

# RUNNING BLIND



Thus says the LORD:

Shout with joy for Jacob,

exult at the head of the nations;

proclaim your praise and say:

The LORD has delivered his people,  
the remnant of Israel.

Behold, I will bring them back  
from the land of the north;

I will gather them from the ends of the world,  
with the blind and the lame in their midst,  
the mothers and those with child;

they shall return as an immense throng.

They departed in tears,

but I will console them and guide them;

I will lead them to brooks of water,

on a level road, so that none shall stumble.

*Jeremiah 31: 7-9*

*by*

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Discontent with this world gives such a painful longing to quit it that, if the heart finds comfort, it is solely from the thought that God wishes it to remain here in banishment. ~**Saint Teresa of Ávila**

She was being called. When summoned one must not be late. As time is but a loosely entwined thread with the abating preponderate mundanities of human affairs; to be late in these realms has an altogether different meaning. She could feel a glowing resonance building to a crescendo of correspondence.

There was a sharpening of Love, an intensification of Eternal Light animating her excitement. It was going to be part of her purpose now and while it had always been there, she was going to get her assignment. Her one and only charge for all of eternity. After all, it was why she was created. Yet now, there was an orchestrating convergence of details.

Her place among voluminous songs emanating from beatific choirs would keep enveloping her in endless Joy and Peace. Each notating strand of glorious polyphony would be transposed into a sentry attuning itself to symphonic Treasuries of Divine Will.

She felt her heart glowing with a new kind of smile. The dance of life of a soul entrusted to her was going to be so sweet! She couldn't wait to see how the powerful fragility of human will, and the exacting order of the Lord's Perfect Unconditional Love, would gracefully ooze and slide across the ballroom floors of time, people, and situations.



The retinue was disbanding. It was hard to leave the myriad of angels he had worked hard with to be ready for spiritual battle. They would never be completely apart but his focus was changing. Whether he was truly ready or not, the viscerating coaching of Archangel Michael's exacting training was interred into his vigorous Light of Being.

He was prepared to take his charge. Without any specifics, he was keenly aware of the fierce fight that lay ahead. In fact, it was crippling to consider. He flexed his massive wings as he prepared to present himself to the Ministry of Assignments.

His duty, no matter how arduous it might become, would be a creative journey into the mysteries of heaven. Besides, the triumph of the Glory of the One enlisting him for this special duty was his only concern. He lifted his shofar upwards towards the rising heavens and blasted a prayer of gratitude.

His intensity, and earnest desire to serve, would find more than a suitable match in the human assigned to him. And so, he began his journey with unbridled love and trust in the One seeking his service.



They arrived together. Even without receiving details of their assignments, there was an immediate symmetry of “calling” that filled them with mutual delight. Having not had the pleasure of making each other’s acquaintance, they dutifully bowed with deferential respect, and blessed each other, as is customary among angels. The radiance of each increased in brilliance and they began walking together.

Twelve pillars on each side of a rising promenade led to the assembly hall where the new assignments were going to be made. The pillars’ contours were encased in lustrous pearly smooth surfaces sheening and glistening whenever they were glanced at.

The pillars appeared to be holding up the sky; a vast unsearchable swath of heavens adorned with playful ever shifting and shape changing iridescent clouds curtaining the Ministry of Assignments building.

The promenade was paved with crystal clear diamond pathways twinkling with deeply cut facets of wisdom encoded in pictorial songs. The lush melodies were soaking the hearkening soles of the guardian angels’ feet as they shuffled in gliding motions across the pathways on their way to the assembly hall. The songs emanating from the pictures were full of rich harmonies infused with oblique guidelines and some initial information about their assignments that was personalized for each angel.

Banners gilded with hues of every imaginable color waved to greet droves of angels arriving from all directions. The hall’s formidable Sandalwood doors were thrust wide open with a grand welcoming flourish. They were decorated with rubies, sapphires, and emeralds and exuded a delicious perfumed essence that was at once riveting and soothing to the angels who were walking through the gracious doors.

The angels stepped into the assembly hall and took their places. It was a standing room only event with over 385,000<sup>1</sup> angels in attendance. The contagion of bristling excitement was

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<sup>1</sup> “The UN estimates that around 385,000 babies are born each day around the world (140 million a year).” Source: <https://www.theworldcounts.com/stories/how-many-babies-are-born-each-day>

suffusing the air with an electricity manifesting itself as streaks of jagged blue bolts of lightning jumping between angels.

A ginormous podium was the centerpiece of the assembly hall. The angels arranged themselves in dense concentric circles around the podium awaiting the arrival of a legion of Dominion<sup>2</sup> angels who would be presiding over the ceremony. They would have the Scrolls of Record obtained from the governing angels of the Thrones<sup>3</sup> with the guardian angels' assignments.

Beneath the podium, the fragile blue planet of the earth was visible. All of the clouds had been swept away and each angel had a clear line of sight to the birthplace of their human. The globe was rapidly spinning to keep up with all the angels zooming in and out of different places in the world in an effort to share with each other through bursts of knowledge the initial information they knew about their assignments.

Booming herald trumpets drowned out the infectious commotion. The clamor of sharing came to an abrupt end. The guardian angels dropped to their knees and bowed their heads. Fiery sweet incensed smoke filled the pregnant space of waiting. A distant rolling thunderous exaltation shook the hall:

*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,  
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.  
Hosanna in excelsis.  
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.  
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.  
Hosanna in excelsis.<sup>4</sup>*

The Light in the hall intensified. The guardian angels embraced the Light shining from the east, and rose in unison to greet their God and King. The angels' rapturous attention was animated with scintillating, graceful movements of devotional worship full of untold Joys. Silence reigned in their spirits with a deafening clarity as they received the outline of their divine charter:

**Blessed be the servants of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.  
Entrusted to you are the illumination and protection of our Father's precious adopted  
children. Through Me, with Me, in Me, and by Me, and my  
Precious Blood they will be made whole.  
Receive them tenderly as a Shepherd cares for the lambs of his flock.**

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<sup>2</sup> Description of the Nine Choir of Angels. See <https://www.beliefnet.com/inspiration/angels/what-are-the-9-orders-of-angels.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Translation of Latin from 1969 the current translation from 2011 differs in the second line Holy, Holy, Holy. Lord, God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosana in the highest. Source: <https://www.liveabout.com/translation-of-the-sanctus-724438>

*“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.’ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”<sup>5</sup>*



**The Queen of Heaven, who was conceived and born without sin, and who was the first human temple to receive Me in all the Fullness and Wholeness of my Sovereign Divinity, will be your Principal Ally, and your Royal Emissary of intercessory prayer. Your Queen knows intimately how much I thirst for souls. Her maternal mantle of blessings will ensure that every possible Grace that can be given, without thwarting the free will of each person, will be enacted in the lives of my Father’s adopted children and heirs of our Kingdom. Please always remember, that through the Office and Authority of all that you are being empowered to do, to bring these precious ones deeper and deeper into the endless mysteries of my Merciful and Loving Sacred Heart.**

The Light from the east sent a jolt of kindling sparks into the assembly hall. An inconsumable blazing Fire pulsing with darting blue and purple flames began to burn next to the podium. A Seraphim angel flew to stand guard at the Fire. He carried a long stick with a rounded flat prong on its end with symbols carved into its surface:



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<sup>5</sup> Luke 15: 4-7

Then a legion of Dominion angels processed into the hall holding seven scrolls with excerpts from the Book of Life. The scrolls were unrolled with great care and draped across the podium. Members of the legion took turns standing at the podium passing back and forth, between themselves, a large silver yad<sup>6</sup> for keeping track of the names and instructions being read from the scrolls.

