

--- Preface ---

Every once in a while, a journalist wanders across a story that he or she must tell – regardless of the risks or irrevocable consequences of doing so. Unfortunately, such a forbidden destiny fell upon me when I chose to peer behind the enigmatic facade of William Kamm, aka The Little Pebble.

a **WOLF among the SHEEP** is an endeavour to reach beyond mere description to explain the absurd. Despite reporting Kamm's first paedophilia trial for my former employer, Australian Associated Press (AAP), I still failed to comprehend how he had prospered as a false prophet for so long. His message wasn't all that different to a lone madman on a street corner proclaiming that the end of the world was nigh, yet Kamm accumulated millions of dollars from steadfast disciples while herding dozens of women into his entourage. I was even more baffled to discover so many intelligent ex-members of the Order of Saint Charbel, founded by Kamm, who were not crackpots – so why had they dedicated their lives to one?

As a journalist striving to understand the inner workings of the cult under its extraordinarily manipulative leader, I have been driven by a fascination with the psyche of both Kamm and those who hailed him as God's holy seer who could supposedly foretell future events. I once interviewed an abiding follower who insisted that she was an analytical person, yet she still concluded that The Little Pebble was a great prophet who never told lies. When she said Kamm was in trouble with the law just like the Apostle Paul, I reminded her that the Romans did not put Paul on trial for molesting children. When I told her that Kamm had predicted that many Melbourne residents would die under metres of snow during an extreme cold snap (and that the prophecy was claimed to have been fulfilled), she said that I was being '*pedantic*'. I told her that a former bishop vehemently denied approving any of

Kamm's early Messages and I suggested she would be rocked by Kamm's repeated claims to the contrary, but she replied '*no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no ... do I sound rocked?*' Members who left the Order and railed against their former leader were just '*grumpy bums*', she contended, and The Little Pebble's failed prophecies about succeeding Pope John Paul II were '*the least of my worries*'.

Cults are prevalent in Australia. A federal parliamentary inquiry into religious freedom and beliefs conducted in 2000 heard that about half a million Australians were either directly involved in cults or adversely affected as friends and family members.¹ The secret world of a religious sect is a fascinating and timely topic, but journalists have no powers of investigation. They can not subpoena documents, demand affidavits, execute a search warrant or subject anyone to an interview. A reporter can only elicit information through the art of persuasion – or provocation.

Kamm declined to cooperate with my research, but that did not hamper access to an unbelievable quarry of highly sensitive material which peeled open his secretive innards. Sources who witnessed The Little Pebble at various stages of his burgeoning 'mission' opened up dozens of boxes of papers – some dating back more than 25 years, the rusty staples barely holding yellowed and curled pages together. This story evolved from a massive documentary foundation which includes numerous private faxes and emails, hundreds of hours of video and audio tapes as well as transcripts of Kamm's weekly talks.

One of those sermons in 1999 included a candid insight into his brainwashing technique as the faithful were derided for failing to pay full attention. Kamm said his talks were typed up so that those who didn't listen properly or weren't present '*will be able to read this over and over in the printed form, because it is necessary that it becomes absorbed and becomes a part of your automatic thinking*'.

My dissection of both the Order of Saint Charbel and its leadership group has been guided by this ethical principle: chop off the head for public display, but leave the body alone. Therefore, adult 'seers' who led others to

believe that they were speaking with divine authority have not been afforded anonymity. Likewise, those who occupied other positions of authority in the Order (and who ought to be held to account) have also been named. The identities of some characters, however, have been legally suppressed by courts. And I have voluntarily constructed pseudonyms to protect the privacy of the Order's less influential members or I sought permission to name others. For undisclosed reasons, I have made certain exceptions to these rules – so no-one should infer that real people who have been named in this book ought to be regarded in a negative way. Indeed, I have sometimes named minor characters and written about them to the extent that it was necessary to uncover something important about Kamm and his cult.

To those who remain loyal to William Kamm, I would say: *'Don't listen to me, listen to him; pay very close attention to statements from The Little Pebble which have been directly quoted in this book and compare them to what he has done and said elsewhere'*.

Graeme Webber

Author

--- Author's notes ---

* In telling this story, it has been necessary for a variety of reasons to use pseudonyms to protect the identities of a significant number of people. Accordingly, while all events involving such characters took place, I have used pseudonyms for them in various ways. Each alias is italicised in inverted commas at first reference and then continued in ordinary script. For ease of reading, pseudonyms have been substituted into quotations. All other names are real.

** Some minor discrepancies have been found in Kamm's Messages and other writings when printed versions were compared to subsequent internet postings – in which case the original versions have been quoted.

