofer, 15 December 1928. The archdiocese of Bamberg had made a similar decision concerning a series of public lectures on Konnersreuth that could only have "bedauerliche Folgen" among the gullible audience. StA, 13038 Regierung der Oberpfalz, Kammer des Innern, Das Erzbischöfliche Ordinariat Bamberg an die Regierung von der Oberpfalz & Regensburg, K.d. I. Regensburg. Betreff: Die Vorkommnisse in Konnersreuth, 22 October 1927.

39 Archives of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (ACDF), Archivum Sancti Officii Romani (SO), Stanza Storica (St.St.), Lateau, C4F 1, report Du Rousseaux, "Louise Lateau" added to letter 4 August 1883.

the fame of Louise Lateau was not only built on the many publications and images of her, but also on the “relics” that were circulating among the faithful that were deemed powerful.

In the following, we want to look at how the fame of these women built on their image as a “stigmatic”, addressing two ways in which this fame was established. Given the significance attached to the visibility of the wounds and the ecstasy of the stigmatics (as discussed in Chapter 3), and the important role that visual representations played in the discussions of their precursors,<sup>40</sup> we will examine: (1) the visual promotional material and (2) the practices that developed around the blood relics (such as the devotional cards of Louise Lateau mentioned above).

### 3 Capturing Corporeal Mysticism

#### 3.1 *Portraying Stigmatics: The Creation of a Type and “True” Image*

Although fame is almost by definition linked to a specific individual, focusing solely on the individual aspect would provide only a fragmented view. Therese Neumann, Louise Lateau and the others were famous because they were “stigmatics” and it is this aspect of their fame that interests us here. How did it feature in their promotional campaigns? How was it visualized? In studying this visual aspect caution is needed. As we pointed out in the previous section, not all stigmatic-related “products” had a religious goal, and it is not always possible to define exactly what the motivation was for their creation. Since it is impossible to cover the whole visual production of this period,<sup>41</sup> we will focus on images that were meant for a broader audience (rather than, for example, drawings included in diaries or letters),<sup>42</sup> and more specifically on the images that depicted the stigmatics as religiously meaningful (e.g. in contrast to caricatures).<sup>43</sup> We study the pictures of the canonical stigmatics in which they were presented “as stigmatics” (rather than images of them in a normal state) and that were (or at least could have been) produced on a larger scale (such as woodcut prints, lithographs and photographs/postcards) as part of

40 Davidson, “Miracles,” 103: “Artistic representation played an important role in the diffusion of the theme of Francis’ stigmata, and opposition to the stigmata often took the form of opposing such presentations or mutilating those that already existed.”

41 For example, depictions of houses, rooms, churches, family pictures.

42 See, for example, Kadoc, *Jezuïeten*, 4.2.1.9. Archief van het provinciaal bestuur. *Spiritualiteit en devotieel leven*, 2261: report on Anna Katharina Emmerick (1813).

43 On caricatures, see the next chapter.

a promotional campaign. To be marketable and religiously meaningful, they needed to be specifically recognizable as a stigmatic.

Studies on the representation of stigmatization have primarily focused on St Francis and Catherine of Sienna and have discussed the visibility of their wounds, the logic of the stigmatization (mirroring or imitating Christ's wounds) and the role of such images.<sup>44</sup> While there seems to be little doubt that the iconography of St Francis influenced the twentieth-century representation of Padre Pio (similar scenery, pose),<sup>45</sup> St Francis and Catherine of Sienna do not seem to have played a similar role as models for the visual representation of "our" stigmatics. In the depiction of the medieval saints, the moment of stigmatization was a recurring theme,<sup>46</sup> with rays of light emerging from a crucifix and marking the saint's body. When we look at the pictures of three of the nineteenth-century canonical stigmatics that were circulating during their lifetime, it is not this moment that is represented; rather, we see them on a chair or in bed – as *grabataires*<sup>47</sup> – with the furniture indicating a domestic setting.<sup>48</sup> By not focusing on the moment of stigmatization and instead showing the viewers the stigmatic in the intimacy of her home with visitors present, the producers were visualizing an actual visit to a stigmatic. In a way, this iconographic tradition presented the modern stigmatic as approachable and recognizable since many of the viewers would be familiar with this type of setting. Moreover, images such as these showed how the divine could intervene in everyday life.

The prominence of the stigmata in these pictures tallies with the popular perceptions of sanctity, in which wonders and their corporeal manifestations

44 Belting, "Saint Francis"; Vauchez, "De la stigmatisation," 16.

45 Krass, "Stigmata," 376.

46 See e.g. Savelsberg, *Franziskus*.

47 Depicting the stigmatics as bedridden, as "grabataires," enhances the similarity of their cases with those of the other miraculous bodies: the nineteenth-century fasting women who were also depicted lying in bed (Sarah Jacob, the Welsh fasting girl, Mollie Fancher). Nevertheless, while inedia was often attested to in relation to our stigmatics, it is clear from these pictures that the stigmata were considered the central feature. On the fasting girls, see Vandereycken, *From Fasting Saints*; Jacobs Brumberg, *Fasting Girls*.

48 Louise Lateau's representation changed from her sitting on a chair to lying in bed (when she became a *grabataire*). For Anna Katharina Emmerick, see e.g., "Lewald hatte auf die Kappe das Bild der Seligen, wie sie stygmatisiert im Bette gesehen wird, geklebt. Solche Bilder habe ich schon viele gesehen; sie sind zu Lebzeiten der Cath. Emmerich oder bald nach ihrem Tode gemacht und beweisen die Beruhmtheit, welche sie schon damals hatte," Gedenkstätte Anna Katharina Emmerick (GAKE), "Abschrift" Dokumente über die Sachen aus der Nachlassenschaft der gottsel. Anna Katharina Emmerick, p.32 nr.88. See also the images on display in the Gedenkstätte in Dülmen and the drawn copy included in Wegener, *Das wunderbare innere und äußere Leben* (1912), 339.

played a central role.<sup>49</sup> When we look at the woodcut prints of Anna Katharina Emmerick that were created during her lifetime or shortly after her death (in 1824), the imitative stigmata on her hands and feet and the figurative stigmata (crosses on her chest) immediately draw attention (Fig. 5.2). To achieve this effect, the sheets are pulled back (so we can see the bare feet and wounds) and the stigmata on the chest are even visible through her clothes.<sup>50</sup> In this respect, the pictures are similar to those of Maria Domenica Lazzeri (1815–1848, stigmata 1834), where we also see her bare feet.<sup>51</sup> (See Chapter 1, Fig. 1.5).

Contrary to Lazzeri's image, however, in the Emmerick prints, the iconography includes explicit references to the supernatural, with the all-seeing eye in the top-right corner and the Y-shaped crucifix (said to have inspired one of the figurative wounds on Emmerick's chest) in the middle as a mediator between God and the stigmatic. The stigmata are stylized versions of the wounds, shown as round dots. Comparing these pictures with those of Louise Lateau in the late 1860s (shortly after her stigmatization in 1868), we can detect some similarities. In a print by R. Landucci (Fig. 5.3), the young stigmatic is depicted sitting on a chair, with the domestic context even more explicit (with a window, open door, the silhouette of the village in the background and people entering the room), and the eyes of the beholder are immediately drawn to the stigmata, from which blood is dripping in dramatic red. Similar to Emmerick's pictures, there are rays of light hinting at the supernatural origin of the wounds.<sup>52</sup>

Landucci's print is quite similar to the picture on display in the Museum of Louise Lateau in Bois d'Haine: both carry the title "Miraculous souvenir of Louise Lateau" ("Souvenir miraculeux de Louise Lateau") (Fig. 5.4), but in the latter picture the only visitor is a cleric. The divine inspiration is made even more explicit, as a cloud and small angels with wings hint at heaven.<sup>53</sup> In both pictures, Louise Lateau is shown barefoot, with the visible, bleeding stigmata on her feet and blood dripping from a side wound through her dress, while her eyes are turned towards heaven as if in ecstasy. The iconography resembles that of another "Souvenir miraculeux de Louise Lateau," created by Dosssey

49 Krass, "Stigmata," 365. At this point in the book, it almost seems self-evident that the visible stigmata were such a dominant feature in the representation of the stigmatics, but it should be remembered that the importance of the visual stigmata in the nineteenth century stood in stark contrast with the previous era, as was the prominence given to stigmata as a defining feature of a specific subset of mystics.

50 Scholz, "Anna Katharina Emmerick," 23–24.

51 Höcht, *Träger*, 332, 337.

52 Antwerp, Ruusbroec Institute, Collectie Engelen, Heiligen en begenadigden, Anna-Louiza Lateau, H4, R. Landucci, Rue Blaes – a lithographer and book printer active in the second half of the nineteenth century.

53 Picture on display in Maison Louise Lateau in Bois-d'Haine.

in 1869 (Fig. 5.5), but while the bare feet, bleeding side, eyes and domestic setting are comparable to the other two pictures, there is no hint of the divine origin: no rays of light, angels or clouds.<sup>54</sup> Both the Dosseray and the Landucci prints include a brief text helping us “read” the image. They are quite similar and include a laudatio on Louise Lateau’s active involvement in the care for the sick during the cholera epidemic, as well as a reference to the numerous visitors and encouragement for the viewers to go and see for themselves.

Do the similarities between the promotional pictures of the stigmatics imply that all prints looked the same? No, but we do want to argue that by the start of the twentieth century, an image could easily be read as a picture of a “stigmatic” if it featured a woman with blood on her face, or bloody wounds, in a domestic setting, and perhaps even in the presence of visitors.<sup>55</sup> By the start of the twentieth century, a visual stereotype of a “stigmatic” had developed that had little to do with the ways in which St Francis or Catherine of Sienna had been depicted in the previous centuries.<sup>56</sup> This does not mean that there were no phenomenological differences. On the contrary, there seem to have also been subtypes, with the head bandages of Anne Katherina Emmerick becoming a model for the representations of Viktoria Hecht and Clara Jung, for example; and the kneeling and praying position of Maria von Mörl possibly inspiring the image of Anna Henle and its selection for the front cover of one of her semi-hagiographies.

Although the fame of these women built largely on their reputation as a stigmatic and they were visualized as such, their celebrity and/or saintly status was linked to their individual case. As a result, the images usually mentioned more specific information on the stigmatic, such as the name and sometimes the date, location or a short description.<sup>57</sup> The pictures also included hints; for example, it was certainly not a coincidence that the miraculous souvenirs of Louise Lateau referred to her work as a seamstress through the inclusion of a sewing machine (in the Dosseray and Landucci prints) or a needle cushion. In fact, the caption for the Dosseray image of Louise explicitly indicated that

54 “Souvenir miraculeux de Louise Lateau” (Dosseray 1869). Bruxelles, Koninklijke Bibliotheek (KBR), Prentenkabinet, S.III.102188, Dosseray 1869.

55 See e.g. the pictures of Rosalie Put, Anna Henle and Clara Jung and others in Höcht, *Träger*.

56 On the development of a basic type, see Priesching, *Maria von Mörl*, 407 and 273, on the institutionalization of von Mörl as a process of typification (Typisierungsprozess).

57 For example, the two images of Anna Katharina Emmerick on display at the Gedenkstätte in Dülmen carry the caption “Jungfer Anna Catharina Emmerich zu Dülmen,” “Jungfer Anna Catharina Emmerich gewesene Chorschwester zu Dülmen.”



it had been made based on real life observation.<sup>58</sup> The idea of a “true likeness” seems to have raised the status of the images, and the public’s eagerness for these seems to have only increased when new techniques such as photography developed, combined with the celebrity snapshot culture.<sup>59</sup>

There was, however, also another benefit of the new visualization technique. Photography was seen as a documentary medium,<sup>60</sup> with photographs considered able to capture the “proof” that in the previous decades could only be observed by those visiting the stigmatics and seeing their wounds and ecstasy with their own eyes.<sup>61</sup> The logic of the representation of the wounds changed throughout the period under discussion. In the Anna Katharina Emmerick prints, the stigmata were dots, an indication rather than a depiction of the wounds.<sup>62</sup> The photographs of Padre Pio circulating after 1919 were characteristic of the bloody realism befitting an era of publicity and public relations.<sup>63</sup> Film had the same documentary reputation and in Therese Neumann’s case, some contemporaries suggested that the reason why the German stigmatic refused a lucrative deal for a movie about her was the fear that she might be found to be a fraud.<sup>64</sup>

The “true” image, however, was not always what one wanted to see. A well-documented example of such a case are the photographs of Louise Lateau taken in 1877. They are one of the earliest examples of contemporaries attempting to capture the ecstasy of a stigmatic on camera. When the Jesuit father who took the photographs later commented on this session in his diary, he mentioned that he had felt ill at ease when he saw her in ecstasy, acting “like an automaton,” in a manner “reminiscent of a nervous illness.” He preferred

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58 “Reproduit d’après nature par Dosseray.”

59 On the evolving photographic techniques and the discussions that resulted from these new developments (e.g. the snapshot), see Giloi, “Copyrighting,” 419.

60 On this, see the comments by Berlanstein (“Historicizing,” 71), “The presumed authenticity of the photo was greater than that of earlier engravings or lithographs and allowed fans to feel that the ‘owned’ their star.”

61 In Padre Pio’s case, the photographs in themselves became proof of the saintly character of the Capuchin friar: rumour had it that if he did not want to be photographed, he was not visible in the picture, Krass, “Kontrollierter Gesichtsverlust,” 82.

62 See the comment by Freeman on the depiction of the stigmata of St Francis up until the modern period, there is no striving for realism, “eerder aangeduid dan afgebeeld,” Freeman, “De verbeelding,” 199.

63 Freeman, “De verbeelding,” 199; Krass, “Stigmata,” 375.

64 BSB, Westermayr, Johann Baptist (1884–1950), Theologe, Ana 338, Akten und Korrespondenzen über die Stigmatisierte Therese Neumann von Konnersreuth, iv. Unsignierte Texte, Texte von Dritten, Konnersreuth und Silva-Mello, post 1936, p. 7. Therese Neumann u. die Filmgesellschaft.

the stigmatic of Bois d'Haine in her natural state.<sup>65</sup> His unease is understandable when we realize that such photographs could be read as proof of hysteria rather than sanctity. In studies such as the *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière*, Louise Lateau was mentioned as an example of certain stages of a hysterical fit (such as the crucifixion pose).<sup>66</sup> The photographed, "real" ecstasy of Louise Lateau was not an image the promoters wanted to spread. However, this never really had to be discussed, for – as noted above – the bishop recalled all of the photographs.

Thus, it appears that the development of new techniques (photography, film, autotypy) not only allowed for important changes in communication (speed and scale) but also enabled shifts in the use of images to create the reputation of the stigmatic. We should be careful, however, not to make this a dominant, all-eclipsing narrative. The format and shape of the wounds of some of the stigmatics were documented with great care before the development of photography.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, it seems as though different markets had other expectations. At least that is the impression that an article by a contemporary of Therese Neumann leaves. The author noted that the American press not only included an image of the "miracle girl" (as in Germany), but also a close-up of her hands, with a clear view of the stigmata, apparently a "really American practical" thing to do.<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless, whatever differences these changing visualization techniques entailed, what remained constant throughout the period was the prominent role of the stigmata in these popular depictions of the stigmatics that were not authorized by the Church. As we will see below, this was less likely to be the case in the "official" circuit.

### 3.2 *Collectable and Venerable: Prints, Blood and "Relics"*

Focusing on the visualizations might create the distorted impression that the fame and the concomitant image of a stigmatic was imposed upon the faithful – as intended by producers and promoters. This structuralist view omits two important players: the stigmatic and the devotee. As this book concerns the

65 Van Osselaer, "The affair."

66 "[...] comme une automate [...] cela ressemblait tant à une maladie nerveuse [...] Vénération donc, me disais-je, pour Louise naturelle": "Mémoire sur les photographies de Louise Lateau," Kadoc, Jeziüeten, 4.2.6, 1595 Ernest Lorleberg, 14475 "Mémoire sur les photographies de Louise Lateau avec supplément de quelques-unes de ses paroles dites à l'auteur." See Hervé Guillemain on the clergy's pathologizing of strange religious phenomena, *Diriger les consciences*, 138; Didi-Huberman, *Invention*, 33; Gilman, *Seeing*, 164, and "The image," 352.

67 Detailed drawings of the wounds in books such as Imbert-Gourbeyre, *Les Stigmatisées*, II, 35.

68 "[...] echt amerikanisch-praktisch" article Erwein von Aretin November 1927 cited in Köppl, *Mystik*, 53.

stigmatics as a type rather than the individual personalities, we will not address their own influence on the construction of their image here, but we will address the devotees' role in the process. Sanctity is in the eyes of the beholder, as Caciola noted,<sup>69</sup> and so is fame, we might add. The ways in which the faithful engaged with the visual and material for example, enhanced and supported their fame as celebrities and "living saints" (we will address the post-mortem situation further below). In addition, a photograph of Padre Pio was meaningful to the devotees because it carried his image, but it was their use of it (while praying for a sick person) that enhanced the fame of the Capuchin friar – when thaumaturgical powers were witnessed.<sup>70</sup>

Thus, if we want to gain an idea of how the fame of the stigmatics worked and how their image as stigmatics was constructed, we need to look into what people did and felt.<sup>71</sup> As Gordon Lynch suggested, referring to the work of David Morgan (2009): "The study of religious visual culture is therefore not simply the analysis of religious images, but the religious practices of seeing, through which these images become a part of people's everyday worlds."<sup>72</sup> Scholars such as Urte Krass have shown how the large scale on which devotional pictures (e.g. a devotional card with a photograph of Padre Pio) were distributed did not diminish their cult value. Their mass production did not undermine the aura of the stigmatic and they were often used in prayer.<sup>73</sup> This use of visual means in prayer illustrates the importance attached to the visual dimension in Catholicism and thus reflected devotional traditions.<sup>74</sup>

Here we want to focus on an aspect of the stigmatic's cult that seems to have been a particular feature of their popularity: the bloody imprints of their wounds and the practices that developed around these "relics."<sup>75</sup> In these practices, the tactile element was as important as the visual. As we noted in Chapter 3, the faithful perceived the visible wounds of the stigmatic as proof of the supernatural. The importance attached to the visual not only resulted in

69 Caciola, "Through a Glass," 304.

70 On the thaumaturgical images of Padre Pio, see Krass, "Kontrollierter Gesichtsverlust," 82.

71 Morgan, "Introduction," 11–12: "Belief should not be understood as coming only before such things as the veneration of relics or the ecstatic drudgery of pilgrimage, but as being constituted by them. People do what they want to believe. They make belief in things they do."

72 Lynch, "Religion," 550.

73 Krass, "Stigmata," 377. What Eva Giloi has noted about the photographs of the German Emperor also seems to be true for those of our stigmatics, the widespread use of the picture did not undermine their aura, Giloi, "Copyrighting," 41.

74 Borutta, *Antikatholizismus*, 183 (on the importance of visual culture).

75 On the importance of material culture for the study of lived religion, see e.g. Morgan, "Materiality," 56, 59.

their prominent presence in the depictions of the stigmatics, but also in what has been called a “fetishism” of the wounds.<sup>76</sup> In the case of the German stigmatic Theresia Winter, this interest materialized in a publication called the *Die Dornenkrone* (*Crown of Thorns*, 1846) – a booklet that, as we discussed at the beginning of the chapter, was condemned by the Church authorities – and in a lithographic reproduction of the bloody imprints that Theresia Winter’s head wounds left on the bandages (Fig. 5.1).<sup>77</sup> A Berlin newspaper criticizing the “ultramontane scheming” of Theresia Winter’s spiritual guide (who published the print), mocked the commercial aspect of the production of the images, meant for those “who could not go and see for themselves.”<sup>78</sup>

The article was clearly written from an anti-Catholic perspective, but it does seem to hold some truth. The imprints of the wounds indeed functioned as an additional form of confirmation and as some sort of “multiplier” of the experience. At least, this is what we can assume after comparing this material output to that of other cases. While it was quite exceptional to have a lithograph made of the bloody imprint, the practice of collecting the imprints of the bloody wounds had already been attested to in earlier cases. Contemporaries of Anna Katharina Emmerick (stigmata 1812), for example, described how when the news of her stigmata spread, and people started talking about her, those who were lucky enough to go and see her in Dülmen brought back confirmation: “They showed imprints on canvas (Leinwand), silk and paper of the crucifix [the figurative wound on her chest, TVO] and the wounds and sent them to those who could not see and hear for themselves.”<sup>79</sup> The imprints were not necessarily obtained with the permission of the stigmatic. Therese Neumann, for example, notified the gendarmes of Konnersreuth in 1927 that an unknown individual had entered her room, lifted her head scarf and “rubbed something on her cheek and the heart wound, probably a piece of cloth to get some blood.” When the intruder attempted to do the same thing with her feet, the stigmatic started kicking. Apart from this, so she said, she was not able to defend herself

76 Vinken, “Via crucis,” 21.

77 “Die Ansicht eines Tuches vom 2 Januar 1846 mit 115 Blutropfen,” LAV NRW, Staatsarchiv Münster, Kreis Recklinghausen, nr.36. Dornenkrone Lithografie.

78 LAV NRW, Staatsarchiv Münster, Kreis Recklinghausen, nr.36. Königliche privilegierte Berlinische Zeitung, 31 January 1846, pp. 5–6 (Fol.67b).

79 “Man zeigte Abdrücke auf Leinwand, Seide und Papier von dem Kreuze und von den Wunden und verschickte sie an diejenigen welche nicht selbst sehen und hören konnten” LAV NRW, Regierung Münster, nr. 17709, Die Wundergeschichte der stigmatisierten ehemalige Chorschwester Emmerich zu Dülmen, 19 February 1817: “Auch etwas über die Erscheinungen bei Anna Catharina Emmerich, Chorschwester des aufgehobenen Klosters Agnetenberg in Dülmen.”

because of the fatigue she always felt on Fridays.<sup>80</sup> Why would someone be so keen on gathering such souvenirs?

This eagerness tallies with the perception of the stigmatic as a “living saint” and the stigmata as a “wonder.” Touching the stigmatic’s body with some fabric not only produced a souvenir of the visit but also a kind of “relic.”<sup>81</sup> The mediating power that the stigmatic was thought to possess could “rub off” on whatever material (paper, textile, etc.) had touched her body. As we noted above, devotional cards with the blood of Louise Lateau were circulating in different strata of society (e.g. among domestic servants).<sup>82</sup> A letter of the Belgian queen Marie-Henriette on 28 September 1868, relates the illness of her son and how she had put “the imprint of the wounds of Louise Lateau on the heart of our beloved little patient. He united his sufferings with that of Our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross.”<sup>83</sup> Given the fact that this was a letter to the Archbishop of Mechelen, Cardinal Dechamps, and Louise Lateau was by no means a Church-approved saint and still very much alive at the time, it is rather remarkable. Such cards with drops of Louise Lateau’s blood continued to circulate during the rest of her “career” as a stigmatic.

It is interesting to note that a system of authentication also seems to have developed, with Louise Lateau’s parish priest signing the cards as proof of their authenticity.<sup>84</sup> In other words, these unofficial relics were approved by a

80 “[...] ferner mit etwas auf der Wange und auf der Herzwunde gerieben, vermutlich mit einen Tüchlein um Blut zu bekommen.” StA, 4169, Bezirksamt Tirschenreuth, Schreiben der Gendarmeriestation Konnersreuth an das Bezirksamt Tirschenreuth, n. 39: 26 February 27. She was also missing a prayer book, socks and the bandages for her feet, but the stranger had left a five mark note under her pillow as compensation, so there seems to have been no intention of stealing.

81 On the different types of relics, see Walsham, “Introduction,” 9–10.

82 Introductory letter from Du Rousseaux, 3 August 1883, and letter from Cmtsse de Liminghe, 26 June 1883 added to ACDF, SO, St.St., Lateau C4F 1, report by Du Rousseaux, “Louise Lateau” added to letter 4 August 1883.

83 “L’empreinte des plaies de Louise a été posée sur le cœur de notre cher petit malade. Il a uni ses souffrances à celles de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ sur la croix, et j’attends un mot de vous pour restituer l’image ensanglantée.” Kadoc, Archief Redemptoristen, Noord-Belgische Provincie 3.3.2.3. Victor Auguste Dechamps, 1477 Queen Marie-Henriette (1836–1902). Letters to Dechamps (1867–1882), letter of 28 September 1868.

84 It is unclear to what extent this was intended to mirror the circulation of “official” relics of “real saints” that had letters of episcopal authentication. When the newly appointed Bishop of Tournay, Mgr Du Rousseaux, wrote to Rome about the situation with Louise in 1883 (the year of her death), he complained about the small “industry” that had developed around the bloody relics: “We believe we need to signal a practice of the parish priest. He distributes images and pieces of cloth with the blood of Louise. On those images, he writes a few words and puts his signature [...] They also distribute images signed by Louise.” “Nous croyons devoir encore signaler une pratique de M. le curé. Il distribue

member of the clergy. The cards and textile fragments continued to circulate after her death. A small collection of miracles attributed to her refers to the healing power of these relics in stories from 1888 and 1914.<sup>85</sup> Most of the imprints on the devotional cards and cloth were “mere” drops of blood. In some cases, however, the imprints were small “miracles” in themselves, with bloody drawings of objects such as a crucifix, a heart or the torture instruments used in Christ’s Passion.<sup>86</sup> As a sign of the “divine origin” of the wounds, they were cherished by the faithful long after the death of the stigmatic.

As the above examples have shown, the religious practices developing around the stigmatic were tactile as much as they were visual. A relic had to touch the body of an ill person in order to exert its powers, and it had to have touched the stigmatic first or have been marked with her blood. The spread of such relics enhanced the fame of the stigmatic, and if such relics proved to be powerful, the fame of the stigmatic grew.

#### 4 Creativity after Death

Until now, we have primarily focused on the ways in which the fame of the stigmatic as such spread during their lifetime. While we will address the post-mortem reception more elaborately in the Chapter 7 (on the response of the Vatican), in order to understand the visual and material aspects of the stigmatic cults, some elements must also be addressed here. With respect to the religiously inspired material, the post-mortem production and consumption of the stigmatic’s fame was quite similar to what occurred during her lifetime.

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des images et du linge tachés du sang de Louise. Sur ces images, il trace quelques mots et appose sa signature. [...] On distribue aussi des images signées de Louise.” Introductory letter from Du Rousseaux, 3 August 1883, and letter from Cmtsse de Liminghe, 26 June 1883 added to ACDF, SO, St.St., Lateau C4F 1, report by Du Rousseaux, “Louise Lateau” added to letter 4 August 1883.

- 85 Archives du Séminaire de Tournai (AST) – Louise Lateau, 1.4. Faveurs et guérisons obtenues par l’intercession de la Servante de Dieu, LL (manuscrit original écrit à Boscombe le 29 janvier 1938). Pages écrites à l’adresse des amis de Louise et des paroissiens de Bois-d’Haine, e.g. in 1888, and 1914; on the thaumaturgical power of a cap worn by Anna Katharina Emmerick with large drops of blood: BAM, Emmerick/Hensel, 40. Stimmen, nr. 11. Witwe Gertrud Hilgenberg, November 1887.
- 86 See e.g. ABSp, Dokumentation Barara Pfister S5, M7 Protokolle über Zeugenaussagen, the testimony of Schw. Cäcilia vom h.H. Jesu, geb. Schäfer von Wattenheim, 26/71938, Carmel. Himmelsporten. See e.g. such figurative imprints in: Imbert-Gourbeyre: *Les Stigmatisées*, II, 45: Palma Maria Matarelli (“photogravure”), 103–104.

If the enthusiasm for the stigmatic endured beyond her death, as, for example, in the case of our canonical stigmatics, relics continued to circulate and be used in prayer. New types of relics also developed, such as body parts or material souvenirs from the stigmatic's grave (such as sand or leaves), which became part of the "circuit."<sup>87</sup> Miraculous cures attributed to the stigmatic's relics were carefully listed in the hope that one day they might be used in processes of beatification or canonization. These often resulted in ex-votos on the grave of the stigmatic, a religious material culture that confirmed the saintly status of the stigmatic.<sup>88</sup> In addition, images and books on the stigmatics continued to circulate and were used in promotional campaigns.<sup>89</sup>

As had been the case during their lifetime, the episcopal authorities monitored what was written and intervened when they deemed this necessary.<sup>90</sup> The commercial aspect also remained important, as did the idea of the "true image." One concise example of both aspects is the story of a bankrupt photographer who, 50 years after the death Anna Katherina Emmerick (1774–1824), wanted to make good use of this renewed enthusiasm. He used an image of Maria Magdalena Postel (from Paris, founder of the Christian schools of charity) on a card, adding the line: "true representation of the divine ('gottselige') A.K.E., born on 8 September 1774 in Flamske near Coesfeld, died on 9 February 1824 in Dülmen." According to a commentator in 1924, this forged image shows how the devotion to Emmerick was still very much alive at that time and was popular enough to be commercially exploited.<sup>91</sup>

In a few cases, for example those of Louise Lateau and Anna Katharina Emmerick, the devotees' ambition to raise the status of the stigmatic from a popular saint to one officially approved by the Catholic Church stimulated the

87 See, for example, BAM, Emmerick/Hensel, 40. Stimmen, nr. 7. Wilhem Overhage; for the history of the head of Louise Lateau as a relic, see: <https://stigmatics.wordpress.com/2018/09/23/how-to-hunt-a-skull-in-five-steps/>.

88 See the graves of e.g. Louise Lateau (previous condition), Clara Jung.

89 See e.g. the tour by Hunkemöller to promote the case of Anna Katherina Emmerick in the United States. One of his means of campaigning was the circulation of a small booklet about her. BAM, Emmerick/Hensel, 45. Kaplan Hunkemöllers Werbereise für Katharina Emmerich in Nordamerika 1923/24: Korrespondenz, Zeitungsausschnitte u.a., c. 1921–1924.

90 See e.g. the censoring of the post-mortem books: ABP, OA Varia I 17 b 11 Maria Beatrix Schuhmann, PAN, letter Wilhelm Maier, 10 August 1914; AAM, Verschijningen, 20. Lucie Schmit-Klaer; rejection Van Roey of manuscript: "Vie de Madame Klaer, glorieuse Servante de Dieu."

91 "Wahre Abbildung der gottseligen A.K.E., geboren am 8. September 1774 zu Flamske bei Coesfeld, gestorben am 9. Februar 1824 zu Dülmen." EBAP, Nachlass Louise Hensel (1798–1876), Lehrerin, cutting, Hans Hüer, "Das Bild der Anna Katharina Emmerick", *Westf. Heim. Kal.* 72 (Münster), 66–68.

creation of a small museum.<sup>92</sup> On display were, and still are, the objects that had once belonged to the stigmatic, but also the cultural products (books and pictures), such as the those discussed above. Recreating, or rather staging, the stigmatic's home (Maison Louise Lateau in Bois d'Haine) or room (Gedenkstätte Anna Katharina Emmerick in Dülmen), these buildings are yet another aspect of the stigmatic's promotional campaign. The carefully selected objects, texts and images support the idealizing narrative, but also show the care with which the devotees preserved the objects that had once belonged to the stigmatic. In the case of the Emmerick Gedenkstätte, the creation of the collection is exceptionally well documented. A catalogue, started in the late 1870s when the first initiatives were taken, includes a small biography explaining many objects in the collection. The preservation of these often inexpensive, everyday objects, such as a coffee cup, shows the depth of the veneration of the previous owners and the ambition of the promoters to once again use material culture to stimulate the fame, here the *fama sanctitatis*, of the stigmatic.<sup>93</sup>

This does not mean that the "image" of the stigmatic remained the same. As we will see in the Chapter 7, the popular perception of sanctity, with its focus on the miraculous, differed from those aspects the Catholic Church wanted to promote as "saintly" – which focused on heroic virtues and an exemplary life. In the case of Louise Lateau, the images that set the tone in her post-mortem promotion were nothing like the three versions of the "miraculous souvenir" we discussed above. There were two main images that played an important role in her post-mortem visualization. One was based on a portrait painted by Alexandre Thomas in 1876, which showed the stigmatic of Bois d'Haine in a calm state contemplating the crucifix, with only a small trace of the stigmata. In 1885, only two years after the death of Louise Lateau, a portrait based on that painting was included in *Souvenirs de Bois d'Haine*, and variations on the theme can be found on her devotional cards. The other image of her that recurred was a "natural" photograph (one of the outcomes of the 1877 session discussed above), in which she is wearing gloves. The stigmata do not immediately catch the eye in either of these visual traditions.<sup>94</sup>

92 Van Osselaer, "Valued."

93 GAKE, "Abschrift" Dokumente über die Sachen aus der Nachlassenschaft der gottsel. Anna Catharina Emmerick.

94 For a similar change in tone and also some creativity with older images, see the changing representation of Taigi and Canori Mora, who developed from mystics into good Catholic housewives, see Van Osselaer, Rossi and Graus, "Virgin mothers."



## 5 Conclusions

A report by the Konnersreuth Gendarmerie on Therese Neumann of 1 July 1926 notes how the German stigmatic was venerated by many of her visitors (80–100 a day, among which were many foreigners, especially Americans), who often asked for her signature on pictures (“Bildchen”). Therese, so the report read, no longer signed them, as her parish priest had forbidden her to do so.<sup>95</sup> This points to a practice which exemplifies celebrity cult, the hunt for autographs of famous people. In this case, the person in question was a German stigmatic, perceived as a “miracle girl” by many of her contemporaries. The phenomenon of autograph hunting adequately illustrates how the practices surrounding celebrities and “living saints” could be quite similar, as was the material and visual culture surrounding them. The devotional and commercial frequently overlapped and caught the eye of the episcopal and public authorities.

The hunt for Neumann’s signature also shows how the creation of fame was a co-constructive process; the “consumers” were as actively involved as the “producers” of the promotional material – in fact, a distinction between the two in this regard might appear arbitrary. As the lawsuits concerning her photographs illustrate, it was difficult to control one’s public image. New media, such as photography, offered new possibilities but also brought new challenges, given the speed with which images could be produced, the number of copies that could be made and the scale at which they could be circulated. The fame of a stigmatic could easily travel beyond the local region, and the concomitant cultural output during their lifetime seems to have built largely on the image of the stigmatic as a “living saint” with bodily gifts, and on a fetishism concerning the stigmata. The images of the stigmatics that we discussed in this chapter as well as the devotional cards and textile fragments with their blood, built upon and confirmed the idea of the stereotypical “stigmatic,” the young woman with visible stigmata who received visitors at home. However, the emphasis changed after the death of the stigmatic, for, if those left behind wanted official recognition for their “living saint,” the mystical epiphenomena had to be minimized. For political campaigns, however, as we will see in the next chapter, the stigmata were allowed to feature in all their glory.

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95 StA, 13038 Regierung der Oberpfalz, Kammer des Innern, Gend. Station Konnersreuth an das Bezirksamt in Tirschenreuth, 1 juli 1926: Betreff: Die Erscheinungen an der ledigen Schneidermeisterstochter Theresia Neumann von Konnersreuth. Similarly, it is telling that one of the schemes that criminals developed relating to the massive interest in Therese Neumann was the forgery of her signature on the photographs of her that were circulating.



FIGURE 5.1 “Die Ansicht eines Tuches vom 2 Januar 1846 mit 115 Blutropfen”  
 LANDESARCHIV NRW ABTEILUNG WESTFALEN (MÜNSTER)  
 STAATSARCHIV MÜNSTER, KREIS RECKLINGHAUSEN, NR.36.  
 DORNENKRONE LITHOGRAFIE (CC-BY-NC-SA)

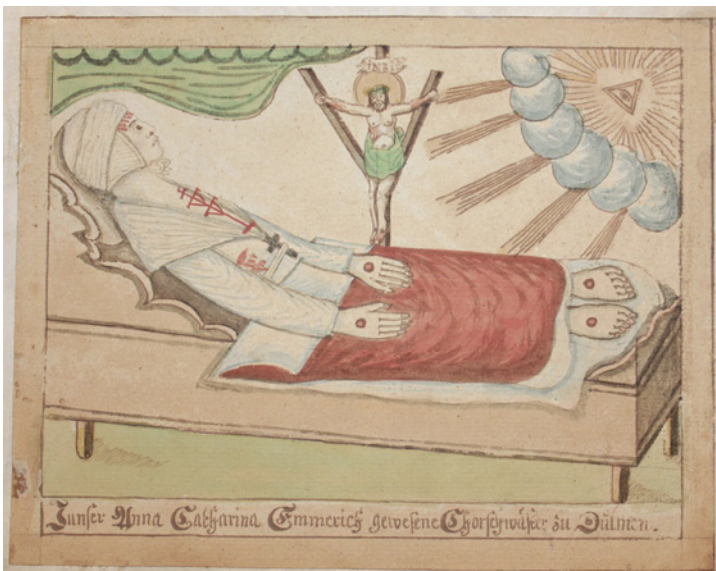


FIGURE 5.2 Anna Katharina Emmerick (woodcut print)  
 DÜLMEN, GEDENKSTÄTTE ANNA KATHARINA EMMERICK.  
 © EMMERICK-BUND E. V., DÜLMEN



FIGURE 5.3 “Souvenir miraculeux de Louise Lateau” (Landucci)  
 ANTWERP, RUUSBROEC INSTITUTE, COLLECTIE ENGELLEN, HEILIGEN EN BEGENADIGDEN, ANNA-LOUIZA LATEAU, H4. © RUUSBROEC INSTITUTE



FIGURE 5.4 “Souvenir miraculeux de Louis (sic) Lateau”  
BOIS-D’HAINE, MAISON LOUISE LATEAU. © MAISON  
LOUISE LATEAU, PHOTOGRAPH AUTHOR



## Stigmatics, Politics and the Law

### *On Fake Stigmata and “Self-styled” Sanctity in Spain and France*

*Andrea Graus*

The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the establishment of constitutional monarchies and new political regimes during the formation of the modern nation-states. The conflicts between secular and Catholic authorities involved in this process had an impact on the manifestation of the allegedly supernatural. During such crises, stigmatics sometimes endorsed or, at least, indirectly supported, politico-religious movements with their visions and prophecies. However, in general, it was others, both advocates and opponents, who gave meaning to these mystical experiences, shaping them to symbolize particular hopes and anxieties. In these cases, the apparition of the holy wounds or an increase in the stigmatic's suffering were perceived as a response to situations such as the passing of secularization laws or attacks on the Vatican. The word “perceived” is key because, as mentioned, the symbolic meaning of stigmatics was generally an external attribution by another.

In previous chapters, we have seen how devotees of stigmatics deemed them “living saints,” or how their suffering was perceived as productive in atoning for the sins of humanity. This attribution of meaning, however, could also be negative, condemning stigmatics as “self-styled saints” and “mystic tricksters” who were allegedly attempting to advance a political agenda with their “fake stigmata” and their alleged reputation of holiness. This chapter analyses this other side, showing how cases that could have merely remained within a narrative of popular devotion and Catholic mobilization were turned into stigmatic fraudsters and political symbols of various kinds.

Our focus will be nineteenth-century Spain and France, in specific moments of tension between the secular authorities and Catholicism, where two celebrity stigmatics of the era came to be perceived as “political dangers” to the modern State. The two stigmatics concerned were the Spanish Franciscan nun, Sor Patrocinio (religious name of María Josefa de los Dolores Quiroga y Cacopardo, 1811–1891), and the French peasant, Rosette Tamisier (1816–1899).

As we will see, the anticlerical liberals and republicans in power attacked their reputation for sanctity and the authenticity of their stigmata in an attempt to neutralize their effects in the public sphere. To achieve this, lawsuits

were filed in each case and anticlerical campaigns were staged against them. The objective of the authorities was to transform these women into famous examples of “stigmatic fraudsters”; that is, in these cases, they were portrayed as someone trying to pass themselves off as a saint through the miracle of the stigmata, with the alleged goal to exploit the credulity of the people and gain power and fame. In both cases, the secular attacks were successful, with Sor Patrocinio and Rosette Tamisier both gaining a reputation as frauds in their own country as well as abroad. They were stereotyped to a point that their names continued to be evoked in the anticlerical press to discredit stigmata and similar examples of miraculous phenomena after them. This notion was thus opposed to the idea of a “true stigmatic” that, as seen in the previous chapter, was being constructed on the basis of promotional images of nineteenth-century canonical stigmatics.

The cases of Sor Patrocinio and Rosette Tamisier may have functioned quite independently as particular examples of fraud in their respective countries; however, their stories were connected in public opinion across Europe after the French stigmatic was convicted for faking the holy wounds and other miracles in 1851, just as had occurred to Sor Patrocinio in Spain in 1836. According to certain French figures such as the journalist and writer Wilfrid de Fonvielle, the secular repression and condemnation of Tamisier was inspired by “the memory of sister Patrocinio’s adventures, another self-styled stigmatic, whom the Spanish magistrates themselves had come to be convinced of imposture and deceit.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, in looking at the French and Spanish cases together, we can identify analogous dynamics in combatting politically meaningful stigmatics in the public sphere and presenting their cases as fraud on the European level.

In analysing the political symbolism and public debunking of these stigmatics, we are dealing with their public personae. Studies in public personae, notably represented by scholars such as David Marshall, have focused on the contemporary era, with an emphasis on mass media and the online public self.<sup>2</sup> Although they were nineteenth-century stigmatics, Sor Patrocinio and Rosette Tamisier also had a kind of “mediatized identity”<sup>3</sup> often linked to celebrities. Their fame and public personae were built up in the daily press and via *vox populi* testimonials, usually from important figures; for example, Sor Patrocinio received the backing of the Spanish royals, who considered her

1 Fonvielle, *La physique des miracles* (1872), 191. “Peut-être Rose Tamisier aurait-elle pu échapper à l’humiliation temporaire qu’elle dut accepter comme une épreuve d’en haut. / Mais ce qui la perdit sans doute aux yeux des juges de la cour d’Aix, ce fut le souvenir des aventures de la sœur Patrocinio, une autre stigmatisée prétendue, que les magistrats espagnols eux-mêmes venaient de convaincre d’imposture et de supercherie.”

2 Marshall, “Persona studies,” 164–165; Marshall, Moore and Barbour, “Persona as method,” 291.

3 Marshall, “Monitoring persona,” 116.

a “living saint.”<sup>4</sup> After gaining a place in the public sphere, news about them circulated in the national media and abroad. The reports of “miracles” and the trial of Rosette Tamisier were repeated in the French, Spanish, British, Italian, American and Dutch press and possibly elsewhere.<sup>5</sup> The media attention attracted more advocates and opponents to the story, turning the discussion of their alleged sanctity and holy wounds into a public debate.

While for many stigmatics who came into conflict with secular authorities the sources are scarce and do not permit an in-depth analysis, in these cases we do find archival material, as well as some exceptional primary sources, including separate accounts of the lawsuits and anticlerical satirical poems and cartoons about them.<sup>6</sup> The fact that some of the sources were published abroad shows the international interest in these stigmatics. When combined, this material gives us an impression of how these stigmatics ultimately became political symbols and famous examples of “feigned holiness” and “fake stigmata” in Europe, as opposed to how they no doubt wanted to be perceived. To examine how this occurred, we begin by discussing the relationship between stigmatics and political symbolism, offering a summary overview of nineteenth and early twentieth-century Europe. We then analyse how Sor Patrocinio and Rosette Tamisier came to be perceived as political symbols in the battles of the “two Spains” and “Frances.” Finally, we show how their public reputation as stigmatic fraudsters and self-styled saints was constructed in the courtroom in their own countries and by the anticlerical press in Europe.

## 1 Stigmatics and Political Symbolism

Scholars such as David Blackbourn and William A. Christian have shown how apparitions, visions and other extraordinary phenomena become loaded with

4 Graus, “Wonder nuns,” 572–577.

5 See, e.g., “Cours et tribunaux. Justice criminelle. Affaire Tamisier,” *Le Constitutionnel*, September 7, 1851, 2–3; “Trial of Rose Tamisier, the miracle worker,” *London Daily News*, September 8, 1851, 3; “Crónica religiosa,” *El Ancora*, January 14, 1851, 219–220; “Rose Tamisier,” *Vaderlandsche Letteroefeningen* 53 (1853), 425–428; “Miraculous picture in France,” *The American and Foreign Christian Union*, 2 (1851), 105–106; “I miracoli di Rosetta Tamisier,” *Gazzetta del Popolo*, September 15, 1851, 2–3.

6 As for the archival material, the diocesan dossier and other archival material concerning Rosette Tamisier can be found in: Archives Départementales de Vaucluse (ADV), Avignon, 2Mi732, 13J47. The cause of beatification of Sor Patrocinio can be consulted in the Archivo Diocesano de Toledo (ADT). Documents from politicians or the royal family concerning her can be found in the Archivo General de Palacio (AGP) and the Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN), both in Madrid.



political meaning during times of turmoil that menace Catholicism.<sup>7</sup> Moments of crisis bring opportunities for change, and supernatural phenomena linked to such crises can influence the way a situation evolves. Just like the seers at Marian apparition sites, the Catholic vocation of several stigmatics in Europe coincided with episodes of violence and political upheaval.<sup>8</sup> As a French journalist remarked ironically with regard to Sor Patrocinio in 1872: “it is not enough to have the stigmata, one must have them on time.”<sup>9</sup>

Although the political and religious constraints that turned stigmatics into symbols are diverse and need to be properly contextualized for each case, we can identify some common denominators. As with modern apparitions and Catholic apocalyptic prophecies, there is a link between the alleged political oppression of Catholics and the perceived symbolic meaning of stigmatics. Their symbolism is often connected to some of the great perceived “enemies” of Catholicism, namely, anticlerical liberalism and republicanism in the nineteenth century, and communism in the twentieth century.<sup>10</sup>

As we will see in detail, the cases of Sor Patrocinio and Rosette Tamisier are exemplary of the Catholic struggle with liberals, republicans and the ambitions of the modern nation-state. In the same period, other “supernatural” manifestations, such as the apparitions of La Salette (France, 1846), were also reactionary and became the target of anticlerical movements.<sup>11</sup> In the twentieth century, stigmatics such as the German Therese Neumann (1898–1962) and her Konnersreuth circle became a symbol of anti-communism, while in Italy the Venerable Edvige Carboni (1880–1952) offered herself up as a victim soul for the conversion of communists.<sup>12</sup> The apparitions of Fatima (Portugal, 1917) are another well-known instance of this.<sup>13</sup> The political symbolism of the stigmatics that we mention below also fit into these “paradigmatic” narratives concerning the perceived great adversaries of Catholicism.

7 The apparitions of Marpingen (Germany, 1876) cannot be understood without taking into consideration the context of the *Kulturkampf*, nor can those of Ezkioga (Spain, 1931) without referring to the Second Spanish Republic. See, respectively: Blackburn, *Marpingen*, 36–42 and 113–120; Christian, *Visionaries*, 3–8.

8 Kane, “Stigmatic Cults,” 109–114. See Chapter 1, Charting stigmatics.

9 Fonvielle, *La physique des miracles*, 192, “Ce n’est pas tout d’avoir des stigmates, il faut qu’on les ai à temps.”

10 Blackburn, *Marpingen*, 37; Christian, *Visionaries*, 8.

11 Lalouette, “La Salette,” 119–120.

12 For Neumann, see O’Sullivan, *Disruptive power*, 106–107. For Carboni, see Peña, *Eduviges Carboni*, 14–16, 31–32. See also the biography of her in the Stigmatics online database and the appendix.

13 Barreto, “Rússia e Fátima,” 500–503.

While becoming a political symbol, the role that the stigmatic took up might be deemed active or passive, sometimes changing from one to the other.<sup>14</sup> In a passive role, it was the suffering body of the stigmatic that seemed to speak for itself and no further meaning, through visions or prophecies, was needed to become a symbol. For example, the stigmatic Maria von Mörl (1812–1868) was called the *Estatica* for her absorbed state of contemplation and suffering, which was interpreted as a symbol of the conflict between the dual national and religious identities after the return of South Tyrol to Austrian rule.<sup>15</sup> In Belgium, Louise Lateau (1850–1883) also spent part of her life in silent suffering, and her case was taken up in Germany during the *Kulturkampf*, in which she was seen as a victim soul comforting German Catholics.<sup>16</sup>

Apart from the political meaning given to a stigmatic's suffering,<sup>17</sup> especially if it increased during a crisis that menaced Catholicism, the mere apparition of the wounds was sometimes deemed to be a sign of the difficulties faced by the Church. For example, in France, Madeleine Parsi (1884–1926) was stigmatized after her Benedictine convent was secularized, along with many other religious institutions, following a law of 1901. In Spain, the nun Lucila González (1908–1936) started reliving the Passion in the same month as the proclamation of the Second Republic, which was followed by a violent anticlerical wave and the burning of religious buildings by the communists.<sup>18</sup> As in the cases mentioned above, bodily phenomenon occurring during a particularly challenging time was sufficient to ascribe a political meaning to the stigmatic.

The examples cited might give us the impression that stigmatics who became political symbols did not engage more directly in public. However, on many occasions we find that, in addition to bearing the wounds during difficult times, some stigmatics had visions or made prophecies about political outcomes in Europe. While, in theory, visions and prophecies are “divine revelations” and do not necessarily represent the stigmatics' wishes or opinions, such phenomena were nevertheless perceived or promoted as a form of public engagement on their part. In this vein, the stigmatics were deemed to endorse the causes about which they prophesized, and thus became “active” symbols of a political nature.<sup>19</sup> Being almost exclusively women, their cases fit into a long tradition

14 Pahud de Mortanges, “Irre,” 213–214. On the shift from one type to another, see: Van Osselaer, “Stigmata.”

15 Gadaleta, “Rosmini,” 168–170.

16 Lachapelle, “Between miracle and sickness,” 87; Van Osselaer, “Stigmata,” 598–602.

17 On suffering and stigmatics, see Chapter 3.

18 See, respectively, Canoni, *L'Histoire extraordinaire*, 23–29; Baumert, *Beata Lucila González María de Jesús. Adoratrix*.

19 On mysticism and public engagement, see Sheldrake, “Christian spirituality.”

of political visionary mysticism and womanhood within Catholicism.<sup>20</sup> The stigmatic, Catherine of Siena, to mention a well-studied example, participated in politics through her mystical experiences during the War of the Eight Saints (1375–1378) between the papacy and the Florence coalition.<sup>21</sup>

With regard to nineteenth-century stigmatics, scholars such as Hilaire Multon have analysed the apocalyptic prophecies spread in Italy and France by Palma Matarrelli (1825–1888) and the stigmatics of the Third Republic, many of which we mentioned in Chapter 4. Their messages fuelled the ultramontane Catholic hope for a monarchic restoration to challenge anticlerical liberal and republican governments, thus favouring the return of the *Ancien Régime* and the triumph of the Holy See after the loss of temporal power.<sup>22</sup> The prophetic function exercised by some stigmatics continued during the twentieth century, especially in the face of traumatic events such as the two World Wars, during which, as historians such as Owen Davies and Matthew Brower have shown, there was an increase in spiritual anxiety and a consequent rise in supernatural manifestations.<sup>23</sup> By way of example, we can name the stigmatized “holy nuns” Elena Aiello (Italy, 1895–1961) and Ramona Llimargas (Spain, 1892–1940), who had visions regarding the destiny of the dictators Mussolini and Franco, respectively, and fuelled the Catholic fear of a “communist conquest.”<sup>24</sup>

Whether acting as “active” or “passive” symbols, the stigmatics’ supporters, as well as their opponents, contributed to their political meaning, and this needs to be properly contextualized in each case, as will be done when considering the cases of Sor Patrocínio and Rosette Tamisier below. For the moment, it is

20 Kagan, *Lucrecia's dreams*, 4; Maître, *Mystique et féminité*, 296–297.

21 On this issue see, Luongo, *The saintly politics*, chapter 5. The scholar Grace Jantzen has interpreted the case of Catherine of Siena and other female mystics as a form of empowerment within the Christian “patriarchy.” Jantzen, *Power*, 216–223.

22 Kselman, *Miracles*, 130–140; Multon, “Prophétesses,” 131–137; Sandoni, “Political mobilizations,” 28–34. For Marie Bergadieu (alias Berguille) in particular, see Lachapelle, “Prophecies,” 57–62. In the same period, in Belgium, Louise Lateau also made some apocalyptic prophecies, thus abandoning her silent role and becoming involved in the liberal and ultramontane Catholic conflict following the death of Pius IX in 1878, Van Osselaer, “Stigmata,” 604.

23 Brower, *Unruly spirits*, 93; Davies, *A supernatural War*, 1 and especially Chapter 3 for spiritualist phenomena and the First World War.

24 Aiello prophesized Mussolini’s fall, while during the Spanish Civil War, Llimargas transmitted the result of the battles to Franco before they had been fought. The latter was allegedly done through bilocation. See, respectively, París García, *El tiempo*, 231; Fernández Rodríguez, *Ramona María del Remedío Llimargas Soler*, 53–57. In Germany, some accounts suggest that Therese Neumann intended to collaborate with the Third Reich, and rumours suggest that the Nazis feared her “supernatural power,” but there is no documentary evidence. O’Sullivan, “Disruptive potential,” 193.

also worth noting that the political symbolism of stigmatics may continue after their death, when they can no longer play a personal role. For example, Father Yannik Bonnet, a devotee of the French stigmatic Marthe Robin (1902–1981), spoke about a prophecy he allegedly received from Robin when he visited her at home in the 1970s, and which concerned a “French renewal.” In recent years, Father Bonnet has promoted this prophecy in his blog and at public conferences to stimulate the Catholic hope that France would become “the daughter of the Church” again. This hope became associated with a potential triumph of Marine Le Pen during the 2017 presidential elections, when Robin’s prophecy was interpreted in Catholic internet forums as a sign that the extreme-right Front National party would win. The postulators of Robin’s cause of beatification publicly denounced Father Bonnet, who died in 2018 and whose blog has now been removed.<sup>25</sup>

As this brief overview shows, the political symbolism of stigmatics took form within particular contexts and could be negative or positive, or more frequently, both; for example, the stigmatics of the French Third Republic were idealized by legitimists and ultramontanes, who found comfort in their alleged expiation of the “sins of France,” but they also attracted the hatred of the republicans, as had previously occurred in the case of Rosette Tamisier.<sup>26</sup> In the following section, we examine the political symbolism ascribed to this stigmatic, as well as to Sor Patrocínio, within the “two Frances” and “Spains.” As we will see, in becoming celebrity stigmatics and “active” symbols in the public sphere, they became a political threat to the modern State that, according to the liberals and republicans in power, needed to be neutralized.

## 2 Sor Patrocínio, Rosette Tamisier and the “Two Spains/Frances”

Although Sor Patrocínio was a religious and not a lay woman, her case fits the typical stigmatic type of the era with regard to her visibility, the importance of the holy wounds for her profile, and how people became increasingly interested in her. Her stigmatization occurred in 1829 after joining a Franciscan

<sup>25</sup> The blog was: [www.yannikbonnet.com](http://www.yannikbonnet.com) (last accessed 16 February 2019). A lecture he gave on this subject: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A4piXouhYbM> (accessed 16 February 2019). On this subject, see also an interview of Bernard Peyrous, until 2017, the postulator of Robin’s cause of beatification: <https://www.martherobin.com/sa-vie/un-rayonnement-immense/des-propheties-de-marthe-robin-sur-la-france/> (accessed 20 November 2018).

<sup>26</sup> Sandoni, “Political mobilizations,” 20–24.

convent in Madrid.<sup>27</sup> The convent was said to be the object of generous donations from the aristocracy and the royals, who came to the monastery to meet the “holy nun.” In this vein, the convent also became a kind of “domestic setting,” where visitors could obtain “relics” or grace from the stigmatic.<sup>28</sup> Sor Patrocinio soon became popularly known as “the nun with the wounds” (“la monja de las llagas”).<sup>29</sup> This epithet was used in Spain and abroad, in countries such as France and the United Kingdom, where she was also referred to as “the bleeding nun” or “the nun of the Stigmata.”<sup>30</sup>

Twenty years later, Rosette Tamisier, a peasant woman from Provence, also became an internationally renowned stigmatic. Her chest was allegedly covered with figurative wounds representing a heart or a cross. The house in which she lived was given the name, “the Saint’s Inn” (“L’Auberge de la Sainte”), and bloody linen with the figurative stigmata started to circulate.<sup>31</sup> Another “miracle” that contributed to her fame was an alleged painting of the pieta that bled before her in the chapel of Saint Saturnin-lès-Apt. The phenomenon attracted hundreds of people from around France and abroad, who had the opportunity to meet the stigmatic.<sup>32</sup>

While other typical stigmatics in France would “succeed” Tamisier,<sup>33</sup> Sor Patrocinio would remain the most remembered stigmatic in Spain. In the press, some stigmatics (religious and lay) who appeared after her were deemed the “new Sor Patrocinio.”<sup>34</sup> Especially telling was the case of Therese Neumann a century later, whom the Spanish journals referred to as “the German Sor Patrocinio.”<sup>35</sup>

Unlike other celebrity stigmatics, however, the international reputations of both Sor Patrocinio and Rosette Tamisier were almost exclusively as frauds.

27 As well as stigmata, Sor Patrocinio experienced other extraordinary phenomena, from diabolical attacks to levitation, to miraculous healing, apparitions and the gift of prophecy.

28 On this issue see Chapter 4.

29 Most biographies of Sor Patrocinio include “the nun with the wounds” in their titles, since she was very well known by this epithet. The most popular biography is by Benjamín Jarnés, entitled *Sor Patrocinio. La monja de las llagas* (1929).

30 See, among others, Manning, *Spanish pictures drawn with pen and pencil* (1870), 83; “Foreign intelligence,” *Bury and Norwich Post*, October 31, 1849, 1; “Foreign news,” *Hertford Mercury and Reformer*, November 3, 1849, 1.

31 Anonymous, *Procès de Rose Tamisier (Miracles de Saint-Saturnin)* (1851), 3.

32 See, e.g., “Trial of Rose Tamisier, the miracle worker,” *London Daily News*, September 8, 1851, 3; “Crónica religiosa,” *El Áncora*, January 14, 1851, 219–220. Handkerchiefs imprinted with blood from the holy wounds have been preserved in the archives, 2Mi732, ADV.

33 See the stigmatics of the early Third Republic analysed in Chapter 4.

34 “Manojo de flores místicas,” *El Motín*, 2.20 (1882): 1–2.

35 See, e.g., “Otra vez Teresa Neumann, la Sor Patrocinio alemana,” *El Heraldo de Madrid*, October 21, 1932, 1.

It is difficult to find other stigmatics who became as renowned at the European level in public opinion. This international reputation was the consequence, on the one hand, of their respective trials – which we will examine below – and, on the other hand, of the fact that the stigmata and other miracles took place in the midst of political upheavals.

In Spain, Sor Patrocinio's stigmatization coincided with the death of the absolutist king Fernando VII and the First Carlist War (1833–1840). In this civil war, the liberal supporters of Isabel II, daughter of the king, were challenged by the Carlists, who supported Don Carlos, brother of the king, who was favourable to the *ancien régime*, and who took Sor Patrocinio under their wing. Rosette Tamisier bore the holy wounds at the end of the short-lived French Second Republic (1848–1851), which saw great tensions between the Bonapartists, who held power, and the Orleanists, who had been dethroned in the revolution of 1848. In this case, the stigmatic received the support of the ultramontanes who fought against the Republic.

As we can see, their stigmatization occurred during moments of change in the national regimes, and within the wider liberal and republican revolutionary waves of the 1830s and of 1848 in Europe.<sup>36</sup> In this context, their stigmatization was not perceived to be politically neutral, and the stigmatics themselves contributed to the growth of their symbolic meaning. Unlike the “passive” stigmatics, whose bodies seemed to speak for themselves, these women were active in stimulating the hopes of their supporters through alleged prophecies and further miracles. For example, Sor Patrocinio allegedly predicted the rise of Don Carlos, the absolutist pretender to the throne of Spain, while Rosette Tamisier's miracle of the bleeding painting became a form of Catholic propaganda in the ultramontane press.<sup>37</sup>

While Sor Patrocinio became the enemy of the liberals and came to represent the clash between liberalism and absolutism in Spain,<sup>38</sup> Tamisier's case is part of what James McMillan called a “longer-running *guerre des deux Frances*.”<sup>39</sup> The appellation of the “two Frances” was widely used at the time to differentiate between the liberal republican and the clerical factions. In 1905, the historian Paul Seippel offered the following definition: “What are these

36 Thus, although they took on symbolic meaning during particular national crises, these crises were part of larger revolutionary waves, in which other stigmatics acquired political meanings in their own homelands – for example, the stigmatics of the South Tyrol. Priesching, *Maria von Mörl (1812–1868)*.

37 Graus, “Wonder nuns,” 573; Marx, *Le péché de la France*, 283.

38 See, e.g., Jarnés, *Sor Patrocinio*, 101; Dom Liber (pseudonym of Charles Potvin), *Le faux miracle du Saint Sacrement* (Bruxelles: Adrian Campan, 1874), LVII.

39 McMillan, “Priest hits girl,” 77.

two Frances? Everyone can easily distinguish them: France of the Church and France of the Revolution, France of the Syllabus and France of the Declaration of Human Rights.”<sup>40</sup> The scholar Christopher Clark employed the same concept to write about the “two Spains” which were battling in Sor Patrocinio’s case, the “two Italys” or even the “two Romes”: that of the Vatican, and the other of the Italian kingdom.<sup>41</sup>

In becoming celebrity stigmatics, Sor Patrocinio and Rosette Tamisier also became icons of “the other” Spain or France: those advocating an absolutist monarchy and the temporal power of the Vatican, and opposing the secular and “progressive” ideals of the modern State taking shape in their country. The liberals and republicans in power responded to this and spoke about the danger of allowing the miraculous to influence the masses and State affairs. To this end, they denounced the alleged exploitation of the supernatural on the part of the stigmatics and their supporters. For example, Spanish liberals accused the Carlists and Sor Patrocinio of hindering liberal reforms and the establishment of a constitutional monarchy.<sup>42</sup> In France, the republicans argued that Rosette Tamisier collaborated with “religious jugglers” or “pious mystifiers” such as Louis Veuillot, the famous director of the ultramontane newspaper, *L’Univers*, who allegedly used the supernatural “to exploit the credulity” of the people.<sup>43</sup>

Furthermore, the political enemies of the stigmatics attempted to link their story with a denigrating idea of religious belief as a form of “superstition” or “fanaticism” – a term frequently used to describe Sor Patrocinio’s case.<sup>44</sup> They

40 Seippel, *Les deux Frances et leurs origines historiques* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1905), XII: “Quelles sont donc ces deux Frances? Chacun les distingue aisément: La France de l’Église et la France de la Révolution, la France du Syllabus et la France de la Déclaration des Droits de l’homme.”

41 Clark, “The new Catholicism,” 42.

42 See, e.g., Dos Amigos Filósofos (pseudonym), *Biografía de Sor Patrocinio, o sea la célebre monja de las llagas* (Madrid: Imp. de los Sres. Rojas, 1868), 63–64 and 80.

43 Émile de la Bédollière, “Partie politique,” *Le Siècle*, May 9, 1857, 1. On the role of Veuillot and *L’Univers* in the French context, see Hérisson, “Louis Veuillot.” In 1871, another famous stigmatic, the Italian, Palma Matarrelli, was said to be “in spiritual contact” with Veuillot while making Royalist prophecies about the future of France. About Matarrelli, Veuillot and Imbert-Gourbeyre see, letter from Louis Veuillot to Antoine Imbert-Gourbeyre, 10 June 1872, Correspondance et papiers de Louis Veuillot (1<sup>re</sup> série), NAF 24222, fol. 300–301, Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Richelieu); Imbert-Gourbeyre, *Les Stigmatisées*, II, 30.

44 See, e. g., Garrido, *L’Espagne contemporaine* (1862), 112; Jarnés, *Sor Patrocinio*, 101; Liber, *Le faux miracle*, LXVIII.

countered these notions with “modern” ideals of science and progress, which had a deep influence in nineteenth-century society.<sup>45</sup> For example, French republicans such as Émile de la Bédollière and Louis Jourdan, self-declared enemies of Louis Veuillot, compared the discoveries of science with Tamisier’s miracles, which, according to Jourdan, contributed “to maintaining the coarsest superstitions among the ignorant masses.”<sup>46</sup>

The arguments of religious exploitation and superstition were also recurrent in other “culture wars” of the era, where the stigmata, as well as other supernatural manifestations, acquired politically symbolic significance. For example, the liberals in Belgium and Germany attacked the Catholic priest and journalist Paul Majunke for allegedly exploiting Louise Lateau’s image as a victim soul to comfort German Catholics during the *Kulturkampf*.<sup>47</sup> In the case of apparitions, David Blackbourn argued that for nineteenth-century nation-state builders and their “modern” supporters, Marian apparitions were “instances of ignorance and superstition” that needed to be combatted.<sup>48</sup> Scholars such as Jacqueline Lalouette have shown how these discourses worked in cases such as La Salette (1846).<sup>49</sup>

Thus, from the point of view of the liberal and republican authorities involved in the building of modern France and Spain, there was a political need to repress Sor Patrocínio and Rosette Tamisier. Given the celebrity they had already achieved as stigmatics and potential saints-to-be, there was a need to attack their public personae. This was done using two powerful weapons: the law, where accusations of fraud and religious exploitation were presented in a formal manner; and the media, including the anticlerical press, the great ally of republicanism and progressive liberalism in Europe. We will later look at how the anticlerical press mocked the stigmatics in caricatures and satirical texts to denigrate their public personae. In the following, we examine how their public image as fraudsters began to be constructed in the secular courts of their respective countries, subsequently becoming internationally renowned.

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45 This contrast between “rational” or “scientific” knowledge and “superstitious” belief would be later taken up in the sociological thesis of disenchantment, contested, among others, by the scholar Egil Asprem. See Asprem, *The problem of disenchantment*, 4–8.

46 Article by Louis Jourdan in *Journal des débats*, 1857, cited in Veuillot, *Mélanges religieux*, vol. III (1860), 69–71, “entretenir parmi les masses ignorantes les plus grossières superstitions.” On Émile de la Bédollière, see Jean-Vaudin, *Gazetiers et gazettes* (1860), 212–214.

47 Van Osselaer, “Stigmata,” 602.

48 Blackbourn, *Marpingen*, 41.

49 Lalouette, “La Salette,” 129–131.



### 3 The Law and the Public Debunking of Stigmatics

Initiating a lawsuit in which the stigmata were involved was exceptional, usually reserved for those cases with a strong politico-symbolic meaning. Our research on hundreds of stigmatics has revealed a little more than a dozen instances where a stigmatic was tried or, at least, faced arrest and brief imprisonment. We must note, however, that the lawsuits or arrests were usually related to ordinary offences that did not concern their mysticism, or addressed other allegedly fraudulent aspects of their religious experience and not the stigmata.<sup>50</sup> For example, in 1926, in Corsica, the above-mentioned Madeleine Parsi was accused of calumny for using perfume to fake the sweet odour that saints emanate and defraud people using her pretence to holiness.<sup>51</sup>

The lawsuits against Sor Patrocínio and Rosette Tamiés were two of the very few cases in which stigmata were addressed in the secular courts.<sup>52</sup> Another known case involved the Alsatian, Catherine Filljung (1848–1915), a political prophet and stigmatic who became a symbol opposing the German annexation of Alsace-Lorraine (1871). She was tried in Germany in 1891 for allegedly faking ecstasy and the holy wounds.<sup>53</sup> Despite the echo that Filljung's case found in France and Germany, the most internationally renowned stigmatic trials were those of Sor Patrocínio and Rosette Tamiés. As with Filljung, the lawsuits demonstrate their political meaning, and that the stigmata – addressed in the courtroom – were relevant to their public personae.

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50 For a more general approach to how different mystical phenomena were translated into criminal charges in the nineteenth-century secular courts, including the three cases mentioned above, see Graus, "Mysticism."

51 Canioni, *L'Histoire extraordinaire d'Hélène Parsi*. Another example is the French stigmatic who was tried in France and Italy, the antipope Clément xv (Michel Collin, 1905–1974), but he was accused of being a swindle in his "Petit Vatican" in Clémery, and for insulting Pope Paul vi. See Delestre, *Clément XV*, 92. For information on this and other cases, see the keyword "lawsuit" in the Stigmatics database.

52 In the 1880s, the German woman, Sabine Schäfer, was imprisoned for ten weeks in Baden after a bottle of blood and an instrument that could produce the wounds was found under her bed. Another interesting trial is that of Bertha Mrazek (1890–1967, a.k.a. Georges Marasco), a Belgian stigmatic and *miraculée* who was tried in 1924 for obtaining money under false pretences and was sent to an asylum. In this case, however, it is not clear if the holy wounds were addressed in the trial, as no records survive. See biographies in the Stigmatics database and the appendix; as well as Thurston, *Surprising mystics*, 210–213; and Van Osselaer, "The many lives of Bertha, Georges and Jean."

53 See Catherine Filljung, v1-Q-62bis, Archives de la Province Dominicaine de France (APDF), Bibliothèque du Saulchoir. For a biography favourable to Catherine Filljung, see Ebel, *Sœur Catherine* (1929). For an unfavourable one, see Pelt, *La vérité sur Catherine Filljung* (1934).

The lawsuits confirmed their political symbolism from the moment they were initiated. In the Spanish case, the liberal governor of Madrid decided to initiate the lawsuit, while in the French case, it was the public prosecutor (*procureur de la République*) of Apt. In other words, they were both representatives of the governing establishment that the stigmatics supposedly challenged. To initiate the lawsuit, both men alleged that the stigmatic had caused the political turmoil in their country. The French public prosecutor called the outcome of Tamisier's stigmata and other miracles "too factious (*factieux*)" – that is, seditious or inciting acts against the established order – "to not have justice deal with it in the end."<sup>54</sup> Sor Patrocinio was directly accused of attempting to subvert the State with her alleged prophecies and simulation of the holy wounds. According to the accusation, these "impostures" could affect "the tranquillity of the State and the Throne."<sup>55</sup> In each case, the lawsuits followed the political narrative that, with their pretence to the supernatural, the stigmatics acted against the modern State.

The legal strategy of the public prosecutors backed liberal and republican intentions to present these cases as a form of religious exploitation, especially pointing to the issues of sanctity and the stigmata. In Spain, Sor Patrocinio and her religious community were accused of "trafficking" in the miracle of the stigmata. According to the prosecutor, the fraud was staged with the aim to "have a saint" in their convent and obtain donations from the aristocracy and the royals, who asked for "bloody relics" from the nun.<sup>56</sup> Similar arguments were advanced in France, where Rosette Tamisier was said to "pose as a saint" in order to receive money, jewels and clothes. To raise doubt about the stigmata, the public prosecutor said the wounds only appeared after Tamisier was visited by a member of a Catholic sect whose leader, the prophet Pierre-Michel Eugène Vintras, had been incarcerated a few years earlier for fraud.<sup>57</sup> The defence attorneys attempted to prove the women's innocence by arguing that they had been victims rather than co-conspirators in a religious plot.<sup>58</sup>

54 Letter of the public prosecutor of Apt, 1 January 1851, 2Mi732, ADV: "un trop factieux résultat, pour que la justice n'ait pas dû, à la fin, s'en préoccuper."

55 Anonymous, *Causa formada* (1837), inside cover page; Jarnés, *Sor Patrocinio*, 200.

56 Anonymous, *Extracto de la causa seguida a Sor Patrocinio* (1849), 80.

57 Anonymous, *Procès de Rose Tamisier* (1851), 20. See also letter of the public prosecutor of Apt, 1 January 1851, 2Mi732, ADV. On Vintras, see Maurice Garçon, *Vintras, hérésiarque et prophète* (Paris: Emile Nourry, 1928); Robert Ziegler, *Satanism, magic and mysticism in fin-de-siècle France* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 116–181.

58 Anonymous, *Extracto de la causa seguida a Sor Patrocinio*, 85; Anonymous, *Procès de Rose Tamisier*, 19.

To prove that the holy wounds were premeditated, and thus that the fraud was intentional, the public prosecutors relied on “expert testimony”; that is, scientists, usually physicians, were asked to analyse the facts based on their expertise. During the nineteenth century, expert testimony was only required during trials involving crimes such as murder, and it was unusual to use it in minor crimes such as fraud.<sup>59</sup> In the cases examined, therefore, calling for expert testimony was no doubt done to reinforce the belief in science and progress that permeated modernity. For the liberals and republicans in France and Spain this would further assist their representation of the stigmata and other miracles as a form of superstition. Two surgeons rejected the supernatural as an explanation of Sor Patrocinio’s wounds and two other physicians argued that Tamisier suffered from frequent and abundant menstruations, an argument frequently advanced to debunk the stigmata.<sup>60</sup> Expert testimony was also called upon in Germany to examine the wounds of the above-mentioned Catherine Filljung – who was deemed hysterical – which suggests it was perhaps a more common legal strategy in cases of fraud involving stigmatics.<sup>61</sup>

Ultimately, the sentences condemned the defendants to a combined total of 21 months in prison as well as a fine for Tamisier and relocation to a convent far from the Royal Palace for Sor Patrocinio.<sup>62</sup> After their condemnation, the two women came to represent the model of the “stigmatic fraudster”; of a

59 Eigen, “I answer as a physician,” 167; Watson, “Medical and chemical expertise,” 375–378.

60 A report on the expert testimony in Sor Patrocinio’s case appeared in the press, “Medicina legal,” *Boletín de medicina, cirugía y farmacia*, 3 (1836), 43. For the report on Tamisier, see Maurice Garçon, *Rosette Tamisier ou la miraculeuse aventure* (Paris: L’Artisan du livre, 1929), 78–79. In addition, in the case of Tamisier, a pharmacist debunked the miracle of the “bleeding painting” using a leech. See his report for the judge in Garçon, *Rosette Tamisier*, 89. For the argument of menstruation and the stigmata, see e.g., Alfred Maury, “Les mystiques extatiques et les stigmatisés,” *Annales médico-psychologiques*, 1.2 (1855): 181–232, esp. 215.

61 For a brief analysis of the role of expert testimony in Filljung’s lawsuit, see Graus, “Mysticism,” 34. The Belgian stigmatic Bertha Mrazek, mentioned above, was also deemed an hysteric and sent to an asylum after a trial in 1924. See Van Osselaer, “The many lives of Bertha, Georges and Jean.”

62 Anonymous, *Extracto de la causa seguida a Sor Patrocinio*, 93–97; Anonymous, *Procès de Rose Tamisier*, 22. In the case of Tamisier, the sentence was initially six months, but she had to stay in prison longer because she could not pay the fine (16 francs). She spent almost two years in jail if we take into consideration her pre-trial detention. There were also several legal discussions concerning which article of the law was more appropriate to judge the facts concerning the “bleeding painting.” Once the court of Carpentras judged the case was suitable for the assizes in Nîmes, they declared that the actions should fall under article 262, which condemns “anyone who, by word or action, shows contempt for the objects of a cult” (13J47, ADV); Garçon, *Rosette Tamisier*, 96–100.

woman simulating the holy wounds and other miracles to pass themselves off as a saint and obtain lucrative gifts, fame and power. Although Sor Patrocinio continued to nourish a cult within the Spanish royals, public opinion on her case became linked to the ideas of “fake stigmata” and “self-styled sanctity” that have survived her.<sup>63</sup> In the case of Tamisier, the conviction destroyed her cult completely.<sup>64</sup>

From start to end, the lawsuits were an event of public interest. In line with the aim of the secular authorities to debunk the defendant in the public sphere, the hearings were open to the public, where the testimony of the experts, the pre-trial investigation and various declarations were presented.<sup>65</sup> In the case of Tamisier, crowds of people were reported to have waited outside the court each morning. To ensure a seat, the members of the public had to obtain “admission tickets” from the president of the court, which rapidly ran out. Although the information is scarce, it appears that the courtroom was completely packed.<sup>66</sup> In the case of Sor Patrocinio, we do not know whether there was an admission policy or who was in the court, but apparently the hearing was relocated to a larger room to “better accommodate the public,”<sup>67</sup> which also suggests that there were too many attendees.

Newspapers representing the government reported on the legal proceedings in support of the State’s public discrediting of the stigmatics, including news on the pre-trial investigation and transcriptions of the declarations. In Spain, the Ministry of Justice distributed minutes of the different interrogations to supportive journals, such as the liberal-progressive *El Eco del comercio*, as well as the testimonies of the experts, in what came to be known as “the

63 Graus, “Wonder nuns,” 572–577. On the relationship between Sor Patrocinio and the royals see, “Apuntes sobre sor Patrocinio,” Reinados, Alfonso XII, 25017, exp. 17, AGP.

64 Garçon, *Rosette Tamisier*, 100–101.

65 In Tamisier’s case, the hearings lasted four consecutive days, in which they interrogated the witnesses, the experts and the defendant, while for Sor Patrocinio, there was only one hearing, in which the declarations were presented and the attorneys made their concluding remarks. Being a cloistered nun, Sor Patrocinio and her religious community (the witnesses) were given the privilege of testifying in private in their convent, or in one of the two houses in which Sor Patrocinio was under domiciliary arrest. See, respectively, Jean-François André, *Affaire Rosette Tamisier, précédée d’une notice sur Pierre-Michel Vintras et sa secte* (Carpentras: Impr. L. Devillario, 1851), 25; Voltes, *Sor Patrocinio*, 89–91.

66 A group of women were placed in the jury’s tribune and the prisoner’s dock was also full. “Cours et tribunaux. Justice criminelle. Affaire Tamisier,” *Le Constitutionnel*, September 7, 1851, 2–3; “Tribunal correctionnel de Carpentras. Affaire Rosette Tamisier,” *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, September 7, 1851, 3–4.

67 “Juzgados de primera instancia,” *Diario de Madrid*, November 21, 1836, 1, “para mayor comodidad del público.”

famous lawsuit.”<sup>68</sup> In France, the hearings were transcribed in Bonapartist newspapers that were critical of ultramontanism and the Church, such as *Le Constitutionnel*, one of the main journals of the Second Republic and later the Empire.<sup>69</sup> A few months after each trial, booklet editions of the lawsuit texts appeared, including the testimonies, some of which were reprinted years after and in several editions.<sup>70</sup> These were extraordinary publications that again show the stigmatics’ celebrity and the public interest in their trials.<sup>71</sup>

The news of the lawsuits also reached other European countries, where liberal journals reported on the trials based on the chronicles appearing in the foreign press, thus contributing to the public debunking of the stigmatics abroad. For example, the French press described Sor Patrocínio as a “fanatic” and the “pythoness of the Carlists,” while Rosette Tamisier was derided in British and Belgian journals, which coined phrases such as the “Miraclising spinster” and “heroine of a pretentious illuminism (*illuminisme*).”<sup>72</sup> Thus, the attacks of the liberal press abroad supported those in the stigmatics’ countries, in line with the “cross-border affinities” in newspaper journalism that Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser identified in the wider secular-Catholic conflicts of the nineteenth century.<sup>73</sup>

68 See, e.g., “Causa célebre de Sor Patrocínio,” *El Nacional*, June 18, 1836, 574. Minutes of the interrogations published in the press can be found in, for example, “Noticias oficiales,” *Eco del comercio*, January 27, 1836, 5; “Ministerio de Gracia y Justicia,” *Revista Española*, January 28, 1836, 2–3.

69 See, e.g., “Cours et tribunaux. Justice criminelle. Affaire Tamisier,” *Le Constitutionnel*, September 7, 1851, 3.

70 Anonymous, *Causa formada contra doña María de los Dolores Quiroga* (1837); Anonymous, *Procès de Rose Tamisier* (1851); André, *Affaire Rose Tamisier* (1851). A new publication on Sor Patrocínio’s lawsuit took place in 1849 (two reprints) and in 1864, when she was involved in further governmental affairs: Anonymous, *Extracto de la causa seguida a Sor Patrocínio* (1849). See, Voltes, *Sor Patrocínio*, 83.

71 In the Spanish press, the publication was deemed “very interesting” owing to the “public attention” Sor Patrocínio received. “Anuncio. Causa de Sor Patrocínio,” *El Español*, February 18, 1837, 1.

72 See, respectively, “fanatisée,” “pythonisse des carlistes,” in “Intérieur,” *Le Moniteur Universel*, November 25, 1835, 1; “Miraclising spinster,” *Morning Advertiser*, 8 September 1851, 3; “Cette héroïne d’un illuminisme prétentieux,” in “On lit,” *Le Messager de Gand*, December 24, 1852, 3. See other news on the trials in e.g. “Trial of Rose Tamisier, the miracle worker,” *London Daily News*, September 8, 1851, 3; “Sham miracles,” *Globe*, September 9, 1851, 4; “Chronique judiciaire,” *Journal de Bruxelles*, September 9, 1851, 3; “Rosa Tamisier detta la Santa,” *Gazzetta dei Tribunali*, 1.74 (1851), 305–306.

73 Clark and Kaiser, “The European culture wars,” 4–5. See also their respective chapters on New Catholicism and anticlerical media in *Culture wars*.

Years after their conviction, the image of Sor Patrocinio and Rosette Tamisier as fraudsters would continue to be evoked throughout Europe by many different publications and authors. “Who was Sor Patrocinio?,” asked an English poet and travel writer in 1868: “an intriguing impostor, once condemned by the public tribunal for having pretended to the miraculous possession of the Stigmata”;<sup>74</sup> and also, more harshly: “a woman stained with false stigmata and armed with the fanaticism of the masses,”<sup>75</sup> wrote a Belgian freethinker in 1874. In a similar vein, the British evangelical press described Tamisier as “an impostor who so successfully mystified the world, and acquired by her miracles a sort of European celebrity.”<sup>76</sup>

Judging from the image that came to represent these stigmatics after their trials, we can conclude that the Spanish and French secular authorities won the battle over public opinion. It would be misleading, however, to affirm that it was only the lawsuit that contributed to the stigmatics’ reputations as fraudsters. As we will see below, from the moment the stigmatics became the target of the secular authorities, they featured in anticlerical press campaigns at home and abroad. In the following, we examine how these campaigns were designed to fulfil two aims: firstly, to present their cases as instances of fake stigmata and the pretence of holiness, thus backing the discourse of the French and Spanish secular authorities; and, secondly, to denounce the stigmatics’ political symbolism and attack – by means of mocking them – the political enemies of anticlerical liberals and republicans.

#### 4 Fake Stigmata and Self-styled Sanctity in the Anticlerical Press

Just as stigmatics had been idealized to reflect Catholic hopes in particular contexts, so they were demystified in the anticlerical press in Europe. Examining the cartoons and satirical texts ridiculing stigmatics gives us an idea of how anticlerical activists used these religious celebrities to advance their own agendas. Unlike the construction of stigmatics as “living saints,” which usually implied a form of interaction with the devotees, their construction as

74 Betham-Edwards, *Through Spain to the Sahara* (1868), 157. Here and below, other examples could have been cited.

75 Dom Liber, pseudonym of the Belgian philosopher and freethinker Charles Potvin, gave a full chronicle of Sor Patrocinio’s imposture in 1874, including a partial translation of the lawsuit text. See Liber, *Le faux miracle*, LVII–LXVIII. “Souillées des faux stigmates et armée du fanatisme des masses,” (p. LXVIII).

76 “Imposition of St. Saturnin,” *The Christian Treasury*, 10 (1854), 101–103.

fraudsters in the anticlerical press was passive, meaning that stigmatics had no real involvement in the process. Nevertheless, the attacks were not completely to their detriment, insofar as “no publicity is bad publicity.” In other words, mocking the stigmatics had the advantage of spreading their fame beyond the Catholic milieu.

Although religion had been a topic of mockery since early Christianity, it was not until the 1850s, with the reduction in printing costs and the revolutions of 1848 that anticlerical journals became a mass medium that could attack religion throughout Europe. The anticlerical press grew exponentially after events such as the Glorious Revolution in Spain, the Paris Commune and the *Kulturkampf*.<sup>77</sup> With their distinctive transnational aims, the anticlerical press in Europe served to discredit religious figures internationally. This included important figures such as Pope Pius IX, as well as ultramontane activists and clergymen, and to a lesser extent, mystic figures.<sup>78</sup> The mocking of Sor Patrocinio and Rosette Tamisier is a smaller, yet interesting, example of how this worked for stigmatics.

As Wolfram Kaiser has shown, anticlerical media frequently repeated the same motifs in their attacks.<sup>79</sup> This also appears to be the case in the caricatures and satirical texts about stigmatics, which especially relied on notions of “feigned holiness” and “fake stigmata.” For example, a famous anticlerical sonnet in Spain described the “hypocrite Sister” who produced the wounds using some kind of poison in an attempt to control the Throne,<sup>80</sup> and in France, a small satirical press biography of Sor Patrocinio said she had declared herself stigmatized “to pass herself off as *holy*,” and to manipulate the royals, and that this was “the beginning of her glory.”<sup>81</sup> As another amusing example of how

77 In antiquity, graffiti depicted Christians as donkeys, and in the early modern era there were drawings mocking the Protestant Reformation. The figure of God, it seems, was not a target until the end of the eighteenth century, Boespflug, “Brève histoire,” 86–94; Doizy, “De la caricature anticléricale,” 63–66.

78 On anticlerical caricature in France, in particular, see Dixmier, Lalouette and Pasamonik, *La République*.

79 Kaiser, “Clericalism,” 70–73.

80 The satirical sonnet (*copla*) is as follows: “I fear that the sceptre will become a crosier [...] / I venerate God, I venerate the tabernacle; / but not a hypocrite Sister who with emetic tartar, / mimics the [holy] wounds [...] / If this cynical farce continues, all masks will fall / and all Spain will burn like a match.” It is attributed to Manuel Bretón de los Herreros (1796–1873). Cited in Dos Amigos Filósofos, *Biografía de Sor Patrocinio*, 143.

81 The Bonapartist journal *Le Gaulois* published a drawing that portrayed Sor Patrocinio next to kings and other important figures of the 1868 Spanish revolution. They described her as follows: “she ate ONE OUNCE of bread per day! It was the beginning of her glory. To pass herself off as *holy*, she declared herself stigmatized and pretended that the wounds on

the anticlerical press mocked these cases on a European level, it is worth citing the first strophe of a song that appeared in the London-based satirical journal *Punch* in 1851, the year of Rosette Tamisier's lawsuit, in which the topics of self-styled sanctity and fake stigmata reappear.

Oh! my Saint is like the French girl, Rose,  
 Tamisier by surname,  
 and leads me gently by the nose,  
 with wonders just the same.  
 A heart, tattoo'd upon her breast,  
 stains handkerchiefs and clothes;  
 of course through miracle impress,  
 as by the French girl, Rose.<sup>82</sup>

Attacking the two features of stigmata and sanctity, and pointing especially to the pretence of the holy wounds as an attempt to obtain a reputation for holiness, thus became a repeated motif in the mocking of Sor Patrocínio and Rosette Tamisier, both at home and abroad. As seen above, this motif was also discussed within the secular courts and the media reporting on the lawsuits. Once again, this shows the importance of these two features for these stigmatics' public personae, as well as the need, in the eyes of the anticlerical press and the secular authorities, to debunk them.

Apart from contributing to the stigmatics' reputation as fraudsters, the anticlerical press used the stigmatics' political symbolism in the war of the two Frances and two Spains to attack their political enemies. In her homeland, the mocking of Rosette Tamisier served to combat liberal Catholics and especially the ultramontanes. Satirical texts and anticlerical caricatures of her frequently included her political supporters, and a special favourite was the ultramontane, Louis Veuillot, the director of *L'Univers*.<sup>83</sup> As evidence of her celebrity, Tamisier had the "privilege" of being caricaturized by Honoré Daumier, probably the most internationally renowned French caricaturist, who depicted

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her hands, feet and side bled every Friday," L. Estor, "La révolution espagnole," *Le Gaulois*, October 17, 1868, 1 (emphasis in the original).

82 "The French girl Rose. A song of a modern saint," *Punch* 21 (1851), 125.

83 Several satirical texts about Rosette Tamisier and her supporters appeared in *Le Charivari* in the year of her trial. See "Le martyre de Sainte Rosette Tamisier," February 23, 2; "M. [Alfred] de Falloux et Rosette Tamisier," August 29, 1851, 2; "Nouveaux miracles dans le Vaucluse," September 6, 1851, 2.



“Saint” Rosette Tamisier as a witch working one of her “miracles” on a fool-like Veuillot (Figure 6.1).<sup>84</sup>

Another small cartoon in *Le Journal pour rire* portrayed her next to Veuillot and the famous liberal Catholic, Comte de Montalembert, “who throw their most ardent wishes into the air in soap bubbles: auto-da-fe, Saint Barthélemy and the canonization of Rosette Tamisier.” Linking Tamisier’s “canonization” with brutal acts such as an auto-da-fe and the Protestant massacre of Saint Barthélemy (1572) placed the stigmatic within the “fanatical” branch of Catholicism with which the anticlerical activists attempted to associate her.<sup>85</sup> Unlike in the satirical texts, Tamisier’s figurative stigmata did not appear in the cartoons – perhaps because, as noted in the *Punch* song, they were covered (on her chest) and thus not always visible. Nevertheless, the wounds were implicit to her public persona, as it was the stigmata that had first given her the reputation for sanctity that the caricaturists now attacked.

In the case of Sor Patrocinio, because she was venerated as a “living saint” by the Spanish aristocracy, including the royal family, the anticlerical press used her image to create “the myth of the Throne against the people.”<sup>86</sup> She thus appeared in a great number of cartoons involving the royals and their clique, which denounced issues such as the interference of the Church in affairs of State, or the lucrative exploitation of mysticism and the stigmata. For example, a caricature of 1886 showed a nun in ecstasy with a small wound on her hand surrounded by clergymen and bags of money – an implicit reference to Sor Patrocinio, the one and only “nun with the wounds.”<sup>87</sup> Another caricature of 1865 depicts Sor Patrocinio next to the “new Don Quixote,” Father Claret, the royal court confessor. Their field is labelled as “neos” (neo-Catholics) and a train named “progress” approaches from behind (Figure 6.2).

Such politicized images of her also spread in the clandestine press, where cartoons circulated as *cartes de visite* and copied the pornographic style previously used to attack Marie-Antoinette and her clique, and which also became

84 Caricature by Honoré Daumier, published in *Le Charivari*, September 18, 1851, 3.

85 Caricature by Nadar (Gaspard-Félix Tournachon) in *Le Journal pour rire*, October 3, 1851, 1.

86 Jorge Vilches, “La propaganda republicana: la monarquía contra el pueblo. El caso de Isabel II (1854–1931),” *Historia y Política* 18 (2007): 231–253, 232. On anticlericalism in Spain, see especially Sanabria, *Republicanism* 15–38. About the satirical press in Spain, see Llera Ruiz, “Una historia.”

