

Guide to the Theological Examination Of The Spiritual Diary Of The Flame of Love

“The Theological Examination Of The Spiritual Diary Of The Flame Of Love” commissioned by His Eminence Péter Cardinal Erdő and completed by Dr. Zoltán Kovács can be a daunting document. This guide is to help you, as Flame of Love leaders who are responsible for spreading, teaching, defending, and articulating the Flame of Love, to understand the Examination and underlying Theology. It is intended to be read along with the Examination and not as a stand-alone document.

A simple faith that follows the voice of the Holy Spirit in our lives and spreads from heart to heart is beautiful, admirable, and desirable. It does not need all the weight of theological examination. On one of our calls, Győző Kindelmann, our current International Director and Elizabeth’s grandson, shared how his grandmother would be invited to speak. The Theologians would raise all kinds of objections but the common people would be praying the Flame of Love Rosary the next day!

Nonetheless, as leaders, we have a responsibility to go further as we will be required from time to time to defend the Flame of Love, explain it with theological precision, answer questions the devotees in our care may have, and guide a cenacle that is drifting out of orthodoxy and into trouble. Whenever we have brought such issues to Győző, he points us to the Examination. Thus I pray this guide will make the Examination more accessible to you by:

1. Defining technical terms and concepts assumed by the Examination
2. Providing portions of the Diary referenced in the Examination but missing from our current English translation
3. Providing helpful context where necessary

May it help us do our part to be the best possible instruments in the hands of our Blessed Mother to spread the Flame of Love of her Immaculate Heart everywhere in the world.

The Diary and Elizabeth’s Spiritual and Mental Health

Dr. Kovács quickly defines what we call the Diary and identifies it as Private Revelation: “The ‘Spiritual Diary of the Flame of Love’ contains the private revelations received by Mrs. Károly Kindelmann. . . between 1961 and 14th March 1983. Madame Erzsébet collected these messages in four volumes.”

This is important to us as leaders because there are sections of what we have called the complete or Blue Diary that are not part of this official definition of the Diary – specifically many of the short sections from 1971 forward. They are the words of Elizabeth shared with others. These others carried

her words out of Communist Hungary and included them with various editions of portions of the Diary. So, in a sense, they help form the “oral tradition” of the Flame of Love but are not part of the “critical edition” of the Diary. Conversely, there are sections of those four volumes that we do not yet have in English. Sometimes, these are longer sections especially from the later years but, other times, they are a few sentences here and there in the midst of the text we already have.

Dr. Kovács then moves to an evaluation of Elizabeth herself as evidenced in the Diary. He notes that her thoughts are cogent, her spirituality mature, well directed, and obedient to the Church and there is no evident mental illness. The attention then turns to the theological evaluation of the messages in section six. This is where we want to focus in this guide.

Theology of the Messages

Dr. Kovács quickly affirms that outside testimony confirms the account in the Diary is consistent with Elizabeth’s experiences, makes the connection with veneration of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and references the one “auto-definition,” i.e., where Mary takes a name to herself, viz., “The Beautiful Ray of Dawn.”

Dr. Kovács then notes that, in the Diary, the Flame of Love is always in the context of Mary’s heart. This is important because the concept of the Flame of Love is used elsewhere in the Church and the writings of the Saints but not always in the same context. It is often used in the context of the Holy Spirit. That is fine and true but, for us in the Flame of Love and in the Diary, it is always the Flame of Love of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

He then affirms what we often emphasize and Mary states so clearly, i.e., that the Flame of Love of the Immaculate Heart of Mary is Jesus himself.

The Flame of Love Grace

The next part of the Theological Examination clarifies an important discussion we have had and a topic that has created some trouble for the Movement. Is there a Flame of Love grace? The Examination states unequivocally yes. “The Flame of Love is introduced by Madame Erzsébet as a grace of God.” Note the important comments in footnote number 38:

Key Point:

The Flame of Love is a grace. It is a force, which penetrates the heart and the will. A force, which restores the values inside us; a force, which transforms us, teaches us how to love, makes us willing towards Jesus, and helps us to participate in the soul-saving work effectively and persistently completely identified with Christ. The Flame of Love helps to understand the will of the Blessed Virgin. Helps us to recognise our situation objectively... the Flame of love is the grace or tool, which helps us to the understanding of the acts of the Blessed Virgin, and gives power to the realization of her bidding, atonement and apostolate. And its only purpose is that not even one soul should be damned. The Flame of Love is Jesus Christ working freely inside us, and

through us. Antalóczi L., Jelenések, üzenetek és a jövő. A jelentősebb magánkinyilatkoztatások és üzenetek szintézise 1830-tól napjainkig, Eger 2000, 17

However, this discussion and the subsequent deeper discussion about grace use some technical terms such as “*gratia gratis data*” and a theological context that most of us may not have. Thus it seems appropriate to digress a moment to provide some of the vocabulary and concepts needed to understand the different ways the Theological Examination uses the word “grace” so that we know exactly what we mean when we speak of the Flame of Love grace and what we do not mean.

Key Point:

This is important to us as leaders because we have already seen the term Flame of Love grace misused to our discredit. For example, we have had devotees claim that the Flame of Love grace replaces the “old” Sanctifying Grace. This is downright heresy, will not help us gain credibility before our Pastors and Bishops, and will lead our people astray. As leaders of “the Movement of Grace,” it is essential for us to understand grace better than the average Catholic.

What is Grace?

It depends on what you mean! As silly as that answer seems, it is true. The word “grace” itself is very broad and hence can be used in several different ways. Thus we must know which way is meant whenever we read it. In its most literal sense, it means “gift” from the Latin “*gratia*” and the Greek “*charis*”. You may notice the similarity to English words like gratuity and charism.

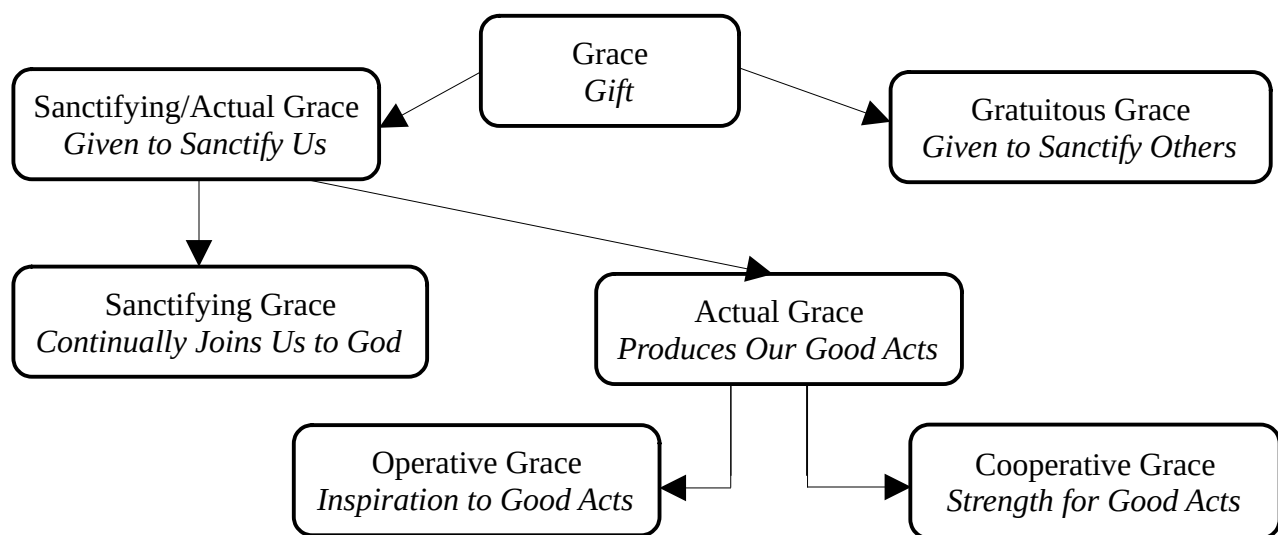
To help us understand the way in which the word “grace” is used differently in different contexts in the Bible and in the teachings of the Church, the Church divides grace into different types and subtypes. At the highest level, the Church distinguishes between “Gratuitous Grace” (*gratia gratis data* in Latin) and Sanctifying/Actual grace (*gratia gratum faciens*, e.g., in Eph 1:6). There is a further distinction between Sanctifying Grace and Actual Grace. Finally, within Actual Grace, we distinguish between Operative and Cooperative Grace. The difference between these is critical in understanding the “Flame of Love Grace” because the Theological Examination uses all those meanings.

So what are the differences? Let’s start with Gratuitous Grace versus Sanctifying / Actual Grace. It’s much simpler than the intimidating words themselves! Very simply: Sanctifying/Actual Grace is given to someone to make them holy while Gratuitous Grace is given to someone to help them make others holy. For example, the grace we receive at baptism is Sanctifying Grace in that its intent is to make us holy; perhaps we might think of when the apostles first received the Holy Spirit in John 20:22. In contrast, if we are given the gift, the grace, of teaching or healing, this is Gratuitous Grace, i.e., it is not given to us for our sake but for the sake of others for whom we use that grace, e.g., Eph 4:7-8,11-13; perhaps think of the descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples at Pentecost in Acts 2 (recall that they had already received the Holy Spirit in John 20). By the way, this is the scriptural justification for the separate administration of the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation in the Western Rites of the Catholic Church; I believe the Eastern Rites still keep them together.

What about Sanctifying (or Habitual) Grace versus Actual Grace? Sanctifying Grace constitutes the recipient in a state of grace while Actual Grace helps them toward the state of grace in a specific good

act. Actual grace is active during a specific time and ceases with the act while Sanctifying or Habitual grace is always active in us.

Finally, even as Actual Grace helps us in that moment in time in a specific good act, theologians distinguish between the grace that moves us to first desire the act and the grace that helps us to do the act once we have willed to do it (Phili 2:13). The inspiration to desire the good act comes from God with no participation on our part and is labeled Operative Grace – it is God directly operating in our lives with no action necessary on our part. Once we receive the inspiration to do the good act, we must will to do it, that is we must cooperate with God’s Operative Grace but even then, we often lack the strength to do what we want to do (Rom 7:18-25). Thus God supplies the Cooperative Grace to give us the strength to do what we have willed in response to the inspiration of His Operative Grace. Hence we have the grace to will (Operative) and to work (Cooperative) for His good pleasure (Phili 2:13).



Grace in the Diary and Theological Examination

The Diary and the Theological Examination of the Diary both use the word “grace” in several of the different ways we have described above. For example, the Theological Examination explicitly states that the messages of the Flame of Love are a gratuitous grace (*gratia gratis data*):

Just as supernatural messages and visions in general, the allocutions of Madame Erzsébet – according to the classical understanding of the terms – come under the category of *gratia gratis data*, because they are divine gifts, of which the purpose is the building up of the community of the Church and helping people to salvation. (Section 6.4.6)

Note also this passage from the Diary from September 7-8, 1962:

While praying before dawn, the Blessed Virgin spoke with me about the effect of grace of her Flame of Love.

