



***Wounded by
the love of
God***

Maria von Mörl

Wounded by the love of God

Written by P. Gottfried Egger (in German)

Translated to English by
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Wounded by the love of God

**Life and Spirituality
of the Stigmatized Maria von Mörl**



Verlag A. Weger



1. edition 2021

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www.weger.net

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Typesetting and printing: printing house A. Weger - Brixen

Printed in Italy, 2021

ISBN 978-88-6563-307-6

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Preface by the diocesan bishop

The saints and blessed of the church are not made by ourselves, but God gives them to us as a sign from heaven for our humanity. With Maria von Mörl, who lived in Kaltern, South Tyrol 150 years ago, God shows us his special love for ordinary people.

The life of the “saint of Kaltern”, as she was called by her contemporaries at the time, was shaped by illnesses, suffering and sacrifices. Maria von Mörl always accepted these difficulties in silence and prayer. Josef Görres testifies (he lived around same time): For 34 years she wore the stigmata, which looked like a living crucifix in a careless, scattered time.

Maria von Mörl refers us to God, who is always greater than our human understands. The ‘Saint of Kaltern’ invites us to be open today for the work of the Holy Spirit. She helps us through her intercession as we follow the crucified and risen Lord.

+ Ivo Muser,
Bischof of Bozen-Brixen, Südtirol/Italy

Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2018

A word on the road

Foreword by Bishop Vitus Huonder

The heavenly Church and Holiness

Whoever celebrates Christ always celebrates all the saints, because Christ has been expressed in their hearts, so that they are always where Christ is. Whoever celebrates the saints always celebrates Christ, for the saints have always looked to Christ and received their grace and perfection from Christ.

Christ is present in the saints. In Christ, the saints are present. With Christ the Saints form the one Body, the one communion of which we confess: “We believe that the great multitude of those who are united with Jesus and Mary in Paradise forms the heavenly Church” (Creed of the People of God by Pope Paul VI).

This is the deepest reason why the saints are close to our hearts and why we seek them out. This is the reason why we also desire and demand that the Church designate the saints to us, that she identifies them to us and guide us to their veneration. The Church does this above all by examining the lives of people who are or have been called to holiness, and by applying strict rules to determine the authenticity of this holy life and, if necessary, of supernatural events in this life.

We’re looking for the saints. We look for them because we rely on their example, their message and their helping Power is needed. In this search we are grateful to all those

who have followed the lives of the saints and who describe these lives to us. We are therefore grateful to Father Gottfried Egger, OFM, for the biography of Maria von Mörl (1812–1868) from Kaltern in South Tyrol which has been presented to us. Her life shows us how wonderfully God acts in His servants (cf. Ps 4, 4).

Maria von Mörl – sign and model

In the following some characteristics of the life of the God's Mother are recorded as a kind of reading aid. It is precisely these characteristics which – without wanting to anticipate the judgment of the Church – suggest to us the veneration of the visionary from the Calendar. In doing so, we start from prayer to beatification:

"O God, you have given us Maria von Mörl as a sign and model. Her life was a testimony to the greatness of the Eucharist and the power of your divine work. Maria von Mörl prayed and sacrificed with all her devotion for the salvation of souls and the intentions of men. With great love she helped many people and gave them comfort. With patience and devotion she endured her many physical and mental sufferings.

O God, we pray for the imminent beatification of Maria von Mörl. Grant us this beatification for your greater glory and as a blessing for our Church and homeland. We humbly ask You to promote this beatification through the answering of prayers and miraculous signs. Amen."

Maria von Mörl is the sign and model of a Christian life. She is first of all a model of faith in general, of prayer and of devotion to God's will and providence. Her difficult childhood and youth cannot turn her away from the path of faith, not even the heavy blow of fate she suffers through the early death of her mother. Everything leads her deeper into faith. Her favorite books are the Bible, the Discipleship of Christ and the writings of St. Francis de Sales. She has a special devotion for the manger, for the Child of Bethlehem.

Maria von Mörl is also a sign of God for us human beings, to strengthen our faith. She is a person who makes us aware of God's closeness and work through special gifts of grace, through prophecy and the vision of the heart. The ecstasies which lead her completely into the divine life, into the experience of God, into God's presence and into God's plans are to be named especially.

Living testimony for prayer and charity

Well known is the exceedingly great love of Maria von Mörl for the Lord in the most holy sacrament of the altars. She thus proves herself to be the spiritual daughter of St. Francis of Assisi. From the Blessed Sacrament she draws the strength to bear her suffering and to come to the aid of her fellow men. Already at the age of ten, a rarity at that time, she goes to her first Holy Communion. She always receives the Lord in deep reverence and intimate love. She becomes an example for our time which has largely lost respect for the Eucharistic mystery.

Maria von Mörl contemplates for hours the events of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The Adoration of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament makes her joyful. Attending Holy Mass, already in the early morning, is part of her daily routine.

People always seek help and comfort from her. She gives them advice. She prays for them. She encourages them to do good. "Pray diligently the morning and Evening prayer: 'Begin with God, end with God, that's the most beautiful life story.' Have a filial love for the Mother of God, and think often of your holy guardian angel who is always and everywhere at your side," she admonishes a young man. In this way she reveals her filial disposition, her union with God, with the Blessed Mother and with the guardian angel.

She sacrifices night hours for prayer and does penitential exercises. To the parents, who came to her oppressed by the sudden death of their son, completely concerned for his salvation, she comforted them after a long and intimate prayer with the indication that the son was saved, but still needed prayer.

People experience help from Maria von Mörl even after her death.

Tolerant of physical and spiritual suffering

Maria von Mörl has been suffering since childhood. With patience and composure, she bears her difficult fate and remains – still unbiased and cheerful. Pain and weakness prepare her for a unique gift of grace: for her Stigma-

tization. At the age of 22 she received the wounds of Jesus and in this way participated in the sufferings of the Lord for 34 years, especially on certain days, such as Thursday evening during the prayer of the Mount of Olives.

A witness reports: "At first the wounds bled only on the days of Communion, later every Thursday and every Friday, when bright blood gushed from all five wounds in large drops. On the other days, a bark of blood covered each wound, but the marks remained clearly visible.

Maria von Mörl never talks about her wounds. She is very reserved in this respect and is guided entirely by wise representatives of the Church.

After his visit to Maria von Mörl, Adolf Kolping wrote: "We soon parted, but what my heart felt, how my mind was still in tune, I cannot describe. Yes, I can also say that I have seen a saint, and although her closeness also has a healing effect on others, I believe that it was not in vain that I stood at her camp and sympathized with her suffering.

These words move us to call upon Maria von Mörl in our concerns and needs, to ask for her help to go and spread their worship. Let us ask the Lord for her beatification!

Chur, Epiphany 2017

*† Vitus Huonder
Bishop of Chur*



The parish church of Kaltern

I. The Life of the Servant of God

Everyone pilgrims to Kaltern

A good 150 years ago, in Kaltern in South Tyrol, a cell was erected by the Tertiary Sisters¹ above the sacristy of their monastery church, from which one could look directly onto the tabernacle. This was occupied by a special woman – the mystic and stigmatized Maria von Mörl. At that time, the attention of many people, not only from all over Tyrol, but also of believers from Italy, Switzerland, Germany, France and England, and even from the USA, was directed towards this simple cell.

Before this cell was built, the “Ecstatic of Kaltern” or the “Miracle of Kaltern”, as she was also called, could be visited at her sickbed in Goldgasse 10, the Mörl House. Many people from simple and educated people, young and old, priests and nobles came. Thousands came – on foot, on horseback, by carriage, and later also by train. All these visitors came to Kaltern first and foremost as pilgrims, almost as if to a place of grace, sometimes even in liturgical processes with crosses and flags, praying the rosary or litanies and singing pious songs. In 1833 alone, in two or three months, there are said to have been between 40,000 and 50,000 believers. For

¹ Around 1700 Maria Huber began to teach girls in Brixen who otherwise would not have had any educational opportunities. She lived with companions in a monastic community under the Rule of the Third Order of St. Francis of Assisi. Hence the name Tertiary Sisters.

many it was a matter of course that they first went to the Franciscan monastery for confession, then attended Holy Mass, and only then went to see Maria von Mörl in her chamber.

There they found a woman tied to her bed by various ailments, and in an ecstatic state, often kneeling or standing on the bed to worship God. Many a visitor was deeply touched by the sight of the stigmatized woman in her ecstasy, believers were strengthened in their faith, those who wavered were encouraged, and doubters were converted. There were people who, after leaving the chamber, were immediately drawn (again) into the confessional.

Among the notable visitors was, among others, Prince Bishop Luschin of Trento, who had come *ex officio*, as well as his successor, Sr. Johannes Nepomuk of Tschiderer². By order of Pope Gregor XVI the later Curia Cardinal Karl August Graf von Reisach, Archbishop of Munich-Freising, came. Archduchess Sophie, the mother of the young Emperor Franz Josef, came in the company of her youngest son Ludwig Viktor and recommended the Emperor to the prayers of the Mystique. Archduke Stefan, the nephew of Emperor Franz, was also among the visitors, as was the royal wife of Italy, Maria Adelaide, and the same Adolf Kolping.

Joseph von Görres, a publicist and politician, a tireless writer and expert on mysticism, was at that time

² Prince Bishop Tschiderer (1777–1860) was highly respected and exemplary in pastoral care, he founded convicts and a school for deaf-he himself had been healed from his muteness in childhood. In the year 1995 he was beatified with great sympathy.

**The blessed Johannes
Nepomuk of Tschiderer**



busy with his five-volume work on “Christian mysticism” and therefore visited Maria von Mörl. In his second volume he describes the deep impression she made on him. Clemens Brentano, who wrote down the visions of Anna Katharina Emmerick, had also been in Kaltern several times.

Various artists tried to capture in pictures the touching view that the ecstatic offered them. Probst Richardi described his impression with the words: “I have never seen anything more wonderful and touching ... She was kneeling on her bed in a white dress, her hair flowing down over her shoulders, her hands folded, her head held high, her eyes turned to the sky, the ... face enlivened by a beautiful radiance, the whole being immersed in heavenly vision.”

Origin and family

The home of Maria von Mörl is situated on the lovely Lake Kaltern, whose wine is famous far and wide and whose beauty still attracts many people from near and far. At that time Kaltern belonged to the archdiocese of Trento. The French Revolution had stirred up all of Europe and made Pope Pius VII a prisoner of Napoleon, the self-crowned French Emperor, who in 1808 had the Papal States occupied and forced the clergy to take an oath of allegiance to the French constitution.

In 1805 Tyrol had come under Bavarian rule. Bavaria tried to pursue an enlightenment and national church policy, which is why in 1807 various traditional monasteries were abolished by the new rulers. Religious customs were also interfered with, which in part led to strong acrimony among the population.

After the collapse of the Tyrolean uprising under the leadership of Andreas Hofer, Tyrol was divided into three parts in 1810 on Napoleon's order: The south fell to the Kingdom of Italy (Dipartimento dell'Alto Adige – Department Überetsch), the east was incorporated into the French "Illyrian Provinces" and the north remained with the Kingdom of Bavaria. Kaltern was henceforth part of the Kingdom of Italy. The whole country suffered heavily from the consequences of the 1809 battles.

The von Mörl family came from the primeval Tyrol, namely the von Pfalzen, Mühlen and Sichelburg family (since 1085) in the Puster Valley. They owned various fruit and wine estates in and around Kaltern.

In 1812 Maria was born as the second oldest child. Fa-



The birthplace in Kaltern with the stairs to the entrance of the house



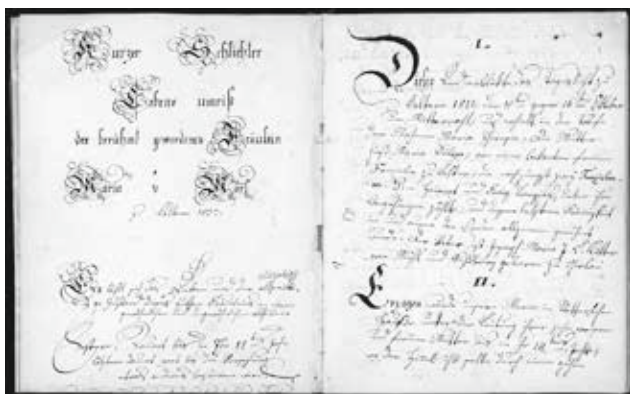
ther Joseph Ignaz was a weak personality in every respect. He was comfortable, indecisive and loved hunting and fishing more than work. He neglected to take care of his possessions and did not know how to handle money, which is why he got his large family into great financial difficulties. Mother Maria Katharina, a born Sölva, tried with diligence and care to provide for the large family. She possessed a deep faith, which she exemplified to her nine children in a religiously influenced attitude and passed it on to them.

Marked by diseases

At the age of three, Maria fell down the stairs. According to KSL³, from then on she “did not experience many more healthy days”. Inflammations, haemoptysis and fever occurred again and again, so that the mother was very worried about Maria. She consulted the various doctors in the area, but nobody could really help her daughter.

This was later compounded by serious maltreatment on the part of the father. One night he returned home in a drunken state, went into the ten-year-old’s room, dragged the sleeping child out of bed and kicked him. The result of this was that the adolescent vomited blood again and

a photograph of the KSL



³ KSL (kurzer schlichter Lebensabrisse der Mari von Mörl in Kaltern) The author is unknown. Probably it was a Franciscan. Some people think it was Father Johann Kapistran Soyer OFM. Since the author talks about him, this is not very likely. The sketch of his life dates from 1837 and exists in several copies.

again and a hard and painful tumour formed in her abdomen, which she had to suffer from all her life. Maria did not hold this inexplicable abuse against her father. She continued to show him her childlike love and respect. “With all these complaints, Mariele remained an uninhibitedly cheerful, even joyful child,” assured the farmhand Franz Anderlan.

However, the biographer Maria von Buol remarks, “[...] that this made her feel pain and joy to an incomparably higher degree than other people. And this was the purely natural precondition for the high mystical gifts of which she was later honoured. God, whose grace always works with, never against nature, seems to have used this child’s natural sensitivity for his own purposes.⁴

Maria’s youth

Maria von Mörl showed a pronounced inclination to piety. When she received her first Holy Communion at the age of ten, she fainted. Whether this reaction was already an expression of her mystical feeling, a so-called “resting in the spirit”, or whether it was simply a consequence of her weakness in health, cannot be judged in retrospect. The hours of sobriety before receiving communion may also have contributed to this. As Maria von Buol puts it: “It is at least possible that during her first Communion a tem-

⁴ Maria von Buol, *Maria von Mörl, Ein Lebensbild*, new edition of the book *Ein Hergottskind* from 1928, 25, Brixen 1997

porary flash of higher grace in prayer took place, which then disappeared again.”⁵

After the obligatory schooling, which she spent with the Tertiary Sisters in the local girls’ school – it was five years – Maria came to relatives in Cles am Nonsberg to learn the Italian language. At that time she was between eleven and twelve years old. Her stay there lasted two years. She was only allowed to return home once during this time, when cheap labour was needed in her father’s estate during the grape harvest. Since the family in Cles did not treat the adolescent with much affection and since Maria certainly longed for her loved ones during this time of strangers, such a working stay at home may have been a welcome change.

When she had to return to the Nonsberg and say goodbye, a sharp pain ran through her soul – it was almost impossible for her to separate from her mother. Did she already have an inkling that slowly began to unfold? It was as if she saw her mother for the last time in this life.

Shortly afterwards, after the birth of her ninth child, Maria Katharina died. This was a decisive, traumatic event for the young people! “It is said that Maria experienced the death of her mother in the distance, at the exact hour it occurred. In any case, this death was the most severe blow that could hit her. The pain almost threatened to kill her, and years later you could hear her calling out for her mother, often with a loud wail.”⁶

Mörl’s whole family suffered severely from this loss, as

⁵ Buol.

⁶ Buol.

there were eight children in the house to raise; the youngest was only nine weeks old!

Father Josef was unable to head the household and the large number of children. As the second oldest – the oldest was a boy – Maria had to take over the role of house mother at the age of 15. She was clever and understanding. The adolescent looked after the younger brothers and sisters from morning to night at the stove at home, and often she was seen sitting next to the mending basket after work. Thank God she found good people who helped her with advice and support: Woman Anna Schasser from Windegg⁷ and the baker's wife Maria Plunger were among the helpful neighbours. A brother of the deceased continued the business of the wine trade.

Incorporation into the Franciscan Family

Despite the enormous workload, Maria did not neglect the spiritual life. She read in her favourite books: The Discipleship of Christ, the writings of St. Francis de Sales and the Bible. It is reported that she sacrificed the night hours for prayer and took on penitential exercises. She is also said to have worn a penitential belt. Every day she attended early mass in the Franciscan monastery. She of-

⁷ This dynasty has been known since the 18th century as a wine lord, mayor and national defender during Napoleon's time in Kaltern. Around 1817 the Schasser family bought the Windegg estate, of which it is said: "Among the middle-class apartments, many are distinguished by good style and beauty, above all Windegg [...], belonging to the hospitable widow of Johann von Schasser". The State of Tyrol, Vol. 2, Innsbruck 1838.



**Father Johann Kapistran
Soyer OFM**

ten had to wait until the Brother Sacristan opened the church door.

One day she met Father Johannes Kapistran Sojer OFM, who was to become her spiritual director and confessor. It is said that this profound priest was healthy and sober, confident in his actions, original in his humour, paired with a little irony – a true Franciscan and experienced spiritual director,

marked by goodness and kindness.