87 See “Tribulaciones místicas,” *El Motín*, September 19, 1886, 2. Apart from *El Motín*, most caricatures of Sor Patrocinio were published in journals such as *Gil Blas*, *La Flaca* and *La Avispa*. For more examples of cartoons involving the nun and the royal clique, see Graus, “Wonder nuns,” 15–21.

a common motif in anticlerical caricatures.<sup>88</sup> One such cartoon represented Sor Patrocinio at an orgy in the palace showing Queen Isabel II a bloody piece of fabric.<sup>89</sup> This refers to the well-known fact that the queen collected “relics” from the stigmatic and liked to wear her stained shirts<sup>90</sup> – which was also mocked in foreign satirical journals such as the above-mentioned *Punch*.<sup>91</sup>

To our knowledge, apart from Rosette Tamisier and Sor Patrocinio, only Louise Lateau was caricaturized and mocked on a European scale during the period examined, which reaffirms the significance of these stigmatics becoming anticlerical targets during the nineteenth-century secular-Catholic conflicts. As Tine Van Osselaer has shown, Lateau had a symbolic meaning for both Catholics and anti-Catholics in the Belgian and German culture wars. Several caricatures of her appeared in Germany during the *Kulturkampf*, especially in the leading satirical journal, *Kladderadatsch*, which according to Wolfram Kaiser was accessible in public libraries.<sup>92</sup> Her alleged wonders, such as the stigmata and inedia, were ridiculed, and Lateau was depicted as a false mystic and an ill woman. She was often paired with Paul Majunke, who, like Louis Veillot in Tamisier’s case, was depicted as a blind devotee and “manager.”<sup>93</sup>

Michael O’Sullivan has recently analysed such depictions in the twentieth century, looking at how Therese Neumann, and the Konnersreuth circle in general, were attacked in the communist and the anticlerical social democratic press “to advocate for issues such as the separation of church and state and to embarrass Catholic political elites”<sup>94</sup> – thus, with similar political intentions as in the nineteenth-century cases. Topics appearing in the caricatures and satirical texts of the above-mentioned stigmatics, such as the exploitation of stigmata and sanctity, or the mocking of inedia, also appeared in the case of

88 On Marie-Antoinette’s pornographic caricature, see Hunt, “The many bodies.” On the pornographic anticlerical caricatures, see e.g., Dixmier, Lalouette, Pasamonik, *La République et l’Église*, 94–98.

89 As scholars such as Isabel Burdiel have shown, in Spain, these images were part of a collection of watercolours called *Los Borbones en pelota* (c. 1868) (“The Bourbons in the buff”), produced by a collective of artists who signed with the pseudonym SEM or SEMEN. See Burdiel, “El descenso de los reyes,” 9–10.

90 For references to Isabel II wearing the stained shirts see, for example, Morayta, *Masonería española* (1915), 175; Schiavo, *Masonería española* (1915), 366–367. On Isabel II’s fascination for Sor Patrocinio see, Correspondencia de Pedro Egaña, *Diversos Títulos Familias*, 3557, Leg. 21, exp. 21, doc. 38, AHN.

91 “Saintry garment,” *Punch*, January 30, 1869, 43.

92 Kaiser, “Clericalism,” 70.

93 Van Osselaer, “Stigmata,” 601–603.

94 O’Sullivan, *Disruptive Power*, 104.

Neumann and the Konnersreuth circle.<sup>95</sup> Thus, even in different times and national contexts, and facing distinct opponents of Catholicism, we find similarities in the anticlerical motifs used to denigrate stigmatics and their supporters.

In the cases of Neumann and Lateau, however, this was only one side of the story, as promotional images and texts were also circulating, and larger cults surrounded them.<sup>96</sup> For Sor Patrocinio and Rosette Tamisier, on the contrary, it was the notion of fraud, as it appeared in daily newspapers, books or the anticlerical media during and after their trials, which nourished the image that survived them in the public sphere. This reputation eclipsed the stigmatics' own stories and, over time, continued to be mobilized in the anticlerical press to demystify other events involving stigmata and similar miracles. For example, in 1882, a Spanish stigmatized laywoman called Narcisa Navarro was compared to "the famous Sor Patrocinio who tricked the fools" in the anticlerical journal *El Motín*;<sup>97</sup> and when, in 1886, some objects allegedly bled in Rouen, the journal *Le Rappel*, representative of the republican *radicalisme*, ironically claimed to be looking for "the Rosette Tamisier of the place" to debunk the miracle.<sup>98</sup> Thus, the women came to incarnate a general notion of stigmatic fraud or related "bloody phenomena," where evoking their name was sufficient to advance the idea of deception.

## 5 Conclusions

Twenty years after the "Tamisier affair," a journalist recalled how, in the midst of the Bonapartist and Orleanist battles that had taken place at the end of the French Second Republic, a stigmatic had invaded the public debate: "Everyone still remembers Rosette Tamisier's epic story, her first triumphs, her trial and the final fiasco that crowned this Catholic speculation."<sup>99</sup> As we have seen, a similar thing had happened to Sor Patrocinio in Spain, with both women becoming the most remembered examples of modern stigmatic fraud in Europe.

95 For Neumann, O'Sullivan, *Disruptive Power*, 104–105.

96 See Chapter 5 as well as, e.g., Kane, "Stigmatic cults," 114–122; Van Osselaer, "Dor," 177–179.

97 "Manojo de flores místicas," *El Motín* 2.20 (1882), 1–2.

98 "M.M ...," *Le Rappel*, May 4, 1886, 4.

99 "Les miracles dans Vaucluse," *La Revue artistique*, November 1, 1872. "Chacun se souvient encore de l'épopée de Rosette Tamisier, de ses premier triomphes, de son procès et du fiasco final qui couronna cette spéculation catholique."

Nevertheless, there have been attempts to restore the reputation of the Spanish stigmatic; firstly, when Queen Isabel II fostered her cause of beatification, opened in 1907, but still showing no sign of progression;<sup>100</sup> and, secondly, even more recently, a Catholic scholar, Javier Paredes, has attempted to present the nun as the victim of the liberals with the aim of clearing her name and reigniting her cause.<sup>101</sup> In the case of Rosette Tamisier, the historian of religion, Joachim Boufflet has questioned whether, despite having gone down in history as a “major mystifier (*mystificatrice*),” she was in fact an “authentic stigmatic” and “victim” of the conflict between the civil and ecclesiastical authorities.<sup>102</sup>

Without deciding whether there was any truth behind their stigmata, these two cases show how stigmatics could be perceived as political threats, and how accusations of “fake stigmata” and “self-styled sanctity” could be effective in neutralizing them. The idea that someone might generate the holy wounds to pass themselves off as a saint and obtain fame and power was not new; however, showcasing this idea by means of a mediatised trial and the anticlerical press was certainly a novelty in France and Spain. Ultimately, however, the target was not the stigmatic *per se*, but what she had come to represent in the public sphere. In this vein, looking at the secular repression of the stigmatics’ public personae shows how they could become malleable religious celebrities, functioning not only to advance Catholic hopes, but also the agenda of the perceived political enemies of Catholicism. In the following chapter, we will see how the holy wounds and their bearers were received by the highest Roman Catholic authority, the Vatican.

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100 Statement by Queen Isabel II, 18 January 1904, Procesos de Beatificación, Causa de Beatificación de Sor Patrocinio (1907), Fol. 659–684, ADT.

101 See Paredes, *Las llagas de la monja*, and also Paredes, *Vida admirable*.

102 Boufflet in Imbert-Gourbeyre, *La stigmatisation*, ed. Joachim Boufflet, 484.



FIGURE 6.1 "Saint Rosette Tamisier continuing with her miracles and transforming Father Veillot into an angel." Caricature by Honoré Daumier published in: *Le Charivari*, 20.261 (18 September 1851): 3  
BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE



FIGURE 6.2 "The new Don Quixote." Published in: *Gil Blas*, 2.40 (2 September 1865): 3  
BIBLIOTECA NACIONAL DE ESPAÑA

# Stigmatized Blood in the Vatican Courts

## *Religious Response and Strategy*

*Leonardo Rossi*

### 1 Introduction: An Ambiguous Relationship

You include Saint Pio [one of the most famous and much discussed stigmatics of the twentieth century, L.R.] among the most beautiful and luminous figures of your people. This humble Capuchin friar amazed the world with his life devoted to prayer and patient listening to his brothers, on whose sufferings he poured out the love of Christ as a balm. [...] he received special mystical gifts from above, which preceded the manifestation in his flesh of the signs of the Passion of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

With these words of approval, spoken during his pastoral visit to Pietrelcina and San Giovanni Rotondo on 17 March 2018, Pope Francis I celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Padre Pio (1968) and the centenary of the appearance of his permanent and visible stigmata (1918).<sup>2</sup> As such, ecclesiastical approval of the mystical phenomenon was again confirmed. Indeed, in February 2016, on the occasion of the Jubilee of Mercy, the *corpus incorruptus* of the Capuchin friar had already been transported from the Apulian monastery to Rome, where it was worshipped in St Peter's Basilica by the Vatican clergy and thousands of believers.<sup>3</sup> Given this special treatment, it seems quite evident

1 Pastoral Visit of the Holy Father Francis to Pietrelcina and to San Giovanni Rotondo on the occasion of the centenary of the apparition of the permanent stigmata and the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Saint Pio of Pietrelcina (17 March 2018): (Italian version) [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/speeches/2018/march/documents/papa-francesco\\_20180317\\_pietrelcina-fedeli.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/speeches/2018/march/documents/papa-francesco_20180317_pietrelcina-fedeli.html); (English version) <http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2018/03/17/180317a.html>.

2 There are many biographies and scientific studies about the life of Padre Pio. Some of the most important are Da Ripabottoni, *Padre Pio da Pietrelcina*; Da Pobladura and Da Ripabottoni, *Padre Pio da Pietrelcina*, 4 Vols.; Di Flumeri, *Le stigmati di Padre Pio*; Di Flumeri, *Padre Pio da Pietrelcina*; Luzzatto, *Padre Pio. Miracoli e politica nell'Italia del Novecento*, English translation, *Padre Pio: Miracles and Politics in a Secular Age*.

3 The news travelled around the world and was reported in major newspapers such as *L'Osservatore Romano*, *Avvenire*, *La Stampa*, *Repubblica*, *Corriere della Sera*, *Libero*, *Catholic*

that the Church officially supports the devotion to the stigmatized saint and uses his cult to spread Catholic messages and ideals of the *societas Christi*. For example, Padre Pio's traditionalist ideas about the family were taken up by the Catholic movement during the debate on LGBT rights in Italy, precisely during the Jubilee's period.<sup>4</sup> If we link the Holy See's support of this modern case with that of the centuries-old devotion to the stigmatized saint par excellence, St Francis of Assisi (1182–1226),<sup>5</sup> we might think that the Church favours all stigmatics. It could be argued, after all, that the stigmata have a devotional value because they are contextualized within the Catholic framework of the *imitatio Christi* and redemptive suffering. Is the Church's response to the bearers of the wounds of the Passion really so positive? How did the Vatican clergy regard other stigmatics?

The case of Gemma Galgani shows perfectly how the attitude of the Holy See towards holiness and stigmata is generally less explicit and more distrustful and reserved. Galgani (1878–1903),<sup>6</sup> the first stigmatic who died and was proclaimed a saint in the twentieth century, was an Italian “stereotypical” stigmatic. She was a young lay woman who became famous during her life for her suffering, and as such a religious celebrity.<sup>7</sup> Her visible phenomena and her status as a public persona created divisions among the diocesan clergy. On one side, there was the party of Mgr Volpi, ordinary confessor and supporter of the psycho-pathological thesis, who wanted to keep the signs secret.<sup>8</sup> On the other side, there was friar Germano Ruoppolo, her last spiritual father and strenuous defender, who published extensively after her death, with the aim of conserving her memory and opening a canonical process.<sup>9</sup> Despite

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*News Agency, Il Fatto Quotidiano, Catholic News Service, The New York Times, The Washington Post, Le Monde, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Frankfurter Rundschau, La Vanguardia, De Standaard, De Morgen.*

4 Margry, “Merchandising.” In conjunction with the Jubilee and the transfer of the corpse of Padre Pio, the Italian parliament discussed matters concerning family law (homosexual civil unions). Catholic groups and the right, especially during Family Day on 30 January 2016, did not waste the opportunity to remember the teachings of the Capuchin saint regarding the traditional Catholic family, using him in a social and political way.

5 There is a recognized liturgical feast of the impression of his wounds (celebrated on 17 September).

6 Caffiero, “Gemma Galgani, santa;” Zoffoli, *La povera Gemma*; Dell'Addolorata, “Gemma Galgani (sainte);” Zoffoli, “Gemma Galgani, santa;” Bell and Mazzoni, *The voices*.

7 On stigmatics as religious celebrities, see Chapters 1, 3 and 4, on how to create religious fame, cult and commodity.

8 A study of the medical report and the diagnosis of hysteria advocated by Dr Pietro Pfanner can be found in Andreoli, “Un caso di santa isteria,” 27–28.

9 Ruoppolo, *Biografia di Gemma Galgani* (1907) – in just six years, from 1907 to 1912, over 52,000 copies were printed – and Ruoppolo, *Lettere ed estasi della Serva di Dio Gemma Galgani* (1910).



the media clamour and debate about her graces, after her death the Church paid only minimal attention to her stigmata, especially during the process of beatification (positive verdict in 1933) and canonization (1940). While Pius XI ratified the decree of the heroism of her virtues in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* (29 November 1931),<sup>10</sup> he explicitly refrained from passing judgement on the preternatural origin of her phenomena,<sup>11</sup> “upon which no decision is even made.”<sup>12</sup> From the pontiff’s statement, we may indirectly grasp that at the time there was a heated debate about her graces, and in fact there were two images of Gemma that reinforced different profiles of sanctity: (1) the ecclesiastical and official image depicted her as a expiatory victim, a young virgin with a deep mystical life; and (2) the popular and devotional image was more interested in emphasizing the exceptional elements and the visible manifestations of her divine election (ecstasies and stigmata). The Vatican clergy chose the first model as it was more in keeping with the values of humility, obedience and resignation that the Church wanted to spread throughout Catholic society at the time. Moreover, avoiding consideration of the preternatural phenomena, it sheltered the saint from charges of hysteria, bigotry and fanaticism levelled by critics.

However, the reticence of the Church’s leaders did not prevent the other profile proliferating in different circles, especially after the proclamation of her holiness. In fact, since 1940, the stigmata of Galgani have ceased to be a taboo topic, even for clergymen. We find this change apparent in an article by the Jesuit writer Domenico Mondrone (1897–1985), published in the journal *La Civiltà Cattolica*.<sup>13</sup> Speaking about the papal prohibition mentioned above, he did not hesitate to interpret it as a strategy of the Holy See to contain the controversy regarding the “extraordinary facts, ecstasies, visions, words, stigmata, diabolic obsessions” that were attributed to Galgani.<sup>14</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica*

10 Villepelée, *La follia della croce*, 401.

11 In the papal bull mentioned, the exceptional phenomena attributed to Galgani (such as stigmata, ecstasy, prophecy, etc.) are designated by the word “preternatural.” Since this chapter is concerned with the Vatican perception, we retain this term.

12 “[...] feliciter elegit ut super heroicis virtutibus huius innocentis aequae ac poenitentis puellae suam mentem panderet, nullo tamen per praesens decretum (quod quidem numquam fieri solet) prolato iudicio de praeternaturalibus Servae Dei charismatibus.” *Acta apostolicae sedis, Commentarium Officiale* 24 (1932), 54–57, 57: <http://www.vatican.va/archive/aas/documents/AAS-24-1932-ocr.pdf>.

13 On *La Civiltà Cattolica*, see De Rosa, “Alle origini della Civiltà Cattolica;” Dante, *Storia della “Civiltà Cattolica” (1850–1891)*; De Rosa, *La Civiltà Cattolica*.

14 Mondrone, “Fulgori di santità e tenebre d’accecamento,” *Civ. Cat.* 91, 2 (1940), 241–249. Previously, however, the attitude and language of the Jesuit fathers was much more hermetic. In 1908, they wrote about the Servant of God: “Her sublime preternatural virtues

has traditionally been the Jesuit magazine that followed the line of the Vatican curia. The reference to stigmata, therefore, can hardly be seen as a casual or personal thought of the author, but rather as a more positive acceptance of the phenomena by the Church. This trend was confirmed by the Passionist Fathers, who also seem to have adopted this change in perspective. They had been the advocates and financial sponsors of Galgani's process of canonization, and were also responsible for spreading the cult and producing commodities that promoted her (holy cards, images and relics).

As a Servant of God, Galgani was portrayed as a young woman in prayer (Fig. 7.1). After her beatification, some elements were added to display her virtues: lilies in her right hand, a symbol of virginal purity, while in her left hand she held a black Sacred Heart with the silver inscription "*JESU XPI PASSIO*," the emblem of the order (Fig. 7.2). In accordance with the ecclesiastical model, no visual element referring to physical stigmatization was present. After 1940, however, her holy cards became progressively embellished. In one image, Galgani is portrayed in an ecstatic state contemplating Christ Crucified, the symbol of martyrdom. On her left, at the bottom, an open book testifies to her mystical writing; while, at the top, angels, the Sacred Heart and the light over her head are proof of her canonized status. On her right, in the background, the "Sanctuary of Santa Gemma" has been added to emphasize that the saint belonged to the order of the Passionists. However, the main change we can see concerns her hand, on which the wounds of stigmatization are now visible (Fig. 7.3).

In other representations, her stigmata are more explicit. In one example, a ray of light coming from the Cross strikes and stigmatizes the body of the saint on the left, while an archangel sets the Crown of Thorns on her head (Fig. 7.4). Finally, as we can see in Figure 5, there is a complete transformation of the scenario. Gemma is represented as bedridden. From the crucifixion behind her, a divine light places the Crown of Thorns on her head, while her hands bleed. The scene is made more dramatic by the presence of a kneeling priest and a woman looking at her stigmatized hand (Fig. 7.5).

In comparison with the cases of Padre Pio, and St Francis in particular, whose miraculous stigmata were mentioned by the pontiffs in their bulls and encyclicals (as we will see later on), the ecclesiastical attitude towards Galgani and "prototypical" stigmatics was much more cautious, ambiguous and subject to change over time. The purpose of this chapter is therefore to focus on

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and her extraordinary charisms were held only by a few Catholic saints". Anonymous, "Recensione: P. Germano di S. Stanislao, pass. – Biografia di Gemma Galgani vergine lucchese, 2° ed., Roma, Artig., *Civ. Cat.* 59 (1908), 2, 235.

the Vatican response and measures taken towards stigmatics in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the previous chapters, we examined how secular society received and perceived the bearers of the wounds of the Passion, by considering the views of lay visitors in particular. By doing so, however, we also had the opportunity to report on the role played by bishops and diocesan clergymen (primarily father confessors and spiritual guides). They had a key role in the promotion or censorship of stigmatics, both during their lifetime and afterwards. Despite differences related to national and local contexts, we have seen that in several European countries (Spain, France, Belgium, Germany and Italy) the bishops – as *ordinari* of their own dioceses – had the task of controlling, investigating and ultimately taking action on cases of alleged mysticism, lived holiness and stigmatization. In the ecclesiastical hierarchy, however, they occupied only the first and local level. At the highest level, the Holy See claimed greater and universal authority over the entire Catholic world.

To contextualize the Vatican response to stigmatics in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it is necessary to analyse the broader framework, that is, how the Church considered the phenomenon of stigmata over a longer time frame. The first part of this chapter is therefore dedicated to the historical evolution of the relationship between the Holy See and stigmata, specifically reflecting on precise periods and themes: (1) the “invention” of stigmata in the Middle Ages; (2) the creation of congregations to control the phenomenon in the early modern era; and (3) the increase in cases in late modernity (c. 1800–1950). The second part, focusing on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, will look at the methods and strategies used by two Vatican congregations to control stigmatics: (1) the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (former Roman Inquisition, 1542–1908, and Holy Office, 1908–1965); and (2) the Congregation for the Causes of Saints (former Sacred Congregation of Rites, 1588–1969).

We address the Church’s measures in order to contextualize the ecclesiastical framework in which stigmatics lived and operated. In some cases, the Church was able to influence the fame of the stigmatics, either creating, spreading or blocking it. This is especially true for Italy, which was unique both in terms of the number of stigmatics and the actions carried out by the Holy See. Of the 245 cases reported between the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries in the five countries studied, 87 are Italian.<sup>15</sup> Of the three saints and fifteen blessed, the proportion of Italians is 2:3 and 11:15 respectively (we will discuss this in detail in the second section). Moreover, according to the material conserved in the Archive of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith (again, we will see this below), it is clear that the Church was more

15 See bibliography in “Appendix.”

interested in intervening and condemning cases of stigmatization reported in Italy than in any other European state. This is not so surprising, as Italy was the country in which the stigmata of the first stigmatized saint were “invented.”

## 2 The Vatican Perspective

### 2.1 *The Middle Ages and the “Invention” of Stigmata*

In the introduction to this chapter we have noted how the attitude of the Church has been decidedly cautious and reticent in taking a position on stigmata and their bearers. No ecclesiastical dogma has ever been expressed in this regard. Nevertheless, the Holy See has discussed and commented theologically on stigmata for centuries, drawing on both the Old and New Testaments. The term can be found in the Old Testament more than once, with the broad meaning of “sign.”<sup>16</sup> In the New Testament, the term is only mentioned in the famous letter of St Paul to the Galatians: “From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.”<sup>17</sup> For centuries, Church Fathers and theologians discussed the precise meaning that should be attributed to this phrase, in particular the visible or spiritual stigmatization of the Apostle of the Gentiles. The opinion widely shared by the clergy is that Paul was referring to the scars of martyrdom arising from the judicial-pagan persecution of the first Christian communities. As such, they are connected to the sacred wounds of the crucified Christ in a completely symbolic-allegorical way, and thus Paul is not considered the first stigmatic of the Christian era.<sup>18</sup>

In the first millennium of Christian history, stigmata were attributed exclusively to Christ.<sup>19</sup> However, this changed when, in September 1224, a layman, Giovanni di Pietro di Bernardone (1181/2–1226) – better known as Francis of Assisi – received the visible marks of the Passion at La Verna. He was not merely a man, but destined to become one of the most controversial and famous characters marking the history of the Church and Europe itself after creating the Order of the Friars Minor. During his lifetime, however, the La Verna episode was entirely of secondary importance, as it occurred in secret, and only two years before his death. Francis never spoke about it, and certainly did not

16 Is. 44:5; Lv 19:28; Gen. 4:15; Ez. 9:4–6.

17 Galatians, 6:17 (“ego enim stigmata Domini Jesus in corpore meo porto”).

18 Adnès, “Stigmates,” 1213.

19 “[...] the medieval adoration of the holy Humanity remained foreign” (“l’adoration médiévale de la sainte Humanité lui est restée étrangère”), Lot-Borodine, “De l’absence de stigmates,” 85.

leave any written record in which he mentioned or explained the event. The gap in the sources has led several historians (e.g. Sabatier and Renan) to question not only the divine nature of the wounds but also the occurrence of the event itself.

In this context, establishing historical evidence or siding with one party or another is not our goal. Whether Francis did or did not have the stigmata is irrelevant. Several scholars have already suggested that the Poverello of Assisi was not the first to have these marks on his body. Richard Trexler has argued that several ascetics before Francis had produced their own stigmata by flogging their bodies in penitential practice, as did the monks Dominic Loricatus (d. 1060) and Stephen of Obazine (1085–1159).<sup>20</sup> Moreover, as early as the seventh century, there are reports of corpses appearing to exhibit the miraculous wounds.<sup>21</sup> For all these cases, however, we cannot speak of stigmatics in the strict sense: at the time, the reference model had not yet been established. Before Francis, therefore, the stigmata had another meaning. The observation of corpses was a widespread practice in the early Christian community and had the function of “verifying” the presence of physical marks which proved the already reputed sanctity of the deceased. “Stigmata” simply meant the miraculous signs which the Lord had impressed on a corpse in order to certify the heroic nature of the living soul’s virtues.<sup>22</sup>

In the case of the monks analysed by Trexler, however, their customs were part of a daily routine of discipline and self-flagellation. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a form of piety that was centred on the humanity of Christ and the redemptive value of suffering began to develop. From the Byzantine realm, the legend of the *Inventio et Exaltatio crucis* began to spread throughout Europe, involving an artistic and cultural shift from *Christus triumphans* to *Christus patiens*. In the devotional field, penitential practices such as temporary inedia, self-flagellation and mortification reflected the new perspective of salvific suffering, which had both individual and collective redemptive value.<sup>23</sup>

In the thirteenth century, the times were culturally and spiritually ripe for the account of the Franciscan friar, Thomas of Celano, who, in his *Vita Prima* (1228–1229),<sup>24</sup> first described how Francis received the sacred stigmata.<sup>25</sup>

20 Trexler, “The Stigmatized Body,” 463–497.

21 Muessing, “L’evoluzione della spiritualità,” 31.

22 Muessig, *Spiritualità delle stigmate*, 31–32, n. 46.

23 Bonetti, *Le stigmate della Passione* (1952), 128–142.

24 Thomas of Celano, “Vita Prima,” and Thomas of Celano, “Vita secunda S. Francisci.”

25 “Cernere mirabile erat in medio manuum et pedum ipsius non clavorum quidem puncturas, sed ipsos clavos ex ejus carne compositos, ferri retenta nigredine.” Thomas of Celano, *Vita Prima*, 88.

According to Celano, while meditating with his most faithful disciples on La Verna (the scenario recalls Jesus' retreat on the Mount of Olives), the Poverello of Assisi received the marks of the Passion on his flesh. The news was received as the "greatest miracle" in late medieval society, but also with reticence and suspicion.<sup>26</sup> Gregory IX did not mention stigmata in the bull in which he decreed the canonization of the saint on 16 July 1228. However, between 1237 and 1291, nine papal bulls sanctioned the authenticity of La Verna's prodigy,<sup>27</sup> with Gregory IX, Alexander IV and Nicholas III all defending the stigmata of the saint from attacks by medieval detractors.<sup>28</sup>

After the *Vita Prima*, the public debate and the canonization, the newly created but already powerful mendicant order commissioned Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (1217/21–1274) – cardinal, theologian and general minister of the Franciscans – to write the official biography of the holy founder.<sup>29</sup> He not only recounted the exemplary life of the Poverello, but *de facto* built the ecclesiastical image of St Francis as a stigmatized saint, indissolubly linking the holiness of Francis to the stigmata. The most evident sign of this exceptional transfiguration were the wounds that had opened on his flesh, reproducing the stigmata of the crucifixion on hands, feet, forehead and chest.<sup>30</sup> They decreed Francis's divine election as *alter Christus*, the first in the history of Christianity.<sup>31</sup>

The central argument of this section, therefore, does not concern the historical authenticity of the stigmatic event but the cultural creation of this model and its impact on society at the time and subsequently. Without Francis, the popular cult of his stigmata and the theological disputation over them, it would be difficult to contextualize the cases that followed or place them under the category of "stigmatics." Starting from the thirteenth century, they had "the meaning of "mark, sign" in the Christian hagiography and mysticism, and are the signs of the wounds of Jesus imprinted in the body of a servant of God."<sup>32</sup> As argued by Carolyn Muessig, in the construction of this definition, the

26 "[...] les stigmates ont été le plus grand des miracles – il y a toujours quelque témérité à classer les œuvres divines – au moins un miracles très grand et très avéré": Le Monnier, "Stigmates de Saint François," 1498.

27 Vauchez, "Les stigmates de saint François," 601–602.

28 Adnès, "Stigmates," 461. More recently, on the occasion of the seventh centenary anniversary of his stigmatization (1924), Pius XI decreed that this "wonder" was a historical fact proven by witnesses worthy of the faith, and therefore a certain and recognized act. Concerning the nature of the phenomenon, however, he added that questions were not allowed, because stigmata are not defined by canonical law or doctrine. *Acta apostolicae sedis, Commentarium Officiale* 16 (1924), 362–365.

29 Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, "Legenda Maior," *Analecta Franciscana*, 10 (1941), 557–652.

30 Muessig, "Signs of Salvation;" Benfatti, *The five wounds of saint Francis*, Chapter 11.

31 Frugoni, *Francesco e l'invenzione delle stimmate*, 150–182.

32 Alliney, "Stimimate," 11, 1342–1347, 1342.

stigmata of St Francis “provide the key to interpreting the successive narratives of other people marked by the same wounds of Christ.”<sup>33</sup> In the first millennium of Christian history, stigmata were thus signs of the crucifixion of Christ, hence proof of his human nature (and not only divine). However, from the Middle Ages, their meaning moved beyond the rigid barrier of this Christocentric theology and were potentially attributable to other exceptional Christians as well: stigmatics were believed to be the privileged bearers of an exceptional charism, a *gratia gratis data* par excellence.<sup>34</sup>

At the end of the Middle Ages, a new type of stigmatization was “invented.” Raymond of Capua, a Dominican friar and hagiographer, reporting the news of the invisible stigmata of St Catherine of Siena (1347–1380) in his *Legenda maior*.<sup>35</sup> However, Catherine of Siena embodied a different model: female, third order and invisible stigmata. As demonstrated by Tamar Herzig,<sup>36</sup> this news provoked heated discussion between the main mendicant orders. While the Franciscans exalted the stigmata of their founder as a unique miracle in the history of Christianity (therefore an exceptional and masculine attribute), the Dominicans proposed Catherine as the female counterpart of St Francis.<sup>37</sup> The debate went on for centuries, and was discussed in theological reflections and papal decrees. The Church was very cautious about recognizing female charismatic authority. While Pius II did not mention the stigmatization of Catherine in the bull announcing her sanctification, the enthusiasm of the faithful gave rise to a form of “deviant devotion” to her, an unauthorized cult of the stigmata.<sup>38</sup> Although the Franciscan pope Sixtus IV attempted to formally prohibit the veneration of the saint of Siena as a stigmatic through a series of papal acts,<sup>39</sup> the cult continued to survive until its formal recognition in 1727.<sup>40</sup> Catherine became the model for several women of the third Dominican order who emulated the life of the saint. Margaret of Hungary (1242–1271), Lucia Brocadelli (1476–1544), Domenica of Paradiso (1473–1553), and a group of

33 Muessig, *Spiritualità delle stimmate*, 21.

34 Tanquerey, *Compendio di Teologia Ascetica*, 1514–1515.

35 Raymond of Capua, “Vita sul profilo innovativo.”

36 Herzig, “Stigmatized holy women.”

37 Cohen, *The Modulated Scream*; and Trexler, *The Stigmatized Body of Francis of Assisi*, 463–477.

38 Herzig reports on the chronicle of Girolamo Albertucci de’ Borselli, who testifies how, during a solemn procession in Bologna, her devotees venerated a painting of her with visible stigmata, Herzig, *Stigmatized holy women*, 156.

39 *Ibidem*.

40 In 1727, Benedict XIII decreed the feast of St Catherine’s stigmata (1 April). Bartolomei Romagnoli, “La disputa sulle stimmate,” 438.

female “living saints” (or “sante vive”)<sup>41</sup> can be considered her spiritual daughters. While Francis was the first *alter Christus*, with Catherine and her emulators, “Christ was transformed into a virgin woman” who carried stigmata.<sup>42</sup>

After the invention of the models of stigmata in the forms of St Francis and Catherine of Siena, the phenomenon of stigmatization expanded on a large scale. Over the centuries, hundreds of cases have been reported. Those who carried the signs of the Passion and exhibited their prodigies to their contemporary community, gaining fame and popularity, were considered by historians and experts in the mystical field as *stigmatics*. The Vatican attitude towards them, however, was much more ambiguous and vague, so much so that they were not catalogued under the stigmatized label. The term appears rarely in the Vatican sources. Thus, it appears that by not using the word, the Church was hoping to deny or, in any case, minimize the phenomenon. While the Vatican sources speak of “stigmata,” that is, of sacred wounds impressed on the body of Jesus, or an exceptional mystical gift granted to a few divinely elected souls, they do not speak of “stigmatics.” From a theological point of view, this attitude emphasizes the wounds, atonement and suffering of the Passion, rather than the bearers themselves. They are, in fact, considered the tools by which the Lord communicates to the faithful.

In a practical sense, the Church could thereby avoid attributing excessive importance to potential “counter-powers.” A reflection in Weberian terms may help to explain this point.<sup>43</sup> While the Holy See is a centuries-old institution based on rational and traditional authority, stigmatics are, on the contrary, a potential living counter-power, endowed with irrational force.<sup>44</sup> In cases in which the stigmatics showed an ambition for charismatic leadership, they benefited from spontaneous recognition and legitimization from below, as their stigmata were popularly considered to be the miraculous proof of their divine election.<sup>45</sup>

The attempt to minimize, hide, or not to speak about stigmata in relation to cases of presumed “living saints” does not in any way mean that the Church has ignored the issue. In the next section, we will see how the Vatican clergy

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41 Zarri, *Le sante vive*.

42 “Ipsium Christum Ihesum in virgine quadam transformatum” as Cardinal Ippolito d’Este wrote. Reference reported by Herzog, *Stigmatized holy women*, 164. On the same topic: Gibson, “Could Christ Have Been Born a Woman?”

43 Weber, *Economy*.

44 Weber, *Economy*, 54–56, 241–246, 1163–1166.

45 On the “routinization” of charisma and the institutional process developed by the Church, see Stark, “The Routinization;” Lemmen, *Max Weber’s Sociology of Religion*, 135–152 and Lüdecke, “Heiligsprechung.”



dealt with the stigmatics, especially from the sixteenth century onwards, when their numbers grew increasingly.

## 2.2 *The Early Modern Period: The Age of Control*

As we saw in the previous section, after the “invention” of the stigmata of St Francis and the codification of the female, invisible and less exceptional model of St Catherine, the number of stigmatics and “living saints” grew. Some of them gained fame and celebrity, and were considered worthy of worship by some. In contrast, the Vatican clergy saw them as a potential problem to be solved, and did so by controlling their devotional following and investigating their prodigies. Stigmata and visible mystical phenomena were elements to which the Church paid more attention, also being prepared to take more severe measures. In particular, in the early modern period there were two aspects that led the Roman curia to take action against aspiring saints: (1) their increasing number and (2) the Catholic reforms to holiness, cult and devotion.

At the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, many “holy women” were reported in Italy. Through the divine graces they showed, they became religious celebrities in their time. They were called “sante vive”<sup>46</sup> by both the people and the sovereigns of the Italian states, with the latter even competing to host one of these charismatic women at their court. In addition to political prophecies and divine visions, one of the exceptional charismata of which they were equipped was the display of stigmata. Despite their success and fame during their lifetime, only some of these women were canonized by the Church.<sup>47</sup> However, as demonstrated by Zarri, it is not officially recognized holiness that assists historians in understanding the popular perception of sanctity in a specific period.<sup>48</sup> The exceptionality of the “canonized” and “living saints” (which sometimes coincide) of the early modern period indicate to us that at the time miraculous events and apocalyptic and prophetic announcements were abundant, being promulgated by a large number of people, especially women, both nuns and lay.

The Holy See was concerned about the high number of “living saints,” their charismatic authority and their popular reputation. In particular, it wanted to suppress the binomial *vox populi, vox Dei*. At the Council of Trent (1545–1563), the Catholic Church dogmatically decreed the validity of Catholic saints, clarifying

46 Zarri, *Le sante vive*, 11.

47 Veronica Neroni (1445–1497), Osanna Andreasi (1449–1505), Stefana Quinzani (1457–1530), Angelella Colomba Guadagnoli (1467–1501), Lucia Brocadelli (1476–1544), Caterina Mattei (1486–1547).

48 Zarri, *Le sante vive*, 11–13.

those aspects of true and false sanctity, and the procedures for canonization.<sup>49</sup> The goal was twofold: on the one hand, the decrees supported the cult of saints and their relics, which were being challenged by the Lutherans; and, on the other hand, they wished to marginalize the role of the faithful and the diocesan authorities in addressing the theme of holiness.<sup>50</sup> For these reasons, two congregations were created for the control of the sacred and aspiring “living saints:” (1) the Roman Inquisition<sup>51</sup> and (2) the Sacred Congregation for Rites.<sup>52</sup>

In 1542, Pope Paul III created the modern Roman Inquisition with the purpose of “judging all crimes against the faith throughout the entire Catholic world.”<sup>53</sup> Among the crimes that someone could be accused of by this tribunal was the category of “living saints,” who could be found guilty of “*affettata santità*” (aspiring to holiness), that is, simulating holiness by demonstrating divine gifts that were in fact fraudulent attempts to obtain personal benefit.<sup>54</sup> Faking divine gifts and charisms such as prophetic and miraculous abilities was considered to be a crime in canon law, inasmuch as it was against the principles

49 Waterworth, *The canons* (1848); *Sacrosancti Concilii Tridentini, Canones e decreta*, s. 25, 233–236.

50 Woodward, *Making saints*, 98–99.

51 From its foundation (1542) until 1908, it assumed the Latin name, *Congregatio Romanae et Universalis Inquisitionis* (in Italian, *Sacra Congregazione della Romana e Universale Inquisizione*, better known as *Santa Inquisizione*; in English, *Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Roman and Universal Inquisition*, or *Roman Inquisition*). From 1908 until 1965, it was called *Sacra Congregatio Sancti Officii* (in Italian, *Sacra Congregazione del Sant’Uffizio*, or *Sant’Uffizio/Sant’Officio*; in English, *Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office*, or *Holy Office*). In 1965, it took its current name, *Congregatio pro Doctrina Fidei* (in Italian, *Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede*; in English, *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*).

52 It was founded in 1588 and had the Latin name of *Congregatio pro sacri ritibus et caeremoniis*, or was simply known as *Congregatio rituum* (in Italian, *Congregazione dei Riti*; in English, *Sacred Congregation of Rites*). From 1969, it changed its name to *Congregatio de causis Sanctorum* (in Italian, *Congregazione delle cause dei santi*; in English, *Congregation for the Causes of Saints*).

53 Borromeo, “La congregazione cardinalizia dell’Inquisizione,” 328. The programmatic manifesto, with the aims and objectives of the Vatican congregation, is contained in Paul III’s bull incipit of *Licet ab initio* (1542): “*Licet ab initio nostrae ad summi apostolatus apicem assumptionis id semper nobis cordi fixum institerit, ut fides catholica ubique floureret et augetur, ac omnis haeretica pravitas a christifidelibus nostra diligentia procul pelleretur, necnon diabolica fraude seducti viam veritatis cognoscerent, et ad gremium et unitatem ecclesiae reducerentur; et si qui, animi preverisitate ducti, in eorum damnato proposito persisterent, ita plecterentur, ut eorum poena aliis transiret in exemplum.*” *Gaude, Bullarum diplomatum et privilegiorum sanctorum romanorum pontificum taurinensis editio locupletior facta collectione novissima plurium brevium, epistolarum, decretorum actorumque S. Sedis a S. Leone Magnus usque ad praesens* (1860), 344–346, 344.

54 Jacobson Schutte, “Finzione di santità,” 601–604 and Jacobson Schutte, *Aspiring Saints, passim*.

of true holiness established by the ecumenical Council of Trent.<sup>55</sup> Among the preternatural phenomena, stigmata were considered one of the most dangerous, described as “fictions, hypocrisies, and artifices” operated by fraudsters, with the aim of creating inappropriate and cunning sanctity.<sup>56</sup> In 1588, the *Congregatio pro sacri ritibus et caeremoniis* was established by Pope Sixtus v, with the aim of regulating liturgical worship, the organization of pontifical ceremonies and, above all, the causes of canonization in the Catholic Church (the latter became the only object of interest in the seventeenth century). In the sixteenth century, attempts were already being made to oppose the opening of those processes of beatification in which the prodigious and charismatic element of the individual and his/her particular experience were exhorted, rather than their remarkable Christian virtues.

Ecclesiastical control led, on the one hand, to the negative labelling of visible mystical phenomena and, on the other, to the promotion of the cult of stigmatics whose profile perfectly followed the guidelines decreed by the Church.<sup>57</sup> In the age of Catholic Reformation (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), and later that of Enlightened Catholicism<sup>58</sup> (eighteenth century), there were several privileged bearers, but only those who passed the test of a rigorous religious process were declared worthy of official veneration.<sup>59</sup> If and how stigmata have influenced the cause of canonization, and how the cult of these saints created forms of emulation have yet to be investigated.

Despite the ecclesiastical measures of censorship and control, popular devotion to mystics carrying the stigmata was still alive in the seventeenth century. This piety perfectly accorded with the late Baroque mystic model.<sup>60</sup> In the final decades of the century, the number of “living saints” and charismatic

55 Gotor, *I beati del papa*.

56 Biondi, “L'inordinata devozione,” 320.

57 See, for example, the harsh condemnation of the Roman Inquisition in the work of Ioannes de Hibernia, entitled: “L'Exercitia, causae et effectus stigmatum à Satana impressorum” (ff. 241–242); and the anonymous volume, “De notis, et stigmatibus in corpore personarum de maleficio accusatarum repertis, utrum solae faciant indicium ad torturam et quibus iudiciis concurrentibus e utrum sufficiant ad condemnationem” (ff. 243–244). ACDF, St.St. O 2 m 14, ff. 241–244.

58 On the term, “Enlightened Catholicism,” see Manzoni, *Il cattolicesimo illuminato*.

59 Some of the most famous stigmatized saints lived or were canonized between the age of the (Counter)Reform and the baroque: Rita of Cascia (1381–1457: b. 1628, c. 1900); Catherine of Ricci (1522–1570: b. 1732, c. 1746); Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi (1566–1607: b. 1628, c. 1669); Charles of Sezze (1613–1670: b. 1882, c. 1959); Veronica Giuliani (1660–1727: b. 1804, c. 1831).

60 Caffiero, “Dall'esplosione mistica,” 344 (an English version is available in *Women and faith. Catholic religious life in Italy from late antiquity to the present*, Cambridge-London, Harvard University Press, 1999).

leaders increased again, as did the concern of the ecclesiastical leaders. The majority of clergymen criticized the belief in stigmata and mystical phenomena as irrational devotion and took their distance from them. This modern and rational current of Catholicism spread in the eighteenth century and shows the triumph of the enlightened clergy.

The greatest innovation of the eighteenth century in this field can be attributed to Cardinal Prospero Lambertini, the future Pope Benedict XIV, who worked on the monumental *De servorum Dei beatificatione et beatorum canonizatione* (1734–1738).<sup>61</sup> In this study, he rationalized the procedure for the election of saints, redefining the criteria used by the Sacred Congregation of Rites. He decreed that miracles were essential, the *conditio sine qua non* for ascension to glory, and he anchored holiness in the more “objective” data of “heroic virtues.” It was officially determined that the holy candidate had to prove they possessed heroic (i.e. at the maximum) levels of the three theological virtues (faith, hope and charity) and the four moral values (prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance).<sup>62</sup> In what has been called “the first monumental history of canonized holiness in the modern age,”<sup>63</sup> the Enlightenment clergyman opposed mystical-visionary religious manifestations – especially women’s – with a “regolata devozione” (“regulated devotion,” i.e. a piety in line with the established canons).<sup>64</sup> This represented a rational, ascetic and sober vision of faith. The hagiographic production, and therefore the texts selected to support the process of the canonization of the servants of God, was founded on philological research typical of the *Acta Sanctorum* of Bollandist friars and on the modern historical method introduced by Antonio Muratori.<sup>65</sup> Predominantly, there was a basic refusal to accept legendary lives of saints based on tradition and hagiographies, in favour of primary and verified sources.

This revolutionary change did not condemn the stigmata *in re ipsa*, which indeed continued to be potentially accepted as *gratia gratis data*.<sup>66</sup> However, along with ecstasies, visions and supernatural manifestations, they were definitively judged not to be proof of holiness.<sup>67</sup> Instead of two explanations of

61 Lambertini, *De Servorum Dei Beatificatione* (1841), 3 vols.

62 Woodward, *Making Saints*, 393.

63 Gotor, *Chiesa e santità*, 120.

64 Rosa, “Prospero Lambertini.”

65 Biondi, “Gli eretici modenesi nell’opera.”

66 “Gratia vero gratis data est ipsa quoque donum supra naturam gratis a Deoconcessum, quod non facit per se gratum habentem illud, sed quod principaliter referitur ad aliorum utilitatem,” Lambertini, *De Servorum Dei*, liber III, caput XLI, 503.

67 Woodward, *Making Saints*, 163–164.

such cases, there were now three, with mental illness (the famous hysteria)<sup>68</sup> now added to the classical dichotomy between human or preternatural cause (divine or diabolic). Thus, as pointed out by Marina Caffiero, the anti-feminine mistrust moved by the erudite and rationalist fringe of clergymen led to an actual “block [of] suspect canonizations.”<sup>69</sup> This fundamental tendency seems to have also affected – and perhaps above all – the approved stigmatized saints, as in the case of Clare of Montefalco (1268–1308, whose sanctification was only approved by Leo XIII in 1881).<sup>70</sup> Other processes of canonization were, however, carried forward and ancient questions resolved,<sup>71</sup> but in no case was there an official recognition of the stigmata. On the contrary, on 27 April 1796, concerning the stigmata of Veronica Giuliani (1660–1727), Pope Pius VI declared that it was not up to the Church to rule on their nature, but left the question open to the faithful and scholars.<sup>72</sup> This trend of suspicion, control and censorship continued to predominate in the Holy See, and became even more severe in the following centuries with the increase in the number of cases.

### 2.3 *The “Golden age” of Stigmatics: The Debate about Stigmata in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*

Although the cases of stigmatization appear to have been reported throughout the centuries, leading us to conceive that there was a continuation of the phenomenon without interruption, in some epochs their number was decidedly higher than in others. Significantly, rather than attesting to specific moments of political and socio-economic crisis, these peaks seem to be a response to a previous period of “persecution” of mysticism and “deviant devotion” to, or the emulation of, famous cases.<sup>73</sup> As we have seen in the previous section, the strict measures taken in the epoch of the Counter Reformation did not prove sufficient to halt mystical cases in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The

68 As early as 1729, in the Vatican and diocesan investigation of the stigmatized Lucrezia Gambarà (1704–1737), the local inquisitor and doctors used the term “pazza,” that is, they considered her a young woman with a mental illness affected by hysteria. ACDF, Stanza Storica by St.St. f. 18 r and Queriniana Library, Brescia (BsBCQ), Ms\* L.II.13, Processo della causa di Lucrezia Gambarà d’Alfianello, c. 124.

69 Caffiero, *From the Late Baroque*, 188.

70 *Il processo di canonizzazione di Chiara da Montefalco*, edited by Enrico Menestò, 434–436.

71 For example, the recognition in 1727 of the feast of the stigmatization of St Catherine (1 April) by Pope Benedict XIII.

72 de Pobladora, “Los procesos de beatificación,” 448 and Adnès, *Stigmates*, 1232.

73 See, for example, the Italian emulators or “spiritual followers,” as they called themselves, of Gemma Galgani and Padre Pio, who were copiously reported on after public debate about their stigmata. Moreover, the element of influence played a central role in the creation of the “cloister”. See Chapter 1.

same occurred with the enlightened Catholic reforms and their attempt to “rationalize” popular piety.

An increasing number of stigmatics (as category) were recorded in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the context of the revitalization of religion and a more tolerant position of the Church with respect to miracles, mysticism and popular devotion, hundreds of cases were reported across Europe. Because of their high number, and the fame and popularity they gained, we can label these centuries the “golden age” of stigmatics.<sup>74</sup> While other scholars have already provided various interpretations and explanations for this growth in the phenomenon of stigmatization in late modernity,<sup>75</sup> in this chapter our goal is to consider the relationship between the Vatican and stigmatics. Before analysing the ecclesiastical strategy used to deal with them in detail, we want to focus on two themes that played a central role in the Church’s perception of stigmata: (1) the modern use and restoration of the cult of St Francis, and (2) the politicization of religion in the context of secularization.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, an important event rekindled public interest in the saint with stigmata par excellence, and therefore in the phenomenon of stigmata *tout court*. In 1818, the remains of St Francis were found. The news resonated throughout Europe, with the Franciscan order and clerics making additional efforts to spread his cult, while historians and lay scholars also began to study his life. Karl von Hase (1856),<sup>76</sup> Ernest Renan (1866)<sup>77</sup> and Paul Sabatier (1893)<sup>78</sup> all rewrote the life of St Francis from a historical-scientific perspective rather than taking an apologetic-hagiographic approach. As a result, his existence was divested of its mystical and exceptional phenomena, with Francis’ stigmata interpreted in different ways: as illness, posthumous literary invention, or a scam operated within the Order.<sup>79</sup> Starting with the Poverello of Assisi himself, doctors and scholars raised numerous doubts about the phenomena that were considered miraculous by the Church. The notion of his holiness was also challenged. The Holy See intervened in this cultural battle with the help of numerous Catholic writers and elements of the

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74 See Chapter 1.

75 For a summary of different explanations and theories, see Van Osselaer, “Stigmatic women,” 270–271.

76 von Hase, *Franz von Assisi* (1856).

77 Renan, “Saint François d’Assise, étude historique d’après le Dr. Karl Hase,” *Journal des Débats* (August 20–21 1866) (repr. in *Nouvelles études d’histoire religieuse* (1884), 323–351). See also a modern edition, Renan, *Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. H. Psichari, vol. VII, 919–935.

78 Sabatier, *Vie de S. François d’Assise* (1893). Concerning Francis’ stigmata, “Étude critique sur le stigmates et sur l’indulgence du 2 août: Les stigmates,” 401–412.

79 Frugoni, *Francesco e l’invenzione delle stimmate*.

media.<sup>80</sup> However, it also became even more cautious in accepting potentially mystical and preternatural elements, and in relation to St Francis only recognized his stigmata in the form of several liturgical celebrations (e.g. for the centenaries of his birth, stigmatization and death). The Poverello affair, analysed in a broader framework, granted the opportunity for modern society to reflect on the themes of sanctity and stigmata.<sup>81</sup>

The second element that played a key role in the evolution of stigmatics is linked to one of the master narratives of the religious and political history of the nineteenth century, namely secularization,<sup>82</sup> and the conservative reaction of the Church.<sup>83</sup> In opposition to the secularization of politics and society, “from the end of the eighteenth century until Vatican Council II, the Church encouraged the miraculous as a way of defending the supernatural against the scepticism generated by the Enlightenment.”<sup>84</sup> The Holy See sought to politicize the faith and above all popular devotional practices (Sacred Heart, Marian apparitions, the martyr pope), with the aim of re-converting society to Catholic values.<sup>85</sup> Although the prophetic-apocalyptic messages of some visionaries were supported,<sup>86</sup> as well as some charismatic figures, stigmata continued to remain taboo for the Holy See, to be hidden or suspected as a crime to be investigated. Of the three saints<sup>87</sup> and fifteen blessed<sup>88</sup> who had stigmata between the end of the eighteenth and the first half of the twentieth

80 See, for example, the articles that appeared in *La Civiltà Cattolica* at the end of the nineteenth century, which do not hesitate to denote non-Catholic historians as “Satanic,” Anonymous, “Del Satanismo ai nostri tempi,” *Civ. Cat.* 31, 3 (1880), 129–142.

81 Appelbaum, “St. Francis,” and Bortolussi, *Le stigmatate*.

82 On the difficult relationship between the Church, modern states and secularization in Italy, see Menozzi, *Cristianesimo*; Menozzi, *La Chiesa cattolica*, 34–55, 136–144; Menozzi, “La risposta alla secolarizzazione,” Traniello, *Religione*; Miccoli, “Chiesa.”

83 Cox, “Secularization;” Cox, *Master Narratives*; Brown, *The Secularization Decade*, 29–46.

84 Woodward, *Making Saints*, 164.

85 On the conflict between Church and secularized society, especially in the Italian context, see Miccoli, “Chiesa e società;” and Traniello, *Religione cattolica*; Menozzi, *Sacro Cuore*; Menozzi, “Contro la secolarizzazione.”

86 Curicque, *Voix prophetiques* (1872); Caffiero, “La fine del mondo.”

87 Anna Maria Nicoletta Gallo (1775–1791: 1843), Gemma Galgani (1878–1903: 1940), Anna Schäffer (1882–1925: 2012), and Francesco Forgione alis Padre Pio (1887–1968: 2002).

88 Elisabetta Canori Mora (1774–1825: 1994), Anna Katharina Emmerick (1774–1824), Anna Maria Taigi (1769–1837: 1920), Gertrude Prosperi (1799–1847: 2011), Anna Rosa Gattorno (1831–1900: 2000), Maria Maddalena Starace (1845–1921: 2007), Teresa Adelaide Manetti (1846–1910: 1986), Maria Grazia Tarallo (1866–1912: 2006), María Josefa Alhama Valera (1893–1983: 2014), Elena Aiello (1895–1961: 2011), Itala Mela (1904–1957: 1976), María Pilar Izquierdo (1906–1945: 2001), Lucila González María de Jesús (1908–1936: 2007), and Maria Bolognesi (1924–1980: 2013). As noted above, these numbers refer to the five countries we studied.

century, only four were popularly well known (both in the trial rooms and the public sphere) as bearers of the signs of the Lord's Passion.<sup>89</sup> In some cases, this was due to the incidental occurrence of the phenomenon (occurring on only a few occasions and without great fame, or otherwise invisible) and the greater relevance of other charisms (charity to the poor and sick, heroic mothers, suffering victims, prophets and miracle workers). In other cases, however, the Holy See succeeded in its deliberate attempts to obscure and minimize the phenomenon during the lives of these people (controlling the Catholic mass media, not giving the imprimatur to suspicious articles or devotional images, or censoring them).

If, after their death, their *fama sanctitatis* remained in their communities, the cause of beatification – and ultimately even sanctification – was opened without any importance being given, and thus omitting any reference, to stigmata and phenomena that were considered embarrassing to the Church. Under the pontificates of John Paul II (1978–2005), Benedict XVI (2005–2013) and Francis I (2013–present), the prudence shown by the Church towards presumed charismatics and miracle workers has remained high. Cults and their leaders that had not yet been formally recognized, were now ignored, if not suspected or found fraudulent.<sup>90</sup> However, other stigmatics were better received and found acceptance. This was the case with Padre Pio, who enjoyed great support and consideration under the pontificates of the popes mentioned above. The same can be said for Anna Katharina Emmerick (1774–1824),<sup>91</sup> Anna Rosa Gattorno (1831–1900)<sup>92</sup> and Maria Faustina Kowalska (1905–1938).<sup>93</sup> In their cases, the Church recognized their stigmata (visible in Padre Pio's and Emmerick's cases, while invisible for the others) without, however, expressing a theological or dogmatic opinion about their nature, simply defining them as a "gift."<sup>94</sup> Should we consider this a sign of a new Vatican trend? We will return to this below.

In the history of the relationship between the Church and stigmata, the Vatican decisions taken in the dogmatic and theological context are of central

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89 They are Padre Pio, Elena Aiello, Anna Katharina Emmerick and Maria Bolognesi.

90 Such as Angelo Giardino (1906–1979), Antonio Ruffini (1907–?), Erminia Brunetti (1914–1990), Natuzza Evolo (1924–2005) and Gigliola Ebe Giorgini (1933–).

91 [http://www.vatican.va/news\\_services/liturgy/saints/ns\\_lit\\_doc\\_20041003\\_emmerick\\_it.html](http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_20041003_emmerick_it.html).

92 [http://www.vatican.va/news\\_services/liturgy/saints/ns\\_lit\\_doc\\_20000409\\_beat-Gattorno\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_20000409_beat-Gattorno_en.html).

93 [http://www.vatican.va/news\\_services/liturgy/saints/ns\\_lit\\_doc\\_20000430\\_faustina\\_it.html](http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_20000430_faustina_it.html).

94 "[...] the gift of hidden stigmata," see links in n. 92 and 93 above.



importance; however, we cannot avoid broader reflection, which includes other agents involved in the matter. From the father confessor to the parish priest, from the spiritual director to the diocesan bishop, from the regional inquisitor to the local clergy, all had a role in the issue.<sup>95</sup> The strategies they used can be divided into three main categories: support, condemnation or simply ignoring the issue. These different *modi operandi* could be adopted either during the life or after the death of a stigmatic. In the first case, they could, for example, benefit from the support of the spiritual father and local clergy, as well as the lay faithful; or, in contrast, be subjected to a trial at a diocesan (bishop's investigation) or central (by Holy Office) level. Alternatively, stigmatics might live their mystical experience in isolation, without attracting the attention of the religious authorities, perhaps spending their life within the walls of their own home or monastery.

After their death these dynamics could continue either in the same way or evolve in other directions. The memory of a stigmatic could fall into oblivion or, the reverse, retain or even gain in fame and popularity, prompting the faithful to ask the diocesan bishop to open a process of beatification. If their *fama sanctitatis* continued and a group of people or a religious order was willing to pay the costs and endure the long process *iter*, then the investigation could be opened. Divided into various and elaborate steps, this process could end in the official recognition of the sanctity of the stigmatic, or could be interrupted, thus blocking any formal legitimization.

These dual pathways, divided between the life and afterlife of stigmatics, was not only present at the diocesan ecclesiastic level, but it was even more elaborate in the Roman curia. In the early modern period, the Church had already developed systems of control through two formal congregations. In the nineteenth and especially in the twentieth century, both of them were reorganized, each taking a more severe approach to dealing with stigmatics.

### 3 Examining Stigmatics

#### 3.1 *Stigmatics under Investigation during Their Lives*

It is not a coincidence that the statutes, procedures and composition of the Holy Office were profoundly transformed during an era that has been called a period of "overflowing mysticism."<sup>96</sup> Above, we saw how the number of stig-

95 Van Osselaer, Smeyers and Rossi, "Fates and faiths intertwined."

96 The inquisitor, Donzella, used these terms when speaking about the case of the alleged stigmatic, Esterina Moriconini, in December 1924, Archive of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (ACDF), *Rerum Variorum*, 4, 482/1923, 54.

matics increased during the nineteenth century and in the first part of the twentieth, when it reached its peak. While the previous pages reflected on the themes of the ecclesiastical debate about stigmata, in the following we consider how the Church, through the congregation of the Holy Office, sought to downplay and censure the fame and popularity gained by “living saints” who bore stigmata.

The reform season started with the *Sapienti Consilio* of 29 June 1908,<sup>97</sup> through which the name of the congregation was changed from the Roman Inquisition to the Holy Office (Sant’Uffizio).<sup>98</sup> In the same year, the *Normae peculiares* formalized the internal structure, the members who would take part and the procedures.<sup>99</sup> The *Lex et Ordo Supremae Sacrae Congregationis S. Officii* of 1911 represents the most significant revision, although minor changes to the text were made until 1917.<sup>100</sup> The pope was reconfirmed as the supreme summit of the restructured congregation, which retained the epithet of *Suprema*, as it was considered the most important among the Vatican congregations. In addition to the pope, a group of cardinals were selected as “general inquisitors,” and there were a number of specialized figures who had different functions (councillors, secretaries, commissioners, consultants, tax lawyers, advocates for justice, notaries, etc.).<sup>101</sup> The weekly agenda was rigorously planned and examined in special meetings called *feriae*. The consultors (external clergymen called on to inform the members of the congregation on specific cases) met on Monday (*feria II*), the cardinals on Wednesday (*feria IV*), the particular congress (only the members of the Sant’Uffizio could participate) on Fridays or on Saturday (*feria III*), while the councillor went every Thursday to report and to seek approval from the Supreme Pontiff (*feria V*).<sup>102</sup>

The most significant change from the procedural point of view was a shift from a judicial process to an administrative one. Contrary to what one might think, this did not reflect a simple modernization due to changes in contemporary society (in which the Church had in fact lost all temporal authority and

97 *Acta Sanctae Sedis*, 1908, 41, 425–440.

98 Borromeo, *La congregazione cardinalizia*, 327; and Castelli, *La Lex et ordo*, 117. It was again modified in 1965 by Paul VI in the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

99 *Acta Sanctae Sedis*, 41, 1908, 707–712.

100 ACDF, *Rerum Variorum* 1916, 8, Dei delitti di competenza del Sant’Uffizio e delle irregolarità riservate al Sant’Ufficio. We find important information in this archival folder. If the most intense and decisive years of reform were those between 1911 and 1917, the internal modernization of the Congregation was already perceived as a problem at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the 1930s, the inquisitors continued to revise – albeit with minimal changes – the organization and functioning of the Holy Office.

101 Castelli, *Padre Pio*, 16–17.

102 *Ibidem*.

therefore the right to intervene against lay citizens), but rather a reinforcement of inquisitorial power. Administrative practice, contrary to a penal approach, did not entail the opening of a formal process in which the offender was called to appear before the court accompanied by a lawyer, with witnesses appearing in his/her favour, and evidence presented to support his/her position. Instead, all trials ceased and the inquisitors decided on the mystical phenomena of the presumed bearer without allowing them to explain or defend themselves. In many cases, they did not even know the reasons why they were condemned by the *Suprema*, with the verdict unquestionable and the details secret.<sup>103</sup>

In the meetings held by the cardinals to discuss the changes to the congregation, the type of crimes to be investigated was one of the most important and recurrent issues. In particular, the crime of aspiration to holiness (*Simulatio sanctitatis et peculiarumum divinorum charismatum*) was presented and perceived as one of the most serious (in the sources it is called “delitto,” i.e. murder).<sup>104</sup> Investigating the exceptional graces of Ester Moriconi (1875–1937), Father Donzella – expressing the common ecclesiastical attitude – pointed out the need to halt the disturbing “overflowing mysticism” occurring in contemporary society. The increase in the number of stigmatics in the nineteenth century now alarmed the Vatican curia at the beginning of the twentieth century, forcing the clergy to take severe measures to contain the spread of unapproved cults.

If we consider how the policy was used over a hundred and fifty years, we can see important changes. Moreover, it is important to note that these changes were not sudden or dependent on specific decrees or acts. They were gradual and sometimes contradictory, based more often on the example of previous cases investigated rather than on regulations or general instructions about how to prosecute the crime. As deduced from the sources preserved in the Vatican archives, we can trace an evolution with three trends. Firstly, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Roman Inquisition – despite virtually claiming authority over the entire Catholic society – controlled the cases of mysticism and alleged holiness reported within the diocese of Rome and in the Papal States. The goal of the inquisitors was to punish specific suspect cases, especially charismatic religious women who claimed divine gifts with which they created a belief in their own living holiness. However, there does not seem have been a concern about the general diffusion of the phenomenon: it was not yet perceived as a problem.

103 Billanovich, “Una nuova invasione mistica,” 43–45.

104 ACDF, *Rerum Variorum*, 1916, 8, Elenco dei delitti di competenza del Sant’Offizio, f. 4 r.

Secondly, while the situation changed progressively, by the middle of the century, and especially around the 1870s, the Church became aware of the dangers of the charismatic authority of “living saints,” which could not always be routinized and officially recognized within the models of canonical sanctity. Thirdly, the reforms of the 1910s and the considerable increase in the number of cases marked an evolution in the *modus operandi* of the Holy Office, which completely centralized competences in relation to such cases (taking powers from local clergy and bishops). In the following, we will explain these trends through the examination of specific cases.

Although the Roman Inquisition had, since the sixteenth century, the task of combatting false sanctity throughout Catholic society in order to defend the canonized models of holiness, other authorities continued to play a fundamental role in the affair. As we have already mentioned, the bishops, the local clergy and tribunals of local inquisitions (47 throughout the Italian states) all had the right and duty to intervene.<sup>105</sup> The Roman court functioned as a “common” local court, judging the cases of mystical aspirants reported within the confines of the Papal States. Only in certain cases would the Church deal with “living saints” beyond its own borders, either because they were particularly serious and difficult to judge or because the local courts asked for help. According to data collected by Jacobson Schutte, there were over 88 cases of presumed mysticism between 1580 and 1758 that underwent judicial process (38 men and 50 women),<sup>106</sup> while Gottor refers to 120 cases.<sup>107</sup> In the papers kept in the archive of the congregation, we do not see the number of stigmatics increase at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Following a centuries-old tradition, other powers continued to deal with “living saints.” In the procedural documents, we find cases reported in the Papal States (such as Maria Agnese Firrao<sup>108</sup> and Maria Bordoni),<sup>109</sup> while other Italian cases were not examined within the Vatican. Significant examples of the latter are Maria Rosa Serra, Maria Domenica Lazzeri and the stigmatics of Tyrol in general: despite the international attention, the incredible number of pilgrims and the public and

105 Del Col, *L'Inquisizione*, 730–737.

106 Jacobson Schutte, *Pretense of holiness in Italy*, 95–96.

107 Gottor, *Chiesa e santità*, 113.

108 ACDF, St. St. 50 B 6 a, Causa c. le monache e direttori del moansterio di S Ambrogio in Roma dette Riformate del terz'ordine di S Francesco.

109 ACDF, (C 4 i), 1, Fano e Fossombrone n.16, Contra p. Danianum de Urbana de pretensibus spectantibus. Contra Mariam Tiberini viduam Bordoni aliosque complices. Contra Raphaelmem Mansaura laicum Philippinum. Contra Annam Marosini, n. 173, 1851, ff. 1 r–35 v.

media debate, the Vatican leaders did not feel the need to intervene, allowing the problem to be addressed by the competent local religious authorities.

If we exclude the cases of Anna Katharina Emmerick (1774–1824)<sup>110</sup> and Louise Lateau (1850–1883),<sup>111</sup> who were not really investigated but rather merely made known to the Vatican clergy, the first stigmatic who was examined by the Roman Inquisition after the union of the Kingdom of Italy and the end of the temporal power of the Church was Palma Matarrelli (1825–1888).<sup>112</sup> Her case is particularly important because it shows us that from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, the Roman Inquisition claimed leadership, to the detriment of other authorities, in dealing with stigmatics, ecstasies and visionaries.

Matarrelli was a widow from Oria (a small town in southern Italy). Thus she was born in a territory that was not under Vatican control and the local bishop did not ask for any help from the Roman curia. At the age of 33 she received the stigmata (1858), and through the complicity of her spiritual fathers she became famous as “Beata Palma.” Subsequently, Oria was overrun by the curious and the faithful, which prompted the public authorities to take action, with Matarrelli isolated in a private location where strangers could not visit her. Despite this, no official investigation was initiated by the local clergy, who continued to defend the divine nature of the graces of the charismatic woman.

News of the Apulian mystic only reached Rome in 1869, when her father confessor asked for the imprimatur of his work on an imminent publication dedicated to the “living saint.” The inquisitors thus investigated her mystical phenomena by sending a clergyman to Oria and claiming superior authority over the local bishop. Matarrelli’s case reveals how the attitude of the Holy Office changed in the second half of the nineteenth century, with the Church wishing to impose canonized cults and devotional models. This meant that “living saints” could not claim recognition of their charisms without the permission of the Holy See, while local religious authorities were also obliged to follow Vatican guidance. Of the 156 cases opened by the Holy Office to investigate the crime of simulated sanctity during this period, 89 concerned Italy and 67 involved other European nations.<sup>113</sup> These figures show that (1) the Church

110 ACDF, SO, St. St., C6 g, Manoscritto anonimo contenente la vita di Anna Caterina Emmerick.

111 ACDF, St. St. C 4 – f, g Pretesa stigmatizzata Luisa Lateau di Bois d’Haine.

112 Castelli, “Per una definizione;” Klaniczay, “The Stigmatized Italian Visionary.”

113 Fassanelli, “Mentre vediamo che un falso misticismo,” 90–91.

was especially interested in controlling the faith in Italy and (2) the Holy Office worked as a national and international congregation beyond the Vatican boundaries. The goal of the Roman clergy was to claim the highest competence in matters of worship and holiness, not only virtually but also *de facto*.

The tendency towards centralization and bureaucratization of the Vatican offices was completed in the decade between 1908 and 1917. In the early part of the twentieth century, the Holy Office claimed complete control over investigations and the monitoring of stigmatics. As discussed above, these reforms gave the Holy Office more power, imposing its rules on bishops and diocesan clergymen. In the cases involving the religious (especially those who lived inside the Vatican City or in a convent protected by papal rules), rather than laypeople, its authority was basically unlimited. This is evident, for example, in the affair of Ester Moriconi (1875–1937), a stigmatized Augustinian nun. In her case, the cardinals decreed perpetual isolation in an asylum for the rest of her life.

However, and despite the great power it held through its prestige and the reforms of the 1910s, the Holy Office did not gain complete control over “living saints” and their cults. Other, including traditional, religious authorities, and above all the diocesan bishops, as well as other agents such as the faithful, the media and the scientific community, still claimed the right to intervene. In 1926, the Franciscan scientist and friar, Agostino Gemelli (1878–1959), sent a letter of complaint to the Holy Office about a young lay girl, Elena Aiello (1895–1961). Gemelli was not an official member of the Holy Office, but he was an important clergyman. He had decided to track down stigmatics and “living saints” personally, with the mission of scientifically demonstrating the non-miraculous nature of their charismata. The inquisitors had begun investigating her case but had not given him any specific task, demonstrating they did not appreciate external influence and had not asked for his expertise.

Aiello had become famous for her stigmata, which were exceptionally bloody and sensational, first appearing in Lent 1923. Many laypeople, doctors and journalists subsequently arrived in her small village in the province of Cosenza (Calabria). Although the Holy Office was reticent and critical, the local clergy and the bishop supported Aiello, helping her found the Order of Minims of Our Lord Jesus Christ for the assistance of orphans. She had thus become a notorious religious celebrity. Endowed with charisms, such as stigmata and prophetic skills, venerated as a “living saint” by her own community, protected by the civil authorities due to her social and humanitarian commitment, Aiello could not be so easily condemned by the Holy Office. There is information on her in the Holy Office archive dated until 1939, after which the

file is inaccessible.<sup>114</sup> We can assume that her public status was so great that the inquisitors preferred to halt any investigation, giving her fame as a “living saint” the opportunity to spread.

Thus, in general, the Church sought to put an end to the alarming rise in stigmatics and their unapproved cults through reforms and strict measures. However, despite its commitment to the centralization of authority and skills, the Roman curia failed to achieve its desired goal, as popular devotion to “living saints” continued and in some cases this occurred despite condemnation by the Holy See. If their *fama sanctitatis* survived after their death, it was even possible that the Vatican would change its former negative attitude towards them, permitting their cult and sometimes providing official recognition of their sanctity.

### 3.2 *The Afterlife of Stigmatics: Damnatio Memoriae or Canonization?*

If the Aiello case shows the limits of the centralization of the Vatican congregations and the survival of other agents with power in relation to the subject, it is also useful when analysing the story of stigmatics in their afterlife. As mentioned above, while the Holy Office opened an investigation of Aiello, the support of the local clergy and the people never faltered. This allowed her to found and expand her institute, and to develop into what we might call a “heroine” of her city. After her death, her reputation for holiness was not forgotten, but instead was fuelled by hagiographies, other publications and supporters. The doubts and perplexities that had concerned the inquisitors in previous years vanished, and her beatification process was finally opened and subsequently concluded positively. On 14 September 2011, Pope Benedict XVI proclaimed her Blessed.<sup>115</sup> How can someone who was accused of “*affettata santità*” become a saint? The following addresses the afterlife of stigmatics and how their reputation for holiness could continue, ultimately leading to their canonization.<sup>116</sup>

As noted above, after the reforms introduced by Urban VIII and Benedict XIV, sainthood was linked with Catholic virtues rather than exceptional and visible evidence. The latter were actually viewed with suspicion and reticence until modern changes to canon law on sanctity in 1917 (expressing the papal

114 ACDF, *Res Disciplinares, Devotiones Varias, Devotiones Varias 1926*, Cosenza. Aiello Elena, *Affettata santità (ex monaca del Preziosissimo Sangue) e circa un certo ordine di suore*, *Dev.V.* 1926 n.2, cc. 233.

115 The *iter* of her beatification can be consulted on the official website of her foundation: <http://www.suoreminimedellapassione.it/iter-della-beatificazione/>.

116 “The saint exists [...] within a series of concentric communities of family, neighbourhood, town, and religious order. [Sainthood is a, L.R.] social product constantly open to reinterpretation,” Caciola, “Through a Glass,” 303.

authority on sainthood), 1969 (the creation of the modern Congregation for the Causes of Saints) and 1983.<sup>117</sup> However, stigmata were not condemned *per se* and there remained a chance that they would be considered a divine gift. As pointed out by Oliver Bennett, the most recent reform, under the pontificate of John Paul II, made the procedures for beatification and canonization easier,<sup>118</sup> so much so that there has been a surge in new saints, some of whom had stigmata during their life. Just as the Holy Office changed its practices at the beginning of the nineteenth century, so did the Congregation for the Cause of Saints, by turning from a juridical to an administrative-collegial system.<sup>119</sup> In accordance with these innovations, the process was no longer about defending the sanctity of the candidate against the objections of the Devil's Advocate, but involved a group of experts who were called the College of Relators, whose task it was to discuss the case.<sup>120</sup>

Five years after a candidate's death, a formal petition can be sent to the Vatican clergy, which decides whether or not to open the beatification process. The first phase takes place in the diocese where the future saint lived or worked.<sup>121</sup> The task of the supporters and the local clergy is to collect documentation and testimonies. If they obtain permission from Rome, the diocesan bishop entrusts the task of writing a life (called a *positio*) of the Servant of God (in which the heroic virtues are described and tested) to a postulator, organizing the exhumation of the corpse and collecting medical evidence for the declaration of the miracle. Before 1983, two miracles were required for non-martyrs to become blessed, while at least two more were needed to become a saint (the number has now been reduced by half at each level).<sup>122</sup> The work of the postulator, once completed, is sent to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, which has the final task of discussing the suitability of the candidate and sending the final decrees to obtain the signature of the Supreme Pontiff. This change in the system, decreasing the number of miracles required,<sup>123</sup> and the extension of the meaning of martyrdom (to include any victim persecuted

117 For the English and online version of the *Divinus perfectionis magister* (1983): [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_constitutions/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_apc\\_25011983\\_divinus-perfectionis-magister.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_25011983_divinus-perfectionis-magister.html).

118 Bennett, "Strategic canonisation."

119 Bennett, "Strategic canonisation," 443.

120 The last test of the Vatican procedures for the canonization process was in 2001: [http://www.vatican.va/news\\_services/press/documentazione/documents/avvenimenti/canonizzazioni-beatificazioni\\_nota-procedura\\_it.html](http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/documentazione/documents/avvenimenti/canonizzazioni-beatificazioni_nota-procedura_it.html).

121 *Ibidem*.

122 Barro, McCleary, and McQuoid, "Economics of Sainthood," 197.

123 On the link between science and faith in the canonical process and the medical commission, see Woodward, *Making Saints*, 76, 194–201, 205, 208–209.



in the name of faith), allowed John Paul II to create an unprecedented “factory of holiness.” Under his pontificate, there were 482 canonizations and 1300 beatifications. In 27 years, he created more saints than any other pope in the history of the Church.<sup>124</sup>

In this procedural context, the Church was also called to express its position on the heroic virtues of candidates who had the stigmata. In some cases, even after death their *fama sanctitatis* survived, and a group of supporters or the monastic order to which the potential saint belonged demanded the opening of a process.<sup>125</sup> If there were no convictions or reports filed within the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (with the exception of the cases of Padre Pio and Elena Aiello), there were no major obstacles to the opening of an investigation. It was thus necessary to avoid charismatic gifts and preternatural phenomena, especially the stigmata, becoming the central element in the construction of a hagiographic profile. The Church maintained the position that there was no link between preternatural phenomena and holiness. Stigmata, prophecies and visions are not considered divine proof or a legitimizing element. Although in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Holy See had a more positive attitude towards devotional forms and practices linked to popular cults, the “democratization” of religion and experiences of mystical feminine activities, the Church continued to contest the validity of stigmata and stigmatics.<sup>126</sup> As already mentioned, of eighteen stigmatized saints and blessed in late modernity (c. 1800–1950), only four were known as stigmatics by both the religious authorities and lay society (at least on a large scale). The other fourteen were famous for other qualities or Catholic virtues, with the fact that they had stigmata remaining in the background. The examples below will make the situation clearer.

As explained in the introduction, the case of Gemma Galgani is emblematic and representative of the reticent and contradictory attitude of the Church towards stigmatics. The young mystic girl had shown exceptional charisms and the signs of the Passion on her body. These phenomena were widely discussed, especially among her spiritual guides, but right up until her canonization in 1940, they succeeded in keeping this from the public. The biographies, articles and devotional images of Galgani that appeared in the Catholic media reflected the model of heroic virgin and pious soul rather than privileged

124 Ciciliot “Heritage talks,” 273.

125 They might be guided by religious orders (Capuchins as in the case of Padre Pio) or be a lay group (as in the case of Maria Domenica Lazzeri and Maria von Mörl).

126 Woodward, *Marking Saints*, 158–160 and 178–188.

stigmatic.<sup>127</sup> Thus, her stigmata were perceived as potentially dangerous during the investigations leading up to her canonization, elements to be hidden rather than emphasized. This attitude was not new for the Holy See. In earlier cases in the nineteenth century (e.g. Elisabetta Canori Mora and Anna Maria Taigi),<sup>128</sup> during the beatification and sanctification process the Church had preferred to erase every aspect linking the candidate's profile of holiness with preternatural and exceptional phenomena. Pursuing this goal, their lives were rewritten and modified several times. In the halls of the Vatican congregation dedicated to the creation of saints, the word "stigmata" was seldom mentioned in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While it was used in the cases of Veronica Giuliani (1660–1727: beatified in 1804 and canonized in 1839)<sup>129</sup> and Anna Maria Rosa Nicoletta Gallo (1715–1791: beatified in 1867), in both cases, the cardinals chose not to speak further about it and to suspend judgement of this mystical phenomenon. Therefore, they did not refer to it as additional proof of their sanctity. A century later, Pius XI stated that "no decision has been made" about the stigmata of Galgani, revealing ecclesiastical reticence in recognizing the phenomena as a divine gift and the bearers as saints for that reason alone.<sup>130</sup>

Only under the pontificate of John Paul II, the most prolific creator of saints in the history of the Church, do we see some signs of change. Firstly, he showed his appreciation for the friar of San Giovanni Rotondo while the latter was still alive, visiting Padre Pio for the first time in 1947, when he still was an unknown Polish clergyman.<sup>131</sup> They maintained a correspondence, with Wojtyła asking Padre Pio for his prayers and intercession, although the friar was considered a fraud by other contemporary popes and large part of the Vatican clergy. Under the pontificate of the Polish pope, especially after his reforms of 1983, the canonical process for Padre Pio was extremely rapid. In the introduction to this chapter, we noted how the friar is today revered by the Church, but this was not always the case. In fact, he was investigated numerous times during his life,

127 We can further affirm this based on the titles of the books about her, di Stanislao, *Lettere ed estasi della serva di Dio Gemma Galgani* (Rome: Tipogr. Poliglotta dell'Ist. Pio IX, 1917); di Stanislao, *Compendio della biografia della beata Gemma Galgani vergine Lucchese* (Rome: Postulazione dei PP. Passionisti, 1933); Passionist Fathers, 1979, *Estasi, diario, autobiografia, scritti vari di S. Gemma Galgani* (Rome: Postulazione dei PP. Passionisti, 1979) [underlining for emphasis by author].

128 Van Osselaer, Rossi and Graus, "Virgin mothers," 175–176.

129 The memory of Giuliani is still present in the Vatican environment, as this papal General Audience of 2010 shows: [http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2010/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_aud\\_20101215.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2010/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20101215.html).

130 *Acta apostolicae sedis, Commentarium Officiale*, 24 (1932), 54–57, 57.

131 Bennett, *Strategic canonizations*, 445.

and he had been given heavy sentences (such as being prohibited from publicly celebrating the mass and confessing the faithful).<sup>132</sup> Only after his death, and above all due to the support of the Polish pope, did his path to official sanctity appear unstoppable. It was so rapid that only 31 years after his death he was proclaimed blessed and three years later declared a saint.

If, in his case, it is apparent that the friendship and the bond that united the two clergymen played a leading role in the Vatican acceptance of the stigmata of Padre Pio, we can also see that there was a more general trend of acceptance. John Paul II in fact signed the decrees of beatification of seven stigmatics.<sup>133</sup> Nevertheless, the stigmata continued to have a secondary function and they were not propaedeutic to the attainment of sanctity. The heroic virtues, according to canon law, remained the only essential condition.

At the same time, compared to the past, the stigmata no longer appear a taboo for saints-to-be. This trend has continued under the successive pontificates of Benedict XVI and Francis I, under which many causes of beatification that were opened during the era of John Paul II have been completed. Benedict XVI beatified four<sup>134</sup> and canonized one bearer.<sup>135</sup> While in the first five years of his reign, Pope Francis has signed the decrees for three stigmatized blessed.<sup>136</sup> It will be interesting to follow developments in the Church's stance on stigmata in future canonization processes.<sup>137</sup>

#### 4 Conclusions

In this chapter, we have seen that in its two millennia of history the Church has never officially recognized supernatural gifts in its dogmas or decrees, but has recognized a presumed divine nature in limited cases. Before St Francis, stigmata were only linked to Christ and were not considered a grace embodied by

<sup>132</sup> Castelli, *Padre Pio*.

<sup>133</sup> Teresa Adelaide Manetti (1986), Elisabetta Canori Mora (1994), Anna Schäffer (1999), Padre Pio (1999–2002), Anna Rosa Gattorno (2000), María Izquierdo (2001) and Anna Katherina Emmerick (2004).

<sup>134</sup> Maria Grazia Tarallo (2006), Maria Maddalena Starace (2007), Elena Aiello (2011), Maria Luisa Geltrude Prosperi (2011).

<sup>135</sup> Anna Schäffer (2012).

<sup>136</sup> Maria Bolognesi (2013), María Josefa Alhama Valera (2014) and Itala Mela (2017).

<sup>137</sup> Such as Luisa Piccarretta (1805–1947), Maria von Mörl (1812–1868), Maria Domenica Lazzari (1815–1848), Angela Molari (1821–1887), Veronica Barone (1856–1878), Maria Concetta Pantusa (1894–1953) and Filomena Carnevale (1929–1959). (Focus on the five countries we studied.)

Catholic saints and mystics. From the thirteenth century onwards, reaching its peak in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, hundreds of stigmatics were reported across Europe, gaining in public attention. Some quickly fell into oblivion after a short moment of fame, while others became religious celebrities, charismatic leaders and “living (but rarely recognized) saints.” Often, they had problems with religious authorities at various levels (from their confessors and spiritual guides to bishops and inquisitor cardinals), provoking strong debate between Vatican theologians and clergy.

Throughout the Middle Ages, stigmata generated discussion among the two main mendicant orders, the Franciscans and Dominicans, who claimed the mystic gift as an exclusive characteristic of their respective founders. In the early modern age, however, the stigmatic phenomenon spread beyond the purely religious context, involving laypeople and, above all, popular cult. Specific Vatican congregations were created to investigate living mystics, elaborating certain profiles of holiness. The contemporary age, despite historiographic theories of the secularization of political power and the rationalization of society, saw the phenomenon grow exponentially, reaching its peak between the end of nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century. Moreover, it was not only the Vatican clergy that studied and investigated the stigmatics through the Holy Office and the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, as other actors also continued to have responsibilities and prerogatives (the faithful, fathers, confessors, bishops).

After disapproving of charismatic forms in the late eighteenth century and a battle against a new rise of mysticism in the first half of the twentieth century, since the pontificate of John Paul II, the Church seems to have become a little more open to cases of stigmatization. The exceptional sanctification of Padre Pio in 2002, the continued honours paid to him by Benedict XVI, and even today by Francis I, demonstrate not only the good fortune of the stigmatized friar, but a more indulgent acceptance of the stigmata and stigmatics, especially after their death. Nevertheless, the Vatican stance towards stigmatized “living saints” is still complicated and extremely cautious.<sup>138</sup>

However, as the case of Aiello showed, severe ecclesiastical opposition to and censorship of stigmatics can change after their death. As was the case for

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138 Living stigmatics include Domenica Galelo (1950–), a Calabrian housewife; Elia Cataldo (1962–), who pretends to be friar and leads a sect of followers in Apulia, now under Vatican investigation; Caterina Bartolotta (1963–), a mystic and Marian visionary; Giorgio Bongiovanni (1963–), a Sicilian seer who became very famous in the US for his speeches, which combine Christian doctrine and theories about aliens; Myrna Nazzour (1964–), a mystic from Damascus.

Galgani, their lives can be adapted and rewritten, in line with a more canonical profile of holiness. Thus, also the harshest judgements can turn into positive acceptance, just as Padre Pio developed from one of the most famous “psychiatric hospital mystics”<sup>139</sup> to one of “the most beautiful and luminous figures” of Christianity.<sup>140</sup>



FIGURE 7.1  
“Vera effigie della Serva di Dio Gemma Galgani”  
ANTWERP, RUUSBROEC INSTITUTE



FIGURE 7.2  
“Zalige Gemma”  
ANTWERP, RUUSBROEC INSTITUTE

139 Luzzatto, *Padre Pio*, 49.

140 *Pastoral Visit of the Holy Father Francis to Pietrelcina and to San Giovanni Rotondo*, see n. 1.



FIGURE 7.3  
“S. Gemma Galgani”  
ANTWERP, PRIVATE COLLECTION  
LEONARDO ROSSI



FIGURE 7.4  
“Visita a Santa Gemma”  
PRIVATE COLLECTION WILLIAM CHRISTIAN



FIGURE 7.5  
“La Bienheureuse Gemma Galgani en extase, reçoit les stigmates”  
ANTWERP, PRIVATE COLLECTION LEONARDO ROSSI

## Conclusion

*Tine Van Osselaer*

From 18 December 1845, feast of the expectation of the most blessed Virgin Mary, up until today, 19 January 1846, the crown of thorns with 90 to 150 drops of blood, is daily visible on the head of the sufferer, similar to the manifestation on the head of the suffering virgin Dominica Lazari in Capriano [*sic*] in Tyrol, connected with ecstasies and levitation, like those of the suffering Maria Theresia von Mörl in Kaldern [*sic*] in Tyrol; and the condition of this stigmatized virgin of Dorsten shows great similarity with that of the famous Augustinian nun Anna Catharina Emmerich of Dülmen, who is buried five hours away from Dorsten in Dülmen.<sup>1</sup>

Published in 1846, the small booklet, *Die Dornenkrone (Crown of Thorns)*, almost reads as a ‘who’s who’ of the famous stigmatics. Making an appeal for the credibility of Theresia Winter, Father Gossler compares her with other celebrity stigmatics that he knew of. The more similarities he noted, the more plausible her case became – there were precedents and she matched the type. Three elements stand out: firstly, his points of reference are all stigmatics who had fairly recently attained religious celebrity (Emmerich had died in 1824, but the other two referred to were still alive). Secondly, he used international as well as more ‘local’ examples and seems to have expected his readers to be familiar with these cases. Finally, by listing them together he demonstrated that he saw them as similar and, by doing so, also co-created a canon of famous stigmatics, the ranks of which would later be joined by Louise Lateau and Therese Neumann. These processes of grouping different cases, the logic of selection

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1 “Vom 18 December 1845, dem Feste der Erwartung der allerseligsten Jungfrau Maria bis heute, den 19 Januar 1846 ist die Dornenkrone mit 90 bis 150 Blutstropfen täglich an dem Haupte der Leidenden sichtbar, ähnlich derselben Erscheinung an dem Haupte der zu Capriano in Tyrol leidenden Jungfrau Dominica Lazari; verbunden mit Extasen und Erhebungen, welche ähnlich sind denen der in Kaldern in Tirol leidenden Maria Theresia von Mörl; und es hat der Zustand dieser stigmatisierten Jungfrau von Dorsten mit dem der bekannten Augustiner-Nonne Anna Catharina Emmerich von Dülmen, welche fünf Stunden von Dorsten zu Dülmen, beerdigt ist, grosse Aehnlichkeit.” *Die Dornenkrone mit Biblisch-katholisch-kirchlichen Auslegungen oder das zeigende und zeugende Zeichen in Dorsten bei Münster in Westphalen*. Dorsten: Verlag von Franz Ahn, 10.

(his focus on physical features) and comparison, as well as the media used for this, is what has interested us here.

In previous chapters we have shown how the nineteenth century witnessed the reinvention of stigmata and an increase in the use of the term “stigmatic” as an organizational category (having the wounds as a defining feature) and as a specific type: the stereotypical stigmatic was a lay woman with visible wounds who received a lot of attention (and, not seldom, also visitors at home). Both developments were indicative of the importance that the faithful attached to stigmata as a sign of the divine. Lists of stigmatics from the past and the present were created and published in books and articles, and new cases were summarily referred to as “the stigmatic of” (e.g. Lütgeneder and Bois-d’Haine). Moreover, the “stigmatic” also entered non-Catholic lexica, indicating that knowledge of this sub-category of mystics had become relevant to a broader public (not just the faithful). We believe that the development of the type and its popularity had much to do with the fact that these women could function as saints and celebrities. Newspaper articles covered stories about celebrity stigmatics such as Louise Lateau, and she and other women like her became meaningful as symbols and religious ammunition in political battles. Their visible wounds, ecstasy and other exceptional corporeal phenomena such as inedia were regarded as “proof” of the divine by their supporters, and as signs of superstition and credulity by their critics. However, the enthusiasm of the faithful for reports of visible stigmatization and the emphasis on the wounds of Christ was not mirrored in the Church’s responses to them. The Vatican preferred not to focus on such corporeal epiphenomena and did not use the term “stigmatic” as an analytical category.<sup>2</sup>

In the following, we will summarize our findings, (1) focusing on the development of the type and the role that modern media and consumer culture played in its development, (2) discussing the development of the religious types, pointing to the importance of the media in creating a shared devotional repertoire, and (3) reflecting on new areas of research that emerge from these.

## 1 A Visible Type

The lists of stigmatics that were created during the nineteenth century featured several different types. They included, for example, the names of women religious whose invisible stigmata were only discovered after their death (when

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<sup>2</sup> Although the word could feature in the files on them – albeit only rarely – “stigmata” was used more frequently but generally in a negative way.



the spiritual father or fellow nuns scanned their writings) and lay prophetesses renowned for their prophecies or religious leadership. So why did the Louise Lateau-type (like e.g. Maria von Mörl, Anna Katharina Emmerick and Therese Neumann) become stereotypical? A short but rather superficial answer would be that the stigmata of these women were their main point of attraction. The faithful were indeed attracted by the visible wounds, but in cases such as Anna Katharina Emmerick it was certainly not this alone that interested the public. The famous German author Clemens Brentano, for example, spent years at her bedside recording her visions of, among other revelations, the Passion of Christ.<sup>3</sup> However, in this respect, Anna Katharina Emmerick, Therese Neumann and Anna Schäffer seem to differ from silent stigmatics such as Louise Lateau, Maria von Mörl and Karoline Beller, who did not express religious teachings or prophecies. Similarly, Therese Neumann and Louise Lateau were also famous for their ability to go without food, but did not become famous as “fasting girls.” So why this narrowed focus? Why rank these women in the same category – bearing stigmata – using only stigmata as the point of reference, and why list them as stereotypical “stigmatics”? As we noted in our introduction to this volume, this type of “stigmatic” does not represent the majority of the people reported to have stigmata.