Mary: “From today on, when you, together with the person designated to you as companion, are in vigil, to you who already know my Flame of Love, I will grant the

following grace: as long as your night vigil will last, my Flame of Love will act upon those who are dying throughout the whole world. I will blind Satan so that my Flame, gentle and full of grace, will save them from eternal damnation.”

....

[Elizabeth:] This is an immense grace. How can I receive it? The grave doubt concerning this grace granted to me and my companion weighs upon my soul.

Notice that this grace (one of many) is granted to Elizabeth and her companion but its purpose is not to sanctify them but rather to sanctify the dying. It is an example of gratuitous grace.

On the other hand, notice this already quoted description from footnote 38 of the Theological Examination:

The Flame of Love is a grace. It is a force, which penetrates the heart and the will. A force, which restores the values inside us; a force, which transforms us, teaches us how to love, makes us willing towards Jesus, and helps us to participate in the soul-saving work effectively and persistently completely identified with Christ. The Flame of Love helps to understand the will of the Blessed Virgin. Helps us to recognise our situation objectively... the Flame of love is the grace or tool, which helps us to the understanding of the acts of the Blessed Virgin, and gives power to the realization of her bidding, atonement and apostolate. And its only purpose is that not even one soul should be damned. The Flame of Love is Jesus Christ working freely inside us, and through us.

This is describing sanctifying grace – “Jesus Christ working freely inside us”. And, as we always remind everyone, the Flame of Love IS Jesus.

Notice this beautiful description by Jesus from October 5, 1962:

My daughter, be the window of the Church which My divine grace makes bright and shining. To make this a reality, you must continually work so that through you, the divine Sun can shine upon all those in My Holy Church who are close to your soul. Your window receives the brightness of My splendor and transmits its light. Those who are close to you will feel the divine Sun shining upon them through you. This will make the fruit of My work of Salvation more abundant in souls.

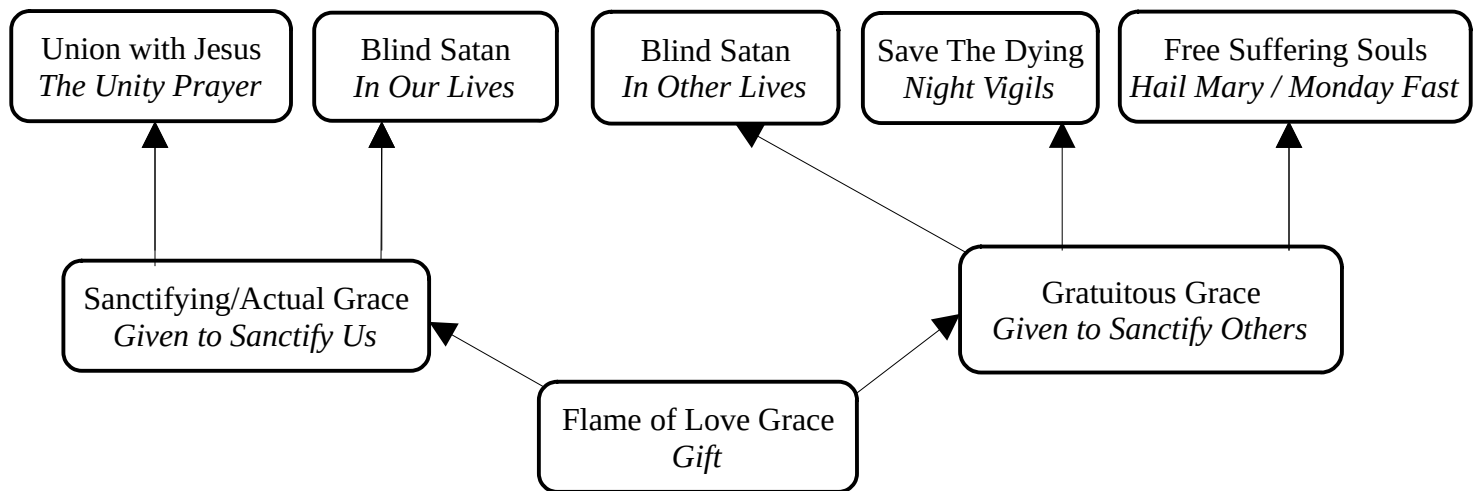
At the end of Elizabeth’s conversation with Jesus on April 8, 1962, we see Jesus say, “I fill you with graces [note it is plural] to strengthen you in an extraordinary way.” This is an example of Actual Grace that gives us the will and the strength to do the good works God has prepared for us.

Thus we see the Flame of Love “Grace” contains a variety of graces. For example, we have spoken about how the Flame of Love is a rocket ride to holiness because, as we personally pursue all the great practices of the Flame of Love, – these great conduits of Sanctifying Grace like Mass, Adoration, prayer, fasting, vigil, and sacrifice in intimate union with Jesus – we are personally sanctified; we are made holy – Sanctifying Grace. At the same time, we know that our living and praying the Flame of Love blinds Satan so *others* can see, that our repentance can lead *others* to repentance, that we can pass the Flame of Love to *others* – all examples of Gratuitous Grace.

When we speak of the Flame of Love “Grace”, we are using the word grace in its most fundamental sense – a gift. It is a great gift that Mary has obtained through the merits of the wounds of Jesus (recall how we meditate upon those wounds). Within the gift of the Flame of Love, within the Flame of Love Grace, there are many graces. In fact, when Mary first gives Elizabeth the Flame of Love Grace on April 13, 1962, she speaks of “graces” – plural:

Mary: “With this Flame full of *graces* that I give you from my heart, ignite all the hearts in the entire country. Let this Flame go from heart to heart. This is the miracle becoming the blaze whose dazzling light will blind Satan. This is the fire of love of union which I obtained from the heavenly Father through the merits of the wounds of my Divine Son.”

Even in this one statement, we see multiple forms of grace. We give the Flame of Love to others from heart to heart – a gratuitous grace. Then there is the fire of love of union – Sanctifying Grace. And we have the grace of blinding Satan which has dimensions of both, i.e., we blind Satan in our lives and the lives of others. We can think of The Flame of Love Grace, the Gift of the Flame of Love, like a care package sent by our mother. As we open it, we find all kinds of valuable things we need for life. So, if we picture the Flame of Love Grace as a gift of many graces to be unpacked, we might see it like this:



Key Point:

This illustration is not intended to be exhaustive or definitive but simply illustrative. If we try to map every aspect of the Flame of Love to some labeled grace, we will tie ourselves in knots and make this far more complicated than it needs to be. Simple is good. Just know that the Flame of Love Grace contains many graces. That helps us understand what the Flame of Love Grace is. Now let’s discuss what it is not.

What the Flame of Love Grace is Not

By not understanding these nuances of grace, we have had some distortions of the Flame of Love Grace surface here and there. These may be put forth by very well meaning people but we want to be able to catch and correct them quickly lest they misrepresent the Flame of Love to our Pastors and Bishops and create disfavor.

Some of the confusion may come from the phrase, “The Flame of Love of the Immaculate Heart of Mary is the greatest grace given to mankind since the Incarnation.” That statement is found nowhere in the Diary. We see many similar statements:

From August 1, 1962:

Mary: “I assure you, my little one, that I have never before given into your hands such a powerful force of grace, the burning flame of the love of my heart. Ever since the Word became Flesh, I have not undertaken a greater movement than the Flame of Love of my heart who rushes to you. Until now, nothing could blind Satan as much.

From September 3, 1962: Mary: “There has never been a time of grace like this since the Word became Flesh. Blinding Satan will shake the world.”

From October 19, 1962:

My Flame of Love is so great that I can no longer keep it within me; it leaps out at you with explosive force. My love that is spreading will overcome the satanic hatred that contaminates the world so that the greatest number of souls is saved from damnation. I am confirming there has never been anything like this before. This is my greatest miracle ever I am accomplishing for all.

From March 24, 1963:

He spoke to me at length about the time of grace and the Spirit of Love quite comparable to the first Pentecost, flooding the earth with its power. That will be the great miracle drawing the attention of all humanity. All that is the effusion of the effect of grace of the Blessed Virgin’s Flame of Love.

The earth has been covered in darkness because of the lack of faith in the soul of humanity and therefore will experience a great jolt. Following that, people will believe. This jolt, by the power of faith, will create a new world. Through the Flame of Love of the Blessed Virgin, faith will take root in souls, and the face of the earth will be renewed, because “nothing like it has happened ever since the Word became Flesh.” The renewal of the earth, although flooded with sufferings, will come about by the power of intercession of the Blessed Virgin.

From July 28, 1963: Mary: “My little Carmelite, whatever the difficulty confronting you, do not give up the fight. By virtue of my Flame of Love which now I send upon the earth, a new era of grace never known before begins on earth. Be my faithful collaborator.”

From November 7, 1963:

Mary: “I can no longer hold back my Flame of Love in my heart. Let it leap out into all of you. Make all the preparations to set out. Only the first step is difficult. Once it will have been accomplished, my Flame of Love will sweep away with uproar the distrust of souls. Encountering no resistance, the Flame will illumine souls with a gentle light. Those accepting the Flame of Love will be intoxicated by the abundance of graces and they will proclaim everywhere, as I said before, that such a torrent of grace has never been granted since the Word became Flesh.”

From January 17, 1964: Jesus: “By her powerful intercession, she obtained from Me for families this great effusion of grace, which she also wants to extend to the whole world. As she said: ‘Nothing comparable to this has happened ever since the Word became Flesh.’ “

From February 23, 1964: “this priest understood the essential message, which is ‘to blind Satan.’ This is the principal and only purpose of the Flame of Love of the Blessed Virgin. She, herself, promised an outpouring of graces so great as have not happened on earth since the Word became Flesh.”

So we can speak of a great outpouring of graces, a great effusion of grace, an era of grace, a time of grace but not “the greatest grace.” We do see the statement, “The Flame of Love of the Immaculate Heart of Mary is the greatest grace given to mankind since the Incarnation” twice in the Simplified Version of the Diary, i.e., the Brown Diary. It is in the “Translator’s Personal Contribution” and at the end of the “History of the Flame of Love and the Spiritual Diary” section. I spoke with the very holy priest who compiled the Simplified Version and wrote the Translator’s Contribution and he agreed that we might want to change his wording if it is causing confusion.

