

THE NINETEENTH TO THE LAST SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST

THE APOSTOLATE : DUTY, FORMATION, PREPARATION, PRACTICE
— UNION WITH GOD : PURIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT,
DEVELOPMENT OF LOVE, UNION OF WILL,
COMPLETE UNION.

ZEAL FOR SOULS

PRESENCE OF GOD - O Jesus, You who gave Yourself without reserve for the salvation of the world, enkindle in my heart an ardent zeal for the salvation of souls.

MEDITATION

I. According to the measure in which the love of God takes possession of our heart, it creates and nourishes in us an ever increasing love for our neighbor; this love, being supernatural, seeks only the supernatural good of our fellow men and thus becomes zeal for the salvation of souls.

If we have little love of God, we shall have little love for souls, and vice versa; if our zeal for souls is weak, this means our love of God is also weak. In fact, how could it be possible to love God sincerely without loving those who are His children, the object of His love, of His care, and of His zeal? Souls are, as it were, God's treasure; He has created them to His image and likeness by an act of love; and by an even greater act of love He has redeemed them with the Blood of His only-begotten Son. "For God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting" (*Jn* 3,16). One who has penetrated the mystery of God's love for men, cannot remain indifferent to their fate : by the light of faith, he has understood that all that God does in the world is for man's good and for his eternal happiness. He longs to have some share in this action, knowing that he can do nothing which will be more pleasing to God than to lend his humble collaboration for the salvation of those who are so dear to Him. This was always the ardent desire of the saints, a desire which impelled them to perform heroic acts of generosity to benefit even one soul. St. Teresa of Jesus writes : "This is an inclination given me by Our Lord; and I think He prizes one soul which, by His mercy and through our diligence and prayer, we may have gained for Him, more than all the other services we can render Him" (*F*, 1).

It is true that the primary end of God's action is His own glory, but He who is infinitely good wills to obtain this glory especially through the salvation and the happiness of His creatures. In fact, nothing exalts His goodness, love, and mercy more than the work of saving souls. Therefore, to love God and His glory means to love souls; it means to work and sacrifice oneself for their salvation.

2. Zeal for souls finds its source in charity and in the contemplation of Christ crucified. His wounds, His Blood, the excruciating sufferings of His agony, all tell us how much God values souls and how dearly He loves them. But this love is unrequited, and it seems that ungrateful men strive more and more to elude His action. It is this sad spectacle of all the ages which is renewed even today, as though men wished to insult Jesus and renew His Passion. "The world is on fire. Men try to condemn Christ once again, as it were, for they bring a thousand false witnesses against Him. They would raze His Church to the ground" (*T.J. Way*, 1). If Teresa of Jesus could speak these words in her century which was troubled by the Protestant heresy, how much more can we say it in ours, when the struggle against God and the Church has increased immeasurably, and has now spread over the entire world. Happy shall we be if we can say with the Saint: "It breaks my heart to see so many souls traveling to perdition. I would the evil were not so great.... I felt that I would have laid down a thousand lives to save a single one of all the souls that were being lost" (*ibid.*). But it is not a question of merely formulating desires; we must work, act, and suffer for the salvation of our fellow men.

St. John Chrysostom affirms: "Nothing is colder than a Christian who does not care about the salvation of others." This coldness comes from a very languid charity. Let us kindle and revive our charity and it will inflame us with zeal for the salvation of souls. Then our apostolate will no longer be merely a duty which is imposed from without, one which we are obliged to attend to because of the obligation of our state in life, but it will be an exigency of love, an interior flame of charity which burns spontaneously.

Devoting ourselves to the spiritual life does not mean shutting ourselves up in an ivory tower to enjoy God's consolations undisturbed, with no concern for the welfare of

others. It means concentrating all our powers on seeking God, working for our own sanctification in order to please God, and thus acquiring a power of action and impetration capable of obtaining the salvation of many souls.

COLLOQUY

"O my dear Lord, how much oppressed You are by those to whom You have shown so much good! It seems as though these traitors would send You to the Cross again and that You would have nowhere to lay Your head. My heart cannot conceive this without being sorely distressed!

"O eternal Father! Surely all these scourgings and insults and grievous tortures will not be forgotten. How, then, my Creator, can a heart as loving as Yours endure that an act which was performed by Your Son in order to please You the more and to obey Your commands (for He loved You most deeply, and You commanded Him to love us) should be treated as lightly as the heretics treat the most Holy Sacrament today, destroying His tabernacles and demolishing His churches? Could it be that Your Son failed to do something to please You? Has He not fulfilled everything?... Has this most loving Lamb to pay once more whenever we relapse into sin? Permit it not, my sovereign Lord! Let Thy Majesty be appeased! Look not upon our sins, but upon our redemption by Thy most sacred Son, upon His merits and upon those of His glorious Mother and of all the saints and martyrs who have died for You!

"Alas, Lord, who is it that has dared to make this petition in the name of all?... When this sovereign Judge sees how bold I am, it may well move Him to anger, as would be right and just. But behold, Lord, You are a God of mercy; have mercy upon this poor sinner, this miserable worm who is so bold with You. Behold my desires, my God, and the tears with which I beg this of You; forget my sins, for Your name's sake, and have pity on all these souls who are being lost, and help Your Church" (*T.J. Way*, 1 - 3).

THE DUTY OF THE APOSTOLATE

PRESENCE OF GOD - O Jesus, You who have accepted me as a member of Your Mystical Body, grant that I may not be in it as a stranger, but that I may work for the good of all my brethren.

MEDITATION

1. Regardless of the degree of charity to which a soul may have attained and of its particular vocation, there is for every Christian a duty of apostolate based on the very fact of his being a Christian, that is, a member of the Mystical Body of Christ. "So we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (*Rom 12,5*); for as in our body each member is interested in the welfare of the other members, "and if one member suffer anything, all the members suffer with it; or if one member glory, all the others rejoice with it" (*1 Cor, 12,26*), so every Christian is bound to be concerned about the welfare of others.

"If a thorn," says St. John Chrysostom, "gets into the sole of the foot, the whole body feels it and is solicitous for it : the back bends, the hands reach down to draw it out, the head is lowered, and the eyes watch very carefully and anxiously." As the back, the hands, the head, and the eyes do not disregard the good of the foot, nor say, 'What is this to me?' but each, in its own way, hastens to help the suffering member, so no Christian can be unconcerned about his brother, but is obliged, according to his ability, to work for the good of his neighbor's soul, and this by reason of his Baptism, which constitutes him a member of the Mystical Body, making him one with the other members, so that the good of others is his good, the suffering of others is his suffering.

"The cause of all evils lies in the fact that we consider as alien the things that concern our own body [the Mystical Body of Christ]. No one is fulfilling his own duty if he ignores his neighbor's salvation. If you dare to contend that you have nothing in common with your fellow member; if you think you have nothing in common with your brother, then neither have you Christ for your Head." These strong

words of St. John Chrysostom remind us that the apostolate is not *an extra*, it is not something optional, left to the free will and generosity of individuals; it is the express duty of every Christian, a duty which comes from the very nature of Christianity, a duty so binding that one cannot be a true Christian without complying with it.

2. As St. Paul to the early Christians and St. John Chrysostom to the Church at Antioch, so today the Vicar of Christ raises his voice to inculcate in the faithful throughout the world the great duty of the apostolate. Jesus by His death on the Cross merited grace for us, and "It was possible for Him personally, immediately to impart these graces to men; but He wished to do so only through a visible Church that would be formed by the union of men, and thus through that Church every man would perform a work of collaboration with Him in dispensing the graces of Redemption. The Word of God willed to make use of our nature, when in excruciating agony He would redeem mankind; in much the same way throughout the centuries He makes use of the Church that the work begun might endure" (*Pius XII : Mystici Corporis*). The Church is the society of the faithful; we are the Church; therefore, it is incumbent upon each one of us to cooperate in the diffusion of grace in souls. Unquestionably, the first place in carrying out this work belongs to the bishops and priests, but next to them and under their direction, every Christian is called upon to take part in it. "Not only the sacred ministers and those who have consecrated themselves to God in the religious life, but also all the other members of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ have the obligation of working hard and constantly for the upbuilding and increase of this Body" (*ibid.*).

Jesus wills to make use of His members, that is, all Christians, to continue His redemptive work in the world. Being infinite omnipotence, He can sanctify souls without help from anyone, just as He created everything out of nothing; but He wills to *need* us and our poor works, and He invites us and begs us to sacrifice ourselves with Him for the salvation of others. "A tremendous mystery," exclaims Pius XII, "and one which can never be sufficiently meditated upon: that the salvation of many depends on the prayers and voluntary mortifications undertaken for this end by the members of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ and on the

cooperation of the pastors and of the faithful" (*ibid.*). To be apostles means to lend Christ our talents and activity, so that He may continue to redeem and sanctify souls through us.

COLLOQUY

"O Lord, turn Your merciful eyes upon Your people and upon Your Mystical Body, the Holy Church, since You will receive more glory from pardoning many souls than You will by pardoning only me, a wretched creature who has offended You so often. I beseech You, therefore, divine eternal Charity, to avenge Yourself on me and be merciful to Your people; I shall never depart from Your presence until I see that You have shown mercy to them. How could I be happy if I had eternal life and Your people were condemned to death?... Therefore, I wish, and as a favor I implore You, to show mercy to Your people by that same charity which moved You to create man to Your image and likeness, so that He might have a share in You and in Your life.

"O Lord, I offer You my life now and forever, whenever it shall please You to take it, and I offer it for Your glory, humbly beseeching You, by the merits of Your Passion, to cleanse and purify Your Spouse, the Church, from every defect; delay no longer!... I turn my gaze in another direction and I see the lost souls of countless sinners. My heart is broken at the sight of them, or rather, it is dilated by the force of bitter regret. I am overcome with compassion, and I cannot help weeping for their misery, as if I found myself—like them—soiled with the mire of their guilt.

"Lord, during Your mortal life, You bore the weight of two crosses by carrying in Your body the heavy burden of our sins. In order that I may be conformed to You, You have burdened me with the weight of two crosses: one crushes my body with infirmities and other distresses, the other transfixes my soul which grieves for the perdition and blindness of so many poor, obstinate sinners" (St. Catherine of Siena).

GOD'S COLLABORATORS

PRESENCE OF GOD - Take me, O Lord, and make me worthy of collaborating with You in the work of extending Your kingdom.

MEDITATION

1. St. Paul, speaking of the work of the apostolate, says : “*Dei sumus adjutores*” (*1 Cor 3,9*); we are God’s coadjutors, collaborators with Him.

The apostolate, therefore, is not merely a personal activity, the more or less praiseworthy result of our own resources and initiatives; nor is it an activity which we can carry on according to our own ideas, and much less by our own powers. Every type of apostolate is a *collaboration* in the one work of redemption and sanctification which God has been developing through the centuries. No one but God, who is Sanctity itself, the Creator and Source of all grace, has the power to redeem and sanctify. “There is one Mediator of God and men” (*1 Tm 2,5*); one alone is the Redeemer and Sanctifier : Jesus, the Incarnate Word. All others, the greatest saints, and even our Blessed Lady, are apostles only insofar as they collaborate in Christ’s work. As St. Paul teaches, we do nothing but lend God our activity : “I have planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the increase. Therefore, neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase” (*1 Cor 3,6.7*).

The field certainly must be cultivated before it can produce fruit, but the farmer’s work is not enough; there must be rain and sunshine, and the season must be favorable. Similarly, in the plan established by God for the salvation of men, the activity of the apostle is necessary, but not sufficient; only God can give the increase. As only God can cause the sun to shine or send the rain to make the fields fruitful, so God alone can give the grace to make the field of the apostolate fructify. St. Paul was so thoroughly convinced of this fact that, when speaking to the Corinthians he exclaimed, “*Dei agricultura estis, Dei aedificatio estis*” (*ibid. 3,9*);

You are God's husbandry; you are God's building. And although he was the first to bring them to the faith, he does not say, you are my children, you are my field, but "you are God's field, you are God's building." The apostolate is not a human but a divine work, to which man lends his collaboration as a humble instrument.

2. If the apostle is God's instrument, he is not, however, a material one such as a pen in a writer's hand. He is a living, personal instrument endowed with intellect and will; therefore, he should put these powers at the service of the divine Artist, trying to harmonize, or better, to synchronize his way of thinking, willing and acting with the divine way, that is to say, with the divine order and will. Each one of us will be an apostle in the measure in which we are docile instruments in God's hands, ready to be used as He wishes.

Here again, we ought to fix our eyes on Jesus, whose humanity was the instrument which the Word used to redeem the human race. The humanity of Jesus possesses no personality of its own; His will, intellect, affections, and body are instruments of the Word, which He used with the most complete freedom and by which He accomplished His work of love for the salvation of men.

In an analogous way the apostle—although he has his own personality which always remains distinct from God, even in the highest states of mystical union—should give himself up to God as a docile instrument, as a pure capacity placed wholly at His disposal. The apostle should freely offer to God all he has received from Him—his intellect and will, his natural and supernatural gifts—for Him to use as He pleases for the extension of His kingdom. It matters little whether God employs him in great and brilliant works or in humble, hidden ones, whether He uses him to preach His word publicly or to enlighten souls privately, whether He engages him in intense activity or immolates him in prayer and silence, provided his whole life and all his strength be spent in the service of souls.

Like the work of personal sanctification, so also the work of the sanctification of others, that is, the apostolate, can be reduced to a matter of docility, of openness to grace and to God's will; in other words, of death to self and to everything in one's thought, will, and actions that might be even slightly contrary to God's thought, will and action.

COLLOQUY

" O my God, I know that You have no need of anyone to accomplish Your work, but just as You permit a clever gardener to cultivate rare and delicate plants, providing him with the necessary skill to accomplish it, so You wish to be helped in the divine cultivation of souls.... Oh! how many souls might attain great sanctity if only they were directed aright from the start!

" My God, the greatest honor You can do a soul is not to give it much but to ask much of it. Therefore, when You make me suffer for the salvation of souls, You are treating me like one of Your privileged friends! Was it not by suffering and dying that You redeemed the world? O Jesus, I aspire to the happiness of sacrificing my life for You, but I know that martyrdom of the heart is no less fruitful than the shedding of one's blood, and even now this martyrdom is mine. How beautiful, O Lord, is the part You have reserved for me, a part worthy of an apostle!

" O Lord, I desire to work with You for the salvation of souls; I have only the single day of this life in which to save them and thus give You proofs of my love. The morrow of this day will be eternity; then You will return me a hundred-fold for the joys I am sacrificing for You.

" How sweet it is, O Jesus, to offer You our slight sacrifices to help You save the souls which You have redeemed at the price of Your Blood, and which await only our help in order not to fall into the abyss.

" How happy I would be if, at the hour of my death, I could have a single soul to offer You! There would be a soul snatched from the fire of hell to bless You for all eternity" (*T.C.J. L.*, 184,171,23).

ONE WITH THE MIND OF CHRIST

PRESENCE OF GOD - Grant, O Jesus, that I may have for souls sentiments like those of Your own divine Heart.

MEDITATION

1. Efficacious collaboration always demands a certain unity of purpose and method between the promoter of a work and his collaborators. This unity must be all the more profound if the work to be accomplished is not material, but spiritual. An apostle, working with God for the good of souls, must live in intimate *spiritual union* with Him, so as to enter as far as possible into His views and plans for the salvation of the world.

Only by penetrating to the depths of the mystery of God's love for mankind can the apostle cooperate in the actual diffusion of love and grace. He must keep in close contact with God by means of the theological virtues, and must try to grasp the profound inspirations of His love. By faith we know that God brought men into existence through the promptings of His infinite goodness. He willed to extend the goodness outside Himself, to communicate to others something of His own goodness, happiness, and life. Grace, the creation of His love, makes man participate in His divine nature. When man cut himself off from God by sin, and became unworthy of His gift, God did not renounce His loving plan; and in order to restore to man what he had culpably lost, He sacrificed His only-begotten Son "who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven" (*Credo*).

The apostle must thoroughly understand that God's action on souls is entirely the action of love : it is the action of the Father who goes in search of the prodigal son, of the shepherd who seeks the sheep that has gone astray; it is the action of a God who offers His friendship to men to make them happy, to be able to welcome them into His Home, to admit them to His intimacy, to make them blessed with His eternal beatitude. An apostle should try to put his

own heart into contact with the Heart of God, that it may be filled with God's love and share in His charity toward men. The apostle should, as it were, have the *mind* of God, the *mind* of Christ, that is, he should cultivate deep sentiments of love for the brethren, a pale reflection of the love of God for men.

2. Not only at prayer, but in the very exercise of the apostolate, the apostle should strive to keep in contact with God and with the mystery of His love for men, in which he should humbly collaborate. He will seek this contact by an intense practice of faith, which will give him a deeper understanding of the mystery of the Redemption and enable him to recognize the fulfillment of this mystery in the various circumstances of his life and in every event of time. This spirit of faith will help him to make his humble activity a part of the great action of God. In this way, even while making use of human means or when occupied with material affairs, the apostle will live in a supernatural atmosphere. He will never lose sight of the goal of his activity, but will always be very keenly aware that he is collaborating with Christ for the salvation of souls.

To faith, an apostle must unite ardent charity, for contact with God and response to His love are realized by means of love. Charity, by the power of intuition proper to it, will permit the apostle to penetrate more deeply into the mystery of the Redemption and to savor the sweet reality of the infinite Love manifested therein; it will urge him to live in close communion with this Love, whose collaborator and instrument he should be. Then his example and words will testify to the truth savored and experienced in his intimate contact with God, the truth that is not only believed in theory, but lived in practice. Then the apostle can say with St. John : "We have known, and have believed the charity which God hath to us" (*I Jn* 4,16), and again : "That...which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life...we bear witness...[we] declare unto you" (*ibid.* 1, 3).

By faith and love the apostle will attain to an ever increasing spiritual affinity with the mystery of the Redemption and with Jesus, who accomplished it; he will be able to make the sentiments of Jesus his own, according to the words of St. Paul : "For let this mind be in you,

which was also in Christ Jesus" (*Phil 2,5*). Having the "mind of Christ," which means loving and willing in unison with the divine Heart, sharing its immense love for God and souls, is the secret of every apostolate.

COLLOQUY

"O Jesus, Son of God, if I think how You died to save souls, how can I fail to want to die for them also? And if I think of men trampling upon Your Blood, how can I tolerate such an insult to You, my Lord? How can I say I love You and long for Your love, if when I see Your picture thrown in the mud, I do not try to pick it up? Why then, do I not devote myself entirely to prayer, and wear myself out trying to make Your Name known and honored, so that by converting souls, I may gather the fruits of Your Blood?

"My God, even if I knew I would never enjoy Your presence, I would, nevertheless, be willing to die for each sinful soul, in order to honor You; in this way, I would undergo as many deaths as there are sinners in the world, so that they might obtain grace now and glory hereafter. But I would do it all the more willingly if I knew that I would attain glory with them!" (St. Bonaventure).

"Lord, I have but one thing to do during the night of this life, this single night which will come but once, and that is to love You with all the strength of my heart and to save souls for You that You may be loved.

"O Jesus, at the sight of Your precious Blood falling to the ground, with no one caring to treasure it as it falls, my heart is torn with grief. I resolve to remain continuously in spirit at the foot of the Cross, that I may receive the divine dew of salvation and pour it forth upon souls.

"Your cry, 'I thirst!' resounds incessantly in my heart, kindling within it new fires of zeal.... O my Beloved, to give You to drink is my constant desire; I am consumed with an insatiable thirst for souls, and I long at any cost to snatch them from the everlasting flames of hell.... To obtain this, I wish to employ all the spiritual means I can think of, but knowing that of myself I can do nothing, I offer You, O my Savior, Your own infinite merits together with all the treasures of Holy Church" (T.C.J. L, 74 - St, 5).

THE SOUL OF THE APOSTOLATE

PRESENCE OF GOD - O Lord, make me understand that only union with You, only love, can make my apostolate fruitful.

MEDITATION

1. Unless our life is one of intimacy with God and His Son Jesus, we cannot be His collaborators, docile instruments in His hands; unless we have an intense interior life, we cannot have the mind of Christ and be associated with His love and His work for the salvation of souls.

By means of prayer and the struggle against sin, by self-renunciation, and the practice of the virtues, the interior life progressively rids the soul of all that is defective, thus favoring in it the growth of grace and love, that is to say it vivifies the soul with divine life, since grace and love are a participation in the very life of God. It follows, therefore, that the more a soul cultivates the interior life, the nearer it will come to God, and having become like Him by grace and love, will be able to live in intimacy with Him, enjoy His friendship, penetrate His mysteries and participate in them. Who, then, will be better able to understand the great mystery of the Redemption and contribute his share to it, than one who by means of a fervent interior life, lives in intimate friendship with God?

The first degree of friendship with God, which consists in the absence of serious sin, does not suffice to fulfill the purposes of the apostolate. A deeper friendship is required, one which creates such uniformity of will, desire and affection that the apostle is enabled to act according to God's Heart; he is moved not by his own impulses, but by the impulse of grace, by God's will, and the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. It is a very significant fact that Jesus made His apostles live for three years in intimacy with Him, treating them like dear friends, before sending them out to convert the world : "I will not now call you servants...but I have called you friends" (*Jn 15,15*). Friends, not only because He shared the treasures of His divine life with them, but also

because He wanted them to be the collaborators, and in a certain sense, the successors of His mission as Redeemer.

Only if we are friends of God can we be apostles; God Himself invites us to this friendship, but we must correspond by living an intense interior life, one which makes our relations with God ever more intimate and richer in love.

2. Only friendship with God, and the charity which unites us to Him, can produce that supernatural strength which makes any form of the apostolate effective. The more a soul is united to God, the more it shares in the power of God Himself; and hence, its prayers, sacrifices, and works undertaken for the salvation of souls, are efficacious and attain their end.

But where will an apostle obtain this love which, uniting him to God, gives him such power? Undoubtedly from God Himself : "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us" (*Rom 5,5*). In a single moment, the moment of our justification, God infused charity into us without any cooperation on our part, but He does not preserve this gift, much less increase it, unless we remain united to Him by living an interior life. The purpose of the struggle against our passions, the practice of the virtues, recollection, prayer, the practice of the presence of God, and frequent reception of the Sacraments, is to foster union with God and the growth of charity. The interior life is a secret hearth where a soul in contact with God is inflamed with His love, and precisely because it is inflamed and forged by love, it becomes a docile instrument which God can use to diffuse love into the hearts of others. Therefore, it is very important to recall frequently this great principle : *the interior life is the soul of the apostolate*. A deep interior life will generate intense love and intimate union with God, and, therefore, from it will spring a fruitful apostolate, a true sharing in Christ's work of saving souls; on the other hand, a mediocre interior life can produce only a feeble love and union with God; hence, the resultant apostolate cannot have an efficacious influence on souls. Where there is little or no interior life, charity and friendship with God are in danger of being extinguished; and if this interior flame be extinguished, then the apostolate will be emptied of its substance and reduced to mere external activity which may make a great noise, but will not bring forth any fruit.

St. John of the Cross says, "It is to hammer vigorously and to accomplish little more than nothing, at times nothing at all; at times, indeed, it may even be to do harm" (*J.C. SC*, 29,3).

COLLOQUY

"Draw me, Lord, we will run! . . .

"O Jesus, I beg You to draw me into the fire of Your love and to unite me so closely to You that You may live and act in me. The more the fire of Your love consumes my heart, the more frequently shall I cry, 'Draw me!' and the more also will those souls who come in contact with mine run swiftly in the sweet odor of Your perfumes, my Beloved.

"We shall run—yes, we shall run together, for souls that are on fire can never remain inactive. Mary Magdalen sat at Your feet listening to Your sweet and burning words, but though appearing to give You nothing, she gave far more than Martha, who was 'troubled about many things.'

"O my Jesus, there is no need then to say : In drawing me, draw also the souls that I love. The words 'draw me' suffice. When a soul has been captivated by the odor of Your perfumes she cannot run alone : as a natural consequence of her attraction toward You, all those whom she loves are drawn in her train.

"As a torrent bears down to the depths of the sea whatsoever it meets on its way, so likewise, my Jesus, does the soul that plunges into the boundless ocean of Your love bring with it all its treasures! O Lord, my treasures, as You well know, are the souls it has pleased You to unite with mine, and which You Yourself have confided to me.

"The end cannot be reached without adopting the means, and since You, O Lord, have made me understand that it is through the Cross You will give me souls, the more crosses I encounter the stronger becomes my attraction to suffering" (*T.C.J. St*, 12 – 7).

THE DIVINE INVITATION

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PRESENCE OF GOD - O my God, give me the sovereign grace to respond to all Your invitations with generosity.

MEDITATION

1. Today's Gospel (*Mt 22,1-14*) outlines the sad story—so true even today—of human ingratitude which rejects God's mercy, and is indifferent to His gifts and invitations.

"The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who made a marriage for his son, and he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage; and they would not come." The king is God the Father, the son is the eternal Word who, becoming incarnate, espoused human nature in order to redeem and sanctify it. God invites all men to the great banquet of the divine nuptials at which they will find their salvation; but submerged in the materialism of earthly things, they reject the invitation and the messengers. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee" (*ibid. 23,37*), will one day be the lament of the Son of God as He denounces before the world, not only the obstinate resistance of the chosen people, but also that of all souls who have stubbornly and ungratefully rejected His love and His grace. The prophets, St. John the Baptist, and the apostles are the "servants," the messengers sent by God to call men to the banquet of the Redemption, but they were all taken and killed. They "laid hands on his servants, and having treated them contumeliously, put them to death," the Gospel says. Today's parable ends there, but unfortunately, human ingratitude has gone much further: not only the servants and messengers were killed, but even God's very Son. Yet God's mercy is so great that it cannot be vanquished; He still invites all men to His feast, and even offers this divine Son whom they have killed, to be their Food. The banquet is prepared; Jesus, the divine Lamb has been

immolated for the redemption of mankind and, if many fail to accept the invitation, others will be invited. "The marriage indeed is ready, but they that were invited were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as you shall find, call to the marriage."

We too have been invited. How have we responded to the invitation? Have we not also shown more interest and concern for earthly matters than for the things of God? Have we not been like the men in the parable who "neglected, and went their way, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise?"

2. Today's parable delineates primarily the invitation to the Christian life, the invitation which, being rejected by the Jewish people, is offered to all nations. But we can also see in it a special invitation to follow a particular vocation : a call to the priesthood, to consecration to God either in the cloister or in the world, to the apostolate, or to a certain mission. In order to respond to this invitation, our assent must be more than nominal. It must involve the sincere and profound commitment of our whole soul. The parable tells us of one man who did not refuse the invitation, but who accepted it in an unworthy manner, appearing at the marriage feast without the wedding garment. This is a figure of those who respond to Our Lord's invitation in a material way only, without embracing it heart and soul, and without striving, by their works, to live in a manner worthy of their vocation. Such souls seriously endanger their salvation, for God will not be mocked. He cannot be deceived by appearances; no uniform or external decorations can conceal from Him the true state of a soul. More clearly than the king in the parable, He takes note of those who are not clothed in a nuptial garment, that is, in the robe of grace and virtue befitting their vocation. Sooner or later the day will come when He will pronounce for each one of them the terrible words : "Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into exterior darkness."

Without going to these extremes, however, we can still remain far from complete correspondence to the divine call. It is well to remember that the problem of corresponding to a vocation is not one that can be resolved once and for all on the day that we embrace a particular state of life; it is a question that arises every day, because each day our vocation

calls for a new response, a fresh adherence adapted to the circumstances and grace of the moment. A vocation attains its full realization only by our continual fidelity to God's invitations. These invitations follow one another without interruption and reveal to the attentive soul ever new horizons, presenting new duties, new opportunities for generosity, and new aspects of perfection and immolation. The parable ends with this grave sentence : " Many are called but few are chosen." Why are only a few chosen? Because there are few who know how to correspond day by day with the grace of their vocation; because there are few who know how to accept all the consequences and demands of the divine call, and who always answer *yes* to the solicitations of grace.

COLLOQUY

" O Lord, this is what You say to my soul : ' Why are you so far away from Me, detained by useless pursuits? Why do you not hasten to prepare a beautiful wedding garment? I suffered death to take you for My spouse. I became man for you, to preserve your life from corruption, I preferred your salvation before all My works. I prepared a nuptial couch for you in heaven, and I commanded the angels to serve you. Would you despise Me, your heavenly Spouse? And whom would you prefer to Me, who in My mercy saved the whole human race? What father could give you life as I have? What father or what spouse can love you as much as I ? '

" O my God, what shall I answer You?

" Pardon me, save me, O patient, long-suffering Lord! Save me, O Christ, Son of God, who alone are without sin! Grant that my heart may have no desire but to respond to Your invitations, and that with the help of Your grace, I may always do Your will, and be prompt and willing to carry out Your orders, so that, with the talents I have received from You, I may be able to trade and acquire the good things of Your kingdom. Grant that I may praise You trustfully and tell You joyfully when I see You : ' I am blessed because You have come to clothe me with the worthy nuptial garment which Your grace has purchased for me. '

" I shall light the lamp, O Christ, given to me by Your grace and bounty. I shall meet You joyfully, blessing,

praising, and glorifying You, O my immortal Spouse" (St. Ephrem).

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THE APOSTOLIC IDEAL

PRESENCE OF GOD - Enkindle in me, O Lord, the fire of the apostolate and feed it with Your love.

MEDITATION

1. Just as a seed cannot produce a stalk which will bear a new ear unless it first buries its roots deep in the ground, so we cannot bear fruit for the apostolate if we do not first put forth the roots of a deep interior life, enabling us to draw from God Himself the sap which will make us fruitful. The interior life is the vital principle, the force, and the flame of the apostolate; but on the other hand, the apostolate brings its contribution to the interior life, helping to make it more generous and more intense. When a soul is fired with zeal for the apostolic life, its very desire to win other souls for God impels it to devote itself with greater generosity to prayer, mortification, and the practice of the virtues, with the intention of making itself more capable of a fruitful apostolate. Thus, while the interior life is the soul of the apostolate, the apostolate in its turn is a very powerful mainspring urging the soul on to union with God, to perfection, to sanctity. The apostolic ideal is of its very nature a generator of spiritual energy and a spur to a generous, holy life. St. Teresa of Jesus, moved by an ardent desire to counteract the great havoc wrought by the Protestant heresy in her times, stamped the reform she initiated with a seal of particular austerity and organized the life of her daughters in such a way as to engage them in a continual exercise of prayer, sacrifice, and self-giving for the salvation of souls (cf. *Way*, 1). The rule of life of the Teresian Carmel, a contemplative life of profound intensity, was thus born of a great apostolic ideal.

The same ideal has recently given rise to a new state of perfection in the Church, the Secular Institutes, in which souls desiring to consecrate themselves to God for the salvation of souls, pledge themselves to a life of evangelical perfection in the world. "The specific end [of the apostolate] seems of necessity to demand and even to create the generic end [of perfection]" (Pius XII : *Primo Feliciter*).

When the apostolic ideal is alive and well understood, it does not plunge souls headlong into activity; it rather guides them to a deeper interior life, to the total gift of self, to sanctity, for we ourselves must be holy before we can make others holy. "And for them do I sanctify Myself" (*Jn* 17,19).

2. An interior life in which the apostolic ideal does not shine, can never be full and vigorous. This is because of the nature of grace and charity, which, of themselves, are expansive and apostolic. Although grace remains in an intimate, incommunicable manner in the soul on whom it is bestowed, it should, nevertheless, be beneficial to the whole Christian community. The dogma of the Communion of Saints tells us precisely that the grace and holiness of one of Christ's members necessarily redounds to the advantage of all the other members. Likewise, charity, the inseparable companion of grace, is by nature expansive, and when it embraces God, it embraces all creatures in God. It gives the soul a twofold impetus : toward God and toward its neighbor; if either one is repressed, charity is stifled in its very essence. This virtue develops and reaches maturity only when its two aspects, love of God and love of neighbor, are fully efficient. If we exclude or diminish fraternal charity, the highest expression of which is the apostolate, our love for God will inevitably be diminished also.

Therefore, a cold spiritual life, indifferent to the good of souls, is necessarily dwarfed; it is nothing more than a mean, petty and selfish form of piety; it has lost its vital heat, the warmth of charity, and does not even deserve the name of life. On the contrary, where the fire of the apostolate burns brightly, one's interior life becomes more vigorous than ever and makes one capable of great generosity. Is it not true perhaps that sometimes our desire for perfection is not strong enough to make us courageous in accepting certain sacrifices or renunciations which are costly

to nature? But when we think that the salvation of other souls may depend on our generosity, our fidelity to grace, or our immolation, then we can refuse nothing to Our Lord, and we find the strength to accept even what is most bitter and painful.

In this way the apostolic ideal becomes a powerful lever for our own personal sanctification, and enriched by a more fervent interior life, can bring to this ideal new energy and fecundity.

COLLOQUY

"O Lord, there come to me desires to serve You with impulses so strong that I cannot describe them, and with a distress caused by the realization of my own unprofitableness.... I think I should like to cry aloud and tell all souls how important it is for them not to be contented with just a little in Your service, and how many blessings there are which You will give us if we prepare to receive them.

"O my God, I experience very deep distress because of the great number of souls who are bringing damnation upon themselves, especially of those who were members of the Church through Baptism, and I greatly desire to labor for their salvation, so much so that I really believe that, to deliver a single one of them from such dreadful torments, I would willingly die many deaths.... Who could bear to look upon souls condemned for eternity to endless suffering? Even earthly suffering which, after all, has a limit and will end with death, moves us to deep compassion. And that other suffering has no limit : I do not know how we can look on so calmly and see the devil carrying off as many souls as he does daily.

"Thou knowest, my God, how grieved I am to see how very many are lost. Save at least one, Lord, at least one who can give light to many others, and this not for my sake, Lord, for I do not merit it, but for the merits of Thy Son. Look upon His wounds, Lord, and as He forgave them who inflicted them upon Him, so do Thou pardon us.

"My God, I want nothing but Your will; submission to it has such power over me that my soul desires neither death nor life. But then, if such be Your will, I desire to live,

in order to serve You better. If, through my intercession, I could do anything to make a single soul love and praise You more, and that only for a short time, it would seem to me of greater moment than my being in glory" (T.J. *SR*, 1—*Life*, 32 — *Exc*, 11 — *SR*, 6).

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VARIOUS FORMS OF THE APOSTOLATE

PRESENCE OF GOD - O Jesus, teach me to pray, suffer, and work with You for the salvation of souls.

MEDITATION

1. When we speak of the apostolate, we think almost exclusively of external activity; this is certainly necessary, but it is not the only kind of apostolate. We must always bear in mind that Jesus saved us not only by the activity of the last three years of His life, which were dedicated to the evangelization of the multitudes and the formation of the first nucleus of the Church, but also by prayer, suffering, vigils—by His whole life. Jesus was always an *apostle*, always the *one sent* by the Father for our salvation. His apostolate began at Bethlehem in the dreariness of a cave; as a tiny Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, He was already suffering for us; it continued during the thirty years spent at Nazareth in prayer, in retirement, in the hidden life; it took an external form in His direct contact with souls during His public life, and reached its culmination in His agony in the Garden of Olives and His death on the Cross. Jesus was an apostle in the stable of Bethlehem, in the shop of St. Joseph, in His anguish in Gethsemane and on Calvary no less than when He was going through Palestine, teaching the multitudes or disputing with the doctors of the law.

Our apostolate consists in associating ourselves with what Jesus has done for the redemption of mankind; therefore, it is not limited to external activity, but it also consists, and essentially so, in prayer and sacrifice. Thus one clearly

sees that there are two fundamental forms of apostolate : the interior apostolate of prayer and immolation, which is a prolongation of the hidden life and of the Passion of Jesus; and the exterior apostolate of word and of work, which is a prolongation of His public life. Both are a participation in the redemptive work of Jesus, but there is a great difference between them. The interior apostolate is the indispensable foundation of the exterior apostolate; no one, in fact, can hope to save souls by exterior works which are not sustained by prayer and sacrifice. On the other hand, there are cases where external works can be dispensed with, without, on that account, lessening the interior apostolate of prayer and sacrifice, which can still be very intense and fruitful. Every Christian is an apostle, not only in virtue of the activity in which he engages,, but principally because of his participation in the prayer and sacrifice by which Jesus has redeemed the world.

2. The interior apostolate can subsist by itself; in fact, there are states of life that justify the absence of an exterior apostolate. One of these is the purely contemplative life, which has always flourished in the Church. Like a mother, she jealously defends it against the attacks of those who condemn it as an escape from the field of action. Those who follow God's call and retire from active works to give themselves to this kind of life are not deserters; if they leave the ranks of the external apostolate, they do this only in order to give themselves to a more intensive apostolate, that of prayer and continual immolation.

"Those in the Church who perform the function of prayer and continual penance, contribute to the growth of the Church and the salvation of the human race to a *greater degree* than those who cultivate the Lord's field by their activity; for, if they did not draw down from heaven an abundance of divine grace to irrigate the field, the evangelical workers would certainly receive less fruit from their labors" (Pius XI : *Umbratilem*). This authorized statement of a great Pope can leave no doubt as to the immense apostolic value of the contemplative life; but, on the other hand, it is but just to remark that such value is realized only when contemplatives engage themselves with all their strength in prayer and continual immolation. In other words, it is not any kind of prayer or sacrifice that will result in such great fruitfulness,

but only the prayer and sacrifice that come from an extremely pure and generous heart, a heart wholly given to God and which, day by day, renews and lives its immolation with ever greater freshness and intensity. When the contemplative life is lived with such intensity it is, in an eminent way, an apostolic life.

It is in this sense that Pope Pius XII has defined the vocation to a cloistered life as "a universal, apostolic vocation...a fully and totally apostolic vocation, not limited by boundaries of place, time, and circumstances, but always and everywhere, zealous for everything that in any way relates to the honor of the heavenly Spouse or the salvation of souls" (*Apostolic Constitution : Sponsa Christi*). Furthermore, contemplative monasteries, by the simple example of their hidden life, their prayer and penance, are a continual reminder for all to be detached from earthly things and to seek those that are heavenly : union with God and sanctity.

COLLOQUY

" What can I do, O Jesus, to save souls? You answer me with the words You once addressed to Your disciples, pointing to the fields of ripened corn : ' Lift up your eyes and see the countries; for they are already white for the harvest.... The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that He send forth laborers.'

" How mysterious it is! O Jesus, are You not all powerful? Do not creatures belong to You who made them? Why then do You say, ' Pray ye the Lord of the harvest to send laborers?' Why? O Jesus, because You have so incomprehensible a love for us that You want us to have a share with You in the salvation of souls, You want to do nothing without us. You, the Creator of the universe, wait for the prayer of a poor little soul to save other souls redeemed like it at the price of Your blood.

" My vocation is not to go harvesting in the fields of ripe corn; You do not say to me : ' Lower your eyes, look at the fields, and go and reap them'; my mission is still loftier. You tell me : ' Lift up your eyes and see.... See how in heaven there are places empty; it is for you to fill them...you are to be My Moses praying on the mountain; ask Me for

laborers and I shall send them, I await only a prayer, a sigh from your heart!'

"Behold, O Lord, the mission You have entrusted to me, to contribute by prayer and sacrifice to the formation of evangelical workers who will save millions of souls whose mother I shall be" (cf. T.C.J. *L*, 114).

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APOSTOLIC PRAYER

PRESENCE OF GOD - Accept, O Lord, my humble prayer that Your kingdom may come.

MEDITATION

1. When Jesus died on the Cross for us, the redemption of mankind became an accomplished fact. Thereafter, every one coming into this world is already redeemed, in the sense that the precious Blood of Jesus has already merited for him all the graces necessary for his salvation and also for his sanctification. What still remains to be done is the application of these graces to each individual soul; and it is for this that God wishes our collaboration. He wants it so much that He has made the granting of certain graces, necessary for our salvation and that of others, dependent upon our prayers. In other words, by the merits of Jesus, grace—God's infinite mercy—is ready to be poured out abundantly into men's souls, but it will not be poured out unless there is someone who raises supplicating hands to heaven, asking for it. If prayer does not ascend to the throne of the Most High, grace will not be granted. This explains the absolute necessity for apostolic prayer and its great efficacy. "This kind [of devil] is not cast out but by prayer and fasting" (*Mt* 17,20), Jesus has said. There is no substitute for prayer, because prayer draws grace directly from its source, God. Our activity, our words and works can prepare the ground for grace, but if we do not pray, it will not come down to refresh souls.

In the light of these truths we can better appreciate the importance of the insistent exhortations of Jesus in respect to prayer : "We ought always to pray and not to faint.... Ask and it shall be given you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you" (*Lk* 18,1; 11,9). We can never be certain that all our prayers will be answered according to our expectation, for we do not know if what we ask is conformable to God's will; but when it is a question of apostolic prayer which asks for grace and the salvation of souls, it is a very different matter. In fact, when we pray for the aims of the apostolate, we are fitting into the plan prearranged by God Himself from all eternity, that plan for the salvation of all men which God desires to put into action infinitely more than we do; therefore, we cannot doubt the efficacy of our prayer. Because of this effectiveness, apostolic prayer is one of the most powerful means of furthering the apostolate.

2. If God has willed the distribution of grace in the world to depend upon the prayers of men, and if people today pray so little—many indeed, and perhaps most of them, not at all—it is extremely necessary to have in the Church souls who are totally consecrated to prayer. By their lives of continual prayer, adoration and unceasing praise to the Most High, these souls supply for the negligence and carelessness of many, and thus they re-establish in the world the balance between God's rights and man's duty, between action and contemplation. Praying and supplicating for all, they are in Christ's Mystical Body the hidden but precious organs whose task is to make the sap of divine grace flow to each of its members. In the Church they are "powerhouses" of supernatural energy, energy derived from and accumulated by prayer, and diffused by it to the utmost bounds of the earth. The prayer of contemplatives is the secret and guarantee of victory for those who struggle in the world, even as the prayer of Moses was the secret and guarantee of victory for Israel. "My brothers labor in my stead," wrote St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, "while I...stay close to the Throne, and love Thee for all those who are in the strife" (*St.*, 13); I love, that is, I pray, suffer and sacrifice for them.

The prayer which contemplatives unceasingly send up to God in the name of all Christians does not dispense the rest of the faithful from this great duty. Above all, those who

dedicate themselves to the external apostolate should give sufficient place in their lives to prayer. But, unfortunately we often put more trust in our work, our diligence, our technique, than in our prayer; we have not enough faith in its efficacy, in the help which God will surely give those who invoke Him from their heart, and as a result, we consider wasted the time we give to prayer. This basic error springs from a lack of faith and humility; it is an error which explains the sterility of so many works. "Let those, then, who are great actives," admonishes St. John of the Cross, "that think to girdle the world with their outward works and their preachings, take note here that they would bring far more profit to the Church, and be far more pleasing to God (apart from the good example they would give) if they spent even half of this time with God in prayer" (*SC*, 29,3).

COLLOQUY

"O eternal Father, I offer You the Blood shed by Your Son with such deep love and ardent charity for the salvation of men.

"O Jesus, I offer You the innumerable drops of Blood which You shed so freely at Your dreadful scourging, and as You shed it for all Your members, so do I offer it to You for all the members of holy Church, whose Head You are. I offer It to You so that Your "Christs," your priests, may once again be the light of the world, that Your virgins may not be of the number of the foolish virgins, that infidels and heretics may return to your fold and that all souls may be saved.

"O eternal Word, I want to speak to You as You did to us. In truth, I say to You that I would sacrifice a thousand lives, if I had them, to help save these souls. I do not want to depart from this life until You have enlightened some one of them. But I am not worthy to be heard. Hear not one who is so presumptuous, but answer Your own Blood. You cannot fail Yourself; hear then, O Jesus, the voice of Your Blood.

"O eternal Father, that love which moved You to create men, urges You also to infuse Your light into them. I well know that You do infuse it, but they do not accept it. What is the reason for this? My ingratitude. I know,

O my God, my ingratitude, but I have not plumbed its depths. Punish me for their offenses; punish me for their sins. Oh! how wretched I am to be the cause of so much ingratitude and wickedness.

“ If I could, I would take all men and lead them to the bosom of Your Holy Church, so that she could cleanse them of all their infidelities, regenerate them like a mother, and then nourish them with the sweet milk of the holy Sacraments ” (St. Mary Magdalen dei Pazzi).

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APOSTOLIC IMMOLATION

PRESENCE OF GOD - O Jesus, immolated for my salvation, make me worthy to immolate myself with You for the salvation of souls.

MEDITATION

1. Apostolic prayer must be accompanied by sacrifice, as we learn from the prayer which Jesus made to His Father in the Garden of Olives and on the Cross. Love should urge those who pray to “ *active sacrifice* which does not allow them to rest calmly in prayer as long as pain and suffering have not all but reached the limits of endurance. Then, consumed by the ardor of charity and the vehemence of desire, they are no longer persons who pray but *living prayers* ” (Pius XII, January 17, 1943). There is a close connection between prayer and sacrifice, since they both flow from one source : love, which spurs the soul on to prayer and incessant immolation for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. The contemplative life, therefore, is synonymous with an austere, penitential life; it is a continual “ sacrifice of praise. ” The more prayer is nourished and accompanied by sacrifice, the more efficacious it becomes; indeed, it attains its maximum efficacy when sacrifice is total.

Every contemplative soul should be “ an altar worthy of the presence of His Majesty ” (J.C. *AS I*, 5,7), an altar from

which prayer rises, and on which the sacrifice is immolated. The apostolate of Jesus reached its climax and was consummated in the annihilation of death on the Cross; not until He had been scourged, pierced with nails, abandoned by God and man, could He say, "Consummatum est," it is consummated (*Jn* 19,30). It will be the same with us; only when we have really sacrificed ourselves for souls, when we have willingly immolated ourselves with Jesus for their salvation, shall we be able to repeat with Him: "It is consummated." Our participation in the apostolate of Jesus attains its fulfillment in the sacrifice of ourselves—not an imaginary, hypothetical sacrifice, but one that is real and concrete. The form and measure of this sacrifice will be made known to us by God Himself, through the circumstances of our life, the events permitted by His divine Providence, the orders of our superiors, and the duties of our state in life. When, for the salvation of souls, we are disposed to live in continual sacrifice of our own will, in continual renouncement of self; when we are disposed to let ourselves be crucified in whatever way the holy will of God ordains, in order to win other souls to His love, then we shall have reached the apex of the apostolate and hence of apostolic fruitfulness.

2. Many souls are lost because there is no one to pray and make sacrifices for them. Without the tears and sufferings of a St. Monica, it is probable that the Church would never have had a St. Augustine. Blessed, then, are those souls who make apostolic immolation the reason for, and the object of, their life. "Oh, my sisters in Christ!" St. Teresa of Jesus wrote to her daughters, "Help me to entreat this of the Lord, who has brought you together here for that very purpose [the salvation of souls]. This is your vocation, this must be your business, these must be your desires, these your tears, these your petitions.... If your prayers and desires, your disciplines and fasts are not performed for the intentions of which I have spoken, reflect (and believe) that you are not carrying out the work or fulfilling the object for which the Lord has brought you here" (*Way*, 1 - 3). Contemplatives, not having an exterior apostolate, are especially bound to concentrate all their powers in prayer and sacrifice; only by so doing will they make the great contribution which the Church expects from them and thus

fulfill their vocation. They are called in a special way to generously fill up in their flesh, for the benefit of His Mystical Body, the Church, what is lacking in Christ's Passion. This is accomplished by the penances entailed by community life and by the observance of an austere, humble life, subject to obedience in all things and deprived of all human satisfaction (cf. Apostolic Constitution : *Sponsa Christi*).

St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus declared : " I have come to Carmel to save souls " (*St.* 7) ; and after she had consumed and offered all her energies for this end, she even offered for sinners the prayers which were offered for her during the sufferings of her last illness that she might obtain a little relief.

Contemplatives should be " specialists " in the apostolate of sacrifice which, however, cannot and should not be wanting, in one form or another, in the life of every apostle. Christ has purchased our souls at the price of His precious Blood ; and whoever wishes to collaborate with Him in the salvation of mankind, should be willing to unite to the most precious Blood of Christ some drops of his own blood. Souls cost dearly, and an apostle must pay *with himself* for those he wants to win. The apostolate is true and fruitful in the measure in which it is imbued with suffering, which is the fruit of immolation.

COLLOQUY

" Lord, my heart rejoices when I consider that You have deigned to associate me to the great work of Redemption, that in me You may undergo, as it were, an extension of Your Passion. You have taken me, and You will that I be as another humanity in which You can still suffer for Your Father's glory and for the needs of Your Church.

" How glad I should be, my adored Master, if You asked me also to shed my blood for You. But what I ask of You, above all, is that martyrdom of love that consumed the saints.... Since You...have said that the greatest proof of love is to give one's life for the one loved, I give You mine, to do with it as may please You; and if I am not a martyr unto blood, I want to be a martyr by love.

" How I rejoice when I think that from all eternity we were known by the Father, and that He wished to find Your

image in us, O Crucified Christ! How necessary suffering is then, if Your work is to be accomplished in me! You desire to enrich me with Your graces, but it is I who set a limit to Your gift, and determine its measure by the generosity with which I let myself be immolated by You.

"O Lord, You called the hour of Your Passion '*Your hour*,' the hour for which You had come, the hour You welcomed with all Your desires. When a great or even a very small sacrifice presents itself to me, I want to think quickly that this is '*my hour*,' the hour in which I can give a proof of my love to You, who have loved me 'exceedingly'" (E.T. L.).

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THE APOSTOLATE OF EXAMPLE

PRESENCE OF GOD - O Lord, grant that all my actions may glorify You and may draw many souls to Your love.

MEDITATION

1. In addition to prayer and sacrifice, there is another powerful arm of the apostolate which is accessible to everyone, the apostolate of a good, holy life. All cannot be preachers, all do not have the duty to admonish or exhort others, not all can attend to apostolic works, but there is no one who cannot contribute to the spiritual good of his neighbor by giving the example of a life which is integrally Christian : holding to the principles one has professed and faithfully fulfilling one's duties. "Everyone can help his neighbor if he does his duty," says St. John Chrysostom, and he adds : "There would be no pagans if Christians were real Christians, if they really kept the commandments. A good life sounds clearer and louder than a trumpet." A good life speaks for itself, it has an authority and exercises an attraction greatly superior to that of words.

For a soul who seeks the truth, who seeks virtue, there is no difficulty in finding books and teachers who will present

it in an attractive form, but there is much difficulty in finding persons whose lives give practical testimony to it. The modern mind, thirsting for experimental knowledge, has special need of such examples, capable of offering not only beautiful theories of the spiritual life, but, above all, of being concrete incarnations, as it were, of virtue, of the ideal of sanctity and union with God. Souls are attracted far more by thoughts and ideals that are lived than by ideas alone. Was this not the course that God Himself followed in revealing Himself to men? The eternal Word became incarnate and through the concrete reality of His human life on earth, He manifested the infinite perfections of God and His tremendous love for us. Jesus, who possessed the divine perfections, could tell us : "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect" (*Mt* 5,48); and speaking thus, He not only showed us the supreme ideal of sanctity, but He also offered Himself as our model. An apostle must follow the same path that Jesus trod, incarnating in his life the ideal of sanctity that he wishes to propose to others. Only if he does this can we say of him, as was said of Our Lord, "coepit facere et docere" (*Acts* 1,1), he began (first) to do and (then) *to teach*. By this way alone can the apostle repeat, in deeds rather than in words, the daring sentence of St. Paul : "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ" (*1 Cor* 4,16).

2. Jesus, who taught us to pray, to fast, and to give alms in secret, so that only our heavenly Father would know of it and reward us, also taught us to act in such a way that our good works might be a silent encouragement toward good for those who see them. "So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (*Mt* 5,16). St. Gregory explains how to reconcile these two instructions of Our Lord : "Let the action be public," he says, "while the intention remains hidden; thus we shall give our neighbor the example of a good work and, at the same time, by our intention which is directed only toward God, we shall please Him alone in secret." There is a great difference between one who makes a big display of his good acts, hoping to call forth praise from others, or perhaps to gain a reputation for sanctity, and one who, acting with the right intention of pleasing God alone, is by his conduct a light and guide for those around him. When we have a right intention, that of giving

glory to God and drawing others to His service, we should not fear lest our good works be seen; on the contrary, we should feel it a duty to edify others by our conduct.

Every soul who lives an interior life, trying to please God alone, should also endeavor to be an apostle by his good example. His life of sincere piety, solid virtue, and union with God, should shine before men, inspiring them to pray, to be recollected, to seek after the things of heaven. This is possible in every walk of life. The professional man in the world can exercise this apostolate among his colleagues, pupils, or clients; the wife and mother, in her family circle; religious, in their own community, and priests, in their sphere of activity.

A truly interior soul is, of itself, an apostle, and as Jesus said, "a city seated on a mountain [which] cannot be hid"; it is a burning light set "upon a candlestick that it may shine to all that are in the house" (*Mt 5,14.15*). The more deeply interior a soul is, the more brightly will its light shine upon other souls and bring them to God.

COLLOQUY

"O my God, there is nothing colder than a Christian who has no interest in the salvation of others! I cannot use poverty as a pretext to dispense myself from it. Peter said, 'Silver and gold I have none'; Paul was so poor that he often suffered from hunger. I cannot allege my humble state, for neither were they of the nobility, nor were their ancestors.

"I cannot give ignorance as an excuse, Lord, because they, too, were ignorant. Even were I a fugitive slave, I could perform my task; Onesimus was such. I cannot object that I am sick, for Timothy was often ill.

"O Lord, You teach me that I can help my neighbor if I fulfill my duty. I will do this by observing Your laws, especially the law of love by which we teach goodness to those who offend us. Good example has more influence on worldly people than miracles, and You tell me that there is nothing better than charity and love of one's neighbor. Help me, then, O Lord, to lead a holy life and to do good works, so that those who see me may praise Your Name" (cf. St. John Chrysostom).

"O Lord, grant that I may believe with my heart, profess with my mouth, and put into practice Your words, that others, seeing my good works, will glorify You, our Father who art in heaven, through Jesus Christ, Our Lord, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen" (Origen).

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APOSTOLIC WORKS

PRESENCE OF GOD - O my God, make me worthy to collaborate with You in spreading Your kingdom of Love.

MEDITATION

1. The interior apostolate of prayer and suffering in virtue of its intrinsic efficacy and fruitfulness possesses a preeminence over all other forms of the apostolate, to such a degree that, even without any exterior activity, it is sufficient to make those who practice it eminent apostles. Nevertheless, works are also necessary in society and in the Church; God wills them, and indeed He ordinarily intervenes in the world through the activity of His apostles. Side by side with the interior apostolate of contemplatives, the exterior activity of pastors and the faithful is needed for the diffusion of the life of grace in souls. The ministry of the priesthood is necessary for the administration of the Sacraments; missionaries are needed to convert infidels; we must have schools and teachers for the Christian formation of youth; to christianize society, we need social works and workers, professional men and women who will be apostles in their own walks of life. In the field of the apostolate, as St. Paul says, there are many duties, many offices of varied importance and value, but they all proceed from one and the same spirit, the Holy Spirit, who "divides to everyone according as He will," and at the same time, orders them all to one end : the growth of the Mystical Body of Christ (*1 Cor 12,11*). Just as one member of the human body has need of the others, "and the eye cannot say to the hand, I need not thy help, nor again the head

to the feet, I have no need of you" (*ibid.* 12, 21), so neither can contemplatives say to those in the active life, "Your works are not necessary"; nor can the latter say to the former, "Your prayer is of no avail." Neither can the supporters of the various kinds of apostolic activity consider one to be more important than others; but with mutual appreciation, all should work in a spirit of solidarity, helping one another, each one trying to carry out his own functions with the greatest possible perfection. From the love with which each one discharges his own duties and, at the same time, remains united to the others, will result the universal good of the Church, which the apostle should seek above and beyond any of his own personal works or interests.

2. The first place in the apostolic ministry belongs, beyond all doubt, to the Bishops who are the direct successors of the Apostles, to whom Jesus officially entrusted the charge of evangelizing the world: "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (*Mt* 28,19.20). Next to this apostolate of the Hierarchy, reserved for the clergy, there is the apostolate of the laity, who are invited by the Church to collaborate with the Hierarchy. The Bishops guide, govern, draw up the plans; and under their direction the faithful are called upon to lend their assistance. It is evident, therefore, that the authentic apostolate, the only one which is in accord with God's plan for the salvation of mankind, is that which is exercised in harmony with the directives of the Church. He who wants to work in the Lord's vineyard, independently of those whom God has chosen to direct and govern it, is not worthy to be called an apostle. Activity of this kind would not only fail to further the ends of the apostolate, but it would also be prejudicial to them.

First on the list of collaborators with the Hierarchy are the persons consecrated to God by the vows of religion, that is, religious men and women dedicated to the works of the apostolate, and the members of Secular Institutes. Next are the members of Catholic Action groups, and finally, there is a place for all Christians who, privately or as members of a group, practice some form of the apostolate. It was not by chance that Pius XII, in the Encyclical *Mystici*

Corporis, speaking of the collaboration of the faithful in the apostolate, made special mention of fathers and mothers of families; indeed every Christian who works to bring the spirit of the Gospel into his own sphere of action—whether it be the home, the school, the office, or the hospital—is a true collaborator with the Hierarchy. Furthermore, the same Pope declared : “ This apostolic work, performed according to the spirit of the Church, consecrates a layman as a kind of minister of Christ; this is what St. Augustine meant when he wrote : ‘ O brethren...you, too, in your own way, ought to be ministers of Christ by leading a good life, giving alms, and preaching His name and His doctrine. In this way the father of a family also will fulfill his duty as a cleric in his own home, and to some degree the duty of a bishop, serving Christ, in order to be with Him in eternity ’ ” (Encyclical : *Summi Pontificatus*). It was in this sense that St. Peter, addressing himself to the faithful, did not hesitate to say : “ You are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood ” (I Pt 2,9).

COLLOQUY

“ O my God, grant that I may no longer think whether I am to gain or lose, but let my one aim be to serve and please You. Knowing Your love for us, I willingly renounce all my pleasure in order to please You alone, by serving my neighbor and proclaiming to others the truths which will do good to their souls. I shall not worry about any loss I may suffer; I wish to have only my neighbor’s good in mind and nothing further. In order to give You more pleasure, my God, I want to forget myself for others, and I am ready, if need be, even to give up my life, as did many martyrs.

“ This, I think, must be one of the greatest comforts on earth, to see good coming to souls through one’s own agency. Happy are they, O Lord, to whom You grant these favors! ” (T.J. Con).

“ My God, fortunate is he who has tasted how sweet it is to work for the salvation of souls! He is not afraid of cold or heat, hunger or thirst, offenses or insults, no, not even of death.

“ O Lord, give me crosses and thorns, persecutions of all kinds, if only I can save souls, and my own among them.

Da mihi animas, coetera tolle : give me souls, Lord, and take all the rest.

“ Only when I know that the devil has given up plotting against souls, shall I cease trying new ways of saving them from his deceptions and snares.

“ O Lord, I wish to make a complete sacrifice of my life to You, to work for Your glory until I draw my last breath, bearing patiently all adversities and contradictions in my work. Help me to spend all my strength for the salvation of souls ” (St. John Bosco).

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THE ROAD TO OUR ETERNAL HOME

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PRESENCE OF GOD - O Lord, teach me the way to come to You.

MEDITATION

1. The liturgy of the last Sundays after Pentecost has a special note, warning us of the approaching end of all things. In fact, the liturgical year is almost at its close, and, as it ends, it invites us to consider the uncertainty of the present life and to turn our eyes toward the eternal life awaiting us. Spontaneously we stop to reflect on the condition of our own soul : How have we employed the time that God has given us? In the Introit we find the humble confession : “ O Lord, we have sinned against Thee, we have not obeyed Thy commandments,” and in the Collect we pray to obtain forgiveness : “ Grant unto Thy faithful people pardon and peace, we beseech Thee, merciful Lord.” In the Epistle (*Eph 5,15-21*) St. Paul counsels us to use the time that remains to us in the best possible way, to attain eternal glory. “ See, therefore, brethren, how you walk circumspectly, not as unwise, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” The Apostle then explains what the nature of our wisdom should

be : " Become not unwise, but understand what the will of God is." It would be the height of folly and imprudence to go through life following our own whims and desires. This is a most dangerous way and one which will never lead us to our destination. The only road that takes us to our eternal home is that of the will of God. Anyone who sincerely seeks God's will and follows it, will be guided, not by his own spirit, but by God's Spirit, the Holy Spirit, and can be sure that he will not go astray. " Be ye filled with the Holy Spirit," exhorts St. Paul, " speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord...being subject one to another." When a soul allows itself, with childlike docility, to be led by the Holy Spirit, He takes complete possession of it, filling it entirely with Himself; and from this plenitude, the spirit of prayer, virtue, humble submission and fraternal love spontaneously blossoms forth. To follow God's will under the direction of the Holy Spirit is the quickest and safest way of reaching our heavenly home.

2. It is impossible to discover and walk in the way of God's will without faith; today's Gospel (*Jn* 4,46-53) expressly treats of this faith and the qualities it must have in order to be pleasing to God.

A certain ruler, having heard of the marvelous cures performed by Jesus, went to Him and begged Jesus to come to his house and " heal his son, for he was at the point of death." This man had faith in the miraculous power of the Master, but he was far from believing that He was the Son of God. Jesus knew this and replied : " Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not." These words, which historically were addressed to the ruler and his companions, were meant for all whose faith depends on what they see and hear. There are very few who believe with simplicity in the Gospel, in Revelation, in the teachings of the Church; most people remain indifferent and are moved only in the presence of something unusual which strikes their senses. It is true that the Lord can use such things to help our weakness, but this is not the faith which pleases Him. " Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed" (*ibid.* 20,29), He said to Thomas, who would not believe unless he saw the place of the nails and put his finger

into His wounds. True faith is not based on our experience, on what we see and touch, but on the authority of God. God has revealed Himself; He can neither deceive nor be deceived; and we believe firmly on His word. To believe on the word of God is supernatural faith, the pure faith which is pleasing to God.

Jesus, who wished to lead the ruler to this true faith, said to him : “ ‘ Go thy way, thy son liveth.’ ” The man believed the word which Jesus said to him, and went his way.” It was not yet supernatural faith in the Son of God; nevertheless, it was an act of faith in the Master’s word, and although it was imperfect, it brought forth fruit : his son was cured. God does not demand more than each one can give Him, and when He sees our good will, our sincere efforts, He Himself intervenes to perfect the work. Thus the ruler’s imperfect and still human faith was rewarded by his son’s cure, and as a result, his faith became supernatural. He believed in Jesus, no longer as a simple prophet or wonder-worker, but as the Son of God; “ and himself believed and his whole house.”