In order to understand the popularity of the stigmatic, its prominence, we looked at the type from a bottom-up perspective. We argue that “visibility” is a key term here, relating to both the physical, visible wounds and the public visibility that the media or others created, drawn by the “stigmatics.” Three aspects are of relevance: (1) the stigmatics fit older Catholic interpretations of suffering and became objects of devotion in a vibrant pilgrimage culture; (2) the visibility of their wounds and the enthusiasm they generated among the faithful was picked up by the press and cultivated in consumer and devotional culture (that highlighted specific features); (3) while the fame of the stigmatics was often transitory because of the developments in media and consumer culture, the names of the stigmatics circulated more easily (and quickly) on a larger scale and celebrity stigmatics thereby helped to “fix” or standardize the type.

First of all, (1) the importance the faithful attached to the stigmata was in line with an increase in lay and corporeal mysticism. The type became successful because it matched ideals of sanctity held by the faithful. Stigmatics such as Louise Lateau were regarded as “living saints” by some of their Catholic

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3 *Das Bittere Leiden unseres Herrn Jesu Christi nach den Betrachtungen der gottseligen Anna Katharina Emmerich, Augustinerin des Klosters Agnetenberg zu Dülmen, (+9ten Februar 1824), nebst dem Lebensumriss dieser Begnadigten* (published anonymously in Regensburg 1833). See e.g. Engling, *Die Wende*, 148.

contemporaries. Popular ideas on sanctity varied, as they depended on perceptions of different communities and were thus historically contingent. In Lateau's case, her saintly reputation tallied with popular perceptions of sanctity, in which the saint was perceived as a revelatory token and the wounds she displayed were regarded as proof of divine intervention. The saintly reputation of the stigmatic did not build solely on their miraculous wounds, but also on the meaning the devotees attached to their suffering. The reputation of holiness was created in interaction with the faithful. The devotees co-created both the *fama sanctitatis* and the "stigmatic" through their devotional practices (similar to more traditional pilgrimage culture) and the use of contact relics (the cards and cloth that carried drops of blood), exemplary of what has been called a fetishism of the wounds. As Nicole Priesching suggests in her work on Maria von Mörl, the visitors knew what to expect of stigmatized virgins, and such pilgrimages confirmed these ideas.<sup>4</sup> During their visits to the stigmatics, the devotees gazed at these "living crucifixes" with a specific mindset. For them, the suffering of the stigmatics not only referred to Christ's body, but also symbolized the state of society and reflected the threats to the Catholic Church. Thus, although stigmatics were linked to older traditions, they were not timeless but loaded with contemporary context-bound meaning.

Secondly, (2) the "standardization" of the stigmatic type was enhanced by the public interest in these women. The enthusiasm for stigmatics was picked up by the press and consumer and devotional culture. In order to sell them as stigmatics, certain features were highlighted (e.g. emphasis on wounds in images) and media (blood-stained cards) produced. Those stigmatics who found themselves in the spotlight and made the headlines could be called the "religious celebrities" of their time. As noted, this phrase, like the term "sanctity," is historically contingent; as we have seen in the previous chapters, it could mean that the fame of the stigmatics was marketable. In order to be marketable, they had to be recognizable as "stigmatics" (being presented as *grabataires* and emphasizing the bloody wounds) and as individual religious celebrities (e.g. by adding their names, small hints at their biography). Thus, while relics and devotional cards reflected and imitated older types of devotional and promotional material, new media such as periodicals and film also developed. The fame of modern stigmatics thus thrived on the circulation of old and new media.

We might wonder whether this increased visibility contributed to the rise in the number of stigmatics reported in this period. Were they, because of the publicity, more well known and thus recognizable (increasing the chance of

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4 Priesching, *Maria von Mörl*, 385: "In allen diesen Fällen wurde der Eindruck von dem, was man sich von dem Anblick einer 'ekstatischen Jungfrau' erwartete, vorgeprägt."

detection), acceptable (phenomenon was already known) and thus able to be imitated? It is not unlikely, but caution should prevail, as older types of stigmatization continued to exist and lists of predecessors were also drawn up. What is clear, however, is that this increased visibility (via the new media and its scale) presented particular challenges to the ecclesiastical and political authorities. By becoming celebrity stigmatics in the public sphere, they could develop into political threats that needed to be neutralized – especially in those contexts in which Catholicism was regarded with suspicion (e.g. during the culture wars of the last quarter of the nineteenth century). Derided as fraudsters, they were under attack for what they represented. As we suggested in our discussion of the term “stigmatic,” the visibility of negative examples such as Sor Patrocínio might have even had a negative effect on the use of the term in Spain.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, as we have shown elsewhere, it would be incorrect to reduce this negative discourse on stigmatics solely to an anti-Catholic phenomenon. The case of Louise Lateau, for example, fuelled discussion between the ultramontane and liberal Catholics in Belgium in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, (3) while their fame could be transitory, the scale of the media production allowed the names of famous stigmatics to circulate on a large scale. In the period under discussion, the fame of the stigmatics spread on different levels and via various means – leaving us with a wide variety of sources. To grasp the reception radius, we can adopt the perspective suggested by David Blackbourn in his book on the Marian apparitions in Bismarckian Marpingen. He considers that a report of religious phenomenon was an event with a widening impact: travelling from reception at the family level to a more general local response (through informal exchange of information), the local event then gained wider resonance, with pilgrims arriving and attempts at commercialization increasing. At this point, the political significance of the event might also draw the attention of the civil authorities, after which it enters its final phase of either rejection by the religious authorities or authentication.<sup>7</sup> To a certain extent, we can follow the same route for the stigmatics, as in the cases of Louise Lateau and Therese Neumann, both village girls who became international celebrities. For each of these phases in the promotion of the stigmatics as “living saints,” different means of communication were involved (e.g. word of mouth, letter writing, an article in the local newspaper or the biography of a stigmatic in a foreign language). In this period, new means of

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<sup>5</sup> See Chapter 1.

<sup>6</sup> Van Osselaer, “Stigmata.”

<sup>7</sup> Blackbourn, *Marpingen*, 20.

communication and production developed that allowed for an increase in the scale and speed in which news about the stigmatics could be spread. In other words, the stigmatics could quickly become meaningful to devotees beyond the local level. Given the development of cheaper and easier ways to travel (e.g. railway network), it was increasingly possible for these foreign devotees to go and see for themselves.<sup>8</sup> This was not only the case for world-famous stigmatics such as Maria von Mörl and Louise Lateau, as less famous cases also attracted foreign interest. As noted, Rosalie Put drew the attention of German devotees, but she was never popular in her own region. Her case thus complicates the teleological narrative in which foreign interest is the final phase in an ever-expanding sphere of impact. In the case of Maria von Mörl, Bernhard Gißibl has noted how it was probably Joseph von Görres's portrait of her in his book, *Die Christliche Mystik* (1836–1842), that helped her gain such wide popularity.<sup>9</sup> We know that Maria von Mörl herself read about Anna Katharina Emmerick (in the 1860s apparently, and thus long after she developed the stigmata in 1834).<sup>10</sup> In the case of Karoline Beller, discussed in Chapter 3, it is clear that such literature provided an example: she had read the lives of Catherine of Siena and Anna Katharina Emmerick and, as one physician noted in his medical report on her, “nothing is more natural than gradually believing oneself to be a similar saint” – so when the eagerly wished for stigmata did not develop, she created them herself.<sup>11</sup> Devotional cards seem to have been thought of as having a similar effect. A report on Theresia Taubenberger, dated 1842, hints at the imitation of the ecstatic pose of Maria von Mörl, of whom she had an image in her room.<sup>12</sup>

Reports on celebrity stigmatics helped to standardize the type, as we find references to, for example, the “Lateau recipe,” or “a new Therese Neumann.” Moreover, when the term “stigmatic” entered Italian and Spanish public

8 The stigmatic Elisabeth Bartenhauser, for example, made a pilgrimage to Maria von Mörl in 1840, before developing her own corporeal phenomena. According to a physician involved in her examination, this had stimulated her sweating blood (“hervorgerrufen”), Gißibl, *Frömmigkeit*, 57.

9 Gißibl, *Frömmigkeit*, 52.

10 Priesching, *Maria von Mörl*, 249.

11 Berlin, Geheimes Staatsarchiv, Preussischer Kulturbesitz (GStAPK), I.HA Rep.76. Kultusministerium VIII A Nr. 2180: Acta betreffende die angeblichen Wunder-Kuren und Wunder-Krankheiten 1821 Nov. 1904 Jan, report by Kreisphysikus Pieper, 6 June 1845. See also the discussion on Beatrix Schuhmann and whether or not she had read about Anna Katharina Emmerick. Archiv des Bistums Passau (ABP), OA Varia I 17 b II Maria Beatrix Schuhmann, PAN, 2. correspondence 1856-9, 18/08/1889: to Kooperator Anton Moosmüller, Pfarrer.

12 Gißibl, *Frömmigkeit*, 57.

discourse on these mystical women, it was linked to celebrity stigmatics such as Louise Lateau and Therese Neumann.<sup>13</sup> Thus, in both cases, the increase in the use of the word seems to have been linked to the popularity of two stigmatics from abroad (Belgium and Germany), whose mediatised fame travelled across national borders to Spain and Italy. Here, caution should prevail, however, and although the word was used to describe famous foreign stigmatics, Italian Catholics shied away from using the word for their “own” stigmatics. Only when Gemma Galgani and Padre Pio, who was considered the new Saint Francis, became immensely popular in the first half of the twentieth century was the term used more often and without the negative connotations it held in the previous century.<sup>14</sup>

## 2 New Types and the Scale of Their Circulation

Should we look at this development of a new religious type as a unique story? We can see parallels with the concept of the “*miraculé/e*” – the faithful who were miraculously cured at a pilgrimage site. Like the stigmatics, they were often common laypeople who received the divine grace of being cured, and whose miraculously healed bodies were seen as “proof” of divine intervention. Moreover, as Suzanne Kaufman has shown in her work on Lourdes, they used the modern media to promulgate their cases and enjoyed their moment in the spotlight, and while their fame might have extended beyond the local region,

13 Louise Lateau (“estigmatizada”) and the German Therese Neumann (in the 1930s, when the word was used more frequently). Similarly, the Italian word “stigmatizzata” was used in book titles on Louise Lateau and for publications on Therese Neumann. Van Looy, *Luisa Lateau la stigmatizzata di Bois-d’Haine* (1876). A translation of the original French.

14 As Leonardo Rossi remarks, we can trace this trend in the pages of *La Civiltà Cattolica*, one of the most influential Catholic magazines closest to Vatican circles. At the end of the nineteenth century, the Jesuit authors of the journal wrote several articles on the relationship between mystical phenomena, science and the Church. They also mentioned contemporary stigmatics, especially Louise Lateau and Anna Katharina Emmerick. The judgment on “foreign” stigmatics was prudentially positive (Civ. Cat. 39, 11 (1888), 267–81; Civ. Cat. 39, 12 (1888), 33–50; Civ. Cat. 40, 1 (1889), 8–24, 609–82; Civ. Cat. 40, 3 (1889), 270–81, 668–83). It took the magazine more than half a century to adopt the lemma “stigmatizzato” for an Italian stigmatic. Despite the numerous investigations conducted during the life of Padre Pio, on the occasion of his death, the Jesuits wrote: “[t]oday, despite the controversies and the strong criticism, it is difficult to cast doubt on the nature of the power with which he attracted millions of souls.” This sentence not only gave the benefit of the doubt to the “stigmatic of San Giovanni Rotondo,” but to stigmatics tout court. Civ. Cat. 119, 3 (1968), 145–62: 145.

it was often transitory in nature.<sup>15</sup> These women and men were famous for a while because they matched the well-known category of “*miraculé/e*.” People knew what type of narrative to expect and there were specific media (postcards before and after) and parts of the press (a journal section on the cures) dedicated to them.

In addressing the development of such new religious types, we can see similarities with the work that has been done on the historicity of new types of saints. More specifically, we can draw inspiration from Gabriella Zarri’s studies. In her work on sixteenth-century “*sante vive*,” she reflected on the development of this new type of holiness represented by the “holy women.” Zarri argued that these “*sante vive*” were successful at the end of the fifteenth century and during the first three decades of the sixteenth century because they matched a specific profile. They combined their ecstasies, stigmata and prophecies with their role as consultants to the high and mighty. In other words, they gained importance “in the most difficult junctures of the Wars of Italy,” years of continuous political uprising, and in such times, their prophetic counselling was useful to princes.<sup>16</sup> What is of relevance to our argument here, is the importance she attaches to the specificity of the context and the concomitant saintly profile, or type of saint, that emerged from it.<sup>17</sup> While we have also pointed to the importance of the historical context for the perception of sanctity (e.g. the saint as a token rather than as exemplary of Christian virtues),<sup>18</sup> it is the emergence of the new type and the specificity of its contexts that interests us here. Could we address the “*miraculé/e*” from this angle as well? In other words, can we also see the historical contingency of new religious “types” (not necessarily subcategories of saints)? More research on the concepts is needed, but it seems telling that we do not really find translations of the concept of “*miraculé/e*” into other languages (although it is also used in Belgian sources on *miraculé/es* at Belgian apparition sites<sup>19</sup>). Is that because the Lourdes cures did indeed reach a wider audience than miraculous cures at other, perhaps more local or national, pilgrimage sites?

In comparison with the “*sante vive*” and the “*miraculée*,” the reception radius of the “stigmatic” seems broader. The scale on which the concept of the

15 Kaufman, “Les miraculées,” 542.

16 Zarri, “Living Saints,” 248.

17 See similar reflections on the specificity of Brazilian “popular saints” and the importance of a shared history (e.g. slavery) for their development and popularity by Eduardo Hoornaert “Heiligheidsmodellen.”

18 See Chapter 3.

19 Archives de Beauraing, “1934–1935” Dossiers Mr. Pierroux, 13. 5/1/35: le visionnaire de Malonne, Alfred V. calls himself “miraculé.”

stigmatic ultimately had its effect goes beyond the regional and national. We found the type in French, German and Belgian sources, and in the end it also entered Italian and Spanish discourse through the fame of specific celebrity stigmatics such as Louise Lateau and Therese Neumann. If anything, this shows the importance of the modern media and consumer culture in the creation of a shared devotional repertoire, and the importance of the transnational networks of Catholics who travelled to visit stigmatics in other countries and wrote about them, as well as the role of the international press. It is difficult to think of the history and success of modern stigmatics without taking the modern media (and its opportunities and challenges) into account.

The modern “stigmatic” was not invented *ex nihilo*. Catholic devotees, including the stigmatics themselves, were aware of older examples of women carrying the stigmata.<sup>20</sup> Scholars such as Ulrike Wiethaus and Peter Dinzelbacher have understood modern stigmatics as continuations of older traditions. Wiethaus saw Therese Neumann as a twentieth-century variation on medieval blood mysticism,<sup>21</sup> while Dinzelbacher referred to Anna Katharina Emmerick as a nineteenth-century example of a continuation of the mystic model of saintliness that had already developed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.<sup>22</sup> When we look at the contemporary reports on Emmerick, we also find references to “the nun Lucia of Ferrara” (Lucia Brocadelli).<sup>23</sup> Nonetheless, referring to Anna Katharina Emmerick, Gábor Klaniczay notes that, with her, a new chapter in the history of stigmatization commences – she is found to be the first of a new type.<sup>24</sup>

As Nicole Priesching suggested in her discussion of the mystical model of Maria von Mörl, the “Grundtypus” (basic type) already existed.<sup>25</sup> In her discussion of the new type of mystic in the nineteenth century, she notes that these new mystics were primarily identified as such by their contemporaries

20 Gabor Klaniczay is currently working on an overview of the history of stigmatization from the Middle Ages to the modern era. See also Klaniczay, *Discorsi*, and *idem*, “Louise Lateau,” 285. See also the book by Muessig, *The stigmata in medieval and early modern Europe* (2020).

21 Wiethaus, *German mysticism*, 32.

22 Dinzelbacher, “Heiligkeitsmodelle,” 16. In his opinion, because of the importance of an interior spiritual life and phenomena such as stigmata and inedia, this model of sanctity was an easy one to simulate. Many of them were lay, according to him, but the majority were members of a religious order (between the thirteenth and the nineteenth centuries).

23 See Chapter 3 “Nonne Lucia” of Ferrara. Pascal, “Nichts Neues,” *Hermann. Zeitschrift von und für Westfalen*, 44. Stück, Hagen, 30.1817, 352.

24 Klaniczay, “Louise Lateau,” 291.

25 Priesching, *Maria von Mörl*, 407.

because of the corporeal epiphenomena they displayed.<sup>26</sup> Such an emphasis on the physical aspect also became apparent in our analysis. We thereby wish to take the argument one step further and argue here that the stereotypical “stigmatics” discussed in this book were, as far as labelling was concerned, reduced to their stigmata. While they often combined other exceptional features, such as bilocation, inedia, hyperthermia and glossolalia,<sup>27</sup> having the stigmata was their defining – and most appealing – feature. Newspapers and devotional books alike introduced new cases as “the stigmatic of ... X.”

In this respect, it does seem safe to say that the modern media was not only of importance with respect to the uniformization and standardization of Rome-approved devotional culture (top down, see e.g. the studies on the popularization of the Sacred Heart devotion or the promotion of the Lourdes apparition shrine<sup>28</sup>), but also to the grassroots cults. Furthermore, in addition to what scholars such as Don James Tilson and Sophia Deboick have shown in their studies on post-mortem devotional campaigns (e.g. pleas for the beatification and canonization of Therese of Lisieux<sup>29</sup>), focusing on the means (images, commercial products, “world tours” of the relics) through which they were promoted not only allows us to see how the popularity of a specific individual grew, but also how a religious type developed and functioned.

Given the fact that the “stigmatic” appears in different geographical contexts, does this mean there was a need for them, similar to what Zarri described in relation to the sixteenth-century “*sante vive*”? Does this not imply a uniformity of context that is highly implausible for the long period under discussion (150 years) and the geographical range of this study? This is not necessarily the case, as what we are arguing here is that because of the international mobility and scale of the press, a shared Catholic repertoire developed that could be “activated” at different moments in different geographical contexts – the devotees were familiar with the type and new versions were reported. In this respect, the scale of circulation resembled that of Rome-supported cults, including the Lourdes Madonna and other “icons of ultramontanism” such as the Sacred Heart. As Vincent Viaene has argued, “(t)he communication

26 Priesching, “Mystikerinnen,” 81.

27 See, among others, the keywords in the database: <https://mediahaven-stigmatics.uantwerpen.be/> (accessed online 14 August 2019).

28 John Moore calls the Sacred Heart devotion not so much a “popular” devotion but rather a “popularized” devotion. Moore, *Herz-Jesu-Verehrung*, 155, 156. For the evolution of the cult, see also Jonas, *France. On Lourdes*; Kaufman, *Consuming Visions*.

29 Sophia Deboick, for example, addressed the strengths and weaknesses, such as the alleged risk of “debasement,” when including the commercial in promotional campaigns, Deboick, *Image*, 36; Deboick, “Céline Martin’s images.”



revolution” allowed them to be promulgated on a massive scale. They “became the cornerstones of a transnational and universally accessible language, a new kind of religious pop culture – kitsch if you like.”<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, as he also emphasized, the “romanisation, the Catholic variety of globalisation, was real, but was sculpted locally.”<sup>31</sup>

Similarly, among the various types of stigmatics, reference points went beyond the local or regional. A stigmatic (both the type and a specific case) could receive different meanings in different geographical and/or chronological contexts. As Kristof Smeyers and Leonardo Rossi have shown, the Tyrolean stigmatics Maria Domenica Lazzeri and Maria von Mörl attracted visits from prominent British Catholics (among others), who used their stories as pro-Catholic currency once they returned to Britain, inspiring local examples.<sup>32</sup> Likewise, Louise Lateau was the point of comparison (and inspiration) for French stigmatics of the 1870s,<sup>33</sup> and she had a symbolic meaning for German Catholics in their struggle through the *Kulturkampf*. Foreign visitors came with expectations derived from their own devotional backgrounds and reference frameworks. French visitors, for example, often expected her to utter political or other prophecies, probably because many of their stigmatics were prophets as well.<sup>34</sup>

In other words, as Vincent Viaene has suggested in his exploration of the transnational dimension of modern Catholicism (and especially the nineteenth-century revival), studying stigmatics allows us to leave the “national paradigm,” since they (1) “acted as a magnet upon believers across borders.” Moreover, as we have shown, they also (2) functioned – similarly to the apparitions in Lourdes or the Sacred Heart devotion, to which Viaene refers – as “key elements in the symbolic idiom of the revival, which gained cross-national (and cross-cultural) currency as shorthand for its counter-revolutionary worldview and its utopia to christen modern society.”<sup>35</sup> It is not unlikely that

30 “De communicatierevolutie liet toe om die en andere iconen van het ultramontanisme, zoals de Christus van het Heilig Hart, in massaoplagen te verspreiden. Ze werden de hoekstenen van een transnationale en universeel toegankelijke vormentaal, een soort religieuze popcultuur – kitsch, zo men wil.” Viaene, “De ontplooiing,” 81.

31 “De ‘romanisering’, de katholieke variant van de globalisering, was reëel, maar werd lokaal geboetseerd.” Viaene, “De ontplooiing,” 82.

32 Smeyers and Rossi, “Tyrolean Stigmata.” Priesching lists the different networks through which the fame of Maria von Mörl spread within Catholic circles in Europe, Priesching, *Maria von Mörl*, 420–421.

33 See Chapter 4 and the work of Sofie Lachapelle on Louise Lateau and Marie Bergadieu, “Prophecies of pilgrimage.”

34 Van Osselaer, “Stigmata,” 600.

35 Viaene, “International History,” 589. See e.g. Kotulla’s work on the reception of the Lourdes devotion by German Catholics (*Nach Lourdes!*).

the fact that this type, including celebrity cases such as Louise Lateau, could function beyond the local scale is due to some extent to the “silence” of many of the “stereotypical” stigmatics. As such, they were not known for their prophecies, but remained silent suffering bodies, and therefore – as Elke Pahud de Mortanges has shown – meanings could be projected onto them.<sup>36</sup>

It is thus important to keep in mind that stigmatics were not only meaningful to Catholics: they also featured in non-Catholic newspapers and at times became well-known symbols of a derided Catholicism. Scholars working on anti-Catholicism, such as Manuel Borutta, Timothy Verhoeven, Yvonne Maria Werner and Jonas Harvard, have emphasized the specificity of its national variations, while at the same time stressing the transnational character of anti-Catholicism.<sup>37</sup> “Anti-Catholicism,” as Werner and Harvard have noted, “presented a shared symbolic language [...] in the communicative landscape of the nineteenth-century circulation of opinion, the transmission of materials between countries increased rapidly, as papers and publishers copied stories from one another.”<sup>38</sup> In this respect, they come close to Christopher Clark’s reflection on the role of the Catholic press during the culture wars, who recognized its importance in creating a “transnational community of sentiment.”<sup>39</sup>

### 3 Suggestions for Further Research

The speed and the scale with which the fame of some stigmatics spread widened their range of reception, and people such as Louise Lateau and Therese Neumann became religiously significant to devotees on the other side of the globe. The discussion and promotion of them through the modern media also allowed the creation of a shared vocabulary, types and examples.<sup>40</sup> Given the

36 She differentiates between a “mute icon,” as she categorized stigmatics such as Maria von Mörl (1812–1868), and a “visionary seer” such as Anna Katharina Emmerick (1774–1824), who had a specific message and allegedly acted as a medium for a divine voice. Pahud de Mortanges, “Irre,” 208.

37 Borutta, *Antikatholizismus*, 13–14; Verhoeven, *Transatlantic Anti-Catholicism*.

38 Werner and Harvard, “European Anti-Catholicism,” 17.

39 Clark, “The new Catholicism,” 35. As Viaene notes in his reflections on this and other chapters in the *Culture Wars* volume edited by Kaiser and Clark, the book was one of the first to focus on Europe as a “common politico-cultural space” during the culture wars (rather than adopting a merely comparative perspective), Viaene, “International History,” 589.

40 As such, our research ties in with current trends in anthropology. As Patrick Eisenlohr remarks: “Anthropologists have therefore begun to see the modalities of the public circulation of culture, above all the circulation of images and discourse, as one of the key questions in cultural analysis.” Eisenlohr, “Introduction,” 1. Forms of belonging “emerge through changes in the way culture circulates.” Cf. Hirschkind, “Media,” 93: “the way the

opportunities that the new media and scale provided for the promoters and devotees, we might wonder whether or not we should see this as a period of what David Morgan has called a “media make-over” of religion; an era in which new media transformed religious communities into something new, “replacing the material basis of one form of fellowship, interaction and community, with another.”<sup>41</sup> The opportunities that the new media provided not only played a part in the popularization of cults supported by Rome, but also in the missionary encounters (e.g. the work on the impact of mission periodicals in the home country) and campaigns for beatification; grassroots cults and deviant devotions (rejected by the Church), which also benefited. In his work on religious deviance, Peter Jan Margry has shown how contemporary movements also thrive through transnational networks (linking unofficial shrines) and modern media.<sup>42</sup>

As our discussions of the Church’s criticism and censorship have shown,<sup>43</sup> the new media landscape, the visibility of the stigmatics, provided specific challenges for the Church. The ecclesiastical authorities (e.g. the local bishops) attempted to deflect interest for different reasons, such as avoiding accusations of commercialization or an increase in religious tensions, or reigniting interest in a local stigmatic. As such, the discussions we came across have similarities with those on the late twentieth-century “mediatization” of religion and the Church’s loss of control over the religious messages that are now promulgated (e.g. on the internet).<sup>44</sup> In the cases we have traced, the international response to the stigmatics presented a specific challenge, but the clergy found a solution by using modern media to reach out to the faithful. However, is the role that new media played unique for this period? Scholars working on the interplay

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spread of new media forms and formats changes the conditions under which the task of practicing a religious tradition is defined and pursued.”

41 Morgan, “Mediation,” 143. Morgan was thereby criticizing the lack of historical funding of the late twentieth-century “mediatisation of religion,” often linked to present-day internet culture. This thesis implies that the media grew into a more autonomous, independent institution in society in the late twentieth century and became integrated into the workings of other social institutions (such as religion), see Hjarvard, “The mediation,” 122. However, according to Morgan, if this implies a “media make-over of religion,” this is something that had happened many times before. He thereby referred, by means of example, to the impact of British Evangelical print culture in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, see Morgan, “Mediation,” 141.

42 He focuses primarily on movements that developed since the 1960s, Margry, “New transnational religious cultures.”

43 E.g. the censoring of the book on Palma Maria Matarrelli by Antoine Imbert-Gourbeyre, as discussed in Chapter 2. Adnès, “Stigmates,” 1221.

44 Apolito, *The internet*; Lövheim and Lynch, “The mediatization.”

between religion and media have repeatedly stressed that we should be careful not to overemphasize the “novelty” of the role of the media.<sup>45</sup> It would be interesting to compare our findings to other periods, such as the sixteenth century – in which mysticism and “living saints” blossomed – looking into the media used at the time and the role it played in creating a shared repertoire.<sup>46</sup>

Furthermore, while we concentrated primarily on the enthusiasm for living stigmatics, it would be interesting to explore their post-mortem cults; in particular, how some of them eventually gained the support of the Vatican, although not as “stigmatics.”<sup>47</sup> Were these cases of what Norbert Lüdecke has described as canonization for the “protection of the hierarchy,” that is, the use of the charisma of religious celebrities to enhance the charisma of office?<sup>48</sup> As we discussed in the final chapter, the Vatican regarded the stigmatics with distrust. Popular perceptions of sanctity (emphasizing exceptional phenomena) clashed with Vatican ideas of sanctity (in which heroic virtues played a greater role than preternatural phenomena). By the mid-nineteenth century, the Vatican seemed to have been well aware of the charismatic appeal of these “living saints” and attempted to downplay and censure their fame and reduce the popularity of these women bearing the stigmata. The same rules seem to have applied after the death of the “saint.” In order for the people’s saint-to-be to have a chance of becoming an official canonized saint (rather than a folk saint), the promoters had to minimize the importance of mystical phenomena and emphasize virtues such as humility, obedience and resignation. Of the fifteen blessed and three saints that lived in the period discussed here who had the stigmata, only four were well known as bearers of them – it certainly was not a central element in the claim for their holiness. Nevertheless, the Vatican policy was not an overall success, and popular devotion could continue after condemnation by the Holy See. Moreover, the Vatican attitude could change

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45 Schofield Clark, “Why study popular culture?” 11; Lövheim and Lynch, “The mediatization,” 111. “The argument that mediatization is a modern condition of the autonomy of media, separate from the institutions of Church and State that once dominated the press and patronage of arts, is not entirely convincing since book and tract production in Europe since the late fifteenth century occurred largely in the commercial sphere,” Morgan, “Mediation,” 141.

46 On the dialectical relationship between official and “popular” religion (Badone, “Introduction”) and the role of new media and consumption practices in religious change, and in the construction of religious identities, see Lynch, “Religion,” 548–549; Lynch, “What can we learn”; Geppert and Kössler, “Einleitung,” 22.

47 During the course of our research, the Vatican archives were available up to the end of the pontificate of Pius XI, in February 1939.

48 Lüdecke, “Heiligsprechung,” 246 (“Auffrischung des Papstcharismas.”)

after the death of a stigmatic, as it has allowed folk saints into the ranks of official saints.

While this book primarily focused on the fame of living stigmatics, the majority of which were never officially approved, we do believe that it would be interesting to study the interim period between the death of the stigmatic and her official recognition as blessed or a holy figure more closely. While we have addressed some of the successful cases of continuous interest (e.g. Elisabetta Canori-Mora, Anna Maria Taigi<sup>49</sup> and Anna Katharina Emmerick)<sup>50</sup> as have other scholars (e.g. on Therese Neumann<sup>51</sup> and Padre Pio),<sup>52</sup> a more comprehensive study is still lacking. One could explore, for example, why the four of fifteen blessed as well as three saints were officially recognized despite explicitly being stigmatics, and how the profile of others might have shifted (Canori-Mora and Taigi developed from mystics into good Catholic housewives). While the Vatican archives are still closed on the majority of the cases, there are other sources available to access this interim period (e.g. the file on the 1924 campaign for the beatification of Anna Katharina Emmerick preserved in the Archives of the diocese of Münster).<sup>53</sup> Campaigns such as these invite questions about who preserved the memories (and what memories), how they constructed the post-mortem image (and linked it, for example, to regional and national identity), the type of souvenirs and relics they kept and the religious practices that developed.

Most importantly, however, we hope that our preliminary work for this book, our own “list” of stigmatics, may serve as the basis for further research. At the back of this book, we include summary biographies of famous, unknown and lesser known cases and the sources we have traced on them. We do not claim this to be an exhaustive list, and there might still be cases that we have overlooked. However, we do hope that the sheer number of cases we have traced and the variety in their stories, will inspire other scholars to embark on new studies and allow the voices of these stigmatics to be heard again.

49 Van Osselaer, Rossi and Graus, “Virgin mothers.”

50 Van Osselaer, “Valued.”

51 Seeger, *Res!*; Köppl, *Mystik*.

52 Margry, “Merchandising,” Krass, “Stigmata,” Luzzatto, *Padre Pio*.

53 Bistumarchiv Münster (BAM), Emmerick/Hensel, 45. Kaplan Hunkemöllers Werbereise für Katharina Emmerich in Nordamerika 1923/24: Korrespondenz, Zeitungsausschnitte u.a., c. 1921–1924.

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# Biographical Dictionary of Stigmatics

- Aiello, Elena (1923, 1895–1961)  
A.L.C. (1944, 1927–)  
Alonso López, Josefina (1941, 1893–1977)  
Amalia de Jesús Flagelado (Aguirre, Amalia) (1928, 1901–1977)  
Amann, Helene (1920, –)  
Amengual Campaner, Margalida (1918, 1888–1919)  
Andriani, Maria Rosa (1820, 1786–1848)  
Anonymous (1838, 1822–)  
Anonymous (1950, 1933–)  
Anonymous of Bordeaux (1885, –)  
Anonymous Carmelite nun (1851, –)  
Anonymous of “D.” (c.1917, –)  
Anonymous of Doizieux-St-Just (c.1870, –)  
Anonymous (French hospital) (1830, –)  
Anonymous of Guriezo (c.1926, –)  
Anonymous of Hennebont (1896, –)  
Anonymous of Le Puy-en-Velay (1891, –)  
Anonymous of Madrid (c.1945, –)  
Anonymous of Molinos (c.1933, –)  
Anonymous of Ochsenfeld (c.1880, –)  
Anonymous of San Genesio (c.1845, –1855/60)  
Anonymous of Syracuse (1930, –1950)  
Anonymous of Vinalmont (1873, –)  
Arenare, Angela (1834, 1816–1857)  
Ascione, Maria Carmela (1818, 1799–1875)  
Asunción Galán de San Cayetano (Galán, Asunción) (1899, 1867–1901)  
B., Irene (1927, 1902–)  
Bandini, Maria Caterina Giuliana (1831, 1798–1841)  
Bárbara de Santo Domingo (Jurado Antúnez, Bárbara) (1869, 1842–1872)  
Barone, Adelina (1930, 1912–2000)  
Barone, Febronia (1869, 1856–1878)  
Bartenhauser, Elisabeth (c.1840, 1813–)  
Barthel, Françoise (1852, 1824–1878)  
Beck, Louise (1846, 1822–1879)  
Bellard, Raymonde (1913, 1901–)  
Beller, Karoline (1845, 1830–)  
Bergadieu, Berguille (1874, 1829–1904)  
Bernard, Emilie (c.1874, 1855–1874)  
Bertho, Philomène (c.1875, 1851–1933)  
Betrone, Pierina (1935, 1903–1946)  
Biagini, Maria Luisa (1798, 1770–1811)  
Billoquet, Laurentine (1881, 1862–1936)  
Blavignac, Marie (1936, 1889–)  
Boisseau, Jeanne (1857, 1797–1871)  
Bolognesi, Maria (1942, 1924–1980)  
Bonnenfant, Raymonde (1931, 1907–1973)  
Bordoni, Maria (1850, 1824–1863)  
Borgoems, Beatrix (c.1841, –)  
Bouquillon, Bertine (1822, 1800–1850)  
Brenti, Rosa (1819, 1790–1872)  
Brígido Blanco, Afra (1945, 1928–2008)  
Brogner, Marie (–, still alive in 1885)  
Calvat, Mélanie (1836, 1831–1904)  
Campana, Santina (1943, 1929–1950)  
Campion, Regina (c.1850, 1815–1874)  
Canori Mora, Elisabetta (1814, 1774–1824)  
Carafa della Spina, Maria Rosa (1888, 1832–1890)  
Carboni, Edvige (1911, 1880–1952)  
Casoli, Elisa (1936, 1900–)  
Catanea, Giuseppina (1932, 1894–1948)  
Chopin, Symphorose (1957, 1924–1983)  
Cianci, Pietro (1929, 1901–)  
Cilissen, Marie (1883, 1850–)  
Clair, Victoire (1845, 1811–1883)  
Clément xv (Collin, Michel) (c.1950, 1905–1974)

- Clément, Caroline (1847, 1825–1887)
- Comoglio, Teresa and Giuseppina (c.1891, 1843–1891; 1891, 1847–1899)
- Courage, Michelle Catherine (1918, 1891–1922)
- Covarel, Théotiste (c.1873, 1836–1908)
- Crozier, Antoine (c.1888, 1850–1916)
- D'Ambrosio, Maria Grazia Giuseppa (c.1802, 1782–1826)
- de Geuser, Marie-Antoinette (1915, 1889–1918)
- de Nicolay, Pauline (1855, 1811–1868)
- De Troia, Genoveffa (c.1920, 1887–1949)
- Dévenaz, Sédulie (c.1890, 1859–1940)
- Di Mauro, Adelaide (1926, 1890–1932)
- D.L.M. (1945, –)
- Dumerin, Thérèse (1894, 1847–1905)
- Élisabeth de la Croix (Doussot, Noémie) (1875, 1832–1896)
- Emmerick, Anna Katharina (1812, 1774–1824)
- Evolò, Natuzza (1938, 1924–2009)
- Fenouil, Célestine (1866, 1849–1918)
- Ferrero, Maria Consolata (c.1912, 1885–1916)
- Ferro, Rosina (1876, 1851–1912)
- Firrao, Maria Agnese (c.1815, c.1800–1855)
- Fiechtner, Anna (1839, 1808–)
- Filljung, Catherine (1883, 1848–1915)
- Filzinger, Apollonia (1824, 1801–1827)
- Flesch, Elisabeth (1873, c.1821–)
- Gachon, Antonine (1886, 1861–1945)
- Galgani, Gemma (1899, 1878–1903)
- Galles, Maria Gertrud (1852, c.1834–)
- Ganseforth, Grete (1943, 1926–1996)
- Gardi Cricca, Teresa Luisa (1804, 1769–1837)
- Gattorno, Anna Rosa (1862, 1831–1900)
- Gherzi, Angela Maria (1782, 1742–1800)
- Ghezzi, Ancilla (1822, 1808–1876)
- Giacobetti, Maria (1919, 1902–1974)
- Giardino, Angelo (1949, 1906–1974)
- Gilli, Pierina (c.1946, 1911–1979)
- Göbl, Anna Maria (1923, 1886–1941)
- Gómez Martín, Josefa (1923, 1901–1924)
- Güttler, Ferdinand (c.1875?, 1829–1898)
- Habermeier, Margareta (c.1862; 1854–1875)
- Hecht, Viktoria (1869, 1840–1890)
- Heigny, Firmin (1824, 1793–1859)
- Hellegouarch, Françoise (1895, 1874–1898)
- Hendrickx, Isabella (1874, 1844–1874)
- Henle, Anna (1887, 1871–1950)
- Hupe, Angela (1863, –)
- Isabel del Santísimo Sacramento (García Suelto y Pantoja, Isabel) (c.1866, 1832–1902)
- Isacchi, Angela and Teresa (c.1850, 1827–1895; c.1850, 1831–1890)
- Izquierdo, María Pilar (c.1936, 1906–1945)
- Jahenny, Marie-Julie (1873, 1850–1941)
- Jalhay-Munzbach, Marie (1865, 1807–1881)
- Jung, Clara (1939, 1887–1952)
- K., Elisabeth (1932, –)
- Kempnaers, Henri (1933, 1893–)
- Kinker, Anne Marie (1798, 1783–1812)
- Lasa, Josefa (1931, 1913–)
- Lateau, Louise (1868, 1850–1883)
- Lazzeri, Maria Domenica (1834, 1815–1848)
- Lebouc, Madeleine (Lair Lamotte, Pauline) (c.1895, 1853–1918)
- Lionetti, Raffaella (c.1950, 1918–1991)
- Llimargas Soler, Ramona (c.1930, 1892–1940)
- Lorger, Magdalena (1778, 1734–1806)
- Lucila González María de Jesús (González, Lucila) (1931, 1908–1936)



- Madame Miollis (Cartier, Thérèse-Joséphine) (1836, 1806–1877)
- Madame Royer (Challan-Belval, Édith) (1870, 1841–1924)
- Madame X. (c.1940, c.1910–)
- Madre Cándida de San Agustín (Córdova Pozuelo, Cándida) (c.1850, 1804–1861)
- Madre Sacramento (López y Burguillos, María Florencia Trinidad) (1868, 1834–1879)
- Madre Speranza (Alhama Valera, María Josefa) (c.1920, 1893–1983)
- Mamma Ebe Giorgini, Gigliola Ebe (1945, 1933–)
- Manca, Gavina Beatrice (1936, 1910–1979)
- Mancini, Marianna (1852, c.1808–1865)
- Manetti, Teresa (c.1875, 1846–1910)
- Mangano, Lucia (1920, 1896–1946)
- Marella, Giovanna (1800, 1770–after 1807)
- Marfuggi, Paolina (1931, 1890–)
- María Amparo del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús (Delgado García, María Amparo) (1930, 1889–1941)
- María Ana de Jesús Castro (Castro, Ángeles) (1900, 1882–1904)
- Marie de Jésus du Bourg (du Bourg, Anne-Rose-Joséphine) (1811, 1788–1862)
- Marie de la Croix (Nault, Maria) (1933, 1901–1999)
- Marie Saint-Augustin de Jésus (Ruel, Marie-Catherine) (c.1838, 1801–1874)
- Marie-Colette du Sacré Cœur (Duchet, Marie-Augustine) (1897, 1857–1905)
- Marie-Xavier de Réquista (Bel, Jeanne) (1868, 1843–1926)
- Marie-Marthe Chambon (Chambon, Françoise) (1866, 1841–1907)
- Marra, Teresa (1913, 1883–)
- Massart, Marie-Thérèse (1873, 1851–)
- Mastacchini, Maria Lilia (c.1907, 1892–1926)
- Matarrelli, Palma (1858, 1825–1888)
- Mela, Itala (1937, 1924–1957)
- Menéndez, Josefa (1920, 1890–1923)
- Mohr, Ursula (c.1825, c.1800–c.1855)
- Molari, Angela (1844, 1821–1887)
- Mónica de Jesús (Cornago Zapata, Basilia) (1908, 1889–1964)
- Moock, Arthur Otto (1935, 1902–)
- Moriconi, Ester (1913, 1875–1937)
- Mrazek, Bertha / Marasco, Georges (c.1922, 1890–1967)
- Napoleoni, Giulia (c.1840, 1819–1851)
- Navarro, Narcisa (c.1880, –)
- Nerbollier, Marie-Louise (1885, 1859–1908)
- Neumann, Therese (1926, 1898–1962)
- Nezzo, Renata (1914, 1894–1925)
- Niglutsch, Crescenzia (1836, 1816–1885)
- Noblet, Marie-Thérèse (1913, 1889–1930)
- Olazábal, Ramona (1931, 1915–1975)
- Padre Pio / Forgione, Francesco (1918, 1887–1968)
- Palminota, Teresa (1920, 1896–1934)
- Pantusa, Maria Concetta (1936, 1894–1957)
- Parlavecchia, Gaetana (c.1865, c.1850–)
- Parsi, Madeleine (1903, 1884–1928)
- Pazzafini, Maria Cesira (c.1913, 1896–1964)
- Périé, Pauline (1860, 1838–1915)
- Perschl, Anna (1840, –)
- Petit, Berthe (c.1900, 1870–1943)
- Pfister, Barbara (1890, 1867–1916)
- Philipp, Katharina (c.1910s, 1900–1980)
- Piccarreta, Luisa (1881, 1865–1947)
- Pickenhahn, Helene (c.1933, –)
- Pirini, Angelina (1938, 1922–1940)
- Planson, Marie-Claire (c.1830, 1808–1832)

- Poli, Teresa/Maria Teresa del Cuore di Gesù (c.1775, c.1750–)
- Pozzi, Laura Teresa (1932, 1910–1944)
- Prosperi, Gertrude (1847, 1799–1847)
- Put, Rosalie (1890, 1868–1919)
- Putigny, Marie-Catherine (c.1826, 1803–1885)
- Reus, Johann Baptist (1912, 1868–1947)
- Robin, Marthe (1930, 1902–1981)
- Ruess, Bärbl (1947, 1924–1996)
- Rumèbe, Joséphine (Rumèbe, Marie-Jeanne) (1855, 1850–1927)
- S., Hedwig (1930, –)
- Salvagnini, Lina (1919, 1896–1940)
- Schäfer, Sabine (1878, c.1862–)
- Schäffer, Anna (1910, 1882–1925)
- Schmit-Klaer, Lucie (1916, 1854–1924)
- Schneider, Julie “Emilie” (post-1845, 1820–1859)
- Schnelle, Johanna (c.1931, –)
- Schnitzelbauer, Therese (c.1842, –)
- Schuhmann, Maria (1853, 1823–1887)
- Schulten, Elisabeth “Salesia” (1909, 1877–1920)
- Schwester Maria Lucia / Sophia Halwax (ante-1885, 1836–1885)
- Segerer, Centa (1934, 1906–1953)
- Serra Pes, Maria Rosa (1801, 1766–)
- Sœur Olive (Danzé, Olive) (1926, 1906–1968)
- Sœur Saint-Bernard de la Croix (Hugueneil, Angélique) (1840, 1820–1847)
- Solari, Teresa (1868, 1822–1908)
- Sor Patrocínio (Quiroga y Cacopardo, María Josefa de los Dolores) (1829, 1811–1891)
- Sotgiu, Leontina (1916, 1882–1957)
- S.P.V. (1948, 1902–)
- Starace, Maria Maddalena (c.1870, 1845–1921)
- Steiner, Teresa (c.1835, 1813–1862)
- Strobl, Hieronyma (c.1840, –c.1869)
- Taigi, Anna Maria (c.1808, 1769–1837)
- Tamisier, Rosette (1849, 1816–1899)
- Tarallo, Maria Grazia (1906, 1866–1912)
- Tartaglino, Maria (1925, 1887–1944)
- Taubenberger, Theresia (1839, –)
- Tekotte, Marianne (1844, –)
- Thaller-Von Schönwerth, Mechtild (c.1890s, 1868–1919)
- Valtorta, Maria (1945, 1897–1961)
- Van den Broek, Maria (1915, 1891–1928)
- Van den Dijck, Léonie (1940, 1875–1949)
- Van den Plas, Maria (1935, c.1920s)
- Vandenputte, Marthe (1918, 1891–1967)
- Vangioni, Maria (c.1890, 1877–1944)
- Veraci, Crocifissa (1792, 1749–1822)
- Veronesi, Teresa (c.1950, 1870–1950)
- Vigneronne, Alfred (c.1933, –)
- Viñals, Gloria (1933, c.1916–)
- Vingerhoedt, Catherine (c.1900, 1855–1932)
- Visser, Dora (1843, 1819–1876)
- von Mörl, Maria (1834, 1812–1868)
- von Posch, Bertha (c.1865, 1843–1872)
- Wallraff, Helena (ante-1800, 1755–1801)
- Weiss, Eleonore “Maria Fidelis” (1919, 1882–1923)
- Winter, Theresia (1844, 1822–)
- Yvonne-Aimée de Malesroit (Beauvais, Yvonne) (1924, 1901–1951)
- Zancajo, María Luisa (1940, 1911–1954)
- Zangàra, Maria Rosa (c.1890, 1844–1914)
- Zeller, Katharina (1844, –)
- Zentner, Walburga (1830, –)
- Zuster Rumolda / Van Beek, Maria (1922, 1886–1948)

### Aiello, Elena (1923, 1895–1961)

Elena Aiello was born in 1895, in Montalto Uffugo, southern Italy (Cosenza, Calabria). She was sick for most of her childhood. In 1908, she had a Marian apparition. On 18 August 1920, she entered the Institute of the Sorelle del Preziosissimo Sangue. However, as a result of an accident and an unsuccessful operation, she was declared unfit for monastic life, and left the cloister without taking vows.

Stigmata appeared on her body in March 1923 and remained until her death, with blood flowing from many wounds on her forehead at 3 P.M. on 2 March 1923. The event was subsequently repeated on Fridays. Aiello was visited by the doctors Turano and Milano. On another Friday (23 March), wounds appeared on her hands, feet, knees, right arm and side, remaining visible for weeks. The news of her stigmatization quickly spread and she was considered a “living saint.” Curious devotees, but also doctors and sceptics, visited her, and she became a religious celebrity of great national interest. On 18 April 1924, after an ecstatic episode, stigmata reappeared in the presence of many witnesses (we have the chronicle of Aristide de Napoli and medical reports). According to the doctors Turano and Fabrizio, Aiello was a hysteric, while Dr Matteo Caracciolo considered her case scientifically inexplicable. Dr Battista Molezzi agreed with him and wrote a positive report (finding no psychosomatic illness or disorder) to the Archbishop of Cosenza, Roberto Nogara (1938). An investigation by the Holy Office was opened against her but was never concluded.

In 1928, Aiello founded the Order of Minim Sisters of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ (offering assistance to orphans) and, in 1949, she finally took her perpetual vows. She became very popular during the 1940s for her political prophecies and also wrote several letters to Mussolini, in which she announced the divine punishment of the dictator if he did not keep Italy out of the war and submit to the Pope (they were published in 1956 in the national newspaper, *Giornale d'Italia*).

She died in Rome on 19 June 1961, and her funeral was a public event attended by thousands of devotees and the faithful. On 14 September 2011, she was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI in Cosenza.

De Napoli, Aristide, 1978. *Elena Emilia Santa Aiello: la “Monaca Santa” di Montalto Uffugo*. Cosenza: SATEM, 1978.

Spadafora, Francesco. *Suor Elena Aiello. La Monaca Santa*. Rome: Citta nuova, 1964.

Speziale, Vincenzo. *Suor Elena Aiello. Profeta di Dio: vita, opere, scritti della venerabile madre*. Trent: Reverdito Stampa, 1995.

Speziale, Vincenzo. *Dio scrive a Mussolini: le profezie del 2000 per l'Italia e per il mondo negli scritti della monaca santa venerabile madre Elena Aiello*. Udine: Segno, 1996.

Speziale, Vincenzo. *Le profezie della beata madre Elena Aiello*. Udine: Edizioni Segni, 2014.

Toteda, Giovanna. *Suor Elena Aiello l'umile serva della tenerezza di Dio: ricordi, testimonianze e disegni*. Cosenza: Progetto 2000, 2013.

**A.L.C. (1944, 1927–)**

A.L.C. was born in Badajoz in 1927. In 1944, the Jesuit father Carlos M. Staehlin examined the wounds on her hands and side. She did not carry the stigmata on her feet.

Staehlin, Carlos M. *Apariciones*. Madrid: Razón y Fe, 1954, 164.

**Alonso López, Josefina (1941, 1893–1977)**

Josefina Alonso López was born in Zamora in 1893 and was the youngest of five sisters. Her father was a physician. After his passing in 1931, Josefina and two unmarried sisters became teachers and opened a private infant's school in their home, until 1939, when one of their cousins died and they inherited all his possessions. Josefina was always very pious and was especially devoted to Jesus of the Sacrament and the Virgin Mary. She had a rich mystical life, full of alleged visions and spiritual communications. In order to join the Lord in his redemptive mission, Josefina offered herself as a "victim soul," willing to suffer in atonement for the sins of humankind.

Around 1940, Father José Muñoz Luengo became her confessor. He asked her to record all her mystical experiences in writing. Between 1941 and 1943, Josefina kept a diary but this went unnoticed until 1977, after her death. When her niece, Purita Alonso, found it, she gave it to Josefina's last confessor, Father David de las Heras, who compared Josefina's mystical experiences with those of Saint Teresa de Ávila. Recognizing the exceptionality of the material, Father David transcribed Josefina's writings in 1986, and they were finally published in 1992.

In the diary, we can read about Josefina's suffering in sharing the Passion of Christ. It seems that Josefina did not understand very well what she was going through: "In general, this painful expression that Jesus has, this way of seeing him covered with blood, as if I saw him with my own eyes, leaves in my soul and even in my own organism an unexplainable something" (cited in Heras, *Una mística*, 63). Although Josefina received the stigmata, they were always invisible. For example, while having a vision of the crown of thorns, Josefina experienced a deep pain in her forehead. This "supernatural suffering" was combined with the wounds that Josefina inflicted on herself through mortification. It is probable that such phenomena continued until the end of her life. However, Josefina always kept quiet about her mystical experiences and never shared them with anyone. It is possible that her diary might be just a small hint of the graces received.

Heras, David de las. *Una mística seglar del siglo XX. Josefina Alonso López (1893–1977)*. Ávila: Francisco López Hernández, 1991.

**Amalia de Jesús Flagelado (Aguirre, Amalia) (1928, 1901–1977)**

Amalia Aguirre was born in 1901 in Ríos (Galicia). Her parents immigrated to Brazil searching for a better life, but Amalia did not join them immediately. As she was very

pious and devoted to charity, she decided to stay in Spain, taking care of the sick during the Great Flu pandemic. She finally left for Brazil in July 1919. There, she followed her religious vocation and nourished her devotion for the Passion of Christ and charity. In 1928, she co-founded, with Bishop Francisco Von Campos Barreto, a religious congregation in Campinas (Sao Paulo), which was called the Missionaries of Crucified Jesus. She took the religious name of Amalia de Jesús Flagelado. The congregation was both contemplative and active. The members could retain their secular dress and mix with citizens, helping the poor. Amalia lived in the community house in Campinas until 1953, when she was transferred to the House of Our Lady of the Apparition in Taubaté (Sao Paulo), where she died in 1977. Her life was especially devoted to poor children and widows. She carried visible stigmata and was venerated for this phenomenon, although she was better known for another extraordinary event.

This event occurred in November 1929, when a man asked for her help. His wife was sick and doctors thought that nothing could be done. Amalia asked Jesus to heal the woman. Jesus allegedly told her to ask "Our Lady of the Tears" and to repeat a prayer with him. As a consequence a new devotion was born. A miraculous healing was supposedly received by the sick woman, leading to the great popularity of the Missionaries of Crucified Jesus and Our Lady of the Tears devotion. Four months later, in March 1930, Amalia claimed to have witnessed the apparition of the Virgin wearing a violet tunic and a white veil, and carrying a special rosary. She allegedly told Amalia that Jesus had asked her to give this "rosary of the tears" to their congregation. She said that the rosary would help the congregation in the conversion of sinners and the possessed. She added that every grace asked using the rosary would be granted. According to Bishop Francisco Von Campos Barreto, innumerable favours were obtained thanks to the Our Lady of the Tears rosary. Today, the devotion continues to spread in Brazil and elsewhere around the world.

Lemos Pinheiro Franco, Maria Aparecida. *Serva de Deus – Irmã Amália*. Taubaté: Alaúde, 1985.

#### **Amann, Helene (1920, –)**

On 20 October, Helene Amann, the housemaid of Father Maximilian Schneider, started to experience the invisible wounds, while Christ allegedly "spoke" through her. In the first two years very few people knew about her, but in 1922 her story gradually became known and laypeople and the clergy heard about her gifts. The Bishop of Rottenburg responded by organizing a commission of religious and medical experts, who concluded that her visions, prophecies and ecstasies were not of supernatural origin. On 27 June 1924, the bishop announced this decision to the clergy and advised them to explain this to the faithful if they thought this was necessary.

Keppler, Paul Wilhelm von. "Kirchliches Urteil über die Vorgänge in Hausen Dek. Riedlingen." *Kirchliches Amts-Blatt für die Diözese Rottenburg*, 11.8 (28 June 1924): 141. Trier. Bistumsarchiv Trier, B111.12, 10 Bd.3e; Causa Göbel Nebenakten von 1924–1930.

### **Amengual Campaner, Margalida (1918, 1888–1919)**

Abandoned the day of her birth, Margalida Amengual Campaner (1888–1919) was adopted by a peasant family from Costitx, an isolated village in Mallorca's interior. Extremely pious, she attempted to join a convent but was rejected because of her poor health. Margalida became a Franciscan tertiary and was said to spend several hours a day meditating over the Passion. In her small library, she kept a book on the life of the stigmatized Italian mystic Gemma Galgani (1878–1903), canonized in 1940. Her spiritual father removed the book from the library after the onset of some extraordinary phenomena. In July 1918, Margalida started to have severe difficulties swallowing and began a period of inedia. Allegedly, for six months she was only nourished by the Eucharist and by ice mixed with sugar and cinnamon. On Friday, 9 August, the stigmata became visible on her hands. From then on, Margalida relived the Passion every Friday until her death. The ecstasies always started with the first stroke of the church's bell at midday. On several occasions, people from Costitx stopped the church clock to see if Amengual would "miss the ecstasy," but her sufferings began at the exact same hour.

The Bishop of Mallorca charged Reverend Nicolás Saggese and Canon Antonio Sancho with an investigation. Along with them, several physicians examined the case. Different reports are preserved at the diocesan archive in Palma de Mallorca. All of the reports deny fraud and judged the phenomena to be authentic. Saggese advocated the supernatural and divine origin of the events; but he also indicated that he was ready to "change his mind" under the "least indication of the ecclesiastical authorities" (ADM, 13.1). During the last months of Margalida's life, the news of her ecstasies spread across Mallorca by word of mouth. The testimonies of visitors contributed to the legitimation of the phenomena. According to the physician, Sebastián Amengual, who was one of the first to examine the stigmata, the events had been witnessed by hundreds of people, including "physicians, lawyers, priests, illustrious people with different points of view, old men and young, sceptical with regard to the acceptance of the mentioned phenomena" (ADM, 13.1).

Margalida's popularity was such that Saggese forbade her to receive any visitors, something she accepted with pleasure. From then on, those who could not obtain an ecclesiastical authorization to witness the "Friday agonies" at Margalida's house had to content themselves with observing the mystic at church – where she allegedly levitated once during prayer. During her ecstasy, what impressed the visitors most was

her facial expression. In the words of a group of visitors: "We saw that her expression was of anguish. It is not possible to describe it. Was it a resigned angst? It cannot be qualified as such. It was a deeply intense anguish; but with an expression of peace and softness ... There is no '[Mater] Dolorosa' with such an expression" (ADM, 13.1).

Margalida Amengual exhibited this ecstatic appearance after she died. Her corpus incorruptus was exhibited for ten days at the church's chapel in Costitx and was visited by around 80,000 people from Mallorca and Spain. She was buried carrying a certificate written in Latin by a local committee of theologians. In it, they described Margalida's charismata to ensure that her story would not be lost for future generations, and that her body would be easy to identify in the case of exhumation. In 1969, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of her death, the diocese of Mallorca put forward her cause for beatification and Margalida's grave was moved from the cemetery to the parish in Costitx; a rare privilege for a lay woman. She was declared Venerable in 2008 by Pope Benedict XVI.

Duran, Miguel. *Impressions i notes biogràfiques de na Margalida de Costitx, Terciària Franciscana i Maria dels Sagraris Calvaris*. Inca: Imp. Durán, 1919.

Munar Ramis, Juan Bta. *Margarita de Costitx: Datos Biográficos de la Sierva de Dios Margarita Amengual Campaner (a) Cativa 1888–1919*. Palma: Imp. SS. Corazones, 1969.

Palma de Mallorca, Axiu Diocesa de Mallorca (ADM), Margalida Amengual, 13.1.

### **Andriani, Maria Rosa (1820, 1786–1848)**

Maria Rosa was born in Francavilla Fontana, in the province of Brindisi, on 22 January 1786. From childhood she showed extraordinary devotion to the Passion of Christ and dedicated her suffering to him. When she was five years old, she fell seriously ill with smallpox. One year later, her martyrdom, through invisible stigmata, was announced to her in a Marian apparition.

She wanted to become a nun but her parents only permitted her to join the Franciscan Order as a tertiary (1808). Her first spiritual father was Giuseppe Gerardi.

On 8 June 1820, she dreamt of a mystical crucifixion. Five rays of fire radiated from the Cross and hit her body. From that day onwards, she displayed the Five Holy Wounds, which were permanently visible until her death (and the crown of thorns). The pains were more intense during Christian feasts, especially during the Easter period. She described this mystical experience to her confessor, who observed her wounds and testified that they bled and that her hands and feet had been pierced through.

On 15 October 1824, she experienced the transverberation of the heart of St Teresa of Avila, and from that moment onwards the mystical phenomenon occurred every year. Other extraordinary phenomena that she experienced include blood that she wept from her right eye (like Teresa Neumann), inedia for 28 years, and intense ecstasy

accompanied by violent self-flagellation (during one of these episodes she tore some bones from her side).

She died on 10 September 1848 at the age of 62. She was not very popular, and was overshadowed by her contemporary, Palma Matarrelli, the stigmatic of Oria.

Jurlaro, Rosaio. "Rosa Maria Andriani, mistica francescana dell'Ottocento in Francavilla." *Miscellanea Franciscana Salentina: rivista di cultura dei Frati minori di Lecce* 24 (2008): 95–103.

#### **Anonymous (1838, 1822–)**

In 1840, the physician and Trappist monk J.C. Debreyne received a letter from a chaplain concerning a girl interned in a religious hospice located in the north of France. The girl was 18 years old and had been experiencing alleged mystical phenomena for about two years. She claimed to have received, while in a trance, bits of sugar and roasted apples that "appeared" in her hands. In addition, she carried the stigmata on her chest and on her feet. Every Friday, drops of blood allegedly flowed from the wounds. To ensure that the wounds were not self-inflicted, they stitched a piece of fabric around her feet. On Friday, the fabric appeared stained with blood.

According to the chaplain, the girl was not a saint and seemed to be feeble-minded. He was convinced that she was faking because the phenomena began to disappear once he and other priests stopped paying attention to them. Debreyne agreed with the chaplain that it was neither a divine miracle nor the work of the Devil, but a human trick. He argued that the girl probably enjoyed being worshiped. With regard to the stigmata, he proposed a physiological explanation and concluded the girl was a liar and a deceiver.

Debreyne, Jean-Corneille. *Essai sur la théologie morale*. Paris: Librairie Poussielgue, 1868, 353–362.

#### **Anonymous (1950, 1933–)**

In 1950, the spiritual director of a 17-year-old girl contacted the Jesuit father Carlos M. Staehlin to examine her stigmata. Staehlin concluded the girl suffered from a dermatological illness.

Staehlin, Carlos M. *Apariciones*. Madrid: Razón y Fe, 1954, 165–166.

#### **Anonymous of Bordeaux (?) (1885, –)**

Religious woman, probably from Bordeaux. She bled from the forehead and the cheeks (1885).

Binet-Sanglé, Dr. *La Folie de Jésus*. 3rd ed. Paris: A. Maloine, 1911, 275.



### **Anonymous Carmelite nun (1851, –)**

We have only sparse references to this case of a lay sister (*sœur converse*) in a Carmelite cloister in Tournai. The information we have stems from the report of a medical examination conducted on 19 April 1851 at the request of the bishop, Mgr Labis. At the time, the sister already had the “odour of sanctity.” She exhibited stigmata on her hands, feet and head, especially during Holy Week or on feasts in honour of the Passion. When in ecstasy, she witnessed Christ’s Passion. A second examination occurred in 1852, concluding that the condition of the sister was caused by the way she meditated, inspired by a particularly large crucifix. She was sent to another cloister where she did indeed recover and could eventually return to her own cloister.

Leuven, Kadoc, Jezuïeten, 4.2.6. Archives of individual Jesuits, Ludovicus Boeteman, 1194. Dossier Louise Lateau, Report on 19 April 1851 and 1852.

### **Anonymous of “D.” (c.1917, –)**

We have only minimal information on this alleged stigmatic, not even her name or location (only that of one of her devotees, from Bottrop). Believers seem to have called her the “chosen one” (“Auserwählte”) and praised her exceptional humbleness and heroic courage for offering herself as a victim for others. She had visions and carried the invisible stigmata and lived through Christ’s Passion (from 1917?). Her life, in her words, was like that of Jesus: filled with mockery and contempt. Not even her father confessor could understand her mystical life and forced her to lead an active life.

München. BSB, Nachlass Lama, Friedrich von (1876–1944), Ana 445, letter to von Lama, 16/2/29 from Bottrop in W.

### **Anonymous of Doizieux-St-Just (c.1870, –)**

Around 1870, in a Franciscan monastery in the village of Doizieux-St-Just, not far from Lyon, one of the sisters started to experience some strange mystical phenomena. The events were witnessed by the parish priest, the vicar and the religious sisters of the community. The Franciscan nun was reported to have received stigmata. Her hands and feet were allegedly pierced by nails, which seemed to appear and disappear in front of the eyes of the parish priest. He attempted to “remove the nails,” but the stigmatic would cry out in pain. Two “real” thorns were present in her forehead, where the wound representing the crown of thorns was located. She also carried a wound on her side.

The stigmata bled a lot, but not regularly. Apparently, there were no special days, such as Friday – day of the Passion – on which the wounds bled more frequently. Many witnessed her sufferings and are said to have heard the strokes of flagellation on her body, along with “angelical singing” in her bedroom. The stigmatized nun allegedly

received the Eucharist from her guardian angel, as a miraculous Communion. She also witnessed apparitions of the Virgin Mary and the Infant Jesus. Although her sisters did not see the apparitions, they said that the room was brightened and impregnated by a sweet odour after Jesus and the Virgin had "left."

Other miraculous phenomena were attributed to this Franciscan stigmatic. For example, she was said to levitate or to make objects disappear or levitate around her, such as a statue of the Virgin or a rosary. She was also said to be able to read the minds of others, to frequently fall into ecstasy and to suffer from diabolical attacks. During her "chemin de croix," little flames allegedly floated in the air surrounding her. Moreover, she was reported to live in a state of inedia.

The ecclesiastical authorities were reluctant to believe in the authenticity of the phenomena. Local clergymen examined the case, concluding that the events were a result of a diabolical intervention. The reasons given were: 1) the phenomena were sometimes childish; 2) the stigmatic seemed to have stolen some money from the community; 3) she was not indulgent when someone doubted her condition; 4) at times she had been discovered committing a fraud; 5) while in ecstasy, her "supernatural dialogues" were trivial; 6) she refused to visit the doctor, and 7) when given the alternative to either go to the doctor or abandon the religious community, she decided to quit the convent.

After she left, the Franciscan sisters did not hear of her again; however, they were concerned that she would try the same thing in another religious community. The clergymen who examined her concluded that she was the victim of a voluntary pact with the Devil. In her absence, the convent seemed to be haunted by mysterious phenomena during the night. The Catholic ultramontane journalist and writer, Roger Gougenot des Mousseaux (1805–1876), author of *Mœurs et pratiques des démons* (1865), attempted to convince the sisters to give him the manuscript concerning the "false stigmatic's possession," but they refused in order to avoid spreading the story and receiving bad publicity.

Tournai, AST, Louise Lateau, B2 Affaires diocésaines (Mgr. Dumont), 4. Enveloppe: Lettres et documents trouvés chez M. Deschamps 1875 (P. Séraphin Passioniste: 1/1/1872).

#### **Anonymous (French hospital) (1830, –)**

"Hysterical" woman from an unknown French hospital with ecstasies and blood sweating (1830).

Binet-Sanglé, Dr. *La Folie de Jésus*. 3rd ed. Paris: A. Maloine, 1911, 272.

#### **Anonymous of Guriezo (c.1926, –)**

Notes from the journal of William A. Christian (17 September 1976):

In Guriezo a woman received the stigmata about 50 years ago. The parish priest believed her, and the two of them retired to a high, isolated hamlet, where they live together. He goes out, does errands, shops. She stays in except for Good Friday, when she goes down to the parish church and confesses and receives communion, her hands in bandages. People get upset because she takes so long to confess. When a village woman died, the priest who lives with the stigmatic came to give his pésame to her son, saying "It's a shame that she went to hell." As a result that priest is in bad odor with the woman's family.

#### **Anonymous of Hennebont (1896, –)**

All we know about this case is that Dr Leissen, from Hennebont (Morbihan), sent a report to the *Bulletin de l'Académie de Médecine* about a female stigmatic he had examined (1896). It appears the report was not published.

*Bulletin de l'Académie de Médecine*, série 3, 36.47, (1896): 747.

#### **Anonymous of Le Puy-en-Velay (1891, –)**

On 2 August 1891, Mother Marie-Ignace Melin wrote a letter to the Jesuit father Louis-Etienne Rabussier, with whom she had co-founded the *Congrégation des religieuses de la Sainte Famille du Sacré Cœur*. Marie-Ignace had been charged with the examination of a female stigmatic in the congregation's convent in Le Puy-en-Velay. The spiritual director of the stigmatic had sent her to the convent on a retreat. Stigmata appeared on the girl's hands every first Friday of the month. Marie-Ignace gave the girl gloves to cover the wounds and prayed to the Lord to make them disappear. She noted that the girl had difficulties in submitting herself to God's will and concluded that she was being fooled by the Devil. The stigmata eventually disappeared, but the girl was not admitted into the novitiate of the congregation of La Sainte Famille du Sacré Cœur.

Leperche, Émilie. *Mère Marie-Ignace Melin. Fondatrice et supérieure générale des Sœurs de la Sainte Famille du Sacré-Cœur*. Lyon: Libr. du Sacré-Cœur, 1942, 361–363.

#### **Anonymous of Madrid (?) (c.1945, –)**

During the 1940s or the 1950s, the Jesuit father Carlos M. Staehlin examined someone (a man or a woman, we don't know), who bore a wound on his/her side. The wound bled every Friday.

Staehlin, Carlos M. *Apariciones*. Madrid: Razón y Fe, 1954, 164–165.

### **Anonymous of Molinos (c.1933, –)**

In autumn 1933, in a hamlet called Molinos close to Orihuela in the province of Alicante, an alleged stigmatic was attracting public attention. The woman had spent eight years bedridden and displayed the wounds of Christ. Devotees and curious people visited her daily. In exchange for a small donation, she offered “holy water,” which was supposed to cure all illnesses. She also had the alleged gift of divinations and spoke to people about their future. The Bishop of Orihuela either did not know about the stigmatic, or did not wish to restrict her cult.

“Desde Orihuela. En Molinos hay una santa,” *El Luchador*, 5 October 1933.

### **Anonymous of Ochsenfeld (ante 1880, –)**

The only thing we know about the Alsatian stigmatic is that she was the aunt of a certain Father Vögeli (or Vögtli). She lived in Ochsenfeld near Mülhausen and she willingly “sacrificed” herself to increase the number of priest vocations. Their number seems to have been exceptionally high in that region. She died in the 1880s.

München, BSB, Nachlass Lama, Friedrich von (1876–1944), Ana 445, letter of P. Felix Lieber, Asal 31/5/30.

### **Anonymous of San Genesio (c.1845, –1855/60)**

The woman known only as the “Anonymous of San Genesio” was born in San Genesio, in the province of Bolzano, probably in the first half of the nineteenth century. She was the daughter of a shoemaker and one of the Tyrolean stigmatized virgins. She experienced ecstasy and stigmata, and despite being blind, claimed to see angels. She died some time between 1855 and 1860.

Imbert-Gourbeyre, Antoine. *La stigmatisation*, ed. Joachim Boufflet. Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1996.

### **Anonymous of Syracuse (1930, –1950)**

In a letter of 8 October 1931, Vicar General Msgr Giovanni Musumeci informed the Holy Office and asked for advice about a case of alleged stigmatization that took place in Syracuse (Sicily). In 1930, a woman (her name is not mentioned in the sources) had claimed to be a saint and to have received the impression of the visible stigmata on her hands, feet and chest, as well as the crown of thorns.

We do not know much about her life. She was born in Syracuse at the beginning of the twentieth century, and when around 20 years old, she married and had a son. After her husband’s death, she retired to a contemplative life, leaving her son with her

parents and wishing to live in a cave sanctuary. The religious authorities denied her permission, so she went to Messina, where she was welcomed into the seclusion of a monastery. After a while, however, she began to exhibit strange phenomena and also wished to reform the convent, so the nuns decided to remove her. The anonymous mystic returned to Syracuse, where she claimed that the Lord wanted her to found a new cloistered monastery.

Her fame spread throughout the city, especially after the appearance of stigmata. On 18 April 1930, a Good Friday, she bled from the Five Holy Wounds and received the crown of thorns. These supernatural phenomena were considered authentic by her spiritual father, some other members of the local clergy and the faithful. The vicar, however, was very sceptical, considering them a sign of hysteria and a fabrication. He sent a letter to the Holy Office and the congregation stating that he did not believe in the phenomenon, so would keep her under strict observation and would not allow the approval of her foundation. She died around 1950.

ACDF, (Dev.V.1932) 3050/1931, n.5.

#### **Anonymous of Vinalmont (1873, –)**

The only references to this stigmatic can be found in some derisive articles in Belgian newspapers. *La Meuse* was one of the first journals to report on the case on 20 November 1873, while *L'Écho du Parlement* and *L'Indépendance Belge* reprinted the same report two days later. The stigmatic was said to be located in Vinalmont near Huy and compared to Louise Lateau. She was allegedly attracting the attention of the French clergy, who wanted to take her to France and put her on display, as miracles such as hers did not have much success in Belgium.

Anonymous S.t. *La Meuse*, November 20, 1873, 2.

#### **Arenare, Angela (1834, 1816–1857)**

Angela Arenare, or Maria Giuliana del Santissimo Sacramento, was a mystical nun born in Naples on 23 February 1816. She grew up in a bourgeois family and, as is sometimes the case with other Italian stigmatics (actually it appears as a literary *topos*), already had extraordinary experiences in childhood. At the age of five, Angela saw the Madonna with the Child Jesus for the first time and they predicted her future: she would become a religious and a spiritual wife of the crucified Christ (bridal mysticism).

At the age of 18, following her religious wish and the intervention of her spiritual father, Angelo Coppola, she enrolled in the Third Order of the Servants of Mary. The young woman, one of the many “domestic nuns” found across southern Italy, spent her days praying incessantly, undertaking mortifying practices and participating in

Christ's Passion. In 1834, stigmata appeared on Fridays on her hands, feet and side, while she felt the sting of the crown of thorns on her head. Father Vincenzo Maria Longo became her new confessor in 1838 and accompanied the mystical woman in her decision to leave the world for the cloister. On 23 June 1842, she entered the monastery of Santa Monaca of Resina (popularly called "Mantellate") and ran the *cursus honorum* until she became the abbess. Her stigmata, which had become invisible, as she had requested, and other supernatural phenomena (prophetic faculties, bilocation, ecstasies, mystical marriage, spiritual communion) attracted many faithful who considered her a "living saint." As early as 1836–1837, Angela was worshipped by the people for having eliminated cholera from the city and for having miraculously cured many people by "absorbing" their maladies into herself.

Maria Giuliana died in Resina at the age of 41, on 25 October 1857. The canonical process was introduced by Tommaso Pedicini in 1898 and on 23 March 1827 she was declared Venerable. Her remains, initially conserved in the monastery, were transferred to the Church of St Pietro in Majella in 1953, while a relic of her uncoagulated blood is preserved in St Girolamo (another Neapolitan church).

Tagliatela, Gioacchino. *La vita della serva di Dio Suor Maria Giuliana del SS. Sacramento nata Arenare. Scritta dal P. Gioacchino Tagliatela dell'Oratorio di Napoli*. Naples: Tipografia e Libreria Festa, 1885.

### Ascione, Maria Carmela (1818, 1799–1875)

Maria Carmela Giuseppa Ascione, better known by her religious name Maria Luisa of Jesus, or the popular nickname "Monaca Santa," was born into a wealthy Catholic family on 28 February 1799, in the district of Barra (Naples). Despite her limited education, she was able to write 45 biblical commentaries and over 1,500 letters under divine inspiration.

At the age of 17, she entered the Benedictine monastery of Donnaromita, but due to illness returned home six months later. Her inner life subsequently became very deep, rich with visions and divine revelations. At Christmas 1818, the Christ Child appeared to her, asking her to participate in his crucifixion. In her biographies, this event appears to be an interior mystical experience, rather than physical and visible (invisible stigmata). After she recovered from her illness, she completed her novitiate in the Olivella monastery of Naples, and in 1820 took the religious habit with the name of Maria Luisa of Jesus.

A new illness forced her to return home until 1824. However, between 1825 and 1839, Maria Luisa was the Mother Superior. In 1830, Christ revealed her mission: she was to abandon the contemplative life in order to establish a new charitable institution. In 1833, she wrote the rules of this institution under the inspiration of St Philomena.

The rumour of her mystical gifts and of her prophetic and healing powers spread beyond the convent and numerous pilgrims visited her daily. She was invoked as a protector by the Neapolitans during the cholera epidemic in 1836.

On 8 May 1840, in the popular neighbourhood of Saint Lucia, she opened the first home of the *Serve di Maria Santissima Addolorata e di Santa Filomena*, and a few years later the second (1851) and the third (1852). At the age of 36, by the order of her father director Luigi Navarro, she began to write a commentary on the sacred text, dictated by a divine voice. The first books were printed by the Dominican fathers of Imola and obtained the consent of Bishop Mastai Ferretti, the future Pope Pius IX. Her biblical exegesis continued after the death of Navarro (1863) under the supervision of the Dominican father, Alberto Radente (who convinced her to enrol in the Third Dominican Order in 1867).

She died in Naples on 10 January 1875, and her body was displayed for three days to allow her followers to pay their last respects. Her cause for beatification, which is still open, is promoted by the Dominicans.

Boccardo, Giuliana. "Maria Luisa Ascione e le illustrazioni sulla bibbia". In Claudio Leonardi et al., eds. *La bibbia nell'interpretazione delle donne*. Florence: SISMEL, Ed. Del Galluzzo, 1999, 147–168.

D'Ortona, Celestina. *Madre Luisa di Gesù Ascione*. Naples: Stella Mattutina, 1975.

Esposito, Salvatore. *L'ascolto ... Cenni biografici della Serva di Dio Suor Maria Luisa di Gesù. Fondatrice delle Suore di Maria SS. Addolorata*. Naples: Tip. A. D'Alessandro, 1987.

Esposito, Salvatore. *Lettere per ogni stagione. Epistolario di Suor Maria Luisa di Gesù*. Naples: Tip. A. D'Alessandro, 1990.

Radente, Alberto. *Vita ed intelligenze spirituali della Serva di Dio Suor Maria Luisa di Gesù scritte dalla medesima, terziaria professa dell'Ordine di San Domenico e fondatrice del Pio Istituto di Maria SS. Addolorata e di S. Filomena*. Naples: Stab. Tip. Dell'ancora di Giovanni Pisanzio, 1883.

### **Asunción Galán de San Cayetano (Galán, Asunción) (1899, 1867–1901)**

Asunción Galán was born in 1867 in Montanchez (Extremadura). Her parents separated five months after her birth. Her mother was hard on her during her childhood, during which she was feeble and suffered from tuberculosis. From a young age, she was very pious, and from the age of eight she practised mortification exercises, such as sleeping without a duvet or walking with chickpeas in her shoes. At the age of 15, she received the Holy Communion every day, an uncommon habit at that time. Her acts of penitence became harsher every year; for example, Asunción began sleeping on the floor.

In 1886, the priest from Fregenal recommended her to the Augustinian sisters of the village. Asunción Galán took her vows in July of that year, adopting the religious name of Asunción Galán de San Cayetano. In 1888, she started to suffer from several illnesses: vomiting blood, and having difficulties eating and breathing. She tried to soothe her pain through prayer and decided to completely give herself up to God. She told her confessor that she wanted to become a saint at any price and explained her mortification programme to him: she would start a period of inedia, wear a spiked belt and pray all night to begin with. However, her confessor advised her to abandon her regime due to her physical feebleness. She ignored his advice and secretly continued with her plan.

Along with her devotion to the Eucharist, Sister Asunción was devoted to the Passion. She performed her Via Crucis exercises daily, reflecting on the Holy Wounds. In her meditations, she asked Jesus to allow her to experience the physical and psychic pains of the Passion. Allegedly, her prayers were answered during the Holy Week of 1899. From then on, she felt the aching stigmata in her flesh, but the wounds were never visible. On 16 February 1900, she experienced the transverberation or spiritual wounding of the heart, a phenomenon especially related to St Teresa de Ávila. The last years of her life were marked by anaemia and tuberculosis. She died peacefully on 23 June 1901.

Fariña, José Agustín. *Vida de la sierva de Dios sor Asunción Galán de San Cayetano*. Barcelona: Librería Católica Internacional, 1924.

Gutiérrez Macías, Valeriano. *Mujeres extremeñas: I. Vidas de perfección, mujeres temple y damas de América*. Cáceres: Gráficas Cervantes S.A, 1977.

### **B., Irene (1927, 1902–?)**

Apart from some fragmentary information from a newspaper article, we have little information on this case (and thus no idea of how it ended). The stigmatization of the young Munich girl, Irene B., seems to be an addition to the larger Konnersreuth story (see Therese Neumann). Irene, 25 at the time, went to see the famous stigmatic out of curiosity and seems to have been moved by the event. Soon, the first signs of change could be perceived: she became extremely pious, started hearing voices and had panic attacks. While medication stopped her from panicking, she started to have visions, felt connected to God and claimed not to be able to walk. Stigmata developed on her palms.

Anonymous. "Ein Opfer Konnersreuther Wunderglaubens. Irene B ..., eine jünge Münchnerin, erkrankt nach einem Besuch bei der 'Resl' an Hysterie und empfängt Stigmata an den Händen." *Regensburger-Echo*, October 7, 1927.



### **Bandini, Maria Caterina Giuliana (1831, 1798–1841)**

Maria Caterina Giuliana Bandini was born in Florence in 1798. As a child she wanted to become a nun, refusing marriage proposals and attempting to enter several monasteries in the city. However, she did not have a dowry or good health, which prevented her from realizing her wishes. She was forced to live a “mixed life” between the domestic sphere and philanthropic activities.

She engaged in numerous penitential practices, including self-flagellation, fasting, and corporal and spiritual mortifications. She also alternated periods of prayer and devotion with charitable activities, especially for the ill, orphans and the elderly. In 1828, under the direction of her spiritual father, Luigi Giannelli, priest of the Santissima Annunziata’s basilica in Florence, she became a tertiary of the Servants of Mary.

In 1831, at the age of 33, Maria Caterina developed the visible signs of the Crucifixion on her body. Her desire to participate in the pain of the Saviour became real through the wounds on her hands, feet and chest. For years, she and the old spiritual father attempted to hide the charismatic gift, but the news began to spread to the city, where she was considered a “living saint.” Her fame led the curia to open an investigation.

Indeed, in 1838, the vicar archbishopric of Florence, Msgr Francesco Grazzini, opened a diocesan investigation to discover the truth. The inquiry was conducted with the participation of the Provincial Father of the Servants of Mary, Michele Francesco Strigelli, who attempted to protect Giannelli (his brother), but considered Maria Caterina a woman suffering from hysteria and with a fervent imagination. The investigation was concluded without a severe sentence. Her stigmata were considered to not be a divine gift and she was forced to live a secluded life, but apparently many contemporaries continued to believe in her.

Maria Caterina Bandini died in 1841 at the age of 43. Some followers requested that a process of beatification be opened, but the curia did not give permission.

Florence, Archdiocesan Archive Mons. Minucci, busta 26, fasc. 14, cc. 3–6.

### **Bárbara de Santo Domingo (Jurado Antúnez, Bárbara) (1869, 1842–1872)**

Bárbara Jurado Antúnez was born in 1842, in the Cathedral of Sevilla, known as La Giralda. Her father was the bell ringer and lived in the tower. For this reason, Bárbara is also known as the Daughter of La Giralda. As a child, she was very pious and when only six years old, she told her mother that she wanted to be a Capuchin. She was said to have learned to read, write and play the cathedral organ by herself. In 1859, aged 17, she entered the Dominican Order in the Madre de Dios monastery and took the religious name of Bárbara de Santo Domingo. Her sisters admired her for her virtues, including poverty, humility, chastity, piety and a great devotion to charity and God. Her spiritual

father was José Torres Padilla, popularly called El santero (The saint maker), because he was the spiritual director of many nuns who died with a reputation for sanctity, such as Madre Sacramento – another stigmatic – and Sor Ángela de la Cruz, who was canonized by Pope John Paul II.

Bárbara's mystical life was full of graces. In compensation, she allegedly suffered from extremely painful attacks from the Devil. She used to submit herself to long periods of fasting and mortification. During episodes of ecstasy, she emanated a sweet odour, similar to that attributed to saints. She had frequent visions of the crucified Christ and was especially devoted to the Passion. In these visions, Jesus covered her with blood from his wounds. According to Bárbara, the wounds symbolized the imperfections of her sisters in the monastery. She also wrote profusely about her mystical life and her diaries can be consulted in a biography written by Paulino Álvarez (1889). There, Bárbara de Santo Domingo explains how she suffered from stigmata, especially from the crown of thorns and from a "nail" that was stuck in her heart. Such wounds especially affected her after 1869, until her death in 1872; however, they were never visible.

It is said that Bárbara de Santo Domingo died by offering herself for another. On 5 November 1872, she was taking care of one of the sisters who was severely ill with typhoid fever, when she offered her life to God in order to heal her. The sister recovered but Sor Bárbara was infected and died from the illness shortly after, with a reputation for sanctity. Her body was exhibited for eight days without showing any signs of corruption. Her funeral was resplendent and drew the attention of many laypeople who venerated her. In 1877, her grave was opened in order to bury her in the re-taken Madre de Dios monastery, from which the nuns had been expelled during the 1868 revolution. Her corpse was said to still be uncorrupted. The cause for her beatification is in progress.

Álvarez, Paulino. *Vida de la Sierva de Dios Sor Bárbara de Santo Domingo*. Palencia: Imp. de Santo Domingo, 1889.

Campa Carmona, Ramón de la. *Las biografías de la Sierva de Dios Sor Bárbara de Santo Domingo Jurado Antúnez*. Oviedo: Memoria Ecclesiae, 2006.

González-Reigada, Margarita. *La hija de La Giralda: Sierva de Dios Sor Bárbara de Sto. Domingo Jurado Antúnez*. 2nd ed. Sevilla: Convento de las Dominicás de Madre de Dios de Sevilla, 2002.

Ortiz Urruela, José Antonio. *Vida de la Sierva de Dios Sor Bárbara de Santo Domingo*. Sevilla: Tipografía de El obrero de Nazaret, 1888.

Zapata García, Miquel, O.P. *La hija de La Giralda, Sor Bárbara de Santo Domingo Jurado y Antúnez: una figura sevillana injustamente olvidada*. Sevilla: Guadalquivir, 1999.

### **Barone, Adelina (1930, 1912–2000)**

Adelina Barone, simply known as Lina, was born in Fiumefreddo Bruzzo, in the province of Cosenza in 1912. She expressed the desire to become a nun from childhood and wanted to enter the Franciscan monastery in her small town. Shortly before entering the monastery at the age of 18, she suffered serious spiritual pains during Easter week of 1930, and on Good Friday (18 April 1930) she started to sweat blood. The visible stigmata were displayed on the palms of her hands as well as on her feet, while she also bore the chest wound and the crown of thorns. Over Easter, the pains disappeared, and while the wounds remained visible, they stopped bleeding.

The phenomenon compromised her admission to the convent. The abbess, however, asked for advice from higher religious authorities. According to biographers, she was received by Pope Pius XII and he encouraged her to hide the extraordinary signs that she bore on her body. However, a file containing information on the Barone's case is kept at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the attitude of the cardinal inquisitors certainly did not seem to be inclined to recognizing the divine nature of her graces. As there was no explicit condemnation, she was permitted to become a nun, taking the name of Dolores. After the first event of 1930, Adelina prayed to the Virgin to make the stigmata invisible. While they were hidden throughout most of the year, they would become visible during Easter week and especially on Good Fridays.

In the late 1950s, Sister Dolores lived in several residences, travelling between Rome and Naples, then settling in the Roman locality of Castellaccio. There, using donations from supporters, she opened a nursery school and a centre for the training of young girls, run by the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart.

Other mystical phenomena characterized her life. These included frequent dialogues and Marian visions, ecstasies, prophecies and healing powers. She became well known in her community especially for the latter. Every September, Dolores went on a pilgrimage to Lourdes and while travelling in the train, made graces and intercessions to the devotees. Adelina died in Rome on 10 October 2000.

Correnti, Santi. *Donne di Sicilia: la storia dell'isola del sole scritta al femminile*. Catania: Tringale, 1989.

De Angelis, Laura. *Suor Dolores: Dono di Dio*. Tavagnacco: Edizioni Segno, 2012.

### **Barone, Febronia (1869, 1856–1878)**

Febronia Barone, better known by the name of Suora Veronica Barone or "L'Estatica Cappuccina," was born on 16 December 1856 in Vizzini, a small town in the province of Catania (Sicily).

From her childhood she manifested extraordinary gifts. At the age of five, the Christ Child appeared to her in a vision. He had a lily in his right hand and the crown of

thorns in the left, prophesying her future of chastity and suffering. Illness, visions of saints and divine healings followed. On 3 October 1861, having fallen ill several days earlier (leprosy), St Veronica Giuliani (stigmatized Capuchin saint) cured her in a mystical way. Ten years later, St Veronica and St Francis saved her again from what doctors declared was her imminent death.

At the age of seven, Veronica had her first ecstatic episode in church. The Capuchin, Giuseppe Sammartino, became her spiritual father. Ecstasy and visions alternated with illnesses, inedia and her apparent death at various times. These extraordinary events were observed by local religious men who, after an investigation and experiments excluded the possibility of illness (initially they assumed she was in a trance or was having an epileptic-hysterical seizure) or fraud.

The descriptions of her stigmata and their appearance are not clear. On Fridays, especially during Lent, she felt the pain of the Crucifixion between midday and 3 p.m. She would start meditating, fall into ecstasy and reproduce scenes of the Via Crucis, holding her arms and feet in a similar position to the crucified Christ. Strange black marks were visible on her hands, but it appears that they did not emit blood. Instead, her eyes, ears, nose and head (crown of thorns) would bleed. These phenomena were reported on 13 September 1869 (vision of Christ crucified) and on the Feast of Corpus Christi in 1871, when she remained in bed for two days suffering the Passion.

On 9 July 1871, she enrolled in the Third Order of Saint Francis. Other supernatural gifts were added: mystical marriage (22 January 1876) and communion (8 April 1876), demonic attacks, liberation of the souls in Purgatory, as well as prophetic and healing powers. She also foretold her own death, which occurred on 5 January 1878.

In November 1907, the first stage of the diocesan process for beatification was held in Vizzini. Those who appeared before the religious authorities testified about many miracles. Recently, the association of the Friends of Sister Veronica Barone was founded to promote her worship and open a new phase in her beatification process.

Da Castelbuono, Raimondo. *Suor Veronica Barone terziaria francescana, 1856–1878: breve schizzo d'una vita crocifissa*. Vizzini: Convento dei Frati Cappuccini, 1976.

Da Vizzini, Beniamino. *Il volo d'un angelo: Suor Veronica Barone da Vizzini (16 dicembre 1856–5 gennaio 1878)*. Turin: L.I.C.E. R. Berruti & C., 1936.

La Scala Da Mazzarino, Pio. *L'estatica cappuccina: suor Veronica Barone, 1856–1878*. Catania: Stabilimento tipografico industriale, 1906.

Puglisi Lo Magno, Giuliano. *Brevi cenni sulla vita di suor Veronica Barone, terziaria francescana*. Ragusa: Vinc. Criscione Tip. Edit., 1901.

Scribanti, Pio Giuseppe. *L'adoratrice di Gesù sacramentato, suor Veronica Barone da Vizzini, terziaria cappuccini (1856–1878)*. Rome: Desclee e C., 1913.