Father Kapistran was born on 24 January 1798 in Schwaz, Tyrol. After the grammar school in Hall i.T. he completed the noviciate of the Franciscans in San Candido in 1816. After studying philosophy and theology, he was ordained a priest on 10 March 1822. He came to Kaltern in 1825 as a lecturer of moral theology for the students of the then Tyrolean Franciscan Province. Two years later he became Master of the Clergy. In this convent he was later also Guardian and Provincial of the Province of St. Leopold in Tyrol. In the 19th century, this had a membership of almost 400 friars. As Provincial he visited the North German Province of Saxonia of the Holy Cross on behalf of the General of the Order.

In 1830 Maria von Mörl – she was 18 years old – was accepted into the Third Order of Franciscans by Father Kapistran.⁸ At the same time she took the vow of virginity⁹ and received the order name¹⁰ Teresia – the saint from Avila became her patron saint.

Illness as a permanent condition

On New Year's Eve of the year 1830 Maria suffered violent fits. She vomited so much pus that people feared for her life. She moaned and gave eerie screams, alternating between convulsive and rigid spasms. Soon she lay there like dead, soon it threw her back and forth in bed, so that three or four people had trouble holding her down. She lost her voice and eyesight and was unable to eat or take medicine.

⁸ There are three groups in the Franciscan Family: The First Order is divided into three branches: Franciscans OFM, Conventual OFM-Conv. or Minorites and Capuchins OFM-Cap. In the Second Order the Poor Clares OSC. The members of the Third Order are also called "tertiaries." There are two groups of them: On the one hand, the world people, men and women, single or married, who live in the world according to the spirituality of St. Francis. Today this community called "Franciscan Community", to which Maria von Mörl belonged. Then there are the men and women who live in congregations or institutions and have made a vow. That is why this group is also called the "Regulated Third Order". The Tertiary Sisters of Maria Huber belong to this group.

⁹ Especially after the Second Vatican Council this status of consecrated young women, which was already practiced in the early church, has been rediscovered. Throughout the ages, there have been people who consecrated themselves to God through a private vow of virginity. Maria von Mörl was not a religious, but a consecrated one.

¹⁰ In the Third Order it is still customary today to bear a religious name.

The family doctor of many years' standing, Dr. Johann Marche from Bolzano, succeeded in providing some relief to the patient with the help of homeopathic remedies. The Her eyesight and voice finally returned and she could eat some food again. Since that time, she completely renounced meat broth and meat of any kind.

Maria once asked the doctor if she would ever get well again. When the doctor denied, she thanked the doctor, who had not asked for any fee, for all his efforts and made him understand that she would renounce all medical care in the future. The financial situation of Haus Mörl was extremely precarious and Maria did not want to spend money on expensive medication. Perhaps also "inwardly she was already so far advanced on the royal road of the cross that she spurned an alleviation of her pain."¹¹

In August 1831 her state of health deteriorated increasingly. When she already seemed to be close to death, Maria was suddenly so well again that she thought she was cured. So, she left her sick bed on September 9th, and Mrs. Schasser brought her to the monastery church with a horse and cart. There she prayed for one and a half hours and received Holy Communion.

When asked by her spiritual director why her health situation had changed so suddenly, Maria answered: "Thanks to the Blessed Mother! She had prayed the Magnificat in Maria's honor, called on St. Francis and

¹¹ Buol.



The Franciscan monastery in Kaltern

St. Romedius¹² and spoke the *Miserere*¹³ words for the dying brother of Father Kapistran. As it later turned out, this brother was indeed different at the hour in question, which Maria could not naturally have experienced.

The phase of improvement was quickly over. In October, Maria von Mörl's physical condition worsened again and new mental sufferings were added: the tested person suffered visibly from terrible Anxiety.

¹² This holy hermit (11th century) is particularly revered in Tyrol. His grave is located on the Nonsberg and is the destination of many pilgrims.

¹³ Lat. *miserere*, have mercy (May God now have mercy on the deceased!), probably in reference to Ps 22 or Ps 142.

Ecstasies and demonic temptations

Maria saw herself surrounded by dark figures who wanted to convince her that she was damned. They tried to keep Maria from prayer and her spiritual exercises. They told her to stop, because it would not help her anyway. No priest could absolve her from damnation and she should let go of her confessor.

However, Maria was repeatedly comforted and strengthened by figures of light. Perhaps it was her guardian angel who came to her aid. From time to time a beautiful child appeared at her camp with a wreath (?) or roses in her hand. This gave her comfort and strength.

In the time of the temptations her deceased mother also appeared to her. Maria told her confessor that her mother often sat at her bed, consoling her again and again and exhorting her to trust in God and be patient. The mother also predicted that her two sisters Julitta and Antonia would enter a convent. "During these horrible apparitions she felt relief from the presence of the above-mentioned child, from the presence of a priest, especially her confessor, and from the presence of her mother, who often saw her sitting by the bed for hours on end. ... and these figures disappeared every time the Blessed Sacrament was offered to her."¹⁴

At Maria Candlemas, February 2, 1832, the co-operator or parish vicar Anton Berger brought the sick communion to Maria in the morning. In the afternoon of the same day Father Kapistran came to her and found her motionless and transfigured. He was of the opinion that

¹⁴ KSL, X.

she was in a spasmodic state, as he had often seen her in this condition.

The next day, at eight o'clock in the morning, he found her in the same state. Far from thinking of anything supernatural, he addressed her: "Maria, don't you give me any sign, any answer? "Obey me!" At that moment, Maria came to her senses and asked if Cooperator Berger was still there. She confessed that after receiving the Body of Christ, she felt such bliss and adored the Lord she had received with deep joy. Father Kapistran told her that the cooperator had already left 24 hours ago.

Later he reported this incident to the local pastor, Dean Eberle, who for the time being could not understand the ecstatic state of Maria von Mörl. However, he gave permission to give the sick person weekly communion for their relief.

For some people from the neighborhood, however, this state of Maria was nothing new. They had often observed that when she prayed and especially when she received the body of the Lord, she seemed to be in another world.¹⁵

On May 3, 1832, Maria dragged herself once again to the Franciscan Church to pray there. On her way home, she saw herself once again surrounded by dark figures who were making terrible threats and curses, so that the afflicted finally collapsed. Her good neighbour, Maria Plunger, could only deliver her home dead more than alive with great difficulty.

¹⁵ At that time a frequent reception of communion was not planned. As a rule, it took place only once a month. This permission was a nice concession.

This was the last time Maria could leave her parents' house for the time being. Shortly afterwards – in the summer of 1832 – she suffered a stroke-like paralysis on the left side. But the worst was yet to come.

On July 28th of the same year Fr. Kapistran was called to Ωihr camp. He was told that Maria had a pin in her mouth but could not give it away. It took a full two hours before the priest finally removed the metal object from her mouth. The next day something similar happened. Maria always had things in her mouth that were difficult to remove: pins, nails, pieces of wire, broken glass, pony-tail hair and other strange objects. Pieces of broken glass also emerged from the surface of her body, but did not leave any cuts, while those who pulled out these objects injured themselves. Maria explained to her spiritual father that uncanny creatures forced her to swallow these disgusting things.

There were other strange occurrences. For example, Maria was dragged out of bed by an invisible force and thrown underneath it. Such phenomena are regarded as attacks of the opposite side and have been handed down to us by many mystics. St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, for example, was physically attacked by the Evil One, St. Priest of Ars was set on fire by demonic forces, St. Joseph of Copertino was given fists and kicks by the Evil One ...

After Father Kapistran removed a large nail from Maria's left foot, the paralysis, which had lasted for two months, suddenly disappeared. The spiritual director realized that these events were of a demonic nature. And he knew that such phenomena sometimes preceded great graces from God.

The loss of the voice

During this time of attacks, the tested person lost control over her voice. She could only speak with her spiritual guide, other confessors or church superiors. With all other people she had to communicate with signs, like deaf-mute people do. This phenomenon was to continue with a short interruption until her death.

“Maria von Mörl was condemned to silence not by a voluntary vow, nor by an order of her confessor, as some later thought, but by the direct intervention of the one who said to St. Teresa of Avila at the beginning of her mystical life: ‘I no longer want you to speak to men, but to the angels.’”¹⁶



Prince-Bishop Luschin

The demonic temptations and plagues only came to a temporary end when Prince Bishop Luschin¹⁷ commissioned Father Kapistran to perform an exorcism on Maria von Mörl. They were only to storm back on her a good quarter of a year before her death.

“Soon after Maria had

¹⁶ Buol.

¹⁷ Prince-Bishop Luschin (1781–1854) was Archbishop of Trento from 1824 to 1834, then Archbishop of Lemberg.

been freed from the worst plagues by the Church's blessings, the Lord showered her with the fullness of His prayer grace."¹⁸

The ecstasies became more frequent

On Corpus Christi Day in 1833, Father Kapistran observed a 36-hour ecstasy. Early in the morning the pastor gave Holy Communion to Maria. Afterwards she went into ecstasy and remained kneeling motionless on her bed, always in the same position. The Father understood that her ecstasies were not only temporary, but had become second nature to her.

In this state, Maria no longer perceived anything from the outside, not even the sounds of the band playing in the Corpus Christi procession. Nor did she hear the firecrackers fired by 200 soldiers directly under her window. Yet she followed the festivities of the Corpus Christi procession with inner participation. When the procession started to move, she immediately straightened up. She remained with folded hands, completely turned inwards, and always turned towards the direction in which the Blessed Sacrament was moving. A contemporary compared her to a sunflower that always oriented itself to the sun. Often in these states, a command from her spiritual director was enough, often just a command formulated in thought, and immediately Maria returned to ordinary life with all her senses.

¹⁸ Buol.

With the ecstasy her inner vision also developed more and more deeply. It happened that during the ecstasy she floated, barely touching the bed with her toes, surrounded by the long white dress.

This phenomenon is also often observed by mystics. St. Joseph of Copertino OFMConv. (1603–1663), the “saint of flights”; for example, floated daily while celebrating Holy Mass. A certain Anna Sinn from Kaltern assured that she once saw Maria von Mörl floating completely free, so that the hem of her garment, which surrounded and hid her feet, was about a span high above the bed.

This event was brought into the public eye by the people present at the time. As a result, crowds of people from all kinds of places suddenly streamed in to see this “Living Saint,” as she was called. Yes, even with crosses and flags the people set off for Kaltern. They all wanted to see this inwardly praying and contemplating person and to be edified by the indescribably moving sight of this woman.

This rush was finally stopped by the church and secular authorities. The stream of visitors became less, but continued until her death.

The stigmata of Christ and the vision of Christ’s passion

More and more often Maria von Mörl saw and contemplated the Passion of Christ, indeed, the whole life of the Lord. She knelt for a long time with outstretched arms. It was noticeable that she then often kept her hands bent as if a nail were stuck in them. She also said that she felt pain in her hands.

Like her founder, Francis of Assisi, she received the wounds of Jesus. Maria was shocked when she discovered these marks for the first time on February 4, 1834, first on one hand. When the confessor asked her what the wound



Maria von Mörl in ecstasy (painted by Wasmann)

was, she said: *"I must have hurt myself."* But when she noticed such a mark on the other hand, she was startled and began to cry.

Mary of Buol reports about these times: "At first the wounds bled only on the days of Communion, later every Thursday and every Friday, when light blood in large drops gushed from all five wounds. On the other days, a bark of blood covered each wound, but the marks remained clearly visible"¹⁹. Maria wanted to keep the marks hidden, but that was impossible in the long run. When Maria spread her hands in ecstasy, the stigmata were clearly visible to the visitors. When she came back from her ecstasy, she tried quick to hide her hands under the covers.

Maria was not only physically involved in the sufferings of the Lord. She also saw them in a visionary way, similar to the sel. Anna Katharina Emmerick (1774–1824) and other stigmatics. She saw the events from the life and passion of Jesus, which she accompanied with the play of her facial expressions and gestures.

Family responsibilities

Since Maria Sepp, a friend of the family, helped out in the Mörl house, the economy has been on the upswing. With the help of Father Kapistran and thanks to Mr. Ferdinand von Giovanelli zu Gerstburg und Hörtenberg, an influential man and friend of the family, Maria was able to draw

¹⁹ Buol.

an annual pension of 400 guilders from the ladies' foundation in Hall near Innsbruck from 1843 onwards. This was a good extra income for the impoverished family.

The younger sisters had grown up and could help with the household chores. Maria regulated and organized everything from her sick bed, supported by her spiritual father, who always served as her mouthpiece.

Four members of the Mörl family soon went their own ways. The oldest son, Joseph, became a Capuchin and was given the name Hyacinth. He celebrated his first mass on August 5, 1834 in the Franciscan monastery of Kaltern. The sisters Julitta and Antonia became nuns. Julitta entered the Dominican convent in Lienz, East Tyrol, Antonia became Ursuline in Klagenfurt.

The fourth of the siblings to bid farewell to the Mörl House was Johanna: Brother Tod brought her home on 13 March 1836. Maria was especially close to this sister, and when the deceased was carried into the room with her in her coffin, she burst into tears. But as soon as the body was carried out of the house, Maria's pain subsided and she fell into ecstasy. In this ecstasy, God made her realize that her dear sister is now with Him in glory.

Maria stayed behind in the Mörl house with her ailing father and four younger siblings. Soon the three weak sisters were accommodated in different monasteries for care. Her brother Felix, the only one besides Father Hyazinth OFM^{Cap}, stayed in the family home. He had a difficult character and was considered difficult to raise at a young age. So, the God-fearing had many worries and annoyances with him. During this



**The monastery
of the Tertiary
Sisters in Kaltern**

time, Father Joseph renounced his property and was content with the demand for board and lodging and a settlement salary. He retained the right to live in Mörl's house until his death.

When Peter Sölva, the mother's brother, retired from the property management in the Mörl house, another relative took on this task. It was Anton Wohlgemuth from nearby Eppan, who was extraordinarily capable, but had little love for the mystical and religious nature of his relatives. For he feared that Maria, in her generous manner of giving, would squander family property. Perhaps he was thinking, for example, of the purple canopy which the Blessed Mother had donated for the new high altar of the monastery of Kaltern. Nevertheless, he could not claim that Maria had been doing badly in her house during all these years. With her common sense she had saved the family from financial ruin.

In the spring of 1840 Maria's sister Klothilde, who had only been able to stammer throughout her life, died in the

Ursuline convent in Klagenfurt, where she had been received by her sister Antonia out of kindness and mercy. In November of the same year, her father also died of a creeping lung disease, which had probably been the cause of his listlessness and weakness at an early age. When Maria heard of her father's death, she began to weep bitterly. Despite all his faults, she had loved him very much.

The dissolution of the Mörl household

After the death of her father it was obvious for Maria to leave the house in Goldgasse. Anna Schasser, her good friend, had offered to take her in, but Maria refused. She was aware that her future place could only be in a convent, but not as a nun, but as a simple guest. She chose the Tertiary Sisters, with whom she had attended school and who gave her not only education but also a Franciscan spirit.

Her brother Felix, who was asserting his claims to the parental home, was not prepared to care for the younger sisters, who were both retarded in their spiritual development. This led to a legal dispute within the family, in which Maria took a decisive stand against her brother. Father Kapistran stood by her side in this delicate matter. He turned to Ferdinand von Giovanelli in Bolzano, to whom Maria wrote the following:

“As the oldest sister, I believe I have the right and the obligation to make a few announcements in deep reverence and submissiveness to the head guardians of my sisters Anna and Aloisia [...] Both my sisters are good children,

but not very talented. According to my observation so far, Anna will need a guardian or curator all the time. The Luis [Luise] is best cared for by me [...] The Nanni [Anna] is often physically unwell and of such a moody, changeable and melancholic disposition that she does not fit into any house and could only be best cared for with her own servant. Good tenants could be found for the realities of these two children, and so their administration would be quite simple. I ask you, my dear Baron, to convey these thoughts to the noble guardianship.”

It is precisely from this letter that we can see how Maria – despite her constant ecstatic state – has remained on the ground of human reality. She had lost nothing of her practical sense and her sisterly love.

Three years after the death of his father, the division was carried out and the common household was dissolved. Felix was now the sole master of the Mörl family; he married and founded a family. Anna and Luise were taken care of, Maria’s efforts had reached their goal.

The division of Mörl’s property was not exactly to their advantage. She was granted a small field at Lake Kaltern in a marshy area, as well as a vineyard near the village, two-thirds hectares in size. Maria, however, was satisfied with it. The vineyard, the best she could inherit, did not remain with her for long. She ceded this land to the community, so that a cemetery could be built there. The master builder of this cemetery was the Franciscan Tertiary²⁰ Sebastian

²⁰ A tertiary could participate in the community of the brothers of the 1st Order. Mostly they wore the Franciscan habit, but without a hood, like Sebastian Gasser from Völs am Schlern.

Gasser. He was a factotum²¹ of the monastery, and he also knew how to build.

Ignaz Grandi tells us how it came about in his booklet about Maria von Mörl: “For years people in Kaltern had been seriously thinking about building a new cemetery. The old cemetery, which surrounded the parish church, already had too many dead. It may not have been built in the days of St. Vigilius, but it must have been the last resting place of the Kaltern people for over a thousand years. In the meantime, of course, there was a housing shortage there. The cholera year 1836 significantly increased the number of deaths. In that terrible year Anna Schasser and Maria Plunger proved to be heroic nurses who were able to save many lives. Nevertheless, the gravediggers had plenty to do, and it seems that this now once necessary, though not enjoyable work was carried out at night and by torchlight, and probably not always with the necessary care and caution.

One day or one night the part of the cemetery that slopes down towards the Adige valley broke off and crashed down the slope with the bodies. In these cases, which had become an urgent problem for the community, Maria von Mörl came to the aid of her fellow countrymen through her donation. She only wanted two graves: one for herself and her family, the other for the Franciscan monastery. And that’s how it was done: In the front, on the right, is the monastery grave, then the family grave of the von Mörl family, where Maria is buried. Her grave-

²¹ “Girls for everything”.



