

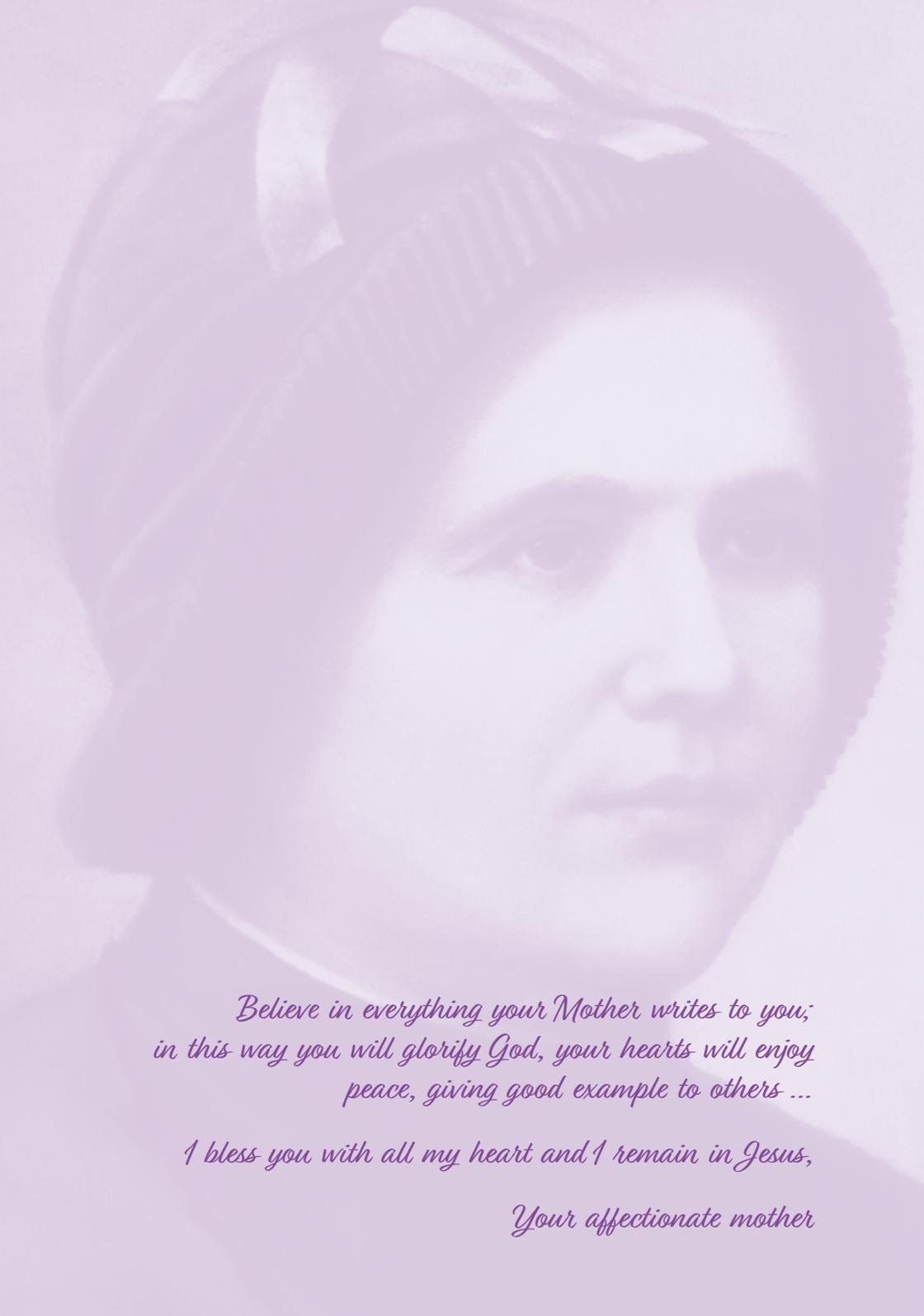


*Mother
Writes*

Letters of
Mother Clelia Merloni



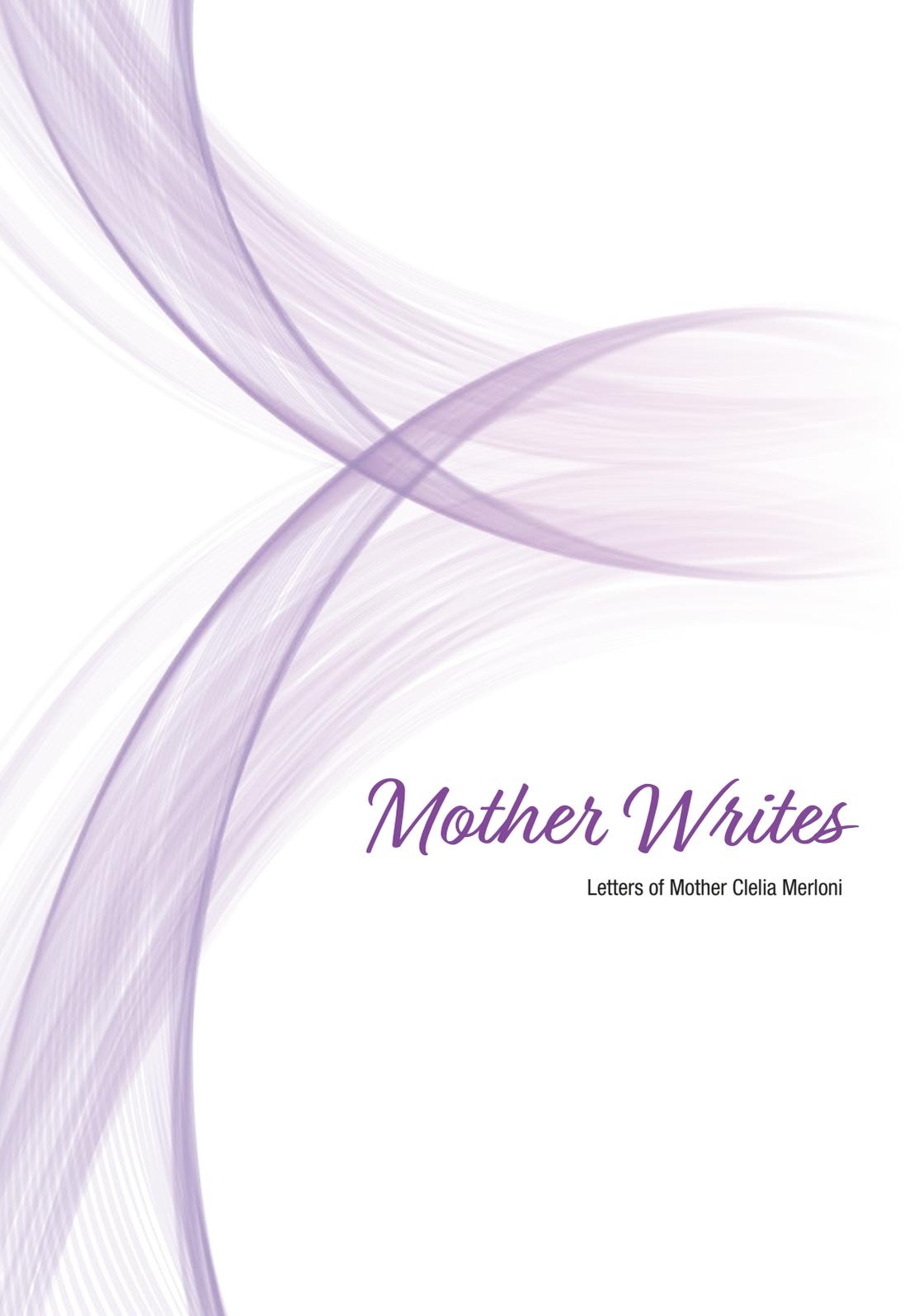
*bless
Thanks
Father
Daughters
Admirable
consolation
Mother
Immortal
Revive
Holy Spirit
Witness
Heart
Mission
Life Jesus
Loving
Admirable
Happiness
Christ Lord*



*Believe in everything your Mother writes to you;
in this way you will glorify God, your hearts will enjoy
peace, giving good example to others ...*

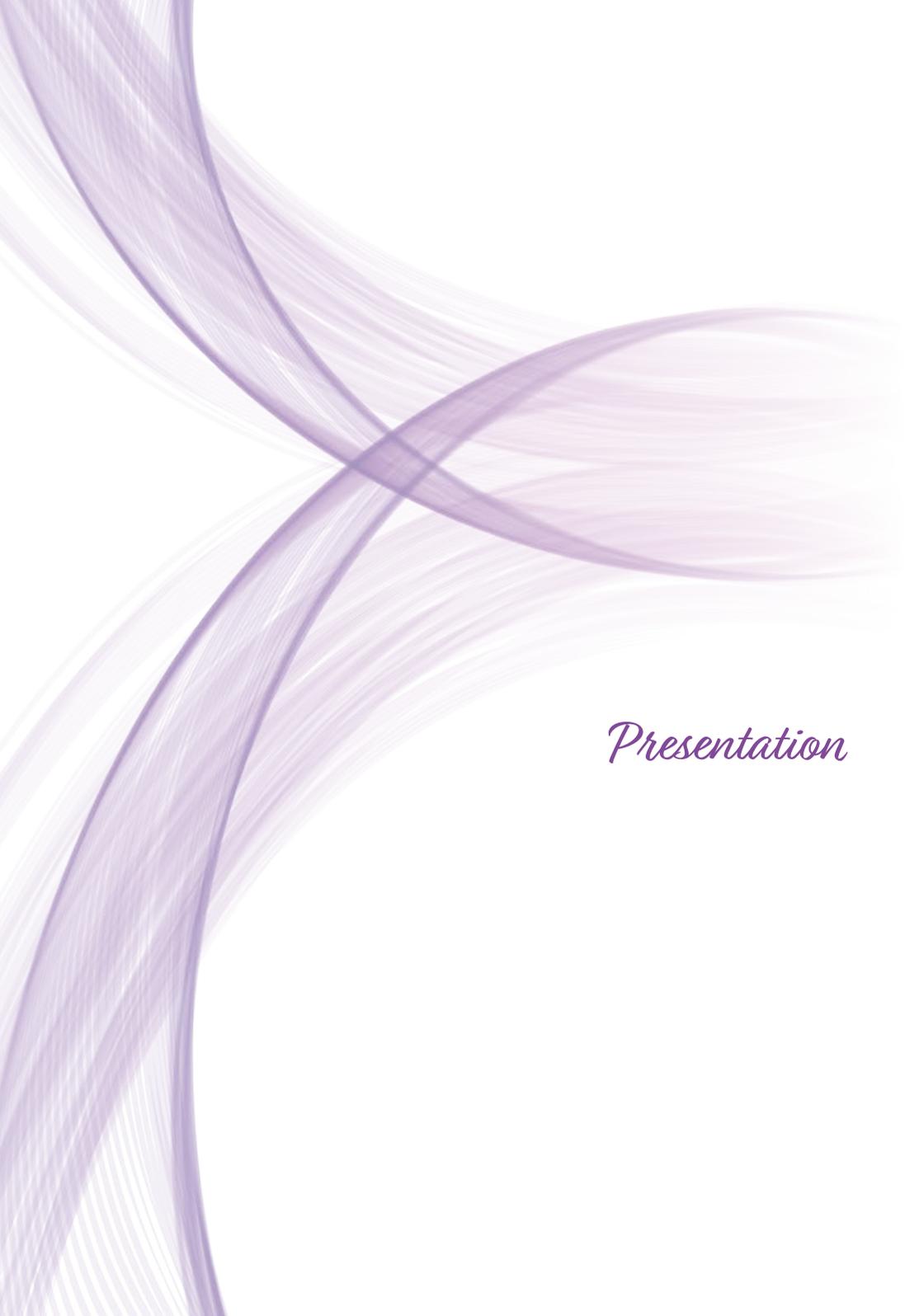
I bless you with all my heart and I remain in Jesus,

Your affectionate mother

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Mother Writes

Letters of Mother Clelia Merloni

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Presentation

Dear young people,

This book was lovingly prepared with you in mind so that in the letters of Mother Clelia Merloni, Foundress of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, you can find both a guide and an inspiration for the different moments of your life. These letters have been grouped according to the following themes: “The Spiritual Life”, “Like You”, and “Searching for Holiness”. Alongside each letter are quotes by various authors that link Mother Clelia’s eloquent words to the reality of your life today.

The call to be better each every day leads us on the search for holiness because each and every person is personally touched by the gift of God to make progress along this path of love.

Starting from this conviction in her own life, Mother Clelia, by her example and her writings, confirmed that we take one step at a time on the path toward holiness. It is the journey of a lifetime and it must be constant.

Mother Clelia was earnest about providing children and young people with a wholesome formation and so she insisted on the practice of good example. She said, “Words encourage, but examples pull us along.”

With these letters from Mother Clelia, we want to offer you a path to follow, an example to imitate, words to listen to, and a friendly and motherly presence for you to feel. We are sure that, through her words, Mother Clelia will both accompany you and guide you along the right path.

Journey well along with Mother Clelia! Let us find in her teachings a light for our path!

Mother Miriam Cunha Sobrinha

Superior General
Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus



Getting to Know the Life of Clelia Merloni

Mother Clelia was born in Forlì, in northern Italy, on March 10, 1861 and was baptized that same day.

In 1864, when she was only 3 years old, her mother died. In 1866, her father remarried. Her new stepmother, Maria Joana Boeri, and her maternal grandmother formed Clelia in faith and in virtue.

In 1872, Clelia received the sacrament of Confirmation.

Clelia grew up with many gifts. She was intelligent, courageous, generous, and enthusiastic; she let the seed of vocation mature in her heart.

In 1884, she entered the novitiate of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Snows and was given the name Sr. Albina, but she returned to her family because of health problems.

In 1888, persistent in her desire to help the poor, Clelia, with the financial assistance of her father, opened an orphanage for girls in Nervi, but it ended up closing the following year.

Clelia did not give up on her dream and, in 1892, she entered the Congregation of the Daughters of Saint Mary of Providence in Como and is received by Blessed Luigi Guanella.

The following year, Clelia contracted tuberculosis and, on the brink of death, she was miraculously cured. From this experience her ardent desire was to begin a work dedicated to the Heart of Jesus with those ready to serve the poor, the orphaned and the elderly.





When she was 33 years old, she was officially introduced to the people of St. Francis Church in Viareggio, in the province of Lucca in northern Italy, on May 30, 1894. Thus she founded the Congregation of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.



Soon, other young women joined her, dedicating themselves to the service of abandoned orphans and elderly women, to the education of girls and to catechesis. Space was scarce...



Clelia's father assisted her by funding her apostolic activities. Although he was a very generous man, he was far from God. Clelia prayed continuously for his conversion. On June 27, 1895, during the month dedicated to the Sacred Heart, her prayers were answered. Her father died after going to Confession, receiving the Eucharist and the Anointing of the Sick.



With the death of her father, Clelia experienced financial disaster caused by the mismanagement of funds by a dishonest administrator. The Apostles were forced to abandon many of their works, including Viareggio. Clelia and her Sisters had no other choice but to beg for money.



Clelia received help from the Bishop of Piacenza, Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini. In 1900, Bishop Scalabrini received the profession of vows by Clelia and 11 other Sisters. Their official work had begun! In that same year, at the request of Bishop Scalabrini, Clelia sent the first Apostles to Brazil. They arrived in Sao Paolo in August and in Curitiba in December.



Mother Clelia had to face various trials and difficulties, caused by the rumors and calumnies making her the object of terrible gossip. In 1904, the title of "Mother General" was taken from her. The following year she reassumed that

position but in 1911, always stemming from slander, it was taken from her again and Mother Marcelline Viganò was elected.

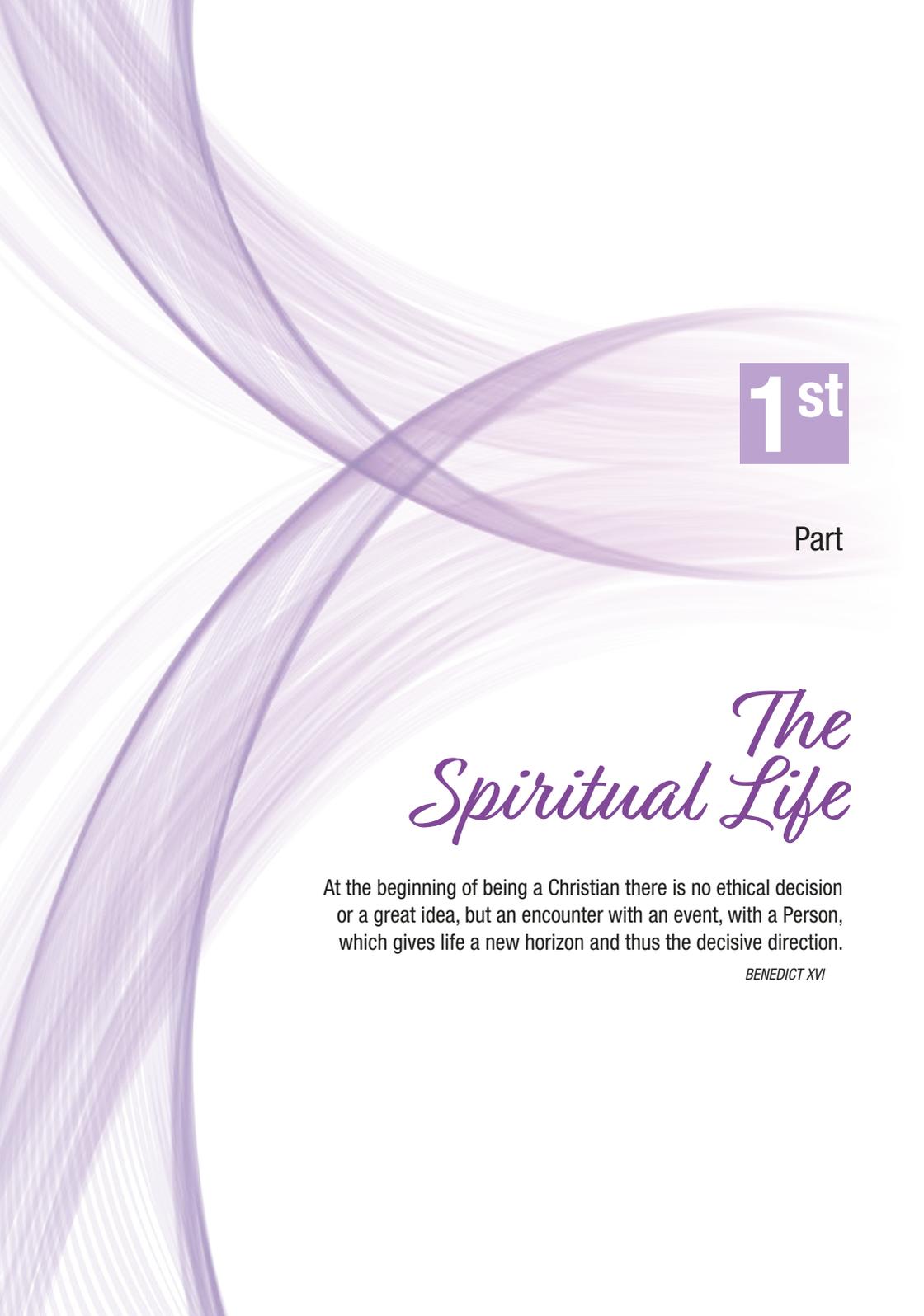
Beset by so many criticisms of her and growing divisions among the Sisters, Mother Clelia left the Congregation, thinking that by doing so she would be doing the best and allow for it to grow. She worked outside the Congregation from 1916 to 1928, but she remained faithful to God and to serving the most needy. She prayed for her spiritual daughters, wrote them letters, and strengthened her trust and confidence in the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

In 1928, already in frail health, Clélia was finally able to return to her Congregation where she spent the last years of her life intensifying her life of prayer and love for the Eucharist. Mother Clelia prayed before Jesus in the tabernacle and made sure that that sanctuary lamp was never extinguished.

On November 21, 1930, Clelia died in Rome.

Her life exemplified unlimited trust in the Heart of Jesus, love, kindness, tenderness, forgiveness, zeal, ardor, courage, fortitude, humility ...





1st

Part

The Spiritual Life

At the beginning of being a Christian there is no ethical decision or a great idea, but an encounter with an event, with a Person, which gives life a new horizon and thus the decisive direction.

BENEDICT XVI

“ Why does God love us?

The Bible responds to this profound question with a single word: Grace. God loves us because of what He is. It isn't that I have done something to deserve it. God cannot help but love because love defines His very nature.

PHILLIP YANCEY

“ God has placed in the

human heart a desire to know the truth—in a word, to know himself—so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves.”

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL THE GREAT, *FIDES ET RATIO*

“ It isn't necessary to accomplish great works to show a great love for God and our neighbor. It is, rather, the amount of love that put into our actions that makes them special for God and for our brothers and sisters.

BLESSED TERESA OF CALCUTTA

Loving God

Dearest daughter in Christ Jesus,

You tell me that you feel no love of God in your heart. But don't you know that He is our Father, the one who created us, who redeemed us through His passion and death, who showers graces by the handful on us and who loves us with an infinite love! Don't you know, daughter, that love for God is the most effective means to achieve perfection?

When one truly loves God, one has no other will but His, loves nothing but what he loves, hates nothing but what He hates, does all that He commands, nothing of what He forbids and so observes the entire law. One loves God because all that which is good is found in this one Good. Here is found the perfect fulfillment of mind and heart and nothing is left to be desired: “Give me your love, my God” St. Ignatius would say, “and that is enough for me.”

A person can become saturated with all the sciences, but no one could be satiated with the knowledge of divine Love. Filled with all knowledge one can still be unhappy; with the love of God one is always happy; and the most ignorant person who knows how to love God is worth more than the learned who do not love Him.

We must love God because not to love Him is a triple sin. It is a sin of disdain because God and His perfections infinitely merit all the love of our hearts, which everything created, put together, cannot deserve. It is a sin of injustice because a person, being unable to live without loving, is unjust when she loves the creature more than the Creator preferring in this way the finite to the infinite, that which is nothing to that which is All, the meager reflections of goodness and beauty found in creatures, to the limitless and absolute Goodness and Beauty found only in God. It is a sin of ingratitude, because we have received everything from God and nothing from creatures except whatever God has given to them both as gift and as the ability to give the gift. Because finally, we await an eternal happiness from God, not from creatures, who when they do not serve the sublime goals of God, are capable of every kind of evil. O God! How just it is to love Him with our whole heart.

