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CHAPITRE INSTRUCTIONS
MERE MARIE EUGENIE DE JESUS
1880

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HOW TO RISE ABOVE EARTHLY THINGS

BY THE VIRTUE OF HOPE

January 1, 1880

My dear Daughters,

At the beginning of a year that may bring anxiety on account of political events and that will certainly bring us good things from God's mercy, I feel urged to speak to you about Christian Hope.

Hope is a virtue, a theological virtue. Its root is planted in our soul. It is one of those virtues that we can practice only because God gives us his grace. It links earth to heaven if it is practiced fully. Everyone would like to have a great and strong hope, but under the aspect that I want to speak about to-day it is rarely understood, I mean its aspect as a virtue. Our first disposition in regard to hope is the expectation of eternal salvation. This expectation must be firm and trustful, and must rest on God alone. We must not lean on anything we have done or on anything we may do in the future, but solely on God's grace and on the infinite merits of Our Lord's most Precious Blood. That and that alone is what makes our hope firm; but this hope must be without presumption. That means that we have to strive with all our might to keep on the road to Heaven, and that we must often pray for final perseverance. What concerns eternal salvation is the chief matter of hope: to expect everything from God, Our Lord, to pray without ceasing for final perseverance, to keep on the road to Heaven with complete and absolute generosity, and never let discouragement spoil our hope. Then we could say with David: "Dark be the valley about my path, hurt fear I none while He is with me". (Ps. 22:4).

Whatever our state may be, consolation, trial, temptation, we must expect everything from

Our Lord, and, as Père Deplace said, we should also give him everything. That is the first thing to say about Hope.

But there is another aspect that concerns our everyday life. It is this: in order to have a great hope we must not lean on temporal things. Look deep into your soul, and you will find that this is not as easy as it seems because every one of us, without exception, is inclined to lean on one thing or another. Holy Church, in the Office of a Confessor non Pontiff, praised him for not seeking gold: "Qui post aurum non abiit". This means that the Saints did not build their life's work on the material advantages of ownership and prosperity, but on the true foundation which is Christ Our Lord. But gold is not the only thing we might want to possess: there are other things on which we might lean. One must look sincerely into one's soul and see if one is detached, if one loves poverty which is the virtue which corresponds to Hope. Take first outward poverty and all its consequences, all the privations that God may ask of us. Our Lord had not where to lay his head. If we came to that by persecution it would be time to practice hope: We ought to be so indifferent to the things of time that we should have no attachment to any of the things that could be taken from us.

If we want a true view of our degree of detachment we have only to look at our everyday life. Are we ready to be sent to another house, perhaps to the antipodes, leaving all our goods and chattels behind? Have we learnt the real lesson of detachment? Are we ready to put ourselves in God's hands as St. Francis of Assisi did when they took away even his clothes? Being so completely deprived of everything, he was happy to say more truly that God was his Father. Those are the dispositions we must cultivate if we want to be souls of great hope, trusting God for everything like the lilies of the fields and

the birds of the air, holding to nothing here below, letting go even of necessities, and being always convinced that if we have lost only temporal things we have lost very little.

That is about temporal things, but I have something to add about spiritual things. There are people (not many among us) who lean for support on a creature: a confessor, a superior, a person who helps them. Others find support in certain interior consolations and lights, on their capacity, their work, on countless other things, and if these were taken from them it would cause them anguish and despair.

Dear Sisters, none of that is God. God is more than all that. Do not mistake the means for the end. The end is far more than the means. Thank God for giving them to you and if he takes them expect something else from His goodness. Real hope and real trust in God makes one be like a trustful child towards his father.

Whatever happens the child is always trustful, he always goes to his father for everything he needs. Even if his father beats him, the child will come back and throw himself in his arms. He accepts everything, and as long as he has his father he feels that he lacks nothing. Now this is what we must do if we want our trust to be perfect.

Hope that is firm, entire and wholly detached wants only what God wants, and finds its rest neither in things nor in persons, but only in Christ Our Lord, who calls us to eternal life and who will never fail us.

Now, a third result of Hope is absolute conformity with God's Will. Such trust as this means not only submission but the certainty that whatever God does is what is best for us. "I was so happy in this house, I am sent to another house. It is God's Will; God be praised..... I had good sight and I spent my time working; draw-

ing, painting. Now I am blind. O Jesus, Thank you. I shall be more recollected, more united to you". This is what Mgr. de Segur said when he lost his sight. Every day he thanked God for two things: for being a priest and for being blind. There you have a soul full of hope and trust in God, whose great love made his great trial easy to bear.

You can apply what I have said about blindness to everything. Apply it to your health, your occupations, your affections, your honour, your pleasure. See how high we can be lifted up by Hope when it throws us into the arms of God as those of a loving father. Such hope, such full confidence in God is a grace and a consolation, but it is also a virtue. In baptism we receive it passively, but we have many efforts to make, if it is to become pure and perfect. There is a saying, that Assumption nuns must rise above earthly things by faith, hope and love. To-day we have talked about hope, another day we can talk about faith and charity. But each of these virtues requires work on our part. God gives us virtues on condition that we work to develop them and on condition that we give up everything that would prevent them from being developed in us.

ON AFFECTIVE AND EFFECTIVE LOVE

January 18, 1880

My dear Daughters,

The aim of any form of religious life is love of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Generally, when one leaves the world to embrace the evangelical counsels, it is out of love and for love of Our Lord. Therefore, I think it most fitting to talk to you on this love today, the feast of the Most Holy

Name of Jesus. I will address to you but a few words to remind you of this love which should be both affective and effective.

There are times when one does not feel one's love for Our Lord with as much ardor as one would wish. One feels cold; it seems that one does not make any progress in love and the soul becomes anxious. Let me tell you, first of all, that when one has affective love, Our Lord deigns to let himself be felt in the soul. Grace, one would say, takes over, and the soul need do nothing but allow itself to be carried, for, as the Imitation says, he is well-sustained who allows grace to bear him. But one is not always carried: one must likewise walk. St. Francis of Sales used to say in his picturesque style, that the parents of the Blessed Virgin carried her in their arms to the Temple, but, from time to time, they would put her down and took delight in seeing her take little steps. And the saint adds, so it is for the soul carried by the Holy Spirit.

But what must one do to arrive at affective love? First and foremost, one must often make acts of love of God for, as St. Teresa says, they move the heart and inflame it. Hence, in all things, make frequent acts of love of God.

There are other means, some negative, others positive, which help the soul in a special way to put the love of God above all other loves. For example, when on seeing or perceiving human beauty of whatever sort, or when one is struck by a lovely scene, one takes the habit of lifting one's mind to the author of all beauty, to him who made all that is beautiful on earth and, consequently, rises above all created beauty, he increases in us the feeling of divine love.

The saints practiced this a great deal. At the sight of a lovely flower, a ravishing sunset, they would rise up to God and exclaim: "What

beauty is yours, O my God, you who have placed in these things, which are nevertheless so beautiful, but a reflection of your admirable beauty!" On meeting saintly souls, lofty minds, they would turn to God and say: "All these come from you, O my God, but how much the affections of your Heart, the thoughts of your Intellect surpass all these!" Likewise, all intellectual beauty reminded them of the Word from whom came all light spread throughout the world.

When acting thus we take the spirit of St. Augustine. He who had such a great intelligence, such a profound soul, always pondered on that beauty which is ever ancient and ever new, who is God. From all intellectual and human beauty he would rise to love, to truth, to holiness, to the greatness of Jesus Christ. Also, he used to say that if one presents Jesus Christ to a soul, one attracts her just as one attracts a child by presenting to him that which he longs for. The Word, the Son of God who came down on earth, was the constant object of the contemplation of his mind, the affections of his heart, the desires of his will. You understand, my dear Sisters, that one's affective love grows when, with regard to all things on earth, which could be the objects of praise, of love, of admiration, one transcends to Him who is infinitely more perfect, more beautiful, more lovable.