Contemporary engraving of Kaltern with a monastery and parish church

brothers 500 gulden for a white vestment. Since it became very expensive, Maria donated the remaining amount. Here she showed herself to be a daughter of St. Francis. To him, everything that was connected with the Eucharist, such as paraments and chalices, could not be of sufficient value. Later, Maria donated red robes for the Franciscans, which consisted of four vestments, two dalmatics²³, a cloak and a blessing vestment²⁴. In the monastery letter from 1866 she wrote:

²³ The dalmatic is the deacon's robe with wide sleeves.

²⁴ Cloak, also called pluviale, was used for solemn blessing thoughts or vespers. The blessing vespers is a corresponding parament that was placed over the smoke cloak when the Eucharistic blessing was given.

“For the greater glory of God, for the glory of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of St. Francis the Father and of St. Anthony of Padua, and in memory of my unforgettable spiritual director, the Exprovincial Superior, Fr. Capistran Soyer, I hereby consign these red vestments to the Convent of the Franciscan Friars of Kaltern [...] I wish that these vestments be used only on the following feast days: All Saints’ Day, St. Stephen’s Day, St. Claudia²⁵, on the high feast of Pentecost and on the feast of the Apostle princes Peter and Paul, and during unusual and extraordinary festive occasions, and at the same time I ask the venerable convent to remember my deceased relatives in holy prayer.

Kaltern, April 5, 1866, Maria von Mörl²⁶.

With the Tertiary Sisters

In the late autumn of 1841 Maria von Mörl left her parents’ house for good and moved to the extension of the Tertiary Church, in which the Tertiary brother Sebastian Gasser had also worked as a master builder. There was a separate entrance and so she could receive people here without disturbing the monastic order. A window to the interior of the church gave a view of the Blessed Sacrament. The

²⁵ She is co-patroness of the monastery church of Kaltern, since Claudia di Medici was the founder of the monastery. She died in Innsbruck in 1648. She was archduchess of Austria and sovereign princess of Tyrol.

²⁶ Out of modesty, Maria von Mörl often refrained from using the “of” or “from” in her letters.

bed was placed in one corner and opposite it was the altar that she had brought from her parents' house. At this altar Holy Mass was celebrated twice a week, while Maria received Holy Communion. In front of her cell there was an anteroom and a kitchen, from where a door led into the monastery. She was to spend 26 years of her life in this place. Today this cell is an oratory of the sisters.

Maria chose the anniversary of her father's death, November 3, 1841, as the date of her farewell from the parental home, and at 8 p.m. at nightfall she was taken on a carrying chair from Goldgasse up to the convent. Father Johannes Kapistran, the master builder brother Sebastian Gasser and a master carpenter from Kaltern were also present.

"For the last time she glanced at the rooms where she spent her childhood at the side of her dearly beloved mother, but after whose death, as a young girl, she herself looked after her brothers and sisters and her father with care; those four walls where she led a life of virtue and prayer, where she experienced mystical closeness to God and the Rapture of the world; that room where she was visited by light and dark figures, consoled by some and tormented by others. It was here that the pious and prudent religious had pronounced exorcism and put a stop to the satanic goings-on, and it was also here that she had received and suffered the stigmata. But why all this? Probably not just for her, but, it seems to us, according to God's plan for His own glorification and the salvation of many souls. This was the space from which so much blessing had emanated that it could also be perceived outside in the parishes.

The master carpenter and the monk lifted the good 'Fräule' onto the support frame and carried it gently

down the narrow and winding staircase, over those stone steps which had been climbed by countless visitors and which had probably also been worn out a little; by people from far and near, high and low. Slowly the transport of the sick went down, from the second to the first floor and from the first to the street; from there around the corner and then straight on and up to the little chapel, to the new apartment or to the holy prison, if you want to call it that. Silently, the men walked through the dark, cold alleys. The load was not heavy, but the climb towards the mountain was still hard for them. Carefully and with a certain shyness they carried this helpless, mute, suffering human child, wounded in five places.²⁷

Together with Maria, her younger sister Luise also left her father's house. The good maid Maria Tschanderin also left with them. She was about the same age as Maria and had been faithfully in their service for several years. From now on she should remain as a good support at Maria and Luise's side. In Kaltern she was known as "the Moidl (Mary) of Maria von Mörl".

"It is easy to imagine the zeal with which the good sisters (of the convent) strove to fulfil all the wishes of their new housemate. Of course, she did not have many of them [...] For the few services that Maria needed, the well-behaved nun easily came up with [...] All the more reason for the convent women to make an effort with Maria's sister Luise. They instructed her in women's work, cooking, knitting and mending, and even tried to teach her Italian, but with-

²⁷ Grandi.

out much success. But the sisters demanded something in return for her willingness to serve, and a rather peculiar one at that. Before a candidate came to be clothed, she was led to Maria, and it was she who had to make the first cut into the full youthful lichens with sharp scissors. When this was done, Maria used to wrap her arms around the heavenly bride and thus express her congratulations in a silent but eloquent way.”²⁸

Visitors in the monastery cell

Every day people gathered in front of the garden wall of the Tertiary Convent and waited for Father Kapistran to open the gate to the annex. This always happened around noon. Many different people came to Maria, mostly from the surrounding area, with their big and small concerns and worries. Often it was people who poured out their hearts to her, needed advice or brought one or more prayer requests. Certainly the young man to whom Maria wrote the following letter recently visited her in her cell:

G. s. J. Ch. (Praise Jesus Christ)

Dear Andrä!

As a pious souvenir I would like to give you a little letter with the wish that you read it more often and follow its contents. Above all, always have God before your eyes. Remember the saying: “Where I am and what I do, God my Father watches me.”

²⁸ Buol.

**Tertiary
church with
extension**



Be a diligent and decent student, a student who is loved by God and the world, and is the consolation and joy of parents. Do not neglect holy prayer, for God's blessing comes through it, and God's blessing is everything. Pray diligently the morning and evening prayer: "Begin with God, end with God, that is the most beautiful life story." Have a childlike love for the Mother of God, and often think of your holy guardian angel who is always and everywhere at your side.

But are you also an obedient son Follow diligently and quickly your dear parents who mean so well with you, who seek only your temporal and eternal good. And in this way you too, like Jesus, our example for all of us, will grow and increase in age, as well as in grace and wisdom before God and men.

This is what I wish you, dear Andrä, from my heart, and I will also ask God for it. I place you under the protection of the Blessed Virgin and Mother of God, Mary. Your holy guardian angel will protect you in all your steps and treads.



Maria von Mörl's cell with a view of the altar

May the grace of God be with you.

In the most holy hearts of Jesus and Mary greets you

Maria von Mörl, Kaltern, 24 Sept. 1863

But there were also visitors from far away, from Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Luxembourg and England. They all wanted to speak with the gifted woman, see her and above all experience her suffering on Fridays. Father Kapistran had the role of a gatekeeper and mediator, as far as time and duty allowed him. He let one or the other person enter the sickroom with peace and serenity. If the crowd was too great, people would line up and wait their turn. The small room in front of Maria's actual cell served as a waiting room for the guests.

Maria von Mörl was especially pleased when there were children among the visitors. These had to be

placed on her bed so that she could laugh and joke with them. Then she chose the most colourful prayer cards to give them a small gift. She laid her hands on them and stroked them. The regional judge Stöckl recorded in his protocol: “With my Margarita, whose godmother she is to become, as with all children, she has her zest for life, takes them to her bed, gives them presents and kisses them.”²⁹

At times the schoolgirls of Kaltern were also allowed to enter the room of the Servant of God. Then they tried to kiss the worshipped girl’s hands. But Maria was prepared for this and knew how to avoid this unwanted homage. For many of these girls the impression of such a visit has remained unforgettable. Later, as an adult, a child said: “I met a saint in my life, and that’s Maria von Mörl!”

It’s probably due to her love for the children that Maria, when asked, always and with joy took over the sponsorship. She once wrote to a sponsored child, who in the meantime had already become a young man, on his name day on the feast of St. Joseph:

“My dear Joseph, St. Joseph’s Day offers me the opportunity to send a heartfelt wish along with the desired picture. God has decreed that I make a covenant with Him for you in Holy Baptism, and I do not need to say how much your soul is dear to me; I feel this at all times, but most of all when this holy day approaches.”

²⁹ Protokoll des Landesrichters J. Seb. Stöckl, S. 29, aus dem Jahr 1839.

During the time when the mysticism expert Joseph von Görres was in Kaltern to observe the ecstatic, the grandchild was baptized by Anna Schasser in Maria's cell. During the ceremony, as Görres reports, Maria fell into ecstasy several times. This special sight – the newly baptized child in Maria's hands – reminded him of an angel with a little child in his arms.

Maria also loved animals, especially birds. Singing birds came to her window mainly on Communion days and delighted her with their songs. "Maria took the doves into her bed, placed them on the bed as she liked, took them to her, kneeled and stood up again without harming them, and the doves themselves, although neither used to them nor cared for by her, remained calm, stroked her face, put their beaks in her mouth while she prayed, and thus remained with her for hours without any food. She still has this dove, and she says: the Lord wants it that way, because they symbolize the unity and the three divine persons. It is also remarkable that during her communions in front of the window there are always birds singing all year round, and this at the crack of dawn."³⁰

Church dignitaries

Even church dignitaries, who often came to Italy on pilgrimage from the north, made a stopover in Kaltern at the ecstatic. Among them was the Bishop of Passau, Heinrich Hochstätter, who even visited them four times. He told

³⁰ KSL, XXIV.

the sufferers about his sorrows and joys as shepherd of his diocese. Maria showed him her sympathy and promised to remember his intentions in prayer.

Bishop Theodor Lau rent of Chersonnes and designated Bishop of Luxembourg described his visit particularly vividly. Together with Sr. Klara Fey, the holy founder of the "Sisters of the Poor Child Jesus", whose spiritual director he was, he had come to Maria von Mörl in May 1863, two days before the feast of the Trinity. They were able to experience Maria in her Passion sect. The bishop wrote to an acquaintance: "Never in my life has a moment gripped and penetrated me as deeply as this ..."

The ecstasy of pain was followed by an ecstasy of joy, in which the Servant of God thanked the Lord for the suffering of the cross and rejoiced in his victory over sin and death. The Bishop continues in his letter: "As much as we wished to see her awake and be recognized by her, it hurt us to take her away from her consolation. But the Father (Capistran), barely audible to us, murmured his word: 'In obedience, come to your senses! She lay under the blanket in a barely perceptible passage and looked around freely and unselfconsciously as if nothing had happened. She immediately recognized Mother Clare, drew her to herself and greeted her warmly, then welcomed me and was so friendly and loving that one forgot all about being with such a highly pardoned woman.

The Bishop then recalled her farewell: "She often took my sinful hand to kiss my ring with the hands that the Lord marks with His imprint (the stigmata), and looked at me with friendly sorrow with her beautiful, expressive eyes, into which the heavenly day so often looks. This is



**Maria von Mörl
in jubilant
ecstasy**

how my passing by this holy bride of the Lord happened. I cannot tell you what a dear, sweet, though longing and wistful memory it has left in my mind.”

After a year his successor in office, Bishop Nikolaus Adames, came to Kaltern. The monastery chronicle, when mentioning this visit, does not note that it was satisfying and edifying, but only states that the bishop was fully convinced of the supernatural nature of Maria’s condition.

“Among the Austrian bishops who visited Maria von Mörl, special mention should be made of Archbishop Milde of Vienna, as well as the Bishop of Lavant in Styria, and finally the Abbot of the Mechitarites,³¹ Azarias, who resided in Vienna and was also Archbishop of Caesarea, who, as the monastery chronicle expressly emphasizes, gave the impression of a saint. He admired what he perceived in Maria, and left her, it is said, praising God.

It made a great impression when the Apostolic Nuncio of Vienna, Monsignor Altieri, appeared in Kaltern on April 26, 1843 to see Maria von Mörl. When he had entered her room, he knelt down to unite his prayer with hers. Afterwards he spoke with her for a while, recommending himself and the Pope’s affections to her prayers [...]

The attraction that Maria von Mörl exerted on the English Catholics was great. The monastery chronicle speaks of a significant number of English bishops who, presumably on their way to Rome, visited the ecstatic von Kaltern [...] Expressly mentioned is a bishop named Georg Brown, who visited Maria twice, but whose bishop’s see is not mentioned, as well as an English missionary bishop, Msgr Polling, who ‘in tears’ recommended himself and his vast mission territory to Maria’s prayers. Among laymen, we should mention Mr John Weld, nephew of Cardinal Weld, and Count Shews-bury, who visited Maria in 1841 and reported warmly to a friend.³²

Visits are also reported from Italian bishops. The des-

³¹ An Armenian Catholic Congregation belonging to the group of Benedictine orders. Founded in 1712 by the Armenian Mechitar of Sebasteia (1676–1749).

³² Buol.

ignated Bishop of Cremona, Monsignor Sardagna, reported that he was allowed to celebrate in her room on May 3, 1838 and to give her Communion. In the late summer of the same year, the choir masters of Neustift near Brixen celebrated a special feast. For this occasion Rome sent Msgr. Vincenzo Tizziani, titular archbishop of Nisibis, who presided over the canons of the Lateran, as representative. After the festivities he visited Domenica Lazzeri,³³ Ursula Mohr and Maria von Mörl. He saw the latter rising in ecstasy “as if with wings”, but found her friendly and natural as soon as she was called to him. On his second visit to Mörl he expressly wanted to see her wounds. He ordered her to open her folded hands. She obeyed, though not without sighing.

Worldly dignitaries

It was above all the princes of the Habsburg imperial house who wanted to see the stigmatised from Kaltern: Archduke Stephan, nephew of Emperor Franz, Archduke Johann and his wife, the Countess of Meran. During her visit, Archduchess Sophie asked the ecstatic to pay special tribute to her imperial son. Count Leo Thun, the Prince of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, also visited her one day, as did Empress Maria Anna. Even Archduke Karl Ludwig, the brother of the Emperor, who had been appointed governor of Tyrol shortly before, visited the “Miracle of

³³ Domenica Lazzeri (1815–1848) was also a stigmatized mystic who for a long time lived only on the Eucharist.

Kaltern” and stayed in her room for a long time. He visited her three times and repeatedly recommended the concerns of Austria and his imperial brother to her.

Not all pilgrims had the opportunity to visit Maria in her cell and present their prayer requests. Some therefore took up a pen and wrote to her of their needs. Maria promised all these pilgrims in writing to pray for them as far as she was able. With joy she prayed for the most varied intentions of the Church and the world and offered God her suffering for them.

Last, painful walk

“Maria von Mörl had gradually become the landmark of her home town, one could simply not imagine Kaltern without its ecstatic [...] Year after year the same spectacle presented itself, the ecstatic Virgin with the loose hair, lying on her knees in a prone position, her hands with the stigmata folded for prayer, her gaze directed motionlessly towards the sky, sometimes immersed in a painful, sometimes in a blissful gaze. Every morning she remained in the ecstatic listening to the Holy Mass, every Friday she saw her Saviour die on the cross and died with him the mystical death of compassion. The people of Kaltern were a bit proud of her “Mörl-Maria, but they’d gotten used to her by now.”³⁴

Meanwhile time was running out. Many people who had known Maria von Mörl in her youth were in her

³⁴ Buol.

Death before. In 1850 her faithful neighbour Anna Schasser, the good “Windegg woman”, died. Of her siblings, only Anna lived. Her spiritual father, Johann Kapistran, had also grown old. At the age of 67 he seemed weak and exhausted. Illnesses, night watches and his untiring commitment as lector, provincial and general visitator of the North German Franciscan Province had sapped his strength.

He was always in contact with Maria also on his travels. Thus he wrote to her on a visitation trip from Northern Germany: “In Jesus’ beloved spiritual daughter, dear Marie, you are not absent for me, but present and not fruitless; for I pray to God for you and recommend you and your inner and outer concerns to Him and His most holy Mother.

Father Kapistran died on May 5, 1865, “full of ardent desire for union with Christ”, as the Franciscan monastic chronicle on his passing wrote.

“The grief in Kaltern was great. For 40 years this holy religious priest in the congregation, appreciated and loved by all, tried and revered by many as an enlightened spiritual guide How many bowed down he had encouraged, how many sinners he had brought back, how many doubters he had shown the right way, how many Godly souls he had led on the steep path of perfection [...] Heavy mourning lay over the village, as if one had lost a father. Everything was now crowding around the body laid out in the outer cloister. The veneration of the deceased knew no bounds among the population. Everyone wanted a souvenir of this holy Franciscan. His

robe was cut up to his knees because they wanted to possess a relic of him.

The most serious loss, however, was suffered by his spiritual daughter, the 'good Marie,' as he lovingly called her. After him Father Simon Prantauer became Maria's spiritual director. He may have been a good pastor, but without much experience in spiritual accompaniment, without the knowledge of the heart that Father Kapistran had marked out," noted Mary of Buol.³⁵

Father Johann Kapistran had supported and guided Maria von Mörl from her early youth, and knew all her ups and downs. The death of this great religious meant for her the last great sacrifice she had to make. As a result she withdrew more and more into herself.

But the number of visitors did not decrease. The rush in the summer of 1867, only a few months before her death, was enormous. The opening of the Brenner railway made the journey to southern Tyrol easier. Every day, new crowds of people flooded into Maria's chamber, where she spent the days and nights in constant adoration.

In these last months of her life, Maria suffered especially badly. She felt the various tribulations of the Church, Pope and Emperor had included her in their daily prayers. Sometimes she received a mandate from God to pray for certain countries. The Church and her homeland were her heart's desire. She saw stormy times approaching for both of them and offered herself to God as a sacrifice to counteract injustice and sin and atone for them on behalf

³⁵ C.f. Buol.

of God.

Last storms

On the night of September 8th, the Feast of the Nativity of Maria, she felt especially impelled to pray for the Church and the homeland. Then suddenly it came over her like a dark night of the soul: the ecstasies stopped and she could no longer pray. Her mysterious muteness was lifted and she could speak again. However, she had the impression that she was lost for heaven.