This thought: I love God and am loved by Him, consoles us in all the afflictions of life, while the love of creatures consoles very little, and is often the beginning of the greatest pains. Apply yourself then, to give your heart over to the love of Jesus with a great and continuous desire to be completely filled and completely aflame with His divine fire.

One can grow in divine love by loving Him, that is, by multiplying, day and night, aspirations of love toward Him. Every act of love is like wood placed in the fire, it ignites, warms and increases the flame of our love.

It is necessary often to take account of the state of our soul, examining it to see to what point it is governed by divine love, and whether this is truly the motivating force of our actions and our feelings. After this examination, strive to conceive a great desire to love God all the more, begging Him for the grace to be able, and to know how, to love Him with all the strength of our soul.

Strive, my daughter, to eradicate in you all that is purely human and natural. You must desire, and will, that only the love of God direct and lead you without giving a thought to any repugnance in your nature. You must will, amid all that changes around you, to remain firm and intrepid in a holy love of Jesus, listening to nothing else but the sweet voice of heavenly inspirations.

I bless you and all there while remaining in Jesus,

Your most affectionate Mother

(BOOK 7, LETTER 3, PP. 51-53)

“ Those who don't love sand are not in a position to throw stones.”

BLESSED SR. DULCE

“ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

ROMANS 8: 38-39

“ Let your religion be less of a theory and more of a love affair.”

G. K. CHESTERTON



“ From infancy you have known the sacred scriptures, which are capable of giving you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”

2 TIMOTHY 3:15

“ Whoever does not know the power of prayer is because he has not lived the bitterness of life!”

ÊÇA DE QUEIROZ

“ The Word of God makes a journey within us. We listen to it with our ears and pass to the heart; it does not remain in the ears, it must go to the heart; and from the heart to the hands, to good works. This is the path that the Word of God makes: from ears to heart and hands. Let us learn these things. ”

POPE FRANCIS

“ Jesus is the bridge between the One who can do everything and the creatures who need everything. You, too, be a bridge between those who have plenty and those who need everything.”

ST. CLARE OF ASSISI

Savor the Lord

You tell me that you do not enjoy Jesus in any way! But what are you saying? Any soul who has experienced Jesus even once cannot live without Him. She has heard His voice on a thousand occasions, and she wants to hear it thousands of times more. Every place displeases her if she does not find Jesus there; every voice bothers her if it is not He who speaks. Oh, how indifferent the conversations of people are to her! She finds that they speak only of vain, foolish things. If one speaks to her only of Jesus, this is for her, spirit and life. From the moment she hears Him speak, she pushes away every other thought in order to focus her entire attention on the divine Word. This is more pleasing to her than the most marvelous thing she could hear on earth. There is nothing she could listen to with greater joy, that she could treasure more faithfully and upon which she could meditate with more intensity. At the same time, there is nothing that could bear more abundant fruit in her. The world, vanities, pleasure all become annoying and she can't stand to hear talk about them.

Beg Jesus to remove from you any alien voices that attempt so suddenly to draw you away and to distract you from His divine Word. You are not to want to listen to anyone other than to Him alone. Beg Jesus to speak incessantly to your soul. I assure you that His voice will teach you in one single day more than the schools of the learned could do over many years. There are some people whom the world calls “simple,” who have been brought up and taught in the school of Jesus. They speak in an admirable way about divine love and they rise, sublimely, to contemplate its greatest mysteries. Don't hesitate any longer to recollect your mind and your spirit, keeping yourself in the presence of God. Pray to Him, beg Him, implore Him insistently in imitation of the Canaanite woman, not only to speak to you, but to have you experience the sweetness of His Fatherly voice; and I assure you that if you begin little by little to be faithful to His voice, you will never again be able to detach yourself from Him.

(BOOK 2, LETTER 7, PP. 24-25)

Abandon Yourself to God to Be Free

Dearest daughter in Jesus Christ,

Direct all your struggles to the Lord; love Him and confide to Him your whole heart without any fear, and He will find the way to dispel all your doubts and will lift you up when you fall. If you will love Him, you will receive every good thing.

Offer yourself to God in sacrifice, in calmness and peaceful spirit; in order to walk better along this journey and to sustain yourself without getting tired or disturbed, it would be best that, at each step, you dispose your soul to align your will with the Will of God. And the more you reach out toward the Will of God, the more you will receive.

Your will must be disposed in such a way as to want everything - or to want nothing - as God wants or doesn't want. In all things set yourself to do what you can do and ought to do. Continuously offer your will to God, and want for nothing more because whenever you have this freedom and are detached from all that surrounds you, you will enjoy tranquility and peace. In this freedom of spirit is found the great good that you intend: that freedom which is none other than persevering with your inner self without weakening yourself to want to desire and seek anything outside of yourself. And all the while that you will be as free as this, you will enjoy divine servitude, which is that great kingdom that we have within ourselves.

Blessing you with all my heart,

Your most affectionate Mother

(BOOK 11, LETTER 9, PP. 28-29)

Father, I abandon myself into your hands; do with me what you will. Whatever you may do, I thank you: I am ready for all, I accept all. Let only your will be done in me, and in all your creatures – I wish no more than this, O Lord. Into your hands I commend my soul: I offer it to you with all the love of my heart, for I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself, to surrender myself into your hands without reserve, and with boundless confidence, for you are my Father.

CHARLES DE FOUCAULD, PRAYER OF
ABANDONMENT



For Mother Clelia, the Eucharist is the source of Communion that, in turn, creates Community; it is the source of life as it establishes that dynamic, living contact with the Risen Jesus.

“Come to him, a living stone, rejected by human beings but chosen and precious in the sight of God; and, like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

1 PETER 2: 4-5

“The celebration of Mass is just as valuable as the death of Christ on the cross.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

“I, who am forever begging, always need medicine within my reach.”

ST. AMBROSE, ON THE EUCHARIST

You are God's Temple

Dearest Daughters in Jesus Christ,

Remember, my Daughters, that you are temple of God. It is St. Paul himself who teaches us this truth. Consider, then, that God does not dwell thus only in our soul and in our body, but he dwells here by means of Communion which makes of us the living Tabernacle of the Eucharist; He dwells here by the grace of Baptism of which St. Paul says: “Do you not know that your members are a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you?” O the greatness of the Christian, how exalted is our soul! How venerable is our body!

We are, dearest daughters, living stones destined for the building of this immortal temple that God prepares here below for His eternal glory, an august temple of which every holy soul must be a part beginning with the prophets and the Apostles who are the foundation, to the martyrs who are the victims, to the virgins who are the flowers, to the confessors who are the adornment, even to the most unknown saints who will all shine in their own place according to the degree of their merits; a temple that grows higher every day and which, always progressing, will arrive at the fullness of its perfection, and whose dedication will be effected in heaven on the day when Jesus will present to God, His Father, His Church, pure and without stain to be united with Him forever. But, likewise, being a temple of God, we have some obligations. The first thing that one requires for putting up a structure is the cutting and cleaning of all the stones with which he must build. And then, so that a soul might be worthy to be included in the construction of the temple of God, it is necessary that the scalpel and the hammer of mortification remove from it all the roughness of character and the inconsistencies of the will. Whoever does not want to receive the blows of this scalpel and of this hammer will be rejected by the Divine Architect.

If, instead, without complaining, we suffer the cutting and cleaning, we will have a place of honor in the temple of God. This is symbolized by the temple of Solomon in whose construction was not permitted a single strike of the hammer or of the scalpel because the stones, before being brought to the building site, had been so precisely cut that there was

nothing to be done other than to put them in their place. The stones, after having been well cut, had to be assembled and arranged together with each other in perfect proportion of each part with the whole.

You can see then, my daughters, how necessary charity is because it is precisely by means of charity that, in the temple of God, one practices this perfect union and beautiful harmony of which St. Paul speaks. In God's temple, everything must be pure and holy. Thus it is in our soul, true Temple of God, all that which is not pure and holy is a desecration. Our bodies themselves must be like the sun and have in our sinful flesh something that is not flesh. A temple is a place of prayer.

We must not allow ourselves anything profane, neither dissipations nor useless thoughts nor vain fantasies, but every thought, our every affection must be turned over to God as well as our accomplishments, with praise and love for Him alone. Since our soul is a temple, it is necessary that you remain recollected, that you pray, that you adore and love God, that you ask Him for the graces you desire, that you speak with Him and listen reverently to His words.

Daughters, try to imitate St. Teresa of Jesus because she accredited to the knowledge of this truth her progress in perfection and readiness to lead a continually recollected life in God. When you advance in the way of perfection like the above mentioned saint, write to me and I will write an exuberant congratulatory note to all of you. Meanwhile I bless you wholeheartedly while in Jesus I remain your

Most affectionate Mother

(BOOK 13, LETTER 7, PP. 21-22)

“ Like clay in the hand of the potter, so you are in my hand.”

JEREMIAH 18: 6

“ Do you think that because you can't hear His voice God doesn't speak? When the heart prays, He responds.”

ST. TERESA OF AVILA

“ The desire to pray is a prayer in itself.”

GEORGE BERNANOS



Thanksgiving

I have a God in me,
and thus I am a temple, a sanctuary,
an altar which holds the divinity
surrounded by countless celestial spirits who adore him
and render him their homage.
I unite myself to you, O Blessed Spirits,
I love and adore my Jesus with you.
Ah, make up for, O celestial Spirits
with the purity and the ardor of your homage and of your love,
the weakness of my sentiments,
let me unite my heart to yours
and my spirit to yours to form a single heart and a single spirit to
think of Jesus,
to adore him, to love him, to praise him,
if not as much as he deserves, at least as much as you are able.
From you, O my beloved Jesus,
I receive your strength, your wisdom, your greatness and mercy,
your goodness, your zeal and your immense charity.
(...)
Fortified by such powerful help, I sigh, and notwithstanding my
weakness,
I am confident that you will receive it in thanksgiving
for having given yourself to me in Holy Communion.

MOTHER CLELIA (BOOK 1, PP. 15-18)

True Freedom

Dearest daughter in Jesus Christ,

By all means hold your soul in high esteem because the Father of fathers and Lord of lords created it for His own dwelling and temple. Hold it in such high regard as to not let it succumb or bow down to anything else. Let your desires and hopes always be for the coming of Jesus who, if He doesn't find you alone, will not come to visit you freely. Don't think He will want to talk with you when others are present. On the contrary! Whenever Jesus sees that the soul is in the presence of others, He not only does not say even a word to her, but He even runs away. It's no use, He wants the soul singleminded in thought and, as much as possible, in desire and even more so, in will.

True freedom of spirit, dearest daughter, is that of not binding yourself to anything. If you, daughter, would give your soul to God in this way, unencumbered, free and alone, you will see what marvels Jesus will work in it.

O admirable solitude and secret room of the Most High; the only place where He wants to confer and speak to the heart of the soul! Oh, heavenly desert! It is only there that God lets Himself be seen and where one can speak with Him! But, if you, dear daughter, want to arrive there, enter barefoot into this land of solitude because it is holy. First strip your feet, that is, the affections of your soul, and let them be naked and free; don't carry bag or baggage along this road because you must not desire anything whatever of this world even though it is desired by others. Neither are you to greet anyone here. Occupy your thoughts and affections with God alone and not with creatures. Let the dead bury their dead. Go by yourself into the land of the living and death will have no part of you.

Enclosing you in the most loving Heart of Jesus and in the arms of Mary, Most Holy, and blessing you maternally, I remain in Jesus.

(BOOK 2, LETTER 4, PP. 17-19)

“ With prayer, men deserve to receive what Almighty God has decided to give them from eternity.”

ST. GREGORY

“ There are many definitions of prayer. The most frequent is said to be conversation with God. When we speak with someone, not only do we talk, we also listen. Prayer, then, is also a listening. It consists in listening to the inner voice of grace.”

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL THE GREAT

“ In all things, big or small, always have God as your goal, because in no other way will you grow in perfection or merit.”

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

“ We are moved by the attitude of Jesus: we have never heard from him words of contempt, never words of condemnation, only words of love, of mercy, which invite conversion.”

POPE FRANCIS

“ The only language which God listens to is the silence of love... Silence in itself isn't love, but a condition for love.”

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

“ Help us to benefit from your grace in this world so that we can join all your chosen ones to praise you, honor you and glorify you.”

ST. PETER CANISIUS

“ Prayer is, for me, a movemnet of the heart, a simple glance toward heaven, a cry of love and gratitude in trials as well as in joyful moments.”

ST. THÉRÈSE OF THE CHILD JESUS

The God of Consolation

Dearest daughter in Jesus Christ,

Since you feel so afflicted and abandoned, don't lose heart, but remember that close to you is the God of consolations with Jesus, who has loved you even to die for love of you and who watches over you with gentle and fatherly expressions of affection. Close to you is the Holy Spirit, the true Consoler of souls. There is a Providence, which is more than maternal and which loves you and wishes you so much good. It is with these thoughts that I ardently want your heart to be consoled. In whatever state of soul you may find itself, consider that you live in God, who is infinitely good. Unite yourself to Him, who is by your side; consider that He offers you His help and His grace here below, with the promise of His reward in the future life, and that He waits only for a word from your heart to protect you and defend you.

Drive far from your mind discouraging thoughts that assail you. Remember that we are soldiers of Jesus, and as such, we must fight with alacrity all our fierce enemies, who tempt us by every means in order to lead us to ruin. Discouragement serves no more than to weaken the powers of the spirit. Left to itself, ivy can do nothing more than crawl along the ground, but close to a great tree, it raises itself even to the highest branches: a faithful image of the soul that walks united with God. It triumphs over the devil, the world and the flesh, with no temptation able to discourage her or any passion able to overcome her.

Throw yourself, then, into the arms of your dear Jesus who waits for this filial and confident thrust of your whole being to temper your soul, to purify it and give it a Herculean strength in the ocean of His most pure and divine Heart, where your poor Mother leaves you, and wholeheartedly blesses you. In Jesus,

Your most affectionate Mother

(BOOK 8, LETTER 3, PP. 111-112)



Work and Pray

Dearest daughters in Jesus Christ,

I recommend that you keep your spirit very much united with God, my daughters. Imitate St. Bernard, who distinguished himself by his union with God. He understood from a most tender age that his soul was created for something far beyond this world. Closing his heart to every earthly affection, and opening it totally to the love of Jesus and Mary, he climbed by this double love, as though by a double stairway, high beyond all that which is passing, and bidding goodbye to the world, he led with him as though in triumph into the solitude of Clairvaux, his father, his uncle, his brothers and thirty other young men from among his friends, to whom he had confided the sacred fire that consumed him.

There, living a heavenly life with the help of a perpetual silence, he kept his soul continuously united with God in prayer and detached from all his senses through fasts and labors. God rewarded such love by making him worthy of the most intimate conversations with Himself, elevating his intellect to the highest contemplation, at times, even to holy raptures, which were for St. Bernard like a taste of heaven. In that way the time spent in prayer filled him with purest joy and always seemed to him to be too brief.

Saint Bernard was great also because of his works. His marvelous union with God did not prevent him from giving himself over to the labors of an active life. He wrote immortal books, marvelous letters to bishops, the incomparable book "Considerations for Pope Eugene"; and Bernard, who, according to his own expression, had no other teachers than the oaks and beech trees, became a Doctor of the Church, the oracle consulted by the most scholarly prelates, the "mouth of wisdom" of Pontiffs, the scourge of heretics, the living treasure of ecclesial science.

Passing from the solitary life to the labors of the apostolate, in order to lead the Christian world from the abyss of iniquity into which it had fallen; he traveled throughout Europe, directing the Church in its customs and its doctrine. He made kings and other powerful people listen to the truth; he judged and resolved every dispute; he promulgated canons and the decrees of the Councils of Pisa, of Troy and of Rheims. He gave new meaning to the symbols of our faith. Which other man has accomplished greater things during a lifetime and how did he manage to achieve these? What a marvelous achievement!

“ You have to learn every day to do something, to be better than the previous day. Learn. Move away from evil and learn to do good: this is the rule of conversion. Because converting is not consulting a fairy who converts us with a magic wand: no! It is a journey to get away and learn.”

POPE FRANCIS

“ The 21st century Christian will be either a ‘mystic’ or he will not be a Christian.”

KARL RAHNER

“ What I can say, apart from everything, is that there is not a kingdom of the living and a kingdom of the dead, only the Kingdom of God exists and everyone, alive or dead, is within it.”

GEORGE BERNAOS



“ A holy life costs our hearts more than the simple purity of faith, because it is a continuous struggle, a tireless work. ”

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

“ Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time. ”

THOMAS A. EDISON

Undoubtedly, his rare talents contributed much to his success; but the governing secret of his successes was his incomparable gentleness that captivated all who met him and changed wolves into lambs.

He was greater still because of his humility. True greatness lies in being able to be profoundly humble in the midst of the acclaims of praise, in the midst of the splendor of honors; and it is in this above all that St. Bernard is admirable. He is praised for his virtue and his miracles, and he begs that everyone have pity on his soul. He knows himself better, he says, than those who judge from appearances.

“Who will allow me to be so humiliated before all people because of the many faults within me as much as I am so often praised for the virtues I don't have?” he says. O prodigious humility! What lessons for us who have so little and who instead of humbling ourselves, strive always for self-aggrandizement!

Therefore, always love humility very much, daughters, and the more you strive to lower yourselves into your own nothingness, all the more will Jesus stoop toward you to fill you with His choicest graces just as I wholeheartedly desire for you; and blessing you maternally, remain in Jesus,

Your most affectionate Mother

(BOOK 6, LETTER 4, PP. 17-19)



The Example of the Saints

Dearest daughters in Jesus Christ,

I recommend that you keep your spirit very much united with God, my daughters. Imitate St. Bernard, who distinguished himself by his union with God.

He understood from a most tender age that his soul was created for something far beyond this world. Closing his heart to every earthly affection, and opening it totally to the love of Jesus and Mary, he climbed by this double love, as though by a double stairway, high beyond all that which is passing, and bidding goodbye to the world, he led with him as though in triumph into the solitude of Clairvaux, his father, his uncle, his brothers and thirty other young men from among his friends, to whom he had confided the sacred fire that consumed him.

There, living a heavenly life with the help of a perpetual silence, he kept his soul continuously united with God in prayer and detached from all his senses through fasts and labors. God rewarded such love by making him worthy of the most intimate conversations with Himself, elevating his intellect to the highest contemplation, at times, even to holy raptures, which were for St. Bernard like a taste of heaven. In that way the time spent in prayer filled him with purest joy and always seemed to him to be too brief. Compared to this great Saint, how small and base are worldly people who live only for this earth, strangling their immortal soul in dissipation and the passing pleasures of this world!

You see, then, my daughters, how poor and miserable we are still, having such little recollection and so little union with God, probably with so little a spirit of prayer.

Saint Bernard was great also because of his works. His marvelous union with God did not prevent him from giving himself over to the labors of an active life. He wrote immortal books, marvelous letters to bishops, the incomparable book *Considerations for Pope Eugene*; and Bernard, who, according to his own expression, had no other teachers than the oaks and beech trees, became a Doctor of the Church, the oracle consulted by the most scholarly prelates, the "mouth of wisdom" of Pontiffs, the scourge of heretics, the living treasure of ecclesial science.

Passing from the solitary life to the labors of the apostolate, in order to lead the Christian world from the abyss of iniquity into which it had fallen; he traveled throughout Europe, directing the Church in its customs and its doctrine. He made

“ I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith.”

2 TIMOTHY 4: 7

“ He carries a handful of Earth every day and builds a mountain.”

CONFUCIUS

For Clelia, passion may be understood as some affection or tendency that seeks to dominate one's reason and will.

“ True joy, genuine festival, means the casting out of wickedness. To achieve this one must live a life of perfect goodness and, in the serenity of the fear of God, practice contemplation in one's heart.”

ST. ATHANASIUS

“ No soul, no matter how miserable it may be, falls into doubt: as long as one lives, one can achieve great holiness, so great is the power of divine grace.”

ST. FAUSTINA KOWALSKA



“ A holy life costs our hearts more than the mere purity of faith, for it is a continual struggle, an indefatigable labor.”

ST. JOHN CHRISTOPHER

“ Our biggest weakness is in giving up. The surest way to win is to try again.”

THOMAS EDISON

“ I fought the good fight, I finished the race, I kept the faith.”

2TM 4,7

kings and other powerful people listen to the truth; he judged and resolved every dispute; he promulgated canons and the decrees of the Councils of Pisa, of Troy and of Rheims. He gave new meaning to the symbols of our faith. He was victorious in the land of Enrico Eresiarca, in the realm of William, Duke of Aquitaine. He had Gilbert Porretano and Peter Abelard convicted, he ended scandals, abolished schisms and heresies; dissolved the hatred between opposed monarchs. Which other man has accomplished greater things during a lifetime and how did he manage to achieve these? What a marvelous achievement!

Undoubtedly, his rare talents contributed much to his success; but the governing secret of his successes was his incomparable gentleness that captivated all who met him and changed wolves into lambs.

Haven't we cause for confusion, daughters, we who do so little for God? Yes, let us be bewildered because we are so far from the gentleness of St. Bernard. He was greater still because of his humility. True greatness lies in being able to be profoundly humble in the midst of the acclaims of praise, in the midst of the splendor of honors; and it is in this above all that St. Bernard is admirable. He is praised for his virtue and his miracles, and he begs that everyone have pity on his soul. He knows himself better, he says, than those who judge from appearances. He is ashamed that what is revered in him is not what he truly is but only what he appears to be and he begs God to let his lowliness be known in such a way that all those who have ever praised such a man as he, who is so unworthy to be praised, may blush for shame.

“Who will allow me to be so humiliated before all people because of the many faults within me as much as I am so often praised for the virtues I don't have?” he says. “O Lord!” he adds, “my grotesque life, my miserable conscience cries out to You that I am neither monk nor member of a royal court, neither cleric nor layman; I am a monstrous composite of all these states; I am the chameleon of the century.”

O prodigious humility! What lessons for us who have so little and who instead of humbling ourselves, strive always for self-aggrandizement!

Therefore, always love humility very much, daughters, and the more you strive to lower yourselves into your own nothingness, all the more will Jesus stoop toward you to fill you with His choicest graces just as I wholeheartedly desire for you; and blessing you maternally, remain in Jesus,

YOUR MOST AFFECTIONATE MOTHER

The Spiritual Life

Dearest daughter in Jesus Christ,

You want to know, then, of what the spiritual life consists? Good! It pleases me that you want to know about it, but it's up to you to try to do all in your power to practice it.