Key Points:

Not Another Form of Grace

When we misunderstand the “Flame of Love Grace” as another *form* of grace rather than as grace in the sense of *gift* and then think that this new form of grace is the greatest since the Word became flesh, we get in trouble. This is where we have had people claim that the “Flame of Love Grace” replaces the old Sanctifying Grace. Rather, as we have explained, it is a grace in the broad sense of a gift and that gift contains the existing forms of grace such as Sanctifying Grace, Actual Grace, and Gratuitous Grace. What is new is the intensification of these graces – the great effusion of grace, the greatest outpouring of graces, and the specific prayers given to us. To quote section 6.2 of the Theological Examination, “What is really new in the Diary is a description of the pouring out of the Flame of Love and its intensity, and the bidding prayer attached to it.”

Not Greatest Grace Ever

We must be careful in our enthusiasm for this greatest outpouring of graces since the Word became flesh, this torrent of grace not granted since the Word became flesh, to not give the “Flame of Love Grace” a life outside of the gospel. It is always in the context of the gospel and never more important than it. For example, we had a sincere and valiant devotee write to a pastor with an extremely accurate portrayal of the Flame of Love with one fatal flaw. They wrote: “It is a gift from God especially for this time to bring about an outpouring of graces upon all of humanity likened and even

greater than when the Word became flesh to set us individually on fire with His love so that we may be transformed into other Christs.”

This is a beautiful description but it went one step too far and gave the Flame of Love an importance it does not have – as important and great as it is. In this case, the Pastor called out the error to the person but remained supportive. We could just as well alienated a less supportive Pastor by such a well intentioned but erroneous statement.

Future or Present?

Another distortion we sometimes see about the “Flame of Love Grace” is that it is an entirely future event and typically associated with the Illumination of Conscience. It may very well be closely associated with the Illumination of Conscience described in other private revelations and there does seem to be a future dimension to the Flame of Love in several of the quotes we cited above.

However, the Flame of Love Grace is also active here and now and it is up to us to spread it here and now.

From Dec 2, 1963: Mary: “Don’t be passive about my sacred Cause. It will be through the few, the little ones, and the humble that must begin this great outpouring of graces that will shake the world. None of those called must excuse themselves or refuse my invitation. All of you are my little instruments.”

A Great Gift to be Properly Understood

This has been a large digression in our exploration of the Theological Examination of the Spiritual Diary of the Flame of Love but I pray it has been a helpful one. The Flame of Love Grace is a remarkable gift to the Church and world – perhaps one of the greatest gifts ever given. Now we can use that phrase knowing its richness and keeping it pure from distortion so that, as leaders, we may fulfill the directive of section 9.2 of the Statues of the Flame of Love Movement:

“To protect and promote the spiritual and apostolic heritage of the Movement, contained in the Spiritual Diary of the Flame of Love and its pious practices.”

Key Point:

The Examination continues with a succinct description of the manifold nature of the Flame of Love Grace: “So, the Flame of love is one of the graces of God, which breaks the power of the evil spirit, and thus helps the spiritual growth of believers and strengthens them on the path toward salvation (especially in their hour of death), and after death it helps the process of purification.”

There is an important clarification in footnote 39 in the Examination to avoid yet another possible distortion. When we say that Jesus is the Flame of Love of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, we do not mean that Mary’s Immaculate Heart is the source of the person of Jesus. That may seem obvious but we may encounter people who, in their enthusiasm, take this wording too far. To illustrate, we may use the English idiom that a person is “the apple of her eye” but it does not mean the person originates from her eye. To quote the Examination footnote, when we speak of Jesus as the Flame of Love of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, “we have to see the unique closeness of her heart to the Heart of His Holy

Son and their co-operation.” I am almost certain that “His” is a mistranslation of the Hungarian and should be “Her”; Hungarian does not have separate masculine and feminine pronouns so the same word is used for “his” and “her”.

Key Point:

The footnotes of the Examination provide several important clarifications. For example, footnote 42 explains that when we speak of the Flame of Love saving souls from damnation, it does not mean those who are already in a state of damnation but rather “detouring” souls who are on the road to damnation. This is similar to the statement that when Mary speaks of many souls falling into Hell, it does not mean they are there yet; it means they are falling into Hell and may still be “caught” before their fall is complete.

Passing the Flame of Love

In this very dense section of the Examination, Dr. Kovács clarifies more points. As we have been emphasizing and as Győző has stated, we must see the Flame of Love in the context of the gospel and not give it a life of its own apart from the gospel. One very holy and insightful Pastor asked about the Flame of Love and such movements in general saying, “are these really necessary? Don’t we already have everything we need in the gospel?” He is correct; we already have everything we need. It is not about necessity but rather utility. The Flame of Love and other movements are useful to help us live and fulfill the gospel. Thus Dr. Kovács writes:

Accepting the Flame of Love – as a grace – is also a mission: one has to transfer it from heart to heart . . . “Passing on” the Flame of Love is a missionary task, because *it is a real participation in the dissemination of the work of salvation* (cf. I/63). For this humility is required, which is many times the fruit of being humiliated (cf. I/112). Its progress shall not be “announced”, one has to do it silently and humbly (cf. I/116-II/1) and anyone can do it. (cf. II/1). [emphasis mine]

There is a lot in that short section! And much has to do with the often discussed idea of what does it mean to “pass the Flame.” There is an important clarification on this topic in footnote 44:

Obviously, this cannot be understood, as if someone could be the possessor of any grace, which he can freely pass on or multiply. “Passing on the Flame of Love” shall be considered as the faithful who received this grace – similarly to the situation in Acts 1,14, when the disciples prayed together with Mary – as a “new cenacle” ask the Holy Spirit through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, that others may also receive it.

Acts 1:14 is: “These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.”

Key Point:

As we think about this, it becomes obvious and is what most of us do in practice anyway. We do not pass the Flame of Love from ourselves even though we use the phrase heart to heart. We pray that others receive it because of the grace within our hearts that urges us to share this great gift but the

grace itself, the actual gift, comes from the Holy Spirit through the intercession of our Blessed Mother. It may come through us but it does not come from us.

It also is not passed by a fixed form prayer though we certainly could pray that someone receive the Flame of Love. In fact, it can pass from heart to heart without prayer as we see in the Diary on May 18, 1963. I'll use a rough translation of the critical edition of the Diary as it has more detail than our current English translation:

What I write now, I do by request of the Lord Jesus. One time I was kneeling at the altar, immersed in prayer. The fire of the love of God burned in my soul. As I adored Him, someone approached me and as she arrived very close, into the burning love in my soul, which kept me near God's holy majesty, the sister approaching me was also included—like a burning wind; and the Lord allowed me to feel how she felt the outpour of His holy majesty. (This sister is Sr. T, the sacrist of our church.)

The sister sister ordered beside me also felt this divine outpour, only much stronger and longer. It also happened, when she approached me during prayer, that God allowed me to feel, how the majestic feeling of His presence poured on her- At that time the feeling of the presence of God filled me so much, that the sister – one might say – sharingly lived in the outpour of the divine graces.

Once I met a priest /K.F./, the priest of our church. Suddenly he greeted me. As soon as I approached him the outpouring divine presence from my soul poured to him. It also happened many times with the parish priest of our church, but I found it strange, that – compared to the previous people – the outpour to his soul was the weakest. When this happened, I was wondering because of this, and the Lord Jesus told me: “I poured these graces onto you, and through you to the souls of those, who approach you. Our Mother's Flame of Love obliges me. My dear, you are our little tool, and the fidelity, by which you stick to us, makes you worthy to mediate My graces.”

Note also the spirit and method of this propagation – silently and humbly. As stated above, it can be with or without an actual prayer of passing the Flame of Love. The references given to the Diary, e.g., I/116, refer to the format of the written Diary, i.e., Notebook / Page Number. There are four handwritten notebooks. The section referenced as I/116-II/1 is from September 29, 1962:

My soul is continually filled with the Blessed Virgin's Flame of Love. Even in the night hours when I stay awake for a while, I ask ceaselessly that her silent miracle be enkindled over the whole world the soonest possible.

An alternative translation of the Hungarian may sound familiar to those who sometimes struggle with Night Vigils!

My soul is constantly filled by the Blessed Virgin's Flame of Love. Even in the hours of night, when I come to my senses a little, my thoughts immediately join in to the effects of grace of the Blessed Virgin's Flame of Love, and I pray ceaselessly that She may help to light Her silent miracle for the world as soon as possible.

Note the “silent” miracle. Recall that our Blessed Mother stated she did not want to do a big miracle like Fatima but that her greatest miracle would be the spread of the Flame of Love among countless families – the silent miracle of spreading the Flame of Love heart to heart – like a wildfire.

Continuing:

Mary: “My little one, Thursdays and Fridays should be considered as great days of grace. Those who offer reparation to my Divine Son on these days will receive a great grace. During the hours of reparation, the power of Satan will weaken to the degree that those making reparation pray for sinners. Nothing flashy is required, no boasting about love is necessary. It is burning in the depth of the hearts and spreads to the others.

I want you not just to know my name, but to know also the Flame of Love of my maternal heart beating for you. I entrusted you with the task of making known this burning love. That is why you must be very humble. Such a grace as this has only been granted to only very few. Hold such great grace in high esteem. What you must love and seek the most in it are the internal and external humiliations. Never believe that you are important. Your principal task is to consider yourself as nothing; never stop doing this. Even after your death, this should be happening. It is for that reason also that you receive the graces of internal and external humiliations. In this way, you can remain faithful in spreading my Flame of Love. Take advantage of every opportunity; seek these external and internal humiliations with your own effort, because what you seek for yourself increases your humility even more.”

When the Blessed Virgin finished these maternal instructions, my heart was filled with profound humility. The Blessed Virgin allowed me to feel how powerful she is. Yet, in her earthly life, she was humble and modest.

The Blessed Virgin commanded me to write her words in a detailed form because this request, which she gives through me, is a ‘message’ for all her children who will be the first to spread her Flame of Love.

When we look at an alternative translation, we can see two things more clearly. First, that “nothing flashy” is referring to personal humility and, second, that the Examination’s statement that the Flame of Love is spread silently and not to be announced is also referring to personal humility. Here is that alternative translation of the section beginning, “nothing flashy is required.”

“You don’t need to stand out, love shall not be announced loudly. It burns deep in the souls of men and it spreads into others’ souls. Nothing has to be written, no loud words shall be spoken, since the whole world knows me by name. Now I want them to know not only my name, but also the Flame of Love of my motherly Heart, which burns for you, and I entrusted the spreading of this flaming love to you. So be very humble, because such graces are given only to a very few. Value these graces, and among them love and look for inner and outer humiliations. Never value yourself as anything, your main care shall be the negligence of yourself. Never cease to practice it.”