Maria may have suffered a similar fate to St. Francis of Assisi, who at the end of his life had such doubts about his faith that he thought that God had rejected him. But God gave him the knowledge that through such suffering he would reach glory. This made the Saint from Assisi break out into such joy that he composed the Canticle of the Sun.

“Certainly, her last trials, three months before her death, were terrible. “A last, gruesome onslaught of hell seemed to be unleashed against her. And when she accused herself, in the terrible distress of inner horrors and soul torture, of having troubled herself and others, these statements were either demonic words forced upon her or utterances spoken out of a deep sense of humility; she, who felt like an unworthy worm before the majesty of God, which she had looked upon all her life.³⁶

All coaxing on the part of Father Simon remained fruit-

³⁶ Höcht, Träger der Wundmale christi, 350, Christiana, Stein am Rhein 2000.

less. It was as if God had withdrawn from Maria. She no longer felt worthy to receive Holy Communion. She could neither eat nor drink and could no longer sleep.

In the midst of all this spiritual confusion she still remained a seer. “Her tired, frightened eyes saw dark secrets of the future. Murder and war passed her by, enemy warriors roamed the corridors, red flags fluttered in her hands. She shouted that all the Pope’s and the Emperor’s possessions would be taken away, and she groaned and asked herself how that was possible, since she had always prayed so fervently for her. Finally, she saw how the devils came up to her, seized her and dragged her along with them. “Now we have the mortar-Marie!” they cried. “She must descend to the depths of hell! Oh, this is a true triumph!”³⁷

Father Simon, who was completely desperate, said that she had gone mad. Sophie von Angelini³⁸, her friend from that time, and the baker’s daughter Maria Plunger judged her condition more correctly, recognizing it as a final test of God.

Rays of hope

During this difficult time Sophie Angelini was a ray of hope for her. Already as a 12-year-old girl she came with

³⁷ Buol.

³⁸ Born 1838 in Innsbruck. She became founder and superior of the Innsbruck Adoration Monastery, where she died as Mother Maria Pia of Divine Love in 1897. We have received twelve letters from Maria von Mörl to Sophie.

her mother to Maria. The sight of the ecstatic had awakened in her the desire to consecrate herself completely to God and to found an Adoration Monastery in Innsbruck with her father's inheritance. Years passed until the plan was gradually realized.

During this time of waiting, Sophie often stayed with her spiritual friend. She acted as her secretary and took care of the lukewarm fenced correspondence. She was very critical of the way they even in one of her letters confesses. In some letters in Maria were found to be often overstated words. Then Sophie just said, "Oh, Maria, this is a stupid I'm not going to read it to you." Maria accepted it with all her heart. She took Sophie to heart like a brave ... her child and was able to laugh their original nature quite cheerfully.

For the adoration monastery planned by the friend, Maria was on fire. Together with Sophie she held novena after novena so that this monastery could become reality as soon as possible.

In moments of light, Maria implored God for help. Once she said: *"How great and strong you are, O God, that you chose a simple-minded girl to put your enemies to shame!"* Father Simon, who was extremely concerned for her, began a novena to St. Teresa of Avila in the month of October. He knew that the patron saint of Maria had also been through severe inner sufferings. She then proved to be a true helper.

On her feast day, October 15th, Maria began to become calmer, and since that day it became lighter in her soul. On October 23rd, on the feast of the name of her spiritual father Capistran, she was able to receive the Holy Communion again. Suddenly all fear was taken from her. Like St. Francis, who composed the Canticle of the Sun



Sophie Angelini

after his dark night, she knelt down and said again and again: *“Praised and blessed be the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar!”*

Maria heard joyful songs and the sounds of the feast day and asked her visitors if they could hear that too. She began to praise and glorify God: *“Praised be God, the Church has won!”* She, who for 35 years could mostly only speak with slurred and in-

comprehensible sounds, was now able to formulate such praise!

Suddenly she fell silent again. Her silence had returned and with it the ecstasy. Ignaz Grandi says, “... it seems that there is a connection between these two phenomena in her life: between being mute on the outside and ecstatic sunken into God.”³⁹

Transitus

³⁹ Grandi.

Something had changed, however. Her weakened body no longer allowed her to pray on her knees for hours. The past weeks had exhausted her, whether she could eat some food again. Now there were swellings in her face and all over her body. The decomposition of the blood, which had begun some time ago, continued. Wounds opened up on her back, which burned intensely – Maria had to suffer unspeakably. Father Simon comments: “Of course, in this state she moaned like a child, but then she suffered again with great patience, prayed a lot and used the saying of love often and repeatedly:

“My Jesus, all for your sake.”

Maria died in 1868 On the feast day the “apparition of the Lord” was so bad that it was thought that she would not survive the day. However, when the last rites were administered to her, she gave signs to indicate that the hour of death had not yet come. On the following days she remained fully conscious and was allowed to receive Holy Communion daily, which meant a special joy for her. She received her last communion on the night of January 10th to 11th.

Mary of Buol describes the last hours of Maria von Mörl: “She rested in quiet peace on her bed; the sufferings and struggles of her life lay behind her, the joys of eternity lay before her [...] So she waited for her beloved in quiet wordless prayer, only that from time to time she lisped the name that was dearest to her: Jesus. – Around two o’clock in the morning she whispered the name Jesus twice in succession, then she added, barely audible, the name Je-

sus: "Oh how beautiful ... how beautiful ...! A few more faint breaths and she had entered the joy of her Lord."⁴⁰

Maria's body was clothed in a long white robe. She was laid out like a bride in the Tertiary Convent, with a white veil on her hair and a wreath of white roses.

To avoid appearances, like after the death of Father Kapistran, the iron bars of the church vestibule were kept locked. Thousands came to bid farewell to their beloved Mörl-Marie. On her face lay a smile. Later, when the veil was removed, the deceased looked even lovelier. No silver thread ran through the long dark hair of the 55-year-old.

Maria had predicted that the stigmata would disappear shortly before her death. And so it did.

It's no secret that Maria von Mörl was venerated during her lifetime. She was buried like a saint. A document was placed in the coffin, locked in a container, which was to guarantee her identity in later times. The deceased was then placed in a zinc coffin, which in turn was placed in a wooden one. An endless procession accompanied the



Cross found in the grave
of Maria von Mörl

Death cross

⁴⁰ Buol.

Maria von Mörl on her death bed.
This is the only photograph of her



mortal remains of the ecstatic woman from Kaltern to the cemetery, which the Servant of God had given to the congregation.

Exactly one hundred years later the grave under Mörl's arcade was opened. The document was found in its container, in which Maria von Mörl was described as a highly gifted virgin. Only the bones of herself had survived. Probably one was disappointed about the sparse remains. But doesn't her Christian-Franciscan life mean more than all the material finds?

On July 1, 2016, the solemn opening of the beatification process of the Servant of God Maria von Mörl took place

in the Chapel of St. John in the Franciscan Monastery of Bolzano by the diocesan Bishop Ivo Muser.

Maria's intercessory prayer

A priest wrote a letter to his parents between 1868 and 1874, a short time after the death of Maria von Mörl, in which he told of a healing that had been experienced by a Sister of Mercy:

“... at that time a worker was brought to the hospital, who got a splinter in his eye when he knocked the stone. The eye looked terrible and the man screamed in rage from pain. The eye was examined three times without success, and on March 9 this year the doctor ordered the eye to be removed. On the night of March 8th the man roared so much while the two nuns were in the adjoining room. It occurred to them to give such a spot of the Mörl Maries sheet to the Sister of Mercy on duty, who was there for nursing. She wants to put it on the husband's eye. She did it with faith and trust, prayed one Our Father and three Glory Be, etc., went away and after a while she came back. The man was very calm and said, “Now the pain is over. It stayed that way, the pain never came back. The eye got its right shape again. This was generally thanks to God and the intercession of Maria von Mörl. This report is taken verbatim from the Sisters of Mercy.⁴¹

⁴¹ Franziskanerarchiv Hall i.T. Nr. 54.



The tomb of Maria von Mörl

Here the godly Maria von Mörl rests in God.
 She was born in Kaltern on October 15, 1812.
 Wore since she was 24 years old
 the wounds of the Lord that bled
 on Thursdays and Fridays.
 She died in the call of holiness
 on January 11, 1868



A certain Franz Sinn from Kaltern was reported to have been freed from severe painful wounds on both legs after invoking Maria von Mörl.

A woman from Eppan suffered from a festering wound on her chest. After she had invoked the intercession of Maria von Mörl, she placed a small piece of Maria's dress on the wound. The following morning the wound was fresh and clean. It healed completely.

In Innsbruck, shortly after Maria's death, a tubercular woman was healed through the intercession of the blessed.

In the archive of the Franciscan Province in Hall i.T. there is a letter written by a Franciscan from Sinj, Dalmatia. In it, he reports from 1878 about two remarkable healings, whose truth he testifies: Through the intercession of Maria von Mörl and through the A 5-year-old, completely blind girl was given a piece of cloth by her and became blind. A man was also healed of a cancerous evil.

A certain Fr. Cosmas reports about another cure: "In 1928 I suffered a severe heart condition. For five years I carried it with me. The doctors declared it incurable. I held two novenas of the divine Maria von Mörl, and behold! After the second novena in February 1933 I was cured of my heart condition! The healing continues, for it has been two years since then."

II. The spirituality of Maria von Mörl

Influenced by the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi

The three fundamental pillars of Franciscan spirituality are the manger, the cross and the altar (Eucharist). As a member of the Third Franciscan Order, Maria von Mörl lived in the midst of this spirituality of the Poverello and was shaped by it. Her spiritual father and spiritual director, the Franciscan Father Johannes Kapistran Soyer, certainly had an important influence.

Manger

St. Francis of Assisi is considered the “inventor” of the Christmas crib. He had a deep desire to experience God’s incarnation close at hand, and was moved by the desire to experience Bethlehem in a very present way and to see the birth of Christ “as closely as possible with the eyes of the body”.⁴² For this reason Francis tried to portray it as faithfully as possible, so that through contemplation he might communicate his deeply meditated joy in the birth of the divine Child to all his friends. Francis also celebrated the nativity play Eucharistically: an altar was erected above the manger on which the Christmas Mass was celebrated. This celebration was to recall anew the love and humility of God in the brothers and in the people.

⁴² Celano, *Franciscan biography*, 1,84

Maria von Mörl shows herself in the veneration of the Child of Bethlehem as a true daughter of St. Francis. In 1838, Landesrichter Stöckl recorded the following about her Christmas visions: “[...] it was on Christmas Eve, December 24, 1838 [...] According to the agreement made, the doors were opened to me at a given sign and I stood in Maria’s room. She was kneeling before the altar with candles burning on it. Her face was the mirror of a melancholy participation in Maria’s birth suffering. At about 11:45 a.m. she spread her hands as if she wanted to offer her services to Maria, and just before noon it seemed as if she wanted to receive the newborn child in her arms. – From that moment on her face transfigured like the spring sun and she seemed to revel in the abundant joy of the birth of the Son of Man.

At 12:30 p.m., the highest degree of ecstasy set in: as if she were hearing the angels’ jubilant song. As the needle is lifted by the magnet, so she lifted the arms skyward and was, as it were, drawn to herself by a supernatural power: at first from the floor to the armchair that stood beside her, and from there to the surface of her bed, where, touching the same thing only with the tips of her toes, with her face skyward, she spread out her arms, hovering for half an hour more than she seemed to stand. It was obvious that her weak organism would finally succumb to such a huge spiritual upswing, so Father Kapistran ordered her to return under holy obedience, whereupon she immediately fell on her knees with all the force of her body and soon after, obeying a second order, lay down to rest ...”⁴³

⁴³ Stöckl.

“If she had cradled the divine child in her arms at Christmas, she prayed on the feast of the saints Three kings (6 January) with the wise men from the east. From Christmas until Candlemas (February 2) she often held her arms and hands in the way one would hold small children.”⁴⁴

In Father Kapistran’s diary, on the occasion of the Feast of Holy Night, we read: “On this feast [...] her contemplation gained a new inner clarity, and also outwardly she became far more admirable. More often during this time, she jumped out of bed to the floor of the hypocaust (warm air radiator) and prayed there kneeling for half an hour and over an hour. Sometimes these contemplations were continued until 9 o’clock at night, which happened on the feast of St. Stephen, St. John and St. Innocent Children, also on the feast of Epiphany and the following two days.

Out of these, apart from the contemplations of the birth of our Lord at midnight 20:45 to 0:45, the speech and death of St. Stephen, which she depicted vividly (by external signs), and the life of St. John the Evangelist, where she held one hand in the air, armed, as it were, with a pen, supported on one foot only, both of which took place on the floor of the bedroom. Yes, she jumped, slightly supported on my hand, with big steps in the bedroom (around), clapped her hands and said: ‘*Yes, Master, I am coming; yes, Master, I am coming*’.

She was also impressed by the death of the innocent children, where she seemed very sad. On the feast of the Epiphany in the evening, and from then on often, she prayed in the manner of the Orientals, stretched out on the floor [...].”

⁴⁴ Grandi.

Maria von Mörl wrote a very beautiful Christmas letter to her friend Sophie Angelini in 1865. It expressed her intimate love for the Child Jesus:

G. s. J. Ch.

Dearest Sister in Christ!

Christmas is approaching and a new year is about to begin, so today I want to write to you, my dear sister, and wish you good holidays and a happy new year.

May the dear Jesus be reborn in your heart and show-er you with His graces; it will certainly reward the love that carried you to His holy childhood and will stretch out His little hands to bless you. What a sweet mystery, what glorious devotion is the veneration of the holy childhood of Jesus; as a little child He wanted to be born so that it would be easier for us to trust Him and love Him. We should take Him as an example in every situation of life and love Him. At the manger there is nothing of seriousness and rigour. Everything there breathes gentleness, goodness and love. Let us go to the manger, let us take Jesus in our arms, let us press Him to our heart and let us ask Him to share with us the flame of His love. What could I wish you better than the dear Jesus?

When you possess Him, you have nothing left to wish for. Where Jesus is, there is heaven, He satisfies the desire of the heart; far from Him, the soul can only sigh, weep and mourn. But on these Christmas days, let us also go in spirit to the manger and listen in holy reverence to the divine teachings that the little child Jesus gives us. It tells us that we must love God with all our strength, because Jesus, our heavenly model, loved these virtues most of all.

We find ourselves at the manger, my dear sister. Infused with this Christmas devotion, we also want to begin the New Year to the glory of God. With each year the merciful Lord gives us many graces and gives us time to love and know him better, so that we may love and serve him and one day attain eternal happiness. You may be convinced that I will recommend your concerns to the Lord.

The Reverend Father Simon greets you and repeats my wishes. Bertha Posch also gave me everything of heart for you. What does the child Jesus, which I gave you? I ask you to pray for me. Now I have to close, live well and also remain good for me. He greets you through the holiest Heart of Jesus and Mary, Your loving sister

Maria von Mörl, Kaltern 22 Dec. 1865

Maria wrote to her spiritual sister Bertha Prankh at Christmas: “But so that she (what is meant by this?) may also win a little joy from you, I will put them all into the manger in which the divine child rests in all its loveliness. May the dear Child Jesus with full hands pour out His graces over you and establish His resting place forever in your hearts, which are so faithfully beating so childishly, may He lead the soon closing year out for you in rich blessings and enrich the new beginning with all the fullness of His grace and mercy, so that on every day of it, new blessings may pour out over you.

Oh, surely the dear divine child will look with the most intimate love at all those who are related to him and who surround his manger! And that you, dear Bertha, are certainly one of these shows your good heart, and when this child looks at you in love – then it not only breaks nothing,

but every wish of your heart united with it will be completely fulfilled”.

To Mother Clare Fey,⁴⁵ from whom Maria had received a baby Jesus as a gift, she wrote on the day of her naming on August 5, 1860: “I am very grateful for this, and as often as we visit it, we will always remember you according to your wish, and I will do the same in

In view of the real baby Jesus often beg you and your faithful cooperative. Oh what astonishment – but what consolation for us to see our great God as a small, so helpless child out of love for us! O what a joyful and tender trust must be stirred in our hearts. Dearly beloved Sister, you asked me the question whether Jesus might not dwell in a heart that yearns for him and often receives him in Holy Communion: “As much as the Lord gives me light, I can assure you of this comfort. For the good Lord gives all His gifts and graces to the petitioner according to the measure of desire, and communicates all the more to those who desire Him, and with His grace abides in their hearts with greater desire for Him. We see this also in the life of St. Catherine of Siena, in which she sometimes believed the Lord at a distance, feeling dull and empty before Him. But when she asked him, finding him, where he had been that time, he answered ‘[...] and in your heart.’ O yes, dearest sister in the Lord, our dearest Bridegroom cannot be surpassed in his love [...] he always gives more than you dare to ask for [...]”.

⁴⁵ Klara Fey (1815–1894) founded the Congregation of the Sisters of the Poor Child Jesus together with Pauline von Mallinckrodt and Franziska Schervier. In 1859 Mother Klara came to Maria von Mörl in Kaltern. Klara Fey was beatified on May 5, 2018.

At Christmas 1866, Maria wrote to Mother Clare: “Now the beautiful Christmas is approaching, and you, dear Mother Clare, with your daughters and children, celebrate the main feast of your Order and prepare the little manger for the dear poor baby Jesus, comforting him in his humility and helplessness and helping him. I would now like to send you many wishes for this holy feast. But in the one wish, that the dear divine child would ignite you in his love, all the wishes of heaven and earth are contained. Whom God truly loves – what can (one) still desire on earth and what can one desire in heaven! Through the Sacred Hearts of Mary and Joseph, let us implore the dear little child to hasten the triumph of the Church, to protect the beloved Holy Father, to destroy the attacks of His enemies and to convert the poor people blinded by sin.



