



ANNA CHROMY

MY LIFE STORY



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### **1 - BIRTH IN KRUMAU / CESKY KRUMLOV**

I should have never been born. War was raging already for several months when my mother discovered that she was pregnant a fourth time.

With my father away, frequent bombing alarms and scarcity of food, my mother, although very catholic, decided that it was impossible to feed another mouth and so she decided to consult a doctor.

As luck would have it, the doctor was not at home and nobody could say when he would return. Back home my mother had a long discussion with her mother, and got the advice I will never forget "Fuer jedes Haeschen waechst ein Graeschen". (For each bunny there grows a weed). My mother heeded the advice and so she decided to forego a visit to the doctor.

### **2 - EVICTION AND FLIGHT TO AUSTRIA**

The war was over and we were fortunate, - our father came back, skinny and depressed, but without injuries. When he saw a fourth little girl at the table he almost collapsed. Couldn't it have been at least a boy he murmured. Only many years later, when he realized that I was the only one to have inherited his artistic talent did he accept not to have a male heir.

Anyway, the question of heritage for his brewery was resolved by the brutal events to come. A new regime had taken over the government which decided to expel the German speaking population. Despite the fact that my mother was a pure Czech from Prague, we had to flee under dramatic circumstances.

My mother, who was aware of my love for the beautiful statues on the bridge in my hometown Cesky Krumlov and the wall paintings in the large castle above our house, took me on a last stroll to say good-bye to all my friends.

The next day we paid a last visit to her hometown Prague. It was in deep winter and I asked my mother if the sculptures would not freeze without my occasional caresses.

Because of the circumstances of our escape, we were not able to take any belongings with us, and for me the worst, we had to leave my beloved grandmother behind. During all the years of my childhood in Krumlov she extended her protective Cloak over me. In her presence I felt secure, whatever happened. She was the one who had sensed my sensitivity first, although I was too young to transform it into art.

We did not have to flee far away, just to the other side of the Bohemian Woods in Austria. Here we learned what it meant to be a refugee. We spoke the same language, had the same religion and culture, and nevertheless we were not welcome. We had no money and no goods, just six hungry mouths to feed. However, luck had it that my father contacted a brewer he knew from the past who was looking for help to run his brewery. I started my new life as a little Austrian.

### **3 - ENCOUNTER AT LINZ, AUSTRIA**

A young man came into our home. My mother smiled at him and turned to me indicating that she thought, "This was him". I looked at him and shook my head in dissatisfaction. He seemed too different from my other friends. But, he handed me a book and left. My mother put her hands to her head and said "No flowers, no presents, a book, the first with a book Anna, somebody to watch". I looked at the volume and was puzzled; it was the "Myth of Sisyphus" by Albert Camus. My mother's premonition proved correct,- this young man was to spend his whole life by my side.

He had spent some time as a student in Paris and had caught the bug of French Civilization. Over time, he introduced me to the other existentialists, philosophers, the chansonniers like

George Brassens, Juliette Greco, Serge Reggiani and others. Little did I know at that time that one day I would be able to meet all these wonderful artists in their hangout at Saint Germain in Paris. More on this later.

#### **4 - NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCE IN GERMANY**

There was a time when I became seriously ill. We were living at that time in Essen, Germany. I had married the young man in the meantime and he found a job in Germany. He had been offered before at age 26 the position as vice-director of a steel mill in Allahabad, India.

When we met the Indian director of the plant in my hometown Linz, he offered to calculate our horoscope to see if we would fit as partners. As Horoscopes are considered trivial and more as an entertainment in general within our western culture, we did not feel it was something to pay much attention to. However, a few days later the Indian Director requested another meeting to give us the results of his Horoscope search. He came with two large volumes and several sheets of calculations. For my husband everything was o.k., but not for me. He saw a major illness, which would impede me from going to India. Having the choice between leaving me back in Austria or quitting his job, my husband decided for the latter.