### **Bartenhauser, Elisabeth (c.1840, 1813–?)**

Elisabeth Bartenhauser's story is inextricably linked with that of other ecstatic women from Waakirchen (in Upper Bavaria) during the Vormärz and with the local priest Weinzierl, who acted as their spiritual guide and promoted a religious life focused on the Passion of Christ among other activities. Elisabeth was the daughter of peasants from Gaissach, and was a sick and impoverished servant when she arrived in Waakirchen in 1839 (at the age of 26). Weinzierl let her stay in his house and in January 1840, she suddenly started to go into ecstasy and "sweat" blood. Although the priory was somewhat isolated, the phenomenon did not remain secret for long. Many regarded Elisabeth as a "saint." Others in the village were more critical, however, and serious discussions commenced. The question was brought before the Tegernsee district court after the president of the Upper Bavaria district accidentally saw the girl covered in blood praying in the midst of a group of women when he was on an inspection visit (28 September 1840). Weinzierl did not like the attention that Elisabeth drew and told her to put an end to her visionary episodes. The phenomenon did indeed stop shortly afterwards, as did the interest of the government. Afterwards, she seems to have lost her "saintly" reputation and was looked upon with pity or critically (in the same region two years later, the cases of Theresia Taubenberger, Maria Fiechtner and Theresia Schnitzelbauer also drew the interest of the authorities).

Gißibl, Bernhard. *Frömmigkeit, Hysterie und Schwärmerei*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004, 56–8.

München, AEM, Realia 923a, Erscheinungen-Einzelfälle, 1839–1845, Bartenhauser.

München, Staatsarchiv, AR 1020/10, Act des königlichen Landgerichts Tegernsee. Umtriebe des Pfarrers Mathias Weinzierl in Waakirchen betr. 1842/44.

### **Barthel, Françoise (1852, 1824–1878)**

Françoise Barthel was born in Andlau in February 1824. For 20 years, Doctor Taufflieb, from Barr was at her side and frequently examined her. He published many articles in medical journals as well as leaving an unpublished manuscript about Barthel, which unfortunately seems to be lost today. Before being favoured by supernatural phenomena, Barthel suffered from many sorts of painful and strange illnesses. In March 1851, she allegedly witnessed the apparition of Saint Joseph, who told her that she would be cured thanks to the Virgin's intercession. After the miraculous healing, Barthel is said to have received divine messages about her future mission and sufferings in the name of God. Every time she received the sacraments, a sweet odour allegedly invaded her room.

On 17 March 1852, she had a vision of Jesus on the Cross and asked him to share his pain. The following day, she began to experience the pain of the Passion and of the flagellation. During another vision, she was allegedly told to suffer for the souls

of those in Purgatory. All these events became publicly known very quickly, and in August, the bishop established a commission to examine the mystic, who moved to a charitable house in Strasbourg during the investigation. According to Dr Taufflieb, the physicians, rather than clarifying the matter, manipulated the girl and forced her to confess that she was mentally troubled. Françoise allegedly confessed with the intention of returning home. It seems that the physicians were unable to discover fraud.

After a few months, the miraculous phenomena began again in November 1852, lasting until Barthel's death in 1878. Dr Taufflieb and others witnessed her reliving the Passion while in ecstasy. She bled especially from the wound representing the crown of thorns. Sometimes the blood was projected a certain distance. After the stigmatization, the Lord allegedly comforted her with a vision. During the flagellation, Barthel suffered from convulsions and her body appeared to be covered in scars. While she relived the crucifixion, her arms were extended, her feet remained next to each other and her chest was arched. Her facial expression denoted extreme pain. Sometimes, blood flowed from her hands, feet, chest and eyes. Little by little, her body lost its rigidity and she would appear to be dead.

Françoise Barthel was in frequent communication with the souls in Purgatory. The first soul that she liberated was that of her father. To save his and other souls, she was allegedly driven in spirit to Purgatory by her guardian angel. It is said that, in one month, Barthel was able to save 76 souls. According to witnesses, when a soul in Purgatory came asking for her help, the door from her apartment would be violently opened by an invisible force. Barthel was often burnt by the souls who solicited her from the flames of Purgatory. Although the parish priest of Andlau acknowledged Barthel's mysticism, she was treated as a fraud by most people, and especially by the Bishop of Strasbourg, Mgr Raess. In December 1853, he prevented her from receiving the sacrament unless she was severely ill. Apparently, the bishop did not approve of Barthel's personality, which was extroverted and a little exhibitionist. Today, Françoise Barthel seems to be forgotten.

Imbert-Gourbeyre, Antoine. *La stigmatisation*, ed. Joachim Boufflet. Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1996.

Laurentin, René and Sbalchiero, Patrick, eds. *Dictionnaire des "apparitions" de la Vierge Marie*. Paris: Fayard, 2012.

Maître, Jacques. *Mystique et féminité. Essai de psychanalyse sociohistorique*. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1997.

### **Beck, Louise (1846, 1822–1879)**

Louise Beck was born in 1822 in Altötting, the daughter of a pharmacist and forensic physician. As a child, she had visions of her guardian angel, saints and souls from Purgatory. She was educated by the English Sisters in Burghausen and wanted to enter

the cloister but her father deemed her unfit. Her friendship with the Protestant count Clemens von Schaffgotsch ended, probably in 1854, in a miscarriage. However, prior to this, in the Holy Week of 1846, depression, sexual illusions and somnambulism led Louise to a nervous fever, cramps and convulsions, while a cross-shaped wound developed on her left side. There is no mention of wounds on her hands and feet (but there are testimonies that she was also stigmatized in this way). She was also plagued by evil spirits. In March 1847, the situation changed, as Louise, whose confessor was the head of the Redemptorists, P. Ritter Franz von Bruchmann, started to have visions concerning the cloister of the Redemptorists, which was under threat of being dissolved. Louise had a vision of a lady, identified as Juliana, the deceased wife of Bruchmann. He and some of his fellow paters saw the ghost, the “mother” as they called it, as their guardian ghost and mediator with the Virgin. Those who believed in her were called “children of the Mother” (“Kinder der Mutter”), who obeyed the “Higher Guidance” (“Höhere Leitung”). Their number grew (among noble women and leading Church authorities), although fervent opposition developed within and outside the order. Messages from above mostly came through letters that Louise answered at night when she was in an ecstatic state, and through a sort of spiritualist conversation, during which Louise voiced the higher guidance’s instructions. Nevertheless, in the eyes of Carl Schmöger – one of her spiritual guides and confessors – it was Louise’s reparatory suffering that made her meaningful to the world (he had published some of Brentano’s manuscript on Anna Katharina Emmerick.) Common fraud was never alleged, although hysteria combined with somnambulism was considered.

München, AEM, *Realia* 3820.

Weiß, Otto. “Seherinnen und Stigmatisierte.” In *Wunderbare Erscheinungen. Frauen und katholische Frömmigkeit im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, edited by Irmtraud Götz von Olenhusen, 51–82. Paderborn: Schöningh, 1995.

Weiß, Otto. *Weisungen aus dem Jenseits? Der Einfluss mystizistischer Phänomene auf Ordens- und Kirchenleitungen im 19. Jahrhundert*. Regensburg: Pustet, 2011.

### **Bellard, Raymonde (1913, 1901–)**

Raymonde Bellard was from the village of Bussus-Bussuel (Somme). Her case of “autostigmatization” echoed through the press towards the end of 1913. It is said that one day, while aged 12, Bellard was trying to solve a mathematics problem at school when she felt something like pins and needles hurting her arm. When she looked at her arm, she saw that the solution to the problem had been imprinted on her flesh. From that day on, other figurative stigmata appeared on her skin. Curious people, as well as physicians, began to visit Bellard at her house. The figurative wounds were usually of trivial content. For example, the drawing of an aeroplane appeared on her flesh on a day in which a plane had flown over the village. Stigmata notwithstanding, Bellard

was reported to have the gift of divination. When people asked a question, the answer supposedly appeared on her skin.

At this point, her fame reached Paris, attracting the attention of the general press. Her portrait appeared in newspapers such as *Le Matin* and *Le Journal*. The journalists interviewed prominent doctors such as Joseph Babinski, looking for a natural explanation for the phenomena. The latter alleged that Bellard was a fraud; a trickster similar to spiritualist mediums such as the Italian, Eusapia Palladino. *Le Matin* charged three physicians with an investigation. They concluded that Bellard was a “dermographe,” meaning that consciously or unconsciously she produced the imprints on her skin using her nails or a sharp object such as a hairpin. They remarked that the inscriptions only appeared in places that Bellard could reach with her right hand. After this declaration interest dissipated and Bellard was quickly forgotten. Only the journal *L'Écho du Merveilleux* tried to keep the case alive, but without great success.

Barby, Henry. “Une visite à l'Enfant aux stigmates.” *Le Journal*, 17 November 1913.

Faral, R. “Le cas de Raymonde Bellard. Autostigmatisme ou simulation?” *L'Écho du Merveilleux*, 17.406 (1913): 353–356.

“La petite fille aux stigmates.” *Le Matin*, 27 November 1913.

“Phénomène étrange. Sur la peau d'une fillette s'inscrit ce qu'elle pense ou devine.” *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 17 November 1913.

Vidal, Henri. “Les stigmates d'une petite fille de douze ans.” *Le Matin*, 16 November 1913.

### **Beller, Karoline (1845, 1830–?)**

Karoline Beller was born on 11 November 1830. Her father died before she was one year old and her mother remarried, leaving her to be raised by her grandfather, a former shepherd. On 28 March 1845, Karoline became ill (cramps) and while the physician could initially treat her, the condition deteriorated until, by the end of the month, she could no longer speak. From 2 May onwards, she no longer ate and on 16 and 17 May, the first traces of blood were visible on her face. On 18 May, there were traces on her hands and feet. The rumour spread in Lütgeneder and soon there were visitors even from outside the village. Thousands of people from all social classes came to see her, but after two weeks the public spectacle was stopped, although the discussions lasted for months. Newspaper articles and a small booklet were both the products and promoters of the continuous stream of visitors. An artist from Warburg was also invited to create a portrait of Karoline (1000 copies were produced in Kassel).

Newspaper articles document the failed attempts to transfer Karoline to Warburg for a physical examination. The physicians and authorities encountered vehement protest (among other reasons because Karoline was already under the medical supervision of State approved physicians). The originally spontaneous mobilization of the Catholic population soon became more organized, while at the beginning of June,



two physicians travelled to Lütgeneder and began questioning her before undertaking an examination. Karoline's hands and feet were "sealed" ("versiegelt") and no new traces of stigmata were detected. One of the physicians, Pieper, pleaded for Karoline's removal from the unhealthy religious atmosphere, in which she was surrounded by masses who wanted to see her. Before the order to transfer her (by gendarmes) could be executed, Karoline was allegedly healthy again. Nonetheless, on 6 June, Karoline was taken from Lütgeneder and images of her were confiscated. As the doctors could not find a medical explanation, Karoline was put in isolation in a hospital from 9 June, and on 19–20 June she confessed to everything they asked. On the same day, however, she wrote to her pastor and godmother that she had confessed under pressure. After 15 months, she was allowed to leave the hospital, but on the condition that she went to stay with her mother in Borgentreich and did not return to Lütgeneder.

Brück, Anton Theobald. "Die Stigmatisierten." *Nord und Süd* 30 (1884): 67–87.

Jacobi, Walter. *Die Stigmatisierten: Beiträge zur Psychologie der Mystik*. München: Bergmann, 1923, 46.

Muhs, Rudolf. "Die Stigmata der Karoline Beller. Ein katholisches Frauenschicksal des Vormärz im Spannungsfeld von Volksreligiosität, Kirche, Staat und Medizin." In *Wunderbare Erscheinungen: Frauen und katholische Frömmigkeit im 19. Und 20. Jahrhundert*, edited by Irmtraud Götz von Olenhusen, 83–130. Paderborn: Schöningh, 1995.

### **Bergadieu, Berguille (1874, 1829–1904)**

Marie Bergadieu, better known as Berguille, was born in 1829 in Loupiac-de-la-Réole (Gironde), not far from Bordeaux. Her parents were farmers and, in 1850, she married a farmer named Bernard Jousseau, taking his surname. They finally settled in Fontet, a small village near Loupiac. They had three children: one girl and two boys. Unfortunately, they lost their daughter and one of their sons, which caused them great pain. Berguille Bergadieu was almost illiterate. She worked hard in the fields and as a cleaning lady. In 1836, a serious stomach illness, described by her biographers as cancer, started to develop, making her bedridden.

In April 1873, her illness worsened and she stopped eating. However, someone brought her "holy water" from Lourdes and after drinking it she allegedly witnessed the apparition of the Virgin and became convinced that she would recover. The priest of Fontet attributed the vision to high fever. However, the Virgin supposedly appeared to Bergadieu more than 30 times in the following ten months. Such apparitions usually took place during ecstasies in which Bergadieu prophesized about the future of France. She announced the upcoming arrival of King Henri V, Count of Chambord, Legitimist pretender to the throne. Her prophecies echoed those by other royalist countryside stigmatics and visionaries, such as Mélanie Calvat (1831–1904) and Marie-Julie Jahenny

(1850–1941), with whom she was in “spiritual contact.” Curious visitors started to arrive at Fontet. Despite Bergadieu’s claims, Henri v never ruled in France.

In spring 1874, Bergadieu started to experience the suffering of the Passion. The pain continued every Friday, and small stigmata, almost imperceptible, formed on her hands and feet. Several physicians examined the mystic with scepticism, believing that hysteria and hallucinations were behind the miraculous phenomena. Although Bergadieu was never acknowledged by the Church, she gained the support of some priests, such as Father Daurelle, whose book, *Les événements de Fontet* (1878), was censored by the diocesan authorities of Bordeaux. As in other unauthorized stigmatic cults, such as that of Marie-Julie Jahenny, most of Bergadieu’s supporters were lay-people. The royalist journalist Adrien Péladan (1815–1890) published many of Jahenny and Bergadieu’s prophecies. However, while Jahenny’s cult survived, and today one can visit her house, which was turned into a living museum and shrine, Bergadieu has been forgotten. After 1880, nothing was said about the mystic and prophetess, as if the phenomena had simply ceased. Bergadieu died in Fontet in 1904.

Bordeaux, Archives diocésaines de Bordeaux (ADB), dossier Marie (Berguille) Bergadieu.

Daurelle, Abbé. *Les événements de Fontet d’après les principes de St. Thomas*. Rome: Imprimerie de Rome, 1878.

Ferrand, Camille. *La vérité touchant Berguille la voyante de Fontet*. Bordeaux: L. Coderc, 1874.

Péladan, Adrien. *Dernier mot des prophéties*. Nîmes: Chez l’Auteur, 1880.

Portets, V. de, *La résurrection de Berguille*. Lyon, Paris: Librairie Pontificale, 1875.

### **Bernard, Emilie (c.1874, 1855–1874)**

Emilie Bernard, the “stigmatic of Antwerp,” died in May 1874 at only 19 years of age. With her father working in Brussels and her mother dead, she grew up in the care of her aunt, both working as bleachers. At the age of 16 a series of illnesses set in: she stopped menstruating, had hallucinatory fits and “hysteria,” started bleeding from the nails of her fingers and toes and – in a later phase – from her eyes. In the final stages of her illness, she had a heightened sensibility and stopped eating. While she was not exceptionally pious, she did claim to have seen the Virgin, who gave her Christ’s blood as nourishment.

Her case was discussed at the Belgian Royal Academy of Medicine (in June 1874). She seems to have attracted attention only for a brief period due to the refusal of the vicar to call her symptoms a supernatural event, the briefness of her illness and the diagnosis of a “diathèse hémorragique,” postulated by Desguin. Her case was compared to that of Louise Lateau, pointing to her miserable childhood, weak condition, and nervous attacks with hallucinations.

Darquenne, Roger. "L'Académie de médecine piégée par le cas Louise Lateau." *Haynau* 3 (1992): 43–57.

Desguin. "La stigmatisée d'Anvers." *Bulletin de l'Académie Royale de Médecine de Belgique* 8 (1874): 857–865.

### **Bertho, Philomène (c.1875, 1851–1933)**

Philomène Bertho was born in Binic (Côtes-d'Armor) in 1851, into a humble family of Breton sailors. She had one brother, a sailor, and two seamstress sisters. Bertho remained bedridden for years, almost paralysed after falling into the harbour. It is not clear when she began to experience the pain of the Passion, but by 1880 she was a well-known stigmatic in Binic. The wounds on Bertho's body were deep and bloody. She carried the crown of thorns, a wound of the right shoulder, flagellation marks, the wound of the holy lance and of the nails in the hands and feet.

The priest of Binic supported her, although he was cautious about sharing his opinions. He visited Bertho frequently to comfort her during her painful ecstasies, when the sacred wounds bled abundantly, especially on Fridays. Although many people in Binic believed in the phenomena, others accused Bertho and her family of fraud and exploitation. However, her fame gradually increased, as sailors arriving at the port of Binic or foreigners arriving on the coast visited the stigmatic and spread the news. Many physicians examined her, judging the phenomena to have a natural origin.

In 1885, Count Alexandre de Sczey-Montbéliard, an officer from the French artillery, arrived in Binic with his family to convalesce near the sea. They heard about Bertho and asked the priest to authorize a visit to her. The priest accepted but asked for discretion and calm. The officer had many injuries from his years of service. When Bertho saw him she allegedly got out of bed and cried tears of blood. After several visits, Bertho and the officer fell in love and decided secretly to enter a spiritual marriage.

Count Alexandre de Sczey-Montbéliard recounted the time in a chapter of his book, *Le lion: synthèse et analyse*, called "La genèse d'une inspiration mystique" (1906–1908). One day, he returned to Binic with his pregnant wife to show Bertho the product of his "supernatural love" for her. However, Bertho could not bear this and sent the Devil to him. From that day on, the officer allegedly began to suffer attacks.

Probably thanks to the reading of *Le lion*, Philomène Bertho attracted the interest of Louis Massignon (1883–1962), a French Catholic scholar who was an expert in Islam. Massignon was fascinated by stigmatics, especially by Anna Katherina Emmerick, to whose grave he made several pilgrimages. On 8 July 1926, Massignon visited Philomène Bertho at Binic. Unfortunately, little is known about this visit. Bertho died some years later, in 1933. In a letter announcing her death, it is said that "she died well resigned and when the priest gave her the last sacraments blood flowed from her [holy] wounds" (FLM, Box 119).

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF), Richelieu, Fonds Louis Massignon (FLM), Box 119.

Scey-Montbéliard, Alexandre de. *Le lion. Synthèse et analyse*. Vol. 4. Besançon: La Solidarité, 1906–08.

### **Betrone, Pierina (1935, 1903–1946)**

Pierina Betrone, or Sister Maria Consolata, was born in Salluzzo on 16 April 1903, in the province of Cuneo (Piedmont). In the following year, she moved to Turin with her family, where her parents opened a bakery and a restaurant. Pierina had a normal childhood until the age of 13, when she heard voices that invited her to follow a religious life.

After becoming a member of Catholic Action, she decided to become a Salesian sister in 1924. This attempt failed, but Pierina did not give up, and on 17 April 1929, she entered the monastery of the Capuchin nuns of the Ausiliatrice in Turin, taking the name of Maria Consolata. In 1934, after her profession of perpetual vows made on 8 April, “Padre X” became her spiritual guide, and the following year forced her to keep a diary.

On 30 March 1934, during one of her many divine visions, the Lord communicated her mission to her: to suffer the Passion of Christ for the redemption of the Church and its faithful. After a period of hesitation and spiritual exercises, the nun accepted the role of “victim soul” on 16 September 1935, thus receiving the invisible stigmata and undergoing the mystical marriage (25 September).

Her only concern was to ensure that no one was aware of her deep mystical life and, above all, the paranormal phenomena. For this reason, she prayed to the Lord that her stigmata be invisible and spiritual, with Christ confirming that they would be like those of St Catherine of Siena rather than those of St Francis and would remain secret.

In 1939, Maria Consolata was transferred to the new Capuchin monastery of Moriondo, in Moncalieri. At that time, she increased her devotional practices and the mortification of her body for the redemption of the sins of war. In particular, she prayed for her country and the Church, increasingly devastated by the Second World War. Her health deteriorated due to continual fasting, mortifications and insomnia. The sisters attested that after 1943, her body was slowly being consumed, until her death on 18 July 1946 in the monastery of Moriondo.

Risso, Paola. *L'amore per vocazione. Suor Consolata Betrone*. Milan: Ancora Editrice, 2001.

Sales, Lorenzo. *Il cuore di Gesù al mondo. Dagli scritti di suor Consolata Betrone*. Moncalieri: Edizione Extracommerciale, 1948.

Sales, Lorenzo. *Suor Consolata Betrone*. Milan: Edizioni Paoline, 1965.

### Biagini, Maria Luisa (1798, 1770–1811)

Maria Luisa Biagini was born into a poor family from Lucca on 14 March 1770. At the age of five, she had a vision of Christ and the Virgin, deciding to devote herself to the religious life. On 11 January 1788, she became a Franciscan nun in the monastery of Saint Micheletto in Lucca, and one year later she took vows to join the Poor Clares (11 January 1789).

Illness was a constant factor in her life. Amenorrhoea, paralysis and, finally, cancer seem to have brought her to the verge of death, but on 4 October 1796, she had a Marian grace. Both miracle and apparition were recognized by a diocesan process.

Maria Luisa suffered temptations and diabolical possessions. From 6 April 1798, she had visible stigmata. As she told her father confessor, she had a vision of Christ in which he ordered the archangel Raphael to pierce her body with a dart in order to open the Holy Wounds. The stigmata reappeared at other times in her life, especially during “Fridays of Passion,” and they were accompanied by ecstasy, fainting and catatonic states of unconsciousness. Blood flowed from her hands, feet, side and front. Pietro Martelli, her doctor, reported that blood sometimes gushed from her head, although there was no wound (the crown of thorns was not always visible). At other times, painful wounds could be seen on her body and her limbs would be stiff, imitating the Crucifixion.

On 4 April 1807, the blood that flowed from her body drew the image of a heart with eight points, while Father Martelli saw blood coming out of her chest which took the form of a heart pierced by swords. On 7 April 1808, a Good Friday, after having a vision of the suffering Virgin, her heart oozed blood. During this period, she also received visible stigmata.

She prophesied her own death before the suppression of her monastery (due to the secularization policy of the time). Maria Luisa died in her cell on 29 March 1811 at the age of 41. The local people considered her a “living saint” for her numerous mystical gifts: stigmata, Marian apparitions, graces, clairvoyance, knowledge of divine and occult things and her intercession for souls in Purgatory. Healings and miracles were also attributed to her. She is venerated as a servant of God by the Catholic Church.

Aesaris, Lapis. *Fior di passione. La serva di Dio suor Maria Luisa Biagini, clarissa del monastero di san Micheletto in Lucca*. Lucca: Tip. Artigianelli, 1948.

Anonymous. *La serva di Dio suor Maria Luisa Biagini religiosa clarissa: cenni biografici*. Florence: Tip. E. Rinaldi, 1930.

Mezzetti, Raffaele. *Vita di Suor Maria Luisa Biagini Lucchese, religiosa conversa del second'Ordine di S. Francesco. Cenni storici del canonico Raffaele Mezzetti tratti dalle memorie del March. Cesare Lucchesini e da altri documenti*. Lucca: Tipografia G. Giusti, 1864.

### Billoquet, Laurentine (1881, 1862–1936)

Laurentine Billoquet was born in Sauchay, close to Dieppe (Seine-Maritime), in 1862. She was very pious and suffered from feeble health from childhood. At the age of 12, she had her first vision of the Virgin Mary. In one of her “supernatural dialogues” with the Virgin, Laurentine was told that “the Cross is the path to salvation.” In June 1881, during the Pentecostal feast, she felt a deep pain in her hands, side and feet. The pain persisted over five days and on June 9 stigmata appeared on her skin.

Laurentine then began a period of inedia and at the end of August she received the crown of thorns, with the Holy Wounds opening every Thursday night and bleeding until Friday afternoon. She prayed to God to make them disappear because she did not want to become an “object of public curiosity.” Indeed, after the stigmatization, many of the curious began to visit her house. Some people felt edified in the presence of Laurentine and kissed the Holy Wounds. It is said that Billoquet’s parents and sisters received everyone with pleasure, and never accepted money in return.

Albert Murphy, the family doctor, examined the stigmatic with a committee of physicians from Dieppe and a priest from Paris. Laurentine’s spiritual father, Pierre Sénateur Gauger, parish priest of Sauchay, advised her to make sure that the physicians saw the stigmata bleed. After the inquiry, the committee concluded that the phenomenon was a fraud. Laurentine, they said, was a hysteric who took pleasure in simulation and in being admired. They published a report in the press (see Ball, “La stigmatisée”) without citing Laurentine’s name; however, the news spread quickly and many letters from people concerned with the case arrived at the diocese of Rouen. Some agreed with the physicians’ conclusions, while others argued that Billoquet’s spiritual father was behind the fraud.

Despite the controversies, Laurentine received support from priests of nearby parishes, who asked their parishioners to visit the stigmatic and experience the edification. In 1882, she visited Bacqueville, a village close to Sauchay, probably invited by the parish priest. Her visit was announced in the press as if it was a spectacle. Billoquet also maintained a close relationship with Ferdinand Hermier, parish priest of Bellengreville. In his diary of 1884–1885, he mentions several figurative stigmata that appeared on Laurentine’s body, depicting a cross or a holy chalice with the Host. Imprints of these stigmata on tissues are kept at the Diocesan Archives in Rouen, sent by some visitors to the diocese after Billoquet’s death.

In 1885, a Marchioness organized a trip to Lourdes for Laurentine, expecting her to recover her health. Three years later, Laurentine joined a Franciscan community in Deauville-Trouville; however, the Bishop of Bayeux, Mgr Hugonin, opposed the move and expelled her from the community. In his opinion, Laurentine was “a hysteric and not a saint; she may be dangerous” (cited in Maître, *Les stigmates*, 105). After being disqualified by the episcopal authorities, Billoquet moved to Dijon under the pseudonym of Estelle Mary and became a clairvoyant.

In Dijon, she fascinated Canon Jean-Baptiste Bizouard. Between 1903–1904, under Laurentine’s influence, the canon plotted against Mgr Le Nordez, the Bishop of Dijon, accusing him of being a Freemason. The problem, it seems, was that Mgr Le Nordez was favourable to the Third Republic. The Holy See asked him to resign. However, the French authorities judged the event as an intrusion and broke its diplomatic relationship with the Holy See in 1904 – a year later, the separation of Church and State took place in France. Laurentine died in Dijon in 1936 with a contested reputation.

Ball, Benjamin. “La stigmatisée de S.” *L’Encéphale*, 1 (1881): 361–368.

Maître, Jacques. *Les stigmates de l’hystérique et la peau de son évêque. Laurentine Billoquet (1862–1936)*. Paris: Anthropos, 1993.

Rouen, Archives Diocésaines de Rouen (ADR), Affaire Laurentine Billoquet, 791.

### **Blavignac, Marie (1936, 1889–)**

Marie Blavignac was born in 1889. In 1936, at the age of 47, she began to have visions of a saintly monk, Venerable Father Pierre Borie (1808–1838), who was her grand uncle. Borie had died a martyr, decapitated while a missionary in China, and was later beatified. When Blavignac “saw” him for the first time, she was a shepherdess and a mother, her visions occurring while she led her flock in the fields surrounding the village of Brive-la-Gaillarde (Corrèze), where a devotion of piety and martyrdom concerning Father Borie had persisted in the community.

As proof of the apparition, Marie Blavignac allegedly received the stigmata, with the wounds visible and bleeding from time to time. While the Bishop of Tulle initiated an inquiry, the conclusions were not made public. One day during Mass, a drop of blood allegedly appeared on Father Borie’s portrait in the church of Brive-la-Gaillarde. The people from the village installed a cross on the site of the apparitions and hundreds of pilgrims began to arrive, with Blavignac falling into ecstasy in front of the crowd. Nothing else is known about this stigmatic or about the apparitions of Father Borie. The enthusiasm, it seems, quickly faded.

A. de P ... “En Corrèze une paysanne prétend avoir vu des apparitions troublantes.” *Le Figaro*, 16 Novembre 1936.

Bounaix. “En présence d’une foule émue la visionnaire est tombée en extase.” *L’Intransigeant*, 26 Novembre 1936.

“Church officials to prove ‘return from the dead’ of monk to shepherdess grand-niece.” *Winnipeg Tribune Friday*, 6 November 1936.

### **Boisseau, Jeanne (1857, 1797–1871)**

Jeanne Boisseau was born in 1797 in the village of La Barillère. Her parents were poor and she was orphaned at the age of six, with one of her aunts taking her to live in a

village close to Boussay. Jeanne became a farm labourer and later worked in several households. At the age of 14, she was bitten by a rabid dog, almost paralysing her legs and obliging her to use crutches. She claimed that these and other physical pains were cured through prayer. Once, while she was very sick, Boisseau asked the priest to bring her some relics of Father Joseph Guérin (1838–1860), whose alleged miracles were well known in the region. She put one relic in her mouth and, shortly after, she appeared to recover completely.

In 1857, after Lent, she started to feel the pains of the Passion and received the stigmata. She bled especially from the side wound in her body but did not reveal it to anyone for two years. Her friends said that she was always extremely sad on Thursdays and Fridays, preferring to be left alone. Sometimes she asked them to read her books about the Passion, and liked to have long conversations about the sufferings of Christ.

In February 1861, she became very ill and the physician said she would not survive. During the first Friday of Lent of that same year, a wound appeared on her forehead in front of several witnesses. In the following weeks – always on Friday – blood started to flow from her hands, feet and the side of her body. The news spread and many people from the surrounding areas visited Jeanne's house. Thousands of visitors marvelled at the bleeding wounds every Friday. During her ecstasy, Boisseau remained conscious but could not speak.

Alarmed by the number of visitors, the police informed the public prosecutor of France and on the orders of the civil authorities, a physician examined Boisseau's wounds in the presence of the priest of Boussay. Unfortunately, we do not know what the doctor concluded. What is certain is that the priest was opposed to Boisseau and described the phenomena as the product of an "epileptic illness" supposedly suffered by Jeanne following the incident with the rabid dog.

In May, Boisseau's wounds bled almost everyday and the crowd of the curious became larger. She retired to another house and the prosecutor of France asked the police to examine her, in particular on Fridays before three in the afternoon – the time that the ecstasies finished. On one occasion, a police officer visited the stigmatic and asked her friends to clean the blood from her wounds, but they refused, alleging their belief in the supernatural origin of the phenomena. While many people continued to assemble around the house, the crowd gradually decreased over time. Jeanne Boisseau carried the wounds until her death in November 1871.

Binet-Sanglé, Dr. *La folie de Jésus. Son hérédité, sa constitution, sa physiologie*. 3<sup>ème</sup> ed. Paris: A. Maloine, 1911.

Imbert-Gourbeyre, Antoine. *La stigmatisation. L'extase divine et les miracles de Lourdes. Réponse aux libres-penseurs*. Clermont-Ferrand: Librairie Catholique, 1894.

Nantes, Archives Historiques du Diocèse de Nantes (AHDN), Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, 5F2/91.



Nantes, AHDN, Archives Épiscopales, Paroisses: série EVPAR / Boussay.

Roberdel, Pierre. *Marie-Julie Jahenny la stigmatisée de Blain, 1850–1941*. Montsûrs: Résiac, 1987.

### **Bolognesi, Maria (1942, 1924–1980)**

Maria Bolognesi was born in Boraso, in the province of Rovigo, on 21 October 1924, the daughter of a single mother who later married in 1930. Her youth was marked by extreme poverty, hard work in the fields and illness. From June 1940, diabolical attacks began to occur. She could no longer pray, see a priest or attend Mass. In summer 1941, her parents asked the parish priest of San Cassiano (her new place of residence) and the Bishop of Rovigo to bless their daughter, and then took her to a hospital for a psychiatric examination, but doctors did not note any psychological disorder. Her illness continued until her miraculous healing in January 1942.

On 1 April 1942, Maria had her first vision of Jesus. He asked her to suffer through his Passion (invisible stigmata), and in return he gave her a ruby ring (symbol of the future visible stigmata) and the ability to read and write (she was illiterate). On the following day, she confessed her vision to the spiritual father, Bassiano, who gave her the task of keeping a daily spiritual diary (kept until 1967). On 2 January 1944, she had another vision, this time Christ granted her the gift of sweating blood, which she did every Friday at 3 P.M., managing to keep this phenomenon hidden thanks to the complicity of a Mrs Piva (Maria had moved into her home). She was ridiculed and insulted by the townspeople for her pious life (she wore a black tunic). On 5 March 1948, she was violently attacked by three men but no one believed her, instead the villagers denounced her for criminal simulation (she was acquitted in October 1948). In 1950, she left the small town and moved to Rovigo, where she was hosted by different families.

During Lent of 1955, Maria was in Sicily. On 1 April, as announced in 1942, the Holy Wounds became visible on her body. On 7 April, she went on a pilgrimage to San Giovanni Rotondo and on the following day, Good Friday, she received the complete stigmata (all five wounds). Returning to Rovigo, Maria started her mission of evangelization in many hospitals and in 1967 opened a care home. Her health deteriorated after 1971, and she was hospitalized for a long time.

Maria died in Rovigo on 30 January 1980. Her cause for beatification was opened ten years after her death, and on 7 September 2013 she was declared Blessed.

Giacomini, Giuseppina. *Maria Bolognesi: donna silenziosa della carità*. Rovigo: Centro studi amici Maria Bolognesi, 1991.

Sartori, Tito. *Maria Bolognesi: vita, esperienze mistiche, spiritualità*. Rome: Città Nuova, 1994.

Sartori, Tito. *Storia di un processo: imputata Maria Bolognesi*. Rovigo: MB, 2003.

Sartori, Tito. *Il volto trasfigurato di Cristo nell'esperienza mistica di Maria Bolognesi*. Rovigo: MB, 2004.

**Bonnenfant, Raymonde (1931, 1907–1973)**

Raymonde Bonnenfant was born in 1907 in the department of Loire Atlantique, into a working class family. She received a religious education and took her first Communion in 1918. She had a complex relationship with her mother, who, unlike her father, did not support her. Following the illness of her younger brother, who died in 1913, her parents made Raymonde and her other brother ask for charity every Thursday. Around 1920, she contracted tuberculosis. In 1922, she was admitted to a sanatorium, but was released after less than a year because she was judged incurable. Raymonde then decided to make a pilgrimage to Lourdes, where she was allegedly miraculously healed, and thanks to the intercession of a nurse in Lourdes, Raymonde began to work in a château close to Nantes in 1924.

In 1928, Bonnenfant joined the sisters of the Sacred Heart in Issoudun, but a few months after her arrival, she allegedly had a vision that told her to leave. Apparently, she had a divine mission to “save the priests.” Bonnenfant wanted to live a more contemplative life and attempted to undertake her novitiate with the Calvairiennes in Poitiers, known for their mortification practices, but she was not accepted. She then began to work with a family in Paris, close to a chapel that was under construction, the “Crypte du Saint-Esprit,” which had three priests in charge, “Les Prêtres de la Miséricorde.” There, Bonnenfant met her spiritual father. During the Holy Week of 1931, while she was at the office of her spiritual director, she received the stigmata for the first time. It is not clear if the wounds were visible or not. In the following year, on 15 May, Bonnenfant allegedly entered into a mystical marriage with Jesus. Due to this miraculous event, she would receive the name of Marie du Christ. From then on, her spiritual director allowed her to wear a necklace containing wafers to receive the sacraments whenever she needed to be close to Jesus. Over the coming years, following her spiritual director, Bonnenfant would travel to places such as Algiers, Rome and New York, and continued to work in France as a housemaid. In 1935, Jesus allegedly promised her that “they” would go to Jerusalem – she travelled there “mystically” during the Christmas of 1937.

Before the Second World War, Bonnenfant obtained her nursing certificate, a job that she took on during the war. Shortly afterwards, her mission would appear more clearly to her. She founded the Missionaries of Nazareth in Landreville, where she became the Mother Superior Marie du Christ. Her modest foundation consisted of three priests, three brothers and two sisters. On 31 October 1959, they pronounced their vows. Bonnenfant then made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, before returning to her religious family with whom she spent fifteen years. They lived in silence, solitude and poverty and prayed for the priesthood and for priests who were in trouble. In these last years, Marie du Christ suffered from multiple illnesses, which immersed her in pain. She died in November 1973. Although her foundation seemed to disappear for some time, in 2008 a new house of the Missionaries of Nazareth opened in Landreville to continue the mission of their predecessors.

Boufflet, Joachim, Peyrous, Bernard, Pompignoli, Marie-Ange. *Des saints au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle: pourquoi?* Paris: Éditions de l'Emmanuel, 2005.

François de l'Assomption, R.P. *Mère Marie du Christ. La vie d'une grande mystique au service du Sacerdoce.* Montsûrs: Résiac, 1978.

François de l'Assomption, R.P. *Mère Marie du Christ. Épouse de Jésus-Crucifié.* Tome II, Montsûrs: Résiac, 1981.

Lohat, François. *Raymonde Bonnenfant, sœur Marie du Christ, racontée par ses premiers Fils spirituels,* Montsûrs: Résiac, 1989.

### **Bordoni, Maria (1850, 1824–1863)**

Maria Tiberini was born in 1824, in San Lorenzo in Campo, a small village in the municipality of Fossombrone, in the current province of Pesaro-Urbino. When she was an adolescent she did not attend Mass, but dressed in men's clothes and led a libertine life. However, it is said that Caterina Baldini, an alleged witch and seer, put a curse on the girl under the orders of an unrequited lover. Despite this, Maria married Luigi Bordoni in 1845 (who died in September 1846) and had a son, Ridolfo. However, the curse continued its work and she became ill.

In summer 1850, the news of her demonic possession spread through the city. The bishop, Msgr Ugolini, opened a diocesan investigation and sent the woman to the monastery of the Capuchin friars of Fossombrone (from July to September 1850), where she was cured and exorcised. Soon, the scandal of an ambiguous relationship between her and some of the friars spread and Maria was sent home.

On 19 February 1851, in the church of Fossombrone, the faithful gathered at Mass saw blood dripping from a crown of thorns which had appeared on Maria's head. The "Laico Filippino," as reported in Vatican sources, wrote a report of the episode and drew her portrait, spreading these images within the diocese. Her stigmata, ecstasies, prophecies and alleged miracles attracted popular attention and divided the community between the faithful and sceptics.

The new bishop, Msgr Fratellini, was one of her supporters. For this reason, when the Holy Office sent him a complaint from a citizen about the Bordoni case, he defended the woman and the Capuchin fathers. In June 1851, however, he opened an investigation and forbade pilgrims to visit Maria, but this attempt failed.

Anonymous denunciations continued to arrive at the Vatican, so the inquisitorial fathers wrote to the Bishop of Fossombrone and the Archbishop of Urbino ordering that the alleged mystic be isolated and visits halted, but the bishops did not take sufficient restrictive measures and her fame continued to spread. Thus, on 1 July 1853, the Vicar General of Fossombrone denounced the situation to the inquisitor father of Pesaro, accusing the local clergy of complicity as well. An investigative process was opened and there was positive collaboration between the local and central courts.

On 29 August 1853, Maria and the priest's supporters were arrested. After long interrogations, all confessed and abjured. Maria said she invented the wonders and self-fabricated the stigmata. She was sentenced to isolation in the monastery of St Maria Maddalena of Pesaro, where she died in 1863.

ACDF, (C 4) h-i, 1846, n.173 and ACDF, M.D. MD 1863, Md. 041 (1863), 35.

### **Borgoems, Beatrix (c.1841, –)**

Not much is known about this stigmatic from Veldwezelt, except that the book that was published about her (*Wonderbaar of miraculous beschrijf van Beatrix Borgoems te Veldwezelt/Wonderful and miraculous description of Beatrix Borgoems in Veldwezelt*) triggered a response from the ecclesiastical authorities. At the request of the apostolic administrator of Roermond, J.A. Paredis, on 7 March 1841 the pastor and dean of Venray, P. Verheggen, sent a letter to all the pastors of his deanery instructing them to reject the supernatural origin of the events and forbade the parishioners to buy or read the booklet.

Brouwers, J. "Een gestigmatiseerde te Veldwezelt?" *G.O.S.S.U.-Tijdingen* 3 (March–April 1973): s.p.

### **Bouquillon, Bertine (1822, 1800–1850)**

Marie Bertine Bouquillon was born in 1800 in Saint-Omer (Pas-de-Calais). Very pious, her religious vocation started at the age of 16 in a charitable house. Her devotion to Jesus was so strong that she rejected a marriage proposal from a rich businessman. In April 1822, Bertine took her vows at the charity hospital and convent of Saint-Louis. In September of the same year, she witnessed the apparition of sister Joseph, of the same convent, who had died in July. The apparitions continued and Bertine accepted the task of sharing sister Joseph's pain, who was allegedly stuck in Purgatory.

In October, Sœur Bertine received the stigmata for the first time. Blood flowed from her hands and feet, and the crown of thorns appeared on her forehead. The Mother Superior of the convent informed Mgr de La Tour d'Auvergne, Bishop of Arras, who set up a committee of physicians and theologians to investigate the events. After verifying Bertine's mental and physical health, the bishop argued in favour of the supernatural origin of the phenomena. Soon, curious visitors started to arrive in Saint-Omer, hoping to meet the stigmatic. However, the visits were forbidden by the ecclesiastical authorities and Bertine's sisters were advised not to talk about the events.

Bertine Bouquillon willingly accepted the mandate of the Church. She carried the stigmata for the rest of her life and spent 28 years hiding them from others. It is said that the wounds bled every Friday and during important religious feasts. After her

death in 1850, a journalist recalled how, in 1822, when rumours about Bertine started to circulate among the population, the ecclesiastical authorities were able to prevent laypeople from witnessing the extraordinary phenomena.

Binet-Sanglé, Dr. *La folie de Jésus*. 3rd ed. Paris: A. Maloine, 1911.

Curicque, J.-M. *Voix prophétiques* (Vol. I&II). 5th ed. Paris: Victor Palmé, 1872.

Curicque, J.-M. *Sœur Bertine, la stigmatisée de Saint-Omer: ses relations avec les Âmes du Purgatoire, ses stigmates et ses prophéties (1800–1850)*. Paris: Victor Palmé, 1872.

### **Brenti, Rosa (1819, 1790–1872)**

Rosa Brenti, also known by her religious names of Teresa del Santissimo Sacramento or Rosa Teresa, was born in 1790, in Tredozio, a small town in the province of Forlì-Cesena, and was the founder of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Sacrament and co-founder of the Emiliani Institute.

From 1811, she experienced numerous apparitions of the crucified Christ, during which he called her to lead a religious life. On 1 January 1812, Rosa entered the Dominican convent in Tredozio and on 1 March 1813 she was confirmed. There, on 9 April 1819 (a Good Friday), she received visible stigmata on her hands, feet and side for the first time. The mystical phenomenon, along with the bloody crown of thorns, reoccurred in the following years, especially during Lent and on the main Catholic feasts. On 15 October 1819, the feast of St Teresa of Avila, she experienced the transverberation of the heart. Her inner life was full of other divine gifts such as bilocation, prophetic abilities, discernment of spirits, mystical marriage, hyperthermia and ecstasies.

After ten years of teaching in Borgo San Sepolcro, Rosa founded the order of the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Sacrament in 1822. In the previous year, Giuseppe Maria Emiliani, a rich nobleman from Faenza, had bought a large building in Fognano on the request of the parish priest Don Giacomo Ciani, with the intention of opening a nunnery and an educational institution. Rosa became a co-founder and the head of teachers of the Emiliani Institute in 1824.

She did not have a good relationship with the powerful Cardinal Fesch, Napoleon's maternal uncle, because of his Jansenist political position. She did, however, establish a deep friendship with the Bishop of Imola, Giovanni Maria Mastai Ferretti (according to malicious gossip she was his secret lover), who was a staunch defender of her institute and the reputation of the "holy nun," often visiting the institute. The two most important visits were in 1846 before his election (prophesied by Rosa), and in 1857 before Italian Unification. She was one of several prophets and mystics who supported the pontificate of Pius IX, helping to spread his ideas against secularization and modernity. She died in the Dominican convent of Fognano at the age of 82 in 1872.

Abrescia, Domenico M. *Rosa Teresa Brenti: una donna per la società e per la Chiesa*.

Rome: Città Nuova, 1993 (2nd edition).

Cantagalli, Gioacchino. *Una grande mistica del secolo XIX: la Madre Suor Rosa Teresa*

*Brenti del SS. Sacramento, figlia di Maria Santissima, fondatrice dell'Istituto del SS.*

*Sacramento in Fognano Ravenna, 1790–1872*. Bologna: Luigi Parma, 1936, 2 vols.

Olivieri Secchi, Sandra. *Suggestioni tridentine nel pensiero e nell'opera di Rosa Brenti*.

Padova: Centro stampe Maldura, 1978.

*Suor Rosa Teresa Brenti: testimonianze*. Faenza: Tipografia faentina, 1990.

### **Brígido Blanco, Afra (1945, 1928–2008)**

On 27 May 1945, coinciding with the end of the Second World War, two young girls from the Spanish village of La Codosera (Extremadura), on the border with Portugal, allegedly witnessed the apparition of the Virgin Mary in the fields of Chandavila. From then on, the chestnut tree where the girls saw the Virgin became a site of devotion. Many people saw a connection between this event and the Marian apparition witnessed by a group of children in Fatima (Portugal) in 1916–17. Thousands of pilgrims from both Spain and Portugal started to visit the “holy chestnut” in Chandavila. A shrine was built at the location, as occurred in Fatima. Every 27 May, there is a pilgrimage to commemorate the event. As noted by William A. Christian (“Holy people,” 107), Marian apparitions usually occur in villages without active shrines. Thus, such apparitions fill the “empty spaces” left by the Church and allow funding to be obtained to build new sites of devotion.

Afra Brígido Blanco was born in La Codosera in 1928. She was 17 years old when the apparition took place. As did everyone in her village, she frequently visited Chandavila expecting to see the Virgin. On one occasion, she allegedly received a secret message from the Virgin, who also told her that she would live a life full of suffering. On Monday, 22 July 1945, Brígido was praying at the church when she had a vision of the crucified Christ and experienced intense pain. After her ecstasy, she fell to the floor, imitating the Crucifixion. Stigmata became visible on her hands. From then on, Afra suffered from the Five Holy Wounds but not the crown of thorns. The wounds on her hands and feet were said to perforate the flesh from one side to the other. The wound in the side of her body was also prominent.

The stigmata especially bled on Fridays. Several physicians attempted to cure the wounds without success. However, the open flesh never entered a stage of putrefaction and the blood was said to emanate a soft perfume, as do the bodies of saints. With the spread of the news, hundreds of people started to visit the stigmatic, coming not only from Spain and Portugal but also from Italy and America. In addition, some priests went to La Codosera to examine the phenomena. It is said that Afra Brígido carried the stigmata at least until 1953, but little is known about her life after that time. Apparently,

she worked in a hospital in Madrid and devoted her life to charity. She died in 2008 after a long illness.

Arias, Pascual and Un sacerdote. *La Codosera (Badajoz) – Vidente de la Santísima Virgen*. Madrid: Gráficas Matesanz, 1953.

Christian, William A. "Holy people in peasant Europe." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 15.1 (1973): 107–114.

Cueva, José de la. *Los prodigios de La Codosera*. Madrid: Orellana, 1945.

Stahlin, Carlos María. *Apariciones*. Madrid: Editorial Razón y Fe, 1954.

### **Brogner, Marie (ante 1885?, –)**

The little we know about Marie Brognier is that her spiritual guide was P. Durand, master of novices of the Fathers of the Holy Sacrament in Brussels, who brought her into contact with Eugène Prévost (1860–1946), future founder of the Sacramental Fraternity, whose Eucharistic and victim spirituality she influenced. She did not eat (apart from the Holy host) for 24 years. After each Communion she experienced an ecstasy similar to that of Maria von Moerl (on her knees, hands folded on her chest). She was not well known and led a secluded life.

Imbert-Gourbeyre, Antoine. *La stigmatisation* (1894) edited by Joachim Boufflet. Grenoble: Millon, 1996, 530.

Lapointe, Georges. *Le père Eugène Prévost (M.E. de la Croix 1860–1946)*. Paris: Libraire du Bon Pasteur, 1951, 49–50.

### **Calvat, Mélanie (1836, 1831–1904)**

Mélanie Calvat was born in 1831 in Corps (Isère). She was the fourth of ten children in a poor family. Mélanie was unable to attend school or receive a religious education, and was illiterate. According to her, at the age of five she had a vision that took her to Calvary where she allegedly received the stigmata. Sometimes the wounds bled, especially on Fridays and during Lent, but most of the time she carried a small scar. Mélanie was very careful and did not show the wounds to anyone. Father Combe, who invited Mélanie to stay in his parish of Diou in 1899, was upset that she was late for Mass on some days, and so one day he surprised her at her house. Mélanie did not have the time to hide the bleeding stigmata, which was the reason why she was sometimes late.

However, Mélanie would become more renowned for another prodigious event. From a young age, she had to leave the family house to work as a farmer. On 19 September 1846, she was grazing cows with Maximin Giraud in the surroundings of La Salette when they allegedly witnessed the apparition of the Virgin, who transmitted a secret to each of them. In 1847, an ecclesiastical inquiry affirmed the reality of the phenomena. Pilgrims began to visit the site of the apparition. Some reported

miraculous cures obtained due to the intercession of the Virgin of La Salette. The Archbishop of Lyon was hesitant about the phenomena and asked Mélanie and Maximin to tell him the secrets they had received from the Virgin. Mélanie only agreed once they assured her that the texts with the secrets would be sent to Pius IX, as indeed happened in July 1851. Apparently, the Vatican also judged the apparition to be true. La Salette immediately became renowned in France and elsewhere. The two seers were continuously interrogated and sometimes menaced by anticlerical activists. Mélanie began to be venerated as a saint, as would occur to Bernadette Soubirous (1844–1879) in Lourdes, during the Marian apparitions in 1858.

After the miraculous events, Mélanie was taken to a convent in Corenc, close to Grenoble. In 1851, at the age of 20, she took the habit under the religious name of Marie de la Croix, and in the following years, began to prophesize about an alleged Freemason conspiracy in France. Her prophecies were well received by French royalists looking to restore a “Catholic kingdom.” Although the bishop tolerated Mélanie’s royalist sympathies, he was afraid that her political opinions would endanger the cult of Our Lady of La Salette. Thus, in 1855, Mélanie joined the Carmelites in Darlington (England) to avoid causing more political turmoil. While she returned to France in 1860, to a congregation in Marseille, she did not stop causing trouble and continued to disobey her superiors.

In 1867, she settled in Castellamare (Naples), where she lived for 17 years. There, she wrote down the secret she had received from the Virgin, which included Mélanie’s promise to found a religious institution. The secret was officially published in November 1879, with the imprimatur of the clergy in Naples, under the title *L’Apparition de la Sainte-Vierge sur la montagne de La Salette*. The publication was very controversial. The Holy Office expressed their dissatisfaction and the Vatican included the publication on its Index of Prohibited Books. Ignoring her enemies, Mélanie continued her journey to different places and visited the site of the apparitions in La Salette one last time in 1902, two years before her death. Debates about Mélanie’s secret continued for many years after her passing.

Calvat, Mélanie. *Vie de Mélanie. Bergère de la Salette. Écrite par elle-même en 1900. Son enfance (1831–1846). Introduction par Léon Bloy (4ème édition)*. Paris: Mercure de France, 1919.

Combe, Abbé. *Le secret de Mélanie, la bergère de la Salette, et la crise actuelle*. Rome: Jonquières et Dati, 1906.

Verdunoy, Abbé. *La Salette. Histoire Critique*. Paris: Beauchesne, 1906.

### **Campana, Santina (1943, 1929–1950)**

Santina Campana was born in Alfedena, in the province of L’Aquila, on 2 February 1929, into a very Catholic family (she had two brothers who became priests and three sisters



who were nuns). As a child she had already declared her desire to suffer for Christ and the Church, as had St Theresa and Antonietta Meo (a very popular heroine at the time). Shortly after her Communion, which took place on 11 June 1936, Santina started wearing a cilice for the mortification of her body, especially during Lent and Good Friday. At the age of seven, she observed complete fasting for the duration of Lent and made the Via Crucis on a daily basis.

In August 1943, her physical and spiritual sufferings continued (she received the gift of invisible stigmata due to having made the vow to be a sacrificial victim). In June 1945, she applied for admission to the Sisters of Charity of St Jeanne Antide Thouret. They accepted her request and on 1 October 1945 she left for Rome. She was just under 17 years old. In 1946, she confirmed her vow of sacrificial victim, undergoing episodes in which she would sweat blood.

On 10 July 1947, Santina was forced to abandon the religious life due to an incurable disease (tuberculosis). She was hospitalized in Rome and then in Pescina (in the province of L'Aquila) also assisted by the bishop, Msgr Domenico Valerii, one of her supporters. She died in Pescina on 4 October 1950.

Meaolo, Gaetano. *Santina Campana. Fioretti di un'anima*. Rome: Edizioni Agiografiche, 1962.

### **Campion, Regina (c.1850, 1815–1875)**

Regina Campion (Maria Veronica was her religious name) was born in 1815 in San Michele di Piave, in the province of Treviso. She had a serene childhood and developed the desire to become a nun. Her parents only gave their permission when she was 29, as it was only then that they could give her the required dowry. Finally, she entered the monastery of Jesus and Mary of the Serve di Maria Eremitane Scalze in Venice on 30 December 1844. She passed the period of probation successfully and, after three years as a novitiate, on 28 January 1847, she became a nun, taking the name of Suora Maria Veronica del Beato Alessio Falconieri (her profession of solemn vows was on 7 March 1848).

During her life, she had many divine apparitions (especially of the Virgin Mary, crucified Christ and saints), including the Ecce Homo tied to a column. A mystical voice informed her that she would receive the visible signs of the Passion on her hands, feet and side and the crown of thorns. However, she prayed to receive the grace of hidden wounds. Every Friday, she suffered the mystical Crucifixion with Jesus Christ, having ecstasies, visions and invisible stigmata.

She died on 16 January 1874 at the age of 59. Her remains were transferred to the Monastery of Carpendo (Mestre) on December 1980, while her beatification process appears to have been interrupted.

Anonymous. *Vita di suor Maria Veronica del B. Alessio Falconieri, Conversa Professa fra le Monache Serve di Maria Eremitane Scalze nel monastero detto del Gesù e Maria in Venezia*. Venice: Tip. Emiliana, 1887.

Cimiero, Tiziano. *Suor Maria Veronica Campion: appunti per una biografia*. Vicenza: Cooperativa tipografica operai, 1980.

### Canori Mora, Elisabetta (1814, 1774–1824)

Elisabetta was born in 1774, into an aristocratic family. She received a Catholic education at the Augustinian monastery in Spoleto. She wanted to enter a monastery as her sister had done, but ultimately decided to take care of her parents.

On 10 January 1796, she married Cristoforo Mora, a lawyer from a rich Roman family, with whom she had two daughters, Marianna (1799) and Maria Lucina (1801). Despite an initial period of happiness, the marriage soon entered a crisis: her husband had a mistress and squandered the family's patrimony. In this context of poverty and suffering, Elisabetta demonstrated extraordinary Catholic virtues, as testified by priests and contemporaries.

In 1807, she became a tertiary of the Trinitarian Order, taking the name of Giovanna Felice. Her biography recounts many mystical experiences, especially under the spiritual direction of Ferdinando of St Luigi. These included Marian apparitions (beginning in 1803), episodes of ecstasy, the gift of prophecy (especially concerning papal and Church figures), stigmata (1814), thaumaturgical power, mystical marriage (1816) and bilocation. While attending Mass in St Carlino alle Quattro Fontane, she met Anna Maria Taigi, another mystical woman with invisible stigmata. Many documents are still preserved in the archive of this church, including her spiritual diary (covering the period from 1807 until her death).

She wrote that on Holy Friday 1814 she had been transported to Mount Calvary to be mystically crucified. Visible stigmata appeared on her hands, feet and left shoulder, but she prayed to God to receive invisible signs. Every Friday, Elisabetta mystically suffered through the Passion. She also received the transverberation of the heart (1815) and experienced a mystical marriage with Jesus Christ (1816), converting her husband as well.

She was considered a religious celebrity by contemporaries because of her prophecies and especially her healing powers. In 1816, a priest gave her an "Ecce Homo" painting that started to work miracles and graces. Her home became a place of pilgrimage, with Pope Pius VII authorizing her to transform her room into a chapel to celebrate the Mass.

Anonymous. *Abrégé de la vie admirable de la servante de Dieu, Elisabeth Canori Mora, romaine, du tiers-ordre des Trinitaires Déchaussés. Dédié aux mères de famille*. Paris: Sarlit, 1869.

Boullan, Joseph-Antoine. *Vie de la servante de Dieu Elisabeth Canori Mora*. Paris: Bureau des Annales de la sainteté, 1870.

Canori Mora, Elisabetta. *La mia vita nel cuore della Trinità: diario della beata Elisabetta Canori Mora sposa e madre (1774–1825)*, edited by Luigi Filosomi. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996.

De La Providence, Calixte. *La vénérable Anna-Maria Taïgi et la servante de Dieu Elisabeth Canori-Mora*. Paris: V. Sarlit, 1870.

### **Carafa della Spina, Maria Rosa (1888, 1832–1890)**

Maria Rosa was born into an aristocratic Neapolitan family on 16 April 1832. Her father was Giuseppe Carafa della Spina, Duke of Traetto. In accordance with her social status, she had a wealthy childhood and received a classical education.

She had wanted to become a nun, but due to her parents' opposition she had to wait until their deaths before joining the Third Order of Saint Francis (25 March 1871). In 1875, she joined the Apostleship of Prayer, of which she was a promoter. In the following year (1876), she met Caterina Volpicelli (1839–1894), another Neapolitan mystical woman, stigmatic and founder of Ancelle del Sacro Cuore. Maria Rosa joined Volpicelli's foundation in 1877. She was in contact with important religious men of the archdiocese, among which the archbishop, Sisto Riario Sforza, and she had various spiritual directors: Domenico Cannola, Vincenzo Atella (Clerks Regular of the Mother of God) and Vito Maria (Alcantarine).

Despite her illness, she engaged in many activities for the new religious institute. She was a teacher and secretary and also engaged in the social apostolate. In 1888, she went to Rome with Volpicelli and had a private audience with Pope Leo XIII.

She combined a deep contemplative life with her public and charitable activities based on the cult of the Sacred Heart, and underwent many mystical experiences, such as ecstasy, visions and stigmata (invisible). In 1888, Maria Rosa had a vision that changed her life. She recounted that she had been taken by Christ to Purgatory to see the damned souls. This mystical experience allowed her to understand the importance of the cult of the Sacred Heart and the Passion: "blood" was an instrument for the redemption of sinners. In the same year (1888), visible signs of the Passion appeared on her body, but later became invisible. She suffered the inner pains every Friday in Lent and offered herself for the salvation of souls.

After a long illness, Maria Rosa Carafa died at the age of 58 in Naples, on 2 May 1890. On 28 August 1907, she was declared Venerable by Pius X and in the following years her remains were buried in the Sacred Heart Shrine.

Anonymous. *Compendio della vita della serva di Dio, Maria Rosa Carafa dei duchi di Traetto, Ancella del s. Cuore di Gesù*. Naples: Stab. Tip. Michele D'Auria, 1901.

De Giovanni, Giuseppe Maria. *Cenni biografici della ven. Rosa Carafa dei duchi di Traetto*. Naples: Tipografia pontificia M. D'Auria, 1914.

### Carboni, Edvige (1911, 1880–1952)

Edvige Carboni was born in Pozzomaggiore, in the province of Sassari (Sardinia), on 2 May 1880. According to her biographers, at the moment of her birth an extraordinary light entered the room and impressed a cross on her chest, which remained visible throughout her life. At the age of five, she started to receive the divine gifts and made a vow of chastity. Edvige wanted to become a nun, but was prohibited from doing so because she had to take care of her many brothers.

She had various confessors and spiritual fathers (Luigi Carta, Giovanni Solinas, Angelico Fadda and Ignazio Parmeggiani as ordinary directors; and fathers Manzella, Salvatore Corongiu and Salvatore Deriu as extraordinary confessors) and the support of important religious men (the Bishops of Sassari, Cagliari, Alghero and the Passionist Fathers of Rome). Her mystical experiences became more frequent and numerous (including episodes of ecstasy, levitation, bilocation, mystical communion, prophetic and thaumaturgical powers, diabolical attacks), attracting the attention of various people. The stigmata appeared for the first time between 1909 and 1913, probably on Friday, 15 July 1911. According to her diary and other documents submitted in her cause for beatification, Christ appeared while she was praying and pierced her body with rays of light coming from his wounds (stigmata and crown of thorns). The stigmata on her hands were visible until 1929, then becoming invisible (the wounds remained open on her feet and side, as seen in the photographs after her death). Family and local community members were divided between supporters and critics. According to the religious authorities, her stigmata were not related to illness or fraud.

Her house became place of pilgrimage (a special room for visitors was built in 1922) and many considered her a "living saint," although many others criticized her. Assunta Oppes had denounced Edvige to the civil authorities in 1922 and later to the religious authorities, which led to the opening of a diocesan investigation by Msgr D'Errico (her supporter). This was finalized on 8 November 1925, completely exonerating Edvige.

In 1929, the situation in her home town became untenable, so she and her sister and father moved to Lazio. They settled in Rome in 1938, where Edvige continued to receive many extraordinary gifts, such as invisible stigmata, demonic attacks and bilocation to the war front, Soviet countries and China (she offered her redemptive suffering to oppose the war and Communism).

She died in Rome on 17 February 1952. Her cause for beatification is supported by the Passionist Fathers of Rome and the association of the faithful for Edvige Carboni.

Ciomei, Fortunato. *La Serva di Dio Edvige Carboni. Una testimonianza cristiana delle virtù evangeliche*. Alghero: Padri Passionisti, 1986.

Ciomei, Fortunato. *Lettere e diario spirituale della Serva di Dio Edvige Carboni*. Alghero: Padre Passionisti, 2003.

Madau, Ernesto. *Ti chiami Edvige. Devi essere l'effigie della mia passione. Biografia e Spiritualità della Serva di Dio Edvige Carboni, secondo i documenti del processo*

*Romano ed Extra della Postulazione dei Passionisti della Scala Santa di Roma e aggiornamenti del "Comitato Ester Carboni". Rome: C.E.I., 2006.*

### **Casoli, Elisa (1936, 1900–)**

The details of Elisa Casoli's life are very scarce. She was born in Milan in 1899 or 1900. Her father was a railway stationmaster and died in the 1920s. Elisa, while working in a pleasure house, met a gentleman from Ascoli Piceno, who convinced her to follow him. For this reason, at about the age of 20, she and her widowed mother moved to Roseto degli Abruzzi in the province of Teramo. She was the man's lover for many years (he was divorced) and also had other relationships, and unsurprisingly was judged unfavourably by the local community. It was also rumoured that she was a fortune teller and seller of magical "dust," including cocaine.

Elisa's dissolute life ended in spring 1936, when she went on a pilgrimage to San Giovanni Rotondo. She claimed that a meeting with Padre Pio of Pietrelcina had triggered a profound conversion. She abandoned her illicit relationships and began to practise long periods of prayer and fasting. Moreover, she would have visions of the Madonna and Christ, who impressed the visible stigmata on her body (which would bleed especially on Tuesdays and Fridays).

On 23 June 1938, Elisa wrote a letter to Pope Pius XI asking that Padre Pio become her special spiritual father because he was the only one who could understand her mystical life, and could thus administer her soul better than her ordinary father. Elisa also wrote that the Lord wanted her to become a saint and therefore the clergy had to help her along this path.

Her request was forwarded to the Holy Office, and the inquisitorial father wrote to the Bishop of Teramo requesting that Elisa be visited and given a prudent spiritual father, as well as recommending her to a doctor specialized in nervous disorders. Even the local parish priest considered her hysterical and overly enthusiastic. He complained about how she sought publicity, spreading her alleged phenomena by talking with friends and neighbours. The last reports of her concern measures communicated to the local clergy from the Vatican at the end of 1938. Her case it seems, fell into oblivion and we do not know when and where Elisa died.

ACDF, *Dev.V.* 1938, n.21, 336/1938.

### **Catanea, Giuseppina (1932, 1894–1948)**

Giuseppina Catanea, known by the religious name of Maria Giuseppina di Gesù Crocifisso, or simply Pinella or the "Holy Nun," was born in Naples on 18 February 1894, into a noble and Catholic family.

In 1912, Giuseppina was struck down by tuberculosis and spinal meningitis, remaining severely paralysed. Despite the disabling illness and opposition from the family,

on 10 March 1918, she joined the community of St Maria ai Ponti Rossi, founded by her sister, Antonietta and by a Carmelite father, Romualdo of Sant'Antonio (her spiritual father). On 26 June 1922, a wonder took place. Pinella touched the relic of Saint Francis Xavier and, after receiving him in a vision, was immediately healed. The miracle, as it was called by the Neapolitan people, attracted great attention and she started her apostolate, preaching Christian values to the people and taking care of the sick and the poor.

Even during her long illness, Giuseppina had offered her suffering to the Lord, and after recovering her health, she wished to continue suffering both physical and spiritual pains (invisible stigmata). She considered her illnesses (along with mystical experiences such as ecstasies and visions) as divine gifts, as they had allowed her to participate in the redemption of the Church and humanity. During the Second World War, she increased her penance and opened her monastery to many pilgrims who wanted to meet her (they believed in her thaumaturgical powers).

In 1932, the Holy See officially recognized the monastery, integrating it into the Second Order of the Discalced Carmelites, and Giuseppina could finally take her perpetual vows and the religious name of Giuseppina Maria di Gesù Crocifisso (6 August 1932). On that occasion, she declared that she wished to become the living image of Jesus, mystically crucifying herself. In 1945, she was elected an abbess of the community, a sign of the great respect held for her in the religious community.

Maria Giuseppina died on 14 March 1948, leaving an autobiography (1894–1932) and a diary, written at the request of her spiritual father, Romualdo, as well as numerous letters of correspondence with the faithful. Her body lay uncorrupted for many days and was visited by many of the faithful, who called her the “holy nun.” In the same year, the Archbishop of Naples opened the process for her beatification and on 1 June 2008 she was declared Blessed.

Anonymous. *Serva di Dio suor Maria Giuseppina di Gesù Crocifisso carmelitana scalza*.

Naples: Carmelo dei SS. Teresa e Giuseppe, 1972.

Truzzi, Claudio. *Lo dico a Gesù*. Rome: OCD, 2008.

### **Chopin, Symphorose (1957, 1924–1983)**

Symphorose Chopin was born in 1924 in Courrières (Pas-de-Calais), but lived in Rueil-Malmaison (Haut-de-Sein), within the Paris region. She was the oldest daughter of a very humble family and was forced to work from a young age to help her family – her father was an unemployed miner. Symphorose rarely frequented school and was practically illiterate. Her mother remarried after the death of Chopin's father. Although Symphorose venerated her mother, she always had a tumultuous relationship with her family, including her stepfather. She was the victim of physical abuse, including an attempted rape by her father when she was only seven years old.

Chopin was very pious and said to be protected by the Virgin Mary. During the Second World War, her stepfather abused her badly, breaking her spine and leaving her paralysed. During the 1950s, Symphorose Chopin suffered from tuberculosis and was put into a sanatorium. These years were marked by miraculous healings, inedia, prophecies, levitation and the exaltation of a mystical life. It seems that she received the stigmata for the first time during the Holy Week of 1957 and carried the wounds until her death. They were visible during Holy Friday and remained invisible the rest of the year, although the pain persisted.

Her neighbours offered to pay for a pilgrimage to Lourdes and she travelled there in 1958. Chopin allegedly came face to face with the Virgin and the Crucified Christ, who healed her. She wanted to hide the miracle, but the nurse that assisted her spread the news. Despite being cured of the paralysis and tuberculosis, she continued to suffer from multiple illnesses afterwards, including cancer. The physicians called her “*trompe-la-mort*,” an expression used to describe someone who cheats death and miraculously escapes from it. At the hospital, she gave hope to her ill companions and survived numerous surgical interventions. There she also met her spiritual father, Father – later Monsignor – André Combes, a specialist in Saint Thérèse de Lisieux and future professor at the Institut Catholique and the Université de Latran.

As with many stigmatics, Chopin felt she was part of a redemptive mission for humanity, which she pursued outside the religious life. In 1969, Chopin’s spiritual father died and she felt lost. At her mother’s house, still ill, she started receiving visits from numerous people, both secular and religious men and women, seeking advice, but never welcomed visitors on Holy Friday, when the stigmata were visible. Her fame spread within conservative circles of French aristocratic society. Henri d’Orléans, Count of Paris and candidate for the throne of France, asked her about French political future and Symphorose assured him that France would continue to be republican.

She died alone in a hospital in 1983 – as she had predicted – with a reputation of sanctity among many people. Her grave is still a site of popular devotion, where her followers discreetly leave flowers and come to ask for graces. In February 2012, the Association Symphorose initiated the process to promote a cause of canonization before July 2013 – the 30th anniversary of Symphorose Chopin’s death. The cause is now open and under ecclesiastical deliberation.

Association Symphorose (Paris).

Boufflet, Joachim, Peyrous, Bernard, Pompignoli, Marie-Ange. *Des saints au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle: pourquoi?* Paris: Éditions de l’Emmanuel, 2005.

### **Cianci, Pietro (1929, 1901–)**

We do not have much information about the life of Pietro Cianci either before or after one episode in 1929. However, his case is quite original in the Italian context, and for this reason, it is important to include his brief story.

Pietro was born in 1901 in Roccamonfina, in the province of Caserta. He was a carpenter by profession and for this reason he was given the task of making a cross for the church of the friars of the Madonna dei Lattani's sanctuary. While he was attaching a portrait of the Ecce Homo to the cross, Pietro noticed that the painting had begun to bleed real blood. On the night of 30 January 1929, he had a vision of the crucified Christ, who was wounded by an arrow in his hands, feet and chest. Awakened by the pain, the carpenter saw open wounds on his own body that were bleeding profusely.

The news spread quickly in the small village, thanks also to the support of the friars, and his home was visited by pilgrims. However, physicians and civil and religious authorities all denied the divine nature of the phenomenon, considering it a case of self-suggestion or fraud.

After a brief period of national fame, with articles written in the major Italian newspapers, the life of Pietro returned to anonymity.

*Corriere della Sera*, 1/2/1929, 4.

#### **Cilissen, Marie (1883, 1850–?)**

Marie Cilissen had been sick for seven years before she was miraculously cured on 30 June 1883, after drinking water from the grotto at Lourdes. This was the start of a series of phenomena, and on 30 September of the same year, she claimed to have seen the Virgin. Other visions followed, in which Mary asked her to encourage the priests to pray for the sinners. When Marie's pastor told her that he did not really believe what she was saying, the visions stopped for 6 to 7 months. However, the visions returned and this time they were combined with extreme physical suffering on Thursday evenings and throughout the night, with her being covered in blood in the morning (hands, feet, side and front). About a month after the stigmata first appeared, Marie started to suffer on Fridays as well and she had visions of hell. She stopped eating.

Her case seems to have attracted attention for only a short period of time (6 months), despite the curé apparently being convinced of the truth of her visions, stigmata and inedia.

Liège, AEL, Doutreloux, C. *Affaires religieuses*, 13. *Croyances et cas particuliers* (1883).

#### **Clair, Victoire (1845, 1811–1883)**

Victoire Courtier (1811–1883) was born in Coux, a small village in the commune of Privas. She was married to a carpenter and took his surname, Clair. They had two daughters, but the older died at a young age. In 1832, her husband also passed away after being crushed by a tree. Victoire suffered a nervous breakdown as a result, experiencing the same crisis every year on the anniversary of her husband's death. After this tragic event, Victoire began to experience supernatural phenomena, such as visions of



Jesus and the Virgin Mary, as well as diabolical attacks. Many witnesses claimed that she levitated during the ecstasies.

Between 1845 until the early 1860s she suffered from the stigmata. The wounds especially bled on Fridays, disappearing after the trance without leaving a scar. Soon, Victoire started to be considered a living saint in Privas, where the news about the phenomena spread quickly. Curious men and women arrived at Coux wishing to meet the stigmatic; however, Father Combes, the local priest, prevented Victoire from receiving any visits. A woman stood outside the stigmatic's front door every Friday to discourage visitors, and while some asked for the Father's permission, he always denied it. The privileged few who did witness the phenomena – Victoire's friends and family – were constantly interrogated by others.

A woman from Privas who was an intimate friend of Victoire transcribed her ecstatic messages for fourteen years (1849–1863), giving the manuscript, consisting of two notebooks, to the local priest. A partial copy was sent to the engineer and psychological researcher Albert de Rochas (1837–1914) on his request. Rochas pointed out the absence of information and studies about Victoire Clair, probably due to the fact that the village priest wanted to hide the phenomena. As argued by Imbert-Gourbeyre (*La stigmatisation*, 562), a retrospective study of this stigmatic would offer a great contribution to the history of mysticism.

Apte, Maurice. *Les stigmatisés. Thèse pour le doctorat en médecine*. Paris: Jules Rosset, 1903.

Imbert-Gourbeyre, Antoine. *La stigmatisation. L'extase divine et les miracles de Lourdes. Réponse aux libres-penseurs*. Clermont-Ferrand: Librairie Catholique, 1894.

Rochas, Albert de. "Un cas de stigmatisation." *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, 13, (1903): 1–15.

### **Clément xv (Collin, Michel) (c.1950, 1905–1974)**

Michel Collin was born in Béchy (Moselle) in 1905. His father was a seminarist who failed to become a priest due to his feeble health. Collin's mother also wanted to enter the religious life, but she followed the advice of a priest, who told her that she would be blessed by her children. In his childhood, Collin had a picture of Pope Pius x in his bedroom. Following his mother's desire, he became a seminarist, and while his religious education was difficult, encountering many obstacles, he completed it in Marseille, Saint-Quentin and Lille, during which time he lost his parents. On 28 April 1935, he gained his priesthood and began working in different parishes, although always finding himself in disagreements with his superiors. From his early days, he developed his mystical life. One night, he was allegedly "transported" to Calvary, where he offered himself up to God.

In 1942, during the Second World War, Michel created an army of Crusaders that he called St Michel's Knights. At the time, he received the support of other stigmatics, such as Therese Neumann (Germany) and Denise Marquis (Switzerland). In addition, Padre Pio sent him a telegram encouraging his apostolic mission; however, the telegram was eventually confiscated by Father Hervouët, Collin's director, who – as Collin prophesized – abandoned him. After the liberation of France from the Germans, the FTP movement (Francs-tireurs et partisans), created in 1941 by the French Communist Party, sent Collin and two of his followers to a concentration camp in the forest of Tronçais when they refused to join a “movement against God.” They were released after 50 days.

In the following years, Michel Collin continued his apostolic mission in France, Italy and Spain. He founded the Ligue des Droits de Dieu and continued to be supported by Padre Pio and other clergymen. On 7 October 1950, he was allegedly “transported” to the Supreme Pontificate, where he found himself surrounded by all the popes and the bishops in Paradise. While there, the sacred Trinity named him “Pontiff of all Pontiffs, King of all Kings,” giving him “universal powers” to save and sanctify the world. It was from this divine encounter that Michel Collin received the name of Clément xv and became the new anti-Pope. Although Pope Pius xii did not condemn him, on 11 January 1951, the Holy Office made public his secularization and excommunication. From then on, Clément xv would be persecuted by the majority of the clergy, as well as by the Catholic press. Even Padre Pio withdrew his endorsement.

During these years of suffering, he allegedly joined Jesus on the Cross and received the stigmata. However, he prayed for the wounds to be made invisible. By the end of his life, the pain of the wound representing the crown of thorns supposedly made him blind. Abandoned by the Church, Clément xv continued to celebrate Mass in private. He founded a new Church which he called the *Église Rénovée*, surviving from donations. In November 1960, he was offered a property in Clémery to establish his “Petit Vatican.” Soon, the civil powers took an interest in the case. Apparently, several people had accused Clément xv of fraud. On 20 June 1962, he was put in temporary detention and interrogated by the public prosecutor. However, he was released nine days later.

Nevertheless, the legal persecution continued. When a judge asked a psychiatrist to examine Clément xv, the latter refused and went into exile in Belgium. In his absence, he was sentenced to ten months prison and a fine of 15,000 francs. He finally decided to return to France to face justice. On 6 March 1965, he was tried by the Tribunal de Grande Instance de la Seine in Paris. The renowned lawyer Maurice Garçon was one of his attorneys, and Clément xv was acquitted of all charges of fraud, but was forced to pay a fine. Returning to his life in the “Petit Vatican,” he excommunicated many of his enemies, including Pope Paul vi, whom he named the anti-Pope. He died in 1974

without leaving a successor, although some, such as the Canadian Grégoire XVII (1928–2011), have claimed this title.

Delestre, Antoine. *Clément XV. Prêtre lorrain et pape à Clémery*. Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1985.

Œuvre des apôtres de l'amour infini et de Notre-Dame du Magnificat. *Clément XV, Pape de Fatima*. Clémery: Petit Vatican, 1979.

### **Clément, Caroline (1847, 1825–1887)**

Caroline Clément was born in 1825 in the village of Andilly (Meurthe-et-Moselle). Her parents were peasants and small merchants. They had six children: five girls and one boy. Caroline was one of the youngest. She was never married and lived with her parents, apart from some time at boarding school during her adolescence. From the age of seven, she started to have problems with her vision, and was sometimes forced to remain in the dark. She also started having visions of the Infant Jesus and the Virgin Mary, to whom she was very devoted.

Caroline felt that her life was not gracious enough. At age 15, she began to meditate on the Christian virtues to prepare her conversion. She wanted to impose mortification practices on herself, but she was not sure how to do so. While her religious education continued, Caroline Clément started to take the Eucharist more frequently, and claimed to receive many graces from the Blessed Sacrament. It was during the Holy Communion that she felt most united with Christ, and her love for Jesus led her to wish to join his suffering on the Cross, so she started praying to other stigmatized mystics, such as Saint Catherine of Siena.

The mystical marriage with Jesus began when Clément was around 20 years old. She made a vow of chastity and doubled her mortification practices. She also claimed that Jesus had revealed the mysteries of the Cross to her. Like many stigmatics, Clément thought that her mission was to become an expiatory victim for the sinners and the souls in Purgatory – a mission that she allegedly began in May 1847. She shared this religious passion with two of her sisters, Louise and Madeleine. Together, they looked for ways to offer themselves up to the Lord. In 1848, after many “infructuous” confessors, Caroline found her spiritual director in Father Cauzier, priest of Colombey.

It is not clear whether Clément carried the stigmata, although most people argue that she did. Clément used to cover her forehead, saying that she felt as if spines were being pressed against her skin. From her first years of martyrdom until her death, she carried a visible wound on her side. According to some witnesses, the wound was about one finger wide. Some physicians examined it, admitting that they could not cure it completely, although they could treat it. Other witnesses allegedly saw the stigmata on her hands, but they were very faint, like a blue-black mark on her skin.

Caroline had other charismata, such as the ability to know people's secret thoughts and feelings (kardiognosis) and the gift of prophecy. She started to build a reputation for sanctity, sustained by popular devotion. Her reputation spread by word of mouth, and many people visited her in her room, where she lived a secluded life, rarely leaving her bed. Others (including children) wrote to her and prayed with her. She allegedly converted many "lost souls," fostered miraculous healings and became the spiritual mother of some.

After her death due to an illness in 1887, a large crowd from Andilly and the surroundings mourned her body. Her room was preserved as it was and a spontaneous cult started to build around her house and grave. Many graces were attributed to Caroline after her passing. Although some clergymen acknowledged her sanctity, in the eyes of the diocesan authorities, the miraculous favours were not consistent enough to open a cause for beatification.

Henry, René. *Histoire d'une âme victime. Caroline Clément (1825–1887)*. 2nd edition. Paris: Téqui, 1932.

### **Comoglio, Teresa (c.1891, 1843–1891)**

### **Comoglio, Giuseppina (1891, 1847–1899)**

The sisters Teresa and Giuseppina Comoglio not only shared the same family and choice of life as "domestic nuns," but both offered themselves as "victim souls" for the redemption of humanity, founded the brotherhood of the Adorazione Quotidiana Universale Perpetua (Everyday Universal Perpetual Adoration) and had received invisible stigmata.

Teresa, the oldest, was born in Turin on 27 June 1843 and Giuseppina was born four years later on 17 March 1847. Their father had been an old widower, and their mother his second wife. She was a very pious woman who, after his death (on 13 October 1848), invoked the protection of Mary for her infant daughters. Thus, Teresa and Giuseppina grew up in a very devout environment, consisting of daily prayers, novenas, the worship of saints, the Sacred Heart devotion and the Passion. The story of the Madonna del Pilone marked their childhood: their mother told them that the Virgin had given her some coins at a time of extreme poverty. When they reached adulthood, they received permission from the religious authorities to transform their home into their "general quarters," in which they had meetings with the faithful and devotees.

The Comoglio sisters wished to become nuns, but their poverty and precarious health prevented them from attaining their goal. Thus, they decided to live in society as "lay nuns," combining their florist business with charitable activities and religious practices. On 14 November 1883, they enrolled in the Third Order of Saint Francis in the Church of St Thomas in Turin, and on 1 November, they joined the confraternity of

the *Fraternità di San Tommaso*. Their spiritual director, the Jesuit father, Enrico Vasco, invited them to live in the parish house. In 1870, the sisters created the confraternity of the *Adorazione Quotidiana Universale Perpetua*, initially a private movement which was criticized (accused of fanaticism), but in 1892 the Archbishop of Turin approved and supported it.

Both offered themselves as sacrificial victims and in return received various mystical phenomena, such as ecstasy, visions, divine revelations and invisible stigmata (verified “empirically” after their deaths). Teresa considered the illness that led to her death on 2 June 1891 as a sacrifice for the redemption of sinners; while Giuseppina displayed strange phenomena for another eight years afterwards (including a statue of the Madonna who operated wonders), creating suspicions and rumours. She died on 2 May 1899. The two sisters shared the same destiny even after death: in both cases their bodies were examined in an autopsy. As determined by the doctors Bonelli and Ballario, their hearts both had a wound, a visible sign of their inner stigmata and of the transverberation of the heart.

On 30 January 1930, their remains were transferred to the Church of St Thomas in Turin and in 1941 their cause for beatification was introduced. The Comoglio sisters are worshiped by the Church as servants of God.

Manni, Mariano. *Le Sorelle Teresa e Giuseppina Comoglio*. Turin: St Tommaso, 1932.

Sandigliano, Giovanni. *Due gigli: Teresa e Giuseppina Comoglio*. Turin: L.I.C.E. R. Berruti & C, 1933.

Santarelli, Antonio Maria. *Beatificazione e canonizzazione delle serve di Dio Teresa e Giuseppina Comoglio del Terz'ordine di s. Francesco: articoli per il processo ordinario informativo sulla fama di santità, sulle virtù e miracoli delle predette serve di Dio*. Turin: M.E. Marietti edit. Tip., 1929.

### **Courage, Michelle Catherine (1918, 1891–1922)**

Michelle Catherine Courage was born into a humble family in St-Étienne. Her father was a labourer and her mother was very pious. From her childhood, Michelle Catherine received a religious education. At the age of seven, she assumed her religious vocation, writing in her diary: “I will be a saint, never mind if I die from it.” Her unique desire was to join Jesus during the Holy Communion and she offered herself up to God to achieve her aim. At 13, she finished school and began working for her aunts. She gave the money she received to the Church and the poor. At the age of 15, she took a vow of virginity and another of victim soul, with the permission of her spiritual father. She began practising mortification exercises, but was careful to hide them from her parents.

Meanwhile, her health began to deteriorate. In 1913, she made a pilgrimage to Lourdes in the company of another sick girl. During their stay there, Michelle Catherine prayed to the Virgin for the recovery of her friend. The girl was cured almost

instantaneously, while Michelle Catherine remained bedridden for more than three years. During that time, she was allegedly nourished only with water and a few drops of ether. Finally, on 25 March 1917, she felt an immense strength overcome her and she was able to get out of bed. Her family interpreted this event as a miraculous healing.

Michelle Catherine wanted to join the Carmelites in Lisieux, a desire that was never fulfilled. However, she was supposedly favoured with extraordinary graces. On 7 June 1918, the Feast of the Sacred Heart, she renewed her vow of victim and on the same day she received the stigmata and joined Jesus during the Holy Communion. While contemplating the Crucifixion, her hands and feet were allegedly pierced. The wounds were visible, but small and difficult to see. Moreover, the stigmata on her hands were in the interior of the palms, making them easier to hide. She eventually received the crown of thorns. The Holy Wounds bled almost every Friday. Unable to join a cloister, Catherine lived a secluded mystical life. In January 1922, she became terribly ill and died a month later. Many people visited her body in the three days before the funeral, and several miraculous favours were allegedly received by those who prayed to her.

Courage, Michelle Catherine. *Michelle Catherine Courage: journal spirituel*. Toulon: Impr. Mouton-F.Cabasson, 1929.

### Covarel, Théotiste (c.1873, 1836–1908)

Françoise-Théotiste Covarel was born in 1836 in La Rochette, into a family of seven children. She worked as a domestic servant and became a Franciscan tertiary. Her fame began as a seer, having witnessed the apparition of the Virgin around 22 times in Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne (Savoie) between August 1873 and July 1874. She received many messages from the Virgin condemning the sins of the priests of the parish; thus, in the same line as the apocalyptic prophecies of La Salette (1846), which also rebuked priests. Her visions followed those of another seer called Cantianille Bourdois, who was said to be possessed by the Devil and to free souls in Purgatory through such possession. The visions received the support of some clergy in the diocese – including, it seems, the Bishop, Mgr Vibert – who wrote a favourable report about the apparitions after an investigation. Their conclusions were contested in an anonymous brochure entitled, *Les visions de Théotiste Covarel* (1875).

Covarel would sometimes fall into an ecstasy after witnessing the apparition of the Virgin. On Fridays, she was said to feel the pain of the crown of thorns and to “hear” the blood dripping around her, but the wounds remained invisible. Soon, people from the region came to Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne to learn about the messages from the Virgin and witness Covarel’s suffering. Her room was turned into a sanctuary where pious objects were allegedly blessed by the Virgin thanks to Covarel’s intercession. In 1875, at the request of the local administration, a doctor examined the stigmatic and declared her mad, and she was taken to an asylum in Bassens. However, some of

her supporters contested the case, including a legitimist lawyer, Benjamin Daymonaz, who published a promotional brochure attacking the doctor and promoting Covarel. The doctor accused them of slander and they were forced to pay fine. Following the scandal, Mgr Vibert was forced to resign in 1876. The affair appears to have been subsequently forgotten.

Anonymous. *Les visions de Théotiste Covarel ou nouvelles extravagances dans le diocèse de Maurienne*. Roanne: Impr. Roannaise, 1875.

Daymonaz, Benjamin. *La séquestration de Théotiste Covarel et le vol d'un évêché de France en plein dix-neuvième siècle*. Paris: Bertin, 1876.

"Faits divers," *Le Rappel*, 18 September 1875, 3.

"Gazette des tribunaux," *Le Figaro*, 20 January 1877, 2–3.

Lunier, L., "L'Affaire Covarel," *Annales médico-psychologiques*, 35.17 (1877): 312–320.

Multon, Hilaire, "Catholicisme intransigeant et culture prophétique: l'apport des archives du Saint-Office et de l'Index," *Revue historique*, 304/1 (2002): 109–137.

### **Crozier, Antoine (c.1888, 1850–1916)**

Antoine Crozier was born in Duerne (Rhône) in 1850, but his family moved to Lyon shortly afterwards. At the age of 13, he felt that God was calling him. Around 1867, he began to attend a religious seminar in a village close to Lyon. However, in 1870, with the start of the Franco-Prussian War, he returned to Lyon to help his family with its business: the commercialization of a popular natural remedy called Toile Miraculeuse or Toile Souveraine. The economic benefits of this enterprise would sustain the charitable activities that Crozier would organize in his future religious life.

In 1877, he was ordained as a priest and after two years departed for Rome to complete his doctorate in theology. Back in France, in 1882, he undertook chaplaincy services in a Carmelite parish close to Saint-Etienne (Loire), where he became the spiritual father of the mystic Antonine Gachon (1861–1945). Gachon received the stigmata and witnessed the apparition of Jesus of the Sacred Heart for the first time in 1883. Crozier's relationship with her inspired him to found the Union dans le Sacré-Cœur et pour le Sacré-Cœur, an association where no registration was required and that aimed to promote the love of Jesus. This Union eventually inspired another association, the Union des Frères et Sœurs du Sacré-Cœur de Jésus, founded by his friend, Father Charles de Foucauld (1858–1916), a few years later. In 1883, Antoine Crozier met his second spiritual daughter, Sédulie Dévenaz (1859–1940), from Lyon – also a stigmatic. Along with Antonine Gachon they formed a "mystic trinity," united through prayer.

Around 1888, Crozier became concerned with the moral and physical pains that he seemed to suffer every Friday. They were especially prominent in his hands, feet, right side of his body and forehead. On 10 January 1901, while he was receiving the Eucharist, his internal wounds emerged and stigmata became visible. He prayed to God, asking

for his wounds to become invisible, wishing to hide the marks of the divine. While his prayers were answered, he suffered from the pain of the stigmata everyday until his death in 1916 after several years of illness.

Bernard-Marie, (Frère). *Le Père Crozier, l'ami stigmatisé du Père de Foucauld*. Paris: Éd. du Chalet, 1988.

Foucauld, Charles de. *Correspondances lyonnaises (1904–1916)*. Paris: Éd. Karthala, 2005.

### **D'Ambrosio, Maria Grazia Giuseppa (c.1802, 1782–1826)**

Maria Grazia was born in Naples on 19 February 1782. At the age of three, she was in the care of her aunt, a Dominican nun. In her childhood she showed a particular inclination to the spiritual life, and at the age of seven she was called the “little saint.” She wanted to become a nun, but her parents did not give their permission because they wanted her to marry a rich man. In 1795, she was forced to leave the Dominican monastery.

In 1802, at the age of 20, she entered the Franciscan Order as a tertiary under the Rule of the Alcantarines Friars, taking the name of Maria Crocifissa delle Cinque Piaghe di Gesù Cristo. Her devotion to the Passion was not limited to worship and prayers, as she also felt the pain of invisible stigmata during her long periods of contemplation.

She would pray every night on the balcony of her house in full view of witnesses. She was highly devoted to various cults, including the Child Jesus, the Mater Dolorosa, the Holy Trinity, Christ crucified, the Passion and the Holy Family. Maria Grazia prayed for the salvation of the Church, for Pius VII in exile and for the souls in Purgatory. When the Pope returned from his Napoleonic captivity, he gave her some reliquaries to thank her for her “intercession” with God. Neapolitans considered her a charismatic leader, asking her advice and using her as an arbitrator in disputes.