**Infant Jesus (made of wax)
a gift from Klara Fey**

Eucharist

Among the first prayers that St. Francis of Assisi recommended to his brothers, we find the following prayer of the holy cross: “We adore you, O Christ – here and in view of all your churches all over the world, and praise you because by Your cross, You have redeemed the world “.

Every church even one we see in the distance, in which Jesus' body is present in the Eucharist, is an invitation to Francis to pray. The saint's faith exceeds the boundaries of every church. He thinks lovingly of his Lord and Redeemer, who is present in all churches and chapels all over the world. His mind wanders everywhere. Here and there (everywhere) he wants to worship Christ in the Eucharist and praise the cross, which redeemed us. This cross prayer is a prayer that embrace the whole world.

It includes in spirit all the churches of the world to worship the Lord there in the Holy Eucharist. Just as Christ redeemed the whole world through His cross, he can also be found throughout the world in the churches where the Eucharist is present, where it is worshiped and adored.

We find this attitude through and through in Maria of Mörl, who is also a daughter of Poverello. The KSL says about her relationship with Holy Eucharist: "The altar sacrament it is and will always be the main stream of power in which Maria is always attracted and nourished. She sees Christ in this mystery among the living pictures, both when she receives it herself and when it is, as if always for cleansing the soul. She sees Christ in the eucharistic bread as a little boy, then until Lent as a young boy, from then until Easter hanging on the cross, and this conception is as usual labeled with the wounds and glorified body from Easter to Ascension.

In this sacrament finds Maria joy and bliss. When only her confessors are present, she expresses her intimate confidentiality and love towards God the almighty loudly. There is indescribable happiness on her face when this Holy Sacrament is exposed for ten to forty

hours of adoration and (she) says: "Today just let me go, today I can't stay until my father (meaning Jesus in the Eucharist) is reinstated, my guardian angel would be angry if i let him worship alone in the church." She worshiped the Most Holy Blessed Sacrament not in a particular palce at a particular time, but instead through her guardian angel worshiped she the Blessed Sacrament all the time just like the Holy Eucharist celebrated all over the world at diffrent times but constantatly.⁴⁶

The following episode can be found in the Bonifacius calendar: "The extremely great love of Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar was the beginning of her rapture, even now she is far more alive and higher on the day of her communion, which her confessor gave her from her confessor with the permission of the Prince-Bishop of Trient often in the week is presented. The same has also allowed Holy Mass to be celebrated in her room twice a week in order to give her communion. On these days she rises up out of bed in preparation, leaning only on the tips of her toes as if she wanted to get up to go to meet her lover. But she receives him on her knees and remains on her knees all the time she gives thanks. On August 5th, 1834, on which one of her Capuchin brothers read the first mass, she was in the greatest delight, quite upright on the bed all day with open arms. She safeguards and watches all the holy masses that are read in the churches of Kaltern, regardless of the times."⁴⁷

⁴⁶ KSL, XVII.

⁴⁷ Berliner Bonifacius-Kalender von 1869.

“The holy mass offering is her daily contemplation for a few hours. She sees the celebration of Holy Mass not only from one or the other priest, but from many thousands at the same time, and this not only when she prays, deprived of the use of the senses from outside, in general, I have noted here that this inner prayer continues with Maria day and night; she may or may not be with herself,⁴⁸ or suffer with pain or none. Only the degree of intimacy is different, namely greater when it is painless and not called to it from outside. Yes, she watches not only the holy masses, but also other celebrations and church activities, for e.g. the sermons, rosary, etc.⁴⁹

cross

St. Francis of Assisi offered following Prayers before receiving his stigma on Mount La Verna around September 17th, 1224: “O Lord Jesus Christ, I ask you to give me two gifts of grace before i die: That i feel in my soul and in my body, as much as possible, the pain that you, dearest Jesus, endured in your bitter suffering. And that, as much as possible, i feel in my heart that abundant love from which you, Son of God, were kindled to voluntarily suffer so much for us sinners.”⁵⁰ In June 1860 Maria of Mörl wrote to mother Klara Fey in Aachen: “[...] in spite of this, I am also satisfied with my hard life and thank God every day for giving me the grace, his to be an unworthy bride among his brides [...] to be able to

⁴⁸ Convulsions with fever

⁴⁹ KSL, XVII.

⁵⁰ Sources of Francis, reflections on the wounds 3, 37-39.



Francis of Assisi.
Image from the Franciscan
monastery of Kaltzern
(17th century)

approach the tabernacle day after day. Oh, if only I were in the position of this great grace! Is it for us that he lets us take part in his cross by sending us now smaller, now larger particles of it, because the cross is the real royal gate, the temple to holiness? Oh yes, it is this state of cross and suffering that makes us conform to our bridegroom. O we blessed! If we could live crucified with Jesus at all times! “

In a letter to Klara Berta Prankh, Maria wrote to Gars / Inn on May 25, 1860: “You see, like this, everything else in this world will soon come to an end and we will have nothing left but what we do acquired through crosses and well passed battles. So do we suffer then we endure in suffering, like St. Francis of Assisi says: The cross and suffering of this world is small and short, the victory, the Glory, however, eternal and incomprehensible, and con-

tinues: 'O let us do good, since we have time!' O we follow Jesus, our example and master, [...] O what joy we will give our divine bridegroom through this! Dear Young lady [...], because I hope to see you soon, I will close for today and only seek your pious prayers, I assure you my prayers. "

On October 24, 1860 wrote Maria of Mörl to her spiritual sister Luise in Gars: Dear Luise! You, like me, will not miss the cross and suffering on this earthly life, but let us console ourselves and rejoice that our dear Heavenly Father honors us to be like his divine Son, as our true and only example. "

On January 30, 1867, a good year before her death, she wrote a Luise to Gars: "The Heart of Jesus places all kinds of crosses on me, which are often difficult for me, but with regard to Jesus carrying the cross and considering how much dishonor and insults are done to the divine heart in thiscarnival time, I will gladly join the divine Savior [...]" "

One of the most impressive testimonies can be found in the diary of Blessed Adolph Kolping (1813– 1865). In 1841 he took a trip to Tyrol as a theology student. On September 9th, he and other students visited Maria von Mörl. He describes their passion sufferings as follows:

"Several clergymen and quite a number of foreigners from the higher classes, they appeared to be Italians had gathered. Many from the place and the surrounding area had come to see Maria's suffering and to be edified by it. We were taken to her room; Maria was still hanging in the



**Maria von Mörl
in ecstasy, a
drawing by Paul
Deschwanden**

same position as in the morning, which would not be possible for a few minutes with an ordinary person, but her features had assumed a deeper expression of pain. The large eyes looked up at the sky as if weeping, the hands were pressed together more tightly, the mouth was half tired, the nose had become more pointed; like the face of a dying person, but one who had been tormented to death by ineffable torture, so was that of Maria. She was a real wretched figure, the marks on her hands seemed to have turned redder since morning, but they weren't bleeding. As an eyewitness, I testify that these wounds can truly

and clearly be seen in her hands. The longer we looked at the fading features of Maria, the more the pain increased. Suddenly she took a deep breath, something you never notice in her, a faint tremor ran over her, her mouth moved softly and opened: it was dry and she seemed to beg for nourishment. Her larynx moved roughly, then a short, quiet pause; but soon a tremendous pain seemed to jerk through her limbs, her clasped hands let her sink down and her knees cramped violently; she stayed that way for a while while her head arched back a little. A low whisper seemed to float over her lips, but death lay on her face. This extinction lasted a while, the assembly stood there in silence and concern, most of them trembled, my heart trembled, people thought they would die with her. The third hour in the afternoon sounds from the church tower, breathing begins again, slowly and with the same gradations as the death rattle of a dying person, soon a tremendous pain flashes through her, the clenched hands tighten even more, she lets her head rest on them Chest sagging, she remains rigid and immobile for a while in this position, then suddenly she sinks back into her bed and stretches her arms out wide as if she were lying on the cross. Not even the slightest sign of life can be seen anymore; she (seems) to have died completely. The people around move away, while they hear her sufferings. We stayed a while and watched the gracious woman with silent pain. Oh, I would never have wanted to part with her! My whole inside had suffered a reshaping, it is still working tremendously in my mind. The sweat that appeared on her forehead during her suffering dries up again. So she lies there until her confessor calls her by

name, where upon she comes to herself, but about her story (what she experienced) tells her only to her confessor[...].“

Special gifts of grace

Ecstasies

The term ecstasy, derived from the Greek *eksstasis*, means stepping out of the ordinary, the normal state. Ecstasy also means not being with oneself or being outside of oneself, growing beyond oneself or entering a higher level of consciousness up to the experience of being one with God.

In KSL, Section XI, we read about Maria of Mörl: “Now, before I tell you about these unpleasant phenomena (temptations by the evil one), something pleasant about our Maria: in 1832, on February 2nd, as is often the case, the good Maria was given the Communion. In a moment, and from there on every Communion day, she raised her hands, opened her eyes, and got a transfigured face. All external sensations ceased, yes, all suffering disappeared, and so she stayed for twelve and sixteen hours the whole day until she was called to her by her confessor through sacred obedience [...]”

When asked seriously about what was going on inside her in this externally unconscious state, she shyly and ashamedly confessed: She was fine; she could worship God very vigorously and knew nothing in the whole

world that could compare her to this sweetness and beauty. From now on, the local priest at the time allowed her to have 8 days of communion, as this also lifted the physical evils for many hours. She was also receiving communion at festivals where there was a lots of noise, shooting or music was made in public, because the shooting and music caused the most violent gouts for her [...]"

The postures that Maria assumed during her ecstasies are also described in the KSL (XX, XXI): "She brought these nights in perpetual prayer, now on her knees, now lying on her face, now standing on her toes [...]" – "Other external positions of prayer are still: kneeling on elbows and knees with raised, crossed feet, clasped hands and a truly heavenly shining upright face; furthermore, standing on the tips of the toes, often for half an hour or more. From Christmas until the presentation of the Lord, (in Latin: Praesentatio Iesu) she often held her hands half-bent and flat, like little children are used for lifting. At that time she had reflections on the little baby Jesus, from his birth to his flight to Egypt, according to the order of church festivals. Yes, she says: she often holds the divine child with his blessed virgin mother in her arms and then sighed childlike when this dear object was taken from her. "

Stigmata

On the occasion of the beatification of Padre Pio, who had worn the stigmata of Christ for fifty years, St. Pope John Paul II: "The connection between death and resurrection has become visible in the wounds." The great mystic of the cross, St. Edith Stein writes in

her work *The Science of the Cross* in Chapter 4: “No human heart has ever entered such a dark night as the Son of Man in Gethsemane and on Golgotha. No inquiring human spirit can penetrate into the unfathomable mystery of the dying Godman’s being forsaken by God. But Jesus can give chosen souls to taste some of this extreme bitterness. It is his most loyal friends whom he expects as the last test of their love.” In this context, the explanation Jesus gave to the Italian mystic Teresa Musco (1943–1976) when she noticed the wounds on her body can also be understood : “I want you to be like me ...”

As we can already see from the story of the unbelieving Thomas, the stigmata are identification marks of the risen Lord, which God may also give as visible external signs to those who belong to him in a special way. The apostle Paul also speaks of the signs of Jesus on his body in Gal 6:17. In the opinion of exegetes, however, this refers to scars and wounds that were inflicted on him during his apostolic activity, i.e., not stigmata in the classic sense.

Since St. Francis of Assisi has been counted well over a hundred people with wounds. In many cases these were people of extraordinary sensitivity. The stigmata are mostly based on mystical experiences and are related to ecstasies. However, there are also similar wounds that may have purely natural causes.

Medically, stigmas are explained as a result of a strong stress factor. This triggers a psychosomatic process that can be expressed physically in wounds. This is supposed to be a process similar to the one used in medicine for gastric and intestinal ulcers, which are classified as typical cases of psychosomatic diseases. The question remains,

however, why the stigmata occur precisely at the places of Jesus' stigmata.

From a theological point of view, stigmata are signs of love in identification with the suffering of Jesus. There are a number of people who wore or carried invisible stigmata; e.g., St. Catherine of Siena.

Since Maria was almost constantly in ecstasy, she observed the suffering and death of Jesus more frequently and intensely. Often times when she kneeled on her bed in painful ecstasy with her arms outstretched, she held her hands a little bent, as if something were in them. She also said that she had pain in her hands and feet. In the autumn of 1833, her confessor discovered by chance that a deepening of wound had formed in the inner surfaces of her hands.

In his letter of July 1836 to the Vicar General of the Diocese of Trento, Father Kapistran wrote about the stigmatization of Maria of Mörl: "She wears the stigmata on both hands, on both feet, and on the side, which I have to myself out of obedience with all [...] once showed modesty. I see it on the hands every day, and on the feet I saw it very often from the top, also bleeding through the stockings.

The stigmata first appeared in 1834 in the first days of February, inside the hands and on the upper part of the feet; but from the outside in the hands she received it in the same year 1834, on the feast of St. John the Evangelist, during the Holy Mass in the parish church after lunch, where in an ecstasy, if not raptus⁵¹ in the strict sense, she

⁵¹ Raptus means "to be carried away or to be carried up". It is a spiritual phenomenon.

lay stretched out on the floor like Christ hangs on the cross. Free (due to) this ecstasy (to be seen uncovered), the bloody marks on the hands were all there. Whether the stigmatization also happened from the soles of the feet, I cannot assure myself personally: I know from herself that she has the same thing about it.

I asked her to confess sincerely with the promise not to examine herself whether she had it or not, and she replied: 'Yes, they were bleeding significantly once and the sweat that flows into it stings.' These marks began in the hands almost at the corner of the thumb and gradually moved towards the fingers in the surface of the hands and would, if they were open, would have this length: ----- (2.5 cm) measure. The same applies to the outside of the hands; I couldn't make this observation on my feet, and on purpose I didn't want to. But these wounds are never completely open lengthways, not even if they give off blood, certainly once a week, on Thursday evening at the Mount of Olives prayer (here and there on special festivals, communion days) but always only a quarter, a third or a half; the rest of the time only has that appearance of a well-healed wound. Apart from the time when they bleed, these marks on the hands and feet are still contracted on the outside and have a light crust; inside the hands, however, they always remain open and large enough to casually put a pea (seed) in them. Incidentally, the openings do not go through and through, but are only a few lines deep on both sides, as soon as they are presented to the eye. The quantity of blood is small, namely only a few drops that flow down to and on the bed and moisten the stockings on this point Tuber (lumps, bumps) show in these places, with-

out any inflammation, and how strangely the wound then splits, I could never observe myself, only it has more pain before it opens than afterwards." Another account came to us from a stranger: "Towards the end of 1833 the confessor observed a deep wound on the palms of Maria, and when he asked her, she said that in these parts there were often violent pains and cramps. On February 4, 1834, he found her covered with a handkerchief with drops of blood, secretly hiding her hands: he asked her what that meant; she replied that she was not sure what had happened to her. And see: the stigmata from which blood was dripping were already there, in a round shape, or rather oval and elongated shape [...] and only on the inner part of the hands and the upper part of the feet. At the same time, there was also a wound on the side. On the feast of St. John the Evangelist, namely on December 27, 1834, while solemn Vespers was being held in the parish church, stigmata also appeared on the outer side of the hands and the inner side of the feet. From the time the stigmata first broke out, every Thursday towards night, when she used to contemplate the agony of the Jesus on the Mount of Olives, and on some feast days, a few drops of blood flowed from the five wounds. On the other days of the week, however, they were covered with a scar of a very beautiful reddish color, without any Signs of inflammation or a tumor. The Virgin hid these signs in every possible way and the confessor did not reveal them either; but God himself revealed them. For on a day when there were many present, the ordinary ecstasy suddenly turned into exulting ecstasy, and Maria, like a cheering angel, was lifted up so that she only touched the bed with the tips of her toes, and so stood she with long, outspread

arms, in the highest degree of joyful mood in bed, or rather was floating in bed, and one saw her in such a way that everyone present saw the stigmata on the hands.” Regional judge Johann Sebastian Stöckl observed the following in 1839: “The wounds on her wonderful and dazzling white hands, which she modestly tries to hide, are clearly visible to the eye: as an encrusted scar like a small one that has been preserved Cut. At the risk of being laughed at, I must confess that although I have seen and observed this phenomenon dozens of times, it left the deepest impression on me and that I have never seen anyone who has not been greatly affected by it.” “The marks on the hands of Maria of Mörl – all deception is far from there – are the result of years of uninterrupted religious contemplation and contemplation of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. We can get credible testimonies from similar and even more extraordinary cases in St. Francis, St. Theresia and the like.”⁵²

The Berlin Bonifacius calendar from 1869 contains the following entry about the stigmata of Maria of Mörl: “But such a lively and penetrating love could not remain without an even rarer proof of the grace of the beloved; she received the impressions of the holy wounds in which one must marvel at the miracle of an inexpressible union and the most mysterious replica of Jesus Christ, whose blood is bleeding in her. One cannot observe these wounds so easily because they are carefully hidden by the delighted woman herself. And in fact they are mostly hidden on the hands by sleeves that come down to the fingers, and by

⁵² Stöckl.

the constant folding of the hands, so that in order to see them one must expect a favorable opportunity; only occasionally do they appear, e.g. when she opens her hands and the Arms spreads [...]⁵³

According to the principles and experiences of the greatest Church Doctors, this is one of the greatest graces that God grants only to the most perfect and to those souls who are devoted to contemplating the suffering of our Lord. Besides the very excellent examples of St. Francis of Assisi, a St. Theresa, a St. Catherine of Siena, the stories of the saints tell us other examples of servants of God who have carried these very venerable symbols. God has already impressed the divine seal of his image, innocence and an original holiness of the soul in the creation; but after this seal was wiped out by sin, the Son of God, who made himself equal to man in his love, found the wonderful secret of imprinting a new stamp on man in his image, namely the sufferings and the stigmata his own crucifixion. That is why the divine bridegroom also gave this beloved one a seal and a sign, which he gave to her heart and hands, after he had let her to a certain extent die through the compassion of the fear of his love and the pain of his death and which represents the image of Christ crucified for her, to whom she herself was crucified. 'Jesus Christ,' says St. Ambrose, 'has marked you with his seal, in that he has impressed the sign of his cross, so that you might be like him also in pain.' We read about the disappearance of the stigmata in the notes of Father Gaudentius Guggenbichler OFM: "The five stigmata on

⁵³ Berliner Bonifacius-Kalender von 1869. Volume VII, Ed. Müller.

the hands, the feet and on the side had completely disappeared a few days before her death, so that one does not have the slightest wound on the hands of the corpse could see; but in the middle of the hand they resembled a translucent and waxy skin.⁵⁴ The good Maria, as the confessor said, often asked the Lord that he would remove her stigmata before she dies so that they would not be seen by everyone. Not only the residents of Kaltern came to the corpse of Maria, but also many believers from the neighboring villages and from Bozen.⁵⁵

For years, Maria von Mörl experienced and suffered the Passion of Jesus every Thursday and Friday. She herself remarked: "I could not watch how a little one suffered, and yet I have to see my Savior die every week." For 34 years the Servant of God wore the stigmata. She suffered with Christ, with the Church and for the Church and the world. Shortly before her passing, the marks of Jesus disappeared. She died exactly a hundred years before Padre Pio, whose wounds also disappeared at the end of his life. It almost seems like it is saying that the mission of these holy people is now complete. Maria von Mörl was really a living crucifix

⁵⁴ Father Guggenbichler, born in Tyrol in 1829, stayed in Kaltern from 1853 to 1854 and from 1859 to 1881. He wrote numerous books of edification and dealt with topics of mysticism. After Maria of Mörl's death he was commissioned by the provincial superior to write a biography about her and to collect the relevant files. He acted temporarily as a postulator in the case of the Franciscan woman Krezentia Höss, who was beatified in 1900 and canonized in 2001.