--- **Chapter 1** ---

The dawning of a new error

*'Publicly I am always
careful and once behind
closed doors, the Dr Jekyll
and Mr Hyde comes out.'*

**The Little Pebble
27 July 1993**

It's 1993 and the end of the world is nigh. The Almighty prepares to unleash a torrent of chaotic reprisals: He has cast a comet towards the earth for a fiery impact amid earthquakes and tidal waves to sweep away an ungodly, corrupt generation. The planet is about to scream and convulse with pangs of pregnancy, giving birth to a New Holy Era which will be free of tears and anguish. And a young girl, aged only fifteen, has been divinely chosen to share in the procreation of an immaculate race to repopulate the new world.

Just as Mary was called as a young virgin two millennia ago to bear a saviour, the Mother of Jesus now calls from heaven for the consecration of twelve queens and seventy-two princesses. The royal appointees are to be joined in "mystical marriages" to God's prophet on earth - William Kamm, aka The Little Pebble. The middle-aged religious leader is revered as a devout and humble man who has visions of the

Virgin Mary, relaying her heavenly Messages to many followers throughout Australia and the world. Such “locutions” are received on the thirteenth of each month, after a day of communal prayer. But The Little Pebble – who maintains that God has appointed him to serve as the last Pope before the world’s final condemnation – is opposed by leaders of the very religion he claims to represent, the Roman Catholic Church.

To be numbered among the eighty-four queens and princesses is a great honour, bestowed upon a chosen few. The court of royal women is not Kamm’s personal harem; he and Mary both emphasise that the union is spiritual, not sexual, and pregnancies will result from the prophet’s holy embrace. Mary instructs The Little Pebble to hug and impregnate the mystical wives with his “holy shining thing” – the sacred seed of life implanted in his body to ensure the survival of mankind after Judgment Day. Euphoria ripples through the Order of Saint Charbel community, which Kamm founded at Cambewarra near Nowra on the NSW south coast, as sacred invitations are delivered to teenagers and other young women who are eager to be part of The Little Pebble’s special mission.

“Kylie” brims with joy when a sealed note from Kamm advises that Mary has smiled on her for the role of a queen. Her parents, “*Simeon and Rosemary*”, are also thrilled at the idea of having a daughter symbolically wedded to The Little Pebble in dedication to God, just like dozens of other queens and princesses. It isn’t such a foreign idea for Catholics to grasp as Rome institutionalised the idea of nuns setting themselves apart for God as Brides of Christ and Jesus had referred to the Church as his “bride”. Rosemary herself had written an article for the Order’s newsletter two years earlier

about a female mystic from a bygone era who *“was united to Our Lord in the Mystical Marriage on 23 October 1887”*. Simeon and Rosemary share the community’s belief that Kamm will soon ascend the papacy as the next Vicar of Christ.

But accepting the title of queen is nothing for a girl to rush into, because she is prohibited from having her own earthly husband and must be prepared to share Kamm’s attention with other wives. The seventy-two princesses are also bound to deliver children for God via the Holy Shining Thing, but at least those on the lower level are allowed to marry husbands apart from Kamm. Longing to be someone special in God’s eyes, Kylie carefully considers the matter before writing a letter to Mary on 5 July 1993, advising that she will submit to the role. *“Dearest heavenly Mother, I love you because I feel your love for me and my family. I wish to thank you for the graces which you have given to me, especially the most wonderful grace of being a bride of the Vicar of Christ. I accept joyfully and with all my soul this mission because I love William in a way I can not explain. I thank you for this special grace as it could be all I’d ever want or need.”*

There is, however, a niggling misgiving. Naturally enough for any teenaged girl, she already has a crush on someone – not a 43-year-old man but a friend, *“Curtis”*, from her own generation. Her heart is heavy for the boy she must put aside if she is to follow her sacred destiny. So in the Elizabethan language of the King James Bible, her letter continues as she wrestles with the torment of love which must succumb to the Father’s will. *“I ask of you, if it be thy will, that in the future he [Curtis] may be my earthly guardian or bodyguard. I ask that when he may find his wife that I may not be jealous because I only want the best for him. Please guide me onto the right path so that I can use the next eighteen*

months to two years preparing for my future role”.

Such prayers are not like the supplications of parishioners elsewhere, who might wonder if their pleas evaporate into the cosmos. Order of Saint Charbel members are not left guessing how their prayers have been answered; they do not have to rely on ambiguous signs, strange coincidences, warm feelings of affirmation or other such nuances. No, the answers to their petitions are clear, specific, timely – and written down on paper. Having their own “seer” in the community means requests for divine guidance are taken directly to the Virgin Mary via personal prayer diaries. The community is led to believe that divine replies are dictated to The Little Pebble (who then scribes them out by his own hand and passes the diaries back to community members).