When her illness deteriorated and she became paralysed and bedridden, a private oratory (dedicated to the Holy Trinity) was built in her house to celebrate Mass and receive the Eucharist.

She died at the age of 43 on 16 December 1826. She was initially buried in the Church of St Agostino alla Zecca in Naples, but was transferred to the Church of Saint Lucia al Monte on 16 December 1846.

Her cause for canonization was introduced on 28 July 1848. On 21 July 1855, the process held in the diocese of Naples was approved by the Holy See and on 14 May 1896 she was declared Venerable by Pope Leo XIII.

Anonymous. *Cenni sulla vita della venerabile serva di Dio suor Maria Crocifissa delle Piaghe di Gesù Cristo, terziaria professa alcantariana*. Naples: Tip. Napoletana 1891.



Frungillo, Rosario. *Vita della serva di Dio suor Maria Crocifissa delle Piaghe di Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo Terziaria francescana dell'Ordine di S. Pietro d'Alcantara*. Naples: Stamperia reale, 1850.

### de Geuser, Marie-Antoinette (1915, 1889–1918)

Marie-Antoinette de Geuser was born in Le Havre in 1889, the oldest child of a family of twelve children. One of her paternal uncles was a canon and became Marie-Antoinette's confessor. From her maternal family, one of her aunts was a member of the Carmelites, which remained the closest religious order to her spirituality.

Marie-Antoinette had suffered health problems since she was young. In 1906, she almost died from appendicitis. In September of the same year, she allegedly witnessed the apparition of Jesus, leading to what she described as her conversion. From then on, she started reading texts by mystic Carmelites such as Saint Juan de la Cruz and Saint Thérèse de Lisieux. In October, she decided to follow her religious vocation. She first attempted to join the Carmelite sisters in Le Havre. However, her plan was not successful due to her feeble health, which prevented her from living in a convent, as well as a domestic accident that immobilized her mother, obliging Marie-Antoinette to take care of her.

Despite not enjoying a fully religious life, Geuser was committed to her mystical vocation and practised self-mortification regularly. From the age of 11, after her first Communion, she was said to receive many supernatural gifts. She was especially devoted to the Mater Dolorosa and the Eucharist, and was fascinated by the idea of having “God inside us.” Between 1910 and almost until her death, she corresponded with many Carmelite sisters, receiving the religious name of Marie de la Trinité from one of them. Nevertheless, she is especially known for a nickname she chose herself, *Consummata*, sometimes signing her letters as such.

In 1914, *Consummata* again suffered from deep pains, supposedly unexplained by medicine, which forced her to take to her bed. Around 1915, she started having continuous visions of the Passion of Jesus. After several months of contemplation, she received the stigmata on her hands, feet and side, but the wounds remained invisible. In a 1916 letter to her spiritual father and uncle Anatole de Grandmaison, she wrote: “Jesus has reassured and comforted me by showing himself crucified in me more evidently than ever, making me feel his wounds in my body, along with his Glory in my soul” (de Geuser, *Lettres*, 184). *Consummata*'s correspondence, which has been translated into various languages – including Spanish, Italian, Dutch and Portuguese – constitutes a valuable contribution to Carmelite spirituality, which may have been even more significant if she had not asked her younger brothers to burn many of her papers after her death on 22 June 1918.

de Geuser, Marie-Antoinette. *Consummata: vie et notes spirituelles, publiées par le P. Plus. Réédition*. Toulouse: Apostolat de la Prière, 1946.

de Geuser, Marie-Antoinette. *Lettres au Père Anatole de Grandmaison, S.J., son directeur*. Paris, Beauchense: Impr. Folloppe, 1977.

### **de Nicolay, Pauline (1855, 1811–1868)**

Pauline de Nicolay was born in 1811 into an aristocratic family of marquises. She had four sisters and five brothers. From the age of four, Pauline allegedly experienced visions of the Virgin Mary and of her guardian angel. In 1824, she went to the boarding school of the Sacred Heart in Paris, where she lived during the 1830 revolution. At the time, King Charles X, senior in the Bourbon line, was forced to abdicate and was replaced by Louis-Philippe I. Pauline's father, a loyal and close supporter of Charles X, could not deal with the situation and went into exile in Switzerland with the family. They rented a château close to Fribourg before moving to Geneva. Meanwhile, Pauline was sent to the Sacred Heart boarding school in Milan.

Pauline de Nicolay wanted to follow a religious life, but her parents discouraged her. However, they finally accepted her will and Pauline took her vows in 1843 in Turin. Unfortunately, her feeble health was not compatible with the life in a convent, and five years later she returned to her family in Geneva. In 1854, she joined the Third Order of Saint Francis. From then on, she began her life as a pilgrim. In France, she visited places such as Ars and La Salette. According to her spiritual father, Jacques Rado, on 15 August 1854, Pauline de Nicolay was admitted into the First Order of Francis of Assisi on the island of Malta, a privilege never granted to a woman. This information has not been certified and we still consider Pauline a Franciscan tertiary.

In December 1854, in Rome, Pope Pius IX authorized her to go to Palestine. While she was waiting to depart, she made a pilgrimage to Loreto, where she received the stigmata for the first time on 17 September 1855, on the Feast of the Holy Wounds. She kept this secret; even her family did not understand why she always asked them to send mittens. One day, while she was staying in an Italian convent of the Claretian sisters during Pentecost, one of the sisters saw Pauline's wounds. However, apart from this event, only Pauline's confessor and perhaps a few others ever witnessed the stigmata.

Pauline de Nicolay departed for Palestine in 1856. There, she continued her pilgrimages and focused on her spiritual life. During her travels, she wrote many poems, some regarding the stigmata. In 1859, she arrived at Emmaus (Al-Qubeiba), where, according to the New Testament, Jesus revealed himself to two of his disciples after his resurrection. Pauline decided to rebuild the sanctuary of Emmaus, the ruins of which were in the hands of the "unfaithful." She obtained permission from Pius IX and bought the property in 1861, hoping to build a Franciscan church and convent, as well as a house

for pilgrims. However, she died in 1868 due to an illness, without seeing her dream completed. After her death, her family donated a great amount of money to finish the work. Today, the Franciscan Sanctuary of Emmaus is still a site of pilgrimage.

In 1869, Father Rado sent a letter to Pius IX describing Pauline's charismata, including the stigmata. The Pope ordered a process of beatification to start in 1869. In 1933, the De Nicolay family provided several documents regarding Pauline's life, although they did not want to be involved in the cause for beatification. Today, the process is still open, but Pauline de Nicolay seems to be forgotten.

Danemarie, Jeanne. *Une croisée solitaire, Pauline de Nicolay*. Paris: B. Grasset, 1954.  
Sodar de Vaulx, Marie. *Les splendeurs de la Terre Sainte: ses sanctuaires et leurs gardiens*. Paris: Bloud et Barral, 1889.

### De Troia, Genoveffa (c.1920, 1887–1949)

Genoveffa De Troia was born in Lucera (Apulia) on 21 December 1887, into a family living in poor economic conditions. Even as a child she was sickly, and at the age of four a wound appeared on her right leg. Over the years, the injuries spread around her body and a supernatural voice told her that the illness was incurable. Genoveffa offered her sufferings to the Lord, accepting her body as that of the crucified Christ, plagued for the redemption of the Church. Her desire to become a nun could not be fulfilled because the illness forced her to be bedridden until the end of her life.

In her case, it was granulomatous disease, also known as Hand-Schüller Christian's disease, which explained her "stigmata." Similar to other stigmatics, however, was her will to offer herself as a victim for the redemption of the sins of humankind, considering herself as a "divine tool," and numerous pilgrims visited her house daily. Her room was transformed into a religious chapel, in which devotees asked for her graces, intercession and prayers. In 1925, the Capuchin friar, Angelo da Sarno, became her spiritual director and confessor until her death. On 2 January 1931, she entered the Franciscan Order as a tertiary. Her reputation as a "living saint" grew as her physical martyrdom intensified, the wounds spreading everywhere and ever deeper, lacerating her flesh. Her head also appeared to be marked by the crown of thorns, pierced by many small holes.

Genoveffa died of the incurable disease on 11 December 1949. Her remains were moved to the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Foggia on 25 April 1965. After the successful conclusion of the diocesan investigation, her cause for beatification was submitted to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, and on 7 March 1982, Pope John Paul II declared Genoveffa Venerable. In 1985, an association dedicated to her was created to spread her fame and to continue her humanist initiatives. In 2012, there was renewed recognition of her remains and the beatification process appears to be proceeding positively.

Da Matrice, Emilio. *Il segreto della vita, Genoveffa de Troia*. Foggia: L. Cappetta e F., 1957.

Da Riese, Fernando. *La serva di Dio Genoveffa De Troia: su un letto per il mondo senza confini*. Padua: Edizioni laurenziane, 1974.

Gargiulo, Carmine. *Il segreto della vita: Genoveffa De Troia*. Foggia: Cappetta, 1957.

Gargiulo, Carmine. *Genoveffa umile fiore*. Foggia: Tip. Leone, 1959.

Triggiani, Leonardo. *La neo-venerabile Genoveffa De Troia*. Foggia: Centrografico Francescano, 1997.

### Dévenaz, Sédulie (c.1890, 1859–1940)

Sédulie Dévenaz was a spiritual daughter of the stigmatized clergyman Antoine Crozier (1850–1916). Along with Antonine Gachon (1861–1945), another spiritual daughter of Crozier, they formed a mystic trinity united through prayer and sharing the suffering of the Passion.

Little is known about Sédulie. She died in 1940, more than 80 years old. In Lyon, she joined a female Roman Catholic community, similar to a religious charity house, which received the approval of the diocesan authorities. The vicar general charged these women with the benevolent assistance of poor seminarians. They worked several days a week at the archbishopric, helping the seminarians in different labours.

Dévenaz was the soul of this group. She was favoured by many extraordinary graces, including stigmata, though we do not know if she carried the wounds internally or on her flesh. Apparently, there was a canonical inquiry in this regard, but we do not know the results. She died abandoned and forgotten in the Institut de Jésus Souverain Prêtre, under the religious name of sister Marie-André de la Croix.

Bernard-Marie, (Frère). *Le Père Crozier, l'ami stigmatisé du Père de Foucauld*. Paris: Éd. du Chalet, 1988.

Foucauld, Charles de. *Directoire. Texte de 1909–1913, publié avec un avertissement [de Louis Massignon], des variantes et 7 annexes*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1961.

Maillet, Paul. *Un ami du père de Foucauld: le père Crozier, 1850–1916*. Lyon: E. Vitte, 1948.

### Di Mauro, Adelaide (1926, 1890–1932)

Adelaide di Mauro, or Sister Chiara Francesca di Gesù Agonizzante, was born in Syracuse (Sicily) on 5 July 1890. Her parents ignored her desire to become a nun and forced her into an arranged marriage, celebrated on 11 June 1910. From this union, three sons were born, and only one, Alfredo, survived his mother. In 1918, her husband died and with widowhood, Adelaide's contemplative life, already strong, became increasingly intense. While waiting to become a nun, under the direction of the Capuchin, Samuele Cultrera, she attempted to isolate herself from the world (she lived in extreme poverty in the Grottasanta cave). In her region and among the clergy, many believed

she was mad (due to numerous episodes of ecstasy in church). In 1920, she became a tertiary in the Franciscan Order and on 14 September 1924 entered the Poor Clares of Messina. Initially, Adelaide arranged for her son to live at an orphanage directed by Annibale di Francia, but later organized for him to be raised by her sister, Virginia.

At the end of her novitiate, Adelaide took the name of Chiara Francesca di Gesù Agonizzante, although she did not take perpetual vows. On 21 June 1926, in addition to ecstasy, visible and imitative stigmata were displayed on her body. In the letters addressed to her spiritual father, the sequence of her martyrdom emerges. Every Thursday, she would fall into an ecstatic state of deep inner pain, which physically manifested in the appearance of the wounds, while copious amounts of blood would come from her hands, feet, chest and head. On Friday afternoons, she emulated the Via Crucis, at the end spreading her arms and clasping her feet together as if she were crucified on an invisible cross. On many occasions, her body levitated and she also underwent the mystical communion. These strange phenomena led the abbess to remove her from the monastery on 21 February 1929.

The last years of her life were spent in various religious institutes, from which she was expelled because of her mystical phenomena. The clergy and others were divided between supporters and detractors, declaring her either insane or a "living saint." On 13 September 1932, at the age of 42, the "holy nun" died, but her fame and alleged miracles survived. As a result, on 16 July 1983, the archbishop, Calogero Lauricella, opened the beatification process.

Cannarella, Giuseppe. *Suor Chiara di Gesù Agonizzante (Adelaide Di Mauro) 1890–1932*.

Syracuse: Marchese, 1951.

Gori, Samuele. *Una vittima del Sacro Cuore. Suor Clara Francesca di Gesù Agonizzante (Adelaide Di Mauro † 1932)*. Rome: Tipografia Agostini, 1974.

### D.L.M. (1945, –)

D.L.M. was a married woman and a mother of three. During summer 1945, she began to relive the Passion in front of the curious, congregated around a chestnut tree. Although it is not specified, the site was probably the fields of Chandavila, close to the village of La Codosera (Badajoz), where Afra Brígido Blanco (also a stigmatic) and other seers witnessed the apparition of the Virgin near a chestnut tree in 1945. A seer described how D.L.M. relived the Passion: "[God] crucified her on the chestnut, two big tears ran over her cheeks and she leaned her head just like the Lord; afterwards, the people kissed her hands" (cited in Staehlin, *Apariciones*, 166). The Jesuit father, Carlos M. Staehlin, who also witnessed the events, considered that D.L.M. was pretending.

Staehlin, Carlos M. *Apariciones*. Madrid: Razón y Fe, 1954, 166.

### Durnerin, Thérèse (1894, 1847–1905)

Thérèse Durnerin was born on 31 December 1847 into a large and pious family in Paris. She was devoted to Jesus from a very young age, taking her first Communion in 1859. After the death of her father – a physician – in 1868, she started suffering from health problems that forced her to live in seclusion for a decade. During the 1870s, she lived through the famine and the bombs of the Franco-Prussian War and through the social challenges of La Commune. At that time, she decided to become an expiatory “victim soul” for the Lord.

In December 1883, Jesus allegedly promised Thérèse that she would soon experience stigmata. Many years would pass until the realization of this promise. During that time, she published a successful series of prayers contributing to the cult of the Sacred Heart, whose main sanctuary was edified in Montmartre after the 1870 war. On one night in 1888, while in an ecstatic state, Thérèse wrote the booklet *L'Hostie et le Prêtre* (*The Host and the Priest*), aimed at promoting devotion to the Eucharist Heart of Jesus. The booklet was printed in five editions and around 200,000 copies were distributed around the world.

Durnerin became a member of the Third Order of Saint Francis and started developing an interest in popular stigmatized laywomen in France. In 1890, she visited Marie-Julie Jahenny (1850–1941) of La Fraudais and two years later, after some insistence, she met Marie-Louise Nerbollier (1859–1908) in Diémoz. She witnessed the “Friday agonies” of these stigmatics among other curious people and devotees. Thérèse would repeat these visits over the years, in combination with her pilgrimages to Marian apparitions sites such as Lourdes and Tilly. Around 1894, she finally received stigmata, as promised by Jesus. However, the wounds were invisible. Her stigmatization remained unknown to almost everyone.

In 1890, Durnerin founded the Société des Amis des Pauvres (Friends of the Poor Society), a society of apostolic life aiming to sanctify its active members, attract poor families into the Catholic faith and offer them a religious education through catechism. The headquarters of the society were located at 181 rue de Charonne, Paris. Despite her feeble health, Thérèse was devoted to this society until her death on 7 April 1905. She died with a reputation of sanctity. Many favours were attributed to her after her death. Her society, however, seems to have disappeared.

Anonymous. *La Société des Amis des Pauvres*. Bar-le-Duc: Impr. Saint-Paul, 1932.

Hamez, Henri-Marie. *Une hostie vivante. Thérèse Durnerin, fondatrice de la Société des Amis des Pauvres (1848–1905)*. Bar-le-Duc: Impr. Saint-Paul, 1908.

Lavaille, Mgr. *Thérèse Durnerin: fondatrice de la Société des Amis des Pauvres (D'après des documents inédits) (1848–1905)*. Bar-le-Duc: Impr. Saint-Paul, 1926.

### Élisabeth de la Croix (Doussot, Noémie) (1875, 1832–1896)

Noémie Doussot was born in Épernay (Marne) in 1832 into a family of intellectuals. Her father was a follower of Voltaire and her mother a disciple of Rousseau. God and Catholicism were not a topic of affection in her family. It was her older brother, Gaston, who secretly taught Noémie the Pater Noster and the Ave Maria when she was eight years old. At ten, she attended a Mass for the first time and had a vision of the Infant Jesus and the Virgin. At the age of 16, she decided to follow her religious vocation. Despite the opposition of their parents, both Noémie and Gaston entered the religious life. Attracted by the contemplative life, she joined the Carmelite sisters in Nevers, while Gaston joined the Dominican brothers. Under the religious name of Élisabeth de la Croix, Noémie became a founder of the Barefoot Carmelite houses in Fontainebleau, Merville and Épernay. She attempted to convert her father without success, and when he died, she asked God to let her suffer in the name of her father's soul in Purgatory.

From the end of 1868, Élisabeth de la Croix decided to become a "victim soul" for the glory of the Pope, the Church and France. She exercised mortification on herself, such as flagellation, and inscribed the name of Jesus and a large cross on her chest. She kept these wounds open by sprinkling salt and vinegar on them. In 1875, her penitence was rewarded when Élisabeth de la Croix was said to have received stigmata. The wounds remained invisible all her life. She was also said to enjoy other graces, such as witnessing frequent apparitions of Jesus and the Virgin Mary or having "supernatural dialogues" with souls in Purgatory. Her most cherished devotions were the Passion, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Eucharist and the Virgin. She wrote an Act of Contrition and an Act of Consecration to Jesus in her own blood. The original documents were buried with her. During a spiritual retreat in 1883, she allegedly underwent a mystical marriage with Jesus. After a serious illness in 1887, her mystical experiences became even richer. She died in Fontainebleau in 1896.

*Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique*. Tome IV. Première partie, Eadmer-Escobar. Paris: Beauchesne, 1960, col. 578–580.

Marie-Joseph du Sacré-Cœur. *Le P. Doussot, dominicain, et la mère Élisabeth, carmélite, sa sœur*. Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1911.

### Emmerick, Anna Katharina (1812, 1774–1824)

Anna Katherina Emmerick is one of the most famous stigmatics of the nineteenth century. She was born in the region of Münster, in Flamschen near Coesfeld on 8 September 1774, as the fifth of nine children. Her family of small farmers (Kötter) was rather poor and Anna Katharina only attended school for four months, as she had to support the family (herding cattle). She first became a dressmaker but discovered another calling. In spite of her poverty, with the help of friends she entered the Augustinian cloister Agnetenberg in Dülmen in September 1802. Almost ten years later, in 1812, the cloister was forced to close due to the new secularization laws (in 1811,

the new King of Westphalia, Jerome Bonaparte, suppressed the religious orders). Anna Katharina was already quite ill at the time and found a place to stay with the widow Roters, who lived near the cloister. Initially, she was employed as the housekeeper of abbé Lambert (a French clergyman in exile) but after only a few months, she became bedridden. Her sister Gertrud took over the household and cared for her. During her stay there, she started to display visible stigmata, and as soon as the rumour spread, the curious and faithful attempted to see her. In the following year she also stopped eating. The Church had her case examined between 10 and 19 June 1813, by 16 men who guarded her every minute. They concluded that no fraud could be detected. In October 1813, Anna Katharina moved to a quieter location in the house of Franz Limberg on Münsterstrasse. Her room, at the back of the house, was more difficult to access but her loyal visitors, such as the famous writer Clemens Brentano and the poet Luise Hensel, easily found their way.

From 7 to 29 August 1819, Anna Katharina was subjected to a rather harsh medical examination by a State commission (ordered by the Prussian government). To the horror of her fellow citizens, Anna Katharina was taken from her home and observed and questioned in isolation. No fraud could be detected. In August 1821, Anna Katharina moved to the house of Clemens Limberg, where she died on 9 February 1824. The stigmatic from Dülmen was already famous during her lifetime. Her fame increased through the books of Clemens Brentano, who sat by her bedside (1819–1824) and recorded her visions in *Das arme Leben und bittere Leiden unseres Herrn und Heilandes Jesu Christi* (*The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, published in 1833).

Her grave and the Emmerick House created in her honour (with one of her rooms preserved in its original state) have been visited by numerous pilgrims. She was beatified on 3 October 2004.

Engling, Clemens. *Unbequem und ungewöhnlich. Anna Katharina Emmerick – historisch und theologisch neu entdeckt*. Würzburg: Echter, 2005.

Engling, Clemens. “Anna Katharina Emmerick – Ein kommentierter Lebenslauf.” In *Anna Katharina Emmerick- ihre mystische Existenz aus nachmoderner Sicht*, ed. Clemens Engling, Herman Flothkötter and Johannes Heling, 11–22. Münster: Dialogverlag, 2007.

Hümpfner, Winfried. “Emmerick, Anna Katharina.” In *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, volume 4, 483–484. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1959.

### **Evolo, Natuzza (1938, 1924–2009)**

Fortunata Evolo, better known as Natuzza, was born in Paravati di Mileto (Calabria) on 23 August 1924. Her father emigrated to Argentina before her birth and started a new family. Her mother had occasional relationships for financial reasons. In childhood, Natuzza had a number of mystical experiences. When she was five, she started engaging in divine dialogues, while at the age of ten (after a Marian vision) strange



scars appeared on her wrists and feet, then spread to the right shoulder, chest, knees and head.

At the age of 14, while she was working as a maid for an aristocratic family, she experienced "apparent death." Extraordinary events multiplied during these years, including ecstasy, bilocation, dialogues with her guardian angel and the dead, diagnosis of diseases and healing powers.

In 1938, visible and epigraphic stigmata would appear. The most evident wounds were not in the palms of her hands and feet (as in almost all other stigmatics), but on her wrists and ankles. In addition to the crown of thorns and the wound on her side, she had wounds in sacred shapes (crosses, a holy face, angels, Madonna) on her knees, forearms and face and when her blood came into contact with fabric, prayers, hymns or religious names written in different languages would appear. The stigmata only appeared during Lent, increasing two weeks before Easter and having their climax on Good Friday, after which they would slowly disappear.

On 29 June 1940, Natuzza received confirmation from the bishop, Paolo Albera. During the Mass, everyone saw a large cross of blood appear on her back. The bishop asked the opinion of Father Gemelli, who suggested it was a hysterical syndrome. The young stigmatic wanted to be a nun but no one would accept her because of her strange phenomena. Thus, on 14 August 1943, she married (she had five children).

Considered a "living saint," she was visited by thousands of pilgrims during her life and became a national media celebrity. Numerous doctors wrote reports to support her mystical experiences (which were scientifically inexplicable). The clergy was divided between opponents and those in favour, while the position of the Italian Committee of the Paranormal (CICAP) was more critical. On 13 May 1987, she founded the association of Cuore Immacolato di Maria for the care of the elderly, orphans and those with disabilities.

Natuzza died on 1 November 2009. The diocesan phase of her beatification is already closed. The Congregation for the Causes of Saints will decide the next part of the process.

Mesiano, Francesco. *I fenomeni paranormali di Natuzza Evolo*. Rome: Edizioni mediterranee, 1974.

Stanzione, Marcello. *Natuzza Evolo: le stimmate, la Madonna e l'Angelo custode*. Milan: Gribaudi, 2015.

Turi, Anna Maria. *Natuzza Evolo: etnografie, bilocazioni e guarigioni spirituali della mistica di Paravati*. Rome: Edizioni mediterranee, 1995.

### **Fenouil, Célestine (1866, 1849–1918)**

Céleste Fenouil, known as Célestine, was a young woman from Manosque (Alpes-de-Haute-Provence), born in 1849. She was said to having received stigmata from the age

of 17. Initially, her mother allowed visitors and doctors to examine the case, but at some point, she became concerned that they would either send her daughter to a convent or an asylum, and restricted almost all visits. Around 1874, at age 25, Célestine stopped eating for two or three months. During this period, she remained bedridden in the family home.

Dr Dauvergne, a dermatologist from the Manosque hospital, was able to examine Célestine four or five times. He considered that Célestine's deprivation corresponded with other cases of hysteria that he had witnessed, while the alleged stigmata were nothing more than a cutaneous disease. The wounds opened every Friday until three in the afternoon, when they started to disappear, leaving only minor traces in the following days. She carried all the sacred wounds on her hands, feet, side and the crown of thorns.

While some people saw a miracle in Célestine, others only saw amusement. Local clergymen who had witnessed the phenomena did not make a public statement. Though Dauvergne was sure that the wounds were the result of an illness, he was unable to find the cause. He told himself that Célestine's exalted imagination was possibly responsible for causing a physiological response – the bleeding – as had been concluded in the case of the Belgian stigmatic Louise Lateau (1850–1883). Dauvergne regretted that Célestine's mother no longer allowed visits, preventing science from shedding light on “this natural affection or this sacred mystery” (“Des maladies,” 136).

Dauvergne, Dr. “Des maladies de la peau qu'il est difficile de spécifier et de classer,” *Annales de Dermatologie et de Syphiligraphie*, 8 (1877): 110–136.

### **Ferrero, Maria Consolata (c.1912, 1885–1916)**

Maria Consolata Ferrero, or Benigna Consolata, was born in Turin in 1885, into an aristocratic and religious family, which granted her a solid classical education. In her case, illness and miraculous healing were reported during her infancy.

In 1898, she met Father Luigi Boccardo, who became her spiritual director until she entered a convent. Despite her young age, the clergyman taught her ascetic penitential practices and to how to experience deep mystical events. The first of these was a spiritual communion with a divine figure, followed by conversations with Christ. Throughout her life, Maria Consolata heard the voice of God, which revealed divine messages, prophecies about future events and her mission: to live in a cloister far from the world, record dictated messages and offer herself as a sacrificial victim for the sins of humankind (especially for the atrocities of the First World War).

Father Luigi believed in her and for this reason supported her work. In 1902, he ordered her to write a spiritual diary in which she should note all her supernatural dispositions. He also chose the monastery of the Visitation Sisters (or the Visitandine) in Como for her.

On 30 December 1907, Maria entered the monastery and on 5 November of the following year took the name of Benigna Consolata. On 28 November 1912, she took her solemn vows. In the cloister, she had a privileged relationship with the abbess and with a new spiritual father, Msgr Alfonso Archi. Her mystical experiences became deeper and more evident in the convent as she underwent mystical visions and conversations, prophecies, ecstasy and invisible stigmata. She wished to suffer for the redemption of the world and to die for this purpose. On 4 July 1915, she prayed to “exchange” her life for the end of the First World War, and died a victim soul on 1 September 1916 at the age of 31.

After her death, spiritual directors began to spread her fame. In 1923, the process of beatification was opened, while in 1928, Father Boccardo wrote a volume recording her mystical experiences. However, it was censored.

Cerruti, Gaetano. *Breve vita della serva di Dio suor Benigna Consolata Ferrero della Visitazione di S. Maria in Como*. Como: Scuola tip. Casa Divina Provvidenza, 1939.

### **Ferro, Rosina (1876, 1851–1912)**

Rosina Ferro was born in Villareggia (Turin) on 14 May 1851, into a poor family of farmers. She had a serious learning problem and was ridiculed by neighbours and some relatives. At the age of 15, an epileptic illness set in and in the following year her mother died.

In 1875, she had a first Marian apparition, in which the Virgin Mary showed her heart pierced by seven swords (a small devotional chapel was built on the site with a painting of the vision). Rosa asked for a thorn in her heart so she could participate in her suffering. In 1876, the Marian apparitions occurred daily between 24 June and 5 November. They took place in her room and in the garden of the parish house in the presence of the priest Luigi Tonso and thousands of witnesses. The news of the “miracle” quickly spread, turning Rosina into a celebrity, being regarded as a “living saint” by some and hysterical and possessed by others. The number of pilgrims and visitors increased every day: on 16 August there were more than 8,000 people, including the mayor, the public security authorities, police and several clergymen. There were some episodes of violence, but the police stopped those who wanted to hurt Rosina. During the apparitions, numerous miracles were witnessed, such as healings or exceptional visions.

During the apparition on 7 October, the Virgin told her to confide to her spiritual father that she had the side wound and that she would receive the visible stigmata in the following week. On Friday, 13 October, she had another Marian apparition, with the stigmata appearing afterwards. The crucifix in her room also started to bleed. Luigo Tonso sent two reports of the extraordinary events to the Bishop of Ivrea, Msgr Luigi Moreno and the authorities decided to examine the case. Rosina was sent to Rome,

where she was interrogated and judged positively, also being granted an audience with Pius IX.

She returned to Piedmont but could no longer live in Villareggia due to strong local pressure, so she decided to move to Tina (she worked for Father Rossi, her confessor for 20 years) and then to Turin, where she died on 19 February 1912, in the care of a few nuns and pious friends. Every Friday, she had suffered the pain of the Passion and bled, as did the chalk statue of the crucified Christ present in her room (two statues were confiscated by religious authorities).

Anonymous. *Leggenda medievale in pieno secolo decimonono e vigesimo ossia cenni biografici di Rosina Ferro da Villareggio*. Trino: Tip. A. Ronza, 1922.

Anonymous. *Due gemme nascoste. Rosina Ferro da Villareggia Canavese, Actis Alebina Domenica La Santina di Vallo*. Caluso: Società Editrice Internazionale Scuola Tipografica D. Bisco, 1925.

Tonso, Luigi. *Relazioni sull'apparizione della Madonna Addolorata in Villareggia, anno 1876* (edited by Gioacchino Mellano). Turin: Opera diocesana Buona Stampa, 1990.

### **Fiechtner, Anna (1839, 1808–?)**

Anna Fiechtner, born on 11 February 1808, was the first of the women from the Waakirchen area to display extraordinary phenomena (the others were Elisabeth Bartenhauser, Theresia Taubenberger and Theresia Schnitzelbauer). She worked on her brother's farm. However, in 1839, she started to go into ecstasy on Fridays, drawing little attention at first. Only after the other cases of women from the town reached the public eye did Anna become the subject of a medical examination ordered by the district court (October 1842). The physician in charge, Dr Krämer, did not believe it was a case of fraud, but thought her ecstasies might be the result of a nervous disposition. After a second examination in 1844, she received medical and religious care.

Gißibl, Bernhard. *Frömmigkeit, Hysterie und Schwärmerei*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004, passim.

München, Archiv Erzbistum München und Freising, Realia 923 a/Erscheinungen – Einzelfälle 1839–1845.

### **Filljung, Catherine (1883, 1848–1915)**

Catherine Filljung (1848–1915) was from what is today the French region of Lorraine, but which was then annexed by Germany. She was the daughter of a humble family who worked in the agricultural sector. In her religious life, she took the name of Marie Rose de Jésus and joined the Dominican Order in the convent of the Carmelites. After becoming ill, she was forced to abandon the convent and moved to Biding. In

March 1873, while ill, she allegedly witnessed an apparition of the Virgin. Although Catherine's mother tongue was German, the Virgin spoke to her in French.

In Biding, Filljung founded a religious orphanage for girls called the Institut de l'Immaculée Conception, receiving large amounts of money from clergymen favourable to her cause. Nevertheless, the sum received could not sustain the functioning of the orphanage and Catherine built up a debt of around 100,000 francs. She would later be accused of fraud. Catherine's ecstasies produced many political prophecies about France and Germany. As in the case of other mystics of her time, such as Marie-Julie Jahenny (1850–1941), she spoke during the ecstasy and those with her transcribed the inspired messages. Among other graces, Catherine carried the stigmata. The wounds became visible during Holy Friday of 1883 and continued to appear every Friday until her death. Like many stigmatics, she was reported to suffer for the expiation of the sins of humanity. For many years, she was supposedly nourished only by the Eucharist.

In 1882 and again in 1887, the Holy Office investigated Catherine's mystical phenomena. One of the first examiners, the Jesuit father Laurençot, claimed that the signs of the divine appeared not to be fraudulent. Mgr Sallua, from Rome, recommended Catherine to the diocese of the Bishop of Metz, Mgr Fleck, and to Pope Leon XIII. The Holy Office did not consider Catherine's phenomena to be the product of diabolical possession; however, they did not confirm that the origin of the events was supernatural.

Despite having many supporters, almost all of the bishops of Metz were against her. Accused of simulating her ecstasies and of fraudulently obtaining money for her orphanage, Catherine was summonsed to court in 1890. During the judicial investigation, she was remanded in prison, where she was examined by a group of physicians. They considered that she was a hysteric and transferred her to an asylum in Steinbach. During her stay there, she was reported to have bled profusely, perhaps from the stigmata. After an operation, she was allowed to leave in July 1891.

The trial took place on 9 April 1892 in the criminal court of Sarreguemines. After long days of debate and the interrogation of numerous witnesses, Filljung was acquitted of all charges and avoided returning to the asylum. Although she still faced prosecution by a conservative sector of the clergy in Metz, she enjoyed the support of many religious men and laypeople until her death in 1915.

In 1929, Eugène Ebel published a favourable biography of her life, which was distributed for free in many countries; however, in 1934, the Roman Catholic Church issued an episcopal order against it. In the same year, Mgr Jean-Baptiste Pelt published another book about Catherine Filljung justifying the position of the Church and explaining her phenomena in terms of simulation and nervous disorders.

Ebel, Eugène. *L'extatique lorraine Catherine Filljung (Sœur Catherine), véritable mystique*. Rouen: Lecerf, 1935.

Ebel, Eugène. *Sœur Catherine. Notes biographiques sur la mystique lorraine Catherine Filljung*. Paris: Téqui, 1929.

Paris, Archives de la Province Dominicaine de France (APDF), Bibliothèque du Saulchoir, Catherine Filljung, VI-Q-62bis.

Pelt, Jean-Baptiste. *La vérité sur Catherine Filljung, fausse mystique*. Metz: Impr. du journal Le Lorrain, 1934.

Seewann, Maria-Irma. *Catherine Filljung (13.4.1848–4.8.1915) im Widerstreit der Meinungen: Dokumentation des aussergewöhnlichen Lebens von Sœur Rose OP*. Wien: [M.-I. Seewann], 2011.

### **Filzinger, Apollonia (1824, 1801–1827)**

We have only sparse information about Apollonia Filzinger from the letters of Clemens Brentano and Joseph von Görres who visited her in 1825. She was an orphan from Homerting (near Saverne) and had been raised by her godfather, a day labourer. She served as a maid in several villages in the neighbourhood until she fell ill and returned to her godfather. Circa fourteen days after the death of Anna Katharina Emmerick (in 1824) Apollonia was stigmatized (visibly: hands, feet and side wound). When Brentano and Görres visited her, they were convinced that no fraud was involved yet the case did have something “Unheimliches.” Apollonia was 24 years old and had allegedly already lived for eight months without food or drink. The news of her stigmata had stirred a lot of commotion amongst the French authorities and Apollonia was thrown in prison in Strasbourg for a short while to conduct a thorough examination and have her confess the fraud. She was released after a few days.

Brentano, Clemens. *Gesammelte Schriften, Vol.9: Briefe, vol.2*. Frankfurt: Sauländer, 1855, 114–118.

Görres, Joseph von. *Gesammelte Briefe, vol.3: Freundesbriefe*. München: Literar.-Artist. Anstalt, 1874, 226.

### **Firrao, Maria Agnese (c.1815, c.1800–1855)**

The information about Maria Agnese Firrao is sparse. Her fame is linked to the dark history of the Roman convent of St Ambrogio della Massima. Born in Rome at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Maria Agnese entered the convent at a very young age, later becoming its abbess and reforming it (under the Rule of the Third Order of St Francis).

She was famous for intense self-flagellation practices. The sisters called her the “Blessed Mother” for her supernatural gifts, among which were ecstasies, prophecies and visible stigmata (we do not know the date of their appearance, but probably before the Vatican condemnation in 1816). Maria Agnese was considered a “living saint” by contemporaries, who kissed her golden ring (from the alleged mystical marriage) as

a sign of veneration and to obtain graces and healings. She was also considered to be a prophetess and able to speak directly with the Lord and with saints.

In 1815, the Holy Office began to study her case, and following the Vatican investigations she was condemned on 8 February 1816 for the crime of “affected holiness.” The inquisitional fathers regarded her stigmata, visions and supernatural graces as false. Her sentence was removal from the monastery in Rome and banishment to a cell in Gubbio. It seems that by 1828 she had persuaded Pope Leo XII to readmit her to Rome, but the Pope’s sudden death and the opposition of the Inquisition ruined her plans.

Despite the Vatican’s disapproval, Maria Agnese continued to direct the convent of St Ambrogio through letters. The nuns still venerated her as the holy founding mother and publicly supported her further canonization.

Maria Agnese died on 4 October 1855 in Gubbio. According to the faithful, a meteorological phenomena occurred that day, just like the sun’s eclipse on the death of Christ. About six or seven years after her death, Cardinal Pecci – under the insistent request of the St Ambrogio nuns – ordered the transfer of her remains from Gubbio to the capital.

In 1861, a new trial for “alleged holiness, false dogma, and acts of turpitude” was opened against Maria Luisa Ridolfi of St Ambrogio, who considered herself a follower of and spiritually guided by the foundress. Firrao’s memory was again condemned *post mortem*.

ACDF, 50 B 6 a, Causa c. le monache e direttori del moanstero di S Ambrogio in Roma dette Riformate del terz’ordine di S Francesco.

Wolf, Hubert. *The Nuns of Sant’ Ambrogio: the True Story of a Convent in Scandal*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

### **Flesch, Elisabeth (1873, c.1821–?)**

In 1873, 52-year-old Elisabeth Flesch claimed to have experienced supernatural phenomena in the village of Eppelborn. With the help of the chaplain, Nikolaus Kickertz (31), whom she had met in Speicher, she built a reputation based on a strange combination of superstition, somnambulist visions and fraud. They spread the story that Elisabeth had been in Eppelborn on a prolonged visit to him, when she started experiencing religious ecstasies on Fridays, as well as sweating blood and announcing prophecies. When her fame started to grow, she moved to another house. Although she had previously been convicted of fraud in 1875 and Kickertz’s record was not clean either, the number of pilgrims from all social classes grew. Kickertz and Flesch used their new “authority” against a number of people, including the local pastor, whom they accused of a sexual relationship with his sister. In the end, however, in 1877, the two of them appeared before the Saarbrückener district court and were convicted. According to the analysis of the local mayor, the court decided that Kickertz had attempted to create a

new mystical cult by abusing the religious imagination of the Catholic population to make money as well as satisfy his own sexual needs.

Berlin. GStAPK. HA.Rep.77. Tit.500, nr. 44 Bd.1 die Massnahmen gegen die durch die angebliche Wundererscheinungen eingetretenen Ruhestörungen.

Freytag, Nils. *Aberglauben im 19. Jahrhundert. Preussen und seine Rheinprovinz zwischen Tradition und Moderne (1815–1918)*. Berlin: Dunker & Humblot, 2003 (Quellen und Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preussischen Geschichte, Band 22), 344–351.

### **Gachon, Antonine (1886, 1861–1945)**

The life of Antonine Gachon (1861–1945) is linked to the life of her spiritual father, the stigmatized Antoine Crozier (1850–1916). They met around 1882, when Crozier became the parish priest of Notre-Dame de Saint-Chamond, close to Saint-Etienne (Loire). Antonine, a young peasant, was known in the region for her mystical phenomena. She had a great impact on Crozier. The latter considered that they shared a “supernatural friendship” and usually referred to her as his sister.

At the beginning of 1883, Antonine Gachon returned to her hometown (Saint-Amant-Roche-Savine) for family reasons, forcing her to abandon her spiritual father. However, they kept in touch by mail. In July, she wrote to Antoine about the first apparition of Jesus of the Sacred Heart that she had witnessed. Crozier was surprised, but soon found a strong correspondence between her vision and those of Saint Marguerite-Marie Alacoque (1647–1690), promoter of the modern devotion of the Sacred Heart. In 1886 he wrote: “I have thought about the analogies between the blessed Marguerite-Marie and Antonine for a long time now, and after the manifestations that Antonine has received from the Sacred Heart, I surprise myself assuming that Antonine will reach, or at least will continue the mission of Marguerite-Marie” (cited in Bernard-Marie, *Le Père Crozier*, 47).

The visions continued over the years, announcing to Gachon and Crozier their mutual vocation as “victim souls” for Christ’s redemptive mission. Soon, the second spiritual daughter of Crozier, a stigmatized woman and Lyon resident named Sédulie Dévenaz (1859–1940), joined their supernatural friendship, forming a trinity. Antonine had frequent visions of three crosses, symbolizing their “suffering trinity.” During Holy Friday 1886, she received the stigmata for the first time. She carried the wounds of Christ every Friday until her death and shared her pain with her spiritual father and stigmatic to be.

Bernard-Marie, (Frère). *Le Père Crozier, l’ami stigmatisé du Père de Foucauld*. Paris: Éd. du Chalet, 1988.



### Galgani, Gemma (1899, 1878–1903)

Gemma Umberta Pia Galgani was born into a wealthy family from Camigliano, Capannori, in the province of Lucca, on 12 March 1878. Like her brothers, she received a strict Catholic education and attended the best institutes in the town (she was also a trainee of blessed Elena Guerra). Her adolescence was marked by the premature death of both parents (1886 and 1897) and of her adored brother Gino (1893). These sorrowful events and the financial failure of the family deeply marked Gemma's soul.

Between 1898 and 1899, the girl's health deteriorated drastically. As her doctors believed her to be near death, a priest gave her the viaticum, but she suddenly recovered, in her view, due to the intercession of Gabriele dell'Addolorata and Margaret Mary Alacoque. The news of the miracle spread quickly throughout the town. Even in the Visitandine monastery, where she had become a nun, she could not find peace: everyone considered her the "little girl of the miracle." Poor health and prejudice against her forced her to abandon the monastery and she was not accepted by another. In June 1899, she met the Passionist fathers and the Giannini family, who housed Gemma in her last years.

Her mystical life was full of extraordinary gifts (ecstasy, visions, prophecy). The first episode occurred on 26 May 1885, when she experienced her first inner locution after receiving Confirmation. In 1899, she experienced the most significant phenomena. On 30 March, she had a vision of the crucified Christ, while on 8 June, she felt flames of fire hitting her body. From that evening onwards, every Thursday night until 3 P.M. on Friday she displayed the signs of the Passion on her hands, feet and chest, while over Saturday and Sunday they slowly disappeared, leaving only a small white scar. In 1901, the crown of thorns, flagellation, the left shoulder wound and blood sweating were also added to her sufferings. These phenomena attracted the attention of the clergy, doctors and others. Her spiritual father, Germano Ruoppolo, was her greatest supporter, while Msgr Volpi considered her behaviour a form of hysteria.

Between February and May 1901, Gemma wrote her autobiography and fought a battle against the devil. In the following year, she fell ill with tuberculosis and died on 11 April 1903. The process for her beatification was rapid (beatification on 14 May 1933 and canonization on 2 May 1940), becoming the first saint to have died in the twentieth century. The Church, however, did not officially recognize the supernatural nature of her stigmata (see *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 24 (1932), 56–57).

Bell, Rudolph M. and Mazzoni, Cristina. *The voices of Gemma Galgani. The life and afterlife of a modern saint*. Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Calabrese, Antonio. *Santa Gemma Galgani*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2005.

Di S. Stanislao, Germano. *Pensieri di Gemma Galgani*. Rome: Tipografia Pontificia nell'istituto Pio IX, 1917.

Di S. Stanislao, Germano. *Lettere ed estasi della serva di Dio Gemma Galgani*. Rome: Tipogr. Poliglotta dell'Ist. Pio IX, 1913.

Di S. Stanislao, Germano. *Compendio della biografia della beata Gemma Galgani vergine Lucchese*. Rome: Postulazione dei Pp. Passionisti, 1933.

Passionist Fathers. *Estasi, diario, autobiografia, scritti vari di S. Gemma Galgani*. Rome: Postulazione dei PP. Passionisti, 1979.

### **Galles, Maria Gertrud (1852, c.1834–?)**

In the Holy Week of 1852, an 18-year-old girl called Maria Gertrud Galles fainted in the church of Giesenkirchen. As the house of the vicar, Wilhelm Schrammen, was nearby, she was taken there to recover. When she regained consciousness, she told him that she had fainted because she had seen the Passion of Christ and had been struck by the horror of Christ's bloody body. Immediately afterwards, she went into ecstasy again. In the days leading up to Holy Friday, her stigmata became visible and the vicar decided to keep her in his house to limit the publicity. While the vicar seems to have been convinced of the truth of what was happening, other local pastors and members of the parish were less certain and wrote to their archbishop. In the meantime, numerous visitors had begun gathering at the vicar's house to see the stigmatic. A first medical examination failed, as Maria Gertrud Galles had received a "message from her guardian angels" not to show her hands to the physicians. Dr Zartmann eventually conducted a medical examination at the request of the public authorities and also informed the ecclesiastical authorities (concluding that the wounds were created by an instrument). He suggested that Galles should be taken to the house of a trustworthy man, the wounds bandaged and sealed on a Wednesday (Thursday at the latest) and then only opened on Friday. However, when they attempted to put the plan into action, Galles had fled the parish. The reputation of the vicar had been tainted and the archdiocese decided to remove him.

Köln. AEK, Generalia I. 31. Religiöse Umtriebe.

### **Ganseforth, Grete (1943, 1926–1996)**

Grete Ganseforth was born on 12 January 1926 in Heede (Emsland). She lost her mother at a young age and her father remarried and had four more children (seven in total). On 1 November 1937 (All Saints), Grete, her sister Maria and their friends, Anni Schulte and Susi, left their local church and saw a shining image that they identified as the Virgin Mary. The news spread quickly, and the girls saw the Virgin several more times. Numerous people came to see them. On the night of 13–14 November 1937, an SS group "Göring" arrived in Heede and supported by the local police put an end to the pilgrimages. On 14 November 1937, the children were transferred to an Institute in Göttingen and were later taken to a hospital in Osnabrück. In late January 1938, they were allowed

to return to Heede, where they continued to see the Virgin until autumn 1940. Grete was the only one of the four young girls whose “mystical” life continued after the end of the apparitions.

In summer 1940, Grete had already offered herself to Mary as “a victim” for all sinners. When she was 17, she had a vision of the Way of the Cross and the Crucifixion, and subsequently started to see and experience the Passion. On Ash Wednesday 1946, she became ill (Brucellosis) and later became lame in September 1947. In the midst of this reparatory suffering (Sühneleiden), Grete received the stigmata. The episodes did not remain unnoted by the authorities. Grete’s accusations against one of the other girl visionaries (whom she claimed had attacked her) resulted in a police and legal investigation. The physician who examined her in the district clinic in Andernach advised that she be moved from the pernicious influence of her pastor (who had mystical aspirations for her). An episcopal commission which examined the original apparitions decided in 1949 that their supernatural origin was not proven. Grete died on 27 January 1996, and decades after her death, her memory is still kept alive through small booklets.

Brinkmann, Johannes (Pfarrer von Heede). “Grete Ganseforth von Heede (1926–1996).”

In *Träger der Wundmale Christi. Eine Geschichte der Stigmatisierten*, ed. Johannes Höcht, 570–573. Stein am Rhein: Christiana-Verlag, 2005.

Rieke-Benninghaus, Hermann. *Lebensbilder von Glaubenszeugen*. S.l.: s.e., 2005, 62–103.

Rieke-Benninghaus, Hermann. *Grete Ganseforth. Lebensbild*. Vechta: Druck: TA Copy-Shop, 2005.

### **Gardi Cricca, Teresa Luisa (1804, 1769–1837)**

Teresa Luisa Gardi was born in Imola on 12 October 1769. She was an orphan and spent her adolescence taking care of her siblings and also engaging in philanthropic activities.

In 1785, she had her first Marian vision, in which the Virgin encouraged Teresa to participate in her suffering. Teresa had an intense spiritual life, including ecstasy, visions, apparitions and demonic attacks (from 1799 until her death).

On 13 October 1801, at the age of 32, she became a tertiary in the Franciscan Order and in the following year (15 October 1802) took her vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. On 25 July 1804, she received the visible stigmata, but prayed that they would become invisible. Nevertheless, red marks remained on her hands and feet and they emitted blood during Communion, ecstatic episodes, and on Fridays. A side wound was open throughout her life and continued to bleed profusely (after her death, this wound was examined by her confessor, his nephew and Maria Sabatini). She also had the crown of thorns (26 May 1821) and signs of the flagellation. Teresa offered her suffering to God for the triumph of the Church and the Pope.

On 1 January 1817, she received a divine ring as a sign of her mystical marriage with Christ. Other extraordinary gifts included prophecy, levitations, the transverberation of the heart (29 May 1818) and the mystical communion, in which she receive the Eucharist from angels or divine entities.

She died in Imola on 1 January 1837 at the age of 67. She was buried in the Church of the Observance. Cardinal Giovanni Maria Mastai Ferretti, Bishop of Imola (1832–1846), later Pope Pius IX, was convinced of her sanctity. After her death, her memory faded, until a diary written by her confessor, which recounted her mystical experiences, was discovered in 1893.

On 9 February 1912, the process for her beatification was opened, but was slowed by the death of her postulator and only reopened in 1998. In 2013, her case was examined by a committee of theological consultants and in 2015 the Congregation for the Causes of Saints declared her virtues of heroic degree. Pope Francis declared her Venerable on 22 January 2015.

Baroncini, Atanasio. *Breve vita della serva di Dio Teresa Gardi, terziaria francescana*.

Quaracchi: Tip. del Collegio di S. Bonaventura, 1911.

Lanzoni, Edoardo. *Teresa Gardi*. Bologna: Edizioni francescane, 1993.

Montorsi, Giambattista. *Ha amato la sofferenza: vita di Teresa Gardi imolese*. Imola: Convento Osservanza, 1987.

Zanini, Carlo Francesco. *Diario della vita e visioni della serva di Dio Teresa Gardi terziaria di S. Francesco. Vergine secolare d'Imola morta con fama di santità di anni 67 il 1 gennaio 1837*. Rome: 124 via Merulana, 1913.

### **Gattorno, Anna Rosa (1862, 1831–1900)**

Anna Rosa Gattorno was born in Genoa on 14 October 1831, into a wealthy bourgeois family. At the age of 21, she married her cousin, Gerolamo Custo, and they moved to Marseille. However, her husband's business failed and they returned in Italy. Her daughter, Carlotta, fell ill and became deaf-mute, and within the space of a few months both Gerolamo and a son died (1858). These sufferings deeply marked her being and she decided to embrace a more Catholic life under the spiritual direction of Father Giuseppe Firpo.

In 1859, she claimed to have received mystical gifts such as ecstasy, visions, divine revelations and foresight. The description of these signs, combined with demonic attacks, are contained in her unpublished memoirs (preserved in the Archives of the Daughters of St Anne at the General House in Rome). During the celebration of her entry into the Franciscan tertiaries (1861), she had the prescient vision of the crucified Christ. In the following year (1862), she received the invisible stigmata, feeling acute pain, especially on Fridays, in the palms of her hands, her feet and heart.

Anna Rosa was very active in her community, engaging in a form of “social apostolate,” taking care of the sick, the poor and orphans. She was a member and director of various Catholic women’s associations until she decided to create her own institute (February 1864). On 3 January 1866, during a private audience with Pius IX, he authorized and supported her initiative. Thus, on 12 March 1866, she abandoned her children and family and founded the Figlie di Sant’Anna in Pavia with five “sisters” (recognized by Msgr Ranza on 12 August 1866). She took the religious habit on 26 July 1867 and her perpetual vows on 8 April 1870. Due to her philanthropic activities, wise leadership and the support Pope Pius IX, her congregation grew considerably – despite the problems with the congregation of bishops (the rule was accepted only in 1892): before her death, there were 368 houses with about 3,500 nuns.

Anna Rosa Gattorno died on 6 May 1900, at the General House in Rome. One hundred years later, on 9 April 2000, Pope John Paul II officially recognized her hidden stigmata and declared her Blessed.

Caffiero, Marina. “Anna Rosa Gattorno.” In *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 52 (1999).  
 Rocca, Giacarlo. *Donne religiose. Contributo a una storia della condizione femminile in Italia nei secoli XIX–XX*. Rome: Nuova Città 1993.

### Gherzi, Angela Maria (1782, 1742–1800)

Angela Maria, better known by the religious name of Chiara Isabella Gherzi (or Gherzi), was a Genoese nun born in Potedecimo on 25 October 1742. Her pious Catholic family was called the “family of saints” by the people, because it included two priests, two Capuchin friars and four Poor Clare nuns.

She felt her religious calling in childhood, but had to struggle to convince her family to allow her to become a nun as she desired. Her father gave her permission only after a divine sign in 1758, when she miraculously recovered from a serious illness. On 8 December of that year, Angela Maria entered the Clare monastery of the Holy Trinity in Gubbio and took the name of Chiara Isabella.

During her novitiate she had to endure rumours and calumnies spread by her cousin, who was an abbess, and other sisters, but also illnesses and continuous demonic attacks. Nevertheless, she was able to overcome the difficulties, taking her religious vows and obtaining the respect of other members of the community (hagiographers considered this change of position as proof of her holiness). Her positive reputation led her to be elected the new abbess on 15 September 1778, and every three years she was confirmed in that role until her death 22 years later. During her direction, she promoted severe moral reformation.

Chiara Isabella also had an intense inner life. As a child, she had undergone mystical experiences such as visions and apparitions, which became increasingly

extraordinary over the years (ecstasies, the gift of prophecy, spiritual communion). On 27 December 1767, she received the transverberation of the heart, with physical and visible modifications of her chest. On 8 December of the following year, the gift of the mystical ring was given to her, representing her marriage to the divine spouse. For gratitude, the abbess offered herself as a victim soul. In 1782, she received the stigmata and the crown of thorns (successively, and becoming invisible after her prayers).

Stigmatized and suffering until the last day of her life, Chiara Isabella died on 27 October 1801. Due to the demands of the religious community and the people of the diocese of Gubbio, the bishop, Ottavio Angelelli, submitted her autobiography and over 500 letters for examination in her process for beatification. The apostolic process occurred between 1822 and 1833 and finally, on 13 November 1894, Pope Leo XIII declared her Venerable.

Da Capistrano, Giovanni. *Nuovi prodigi di grazia del Dio Redentore nella Venerabile Serva di Dio Suor Chiara Isabella Gherzi dell'Immacolata Concezione già abbadessa del monastero delle Clarisse detto della SS. Trinità in Gubbio*. Parma: Carmignan, 1840.

Da Marassi, Giovanni Francesco. *Vita della venerabile serva di Dio sr. Chiara Isabella Gherzi da Pontedecimo Ligure. Abbadessa clarissa nel monastero della SS. Trinità di Gubbio*. Genoa: Tip. della Gioventù, 1875.

Rollero, Emilio. *L'Agnello di Gubbio: ven. suor Chiara Isabella Gherzi*. Genoa: Scuola tip. Derelitti, 1941.

Urbani, Epifanio. *Ti farò mia sposa. La venerabile Chiara Isabella Gherzi clarissa del Monastero SS. Trinità in Gubbio*. Assisi: Porziuncola, 1993.

### **Ghezzi, Ancilla (1822, 1808–1876)**

Ancilla Ghezzi, also known by the religious name of Maria Serafina della Croce, was born in Monza on 4 October 1808. The financial circumstances of her family deteriorated with the death of her father in 1820 and Ancilla soon began to work, both as a servant and a factory worker.

In 1822, she moved to Milan and the following year took a private vow of chastity. Fundamental to her ascetic life was an encounter with Father Luca Passi. From 1836, Ancilla frequently fell into a state of ecstasy, even during her everyday work, and also experienced the pain of the Passion (first visible with wounds on her hands and feet, and then becoming invisible).

On 22 May 1845, during the Feast of Corpus Christi, under divine inspiration she received the order to found a monastery for the worship of the Perpetual Adorers of the Blessed Sacrament. On 31 January 1847, while in a state of ecstasy, she saw the sisters of the Blessed Sacrament and their founder, the Blessed Maria Maddalena Sordini, and wished to open a similar religious institute. Thus, on 3 November 1849, with three

other aspiring nuns, she founded the first community in a small rented apartment. Six years later, in 1855, thanks to numerous donations and alms, Ancilla bought the former Benedictine monastery of St Maddalena.

Aspiring sisters completed their novitiate in Rome among the sisters of the Perpetual Adorers of the Blessed Sacrament, where they took their religious vows and were incorporated into the Order. Ancilla took the religious name of Maria Serafina della Croce. In December 1857, she returned to Monza, with her congregation attracting increasing numbers of young women. Pope Pius IX officially recognized the institute in 1861 and two years later, the first chapter meeting was held, in which Maria Serafina was elected superior (she held the office until her death).

In 1870, a monastery was founded in Innsbruck, in 1880 in Milan, and four years later, in Genoa. Ancilla died on 8 February 1876. In 1943, her beatification process was opened.

Pesarin, Fernanda. *Come fiamma viva: madre Serafina della Croce*. Milan: Ancora, 1998.

Piccardo, Antonio. *Le divine meraviglie di Gesù Cristo e del suo SS. Cuore nella vita della sua fedel serva suor Maria Serafina della Croce: fondatrice del monastero delle Adoratrici perpetue del SS. Sacramento in Monza. Compilata da un padre della congregazione dei Figli di Maria suo ultimo direttore*. Ala: Tipografia ed. dei Figli di Maria (3 vols.), 1881–83.

Taroni, Massimiliano. *Madre Serafina della Croce: fondatrice del monastero di Monza delle Adoratrici perpetue del Santissimo Sacramento*. Gorle-Torina: Velar-Elledici, 2013.

### **Giacobetti, Maria (1919, 1902–1974)**

Maria Giacobetti, called “Madre Maria” by her supporters, was born in Appignano del Tronto, a small town in the province of Ascoli Piceno (central Italy), in 1902. She was the daughter of poor peasants. Her relationship with her family was not straightforward, as they did not understand her strange behaviour. Indeed, from her adolescence, Maria had received many divine graces, such as ecstasy and visions. At the age of 17, in 1919, she had various Marian apparitions, during one of which she received the visible stigmata, which remained visible until her death. The wounds of her hands, feet and chest bled every Thursday and Friday.

In 1926, against the wishes of her parents, Maria decided to devote herself to the religious life, taking refuge – although as a servant and not a nun – in a convent in Ascoli Piceno. After one year, however, she was removed because the news of her stigmata started to spread. With the help of her confessor, the priest of Appignano, in 1928 she joined the Suore del Preziosissimo Sangue of Ascoli. However, she also had to leave this monastery when, after four years, the same “scandal” caught the attention of the public.

Her family refused to allow her to return home and so she lived alone in a small house. In 1949, Maria managed to convince the parish priest of Appignano to build a church dedicated to the worship of Christ the Redeemer (inaugurated in 1950) on the site where she had experienced Marian visions. In her adolescence and even more so after leaving the convent, many people started to consider her a “living saint” and a miracle worker. Several visitors knocked on her door every day asking to be healed or for spiritual advice. Due to her maternal approach, she was called Mamma Maria by her “spiritual sons.”

Msgr Ambrogio Squintani saw her *fama sanctitatis* spread and decided to examine the nature of her stigmata by establishing a medical commission. According to the doctors, there were no natural physiological explanations in her case. While the religious authorities did not promulgate any official judgement, Squintani allowed her to accept money offered by the faithful for the establishment of a religious foundation. However, Marcello Morgante, the new bishop, opposed her fame and popular devotion, and closed her community.

She died in 1974, considered a “living saint” by the faithful (even today her followers continue to call for the opening of a beatification process).

Celani, Luigi Maria. *Una carismatica: Madre Maria Giacobetti. Notizie e documenti raccolti dal sac. Luigi Maria Celani*. Lido di Venezia: Istituto tipografico editorial, 1970.

### **Giardino, Angelo (1949, 1906–1974)**

Angelo Giardino was born in Solopaca, in the province of Belluno, on 24 April 1906, into a poor farming family. Every Friday in his youth he spiritually suffered the pains of Christ, while in adulthood, he displayed the visible stigmata on his body. At the age of 29, he married Maria Tazza, a mystical woman with whom he had a celibate relationship.

His ascetic practices were extremely harsh (long periods of fasting, flagellation, sleeping on the ground or on rocks) and accompanied by mystical experiences, such as frequent ecstasies, visions, divine dialogues and the gift of the thorn in his left foot. On the Holy Wednesday of 1949, Angelo had a vision of Christ, who told him that on the following Friday he would receive the Five Holy Wounds of the Passion. On 15 April, he received the stigmata on hands, feet and side for the first time. He did not understand what was happening, so he reported everything to the spiritual director, Msgr Adolfo Leone. The pains were so intense that he was bedridden for four months (until a miraculous healing by Christ).

In 1949, he also began a pilgrimage to San Giovanni Rotondo. Angelo was in fact a faithful adherent of Padre Pio, and the Capuchin friar supported the stigmatic and his growing reputation as a saint. On 16 April 1954, another Good Friday, stigmata appeared for the second time and from then on every year until his death. At Easter



they would stop bleeding and gradually heal. A stigmatic episode in 1954 took place in the presence of numerous witnesses and the news spread throughout the diocese. In 1963, two priests from Benevento harshly criticized Angelo, denouncing him to the civil court as a fraud. On 19 January 1965, he was pronounced innocent and completely absolved.

In 1969, the Madonna ordered the male stigmatic to construct a small devotional chapel in her honour. The popular cult eventually required a larger sanctuary (blessed by the Bishop of Cerreto Sannita in 1971). The final years of Angelo's life were spent engaged in Catholic apostolate in Italy and abroad (Switzerland). On 4 September 1974, he received the gift of mystical communion and he died on 20 May 1979, in Solopaca.

Di Rubbo, Maria Rosaria. *Fatti straordinari di Angelo Giardino Stigmatizzato*. San Leucio del Sannio: Edizioni Nord-Sud, 1999.

Scafetta, Fernando and Masci, Salvatore. *Angelo Giardino stigmatizzato: (1906–1979)*. Rome: Ass. Angelo Giardino, 1986.

### Gilli, Pierina (c.1946, 1911–1979)

Pierina was born in Montichiari, in the province of Brescia, on 3 August 1911, into a peasant family. At the age of seven, her father died and she was sent to the religious orphanage of Ancelle della Carità (1918–1922). There she studied the catechism and learned the story of the founder of the institute, St Maria Crocifissa di Rosa. Pierina decided to follow her model of suffering and atonement, offering herself as a redemptive victim. Her physical and spiritual illnesses and sufferings were considered by her as a sacrifice offered to the Lord. Her precarious health did not allow her to become a nun, and so she worked as a cleaning lady for a priest and then for several hospitals.

In December 1944, Pierina became ill with meningitis and was considered incurable by the doctors. On the point of death, she had a vision of St Maria Crocifissa di Rosa, who miraculously saved her (17 December). The saint informed her that her mission was to “carry the cross,” that is, to suffer the pains of the Passion of Christ (invisible stigmata).

On 24 November 1946, Pierina had a Marian apparition of the Madonna of the Rosa Mistica. The apparitions took place in Montichiari and were repeated both privately and in public, with the miraculous healing of the faithful and other paranormal phenomena. Pierina's fame as a *medium* and the cult of the Rosa Mistica spread rapidly in Lombardy and northern Italy, attracting thousands of pilgrims.

After the apparitions of 1947, Msgr Vigilio Mario Olmi ordered that Pierina be sent to the Franciscan convent of Brescia, to stop the cult developing and halt further visits of the faithful. The visionary remained in the city for almost 20 years but when she returned to Montichiari in 1966, the Marian apparitions began again. A group of believers formed around her, all of whom supported her spiritually and economically

against the directive of the parish priest of the village. Numerous public appearances were witnessed in 1966 and between 1967–1982.

Pierina Gilli died in Montichiari on 12 January 1991, considered by many as a holy *medium* between God and humankind, while the clergy and sceptics considered her a hysteric. Even today, the cult of the Rosa Mistica is locally venerated and every year her first apparition is celebrated on 14 April.

Massaro, Bruno. *Il caso Pierina Gilli di Montichiari*. Brescia: Starrylink editrice Brescia, 2004.

### **Göbl, Anna Maria (1923, 1886–1941)**

Anna Maria Göbl was born on 22 March 1886, in Bickendorf (Eifel), as the youngest of six children. Her parents, Bartholomeus Göbl and Katharina Tölkels were pious and well-off peasants who gave their three boys and three girls a Christian education and sent Anna Maria to school for eight years. After the death of her father from pneumonia in 1901, she became ill (according to the physicians because she had been scared by her father's death) and remained sick for 20 years (she suffered from a liver disease, rheumatism, paralysis, blindness and deafness, among other ailments). Several doctors were consulted, including a Dr Lenz (from the city of Prüm), but they could not help. In 1917, a liver disease accompanied by the formation of gall stones ("Gallensteinbindung") made an operation in the Heart of Jesus cloister in Bonn necessary. After the removal of 22 stones, she no longer had any appetite. Her physical condition worsened after her return to her parents' house and from 1920 onwards she vomited blood. The physicians diagnosed the first signs of stomach cancer. She was paralysed on her left side for three weeks, but this was cured after a vision of Mary on 21 August 1921. According to the doctors, no signs of hysteria were ever detected.

On 24 July 1921, she had her first vision of a crown of thorns. Two years later, she was stigmatized (as her biographers emphasize, thus prior to Therese Neumann, so she could not have been inspired by her), first with the crown of thorns and later receiving a head wound in the shape of a cross. She had "blood marks" ("Blutzeichnen") in various shapes on her forehead, at the places of the Five Holy Wounds and on other places on her body.

From 1926 onwards, her spiritual father, A. Faber, had to stop his visits to her house as the diocesan authorities of Trier started an examination: two theologians and two physicians were to study her in the hospital of the Borromean sisters in Trier. During the examination (between 1 April and 20 May 1926), no supernatural phenomena were reported. She was sent home and her confessor was assigned a new job. Anna Maria continued to have visions of Mary and Jesus, who encouraged her not to give up on her reparatory suffering, and she continued to have significant religious influence in the following years. She died on 19 January 1941.

München. AEM, Nachlass Faulhaber, 5945 (1926–32): Therese Neumann von Konnersreuth, Anna Nassl (Korrespondenzen: Bischof von Regensburg, Erzbischof von Prag, Prozesprotokoll Ritter von Lama gegen Dr. Aigner, Dr. Gerlich u.a.).

Trier. Bistumsarchiv Trier, BIII.12, 10 Bd.3a Causa Göbl-Faber.

Priller, Georg. *Anna Maria Goebel. Die Stigmatisierte von Bickendorf, Eifel*. Tischenreuth: Kohl, 1928.

### **Gómez Martín, Josefa (1923, 1901–1924)**

Josefa Gómez Martín was born into a humble family in San Esteban del Valle (Ávila) in 1901. Until autumn 1921, her life was unremarkable. She received a Catholic education and joined an association named the Daughters of Mary. She was especially devoted to Jesus of the Sacrament and to the Passion of Christ. At the age of 20, God allegedly began to appear to her. Following the advice of her spiritual father, parish priest Anastasio Mateos Bragado, she started a diary where she recorded her mystical experiences. In February 1922, she abandoned her previous life and dedicated herself to virtue and sanctity. However, her journey did not last long. She died from an unknown illness in 1924.

According to her spiritual father, Josefa did not know much about the graces she received and was not always aware of their importance. For example, she wrote about having received stigmata one year after the event, and only did so because her spiritual father reminded her. In her diary, Josefa described her dialogues with Jesus and the Virgin. During Lent, she had visions of the crucified Christ covered in blood. In 1923, while contemplating this image, she experienced the spiritual wounding of the heart. She asked Jesus to allow her to suffer with him in atonement for her sins. On Holy Friday 1923, she felt needles piercing her forehead and realized that she was carrying the crown of thorns. According to Josefa, on that day, the sacred wounds were imprinted inside her. Although they were never visible, the pain of the wounds never left her.

Mateos Bragado, Anastasio. *Un lirio entre espinas. Vida y escritos de la joven Josefa Gómez Martín*. Ávila: Tip. Antonio M. Ibáñez, 1925.

### **Güttler, Ferdinand (? , 1829–1898)**

“Brother Ferdinand” was born in Zechlitz in 1829, and after a poor and pious childhood he chose a hermit’s life in the ossuary (Beinhäusl) of the Zechlitz cemetery. While contemplating the crucifix, he had a vision of a young man leading him past all the sites of the Passion to a cross where Christ himself crucified him. He woke up with red marks on the places where the wounds had occurred during his vision. He was member of the Third Order of Saint Francis and died on 15 April 1898. He seems to have been

largely forgotten despite a small book on “Brother Ferdinand” being published in 1903 by Johann Stieber.

München. BSB, Nachlass Lama, Friedrich von (1876–1944), Ana 445, Ein seltsamer Fall von Stigmatisation -mitgeteilt von F.R. von Lama.

### **Habermeier, Margareta (c.1862, 1854–1875)**

There is little information on this stigmatic from Unterstall near Neuburg. She was born in 1854 and received the stigmata soon after her first Communion, after which she became bedridden. Her sufferings were particularly intense during Lent, and in the Holy Week she always said her goodbyes to her family on the Wednesday. She would then lie on her bed without moving. On Good Friday, she would spread her arms and the wounds on her hands and feet would bleed. She did not eat and only started consuming some food again half a year before she died (1875).

München. BSB, Nachlass Lama, Friedrich von (1876–1944), Ana 445, Letter to von Lama from Wilhelmsthal, 7/7/1931.

### **Hecht, Viktoria (1869, 1840–1890)**

Viktoria Hecht was born on 17 December 1840 in Haller (near Wolpertswende), the daughter of Genovefa Gessler (1813–1873) and Vinzenz Hecht (1811–1879). She was the fourth of fifteen children, of which eight survived infancy. Viktoria went to school until 1854 and a year later had to leave her parents' house to work as a servant. When she was 17, however, she fell from a hayloft while gathering feed for the animals. She had a severe concussion and while she recovered, she never completely regained her health. Only a year later, she had a second accident, in which she was thrown from a hay wagon as it collapsed and hit a milestone. In 1863, her condition was so bad that she could no longer work and she returned to her parents. Her right side was swollen and she could no longer use her arm and leg on that side. The Oberamtsarzt of Ravenstein, Johannes Reiffsteck, declared that the wound caused by her crash had developed into an ulcer. Until 1867, she was able to sit for a short while in her parents living room and knit, but had to return to her bed quickly. From 1868–1869, it is said that she lived without eating. On 18 February 1869, she was cured thanks to the intervention of “Good Beth” (“gute Beth”/Elisabeth Achler of Reute, a fourteenth-century mystic). At the time, Viktoria became a clairvoyant (e.g. she announced the death of a cloistered nun). On 13 August 1869, she started to experience pain in her hands and feet and also received the crown of thorns. When her brother took over the farm, Viktoria and her parents moved to the hermit's house near the Gangolfskapelle. By then, Viktoria already had a “saintly” reputation and went through Christ's Passion every Friday, but

could not describe what she had seen. She received many visitors and many cures were reported. After Viktoria prayed to the Lord asking that she might suffer in silence, the wounds closed on the Feast of the Assumption in 1874. In the same year, the city pastor of Ravensburg and dean, Karl Stempfle (1817–1885), who doubted the supernatural origin of the events, asked the diocesan authorities of Rottenburg to intervene because the number of people visiting Wolpertswende was growing steadily and the police were planning to intervene. The bishop, Karl Josef von Hefele, asked pastor Mühlebach to report on the diabolical influences, while vicar Fricker had to report on the exorcism he was planning. The bishop also gave the Ravensburger Oberamtsarzt, Johannes Stiegele, the order to start an examination. The latter came to the conclusion that Viktoria's illnesses could not be explained in a natural way. In October 1874, the ordinariat decided that only the treating physicians and no one else would be allowed to visit Viktoria. The dean Stempfle was to assess the situation in Wolpertswende. In November 1874, the episcopal authorities were planning to move her to an asylum ("Irrenanstalt") in Schussenried, but her father refused. She died on 17 February 1890, probably from heart failure.

Pappelau, Stefan. *Viktoria Hecht. Stigmatisierte Dulderin von Wolpertswende 1840–1890*. Lindenberg: Kunstverlag Josef Fink, 2010.

### **Heigny, Firmin (1824, 1793–1859)**

Firmin Heigny was born into a pious and humble family in Plessier-Rozainvillers in 1793. He had six brothers and sisters. At the age of 16, he left his family to join the religious brothers of the Collège Montdidier, led by Father Louis Sellier. After three years, he continued his religious education at the seminar of Soissons, and was then called up for military service. Having fulfilled his training, he heard that the Society of Jesus had been re-established and decided to join it. Firmin was admitted on November 1814, at the house of Saint-Acheul, where he carried out domestic duties while working as the doorman.

Frère Firmin was particularly devoted to the suffering of Jesus. Everyday, he spent one hour meditating on each stage of the Passion. His meditations started at four in the morning, when he woke up, and continued until six in the afternoon. From 1824 until his death, Firmin suffered from the pains of the Passion, frequently experiencing great pain in his hands, feet and heart. He told the doctor that it felt like he was being pierced, but the doctor said that he could not help him.

Firmin was also devoted to the suffering of the Virgin Mary. In his doorman's cabin, he kept a statue of the Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows, which had been mutilated during the revolution of 1793. The statue was finally installed at the Church of Saint-Acheul, where it inspired frequent pilgrimages, especially during the Feast of Compassion in March and the Feast of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows in September.

People sometimes wrote to Firmin Heigny asking him to mediate with Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows to obtain protection or a favour.

Firmin became very sick on 29 July 1859, during which his meditations regarding Christ's suffering were his greatest consolation. He frequently asked his brothers to read him excerpts from the Passion. He died on 21 August, with a reputation of sanctity. His body was put on display the following day, with many people coming to touch his body with pious objects that became holy relics. To satisfy the constant demand for relics after his burial, the brothers started to distribute small pieces of Frère Firmin's clothing.

Burnichon, S.J. Joseph. *La Compagnie de Jésus en France: histoire d'un siècle, 1814–1914. Tome I: 1814–1830*. Paris: Gabriel Beauchesne, 1914.

Guidée, Achille. *Notice historique sur le F. Firmin Heigny*. Paris: C. Douniol, 1860.

Marchand, A. *Notice sur le Plessier-Rozainvillers*. Abbeville: Imp. Cabinet historique de l'Artois et de la Pieradie, 1889.

### **Hellegouarch, Françoise (1895, 1874–1898)**

Françoise Hellegouarch was an illiterate girl from a family of farmers in the Breton village of Kerguer-en-Inzinzac (Morbihan). According to her parents, she started carrying the stigmata from Ascension Day in 1895, Thursday, 23 May. The Five Holy Wounds suddenly appeared. Three months later, a wound depicting a cross emerged on her chest, with the end of the cross located near her stomach. During the night of Holy Friday in 1897, she allegedly received the crown of thorns. She was also reported to have bled from her left eye, lost her voice, and to have lost her toenails. The wounds would bleed every Friday and during all ecclesiastical feasts devoted to the Crucifixion. However, on cleaning the wounds, the skin seemed to be intact, as if Françoise had sweated blood. During ecstasy, she suffered from great convulsions, falling into a deep somnolent state afterwards.

After 1896, Hellegouarch was unable to leave her bed and, the following year, she allegedly stopped eating; however, she did not lose any weight. Very pious, she wanted to enter a congregation but she was unable to do so, probably due to her feeble health and the strange phenomena surrounding her. After her stigmatization, hundreds of people from the surrounding villages started to come to Inzinzac, with the diocesan authorities following the events closely. Several physicians, including Albert Pitres (1848–1928) from Bordeaux, examined the stigmata. They all argued against the supernatural origin of the phenomena and concluded that Françoise was simulating an illness. Many thought that she suffered from episodes of hysteria.

Around September 1897, Françoise made a pilgrimage to Lourdes. There, she received two graces from the Virgin, regaining her voice and being able to receive the Eucharist at least one day per week. Those who assisted her in Lourdes asked to be

included in her prayers. After her pilgrimage, her health continued to deteriorate. She died in May 1898, still carrying the stigmata. Sixty hours after her death, her body appeared uncorrupted. A crowd of people attended the funeral and mourned her body. Some continued to visit Françoise's grave, nourishing the cult.

A.L. (prêtre). "Visite à la stigmatisée d'Inzenzac." *L'Écho du Merveilleux*, 1.13 (1897): 199–200.

Anonymous. "La stigmatisée d'Inzinzac," in *Almanach Hachette*. Paris: Hachette, 1898, 364–365.

Apte, Maurice. *Les Stigmatisés. Thèse pour le Doctorat en Médecine*. Paris: Jules Rosset.  
Binet-Sanglé, Dr. *La Folie de Jésus. Son hérédité, sa constitution, sa physiologie*. 3rd ed. Paris: A. Maloine, 1911.

Chasse, Charles. "Deux stigmatisées bretonnes," in *Mélanges bretons et celtiques offerts à M.J. Loth*. Rennes, Paris: Plihon et Hommay; H. Champion, 1927.

Guéret, Émile. "La mort de la stigmatisée d'Inzenzac." *L'Écho du Merveilleux*, 2.35, (1898): 227.

"La stigmatisée d'Inzenzac à Lourdes." *L'Écho du Merveilleux*, 1.18 (1897): 284–285.

### **Hendrickx, Isabella (1874, 1844–1874)**

Isabella Joanna Henderickx (Belloke) was the daughter of a farming family, her parents, Franciscus Henderickx and Victoria Gijs, had four children. During her short life (1844–1874) she observed ascetic practices and wore, among other things, an iron chain so close to her body that it grew into her skin. She showed great devotion to the Passion of Christ and prayed the Stations of the Cross daily for 20 years.

In 1873, she had her first vision of Jesus Christ and stopped eating. The local physician suspected her of having heard something about Louise Lateau and called her weekly ecstasies a female nervous disease. From July 1874 onwards, she carried stigmata. Initially, these were invisible, but on 18 September 1874 (the day after the Feast of Saint Francis) they became visible. Before she died, the villagers had known almost nothing about the various phenomena. However, after her death on 7 November 1874, when people wished to pay their respects to her one last time, rumours started to spread and thousands came. Her sister (who died in 1938) preserved the room in which she died in its original state for a long time and also kept her linen. (Two days before her death a professor from the University of Leuven, D. Van den Steen, suggested that her case be brought before the bishop.) According to a Flemish Catholic periodical, she caught the attention of "bad" newspapers.

De Vijvere, Gentiel. *Isabella-Joanna Henderickx (Belloke), de gestigmatiseerde van Appels/Dendermonde 1844–1874*, ed. H. Schollens. S.e, 1991.

Imbert-Gourbeyre, Antoine. *La stigmatisation*, ed. Joachim Boufflet. Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1996, 497.

### Henle, Anna (1887, 1871–1950)

Anna Henle was born on 18 November 1871 into a family of bakers in Aichstetten near Memmingen. When she was 13, on the day of her first Communion she had a vision of three angels, one holding flowers, the other a crown of thorns and the last, a harp. She had to choose between them and selected the crown of thorns. From that moment on, she was paralysed and remained bedridden until her death on 21 February 1950. She received the stigmata in 1887, which became invisible when she was 33 years old, although she continued to suffer. At one point, she regarded her 66 years of suffering as beneficial to the unity of Christians, especially in her “poor torn fatherland.” In the young priest, abbé and later minister Josef Busert, she found a priestly friend. He allegedly had a vision of a mass of angels himself before he officially celebrated his first Mass (1895). He had seen a vision of a consecrated host flying to a house in Aichstetten and when planning his holiday later that year he decided to look for the house. Anna had received a message during a vision that the person who visited her on that day would become her future helper. Anna had been ordered not to receive any visitors and was thus not subjected to the curious gaze of strangers. However, her family did allow friends and family to attend her ecstasies, so we do have testimonials about these events. After Anna’s ecstasies, the visitors could sometimes perceive “Heaven’s dew” (“Himmelstau”) in the room.

Franz Tengg, Franz. *Anna Henle: der Leidensengel von Aichstetten im Allgäu*. Wien: Kreuz-Verlag, 1972.

Höcht, Johannes. “Anna Henle (1871–1950).” In *Träger der Wundmale Christi. Eine Geschichte der Stigmatisierten*, ed. Johannes Höcht, 459–460. Stein am Rhein: Christiana-Verlag, 2000<sup>5</sup>.

### Hupe, Angela (1863, –)

Angela Hupe from Boke, inspired by reading about the German stigmatic Anna Katharina Emmerick, pretended to be a stigmatic in 1863. Feigning deafness and lameness, she also claimed not to eat. She proved to be a fraud after an examination at the request of the ecclesiastical authorities, during which four Sisters of Mercy were to watch her closely. She “produced” the stigmata from bottles of blood hidden under her bed.

Jacobi, Walter. *Die Stigmatisierten. Beiträge zur Psychologie der Mystik*. München: Bergmann, 1923, 45.

Kurtz, J.H. *Church History, Vol. 3*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1893, 244.



**Isabel del Santísimo Sacramento (García Suelto y Pantoja, Isabel)  
(c.1866, 1832–1902)**

Isabel García Suelto y Pantoja was born in Cabañas de Yepes (Toledo) in 1832 and had six siblings. Apparently, she was a feeble and “ugly” child, but was allegedly transformed into a beautiful girl during the feast of the Transfiguration of Jesus in August 1833. It is said that during her childhood, one of her cousins locked her inside a farmyard with bulls, hoping that the animals would kick her. Instead, the bulls took care of Isabel, covering her with hay to protect her from the cold. When her mother and sister found her, they thanked God for this blessing.

During Pentecost 1841, Isabel supposedly fell into an ecstasy and was told by Jesus that from now on she would become the “Wife of the Sacrament.” Between that year and 1847, she lost her parents from different illnesses. Very pious, just before she turned 20, she joined the convent of Santa Clara in Ocaña (Toledo), the village in which she had lived since the age of seven. She took the religious name of Isabel del Santísimo Sacramento due to her fervent devotion to Jesus of the Sacrament. Before joining the Order of Saint Clare she was already extremely devoted to the Passion of Christ, the Eucharist and the Immaculate Virgin. During her time in the convent, she developed a prominent mystical life. From 1856, she recorded her mystical experiences, following, she said, God’s order. She left 17 manuscript volumes after her death.

Because Isabel was a cloistered nun, she experienced all of the mystical phenomena within the closed walls of the convent. Her sisters witnessed some of her divine graces, and stories about them circulated by word of mouth between the nuns and their congregations. According to Madre Natividad, Isabel del Santísimo Sacramento fell into an ecstasy every time she received the Holy Communion. Levitations and other extraordinary phenomena constituted her daily life. She was said to meditate frequently over the pain of Jesus during the Passion, to the point that she joined him in his suffering. It seems that Isabel del Santísimo Sacramento carried the invisible stigmata while in such meditations. She died in 1902, with a reputation for sanctity. Her cause for beatification began in 2002.

Abad Pérez, Antolín, O.F.M. *Amanecer de esperanza. Madre Isabel del Santísimo Sacramento*. Madrid: Ediciones Doce Calles, 1996.

Moreno Nieto, Luis. *Santos y beatos de Toledo*. Toledo: Imp. Serrano, 2003.

**Isacchi, Angela (c.1850, 1827–1895)**

**Isacchi, Teresa (c.1850, 1831–1890)**

Angela and Teresa were born into a very poor farming family in Casletto, in the province of Como (under the Archdiocese of Milan), Angela on 1 July 1827 and Teresa

on 22 February 1831. The two women did not receive formal education. As children, they were gifted with paranormal graces. At the age of four, Angela was seen emitting light as if she was an angel, while her younger sister announced the death of their father at the age of seven (1838). Both worked as peasants and as silk spinners in a small family company.

From 1853, Teresa had visions of St Teresa, St Ursula and a large crucifix of gold, which communicated to her that she would fall sick in 15 days. The prophecy came true and Teresa, seeing Christ crucified and emitting blood from his wounds, began to sweat blood in imitation. While we know that both Angela and Teresa offered themselves as “victim souls,” it is unclear from the sources whether they had visible or invisible stigmata. In the following year (1954), Angela began to converse with the penitent souls in Purgatory, while in 1856 her sister had the first of a long series of Marian apparitions, becoming a famous figure for pilgrims and invited as a guest to several shrines.

Supported by the priest of Pusiano, Father Felice Mariani (he was also their confessor), in June 1956, the sisters created a group called “Il Giardino della Santa Parola” (the Garden of the Holy Word). The father granted them the capacity to speak and prophesy in church after the Mass, where pilgrims gathered to hear the divine messages they reported while in a trance. Over the years, they claimed to have had numerous episodes of ecstasy, paranormal phenomena and apparitions. Convinced of their holiness, Mariani wrote two letters to Emperor Franz Joseph I of Austria in 1857, and in the following year, to Pope Pius IX. Neither replied, so the priest and Angela went to Rome in 1858, receiving negative feedback from the Vatican clergy and the Pope.

After the negative response from the civil and political authorities, the sisters and their group took an almost hostile attitude towards them. The mystical women, in particular, prophesied the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the end of the secular power of the popes, precisely because they refused to acknowledge their holiness.

Their fame continued after their deaths – Teresa in 1890 and Angela in 1895 – leading to a division of the community into supporters and detractors. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the priest of Cazzanica, in agreement with the Archbishop of Milan, fought against the Isacco faithful, refusing to admit them to the sacraments. In 1960, their home – a place of worship for believers – was destroyed in an attempt to erase any form of misdirected devotion.

Anonymous. *Meditazione per ciascun giorno di ogni mese e guida per ascoltare la santa messa di Angela e Teresa Isacchi contadine illetterate della provincia di Como*. Florence: Tip. cattolica diretta da G. Papini, 1869.

Isacchi, Teresa. *La Guida della Messa dettata da Teresa Isacchi contadina illetterata di Casletto nella provincia di Como*. Lecco: Tipografia di Giuseppe Corti, 1876.

### Izquierdo, María Pilar (c.1936, 1906–1945)

María Pilar Izquierdo Albero was born in 1906 into a humble family of five children from Zaragoza. Pilar stayed at home, taking care of her brothers, and did not receive any schooling. She would finally learn to read and write at the age of 34. During her adolescence, she began to suffer from health problems, described as “attacks.” Her parents decided to move to the countryside, but returned to Zaragoza after five years without improving their daughter’s health. The family then moved into a small attic and survived in part on charity. In 1926, on her way to work, Pilar fell and broke her pelvis. After a year of convalescence, she was allegedly cured by a miracle. However, her joy did not last long. In May 1929, she felt a strong pain in her chest. She passed out and after recovering, found that the left side of her body was paralysed. After a few days, the paralysis appeared to have spread throughout her body and she also lost her sight. For many months, she was unable to talk and could barely hear.

During these years of penitence, Pilar allegedly received frequent visits from Jesus and became a “victim soul.” She underwent surgical operations without good results. In December 1933, she was admitted into the religious institution of Marías de los Sagrarios, where Mass was sometimes celebrated in her room. Religious men and women from other communities – Carmelites, Claretians, Augustinians – began to visit her. They considered her a “living saint” and her fame started to grow in Spain. She was said to have the gift of kardiognosis or the ability to penetrate the spirit of others. During the Civil War (1936–1939), many people from across Spain visited her asking for news about their loved ones on the front, and questioning her about their future. Her confessor put a sign on her door for visitors which said: “1. Do not forget that she is on the Cross. 2. Avoid fuss, laughing and impertinent conversation. 3. Respect this attic sanctified by pain.” A great number of visitors – about 5,000 – felt spiritually linked to Pilar. She called them “my little flock.”

On 8 December 1939, a few months after the end of the Civil War, Pilar was “miraculously healed,” a favour allegedly attributed to God, allowing Pilar to establish a religious congregation. The Archbishop of Zaragoza, surprised by the miraculous healing, began an investigation. In March 1940, Pilar testified before the curia in Madrid, where she had travelled to make arrangements for the congregation. Allegedly, Pilar already knew that the tribunal would conclude against her, as indeed happened in April. The news spread in the press and Pilar was called a witch, a hysteric and possessed. Rumours suggested that she had established a divination and quackery consultancy in Zaragoza earning lots of money. Without having her congregation approved, Pilar and the girls from her “little flock” lived in apartments as laywomen. As time went by, they were able to settle in two houses in the surroundings of Madrid, where they developed an apostolic mission in troubled neighbourhoods.

During these years, Pilar continued to suffer with Jesus. She did not bear visible stigmata, but was said to carry invisible wounds in her stomach and other cysts inside

her body. In the early 1940s, new calumnies and rumours surrounded her, and many girls abandoned her foundation. In 1944, Pilar's confessor advised her to stay away from her own congregation. Pilar died in August 1945 without seeing her work completed. Fortunately for her, her foundation continued and was finally approved in 1948 under the name *Obra Misionera de Jesús y María* (Missionary Work of Jesus and Mary). Today, the congregation has 22 houses in Spain, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Italy and Mozambique. Pilar's cause for beatification began in 1983, in response to her fama sanctitatis. She was declared Venerable in 2000 and was beatified on 4 November 2001, after Pope John Paul II approved a miracle attributed to Pilar's intercession.

Anonymous. *Beata M<sup>a</sup> Pilar Izquierdo: epistolario*. Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwer, 2001.

Díez García, Daniel. *Madre M<sup>a</sup> Pilar Izquierdo Albero, fundadora de la obra misionera de Jesús y María*. Logroño: D. García, 1993.

Peña, Ángel, O.A.R. *Beata María Pilar Izquierdo. Una luz en la oscuridad*. Lima, Perú, n.d.  
Santiago, Miguel de. *Sufrir y amar, amar y sufrir*. Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwer, 2001.

### **Jahenny, Marie-Julie (1873, 1850–1941)**

Marie-Julie Jahenny (1850–1941) was a peasant woman from La Fraudais, a hamlet close to the village of Blain and not far from Nantes. From a young age, she expressed her devotion to the Virgin Mary and to the Cross, becoming a Franciscan tertiary years later. Stigmata notwithstanding, Marie-Julie Jahenny was reported to have the gift of prophecy. Her case is exemplary of other nineteenth-century French Catholic female mystics and “political prophetesses,” promoters of ultramontanism, millenarism and royalism in the face of the “evil” republican, secularized and post-revolutionary France. Jahenny repeatedly announced the future arrival of a king named Henri v de la Croix – probably Henri d'Artois, Count of Chambord – redeemer of the nation. During her bouts of ecstasy she spoke in patois. Those around her transcribed the prophecies in situ, translating from patois into French.