In this life we walk toward God, not by vision, but by faith. The purer our faith is and the more free from human elements, the more pleasing it will be to God, and the more it will enable us to know His holy will and to accomplish it with love.

COLLOQUY

“ Be propitious to Your children, O divine Master, Father and Lord. Grant that we who keep Your commandments may reflect Your image; may we experience, according to our strength, Your goodness, and not the severity of Your judgment.

“ Grant that we may all live in Your peace and be admitted to Your kingdom after struggling against the waves of sin without being shipwrecked. In great tranquility, may we be drawn by the Holy Spirit, Your ineffable Wisdom, and guided by Him day and night, unto the perfect day. Grant that, until our last hour, we may be grateful in prayer and prayerful in gratitude to the one Father and Son, Son and Father, the Son our Teacher and Master, together with the Holy Spirit ” (Clement of Alexandria).

"Lord, You know what is best; let this or that be done as You will. Give what You will, as much as You will, and when You will. Do with me as You know best, as will most please You, and will be for Your greater honor. Put me where You will, and do with me in all things according to Your will. Lo, I am Your servant, ready to obey You in all things; for I do not desire to live for myself, but for You : Oh, that I could do so in a faithful and perfect manner!"

"O most loving Jesus, grant me always to will and desire that which is most acceptable to You, and which pleases You best. Let Your will be mine, and let my will always follow Yours, and agree perfectly with it. Let my will be one with Yours in willing and in not willing, and let me be unable to will or not will anything but what You will or do not will" (*Imit. III, 15,2.3*).

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THE FORMATION OF APOSTLES

PRESENCE OF GOD - Jesus, divine Teacher, deign to accept me in Your school, so that, under Your direction, I may prepare myself for the apostolate.

MEDITATION

1. No special preparation is necessary before giving oneself to the interior apostolate, for, if a soul dedicates itself to prayer and sacrifice, not only will it help others, but at the same time it will draw great profit for its own sanctification. In fact, the practice of the interior apostolate coincides perfectly with the fundamental exercises of the spiritual life. However, the same cannot be said of the external apostolate which, by its very nature, involves cares and occupations beyond those required for one's personal progress. One who is just setting out in the spiritual life is not capable of attending to his own sanctification and the sanctification of others simultaneously; he should first have time to concentrate all his powers on his own spiritual formation.

Furthermore, since the effectiveness of the apostolate corresponds to the degree of love and union with God which the apostle has attained, it is evident that a beginner will not be capable of exercising a very fruitful apostolate. Hence, if he engages in the active apostolate prematurely, he will dissipate his energy uselessly, with consequent harm to his own interior life and to the fruitfulness of his apostolate.

Jesus Himself spent thirty years in prayer and retirement although, being God, He had no need to do so. It was as if He wanted to show us that before we plunge into the work of the exterior apostolate, we must have reached a certain spiritual maturity by the exercise of the interior life. He treated the Apostles in a similar way : the three years they spent with Jesus were years of true formation for them. Our Lord instructed and admonished them, taught them how to pray and to practice virtue. Only occasionally, and then with precaution, did He entrust some mission to them, in order to give them experience. Finally, before He sent them out to conquer the world, He wished to strengthen their spirit by nourishing them with His Body, calling them to witness His Passion, and reuniting them in the Cenacle to await the coming of the Holy Spirit. Thus true Catholic tradition demands that, before apostles go out into the field of battle, they must prepare themselves by the practice of an intense interior life, which will make them qualified, fruitful instruments for the good of souls.

2. The great necessity for apostolic works, which is growing in urgency today, cannot justify a hasty preparation for the apostolate. What advantage would it be to send a greater number of apostles into the fray if, from lack of formation, they would not only be incapable of making any headway, but could not even withstand the attacks of the enemy?

Enthusiasm and good will are not enough. A vigorous interior life, maturity of thought and judgment, and a spirit of sacrifice and union with God are also necessary; if these are wanting, no good will be accomplished, and the spiritual life of the apostles themselves will be endangered. The urgency of the apostolate must be answered by intensifying the formation of those who are to dedicate themselves to it, because only souls who are firmly anchored in God by an intense interior life will be able to withstand

the constant pressure of external activity, and to vivify this activity with the fire of love.

St. Teresa of Jesus says, "A single one who is perfect will do more than many who are not" (*Way*, 3). It is, therefore, of the greatest importance that those who give themselves to the apostolate strive earnestly for perfection and sanctity, for only thus can they give God to souls and bring souls to God. The entire history of the Church is a practical demonstration of this principle : "St. Paul was only one, yet how many he attracted!... If all Christians were like St. Paul, how many worlds would be converted!" (St. John Chrysostom). The holy Curé of Ars had very few human resources, yet he converted an immense number of souls by the power of his own holiness, love, and union with God.

The pressing demands of the external apostolate focus our attention more than ever upon the need of well-formed apostles, apostles of deep interior life, saintly apostles. Therefore, even when the formative period has ended, we must always take care that external activity in no way diminishes our interior life. It is necessary to continually maintain the balance between prayer and work in such a way that we do not exhaust our spiritual energies, but allow sufficient time to renew them, to revive and to sustain our intimate contact with God.

COLLOQUY

"O Lord, my whole yearning is that, as You have so many enemies and so few friends, these last should be trusty ones. Therefore I am determined to do the little that is in me : namely, to follow the evangelical counsels as perfectly as I can, and...to pray for those who are defenders of the Church, and for the preachers and learned men who defend her. O Lord, since I am not strong enough to defend Your Church myself, I want to strive to live in such a way that my prayers may be of avail to help these servants of Yours, who, at the cost of so much toil, have armed themselves with learning and virtue and have labored to defend your Name.

"O my God, I wish to try to live in such a way as to be worthy to obtain two things from You : first, that there may be many of these very learned and religious men who

have the qualifications for their task, and that You may prepare those who are not completely prepared already; for a single one who is perfect will do more than many who are not. Secondly, that, after they have entered upon this struggle, You may have them in Your hand so that they may be delivered from all the dangers that are in the world, and, while sailing on this perilous sea, may shut their ears to the song of the sirens. If I can prevail with You, my God, in the smallest degree about this, I shall be fighting Your battle even while living a cloistered life.

"I beseech Your Majesty to hear me in this; miserable creature that I am, I shall never cease to beg You for this, since it is for Your glory and the good of Your Church, and on these my desires are set. The day that my prayers, desires, disciplines and fasts are not performed for the intentions of which I have spoken, I shall not have fulfilled the object for which You, O Lord, called me to the contemplative life" (cf. T.J. *Way*, 1 - 3).

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SANCTIFICATION IN THE APOSTOLATE

PRESENCE OF GOD - Give me light, O God, that I may recognize the graces You have prepared for me to lead me to sanctity; help me to correspond with them.

MEDITATION

1. It is the saints who are the most efficient apostles. Must we then be saints before devoting ourselves to the apostolate? Theoretically, this is the ideal, but in practice, it is impossible. To think that the formative years—those spent in the seminary or novitiate, for example—suffice to make us saints is a misconception. It is equally wrong to exempt ourselves from apostolic work, when charity or our duty imposes it on us, under the pretext that we have not yet arrived at sanctity. We must therefore conclude that when the period allotted exclusively to preparation is over, we

must combine our own personal efforts toward sanctity with the exercise of the active apostolate. In other words, apostles must sanctify themselves in the apostolate and by means of it. "To sanctify yourself in view of and by means of the apostolate : these should be the marching orders of a diocesan priest.... We would be giving the lie to the Church, to the life of Jesus, and the lives of all the saints, if we said that the exterior apostolate is incompatible with personal sanctity." These words, spoken by the servant of God, Don Poppe, to priests, are equally true for all apostles, cleric or lay, religious or secular. Every apostle should be convinced that precisely in his own field of labor—and nowhere else—will he find all the graces necessary to sanctify himself, to attain intimate union with God. When a person gives himself to the apostolate, not by his own choice, nor because of a natural attraction for activity, but solely in answer to a call from God, he can be certain that, since God has *willed* him to engage in the apostolate, and as He also *wills* him to be a saint, that the apostolate will provide him with the means to become one. God cannot condemn to mediocrity one who, in order to do His will, and out of love for Him, is burdened with apostolic labors and responsibilities. "No, brethren," Don Poppe continues, "the active life is not a night in which the light of the ideal is extinguished. If so many apostles have lost their light, you should not lose confidence, but *humble yourselves* profoundly because of your weakness, and then more abundant grace will surely bring you success. Do you not know that difficulties and obstacles are sometimes transformed into helps under the wonderful action of grace, and may contribute greatly to good? '*Certus sum*,' you can say with St. Paul : I am certain that no creature in the world has the power to draw me away from the road to sanctity." In the measure that an apostle is docile and faithful to grace, God will purify him, refine him, and sanctify him, precisely by means of his apostolic labors.

2. The conviction that we can sanctify ourselves in the midst of our work does not prevent us from having that silent longing for recollection, that desire for solitude and intimacy with God which often accompanies an apostle in his activities, becoming so keen at times that it casts a veil of nostalgia over his life. Anyone who has tasted, even in a slight degree,

the infinite beauty and goodness of God, cannot fail to experience an overwhelming longing and need for Him. This is a good sign : it means that the apostle has not permitted himself to be pervaded and distracted by exterior occupations, and that, although living in the world, he is not of the world, but really tends toward God. Even if this longing should at times become painful, the apostle must not be disturbed nor believe that he has mistaken his way. This pain will purify him and lead him to God. Moreover, he should not think that the mere desire for deeper recollection and union with God necessarily indicates a call to the contemplative life, which is characterized especially by the need of a radical dedication and self-immolation. An insistent call to a deeper interior life should be considered rather as a grace given to protect the apostle against the dangers of the exterior life. It is the bulwark, the enclosure wall of his spiritual life.

However, the desire for God should be satisfied; in addition to the daily hours of prayer and silence, the apostle must have sufficient pauses in his work. Monthly and yearly retreats are indispensable, and even more leisure for recollection must be taken after periods of intense activity. It would be a fatal error to allow oneself to become so absorbed in work that time could no longer be found for concentration on God in intimate heart-to-heart conversation with Him. Not even from the standpoint of greater generosity should an apostle renounce his hours of prayer.

But at the same time, he must go to his work calmly and confidently, ever mindful of the fact that, until he has attained to full maturity in the spiritual life, he will not be able to escape the conflict between action and contemplation : action which tries to draw him away from contemplation, and contemplation which would like to prolong itself beyond the appointed time. He must make every effort to maintain an equilibrium, avoiding both extremes, and unifying his life by means of love. Before the conflict is settled in perfect harmony, a long road must be traversed, where it is absolutely necessary to give oneself to activity with great prudence, and to be very faithful to prayer, being careful not to allow the time allotted for it to be encroached upon.

COLLOQUY

"O my God, how few saintly apostles there are! How rare are Your real friends! O Lord, I am on fire with longing for the coming of Your kingdom in the souls of apostles; I am on fire, but I am so poor that I shall be consumed before this kingdom comes!"

"O Lord, make me a holy apostle, because a saint can accomplish more with one word than an ordinary worker can with a whole series of speeches. Without sanctity, I am like sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal, and You, O God, speak only through the mouths of the saints. Give me sanctity then, as it alone can enlighten minds, move hearts, and renew them. O my God, do not permit me to deal in tinsel or to be an empty vessel!"

"It is hard to sanctify oneself in the apostolate; there are many obstacles and dangers to be encountered. Shall I then retire in discouragement? No, my God, because if my will is good, I shall always be aided by Your grace, and where there is grace, the way which leads to the end, to sanctity, will always be found! Then what have I to fear? Your grace is with me; You Yourself are with me and in me. And if You, O God, enter the battle with me, what can I call an obstacle? Would it be tribulation or sorrow, hunger or nakedness, danger, persecution, or the sword? I shall overcome all these difficulties with Your help, for You love me, and will not abandon me. Leaning on You, O Lord, I am certain that nothing in the world has the power to separate me from the way of sanctity. I am certain because You want apostles to be saints, because You are infinitely good, infinitely powerful, and faithful to Your promises, and because You are infinitely merciful" (Don Poppe).

A RIGHT INTENTION

PRESENCE OF GOD - O God, remove from my heart all secondary intentions and all movements of self-love, so that I may seek only Your glory.

MEDITATION

1. Difficulties encountered in the apostolate often arise because apostolic activity is not exercised under conditions which are required by its very nature, conditions which are indispensable if this activity is to be transformed into an intense exercise of the spiritual life. There is question here of a certain disorder, arising from the more or less natural motives which insinuate themselves into the work and cause it to descend from the supernatural to the natural level. Thus it becomes an occasion for deviation and lukewarmness in the interior life, which in turn, makes the soul feel dissatisfied and uneasy. Pope Pius XII, in his Motu proprio *Primo Feliciter*, expressed very clearly the necessary conditions for a holy activity. He said : "The apostolate should always be exercised in a saintly manner, with such purity of intention, such interior union with God, such generous forgetfulness and abnegation of self, and with so great a love for souls that it [the apostolate] flows from the interior spirit which informs it and at the same time nourishes and renews this same spirit." Examining our apostolate in the light of these words, we shall be able to detect its weak points, to discover the defects to be avoided and the remedies to be applied. There are four conditions proposed : purity of intention, union with God, self-abnegation, love for souls. They are so important that while guaranteeing a fruitful apostolate, they constitute an efficacious means of spiritual progress. Striving to realize them, we shall simultaneously raise the level of our activity and of our interior life.

Let us first consider purity of intention. If no one can "serve God and Mammon" (*Mt 6,24*), much less can the apostle give himself to apostolic works with the double intention of serving God and his own self-love, of pleasing

God and the world, of being zealous for the interests of souls and for his own personal interests. Strength, peace, and life come from unity; dividing one's forces especially in the realm of the spirit, can only lead to weakness, conflict, and ultimately to death. An apostle whose heart is torn between opposing intentions will look in vain for peace in his work; he will always be disturbed and dissatisfied.

2. There can be a lack of right intention in a way that easily escapes one's notice; it may be so subtle that to a distracted soul, it passes wholly unobserved. In order to discover the least secondary intentions which, like little foxes, creep in secretly to destroy apostolic activity, an atmosphere of recollection and prayer is necessary. In his moments of quiet at the feet of Our Lord, the apostle will discover that often, in the course of his daily occupations, he loses sight of the supernatural end which should animate his activity, and that in its place secondary ends appear, becoming the immediate motive of many of his decisions and acts. This means that his intention has not remained directed solely toward God and souls, but has often deviated under the influence of self-love. Sometimes it is a question of seeking praise and glory, more or less unconsciously, or it may be preoccupations concerning his personal advantage or material interests: keeping a position, obtaining some promotion, being favored by superiors, or selected for more attractive or remunerative work.... In short, the apostle should realize that, side by side with his love for God and souls there is still much self-love and egoism. This is not a very consoling picture, but he should not be discouraged by it; instead, he should humbly recognize his own misery and thank God who has revealed it to him in order that he may correct it. On the other hand, he must not think that everything he does is merely the fruit of pride. No, when a person has consecrated himself to the apostolate with a sincere desire of doing God's will and winning other hearts for Him, he should acknowledge that he is animated by love for God and souls, but that his love is not strong enough yet to triumph completely over human passions. Therefore, the apostle should not give up the struggle against the manifestations of self-love, no matter how trivial. He must not yield to them under the pretext that they are natural tendencies, but must correct, mortify, repress, and

cut them off without pity, and must always rectify his intentions. A long, thorough purification is necessary to overcome completely the dualism between God and "self," between love for souls and love of self. The apostle must ask Our Lord for the grace of this total purification and dispose himself to receive it, profiting by every occasion for detachment, renunciation, sacrifice, and humiliation, which apostolic activity offers in abundance to all who seriously dedicate themselves to it. If the apostle does this, he will find in his work an excellent means of spiritual progress, and instead of becoming entangled in the dangers which abound in external activity when self-love is not mortified, he will be purified by the very exercise of his apostolate.

COLLOQUY

"When I desire to pray or work for the good of others, I must first of all turn the eyes of my mind toward You, O eternal Light, and to Your splendor, so that You will give me light, strengthen my spirit, and help me to withdraw, as much as possible, from external things in order to turn wholly toward that which is interior. Grant that I may see only the interior man in my neighbor, paying attention to the exterior only insofar as it helps the interior, so that everything else will be put aside as vanity and I may not be attracted by vain things.

"O my God, grant that I may be drawn to the apostolate, to prayer, and to giving good example, not by vainglory, ambition, human complacency, or any worldly interest, but only by the desire to save souls. You alone, O my crucified Christ, do I wish to seek! I want to inebriate souls with Your Blood, and not with vain curiosities, in order that they may desire You alone. I would say to each one of them, 'I know only Jesus Christ and Him crucified.' Hence I not only have no desire of worldly advantages or of being pleasing to men; I do not even judge myself as knowing anyone or anything but You, Christ crucified.

"O Lord, inebriate me so thoroughly with Your love that, if anything else but You presents itself to my sight or taste, to my hearing or any other sense, I shall consider it as nothing, so much so that I shall not take my delight, nor my glory, nor my rest except in Your Precious Blood, toward

which I desire to be completely turned. Grant that my eyes may not be filled with the things of earth, but only with Your sufferings; grant that my mouth may not be filled with vain words, but with what concerns Your Passion, and may it be the same with all my other senses" (cf. St. Bonaventure).

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SELF-FORGETFULNESS AND ABNEGATION

PRESENCE OF GOD - O Lord, You who give Yourself to us even to becoming our food, teach me to give myself to souls even unto total forgetfulness of myself.

MEDITATION

i. Another condition necessary for making our activity holy is "generous forgetfulness and abnegation of self" (Pius XII); what is more, without forgetfulness of self, it would be impossible to have rectitude of intention. Many secondary intentions steal into our actions precisely because we are so wrapt up in ourselves, so occupied and preoccupied with our *ego*, our interests, our conveniences, so anxious to be admired and to win applause and esteem. "We must go forth from ourselves and from creatures," says St. John of the Cross, go forth especially from this creature whom we love more than every other, *ourself*. If the Saint indicates to us the way of "the nothing" with a view to the contemplative ideal of union with God, we may assert that the apostolic life does not require less; it too exacts total abnegation of self which can only be brought about by constantly reminding ourselves : nothing, nothing, nothing.

To realize his vocation, the missionary must leave his homeland, his parents, his friends; he must give up the language, habits, and customs of his country in order to conform to those of his adopted land; likewise, due proportion being made, every apostle must renounce many things, even when working in home surroundings, his place of employment, or among his neighbors. Tastes, habits, personal demands of

culture, education, sensibility must be generously put aside, that the apostle may adapt himself to the mentality and to the demands of others; quiet, rest, relaxation, must yield their place to the service of souls. The apostle should not go about seeking interesting conversations, consoling friendships, pleasant occupations, satisfying results. Occasionally it may happen that he will meet these things on his way, but even then, he may not stop to enjoy them selfishly, but must use them as means for the apostolate; in any case, they may never and must never rule his activity. The apostle is sent to "give" and not to "receive," to sow and not to reap; therefore, he ought to know how to give his time, his work, his energies, and his very self, even in situations which offer nothing consoling, and even to those souls from whom he receives neither satisfaction nor gratitude.

2. St. Paul teaches that the priest "is ordained for men" (*Heb 5,1*), and the same can be said of every apostle. The apostle does not exist for himself, for his career, for his own advantage, but for souls, for the advantage of others and for all that concerns their spiritual good. Even if the apostolate confers on him some authority, some dignity, it is not for his honor, for his utility, but only for the service of his fellow men. The only personal advantage that he can and should derive from the exercise of his apostolate is his own sanctification. Such is the only right that the apostle is entitled to, the sole benefit he can seek for himself; all the rest must be generously sacrificed for God and for souls.

A soul truly *given* to the apostolate no longer belongs to himself: his strength, his talents, his time, his health, his life belong to God and his neighbor, and having *given* himself, he can no longer take himself back, nor dispose of himself. It can be said that he has lost the right of ownership over all that he is and all that he has. To give himself by forgetting himself, and to forget himself that he may give himself even more: such is his program; and this, not only in moments of enthusiasm, on bright days, when souls respond to his care, when his works flourish, and he himself is strong and vigorous, but also in moments of darkness, on gray days, when all seems to crumble under the impact of difficulties, when his tired body claims a little rest, when the work is heavy and energy declines and, with the onrush of internal and external struggles, it becomes very difficult to remain at his post.

Yes, even in hours of abandonment and trial, the apostle must continue to give himself with equal constancy and generosity. If he does not do so cheerfully, that is, with a true spirit of sacrifice, it will be impossible for his conduct not to betray his ill humor, discontent, aversion, or impatience; and all this is very prejudicial to his work and the influence he could exercise. But where can the strength be found for this complete and continual gift of self? In the Holy Eucharist. In it, Jesus gives Himself to us even to becoming our food. If the apostle, called to extend the mission of the Master, cannot imitate Him by giving himself literally as food to souls, he can nevertheless follow His example by putting himself at their disposal to the point of allowing himself to be "eaten" by them, that is to say, by allowing himself to be consumed in their service.

COLLOQUY

"O Lord, help me to understand well that my work has eternal value only in proportion to the love with which I do it, and not to the success or failure it may or may not have. Even if I do not see the fruits, what does it matter as long as You see them? You want me to work in the spirit of faith, without seeking personal satisfaction.

"I feel that I am a mother of souls, and I must sacrifice myself for them with the greatest generosity because the salvation of many souls may depend on my correspondence to grace. I am a poor little nothing, Lord, but I offer You all. Father, I offer You Your divine Son. Take me and dispose of me for Your greatest glory.

"O Lord, with insistence You are constantly urging me to an ever more generous and total sacrifice. I feel the need to give myself to You, no longer to reserve anything for myself. I wish, then, to renew my offering to You in order that You may take me wholly, that You may transform me, that You may use me for Your glory, for the salvation of souls, and that You may complete in me what is lacking to Your Passion for Your Body which is the Church. I am happy to find so many practical occasions in the course of my day to realize this offering" (Sr. Carmela of the Holy Spirit, O.C.D.).

"O Jesus, my whole strength lies in prayer and sacrifice : these are my invincible weapons, and experience has taught

me that the heart is won by them rather than by words " (T.C.J. St, 11).

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HUMILITY IN THE APOSTOLATE

PRESENCE OF GOD - Impress in me such a deep sense of my poverty, O Lord, that I may look to You for everything and attribute to You, to You alone, all that is good.

MEDITATION

1. Humility is the indispensable foundation of the whole spiritual life; hence it is the basic condition of every apostolate and constitutes the principal part of the program of abnegation and forgetfulness of self which the apostolate requires. Because the apostle is placed, as it were, on a candlestick, he needs more than others to protect himself from pride and vainglory by a deep humility. In glancing through the Gospels, it is significant to note how much Jesus insisted on this point relative to the training of His Apostles. While they were debating among themselves who would be the greatest in the messianic kingdom, the Master answered : " Unless you be converted and become as little children, You shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven " (*Mt* 18,3). On another occasion, when the mother of James and John asked the first places for her sons, Jesus replied : " He that will be first among you shall be your servant " (*ibid.* 20,27). And on the evening of the Last Supper, while washing the feet of the Apostles, He showed them to what extent they should make themselves servants : " If then, I, being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet " (*Jn* 13,14). Finally, before sending them into His vineyard to bear " much fruit," He repeatedly told them, " Without Me you can do nothing " (*ibid.* 15,5).

Yes, the apostle is the friend of Jesus, chosen by Him and destined to evangelize the world. Some have been appointed by Him to govern the Church, clothed with the dignity

of the priesthood, with the power "to loose and to bind." All—cleric or lay—have been elevated to the dignity of collaborators with the Hierarchy in the work of saving souls. But at the base of all these privileges, all these honors, are found the great words : " You must become as little children.... Without Me you can do nothing." Oh! If we were truly convinced that, although God may will to make use of us, He alone possesses the power to make our action fruitful, He alone can produce fruits of eternal life, He alone can give grace to souls, and we are nothing but instruments! In fact, the smaller we make ourselves by acknowledging our poverty, the more qualified we become to be used as a means for the salvation of others. What glory can a brush claim if a skillful artist uses it to perfect a work of art? Can the marble used by Michelangelo to sculpture his Moses boast of any merit? " You have not chosen Me," Jesus said to His Apostles, " but I have chosen you; and have appointed you, that you should go and should bring forth fruit " (*Jn* 15,16).

2. "Without Me you can do nothing." How many ambitions and points of honor, how much vain self-complacency, how many desires for applause and for advancement in recognition of our personal worth are broken, like waves on the rocks, by these words! Jesus does not tell us that "without Him we can do little," but, *nothing*, absolutely *nothing*, and if in appearance the works flourish, admirers increase, churches and halls are filled, in reality not the least atom of grace can descend into hearts if God does not intervene.

Poor apostle, at times so satisfied, so inflated by success! Despite your abilities, your talent, your brilliant style, your attractive conversation, your titles, your successes—in relation to the apostolate, you are smaller and more powerless than an ant before a very high mountain. Recognize your nothingness, take refuge in God, keep yourself closely united to Him, for only from Him will you draw the fruitfulness of your works.

Charged with the education of the novices, St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus exclaimed : " You see, Lord, that I am too small to feed Your little ones, but if through me You wish to give to each what is suitable, then fill my hands, and without leaving the shelter of Your arms, or even turning

my head, I will distribute Your treasures to the souls who come to me asking for food" (*St 11*). Such should be the attitude of every apostle; and what is more, the higher his mission, the more important and delicate it is, the more necessary is this humble consciousness of his personal misery, this confident recourse to God, this constant union with Him. If God does not use us to accomplish great works, is it because, being insufficiently convinced of our nothingness, we would take to ourselves the glory due to Him alone, attributing our success to our own merits? If our apostolic activity produces few fruits, is it because, relying too much on ourselves, we do not constantly strive to keep close to God by means of humility and prayer?

"Abide in Me," Jesus repeats to us. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me" (*Jn 15,4*). It does not suffice for the apostle to be united to Jesus through the state of grace; he must remain united to Him, plunged in profound humility which makes him realize that he can do nothing, absolutely nothing, without continual help.

COLLOQUY

"O Lord, You wish that in my apostolate I may feel and recognize my nothingness, but at the same time You want me to let myself be taken and carried by You to accomplish the mission that You confide to me, and then enter again into obscurity and silence, boasting of nothing and saying only: '*servi inutiles sumus*'; I am a useless servant, without You I can do nothing."

"O Lord, help me to flee praise and the applause of creatures; help me to act always with an upright intention, seeking only Your good pleasure. I beg You to put far from me those defects which could distract me from working only to please You: ostentation, compliments, adulation, the desire of making a good appearance, of being agreeable to others. Grant that I may never seek my glory but only yours. All to please You, nothing to satisfy myself" (Sr. Carmela of the Holy Spirit, O.C.D.).

"I beg You, Lord, to direct the heart and the will of Your apostles to Yourself so that they may follow You, immolated Lamb, poor, humble, and meek, by the way of the

Holy Cross, in Your way and not in their way. Dispel the darkness of their hearts and give them Your light; take from them all self-love and kindle in them the fire of Your charity. Make them close the faculties of their souls, shutting their minds to vain delights and earthly benefits, leaving them open only to Your benefits, that they may love nothing outside of You, but love You above all things, and everything else according to Your will; may they follow You alone.

"Grant that, with well ordered charity, they may seek the salvation of all, disposing themselves to give their life for the good of souls. And may they be angelic creatures, earthly angels in this life, and burning lamps in the Holy Church!" (cf. St. Catherine of Siena).

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HUMAN QUALITIES AND APOSTOLIC CHARITY

PRESENCE OF GOD - Melt my heart, Lord, in the flame of Your charity.

MEDITATION

1. The apostolate is the expression and the fruit of *caritas apostolica*, that is to say, of love of God and neighbor, which has increased until it has become zeal for souls. But besides this essential aspect of the charity which must animate the apostle, there are secondary aspects; we might almost say human ones, that are, nevertheless, of great importance, since they permit the apostle to exercise influence over souls. We here speak of such qualities as affability, thoughtfulness, courtesy, sociability, sincerity, understanding, which although human gifts in themselves, acquire supernatural value when elevated by grace and placed at the service of the apostolate. It is a matter, in substance, of those qualities which St. Paul attributes to love : "Charity is patient, is kind... is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil...rejoiceth with the truth" (*1 Cor 13,4-6*).

It is not sufficient to love souls in the secret of our heart, working and sacrificing ourselves for them; this love must also be manifested exteriorly by an agreeable and pleasant manner, in such a way that those who approach us may feel themselves loved, and consequently encouraged to confidence and to trust. A rude, brusque, or impatient manner might cause some to go away offended, and perhaps, even scandalized. The apostle may well have a heart of gold, rich in charity and zeal, but if he maintains a rough and sharp exterior, he closes access to souls, and considerably diminishes the good he could realize. The saints, while being very supernatural, never neglected these human qualities of charity. St. Francis de Sales liked to say that, as more flies are attracted with a drop of honey than with a barrel of vinegar, so more hearts are conquered by a little sweetness than by rough manners. And St. Teresa of Jesus, who wished her daughters to be united by the bond of pure supernatural charity, did not believe it superfluous to make recommendations of this kind : "The holier you are, the more sociable you should be with your sisters. Although you may be sorry if all your sisters' conversation is not just as you would like it to be, never keep aloof from them if you wish to help them and to have their love. We must try hard to be pleasant, and to humor the people we deal with" (*Way*, 41). This is very useful advice for anyone who wishes to win souls for God.

2. Concerning natural qualities employed in the service of apostolic charity, we can meditate fruitfully on the exhortation addressed by Pius XII to a group of religious men : "Before the young religious (and this could be said of the apostle) becomes a shining example, let him study to become a perfect man in the ordinary everyday things. . . . Let him learn, then, and show by his works, the dignity proper to human nature and to society; let him regulate his countenance and bearing in a dignified manner and be faithful and sincere; let him keep his promises; let him govern his acts and his words; let him have respect for all and not harm the rights of others; let him endure evil and be sociable. . . . As you well know, the virtues called natural are raised to the dignity of the supernatural life chiefly when a man practises them and cultivates them in order to become a good Christian and a worthy herald and

minister of Christ" (September, 1951). There is, therefore, no reason to believe that an antagonism exists between the plenitude of the supernatural life, union with God, and the plenitude of human virtue, deriving from a right development of the natural virtues. We must remember that grace does not destroy nature, but elevates it. The struggle against nature making way for grace, tends to mortify and to destroy only what is defective in nature, leaving intact the good qualities and powers to be raised and transferred to the supernatural plane. Grace, and consequently the Christian life, greatly respects and uses all human values; moreover, how could we believe that the supernatural destroys nature when the latter, no less than the former, is the work of God, the fruit of His wisdom and of His infinite goodness?

In raising man to the supernatural plane, God did not intend to destroy in him what had already been created, but only to sublimate and to elevate it. In the light of these principles, we understand why it has been said that the apostle, as well as the priest, must be a "perfect gentleman" (Cardinal Newman). We also grasp why the saints are the more perfect men, in the sense that they have carried the natural virtues to their highest perfection and sublimation. It follows that the saints are more capable than others of surrounding men with amiability, delicacy, and understanding, while loving them with a purely supernatural love; thus they more easily win their hearts. This perfect courtesy, ever self-possessed, even with the importunate, and even in moments of weariness, can only flow from great supernatural virtue and delicate charity.

COLLOQUY

O Lord, "if I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal...if I should have the gift of prophecy and should know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it would profit me nothing."

" Grant me charity, then, O my God, for charity is patient, is kind : charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up; is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things " (cf. *1 Cor 13,1-7*).

Grant, O Lord, that in consecrating myself to Your service, my tenderness toward my neighbor may not diminish, but may grow in my heart, and may become ever more pure, more supernatural. Teach me to love tenderly all who draw near to me. Make me gentle, affable, agreeable, not to attract to myself the affection of creatures, but to conquer their hearts for You.

O Jesus, if the apostle should be a copy of You, not only in broad lines, but even in details, how shall I be such if I do not try to imitate the gentleness of Your heart? O Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto Yours.

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FORGIVENESS

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PRESENCE OF GOD - O Lord, as You are so generous in forgiving me, teach me to forgive others generously.

MEDITATION

1. " The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who would take an account of his servants." Today's Gospel (*Mt 18,23-35*) refers to the account which all men will one day be called upon to give. It is a serious thought, which makes us reflect, as we did last Sunday, on the state of our conscience. Yet, as we continue the reading of this parable, our hearts are comforted. God, represented by the king, manifests such kindness, mercy, and compassion to the poor

servant who cannot pay his debt; He forgives him everything and sets him free.

The debt of that servant was not a trifling one: ten thousand talents; our debts to God are much greater and cannot be computed in talents, nor in silver and gold; they must be reckoned according to the price of our redemption, the most precious Blood of Jesus. Our debts are our sins which needed to be washed away in the Blood of a divine Victim. In spite of our good will, we increase these debts each day, to a greater or lesser extent, if only by faults of frailty and weakness. Is there one who can say at the day's end that he has not contracted new debts with God? If, at the end of life, God should place before us an exact account of our *deficit*, we should find ourselves in a much more embarrassing position than that of the servant in the parable. But God, being infinite goodness, knows and has pity on our misery; each time we place ourselves before Him and humbly acknowledge our faults with sincere repentance, He immediately pardons us and cancels all our debts. God is magnificent when He pardons: He does not reproach us for the faults over which we have already wept, nor does He keep any account of them; His pardon is so generous, so great and complete, that it not only annuls our debts, but destroys even the memory of them, as if they had never existed. It is enough for Him to see us repentant; then every wound, even the most grievous and repugnant, is completely healed by the precious Blood of Jesus. Christ's Blood is like an immense sea which has the power to cleanse and destroy the sins of all mankind, provided they are sincerely repented of. Every minute of every day we can take the burden, heavy or light as it may be, of our sins and infidelities and make it disappear in this ocean of grace and love, certain that not one trace of it will remain.

2. The second part of the parable speaks of our forgiveness of others. Returning home, the fortunate servant whose debts had all been cancelled, met one of his fellow servants, who owed him a hundred pence, a very small sum compared with the ten thousand talents which had been cancelled for him. Yet he who had been treated with so much mercy, showed none to his fellow servant; he would neither listen to his pleadings, nor heed his tears, but "went and cast him into prison, till he paid the debt."

A few moments ago we were moved by the master's kindness; now the servant's cruelty makes us indignant. Yet, even though we blush, we ought to recognize that, just as the kindheartedness of the master is the image of the mercy of God, ever ready to pardon, so the cruelty of the servant is the figure of our own hardheartedness and miserliness in forgiving our neighbor. Unfortunately, it is all too true: we who need God's forgiveness even more than we need our daily bread, are so hard, so demanding toward our fellow men; we find it difficult to be indulgent and forgiving. Yet what are the debts that our neighbor may owe us compared with what we owe to God? Certainly, infinitely less than a few pence compared with ten thousand talents, since it is a matter of an offense committed against a mere creature compared with one committed against the infinite majesty of God. But what a contrast! God pardons, forgets, and entirely cancels all our heavy debts; He does not cease to love us and bestow favors upon us in spite of our continual want of fidelity. We, on the contrary, find it very difficult to forgive some little slight; even if we do forgive, we cannot entirely forget it, and we are ready to reproach the other person at the first opportunity. How would we act if our neighbor committed against us each day the numerous infidelities and faults that we commit against God? Oh! how miserable and constrained is our way of pardoning others!

The parable describes the punishment inflicted on the cruel servant by his master: "And his lord being angry, delivered him to the torturers until he paid all the debt"; and the conclusion follows: "So also shall My heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not your brothers from your hearts." If we wish God to be generous in pardoning us, we must be generous in forgiving others; we shall be forgiven according to the measure in which we forgive, which means that we ourselves give to God the exact measure of the mercy He is to show to us.

COLLOQUY

"Is there anyone, O Lord, who is not in debt to You? Is there anyone who has not someone in debt to him? In Your justice You have determined that Your rule of conduct

toward me, Your debtor, should be that followed by me in regard to my debtors. Therefore, because I also have sinned—and how often!—I must be indulgent with him who seeks my pardon. In fact, when the time of prayer comes, I should be able to say to You, ‘ Forgive me, O Lord, my trespasses,’ and how? The condition is laid down by me, I myself fix the law : ‘ Forgive me my trespasses as I forgive those who trespass against me.’

“ O Lord, You have set down in the Gospel two short sentences : ‘ Forgive and it shall be forgiven you; give and it shall be given to you.’ This is my prayer : I ask pardon of You for my sins, and You will that I should pardon others.

“ Just as the poor beg from me, so I, Your poor little beggar, stand at the door of my Father’s house; rather, I prostrate myself there, begging and groaning, longing to receive something, and this something is You. The beggar asks me for bread, and what do I ask of You, if not Yourself, for You have said, ‘ I am the living bread that came down from heaven?’

“ In order to obtain forgiveness, I shall forgive; I shall pardon others, and I shall be pardoned. Because I wish to receive, I shall give, and it shall be given to me.

“ If it is hard for me to forgive someone who has offended me, I shall have recourse to prayer. Instead of repaying insults with more insults, I shall pray for the guilty one. When I feel like giving him a harsh answer, I shall speak to You, O Lord, in his favor. Then I shall remember that You promise eternal life, but You command us to forgive others. It is as if You said to me, ‘ You who are a man, forgive other men, so that I, who am God can come to you’ ” (St. Augustine).

EDUCATION AND CULTURE AT THE SERVICE OF THE APOSTOLATE

PRESENCE OF GOD - Teach me, O Lord, to put into the service of the apostolate all the talents I have received from You.

MEDITATION

1. Together with the natural virtues placed at the service of apostolic charity, it is also necessary to consider the other human qualities which give the apostle an ascendancy in his field of activity, not for his personal gain, but for the benefit of the Christian ideal. To say that notwithstanding his culture and abilities, the apostle can do nothing without the help of God, is not a condemnation of these natural values; is merely the statement that, of themselves, these qualities are insufficient to attain the essential end of the apostolate, that is, the communication of grace to souls, an end which only the divine action can effect. However, that which does not suffice in itself, can become in the hands of God a most excellent means for procuring the good of souls. The brush of itself can do nothing, but in the hands of a skillful master, it can be used to create great works of art.

The apostle should be conscious of the radical insufficiency of his gifts and talents; but at the same time, he should cultivate these gifts and make these talents bear fruit, so as to put them at the disposal of God for apostolic ends. It is therefore necessary that apostles foster their intellectual formation, together with the interior life. Certainly sanctity is always the more important element; however, when learning is united to sanctity, the results will be better. St. Teresa of Jesus was of this opinion, and she did not hesitate to say concerning spiritual direction : "The director ought to be a spiritual man, but if he has no learning, it is a great inconvenience" (*Life*, 13). This is true, not only in the direction of souls, but in any form of apostolate, for "learning is a great help in giving light upon everything" (*Way*, 5); furthermore, it is impossible to gain entrance into certain circles without sufficient culture. It is therefore a

duty of the apostle to procure an intellectual preparation adequate to the apostolate which he must exercise. It is not a question of seeking knowledge which inflates, nor of cultivating one's intellect in order to make a display of oneself, but of putting into use for the good of souls all the talents received from God. Under the vivifying influence of charity, such things as education, culture, doctrine, technical capabilities, — everything, in fact, is transformed into means of furthering the apostolate.

2. Those who are called to exercise the apostolate in professional life have, more than others, the duty of training themselves and of developing the technical skill required for their profession. A teacher who does not carefully prepare his courses, who does not keep abreast of the times, or give himself with zeal to teaching, will never deeply influence his pupils; any apostolic endeavor among them is doomed to failure. Only good professional competence can obtain for the Catholic that authority which, going beyond the limits of his profession, often embraces the moral and religious field, permitting him to exercise an efficacious influence over those who approach him; in this way he can do immense good, and his word is sometimes more readily heeded than that of the priest. It is noteworthy that Pope Pius XII counseled Catholic laymen not to "be inferior to others in scientific and professional competence, but to do what they could to become better professionals, better jurists, scholars, physicians, engineers" (to the Catholic Laureates, March 20, 1941); and this, not in view of financial profit, but in order to acquire for apostolic ends a wider and more authoritative influence. In proportion to their professional competence, Catholics will be called upon to occupy positions of command in society; they will in this way be able to cooperate more effectively in organizing a civil world in harmony with the principles of the Gospel, thus making it more receptive to divine grace.

Before devoting himself to other forms of the apostolate, the layman should first exercise it by the perfect fulfillment of his professional duties. For, as sanctity should be sought above all in the fulfillment of the duties of one's state in life, so the apostolate should be developed primarily through the perfect accomplishment of professional duties, which are precisely

those of one's state of life. To become a saint and an apostle by means of his ordinary everyday life, that is, by the fulfillment of his professional duties, should be the program of the Catholic layman. This practical program is within the reach of all; nevertheless, it requires an eminent spirit of sacrifice, of faith and of love, to transform arduous professional labor into an apostolic force. But apostolic charity is capable of great things. In the name of God it can do all things, because it "beareth all things, hopeth all things" (*1 Cor 13,7*).

COLLOQUY

O Lord, I do not desire knowledge that inflates, but the humble learning which comes from You, enlightening minds and enkindling hearts.

"You, O Lord, are He who teaches men knowledge, and to little ones You give a clearer understanding than can be taught by man. If You speak to me, I shall become learned in a short time and will make great progress in the spiritual life.

"It is You, O Lord, who in an instant so enlighten the humble mind that it comprehends more of eternal truth than could be learned by ten years in the schools, You who teach without noise of words or clash of opinions, without contention of arguments" (*Imit. III, 43,2,3*).

Give me this knowledge, O Lord, and I shall be able to enter into study and work without any danger of vainglory. I want to use the intelligence You have given me by employing it in Your service; I want to make it fructify for Your glory and for the good of souls. Everything that I have received from You—intelligence, will, physical and moral energies—should be used for this end, for the apostle must be completely devoted to the fulfillment of his mission, always at his post for the defense and the glory of Your Name.

Sanctify, Lord, my studies, my work, the practice of my profession; grant that love may transform all into a means of apostolate.

"Remember, Lord, that You declared to me, 'I have come for the salvation of souls.' I offer You, then, my life, now and forever; grant that it may be pleasing to You; I offer it for Your glory, humbly begging You by virtue of

Your Passion, to purify and to sanctify Your people”
(St. Catherine of Siena).

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APOSTOLIC HOPE

PRESENCE OF GOD - O Jesus, I place all my hope for the souls that You have entrusted to me, in Your power, in Your infinite love, and in Your Passion.

MEDITATION

1. In his work the apostle needs to be sustained by a strong hope. The moments of enthusiasm are brief, success is quickly followed by failure, difficulties are numerous, the struggle waged by enemy forces is sharp and incessant, and if the apostle is not firmly anchored in God by solid theological hope, he will end, sooner or later, by giving up the enterprise in discouragement. “I have overcome the world” (*Jn* 16,33), Jesus declared, and sending the apostles to continue His victorious mission, He assured them, “I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world” (*Mt* 28,20). The foundation of apostolic hope is the victory of Christ and His continual help. Yes, He is with us *all days*, even on the dark days, when the horizon is black without a ray of light, when the enemy triumphs, when our friends forsake us, and when, humanly speaking, one does not see any possibility of success. If we had to rely upon our own resources, our ability, our works, we should have every reason to give up in despair; this, however, is not the case. We hope and we are certain in our hope, because God is omnipotent, because He wills all men to be saved, because Christ has redeemed us with His Precious Blood, and because He has died for us and for us has risen again; and finally, because His promises—the promises of a God—are infallible: “Heaven and earth shall pass, but My words shall not pass” (*ibid.* 24,35).

Relying on the salvific will of God, on His infinite power, and on the redemption of Christ, the apostle should nourish the certain hope that grace will triumph in the end. But at the same time, he should have no delusions; he should realize that he will not attain victory except by passing through Calvary. "Neither is the apostle greater than He that sent him" (*Jn* 13,16). If Jesus reached the triumph of the Resurrection only after His Passion and most painful death, the apostle cannot seek another way. For him also, there will necessarily come hours of darkness, but rather than being a sign of defeat, they will be the prelude to victory; rather than being a sign of abandonment on the part of God, they will be a proof that God is with him, precisely because He is leading him by the very same way along which He led His divine Son.

2. Jesus also has known failure: after His discourse in the synagogue of Nazareth, His fellow citizens were indignant. "They brought Him to the brow of the hill... that they might cast Him down headlong" (*Lk* 4,29). On two other occasions when the Jews were scandalized by His words, they "took up stones to stone Him" (*Jn* 10,31). The Pharisees conspired against Him and treacherously plotted His death; Judas betrayed Him; His own abandoned Him. He was made the laughingstock of the soldiers; He was scourged, crowned with thorns, clothed as a mock king, blindfolded, spat upon; Barabbas was preferred to Him. He was led to Calvary and crucified between two thieves. Humanly speaking, one could well say that the apostolate of Jesus terminated in absolute failure, with His death as a malefactor. All this should be deeply impressed on the mind of the apostle, so that he may not be scandalized if something similar should happen in his own life: "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" (*ibid.* 15,20).

By means of persecutions, humiliations and failures, the apostle will learn not to trust in his own strength; he will consider himself a useless servant even after he has labored much; he will be convinced of his own insufficiency and of the insufficiency of all human means; hence, he will place all his hope in God. He will learn to work solely for the love of God, without seeking the consolation of success, renouncing even the legitimate satisfaction of seeing the

results of his labors. He will learn to be detached from the opinions and judgments of men, to act independently of their approval or disapproval, and to look only to the judgment and approval of God. The contradictions and troubles that the apostle encounters in his work constitute his dark night, comparable to that of contemplatives, a night that is painful but very precious, because its purpose is to purify the soul of every remnant of self-love, of egoism, of vanity, of attachment to creatures and to their esteem. This night, if generously accepted, will gradually lead to an ever greater interior purity, and therefore, to an ever closer union with God. The apostle should remain steadfast in hope, notwithstanding struggles, difficulties, and failures. He should be assured of success, not only where the salvation of the souls entrusted to him is concerned, but also in relation to his own personal sanctification. Even if God should permit his success to remain hidden and all his work to end, as did that of Jesus, in apparent failure, the apostle will find strength in the wounds and Blood of the divine Crucified to persevere in hope, and to hope against all hope.

COLLOQUY

“ O Lord, I wish to draw down Your mercy on this poor world, not only by the generosity of my sacrifice and my detachment, but also by the generosity of my confidence. I want to believe against all evidence, hope against all hope; I want to believe with unshakable confidence, even when things seem to become ever more painful and difficult to resolve. I want to touch Your heart, O Lord, by the firmness and generosity of my confidence!

“ I know and firmly believe that You love me, that You permit all for Your greater glory and for my greater good; I know that I can cooperate in the salvation of souls, and that the sufferings of time have no proportion with future glory; I know that to become a saint it is necessary to suffer much, and that one reaches pure love through pure suffering; I know that all is possible to me in You, who are my support. Even if I were fatigued, oppressed by darkness, anguish, and agony, by looking at You, O Jesus Crucified, I should always taste an intimate supernatural joy, since You admit me to share Your sufferings in order to conform me to Your

Passion and to permit me one day to participate in Your glory.

"I can always rejoice in the face of any suffering, humiliation, trial, interior or exterior pain, by reflecting that You, O Jesus, do me the honor of inviting me to participate in Your Passion, in Your redemptive work for souls. Therefore, far from considering these sorrows as evils, teach me to embrace them and to welcome them as favors and precious means for my sanctification, vivifying them through love and a peaceful, total adherence to Your will. O Lord, it is in this spirit that I intend to offer You my prayer, my mortification, my daily renunciation, my continual acceptance of the sufferings You send me, to draw down graces on the whole Church and to save souls" (Sr. Carmela of the Holy Spirit, O.C.D.).

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PROGRESS IN THE APOSTOLATE

PRESENCE OF GOD - Unite me to You, O Lord, and may the power of Your charity enkindle in my heart true apostolic fire.

MEDITATION

i. St. Thomas teaches that love is like fire. It produces a flame, and the flame of love is zeal. If the fire burns intensely, then the flame will also be intense and devouring. True apostolic zeal is the spontaneous result, the normal fruit of intimate contact of the soul with God through love. The more a soul is united to God by love, the more it becomes enveloped in the flame of His charity, participating in His infinite love for men, in His eternal zeal for their salvation; thus it *necessarily* becomes *apostolic*.

It would be an exaggeration to say that one could not be an apostle before being thus intimately enraptured by divine love, but it is evident that the fullness of the apostolate, and therefore of apostolic fecundity, will not be attained without this interior flame which is born of union with God. Until we

attain this, we must consider ourselves beginners in the apostolate, like apprentices who apply themselves to an art, executing this or that work without yet being sustained or led by personal inspiration. Beginners must act as such, that is, with caution, giving themselves to the apostolate with prudence and measure, because not having attained that spiritual maturity in which the flame of zeal burns spontaneously within them, they have not as yet those reserves of grace which serve to defend the soul from the dangers of a too intense external activity, and which, at the same time, have the power to make all their labor fruitful. St. Teresa asserts that "as yet the soul is not even weaned, but is like a child beginning to suck the breast. If it be taken from its mother, what can it be expected to do but die? That, I am very much afraid will be the lot of anyone to whom God has granted this favor, if he gives up prayer; unless he does so for some every exceptional reason, or unless he returns to it quickly, he will go from bad to worse" (*Int C IV*, 3). Let us remark that the Saint is not speaking of souls who are taking the first steps in the interior life, but of those who have attained to the prayer of quiet and could well be called proficients; yet it is no exaggeration to say that, in respect to the apostolate, they are still beginners.

2. St. Teresa shows us a soul at the moment in which—in consequence of the charity which unites it to God—there is born in it the interior flame of the apostolate. Through love and abandonment, it has become so submissive to the will of God that "it neither knows nor desires anything save that God shall do with it what He wills"; and God who "takes it for His very own...seals it with His seal" and infuses into it a most lively sorrow for the sins of men and an ardent desire to immolate itself for their salvation (*Int C V*, 2). In this soul charity has increased to such a point as to enable it to renounce effectively its own will in order to conform itself in all things to the divine will. Even when confronted with difficult and unforeseen circumstances which require a great spirit of sacrifice it puts aside every natural repugnance and resentment, all personal views and desires, in order to adhere entirely to the divine will, whether this presents itself under the aspect of daily duties or by means of the external voice of obedience, the interior voice of the Holy Spirit, or even by the circumstances of life.

Then, when the soul is truly united to God by love, truly given to Him, God *takes* it and sends it forth in the service of the Church and souls. He wills to make use of it to realize His plan for the salvation and sanctification of humanity.

Immense desires of the apostolate, in no wise comparable to those it had nourished before, awaken in the soul. It feels that it no longer belongs to itself, that its life is necessarily bound to that of the divine Redeemer, and that, in imitation of Him, it should dedicate its life to souls and let it be wholly consumed in their service. Even those who apparently live isolated from the world and from external contact with men—religious in their cloisters, contemplatives in hermitages and deserts—become eminently apostolic when they have reached this state. Their whole life of prayer and sacrifice is orientated toward one ideal : to make reparation for the sins of mankind, to save souls. Whereas contemplatives give vent to this apostolic zeal by redoubling their hidden immolation, active souls, given to exterior works, find in the interior flame blazing forth from their union with God the impulse, the strength, the support, the fecundity of their apostolate. Once again we must come to the conclusion that to the way to attain to the greatest apostolic efficacy is the solitary and silent way of union with God.

COLLOQUY

"O my God, how fervent and strong is the charity of a soul who is united with You by love! Those whom You have taken to Yourself in this way, cannot confine themselves to their personal advantage, and be satisfied with it. Nor would it suffice for them to go to heaven alone, but with solicitude and affection wholly celestial, and with utmost diligence, they endeavor to lead many others with them. Grant, O Lord, that my love for You may have this same effect on me" (cf. J.C.).

"O Lord, when once a soul is resolved to love You and has resigned itself into Your hands You will have nothing else save that it desire and seek to contribute to Your greater glory.

"Oh! the charity of those who truly love You! How little rest will they be able to take if they see they can do anything to help even one soul to make progress and love You better, or to give it some comfort or save it from some

danger! How insupportable would their rest become for them!

"Even if I can do nothing for others by my actions, I can do a great deal by means of prayer, importuning You, O Lord, for the many souls the thought of whose ruin causes me such grief. I would lose my own comfort, and look upon it as well lost, for I am not thinking of my own pleasure but of how better to do Your will.

"O my God, as time goes on, my desires to do something for the good of some soul grows greater and greater, and I often feel like one who has a large amount of treasure in her charge and would like everyone to enjoy it, but whose hands are tied, so that she cannot distribute it.... Unable to contain myself any longer...I call upon You, O Lord, beseeching You to find me a means of gaining some soul for Your service" (T.J. F, 5 - 1).

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APOSTOLIC MATURITY

PRESENCE OF GOD - Your love, O my God, matures my soul and renders it capable of giving itself fully to the service of souls.

MEDITATION

1. We may ask if the apostle can devote himself freely to the apostolate when he has reached the degree of union with God in which the flame of zeal bursts forth spontaneously. The fact is that, at this point, he cannot and should not evade the gift of self. Whether he is consecrated to contemplation or to action, whether he lives in the cloister or in the midst of the turmoil of the world, his life consists henceforth in giving himself unceasingly : in giving himself to God for the good of his neighbor, in giving himself to his neighbor for the glory of God. To stifle this tendency would be to retrogress and to impoverish his own spiritual life; the time has come when the soul should be enriched by the gift of self lived in the exercise of an intense apostolate,

interior or exterior as the case may be. However, the saints teach that prudence is still necessary, and one must not cease to be vigilant, since to have received the interior grace of the apostolate does not signify that one has been confirmed in grace. St. Teresa says this expressly : " I have known people of a very high degree of spirituality who have reached this state, and whom, notwithstanding, the devil with great subtlety and craft, has won back to himself" (*Int C V*, 4). " How many are called by the Lord to the apostleship, as Judas was, and enjoy communion with Him...and afterwards, through their own fault, are lost! " (*ibid.*, 3). Spontaneously one recalls the cry full of humility and distrust of self that burst forth from the heart of St. Paul, the Apostle who had been rapt to the third heaven : " Lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway" (*1 Cor* 9,27). As long as we are on earth, we have reason to fear; we always have, alas, the sad possibility of not corresponding with grace, of separating ourselves, even in small things, from the will of God—and herein lies our ruin—thus, little by little we fall back. " Christian souls whom the Lord has brought to this point on your journey, " exclaims St. Teresa of Jesus, " I beseech you, for His sake, not to be negligent, but to withdraw from occasions of sin"; and she adds, " For this purpose [the downfall of an apostle] the devil will marshall all the powers of hell, for as I have often said, if he wins a single soul in this way, he will win a whole multitude" (*Int C V*, 4). On the contrary, if the apostle remains faithful to the grace of the apostolate, he will not only be an instrument for the salvation of many, but his own interior life will be deeply enriched.

2. In order not to be unfaithful to the grace of the apostolate, three cautions are particularly necessary. First of all, one must always have a jealous care for humility, defending oneself against the flattering voices of praise and success and confronting them with the picture of one's misery, the poor figure so often made, as well as of one's blunders and failures in the apostolate. If Lucifer—a pure spirit—fell through pride, it is not unthinkable that an apostle, too, is subject to such a fall, being man and weighed down by matter. Constant vigilance is necessary, then, to maintain intimate contact with God, for just as iron becomes red hot

and glows only when it is in contact with fire, so the apostle radiates the divine light and warmth only if he keeps himself united to Him who is their only source.

Lastly, it is of the greatest importance to persevere in perfect detachment from one's own will and judgment. In regard to this, St. John of the Cross warns us that "among the many wiles used by the devil to deceive spiritual persons, the most ordinary is that of deceiving them under an appearance of what is good, not under an appearance of what is evil : for he knows that if they recognize evil, they will scarcely touch it" (*P*, 10). Therefore, in order not to fall into his snares, the Saint warns us never to undertake any action "however good and full of charity" (*ibid.*, 11) it may seem to be, without the sanction of obedience. This advice is good not only for religious but for all who work in the apostolate, because all should be submissive to ecclesiastical authority. For even if such a work, such an initiative, such a method of apostolate should obtain excellent results, from the moment that ecclesiastical authority does not approve of it, for whatever reason, the apostle should immediately renounce it, without criticism, complaint, or murmuring, by which he might try to make his own point of view prevail.

Protected by deep humility and sincere detachment, sustained by intimate union with God, the apostle can go through the paths of the world without fear for his spiritual life.

COLLOQUY

"O Lord, the souls who were closest to You, as were Your most holy Mother and Your glorious Apostles, were those who suffered and labored the most for You, giving themselves no rest.

"O my God, how little should the soul that lives closely united to You think about resting! How far it ought to be from wishing to be esteemed in anything! If it is occupied with You, as it is right it should be, it will forget itself; its whole thought will be concentrated upon finding ways to please You, and seeing in what things and in what ways it can show You its love. You teach me, O Lord, that this is the aim of prayer, and that union with You tends to this : to produce good works and good works alone.

" If I fix my eyes on You, my crucified Lord, everything will become easy to me. Since you have shown me Your love by doing and suffering such amazing things, why should I content myself with words alone? Oh! make me know how to give myself to You as Your slave, so that branded as such with Your sign, which is the sign of the Cross, You can sell me as a slave to the whole world. Let me see what it means to become truly spiritual.

" Unite me to You, O divine Strength, that I may share in Your strength as the saints shared in it, so that with great zeal, I may work for Your glory, and suffer and die for You, and thus win many souls for You" (*Int C VII*, 4).

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SPIRITUAL PATERNITY AND MATERNITY

PRESENCE OF GOD - O my God, unite me to Yourself by a bond of fervent love; grant that by this union I may bring You many souls.

MEDITATION

1. God has bestowed on man the great honor of willing that he be His collaborator in a work which is proper to Himself, as God, which belongs essentially to Him alone, that is, the communication of life, and not only of natural life but of supernatural life also. On the natural level, which we may call the plan of creation, the fathers and mothers of families are His collaborators, having been entrusted with the high mission of communicating life to new human beings, of rearing and educating them for the glory of God. On the supernatural level, that of Redemption, God's collaborators are all those who, by dedicating themselves to the apostolate, have an even more noble and vast mission, that of communicating to men the life of grace, without which they are unhappy creatures, and in a certain sense, are unable to attain eternal life. In his Encyclical *Menti Nostrae*, Pope Pius XII declares, " The priest is...the organ of the

communication and increase of life in the Mystical Body of Christ. Far from losing the gift and the office of paternity because of his celibacy, the priest increases them immeasurably, since if he does not beget children for this passing life on earth, he begets them for that life which is heavenly and eternal." In due proportion, the same can be said of every apostle; for the final end of the apostolate is precisely to engender souls to the supernatural life.

"My little children, of whom I am in labor again, until Christ be formed in you," exclaimed St. Paul in a letter to the Galatians (4,19). Every apostle has an equal right to feel himself both father and mother of the souls for whom he sacrifices himself entirely—a paternity and a maternity which are a reflection of, or rather, a sharing in the paternity of God. In the natural order, God has arranged that fecundity, the source of life, should be the result of the union of two creatures. In the supernatural order also, fecundity is born of union, but of an immensely superior and wholly spiritual union: the union of the soul with God. The more a soul is united to God by love, the greater is its participation in His inexhaustible fecundity, which has for its end the communication of the divine life to men. Therefore, consecrated souls, who have renounced natural fecundity, have not impoverished and stifled their lives, condemning them to sterility; through their union with God, these souls have been raised to a paternity, to a maternity, of a far superior nature.

2. To be a father or mother of souls is not limited to those who work in the external apostolate; it extends also to those who have dedicated themselves to the contemplative life. Although completely separated from the world, St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus felt an ever increasing spiritual maternity grow in her heart, and in the solitude of Carmel she writes: "To be Your spouse, O Jesus, and by my union with You, to be the mother of souls!" (T.C.J. St., 13). This is the fundamental aspiration of her spirit, the ideal that attracted her, sustaining and urging her on to a life of continual and painful immolation. She is ever conscious that she must give herself, sacrifice herself for souls; like a loving mother she must be constantly at the complete disposal of her children. One day, seeing a novice sauntering listlessly to her work, the Saint teasingly reproved her:

" Is that the way people hurry when they have children and are obliged to work to procure them food? " (T.C.J. C.).

The earnest apostle, ever conscious of having children to *nourish*, realizes that he should spend his whole life for them, that he has to *maintain* them by his toil, his prayers, his weariness, and above all by his love. Precisely from love—from this same love which unites him to God—does he draw the strength to sacrifice himself for them, and draws even that spiritual fecundity by which he becomes God's collaborator in communicating to them the life of grace. As love increases, union with God becomes deeper, and this, in turn, gives rise to greater fecundity and more power in communicating divine life to an immense number of souls. Who can estimate the extent of the spiritual paternity and maternity of the saints?

There is no interior life, no real sanctity which is not crowned with the aureole of spiritual paternity or maternity. But as in the natural realm, the mother brings forth her children in sorrow, so in the supernatural order, there is no paternity or maternity of souls without suffering.

It was by dying on the Cross that Jesus brought us forth to divine life. From Him we learn that if we wish to share in His redemptive work, we must not fear either persecutions, or mockeries, or scourgings, or thorns, or nails, or the cross; we must be ready to give for souls all that we have and are, even our very life, that they may be nourished with our blood.

COLLOQUY

" O eternal Father, You cannot fail to know that poor sinners are Your creatures and belong to You by the supreme title of creation.

" O eternal Son, blessed King, You cannot deny that these wretched beings belong to You, since You gained them for Yourself by the incomparable title of Redemption. Listen to me, O most obedient Son, listen to me and show Yourself propitious to my prayers, because when I present myself to the eternal Father with the pledge of Your Blood and Your Passion in my hand, He cannot drive me far away from Him without first hearing my requests.

"Come to my aid, O eternal Holy Spirit! No matter how abominable these sinners may be by the enormity of their sins, they still belong to You, since You made them Yours by admitting them to a share in Your goodness.

"O Lord, my only comfort is to see souls converted to You; and for this alone I suffer patiently Your absence. If You do not grant me this comfort, what can I do? Do not drive me away, most merciful Lord!