In rapid succession angels came forward through the thick concentric circles of their colleagues to receive their assignments. After a name was read from the scroll, the Seraphim dipped his long stick into the fire and pressed its prong into the heart of each angel. Key passages from the Sacred Word, encoded with spiritual truths especially relevant for the person being assigned to the guardian angel, were branded on the heart of the angel to guide the mission that lay ahead of them.

It was her turn. She presented herself to the Dominion angel presiding over her assignment with as much humility as she could muster. Although her self-conscious curtesy almost caused her to fall flat on her face in the process, she managed some semblance of angelic poise. He began to take her in with copious scrutinizing glances that could not belie his continuously growing bemusing smile of abject delight.

He began his assessment in a somber tone, “I see... you are uniquely equipped with an excess of Joy, a propensity for song and dance, an inordinate excess of self-possessing God glorifying silliness, a flare for sacred storytelling, a passion for contemplative narrative, an insatiable thirst for opportunities to exemplify generosity, a penchant for hospitality, and a deep spirit wired for compassionate prayer. Our dear Lord did manage to stuff quite a bit in such a small angelic package. Goodness gracious He never ceases to amaze me. Praise Be His Holy and Great Name now and forever!”

He stopped his study of her and proceeded to examine the scroll in front of him. “Hmmm, let’s see now who our Lord has chosen for you. This must be an especially needy human.”

The Dominion angel pointed the yad at the line in the scroll with her assignment.

יֹד־חַנּוּךְ

In unison, a mighty chorus of Dominion angels sang the name with ineffable love:

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<sup>6</sup> “A **yad** (Hebrew: יָד, literally "hand"; Yiddish: האַנט *hant*, "hand") is a Jewish ritual pointer, popularly known as a **Torah pointer**, used by the reader to follow the text during the Torah reading from the parchment Torah scrolls. It is often shaped like a long rod, capped by a small hand with its index finger pointing from it.” Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yad>

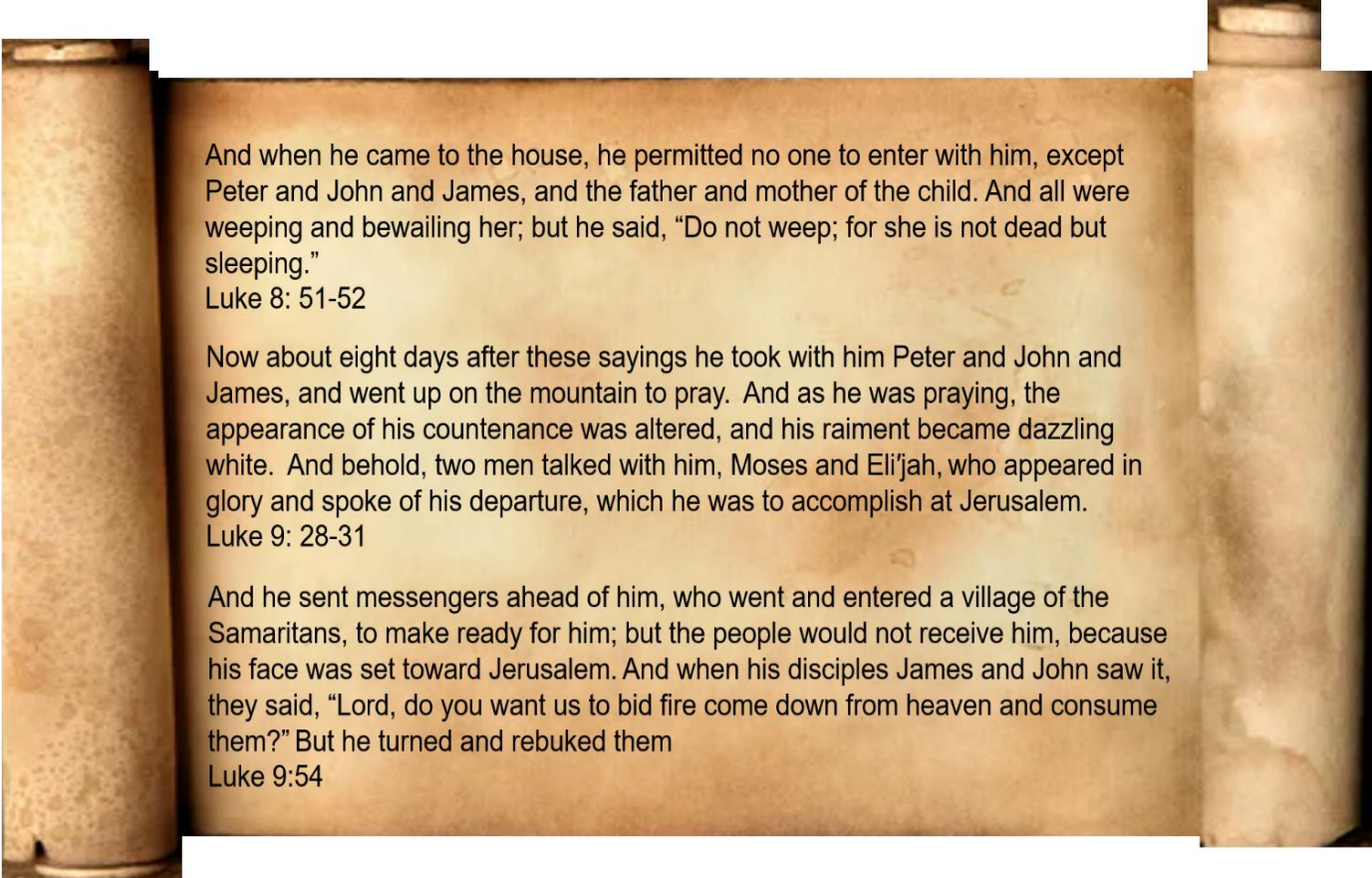
# “Yochanan<sup>7</sup>”

The Dominion angel explained, “Yochanan’s name means, *Yaweh is gracious.*”

She began to turn his name over and over in her thoughts; rotating it as if it were an object and trying with all of her strength to greet this fresh beautiful soul with tender sweetness. She hadn’t notice the Serpahim angel extending a glowing prong towards her heart. She felt a brilliant singeing flash of compacted Wisdom titillating with spiritual mysteries consuming every fiber of her being.

She listened intently as the Dominion angel explained, “These gems from the Sacred Word are your personal companions for discerning the character, nature, and needs of Yochanan. May the Light of the Divine Will activate the blessings of the Word and confer upon Yochanan and you, the never ending Presence and Peace of our Lord and God.”

Turning within herself she began to reflect on the Sacred Word:



And when he came to the house, he permitted no one to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child. And all were weeping and bewailing her; but he said, “Do not weep; for she is not dead but sleeping.”

Luke 8: 51-52

Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the appearance of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became dazzling white. And behold, two men talked with him, Moses and Eli’jah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem.

Luke 9: 28-31

And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him; but the people would not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, “Lord, do you want us to bid fire come down from heaven and consume them?” But he turned and rebuked them

Luke 9:54

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<sup>7</sup> Yochanan is the Hebrew name for John. The chosen name coincides with the beloved apostle and evangelist John.