⁵⁵ Priesching, *Unter der Geißel Gottes*, 230, Weger Verlag, Brixen 2007.

for the people of that time, as Joseph of Görres notes in a report.

The gift of prophecy and a gaze of the heart

Maria of Mörl knew about things that were distant in time or space. Even as a young girl, she foresaw her mother's early death. She also knew of the approaching death of priest Kapistran's brother. After the death of her beloved sister Johanna, God made her realize that she had already entered into eternal glory. She also prophesied the imminent death of Baron Dipauli, and she also knew of the sudden passing of a young relative from Eppan.

Alois Wohlgemuth, who had been the family's asset manager for several years, was asked by Maria to travel to Innsbruck as soon as possible because his ailing brother would soon die. He needs his help and wants to fix a few things like his soul before he dies. On July 31, Wohlgemuth finally went to Innsbruck. The patient was deeply affected. He took care of his worldly and spiritual matters and died on August 1st, provided with the sacraments of the Church. Maria once informed her spiritual father that she would die when everything was known, i.e. winter. "When she moved to her monastery apartment, she discovered a young fig tree under the window. When this fig tree was once so big that it could reach its fruit through her window, then her last hour was not far off. It was like that in the end. The tree had 26 years to grow before it reached your window. Her last summer had come."⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Grandi.

Maria not only had an insight into the future, but also into people's hearts. When a visitor in her chamber noticed a small purse under her pillow, he wondered in his mind: "Ah, such a pious person who has money under her pillow..." When Maria was called back from ecstasy as usual, she immediately pulled the little pouch out from under the pillow and showed it to the visitor: There were none in it Coins, but relics!

One day a pyromaniac was out and about in Kaltern. Maria had Father Kapistran inform the potential victim of the attack that danger to his barn was imminent. A guard was posted. In fact, at 7 p.m., flames broke out in the barn, but thanks to the guard, they were quickly extinguished. Another report says: "One autumn day, Guido, the son of the famous Görres, came to see Maria in Kaltern with a priest from the Rhineland. There were several people in the room again. She began handing out pictures to everyone present, as was her custom. The Rhineland priest had already received two pictures when it occurred to him that he would also like to bring a souvenir to a friend. Maria understood. She took the picture supply again and chose a third one for the priest, behold! It was precisely the one on which the holy patron saint of the priest receiving the gift was depicted, and yet no one had given her his baptismal name.⁵⁷

Maria also knew about the lot of the dead. One of the parents was informed of the sudden death of their son. The young man had been a student at the University of Pavia and a passionate swimmer. One day,

⁵⁷ Grandi.

for some inexplicable reason, he drowned in the pool. The son's death depressed the parents in two ways: on the one hand because of the sudden loss of their child and then on account of concern for the salvation of his soul. In their grief they turned to Maria of Mörl. She then prayed fervently and long. Then she comforted her parents: Her son was saved, but he still needed her prayer.

A theology student was dismissed from the seminary in Brixen because of a prank. The young man, who had missed more out of arrogance than malice, came to Maria one day and complained to her of his suffering. She encouraged him and advised him to check with the Franciscans and ask for admission. The provincial welcomed the contrite, and it turned out, over time, that he had a profound vocation for the order. Maria of Mörl also provided advice to the Tyrolean Klara Steiner, who was later stigmatized. Even at a young age, she felt called to join the order. However, both her family and her spiritual guide were against it. Then she wrote to Maria of Mörl. She recognized the authenticity of her call and promised to accompany her in prayer. She also encouraged the young woman to go to Assisi, where she made profession in 1841 in the monastery of the Capuchin Poor Clares. The mystically gifted Clare later reformed a monastery in Perugia and one in Nocera Umbra by giving them a milder rule recognized by the superiors. Her beatification process began in 1909.

Vocation to atonement

Maria of Mörl also received a call to atonement from God. Cardinal Frantisek Tomasek of Prague (1899–1992) summarized what is meant by this: “Those who work for the Church do a lot. Those who pray for the Church do more. Those who suffer for the Church do the most.”

When we talk of atonement, it is important to look to Christ first. He is the Lamb of God who took upon himself the sin of the world. John the Baptist on the Jordan has already referred to him. Out of infinite love for us, the Son of God accepted the lot of a sinner and carried the consequences of sin, the distance from God, with him to the cross. With this he gives us reconciliation with God. We don't need to redeem ourselves, just believe that we are redeemed through Christ's sacrifice on the cross. We do not have to save ourselves, we just have to accept the salvation that our Savior obtained for us all on the cross. When we speak of atonement, we mean standing up for others who are far from God, who do not know God or who have turned away from him. To atone for others – that runs through the whole life of Maria of Mörl. Your stigmata are an outward sign of it. Atoning people express something of the infinite love of Christ with which He first loved us all. Maria of Mörl lovingly presented her physical and mental suffering in prayer to God. Their atonement came out of self-sacrificing love for those who did not love God. Wasn't that also an invitation to the seer children of Fatima to unite with the sacrifice of Christ? This willingness to atonement includes an attitude that lacks any calculation, a great childishness. This attitude

has undoubtedly lived the ecstatic of the cold in their path of suffering. How many people brought their concerns to Maria of Mörl during their visits and letters. She always had an open ear and an open heart for all people's needs. She took everything, held it out to God, and suffered for it. It is a fact that she often offered herself to the Lord as an atonement for sinners.

Witness reports

Joseph of Görres,

Known at the time as a specialist in Christian mysticism, he expressed himself as an eyewitness to an ecstatic suffering of Maria as follows: "The action begins on Friday morning, but in proportion as the action becomes more painful and moving as the action progresses, the features of the picture also become deeper furrowed and therefore emerge more clearly, right up to the end, when the hour of death approaches on the cross and the pain is burrowed to the very bottom inside, the image of death speaks in all its features outside. When she then folds her hands in front of her chest and kneels on her bed, it is as if the shadows of death gradually rise up on her and toss around her soul until it sinks completely in her numbness. Pale, as it is during the entire process, you then see her pale more and more; how the shivers of death run through their bones more often and the sinking life becomes more and more dusky. Sighs hard to break out of the chest announce the increasing distress. The more and more staring eyes



Joseph of Görres

squeeze out drops of tears that slowly trickle down over the cheeks. Slight twitches surround the mouth, which is initially only slightly, then increasingly wide gaping. That sigh of fear has meanwhile turned into a heartbreaking moan that groans up from the fearful chest. The cheeks are covered with a dark blush, the thickened tongue seems to stick to the aching palate, the convulsions become more violent and incisive. The hands clasped in front of the chest, which at first sank only imperceptibly, now slide down faster, the nails begin to turn blue, the fingers intertwine convulsively. Soon there is a rattle in the throat; the breath, more and more pressed, struggles to get out of the iron banded chest, the features disguise

themselves beyond recognition, the mouth of the pain is now wide open, the nose pointed, the staring eyes want to break, push in long gaps some more rattling breathing halting through the frozen organs. Finally it's as if the last one wants to breathe; then the face bends, and the head, marked with all the signs of death, sinks in utter exhaustion; and it is a different, barely recognizable face that now hangs down against the chest. Everything remains in this position for about a minute and a half, then the bowed head straightens up again, the hands are raised against the chest. She kneels there now, reassured, her eyes open to the sky and busy offering her inner thanksgiving.⁵⁸

Adolf Kolping

Adolf Kolping visited Maria of Mörl on September 9, 1841, before he went on to Domenica Lazzeri in Capriana on September 27. We read about it in his diary: "The two students had already been to the famous Marie of Mörl's yesterday evening, just before we entered the pub. They and other people in the village told us several things about their condition and situation. This morning we went to the Franciscan monastery together, heard mass in the beautiful church there, and then went to Father Kapistran, to whom the other two students were addressed. We were given permission to appear at the house at seven thirty. As we waited to meet Maria of Mörl, we looked around the beautiful surroundings, but it was too long for me to see the living miracle of grace. We finally went. A butcher does his business downstairs. My heart beat audibly

⁵⁸ Görres, *Mystik*.



Blessed Adolph Kolping

as I climbed the narrow, dark spiral staircase. We waited a while at the door of the upper corridor, then we were opened and Father Kapistran led us to the famous saint of Kaltern, as the people of Tyrol call her.

Marie was sitting or rather hanging on her knees in her bed, her position was fairly upright; she kept her eyes fixed on the sky without even flicking her eyelashes. She held her folded hands under her chin. The expression on her face, on which lies an infinite pain, is indescribable. At first glance you think you see a wax picture, but which artist will shape such a face, such features, such a look? You hardly notice that the body is moving, that it is alive. Since yesterday evening, that is on Thursday, she has been looking at the suffering of the Redeemer, but not looking at it alone, but suffers with it, which her painful features sufficiently indicate. She knows and hears nothing of what is happening around her; she is in perpetual ecstasy. The

first impression one could feel is something indescribable. Nobody can help out. You want to cry and you can't, I want to pity you, and our condition doesn't match it, you don't know where to go any more. The heart is moved and finds no words for your feelings, you look and lose yourself in painful contemplation. The appearance of Marie is otherwise not at all daunting, her clothes are clean and white, the long, loose hair flows down over her shoulders. An altar has been set up in her room for the celebration of Holy Mass in certain days. A clergyman is near her almost all the time. Father Kapistran is her confessor; for the time being he tells little about her inner life, nothing at all to strangers. Our presence lasted only a few minutes, then we part because we were due for two thirty in the afternoon, when she contemplates the death of the Savior. Completely moved and inwardly almost crushed, I left the blessed woman, whose credibility is to doubt the most presumptuous folly. Spiritual and secular superiors have spoken their verdict, and one can approach it without the least doubt [...]

We soon parted, but what my heart felt, how my spirit was still in tune, I cannot describe. Yes, I can also say that I have seen a saint, and if her closeness also has a healing effect on others, I believe that it was not for nothing that I stood by her bed and almost felt her suffering.”⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Hans-Joachim Kracht, *Adolph-Kolping-Schriften Vol I*, 142, Cologne 1982.

Clemens Brentano,

the biographer of Blessed Anna Katharina Emmerick (1774–1824)⁶⁰, compares Maria of Mörl with Anna Katharina:

“On September 11th (1835) we drove to the lovely market town of Kaltern. This is where the 23-year-old Miss Maria of Mörl lives, a dear, pious, chosen creature who has been without food for four years,⁶¹ in constant kneeling, ecstatic adoration and contemplation, for a year also stigmatized, with open bleeding wounds, like Bl. Emmerick. She has the dumbness of obedience. She was commanded by God to ask her confessor that he, under spiritual obedience, commanded her not to be able to speak a word to anyone but to him, and even then only what is absolutely necessary, confession and whatever God wants her tell him. She has been mute since that order; it is quite impossible for her to utter a word against her siblings, against anyone; she helps herself with signs.

She is incessantly day and night kneeling in bed, her hands spread or folded, frozen in delight, in such a bent position that a person in a natural state would fall on his face. She is stretched out so wonderfully that one takes her for a very tall person who is actually small. Her eyes are open and blank, the flies run over her pupil⁶², she

⁶⁰ Emmerick, an Augustinian and bedridden, was a stigmatized mystic who experienced the suffering of the Lord in visions.

⁶¹ Maria von Mörl did not live entirely without food. However, this only consisted of fruits and nuts and very little bread. She hardly ate any cooked food. There have been times when she practically had any food, even without fluids.

⁶² The dark circular opening in the center of the iris of the eye, varying in size to regulate the amount of light reaching the retina.

doesn't twitch. It is like a wax picture and the sight of it is harrowing. Every now and then her confessor orders to lie down, and instantly, it is not quite sure how, she rests stretched out in her bed; but after two minutes she kneels again, as before. There is no pulling together, the way they are raised is quite surprising; I saw them several times, it is as if they raise invisible spirits to their knees; the movement is as fast as a slowly striking shotgun lock.

This perpetual kneeling, ecstatic gazing and worshipping is deeply shocking, yet not terrible; for she, as the priest commands her, to come into her natural state for a few minutes, like the loveliest, most innocent child (seven year old) who, waking up, sees himself surrounded by people in bed. She hid up to her nose under the covers, looked around her half shyly, half willfully smiling, handed out pictures, was cheerful and sweet like the blessed Emmerick. She then seems extremely lively and would like to speak if she only could. Her confessor, Father Kapistran, a local Franciscan, is a gentle, holy man of the highest peace. He didn't ask her anything; he writes down what she can speak now and then.

Few persons of this kind should ever have enjoyed such an adequate soul guide. When you see them together, you don't know which of the two appears more sacred ...

We went to see her three times with our friends. At nine in the morning we saw her in ecstatic prayer. After dinner we saw her awake; after two minutes we saw her delighted, and she was on her knees again. It was Friday and we saw her from three to four o'clock in the Passion. She kneels then too. I have never seen anything more serious or devastating; all the patience, torture and abandonment and love of the dying Jesus emerge in her with



Clemens Brentano

unspeakable truth and dignity. You can see her dying little by little, her face becomes darkened, her nose becomes pointed, her eyes break, the cold sweat runs down, death fights in the trembling chest, the head rises with painfully she opens her mouth, neck and jaw almost in one line; the tongue withers and retracts convulsively, the air cooing inevitably from the soul, the upper body trembles terribly, the hands sink and then the unrecognizable head on the right, deep on the chest.

A priest, (during the absence of Fr. Kapistran this particular priest looked after Maria of Mörl) ordered her to rest. At the moment she lay exhausted, but with a very calm face, quite orderly on her bed and after three minutes at the most with a touching, thankful expression on her knees and thanked for the death of him. About thirty people were present. A wealthy widow who was present,



Maria von Mörl in an ecstatic passion

who lives there in a lovely villa and is the benefactress of dear Maria, invited us to her garden. Sitting under grape arbors and orange trees, in a gathering of many relatives and noblemen, I had to tell her a lot about the Emmerick, whom she admires. The people were all drunk with joy. More than three hundred copies of her visions of the bitter suffering of Jesus Christ are distributed in Bolzano and the surrounding area. I had a good painting of Maria von Mörl made.”⁶³

⁶³ Clemens Brentano, *Gesammelte Schriften IX*, Frankfurt 1855.

Dr. Magnus Jocham

Dr. Magnus Jocham recorded something remarkable in 1869 under the title *Memoirs of an Obscurant*: “In the Franciscan monastery of Bozen I even met dear fathers. One of them, Father Isidor Wille, accompanied me to Kaltern, only two to three hours away. It was of great interest to me to see the stigmatized Virgin Maria von Mörl, from whom I had already heard and read a lot in my parish. It was just as important to me to get to know personally the excellent Father Kapistran, who had guided this much tried so sensibly and with such determination according to the principles of the saints. It was not easy to see something simpler and more undemanding than this witty religious, in whom one recognized at first glance the mature and tried ascetic. He accompanied me to Maria’s room. When we entered, she was floating over the bed, in a kneeling position, in ecstasy. The sight of the pardoned and everything in the room was right for devotion. Involuntarily I folded my hands. Father Kapistran clapped my hands downwards with the words: ‘There is no object of adoration here!’ But everything is right for devotion, I involuntarily expressed this mood. At a sign or a word from Father Kapistran, which I did not understand, Maria von Mörl sank back on her bed in an instant and suddenly lay on it in a very orderly manner. Then she picked up a few pictures and selected some for me to bring to my relatives and friends. She knew how to make herself understandable to the father; but I couldn’t understand her. During her ecstasy her face had the painful expression of the Lord’s mother, where she is carrying the body of her only begotten son, removed from the cross, on her lap, now her



**Blessed Anna Katharina
Emmerick**

features were very cheerful and friendly and her whole being very childlike. 'After her terrible suffering and terrible plagues, the pious sufferer now has a lovely evening from work and is already enjoying part of the bliss in her taste. I said to Father Kapistran: she is free and secure from the storms that keep breaking out on us, what do you mean by secure? He asked me. If she indulges in haughty thoughts, then she is a child of anger. Watch and pray! applies to her just as much as to us. It was a great pleasure for me to see here for the first time a truly pious soul, who has been purified through much tribulation, betrothed to the Lord and adorned with the marks of the Lord, as I always have the excellent saints of the latter and earlier times had imagined. That was a difference to those hysterical somnambulant⁶⁴ persons whom I had previously seen, as between

⁶⁴ Walking during in the sleep (hysterical somnambulant)..

a very common wood-hut and a consecrated person: the chapel consecrated accordingly.⁶⁵

Antonio Rosmini,

Priest, theologian and later advisor to Pope Pius IX, left the following notes on his visit to Maria in 1834: “You will certainly be welcome when I inform you of an extraordinary and remarkable event, through which it appears Our Lord and God wants to show his grace to this village of Tyrol, namely the event of the ecstatic from Kaltern. I myself had the opportunity to witness what happened last Tuesday, and I left the same deep impression that remains in the thousands of people who flock to this house, to this room, to this bed from all over the place. It is a 22-year-old girl from a noble family, who, as everyone says, leads an innocent life and who – led by God through the most difficult and unusual sufferings, which she endured with admirable perseverance and always with a cheerful heart, and guided by Him through the various stages of worship – arrives at that peculiar state in which she is to be seen at the moment and which is viewed as ongoing ecstasy.

