

**Question:** Dear Father Joseph, many of us love Luisa and read her volumes together. We have different translations and don't always understand what she says. Can you help us?

**Answer:** I am happy to assist. To the extent that the theologian's vocation and duty require him "to investigate and explain the doctrine of the Faith" and "to preserve the sacred deposit of revelation, to examine it more deeply, to explain, teach, and defend it for the service of the People of God and for the whole world's salvation,"<sup>1</sup> I provide the below response.

## Volumes

You address two things: the translations of the divine revelations contained in Luisa's 36 volumes, and how to properly understand them. With respect to Luisa's 36 volumes that have been translated into English and that are available today, they do not enjoy the Church's backing for the following reasons.

First, we are in a period pending the release of the official Italian 36 volumes that are presently under review – the first 19 of which were granted in 1926 the *Imprimatur* and *Nihil Obstat* of Archbishop Joseph Leo and St. Hannibal. Second, several of Luisa's publications enjoy the Church's present-day official *Imprimatur* and *Nihil Obstat* seals of approval, e.g., *The Hours of the Passion*, *The Blessed Virgin Mary in the Kingdom*, etc. So that one may not be deprived of the many spiritual fruits Luisa's writings offer, one may happily meditate not only on Luisa's approved works, but also on those different and unofficial translations of her volumes in circulation today, but always with the knowledge that they are not official translations. Indeed, all present-day translations of Luisa's volumes were done by individuals who lack conversancy in theology and proficiency in the English grammar. As a result they lack the correct ecclesial and theological expressions (terminology), both of which lend to ambiguous and erroneous interpretations. Hence the past and temporary *moratorium* on conferences to curtail the faulty and *ad litteram* interpretations thereof and request to desist from publishing in print or on the internet said volumes respectively from 26 and 16 years ago.

While I commend anyone who undertakes the voluminous work of translating the writings of a saintly person whose life, like that of Luisa, is associated with sanctity and heroic virtue, I am also mindful that the reading and interpretation thereof must always be done through the guidance and direction of competent experts who are "qualified"<sup>2</sup> by the Church in the fields of dogmatic and spiritual theology. St. Hannibal makes this very clear on several occasions in his letters of correspondence.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *International Theological Commission, the Ecclesiastical Magisterium and Theology*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1975.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Introduction.

<sup>3</sup> In the following passage, St. Hannibal emphasizes the importance of the Church's "learned writers" or theologians who are to educate the faithful, and even remove errors before a prophetic revelation is published, translated and read by the faithful. In a letter to Fr. Peter Bergamaschi who had published all the unedited writings of a renowned Benedictine mystic, Sr. M. Cecilia of Montefiascone (1694-1766), Hannibal criticizes his decision to publish them:

*"Conforming to prudence and sacred accuracy, people cannot deal with private revelations as if they were canonical books or decrees of the Holy See. Even the most enlightened persons, especially women, may be greatly mistaken in the visions, revelations, locutions, and inspiration. More than once has the divine operation been*

The reality that all of the English translations of the volumes in circulation today contain anywhere from 10-15% theological and grammatical inaccuracies, provides reason to exercise caution when reading them, and a stimulus to seek out the proper theological advice from those who are accredited by the Church to teach the faithful. To avoid the pitfall of misinterpreting said volumes, I offer the following recommendation:

- 1) Inform oneself of Magisterial teachings
- 2) Consult with the Church's qualified theologians<sup>4</sup>
- 3) Consider participating in those prayer groups that are loyal to the Magisterium and disassociate oneself from those that are not

### **Interpreting Unofficial Translations in Circulation**

In answer to your question of how those who love Luisa's volumes may properly interpret them when using only the unofficial English volumes in circulation today, I offer the following recommendation.

When one decides to read these translated volumes in a group, with others and/or online, one person (perhaps the coordinator) may inform those present that the translations are not an official translation of the Church, that they contain some inaccuracies (from the translators), and that they ought to seek guidance from a theologian or priest to properly interpret those passages in question.

While to some it may seem that mentioning "inaccuracies" or "errors" in a work that one is publicly presenting to the people is counter-productive, as it will discourage them from reading it, not to do so is more spiritually harmful to the readers and, to be quite frank, dishonest. Certainly one should not convey this truth in an abrupt manner, but rather pray to the Holy Spirit to properly present to the participants the truth in such a way that they appreciate the truthfulness spoken and are drawn to know more. One should emphasize:

- 1) Several of Luisa's prophetic revelations enjoy the Church's official seals of approval (e.g., several *Imprimaturs* and *Nihil Obstats* were granted to the Hours of the Passion, Blessed Virgin Mary in the Kingdom of the Divine Will, etc.).

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*restrained by human nature. For example, who could ratify in full all the visions of Catherine Emmerich and St. Brigitte, which show evident discrepancies? I love the private revelations of holy persons, but I never accept everything.*

*Were I to publish revelations, I would eliminate or revise what is inconsistent with a sound criterion, or reliable tradition, or opinions of sacred, learned writers. I think of behaving prudently... My dear father, to consider any expression of the private revelations as dogma or propositions near of faith is always imprudent!... This is proved by experience, by the mystical theologians, such as St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa, Castrotelere, Poulain, etc... We cannot consider their revelations and the locutions as words of Scripture. Some of them must be omitted, and others explained in a right, prudent meaning."*

<sup>4</sup> There are several theologians and priests familiar with Luisa's writings. There is also online Q&A site where questions may be submitted to qualified Church theologians: LTDW.org. There are also weekly live online zoom meetings open to questions on Luisa and her writings, e.g., "Online Lessons on Divine Will Spirituality."

- 2) Since Luisa wrote more than 15,000 pages, much of her writings are currently being studied by the Vatican, and this includes her 36 volumes. As we await the completion of the Church's review, we are free and even encouraged to read her works, including the unofficial English translations of the volumes, which provide an occasion for us to turn to those teachers of the faith, theologians, whom the Church relies upon to explain her doctrines.
- 3) A website is available to which one may submit questions: [LTDW.org](http://LTDW.org).

In Christ,

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