One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was lying close to the breast of Jesus...  
John 13:23

When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" <sup>27</sup> Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.  
John 19: 26-27

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they wondered; and they recognized that they had been with Jesus.  
Acts 4:13

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants what must soon take place; and he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, <sup>2</sup> who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.  
Revelation 1: 1-2

Caught up in the Word, she found herself drawn into a spinning tunnel fashioned from blinding white light. She could make out a vague blue dot of the earth at the end of the tunnel. Her time to serve was about to begin.



After a deep bow and blasting a blessing of praise on his shofar, he straightened his back and stretched himself as tall as he could to take on a stature of solemn seriousness. He raised his head and then with a slight purposeful jutting forward and lifting movement of his chin, stood at ready attention before the Dominion angel presiding at the podium.

“You’ve been trained by the best I see,” observed the Dominion angel.

After a brief pause he continued, “You are a FINE spiritual warrior endowed with raw strength, bold grit, impatient perseverance, exceptional courage, an astounding capacity for absorbing the suffering of others, an every ready ganergous instinct for stirring up sass for defusing and vifiying even the most austere and grievous sitions, stubborn to the core, a keen and curious intellect, a flare for teaching, an unrealized talent for writing, an affable



relationship to creating and maintaining structures, an unbreakable commitment to the strictures of loyalty, and you are possessed by a gentle, spirit deep and true. For all these things, we lift them up as perpetual offerings of praise, glory, and honor to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”

The Dominion angel pointed the yad at the line in the scroll with his assignment.

# יהוה

In unison, a mighty chorus of Dominion angels sung the name with ineffable love:

*“Hadassah<sup>8</sup>”*

At the lovely sound of her name the guardian angel felt a surge of pride. This was certainly a mighty maiden of the Lord in the making he thought.

The Dominion angel pleased by the guardian angel’s summation explained, “Her name means star.”

The Serpahim angel extended the prong of his stick into the Fire next to the podium and thrust it into the guardian angel’s heart. A suffusing searing sensation delivered an infusion of delicious Wisdom through his entire being.

The Dominion angel explained, “The story of Esther from the Sacred Word will be your guide in discerning the character, nature, and needs of Hadassah. May the Light of the Divine Will activate the blessings of the Word and confer upon Hadassah and you, the never ending Presence and Peace of our Lord and God.

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<sup>8</sup> Hadassah is the Hebrew name for Esther. The name Hadassah is derived from the Hebrew word hadas (Heb. הדס), a myrtle tree from the Myrtaceae family. The myrtle has a pleasant fragrance. Rabbi Shmuel Eliezer Edels, known as Maharsha, explains that since “man is like a tree of the field.” therefore the righteous are called myrtles, likened to a good tree with a pleasant smell.

The name Hadassah represents righteousness. As such, it corresponds to a heavenly sphere representing G d’s infinity. The name Esther (Heb. אסתר) is derived from the Hebrew word hester (Heb. הסתר), which means “hiddenness,” and corresponds to a spiritual plane representing hidden G dliness. Source: [https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/1769366/jewish/What-Does-the-Name-Hadassah-Mean.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1769366/jewish/What-Does-the-Name-Hadassah-Mean.htm)

Queen Esther, seized with mortal anguish,  
had recourse to the LORD.  
She lay prostrate upon the ground, together with her handmaids,  
from morning until evening, and said:  
"God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, blessed are you.  
Help me, who am alone and have no help but you,  
for I am taking my life in my hand.  
As a child I used to hear from the books of my forefathers  
that you, O LORD, always free those who are pleasing to you.  
Now help me, who am alone and have no one but you,  
O LORD, my God.

"And now, come to help me, an orphan.  
Put in my mouth persuasive words in the presence of the lion  
and turn his heart to hatred for our enemy,  
so that he and those who are in league with him may perish.  
Save us from the hand of our enemies;  
turn our mourning into gladness  
and our sorrows into wholeness."

Esther Catholic cannon Chapter 12, 14-16, 23-25

While mulling the courageous story of Esther, he found himself drawn into a spinning tunnel fashioned from blinding white light. He could make out a vague blue dot of the earth at the end of the tunnel. His adventure with a star of compassion was about to begin. He blasted his shofar with a mighty gust of praise and thanksgiving!



The surest way to determine whether one possesses the love of God is to see whether he or she loves his or her neighbor. These two loves are never separated.

Rest assured, the more you progress in love of neighbor, the more your love of God will increase. ~**Saint Teresa of Ávila**

Alphaora and Omegaora were small sister villages of one another tucked safely in the foothills of the Monterey mountain ranges. Over the years, these cobble stoned, seemingly arrested in time, humble villages were an oasis of peace in the midst of four perpetually feuding kingdoms in the north, south, east, and west. To be from Alphaora or Omegaora was

considered to be a curse though. After all, nothing of value or worth could ever come out of such unimportant places.

The villagers relished their life, and the villagers cherished one another. Their humble gentility and warm hospitality were palpable in even the smallest and most obscure gestures of kindness. They possessed an unrehearsed, never pretentious, ever present focus of pervasive caring intention for each other. One could argue that their modest lives, and the circumstances under which they lived required such an inner quality, and yet, there was a clear volitional, existential centeredness to their ways. They were drawn to the delightful gravity of this fulfilling way of walking and being in the world.

For example, what would you think, if before you awoke a neighbor placed a warm loaf of bread in front of your door since she happen to know, without you or anyone else telling her, that you had just run out of flour, and that it might be days before you could procure any? Or what about a craftsman, who sets aside two days of wage earning, to make his neighbor a new chair for his family's table when he learns that his neighbor will be hosting a relative in his home and that without a new chair he would not be able to offer them a place to sit at his family's table?

This was the norm in Alphaora and Omegaora. For these bright warm hearts, tender and sweet, opening with kindness was nothing extraordinary. Nor were their ways overtly celebrated as acts of great charity; it's just the way these villagers lived neighborly lives of selflessly caring for each other.

The towns to the north of Alphaora and Omegaora were renown for their sophisticated fiduciary contortions in the arts of business and trade. People in the north of the kingdom were held in high esteem for their shrewdness and talent for capitalizing on the most efficient and self-serving business deals to secure their wealth and position. A certain icy logical transactional precision rationalized every preempting maneuver that maximized their advantage over others in almost any situation. The northerners pitied the villagers. They held the villagers' simple, ingratiating ways with haughty contempt and relentless ridicule.

The warmer climate in the southern towns of the kingdom were conducive to living physically active, and very vibrant lives. Most southerners were self-possessed with admiring the beauty of their attractiveness, hard earned toned bodies, and golden tans. Appearance, and lavish immodesty for the sake of immodesty, were favored over any intimations of a more humble nature. Esteem was generously heaped upon all card carrying members of the Me, Myself, and I clubs. One fashion was quick to give way to the next, and keeping up with the latest trends was all the rage. People's proclivities for pursuing heated pleasures had become an obsession that knew no limits, constraints, or boundaries. The "ugly" people of the villages of Alphaora and Omegaora were scorned for their pathetic lives.