And just like that it happened. I had to go to hospital in a foreign environment with no friends or family to assist. The doctors proved as incompetent as many others I had to consult in my life. They found a pregnancy but no fetus. They accused me of having performed an abortion, which was absolutely not true. My pain increased from day to day and it became unbearable. My husband and I were desperate.

The pain had ceased. I was unconscious for an incalculable time. They had pushed me into the bathroom with a burning candle at my side. So was this death? I felt so peaceful, so calm. A beautiful light shone over me, I thought Angels came calling. I wanted to see this beauty with my own eyes and opened the lid slightly.

In this moment I was awakened by a terrible scream. The nurse had entered the room to take me to the mortuary and was astonished to find me alive still. Finally, the doctors got their wits together and found out that my ovary had exploded. My first son could not be saved. When it happened a second time the doctors were warned about my previous condition, and sadly the second son also passed away.

So we had to adjust to a life without children, a very sad perspective for a young couple who had bought their first furniture to accommodate at least three of them. This was the second major loss in my life after my grandmother. My partner decided that we would take this destiny jointly on us and start a new life. What does not destroy us makes us stronger was his motto.

#### **5 - PARIS**

And, it did make us stronger. My husband with his love for everything French had managed to convince his company to send him to Paris. As he was working in the publishing business, we were received with open arms by the major publishers, like Gallimard, Hachette a. o. A whole new world overwhelmed my senses,- the writers and existentialist philosophers, like Albert Camus, to whom my husband had introduced me to at our first encounter, the treasures of the Louvre, the largest museum in the world, and many others.

In France I found a culture, la "Civilisation Francaises", which fascinated me to a point that I decided to settle here for good.

In Paris, I had finally found a doctor able to recognize my illness and to heal it for good. However, for kids it was too late. We had at the time our first house in the village of Barbizon, at the fringe of the Forest of Fontainebleau. Barbizon had become famous through its School of Painting with the predecessors of the Impressionists. This environment strengthened my decision, I wanted to become a painter!

An artist friend recommended trying the Academie de la Grande Chaumière in Paris to start a professional career. At the first lesson, I realized that I was the eldest in the class. So, I had to work harder than the others and learn faster.

My professor admired my ardent dedication and soon enough the first results evolved. I was chosen as the only member of our class to attend a group lesson with Salvador Dali in his Paris home in Hotel Meurice.

Each of us had to show a picture to the Master to get his opinion and advice.

When it was my turn Dali stood up from his seat and took my work to another room. A short time after he returned with the words "Anna you are not a woman. You have too much creativity for a woman". I felt as if I had been born for a second time, this time as artist. My path was traced. I had realized that with a strong, targeted will, we can spur our creativity to reach almost any goal.

I really liked to draw and sketch. It was the best way to let my overbearing imagination flow. Because of my three-dimensional way to sketch, my professor continued to push me towards sculpture, but my love was painting, full stop. I was as happy as never before.

## **6 - MOURNING**

However, life is unpredictable. Within minutes, you can go from heaven to hell. I lost two of my dearest persons in life within a short time. First my beloved mother who had always helped and guided me; and then my sister. We were like twins, despite a difference in age. I fondly remember that when she started school I insisted to attend class with her, although I was too young. We had done everything together during our entire life; we chose our partners together, we worked together and we had fun together.

Then we got married and all of sudden we had to live separate lives. I was living far away from Austria, in Paris, and when my mother passed away, she felt so lonesome that she decided to go as well. Even as there was not much I could have done to prevent this, her death burdens my conscience to this day. We are like trees: some bend in the storm, only to stand up again while others break away.

The grief inspired me to create one of my most important paintings, "To be or not to be". In the mysterious setting of the city of Venice a beautiful naked woman symbolizes life. A shrouded, empty Cloak sitting behind her is the symbol of mourning and death. A Cloak, which should also become my symbol of resurrection following another tragedy. More on this later.