So Kylie writes her letter dated 5 July 1993 into her prayer diary and hands it over to Kamm. The Blessed Virgin’s answer is written under Kylie’s petition on 13 July: *“My beloved daughter Kylie, I am very pleased that you have accepted the graces from God. You will be very happy in your life with William, our chosen son, because your love for him is very deep as it was given to you from my divine son, Jesus. I know, dearest child, you are excited and anxious to deepen your relationship with your husband, William. However remain at peace and let each day take care of itself in the divine plan of God. Remember well that marital love will nurture with time and, in your case, all things must be done slowly and discreetly as Bettina must not become aware of the situation ’til I myself speak to her.”*

Bettina is Kamm’s first mystical spouse, but not his lawful wife. Kamm is not yet divorced from Anne, who bore four children before he returned to his homeland, Germany, in 1991 and brought back a souvenir – an attractive, seventeen-

year-old blonde. The Little Pebble announced that, with Mary's blessing, he and Bettina had been mystically married in Germany. Anne and her children subsequently left the Cambewarra community, as did other disgruntled members who refused to tolerate adultery. But most good folks from the Order of Saint Charbel accepted Kamm's assurances that he was merely obeying God's mysterious command to marry Bettina; further revelations that he should take more mystical wives were also warmly welcomed at Cambewarra.

Meanwhile, Mary's instructions to Kylie from the 13 July 1993 diary entry continue: *"The ring that I blessed today is a sign of the covenant that God made with your husband, William, and the everlasting bond between you and him. Remember this each time a temptation comes your way. For the next few months, it will be difficult for you as you desire to have your husband near you. Be patient, child, for all must take its rightful time and place. You have permission for an intimate union with your husband at any time but remember: be discreet 'til the time of revelation. I bless you child."*

* * *

Mary was not the only one pleased with the girl's mystical marriage; the groom was ecstatic. Whereas Mary had waited eight days to reply to Kylie through the monthly locution, Kamm cut in with his own letter on the same day that the teenager had written to the Virgin Mary to formally accept her new mission. Not that Kamm had read her prayer request, of course – it was just that his angels had already advised him that Kylie had agreed to the coronation, he said.

Kamm was *'truely [sic] excited to think that this young girl has already said "yes"'* and he explained how Kylie would forever carry the titles: Princess of the Royal House of David and The Mother of a Nation. *'You will receive*

seventeen children from my seed and your life will be one of holiness and happiness beyond your understanding,' Kamm wrote. 'I know, Kylie, that it is difficult to understand, and more so that I will be married to more than one wife. However it is God's holy will and I will do everything in my power to do his holy will as all of what I am revealing to you has been revealed to countless mystics around the world. This is the only way that is certain to know that it is from God.'

Kamm often referred to 'countless mystics' to confirm his own Messages. His oracles routinely foretold the world's imminent apocalyptic damnation and his new doctrine explained how a thread of hope hung from The Little Pebble and his mystical wives. Other seers carried mysterious names like: Little Grain, Golden Rod, Thornbush, Angel Rose, The White Warrior and Honeysuckle of Heaven's Dew. But they were not Kamm's equals; they were under his authority and he rebuked any that fell out of step.

The Little Pebble told Kylie that she would officially become his spouse within a few years, but they were already spiritually married because Heaven regarded them as man and wife. *'There is, however, one thing I must tell you, Kylie,'* Kamm cautioned. *'Bettina is not aware about any of this and would die if she knew as she is a very jealous woman.'* Kylie was allowed to show her friendship with Kamm around Bettina, *'but no deep love as Bettina would pick it up, [not] at least until Our Lady has spoken to Bettina herself; then all will be open'.*

In the meantime, Kamm insisted on a clandestine liaison and the Virgin Mary also implored Kylie to act discreetly behind Bettina's back. Secrecy was embedded as a cornerstone of his illicit relationship with the child as Kamm further instructed her to *'keep my letters carefully hidden'.*

Kamm had been thinking about his new 'sweetheart' a lot and suggested they should go out together during the week – after school. Even before their first date, and less than two months after Kylie's fifteenth birthday, Kamm's initial letter of 5 July canvassed the vexing issue of sex. Their relationship could go *'as deep as a married couple in*

every way, as by your "yes" you already belong to me and I to you'. Kamm said Kylie's first child would be conceived in a few years' time but it was up to her to decide how fast the relationship moved. 'As for how our intimate sexual relationship will be when I have so many wives, I cannot answer that yet as I have not been in such a situation,' Kamm wrote. 'I have always been a one-woman man and protecting the marriage state. Of course it is the dream of men to have many wives but, funny thing is, I have never desired this. Yet the very thing I was so protective [of], God asks me to undo – which I do with love and faithfulness.'

