

## MARIA BAXIU — IN MEMORIAM

It is already a year since Maria has departed us, called back to the Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, God of Jesus Christ, to whom she had consecrated her life. To those of us who shared her faith and hope, she remains present. We are certain that she is our ambassador to God and that she shares, more than ever, in our task, our labour and our toils.

During this past year I have had the joy and privilege of becoming acquainted with the small fraternal group which had grown up around her in Milan, a group of Jews and Christians for whom brotherhood is a living witness, and whose enthusiasm and labour are expressed in the journal *Sefer (Studi Fatti Ricerche)*, which she edited. For us, this group is a continuing sign of her presence and of her message.

By planting these trees in the Land of Israel, that land in which she herself would have liked to be buried, we simultaneously give expression to her expectation and our own. For Jews, as for Christians, this is a way of visibly affirming that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob "is not the God of the dead but of the living." But it is also for us today our way of affirming our confidence in that progress and blossoming of the work to which she devoted her life.

We have added her name to the litany of the saints, to the long list of those who have experienced the mysterious law whose secret significance God alone knows. This may be summarized in two propositions. The first is that the discovery of the mystery of Israel is, for one who is not a Jew, a privileged grace enabling him to participate to a certain measure in the singular and exemplary grace of the election of Israel. The second, which is a corollary of the first, is that the Christian who loves Israel must be ready to know within the Church, in his own analogous manner, that destiny of solitude, of incomprehension, of malevolence, indeed, even of scorn and hatred, to which the Jew is subject in the world. Maria lived that destiny in an exemplary fashion.

Recalling her memory, as well as that of J an Roger, Sister Aline, Cornelius Rijk, Mgr. Ramslaar, Abbot Leo Rudlof, and Peter Schneider, we may apply once again to her the splendid words of Gregory of Nazianze: "The flame which devoured the shepherd gave light to the flock." May that flame with which Maria was consumed be for us a flame that guides our path and enables us to keep faithful in the darkness.

Marcel J. Dubois, O.P.

(From an address given at the planting of the Maria Baxiu Memorial Grove in the Ramoth Forest in Jerusalem, July 22, 1983.)