## **7 - THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA**

In every artist, life and work are intensely intertwined. C.D Friedrich's fate-laden atmosphere of nature in his paintings could not be explained without the tragic death of his brother who had saved his life. In Franz Kafka's work, his progressing illness darkens increasingly the atmosphere. And, just to give another example, the depth of Mozart's music can be understood only in terms of his genius, which made him a total outsider in his day and age.

In the same way I have been strongly marked by my youth in Central Europe with its convoluted history and a change of borders like in no other region; the mysterious literature of Franz Kafka and his colleagues; but also by its splendid baroque buildings and the concentration of classic music in the triangle formed by the cities of Prague, Vienna and Salzburg, with W.A. Mozart as the focal point.

This was true for the first 40 years of my life, but now a very different environment and lifestyle was going to mark the next half of my life. We had decided to move to the South of France, on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea.

As the size and number of my paintings were increasing, we had decided to buy a villa capable of housing my works and allowing me an atelier in a new dimension. My husband's company had been growing at the same pace compelling him to travel constantly around the world. I was able to paint in total tranquility with my two four-legged companions, Tasso and Puma. My works mirrored the new atmosphere; they became brighter and more optimistic. However, destiny struck again, putting for a long time an end to my life as painter.

## **8 - CAP MARTIN**

I had just finished the preliminary sketches for a prestigious commission of four Peace paintings at the United Nations in New York, when my husband arrived from one of his business trips. I showed him the beauty of our garden while I was watering the plants under the terrace. Full of joy our dogs were jumping at him pushing and shoving, - and I lost my equilibrium and vanished. When I woke up I was surrounded by paramedics. Don't move they said, but this was unnecessary, my leg did not follow any command.

A surgeon in the hospital of Monaco miraculously managed to save my leg. In eight hours, he had put together 27 pieces of my femur like a giant puzzle. To his consolation, the doctor introduced however a terrible judgement: you will need crutches for a long time and you might never be able to walk again normally and work as an artist. I could tell, he had never had an artist as a patient. To renounce artistic creation was no liveable option for me. I decided to take destiny into my own hands. I decided to fight. Six years of painful re-education, where I chose Champagne as a painkiller rather than opium, journeys with my husband to different specialists and hospitals throughout Europe to get advice. During this time, the bond with my husband grew ever stronger despite his many travels. His compassion, love and admiration forced my conscience; I had to find a way to continue to express my creativity. Young couples strengthen their bond through the upbringing of their children. But when they leave the house it creates a dangerous void in their relationship. We had only my art, but this art had absolutely to go on! I decided to fight. My dream of the ballet, Nureyev and Baryshnikov, who inspired me for many of my paintings vanished, and I needed something else to replace it. To occupy me during these years of convalescence a friend had suggested to try sculpture. She brought me one day a block of clay and an old, yellow photo of Oscar Wilde. She had to go soon to London for the presentation of a new book on the author and wanted to bring a bust of him as gift to her friend. The result of my work was so convincing that it ended up in a major museum. I had been successful to convert my facility to sketch the traits of a face, noticed already by my professor in the academy, into the three dimensions of a sculpture. My future was clear: I had to become a sculptor.

## **9 - REVOLUTION IN EASTERN EUROPE**

As soon as I was able to walk again my husband organized a string of exhibitions for my paintings in different parts of Europe, from Madrid and Barcelona to Prague and Kiev. It was the time when the Iron Curtain came crushing down. From Vienna to Bratislava in Slovakia it's only a one hour drive, but the contrast could not have been starker. Vienna a freewheeling western metropolis, Bratislava still a gray communist holdout. When we continued to the next venue in Prague we felt a sudden wind of freedom. We could not understand why hundreds of students crowded into the gallery, but to our surprise, it became clear in the next morning news: they had been preparing for the "Silk Revolution", apparently considering our gallery as a neutral territory. It turned out to be the softest and unbloodied revolution ever. When the Czechs decided to separate from the Slovaks several years later they did it in the same peaceful way. I became very proud of my country of birth.