I would add, one grows in affective love in another manner, but this depends a great deal on the particular disposition of each individual soul. In general, the heart which is disposed to love Our Lord, is likewise disposed to love something earthly besides. It would be a peculiar heart, which being open to Christ would be closed to the things of this world. It should be capable of loving something else, but each time that this love directs itself to a creature, he should put Christ between himself and this

creature. I suppose one is sensitive to suffering. When one sees a loved one suffer, one is keenly touched. Well, when one is thus moved, one should think of what Christ suffered for us; one should put before oneself the sufferings of his Passion which, humanly speaking, surpassed all that one can imagine.

By what else can one be affected? By a separation, the distance from someone dear to us. Well, one should say: "On earth I am separated from Jesus Christ and this is the separation I should feel most." Since Christ's ascension into heaven the Church has been in a state of widowhood, as Christ himself has said in answer to those who asked him why the Apostles did not fast.

One applies this state particularly to the religious soul. As a matter of fact, she does not possess him whom she would like to live with; she expects him, she sees him but in a veiled form, she speaks to him but in a mysterious manner. She still cannot carry on that relationship with Christ she aspires to.

If, in all one's affections, in one's emotions, in all that touches one deeply, one acquires the habit of directing them all to Our Lord, one grows in affective love.

One can grow in affective love in another way. It is by picturing to oneself the love of all the saints for Our Lord. Pius VI approved the litany which begs of God the perfection of their love for him.

This litany is not necessary; but the soul can gain a great deal if she spends some time on the love of Mary Magdalen for Our Lord, and at other times on the love of St. Peter, on the love of St. John, for God is the author of this marvel: the form of love of the saints is a particular creation for each of them, so much so that the love of one was not the same as

that of the other. You can, therefore, take at times the love of Our Lady, at other times, that of St. Joseph, of the holy Apostles, of the disciples, of the holy women, of St. Cecilia, St. Agnes, St. Gertrude, St. Dominique, St. Benedict, etc. You understand that living in such an atmosphere, occupying your mind with such a marvel, as the soul of a saint, you will, one day, enter into that love which you ask God to grant you and you will grow in affective love.

I now come to effective love. In what does it consist? To do all that pleases the Beloved, and, consequently, above all things, to rid oneself of all that displeases him, that is to say, all the remains of the seven capital sins, all our selfish tendencies. If you want to progress in affective love, you must grow likewise in effective love by doing all that pleases God and by removing from your souls all that displeases him. "It is not those who say to me, 'Lord, Lord, who will enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven,' (Mt. 7:21) Our Lord said; and again, 'If you love me, you will keep my commandments.' (Jn. 14:15). How can we acquire this mark of love? By doing the will of God at every moment in our work, by always looking for that which pleases him, by suppressing in our souls all that displeases him; all, even the least gesture, even one word in times of silence, rendering each of our actions, according to St. Francis of Sales, a perpetual "Yes" to God.

You see by this that affective love and effective love grow simultaneously. In order that affective love be true and ardent, it is necessary that always, in our prayer, in our relations with each other and with the children, in our work, in all things and at all times, we do God's will and seek only to please him. That is why I came from examples of the saints to effective love. When we penetrate into the heart of St. Peter, of St. Andrew, of St. John, of the great virgin mar-

tyrs, of the great saints who founded churches, etc., we see the ardor, the holy flame of affective love: but we never saw it without the corresponding efforts, without that great purity of intention and of action, without that great fidelity in the smallest things, without that generous detachment of all that displeased him.

I cannot think of anything better to say on this feast of the Most Holy Name of Jesus. This Name is all powerful. We should have it often on our lips to guard ourselves against danger and to strengthen us.

In the legend we read in the divine Office, day before yesterday, we read that St. Anthony often repeated to his monks that there was no more effective weapon against the devil than an ardent love for Our Lord Jesus Christ. For us, too, do we want not to be overcome by the trials of this world which come from the devil, trials of revolutions, trials due to the wickedness of men, temptations? Let us be inspired by a great love for Our Lord, let us try to acquire every day new ways of showing tenderness in our love for Our Lord. Then, we shall be strong against the world, for it can do nothing against those who love Our Lord Jesus Christ, as Holy Scripture ceaselessly repeats.

TO MEDITATE ON THE WORDS OF THE OFFICE

January 25, 1880

My dear Daughters,

We celebrate these days the feast of innumerable martyrs, and in order to have a greater devotion to the divine Office, it is good to meditate on its different parts - for example, the

hymns, the prayers, so that when one repeats this hymn or that prayer one develops a special devotion. Who among us has not pondered on a passage of the Ave Maris Stella or on one or the other of the prayers which we have so often on our lips?

These past days, I was struck by a beautiful passage in the hymn of the Office for a martyr:

Deus tuorum militum

Sors et corona præmium

"Sors", that is to say that there was a choice, a destiny laid before this soul so that she would be called to martyrdom. Taking it in another sense "sors" also means that God, who becomes the crown and reward of the martyr, was his portion and his share here below, that is to say, that the martyr, having followed the road opened to him by Christ, having shared his life, his sacrifice and his sufferings, reached the crown.

If we relate this thought to the destiny of a virgin consecrated to God, we shall see that we can, likewise, apply to her this passage: "Sors et corona præmium." Her lot here below should be Jesus Christ, perhaps, not to the extremity of the sacrifice of Calvary, but her lot here below should be to follow Jesus Christ. He has chosen her so that she may resemble him in her thoughts, in her ways, in her conduct, in her life; in a word, in order that in her may be imprinted that character by which she may be recognized as having been chosen by Christ and that she belongs to him entirely. Furthermore, the lot, the share, the consolation, the treasure of a virgin consecrated to God should be Jesus Christ. She should attach herself to no other consolation nor seek any other treasure; Christ should be the only lot she has chosen and towards whom she is always turned.

It is a great thing to be a virgin and consecrated to God. In the world there are many who keep the crown of virginity, but the consecration that is added to this virginity keeps them as something holy, priceless unto the day of eternity so

that God himself will be their reward and their crown. I address to you just these few words. From time to time, meditate by yourselves, either one part or the other of the divine Office. There you will certainly find thoughts which will raise you above that which is of the earth, and it would be very much in keeping with the spirit of the Assumption to draw from the divine Office the source of your devotion.

TO SEE HOW WE CAN LEAVE BEHIND
ALL THAT IS EARTHLY DURING LENT

February 15, 1880

My dear Daughters,

We read in the beginning of Lent the famous words of God to Abraham which are presented as the type, the figure and the means of perfection: "Leave your country, your family, and your father's house" (Gen. 12:1). The most beautiful commentaries have been written on these words. Although I do not claim to surpass them nor reproduce them, I feel urged to call your attention to this beautiful passage.

On entering the religious life, the first thing one does is to leave one's family, one's country, all one's loved ones, and all that, until that time, constituted one's life. But it isn't achieved all at once: this first separation from all that filled one's life: the world, the family, all the customs one can have here below is something one has to begin all over again and God often renews it deep in our hearts by the words: "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house."

What is this country? It is all that is

earthly in us, and it takes a lifetime to discover how we may get rid of all that is earthly in us in order that we may rise to supernatural and divine things. One must continually make efforts for we have in us an earthly element, which is our body formed out of the slime of the earth and which drags us down to petty things. "Go from your country, egredere de terra tua," God said to Abraham, and he added: "et de cognatione tua, and from your kindred."

One truly leaves one's relatives for the first time when one enters religious life. However, soon after, one finds other friends, other loves, other creatures with whom one begins to have new ties. I said ties, and I said it on purpose, because it is something one must avoid in religion. It is good to have acquaintances, to help them, to be helped by them, to find in them something which will take us to God; and in helping them, in knowing them, it is not an attachment that we acquire, rather, it is a service we undertake. This is for life. The soul must make efforts to leave all that she has known, to leave them by her thoughts, her affections, and in reality, for in all the relationships one may have in this life, there are some that one keeps for the sake of Christ; there are others one keeps because of natural dispositions and in turn they attach themselves to us by the same natural dispositions. This is not what God asks for the perfection of a soul; this is not what the Lord asked in the Old Testament when he said to the saintly Patriarch: "Go from your country, and your kindred and your father's house."