The fickle towns of the east were safe havens for the most lawless and criminally minded people of the kingdom. As other parts of the kingdom pursued self-righteous ways to lock down the norms and expectation of their social behaviors, towns in the east were sanctuaries for those hell bent on pursuing the liberating chaos of making up their own rules to best suit themselves. In the glorious vicissitudes of anything goes, and one thing is as right as the next, people in the east thrived on feeding upon one another. Their favorite past time was to plot elaborate anarchistic schemes for disrupting the lives of other people in the kingdom. For the most part, the people in the east left Alphaora and Omegaora villagers alone. The thought of even being in the vicinity of these people was reprehensible to them. The people from the east noticed that the villagers' peace seemed immovable regardless of whatever external circumstances might befall them. Therefore, the insidious pleasing sting of delivering suffering blows to others had little to no effect on the villagers. This only served to incite more rage for the people of the east, rather than the pleasure they sought in causing hurt to others.

The towns in the western part of the kingdom were geographically charmed with natural raw, bold beauty. Verdant carpets of fertile land unfurled themselves on jagged cliffs beholden to foaming waters seething with fish, dolphins, and whales. Many of the families from Alphaora and Omegaora had been originally from these western towns. Over time a kind of blinding malaise infected people's native sense of wonder. Rapid progress in all types of innovations and discoveries grabbed the attention of westerners. What at first might have been an inadvertent lapse of wonder for their stellar surroundings, over time morphed into flagrant disregard for the beauteous gifts of nature not of their own making. Nature was supplanted by the clever creations and findings of willful intellects intent on controlling and mastering the world around them. The people of the west were too busy worshipping and pursuing material progress to be concerned or think about the simpletons from the villages.



Alphaora's beloved musical couple of Theodoros<sup>9</sup> and Yocheved<sup>10</sup> were surprised by the unexpected pregnancy. Yocheved had been barren for seven years. For the aging Theodorus, Yocheved's pregnancy was like a delicious reverberation of a never heard before instrument voicing novel tones of hope that filled both of their hearts with joy. It was an unmistakable

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<sup>9</sup> In Hebrew, the name has a similar meaning, as the name "Theodoros" is translated to "God-given." Source:

<https://starbijay.com/theodore-name-meaning-in-hebrew/>

<sup>10</sup> The name Yocheved is girl's name meaning "God is glory". The name of the mother of Miriam, Aaron and Moses in the Old Testament. Source: <https://nameberry.com/babynome/yocheved>

miracle after decades of trying to conceive a child. Then again, the couple had never stopped praying and believing that anything was impossible for God.

The village composer and singer were giddy with anticipation. Even when the pregnancy became physically demanding, the to-be-mother could not stop beaming from ear to ear. The other villagers couldn't have been happier for the couple's miraculous fortune. Yocheved went about the village asking everyone to touch her belly and bless the baby. This was neither a chore nor a hardship for anyone to indulge her. Everyone said they could feel the baby dancing in her womb. And Theodoros was consumed in rapturous spurts of composing new hymns of praise and thanksgiving to be played in Alphaora's and Omegaora's shared chapel of the *Madonna Castri Cordis* (Madonna of the Castle Heart).

The big day arrived. The guardian angel found a comfortable spot in the room and took it in all the proceedings with great interest. Her angelic composure quickly devolved into something else. Being of an excitable nature she couldn't help herself. She started singing and doing twirling dances around the parents and midwife. It was a good thing no one could see her because from time to time she would lose her balance in one of her agile challenged bouts of exuberance.

After an intense delivery, the midwife raised a wailing baby boy for all to see. There was immediate agreement as to what name the boy should be given. God had been so gracious to Theodoros and Yocheved. This boy must be named Yochanan.

They gazed in wonder at their precious bundle of life. They knew without a doubt, that Yochanan was destined to be a blessing and a source of God's Joy to many. The guardian angel touched Yochanan's heart and whispered, "Welcome gracious child, may the Light of our Lord transfigure the eyes of your heart into a temple lavished with infinite visions of His Goodness and Love."



Josef was covered in saw dust which arguably might have been his favorite thing short of his wife Miriam's cooking. The newlyweds were charmed by all the wonderful new rituals of daily life together. Josef was hard at work chiseling, and shaping ornate wooden pillars and pedestals to be used for the Easter services that year. Josef was humbled by the pastor's invitation to design the decorations. Among all the carpenters in Alphaora and Omegaora he was the artisan chosen.

Of course Miriam's counsel was essential in ensuring that all the carved details and colors chosen for the pieces would work with the chapel's simple décor. They were quite a team. It

was enlivening for Josef and Miriam to collaborate and co-create the decorations, and in doing so, became an obvious sign to everyone, that the couple's new union would be a blessing full of great fruits.

Miriam was also beloved by the villagers for the splendor of her rose garden. She could often be found sharing a bright red rose in the glory of its blooming life with a neighbor. Flowers from Miriam's garden, and in particular her red roses, were a strong medicine guaranteed to lift up anyone caught in the throes of distress or sadness.

Miriam's neighbors were ecstatic when they learned she was pregnant with her first child. People went out of their way to fuss over her and make sure, especially in the later months of her pregnancy, that she had plenty of everything. Josef, being a modest man, was a bit overwhelmed by all of the attention, but grateful for the care being lavished on his wife. Despite everyone's protestations otherwise, Josef, often giving up hours of his sleep at night, insisted on fixing and crafting things for people to express his undying gratitude for their kindness.

The guardian angel was still blasting his shofar when Miriam was taking the baby into her arms and putting her to breast for the very first time. He positioned himself next to Josef and without opening his mouth, consecrated the child to God while sweetly praying over and over her name, "*Hadassah, Hadassah, Hadassah.*"

Josef walked over to kiss Miriam and their beautiful, peachy soft golden haired baby. He looked deeply into Miriam's eyes and effused, "She's a stunning gift from God. What a journey she's made. And to think, that with the Shepherd of her heart, she selected us as her parents. Blessed be God our Creator! May she become one of our Lord's mighty maidens just like her mother."

Josef paused, as if listening to something speaking inside of him and then asked his wife, "What if we name her Hadassah, after one of your favorite courageous heroes in the bible?"

Miriam smiled – and so it was decided.



I began to think of the soul as if it were a castle made of a single diamond or of very clear crystal, in which there are many rooms, just as in Heaven there are many mansions. ~ **Saint Teresa of Ávila**

Sunday was a special day for the villagers of Alphaora and Omegaora. It was a day of rest; as it was always meant to be. No matter what exciting or even challenging things might be going

on in people's lives, Sundays afforded everyone an opportunity to re-center themselves. That's not to say that everyone had, or was expected to have, a sunny disposition and put aside any of the burdens weighing upon their hearts, minds, spirits, and bodies but it was a day, set apart to bring the good, the hard, and the unknowns to the community's shared space and time of worship and prayer.

The villages were too small to have their own church so they shared a chapel named *Madonna Castri Cordis* (Madonna of the Castle Heart). It was certainly not a cathedral, and there was nothing stately about its appearance. Yet for the villagers, it was a sacred home, away from their highly anticipated home of heaven which they never stopped longing for.

Madonna Castri Cordis was perched on a hill burrowed beneath trapezizing rugged ridges of the majestic Monterey mountain ranges. The chapel sat in a meadow exactly between the centers of Alphaora and Omegaora.

The chapel's crucifix was perched above the tabernacle housing the real presence of Jesus Christ. This was the chapel's central focus. You couldn't help but be drawn into the mysterious suffering of Jesus' redemptive act of Love. Painted above the crucifix was a prayer.