In Kiev, we returned to the old habits of soviet times, with the exhibition reserved for the nomenclature and the others shut out. The nuclear power plant in close by Chernobyl had just gone up in fumes. The radiation was invading Kiev and far beyond, hospitals were bonded, pregnant women tried to abort to avoid miscarriages, no birds were singing anymore in the streets.

It was impossible to celebrate in such an atmosphere. These series of exhibitions were an exhausting roller coaster for my conscience.

## **10 - BIRTH OF THE CLOAK**

A few years before my terrible accident I had created the painting "To be, or not to be", paraphrasing life and death, with the body of a beautiful naked woman stretched out before a mysterious venetian setting, and an empty Cloak in a sitting position, bent forward in mourning. During my immobilization, I had ample time to study every detail of this premonitory work. I felt then that it should become the symbol of my life.

It was only natural that I would try to create the Cloak as my first life-size sculpture. After my renewed close encounter with death I have understood what is really important in our life, what will survive our disappearance: it is our soul, our conscience, our creative energy, our empathy and love, all the things we cannot see or touch. They are contained in the empty shell we will be leaving behind.

During our life, the Cloak gives us hope. We can always choose between different options based on our conscience. Like Don Giovanni in Mozart's opera: Invited to his last dinner by the Commander to clear his conscience he decided not to repent his misdeeds and went to hell. On the contrary, in Hugo von Hofmannsthal's "Everyman", another play that had marked my youth in Salzburg, Jedermann chooses to be accompanied on his last hour by his faith and his good deeds.

In honor of Mozart, whose music is a constant company and inspiration for my work, I created as first group the characters of the opera Don Giovanni and integrated the Cloak into it as Commendatore, the symbol of our conscience.

## **11 - THE HEART OF THE WORLD**

One day the Archbishop of Salzburg, who had become a friend since the installation of a Cloak in front of his Cathedral, called me to ask if I could imagine a gift for the 82nd anniversary of Pope John Paul II. I accepted the challenge enthusiastically because of my admiration for the Holy Father.

I started with a photo from a Polish magazine with The Pope holding a child protectively in his arm and created a heart in bronze with this image. I called it the "Heart of the World" because of the unlimited love of the Holy Father for the children of the world. In the base of the sculpture, I inserted the image of the Cloak and a pile of stones symbolizing a phrase of Ezekiel "I will remove the heart of stone from your body and give you a heart of flesh".

On 18 May 2002, we were invited to the Papal Audience on Saint Peters Square in Rome to present his gift to the Holy Father. During the long hours, until it became our turn to receive the Papal blessing, I had ample time to study the frail silhouette of the Pope in his white garment bent over his cross. He appeared to me like the living image of my Cloak. When it was my turn to kneel in front of him, I could no longer restrain my tears. I felt like enveloped in his immense aura and I understood in this moment that I had encountered the Conscience of our World.

My decision was taken. I had to create the Cloak in white marble in addition to my existing Cloaks in bronze. But how?

The answer came a few years later when we had a meeting with the Abbott of the Holy Basilica and Monastery of Saint Francis in Assisi where the Saint has found his last resting place. My husband had since his youth in a Franciscan seminary kept the relationship with the order. The Abbott was therefore aware of my Cloak.

He invited us for dinner with the brothers in the huge refectory of the convent, and took us afterwards on a private tour through the illuminated Basilica and Monastery, a one in a lifetime experience. On our way, the Abbott indicated several places where he intended to install some of my sculptures. When we sat down at the end, he asked me if I could imagine my Cloak like a little space of meditation following the words of Saint Francis "that in the absence of a consecrated place to pray we shall use our own body as a cloak for our prayers".

Saint Francis is for me the ultimate example of conscience, with his renouncement of possessions, his unlimited love of nature, and his burning desire for peace.

I therefore gladly accepted the challenge, but the realization needed a few more years.