The Order of Saint Charbel was an openly affectionate community where kisses and hugs were not restricted to just relatives. Everyone within the community was part of God's household, so it was only natural for affections to be freely exchanged across families. Within a week of Kylie's calling, Kamm sealed their relationship with a kiss – as he confirmed in his second letter of 11 July:

Kylie, my love, I hope I did not pressure you too much because I do not want to push you. Our first kiss was lovely but wait 'til the next one, they get deeper and better with time. Did you like it? I am sorry it was in such a hurry ... I have been thinking of you often these last days. I am truly spellbound to think such a young girl, and lovely one at that, wish[es] to be my wife when you can have any other young men, which are many, like Curtis ... and others who are young and tall and good looking and have a strong faith. Yet you want me, a married man, much older than you, and short – even though of course I will be as tall as Jesus, when he comes, and young again.

And there was certainly no confusion about Kylie's age, as Kamm wrote that she might grow even taller '*as you are only fifteen*'.

Little by name and stature, Kamm's height (about 150cm) was something of a personal issue which was accentuated by his rotund figure. He took great pride in his image – or at least the Jesus-look-alike body he aspired to

inherit in the New Era – and Kylie was told he would one day be a *'big, tall, handsome man'*. Dark whiskers shadowed through Kamm's pasty complexion, bushy eyebrows arched across pupil-drenched eyes and there was usually a glint of pride when his duck-bill embouchure gave way to a grin.

Quiet yet self-assured, he projected an image of piety and reverently bowed whenever an altar or statue of Mary was approached. He issued press releases to inform the wider community about his important work and some self-published articles contained photos of the bespectacled seer looking pensive – often in an enigmatic pose or gazing heavenwards, awe-struck. One of his favourite pictures was taken at the Vatican as he reached out to clasp the hand of Pope John Paul II. Other photos from The Little Pebble's public album depicted so-called miraculous lights, glowing apparitions of Mary and illuminated crosses which appeared around himself.

On the day that Kamm was to have holy communications with the Virgin Mary, 13 July 1993, he was again thinking of his new child bride. *'I am sorry to say you are stuck with me for life now. I can't wait 'til we are alone where I can show you the deepness of love through a kiss; you will need a snorkel to catch your breath. I think you are sexy too, your eyes and lips and mouth, that suckulent [sic] mouth!'*

The following day, The Little Pebble was eager that Kylie be patient about having sex and babies; there was no rush and no pressure, he assured her. *'You do not need to worry, my love, that I am going to make you pregnant early. No, I have no intentions of making you pregnant for some time yet. You probably do not know that you can have sex without making someone pregnant. Well, my little one, there are ways of making love which is [sic] safe, with using contraception or any other means. When I am alone with you, I will explain all.'*

Not only was contraception a violation of the strict Catholic beliefs that Kamm purported to represent, the prohibition was clearly stated in the Order's constitution – authored by The Little Pebble himself. Yet he asked if Kylie had been thinking about them making love, because he had. Kamm told Kylie she should not fall pregnant until the end of 1994 (by which time the queen would have been

sixteen and therefore above the legal age of consent). *'Of course [sic], that does not mean we can not make love; I leave that to you, whenever you are ready'*.

Kamm backed off a little in his next letter of 17 July, saying his previous note did not say he wanted to have sex with Kylie – he only wanted to know how she felt talking about it. Yet Kamm went on to say: *'Did you know you are very sexy, I am licking my lips now'*.

Saint Charbel Order women followed a strict dress code, as laid out in Kamm's community rule book – skirts had to be long, tops were modest, trousers were forbidden on the sacred property and the young women usually had long, flowing hair. Men had to wear trousers – no shorts or tight clothing allowed – and Kamm reprimanded the Order's young women for any breaches, such as wearing skirts with slits that were too revealing. Yet Kamm ogled Kylie's figure when she visited his office one day, as he later confessed in a letter to her: *'you have got a great pair of legs, I was watching them as I was writing to you today'*.

Kamm had little regard for Kylie's education, as he wrote in one letter: *'So you have problems concentrating [sic] on your school work, that's great. I think of you often too'*. Kamm might have learnt to spell properly if he had 'concentrated' more in class himself. Two further gleeful inquiries were made about whether he was a distraction to Kylie's studies.