*Adoramus te, Christe,  
et benedicimus tibi*



The tradition was that as every person entered the chapel, they blessed themselves with Holy Water, genuflected, and prayed:

*Adoramus te, Christe,  
et benedicimus tibi;  
Quia per tuam sanctam crucem  
redemisti mundum,  
qui passus est pro nobis.<sup>11</sup>*

In the right transept of the chapel was a statue of the Blessed Mother of Jesus touching her Immaculate Heart.



But reflect, daughters, that He doesn't want you to hold on to anything, for if you avoid doing so you will be able to enjoy the favors we are speaking of. Whether you have little or much, He wants everything for Himself, and in conformity with what you know you have given, you will receive greater or lesser favors.

~ **Saint Teresa of Ávila**

Legend had it, that long ago, the Blessed Mother had appeared to two young, unrelated, orphaned children. They were out playing in a meadow pretending to be king and queen of a massive castle full of endless rooms and every good thing they could imagine. A woman passing by approached them. She was barefooted and wore a simple white dress with a golden sash around her waist. A white veil covered her head, and a beautiful blue mantle was draped around her.

The children didn't know who she was. They had never seen her before. They halted their play. There was something captivating and soothing about this woman. She walked up to them and coyly inquired into the nature of their games. The children were quick to explain that they were building a castle so that they could act as it's gracious, benevolent king and queen serving all the orphaned children in the kingdom.

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<sup>11</sup> Translation of the Latin: *We adore you, Christ, and praise you; because on your holy cross you have redeemed the world and you have suffered for us.*  
Source: <https://lyricstranslate.com> For a sample musical setting listen to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2vJn9WBdq0>



Their castle was going to be full of splendid rooms for every orphan that ever was, or ever would be. Furthermore, each room would be cared for by a devoted and loving mother and father. Enamored by the sweetness and attentive listening of the woman, the children urged her to play with them and help them build their castle.

The woman happily did so, laughing with delight as they shared with her all the things they were imagining. A bright white light began to envelop her, and spread over the children. They were swept into a flood of luminosity with her, and transported into a new realm.

The meadow disappeared and they were standing in the middle of glorious gardens enshrining an otherworldly castle. The frightened children didn't know what to think. They ducked inside the woman's flowing blue mantle seeking refuge. After a moment or two, she persuaded them to come out. She encouraged them not to be afraid. She explained that she had taken them to her home in heaven. The children's mouths opened wide with wonder as they began to look around.

She led them on a tour of the gardens and castle. They were surprised to see other children running and playing and wanted at once to be a part of their fun. She explained that the children could not see them.

The orphaned children wanted to know why the woman had taken them to this heavenly place. She drew the children close to her in a maternal hug and in a lyrical voice that sounded like bells explained, "The love in your hearts fills me with Joy. I am the Blessed Mother of the Castle Heart. Your desire to minister to orphaned children like yourselves, speaks to me in a special way. I wanted to show you how your hearts can be a reflection of your heavenly home with me, my Son Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit."

"Please remember that you're never alone while you are briefly living in your earthly home, no matter how poor you are, or how broken you may feel. Here in heaven you'll never be orphaned. This is your eternal home.

"One day, not too long from now, you'll be here with me. Until then, please promise me that you'll do three things for me: love my Son - and all of His Father's adopted children with all of your heart, mind, soul and strength, trust my Son with all of your might, and pray to my Son with all your needs, and the needs of others."

The castle and the heavenly gardens disappeared. They were standing again in the meadow. The Blessed Mother's feet were crushing the head of a hissing green serpent.



She assured them, that even though they would not see her again, she would always be present in their lives to be their mother, and the mother of all children in need; especially orphans. She pleaded with them to speak to her in their hearts every day, sharing all of the things they were thinking about, learning, feeling, desiring, needing, and experiencing.

She blessed the children and hugged them. As she began to fade from their sight she said, “My dear little ones, a chapel must be built here on this spot in my honor. It is to be named, Madonna Castri Cordis. And I promise you, one day after dark and terrible things, the great Peace from the Perfect indwelling of my Son in my heart, will reign here as Sovereign King until the end of time.”



Prayer is an act of love; words are not needed. Even if sickness distracts from thoughts, all that is needed is the will to love. ~ **Saint Teresa of Ávila**

Yochanan and Hadassah were like fast growing trellising flowers perfectly situated in their garden’s grooming soil of rich nutrients and life giving sun. They benefited from the doting care and attention of their parents who were well equipped to model the ways of love. As they did with all children, the Alphaora and Omegaora villagers wrapped themselves around Yochanan and Hadassah taking great interest in all the phases of their development and growth. And with the vigilant prayers and tutelage of their guardian angels the two children grew in wisdom.

Hadassah and Yochanan became aware of each other in a very special way. The children were captivated by the story of the Madonna of the Castle Heart. Hardly a day went by without one of them asking their parents to tell them the story again. It was as if they both believed there had to be more to the story, and if they asked enough times, they would eventually hear it.

As soon as they were able move on their own, Hadassah and Yochanan ran every Sunday to the chapel's statue of the Blessed Mother. In the early days of their new found devotion, the children's parents could be seen pulling the wailing protesting children away from the statue so mass could begin without unnecessary interruptions.

Even as Hadassah and Yochanan shared a passion for the Blessed Mother, they were oblivious to one another. Then it happened. One Sunday, when the children were about five years old, they independently asked their mothers if they could bring a rose to the Blessed Mother's statue. Miriam thought that was a lovely idea and took Hadassah out into their garden to have her select the choicest red rose. While Yocheved didn't have the kind of spectacular garden as Miriam, she was touched by her son's desire to bring the Blessed Mother a flower. They found a pristine white rose in the infancy of its blooming life and carefully snipped it.

Gripping tight the treasures of their roses, the children ran in front of their parents to get to the chapel as fast as they could. They could barely contain their excitement. Coming from different directions they caught sight of one another running. They looked over at each other with pure glee and they unofficially began to race one another all the way to the chapel.

Hadassah was quite the runner and challenged Yochanan toe to toe, stride to stride until ready to fall over, they arrived at the chapel. They were beaming from ear to ear. As they caught their breath they locked eyes and looked at each other with a knowing kind of look. Without exchanging a word, Yochanan handed Hadassah his white rose and Hadassah handed Yochanan her red rose. They walked together over to the statue and placed their roses at the feet of the Blessed Mother. From that day forward this was their little ritual every Sunday.



Lord, how you afflict your lovers! But everything is small in comparison to what you give them afterwards. ~ **Saint Teresa of Ávila**

Yochanan and Hadassah's connection grew. By the time they turned seven they had to endure

a little mild teasing and questioning from their friends, and even families, but it helped that their interactions were largely relegated to their Sunday ritual. The physical distance between their villages, and the limited opportunities they had to spend time together didn't seem to matter. Yochanan and Hadassah developed a lovely habit of praying for each other. Their ongoing thoughts and concerns for the wellbeing of the other, became as natural as breathing in and breathing out.

The guardian angels had more and more occasions to confer with each other. They loved comparing notes about the children. Unbeknownst to Yochanan and Hadassah, their uncanny connection with each other, allowing them at times to anticipate and even feel some of the inner experiences of the other, was an artifact of the hard work of their guardian angels who had developed a divinely inspired vested interest in the children's communion with each other. They found the hearts and spirits of the children to be absolutely beautiful, and in a simple, pure way: inspiring. The children's hearts and spirits were like eager, dry earthen vessels thirsty for Light and Goodness. The guardian angels poured every grace they could into them.

