

## We Heard the Spirit World Testify to the Returning Messiah

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*During the late 1940s, True Father was in Hungnam Special Labor Camp in North Korea, fighting to continue his mission, and fighting for his very life. At the same time (and over the ensuing years), remarkable communications about God's light in the world were given from the spirit world during sittings in Milan, Italy, with a medium named Jolanda (pronounced Yolanda) Pizzi.*

*Despite some initial skepticism, many who heard the testimony from her spirit guide in the 1960s and subsequently listened to the Divine Principle were led to establish the first Unification Church community in northern Italy.*

*Four people contributed their testimony:*

*Elio D'Alberti: Early member of the northern Italian church; now national messiah to the Czech Republic*

*Franco Ravaglioli: Early member of the northern Italian church; national leader of Italy for 20 years*

*Luciana Ferrario: An early member who joined with her husband; now national messiahs to Romania*

*Daniela Granata: A home member, Daniela recorded many sittings with the medium, Jolanda, during the 1970s and 1980s, later transcribing and publishing them in a book *Il Vero Amore [True Love]* in 2009.*

Daniela shared the following background information about Jolanda Pizzi, based on their conversations:



*Jolanda Pizzi (left), a spiritual medium, with Franco Ravaglioli's mother*

Sometimes Jesus came down to talk through Jolanda. I think the Holy See (Vatican) must have been aware of this, since Jolanda at that time was received by the Secretary of Pope Paul VI, to whom she described the details of her encounters with Jesus. She received their acknowledgement that she had really met Jesus. From what she told us, the Catholic church has some particular characteristic signs that allow its officials to understand whether the person describing an episode is telling the truth, because the person must give precise details. As far as we know, for Jesus there are three signs that must be confirmed, but Jolanda told us only two of them: the color of his eyes and his hairstyle -- which are not those which we see in common holy pictures. I leave you to imagine what role Jolanda could have played as a mediator between our movement and the Catholic Church. Alas, she passed away in 1995.

### **Testimony of the Early Members in Italy**

*Elio D'alberti: My mother and I knew a spiritualist lady named Jolanda. She loved Jesus very much. I am writing to testify how well the spirit world (in particular Jolanda's spirit guide, Horward) was ready to testify to the Second*

Coming of the Messiah at that early time. True Father's suffering life was known in the spirit world, as was the fact that he had brought the light of the highest truth and the power of the greatest love of God. Words will never be sufficient to express the joy when the news came that "he is living on earth."

*Franco Ravaglioli: My mother learned that Horward, the spirit speaking through Jolanda, had been British and was the captain of a ship that sank in the thirteenth century. He and all his crew had perished.*

In Jolanda's early days, when he came down and spoke through her, Jolanda was completely out of her body. Her body was taken over by his spirit. My mother was very impressed by what this man said, because he was giving a very high level of spiritual guidance. He talked a lot about Jesus. When my mother came back from the sittings, she would tell us what he had told her -- about what to do in order to overcome difficulties, the support the spirit world was giving, and so on.

When my mother was pregnant with me, she had had a sitting with Horward [Franco was born in 1949]. She was thinking to herself, I will talk about anything, but I won't talk about the baby in my womb. As soon as the sitting began, the spirit told my mother, "You have a wonderful baby in your womb"! My mother was shocked because she had not wanted to talk about her baby. The first thing he said was about me: "He will have a great future. He will be like a priest." My mother said, loudly, "No! I don't want a son who is a priest; I want to have grandchildren, and I want to have a daughter-in-law." Horward replied, "Yes, but in the future, priests will not be like they are now. You will have grandchildren and a daughter-in-law."

*Daniela Granata:* From childhood, Jolanda had paranormal powers, but she thought that all people were like her. She received help and support from her grandmother, who reassured her about the phenomena occurring to her (she felt the presence of spirits). Horward came to her for the first time on February 3, 1948. Jolanda told us that he testified to Mrs. Ravaglioli, a good friend of hers, about the baby she had in her womb and to whom she gave birth shortly afterward. He told her that her son would become a religious leader. Franco later became the national leader of our church in Italy. Some of those who had attended sittings with Horward before us and were guided by him told us that from the very beginning he had talked about "this important person" who had a special role for the future of humankind, although in those years it was still impossible for this person to manifest himself openly. We are talking about the years 1948 to 1965. [True Father's first global tour was in 1965]



*Franco Ravaglioli soon after hearing the Principle*

*Luciana Ferrario:* Horward told them to write whatever he said on paper and to keep the messages somewhere safe. "The time will come when you will understand," he said. They had a drawer overflowing with these pieces of paper. One of the things he said, which at the time had seemed strange, was "the marriage of the lamb has taken place."