For us, now, our kindred are God's people and we must not deny them. However, we should not be so natural, that even in religion we should become so attached to places. Have you not read in Holy Scripture, that the children of Noah, who had to spread throughout the world and people the earth, wanted to build, before dispersing, a great city

and a tower that would reach the heavens? And God came and saw their work and he told himself: "If they begin to build this city, they will want to finish it and stay there, and they will not do my work." And this is one of the reasons for the confusion of languages at the tower of Babel. God came and confused their languages, not merely to punish them for their pride but to oblige them to disperse and, according to his plan, to people the earth and to spread the race to all parts of the world.

To build a great city was the ambition of the ancients. See how it was often the issue in both profane and sacred history, of Babylon, of Niniveh, and of any other city which had such thick walls, towers, chariots - in short, where they tried to be as comfortably installed as possible.

Let us apply this to our religious kindred. Often, God wants us to be comfortably settled where we are; at other times, God wishes us to go to different places for his service, that we be separated, and if we examine ourselves well, we will see that our hearts need to forego this too natural attachment which makes us busy ourselves in founding a too comfortable city where we will all be together. Are we not often tempted to say: "How wonderful it would be if we had a great city where we could all live together!" It is not always God's will. God's will is that we go elsewhere to make his Name known and to spread his kingdom. God's will is that we work elsewhere to imbue the young with the spirit of faith, the spirit of generosity, the true Christian spirit which we should have in our own hearts.

These things have been repeated many times in different ways and you can meditate on them. There are still so many lessons to derive from the word "egredere, leave". Remember that there is always a call of God for us to aim higher. As you advance in life, leave all that is behind you;

do not look back; rather, look ahead according to the beautiful saying of St. Paul: "I forget the past and I strain ahead for what is still to come, I am racing for the prize to which God calls us upwards to receive in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:13-14).

We cannot, with our work and our actual weakness of constitution, take up many corporal mortifications during Lent. But you know what mortification is. It is death to the lower things, death to self, death to our selfish life so that the life of Christ, given us by grace, may shine.

Daily in Lent, let us leave behind that vast crowd I did not speak to you about: our thoughts, our feelings, our pursuits, our inclinations, our faults. Try to leave behind the triple crowd we have with us: that earthly kindred which is our body with its inclinations, and all that we call love of comfort; that crowd of acquaintances, of attachments, of satisfactions and all that one has to leave behind at the cost of continual ~~effort~~.

If we allow nature to take over even when we turn our gaze to God, even when we pray, we will not do much. Put in a boat a person who prays and says his rosary devoutly, but who makes no effort to go against the current, it is evident that he will float down. One must, therefore, work, see how one can rise, leave what is behind us, and, often, have the courage to cut, either the ropes or the threads that attach us to creatures or to our own selves. I leave you this beautiful saying which I borrowed from Genesis so that in your prayer and in your meditation, you may discover what you have to leave behind, and that, throughout your life, you be faithful and generous in rising above all that is earthly.

MEDITATE ON SOME PART OF THE DIVINE OFFICE
THE "TE DEUM"

II Sunday in Lent, February 22, 1880

My dear Daughters,

I think it is useful to talk, from time to time, on some parts of the divine Office in order to arouse our attention and stir up our devotion. For quite a while now, I have wanted to speak to you of the "Te Deum". This hymn which the Church puts on our lips - when we are not in the penitential season - was the object of such great devotion on the part of the saints that, for example, St. Benedict, whenever the "Te Deum" began, used to leave his place and to walk down the stalls of his brothers in order to arouse in them spiritual joy as well as great fervor and devotion in singing it. The "Te Deum", as you know, is the hymn of joy of the Christians; and I would like to call your attention to this point: that the joy of Christians - the praise of God, should begin here as it will be sung eternally.

The first part of the "Te Deum" is dedicated to praise. We confess, we admire the Blessed Trinity in Its unity, what each of the Three Divine Persons is in his greatness, in his beauty, in his perfections. Here is where the true joy of Christians is found.

Then, all of a sudden, after having praised God in his holiness, in the unity of his essence, and the Trinity of his persons, and this in union with the Cherubim, the Seraphim, all the choir of saints, the Church, turning toward Jesus Christ, who made known to us the Blessed Trinity and Its unity, who opened for us the gates of glory, tells him: "Tu Rex gloriae, Christe", and she now takes up all that the Son of God has done for us, coming down to earth into the womb of the Blessed Virgin and ransoming us with his Blood.

All that follows in the "Te Deum" is like a call to the mercy of God, and it arouses confidence in the heart of the faithful. Well, I do not know if you are aware that one of the most learned saints - St. Thomas Aquinas - used to repeat the last part of the "Te Deum" from the words: "Tu Rex Gloriæ, Christe", everytime he greeted the Blessed Sacrament.

You, Sisters, who are often before the Blessed Sacrament, you could repeat at times this "Rex Gloriæ, Christe", in order to arouse in you a more ardent adoration of Jesus Christ, addressing yourselves to this King of Glory, this Master of Glory, to him who will grant it to us, and who has opened its gates to us by his Blood, his death, his sacrifice. To imitate the saints, to join them in their devotion to all that the Church puts on our lips, is a great means of sanctification and of stirring up our attention at prayer while one recites it. That is why I wanted to address to you these few words in order that you may in turn ponder on them by yourselves.

TO FORM ONESELF TO UNION WITH OUR LORD
AND TO HIS DIVINE LIKENESS

III Sunday in Lent, February 29, 1880

In today's Gospel, my dear Sisters, there is a passage I urge you to meditate on, or rather, which I would like to meditate with you from the point of view of union with Jesus Christ: "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters," (Lk. 11:23) Our Lord said. One could give this passage a number of interpretations with regard to human life, but I would like to consider it from another point of

view, which we have often meditated on together and to which one must always go back.

We are, as you well know, incorporated in Jesus Christ by baptism; we are one body with him. Jesus Christ is the Head, we are the members. The Church is the mystical body of Our Lord Jesus Christ, body which continues to grow and develop on earth and which will have its completion and plenitude in heaven. Each one of us is part of this mystical body, she is one of its members. One understands, at once, that he who does not obey Christ, his Head, and does not allow himself to be formed according to His plan, goes against Christ.

Our Lord Jesus Christ came down on earth to do a definite work; he gave his Blood to ransom all men in their unhappy and sinful humanity. All the souls who were willing have profited from this redemption, for, according to St. Augustine, the Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, is more than sufficient to buy back all mankind. But there are a certain number who do not want this salvation which he brings. Christ, therefore, redeems the elect. Who are the elect? They are those who wish to be members of the mystical body of Christ; who wish to work with him; who wish to place themselves under his influence, in such a way as to resemble him and live by him.

If one pictures a man buried in a swamp where death awaits him, and if, by an impossible supposition, the feet of this man were to attach themselves to the swamp, take root, spread out branches; he would eventually become an inferior creature which would subsist on the earth and attach itself to it. One would find this frightful. Nevertheless it is precisely what a man does, who, instead of just placing his feet on this earth, receives all the influences of the earth, allows all earthly inclinations and tendencies to rise in him, and allows the lower life to develop in him and to come forth

from him. How many men live thus!

As for us, dear Sisters, are there not remains of worldly tendencies in us, something more than just placing our feet on earth? Are we like the bird on a branch? What matters to the bird should the branch break, does it not have wings? How many among us who still have something of this world - all that is of pride, all that is inferior which we share with the animals! For, when one studies the animal, one sees that they have resentment, anger, jealousy, and a number of other inferior traits which are common to us. Well, my dear Sisters, in order to live incorporated in Christ, in order to depend on him, one must detach oneself, leave all that is worldly, receive nothing of its influences. We must, above all, place ourselves under the influence of the Father, listen ceaselessly to his Word, be continually turned towards him, seeking always to resemble him.

Each one of us should be something of Christ. But what? It is a question one must often ask oneself. "In eternity I must be a part of the mystical body of Christ, but what has Christ given me for that? What does he ask of me? Am I fit to be the hand, the feet, the heart of the Church?"

You know that it is often said that the religious are destined to be placed in the heart of Christ by adoration, prayer, love and lofty sentiments. In a word, "is there something in me which can, more or less, resemble this faultless model, so that he may, one day, recognize me as forming part of his mystical body?"

