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The Blessed Virgin Mary in the Life of Inez Casolani (Part Two)

Inez Casolani's personal holiness flowed from her profound love for the Immaculate Virgin Mary. This is how she followed in the footsteps of Mary:-

❖ "I am the Lord's servant." (Lk. 1:38) This was Mary spontaneous reply! In her humility, Mary was the perfect Temple for Our Lord. She "treasured all these things in her heart." (Lk 3:51) such as:

- when the shepherds and the three wise men went to visit and knelt before Jesus, paying Him homage and offering Him gifts;
- at the words of Simeon who told her that Jesus was the Messiah, confirming what the angel had said to her;
- when Mary had found Jesus in the Temple preaching to the learned men of the Synagogue.

In imitation of Mary, Inez Casolani's mind, deeds and behaviour were embellished because of her humility:

- she readily admitted a mistake;
- she was quick to take action and to ask pardon;
- she would forgive and forget any unkind deed;
- she found no objection in helping those who hurt her and made her suffer;
- she humbled herself in the sight of Our Lord and never did she exalt herself above others.
- she had a delicate and fine conscience. Ever since her childhood, Inez Casolani went to confession regularly and always chose holy confessors.

This is what we find in her writings: *'There cannot be anything superior to God's realm.'*

- ❖ “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus.” (Lk. 1:31). The angel of God saluted Mary, “Hail, full of grace!” to indicate that she was chosen and selected by God to be the Mother of his Son through the Holy Spirit. In the light of her sublime vocation, everything in her life, before and after the Annunciation, revolved around her divine maternity.

Like Mary, Inez Casolani's life revolved around Christ:

- she simply lived in His presence. Mass and The Holy Eucharist were the fulfillment of her day.
- like Mary, her faith was magnificently alive.
- to her, every moment was a sign of God's presence.
- her life was a constant religious experience. Therefore she saw human, nature and all created reality as a reflection of the glory of God.

This is what we find in her writings: *'Whatever you do, keep God's presence in front of you and always leave room for Him in your own loving heart.'*

- ❖ “Be it done unto me according to thy word.” (Le 1:38). Guided by the Holy Spirit and anxious to devote herself to God's Divine Plan, in faith and trust, the Virgin Mary surrendered herself unconditionally to God's will.
- Like Mary, Inez Casolani lived all her life in obedience to the Father's Will through the small events of her daily life as well as through the more dramatic moments she experienced.
- she was totally submissive to God's will.
- she was also totally obedient to the Teachings of Christ and the Church.

In her writings we find: *'I am in His Hands and I accept all He sends me joyfully.'*

- ❖ “During those days Mary set out and travelled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.’ (Lk 1:39). Like Mary,
- Inez Casolani bore witness to the immense charity of Our Lord.
- her boundless love, her goodness, her humility, her obedience, her piety, her purity of heart, her willingness to serve captivated the ones who knew her.
- she embraced her married vocation with zeal and dedication.
- she fulfilled her daily duties piously, conscientiously and to the best of her ability.
- she lived her whole life doing good to others while expecting nothing in return. Love and benevolence permeated all her actions.
- her speech was coloured by love, kindness, concern and compassion.
- she visited the sick and those in need.
- her love and Christian benevolence were visible to all.

In her writings we find: *'Do we use our hands to do God's work and for the good of our neighbour?'*

❖ Simeon told Mary: “.... sorrow like a sharp sword shall pierce your own heart.” (Lk 2: 35). Inez prayed: *'O Jesus, I love You very much. Help me to love Your sorrowing mother as well.'* During her holy life, Mary had her share of difficulties. When Herod searched for Jesus to destroy the promised King, Mary had to flee to Egypt with Him. She was full of anxieties when at the age of twelve, Jesus went missing and was found in the Temple. She stayed with Her Son faithfully and followed Him up and unto death. At the foot of the Cross her heart was pierced with atrocious sorrow.

The family of Henry and Inez Casolani was the first house of spiritual formation for their only child, Cecilia Mary. It was the consecrated place where the seed placed by God in the heart of Cecilia Mary could take root and mature.

- Like Mary, Inez ,together with Henry, did not shy away from such a responsibility but participated in the Divine plan in a most sublime manner.
- Just as Mary did with Jesus when He left her home at Nazareth in order to carry out His Messianic mission, so did Inez Casolani follow her daughter in every way, but mostly by means of prayer.
- Like Mary, Inez Casolani endured suffering willingly and patiently. In her later years, among other ailments, Inez suffered from tinnitus, arthritis, shingles in the head and severe heart trouble.

After being diagnosed with diabetes, Inez wrote: “*I thank God for this new bouquet. I am in His Hands, and I accept all He sends me joyfully.*” Aware of the closeness of her end and in constant discomfort, Inez Casolani continued to give her family the totality of her love and service as she had done throughout her life.

- ❖ “When the wine failed, the mother of Jesus said to him, ‘They have no wine’.” (Jn 2:2). Mary enjoyed the fullness of faith. She believed that anything was possible with her Son, Jesus. Like Mary,
- Inez Casolani was firm in character but generous and sensitive to the needs of others.
- empathy was strong in Inez.
- she was kind-hearted, generous and sincere;
- she loved and helped anyone who needed her. Her concern was to give rather than to receive.
- she was friendly and warm in her personal relationship. In her writings we find: *‘We must practice the beautiful virtues of love, obedience and humility*

towards one and all.’ She exhorts: ‘Be always kind and humble towards one and all.’

- ❖ “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my saviour.” (Lk 1:46). Mary feels the greatness and holiness and mercy of God and rejoices in Him. Like Mary,
- Inez Casolani rejoiced in God all her life.
- She felt that she had to give an account to God for all her actions. She testified this at the last breath of her life with her words: ‘In Thee I have had my earthly joy.’
- Above all, like Mary, Inez Casolani proclaimed God’s glory by the practice of all the cardinal and theological virtues.

Inez wrote: ‘Let us do our utmost to be living temples of the Holy Spirit. Let us remember that some day or other we shall be called to give an account of our own actions in front of the Divine Judge. We can never possibly understand the happiness, peace and joy which a person experiences once he is united with his Creator in Heaven.’

Inez Casolani was greatly attracted by the Saints and Blessed who had an outstanding devotion towards Our Lady. She was therefore a great devotee of St. Joseph, Padre Pio, St. Bernardette Soubirous and St. Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer. Being a staunch Catholic and fully in love with Our Lady, Inez Casolani would never tolerate anyone mentioning Her name in an inappropriate way. Inez Casolani was a member of the international society of the ‘Ambassadors of Mary’, whose mission was to promote devotion to Mary. She was also an auxiliary member of the ‘Legion of Mary.’

At the end of his Lenten 2011 retreat, which focused on the communion of saints and the spiritual riches they hold for us, Pope Benedict XVI asserted that **“it is precisely the ‘little’ saints who are the ‘great’ saints.”** Inez Casolani prayed to Our Lady, loved her with all her strength and always tried to make her known and loved. This

strong motivation spurred her on from day to day. May such an orientation be our motivation too: to love Mary and to make her loved.

On the feast of the Nativity of Our Lady Pope Francis exclaimed "In this world in which long-lasting values are rejected and everything is changing, in which the disposable triumphs, in which it seems people are afraid of life's commitments, the Virgin encourages us to be men and women who are constant in their good works, who keep their word, who are always faithful," Pope Francis 8th August 2014

May we too walk along this path to salvation that has already been trodden by Inez Casolani, a faithful servant of God. May she, who lived in a most loving union with Christ and His holy Mother throughout her life pray for us that we too may persevere in our pilgrimage of faith and loyalty. Amen.