"You are resolved and already disposed to hear me, since in Your compassionate glance toward me, I perceive, clothed with Your light, my spiritual sons and daughters, my brothers and sisters and all those whom I strive to win to You day by day. May they always remain faithful to You.

"O sovereign and eternal Father, I recommend to You my beloved children, whom You have confided to me; I beg of You to visit them with Your grace, to make them live as dead to the world that they may enjoy clear and perfect light, and be united among themselves with the sweet bond of charity. I pray You, O eternal Father, that none of them be taken from my hands, and I beg You to pardon us all our offenses. I offer and commend to You my beloved children, because they are my very soul" (St. Catherine of Siena).

MARThA AND MARY

PRESENCE OF GOD - Grant, O Lord, that I may love You with the heart of Mary, while serving You with the devotedness of Martha.

MEDITATION

1. There are two great attractions in a soul which has given itself seriously to God : the attraction to solitary, silent prayer where, immersed in God, the soul listens to His voice, penetrates His mysteries, and above all unites

itself more intimately with Him; and correspondingly, the attraction to the apostolate, to active, generous sacrifice for the salvation of souls. To recollect itself in God "the soul would like to flee from other people, and greatly envies those who live, or have lived, in deserts. On the other hand, it would like to plunge right into the heart of the world, to see if by doing this it could help one soul to praise God more" (*T.J. Int C VI*, 6). Such is the double movement of charity which, fusing the love of God and the love of neighbor into one and the same love, urges the soul equally to union with God and to the service of its neighbor. If one of these movements is lacking, charity will not be complete. The development of the interior life requires this double attraction which is both a sign and a means of progress; it is at the same time, a torment for the soul that has not yet found the just mean between the two tendencies. To which of the two will it give the preference? To action or to contemplation? In practice, the problem must be solved on the basis of the requirements and the duties of one's state in life, the directions of obedience, and the particular circumstances permitted by God. A desire for contemplative prayer which distracts, or withdraws the soul from the fulfillment of duty would not be in conformity with the will of God; God has every right to ask us to renounce such a desire, that He may send us to serve our neighbor. Magdalen rejoiced when she finally found Jesus, her Risen Lord; she longed to remain at His feet, but He commanded her: "Go to My brethren" (*Jn 20,17*); and she, with docility, left Him to announce His Resurrection. On the other hand, the contrary is also true. Jesus said to His Apostles on their return from preaching: "Come apart into a desert place and rest a little" (*Mk 6,31*), thereby inviting them to suspend their apostolic activity and to reinvigorate their spirit in silence and in prayer, alone with Him. The best way, which steers a middle course deviating neither to right nor left, is always the way of duty, of the will of God, of interior inspiration, under the guidance of one who has the authority to direct the soul.

2. To harmonize interiorly this double attraction to the active apostolate and to union with God in prayer, there is need of a deeper solution, one which can come only from the interior. This solution consists in a greater progress in the

interior life leading to an ever greater degree of love. Love is the only root from which blossom both action and contemplation; it is the only force which, nourishing these two activities simultaneously, finally succeeds in blending them into perfect harmony, thus enabling them to bear the best fruit. Springing from the same stem of an advanced love, action and contemplation are fused only in perfect love.

Perfect charity makes the soul, while recollected in contemplation at the feet of the Lord, more operative and fruitful than ever for the good of others. "A very little of this pure love" (solitary love which flourishes in intimate contact with God) "is more precious in the sight of God and the soul, and of greater profit to the Church, even though the soul appear to be doing nothing, than are all other works together.... Therefore," declares St. John of the Cross, "if any soul should have aught of this degree of solitary love, great wrong would be done to it and to the Church, if, even for a brief space, one should endeavor to busy it in active or outward affairs of however great moment" (*SC* 29,2,3).

In the regions of pure love, that is, of perfect charity, contemplation and the apostolate become identified; they complete and require one another. At this point, the contemplative soul is eminently apostolic. Its greatest activity for the benefit of its fellow men is precisely its solitary prayer, nourished by love, sacrifice and immolation. On the other hand, the soul occupied in apostolic works becomes, through perfect charity, more contemplative, more united to God than ever. Love has so fixed the soul in God that, even during work, its interior gaze is always turned toward Him, to nourish itself with His divine presence, to reflect in its own conduct His infinite perfections, and to govern itself at all times according to His good pleasure. Thus at the summit of the spiritual life, action and contemplation become fused in perfect unity and harmony. "Believe me," wrote St. Teresa of Avila, "Martha and Mary must work together when they offer the Lord lodging, and must have Him ever with them, and they must not entertain Him badly and give Him nothing to eat...His food consists in our bringing Him souls, in every possible way, so that they may be saved and may praise Him forever" (*T.J. Int C VII*, 4). From this we can understand how all the great contemplatives were at the same

time great apostles, and the great apostles, great contemplatives.

COLLOQUY

“ O Lord, the desire to listen to Your divine Word, the need to be silent is sometimes so strong that I would wish not to know how to do anything else save to remain at Your feet like Magdalen, in order to penetrate ever more deeply into that mystery of love which You came to reveal to us. But You teach me that if the soul never separates itself from You, it can always remain absorbed in contemplation, even though apparently it is carrying out Martha's functions. In this way, O Lord, I intend and wish to exercise my apostolate : I shall radiate You, I shall give You to souls, provided I do not separate myself from You, O divine Source. Help me, sweet Master, to come very near You, to commune with Your Soul, to identify myself with all Your operations, and then to go forth like You to do the Father's will.

“ What a wonderful influence over souls has the apostle who never leaves the source of living waters! Grant me, O Lord, to be one of these. Then the spring of water will fill my soul and overflow it without danger of its becoming empty, for it will find itself in continual communication with You, the Infinite.

“ My God, deign to invade all the faculties of my soul; grant that everything within me may become divine and marked with Your seal, so that I may be another Christ working for Your glory.

“ Lord, how I long to labor for Your glory! I long to give myself entirely to You, to be pervaded by Your divine life; be the life of my life, the soul of my soul, and grant that I may always remain under the influence of Your divine action ” (E.T. L.).

OUR DUTIES

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PRESENCE OF GOD - Teach me, O Lord, to fulfill all my duties in homage to Your sovereign Majesty.

MEDITATION

1. The teachings contained in the Mass of this Sunday can be synthesized in the well known statement of Jesus, which we read in the Gospel (*Mt 22,15-21*) of this day : " Render...to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God, the things that are God's"; in other words, fulfill with exactness your duties toward God and toward your neighbor, by giving to each one his due.

The Epistle (*Phil 1,6-11*) presents St. Paul to us as a model of charity toward those whom God has confided to his care. " I have you in my heart," writes the Apostle to the Philippians, " for that in my bands and in the defence and confirmation of the Gospel, you all are partakers of my joy." St. Paul is keenly aware of his spiritual paternity toward the souls he has begotten in Christ; even from a distance, he feels responsible for their success, is preoccupied with their perseverance in good, sustains them with his fatherly affection and wise counsels : " Being confident of this very thing, that He, who hath begun a good work in you, will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus." He does not want them to be frightened because he is far away from them : he is nothing but a poor instrument, God alone is the true guide of souls, and He will complete the work begun. As for him, they may be certain that he does not cease to love them : " For God is my witness how I long after you all in the heart of Jesus Christ."

St. John Chrysostom asserts that the heart of Paul is the heart of Christ because of the great love for souls which makes him so like the Redeemer; thus should it be possible to say of the heart of every apostle. When God has put us in contact with a soul and has asked us to occupy

ourselves with it, we can no longer be disinterested; this soul is henceforth bound to ours, we should feel responsible for it, and bound to help it even to the end.

After having spoken to us of the solicitude we should have for those confided to our care, the Epistle reminds us also of charity toward our neighbor in general : "That your charity may more and more abound in knowledge and in all understanding : that you may approve the better things." He speaks of a charity increasingly delicate in its understanding of the souls of others, adapting itself with an ever more refined tact to the mind, the demands, the tastes of others; a charity which must urge us, as St. Paul says, to "approve"—and therefore, to do—"the better things," in order that we "may be sincere and without offence unto the day of Christ."

2. The Gospel outlines, clearly and distinctly, the position of the Christian toward civil authority. The insidious question : "Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" gives Jesus the occasion to solve the problem of the relation between religious and civil duties. He asks for a coin and says : "Whose image and inscription is this? They say to Him : Caesar's. Then He saith to them : Render, therefore, to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God, the things that are God's."

There is no opposition between the rights of political power and the rights of God, since "there would be no power unless it were given from above" (cf. *Jn* 19,11) : political authority, legitimately constituted, comes from God and must be respected as a reflection of the divine authority. This is precisely the reason why every Christian is bound to fulfill all the duties of a good citizen, and, consequently, must obey political authority, unless its orders are opposed to the law of God; for, in this case, it would no longer represent divine authority and then, as St. Peter says, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (*Acts* 5,29).

We must not believe that because we are vowed to the apostolate or dedicated to religious works, we are, by this fact, dispensed from civic duties; on the contrary, even in this domain Catholics should be in the front rank. Emperors, kings, statesmen, soldiers, whom the Church honors as saints, tell us that sanctity is possible everywhere and for everyone, that it can be realized by those who dedicate themselves

to the service of the State, because even here it is a question of serving God in His creatures.

By telling us to render to Caesar what is Caesar's, Jesus teaches us to give to the State all that falls under its jurisdiction, that is, everything that concerns temporal order and the public good. But Jesus does not stop there, He says more : " Give to God what is God's." If the coin which bears the image of Caesar should be restored to Caesar, with much greater reason should our soul, which bears the image of God, be restored to God. To say that we must give our soul to God, is to say that we owe Him *everything*, because, as a matter of fact, we have received everything from Him. In this sense, to fulfill our duties toward our neighbor, toward our equals or our inferiors, toward our ecclesiastical or civil superiors, is to fulfill our duty toward God; it is to restore to Him everything He has given us, by submitting our freedom to His law, by putting our will in the service of His will.

COLLOQUY

" O my God, since I am Yours for so many reasons, and have so many obligations to serve You, permit no longer that sin, or Satan, or the world, usurp, even in the slightest degree, that which is entirely Yours. But, if it please You, take complete and absolute possession of my being and of my life. Here I am, O my God, I give myself entirely to You, protesting to You that I do not wish to exist but for You, and that I do not want to think, or say, or do, or suffer anything but for Your love, today, tomorrow, and always " (St. John Eudes).

" O my Lord Jesus, You gave Yourself to me and You ask only for my heart. But, O my Lord, what is this poor heart of mine when You are all? If my heart were worth more than those of all the children of men combined, and all the love of the angels, and if its capacity were so great that it could contain more than all the empyreal heaven, I would consecrate it wholly to You. It would be a very poor gift, and even almost nothing, to so great a Lord. But, how much more shall I not give You, and wholly repose in You, this little spark of a heart which I find in myself! Because this is for me a very great thing, that You

should deign to keep my heart. Would it not be folly if I should consecrate it henceforth to some creature, when my God wills it for Himself? I do not want it to remain any longer in me, but to repose entirely in You, who have created it to praise You. It is better that I place my heart in eternal joy, in divine majesty and in immense goodness, rather than in my frailty; that I place it in Your deity, rather than in my iniquity" (St. Bonaventure).

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THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE APOSTOLATE

PRESENCE OF GOD - O Holy Spirit, take possession of my soul and transform it into a chosen instrument for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

MEDITATION

I. The heart of the apostolate is love. St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus understood this well; after having passed in review all possible vocations, and recognizing that they would not suffice to appease her immense apostolic desires, she exclaimed : "My vocation is found at last—*my vocation is love!*... In the heart of the Church, my Mother, *I will be love!* Thus shall I be all things" (T.C.J. *St.*, 13). Where can we obtain such a complete and transforming love? We must never forget that the source of charity is the Holy Spirit, who is the personal terminus of the love of the Father and of the Son, the eternal breath of Their mutual love. This Spirit "has been given" to us, He is "ours"; He dwells in our hearts precisely to pour forth in them that supernatural love which makes us burn with love for God and for souls. "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us" (*Rom 5,5*). By communicating the flame of divine charity to men and associating them to His infinite love, the Holy Spirit is the secret animator and sustainer of all apostolate; "It is He," Pius XII teaches, "who through His heavenly breath of life

is the source from which proceeds every vital and efficaciously salutary action...in the Mystical Body of Christ" (*Mystici Corporis*). He is the soul of the Church. Do we wish to become apostles? Let us open our hearts wide to the outpourings of the Holy Spirit, in order that His love may invade and penetrate us to the point of absorbing our poor love into Himself. When the love of a soul is united to "the living flame of love" which is the Holy Spirit, so as to "become one thing with it" (cf. J.C. *LF*, 1,3), then it becomes a vivifying love in the heart of the Church. This is the only way to realize the magnificent ideal: "In the heart of the Church I will be love. Thus I shall be everything" (T.C.J. *St*, 13). To attain to this supreme summit of love and of the apostolate, we must follow, day by day, moment by moment, the motions of the Holy Spirit, open ourselves submissively to His action, and allow ourselves to be directed and governed by Him. Above all, we must yield ourselves to His infinite love which diffuses itself totally in the Father and the Son, and then overflows on souls, to draw them all into the Blessed Trinity.

2. The apostolate was inaugurated in the Church on the day of Pentecost when the Apostles "were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Spirit gave them to speak" (*Acts* 2,4). Before that, the twelve were poor men, dull, weak, full of fear. But once the Holy Spirit took possession of them, He transformed them into men of fire, ready to give their lives to witness to the Lord.

In our day too, the Holy Spirit can renew that great miracle. As in former times, He can—or rather, He wills—to take possession of poor men, of weak women, in order to, transform them into ardent apostles. What is the condition that He requires? A total *self-surrender*, a docility so sensitive, so delicate, that the apostle becomes wholly amenable to His operative presence, to His motions, to His inspirations. To attain this, the apostle must have a true sense of his complete dependence on the divine Paraclete, a sense which must manifest itself practically by diligent care to maintain, even in the midst of activity, a continual contact with Him, always attentive to His inspirations, and quick to follow them. Like the wind "the Spirit breatheth where He will; and thou hearest His voice, but thou knowest not whence

He cometh, and whither He goeth" (*Jn* 3,8). His inspirations may surprise us in the midst of activity no less than in prayer; it is essential, therefore, to learn to speak interiorly with Him even while exteriorly we are occupied with creatures. This attitude is particularly necessary in our direct contact with souls; then, more than ever, the apostle should invoke the Holy Spirit, keep himself under His influence, and allow himself to be directed by Him. Souls belong to God and they should be directed, not according to one's own spirit, but according to the Spirit of God. Complete submission demands great faith and great confidence in the omnipotent and transforming action of the Holy Spirit. Only in this way will the apostle have the courage to follow His lead in any form of activity, while remaining fully aware of his own insufficiency. Only thus will he have the courage to face any sacrifice with generosity, while feeling all his own weakness. The Holy Spirit has not been given to us in vain; He is within us, and provided we give ourselves wholly to Him, He can transform us into "chosen instruments" for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

COLLOQUY

"Pardon me, my Jesus, if I venture to tell You of my longings, my hopes that border on the infinite; and that my soul may be healed, I beseech You to fulfill all its desires. To be Your spouse, O my Jesus...and by my union with You, to be the mother of souls, should not all this content me? Yet other vocations make themselves felt, and I would wield the sword, I would be a priest, an apostle, a martyr, a doctor of the Church.... O Jesus, my Love, my Life, how shall I realize these desires of my poor soul?

"You make me understand that all cannot become apostles, prophets, doctors; that the Church is composed of different members; that the eye cannot also be the hand.... You teach me that all the better gifts are nothing without love, and that charity is the most excellent way of going in safety to You.

"At last I have found rest.... Charity gives me the key to my vocation. I understand that since the Church is a body composed of different members, she could not lack

the most necessary and most nobly endowed of all the bodily organs. I understand, therefore, that the Church has a heart—and a heart on fire with love.

"I see too, that love alone imparts life to all the members, so that should love ever fail, apostles would no longer preach the Gospel and martyrs would refuse to shed their blood. And I realize that love includes every vocation, that love is all things, that love is eternal.... O Jesus, my Love! my vocation is found at last—my vocation is love! I have found my place in the bosom of the Church, and this place, O my God, You Yourself have given to me : in the heart of the Church, my Mother, I will be love. Thus shall I be all things and my dream will be fulfilled " (cf. T.C.J. *St*, 13).

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UNION WITH GOD

PRESENCE OF GOD - My God, Thou hast created me for Thyself; grant that I may return to Thee and unite myself to Thee by love.

MEDITATION

1. The whole life of man is a return journey to God : he came from God and must go back to Him. The more complete this return, the more intimate his union with God will become and the better will he have attained the end for which he was created : he will be perfect and eternally happy. St. Thomas teaches that a being is perfect when it attains its end; thus the perfection of man consists in rejoining God and uniting himself to Him, his last end. Man finds in union with God all that he can desire : he finds his peace, the assuaging of his hunger for the infinite, of his thirst for love and imperishable felicity. "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in Thee" (St. Augustine). Man finds his eternal happiness in union with God; and the life of heaven is nothing else than this union carried to its ultimate perfection, wherein

man gives God the greatest glory and the greatest love which, in turn, redounds to man's own eternal beatitude.

The soul that truly loves God does not resign itself to waiting for heaven in order to be united to Him, but desires ardently to anticipate this union here below. Is this possible? Yes, Jesus has said so : "If anyone love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him; and We will come to him and will make Our abode with him" (*Jn* 14,23). Our Lord Himself tells us in these words the condition for living united to Him : love. "He that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him" (*I Jn* 4,16). Love is the great power which unites us to God even in this life, where, imprisoned in matter, we cannot yet enjoy the direct contact, the face to face vision of Him.

"The end of the spiritual life," says St. Thomas, "is that man unite himself to God by love" (II^a II^{ae}, q.44, a.1, co.). By steps of love, *gressibus amoris*, we advance toward our last end : union with God. Such is the great ideal which should illumine and direct our whole life, the great goal which, with the divine assistance, we can attain even here below, as far as is possible in our state as pilgrims.

2. St. John of the Cross explains wherein union of love with God consists. It is not a question of the *substantial union* which always exists between God and everything created and by means of which He is preserving their being. That kind of union is *natural* and can never be lacking in any creature, not even in the greatest sinner. The union of love, however, is *supernatural* and only takes place in souls "when there is produced that likeness that comes from love," that is, in souls that are in the state of grace. The Saint says : "Although...God is ever in the soul, giving it, and through His presence conserving within it, its natural being, yet He does not always communicate supernatural being to it. For this is communicated only by love and grace, which not all souls possess; and all those that possess it have it not in the same degree; for some have attained more degrees of love and others fewer." He concludes : "God communicates Himself most to that soul that has progressed farthest in love" (*AS II*, 5,3.4).

The state of grace is the point of departure for the union of love with God. The goal is the full development of grace, so that the soul remains totally supernaturalized,

and all its powers, its entire will, all its affections are concentrated in God, neither desiring nor loving anything henceforth but what God wills and loves. Grace is the life of God in us, a life which develops through progress in love. The more the soul loves, the more grace increases in it, with the result that its participation in the divine life becomes more profound, leading it to an ever more intense and perfect union with God. Grace and love are the precious seeds of union with God; they put the soul in intimate communion with Him: communion of life, of thought and of will. God always remains God, distinct from His creature; the creature always keeps its own personality, and yet the soul becomes so permeated with divine life, God so "communicates to it His own supernatural Being that it seems to be God...rather than a soul" (*ibid.*, 7).

Such is the ultimate end of union with God upon earth, a sublime end, but one which it is not rash to desire, since each of us has already received in baptismal grace the seed of union with God.

COLLOQUY

"O Jesus, who will give me the grace to form one only spirit with You? Rejecting the multiplicity of creatures, I desire indeed, O Lord, Your unity alone! O God, You are the only One, the sole unity necessary for my soul! Ah! dear friend of my heart, unite this poor soul of mine to Your singular goodness! You are entirely mine, when shall I be all Yours? The magnet draws iron and holds it fast to itself; Lord Jesus, my Beloved, be the magnet of my heart: draw, hold fast, unite forever my spirit to Your paternal heart! Oh, since I was made for You, how is it that I am not in You? Submerge this drop, which is the spirit You have given me, in the sea of Your goodness, from which it proceeds. Lord, seeing that Your heart loves me, why do You not lift me up to You, as I so much desire? Draw me, and I will run in the odor of Your ointments until I cast myself into Your arms and never move from thence forever. Amen" (St. Francis de Sales).

"O Lord, who could describe how great a gain it is to cast ourselves into Yours arms and make an agreement with You: You will take care of my affairs and I of Yours

" For what am I, Lord, without You? What am I worth if I am not near You? If once I stray from Your Majesty, be it ever so little, where shall I find myself?

" O my Lord, my Mercy and my Good! What more do I want in this life than to be so near You that there is no division between You and me?

" O Lord of my life, draw me to Yourself, but do it in such a way that my will may ever remain so united to You that it shall be unable to leave You " (*T.J. Con*, 4 - 3).

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THE WAY OF UNION

PRESENCE OF GOD - Lord, give me light and strength to root out of my heart all that hinders me from being united to You.

MEDITATION

1. " God communicates Himself most to that soul that has progressed farthest in love : namely, that has its will in closest conformity with the will of God " (*J.C. AS II*, 5,4). In ordinary life, true love is manifested in willingness to do what pleases the person loved; in conforming oneself to his desires, tastes and will, not willing anything which could displease him. The soul unites itself to God in the measure in which it is truly conformed to His will. It is evident that this union cannot be perfect as long as the soul resists the divine will, be it only in very small things, or does not accept it readily, or as long as it retains desires and tastes which, even in a very slight way, are not in harmony with the will of God. The whole spiritual ascent to divine union consists in a double movement, very simple but essential : despoiling oneself of all that is displeasing to God, and renouncing all that is in opposition to His will, by conforming oneself to that will and fulfilling it with the greatest love. It is an extremely simple movement, but at the same time an all-embracing one, because it extends to every circumstance of life, without exception, so that in all things, the greatest

as in the least, the soul acts in a manner that is in perfect conformity with the divine will. It is also a very profound movement which must reach even to the most secret recesses of the spirit, in order to free it from the least residue, the last resistances of egoism and pride, not only eliminating their manifestations but undermining their very roots. As long as this work of total purgation is incomplete, the soul's will cannot be totally conformed to that of God; its numerous imperfections and imperfect habits are still opposed to this entire conformity. Only "the soul that has attained complete conformity and likeness of will is totally united and transformed in God supernaturally. It needs, then, only to strip itself of these natural dissimilarities and contrarieties..." (*ibid.*).

2. If we examine ourselves attentively, we shall see that our will is still very dissimilar to God's will. God wills only the good, and He wills it in the most perfect manner. We, on the contrary, often will evil together with the good; moreover, we lack the strength to do the good that we will, and we realize it only imperfectly. Every time we commit any fault, even a simple imperfection, we desire something that God cannot will: these faults include slight acts of slothfulness, negligence, impatience; they may involve a subtle seeking of self or the affection and esteem of creatures; there could be numerous secondary motives which secretly insinuate themselves into our actions. To attain to divine union all these must be eliminated.

St. John of the Cross says expressly that it is not only beginners on the spiritual road, but even the "proficients" who are subject to many imperfections and still retain imperfect habits, proceeding especially from a subtle pride and spiritual egoism. As they have exercised themselves for a long time in the interior life, a certain presumption and self-assurance may easily creep in, through which these souls are exposed to failings in humility and reverence in their relations with God, while in their relations with their neighbor, they often fall into the weakness of desiring to be esteemed as perfect. Furthermore, as they are not entirely detached from themselves, they stop to enjoy, a bit egoistically, the spiritual consolations they receive in prayer; thus they distract themselves from seeking God alone, retard their union with Him, and even expose themselves to falling into the snares of imagination or of the devil (cf. *DN II*, 2,2).

All this proves how deeply pride and egoism are rooted in us. Scarcely have we detached our hearts from earthly vanities and material goods, than we are immediately ready to attach ourselves to spiritual goods. Yet we must not despair of attaining divine union; we must seize the occasion of our misery to beg with greater insistence that Our Lord may deign to complete the work of our purification. Moreover, He desires it more than we ourselves, and if He does not effect it as He would, it is only because He finds us refractory, impatient, little disposed to accept in good part what humbles and mortifies us to the core. Yet this alone is the way to reach union with God.

COLLOQUY

"As long as my will desires that which is alien to the divine will, has preferences for one thing or another, I remain like a child; I do not walk in love with giant strides. The fire has not yet burnt away all the dross, and the gold is not yet pure. I am still seeking myself. O Lord, You have not yet done away with all my resistance to You. But when the crucible has consumed all tainted love, all tainted pain, all tainted fear, then love is perfect, and the golden ring of our union is wider than heaven and earth.

"But in order to attain this I must die daily to myself. O Jesus, I wish to die, to decrease, to deny myself daily more and more, in order that You may grow and be exalted in me. As a 'little one' I dwell in the depths of my poverty; I see my nothingness, my penury, my weakness; I see that I am incapable of progress, of perseverance; I appear to myself in all my destitution; I prostrate myself in my wretchedness, and recognizing my state of dire need, I spread it out before You, my divine Master.... As far as my will—not my feelings—is concerned, I set my joy in everything that can humble me, immolate me, destroy self in me, for I want to give place to You, O Lord.... I no longer wish to live by my own life, but to be transformed in You, so that my life may be more divine than human, and that, inclining unto me, the Father may recognize Your image, the image of His beloved Son, in whom He is well pleased" (E.T. I, 2-3).

THE NIGHT OF THE SPIRIT

PRESENCE OF GOD - Pour forth, O Lord, into my soul greater love and greater courage, that I may willingly accept Your purifying action.

MEDITATION

1. The difficult and bitter purification called the *night of the spirit* is necessary to extirpate the roots of imperfect habits. The purification of the soul begins with the *night of sense*, which, by putting the soul into obscurity and depriving it of all sensible consolation, frees it from attachment to creatures and to material goods; but this night is completed only by the *night of the spirit*, which, annihilating the soul in its spiritual faculties, succeeds in destroying in it every imperfect habit. St. John of the Cross remarks very appositely that after having passed through the *night of sense*, "there still remain in the spirit the stains of the old man, although the spirit thinks not that this is so, neither can it perceive them" (*DN II*, 2,1); these stains are so deep and hidden that the soul has difficulty in recognizing them.

Consider, for example, one who is detached from creatures and earthly goods, advanced in prayer and virtue, a soul, therefore, who has already gone through the stages of the purgative and illuminative ways; nevertheless, when put to the test, it is easy to discover in it a certain attachment to its good works—works of the apostolate, exercises of penance or devotion—so that if obedience or the service of its neighbor oblige it to leave these works or substitute others for them, the soul is troubled, offers a certain resistance, and only with much reluctance does it succeed in submitting. This happens precisely because there are still within it the roots of imperfect habits and, above all, those of pride and egoism, whence spring all the other faults and imperfections. Of what use is it to suppress faulty actions if their roots remain in the spirit? Cut off only superficially, these roots, sooner or later, send forth shoots in a new direction.

No one can be freed from the roots of his faults without passing through the painful night of the spirit. Comparing this night with the night of sense, St. John of the Cross says that the difference between one and the other "is the difference between the root and the branch, or between the removing of a stain which is fresh and of one which is old and of long standing" (*ibid.*). Although the operation is very arduous and painful to undergo, it is nevertheless indispensable, because the stains of the old man are removed only "with the soap and strong lye" of the purgation of the spirit, without which the soul "will be unable to come to the purity of divine union" (*ibid.*).

2. In order to enter the *night of sense* a good measure of courage is necessary, for it is a matter of renouncing "every pleasure that presents itself to the senses, if it be not purely for the honor and glory of God" (J.C. *AS I*, 13,4). To enter the *night of the spirit*, much more is required, since it is necessary to renounce not merely material things, but spiritual things as well. It is a matter, for example, of blinding one's own reason, of renouncing one's own will or the asserting of one's personality, not only in what concerns material goods but even in regard to moral and spiritual goods. In the night of the spirit the soul must walk in darkness, it must be placed in emptiness with respect to the senses and also with respect to its spiritual faculties. In this night God "strips their faculties, affections, and feelings, both spiritual and sensual, both outward and inward, leaving the understanding dark, the will dry, the memory empty and the affections in the deepest affliction, bitterness and constraint, taking from the soul the pleasure and experience of spiritual blessings which it had aforetime" (J.C. *DN II*, 3,4).

Such desolation and such privation of everything should not discourage us; they are not ordered to death, but to life and even to the fullness of life, which is union with God by love. Therefore, the soul that loves is neither frightened nor alarmed; its ideal is divine union and it desires to reach it at any cost; no sacrifice seems too hard, provided it reach its goal. On the other hand, if we had the least conception of the infinite perfection of God and were even dimly aware of our own profound misery, we should have to admit that no purification, however severe or painful,

could ever be exaggerated when it prepares us, unworthy and wretched as we are, for union with Him who is Goodness, Purity, and Infinite Beauty; nor could the sufferings which this purification imposes on us ever seem insupportable when compared with the immense good which they will procure for us. The soul enamoured of its God repeats with St. Francis : " So great is the good which awaits me that all pain is delightful to me "; and it is here below that it awaits this good, because it knows that God does not refuse to admit to union with Himself the spirit which is well disposed, that is, totally purified.

COLLOQUY

" O my soul, when will you be delivered from your passions and vicious tendencies and changed for the better? When will the root of all evil be dried up within you? When will every trace of sin in You be effaced? Oh, if only you would love your God ardently! If only you were indissolubly united to your Sovereign Good!

" Good Jesus, tender Shepherd, my sweet Master, King of eternal glory, when shall I appear before You without stain and truly humble? When shall I truly despise all that is of earth for Your love? When shall I be entirely detached from myself and all things? For if I were really free of all worldly attachment I would no longer have any will of my own, nor would I any longer groan under the yoke of my passions and ill-regulated affections; I would no longer seek self in anything. The lack of this absolute, total detachment is the only real obstacle between You and me, the only thing which keeps me from taking flight freely toward You. When, then, shall I be despoiled of all? When shall I abandon myself without reserve to Your divine will? When shall I serve You with a pure, humble, calm, serene spirit? When shall I love You perfectly? When, after receiving you into my heart, will my soul unite itself delightfully to its Beloved? When shall I leap up to You with tender and ardent desire? When will my negligence and imperfections be absorbed in the immensity of Your love? O my God, my life, my love, my sole desire! My treasure, my good! My beginning and my end! My soul longs for Your tender embrace, it languishes and faints with desire

to unite itself to You, to be held close to You by the bond of a sweet, holy and indissoluble love! What have I in heaven? What do I desire upon earth? The God of my heart, the God who is my portion forever!" (Bl. Louis de Blois).

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PURIFYING LOVE

PRESENCE OF GOD - O Lord, help me to open my heart wide to the outpouring of Your purifying love.

MEDITATION

1. One of the greatest graces God can give a soul is that of introducing it into the painful desolation of the night of the spirit, for it is in this way that He prepares and disposes it for union. Although to the soul who experiences its distressing pains, this night seems to be a chastisement from God, it is, on the contrary, a gift of His merciful love, by means of which, He wills to disentangle the soul from the last snares of its imperfections. St. John of the Cross declares expressly that this night is the work of "the loving wisdom of God," which purifying the soul "prepares it for the union of love" (*DN II*, 5,1). But if this is the work of love, why is it so painful? The soul has become like a piece of green wood placed in the fire; material fire, acting upon wood, first of all begins to dry it by driving out its moisture, and "to make it black, dark, and unsightly, and even to make it give forth a bad odor; and, as it dries it little by little, it brings out and drives away all the dark and unsightly accidents which are contrary to the nature of fire. Finally, it begins to kindle it externally, to give it heat, and at last transforms it into itself, making it as beautiful as fire." Likewise divine Love, "before it unites and transforms the soul into itself, first purges it of all its contrary accidents. It drives out its unsightliness, and makes it black and dark, so

that the soul seems worse than before, and more unsightly and abominable than it was wont to be" (*ibid.*, 10,1.2). One easily understands that under the weight of such purifications the soul must suffer; nevertheless, all this is the work of Love. The loving Wisdom of God invading the yet imperfect soul must necessarily begin in it a work of destruction, of purification, and only after having freed it from everything contrary to divine love, will He unite it to Himself and transform it in Himself. Then the work of Love will no longer be grievous to the soul, but very sweet and delightful; however, as long as it is not completely purified, this work of purgation cannot fail to be afflictive. O blessed affliction which disposes the soul for so great a good! St. John of the Cross cries out: "O souls that seek to walk in security and comfort in spiritual things! If ye did but know how necessary it is to suffer and endure in order to reach this lofty state of security and consolation...ye would in no way seek consolation, either from God or from creatures, but would rather bear the cross, and having embraced it, would desire to drink pure vinegar and gall, and would count this a great happiness" (J.C. *LF*, 2,28).

2. The more deeply convinced we are that purification is the work of Love, the more eager we shall be to welcome it gladly, and to embrace it courageously, even when it costs us dear. Moreover, the general law of perfect love—even of human love—does not tolerate sharing the heart. Love will not admit rivals and cannot endure a lack of harmony between those who love. If human love, so limited and weak, demands such totality, why should we not accord the same rights—or rather, infinitely superior ones—to divine Love?

Love by its very nature tends to equality: it either finds or it makes those who love one another equal; and God, seeing a soul of good will, wanting to give itself entirely to Him, loves it to the point of making it like Himself, by stripping it of all that is contrary to His infinite perfection; and in the measure that He strips it, He clothes it with Himself, with His own divine Life.

By its very nature, love also tends to unity: it desires complete fusion of hearts; and God, who infinitely loves the soul that sincerely seeks Him, desires nothing more than to unite it to Himself; therefore He purifies it of every

stain that would impede perfect union with His infinite purity.

Jesus Himself, at the Last Supper, expressed the supreme desire of His love for us by asking for this perfect union : " As Thou, Father in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us" (*Jn* 17,21). But because we were radically incapable of this union, vitiated by sin and full of every misery, He took our sins upon Himself and washed them away in His Blood. The Passion of Jesus tells us how much our purification has cost the sinless Son of God. And if it has cost Him, Innocence itself, so much, is it not just that we should suffer a little, too, we who are culpable, having so often offended God, and having so many times, by our willfulness, put obstacles to the outpouring of His love in our souls? And now that this divine Love, instead of abandoning us as we deserve, comes to us in order to purify us, shall we flee from its action? No, this cannot be! Just as purifying sufferings are the work of God's love for us, so we want our acceptance of them to be the work, the proof, of our love for Him. " To love is to labor to detach and strip ourselves for God's sake of all that is not God" (*J.C. AS II*, 5,7).

COLLOQUY

" O Lord, be mindful of me, who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death, and quicken Your creature with Your love, which is the very breath of my life. Make the divine fire of Your love consume in me every desire for earthly affection, and may there remain in my heart but one love alone, entirely directed to Your infinite beauty and goodness.

" O Jesus, Your immense love, drawing me to union with Yourself, awakens in me a great longing to love You in return. Therefore, from the very depths of my heart I cry to You, and beg You, by the flames of the boundless charity with which You loved me and became incarnate for me, to send me the Holy Spirit, that divine Fire which inflames the Church, my Mother and Your Spouse, that He may enlighten and convert me and thus revivify my soul.

" O sweetest Son of God, let that divine Spirit come. I open wide my heart to Him so that, disfigured as I am by sin, He may, transform me according to Your beautiful form and grace.

"This, O Lord, is my request, and to obtain it I surrender myself to the fire and water of tribulations, and to all the pains of this life. For this I rise early to forestall You with prayer and to sacrifice myself to You in the morning watches. For this I supplicate You in the silence of the night and knock at the door of Your mercy. By their tears my eyes speak to You, and I shall not take any rest until You have satisfied my desire.

"If You condescend to hearken to me by sending me Your Fire, I will sacrifice to You the firstfruits of my affections, and I will never serve strange gods. I will praise You in public and in secret. I will sing Your mercies eternally and acclaim the victories of Your love" (Ven. John of Jesus Mary).

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TOWARD COMPLETE PURIFICATION

PRESENCE OF GOD - Help me, O Lord, that I may have the courage set out myself by my own initiative toward complete purification.

MEDITATION

I. "The soul desirous of reaching this high state of union with God is greatly impeded when it clings to any understanding or feeling or imagination or appearance or will or manner of its own, or to any other act or to anything of its own, and is unable to detach and strip itself of all these" (J.C. *AS II*, 4,4). This profound and radical detachment is effected in the soul by the night of the spirit. If then, we wish to enter this night, which will bring such good to our soul, we must try as far as in us lies, to deny ourselves in everything, especially in those things to which we are most attached. We must be disposed to renounce our plans, our projects, and our views, not only regarding material things, but even spiritual ones, for we must go to God, not by a way of our own choosing or taste, but only by the way which He Himself has prepared for us. We

must be disposed to renounce divine consolations and to walk in darkness and aridity for as long as Our Lord wills, to renounce our most cherished works, our most legitimate affections, our most holy friendships, even the very support of the one who understands and guides us in the ways of God.

There are few who enter effectively into the night of the spirit precisely because "there are few who can enter, and desire to enter, into this complete detachment and emptiness of spirit" (*ibid.*, 7,3).

Even among spiritual persons, few are persuaded that the way which leads to union with God "consists only in the one thing that is needful, which is the ability to deny oneself truly, according to that which is without and that which is within, giving oneself up to suffering for Christ's sake, and to total annihilation" (*ibid.*, 7,8). We must be convinced of this, and act in all things with the greatest detachment, without detaining ourselves through a spirit of ownership or by vain complacency, either in material or in spiritual goods. We must look at Jesus on the Cross: He was truly despoiled, stripped of all things, and "annihilated in everything, that is, with respect to human reputation; since, when men saw Him die, they mocked Him rather than esteemed Him; and also with respect to nature, since His nature was annihilated when He died; and further, with respect to the spiritual consolation and protection of the Father, since at that time, He forsook Him" (*ibid.*, 7,11). From this we should understand the way to unite ourselves to God; we should realize that the more completely we annihilate ourselves for love of Him, the more completely will we be united to Him.

2. The generous practice of total renunciation is not the only thing we can do in order to enter the night of the spirit; there is another, no longer negative but eminently positive: the intense exercise of the theological virtues. Faith, hope and charity must be our support and guide in the obscurity of the night and, at the same time, help us to purify the faculties of our soul—the understanding, the memory and the will—so that they may cling to God alone.

"Faith," writes St. John of the Cross, "causes an emptiness and darkness with respect to the understanding"

(*AS II*, 6,2). Indeed, in proposing for our belief truths which we cannot understand because of their sublimity, faith teaches us that instead of depending upon our own manner of reasoning and understanding, we ought rather to despoil ourselves of this—thus placing our intellect in emptiness—in order to unite ourselves to God. The greater our progress in faith, the more detached we shall be from our shallow ways of thinking, not only in what concerns the divine mysteries and our direct contacts with God, but even with respect to the events of life, which we shall learn to judge only in relation to God.

Hope, on its part, “renders the memory empty and dark with respect both to things below and to things above” (*ibid.*, 6,3). If we hope earnestly, it means that we await blessings which we do not yet enjoy and are not content with those already possessed. If we place all our hope in God, it means that we no longer hope in the things of earth, that possession of them does not satisfy us; thus the remembrance of them becomes less lively, less frequent, so that our memory remains empty, and capable of applying itself solely to what concerns God and His service. If we exercise ourselves intensively in the hope of heavenly goods, we shall forget earthly ones; if we hope in God alone, we shall no longer be occupied with the remembrance of creatures.

“Charity causes emptiness in the will with respect to all things, since it obliges us to love God above them all; which cannot be unless we withdraw our affection from them all in order to set it wholly upon God” (*ibid.*, 6,4). If we wish to attain to detachment and to total renunciation we must love much. The more we grow in divine love, and the more readily we detach ourselves from earthly things and also from ourselves, the more capable we become of renouncing our own will and annihilating our ego in all things.

If we walk in faith, hope, and love, we shall go forward in the night of the spirit, without going astray in the obscurity and darkness that is encountered, for these virtues will keep us strongly anchored in God.

COLLOQUY

“O Lord, make possible to me by Your grace what seems impossible to me by nature. You know that I can bear but

little and that I am quickly discouraged by a small adversity. Let every trial and tribulation become agreeable to me, for Your name's sake; for to suffer and to be afflicted for You is very beneficial to my soul.

"Be with me, O Lord Jesus, in all places and at all times. Let this be my consolation, to be willing to be without all human comfort. And if Your comfort also be withdrawn, let what You will and ordain for my trial be to me as the greatest of comforts. 'For You will not always be angry, nor will You threaten forever.'

"Lord, provided that my will remain but right and firm toward You, do with me whatever pleases You. For whatever You shall do with me can only be good. If You wish me to be in darkness, I shall bless You; and if You wish me to be afflicted, I shall still bless You forever.

"Lord, I shall suffer willingly for Your sake whatever You wish to send me. I will receive with indifference from Your hand both good and evil alike; keep me from all sin, and I will fear neither death nor hell. Do not cast me out forever, nor blot me out of the book of life, and whatever tribulation befalls will not harm me" (*Imit. III*, 19,5 – 16,2 – 17,2.4).

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DESIGNS OF PEACE AND LOVE

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PRESENCE OF GOD - O Lord, fulfill in me Your designs of peace and love, making me rise to a life of complete fervor.

MEDITATION

1. In spite of our sublime ideal, our ardent desire for sanctity, we always find ourselves full of miseries, always indebted to God. Our souls often tremble with fear in His presence, and we ask ourselves : How will He receive me? Will He turn me away? But the answer

is quite different from what we would expect : "The Lord saith : I think thoughts of peace and not of affliction. You shall call upon Me and I will hear you, and I will bring back your captivity from all places." These consoling words, which we read in the Introit of today's Mass, open our hearts to the sweetest hopes. God loves us in spite of all. He is always and everywhere our Father, and He desires to free us from the servitude of our passions and from our weaknesses. Then spontaneously the humble invocation of the Collect rises to our lips : "Grant, O Lord, that by Your goodness we may be delivered from the bonds of sin which by our frailty we have committed." Humility and the sincere acknowledgment of our wrongdoing is always the starting point for conversion.

In the Epistle (*Phil 3,17-21-4,1-3*) St. Paul speaks to us of conversion : "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you weeping, that they are enemies of the Cross of Christ...who mind only the things of earth." Every time that we shun a sacrifice, that we protest against suffering, that we seek selfish pleasures, we behave, in practice, like enemies of the Cross of Christ. Thus our lives become too earthly, too much attached to creatures, too heavily burdened to rise toward heaven. We must be converted, we must practice detachment, and remember that "our conversation is in heaven"; to this end, we must willingly embrace the hardships of the return journey to our heavenly homeland. As an encouragement, St. Paul places before our eyes the glory of our eternal life : "Jesus Christ will reform the body of our lowness, made like to the body of His glory." These are the "thoughts of peace," the great designs of love which our heavenly Father outlines for us: to free us from the bondage of sin, and conform us to His own Son, making us sharers in His glorious resurrection. They are marvelous designs but they will be realized only with our cooperation. "Therefore," the Apostle beseeches us, "my dearly beloved brethren, and most desired, my joy and my crown : so stand fast in the Lord." Stand fast, that is, persevere in your conversion, strong in humility, confidence, and love of the Cross.

2. Today's Gospel (*Mt 9,18-26*) gives a striking example of the transformation which God desires to accomplish in us. It also shows how He realizes His thoughts of peace in those who approach Him with a humble and trustful heart. First,

let us consider the woman troubled with an issue of blood. Her malady was incurable, she had been suffering from it for twelve years, and she had found no remedy. The poor woman, ashamed and humiliated, did not dare, like the other sick persons, to present herself directly to Jesus. However, her faith was so lively that she said within herself : " If I shall touch only His garment, I shall be healed." Furtively drawing near to Him she touched the hem of His garment. Jesus noticed that light touch and turning around said : " Be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole. " No petition, no spoken request—but what moved the Lord was the prayer of that humble, trustful heart, so full of faith.

As Jesus healed the woman with the issue of blood, so does He wish to heal our souls, but He expects of us dispositions similar to hers. Too often we are content to pray with our lips while our hearts are cold and distant; Jesus, however, looks to the heart; He wants the prayer of the heart, a cry of humility and confidence, a cry which goes straight to His own divine Heart. On the other hand, how much more fortunate are we than that poor sick woman! She succeeded only once in touching the hem of His garment, whereas our souls in Holy Communion may be daily united with His very Body and Blood. Oh! if we only had faith like a grain of mustard seed!

The second miracle followed. The daughter of Jairus was not simply ill, she was dead; but it was no more difficult for Jesus to restore a dead person to life than to heal one who was sick. He, the true Lord of life and death, " took her by the hand and the maid arose. " Jesus is our Resurrection not only for our eternal life when, at a signal from Him, our body will rise glorious and be reunited to our soul; but He is our Resurrection even in this life : our Resurrection from the death of sin to the life of grace, our Resurrection from a lukewarm life to a fervent and holy life.

Let us draw near to Jesus with the humility and confidence of the woman cured of the issue of blood. Let us beg Him with all our hearts to realize in us His designs of love, by drawing us away from the sluggish mediocrity of a spiritual life still entangled in the snares of egoism, and by giving us a strong, determined impetus toward sanctity.

COLLOQUY

"O Lord, how ill is Your friendship requited by those who so soon become Your mortal enemies again! Of a truth, Your mercy is great; what friend shall we find who is so long-suffering? If once such a cleavage takes place between two earthly friends, it is never erased from the memory and their friendship can never again become as close as before. Yet how often has our friendship for You failed in this way, and for how many years do You await our return to You! May You be blessed, my Lord God, who bear so compassionately with us that You seem to forget Your greatness and do not punish such treacherous treason as this, as would only be right" (*T.J. Con*, 2).

"O Jesus, You are my peace; for through You I have access to the Father, since it has pleased the Father to grant peace through the Blood of Your Cross to all in heaven and on earth.

"This is Your work as regards every soul of good will; it is what Your immense, Your exceeding charity urges You to do in me. You desire to be my peace.... By the Blood of Your Cross, You will make peace in the little heaven of my soul.... You will fill me with Yourself, You will bury me in Yourself, and You will make me live again with You, by Your Life.

"O Jesus, even though I fall at every moment, in trustful faith I shall pray You to raise me up, and I know You will forgive me, and will blot out everything with jealous care. More than that : You will despoil me, deliver me from my miseries, from everything that is an obstacle to Your divine action; and will draw all my powers to Yourself, and make them Your captive.... Then I shall have passed completely into You and shall be able to say : It is no longer I that live; my Master liveth in me" (*E.T. II*, 12).

PASSIVE PURIFICATION

PRESENCE OF GOD - My God, illumine my way, that I may not go astray in the midst of the darkness of tribulation.

MEDITATION

1. Although it is possible for us to enter the night of the spirit by a generous practice of total renunciation and an intense exercise of the theological virtues, we will never be able to penetrate into its deepest part if God Himself does not place us there. Only He can deepen the darkness which envelops us in this night, so that we may be reduced to nothingness in all, to the point of attaining the purity and poverty of spirit which are required for union. Far from taking the initiative, our task is then reduced to accepting with love, to enduring with patience and humility all that God disposes for us.

In order not to resist the divine action, we should remember that God generally purifies souls through the ordinary circumstances of life. In the life of every Christian, every apostle, every religious, there is always a measure of suffering sufficient to effect the purification of the spirit. These are the sufferings which God Himself chooses and disposes in the way best suited to the different needs of souls; but, unfortunately, few profit by them because few know how to recognize in the sorrows of life the hand of God who wishes to purify them. Illness, bereavement, estrangement, separation from dear ones, misunderstandings, struggles, difficulties proceeding sometimes from the very ones who should have been able to give help and support, failure of works that were cherished and sustained at the price of great labor, abandonment by friends, physical and spiritual solitude —these are some of the sufferings which are met with more or less in the life of every man, and which we will find in ours. We must understand that all such things are positively willed or at least permitted by God precisely to purify us even to the very inmost fibers of our being. In the face of these trials, we must never blame the malice

of men, or stop to examine whether or not they are just; we must see only the blessed hand of God who offers us these bitter remedies to bring perfect health to our soul. St. John of the Cross writes : " It greatly behooves the soul, then, to have patience and constancy in all the tribulations and trials which God sends it, whether they come from without or from within, and are spiritual or corporal, great or small. It must take them all as from His hand for its healing and its good, and not flee from them, since they are health to it " (*LF*, 2,30).

2. Let us consider how great a spirit of faith is necessary to accept from the hand of God all the circumstances which afflict and humble, contradict and mortify us. It will sometimes be easier to accept heavy trials which come directly from Our Lord, such as illness and bereavement, than other lighter ones where creatures enter into play, and for which, perhaps, we experience greater repugnance. The immediate action of creatures, especially if their malice has a share in it, makes it more difficult for us to discover the divine hand. A greater spirit of faith is necessary here, that we may pass beyond the human side of circumstances, the faulty way of acting of such and such a person, and find, beyond all these human contingencies, the dispositions of divine Providence, which wills to use these particular creatures, and even their defects and errors, to file away our self-love and destroy our pride.

The counsel given by St. John of the Cross to a religious will be very useful for us in such cases : " Thou must know that those (who are in the convent) are no more than workers whom God has placed there only that they might work upon and chisel at thee by mortifying thee. And some will cut at thee through words...others in deed...others by their thoughts, neither esteeming nor feeling love for thee... and thou must be subject to them in all things, even as an image is subject to him that fashions it and to him that paints it and to him that gilds it " (*P*, 15). Profoundly convinced that God guides and disposes all for the good of those who love Him, the soul of faith sees in every person a messenger from our Lord, charged by Him to exercise it in virtue, particularly in that which it lacks most. Instead of rebelling and being indignant because of some want of consideration or even some really unjust treatment, it

bows its head and accepts all humbly, as the most suitable treatment for curing its faults and imperfections. This must be our conduct, if we wish to draw profit from all the trials that God places in our path. In each instance we must keep ourselves from posing as a victim, from protesting, from complaining, or from retaliating. Whatever suffering may come to us from creatures has only one true explanation : Our Lord wishes to purify us, and is beginning to do it precisely through these exterior tribulations. Let us be persuaded that all serves greatly for our spiritual progress, because before attaining to union with God, it is necessary to be reduced to nothingness, that is, to be established in profoundest humility.

COLLOQUY

" Teach me, my God, to suffer in peace the afflictions which You send me that my soul may emerge from the crucible like gold, both brighter and purer, to find You within me. Trials like these, which at present seem unbearable, will eventually become light, and I shall be anxious to suffer again, if by so doing I can render You greater service. And however numerous may be my troubles and persecutions...they will all work together for my greater gain though I do not myself bear them as they should be borne, but in a way which is most imperfect " (T.J. *Life*, 30).

" O grandeur of my God! All the temptations and tribulations which You permit to come upon us, absolutely all, are ordered for our good, and if we have no other thought, when we are tried here below, than that of Your goodness, this will suffice for us to overcome every temptation.

" O Word of God, my sweet and loving Spouse, all power in heaven and on earth is Yours. You confound and put to flight every enemy. As for me, I am extremely weak; I cannot see, being filled with misery and sins; but by Your slightest glance, O Word, You put all these enemies to flight, like bits of straw in the wind; first, however, You permit them to give battle to Your servants, to make these, Your servants, more glorious. And the greater the grace and light You want to give Your servants, that they may love and know You better, the more do You try them by fire and purify

their hearts like gold, so that their virtues may shine like precious stones.

"By Your power, O divine Word, You confer strength for the combat, and he who wishes to fight manfully for Your glory must first descend into the most profound knowledge of self, yet all the while raising his heart to You, that he may not be confounded" (St. Mary Magdalen dei Pazzi).

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INTERIOR TRIALS

PRESENCE OF GOD - O Lord, purify me as gold in the crucible; purify me and do not spare me, that I may attain to union with You.

MEDITATION

1. If Our Lord finds you strong and faithful, humble and patient in accepting exterior trials, He will go on little by little to others that are more inward and spiritual "to purge and cleanse you more inwardly...to give you more interior blessings" (J.C. *LF*, 2,28). The passive night of the spirit culminates precisely in these interior sufferings of the soul, by which God "destroys and consumes its spiritual substance and absorbs it in deep and profound darkness" (J.C. *DN II*, 6,1) in order that it may be completely reborn to divine Life. We are, in fact, so steeped in miseries and faults, which adhere so closely to our nature, that if God Himself did not take our purification in hand, renewing us from head to foot, we should never be delivered from them. Jesus, too, spoke of this total renovation, of this profound spiritual rebirth : "Unless a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (*Jn* 3,5); the kingdom of God here below is the state of perfect union with Him, to which no one attains if he be not first totally purified.

St. John of the Cross explains at length how this work of purification is accomplished by the Holy Spirit, who, invading

the soul with the living flame of His Love, destroys and consumes all its imperfections. So long as this divine flame purifies and disposes the soul, says the Saint, it "is very oppressive...the flame is not bright to it, but dark, and if it gives any light at all, it is only that the soul may see and feel its own faults and miseries" (*J.C. LF*, 1,19). Although the soul finds itself under the direct action of the Holy Spirit, this action is not agreeable but painful, because its first fruit is precisely to show it all its weaknesses and miseries that it may conceive a horror for them, detest them, humble itself for them and be sorry for them. The penetrating light of the "living flame of Love" lifts the thick veil which hides from the soul the roots of its evil habits. The soul suffers at such a sight, not only because it feels humbled, but also because it fears being rejected by God; indeed, seeing itself so miserable, it feels itself dreadfully unworthy of divine love, and, at certain times, it even seems as if God in anger had cast it off from Himself. This is the greatest torment the soul can suffer, but a precious one, because it purifies the soul of all residue of self-love and pride, and deepens within it the profound abyss of humility which calls to and draws down the abyss of divine mercy.

2. If the Holy Spirit did not make you understand and experience your wretchedness, you could not be delivered from it, for in your ignorance you could not further the work of purification which He wills to accomplish in you. Therefore, when the divine light shows you the depths of your depravity through the failures of your spiritual life, the powerlessness of your spirit, or the struggles and rebellions of nature, you must support the sight humbly, recognizing and confessing your weaknesses without excusing them, without blaming adverse circumstances, without turning your gaze elsewhere. These are the moments in which, more than ever, you must humble yourself "under the mighty hand of God" (1 Pt 5,6), who shows you what you really are in His sight. But, on the other hand, the sight of your miseries, however ugly and detestable they may be, should not plunge you into discouragement, for this is not the end for which the Holy Spirit reveals them to you; rather, it is to divest you of every trace of secret self-esteem and to extinguish in your heart—in case it were there—any claim to meriting divine gifts and favors. Neither should you

believe that you have become worse than formerly. You have always borne these miseries within you! Hitherto you were ignorant of them, whereas now the divine light shows them to you clearly, not that they may overwhelm you but that you may be delivered from them. Therefore, despite all the suffering that you may experience at the sight of your misery, you must remain confident and certain that God will never abandon you. You have been unfaithful to Him, it is true; you have not corresponded to His love as you should have done, and the services which you have rendered Him are very little in comparison with what God deserves; nevertheless He who is infinitely good does not despise your contrite and humble heart. God loves you and, far from rejecting you, He desires to unite Himself to you; but first He wants to make you perfectly aware that you are wholly undeserving of this great grace. God communicates Himself only to humble souls, and only the humble are filled with His gifts; that is the reason for the purifying sufferings of the night of the spirit: it is impossible to be entirely humble without passing through the bitter anguish of this night in which God Himself undertakes to humble the soul. But when finally He will have reduced it to the center of its nothingness, then He will exalt it, drawing it to Himself in the perfect union of love.

COLLOQUY

“ O my soul, if you are wounded by sin, behold your physician, ready to cure you. His mercy is infinitely greater than all your iniquities. This I say, not that you may remain in your misery, but that by doing your utmost to overcome it, you may not despair of His clemency and pardon.

“ Your God is sweetness itself, mildness itself; whom will you love, whom will you desire except Him?

“ Let not your imperfections discourage you; your God does not despise you because you are imperfect and infirm; on the contrary, He loves you because you desire to cure your ills. He will come to your assistance and make you more perfect than you would have dared to hope, and adorned by His own hand, your beauty will be unequalled, like His own goodness.

"O my Jesus, tender Shepherd, gentle Master, help me, lift up Your dejected sheep, extend Your hand to sustain me, heal my wounds, strengthen my weakness, save me; otherwise I shall perish. I am unworthy of life, I confess, unworthy of Your light and help; for my ingratitude has been so great; Your mercy, however, is greater still. Have pity upon me, then, O God, You who love men so much! Oh, my only hope! Have pity upon me according to the greatness of your mercy" (Bl. Louis de Blois).

"One abyss calleth upon another. It is there, my God, at the bottom that I shall meet You: the abyss of my poverty, of my nothingness, will be confronted with the abyss of Your mercy, the immensity of Your All. There I shall find strength to die to myself and, losing every trace of self, I shall be changed into love" (E.T. I, 1).

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DESOLATION AND DARKNESS

PRESENCE OF GOD - Come to my aid, O Lord, that I may not be overwhelmed by the storm.

MEDITATION

1. Seeing its wretchedness so clearly, the soul senses the infinite distance separating it from God; and, while desiring even more to be united to Him, it realizes that it is farther from Him than ever, absolutely incapable of bridging the chasm which divides them. This recognition causes pain as well, for the lover ardently desires union with the beloved. The suffering sometimes becomes so intense that it seems to the soul that there no longer exists any hope of holiness, of union with God, or even of eternal salvation for it.

There is nothing exaggerated, much less feigned in this desolation. The Holy Spirit, under whose action the soul finds itself, cannot inspire it with anything not entirely conformable with truth. It is quite true that between us,

poor creatures that we are, and God, sovereign and infinite perfection, there is a distance, an incalculable distance; it is quite true that, by our own strength, we are radically incapable of elevating ourselves to God; again it is true that considering our actions—even the best of them—there is nothing in us which merits either union with God or eternal life. If many souls are not convinced of this, thinking that they are able of themselves to do something to advance toward God and holiness, it is because they have not yet been enlightened as to the depths of their own nothingness.

If we are, then, utterly unworthy of God, of His love, of union with Him, of His eternal glory, it is equally true that God Himself, in His merciful love, has desired to bridge the distance that separates Him from us. He has stooped down to us to the point of clothing us with His divine Life and calling us to his intimacy. What is impossible to our misery is entirely possible to the omnipotence and infinite mercy of God. He wills to do this work in us, yet He wants us to realize that it is His work alone.

In those moments when the soul is tempted to despair of attaining to God and eternal salvation, it must remain firm in unshakable hope. However justifiable may be its mistrust of itself and all its efforts, there is even more reason to await all from God, whose love and goodness infinitely surpass both its poverty and its expectation. In this way the desolation of the night of the spirit will achieve its end—that of establishing the soul in a deeper humility, in a purer and more perfect hope, because now the soul trusts only in the merciful love of God.

2. St. John of the Cross writes : “ And thus at this time the soul also suffers great darkness in the understanding.... And in its substance the soul suffers from abandonment and the greatest poverty. Dry and cold, and at times hot, it finds relief in naught, nor is there any thought that can console it, nor can it even raise its heart to God ” (J.C. *LF*, 1,20). Yet another cause of spiritual distress is the aridity in which the soul finds itself : the inability to think of God, to find help by reflecting upon divine things. It seems to the soul as if a very high wall had risen up between God and itself, preventing its cries from reaching Him. It is deep night, in which the soul cannot go forward except by leaning upon pure, naked faith, clinging with all its strength to the

belief that God is infinitely good, that He loves it and listens to its cries, that He knows its torment, and allows it to suffer only to purify it. It is not surprising that the soul in this state may experience strong temptations against faith, like those which afflicted St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus in the last period of her life. She writes : " Our Lord allowed my soul to be plunged in thickest gloom, and the thought of heaven, so sweet from my earliest years, to become for me a subject of torture " (*St.*, 9). She adds, however : " God knows how I try to live by faith, even though it affords me no consolation. I have made more acts of faith during the past year than in all the rest of my life " (*ibid.*). Alluding to her poems on the happiness of heaven, she confesses : " When I sing...of the happiness of heaven and of the eternal possession of God, I feel no joy; I sing only of what *I will to believe*" (*ibid.*). This is exactly how the soul must conduct itself : *believing because it wills to believe*, not relying on what it feels or experiences, but relying solely upon the word of God. These acts of pure faith, stripped of all consolation, independent of any feeling whatsoever, are truly heroic acts; they honor God more purely, the more they are based only on divine revelation; and they unite the soul to God, the more stripped they are of all human support. The darkness of the night of the spirit has precisely this end : to accustom the soul to walk by pure faith, by heroic faith.

COLLOQUY

" O Jesus, King of peace, whose presence heaven and earth long for, how have You gone so far away from me! How are all my riches and strength lacking! O loss more painful than mortal wounds, O truly bitter separation, worse than the anguish of death!

" Why have You hidden Yourself, my gentle Spouse, and by Your absence cast me into this night full of thick shadows and dark desolation? Who will help me in this utter abandonment, in this solitude? Oh! how great are the sufferings of love, how great is the anxiety of the heart which knows not nor can do anything but love, while possessing not Him whom it loves!

" I have no other remedy, O most kind King, than to sigh for You. I cry to You from the bottom of my heart and

speak to the tenderness of Your love. Remember me, O my hope; see my desolation at the thought of Your refusal, and the bitter abandonment consuming me.

"Do not abandon me, O gentle Son of the Virgin, because mercy was born, together with You, from the womb of Your Immaculate Mother. See, Lord, how all my strength is failing, and how, bereft of You, I am oppressed by the horror and shadow of death.

"Have pity on me, my Friend, because all my strength being consumed, I have only lips and tongue left to cry to You. O immortal life and fountain of living water, do not deprive me of Your presence with so much rigor, for it is dearer to me than life. I shall not rest, O gentle Son of God, nor ever cease my sighs and supplications until You show me Your Face" (Ven. John of Jesus Mary).

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CONFIDENCE AND ABANDONMENT

PRESENCE OF GOD - Into Your hands, O Lord, I abandon myself with all confidence.

MEDITATION

i. "There are many who desire to make progress [in the spiritual way] and constantly entreat God to draw them and let them advance to this state of perfection [the state of union], but when it pleases God to begin to bring them through the first trials and mortifications, as is necessary, they are unwilling to pass through them, and flee away, to escape from the narrow road of life and to seek the broad road of their own consolation" (J.C. *LF*, 2,27). This is the reason why many souls do not reach union with God; they are not willing to tread the way of the Cross, the only way which leads to it.