For a teenager with a critical mission from God, time was running out. The dawn of the New Era was never far off – it was always so, so soon. But only Mary knew when. Since Kylie was living in the last days of the world, she began to question the value of finishing school. She asked her mentor husband if it would be better to drop out and instead attend TAFE to gain some practical skills that might be more useful in the New Era. Kamm agreed. So sacrificing her education and future career options at the altar of The Little Pebble's mission, Kylie parted company with her schoolmates. She took up a catering course at Nowra TAFE and Kamm wrote another letter on 20 July 1993, asking when she attended classes so they could meet (outside the holy grounds, that is).

Kylie wrote back to advise when she attended TAFE and in answer to Kamm's inquiries about whether she thought he was sexy for a man, she said 'yes'. It was a gushy love note, signed off: *'Lots of love, lots and lots of love and kisses, your Rapunzel, Kylie'*. Kamm wrote a sex-drunk note on 21 July and another on 26 July after Kylie and some other girls had a movie night/sleep-over at Kamm and Bettina's house. *'It was unusual for me last night seeing you in that sexy nightie, I would have liked to have [had] you in my arms where I would have kissed you passionately.'* The Virgin Mary's leering seer said he couldn't wait until he had the fifteen-year-old alone and then he asked if she trusted him. *'Do you ever think of us making love or kissing passionately? I do,'* Kamm wrote. A day later, he was still preoccupied with Kylie's nightie: *'I hope you will be staying overnight often for it gives me a chance to get to know you and eye you off, especially to see that sexy body of yours'*. His three-page letter of 27 July and two other undated notes written about the same time were all loaded with smut and sexual innuendos.

Like any love-struck bride, Kylie was craving the attention of her man and she wrote a bedtime note on 1 August as she fluttered off with the fairies to Fantasia. *'Dearest Will, I hope you're fine. I'll miss you when you go to Africa, but it won't be as bad as if I was already your wife, because then I'd probably cry my head off. I try to imagine (or dream) a lot that you're with me because it makes me feel a lot better. If I'm upset or bored or lonely, I just have to think of you for a bit and I'm cured. I try to dream a lot actually, I'm always thinking of castles in fairytale lands and fairies and gnomes and animals that talk.'* Her girlish outpouring rambled on and she hoped they could see each other again soon. *'You looked very nice on Saturday, extremely cute. Anyway I really have to go to sleep. I'll probably dream of you, I love you. Lots of kisses and hugs and kicks and punches. Love Kylie.'*

Earlier that day, she had written another letter to Mary and again asked for heavenly guidance about what the future held for her secret flame, Curtis. Kamm had asked in two previous letters if Kylie loved Curtis more than she let on; Mary meanwhile gave a stern warning (via

the prayer diary) about the Devil's temptations and instructed Kylie to focus her love on The Little Pebble. *'My beloved daughter, Kylie, remain at peace for the Evil One is trying to tempt you now that you have found the direction in your life. Trust and pray for the Eternal Father desires that you give yourself over totally to his care and love. Many changes will be coming into your life so that you will know and understand the divine will of God. Child, your love for my son, Curtis, is a natural love because you have been together for some time. This love is important for your companionship and friendship. Curtis will be with our holy son The Little Pebble for some time until he becomes a bishop, for then he will be called to govern the flock under his care. As for yourself, you will be very deeply in love with our holy son, The Little Pebble, who will be your spouse and vicar.'*

Evidently, Kamm had stepped up contact with Kylie, as he wrote on 7 August: *'I hope I didn't stir you up too much by touching your leg – you have such sexy legs'*. He sent a further letter on 16 August which said: *'I hope I am not arousing you too much'*. Then on 20 August, he wrote: *'I intend to arouse you some more because I wish to seduce you to love me deeply. You are very sexy and sweet.'* Incidentally, the Order's puritanical Rule and Constitution posted on the internet confined sex to married couples (primarily for procreation). The rule book counselled husbands and wives *'to avoid all forms of arousal which might precipitate self-gratification as a motive for their conjugal union'*. Single people were also forbidden to incite sexual desire through kissing and cuddling. Naturally, the conservative Order embraced mainstream Catholic ideals for life-long monogamy. Kamm also explained to Kylie on 25 August that it would not normally be possible for a man to focus on just one woman when there were so many wives to think of, but he had been empowered with a special grace from God to do so.

The series of letters between Kamm and his fifteen-year-old mystical bride would in later years become an integral feature of a prosecution case put to a jury. It was not unusual for The Little Pebble to be exchanging such confidential letters with minors like Kylie; sealed notes

were routinely passed hand-to-hand among the 180-plus residents of the Cambewarra community. There was certainly no cause for suspicion from Kylie's parents because their love and respect for Kamm dated back to 1984 when they first became aware of his group, then known as The Marian Work of Atonement. Rosemary and Simeon had been living at Katoomba, in the Blue Mountains overlooking Sydney, and they believed The Little Pebble's conservative Catholic-based community would provide a wholesome grounding for Kylie and their other children: 'Sienna', 'Aaron' and 'Stacey'.