The religious must seek an intimate union with Our Lord. She must fill her heart, her will, her actions with the Gospel and the spirit of him who came to bring it to her. She should see Christ in his mysteries, seek those which she can best reproduce in her life according to the attractions God gives her. There are souls who have a great devotion to the Passion of Our Lord; others to the

Holy Infancy, the Hidden Life; still others, the way of persecution our Lord had. A number wish to follow him in his Public Life, during which he sought nothing but the glory of his Father and his Will. Everywhere he brought salvation, announcing ways to go to God. He lived in such poverty that he had not even where to lay his head. He trained his twelve Apostles, the seventy-two disciples and the pious and devoted women, whom he, likewise, taught and formed. Why did Mary Magdalen stay at his feet, listening to his words if it is not that he was revealing to her the mysteries of his kingdom? It is what he does with us, dear Sisters: first, by what we hear, by what is taught to us, and, also, by what he tells us deep down in our hearts.

God has destined each one of us to resemble Christ in a very special manner. How we must, therefore, strive to resemble him and fear to waste one's time in useless things, in vain things, in the little worthless occupations of this life! We do not know how much time is given us to accomplish this great work. It is important, therefore, not to waste a minute. One must make the best use of prayer, work, the occupations of our religious life, silence, the divine Office, and all that, in one way or another, enters into the plan drawn up for us by Christ.

We have seen Sisters die young, but having nevertheless, reached a visible resemblance to Christ. One among them very dear to our memory - Sr. Marie Catherine of the Precious Blood - reached this resemblance by her patience, her sweetness, her charity. You know very well that her one great preoccupation during her last illness was to acquire to the highest degree the love she would have attained had she lived a long life. "All my prayer," she used to say, "is to ask Our Lord to give me all the

degrees of love I am capable of." And, clinging to Our Lord by love, she reproduced in herself his divine resemblance; for it is in imitating him by love that one attains to resemblance. I no longer remember which saint said: "To look at Jesus Christ is already to have Him as a model; to imitate Him is to do all one can so that His divine resemblance be imprinted in us." To look at Him with the eyes of the soul, to love with Him, is to sanctify oneself with him and be transformed into him.

What do I wish to tell you by this, dear Sisters? Let us make use with great fidelity of what remains of Lent in order not to waste time, so that nature may not take the better of us. If temptation comes do not heed it, do not worry over it, do not preoccupy yourself with it nor with yourselves; but live with Christ, with whom we should work and love so that when he comes to reward us, he will find us incorporated to him by baptism, in holy communion and also, in the fervor of a life in complete imitation of his.

MEDITATE ON THE "GLORIA IN EXCELSIS"
IN WHAT CONSISTS THE PEACE BROUGHT BY THE ANGELS
DUTIES OF ADORATION, PRAISE, THANKSGIVING TO BE
RENDERED TO GOD

IV Sunday in Lent, March 7, 1880

My dear Daughters,

Two weeks ago I spoke to you on the "Te Deum". As I wished to speak to you of some hymns and prayers of the Church, it seemed right to begin with the "Te Deum" as this canticle of thanksgiving is attributed to St. Augustine and St. Ambrose who composed it together after the great grace of baptism God gave St. Augustine. Today I

wish to talk to you on one of the most beautiful prayers there are, the "Gloria in Excelsis".

The beginning of this prayer was brought from heaven to earth, and it is a whole program of christian life. "Gloria in excelsis, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis."

There is no peace for man until he renders glory to God. To glorify God, to serve him, to love him, it is in this that one finds peace. Anyone, even in the perfect life, who has not yet found peace, does not find it because she does not seek enough the glory of God. She has not quite turned on high her thoughts, her desires, her affections; for, the peace promised by the angels to men of good will is found as one directs one's thoughts heavenwards.

One cannot remember too often that it is from the glory of God that peace comes. That is why the angels said: "Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis."

Two great orders in the Church have taken for motto the word "Peace". The order of St. Benedict writes everywhere: PAX; it is specially written in the hearts of his sons whose calm and recollected life is a life of peace, and through the zeal of his sons, he does his apostolic work by bringing peace. The most active order of modern times, the Jesuits, also write on their letters "PAX CHRISTI." They have been sorely tried, but they have peace, ^{and} they give it; but how can they have it, for they are ceaselessly attacked, pursued by the jealousy of their enemies?

They have the peace of Jesus Christ, because they hold only to Jesus Christ, because they know that the fate of a disciple cannot be higher than that of his master, because they willingly walk in the footsteps of him who trod

the way of the cross, trial and sacrifice, and who gave his life for souls. They have peace and they give it to others through education, preaching, service and a life wholly spent in giving to the world the peace of Jesus Christ.

Having said this, one must examine oneself. You know that the motto of the order of St. Augustine is represented by a heart pierced by the arrow of divine love. It is the heart of man given to God without reserve, finding there his peace. If there is a trial, a suffering, something to bear, the love of God will make me bear it.

We too, dear Sisters, should find our peace in the ardent desire to do and suffer for God all that comes our way; we should give His teachings to all creatures we meet, making them all love him, and the peace of Christ which we must bring is not a peace without combat. Our Lord warned us: "I have not come to bring peace to the earth but a sword" (Matt. 10:34) and what is this sword? It is the sword of separation and of sacrifice.

The children whom we have to educate give us the opportunity to bring this peace which costs, this peace which is not of nature but of grace, this peace which comes when one seeks God above all things, that one desires to sacrifice everything to God, love Him, seek His glory, that one wishes all that follows immediately in the angelical hymn: "Laudamus te. Benedicamus te. Adoramus te. Glorificamus te. Gratias agimus tibi." You have heard it Sisters: "We praise you; we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you; we give you thanks for your great glory."

I hope this is the ordinary occupation of your soul. For you see, it is not precisely a question of earthly matters, of the things we meet in life; it concerns the occupation of our soul, always praising God, blessing God, glorifying God, adoring him, giving him thanks because of his glory; because the glory of God is our joy, our

love, our end; because if on earth we are always occupied with praising, blessing, adoring, glorifying God and giving him thanks, we begin here on earth what we shall continue eternally in heaven. Then, as St. Paul says, "for us our homeland is in heaven" (Phil. 3:20). Our conversation, for us Religious, in whose midst one should never find what is bad or imperfect, should be in heaven. And so that all that is pure, all that is good, all that is holy may be found among us, we should remain in these sentiments.

I, hold as very happy and very close to peace a soul who in everything, her feelings, her preoccupations, the thoughts which haunt her spirit, the events of this world, goes back immediately to one of those sentiments or to those five sentiments which are no other than the great duties of the soul towards God. These duties, not well known in the ancient law, were formed in the hearts in a special manner by Our Lord Jesus Christ. I cannot say that they did not exist before the coming of the Saviour, since the Psalms of David are wonderful songs of praise, of adoration, of blessing, of thanksgiving; but Our Lord came to make them more alive in the Christian hearts.

We who are not only Christians, but spouses of Jesus Christ, who have left the world to have a better and more perfect life, where can we find this divine peace, this peace we can give, if our thoughts, our sentiments, our preoccupations do not turn to these great duties towards God? I should say first of all a great duty of adoration. Through your vocation as daughters of the Assumption, you are adorers; and by adorers I mean those who render these great duties to God, those who are filled with admiration, submission, in excess of love, if one can say so.

I have already told you what a child answered the priest who asked him if he loved God: "But Father, since I adore him." It is an adora-

tion which becomes the summit of love. How can it be that I do not love him since I adore him? I adore him in love as much as I adore him with respect, as I adore with submission, the homage of my poor human heart.

Well, my dear Sisters, you who are Religious adorers, adore God by love, adore him in thanksgiving. At times it seems difficult to adore him in suffering. I would like to convince you that the best way to get through suffering is to give thanks. We also pray at Mass: "It is right and just that we should give thanks to God at all times and in all places." We certainly have to give thanks to God at all times and in all places were it only for his Incarnation and for making us share in it through baptism and the sacraments; but a Religious adorer's duty is to give thanks in suffering, in difficulties, in the trials of life, rising above her little self to give thanks to God. The martyrs have given us this example through fire and flame: "Give thanks to God at all times" (Ps. 33:2).