## **12 - DON GIOVANNI IN PRAGUE**

In the year 2000 Prague was the Cultural Capital of Europe. As part of it, they planned a sculpture exhibition, but it had to fit with the local environment of the Nostiz Theatre or Stavovsky divadlò, the opera house where Mozart presented in 1787 for the first time his Don Giovanni. My Don Giovanni Group and my Musicians or Music of the Rivers, fit the bill to perfection. Apart from the Cloak, they all were in movement as petrified in a dance.

The exhibition was such a success that the Municipality of the Old Town decided to install the Cloak permanently in front of the Theatre, to remember the Commendatore, the symbol of conscience.

From there on Prague, the hometown of my mother, has become a center of my art. Over the years, other installations followed, such as the Fountain of Czech Musicians and Franz Schubert. I was honored with important prizes, such as the Masaryk Prize for European reconciliation, the Kafka Literary Medal, the Salvador Dali Prize for painting, and ultimately the Golden Medal of

Prague I for my artistic contribution to the Old Town of Prague, the very center of this beautiful city.

### **13 - EXHIBITION IN PARIS**

In the year 2005, I had the honor to exhibit twenty of my monumental sculptures on Place Vendome in Paris, the icon of a luxury surrounding.

I presented there for the first time my sculpture group "Myths of the Mediterranean", which was later shown again at the Port of Saint Tropez.

Myths were the first creation of the human mind, and they were formed out of a profound need to provide an allegorical explanation for the phenomena of life. They incorporated the quest for the sense of our life, questions taken up thousands of years later by psychoanalysis.

Today, three thousand years later, despite the phenomenal advances of science, we might need again some super heroes like in the ancient myths to get us out of our current deadlock. The unstoppable increase in global temperatures, the "Doomsday Clock" for nuclear threats at two minutes before midnight, are proof that moral and ethical development has not kept pace with science.

I have therefore felt that the necessity to show that love, that honesty, and a clear conscience, can help find solutions to our contemporary problems; the same way as they did in the past. I decided to add written explanations to each sculpture in order to outline their relevance for our contemporary life.

In some of the sculptures, like the sea gull in Alcyon, my love for animals is clear. I know instinctively what they think, and it seems that they feel the same. They are so pure. Having no consciousness they have no conscience as well, but they they are not in need of it. They kill only what they need in order to survive, not like us two-legged animals who have invented mass destruction of life on earth.

Since their creation, many of those "mystical" sculptures have found a permanent home, like Sisyphus at the University of Pisa, and Ulysses at Forte dei Marmi in Tuscany, Menton on the French Riviera, and the famous Yacht Club of Monaco.

### **14 - CHINA**

The exhibition on Place Vendome was seen by three million people in two months, but its most important result was that it became the springboard for my career in China. CCTV and Phoenix Satellite TV, the two national Chinese networks, were both filming extensively the exhibition and as a result, I was invited as the Guest of Honor to the Guangzhou Art Fair 2005.

I had never been in China before and did not know what to expect. When we arrived at their new airport, we were greeted by immense banners announcing the Fair featuring my Violin Player. When we got to the city it was the same at the bus and metro stations. I learned my first Chinese lesson: whatever they do, they do it in style and to perfection. An experience, which has confirmed itself over the years and many exhibitions to come.

Sales started to take off and my first monumental sculptures in China found a home in the Museum of Modern Art.

Since this head start the development of my art in China never stopped. I was invited as Honorary Professor into the National Sculpture Association and as Judge to the CCTV National Sculpture Competition together with five Chinese Grandmasters. Then the National Museum of China in Beijing, the museum with the highest attendance in the world, invited me as the first foreign artist for an individual exhibition of my works. It turned out to become a huge success and triggered the sale of eight of my monumental sculptures, among them one ten meters high, to a large Chinese insurance company.