The spiritual life does not consist in anything but the knowledge of God's goodness and greatness and of our nothingness and inclination to every kind of evil; in the love of God and the abhorrence of oneself; in the submission of oneself not only to Him but to any person whomever for love of Him. It consists, moreover, in disposing of our will with total resignation to the divine Will. And one must want to do all this purely for the glory of God and to please Him, and because this is what He wants, and He well deserves to be so loved and served.

“ He carries a handful of Earth every day and builds a mountain.”

CONFUCIUS

For Clelia, passion may be understood as some affection or tendency that seeks to dominate one's reason and will.



“ True joy, genuine festival, means the casting out of wickedness. To achieve this one must live a life of perfect goodness and, in the serenity of the fear of God, practice contemplation in one’s heart. “

ST. ATHANASIUS

“ No soul, no matter how miserable it may be, falls into doubt: as long as one lives, one can achieve great holiness, so great is the power of divine grace.”

ST. FAUSTINA KOWALSKA

“ Diligence is the mother of good fortune.”

MIGUEL DE CERVANTES

“ Every holiness consists in loving God, and all love for God consists in doing his will. “

ST. ALPHONSE LIGUORI



This, daughter, is the law of love impressed by the hand of God in the hearts of faithful souls. This is the denial of self which He requires of us. This is the sweet yoke and the light burden. This is the obedience to which, by example and by word, our Redeemer and Master calls us. It is why, aspiring to the heights of such perfection, you have to do continuous violence to yourself in order to generously expel and nullify all your cravings, be they great or small.

It is important that you prepare yourself for this battle with readiness of spirit because no crown is given except to brave warriors. Since this effort is more difficult than any other thing (because in fighting against our self we are, at the same time, beaten), the victory that is won is more welcomed by Jesus.

If you would trample and kill, that is, extinguish all your inordinate passions, desires and wishes, small though they might be, you would give greater glory to God...And even though the Lord may value more in itself the conversion of a soul than the mortification of a little desire, nevertheless, you must not will or do anything other than that which Jesus strictly asks and wants of you. He certainly is much more pleased that you struggle and take care to mortify your passions than if you knowingly and willingly left one of them alive within yourself while serving Him in any great and important way.

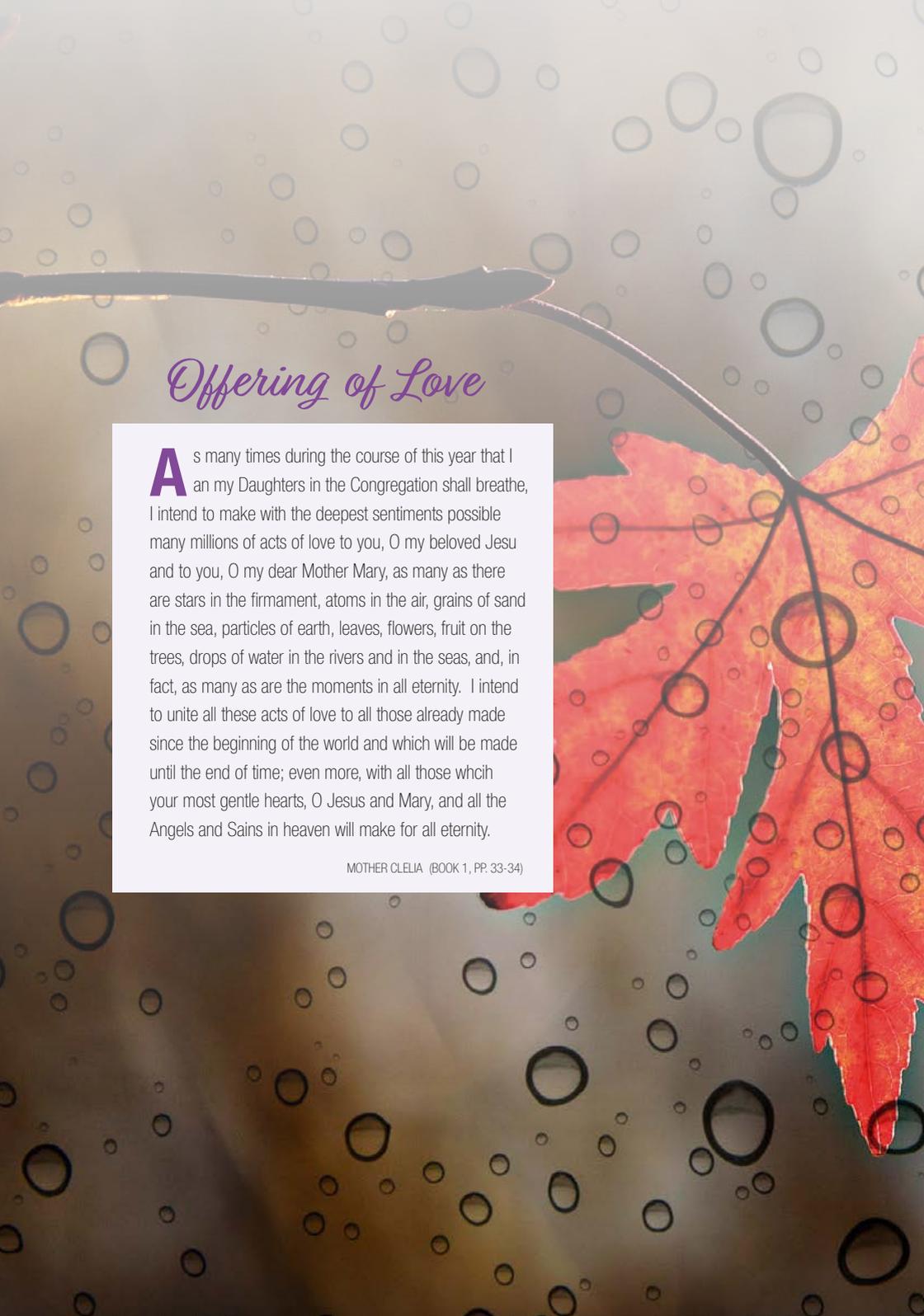
You see, then, daughter, in what Christian perfection consists, and that to acquire it you must carry on a continuous and very bitter war against yourself. To win it, you need four weapons which are extremely safe and most necessary in order to obtain the palm and be the victor in this spiritual battle. Here they are: mistrust of yourself, confidence in God, self-discipline and prayer.

I leave you in the most Sacred Heart of Jesus that your spirit may become strong and that you might not weaken for a single day in your present good and holy resolutions.

I bless you maternally,

Your most affectionate Mother

(BOOK 2, LETTER 2, PP. 12-14)



Offering of Love

As many times during the course of this year that I and my Daughters in the Congregation shall breathe, I intend to make with the deepest sentiments possible many millions of acts of love to you, O my beloved Jesu and to you, O my dear Mother Mary, as many as there are stars in the firmament, atoms in the air, grains of sand in the sea, particles of earth, leaves, flowers, fruit on the trees, drops of water in the rivers and in the seas, and, in fact, as many as are the moments in all eternity. I intend to unite all these acts of love to all those already made since the beginning of the world and which will be made until the end of time; even more, with all those which your most gentle hearts, O Jesus and Mary, and all the Angels and Sains in heaven will make for all eternity.

MOTHER CLELIA (BOOK 1, PP. 33-34)

“Those who know your name trust in you; you never forsake those who seek you, Lord.”

PSALM 9: 11

“Nobility and beauty of faith consist in this: that we have a bold heart.”

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

“Faith in God’s great love disposes the soul to be filled with the fullness of God.”

ELIZABETH OF THE TRINITY

“Call out to God whose love is so tender; entrust the future to him!”

ST. THÉRÈSE OF THE CHILD JESUS

“If you want to know a person, don’t look at what he does, but who he loves.”

ST. AUGUSTINE

“Lord, change the world, beginning with me.”

FROM A CHINESE PRAYER

“Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

“When it is a heart that prays, He no doubt listens to it.”

ST. TERESA OF AVILA

Confidence in Jesus

Dearest daughter in Jesus Christ,

Understand. Have courage and unlimited confidence in God. You, dearest daughter, must begin [your journey] little by little and with gentleness, with unbounded trust in the divine Heart of Jesus, who calls you saying: “Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will comfort you. All you who are thirsty come to the fountain.”

You, daughter, must follow this action and divine vocation; you must continue to wait for the prompting of the Holy Spirit, so that, with determination you may throw yourself blindly into the ocean of divine Providence and of the Eternal Will and beg that it be fulfilled in you so that you may be carried along by the most powerful waves of divine kindness, unable to resist, and be transported to the shore of your particular perfection and spiritual well-being.

Having made this decision, which you should repeat many times each day, study yourself and strive, with as much certitude as you can, interiorly and exteriorly, to draw near, with all the strength of your soul, to those things that excite you and bring you to appreciate ever more the goodness, the loveableness and the infinite charity of your beloved Jesus.

These acts are to be done always without pressure and violence to your heart so that they do not weaken you or maybe even incapacitate you.

Whenever you can, accustom yourself to the contemplation of the divine goodness and of His continuous and loving gifts, and humbly receive the droplets of His inestimable goodness that will descend into your soul. Guard yourself well against forced tears or other devotions of the senses, but remain tranquil in interior solitude awaiting the fulfillment in you of God’s divine Will. And then when He may give these to you, they will be sweet, without struggle or force, and you will receive them with gentleness and serenity and above all with humility.

Remember, daughter that the key to opening the secrets of spiritual treasures is in knowing how to deny oneself

always and in all things, and it is this key that closes the door to tepidity and mental aridity when it is caused by our own fault. When these come from God, they join the other treasures of the soul. Be pleased to stand with Mary as much as you can at the feet of Jesus and listen to what He tells you.

Be watchful so that your enemies (chief among whom is you, yourself) will be unable to impede this holy silence. For now I will say no more because I hope you will put into practice what I have written.

Now I leave you at the feet of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, so that, with His strength, you will be able to distance yourself from any shadow of sin and continue along the narrow path of the Saints!

I bless you with all my heart.

Your most affectionate Mother

(BOOK 7, LETTER 7, PP. 62-63)

There is no holiness if You withdraw Your hand, Lord. There is no wisdom if You cease to guide, no courage if You cease to defend. Our vigilance avails nothing if Your holy watchfulness does not protect us. Left to ourselves we sink and perish, but visited by You we are lifted up and live. We are truly unstable, but You make us strong.

THOMAS À KEMPIS

“Faith is comparable to fish. Just as a fish is beaten by the frequent waves of the sea without dying on account of it, so faith is not broken by adversity.”

ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA

“When it is a heart that prays, He no doubt listens to it.”

ST. TERESA OF AVILA

“Faith is comparable to fish. Just as a fish is beaten by the frequent waves of the sea without dying on account of it, so faith is not broken by adversity.”

ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA



“ In time of sadness and worry, abandon neither the practice of prayer nor penance that you are accustomed to. Rather, intensify it and you will see how quickly the Lord will support you.”

ST. TERESA OF AVILA

“ Meditation on the Word, the practice of prayer and meditation are due services, and God's grace is there in them.”

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

“ The Lord told us: “Ask and it will be given to you.” We welcome this word and trust, but always with faith and belief. This is the courage that Christian prayer has. If prayer is not courageous, it is not Christian.”

POPE FRANCIS

“ But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.”

MATTHEW 6: 6



What is Prayer?

Prayers is everything that is most sublime in our faith: it is a lifting up of our mind and our heart to heaven; it is an intimate conversation with God; it is the union of the soul with the Supreme Good; it is the occupation of the Angels in paradise permitted to human beings on earth; it is the life of heaven begun here on earth. With prayer we lift ourselves above all that is passing and we leave it beneath our feet; with prayer, understanding that God alone is all, we abandon ourselves to Him, we pour our heart into His in order to love and serve only Him, to live for Him alone. What, then, is more sublime and necessary than a time of prayer? “If my meditation,” says David, “had not been Your law, O my God, then I might have perished in my afflictions. I will never cease to meditate on your judgments because that is the source of life for me.”

In fact, only meditation can maintain in the soul that living faith in the great truths of our religion, in the importance of eternal life, in the sanctity of its mysteries, in the fulfillment of all our duties without which it is not possible to attain eternal life. Only this can prevent bad habits, laxity, the subsequent abandonment of salvific pious practices, and dispel illusions, into which each of us could easily fall, regarding the state of one's own conscience. Prayer alone can form and maintain in us the spirit of humility, of mortification, of charity, of sweetness, of all the virtues necessary for the acquisition of eternal life.

Saint Bonaventure says: “Without prayer one cannot hope for progress in virtue.” Prayer, my daughter, is not only necessary, it is still more infinitely advantageous in attaining graces of which it is the source.

Let us ask holy souls who practice it habitually how necessary it is, and they will tell us that it is through well made prayer that they are able to enjoy delightful moments, moments of paradise on earth.

I leave you in the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, and blessing you maternally together with all your Sisters, I remain in the Lord
Your most affectionate Mother

(BOOK 2, LETTER 8, PP. 26-28)

We Need You

O Christ, our only mediator,

We need you to live in Communion with God the Father; to become with you, who you are the only Son and our Lord, his adopted children; to be reborn in the Holy Spirit.

We need you, our only true master of the hidden and indispensable truths of life, to know our being, our destiny and the way to achieve it.

We need you, our Redeemer, to uncover our misery and to heal it, to make us aware of both good and evil, to gift us with a hope of holiness, to deplore our sins and to seek forgiveness for them.

We need you, firstborn brother of mankind, to find the true reasons for brotherhood among men, the foundations of justice, the treasures of charity, the highest value of peace.

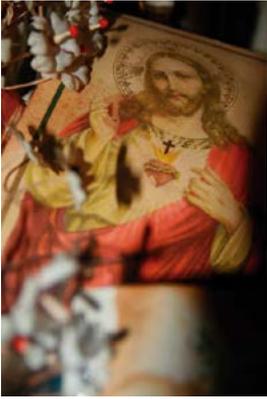
We need you, great patient of our pains, to help us know the meaning of suffering and to give it a value of expiation and redemption.

We need you, the winner of death, to free ourselves from despair and denial, and to have convictions that will never betray us.

We need you, Christ, Lord, God-with-us, to teach us true love and to help us to walk in the joy and strength of your love along the path of our life, until we finally meet You who we have loved and awaited, You who are blessed throughout the centuries.

BLESSED POPE PAUL VI





Trust and Abandon Yourself to Jesus

Dearest daughter in Jesus Christ,

I have already told you — and I repeat to you — that you have an extreme need to distrust yourself and to throw yourself with complete confidence into the Heart of Jesus, expecting and waiting for every good thing, help and gain from Him alone. You must be totally diffident of yourself — since you are nothing of yourself — and so you are not permitted to expect anything of yourself but continuous falls. If, in order to obtain His help, you arm your heart with a filial confidence in Him, you will be able to obtain from the loving divine Jesus great victories.

And this you will be able to obtain primarily by humbly asking it of Jesus; secondly, by transporting yourself and seeing with the eye of faith the omnipotence and infinite wisdom of God for whom nothing is impossible or difficult and that He, being goodness personified, is always ready to give hour by hour and moment by moment all that you need for the spiritual life and total victory over yourself, so long as you throw yourself with full confidence into His loving arms.

And could it be possible that our Divine Shepherd, who for thirty-three years has pursued the lost sheep with such loud cries that He became hoarse and along paths that were so difficult and thorny that He shed all His blood and died, now that you, dearest daughter, as His little lamb are following Him, obeying His commands, with the desire to obey Him, calling after Him and begging Him, could it be possible that He not turn His life-giving eyes to you, that He not listen to you and not put you on His divine shoulders, rejoicing with all His neighbors and Angels in heaven? How could it be possible that Jesus would abandon that little lost lamb who very loudly called out to its Shepherd? How is possible to ever believe that when Jesus, who continuously knocks at the heart of a person with the desire to enter in and dine with him and communicate His gifts, that when the person opens the door of his heart, He pretends to be deaf and does not want to enter?

“O how wonderful is the prescience of the divine heart who foreknew every creature. For when God looked upon the face of man, whom He had made, all his works He saw completed in his form. O how wonderful is the breath which brought man to life.”

HILDEGARD VON BINGEN

“Conversion is going against the current, where the “current” is the superficial, incoherent and illusory way of life, which often draws us, dominates us and makes us slaves of evil or prisoners of moral mediocrity.”

BENEDICT XVI

“Whatever you do, always be humble, zealously guarding the purity of your heart and the purity of your body.”

ST. PIO OF PIETRELICINA

Listen, my daughter: Whenever it occurs to you to do something and to undertake some battle and overcome yourself, before you decide to do that, remind yourself of your weakness, and then, turning toward the power, wisdom and divine goodness and confiding in that, decide to fight and to work generously. And with these weapons in hand and with prayer, fight and work generously. Don't cease to repeat with your mind and with your heart this short prayer: "Blood and Wounds of my Jesus, be my strength, my energy, my weapons in the spiritual, moral, physical and temporal battles. Be my victories, my merits, my virtues." You will also say: "Oh, my Mother, transform me according to the desires of the Heart of Jesus."

Please tell your good Superior and Sisters that I send a blessing to all — no one excluded — so that you may distance yourselves from every shadow of sin and all may walk with giant steps along the narrow way of the Saints according to the designs of God for each of you.

I implore upon you, daughters, the maternal blessing of Most Holy Mary so that your hearts, blessed by her, may become fertile with the flowers and fruits of true sanctity.

(BOOK 11, LETTER 10, PP. 30-31)

“ Let us think very, very seriously about our conversion, so that we can move forward along the path of our Christian life.”

POPE FRANCIS

Grow in me

Jesus, grow in me.
in my spirit,
in my heart,
in my imagination,
in my feelings.
Grow in me with your meekness,
your purity,
your humility,
your zeal,
your love.
Grow in me, with your blessing,
your light and your peace.
Grow in me unto the glory of Your Father,
For the greater glory of God.
AMEN

PIERRE OLIVANT



“ Today let us ask the Holy Spirit to give us this apostolic fervor and the grace to “disturb” things that are too quiet in the Church; the grace to go to the existential peripheries not only in distant lands, but here in the cities where the proclamation of Jesus Christ is needed. And if we are disturbed, blessed be the Lord. As the Lord said to Paul: “Courage!”

POPE FRANCIS

“ Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

MATTHEW 28: 18-20

“ The ultimate purpose of mission is none other than to make men share in the communion between the Father and the Son in their Spirit of love.”

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, N. 850

Never Say Enough

Dearest daughters in Jesus Christ,

What I warmly recommend to you is to have a bit of zeal for the glory of God. It is impossible to love God and not exert oneself for his glory, just as it is impossible for a daughter not to care about the honor of her father, to feel no pain over the insults that afflict him and not to rejoice over the glory that honors him.

When divine love is truly in the heart, it awakens in it a great desire to see God known, loved and served, a profound sadness over offenses against this benevolent God and an ardent zeal to bring sinners, who have left him, back to him. If, then, the iniquities flooding like torrents over the face of the earth find us insensitive, if all the evils that afflict our faith, all the sufferings that disturb the Church do not press on our soul like an immense weight, we must tremble, strike our breast and tearfully admit: “O, how miserable we are; we thought we loved God and now we have become aware that we have not really loved him!”

Under the New Law thousands of apostles, of missionaries, of heroic women have sacrificed their country and their families, their rest and their goods. Some have sacrificed even their own life in order to make God known, loved and served by everyone in all ages.

Oh! These great souls knew how to love, and they would repeat every day, with a heart full of a holy jealousy for the honor and glory of God: “O Father, who are in Heaven, may Your Name be hallowed, exalted and blessed! May Your kingdom be established in all hearts and dominate every other affection, may Your will be respected everywhere, be loved everywhere on earth as it is in heaven.”

Remember that zeal must be active, insatiable, sweet, and prudent. This zeal does not inflame the heart without also showing itself externally through works. Let us seek, daughters, and utilize all the means the Lord gives us to make God better known, loved and served. Let us joyfully seize every opportunity to gain souls for Him, and to lose our

goods, our rest, and our very lives. In fact, we should rejoice if by such means we could bring it about that one more soul on earth will love the Lord.

The more good we see to be done, the more we must do and never say “enough”. How happy I would be if I could see you animated by that holy zeal that would fire you with an ardent desire to travel throughout the earth to make the Lord loved and praised everywhere and say with St. Francis Xavier: “I will not be able to enjoy a moment of rest if I know of one corner of the world where God is not loved.”

Despite his great desire to make God loved, he knew how to contain himself; he was not at all uncivil. His language was always moderate, his actions always thoughtful; gentleness and prudence always presided over his actions and brought hearts to reconciliation. Are these, daughters, the characteristics of our zeal?

(BOOK 7, LETTER 6, PP. 58-59)

Setting Out on Mission

To set out is, above all, to emerge, to break the crust of egoism, which seeks to imprison us in our own ego.

To set out means to stop revolving around one's self, as if one were the center of the world and of life.

To set out is to not let yourself be caught in the circle of the problems of the small world to which you belong. As important as they may be, humanity is greater and this we must serve.

To set out does not mean to travel endless miles, to cross oceans, or to travel faster than sound. It means, above all, to open yourself to others, to recognize them, to encounter them.

DOM HELDER CAMARA



St. Francis Xavier was born in the castle of Xavier in Navarre (Spain), 1506. He was ordained a priest in 1537 and dedicated himself to works of charity. In 1541 he left for the East where he tirelessly evangelized India and Japan for ten years, converting many to the faith. He died in 1552 on the island of Sanchoon, at the gates of China. He is one of the patrons of the Congregation of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

“ The greatest joy we can give to Mary Most Holy is to bring the Eucharistic Jesus into our hearts. In Christendom, Mary is the noblest treasure after Christ, and we can never adequately exalt the nobility of the empress and queen, exalted and blessed above all nobility, with wisdom and holiness.”

MARTIN LUTHER

“ But our ability to understand is limited; therefore the mission of the Spirit is to introduce the Church in an ever new way, from generation to generation, in the greatness of the mystery of Christ.”

POPE BENEDICT XVI

“ The Holy Spirit, life-giving life, is the engine of everything and the root of every creature.”