This does not mean that we do not write anything and do not speak publicly about the Flame of Love. Elizabeth was often instructed to write otherwise we would not have the Diary. In part of the oral tradition from Elizabeth that has made its way into the English complete translation (the Blue Diary) even though it is not in the critical edition of the Diary approved by Cardinal Erdő, we have an entry from July 26, 1971:

Jesus: “Speech is a gift of God and one day, we must give an account of our words. Through words, souls communicate with one another. Also through words, people get to know us.

Therefore, we have no right to wrap ourselves in silence but we also must remember that we are responsible for every spoken word. Therefore, we should walk and live in God’s presence, pondering each word that we say. Our Father gave the gift of speech and you must make use of your gift. Do not be afraid to speak!

Shaking others out of their lethargy is a serious responsibility. Nevertheless, you cannot leave them in their homes with empty hands and empty hearts. You must speak!”

Mary: “You can only explain my Flame of Love to others by speaking about it. You have no right to be silent because of cowardice, pride, negligence or fear of sacrifice.

Let the words you say about me be alive so the mystery of Heaven has an impact on souls. If, eventually, you ask to speak and it is granted to you, may my power be with you! Let each word be like a seed planted so those listening produce an abundant harvest.”

Jesus: “Get the timid and passive priests to leave their homes. They must not stand idle and deprive humanity of the Flame of Love of the Immaculate Heart of My Mother. Let them not abuse the confidence by which I have bonded them to Me. They must speak out and announce My abundant riches, so I can pour out My forgiveness upon the whole world.

Key Point:

So Mary’s statement is not a prohibition against speaking and writing. Rather, this is a caution about the spirit and method of spreading the Flame of Love. It is not spread by a magic incantation of words or by self-absorbed, self-exalting fancy speech; it is spread by the power of grace active in us. We must be rooted in a spirit of humility to properly propagate it because pride stunts our growth in grace and it is the effect of grace that shines brightly within us to draw others to the Flame of Love. The focus is never on us, on the events, or even on the message; it is grace. One of the beautiful characteristics of the Flame of Love which testifies to its truth is that it does not emphasize the messenger (although Elizabeth is most admirable), nor the messages (although this is the way we learn about the Flame of Love), but rather it is all about grace; it is all about leading us to a deep union with Jesus that consequently blinds Satan and saves souls.

The center and goal of our work is not *our proclamation* of the Flame of Love but rather *other’s reception* of the Flame of Love. The proclamation is not the focus but merely the means of bringing

others into contact with the grace that is shining, the flame that is burning in our hearts so the Flame of Love can be spread from heart to heart. It is less about *information* and more about *formation*. We learn the Flame of Love through knowledge, through information, but we live the Flame of Love and spread it in the world by lived experience – formation. It is this holiness that is brought about by the Grace of the Flame of Love that is attractive and causes it to spread rapidly throughout the world. It is more what people see than what they hear. Pride – especially spiritual pride or pride in the work we are building – stands in the way of holiness.

And then, to address the last part of this quote from the Examination, since it is the holiness that is the effect of grace of the Flame of Love that itself spreads the Flame of Love from heart to heart and not some special position, authority, or set of words, anyone can do it. Those who speak and those who lead do not have a monopoly on passing the Flame of Love. In fact, it is not only *allowed* that others besides the leaders pass the Flame of Love, it is absolutely essential since the leaders alone cannot possibly touch enough hearts themselves. To spread like wildfire, it must be spread by countless holy, enflamed hearts to countless new hearts. The leader's role is to enable and inspire the countless others to pass the Flame of Love from heart to heart but now I am digressing from the Examination and need to return.

The Greatest Movement

The Examination then turns to examine the statement, “since the Word incarnated, there was no movement of such a grand scale on my part, which would have come to you as I send you the Flame of Love of my Heart.” That may sound awkward to us because the Examination is using the critical edition of the Diary in Hungarian and translating the excerpts directly into English independently of the current English translation we have. Our “Blue” Diary is a translation of the Spanish version translated from a Hungarian edition that is not the critical edition approved by Cardinal Erdő. In the blue Diary we use, this is the section from August 1, 1962:

Mary: “I assure you, my little one, that I have never before given into your hands such a powerful force of grace, the burning flame of the love of my heart. Ever since the Word became Flesh, I have not undertaken a greater movement than the Flame of Love of my heart who rushes to you. Until now, nothing could blind Satan as much. And it is up to you not to reject it, for this rejection would simply spell disaster.”

Dr. Kovács provides an interesting thought about this passage in footnote 45. Recall that there are no masculine or feminine pronouns in Hungarian so, where he writes “his” he may mean “hers”:

As I see it, the key to understand this message shall be seen without any interpretation that a *huge pouring out of grace* is to come, in which the Blessed Virgin has an important role. The Mother of God, as also Mother of the Church is active towards the mystical body of his Son, so in co-operation with His Son as mediator of graces she practices her mission from God in our direction, which does not fulfil in the conception of the Word of God, in giving birth of Jesus Christ into this world, in raising him and guiding him as a mother, but this motherly love so to say is completed towards the members of the Church.

In other words, our Blessed Mother's role did not end with giving birth to Jesus but continues with aiding the members of His body, the Church. Now she is doing so with a huge outpouring of grace. The Examination points out that the world will have a great devotion to our Blessed Mother in gratitude for her pouring forth the Flame of Love.

Footnote 47 makes an interesting point regarding the Flame of Love extending to the non-baptized. Dr. Kovács points out that this is not to bypass the sacraments and render them unnecessary because of the Flame of Love but rather that the Flame of Love will extend to the unbaptized to lead them to the sacraments.

Dr. Kovács concludes this section on the concept of the Flame of Love with a reminder of its root in veneration of the heart of Mary which helps transform us into the likeness of Jesus and Mary which brings us nearer to God and perfection in Christian spirituality.

Key Point: **Blinding Satan**

The Examination then turns to the important phrase of “blinding Satan” and provides several insights that help prevent us from distorting the Flame of Love into something it is not. It describes the blinding of Satan as a consequence of the outpouring of the Flame of Love. Dr. Kovács makes the point that this blinding is temporary. This is confirmed in two ways from what we read in the Diary. First, we see that sometimes Satan does have a strong influence on Elizabeth and plants terrible doubts while at other times he appears quite powerless. Second, we must persist in our actions. There is not a magic prayer that blinds Satan once and then is done. We must persist in prayer, Mass, Adoration, and all the works of grace.

We do not directly cast out Satan in the sense of an exorcism or deliverance but rather displace him by the effect of grace. The progression of grace in our lives frees the soul from the temptation of evil by increasingly conforming us to the image of Jesus. Dr. Kovács makes the point that this blinding of Satan does not happen “because of some one, new thing (praying the prayer of the Flame of Love), but rather through the whole Christian life.” This reinforces the words of Tony Mullen, a previous National Director of the Flame of Love in the United States, that the Flame of Love is not just a devotion but a way of life. Dr. Kovács points out that this displacement of Satan by grace is not something new but has always been the effect of grace, e.g., the Mass has always been the great conduit of grace.

Thus, “blinding Satan” is a description of the effect of grace on Satan. Both grace and its blinding effect upon Satan are not just a result of prayer but also of work. Dr. Kovács highlights the balanced spirituality of the Flame of Love, i.e., both prayer and work, and quotes Elizabeth's statement that, “during the day, offer your work to the glory of God. This offering in the state of grace intensifies the blinding of Satan.”

Dr. Kovács concludes this section stating that the Diary does not exaggerate the power of evil and always shows it under the control of God. As a result, there is no need to fear.

Consistency with the Teachings of the Church

Dr. Kovács then turns his attention to the fidelity of the messages of the Diary to the teachings of the Church in various dimensions, i.e., do the messages align with what the Church teaches. He states his conclusion at the beginning of the discussion: “Most of the messages found in the Diary can be considered as free from theological errors, even if some of them need some explanation.”

The Christ-centeredness of the messages

The first topic is the Christ-centeredness of the messages or, as we often say, “it is all about Jesus”. “The Diary never places the person of Mary or her role in the work of salvation above the person and role of Christ.”

The Pneumatological Dimension

The next topic is the Holy Spirit; pneuma is Greek for spirit, breath, or wind hence “Pneumatological”. He references the section of the Diary (II/93 under March 24th, 1963) that speaks of a time of grace and the Spirit of Love like the first Pentecost. He points out this future dimension that will result in a great renewal and the current dimension where the pouring out of the Flame of Love has started already. For the current pouring out of the Flame of Love, he adduces II/100 which is from May 19, 1963. This is the section where our Blessed Mother describes Elizabeth as being among the “early birds” or “first risers” and then describes herself as the beautiful ray of dawn.

The Ecclesiological Dimension

The third topic is the Church; ecclesia is Greek for Church (“called out ones”) hence Ecclesiological. He mentions how the Diary shows that the triumphant, suffering, and militant Church are all intertwined. He states that the pouring out of grace comes from Jesus as the Head of the Church but “is also the fruit of the work of Christians willingly co-operating with God’s grace and Mary.” He points out many places where the Diary shows Elizabeth subject to the hierarchy of the Church and reminds us that the Movement must not contradict the directives of the Magisterium.

In the discussion on fidelity to the Church, Dr. Kovács spends some time on the Feast of the Flame of Love being the Feast of the Presentation. He makes the connection between the Flame of Love and the lumen Christi – the Light of Christ – the light of revelation to the Gentiles mentioned in the Cantic of Simeon which is central to the celebration of the Presentation (Luke 2:29-32).

There is an interesting note in footnote 54 that can help shape our celebrations of Candlemas and the Flame of Love. He states that there is no reference to anything we are supposed to add to the official liturgy of the Feast of the Presentation and that the liturgy of the Church has absolute priority. The translation of the footnote is awkward but appears to mention that we can then have a separate set of prayers joined to the celebration. In a separate email from Győző Kindelmann, we have a description of how they do this in Hungary:

Also, there is a formal event of the Passing of the Flame of Love annually on February 2nd, the Feast of the Flame of Love, and the same external form of commitment is present at the end of the Flame of Love missions. The process is as follows: One by one,

the congregation (faithful believers) with a candle in everyone's hand, goes in front of the priest (or leader), who lights the candle of every committed man from the burning candle in his own hand, repeating to everyone the words of Our Lady to Elizabeth:

“Take this flame that I give you, it is the flame of love of my heart, set fire to yours and pass it on!”

Before that, it is important to make the participants aware that these are the words of Our Lady; therefore, the mission is received from Our Lady herself to be apostles of the outpouring of the Flame of Love.

Dr. Kovács concludes this topic by stating, “All in all, we can say that the Marian character of the Spiritual Diary is not only Christ-centred, but also faithful to the Church.”