The trail of correspondence about Simeon and Rosemary's arrival to Kamm's cult reads like the plot of a horrible movie where innocent characters are lured into a trap while viewers, with the benefit of hindsight, hopelessly urge them not to enter. Wanting to raise their children with modesty, they were comforted by a personal letter from The Little Pebble on 18 October 1988 which said it was okay for their children to go to the beach *'if it is secluded'* and for them to take part in swimming at school. *'You are both doing fine with the children, proceed as you are and do not be concerned,'* he counselled. Whenever Simeon's work schedule allowed, the family made a four-hour (each way) trek to Nowra to receive Mary's monthly blessings. But it was not enough and they wanted to make an even greater commitment in order to be further enriched by The Little Pebble's ministry. So Kamm suggested they have a talk about moving the whole family onto the holy grounds.

Community Council Minutes reveal how Kamm advised on 21 July 1990 that Simeon and Rosemary's family might take up residence at Cambewarra; the council heard on 27 July that they had made a formal request to join and a unanimous vote the following month welcomed the family of six to the grounds. Kamm informed Simeon and Rosemary that it would normally cost \$63,000 to set up a new module home on the property but he sold them one for \$30,000, although that did not include a land entitlement.

They took up residence in January 1991 and eagerly pursued their path to the New Holy Era. Simeon and

Rosemary received a reassuring note from Kamm in October 1992 which said: *'Our Lady also said she loves you and promises that your children will never go astray and will remain always under her motherly mantle'*. They were particularly enthusiastic about the conservative communal rules, having previously valued the strict discipline of nuns and brothers in the Catholic school system. There was no loose talk about sex in Simeon and Rosemary's household – sex was a private affair and the children were guarded against forbidden knowledge that might singe their souls. As such, their children were withdrawn from sex-education classes at school.

The apparition days continued to be a magnetic fusion for the Order, as Mary's Messages were disseminated among Kamm's growing list of devotees throughout the world. With much prayer and ritual, the faithful would twirl their beads as the rosary was recited; the worship lasted through the morning until midday Mass. After lunch, usually about three o'clock, The Little Pebble would make contact with Mary, receiving an inspiring Message full of the gentle Mother's love and compassion. The revelation typically fell soothingly on the ears of her subjects, yet there were also warnings of the wrath and brimstone that would befall those who refused to call on God's name.

To have one daughter selected as a queen was a great honour, but Simeon and Rosemary received a double blessing when their eldest child, Sienna, was drawn into the sisterhood as a princess. They petitioned Mary about their daughters on 17 September 1993 saying: *'It was our joy to have her included in the 72 chosen daughters and we hope Heaven has many wonderful plans for her. Our family and lineage are honoured that Kylie is to become a Bride of Christ with The Little Pebble – we do not necessarily understand everything but we know he loves her and that she loves him. O Blessed Mother, you have given us so many graces and blessings over the years – how can we ever thank you?'*

The reply under Mary's name spoke of a supernatural love which had been planted in Kylie for The Little Pebble before the world was made. *'As for your*

daughter Kylie, she is a chosen soul who is very much in love with our holy son and future vicar, The Little Pebble. She is one of the twelve princesses [sic, 'queens'] of the New Era who will always be at the side of our child, The Little Pebble. This love that you are witnessing from your daughter was planted in her soul for our Little Son from the Eternal Father even before time began. So remain at peace, for God has many plans for your children and also for you both; for when you both enter the promised land of the New Era you will have many more children to give glory to God and much of your desires will be fulfilled.'

There were even more mystical wives living abroad and from time to time Kamm would jet off to meet other queens and princesses in Canada, the United States, Japan, Africa, New Zealand and throughout Europe. He would also call the girls together to lecture them about what the next world would be like and how they had to prepare for exceptional duties. Kylie, for example, was looking forward to nurturing children in what Kamm called the '*Kingdom of Fantasy*' where she would teach and play with children in a big playground or circus. The holy angels would work with Kylie to make toys for the children and she would also be a queen of expectant mothers, to help them and their children. Kylie would fly with the angels to different kingdoms to unveil many mysteries about God and heaven, Kamm explained. Kylie marvelled at such revelations and confided to Mary in a diary entry how fascinated she was by The Little Pebble's prophesies and how the New Era '*seems really unreal*'. It would be years before she realised exactly how unreal those stories were.