HILDEGARD VON BINGEN

Wisdom is from the Spirit

Dearest daughter in Jesus Christ,

You must pray to the Holy Spirit, that He may instruct you in Christian wisdom; pray much until He inspires in you a love for it and the practice of it. This wisdom, which is, after all, that of the Saints, is the life and peace of the soul, the teacher, the guardian and the directress of virtues. Do you know, my daughter, what Christian wisdom is?

It consists of proposing as the primary and principal purpose of all your actions, the glory of God and your eternal salvation. You are to consider all creatures and all events as means ordered toward the attainment of this purpose. Jesus Himself tells us: “What does it profit a person to gain the whole universe if one loses one’s soul?” Remember, daughter, that aside from eternal salvation and the glory of God, all is nothing and should not be held in any account.

Christian wisdom consists of using the best means possible to attain it, not those which are offered to us by our senses or our reason unaccompanied by faith, but those which the holy and true maxims of the Gospel and the examples of Jesus Christ show us; in short, in all things we must search for the Will of God, which is the rule of all perfection. Strive to do all you can to submit to that holy wisdom with love and obedience. The areas where the Will of God manifestly appears are: to want to prefer for yourself a disdain of honors, poverty rather than riches or life’s comforts, and suffering instead of pleasure simply because that is what your divine Spouse Jesus did.

You must be vigilant so as not to let escape from you occasions to put these means into practice; you must be vigilant over small occasions as well as great ones, in order to be equally faithful in all of them; be careful of your words so that you say only what is useful and always for your own good and that of others; watch attentively over your actions that they may have as their goal the glory of God, the sanctification of your soul and a holy zeal to do good for others. Be watchful especially over yourself that the enemy may never catch you off guard.

If you call on the Holy Spirit, who is totally divine wisdom, He will come to you and fill you with His light. When His holy light will have illumined your intellect and your spirit, then you will feel spurred on, drawn to pursue the way of holiness,

and everything that surrounds you on a natural level will seem to you to be only mud and rottenness.

Christian wisdom is beautiful in the eyes of God for the innocence of life that it teaches, for the rectitude and purity of intentions that it inspires; beautiful in the eyes of people who cannot deny their esteem for it and are drawn by it to love the faith; beautiful in itself because of its noble simplicity, because of the elevation of its sentiments, because of the great virtues it inspires and the eternal glory to which it leads.

Through Christian wisdom all of us can be saved, while without it, we condemn ourselves. In receiving Christian wisdom you will be happy in your present life. Your heart will be at peace; your conscience, tranquil. By means of it you will taste the delicious joys of innocence and of the friendship of God. Without this holy wisdom you will find nothing but vanity and affliction of spirit. You will feel flushed with remorse and unhappy with yourself. You will feel yourself disdained, discouraged, even losing your self-respect which is the worst misfortune that could afflict a person.

Oh, how precious is Christian wisdom! Ask God insistently for the grace of having Wisdom preside over all your counsels, over all your judgments, over all the acts of your life. When you write to me I will discern from your writing if you have obtained this grace which is indispensable for anyone who is to pursue the way of perfection. Offer to God all the sacrifices which the generosity of your heart dictates in order to obtain this grace because it is of the utmost importance for the sanctification of your soul.

I bless you with all my heart and with you I bless all my good daughters there. I ask that each of you receive Holy Communion for nine Fridays according to the intentions of your poor and

Most affectionate Mother

(BOOK 2, LETTER 3, PP. 14-17)

“ Communion on the first nine Fridays is a practice proper to devotion to the Heart of Jesus according to the promise made to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque: “I promise you, in the excessive mercy of my Heart, that my almighty love will give to all those who will receive Communion on the first nine Fridays of the month the grace of the final penance. They will not die in sin or without receiving the sacraments, and my Divine Heart will be their safe refuge in that last moment.”

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit,
that my thoughts may all be holy.
Act in me, O Holy Spirit,
that my work, too, may be holy.
Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit,
that I love but what is holy.
Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit,
to defend all that is holy.
Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit,
that I always may be holy. Amen.

ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO



Mother Clelia had a special devotion to Our Lady. Her letters highlight Mary's virtues as a model for apostles. She considered Mary to be both mother and teacher and she understood that to grow in the path of holiness, Mary's intercession and example were essential."

“ He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart.”

LUKE 2: 51

“ I didn't know what it meant to love Jesus until I put my heart at Mary's feet.”

WILLIAM FABER

“ The expression “Be it done unto me “ must constantly resound on our lips because there must be complete harmony between our will and that of the Immaculate Virgin Mary. So what should we do? Let us be guided by Mary and we will have nothing to fear.”

ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE

Saying “Yes” Like Mary

Dearest daughters in Jesus Christ,

(...) And so it is that a messenger, cloaked in divine light, comes down from the heavens. He is the Archangel Gabriel who comes to announce the great event. (...) He turns to a little village of Galilee called Nazareth, and here he enters a poor house which holds nothing that the world esteems. In that house, however, wrapped in recollection, is God's greatest treasure: here lives Mary.

Let us unite ourselves to that heavenly messenger to warmly congratulate our most holy Mother for the great spiritual treasures which filled her mind, her heart, her senses and her works. Let us entreat her to be moved to pity by our wretchedness and to make us share in the grace with which she is filled. It is from her fullness that we can all hope to obtain relief from our spiritual poverty.

But how did Mary receive the apparition and greeting of the angel? The Virgin Mary received these with a holy anxiety. (...) On seeing Mary's distress, the angel reassures her by explaining the mystery. “Don't be afraid, Mary,” he tells her, “because you have found favor in God's sight. Behold, you will conceive and bear a Son and you will name Him Jesus...” Mary understands that this concerns the awaited Messiah (...) She understands, at the same time, the glory that must belong to the one who is destined to be His Mother, and what joy is to be hers to cooperate so intimately in the work of human redemption. But she doesn't give way to rejoicing nor follow the impulse of her heart without reflecting seriously. Before giving her consent, she wants an explanation that will reassure her (...).

And what does Mary decide? After having consented to all the graces God gave her to prepare her for this great mystery, wouldn't she undoubtedly consent to this one too? “Behold the handmaid of the Lord,” she answers, “let it be done to me according to Your Word” -- expressions of her perfect holiness. The entire perfection of a soul consists not in having one's own way, but having only the will to do and to suffer all that pleases the Lord. And such is the disposition of Mary's heart. She neither exalts herself by thinking of

the dignity and joys of being the Mother of God, nor is she daunted by the sacrifices which would be asked of her and which would make her the Mother of Sorrows and Queen of Martyrs, even before Mother of Consolation and Queen of Heaven. In perfect calmness of spirit, she abandons herself totally to the plans of God.

Now, comparing Mary's behavior with Eve's in the earthly paradise, what contrasts do we see! Eve wanders around Eden in order to feed on pleasures; Mary stays recollected and praying in her room. Eve rejoices in the deceitful words of the serpent who flatters her about her loftiness; Mary is perplexed and trembles at the words of praise uttered by the angel. Eve rashly believes the father of lies and adheres to his proposals against God's commands; Mary, before consenting to the proposals of the angel, wants clarification to ensure her virtue and only then abandons herself to the divine Will. What happened? Eve fell miserably and lost her dignity; Mary, on the other hand, was raised to supreme grandeur. Let us, too, learn how we are to conduct ourselves if we want to avoid the lot of Eve and share in that of Mary.

(BOOK 3, LETTER 3, PP. 58-64)

To Mary Most Holy

O Mary, be my Advocate, speak for me and for my poor daughters in religion.

O Mary, be my most powerful Benefactor, enrich me with your special graces.

O Mary, be my Consolation, console me.

O Mary, be my Star, guide me everywhere.

O Mary, be my Strength, uphold me.

O Mary, be my Guardian, take care of me.

O Mary, be my Light, enlighten me.

O Mary, be my Mother, love me much.

O Mary, be my Protector, defend me.

O Mary, be my Refuge, hide me.

O Mary, be my Help, and come to me.

MOTHER CLELIA (BOOK 1, PP. 65-67)

“ The greatest joy we can give to Mary Most Holy is to bring the Eucharistic Jesus into our hearts. In Christendom, Mary is the noblest treasure after Christ, and we can never adequately exalt the nobility of the empress and queen, exalted and blessed above all nobility, with wisdom and holiness.”

MARTIN LUTHER



Act of Entrustment To Mary

“ Behold, your Mother! (Jn 19: 27)

O Virgin Mary,

Jesus on the Cross wanted to entrust us to you,
not to lessen
but to reaffirm
his exclusive role as Saviour of the world.

If in the disciple John
all the children of the Church were entrusted to you,
the happier I am to see the young people
of the world
entrusted to you, O Mary.

To you, gentle Mother,
whose protection I have always experienced,
this evening I entrust them to you once again.
All seek refuge and protection under your mantle.

You, Mother of divine grace,
make them shine with the beauty of Christ!

The young people of this century,
at the dawn of the new millennium, still live the
torment that derives from sin,
from hatred, from violence,

from terrorism and from war.

But it is also the young to whom the Church looks
confidently, knowing that with the help of God's
grace,
they will succeed in believing and in living as Gospel
witnesses in present day history.

O Mary,

help them to respond to their vocation.
Guide them to the knowledge of true love
and bless their affections.

Support them in times of suffering.

Make them fearless heralds

of Christ's greeting on Easter Day: Peace be with
you!

With them, I also entrust myself once again to you
and with confident affection I repeat to you:

Totus Tuus ego sum!

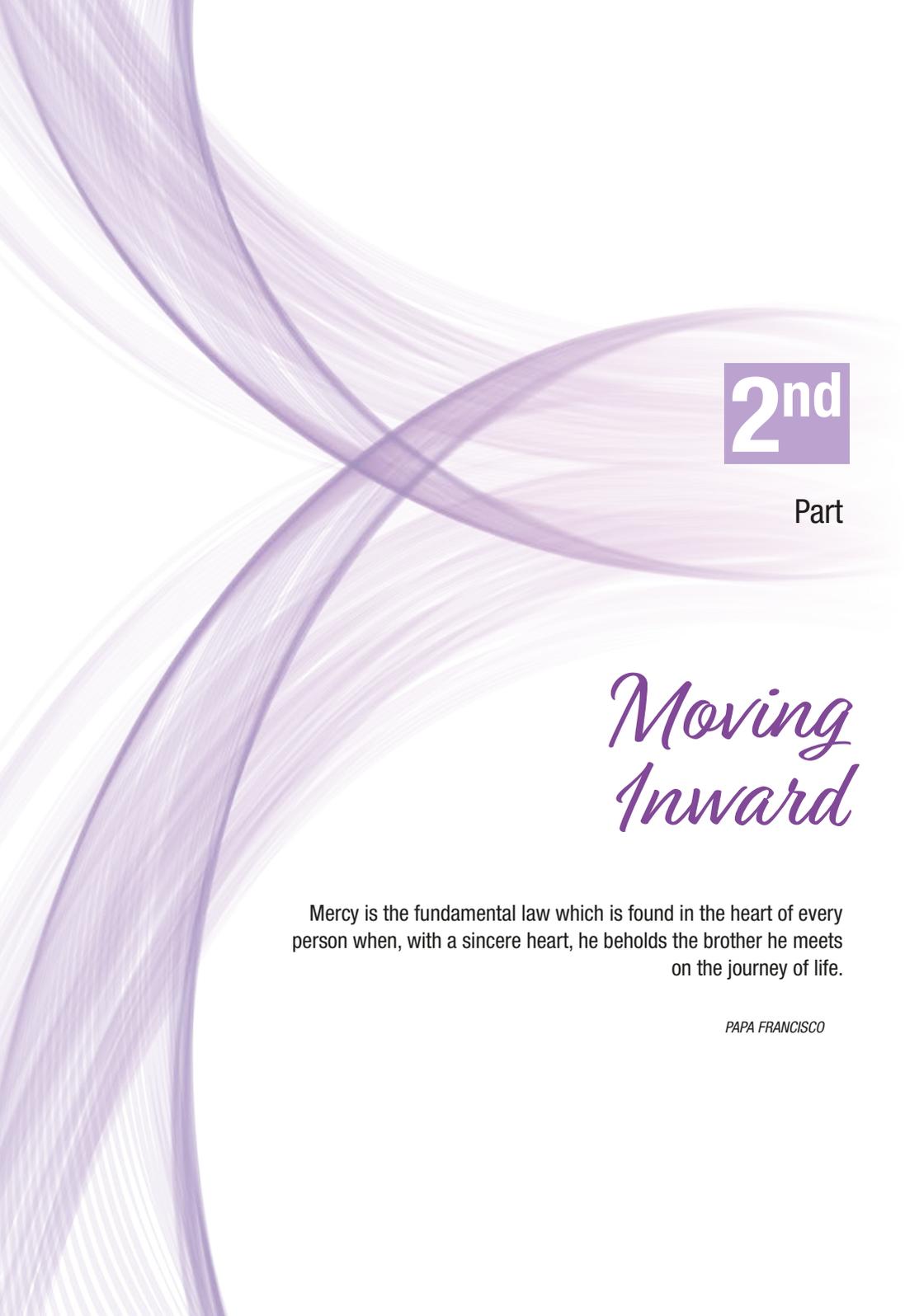
I am all yours!

And each one of them cries to you, with me:

Totus Tuus! Totus Tuus! Amen

ST. JOHN PAUL II





2nd

Part

Moving Inward

Mercy is the fundamental law which is found in the heart of every person when, with a sincere heart, he beholds the brother he meets on the journey of life.

PAPA FRANCISCO

“ It is humility that makes us aware every day that we are not the ones who build the Kingdom of God, but always the grace of the Lord who works in us; it is humility that drives us to dedicate ourselves entirely not to the service of ourselves or of our ideas, but to the service of Christ and the Church.”

POPE FRANCIS

“ Mother Clelia, in making the vow of humility, was well aware of what it was, and of what was necessary to practice it: ‘willpower’ and a ‘courage’ greater than that required for presenting one’s self on a battlefield. “

SR. PIERPAULA DE FARIAS

Precious Virtues

Dearest daughter in Christ Jesus,

Don’t you know, blessed child, that the soul that aims to love God alone, and at first conforms her actions to His will, and then thinks for a single instant that she wants to be esteemed, praised, admired, that at the very instant she distances herself from Jesus. Remember that self-love draws close to you with its seductions to corrupt the gifts of God in you. Whoever esteems the quality of her own heart and glories in, it puts a worm in it that rots it and spoils it at its roots.

God has given us, it’s true, the grace of prayer by means of which we can obtain all things; but if self-love is mixed with prayer, she will be cursed and reproached by God as was the Pharisee. To the grace of prayer God has attached the grace of good works and acts of various virtues, but if self-love mixes itself in those works, all merit is lost. If you esteem yourself more than the virtues that God gives you, by the act of getting your satisfaction you kill it. If you take pride in your piety, you kill it; if you take satisfaction in your good works, you destroy the copious harvest of graces that you would have been able to gather; you upturn the edifice of your good works. Oh how many merits are lost!

What will you gain from having worked so much and made bloody sacrifices to acquire merits, if you then let self-love take it all away? Because of this, not only will you have nothing left of what could have enriched your soul, but you would be poorer than you were before. What you could have gained so much will turn against you, and you will have nothing else to expect from God than the punishment of the proud. This is why Jesus often told His followers: “Guard against doing good works in order to be seen and praised; otherwise you will have no recompense from your Father who is in heaven.”

Examine yourself well, my daughter, and recognize once and for all how many good works of your past life and, perhaps even of the present have been robbed from you by your self-love! Of how many celestial riches has it deprived

you perhaps even bringing you to merit condemnation at the judgment seat of God! Be humble, my daughter! Think little of yourself if you want your soul to be in a state of understanding Divine Love. Humility is the basic disposition to have in order to do all things well: to pray, to come to the Sacraments, to interact with one's neighbor, to overcome temptations, to conquer our passions. Humility is the true foundation of every virtue.

Consider, then, the more good works you do, the more you must root yourself in humility for fear that pride and self-love, eager to nourish itself with praise and self satisfaction, may not steal the merit of all that you have done.

I bless you wholeheartedly and with you all my other dear daughters, while in Jesus I remain your

Most affectionate Mother

(BOOK 9, LETTER 20, PP. 48-50)

“ This way is first humility, second humility, third humility and no matter how often you keep asking me I will say the same over and over again.”

ST. AUGUSTINE

“ Humility is a virtue that in the world of today, and in general, isn't held in high regard. But the Lord's disciples know that this virtue is, so to speak, the oil that makes the dialogue, collaboration and cordial unity possible.”

POPE BENEDICT XVI



“ Friendship whose source is God is never exhausted.”

ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA

“ I call you friends because I have made known to you all that I have heard from my Father.”

JOHN 15: 15

“ Those who live by judging others or speaking ill of others, are hypocrites because they lack the strength and the courage to look at their own shortcomings.”

“ Men of few words are the best.”

SHAKESPEARE

“ Just as a doctor is necessary for a body that is sick, so too for the soul, a friend: an affectionate words knows how to lessen pain.”

MENANDER

“ Friendship with God and friendship with others is one; we cannot separate one from the other.”

ST. TERESA OF ÁVILA

To Be Everything to Everyone

Dearest daughter in Jesus Christ,

You ask me how you should conduct yourself toward the different groups of people with whom you must frequently converse. So here I am, replying to you without delay.

Whoever the persons are with whom you must discourse or converse, you must always be polite, cordial, kind. You must treat each one according to his merit, his dignity, his character, having with some a more serious manner and with others a more cheerful demeanor. You must not have an air of feigned affection, of arrogance and sharpness, or of antagonism to the others' words. You must conduct yourself in such a way that no one would have reason to complain about you but that all would be edified by your demeanor and your behavior.

If the persons with whom you find yourself conversing are disagreeable to you, find a way to conceal under a pleasant manner the interior repugnance that they stir up in you, and don't allow yourself to appear sad, annoyed, or stern in your words or actions because charity obliges you to bear with them and to give them good example so that they might amend those faults which make them disagreeable. If, on the contrary, they are persons who are attractive to you, guard yourself carefully from being too free or frivolous; speak only of honorable and holy things. Beware of the intrusion of friendships that trouble your heart.

If there are individuals who, for example, are poor, simple or insignificant, charity forbids you from avoiding them, rejecting them, or saddening them with an arrogant, disrespectful, or gloomy air, or from using any excuse to reject them. Charity demands that we receive them with joy, speak to them with kindness, put ourselves in their situation, and see that they are comfortable with us. That is what you, too, must do. If they are devout people whose conversation tends to God and uprightness, then delight greatly in their company.

Your conversations, however, are always to be edifying; the Holy Spirit says: that the heart of the good person inspires her words and bestows grace from her lips. (...) From time to time, in your conversations speak edifying words about God, about eternal salvation, about the grandeur and goodness of

the Faith, of the Church, and of the Saints and about how to imitate their good example.

As soon as you recognize that your conversations are neither edifying nor useful, see to it at least that they are blameless; love of truth should drive far from you every dissemblance in speech, that all those lies so associated with self-love in order to conceal a truth that humiliates, to make you appear more important than you really are, to exalt you above others putting them down for your own advantage. It is then necessary that love of neighbor banish from your conversations every word of gossip, criticism, of blame against those who are not present, any word that might sow in the heart seeds of discord. In summary, one must work that modesty not permit any word of self-love or vanity, that gentleness not be upset by any dispute or altercation, that the Religious spirit never give any worldly message contrary to the Gospel.

Now, I hope you will not be overtaxed by the tedious idle talk that you must endure with these people who every now and then come to disturb your tranquility and interrupt your union with Jesus.

Courage, daughter! The tongue can do immense good and bring forth a fruitful apostolate when it is used in the exercise of Christian charity and for the glory of God and for the salvation of souls.

I leave you in the company of the Most Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and of St. Joseph so that with their good counsel you can bring about the fruits of conversion, scattering holy seeds in whomever you will have the grace to meet.

I wholeheartedly bless you and all my beloved daughters there while, in Jesus, I remain your

Most affectionate Mother

(BOOK 13, LETTER 4, PP. 14-16)

“ Do not worry about others' business, whether good or bad, because besides the danger of sinning, this serves to distract us and give negative energy for our spirit.”

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

“ Let us always speak of the other as if they were present.”

CHIARA LUBICH

“ ... In God and with God, I am able to love the person I don't like or don't know. This can only be achieved by an intimate encounter with God, an encounter that becomes a communion of wills, that affects my feelings. I see that person, not only with my eyes and my feelings, but according to the perspective of Jesus Christ.”

BENEDICT XVI



In the face of life's sufferings, Mother Clelia experienced the Mystery of the Cross and surrendered completely to God.

“When we look at the cross, we understand the greatness of his love. When we look at the manger, we understand the tenderness of his love for you and for me, for your family and for every family.”

BLESSED TERESA OF CALCUTTA

“The cross is not an end in itself: it elevates us to the heights and reveals to us deeper realities. This is why it is not only a symbol; it is the powerful weapon of Christ.”

EDITH STEIN

“I have patience and I think to myself: all evil brings with it something that is good.”

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

“Conquering yourself is the greatest of all victories.”

PLATO



Patience in Trial

Dearest daughter in Jesus Christ,

I sympathize with you, my child, and ever since you wrote to me I understood that you are not yet accustomed to mend the sudden pangs of offenses and of other contrary things. In order to succeed in this, you must first ask for God's help and then you have to accustom yourself to foresee them and to want them more and more, waiting for them with a ready spirit.

You may possibly say to me: but what must I do to foresee them? Here is what you have to do. The way to foresee them is to consider the condition of your passions, and consider even the people and places where and with whom you have to interact. In this way, you can conjecture on what could possibly happen. And when you experience an adversity that you may not have expected, your ready spirit will help you to face it as well as those you did foresee.

You could also make use of this other method: as soon as you begin to feel the first pangs of an insult, or any other painful thing, strive to make every effort to lift your mind up to God, thinking about His ineffable goodness and the love He has for you, with which He allows you to experience that adversity so that, bearing it for love of Him, you will purify your soul all the more and in this way draw closer to Him and be united with Him. And knowing how pleased Jesus is that you bear this, look at yourself and say to yourself: “Oh! Why shouldn't I suffer this cross, which no one but my heavenly Father Himself is giving me?” Then, turning to the cross, embrace it with great patience and serenity as much as you can, saying: Oh, cross, made by Divine Providence! Oh, cross, sweetened with the sweet love of my Jesus Crucified, let me be nailed to you, so that I may give myself to the One, who by dying on you redeemed me!