Ever true to the instructions given to them by the Lord Himself, the guardian angels brought frequent prayers to the Blessed Mother on behalf of the children. They also did everything they could within their power to prepare Yochanan and Hadassah for their First Communion<sup>12</sup>. That was going to be a very special day that would change the children forever. They couldn't wait for Yochanan and Hadassah to receive the Bread and Cup of Life. Since angels neither eat the Body of Christ, nor drink His Blood, the Eucharist was a heavenly Grace and Joy they had never experienced.

While the children slept at night, the guardian angels had opportunities to catch up on their prayers and news from the celestial realms. They could see for themselves how things were unfolding. The cities in the north, south, east, and west of the kingdom were growing further and further away from any semblance of holiness, goodness, righteousness, and Godliness.

There were few churches still open in any of the cities, and those that were, had become stages of universal mockery with watered down sanitized liturgies composed from and influenced by populace appeals. To hold a belief in God as more than an intellectual interesting question for philosophical and social deliberations, was considered sophomoric and playing unacceptably too close to the civil boundaries of fanaticism.

Alphaora and Omegaora were the last bastions of faith in the kingdom. The villagers were committed to doing their best to live by God's Divine Laws. To do God's Will, in all things at

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<sup>12</sup> "First Communion is considered one of the holiest and most important occasions in a Roman Catholic's life. It means that person has received the Sacrament of the Eucharist, the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Most Catholic children receive their First Communion when they're seven or eight years of age because this is considered the age of reason." Source:

<https://www.announcingit.com/invitation-dos-and-donts/kids-and-teen/what-is-first-communion>

all times, was their greatest desire. Against an increasingly hostile world around them, they were facing an uphill battle and finding themselves under constant spiritual attack.

The guardian angels could feel a growing celestial agitation. They were picking up on sacred rumblings of sadness from unrequited Divine Love. If the Cup of Life became too bitter, and the gifts of Mercy and Love continued to be rejected by most people, then all of the angels and saints in heaven understood the consequences.

Something of a grave nature was likely to happen soon and while they knew neither the day nor the hour, they were convinced of the inevitability of heavenly chastisements. The guardian angels doubled their efforts in watching over the lives of the children. They pleaded with the Blessed Mother to intercede for all of the kingdoms' people.

During the Blessed Mother's conversations with the guardian angels she was at times inconsolable. She explained to them that the severity of these chastisements could be lessened with prayers, but that without some warnings and chastisements, too many souls would be lost forever. A dramatic act of Mercy and Love was necessary.

They could always cheer her up though with their reports of Yochanan and Hadassah. She promised the angels that she would beg her Son to delay the chastisements until the children had their first Communion.



If we don't want to be fools and blind the intellect there's no reason for doubt.

Receiving Communion is not like picturing with the imagination, as when we reflect upon the Lord on the cross or in other episodes of the Passion, when we picture within ourselves how things happened to Him in the past. In Communion the event is happening now, and it is entirely true. There's no reason to go looking for Him in some other place faraway. ~ **Saint Teresa of Ávila**

Josef ran his hands along the satin sleeves of Hadassah's white dress as if he was perfectly smoothing the rough grainy side of a piece of wood from his carpenter shop. Miriam couldn't stop adjusting the freely bouncing golden wavy curls underneath the veil covering her daughter's head. Neither one of them knew how to contain their ecstatic anticipation of finally being able to share the Eucharistic feast with their daughter.

Hadassah was ready; she had been ready for a long time. Her guardian angel was outfitted with his finest amour and sharpest sword. He was prepared to walk Hadassah down the aisle to receive their Lord and King. Then, as soon as the Lord entered the temple of Hadassah's heart and spirit, he was going to blow His shofar like never before.

Yocheved lowered the cross over Yochanan's head. It hung perfectly over his heart. Upon the insistence of Hadassah, Josef had made a wooden cross as a Communion gift for Yochanan. He pressed the cross into his heart. He told his mother that he wanted to always stand by Jesus' cross and never abandon Him, no matter what might happen.

Yochanan and Hadassah had asked Theodorus if he would compose a special song for the Blessed Mother to be sung at the First Communion mass to accompany a special gift of roses to be given to the Blessed Mother during the offertory. They had worked everything out. Yochanan would sing as Hadassah brought the roses to the Blessed Mother.

Theodorus was more than happy to compose a song, although being a musician and not a writer, he was secretly concerned about the lyrics. Yochanan's guardian angel knew exactly what she needed to do. Employing some of her best "musing" dance moves that even surprised her, especially when they didn't result in any falls, she inspired Theodorus with lyrics to match his gift of bringing music to life. Yochanan memorized the lyrics by heart and practiced singing the song for the Blessed Mother.

Flowers at your feet  
A prayer in our hearts  
Lift our veil of fear  
Prepare us for this journey  
Brighter than all the stars of heaven  
You carry us on beams of hope  
Children before  
Children now, and  
Children always  
Need your simple truth  
To know your Son and Father of us all  
Teach us not to falter  
Fill us with love sublime  
Teach us how to be servants  
Bless our Communion  
Receive us as your children  
Guide us  
Show us the way home

The first Communion mass was covered in a blanket of soft, warm, murmurings of the Spirit's tenderness. Yochanan and Hadassah were the only children receiving their first Communion on this occasion. This made the mass even more special. When it was time for the offertory, and the presentation of the gifts of bread and wine for consecration, Hadassah and Yochanan stood up.

Hadassah had a gorgeous bouquet of eleven red roses and eleven white roses tied together with an azure blue ribbon. Hadassah and Yochanan took a moment to look into each other's eyes with a look of mutual encouragement and shared devotion. In the privacy of their hearts and prayers they had imagined this moment many times.

Hadassah began a gentle, quiet but earnest, deliberate, slow procession towards the Blessed Mother statue in the right transept of the chapel. Yochanan joined his father who was playing the organ in the left transept of the church. He faced the altar looking towards the Blessed Mother statue.

Yochanan began to sing. A suspended hush of profound reverential peace descended upon the congregation. Yochanan closed his eyes. He was immersed in a flood of sound and emotive prayers that rose from within him, and consumed him with a blaze of Love. Even his ever ebullient guardian angel dropped to her knees in sweet, serene adoration. Yochanan became aware of brilliant light streaming from the altars' gold tabernacle. It was more than his eyes could take in and he felt his heart drinking up the light emanating from the tabernacle.



Hadassah was tethered to Yochanan's voice. Her heart was unified to the music and its prayer. She placed the bouquet of roses at the Blessed Mother's feet and kneeled. Hadassah's guardian angel placed his sword of Truth upon her shoulders. He was caught in flurries of heavenly thermals filling the chapel. Here before him was such a meek and humble but mighty little maiden of the Lord. Both of the guardian angels saw the Blessed Mother with a host of angels. She was smiling with inexorable Joy.



I had many friends to help me to fall; but as to rising again, I was so much left to myself, that I wonder now I was not always on the ground. I praise God for His mercy; for it was He only Who stretched out His hand to me. May He be blessed forever! Amen. ~ **Saint Teresa of Ávila**

The winds of change were howling. Angels were being summoned left and right and being given authority to fill their bowls of chastisement in preparation to pour them out upon the earth. Things and events of a spiritual nature can take time; they unravel in fraying ripples of potentiated repercussions while always leaving a trail of bread crumbed invitations of new possibilities. But time never stands still, at least when it's governed by human will.