But Kylie liked the idea of bearing special children for God; it sounded neat. She'd even toyed around with a few baby names and came up with '*Safarielle*' if her first child was a girl (Mother Mary had advised that Kylie would have three boys and the rest would be girls to continue the population spurt needed for the New Era). Kylie bounced the suggested name up to heaven through her prayer diary and Mary approved. Kamm also promised Kylie that she could transfer to the Order's sister community in Canada the following year, 1994, around July – which seemed like a good time to have a baby, she

thought. *'Do you think I would be able to fall pregnant in about December?'* she asked Kamm in an undated letter, some time around September 1993. *'Then I could have it in Canada and my family wouldn't know. I really don't want them to, I really would prefer to have it now [rather] than later because it would be a surprise for them when I come back. I would absolutely adore it and you wouldn't have to look after it if that bothers you and nobody need know you are the father.'*

But Kylie was not asking for sex; she just wanted to fall pregnant. She still believed what everyone else in the Order of Saint Charbel believed – that Kamm would father her children by imparting the Holy Shining Thing through a divine embrace. In accordance with her parents' will, Kylie remained serenely ignorant of the facts of life and the means by which women normally conceived. Her idea of 'falling pregnant' ranged somewhere between Sleeping Beauty and the deliverance of newborn babes to a cabbage patch in the beak of a stork. She knew nothing of the naked, invasive business of sexual intercourse.

Although the girl was aged under sixteen – the legal age of consent under state law in NSW – Kamm took her question as an invitation to come on strong. His epistle dated 28 September 1993 said: *'To answer your question, yes you can sleep with me any time, Heaven has already said "yes" from the moment you said "yes" to me because from that moment you were joined to me. So we can make love any time but you can not fall pregnant yet, that is all, and I know how to make love to you without you falling pregnant.'* Kamm was going to Canada and the United States in November but on his return he would *'work out a plan where we can be together and make love. I think you have a sexy body and I am so glad it belongs to me.'*

Kylie had approached Kamm in the prayer house and whispered that she loved him, which got him back on the topic of sex on 5 October. *'When we make love for the first time, it will be a little hard because it will be new for you but you do not have to be afraid for I will be very gentle with you. As you are a virgin, we will make love slowly until your virgina [sic] gets used to my body penetration.'* He even wrote to Kylie about his attempts to have sex with another queen from

the Royal House and added: *'Anyway, my sugar plum, I do not wish to talk too much in the one subject or you might think I am a sex maniac'*.

Kylie was subjected to more grooming than the British Queen's royal horses. His letters described her as *'sexy'* nine times and numerous other overtly sexual observations were made about her body. There were countless comments about wanting to get Kylie alone to kiss and hold and make love to her; his thirty-plus pages of letters could have been reduced to a few sheets if all the sexual references were omitted. He repeated his desires to *'make love'* to Kylie in a letter sent from overseas and, on his return, The Little Pebble penned a note on 18 November inviting the girl to go away with him the following week so that *her* desires to *'make love'* could be met. He also chided Kylie for telling a friend *'about everything'*. *'Please be careful, do not tell anyone – even those you may think you can trust – as it is very dangerous now as the press is sniffing around'*.

But Kylie temporarily left the community in November 1993 to collect her thoughts about the mounting doubts which clouded her heavenly mission. She spent a week with Judith Benson, a local solicitor aged about 60 who lived in Nowra as a devoted external member of the Order. [At no stage did Kylie make any complaints about Kamm's conduct to the solicitor, Ms Benson]. In her petitions to the Virgin Mary, Kylie had repeatedly asked God to inspire her heart with a deeper love for The Little Pebble – for the simple reason that it did not come naturally. Deep within her soul, Kylie's faith in Kamm was starting to falter; but forsaking her queenly duties to God would disappoint Jesus and Mary. Unthinkable.

Kylie was bombarded with letters from both Kamm and the Virgin Mary – and there was an uncanny similarity in the advice they both offered about pursuing a deeper intimacy with her mystical spouse. But the resemblance was surely to be expected from the Virgin Mary and her chosen prophet – how could they ever be in conflict?

Not long after her refuge with Judith Benson, a diary reply from Mary on 4 December instructed Kylie to intensify her relationship with Kamm. *'I desire you both to be*

very intimate with each other in a deep union so this bond between you will also deepen. I know you love our son very much and desire to deepen this love, this will come as my holy son loves you very deeply and desires to fulfil all that we have asked of him; so be at peace, pray and be patient.'