Marie-Julie Jahenny received the stigmata for the first time on Friday, 21 March 1873, and would continue to bear the wounds of Christ until her death. Before that day, she allegedly saw an apparition of the Virgin, who asked her if she was ready to suffer for the rest of her life for the conversion of sinners – a common mission among stigmatics. That first Friday of 1873, the blood flowed from the sacred wounds in front of her siblings, neighbours and several priests from close villages. From that day onwards, Jahenny's confronting manifestations continued every Friday, blessing her with all kinds of stigmata. She carried all the imitative wounds (hands, feet, forehead, side and shoulder) and had several figurative stigmata: a wedding ring on her finger (symbolizing the Holy Prepuce and her mystical marriage to Christ), the monograms J.H.S (for Jesus) and M.A. (for Mary) on her chest, and the phrases “Viens, ma victime!” and “Triomphe de l'Église,” also on her chest.

The phenomena attracted the attention of thousands of visitors and aroused the suspicion of clergymen in Nantes and Blain. They believed that her spiritual advisor, Father David, was the author of the fraud. Monsignor Félix Fournier, Bishop of Nantes, entrusted two physicians to investigate, with 10,000 people congregating in La Fraudais during the inquiry. The doctors certified the existence of the wounds but denied their supernatural origin; however, the Catholic physician Antoine Imbert-Gourbeyre (1818–1912) disagreed. He and his daughter would become followers and intimate friends of Marie-Julie Jahenny. They were two of the thousands of visitors who would witness her “chemin de croix” in her house on Fridays. One bus driver recalled that before the start of the Second World War he drove many English, Dutch, German and Belgian people to the stigmatic’s house.

Despite having the diocesan authorities against her, Jahenny achieved “living saint” status among her followers. During her lifetime and after her death, lay associations were created to promote her cause; from the Amis de la Croix, founded in the 1870s, to the current Association Le Sanctuaire de Marie-Julie Jahenny. After Marie-Julie’s passing, her supporters bought her thatched cottage and her possessions in La Fraudais, turning her house into a living museum and shrine that is still a site of unapproved pilgrimage.

Bruno, Jacqueline. *Quelques souvenirs sur Marie-Julie, la stigmatisée de Blain*. Saint-Nazaire: Éditions du Courrier de Saint Nazaire, 1941.

Guillemain, Hervé. *Diriger les consciences, guérir les âmes. Une histoire comparée des pratiques thérapeutiques et religieuses (1830–1939)*. Paris: Éditions de La Découverte, 2006.

Imbert-Gourbeyre, Antoine. *La stigmatisation. L'extase divine et les miracles de Lourdes. Réponse aux libres-penseurs*. Clermont-Ferrand: Librairie Catholique, 1894.

Nantes, Archives Historiques du Diocèse de Nantes (AHDN), Fonds Marie-Julie Jahenny, 5F2.

Roberdel, Pierre. *Marie-Julie Jahenny la stigmatisée de Blain, 1850–1941*. Montsûrs: Résiac, 1987.

### **Jalhay-Munzbach, Marie (1865, 1807–1881)**

Marie Jalhay, mother of five, spent all her life in Petigny (near Couvin). She initially lived an unremarkable, pious life and became a widow at an early age. Although she would have preferred to stay single, her parents and parish priest encouraged her to remarry a rich farmer, with whom she had another two children. The family was well known for its piety. During an epidemic of scarlet fever in 1852, her husband and six of her children were afflicted. Marie prayed to God and offered to suffer in their place. She already had pains in her back and now started to suffer from cardiac disease, convulsions and gastric cancer. Rather than pray to recover, she offered all her sufferings

for the conversion of sinners. She was bedridden for a few years but was healed immediately after an apparition of the Virgin on 13 January 1865. The rumour of her cure attracted many people, who wanted to see the room of the miracle. Three days later, Marie saw Christ, who revealed to her the faults of her past. She offered herself as a reparatory victim. From 25 March 1865 onwards, she had daily ecstasies, saw the Virgin and Christ and received the stigmata. She did not wish to be in the public eye as Louise Lateau was at that time. The ecclesiastical authorities conducted a discrete examination. In vain, she asked that the exterior signs of her stigmata would disappear. While those on her feet disappeared, they reappeared after her death, those on her hands, she covered with gloves. She died in 1881, after a life dedicated to prayer and charity.

Imbert-Gourbeyre, Antoine. *La stigmatisation*, ed. Joachim Boufflet. Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1996, 522–523.

### **Jung, Clara (1939, 1887–1952)**

Clara Jung, born in Antwerp on 15 September 1887 (Feast of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows), was the eighth of ten children of well-off Catholic wool merchants (her father had been a papal Zouave in his youth). In 1905, Clara became a kindergarten teacher. However, because of her feeble health she had to give up her work. In 1918, she became bedridden due to myelitis (a spinal infection) and a cyst in her stomach, where she remained until her death in 1952. During these long years of illness, she had various mystical experiences that she recorded herself, as did her confessor, Joris Baers. During the last 13 years of her life, she displayed stigmata, and on Fridays she relived the Passion of Christ.

Apart from her physical suffering she also experienced emotional pain and felt that she had been abandoned by God. Apparently, she was not well known during her lifetime. Her remains were exhumed in December 1976 and proved to be rather well preserved.

D.V.M. "Clara Jung (1887–1952)." In *Träger der Wundmale Christi. Eine Geschichte der Stigmatisierten*, ed. Johannes Höcht, 536–544. Stein am Rhein: Christiana-Verlag, 2000.

Nulens, Jan. *Het leven van Clara Jung uit Antwerpen (1887–1952)*. S.l.: s.e., 1978.

Van Massenhove, Gaston. *De Antwerpse gestigmatiseerde Clara Jung (1887–1952) die ik persoonlijk gekend heb*. S.l.: s.e. 1986.

### **K., Elisabeth (1932, –)**

We have only sparse information about this anonymous stigmatic. The information stems from a book published in 1933 by Dr Alfred Lechler, her physician in Haus

Lebenswende (Neustadt/Harz). She was born in 1902 in a city in the south of Germany. As a child she was very sensitive and suffered from sleepwalking. At 15 she had a severe bout of flu, after which she suffered from a tremor in her head, right arm and right leg. She was admitted to hospital and recovered after one year through hypnosis. She attempted to work as a maid several times, but each time she became ill, depressed and was considered hysterical. In 1928, she entered Haus Lebenswende. On Good Friday 1932, while watching a slide show, Elisabeth saw Christ's crucified body and started to experience his pain. Dr Lechler suggested through hypnosis that she would also develop wounds, and indeed she did. When he suggested that the wounds would disappear they vanished. He considered the case was a psychiatric-psychological problem.

Lechler, Alfred. *Das Rätsel von Konnersreuth im Lichte eines neuen Falles von Stigmatisation*. Elberfeld: Licht und Leben Verlag, 1933.

#### **Kempenaers, Henri (1933, 1893–?)**

Henri Kempenaers (Lier 1893) was one of the Antwerp visionaries involved in the series of apparitions that swept across Belgium in the first half of the 1930s. As a *miraculé* (allegedly cured from tuberculosis), healed in Onkerzele, and visionary (from October 1933), he had already gathered a group of supporters before he publicly relived Christ's Passion on 25 December 1933. In June 1934, he claimed to have experienced stigmata, an event he described in minute detail to a Catholic journalist, Jan Filip Boon. Kempenaers case was dismissed by the archdiocesan commission investigating the apparitions in Belgium (apart from Beauraing and Banneux). The verdict was made public in March 1942. (A negative response was already circulating in August 1934.)

Van Osselaer, Tine. "Sensitive but sane. Male visionaries and their emotional display in interwar Belgium." *Low Countries Historical Review* 127.1 (2012): 127–149.

#### **Kinker, Anne Marie (1798, 1783–1812)**

Anne Marie Kinker was born in 1783 in Eppendorf, the daughter of a blacksmith. When she was ten years old she started to have epileptic fits ("wird fallsüchtig") and her health deteriorated. With some medical help, she was able to remain active, but in 1796 she became bedridden. Her appetite diminished and she stopped eating three weeks before Easter 1798. In the following weeks she lost consciousness. During this deathlike period of existence, the secretary of the cloister Oesede, notary Rhode, visited the house and examined her. Due to his intervention, six sworn men were engaged to watch Anne Marie over a period of 14 days and they confirmed what her parents had already stated: that she did not drink or eat. In addition, there was blood on her lip (no other signs of bloody wounds). When rumours began to spread, people from

the neighbourhood wanted to see her and thousands travelled to her house to observe her lying on her bed like the Madonna. When a Dr Schmid (from Melle) published his findings on her case, Anne Marie even started to attract international interest. In the following months, her condition improved and she was able to move again but still did not eat or drink. In the meantime, the "Amt Imburg" had, in order to calm the commotion, created a new commission (the members were Dr Schelwe, Justus Gruner and the lawyers Dürfeld and Vezin). Initially, they wanted to transfer her to the house of notary Heilmann in order to watch her for several days, but her father resisted energetically and she remained home. After a few days, they discovered that the wet towels she asked for to moisten her face were in fact used as a source of water. She was then transferred to Borgloh (to Heilmann's house), where she confessed to having received one or two mouthfuls of food from her brother, Christian, from time to time. The "Gogericht" of Iburg was informed and started an investigation. After some incriminating testimonies, Anne Marie was transferred to the workhouse in Osnabrück where she was put into an isolation cell. She then finally confessed to having eaten during 1798 and 1799. She was sentenced to six months labour and her brother to lashing on his bare back, but he was reprieved. After serving her sentence, Anne Marie was forced to stand in front of the church for one hour with a sign saying that she was a fraud.

Brück, Anton Theobald. "Die Stigmatisierten." *Nord und Süd* 30 (1884): 67–87.

Fiebert, Monika. *Kranke, Betrügerin oder Wundermädchen? Die Geschichte der Anne Marie Kienker aus Eppendorf bei Brogloh im Fürstbistum Osnabrück. Texte von Ludwig Schmidtman und Justus Gruner.* (Schriften zur Kulturgeschichte des Osnabrücker Landes, Band 12.) Osnabrück: Landkreis Osnabrück, 2001.

### **Lasa, Josefa (1931, 1913–)**

Josefa Lasa was from Ataún (Guipúzkoa, Basque Country) and was one of the stigmatized seers of the Marian apparitions in Ezkioga. The events began in June 1931, shortly after the proclamation of the Second Republic (1931–1936) in Spain. At that time, Josefa was 18 years old. Hundreds of seers, most of them children and adolescents, witnessed the apparition of the Virgin and spread political prophecies against the Spanish Republic. One million pilgrims are said to have visited the Ezkioga hillside and watched the seers fall into a trance on a stage. After several investigations, the diocesan authorities from Vitoria and the Vatican condemned the seers and the alleged visions. The seers were also repressed by the political powers, as their messages were to the detriment of the Second Republic.

Although many of the Ezkioga seers were said to experience the pains of the Passion, only a few showed the visible signs of the stigmata, such as Ramona Olazábal and Gloria Viñals. Josefa Lasa escorted her friend Ramona to the hillside on 15 October 1931, when the latter received the stigmata for the first time – the Vicar General of Vitoria accused



her of fraud. Two days later, on 17 October, while Lasa was praying the rosary, she fell into an ecstasy and a sacred wound supposedly appeared on one of her hands. The wound was very superficial and barely bled. According to Josefa, the Christ Child had wounded her with a little dagger. Someone affirmed that the girl had hidden her hand in her pocket until the moment of ecstasy, making some think that she had injured herself on purpose before falling into a trance. Others standing next to Lasa affirmed that they had seen the wound open during the trance. The parish priest, who did not acknowledge the phenomenon, never approved Josefa's or Ramona's behaviour.

Anonymous. *Los videntes de Ezkioga: a la opinión pública creyente*. San Sebastián, depósito La Constancia: Artes Gráficas Pasajes, 1931.

Boué, G.L. *Merveilles et prodiges d'Ezquioga*. Tarbes: Imp. Lesbordes, 1933.

Burguera y Serrano, Amado de Cristo, O.F.M. *Los hechos de Ezquioga ante la razón y la fe*. Valladolid: Imp. y Librería Casa Martín, 1934.

Christian, William A. *Visionaries. The Spanish Republic and the Reign of Christ*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

Fort, Stanislas. *Une nouvelle affaire Jeanne d'Arc*. Orléans: La Librairie Centrale, 1933.

Montilla, Julia, ed. *Ezkiozaleak: un relato fotográfico*. Barcelona: Ediciones Maravilla, 2009.

### Lateau, Louise (1868, 1850–1883)

Louise Lateau is by far the best-known Belgian stigmatic: she was the topic of heated discussions during her lifetime and afterwards, with numerous works published on her. Born in Bois-d'Haine on 29 January 1850, Anne-Louise Lateau was the daughter of a railway worker who died from smallpox shortly after her birth. Louise, her mother and two sisters struggled to survive and Louise only attended school for 6 months. From 1860 onwards, she helped out on farms in the neighbourhood, and during one of these jobs she was trampled by a cow, leaving her with a bent spine. Despite her own physical suffering, she loved to take care of others, and during the cholera epidemic of 1866, her work for the sick was particularly noted and praised. Louise trained as a seamstress and joined the third order of Saint Francis on 1 December 1867.

In the following years, her health deteriorated. Louise became very sick (headaches, physical pains) and by March 1868 she was spitting blood. Against all expectations, she survived. However, on the last Friday of April 1868, she began to bleed from her side and in the following weeks the bleeding reappeared, now including her hands and feet. From July onwards, she also went into ecstasy and witnessed Christ's Passion. Thousands of people came to see her, among them physicians, members of the clergy and lay believers. Her suffering was linked with political causes (e.g. suffering of the German Catholics in the new state) and the Catholic Church (e.g. attacks on Rome). The bishop initiated a brief investigation, conducted by theologians and medical

experts. Commission member, Dr Lefebvre, from the Medical Faculty of Leuven, published a report in which he stated that he could not find a medical explanation and left the case open for the Church to decide. The report attracted the attention of the Belgian Royal Academy of Medicine, which began its own examination in 1874–1875 (the very diverse opinions on the case were published in its periodical).

From March 1871, Louise ate and drank little, apart from taking the Holy Communion. From 1876 onwards, she could no longer go out, and three years later, she was confined to her bed. Her condition deteriorated in January 1883 and she died in August of the same year. Allegedly, 5000 people attended her funeral, and her grave still attracts visitors. In 1991, the bishop created a diocesan commission with the intention of introducing her case for beatification. The Vatican responded *nunc non opportunit*.

Klaniczay, Gabor. "Louise Lateau et les stigmatisés du XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle." *Discorsi sulle stimate dal Medioevo all'età contemporanea*, ed. G. Klaniczay, *Archivio italiano per la storia della pietà* 26 (2013). Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 279–319.

Lachapelle, Sofie. "Between miracle and sickness: Louise Lateau and the experience of stigmata and ecstasy." *Configurations* 12 (2004): 77–105.

### **Lazzeri, Maria Domenica (1834, 1815–1848)**

Maria Domenica Lazzeri (known as "L'Addolorata di Capriana" or "La (Beata) Meneghina"), was born in Capriana on 16 March 1815, and would become the most famous stigmatic of Tyrol. She worked as a farmer on her father's land until she contracted an incurable disease. The doctor, Leonardo Cloch, who wrote several reports on her, declared that her illness was scientifically inexplicable.

On 17 December 1834, after a Marian vision, the visible signs of the Passion appeared on her body (she attributed an expiatory meaning to them and saw them as her redemption for humankind). On 10 January 1835, she decided to confess these phenomena to Michelangelo Santuari, the main parish priest of the village, and Antonio Eccel, her first confessor. She told them she had the Holy Wounds on her hands, feet and side. On 20 February, the crown of thorns also appeared and blood marked her clothing with religious images (crosses) and letters ("SS.V.M.D.L.A.C", "Sanctissima Virgo Maria Domenica Lazzeri Absistens de Capriana").

Santuari immediately informed the religious authorities, and the Bishop of Trent questioned him about the case of L'Addolorata. The correspondence between Santuari and the religious authorities can be found in the diocesan archive of Trent, it continued for 14 years and was partially published in 1991 (the original material is currently under the seal of secrecy because the cause for beatification is still open).

The news of her stigmatization quickly spread far and wide, also attracting the attention of the political authorities. The huge number of visitors made supervision necessary to handle the crowds that flocked to see her Friday Passion. Her fame

even reached the most distant countries, such as Australia and the United Kingdom. In English-speaking countries in particular, the debate became very heated in the years 1841–1843, when in various newspapers, such as *The True Tablet*, *The Tablet*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Australasian Chronicle*, the Protestant party challenged the Catholic minority by attacking the two stigmatics of Tyrol, Maria Domenica and Maria von Mörl, who were defended by John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury and by the Bishop of Sydney.

After attracting thousands of pilgrims and the curious from across Europe, L'Addolorata died in Caldaro on 4 April 1848, in the bed where she had lain immobile for many years. On 4 April 1995, her promoters (Gli amici della Meneghina) started work on her cause for beatification.

Anonymous. *Le tre mirabili vergini viventi nel Tirolo*. Milan: Tip. Santo Bravetta, 1837.

Boré, Léon. *Les Stigmatisées du Tyrol*. Paris: Lecoffre, 1846.

Gadaleta, Ludovico Maria and Vesely Leonardi, Ludmilla (eds). *Il "Diarium Missarum" di don Antonio Eccel con annotazioni riguardanti Maria Domenica Lazzeri "L'Addolorata di Capriana" (1815–1848)*. Rovereto: New-book edizioni, 2015.

Marinolli, Mario. *Maria Domenica Lazzeri, L'Addolorata di Capriana 1815–1848*. Trent: Grafiche Artigianelli, 1998.

Sommaviva, Simone. *Notizie storiche intorno a Maria Domenica Lazzeri o l'Addolorata di Capriana in Fiemme esposta dal sacerdote Simone Sommoviva*. Trent: Scuola Tipografica Artigianelli, 1926.

Vesely Leonardi, Ludmilla. *Maria Domenica Lazzeri e i visitatori inglesi. La documentazione sulla stampa degli anni 1841–42–43 in Inghilterra e Australia*. Rovereto: Edizioni Osiride, 2007.

### **Lebouc, Madeleine (Lair Lamotte, Pauline) (c.1895, 1853–1918)**

Madeleine Lebouc is the fictional name given to Pauline Lair Lamotte, the famous hysterical patient of Pierre Janet (1859–1947). Madeleine was born in Mayenne in 1853. After several illnesses during her childhood, she left her home and departed for London in 1873 to work as a private tutor. The Third Order of Saint Francis, which she joined along with her sister Sophie, influenced her spirituality. The Franciscans wanted Madeleine to enter the religious life, but she felt that a convent was too far from her ideal of poverty. During a journey in the countryside, she decided to break with everything. Returning to France in October 1874, she lived like a vagabond in Paris, where she was imprisoned for a short period for that reason.

From the 1880s, Madeleine experienced motor disorders. During Christmas 1892, she felt an unbearable pain in her legs and was admitted to hospital. Apparently, these problems became worse after the death of her spiritual guide Father Conrad (1819–1893). In May 1893, the positivist neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot (1825–1893),

who studied hypnosis and hysteria and led the Salpêtrière School, visited Madeleine. After stays in various hospitals, Madeleine entered the Salpêtrière in 1896, where she became the patient of Pierre Janet, who examined her motor disorders as well as her mental troubles. Her divine frenzy and apocalyptic prophecies were deemed mere hallucinations by most psychiatrists. Madeleine allegedly experienced other mystical phenomena, such as ecstasy and religious stigmatization, with stigmata clearly visible on her hands, feet and forehead.

Following the premises of the Salpêtrière School, Janet suggested a diagnosis of hysteria and attempted to hypnotize Madeleine, but she refused every time. In a public conference at the Institut Psychologique International (1901), as well as in several publications, Janet spoke about his patient, generating great interest in the press and in the scientific and ecclesiastical communities. The case of Madeleine would allow Janet to develop a psychiatric theory of mysticism, expounded in his two-volume book *De l'angoisse à l'extase* (1926–1928).

Madeleine left the Salpêtrière in March 1904. Apparently, she had finally found mental stability without renouncing her mystical life. In the following years, she lived in Mans, Brussels and Mayenne with several of her siblings. She died on 9 April 1918. After her death, she continued to attract the interest of physicians, theologians and scholars. In 1931, the journal *Études Carmélitaines* devoted several articles to her case, written by Father Bruno de Jésus-Marie (1892–1962) and other renowned personalities. More recently, the French scholar Jacques Maître (1925–2013) published the definitive work on her, entitled *Une inconnue célèbre. La Madeleine Lebouc de Janet* (1993).

*Études Carmélitaines* (volumes April and October), 1931.

Hamon, Romuald. "Madeleine Lebouc: se faire un corps sanctifié par la religion catholique." *L'Évolution psychiatrique*, 73 (2008): 41–52.

Janet, Pierre. *De l'angoisse à l'extase. Étude sur les croyances et les sentiments*. Vol. 1, 2. Paris: Félix Alcan, 1926–28.

Maître, Jacques. *Une inconnue célèbre. La Madeleine Lebouc de Janet*. Paris: Anthropos, 1993.

### **Lionetti, Raffaella (c.1950, 1918–1991)**

Raffaella, better known as Lina, was born into a large family in Barletta, Puglia, on 21 January 1918. As a result of precarious economic conditions, at the age of 20, she decided to try her luck in northern Italy, moving to Milan. At the end of the Second World War, she returned to Foggia in Puglia, where she became ill with typhus and experienced psychological disturbances. Lina also began claiming to have had ecstasies, apparitions of saints and other visions, but everyone believed they were side effects of her illness. At the beginning of the 1950s, she began to feel pain in her hands and feet, without, however, having visible stigmata. On 1 November 1954, Lina saw the Sacred

Heart of Jesus crowned with the crown of thorns. From that day onwards, her heart burned like a flame every time she meditated or entered the church.

In 1957, she moved to Udine with two friends. Her stigmata became visible but unlike other stigmatics, she suffered the Passion of Christ, sweating blood and the crown of thorns, on Thursdays. On Holy Thursday in particular, she underwent all the stages of the Crucifixion with incredible suffering. To hide her wounds, she wore gloves and thick bandages.

A group of lay and religious faithful formed around her, believing in the Lina's holiness, her prophecies and graces. One of the most extraordinary miracles she claimed was the mystical communion. After her ecstasies, consecrated hosts materialized in her room and Lina would give them to her friends. At other times, pilgrims saw dense smoke, snowflakes or flower petals, which represented, according to Lina, the presence of Our Lady. She also had the gift of bilocation of the spirit, making pilgrimages to Marian sanctuaries or visiting Padre Pio. In addition to the graces, however, she was also harshly persecuted by the devil.

Lina died on 20 December 1991 at the age of 73. Shortly before her death, the wounds on her hands and feet disappeared without leaving scars.

Anonymous. *Nel segno del dolore: biografia di Raffaella Lionetti*. Udine: Edizioni Segno, 1992.

Piai, Pier Angelo. *La stigmatizzata di Udine, Raffaella Lionetti (1918–1991)*. Udine: Edizioni Segno, 2015.

### **Llimargas Soler, Ramona (c.1930, 1892–1940)**

Ramona María del Remedio Llimargas Soler was born in Vic (Barcelona) in 1892. She was the only surviving child of parents whose seven other children died prematurely. Ramona's parents were illiterate, while she learnt to read but could not write. Moreover, she only spoke Catalan and never learnt Spanish. From a very young age, she developed a mystical life. Her friends thought that she was stupid, because she was frequently absorbed by her religious experiences. They called her "the Enchanted." Her mother never accepted her religious vocation and was very hard on her.

At the age of nine, Ramona Llimargas allegedly witnessed the apparition of Jesus carrying the Cross, who told her that she would be the founder of a religious institution. Between 1916 and 1920, she worked in a convent in Vic, helping the cloistered nuns. In 1936, the Spanish Civil War began and Llimargas lost her father – her mother had died in 1924. Furthermore, the cloister nuns for whom she worked were expelled from the monastery. The partisans of the Republican and antifascist bloc were especially belligerent with the clergy. Ramona was almost killed for hiding the Bishop of Vic. The militia leader, Franciso Freixenet, spared her life because, in the past, Llimargas had saved his son from choking to death.

During the war, Ramona cured and prayed for many soldiers. She decided to pursue her will to found a religious institution, which would depend on charity to take care of the poor and the sick. In 1939, on a trip to Xàtiva (Valencia), she met María Luisa, who would become the co-founder of the Instituto de las Hermanas de Jesús Paciente in Barcelona. This religious institution still exists – although it subsists very precariously – and is located in Can Trilla, an old country house in the Gràcia neighbourhood of Barcelona. Ramona Llimargas (her religious name was Madre Remedios) did not have the time to enjoy her foundation and wear the habit. In October 1940, she died a martyr after “transferring” cancer from a sick woman to herself.

Llimargas’ main virtues were humility and charity. She had many charismata, such as kardiognosis, ecstasy and bilocation. It is said that she appeared several times to the general and dictator, Francisco Franco, during the Spanish Civil War. Franco allegedly called her “Ramona, the Catalan.” During the war, Llimargas also “visited” a leader of the Republican bloc through bilocation and acted as a guardian angel in the trenches. She frequently suffered from diabolical attacks – her crucifix has a “bite from the Devil” – and experienced the pains of the Passion, carrying invisible stigmata. Moreover, she allegedly communicated with other stigmatics, such as Padre Pio and Therese Neumann.

Ramona Llimargas died in 1940 with a reputation for sanctity. Her grave can be visited at the Instituto de las Hermanas de Jesús Paciente. Many graces were attributed to her after her death. Her religious sisters have prepared all the documentation for her cause for beatification, which was still not open in 2015.

del Bosque de Sales, Damián, Morros Parellada, María. *“Ramona, la Catalana.” (El ángel tutelar de la infortunada España de 1936–1939)*. Sant Adrià del Besós: Hermanas de Jesús Paciente, 1985.

Fernández Rodríguez, Pedro. *Ramona María del Remedío Llimargas Soler. Fundadora de las HH. de Jesús Paciente*. L’Hospitalet: Hermanas de Jesús Paciente, 2001.

Religious Institution: Instituto de las Hermanas de Jesús Paciente (Barcelona).

### **Lorger, Magdalena (1778, 1734–1806)**

Magdalena Lorger was born on 12 September 1734, the daughter of a blacksmith in Offheim. She was pious and modest and entered the Dominical cloister of Hadamar in 1767 or 1768 under the name Maria Magdalena. In summer 1775 she became very ill, started vomiting blood and had to remain in bed. She received Jesus’ side wound on the Feast of the Sacred Heart in 1778 when she was 44. In 1781, she showed the marks of flagellation and, in the following year, she received the stigmata on her hands and feet. These marks also drew attention outside the cloister. Finally, in 1785, the Bishop of Trier developed an interest in the case after receiving the reports written by a clergyman from Mainz and a theology professor. The bishop started an official examination

(medical and theological) in 1786. Apparently, their approach was rather harsh: Magdalena was given a laxative and they shook and pulled her to bring her out of ecstasy. The conclusion was periodical epilepsy, an overexcited imagination and a damaged nervous system. The verdict shocked the sisters and their physician, Dr J.C.J. Wolf, who started his own investigation and wrote a report. This in turn caught the attention of the bishop, as it could be considered insulting, and Wolf eventually filed a new one.

Afterwards, Magdalena fell into obscurity, although in Hadamar she remained known as the “saintly nun” even after her death on 8 February 1806.

Höcht, Johannes Maria. *Eine unbekannte deutsche Stigmatisierte des Herzens. Magdalena Lorger von Hadamar (1734–1806)*. Wiesbaden: Credo-Verlag, 1951.

Imbert-Gourbeyre, Antoine. *La stigmatisation*, ed. Joachim Boufflet. Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1996, 436.

Luz-y-Graf, Guillermo. “Die Stigmatisation der Anna Lorger in Hadamar 1785. Die Kritik eines Wunders in der Aufklärung.” In *Das Wichtigste ist der Mensch. Festschrift für Klaus Gerteis zum 60. Geburtstag (Trierer Historische Forschungen 41, 2000)*: 333–345.

### **Lucila González María de Jesús (González, Lucila) (1931, 1908–1936)**

Lucila González was born in San Esteban del Valle (Ávila) in 1908. She was the daughter of a pious family. At the age of seven, the Virgin allegedly appeared to her. Three years later, she lost her father and, in 1927, her mother also died. In April 1930, Lucila entered the religious life, joining the congregation of the Adoratrices, first in Ávila, then in Madrid and later in Guadalajara. She was especially devoted to the Eucharist and became a “victim soul.” In 1931, the Second Republic was proclaimed in Spain. Between 10 and 13 May, there was a violent anticlerical wave, characterized by the burning of convents and other religious buildings. Fortunately for Lucila, the Adoratrices convent remained untouched.

From the time of her novitiate, Lucila supposedly received many favours from Jesus. Her confessor asked her to keep a diary and record all the prodigious phenomena. Some of her writings were destroyed during the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), when the communists took over the convent in Madrid. However, a small notebook survived, in which Lucila described the graces received, including invisible stigmata. On Holy Friday 1931, she asked Jesus to join his suffering during the Passion and she allegedly felt the pain of the crown of thorns. The same occurred in the following year. In October 1931, she seemed to experience the spiritual wounding of the heart.

According to witnesses, Lucila wanted to be a martyr. In July 1936, at the start of the Civil War, the Republican government confiscated the building of the Adoratrices congregation in Madrid to establish a hospital. The nuns, including a very weak and sick Lucila, fled and hid in different apartments in the capital. During the following months, their homes were frequently the object of inspections by militiamen. On the afternoon of 9 November 1936, Lucila and her sisters were arrested. According to the militiamen,

one of their colleagues had been killed by a gunshot coming from the apartment used by the nuns. They were taken against their will and were shot by a firing squad in the early morning of 10 November. In the eyes of her followers, Lucila had finally achieved her will to become a martyr.

1 July 1952, her cause for beatification was sent to Rome. At the time, the dioceses began to register the extraordinary graces obtained thanks to Lucila's intervention. She was beatified on 28 October 2007 by Pope Benedict XVI, along with 498 other martyrs of the Spanish Civil War.

Baumert, Thomas. *Beata Lucila González María de Jesús. Adoratrix*. Madrid: Edibesa, 2014.

### **Madame Miollis (Cartier, Thérèse-Joséphine) (1836, 1806–1877)**

Thérèse-Joséphine Cartier was born in Marseille in 1806, but soon moved to the isolated village of Villecroze, where she was raised by one of her aunts. At the age of 18, she married a rich carpenter and became Madame Miollis. They did not have any children, apparently due to Madame Miollis's sterility. Around 1840, during the feast of Saint Andrew, she fell into deep meditation while listening to the words of the priest in the church. She soon started to feel the pain of the stigmata and the Five Holy Wounds of Christ became visible.

She carried the stigmata for eight to ten years. Although she always felt the pain, the wounds were only visible on Wednesdays and Fridays. They were allegedly created by luminous lights coming from a crucifix that she saw while in ecstasy. Madame Miollis also had figurative stigmata, including a cross on her chest, above her heart. Although it did not bleed, it always looked like a fresh wound on her skin.

For many years, only her confessor knew about the phenomena. Nevertheless, around 1840, news of her abilities started to circulate in the south of France and many people began to visit Villecroze expecting to see the stigmatic. Men of science in nearby cities such as Toulouse, Montpellier and Marseille argued against the supernatural origin of the phenomena. Meanwhile, Miollis welcomed visitors whenever her confessor permitted.

It seems that Miollis's husband was overwhelmed by the situation and attempted to kill himself by jumping out of a tall tree. Although he did not die, he was severely injured. His wife prayed for him and experienced deep pains during the night of the tragedy, and in the morning her husband appeared to be fully recovered.

Dr Reverdit and Dr Lauvergne were two of the numerous witnesses to Miollis's wounds. In a letter addressed to a prestigious Parisian physician (the name is not mentioned), Reverdit explained how he observed – along with others, from lawyers to the clergy and members of the military – Miollis's wounds bleeding frequently. Those unable to visit Miollis wrote to her looking for recommendations and favours from God, with many considering her a living saint. Madame Miollis usually asked her



correspondents to pray one particular prayer with her. While the bishops of Fréjus, Mgrs Michel and Wicart, began an investigation, no conclusion was made public. The phenomena disappeared when she settled in Draguignan around 1848–1850, where she died in 1877.

Apte, Maurice. *Les stigmatisés. Thèse pour le doctorat en médecine*. Paris: Jules Rosset, 1903.

Binet-Sanglé, Dr. *La folie de Jésus. Son hérédité, sa constitution, sa physiologie*. 3rd ed. Paris: A. Maloine, 1911.

### **Madame Royer (Challan-Belval, Édith) (1870, 1841–1924)**

Édith Challan-Belval was born in 1841 in Aizy (Aisne). The Challan family was one of the oldest and most pious in France. Édith's father had been a student at the prestigious École Normale Supérieure in Paris. He and his wife had five children: two boys and three girls. At the age of six, Édith was already attracted to the religious life and made a vow of chastity. However, at 19 years of age she became engaged to Charles Royer, from a good family in Burgundy. In order to marry Royer, she had to abandon her vow. To do so, a priest examined her and said that she had not been called by God. Following her parents' will, Édith married Charles in 1860 and became Madame Royer. In 1863, she gave birth to a girl named Louise and had three more daughters over the coming years. Her husband died in 1883 and she also survived the death of two daughters in the early twentieth century.

Her family life was frequently affected by her repressed religious vocation and her mystical experiences. She felt guilty for marrying and betraying her vow of chastity, and attempted to make reparation for her sins through mortification practices. Sometimes she felt strangely ill, from which she was allegedly only able to recover through disciplinary penitence. Madame Royer's devotees considered her to be a "victim soul" for the Lord. From 1870, she was reported to have received revelations from the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In that year, she also received the stigmata. The wounds remained invisible but the pain never abandoned her. In her visions, she saw Jesus Christ standing on a rock, with his arms spread out and his radiant heart in the middle of his chest. Reproductions of this image have joined the devotion of the Sacred Heart.

Around 1875, the Lord supposedly transmitted the rules of a new religious institution to Madame Royer: the Association de Prière et de Pénitence. In the same year, Royer witnessed the apparition of Marguerite-Marie Alacoque, a seventeenth-century French Roman Catholic mystic promoter of the modern devotion to the Sacred Heart. Marguerite-Marie gave her more information about the mission of the Association. In 1879, a diocesan inquiry took place to examine the revelations received by Madame Royer, as well as her alleged role as Marie-Marguerite's successor. Her message was acknowledged by the ecclesiastical authorities and the Association de Prière et de Pénitence was approved in Montmartre (Paris) in 1881. Its aim was to help Christ in

his redemptive mission. The only mandatory practice to join the Association was to dedicate one day a week to mortification.

During the First World War, Madame Royer received many prophecies concerning the destiny of France. In 1920, she was finally able to follow her religious vocation and was admitted to the convent of the Bernardines in Saint-Rémy. However, before taking her vows she fell and broke her femur, leaving her unable to walk. Being too old to hope for a cure, she decided not to join the Bernardine sisters and become a burden. She suffered from great pain until her death in 1924.

Boissard, Henri. *La vie et le message de Madame Royer, 1841–1924*. Paris: Lethielleux, 1960.

Despiney, Marie-Augustin. *Madame Royer, confidente du Sacré-Cœur et les origines de l'Archiconfrérie de Prière et de Pénitence de Montmartre*. 2ème ed. Paris: Casterman, 1960.

Ruy, Louis. *Un message du Sacré-Cœur: Madame Royer, 1841–1924 et l'Archiconfrérie de Prière et de Pénitence de Montmartre*. Issoudun: Dillen, 1949.

### Madame X. (c.1940, c.1910–)

Madame X. is the name used by Dr Jean Lhermitte to refer to this stigmatic, who was also his patient. Although very little is known about her personal life, the descriptions regarding her phenomena are abundant in Lhermitte's book *Mystiques et faux mystiques* (1952). It seems that Mme X. lived not far from Paris. She was said to be around 40 years old in the 1950s, the mother of several children and happily married to a modest man. When she was in her 30s, she lost one of her children, a little girl that she especially loved. After this tragedy, she became very ill, suffering from a continuous state of high fever that left her with no voice or sight. The local priest gave her the extreme unction and, on the following day, she appeared to have completely recovered. The priest thought it was a miraculous cure.

One month after this episode, during the first Friday of August, possibly 1940, two wounds allegedly appeared on Mme X. hands while she was praying. Soon, stigmata manifested on her feet, the right side of her body, on her forehead and her eyelids, always while in a trance. Mme X. experienced these first ecstasies at her house, but in September, while she was in the church's chapel of the Passion, she fell into a trance and started bleeding. In January, she experienced a short phase of inedia where she was unable to get out of bed. During these months, she was examined by several physicians and religious men, including Dr Lhermitte.

After six years without suffering from any other incident, the phenomena restarted. This time, Mme X. began to experience visions of Jesus and of Saint Thérèse de Lisieux. She was said to contemplate the crucifix frequently during her ecstasies. Her alleged mission was to suffer and pray especially for the souls of the priests. She looked down on those priests who, according to her, did not believe or follow her. Lhermitte

interpreted her egotism as a sign of her inability to become a saint, since the supremacy of the ego is a characteristic not shared by saints. In his opinion, Mme X.'s stigmata were pathological (i.e. hysterical) and deeply influenced by dangerous suggestions originating from her spiritual father and her own beliefs. According to Lhermitte, she had read several books on mysticism, including one about Anna Katherina Emmerick's visions, which could have caused the phenomena.

Lhermitte, Jean. *Mystiques et faux mystiques*. Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1952.

### **Madre Cándida de San Agustín (Córdova Pozuelo, Cándida) (c.1850, 1804–1861)**

Cándida Córdova Pozuelo was born in 1804 in Valdepeñas (Ciudad Real). Her parents were well off, and while Cándida expressed her will to devote her life to religion from a young age, her father was against it. In 1820, she lost her mother and was charged with the education of her sister, who was only ten years old. She continued to express her desire to enter a religious community. Finally, in 1826, she took her vows in the convent of Nuestra Señora de la Consolación in Alcalá de Henares, close to Madrid, with the religious name of Madre Cándida de San Agustín. She was devoted to Saint Diego de Alcalá and to Saint Felip Neri. During the early years of her religious life, she experienced many severe illnesses, including two breasts tumours that caused her to vomit blood, as well as fever and a period of paralysis. Allegedly, she was miraculously cured on 11 November 1828, the feast of St Diego de Alcalá, after she was given a relic from this saint.

In 1853, she moved to another convent in Toledo, becoming Mother Superior. Among her initiatives, she founded an Augustinian convent in her hometown, which combined educational activities with contemplation exercises. Many charismata were attributed to her, among which, the gift of prophecy and bilocation. As a product of a supposed bilocation, she was allegedly seen on the frontline helping soldiers during the Hispano-Moroccan war (1859–1860), also known as the African War. This “miraculous event” is depicted in a painting and a sculpture that date from 1931. Madre Cándida's cult is linked to the devotion of the Child Jesus of Solace (Niño Jesús del Consuelo). Madre Cándida acquired a statue of this Infant Jesus for her convent. The image of Child Jesus of Solace allegedly accompanied Madre Cándida during her “spiritual travels” or bilocation, including her apparition in the front, where the Child Jesus of Solace supposedly protected the Spanish soldiers. The above-mentioned sculpture also depicts the image of this Infant Jesus. The worship of the Child Jesus of Solace continues in Valdepeñas.

Madre Cándida spent many hours a day meditating on the Passion and performed several acts of mortification. Her biographers say that to honour her devotion, Jesus allegedly made her participate in his sufferings. Madre Cándida was said to frequently experience the pain of the Holy Wounds, but only internally, without showing any

visible signs. Sometimes, the pain from the spines of the crown of thorns was such that her right eye was blinded. She died with a reputation for sanctity in Toledo in 1861. In 1876, her grave was moved to her convent in Valdepeñas. Her body was allegedly uncorrupted. After her death and until today, many people have reported to have received grace and protection from Madre Cándida de San Agustín. Such testimonies are collected by the sisters of her convent, supporters of the ongoing cause for beatification of this Servant of God.

Esteban, Eustasio. *La sierva de Dios Sor María Cándida de San Agustín*. Madrid: Imp. Helénica, 1918.

Newspaper: *La Perla de Valdepeñas* (Directed by Father José Agustín Fariña, published between 1931–1935).

Toledo, Archivo Diocesano de Toledo (ADT), Procesos de Beatificación, Madre Cándida de San Agustín.

### **Madre Sacramento (López y Burguillos, María Florencia Trinidad) (1868, 1834–1879)**

María Florencia Trinidad López y Burguillos, also known by her religious name of Madre Sacramento, was born in 1834 in Sevilla. She is one of several living saints who were closely related to this city during the nineteenth century. José Torres Padilla, popularly called El santero (The saint maker), was the spiritual father of Madre Sacramento and of other nuns who died with a reputation for sanctity in Sevilla, such as the stigmatic Bárbara de Santo Domingo and Ángela de la Cruz, who is now a saint.

Madre Sacramento was known for carrying stigmata and having visions of the Passion. She also had the gift of prophecy and allegedly announced to Sister Ángela de la Cruz, whose secular name was Ángela Guerrero, her future religious vocation and canonization. After the revolution of 1868, she had to abandon her convent and entered the monastery of the Dominican sisters in Sevilla. There, she suffered from weekly ecstasies and experienced the pains of the Crucifixion. The wounds were visible on her feet and hands. After her death from tuberculosis in 1879, her body was exhibited for 19 days in the convent without showing any sign of corruption. Thousands of people visited the mortuary chapel. Unlike other living saints of her time, Madre Sacramento has been forgotten.

Imbert-Gourbeyre, Antoine. *La stigmatisation*, ed. Joachim Boufflet. Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1996.

Pastor Torres, Álvaro. "Madre Sacramento," *ABC*, 26 October 2004, 8.

### **Madre Speranza (Alhama Valera, María Josefa) (c.1920, 1893–1983)**

María Josefa Alhama Valera was born in Santomera (Murcia) in 1893. She was the first child of eight children of a working-class family. When she was 21 years old, she joined

the cloistered nuns of the convent of Hijas del Calvario in Villena. Shortly afterwards, the convent joined the Claretian Missionaries, and María Josefa took the religious name of María Esperanza de Jesús. As she spent most of her life in Italy, where she has a reputation for sanctity, she is frequently referred to as Madre Speranza.

In 1930, she founded the congregation of the Handmaids of Merciful Love (*Esclavas del Amor Misericordioso*) in Madrid. Years later, in 1951, in Collevalenza (Italy), she established a male version of the congregation. In Spain, the Handmaids of Merciful Love opened many houses for the poor and children. In 1936, with the advent of the Spanish Civil War (until 1939), Madre Speranza moved to Rome with other religious sisters, where she founded a girl's school. She lived in Via Casilina. During the Second World War, she assisted the injured and local families. As she did in Spain, Italy and later in Latin America, she continued to open many houses for the poor.

The life of Madre Speranza is marked by wondrous charismata and self-imposed penitence or mortification. A few years after choosing the religious life, she began to experience all kinds of extraordinary phenomena, including bilocation, food multiplication, ecstasies and attacks by the Devil. One day, during one of these attacks, her bed suddenly caught fire. She was also said to carry the wounds of Christ. Her stigmata bled during Lent, when Madre Speranza relived the Passion. Although some people saw the Holy Wounds, Madre Speranza was very discreet about her mystical experiences.

In 1951, she moved to Collevalenza, where she founded the congregation of the Sons of Merciful Love (*Figli dell'Amore Misericordioso*) and the Sanctuary of Merciful Love (*Santuario dell'Amore Misericordioso*), which promoted Madre Speranza's devotion to the Passion and to the Love of Christ. This devotion became very popular, especially in Italy. Collevalenza is still a site of pilgrimage. On 23 November 1981, Pope John Paul II visited the Sanctuary of Merciful Love after surviving a homicide attempt in May. It was his first trip after that failed attack. Madre Speranza died in Collevalenza in 1983, with a reputation for sanctity. The cause for her beatification started in 1988. On 31 May 2014, she was declared Blessed in front of a crowd of thousands of people in Collevalenza, where she is buried.

Amico, Beppe. *Madre Speranza. Una storia di grazia e misericordia*. Trent: Ega&book, 2014.

Valli, Aldo Maria. *Jesús me ha dicho: Madre Esperanza, testigo de Amor Misericordioso*. Barcelona: Mercy Press, 2014.

See also: <http://www.collevalenza.it> (accessed 19 February 2019).

### **Mamma Ebe / Giorgini, Gigliola Ebe (1945, 1933–)**

Gigliola Ebe Giorgini – better known as Santona di Carpineta, Mamma Ebe or more recently Nonna Ebe – was born in Pian del Voglio, in the province of Bologna, on 17 March 1933. She became famous at the age of 12 in 1945, when she claimed to

have received the invisible stigmata after a Marian apparition. For years she had desired to enter a convent, but in 1953 she married. Afterwards, she became seriously ill and no medical treatment appeared to work, so she decided to leave for San Giovanni Rotondo to visit Padre Pio. Ebe returned home completely healed, and her stigmata became visible, like those of Padre Pio, whom she faithfully worshipped, and the wounds on her hands, feet and chest emitted blood. The news of her holiness spread quickly, and many visitors came to see her. Her house was transformed into a sanctuary, in which the most important element was the bed, where she suffered the Passion.

However, from the early 1950s, the local clergy began to take action against the alleged mystical woman. The Church's position became even firmer after she founded her own "order," called the Ordine di Gesù Misericordioso (the Order of Merciful Jesus), with both female and male followers. In February 1957, the police also started to investigate Ebe's phenomena. Different witnesses denounced her, claiming she was engaged in criminal activities (deception, plagiarism, extortion of money). In May of the same year, she was subjected to medical examinations in an attempt to determine the origin of her stigmata. Although it was evident to the physicians that she was a fraud, the faithful continued to believe in the divine nature of her graces. Ebe thus began moving from one city to another (Pistoia, Rome, Vercelli, Cesena, Forlì), having problems with the law in every case, and always having to start again somewhere else.

Between 1980 and 1994, Ebe was investigated for abuse of the medical profession, manipulation, extortion and even murder. On 11 June 2010 and 16 March 2016, she was found guilty of several crimes and she is currently in prison.

Tocchini, Anna. *Conflitti sociali e magia nel mondo contemporaneo: analisi antropologico-culturale sul caso della guaritrice Mamma Ebe attraverso le interviste a clienti, medici, autorità civili e religiose*. Florence: Sansoni, 1986.

### **Manca, Gavina Beatrice (1936, 1910–1979)**

Gavina Beatrice Manca was born in Ozieri, in the province of Sassari, on 24 March 1910. Around the age of 20, she received the call to the religious life and attempted to enter the Franciscan convent of Oristano, but was rejected due to her precarious health. Gavina subsequently left for Rome on 14 June 1931 to join the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Egypt, taking the name of Sister Edilburga.

From May 1933, she began to experience episodes of blood sweating and visions of souls in Purgatory. In April 1934, she left for Tripoli, but due to health problems was transferred to Palermo. There, in December of the following year, small holes appeared above her heart, emitting blood. On 10 April 1936, a Good Friday, visible stigmata appeared on her body. They occurred every Friday around 3 P.M. after a long period of suffering and a deep ecstatic state, and then disappeared without a trace the following day. Other mystical phenomena attributed to her were visions (of the Madonna,

Christ, a guardian angel, souls in Purgatory), demonic temptations, ecstasies, the appearance of a bleeding cross on her chest and mystical communion.

The General Minister of the Friars Minor was informed of her case and went to visit her personally with the doctor of the order. The physician decreed that it was a natural phenomenon and ordered her to be transferred to Rome for further examination, where she was declared hysterical. After continuous and invasive examinations, Gavina escaped on 25 March 25, returning to Palermo, where she was protected by the abbess. Between 1937 and 1947, there was an internal struggle in the order, with high level Vatican clergymen also involved, until Gavina and four other nuns were removed.

On 30 April 1947, she and the other four sisters decided to live together, giving their life *de facto* to a new institute of Our Lady of Bonaria (simply called the Bonariane). In June, Msgr Petralia blessed the new foundation. Manca was elected the Mother Superior and wrote the rules. Their mission was to care for orphans and offer them education and work. On 16 July, Cardinal Ruffini, one of her old Vatican enemies, sent public security forces to check on the new congregation. Problems continued to occur in the following years and they were forced to move to different Sicilian towns. Gavina Beatrice Manca died on 6 December 1979 in Palermo. Her foundation was officially closed in 1994.

Torcivia, Mario and Bonariana, Francescana. *Gavina Beatrice Manca (Ozieri, 1910–Palermo, 1979)*. Soveria Mannelli: Rubettino Editore, 2016.

### **Mancini, Marianna (1852, c.1808–1865)**

Marianna Mancini was born between 1808 and 1810 in San Giovanni Profiamma (Foligno), in the province of Perugia. At the age of 15, she realized that her mission was to teach the Catholic precepts, found a religious congregation (the Nazzarene) and suffer, bearing the visible signs of Christ's Passion. Following her mission, Marianna moved to a farmhouse and with the consent of her spiritual father, Angelo Francesconi, began to receive both lay and ecclesiastical pilgrims.

On 1 January 1852, Marianna publicly revealed visible stigmata on her body, and her hands, feet, head and chest emitted blood. In addition to the stigmata, she was also famous for her prophecies, episodes of ecstasy, healing, the liberation of souls from Purgatory and conversions.

Her congregation, despite the lack of official recognition by the Church, became ever larger, with over one hundred members of both sexes. While for the faithful she was a spiritual mother, for the sceptics she remained a deceiver. According to several witnesses, she had a morbid relationship with her followers and especially with the priest, Francesconi. He no longer resided in the parish but in the Mancini "sect," celebrating the Mass in her chapel and allowing her to confess the faithful.

On 31 August 1859, the case was reported to the Holy Office, which immediately contacted the Bishop of Foligno and started an official investigation. After hearing numerous witnesses, on 23 March 1858, Mancini and two priests involved were imprisoned and taken to the Holy Office in Rome. Here they confessed their faults and asked forgiveness for what they had done. On 12 January 1859, Marianna was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment in the monastery of St Maria del Rifugio in Rome.

Marianna Mancini died during her monastic isolation, on 15 August 1865.

ACDF, (C 4) h-i.

### **Manetti, Teresa (c.1875, 1846–1910)**

Teresa Adelaide Cesira Manetti, known simply as Bettina, was born in Campi Bisenzio, in the province of Florence, on 2 March 1846, into a poor family. In 1849, at just three years of age, she lost her father. Teresa considered 1865 as the year of her “conversion,” when she gave her life to God, due to the spiritual guidance of her confessor Ernesto Jacopozzi.

On 15 July 1874, with two companions, Bettina retired to an old ruined house on the banks of the river Bisenzio. This marked the start of her religious foundation. On the following day, the three women became tertiaries of the Carmelite Order. St Theresa was their model in life and her mystical model their guide. With the supervision of her spiritual father, Ernesto Jacopozzi, Teresa’s mystical experiences increased. She had visions, ecstasies and offered herself as a victim for the salvation of the Church (it is not clear whether she received visible or invisible stigmata around 1875).

From 1877, the congregation began to host orphans. The institute grew rapidly and was officially recognized as a member of the Carmelite Order. On 12 July 1888, Bettina and the other sisters took their perpetual vows. She took the name of Teresa Maria della Croce.

On 11 January 1902, a second house was opened in Florence, dedicated to the Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration, while in 1904, some sisters left for missions in Lebanon, the Holy Land, Brazil and what is now the Czech Republic. On 27 February 1904, Pope Pius X approved the rules and constitution of the institute, which received pontifical right. Between 1908 and 1909, her illness deteriorated and Teresa Maria died in Florence on 23 April 1910 at the age of 64.

In 1930, the Cardinal of Florence, Alfonso Mistrangelo, opened the diocesan beatification process (ended in 1936). In 1973, her heroic virtues were declared, while a miracle was recognized in 1985. Pope John Paul II celebrated her beatification in the municipal stadium on 19 October 1986.

Anonymous. *Teresa Maria della Croce, Il Seme caduto in terra. Lettere (1888–1910)*. Rome: Edizioni OCD, 2002.



### Mangano, Lucia (1920, 1896–1946)

Lucia Mangano was born into a large but poor Sicilian family in Trecastagni (province of Catania), on 8 April 1896. She was only a child when she began to work in the fields. At the age of 17, after the family moved to San Giovanni La Punta, she served as a maid. At the time, she became seriously ill and, according to her own claims, was healed by divine intervention. Consequently, she decided to devote herself to God. In 1919, Lucia entered the *Compagnia di Sant'Orsola*, simply known as Orsoline, and becoming the local superior of the community in 1925. According to her biographers, between the age of 19 and 24 (1915–1920), she experienced a long period of temptation, spiritual aridity and demonic attacks. Apparently, these never disappeared entirely, but later, mystical gifts alleviated her suffering.

Between 1920 and 1933, Lucia had more than 5,000 episodes of ecstasy, achieved through strict discipline, long prayers and self-flagellation. Her mission was to suffer the Crucifixion and the spiritual pain of the Virgin Mary (*Mater dolorosa*). From Easter 1920, she received the sufferings of Christ, beginning at the Mount of Olives, undergoing the flagellation, the crown of thorns and his death on the Cross. Initially, her stigmata were visible, becoming invisible after praying for them to not be seen. Thus, the extraordinary phenomena were hidden from the world, even after 1927, when she left her family to live with other Ursuline women.

Over the years, her mystical experiences were enriched by other gifts, such as multiple visions, apparitions, the gift of prophecy, revelations and insightful hearts. Many times, however, she believed she was the subject of demonic illusions (she also doubted the origin of her stigmata). The confirmation of the divine nature of her graces occurred on Friday, 24 March 1933, through her mystical marriage.

Lucia spent the rest of her life overseeing the congregation and sacrificing herself as a victim for the Church and for the remission of the sins of humankind. She died on 10 November 1946. Already worshipped during her life, after her death her *fama sanctitatis* spread increasingly, and on 11 January 1955, the Archbishop of Catania opened the diocesan phase of the beatification process. On 2 July 1994, Pope John Paul II declared Lucia Mangano Venerable, recognizing her heroic virtues.

Domenico, Gagliani. *La contadinella regina, serva di Dio, Lucia Mangano*. Bari: Ed. Paoline, 1965.

Mangano, Lucia. *Autobiografia. San Gioviovanni La Punta: Istituto delle Orsoline; Fontanarosa, Generoso, 1971. Lucia Mangano, orsolina*. Mascalucia: L'Addolorata (4 voll.), 1971.

### Marella, Giovanna (1800, 1770–after 1807)

Giovanna Marella was born in 1770 in Ceccano, in the province of Frosinone (not far from Rome). Towards the end of the century, she moved to a nearby village and, in

January 1799, a brass crucifix in her house started to sweat blood. The news of the prodigy spread quickly and crowds of believers came to see it. The Bishop of Ferentino, the diocesan responsible for the town, informed the Vatican Congregation of Rites in November about the grace and the clergymen decided to remove the crucifix from her house.

However, this was not the end of her story. Giovanna, in fact, soon claimed to have received mystical gifts herself, such as visions, ecstasies and prophecies. In 1800, she publicly showed her stigmatized hands, feet and chest; while her head was pierced by the crown of thorns. Every Friday, after being in an ecstatic state, she showed the visible signs of the Lord's Passion.

The faithful worshipped her as a "living saint" and several clergymen also supported her, including the Vicar-General. However, some members of society and ecclesiastical figures doubted her presumed graces. In 1801, complaints arrived at the Holy Office. Giovanna was accused of sexual relations with her confessors, and of leading an immoral life and being a fraud. Meanwhile, the situation became increasingly delicate. The news of her fama sanctitatis had spread beyond the confines of the Church State and arrived at the Kingdom of Naples. In addition, the faithful believed in her ability to work miracles and treat illnesses, offering money and presents in return.

In May 1802, the inquisitional fathers asked the Bishop of Ferentino to collaborate. In February 1803, the Vatican clergy officially opened a trial, which closed in June of the same year with her condemnation and her confessor accused of complicity.

No further information is available after 1807, when the Holy Office stopped monitoring her case. Therefore, we know neither the date nor the place of her death.

ACDF, St C 4 – e, Processo contro Giovanna Marella per affettata santità (1799–1807). Ponzani, Michela and Griner, Massimo. *Donne di Roma. La lunga strada dell'emancipazione femminile nella città eterna*. Milan: Rizzoli, 2017.

### **Marfuggi, Paolina (1931, 1890–)**

Paolina Marfuggi was born in Aversa, in the province of Naples, in 1890. There is not much known about her life. She was a common wife and mother, until May 1931, when she became very famous in Campagna and across Italy for her alleged stigmata, prophetic powers and clairvoyance. The news of her stigmata was spread in many articles written in national newspapers. On 1 May 1931, Paolina fell asleep while she was praying. In the dream, it is said that she had a vision of the Sacred Heart of Christ surrounded by clouds and rays of light. One of these rays hit her hands and she felt a very intense pain, waking from her dream. When she got up, she saw blood flowing from two deep wounds opened on her hands. The first to learn of the event were her sons and her husband, followed by the entire neighbourhood. In less than a week, the news was well known throughout the town and it quickly exceeded regional boundaries.

Pilgrims from all over Italy came to Aversa to see the signs of the prodigy with their own eyes. Paulina also said that she had received other graces, such as the ability to read hearts, know the future and perform miracles.

In 1932, the “living saint” of Aversa was denounced by the Torromacco sisters. Anna and Maria, aware of the *fama sanctitatis* of the alleged mystic, asked her to pray for the health of one of their family members. A short time later, the woman miraculously recovered. Grateful for the healing, the sisters gave a generous reward to Marfuggi. However, a few weeks later, Paolina called the two women, warning them of an imminent war and a banking crisis, convincing the sisters to give her all their savings. A year later, aware that there was no war, Anna and Maria realized that they had been tricked and so denounced Paolina and her husband.

After the women’s denunciation, followed by Paolina’s condemnation in September 1932, her fame dissipated quickly, her name consigned to oblivion. No other information has been reported about her life.

*Corriere della Sera*, 10 May 1931, 5 and 28 Wednesday September 1932, 7.

**María Amparo del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús (Delgado García,  
María Amparo) (1930, 1889–1941)**

María Amparo Delgado García was born in Cantalapiedra (Salamanca) in 1889. She was the youngest in the family, with seven older brothers. Her parents owned a shop in the village and were very pious. Her father died when she was only five years old. At that time, she was already very devoted to Jesus of the Sacrament and the Virgin. Her faith was such that her confessors allowed her to take the Holy Communion every day. From her adolescence, she began to take care of the sick and the poor, and undertook mortification exercises. She took the veil on 12 May 1909, joining the Cistercian sisters; however, tuberculosis forced her to abandon the convent for several years, after which she joined a Claretian community. Allegedly, she received a mission from God to found a new monastery. This mission was accomplished on 31 May 1920, with the opening of the Monastery of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Among her many charismata, María Amparo joined in Jesus’ suffering during the Passion, and shared his redemptive mission. She became a “victim soul” in atonement for the sins of humankind. In 1926, she received invisible stigmata and was supposedly wounded in the heart by the love of Jesus. One day, after the ecstasy, María Amparo saw that she was bleeding either from her eyes or from her forehead. In 1919, she wrote a very worried letter to a priest saying she was afraid of what she was going through and did not want to be labelled a false mystic and visionary. She also suffered from the flagellation and from attacks by the Devil. Stigmata became visible on 8 June 1930, with the wounds bleeding especially on Fridays and during special feasts. When referring to

her stigmata, María Amparo used to say that “her hands were ill.” She prayed to God to made the wounds disappear.

María Amparo was very discreet about her mystical phenomena and sharing her suffering with anyone. The sisters of her community kept her secret. As a result, news of her stigmatization did not spread outside the convent walls. Only the family members of the religious sisters knew about the phenomena, with many becoming devotees of María Amparo. She would cover her hands with mittens to hide the wounds. According to witnesses, a sweet odour emanated from the blood. María Amparo died in 1941 with a reputation for sanctity. Her cause for beatification was initiated in 1977 and she was declared Venerable in 1994.

Calvo Moralejo, Gaspar. *La estigmatizada de Cantalapiedra: espiritualidad de la Pasión en la M. María Amparo del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús, OSC*. Ávila: Francisco López Hernández, 1996.

Tena Revillas, Paloma. *Cuando el amor es entrega: vida de la Venerable M. María Amparo del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús*. Madrid: EDIBESA, 2001.

### **María Ana de Jesús Castro (Castro, Ángeles) (1900, 1882–1904)**

Ángeles Castro was born in Havana (Cuba) in 1882, when the island was still a Spanish colony. She had ten brothers and sisters and came from a well-positioned and cultivated family. Her mother died when she was only five years old. She and some of her sisters studied at an apostolate school in Havana, and Ángeles was very pious, wanting to take a vow of poverty. It is said that one day she burned all her silk clothes. She was especially devoted to Jesus of the Sacrament, who she felt was living inside her. After her first Communion, in 1891, Ángeles claimed to receive many favours from him. As did two of her sisters, she decided to enter religion. They all had a small statue of the Cuban Infant Jesus and they were referred to as “the girls of the Child Jesus.” At the age of 17, she decided to join the Capuchin sisters in the convent of Plasencia (Zaragoza, Spain). In one of her letters to the Mother Superior, she said that her wish was to become “a great saint” (cited in Guernica, *La perla*, 49).

Ángeles arrived at Plasencia in August 1899 and took the religious name of María Ana de Jesús. A few months after the start of her novitiate she began to suffer from attacks of the Devil, who allegedly prevented her from eating. María Ana became the object of many phenomena. The Bishop of Plasencia asked her to record her visions and spiritual communications in writing. However, she seemed unable to do so, and one of her sisters had to help her. Because María Ana was not the author of the notes, doubts began to arise concerning the reliability of her mystical experiences. According to those who knew her, María Ana wanted to share the suffering of Jesus on the Cross more than anything else. She started practising mortification to atone for the sins of

humankind, and allegedly experienced a mystical marriage with Jesus, becoming a “wife in blood.” On 23 May 1900, it is said that she received the sacred wounds. María Ana also experienced the spiritual wounding of the heart. The wounds were invisible most of the time, but sometimes they bled profusely, especially from her forehead – a representation of the crown of thorns. According to her sisters, a sweet odour emanated from the blood.

María Ana was said to have many other charismata, including kardiognosis. She was allegedly in contact with souls in Purgatory and frequently witnessed an apparition of Jesus, with whom she entertained “spiritual dialogues.” Her sisters found her in ecstasy many times, especially after receiving Holy Communion. On August 1904, María Ana became very sick and had to remain in bed. The mortal illness lasted only seven days, and she died at 22, with a reputation for sanctity. Her body, which was said to emanate a soft perfume, remained beautiful and was not cold, while the extremities appeared to preserve all their flexibility. The sisters allegedly saw fresh blood pouring from María Ana’s mouth 15 hours after her death. Although laypeople wanted to contemplate the corpus incorruptus, local authorities forbade the public exhibition of her body. The image of the Cuban Child Jesus is still venerated at the Capuchin convent in Plasencia.

Guernica, Juan de. *La perla de la Habana. Sor Maria Ana de Jesús Castro. Religiosa capuchina del Convento de Plasencia (Cáceres) 1882–1904: Bosquejo histórico de su vida maravillosa*. Vol. 1&2. Zaragoza: Andrés Uriarte, 1914.

**Marie de Jésus du Bourg (du Bourg, Anne-Rose-Joséphine)**  
(1811, 1788–1862)

Anne-Rose-Joséphine du Bourg was born in 1788 in a château in Rochemontès, close to Toulouse, into an aristocratic and pious family with seven children. Her father was a member of the Toulouse parliament. Apparently, the family had links to the stigmatized mystic, Saint Maria Magdalena de Pazzi (1566–1607), among others. During the French revolution, the convent of La Visitation became a prison, with Joséphine’s father incarcerated and sentenced to death by guillotine in Paris. One of his sons, only 15, attempted to save him without luck.

Joséphine joined the sisters of La Visitation in 1803, shortly after the death of her mother, but her feeble health forced her to postpone her religious vocation for a while. Installed in the château of an older sister and her husband in Béziers, she devoted herself to spiritual exercises. After spending some time in Limoges, where one of her uncles was the bishop, she went back to Toulouse and joined the convent of Notre-Dame in 1809. Two years later, during the Monday of Pentecost, she allegedly started to levitate while praying, and received the mission to found her own congregation. From then on, divine communications, ecstasies, diabolical attacks and physical pains governed her daily life. Every Friday she was said to experience all the pains of the Passion.

While the wounds never opened or bled, her sisters always believed in her stigmata. During the Holy Week, she was reported to suffer from unbearable pains, from which she recovered at dawn on Easter Sunday.

In 1812, she returned to Limoges and joined the convent of the Verbe-Incarné, where she met her spiritual father M. Denis. She spent her days helping at the Limoges hospital. After three years of charity work, she decided to take the habit and became *Sœur Marie de Jésus* in the convent of Saint-Alexis – where she is frequently referred to as *Madame du Bourg*. Although her spiritual father had told her to abandon the idea of founding a congregation, she continued to receive “spiritual messages” from Jesus asking her to pursue the enterprise. In 1833, the first house of the *Congrégation du Sauveur et de la Sainte-Vierge* was founded in Terrasson (Dordogne). They opened a school – free of charge – and also began to take care of the sick.

In May 1834, Marie de Jésus du Bourg became Mother Superior of the congregation, whose main house was located in La Souterraine (Creuse). New houses were founded in several villages, and the blue habit distinguished the religious sisters of the congregation. On Monday of Pentecost in 1862, Marie de Jésus suffered a physiological attack that left her paralysed. She died on 26 September of the same year, with a reputation of sanctity. Her body was displayed for several days to satisfy the laypeople's desire to mourn her. Many continued to visit her grave after the funeral, supposedly obtaining miraculous graces. A process of beatification started in the 1890s, while in 2012 the sisters of her congregation celebrated the 150th anniversary of her death.

Anonymous. *Vie de la Révérende Mère Marie de Jésus, Anne-Joséphine du Bourg: fondatrice de la Congrégation du Sauveur et de la Sainte-Vierge*. Abbeville (Somme): C. Paillart, 1896.

Bersange, J. *Madame du Bourg, Mère Marie de Jésus, Fondatrice de La Congrégation des Sœurs du Sauveur et de la Sainte Vierge* (3rd ed.). Paris: Delhomme et Briguët, 1892.

Du Bourg, Gabrielle. *Une Fondatrice au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle: “rien que son âme”*. Paris: Beauchesne, 1914.

### **Marie de la Croix (Nault, Maria) (1933, 1901–1999)**

Maria Nault was born on 21 April 1901 in Saint-Aignan-sur-Roë (Mayenne), on an Easter Sunday. She was the first child of a pious family of farmers. From a young age, she expressed a will to embrace the religious life; however, her health prevented her from doing so. In September 1929, being very ill, she joined a group of sick pilgrims heading to Lourdes. After two days of pilgrimage, she was said to have fully recovered, with the Lourdes medical office certifying the miraculous healing.

In November 1931, she was accepted into the convent of the sisters of the Immaculate Conception in Lourdes, and became *Sœur Marie de la Croix* a year later. According to her religious sisters, Marie de la Croix was passionate about God, but at the same

time she was shy and hesitant. Deep physical pains kept afflicting her. She experienced them as a communion with Jesus. At the beginning of 1933, she allegedly saw the apparition of Saint Thérèse de Lisieux (1873–1897), who told her that she would suffer and not be understood.

On 25 March 1933, the Holy Wounds appeared and started to bleed in front of everyone for the first time. Despite her will to make them disappear, the stigmata were visible until 1989. Between that year and her death in 1999, she continued to suffer from invisible stigmata every week. Shortly after the first manifestation of the phenomenon, the Bishop of Lourdes began an investigation. Mgr Gerlier advised Marie de la Croix's sisters to be discreet. He was not keen on having a crowd of people coming to the convent attracted by the supernatural. For Marie de la Croix, this period was marked by inedia and by a supposed mystical marriage with Jesus, who gave her a ring.

According to Marie de la Croix, the Lord conferred on her a mission as a founder. This created conflict in her community, which began to doubt her and she was forced to leave Lourdes. In 1939, she was accepted into the diocese of Toulouse, where she founded a diocesan congregation called the Petites Sœurs de Marie Mère du Rédempteur. Several decades later, in 1971, she founded the male version of this congregation, the Petits Frères de Marie, in the diocese of Laval, where she was transferred in 1969 due to her health. In the 1980s, she returned to Saint-Aignan, where she would become Mother Superior until her death on 9 April 1999.

Boufflet, Joachim, Peyrous, Bernard, Pompignoli, Marie-Ange. *Des saints au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle: pourquoi?* Paris: Éditions de l'Emmanuel, 2005.

Imbert-Gourbeyre, Antoine. *La stigmatisation. L'extase divine et les miracles de Lourdes. Réponse aux libres-penseurs.* Clermont-Ferrand: Librairie Catholique, 1894.

Marie de Gethsémani (Sœur). *Mère Marie de la Croix. Maria Nault 1901–1999. Une fondatrice.* Morinaie: Éditions de la Morinaie, 2015.

### **Marie Saint-Augustin de Jésus (Ruel, Marie-Catherine) (c.1838, 1801–1874)**

Marie-Catherine Ruel was the sixth and last child of a family of merchants. Her mother had renounced her religious vocation. One of the sons in the family became a priest and, along with Marie-Catherine, another of the daughters became a nun. From her childhood, Ruel suffered from health problems. These difficulties nurtured her faith and her desire to enter the religious life. Little by little, she started to follow mortification practices and developed a fruitful mystical life. Divine messages, guardian angels, clairvoyance and attacks from the Devil were part of her daily experiences. At that time, she began to provide religious education to her female friends.

The Virgin allegedly gave her the mission to start a foundation. At the age of 20, after having received Confirmation, three girls decided to join Marie-Catherine. They took

vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Gradually, new members joined their congregation. Father Tempier helped Marie-Catherine in her enterprise. Meanwhile, she started to suffer from intense pains that made her fall into ecstasy. In November 1823, the project of the foundation, *Congrégation des Saints-Noms de Jésus et de Marie*, was approved by the Bishop of Marseille and was established in the town.

Marie-Catherine Ruel and her friends decided to stay at the convent of the *Sœurs de la Présentation* at Pont-Saint-Esprit. She was then reclaimed by the parish priest of Marignane, M. Nay, who was looking for religious instructors. There, Marie-Catherine took the religious name of Marie Saint-Augustin de Jésus and founded a religious institution. The sisters of her religious community lived under poor conditions and practised self-mortification. With the arrival of a new parish priest in the region, the clergy began to question the exorcist methods employed by Marie Saint-Augustin in her institution.

In 1828, the community moved to a Capuchin convent in Marseille, and continued to change location from time to time. During these years, Marie Saint-Augustin was terribly ill from cancer but recovered “miraculously” in 1835. The miraculous healing and the foundation of other religious congregations – one in Canada – made her renowned. During Easter 1838, several sisters of the community were allegedly possessed by the Devil. While *Mère Saint-Augustin* was practising the exorcism, she offered her body to the flagellation to liberate her sisters. Like Saint Catherine of Siena (1347–1380), she allegedly underwent a mystical marriage with Jesus, who gave her an invisible ring. Although her biographers are not clear with regard to the Holy Wounds, it seems that she received invisible stigmata, probably on the day of her mystical marriage.

In 1845, suffering from poor health, *Mère Saint-Augustin* began a retreat in a country house near Marseille. There, she became an expiatory victim for the sins of humanity. During the last years of her life, she suffered greatly from mysterious pains. She passed away in 1874. Four years later, her grave was opened by accident and her body appeared to be uncorrupted. Some divine favours were attributed to *Mère Saint-Augustin* after her death.

Couturier, M.-J., O.S.B. *Vie de la Mère Saint-Augustin de Jésus. Fondatrice de l'Institut des Saints-Noms de Jésus et de Marie*. Paris, Vienne: Retaux, Imp. Saint-Martin, 1899.

### **Marie-Colette du Sacré Cœur (Duchet, Marie-Augustine)**

**(1897, 1857–1905)**

Marie-Augustine Duchet was born in 1857 in Besançon (Doubs). Her father had served in the army during the campaigns in Africa and Crimea and had later obtained an administrative position at Besançon. At the age of four, Duchet already felt the desire to suffer in reparation for the sins of humanity. She practised mortification and penitence exercises and expressed her will to enter the religious life. She attempted to join several



Clarisses communities, but did not fit in. She finally took her vows at the Clarisses convent in Besançon, choosing the religious name of Marie-Colette du Sacré Cœur.

From her childhood, Marie-Colette had been attracted to the mystical life; however, the Clarisses did not seem to share her attraction. After entering the religious life, her mystical experiences increased. She decided to become a “victim soul” and offered herself up to God. Throughout her life, Marie-Colette suffered from terrible pains to fulfil her reparation mission as a martyr. She recorded her impressions in her “Notes spirituelles,” which were later partially published by Father Jean-Joseph Navatel.

On Holy Friday 1897, she received the stigmata for the first time. The sacred wounds – which remained invisible – continued to manifest until her death in 1905. On 18 August 1897, Sœur Marie-Colette wrote: “Some days I feel deep pains in my hands, my feet, around my head and in my heart ... I have noticed that it happens especially on Friday and Sunday ... We see absolutely nothing [in the wounds], there is no swelling, nor contraction, nor redness, which surprises me and, at the same time, pleases me a lot, because Our Lord gives me such a desire to live a secluded life ... that I would be saddened to attract any attention” (cited in Navatel, *Une contemplative*, 296–297).

Navatel, Jean-Joseph, S.J. *Une contemplative au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, sœur Marie-Colette du Sacré-Cœur, religieuse Clarisse du monastère de Besançon, d'après ses notes spirituelles (1857–1905)*. Besançon: Impr. Jacques et Demontrond; Paris: J. de Gigord, 1921.

### **Marie-Xavier de Réquista (Bel, Jeanne) (1868, 1843–1926)**

Jeanne Bel was born in the village of Saint-Paul-Cap-de-Joux (Tarn). She was the daughter of a baron's manager and was very close to her grandmother, who was responsible for her religious education. In 1865, she joined a religious charitable institution called the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Apparition (Sœurs de Saint-Joseph-de-l'Apparition), in Marseille, and took the name Marie-Xavier. After taking her vows, her superiors sent her to the convent of Réquista, where she was a primary school teacher for girls until 1872.

The extraordinary phenomena started to manifest in 1868, with diabolical attacks, visions and ecstasies preoccupying the everyday life of Marie-Xavier. She also received the stigmata on her hands, feet, side and forehead. A figurative wound – allegedly “written using a spine” – appeared on her chest, it said: “fille de réparation.” In the Roman Catholic tradition, the act of reparation aims to mend the sins of others. In this vein, the wound represented Marie-Xavier's expiatory mission.

She started to be called “la stigmatisée de Réquista” and became renowned in France. Despite her religious sisters not wishing to advertise the mystical phenomena, Marie-Xavier's ecstasies attracted many curious people and gave her a reputation of sanctity. Marie-Xavier was also said to be a brilliant visionary. She was renowned

for her premonitions and predictions regarding important political events in France, such as the 1870 war and the Commune. Her prophecies reflected her millenarist and monarchical influences. Fascinated by Marie-Xavier's mysticism and prophecies, some aristocrats became financially involved with the convent.

Mgr Bourret, Bishop of Rodex, had Marie-Xavier's mystical life examined and judged it to be veridical. Nevertheless, he prevented Marie-Xavier from having any contact outside her community and suggested she leave the country or enter a cloistered monastery. Around 1871, a personal investigation was undertaken by Canon Servières, who also judged the phenomena favourably. However, Mgr Bourret did not seem to tolerate the public enthusiasm surrounding Marie-Xavier and decided to send her back to her first congregation in Marseille.

By then, Georges de Nédonchel Choiseul, a Belgian count, had become a great admirer of the stigmatic. Mathilde, the count's deceased daughter – who offered her life to God in order to cease the persecution of Pius IX – appeared to Marie-Xavier along with Jesus. The Belgian count treated Marie-Xavier as an adoptive daughter and financed her initiatives. Marie-Xavier founded the congregation *Sœurs Consolatrices du Cœur de Jésus* in Boussu, where she became Mother Superior under the name of *Mère Marie du Cœur de Jésus*. She died in Boussu in 1926, still carrying the stigmata.

Maître, Jacques. *Mystique et féminité. Essai de psychanalyse sociohistorique*. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1997.

Massol, Marcel. *Histoire de La Clauze. La révérende Mère Marie*. Réquista: Chez l'Auteur, 1983.

Nihoul, P. *Une âme réparatrice. Mère Marie du Cœur de Jésus fondatrice des Consolatrices du Cœur de Jésus*. Rodez: Éd. Du Rouergue, 1947.

### **Marie-Marthe Chambon (Chambon, Françoise) (1866, 1841–1907)**

Françoise Chambon was born into a humble family in Croix-Rouge (Savoie) on 6 March 1841. From a young age, she was very pious and was said to receive favours from God. During one Holy Friday, when she was nine years old, the crucified and bleeding Christ appeared to her and Chambon decided to devote her life to God. The priest of the parish, M. Lacombe, accepted her as a Franciscan tertiary at the age of 19. At first, he sent her to Chambéry to the Carmelite sisters, but they considered that the girl was too frail and had insufficient education – she was illiterate – to live a life of penitence. In contrast, the sisters of La Visitation found her innocence and fragility very attractive and accepted her. At age 21, Françoise took the religious name of Marie-Marthe.

In September 1866, she started to have daily visions of the crucified Christ and contemplated his wounds. She claimed that Jesus had asked her to sleep on the floor with a spiked belt and granted her the pain of the crown of thorns, which prevented her from

resting her head without suffering from intense agony. In the following year, on 26, 27 and 28 of September, Marie-Marthe Chambon had a splendid vision of the Crucifixion, which revealed her true mission in casting a favourable light on the sacred wounds of Christ to convert sinners and help the Church. "The Crucifix, that's your book!" Jesus had allegedly told her. "All the real science is in the study of my Wounds" (cited in Schoons, *La stigmatisée*, 32). From then on, she dedicated her life to developing of a devotional cult focused on the contemplation and exaltation of the Holy Wounds to achieve salvation, especially for the souls in Purgatory. During this period, her only known nourishment was the Eucharist.

During the last two decades of her life, Marie-Marthe carefully hid her divine graces from others. Little is known about how she experienced the stigmata. One day, she claimed to have received the following message from Jesus: "I want you to be crucified with Me; I want it in every way." Thus, it seems that she suffered from all the wounds of Christ, although they were invisible most of the time. When the wounds in her feet opened in June 1874, she prayed to the Lord to make them disappear. She died on 21 March 1907. After her passing, more than a million booklets about her life and the cult of the Holy Wounds were published in 17 languages.

Hannesse, C. "Les saintes formées par la Visitation." *Bulletin du Diocèse de Reims*, 64.17 (1936): 202–203.

Monastère de la Visitation. *Sœur Marie-Marthe Chambon de la Visitation Sainte-Marie de Chambéry et les saintes plaies de N.-S.J.-C.* Chambéry: Monastère de la Visitation, 1924.

Monastère de la Visitation. *Sœur Marie-Marthe Chambon. Religieuse de La Visitation Sainte-Marie de Chambéry, 1841–1907.* Chambéry: Imp. Réunies, 1928.

Schoons, Willibrord. *La stigmatisée de Chambéry: sœur Marie-Marthe Chambon, l'apôtre des Plaies du Christ.* Bruxelles, Beauraing: Annales de Beauraing et de Banneux, 1934.

### **Marra, Teresa (1913, 1883–)**

Teresa Marra was born into a poor farming family from Azzano San Paolo, in the province of Bergamo, in 1883. She had a simple childhood divided between work in the fields and church. When she was an adolescent, she became a fervent Catholic. At the beginning of 1913, while she was working in a factory, Teresa felt unwell. Her colleagues called a doctor, who found a large steel chain tied to her chest, a thorn stitched into her skin close to her heart, and a cilice of 90 nails.

At another time, St Angela Merici appeared to Teresa and predicted incredible events, such as Marian apparitions and prophecies. During one of her daily ecstasies, she saw the Virgin Mary, who told her that on 14 February 1913 she would receive the stigmata of the crucified Christ. The news was communicated to the parish priest of Azzano, Father Alberti, and to his confessor, Father Rivellini. They were her devoted

supporters and spread the news. On 14 February, Teresa was surrounded by many people in her home when the imitative wounds of the Passion opened on her hands, feet and chest. For her faithful, she was a popular “living saint.” Thousands of visitors came to see the miracle with their own eyes.

Doctors Silvio Gavazzeni and Angelo Brignoli, who visited her, claimed her case was a psychological illness; a severe form of hysteria. However, her faithful refused to accept the medical diagnosis. Teresa prophesied that she would die on 30 March of that year, as announced by St Angela Merici. From the end of the month until 2 April, thousands of followers arrived in Azzano from across northern Italy, waiting for the death of the “holy” woman. However, after three days, Teresa appeared in good condition and the miracle did not occur this time. Finally, on 2 April, the public security authorities gave the order to protect the village from the crowds of visitors, and Teresa was taken to Dr Gavazzeni’s hospital, where she was treated as a hysteric. The popular devotion, however, did not stop, and for some years her faithful tried to visit her in the hospital in the hope of obtaining graces and healing.

We do not have any more information about her life after these events of 1913.

*Corriere della Sera*, Monday 1 April 1913, 5; Thursday 3 April 1913, 4; Friday 4 April 1913, 2–3; Tuesday 8 April 1913, 6; Sunday 13 April 1913, 3.

### **Massart, Marie-Thérèse (1873, 1851–)**

Marie-Thérèse Massart was born in 1851 in the province of Liège (Belgium). Her father was a peasant, and took his family to France. They lived in various places until settling in Grand-Rozoy (Aisne) in November 1873. From her childhood, Marie-Thérèse was very devoted to the Virgin. She suffered from numerous illnesses and saw her pain as an expiatory mission from God. On Friday, 21 February 1873, she relived the Passion for the first time. At the time, her family was living in Louppy-sur-Loison (Meuse). Over the following weeks, and until Holy Friday (11 April), she suffered from the Holy Wounds. The pain began at 7.30 P.M. on Thursday afternoon and stopped on Friday at midnight. Her family, along with the parish priest and the family physicians, decided to keep Marie-Thérèse’s stigmatization a secret. The parish priest attempted to elucidate whether the phenomenon was supernatural in origin. Apparently, on 2 May he obtained definitive proof, when Marie-Thérèse revealed to him something that she was not supposed to know.

On 29 April 1873, six months after she began suffering from the pains of the Passion, the Holy Wounds appeared on Marie-Thérèse’s body. The news began to spread and a crowd of people, including many clergy, started to visit the stigmatic, wishing to witness the phenomenon. They saw the stigmata on her hands, feet, side and a little on her forehead. It is said that one Friday about one thousand people visited Marie-Thérèse.

Not everyone was admitted to the stigmatic's room during the stigmatization because she claimed that those who doubted her increased her pain.

Marie-Thérèse was apparently in spiritual contact with other stigmatics. While in ecstasy, she mentioned that she "saw" four stigmatics in Europe. One in Belgium (Louise Lateau) was more "advanced than her," but she would soon "become just like her." Sometimes, she was "transported" to the mountain of La Salette, where the seer and stigmatic Mélanie Calvat saw the Virgin in 1846. There, the Virgin of La Salette allegedly spoke to Marie-Thérèse about the future of France.

It is uncertain what happened to Marie-Thérèse and how the phenomena evolved. It seems that in January 1874, her spiritual guide forbade her to receive more visits. The clergy discussed the veracity of the phenomena in their private correspondence. While her spiritual guide considered the wounds to be supernatural, others thought that Marie-Thérèse was either simulating or that she was possessed by the Devil. The discussion seemed to fade during 1874. In the autumn of that year, the journal *Annales de la Sainteté* published several accounts of the extraordinary graces received by Marie-Thérèse between February and December 1873.

Tournai, AST, Louise Lateau, B4, Documentation diverse, 6. Publications diverses sur des stigmatisées autres que Louise Lateau.

### **Mastacchini, Teresa (c.1907, 1892–1926)**

Teresa, known by her religious name Maria Lilia, was born in Castell'Azzara, in the province of Grosseto, on 24 May 1892. Her parents were fervent Catholics who encouraged her mystical path and the priesthood of her brother, Giglio Mastacchini, who became a monsignor. From childhood, Teresa's life was marked by prodigies. As a small child, she fled over a wall to escape a violent assault and was, she claimed, saved by the Virgin Mary.

Her divine gifts increased after she entered a monastery. At the age of 15, in April 1907, she joined the Franciscan tertiary of Ischia di Castro (Viterbo) and took the name Maria Lilia. The devotion to Gemma Galgani was widespread in the cloister, although it was not yet officially recognized by the Church. Maria Lilia, supported by her spiritual father, Luigi Taffi, decided to follow the spiritual example of the Tuscan saint. Prolonged fasts and corporal mortifications led to altered states of consciousness and alleged mystical phenomena, such as ecstasy, stigmata and blood sweats. Among the paranormal phenomena, there was also the ability to prophesy future events (such as the Ischia earthquake), meetings with a guardian angel and the bleeding of the crucifix in her room.

In August 1919, she and three other sisters received permission from Cardinal Scopinelli to found a new religious institution. In Gavignano, in the province of Rome, Maria Lilia established the Istituto delle Sorelle Terziarie Francescane della Divina

Provvidenza (Institute of the Tertiary Franciscan Sisters of Divine Providence), which later became the Suore Pie Operaie (with educational and welfare functions).

The *fama sanctitatis* of the founder quickly spread beyond the monastery, reaching the Vatican, with the news of her paranormal manifestations alerting the Holy Office. In December 1925, Msgr Salvatore Baccarini was selected as the apostolic visitor to investigate Maria Lilia and the other sisters. He found a deep conflict within the monastery, between supporters and detractors of the charismatic founder.

A few months later, on 1 April 1926, Maria Lilia died at the age of 33, before explicit measures could be taken by the Holy See. Even after her death, believers continued to consider her a saint, invoking her during the war, or to obtain miracles. In 1992, initial work for the beatification process began, promoted by the association of Maria Lilia Mastacchini.

ACDF, Dev. V. 1923, 2.

Gentile, Rosalba. "Nel solco di Gemma. Maria Lilia Mastacchini e Suor Crocifissa Vangioni nella serie archivistica *Devotiones Variae*." In *Ricerche di storia sociale e religiosa*, 79 (2011), 289–299.

### **Matarrelli, Palma (1858, 1825–1888)**

Palma Matarrelli, better known as Palma of Oria or Beata Palma, was born into a family of poor peasants from Oria, in the province of Brindisi, on 31 March 1825. In 1842, at the age of 17, she married Domenico Zito and had three children, all of whom died at an early age. Her husband died in 1848, and Palma lived alone with her mother, completely changing her life, especially after a meeting with the canon, Vincenzo de Angelis, and later Francesco De Pace.

On 3 May 1858, at the age of 33, while she was praying at the Church of St Francis, she received the stigmata on her hands, feet and chest. They were evident until 1865 (the side wound remained until her death). In addition to stigmata, other mystical phenomena were reported, including visions, ecstasies, apocalyptic prophecies, miraculous communion, the emission of miraculous liquids and perfumes, as well as healing abilities.

Her fame spread throughout Italy and even abroad, and she became a very popular religious celebrity. In June 1866, due to the incredible number of pilgrims, the mayor of Oria and the civil authorities decided to take action. Visitors were removed from the village and Palma and her mother were locked up in isolation at the orphanage of St Domenico while a medical investigation studied her case. Despite these measures, the pilgrims continued to come.

In 1869, the canon de Angelis sent a manuscript in three volumes about the "Marvels of Matarrelli" to the Holy Office, asking permission to publish and distribute it. This prompted a Vatican investigation.

In 1871, the French doctor, Antoine Imbert Gourbeyre, visited Palma, declaring her manifestations to be paranormal. He also dedicated the second volume of his book *Les Stigmatisées* to her (the case of Palma was not included in the edition of 1894, due to Holy Office censorship).

In 1872, the Holy See decreed that all of Palma's phenomena, including the stigmata and apocalyptic prophecies about the Church and Pope, were illusions, fraud and inspired by the devil. They also decreed that she was to live in total isolation, forbade pilgrims and dismissed her fanatic spiritual directors. However, the Bishop of Oria, Luigi Margarita, did not obey the measures and the popular devotion ("deviant devotion") continued until her death.

Palma died on 15 March 1888, considered Blessed by the people. Her remains are conserved in the chapel of the Daughters of the Divine Zeal of Oria.

Castelli, Francesco. *Per una definizione del modello di processo penale del Sant'Uffizio: il procedimento inquisitoriale per affettata santità nei confronti di Palma Matterelli di Oria (1869–1878)*. In Van Geest, Paul and Regoli, Roberto (eds.). *Suavis Laborum Memoria. Chiesa, Papato e Curia Romana tra storia e teologia*. Vatican City: Archivio Segreto Vaticano, 2013.

Imbert-Gourbeyre, Antoine. *Les stigmatisées*. Paris: Victor Palmé, 1873.

### **Mela, Itala (1937, 1924–1957)**

Itala Mela was born in La Spezia on 28 August 1904 to non-practising Catholic parents, and was secretly baptized by a midwife (she was re-baptized on 24 August 1948 by Msgr Bonfiglioli, the vicar of La Spezia). In 1920, her little brother died and her family responded to this sorrowful event by losing all faith. In 1922, the girl moved to Genoa, where she attended the university (faculty of letters and philosophy). This was also the year of her conversion, due to the spiritual direction of Father Marchisio Scolopio. Throughout the years, her inner life became deeper, so much so that she wanted to become a nun. In 1925, she graduated and began teaching at Pontremoli, in the province of Massa Carrara. In June of that year, she made a vow of chastity, which became perpetual from the Easter of 1928. Her ascetic life included episodes of ecstasy, charismatic visions and gifts, and a divine voice, which asked her to found a new Benedictine monastery in Belgium. On 3 August 1929, a supernatural ray from the tabernacle illuminated her mind and wounded her body, convincing her to become a sacrificial "victim soul" for the salvation of the Church. Her suffering became more intense during the Second World War.

The paranormal experiences became increasingly frequent, and during the Pentecost of 1929, Itala reconfirmed her desire to be an expiatory victim. Despite the family's opposition, she finally entered a convent, but a mystical illness (an ongoing fever) forced her to return home in desperate health. After recovering her health, Itala

became an oblate in the monastery of St Paul Fuori Le Mura in Rome, later renouncing the monastic life for the Catholic apostolate in the world.