Picture to yourselves the beauty and peace of a soul who blesses God at all times, who adores him with respect, love, submission, who turns everything into praise and thanksgiving; this should be the characteristic of the Religious of the Assumption. They are not of this earth. They should strive to ascend after our Lady and their conversation should be in heaven.

Read the rest of the "Gloria in Excelsis" and ponder it in your heart. I think this is a useful meditation. Take up again other parts of the Mass, for example the Preface. Each Preface develops a special motif for which we should give thanks to God. It is because of the cross, because of the graces and marvels which God shed on the Virgin who, pure and immaculate, brought to the world the uncreated light. "Lumen æternum mundum effudit."

Take the Prefaces now and then, meditate on these beautiful liturgical prayers: it is a great

means to rise above oneself, it is also a means to increase devotion to the Divine Office, for, when one has meditated on a word and one says it more rapidly during Mass, one finds again the impression one had when one was meditating on it and saying it slower.

ON OBEDIENCE

Passion Sunday, March 14, 1880

My dear Daughters,

We enter into Passiontide, and holy Church constantly brings before us the distinctive trait of the sacrifice of Our Lord Jesus Christ: his obedience. "He was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross" (Phil. 2:8).

For quite some time I have been wanting to insist on this point with you, making you notice that one of the great distressing facts of our times is that one no longer enters religion with the ideas of obedience we formerly had, when, already at home, we were accustomed to respect authority and be obedient in a spirit of faith. When obedience was part and parcel of life's habits from the age of four or five, religious obedience - greater, higher, more supernatural - was simply added on to this Christian spirit of obedience imbibed in the home.

Today, the opposite is true; and we see this clearly in the children we have to educate. Their parents had no idea of the obedience they should have asked of them, and they had no idea of the obedience they owed their parents. This is one of the most difficult points in educating them: how to give them some supernatural idea of obedience. We can bring about their giving in;

but we do not succeed in making them understand that obedience is the great law of life, and that each one must obey according to his station in life.

If, from the children, we pass on to the persons who enter religious life, we see that generally they do not bring with them the right notion of obedience since they were not accustomed to obey during their childhood days. The conclusion is that it is the duty of the older professed among us to give them the example. They must see in those who have been longer in religion such a great spirit of obedience, that they may conclude immediately that this is the spirit proper to the state which they enter, and that the first thing they have to do is to become submissive, respectful, deferent, obedient, according to the spirit of the Church and the spirit of our Rule. For you see, Sisters, it is not a question of obeying Mother X or Mother Y; no, it is a question of obeying for love of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to the spirit of the Church and of the Rule.

Thus those who enter religion must see in us obedience, and not only obedience as a whole which is necessary for the practice of the vow, but also the practice of the virtue which is proper to the vow. We must give them the example of the spirit of faith by a prompt, generous, respectful obedience -- respectful, not because of the persons, but always for God and the vows we have made. Therein lies the duty of us older ones.

For those who enter or who have entered but recently, their duty is to think in what measure they must sacrifice the entirely false habits of mind they have in this respect. They have their own ideas, their own mind, their own will, I would even say their caprices. This novice wants to do this and not that; today she is well-disposed, she had done her oraison well, her mistress has spoken to her, she will do all well; but tomorrow, because she stayed at the door of her mis-

tress without being able to speak to her, she will no longer do anything. This is very like the conduct of a 5 or 6-year old child: it is not indicative of the idea of service of Our Lord Jesus Christ, of the will of God, of obedience in a supernatural spirit, of the accomplishment of the Rule. The young Sisters know only too well how that attitude is still there to haunt them.

Sometimes we say: "What a subjection to a creature is obedience!" Yes, if we obey because the creature who commands us suits us, because she talks to us, holds us in consideration, looks after us; and it is truly to ~~lower~~ oneself when we do all to please a creature; but if there is nothing of the creature in sight, if we only obey for Our Lord Jesus Christ, following the order of the will of God, then it is quite different.

You see, my dear young Sisters, you are not obliged to be religious. You have not made vows; but you are on the path that must lead you to this solemn commitment to God; and once you have entered on this way, it is probable that you have been called to it. Your confessor, the people who surrounded you have believed you were called: there is therefore a strong probability that you are. I know well there are exceptions. It is possible that in the middle of your novitiate, they tell you, after due examination of your vocation, that you are not made for the religious life; but be careful that this does not come about through your own fault. He who despises his way shall be killed; he who abandons his way will be killed; he who through whim, caprice, mood, wilfulness does not do what there is to be done in the state of a novice, will be punished.

It is not I who say that, it is St. Francis de Sales; and he says it in reference to professed Sisters who certainly have the obligation

of obedience, since they have made the vow; but is there ~~any~~ obligation for novices? Yes, there is an obligation to follow the path God has traced for them, in order not to risk, in leaving it, ~~missing~~ in another path the graces necessary for their salvation. And this, I repeat to you, is the doctrine of St. Francis de Sales and of St. Paul.

There is then for the novices the strict **duty** of applying themselves during their novitiate to form themselves to the practices and habits of obedience. You have not made the vow thereof; but you must practice it in all that presents itself to be practiced during the Novitiate, in order to remain in the path God has traced for you. I always lay aside the case in which you might be told you are not called and that you have to withdraw into private life in the world. If you are told this, you must do it serenely, in peace and in a spirit of obedience. If you have doubts about your vocation, you must clear up this question with your confessor and your superiors. You might perhaps say that you have no desire to withdraw into private life in the world, but that you do not have any intention either of subjecting yourself to all the practices which might sanctify you. This is very unfortunate, and it is what happens too often. One obeys out of caprice, feeling, whim, one is well one week and badly disposed 8 days; all that not because of lack of vocation, but of lack of fidelity. It is not that one desires to return to the world; but one feels like remaining as one was in childhood, that is, a spoiled, independent child, persons who pleased themselves in one way or another.

Each one of us has a dominant fault. One is sensitive, the other vain; for one, it is the need to make herself interesting; for another, it is indolence, cowardice, laziness, and many things like these. So as not to vex one's favorite Isaac, one goes against obedience each time that obedience demands something which costs to this favorite incli-

nation; and thus one is not trained to the virtue which is the essence of religious life. If God has called you to progress and tend towards perfection, He especially demands the sacrifice of this dominant fault. If there is anything humiliating for us, it is to see that we reach the ages of 30, 40, 50 years with one, two, three dominant faults.

La Fontaine's moral lesson is quite true. We have a bag behind us for our defects and one in front for the defects of our neighbor. Those who pass behind us see our defects and could well tell us: "There is in you indolence, caprice, susceptibility, self-love", but we close our eyes. Yet ordinarily in a retreat we see our defects, and there is no more efficacious resolution than that of combatting our dominant defect, of trying to get rid of it, of profiting with this in mind of observations, of rules, of sacrifices, of employments.

If we did not have this dominant defect, if we were like God who has created us, we would go straight to him; and obedience would be natural to us; we would without effort reach that degree of humility marked by St. Ignatius, which is to prefer the will of God to ours, because our intelligence which would be upright is not. If our heart, our mind were upright, if we were not crippled by self-love, susceptibility, the desire to draw attention, we would go simply towards the will of God. Our intelligence would understand it, our will would embrace it, our soul would be drawn to it; we would do the will of God as the Angels do it in heaven, with joy, with enthusiasm, with love; and to do the will of God is to obey. In all the states of life to obey is to do the will of God. The married woman, when obeying her husband in right things, does the will of God; children, when obeying their parents in right

things, do the will of God; in a word, obedience is the law of Christian life, of all human life.

After all these digressions, I urge you, dear Sisters, to ask Our Lord Jesus Christ for the strength of a prompt obedience, a spirit of obedience which is simple, upright, which does not analyse anything and which makes you say to God: "My God, I prefer to die than not to obey you, make me obey you in all things. May your will and not mine be done!" Is this not, Sisters, the spontaneous expression of a fervent soul filled with faith and love? Is this not what should always be on our lips? Everytime that we feel in us two wills, the will of God and ours, ours should not count at all; we must go beyond it whenever it is an obstacle between God and us.