And if at first your emotions prevail and you are not able to lift yourself up to God, but remain wounded, try as best you can to do so as soon as possible as though you had not been wounded.

(...) But if your alteration comes, not from the thing, but from the person, whose every little action bothers you and affects you, the remedy, if this is the case, is that you make every effort to incline your will to loving her and holding her dear, because, in addition to being a creature formed, as you are, by the divine hand, she is also re-formed, as you are, by the same Divine Blood of Jesus. And this is a very beautiful occasion that Jesus gives you, to imitate the charity of the most loving Heart of your dear Jesus. He says to you: "My dearest daughter, show me the love you have for me by using sweetness and goodness toward every creature, because what you may do to your neighbor, I will consider as having been done to Me."

I leave you in the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and am

Your most affectionate Mother

(BOOK 8, LETTER 25, PP. 154-155)

Prayer for peace

Lord God of peace, listen to our plea! We have tried many times and for many years to resolve our conflicts with our own strength and also with our weapons; so many moments of hostility and darkness; so much spilled blood; so many broken lives; many hopes buried ... But our efforts have been in vain. Now, Lord, help us! Give us peace, teach us peace, lead us to peace. Open our eyes and our hearts and give us the courage to say: "never again the war!"; "With war everything is destroyed!" Infuse in us the courage to make concrete gestures to build peace. Lord, God of Abraham and the Prophets, God of Love who created us and calls us to live as brothers, give us the strength to be peacemakers every day; give us the ability to look with kindness on all the brothers we meet on our journey. Make us available to listen to the cry of our citizens who ask us to transform our weapons into instruments of peace, our fears in trust and our tensions into forgiveness. Keep the flame of hope lit in us to make choices of dialogue and reconciliation with patient perseverance, so that peace can finally win. And let these words be banished from the heart of every man: division, hatred, war! Lord, disarm your tongue and your hands, renew your hearts and minds, because the word that makes us meet is always "brother", and the style of our life becomes: shalom, peace, salam! Amen.

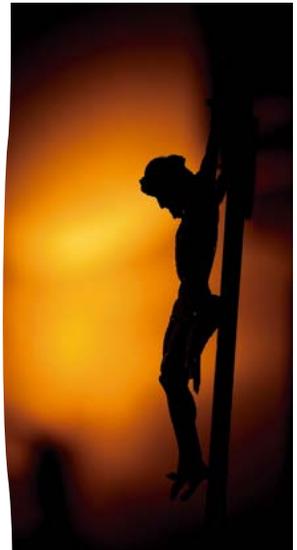
POPE FRANCIS

“Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet.”

JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

“Where there is no patience, there is no wisdom.”

ST. AUGUSTINE



“ We shouldn't content ourselves in speaking about love of neighbor, but we should practice it. ”

ALBERT SCHWEITZER

“ Some people take better care of their dogs than they do other people. ”

“ Love is a wonderful virtue. It is at the same time the means and the end, the movement and the goal, the path that leads to itself. What, then, must we do to love? For this, we do not need do anything but love; we learn to play the lute in playing it, we learn to dance by dancing. ”

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

Speak and Love Like Jesus

Dearest daughters in Jesus Christ,

Why, my daughters, is there this separation among you? Don't you know, dearest daughters, that where reciprocal charity is lacking there is no true Christian spirit? Remember often that Jesus Himself left us as a testament: "Love one another as I have loved you." Jesus, our divine Spouse, wants that our love raise us up even to the point of sacrifice. We must be disposed to sacrifice all that we have, all that we are and our very life if needed, for the service of our neighbor because Jesus Christ, our model, has sacrificed His life for us.

My beloved daughters, I urge each of you to examine your conscience; see if you have rooted in your heart that generous charity that reaches the point of sacrifice, that spares neither time nor pain nor money for the good of one's neighbor. Does egoism sometimes close your heart to compassion, your hand to charity? Remember, my daughters, that the living charity of Jesus Christ must embrace everyone without excluding anyone. Charity embraces in its sacrifice both friend and foe, benefactors and persecutors. Yes, my dearest daughters, we must love even those who hate us and have offended us with their word and by their actions because all of us are children of God and God does not want any of His children to be hated.

This love of one's enemies has the added advantage of ensuring you that you love with a supernatural and meritorious love while one's love for friends and benefactors is open to being purely natural and without merit. Therefore, love one another, without exception; see to it that in your heart there is no leaven of animosity, aversion or bitterness toward anyone. Don't be content with not wishing them any harm, but you must be disposed to reconcile yourselves with them as soon as possible, and not delay in coming to their aid even though they may be thought to be people of little worth, or they may be at greater fault than you. Finally, you are to have for your neighbor a sincere affection, a heart full of charity and you are to find every occasion to benefit them even to the point of sacrifice.

Always speak well of them; never complain about anyone, or of the wrongs they have done to you, instead, say all the good things you can about your neighbor. Pray for everyone and if someone has faults or defects, implore for them the grace of correcting and sanctifying themselves. Have compassion on them and ask the Lord to help them become better. If they are alienated from God, beg the Lord to have pity on them and to lift them from the state in which they have fallen.

When the occasion presents itself, help them with your advice, and foresee their needs if they hesitate to ask for help. If in spite of all this they persist in being your enemies, continue to love them as St. Paul the Apostle used to say to the Corinthians: “Even if you should love me less than I love you, I will not cease to sacrifice myself for you.

You must have compassion on the afflicted and console them the best way you can. You should never use harsh words, nor a severe or brusque manner; but on the contrary, you must have a welcoming, smiling and friendly look with a cordial and amiable attitude. Don't forget, my daughters that the love that Jesus Christ has is sensitive to all that others find good and bad; weeps with those who weep and rejoices with those who rejoice. It suffers all that others suffer whether they are present or absent, friend or foe, near or far because

Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

1 CORINTHIANS 13: 4-7

“To tell someone, with fullness of heart, ‘I love you,’ is virtually the same as saying, ‘You shall never die.’”

GABRIEL MARCEL

“Dear God, you gave me the courage to believe that you accept me. Give me the strength to love all the untouchables, just like you love and accept me.”

BLESSED TERESA OF CALCUTTA.



“ With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. This need not be so, my brothers.”

JAMES 3: 9-10

it sees in everyone a member of the same Body of which Jesus Christ is the Head. Now, just as in the human body when one member suffers, all other members suffer in that if the foot is wounded, the arm reaches out to it, the knee bends, the eye quickly looks at the foot to see it and all the other members mobilize to help it. So, too, true charity gives us a tender and compassionate heart toward all those who suffer.

Remember that God will treat you just as you have treated your neighbor. Now, since we have an immense need that God treat us with compassion and not with harshness, we are to strive to treat everyone with sweetness and charity.

If our neighbor has bad habits, instead of judging her with an inflexible rigor, we must win her over to the faith by showing her indulgence and amiability.

This is so beautiful that tender piety looks with affectionate compassion on anyone whether they are in a state of suffering, illness, pain or inferiority. What didn't St. Vincent de Paul do for others? What have those people done, and continue to do, even today who are filled with tenderness and sincere charity and compassion for the underprivileged?

Never let it be, daughters, that we would be numbered among those who have a heart that is indifferent and hardened toward the suffering of our brothers and sisters. To sadden an afflicted person with harsh words, with an air lacking benevolence, to look at a poor person with haughtiness and speak to him in a bitter or stern tone of voice, to treat him discourteously and in a bad mood is a cruelty unworthy of a Christian who speaks with a brother or sister.

May your behavior, then, be indulgent toward those who have faults, kind toward those who suffer. Be all to everyone, poor with the poor, a sufferer with the suffering, ignorant with the ignorant, and God will bless you and fill you with His graces and His special heavenly blessings, as are wished on you by one who, blessing you maternally, remains in Jesus,

Your affectionate Mother

(BOOK 7, LETTER 17, PP. 82-84)

Speak Wisely

“The mouth of the just is a true fountain of life. For a person who acts with integrity and has no other aim than the glory of God, his speech is as precious as purified silver; and wisdom is found on his lips.” Jesus Christ taught it to us by His example, because He never let fall from his mouth anything but words of grace which captivated all His hearers and everyone would say, after having listened to Him: “No man has every spoken in this way.”

With our speech, daughter, we must make God known and loved: we must teach His commandments, make clear His counsels, teach all those we meet to love each other, to bear with one another, to support and help one another in turn, to distance themselves from the evil way which leads to perdition, and to follow the sound path that leads to heaven.

By means of your words, my daughter, you can console the afflicted and dry their tears; you can teach them to appreciate the faith which inspires so much amiability and grace. By means of our speech, we can bring together divided hearts, reconcile individuals with their families; and expand the reign of peace and charity. With one kind word, wise counsels and holy teachings are made attractive.

Oh, how much good our speech can accomplish when wisely used, when it fully responds to a higher end for which we have been privileged by God to be above all other animals! Let us beg the good Jesus, daughter, to give us the grace to always how to regulate our speech for good so that it be used to continually praise our good God and to zealously show with overwhelming enthusiasm and vibrant expression of divine love His divine grandeur to our neighbor. If you want this, daughter, be certain that you will succeed, because if Jesus has called you to follow Him, it is a sign that he is ready to give you the graces necessary to make you holy provided that you desire it.

Now I'll end this letter and I'll not write to you again until I learn from your good superior that you have begun to work earnestly on yourself to eliminate all that can stand in the way of your sanctification.

I bless you wholeheartedly and in Jesus I remain your Most affectionate Mother

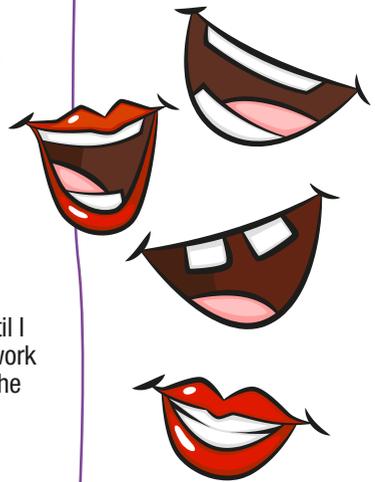
(BOOK 13, LETTER 12, PP. 31-32)

“The disciple's joy is not a feeling of selfish well-being, but a certainty that springs from faith which calms the heart and allows us to proclaim the good news of God's love. Knowing Jesus is the best gift that anyone can receive; having found him was the best that occurred in our lives, and making him known through our word and our actions is our joy.”

DOCUMENT FROM APARECIDA

“Gossip is a crime. There is no such thing as innocent gossip!”

POPE FRANCIS



“ We must each become saints. We must come to God with each other, presenting ourselves to Him with each other. We must not meet the good God without each other. What would he say if we returned (from Him) one without the other? ”

CHARLES PEGUY

“ Tolerance is the best of religions.”

VICTOR HUGO

“ The deepest essence of love is God who is love and who gives himself to the creature that he himself has created out of love.”

EDITH STEIN

As We Forgive

Remember, my daughters, that mutual tolerance is part of the precept of charity. These two things are so bound to each other that without mutual suffering, charity would not be possible, and it would be necessary to cancel this precept from the Gospel because every person on earth has his or her own defects and imperfections. There are no angels except in heaven. If you don't bear with the defects and imperfections of others, you break that bond and charity is destroyed.

Everyone has his or her own particular nature. Inclinations and temperaments are not all the same; judgments and ways of feeling contradict each other; wills clash with one another; tastes vary. No, among so many contrary elements, the fusion of hearts to form one heart, one only soul, as charity demands, is not possible so long as people don't bear with one another in their weaknesses and don't suffer in a spirit of charity and patience all that offends them, all that displeases them, all that does not meet with their tastes nor their disposition.

Without this mutual tolerance the union of hearts would be likewise impossible, no different than the fusion of water with fire, of light with darkness. There would necessarily be among them divisions, arguments, discord.

God has given us a special law of mutual tolerance. In charity God imposes on us the obligation of reciprocal tolerance because one cannot exist without the other; and to this obligation He gives such an importance that He makes it a special law. We must support the defects and weaknesses of our neighbor.



If we must do this, it is not a favor we do for them, but a duty that we must fulfill. It is instead a debt that we must satisfy. We must each carry the burdens of others and in this way we fulfill the law of Jesus Christ. Therefore, bear with one another with great humility. This excludes sensitivities and pretensions. This will teach you how to treat your neighbor. Do it with sweetness and patience and so you will exclude murmurs and grumbling, criticisms, sarcasm, stinging barbs, antipathies and impatience with displeasures received. Do this with great charity and this will teach you to treat your neighbor as you would like to be treated yourselves.

Reflect, daughters, on how benevolent a law this is, so worthy of the Father of us all; a law of benevolence and indulgence, that gathers all miseries at once under His defense and does not permit either disdain because of weakness or derision because of defects, or censure for the same failures that we have no right to reprehend; laws to which our dearest interests are connected because God will not be indulgent toward our defects except in the measure that we are indulgent toward the defects of our brothers and sisters. If we do not support our neighbor, God will not support us; if we do not sympathize with others, God will not sympathize with us.

We ourselves, daughters, do recognize the demand of this law, and so we say: Forgive us, O Lord, our offenses as we forgive those who have offended us. We, therefore, must be indulgent toward our own faults in the measure that we are indulgent toward the faults of others. Justice itself obliges us to mutual tolerance.

Who does not feel the need for herself of this law of tolerance, of this law, which is protective of human weakness? Now if we want it to be observed in our regard, isn't it a real injustice not to want to observe it regarding our neighbor?

We complain about the imperfections of others, but we don't want others to complain about ours? [We complain] about their character and of their moods, but don't we also have some critical moments? [We complain] about their impulsiveness, or of their discourtesy, but don't we also fall into the impulse of a language that is too pointed and rude?

It is not good, daughters, in fact, it is very bad, for us to want perfection in others to the point of not supporting in them any spot, any imperfection. Seriously probe your own conscience

“Tolerance is the most sublime effect of education.”

HELEN KELLER

“There is no triumph without loss, no victory without suffering, no freedom without sacrifice.”

J.R.R. TOLKIEN, LORD OF THE RINGS

“Never fixate on the faults of others, but always be ready to excuse them. Be ready to accuse yourself; besides, he wishes that everyone know you, inside and out.”

ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

“To live on love is to sail without stopping, to sow peace and joy in all hearts.”

ST. TERESA OF THE CHILD JESUS

“Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ.”

EPHESIANS 4: 32

“ Stop judging, that you may not be judged. For as you judge, so will you be judged, and the measure with which you measure will be measured out to you. Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove that splinter from your eye,' while the wooden beam is in your eye? You hypocrite, remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter from your brother's eye. Matthew 7: 1-5

• a little bit, daughters, and see how you support the defects of your neighbors, their moods—either too happy or too dark, their mannerisms—either too soft or too rigid.

Instead of excusing and covering over the defects of our neighbor, haven't we perhaps done the contrary? From the gist of your letters it is too clearly understood that your behavior is not guided by the charity of Jesus Christ because there is a lack of that mutual tolerance, which a soul consecrated to God should possess in abundance.

Pray the Divine Heart of Jesus and Mary Most Holy to grant to you the spirit of true charity toward your neighbor because without this there is no place for salvation. Jesus Himself told us: "Do you want to know how much you love Me? Examine how you love, support and sacrifice yourself for your neighbor; the measure of love that you have for her, is the measure of the love you have for Me."

In the hope of uncovering in your spirit better dispositions in the sincere practice of the true charity of Jesus Christ, I leave you at the feet of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament where you will draw from His Divine Heart that spirit of charity of which, in fact, you are unfortunately deprived.

I remain in Jesus,

Your anguished Mother

(BOOK 7, LETTER 20, PP. 90-92)



We Need Each Other

Dearest daughters in Jesus Christ,

I appreciated the good news you have given me, but I am not satisfied about the second part of your letter, in fact, I have to tell you that with regard to the second part, I sensed an ingratitude totally unbecoming souls that declare themselves to be followers of Christ. It was as though you were simply seculars.

Don't you know, daughters, that gratitude is a precept of the natural law? If natural law obliges us to love our equals even though they have offended us or have incurred some fault toward us, what do we not owe to those who have done us some service or have benefited us in some way?

Love draws love; one who receives is obligated, and the benefit received demands reciprocal benevolence. Those who do not pay their debts are unjust; but those who don't pay their debt of gratitude are worse yet; they are vile.

You show yourselves, daughters, to have hearts and souls that lack delicacy and a sense of honor, and you appear not to understand that every good heart must be grateful, that the sweetest of joys is to proclaim the benefit received and to render due thanks for it.

Remember, daughters that ingratitude is the most odious of vices and it is a horrible product of arrogance and malignity. Only the arrogant are ashamed to have received benevolence; they hide it as best they can and become angry when they are reminded of it. This generates forgetfulness about benefits received, and produces an infinite number of ungrateful people.

In order to dispense themselves from acknowledging the gift, they presuppose that the benefactor has selfish motives; they search for reprehensible faults in him, defects to be censured. And if they have been able to render to him a small service, they count that as relieving themselves of the obligation of gratitude.

Isn't that what you are doing, unworthy followers of Jesus? Isn't this a good reason to make you blush with shame? Remember often that gratitude is the soul of society and of the family; that the world cannot subsist except for an exchange of goods and mutual services. In order to unite

“ The greater the gratitude with which we receive what is given to us every day, so too more certainly will our communion grow day by day according to God's kindness.”

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

“ There are in all cultures, singular and various ethical convergences, an expression of the same human nature desired by the Creator and which the ethical wisdom of humanity calls the Natural Law.” Benedict XVI,

CARITAS IN VERITATE

“ It is in giving that we receive ... it is in pardoning that we are pardoned ...”

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

“ Gratitude is the only treasure of the humble.”

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

“ Gratitude is the virtue of noble souls.”

AESOP

“ I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise will always be in my mouth.”

PSALM 34

“ Happy people remember the past with gratitude, they rejoice at the present and face the future without fear.”

EPICURIUS

“ Careful, patient and generous kindness comes much farther and faster than rigor and the rod.”

ST. JOHN XXIII

“ We have learned to fly like birds and swim like fish, but we haven't yet learned to live as brothers.”

MARTIN LUTHER KING

everyone with the sweet bonds of charity, God willed that we all need one another. Superiors need the services of subjects; everyone needs the help of others.

Review all the conditions, all the laws of social life, of all ages from infancy to youth and youth to maturity, from maturity to old age, and you will see that everything goes on as it does because of the reciprocal exchange of services. Gratitude draws the hand we need closer to us; ingratitude pushes it away. Gratitude makes help fly to our aid while ingratitude leads to abandonment. The former tightens social bonds; the latter loosens and unties them. And this holds all the more true in family life.

Which are the good families if not those where children and parents, employers and employees strive to bring joy to one another? Where are these delicate attentions found if not where gratitude inspires them?

Which are the bad family situations if not those in which the children are ungrateful, the servants are not recognized? Don't you think, my daughters that whoever is not grateful to their neighbor will have difficulty being grateful to God?

Your most affectionate Mother

(BOOK 7, LETTER 22, PP. 96-97)



Forming Your Own Character

Characters, like faces, differ among themselves. The result of this dissonance is that if each one does not mortify herself to get along with another, it is impossible to have even two people live with each other in good harmony. If one who has a bad character doesn't try to mortify herself as much as possible, there will be nothing other than continuous hardness, coldness and discord. Charity is not possible except on condition that one bears with what one dislikes in others, and reduces in oneself what others dislike in her. It is useless to say: "I have my own personality," or "I just don't like that one's personality." Neither of these excuses can stand up before God to excuse us from the law of charity, and to legitimize our dislikes and impatience with others.

Have you understood, daughter? That is not enough. Also remember that a bad character is the dishonor of virtue. At times one sees good people who have a brusque, difficult, fastidious, dry temperament that is the cause of suffering for those who have to deal with them. Then there are lightheaded and voluble characters; and other characters that are flaccid and totally lacking in energy, who have nothing regulated or planned in their life and have such a bizarre, inconstant temperament and cannot accept anything good if it does not conform to their way of thinking and feeling. There are others who are all on fire for everything they like; but total ice toward whatever they don't like and make their decisions, not in the light of reason or faith, but according to their inclinations and temperament, quitting the best works as soon as they cease to be to their liking.

And still I tell you that this is not enough because a bad character is the open door to every evil. A bad mood killed Abel, exiled Joseph, persecuted David. A proud temperament precipitated Arian into heresy.

You see, then, my daughter, how much evil a bad character and a bad temperament can cause? Are you not aware, daughter, that bad humor acts without discipline, speaks without reflecting, treats everyone brusquely, and a reasonable person in all other ways, becomes so intractable in all that relates to her moods?

Dearest daughter, don't you have some serious reproaches to make to yourself because of your character since you allow yourself to be dragged about by your bad temper?

I suggest, my daughter, that you observe how that angel incarnate, Sister N.N., is loved so much! It is impossible not to love her! She is always even tempered, constant, sociable;

Prayer for Good Humor

“ Grant me, O Lord, good digestion, and also something to digest. Grant me a healthy body, and the necessary good humor to maintain it. Grant me a simple soul that knows to treasure all that is good and that doesn't frighten easily at the sight of evil, but rather finds the means to put things back in their place. Give me a soul that knows not boredom, grumbings, sighs and laments, nor excess of stress, because of that obstructing thing called "I." Grant me, O Lord, a sense of good humor. Allow me the grace to be able to take a joke to discover in life a bit of joy, and to be able to share it with others." St. Thomas More
"Humor isn't a state of mind, but a vision of the world."

LUDWIG WITGENSTEIN

Among the numerous audiences held with important people as well as other simpler people, John XXIII one day received an American senator. The senator introduced himself, making known his religion, telling him: "Holiness, I'm a Baptist." And the Pope responded with his usual smile. "I am John, so we are complete.

“ Just as what you hear and see depends on where you are, so it also depends on who you are.”

C.S. LEWIS

“ Lord, teach me what to teach. Teach me how to correct myself.”

ST. AUGUSTINE

she always receives others with goodness, discusses affably; she is always humble without being lowly, dignified without being arrogant, active without being either brusque or petulant, always ready to be of service, to forget wrongs done to her, to suffer from others without being a source of suffering for others. She is dear to everyone and loved by the Community and by God, because a good character is like a compendium of all virtues in action: patience, self-abnegation, obedience that moves from words to actions; in short, perfection.

Under the guidance of a good character, all things are done well because one acts always with the calmness of reflection, and never with the impetuosity of moods. She does not imprudently throw herself against obstacles, but considers the means to arrive at a good end and with time everything is fixed and all turns out well.