You also desire to arrive at divine union, but perhaps you, too, think to reach it by a broad, sunny, pleasant way, by the way of success, where one goes from victory to victory,

where one enjoys abundant spiritual consolations, where one finds the applause, support, and esteem of creatures. But by now you must certainly have understood that it is necessary to take quite another way : the narrow and obscure way where the soul discovers all its misery, experiences all its powerlessness, where consolation from God and men is wanting. You know, too, that you must accept having to walk on this road for as long as it will please God. How many months or years will suffice? Only God knows. He often keeps souls a long time in the dark night of the spirit, and it might even be said that, in general, even after the principal stages have been passed, there is always a little of the night as long as one lives upon earth. The wisest course to take is to surrender yourself completely to the divine will of God, without setting limits either to the duration or the nature of your trials. God knows what is best for you; He, who knows so well the weaknesses and necessities of your soul, will know how to prescribe exactly the treatment to cure your evils. Do not be hasty, but, on the contrary, have much patience, and you will not expose yourself to deception. Let your patience be long-suffering and trustful because, although you truly suffer, these sufferings do not come to you from an enemy but from your greatest Friend, from God, who loves you much more than you could love yourself, who wills your good, your happiness, your sanctification much more than you could ever desire them. Hope in Him and you will never be confounded; entrust yourself to Him blindly and you will have nothing to fear.

2. The most suitable moments to prove to God that you trust Him blindly, that you wish to abandon yourself to Him without reserve, are undoubtedly those of the dark night of the spirit. Even if it seems to you that all gives way under your feet, even if the tempest engulfs you to the point of making you feel tempted against faith and hope, you have nothing to fear, because in this night you are, in a very special way, under the action of the Holy Spirit. It is He who, by the living flame of His Love, lays waste your soul to purify it, but at the same time He Himself covers it with His shadow, secretly pouring into it the strength to resist, and measuring the suffering in such a way as not to exceed your capacity. Do not be afraid; you are in good hands : you are protected by the shadow of the Almighty, and no

evil can befall you, provided you adhere voluntarily and with docility to His purifying action. Accept, and continually repeat your "fiat"; this is what Our Lord wants of you in this state, and this you can and should do, even in the midst of the most violent tempests. This pure, simple adhesion of your will to God, will unite you to Him and anchor you in Him, keeping you from shipwreck. What does it matter if you can neither say nor do anything more, if you are incapable of long prayers; even Jesus, in the Garden of Olives, did nothing but repeat this one protestation: "Father...Thy will be done" (*Mt* 26,42). Let this be your prayer too, prayer rising more from your heart than from your lips, rising from a profound attitude of pure adherence to the will of God, in which you submerge yourself with all the powers of your soul. This adherence must become so strong, so complete, so filial and confident as to transform itself into a prolonged act of abandonment: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit" (*Lk* 23,46). Jesus Himself formulated this act in the midst of anguish and desolation infinitely more intense than anything you could ever experience. Unite yourself to the agonizing Jesus; lean upon Him, and in Him you will find the necessary strength to accept and to resist. Keeping your eyes fixed upon Jesus Crucified, who has reconciled and united the human race to His divine Father by His Passion and death, you will understand ever more perfectly that union with God "consists not in refreshment and in consolations and spiritual feelings, but in a living death of the Cross, both as to sense and as to spirit—that is, both inwardly and outwardly" (*J.C. AS II*, 7,11).

COLLOQUY

"O my God, where is the sun of Your grace? It seems to me that it is darkened. You seem to have wholly withdrawn Your goodness from my soul. I am abandoned now, like a body which, deprived of its members, cannot help itself, or like a sterile tree trunk, for, Your grace being taken away, I can do nothing. O my God, stretch out Your right hand to me and give me strength.

"O eternal Father, if Your Word is with me, who can be against me? What can move me, cast me down, or vanquish

me? Storms will beat against me exteriorly, but will not touch my inmost heart. They may make me suffer, and I accept it willingly because You so will, but they can never trouble my soul, ever abandoned to Your divine good pleasure. I shall still every storm, thinking that these sorrows come by Your will, and I shall immerse myself in the lowness of my being. If these troubles swallow me up in hell, I shall raise myself up again to heaven with Your help, and in Your name I shall overcome every conflict.

"Nevertheless, I know my weakness and during this trial, which may be long or short according to Your good pleasure, while many battles rage, I know well what I must do; I shall trust in You and I shall never be moved" (St. Mary Magdalen dei Pazzi).

"Blessed Master, grant that the divine good pleasure may be my food and daily bread; may I let myself be immolated according to the Father's every wish, after Your example, O adored Christ. If at times what He wills is more crucifying, no doubt I may say with You: 'Father, if it be possible let this chalice pass from me,' but I shall immediately add: 'not as I will, but as Thou wilt'; and calmly and steadfastly I shall climb my calvary with You, singing in my inmost soul, sending up to the Father a hymn of thanksgiving. For those who tread that Way of Sorrows are those 'whom He foreknew and predestined to be made conformable to the image of His divine Son,' who was crucified for love!" (E.T. I, 3 - 8).

PRESENCE OF GOD - My God, from all eternity You have gone before me with Your infinite love; increase my love for You.

MEDITATION

1. "What shall prevent God from doing that which He will in the soul that is resigned, annihilated, and

detached?" (*J.C. AS II*, 4,2). This statement of St. John of the Cross makes you understand that God has an immense desire to work in your soul, to lead you to sanctity and to union with Himself, provided you commit yourself into His hands, despoiled of every attachment, annihilated in your self-love, entirely docile, malleable, and adaptable to His action. The Lord comes to your assistance with purifying trials in order to empty you of self, to detach you from creatures, to immerse you in true humility, but at the same time He helps you to grow in love, the strong bond which must unite you to Him. All the work which God accomplishes in your soul is done in view of making you advance in this virtue; exterior and interior trials, humiliations, powerlessness, aridity, struggles, and tempests are meant in the divine plan to extinguish the illusory fires of self-love, pride, earthly affections, and all other irregular passions, so that only one fire may burn within you, ever more intensely and strongly, the fire of charity.

The more the Lord purifies you, the more your heart will be freed from all dross and become capable of concentrating all its affection upon Him. Walk, then, in this way by accepting purification in view of a deeper love, and by orientating your whole spiritual life toward the exercise of love. What you suffer, suffer for love, that is, suffer it willingly, without rebellion or complaint, and then, in the measure that your soul is humbled, despoiled, and mortified, it will also be clothed with charity. The trials which God sends you have the purpose not only of purifying your heart, but also of dilating it in charity. They aim at deepening your capacity for love; not, certainly, a sensible love, but a powerful love of the will, which tends toward God through pure benevolence, independent of all personal consolation, its sole pursuit being His glory and good pleasure.

2. By means of purifying trials, "God secretly teaches the soul and instructs it in the perfection of love" (*J.C. DN II*, 5,1). Above all, He teaches it to love independently of all happiness and joy, even depriving it of that joy, though legitimate and spontaneous, which proceeds from the consciousness of its own love. The soul that is not yet wholly purified could become attached to this joy, so God withdraws it entirely; in the thick darkness the soul feels that it no longer loves; dry aridity extinguishes all joy and

sweetness, and it is constrained to go forward by a pure act of the will. Instead of taking complacency in its own love, which henceforth it no longer feels, the soul is profoundly afflicted by the tormenting doubt that it no longer knows how to love, and to combat this doubt, it can only apply itself with all its might to performing the works of love, that is, embracing generously every labor, every sacrifice that may please God. In this way, its love matures, becoming purer and stronger : purer, because it is not mixed with any personal consolation; stronger, because it urges the soul to more generous labors. In this state, the soul adheres to God by a simple act of the will, and herein the substance of love consists : it *wills good* to God solely because He is the supreme, infinitely lovable Good; it desires Him alone and serves Him alone, fulfilling all His divine will without any return on self, without seeking any joy or spiritual consolation. The soul is no longer preoccupied with enjoying His love, or with receiving; its one solicitude is to give, to give itself, to give pleasure to God. From this we understand how aridity and darkness, instead of stifling love, make it grow in a wonderful manner, provided the soul is disposed to seek only God's good pleasure and forget itself completely.

"Learn to love as God desires to be loved, and lay aside your own temperament" (*SM I*, 57) St. John of the Cross tells you; that is, learn to love God by a pure, strong act of the will, without being preoccupied with what is sentiment, consolation and joy of heart. Perhaps your manner of loving is still a little too dependent upon feeling; so be grateful to God if He makes you walk in darkness and aridity : it is thus that He will help you deliver yourself from this weakness.

COLLOQUY

"O Lord of my soul and my only Good! When a soul has resolved to love You, and forsaking everything, does all in its power toward that end, so that it may the better employ itself in Your love, why do You not grant it at once the joy of ascending to the possession of this perfect love? But I am wrong : I should have made my complaint by asking why we ourselves have no desire so to ascend, for it is we

alone who are at fault in not at once enjoying so great a dignity.

"If we attain to the perfect possession of this true love of God, it brings all blessings with it. But so niggardly and so slow are we in giving ourselves wholly to God that we do not prepare ourselves as we should to receive that precious love which it is His Majesty's will that we should enjoy only at a great price.

"There is nothing on earth with which so great a blessing can be purchased; but if we did what we could to obtain it, if we cherished no attachment to earthly things, and if all our cares and all our intercourse were centered in heaven, I believe there is no doubt that this blessing would be given us very speedily.... But we think we are giving God everything, whereas what we are really offering Him is the revenue or the fruits of our land while keeping the stock and the right of ownership of it in our own hands.... A nice way of seeking His love! And then we want it quickly and in great handfuls, as one might say.

"O Lord, if You do not give us this treasure all at once, it is because we do not make a full surrender of ourselves. May it please You to give it to us at least little by little, even though the receiving of it may cost us all the trials in the world.

"No, my God, love does not consist in shedding tears, in enjoying those consolations and that tenderness which for the most part we desire and in which we find comfort, but in serving You with righteousness, fortitude of soul, and humility. The other seems to me to be receiving rather than giving anything....

"May it never please Your Majesty that a gift so precious as Your love be given to people who serve You solely to obtain consolations" (*T.J. Life*, 11).

THE LOVE OF ESTEEM

PRESENCE OF GOD - O my God, sovereign and infinite Good, grant that I may esteem nothing more than You and prefer nothing to You.

MEDITATION

1. Our Lord once said to St. Teresa : "Knowest thou what it is to love Me in truth? It is to realize that everything which is not pleasing to Me is a lie" (*Life*, 40). Without sound of words, the Holy Spirit gives this lesson to every soul that lets itself be formed and purified by Him. The more He enlightens it on the truth of its own misery and that of all creatures, the more the soul remains disinclined toward them; it withdraws all its hope from them and comes truly to esteem God above all things and to prefer Him to everything else. The attitude of this soul becomes very like that of St. Paul, who exclaimed : "I count all things to be but loss for...Jesus Christ, my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ" (*Phil* 3,8).

The love of esteem which the Holy Spirit pours into the soul through the purifying darkness is so strong that the soul is disposed to accept any sacrifice whatsoever, to confront every obstacle, to undergo every humiliation and suffering that it may win its God. St. John of the Cross says : "The love of esteem which it has for God is so great, even though it may not realize this, and may be in darkness, that it would be glad, not only to suffer in this way, but even to die many times over in order to give Him satisfaction" (*DN II*, 13,5). Let us note that the soul does not feel nor take pleasure in its own love, this love is not accompanied by enjoyment and sweetness; nevertheless, it is a love so real that it leads the soul effectively to the accomplishment of the most difficult things "if thereby...it might find Him whom it loves" (*ibid.*). We could also note that it is not a question of impulses, of inoperative desires which immediately give way before concrete opportunities for sacrifice, but, on the contrary, of a strong determination of the will which

nothing can shake. Once the soul has understood that a certain action is necessary in order to unite itself to God, it pays no attention to anything, neither to the repugnances of nature, nor to the voice of self-love or egoism, nor to what others might say or think; it plunges headlong with great courage.

2. A further effect of this great love of esteem for God is that "the greatest sufferings and trials of which [the soul] is conscious in this night are the anguished thoughts that it has lost God, and the fears that He has abandoned it" (*J.C. DNII*, 13,5). Just as it is not concerned about acquiring any possession except the possession of God, neither is the soul concerned about any loss, if it be not the loss of God. Everything can be taken from it: health, riches, honors, esteem, trust, the affection of the most cherished creatures, and these creatures themselves; but never could the soul endure that God should be taken from it, or that it should be prevented from loving Him. Thus have the saints thought and acted. In her immense desire to love God, St. Teresa Margaret Redi declared that she was ready to suffer even the pains of hell to obtain that grace; and to one who asked how she would be able to support such unspeakable torments she replied: "I think that love would render them bearable for me and perhaps even sweet, for of itself love makes all things else seem as naught" (*T.M. Sp*). That is also what St. Teresa of Jesus thought when she wrote to her daughters these beautiful lines: "Let your desire be to see God; your fear, that you may lose Him; your sorrow, that you are not having fruition of Him; your joy, that He can bring you to Himself" (*M*, 69). Such is the characteristic of true love: to create but one preoccupation in the soul, one fear, one desire, and one joy,—all of which are concentrated on God alone.

If you wish to see how far your love of esteem for God has reached, examine your conduct, and try to discover the ultimate motive of your preoccupations, fears, desires, and joys; if this motive is not God, but creatures, your own interests and satisfaction, you ought to acknowledge humbly that you have not yet succeeded in esteeming God above all things; for you weigh "in the balance against God that which...is at the greatest possible distance from God" (*J.C. AS I*, 5,4). Searching your heart more deeply, you

will see that you frequently place on the same plane your will and the will of God, your tastes and His good pleasure, your interests and His glory, your convenience and His service. Furthermore, although in theory you protest that you esteem God above all things, in practice you very often give the preference not to His will, desires, and interests, but to your own, and that is why you fall into so many imperfections.

Be convinced that "where there is true love of God, there enters neither love of self nor that of the things of self" (*J.C. DN II*, 21,10).

COLLOQUY

" Most amiable Son of God, I confess to You my fault. I know not by what spirit I was led when I allowed my heart, created for You, to be ensnared by affection for creatures and sullied by the profane conversations of earth. I let myself be deceived, not by reality, but by the appearance of a love artfully represented, and I withdrew far from You and from the sweet law of Your true and only love. But now that Your light has drawn me out of my darkness, I renounce all worldly beauty and I choose You, Son of God and of the Blessed Virgin, that I may love You by a pact of eternal love.

" Without You, infinite Beauty and Goodness, no creature can possess true good, and outside of You my soul finds no satisfaction. For You have given it so great a capacity and such a hunger for the infinite, that it can neither will nor seek any other good than You. When I consider the earth, and all things, O Son of the Most High, they seem small and imperfect compared with You. If all the dignities of the world, all created beauties, all the comforts of life were given to me; if I had at my disposal all that is great, honorable, rich, and admirable in the world and could enjoy all these things together for all eternity, I would never change what I have chosen, but I would sing with ardent love : Your Face, O Lord, I seek and I shall seek it forever.

" Close my heart, Lord, that no human affection may enter there. Grant that I may not see, nor feel, nor taste, anything created, and may no creature attach itself to me, to the detriment of Your pure love. You alone, O my infinite Good, suffice to fill to the brim all my desires and to

satisfy this hunger which tortures me; no other good, not even all other goods combined would be able to satisfy me; rather, after having tasted them all, I would be left dying with hunger, languishing in extreme abandonment, deprived of You" (Ven. John of Jesus Mary).

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*THE GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED*TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
SIXTH AFTER EPIPHANY

PRESENCE OF GOD - May Your kingdom come, O Lord, in the whole world and in my heart.

MEDITATION

1. The parable of the mustard seed emerges from the text of today's Mass; it is brief, but rich in meaning : "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field; which is the least indeed of all seeds, but when it is grown up, it is greater than all herbs and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and dwell in the branches thereof" (*Gosp : Mt 13,31-35*). Nothing was smaller or more humble in its beginnings than "the kingdom of heaven," the Church : Jesus, its Head and Founder, was born in a stable; He worked for the greater part of thirty years in a carpenter's shop, and for only three years unfolded His mission to a poor people, preaching a doctrine so simple that all, even the unlettered, could understand. When Jesus left the earth, the Church was established by an insignificant group of twelve men, gathered about a humble woman, Mary; but this first nucleus possessed so powerful a vitality that in a few years it spread into all the countries of the vast Roman Empire. The Church, from a very tiny seed, sown in the hearts of a Virgin Mother and of poor fishermen, became little by little through the centuries a gigantic tree, extending its branches into all regions of the

globe, with peoples of every tongue and nation taking shelter in its shade.

The Church is not merely a society of men, but of men who have for their Head, Jesus, the Son of God; the Church is the whole Christ, that is, Jesus and the faithful incorporated in Him and forming one Body with Him. The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ of which each of the baptized is a member. To love the Church is to love Jesus; to work for the extension of the Church is to work for the increase of the Mystical Body of Christ, so that the number of His members may be filled up and each may contribute to the splendor of the whole. All this is summarized and asked of the Father in the brief invocation : "*Adveniat regnum tuum.*"

Perhaps there is but little that we can do for the extension of the Church. Let us, at least, do that little; let us contribute our insignificant labor, as a veritable mustard seed, toward the growth of this wonderful tree, beneath whose shadow all men are called to find salvation and repose.

2. The parable of the mustard seed makes us consider not only the expansion of the kingdom of God in the world, but also its development in our hearts. Has not Jesus said : "The kingdom of God is within you" (*Lk 17,21*)? Yes, in us too this wonderful kingdom began as a tiny seed, a seed of grace : the sanctifying grace which, in a hidden and mysterious way, was sown in us by God at Baptism, and the actual grace of good inspirations and of the divine word—"semen est verbum *Dei*"—which Jesus the heavenly Sower, has scattered plentifully in our souls. This little seed has germinated slowly, it has sent down ever deeper roots, it has grown progressively, penetrating our whole spirit, until it has entirely conquered us for God, until we have felt the need of saying : Lord, all that I have, all that I am, is Yours; I give myself wholly to You. I want to be *Your kingdom*.

To be entirely the *kingdom of God*, so that He is the only Sovereign and Ruler of the heart, so that nothing exists in it which does not belong to Him or is not subject to His rule, is the ideal of a soul that loves God with perfect love. But how can we attain to the full development of this kingdom of God within us? The second parable which we read in today's Gospel tells us : "The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal,

until the whole was leavened." Here is another very beautiful image of the work grace must accomplish in our souls: grace has been placed in us like leaven which little by little must increase until it permeates our whole being and divinizes it entirely. Grace, the divine leaven, has been given to purify, elevate, and sanctify our entire being, with all its powers and faculties; only when this work will have been brought to completion, shall we be entirely the *kingdom of God*.

Let us reflect further on the great problem of our correspondence with grace. This divine seed, this supernatural leaven, is within us; what can prevent it from becoming a gigantic tree, capable of giving shelter to other souls; what can impede the leaven from fermenting the whole mass, if we remove all the obstacles opposed to its development, if we respond to all its motions and requirements?

"*Adveniat regnum tuum!*" Yes, let us pray for the absolute coming of the kingdom of God in our hearts.

COLLOQUY

"O Lord, my God, who created me to Your own image and likeness, grant me this grace which You have shown to be so great and necessary for salvation, that I may overcome my very evil nature that is drawing me to sin and perdition. For I feel in my flesh the law of sin contradicting the law of my mind and leading me captive to serve sensuality in many things. I cannot resist the passions if Your most holy grace warmly infused into my heart does not assist me....

"O Lord, without grace I can do nothing, but with its strength I can do all things in You.

"O grace, truly heavenly, without which our merits are nothing and no gifts of nature are to be esteemed! O most blessed grace, which makes the poor in spirit rich in virtues, which renders him who is rich in many good things humble of heart, come descend upon me, fill me quickly with your consolation lest my soul faint with weariness and dryness of mind.

"Let me find grace in Your sight, I beg, Lord, for Your grace is enough for me, even though I obtain none of the things which nature desires. If I am tempted and afflicted with many tribulations, I will fear no evils while Your grace is with me. It is my strength. It gives me counsel and

help. It is more powerful than all my enemies and wiser than all the wise.

"Let Your grace, therefore, go before me and follow me, O Lord, and make me always intent upon good works, through Jesus Christ, Your Son" (*Imit. III*, 55).

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COURAGEOUS AND IMPATIENT LOVE

PRESENCE OF GOD - May Your love, my God, make me intrepid in seeking You, and impatient to possess You.

MEDITATION

1. Although the soul subjected to interior purifications by the Holy Spirit is profoundly conscious of its own misery and unworthiness, it is nevertheless "sufficiently bold and daring to journey toward union with God" (J.C. *DN II*, 13,9). Whence comes such audacity? From the love which is ever growing within it; indeed, "the property of love is to desire to be united, joined, and made equal and like to the object of its love" (*ibid.*). Therefore, the more love increases in the soul, the greater is the longing for union with God. Even if its love is still imperfect—since it has not yet brought the soul to union—nevertheless, it is sincere and thanks to "the strength set by love in the will," the soul experiences "hunger and thirst for that which it lacks, which is the union" to which love tends (*ibid.*). Besides, how could the soul which has grasped something of the infinite beauty and immense love of God not aspire to unite itself to Him? That same divine light which reveals to it the abyss of its own nothingness and that of creatures, enlightens it, by contrast, as to the infinite transcendence of God, so that the soul remains seized and captivated, while God Himself, in the measure that He purifies it, draws it to Himself by infusing new love in it.

Humbled by the knowledge of its own unworthiness, but emboldened by the love which is growing within, and by the invitation which God Himself addresses to it, drawing

it secretly to Himself, the soul dares to aspire to this supreme good which is divine union. It is humble in its audacious desire, because it knows that it does not merit such a gift; but it is also daring, because it feels that God Himself wills to give this union, and because its hunger and thirst for God are so great that it cannot live apart from Him. "Why should not the confiding soul venture toward the One whose noble image and glorious likeness it is conscious of bearing within itself?" exclaims St. Bernard. God's love has gone before it, willing to render it like unto Himself by creation and by grace. This divine resemblance, natural and supernatural, best expresses the desire of God to unite the soul to Himself and, at the same time, constitutes the basis of such union. God, who has established this basis, certainly wills to bring His work to completion; and to do it He only waits for the soul to concur with His action, letting itself be purified, despoiled of self, and clothed completely with divine Life.

2. The soul, famished and athirst for God, seeks Him without respite, "for, being in darkness, it feels itself to be without Him and to be dying of love for Him" (*J.C. DN II*, 13,8). Love makes the soul impatient to find the Lord, and it seeks Him with great solicitude, like Magdalen, who, after the death of Jesus, gave herself no peace, but, rising early, ran to the sepulcher, and finding the sacred Body no longer there, went in search of it, questioning all whom she met. "I will rise and go about the city," says the spouse in the Canticle, "in the streets and in the broad ways I will seek Him whom my soul loveth" (3,2). This is the attitude of the soul who does not turn back or resign itself to being vanquished; indeed, it desires at any cost to find this God whom it loves more than its very self. In this state, says St. John of the Cross, "the soul now walks so anxiously that it seeks the Beloved in all things. In whatsoever it thinks, it thinks at once of the Beloved. Of whatsoever it speaks, in whatsoever matters present themselves, it is speaking and communing at once with the Beloved. When it eats, when it sleeps, when it watches, when it does aught soever, all its care is about the Beloved" (*DN II*, 19,2).

Oh! if you, too, were so solicitous in seeking your God! From all eternity His love has gone before you; created to

His image and likeness, you, also, have been clothed with divine life, and God has invited you to divine union. Why then, do you go about the world, not in quest of God, but of yourself; anxious, not for His love, but for the love of creatures? Is there not, perhaps, more anxiety and solicitude in you for the wretched things of earth than for the things of heaven, than for God?

Oh! how much need you still have of detachment, of renunciation and purification! Do not resist the divine invitations; open your heart wide to the purifying action of the Holy Spirit; He alone can finally disengage you from all earthly cares and solicitude. If you are attentive and faithful to the inspirations of the divine Paraclete, He will send you new, more subtle and delicate ones which will incline you ever more and more to leave the vanities of earth, to seek and love God alone.

COLLOQUY

" O Lord, my life and my strength, one of the greatest of the divine mercies which You have bestowed upon me is that of deigning to invite a creature so sinful and ungrateful as I am to love Your Majesty. In Your presence the heavenly seraphim veil their faces, dazzled by the splendor of the divinity and the fire of Your love. I am honored by such liberality and at the same time impelled to love You in return for Your love and for the desire which You have to unite me to Your heart, that sweet refuge, to which I long to fly that I may find repose therein.

" Let others look after their affairs and worldly pretensions; as for me, I shall occupy myself with You alone and shall importune You to grant me Your love. I know not, nor can I ask anything but You alone : I love You and seek You; I shall love You and always seek Your Face, that I may be drawn and captivated by its divine beauty.

" Cast me not away from You, most amiable Lord! You, who have ever been most liberal and divinely merciful, even toward those who have not asked it of You, be not severe with me, who implore from the bottom of my heart the kindness and sweetness of Your love.

" May it please Your most tender Heart, O Son of the Most High, to accept me for Your service, to number me

among the servants of Your house, who suffer, labor, bear the burden of the day, and desire no other recompense than You Yourself.

"But my desire goes further still, for I aspire to unite myself to You by an indissoluble bond. O Beauty full of majesty which ravishes hearts with an infinite power, and makes them like unto Yourself, realize this transformation in me, I implore, so that I may no longer live in myself but in You. May the most sweet law of Your grace and the power of Your love direct all my thoughts, words, and works" (Ven. John of Jesus Mary).

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HUMBLE AND REVERENT LOVE

PRESENCE OF GOD - O God, who art so great, deign to lift up my soul, so small and miserable, to Yourself.

MEDITATION

1. The love which audaciously urges the soul on to the conquest of divine union is, at the same time, full of reverence and respect, for the soul understands, much better than before, how sublime and lofty is the majesty of God. If, on the one hand, love makes it impatient to be united to Him, on the other, the clear and continual consciousness of its misery renders it more eager than ever to keep strict watch over its conduct, so that nothing may be found in it which could displease such great majesty.

"The soul," says the Mystical Doctor, "immediately perceives in itself a genuine determination and an effective desire to do naught which it understands to be an offense to God, and to omit to do naught that seems to be for His service. For that dark love cleaves to the soul, causing it a most watchful care and inward solicitude concerning that which it must do, or must not do, for His sake, in order to please Him. It will consider and ask itself a thousand times if it has given Him cause to be offended" (*DNI*, 16,14).

Evidently there is question here of something far exceeding mere flight from sin : it is the firm resolution to shun every imperfection, omission, or voluntary negligence; and since the soul knows from experience that, in spite of all its good will, many of these faults may escape it, either through inadvertence or through frailty, it desires to intensify its vigilance in order to avoid even these as far as is possible.

This solicitude proceeds from love and not from scruples, a truly loving anxiety, like that which made St. Teresa Margaret continually repeat : "What am I doing now, in this action? Am I loving my God?" (*Sp*), or that which St. Angela of Foligno expressed in these burning words : "See, O Lord, if there is anything in me which is not love!"

If you would have a sure sign of your love of God, test the firmness of your resolution to fly from every least thing which might displease Him. This resolution must be so deeply rooted in your will that not only is it continually present to you—as are the things you really care for—but is also strong enough to withdraw you from every imperfection as soon as you become aware of it. This is absolutely indispensable, because, as St. John of the Cross teaches, "for the soul to come to unite itself perfectly with God through love and will...it must not intentionally and knowingly consent with the will to imperfections, and it must have power and liberty to be able not to consent intentionally" (*AS I*, 11,3).

2. Knowledge of its lowness helps keep the soul humble in its love, driving away all presumption. Far from relying on its own merits and good works, it sees clearly that however much it might accomplish, it is as nothing in comparison with the exalted majesty of God. "Wherefore it considers itself useless in all that it does and thinks itself to be living in vain" (*J.C. DN II*, 19,3). The words of the Gospel : "We are unprofitable servants," are for it a living actuality, and they express very well its habitual state. The light poured forth in the soul by the Holy Spirit is too great to let it fall into any illusion concerning its own worth, or to allow it to take complacency in its works. Even more, the soul "considers itself as being, most certainly, worse than all other souls : first, because love is continually teaching it how much is due to God; and secondly, because, as the works which

it here does for God are many and it knows them all to be faulty and imperfect, they all bring it confusion and affliction, for it realizes in how lowly a manner it is working for God, who is so high" (*ibid.*). It is wonderful to see how this profound humility is not only the fruit of light but also of love: love makes the soul esteem God so highly that, while ardently desiring to possess Him, it is profoundly convinced of being absolutely incapable of reaching Him. On the other hand, although humble and reverent, love maintains its characteristic audacity and the soul does not cease to aspire to divine union. Precisely in this spirit St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus wrote: "Notwithstanding my littleness, I dare to gaze upon the divine Sun of love" (*St, 13*). The Saint, who in all simplicity compared herself to a downy little bird, incapable of taking its flight, well understood that of herself she could never soar so high; nevertheless, she did not lose her confidence. If she could not count on her own strength, she knew that she could rely upon the love of Jesus, the divine Word, who became incarnate precisely to come and seek us, poor sinners that we are, who willed "to suffer and to die, in order to bear away each single soul and plunge it into the very heart of the Blessed Trinity, Love's eternal home" (*ibid.*). St. Thérèse had the certitude that one day Jesus would be touched by her weakness, and would swoop down to make her the "prey" of His love: "I am filled with the hope that one day Thou wilt swoop down upon me, and bearing me away to the source of all Love, wilt plunge me at last into its glowing abyss" (*ibid.*).

Yes, Jesus is ready to meet all souls of good will, to come to your soul and raise it to the much desired union, but He would have you know how to await Him with fidelity, fully and generously devoted to His service.

COLLOQUY

"O eternal Word! O my Savior! Thou art the divine Eagle whom I love and who allurest me. Thou who, descending to this land of exile, didst will to suffer and to die, in order to bear away each single soul and plunge it into the very heart of the Blessed Trinity—Love's eternal home! Thou who, returning to Thy realm of light, dost still remain

hidden here in our vale of tears under the semblance of the white Host.... O eternal Eagle, it is Thy wish to nourish me with Thy divine substance, a poor little being who would fall into nothingness if Thy divine glance did not give me life at every moment....

"Forgive me, O Jesus, if I tell Thee that Thy love reacheth even unto folly, and at the sight of such folly, what wilt Thou but that my heart should leap up to Thee? How could my trust know any bounds?

"I know well that for Thy sake the saints have made themselves foolish—being "eagles" they have done great things. Too little for such mighty deeds, my folly lies in the hope that Thy love wilt accept me as a victim....

"O my divine Eagle! As long as Thou willest, I shall remain with my gaze fixed upon Thee, for I long to be fascinated by Thy divine eyes, I long to become Love's prey. I am filled with the hope that one day Thou wilt swoop down upon me, and bearing me away to the source of Love, wilt plunge me at last into its glowing abyss, that I may become forever its happy victim" (*T.C.J. St*, 13).

PRESENCE OF GOD - Lord, grant that my love for You may not be content with words, but prove itself in generous deeds.

MEDITATION

I. "Love is never idle" (*T.J. Int C V*, 4). When true love of God enters the soul it gradually begets in it an interior dynamism so strong and forceful that it spurs it on to seek ever new ways of pleasing the Beloved, and makes it diligent in devising fresh means of proving its fidelity to Him. Love, in fact, is not nourished by sweet sentiments or fantasies, but by works. "This love," says St. Teresa, "is also like a great fire which has always to be fed lest it should go out. Just so with these souls [in which God Himself kindles the

flame of charity]; cost them what it might, they would always want to be bringing wood, so that this fire should not die" (*Life*, 30). The soul that truly loves does not stop to examine whether a task is easy or difficult, agreeable or repugnant, but undertakes everything in order to maintain its love. It even chooses by preference tasks which demand more sacrifice, for it knows that love is never truer than when it urges the sacrifice of self for the One loved. Hence, through love, "there is caused in the soul a habitual suffering because of the Beloved, yet without weariness. For, as St. Augustine says, 'Love makes all things that are great, grievous, and burdensome to be almost naught.' The spirit here has so much strength that it has subjected the flesh and takes as little account of it as does the tree of one of its leaves. In no way does the soul here seek its own consolation or pleasure, either in God, or in aught else" (J.C. *D.N II*, 19,4).

This explains the attitude of the saints, who not only embraced wholeheartedly the sufferings with which God strewed their paths, but sought them with jealous care, as the miser seeks gold. St. John of the Cross replied to Our Lord, who had asked him what recompense he desired for the great services he had rendered Him: "To suffer and to be despised for Your love." And St. Teresa of Jesus, seeing her earthly exile prolonged, found in suffering embraced for God the only means of appeasing her heart, athirst for eternal love; and she entreated: "To die, Lord, or to suffer! I ask nothing else of Thee for myself but this" (*Life*, 40).

In heaven we shall have no further need of suffering to prove our love, because then we shall love in the unfailing clarity of the beatific vision. But here below, where we love in the obscurity of faith, we need to prove to God the reality of our love.

2. "If our love is perfect, it has this quality of leading us to forget our own pleasure in order to please Him whom we love"; it has the power to make us accept our trials with joy "and take the bitter with the sweet, knowing that to be His Majesty's will" (T.J. *F*, 5). Evidently, a love like this cannot be the fruit of our own human nature, which has such repugnance for suffering; it cannot be acquired, for it greatly surpasses the capacity of our nature, so poor

and weak. God alone can infuse it little by little into souls who allow Him to guide them by the narrow way of interior purification. Yes, in aridity, in solitude of heart, in the privation of all light and consolation, the Holy Spirit enkindles in them this flame of charity, a flame which invades them increasingly as it finds them well disposed, that is, purified of everything contrary to love. When all resistances have been overcome, all dross eliminated, the flame of love will blaze up irresistibly and give to the soul the strength of a giant. The flame of love, St. John of the Cross explains, "causes [the soul] to go forth from itself, and be wholly renewed and enter upon another mode of being" (*SC*, 1,7). While formerly the soul feared and fled suffering, now it embraces it courageously.

The soul strongest in suffering is also the strongest in love. No creature in the world loved, nor will love God more than the most Blessed Virgin Mary, and none was, nor ever will be, stronger than she in suffering. See her at the foot of the Cross : she is a Mother, and she voluntarily assists at the terrible agony of her Son; she sees the nails being driven into His Flesh; she hears the heavy blows of the hammer; she beholds His Head crowned with thorns, vainly seeking a little repose on the hard wood of the Cross; she sees the Cross raised and her Son hanging on it, suspended between heaven and earth, disfigured by suffering, without the least consolation. Mary's heart was pierced; nevertheless, she repeated her *fiat* with the same fullness of consent with which she had pronounced it at the joyous annunciation of her maternity. In her love, she found courage to offer her well-beloved Son for the salvation of His executioners. What mother could rival Our Lady in strength? Yet her sacrifice immeasurably surpassed that of any other mother because only she could say : The Son whom I immolate is my God.

Let us learn the secret of strong love at the foot of the Cross beside Mary, Queen of Martyrs, through love and suffering.

COLLOQUY

" He who truly loves You, Lord, has only one ambition, that of pleasing You. He dies with desire to be loved by You, and so will give his life to learn how he may please You

better. Can such love remain hidden? No, my God, that is impossible! There are degrees of love, for love shows itself in proportion to its strength. If it is weak, it shows itself but little. If it is strong, it shows itself a great deal. But love always makes itself known, whether weak or strong, provided it is real love.

"O Lord, grant that my love be not the fruit of my imagination but be proved by works. What can I do for You, who died for us and created us and gave us being, without counting myself fortunate in being able to repay You something of what I owe You?

"May it be Your pleasure, O Lord, that the day may finally come in which I shall be able to pay You at least something of all I owe You. Cost what it may, Lord, permit me not to come into Your presence with empty hands, since the reward must be in accordance with my works. Well do I know, my Lord, of how little I am capable. But I shall be able to do all things provided You do not withdraw from me.

"It is not You that are to blame, my Lord, if those who love You do no great deeds; it is our weak-mindedness and cowardice. It is because we never make firm resolutions but are filled with a thousand fears and scruples arising from human prudence, that You, my God, do not work Your marvels and wonders. Who loves more than You to give, if You have anyone that will receive; or to accept services performed at our own cost? May Your Majesty grant me to have rendered You some service and to care about nothing save returning to You some part of all I have received" (*T.J. Way, 40 – Int C III, 1 – Life, 21 – F, 2*).

UNITIVE LOVE

PRESENCE OF GOD - My God, You have infused love into my soul. Grant that it may increase until it brings me to union with You.

MEDITATION

1. "God continues to do and to work in the soul by means of this night, illumining and enkindling it divinely with yearnings for God alone and for naught else whatever" (*J.C. DN II*, 13,11). In proportion as it detaches itself from earth, leaving aside all affection and desire for creatures, the soul climbs "the secret ladder" of love which raises it step by step even unto its Creator, "for it is love alone that unites and joins the soul to God" (*ibid.*, 18,5).

This enkindling of love is not perceived in the beginning of the purification, because then "this divine fire is used in drying up and making ready the wood (which is the soul), rather than in giving it heat. But, as time goes on, the fire begins to give heat to the soul, and the soul then very commonly feels this enkindling and heat of love" (*ibid.*, 12,5). The flames of love can produce great spiritual delight; there are moments of unspeakable joy in which the soul receives a foretaste of its approaching union with God, a joy which compensates fully for all the pain and anguish suffered in the obscurity of the night, and one which encourages it to accept wholeheartedly whatever it must still undergo to attain perfect union with God. Nevertheless, it is well to remember that the enkindling of love does not consist in the joy the soul may experience, but rather in the firm determination of the will to give itself entirely to God. Moreover, "this is wrought by the Lord, who infuses as He wills," that is, who can infuse love, either "leaving the will in aridity" (*ibid.*, 12,7) or inflaming it with sweet ardor.

Be that as it may, what matters is not the enjoyment of love, but our rapid advancement in it, for love is the only power that can unite us to God. St. John of the Cross, developing this topic, states precisely: "It is to be

observed, then, that love is the inclination of the soul and the strength and power which it has to go to God...and thus, the more degrees of love the soul has, the more profoundly does it enter into God and the more is it centered in Him" (*LF*, 1,13). As a stone in its fall is drawn toward the center of the earth by gravity, so the soul is drawn to God by the power of love. The stronger the love, the more powerfully will the soul be drawn to God and entirely united to Him : "the strongest love is the most unitive love" (*ibid.*). How, then, could a soul that sincerely desires union with God fail to exert all its efforts to grow in love?

2. A degree of imperfect love bears a corresponding degree of imperfect union, whereas perfect union corresponds to perfect love. "For the soul to be in its center, which is God, it suffices for it to have one degree of love, since with one degree alone it may be united with Him through grace. If it have two degrees of love, it will be united and have entered into another and a more interior center with God, and so forth" (*ibid.*). We may compare these degrees of union to a stone which by its weight is drawn to the center of the earth; the heavier it is and the less impeded by obstacles, the more rapidly will it reach the center, and even the deepest part of it. Love is the weight which draws us into God, and, conversely, love draws God into our souls, for Jesus has said : "If anyone love Me, he will keep My word...and We will come to him and will make Our abode with him" (*Jn* 14,23). A single degree of love, shown by the observance of the divine law, guarantees that we are in the state of grace and that God is present in the soul, making His abode there; consequently, we can live united to Him. But it is evident that a very imperfect union with God corresponds to this first degree of love and grace. In this state the soul is already in its center, that is, in God, and it already lives united to Him who deigns to dwell in it by grace; however, it still has a long way to go before reaching its deepest center, before penetrating into the depths of God and living intimately with Him, perfectly united to Him. The stages of this road are marked by progress in love; the more the soul loves, the more it immerses itself in God; and, on the other hand, God Himself, making good His promise, becomes ever more present to it by grace, inviting it to an increasingly more intimate friendship and union.

Finally, the day comes when “if it attain to the last degree [of love], the love of God will succeed in wounding the soul even in its remotest and deepest center—that is, in transforming and enlightening it as regards all its being and power and virtue such as it is capable of receiving, until it be brought into such a state that it appears to be God” (*J.C. LF*, I, 13).

Love accomplishes the great miracle; it draws God into the soul that loves Him and immerses the soul in Him; by means of love, a miserable creature comes to the embrace of its Creator and is united to Him so intimately and perfectly that it abides there entirely transformed and divinized. Could God have granted us a greater gift than that of creating us in love and filling us with love, the great power capable of uniting us to Himself?

COLLOQUY

“O most loved King of peace, desired by all generous hearts in heaven and upon earth, who ask me with infinite sweetness to love You with all my heart, my mind, and my strength; despise not my sighs and yearnings.

“Beloved King, You came into the world to reign in the hearts of men by Your sweet law of charity, grant that I may love You with all my heart, and all the strength of my mind. Grant, most amiable Lord, that I may live no longer in myself but in You, who are my life; transform me into Yourself by love’s activity. Communicate to me that sweet fire which burns in Your Heart and grant that in all things I may seek You alone, You who are the true peace and center of my soul. I await but one thing from You: kindle Your eternal fire within me and let it beget in my heart such great desire for You that I may seek You always, night and day; let this longing constrain me to use everything, to seize every occasion, to find ever new ways of pleasing You and of inducing all creatures to serve You, to love You, and to unite themselves to You by the bond of charity.

“Come within me, O sweet Spouse of my soul, O ardent Heart, desirous of my own. Enter Your dwelling as absolute Lord, and govern there irresistibly by the power of Your omnipotent love. This very day I wish to be drawn to You,

O generous Son of God; let my soul be transformed in Yours, and, after that, You will be my soul, my life, the one comfort of my afflicted heart, and my only consolation" (Ven. John of Jesus Mary).

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UNION OF WILL

PRESENCE OF GOD - O Lord, take my entire will and transform it into Your own.

MEDITATION

1. The first and most important result of the unitive power of love is the perfect union of man's will with the will of God. As love develops, it so empties the soul of everything opposed to the divine will, so impels it to love and desire only that which God Himself loves and desires, that little by little, the weak human will becomes fully conformed and united to the divine will of God; the two wills are made into one, "namely, into the will of God, which...is likewise the will of the soul" (J.C. *AS I*, 11,3). In all its deliberate actions, the soul is no longer guided by its personal will, so frail and inconstant; it is directed and moved solely by the will of God, wherein its own has been lost, lost through love. "He that shall lose his life for My sake shall find it," Jesus declared (*Mt* 16,25). Captivated by love for God, the soul has, for His sake, entirely renounced its own will; it has voluntarily lost in Him all desire, all inclination; and now, the loss has become the greatest of all gains, because the soul finds its will, now entirely transformed in the divine will of God. Could one hope for a more advantageous exchange? St. John of the Cross writes: "The state of this divine union consists in the soul's *total* transformation, according to the will, in the will of God" (*AS I*, 11,2). This transformation is total, and not merely in part, nor is it merely in things of greater importance, but even in very

small, minute things, so that the divine will truly becomes the unique motive force of the soul : whatever it does, says and thinks is "in all and through all...the will of God alone" (*ibid.*). A sublime state, which lifts a creature to the heights of the Creator, which takes it from the level of human life to that of the divine! To achieve this it was worthwhile for the soul to have undergone the bitter purification by which it was "stripped and denuded of its former skin" (J.C. *DN II*, 13,11), that is, of its own imperfect will; it was worthwhile to have renounced itself and everything created!

2. Speaking of perfect union with the will of God, St. Teresa of Jesus writes : "This is the union which I have desired all my life; it is for this that I continually beg Our Lord; it is this which is the most genuine and the safest" (*Int C V*, 3). The Saint, who had experienced the efficacy and sweetness of the mystical graces of union, wherein the soul "cannot possibly doubt that God has been in it and it has been in God" (*ibid.*, 1), does not hesitate to prefer to such delights perfect union with the will of God. Actually, the essence of sanctity consists solely in this union, whereas mystical graces are only a means toward its attainment, a very precious means, because a more rapid one, but always a means and not an end. The end consists solely in perfect conformity of one's own will with the will of God. Besides, it does not depend upon us to choose the "shortcut" of mystical graces, rather than to follow the ordinary way of generous and persevering effort. The choice depends upon God alone, who is Master of His gifts and "gives when He wills, and as He wills, and to whom He wills...and this is doing no injury to anyone" (*ibid. IV*, 1).

What is of the greatest importance is to know that union with God is not reserved for a small number of privileged souls; God calls every soul of good will to union with Himself, regardless of the way by which He chooses to lead it. Hence, the ordinary way, "the little way," as St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus called it, or the "carriage road," according to St. Maria Bertilla, leads just as surely to divine union. Instead of preoccupying ourselves about *the way*, let us rather concern ourselves with striving to be completely generous, for only souls who give themselves wholly to God reach union with Him. "But observe, my daughters," writes St. Teresa of Avila, "that if you are to gain this

[union with God], He would have you keep back nothing; whether it be little or much, He will have it all for Himself, and according to what you yourself have given to Him, the favors He will grant you will be small or great" (*ibid. V, 1*). The more generous our gift, the more God will anticipate us with His grace and sustain us by His omnipotent action. The ordinary way, though more hidden and less consoling than the way of mystical favors, is no less genuine or efficacious. Whether God chooses to lead us by one way or by the other, we shall never lack the necessary divine help to attain to union with Him.

COLLOQUY

"Lord, what power this gift has! If it be made with due resolution, it cannot fail to draw You, the Almighty, to become one with our lowliness and to transform us into Yourself and to effect a union between the Creator and the creature.

"The more resolute we are in soul and the more we show You by our actions that the words we use to You are not words of mere politeness, the more and more do You draw us to Yourself and raise us above all petty earthly things, and above ourselves, in order to prepare us to receive great favors from You, for Your rewards for our service will not end with this life. So much do You value this service of ours that we do not know for what more we can ask, while You never weary of giving.

"Not content with having made this soul one with Yourself, through uniting it to Yourself, You begin to cherish it, to reveal secrets to it, to rejoice in its understanding of what it has gained and in the knowledge which it has of all You have yet to give it. You begin to make such a friend of the soul that not only do You restore its will to it, but You give it Your own also. For now that You are making a friend of it, You are glad to allow it to rule with You. So You do what the soul asks of You, just as the soul does what You command, only in a much better way, since You are all-powerful and can do whatever You desire, and Your desire never comes to an end.

"O my God, how precious is the union which the soul attains with You, after having established itself in submission

to Your will. Oh, how much to be desired is this union, in which we resign our wills to the will of God! Happy the soul that has attained to it, for it will live peacefully both in this life, and in the next, for, apart from the peril of losing You, O Lord, or of seeing You offended, there is nothing that could afflict it, neither sickness nor poverty nor even death, for this soul sees clearly that You know what You are doing better than it knows itself what it desires!" (*T.J. Way*, 32 - *Int C V*, 3).

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DIVINE ASSISTANCE

PRESENCE OF GOD - O Lord, You anticipate, accompany, and sustain me with Your grace. Grant that it may not remain sterile.

I. "If a soul is seeking God, its Beloved is seeking it much more; and, if it sends after Him its loving desires... He likewise sends after it the fragrance of His ointments, wherewith He attracts the soul and causes it to run after Him" (*J.C. LF*, 3,28). The soul is never alone in its efforts to attain union : God goes to meet it, giving it His helping hand and drawing it to Himself by means of the holy inspirations which enlighten its mind, and the interior touches which inflame its will. These inspirations and divine touches are none other than the actuation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, by which God directs the soul and works within it, first to purify and dispose it for union, and then to unite it effectively to Himself by love. It is most consoling to consider that this wealth of divine help enters into the normal course of the development of the life of grace, and hence is encountered even in the ordinary way of holiness. This is the heritage which God has prepared for every soul, provided it is generous in giving itself to Him.

With St. John of the Cross we must conclude that if souls which actually reach perfect union are so few, "it is not because God is pleased that there should be few raised to this high spiritual state," or that He is sparing of His help;

"it is rather that He finds few vessels which can bear so high and lofty a work" (*LF* 2,27).

If after many years of the spiritual life we find ourselves still far from union with God, we cannot attribute this to the insufficiency of divine help; rather, we should blame our own lack of generosity and fidelity to grace. St. Teresa emphatically declares : "True union can quite well be achieved with the favor of Our Lord, if we endeavor to attain to it by not following our own will but by submitting our will to whatever is the will of God." And, while recognizing that one does not attain this except by painful labor, she assures us, "You must not doubt the possibility of this true union with the will of God" (*Int C V*, 3).

2. "We do not require extraordinary favors from the Lord before we can achieve this [union]. He has given us all we need in giving us His Son to show us the way" (*ibid.*). Jesus suffices for us! He has not only shown us the way to divine union, but has likewise procured for us the means of obtaining it.

Jesus washes and purifies our souls in His Blood; He nourishes them with His Flesh, instructs them by His doctrine; every day, and many times a day, He renews His sacrifice upon the altar on our behalf; Jesus, glorious at the right hand of the Father, is always interceding for us, obtaining grace and dispensing it to us according to our need. Jesus sends us the Holy Spirit, *His* Spirit, that He may guide us on the road to sanctity. Jesus gives us His Mother, the most Holy Virgin Mary, that she may be our Mother, our refuge, our support in time of trial. What more could we desire? Should we consider these graces less precious because they form part of the "ordinary" graces accorded to all souls? Oh! if we were truly convinced of the great efficacy of these means of sanctification, we would not seek others; instead of waiting for some extraordinary favors in order to give ourselves wholly to God, we would work at corresponding with great fidelity to the grace which He offers each day with wonderful largesse, and thus we would surely achieve our end.

"Let us beg the Lord," St. Teresa exhorts us, "that, since to some extent it is possible for us to enjoy heaven upon earth, He will grant us His help so that it will not be our own fault if we miss anything" (*ibid. V*, 1). The heaven

which we can enjoy here below is precisely the state of union with God in which the soul, perfectly conformed to the divine will, enjoys great peace, even amid the inevitable sorrows of life, because it abandons itself always into the hands of divine Providence. We can all reach this happy state, provided we are determined to follow the way which Jesus Himself has marked out for us : " If anyone love Me he will keep My word.... You are My friends if you do the things that I command you " (*Jn* 14,23 – 15,14). It is the way that Jesus Himself travelled, desiring no other food than the Father's will and doing always the things that pleased Him. Let us follow Jesus, entrusting ourselves to His guidance, and He, who is the way, the truth and the life, will lead us to the union we so desire.

COLLOQUY

" O Jesus, in those words by which You told us that Your food was to do the Father's will, You have shown us that Your will was His, and His will was Yours, and, having but one will with Him, You have declared to us that You are equal to the Father, and one with Him. Further, You have taught us how we, too, can become by grace, in a certain manner, equal to God and one with Him. We can do this by accomplishing His will, which should be the rule and pole toward which our will, like a magnetized needle, ceaselessly tends; and when we deviate, be it ever so slightly, from the divine will, we will lose this equality and union.

" O Lord, deign to unite me entirely to Yourself as a bride. Take from me my will and all my desires, so that I may neither will nor desire anything except what You will. Make my will so conformed and united to Yours that I may no longer will anything of myself, being preoccupied neither with living nor dying, but only willing what You will.

" My God, when I shall have offered You my will in all and for all, You will return it to me, for, when it is no longer mine, but I shall have given it entirely to You, then You will be content that I follow it in all things, since it will not be mine but Yours" (cf. St. Mary Magdalen dei Pazzi).

" Receive, O Lord, all my liberty; take my memory, my understanding and my will. All that I am and have,

You have given to me. I give it all back to You to dispose of according to Your will. Give me Your love and Your grace. With these I am rich enough and have nothing more to desire" (St. Ignatius Loyola).

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THE END OF THE WORLD

LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PRESENCE OF GOD - My God, in the evening of life You will judge me according to my love. Help me to grow in love each day.

MEDITATION

1. The Mass for today, the last Sunday of the liturgical year, is a prayer of thanksgiving for the year that is ending, and one of propitiation for that which is about to begin; it is a reminder that the present life is fleeting, and an invitation to keep ourselves in readiness for the final step which will usher us into eternity.

In the Epistle (*Col 1,9-14*), St. Paul prays and gives thanks in the name of all Christians: "We...cease not to pray for you and to beg that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will...that you may walk worthy of God, in all things pleasing; being fruitful in every good work." This is a beautiful synthesis of the task which the interior soul has endeavored to accomplish during the whole year: to adapt and conform itself to God's holy will, to unite itself to it completely, and, being moved in all things by that divine will alone, to act in such a manner as to please Our Lord in everything. God be praised if, thanks to His help, we have succeeded in advancing some steps along that road which most surely leads to holiness. Making our own the sentiments of the Apostle, we should give thanks to "the Father who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the saints in light." The lot, the inheritance of the saints, of those who tend toward holiness, is union of love with

God—here below in faith, hereafter in glory. This heritage is ours because Jesus has merited it for us by His Blood, and because in Jesus “we have redemption, the remission of sins”; thus, cleansed from sin and clothed in grace by His infinite merits, we also can ascend to that very lofty and blessed state of union with God.

If, with God’s help, we have succeeded in making some progress, there still remains more and greater work to be done. The Church, therefore, has us ask in the Collect : “ Stir up, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the wills of Thy faithful people, that by more earnestly seeking the fruit of good works, they may receive more abundantly the gifts of Thy loving kindness.” So it is : the more we correspond to grace, the greater the graces Our Lord will grant us; the more we press on toward Him, the more He will draw us to Himself, so that the result of this continuous interplay of the divine assistance and our correspondence will be the sanctification of each one of us.

2. With the description of the end of the world and the coming of Christ to judge the living and the dead, the Gospel (*Mt 24,15-35*) reminds us that just as the liturgical year passes and comes to an end, so does the life of man on earth. Everything will have an end, and, at the end of all, will come the majestic epilogue : “ Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven [the Cross] : and then shall all tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty.” Jesus who once came upon earth in poverty, hiddenness and pain, to teach us the way to heaven and to redeem our souls, has every right to return glorious at the end of time, to gather the fruit of His labor and His Blood. He will be our judge, and will judge us, as He Himself has said, according to our love : “ Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you.... For I was hungry and you gave Me to eat... thirsty and you gave Me to drink.... As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me” (*Mt 25,34-35.40*). His sweet precept of love, love of God and of neighbor, will be the law by which we shall be examined. Blessed shall we be if we have loved, and loved much! “ Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much” (*Lk 7,47*), Jesus said, referring to the sinful woman. The greater and deeper our

love, the more effectively will it efface all the sins, miseries, and faults into which, despite our good will, we fall daily.

"For this reason it is a great thing," says St. John of the Cross, "for the soul to exercise itself constantly in love, so that, being perfected here below, it may not stay long, either in this world or in the next, without seeing God face to face" (*LF*, 1,34). The Saint is alluding to a soul inflamed with divine love and longing anxiously for heaven in order to see its God face to face and be able to love Him more. Only an intense exercise of love, however, can of itself lead to union with God, both here on earth and in a blessed eternity. Happy the soul who, at the end of life, after having exercised itself much in love, can be immediately admitted to the beatifying union of heaven. Then it will have nothing to fear from the judgment of Jesus, for this judgment will be its eternal joy and happiness.

COLLOQUY

"Deign, O Lord, to grant me the experience of true love before You take me from this life, for it will be a great thing at the hour of my death to realize that I shall be judged by One whom I have loved above all things. I shall be able to meet You with security, certain that I shall not be going into a foreign land, but into my own country, for it belongs to the One whom I have loved so truly and who has loved me in return.

"How sweet will be the death of that soul who has done penance for all its sins and does not have to go to purgatory! It may be that it will begin to enjoy glory even in this world, and will know no fear, but only peace!" (*T.J. Way*, 40).

"To You, O Lord our God, we must always cling, that with Your continual help we may live in all holiness, godliness and uprightness. The weight of our weakness drags us down : but by Your grace, may we be enkindled and raised on high, may we be inflamed so as to climb from the depths, arranging in our hearts to ascend by steps. Let us, then, sing the song of 'ascents,' burning with Your holy fire and journeying on toward You.

"Where are we going? On high, to the peace of the heavenly Jerusalem, as it is written : 'I rejoiced at the

things that were said to me : we shall go into the house of the Lord.' There, good will shall be so ordered in us that we shall have no other desire than to remain there eternally. So long as we live in this mortal body we are journeying toward You, O Lord; here below we have no lasting dwelling place, but seek one which is to come, since our home is in heaven. Therefore, with the help of Your grace, I enter into the secrecy of my heart, and lift up songs of love to You, to You, my King and my God!" (St. Augustine).

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THE "YES" OF PERFECT CONSENT

PRESENCE OF GOD - Lord, grant that I may give You the free and full consent of my will.

MEDITATION

i. St. John of the Cross very aptly says that the characteristic of union of wills is the *yes* of the soul's "free consent" (*LF* 3,24) by which it gives itself entirely to God, surrendering itself completely to Him by the full and total gift of its will. In other words, the soul is henceforth so determined not to will anything but God and His good pleasure, that in every circumstance it only repeats its *yes*, by accepting with love all that He wills and does for it. This *yes* is effective, and not simply a desire; it is a *yes* by which the soul truly gives itself with all the generosity of which it is capable.

From the beginning of the spiritual life, the fervent soul should desire to give itself to God without reserve, always saying *yes* to Him. But in practice, being still hampered by the bonds of passions and attachment to creatures, it often happens that the soul's gift is not a complete one. Frequently, in the concrete instances of life, when faced with the bitterness of renunciation and interior conflict, its ideal *yes* is changed into a virtual *no*. In the state of

union, however, this is no longer true. Here the soul is so surrendered to the holy will of God that it does not take back anything of its gift; its *yes* is so definitive and efficacious that it offers and unites the soul to God as a bride to her Bridegroom; that is why the mystics call this state "spiritual espousals."

It is important to realize, that, on the part of the soul, the intensity of its union with God depends on the perfection of its *yes*; it should be a consent that is perfect in breadth and in depth : in breadth, because it should extend not only to what God commands, but even to all that He desires, to all that would give Him greater pleasure. Love must keep the soul so vigilant and attentive that it can discern in various circumstances what pleases God most, and this same love should make the soul generous enough to accomplish all without the least hesitation. The *yes* must be equally perfect in depth, because the soul should adhere to the divine good pleasure, not with negligence, niggardliness, nor even with the slightest bad grace, but with all the ardor of its will, happy to be able to give itself to God, whatever sacrifice this might entail.

2. The soul must apply itself to saying its *yes* perfectly, especially in the sense that Jesus has indicated to us in His great commandment of charity, which is the foundation, not only of the whole law, but of all sanctity. St. Teresa of Avila says expressly : "Here the Lord asks only two things of us : love for His Majesty and love for our neighbor. It is for these two virtues that we must strive, and if we attain them perfectly, we are doing His will, and so shall be united with Him" (*Int C V*, 3). But the attention of the Saint is immediately turned to charity toward our neighbor, because she sees in it the surest sign of the love of God, and also because she knows that this is a very vulnerable point. It is not uncommon that, after having said *yes* to Our Lord in the face of sacrifice, renunciation, or works of greater importance, some *no* is permitted to escape in connection with fraternal charity. Speaking of certain faults which insinuate themselves very secretly into the soul, and hinder it from attaining union, St. Teresa singles out, besides self-love and self-esteem, "criticism of our neighbors (even if only in small things), lack of charity toward them, and failure to love them as we love ourselves" (*ibid.*). As long as we find in ourselves

failings of this kind, however slight, it is a sign that our gift to God is not complete, that our *yes* is not perfect. God wants us to love our neighbor, whoever he may be, and to love him perfectly : "This is My commandment," Jesus said, "that you love one another, as I have loved you" (*Jn* 15,12). How can we be united to the will of God, if we do not fulfill this commandment with great diligence?

"I tell you," warns St. Teresa, "that doing what I have said [that is, practicing fraternal charity with perfection], you will not fail to obtain this union, but, if you find that you are lacking in this virtue [of fraternal charity], you should be persuaded that you will never reach it, although you may have devotion and consolation so that you think that you have attained it." And she concludes with this beautiful assertion : "So dearly does His Majesty love us that He will reward our love for our neighbor by increasing the love we bear to Himself, and that in a thousand ways : this I cannot doubt" (*Int C V*, 3).

COLLOQUY

"O infinite God, I wish to offer and consecrate myself unceasingly to You on the altar of my heart. First of all, I offer You my soul, Your spouse, ransomed with Your precious Blood. I offer it as a place of repose for Your Majesty, that it may be transformed in You, no longer living of itself, but only with Your life.

"O divine Wisdom, I offer You my intellect avid for knowledge, that You may quench its thirst by enabling it to comprehend Your grandeurs! Enlighten my darkness, and let me taste You in that very sweet knowledge which inflames my heart with love.

"Next, O most beautiful Spouse of my soul, I offer You my will which seeks You above all else, to love You with an eternal ardor, and be united to You forever. Deign, O Lord, that my will may detach itself from all creatures and, soaring aloft, elevate itself to You; then, in the slumber of pure love, let it repose in the cavern of Your Heart. O delightful cavern, when shall I hide within You, and hear the pulsations of that Heart which gives me life and salvation?

"But why, O my God, do I offer You my soul with its faculties, when I am already all Yours by creation and, even more, by Redemption? Is there some advantage for You, O most lovable Life, in this gift and offering which I would make to Your majesty and greatness? No, certainly it is not for Your interest, but for mine, O immortal Life, that I offer and give myself to You, since I know with certainty that my happiness consists in uniting myself to You" (Ven. John of Jesus Mary).

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THE RECIPROCAL GIFT

PRESENCE OF GOD - May I be all Yours, Lord, and You all mine.

MEDITATION

I. "God does not give Himself wholly to us until He sees that we are giving ourselves wholly to Him" (*T.J. Way*, 28). God respects man's liberty so much that, although desiring to have him share in His divine Life, He actually communicates Himself only in the measure of our consent; when this consent is total, He does not hesitate to give Himself wholly. God responds to the perfect *yes* of the soul with the "true and entire *yes* of His grace" (cf. *J.C. LF*, 3,24). To the perfect gift of the will on the part of the soul corresponds the full communication of grace on the part of God; grace is granted in all its perfection, accompanied by the wealth of the infused virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Grace and love necessarily go together, and as perfect adherence to the will of God is the sign of perfect love, it follows that God gives the superabundance of grace to the soul which is completely conformed to His divine will.