*Franco:* My father died of cancer six years after I was born. Just before he died, he met my mother and me and asked for forgiveness for all the pain he had caused us. He said he would recover and we would be one family, together again. My mother was very hopeful about this. When she went to a sitting, she told Horward what my father had said. Horward was silent for a time and then said, "I am sorry. You will

not be able to see him again. You will hear about him only through that special device you have with numbers that go around." (He meant the telephone). My mother said, "Oh, he's crazy; that's not possible - - of course we will meet!" Two days later, the day before my mother was to meet my father, his sister called to say my father had died. My mother could indeed never meet him again, but just heard about him over the telephone.

*Elio:* My grandfather had had healing power in his hands, and my mother discovered that she also had that gift. Our small apartment became a center for healing people. My mother could not stop the people coming. For my father, brother and other relatives, it was difficult to accept the situation because they could not understand what was happening. Finding myself in a position of having to balance different people's expectations of my mother, I began to ask myself about values in life.

My faith in Jesus and in Mother Mary pushed me to find answers outside the Catholic Church. I started attending meetings where Mary appeared. I had many unanswered questions. Often, I could not sleep at night. One night, an oriental man appeared in a dream, calling me by name. He said, "Elio, you are living a life without value." I awoke with a very clear mind. I wanted to be more useful to more people. In particular, I questioned in my heart why so many marriages break down, though in the Bible it is written that man should not separate what God has united. I wondered what God thinks about marriage. With greater determination than I had had before, I asked for an appointment with Jolanda's spiritual guide Horward. I asked him what God thought of marriage. He said, "No marriage has value in front of God. You cannot understand this now, but ask Jolanda to invite you again when she has a larger meeting." Little did I know that the most wonderful clarification was waiting for me.



*Members of the early Milan church community; Jolanda Pizzi is in the chair second from the right; standing at far right, behind his mother, is Elio d'Alberti*

That was 1969. In March, although I did not know it then, True Parents had come to Europe and had held a Blessing Ceremony the first couples there [Note: this was for eight European couples, part of the 43-couple Blessing]; among them were Martin Porter and his wife. At that time, Martin lived far south in Rome, and he did not know Jolanda. It turned out that he decided to visit Milan on the same day that Jolanda had invited me to a "larger meeting." One woman who had been invited was unable to come, and that lady suggested Martin and his wife participate in her place. There were many people, many couples. When it was my turn to put my question, I asked the same one as before, about God's thoughts about marriage. The answer at first seemed to be the same, that no marriages had value in front of God -- but there was a big difference. Horward, the spirit guide, then pointed to Martin and his wife, and said that their marriage did have value in front of God; that they were the only married couple there that was accepted by Heaven.

*Luciana:* Everyone was surprised that Horward said only Mr. and Mrs. Porter's wedding was recognized by God. Nobody knew them, because it was the first time they had come. Many of Jolanda's following were senior members of society with well-established marriages. On this occasion, Horward spoke to Martin very humbly as if he were addressing a superior. After this, Barbara Burrowes [a Guyanese member who joined in Italy and became a missionary there] and Martin Porter began to teach the Principle to the group.

Around this time, Jolanda took all the pieces of paper with Horward's messages out of the drawer. In light of the Divine Principle teachings, the meaning of all the messages became clear. For example, the one that said, "The marriage of the lamb has taken place." All the messages were connected with True Father.

[Note: According to Daniela Granata, another paper read, "He who is to come cannot show himself now." They later understood that this was given at the time Father was in Seodaemun Prison (1955).]

That is how our church in Italy really began -- prior to this, only members from other countries had joined in that country.



*Franco Ravaglioli and other members witnessing in the early 1970s*

[Note:] Jolanda's group was already established by the time Horward began speaking through her. Her clientele included many high-society women who were fascinated by the idea of communication with the departed. According to Luciana, a good number of these became early home church members. They continued to attend Jolanda's sittings, and some of their children joined our church. Because they were already a certain age and did not have the courage to leave their families and material possessions behind, many couldn't stay with the church as it was in those days. But they believed in True Parents.