A good character honors Religious life. The world cannot see a Christian or a Religious who always owns their actions and always proceeds with a peaceful and patient soul, without giving due homage to the faith that forms so perfect a virtue.

We must examine, my daughter, whatever is reprehensible in our character. Once this defect is known, it is necessary to spend every day reforming it, by moving in the opposite direction and not ending the struggle until the desired goal is reached. It is necessary that one who has too lively a character, to moderate herself; that one who has too relaxed a character, to drive herself and enliven herself; whoever has a brusque and touchy character, to sweeten and temper herself waiting to speak until the soul is calm and in full possession of itself.

Saint Frances de Sales had received from nature an strong and angry temperament; St. Ignatius, a lively and impatient character; St. Vincent de Paul, a stern and not so pleasant temperament; but these great Saints by dint of constantly fighting against themselves succeeded in forming a temperament that was so good and so amiable as to render their memory always dear and venerable among people as the presence of their souls are dear before God.

Start right away, my daughter, and if you will listen to my maternal counsels and try to apply them immediately, you will see how much help and blessings our good God will let flow into your soul.

Remember me to Jesus while, blessing you, I remain at the feet of Jesus,

Your most affectionate Mother

(BOOK 9, LETTER 7, PP. 20-23)

Conquer With Virtue

Dearest daughters,

...As long as we are in this valley of tears we must resign ourselves to suffering everything that God gives us the opportunity to suffer, day by day, hour by hour, and we must not suffer with grumbling, dragging the cross like the Cyrenian, but we must carry it with the greatest generosity after the example of Jesus Himself. Remember well, and do not forget it over again: that which we do to our neighbor we do to our dear Jesus. Yes, my dear Daughters. Do you know what Jesus says as soon as we assure Him of our love? He warns us, telling us that the measure of love we have for our neighbor (including those who have done evil to us, or for whom we have a natural repugnance) He considers to be the measure of love we have for Him. Therefore, if you truly love Jesus your Spouse, subdue on the one hand the nasty instincts of anger, rancor, etc., but on the other hand accept crosses with maximum goodness, charity, and kindness. You will see that Jesus, who observes the violence you do to yourselves in order to exercise in the best way possible that holy charity that He Himself wants to see in us, will repay you more or less according to the measure of the efforts you exert within yourselves.

Courage, my daughters; we are on the battlefield. May the wounds that we receive from the enemy and from our self-love render us more ardent in the fight. Never make peace or truce with your faults and you will achieve victory.

Each morning, together with the children, offer your efforts to the Heart of Jesus and the Heart of the Immaculate Virgin so that, with the protection of Jesus and Mary, your works may be meritorious and the innocent flock may be blessed.

I wish you a happy and holy Easter, such that Jesus will make you rise again to better dispositions of spirit and heart. I wish you patience, without which we allow ourselves to be clouded over by the smoke of self-love, the source of every evil and turmoil.

“ In the Eucharist he gives us this double love, giving himself to us so that, nourished by this Bread, we love each other as he loved us”.

POPE BENEDICT XVI

“ On the most ordinary days, I watched as much as I could the faces of the poor, the hungry, those crushed by humiliation... and in them I discovered your face, the risen Christ!”

BISHOP HÉLDER CÂMARA

“ Joy is in the struggle, in the attempt, in the suffering involved and not in the victory itself.”

MAHATMA GANDHI



(BOOK 10, LETTER 12, PP. 29-31)

“ If you can't feed a hundred people, feed at least one.”

BLESSED TERESA OF CALCUTTA

“ Knowing how to find joy within the joy of others is the secret of happiness.”

GEORGES BERNANOS

“ Three things are required for piety. The first is to have compassion for the misery of another since the merciful one opens his heart to the miseries of the poor one. The second consists in having a determined will to help them in their miseries. The third is putting the will into action.”

ST. JOHN EUDES

“ Unlike the economy of consumption, based on the culture of "having," the economy of communion is the economy of "giving." This may seem difficult, arduous, heroic. But it is not so, because man, made in the image of God, who is Love, finds his fulfillment precisely in love, in giving.”

CHIARA LUBICH

Love Even Our Enemies

Dearest daughters in Jesus Christ,

But why, my most loving daughters, don't you seriously exercise the true and constant practice of the virtue of fraternal charity? Don't you remember that Jesus left us as His testament: "Love one another as I have loved you?" Don't you know, daughters that our Divine Spouse wants our love to be elevated even to the level of sacrifice? Yes, daughters, Jesus requires of us the sacrifice of our likes and pleasures, the sacrifice of good things and even of life itself in certain cases.

Keep in mind as often as possible how the early Christians would sell their goods and put the money at the feet of the Apostles to be distributed among the poor according to their needs. Aren't there some lay people who spend their fortune in alms and good works for the needs of the poor? Aren't there generous souls that sacrifice their lives in hospitals to care for the sick, in schools to teach the youth, in less civilized countries for the release of prisoners or even in their own nations for the relief of all the less fortunate?

And you, daughters, want to be so petty and egotistical as to close your heart to compassion and your hand to almsgiving? Don't you remember that the true charity of Jesus Christ embraces in His sacrifice our own enemies?

Christian charity embraces everyone without excepting those who hate us or offend us with their words or their actions because all are children of God and God does not want any of His children to be hated. Consider, my dearest daughters, that they are all members of the same Body of which Jesus Christ is the Head; and Jesus does not want that the members of His Body be divided, nor that they hate one another, and He holds it as done to Himself that which is done to the least of them.

This love for one's enemies that Jesus Christ requires of us also has the advantage that one is more certain to love them with a love that is supernatural and meritorious, while the love of one who benefits us and shows us friendship is almost always exposed to being purely natural and without any merit.

You see then, my beloved daughters, to what extent the true love of Jesus Christ obliges us? Therefore, banish from

your hearts and from your minds whatever memory may be painful and anguishing to the natural sensibilities of your heart.

Love those who have made you suffer and do not leave in your heart any leaven of animosity, nor of aversion; of revenge or of bitterness against whoever they may be. Don't be content to not wish them any harm, but be disposed to reconcile yourselves with them as soon as possible, and do not delay to go to them, even though they may have the greater blame than you; have a sincere affection for them, a heart full of love and look for all occasions to benefit them even to the point of sacrifice. In addition, speak well of them, don't ever complain either about them or about the wrongs they have done to you. On the contrary, say of them every good thing that you can.

Pray for them. If you know that they are truly guilty, pray and implore for them the grace to correct and sanctify themselves. Have compassion for them and ask the Lord to convert them and if they may be in grave sin, beg God to have pity on them and to lift them up from the state into which they have fallen. If they persist in persecuting you and show themselves to be your enemies, you are to continue to love them and say to them with St. Paul: "Even though you are our enemies, we will not cease to sacrifice ourselves for you." Always remember, my daughters, that God will treat us no more nor less than the way we will have treated our neighbor.

Just as in the body if one member suffers, all the other members suffer with it so that the foot cannot be wounded without the arm reaching out to it, the knee bending, the eyes quickly looking down at the foot to observe it and all the other members mobilizing to help it; so too does true Christian charity give us a tender and compassionate heart for all those who suffer.

Apply yourselves, then, to practice with utmost zeal, the true love of Jesus Christ toward your neighbor and you will receive the choicest blessings of God and eternal reward in the heavenly kingdom of Paradise.

I bless you with all the effusion of which my maternal heart is capable while in Jesus I remain,

Your most affectionate Mother

(BOOK 7, LETTER 18, PP. 85-87)

“ Open my eyes, Lord,
to the light of your
presence. I'm as one who is
lost and blind, looking for you:
heal me.

Lord, open my hands
because everyone is waiting
for you. Lead me to every one
who is poor and hungry to
give them my bread.

Let me walk without stopping.

Whatever the way I want to

follow you, Lord: May your
arms support me. There are
my brothers who cry. May
I listen to them, Lord; don't
make my soul deaf to the
voices of those who suffer.

Guard my faith. Many cry
out Your death, Jesus. And
when the night comes, stay
with me, Lord. Amen.

HYMN TO THE GERMAN LITURGY
OF THE HOURS

“ Christian brotherhood is not an ideal which we must realize; it is rather a reality created by God in Christ in which we may participate.”

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

“ This relationship between Jesus and the Father is the “matrix” of the bond between us Christians: if we are intimately part of this “matrix”, this fiery furnace of love, then we can truly become of one single heart and one single soul among us. For God’s love burns away our selfishness, our prejudices, our interior and exterior divisions. The love of God even burns away our sins.”

POPE FRANCIS (10/30/2013)

“ Do nothing; do not say a word that Christ would not say or would not do if he were in the same circumstances.”

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS



See God in Your Neighbor

Dearest daughters in Jesus Christ,

Banish from your hearts and from your minds all that is profane. You must live for God alone. If you will know well the divine love of God, you will neither do nor say anything whatsoever that is not for God or have God as its goal.

The love of your vocation must be so strong and vigorous as to have you embrace with joy all sacrifices even that of the deepest affection for your parents. Have an ardent and invincible love as to get involved in the greatest endeavors for the glory of God and for the salvation of souls; a love that is indestructible in the face of reversals, always confident in God’s Providence, without any regard for yourself; a love that is humble even to the total annihilation of egoism, so that God alone may be exalted; a love that is joyful in the midst of anguish even to the point of savoring with delight inner bitterness and abandonment and contradictions and disdain from others; a love, in short, for which all of you must abandon yourselves into the hands of God, letting yourselves be guided by Him alone along the difficult path of life.

Apply yourselves then with a generous heart to do all with the greatest perfection gazing on the image of God in your neighbor whoever he or she may be, who because of this, will become in your eyes the object of your most tender concerns even to feeling the joy of rendering them good for evil.

Endure everything, forgive everything, love always even though they may hate us. You can be sure, dearest daughters, that if you do this, you will advance, with giant steps, along the narrow way of the great Saints.

Pray for me who am in great need of prayers and blessing you in Jesus I remain,

Your affectionate Mother

(BOOK 7, LETTER 19, 88-89)

Bring Others to Jesus

Dearest daughters in Jesus Christ,

Do you know, daughters, what Philip did? After having been called by Jesus to follow Him, he met one of his friends named Nathaniel, who, it is believed, later became the apostle St. Bartholomew, and he immediately made him aware of that incredible news that filled his own soul with holy exultation. He told him: “We have found Him of whom the prophets spoke: Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph.” Listen, daughters; as the tree is known by its fruits, so, too, judge whether the friendships and relationships you cultivate are holy or vain. If you draw some spiritual good from a relationship, it will then be a very advantageous means of growth for you and for the other person. If not, it will be nothing more than a waste of time and an occasion for a cooling down of your spirituality—if it is not altogether sinful.

Nathaniel, having been ill-advised by the rumors current among the Jews who were waiting for the Messiah to come like a triumphant king into Jerusalem surrounded by power, majesty and glory, could not resist an expression of amazement on hearing it said that the Messiah was Jesus, son of the poor carpenter of Nazareth. He answered Philip: “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip did not want to argue, but simply said: “Come and see.” Since he knew that Nathaniel was a just and sincere person, he rightly thought that as soon as he would meet Jesus and speak with Him, he would not delay in disdaining all the prejudices of the Judean Nation and would recognize Him as the true Messiah.

As soon as Jesus saw Nathaniel, who was coming to Him with the good desire of getting to know Him as the promised Savior, He pointed him out to His disciples with these words of praise: “Behold a true Israelite in whom there is no guile!” (...) Nathaniel, amazed by that welcome and that praise, asked Jesus how it was that He knew him; and Jesus answered: “Before Philip called you, I saw you under the fig tree.” Then Nathaniel, convinced that this was not a mere man who saw things from afar and read even into the secret chambers of the heart, professed this most beautiful

“ In Christ our destinies are concentrated, in Christ our dramas are resolved, in Christ our pains are explained, in Christ our hopes are shown.”

POPE PAUL VI

“ There are two kinds of people one can call reasonable: those who serve God with all their heart because they know him, and those who seek him with all their heart because they do not know him.”

BLAISE PASCAL

Nathaniel's “heart is moved by Jesus’ words, he feels understood and he understands: “This man knows everything about me, he knows and is familiar with the road of life; I can truly trust this man”. And so he answers with a clear and beautiful confession of faith.”

POPE BENEDICT XVI (10/4/2006)

Mother Clelia understood

reparation as a response of love, without reservation, to the one who loves us and who loves us to his last drop of blood and his last breath. He gave us everything, to the point of having nothing left to give. Love calls upon love! How can you not want to reciprocate "love for love"?

“ You formed by inmost being; you knit me in my mother’s womb. I praise you, because I am wonderfully made; wonderful are your works! My very self you know.”

PS 139: 13-15

“ At times we forget that our faith is concrete: the word became flesh, not an idea. It became flesh.”

POPE FRANCIS, (4/24/2017)

• confession of faith: “Master, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.”

...Let us often repeat in our heart this act of faith, of adoration and of cordial homage toward our divine King even to repair in some way the incredulity of the wicked and the blasphemies of some many who do not want to acknowledge Him as the true Son of God.

...Let us then begin to live by faith, embracing that most efficacious means indicated in Sacred Scripture: the practice of the Presence of God. Let us impress this fundamental truth deeply in our hearts, that wherever we may be, God is present to us. He is observing all our intentions and actions; not even a thought escapes His searching gaze. Even the most intimate secrets of our hearts are clearly visible to Him.

God sees us! Do we dare to sin under the eyes of God, of our Judge! God sees us! What an incentive and what a comfort in the practice of virtue! Though we might be censured, ridiculed, scorned by all, isn’t it enough for us to have a witness to our virtuous life and the integrity of our intentions that divine gaze which judges things not from vain appearances as people do but according to truth and justice?

God sees us in our struggles, in our temptations, in the trials of life; and He is present to support us, to help us, to console us and to reward us if we are faithful and constant in praying and in struggling until we are victorious.

God sees us at every instant, at all times, in every place, in every circumstance of our life. By day, by night, in the midst of our occupations, He is always with us. Can we possibly live forgetful of His Presence? Will we let long hours go by and even entire days without remembering Him, without thinking of Him, without offering a glance, a prayer, a word of love to Him?

Unfortunately that is how we were in the past, but from now on, let us strive to cultivate the thought of the Divine Presence so that we may live purely and faithfully under the eyes of our divine Spouse, Jesus.

I bless you maternally and remain in Jesus.

Your most affectionate Mother

(BOOK 5, LETTER 6, PP. 98-101)

Charity — Always and in Everything

Dearest daughters in Jesus Christ,

Use charity with a sweet and serene look, with an affable air, with sweet and cordial words; use an indulgent charity, always taking it in a good way and favorably interpreting all that is said; excusing others even at your own expense as far as prudence permits.

You should not show any discontent because of the coarseness or infirmity of your neighbor. You are to accept with affability and sweetness their advice, reprehensions, mortifications whatever they may be. Guard your words and your manner so as not to say anything nor do anything that may displease, but say and do all that conscience permits and is amiable. You must show them affection, render them services with joy, and charitably interest yourself in all that they need.

When others are speaking, you are to listen without permitting yourself to interrupt what they are saying; you should willingly acquiesce to their feelings as far as your conscience permits; avoid speaking of yourself or of that which could draw to yourself the esteem and praise of others.

See to it that zeal for good may sanctify your conversation, console your neighbor in his sadness, encourage him in his doubts, strengthen him in his weakness, lift him up in his discouragement, give him good counsel and exhort him to return to God and to virtue.

You should not treat others with arrogance, nor with austerity, nor contradict what others say. Finally, we must conduct ourselves in such a way that no one will have cause to complain about us, that all may be edified by our manner of comportment.

If the people with whom you converse displease you, it is necessary to hide the inner repugnance that they inspire in you under a gracious demeanor and not allow anything

“ God words are worth much, and cost little.”

GEORGE HERBERT

“ The Bible tells us to love our neighbors, and also to love our enemies; probably because generally they are the same people.”

G. K. CHESTERTON

“ Virtues are based upon love of others; they receive life from charity.”

ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA

“ Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier.”

BLESSED TERESA OF CALCUTTA

“ We are in the same arena, and a like struggle lies before us. Let us put away empty and profitless thoughts, and let us advance in accordance with the glorious and holy rule which is handed down to us. Let us know what is honorable and what is acceptable before Him who made us.”

POPE CLEMENT I

“ Therefore, I ask you, young people, how to work toward these ideals, day after day, in concrete ways? Even if you make mistakes, correct yourself and begin again.”

POPE FRANCIS (6/11/2015)

sad, annoying, or austere to be conveyed through words or actions, because charity obliges us to have compassion on them and to give them good example, so that they may amend their defects by which they render themselves displeasing.

Try to make your conversations edifying...that love for truth distance any counterfeit language.

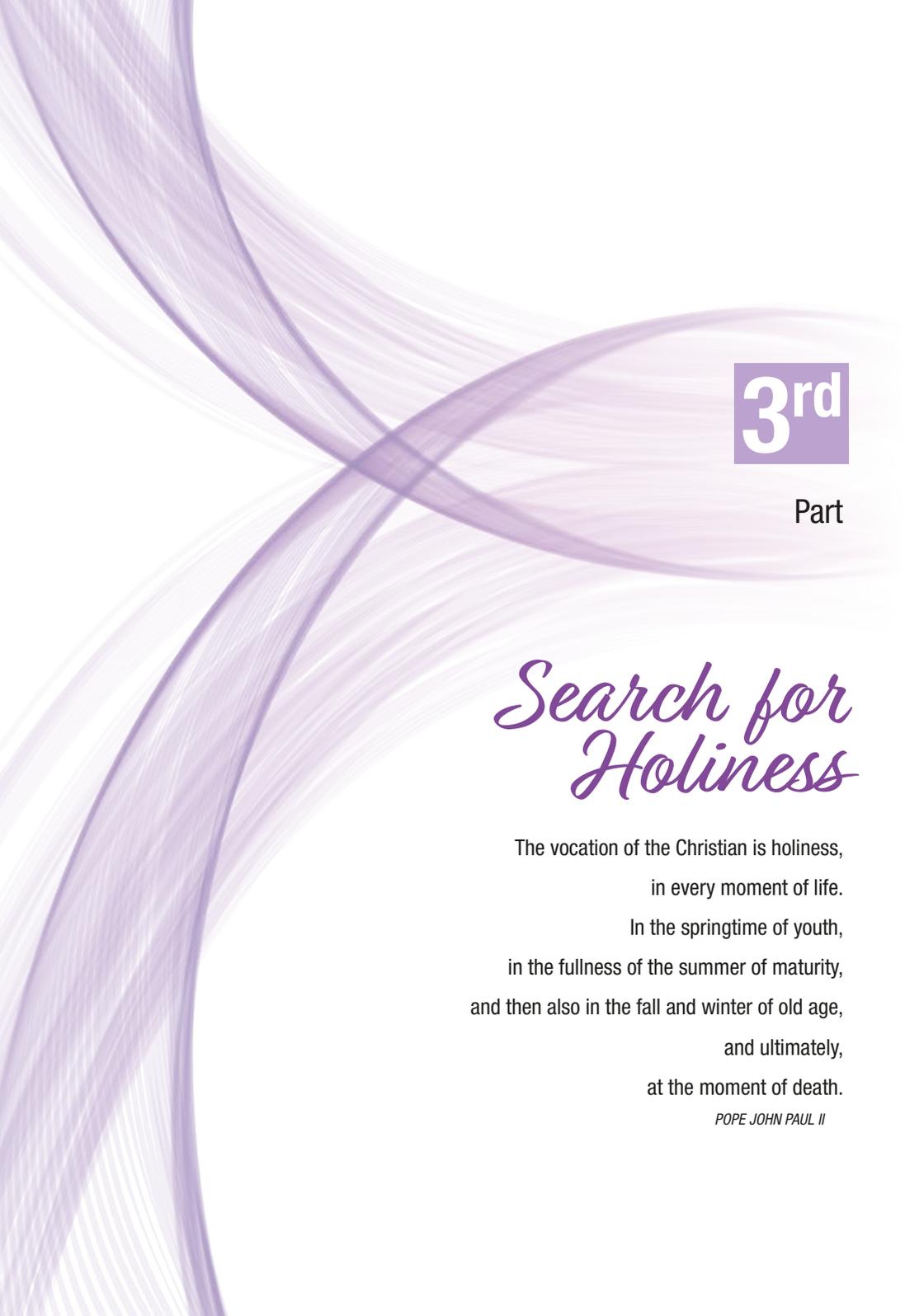
It is necessary that love of neighbor banish all gossip and criticism, any ridicule of those present, any kind of censure of those who are not present, any word that could sow seeds of discord into souls...

Have you understood, dearest daughters?

Your most affectionate Mother

(BOOK 7, LETTER 21, PP. 93-95)





3rd

Part

Search for Holiness

The vocation of the Christian is holiness,
in every moment of life.
In the springtime of youth,
in the fullness of the summer of maturity,
and then also in the fall and winter of old age,
and ultimately,
at the moment of death.

POPE JOHN PAUL II

“ We are something great, because our beloved God, who created and redeemed us, has made us so precious.” St. John Vianney
“Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides.”

MATTHEW 6: 33

“ Holiness is not the prerogative of a few: it is a gift offered to all, without excluding anyone, and therefore constitutes the distinctive mark of every Christian.”

“ It is not enough to be saints: it takes holiness that requires the present moment, a new holiness, even without precedent... The world needs saints who have genius, just as a plagues-stricken town needs doctors.” Simone Weil

The Most Loved by God

Why do you worry about useless things?

Think about Me, Jesus says, and I will take care of you and all that regards you. What more could you want? Abandon yourself completely in God and He will lead you wherever He wants you to be. Knowing that He leads you, remain tranquil in His love. The less you worry and get agitated, the more you will avoid certain incidents. The impulses of grace are never to be disputed. Don't think or rationalize over the possibility that today He asks something of you and maybe tomorrow He will not. Your Superior's advice, however simple, carries its own weight in God's mind. She can put her finger on details of which others are not aware. The voice of God requires of you simplicity, confidence and submission. Commend yourself to the Holy Spirit. Beg Him to fill your poor heart with His divine grace. Jesus wants you to humble yourself because it is to the humble that He gives His graces. Remember that it is the littlest ones whom Jesus loves the most. If you truly want to become a saint, as Jesus desires, you have to use all the ardor and noble enthusiasm of which you are capable; and don't claim anything as your own, but let everything you do be turned solely to the pure glory of God.