On the Holy Friday of 1937, Itala was carried in spirit to the Mount of Calvary, on which she shared the Passion of Christ. On 3 May of the following year, Jesus told her that she would receive spiritual stigmata every Friday. She also received the gift of the transverberation of the heart (August 1938). Her adoration for the “Inabitazione” (“Inhabitation,” a form of worship of the Trinity), led her to establish a religious family in 1946 consisting of priests engaged in the spread of devotion.

Itala Mela died on 29 April 1957, and her remains were buried in the cathedral of La Spezia. Her cause for beatification was introduced in 1976 and was completed on 10 June 2017, when she was declared Blessed.

Piccinelli, Aldo. *L'esperienza spirituale di Itala Mela. Una vita di incandescente immersione nella trinità*. Rome: Benedectina Editrice, 1991.

### **Menéndez, Josefa (1920, 1890–1923)**

Josefa Menéndez was born on 4 February 1890 in Madrid, into a humble and very pious family. After the death of her father, she began working as a seamstress and helped her mother take care of her three younger sisters. For a long time, she wanted to follow her religious vocation, but could not leave her mother on her own. On February 1920, when one of her sisters was old enough to help with the family, she crossed the border between Spain and France and joined the convent of the Religieuses du Sacré Cœur des Feuillants in Poitiers. She was 30 years old. Her daily life in the convent was ordinary and she carried out humble tasks with grace and humility. From her arrival until the day of her death only four years later, her fellow sisters did not know of the mystical phenomena that Josefa experienced.

Josefa became a victim soul in reparation for the sins of humankind. She witnessed several apparitions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Virgin, and was allegedly tormented by diabolical attacks. Apparently, she was able to descend into Hell and experienced the pain of the condemned souls. She underwent a mystical marriage with Jesus, who made her join his suffering during the Passion. According to Josefa, Jesus once told her: “Take my cross, my nails, my crown of thorns; these are my treasures, but since you are my wife I am not afraid of lending them to you” (cited in Menéndez, *Un llamamiento*, 53). Jesus supposedly gave Josefa a “message” that she should transmit. She recorded this message and her memories in a text published posthumously under the title *Un llamamiento al amor* (*The way of divine love*), which has been translated into many different languages (including French, Portuguese, Italian, English, Chinese and Hungarian) and has been reprinted several times. When the sisters discovered the text after Josefa’s death in 1923, they realized that they had been living with a saint. Her cause for beatification began in the same year. Josefa’s manuscript was taken to



Rome for examination and was declared nihil obstat in 1938. Many graces have been attributed to Josefa's intercession.

Feraud García, José María. *Una palomita blanca: (Sor Josefa Menéndez)*. 2nd ed. Madrid: Ediciones Paulinas, 1955.

Menéndez, Josefa. *Un llamamiento al amor*. Barcelona: Ramón Farré, 1943.

### **Mohr, Ursula (c.1825, c.1800–c.1855)**

Ursula Mohr was born into a peasant family from Appiano, in the province of Bolzano, in the first half of the nineteenth century. She lived a secluded and withdrawn life, but because of her mystical phenomena, such as ecstasies and visible stigmata, she became famous as one of the stigmatized virgins of Tyrol. Ursula died in Appiano between 1855 and 1860.

Imbert-Gourbeyre, Antoine. *La stigmatisation*, ed. Joachim Boufflet. Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1996.

### **Molari, Angela (1844, 1821–1887)**

Angela Molari was born in Rimini on 24 August 1821. According to the hagiographic tradition, she followed the main mystical stages of other stigmatics. At the age of five, she made a private vow of chastity and then consecrated herself to Christ; at the age of eight, she began to suffer spiritual pains for the salvation of the Church. In 1830, she received her first Communion and experienced her first episode of ecstasy. Her penitential practices were extreme and included inedia, unceasing prayers and self-flagellation, while divine visions and demonic temptations had already begun in her adolescence.

Her father died in 1838 and two years later she opened a kindergarten with her mother. She assiduously attended the Marian shrine of Colonnella, choosing the Capuchin, Michelangelo da Rimini (her director for over 30 years), as her spiritual father. On 28 January 1844, after the Mass, she became ill with an undiagnosed disease that within a few days appeared to be condemning her to death. On 2 February, she had her first Marian apparition and Our Lady predicted that she would receive the stigmata. After the vision, her feet exhibited a deep gash, from which blood was emitted. In the following period, the Holy Wounds opened on her hands, chest and head (crown of thorns).

Angela and her confessor attempted to hide the events, but in the following year news had spread within the diocese, attracting the interest of the newly elected bishop, Msgr Salvatore Leziroli, who decided to investigate the case. On 2 September, he sent two doctors (Remigio Paglierani and Felice Lancellotti), the pro-vicar general and two other witnesses to ascertain the nature of her stigmata and conduct some experiments.

After examining and sealing them, they were declared to be scientifically unexplainable. The bishop, however, continued to monitor Angela and, on 28 January 1847, he wrote a report to Pope Pius IX, who commissioned the Bishop of Bagnore to examine her case once again in 1850. The stigmata phenomenon was initially repeated every week, on Fridays, then became more sporadic, until it only occurred during the Easter period. Many relics were obtained from the impression of linens on her wounds.

Earlier, in 1844, Angela, her mother and some women of Colonnella created a small religious community in which they all lived, which became a monastic congregation in 1851 (the *Congregazione delle Figlie dell'Immacolata*). She also took the name of Maria Maddalena della Santissima Trinità. After a long illness, she died on 21 November 1887. On 10 May 1988, her cause for beatification was introduced.

Da Lagosanto, Venanzio. *Vita di suor Maria Maddalena della SS. Trinità, al secolo Angela Molari di Rimini, fondatrice dell'istituto delle Figlie dell'Immacolata Concezione*. Milan: Tip. Arc. Boniardi-Pogliani, 1890.

Felici, Icilio. *La santa di Rimini: Angela Molari fondatrice delle Suore Bianche di Sant'Arcangelo di Romagna*. Rome: Nuova Lux, 1957.

Ruggeri, Fausto. *Angela Molari. Una donna tutta di Dio*. Santarcangelo di Romagna: Congregazione Suore Francescane dei Sacri Cuori, 2012.

### **Mónica de Jesús (Cornago Zapata, Basilia) (1908, 1889–1964)**

Basilia Cornago Zapata was born in Monteagudo (Navarra) in 1889. She was the third child in a family of ten children. They all received a very pious Catholic education. Basilia recognized her religious vocation very early. On the day of her first Communion, in May 1901, she saw her guardian angel for the first time. At the age of 19, she joined the Augustinian sisters in the monastery of Santa María Magdalena in Baeza (Jaén). After her entry into religious life, she started to suffer from attacks by the Devil. Initially, she took the religious name of Sor Basilia de Santa Mónica, but because there was already a Sor Basilia in the convent, everyone began to call her Mónica de Jesús.

Her ecstasies and mystical phenomena were not always well received by her sisters. Fortunately, she found a spiritual director in Father Cantera, a doctor in philosophy and canon law. Mónica de Jesús was especially devoted to Jesus of the Sacrament, with whom she allegedly maintained a spiritual relationship. She also claimed to be in contact with souls in Purgatory. One of the most extraordinary phenomena that she experienced was the gift of bilocation. Allegedly, Mónica de Jesús was transported to different places by her angel. For example, she was said to have appeared at an execution by firing squad during the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939). Eleven of the 30 victims were priests. Even more exceptional was her alleged bilocation in 1921 during the Second Moroccan War, where she encouraged the Spanish soldiers on the battlefield and was injured in the leg.

One of her greatest concerns was the conversion of sinners. In March 1917, she founded an association of "victim souls" to pursue this mission. They were a small group of seven people, six women (four religious, two lay) and a priest. Mónica de Jesús was said to spend every Holy Week in ecstasy. She received stigmata for the first time in 1908, during her novitiate. According to her spiritual father, sometimes the wounds bled profusely and the cloth that she used to cover them was soaked. They would start bleeding on Thursday at midday and were closed by Friday at the same hour. The stigmata became invisible during the Spanish Civil War, when the Augustinian sisters were forced to leave the convent and live among the secular population.

Mónica de Jesús died in 1964 with a reputation for sanctity. People from Baeza and surroundings, as well as from Madrid and other parts of Spain, came to see her body. Many commended themselves to Sor Mónica. A process of beatification was opened on 8 December 1979 and she was declared Venerable by Pope John Paul II on 13 June 1992.

Ayape, Eugenio Fr. *Una flor contemplativa: sor Mónica de Jesús*. Madrid: Augustinus, 1977.

Carmen, Teodoro del, O.A.R. *Camino de santidad*. Madrid: Augustinus, 1975.

Peña, Ángel. *La venerable sor Mónica de Jesús y su ángel custodio*. Lima: Perú, 2011.

### **Moock, Arthur Otto (1935, 1902–?)**

The case of Arthur Otto Moock (born 13 May 1902 in Hagenau), a merchant from Hamburg, was found exceptional by his contemporaries in two ways: he was a Protestant and a man who had never been much concerned about religion. However, in 1928, he had a terrible car accident, damaging his spinal cord (and thus the sympathetic nerve system, according to a physician), and he had to stop working. After seven years, in March 1935, he received the wound of the crown of thorns and stigmata on his hands and feet. A small wound also appeared on his forehead, which looked like the skin had been torn a little. During a bomb attack in the Second World War, his forehead developed an additional mark, completing a cross. At the time, he also received the side wound. Initially, Moock sought medical help but he gave up when he claimed to have received a mission from Christ in October 1949. Moock saw Christ urging the faithful to gather together, including all confessions as all of one faith. Moock himself linked this to the Pope's statements about the dialogue between the confessions. His case drew the attention of medical and psychological experts and was made into a film called 'The Riddles of the Cross' (*Rätsel des Kreuzes*). This in turn increased the number of visitors, as well as opposition to his case. In 1949, the Danish hypnotist Thorsen attempted to cure him using hypnotic suggestion but failed.

Anonymous. "Ja, es ist Blut." *Der Spiegel*, July 28, 1949.

Anschütz, Georg. "Ein Stigmatisierter unter uns." *Die Zeit*, July 28, 1949.

Schütz. "Der stigmatisierte Arthur O. Moock." *Neue Wissenschaft. Zeitschrift für kritischen Okkultismus* 1.2 (1950): 41–47, 1.3 (1950): 20–22.

### Moriconi, Ester (1913, 1875–1937)

Ester Anna Moriconi, also known as Esterina or by the religious name of Maddalena, was born into a family of poor peasants from Montelupone, in the Marche region (central Italy), on 6 September 1875. At the age of nine, she became ill with a severe case of meningitis that left her deaf-mute for years and the victim of ongoing consumption. Her father died in 1892, and she and her mother were housed by friends and relatives, until they moved into a house owned by a woman called Maddalena Magner in 1894. In 1913, her mother died, and the charismatic woman began to exhibit incredible graces. While in childhood she had been favoured by miracles, such as healing from fatal illnesses, from 1913 onwards, she began to have daily episodes of ecstasy and visions. On 29 October, she received the invisible crown of thorns. In November of the following year, the stigmata appeared on her body, although she kept them hidden until 18 December 1917, when she confessed the phenomena to Magner and numerous priests (especially the fathers of St Francis, her spiritual directors).

She not only had divine graces, but also suffered a mystical illness and demonic possession. In many letters sent to Ester's faithful, Magner wrote that she was constantly persecuted by demons, beaten and abused for her sacrifice and atonement for the Church. From March 1921, Moriconi experienced the phenomenon of stigmatization for three days every week. On Mondays, she contemplated the Passion in an ecstatic state, on Wednesdays, she received the flagellation, while on Fridays, deep wounds opened on her hands, feet, head and chest. Copious amounts of blood was emitted from the wound on her chest, which created symbolic figures (crosses, hearts, holy images) when it came into contact with cloth, later used as relics by the faithful.

In 1921, Maddalena Magner died and Ester went to Rome, hosted by the Augustin Sisters of the Seven Sorrows (Suore agostiniane dei Sette Dolori). There, supported by the abbess and important clergymen (including cardinals), she became a significant religious celebrity. On 29 October 1922, she took her vows and became a Augustinian nun. Her fame soon spread beyond the boundaries of the cloister, and many pilgrims would visit her, especially during the Fridays of the Passion. On 18 April 1923, the Holy Office officially opened an investigation of her, conducted by Father Donzella. In December 1924, the Vatican Congregation decided that Esterina should be removed from the monastery and placed in a psychiatric hospital with the assistance of Agostino Gemelli in Milan (1925–1937). They closed the house in Montelupone because it had become a pilgrimage destination, and destroyed all the relics and writings. Esterina died in Milan on 30 November 1937.

### **Mrazek, Bertha “Georges Marasco” (c.1922, 1890–1967)**

Bertha Mrazek was born around 1890 in Brussels. Her Czech father and Belgian mother allegedly turned her out on the streets at an early age and she started a career as a lion-tamer (in the circus of the Van Been brothers) and also as a singer at “Minerva.” During the First World War, she is reported to have been in Saint Gilles prison, but it is unclear under what circumstances. Some say she had collaborated with the Germans, while, according to other stories, she had been good friends with Edith Cavell and helped in the resistance. After the war, she was accused of having acted as a spy on behalf of the German occupiers. Baron Van Zuylen van Nyevelt and five others investigated the case from 25 November 1918–2 May 1919 and had no success in finding incriminating evidence.

Bertha did not live through the war years uninjured and in 1919 she could no longer move: her arms and legs were paralysed and a few months later she went blind. As a last resort, in July 1920, she went to the basilica in Halle, where she underwent a miraculous cure at the shrine of Our Lady. She made a painting of her cure in Halle, as an ex-voto, and hung the image in her own chapel in her house in Brussels. From an initial small group of enthusiasts after her cure (with whom she exchanged poems and letters), a loyal set of followers soon developed when Bertha became a “victim soul” and began suffering for others. She also exhibited the stigmata and became a prophetess.

Her conduct and apparently miraculous cure were viewed with extreme disfavour by the ecclesiastical authorities. Moreover, her persistence in wearing male attire, calling herself George Marasco, as well as her alleged mission and prophecies and the considerable sums of money she collected from her supporters, roused their suspicion. She seems to have been denied the sacraments. In 1924, she was arrested for obtaining money under false pretences. The medical experts who examined the case had her transferred to an asylum in Mons, with the newspapers headlining on 3 December that she had been declared insane. A small group of followers remained loyal, however, and in the 1930s we find Bertha, now Père Jean, in a castle in Essenbeek. He continued to receive visitors in her own chapel in her house in Brussels as well. He died in 1967, but even today his followers attend a mass in his honour in Halle on the day of the miraculous cure

Schleyer, Franz. *Die Stigmatisation mit den Blutmalen*. Hannover: Schmorl Von Seefeld, 1948.

Thurston, Herbert. *Surprising mystics*. London: Burns & Oates, 1955.

### **Napoleoni, Giulia (c.1840, 1819–1851)**

Giulia Napoleoni was born in Arsoli, a village near Rome, on 5 February 1819. As an adolescent, she moved to Rome, where she worked as a cleaning lady for aristocratic families in the capital. Her father confessor was Vincenzo Tizzani, who considered her

a very pious and obedient believer. Many graces and mystical phenomena have been attributed her, including visible stigmata, ecstasies, bilocation, visions and prophecies (most of them about the popes and Pius IX in particular).

Giulia died of tuberculosis. It is said that her body was exhumed after 90 days and “fresh and living” blood came from her heart and stigmata, as reported by doctors and witnesses. Father Tizzani and Massari asked the Dutch painter Jan Philip Koelman to make a portrait of her remains in St Vitale church.

Rome, ASPV, Archive of St Pietro in Vincoli fondo Tizzani, M 1030, cc. 1–48.

### **Navarro, Narcisa (c.1880, –)**

Narcisa Navarro was a woman from Ayamonte (Huelva) in the south of Spain. Around 1880, she became bedridden. Her acquaintances soon discovered that her body was covered with figurative stigmata depicting bloody crosses. The news spread by word of mouth. People from villages close by, and also from Portugal – not far from Huelva – started to come to Ayamonte wishing to see “the living saint.” Some were reported to admire Narcisa and others made fun of her. Many took pictures of her in bed, and these were allegedly sold as relics.

Miracles other than stigmata were also reported to have occurred. For example, on two occasions, Narcisa Navarro’s bed suddenly caught fire, but she did not suffer burns. Her spiritual father was Francisco Campos, the parish priest of Ayamonte and her brother-in-law. This family relationship made some people suggest it was fraud. The anticlerical and Republican Spanish newspaper *El Motín* argued that Narcisa and Francisco were partners in crime, and that the crosses on the stigmatic’s body were like “prisoners’ tattoos,” made using injections.

“Manojo de flores místicas,” *El Motín* 2.20 (1882): 1–2.

### **Nerbollier, Marie-Louise (1885, 1859–1908)**

Marie-Louise Nerbollier was a seamstress, born in 1859 in Lyon. Around her 20s, she took shelter at the château of a pious woman, Mme Piellat, in Diémoz – a village of 700 inhabitants close to Lyon. Piellat’s son, Amédée de Piellat, was spending his fortune on the Catholic missions in Jerusalem, where he had met the mystic and stigmatized nun Joséphine Rumèbe (1850–1927). By then, Marie-Louise was already known for undergoing mystical events. In 1884, while she was living in her tiny room in Lyon, she allegedly witnessed an apparition of the Virgin, which took place at the same site where, two years earlier, Anne-Marie Coste (1861–1924) had seen the Virgin.

At Diémoz, under the guidance of Mme Abric – Nerbollier’s old boss – and the curé Germanet – the parish priest of Diémoz – Nerbollier continued to develop her religious practices at the château. She was said to receive the stigmata every Friday. The

Five Holy Wounds were visible and bled profusely. Soon, an unauthorized cult started to develop around this mystic, popularly known as “la stigmatisée de Diémoz.” She received many visitors, including the later stigmatic Thérèse Durnerin (1847–1905), who went to Diémoz for the first time in 1892. During bouts of ecstasy, Marie-Louise was said to see the crucified Christ and the Virgin. Like other stigmatics, her alleged mission was to suffer as an expiatory victim for the sins of humankind.

According to Republican and Freemason newspapers, such as *Le XIX<sup>e</sup> Siècle* and *Le Franc-Maçon*, the parish priest of Diémoz advertised the events. He was the uncle of a carriage contractor. On Fridays, the day of the ecstasies – as well as market day – his carriages would be full with people heading to the “stigmatic’s show.” Several journalists from *Le Petit Lyonnais* and *Le Courrier de Lyon* were sent to Diémoz. According to them, Marie-Louise was a hysteric, whose illness had been exploited by the clergy and her entourage.

Although it has not been proved, it is said that Nerbollier joined the Third Order of Saint Francis. She died on 15 August 1908. In 1939, the grave concession at the cemetery was not renewed and Marie-Louise was exhumed. Her body appeared to be uncorrupted. A local cult surrounding this mystic has survived.

Lyon, Archives diocésaines de Lyon (ADL), Marie-Louise Nerbollier, 1.1911.

“La stigmatisée de Diémoz,” *Le XIX<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, 19 April 1886, 4.

“Le miracle de Diémoz,” *Le Franc-Maçon*, 24 April 1886, 1–2.

“Miracle ! Miracle !” *Le Républicain de la Loire et de la Haute-Loire*, 23 April 1886, 3.

Théotime de Saint-Just, (Père). *Les Capucins de Lyon, de la fin de la Révolution française à nos jours*. Lyon: Petit messenger de Saint-François, 1942.

### **Neumann, Therese (1926, 1898–1962)**

Therese was born on 9 April 1898, as the first of 11 children of the tailors Ferdinand and Anna Neumann. Therese’s family was not wealthy. They owned a small parcel of land and four cows. Therese started to contribute to the household in her final year of school (1910/1911) by working at Gut Flockenfeld watching over the cattle. In 1912, she started working as a maid for the innkeeper and farmer Max Neumann. On Sunday, 10 March 1918, a fire in a nearby estate changed Therese’s life. Most probably she strained her back carrying buckets of water to put out the fire. Afterwards, after several unlucky falls in which she hit the back of her head, she was confined to her bed, and in March 1919, she went completely blind. The doctors who assessed her case (for invalid support) in February 1920 diagnosed “hysteria” as the main cause.

Bedridden and blind, Therese had to give up on her dream of becoming a missionary nun. On 29 April 1923 (the day of the beatification of Therese of Lisieux), she suddenly regained her eyesight and, on 17 May 1925, she was no longer paralysed. She received the stigmata on 4–5 March 1926 and started having visions of the Passion of

Christ. In the same year, she stopped eating. Numerous visitors (including from countries such as France and the US, as well as all ranks of society) came to see her and she eventually attracted the attention of the episcopal authorities.

They created a medical commission that examined her case (especially her alleged inedia) from 14 to 28 July 1927 in her home, with Therese put under the close observation of four Franciscan nurses from Mallersdorf. No fraud could be detected and the episcopal authorities pressed for an examination in a clinic, but her father refused. In the aftermath, the episcopal ordinariate decided (in October 1927) to create a system of permissions for those who wanted to visit the stigmatic in order to stop the “pilgrimages” and publications on the matter. During the National Socialist period, the Gestapo took particular interest in the Konnersreuth circle, but Therese was never harmed or sent to a clinic, although her house was searched and her mail checked. In the years immediately after the war, the Americans accounted for almost half the visitors to Therese.

Although Therese Neumann was named after Saint Theresa of Avila, it was Therese of Lisieux who played an important role in her life after her father had given her a devotional card in 1914. She had regained her eyesight on the day of the beatification of the little flower, and Therese appeared to her on the anniversaries of her beatification and canonization. In 1962, Neumann became involved in the plans for the “Theresianum,” a cloister in Konnersreuth in honour of the 40th anniversary of Therese’s beatification; however, she died from a cardiac arrest before she could see the start of the building process on 18 September 1962. She was buried on 22 September 1962, with thousands of people (from the former West Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Switzerland and Austria) attending the service. The devotion to Therese Neumann remains very much alive (numerous people have visited her grave) and on 13 February 2005, the process of beatification was opened.

Boufflet, Joachim. *Thérèse Neumann ou le paradoxe de la sainteté*. Mesnil-sur-l’Estrée: Éditions du Rocher, 1999.

Seeger, Joachim. *Resl von Konnersreuth (1898–1962). Eine wissenschaftliche Untersuchung zum Werdegang, zur Wirkung und Verehrung einer Volksheiligen*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004.

### **Nezzo, Renata (1914, 1894–1925)**

Renata Nezzo was born in Urbino, central Italy, on 1 May 1894. The premature death of her mother (23 February 1901) and father (15 November 1903), led the young girl to travel frequently between Rome and Urbino as a guest of family and monasteries. Around the age of 12, she proved to have a deep inner life and made a temporary vow of chastity (29 September 1907), renewed every year until 1921, when it became perpetual. Three years later, she decided to adopt ascetic practices, including fasting,



self-flagellation and spiritual exercises. In January 1911, Nezzo entered the Third Order of Saint Francis and on 24 January 1913 joined the Daughters of Mary in Rome.

Despite her greater desire to become a nun, she felt that her mission consisted in offering herself as a "victim soul." This decision was taken thanks to the guidance of her spiritual fathers, Francesco Fabbri and Msgr Ugo Aiuti. It is difficult to know what kind of stigmata she had because her hagiography was rewritten in the 1970s and the most controversial issues – including mystical experiences – were deleted by Holy Office censorship. However, in her own writings she records that at Easter 1914, she received the crown of thorns around her head, on 16 February of the following year, she wrote that her inner suffering had also manifest physically, while on 27 July 1924 she recorded that a lot of blood issued from the wound on her chest. Moreover, every Thursday evening she fell into a state of ecstasy, while on Fridays she shared Christ's Passion (and her sufferings were more intense over the Easter period).

In 1916, she underwent the mystical crucifixion in Gethsemane and anticipated her death after a long illness. Renata had good relationships with the diocesan clergy and the pontiffs, who received her at private hearings (Pius X, Benedict XV and Pius XI). These relationships allowed her to become the secretary of the Catholic Action of Urbino (1918) and to found and write the manual for her community, the *Piccole Vittime dell'Amore Misericordioso* (Little Victims of Merciful Love) (25 November 1923), approved in 1925 by the Archbishop of Urbino.

Renata died on 4 September 1924 at the age of 31. After her death, the congregation split into different parts. The fanaticism of some of her followers led the Holy Office to open an investigation, dissolve the foundation and prohibit the distribution of the manual (2 April 1928). However, in 1976, the Bishop of Urbino requested the movement be reopened.

Galli, Enea. *Renata Nezzo (1894/1925). Vittima dell'amore misericordioso*. Urbino: Arti grafiche editoriali, 1981.

### **Niglutsch, Crescenzia (1836, 1816–1885)**

Crescenzia Niglutsch, one of the stigmatics of Tyrol, was born in St Leonardo in Passiria on 17 June 1816, and at the age of five moved with her family to Tschermers (Cermes). From 1832 to 1835, she worked as a cleaning lady for different families in Merano, Trent and Verona, but was forced to return home due to a nervous illness. Her mother died in 1835, her father had serious financial problems, and no medical treatment was able to help her. During that year, ecstasies, visions and a complete state of inedia changed her life completely.

The Gratschs, a rich and pious couple from Merano, decided to host and take care of Crescenzia, who moved into their home on 16 July 1835. Her illness, however, continued, and on 9 June 1836 she also received the visible stigmata on her hands. A few

weeks later, they also appeared on her feet, head and side. Every Friday, she relived the Passion of Christ with bleeding wounds.

All of these phenomena were very similar to other stigmatics of the Tyrol (they allegedly knew each other and met) but unlike them, she was not bedridden. Crescenzia was mobile and could even work, and after the first visible manifestations she prayed God to turn her wounds into invisible stigmata. On 9 October 1836, she appeared “re-born,” without the stigmata and recovered from her illness, and thus went back to her father’s house; although, between Thursdays and Fridays she would fall into a deep ecstatic state. During other working days, however, she now appeared quite “normal.” Under the spiritual direction of Franz Huber, her new confessor, Crescenzia began an active life in her parish.

In her village, however, the rumour spread that Crescenzia’s stigmata had disappeared as the result of her relationship with the young priest. According to the rumours, God had punished her by taking away the precious gift of the stigmata. The archbishop, Giovanni Nepomuceno Tschiderer, acted accordingly and ordered Father Huber to move her to Rovereto (1838). The bishop, without having met Crescenzia or opening a real investigation, claimed that the phenomena had no extraordinary origin.

This harsh judgement and the defamatory rumours meant Crescenzia was not accepted into the convent of the Sisters of Charity in Caldaro. It is likely that she first went in Rovereto with her confessor and then later lived in the Gratsch house once more. She died in Bolzano on 14 May 1855.

Anonymous. *Vita compendiosa di Crescenzia Nieklutsch di Tschermis*. In Antonio Riccardi (ed.). *Le tre mirabili vergini viventi nel Tirolo*. Milan, Tip. Santo Bravetta, 1837.

Gadaleta, Ludovico Maria and Vesely Leonardi, Ludmilla. *Il “Diarium Missarum” di don Antonio Eccel con annotazioni riguardanti Maria Domenica Lazzeri “l’Addolorata di Capriana” (1815–1848)*. Rovereto: New-book edizioni, 2015.

### **Noblet, Marie-Thérèse (1913, 1889–1930)**

Born in 1889, Marie-Thérèse Noblet was the second of three children of a French textile manufacturer and Mayor of Signy-l’Abbaye (Ardennes). In 1894, her father died after the failure of his business and the family moved into the maternal grandparents’ house. In a little less than a year, Noblet lost all her close relatives, except for her grandfather. She lived under his tuition until his death in 1900, when she moved to Epernay with other relatives. At that time, she was very devoted and committed to Christ. In 1905, she suffered from an illness that left her unable to walk. However, she went to Lourdes and was allegedly cured, with the medical office certifying the miraculous healing.

Around 1910, she attempted to join the Carmelites, but they rejected her due to her physical feebleness. She then started suffering from alleged diabolical attacks. Three

years later, she finally accepted that she was a “victim soul” for Christ. In that year, the first figurative Holy Wound appeared: a cross on her chest. On Holy Friday 1921, and in the presence of Archbishop Alain de Boismenu, she received the second figurative wound: a host below her throat. The wounds supposedly mutated and changed form from time to time.

At the time, Alain de Boismenu was Noblet’s spiritual father. In September 1921, believing that her mystical phenomena might help to convert the pagan peoples of Papua, Boismenu embarked with Noblet on a long journey to this province of Indonesia. Living in very poor conditions, Marie-Thérèse shared her life with the Indigenous people as a Mother Superior of a new congregation. It is said that other figurative stigmata appeared and disappeared over the years in Papua. The only witnesses were Boismenu and a few close friends.

She died in Kubuna in 1930 in obscurity. Over the following decades, several physicians and psychiatrists – Jean Lhermitte, Roland Dalvies, François Achille-Delmas and Pierre Giscard – accused her of unconsciously faking the mystical phenomena. They presented their arguments during a Congress for Religious Psychology in 1938, and published several books and articles on the subject, especially in the journal *Études Carmélitaines*. According to Giscard (1953), the absence of evidence makes it more difficult to judge the phenomena.

Giscard, Pierre. *Mystique ou hystérie? À propos de Marie-Thérèse Noblet*. Paris: La Colombe, 1953.

Journal: *Études Carmélitaines* (1938, vol. 23, October; 1939, vol. 24, April).

Lhermitte, Jean. *Mystiques et faux mystiques*. Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1952.

Marchal, Jean. *Marie-Thérèse Noblet*. Charleville: L’Ardennais, 1961.

Winowska, Maria. *Le scandale de la croix*. Montsûrs: Résiac, 1973.

### **Olazábal, Ramona (1931, 1915–1975)**

Ramona Olazábal was born in Beizama (Guipúzkoa, Basque Country) into a family of farmers. Her life is linked to the Marian apparitions that Ramona and other seers, usually children or adolescents, witnessed in the hills of Ezkioga during the Second Republic (1931–1936) in Spain. The visions started in June 1931, shortly after the proclamation of the Republic. In only a couple weeks, hundreds of new seers started to experience the same visions. Many were seen undergoing the pains of the Crucifixion, while a few supposedly received the stigmata. Along with Gloria Viñals and Josefa Lasa, Ramona was one of the latter. The events at Ezkioga attracted the attention of large crowds, with more than one million people visiting the site. The visions were condemned by the ecclesiastical authorities, including the Vatican. The political powers also repressed those who visited the site of the apparitions.

Ramona Olazábal’s first vision dates from 16 July 1931, when she was 16. At that time, she had already left her parent’s farm and had started working for aristocratic families

in San Sebastián. As the events at Ezkioga became increasingly popular, Ramona left her job and moved closer to the site of the apparitions. She was highly appreciated by the press, who reported her visions in the newspapers. Thanks to the mercifulness of her messages, she quickly gained followers, becoming one of the most popular seers. Her devotees often offered her money.

Like other seers from Ezkioga, Olazábal was waiting for a “great miracle.” She predicted that the Virgin would give her a rosary on 15 October. On that day, she went up to the hill with a girlfriend, Josefa Lasa. A crowd of around 18,000 people was waiting for her. When she returned, the backs of her hands showed two bloody wounds. A rosary was also found in her belt. Men carried Ramona down the hill seated on a chair. Meanwhile, people tried to wet their handkerchiefs with the blood from her hands. Pilgrims from all over the Basque Country arrived at Ezkioga in the following hours.

Justo de Echeguren, the Vicar General of Vitoria, created an ecclesiastical committee to investigate the alleged miracle. During the inquiry, Echeguren was sceptical. A man allegedly told him in private that after witnessing the blood flowing from Ramona’s wounds he saw a razor blade on the ground. Echeguren charged two physicians (one Catholic) with an investigation. After examining Ramona’s wounds, they concluded that they had been self-inflicted, probably with a razor blade or a bistoury. Shortly afterwards, Echeguren wrote a note for the press explaining that the origin of Olazábal’s wounds was not supernatural. Although some continued to believe in Ramona and accused Echeguren of having plotted against her, the girl’s reputation was considerably damaged.

Boué, G.L. *Merveilles et prodiges d'Ezquioga*. Tarbes: Imp. Lesbordes, 1933.

Christian, William A. *Visionaries. The Spanish Republic and the Reign of Christ*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

Fort, Stanislas. *Une nouvelle affaire Jeanne d'Arc*. Orléans: La Librairie Centrale, 1933.

Montilla, Julia, ed. *Ezkiozaleak: un relato fotográfico*. Barcelona: Ediciones Maravilla, 2009.

### **Padre Pio / Forgione, Francesco (1918, 1887–1968)**

Francesco Forgione, better known as Padre Pio, or Saint Pio of Pietrelcina, was born into a poor family from Pietrelcina, a small town in southern Italy (Campania), on 25 March 1887. In 1903, he entered a monastery, taking the name of Pio and, in 1916, he was consecrated as a priest.

On 8 September 1911, he wrote to Father Benedetto of St Marco in Lamis, his spiritual guide, that he had suffered from acute pains on his hands and feet since September 1910 (without bleeding). In 1918, he moved to San Giovanni Rotondo, where the visible stigmata began to appear. On 5 August, he received the mystical gift of the transverberation of the heart, and on 20 September the visible signs of the Passion appeared on his body. For 50 years, until his death, he had visible and open stigmata.

The news spread quickly through media channels and Padre Pio became a religious celebrity. The number of believers grew exponentially and hundreds of people visited San Giovanni Rotondo every day. The Italian and international press wrote long articles about the stigmatized friar. The Holy Office in Rome investigated his case, while Romanelli, Bignami, Festa and the famous scientist-priest, Agostino Gemelli, also visited him, writing differing reports, which led to the dichotomy of “living saint” or “holy impostor,” also reflected in the division of the Church and his devotees, the latter considering him a “living saint.” Actions were taken by the Holy See to constrain his cult. In 1931, he was forbidden to publicly celebrate the Mass and hear confession of the faithful. These measures, however, did not stop the popular devotion but only helped to spread his fame as a martyr fighting the corrupt Church. When Pope Pius XI revoked the orders of the Holy Office, San Giovanni Rotondo became a “semi-official” place of pilgrimage and worship, attracting believers from everywhere and from every social class.

Due to public and political support, Padre Pio was able to obtain money to build the Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza, a hospital and spiritual centre inaugurated in 1956. He also created prayer groups which spread throughout the world, promoting his international fame.

During the 1960s, he was the object of new accusations and suspicions, also fuelled by a misunderstanding with Pope John XXIII. However, he did receive papal support under the following pontificates of Paul VI and John Paul II. He died on 23 September 1968, and was given a State funeral. His canonical process was opened in 1969. In 1999, he was declared Blessed, and on 16 June 2002, he was declared a Catholic saint by Pope John Paul II. He is the most venerated saint in Italy.

Da Ripabottoni, Alessandro. *Padre Pio da Pietrelcina. Un cireneo per tutti*. Foggia: Centro culturale francescano, 1974.

Da Pobladura, Melchiorre and Da Ripabottoni, Alessandro. *Padre Pio da Pietrelcina. Epistolario*. San Giovanni Rotondo: Ed. Padre Pio (4 vols.), 1975–84.

Di Flumeri Gerardo. *Le stigmate di Padre Pio da Pietrelcina. Testimonianze, relazioni*. San Giovanni Rotondo: Ed. Padre Pio, 1985.

Di Flumeri, Gerardo. *Padre Pio da Pietrelcina. Lavori scolastici*. San Giovanni Rotondo: Ed. Padre Pio, 1993.

Luzzatto, Sergio. *Padre Pio. Miracoli e politica nell'Italia del Novecento*. Turin: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 2007 (English translation: Luzzatto, Sergio. *“Padre Pio”: Miracles and Politics in a Secular Age*. New York: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Company, 2010).

### **Palminota, Teresa (1920, 1896–1934)**

Teresa Palminota (called Colombina by her spiritual fathers) was born in Bari on 25 September 1896 and moved to Rome with her family in 1914. In the Italian capital,

she had a busy religious life, enrolling in the Pia Unione delle Figlie di Maria and participating in the young women's branch of the Catholic Action. In January 1917, while she was praying in church, a light coming from the Blessed Sacrament pierced her heart.

In August 1919, Teresa entered the Institute of the Sisters of Charity Maria Bambina of Monza, but acute otitis made her almost deaf and forced her to leave the convent in 1920. She returned to Rome and engaged in religious and charitable activities in the parish of St Gioacchino ai Prati.

On the night between Thursday, 14 and Friday, 15 August, while residing at the Sisters of St Anne convent in Montopoli (Sabina), she fell into an ecstatic state and had a vision of Christ crucified. From his wounds came rays of fire that crucified her hands, feet and side, causing terrible pain that left her bedridden for three months. She hid the marks of the Passion from family members and friends.

Father Gennaro Finelli was the confessor who supported her during the initial years of her mystical manifestations (1921–1926); but Teresa regarded Msgr Giovanni Volpi as her real spiritual guide. He was the former confessor of the stigmatic, Gemma Galgani, when he was the Archbishop of Lucca (Volpi had expressed doubts and suspicions about Gemma). Teresa entrusted the secret of her visible stigmata to him. She also had a number visions and mystical dialogues with Christ, the Virgin Mary and various saints, including Gemma Galgani. Among the most extraordinary mystical manifestations, in addition to visible stigmata, she experienced ecstasies, prophecies, inedia and especially the heart wound, which emitted blood and intense heat that set her clothes on fire during the Fridays of Passion. On the death of Msgr Volpi (1931), the Passionist, Luigi Fizzotti, became her new confessor.

Her confessors wished Teresa to be examined by doctors, but she refused, asking only to suffer in anonymity. In 1933, her health deteriorated and her stigmata started to close gradually. She died on 22 January 1934. Father Luigi wrote her first biography (1935, unpublished) and requested her cause for beatification be opened. Today, it appears to have been interrupted.

Fizzotti di San Carlo, Luigi. *Il segreto di Teresa Palminota. La direzione spirituale di una grande mistica*. Milan: Edizioni ECO, 1979.

### **Pantusa, Maria Concetta (1936, 1894–1957)**

Maria Concetta was born in Celico (Calabria) on 3 February 1894. Her father did not want to give her a religious education, so she received sacraments in secret, through her mother's collaboration with the local priest, Don Vincenzo Lettieri. When she asked her father for permission to become a nun, he forced her to emigrate with him to Brazil, where she married Vito De Mauro on 25 December 1914 against her will.

On 28 October 1915, a daughter called Maria Carmela was born. One year later, Maria Concetta and her family returned to Italy and her husband died fighting in the First

World War. Maria thus became a widow and was elected president of the Daughters of Mary, beginning a deep spiritual life that included mystical gifts (ecstasy, levitation and illness). In 1927, Maria Concetta's father forced her to leave his home with her daughter. On March 1930, Maria Carmela entered the Poor Clares of Airola (Benevento), but her mother was rejected. Instead, she opened a kindergarten in Monteoliveto with a friend, Sister Speranza Pettinato, who wrote a daily diary recording the mystical experiences of Maria Concetta.

On 1 August 1936, after Maria Concetta had received many mystical gifts (such as ecstasy, vision of saints such as Gemma Galgani, visits to Purgatory), she displayed stigmata on her hands, feet and side. Every Easter Friday, the wounds bled, until the stigmata on her hands and feet disappeared at the end of 1939. However, the wound on her side only disappeared a year before her death in 1952.

On 17 February 1947, some of the religious pictures that she possessed, in particular, a copy of the Shroud of Turin, bled for three hours. The same strange phenomenon occurred on 28 February and 4 March. More images of Christ also appeared in her house, all of which would bleed during the days of the Passion. Due to her extraordinary mystical experiences, everyone in Airola called her Sister Concetta, although she was a widow who had not taken religious vows. She also had a reputation as a "living saint."

Maria Concetta died in Airola on 27 March 1953, a Holy Friday, having prophesied the date of her death. On 10 October 2007, her cause for beatification was officially opened. The Roman Church currently considers her a Servant of God.

Massaro, Giuseppina. *La mistica della croce in Maria Concetta Pantusa, 1894–1953*.

Naples: Univeristà degli Studi, 1995.

Parente, Ulderico. *La Serva di Dio Maria Concetta Pantusa: una madre di famiglia testimone del Vangelo*. Gorle-Turin: Velar-Elledici, 2013.

### **Parlavecchia, Gaetana (c.1865, c.1850–)**

Gaetana Parlavecchia was born and lived in Bari (Puglia) in the second half of the nineteenth century. She became famous when, in March 1870, her statue of Baby Jesus began to cry blood and emit the fragrance of flowers. The phenomena attracted many curious from across southern Italy, frightening the local religious authorities. Gaetana was already known by the clergy for her alleged visible stigmata (c. 1865), studied by theologians and physicians. In 1871, the statue cried blood once again and the number of visitors and pilgrims forced the authorities to take action. The statue was seized and the case of Gaetana was soon forgotten.

Imbert-Gourbeyre, Antoine. *La stigmatisation*, ed. Joachim Boufflet. Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1996.

**Parsi, Madeleine (1903, 1884–1928)**

Hélène Parsi, better known as Madeleine or Lelléna, was born in 1884 in Campitello (Corsica), into a humble and very pious family from the island. She had seven sisters and brothers, all of whom received a religious education. On 26 June 1899, Parsi and her friend Perpétue Lorenzi allegedly witnessed the apparition of the Virgin Mary next to a boulder in the surroundings of Campitello. At the beginning, the people from the village did not believe them. On 4 July, Parsi convinced her godmother to visit the boulder where she had had the vision. The Virgin supposedly appeared again and they fell into an ecstasy. From that day on, crowds of people, sometimes in the thousands, began to visit the site of the apparitions, and watched Parsi and other adolescents having visions. In December, Parsi's father died suddenly. She thought that it was due to the impression that the vision of the Virgin had on him.

In 1900, Parsi began her monastic life at the Abbey of Erbalunga. A year later, she took her vows under the religious name of Marie Catherine d'Alexandrie. However, in 1902, the French government secularized the Benedictine community of Erbalunga for not following the 1901 law, which obliged religious congregations to ask for the State's permission to continue with their activities. The religious women at Erbalunga were forced to abandon the habit. Parsi then became a housemaid at the convent. In order to not forget this tragic event, she drew a cross on her chest with a hairpin. During the night, the cross grew and bled abundantly, and Parsi began to have visions of Jesus and the Crucifixion, who announced that her life would be full of suffering in reparation for the sins of humanity. In November 1903, stigmata became visible on her flesh. The pain and the bleeding were such that sometimes she could not work. These episodes were accompanied by tragic prophetic messages concerning France.

In 1906, the relationship between Parsi and the abbess at Erbalunga deteriorated and she was forced to return to Campitello, where the Marian apparitions continued. A water fountain emanated from the boulder and was said to cure all kinds of illnesses. The Vatican sent a delegate to investigate the Marian apparitions and the press began to cover the event. In parallel to the ecclesiastical investigation, a judicial inquiry accused the priest of Campitello and Madeleine Parsi of fraud, breach of trust and marketing the water under false pretences. Parsi was described as a neurasthenic and accused of suffering from hallucinations. The last Marian apparition in Campitello supposedly took place on 3 September 1909.

During the First World War, Parsi lived in extreme poverty with a friend. She never abandoned her will to join a convent, but all her attempts were in vain until 1921, when she met a woman who wanted to found a Benedictine Order in Calvi. After entering the convent, Parsi began to have spiritual communications with Saint Teresa and with the souls in Purgatory. In 1926, she was accused of using perfume to fake the "soft odours" – a sign of sanctity – that emanated from her body; but her reputation,



it seems, was not affected. She died two years later due to health problems. A crowd of people came to see her body and she was buried in front of the Marian apparition boulder. Every 26 June, there is a procession from Campitello to the site of the apparitions. The “holy water” emanating from the boulder is still said to heal illnesses.

Canioni, Christopher. *L'Histoire extraordinaire d'Hélène Parsi et des apparitions de Campitellu*. Bastia: Éd. Anima Corsa, 2014.

### **Pazzafini, Maria Cesira (c.1913, 1896–1964)**

Maria Cesira was born in Ferrara on 16 November 1896. The reputation of her family was not respectable, as her parents lived together without having undertaken a religious marriage, and her delicate financial state deteriorated with her father's death (1904).

Devoted to St Francis, St Catherine of Siena and St Gemma Galgani (all stigmatized saints), from the age of 14 she expressed the desire to suffer the Passion with Christ, offering herself for the redemption of the souls in Purgatory and for the triumph of the Church. According to her “Quaderni autobiografici,” at the age of 17, while she was contemplating the Blessed Sacrament, a divine voice came from the Host and told her that God had accepted her will and that she would be transformed into a sacrificial victim. This was a prophecy about her future invisible stigmata and physical illness. She intensified her ascetic devotional practices, with long prayers, fasting and increasing self-flagellation.

Two years later, in 1915, Maria Cesira heard the call to the monastic life and thus entered the Capuchin monastery of St Chiara in Ferrara as a novice, where she became a nun, taking the name of Maria Veronica Teresa of del Santissimo Sacramento. In the following years, she became famous both within the community and outside (in the diocese of Ferrara).

Concurrently with physical illness, her inner sufferings became even greater, and she considered them the way she could follow Christ. In 1922, her mystical life became more intense, with frequent ecstasies, divine visions and dialogues.

It is possible to reconstruct her biographical profile and, above all, her inner life, due to her own works, including the already mentioned “Quaderni autobiografici” (from 1931 to 1936), a diary (1920), two books written between 1920 and 1924, and her epistolary collection of correspondence with her spiritual directors.

Sister Maria Veronica died on 8 July 1964, and her remains are conserved in the Church of St Chiara in Ferrara. After her death, many pilgrims came to worship her (her cult seems to be linked to fertility, as she is a popular patron for infertile women). Recently, her canonization process was initiated by the archbishop, Luigi Negri (on 8 July 2014).

Bergamini, Tiberio and Libanori, Daniele. *Pensieri spirituali*. Ferrara: Gabriele Corbo, 1992.

Da Santa Maria, Clemente. *Vita di suor Maria-Veronica del Santissimo Sacramento: clarrissa cappuccina*. Milan: Edizioni francescane Cammino, 1984.

Libanori, Daniele. *Sentii cose che non so spiegare. Scritti spirituali (1920–1936) di Suor M. Veronica Teresa del SS. Sacramento Cappuccina povera di S. Chiara (1896–1964)*. Rome: ADS, 2004.

### **Périé, Pauline (1860, 1838–1915)**

Delphine Périé was born in Francoulès, a village close to Cahors, on 3 October 1838. Despite being baptised Delphine, everyone called her Pauline. Her father was a countryside postman and her mother a peasant. She had two brothers and one sister. Pauline was said to be very beautiful and pious. From her adolescent years, she practised mortification exercises. In July 1853, Father Cuquel became the priest of Francoulès and quickly noticed Pauline, by then 15 years old. She told him that she wanted to join the Carmelites, but they rejected her after hearing about the miraculous phenomena surrounding Périé. It was said that she had walked for four hours in the rain one day without getting wet.

According to Father Cuquel, Périé was greatly admired in her hometown for her piety and divine graces. Without consulting her confessor, she asked God to replace all her comforts with sufferings and from that day on demons began to appear to her. They tormented her especially during prayer and other pious practices. At that time, she also started to fall into ecstasy frequently. Father Cuquel recognized her state thanks to his reading of Joseph von Görres (1776–1848), a prolific writer on mysticism and stigmata. Sometimes the ecstasy took place over several hours, in which Périé remained insensitive to any stimuli.

In 1860, as Lent approached, her sufferings began to increase. Périé experienced deep pains in her side and forehead, but not in her hands or feet. Father Cuquel saw that her forehead was framed by a red swollen circle. Apparently, Périé was unaware of what her suffering might be a response to, and Father Cuquel told her about the Passion of Christ. The mark of the crown of thorns allegedly appeared on her forehead but disappeared after Périé begged God to make it invisible. During Holy Friday, Périé was supposedly able to experience Jesus' unbearable pains on the Cross.

From April 1860, Jesus allegedly told Pauline Périé that he was going to dictate messages to her, and that her goal would be to make them public. She received dozens of messages from him, as well as from the Virgin Mary, who also appeared to Périé. Father Cuquel transcribed the messages for at least two years. They were published under the title *Apparitions et révélations de N.-S. Jésus-Christ et de la Sainte Vierge à Pauline Périé*. Many messages concerned the return of the monarchy in France.

In 1861, a committee of clergymen and physicians examined the mystic. Périé had allegedly not eaten anything for several months and she was taken to a convent to better analyse her state. There, many of the sisters and other clergy accused her of trickery, and Périé was prevented from receiving the Holy Communion. Father Cuquel compared the treatment received by Pauline to that given to contemporary stigmatics such as Louise Lateau. In the end, the committee did not make a clear judgement in favour or against Périé, but the bishop asked Périé to renounce to her prophecies and threatened to forbid Father Cuquel from seeing her. In 1862, Périé joined the Third Order of Saint Francis and allegedly underwent a mystical marriage to Jesus. Little else is known about her life from then on. Apparently, she emigrated to Santa Fe (Argentina) with her sister in 1907, where one of her brothers (a priest) had founded a school.

Cuquel, J. *Apparitions et révélations de N.-S. Jésus-Christ et de la Sainte Vierge à Pauline Périé, la voyante de Francoulès, publiées par l'abbé J. Cuquel*. Paris: Téqui, 1899.

Laurentin, René, Sbalchiero, Patrick, eds. *Dictionnaire des "apparitions" de la Vierge Marie*. Paris: Fayard, 2012.

#### **Perschl, Anna (1840, –)**

Anna Perschl, daughter of a peasant from Tyrlbrunn, first displayed the wounds of Christ on 23 January 1840. In the years leading up to receiving the stigmata, she had suffered from a condition that was difficult to diagnose, with some considering hysteria, others possession, and she was exorcised by Kooperator Hilger and others. This priest witnessed her first visions of Jesus and supported her when the stigmata appeared. Her reliving of Christ's Passion drew the attention of many and divided the local community. The larger part sided with Anna and Kooperator Hilger, who believed in the divine origin of her wounds, while a smaller number followed pastor Ostner, who was critical. The local authorities called for an examination and transferred her to the general hospital in Munich. In April 1840, she confessed that she had inflicted the wounds on herself with a needle.

München. AEM, Realia 923 a. Erscheinungen – Einzelfälle 1839–1845, Perschl.  
Gißibl, Bernhard. *Frömmigkeit, Hysterie und Schwärmerei*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004, 59–60.

#### **Petit, Berthe (c.1900?, 1870–1943)**

Berthe Petit was born on 3 January 1870, the third daughter of notary Petit and Jeanne Meys in Enghien (Belgium). Her health was fragile and she also suffered a severe attack of typhus when she was 14. She was later sent to boarding school (1886–1887, Dames Bernardines in Ollignies, Hainaut) but had to leave due to her parents having financial problems. Giving up her dream to become a nun, she dedicated herself to the

well-being of her parents, who she managed to support even while her own health deteriorated. When she was 38, she could no longer eat solid food and only drank a little coffee. She only slept for a quarter of an hour every night and suffered immense pains in her spine, knees and fingers.

Berthe's life was filled with mystical experiences: she had her first apparition of the Virgin Mary and the child Jesus when she was only 4 years old. When she was 15, she decided she wanted to be a victim for the sanctification of the clergy, and claimed to suffer in mind and body the pain that Mary and Jesus experienced. Like Catherine of Siena, Berthe asked the Lord not to make her stigmata visible, yet she felt their pain every Friday. On 7 February 1910, Berthe claimed to see the hearts of Jesus and Mary entwined. A few days later, in Saint Anne (Alsace), she received the message that her mission would be to realize the consecration of the world to the sorrowful and immaculate Heart of Mary. Petit communicated her message to Pope Pius X through the Belgian cardinal, Mercier. The mission seems to have been a success and on 30 March 1911 the pope promised a 100 day indulgence to those who called upon the Heart of Mary. Throughout her life, Berthe remained a loyal apostle of this devotion and made prophecies as well (e.g. concerning the First and the Second World Wars).

After her death in 1943, numerous people came to see her body, and soon the first attestations about graces obtained through her mediation were heard.

Colin. *Berthe Petit. Apôtre du Cœur Dououreux et immaculé de Marie*. Paris: Nouvelles Éditions Latines, 1967.

Duffner. *Berthe Petit*. Tiel: Lannoo, 1950.

### **Pfister, Barbara (1890, 1867–1916)**

Barbara Pfister was born in 1867 in Wattenheim. Her father initially had a thriving carpentry business, but as his affairs deteriorated, the local the pub became more attractive and, having become a merchant, he left his family twice. In October 1883, Barbara entered the Dominican cloister of Speyer to train as a teacher. She only stayed for three months and was sent home because she repeatedly fainted after receiving the Holy Communion due to her visions of the suffering Christ. Barbara later became a servant in Speyer, continued to have visions and eventually ended up in the hospital, where they did not know how to treat her. Sent home again, she initially worked in clay production ("Lehmkauf"), but then learned how to make artificial flowers and how to do needlework.

On the feast of Peter and Paul in 1890, she received the stigmata (the side wound had developed on the Feast of the Sacred Heart). Her pastor, Franz Weber, contacted his bishop and asked what he should do. The wounds and her physical suffering were now returning every Friday and people in church could see her returning from Communion with bloody hands. The Evangelical vicar Hussong eventually made the

whole case public in two of his sermons and the number of people who wanted to see her grew. The bishop refused to establish a commission but asked the pastor to note everything carefully. In the meantime, however, a complaint had already been filed with the public authorities against Barbara for fraud. Barbara was examined twice (also medically), but the case against her was eventually dropped.

The stigmata disappeared after Easter 1891, but each year on the feast of Peter and Paul the wounds reappeared and she suffered through the pain without losing blood. In 1896, Barbara moved to a room in the cloister of the Barmherzige Schwestern in Speyer, where she died in 1916. Her grave became a site of pilgrimage and due to this enthusiasm, in May 1938, the bishop created a commission to collect the material and testimonies that could still be preserved. The Second World War intervened, however, and the task was never completed.

Lauer, Nikolaus. *Barbara Pfister. Eine Pfälzische Stigmatisierte*. Speyer: Pilger Verlag, 1949 (3rd edition).

### **Philipp, Katharina (c.1910s?, 1900–1980)**

Born on 7 February 1900, the daughter of a carpenter in Munich. It was her father's second marriage. His first wife had died from tuberculosis and left him with four children, whom he allegedly preferred to the children of his second marriage, among them Käthi and later her brother Pepi. The family often went hungry and Käthi, who wanted to contribute to the family's livelihood, robbed herself of the little health she still had during her first job as a washing maid. From February 1917 until May 1923, she suffered from intestinal tuberculosis but was healed miraculously from what she called her reparatory suffering.

She had visions of Mary, who guided her religious education and stimulated her willingness to sacrifice herself. She allegedly could read the will of God and had the power to heal from an early age onwards. She also received the stigmata at a young age (from the child Jesus) and saw her guardian angel, who explained everything to her when she witnessed the Passion of Christ. At the age of 17, she lived through Mary's emotional pain every Friday, and from 1953 onwards, she also suffered through Christ's Passion. She experienced a mystical marriage and demonic attacks, had the gift of kardiognosis and prophecy, and suffered for the souls in Purgatory. She died on 19 April 1980.

Ritzel, Ferdinand. *Kurzbiographie der Katharina Philipp*. München: s.e., 1981.

### **Piccarreta, Luisa (1881, 1865–1947)**

Luisa Piccarreta was born into a farming family from Corato (Bari) on 23 April 1865. When she was 13 years old, she had her first vision of the crucified Christ. At the age

of 16, she prayed to be permitted to participate in his Passion, offering herself as a redemptive victim for the sins of humankind, and suffering the pains of the invisible stigmata on Fridays for years. In addition to visions, ecstasy, inedia and demonic attacks, the most extraordinary mystical phenomenon was her deathlike state. Every morning, her body was insensitive to every external stimulus, as if she were dead. Doctors were unable to find a diagnosis and no scientific cure was ever found. When the Augustinian father, Cosma Loiodice, first saw her in this state, he made the Sign of the Cross, and Luisa woke up immediately. From that day onwards, a priest had to go to her house every morning to give her the sacred benediction. Many clerics considered her hysterical and therefore refused to become her confessor (leaving her in her apparent death state for nearly a month). From 1 January 1889, a serious illness and constant pain forced her to remain bedridden for 60 years until her death.

The Archbishop of Trani and Barletta, Msgr Giuseppe de Bianchi Dottula, assigned Michele De Benedictis as her spiritual father; his successors were Father Gennaro De Gennari and Father Benedetto Calvi. From 28 February 1899, the bishop ordered her to record in writing all of her divine revelations and divine conversations (the last chapter is dated 28 December 1938), amounting to over 14,000 handwritten pages collected in 36 volumes. These writings were all read and edited by Annibale Maria di Francia (a future saint), who was chosen by the archbishop, Giuseppe Leo, as her extraordinary confessor and the official ecclesiastical censor of her writings (from 1919 until his death in 1927).

On 7 October 1928, Luisa moved to the Istituto delle Figlie del Divino Zelo, built in Corato on the patronage of Annibale di Francia. Ten years later, three of her manuscripts were placed on the *Index* (censorship removed only in 1994) and she had to leave the religious institution in which she resided. Luisa submitted herself to the will of the Church and handed over all her manuscripts (today preserved in the Holy Office archive).

Luisa died in Corato on 4 March 1947 at the age of 81. Her cause for beatification was opened in 1994 and the diocesan process was successfully completed in 2005.

Anonymous. *Sant'Annibale Maria di Francia e gli Scritti sulla Divina Volontà della serva di Dio Luisa Piccarreta, dagli Scritti della Serva Di Dio Luisa Piccarreta*. Tavagnacco: Edizioni Segno, 2013.

Bucci, Bernardino Giuseppe. *Cenni biografici della serva di Dio Luisa Piccarreta*. Corato: Pubblicazione Graziani, 1994.

Di Francia, Annibale Maria. *Raccolta di lettere inviate dal beato padre Annibale Maria Di Francia alla serva di Dio Luisa Piccarreta*, edited by Postulazione della Causa di Beatificazione di Luisa Piccarreta. Corato: Graziani, 1997.

### **Pickenhahn, Helene (c.1933, –)**

We only have a little information about this stigmatized hairdresser from Cologne. She seems to have received the stigmata on 18 August 1933 (Helen's day). She claimed to be in contact with Therese of Konnersreuth (sharing in her expiatory suffering) and warned of the antichrist (according to her, at the age of 15 in 1934). She received the divine message that she needed to create a community of sisters in the diocese of Aachen. However, the episcopal authorities of Cologne were not supportive and more or less opposed her plans. Nevertheless, she seems to have at least started the building process and gave up her hairdressing business to make herself available for God's plans. According to her followers, the Bishop of Aachen visited her and she had the support of Rome.

München. BSB, Nachlass Lama, Friedrich von (1876–1944), Ana 445, letters to von Lama by Selene Hering, Gmunden, 1933–1934.

### **Pirini, Angelina (1938, 1922–1940)**

Angelina Pirini was born in Celle di Sala (Cesenatico) on 30 March 1922, into a modest but far from poverty stricken family. She had a very quiet childhood, which included work and prayers. In 1934, Father Giuseppe Marchi became the new priest of her small village as well as her spiritual director. It was due to him that Angelina began to seek a deeper life of mystical contemplation. He invited the young girl to actively participate in the local Catholic Action and to pray with special devotion to the cults of the Passion and the Sacred Heart. While Angelina thus had an active and apparently normal life (becoming president of the local Catholic Action and an excellent teacher), she also wished to escape from the world and develop a direct relationship with Christ.

On 8 December 1936, she pronounced a vow of chastity, the first stage in her new ascetic journey. Then, on 16 June 1938, when severely ill, Angelina asked God to allow her to become a "victim soul" for the salvation of the Church and the faith. From 1936, she was afflicted by an unknown disease. Despite medical care and surgery, it appeared that nothing could be done to save her. Aware of her imminent death, she decided to offer herself as a victim, wishing to receive the Holy Wounds (she subsequently received invisible stigmata).

On 11 February 1939, she took a vow of obedience and asked that all her earthly desires be removed so she could obey only God. After four years of physical illness and spiritual suffering (invisible stigmata), Angelina died on 2 October 1940. She left a diary of her mystical experiences and a spiritual testament. The diocesan process was opened in Cesenatico on 27 July 1985. Once completed (28 October 1989), the documents were transferred to Rome to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. The association of the Amici di Angelina was formed with the aim of maintaining and spreading her fame.

- D'Amendo, Filippo. *Angelina Pirri (1922–1940). Un dono del signore alla sua Chiesa*. Teramo: Eco di San Gabriele, 1985.
- D'Amendo, Filippo. *Angelina Piri, Dal Cenacolo al Calvario. Diario, scritti e documenti*. Teramo: Eco di San Gabriele, 1986.
- Maraldi, Valentino. *Angelina. La sua vita e l'Eucarestia*. Cesena: Stilgraf, 1997.

**Planson, Marie-Claire (c.1830, 1808–1832)**

Marie-Claire Planson, born in 1808, was the daughter of a winemaker from Briennon (Bourgogne-Franche-Comté). The parish priest of Briennon, Michel Fromentot (1767–1836), was her confessor. From her childhood, Planson had visions of the Virgin Mary, Jesus and her guardian angel. Fromentot noted these experiences in a manuscript of 2,000 pages. In it, he described Planson's unbearable moral and physical sufferings, which suggests that she received the stigmata. The Archbishopric of Sens acknowledged the supernatural phenomena after five weeks of inquiry.

Maire-Claire became a "victim soul," offering herself up to God. She supposedly received the mission to found a religious institute for the reparation, purification and conversion of sinners. Unfortunately, she died in 1832, two years before the establishment of the institute in Tours. The religious sisters of the institution were called "Purificandines" in recollection of their purification and expiatory mission. The decline of the institute began at the beginning of the twentieth century, ending with an internal crisis during the years 1949–1950, which led to its closure.

- Imbert-Gourbeyre, Antoine. *La stigmatisation*, ed. Joachim Boufflet. Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1996.
- Laurentin, René, Sbalchiero, Patrick, eds. *Dictionnaire des "apparitions" de la Vierge Marie*. Paris: Fayard, 2012.
- Pelliccia, G., Rocca, G., eds. *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione*. Vol. VII. Rome: Paoline, 1983, co. 1117–1118.

**Poli, Teresa (Maria Teresa del Cuore di Gesù, c.1775, c.1750–)**

Teresa Poli, in religion Maria Teresa del Cuor di Gesù, was born in Rome in 1748. Her story is linked to the Valentano prophetesses, suppression of the Society of Jesus, and above all the apocalyptic prophecies widespread for the restoration of the Jesuits. The preserved sources about her are radically different in nature: an encomiastic autobiography written by her confessor and her trial papers. Her life seems to have been modelled on the hagiography of the medieval and early modern mystical saints, especially St Catherine of Siena, St Teresa of Avila, and the venerable Mary of Jesus of Ágreda.

Ever since her childhood, Teresa had visions, ecstasies, and divine dialogues. At twenty-one (1769), she entered the Dominican monastery of the Santissimo Rosario in Valentano, a small town in the province of Viterbo (north of Rome). After the religious



turning point, her spirituality became more intense: she claimed to have demonic attacks, ecstasies, mystical marriage, prophetic abilities and stigmata, in particular, a bloody sore on her side. However, it was not her charism that attracted popular interest and ecclesiastical suspicions, but her prophecies. She prophesied the death of Pope Clement XIV and of the kings of France and Spain, along with the destruction of the Catholic Church, and the restoration of the Society of Jesus. In the meantime, and in the same village, a lay peasant, Bernardina Renzi, began to foresee apocalyptic scenarios as well. Their fame spread quickly outside the local borders, arriving in Rome and in the rest of Italy.

In July 1774 two delegates from the Holy Office arrived in Valentano to open an inquiry. The nun immediately confessed her faults, admitting the strong pressures received from the abbess, father confessor, and especially by a group of ex-Jesuits. The judge's objective was to solve the matter quickly while maintaining the reputation of the monastery since both the important Vatican clergymen and two saints-to-be were linked to the monastery. The nun was accused of the crime of 'feigned sanctity' (*affettata santità*), simulation of charisms (including stigmata), and false prophecies. Her punishment was a period of monastic detention and she probably died in the early decades of the nineteenth century.

ACDF, (B 4 p) 2.

Caffiero, Marina. "Polica e profezie femminile in età moderna. Il processo di Valentano (1774-1775)." In *Cristianesimo nella storia*, 20.3, 1999, 595-638.

### **Pozzi, Laura Teresa (1932, 1910-1944)**

Laura Teresa Pozzi, better known as Tomasina, was born in Trevano, a small town a few miles from Lake Como, on 27 April 1910. Her life was characterized by illnesses, demonic attacks and exceptional mystical phenomena that created a dark aura of suspicion and misunderstanding around her.

Although she was poor and uneducated, Tomasina was admitted to the novices of the Holy Family's Congregation in Mese (province of Sondrio, Lombardy), and while her precarious health forced her to stay home and thus far from the convent for several months, she was able to take her perpetual vows and the name of her patron, St Thomas Aquinas.

Before she became too ill herself, she assisted the poor and others who were sick. In 1930, to recover her health, she went to Morbegno, where she lived for about a year and a half, returning to Mese in early 1932.

New strange phenomena characterized the life of the poor nun during the 1930s, such as spiritual aridity, diabolical assaults and temptations and physical suffering. In her diary, written in an act of obedience, she noted the violence inflicted by the devil.

After pulling 28 strange objects (nails, needles, irons) from Thomasina's body, the abbess and other sisters invoked the help of an exorcist without success.

On May 1932, the temptations became ever greater and Tomasina felt intense pain in her hands and feet, receiving the visible signs of the stigmata. On 23 June of the same year, the Sacred Heart Feast, the lance's wound appeared on her chest and bled profusely. These phenomena were even more intense at the age of 28, when she received all of the signs of the Crucifixion (five wounds and the crown of thorns). This news shocked the monastic community and another exorcist was called to free her from the alleged demonic possession. The priest's failure once again, led some nuns to change their minds, and they started to consider Tomasina a "living saint."

Tomasina Pozzi died in the monastery of Mese on 4 November 1944 at the age of 34. Her body was buried in the chapel of the community.

Levi, Abramo. *Suor Tomasina Pozzi ovvero la Chiesa sottovoce*. Olgiate Comasco: Dialogo, 1978.

Libera, Giovanni. *La stigmatizzata di Mese (suor Tomasina Pozzi)*. Como: E. Cavalleri, 1944.

### **Prosperi, Gertrude (1847, 1799–1847)**

Gertrude Prosperi was born into a noble family from Fogliano, in Cascia (in the province of Perugia), on 19 August 1799. In her childhood she had apocalyptic visions and premonitions. On 4 May 1820, she entered the monastery of Santa Lucia of Trevi, in the diocese of Spoleto, becoming a Benedictine nun with the name of Maria Luisa Angelica del Sacro Cuore di Gesù.

Her visions were followed by ascetic practices of penance, inedia, flagellation and corporal mortifications. Her internal life was marked by a strong devotion to the cult of the Sacred Heart and the Passion. During a vision, Christ asked her to share his sufferings, and when she accepted, she received the sign of the Passion on her body (initially hidden, visible only in the last years of her life). Gertrude offered her suffering for the redemption of sin, the salvation of the Church and for the souls in Purgatory.

She had many tasks in the convent: she was a nurse, a teacher of the novices and treasurer, and she was appreciated by her sisters and father confessors, until her mystical experience became visible. In fact, while her previous directors (Giuseppe Sbiocca and Carlo Paterniani) understood and supported her, the Archbishop of Spoleto, Ignazio Giovanni Cadolini, her new confessor (about 300 letters are conserved), considered Gertrude possessed and hysterical. Despite this opposition, on 1 January 1837, she was elected abbess, initiating major reform in the monastery. Her success was so significant that Cadolini stopped doubting her and asked the abbess to join him in Ferrara (where he became archbishop) to found a new institute dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Sister Maria Luisa spent the last four years of her life paralysed in bed. During the Holy Week of 1847, the abbess was struck by a grave illness and showed the visible signs of the Passion on Holy Friday. According to witnesses, the stigmata appeared on her hands, the crown of thorns on her head and wounds of the flagellation on her body. On Easter Sunday she suddenly recovered.

She died in the monastery on 19 August 1847. The diocesan process was introduced in 1914 by Pietro Pacifici, Bishop of Spoleto, but it was interrupted by the First World War. It was reopened in 1987, with the acts of the process finally approved on 27 January 1995. On 19 December 2011, Pope Benedict XVI declared Gertrude Blessed.

Anonymous. *Vita di donna Maria Luisa Prosperi: religiosa benedettina abbadessa nel ven. Monastero di S. Lucia di Trevi dell'Archidiocesi di Spoleto morta in odore di santità l'anno 1847*. Rome: Tipografia forense, 1870.

Cabitza, Maria Ildegarde. *Un Fiore Benedettino. Donna M.L. Prosperi*. Florence: A. Salani, 1942.

Gradassi, Marco. *Suor Maria Luisa Angelica Prosperi, benedettina in Santa Lucia di Trevi (Pg)*. Spoleto: Tip. Dell'Umbria, 1970.

Romano, Angelo. *Maria Luisa Prosperi: monaca benedettina (1799–1847)*. Vatican City: Libreria editrice vaticana, 2012.

### **Put, Rosalie (1890, 1868–1919)**

Rosalie Put was born on 2 August 1868, in Lummen near Hasselt in Belgium. Her family was poor, so when she was only 7, she took a position as a farmer's hand. She received her first Communion when she was 9. On that day, she saw Jesus, who gave her a crown of thorns as well as the stigmata, which remained hidden for seven years. At the age of 22, she wanted to enter a cloister, but she became sick and did not recover for 25 years. She remained bedridden and only received the Communion once: the clergy did not trust her and did not wish to enter her house. Every Friday, she went into ecstasy and would bleed from a head wound.

Despite the negative response of the clergy (public condemnations by the Belgian and German episcopal authorities in 1909/1910 with reference to a negative medical examination), Rosalie continued to receive visitors. Quite a few people came from Germany. Among them was Helene Hofmann, a German founder of an orphanage, who became her friend and wrote detailed accounts of Rosalie's sufferings (later published). Bloody wounds on Rosalie's arm were said to describe the Way of the Cross that the Virgin was supposed to have erected near her home in Ephesus. Her descriptions tallied with those of Anna Katharina Emmerick. Rosalie was pressed to describe the location of Mary's grave, but waited for permission from Pope Pius X. When he died, all plans were abandoned.

Rosalie died on 16 February 1919. The priest, Robert Ernst, attempted to rekindle enthusiasm with a book on her in 1954, without much success. Her case was picked up by the Emmerick movement in the 1970s (because of the links with Emmerick's visions). When her grave was under threat of being demolished, the movement exhumed Rosalie's remains and placed her in a new grave, with her plan of the Way of the Cross on the tombstone.

Csernohorszky, Vilmos. "Rosalie Püt." In *Träger der Wundmale Christi. Eine Geschichte der Stigmatisierten*, ed. Johannes Höcht. Stein am Rhein: Christiana-Verlag, 2005, 531–532.

Hofmann, Helene. *Meine Besuche bei der belgischen Stigmatisierten Rosalie Püt*. Stein am Rhein: Christiana Verlag, 1990.

### **Putigny, Marie-Catherine (c.1826, 1803–1885)**

Thérèse Putigny was born in 1803 in Éply (Meurthe-et-Moselle), a village close to Metz. She was the daughter of a peasant family, had three brothers and lost her mother at the age of ten. She was taken under the wing of a pious family in Metz, with whom she lived for eight or nine years. When the family left Metz, Putigny stayed on, in accordance with her father's wishes. She started working as a housemaid before joining La Visitation monastery in Metz at the age of 23 and taking the habit on 8 December 1828 under the name of Sœur Marie-Catherine. During that time, she allegedly witnessed the apparition of Jesus and suffered from frequent attacks by the Devil.

In 1832, she started working as a nurse at a residential school in La Visitation. After the proclamation of the Second Republic in 1848, Marie-Catherine began to prophesize and was said to read minds, with her religious sisters transcribing her prophecies. In 1848, she predicted the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 and the Paris Commune. She also announced the deaths or attempted assassinations of renowned personalities, such as the Archbishop of Paris and Napoleon III. At the time, she was authorized to take Communion daily. She was extremely devoted to the Blessed Sacrament, with the Holy Communion functioning as a kind of "Eucharistic sacrifice" for her. Among her virtues, Marie-Catherine was said to be very humble, adhering to the vows of poverty and chastity.

According to her sisters, Jesus made Marie-Catherine join in his suffering and his expiatory mission. The souls in Purgatory also asked her to help in their salvation. It is also said that for many years Marie-Catherine carried the Holy Wounds of Christ. While several physicians examined the stigmata, they were unable to find a natural cause. Over many days and nights, she allegedly suffered from the pain of the Passion, her hands and feet red and swollen. While in such a state, she did not respond to any stimuli, while the wound in her side would appear and disappear. According to one of

her sisters, “when she followed the Saviour from the Praetorium to Calvary while making his Way of the Cross, we saw the blood flow from the face of our dear sister” (cited in Franciosi, *Vie*, 232). Similar to the mystic and stigmatic Anna Katherina Emmerick, she “saw” the life of Jesus as portrayed in different paintings. Marie-Catherine’s biography was published almost three years after her death on 22 July 1885 after suffering a stroke.

Binet-Sanglé, Dr. *La folie de Jésus. Son hérédité, sa constitution, sa physiologie*. 3rd ed. Paris: A. Maloine, 1911.

Franciosi, P. De. *Vie de Sœur Marie-Catherine Putigny*. Neuville-sur-Montreuil: Imprimerie Notre-Dame des Prés, 1888.

Imbert-Gourbeyre, Antoine. *La stigmatisation. L’extase divine et les miracles de Lourdes. Réponse aux libres-penseurs*. Clermont-Ferrand: Librairie Catholique, 1894.

### **Reus, Johann Baptist (1912, 1868–1947)**

Johann Baptist Reus was born in Pottenstein on 10 July 1868, the eighth of eleven children of a Catholic butcher/peasant family. After his military service in 1889, he entered the diocesan seminary of Bamberg. After his ordination (30 July 1893), he joined the Jesuit Order (training in the Netherlands due to the Kulturkampf: Blijenbeek 1894–1895; Valkenburg 1896–1899; Wijnandsrade 1899–1900). He was sent to Brazil as a missionary in May 1900. His first station was as a teacher in Rio Grande do Sul; he then lived in Porto Alegre (1912) and in 1913, he moved to Sao Leopoldo as the new pastor of the Jesuit parish. Between 1914 and 1942, he taught liturgy and was the spiritual father of the seminarians of the diocesan seminary there. In 1934, he began a spiritual diary, in which he recorded the mystical graces he experienced; among other events, he received the stigmata on 7 September 1912, when a flame pierced his heart and five rays of light struck his hands and feet. However, the stigmata did not become visible. He died on 21 July 1947 at the age of 79.

Baumann, Ferdinand. *Ein Apostel des heiligsten Herzens Jesu. Der Diener Gottes P. Johann Baptist Reus. S.J. (1868–1947)*. München/Freiburg/Konstanz: Kanisius Verlag, 1960.

Baumann, Ferdinand. *P. Johannes Baptista Reus, S.J. (1868–1947). Ein heiligmäßiger Priester unserer Zeit*. Bamberg: St. Otto-Verlag, 1954.

### **Robin, Marthe (1930, 1902–1981)**

Marthe Robin was born in 1902 in the small village of Châteauneuf-de-Galaure (Drôme), and never left the family farmhouse where she was raised. At the age of 16, she became very ill, and unexplained ailments forced her to remain in bed. Paralysis, anorexia, insomnia and comatose episodes succeeded one another. It is said that Marthe remained

bedridden for 50 years without eating or sleeping. During that time, she developed a strong mystical life. In 1925, the Virgin and Saint Thérèse de Lisieux allegedly revealed her divine mission as a victim soul. In October 1930, stigmata appeared on her flesh for the first time. From then on, she relived the Passion every Thursday evening and Friday morning. In 1948, most of the Holy Wounds became invisible, and only the crown of thorns and tears of blood manifested from time to time.

Thanks to this prodigious event, Marthe became renowned as “the stigmatic from Drôme.” Hundreds of thousands of people, especially from France, but also from other countries, came to visit her in her room, where she remained bedridden. Some of the visitors were pious people looking for spiritual guidance from this “living saint,” others were curious or sceptical, wishing to debunk the alleged mystic. Today, arguments about her sainthood or her supposed hysteria and simulation continue to overshadow her reputation. Physicians and psychiatrists still attempt to explain the inedia, the stigmata and other miracles in clinical terms. However, this has not prevented the popular devotion surrounding Marthe from growing.

Marthe sometimes received 50 to 60 visits per day, but only on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. The rest of the week was reserved for the Lord. She loved to listen to the people and comfort them with her piety and she took care of the poor and the prisoners who wrote letters to her seeking her recognition. In 1934, she also founded a school. Two years later, with her spiritual father Père Finet, she began a spiritual movement called the “Foyers de charité.” Today, her foundations include more than 70 retreat houses around the world, where men and women live together under the spiritual guidance of a priest, the “père du Foyer.” They share an evangelization mission through predication and, especially, spiritual retreats, which first began in the “foyer” of Châteauneuf-de-Galaure during the Second World War.

As the Virgin had allegedly told her, Marthe’s suffering increased at the end of her life. Her pain was such that she could barely talk or receive any visits. She died on 6 February 1981, surrounded by Père Finet, her family and her community of devotees. Following Marthe’s wishes, they dressed her body in a white dress. In doing so, they noticed blood stains on the blankets where her feet and her head rested, but the Holy Wounds were not visible on her flesh. Her death was announced on television and a large crowd of people attended her funeral. Unable to enter the church, many waited outside and escorted the coffin to the cemetery. After Marthe’s death, her reputation of sanctity continued to grow. Hundreds of pilgrims each year still continue to visit her house, which today is a “living museum.” The diocesan inquiry for her cause for beatification began in 1986, and ten years later a dossier of 17,000 pages was submitted to the Vatican. Marthe Robin was declared Venerable by Pope Francis on 7 November 2014.

Anonymous. *Marthe Robin*. Lyon: L’Alouette, 1981.

Guitton, Jean. *Portrait de Marthe Robin*. Paris: Grasset, 1985.

Mottet, Gonzague. *Marthe Robin, la stigmatisée de la Drôme*. Toulouse: Èrès, 1989.

Peyret, Raymond. *Marthe Robin: la croix et la joie*. Valence: Société d'édition peuple libre, 1981.

### Ruess, Bärbl (1947, 1924–1996)

Bärbl Ruess was born on 15 June 1924 in Pfaffenhofen, the eldest of six children of Hans Ruess, a successful business man and Helene Köhl. After her mother's early death, her father remarried and Bärbl left for boarding school. After completing her Reichsarbeitsdienst as a streetcar conductor in Munich, she returned to her father's company. In 1947 and 1948, she worked in the parish office of Pfaffenhofen. After a few weeks she complained about pain in her hands and feet and near her heart. On 21 February 1947, the wounds started to bleed and on Good Friday she went into ecstasy and experienced Christ's Passion. It was not the first mystical event Bärbl reported. She had her first vision of Mary on 13 May 1940, who had taught her how to pray the Rosary. She saw the Virgin three more times at a site in the woods where a votive chapel was built (Marienfried). Bärbl practised "Sühneleiden" (reparatory suffering) and took on the illness of a school friend, among other acts of reparation. In May 1947, bishop Kumpfmüller ordered the Jesuit, P. Heinrich Bleienstein, to examine her case. A year later, the ecclesiastical authorities also wanted more information about the alleged kidnapping of Bärbl by Satanists on Good Friday. As the police report (August 1948) seemed to suggest that the event had been staged because Bärbl did not show the stigmata that day, the case was dropped. In 1948, Bärbl graduated as a religious teacher and taught classes on the outskirts of Munich. In 1950, on a trip to Rome, she visited Assisi and prayed at the grave of Saint Francis that her stigmata would not remain visible. She married Anton Rehm on 15 August 1952 and they had five children.

On 14 February 1969, Josef Franz Künzli of the Miriam Verlag received an imprimatur from Dr Josef Zimmermann, episcopal vicar in Augsburg, allowing him to publish the book *Erscheinungen in Marienfried* (indicating that the messages of the apparitions did not contain anything contrary to the Catholic faith). The new bishop, Viktor Josef Dammertz, created two commissions: the first to examine the pastoral practices in Marienfried, which led to Marienfried becoming an ecclesiastical foundation called "Mary, mother of the Church"; the second, to examine the apparitions (1995–2000), which were declared *non constat*. Bärbl died on 4 November 1996 (she had been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis ten years earlier).

Gutwenger, Lisl. *Die Seherin von Marienfried. Sind Bärbls Leben und Botschaft glaubwürdig?* Jestetten: Miriam-Verlag, 2015 (1. Auflage: Christiana-Verlag, Stein am Rhein, 1997).

**Rumèbe, Joséphine (Rumèbe, Marie-Jeanne) (1855, 1850–1927)**

Marie-Jeanne Rumèbe was born in 1850 in Milhas (Haute-Garonne), in the French Pyrénées. She was the youngest child of a family of six children, and her father had a small gypsum mine. Soon after her birth, the family, who were very pious, moved to Aspet. When her mother was young, she had wanted to enter the religious life, while Jeanne's own religious vocation developed at the age of five, when she allegedly saw Jesus while she was playing. In 1858, her mother took her on a pilgrimage to Lourdes and they are both said to have witnessed the apparition of the Virgin. By then, Jeanne already dreamed about going to Palestine, where she would ultimately end her days.

For a while, Rumèbe thought about joining the missionary congregation of the *Sœurs de Saint-Joseph-de-l'Apparition* in Marseille, and perhaps leaving for Jerusalem but she could not decide. So, she undertook a secret trip to Lourdes to consult the Virgin with one of the sisters, but this time Jeanne did not receive any revelations. On their way back, one of the pilgrims, a priest, told her that she should join Saint Joseph, but he then disappeared. Jeanne thought that it was Saint Joseph himself who had spoken to her. In November 1868, Jeanne took her vows and became *Sœur Joséphine*. A few months later, she departed for Jerusalem.

On her arrival in Palestine, she was sent to the Saint-Louis hospital, where she met Amédée de Piellat (1850–1925), an aristocrat from Lyon, who spent his entire fortune on the Catholic missions in the Holy Land. In 1873, an epidemic of cholera occurred in Cyprus and *Sœur Joséphine* decided to help. While there she became infected and almost died, allegedly recovering after witnessing the apparition of the stigmatized Palestinian Carmelite, Saint Marie de Jésus Crucifié (1846–1878). She returned to Jerusalem in 1878, where she undertook several pilgrimages and continued to work in the hospital, where she was known as *Sœur Camomille* due to the camomile infusions she gave to the ill.

Around 1900, *Sœur Joséphine* and Père Lagrange bought land in the village of Abou-Gosh, on the mountain of Kyriat, not far from Jerusalem. Along with Amédée de Piellat, they built a church, convent and a sanatorium on the ruins of an old fifth-century sanctuary. During the First World War, the Ottoman government aimed to expel all clergy from enemy countries and *Sœur Joséphine* was forced to return to France until March 1919, the date of her return to Jerusalem after its liberation in December 1917 by the English army.

Although she was very discreet with regard to her “Holy sufferings,” *Sœur Joséphine* was said to have carried invisible stigmata from the age of five or six. She said that Jesus knew that she would not be able to carry the visible wounds, and allowed her to suffer without bleeding. These sufferings continued throughout her life, intensifying from time to time – for example, in 1921, the pain in her side was extremely severe. In 1927, the last year of her life, *Sœur Joséphine* allegedly witnessed the apparition of



Saint Thérèse de Lisieux (1873–1897), who released her from the intense pain in her legs. Sœur Joséphine died on 1 September 1927, after 52 years of missionary work in the Holy Land.

Bront, Agnès, La Borie, Guillemette de. *Héroïnes de Dieu: l'épopée des religieuses missionnaires au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*. Paris: Presses de la Renaissance, 2011.

"Sœur Joséphine de Jérusalem," *La Croix*, 3 September 1927.

Stolz, Benedikt, O.S.B. *Cherub auf dem Gotteshügel: Josephine Rumèbe, Gründerin des Heiligtums U.L. Frau von der Bundeslade zu Kirjath-Jearim*. Stein am Rhein: Christiana-Verlag, 1972.

### S., Hedwig (1930, –)

In 1930, Hedwig S. was described as a "second Therese Neumann" in the newspaper *Die Welt am Abende*. The woman from Halle cried tears of blood whenever she was emotionally moved by music. The *Konnersreuther Jahrbuch*, a series dedicated to the stigmatic, Therese Neumann, referred to the case and called this description a chapter of human idiocy.

Lama, Friedrich, Ritter von. "Zweite Therese von Konneresreuth." *Konnersreuther Jahrbuch*, (1930): 191–194.

### Salvagnini, Lina (1919, 1896–1940)

Lina Salvagnini was born in Bagnoli, in the province of Padua, on 19 January 1896. Despite the precarious financial state of her family and the premature death of her father, Lina was able to receive a decent school education. She studied at the Canossiane sisters and then at a professional school in Padua, where she graduated.

In 1919, Lina met her new spiritual father, Giuseppe Paccagnella, which marked a fundamental turning point in her life. He encouraged her to live a deep mystical life, and supernatural phenomena such as ecstasy, visions and stigmata began to appear. Among the most amazing of her graces was the blood liquefaction of the Eucharist when it touched her mouth (with the consequent impression of Christian symbols on linen). At the age of 26, in 1922, she enrolled in the institute founded by her confessor, the Casa Antoniana Buoni Fanciulli.

Her fame spread throughout the town and, on 15 January 1921, the vicar general, Msgr Bellincini, was informed by one of her supporters, who wanted the official approval of the clergy. The diocesan bishop, Monsignor Pellizzo, contacted the Vatican and the Holy Office, having the task of following up the affair. Between 30 December and 1 January, Bellincini and Pellizzo subjected her to several tests and became convinced of Lina's genuineness. Between 1921 and 1923, they sent two detailed reports to the Holy Office in Rome, in an attempt to defend the supernatural nature of Salvagnini's phenomena. However, on 5 March 1923, Bishop Pellizzo was forced to resign by Pope

Pius XI. His enemies had exploited his bond with Lina to discredit him in the eyes of the Holy See.

The new apostolic administrator proved to be decisively opposed to Lina, Father Paccagnella and their institute, sending testimonies and complaints made by their enemies to the Holy Office. The next new Bishop of Padua was also forced to maintain a position of distrust against the charismatic woman, increasingly feared by the Vatican.

On 9 February 1924, the Holy Office declared the non-divine nature of her phenomena. She was judged to be a simulator of holiness and a hysterical woman. On 28 February, Father Paccagnella was suspended *a divinis* by the priesthood, while Lina was forbidden to receive communion. Between 1924 and June 1927, she was spiritually assisted by Leopoldo Mandić, who supported her case until formal suspension. Lina Salvagnini died on 12 January 1940, without being rehabilitated by the religious “crime” of “aspiring holiness.”

Billanovich, Liliana. “Amministratore apostolico e inquisitore. Il ruolo del vescovo A.G. Longhin nella causa di Lina Salvagnini (first part).” In *Ricerche di storia sociale e religiosa*, 74, 2008, 87–172.

Billanovich, Liliana. “Amministratore apostolico e inquisitore. Il ruolo del vescovo A.G. Longhin nella causa di Lina Salvagnini (second part).” In *Ricerche di storia sociale e religiosa* 75, 2009, 103–210.

Billanovich, Liliana. “Fra Sant’Ufficio e conflitti intraecclesiali: la mistica Lina Salvagnini, il confessore Leopoldo Mandić e il vescovo Elia Dalla Costa nella Padova degli anni Venti.” In *Ricerche di storia sociale e religiosa*, 73, 2008, 65–155.

### **Schäfer, Sabine (1878, c.1862–)**

Sabine Schäfer from Baden reputedly exhibited the wounds of Christ every Friday, and allegedly had the gift of knowing who was in Hell or Purgatory. She was said to live without food, and if she had food with her, it was always intended for her guardian angel, so he could give it to the poor. After two years, in 1880, the 18 year old was discovered to be a fraud, when she attempted to bribe her guardian to bring her food, and in addition she was found with a bottle with blood, as well as an instrument with which she could produce the stigmata. She confessed and was sentenced by the Baden criminal court to ten weeks in prison.

Kurtz, J.H. *Church History*, Vol. 3, 245. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1893.

### **Schäffer, Anna (1910, 1882–1925)**

Anna Schäffer was born in Mindelstetten (Upper Bavaria) on 18 February 1882, the third of eight children of the carpenter Michael Schäffer and his wife Therese. Anna had a deep Eucharistic piety and when she was 11 years old, on the day of her first Communion, she offered herself to Jesus as “Sühneopfer.” Anna was working as a

servant when, on 4 February 1901, she fell into a washing kettle full boiling soapy water. Her legs and arms were burned severely, and despite all the medical treatment (she had 30 operations in two years) she remained in need of care for the rest of her life. Anna understood that God wanted her to suffer to repent for the sins of others and attempted to save as many souls as she could. After a few years she became lame and was also diagnosed with intestinal cancer. She insisted on making her own money through needlework and started to write religious poems and a work on her life as a patient (*Gedanken und Erinnerungen meines Krankenlebens und meine Sehnsucht nach der ewigen Heimat*). She also engaged in lay apostleship through letters, becoming an important spiritual counsellor and consoler in her village and beyond. Even members of the royal house of Bayern had contact with her and she also received letters from America. Numerous people travelled to her bedside and she seems to have had a beneficial influence on the youth of her village (convinced the girls of chastity before marriage). She had a strong devotion to Mary and a carefully planned prayer schedule of "Sühnestunden," during which she prayed either for a personal or a general cause. On 4 October 1910, she received the stigmata. When she died 15 years later, she was buried in her dress of the Third Order of Saint Francis. After her death, a devotion developed, which included an annual Anna-Schäffer day (on 26 July), first organized in 1972. Almost 20,000 answered prayers have already been reported. She was beatified in 1999 and became a saint on 21 October 2012. Her remains were exhumed when the graveyard was abandoned and were reburied within the church (in 1975), moved once more in 1999 (this time to the centre of the church).

Bauer, Wolfgang. *Heilige Anna Schäffer. Kurzbiographie & Novene*. Jestetten: Miriam Verlag, 2012.

Weigl, A.M. *Vor 50 Jahren starb Anna Schäffer*. Altötting: Verlag St. Grignionhaus, 1983 (5. Auflage).

Zolle, Konrad. *Leben und Leiden der Jungfrau Anna Schäffer von Mindelstetten: Eine Wallfahrt*. Regensburg: Gregorius Verlag, 1949.