She always keeps her hands, which also shine with natural beauty, clasped in prayer, and one could mistake her for a figure made of wax if she were not immediately seen following the voice of obedience that caused her to move from her kneeling position from laying on his back. But it does not linger long like this; almost driven by the vi-

⁶⁵ Johann Jakob Hansen, *Lebensbilder hervorragender Katholiken des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, Paderborn 1906, Bonifazius-Druckerei.

olence of love, she rises to her knees again, always with clasped hands and without leaning on the bed with her arms. To see this is truly astonishing, since nobody knows how to explain the force with which they can move themselves from one position to the other. A feeling of heavenly joy runs through her veins when one sees that lovely smile on her lips that she shows when she stands up and kneels again in silent adoration; and it seems that, uplifting and smiling, she almost follows a call of love, as if she wanted to say to her husband: I am ready, I am coming; this is exactly what I wanted you to call me, my beloved. ⁶⁶

Johann Sebastian Stöckl,

District judge, recorded in 1839: “Since 1832 she has been eating very little on water, fruit and bread. Above all, she disgusts meat. Sleep visits her very seldom, so she not only spends the days but also the nights uninterruptedly in prayer and in religious contemplations, whereby she never leaves the room, and only very rarely leaves her bed.

Since 1833 she no longer speaks in words, but only in signs, which she accompanies with tones through her nose. Her guide was Father Sojer from the Franciscan Order, 40 years old, lecturer and guardian of the monastery, of a religious and unadulterated character. According to his assurances, after a request to the consistory in Trento, he carried out the church exorcisms on her and lo and behold: the tempter gave way and peace of mind returned to her. Since that time the state of her soul has been in a

⁶⁶ Roggero Giancarlo, *Antonio Rosmini, Liebesfeuer ans Wahrheitslicht, Biographie und Einführung in sein Werk*, Schaffhausen, 2000

**Maria von
Mörl in float-
ing ecstasy (in
her chamber
at her parent's
house)**



continuous undisturbed view of divine things and, as the eye can be convinced, the happiest in which a person can immerse himself. The sixth year is now complete (1839), when she spent almost no food and no sleep with only brief interruptions in ecstatic prayer. She is already called 'la Santa di Kaltern' (the saint of Kaltern). I arrived on May 30, 1838 as the district judge of Kaltern and gave myself a full eight days to [...] obtain the necessary preliminary studies. It was on Thursday, June 7th, 1838, at 4 o'clock in the evening, when Father Kapistran was to introduce me to Maria for the first time. Without belief and without prejudice, but full of expectation, I entered a spacious, beautiful, green-painted room. Next to the door was an

altar with delicate paintings and silver utensils. In the middle of the room between the two windows, on a pure white, raised bed, the maiden knelt, beautiful to look at, her raven-black, long hair hanging down to the middle of her body, her big, beautiful eye fixed and motionless on the ceiling of the room pinned, hands raised in prayer, the slender body covered up to the soles with a wide white dress, without moving any part of her body, even without visible breath, immersed in the bottomlessness of supernatural, divine contemplation for hours. Verily, in another place I would have accepted it for a well-made marble statue! This is how it is shown in the well-taken picture that I enclose. When the time came when, according to our doctrine of the faith, the suffering of Christ was taking place on the Mount of Olives, an inexpressible pain, an indescribable compassion, was expressed on her face. She bowed her head up to the ceiling of the bed three times, and it was evident that the most vivid images passed before her soul. The second time I visited her on a Friday afternoon from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. The most eloquent language, the paintbrush, can only convey a weak idea of what pain in the contemplation of the suffering and death of Christ tore her soul to pieces. Her features were those of a dying woman, tears rolled down her cheeks, her eye was broken, and she gasped as if she were near death. In order to try her out because of the bright and television viewing, I paid her a visit on Peter and Paulus Day, Friday June 29, 1839, and during that time I was all alone with her in the room. I confess that in such a situation you cannot help but feel cold. It was 2 o'clock when I entered and found her already in ecstatic prayer. On my watch I had

exactly observed the time at which the blessing had to be given in the parish church during the festive service, and the fact is: at the same moment she returned to the outside world, bowed her head, lisped a few words with her mouth and thereupon sank again into their lifeless and motionless ecstatic state [...] These extraordinary ecstatic phenomena recur again uniformly on the days of Christ's suffering and on the feast days of the year; hence their inner state must also recur periodically and uniformly. Let me pass from the same to their natural state that I have observed as often as that of ecstasy. When she was told by her confessor with the half-aloud words: I command you by sacred obedience, come back! is called to her, she is endowed with an extraordinary grace and friendliness, likes to hear a humble conversation and is easy to understand. It happens every time, however, that during a one-hour visit she falls back into an ecstatic state and has to be called back to her. Not only a good Christian, but also a good subordinate as she is. On my first visit she was even so polite to make me understand that she had prayed a lot and often for a district judge who would recognize and fulfill his duties [...]"⁶⁷

Ludwig Clarus (Wilhelm Gustav Werner Volk),

Writer and Protestant (he later converted to Catholicism) said of Maria von Mörl: "The bright reality, drunk with eyes and ears, creates a completely different saturation and satisfaction of the thirst for knowledge than

⁶⁷ Aus dem Protokoll des Landrichters Joh. Seb. Stöckl, 31. Januar 1839, S. 17–21 u. 24

all book studies and oral relations. I had now breathed it, that atmosphere of truth that – according to Görres – is spread around Maria von Mörl. Everything I saw eliminated any suspicion of deception. The power of reality and truth seized me in such a way that I immediately felt an almost indomitable urge, like the apostle Johannes, to proclaim what I heard, what I saw with my own eyes, what my hands felt. After the conversion, Clarus wrote a passion play for Oberammergau. Did the visit to Mörl inspire him?⁶⁸

An unknown author

is quoted in the already mentioned Berlin Bonifacius calendar of 1869: “At 1 o’clock, after waiting a long time, I went to see Maria, accompanied by a priest. Not far from the (Franciscan) monastery, on a gentle hill, is the monastery of the school sisters, where she lives. The thought of soon standing before such a devoted soul made me sigh deeply in my heart, conscious of my unfaithfulness to the always faithful God, and the Confiteor. The gate soon opened, a sister led me up a flight of stairs, where I met a tall, slender Franciscan with a deep, gentle look. He welcomed me warmly with a friendly, smiling mouth. It was Father Simon, confessor of Maria since Father Kapistran’s death. He replied in a gentle, deliberate manner to my words addressed to him, and in particular to the request to ask for two pictures of the pardoned virgin in memory of my sister and me. Then he apologized for a moment,

⁶⁸ Volk Wilhelm, Die Tyroler ekstatischen Jungfrauen, Bd I, Regensburg 1843.

went into Maria's room, and immediately afterwards bade me come in. My first look was directed to the praying woman, who for a long time captivated him immovably. It is an overwhelming impression, a sight, as Görres says, comparable to no other than from a distance that which the angels of God may give when, sunk in contemplation of his glory, they kneel before his throne. That is why the rudest minds cannot withstand this omnipotence of sensation, and tears of the most joyful surprise and exaltation flow around them in abundance. Hardly on her bed without pressing it in, with her hands folded on her chest, in a floating position, through the love of her prayer, she was literally in a position to say about it the Lord: 'I will draw you to me.' Her heart rested in truth in the ocean of divine love, which she worshiped in the most holy sacrament of the altar before her eyes. I thought I was covered in a long, white robe all over my body, and I saw an alabaster figure in front of me, which was breathed deeply into life. In these ecstasies, according to her councilors, she has been looking at the life and death of Jesus Christ for 37 years and at the same time connects the Adoration of the Holy Eucharist and a contemplative prayer, well regulated according to the order of the church year. She wrote down some of these for her confessor, which, according to him, are full of warm, pious feelings and rich in edification. Their visions and clairvoyance have always comprised only sacred and ecclesiastical things, quite independently of the current circumstances. She only spoke about this to the confessor, but it was often difficult for her to find the right description for the things she saw. The generality of the images viewed was clearly expressed in

their external attitude [...] We have many reports from eyewitnesses at hand about some of these ecstatic states of hers [...] In particular, it is the passion that most often permeates your soul with its shocking stations and which is also outwardly affected by the wounds The Virgin adorned on the cross is revealed, especially during Holy Week, otherwise every Friday of the year. The pain gradually increases, her heart rises in the floods of bitter suffering until it seems to sink on the heights of Golgotha, flooded by the same [...] No matter how deeply ecstatic she may be, and she was completely ecstatic when I entered, she sank down on her bed with the swiftness of an arrow shot from a bow, joked and was delighted with my visit with the simplicity and naturalness of a child that I couldn't think of the astonishing person I used to be. The confessor had called her back out of ecstasy with a single word, 'Maria'. I have never seen happiness and piety in a more beautiful, I must say, unearthly harmony than here with Maria Mörl. With this innermost feeling, I immediately wrote to a sister in the silent monastery: 'I left this holy person with the firm resolve to ask God every day that he would make me pious from the bottom of his heart so that I could really be happy' [...] She very willingly complied with the request I had made to him (the confessor) to give me two small pictures as a souvenir. She opened the rather tall and strong prayer book lying on her bed, which, bound in black leather and gilt, may have been in use for a long time, and handed me the little pictures with her signature, smiling in a friendly manner. Then I saw on her full hand the wound of Christ's nails, which in a fine red color stood out clearly

from the snow-white palm. Warmly delighted with this precious memory, I thought inside: How many more would you like to bring such a picture home with you! She looked at me, and in the kindest way she looked for six more pictures spread out before her, which she gave me and which have given everyone a holy joy. “

Melchior Paul Deschwanden,

a Swiss painter from Stans / Nidwalden visited Maria von Mörl in July 1847. He was enthusiastic about what he found and painted various pictures of her ecstasy. About the ecstatic he said: “Maria von Mörl lives more in a state of transfiguration; protrudes into eternity; dwell and walk near God; the divine is communicated to her and is so conspicuously expressed in her whole posture, especially in her facial features, that one tries to take her for a being of a higher kind, feels transported into a supernatural sphere in her vicinity, and dwells with her with delight [...] It elevates us above time and world, teaches us to despise this world and seek out a new, heavenly, transfigured one.”

Visions and images

In the KSL we read the following introductory words to the visions of Maria von Mörl: “Now it would be appropriate to speak of the objects of her inner contemplations. In general, it is none other than the truths and secrets of our sacred religion. The divine perfections, the life and suffering of Jesus, the martyrs and the excellent confessors on their memorial days. The story of the Passion is renewed every week according to order, from Thursday evening, from the last evening until the resurrection on Sunday night. Here she sees the dining room, the Savior, the Apostles, hears their speeches, the institution of the Most Holy Place. Then she sees the Mount of Olives, the fear of Jesus and his imprisonment, etc. The other days of the week she can look at individual parts of Jesus’ suffering in more detail for many hours and with suitable affects of compassion, sacrifice, atonement, etc.”

In the biography of Father Gaudenz Guggenbichler OFM it says about the ecstasies of Maria von Mörl: “The usual order and order of the meditations was:

a) In her regular contemplations, Maria followed the ecclesiastical feasts and the pericopes of the Gospel.

b) In the meditations she dealt daily with the sacrifice of the Mass, the holy sacrament of old age, the preparation and thanksgiving for holy communion.

c) The contemplation on the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the Gospel, which lasted in the individual weeks from Thursday to Sunday night (with intervals for other considerations).

The remaining meditations and contemplations were

for the most part special, e.g. B. about the divine perfections. Oral prayer was very little; Maria's prayer was primarily an inner one and with prayers in response [...] As for the different body positions of the good Maria in prayer and ecstatic contemplation, I notice:

a) The usual position of the body was that in which she prayed with bent knees, with her face and eyes directed towards the sky without any movement, with her hands folded in front of her chest, immobile in bed.

b) Another situation was that on Thursdays when Maria in her ecstatic meditation represented the agony of the Lord on the Mount of Olives at night. In agony, she bowed her head three times and kept her hands crossed in front of her chest.

c) On Fridays from half past one in the afternoon until after 3:00 am she contemplated the bitterest pains of Christ on the cross and his death, where her compassionate love for Christ was so intensified that she seemed to suffer and linger with him; for here the observer of Maria sees the overflowing and twitching eyes raised to the sky and her depressed soul, carried away by alternating sobs, and (how she) suddenly bows her head and already falls into bed, that one could believe that she would be hers Exhale your soul. In this suffering and mystical death she prayed at first in the usual position, but with a very painful face; then she kept her hands folded but lowered, and finally, in a feeling of abandonment, as it were, kept her hands violently spread out until she was ordered to keep her hands spread out and lie back on the cushion.

d) The condition and position of the ecstatic virgin at the birth and the apparition of the Lord, on the last days of

Holy Week and on other festivities was also unique. In the daily ecstasy at that moment when the priest performed the consecration at Mass either in the parish church or in our church, she was kneeling on her bed, as usual, but turned her body towards the church; with lowered. She adored the Holy Sacrament with her face and eyes.

D) When the Holy Sacrament was carried around in a solemn process, the good Maria was in ecstasy, kneeling and praying and slowly turning around, always towards that region and the place through which the procession with the Holy Sacrament passed.

E) In ecstasy she stood cheering on her toes in bed, her angelic face and her almost shining eyes raised to the sky and with her hands outstretched or folded in front of her chest. In the first years of ecstatic life during the holy processions, she often hung [...] as it were in the air above her bed, and in such a state she did not stay (only) once for half an hour.”⁶⁹

Maria von Mörl saw the events surrounding the Passion of Jesus, but also joyful events. And so, in her ecstasies of suffering alternated with jubilant ecstasies, ecstasies of joy. From jubilant ecstasy she then switched to the calm ecstasy of simple transfiguration. We can say that she experienced this state of contemplation every day since the summer of 1833. Yes, it has become second nature, as it were.

⁶⁹ Quoted from: Nicole Priesching, *Die Geißel Gottes*, Brixen 2007, 208 f.

A Mount of Olives vision

In his diary on September 19, 1833, Father Kapistran describes a vision of Maria on the Mount of Olives: "The Lord's Supper lasted from 6 in the evening to 8 in the evening, when Jesus instituted the Most Holy Eucharist. He then said goodbye to his mother with deep inner pain, outer serious, comforting words and expressions with mutual kisses on the hand. Maria was deeply sad and swooned, but sank without loud sobbing and crying, saw the sufferings of her divine Son individually in advance and always followed him not far away.

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives forsaken, even by the three called disciples, whose fear, sadness and thoughtlessness had seized them, and fell into deep mourning between the Kedron brook and the olive garden, prayed here for an hour, kneeling until 9 a.m. covered over and over with fear and sweat, bent almost to the ground. The three disciples were a little sideways away, and Jesus felt his impending suffering more deeply than before in his life etc. and then he went forward near the garden and fell here again, abandoned, alone, in severe fainting, deep sadness, prayer, sweat out of fear, bent almost to the ground, and stayed for a while, about an hour and a quarter. Thereupon he entered the olive garden, went deep into it, made and ordered the disciples to watch, wait and pray three different times. But he prayed in quiet heartfelt prayer and three loud calls, sinking to the ground each time in a bloody sweat from after 9 a.m. to over 10 a.m., when the angel finally strengthened him for a few moments. The hours were the time of most pain. "

Further visions in the year 1833

Towards the end of October 1833, Maria reported the following to Father Kapistran: “Jesus is there (in the sacrifice of the Holy Mass) very much alive before me, hanging on the cross, sacrificing himself to the Father, praying to him. – He wanted to have mercy on us, to pray, especially for some, because he gave his blood and life for it, that this effort would not be fruitless? During Holy Communion I see Christ giving himself to us out of love and entering into us; at the last blessing, as he blesses through the priest.”

On November 15, 1833, Maria said to her spiritual father: “When it is communion day, God admonishes me during the night and prepares me for it; then I invite the Lord, the angels and the innocent to pray to God for me because I cannot. In the spirit I then see everything, you when you come, the shine penetrates through the door beforehand, and holy angels and the innocent surround you on all sides. I urge them, and that they should not go away, that they also worship God afterwards. “

When her sister Julietta was professed as a Dominican nun in Lienz on November 21, 1833, Maria von Mörl was able to experience this in her mind on her sick bed. Father Kapistran noted: “Sister Johanna and Mr. Peter Sölva were present. That day she stood three times (in bed) and looked at her sister during and after she was professed, and she recognized at the same hour, as I later learned from the returnees when that happened [...] “

On December 8th, Maria was honored to see the mystery of the incarnation: she saw the angel greet Maria. She can look at this mystery in a special way at the Marian feasts.