I say this specially for the young Sisters. I beg them to ask earnestly from Our Lord Jesus Christ during this fortnight a fervent spirit of obedience. Our Lord gives us an example of the hardest obedience. He could have not surrendered as he did, Bossuet remarks: when they ask for his shoulders to be scourged, he gives them wilful liberty; when he is asked for his hand to place it in an insulting scepter, he puts forward his hand; and all that because he willed it. He did it out of love as well as out of obedience. Each one of his acts is an act of obedience, but with full freedom not to do it if he had not willed to. If he had wanted to stop his torturers, he could have done it, as he showed in the Garden of Olives, just by these words alone: "Ego sum", he threw down those who came to take him. He allowed himself to be arrested, he allowed himself to be crucified, because he willed it.

As we meditate the Passion these days, stop especially at these examples of absolute, generous, painful obedience Our Lord gave us without any hesitation. He wants us to understand that, having allowed himself to be tied and bound by obedience, what he asks of the religious, is that she also be

tied to the cross by obedience, that she carry the cross in her heart as well as on her breast, and that she consent to all that concerns obedience in order to follow him and to love him.

MYSTERY OF FAITH

Easter, March 28, 1880

My dear Daughters,

Today's mystery is a mystery of faith: "I am the Resurrection and the Life," Our Lord said. "If anyone believes in Me, even though he dies, he will live." (Jn. 11:25-26). What do these words mean -- since all men have to pass through death? You understand, Sisters, that they do not refer to natural death, but to death in sin, from which Our Lord has come to draw us. Those who died through sin rise from it at this moment by the power of the Sacraments, and find in Our Lord Jesus Christ the life of faith. It is indeed very necessary to strengthen oneself in faith at this time when Faith is attacked from every side.

These things which occur around us are quite similar to those written about in the Psalms: "Why this uproar among the nations, why this impotent muttering of pagans... Princes plotting against God and his Anointed?" (Ps.2:1-2). Because it is to him that the empire of the world has been given and he will rise up and shatter the heads of those who reject his yoke. Will he do it at once? God alone knows. It is possible that he allow those who repel his yoke the power to fight against religion and to persecute it. But, is persecution always an evil?

Persecution purifies; it converts many souls; and at this time, there are many people, whom, the persecution against the Jesuits dispose to come closer to God by a sentiment of indignation at the injustice done to them. In short, God will end by affirming his rights, but whatever happens, what might be the suffering, the difficulties we shall have to meet -- it is necessary that a great sentiment of faith make us count on the power of Our Lord Jesus Christ who is the king set over the nations and who, being the resurrection and the life, gives life to those who believe in him.

Let us pray much during this time, dear Sisters; let us pray for the Church, for souls -- that these may profit by the sight of injustice, and that others be not tempted and weakened when they can offer no resistance, and by that, I refer to the poor little children to whom some people would like to give an impious and revolutionary education.

Let us sincerely ask of God that He humble the enemies of the Church, and let us ask this of him with very great faith and a very great love for Our Lord Jesus Christ.

TO LIVE THE LIFE OF FAITH TO LET THE
HOLY SPIRIT FREE TO ACT IN THE SOUL

May 16, 1880

My dear Daughters,

In the discourse after the Last Supper Our Lord says: "My Word is Truth". The one and only great truth is the Gospel, the word of Our Lord Jesus Christ. He promised us that the Holy Spirit would be our Consoler, our joy, our support; that

he would remind us of all the words of Our Lord and would clothe us with strength from on high. How far, dear Sisters, have these effects been produced in us who have all received the Holy Spirit in Baptism, in the Sacraments, and in a very special way in Confirmation? Each one of us at Pentecost asks for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit. But what does he do in us as regards that light by which he makes Our Lord known, as regards that life which is found in Our Lord's words, that grace we have of remembering these words, understanding them and of putting them into practice? What does the Holy Spirit do in us as regards the joy with which he secretly fills the heart, the joy that he brings to souls of good-will, as regards the holiness, which is his own special work?

Those are questions we can ask ourselves. And if these things do not happen in us we may ask ourselves: "Is this because I fail utterly to fulfill the conditions necessary for the Holy Spirit to pour out all his effusions in me?" Fail utterly, no. We fulfill them to a certain extent, but to a certain extent also we fail. And that is why we only receive some of the graces that the Holy Spirit brings to the world.

I feel tempted to say to-day that the most necessary condition, the most suitable one for a religious soul, is to live the life of faith. In so far as we live the life of faith, so far do we give the Holy Spirit influence over our soul. Strictly speaking, the religious life is a life of faith; faith is its mainspring; Our Lord's words are its food; faith remembers all his words and understands them all; it is a life that is more attached to the things of faith than to the things of earth; the soul passes through these but without dwelling on them.

You are of different stages, Sisters, May I tell you, you who are beginners, that in order to enter in the life of Faith one must be detached from the life of the senses. You will answer "but I do not live by the life of the senses". That is true. All the same, where do most of your impressions come from? It is not from what you see and hear, from what happens to you or what you are attached to? St. John of the Cross used to say that we must try to shut out impressions that come through our senses; that we must try not to dwell on what we see and hear in this world; that we must banish from our mind all that has given us pleasure or pain so that God may be able to write on a soul that is crystal clear, pure, and free from all earthly impressions. When one enters religion that is what we must begin with.

When we are older in religion we must ask ourselves: "Do I brood over things that happen to me every day from creatures?" These things are varied. There are joys and sorrows. First of all there are rightful sorrows that we cannot help feeling. But to give them a permanent place in our heart is not living the life of Faith: keeping them, nursing them, often coming back on these things that happen to us on earth. After a time one must try to turn one's mind to eternity, and see these things only in their rightful place in connection with eternity. For example, we remember those who have died, but we should see them in eternity, in glory, in hope, and not just brood over our sense of loss and separation. There are other kinds of sadness not quite so lawful or right. One feels not being thought much of: one suffers from the daily contact with characters that rub us the wrong way; one is troubled when human things do not turn out as one had expected. In a word, there are all those different human causes of sadness that are not so legitimate as the loss of our loved ones. In the midst of these little trials

of everyday one should say to oneself: "I was created for higher things; I was created to find joy and peace in my relation to God, in union with him. I am already a citizen of eternity".

When you entered religion, you gave up the world to embrace a life in which your conversation should already be in heaven, in which your desires, hopes, joys and thoughts should tend upwards. Therefore, the least fault you commit ought to give you more sorrow than this or that difficulty or annoyance. The slightest thing that comes between you and God and which prevents him from living in your soul ought by rights distress you more than any trials that can come to you here below. Those are the great events in the life of anyone who loves God. And it is the same with joys.

Even a religious can have vain joys. Vain is the joy that comes to us from human contacts that give pleasure. A joy is of this world if it comes to us through our eyes, ears or senses. And if one knows how to refuse oneself these joys that are lower and do not last, one finds everlasting joy, peace, purity, and union with God, all of which come from the Holy Spirit who wants to imprint them on souls that he finds free from the things of this world.

So, Sisters, let us free ourselves. This is necessary for us all: for beginners, and for those who are older. Those who have been longer in religion should have learnt to live more by the life of faith. But to grow in this life we must all be attentive to develop what belongs to the supernatural order, to give more importance to what leads heavenwards, to what belongs to our interior dealings with God, such as our prayer, our sanctification, the perfection of virtue.

Put yourself back again and again under

God's influence, so as to listen to his word. He speaks very softly, and in order to hear him one has to get away from the vain noises of this world. By doing this, we become capable of receiving the secret, divine outpourings from which holiness will come.

It is from the Holy Spirit's influence that holiness comes. If we are bound to tend to perfection we need a means. What means? Giving the Holy Spirit a free hand in us. But if the Holy Spirit is to act in us he must not find our soul all written over with many words. If we let ourselves go to the emotions and thoughts of this world, to its joys, its business and its annoyances, the Holy Spirit will not find a blank page on which to write. his heavenly doctrine, nor a quiet corner where he can make himself heard, nor a place where he can imprint his joy, his strength, his grace and his holiness.

So, it is partly on us that this loving action of the Holy Spirit depends. I know that we could do nothing towards it if he had not first come to strengthen us. But he came by grace and the Sacraments and he can do nothing within us unless we co-operate with his action. Let our first co-operation be to give up earthly and passing things and to keep ourselves under the influence of the Divine Spirit whose outpouring we beg for to-day.