Eschatological Dimension

In the next section, Dr. Kovács makes an important point that can help prevent us from a common distortion of the Flame of Love. He states, “There are no excessive eschatological and apocalyptic references in the visions, except when speaking about the souls in the Purgatory.” Eschatology is the study of end things. He does not say that there are no such references and, in fact, cites one; II/93 is the reference to a time of grace like the first Pentecost and the great “jolt” or “trauma” that will create a new world. However, these references are not excessive, i.e., we should not be obsessing about end time events in the Flame of Love. There is a concern for mass damnation but there is also an answer – mass conversion which is the great miracle Mary promises in the Flame of Love (q.v., footnote 60).

Key Point:

Doctrinal Dimension

In the section on doctrinal fidelity, The Examination touches upon the important role of suffering as partaking of the the redemptive life of Christ and spreading the work of salvation referencing Rom 8:17-18 to which we can also add Phili 3:10, I Peter 2:21, Col 1:24, and Heb 13:13. It continues on to reinforce our frequent statement that the Flame of Love is a heavily Eucharistic devotion. It mentions the meditation on the five wounds in conjunction with a correct understanding of the Blood of Jesus for which it references the Diary from January 16, 1964 where Jesus again speaks to Elizabeth of divinization, i.e., the effect of grace.

Dimension of Grace

The next section returns to the topic of grace. It categorizes the allocutions themselves as a gratuitous grace as discussed above, i.e., a grace given to us to make others holy. It then proceeds to discuss grace and the Flame of Love in ways that are very consistent with the way we have been describing it. Dr. Kovács writes, “The vast majority of the messages are full of references to the grace of God.” He then states that the Flame of Love is itself a grace (as we discussed earlier) and makes the explicit connection that the result of grace, of Jesus present in us, is rendering the devil powerless – blinding Satan.

He defines passing on the Flame of Love not as something magical but rather the spreading of grace – very much aligned with the gospel and the work the Church has always done. Similar to what we have been saying, he says that “All the practises linked to the messages are sources of graces” and once again emphasizes the Mass as the greatest conduit of grace.

Interestingly, in footnote 68, he quotes a section of the Hungarian critical edition of the Diary that we do not yet have in our current English version that refers to the movement of grace: “...for the person assigned to me a great work awaits. They will be the one called to bring the news of the lighting of my Flame of Love to their fellows, and to start the movement of grace.” (II/93 – March 24, 1963). I checked with one of our translators and the Hungarian word is not exactly the same word used in “The Flame of Love of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Movement” but does carry similar ambiguity to the word in English, i.e., it can be movement as in a flow of grace or movement as in organizing people and activities in support of grace.

The Angelic and Demoniactal Dimension

The Examination next turns to the portrayal of angels, demons, and, particularly, Satan in the Diary. It declares the portrayals to be balanced. Dr. Kovács writes that in the Diary, “The absolute power of the Redeemer, however, never gets eroded by the limited power of Satan.” That is an important reminder to us as the power of evil appears to grow stronger around us.

Key Point:

Pastoral Theological Dimension

The following section is entitled Pastoral Theological Dimension and addresses issues of life in the context of community. He makes the interesting point that Elizabeth took great responsibility not just for the world in general but for her specific parish – through prayer, atonement, organization of prayer groups, and, as pointed out in the footnotes, physical service, e.g., dusting or polishing the floor. Here he mentions the weekly agenda and states that, “The followers of the spirituality often take up this rhythm partly or in its entirety.” The section concludes by mentioning the importance of families and mothers. Footnote 72 points out that it is not just motherhood in general but motherhood that follows the will of Christ.

Marian Dimensions (sections 6.4.9-12)

The next four sections deal with the treatment of our Blessed Mother in the Diary. The first affirms the Diary’s consistency with belief in the four Marian dogmas. The second addresses the Diary’s perception of Mary’s mediation of graces. Dr. Kovács provides an interesting example of Mary as Mediatrix by using the Visitation. By Mary bringing Jesus with her, John the Baptist leaps for Joy and Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit. About this, he writes, “We see not only the mediation of graces here, but the effect also, which is manifested in its fruits.” The tie between the effect of grace and its fruits is interesting. He then reminds us that the Diary portrays that we all have a role to play in mediation and intercession.

The discussion of Mary in the Diary continues with a pointed question: “how can the worries, pain and suffering of Mary for the souls on the road to perdition be compatible with the joy of the glorified state in Heaven”? Dr. Kovács highlights the support for this idea of Mary suffering from both miraculous events (such as weeping statues) and the liturgy of the Church. He states that our Blessed Mother expresses her motherly concern for suffering mankind through us. Footnote 80 provides the needed reconciliation. Mariology makes the subtle distinction that, for example, when a statue weeps, it is the statue and not the person of Mary that is weeping. In the case of Elizabeth, we might say it is the locution of Mary that is weeping. The purpose is to help us to comprehend the seriousness of the situation. This extended, four section examination of the treatment of Mary in the Diary concludes with a mention of the importance of our Lady of Hungary in the Diary. Recall that Hungary was the first country to be consecrated to our Blessed Mother.

Summary of the Systematic Part

Dr. Kovács then summarizes this entire section of examining the fidelity of the Diary to the teachings of the Church. He reminds us that such private revelation can never be part of the deposit of the faith but that it does authentically show us the way toward salvation among the difficulties of our current age. We have already received all we need in Jesus but The Flame of Love leads us to take the Christianity we have always had more seriously. It strengthens our faith to carry out the apostolate, i.e., the mission of all Christians toward the evangelization and sanctification (making holy – making partakers of the Divine Nature) of all mankind. To quote from the first chapter of the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity:

The Church was founded for the purpose of spreading the kingdom of Christ throughout the earth for the glory of God the Father, to enable all men to share in His saving redemption, and that through them the whole world might enter into a relationship with Christ. All activity of the Mystical Body directed to the attainment of this goal is called the apostolate, which the Church carries on in various ways through *all* her members. (emphasis mine).

He concludes by stating:

During the theological examination of the Spiritual Diary we did not find any elements which would contradict neither the Holy Scriptures, nor the Sacred Tradition of the Church, the liturgy, the teachings of the Magisterium and the truths of faith based on the *sensus fidei* and crystallised in the practice of popular devotion.

Problematic Phrases and Words

The Examination then addresses formal and material errors. Formal is being used in a technical sense here and does not mean requiring a jacket and tie. It means pertaining to the literal form – how things are written. For example, footnote 91 points out, “the Diary could not be printed in its original forms, since it is full of spelling and stylistic errors.” It says the text had to be corrected grammatically just to be understandable. Recall that Elizabeth had very little education; she was on her own from the time she was eleven.

Footnote 90 reminds us that the language of mystics is not the exact language of a teaching document or theological treatise; it is the language of conversation. It may exaggerate; it may be more expressive than technically accurate to capture the emotion intended; it may be phrased a certain way to emphasize a particular point or it may reference something not captured in writing but said elsewhere to the mystic.

Dr. Kovács addresses the very anthropomorphic statements in the Diary, i.e., those where Jesus and Mary seem very “human” in the sense of our humanity rather than humanity in a glorified state, e.g., “we both grew tired”, or “let’s eat something warm”. He points out this is entirely in line with the way Jesus has always made Himself accessible to us, e.g., just the fact that became man, became one of us. We see this example in the scripture. In Luke 24:41-43, the resurrected Jesus asks for something to eat and eats it in their presence even though His glorified body does not need the sustenance. Just a little earlier in verse 30 He is breaking bread with the disciples on the road to Emmaus. We might even speculate that this is the meaning of Heb 2:10 where it says Jesus was made perfect through sufferings, i.e., not that Jesus was imperfect but rather that His relatability to us – in our perception – was perfected by allowing us to see Him suffer.

He next brings up an unusual statement from May 14, 1962 that “Many drift into damnation against their wills.” In our current version of the Blue Diary, this is translated, “Many are dragged away in spite of their good will.” This is a good example of the Diary not using theologically exact language with its care to not be ambiguous. He points out that this must not be understood to mean that sin is “not the consequence of human free will and that the evil spirit could force it on people.” He reminds us that “the evil spirit could not lead souls into perdition without the agreement coming from the free will.” Rather, it may be meant in the sense that it is not their will, i.e., their intent, to be damned. Likewise, he reminds us that “Neither does the Diary state that the gift of the Flame of Love could free the souls from sin without repentance” but rather that repentance is a constant theme. Footnote 93 clarifies the matter by stating how the Flame of Love liberates souls from the effects of evil and makes reference to August 1, 1962 where Elizabeth speaks of her own liberation. In the blue Diary, we read, “O most powerful Virgin, I hail you. From what sorrow you have saved me! Why do you give me so many graces?” but a more literal translation is, “from how great misery you have freed me!” Perhaps an even better illustration comes from just a little earlier on the same day:

Mary: “Now, Satan has been blinded for some hours and has ceased dominating souls. Lust is the sin making so many victims. Because Satan is now powerless and blind, the evil spirits are dazed, as if they have fallen into lethargy. They do not understand what is happening. Satan has stopped giving them orders. Consequently, souls are freed from the domination of the Evil One and are making sound resolutions. Once those millions of souls emerge from this event, they will be much stronger in their resolve to stay firm.”

Once, during a cenacle, I was asked how the night vigils could ensure that not one dying person would be condemned as that would be a violation of free will. I could only reply that, once a person sees all things as they truly are, when they see the beauty of God and the horror of their sin, when Satan’s deceiving influence over them is broken, and when they see their fellow brothers and sisters sacrificing in night vigil out of love for them, why would they not choose eternal life.

Another view of drifting into damnation against their will is offered by footnote 94 which references a section of the Diary we do not yet have in English. It speaks of the emotional reaction of people to scandal in the Church such as we have seen so painfully in the last many years:

4th July, 1964 – First Saturday

I was in the Beloved House. By washing my hand, when I reached out for the soap, I realised that whoever used it before, put it back dirty. I involuntarily said: “Eww, that’s disgusting!” The sister ordered beside me heard it and scolded me, that she did not expect to hear this from my mouth and that I shall not say this again. After this I thought about the spiritual delicacy of the sister and that, even though the soap was disgusting, I shouldn’t have expressed my opinion. And when I thought this, the Lord Jesus said to me: You didn’t like, that the soap, which serves cleanness, filled you with disgust? You see, that is how sorrowful I am when the souls, who consecrated their lives, bodies and souls to me in order to be a benefit for the other souls with their cleanness, but instead of this, they make people disgusted, so that they against their will will hate the impurity manifested in their deeds. You know, how much this hurts Me? Look, how sad I am because of them! Atone for these, too!”

