

## **Adrienne Von Speyr's experience of Holy Saturday**

"It is," commented von Balthasar, who was present at these missions. "Christ's final act of obedience toward His Father that He descends into hell." the place into which all the world's sin is finally cast. "In hell He encounters His own work of salvation, not in Easter triumph, but in the uttermost night of obedience, truly the obedience of a corpse.

"He encounters the horror of sin separated from men. He walks through sin and, traversing its formlessness, He experiences the second chaos. While bereft of any spiritual light emanating from the Father, in sheer obedience, He must seek the Father where He cannot find Him under any circumstances."

And such, in vicarious ways, is precisely the harrowing which von Speyr underwent as a result of giving her consent to whatever God might wish of her; a grace, charism and mission which stands at the very center of her mystical life and of its incomparable importance to the Church.

For here is the deepest and most intimate participation in the Lord's own oblation to the Father, His mysterious self-emptying on behalf of the world and the terrible weight of its sin which he redeemed from within.

"What Adrienne experienced, von Balthasar said, 'is actually more horrible than the hell depicted for us by medieval imagination; it is the knowledge of having lost God forever....' So utterly real was it, he added, that for anyone blithely to dismiss the existence of hell would be, at once, both "ridiculous and blasphemous."