St. John of the Cross explains this lofty state yet more fully : "When the will of God and the will of the soul are as one in a free consent of their own, then the soul has attained to the possession of God through grace of will, insofar as can be, by means of will and grace; and this signifies that God

has corresponded to the *yes* of the soul with the true and entire *yes* of His grace" (*ibid.*). The soul has given itself entirely to God, and now it receives its reward : God gives Himself to it. The soul, says the Saint, possesses God "through grace of will," that is, by reason of the perfect communication of grace, which is God's response to the total gift of the will. By this perfect communication, God gives Himself to the soul, allowing it to participate more and more in His supernatural Being and divine Life, and dwelling in it in a manner ever more intimate and profound.

This is the triumph of grace in the soul. That grace, which was communicated to it in germ at Baptism, and which has increased little by little in the course of the various stages of the spiritual life, reaches maturity when the soul has surrendered itself completely into the hands of God, giving Him its whole will. Not in vain has the soul died to itself; it has died in order to live in God and for God, to live by His life, by His love, by His will. "You are dead," says St. Paul, "and your life is hid with Christ in God" (*Col 3,3.*).

2. With the authority of a Doctor of the Church, St. John of the Cross declares : "When in this way the soul voids itself of all things and achieves emptiness and surrender of them (which, as we have said, is the part that the soul can play), it is impossible, if the soul does as much as in it lies, that God should fail to perform His part by communicating Himself to the soul, at least secretly and in silence. It is more impossible than that the sun should fail to shine in a serene and unclouded sky; for as the sun, when it rises in the morning, will enter your house if you open the shutter, even so will God...enter the soul that is empty and fill it with divine blessings" (*LF 3,46*).

How long has Our Lord, the divine Sun, let the luminous ray of His grace shine upon your soul; how long has He knocked at your door : "Behold, I stand at the gate and knock" (*Ap 3,20*). Each confession, each Holy Communion, each Mass, each occasion for the exercise of virtue, each inspiration, each command or request of obedience : are not these God, knocking repeatedly at the door of your heart? And what are you doing? Why do you still keep Him waiting? Wake from your torpor, open your soul! "Lift up your gates...and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates, and the King of glory shall enter in!" (*Ps 23,7*). Do not be satisfied

with opening the door half-way, or even three-quarters; open it completely. It is necessary to lift up the gates, to remove every obstacle : your God must enter in.

If you find it costly to deny your will in everything, consider how great a good it is to be guided in all things by the will of God. If you find it a burden to renounce self-love and earthly affections, think how joyous it is to possess the love of God. If you are reluctant to die to self, ponder how glorious it is to live to God. St. Teresa of Jesus cried out in a burst of enthusiasm : "What nothingness is all that we have given up, and all that we are doing, or can ever do, for a God who is pleased to communicate Himself in this way to a worm! If we have the hope of enjoying this blessing while we are still in this life, what are we doing about it, and why are we waiting? What sufficient reason is there for delaying even a short time instead of seeking this Lord, as the Bride did, through streets and squares?" (*Int C VI*, 4).

Our Lord wills to communicate Himself to your soul, to give Himself entirely; He wills to come and live with you : "If any man shall hear My voice and open to Me the door, I will come into him and will sup with him and he with Me" (*Ap* 3,20). Oh! may you not lose this immense gift through your own fault, your own negligence!

COLLOQUY

"O Lord of heaven and earth! Is it possible, while we are still in this mortal life, for us to enjoy You with such special friendship?... Oh! the joys which You bestow on souls who give themselves entirely to You! What endearments, what sweet words are these, one word of which would suffice to unite us to You. May You be blessed, O Lord, for so far as You are concerned we shall lose nothing. By how many paths, in how many manners, through how many means do You reveal Your love to us! By trials, by bitter death, by tortures, by affronts suffered daily, by Your forgiveness. And not by these alone, but by words that pierce the soul that loves You.

"So, my Lord, I ask You for nothing else in this life but that You should 'kiss me with the kiss of Your mouth'; and let this be in such a way, Lord of my life, that, even if I should desire to withdraw from this friendship and union,

my will may be so completely subject to Yours that I shall be unable to leave You. May nothing ever hinder me, O my God and my glory, from being able to say : ‘ Better and more delectable than any other good is Your friendship and Your love. ’

“ For the love of the Lord, my soul, wake out of this sleep and remember that God does not keep you waiting until the next life before rewarding you for your love of Him. Your recompense begins in this life.

“ O my Lord, my Mercy and my Good! What more do I want in this life than to be so near You that there is no division between You and me? And since Your love allows it, I will repeat without ceasing : ‘ My Beloved to me and I to my Beloved ’ ” (cf. T.J. *Con*, 3 - 4).

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PERFECT UNION

PRESENCE OF GOD - I implore You, my God, to let nothing trouble my union with You.

MEDITATION

1. The *yes* of perfect consent has surrendered the whole human will to God, placing it completely under the vivifying influence of the divine will. Yet there are still found in the sensitive part of the soul disturbances which tend to withdraw it from the governance of God’s will : this sensitive part is subjected to the spirit only with difficulty, in consequence of the disorder produced by original sin. Even while the soul is by its will entirely conformed and united to the divine will, the sensitive part is always pulling in its own direction, carrying the affections along with it, sometimes stirring up repugnances and difficulties which can render continual adherence to God’s will painful and trouble the peace of the soul. Sensitiveness can still subject the soul to impressions and emotions which are a little too lively and expose it,

when it does not succeed in wholly dominating them, to commit faults through inadvertence or frailty. Nor is the devil excluded from making use of the movements of the sensitive part to assail the soul, to hinder its progress, or, quite simply, to make it turn back, which, unfortunately, is always possible as long as we are in this life. The soul suffers from these trials, and ardently sighs to be freed from them, for it sees how they can disturb its union with God, and it desires this union to be more intense and perfect than ever. Only God can re-establish in man the harmony destroyed by original sin, and He does not refuse this sublime grace to a soul which is truly faithful to Him. He grants it by means of a more intimate and complete union with Himself, wholly dominating the soul by His powerful influence, as if taking it into His possession. This is *total union*, called by the mystics "spiritual marriage," the highest degree of union with God possible in this life.

Oh! with what fervor the loving soul longs for this sublime state in which it can give itself entirely to God, and can be wholly possessed and directed by Him, without being troubled by the turbulence of sensibility.

2. "Spiritual marriage," writes St. John of the Cross, "is a total transformation in the Beloved, wherein on either side there is made surrender by total possession of the one to the other with a certain consummation of union of love" (*SC*, 22,3). It is a *total* transformation in God; that is, the transformation which at first—in the spiritual espousals—was realized only in the will, is now extended to the other faculties as a result of that mutual, perfect giving of God to the soul and of the soul to God. God gives Himself to the soul as if He were its possession; He establishes Himself in it as the active principle, not only of its will, but of its whole being, directing its entire life, and inspiring it in all that it does. This is the result of an ever more intense influence of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that pervades all the faculties of the soul, entering even into its sensitive part, which remains henceforth completely subject to the spirit. The soul possesses its God as One who vivifies, moves and governs it; it possesses Him as its principle of life, as its support, its strength, its all; it exclaims spontaneously with St. Paul: "I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me" (*Gal* 2,20). It feels that its life is much more the

life of God than its own life; in fact, since God has given Himself wholly to the soul, it is precisely in virtue of the singular plenitude of the divine gift that the soul has given itself wholly to Him. It is no longer only the perfect gift of the will; it is the gift of the entire being, magnificently harmonized by the full actuation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This gift, this total surrender of the soul to the Beloved, effects, as it were, the transfer of the life of the soul into God, so that it lives more in Him than in itself, "more in Him whom it loves than in the body which it animates" (cf. J.C. *SC*, 8,3). Like the mystical spouse of the Canticle, the soul which has arrived at this state can repeat in all truth : "My Beloved to me, and I to Him" (2,16).

The union of the soul with God is henceforth so perfect, so full, that only the beatific union of heaven can surpass it. Total union is heaven anticipated, heaven offered to generous souls who spare neither pain nor sacrifice in order to give themselves wholly to God.

COLLOQUY

"Great is this favor, my Spouse, and this delectable feast, this precious wine that You give me, one drop of which makes me forget all created things, and withdraw from creatures and from myself, and no longer desire the satisfactions and joys which until now my senses have longed for. Great is all this and unmerited by me.

"Let worldlings come with all their possessions, their riches, their delights, their honors, and their feasts : even if all these could be enjoyed without the trials that they bring in their train, which is impossible, they could not in a thousand years cause the happiness enjoyed in a single moment by a soul whom You have elevated to this state.

"No, I do not see how it is possible to compare the base things of the world with these delights so sweet that no one could merit them, with this union so complete with You, my God, with this love so ineffably shown and so blissfully experienced" (T.J. *Con*, 4).

"O Lord my God, who is there that seeks Thee in pure and true love who does not find Thee to be the joy of his will? It is Thou who art the first to show Thyself, going forth to meet those who desire Thee.

"O my God, how sweet to me Thy presence, who art the sovereign Good. I will draw near to Thee in silence...I will rejoice in nothing till I am in Thine arms. O Lord, I beseech Thee, leave me not for a moment because I know not the value of my soul" (*J.C. SM I*).

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THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE

PRESENCE OF GOD - Grant that there may be only love in me, my God; that all may proceed from love, and all revert to love.

MEDITATION

i. The life of the soul which has reached total union may be defined as one simple, continual, most intense exercise of love, by means of which it gives itself to God unceasingly. All its faculties, not only purified, but perfectly harmonized, are wholly employed in the divine service : " Its understanding [the soul] employs in the understanding of those things that pertain most nearly to His service in order to do them; its will, in loving all that pleases God and in having affection of the will for God in all things; and its memory and care in that which pertains to His service and will be most pleasing to Him" (*J.C. SC, 28,3*). Furthermore, even the sensual part, the body with all its senses, takes part in this magnificent concert of love, so that the soul can truly say that all its " possessions," that is, all its spiritual and sensitive powers, are completely employed in the service of holy love. " For the body now works according to God; the inward and outward senses are directed toward Him in all their operations and all the four passions of the soul [that is, joy, hope, fear, and sorrow], it likewise keeps bound to God, because it neither has enjoyment save from God, nor has hope save in God, nor fears any save only God, neither does it grieve save according to God; and likewise all its desires and cares are wholly directed to God alone" (*ibid., 4*).

The loving flame of divine Wisdom has taken possession of this soul to such an extent, has so purified it and made it love God alone, that its whole being and all its faculties vibrate solely for Him, being engaged in nothing except in His service and in giving Him pleasure. It has no craving but for Him, no other desire than to give itself and unite itself to Him in perfect love; hence even the very first movements of this soul are movements of love : "The understanding, the will, and the memory go straightway to God; and the affections, the senses, the desires and appetites, hope, joy, and all the rest of the soul's possessions are inclined to God from the first moment" (*ibid.*, 5). Love has become the atmosphere in which the soul moves; it has become its breath, its life. The difficult sacrifices, the bitter struggles and renunciations of the past, when its exercise of love consisted "in stripping itself for God's sake of all that was not God" (J.C. *AS II*, 5,7), seem to it as nothing now, compared with the great good it has obtained; thus it repeats enraptured : "Everything is little when it is a question of acquiring pure and true love of God" (T.M. *Sp*).

2. The love of a soul completely surrendered to God is truly pure love, because it has been purged of the least affection for creatures and of all return on self; it is pure love because it goes straight and swiftly to God through all the circumstances of life, without stopping at anything created. The soul makes use of every happening, all its duties, all its actions to love God, which simply means that it gives itself to Him by serving Him in the way most pleasing to Him. It no longer needs to apply itself, as formerly, to the practice of this or that virtue, since it has acquired all of them in a perfect manner, and "whether its commerce be with temporal things or whether its exercise be concerning spiritual things, a soul in this case can ever say that its exercise is now in loving alone" (J.C. *SC*, 28,9). The soul no longer has need of the spur and stimulus of an exterior law to guide it, because its law is now the great love it bears within itself, which impels it in all things to seek and to will the divine good pleasure. "Love and do what you will," said St. Augustine; "For the just man there is no law," wrote St. John of the Cross at the summit of the Mount of Perfection. Far from implying that love dispenses from the observance of the law, from duties and obedience,

these words signify rather, that love, when it is truly perfect, replaces and completes all law, having in itself the power to draw the soul to the highest perfection.

Of this perfect and most pure love, which concentrates upon God all the powers of the soul without anything being able to draw them away; of this love which wounds the heart of God directly, passing beyond all that is of earth, St. John of the Cross writes : "A very little of this pure love is more precious, in the sight of God and the soul, and of greater profit to the Church...than are all these [other] works together" (*SC*, 29,2). There cannot be, in fact, an activity more intense and more sublime than that which concentrates and employs in God all the energies and capacities of the creature. It is the eternal activity of the angels and saints in heaven; it is the activity which, even here below, souls who have attained to perfect union with God can enter upon in emulation of the Blessed. "Happy life and happy estate and happy the soul that arrives thereat, where all is now substance of love to it, and joy and delight of betrothal" (*ibid*, 28,10).

COLLOQUY

"Even as a maiden that is betrothed sets not her love upon another than her spouse, nor directs her thoughts or her actions to any other, grant, O Lord, that my soul may no longer have any affections of the will or acts of knowledge of the understanding, nor any thought or action which is not wholly turned to Thee. Grant that I may know naught save how to love Thee, O my divine Spouse, and seeing that Thou prizest nothing and art pleased with nothing besides love, help me to employ everything purely for love of Thee and to serve Thee perfectly.

"Permit not that I should seek my own gain nor pursue my own tastes nor busy myself in other things and in intercourse that has naught to do with Thee. May I have no other style or manner of intercourse save the exercise of love. May all in me be moved by and in love. In laboring, I wish to do all with love; in suffering I wish to endure all for love.

"Grant that I may repeat to Thee with the Spouse of the Canticle : 'All the fruits, the new and the old, my Beloved,

I have kept for Thee, ' which is as if she said : My Beloved, I desire for Thy sake to have all that is hard and wearisome, and all that is sweet and delectable I desire for Thee " (J.C. *SC*, 27,7.8 – 28,2-10).

" O Jesus, I do not ask for riches or glory, not even for the glory of heaven.... I ask only for love. One thought is mine, henceforth, dear Jesus, it is to love Thee!... I love Thee, I love my Mother the Church, and I bear in mind that ' the least act of pure love is of more value to her than all other works together.' But does this pure love really exist in my heart?..."

" O Jesus, grant that love may surround and penetrate me; that at each moment Thy merciful love may renew and purify me, cleansing my soul from all trace of sin " (T.C.J. *St*, 13 – 8).

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TRANSFORMING LOVE

PRESENCE OF GOD - My God, may Your love inundate and penetrate my soul until I am completely transformed in You.

MEDITATION

1. As the flame of a candle, united to the flame of an immense fire, becomes one with it, burning and shining with a single brightness, so that it is impossible to distinguish it from the great fire in which it is immersed, similarly the soul united to God by love loses itself in Him, remaining so enveloped and transformed in Him as to appear to be God Himself, and to be made " divine and become God by participation, insofar as may be in this life " (J.C. *SC*, 22,3). God is always God, essentially distinct from the soul. Love, however, has so united and, as it were, merged the creature with the Creator, that " there are two natures in one spirit and love " (*ibid.*). By the perfection of charity and of grace the Holy Spirit dwells with singular plenitude in such a soul, and in this divine Spirit—the Spirit and bond of Love—the

soul lives completely united to the Blessed Trinity. Here is realized in the most perfect manner the burning desire and ardent prayer of Jesus : " As Thou, Father, in Me and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us " (*Jn 17,21*).

United to God in this way, the soul remains transformed in Him by love, or rather, it is love which, uniting it completely to God, makes the soul so similar as to transform it wholly in Him. This transformation extends to all its powers : " The human understanding... becomes divine, through union with the divine," and wholly enlightened with supernatural light; " the will is informed with divine love so that it is a will that is now no less than divine, nor does it love otherwise than divinely.... So, too, is it with the memory; and likewise the affections and desires are all changed and converted divinely, according to God " (*J.C. DN II*, 13,11). Further, the soul remains divinized not only in its being and its faculties, but also in its actions, for " it is God Himself who moves the faculties and commands them divinely, according to His divine Spirit and will; and the result of this is that the operations of the soul are divine " (*J.C. AS III*, 2,8). The plenitude of supernatural life communicated to the soul in the state of spiritual marriage realizes in it, in the highest degree, the prerogative of grace, which is precisely that of making man a " partaker of the divine nature " (*2 Pt 1,4*). We see here the marvelous continuity which exists between the development of grace in our soul and these elevated states which are its ultimate consequence and its resplendent crown. Why do we tarry amid the paltry things of earth, when God has created us for these divine grandeurs?

2. St. John of the Cross says : " The lover cannot be satisfied if he feels not that he loves as much as he is loved " (*SC**, 37,2). One who truly loves cannot endure being outdone in love, and the more he feels himself loved, the more he desires to love in return. But how can a creature, so weak and limited, equal God in love, that is, love Him as much as it is loved by Him? This holy and audacious ambition is realized precisely in the state of total transformation. As the will is completely transformed in that of God, " there is equality of love, " affirms the Saint, " for the will of the soul that is converted into the will of God... becomes the will of God. And thus the soul loves God with the will of God,

which is also its own will; and thus it will love Him even as much as it is loved by God, since it loves Him with the will of God Himself, in the same love wherewith He loves it, which is the Holy Spirit" (*ibid.*). The Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, terminus and subsistent bond of uncreated Love, who unites indissolubly the Father and the Son, has been given to us, so that, enkindling in our souls the fire of divine love, He may make us capable of loving God, not alone with our poor and very limited powers, but conjointly with Him, infinite Power and Love. The flame of charity was enkindled in our soul by the divine Paraclete on the day of our Baptism; it has grown since then, in proportion to our correspondence with grace. In the soul that has reached full transformation in God and has become one spirit with Him, this flame of charity is totally absorbed and loses itself in the infinite flame of the Holy Spirit. Then it truly loves God as it is loved by Him, because it loves Him together with the Holy Spirit. The capacity of the soul becomes in a certain sense and by participation, quasi infinite, and only in this way is its love assuaged because it can love God in return with parity of love. The Mystical Doctor again explains: "And thus the soul loves God in the Holy Spirit together with the Holy Spirit...by reason of the transformation...and He supplies that which it lacks by its having been transformed in love with Him" (*ibid.*).

What joy and consolation for the soul, who suffers because of the extreme poverty of its love, compared with the infinite love of God and His infinite loveliness, to know that the Holy Spirit can and will supply for its insufficiency, provided that it let itself be completely seized and absorbed in the immense flame of His love.

COLLOQUY

"O my soul, created for these grandeurs and called thereto! What are you doing? Wherein do you occupy yourself? Your desires are base and your possessions misery. O wretched blindness of your eyes, which obscures so great a light! And why are you deaf to so clear a voice, seeing not that for as long as you seek grandeurs and glories you remain miserable and mean, and have become ignorant and unworthy of so many blessings?" (cf. J.C. SC, 39,7).

"O Holy Spirit, You serve as intermediary between the soul and God, moving it with such ardent desires that it becomes enkindled by that sovereign Fire, who is so near it.

"O Lord, what mercies are these that You bestow upon the soul! May You be blessed and praised forever, You who are so good a Lover! O my God and my Creator! Is it possible that there is any soul who does not love You? Unhappy that I am since for so long a time I myself loved You not!

"O my Lord, how good You are! May You be blessed forever! Let all things praise You, my God; You have so loved us that we can truly say that You have communication with souls even in this exile. O infinite Bounty, how magnificent are Your works!

"One whose understanding is not occupied with things of earth is amazed at being unable to understand such truths. Do You, then, grant these sovereign favors to souls who have so greatly offended You? Truly, my own understanding is overwhelmed by this, and when I begin to think about it I can go no farther. Where, indeed, would I go that would not be turning back? As for giving You thanks for these favors, there is no way of doing it..."
(T.J. Con, 5 - Life, 18).

DIVINE INTIMACY

PRESENCE OF GOD - Grant, O Lord, that I may have perfect and lasting intimacy with You, that I may ever love You more and more.

MEDITATION

1. A soul enters upon the way of divine intimacy the moment that it resolutely determines to go forth from itself and from all created things, in order to set out with fervor in quest of God, living and present within it. The road

between this first step and profound intimacy, which will bind to God the soul that has reached complete union, is long and difficult. Progressively, the soul begins to walk toward that "sweet and delectable union" (*J.C. DN II*, 16,14) in the measure that, sustained by grace, it becomes detached from itself and creatures, delivered from its imperfections, despoiled of its own will so as to be clothed with the divine will alone, and permits the fire of love to be enkindled within it. Intimacy with God becomes more intense and loving, until, attaining the heights of transforming love, it becomes continual and perfect, a divine embrace which binds the creature to the Creator. Then the great promise of Jesus: "If anyone love Me... My Father will love him: and We will come to him and will make Our abode with him" (*Jn* 14,23), is realized as perfectly as is possible here below. St. John of the Cross affirms: "It must not be held incredible that in a faithful soul which has already been tried and proved and purged in the fire of tribulations and trials, and found faithful in love, there should be fulfilled that which was promised by the Son of God: namely, that, if any man loved Him, the Blessed Trinity would come to dwell within him and would abide in him. And this comes to pass when the understanding is divinely illumined in the Wisdom of the Son, and the will is made glad in the Holy Spirit, and the Father, with His power and strength, absorbs the soul in the embrace and abyss of His sweetness" (*LF*, 1,15). In the most sublime moments of transforming union, the soul is rendered conscious of God living, present, and working in it; it is conscious of His sweet paternal embrace which sustains it, of the splendor of His Wisdom which enlightens it, of the divine enkindling of His Love which penetrates it through and through. Even when the realization of the divine presence and action is less strong, and does not make the soul so blissful, it is still conscious of being profoundly united to God, of being moved and governed by Him. St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus attests: "I know that Jesus is within me, always guiding and inspiring me" (*St.* 8). The humble Saint, although not having experienced the extraordinary mystical graces, attained no less than her glorious Mother, St. Teresa of Jesus, to the profound intimacy with God which the soul enjoys in the state of perfect union.

2. Divine intimacy, especially in its highest degrees, is in itself a very joyous and blessed state; yet the enamored

soul does not desire this intimacy in order to enjoy it, but to love God more, to be totally united to Him, entirely possessed, moved, and governed by Him, that it may serve Him better and give Him glory in all its actions. St. Teresa of Avila says expressly that the end for which Our Lord communicates Himself to souls and gives them so many graces—even the highest mystical favors—is not merely to “give them pleasure,” or to console them, but “to strengthen their weakness that they may be able to imitate Him in His great sufferings,” and she adds, with her usual enthusiasm: “This is the aim of prayer, this is the purpose of the spiritual marriage, to give birth to good works and good works alone” (*Int C VII*).

The end of the sweetness and the joy of intimacy with God is to make the soul more courageous in the divine service, more generous in the gift of self, stronger in bearing the cross. As long as we are on earth, suffering will never be wanting, and it will be found even amid the delights of divine union, for we must be conformed to Jesus Crucified; we must follow Him on the way to Calvary, that we may be completely immolated with Him for the glory of the Father and the salvation of our brethren. The works which union with God should produce are precisely works of love; it is through the intense activity of pure love that the soul gives itself unceasingly to God, eager to draw with it an immense multitude of other souls. Therefore, the most fruitful apostolate springs spontaneously from divine intimacy, from perfect union with Our Lord, from pure love. “Their conception of glory” (that of souls who have arrived at spiritual marriage), says the ardent Teresa of Jesus, “is that of being able in some way to help the Crucified, especially when they see how often people offend Him, and how few there are who really care about His honor and are detached from everything else” (*ibid.*, 3).

The loving soul, truly forgetful of itself, thinks neither of enjoying nor of suffering, but only of loving and serving God, of contributing as much as it can to His glory by associating itself to the redemptive work of Jesus. And if it aspires to an ever more perfect and intimate union with God, as well today, on earth, as tomorrow in heaven, it is in order to love with the greatest intensity, and make Love loved by the greatest possible number of souls.

COLLOQUY

“ O Lord God, my Love, if Thou art still mindful of my sins, and wilt not grant my petitions, Thy will be done, for that is my chief desire. Show Thou Thy goodness and mercy, and Thou shalt be known by them. If it be that Thou art waiting for me to do good works, that in them Thou mayest grant my petition, do Thou give them and work them in me; send also the penalties which Thou wilt accept, and do Thou inflict them. But if Thou art not waiting for my good works, what art Thou waiting for, O most merciful Lord? Why tarriest Thou? For if, at last, it must be grace and mercy, and I pray for it in Thy Son, do Thou accept my worthless offering, according to Thy will, and give me this good also according to Thy will.

“ Who can free himself from base and mean ways, if Thou, O my God, will not lift him up to Thee in pure love?

“ How shall a man raise himself up to Thee, for he is born and bred in misery, if Thou wilt not lift him up with the hand that made him?

“ Thou wilt not take away from me, O my God, what Thou hast once given me in Thy only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, in whom Thou dost give me all I desire. I will therefore rejoice; Thou wilt not tarry if I wait for Thee. Wait in hope, then, O my soul, for from henceforth thou mayest love God in thy heart.

“ Mine are the heavens and mine is the earth; mine are the people, the righteous are mine, and mine are the sinners; the angels are mine, and the Mother of God, and all things are mine; God Himself is mine and for me, because Christ is mine, and all for me. What dost thou, then, ask for, what dost thou seek, O my soul? All is thine, all is for thee, do not take less, nor rest with the crumbs which fall from the table of thy Father. Go forth and exult in thy glory, hide thyself in it, and rejoice, and thou shalt obtain all the desires of thy heart” (*J.C. SM I*, Prayer of the Enamored Soul).

IMMOVABLE FEASTS

THE PURIFICATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

FEBRUARY SECOND

PRESENCE OF GOD - O Lord, I come to You and beg You, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to purify my soul.

MEDITATION

1. Today's Feast, which marks the end of the Christmas season, is a feast both of Jesus and of Mary : of Jesus, because He is presented by His Mother in the Temple forty days after His birth, according to the requirements of the law; of Mary, because she submits herself to the rite of purification.

The liturgy celebrates, primarily, the entrance for the first time of the Infant Jesus into the Temple : "Behold the Lord, the Ruler, cometh into His holy Temple : rejoice and be glad, O Sion, and hasten to meet your God" (*RB*). Let us, too, go to meet Him, emulating the holy sentiments of the old Simeon who "came by the Spirit into the Temple" (*Gosp : Lk 2, 22-32*), and filled with joy, received the Divine Child into his arms.

In order to celebrate this event more fittingly, the Church today blesses candles and gives them to us; with burning tapers, we enter the Temple in procession. The lighted candle is a symbol of the Christian life, of the faith and grace which should shine in our soul. It is also the image of Christ, the light of the world, "a light to the revelation of the Gentiles," according to Simeon's canticle. The lighted candle reminds us that we must always bear Christ in us, the source of our life, the author of faith and grace. By His grace, Jesus Himself disposes us to go to meet Him with livelier faith and greater love. May our meeting with Him today be particularly intimate and sanctifying!

Jesus is taken to the Temple to be offered to the Father, although, being God, He was not subject to the prescriptions of the Jewish law as were the other firstborn of the Hebrews. He is the Victim who will be immolated for the salvation

of the world. His presentation in the Temple is, so to speak, the offertory of His life; the sacrifice will be consummated later, on Calvary. Let us offer ourselves with Jesus.

2. Jesus was presented in the Temple by His Mother. Let us therefore contemplate Mary in her office of Co-Redemptrix. Mary knew that Jesus was the Savior of the world, and through the veil of prophecy she sensed that His mission would be accomplished in a mystery of sorrow in which she would participate, in her role as Mother. Simeon's prophecy : "And thy own soul a sword shall pierce," confirmed her intuition. Deep in her heart, Mary at that moment must have repeated her *fiat* : "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to Thy word" (*ibid.* 1,38). At the same time that she offered her Son, she offered herself, being always closely united to His destiny.

But, before entering the Temple to present Jesus, Mary wanted to submit to the law of legal purification. Although she knew she was a virgin, she put herself on the level of all the other mothers, and standing with them, humbly awaited her turn, carrying "a pair of turtle-doves," the offering of the poor. We see Jesus and Mary submitting themselves to laws by which they are not bound : Jesus does not need to be redeemed, nor Mary to be purified. These are lessons in humility and respect for the law of God.

There may be some laws by which we are bound and from which our pride by false pretexts seeks to exempt us. Such dispensations are abuses sought in the name of rights which do not really exist. Whereas Mary had no need to be purified, let us humble ourselves and acknowledge our extreme need of interior purification.

COLLOQUY

"O Jesus, You went to the Temple to offer Yourself. Who offered You? The Virgin Mary, who has never had, and never will have, an equal. You were offered by Mary who, through the mouth of Wisdom, was called by Your Father the 'all-beautiful, all-fair.' To whom were You offered? To God, the infinite Being, sublime in His creation, fruitful in His heritage, unfathomable in His designs,

gracious and sweet in His love. What did she offer? She offered You, the eternal Word, substance of the divine essence, Son of the Most High, the Lawgiver of the universe, You, who have been called by so many great and beautiful names : O Key of David, O King of nations, O Emmanuel!

“What do You teach me, O Lord, offering Yourself thus in the Temple? You show me respect for the law by Your willingness to observe it. You teach me adoration, for You offered Yourself to the Father, not as His equal, which You really were, but as man. Here You have given me a model of the respect which I owe to Your law, not only to the Ten Commandments, but also to my Holy Rule and Constitutions. This law is all sweetness and delight for me, but I make it bitter when I do not renounce myself, for then, instead of my bearing it sweetly, the law is obliged to bear me” (St. Mary Magdalen dei Pazzi).

O Jesus, through the hands of Mary, I wish to offer myself today with You to the eternal Father. But You are a pure, holy, and immaculate Host, while I am defiled with misery, and sin. O Mary, my Mother, you were willing to be purified, although you were free from the slightest shadow of imperfection; purify, I beseech you, my poor soul, so that it may be less unworthy to be offered to the Father along with Jesus, who is your Son as well as His. O Virgin most pure, lead me along the way of a serious, and thorough purification; accompany me yourself, so that my weakness will not make me faint because of the roughness of the road.

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**ST. JOSEPH, SPOUSE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY,
PATRON OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH**

MARCH NINETEENTH

PRESENCE OF GOD - O glorious St. Joseph, under your patronage may my interior life grow and develop.

MEDITATION

i. Today the Church presents St. Joseph, the great Patriarch, to whose care God willed to entrust the most chosen portion of His flock, Mary and Jesus. Because Joseph was selected by God to be the guardian of the family of Nazareth, the nucleus of the great Christian family, the Church recognizes in him the Guardian and Patron of all Christendom. Herein lies the significance of today's Feast, which invites us to fix our attention on the mission entrusted to this great Saint in relation to Jesus and to the Church.

Aware of the great mystery of the Incarnation, Joseph's whole life gravitated about that of the Incarnate Word : for Him he endured worry, suffering, fatigue, labor. To Him he consecrated all his solicitude, his energy, his resources, his time. He reserved nothing for himself, but completely oblivious of any personal needs, desires, or views, he devoted himself entirely to the interests and the needs of Jesus. Nothing existed for Joseph except Jesus and Mary, and he felt that his life on earth had no other *raison d'être* than his care of them. In this way he participated fully, as a humble, hidden collaborator, in the work of the Redemption; if he did not accompany Jesus in His apostolic life and to His death on the Cross—as Mary did—nevertheless, he worked for the same end as the Savior.

Having been the faithful guardian of the Holy Family, it is impossible that from the heights of heaven St. Joseph should not continue to protect the great Christian family, the universal Church, which, confident of his protection, and relying on his assistance, prays thus : "Sustained, O Lord, by the protection of the spouse of Your holy Mother,

we beseech Your clemency...that by his merits and intercession You will guide us to eternal glory" (*RM*).

2. St. Joseph's vocation to become the guardian of the Holy Family was also an invitation to divine intimacy. We must not forget that he stood at the dividing line between the Old and the New Testament. The first part of his life belonged to the Old Testament, the second, to the New. Before the coming of Jesus, he, like all the patriarchs of the Old Law, would certainly have followed the trend of his time, and his relations with God would have been especially influenced by the sentiment of reverent fear. But as soon as the Angel revealed to him the mystery of the Incarnation, and he learned that Mary his Spouse was to be the Mother of the Redeemer, everything in his life changed. God, whom he had always honored as the Most High, the Inaccessible, the Thrice Holy, had now come near to him, so near that He had taken flesh in the womb of his Spouse, and had chosen him, Joseph, as His foster father. As soon as Jesus was born, He was placed in Joseph's arms and entrusted to his care; later He would grow in his sight, be fed at his table, and sleep under his roof. What a life of intimacy! And it was not only an intimacy of external relations, but also one of profoundly interior, spiritual relations, for Joseph knew by faith that Jesus was his God. Thus, together with Mary, this great Saint was the first one to enter into that life of love and intimacy with God, to which Jesus opened the door. Let us, then, watch Joseph fulfill his mission, not only with complete exterior dedication, but also with a heart filled with Jesus, a heart in which a glorious life of divine intimacy flourishes. While he is devoting himself to the work required by his position as foster father, he lives, in the secrecy of his heart, in continual relations of love with his God, the Incarnate Word.

In the Church, each one of us has his mission to fulfill for the good of souls and the glory of God. This mission requires work—often fatiguing work—and much sacrifice and intense activity. Like St. Joseph, we must give ourselves generously and totally, without sparing, without reserve, but, at the same time, we must also give ourselves to the works of God with a heart filled with God, with a heart which lives with Him in an intimacy nourished by the assiduous exercise of prayer. St. Joseph teaches us the blessed secret

of a life of combined activity and contemplation, so that, following his example, we may give ourselves to the active life without neglecting our life of intimate union with God.

COLLOQUY

"O St. Joseph, happy are you to whom it was given not only to see and hear that God whom so many desired to see and saw not, to hear and heard not, but even to carry Him in your arms, to embrace Him, to clothe Him, to watch over Him.... O St. Joseph, what others have only after death, you had while still living; like the blessed in heaven, you enjoyed God and lived close to Him. You clasped to your heart the Infant Jesus, you accompanied Him in the flight to Egypt, you sheltered Him under your roof" (*RB*).

"Oh, how sweet were the kisses you received from Jesus! With what joy you heard the little one lisp the name of 'father,' and how delightful to feel His gentle embrace! With what love did He rest on your knees, when His little body was worn out with fatigue! Love without reserve brought you to Him as to a most dear Son whom the Holy Spirit had given you through the Virgin, your Spouse" (St. Bernardine of Siena).

"O glorious Saint, it is a thing which truly astonishes me, the great favors which God has bestowed on me and the perils from which He has freed me, both in body and in soul, through your intercession. To other saints the Lord seems to have given grace to succour us in some of our necessities, but you succour us in them all.... If anyone cannot find a master to teach him how to pray, let him take you as his master and he will not go astray" (*T. J. Life*, 6).

May the life of the whole Church, as well as the interior life of every Christian, grow and prosper under your patronage, O Joseph. I place my spiritual life under your protection. You, who lived so close to Jesus, bring me to intimacy with Him, so that, following your example, I may serve Him with a heart full of love.

ST. JOSEPH'S LIFE OF FAITH

PRESENCE OF GOD - In your school, O glorious St. Joseph, I desire to learn how to live by faith, guided in all things by divine Providence.

MEDITATION

I. The fundamental disposition of St. Joseph's soul was one of complete confidence and abandonment to God, which had its source in his faith. St. Matthew called him "a just man" (1,19); now Sacred Scripture teaches that "the just man liveth by faith" (*Rom* 1,17), and it can well be affirmed that no creature, after the Blessed Virgin, has lived as much by faith as St. Joseph. In fact, having spent his whole life within the orbit of the mystery of the Incarnation, he necessarily had to pass through all the obscurities which surrounded the accomplishment of the great mystery. So Joseph needed deep faith, a faith continually nourished by suffering and tempered through anguish. The perplexity aroused in his mind by Mary's mysterious maternity, the extreme poverty and anxieties connected with Bethlehem, the privations during the flight into Egypt, afflicted his sensitive soul to such an extent that in the most serious crises he needed the intervention of an angel, by whom he was sustained and introduced into the depths of the divine mystery unfolding before his eyes. Joseph allowed himself to be guided with the docility and blind confidence of a child. The Gospel relates four events which testify to this :

(1) An Angel put an end to his anguish by commanding him to take Mary as his Spouse, "for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit." Joseph did not hesitate a moment and did "as the Angel of the Lord had commanded him" (*Mt* 1,20.24). (2) An Angel warned him to "take the Child and His Mother and fly into Egypt" (*ibid.* 2,13). Without delay, in the middle of the night, the Saint arose and carried out the order. Objectively the flight presented overwhelming difficulties : the great inconvenience and dangers of the journey, extreme poverty, exile in a strange

land. But the Angel spoke and Joseph obeyed. (3) After Herod's death, an Angel ordered him to return into the land of Israel. (4) An Angel warned him to withdraw into Galilee (cf. *ibid.* 2,19.23).

Here we have four acts of faith and blind obedience. Joseph neither hesitated nor reasoned; he made no objection; for he had complete trust in God; he believed in Him fully, in His Word, in His divine Providence.

2. St. Joseph's whole life may be summed up as a continual adherence to the divine plan, even in situations which were very obscure and mysterious to him.

In our life, too, there is always some mystery, either because God is pleased to work in a hidden, secret manner or because His action is always incomprehensible to our poor human intelligence. Therefore, we need that glance of faith, that complete confidence which, relying on the infinite goodness of God, convinces us that He always and in all circumstances wills our good and disposes everything to that end. Only this loving trust will permit us, like Joseph, always to say our *yes* to every manifestation of the divine will, a humble, prompt, trustful *yes*, in spite of the obscurities, the difficulties, the mystery.... God made use of the angels to make His will known to Joseph; to manifest it to us He makes use of our superiors who, like the angels, are His messengers and envoys. Let us obey with the simplicity of St. Joseph, understanding that God can employ any person or circumstance to make us know and execute His divine will, just as He used Caesar's edict to bring Joseph to Bethlehem, where Jesus was to be born. The Roman Emperor had far different intentions, but God utilized this political act to carry out the plan of the Incarnation. God always governs and directs all things toward the fulfillment of His will.

Another characteristic of St. Joseph's life was his entire consecration to the mission entrusted to him by God. Joseph did not live for himself and his own interests, but only for God, whom he served in Jesus and Mary. Thus he is the true model of interior souls, of souls who desire to live totally for God and with God, in the accomplishment of the mission they have received from Him.

COLLOQUY

"O St. Joseph, how much I love you! How much good it does me to think of your humble, simple life! Like us, you lived by faith. I contemplate you in the little house at Nazareth, near Jesus and Mary, busy working for them. I see you using the plane, and then wiping your forehead from time to time, and hurrying to finish the work on time for your customers. Although you lived with the Son of God, your life was very ordinary, for Jesus certainly did not perform any useless miracles. Everything in your life was just as it is in ours. And how many sorrows, fatigues and dangers! Oh! how astonished we should be if we knew all that you suffered!" (cf. T.C.J. C., - NV).

"I do not know how anyone can think of the Queen of Angels during the time that she suffered so much with the Child Jesus, without giving thanks to you, O glorious St. Joseph, for the way you helped them. For this reason it seems to me that those who practice prayer should have a special affection for you always.

"I wish I could persuade everyone to be devoted to you, for I have great experience of the blessings which you obtain from God. I have never known anyone to be truly devoted to you and render you particular services who did not notably advance in virtue, for you give very real help to souls who commend themselves to you. I have clearly seen that your help has always been greater than I could have hoped for. I do not remember that I have ever asked anything of you which you failed to grant. The Lord wishes to teach us that as He was Himself subject to you on earth (for, being His guardian and being called His father, you could command Him), just so in Heaven He still does all that you ask" (cf. T.J. *Life*, 6).

O dear St. Joseph, I place myself, then, with full confidence under your protection. Teach me to live as you did, in faith and abandonment to God; teach me to live solely for Him, by consecrating myself entirely to His service.

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*THE ANNUNCIATION
OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY*

MARCH TWENTY-FIFTH

PRESENCE OF GOD - At your side, O Mary, I wish to learn how to repeat in every circumstance your "Ecce ancilla Domini!" Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

MEDITATION

1. Let us try, through the inspired narrative of St. Luke (*Gosp.*: 1, 26-38), to enter into the dispositions of Mary's soul at the time of the Annunciation.

The Angel sent by God finds the Virgin recollected in solitude, and "being come in," says to her : "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee : blessed art thou among women." At these words, according to the sacred text, Mary is "troubled"; we must not, however, take this phrase to mean real disturbance, which destroys the peace of the spirit; it means rather a profound astonishment at this unusual greeting, an astonishment so great as to cause a kind of fear. This is Mary's first reaction to the angelical message, a reaction arising from her deep humility, which makes her think this extraordinary eulogy very strange.

Meanwhile the Angel communicates to her his great message : God wishes her to become the Mother of the Redeemer. Mary had always lived under the continual direction of the Holy Spirit and under His inspiration had made a vow of virginity; therefore, she was convinced that she should remain a virgin and that this was God's will. But now God lets her know that He has chosen her to be the Mother of His Son, and she, humble handmaid that she is, is ready to adhere to the divine plan. However, she does not yet understand how she can be at the same time a mother and a virgin, and she questions the Angel on this point : "How shall this be done?" The Angel explains : "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the

Most High shall overshadow thee." Her maternity will be the direct work of the Holy Spirit and will respect her virginity.

The will of God is then entirely clear to Mary, and she, who during her whole life has always been moved by the divine will alone, accepts it immediately, with an entire adherence and a most intense pure love : "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word." The total acceptance is accompanied by a total donation : Mary accepts by offering herself, and she offers herself by giving herself. She offers herself as a servant, or rather, as a slave, if we take the word in the full sense of the Greek text; she gives herself by abandoning herself as a prey to the divine will, accepting by anticipation everything that God may ask of her. Her adherence to Him is both active and passive : Mary wills all that God wills, and she accepts all that He does. Thus Mary appears as the model of a soul completely united to God, fully given up to His divine will.

2. The Angel's explanation does not prevent many future events and circumstances from remaining hidden and obscure to Mary. She finds herself face to face with a mystery, a mystery which she knows intuitively to be rich in suffering; for she has learned from the Sacred Scriptures that the Redeemer will be a man of sorrows, sacrificed for the salvation of mankind. Therefore, the ineffable joy of the divine maternity is presented to her wrapped in a mystery of sorrow : to be willing to be the Mother of the Son of God means consenting to be the Mother of one condemned to death. Yet Mary accepts everything in her *fiat* : in the joy, as well as in the sorrow of the mystery, she has but one simple answer : "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." By this acceptance, the Blessed Virgin becomes intimately associated with the life of suffering of her Son Jesus, and, therefore, with His work of Redemption, thus becoming the spiritual Mother of the human race. This is the divine plan for her, and Mary accepts it wholly, without reserve, precisely because her will is wholly united to the will of God.

Every Christian receives a vocation from God, a mission to fulfill, by means of which he is called to participate in the redemptive work of Jesus. For souls consecrated to God, this mission always finds its culminating point in a task of

spiritual paternity or maternity. Oh, if every soul would respond to the divine appeal by as complete an acceptance as Mary's "*Ecce ancilla Domini...Fiat!*" Behold the handmaid of the Lord.... Be it done!

Many times in the course of our life we have received invitations from the Lord—and we shall certainly continue to receive them—invitations to suffering, to sacrifice, to the gift of self. How have we corresponded? Perhaps the thought of the fatigue and suffering which we would have to embrace has held us back. Let us try, in the future, to keep the eyes of our soul open to the light of faith, so that, like Mary, we shall understand that it is through suffering that God calls us to collaborate with Jesus in the sanctification of souls.

COLLOQUY

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee! Not only is God the Son with you, to whom you gave your blood, but also God the Holy Spirit, by means of whose operation you conceived, and also God the Father, who generated from all eternity Him whom you conceived. The Father, who gives you His Son, is with you; the Son is with you, who, wishing to accomplish a prodigious mystery, conceals Himself in your maternal bosom without violating your virginal integrity; the Holy Spirit is with you, who, together with the Father and the Son, sanctifies you. God is truly with you" (St. Bernard).

"O Mary, Mary, temple of the Trinity...O Mary, vessel of humility, you were pleasing to the eternal Father, and in His own singular love, He has captivated you and drawn you to Him. By the fire of your charity, by the unction of your humility, you have drawn the Divinity to come within you.

"Did fear disturb you at the Angel's word, O Mary? It does not seem that it did, although you were astonished. At what, then, were you astonished? At the great goodness of God, when, considering yourself, you knew you were unworthy of so great a grace. You wondered at the sight of your unworthiness, your weakness and at God's ineffable grace...and thus you showed profound humility. But there also appears today in you, O Mary, the dignity and

liberty of man, for before the Word was made incarnate, the Angel was sent to ask your consent. The Son of God did not descend into your bosom before you had consented; He waited at the door of your will which you opened to Him, for although He wanted to come to you, He would never have entered if you had not opened to Him saying : ‘Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to Thy word....’

“O Mary, my sweet love, you opened to the eternal Divinity the door of your will, and the Word immediately became incarnate within you. By this you teach me that God, who created me without my help, will not save me without it...but knocks at the door of my will and waits for me to open it to Him” (St. Catherine of Siena).

O Mary, by the ineffable mystery which was accomplished in you I beg you to teach me and help me always to open wide the door of my soul to every divine appeal, to every solicitation of grace. At each manifestation of the divine will, may I repeat with you a humble, prompt, “*Ecce, fiat!*”

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FEAST OF SS. PETER AND PAUL

JUNE TWENTY-NINTH

PRESENCE OF GOD - O Lord, grant that the Feast of these Apostles may strengthen my faith and my fidelity to the Church.

MEDITATION

1. The Feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, Princes of the Church, awakens in our souls a greater love for the Church and for our Holy Father the Pope.

The liturgy today gives the place of honor to St. Peter, the head of the Apostles; tomorrow it will speak to us of St. Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles. Thus it presents to us those who have established the Church, not only by

their labors, but even by their blood. The Gospel (*Mt 16,13-19*) recalls the scene at Caesarea, where Jesus, for the first time, proclaimed Peter as the foundation stone of the Church : " I say that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church," words which have had a magnificent repercussion down through the centuries, and which, even today, bear witness to the primacy of Peter and his successors over the whole of Christianity—not over a number of small churches, but over one great, unique Church, the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church. One only Church, whose sole Founder and Head is Christ, who chose Peter to represent Him. " Where Peter is, there is the Church " (St. Ambrose). This means that wherever the Pope, Peter's successor, is, there the Church is. Rightly, then, should we consider the Feast of St. Peter as the Feast of the Church, the Feast of our Holy Father the Pope, and one which should awaken in every Christian soul a profound sense of belonging to the Church and of devotion to the Sovereign Pontiff. At the moment of her death, St. Teresa of Jesus repeated : " I am a daughter of the Church! " After having labored so much for God and souls, this was the only title that made her sure of the divine mercy. To be a child of the Church! This is our title to salvation, this is our glory, after that of being a child of God. Or rather, not *after*, but *together with*, for, as the Fathers of the Church say, " He cannot have God for Father who does not have the Church for Mother " (St. Cyprian). He is not a true Catholic who does not feel the joy of being a child of the Church, whose heart does not vibrate for the Church and for the Vicar of Christ upon earth, who is not ready to renounce his own personal views in order to "*sentire cum Ecclesia*," to think with the Church, always and in all things.

2. Today's Communion antiphon repeats again the memorable words by which Jesus constituted Peter the foundation stone of the Church. " Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church." It is a renewed expression of honor to the Prince of the Apostles, but it is also a summons to us. Every Christian, in fact, ought to be a firm, solid rock which Jesus can use to sustain His Church. Evidently, the living rock, the cornerstone par excellence is Christ, and, next to Himself, He has placed His Vicar; next come all the faithful, from the Bishops down to the last

person to be baptized. We are all, as St. Peter says in his first Epistle, "living stones built up, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood" (2,5).

Whoever you may be—priest or lay person, religious or father of a family, simple Christian or humble nun, you also are called to support the Church, just as in a building, not only the big blocks of granite, but also the smallest bricks help to solidify the whole edifice. This profound apostolic sense must not be wanting in any soul; it must make us conscious of our degree of responsibility for the growth of the Church. We must fulfill our part, first of all, by our obedience and submission to the directives of the Hierarchy; but this is not enough. If we are true children of the Church, we cannot be indifferent to her needs, her interests, and her sufferings. The Church today suffers more than ever : she suffers in her Vicar, who, placed as a sentinel for the whole Christian world, knows and estimates better than anyone else the dangers and struggles threatening her on all sides; the Church suffers in her Bishops, in her persecuted martyred priests, who are rendered powerless; she suffers in her children, abandoned and dispersed like sheep without a shepherd; she suffers because of errors, because of the calumnies which are hurled against her. And you, her child, can you remain indifferent? Suffer with your Mother; pray, work, and use your strength to serve and defend her. Lay aside your own little personal interests and consecrate yourself—your life, your works, your prayers, your silent, hidden sacrifices—to the great interests of the Church.

COLLOQUY

"O sovereign, ineffable God, I have sinned and am unworthy to pray to You, but You have the power to make me worthy. Lord, punish my sins and do not judge me according to my faults. I have a body : I offer and give it to You. If it is Your will, crush my bones and my marrow for Your Vicar on earth, for whom I pray to You.... Give me a heart that will continually grow in grace, a heart strong enough to defend the banner of the Holy Cross, so as to bring infidels to share like us in the Passion and Blood of Your only-begotten Son, the Lamb without spot.

" O infinite, eternal Trinity, do not delay any longer, but through the merits of St. Peter, help Your Spouse, the Holy Church I cry to You today, O my Love, eternal God; show mercy to the world and enlighten Your Vicar, so that all will follow him Enlighten also the enemies of the Church who resist the Holy Spirit, that they may be converted to You, my God. Call them, stir up their hearts, O inestimable Love, and let Your charity constrain You to conquer their hardness. Bring them back to You, that they may not perish. And because they have offended You, O God of sovereign mercy, punish me for their sins. Take my body which I have received from You; I offer it to You. May it become an anvil for them, so that their sins may be destroyed " (St. Catherine of Siena).

" O Lord, in spite of my great misery I do not cease to beseech You to hear me : Your glory and the good of Your Church are at stake. All my desires are directed to this intention. Does it seem overbold of me to think that I can do anything toward obtaining this? Hear me not, O Lord, when I ask You for honors, endowments, money or anything that has to do with the world, but when I ask only for the honor of Your Son, why should You not hear one who would willingly forfeit a thousand honors and a thousand lives for You? Do not hear me, O Lord, for my own sake, for I do not deserve to be heard, but for the sake of the Blood of Your Son and for His merits " (T.J. Way, 3).

*FEAST OF THE MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD OF
OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST*

JULY FIRST

PRESENCE OF GOD - O Jesus who redeemed me by Your Precious Blood, grant that it may produce all its fruit in me.

MEDITATION

i. In today's liturgy the majestic figure of Jesus stands before us as that of a king who presents himself to his people robed in his royal mantle. The first antiphon of Vespers says : "Who is this that cometh...with dyed garments? This beautiful one in his robe" (*RB*). But the mantle Jesus wears is not beautiful by reason of fine linen or purple, but rather because it is sprinkled with *His* Blood, which was shed for our sins. "He was clothed in a robe sprinkled with blood, and His Name is called the Word of God" (*ibid.*). That blood which the Word, when He became incarnate, took from our human nature, He gave back to us—every drop of it—as the price of our redemption. And He gave it back, not as if constrained by anyone, but freely, because He willed to, because He loved us. "Christ...hath loved us," says St. John, "and washed us from our sins in His own Blood" (*Ap* 1,5). All the mysteries of our redemption are mysteries of love; and, therefore, all urge us to love. But the one on which we meditate today is especially moving, since it makes us consider the Redemption from its most terrible aspect : the shedding of the Blood of Jesus, which, from Calvary, flowed forth to crimson the whole world, to sprinkle all souls. Christ has redeemed us, "neither by the blood of goats or of calves, but by His own Blood," St. Paul exclaims in the Epistle (*Heb* 9,11-15). This is a great truth which, if really understood, would more than suffice to make us genuine saints. We must have a "sense" of Christ's Blood, that Blood which He shed to the last drop for us, and which, through the Sacraments, especially Penance,

continually flows over our souls to cleanse them, purify them and enrich them with the infinite merits of the Redeemer. "Bathe in His Blood, immerse yourself in His Blood, clothe yourself in the Blood of Christ," was St. Catherine of Siena's continual cry.

2. In the Office of the day, St. Paul earnestly invites us to correspond with Christ's gift. "Jesus...that He might sanctify the people by His own Blood, suffered outside the gate. Let us go forth therefore to Him...bearing His reproach." If we want the Blood of Christ to bear all its fruit in us, we must unite our own blood with it. His alone is most precious, so precious that a single drop is sufficient to save the whole world; nevertheless, Jesus, as always, wants us to add our little share, our contribution of suffering and sacrifice, "bearing His reproach." If we are sincere we will have to admit that we do all in our power to escape Christ's shame and disgrace. A lack of consideration, a slight offense, a cutting word, are all that it takes to arouse our passions. How can we say that we know how to share in Christ's humiliations? Behold our divine Master treated like a malefactor, dragged amidst the coarse insults of the soldiers outside the gate of Jerusalem and there crucified between two thieves! And we? What part do we take in His Passion? How do we share in His reproach?

To redeem us, "Jesus...endured the Cross, despising the shame..." and "you," St. Paul reproaches us, "have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin" (*Heb 12,2,4*). Can we say that we know how to struggle "unto blood" to overcome our faults, our pride, our self-love? Oh! how weak and cowardly we are in the struggle, how self-indulgent and full of pity for ourselves, especially for our pride! Jesus, Innocence itself, expiated our sins even unto a bloody, ignominious death! We, the guilty ones, far from atoning for our faults unto blood, cannot even sacrifice our self-love. The blood which flows from sincere, total renunciation of self, from humble, generous acceptance of everything that mortifies, breaks, and destroys our pride : this is the blood which Jesus asks us to unite with His! The Precious Blood of Jesus will give us the strength to do so, "for the soul which becomes inebriated and inundated by the Blood of Christ, is clothed with true and genuine virtue" (St. Catherine of Siena).

COLLOQUY

"O sweet Jesus, my Love, to strengthen my soul and to rescue it from the weakness into which it has fallen, You have built a wall around it, and have mixed the mortar with Your Blood, confirming my soul and uniting it to the sweet will and charity of God! Just as lime mixed with water is placed between stones to cement them together, so You, O God, have placed between Your creature and Yourself, the Blood of Your only-begotten Son, cemented with the divine lime of the fire of ardent charity, in such a way that there is no Blood without fire, nor fire without Blood. Your Blood was shed, O Christ, by the fire of love!" (St. Catherine of Siena).

"I adore You, O Precious Blood of Jesus, flower of creation, fruit of virginity, ineffable instrument of the Holy Spirit, and I rejoice at the thought that You came from the drop of virginal blood on which eternal Love impressed its movement; You were assumed by the Word and deified in His person. I am overcome with emotion when I think of Your passing from the Blessed Virgin's heart into the heart of the Word, and, being vivified by the breath of the Divinity, becoming adorable because You became the Blood of God.

"I adore You enclosed in the veins of Jesus, preserved in His humanity like the manna in the golden urn, the memorial of the eternal Redemption which He accomplished during the days of His earthly life. I adore You, Blood of the new, eternal Testament, flowing from the veins of Jesus in Gethsemane, from His flesh torn by scourges in the Praetorium, from His pierced hands and feet and from His opened side on Golgotha. I adore You in the Sacraments, in the Eucharist, where I know You are substantially present....

"I place my trust in You, O adorable Blood, our Redemption, our regeneration. Fall, drop by drop, into the hearts that have wandered from You and soften their hardness. O adorable Blood of Jesus, wash our stains, save us from the anger of the avenging angel. Irrigate the Church; make her fruitful with Apostles and miracle-workers, enrich her with souls that are holy, pure and radiant with divine beauty" (St. Albert the Great).

THE VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

JULY SECOND

PRESENCE OF GOD - O my Mother, most holy Virgin Mary, be always my model, my support, and my guide.

MEDITATION

I. "And Mary, rising up in those days, went into the hill country with haste into a city of Juda." These words are from today's Gospel (*Lk* 1,39-47). Mary, in the exquisite delicacy of her charity, has such a profound sense of the needs of others, that as soon as she hears of them, she acts spontaneously and decisively to bring help. Having learned from the Angel Gabriel that her cousin was about to become a mother, she goes immediately to offer her humble services.

If we consider the difficulty of traveling in those days, when the poor, such as Mary, had to go on foot over difficult roads, or at best, by means of some rude conveyance, and also the fact that Mary remained three months with Elizabeth, we can readily understand that she had to face many hardships in performing this act of charity. However, she was in no way disturbed: charity urged her, making her wholly forgetful of herself, for as St. Paul says: "Charity seeketh not her own" (*1 Cor* 13,5). How many times, perhaps, have you omitted an act of kindness, not to spare yourself a hard journey, but only to avoid a little trouble. Think how uncharitable you are and how slow to help others. Look at Mary, and see how much you can learn from her!

Charity makes Mary forget not only her hardships but also her own dignity, which was greater than that given to any other creature. Elizabeth is advanced in years, but Mary is the Mother of God; Elizabeth is about to give birth to a man, but Mary will give birth to the Son of God. Nevertheless, before her cousin as before the Angel, Mary continues to look upon herself as the humble handmaid of the Lord, and nothing more. Precisely because she considers herself a handmaid, she comports herself as such, even in

respect to her neighbor. In your case, perhaps, although you know how to humble yourself before God and recognize your lack of perfection in the secrecy of your heart, it displeases you to appear imperfect before your neighbor, and you quickly resent being treated as such. Are you not anxious to have your dignity, education, and ability recognized, as well as the more or less honorable offices or charges which have been entrusted to you? Your dignity is a mere nothing, and yet you are so jealous of it. Mary's dignity approaches the infinite, yet she considers herself and behaves as if she were the least of all creatures.

2. And Elizabeth cried out with a loud voice and said : “Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?” Enlightened interiorly by the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth recognizes her young cousin as the Mother of God, and, deeply moved, breaks forth into words of praise and admiration. Mary makes no protest but listens with simplicity, knowing well that this praise is not due to her, but solely to the Almighty who has done great things in her. Immediately, her humble heart, by a spontaneous movement, refers all Elizabeth’s praises to God. “Elizabeth,” the Virgin says, “you glorify the Mother of the Lord, but ‘my soul doth magnify the Lord.’ You say that, at the sound of my voice, the child in your womb leaped for joy, but ‘my spirit doth rejoice in God, my Saviour....’ You say : Happy is she who has believed, but the reason for her faith and happiness is the gaze which divine goodness has turned upon her. Yes, ‘henceforth all generations shall call me blessed, because God hath regarded the humility of His handmaid’” (St. Bernard). This beautiful paraphrase of the *Magnificat* gives us a vivid picture of the attitude of Mary’s soul as she bows in humble confession of her nothingness, touching as it were the depths of her lowliness, and then, rising higher in God than she had previously abased herself, she is not afraid to acknowledge and praise the wonderful things He has accomplished in her, precisely because she sees perfectly that they are a pure gift on His part.

If you are still inclined to vain complacency about your successes, the praise of others, the graces which God has given you, it is because you have not yet touched, as Mary did, the depths of your lowliness, and have not gone deeply

enough into the consideration of your nothingness. You are not yet convinced of your radical insufficiency, your powerlessness, wretchedness, and frailty. Ask Mary to obtain for you the great grace of a clear, practical knowledge of your nothingness. Do not cherish any illusions here! You have inherited the seed of pride from Adam; hence, the road to self-knowledge is rough and hard; it is the road of humiliations. But Mary is your Mother; if she is with you, helping you, everything will become easier and sweeter.

COLLOQUY

“ O Mary, how great is your humility when you hasten to serve others! If it is true that he who humbles himself will be exalted, who will be more exalted than you who have humbled yourself so much?

“ When Elizabeth caught sight of you she was astonished and exclaimed : ‘ Whence is this to me that the Mother of my Lord should come to me? ’ But I am still more astonished to see that you, as well as your Son, came not to be served, but to serve.... It was for this purpose that you went to Elizabeth, you the Queen, to the servant, the Mother of God to the mother of the Precursor, you who would give birth to the Son of God, to her who would bring forth a mere man.

“ But your profound humility in no way lessened your magnanimity; the greatness of your soul was not opposed to your humility. You, so small in your own eyes, were so magnanimous in your faith, in your hope in the Most High, that you never doubted His promises, and firmly believed that you would become the Mother of the Son of God.

“ Humility did not make you fainthearted; magnanimity did not make you proud, but these two virtues were perfectly combined in you!

“ O Mary, you cannot give me a share in your great privileges as Mother of God; these belong to you alone! But you want me to share in your virtues, giving me examples of them in yourself. If, then, sincere humility, magnanimous faith, and delicate, sympathetic charity are lacking in me, how can I excuse myself? O Mary, O Mother of mercy, you who are full of grace, nourish us, your poor little ones, with your virtues! ” (St. Bernard).

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

JULY SIXTEENTH

PRESENCE OF GOD - O Mary, Beauty of Carmel, make me worthy of your protection, clothe me with your scapular, and be the teacher of my interior life.

MEDITATION

1. The Blessed Virgin is a Mother who clothes us with grace and takes our supernatural life under her protection, in order to bring it to its full flowering in eternal life. She, the Immaculate, full of grace from the first moment of her conception, takes our souls stained by sin, and with a maternal gesture, cleanses them in the Blood of Christ and clothes them with grace, which, together with Him, she has merited for us. We can truly say that the garment of grace was woven by the blessed hands of Mary, who day by day, moment by moment, gave herself entirely, in union with her Son, for our salvation. Legend tells of the seamless robe which the Blessed Virgin wove for Jesus; but, for us—and in reality—she has done much more. She has cooperated in obtaining the garment of our eternal salvation, the wedding garment in which we shall enter the banquet hall of heaven. How she longs that this robe be imperishable! From the moment we received it, Mary has never ceased to follow us with her maternal gaze, to safeguard within us the life of grace. Each time we are converted and return to God or rise again after falling into sin—be it great or small—each time we increase in grace, all, everything, is effected through Mary's mediation. The scapular, the *little habit*, that our Lady of Mount Carmel offers us, is only the external symbol of her unceasing, maternal care: the symbol, but also the sign, the pledge of eternal salvation. "My beloved son," Mary said to St. Simon Stock, "take this scapular...whoever dies clothed in it will not suffer eternal fire." The Blessed Virgin gives the assurance of the supreme grace of final perseverance to all who wear worthily her *little habit*.