Forget the good you could have done, and generously strive toward the holiness which you have not yet acquired. If you were alone, you could be fearful, but God's grace is with you and works in you. Work with all your will to cooperate with grace. Don't stop in the face of obstacles, but always be generous and ready to begin the struggle again; and don't relax your guard until you draw your last breath. Offer part of your struggle for those who live without God's grace. (...)

Your affectionate Mother

(BOOK 8, LETTER 1, PP. 107-108)

I Want to Become a Saint

How can I become holy?

By doing as best as I can everything that will be asked of me each day.

Many saints in Heaven did nothing more than what I am doing here...

Prayer, meditation, promptness in community acts, daily acceptance in a spirit of faith

of whatever sacrifices God permits...

What I must do I want to do as though God were present, watching me, and smiling at my efforts.

I want to perform each action

as though I were being helped by my Guardian Angel who has this as a special mission and does not wait to be asked by me.

I want to perform each action as though I had nothing else to do except the one obedience imposed on me at that moment and I shall not stop until I have done it with as much perfection as possible for me.

I want to perform every action as though I afterwards would have to offer it in homage to God and to the Most Holy Virgin. God, without a doubt, waits to be honored by this action of mine.

God has assigned a particular grace to this action. He will realize that I love him if, no matter how bored I am, I continue to finish my work.

God will write down each of my actions that is performed well and later they will form my crown in Heaven. God will erase my many past sins if, to give him pleasure, I try to do each thing well. God receives from me, his poor daughter, a glory which will compensate for the blasphemies of the wicked and the rebellion of the souls who do not want to submit themselves to his divine will. Oh yes, my God, yes, I ALWAYS WANT TO DO ALL OF MY ACTIONS WELL!

(MOTHER CLELIA) (BOOK 1, PP 23-26)



“ Eternal life, our much desired life, consists in an intimate and true love of God, our Christ and our Lord.”

ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

“ There are souls so simple that they know nothing of the ways of the world, but who understand much about intimacy with God.”

ST. TERESA OF AVILA

“ What cannot be done out of love should not be done in any other way because it doesn't work.”

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

“ Love many things, for therein lies the true strength, and whosoever loves much performs much, and can accomplish much, and what is done in love is done well.”

VINCENT VAN GOGH



All for Love

If my eternal beatitude depends on achieving my purpose in life, and an eternity of unhappiness is the result of not achieving it, I must, with all the diligence possible for me and with sacrifice, search for it in all things and everywhere; and every day I will renew my intention and desire to attain it.

And since it consists in praising and serving my Jesus, my God, I want (and it is my duty) to occupy myself in fulfilling this duty with maximum diligence and fidelity as the one thing necessary. I absolutely want to pay it the tribute of my internal and external development, by adoring Him and wholeheartedly offering myself and all that is mine to Him in sacrifice, by recalling His presence everywhere, by thanking Him for His fatherly providence and by flinging myself with filial trust and confidence into His most loving and fatherly Heart.

I will make every effort possible to fulfill whatever Jesus may want of me by depending on His Will in all things, in every place, at every moment, and by always doing that which God wants me to do and in the manner He wants it done. I will redirect my thoughts, my words, my actions, doing all according to the Will of God as it is manifested to me through lights, inspirations, or by means of whomever the Lord uses to guide my soul.

It is true, however, that there are multiple times when, in order to follow what God wants of me, my nature experiences some repugnances and makes its howls heard, but my will bends affectionately to fulfill God's holy desires. I want to belong entirely to God, and to His greater glory I will force myself with all my soul to become a saint--but quickly and a great saint at that! I will never again stop because of whatever difficulties that may intervene, but I will overcome these taking into account the eminent utility and true necessity of attaining my purpose by praising, loving and serving my God, and in this way go to enjoy Him forever in my heavenly homeland.

Mother Clelia

(BOOK 2, LETTER 1, PP. 10-11)

Seek the Lord

Dearest daughter in Jesus Christ,

You are to have a great deal of trust in the Lord, who, while calling you, says to you: "Come to Me you who are afflicted and burdened, and I will refresh you. You who are thirsty, come to the fountain."

You must follow this movement and divine call expecting to receive with it the impulse of the Holy Spirit so that you may, resolutely and blindly, throw yourself into the ocean of divine Providence of the eternal good Will, begging that it be fulfilled in you and that you be carried by these most powerful waves of divine pleasure, and without any resistance on your part, be transported to the port of your particular perfection and well-being. Having made this act, which you must repeat many times a day, strive and study, with as much assurance as you are able, interiorly as well as exteriorly, and with all the powers of your soul, to draw near to the things that excite you and make you praise God.

Always, these acts are to be without force or any violence to your heart so that they may not, because of indiscretions and awkwardness, weaken you and perhaps even harden you, and so, render you incapable of anything.

Guard yourself against forcing tears or any other devotion through the senses; but remain peaceful in your interior solitude, waiting for the divine Will to be fulfilled in you. The key by which the secrets of spiritual treasures are opened is the denial of self at all times and in all things; and this same key locks the door to insipidness and aridity of mind when these are caused by our own fault; but when these come from God, they are united with the other treasures of the soul.

As much as you are able, try to remain, with Mary Most Holy, at the feet of Jesus and listen to what He is saying to you. Be on guard that your enemies (the greatest of which is yourself) don't become obstacles to this silence; and know that when you go to look for God with your intellect in order to rest in Him, you are not to set limits or make comparisons with your weak imagination because He is infinite wherever you may find Him. You will find Him in your own soul every time you look for Him sincerely, that is, when you look for Him and not for yourself.

During meditation, don't stay so bound to the points so that you want to meditate on them alone; but wherever

“ There is, however, no better way to savor the Truth and to be enlightened by a humble and continuous prayer based on the knowledge of oneself and of God.”

ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA

“ Have Jesus Christ in your heart and all the world's crosses will look like roses.”

ST. PIO OF PIETRELCINA

“ Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer.”

ROMANS 12: 11-12

“ The function of prayer is not to influence God, but rather to change the nature of the one who prays.”

SOREN KIERKEGAARD

“ There are thoughts which are prayers. There are moments when, whatever the posture of the body, the soul is on its knees.”

VICTOR HUGO

“ Lord, Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.”

PRAYER OF A RUSSIAN PILGRIM

“ Only men who realize inner unity within themselves, only those of plenary vision and of universal heart will be valid instruments for the miracle of being violent like the prophets, true like Christ, revolutionary like the Gospel, without hurting love.”

HELDER CAMARA

“ Mental prayer is nothing more than an intimate relationship of friendship, a familiar setting only with Him from whom we know we are loved.”

ST. TERESA OF JESUS

you find refreshment, stop there and enjoy the Lord in whatever way He wants to communicate Himself to you. And even if you should put aside what you had planned to do, don't be scrupulous, because the whole purpose of these exercises is to enjoy the Lord. The intent, however, is not to choose enjoyment as the primary goal, but to become more enamored of His works with the firm resolve to imitate Him as much as we are able.

One of the obstacles to true peace and quiet is the anxiety that is experienced in similar works binding the spirit and dragging it after this or that thing, forcing God to lead us by the road that we want, and forcing ourselves to walk where our own imagination brings us while thinking we are doing His Will. This is nothing other than searching for God while fleeing from Him, and wanting to please God without doing His Will.

You, daughter, are to have no other intention or desire than to find God... Meditate well on what I have written and, at the feet of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, decide whether you are well disposed to follow His divine Will or to do your own.

I wholeheartedly bless you.

Your most affectionate Mother

(BOOK 2, LETTER 10, PP. 31-33)



Taste the Mercy of God

Since the grace of God has inspired you to pursue the way of sincere repentance, without any delay surrender yourself to the divine call. Do not be disheartened if your sins were many and serious, but trust unreservedly in the mercy of the Divine Shepherd. For their guidance, penitent souls derive great benefits from their own failings. Our Good God, in His infinite love, permits repentant souls to find in their own sins the greatest preparation for acquiring eternal salvation. Their failings make them more humble, convincing them all the more of their weakness and of their fragility. They draw them to a distrust of themselves that causes them to be increasingly on guard, to have recourse more often through prayer to our Good Jesus and to the Most Holy Virgin. They rouse the penitent soul to better fulfill her duties, to make reparation for her failings, to pursue with more love, with more zeal the paths that lead to eternal life, to make up for past wrong-doing by the multiplicity of present good works in order that there may be a superabundance of uprightness where there had earlier been an abundance of sin, and thus a thousand times more is done for the glory of God than if nothing had been done against it. Failings give true penitents the experience that teaches them to arm themselves against sin and to close the paths to the heart, like a governor of the piazza who fortifies its side where it had at one time been broken into. The Lord brings to birth in sincerely repentant souls that contrition that will help them to avoid with greater vigilance the occasions of sin. He will make them feel more hatred for evil, more zeal for perfection, a greater fear of displeasing God, and a greater desire to comply with divine grace.

Therefore, if you will it, use that which is most repulsive in you as a stairway to mount to God; and those same failings, if you know how to profit by them, will become means of perfection and instruments of salvation. Every fault that you have committed shall make you avoid many others. If you have been uncharitable toward your neighbor, for example, resolve to be sweet, meek and humble with everyone. The moment you yield to a thought of self-love, make great efforts to be habitually and enduringly humble. In this way,

“ Our faults are like a grain of sand beside the great mountain of the mercies of the good God.”

ST. JOHN WANNEY

“ Only misfortune can transform a heart of stone into a human heart.”

FRANÇOIS FENELON

“ I suffered alot to see how men live and forget God. They live in unbridled joy, offending him, without thinking that they are nearching death with each year.”

ST. TERESA OF THE ANDES

“ Repent and believe in the Gospel.”

MARK 1: 15

“ Little knowledge makes people proud. A lot of knowledge makes them feel humble. This is how the ears without wheat raise their heads contemptuously towards Heaven, while the full ones bow their heads towards the earth their Mother.”

LEONARDO DA VINCI

evil will be turned to good and you will be able to make reparation with the merits of the Most Precious Blood of Jesus for your past life and greatly console the Divine Heart of Jesus, and with the penance you propose to do, you will be able to restore that innocence to your soul to make you ever more well-disposed to the loving glances of Jesus and in this way to console that Divine Heart which loves you so much and longs for the moment when He can hug you with an overflowing of fatherly affection to His most loving Heart. I shall pray much and have others pray for your intentions. You, however, close to Jesus, do not forget the one who maternally blessing you remains at the feet of the Crucified for you

(BOOK 14, LETTER 13, PP. 63-64)



Time

Dearest Daughters in Jesus Christ,

Don't waste your time uselessly, because time is precious. My daughters, time is worth as much as heaven because heaven is the reward given by God Himself for its good use. A single moment well used merited for the good thief, in spite of the sins of his past life, possession of paradise. Even if because of the holiness of our life we may have been worthy of paradise, one good moment used well could gain for us another degree of glory and of eternal happiness, that is, a new heaven within heaven itself. Time is worth as much as the Blood of Jesus Christ because this Blood is the price with which we have been ransomed in all the moments of our life.

If then this Blood is called precious, then time must also be proportionately precious because who could tell the value of this Blood of which one single drop would have been enough to redeem a thousand worlds?

Time is as valuable as God Himself because each well used moment is able to gain for us the enjoyment of God for all eternity. Time is of such great value that God only gives it drop by drop without ever giving two moments at the same time. If one cannot use that one moment which passes like a flash and if it is not seized in its passing, it is lost forever, irreparably lost because neither does passed time return nor can another moment make up for it for these reasons: This other period of time is already owed to God, and that which is owed cannot pay other debts. Time, able to be snatched from us at any instant, is a most uncertain possession; and something that is uncertain cannot be used as payment of certain debt...

Let us try, then, my daughters, to do our best to use time well. At every moment we must do what God wants us to do.

Since time belongs to God and not to us, we do not have the right to use it for any other purpose different from that which God wills... If you act on your own account or on that of another creature, you waste time and effort. The Pharisees displayed a worthy practice of doing good works; Jesus

My Jesus, I want to serve you and I can't find the way. I want to do good and I can't find the way.

I want to look for you and I can't find the way.

I want to love you and I can't find the way.

I haven't met you yet, my Jesus, because I'm not looking for you. I look for you and I can't find you.

Come to me, my Jesus.

I will never love you, if you do not help me, my Jesus. Cut my ties if you want me to be you.

Jesus, be Jesus for me.

Amen.

ST. PHILIP NERI

“ Do everything as if His Majesty were truly visible; thus come se Sua Maestà fosse veramente visibile; in doing so, your soul will gain much.”

ST. TERESA OF AVILA

“ Dear young people, do not let the flashes of youth go out in the darkness of a closed room where the only window to watch the world is the computer and the smartphone.”

“ Then he said: 'In the favorable time, I heard you, in the day of salvation, I helped you.' Now is the favorable time, now is the day of salvation.”

“ A man who dares to waste one hour of time has not discovered the value of life.”

CHARLES DARWIN

“ Learn as if you were to live forever. Live as if you were to die tomorrow.”

ST. ISIDORE OF SEVILLE

“ The most insignificant things are sometimes of greater importance and usually people lose themselves for them.”

DOSTOEVSKY



Christ declared that they would receive no reward because they were doing them to make themselves esteemed by men and not for the sole purpose of pleasing God!

Oh, how many merits are lost that way! My daughters, we must seek to do everything in the best way possible. Let us do all that we do perfectly. If we do things poorly or with negligence, we show a lack of respect for the Lord because the more distinguished the person is, all the more must whatever one does for him be done with greater perfection. One who behaves badly shows to whoever observes her that she acts routinely, that is, without right intention of doing it for the glory of God.

How important it is to pay attention to this point, daughters, so as to not to fail in the precise fulfillment of our duties! Never forget, daughters, every instant of time we spend on earth must be made fruitful for the glory of God and the greater sanctification of our souls.

I bless you wholeheartedly and remain in Jesus your
Most affectionate Mother

(BOOK 13, LETTER 8, 23-24)

Morning Offering

God, our Father, I offer you my day. I offer you my prayers, thoughts, words, actions, joys and sufferings, in reparation for sin and in union with the Heart of Jesus, who continues to offer Himself in the Eucharist for the salvation of the world. May the Holy Spirit, who guided Jesus, be my guide and my strength today so that I may witness to your love. With Mary, the mother of our Lord and of the Church, I pray for all apostles of prayer especially for the intentions of the Holy Father.

Peace of Heart

Take care, as I already told you, never to let your heart be disturbed or get involved in things that upset it, but always make efforts to keep it calm because in this way the Lord will build a city of peace in your soul, and your heart will be a place of delights.

The only thing Jesus wants from you is that every time you get upset, you again quiet and calm yourself down in all your works and thoughts. And just as a city is not built in one day, so must you not think that you can acquire this interior peace in a day because this is nothing other than building a house for the Lord and a tabernacle for the Most High by making yourself His temple. And this same Lord is precisely the One who is to build it, because otherwise your work of sacrifices would be useless.

Don't forget, however, dearest daughter, that the basic foundation of all of this has to be humility.

She blesses you with all her heart who, while blessing you maternally, remains in Jesus

Your most affectionate Mother

(BOOK 11, LETTER 16, PP. 41-42)

“Whoever does good conquers inner peace.”

JEWISH PROVERB

“There are creatures like sugar cane: even when they are ground, crushed, reduced to crumbs, they only know how to yield sweetness.

HELDER CAMARA

“May the road rise to meet you, may the wind be always at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face and until we meet again. May the Lord hold you in the palm of His hand.”

IRISH PRAYER



“ God comes quietly and discreetly, without imposing himself on our freedom. So it may happen that his voice is suffocated by the many anxieties and demands that weigh on our mind and our heart.”

POPE FRANCIS

“ If you hear the voice of the wind calling without stopping; If you hear the voice of time ordering you to wait... The decision is yours.”

FR. ZEZINHO

“ He who has a profession has value; he who has a call has a position of profit and honor.”

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Listen and Respond

My dear child,

Yes, my good child, your countenance conceals a sacrifice not taken lightly; in it there is courage and truly proof of a filial attachment that I could expect only from an older daughter who is already bound to the Institute. This moves me deeply because I would never have expected it from a young girl in a situation like you find yourself struggling both spiritually and physically. But, I want to encourage you, my dear; the Lord wills this and you need it. My heart, you see, rarely errs in its intuitions. My heart perceives that if you listen to the sweet voice of Jesus, you will turn out well in the future. That is why I am interested in you and want to cultivate your good inclinations. Yes, dear little one, you are discerning the path by which the Lord wants you, and you prefer that it were not that. You are fighting it, but for goodness sake do not disregard the voice - the holy inspirations of God.

If He is calling you, and it is evident to me that He is, answer Him readily; don't ignore; don't resist the invitation of your Jesus! If you only knew how valuable, how precious are the sweet invitations of Jesus! They seem, at times, as something bitter for our human nature, but beneath the bitterness are found ineffable graces that make up for the tears that have been shed. Certainly, the life you are leading at present is not too conducive to considering seriously and making up your mind about so weighty a decision as the choice of a state of life. My dear girl, do you understand that Jesus has linked the most precious graces He has for you to the generous and spontaneous sacrifice you have made? Do you know what rewards that Heart which contains treasures of delight has envisioned for you? What rewards that Heart from which rise endless flames of love for those souls who have offered themselves in sacrifice and have immolated themselves generously for Him has reserved for you? Yes, I am aware that He shall give you a reward which could only come from God.

My little one, how many beautiful things I would yet like to tell you! How I would want to comfort your disheartened

soul! I would have you raise up your trusting and serene gaze to heaven so that from that faith-filled sight you might draw courage and consolation! The time of trial is short. Let us fight with energy; soon, it will all be over: the world full of sorrows, deceptions, illusions will disappear before our eyes, and sinking into the grave, nothing will remain but the reward of good works.

My dear one, ponder what your most affectionate Mother, with her heart full of concern and maternal sentiment, has told you and will always continue telling you.

I bless you and leave you in the Most Loving Heart of Jesus. Remember me in your prayers because continuous trials afflict me.

Your most affectionate Mother,

Sr. Clelia

(BOOK 14, LETTER 6, PP. 50-51)

“Where your talents and the world's needs cross, there lies your vocation.”

ARISTOTLE

“Jesus called them. And immediately they left their father Zebedee on the boat with his servants, and they followed Jesus.”



“ May your desire be to see God. May your fear be to lose Him. Pain, not to peaseHis presence, the satisfaction that can bring it to Him. And you will live in a great peace.”

ST. TERESA OF AVILA

“ Arm yourself with the weapon of prayer, and you will have more strength for daily combat.”

ST. PIO OF PIETRELCINA

“ Under thy protection we seek refuge, Holy Mother of God; despise not our petitions in our needs, but from all dangers deliver us always, Virgin, Glorious and Blessed.” The oldest Marian prayer

“ All my works are based on two things: the Mass and the Rosary.”

ST. JOHN BOSCO

“ The unexamined life is not worth living.”

SOCRATES

“ The Holy Rosary is the best devotion of the Christian people.”

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

Patience in Trials

As Jesus wants to try your fidelity, He deprives you, for a set time, of His sensible Presence. He showed this behavior even toward His own Mother. Jesus had intuited the grief His absence would cause; nevertheless, He distanced Himself for a day or so from her and remained in the temple without her knowledge.

If it pleases Jesus, who is all love, to try you in this same way, don't torment yourself, arm yourself with courage, and wait patiently for His return. Although He is always close to you to help you every time you ask for His help, it is good, though, that He sometimes pretends to go away so that you could better understand how unfortunate you would be if you were to really lose Him. When Jesus favors a soul with His consolations He does this to comfort her in her sorrows. Then, when he permits that she be abandoned to aridity and to desolation, He does this that she may not become too proud of the kindness He has toward her. All, or almost all, the souls who have faithfully followed Jesus have had similar alternating experiences of joy and sadness, devotion and aridity, peace and temptation. When Jesus appeared to distance Himself from them, pretending to abandon those dear souls to themselves, they felt the extent of their weakness; but they did not lose heart, because they were confident of Jesus' help.

When Jesus' grace sustained you with sweetness and consolation, you walked with pleasure and happiness; but you will make greater gains in virtue now that He is trying you with aridity while you bear patiently, humbly and submissively the state of abandonment in which Jesus pretends to leave you.

It is true that this state is a sad one because sometimes it seems more a punishment than a trial; nevertheless, daughter, don't lose heart, but have confidence and firm hope, and the trial will not be long as it wasn't for Mary, His Mother. Imitate the solicitude that this Mother had in seeking her Son. Search for Him, as she did, with a holy desire and a holy impatience to find Him...

What I could assure you of, my daughter, is that Jesus loves you with a love of predilection. Therefore, see to it that you never lose esteem for such grace, holding yourself ever vigilant so as not to commit the smallest infidelity to grace as is wholeheartedly wished for you by one who blesses you maternally and is pleased to call herself, in Jesus,

Your most affectionate Mother

(BOOK 2, LETTER 12, 36-38)

Mother's Example

I don't know how to tell you how much I appreciated your last letter, how much I value, and how much I am consoled by the sincere venting of your afflicted heart. Poor child! Yes, your letter was able to soothe a little my exacerbated heart. Thank the Sacred Heart for having blessed you with such a delicate soul.

Dear daughter! Your heart, as far as I am aware, is sharing in large measure in the acute pains of which your poor Mother is subjected. But have courage, my child! Religious life is an intermingling of sacrifices. Since, by divine inspiration, I spontaneously consecrated myself to His Divine Heart, it is only right that I yearn for no other joy than that of being humiliated, despised, calumniated, forgotten by all, not sympathized by anyone.

You, my daughter, pray to Jesus with your whole heart that in prosperity and in adversity I may never cause Jesus to lower His eyes, and that I may hold as faith, that Divine Providence wisely ordains all things, and disposes all things, in favor of and to the advantage of my soul, if not for the good of the Institute itself. You tell me, in your letter, that your heart breaks to think that all that I did has been so contemptuously repaid. No, my child, let's not accuse anyone of what God does by means of them. They are only instruments in God's hands. Whatever tribulation, whether caused by nature, or by people, be it physical or moral, is always of God and is a minister of the divine Will.

Of course, our nature wants its share, but neither let us deny to reason and to Christian resignation the share it is due. So you, my daughter, be of good cheer and crush every fear and anguish. We are always in the hands of God and of Mary Most Holy. We have nothing to fear.