Dr. Kovács then quotes some phrases which, if understood incorrectly, would attribute to Mary things proper to God, viz., that she is the source of grace or salvation. For example, on November 30, 1962, Mary says, “Live in accordance with my graces so that Satan will be blinded even more.” On November 19, 1962, she says, “There are many cold families like yours in my country. I want the Flame of Love of my heart to warm them up and others just as well. I can see that you understand this well since you are living the same reality. This is why you have compassion for me. As a result, I first entrusted to you the abundance of my graces.” Once more the language is not exact enough to distinguish between “my” meaning she is the source or “my” meaning she is the one who obtained these graces from the One who is the source of grace and the language does not need to be exact; as stated at the beginning of this section, this is the language of conversation and not theological debate. Dr. Kovács does not see a problem here.

Neither does he take issue with the statements from Jesus that our Blessed Mother “obliges” Him. He mentions this is a common motif of popular piety even if not theologically exact and sees no theological error involved.

In section 6.5.5, Dr. Kovács addresses a section of the Diary we do not yet have in English where Elizabeth quotes Jesus saying, “your suffering merges with my divine powers at every moment, and this power is also given to you to redeem your soul” (IV/19). He says the line has been rephrased in a later edition but I do not know if this means rephrased by Elizabeth or by the editors as an attempt to correct her poor written Hungarian. The entire section is from May 8, 1966 and reads:

Early in the morning of Mothers’ Day, so big sufferings flooded me, that I barely could make it to Mass. My illness increased further on the road. I wanted to turn back, but since I was closer to the church than home, I decided to go to the church. On the way home and also in the afternoon, I still felt unwell.

This pain eased by nightfall, so I had the strength to go to visit the sacrament in the evening. As I was going home, the Lord Jesus said: "Every drop of tears pressed out of your eyes by suffering falls on the souls of sinners, and initiates tears of repentance in their souls.

Why are you surprised? Have you forgotten that your sufferings melt together with the power of God every second, and this power is also given to you to partake in the work of redemption?"

I'm honestly not sure why this is of concern but it has to do with the possible understanding that this implies a division of divine power. Perhaps the concern is that the divine power of redemption could be misunderstood as coming from Elizabeth as he points out that we all participate in the work of redemption by virtue of our baptism and in particular by our joining our sufferings with those of Jesus.

The Examination then discusses the several conversations our Lord had with Elizabeth regarding the day of her death which He says will be on June 6, 1965, i.e., her 52nd birthday. Interestingly, none of these several sections are in the Blue Diary and they provide context to some sections we do have that are a bit puzzling without them. I'll reproduce them here. The issue is that she did not die on her 52nd birthday. Later in the Diary, Jesus makes it clear that He was not referring to her physical death but to her finally dying completely to the world, e.g., Gal 2:20.

November 2, 1963

We were talking about the time of my death. I asked Him if it was not my imagined will about my time of death. The Lord Jesus answered with kind reproach: "Do our wills not agree or do not you want to come to Me? Is there anything that still attracts you to the earth? I have told you the time of your death so that it would be easier for you to bear the burden of the world. Tell Me, this is not how you understand it?" "My adored Jesus! You do make me really happy with it. O, do not misunderstand me, doubt has only risen because I do not want my will to come in the foreground against Your divine holy will. And also because You make me so much happy with your words that since I accepted the time of my death, my soul serves You with even greater devotion so no minute of my life would be unused."

When the Lord Jesus ceased my torturing doubts, words of gratitude came to my lips. "By Your grace the torturing doubts in my soul have calmed down. O, Most Holy Trinity! What a great wonder You have worked in my soul! You have cauterised my soul in the furnace of sufferings and it has become pure and lo, it can contemplate You and immerse in You. Oh, my good heavenly Father, admirable Most Holy Trinity! You have allowed me to experience and taste this wonder full of majesty already here on earth. Oh, my heavenly Father, Lord of heavens! My soul is glowing and burning with love. The light kindled in my soul is blazing up to you. And I know that You wish nothing but relying on You completely."

April 7, 1965

I talked to the sister ordered beside me and mentioned to her, that sometimes the Lord Jesus seems to have forgotten me, and I feel Him to be so far away from me. The same day, when I took care of my grandchildren, in my soul I adored and atoned the Lord Jesus. As I sent my word to Him, I felt as if they were flying up to the high heavens, and He surprised me “Why do you think that I am far from you in the high? I am standing here, next to you, and I just want to assure you that you should not worry if the day of your death will be true. Yes, it will be. And also know how much we are waiting for your arrival: My Mother, Me, the Spirit of Love along with the heavenly Father. The Spirit of Love, who took hold of you, is preparing wonderful happiness for you.”

And while the Lord Jesus spoke inside my soul, through the waves of interesting feelings it grasped as the Blessed Virgin said to the Lord Jesus with Her wonderful, captivating love: “This one is my delight, too.” And they allowed me to know, that it was about me. The Blessed Virgin melted into the love of the Holy Trinity to that degree, that I could barely distinguish it in my soul. I was very surprised by this, and to my amazement the Lord Jesus allowed me to immerse in a wonderful thing, and He said: “This is a form of ecstasy, so you can endure it with the strength of your body.” And in the meantime, He introduced me into previously unknown heavenly matters. I cannot express them in words. [...]

The Lord Jesus talked to me about this also the next day, during the mass. I cannot write about these. Among many things He said: “You just follow My footsteps! I also follow yours. You know, our feet walk together and our hands gather together. The Spirit of Love, who took you into possession finds the oil drops of your sacrifices beautiful and meaningful. Be persistent until your last breath! My Elisabeth the persistence and fidelity until your death is the sure salvation for you and for others.”

April 21, 1965

The doubts of faith fill me not only with a depressing power but with almost hopeless fright. My soul is writhing in torments, the light of faith cannot penetrate it. In the darkness of my soul, its frightening shadows want to inspire me to do weird things. Now I am struggling with such a spiritual difficulty. One of the manifestations of my doubts of faith rose up again. It attacked the calmness in me: my confession is not valid, God didn't forgive my sins, and my soul will be damned because I recklessly trust the mercy of God, and this is the greatest sin, which leads my soul into damnation. And not only mine, but also my spiritual guide's, who was also reckless in giving me absolution, which is not valid at all. This is a terrible torment. I never had doubt of faith to this degree, which would even doubt the mercy of God. In my grievous writhing, I took the Holy Body of the Lord almost choking, and crying I asked the Lord to allow me to trust in His infinite mercy and the validity of the absolution, and that He shall not condemn my spiritual guide, who is in danger only because of me. I had to go to him, because he also needed to see clearly, in how grave danger we both are.

These days I was attacked by such doubts of faith, that I wanted to go to the father dean and ask him to absolve me, and enlighten my spiritual guide so that he wouldn't be damned. And since I didn't do this, that doubts started to torment me even stronger, saying that I am committing even graver sins, because pride is holding me back, and I don't want to acknowledge my sins and this is why I don't go and confess them. Yes, this is the state of my soul, and in this dark spiritual torment I could not even imagine, that this would be the will of God.

[this section then jumps to May 6]

May 6, 1965

The Lord Jesus hasn't spoken to me for a long time. The conversation is one-sided again. Today, early in the morning, when I woke up, I thought that, according to the promise of the Lord Jesus, June 6th, my 52nd birthday, will be the day I die. I am thinking about this day, always rather touched, about which He said: yes, it will be so.

I went into a silent retreat; this is the second day. I was contemplating on death. I wonder how my soul will be, when death grabs it from my body? Will it maybe soak in the pleasant rain of the western wind, and it will surprise me purified in the drops of the rain, or maybe resting in the warmth of the southern wind? Or maybe the dry eastern wind will dry up that breath-like shroud, about which the Lord Jesus once said: "You see, that is all, what separates us." Maybe it will be the howling northern wind which will grab this shroud in an instant and I will stand face to face with the Lord? I think of His piercing gaze a lot. What will be the last word to leave my lips? And will the last words spoken on the Earth echo in the heavens? O, if I think of the piercing eyes of the Lord, what else but this sentence could come into my mind: "My Lord, forgive my sins!" Could anyone think of anything else, because the Lord looked at me many times with His penetrating gaze and said: "*Look into My eyes!*" *Then I collapsed and begged the Lord: "How could I look into Your eyes?" The piercing gaze of His eyes shed light on the hidden sins of my soul and He allowed me to see, how the piercing gaze of His eyes caresses my failures out of my soul.*

III/220

I could not stand His gaze and closed my eyes but it didn't help. The all-illuminating gaze of the Lord's eyes worked and shined in my soul also through my closed eyes. And if this breath-like shroud would fall, nothing will distract the piercing gaze of His eyes anymore, but then I will be able to stand it, and my body won't collapse. These days the winds of death often blow around me, and how good is this, it takes from my body what the burdens of the earth have put on. This howling wind, the sign of death blows around me in various forms.

Today, after the Holy Communion, as I knelt back, I felt a strong pain coming from my hip bone. Going through my side, my ribs and spine until my throat it caused such a pain, that I could not even breathe. My mind became blunt in a second and I was filled with pain, which started to recede after a short time, but during the whole day I was writhing with my mind blunt. I don't know how long this will last, but all is well. This is also one form of suffering, which the Lord Jesus promised a long ago. Thanks, thanks, thanks be to the divine love, which always provides me suffering!

After this comes the section labeled May 1965 where she goes to the doctor and he tells her that he cannot diagnose anything but rather her sufferings are from taking on the sufferings of others.

The explanation comes right around her 52nd birthday.

June 5, 1965

There is a constant desire for God in my soul. I accepted with great reassurance in His holy will, either if I have to live, die or suffer. This filled me such happiness that no word can express or describe it. All this faded in my soul by the morning of the 6th, and the attack of the evil surprised me again. I have never used this word before, but now I have to say that the torments of the sufferings tore my soul apart. With a few words I will describe the attacks of the evil with what he wanted to make me stagger, so that I may see that there is no point to see my made-up folly as true. "Has this great disappointment made you realise that you made this all up? Admit it and change! *Continuing this life is opposed to your human dignity, and you even sin with it. You see, even who you adore, has abandoned you and does not give you either life or death. Only damnation is sure for you and for all those who agree with you. Indeed, only you are responsible for them! You brought trouble on them with your constant lies.*"

He attacked me with such force that I immediately lost the balance of my soul. This fight went on for days. *In this great uncertainty, my sole prayer was the Prayer of the Lord. I asked the heavenly Father to accept my soul and body. I want to love and serve Him with all my mind and zealously asked Him to have His holy will perfectly fulfilled in me through Him. This is all I desire. I asked Him to forgive all my sins through the merits of our Lord, Jesus Christ. And that He may accept this longing of mine. And I offered Him the uncertainty of my soul, which makes me suffer so much.*

June 9, 1965

In the evening I went to bed. Because of the weakness and the tiredness, I was barely able even to think. Quite unexpectedly, the eulogy of the Lord Jesus surprised me and He even started to talk. Never in my life has He touched me with His words like now. I listened with a trembling soul and a devoted collectedness. The tiredness disappeared, and the darkness of my soul ceased. I had difficulty in capturing the meaning of His words. In the last few days, a blinding darkness surrounded me. My every moment was not only physical, but also spiritual torture.