"Those who wear the scapular," said Pius XII, "profess to belong to Our Lady." Because we belong to Mary she takes special care of our souls. One who belongs to her cannot be lost or be touched by eternal fire. Her powerful maternal intercession gives her the right to repeat, for her children, the words of Jesus : "Holy Father...those whom Thou gavest Me have I kept; and none of them is lost" (*Jn 17,12*).

2. Devotion to our Lady of Mount Carmel indicates a strong call to the interior life, which, in a very special way, is Mary's life. The Blessed Virgin wants us to resemble her in heart and mind much more than in externals. If we penetrate into Mary's soul, we see that grace produced in her a very rich interior life : a life of recollection, prayer, uninterrupted giving of herself to God, and of constant contact and intimate union with Him. Mary's soul is a sanctuary reserved for God alone where no creature has ever left an imprint; here reign love and zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of men.

Those who wish to live truly devoted to our Lady of Mount Carmel, must follow Mary into the depths of the interior life. Carmel is the symbol of the contemplative life, of life wholly consecrated to seeking God and tending wholly toward divine intimacy; and she who best realizes this very high ideal is Mary, *Queen, Beauty of Carmel*. "Judgment shall dwell in the wilderness and justice shall sit in Carmel. And the work of justice shall be peace, and the service of justice quietness and security forever. And my people shall sit in the beauty of peace, and in the tabernacles of confidence." These verses, taken from Isaias (32,16-18) and repeated in the Office proper to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, delineate very well the contemplative spirit and, at the same time, they are a beautiful picture of Mary's soul which is a real "garden" (Carmel in Hebrew signifies garden) of virtues, an oasis of silence and peace, where justice and equity reign; an oasis of security completely enveloped in the shadow of God, and filled with God. Every interior soul, even if living amid the tumult of the world, must strive to reach this peace, this interior silence, which alone makes continual contact with God possible. It is our passions and attachments that make noise within us, that disturb our peace of mind and interrupt our intimate converse with God.

Only the soul that is wholly detached and in complete control of its passions can, like Mary, be a solitary, silent "garden" where God will find His delights. This is the grace we ask of Our Lady today when we choose her to be the Queen and mistress of our interior life.

COLLOQUY

"O Mary, flower of Carmel, fruitful vine, splendor of heaven, who brought forth the Son of God yet remained a Virgin, sweet and Immaculate Mother, grant the favors your children implore, O Star of the sea" (St. Simon Stock).

"O most Blessed Virgin: has anyone ever invoked your aid without being helped? We, your little children, rejoice with you for all your virtues, but particularly for your mercy. We praise your virginity, we admire your humility; but for the needy, mercy has even a sweeter savor. We have a more tender love for mercy, we recall it more often, and we invoke it more frequently. Truly your mercy has obtained the redemption of the world; together with your prayers, it has secured the salvation of all mankind. Oh Mary, who can measure the length, breadth, height and depth of your mercy? Its length reaches to the end of time, to help all who call upon it; its breadth encompasses the whole world, for all the earth is full of your goodness! The height of your mercy has unlocked the gates of the heavenly city and has obtained the redemption of those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death. By you, O Mary, the erring are brought back to the right road and heaven is filled. Thus your most powerful and merciful charity is poured over us like a compassionate and helpful love" (St. Bernard).

*THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY***AUGUST FIFTEENTH**

PRESENCE OF GOD - O most Blessed Virgin Mary, assumed into heaven, I beg you to purify my senses so that I may begin to enjoy God even while I am on earth.

MEDITATION

1. The Blessed Virgin Mary, whom we contemplate today assumed body and soul into heaven, reminds us very definitely that our permanent abode is not on earth but in heaven where she, with her divine Son, has preceded us in all the fulness of her human nature. This is the dominant thought in today's liturgy. "O Almighty and everlasting God, who hast taken up body and soul into heavenly glory the Immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of Thy Son : grant, we beseech Thee, that, ever intent upon heavenly things, we may be worthy to be partakers of her glory" (*Collect*).

The Feast of the Assumption is a strong appeal to us to live "ever intent upon heavenly things," and not to allow ourselves to be carried away by the vicissitudes and seductions of the world. Not only was our soul created for heaven, but also our body, which, after the resurrection, will be welcomed into our heavenly home and admitted to a participation in the glory of the spirit. Today we contemplate in Mary, our Mother, this total glorification of our humanity. That which has been wholly realized in her, will be realized for us, as well as for all the saints, only at the end of time. This privilege was very fitting for her, the all-pure, the all-holy one, whose body was never touched by even the faintest shadow of sin, but was always the temple of the Holy Spirit, and became the immaculate tabernacle of the Son of God. It is a reminder to us to ennable our whole life, not only that of the spirit, but also that of the senses, elevating it to the heights of the celestial life which awaits us. "O Mother of God and of men," exclaims Pius XII in his beautiful prayer for the Assumption, "we beg you to

purify our senses, so that we may begin to enjoy God here on earth and Him alone, in the beauty of creatures."

2. Mary's Assumption shows us the route we must follow in our spiritual ascent : detachment from the earth, flight toward God, and union with God.

Our Lady was assumed body and soul into heaven because she was Immaculate; she was all-pure—free not only from every shadow of sin, but even from the slightest attachment to the things of earth, so that she "never had the form of any creature imprinted in her soul, nor was moved by such, but was invariably guided by the Holy Spirit" (J.C. *AS III*, 2,10).

The first requirement for attaining God is this total purity, the fruit of total detachment. The Blessed Virgin, who lived her earthly life in absolute detachment from every created thing, teaches us not to allow ourselves to be captivated by the fascination of creatures, but to live among them, occupying ourselves with them with much charity, but without ever letting our heart become attached to them, without ever seeking our satisfaction in them.

In her Assumption Mary speaks to us of flight toward heaven, toward God. It is not enough to purify our heart from sin and all attachment to creatures, we must at the same time direct it toward God, tending toward Him with all our strength. The Church has us pray in today's Mass, "O Lord, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary who was assumed into heaven, may our hearts, enkindled by the fire of Thy love, continually aspire toward Thee" (*Secret*). Our earthly life has value for eternal life insofar as it is a flight toward God, a continual seeking after Him, a continual adherence to His grace. When this flight fails, the supernatural value of our existence lessens.

Mary has been taken up to heaven because she is the Mother of God. This is the greatest of her privileges, the root of all the others and the reason for them; it speaks to us, in a very special way, of intimate union with God, as the fact of her Assumption speaks to us of the beatific union of heaven. Mary's Assumption thus confirms us in this great and beautiful truth : we are created and called to union with God. Mary herself stretches out her maternal hand to guide us to the attainment of this high ideal. If we keep our eyes

fixed on her, we shall advance more easily; she will be our guide, our strength, and our consolation in every trial and difficulty.

COLLOQUY

" O Immaculate Virgin, Mother of God and Mother of men, we believe with all the fervor of our faith in your triumphal Assumption, both body and soul, into heaven, where you are acclaimed as Queen by all the choirs of angels and all the legions of the saints. And we unite with them to praise and bless the Lord who has exalted you above all other pure creatures, and to offer you the tribute of our devotion and our love.

" We know that your gaze, which on earth watched over the humble and suffering humanity of Jesus, in heaven is filled with the vision of that humanity glorified, and with the vision of uncreated Wisdom; the joy of your soul in the direct contemplation of the adorable Trinity causes your heart to throb with overwhelming tenderness. We, poor sinners, weighed down by a body which hinders the flight of the soul, beg you to purify our hearts, so that while we remain here below, we may learn to love God and God alone in the beauty of His creatures.

" We trust that your merciful eyes may deign to look down upon our miseries and our sorrows, upon our struggles and our weaknesses; that your countenance may smile upon our joys and our victories; that you may hear the voice of Jesus saying to you of each one of us, as He once said to you of His beloved disciple: 'Behold thy son.' And we, who call upon you as our Mother, take you, like John, as the guide, strength, and consolation of our mortal life.

" And from this earth over which we tread as pilgrims, comforted by our faith in the future resurrection, we look to you, our life, our sweetness, and our hope. Draw us onward by the gentleness of your voice, so that one day, after our exile, you may show us Jesus, the Blessed Fruit of your womb, O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary" (Pius XII).

THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

SEPTEMBER EIGHTH

PRESENCE OF GOD - O Mary, my Mother, teach me to live hidden with you in the shadow of God.

MEDITATION

1. The liturgy enthusiastically celebrates Mary's Nativity and makes it one of the most appealing feasts of Marian devotion. We sing in today's Office : "Thy Nativity, O Virgin Mother of God, brings joy to the whole world, because from you came forth the Sun of Justice, Christ, our God." Mary's birth is a prelude to the birth of Jesus because it is the initial point of the realization of the great mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God for the salvation of mankind. How could the birthday of the Mother of the Redeemer pass unnoticed in the hearts of the redeemed? The Mother proclaims the Son, making it known that He is about to come, that the divine promises, made centuries before, are to be fulfilled. The birth of Mary is the dawn of our redemption; her appearance projects a new light over all the human race : a light of innocence, of purity, of grace, a resplendent presage of the great light which will inundate the world when Christ, "*lux mundi*," the Light of the World, appears. Mary, preserved from sin in anticipation of Christ's merits, not only announces that the Redemption is at hand, but she bears the firstfruits of it within herself; she is the first one redeemed by her divine Son. Through her, all-pure and full of grace, the Blessed Trinity at last fixes on earth a look of complacency, finding in her alone a creature in whom the infinite beauty of the Godhead can be reflected.

The birth of Jesus excepted, no other was so important in God's eyes or so fruitful for the good of humanity, as was the birth of Mary. Yet it has remained in complete obscurity. There is no mention of it in Sacred Scriptures and when we look for the genealogy of Jesus in the Gospel, we find only what refers to Joseph; we find nothing explicit about Mary's

ancestry except the allusion to her descent from David. Our Lady's origin is wrapped in silence, as was her whole life. Thus, her birth speaks to us of humility. The more we desire to grow in God's eyes, the more we should hide ourselves from the eyes of creatures. The more we wish to do great things for God, the more we should labor in silence and obscurity.

2. In the Gospel the figure of Mary is, as it were, completely overshadowed by that of her divine Son; the Evangelists tell us only what is necessary to present the Mother of the Redeemer, and in fact, she enters on the scene only when the narrative of the Incarnation of the Word begins. Mary's life is confounded with, is lost in, the life of Jesus : truly she lived "hidden with Christ in God." Let us note, too, that she lived in obscurity, not only during the years of her childhood, but also during the whole period of her divine maternity, yes, even during the triumphal moments in the public life of her Son, even when a certain woman, enthusiastic about the wonderful things that Jesus did, cried out in the midst of the crowd : "Blessed is the womb that bore Thee and the breasts that nursed Thee!" (*Lk 11,27*).

The Feast which we celebrate today is an invitation to the hidden life, to hide ourselves with Mary in Christ, and with Christ in God. Many times it is God Himself who, through circumstances or the decisions of our superiors, makes us live in obscurity. We should be very grateful for this, and take advantage of these opportunities to make more progress in the practice of humility and self-effacement. At other times, however, God gives us responsibilities, offices, apostolic works which bring us into prominence, but even in such circumstances we should try to efface ourselves as much as possible. Certainly we must not refuse the assignment, but we should know how to withdraw as soon as our activity is no longer needed for the success of the work entrusted to us. All the rest—praise, applause, the account of our success or the excuse for our failure—should not concern us. In the face of all this we should strive to remain wholly indifferent. An interior soul should long to hide itself as much as it can under the shadow of God, for, if it has been able to accomplish some little good, it is convinced that in reality all has been the work of God; therefore, it eagerly seeks that all may redound to His glory alone.

Let Mary's humble, hidden life be the model of ours, and if, in emulating her, we have to struggle against our ever-recurrent tendencies to pride, let us confidently seek her maternal aid, and she will help us to triumph over all vainglory.

COLLOQUY

"When I feel myself tossed about in the sea of this world amidst storms and tempests, I keep my eyes fixed on you, O Mary, shining star, lest I be swallowed up by the waves.

"When the winds of temptation arise, when I dash against the reefs of tribulations, I raise my eyes to you and call upon you, O Mary. When I am agitated by the billows of pride, ambition, slander or jealousy, I look to you and I invoke you, O Mary; when anger or avarice or the seductions of the flesh rock the fragile little barque of my soul, I always look to you, O Mary. And if I am troubled by the enormity of my sins, troubled in conscience, frightened at the severity of judgment, and if I should feel myself engulfed in sadness or drawn into the abyss of despair, again I raise my eyes to you, always calling on you, O Mary.

"In dangers, in difficulties, in doubts, I will always think of you, O Mary, I will always call on you. May your name, O Virgin Mary, be always on my lips and never leave my heart; in order that I may obtain the help of your prayers, grant that I may never lose sight of the example of your life. Following you, O Mary, I shall not go astray, thinking of you I shall not err, if you support me I shall not fall, if you protect me I shall have nothing to fear, if you accompany me I shall not grow weary, if you look upon me with favor, I shall reach the port" (St. Bernard).

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FEAST OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY OF THE ROSARY

OCTOBER SEVENTH

PRESENCE OF GOD - O most holy Virgin, may the Rosary be my spiritual armor and my school of virtue.

MEDITATION

1. Today's Feast is a manifestation of gratitude for the great victories won by the Christian people through the power of Mary's Rosary; it is also the most beautiful and authoritative testimony of the value of this prayer. The liturgy of the day is not only a commentary on the Rosary, but an amplification of it : the three hymns of the Office as well as the antiphons of Matins and Lauds, review its different mysteries; the lessons chant its glories, and the continual references to the Virgin, who "blossomed as it were, among the flowers, surrounded by roses and lilies of the valley," are a clear allusion to the mystical crowns of roses which Mary's devoted children weave at her feet when they recite the Rosary. This Feast tells us that to honor the Rosary is to honor Mary, for the Rosary is simply a meditation on Our Lady's life, accompanied by the devout recitation of the Hail Mary. It is for this reason that the Church praises this practice and recommends it so insistently to the faithful. "O God," she prays in today's Collect, "grant that meditating on the mysteries of the most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may both imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise." The Rosary, if recited well, is both prayer and instruction; its mysteries tell us that in Mary's life everything is judged in relation to God: her joy and consolation found in all that gives pleasure to God; her sorrows are, so to speak, the very sorrows of God, who being made man, willed to suffer for the sins of mankind. Mary's only joy is Jesus: to be His Mother, to clasp Him in her arms, to offer Him for the adoration of the world, to contemplate Him in the glory of His Resurrection,

to be united to Him in Heaven. Mary's unique sorrow is the Passion of Jesus : to see Him betrayed, scourged, crowned with thorns, and crucified by our sins. This, then, is the first fruit which we must gather from the recitation of the Rosary : to judge all the events of our life according to their relation to God, to rejoice in what gives Him pleasure, in what unites us to Him, to suffer for sin which separates us from Him and is the cause of the Passion and death of Jesus.

2. The second fruit that we should derive from the daily recitation of the Rosary is a penetration into Christ's mysteries; by Mary and with Mary, who opens the door to them for us, the Rosary helps us to penetrate the ineffable grandeurs of the Incarnation, Passion, and glory of Jesus. Who is there who has understood and lived these mysteries as Our Lady did? And who better than she can make us understand them? If, during the recitation of the Rosary, we really know how to put ourselves in spiritual contact with Mary and to accompany her in the various stages of her life, we shall be able to perceive something of the sentiments of her heart concerning these great mysteries which she witnessed, and in which she played such an important part; this, in turn, will serve wonderfully to nourish our souls. Thus, our Rosary will be transformed into a quarter of an hour's meditation—we might almost say contemplation—under Mary's guidance. This is what Mary desires, rather than many Rosaries recited with the lips, while the mind wanders in a thousand directions! The Hail Mary, continuously repeated, should express the attitude of a soul who is striving to approach the Blessed Virgin, hastening toward her in order to be captivated by her and given insight into the divine mysteries. "Ave Maria!" the lips say, and the heart murmurs : "Teach me, O Mary, to know and love Jesus as you knew and loved Him."

Saying the Rosary in this way requires recollection. St. Teresa of Jesus says that "before beginning to recite the Rosary, let the soul think of whom it is going to address, and who it is that is speaking, that it may speak to Him with due respect" (cf. *Way*, 22). The Saint, with her keen wit, laughs at those people "who are so fond of repeating a large number of vocal prayers in a great hurry, as though they were anxious to finish their task of repeating them daily"

(*ibid.*, 31). Rosaries recited in this way cannot really nourish our interior life; they will bring little fruit to the soul and little glory to Mary. On the other hand, if recited with a real spirit of devotion, the Rosary becomes an effective means of cultivating devotion to Mary and of bringing us into intimacy with Our Lady and her divine Son.

COLLOQUY

"O Mary, just as there is no saint who loves God more than you love Him, so we neither have, nor could we have, after God, anyone who loves us more than you, our most loving Mother. If it were possible to bring together the love of all mothers for their children, of all wives for their husbands, of all the saints and angels for those who have devotion to them, it would not equal the love you have for one single soul, and, therefore, for my soul too.

"O Mary, since you love me, make me resemble you. You have all power to change hearts : take my heart, then, and transform it. Make me a saint, make me your worthy child.

"Let others ask for what they will : health, riches, worldly advantages; I come to ask you, O Mary, for those things which you yourself desire for me and which are very dear to your heart. You, who were so humble, obtain for me humility and a love for contempt. You, so patient in the sorrows of this life, obtain for me patience in adversity. You who were filled with love for God, obtain for me the gift of pure, holy love. You were all charity toward your neighbor; obtain for me charity toward all, and especially toward those who are opposed to me. O Mary, you who are the holiest of all creatures, make me holy. You lack neither love nor power; you can and you will obtain everything for me. Only my failure to have recourse to you and my want of confidence in your aid can prevent me from receiving your favors" (St. Alphonsus).

*FEAST OF THE MOTHERHOOD OF THE
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY*

OCTOBER ELEVENTH

PRESENCE OF GOD - O Mary, Mother of God, deign to accept my humble homage and grant that I, too, may enjoy the blessed fruits of your maternity.

MEDITATION

1. The Feast we celebrate today honors Mary under her most beautiful title and in her most glorious prerogative : Mother of God. This title and prerogative were solemnly proclaimed by the Council of Ephesus, to oppose the Nestorian heresy. Today the Church congratulates Mary for this supreme dignity, which raises her above all other creatures, even to the threshold of infinity, and makes her Queen, not only of men, but also of angels. This is the dominant theme throughout the Mass. The Introit repeats the prophecy of Isaias which, even in the Old Testament, had foretold the sublimity of our Blessed Lady, "Behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and His Name shall be called Emmanuel" (*Is 7,14*), that is, God with us. The Epistle (*Sir 24,23-31*), applying to Our Lady an extract from the book of Wisdom, sings the praises of her divine maternity : Mary is the fruitful vine which bore the fairest fruit, Jesus. Mary is "the mother of fair love" in whom is "all grace of the way and of the truth...all hope of life and of virtue," since through her alone God gave to the world His only-begotten Son; through her alone men have had their Savior. He who wants Jesus must seek Him in Mary's arms; he who wishes to propitiate the Savior must have recourse to her who is His Mother. How sweetly, then, does her maternal invitation sound in our ears : "Come over to me, all ye that desire me, and be filled with my fruits." Yes, let us go to Mary and we shall not be deceived; in her we shall find all we can desire, because Mary gives us Jesus, the Redeemer, Father and true Food of our souls. Not only

does she give Him to us, but, by the example of her wonderful life, she teaches us to love Him, to imitate Him, to follow Him, and to profit as much as possible from His redemptive, sanctifying work. Thus Mary extends her maternity to us too, fulfilling toward us the duties of a Mother, and we can repeat with full confidence the prayer which the Church puts on our lips today : " O Lord...grant that we who believe her to be indeed the Mother of God may be aided by her intercession with Thee " (*Collect*).

2. The Feast of Mary's Maternity should awaken in our hearts confidence and trust in her who, because of her dignity as Mother, has the greatest influence with her divine Son. In praising the Mother of God, we beg her to use her maternal power in our behalf : " Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners. " What greater advocate could we find? What more powerful Patroness? Jesus cannot resist His Mother's supplications, nor can Mary resist those who invoke her under her sweetest title : Mother. If every woman is touched when she hears herself called " Mother, " will not Mary be even more deeply touched when she is invoked as " Mother of God "? Then let us call her by that name, let us treat her as a mother—as the Mother of God first of all and then as our own Mother—since Jesus, when dying on the Cross, put at our disposal the treasures of her maternity. Our Lady has a maternal mission to accomplish in our souls. Jesus Himself has entrusted it to her; therefore, it is very dear to her, and she desires to fulfill it perfectly. Yes, Mary wishes to be our Mother, she wishes to use the privileges and treasures of her maternity for our advantage, but she cannot do so unless we entrust ourselves to her care like docile, loving children. Even among those who are consecrated to God, not all realize sufficiently the necessity of giving themselves to Mary as her children, of opening their soul to her maternal influence, of having recourse to her with complete confidence, of calling upon her aid in all their difficulties and dangers, and of placing their whole spiritual life under her patronage. In the natural order a child needs a mother, and suffers both morally and spiritually without one; so also in the supernatural order, souls need a mother, they need Mary, most holy. Without her and her maternal care, souls suffer, their spiritual life is stunted and often becomes lax, or, at least, is not as vigorous

as it should be. On the other hand, when souls give themselves to Mary, seek Mary, and trust themselves to her, their interior life progresses rapidly, their journey toward God is more simple and swift; everything becomes easier because there is a Mother's hand to sustain them, there is a Mother's heart to comfort them.

COLLOQUY

“ Your name, O Mother of God, is filled with every divine grace and blessing. You carried in your womb Him whom the heavens could not contain. You nourished Him who feeds the whole world. The Lord of the universe willed to have need of you, for you gave Him the flesh which He did not have before. Rejoice, O Mother and Handmaid of God! Rejoice! You have for debtor Him who gives existence to all creatures; we are all debtors to God, but God is debtor to you!

“ O most holy Virgin, you have more goodness and charity than all the other saints and you have greater access to the throne of God than they, because you are His Mother. I, then, who am celebrating your glories and praising your immense goodness, beg you to be mindful of me and my miseries” (St. Methodius).

“ O great Mother of God, I, too, will say with St. Bernard : ‘ Speak, O Lady, because your Son is listening to you, and whatever you ask He will grant you! ’ Speak, then, speak, in my favor, O Mary, my advocate, wretched as I am. Remember it was for my benefit, too, that you were given such power and dignity. God willed to make Himself your debtor by taking His human nature from you, so that you might freely dispense the riches of His divine mercy to the poor and wretched.

“ If you, who are so immensely good, do good to all, even to those who do not know and honor you, how much more should we hope in your benignity, we who wish to honor you and love you and who trust in your aid? O Mary, although we are sinners, you can save us, because God has enriched you with mercy and power that surpasses all our iniquity. O most sweet Mother, to you I give my soul, that you may purify it, sanctify it, and consecrate it wholly to Jesus” (St. Alphonsus).

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FEAST OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST THE KING

LAST SUNDAY OF OCTOBER

PRESENCE OF GOD - O Jesus, Prince of Ages, King of Nations, be the sole Ruler of my mind and heart.

MEDITATION

I. The liturgy today is truly a triumphant hymn celebrating the Kingship of Christ. From the First Vespers of the Feast, the figure of Jesus is majestically portrayed, seated on a royal throne and dominating the entire world; "His Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and all kings shall serve and obey Him.... He shall sit and rule and shall speak peace unto the nations."

The Mass opens with the apocalyptic vision of this extraordinary King whose majesty is intimately linked to His immolation for the salvation of souls.... "The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power and divinity and wisdom and strength and honor. To Him belong glory and power forever and ever" (*Introit*).

In the Epistle (*Col 1,12-20*) St. Paul enumerates the titles which make Christ King of all kings: He is "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature; for in Him were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible." These titles belong to Jesus Christ inasmuch as He is God, perfect image of the Father, exemplary cause of all earthly and heavenly creatures and, at the same time, Creator, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, of all that exists, for nothing has existence without Him, but "all things were created by Him and in Him...by Him all things consist."

Then come His titles to Kingship as Man: "He is the Head of the Mystical Body, the Church.... Through Him [God]...reconciled all things unto Himself, making peace through the Blood of His Cross." He, who is already our King by reason of His divinity, is also King through

His Incarnation, which has constituted Him the Head of all humanity, and through His Passion, by which at the price of His Blood He has regained our souls, which already belonged to Him as His creatures.

Jesus is our King in the full sense of the word : He has created us, redeemed us, vivified us by His grace, He nourishes us with His Flesh and Blood, He governs us with love, and by love He draws us to Himself. In the face of such considerations, the cry of St. Paul rises spontaneously from our heart : " Giving thanks to God the Father...who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption...the remission of sins. "

2. In today's Gospel (*Jn* 18,33-37) we have the most authoritative proclamation of the Kingship of Christ, since it comes from His own lips in that most solemn moment during the trial which preceded His Passion. Pilate explicitly questioned Him on the subject : " Art Thou the King of the Jews? " Jesus did not reply directly to this first question; actually, He is not King of any one determined nation; His Kingdom has nothing to do with the kingdoms of earth. But to Pilate's second and more precise question, " Art Thou a King then? " Jesus replied unhesitatingly : " Thou sayest it; I am a King. " He proclaims His Kingship in the most formal manner before the highest civil authority in Palestine; He proclaims it, not in the midst of an enthusiastic crowd, nor in the triumph of His miracles, but bound with chains, before him who is about to condemn Him to death, before a crowd thirsting for His Blood, a few moments before being dragged to Calvary where, from the heights of the Cross, above His thorn-crowned head, will appear for the first time the title of His royalty : " Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews " (*Jn* 19,19). He had fled when the enthusiastic crowd wished to make Him their King; now He proclaims Himself King in the midst of the unspeakable humiliations of His Passion, thus affirming in the clearest manner that His Kingdom is not of this world, that His Kingdom is so sublime that no dishonor, no insults can eclipse it. But by this act Jesus also tells us that He prefers to manifest His Kingship far more as a conquest of His Blood than as a title belonging to Him in virtue of His divine nature.

We should go to meet this divine King with all the yearning of our soul. He presents Himself to us under an appearance so human, so loving, so welcoming, stretching out His arms on the Cross to invite all to come to Him, showing us the wound in His side as the symbol of His Love. Far from trying to escape His dominion, we should beseech Him to be the sole Ruler of our mind and heart, and the complete master of our will. We should submit ourselves and all that belongs to us to "His most gentle rule" (*Collect*).

COLLOQUY

" You, my God, are an eternal King, and Yours is no borrowed kingdom.... When the Credo says : ' of Your Kingdom there shall be no end ' this phrase nearly always makes me feel particularly happy. Yes, I praise You, Lord, and bless You, for Your Kingdom will endure forever " (T.J. *Way*, 22).

" O divine King, most amiable Jesus, my Redeemer, my Savior, my Spouse, my Master and model, I renew today the total consecration of my being to You, begging You to take absolute dominion over me. Be my Sovereign, my Ruler, my Guide. Direct and govern me entirely, so that everything may turn to Your greater glory. Be King of my memory, of my intellect, of my will, of my emotions; I wish all to be completely subject to You and I invite You to reign in me.

" Your Kingdom is a kingdom of Truth, of Love, of Justice and of Peace.

" Grant that Your reign of *Truth* may be established in my mind, destroying all error, deceit and illusion. Enlighten me by Your divine Wisdom.

" Grant that Your reign of *Love* may be completely established in my will, to move it, draw it, and direct it always, so that I may no longer be moved by self-love, or by creatures but by Your Holy Spirit alone. Make this weak, mean, rebellious will of mine strong, generous, constant; make it grow stronger by the persevering exercise of virtue, and by the gifts of Your Spirit.

" Grant that Your reign of *Justice* may be established in all my actions, so that all I do, having this characteristic, may be a work of holiness, accomplished with purity of

intention and with the greatest fidelity in order to give You pleasure and accomplish Your holy will.

“ Grant that Your reign of *Peace* may be established, not only in my soul but also in my sensibility, so that, in harmony with the superior part of my soul, it may give You glory and neither retard me nor be an obstacle to union with You ” (Sr. Carmela of the Holy Spirit, O.C.D.).

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FEAST OF ALL SAINTS

NOVEMBER FIRST

PRESENCE OF GOD - Through the intercession of Your saints, O Lord, may I tread the way of holiness courageously.

MEDITATION

i. Holy Mother Church, always solicitous and anxious for our salvation, exults today with exceeding joy as she contemplates the glory of her children who, having reached their heavenly fatherland, are safe for all eternity, forever delivered from the snares of the evil one, and now numbered everlasting among the elect, the people of God. Like a mother, proud of the triumph of her children, she presents them to the whole Christian world, inviting all the faithful to share her maternal joy : “ Let us all rejoice in the Lord, celebrating a feast in honor of all the saints, at whose solemnity the angels rejoice and give praise to the Son of God ” (*Introit*).

The Epistle (*Ap* 7,2-12) offers us the apocalyptic vision of the glory of the saints : “ I saw a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and in the sight of the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and with palms in their hands.” Ranks of martyrs, apostles, confessors, and virgins, luminous hosts who delight unceasingly in the vision of God, adore Him continually and praise Him as they repeat : “ Benediction

and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and strength to our God forever and ever. Amen."

Who are these glorious saints? Men who have lived upon earth as we have, who have known our miseries, our difficulties, our struggles. Some of them we recognize easily, for the Church has raised them to the honors of the Altar, but the great majority are entirely unknown to us. They are humble people who lived obscurely in the accomplishment of duty, without display, without renown, whom no one here below remembers, but whom the heavenly Father looked upon, knew in secret, and, having proved their fidelity, called to His glory. The honorable positions occupied by some in this vast gathering, or the mighty deeds accomplished by others, no longer possess any value of themselves: eternal beatitude is not determined by the great things achieved here below. One thing only endures, for the humble and the great, the poor and the wealthy: the degree of love they had attained, to which corresponds the degree of glory which now renders them eternally happy.

2. While the Epistle gives us a glimpse of the life of the saints in heavenly glory, the Gospel (*Mt* 5,1-12), citing a passage from the beatitudes, unveils the life which was theirs upon earth: "Blessed are the poor in spirit...Blessed are the meek...Blessed are they that mourn...Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice...Blessed are the merciful...Blessed are the clean of heart...Blessed are the peacemakers...Blessed are they that suffer persecution." Poverty, humility, detachment from earthly goods; meekness of heart, resignation and patience in sorrow, uprightness, hunger for justice; kindness and understanding toward one's neighbor; purity of mind and heart; peacefulness of spirit and bearer of peace; fortitude and generosity, which, for love of God, embrace every suffering and endure every injustice: such are the characteristics of the life led by the saints on earth, and such must be our program, too, if we wish to attain sanctity as they did.

We want to become saints, but in the easiest way possible, without effort, without fatigue or violence to ourselves; we should like to practice virtue, but only to a certain point, only when it does not ask for great sacrifice, or go too much against the grain. And so it happens that when faced with acts of virtue which exact greater self-

renunciation, or the acceptance of difficult and repugnant things, such as quelling the resentments of self-love, renouncing an attempt to make our opinion prevail, submitting ourselves and meekly condescending to one who is opposed to us, very often—if not always—we refuse, thinking it unnecessary to go to such lengths.

Yet our progress in holiness depends precisely upon these acts which we hesitate to make; without them we shall always lead a mediocre life, we shall always remain on the same level, if indeed we do not lose ground. Let us beg the saints whom we honor today to help us overcome our laziness, our lassitude, our cowardice; let us ask those who have gone before us in the arduous way of sanctity to obtain for us the strength to follow them. “If such as these [have attained to sanctity], why not I?” (St. Augustine). God offers us the grace which He gave to the saints; but alas! what is lacking is our correspondence with it.

COLLOQUY

“O holy souls that now rejoice without fear of losing your joy and are forever absorbed in the praises of my God! Happy indeed, your lot! How right that you should employ yourselves ceaselessly in these praises! and how my soul envies you, free as you now are from the affliction caused by the grievous offenses which in these unhappy days are committed against my God! No longer do you behold all the ingratitude of men and their blindness nor the multitude of souls being carried away by Satan.

“O blessed, heavenly souls! Help us in our misery and intercede for us with the divine Mercy, so that we may be granted some part of your joy and you may share with us some of that clear knowledge which is now yours.

“And You, O my God, make us understand what it is that You give to those who fight manfully through the dream of this miserable life. Help us, O loving souls, to understand what joy it gives you to behold the eternity of your bliss and what delight to possess the certain knowledge that it will never end.

“O blessed souls, who knew so well how to profit by the gifts of God, and to purchase with this precious ransom so delectable and enduring a heritage, tell us how you won

through Him such an eternal blessing! Assist us, since you are so near the Fountainhead. Draw water for those of us on earth who are perishing with thirst" (T.J. *Exc*, 13).

"O saints of heaven, I am the least of all creatures. I know my worthlessness, but I also know how noble and generous hearts love to do good. Therefore, O blessed inhabitants of the heavenly City, I entreat you to adopt me as your child. All the glory you may help me to acquire will be yours; deign, then, to hear my prayer and obtain for me... your love..." (T.C.J. *St*, 13).

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*COMMEMORATION OF ALL THE FAITHFUL
DEPARTED*

NOVEMBER SECOND

PRESENCE OF GOD - Grant, O Lord, eternal rest to the souls of the departed; and may the thought of death spur me on to greater generosity.

MEDITATION

1. "Holy Church, our good Mother, after having exalted with fitting praise all her children who now rejoice in heaven, strives also to help all those who still suffer in purgatory, and to this end intercedes with all her power before Christ, her Lord and Spouse, in order that as speedily as possible they may join the society of the elect in heaven." These are the words of the *Roman Martyrology*.

Yesterday we contemplated the glory of the Church triumphant and implored her intercession. Today we consider the expiatory pains of the Church suffering and solicit for these souls the divine assistance: "Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord." This is the dogma of the Communion of saints put into practice. The Church triumphant intercedes for us, the Church militant; and we, in our turn, hasten to the help of the Church suffering. Death has

taken from us those we love; yet there can be no real separation from those who have died in the kiss of the Lord. The bond of charity continues to unite us, enfolding in one embrace earth, heaven and purgatory, so that there circulates from one region to another the fraternal assistance which springs from love, which has as its end the triumph of love in the common glory of Paradise.

The liturgy of the day is pervaded with sadness, but it is not the grief of those "who have no hope" (*1 Thes 4,12*), for it is resplendent with faith in a blessed resurrection, in the eternal felicity which awaits us. The passages chosen for the Gospels of the three Masses for the faithful departed speak to us explicitly of all these consoling truths, and in a most authoritative way, since they repeat to us the very words of Jesus: "This is the will of the Father who sent Me; that of all that He hath given Me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again in the last day" (*Gosp*, 2nd Mass: *Jn 6,37-40*). Could there be a more consoling assurance?

Jesus presents Himself to us today as the Good Shepherd who does not want to lose even one of His sheep, nor does He spare any pains to lead them all to salvation. As if in response to the sweet promises of Jesus, Holy Mother Church, full of gratitude and enthusiasm, cries out: "For with regard to Thy faithful, O Lord, life is changed, not taken away; and the abode of this earthly sojourn being dissolved, an eternal dwelling is prepared in heaven" (*Preface*). Rather than an inexorable end, death is, for the Christian, a door opening into eternity, a door which admits the soul into eternal life.

2. All Souls' Day makes us mindful not only of the death of our dear ones but also of our own. Death is a punishment, bringing with it, of necessity, a feeling of pain, of fear, of uncertainty. The saints experienced it, and Jesus Himself willed to undergo it. Thus the Church puts before us passages from Scripture most suited to encourage us: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord... henceforth they rest from their labors, for their works follow them" (*Eph*, 3rd Mass: *Ap 14,13*). The life of the body dies; the life of the spirit and the good deed accomplished during life remain; these deeds alone accompany the soul in its journey from this life and render its death precious.

" Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." This death has been justly defined : " *dies natalis*," the day of birth to eternal life. Would that our own death might be such! A *dies natalis* which would bring us into the beatific vision, bring us to birth in the indefectible love of heaven.

However, by inviting us to pray for the faithful departed, today's liturgy reminds us that between death and eternal beatitude there is purgatory. Because our works *do* follow us, and not all of them are good works, or, even if they are good, they are full of faults and imperfections, it is necessary for the soul to be purified of every blemish before being admitted to the vision of God. And yet, if we were perfectly faithful to grace, there would be no need of purgatory, for God purifies here below those who give themselves wholly to Him, who let themselves be fashioned and formed according to His good pleasure. Furthermore, purification accomplished on earth has the great advantage of being meritorious, that is, of increasing grace and charity in us, thus permitting us to love God more for all eternity; whereas in purgatory, one suffers without growing in charity. That is why we should desire to be purified during life. But let us have no illusions : even on earth total purification entails great suffering. If now we are not generous in suffering, if here on earth we do not know how to accept suffering, pure and unmitigated, as Jesus did on the Cross, our purification will of necessity have to be completed in purgatory.

May the thought of that place of expiation rouse our zeal to pray for the souls of the departed, and may it also make us more courageous in embracing suffering in reparation for our own faults.

COLLOQUY

" Grant, O Lord, that I may experience a reasonable sorrow at the death of those who are dear to me, shedding tears of resignation over our mortal condition, yet soon restraining them by this consoling thought of the faith : that in dying, the faithful have only withdrawn a little from us to go into a better world.

" May I not weep as do the pagans who are without hope. I may have reason to be sad, but in my affliction hope

will comfort me. With hope so great, it is not fitting, O my God, that Your temple should be in mourning. You dwell there, You who are our Consoler; and You cannot fail in Your promises " (St. Augustine).

" O Master and Creator of the universe, Lord of life and death, You give our souls being and fill them with blessings : You carry out and transform everything by the work of Your Word, at the time foreordained and according to the plan of Your Wisdom; receive, today, our deceased brethren and give them eternal rest.

" May You welcome us, in our turn, at the moment pleasing to You, after having guided us and left us in the body for as long as You think useful and salutary.

" Made ready in Your fear, without trouble and without delay, may You receive us on the last day. Grant that we may not leave the things of this world with regret, like those who are too much attached to earth and the flesh; grant that we may advance resolutely and happily toward that blessed and unending life which is in Christ Jesus Our Lord, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen " (St. Gregory Nazianzen).

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THE PRESENTATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

NOVEMBER TWENTY-FIRST

PRESENCE OF GOD - O Mary, present my offering and my life to Our Lord.

MEDITATION

1. Although Holy Scripture does not tell us anything about the presentation of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary in the Temple, this belief is based upon evidence authorized by a very ancient Christian tradition, and the Church has given it official recognition by making it the object of a special Marian feast. Mary, who leaves her home and parents in her most tender years in order to live in the shadow

of the Temple, speaks to us of detachment, of separation from the world, of complete dedication to the service of God, of virginal consecration to the Most High. After her, countless virginal souls will present themselves in the Temple to offer themselves to God, but no offering will be as pure, as total, as acceptable as Mary's.

Our Lady is truly the privileged one among all creatures, who, from the first moment of her existence, heard the great call : " Hearken, O daughter, and see and incline thy ear, and forget thy people and thy father's house " (*Ps 44,11*). The Most High is enamored of her beauty and wills that she be wholly His. Mary responds, and her answer is eminently prompt and complete. The response of souls whom God calls to the Altar, to the religious life or to virginal consecration in the world, should resemble Mary's. These souls must also be separated from the world, leave parents and friends; they must detach themselves from their people and their homes. There cannot always be material separation, but there must always be a spiritual one, that is, a separation in the realm of the affections. It is the heart which must be detached, be secluded, because the Lord's elect can no longer belong to the world : " they are not of the world " (*Jn 17,14*), Jesus said. To live in the world without being of the world is not easy, but it is absolutely essential in order to answer the divine call. There are virginal souls who fail in their consecrated vocation, or neglect to correspond fully, because they are still attached to the world—to its maxims, its vanities, its affairs, its comforts; they have not had the courage to effect a true separation, or at least, if they have undertaken it, they have not remained faithful. This can happen not merely to souls living in the world but even to those in the cloister, for the world penetrates everywhere, and everywhere it invades hearts that are not entirely detached.

2. Corresponding to complete separation is oblation, total consecration. Mary gave herself wholly to God, unreservedly, forever. " Lord, in the simplicity of my heart I offer myself to You this day as Your servant for evermore, for Your homage and for a sacrifice of perpetual praise " (*Imit IV, 9,1*). Such must have been the dispositions with which this holy child offered herself to the Most High, dispositions which were lived with a fullness and coherence incomprehensible to our wretchedness.

Never for a moment did Mary fail in her complete consecration; God was able to accomplish in her all that He willed, without meeting the least resistance. Circumstances of an exceedingly difficult and painful nature abounded in the life of our Blessed Lady : Joseph's doubt concerning the origin of her maternity; the hardships and inconveniences of the journey to Bethlehem; the bleak poverty in which she saw her Child born, the flight into Egypt, the life of privation at Nazareth, the hostility and malice of the Pharisees toward Jesus, the treason of Judas, the ingratitude of a people so favored and beloved, her Son's condemnation to death, the way to Calvary, the Crucifixion amid the insults of the populace. In vain would we scrutinize Mary's heart to find there a single movement of resentment, of protest; in vain would we seek to find upon her lips one single word of complaint. Mary gave herself wholly to God, allowing Him to exercise over her all His rights as Sovereign, Lord, and Master. She made no objections nor did she marvel that her immolation should reach such proportions : had she not offered herself without reserve? And when her offering was consummated she did nothing but repeat : "Fiat! Ecce ancilla Domini!"

What a contrast to our life as consecrated souls! How easily we take back the gift made to God! We take back our heart when we admit human affections; we take back our will when we refuse to submit to certain commands of obedience which mortify or contradict us, when we will not accept that which entails sacrifice, when we complain, protest or defend our rights. Yet the only true right of a soul consecrated to God is that of letting itself be used and consumed for His glory.

Let us ask Mary, presented in the Temple, to take our poor offering into her maternal hands, to purify and complete it by her offering, so pure, so perfect; to include and hide it in hers, so great and so generous, that being thus purified and renewed, it may be agreeable to God.

COLLOQUY

"O dearly Beloved of God, most amiable Child Mary, would that today I could offer you the first years of my life and consecrate myself to your service, my blessed and sweet

Lady, as you presented and consecrated yourself in the Temple for the honor and glory of God.... But time has slipped away and so many years have been spent in serving the world and my own caprice, as it were, forgetful of you and of God. Woe to the time when I did not love you! But better late than never. Behold, O Mary, I present myself to you today, offering myself entirely to your service, for the number of days, whether few or many, that are still left to me on earth. I renounce all creatures, as you did, and vow myself entirely to the love of my Creator. I consecrate to you, O my Queen, my intellect, that it may always think upon the love you deserve, my tongue, that it may praise you, my heart that it may love you. Accept, O Most Holy Virgin, the offering which this wretched sinner presents to you; accept it, I beg, by the consolation your heart felt when you gave yourself to God in the Temple. And if I am late in putting myself at your service, it is but fitting that I redeem the time lost by redoubling my devotion and my love.

"O Mother of Mercy, help my weakness by your powerful intercession, and obtain for me from your Jesus the strength to be faithful to you until death. Grant that after having served you always in this life I may go to praise you eternally in Paradise" (St. Alphonsus).

ANALYTICAL INDEX

ANALYTICAL INDEX

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mourn : 310,1,2; - blessed are the clean of heart : 312,1,2; - blessed are the peacemakers : 314,1,2.

See : COUNSEL; FORTITUDE; UNDERSTANDING; PIETY; WISDOM; KNOWLEDGE; FEAR OF THE LORD.

Charity — Is inseparable from grace : 4,2; 259,1; - cannot subsist with the death caused by sin: 254,1; - whoever possesses it shares in the life of God : 4,2; - is the condition and the consequence of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit : 189,2; - proportionately to —, the gifts of the Holy Spirit develop in our souls : 195,2; - only — and grace confer supernatural life to the soul : 259,1; - is the greatest gift the Holy Spirit can infuse in us : *ibid.*; - is the greatest virtue : 4,2; 254,1; - is the essence of Christian perfection : 100,1; 106,1; 145,2; - has pre-eminence over all the virtues : 254,1,2; - gives the warmth and strength of eternal life to hope : 254,1; - nothing avails without — : 254,2; - least act of — immensely superior to all human values : 234,2; - and to all extraordinary gifts : 259,1; - Christianity is all love : 301,1; - a soul is holy in the measure that it is dominated by — : 4,2; - by means of — the soul is always orientated toward God : 13,2; 160,1; - increase of — : 35,2; 180,2; - Jesus has commanded the exercise of this virtue in the greatest measure : 19,1; - the precept of — has no limits : 53,2; 253,1; - is absolute : *ibid.*; - makes one share in the infinite love with which God loves Himself and creatures : 53,1; 271,2; - is a created participation in the love with which God loves Himself : 250,1,2; 251,2; - makes us enter

into the current of love existing in the Blessed Trinity : 250,1,2; - is the love of friendship between God and man : 251,1,2; - conquers all things : 63,2; - spiritual life and consecration to God worth little if they do not lead to perfection of — : 70,1; - end of spiritual life is the perfection of — : 145,2; 301,1; - perfection of — demands detachment from earthly goods; 86,1; - perfect — requires absolute renunciation and purity : 253,2 355,1,2; - empties the will of all things because it obliges it to love God above all things : 349,2; - on earth absolute perfection of — not possible, but only relative perfection : 253,1; 256,1; - the foundation of — is humility : 106,1; 259,2; 301,2; - is one because it has but one object, God, loved in Himself and in one's neighbor : 181,1; 258,1; - double movement of — toward God and neighbor; one repressed, the other cannot be perfect : 323,2; 342,1; - is by nature expansive, apostolic : 323,2; - action and contemplation born of love and established only in perfect love : 342,2; - at the end of life we shall be judged on — : 364,2.

See : LOVE OF GOD; LOVE OF NEIGHBOR.

Chastity — Souls consecrated to God obliged to perfect — : 75,1; - vow of perfect — : 88,2; - vow of — does not condemn souls to a sterile life, but uniting them to God, opens to them the sublime fruitfulness of the apostolate : *ibid.*; - the vow of — does not liberate the soul from temptations and struggles : 89,1; - required of every Christian in conformity with his state of life : 88,1; - of body, not sufficient, should include that of heart and

thoughts : *ibid.*; - of heart : 90,1,2; - modesty, custodian of — : 89,1,2.

Christian — Every — has the duty of the apostolate : 23,1,2; 77,2; 318,1,2; - no one more cold-hearted than a — with no interest in the salvation of others : 317,2; - no pagans, if — were what they should be : 327,1; - every — who strives to make the spirit of the Gospel penetrate his own life is, in his own sphere, a collaborator with Christ : 328,2; - should live for the glory of Christ : 32,2; 40,2; 206,2; - is a new creature purified in the Blood of Christ : 36,2; - should live in Christ : 43,2; 48,1; 65,1; - is a member of the Mystical Body of Christ : 44,1,2; 48,2; 67,2; 164,1; 267,1; - is *alter Christus* in measure in which he is influenced by Jesus and the inspirations of the Holy Spirit : 65,1; - his life should be a prolongation of the life of Christ : 65,2; - is called to participate in the redemptive work of Jesus : 374,2; - is a child of God : 34,2; 75,1; 164,1; 282,1; - is a temple of the Holy Spirit : 47,2; - should seek only the glory of God : 62,2; - his riches are to be a child of God, heir of Christ, temple of the Holy Spirit : 245,1; - should serve God, not as a servant, but as a son : 282,2; - is a child of the Church : 67,2; 164,1; 375,1; - his spiritual life should conform to the directives of the Church : 164,1; - should contribute to the good of the Church : 357,1; 375,2; - the greatness of his vocation : 75,1; - is great through gifts received from God : 286,2; - is a tree in the vineyard of the Lord, lovingly cared for by the Divine Gardener : 238,1; - should carefully manage the natural and supernatural patri-

mony received from God : **245,2**; - should be deeply engaged in struggle against sin, in himself and in others : **100,2**; - should impose upon himself a life of sacrifice, in view of the happiness of the next world : **161,1**; - is a pilgrim anxious to reach the fatherland of Heaven : **161,2**; - cannot be completely satisfied until he has reached Heaven : *ibid.*; - many Christians serve God merely for their own interests : **211,2**; - should be aware of his fellowship with his brethren : **267,1**; - is a potential martyr : **288,1**; - should not be a forced Cyrenian, but a voluntary one : **291,2**; - we are Christians in the measure in which we live in love and understand the mystery of the love of God : **301,1**.

The Church — Society of the faithful : **23,1**; **318,2**; - its beginning and development : **357,1**; - Spouse of Christ : **23,1**; **67,1**; - Mystical Body of Christ : **44,1**; **67,1**; **68,1**; **69,1**; **357,1**; - Christ makes — live His own Life : **44,1**; **67,1**; - continues the work of Christ : *ibid.*; **188,1**; **318,2**; - sole depository of the merits and doctrine of Christ : **67,2**; - by means of the sacraments, — nourishes the life of its members : **69,1**; - love and devotion to — and submission to its directives : **67,1,2**; **328,2**; **357,1**; - duty of contributing to the good of — : **77,2**; **357,1**; **375,2**; - not a true Catholic if he does not renounce his personal views to *feel* with — : **375,1**; - solidarity with — : **375,2**; - our spiritual life should be framed in that of — and associated with it : **164,1**; - participation in the universal prayer of — : **165,2**; **167,1,2**; - prays through the hearts

of her children; the more fervent they are, the more pleasing will their prayer be to God : **167,2**; - the Holy Spirit is the soul of — and guides it to the fulfillment of its mission : **188,1**; - Holy Spirit illuminates souls through the teaching of — : **190,2**; - importance in — of contemplative Orders : **324,2**; **325,1,2**; **326,1,2**; - active and contemplative Orders necessary for the growth of — : **328,1**; - contacts between — triumphant, — militant, and — suffering : **385,1**.

Confession — Utility of frequent — and dispositions to receive its fruit : **73,2**; **104,1,2**; by means of sacramental grace, — protects the soul from sin : **3,2**; **104,1**; - accusation of the degree of willfulness in our faults and motives : **104,2**; - importance of sorrow : *ibid.*; - sincerity in — : **284,1**; - accompanied by deep compunction : **310,1**; - difficulties due to a lack of the spirit of faith : **280,2**; - to doubt absolution is to doubt Jesus Himself : *ibid.*

Confidence — Too much self-confidence prevents the soul from having recourse to God with full — : **63,2**; - God admits to His intimacy only souls completely free from self-confidence : **108,2**; - in God increases in the measure of one's humility and diffidence in self : *ibid.*; **21,1,2**; - soul who trusts itself is not mature in sanctity and the apostolate : **135,2**; - should have recourse to God with all — : **63,2**; - unlimited — in the infinite merits of Jesus : **175,2**; - and in divine Providence : **239,2**; - we should trust ourselves to God because we are His children : **245,1**; - to trust in God even to

daring : 247,²; - the more — we have in God, the stronger we shall be : 295,²; - — in God in temptations : 98,²; 215,²; 252,¹; - in trials : 119,²; - in suffering : 129,²; 130,²; - in temptations to discouragement : 248,²; - in the anguish of purifying trials : 352,²; 354,^{1,2}; - — in God in spite of one's own miseries and failings : 108,^{1,2}; 109,²; 210,²; 215,²; 217,^{1,2}; 247,²; 249,²; 252,¹; 280,²; 295,²; 352,²; - the more we experience our impotency and our nothingness, so much the more we rely on God with full — : 247,¹; - to make use of our miseries to show God how much we need His help and to increase our — in Him : 249,²; - we should go to Jesus because we are sinners : 280,²; - want of — in God lessens capacity to love : 109,²; - and paralyzes spiritual life : 217,²; - — in government of God through the commands of superiors : 123,²; - — in God is vain if not accompanied by works : 175,².

See : HOPE.

Confirmation — Confirms the soul in Christian life : 72,¹; - infuses the strength of the Holy Spirit : 72,²; - confers strength to face even martyrdom when necessary : 72,¹; 288,¹; - — is the Pentecost of every Christian soul : 189,²; - to value and to live this sacrament : 72,².

Consecration to God — The consecrated soul is especially called to collaborate with Christ for the salvation of souls : 23,²; 61,¹; - consecrated to God, one becomes His collaborator in communicating the life of grace to men : 88,²; 341,¹; - spiritual paternity and maternity derived from — : 88,²

341,^{1,2}; 374,²; - has no value if it does not aid to perfect love : 70,¹; - is vain for one who does not live his Baptism : 71,²; - should become ever deeper and more perfect : 76,²; - the vocation to — due solely to the divine good pleasure : 75,²; - soul consecrated to God does not belong to itself or creatures but to God alone : 75,¹; - calls for renunciation and detachment : 76,^{1,2}; 88,²; 386,¹; - one should practice particular modesty of the senses : 89,^{1,2}; - its one directive is to let oneself be spent and consumed for the glory of God : 386,²; - coldness and infidelity of consecrated souls : 134,²; 202,¹; 203,²; 283,¹; 322,²; 386,²; - virgin souls who have almost lost their "consecrated" vocation because of their attachment to the world : 386,¹; - Mary is the model of consecrated souls : 386,^{1,2}.

Contemplation — Genuine — inspires generosity and sacrifice : 59,²; - purpose of contemplative graces is to render souls stronger in suffering : 194,¹; - should not interfere with the practice of fraternal charity : 64,¹; - gift of God granted only to generous souls : 143,²; - it is lawful to desire it, but not excessively, because it is a gift God gives to whom and how He wishes : 144,¹; - necessary to dispose oneself for — with unlimited generosity, with recollection and prayer : 145,^{1,2}; - is a precious means of entering into intimacy with God : 144,¹; - diverse degrees and forms of — : 144,²; - is not the end of the spiritual life, but a powerful means of attaining to the plenitude of love : 145,²; - the more a soul contemplates God, the more it loves Him and acquires generosity

in His service : 151,2; - obscure and initial — arises amidst the anguish of purifying aridity : 157,1 - conduct of the soul in this degree of — : 158,2; 159,1,2; - — and the apostolate not opposed, but require and sustain each other : 184,1; 342,2; - the perfect harmony between action and — realized only in the full maturity of the spiritual life : 331,2; 342,2; - and is the fruit of perfect love : *ibid.*; - one should give oneself to — and action according to the duties of ones' state in life and in obedience : 342,1; - desire of — draws one from performing works not in conformity with the Will of God : *ibid.*; - at the apex of the spiritual life action and — blend in perfect unity and harmony : 342,2.

Contemplatives — Importance in the Church of contemplative Orders : 24,2; 324,2; 325,1,2; 326,1,2; - — cannot say to those actively engaged, "Your works are not necessary," and vice versa : 328,1; - no form of contemplative life excludes the duty and necessity of care for one's neighbor : 64,2; - from the fervent contemplative life is born the flame of the apostolate : 184,1; - spiritual paternity and maternity of contemplative souls : 341,2; - the contemplative soul who attains the greatest charity is eminently apostolic : 342,2; - all the great — have been great apostles : *ibid.*; - — should engage with all their might in prayer and continual immolation for the salvation of souls : 324,2; 326,2; - their prayer is the guarantee of victory for those who struggle in the world : 325,2; - every contemplative soul should be a worthy altar where prayer is offered

and the sacrifice of self-immolation : 326,1.

Conversion — We should always renew ourselves by — : 77,1; 99,1; - no need to place limits on one's own — : 99,2; - — is by nature progressive : *ibid.*; - the need to arise each day from our little infidelities : 294,2; - the meaning of — : 99,1; - the point of departure for — is the sincere recognition of one's faults : 350,1.

Counsel (Gift of) — To aid prudence : 306,1; - by means of — the soul perceives the voice of the Holy Spirit : 306,1; - by means of this gift the Holy Spirit wishes to be our Counselor : 306,2; - recollection and docility necessary to profit by this gift : *ibid.*; - its special effect is mercy : 307,1; - it corresponds to the beatitude of mercy : 307,1,2; - it enlightens us on our own misery : 307,2.

Courage — Urges the soul to face anything in order to be faithful to God : 288,1; - — is necessary to follow the divine inspirations : 302,1; - to make acts of — in spite of the fears that invade our sensible nature : *ibid.*; - one becomes courageous by performing acts of — : 288,2.

Creatures — To find God, it is necessary to go from — : 11,2; - attachment to — is an obstacle in the quest for God : 13,1; 20,1,2; 90,1,2; - how to use — so that they will not divert us from union with God : 13,1; 20,1,2; - should not delay us on our way to God : 161,2; - to go beyond — to see God who has created them : 163,1,2; 244,2; - whoever wishes to be united with God should

not permit his heart to be bound to — : 227,2; - in the measure that a soul separates herself from —, she climbs the secret ladder of love : 361,1; - greatest folly to let the heart be bound to — who have no claim on it : 90,1; - soul who wishes to live for God alone desires to be forgotten by — : 114,2; - whoever seeks possession of — has not poverty of spirit : 300,2; - to live in the midst of — and to be occupied with them without the heart being attached to them : 379,2; — not sufficient to satisfy our thirst for happiness : 143,1; 303,2; - vanity of — : 309,1; 356,1; - attractiveness of — easily makes one forget and even betray his Creator : 309,1; - necessary to esteem God above all — : 356,1; - are nothing in comparison with God : 227,2; 228,1; 229,1; 309,1,2; - exist only because God has created them and maintains them in existence : 228,1; - are variable and changeable : 230,1; - can do nothing without the help of God : 240,2; - to the soul enlightened by the gift of knowledge, — become a ladder to God : 309,2.

Cross — To follow Jesus necessary to carry the — : 126,1; 129,1; 193,2; - the more we share in the — of Christ, the more we shall be like Him : 194,1; - when we flee from sacrifice, we act as enemies of the — of Christ : 350,1; - only the way of the — leads to union with God : 354,1; - love of Jesus transformed the —, a horrible instrument of torture, to a most effective means for the glory of God and the salvation of mankind : 127,2; - the — of Jesus is the greatest proof of His love for men : 132,2; - Jesus reigns from the — :

133,1; - the victory of the — : 139,1; - the daily — : 129,1,2; 194,2; - to bear the — with love : 129,2; - is the great means of our sanctification : 132,1; 194,1; - is the instrument and work of love : 132,2.

Death — Jesus in submitting to — has given us strength to accept it with love : 94,1; - soul who tries to fulfill the Will of God with love can trust that God will grant her the grace to accept — with love : 95,2; — of love accessible to all souls of good will : *ibid.*; - to overcome the anguish of — by acts of adhesion to the Will of God and abandonment : 138,2; - usefulness of the thought of — : 94,1; - is never sudden for one who is ready : 95,1; - will not be feared by one who is always faithful to grace : *ibid.*; - last visit of the Lord to the soul : *ibid.*; - door opened to eternity, which introduces us to eternal life : 385,1; - happy the soul who at the end of life with no delay is admitted to the beatific union of Heaven : 364,2; - at the end of life only love remains : 384,1; - and the good works accomplished which render — precious : 385,2.

Defects — Should not be too much at peace with our — : 295,2.
See : IMPERFECTIONS.

Despoilment — Of self and of all things in order to respond to the infinite love of God : 31,1,2; - to love and despoil oneself for God of all that is not God : 31,2; 348,2; - need of despoiling self of all to attain true poverty of spirit : 300,1; - the soul which strips itself of its appetites, its likings and

dislikings will be clothed by the Lord with His own purity, His own joy, and His own will : **300,2**; - God rids the soul of its imperfections in order to clothe it with Himself : **348,2**.

Detachment — Necessity of — to find God : **11,1,2; 13,2; 81,1,2**; - the more a soul feels the need of God, the more she is detached from earthly things : **141,1**; - renders the soul docile to the inspiration and voice of the Holy Spirit : **192,2**; **306,2**; - a thread suffices to attach the soul to earth : **192,2**; - deep and radical — necessary to attain union with God : **349,1,2**; - — is the indispensable foundation of the spiritual life : **54,2**; - required of the soul consecrated to God : **76,1,2; 88,2; 386,1**; - total — is the logical consequence of the precept of charity : **80,1**; - essence of — consists in putting to death all disordered affections : **80,2**; - relation between effective and affective — : *ibid.*; - not an end in itself, but a means to unite the soul with God : **81,2; 82,1**; - its end is not to leave the soul in emptiness, but to raise it to God : **81,2**; - rules for — : **82,1,2**; - should be practised with generosity and discretion : **82,2**; - to practise — even in relaxation : *ibid.*. See : ABNEGATION; MORTIFICATION; RENUNCIATION.

Devotion — Absence of sensible — causes aridity : **153,1**; - consists in the promptness of the will in the service of God : **153,2; 282,2**; - is an act of the will and can subsist in spite of aridity and the rebellion of our lower nature : *ibid.*; - when it is deprived of relish, its value is doubled : *ibid.*

Discouragement — Due to pride and lack of confidence in God : **109,1; 249,2; 295,1**; - makes one recede in the path of perfection : **295,1**; - not to be discouraged by falls, but to humble oneself and begin again : **193,2; 293,2; 294,1; 295,1**; - not to be discouraged by one's misery and impotence : **247,2; 252,1**; - in temptations to — to react with an act of confidence in God : **248,2**.

Divine Office — Prayer of the Mystical Body of Christ : **167,1,2**; - universal prayer offered in union with Christ and in the name of the whole Church : *ibid.*

Doctrine — False — : **238,2**; - avails little to possess profound — if one fails to live in conformity to it : *ibid.*; - the fruit that should prove the worth of the — is the fulfillment of the Will of God : *ibid.*; - sanctity should be based on — : **337,1**.