Over all the years in China, I had asked myself what the special attraction of my works could be for these wonderful people. I was not part of the so-called "Contemporary Art Market", with ready-mades, installations and performances, produced in great numbers to make a fortune fast. I have chosen a more difficult path, where I work with my own hands on every creation in order to express the visible of the invisible, and to allow the mysterious to be transformed into image. For me art has an ethic, a spirituality. With my art, I want to induce beauty into the hearts of the observer and tell him a story.

## **15 - BEIJING / NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CHINA**

The exhibition in the National Museum finally gave me the answer to my question. The show was organized by Wu Weishan, a famous Chinese sculptor, Director of the National Art Museum of China, Director of the City Sculpture Committee and many others. He had engaged as Curator of the exhibition Wang Chunchen, the Head Curator of the China Central Academy of Fine Arts, who together with some colleagues made a thorough analysis of the attractiveness of my works for the Chinese public and authorities.

Chinese culture is 6000 years old; they have an innate sense for beauty, and they are eager to learn and to grow.

I quote some passages from the foreword to the catalogue by Wang Chunchen to answer the question above: "With the deconstruction of the relationship between form and object in contemporary art, the fact that we abandon narration, we fall into a void, we promote a flat world and we forget the pursuit of a meaning for us as human beings. ...Chromy's realism represents a meaning of enlightenment for today's sculpture in China... Her new interpretations of classic European sculpture is a long-term historic responsibility which should be followed by our young sculpture generation... Chromy's message for us is that, instead of abandoning the classics, as is the logic of modernism and contemporary art, we shall go back to our roots and rebuild Chinese culture and civilization".

Because of the success of my exhibition, the National Museum offered me the opportunity to install one of my sculptures permanently in the great Entrance Hall. They chose my most popular work, the sculpture, which has become my trademark, a Cloak of Conscience in shining gold color.

## **16 - MICHELANGELO QUARRY AND STUDIO**

In order to make the Cloak unique it had to be made from the highest quality of white Carrara marble, from the mountains where Michelangelo, Bernini and others searched their block 500 years ago. After the proposals of different quarries to create the "Archi-Sculpture" using seven to nine blocks, I met Franco Barattini, the owner of the famous "Cave Michelangelo". He is a Master unlike any other at feeling, sourcing and finding the most iconic blocks of Marble. He suggested to use one single block, if he ever could find it.

Sure enough, a year later the block of 250 tons was there and the adventure was on its way. It was the first time since Michelangelo that a block had to be roughed high up in the mountains, before it was brought down to the studio in the valley one year later.

During all the years while I was working the same marble as the genius, surrounded by his David and other masterworks, I felt increasingly close to the master. Like him, I always ask questions about the nature of the human soul, I try to explore similar perennial issues about the mysteries of human existence.

With Michelangelo's inspiration, I learned the long lost art how to create marble folds that seem made of fabric, an art that won me as first woman the coveted "Premio Michelangelo". It was extremely difficult to find assistants for this work, because the art of creating this kind of folds has been lost a long time ago.

The Cloak is the largest sculpture ever sculpted into a single block and the first to be carved also in its interior. Although it has not yet reached its final destination, it has already attracted enormous interest. It has appeared in several telecast in Europe and China, it has been written up in several books.

One of them is the "Literature of Pity" by the acclaimed Professor David Punter of the University of Bristol in the UK. In his book, he compares the representations of "Pietà" by Michelangelo, Van Gogh and other artists and concludes that my Cloak can be considered THE contemporary interpretation of pity. He considers that the paradox that pity, the emotion, is usually dependent on the expression of the face is in my Cloak solved by the specific droop of the empty body.

The Cloak of Conscience is the centerpiece of my legacy, because our conscience makes us see the beauty in life and feel the mysterious. The Cloak is only empty in appearance; because it is filled with all the intangible values, which we can neither see nor touch, such as Love and Compassion, the central elements of Conscience. This might be the reason why Albert Camus, the philosopher of the absurd, considers "conscience even more important than pure survival".