The words of the Lord Jesus: “My Elisabeth, my sister! I found delight in the fight of your soul. It is my greatest delight if you constantly battle the prince of darkness. Whoever does this, their salvation is assured. My dear, I relieved the darkness of the last few days in your soul. And now I am going to tell you, what is why. Do not believe that these were deceiving imaginations in your soul. No! My divine words are always purposeful and meritorious, no matter how dark they are to you. I can see that the lack of fulfillment of your death has caused such a suffering in your soul. I ask you, do you live now, as you did before? No, right? For the world you have completely died. I will continue later. Rest now.” He went silent. I could not sleep. I spent almost the whole night awake. I pondered on the words of the Lord Jesus. During this evening conversation, the Lord Jesus praised me. The next day I was unable to write it down, it went into the consciousness of my mind. I was so happy because I felt so unworthy of the praise of the Lord Jesus. *I cannot be humble enough. I bow down to Him, and ask for the humility of the angels and Saints of Heaven, and I put my tiny humility next to them and think of the words of the Lord trembling in my soul.*

This then gives context to the statement we have in the blue Diary on June 10, 1965: “The fact that your death has not yet arrived is also a form of these sufferings. I gladly admit that I was very pleased when you renounced your life. This renunciation was fruitful both for you and for those for whom you offered it.”

Dr. Kovács then addresses two sentences in the Diary that refer to Jesus being a human in the past: “I was a man, too” and “I used to be a man.” In the blue Diary one sentence is translated in a way that avoids the difficulty and the other is missing. Dr. Kovács points out that we must not understand this and it was not intended to say that Jesus is no longer a man. It is referring to a state or action of the past to make a point and is not meant to imply that Jesus is no longer in that state. He is still fully human and fully divine.

Potential Doctrinal Problems

In the first part of the section, Dr. Kovács raises an issue that does not seem to have a theological resolution. He is addressing the idea that a fixed number of prayers can have an impact on the souls in Purgatory, e.g., one soul released for every three Hail Mary’s. The question is can actions in this world (the immanent dimension) have an impact outside of this world (the transcendent dimension). As footnote 103 points out, this may be a theological struggle but how could we deny this in the Diary and yet accept First Saturdays or the idea of indulgences. I’m not sure why he raises such an indeterminate subject unless it is to be thorough.

The only other topic Dr. Kovács discusses in this section is the Flame of Love Hail Mary. To understand his comments, it is helpful to understand some things that are not obvious in the current English translation of the Diary. In our current version, the request appears early in the Diary in October 1962. In Elizabeth’s handwritten Diary, that is not the case. In fact, it is the very last entry made on March 14, 1983 – over a year after the last entry in the Diary and just two years before she died. She writes that the Blessed Virgin told her this in 1962 but she dared not write it down.

Also of note is that the section we have in the Blue Diary explaining the request is NOT part of Elizabeth's Diary. This is the section that reads:

Note: The competent bishop asked Elizabeth: "Why the very old Hail Mary should be recited differently?" On February 2, 1982, the Lord answered:

Jesus: "It is exclusively thanks to the efficacious pleas of the Most Holy Virgin that the Most Holy Trinity granted the effusion of the Flame of Love. By it, ask in the prayer with which you greet My Most Holy Mother: 'Spread the effect of grace of thy Flame of Love over all of humanity, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.' So that, by its effect, humanity is converted."

The Most Holy Virgin added:

Mary: "I do not want to change the prayer by which you honor me; (Footnote: The Hail Mary) by this petition, I want rather to shake humanity. This is not a new prayer formula; it must be a constant supplication."

This section was added by others who spoke to Elizabeth about the subject. With this context, let's explore Dr. Kovács' comments. He makes several important points and at least one may correct the way we describe the Flame of Love Hail Mary:

- 1) It is not the only and "correct" way to pray the Hail Mary.
- 2) It is not compulsory for anyone in the Church.
- 3) Although it is based upon the traditional Hail Mary, it creates a new prayer.
- 4) It does not effect the original prayer and does not require anyone to change it.

Key Point:

Dr. Kovács then reiterates the point so it appears to be important to him: "We must mark, that the praying of the Hail Mary with the addition is neither a 'correction of', nor an 'addition to' the original, nor some variant of it, but a self-sufficing prayer, independent from the original Ave Maria [Hail Mary]." Thus we may wish to cease referring to a change in the Hail Mary but start speaking of the Flame of Love Hail Mary as a new prayer based upon the Hail Mary.

So then what does one make of the statement attributed to Mary in our current translation, "I do not want to change the prayer by which you honor me; (Footnote: The Hail Mary) by this petition, I want rather to shake humanity. This is not a new prayer formula; it must be a constant supplication"? I have often been personally puzzled by the seeming contradiction, i.e., "I do not want to change the prayer" and "this is not a new prayer." It is a bit dangerous to read the words too closely without a better understanding of the Hungarian but perhaps we have misunderstood the statement by not grasping where the emphasis is. Perhaps the emphasis is not on the prayer itself but on the way it is prayed. That may be the point our Blessed Mother is making. She doesn't want a routine prayer "formula" spoken as so many empty words said from time to time out of obligation. She wants this to burst from our hearts as a constant supplication by which fervor we shake humanity.

Footnote 106 adds a clarifying point and quotes the below section 4.4 of the Statutes of the Flame of Love Movement:

Establish in practice among the Association Members as a “private devotion,” the petition of the Virgin in the second part of the Hail Mary, “Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, spread the effect of grace of Thy Flame of Love over all humanity, now and at the hour of our death. Amen,” insofar as it may be approved.

Note the references to “private devotion” and “insofar as it may be approved.” Dr. Kovács clarifies this as “during the gatherings of the Movement, the Ave Maria [Hail Mary] can be prayed with the added formula, and outside the gatherings of the Movement with the permission of the local ordinary.”

Interaction of the Church and Diary

We learn some interesting items about both the history of the Diary and perspective about it in this section. Dr. Kovács makes reference to the spread of the Flame of Love outside of Hungary and about various “extracts” of the Diary. Footnote 107 gives us even more clarity. An “extract” of the Diary was granted a Nihil Obstat while Elizabeth was still alive but the political situation at the time made it impractical to grant an Imprimatur and eventually forced the removal of the Nihil Obstat.

The footnote goes on to mention specifically a compilation created by Anna Roth, a good friend of Elizabeth, and says this compilation was translated into Spanish, published in Ecuador, and received an Imprimatur from Archbishop Ruiz. I do not know for sure but this may be the Hungarian document from which Father Rona made the Spanish translation since, as far as I know, the original, handwritten Diary never left Hungary. It would also explain why there are sections in the Blue Diary containing information from personal discussions with Elizabeth that are not part of the handwritten Diary.

The use of the extracts and the political situation in Hungary which prevented approval of the Flame of Love there, give context to the importance of the 2009 initiative from Cardinal Erdő. As the examination writes, this investigation was based upon the whole original text of the Diary. This was not as simple as it sounds. Not only was Elizabeth’s writing poor because of her lack of education but Hungarian itself had changed dramatically in the short time between the time Elizabeth wrote and the 2009 examination. A committee was formed with people who knew Elizabeth well and an expert in the changes to Hungarian in order to compile what became the critical edition in modern Hungarian.

We learn another interesting fact about the Diary a couple of paragraphs later, viz., that there are portions of the handwritten Diary that are not part of the critical edition because Elizabeth noted in the margins that the message was only for her. This was confirmed by Győző Kindelmann in a Facebook post from September 25, 2021:

Few of you may know that not all of the original manuscript of the Spiritual Diary of the Flame of Love was included in the critical edition of the book, which was edited by Cardinal Péter Erdő and published with the approval of the Church. One of the main reasons for this is that the manuscript contains some communications or messages on which Our Lady or the Lord Jesus asked Mrs Elizabeth to write: "This is not to be spoken outwardly"; or, "The following lines are not yet to be published."

One of these excerpts, from the very first message of the Blessed Virgin on 13 April 1962, is particularly noteworthy. It is a prophecy which we can safely say has been

fulfilled nearly five decades later. We therefore believe that the time has come to publish it.

Our Lady says: "There will be a time when you will not be able to come en masse to the churches. These will be difficult times, but do not be afraid, those of you who accept and are faithful to my requests, you will receive much grace in your time of need."

In the second paragraph of this section, Dr. Kovács mentions the messages going to Rome. This is a topic which is in the critical edition of the Diary but we do not have much information about it in the current English version. There is a reference to Jesus requesting Elizabeth to fast until the sacred cause reached the Holy Father and her Confessor forbidding it in the entry for September 18, 1965.

Our English Diary ends with the entry for December 12, 1981 but the critical edition continues with the entry for that day and it explains why there was such a delay in presenting the Flame of Love to the Holy Father and why there is a 16 year gap in the Diary between 1965 and 1981:

Now I have to write more about the matters mentioned of the seventh page of the diary [the entry for September 18, 1965]. About the forty-days of fasting, which Gy.K., my former spiritual guide prohibited. My later spiritual guide and confessor, E.F. -who took care of the state of my soul for years – came to me every Friday. I learned only a few days prior to our departure for Rome, that for years he had me under surveillance. When this, what I'm about to write down happened, he has already been observing my soul for years. One day the Lord Jesus said: "ask your spiritual guide to allow the forty days fasting for you, which will consist of bread and water."

The next day the father was coming and I asked him, or rather I told him the request of the Lord Jesus. Even though I was prepared for his refusal too, but at my greatest surprise he answered: "My dear, If the Lord Jesus asked this from you, you have to do it."

This was on Friday. The next Monday I started the strict fasting. Here I have to describe the circumstances in my family. My widowed son has married after three years of being a widower. There were three small boys: one-, two- and three-years old ones, still babies. Their mother passed very suddenly, and no one has accepted the little orphans. I finished the upbringing of my six children as a widow. I was very tired and wanted to rest, but I couldn't do it. I had to start the upbringing again with three small children. I took two to the nursery, one to the kindergarten.

During this time the Lord Jesus has also scheduled my soul with His extraordinary divine messages, so my difficult life, along with the great sorrow of my son continued. I raised the three little orphans for sixteen years. During these sixteen years my son fell also seriously ill, disallowed for eight years. So my life became even more difficult: three vivid little boys, their severely ill father, and I fulfilled the requests of the Lord Jesus and the Blessed Virgin with all my strength as they commanded me, undertaking every humility, mockery and contempt. I was called everything: idiot, fool, mental. But

in these difficult times I received wonderful graces and an infinite help to carry out my physical work.