Duty — Is the expression of the Will of God : **6,2**; - how to seek God in the fulfillment of our — : **13,1,2**; - conformity to the Will of God should be expressed in the fulfillment of our — : **193,2**; - perfect fulfillment of — leads to sanctity : **6,2**; - that which distinguishes the saints is perfection of diligence in fulfillment of — : **276,1**; - promptness and punctuality in the fulfillment of — : **276,2**; - — toward God takes the first place : **42,2; 343,2**; - toward family : **42,2**; - perfect fulfillment of professional — as a means of the apostolate : **337,2**; - relation between civil and religious — : **343,2**; - every Christian is bound to fulfill every — of good citizenship : *ibid.*; - conflict between action and

contemplation should be resolved by — of one's state : 342,1.

Efforts — To react against difficulties without sacrificing one's peace : 63,1; - God wills our —, but not that we should place our hope in them : 63,2; - to continually renew our — with humility and confidence : 193,2; - draw down the help of the Holy Spirit : *ibid.*; 197,1; - are necessary to attain sanctity : *ibid.*; - God does not ask us to succeed but to continually renew our — : 294,1.

Eternity — In — we shall be confirmed in degree of grace which we had at the moment of death : 35,1; - present life should be seen in connection with — that awaits it : 230,2.

See : HEAVEN.

Eucharist - Communion — Foreseen in miracle at the Wedding of Cana : 49,2; - is the response of Jesus to the betrayal of men : 137,1; - at the moment of — we, like Our Lady, hold Jesus truly living in our heart : 183,1; 206,1; - in the — we find the Sacred Heart living in the midst of us : 216,1; - by means of — the Heart of Jesus comes to dwell within us : *ibid.*; - perpetuates the presence of Jesus within us : 200,1; 201,1,2; - in the — Jesus is not a passive object of our adoration but a living one : 201,2; - living faith in the — : 202,1,2; - behavior in the presence of the — : 202,2; - in the — Jesus makes Himself our Food : 201,1; 202,2; 203,1,2; 204,1; - the — nourishes the life of Christ in us : *ibid.*; - in the — Jesus feeds us with His substance, assimilating us into Himself and personally communicating the

divine life : 205,2; - by means of the other sacraments Jesus gives us His grace; by the — He gives Himself to us : *ibid.*; - he who nourishes himself by the — lives the life Jesus communicates to him : 206,2; - is the sacrament of union : 200,2; 206,1,2; 207,1; - by means of the — Jesus unites Himself to us in the most intimate manner : 205,1,2; - union with Christ begun at baptism has its greatest fulness in the — : 206,1; - special grace of the — is union with Jesus : 207,1,2; 218,1; - it strengthens permanent union with Jesus : 216,2; 218,1,2; - to remain throughout the day under the influence of the — : 218,2; - is a pledge of eternal life : 204,2; - is our hope for this life and the next : *ibid.*; - in the — the love of Jesus surpassed all measures : 205,1; - the — crowns all the gifts of the love of Jesus : 208,1; - coldness toward the — : 202,1; 203,2; - the reasons that keep some persons from the — : 203,2; - the effects of the — are proportioned to the communicant : 207,1; 218,1; - every — produces an increase of grace and charity : 207,2; 218,1; - Jesus in the — continues to be mediator between us and the Trinity : 219,1; - — strengthens the union of our soul with the Trinity : 219,1,2; - special presence of the Blessed Trinity through the reception of the — : 219,2; - sacramental presence of Jesus in our soul enables us to render worthy adoration to the Blessed Trinity : *ibid.*

Evil — To omit good is to do — : 112,2; - tactics for overcoming — : *ibid.*; - from the double — of sin and suffering, God has drawn the great good of our Redemption :

127,1; - the infinite goodness of God draws good even from — : **232,1.**

Examination of Conscience — Necessity and practice : **103,1,2;** - need to examine oneself on the degree of willfulness in our failings : **103,2.**

Extreme Unction — Perfects the purification of the soul in order to prepare it to meet God : **74,1;** - necessity of receiving it with proper dispositions : **74,2.**

Faith — Its necessity : **15,2;** **18,1,2;** **241,1;** - is proximate and proportionate means to union with God : **18,1;** - quest of God in — : **18,2;** **141,2;** - spirit of — makes one recognize God in all creatures : **20,1,2;** **163,1,2;** - to believe in the infinite love of God : **18,2;** **19,1;** **30,1,2;** **63,1;** **235,2;** **301,1;** - to believe in one's vocation to sanctity and intimacy with God : **177,1;** - practice of — in darkness and temptation : **41,2;** **147,2;** **242,2;** **243,2;** - and in the dark night of the spirit : **353,2;** - spirit of — in trials : **63,1;** **119,2;** **147,2;** **163,1;** **177,1;** - conduct in temptations and doubts against — : **242,2;** - by trials and difficulties — becomes purer and stronger : *ibid.*; **243,2;** - naked and pure — the sole support of the soul in the dark night of the soul : **353,2;** - makes one share in the knowledge of God : **53,1;** **241,1;** **250,1;** - makes one see and judge things as God Himself does : **163,1;** **241,1;** **244,2;** **349,2;** - is an anticipation of the knowledge of God that we shall have in Heaven : **241,2;** - makes us enter, while on earth, into communion with the thought and knowledge of God : *ibid.*; - the more we

judge things in the light of —, the nearer we draw to the Wisdom of God : **244,2;** - examples of living — : **56,1;** **91,2;** - doubt of Thomas the Apostle strengthens our — : **147,2;** - necessary to draw near to Jesus with the simplicity of a child : **147,1;** - to have great —, necessary to have humility and simplicity of a child : **315,1;** - — is the foundation of supernatural obedience : **124,2;** - importance of — in relation to the Eucharist : **202,1,2;** - spirit of — in suffering and difficulty : **128,2;** **243,1;** - in the providential government of God, who ordains all for our good and our sanctification : **163,1,2;** **244,1,2;** **351,2;** - spirit of — recognizes God, His Will, or permission in every circumstance of life : **163,1,2;** **244,1,2;** **351,1,2;** - spirit of — does not examine the Ways of God, but believes in Him and follows Him blindly : **177,2;** - lack of — hinders us from overcoming many difficulties : **231,2;** **243,1;** - — should enlighten, not only hour of prayer, but our whole life : **244,1;** - glance of — is most comprehensive and penetrating : **244,2;** - to believe in the wise and loving government of God without understanding it : *ibid.*; - blessed are those who have no need of sensible signs to believe in God : **147,2;** **329,2;** - more than substitutes for the senses : **201,2;** - is often smothered in a too natural mentality : **244,1;** - purifies the understanding : **349,2;** - value of — which clings blindly to God through every circumstance and personal experience : **147,2;** **221,1;** **242,1,2;** **353,2;** - is voluntary adherence of the intellect to revealed truth : **202,2;** **242,2;** - certitude and obscurity of — : **242,2;** - obscurity

of — constitutes the glory and the merit of the act of — : *ibid.* - profound motive of — is not our experience, but the authority of God : 329,2; - the purer is —, the more free from human elements, the more pleasing it is to God : *ibid.*; - without works — is dead : 238,1; 254,1; - should be sustained by hope : 246,1; - — without charity is incomplete : 254,1; - in Heaven it will cease : *ibid.*; - is perfected by the gift of understanding : 311,1; - the more lively — is, so much the more God enters into our life—the great reality in whom we live : 241,2; - God uses His omnipotence in favor of one who firmly believes in Him : 243,1; to believe in God at all costs and without uncertainty : 243,2.

Fear — Of God which comes from love and makes the soul diligent : 276,1; - difference between servile and filial — : 299,1; - perfect filial — is the fruit of perfect love : 299,2; - *Gift of Fear* : inspires hatred for sin which offends God : 299,1; - perfects the virtues of hope and temperance : 299,2; - inspires filial reverence for the majesty of God : *ibid.*; - to the Gift of — corresponds the beatitude of poverty of spirit : 300,1.

Fervor — Sensible — makes spiritual exercises easy and pleasant : 153,1.

Fidelity — To God in love : 22,1; - in suffering : 105,2; - in times of darkness : 139,2; - in following the impulses of grace : 266,1; - delicacy in — to God : 310,1; - — of the soul is met with new invitations on the part of God : 76,2.

Fortitude (Gift of) — Perfects the virtue of — : 302,1; - by means of this gift the Holy Spirit communicates something of His infinite strength : 302,2; - corresponds to the beatitude : blessed are they that hunger : 303,1; - by the practice of the virtue of — we dispose ourselves to receive the gift : 302,2.

Fortitude (Virtue of) — Makes one capable of facing sacrifices in the fulfillment of duty : 286,1; - supreme act of — is martyrdom : 288,1; - it is for us to exercise — infused in us at baptism : 288,2; - principal act of — to stand firm in danger and to bear difficulties with virility : 291,1; - is based on God and His great gifts given to men : 286,2; - without grace, all human — is weakness : 288,2; - the more confidence we have in God, the more we shall become strong in — : 289,2; - our — insufficient if not strengthened by infused gift of the Holy Spirit : 301,1; 302,1,2; - should be joined to humility : 286,2; - — and patience in inevitable difficulties of life : 291,1,2.

Generosity — Consideration of the love of God urges to — : 30,1; 150,1; - the more a soul loves God, the more it feels the need of total — : 151,2; - is the fruit and the generator of love : 290,1; - love of souls urges to — : 323,1,2; - in mortifications : 92,2; 93,2; - in despoilment : 300,1,2; - in the practice of the apostolate : 333,2; - necessary to attain union with God : 362,2; - in accomplishing the mission God has entrusted to us : 372,2; - God does not refuse His gifts to a generous soul :

144,1; - total — is the means by which to dispose ourselves to receive the divine gifts : **145,1,2;** **290,2;** - lack of — is an obstacle to the action of the Holy Spirit in our soul : **192,2;** - a soul who does not serve God with — will not be satisfied : **287,2;** - no need to fear doing too much for God : **289,2;** **290,1,2;** urges to do all with the greatest dedication without stint or calculation : **290,1,2;** - is short cut to reach goal quickly : **290,1;** - one becomes generous by forgetting self and always seeking what is most perfect : **290,2.**

Gifts of the Holy Spirit — Graces of light and love infused into our souls by the — : **143,2;** - activity of the — in prayer : **145,1;** **159,1;** - actuation of the — is the normal achievement of the soul who corresponds to grace : **145,1;** **316,1;** - no temerity to desire the — to develop into full maturity : *ibid.*; - are supernatural principles which make the soul capable of receiving the help of the Holy Spirit : **195,1,2;** - we receive them in baptism together with grace and the infused virtues, and they develop together : *ibid.*; - by means of the — God Himself intervenes in the work of our sanctification : **195,1;** - they grow in us with the growth of charity : **195,2;** - progressive influence of the — in the spiritual life : **197,2;** - they are given to perfect the virtues : **197,1;** **298,2;** - by the practice of the virtues the soul should dispose itself for the action of the — : **197,1;** - only under the habitual influence of the — can the instability of human nature be cured : **293,2;** - they are indispensable in attaining perfect virtue, sanctity : **298,2;**

- fear, fortitude, piety, and counsel perfect the moral virtues; knowledge, understanding, and wisdom perfect the theological virtues : **309,1;** - every gift corresponds to a beatitude : **300,1.**
See : COUNSEL; FORTITUDE; UNDERSTANDING; PIETY; WISDOM; KNOWLEDGE; FEAR OF THE LORD.

Glory — The Christian should not wish any — but that which comes from being a child of God : **62,2;** - if we admire and glorify ourselves, our — is nothing : *ibid.*; - the search for human — blinds one to the ways of the spirit : *ibid.*

Glory of God — Is the prime motive of all the works of God : **32,1;** **226,2;** **317,1;** - God, infinitely good, wishes to be glorified in procuring the happiness of His creatures : **226,2;** **317,1;** - we have been created and should live for the — : **32,2;** **226,1,2;** - we should seek the — in everything : **62,2;** - no waste to use gifts of God solely for His glory : **134,1;** - glory we can give God consists in being one with His Will : **256,1;** - need to seek perfection, not to enjoy it, but for the — : **132,2;** - first consideration should always be the — and His pleasure : **256,1;** - the soul, who after falling, turns to God with repentance and confidence, gives much glory to God : **210,2.**

God — Gave His only-begotten Son for the salvation of the world : **2,1;** **22,1;** **26,1;** **29,1;** **30,2;** **36,1;** **231,1;** **317,1;** - permits the fall of man in view of the redemptive Incarnation of the Word : **39,2;** - wishes all to be saved : **2,1;** - wishes all to be saints : **2,2;** **53,1;** **77,2;** **84,1;** **298,1;** - He calls

at all hours : 77,2; — is Love : 4,1; 26,1,2; 29,1; 235,1; 271,2; - He wills only love : 301,1; - He has created us to communicate His goodness and His happiness : 4,1; 26,1; 233,1; 320,1; - His infinite love for us : 4,1; 22,1; 30,1,2; 36,1; 63,1; 189,1; 205,2; 208,2; 221,2; 226,1; 251,1; 301,1; 352,2; 353,1; 354,1; 358,1; - He has created us by an act of love : 26,1; 233,1; 235,1,2; - He has redeemed us by a more striking act of love : 26,1; 205,1; 320,1; - has made us His children and has resolved to make us share in His Nature, His intimate Life, and in His eternal beatitude : 26,1; 205,1; 251,1; - all His actions in our favor are actions of love : 26,1,2; 205,1; 235,1,2; 320,1; - consideration of His infinite love urges to generosity and a return of love : 22,1; 30,1; 31,1,2; 150,1; 211,1,2; 299,1; - we are called to imitate His infinite perfections : 4,1; 53,1; 227,1; 298,1; - above all, we should imitate His Charity : 4,1; 53,2; - we should reflect His Unity, bringing about unity in ourselves : 228,2; - His Simplicity, the means of our simplicity of spirit : 229,1,2; - His Goodness, loving and benefiting all : 233,2; - His Wisdom, judging all things in relation to Him : 234,2; - His Mercy, showing mercy to our neighbor : 236,2; 264,1,2; - God invites the soul to intimacy with Himself : 10,1,2; 141,2; 321,1; - and to union with Himself : 358,1; - cannot admit to His intimacy a soul who retains even a slight attachment to sin or imperfection : 237,2; - does not reject us because of our misery, but notwithstanding it, invites us to His intimacy : 352,2; 353,1; - the divine natural and supernatural

likeness God has imprinted on our souls expresses His desire to unite us to Himself : 358,1; - to find — it is necessary to make use of all things and to recollect oneself in God : 11,1,2; 12,1,2; - how to seek Him in ourselves : 11,1,2; 12,1,2; 141,2; 152,1,2; - how to maintain contact with Him in the midst of occupations : 13,1,2; 21,1,2; 160,1,2; 162,1,2; 163,1,2; - the quest for — : 18,1,2; and *fol.*; 140,2; and *fol.*; - if the soul is seeking —, much more is her loving Saviour seeking her : 19,2; 197,1; 363,1; - we should live for the glory of — : 32,2; 226,2; 228,1; - — alone suffices : 105,2; - the soul should strive to please God alone : 115,2; - — forces no one, but He gives Himself wholly to those who give themselves wholly to Him : 34,1; 90,2; 145,2; 188,2; 366,1; - He does not give Himself wholly to the soul while it is not purified from everything that is contrary to His infinite perfections : 78,1,2; - He does not sanctify us without our cooperation and our consent : 77,2; 84,1,2; 99,2; 172,2; 298,1; - only — can sanctify us, but He does not do it without our concurrence : 119,2; - Jesus is the only Way that leads to — : 38,1,2; - — loves us and recognizes us as His adopted children only if He sees us grafted onto Christ : 43,1; - — is not a tyrant who enslaves us, but a Father who tries us because He loves us : 63,1; - — does not abandon us if we do not first abandon Him : *ibid.*; 119,2; 248,1; - — permits evil to put His servants to the test : 70,2; — does not permit us to be tempted beyond our strength : 98,2; 252,1; - every circumstance, however painful, is permitted by

— for our good : 128,2; 129,2; 130,2; 163,1,2; 239,1; 243,2; 291,1; 292,1,2; - is faithful : 177,1; 239,1; 252,1; - does not deceive our hope : 178,2; - tries those whom He loves : 248,1; 354,1; - has the right to require renunciation of the affections that are most holy : 76,1; - is jealous of the heart that is consecrated to Him : 90,2; - not possible to serve — and Mammon : 85,1; 287,1; — does not give us consolation for pleasure, but to make us more generous in suffering : 105,2; - without — we cannot think or will any good : 107,2; — alone can satisfy us : 141,1; 143,1; 231,1; - hunger and thirst for — : 141,1; 231,1; 358,1,2; - our life is one continual seeking of — : 141,2; 379,2; - the seeking of — is the preoccupation of the loving soul : 142,1,2; - transcendence of — : 142,2; 227,1; 251,1; — infinitely surpasses our understanding : 191,1; 196,2; 227,1; - perfect orientation toward — impossible without the help of the Holy Spirit : 191,1; 195,1; - infinite distance between us and — : 353,1; - while on earth we know — through the mirror of creatures : 191,1; 227,2; - perfections of creatures are nothing in comparison with those of — : *ibid.*; 228,1,2; - our contact with — should be that of children : 198,1; 245,1; 282,1,2; - we should consider — as a Father : *ibid.*; 299,1; 304,1; — is our Father in spite of our miseries : 350,1; — is infinite Being eternally subsisting : 228,1; — possesses all perfections without defects or limits : 228,2; 230,1; - He is *ONE* in His myriad perfections : 228,2; - He is Being absolutely simple, to the exclusion of all duplicity and multiplicity :

229,1,2; - He wishes good always and solely : 229,2; 230,1; 232,1; - He is immutable; His thought and will do not change : 230,1; - He is eternal; He possesses the fulness of His infinite life totally at the same time : 230,2; - He is infinite Wisdom who knows all things in the most perfect manner : 234,1; - He is infinite Goodness who wishes only good and who draws good even out of evil, even from sin : 232,1; 244,2; - all that comes from the Hand of — bears the impress of His goodness : 232,2; - this infinite goodness immeasurably surpasses all human malice : *ibid.*; - goodness of — gratuitous and inexhaustible : 233,2; — is infinite Love; all that is in Him is love : 235,1; - the love of — is the Cause that infuses and creates goodness in things : *ibid.*; - all that we have; all that we are, is the gift of His infinite love : *ibid.*; - He goes before us and continually accompanies us with His love : 235,2; - He loves us when He consoles us and also when He afflicts us with sorrow : *ibid.*; - He loves us, not because we are without sin, but because we are His children : 249,2; - He has loved us to the extent of becoming like to us, so that it is possible to admit us within the circle of the divine friendship : 251,1; - and to unite us to Himself by love : 348,2; 358,1; - He has first loved us and made us capable of returning His love : 251,2; - the love of — for us is merciful love : 236,1; — is merciful because He is just, and He is just because He is merciful : 237,1; - in His mercy He gives as much as He can in accordance with justice : *ibid.*; — does not demand more than one can give Him : 329,2; — is Providence

that ordains and directs all for our good : **239,1; 244,2;** - permits suffering only for our good : **239,1; 248,1; 292,1;** - has special care for each creature, even the least : **239,2;** - governs all things with infinite sweetness : **270,1;** - nothing can obstruct His omnipotence : **240,1,2;** - omnipotence of — is totally at the service of His infinite goodness : **240,1;** - — is helpful omnipotence always ready to come to our assistance : **246,2.**

See : GLORY OF GOD; MERCY; PRESENCE OF GOD; PROVIDENCE; TRINITY.

Goods of Earth — Attachment to — is an obstacle to perfection : **85,1,2;** - should not have a too great solicitude for — : **87,1,2;** - — are a temptation to allure the heart : **287,1;** - excessive solicitude for — hinders the total seeking for the kingdom of God : **287,2;** - poverty of spirit frees the soul from servitude to — : **85,2;** - the vow of poverty prohibits their free use : **86,1,2.**

Grace — Makes one a participant in the Divine Life : **3,1; 251,1; 321,1;** - seed of sanctity : **3,1; 45,2;** - seed of glory : **44,2; 105,1;** - vital principle of our likeness with Christ : **65,1;** - creation of the love of God : **320,1;** - is gratuitous gift lavished on us through the merits of Christ : **3,2;** - given only through Jesus : **38,2; 43,1; 45,1,2;** - continually communicated by Christ in proportion to the fidelity of the soul's union with Him by faith, charity, and good works : **43,2;** - — communicated to our souls is in essence identical with that which adorned the soul of Jesus : **45,2; 58,2; 193,1;** - every — comes

to us from the creative action of the Holy Spirit and the mediatory action of Christ : **47,2;** - is infused in the soul in proportion to its conformity to the Will of God : **60,2; 78,1;** - and its purity : *ibid.*; - communicated by the sacraments : **69,1;** - is inseparable from charity : **4,2; 254,1;** - is destroyed by sin : **100,1;** - we cannot be certain that we are in the state of — : **247,1;** - transformation of soul by — : **49,2; 78,1,2; 105,1;** — transforms and transfigures from glory to glory : *ibid.*; - full development of — leads to identification with Christ : **193,1;** - — respects and utilizes all human values to their utmost : **335,2;** - — has been given to us that our whole soul may be healed, elevated and sanctified; only when this is our goal shall we enter into the "Kingdom of God" : **357,2;** - we should collaborate with — that the fruits of the Redemption may be applied to our souls and to others : **61,1;** - — does not sanctify us without our collaboration : **73,1;** - resistance of our souls to — : **133,2; 322,1;** - correspondence with — : **252,1,2; 266,2; 357,2; 364,1; 366,2;** - there are few who always respond to invitations of — : **322,2;** - to the perfect "Yes" of the soul, God replies with the true and complete "Yes" of — : **366,2;** - all is — : **63,1;** - God gives us — to overcome every evil tendency : **92,1;** - temptations : **98,2;** - weakness : **288,2;** - God does not refuse the first — which gives us the courage to act : *ibid.*; - the necessity of prayer to obtain — : **325,1;** - God has willed to have the distribution of — depend on the prayers of men : **325,2;** - necessity of actual — to perform any supernatural act : **107,2;** - without —

we cannot correspond with — : **266,2**; - God is within us by — : **141,2**; - by means of — God has established between Himself and us a certain community of life : **251,1; 345,2**; - only — and charity sanctify the soul and unite it with God : **259,1**; - by means of — and love the soul becomes like to God and enjoys His friendship : **321,1**; — and love are the precious seeds of union with God : **345,2**; - strength of — : **143,1**; - the least degree of — is immensely superior to great achievements : **234,2**; - and to all extraordinary gifts : **259,1**; — is not only light and divine life, but also strength : **286,1**; - increase of — : **180,2**; - development and triumph of — : **357,2; 366,1**; — of a member of Christ redounds to the good of all the other members : **323,2**.

Gratitude — Duties of — toward God : **280,2; 283,1,2**; — draws new benefits : **283,2**; — flourishes only in a humble heart : *ibid.*; - sometimes the souls who have received the most are the least grateful : **283,1**.

See : INGRATITUDE.

Haughtiness — Has the sad power of impeding the work of the infinite mercy of God : **236,1; 259,2**; - God resists the haughty and gives His grace to the humble : *ibid.*; - hinders charity : **259,2**; - he who is haughty is a seeding ground of discord : **294,1**; — is an obstacle to faith : **315,1**.

See : PRIDE.

Heaven — Sufferings of this life are nothing in comparison with the glory of — : **161,1**; - our life should be a continuous pilgrimage and

yearning for — : **161,1,2; 175,1; 179,1; 182,1; 379,1**; - our citizenship in — : **350,1**; - the soul inflamed with love yearns for — to love God more : **364,2**; - and to make Him loved by as many souls as possible : **370,2**; - ascension of Jesus has given us the right to — : **179,1**; - assumption of Mary is a plea to live with our thoughts on — : **379,1,2**; - only in — will an absolute fulness and stability of love be possible : **253,1; 256,1**; - in — we shall love God in the clarity of the beatific vision : **360,1**; - glory of — corresponds with the degree of love attained on earth : **384,1**; - life of — is union with God in its ultimate perfection : **345,1**; - the happy soul who at the end of life with no delay is admitted to the beatific union of — : **384,2**; - glory of the saints in — : **384,1**.

Hidden life — Imitation of the — of Jesus : **114,1; 116,1,2**; - and of Mary : **380,2**; - practice of remaining unobserved : **114,1,2; 380,2**; - to forget oneself and to hide from oneself : **115,1**; - from the — is derived a great disinterestedness, not only for human recompense, but also for divine consolations : **115,2**; - the more we wish to do great things for God, the more we should work in silence and be hidden : **380,1**; - to be very grateful to God when He makes us live in obscurity : **380,2**; - a soul of interior life should be anxious to hide herself under the shadow of God : *ibid.*; - the positive aspect of the — consists in being centered on God : **116,1**; - the more a soul hides itself from creatures, the more it is able to live hidden with Christ in God : **116,1,2**.

Holy Spirit — Is the soul of the Church : 44,2; 188,1; - given to the Church that each member may always become more like the Redeemer : 44,2; 188,2; 193,1; - promised by Christ as comforter and support of the Apostles : 179,2; 182,2; - gives strength to render testimony to Christ in any difficulty : *ibid.*; 188,1; - inflames in the Church zeal for glory of God and the salvation of souls : *ibid.*; - is the inspiration of every apostolate : 344,1; - is the Spirit of Jesus : 47,1; 187,1; - dwells in Christ with a singular fulness of grace : 47,1; - Soul of Christ is His chosen temple : *ibid.*; 187,1; - His action in the Soul of Christ which is most docile to His impulses : 187,2; - incorporated in Christ we receive the — : 48,1; - we receive Him in a special way in confirmation : 72,1,2; - Jesus merited Him for us and sent Him to continue His work in us : 168,1; 188,2; - the descent of the — is the fulness of the gift of God to men : 189,1; - He is the substantial expression of the mutual love of the Father and the Son : 186,1; - is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity : 186,2; - to Him particularly is attributed the diffusion of grace : 47,1; 190,1; 193,1; - and the work of sanctification : 186,2; 190,1; - dwells in all souls in state of grace and is pleased the greater is their degree of grace : 187,1; - immensely complacent in the most holy soul of Mary : *ibid.*; - is the sweet Guest of the soul : 188,2; 189,2; - His renewed and continual effusions in the soul : *ibid.*; - His continual and secret action in souls : 168,2; 190,1,2; - is in us to sanctify us : 188,2; 189,1; - cannot sanctify us if we do not respond

freely and fully to His action : 188,2; 190,1; 192,2; - prepares souls for the supernatural life : 190,1; - infuses charity in us : 189,2; 190,2; 259,1; 344,1; - invites the soul to good and sustains its efforts : 190,2; - our whole spiritual life develops under His influence : 190,2; 192,1; - His initiative in us supplies for our insufficiency : 191,2; 192,1,2; - attracts us and orientates us completely toward God : 191,2; 192,1; - is Master of sanctity : *ibid.*; - Master sweet but exacting : 302,1; - in us to conform us and assimilate us to Christ : 193,1; - urges us to the way of the cross : 194,1,2; - completes the soul's purification : 194,2; 316,1; 352,1,2; - His action in the soul is not always consoling : 194,2; 316,1; 352,1; - without His help impossible to attain sanctity : 195,1; 298,2; 316,2; - acts in us by His Gifts : 195,1,2; - infuses in us the sense of our divine sonship : 198,1; 299,1; 304,1; - He teaches us to pray and He prays in us : 198,2; - His influence in prayer : 143,2; 145,1; 159,1; - He enlightens the soul on its own misery : 307,2; 352,1,2; 256,1; - the full dominion over sensibility is the fruit of the — : 367,2; - sin is great obstacle to action of the — : 168,1,2; 188,1; - cannot fill the soul lacking in fraternal charity : 182,1; - attachment to self and lack of generosity hinder His action : 192,2; 306,2; - to act only under the impulse of the — : 171,2; - docility to His action and voice : 192,1,2; 197,2; 302,1; 306,2; 344,1,2; - trustful recourse to the — : 193,2; - the assiduous practice of virtue disposes the soul to receive the Gifts of the — : 197,1; 298,2; - the attitude

of the soul to dispose itself for His action and to profit by it : 197,^{1,2}; 316,²; - to place the whole spiritual life under His direction : 199,¹; - to act in continual dependence on Him : 199,²; 344,²; - how to recognize His inspirations : 199,²; - to follow the Will of God guided by the — is the most secure way to the heavenly Fatherland : 329,¹; - commentary on *Veni Creator* : 186,²; 316,².

See : BEATITUDES; GIFTS OF HOLY SPIRIT.

Honor — Attachment to points of — is obstacle to spiritual progress : 117,¹; - struggle against points of — : 117,².

Hope - As much as the soul hopes for, so much it obtains : 63,²; 249,¹; - — in God's mercy is very pleasing to Him : 108,²; - in spite of our misery, we should trust ourselves to God completely : 247,²; 249,^{1,2}; — in God is not excessive because it is based on His infinite mercy : 249,¹; - the more a soul is dilated by — in God the more it is open to His sanctifying action : *ibid.*; - in spite of its weakness and misery, the soul hopes to attain union with God : 359,²; - our — is based on the Passion of Jesus : 126,¹; - we can — for all in the name of Jesus and in His infinite merits : 175,²; — has a sense of sadness, as we do not yet possess that which we — for : 161,²; - in Heaven — will cease : 254,¹; - without charity, this virtue is incomplete : *ibid.*; - it is perfected by the gift of knowledge : 310,²; - it purifies the memory, emptying it of all things : 349,²; - our — in God is not complete as long as we still trust in creatures : 178,²; - the

Holy Eucharist is a motive for great — and confidence : 204,²; - object of — possession of God in Heaven : 246,¹; 299,²; - we should have firm — that God will pardon our sins and give graces necessary for sanctification : 246,^{1,2}; - foundation of — is infinite goodness of God, His saving and sanctifying Will : 247,¹; - we should not base our — on our merits, on our works or resources, but in God alone : 247,^{1,2}; 249,^{1,2}; 338,²; - certitude of — based on faith in infinite love of God : 247,²; - in trials our — becomes more pure, supernatural, and intense : 247,¹; 248,^{1,2}; - stability of — measured by trial, desolation, abandonment : 248,¹; - least act of — in trial and desolation worth more than a thousand in joy and prosperity : 248,²; - not necessary to have sentiment of —; it suffices to will to — : *ibid.*; - conduct in trials and temptations against — *ibid.*; - is the anchor of salvation for the soul tossed by the waves of human weakness : 249,²; - unshakable — in anguish of purifying trials : 353,¹; - temerity to think God will save and sanctify us without our collaboration : 246,²; - though God requires good works, God does not wish us to base our confidence in them : 247,¹; - Christian — requires good works, though it does not direct us to depend upon them, but upon God and His infinite mercy : 249,²; - firm — necessary for an apostle : 338,^{1,2}; - to continue to — in spite of contradiction and failure in the apostolate : 338,².
See : CONFIDENCE.

Humiliations — Are means of acquiring humility : 110,¹; 377,²;

- — do not render one humble but by the way in which they are accepted : 110,²; - — which show the truth are worth much more than illusions which lead to deception : 284,¹; - to ask for — whenever we are tempted to raise ourselves above others : 301,²; - to share in the outrages and — of Jesus : 376,².

Humility — Means of preparing in our hearts the way of the Lord : 22,²; - necessity of — to overcome enticements to self-love : 62,²; - difficulty in obedience due to lack of — : 125,²; - is difficult to humble oneself before one's neighbor : 377,¹; - in falls : 101,²; 109,^{1,2}; 193,²; 210,²; 295,¹; —, sincere and trustful, is the remedy for every fall and misery : 109,²; 210,²; 236,²; 249,²; - to humbly recognize one's own faults without excusing them and to accept correction : 118,¹; - the humble recognition of one's misery draws down the mercy of God : 236,²; 259,²; — in things poorly done pleases God more than pride in things well done : 259,²; - to recognize our own miseries is the first step toward freeing ourselves from them : 284,¹; 350,¹; — is the foundation of our spiritual life : 106,¹; 316,¹; - and of charity : 106,¹; 259,²; 294,¹; - the more a soul humbles itself, so much the more will God fill it with grace and sanctify it : 106,²; 176,²; 240,²; 259,²; 352,²; — gives us the capacity to receive gifts of God : 106,²; — is the virtue that makes us keep our place : 107,¹; 109,²; - and which makes us take the lowest place : 113,^{1,2}; 301,²; - fruitfulness and riches of the interior life always in proportion

to — : 176,²; - we are nothing and can do nothing without the help of God : 107,^{1,2}; 240,²; 307,¹; 334,^{1,2}; - though doing all we can, we should not expect success from our works, but solely from the help of God : 240,²; - awareness of our insufficiency and impotence should keep us very humble : *ibid.*; - deep — necessary for an apostle : 334,^{1,2}; - Christian — does not depress, but lifts the soul to God : 108,¹; 240,²; - relation between — and confidence : 108,^{1,2}; - humble soul does not trust self, but only God : 108,²; - true — does not disquiet, but false — does : 109,²; - lack of confidence in the mercy of God is not fruit of — : 109,²; - to acquire — necessary to accept humiliations : 110,¹; - humble soul considers it just to be humiliated : *ibid.*; - the more one strives for humiliations on his own initiative, the more he should accept those that come from others : 110,²; - importance and practice of — of heart : 111,^{1,2}; — of heart is born of humble recognition of one's own misery : 111,²; - practice of — in honors and posts of authority : *ibid.*; 113,²; 176,²; 377,¹; - the humble soul conceals all that could draw the attention of others : 114,^{1,2}; - it is great — to remain silent when unjustly accused : 118,²; - attitude of — in contemplation : 144,¹; 145,²; - practice of — in aridity : 155,²; — in prayer : 175,²; - the higher the post one fills, the deeper should be — : 176,²; 334,^{1,2}; - in gaining — the other virtues also gained : 214,¹; - the humble soul is grateful : 283,²; - the humble soul is not pusillanimous, but magnanimous : 239,²; - Jesus the Model of — : 111,¹; 113,¹; 114,¹; - for the

followers of Jesus, the place of honor is the place of service : **113,2**; - — leads to the imitation of the hidden life of Jesus : **114,1**; - to imitate the silence of Jesus in the case of unjust accusations : **118,2**; - to imitate the — of Mary : **176,1,2**; **377,1,2**; **380,2**; - graces and divine favors should make us more humble : **176,1**; **252,1**; - Jesus, the Gift of God, wishes — of heart : **217,2**; - God permits failures that the soul may be convinced of its insufficiency : *ibid.*; - God permits falls that the soul may be persuaded of its misery : **295,1**; **307,2**; - the Holy Spirit illuminates the soul on its own misery : *ibid.*; **352,1,2**; **359,2**; - by means of the night of the spirit, God Himself undertakes to humble the soul : **352,2**; - deep — that the soul attains in this night : **359,2**.

Imperfections — Every voluntary imperfection is contrary to the Will of God : **5,2**; **78,2**; **102,1**; - — hinder union with God : **78,2**; **79,1**; **102,1**; **359,1**; - habitual — are the most harmful and not only prevent union with God, but even progress in perfection : **79,1,2**; **102,1**; - voluntary — always come from a lack of effort and vigor : **102,2**; - the struggle against deliberate and semi-deliberate —: **103,2**; - voluntary — can lead to tepidity : **153,1**; - to recognize one's own — : **249,2**; - meaning of — : **102,1**; - diverse types of — : **102,1,2**; - — of proficients : **346,2**; **347,1**; - to extirpate the roots of habitual —, the night of the spirit is necessary : *ibid.*; - the firm resolution to avoid every imperfection is a sure sign of the love of God : **359,1**.

Imprudence — The greatest — to follow one's own whims and will : **329,1**.

Incarnation (Mystery of) — The greatest proof and manifestation of the infinite love of God for men : **22,1**; **26,1,2**; **27,2**; **28,1**; **29,1,2**; **30,1,2**; **32,1**; - greatest work of God accomplished in time : **28,1**; - was accomplished in obscurity and silence : **28,2**; - it glorifies the infinite goodness of God more than any other work : **32,1**; **226,2**; - purpose of the — is the glory of God : **32,1**; - leads man again to the Trinity : **219,1**.

Ingratitude — For favors received hinders reception of others : **280,2**; - is always harmful to the soul : **283,1,2**; - human — withholds divine mercy : **322,1**.

Intentions — Purity of intention often lacking in one who seeks the esteem of creatures : **114,2**; - purity of intention makes one act solely for God and one's spiritual profit : **115,2**; - when our — are right we should not fear that our good works may be seen : **327,2**; - secondary — contaminate good works : **285,2**; - the secondary — which can insinuate themselves in apostolic activity : **332,2**.
See : **RECTITUDE**.

Jesus Christ — His redemptive work : **2,1,2**; **24,1,2**; **38,1,2**; **39,2**; **61,1**; **64,1**; **67,1**; **154,1**; **210,1**; **222,1**; **238,1**; **273,1**; **280,1**; - has redeemed the world principally by the death of the Cross : **24,1**; **25,2**; **38,2**; **43,2**; **93,1**; **139,1**; **326,2**; - wishes our collaboration in His redemptive work : **23,1,2**; **61,1**; **65,2**; **93,2**; **318,2**; **325,1**; - dispositions to profit by His

redemptive work : 34,1,2; 61,1; - we have been chosen in Him as the adopted sons of God : 28,1; 39,2; 43,1; 58,1; - He is the source of our salvation and sanctity : 28,1; 34,1; 37,1; 38,2; 43,1; 45,1,2; 48,1,2; 66,1; 383,1; - He is the unique source of our supernatural life : 39,2; 43,1; 45,2; 46,2; 66,1; 204,1; 294,1,2; 315,2; 371,1; - He has incorporated us into Himself : 43,1; 44,1; 48,1; - He has merited and continually communicates grace to us : 43,2; 45,1,2; 46,1,2; 58,2; 66,1,2; - He places before us His infinite riches : 45,1,2; 315,2; - communicating grace to us He communicates His own Life : 45,2; 66,1; - He continually intercedes with the Father for us : 46,2; - He selects and distributes graces to each one : *ibid.*; - by grace He has made us participate in His quality of Son of God : 58,1; 66,1; 282,1; - in Him we find all that serves for our spiritual life and our sanctification : 66,1; 231,1; 294,1; 315,2; - Birth : 28,1; 29,1,2; 31,2; - Presentation in the Temple : 34,1; 371,1; - Circumcision : 36,1; - Signification and value of His Name : 37,1,2; - Epiphany : 41,1,2; - Transfiguration : 105,1; - conduct before His enemies : 126,2; 133,2; - and toward Judas : 134,2; 262,2; - His death is the greatest victory : 139,1; - importance of the Resurrection and our participation in it : 140,1,2; 141,1; - going to Heaven, He has given us the right to follow Him one day : 179,1; - conduct of the Apostles at the Ascension : 179,2; - was always an Apostle, even in His hidden life : 324,1; - the only perfect Glorifier and Adorer of the Father : 33,1; 59,2; 281,1,2; - norm of His life is the Will of the

Father : 60,1; 62,2; 81,1; 121,1; 193,2; 282,1; - He fulfills the mission entrusted to Him by the Father : 61,1; - He seeks only the glory of the Father : 62,1; 281,2; - His relations with the Father : 282,1; - Mediator Who reconciles men with God : 33,1; 38,1,2; 43,1; 45,2; 66,1,2; 116,2; 200,1; 219,1; 222,1; 319,1; 383,1; - the only Way that leads to the Father : 38,2; 57,1; 66,1,2; 174,2; 200,1; 205,1; - in Him and through Him we can share in the intimate Life of God : 116,2; 154,2; - He has opened to man the way of union with God : 205,1; - in — we find all that satisfies our debts to God and supplies for our insufficiency : 281,1; - He has willed to assume likeness of sinful man and experience all our indigence : 36,1; 64,2; - His life was a continual spiritual and physical immolation : 93,1; - He embraced pain transforming it into a means of Redemption : 127,1,2; - He gave Himself for our sins : 127,1; 136,2; 138,1,2; 154,1; 348,2; - He bore the punishment of our sins even unto the death of the Cross : 376,2; - the greatest suffering of — is the resistance of souls to His grace : 133,2; - no one could have had more experience of the pain of ingratitude and betrayal : 136,1,2; - He has given us life at the cost of His own : 154,1; - He has redeemed us at the price of His Blood, shedding it for us to the last drop : 376,1; - if we wish His Blood to bear in us all its fruits, we should unite ours to it : 376,2; - the Firstborn of all creatures : 39,1,2; - by Him all things have been created : 39,1; 383,1; - His royalty : 40,1,2; 133,1; 383,1,2; - His kingdom is a kingdom of love : 40,2; 133,2;

383,2; - He reigns from the Cross : **133,1;** - He is the Head of the Mystical Body : **44,1; 67,1,2;** **383,1;** - in — dwells the fulness of the Divinity : **39,1; 219,1;** - as God He possesses the Divine Life as does the Father : **45,1; 66,1;** - as man He receives the greatest plenitude of grace : **45,1; 187,1;** - the power of the most holy humanity : **46,1;** - the Divinity acts through the Humanity of — : **46,1;** - as man He is our Way; as God He is our End : **66,1,2;** - we should "Abide" in Jesus : **43,2;** - our real and vital union with Christ our Head : **44,2;** **179,1; 206,1;** - we should live and grow in Christ : **48,1,2; 65,1;** - our spiritual rebirth in Christ : **147,1; 231,1;** - our vital participation in His mysteries, the consequence of our incorporation in Him : **179,1;** - to live in Christ we must first die with Him : **231,1;** - Jesus is our Resurrection, not only to eternal life, but also in this life : **350,2;** - the soul of — is the chosen Temple of the Holy Spirit : **47,1; 187,1;** - by His death He has merited the Holy Spirit and together with the Father, He continually sends Him to us : **47,2; 55,2; 66,2; 188,1; 315,2;** - to live in — is to live in the Holy Spirit : **47,2;** - — continues His work in souls through the Holy Spirit : **168,1; 175,1;** - the Master : **50,1,2;** and *fol.*; - as the Word, He is the substantial expression of the Father and contains and manifests all truth : **50,2;** - He, not only knows all truth, but He is Truth : *ibid.*; - characteristics of the teaching of — : **51,1,2; 55,1,2;** - He reveals the Father : **52,1,2;** - whoever knows —, knows the Father : **52,1;** - He teaches us to

imitate the Heavenly Father and gives us the means : **53,1;** - — would have us engage in the struggle against sin : **54,1,2; 100,2;** - He leads our soul to accept the truth and to put it into practice : **55,1;** - He infuses in us the light of faith and the flame of charity : **55,1;** - He interiorly instructs souls : **55,2;** - — reveals to us the love of God : **29,1,2; 30,1,2; 52,2;** - our Model : **57,1,2;** and *fol.*; - imitation of Jesus : **57,1,2;** - conforming ourselves to His image, we conform ourselves to the likeness of God : **57,1;** - His permanent and intimate union with the Father, model of our union with God : **25,1; 58,1;** **61,2;** - His interior life and our participation in it : **58,2; 116,1,2;** - His prayer : **59,1,2;** - our assimilation and conformation to — : **65,1,2; 193,1;** - — wills to continue in us His life and His work : **65,2; 93,2; 193,1;** - conformity to — Crucified : **93,1,2; 194,1,2;** - we cannot be His intimate friends if we do not suffer with Him : **93,2;** - — Model of humility : **111,1; 113,1; 114,1;** - His humility and humiliations : **27,2; 31,1;** **36,1; 42,1,2; 62,1;** - His obedience : **42,2; 121,1;** - His submission to the law : **36,2; 371,2;** - Model of patience : **128,1; 279,2;** - His meekness and mildness : **133,2;** **270,1; 279,2;** - attitude of the Soul of — wholly immersed in the Trinity : **58,2; 64,1; 116,1;** - guides us to the Trinity : **116,2; 219,1;** **222,1;** - He has revealed to us the mystery of the Trinity : **220,1;** - His infinite love for us : **64,1;** **132,2; 136,2; 137,1,2; 139,2;** **209,1,2; 210,1; 238,1; 262,2; 273,1;** **315,2;** - the same love that binds Him to the Father makes Him love men as creatures of the Father :

64,1; - the yearning of His soul for the glory of the Father and for the salvation of men : **65,1;** - knows and loves each soul individually : **154,2;** - love unfolds the mystery of all that — has done for us : **209,2;** - — the Good Shepherd : **64,1;** **154,1,2;** **210,1;** - sower of the divine word in souls : **84,1;** - has overcome the demon and has paid the price of our victories : **112,1;** - — Fount of Living Water invites all to draw from its source : **143,1;** **144,1;** - — has compassion on our spiritual and material needs : **231,2;** **294,2;** - has every right to find the fruits of sanctity in us : **238,1;** - is the Good Samaritan Who tends and heals our souls : **273,1;** - — has founded His Church as the continuation of His work : **67,1,2;** - lives and works in His Church : *ibid.*; - if we wish to live according to His Spirit, we should let ourselves be guided by the Church : **67,1;** - He gives the sacraments their efficacy : **69,1.**

See : INCARNATION; PASSION;
REDEMPTION; SACRED HEART.

Joseph (St.) — His obedience, spirit of faith, and humility : **28,2;** **373,1;** - his adhesion and abandonment to the Will of God and in the most obscure circumstances : **33,2;** **373,2;** - together with Mary, — was the first to enter into that life of intimacy and love to which Jesus opened the door : **372,2;** - — is the model of souls of the interior life : **373,2;** - His mission of guardian of the Holy Family and Patron of the Church : **372,1;** - — has participated in full as a humble hidden collaborator in the work of Redemption : *ibid.*; - — did not live for Himself,

but solely for Jesus and Mary : *ibid.*; **373,2.**

Joy — Of the soul who is completely given to God : **303,2;** - of the soul who has the foretaste of union with God : **361,1.**

Judas — Conduct of Jesus toward him : **134,2;** - represents the souls who by their infidelity have made themselves unworthy of the graces received : *ibid.*

Judgment — Last — : **1,2;** **364,2;** - in the last — God will judge on charity : **257,2;** **264,2;** **364,2;** - God will judge us with the same mercy which we have shown our neighbor : **264,2;** - necessary to judge things, not according to appearances, but according to their value in the sight of God : **234,2.**

Justice — Exterior — not sufficient : **224,2;** **279,1;** - necessity of fulfilling duties of — toward the neighbor : **277,1,2;** **278,1;** - we should not be satisfied until we have fulfilled all duties of — : **278,1;** - the enemies of — : **278,2;** - to maintain rectitude by not deviating from — : *ibid.*; - not lawful to fail in — under pretext of charity : **238,2;** **277,1;** - indispensable for charity : *ibid.*; - should be vivified by charity : **279,1;** - to uphold — not by strength but by charity : **279,2;** - is the constant will to give to each his due : **277,1;** - is source of peace : **277,2;** - in this world absolute — not possible : **279,2;** - for soul aspiring to sanctity greatest — is patient bearing of injustice : *ibid.*; - hunger and thirst for — corresponds to hunger and thirst for sanctity : **303,1,2;** - blessed are they who hunger and thirst

for — : 303,1; - is perfected by the gift of piety : 304,1,2; - in our contacts with God we are always infinitely below what — exacts : 281,1; - — to God impels one to give himself to God without measure : 281,2; - in Jesus we are able to supply for the insufficiency of our — : 281,1; — and religion : 281,2.

Justice of God — Presupposes mercy and is accompanied by it : 237,1; - infinite — is the zeal which protects the rights of God 237,2; - punishments of God are the fruit of the — and of His mercy : *ibid.*

Knowledge (Gift of) — Makes one understand the nothingness of creatures : 309,1,2; - the soul who is enlightened feels the need of withdrawing from creatures : 309,2; - under the influence of — creatures become a ladder to go to God : *ibid.*; - infuses contrition for sin : 310,1; - perfects the virtue of hope : 310,2; - to the gift of — corresponds the beatitude of mourning : 310,1; - makes the soul understand the joy of sorrow embraced for love of God : 310,2.

Law — To observe the divine — gives glory to God : 33,1; - submission of Jesus and Mary to the — which did not bind them : 36,1; 371,2; - — to which we are bound and to which self-love would claim exemption under false pretexts : *ibid.*

Lent — Time for spiritual reform : 77,1; - dedicated to the remembrance of the Passion of Jesus : 91,1; - and to penance : 94,2; - and to the struggle against sin : 98,1; - Lenten program : 99,1,2.

Liberty — Man is free to correspond with grace or to reject it : 34,1; 73,1,2; - God does not do violence to our — and will not sanctify us without our consent : 188,2; - God is omnipotent and governs man without hindrance to his — : 240,1; - to correspond with grace, our free consent is necessary : 266,2; - — is the ability to adhere to the good without letting oneself be influenced by passion : 102,1; - to refuse to do what is best under pretext of freedom is an abuse of — : *ibid.*; - it is an abuse of — to use it to will evil rather than good : 232,2; - — of spirit permits the soul to concentrate itself wholly on God : 116,2; - renunciation of — is greatest sacrifice man can offer God : 121,2; - free immolation of — by the vow of obedience : 122,1,2.

Life (Earthly) — Conditioned by continual flow of time : 35,1; - happy the soul who at the end of — without delay can be admitted to the beatific union of Heaven : 364,2; - the degree of glory we shall possess for all eternity will correspond to the degree of love attained at end of — : 384,1; - — of the body dies, but life of the soul remains : 385,2; - — is a pilgrimage to eternal life : 161,1,2; 175,1; - — should be a preparation for our meeting God : 182,1; - it is a way of return to God : 345,1; - while on earth we should long for God, for Heaven : 179,1; 182,1; - the worth of our — should be proved by the accomplishment of the Will of God : 238,2; - — is a continual struggle : 245,1; 287,1; - greatest imprudence to be guided in our — by our own whims and self-will : 329,1.

Life (Interior) — Is the soul of the apostolate : **25,1; 321,2; 323,1**; - should be orientated to the salvation of souls : **317,1**; - apostolic ideal urges the soul to a deeper — **323,1**; - an — indifferent to the good of souls is necessarily stunted and narrow : **323,2**; - deep — necessary for an apostle : **320,1,2**; - — is not genuine if not crowned with spiritual paternity or maternity : **341,2**; - whoever seeks the esteem of creatures and wishes to assert his rights cannot have a deep — : **114,2; 117,2**; - — leads to intimate friendship with God : **321,1**; - is the secret hearth where the soul in contact with God is inflamed with His love : **321,2**; - the development of — calls for the twofold attraction of union with God and the apostolate : **342,2**.

Life (Spiritual) — To awaken fervor in — : **1,2; 77,1**; - renewal of — : **140,2; 141,1**; - in — there is daily need of beginning over again : **217,1,2**; - lack of deep unity renders — weak : **228,2**; - even after long years of — there can arise the struggle between the flesh and the spirit : **245,1; 287,1**; - as long as one does not understand that God is infinite Love the — is only in bud : **30,2**; - hunger for God is a sign of an efficient — : **141,1**; - — depends much on the thought that we are working for God : **211,2**.

Love — Resembling God our supernatural life should be essentially — : **4,1**; - in every action we are impelled by the — of God, of creatures, or of self : **5,2**; - — is an act of the will : **19,2; 255,1**; - — is repaid by — : **22,1**; - — overcomes every obstacle

in order to be united with the loved one : **31,1**; - — finds or renders lovers equal : **251,1; 348,1**; - — tends by nature to unity : *ibid.*

See : LOVE OF GOD; LOVE OF NEIGHBOR; CHARITY.

Love of God — Is the power that unites the soul to God : **4,2; 100,1; 250,2; 345,1; 361,1,2**; - true — consists in doing the Will of God : **5,1; 19,1,2; 255,1,2; 256,1**; - the perfection of — consists in full conformity to the Will of God : **6,1; 120,1; 251,2**; - pure — seeks only the glory of God and the fulfillment of His Will : **256,1**; - the soul who with all its strength believes that God is truly God will love Him very much : **19,1**; - — makes one taste and experience God : *ibid.*; - — confers on the soul the "sense of God" : **143,2; 157,2; 158,1,2**; - prayer is above all an exercise of — : **149,2; 150,1,2**; - of — is born the loving knowledge of God : **150,1**; - — is reinforced by prayer : **256,2**; - love of charity is pure benevolence toward God : **19,1**; - — makes one love God for Himself as He loves Himself : **250,2**; - renders one capable of loving God with the love of friendship : *ibid.*; **251,2**; - makes man live no longer for himself but for God : *ibid.*; - infusing charity in us, God has made us capable of returning His love : *ibid.*; - our friendship with God will be perfect when there is nothing in us contrary to His Will : *ibid.*; - — does not consist in sentiment, but in the act of the will : **19,2; 158,1; 255,1; 361,1**; - the love of charity does not consist in sentiment, but in the will to give God the preference over

all things : 158,¹; 255,²; - relations between the feeling of — and the act of — : 255,^{1,2}; - — is true even when deprived of feeling : 255,¹; 356,¹; - lacking the feeling of love, one needs to apply oneself with all one's strength to accomplish its works : 355,²; - one should not seek enjoyment in —, but should seek to make progress in it : 361,¹; - to return with — the infinite — for us : 22,¹; 30,¹; 31,^{1,2}; 150,¹; 211,^{1,2}; 252,¹; - — is a spur to generosity : 30,¹; 31,^{1,2}; 211,^{1,2}; 290,¹; - and to the total gift of self : 212,¹; 250,²; 290,²; - to love and to despoil oneself of all that is not God for God : 31,²; 348,²; - the — and the cult of God should always have the first place : 134,¹; - when the — has taken full possession of a soul there remains no room for other loves : 142,¹; 356,¹; 358,²; - how the loving soul seeks God : 142,^{1,2}; - the need to love God above all things : 253,²; - generous and continuous exercise of — : 256,²; - only — can give an intuition of the mystery of the — for us : 208,²; - the degree of — attained on earth is the same as that with which we shall love God in Heaven : 35,¹; 256,¹; 384,¹; only in Heaven shall we be able to love God with absolute perfection and stability : 253,¹; 256,¹; - to increase in love, one must do good works with all one's heart : 35,²; 180,²; 256,²; - necessary to keep oneself in contact with God : 301,¹; - however much we love God, we shall not be able to love Him to the extent of His loveliness : 53,²; 99,²; 249,¹; 253,¹; - measure of loving God is to love without measure : 99,²; 253,¹; - — is inseparable from the love of neighbor : 64,²; 181,^{1,2}; 257,^{1,2};

301,²; 323,²; - the more a soul loves God, the more it loves its neighbor : 181,¹; 258,¹; - a soul who loves God loves all that God loves : 181,²; 260,²; - we cannot be deceived about our — if we love our neighbor : 257,²; - the best way to increase our — is careful practice of fraternal charity : 271,²; - from — is born zeal for souls : 317,¹; 344,¹; - reality of — is shown by embracing suffering for His love : 96,^{1,2}; 132,²; 360,¹; - the stronger the — the more it enables the soul to embrace what is painful and arduous for God : 288,¹; 289,²; 356,^{1,2}; 360,^{1,2}; - the stronger the soul is in suffering, the stronger is — : 360,²; - — when it is perfect, destroys sin more than does purgatory : 100,²; - — can make any suffering a means of sanctification : 127,²; - whoever works purely for the — seeks his own interest in nothing : 115,²; 256,¹; 355,²; 356,²; - one degree of pure — is more precious in the sight of God and more useful to the Church than all other works combined : 342,²; 368,²; - — makes the soul completely forgetful of self, of one's consolations and satisfactions : 355,²; 356,²; 360,²; 370,²; - torturing pain not to love God : 157,²; 158,¹; - — is purified, strengthened, and developed by aridity : 255,²; - and by the painful trials of the night of the spirit : 355,^{1,2}; - for the soul who loves God, the fear of not loving Him is a very great torment : 355,²; - the strong and appreciative — that the Holy Spirit infuses into the soul by purifying trials : 356,^{1,2}; - the fire of love invades the soul so much the more as it is purified from everything contrary to it : 360,²; - — makes the ardent soul impatient

in its inspirations for union with God : 358,^{1,2}; - most careful to avoid the least offense against God : 359,¹; - — indomitable in fatigue and suffering for God : 360,^{1,2}; - — in proportion to its strength, unites the soul to God : 361,^{1,2}; - — draws God to the soul and the soul to God : 361,²; - it is of the utmost importance to exercise oneself much in love in order to attain union with God while on earth and hereafter in a blessed eternity : 364,²; - sublime exercise of — in the soul which has attained union with God : 368,^{1,2}; - — renders the soul so conformed to God as to transform it into Him : 369,¹; - in this state the soul loves God with the equality of love : 369,²; - the enamored soul longs for union and intimacy with God, not for enjoyment, but to love Him always more : 370,².

See : LOVE; CHARITY.

Love of Neighbor — Is the precept of the Lord and it is sufficient : 32,²; 308,²; - — is distinctive of the disciples of Christ : 70,¹; 262,¹; - — is the commandment of the New Law : 224,²; 260,¹; 262,¹; - the commandment of Jesus is to love one's neighbor as He loves him : 262,^{1,2}; 307,¹; - our charity will be perfect when it is the reflection of the love of Jesus for every creature : 262,^{1,2}; - — should extend to all, excluding no one : 56,²; 258,¹; 260,¹; 265,²; 273,²; - it is necessary to overcome evil by love : 56,²; 63,²; 70,²; 224,¹; - charity does not permit divisions, overcomes opposition, maintains peace : 70,¹; 224,¹; 308,²; - greatest charity is practised toward those who do us harm and in bearing with the wicked : 70,²; - to know

how to pardon : 70,^{1,2}; 224,¹; 264,^{1,2}; - to be good to all, even to the ungrateful and to enemies : 233,²; 264,¹; - to overlook wrongs, misunderstandings, offenses : 268,²; - and injustice : 279,²; - charity shares in the sorrows and necessities of others and sacrifices itself for them : 64,²; 267,^{1,2}; 273,²; - — requires an understanding of the material needs of others : 119,¹; 261,²; - — is the consequence and extension of the love of God : 64,²; 181,^{1,2}; 257,¹; 268,¹; - — is strong and constant only when it stems from love of God : 64,²; - when — is weak so also is the love of God : 181,²; 317,¹; 323,²; - — is the proof and the most certain sign of our love for God : 182,¹; 257,²; 271,¹; 365,²; - —, together with the love of God, is the foundation of Christian life : 257,¹; 308,²; - recollection and union with God should not hinder the practice of — : 64,²; 181,^{1,2}; - lack of — is one of the greatest obstacles to the action of the Holy Spirit : 182,¹; - God is not pleased with prayer that is not accompanied by charity : *ibid.*; 224,²; - to cover our debts to God with charity : 245,²; - — is an essential condition for eternal salvation : 257,²; - there is no true religion without — : 273,²; - — should be the fruit of Holy Communion : 137,²; - duties of fellowship stemming from our incorporation in Christ : 267,¹; - — is love for creatures *propter Deum* : 257,¹; 258,^{1,2}; 260,¹; - the precept of — is inseparable from that of love for God : 257,¹; - God considers as done for Himself all that we do for our neighbor : 257,^{1,2}; - — is identical with the theological virtue with which we love God : 258,¹; - he who says

he loves God and hateth his brother is a liar : *ibid.*; — is charity only in the measure in which it is inspired by the love of God : 258,2; - one who does not love his neighbor does not love God : 259,2; 301,2; 323,2; - charity should not be based on the qualities of our neighbor, nor on our relations with him, but on his relation to God : 260,1,2; - in recompense for our —, God will make our love for Him increase : 271,2; 365,2; — is a created participation in the love which God has for His creatures : 271,2; - practising — we unite ourselves to God; failing to do so, we alienate ourselves from Him : *ibid.*; - failures in — are obstacles to union with God : 365,2; the foundation of charity is humility : 259,2; 294,1; 301,2; - egoism hinders the practice of charity : 260,2; - the greatest enemy of charity is self-love : 261,1; - to love our neighbor as ourselves, treating him with the same delicacy and understanding that we would desire ourselves : 261,1,2; 263,2; 265,1; - to love each one individually in his concrete personality : 261,2; - it is not charity to give in order to receive, but to give without calculation or measure : 268,1; - charity hides the good that it does, as it seeks no return : *ibid.*; - self-renunciation is the delicacy of charity in order to adapt oneself to one's neighbor : 269,1,2; 308,1,2; 343,1; - charity is always mild and sweet : 270,1; - the practice of mildness in difficult contacts with one's neighbor : 270,2; - charity should be accompanied by affability and delicacy of manner : 335,1,2; - perfect courtesy, always unvarying, is the fruit of a delicate charity : 335,2; - the chief good we should

wish for our neighbor is his spiritual welfare : 261,2; - it is a great mistake to judge persons and things only on the negative side : 263,1; - rather than criticize the faults of others, we should try to correct the same in ourselves : *ibid.*; - to judge no one because judgment is reserved to God alone : 263,2; - if it is not possible to excuse the action, at least excuse the intention : *ibid.*; - the defects of a neighbor should not lessen the esteem and benevolence for him : *ibid.*; 267,2; - fraternal charity draws a veil over the faults of others : 265,1; - to fight against thoughts and judgments lacking benevolence for one's neighbor : 265,2; - true charity consists in bearing with the faults of others : 267,2; - in contacts with one's neighbor, to imitate the mercy of our heavenly Father : 264,1; 307,1; - God will show us the same mercy that we have shown others : 264,2; 336,2; - fraternal correction is real act of charity if done with kindness : 270,2; 294,1; - charity is the best means of practising justice : 279,2; - charity should be the bond that unites all : 308,1; - necessary to be prepared for any personal sacrifice to preserve fraternal union : 308,2; - the highest expression of fraternal charity is the apostolate : 323,2.
See : LOVE; CHARITY.