Now I leave you in the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, while imploring upon you a flood of heavenly blessings, and blessing you myself, I remain in the Sacred Heart of Jesus,

Your affectionate Mother

(BOOK 8, LETTER 2, PP. 109-110)

“ Do you want to reach faith and don't know how to get there? Learn from those who, before you, have been troubled by doubt. Imitate their way of doing things, do whatever your faith requires, as if you were already a believer. Mass, use holy water...! This will make you a simple person and lead you to faith.”

BLAISE PASCAL

“ Let nothing disturb you,
Let nothing frighten you,
All things are passing away:
God never changes.
Patience obtains all things.
Whoever has God lacks nothing;
God alone suffices.”

ST. TERESA OF AVILA

“ It's nice to teach, so long as you practice what you teach.”

ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

“ If we do not live the Gospel, Jesus does not live in us.”

CHARLES DE FOUCAULD

“ In suffering, behave with faith and calm, knowing that all things pass with time.”

FAUSTINA KOWALSKA

“ Most people have no idea of what God could make of them is they would only placed themselves at His disposal.”

ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

“ Vocation is the word that introduces us to an understandign of the dynamism of God's revelation and therefore reveals to man the truth of his own existence.”

JOHN PAUL II

“ While Jesus passed, he saw a man named Matthew seated at the tax collector's table and said to him, "Follow me!" "He got up and followed him.”

MATTHEW 9:9

“ Only for today, I will be happy in the certainty that I was created to be happy not only in the other world, but also in this.

JOHN XXIII

“ My mirror must be Mary. Since I am her daughter, I must resemble her so that in this way I will also resemble Jesus.”

ST. TERESA OF THE ANDES

If You Want to Be Happy

Dearest daughter in Jesus Christ,

Today, Jesus states in His Gospel that whoever deprives himself of something in this life for love of Him will receive a hundredfold of what he has sacrificed. Do you know what this hundredfold is? It is perfection, the fruit of detachment from earthly goods; or rather, the reward is Jesus Christ Himself. Possessing Jesus, we become proprietors of the entire world; we enjoy in Him the goodness of every creature and with so much greater gain because possessing these in God, we possess them without the instability, the anxiety and the other owes that always accompany the goods of this world.

St. Mathew the Apostle, you see, was right in leaving everything when the Savior first called him, as opposed to the example of that young man of the Gospel who possessed many goods and walked away sad because Jesus Christ had told him that in order to be perfect, he had to sell all that he had and give it to the poor. The latter lost everythign not wanting to leave anything, and St. Matthew gained everything having left everything. This is why he became a saint, an apostle, a man whose name will be blessed throughout the centuries and considered great in all places including heaven itself, while the name of that rich young man is forgotten and, perhaps, even unknown in heaven. So true it is that in the service of Jesus, privation is of more value than any pleasure. And, in fact, the joy St. Matthew experienced in the service of Jesus Christ was a million times greater than all that the young man of which Scripture speaks could have experienced through the possession and enjoyment of all his welath.

This Apostle, and all the Saints who deprived themselves of everythign for Jesus Christ, would say, if they could speak to us, that their joy was so great, their peace so profound, their consolation so full that all that one could experience on earth would not be equal to the smallest particle of their happiness. On one hand, all created goods disgusted them,

were a burden from which they were glad to be freed; on the other hand, virtue held so many charms and sweet attractions for them that the entire universe could not be compared to it. The spiritual consolations God gave them in exchange for temporal joys were so far superior to those joys that here is just no comparison. God, my daughter, often gives us many people who care about us, who try to please us, render us service, comfort us in our need, and have a generous charity toward us because their love is not rooted in flesh and blood but in Jesus Christ Himself, for love of whom we love one another.

Oh! How much happier St. Matthew was in the midst of the faithful who were converted through his apostolate than among his riches and all the people from whom he collected taxes!

What do you think of that, my daughter? Do you want to imitate the example of St. Matthew or that of the poor young man who returned home because he was too attached to the goods of this earth? Think well about this because you still have time to remedy the situation, but see that your decision is made seriously at the foot of the Tabernacle and only after having invoked the Holy Spirit many times to enlighten you. With this expectation, I bless you with all my heart.

Your most affectionate Mother.

(BOOK 5, LETTER 2)

The Mission Given to Us

God our Father, how wonderful is your creation. All that is created comes from your hand. I too have been called into being by you, given a task for my life, a task that no one else can fulfill. I have a mission for life. Maybe I do not recognize this mission clearly on earth, but one day it will become clear to me. I have not come into being without worth or purpose, but as a link in a long chain, a bridge between individuals and generations. Lord, God, this is the good thing entrusted to me: to complete your work, to bring peace, to do good, to serve the truth, to live your word, wherever I am, wherever I might be. Amen.

PRAYER FROM THE FUJI ISLANDS

“ Today when we stop to think about these things and make decisions and choices, we know that the Lord is with us, by our side, to help us. He never lets us go alone. He is with us. Even in the moments of decision He is with us.”

POPE FRANCIS



Nothing is good enough. So let us do what is right, devote our best efforts to reach to the unreachable, develop as best we can the talents that God has given us, and never stop learning.”

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

“ He who does battle with his gaze fixed on God will sing the hymn of victory.”

ST. PIO OF PIETRELCINA

“ Hope without risk is not hope, which is believing in risky loving, trusting others in the dark, the blind leap, letting God take over.”

DOM HELDER CAMARA

“ It isn't death that saved us, but the will of the One who died.”

ST. BERNARD

Without Me You Can Do Nothing

Dearest Daughter in Jesus Christ,

Remember, my daughter, that presumption is a vice by which you, puffed up by the good opinion you have of yourself, put all your trust in your own strength, your spirit, your intelligence, and your virtue, as if everything that happens did not depend on God, who is absolute Master. Remember, my daughter, that this presumption is condemned in every page of Sacred Scripture. Reflect, daughter, that to count on ourselves and our own ability without God is to refuse to acknowledge God's supreme dominion over everything. Jesus tells us: “Without Me you can do nothing.” Remember that with confidence in God rather than presumption, even the weakest rational creature can accomplish anything.

David struck down Goliath in the name of the Lord. Judith, trusting and leaning entirely on the powerful arm of God, routed a great army. Yes, she prayed and God heard her prayer. With presumption and impertinence even the most powerful fail. The Assyrian army counted on its own strength and was destroyed by the prayer of that strong woman who said: “Show, O Lord, that You do not abandon those who rely on You, but that You humble those who rely too much on themselves and their own ability.” This is a law that God has established for all time, and the first of the Apostles was subject to it like everyone else. St. Peter swore that he would be faithful to his Master, even at the risk of death, but because he relied too much on himself, trusting in his own strength, God permitted him to fall most dreadfully.

And you, pitiful creature, will you still rely too much on yourself, and will you not tremble, seeing such a pillar fall? If Peter fell, he who loved Jesus so much, what can you presume for yourself? Write back to me after reading this letter and tell me what you plan to do.

With a mother's heart I bless you, you and the good Sisters, wishing for each of you a complete stripping of your poor ego, which is the most bitter enemy of the true humility of our God.

Your Affectionate Mother

(BOOK 9, LETTER 1)

Past, Present and Future

Remember, my daughter, that no one is more unhappy than the one who lets herself be carried away by an untamed imagination: the past, the present, the future – everything torments her. And that's what you do. The past shows you the humiliations you have received, some setback you suffered, a contradiction that caused you pain. The imagination takes hold of the pain that no longer exists, exaggerates, it, magnifies it, reproduces its painful effects, and from the slight thing that it was, renders it more oppressive and makes even a passing pain permanent.

The present annoys and disgusts you. You imagine you would be better off anywhere other than where you are. How many others, who are less deserving, seem to be happier than you are. Meanwhile, you never pay attention to what you are doing because your imagination always distracts you. It tires you out with extravagant images, vain shadows of remorse, and shares in your superficiality. The future troubles you, sometimes with the desire to throw yourself into a false happiness of which you immediately despair, at other times with the fear of pain and imaginary crosses which make you suffer as if they were real. And so you become unbearable to yourself, always restless and anxious, unhappy and fickle.

In addition to all of that, your imagination causes you to see suspicion, contempt, hatred, and bad intentions in others – none of which is there; meanwhile you torment yourself. You stir up in others anxieties and fears that have no foundation whatsoever, and you allow yourself to give way to depression. To drive away the boredom and the pain you feel, you would like to apply yourself to some ascetic practice, or to solid spiritual reading, but your imagination still distracts you and absorbs your thoughts; so, disgusted, you put aside the spiritual exercise. Isn't this the story of your whole life? How many times have you sacrificed your happiness to vain and useless fantasies?

Try then, daughter, to contain and repress the wanderings of your imagination! (...) Dangerous thoughts, indecent images, and temptations of every sort flow from the excessive liberty that we give to our imagination. (...) From a soul enslaved to

Imagination =
dreams with eyes
wide open, illusions.
Mother Clelia refers to
thoughts that cause
anxiety and keep
us far from God.

“Imagination is
crazy at home.”

SAINT TERESA OF AVILA

“In prayer comes a
word of prophecy,
wisdom, or knowledge;
through by means of a
clear and incisive image,
revelation, or biblical
quote God speaks to
us. But at this time, our
fantasy - the 'crazy' of the
house - acts and we start
to make money, making
castles, because she
likes to decorate things.”

FR. JONAS ABIB

“Nothing is so
wretched and
foolish as to anticipate
misfortunes.”

SENECA

“A sound Christian
attitude consists
in putting oneself
confidently into the
hands of Providence
for whatever concerns
the future.”

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC
CHURCH, N. 2115

“ A piece of bread eaten in peace is better than a banquet partaken in anxiety.”

AESOP

“ Dear young people, only Jesu knows your heart, your deepest desires. Only He, who loved you unto death, is able to satisfy your aspirations. His words of eternal life are those which give meaning to our life. Outside of Christ there is no one who can give you true happiness.

S. JOHN PAUL II

the imagination, you cannot expect that habitual reflection which allows itself to know its transgressions and the best way to control them, nor a lively faith that presupposes a reflective soul, nor the charity that presupposes the forgetfulness of a neighbor's defects and faults, nor the modesty that flows from the calm and order of the actions of the interior life, nor the humility that closes one's eyes to the illusion of one's own excellence (an illusion drawn in the imagination by the hands of self-love), nor the spirit of prayer which is diametrically opposed to the wanderings of the imagination.

Re-examine yourself, my daughter, and see if you have learned how to contain and repress your unbridled imagination, and if you have not yet done this, do not delay any further on this point, but (after you have invoked the help of God) set out right away to control your imagination with all the strength of will that is possible. If you would do this, Jesus Himself will run to your help by giving you the strength needed for this endeavor. With every effort that you will make, Jesus will bless you just as you will be blessed wholeheartedly by you

Most Affectionate Mother

(BOOK 9, LETTER 4)XC V

My Creator and My Salvation

receive life continuously from Your hands. This is my truth and my joy. My eyes continually turn to You and I live under Your gaze, You, my creator and my salvation. Teach me, in the silence of Your presence, to understand the mystery of my existence. May I exist through You, before You and for You. Amen.

ROMANO GUARDINI



Imitating the Master

Dearest daughter in Jesus Christ,

If it is true that you love Jesus, see to it that your love transforms your loving soul into the beloved Person of your dear Jesus. Oblige Him to love you by absolutely willing to do out of love for Him what He did for love of you. You could not be able to give to Jesus a more certain witness of your esteem and of your affection than to become like Him, since we imitate only those we esteem, precisely because love transforms the lover into the person loved. What a great honor it is for you to be loved by God, to live as His divine Son did, to speak as Jesus did, to act and to suffer as He Himself has done.

In the mystery of the Incarnation, my daughter, don't you see a real marvel of humility because of the times during which the Son of God offered Himself to become a man and redeem the world? Before His Incarnation the human race had been left to itself, incapable of effecting anything good, fully capable of doing every evil act. (...) Yet, His is not concerned about the interests of His greatness and of His justice, but from His throne God looks upon human beings, feels a profound compassion for them and thinks about a solution for such a great evil. And so, in order to restore their image, which had been so greatly disturbed, He decides to send His eternal Word and effect the most sublime mystery of the Incarnation. With such an incomprehensible annihilation, He teaches proud man, who is excessively greedy for glory and honor, how true greatness, true glory is hidden in the virtue of humility. (...)

Doesn't it seem to you, daughter, to be an inexplicable mystery that this God, while He is grievously offended by man, offers Himself as Redeemer and annihilates Himself in order to exalt him and make him master of every virtue?

Isn't this a true mystery of humility? Isn't that an example to be learned as to how to do good toward those who hurt us? How beautiful, desirable and excellent is the virtue of humility! Ah, daughters, let us renew our faith and reflect that the dear little Child, having no regard for His greatness and

“ In the face of infinite wisdom, a brief desire for humility with some act of it is better than all the science in the world.”

TERESA D'AVILA

“ The most intimate essence of love is bestowal. God who is love gives Himself to the creature that He Himself created for love.”

EDITH STEIN

“ Money makes rich men, knowledge makes wise men, and humility makes great men.”

MAHATMA GANDHI

Jesus meek and
humble Heart, make
my heart like yours.

“ All holiness consists
in loving God, and
all love in God consists
in doing his will.”

ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI

happiness, left heaven, where He was adored and praised by all the hierarchy of angels, and chose earth as His dwelling place. He became man, and in a lowly human form remained unknown until death. He heard himself called poor, weak, and imposter in order to teach us how great humility is. (...)

The mystery of the Incarnation is a mystery of humility because the Body the divine Word assumed was in the form of a Baby. (...)

He wanted to come into the world as an Infant in order to resemble in every way His brothers and sisters, to subject Himself to all the humiliations and to all the illnesses of infancy, renouncing the right, which He had from His glorious state and His other prerogatives. (...)

We believe all these things, but why do we always allow ourselves to be dragged away by pride? Let us fix in our minds, once and for all, that humility is the foundation of all Christian and religious life and that without humility there is no sanctity. (...)

Your most affectionate Mother

(BOOK 7, LETTER 2)



For a New Life

Dearest daughter in Jesus Christ,

Remember, my daughter that it is human to sin, but continuance in sin comes from the devil. Even if you have had the ill fortune to let yourself be carried away by your temperament and commit a fault, if you are really contrite, you must do all you can to beg our good God to forgive you and to give you the grace to rise up to a new life.

Even St. Augustine fell constantly into fault after fault, but never has a more contrite, more humble, more grateful penitent been found who could compare with this great saint.

He was most contrite because his tears began to flow from the very beginning of his conversion: "There arose within me a storm," he said, "that was followed by an abundant shower of tears," and he resolved to bury himself alive in some isolated place where he could cry and grieve for his sins until he drew his last breath.

While Divine Providence was opposed to such a plan, Augustine learned how to unite penance and the most austere practices with the heavy obligations of the episcopacy. His entire life was nothing but a continuous series of travels, vigils, fasts, crosses. And seeing all of these as still insufficient to expiate the gravity and number of his sins, when he was about to die, he asked that there be hung on the walls of his room the Penitential Psalms, which he recited with an abundance of tears until he died.

Never has there been seen a more humble penitent. In his book of Confessions he reveals his most shameful sins to the whole world and shows his anguish over them to all people for all time. It will always be known that Augustine was a lewd, depraved man; and he made this public and permanent confession while he was still alive in this world and seated on a throne of the Church, surrounded by heretics and jealous people, from whom he accepted disdain as though it were something due him.

Never was there seen a more grateful penitent. His writings inspire love for the mercy of the Lord which he experienced; and in order to tell it, neither his pen, nor his tongue could satisfy his heart, so great were his impulses of admiration, of gratitude, of effusive love.

“ At times, life presents great challenges. Through them, the Lord calls us anew to a conversion that can make his grace more evident in our lives, “in order that we may share his holiness” (Hebrews 12:10).

POPE FRANCIS, GAUDETE ET EXULTATE, N. 17.

“ Where there is love and wisdom there is no fear or ignorance.”

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

“ It is not riches that must be destroyed, but the vices of the heart that provoke the greed of those who possess much and the lust of those who have none.”

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

“ When I am at odds with myself it is because I am not in union with God.”

ST. BERNARD



“Late have I loved you, beauty so old and so new: late have I loved you. And see, you were within and I was in the external world and sought you there, and in my unlovely state I plunged into those lovely created things which you made. You were with me, and I was not with you. The lovely things kept me far from you, though if they did not have their existence in you, they had no existence at all. You called and cried out loud and shattered my deafness. You were radiant and resplendent, you put to flight my blindness. You were fragrant, and I drew in my breath and now pant after you. I tasted you, and I feel but hunger and thirst for you. You touched me, and I am set on fire to attain the peace which is yours.”

ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

“O, Beauty ever ancient, ever new,” he exclaims, “late have I loved You. How sad were the days when I did not love You. O ever burning and non-consuming fire, O, ever fervent love that knows no bounds, inflame me, let me become a living flame that I may love You with all my strength, and there be in me nothing that is not pure love.” “I seem to love You, O my God, but I want to love you ever more.” What a furnace of love! O great Saint, let one drop of that great fire that consumes you fall on my poor heart and on the hearts of my dear daughters.

Saint Augustine had the zeal to evangelize nations and the charity to assist the unfortunate and he possessed these two characteristics to the highest degree. He had the zeal to evangelize nations. Burning with the desire to have Jesus Christ known not only throughout the entire world, but throughout the centuries, he determined with all his strength to study the Sacred Scriptures, and he became one of the most scholarly people who have ever pondered the sacred and divine sciences; and then, pouring on his people the treasures of his wisdom, he nourished them abundantly with the bread of the word of God.

To numerous eloquent sermons he added a prodigious number of erudite texts designed with the sublime goal of leading to the truth pagans and philosophers, revealing to the whole world the most hidden mysteries of grace in so many immortal works that will always be a beacon of light for the universal Church.

To his zeal to evangelize and teach, he united the charity to lift up the unfortunate. He forgot himself completely, gave all he had, and, when he was near death, he could not make a will because he had already distributed everything he had to the poor and had nothing left to will to anyone. Can we even imagine a more beautiful sacrifice?

Let us compare our life with that of this great Saint and let us judge ourselves, but without any discouragement whatsoever. Let us throw ourselves, with childlike confidence, into that Divine Heart who can do all things, and so draw from Him that strength which we sorely need in order to sanctify our every action, to console the Divine Heart of Jesus, loving Him always without ever offending Him again.

Your most affectionate Mother

(BOOK 6, LETTER 3, PP. 14-16)

Everything in its Own Time

Dearest daughter in Jesus Christ,

Blessed daughter! You are always approximately the same. But don't you know, my daughter, that almost never being entirely engaged in the present action, and preoccupying yourself now with whatever preceded it, now with things that will follow, is a real abuse of your spirit?

You must instead do each thing at its own time. You must be entirely engaged in the present action as though you have nothing to do next, as though you have not done anything at all in the immediate past, as though you have nothing to do afterwards. This, daughter, is the rule of wisdom. You will arrive at this (wisdom) with a firm will to fight a preoccupation as soon as you become aware of it; but all the more, with a purity of intention free of every dangerous attachment and of any human respect.

Do you want to maintain your peace in the face of your serious and multiple occupations? Well, my daughter, accustom yourself to see in all things the most adorable Will of God, which is at once order and wisdom. You must always be on top of things, not under them, always among eternal things as well as present things, always disposed to have the latter under your feet, and your eyes fixed on the former.

Permit me, my daughter, to have you observe another defect that you, perhaps, are not careful enough to combat, but which could lead you to serious falls because it is stamped with pride that is an abomination in the eyes of God. Do you know what I want to say? It's this: You must absolutely guard yourself from your own judgment. Remember, daughter, that one's own judgment is presumptuous. You think you can examine everything, ponder everything and you do one thing and another with an incredible levity.

Because you are too attached to your own judgment, you believe that you have no need of advice; you don't ask for any and you reject advice that is given to you, or else, if you do submit to the advice, you do so only after many arguments. You, then, daughter, are so attached to your own opinions, to your own sentiments that you never want to submit in arguments and in continuous disputes until your contradictor submits to what you say.

Your most affectionate Mother

(BOOK 9, LETTER 28, PP. 63-64)

It doesn't matter much who is for or against you, but that God is with you in everything you do. Keep a clear conscience and God will defend you, because for those those who God helps there is no evil that can harm them. If you know how to be quiet and suffer, you will undoubtedly experience the Lord's help! He knows the way to free you. Give everything over to Him.

IMITATION OF CHRIST

“If you look at God, all your cares will become insignificant.”

ST. CLARE OF ASSISI

“Don't be upset: pray and wait. Being upset doesn't help at all. God is merciful and will listen to your prayer.”

ST. PIO OF PIETRELOINA



In Conclusion...

Having reached the end of this book, dear reader, we have no doubt about the wisdom of Mother Clelia, about her virtues, the fruit of her union with God. From her we can learn how to follow the Master.

Her letters reveal that her response to God who called her was radical, firm, strong, complete! Her whole life was a total gift to the Lord in concrete gestures: she prayed and worked and in everything she exercised herself in the virtues that

brought her ever closer to the Heart of Jesus. There is where she always wanted to go and where she wanted to stay. It was her “safe haven”, the center of her life, the source from which she sought strength, inspiration, courage and reasons to love and serve. That’s why she exhorted: “May the Heart of Jesus be your all”.

The excerpts from the letters you have just read are some of the many writings



that show how great this woman was, or rather, the “giant” she was: in trust, faith, gift, resilience ... How many are her virtues! Her capacity to forgive and love, to persist even in the face of major obstacles, is both inspiration and proof for us today that it is possible to be saints! It is possible to do good by maintaining the hope that the Lord will reward and for him everything has worth.

We hope that the words of our dear Mother Foundress can motivate you so that in everything you may look for the way to be more, to be better, to be a stone in building the Kingdom of God - a kingdom of justice, peace and brotherhood.

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Getting to Know the Life of Clelia Merloni

Mother Clelia was born in Forli, in northern Italy, on March 10, 1861 and was baptized that same day.

In 1864, when she was only 3 years old, her mother died. In 1866, her father remarried. Her new stepmother, Maria Joana Boeri, and her maternal grandmother formed Clelia in faith and in virtue.

In 1872, Clelia received the sacrament of Confirmation.

Clelia grew up with many gifts. She was intelligent, courageous, generous, and enthusiastic; she let the seed of vocation mature in her heart.