On December 24th and 25th, she was ecstatic from 10:30 p.m. to midnight. She prayed kneeling first, then kneeling in ecstasy for a quarter of an hour on the floor in front of the altar which had been erected on the table on which the birth in the grotto was depicted. After her return to bed, she remained kneeling and praying, and for a while held her hands as if a wrapped child⁷⁰ were lying in them.

Between 11 p.m. and midnight, she stood on her bed three times. The first two times she fell on her face and the last time she prayed with her head bowed. When her spiritual Father later asked her what this three-fold standing and falling meant, she explained: “The first time: Mary and Joseph are expecting the birth. The second time: The raising of the heart of Mary and Joseph. And the third time: Mary holds the child in her lap. “

On Christmas Day in 1833, Father Kapistran also notes: “At the celebration of the birth of Christ, during services in the parish church she stood before and after noon, spreading her hands as if she had to carry the child: Since then she has always held this position for a while [...] because, (as she told me), she sees the divine mother who carries the divine child, caresses it, kisses it, which she often does herself in the spirit by pressing both lips together and whistling (kissing) to indicate [...] “

Visions in 1834

On the feast of “Conversion of St. Paul”, on January 25, 1834, around 9:30 a.m., Maria saw Saul fall from his horse

⁷⁰ Baby Jesus wrapped entirely in ribbons. The term is derived from the Italian fascia, cradle strap.

and heard the voice from heaven speak to Saul. In doing so, she indicated the fall of Paul in her gestures, who later known as the Apostle of the Nations.

After February 2, she reported the appearance of the angel to Joseph, who asked him and the holy family to flee. On February 3rd at around 9 o'clock she was in her bed again, laughing and jumping, and when asked about it, she said: "I saw the child Jesus. He jumped from St. Joseph to Mary. Joseph kissed the child in my name, and the Blessed Virgin Mary on child's feet with her closed eyes and lowered head."

On the same day towards evening, while kneeling she said very clearly: "Father, oh I beg you, forgive me for my misdeeds, I have sinned before you and all of heaven. Oh, if I had the repentance of St. Paul and St. Magdalena! – O help me, you holy penitents, repent of my sins [...]"

Report about the escape of Holy Family: "They left early on February 4th, maybe after 3 o'clock. On the 4th and 5th and 6th they marched the whole day until late in the evening at 8 o'clock, always had rough Wind, very cold weather and always had to spend the night in crevices where the poor people stopped in general, God always led them to the worst places. – The donkey served the child and the Mother of God to keep them warm and therefore always lay close to them. On February 7th they arrived in Egypt by a poor widow with two daughters and they were welcomed lovingly."

On February 5, 1834, Maria of Mörl received the stigmata. When the Holy of Holies (Adoration) was exposed in the parish church on February 8, 9 and 11, she stood or kneeled in her bed. Her face always turned towards the parish.

Further ecstasies and visions

(At other church festivals)

Father Kapistran recorded the following: "On the feast of Epiphany in the evening and from then on more often she prayed like the Orientals, stretched out on the ground and towards evening on the same feast and on the following three days, in addition to the three kings and the baptism of Christ by John the Baptist, she viewed the wedding of Cana in Galilee with such great serenity and joy that she repeatedly exclaimed in a clear voice: 'Juhu', Etc. And she sat on the floor in the style of the orientals, her head bowed on her hand and her legs crossed; her face was reddish. When the conversation between Jesus and Mary and the food master began, she sat up again and held her hands behind her back; she seemed to command and give orders with a serious face, yes, with one hand she makes the gentlemen's movements here and there to give orders". "On the feast of St. John the Evangelist (1834) during the church service in the parish and on the Feast of the Innocent Children (1835) she lay repeatedly on the ground like Christ on the cross, for about two hours; then her face was sad and she was trembling all over. And on returning to oneself, i.e. from this situation, the stigmata also appeared externally on the hands,⁷¹ which had grown, especially at the time of the 40-hour prayer in this parish. And they were very open on the feast of the five wounds of Jesus, i.e. on March 6th."

"On March 19th, on the feast of St. Josef, she was able to

⁷¹ She received the stigmata on the first days of February 1834 in the palms of her hands. They have appeared on the back of the hand since the feast of John the Evangelist on December 27, 1834.

witness the death of St. Joseph during mass in the parish church of Kaltern. She sees not only the death of Joseph, but also his glorification. Mary and Jesus stood by the dying man.” On March 26th, on a Thursday, after the prayer and during the night flowed a lot of blood from Maria’s nose, also on the following Thursday (the Vigil of the Seven Sorrows of Maria).

“On April 10th, Friday, on the feast of the Seven Sorrows of Maria, around seven o’clock in the evening,” Father Kapistran noted in his diary, “she was now standing, now kneeling, looking at the Virgin Mary standing under the cross wherever she held her hands now outstretched, now bandaged, now almost as if she were holding Christ (in her hands), her face at the same time in loving pain, on the bed and on the floor.”

Visions of the Holy Week and Easter days

“From 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. exclusively, at the time when the Lord’s Supper, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and the Resurrection were taking place, she prayed very often for an hour or more, kneeling on the floor and prostrate, and at midnight, the Lord’s resurrection, she was jumping and praying too. Indeed, at the Last Supper and on the two following days, she was unable to sleep during the day or at night, because of the holy of holies exposed in different places where it had to be worshiped, even in Rome (this is probably the 40 hour Meaning prayer at the holy grave).

Among other things, she said today (on Maundy Thursday): ‘It was hard to hear the Pharisees arguing yesterday and today and conferring with the traitor Judas



The altar of the tertiary church. On the right is the window from which Maria von Mörl looked at the Blessed Sacrament.

about the imprisonment of Jesus.' Today's ecstasies lasted from six in the evening until two-thirty in the morning, when I was alone in the bedroom asleep and awake. But she herself layed in bed with a very sad face and sighs, stretching out and kneeling. She prayed there on bed or on the ground, and if I am not mistaken, she said: 'Around 12 o'clock in the morning they will arrive in the city with the bound Jesus.

And at 2:30 PM he was locked in the dungeon. On Good Friday from a quarter to ten in the morning to a quarter past one in the afternoon, she prayed kneeling on the floor; then she looked for the bed, and again to the Floor, and only after the Bell of two o'clock did she stay firmly in bed and contemplated until half past three ...

The expression of death was at its highest point today (by Maria of Mörl), she prayed a little after three o'clock, as otherwise not, stretched out for a long time, then bent her arms with a palpable roar and prayed again fervently with raised hands and open eyes.

The rest of the day she soon prayed as usual, and at night she said: "Now I have to pray to the holy grave." "On Holy Saturday happened something extraordinary: During the celebration of the Lord's Resurrection in the parish church, she prayed stretched out on the floor for over an hour, and after climbing the bed, she repeatedly jumped about, cheering and cheerfully [...] around 12 o'clock she stood on the ground jumping, and shortly afterwards she said that Christ had already risen. – At around 2 a.m. she said that Holy Women are on the way to visit the grave. – She celebrated the Easter triduum with a lot of prayer and often she got up during the parish service and prayed kneeling on the floor."

Feast of the Ascension of Jesus Christ and other visions

"On May 28, 1835 (immediately after 12 p.m.) she was honored to contemplate Christ ascending to heaven with the greatest joy and sadness at the same time. She vividly depicted the apostles looking to heaven, kneeling on the ground, eyes fixed and crying, with hands bandaged and raised. Then she got on the bed, moving her head, looking around to see if she could no longer see Christ, until he vanished from her eyes".

On June 7th around 9 a.m. she had an apparition of the Most Holy Trinity under the image of three fiery men, the sight of whom and the lightning struck

(blinded by the light?) She shivered and fell back into my hands, as well as she also suddenly closed the eyes because of the excessive sheen. I asked her about the Trinity, to which she replied: “*Look at fiery men and say what shape they are!*”

“On June 28th, on the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, her prayers were constantly and reverently addressed to this Sacred Heart. She recognized his boundless love for us and our ingratitude for it.”

On the feast of the Immaculate in 1835, Father Kapistran noted: “On December 8th, she had the presence of the Immaculate Conception and her glory in heaven. She was first shown (this event) under the image of a brightly shining star and with a burning flame in the middle. This star was surrounded by white and red roses, as well as lilies, and not only these, but also the whole way was illuminated from heaven to St. Mother Anna, on whom the star descended, covered with such flowers, and at the same time with a great number of angels. This clear vision happened from one-thirty to two-thirty in the afternoon, where she was kneeling on the floor praying. —

She had the other vision at about half past six in the evening. She saw the Blessed Virgin Mary in heaven like a tall, white and immaculate lady with a translucent dress and reddish adornments. On all sides She was surrounded by very shining stars, and under her feet was a snake with an apple in its mouth, she crushed its head; She herself was weighted up by a shining cloud. Very near was the Most Holy Trinity, the Son on the right holding the globe, and the Eternal Father on the left, and these two the Holy Spirit surrounded in the shape of a dove. Surrounded by

all these the Immaculate Blessed Virgin Mary were bright as the sun, so that the rest of the saints, who stood from afar, were quickly struck in shadows. – From that day until the Christmas vigil, she suffered much more.”

Ecstasy during the funeral of Johanna

Maria’s biological sister Johanna, who died on March 13, 1836, was buried on March 15 in Kaltern. In the notes of Father Kapistran’s we read: “At 3 o’clock in the afternoon, sister Johanna was buried; while the priests sang: De profundis etc. when she was carried out, she (Maria) howled [...] so that the believers accompanying the coffin could hear it. But as soon as the dead woman was carried away from the house, she suddenly fell silent and was carried away into a severe ecstasy. When the corpse was placed in the grave, she (Maria) got up in bed, sternly entranced and absorbed by such an ecstasy. After the sister’s funeral I called her again, she appeared comforted and never shed any more tears. So the kindest God relieved her pain, which she endured very calmly in the soul, although nature suffered a lot in this state. Afterwards she confessed to me that in her ecstasy she had recognized her sister, who had died piously in the Lord and was admitted to the enjoyment of God on the following April 12th, fully purified.”



One of the many devotional pictures that Maria von Mörl gave each of the visitors.

Appendix

Prayers from Maria von Mörl

My God, let my heart always, in joys and sorrows, be directed to the holy cross, so that I can always rest in peace in the shade of the tree of my redemption. My God, keep a place in my heart where the world cannot irrupt and I can stay with you. Till the death on the cross, my Jesus, you did the will of your heavenly Father so that you could say: It is done. I ask you, give me the grace that I can fulfill your will and always be able to unite my will with yours. Amen.

*

Lord, do not give me joy anywhere, no consolation anywhere except in you alone.

Give me the grace to live in front of you everywhere and at all times and to have you in my heart. I love you alone and I want to love you more and more. Give me such a power of love that makes me your own image. Amen.

*

Heavenly Father! Accept this holy sacrifice of your dearest Son by the hands of the priest, in adoration of Your Most High Majesty, in thanksgiving for all graces and benefits received, especially for the Incarnation, suffering and death; for the sacraments, especially of the altar, for all internal and external gifts, for the holy church and her rulers, and give them in peace. O father, give her good priests! O Father, I pray you with all the angels and

righteous people for Father Kapistran and for Nikolaus⁷², and for my parents, siblings and relatives, for all benefactors, especially (for those) who stand by me in this situation, for all enemies, for all righteous and innocent and educators. Amen.

The actuality of her Message:

“The statement of the mystic expert Joseph von Görres that Maria von Mörl was placed like a living crucifix in her careless, distracted time has lost none of its topicality. “This statement is just as true in our time, which is often characterized by terrifying religious indifference and disorientation.”⁷³ Today, when esotericism is booming, Maria von Mörl is a visible sign of the existence of God. The Servant of God was completely drawn into the Incarnation and Passion of Christ through the transforming power of the Eucharist. The crib, the cross and the Eucharist were the cornerstones of the Franciscan spirituality towards son of God, who took the form of us. Her friendship with the Mother of God, the angels, saints and the deceased is an expression of her constant bond with the hereafter. God worked in her, and her impressive testimony of life is still alive 200 years after her birth. One of the theological censors in the process of preparing for her beatification sums up Maria von Mörl: “Her mysticism ranks among the great mystics of suffering such as

⁷² cooperator Nikolaus Prosliner.

⁷³ Egger, Peter, *Novene zu Maria von Mörl*, Brixen 2012, 2. Auflage.

Katharina Emmerick, Marthe Robin, Chiara Luce Badano.” In her has come true in a special way what the apostle of the people and mystic St. Paul says: “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal 2, 20). Maria von Mörl encourages us, especially in our often-confused times, to trust firmly in God’s assistance and to always ask the Trinity and living God for help and protection. She is like a guide for the highest and ultimate goal of our earthly life and an intercessor with God, to whom we can turn confidently.

In the introduction to the biography of Maria von Mörl, Father Gaudentius Guggenbichler remarks: “Maria had an extremely great love for God, for Jesus Christ and for the Blessed Virgin Mary; an intimate one Adoration of all angels and saints and touching compassion for the poor souls in purgatory.

She was full of devotion to Jesus in the most holy sacraments, especially during the holy mass she prayed almost continuously for the concerns of the church, for the empire, for our closer fatherland, for the congregations. She prayed ceaselessly for the conversion of the unbelievers, the unbelievers and the sinners, and for all and everyone who asked her prayers. She loved her neighbor, helped with what she had wherever she could, asked God for advice for those in doubt, consolation for those who were sad, and yes, she took even other sufferings.

See, you can apply all of this to yourself, and it is your duty to exercise it according to your status, if you want to enter that life to which you have already entered, as we

can hope confidently, since God Himself through numerous Invocation of her intercession, answers to the prayer, which took place after her death.

Timeline

- October 16, 1812: Birth on the night of the 15th to the 16th in Kaltern, South Tyrol, the second child of Josef Maria Ignaz von Mörl and Maria Katharina, born. Sölva.
- October 17, 1812: Baptism in the parish church of Maria Assumption in the name of Maria Assumpta Katharina Barbara.
- 1822: First Holy Communion Five-year school attendance with the tertiary sisters.
- 1826–27: Stay in Nonsberg Cles.
- Feb. 6, 1827 Death of her mother, Maria is the oldest daughter, responsible for the family.
- 1829: P. Johannes Kapistran Sojer OFM becomes her spiritual guide.
- Nov. 29, 1830: Admission to the Third Franciscan Order, private vow of virginity (Consecrated virgin).
- Feb. 2, 1832: Presumed beginning of the ecstasies.
- May 3, 1832: Maria could not leave the parental home due to illness. She remains bedridden until the end of her life. In that year she also lost the language until short before her death.
- July 1833: Severe disputes are ended by an exorcism by her spiritual father.
- Summer / autumn 1833: The mass influx of visitors is stopped by ecclesiastical and secular authorities.
- Feb. 1834: Appearance of the stigmata on the inside, from
- Dec. 1834: Appearance of the stigmata on the outside.
- 5th Aug. 1834: First Holy Mass of her biological brother P. Hayzinth of Mörl in the monastery church Kaltern.
- March 13, 1836: Death of her sister Johanna.

- Spring 1840: Death of her sister Klothilde.
- Nov. 3, 1840: Death of her father Josef Ignaz of Mörl.
- Autumn 1841: Relocation to the extension near the Tertiary sisters.
- September 8th – September 15th Oct. 1867: last contestation, purification.
- Jan. 11, 1868: Maria dies at half past two in the morning.
- Jan. 12, 1868, the deceased is in the tertiary church laid for paying last homage. She is placed (like a saint) in a zinc coffin and then in a wooden coffin.
- Jan. 13, 1868: Jan. 13, 1868: Solemn burial in the cemetery, which she donated in Kaltern. Shortly after death, there are various answers to prayer through her intercession.
- 1870: P. Gaudenz Guggenbichler OFM writes a biography of Maria of Mörl on behalf of the order.
- 1968: Finding her grave. There are few remains left.
- July 1, 2016: Ceremonial opening of the beatification process of the Servant of God Maria von Mörl in the Johannes chapel of the Franciscan monastery in Bolzano by Diocesan Bishop Ivo Muser.
- January 12, 2019, the diocesan process was officially concluded in the presence of Bishop Ivo Muser in the parish church of Kaltern.



Father Gottfried Egger OFM

(*1953 in Zurich) entered the Franciscan order in 1974, where he professed in 1979 and was ordained in 1981. He lives in Näfels (Switzerland), where he is the guardian of the Franciscan monastery there. He is a sought-after retreat preacher, connoisseur of Franciscan spirituality and author. He has worked as a postulator since 2012 and as the episcopal

delegate of the diocese of Bozen-Brixen in the beatification process of Maria von Mörl since 2016.

The diocesan process was opened in 2016 and was officially concluded on January 12, 2019 in Kaltern by the diocesan Bishop Ivo Muser. Now the Roman process has begun. Since then, Father Gottfried Egger OFM is Vice Postulator.

Maria von Mörl (1812–1868) is one of the most fascinating mystics of the 19th century. At the age of twenty-two, the impoverished South Tyrolean aristocratic daughter, who was ailing from an early age, began to go into extraordinary mystical states. The love for Jesus draws her into ecstasies, during which she contemplates the life and passion of Jesus for hours. When the “Ecstatic of Kaltern” received the stigmata of Christ in 1834 and entered the passion of Jesus on Thursdays, an influx of pilgrims began, including the blessed Adolph Kolping and also rulers and princes of the church.

This illustrated book traces the life, spirituality and charisms of Maria von Mörl based on the reports from contemporary witnesses along with testimonies of healings through her intercession and a small prayer appendix.

ISBN 978-88-6563-307-6