### **Schmit-Klaer, Lucie (1916, 1854–1924)**

Lucie Schmit-Klaer was born in Wilz (Luxembourg) on 28 July 1854, moving to Belgium after her marriage. In 1873, she had a vision of Jesus, who told her that she had not yet done anything to deserve Heaven. Shortly afterwards, her first son died from meningitis. When she had yet another vision, she declared that she was willing to suffer for Jesus. She became a widow at a young age and tried to make a living by opening an underwear shop. However, it did not succeed. She then sent her daughter to boarding school and started to teach in England (catechesis and French). According to Lucie, her daughter became possessed by the Devil. While they tried exorcism, she did not repent, and continued to live with a divorced man. Her daughter went mad in 1914 and

was sent to an asylum, where she died in September 1915. During Lent in 1916, Lucie suffered through Christ's Passion. Her physician and friends witnessed her stigmata and sufferings. Lucie died in 1924 and her supporters attempted to have her case approved by the Church, sending a file to the archbishop of Mechelen and to the Vatican. They were unsuccessful, despite reporting several miraculous cures and graces that had allegedly been obtained through the mediation of Lucie.

Mechelen. AAM, Verschijningen, 20, Lucie Schmit-Klaer, Santoro/Conrotte, 1925? "Vie de Madame Klaer, glorieuse servant de Dieu" unpublished manuscript.

### **Schneider, Julie "Emilie" (post 1845?, 1820–1859)**

Juliana "Julie" Schneider was born on 6 September 1820 in Haaren, the daughter of a Protestant Prussian border official, Friedrich Schneider, and the Catholic daughter of a wine merchant, Elisabeth Münchs. At that time, children of mixed marriages had to adopt the religion of their father, but Julie's mother insisted on raising her children as Catholics, which was made even more difficult by her husband being part of the Protestant military community. Despite protests by her parents, Julie joined the Daughters of the Holy Cross in Liège in 1845. She led the new daughter house in Aspel near Rees (after the end of the Prussian police state in the Rhineland) and in 1852 was appointed head of the hospital in Düsseldorf.

Throughout her life she had intense mystical experiences, about which she only told her spiritual father, Rector Joseph von der Burg. She has visions of Jesus, his wounds and his Sacred Heart. During one such vision she received the grace of the wounding of the heart. She also suffered through multiple illnesses, physical pains and headaches as reparatory acts for the sins of others. Falling ill in December 1858, she died with a saintly reputation on 21 March 1859.

Immediately after her death a "pilgrimage" to the hospital started, as many people wanted to see her once again. Her saintly reputation was due to her heroic virtue, as very few knew about her mystical experiences. Her spiritual father immediately started recording recollections of her from those who had known her, and two years after her death he secretly opened her grave in the presence of a small group to gather some relics. Within a year of her death he published some of her letters (but only for the sisters, and with episcopal approval). She was called upon in prayers and in the mid-1860s three miracles that she was said to have enabled were to be examined. However, the war years of 1866 and 1870 intervened, as did the Kulturkampf, and thus Julie, or Sister Emilie, was forgotten. In 1926, Cardinal Schulte of Cologne started the preparations for her beatification (in a house of the Sisters of the Cross in Sörs near Aachen). The cause was renewed in 1984 and the documents have been in Rome since 1992. On 6 July 2007, Julie Schneider was ranked among those whose virtues had reached a heroic degree.

Höcht, Johannes. *Träger der Wundmale Christi. Eine Geschichte der Stigmatisierten*. Stein am Rhein: Christiana-Verlag, 2000 (5th edition), 382.

Richstätter, Karl. *Eine moderne deutsche Mystikerin, Leben und Briefe der Schwester Emilie Schneider, Oberin der Töchter vom hl. Kreuz zu Düsseldorf*. Freiburg: Herder, 1928.

### **Schnelle, Johanna (c.1931, –)**

The only information we have on this stigmatic from Birkungen (Eichsfeld) stems from letters sent to Friedrich Ritter von Lama in the 1930s. She was called “spiritual mother” (“geistige Mutter”) by her followers and started some sort of cloister (comprising two houses, a way of the cross and land for building) and her followers all carried the names of the apostles and the holy women. The local priest firmly opposed her activities, denounced her and her followers in church, and attempted to have her committed to an asylum. Schnelle compared the episode to Christ’s trials, claiming that she had not only joined in his suffering but also in his arrest (not completely, however, as she was not home on the day they came to take her away). She was in contact with Therese Neumann, and there are reports of miraculous cures through her mediation (her suffering and prayers). She carried the wounds of Christ visibly, but would have preferred them to remain invisible.

München. BSB, Nachlass Lama, Friedrich von (1876–1944), Ana 445, Letters from and to von Lama, 1930; 25/4/1931; 6/6/1931; 28/6/1936.

### **Schnitzelbauer, Therese (c.1842, –)**

Therese Schnitzelbauer is one of the Waakirchen women (see Bartenhauser, Taubenberger and Fiechtner) who fell under the influence of the priest Matthias Weinzierl. She was his servant and had ecstatic episodes on Thursdays and Fridays. She became a person of interest to the authorities in October 1842. In comparison to the other three cases, little is known about her.

Gißibl, Bernhard. *Frömmigkeit, Hysterie und Schwärmerei*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004, passim.

### **Schuhmann, Maria (1853, 1823–1887)**

Maria Schuhmann was born on 17 March 1823 in Pfarrkirchen. She worked at farms and entered the Third Order of Saint Francis, where she received the name Beatrix and met Father Paulus Luginger, who became her confessor. At the age of 19, she decided to enter the cloister of the Barmherzige Schwestern in Munich. However, on discovering that she was ill, Maria was sent home. A similar attempt to enter the Franciscan cloister in Giesing failed. Due to her poor health, she could not perform hard physical

labour but contributed to her family's livelihood by knitting and embroidery. At the age of 27 she could no longer leave her room. In September 1851, she had a vision of the suffering Christ and from Lent 1852 she continuously had an image of the crown of thorns before her eyes. The physical effects of the crown could be noticed as well, she had a swollen forehead and drops of blood appeared. On 25 March 1853, she experienced the Passion of Christ and first displayed the wounds on her hands and feet. She attempted to hide the stigmata, but this did not help as they were visible as she lay unconscious. Moreover, she sometimes lay for an hour with her arms extended (as if on the Cross) or sat kneeling with her hands in prayer like Maria von Mörl. She had the gifts of bilocation and prophecy, had a mystical wedding and suffered for the community, the Church and the Holy Father. She had a special devotion to Saint Francisca of the Five Holy Wounds, whom she resembled in her devotion to the child Jesus, in helping the souls of those in Purgatory and in her intense physical suffering. Several people came to see her, but the clergy attempted to avoid her becoming a public figure and Maria soon found herself living a secluded life once again. Her last confessor, similarly to Brentano, recorded all her visions, which were published, along with her letters, to edify readers. Maria died on 30 August 1887 from heart disease and dropsy.

Maier, Wilhelm. *Das verborgene Leben und Leiden der frommen Tertiäerin Jungfrau Maria Beatrix Schuhmann von Pfarrkirchen*. Passau: Kleiter, 1914.

### Schulten, Elisabeth "Salesia" (1909, 1877–1920)

Elsa Schulten was born on 8 March 1877 in Cologne-Kalk, as one of seven daughters of an engineer. She was not a very talented student and was therefore not sent to a boarding school but went to the local Volksschule. After a visit to an aunt at the Ursuline cloister in Nimwegen, she decided to join the order. She did so at 19, and after a longer trial period than usual, she received the habit and became known as sister Salesia in 1896. She was appointed to the kindergarten and later, when the school was closed down and the Nimwegen Ursulines combined with those from Osnabrück, she became responsible for the gate and sacristy (smaller tasks). Throughout her cloister life, Salesia heard inner voices which predicted various events, including the death of her confessor. She died on 28 February 1920 and left behind a number of writings that testified to a deep spiritual life that none of her fellow sisters had suspected. They documented her suffering, love of humiliation, obedience and reparatory acts through penance and asceticism. She had visions of herself sitting at Jesus' feet, worshipping his wounds. On 22 October 1909, she received the stigmata for the first time and learned how contemplating the crucifix allowed her to experience them again.

Richstätter, Karl. *Mater Salesia Schulten und ihre Psychologie der Mystik: Leben und Schriften einer Ursuline*. Freiburg: Herder, 1932.

### Schwester Maria Lucia (Sophia Halwax, ante 1885, 1836–1885)

The only references to the stigmatization of this nun from Speyer (member of the Töchter des göttlichen Heilandes/Daughters of the Divine Saviour) can be found in a biography of another stigmatic from the Pfalz region, Barbara Pfister. Schwester Lucia (Sophia Halwax) was said to have appeared to her as a soul from Purgatory. In the description of that episode, there are references to wounds on her head and heart. In an obituary published shortly after her demise in February 1885, there are no such indications. She is described as the pious daughter of well-off bakers from Hagenau (born 8 December 1836) and a zealous nun who cared for the poor and sick, and who eventually became the head of one of the daughter houses of the Töchter des göttlichen Heilandes in Speyer.

S.n. "Das Bild einer barmherzigen Schwester." *Der christliche Pilger* 38.9 (1/3/1885): 65–68. Lauer, Nikolaus. *Barbara Pfister. Eine Pfälzisch Stigmatisierte*. Speyer: Pilger Verlag, 1949, 86–88.

### Segerer, Centa (1934, 1906–1953)

Kreszentia – "Centa" – Segerer was born on 31 October 1906 in Munich-Giesing as the eleventh of twelve children of a very pious family. Trained as a carer of newborns, Centa took over the household when her mother became ill in 1919. At the age of 18 she attempted to enter various orders but did not succeed. She remained at home until, in February 1931, she accepted a position in the institution Ecksberg, near Altmühldorf, a home for mentally disabled children (under increasing threat by the regime). However, for health reasons, she had to return home. The following years were marked by physical and emotional suffering that she willingly accepted – for the benefit of the priests. In 1934, she woke with the wounds of Christ on her body. From then on, every Thursday through Friday she would relive Christ's Passion and her wounds would start to bleed again. She had visions of Jesus and Mary and experienced demonic attacks. During the Second World War, she offered her suffering to save Munich from bombing attacks and to release souls from Purgatory. She died on 15 May 1953. Her life would have remained unknown if a collection of her sayings, uttered on Fridays from 1937 to 1953, had not been preserved, and a priest who had received his calling through her mediation also promoted her cause in the countries he was sent to as a missionary.

Bäumel, Alois. *"Ja, Vater." Ein Leben im Willen Gottes* (unpublished biography, 2016.). Kastner, Adalbert. "Centa Segerer lebte 20 Jahre nur von der hl. Kommunion." *Die schönsten eucharistischen Wunder* 5 (2001): 16–19.

### Serra Pes, Maria Rosa (1801, 1766–after 1806)

Maria Rosa was born into a noble family from Alghero (Sardinia), on 17 January 1766. At the age of 12, she entered the Capuchin monastery of the St Rosary in Ozieri. On Sunday, 26 April 1801, Maria Rosa fell into an ecstatic state, rose in a state of levitation and prophesied that on the following Friday, after receiving the Eucharist, one of them would exhibit remarkable and visible charismata. The chosen one should become the new abbess based on this divine decision. On Friday, 1 May, the prophecy was fulfilled: Maria Rosa began to bleed abundantly from her visible wounds on her hands, feet, chest and head (crown of thorns). She was unanimously elected the new abbess.

With the support of the ex-Jesuit father, Gavino Sechi Nin and his brother Antonio Sechi Nin – the vicar and her father confessor – and through the public manifestation of her alleged religious charismata, Maria Rosa gained authority and leadership. Her *fama sanctitatis* quickly spread throughout the island and many pilgrims came to visit her. On 15 May 1801, some members of the Savoy royal family arrived in Ozieri to observe her supernatural phenomena and hear prophecies about the future of their kingdom.

Her charismatic authority ended when her political prophecies proved incorrect and with the election of Msgr Giovanni Antioco Azzei as Bishop of Bisarcio-Bosa-Ozieri in 1804. Azzei was sceptical about the woman and in 1805 he initiated a scrupulous investigation. On 6 January 1806, after five years of popular worship, he obtained a confession from Maria Rosa, who admitted to fraud, stating that with the complicity of the two ex-Jesuit fathers, she had falsely exploited the sorrows of the Crucifixion to obtain the title of abbess, gain public visibility and important funding for the poor monastery (which indeed became very rich). The public denial of her *fama sanctitatis* led to intense public debate. She was removed from the convent and lived in seclusion until her death (after 1806).

Manno, Giuseppe. *Note sarde e ricordi*. Turin: Stamperia reale, 1848, 147–150.

Mareto, Felice. *Le Cappuccine nel mondo (1538–1969). Cenni storici e bibliografia*. Parma: Libreria francescana, 1970.

Smyth, William Henry. *Sketch of the present state of the island of Sardinia. By captain William Henry Smyth*. London: John Murray, 1828.

### Sœur Olive (Danzé, Olive) (1926, 1906–1968)

Olive Danzé was born in 1906 in Plogoff (Finistère) into a humble family of eleven children. From the age of five she had visions of the Infant Jesus, who allegedly came to play with her. At eight years old, Jesus supposedly told her that she would be his wife and his victim soul, making her suffer a lot. In return, he would give her great consolations



once her religious life had begun. A few years later, the Virgin appeared to her and suggested she join the convent of the Benedictine sisters in Paris (16 rue Tournefort). Olive took her vows in 1926 under the religious name of Marie du Christ-Roi, although she is more commonly known as Sœur Olive.

On 29 November 1926, she experienced a great pain in the side of her body and blood started to stain her clothes. Stigmata reappeared on the first Friday of December. On 13 January 1927, after Jesus allegedly granted her the crown of thorns, a wound opened on her forehead. Little by little, Olive began to suffer from all of the sacred wounds, which she would carry until her death. The pain was especially bad on Fridays, when she frequently relived the Passion. The wounds on her hands would always bleed during the first Friday of Lent, and she also experienced transverberation of the heart and other mystical phenomena, such as miraculous Communion, hyperthermia and the gift of prophecy.

At the beginning of 1927, she began having visions of the Sacred Heart. Apparently, Jesus wanted to build a sanctuary in Paris on Sainte-Geneviève hill, where the Benedictine convent was located. The sanctuary would be dedicated to “Christ-Roi, Prince de la Paix, Maître des Nations” (Christ the King, Prince of Peace, Master of the Nations). Sœur Olive communicated the messages to her Mother Superior, who contacted the diocesan authorities. The sanctuary of Christ-Roi received the approval of the Archbishop of Paris and building began at the outer wall of the Benedictine convent, the work made possible due to donations, including a generous contribution by the government of Ireland. The construction of the sanctuary started in 1935 and was inaugurated on 27 October 1940, on the Feast of Christ the King. The cult of Christ-Roi was inspired by millenarianism, proclaiming the restoration of the monarchy in France through an “imagined” king named Henri V de la Croix – as in the prophecies of the stigmatized mystic Marie-Julie Jahenny (1850–1941).

In 1941, after the death of the Archbishop of Paris, Jean Verdier, the ecclesiastical authorities became less enthusiastic with regard to the Christ-Roi sanctuary and Sœur Olive was asked to leave the convent. In 1953, she had an audience with Pope Pius XII, who authorized her to dedicate the sanctuary to “Christ-Roi, Prince de la Paix, Maître des Nations.” The dedication ceremony took place in 1956. After Pius XII’s passing two years later, Olive returned to Plogoff with two of her religious sisters. She died in 1968, isolated and without being acknowledged by the Church. The sanctuary of Christ-Roi was demolished by the Parisian authorities in 1977 to construct a block of apartments. The Archbishopric of Paris did not oppose the municipal order.

Bourcier, Henri-Pierre. *La messagère du Christ-Roi: Sœur Olive*. 2nd ed. Montsûrs: Résiac, 1993.

**Sœur Saint-Bernard de la Croix (Hugueneil, Angélique)**  
(1840, 1820–1847)

Angélique Hugueneil was born in 1820 in Sainte-Foy (Vendée). She lost her father at a young age and had to take care of her younger brothers and sisters. Forced to leave her mother, who was terribly ill, she and one of her sisters were taken care of by a Protestant family. Angélique was allegedly favoured by mystical graces and joined the community of Marie-Thérèse in 1842, taking the religious name of Sœur Saint-Bernard de la Croix. Although she was very quiet and discreet, she confessed to one of her mother superiors that, in 1840, before joining the convent, she had experienced the pain of the Passion. The wounds were nevertheless invisible and nobody noticed her suffering.

On 25 May 1843, the pain was so great that Sœur Saint-Bernard had to remain in bed. The physician claimed that he did not know of an illness that could cause such sufferings. Sœur Saint-Bernard was told to pray to Jesus – who allegedly appeared to her sometimes – to obtain a sign. In spring 1844, stigmata appeared on her hands, feet and side, emanating blood and at times water. From then on, the wounds opened once a week. Sœur Saint-Bernard shared the Passion of Christ while in ecstasy, plunging herself into a deep agony that made her scream in front of her sisters. She made the commitment to give herself up to God, living an expiatory and contemplative life for the reparation of the sins of humankind. Stigmata notwithstanding, she was allegedly favoured with other gifts, such as mind-reading and the ability to take upon herself the suffering, sickness and temptations of her sisters.

During 1845, Sœur Saint-Bernard prayed to God to make the stigmata invisible. She was granted her wish until January 1846, when she allegedly received the crown of thorns and the stigmata became visible again. From then on, in addition to reliving the Passion every Friday, Sœur Saint-Bernard frequently saw the Infant Jesus while in ecstasy, and suffered from attacks of the Devil. As the phenomena continued to increase, the Vicar General of Lyon, confessor of the Sœur Saint-Bernard religious community, began a medical investigation. Unable to find a natural cause for the events, a canonical commission examined the case and concluded that the phenomena were of supernatural origin. In 1847, Sœur Saint-Bernard became extremely ill and died, almost 27 years old, in July of the same year. The community experienced the loss with great agony. Both the Mother Superior and the Vicar General of Lyon left writings to testify in favour of Sœur Saint-Bernard's mystical graces and stigmata.

Imbert-Gourbeyre, Antoine. *Les stigmatisées. Vol. 1. Louise Lateau de Bois-d'Haine, Sœur Bernard de la Croix, Rosa Andriani, Christine de Stumbele*. 2nd edition. Paris: Victor Palmé, 1873.

### **Solari, Teresa (1868, 1822–1908)**

Teresa Solari was born in Né, in the province of Genoa, on 8 December 1822. A few years later, she lost her mother. Her father remarried a woman who hated the child and they tried to kill her by throwing her into the sea. Teresa survived and went to live with an aunt.

She received many gifts in her childhood, such as visions and conversations with Christ and Our Lady. The Lord also gave her a ring, a symbol of her mystical marriage. Among the various divine visions, she saw Christ crucified with the Virgin at his feet. Both invited her to participate in the sufferings of the Passion. She accepted, and from 25 February 1868, she had spiritual pains, blood sweats, marks of the flagellation, the crown of thorns and the pains of the Crucifixion for three days a week, and especially during Lent.

From the age of 15, she suffered a series of mysterious illnesses and was hospitalized in Chiavari and Genoa for almost 20 years. When she was finally well enough to leave, she founded a new religious institute in Sampierdarena with a friend (Antonietta Cervetto), with the support of her spiritual father, Vera, and Msgr Marchesi di Reggio, Bishop of Ventimiglia and later Archbishop of Genoa.

In 1861, Teresa and Antonietta moved to Genoa and in 1863 they began to welcome poor and orphan girls, creating the Little House of Divine Providence. In 1866, the archbishop officially recognized the foundation and in 1969 it was integrated into the Dominican order. In 1871, the foundress and other sisters took perpetual vows and became nuns, while in 1904, Teresa met Pope Pius X and the following year Queen Elena of Savoy. Teresa died on 7 May 1908 in Carignano (Turin).

Spiazzi, Raimondo. *Servire Cristo nei poveri. Madre Teresa Solari. Fondatrice della piccola casa della divina provvidenza in Genova*. Rome: Idea Centro Editoriale, 1981.

### **Sor Patrocinio (Quiroga y Cacopardo, María Josefa de los Dolores) (1829, 1811–1891)**

María Josefa de los Dolores Quiroga y Cacopardo was born in 1811 in Venta del Pinar (Cuenca). Her father was a financial manager loyal to King Fernando VII during the French invasion (1808–1814). In 1826, Dolores met Salustiano de Olózaga, a man from a good family with a rising political career. Olózaga fell madly in love with her, but although he proposed several times, she always refused, disobeying her mother's will. Dolores relied on her aunt's support, a marquise, and together they searched for convents in Madrid. In early 1829, Dolores took her vows, joining the Franciscan Order of the Immaculate Conception under the religious name of Sor Patrocinio.

In July 1829, the first sacred wound appeared on the side of her body. In the following year, just before Ascension Day, Sor Patrocinio fell into ecstasy and the rest of

the sacred wounds supposedly opened on her flesh. She attempted to hide them from her sisters; however, sometimes the bleeding was so profuse that she could not keep it secret. Stigmata notwithstanding, Sor Patrocinio experienced many other kinds of extraordinary phenomena, from hideous attacks by the Devil to levitation, miraculous healings, Marian apparitions and the gift of prophecy. Soon, her reputation extended beyond the convent's wall and she started to be known as "La monja de las llagas" (The nun of the wounds).

At the same time, political upheaval was occurring in Spain. In 1833, King Fernando VII died and left the regency of the country to his wife, the Italian María Cristina, until their daughter Isabel II – aged three years old – could be crowned. This infuriated partisans who supported the crowning of Fernando VII's brother, Don Carlos, leading to the First Carlist War (1833–1835). To mitigate the absolutist aspirations of the Carlists – who received support from the clergy – María Cristina had to make liberal concessions. It is said that the clergy used Sor Patrocinio's stigmata and prophecies to favour the rise of Don Carlos. In 1835, Sor Patrocinio was summonsed to the court, accused of faking extraordinary phenomena and of attempting to subvert the State by favouring the Carlist cause. During the trial, Sor Patrocinio's defence attorney argued that she had been the victim of Father Fermín Alcaraz – loyal to Don Carlos – who gave her a "miraculous relic," saying that a wound would appear wherever she pressed it. Ultimately, Sor Patrocinio was condemned, forcing her to move to another convent far from the Royal Court.

Although Sor Patrocinio was supposed to be a cloistered nun, she never ceased moving from one convent to the other, living in more than 15 different places in Spain and France. Despite the accusation of having supported Don Carlos, she became a close friend and ally of Fernando VII's daughter, Queen Isabel II, who she met in 1844. Isabel II had been fascinated by "the nun of the wounds" since her childhood and always supported her. In the decade preceding the 1868 revolution, Sor Patrocinio obtained funding from the Queen and her husband, Francisco de Asís, for the foundation of convents. The first was located next to the Royal Palace in Aranjuez.

The conservative and liberal parties attributed every unfavourable political outcome to Sor Patrocinio and her influence on the Queen. Apparently, the nun manipulated the monarchy's political agenda with her "visions." Sor Patrocinio became a symbol of absolutism and of the struggles of the liberal regime. At the same time, she became a frequent source of mockery in the anticlerical and Republican press. She survived two assassination attempts. When the revolution of 1868 dethroned Isabel II, Sor Patrocinio followed the court into exile in France. In 1876, with the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in Spain, Sor Patrocinio was allowed to return home, where she died in 1891 with a controversial reputation. Her cause for beatification was opened in 1907 and is still under examination.

- González, Arturo, Diéguez, Miguel. *Sor Patrocinio*. Madrid: Editorial Nacional, 1981.
- Jarnés, Benjamín. *Sor Patrocinio. La monja de las llagas*. Barcelona: Círculo de Lectores, 1993[1929].
- Paredes, Javier, ed. *Las llagas de la monja. Sor Patrocinio en el convento del Caballero de Gracia*. Madrid: San Román, 2015.
- Toledo, Archivo Diocesano de Toledo (ADT), Procesos de Beatificación, Causa de Beatificación de Sor Patrocinio (1907).
- Voltes, Pedro. *Sor Patrocinio, la monja prodigiosa*. Barcelona: Planeta, 1994.

### **Sotgiu, Leontina (1916, 1882–1957)**

Leontina Sotgiu was born in Sassari (Sardinia) on 13 January 1882 and lived with her family in Marseille for a short time. At the age of 16, she refused a marriage proposal and subsequently joined the Third Order of Saint Francis. On 15 August 1900, she took her vow of chastity with the permission of her confessor.

Her inner life became increasingly rich and incomprehensible, so she sought spiritual direction from fathers Giovanni Sanna and Giovanni Battista Manzella. The latter presented her to Sister Angela Marongiu, his co-founder of the Gethsemane nuns. Leontina wanted to enrolled her in the convent, but Manzella only allowed her to take private vows and live at home as a religious woman.

A divine voice prophesied her extraordinary mystical gift of the stigmata and she prayed that they would be hidden and not known to anyone. On the eve of the Holy Crux feast, in 1916, she had a vision of Christ, who struck her heart, hands, feet and head with fiery rays. The stigmata were invisible and only present on the days of the Passion or when she prayed for the salvation of souls (sometimes they would bleed, especially the wound of the heart).

Sister Angela Marongiu was present during an episode of her invisible crucifixion and wrote a report in 1922. It was a Friday in Lent and she suffered from 1.30 P.M. to 4 P.M. When she recovered, she imitated the Via Crucis, praying, crying, trembling and groaning as she suffered through the flagellation and Crucifixion and offering her pains for the souls in Purgatory. On Easter Sunday when she attended Mass, she claimed to have seen an incredible number of souls admitted into Paradise.

In 1930, her new confessor, Giovanni Pirastru, the spiritual son of Father Manzella, was elected Bishop of Iglesias. Leontina and her sister, Maria, became his housekeepers for 27 years. She continued her life of redemptive suffering for the salvation of souls in Purgatory and for the glory of the Church. Leontina died in Iglesias on 28 September 1957. The diocesan process for the opening of her cause for beatification started in 1982. Msgr Pirastru collected 1,438 letters and her diary in eight volumes and another two volumes about her relationship with her spiritual fathers.

Anonymous. *La lucertola del cupo bosco: profilo spirituale di Leontina Sotgiu*. Iglesias: Edizioni OVS, 1964.

Cerafogli, Germano Elia. *Leontina Sotgiu: vittima di espiazione*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1978.

Cerafogli, Germano Elia. *Virtù e carismi di Leontina Sotgiu*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1978.

### **S.P.V. (1948, 1902–)**

S.P.V. was born in Madrid in 1902. She bore a wound on her side. In 1948, the Jesuit father Carlos M. Staehlin examined the stigmata.

Staehlin, Carlos M. *Apariciones*. Madrid: Razón y Fe, 1954, 164.

### **Starace, Maria Maddalena (c.1870, 1845–1921)**

Costanza Starace (religious name Maria Maddalena) was born into a wealthy and very religious family from Castellammare di Stabia (Naples) on 5 September 1845. She received a Catholic education, attending the aristocratic institution of Figlie della Carità. At the age of 12, she entered the monastery of the Holy Trinity in Vito Equestre, but two years later she had to return home due to her precarious health. She then began to suffer from various illnesses (tremors, epileptic fits, blood emissions) which continued throughout her life, preventing her from becoming a cloistered nun.

At the age of 15, she abandoned the monastic ideal, but did take her perpetual vows. Costanza was a “domestic nun,” one of the many young Neapolitans who led a religious life within the domestic sphere. She enrolled in the Trinitarian Servants of Mary and on 19 June 1865, the bishop, Francesco Saverio Petagna, gave her permission to wear the religious habit. Two years later, she made the profession of faith, becoming tertiary nun and taking the name of Maria Maddalena della Passione (8 June 1867).

At the request of the bishop, she was elected director of the Pia Unione delle Figlie di Maria, an institution for education in the catechism. In 1869, she founded a pious association with a group of sisters in one of her family’s palaces, with the aim of taking care of cholera patients, orphans and young girls. Their religious congregation was called the Suore Compassioniste Serve di Maria. Success was immediate, with 100 guests in the first year. Msgr Petagna granted his diocesan approval (27 May 1871), and on 10 November 1893, the general father of the Servants of Mary perpetually bound this foundation to his order.

From 1879 to 1897, Vincenzo Maria Sarnelli was the Bishop of Castellammare and the confessor of Maria Maddalena. He supported her charitable activities and encouraged her mystical life. The sister considered her illness and diabolical attacks as “divine

tests” of her worthiness to receive special gifts such as ecstasy and stigmata. Only a few witnesses observed her mystical experiences, and she kept them hidden in the pages of her spiritual diary. It seems, however, that the stigmata were occasionally visible during Lent Fridays.

Maria Maddalena died on 13 December 1921 in Castellammare and was considered a “living saint” by the Neapolitan people. On 4 April 1939, the process for her beatification was opened, and was concluded on 15 April 2007, when she was declared Blessed.

Anonymous. *In memoria di sr. M. Maddalena Starace: fondatrice superiora generale delle suore compassioniste serve di Maria*. Naples: Officina tipografica Elzevira, 1922.

Gori, Nicola. *Con Maria ai piedi della croce: biografia della beata Maria Maddalena Starace fondatrice delle suore Compassioniste serve di Maria*. Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2010.

Roschini, Gabriele Maria. *Vita e l'opera di suor Maria Maddalena della Passione (Costanza Starace), fondatrice e prima superiora generale delle Suore Compassioniste Serve di Maria*. Isola del Liri: Macioce e Pisani, 1937.

### **Steiner, Teresa (c.1835, 1813–1862)**

Teresa Steiner, known by the religious name of Maria Agnese Chiara, was one of the stigmatics of the Tyrol. She was born in Taisten (today Tesido) on 29 August 1813. Her father died a few years after her birth and she lived with her mother in great poverty. As in the “hagiographies” of many other stigmatics, it is said that she started to show extraordinary signs when she was still a child: at the age of five, she prophesied future political events (suppression of religious orders, end of the temporal powers of the Church, birth of the Kingdom of Italy) and at ten, she had her first vision in which Christ indicated her mission (to become a nun and write new rules for the Poor Clares).

On 14 July 1834, she enrolled in the Third Order of Saint Francis. Against the wishes of her family, she attempted to be admitted to various monasteries in Tyrol between 1835 and 1837 (Clarisse of Bressanone, Benedictine of Sabiona, Ursuline of Brunico), but each time she was rejected because of her poor health. In this period, mystical phenomena that would accompany her throughout her life began. Teresa accepted the task of suffering the invisible stigmata for the redemption of souls and the Church. Her inner pains were sometimes visible, especially during Fridays of the Passion, when red spots appeared on the palms of her hands, which did not, however, emit blood. In addition to the invisible stigmata, she had visions, episodes of ecstasy and violent demonic attacks, as well as the gift of prophecy and the mystical marriage (26 June 1839).

Nevertheless, her confessor, Father Giorgio Habtamann, was not pleased and in June 1838 she wrote to the German Poor Clares of Assisi asking to be admitted to their convent and was accepted. On 6 June 1841, she took her perpetual vows. Initially, the sisters looked with suspicion on her supernatural episodes and thought she was

possessed by the devil, but over time she gained the reputation of being a “living saint.” In 1847, under divine inspiration, she wrote the new constitution of the Poor Clares, reforming the old rules. In the same year, she was sent to the monastery of San Giovanni in Nocera Umbra (Perugia) to refound it. On 21 January 1848, she was elected abbess.

She predicted the election of Pope Pius IX, as well as his exile and the persecution of the Church. After a long illness, Maria Agnese Chiara died on 24 August 1862. Her cause for beatification was opened on 23 February 1909.

Anonymous. *Nel I centenario della Riforma delle Clarisse della ven. madre Maria Agnese Chiara Steiner nel Monastero di s. Giovanni Battista in Nocera Umbra: 1846–1946.*

Foligno: Tip. F. Salvati, 1946.

Baur, Giovanni. *La venerabile serva di Dio Maria Agnese Chiara Steiner del Sacro Costato, fondatrice delle Clarisse Mitigate, 1813–1862.* Nocera: Tip. del Seminario, 1950.

Da Reus, Francesco. *Compendio della vita della serva di Dio Suora Maria Agnese Chiara del costato di Gesù.* Foligno: Stab. Tip. Campitelli, 1878.

### **Strobl, Hieronyma (c.1840, –c.1869)**

Hieronyma Strobl was probably born in Caldaro, in the province of Bolzano, in the first half of the nineteenth century (the same village in which Maria von Mörl was born). We have little information about her: she was a Franciscan nun who served at the Caldaro hospital. Hieronyma was one of the numerous stigmatics of the Tyrol, receiving the pains of the Lord’s Passion every Friday. It is not clear that her suffering was internal or even visible. She died in her native village around 1869–1870.

Imbert-Gourbeyre, Antoine. *La stigmatisation*, ed. Joachim Boufflet. Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1996.

### **Taigi, Anna Maria (c.1808, 1769–1837)**

Anna Maria Giannetti was born in Siena (Tuscany) on 30 May 1769 and moved to Rome with her parents in 1775, working as a domestic servant. There, she met Domenico Taigi, her future husband. They married in 1790 and had seven children. However, her domestic duties did not hinder her devotion to daily religious practices. Anna Maria had an intense inner life, characterized by mystical gifts, visions, ecstasy, flagellations, prophecy and demonic attacks. According to Raffaele Natali, the most significant was a mystical sun that shone before her eyes (from 1790 until her death), granting her the gift of prophecy, which gave her knowledge of future events concerning the fate of the Pope and the Church in particular.

On 26 December 1808, she became a Trinitarian tertiary under the spiritual direction of Raffaele Natali, who lived in her house for 20 years and testified to her exceptional mystical life. Ferdinando di St Luigi Gonzaga (spiritual guide of Elisabetta



Canori Mora, another mystical women) was her main confessor. From 1808, she suffered the pains of the Passion and probably invisible stigmata. She had apocalyptic and political visions and Marian apparitions as well and offered herself as a “victim soul” for the Church.

Anna Maria became very popular in Rome especially because of her prophecies (about historical events) and clairvoyance (personal facts), but also because of her philanthropy and assistance of others. Pope Gregory XIV allowed the celebration of Mass in her home (1836), so it became a place of worship and pilgrimage. She was not only famous among the ordinary people, but also the aristocracy and Church members, who interpreted her prophecies politically. Her prophecy of the apocalyptic days after the pontificate of Pius IX, followed by the ultimate triumph of the Holy See (that would regain its power across Europe, England, Russia and China), was interpreted in political terms: the Church would defeat secularization and its other enemies.

She died in Rome on 9 June 1837. Her cause for canonization began in 1862 and ended with her beatification on 30 May 1920 by Pope Benedict XV, who depicted her as the perfect wife and mother. Her incorrupt body is conserved in the Church of San Crisogono in Trastevere, Rome.

Antignani, Gerardo. *Anna Maria Taigi: amore e sacrificio, storia di una mamma*. Siena: Cantagalli, 1975.

Bouffier, Gabriel. *La vénérable servante de Dieu Anna Maria Taigi d'après les documents authentiques du procès de sa beatification*. Paris: A. Bray, 1867.

Della Providenza, Callisto. *Vita della venerabile serva di Dio Anna Maria Taigi*. Rome: Chiapperini, 1873.

Luquet, Jean Felix Onesime. *Notice sur la vie et sur les vertus de l'humble servante de Dieu Anna-Maria-Ant.-Gés. Taigi née Giannetti*. Rome: Paternò, 1849.

Luquet, Jean Felix Onesime. *Notizia sulla vita e sulle virtù dell'umile serva di Dio Anna Maria Antonietta Gesualda Taigi nata Giannetti*. Milan: Boniardi Pogliani di E. Besozzi, 1850.

Salotti, Carlo. *La beata Anna Maria Taigi: secondo la storia e la critica*. Grottaferrata: Scuola tipografica italo-orientale S. Nilo, 1922.

### **Tamisier, Rosette (1849, 1816–1899)**

Rosette Tamisier was born in 1816 in Saignon (Vaucluse) into a humble peasant family. She was eight years old when she first noticed a wound on her chest. A “woman” – perhaps the Virgin Mary – allegedly appeared to her in the middle of the night and cured it without leaving any trace. At the age of 18, the religious sisters of the congregation of the Présentation took over direction of the hospital in Saignon and Tamisier was accepted as a cleaning lady. Soon, she started complaining about pains in her hands and feet.

She later moved to Salon, to another house of the congregation, where she became very ill and so returned to Saignon to her family. Unable to digest any food, “angels” allegedly brought her the Eucharist, which became her only sustenance. From 1849, the prodigies attributed to this stigmatic multiplied. She was said to frequently fall into a trance and sometimes to levitate while she was in ecstasy. Her body was said to be covered with figurative stigmata, especially on her chest, and the people from her village would imprint the wounds on patches of cloth. They treated these objects as holy relics and used them to pray to Rosette, asking for her recommendation.

Despite these “miracles,” the phenomenon that made her famous across France was of another nature. It took place in front of many witnesses in Saint-Saturnin-lès-Apt. Tamisier was praying in front of a painting depicting the Pietà when red liquid – blood, according to Tamisier – emerged from the right hand and the side of the Christ in the painting. This phenomenon occurred at least six times between 10 November 1850 and 5 February 1851. The “miracle” provided Rosette with new supporters, as well as new enemies. An ecclesiastical investigation undertaken by the Archbishop of Avignon concluded that the facts could not be attributed to the supernatural.

The civil court was informed about the event and Tamisier was accused of “staining” the Pietà painting and of having stolen Hosts from the priest of Saignon – and then faking the miraculous Communion. After three months of inquiry, the correctional court declared it was not qualified to judge the events and the public prosecutor took over legal proceedings. Rosette was found guilty and was sentenced to six months prison and a fine of sixteen francs. Unable to pay, she was kept in prison for 21 months until 3 December 1852. After she was freed, the Church refused to give her the sacraments unless she confessed. After years of denial, she signed a statement acknowledging that she had not worked any miracles, and so was authorized to take the Communion. She died on 23 February 1899, her reputation still controversial.

Avignon, Archives Départementales de Vaucluse (ADV), Rosette Tamisier, 2Mi732, 13J47.  
André, Jean-François. *Affaire Rosette Tamisier, précédée d'une notice sur Pierre-Michel Vintras et sa secte*. Carpentras: Imp. L. Devillario, 1851.

Anonymous. *Procès de Rose Tamisier*. Paris: Imp. Preve et Ce, 1851.

Garçon, Maurice. *Rosette Tamisier ou la miraculeuse aventure*. Paris: L'Artisan du livre, 1929.

### **Tarallo, Maria Grazia (1906, 1866–1912)**

Maria della Passione, nee Maria Grazia Tarallo, was born in Barra (a neighbourhood in Naples) on 23 September 1866, into a quite wealthy and religious family (her two sisters also became nuns).

Her biography seems to reflect the traditional stages of Catholic hagiography. She had her first visions when she was five years old and an apparition of Christ crucified

at the age of seven. As an adolescent, Maria Grazia made a vow of chastity to Our Lady and chose to become a “victim soul.” Her father, however, ignored her desire to become a nun and forced her to marry on 13 April 1889. Nevertheless, the marriage remained unconsummated and her husband died a few months later, after which she could finally join a monastery (1 June 1891).

At the age of 25, Maria Grazia entered the new institute of Crocifisse Adoratrici di Gesù Sacramento, funded by Maddalena Notari in San Giorgio a Cremano (Naples), taking the name of Maria della Passione. On 18 March 1903, she took her perpetual vows, living in various monasteries until 1906, when she settled in Cremano.

Her sisters, the founder and the confessor, Fontana, were witnesses to her mystical experiences. Visions, ecstasies, small “dots” on her forehead and wounds on her feet and side were reported. According to hagiographers, Maria Grazia was also a prophetess and suffered demonic attacks, which left visible lesions (lacerations, burns, broken limbs and paralysis). These phenomena mainly took place after 1906 and were accompanied by continuous flagellation, fasting and self-inflicted suffering.

Maria della Passione died on 27 July 1912. Her popular following was impressive and her devotees considered her a “holy nun.” One year later, the Cardinal Archbishop of Naples opened her cause for beatification and finally, on 14 May 2006, she was declared Blessed by the Church after its recognition of a miracle.

Fontana, Luigi Maria. *La vittima riparatrice Suor Maria della Passione religiosa professa e maestra di novizie della Crocifisse Adoratrici di Gesù Sacramento*. Naples: Tipografia Pontificia Michele D'Auna, 1913.

### **Tartaglino, Maria (1925, 1887–1944)**

Maria Tartaglino was born in Asti, Piedmont, on 17 September 1887. Her mother died two years later and her father refused to look after her. She was first sent to one of her mother’s friends and, on 23 October 1900, to the Daughters of St Anna (popularly known as Figlie di Santa Chiara). From childhood on, she suffered many illnesses, including the loss of sight in her left eye. Maria considered these illnesses as divine proof of her suffering for the redemption of Catholics and the clergy.

In 1914, Father Placido Botti became her spiritual confessor, persuading her to engage in ever more extreme devotional practices, which led her to become the crucified bride of Christ. On Friday, 31 December 1925, after an ecstatic episode, the visible signs of the Passion opened on her hands, feet, chest and forehead, disappearing over the following day. The stigmata emitted blood especially during the Easter period and were visible for five years (becoming invisible in 1930).

Among her mystical gifts and paranormal experiences we can include demonic attacks, ecstasy, voices and visions, bilocation and the dictation of divine messages. In

her long years of paralysis, Maria wrote 440 letters, works on the Sacred Heart and mystical marriage, as well as some religious poems and an autobiography.

On 11 August and 27 October 1933, her crucifix bled abundantly. At the time, Maria was living at the St Chiara Institute and the news spread quickly among the sisters and other religious at the centre, the Oblates of St Joseph. The Bishop of Asti, Msgr Umberto Rossi, ordered the opening of a diocesan process, which occurred between 12 February and 14 May 1934. Eyewitnesses were called to testify and medical-scientific analyses of the crucifix and Maria Tartaglino were undertaken. The bishop declared the supernatural nature of the episode, then declared the miracle and allowed the public worship of the crucifix, attracting crowds of pilgrims (over 10,000 on 9 March 1934 alone).

Maria's celebrity continued to spread quickly and she soon became known at the Holy See. On 24 April 1934, a Vatican delegate was sent to Asti and, on 6 May, the crucifix was removed. On 4 June 1934, the bishop read the measures imposed by Rome: censorship, abolition of the cult, requisition of any kinds of relic and the replacement of her confessor. Maria was judged to be hysterical. Maria Tartaglino died in Asti on 1 September 1944.

D'Anna, Antonino. *Il sangue del crocifisso. Maria Tartaglino e il prodigio di Asti*.

Tavagnacco: Edizioni Segno, 2014.

Tartaglino, Maria. *Mese di giugno 1929. Riflessioni elevazioni sul "dolce mio Amore"*, edited by Alberto Chilovi. Asti: Amico, 2011.

### **Taubenberger, Theresia (1839, –)**

Theresia März, the illegitimate daughter of the farmer's help, Bartolomä März, married Joseph Taubenberger on 25 June 1827. After the death of her mother and stepfather she inherited an estate ("Hort"), but due to mismanagement this soon declined. It was a rather unhappy marriage and Theresia seems to have found comfort in her faith. From 1839, she no longer ate solid food, she flagellated herself and increased her visits to the church. Soon ecstatic episodes set in, combined with visions in which her husband and the Devil became one and the same. After a while, the episodes developed a certain pattern, starting on Thursday evening and lasting until Friday afternoon. Her pastor, Matthias Weinzierl, became her spiritual guide. Her husband accused him of encouraging the phenomena (there were indeed three other women who displayed similar phenomena – see Bartenhauser, Fiechtner and Theresia Schnitzelbauer).

In October 1842, her condition became a topic of interest for the authorities, when her husband filed a complaint after Theresia had gone to live at the house of her brother-in-law. Two opposing groups developed, one supporting Theresia's husband, made up of the men of Waakirchen and the local court, and the other made up of Weinzierl, the female parishioners and the archdiocese. Theresia's husband accused

Weinzierl and Theresia of an overly intimate relationship. An investigation of the nature of the phenomena was conducted by Dr Krämer, who attributed them to a nervous disposition and could not detect any fraud. After a complaint by representatives of the Waakirchen community in July 1843, which claimed that Taubenberger was still causing trouble, the court decided that she had to leave the house of her brother-in-law within five days. She went to the cloister of Reutberg. The couple divorced in October, but shortly afterwards Joseph died and Theresia returned to Waakirchen. Not much is known of her after this, apart from the fact that she sold her property in August 1845.

Gißibl, Bernhard. *Frömmigkeit, Hysterie und Schwärmerei*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004, passim.

### **Tekotte, Marianne (1844, –)**

In May 1844, the widow Tekotte pressed the local police to examine the case of her daughter Marianne. For a year and a half, strange rumours had been spreading about her daughter, who worked as a servant in Althrede. She was allegedly able to foretell events in her sleep and had recently started to bleed from her hands, feet and head. There was a mixed response. Those who believed in the phenomena stood in line to see her bleed on Fridays (according to her mother, 300–400 people, others said about 50), while those who did not believe spread evil rumours. Marianne's mother wanted to stop it all before her daughter's reputation was ruined. However, neither a medical examination nor a police investigation took place. The local clergy did not pay any special attention to the case and by October 1844 interest in the case seems to have faded.

Münster. LAV NRW, Kreis Borken, Landratsamt, Nr. 112, Stigmatisation der Dienstmagd Marianne Tekotte aus Altrhede (1844).

### **Thaller-Von Schönwerth, Mechtild (1890s?, 1868–1919)**

Mechtild von Schönwerth, born on 3 March 1868, grew up in Munich in the parish of St Ludwig. Her parents, Maria Rath and Franz Xaver Schönwerth had eight children. Mechtild was well educated and learned Latin, Greek and Spanish alongside her brothers. The family moved to Regensburg when she was 16. Although Mechtild had rejected all human love in a solemn pledge to God at the age of five, her father confessor urged her to marry. She did in fact marry a school friend of her brothers who was four years her senior, on 7 May 1895. He turned out to be a tyrant who tortured her physically and emotionally and had a mistress. In 1898, her husband accepted a job in Württemberg and they moved to Obermachtal.

When Mechtild was young she developed a strong piety for the suffering Virgin and whenever she could, she would attempt to wipe away the tears from the statue with a

handkerchief (which indeed disappeared, but returned again). As an adult, Mechtild guided a “family” of “spiritual children” through her letters: men, women, priests, lay-people and members of her congregation. In the first year of her marriage, Mechtild had seen a crucifix come to life. She had the gift of bilocation, and during the First World War she visited the wounded close to the frontlines. Her guardian angel told her to hide all her exceptional gifts from the world (including her stigmata). She sometimes called herself Magdalena (when she wrote to her friend Mater Hedwig Schnabel), the name she had received when she became a member of the Grignon-Bruderschaft, while to her spiritual children she was “Mutter Magdalena.” She died on 30 November 1919. Her body was transferred to Munich and buried in the Waldfriedhof. After her death, her husband showed remorse, as did his mistress.

Hausmann, Irmgard. *Die Vertraute der Engel. Leben der Mystikerin Mechthild Thaller-Schönwerth (1868–1919) im Spiegel ihrer Schriften und nach Aussage Nahestehender*. Jestetten: Miriam Verlag, 1982.

Lama, Friedrich, Ritter von. *Ein Büchlein von den Engeln*. Stein am Rhein: Christiana Verlag, 1993 (original 1935?).

### **Valtorta, Maria (1945, 1897–1961)**

Maria Valtorta was born into a rich Lombard family from Caserta on 14 March 1897. Due to her father’s position (cavalry marshal), the family lived in several Italian cities (Milan, Monza, Florence, Reggio Calabria, Viareggio), where Maria attended the best schools and received a classical education. However, her relationship with her mother was complicated.

In 1920, while she was living in Florence, she was attacked by a man. This left her with a spinal injury, which led her to become progressively infirm. In 1924, she moved to Viareggio, where she regularly attended the parish, joined the Third Order of Saint Francis (1928) and Catholic Action. From 1 April 1934, Maria was bedridden, and in the following year her beloved father died. These events led her to the desire to become a “victim soul” for the redemption of humanity and for the salvation of the Church. She was a fervent devotee of the Mater Dolorosa, the Passion and the Eucharist, and these devotions became even more intense after 1943, when the serving father, Romualdo Migliorini, became her spiritual father.

Maria was fascinated by the autobiography of Thérèse of Lisieux, had contact through bilocation with Therese Neumann and Padre Pio, and also heard mystical voices. Her confessor ordered her to write her autobiography and, after enrolling in the Third Order of the Servants of Mary (25 March 1944), she declared that she had received divine messages. Between 1944 and 1951, she wrote 122 books, amounting to approximately 15,000 pages, in which she wrote commentary on the Gospels and the life of Jesus.

Her desire to sacrifice herself as an unknown redemptive victim clashed with the distribution of her writings by Father Migliorini, who attracted the attention of the Holy Office. It ordered the withdrawal of all volumes, without a formal charge. On 27 March 1945, Maria received the gift of invisible stigmata, as attested in her letters.

Despite the censorship, the publication of her writings continued until 16 December 1959, when they were placed on the *Index* (judged a fictional version of Christ's life). Maria died in Viareggio on 12 October 1961. In 1973, her remains were transferred to Florence, where the Servants of Mary attempted unsuccessfully to open a process for her beatification. There are, however, a large group of faithful and another that deals with the publication and promotion of her writings, the Valtorta Editorial Centre.

Centoni, Albo. *Una vita con Maria Valtorta: testimonianze di Marta Diciotti*. Isola del Liri: Centro editoriale Valtortiano, 1987.

Pisani, Emilio. *Pro e contro Maria Valtorta*. Isola del Liri: Centro editoriale valtortiano, 2008.

Valtorta, Maria. *Autobiografia*. Isola del Liri: Centro Editoriale Valtortiano, 1997.

Valtorta, Maria. *Quadernetti*. Isola del Liri: Centro editoriale valtortiano, 2006.

Valtorta, Maria. "Preparazione alla passione." In *Il poema dell'Uomo-Dio*. Isola del Liri: Centro editoriale valtortiano, 2008.

### **Van den Broeck, Maria (1915, 1891–1928)**

Maria Antonia Van den Broeck was born in Sinaai-Waas on 21 June 1891. She was the third of 9 surviving (of 14) children of Aloïs Van den Broeck, a clog maker, and Henriette Seghers. Maria became a member of the Marian congregation on 8 December 1906. In 1905, she had started boarding school in Sint-Niklaas. A year later, she had to leave the school due to the illness of her older sister Celine: her help was needed at home and in the clothing shop of her sisters. After refusing an offer of marriage, she remained living at home – bedridden in her last years and receiving divine graces. However, few people knew what was happening to her as her family kept her hidden from neighbours and friends.

She had her first vision of her guardian angel in 1898, later she also saw Our Lady and Jesus (1899). When she was 15, she talked about being visited by the Devil. Between the ages of 15 and 18, she wore a penance belt and flagellated herself, endangering her health. Suffering became her calling and she started to participate in Christ's Passion (when she was 15). On Good Friday 1915, she shared his Passion, and after only a short while her whole body was covered in blood. In 1906, the first signs of tuberculosis became apparent, but Maria continued to live her life as normal. From 1910 onwards, she became bedridden, vomiting blood, and experiencing fevers, a cough and ulcerations. Beyond medical help, she was suddenly healed during Pentecost 1916. Her good health lasted until Pentecost 1918 but from then on she was bedridden until her death.

On 20 May 1923, she and Jesus celebrated their mystical marriage. Her illness kept her from joining the Passionist order in Tielt, but on 31 May 1926 she was included “on a personal title.” When she died on 3 December 1928, the emblems of the Passionist order were placed on her body.

Maes, Koen. *Maria Van den Broeck (1891–1928). Een wonde aan Jezus’ lichaam*. Wezembeek-Oppem: private initiative, 2007.

### **Van den Dijck, Leonie (1940, 1875–1949)**

Leonie Marie Van den Dijck was born on 19 October 1875 in Idegem. She married Frans de Spiegeleer and bore him 13 children, of which 9 survived beyond childhood. When her husband left her, she and her children had a difficult time making ends meet. In August 1933 (in the aftermath of the Beauraing and Banneux apparitions), she claimed to have seen the Virgin in a chapel in Onkerzele. As this was the first apparition in Flanders in the 1930s, she drew a lot of attention. The series of public apparitions continued throughout the following years and she was joined by several other visionaries. However, her group of supporters slowly diminished when she entered a more secluded phase, during which she gave prophecies (allegedly about the Second World War and the murder of King Albert of Belgium). In her later years (from 1940 onwards), she also displayed the stigmata. In March 1942, the archbishop publicly rejected her case (as well as several others). She died on 23 June 1949, but her supporters still continue to promote her cause. They started a movement and even exhumed her remains in 1972 to prove that Leonie had told the truth. Her body is said to have not decayed. The Church responded by referring to the 1942 rejection. However, in 1982, there was a second exhumation and today a small museum in her former house is open to the public.

Anonymous. *De zienster van Onkerzele. Leonie Van den Dyck (1875–1949)*. Mechelen: Frans Jacobs, 1973.

Bernaau, Patrick and Didelez, Guy. *Het orakel ontgraven*. Antwerpen/Amsterdam: Manteau, 1993.

Magain, Alfred. *Onze-Lieve-Vrouw bij de Vlamingen. De verschijningen van Onkerzele*. Leuven: Rex, 1933?

Schellinck, Gustaaf. *Het wonderbare leven van Leonie Van den Dijck*. Onkerzele: Komiteit, 1987.

### **Van den Plas, Maria (1935, c.1920–?)**

Maria Van den Plas first made the Belgian news in the summer of 1934, when she and two other girls claimed to have seen the Virgin and began to publicly experience Christ’s Passion. The event caused much commotion; there were even some riots in Lokeren, where the events took place. The local government decided to forbid gatherings of



more than five people, and the Belgian bishops rejected the phenomena in a letter read to the faithful of the diocese on 2 September 1934. However, this was not the end of the affair and in 1935 Borromeus Vandewalle investigated (for an archdiocesan commission) the rumours about Maria Van den Plas having stigmata (received on 14 May). He concluded they were a mixture of fraud, illness and the Devil's doing.

Van Osselaer, Tine. "Uit de lucht gegrepen? Mariaverschijningen op het Naastveld." *Annalen van de Koninklijke Oudheidkundige Kring van het Land van Waas*, 114.1 (2011): 277–302.

### **Vandenputte, Martha (1918, 1891–1967)**

Maria Vandenputte was born on 29 September 1891 in Sint Joost-ten-Noode, the daughter of the bailiff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brussels, Ferdinand Vandenputte, and Maria De Muylder. Her father had lost his faith, but her mother remained deeply Christian. She went to school at Our Lady of Namur (for eight years). The teachers' college she attended afterwards was, in her opinion, lacking in religious and moral education and she often missed classes. She was not in good health and for this reason the family decided to move to Oppem, in the countryside. In 1906, Maria felt a religious calling and had an apparition of the Virgin, who introduced her to Father Valentinus, later to become her spiritual guide (in 1908). Years later, in 1927, the two started a new congregation with the approval of the archbishop: the *zusters Missionarissen van het Allerheiligste Kruis en Lijden van Onze Heer Jezus Christus* (8/12/1927, The Sister Missionaries of the most Holy Cross and Suffering of Our Lord Jesus Christ).

Martha continued to have mystical episodes. In 1918, she had an apparition of Jesus, who showed her the Cross and asked her if she was willing to carry it. She agreed, and she went through Christ's Passion several times (at least once with visible wounds). She suffered through attacks of the Devil, but also had visions of the Virgin, the child Jesus and an angel. One episode of bilocation was reported, during which she brought the Communion to a priest held captive behind the Iron Curtain. In 1931, Marthe burned the name of Jesus on her chest with a hot iron. She died on 17 September 1967, after an illness lasting several days.

Rummens, Hilde. *Getekend, Moeder Martha Vandenputte*. Antwerpen: Halewijn, 2011.

### **Vangioni, Maria (c.1890, 1877–1944)**

Our knowledge about the life of Maria Vangioni, better known by the religious name of Crocifissa, is rather limited and comes mainly from her detractors. Maria was born in Calomini, a small village in the province of Lucca, on 25 September 1877. Her mother was known as Estellia. Maria experienced many phenomena, including ecstasy,

stigmata and the crown of thorns, with unusual phenomena already characterizing her childhood, such as the appearance of the chest wound. Mystical events continued in her adulthood, when Maria decided to follow the model of Gemma Galgani. She was venerated with enthusiasm in her home town and, initially, her confessor was Father Germano, the same spiritual director of the Tuscan saint.

At the age of 13, in 1890, she entered the convent of the Sisters of Santa Zita in Lucca. Ecstasies, corporal flagellation and fasts became daily practices in the cloister. Her fame began to spread very quickly and grew after the appearance of visible stigmata (we do not know the year, but almost certainly after 1890). Publicly displaying her gifts, Maria gained a leadership role in the religious community, but not all of the sisters were willing to support her. The division between the faithful and the critics was particularly evident after her election as the new abbess. The new spiritual director, Father Gregorio, was one of her most fervent believers, condemning the sisters who attempted to oppose her. However, they did not intend to accept her promotion, so they asked the Pope to abandon the monastery. To determine what was happening, the Holy Office sent Msgr Giovanni Battista Tommasi, who did not believe in the paranormal origin of her alleged graces, determining that they were the result of auto-suggestion or fictional. However, he did consider her a great abbess, especially due to her financial management of the institute. The Vatican congregation did not take any action against her. Crocifissa died on 22 September 1944.

ACDF, *Dev. V.* 1923, 4.

Gentile, Rosalba. "Nel solco di Gemma. Maria Lilia Mastacchini e Suor Crocifissa Vangioni nella serie archivistica *Devotiones Variæ*." In *Ricerche di storia sociale e religiosa*, 79, 2011, 289–99.

### **Veraci, Crocifissa (1792, 1749–1822)**

Crocifissa Veraci was born in Florence on 18 October 1749, into a wealthy bourgeois family. As an adolescent she embraced Enlightenment ideals and opposed the Church, declaring herself to be an atheist and making a blood pact with the devil.

However, after this libertine period of life as an "enemy" of Catholicism, Crocifissa felt the call to a religious life at the age of 33 and decided to become a nun. In 1782, she entered the monastery of Giovanni Apostolo in Pratovecchio, in the province of Arezzo but under the diocesan administration of the Bishop of Fiesole.

At the time, a period characterized by political and cultural revolutions (Enlightenment and secularization), a new type of spirituality and piety that was more modern and rationalist was promoted by some clergymen. The Bishop of Prato and Pistoia, Scipione de' Ricci, according to the policy of the Grand Dukes of Tuscany, imposed a Jansenist spirituality. In 1784, the cult of the Sacred Heart was suppressed and banned

from the convent of Pratovecchio. Crocifissa did not accept the decision. In one of her many visions, Jesus exhorted her to take action and assigned her the role of “the Apostle of the Sacred Heart,” once again spreading its cult.

She wrote numerous letters to the Archbishop of Florence and the Bishop of Fiesole asking them to publicly support her cause. Crocifissa accepted the active role that Christ had offered her and simultaneously continued to follow her mystical-ascetic path. Eventually, her inner suffering (invisible stigmata) became visible during the Easter week in 1792, when the signs of the Passion appeared on her hands, feet and side, as well as the crown of thorns.

Due to her visible stigma (occurring especially during Lent Fridays until her death), she was considered by her religious community and the faithful as a “living saint.” Crocifissa died in 1882 and it seems that her cause for beatification was never opened.

Ciampelli, Parisio. *Il trionfo della grazia divina nel cuore di Donna Crocifissa Veraci religiosa professa della congregazione camaldolese nel monastero di Pratovecchio in Casentino*. Bagno di Romagna: Vestrucci, 1928.

Pierazzoli, Giuseppe. *Tentazione e redenzione. Vita di Donna Crocifissa Veraci*. Florence: Parretti, 1992.

### **Veronesi, Teresa (c.1950, 1870–1950)**

Teresa was born in San Ruffilo, in the province of Bologna, on 28 September 1870. Her childhood was rich in supernatural signs. On 24 May 1879, after receiving her first Communion, Teresa saw a light emanating from the statue of Christ and a voice invited her to consecrate herself to the religious life. From that moment onwards, she would pray almost through the entire night.

At the age of 17, Teresa came into contact with the Suore Minime dell'Addolorata, founded in 1868 by Mother Clelia Barbieri. Overcoming her parents' opposition, in July 1887, she entered their monastery at Le Budrie, whose spiritual director was Father Guidi. On 2 May 1888, Teresa took the religious habit and on 7 April her perpetual vows. She became an elementary teacher in the monastery and in 1889 she became the superior of the convent and director of the school of Bentivoglio.

The crucified Christ and the Ecce Homo appeared to her several times. While the date is not reported, after one of these many visions, Teresa received the gift of the crown of thorns, bleeding abundantly from the many holes that pierced her head until Good Friday of 1950. She kept this grace secret with linen and the religious habit.

In October 1907, Teresa opened a religious house in San Ruffillo, the village where she was born. In Bologna, her fame as a founder of the house, combined with her fame as a miracle worker, ecstatic and visionary, spread among the people and the local clergy. She had a deep friendship with Archbishop Della Chiesa (the future Pope

Benedict xv). On 19 October 1908, Teresa was elected the superior of the asylum of Sant'Agata Bolognese. She also founded schools for girls and boys with the other sisters.

For over 40 years, she was the spiritual guide and charismatic leader of the convent and of the school in Sant'Agata Bolognese. She died on 16 May 1950. Her cause for canonization is currently underway. On 19 February 2000, the Cardinal of Bologna, Giacomo Biffi, officially opened her cause for beatification. The diocesan phase ended on 6 April 2003 and the material collected was sent to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome.

Bonora, Maria Clara. *Suor Teresa Veronesi. Una mistica dei nostri tempi sulle orme di Santa Clelia Barbieri*. Bologna: Elledici, 2003.

### **Vigneronne, Alfred (c.1933, –)**

In the midst of a series of Marian apparitions that swept across Belgium from late 1932 until 1935, the cook of the Discalced Carmelites of Namur claimed that he had been healed miraculously and had a message for the pope. He also reported stigmata and wanted to talk to the child visionaries of Beauraing (the initial apparition site of the Belgian series). Not much attention was given to his claims. His letters are kept under the heading "Another fool."

Beauraing. Archives de Beauraing, Aurélien Pierroux, 1934–1935, 1935, nrs. 13 and 15.

### **Viñals, Gloria (1933, c.1916–)**

Gloria Viñals Laquidain was around 15 years old when the Marian apparitions in the hills of Ezkioga (Guipúzkoa, Basque Country) took place. The events started in June 1931 after the proclamation of the Second Republic (1931–1936) in Spain. Hundreds of seers, mostly children and adolescents, experienced visions and the pains of the Crucifixion during their ecstasies; but only a few supposedly carried the Holy Wounds. Gloria was one of the "fortunate" ones, along with Ramona Olazábal and Josefa Lasa. The events in Ezkioga attracted more than one million people to the hillside, despite being condemned by the ecclesiastical authorities from Vitoria and Rome. The political powers repressed the seers, as the messages they sent were against the Republic.

Gloria Viñals was from Pamplona (Navarra). During the Ezkioga frenzy, the Virgin allegedly cured her eye problems. Afterwards, she became a very popular visionary. During Holy Week in 1933, she was in the hills of Ezkioga. On Holy Friday, 14 April, around 11.30 A.M., she was surrounded by people when she fell into a trance. In her vision, she saw the crucified Christ. Gloria experienced all the pains of the Passion under the captivated gaze of her public. At the end of her ecstasy, she started praying to Jesus and to the Virgin, asking for their pardon for all the sins of humanity. She then

offered herself up to God to serve as an expiatory victim in the name of the sinners. A few weeks after this episode, she started to carry the wounds of Christ on her hands and feet.

In May 1933, the seers from Ezkioga were submitted to great pressure from the diocesan authorities. Bishop Múgica, from Vitoria, urged priests to obtain a signed statement from Gloria Viñals, Ramona Olazábal and other visionaries, making them promise not to return to Ezkioga and forcing them to retract their claims to visions. Although some signed the statement and never returned to the hillside, they continued to experience ecstasies clandestinely. The manifestation of stigmata in Gloria's flesh might be interpreted as a rebellious act against the ecclesiastical authorities.

Boué, G.L. *Merveilles et prodiges d'Ezquioga*. Tarbes: Imp. Lesbordes, 1933.

Christian, William A. *Visionaries. The Spanish Republic and the Reign of Christ*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

Fort, Stanislas. *Une nouvelle affaire Jeanne d'Arc*. Orléans: La Librairie Centrale, 1933.

Montilla, Julia, ed. *Ezkiozaleak: un relato fotográfico*. Barcelona: Ediciones Maravilla, 2009.

### **Vingerhoedt, Catharina “Trientje” (c.1900, 1855–1932)**

Catharina (“Trientje”) Joanna Vingerhoedt was born in Stabroek on 13 July 1855 into a poor family. Her parents died when she was quite young and she had to leave school and start working. One day she fell ill and was forced to remain in her bed. After 6 months she reportedly “died” on a Friday at 12, but three hours later came back to life. This event repeated itself every Friday and the rumour spread to cities such as Antwerp and Brussels. People thus began coming to see her “die.” Leonie Seghers, a well-off single Lady from Antwerp, took an interest in the case and had a house built next to Trientje's. A certain merchant from Antwerp, Jacob Leys also started to visit. He saw that there was money to be made and convinced his 26-year-old son to marry Leonie. After the marriage, Leys Sr. started building a sanctuary, including a Lourdes-style grotto and small shops with rosaries and the image of Trientje. The parish pastor, Van Goethem, informed the bishop that the profits were going into Leys's pockets and warned Trientje to be careful and no longer admit people. Subsequently, her cult started to diminish. In 1907, Henri Daems (according to rumours, a former *pater*) started to take care of Trientje. The grotto was sold in 1916 and moved to Brasschaat-Rustoord. Meanwhile, Leonie's husband spent all her money and eventually left her in 1918. In February 1932, Trientje died for the last time. Daems had her exhumed after ten years (at her own request), but there were no remains.

Beaujean, Philippe. “Catharina Vingerhoedt van Stabroek: Heiligheid of van haar tijd?” *Polderheem* 2 (2017): 10–15.

Langley, Nicky. *Elfde gebod. Mystieke plaatsen en figuren in Vlaanderen*. Leuven: Davidsfonds, 2010, 139–154.

### Visser, Dorothea (Dora) (1843, 1819–1876)

Dorothea Visser was born in 1819, the daughter of a day labourer. When she was twelve she injured her leg, leaving her almost unable to walk. A urinary tract infection five years later made suffering an inextricable part of her life. In 1843, she allegedly received the stigmata for the first time. The wounds recurred several times before her death in 1876. Initially, she received them every Friday – but after the first year they only occurred on Good Friday and feast days focusing on the Holy Cross (3 May and 14 September). Her fame in the region of Gendringen grew through the sermons of the Redemptorist fathers and the booklet her physician published in 1844. Antonius Kerkhof, who became her father confessor in 1853, attempted to promulgate her *fama sanctitatis* and came into conflict with the Archbishop of Utrecht due to his campaigns. Kerkhof was transferred to Kloosterburen in Groningen, and later to Olburgen, where Dora Visser lived as his housekeeper until her death in 1876. Kerkhof's notes on her were the source of a report by the journalist Bert Kerkhoffs in 1865. This kindled devotion to her and a movement called Vrienden van Dora Visser developed, preparing a campaign for beatification. From March 2005 to February 2013, a special diocesan commission examined a miraculous cure that was attributed to Dorothea Visser. The file has been sent to Rome.

Eijt, José and Margry, Peter Jan. “Olburgen, Dorothea (Dora) Visser” <https://www.meertens.knaw.nl/bedevaart/bol/plaats/255> (accessed 18 August 2019).

Nissen, Peter. “Het zalig lijden van Dora Visser (1819–1876).” In Charles Caspers, Peter Nissen and Peter Raedts, (eds.), *Heiligen en hun wonderen. Uit de marge van ons erfgoed, van de late middeleeuwen tot heden*. Budel: Damon, 2007, 103–117.

### von Mörl, Maria (1834, 1812–1868)

Maria von Mörl (also “von Moerl” and better known as “L'Estatica di Caldaro”) was born in Kaltern (today Caldaro), in south Tyrol (in her time, under the Austro-Hungarian Empire), on 16 October 1812, and was one of the stigmatics of Tyrol. She had a normal childhood until her mother's death in 1827 and the appearance of a mysterious illness. On the Feast of Corpus Christi in 1832, Maria fell into a prolonged ecstatic state, after which her spiritual father, Giovanni of Capestrano, gave her the holy sacrament. From that day onwards, many mystical gifts began to appear, as well as demonic attacks.

Her fame as an ecstatic spread quickly in Tyrol, and she became a religious celebrity across Western Europe. Between June and October of 1832, more than 30,000 pilgrims, devotees, or simply the curious visited her; and during the summer of 1833 more than 40,000 arrived. Such popular participation alerted the public authorities and in

the autumn of 1833, Francis Xavier Luschin, Prince-Bishop of Trent, opened a diocesan investigation to determine the nature of her phenomena and to limit the huge flow of visitors.

After months of inner pains, on 4 February 1834, she received the visible stigmata on her hands, feet and side (the latter was hidden and only seen by some family members and female friends). The blood flowed from her wounds between Thursday evening and Friday.

When her father died in 1841, Maria joined the Third Order of Saint Francis and lived in its monastery in Kaltern. There, she was better protected from the exceptional number of visitors, who still continued to come to see her. Among them were the Bishop of Terni, Msgr Vincenzo Tizzani; John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury; Antonio Rosmini; the poet Clemens Brentano; and her biographer, Johann Joseph von Gorres.

Father Capestrano died in 1865, after having followed L'Estatica for 40 years. On 7 September 1867, Garibaldi invaded the Church State and Maria was told to suffer physically for the defeat of the Church. A few days before her death, the stigmata gradually disappeared, leaving only a small scar. Maria von Mörl died on 11 January 1868 with thousands of faithful coming to see her "sacred" body in the following two days.

Boré, Léon. *Les Stigmatisées du Tyrol*. Paris: Lecoffre, 1846.

Priesching, Nicole. *Unter der Geißel Gottes das Leiden der Stigmatisierten Maria von Mörl (1812–1868)*. Brixen: A. Weger, 2007.

Ricciardi, Antonio. "Storia meravigliosa dell'estatica Maria de Morl vivente in Caldaro nel Tirolo." In Antonio Ricciardi (ed.). *Le tre mirabili vergini viventi nel Tirolo*. Milan: Tip. Santo Bravetta, 1837.

### **von Posch, Bertha (c.1865, 1843–1872)**

Bertha von Posch was born in San Genesio, in the province of Bolzano, in 1843. She belonged to the German language and cultural community of south Tyrol. Bertha was one of the stigmatized virgins of Tyrol, having received the wounds of Christ on her body, especially during the Friday Passion.

Imbert-Gourbeyre, Antoine. *La stigmatisation*, ed. Joachim Boufflet. Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1996.

### **Wallraff, Helena (ante 1800, 1755–1801)**

Helena Wallraff was born in 1775 in Brügggen, the daughter of modest farmers. While she never learned how to read, her parents made sure that she had a religious education. She married Wilhelm Horst and had four daughters who all died at a young age. They lived in Kirdorf near Cologne. Helena foresaw the troubles that were to come and communicated them to her spiritual guide, the pastor of Kirdorf. They were

put in writing and sent to the Archbishop of Cologne. A group of followers gathered around Helena, who carried the stigmata, and she gave them spiritual direction. They organized multiple religious processions (“religiöse Umzüge”) in which whole neighbourhoods participated. This caught the attention of the French occupying forces and Helena and her “brethren” (“Brudermeister”) were sent to prison in Cologne. On the morning of 14 June 1799, a cavalry troop took the pastor to Cologne as a prisoner, where they questioned him on his writings (they suspected him of Austrian conspiracy). Helena was also questioned. The pastor was released and took his work (not without danger, as he travelled through regions occupied by the French) to the Kurfürst in Ellingen. During the eight months of examination of the work, pastor Dheim lived in Marienstad. Helena also went there and helped with the interpretation of the text. When the pastor returned home, he no longer wanted to put her prophecies into writing and so her husband took over (her book, *Trost der Betrübtten*, encouraged resistance against the oppressor, announced the fall of Napoleon, defined the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, and announced Church reformation). Helena died on 14 September 1801 (as she had predicted) on the Feast of the Holy Cross. It was said that her body had a sweet odour. Her grave became a site of pilgrimage, where her followers called upon her and “noch jetzt tragen Viele Steinchen, auf ihrem Grabe gesammelt, zur frommen Erinnerung mit sich.” Her husband died on 5 February 1809.

Curicque, Jean-Jules-Marie. *Voix prophétiques ou signes, apparitions et prédictions modernes, touchant les grands événements de la Chrétienté au XIX siècle et vers l'approche de la fin des temps: signes et apparitions prophétiques*. Paris: Victor Palmé, Vol. 2, 1872, 250.

Heinen, Engelbert Michael Josef. *Helena Wallraff von Brügggen, Pfarrei Kirdorf bei Lechenich, die merkwürdigste Seherin am Rhein*. Euskirchen: Franz Kreuder/Friedrich Reel, 1849.

Imbert-Gourbeyre, Antoine. *La stigmatisation*, ed. Joachim Boufflet. Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1996, 438.

### **Weiss, Eleonore “Maria Fidelis” (1919, 1882–1923)**

Eleonore Weiss was born on 12 June 1882. Her parents, Karl and Albertine Weiss, had twelve children, of which eight died young. Life was often hard for the family after the father's early death. Eleonore had poor health and was continuously sick from the age of seven (including rashes and eye infections). She learned needlework at the Frauenarbeitsschule. In 1894, Eleonore received the Holy Communion and had her first vision of God. Four years later, she heard Jesus' voice telling her that he had chosen her as his bride and wanted her vow of eternal chastity. The Franciscan sisters in Reutlingen accepted her in 1900, on the condition that she learned how to play the organ. To acquire the necessary skills, she first enrolled in the Institute of the Schulschwester in



Lenzfried near Kempten. In 1903, she officially joined the Reutlingen sisters as Maria Fidelis and started to teach needlework and play the organ. Her spiritual life was characterized by obedience, silence, humiliation and asceticism.

From 1911 onwards, she saw the suffering Christ while praying. After a period of feeling abandoned by God, she had a vision of the Sacred Heart of Jesus asking her to accept suffering to save souls (from impurity and cursing) and for the priests who had lost their calling. On 17 April 1919, she became one with Jesus in his suffering and while she previously had only been able to see his pain, now she could also feel it. Every week, she lived through Christ's suffering both in body and mind, on Thursdays and Fridays, and on Saturdays she felt Mary's pain. In October 1922, she suffered from a cold that developed into tuberculosis in her throat. Before she died, on 11 February 1923, she attempted to have all her writings burned, but some of her texts survived. It was only after her death that her fellow sisters learned about her deep spiritual life from her spiritual guide, who, while initially rather critical, decided to make her case public, publishing a book on her in 1925 (*Lieben und Leiden*). A more elaborate biography was published in the following year. These publications and the positive response triggered the interest of the faithful, who started to visit her grave, while the bishop started an investigation. Closed at the diocesan level in 1939, she was ranked on 1 June 2007 among the those whose virtues reached a heroic degree. The Roman process is on hold as no miracle has yet been recognized.

Jakob, Michael. *Der Seligsprechungsprozess der Schwester Maria Fidelis Weiß O.S.Fr. von Kloster Reutberg*, 2002 (<http://www.schwester-fidelis-weiss.de/links-bücher-downloads/downloads/>).

Mühlbauer, Johann. *Lieben und Leiden der Schwester M. Fidelis Weiss von Reutberg*. München: Pfeiffer, 1956.

### **Winter, Theresia (1844, 1822–?)**

Theresia Winter was born on 21 January 1822 in Salzkotten (near Paderborn). As a member of the Third Order of Saint Francis (from 1841), she participated in an initiative of the Franciscan pater Heinrich Gossler. He created a new religious house with members of the Third Order of Saint Francis in Paderborn in August 1842. Since Gossler had not obtained the approval of the ecclesiastical or public authorities, he was forced to dissolve the order. He went to Berlin to plead his case before the King and the Minister for Religious Affairs but neither of them would approve the initiative. He then travelled to Rome followed by four young women. Among them was Theresia Winter, who also followed Gossler to Dorsten, where he found a position in the Franciscan cloister. Theresia lived with two other women and they attempted to make a living by sowing, spending their free time in church and engaged in religious exercises.

Theresia had her first vision while in Rome – on which Gossler published a booklet in 1846 – and displayed the stigmata on the Feast of the Stigmata of Saint Francis on 17 September 1844. Due to the interest generated by *Die Dornenkrone*, the booklet by Gossler, a first medical examination by a Dr Sebregondi began on 27 January 1846. It was not undertaken voluntarily by the physician, who had initially refused to examine her but was later called to her bedside due to an emergency. Sebregondi found blood-stained fabric but Theresia's forehead was not lacerated or wounded (which became clear after the blood was washed away). An episcopal examination directed from Münster began in the following month (9 February). The commission consisted of the “bischöfliche Räte,” C.A. Krabbe and P. Melchers, Sebregondi and another physician, Bierbaum.

Theresia and the two other women left for Haltern on 26 March 1846. Gossler was sent to Hardenberg (despite protests by the local population on 10 February). Shortly afterwards Theresia returned, alone, to Dorsten. She lived a secluded life, while the blood phenomenon continued. When, in August and September 1846, the newspapers reported on the streams of visitors, the Ministers of Religious Affairs and the Interior decided to put a stop to the events and attempted to move her to a hospital. However, the Generalvikar F.A. Melchers refused to transfer a sick woman, although he forbade all visits. He also asked Oberpräsident Schaper to ban *Die Dornenkrone*, but the latter said he did not have the power to do so and considered it would give the badly written book an importance that it did not deserve. Nevertheless, apart from a few newspaper articles, Theresia's case never became very well known and was soon forgotten.

Schulze, Bernward. “Die “angeblich” stigmatisierte Theresia Winter, die Wundmale der Dornenkrone bei einer “Clarissin” im preußischen Westfalen 1845/46.” *Westfälische Zeitschrift* 145 (1995): 139–170.

Setzer, Ewald. “Die Stigmatisierung der Theresia Winter (1845/49).” *Heimatkalender der Herrlichkeit Lembeck und Dorsten e.V.* 57 (1998): 184–188.

### **Yvonne-Aimée de Malestroit (Beauvais, Yvonne) (1924, 1901–1951)**

Yvonne Beauvais was born in 1901 into a bourgeois family in Cossé-en-Champagne. Her father died in 1904, forcing her mother to find a job as a governess and leave Beauvais under the care of her grandmother in Mans. From the age of six, she lived in different retirement houses where her mother worked, going to England with her in 1914. She returned to France in 1922, to the commune of Malestroit, where she was interned in the clinic of the Augustinian sisters suffering from a strong episode of fever. In July of the same year, she claimed to have witnessed the apparition of Jesus. After reading about the religious Carmelite Thérèse de Lisieux – who would be canonized in 1925 – Beauvais expressed her desire to become a saint.

Beauvais started suffering from the stigmata on Friday, 22 February 1924, and the wounds began to bleed on Friday, 7 March. She wrote to Father Crété, her spiritual director, about her pain. Prior to this date, Crété had advised her to read a book about Madeleine Morice, a French mystic and stigmatic of the eighteenth century. From 1924 and until her death in 1951, Yvonne experienced the Five Holy Wounds of Christ, especially on Fridays. She was also said to sweat and cry tears of blood. Around 90 people allegedly witnessed these phenomena during her lifetime. However, nobody was ever present when the bleeding started.

In 1925, Beauvais became a nun in an Augustinian community in Malestroit and took the religious name of Yvonne-Aimée de Jésus. She developed a type of devotion, called *Petit Roi d'Amour*, which combined devotions to the Jesus Child and the Sacred Heart. During her life she was the founder of two federations devoted to the Augustinian sisters.

During the Second World War, she healed combatants of the Resistance in the Augustinian convent and clinic at Malestroit. When the German army took over the convent, Yvonne-Aimée hid many of the French fighters, disguising them in nun's habits. In 1943, Father Monier-Vinard accused her of being a false mystic and said that the atmosphere of veneration that surrounded her was dangerous. In February of the same year, she was arrested and allegedly tortured by the Gestapo. Apparently, she was able to escape using the miraculous power of bilocation. She was said to have appeared, covered in blood, in the room of her spiritual son Paul Labutte. After the war, she received the *Légion d'Honneur* from Charles de Gaulle.

Shortly after her death in 1951, a process of beatification started, but the Holy Office stopped this suddenly in 1960. They suspected that the miracles and prodigies that were attributed to Yvonne-Aimée during her life and after her death might be a fraud and they prevented her followers from publishing anything about her. In 1980, only Father René Laurentin was authorized to do so. In 2009, the Bishop of Vannes asked the Vatican authorities to start examining Yvonne-Aimée's dossier again, which was about 4,000 pages.

Hamond, Romuald. "La mascarade féminine des stigmates ou la splendeur des vérités et des réalités divines." *Cliniques Méditerranéennes*, 1.81 (2010): 47–64.

Labutte, Paul. *Yvonne-Aimée ma mère selon l'esprit*. Paris: F.-X. de Guibert, 1997.

Labutte, Paul. *Une amitié voulue par Dieu*. Paris: F.-X. de Guibert, 1999.

La Rocca, Sandra. "Le Petit Roi d'Amour: entre dévotion privée et politique." *Archives des Sciences Sociales des Religions*, 113, janvier–mars (2001): 5–26.

Laurentin, René. *Les stigmates d'Yvonne-Aimée de Malestroit dans le sillage de François d'Assise*. Paris: CÉIL, 1988.

Monastère de Malestroit. *Mère Marie Yvonne-Aimée de Jésus*. Malestroit: Monastère, 1955.

**Zancajo, María Luisa (1940, 1911–1954)**

María Luisa Zancajo de la Mata was born in Sinlabajos (Ávila) in 1911. She was born into a humble family and had two sisters. At around the age of three, María Luisa suffered from an illness that left her with paralysis. After many unsuccessful treatments, her parents decided to move to Madrid, where they hoped to find work and take better care of their children; however, her father became very sick and the financial situation of the family deteriorated. María Luisa was taken to San José, a charitable nursing house and convent led by religious women in the capital. There, she suffered from a lack of maternal love, while receiving a strict Roman Catholic education. As a child, she is said to have received a visit from Jesus, who allegedly taught her to read. In 1929, she began to receive spiritual visits from Saint Thérèse de Lisieux. María Luisa desired to become a saint like Thérèse. In June that year, she decided to enter the religious life.

With the start of the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), many religious institutions were under threat. The clergy feared another episode of “burning convents,” like those experienced during the Tragic Week (1909) or with the advent of the Second Republic (1931). Many religious sisters of San José left the house and María Luisa went to live with her mother in Madrid, working as a seamstress until July 1940. During that time, she allegedly received the divine mission of founding a religious institution with the crucified Jesus as its emblem. The foundation was named *Misioneras de la Caridad y de la Providencia* and started with an educational and apostolic mission. In August 1940, María Luisa contracted a strange illness that caused intense pain, especially in her forehead. As the physicians were unable to find a cause, she interpreted the symptoms as the pain of the Passion. Stigmata remained invisible until the end of 1949. In October of that year, the Virgin allegedly appeared to María Luisa and told her to prepare to join Jesus in the Passion during the first week of December. From then on, the sacred wounds always bled during the Friday of Lent and every Holy Friday.

In 1950, María Luisa met Father Manuel Soria. Following his advice, she began to write her autobiography. After their meeting, Father Manuel also started having mystical experiences. Meanwhile, a second congregation was founded in Hellín (Albacete), where María Luisa would end her days. For María Luisa, 1951 was a special year, in which she relived the Passion most intensely. Father Manuel asked some experts to examine her case and María Luisa visited Dr Cores, a famous neuropsychiatrist in Madrid, and Father Staehlin, a Jesuit and specialist in supernatural phenomena. The latter certified that the wounds were real, but did not come to any conclusions regarding the origin of the phenomenon. Several pictures and a film of the stigmatization have been preserved. While in Hellín, the nuns of the congregation focused their mission on the poor neighbourhood of Las Cuevas. María Luisa's prodigies began to spread by word of mouth, giving her a reputation for sanctity. She became the spiritual confidant of many Spanish families, not only in Hellín, but also in Zaragoza and Valencia.

In January 1954, María Luisa became very sick, and she died on 5 June in Madrid. Her cause for beatification began in October 2010.

Soria, Manuel. *Yo soy testigo*. Hellín: Misioneras de la Caridad y la Providencia, 1984.

Tolín Arias, Alfredo. *Escondida en Jesús. Retrato biográfico de María Luisa Zancajo de la Mata*. Burgos: Monte Carmelo, 2004.

Zancajo, María Luisa; Tolín Arias, Alfredo. *M. María Luisa Zancajo de la Mata. Antología de sus escritos*. Burgos: Monte Carmelo, 2006.

### **Zangàra, Maria Rosa (c.1890, 1844–1914)**

Maria Rosa Zangàra was a Sicilian religious founder and nun. She was born on 8 November 1844, into a poor and very religious Catholic family. At the age of 20, she followed her two Capuchin brothers to Balestrate, living in the small village from 1845 to 1890. She spent her daily life attending the sick, widows and orphans, and dreamed of founding a community for the most vulnerable.

During those 25 years, Maria Rosa was subjected to paranormal phenomena, such as ecstasy, visions, infused knowledge and stigmata, especially during the Easter period. She responded to the Lord in thanks for these graces by choosing an austere ascetic path, which led her to observe fasting, insomnia, and physical and spiritual penance.

In 1890, she entered the monastery of the Madonna del Carmelo and on 13 August 1892, established the Figlie della Misericordia e della Croce (Daughters of Mercy and the Cross) in her native town. Maria Rosa was supported in her activity by three sisters and local religious men, including Msgr Lancia, Archbishop of Monreale (at least at the beginning), who officially recognized the new congregation. Even after founding this community, she continued in her role as a victim soul, praying to the Lord to share his suffering with her. Her stigmata (probably invisible), along with other mystical phenomena and the rigid rule that she imposed in her institute, attracted suspicion, and in 1901, the archbishop accused her of fanaticism and obsessive enthusiasm, removing from her the title of founder and director. Mother Zangàra was isolated in the Borgetto's house, where she spent the last 12 years of her life bedridden. Only a month before her death, Msgr Antonio Augusto Intrecciatiagli restored the poor founder to her full powers.

Maria Rosa died on 9 April 1914 during the Easter week. Her work survived her death, with many new houses opened to take care orphans, the sick and children. In 1994, a movement inspired by her (the Movimento Ecclesiale Zangariano) was established. The diocesan phase of her canonization process was closed on 8 June 1982.

Barraco, Nino. *Madre Maria Rosa Zangara: memoria e profezia di misericordia*. Palermo: Lo Giudice, 1990.

Citera, Gennaro. *Maria Rosa Zangàra*. Rivoli: Elle Di Ci, 1989.

Da Castellammare, Antonino. *La madre suor Maria Rosa Zangara fondatrice delle Figlie della misericordia e della croce*. Palermo: Tip. Fiamma Serafica, 1938.

Guccione, Gioacchino. *Un'ostia sul mondo. La serva di Dio madre Maria Rosa Zangara, fondatrice delle Figlie della misericordia e della Croce, 1844–1914*. Torretta: Santuario delle grazie, 1964.

Lentini, Gerlando. *Maria Rosa Zangàra. Ferita dall'amore: fondatrice delle Figlie della Misericordia e della Croce*. Palermo: Ed. Biblioteca Francescana, 1993.

### **Zeller, Katharina (1844, –)**

Katharina Zeller is, according to Bernhard Gißibl, most probably the young peasant girl referred to by the physician of King Ludwig I, Johann Nepomuk Ringeis. In 1844, she was said to have received the host on her tongue in a miraculous manner and she also displayed the stigmata. She ended her life doing penance behind cloister walls.

Gißibl, Bernhard. *Frömmigkeit, Hysterie und Schwärmerei*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004, 63.

### **Zentner, Walburga (1830, –)**

Walburga Zentner was a servant from Waalhaupten who created some commotion with her visions and stigmata in 1830. Some believed her to be a witch, others saw her as a saint and prophetess. During her episodes, she quite literally embodied the person she was “fighting for,” adopted his traits and suffered the illnesses and afflictions from which he had suffered. She displayed small visible stigmata that bled at the end of such episodes on every Friday during the fasting period. While her pastor, Joseph Fux, uncovered the imaginary character of her visions, a circle of 12 men still gathered around her (in spirit, as she only met a few, most of them friends or students of the Regensburg bishop, Johann Michael Sailer). Her career ended when she no longer fit the profile of a naïve and pious girl and her reputation became tainted by indiscretion.

Gißibl, Bernhard. *Frömmigkeit, Hysterie und Schwärmerei*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004, 63, 97.

Magnus, Jocham. *Memoiren eines Obskuranten. Eine Selbstbiographie*. Kempten: Kösel, 1896, 213–224.

### **Zuster Rumolda/ Van Beek, Maria (1922, 1886–1948)**

Maria Van Beek was born on 3 March 1886 as the fourth child in a Christian rural family with seven children. She began a life of penance and prayer at a young age, and at the age of 17 she expressed the wish to enter a cloister. As a brother and an older sister had already entered the religious life, she had to stay home and help her family.

However, she eventually entered the cloister of the Franciscan sisters in Herentals at the age of 33.

From June 1922 onwards, she felt tormented by the Devil, both corporeally and mentally. A few months later, in October 1922, she had a vision of the Sacred Heart, in which she was promised that her sufferings would benefit other souls. She gradually felt the pain increasing in her hands and feet, and the five wounds became increasingly visible. On 18 November 1922, she displayed the full stigmata. On the same day, her cloister ring was miraculously inscribed with "JUB" ("Jezus uw bruidegom"/"Jesus your bridegroom"). While she was supposed to leave for missions in Congo in December 1922, she was no longer considered capable after receiving the stigmata. She remained in Herentals, where she died in 1948. There is a small museum in the Convent, with some memorabilia on display (e.g. cloths with sanguine drawings of torture material, crosses and sometimes a heart in flames). A group of promotors, known as the *Werkgroep Zuster Rumolda v.z.w.*, keeps her memory alive in publications and meetings, among other activities.

Van den Broeck, Adr., o.f.m. *Zuster Rumolda. In de wereld Maria Van Beek (1886–1948)*. Herentals: *Werkgroep Zuster Rumolda v.z.w.*, 1991.

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