But Kylie had grown cold and aloof towards Kamm. By the end of December 1993, he knew his fantasies about the fifteen-year-old were falling apart. His Christmas card to Kylie acknowledged that they were rarely together and that she seemed more and more distant, so he asked whether she were having second thoughts about the mystical marriage. She was.

The 'Virgin Mary' again intervened with another divine diary entry on 13 February 1994, promising that Kylie would soon hear her own angels speaking. The young queen was told to spend more time with The Little Pebble in order for her love for him to grow. '*Child, the deepening of your love will come when you become intimate with your spouse,*' Mary counselled. Kylie was again warned to be careful with friendships involving other males: '*As for the temptations that now assault you, these will continue as Satan desires to take you away from the plan of God.'*

Kylie fled the community in the middle of 1994, aged sixteen, and boarded with her elder sister in Nowra. Robbed of a proper education, she struggled to survive in the outside world on her own – while her disappointed parents clung loyally to Kamm for four more years. Kylie continued with her catering apprenticeship, which later led her to work in Sydney. But she was still not free. Kylie tussled with the tentacles of guilt, doubt and insecurity which beckoned her back to a heavenly mission, friends and family. Like most people struggling to leave religious cults, Kylie grappled with the 'what if' factor: what if all that weird stuff really were true; what if Kamm really was God's prophet and the future Pope; what if anyone who went against Kamm really would suffer God's punishment; what if her own inner voice of doubt really was the Devil speaking? Like problem gamblers enslaved to poker machines, many members of Kamm's cult suspected that they were on a losing streak but it was hard

to turn away after investing so much – materially, spiritually and sexually.

So Kylie decided to keep quiet about how Kamm had sexually abused her and she stayed in contact with the community for the sake of her family. Simeon and Rosemary were devastated that Kylie's queenship had failed and thought she was just being rebellious – which is what 'Mary' said. Kylie even returned to live in the Cambewarra community in 1997. And still desiring to please the Virgin Mary, Kylie asked Kamm whether she could rejoin the Royal House on demotion to the less demanding role of a princess so she could have a husband of her own. Kamm refused. In turmoil, she left the community for good in 1998.

Young Kylie was but clay in Kamm's manipulative hands. However she did not completely surrender to his plans for a full sexual relationship: it was not so for other teenaged girls.

* * *

The truth of this fairytale is that throughout the mishmash of love letters and pseudo-divine Messages from the Virgin Mary, Kamm's approaches to Kylie increasingly became less than holy. He gave Kylie a startling insight into his complex, devious mind on 27 July 1993 when he wrote: *'Publicly, I am always careful and once behind closed doors, the Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde comes out'*. Just like the infamous character of Robert Louis Stevenson's 19th century fiction, Kamm's dark side overshadowed the respectable, mild-mannered public persona of The Little Pebble to perpetrate vile deeds against the child.

Despite Kamm's protests of innocence, a jury heard Kylie's testimony more than a decade later that her God-ordained courtship and honeymoon with the prophet was nothing more than child molestation. As a 27-year-old woman, she recalled for the NSW District Court how Kamm had pressed against her teenaged body on two occasions when she had visited his office – thrusting his tongue into her mouth as he kissed her, fondling her

breasts during the second visit. She said that he daringly performed similar acts in her bedroom – while her parents were in an adjoining room – and also during a car trip. Such behaviour brought four charges of aggravated indecent assault. Kamm also denied parking in a public street in broad daylight during another car trip, in which he reached under Kylie's skirt and put his fingers inside her underpants for some twenty minutes while passionately kissing her with his tongue. It was an act that Kylie would in later years recognise as masturbation and it earned Kamm a further charge of aggravated sexual intercourse. The assaults occurred over a five-month period from July to November 1993, Kylie alleged. The Little Pebble refuted her claims but did not deny authorship of the many letters which had been received by the fifteen-year-old girl. Conceding they had a '*sexual flavour*', a defence barrister argued that Kamm's letters only reflected desires for – not actions toward – the underaged girl.

But back in 1993, Kylie struggled to understand how the will of God could make her feel so defiled. She became lost and entangled in a theatre of insidious marionette dolls as Kamm jiggled the strings of authority figures around her. He conjured up a fake reality so that Kylie's present life was portrayed as a mere rehearsal for his New Holy Era. The Little Pebble was her trusted and unquestioned religious leader who meanwhile orchestrated celestial decrees from the Virgin Mary to suit himself. In desperation, Kylie cried out to Mary in the middle of 1994: '*I am so mixed up, confused and frightened.*' But her prayer diary returned blank, as Mary fell silent.

End Notes

¹ ‘*Conviction With Compassion*’, a Report into Freedom of Religion and Belief, Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, November 2000