Later, when the children started to grow up and became nine, ten and eleven years old, the Lord Jesus told me that I have to take the Flame of Love to Rome. I told my spiritual father the request of the Lord Jesus. He accepted it completely.

This is the 1976 trip referenced in the Examination. The critical edition continues on to describe her second trip by herself a year later which is also mentioned in the Examination.

Dr. Kovács then moves to address our Blessed Mother's statement that there will be no need to approve or investigate the Flame of Love. From October 19, 1962:

Just as the whole world knows my name, so I want the Flame of Love of my heart performing miracles in the depths of the hearts to also be known. There will be no need to investigate this miracle. All will feel its authenticity within their hearts. Whoever has felt it once will communicate it to others because my grace will be active in them. There is no need for authentication. I will authenticate it myself in every soul so that all recognize the effusion of grace of my Flame of Love.

He points out that this does not mean we should not seek approval from the Church. Rather, this reflects what we often tell our leaders, viz., start at the grass roots; spread the Flame of Love heart to heart. People will know it is right; they will sense it; they will recognize the power of grace it brings in their lives. In this way, the Movement bears fruit that we can then take to our bishops and pastors to seek their approval.

He also addresses Elizabeth's statement from November 22, 1962 that, "It isn't necessary to have the cardinal virtues to spread the Flame of Love." He points out that this is not technically correct but must be seen in context. It is not a statement about the Flame of Love but about her humility. The setting is that the priest to whom she confided the messages of the Flame of Love disparaged them and told her to focus on the cardinal virtues especially prudence. She realizes that she does not need to be particularly educated in prudence and expresses her feelings to Jesus: "When I left the confessional, . . . I thought about the cardinal virtues. Would prudence be the most important? 'My adorable Jesus, I attend Your school, and if there is something that I do not know, it is up to You to decide if I should know it or not. It isn't necessary to have the cardinal virtues to spread the Flame of Love. Otherwise, You would have instructed me.'"

Practices in line with the tradition of the Church

In this next section, the Examination shows how consistent the practices of the Flame of Love are with the history of the Church. As we have often portrayed, the power of the Flame of Love is not in its novelty but just the opposite; Jesus and Mary call us to the great practices of grace that have always had the power to break the influence of evil but now with greater power and intensity. It is not about the messages or the messenger; it is all about grace.

Dr. Kovács starts with the Mass and how we believe it is the highest form of the outpouring of grace – fully consistent with the Church. He reminds us that this blinding of Satan at Mass is not a once and

done event but that it provokes his greater fury; the battle continues. He cites Mary's comments on November 22, 1962:

Mary: "If you attend Holy Mass while under no obligation to do so and you are in a state of grace before God, during that time I will pour out the Flame of Love of my heart and blind Satan.

My graces will flow abundantly to the souls for whom you offer the Holy Mass, because when Satan is blinded and devoid of his power, he is unable to do anything. The participation in the Holy Mass is what helps the most to blind Satan. Tormented and breathing out terrible vengeance, he wages a ferocious battle for souls since he feels the impending coming of his blindness."

Dr. Kovács makes the point that the Diary asks for nothing that is impossible but that we are called to what we have always been called. In footnote 113, he reminds us of the triple call to penance at Fatima, making a connection many of us already appreciate. He reminds us that this call to holiness manifested in an ascetic life rooted in a love that pours itself out for others is consistent with many Marian apparitions (footnote 115).

"You will know them by their fruits" (Matt 7:20)

This last section of the theological portion of the evaluation begins with the most beautiful statement. There are no spectacles in the Flame of Love as there have been with other Marian apparitions - "no healing, nor any miracle of the Sun, nor shedding of tears, etc. We can only talk about the fruits, which are experienced and bear witness to interior miracles. The miracles happened in the depths of the souls." Indeed, the Flame of Love is all about the miracle of Christianity – a miracle greater than the parting of the Red Sea – the miracle of the transformation of our very natures from our generally selfish human nature into the perfectly selfless divine nature – by the effect of grace to be made divine in complete union with Jesus, true God and true man. For how can we change our very nature? This is a miracle – the greatest miracle.

Dr. Kovács then mentions the twelve priests and confirms that we are never told who all of them are. However, he also mentions twelve laymen, twelve nuns and twelve teachers. This is missing in our current English translation. In the section for March 4 to 7, 1962, after the paragraph ending, "No one and nothing will snatch you from Me," there is another paragraph:

After the conversation He handed his messages to me: "My dear girl! You have to recruit twelve more souls into my redeeming work; twelve lay males and twelve teachers, who undertake the adoration and atonement on Thursdays and Fridays. They shall prepare for this with great zeal, and offer it for the twelve priests until our case reaches its goal. Finally, I will invite twelve people for my Thursday's and Friday's adoration and atonement from the 'Beloved House', and they shall offer their fasting for the twelve priests, as their health allows. They shall not be short-spirited, because I will give them huge graces."

There is a footnote from the editor in the critical edition of the Diary that explains more about the “Beloved House”:

Before the suppression of the orders this house was the house of the Sisters of the Social Service, which – after the suppression – was used by the sisters as an accommodation (in the II. district of Budapest). A few of the elder nuns lived in the house, among them the sister, who “was sent to her” (Sister P, born in Nagyvárad, today Oradea in Romania) Inspired by the Lord, Madame Erzsébet sought out the sister living an exemplary life, who helped her in spiritual matters. She welcomed her help, especially because she was a person consecrated to God. Madame Erzsébet has written to the nun some fragments of the Diary as letters. But sometimes it is not clear, where these letters end. Sometimes she just addresses the sister in the text, but does not write a letter to her.

We have a little more about this in a separate work entitled “Loving While Being Loved – Learning to Love from the Flame of Love Spiritual Diary” by Father Domonkos Mészáros, OP:

3.3. THE FIRST TWELVE; MEMBERS OF THE KIND HOUSE; THE MOVEMENT IS OUTLINED

According to the Spiritual Diary, as mentioned before, Jesus first called three times twelve persons – belonging together – for the service of the Flame of Love: of religious sisters, priests and lay persons. Therefrom the movement spreads.

3.3.1. The effects of grace coming from dedication to God In those days, in the 1960s, there could be no talk about convents or religious sisters. Despite their dissolution, the Sisters of Social Service encouraged Elizabeth a lot in the kind house – especially at an early stage of the Flame of Love messages – whenever fear made her halt before confession, or the priest was rude to her, or he asked/instructed her differently from what the Blessed Mother had told her. It was not easy to obey on such occasions. Indeed, Elizabeth argued with the Blessed Mother, but She gently corrected her human weaknesses, her changing will and alternating states of soul, asking her to always obey her confessor. Along with this, the regular prayer life of the sisters taught Elizabeth to rise above her changeable moods and her feelings of being either elated or abandoned. Thus, practice demonstrated how closely the lives of religious sisters and lay people, Elizabeth’s life and that of the members of the kind house were connected. [The kind house used to be the residential building of the Sisters of Social Service in the 2nd district of Budapest, in Hűvösvölgy, before the dissolution of monastic orders]

The theology section ends by pointing to the miraculous spread of the Flame of Love around the world with its abundant fruits of the effect of grace and without the direct organizing efforts of Elizabeth as evidence of its authenticity.

Summary

In the overall conclusion of the Theological Examination of the Diary, Dr. Kovács makes a subtle but critical point. He says there are phrasings that are erroneous in the Diary but that an examination of the context clarifies what Elizabeth was intending to say and what she was intending to say is consistent with the teachings of the Church. From this we can understand two vital sub-points.

First, we must be careful to not read the literal words of the Diary too closely. If we fixate on a phrase without both textual and theological context, we could arrive at a position in contrast with the teachings of the Church as there are erroneous phrasings that need to be clarified by context. This is a particular danger because of our human tendency to be drawn to the novel and unique as if imparting special knowledge. If Elizabeth has phrased something incorrectly at variance with the Church, it will stand out as different and we may be drawn to it for its novelty not realizing what Elizabeth means (discerned from context) is not exactly what she wrote. This is exactly what we mean when we speak of taking something out of context. Examples cited in the Examination are, “Many drift into damnation against their wills” and “there is no need for approval”.

The second sub-point is related, viz., we must always see the Flame of Love in the context of and subordinate to the Gospel. The Flame of Love must not take on a life of its own apart from the Gospel and the Church and it must never become more important than either. Throughout the Examination and explicitly in the Summary, the Diary is evaluated against the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. In our enthusiasm, we must not inflate the importance of the Flame of Love even if it is the greatest outpouring of graces since the Word was made flesh. We have everything we need in Jesus and the Gospel. The Flame of Love and any other devotions and movements do not exist because they are necessary but because they are useful to support and promote the Gospel and the teachings of the Church.

This is the main point of the Summary and the Examination, specifically, that the Diary IS consistent with the Gospel and the teachings of the Church and promotes the Gospel and the life of grace wherever it has spread in the world. Even if there are a few erroneous phrases, “the concepts of the teachings on the Holy Trinity, Christology, Pneumatology, Divine Grace and Mariology are correct” and “The ascetic practices, included in some of the messages, are also in full accordance with the Catholic faith.” Thus, “we can suppose the credibility of the content of the allocutions, that is the conviction that they are very likely traceable back to real and objective graces” and take heart in Dr. Kovács’ conclusion that “this edition of the Spiritual Diary serves for the benefit of the Church, thus is worthy to be printed and published.”

The final date stamp, i.e., “the feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, A.D. 2020” has been a source of confusion. We kept asking Győző Kindelmann for the document produced as a result of Cardinal Erdő’s investigation resulting in his 2009 approval and Győző kept pointing us back to this 2020 document – obviously later than 2009! That this is the 2009 document is confirmed by Father Mészáros’ “Loving While Being Loved – Learning to Love from the Flame of Love Spiritual Diary” published in 2015 where he writes in his Introduction, “My earlier reluctance regarding the Flame of Love was defeated by an excellent work: the Evaluation by the Theological Censor of the Flame of

Love Spiritual Diary, written by Dr. Zoltán Kovács and published in the 2009 issue of Magyar Sion.” My guess is that the 2020 date stamp is the date of the English translation.

I do pray that this guide to the Theological Examination of the Spiritual Diary of The Flame of Love has been helpful. Even though its intent has been to make the Examination more accessible, it is itself not light reading. To reiterate the introduction to this guide, understanding these nuances is not necessary to pray and live the Flame of Love but it is necessary for us leaders to defend and protect the Flame of Love and better serve our devotees who have questions. May our Lord, our Lady, and Saint Joseph help us spread this great grace, this great gift, throughout the world for the renewal of the Church and the salvation of souls.

John A. Sullivan III – Christmas Day, 2021