Upon command, the Seraphim caught a single breath of God the Most High and with it, its Unbearable Fiery instantiation. They tossed the Breath back and forth between and among their six-winged bodies of Light. The Breath grew into a massive ball of Fiery Destruction.

The Seraphim cried out in a percussive shriek that rocked the heavens, “From this cauldron of fire, send forth a comet to the northern cities of earth. Let them experience the inescapable wrath of Yahweh for their ceaseless, unrepentant sins born from their coldness of heart.”

The Seraphim cried out again, “From this cauldron of fire, send forth a comet to the southern cities of earth. Let them feel the wrath of Yahweh for their ceaseless, unrepentant sins born from their passions of heart wrought in their indulgent pleasure seeking corruptible bodies.”



The Seraphim cried out a third time, “From this cauldron of fire, send forth a comet to the eastern cities of earth. Let them know the wrath of Yahweh for their ceaseless, unrepentant sins born from the perversion of their hearts expressed in lawless acts of violence and selfishness.”



The Seraphim cried out one last time, “From this cauldron of fire, send forth a comet to the western cities of earth. Let them discover the wrath of Yahweh for their ceaseless, unrepentant sins born from the idols of their hearts reeking with putrid pride and arrogance.”



Christ has no body now but mine. He prays in me, works in me, looks through my eyes, speaks through my words, works through my hands, walks with my feet and loves with me here. ~**Saint Teresa of Ávila**

The asteroids slammed into earth sending indiscriminate shock waves of destruction in every direction. Many people never felt the impact. The sight of the Holy Fires from heavens caused them to die of abject fright and bitter shame. All the major cities in the north, south, east, and west of the kingdom whose aggrandizing structures had once been believed to be invincible, were reduced to decimated rubble. And whatever wasn't accomplished by the impact of the asteroids, was finished by colossal tidal waves, earthquakes, and fires. The few stragglers that had somehow managed to escape the mercy of an immediate death, were consumed by the chaos of people pitting themselves one against another in a cannibalistic fight for survival.

While pleasing to God, not even Alphaora and Omegaora could escape the physical consequences of the heavenly chastisement. When Yochanan's and Hadassah's parents saw the fireballs descending from the sky they screamed at their children to run as fast as they could towards the meadows and the chapel, and to never look back.

Yochanan and Hadassah took off in a feverous sprint. They were sure their parents were right behind them, and that somehow everything would be okay. Their legs had never moved this fast. Their guardian angels were filling their lungs with the Holy Spirit to give them strength and speed well beyond their natural capabilities.

Everything was being shaken by an invisible force. Yochanan fell several times trying to keep his balance as he ran. He arrived at the chapel, or at least what was left of it, before Hadassah. He fell to his knees, buried his face in his hands and began to wail. Their precious chapel had been reduced to a debris field of splintered timbers spread across the meadow. The tabernacle and Blessed Mother statue were the only things still standing.

Yochanan lifted his face from his hands. He turned his gaze towards the tabernacle. He tried to focus his eyes through a blurry filter of tears. The doors of the tabernacle flung wide open. A transfiguring streak of jolting Light burst forth from the tabernacle. Yochanan's eyes

burned, and suddenly everything went black. He could move, he could smell, he could taste his tears, but he couldn't see anything.

Hadassah struggled to stay on her feet. Despite falling hard several times and finding it more and more difficult and painful to move she kept getting up to run to the one place she had always been able to rely on, the chapel of the Madonna of the Castle Heart. As she approached the chapel and took in the devastation, she was relieved to see Yochanan on the ground near the tabernacle. She called out to him but he was unresponsive. The noise around them was deafening.

Hadassah arrived at what had been the right transept of the chapel. She lurched forward to grab hold of the Blessed Mother statue to steady herself as the ground shook beneath her. She fell. This time she couldn't get up. Hadassah shouted Yochanan name with all her might. He recognized her voice and yelled back, "I hear you but I don't know where you are."

"I'm here at the Blessed Mother statue. Can't you see me?" she asked.

He implored her, "Hadassah I'm blind. I can't see anything. Come to me. Please help me."

Replying with anguished tears she said, "Yochanan something has happened to my legs. I can't move them. I can't stand. I can't reach you. Come to me!"

Yochanan assured her, "I'll find you. Keep talking to me. I'll use your voice to locate you."

Hadassah lifted her neck and projected her voice. "I'm at the Blessed Mother statue. Where we've always gone together. You know where it is. Be careful. Listen to my voice. I'll guide you through the field of debris that lies between us."

The guardian angels encircled them in a shield of sacred silence so without them realizing what was happening, the children could hear each other's voices clearly with the ears of their hearts. Yochanan reached Hadassah and gave her the longest, deepest, warmest, securing hug that either one had ever felt.

Releasing one another, Yochanan began to cry again. "What do we do now? Our parents are probably dead. Our chapel is destroyed. I'm blind. And you're lame. We're as good as dead!"

Hadassah's guardian angel nudged her with the tip of his shofar. With new found boldness she declared, "Whatever we do, we're not giving up. You can stand, you can walk, I can see, and we can run. Put me on your back. Working together we'll go look for other survivors."

Yochanan's guardian angel placed her hands against his back and began to sing a happy song. He felt a surge of confidence and certainty flood his being. Following Hadassah's guidance he positioned himself so she could climb onto his back. He was their legs and she was their eyes.

They began their search working seamlessly as a team. Every step of their way was guided by their guardian angel's gracious care. Yochanan's strength never wavered.

After several hours of looking without any success, Hadassah's spirits sank. "Yochanan," she moaned. "This is futile. We'll never find anyone. What if we're the only ones left? What if we've been abandoned? How will we ever survive?" She buried her head in Yochanan's shoulders and wept uncontrollably.

He squatted down on the ground to gently let Hadassah off of his shoulders. They sat in silence. He was filled with compassion. Somehow he was not succumbing yet to the pits of despair. He had hope. He knew they hadn't been abandoned even as they didn't know what was going to happen to them. Yochanan's guardian angel did a slow lilted dance around him as he was deep in thought. She touched his heart. He heard the word, "castle." A new thought emerged from his cloudy straining.

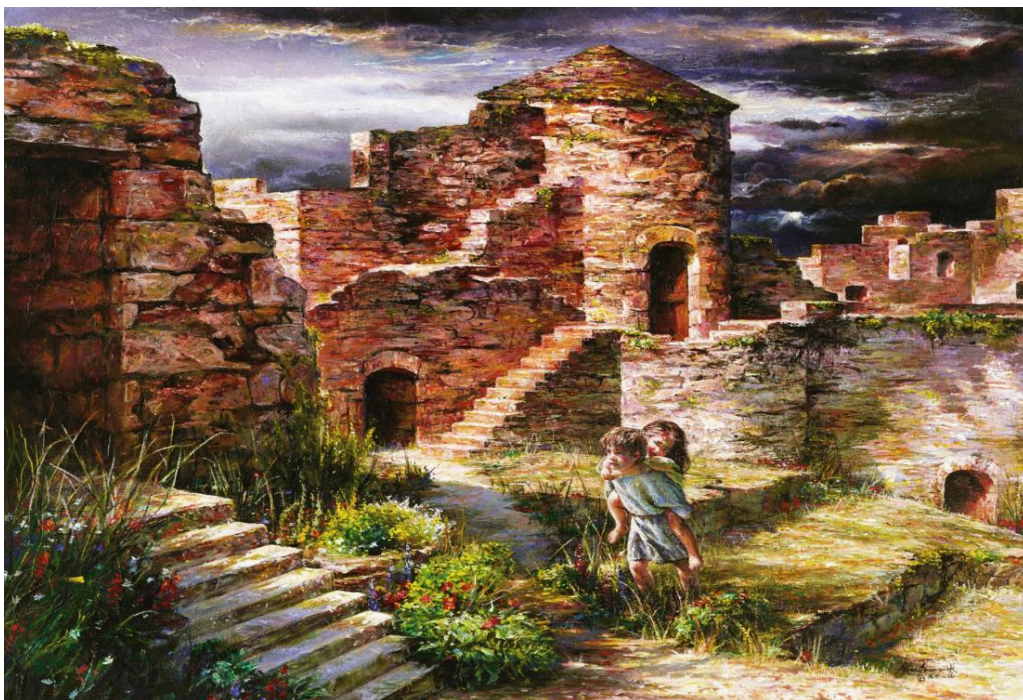
"Hadassah," he began in a slow careful tone. "Do you remember the Legend of the Madonna of the Castle Heart?" She had a hard time hearing him through her anxiety and sadness. He repeated his question in a brighter voice. "Hadassah, do you remember the Legend of the Madonna of the Castle Heart?"