N.B. Chapter May 23 appears at end of the series
of 1880

OUR LORD IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

June 6, 1880

Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament is our model of self-surrender, and asks our consent to work miracles of his almighty power in our hearts.

I was very sorry that I could not speak to you about Our Lord during the octave of Corpus Christinus on the eve of the Sacred Heart. But can't we say, that for us, who have daily Exposition, it is always a Feast of the Blessed Sacrament? Our mind and heart go to him there, and everything in our life should be centered in a special way around his presence.

To-day I want to speak to you about two thoughts concerning the Blessed Sacrament. No word, no praise can ever be adequate for this as we have been repeating these days in the Sequence:

Quantum potes tantum aude,
Quia major omni laude,
Nec laudare sufficis.

The Blessed Sacrament can be looked at under many aspects, since it is the epitome of all God's wonders. One could talk about it endlessly and never exhaust all that might be said. To-day I shall only consider how Our Lord stripped himself and surrendered himself so as to live among us in this state. Not only ought we to be touched and deeply moved by the love that makes him accept such a state, but we should also strive to imitate him.

Our Lord has chosen to live in our Chapel under the appearance of bread which no longer exists. It is not bread any more: it is the very Body of Our Lord who is in the tabernacle and that is why the tabernacle should be the center of a religious house, the place towards which everything is directed and from which everything comes. As man's heart is the centre of his body, as it is from the heart that everything starts and to which everything returns: as every time we breathe the blood flows to the heart and then spreads to the whole body to give it life, so it should be with our tabernacle where Our Lord makes himself our very own. He

must be the centre, the heart of the Congregation to which we belong, of the Convent where we live. And in this our Lord has chosen to be wholly dependent on us.

The sacred vessel that contains him, the tabernacle where he is enclosed, the veil that hides the tabernacle, the altar he rests on, the candles and flowers that surround him, are all our responsibility. Our Lord has nothing; he surrenders himself to us, puts himself in our hands, so that for all he needs materially he depends on us. He depends on us even more for the homage and love and devotion that ought to surround him. He comes not only to rest on the cold stone of the altar, but to be loved. What food for thought, Sisters! The conclusion we must draw from this is, first of all, that we should go to him as often as we can, and when we cannot go, at least our heart and our love must be with him.

We could not bear it if the linen and silk that surround the Blessed Sacrament were stained or had been used for some other purpose: we could not dream of putting faded flowers on the altar or using old candle-ends: we would not accept that Our Lord should be given what is unworthy of him. But we ourselves, when we go to him, are we perfectly pure? Is our heart like the blest altar linen, like a veil shutting out all else to that we are wholly attentive to him? Do we take not only to holy communion but to adoration and prayer, something that will correspond as far as in us lies to the immense love and holiness of him who comes down to us? Our Lord is not only thus destitute and stripped to be a model of what we should be here below by the poverty and surrender with which we abandon ourselves through love into his hands, he is also the Almighty. In this Sacrament his power is as great as his renunciation and his dependence. It is a great mystery that infinite power is there, and also real dependence.

This has always been a feature of God's plans in his dealings with man. When the time came for the Incarnation God made it depend on Our Lady's consent. God's glory in the whole world depended, for a moment, on her consent, on her "Fiat". And likewise, Sisters, all the mysteries of the power of the Blessed Sacrament within us depend on our consent, and on that subject there is a point of view to which I want to draw your attention. In the Blessed Eucharist, eternal and divine life is brought into human life. There is the point of contact between eternity and time. I am not speaking of eternity when we enter it, of the moment, when we are on our death-bed, and this Sacrament will open the gates of eternity to us. I am speaking of the present time. Our Lord brings us eternal life now, immortal life now, divine life now.

When Our Lord was on earth he was, like us, a traveller through life; but at the same time he was the Eternal, the Almighty, reigning at the Father's right hand. That is what happens in the Blessed Sacrament. There, Our Lord is poor, destitute; under the appearance of bread he feeds us on our life's journey; but he is the Eternal and when he comes to us, we have in us, eternal life. This is not temporal life in which moment follows moment, in the succession of time, made up of an indefinite number of successive days, but the everlasting day of eternity. That is what we have in us at the moment when Our Lord comes down within us, and this eternal life is always in the tabernacle. What we see and adore on the altar is Jesus Christ, risen, immortal, almighty, king of ages. There we have the Lamb who was immolated on Calvary in his mortal life, the Lamb whom the Angels and Saints adore and will adore for all eternity; and he it is, the very same, who brings into this world the divine state, the risen and glorious

state, the heavenly state.

All that, Sisters, happens in our hearts. And there, Our Lord asks our consent to make of this wonder both a grace and a state. He comes not only so that we should know him by Faith. He comes so that there should be a transformation in us corresponding to the eternal life that has come down into our souls. I ask you, won't the state of our souls be transformed by often receiving him who is the God of eternity? Shall we go on being concerned with the things of this passing life? (I do not speak of its aspect as our journey to eternity, because that is God's will for us). But shall we trouble our heads about one thousand ups and downs of this shabby, inferior life of earth, when two, three, or four times a week eternal life comes down into us and for a time that we cannot measure Our Lord stays within us substantially present in his sacred humanity? "No one can come to the Father except through me" (Jn. 14:6), he said. But by him we go to the Father. When he is in our breast, we can, with him, rise up even to the inaccessible throne of the Blessed Trinity. Lifted up by him who is the Omnipotence of the Father, the Wisdom of the Father, the Word of the Father, we can reach even to the foot of God's throne to adore the Blessed Trinity with the Angels and Saints. Taking all that into consideration, can you believe that Our Lord does not want our everyday life to be transformed? Can you believe that He does not want us to give our consent, to say "Fiat", "Amen", constantly, so that our whole life will be renewed and become more like eternity than time?

About us, religious, it has been said both by our friends and foes that we are citizens of eternity. Strictly speaking we do not belong to this passing time. We belong to eternity and that is why we are hated. What can one do with people who

live on this earth but without the preoccupations and attachments and ties of earth? They are good-for-nothing say our enemies. In the eyes of the ungodly what is the use of living for eternity? Those who hate God, also hate those who live for him and for eternal life.

Alas! Sisters, do we deserve this hatred? How happy we should be if we did! How happy we should be if of every event we made a starting-point for eternity, not only at the solemn moment when we have Our Lord in our heart, but often during the day, if we went up with him to take our love, our adoration, and our dependence to the throne of God where the Angels and the Saints stand. How happy we should be if after holy communion we continued saying to him: "Yes, Lord: yes, for all you will, in all you will!" That, Sisters, would be the perfect life, with Jesus as its centre, where he would become as the heart of our heart.

Here comes in devotion to the Sacred Heart. If Our Lord is to be the heart of your heart, you must draw from his divine Heart your desires, your affections, your will; for all other things, the work of your life should be to learn detachment from them.

There is a passage in our Rule that clearly gives us St. Augustine's thought on this: "If anyone grumbles because the clothes she is given are not as good as what she had before, or if she is indignant at wearing what has been worn by another Sister, judge from that how much your soul's interior garment is lacking in sanctity, since you fret about bodily garments". What is meant by the holiness of the soul's interior garment? It means the habit of not complaining about food or clothes: the habit of making Our Lord the heart of your heart, of holding to him alone, of rising above the things of earth, of always having your soul in your hands and offering it to him cease-

lessly, consenting constantly to all his plans for you. By these dispositions we give God freedom to work in us miracles of his almighty power. If the good acts we do for God are transitory, the fervor of a moment, he will not be satisfied. What he wants to see in us is an enduring likeness to Our Lord, who was on earth a traveller, but constantly occupied with his Father's life.

It is a common opinion that Our Lady lived on earth, especially from the moment of the Incarnation, with her attention always fixed on the Blessed Trinity. This was an eminent grace. But many theologians think that St. Teresa, from a certain moment of grace and holiness, was nearly always conscious of the presence of the Blessed Trinity, not to such an eminent degree as was Our Lady, but by a union of grace.

That state is not for us. But we can work at forming an habitual state of adoration in our hearts, a state in which everything will be handed over to God, abandoned to him in such a way that our soul will always submit, always love, always obey, always seek God's good pleasure, like the servant whose eyes are always on her mistress' hands. "Like the eyes of a servant girl on the hand of her mistress, so our eyes are fixed on the Lord, our God" (Ps.122: 2).