## **17 - THE DEAL**

Four years of hard work on the Cloak with temperatures up to +40 in summer and – 20 in Winter, had taken the last energy out of me. I needed a rest. The doctor in Princess Grace Hospital in Monaco ordered thorough analyzes in order to find the reasons. When we went to see him for the results (my husband always accompanied me to my medical visits) he had no good news. My blood was full of heavy metals. I had the “painters curse” as it was called in old times, created by the poison of the oil colors and paint mediums like terebenthine, and maybe other poisons as well.

I must admit that I never take any precautions while working. I’m very physical, that’s why I love to sculpt the marble and the clay for my sculptures. I also have to feel the oil colors and the canvas. I was never able to work with gloves or a mask against the fumes.

The doctor continued: “If you do not take drastic measures, I give you eight to ten months to live”. We were destroyed. It seemed as if the block of the Cloak had hit our head. But not for long. My husband put his arms around me, saying “Anna I never will let you go. We have mastered our common destiny so many times. It is not now that we will give up”.

I pleaded to my Lord: “Please let me see the installation of my monumental Cloak before I have to go. It’s my favorite child and I want to see it growing up”.

“St. Peter you have to wait”.

## **18 - ST. PETER IN SALZBURG**

I have a special relationship with the City of Salzburg, and it has a lot to do with her most famous son, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. It was his “Don Giovanni” which inspired me for the Cloak, and when I work, it is mostly with the heavenly melodies of this genius. It seemed therefore only logical that the first Cloak in bronze would be installed in front of the Salzburg Cathedral.

When the Archbishop of the City asked me what he could do to thank me I said spontaneously “a Tomb in St. Peters”, well knowing that this was nearly impossible.

St. Peters is a small cemetery in the center of town, a historical monument from the Renaissance, where burials have ceased a long time ago.

But, luck had it that a short time after an old tomb became available and my wish took shape. The Archbishop took my hand and led me into the catacombs of the fourths century right behind the cemetery in order to choose a beautiful wrought iron cross from Mozart’s time.

We had it restored, with our names and birth dates engraved. There it stands now, a short distance from the tomb of Nannerl, Mozart’s beloved sister, and close to the baroque St. Peters Basilica. I will be able to hear Mozart’s Requiem, “the Music of all Music”, when the time comes.

## **19 - JERUSALEM**

There is only one God. We are all children of the same Father. We have to advance all together hand in hand. My conviction is that this message can be most effectively spread from the Holy City of the three monotheistic religions: Jerusalem. I was dreaming of a Cloak in this holy city.

The occasion presented itself when H.B Fuad Twal, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, invited us as his personal guests to attend the Easter Ceremonies.

He put us up with the Franciscans, the “Guardians of the Orient”, as they are called since the time when Saint Francis went to see the Sultan in order to teach peace and tolerance among religions.

To pray Holy Thursday night in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives, to celebrate on Good Friday the Passion of Christ on Calvary in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, to follow the Franciscan Fathers’s Procession in the Way of the Cross at the Via Dolorosa, gives one the emotions of a lifetime and it tears at the soul as it appeals to one’s conscience.

Another moving experience of this kind was the visit to the Kotel or Wailing Wall at the foot of Temple Mount.

But where to find a place for the Cloak in this city riddled by conscience?

Luck had it that we were introduced by friends from Paris to the President of Hadassah Medical Center at Ein Kerem.

For over a century, Hadassah has extended its hands to all, regardless of race, religion, or gender. Hadassah has always embodied the concept that Medicine serves as a bridge to

Tolerance and Peace. It is therefore an ideal place to establish a Cloak of Conscience. To give even more weight to the concept Hadassah has organized concurrently with the inauguration a seminar "Wrestling With My Conscience - My Hardest Medical Dilemma".

I feel confident that from this place in Jerusalem the Cloak will radiate his message of compassion and peace to the world. In addition, the Cloak will become a fundamental element in the physical and psychological healing process of the patients in the hospital, a place where human beings are in a state of distress. Beauty and Love are essential to help the healing.



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