"Of course I do, but tell me the story again," she sobbed.

He was happy to grant her wish. By the time he finished, there was a faint smile spreading on her face. She asked him, "Do you think the Madonna of the Castle Heart will help us now?"

The guardian angels nodded vigorously to themselves. Yochanan suggested, "Hadassah, let's keep looking for others. Please get back on my back. Let's put our hope in the Madonna's promise. She said her children would never be abandoned and I believe her! Don't you?"

"Yes...yes...YES of course I believe her," Hadassah confirmed vigorously nodding her head.



The children set out again. They kept encouraging each other with new stories of the Madonna of the Castle Heart. Like the children in the legend, they imagined a heavenly castle being rebuilt all round them from the broken remains. Over the course of three challenging days, and with lots of tireless help from their guardian angels, they began to find other survivors.

They did find the bodies of their parents. It wasn't a surprise but nothing can prepare a young heart for such a loss. Their grief was unbearable. The children planned a simple service. They would conduct their service at the ruins of the chapel. Hadassah had found a few wooden fragments of her father's chapel decorations. They would place these at the feet of the Blessed Mother statue that was still standing.

Yochanan was going to stand at the tabernacle and sing the song his father composed for their first Communion. Goaded by the fighting perseverance of her guardian angel, he reminded Hadassah of her mother's favorite hero in the bible. The children decided that in honor and thanksgiving for their parents' lives they would end their service by laying prostrate on the ground like Queen Esther asking God for help for the survivors, and mercy for all the people who had died.



The conference of Dominion angels convened to review the work of their legions of guardian angels. Yochanan and Hadassah's guardian angels were represented by none other than the Blessed Mother herself, the Queen of Angels. She informed the Dominion angels that the work of Yochanan and Hadassah's guardian angels had been very pleasing to the Lord. Therefore the Lord had approved healing blessings, to be ministered by the children's guardian angels, and conferred upon each child. Yochanan's eye sight was to be restored, and Hadassah was to regain full use of her legs with a new boost of exceptional running speed.

There was rapturous applause and then a rousing chorus was sung by all:

*Regina caeli, laetare, alleluia.  
Quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia.  
Resurrexit, sicut dixit, alleluia.  
Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.*

*Gaude et laetare, Virgo Maria, alleluia.  
Quia surrexit Dominus vere, alleluia.*<sup>13</sup>

Life continued and something new was being born. The promise of Peace on earth was realized. An earthly experience of heavenly things became the norm rather than an isolated exception. Suffering increased everyone's capacity to love more deeply. Humanity was being given a renewed spirit of Life in more perfect Communion with the Lord. The Mystical Body of Christ in all of its earthly expressions was being glorified.

With the gracious gifts of time, the village's chapel was rebuilt, life returned with an abundance born from simplicity, and the villages grew again – that is of course, with a little help from Yochanan and Hadassah who had three beautiful children.



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<sup>13</sup> Regina Coeli (Queen of Heaven, rejoice!) Translation: Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia. For He whom you did merit to bear, alleluia. Has risen, as he said, alleluia. Pray for us to God, alleluia. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia. For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia. Source: <https://spx.org/en/news-events/news/easter-anthem-mary-regina-coeli-4080>

# Quotes from Saint Teresa of Ávila



Accustom yourself continually to make many acts of love, for they enkindle and melt the soul.

The will has such deep rest in its God that the clamor of the intellect is a terrible bother to it. There is no need to pay attention to this clamor, for doing so would make the will lose much of what it enjoys. But one should let the intellect go and surrender oneself into the arms of love, for His Majesty will teach the soul what it must do at that point.

May today there be peace within. May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be. May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith. May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you. May you be content knowing you are a child of God. Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love. It is there for each and every one of us.

The closer one approaches to God, the simpler one becomes.

If we learn to love the Earth, we will find labyrinths, gardens, fountains, and precious jewels! A whole new world will open itself to us. We will discover what it means to be truly alive!

The important thing is not to think much but to love much; do, then, whatever most arouses you to love.

I know the power obedience has of making things easy which seem impossible.

Mental prayer in my opinion is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us. The important thing is not to think much but to love much and so do that which best stirs you to love. Love is not great delight but desire to please God in everything.

We can only learn to know ourselves and do what we can - namely, surrender our will and fulfill God's will in us.

First, we must always ask God in prayer to sustain us, and very often think that if He abandons us we will soon end in the abyss, as is true; and we must never trust in ourselves since it would be foolish to do so. Then, we should walk with special care and attention, observing how we are proceeding in the practice of virtue: whether we are getting better or worse in some area, especially in love for one another, in the desire to be considered the least among the Sisters, and in the performance of ordinary tasks. For if we look out for these things and ask the Lord to enlighten us, we will soon see the gain or the loss.

Our souls may lose their peace and even disturb other people's, if we are always criticizing trivial actions - which often are not real defects at all, but we construe them wrongly through our ignorance of their motives.

God has been very good to me, for I never dwell upon anything wrong which a person has done, so as to remember it afterwards. If I do remember it, I always see some other virtue in that person.

A beginner must look on himself as one setting out to make a garden for his Lord's pleasure, on most unfruitful soil which abounds in weeds. His Majesty roots up the weeds and will put in good plants instead. Let us reckon that this is already done when the soul decides to practice prayer and has begun to do so.

Those who give themselves to prayer should in a special manner have always a devotion to St. Joseph; for I know not how any man can think of the Queen of the angels, during the time that she suffered so much with the Infant Jesus, without giving thanks to St. Joseph for the services he rendered them then.

It is a most certain truth, that the richer we see ourselves to be, confessing at the same time our poverty, the greater will be our progress, and the more real our humility.

God gave us faculties for our use; each of them will receive its proper reward. Then do not let us try to charm them to sleep, but permit them to do their work until divinely called to something higher.

I know the power obedience has of making things easy which seem impossible.

Keep in mind that I could not exaggerate the importance of this. Fix your eyes on the Crucified and everything will become small for you. If His Majesty showed us His love by means of such works and frightful torments, how is it that you want to please Him with only words? Do what it means to be truly spiritual? It means becoming the slaves of God.