Love of Self — Heart occupied by — cannot be filled with God : 22,2; - impossible to serve God and — at the same time : 117,2; - until mortification attacks —, it does not attain its end : 97,1; - struggle against demands of self-love : 117,1,2; - assiduous labor to uproot all its germs : 214,2; - to break all the binding threads of — :

316,1; — leads us to excuse our failings : **118,1;** - cause of anger in face of opposition : **214,2;** - great enemy of fraternal charity : **261,1;** - — not mortified, disturbs fraternal union : **308,1;** - eliminating —, we eliminate all other defects : **214,1;** - often we believe we are acting for love of God when acting for — : **274,2;** - — makes us deviate from right intention : **332,2.**

Magnanimity — Inclines the soul to render great service to God embracing what is arduous and difficult : **289,1;** — should be united to obedience, humility, and the fulfillment of duty : *ibid.*; - the truly humble are magnanimous : **289,2.**

Man — Does not exist and can do nothing without the help of God : **107,1,2;** **240,2;** **307,2;** - his insufficiency and limitations in comparison with God and sanctity **191,1;** **192,1;** **227,1,2;** **228,1;** **230,1;** - — is changeable and weak, affected by time : **230,2;** - immeasurable distance between — and God : **232,2;** - his powerlessness and insufficiency should keep him very humble : **240,2;** - — is by nature unstable : **293,1;** - all sufficiency comes from God : **107,2;** **240,2;** - — exists only inasmuch as God communicates life to him and maintains him in existence : **228,1;** - — is good only insofar as God communicates to him a reflection of His goodness : **232,1;** - experience of his own misery should direct him to God with full confidence : **249,1;** - — is nothing in himself but great through gifts God has given him : **286,2;** - his responsibility in view of invitations of God : **188,2;** - God has created — free;

therefore, freely he should respond to goodness infused in him : **232,2;** - weakness of human nature : **193,2;** **287,1;** **295,1;** **307,1,2;** - malice of — : **232,1,2;** - interior — is natural — regenerated by grace : **301,1.**

Mary — Her Immaculate Conception : **9,1;** **171,1;** - her sanctity from first instant of her conception : **9,1,2;** **180,1;** - elevated to the state of union with God from the first moment of her existence : **9,2;** **171,2;** **172,2;** - always and in everything moved by the Holy Spirit : **9,2;** **171,1,2;** **180,2;** **374,1;** - beloved daughter of the Father : **170,1;** - faithful spouse of the Holy Spirit : **171,1;** - her greatest dignity to be the Mother of God : **172,1;** **382,1;** - her interior life : **14,1,2;** **169,2;** **183,1,2;** **378,2;** - intimate contacts with the Trinity : **183,2;** - faith : **15,2;** **49,1;** **177,1,2;** - perfect adhesion and abandonment to the Will of God : **33,2;** **170,2;** **171,2;** **172,2;** **374,1,2;** - correspondence and fidelity to grace : **171,2;** **180,1,2;** - and to the call of God : **386,1,2;** - humility : **176,1,2;** **377,1,2;** - no one had such concrete and practical knowledge of her own nothingness : **178,1;** - the deeper her consideration of her nothingness, so much the more she was raised to God, seeing and praising Him for the great things He had done in her : **377,2;** - full confidence and hope in God : **178,1,2;** - fidelity in employing the talents received : **180,1;** - incessant progress in charity and grace : **180,2;** **187,1;** - strength in sorrow : **360,2;** - humble submission to the law : **371,2;** - judged all things in their relation to God : **381,1;** - gave herself to God and permitted Him

to exercise all His rights over her : **386,2**; - recollection and union with God did not prevent her from caring for the needs of her neighbor : **14,2**; **181,1,2**; - charity for her neighbor : *ibid.*; **377,1**; - charity makes her unmindful of discomfort and of her dignity : *ibid.*; - giving herself wholly to God, she is wholly given to her neighbor : **181,1**; - the apostolate derived from her love of God : **184,1**; - her apostolate characterized by retirement and silence : **184,2**; - attains the height of the apostolate by hidden immolation : *ibid.*; - mediatrix of all graces : **49,1**; **185,1,2**; - our Mother, comfort, support, and refuge : **169,1**; - after Jesus, the surest guide to union with God : **171,2**; - her maternity in our regard : **173,1,2**; **378,1**; **382,1,2**; - her maternity at the foot of the Cross : **173,2**; - all graces received through the hands of — : **173,1**; **185,1**; — has loved us to the extent of sacrificing her Son for our salvation : **173,2**; **181,2**; — is the easiest and most secure way to reach Jesus : **174,2**; - she guides us to Jesus and through Him to the Blessed Trinity : **183,2**; - she has given Jesus to us and she brings us to Him : **185,2**; **382,1**; - filial and confident recourse to — the Mother of Jesus and our Mother : **382,1,2**; - he who wishes Jesus, should seek Him in the arms of — : **382,1**; - we should trust ourselves to — as devoted and loving children : **382,2**; - she teaches us to practise the teachings of Jesus : **49,2**; - with her we should share in the Passion of Jesus : **131,2**; - — model of souls living the interior life : **169,2**; **183,2**; **378,2**; - life of intimacy with — : **174,1**; - imitation of — :

169,1,2; **174,2**; **176,2**; **374,2**; **380,2**; - model for contemplative and apostolic souls : **184,1**; - model of souls totally united and given to the Will of God : **374,1**; — is perfectly united to Jesus in the observance of His teaching : **112,2**; - her participation in the Passion of her Son : **131,1,2**; **184,1,2**; **185,1**; - the intimacy of her contacts with her Divine Son : **172,2**; **174,2**; **183,1**; - participation and association with the Redemptive work of her Son : **173,1,2**; **184,1,2**; **185,1**; **371,2**; **374,2**; — is the most perfect image of Christ : **174,2**; - her birth is the dawn of Redemption : **380,1**; - her origin and her whole life wrapt in silence : *ibid.*; — presented in the Temple is model of consecrated souls : **386,1,2**; - her conduct at the moment of the Annunciation : **374,1,2**; - her conduct at the wedding of Cana : **49,1**; - her Assumption tells us that we have no lasting dwelling here, but in Heaven : **379,1**; - and it indicates the itinerary of our spiritual life : **379,2**; - the Little Habit our Lady of Mount Carmel offers us in an external sign of her constant and maternal work for our souls : **378,1**; - devotion to our Lady of Mount Carmel implies a call to the interior life : **378,2**.

Mass — Is the center of liturgical cult : **165,1**; - how to assist at — : **165,2**; - with the priest to offer the Divine Victim : **166,1**; - to associate ourselves with the immolation of Jesus : **166,2**.

Meditation

See : PRAYER.

Meekness — Renders man capable of dominating anger : **214,1**;

297,1; - its foundation is humility : **214,2;** - ensures the soul of interior peace : **297,1;** - importance of — for a life of prayer and union with God : **297,2;** - by gift of piety the Holy Spirit helps the soul to preserve — : **305,1;** - blessed are the meek for they shall possess the land : **305,2;** - the meek person possesses himself and gains the hearts of men : *ibid.*

See : MILDNESS.

Mercy — Of God in Redemption of man : **2,1; 26,2;** — characterizes love of God for us : **236,1; 307,1;** - relations between the — of God and His justice : **237,1,2;** - we have continual need of divine — : **264,1,2;** - with infinite love God has willed to bridge the distance that separated us from Him : **353,1;** - distrust in the — of God shows pride and diabolical temptation : **109,2;** - we cannot trust too much in the — of God : **210,1; 249,1;** - Jesus has inculcated in us a deep sense of the infinite — of God : **210,2;** - — of God is so great that no repented sin can stop it : **236,1;** - wrong to doubt the — of God and the pardon of sins : **246,2;** - sins committed should not hinder our trust in divine — : **280,2;** - — of God is not arrested by the ingratitude of men : **322,1;** - magnificence and largesse of the — of God : **336,1;** - God is always ready to pardon our sins : **336,1,2;** - to draw down upon ourselves the divine —, God requires us to be merciful to our neighbor : **236,2; 264,2; 336,2;** - and that we humbly recognize our misery : **236,2; 259,2;** - God will treat us with the same — that we have shown our neighbor : **264,2; 336,2;** - the consideration

of the — of God should render us merciful to our neighbor : **264,1,2;** - we should imitate the infinite — of the heavenly Father : **307,1;** - one who is convinced of his own misery is merciful to his neighbor : **307,2;** - through the gift of counsel, the Holy Spirit establishes the soul in perfect — : *ibid.*

Mildness — Is the flower of charity : **270,1;** - to overcome anger by — and mercy : **270,2;** - more hearts are gained by a little kindness than by a harsh manner : **335,1.**

Modesty — The practice of — in relation to chastity : **89,1,2.**

Mortification — To prepare by — for the coming of the Lord : **8,2;** - necessity of — that Christ may live in us : **65,1; 231,1;** - — removes the obstacles to the development of grace : **143,2;** - relaxation in — leads to tepidity : **153,1;** - — of the senses : **16,1,2; 83,1,2;** - importance and scope of corporal — : **92,1,2; 93,1,2;** - necessity of — of the flesh in order to re-establish harmony between spirit and flesh : **296,2;** - — of the taste : *ibid.*; - active — should be completed by passive — : **83,2;** - voluntary — is a proof of love : **96,1;** - — avails in the measure of love and generosity with which it is accomplished : **96,2;** - spirit of — is complete only when it leads to self-renunciation : **97,1;** - true spirit of — embraces all the occasions of suffering permitted by God in the circumstances of life : **97,2;** - each day the need to die to self : **231,1.** See : ABNEGATION; DETACHMENT; PENANCE; RENUNCIATION.

Night of the Senses — Is the total mortification of the senses : **83,1; 347,1;** - to enter the — it is necessary not to rest in sensible pleasure : **83,1;** - activity of soul to enter into the — : **83,2;** - God gives a great grace when He introduces the soul into the passive — : *ibid.*

Night of the Spirit — Uproots imperfect habits : **347,1;** - achieves in the soul a deep and radical detachment : **349,1;** - to enter the — there is need of renunciation of self, not only in regard to material goods, but also in regard to moral and spiritual goods : **347,2;** - need to exercise oneself intensely in the theological virtues : **349,2;** - anguish and darkness the soul suffers in this — : **353,1,2;** - its sole support is pure and naked faith : **353,2;** - one of the greatest graces God can grant a soul is to introduce it into the — : **348,1;** - this —, though very bitter, is the work of Divine Love : *ibid.*; - only God can lead the soul into the depth of this — : **351,1;** - the — culminates in interior pain in which God annihilates it in its spiritual faculties and destroys in it every imperfect habit : **352,1;** - in the — the soul is reduced to the center of its nothingness : **352,2;** - in this — the soul is in a special way under the influence of the Holy Spirit : **354,2;** - the obscure night of the apostolic life : **338,2;** - while we are on earth there will always be something of the — : **354,1.**

Nothing — The way of — leads to perfection : **7,1,2; 81,1,2;** - only the way of — leads to the all of God : **7,1,2; 31,1;** - to attain to union

with God it is necessary to go through the way of — : **54,2;** - the apostle should go by the way of — : **333,1;** - when a soul has gone so far as to be reduced to — she will then have attained union with God : **106,1;** - in attaining union with God, the soul is reduced to — : **351,2; 352,2;** - awareness of our own nothingness : **217,1,2;** - to thank God when we see ourselves reduced to — : **247,1.**

Obedience — Gives the soul the security of dwelling in the Will of God : **21,1;** - makes one adhere to the Will of God expressed by the commands of superiors : **120,1;** - makes one abandon one's own will to embrace the Will of God : **120,2;** - the formal act of — consists in the free renunciation of self and the free adhesion to the Divine Will : **122,1;** - supernatural — places one in direct contact with the Will of God : **123,2;** - he who leaves the path of — leaves the secure road of the Will of God for the dangerous way of one's own will : **124,2;** - imitation of the — of Jesus : **42,1; 121,1; 125,2;** - — simple as that of a child : **49,1;** - motive of supernatural — : **123,1;** - confidence in the government of God through the commands of — : **123,2;** - — based on human motives has little value in the sight of God : *ibid.*; - blind — **124,1,2;** - life of — is wholly based on supernatural values and motives : **125,1;** - the more one considers in superiors the authority that comes from God, the more meritorious will be their — : *ibid.*; - God prefers — to penance : **92,2;** - and to anything else : **120,1;** - — is the shortest path to union with God : **122,1;** - the most

perfect way is always that of — : **123,1; 124,2**; - the vow of — is greatest and most meritorious sacrifice : **121,2**; - the complete immolation of man in honor of God : *ibid.*; - and the free immolation of liberty : **122,1**; - fidelity to the — vowed to God : **122,2**; - lack of spirit of faith in — : **125,1,2**; - and lack of humility : **125,2**; — to political authority : **343,2**; - necessary to obey God rather than man : *ibid.*

See : SUPERIORS.

Pardon — Of offenses : **70,2**; - magnificence and largesse of the — of God : **336,1**; - pettiness and narrowness of our — : **336,2**.

Passion of Jesus — Prediction of the — : **91,1**; - voluntary mortification, means of sharing in the — : **93,1,2**; - participation in the — : **126,1; 132,2; 376,2**; - to accompany Jesus in His Passion : **133,1**; - he who suffers with Jesus best understands the — **138,1**; - consideration of the — renders the soul generous in embracing suffering : **96,2**; - zeal for souls arises from the contemplation of Jesus Crucified : **317,2**; - the — tells us how great is the malice of sin and its destructive power : **100,2**; - the — is our salvation and our hope : **126,1**; - Jesus in His Passion has embraced the sufferings of all humanity : **128,1**; - attitude of Jesus facing His Passion : **135,1**; - He went to His Passion because He willed to go : *ibid.*; **136,2**; - His desolation, abandonment, and abjection : **136,1,2**; - Jesus is the Victim who immolates Himself with love and full liberty : **136,2**; - the Agony in the Garden of Olives : **138,1**;

- the arrest for crucifixion : **138,2**; - Jesus abandoned by the Father : *ibid.*; - the death of Jesus is not a defeat, but a victory : **139,1**; - Jesus proclaimed King in the midst of the unheard cruelties of His Passion : **383,2**; - the — is the greatest proof of the love of Jesus for us : **132,2; 136,2; 139,2**; - he who resists grace, resists the — : **133,2**.

See : JESUS.

Passions — Struggle against the predominant passion : **103,2**.

Patience — One learns — in considering Jesus all-patient : **128,1**; - progressive practice of — : **128,2; 292,1,2**; - — enables one to live in a state of suffering without losing serenity : **291,1**; - — is the willing acceptance of suffering in view of God and eternal beatitude : **291,2**; - one acquires — by sweetly accepting that which contradicts and causes suffering : **292,1**; - necessity of spirit of faith to exercise — in the difficulties of life : **128,1**; - — is humility in bearing injustice : **279,2; 351,2**; - — in the painful trials of the purification of the spirit : **351,1,2; 354,1**.

Peace — In what true — consists : **33,1,2**; - — promised to men of good will : **33,2**; - fruit of humility : **111,2**; - preoccupation of those concerned about their own rights makes them lose interior — : **117,2**; - gift of wisdom establishes the soul in — : **314,1**; - peacemaker is one who sows — and cultivates it : *ibid.*; - little — in the world because man does not let himself be guided by the Spirit of Wisdom : **314,2**; - the reward of peacemakers is to be called children of God : *ibid.*; - the intentions of the Lord are intentions of — : **350,1**.

Penance — Sacrament of : 73,1,2; - without obedience is the — of animals : 92,2; - is a means of assimilation into Christ Crucified : 93,1,2; - relation between corporal and spiritual — : 94,2; - the most important — is the patient suffering of the trials of life : 213,2.

See : CONFESSOR; MORTIFICATION.

Perfection — God alone is infinitely perfect : 53,1; - by stripping the — of the creature of all limits and defects, we can form a faint idea of the infinite — of God : 227,2; - the Mount of — : 7,1,2; - not to be satisfied with — already acquired : 53,2; 99,2; - precept to tend to — has no limits : 53,2; - Christian — consists in union with God by charity : 100,1; - few attain — because few welcome purification : 132,1; importance of nourishing generous desires in order to attain — promptly : 289,1,2; 290,2; - a perfect man does much more than a great number of imperfect men : 330,2; - the first thought should not be personal —, but the glory of God, His pleasure, and approval : 256,1.

Perseverance — Necessity of — to derive fruit from the word of God : 84,2; - — in prayer : 156,1,2; - — in the struggle against one's defects and in the effort to acquire virtue : 298,2; - remedy for the instability of human nature : 293,1; - has for object endurance in effort : *ibid.*; - perfect — not possible without habitual intervention of the gifts of the Holy Spirit : 293,2; - our — consists in continually beginning again : *ibid.*; 295,2; - God will crown our efforts with the grace of final — : 293,2; - he who after every fall humbles

himself and rises, relying on the infinite strength of God, will persevere : 295,2.

Peter (St.) — Conduct of — in the Passion of Jesus : 135,2; - — made the head of the Church : 375,1; - where — is, there is the Church : *ibid.*

Piety (Gift of) — Infuses the sense of divine sonship and filial piety : 198,1; - perfects the virtue of justice : 304,1; - inspires the sense of filial piety toward God : *ibid.*; - under its influence prayer becomes more filial : *ibid.*; - it renders contacts with one's neighbor more brotherly and cordial : 304,2; - beatitude of mercy corresponds to — : 305,1,2.

Piety (Virtue of) — True — consists in the sense of sonship with God and brotherhood with all men : 273,2; - filial — is the heart of religion : 282,1; - and penetrates all devotion : 282,2; - to imitate the filial — of Jesus for His Father : 282,1.

Poverty — Imitation of the — of Jesus : 31,2; - Jesus invites us to follow Him in — : 85,1; - material — without the spirit of — has no value : 85,2; 300,1; - only the spirit of — frees the soul from slavery to earthly goods : 85,2; - the spirit of — is fruit of the gift of fear : 300,1; - spirit of — requires detachment from moral and spiritual goods : 300,2; - to acquire — of spirit, it is necessary to despoil oneself of all that is not God : *ibid.*; - voluntary — is primary foundation for acquisition of perfect charity : 86,1; - meaning and practice of voluntary — : 86,1,2; - practice of the spirit of — : 87,1,2; - the spirit of — is

based on confidence in Providence : 87,2.

Prayer — How to seek God in — : 12,1,2; - to interrupt activity to give oneself to — : 12,1; 59,1; - apostolic activity should not absorb the time necessary for — : 325,2; 331,2; 339,1; - — should be a prolongation of the — of Jesus : 59,2; - — should be accompanied by sacrifice : *ibid.*; 326,1; - continuity of — : 146,1; - substance of every form of — is intimate contact with God : 146,1,2; 198,2; our — should be filial contact with God : 198,1; - vocal — : 148,1,2; - necessary always to unite vocal — with mental — : 148,2; - liturgical — : 164,1,2; - relationship between liturgical — and personal — : 164,2; 167,2; - Holy Mass is the center of liturgical cult : 165,1,2; - Divine Office is the — of the Mystical Body : 167,1,2; - efficacy of — made in the Name of Jesus : 175,1,2; - — is vain if it does not correspond to one's life : 175,2; - not granted by God to one without fraternal charity : 182,1; - the more — is interwoven with sacrifice, the more efficacious it is : 326,1; - Jesus wishes the — of the heart : 350,1; - the Holy Spirit teaches us to pray and prays within us : 198,2; - God has ordained that certain graces necessary for our salvation and that of others should depend upon our — : 325,1,2; - apostolic — is one of the most potent means of the apostolate : 325,1; - it is of the highest importance that there should be in the Church souls totally consecrated to — : 325,2; - — and self-indulgence do not go together : 92,2; - — places the soul in actual contact with God :

143,2; - God draws to Himself the soul who seeks Him in — : 145,2; 151,2; 151,1; - the most precious knowledge of God does not come from reasoning but from the "sense" of God derived from the love and the action of the Holy Spirit : 143,2; 157,2; 158,1,2; 191,1; - vocal — : 148,1,2; - difficulty in mental — produced by mobility of the imagination : 149,1; - how to make use of reading in order to pray : 149,2; - — consists much more in loving than in thinking : *ibid.*; 150,1,2; - reflections and reasoning should serve to awaken love : *ibid.*; - to begin — by placing oneself in the presence of God : 150,2; - mental — consists in an intimate contact with God : *ibid.*; 151,1; - intimate conversation with God : 151,1,2; - — of recollection based on the presence of God in the soul : 152,1,2; - practice of recollecting the senses in — and withdrawing oneself with them into God : 152,2; - method of meditation which disposes the soul to contemplation : 150,1,2; - loving contemplative gaze : 151,2; - it is absurd to wish to meditate when God invites the soul to a simpler — : 158,1,2; - to recollect oneself in the presence of God by a simple glance of faith and love : 158,1; - loving attention to God : 158,2; 159,1; - action of the Holy Spirit in this form of — : *ibid.*; - conduct of the soul in passage from meditation to contemplation : 159,1,2; - — deepens under the influence of the gift of knowledge : 309,2; - and understanding : 311,2; - and of wisdom : 313,2; - divers causes of aridity in — : 153,1,2; - fidelity to — regardless of aridity : 153,2; 155,2; 156,2; - it is a beautiful proof of our love to

persevere in — regardless of aridity and repugnancy : **153,2**; - to humbly welcome the torment of aridity in — : **156,2**; - the resolute decision not to relax in — regardless of all difficulties which one may meet : **156,1**; - by means of aridity God raises the soul to a higher prayer : **157,1,2**; - in aridity is born a "sense" of God : **157,2**; - soul should not be disturbed by her impotence and aridity in — : **158,1**; - to prolong — during the day : **160,1,2**; - to maintain oneself in intimate contact with God by means of — : **160,1**; - and by the practice of the presence of God : **162,1,2**.

See : ARIDITY; CONTEMPLATION.

Presence of God — In all creatures : **10,1**; **152,1**; - in the souls of the just : **10,1,2**; **152,1**; **160,1**; **251,1**; - God always with us, even when we do not advert to the — : **141,2**; - prayer based on the — in us : **152,1,2**; - continual contact with God present within us : **160,1**; **162,1,2**; - the — in us deepens in proportion to the measure of our love : **301,1**; - the practice of the — and its diverse forms : **162,1,2**; - consciousness of the — in us and in our neighbor : **162,2**; **163,2**; - to keep oneself in the — in the midst of daily occupations and difficulties : **163,1,2**.

See : TRINITY.

Pride — Struggle against — : **62,2**; - one conquers — by accepting what is humiliating : **98,1**; - humiliations are the remedy for — : **110,1,2**; - to make use of temptations to — to humble oneself : **111,2**; - to struggle against — even "unto blood" : **376,2**; - to have

recourse to Mary in the struggle against the ever-recurring tendencies to — : **380,2**; - — is an obstacle to grace and to the action of God in the soul : **106,2**; **259,2**; - —, egoism, and the other passions turn into evil that which God has disposed for our good : **266,2**; - — does not wish to recognize its own faults : **118,1**; - vexation of the soul finding itself always on the ground is the fruit of — : **295,1**; - imperfections arising from subtle spiritual — : **346,2**.

See : SELF-LOVE; HAUGHTINESS.

Priest - Priesthood — Function and dignity : **68,1,2**; - perpetuates among us the work of Jesus : **68,2**; - is organ of communication and increase in the life of the Mystical Body of Jesus : **341,1**; - duties toward — : respect, gratitude, and prayer : **68,1,2**; - call to — and correspondence : **75,1**; **76,1,2**.

Progress — The need to always make — in the spiritual life : **77,1**; **99,1,2**; - — not measured by the comfort the soul experiences : **153,2**; - — in the way of sanctity depends upon the generosity with which we renounce ourselves : **384,2**; - examen of conscience is a means of spiritual — : **103,1,2**.

Providence (Divine) — Confidence in — : **87,2**; **239,2**; **287,2**; - confidence in — frees the soul from anxiety for worldly goods : **87,2**; **287,2**; - and gives courage to bear their privation : **98,1**; - one who lets herself be guided by — does not flee from occasions of sufferings : **97,2**; - — permits and directs all for our good : **128,2**; **130,2**; **163,1,2**; **239,1**; **244,1,2**; - even suffering, evil, and its consequences : **248,1**; **292,2**; - nothing escapes the govern-

ment of — : 163,1; 239,1; 244,2; - — is so great that it embraces the universe and cares for each individual creature, even the least : 239,2; - — makes use of our defects and falls to humble us and to make us understand our misery : 295,1; - — makes use of the defects of others to exercise our virtue : 292,1,2; - and to make manifest our self-love and to purify us of our imperfections : 351,2; - — chooses and prepares the sufferings of this life for our purification : 351,1,2.

See : GOD.

Prudence — Necessary in order not to let oneself be deceived by false appearances : 238,2; - shrewdness in providing for our eternal interests : 245,2; 272,2; - — tells us what to do and what to avoid in order to attain the end : 272,1; - supernatural — consists in setting the utmost value on the present moment for the sake of our eternal end : 272,2; - Christian — has nothing in common with — of the flesh : *ibid.*; 275,2; - — in deliberations : 274,1,2; — is perfected by the gift of counsel : 274,1; 306,1; - in order that judgment and choice may be prudent, they should be free of selfish motives : 274,2; - — is the guide of all the other virtues : 275,1; - Christian — travels the straight way of duty and truth : 275,2; - relationship between — and uprightness : *ibid.*

Punctuality — In the fulfillment of duty requires mortification and detachment : 276,2.

Purgatory — Would not be necessary if we were perfectly faithful to grace : 385,2; - in — one suffers without increasing in love,

though on earth purification is accomplished with an increase of grace and charity : *ibid.*

Purification — Necessity of — : 78,1,2; 132,1; 237,2; 316,1; 346,1,2; 346,1,2; 348,1; 385,2; - God fills the soul in the measure of its — from every stain of sin and imperfection : 78,1,2; - few attain the fullness of the spiritual life because few accept the purifications : 132,1; 354,1; - the purpose of purifying trials is reparation for faults committed and the destruction of the last roots of sin : 237,2; - a great — is necessary to overcome completely the dualism between the ego and God : 332,2; - the painful — which is the night of the spirit is necessary to remove the roots of imperfect habits : 347,1; 352,1; - God alone can lead the soul to complete — : 83,2; 132,1; 194,2; 351,1; 352,1; - though very painful, — is the work of God's love : 348,1,2; 354,1; - God purifies the soul of every stain that hinders its perfect union with His infinite purity : 348,2; - God purifies the soul by the circumstances of life : 351,1; - — of the soul is the work of the Holy Spirit : 194,2; 316,1; - with the Living Flame of His Love, He destroys and consumes all its imperfections : 352,1,2; - how the soul suffers in this state : *ibid.*; and *fol.*; - patience and confidence in the pain of — : 354,1; - purifying sufferings ordained for the development of love : 355,1,2; - Holy Spirit fills the soul with the flames of His Charity when He finds it purified from all that is contrary to love : 360,2; - by spiritual — God inflames the soul with yearnings for divine love : 361,1; - by means

of the struggle against pride and self-love : 316,1; - to desire and ask for the grace of — : 346,2; 385,2; - we should welcome — to give God proof of our love : 348,2; - loving, patient, humble acceptance of purifying sufferings : 351,1,2; - if we do not know how to accept — in this world, we shall suffer it in purgatory : 385,2.

See : ARDITY; NIGHT OF THE SENSES; NIGHT OF THE SPIRIT; TRIALS.

Purity — Of heart enables one to understand divine subjects : 90,2; — of heart is necessary for penetration of the divine mysteries : 312,1; — of heart is the fruit of the gift of understanding : 312,2; - first condition to reach God is total — which is the fruit of total detachment : 379,2.

See : Charity.

Pusillanimity — Deters the soul from accomplishing great works from excessive fear of failure : 289,2; — is cowardice and pride : *ibid.*

Recollection — To await in — the coming of Jesus : 8,2; — should not hinder the practice of charity : 14,2; 64,2; 181,1,2; — and interior silence : 17,1,2; 378,2; - to keep — in activity : 21,2; — necessary to penetrate and practice the teaching of Jesus : 55,2; 84,2; - to perceive the counsels of the Holy Spirit : 306,2; — disposes the soul for contemplation : 145,2; - prayer of — : 152,1,2.

Rectitude — Of intention in the apostolate : 25,2; 332,1,2; - necessity of — of intention : 285,2; - relation between prudence and — : 275,2;

— necessary in order not to deviate from justice : 278,2.

See : INTENTION.

Redeemer and Redemption
— Expectation of — : 1,1,2; 22,1,2;
- our collaboration with the work of — : 23,1,2; 24,1,2; - from the twofold evil of sin and suffering God has drawn the great good of our — : 127,1; - work of — is the most glorious manifestation of infinite goodness of God : 226,1;
- by — humanity has been grafted into Christ : 238,1; - the work of — is always in action and we live under its influence : 273,1; 280,2;
- all the mysteries of — are mysteries of love : 376,1.

See : JESUS; INCARNATION; PASSION.

Religion (Virtue of) — Gives us a profound sense of our relations with God and with our neighbor : 273,2; - filial piety is the characteristic, the heart of our — : 282,1; — urges us to give God the worship which is His due : 281,2
- — honors God in the only way worthy of Him, inasmuch as it shares in the — of Christ : *ibid.*
- the virtue of — makes our life a continuous act of worship of God : *ibid.*

Renunciation — Of self is indispensable foundation of spiritual life : 54,2; - total — necessary in order to attain union with God : 79,2; 80,1; - when the soul has attained total — of self, it will acquire the precious pearl of divine union : 82,1; - — places one on the path of conformity to Jesus Crucified : 194,2; - — frees the soul so that it can use all its strength to love God : 253,2; - — is an exercise of love : *ibid.*; - the way that leads

to union with God consists in abnegation of self : 349,1; - — of anything that may not be for the honor and glory of God : 62,2; - — of any satisfaction and affection that does not lead to God : 81,1; - — of the satisfaction of taking account of one's interior progress : 115,1; - — of defending one's rights : 117,2; - — of one's own will by means of obedience : 120,1,2; and *fol.*; - — of one's own views by acting according to God's view as manifested by orders of superiors : 124,1; - — of one's own tastes and rights and ideas in favor of charity and fraternal union : 269,1,2; 308,1,2; - — necessary for soul consecrated to God : 76,1.

See : ABNEGATION; DETACHMENT; MORTIFICATION.

Reverence — Before the majesty of God : 155,2; 359,1; - — infused by the gift of fear : 99,2.

Rosary — Is the meditation of the life of Mary : 381,1; - the — helps one to penetrate the mysteries of Christ : 381,2.

Rule of life — Is a manifestation of the Will of God : 276,2; - punctuality and exactness in keeping — : *ibid.*

Sacraments — The exterior rite accomplished by the Church — the interior effect produced by Christ : 69,1; - working *ex opere operato* : 69,2; - dispositions with which to receive the — : *ibid.*

Sacred heart of Jesus — The love of the — is the source and motive of all His gifts : 208,1; 209,2; - the — holds the mystery of the love of God for men : 208,2;

- is the symbol and image of the love of Jesus : 209,1; 210,1; - chief object of devotion to the — is the love of Jesus : 209,1; - devotion to the — touches the depths of all the mysteries of the Redeemer : 209,2; - and aims to spur us to return His love : 211,1,2; 212,1; - contemplating the — one always understands His love better : 211,2; 215,1; - devotion to the — inspires reparation : 213,1,2; - to model our heart on the — : 214,1; - to imitate the meekness and humility of the — : 214,1,2; - consecration to the — is the response to His love : 212,1; - to consecrate oneself to the — signifies one's choosing His Will, His desires, and His tastes as the norm of one's own life : 212,2; - the — is the abode of the soul living the interior life : 215,1; - and its refuge in temptation : 215,2; - confidence in the — in failings and infidelity : *ibid.*; - the — living in the Eucharist : 216,1.

See : JESUS.

Sacred Scriptures — Inspired by the Holy Spirit : 167,2; 190,2; - to meditate on the — is to enter the school of the Holy Spirit : 190,2.

Sacrifice — Is a most powerful means of the apostolate : 24,1,2; 25,2; 326,1,2; - renders works fruitful : 36,1; - — and prayer : 59,2; - our sacrifices have value only inasmuch as they are offered in union with the — of Jesus : 166,2; - when we avoid —, we act like the enemies of the Cross of Christ : 350,1.

See : CROSS; SORROW; SUFFERING.

Salvation (Eternal) — God wills all to be saved : 2,1; 247,1; - God gives to all the grace necessary

for — : 2,1; - Jesus is the one source of our — : 28,1; 37,1; 38,2; - — of many depends on our prayers and voluntary mortifications : 23,2; 318,2; 325,1; - many are not saved because no one prays and sacrifices himself for them : 298,2.

Sanctity — Call to — : 2,2; 77,2; - Will of God is our sanctification : 2,2; 247,1; 298,1; 316,1; - we may be certain that God will give us all the graces necessary for our sanctification : 246,2; 295,2; - if we cannot hope to attain — by our efforts, we should hope to attain it by the power of God : 249,1; 295,2; - no earthly creature can take us from the road to — : 331,1; - God desires our sanctification more than we do : 354,1; - He greatly desires to work in souls to lead them to — : 355,1; - Jesus has merited all the graces necessary for our sanctification : 2,2; 246,2; 266,2; 325,1; 363,2; - Jesus is the one source of our — : 38,2; - He teaches us how to be saints and gives us the means : 53,1; - the way to — is imitation of Christ : 57,1,2; - and conformation to Him : 193,1,2; - — consists in the degree of grace and love which the soul possesses : 3,1,2; 4,2; - in its perfect conformity to the Will of God : 5,1,2; 6,2; 193,2; 362,2; - in the continual and exact accomplishment of duty : 6,2; - in the continual tending toward the infinite perfection of God : 53,2; - and the fullness of love and grace : 99,2; - — does not consist in words and sighs but in doing the Will of God : 238,1; - — consists in a disposition of the heart that renders us humble and little, conscious of our weakness, and confident in God even unto

daring : 247,2; - — consists in the continual adhesion to grace : 252,2; - to be saints the practice of virtue is essential : 298,2; - — is possible to every soul of good will : 5,1; 175,2; - necessary to be sanctified in order to sanctify : 24,2; 323,1; - the apostolic ideal is a powerful lever for personal sanctification : 323,2; - need to offer to the world the living realization of the ideal of — : 327,1; - necessity of holy apostles : 330,2; - apostles should sanctify themselves in view of the apostolate and by means of it : 331,1,2; - genuine — is always crowned with the halo of spiritual paternity or maternity : 341,2; - the model of all — is God : 53,1,2; - to be saints it is necessary to live as children of God : 58,1; — should be the fruit of a Christian life: 238,1; - — should be accompanied by affability of manner : 335,1; - necessity of making progress in the way of — : 77,1; - to attain — one must not tire in the struggle : *ibid.*; - God goes before us with His grace, but He will not sanctify without our cooperation : 77,2; 84,1,2; 99,2; - the desire of — is the lever of the interior life : 99,1; - secret of attaining — is not to cease to strive for it : 99,2; - need of keeping always in mind our aim for — : 103,2; - the inheritance of all who aim for — is union with God : 364,1; - life of — is total renunciation : 79,2; - is not possible without mortification : 92,1,2; - the greater the — to which one aspires, the greater the need of deep humility : 106,2; - to be saints it is necessary to suffer : 132,1; 194,1,2; - it is necessary to have a magnanimous heart desiring to do great things for God : 289,1,2; - one should not flee from occasions

of practicing patience : 292,1; - it is necessary to persevere in good to the end : 293,1; - and to do violence to oneself : 384,2; - our insufficiency in the matter of — : 191,1,2; 192,1; - in the case of — we are always learners : *ibid.*; - the Holy Spirit Master of — : *ibid.*; - our sanctification is a question of docility to the Holy Spirit : *ibid.*; - necessity of the assistance of the Holy Spirit in order to attain — : 191,1,2; 192,1; 193,2; 195,1; 298,2; 316,1,2; - the Holy Spirit makes the soul hunger and thirst for — : 303,1,2; - saints are the most perfect men, even from the human point of view : 335,2; - they show us the way that leads to — : 384,2.

Selfishness — Is the cause of voluntary imperfections : 102,2; - — hinders the practice of charity : 260,2; - only the soul free from — is fully generous : 290,1; - imperfections due to subtle spiritual — : 346,2.

Self-Knowledge — Knowledge of self and of our miseries should not be separated from knowledge of God : 109,1.

See : HUMILITY.

Senses — Custody of the — : 16,1,2; 17,1; - to attain union with God total mortification of the — is necessary : 83,1; - to use the — only in the measure required by duty : 89,2; - mortification of the sense of taste : 296,2; - every disorder, however slight, in the life of the — weakens the life of the spirit : *ibid.*; - how to recollect the — in prayer : 152,2.

See : MORTIFICATION; NIGHT OF THE SENSES; RENUNCIATION.

Silence — Exterior and interior — : 17,1,2; - interior — makes contact with God possible : 378,2.
See : RECOLLECTION.

Simplicity — In suffering : 130,1,2; - excludes all duplicity of mind and will : 229,2; 285,1; - perfect — makes one live solely for God and with God : *ibid.*; - the simple soul follows but one light, relies upon one strength, tends to but one end — God : *ibid.*; - — does not preoccupy itself with the judgment and favor of others : 285,2; - relation between — and prudence : 238,2; 275,2.

Sin — Dishonors Christ and saddens the Holy Spirit who dwells within us : 48,2; - — is in opposition to the infinite perfection of God : 54,1; - ugliness and consequences of — : *ibid.*; 100,1,2; 280,1; - — caused the death of Jesus : 54,1; - is the violence that separates man from God : 100,1; - while grace transforms man from glory to glory, — disfigures those who are its victims : 105,1; - — is an obstacle to the effusions of the Holy Spirit : 168,2; 188,1; - the slave of — produces death : 238,1; 245,1; - lack of harmony caused in us by — : 296,1,2; - struggle against — : 54,2; 98,1; 100,2; 101,1,2; - need to destroy — in its roots and causes : 54,2; 100,2; 103,2; - horror and hatred for — : 280,1; 299,1; - remedy for — is sincere humility and trustful recourse to God : 280,2; - the real evil is not so much in falling as in not rising again : 295,1; - Jesus dying on the Cross conquered — : 54,2; 168,1; - God willed to free us from the slavery of — : 350,1; - in Jesus we have the remission

of — : 383,1; - we all bear the wounds of — : 273,1; - our debts to God are for our sins : 336,1; - mercy of God in pardoning — : 336,1,2; - we should be assured of the pardon of — sincerely detested : 246,2; - and confessed : 280,2; - the first requisite for becoming saints is to hate — : 295,2; - the soul who loves God fears nothing more than — : 299,1; - blessed are they who weep for their sins : 310,1; - love destroys — : 100,2; 364,2.

Original Sin — its consequences : 2,1; 26,2; 38,1; 127,1; - in consequence of original — man has lost the dominion of the spirit over his senses, his flesh : 92,1.

Mortal Sin — is in complete opposition to God : 54,1; 100,1; - malice and consequences of mortal — : 100,1,2; - struggle against mortal — : 100,2; - God clothes with His grace the soul cleansed from mortal — : 78,1.

Venial Sin — diminishes the vigor of charity and hinders its development : 101,1; - when venial — is deliberate and habitual, it leads to tepidity : *ibid.*; 153,1; - venial — always includes a transgression more or less light of the law of God : 102,1; - conduct in case of venial — caused by frailty or inadvertance : 101,2.

Sincerity — A sincere soul recognizes its defects : 140,1; 284,1; - — with one's neighbor : 284,2; - — in words and actions should express truth loved interiorly : *ibid.*

Solitude — Is necessary in order to find God : 12,1; - interior — : 13,2.

Sorrow — Is permitted by God only for our good : 63,1; - — being the consequence of sin, has been

transformed by Jesus as means of destroying sin : 127,1; - it is necessary to pass through the crucible of suffering in order to reach sanctity : 91,1; - the gift of knowledge shows — of present life light in comparison with eternal blessedness : 310,2; - man is blind in face of the mystery of — : 91,2. See : CROSS; SUFFERING.

Soul — Temple of the Holy Trinity : 11,1,2; 16,1; 58,2; 61,2; 78,2; - the — totally free from every attachment acts only according to the Will of God : 5,2; - when the — is completely purified, God transforms it into Himself by means of grace and love : 78,1,2; - when the — does what it can, God will not fail to do His part and to communicate Himself to it at least in secret and in silence : 366,2; - the — should open itself to the action of God : *ibid.*; - the first vineyard that we could cultivate is our — : 77,2; - should be fully resolved to practice renunciation : 82,1; - dispositions the — should have in order to draw profit from the word of God : 84,2; - the — that seeks the esteem of creatures does not live alone with God alone : 114,2; - the — should forget itself to be completely centered on Christ : 115,1; - the — living an interior life should not act as a mercenary, but as a child : 115,2; - the enamored — should give herself exclusively to God giving up all that she is and all that she has : 134,1; - the — who has given herself seriously to God has two great attractions : prayer and the apostolate : 342,1.

Spiritual Childhood — Attained by rebirth in Christ : 147,1.

Spiritual Consolation — Not an end in itself, but a maid to serve God with greater generosity and to give us more strength to carry the cross : 105,2; 370,2; - it is necessary to learn how to love God with a pure and strong act of the will above every feeling and consolation : 255,1,2; - the loving soul longs for divine intimacy, not to enjoy it, but to increase in the love of God : 370,2.

Spiritual Delights — To seek God rather than — : 18,1,2; - he who seeks — does not love God with all his strength : 19,2.

See : SPIRITUAL CONSOLATIONS.

Spiritual Espousals — The characteristic of — is the perfect “Yes” of the consent the soul gives to God : 365,1; - to the perfect “Yes” of the soul, God replies with the true and complete “Yes” of grace : 366,1.

See : UNION WITH GOD.

Spiritual Marriage — Is a total transformation in the Beloved : 367,2; - is a union as perfect and full as is possible outside of the union of Heaven : *ibid.*; - love, fully uniting the soul to God, makes it so conformed to Him that it transforms it into Him : 369,1; in its most elevated movements the soul advertises to the living God present and working within it : 370,1; - in the state of — the sensibility of the soul is fully pacified : 367,1; - the whole “capital” of the soul is employed in the practice of love : 368,1; - even the first motions are those of love : *ibid.*; - its sole activity consists in loving : 368,2; - it loves God with pure love : *ibid.*; - it loves God as it has been loved by

Him because it loves Him with the Holy Spirit : 369,2; - it does not long for the divine intimacy to enjoy it, but to love God always more : 370,2; - it tends to produce works and to work : *ibid.*; - the glory souls attain in this state is in their power to assist their Crucified God by working for the salvation of souls : *ibid.*

See : UNION WITH GOD.

Struggle — Of the flesh against the spirit : 245,1; 287,1; 301,1; - not to relent in the — regardless of falls : 295,2.

Suffering — Its value : 91,1,2; 127,1,2; - has value only when offered with Christ and for Christ : 93,2; - value of — permitted by God in circumstances of life : 97,2; 213,2; - — is lovable only in view of the good attainable by means of it : 127,1; - value and fruitfulness of — : 129,1,2; 139,1; 194,2; - is impossible to attain eternal glory without — : 105,1; 161,1; - present — nothing in comparison with glory awaiting us : *ibid.*; 217,1; 310,2; - — in this world necessary in order to prove our love for God : 360,1; - cannot fail to have — in this world : 370,2; - we should be generous in — to expiate our faults : 385,2; - any — can be made to harmonize with the ideals of a Christian : 127,2; - charity makes us capable of bearing any — without becoming overwhelmed : *ibid.*; - to suffer for the love of Jesus, who has suffered for love of us : 128,1; 291,2; - our — is nothing in comparison with that of Jesus : 128,1; 130,1; - spirit of faith on occasions of — : 128,2; 351,2; - by — the soul gives glory to God

and shows its love : **132,2**; - only God can infuse love for — : **360,2**; - — is permitted for our sanctification : **128,2**; **129,2**; **291,1**; **351,1**; - the more God makes us suffer, the more will He sanctify us and love us : **132,2**; - God permits — for the good of His elect : **248,1**; - the gift of understanding makes us comprehend the beatitude of — embraced for the love of God : **310,2**; - necessity of — to attain union with God : **347,2**; **348,1,2**; - God chooses and disposes the — of life for our purification : **351,1**; - profit the soul receives from — embraced for love of God : **128,2**; **129,2**; - every — accepted from the hand of God is a means of sanctification : *ibid.*; - confidence and abandonment to God in — : *ibid.*; **130,1,2**; **138,2**; - self-forgetfulness and simplicity in — : **130,1**; - a simple soul is one who suffers with the greatest courage : *ibid.*; - necessity of — for our purification : **132,1**; **248,1**; **351,1,2**; - active — is not sufficient; passive — is necessary : **132,1**; - patience renders us able to bear daily — without losing serenity : **291,1**; - saints longed for occasions of — : **292,2**; **360,1**; - to suffer without complaining : **292,2**; - to suffer injustice with serenity : **279,2**.

See : CROSS; SORROW; TRIALS.

Superiors — Whoever obeys — obeys God : **120,1**; **124,2**; - to see God in — : **123,1**; **125,1**; - by orders of — God enables one to act according to His Will : **124,1**; - legitimate orders of — are a secure manifestation of the Will of God : **124,2**; - in — necessary to consider authority of God : **125,1,2**; - God governs us by — notwithstanding

their errors : **123,2**; - not to reason on the faults and lacks of — : *ibid.*; **125,1,2**; - duties of — : **125,2**.

See : OBEDIENCE.

Temperance — Moderates the disordered desire of sensible joy : **296,1**; **299,2**; - helps to re-establish the harmony lost by sin : **296,1,2**; - — in regard to the sense of taste : **296,2**.

Temptation — Conduct to maintain in — : **98,1,2**; - every — is accompanied by grace sufficient to overcome it : **98,2**; **252,1**; - discouragement and want of confidence is most dangerous — : **295,1**.

Tepidity — Cause and consequences of — : **101,1**; - tepid soul does not advert to its need for God : **141,1**; - voluntary infidelity can draw a fervent soul into — : **153,1**.

Time — Good use of — : **35,1,2**; **329,1**; - — not used for our sanctification and for others is — lost : **61,1**; - — is from God : **36,2**; - Jesus will come at the end of — to gather the fruits of His work and Blood : **364,2**.

See : LIFE (Earthly).

Trials — Spirit of faith in — : **63,1**; - in — the need to have recourse to God with confidence : **63,2**; - fidelity to God in — : **105,2**; - humble acceptance of purifying — : **237,2**; **351,2**; - if the soul is strong in accepting exterior —, God purifies by interior — : **352,1**; - the greatest suffering of the soul in purifying — is to feel itself unworthy of the love

of God and the fear that it has been rejected by Him : *ibid.*; - the fear of not being able to attain union with Him : 353,1,2; - the fear of not knowing how to love Him : 355,2; - every trial is a great mercy of God : 237,2; - God tries the souls He loves : 248,1; - God does not try us beyond our strength : *ibid.*; - by purifying — God helps the soul to increase in love : 355,1; - and trains the soul in the perfection of love : 355,2.

See : ARIDITY; NIGHT OF THE SENSES; NIGHT OF THE SPIRIT; PURIFICATION.

Trinity — Indwelling in the soul in the state of grace : 10,1,2; 11,1; 16,1; 152,1; 183,2; 222,1; 223,1; - the — lives in the soul in the state of grace by associating it with Its Life : 222,2; - the divine Persons are present in the soul and each One communicates Himself to it according to His characteristics : *ibid.*; 225,1; - progressive effusions of the — in the soul of the just : 223,1,2; - three Persons of the Blessed — concurred in the work of the Incarnation : 26,2; - all the external works of God are common to the three Persons of the — : 186,2; 225,1; - the Triune God gives Himself to man to redeem, sanctify, and introduce him to divine intimacy : 189,1; 221,2; 225,1; - every gift comes from the — : 196,1; 226,1; - merciful work of the — for the benefit of our souls : 196,1; 221,2; - equality of the three divine Persons : 27,1; - intimate life of the — : 186,1; 196,2; 220,2; 250,1,2; - sublimity of the Trinitarian mystery : 196,2; - incomprehensibility of this mystery : *ibid.*; 221,1; - the — has been revealed by Jesus : 220,1;

- mystery of the — reveals more than any other mystery the perfection of the goodness of God : 220,2; - revealing to us the mystery of the —, God has unveiled the secret of His intimate life : 221,2; - the — is the source and center of all other mysteries : 226,1; - life of intimate union with the — : 58,2; 61,2; 116,2; 183,2; 225,1,2; - union with the — nourished by the Eucharist : 219,1,2; - union with the — deepens in proportion to charity and grace possessed by the soul : 223,1; - particular contacts with each of the divine Persons : 225,2; - purpose of Incarnation and Redemption is to lead man to the — : 116,2; 219,1; 222,1; 225,2; - the end of the Christian life is to make us share in the life of the — : 116,2; - all has been ordained for the glory of the — : 226,1,2; - to live for the glory of the — : *ibid.*; - attitude of humility and faith in the presence of the — : 221,1.

Truth — Excusing our faults, though it satisfy our pride, in reality blinds us, makes us incapable of seeing the — in our own case : 118,1; - joy in the — : 140,1; - doing the — in charity : *ibid.*

See : SINCERITY.

Understanding (Gift of) — Enables one to penetrate the divine mysteries : 311,1; - introduces the soul to a prayer more simple and profound : 311,2; - perfects the virtue of faith : 311,1,2; - purifies the mind of errors : 312,2; - to — corresponds the beatitude : blessed are the clean of heart : 312,1,2; - purity of heart is necessary to become open to the influence of — : 312,1; - purity of heart is the fruit of this gift : 312,2.

Union with God — Calls for total conformity of will with the Will of God : 5,2; 78,2; 120,1 272,1; 346,1; 362,1; — not attained so much in the sweetness of prayer as in fully embracing the Will of God : 21,1; - state of — consists in the soul being wholly transformed in the Will of God : 5,2; 251,2; 362,1; - in this state the Will of God becomes the will of the soul : 7,1; 362,2; - measure of — is measure of conformity to His Will : 346,1; - the power that unites the soul to God is love : 4,2; 100,1; 250,1; 345,1,2; 361,1,2; - it is not the sentiment of love that unites the soul to God, but the act of love that seeks God and His Will : 255,2; 345,2; - the more a soul is united with God, the greater its progress in love : *ibid.*; 346,1; - to a greater degree of love corresponds a greater — : 361,1,2; - the greater the faith of a soul the greater will be its — : 18,1; - the soul disposes itself for — by purity and love : 78,2; - it attains — in proportion to its humility : 106,1,2; - obedience the shortest way to — : 122,1; - we are united to God by the theological virtues and in the measure of their purity and intensity : 248,1; - — is indispensable for the efficacy of the apostolate : 25,1; - — and dependence on Him in every work : 61,2; - — and with one's neighbor is the secret of victory over evil : 112,2; - blessed is the soul who is united to God by the observance of His doctrine : *ibid.*; - — requires union with our brethren : 271,2; - the more a soul is united to God, the more it is inflamed with His charity and becomes apostolic, participating in His inexhaustible fecundity : 339,1; 341,1; - the soul cannot attain — if it keeps any

attachment or imperfection : 78,1,2; 79,1; 80,1,2; 82,1; 346,1,2; 359,1; - a single voluntary imperfection is an impediment to — : 78,2; 79,1; 102,1; - any disordered affection hinders — : 80,2; 81,1; 349,1; - he who wishes — should not let his heart be bound to creatures : 227,2; - lack of fraternal charity prevents — : 365,2; - necessity of purification in order to attain — : 78,1,2; 132,1; 237,2; 316,1; 346,1,2; 347,2; 348,1,2; - when the soul has attained renunciation of self in everything, God Himself will place in her hand the pearl of divine union : 82,1; - no sacrifice is too great, no purification is too painful to attain — : 347,2; 348,2; 356,1; 366,2; 368,1; - Divine Love before uniting and transforming the soul to God purifies it from every contrary quality : 348,1; - how necessary it is to suffer before attaining — : 348,1,2; and *fol.*; - God desires nothing more than to unite the soul to Himself, and therefore He purifies it of every stain of sin that can prevent perfect union with His infinite purity : 348,2; - way that leads to — consists in interior and exterior self-abnegation and a willingness to suffer for Christ : 349,1; - to attain — the soul must be reduced to the center of its nothingness : 351,2; 352,2; - many souls fail to attain — because they do not accept the pain of purification : 354,1; - only the way of the cross leads to — : 354,1,2; - — does not consist in joy and feeling, but in the living death of the cross : 354,2; - as long as we are on earth, suffering will not be lacking, even in the midst of the delights of — : 370,2; - — by means of charity is the essence of Christian

perfection : 100,1; - end of man is — : 345,1; - the soul who truly loves God longs to anticipate his — while on earth : *ibid.*; 347,2; - the divine likeness, natural and supernatural, which God has imprinted on the soul, expresses His desire to unite it to Himself and is the foundation of this union : 358,1; - love makes the soul ardent in its desire for — and impatient to attain it : 358,1,2; 359,2; - regardless of its weakness and misery the soul hopes to attain — relying on the help of Jesus : *ibid.*; - Jesus has shown us the way of — and procured for us the means to attain it : 363,2; - — is our inheritance because Jesus has merited it for us with His Blood : 364, 1.

Perfect Union of Will — 362,1,2; - is the essence of sanctity and is to be preferred to all mystic graces : 362,2; - every soul of good will can attain — if it is generous : *ibid.*; 363,1,2; - one can always attain it by forcing one's will to submit to the Will of God : 363,1; - characteristic of union of will is the "Yes" which the soul gives interiorly to God : 365,1; - God communicates Himself and His gifts to the soul who has given herself interiorly to Him : 366,1,2.

Total Union — is total transformation in God : 367,1,2; - in this state the soul possesses God as its principle of life : 367,2; - is completely employed in the exercise of love and even its first movements are motions of love : 368,1; - becomes God by participation as much as is possible in this life : 369,1; - loves God with the same love with which He loves her because she loves Him with the Holy Spirit : 369,2; - she enjoys a

deep intimacy with God : 370,1; - spontaneously she becomes apostolic, desiring to draw with herself an immense multitude of souls : *ibid.*

See : SPIRITUAL ESPOUSALS; SPIRITUAL MARRIAGE; WILL OF GOD.

Victim — Jesus is the — who immolates Himself continually for us : 166,1; - the soul who offers itself as a — to God when renouncing her own will is completely conformed to God : 166,2; 213,2; - — of reparation : *ibid.*; - not to pose as a — in the face of unjust treatment : 351,1.

Virtue — Is strengthened by difficulties : 63,1; - — marked by the cross flourishes in the midst of difficulties : 128,1; - no one can perform the least act of — without the aid of actual grace : 107,2; - however much the soul practices —, it cannot count on its strength 108,2; the greatest obstacle to the acquisition of — is to believe it is already attained : 117,2; - the intense practice of — is necessary to receive the divine gifts : 145,2; 197,1; 298,1,2; 302,2; - the infused virtues are capital that will have increase only if we know how to invest them by good will : 288,2; - one should not be contented with tiny acts of —, but should perform generous and heroic acts : 289,1; - God uses every circumstance of life to invite us to — : 163,2; 266,2; 292,1; - God will give us — only if we apply ourselves to its exercise : *ibid.* - the infused virtues are supernatural principles of activity : 195,1; - God has infused — in us without any merit on our part, but He will not make it increase

without our collaboration : **298,1**; - one cannot attain perfect — without the help and the gifts of the Holy Spirit : **298,2**.

Virtues (Theological) — Are the means best adapted to unite us to God : **248,1**; - if we practice them by our will, it is not necessary to have sentiment : **248,2**; - they purify the three powers of the soul : **349,2**.

Vocation — To the Christian life : **75,1**; - to consecration to God : *ibid.*; - privilege and gratuity of — : **75,2**; - correspondence to — : **76,1,2**; **322,2**; **386,1**; - progressiveness of the divine call : **76,2**; - each day requires a new response, a new acceptance according to the grace of the moment : **322,2**; - infidelity to — : **134,2**; **322,2**; - fidelity to — requires the breaking of every attachment : **134,2**; - cloistered — is an apostolic, universal — : **324,2**.

See : CONSECRATION TO GOD.

Vows — To correspond with one's vocation, it does not suffice to make — : **76,2**; - vow of poverty : **86,1,2**; - vow of chastity : **88,2**; - vow of obedience : **121,2**; **122,1,2**. See : CHASTITY; OBEDIENCE; POVERTY.

Will of God — Is our sanctification : **2,1**; **247,1**; - the — disposes the events of our life for our sanctification : **36,2**; - the — is always best for us : **56,1**; - conformity to the — is the essence of sanctity : **5,1,2**; **6,2**; **362,2**; - the happier souls are in doing the —, the more perfect they are : **5,1**; - the — is the sole incentive for souls to be

perfect : **5,2**; **7,1**; **362,1**; - conformity to the — should be such that there is nothing in the soul contrary to It, but in all things the soul be moved solely by the Divine Will : **5,2**; **60,2**; **78,1**; **193,2**; **251,2**; - only in the — shall we find our sanctification : **36,2**; - the — should become the sole motive of our actions : **99,2**; - manifestations of the — : **6,1**; **120,1**; **276,2**; - conformity to the — by obedience : **120,2**; - the — securely manifested by orders of superiors : **123,1,2**; **124,1,2**; - to attain full conformity to the — it is necessary to undergo purifications : **7,2**; **346,1**; - one of the greatest obstacles to conformity to the — is attachment to one's own will : **120,2**; - one cannot embrace the — without renouncing one's own : **194,1**; - one cannot be united with the — if one does not diligently fulfill the commandment of fraternal charity : **365,2**; - conformity to the — is a source of peace : **33,2**; **36,2**; **363,2**; - is the best preparation for Communion : **207,1,2**; - and reparation for sin : **213,2**; - acceptance of the — : **36,2**; **112,2**; - the — should be the rule of our conduct : **60,2**; - the greater the conformity to the —, the greater the graces corresponding to it : *ibid.*; **78,1**; - conformity to the — corresponds to the degree of purity of the soul : *ibid.*; - the soul should be able to find satisfaction only in doing the — : **81,1**; - Jesus Crucified has told us how great is the cost of fulfilling the — : **193,2**; - the accomplishment of the — should be the fruit of the Christian life : **238,2**; - he who travels by the way of the —, instead of being guided by his own spirit, is guided by the Holy Spirit : **329,1**; - simple adhesion

to the — in the painful trials of the night of the spirit : 354,2; - true love consists in seeking always the —, preferring it to one's own : 255,2; 256,1; - love leads the soul to the perfect conformity of its will with the — : 362,1; - every soul of good will can attain to this state : 363,1,2; - the perfect "Yes" to the — : 365,1,2; - the soul of interior life should try to conform herself always more to the — : 364,1.

See : UNION WITH GOD.

Will (Human) — Should in all things conform itself to the Will of God : 5,1,2; - our stubborn, petty — is an obstacle to the action of the Holy Spirit : 192,2; - to hold on to our inconstant — rather than to the immutable Will of God : 230,1; - quality of good — : 33,2; - importance of renunciation of one's own — : 120,2; - sacrifice of one's own — the greatest and most meritorious act : 121,2; - he who has consecrated to God his own will by promise or vow should be on his guard not to take back what he has offered : 122,2; - he who is attached to his own — is not poor in spirit : 300,2; - how our — differs from the Will of God : 346,2.

Wisdom — Of the world is foolishness to God : 234,2; - — to judge things as God values them : *ibid.* *Gift of Wisdom* — makes one relish the things of God : 313,1; - — actuates us by charity : 313,2; - introduces the soul to the prayer of union : *ibid.*; - under its influence the soul judges all things according to the divine judgment : 314,1; - to — corresponds the beatitude of the peacemakers : *ibid.*; - — establishes the soul in the peace of the children of God : 314,2.

The Word (Second Person of the Most Blessed Trinity) — In every way is equal to the Father and the Holy Spirit : 27,1; - Incarnate for love of us : 27,2; - in order to communicate to us supernatural being : 39,2; - becoming Incarnate — remains as He was : 27,2; 52,1; - becoming Incarnate — conceals His greatness and His Divinity : 31,1.

See : JESUS; INCARNATION.

Works — The more — cost us, the more they are proofs of true love : 36,1; - our good — are always full of defects : 247,1; - our — should be to the edification of our neighbor : 327,2.

Zeal

See : APOSTOLATE.



Fr. Gabriel
of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D.
1893-1952

BORN in Belgium in 1893, Fr. Gabriel was noted for holiness even as a boy. He entered the Order of Discalced Carmelites in Bruges, Belgium in 1910 at the age of 17 and was ordained in 1919. From 1919 to 1926 he taught philosophy at the Carmelite seminary in Courtrai, Belgium, finishing his own studies at Louvain and at the Angelicum in Rome during this same period. In Rome he studied for a time under Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. During World War I, Fr. Gabriel and his confreres were conscripted to do hospital work at the military front. There they managed

to live as religious, and Fr. Gabriel even used the available time to study Scripture and to learn Hebrew. Then, beginning in 1926, he taught at the Carmelite International College of St. Teresa in Rome. Among his students he produced an atmosphere of Christian charity, encouragement and peace. From 1931 until his death in 1952, Fr. Gabriel dedicated himself especially to the study and teaching of spiritual theology. His remarkable talents as a teacher and spiritual director (to priests, religious and laity) were evidenced in his conferences and writings on Carmelite spirituality. Fr. Gabriel had great esteem for the teachings of St. Thomas. He was made a member of the Roman Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas, as well as a Consultor of the Sacred Congregation of Rites. In 1941 he founded the review *Vita Carmelitana* and in 1947 initiated the *Revista di Vita Spirituale*.

In 1935 Fr. Gabriel wrote that his desire was "always this, to sanctify myself and to really love God, and make Him loved." He wanted priests of his Order to pass on the rich tradition of Carmel, but to present it to souls of today in a language they understand. A fellow priest wrote of him: "He was a master eminently Carmelite. Few have loved and studied the doctrine of the masters of the Carmelite school as much as Father Gabriel: St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross were most familiar to him. It seemed to us we had heard him

say that he had read the entire works thirty times. Certainly he had penetrated even the most difficult points of them, making his own their sublime and elevated doctrine, which was always at the base of each of his instructions." Explaining the development of his own thought, Fr. Gabriel would say: "When I was young, I loved architecture and travelled to study the magnificent cathedrals that emerged through the centuries; and even today, coming across a monument of art, I take pleasure in it. But after having studied theology, and when I began to draw near to souls, I found greater beauties, and nothing seemed more beautiful to me than to help them to live the life of God." Special characteristics of Fr. Gabriel were his great desire for pure love for God, love for the will of God as lived out in generous and minute religious obedience, complete self-giving, untiring zeal in assiduous work—knowing its penitential and sanctifying value—and a passion for the ideals of the Carmelite Order.

Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen was profoundly aware of the spiritual needs of our times, and he also understood the special mission of Carmel in the Church: that of leading souls to a life of intimate union with God by means of the practice of mental prayer. It is this ideal that inspired Fr. Gabriel to conceive the work entitled *Divine Intimacy*, which has since become a beloved spiritual classic for many people.

The photo of Fr. Gabriel and much of the above brief biography is from *A Master of the Spiritual Life: Father Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D., 1893-1952*, by The Carmelite Nuns of the Carmel of St. Joseph, Rome, published by the Postulazione Generale, Rome, 1959; English translation by Sister Miriam of Jesus, O.C.D., published by the Carmel of Maria Regina, Eugene, Oregon, 1982.

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