That I think, is the great power of the Blessed Sacrament. In this temporal life it opens to us a door to eternal life, and brings eternal life for us to live by. Those are the two things I wanted to say to you to-day. How good it is to talk about the Blessed Sacrament, since, I repeat, we are adorers. And any thoughts that can draw our minds to it and teach us to adore better are thoughts that we should welcome with love and joy.

THE TEACHINGS THAT ONE FINDS IN THESE WORDS OF
OUR LORD: "I AM THE VINE, AND YOU ARE THE BRAN-
CHES"

June 27, 1880

I do believe I have already spoken to you about these words of Our Lord: "I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, with me in him bears fruit in plenty, for cut off from me you can do nothing." (Jn. 15:5). But I wish to speak to you again of these words, to find in them the lessons that are suitable to the present time and also to find in them precepts of perfection. Our Lord therefore said: "I am the true vine and my Father is the vine-dresser. Every branch in me that bears no fruit he cuts away; and every branch that does not bear fruit he prunes to make it bear even more." (Jn. 15:1-2). It is this prediction which at the moment is accomplished. When Our Lord said that, he said it in view of persecutions, of trials, of suffering through which all the elect should pass in order to be purified and bear more fruit. In this way, in the events which are coming, those who do not bear fruit, who do not belong to Jesus Christ, will be rejected; but those who belong to Jesus Christ, and who bear fruit will be purified, so that they will bear more fruit. This thought should guide us, at this moment when it seems that the ungodly triumph and God does not rise to reduce his enemies to silence.

Our Lord added: "But I have told you all this so that when the time for it comes you may remember that I told you." (Jn. 16:4). We also have to seek in these words the precepts of perfection. Each one of us, I hope, bears fruit. What does it mean, to bear fruit? It is to fol-

low one's vocation, to do its works, to practice virtue; for the fruit asked by God, who reads the secret of hearts, are fruits of virtue; without doubt the works follow, but it is from the fruits of virtue that works spring.

In the measure that one has more grace, more faith, more love, that one resembles Our Lord more closely, that one is more evangelical, does one arrive at having a greater desire to do good to souls, and one does so, but it is from the fruit of virtue that come the fruit of works which would not be much, if they were not inspired by union with God and by prayer. "Cut off from me you can do nothing." (Jn. 15:5).

But the souls that we wish to induce to bear fruit, have to be purified not only by exterior trials, but also by interior trials. It often happens that God manifests himself more to a soul during the early period that she serves him. Then everything is easy; prayer is without difficulty. God nourishes the soul with milk and honey, because she cannot take anything but the nourishment of children; but later on, God leads her by harder ways, through pain, dryness, trials. Then she follows Jesus Christ more on Calvary where there is great darkness.

The saints who stood at the foot of the Cross felt great grief. They felt that the world was redeemed; but their hearts were torn and full of anguish. So much so that it is the general opinion, that for almost all with the exception of Our Lady, faith was as if it were extinguished at the moment when the Son of God died in the greatest abandonment. One can say that at that moment, the faith of the Church, the whole Church, was in the heart of the Blessed Virgin, for whom there never was any faintness, or weakness. She could have had darkness, great suffering, but never was there in her the least shadow or diminution of faith, of confidence, or of the most heroic virtue.

On the contrary, she went from virtue to virtue, from one act of faith to another, from one act of resignation to another, always rising higher through anguish and suffering.

As for us, who have to be purified, who do not have the special grace of the Blessed Virgin, and we have to accept, in moments of obscurity and dryness, the interior sufferings sent to us by God for the purification of our souls; exterior sufferings may come to us as they come to others. In these moments one can say to oneself: "After all the vinedresser of my soul is God himself; if he makes me pass from the mildness of spring to the heat of summer and the rigors of winter, he knows what he is doing. He is a sovereign vinedresser and very wise; the great thing for me to do is to keep myself under his influence."

I read formerly in the life of a holy religious who is not canonized, that she had as a devotion trying to place her soul in the hands of God so that he would work on it. As she worked peacefully over the needlework or embroidery which she had in her hands, so too in the same manner did she try to keep her soul under the action of God, in such a way that he would always find it submissive, respectful, attentive, adoring, allowing God to work in her, never opposing this work, never asking for something else, blessing God when in light or in darkness; in success and in affliction. Remember this, Sisters; I say it to those who are beginning and to those who, being older, should the better understand it: that is the true meaning of those words of Our Lord: "I am the vine and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that bears no fruit he will cut away; and every branch that bears fruit, he will prune that it may bear more fruit."

Now, Sisters, you may ask yourselves what

are the means of knowing that one is really rooted in Our Lord, that one abides in him and he in us, since it is not always by sweetness, by consolation, by interior certitude that one is assured of it. We can have light, sweetness, consoling answers interiorly and still not be too advanced; on the contrary, we can have answers of pain, of sacrifice, of the cross and be well advanced in union with God. Our Lord took care to teach us this; for he added immediately after: "You are pruned already by means of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me and I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself but must remain part of the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me." (Jn. 15:3-4).

It is then the words of Our Lord that one has to recall in order to know if we abide in Jesus Christ, if we are what we should be to bear fruit and to have the results of his admirable promises.

Now the words of Our Lord are in the Gospel; it is there that one should look at oneself, whether one has consolation or not. Where are we with regard to the different teachings of Our Lord in the Gospel? Take the most important "Learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart." (Mt. 11:29). Do these words abide in us? Have we learned this great lesson of meekness and humility? "If anyone wants to be a follower of mine let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me." (Mt. 16:24); and all the other words that you will find in the Gospel. Now take that which for us is the practice of the Gospel, our Rule, for the Rule with regard to us, is that which we should do to live the Gospel. Through this of course, it is easy to know in what measure one abides in Jesus Christ; it is easy to work always, at all times, in darkness as well as in light, in trial as well as in consolation, to bear fruit and to abide in Jesus Christ.

Then, following what Our Lord said to his Apos-

bles, it is his word which purifies; but it is this word accepted, it is this teaching believed by faith; loved by love, for love should follow faith; it is this teaching into which one puts all one's trust; that is hope; it is in this teaching when practised; that are found the virtues. One often says: "How I wish to be in Jesus Christ! How I desire him to be in me! How I wish in my prayer to be this branch that is grafted on the vine to receive the sap!" But this sap consists in the evangelical virtues; one should make a self-examination and say: "Where am I with regard to such and such a word of the Gospel? Where is my meekness, my humility, my poverty, my faith, my hope, my confidence?" Our Lord always stressed trust: "If you have faith," he said, "you will be cured. Be brave. I have conquered the world." (Jn. 16:33).

After telling you these things which will put you on the way to think deeply about this thought during meditation, I will remind you that in the Third Order of the Assumption, there is a rule to read everyday a chapter from the Gospel on one's knees. It is not in our rule, for the reason that having many observances, they did not wish to multiply them. But when you can, and you can do it at adoration, read a chapter or a part of a Gospel on your knees, to receive this word with the respect due to it, to listen to the Master who speaks, so that this word may come from him, and that you make it bear fruit in adoration and in prayer.

I end with this. It is a great thing to practice the Gospel, since in it is perfection. It is a great thing to follow all its rules, since in them is perfection. How will we reach this? Through prayer. Let us ask God without ceasing for that which we should render him.

Through the prayer which we address without ceasing to the Blessed Virgin and the Saints, let us ask for these virtues, this faith, this hope, this love, this meekness, this humility, this renunciation, this evangelical spirit. But when you have found in the Gospel this light that you are looking for, if on the one hand you have to say to God: "My God, I want to practice these virtues, I want to renew myself, to leave myself, to correct myself;" you should add: "But, Lord, I need you, work this marvel in me, let this miracle come from you! For without you I can do nothing."

Sometimes one looks for what one can do at adoration; well, I think your time of adoration would be well spent if you asked Our Lord, who is present there, for the grace, the strength, the possibility of practising the virtues he asks of you. Many souls at this time need strength and courage; and as one should not be selfish, ask for others, what you ask for yourself.

Intercede for the religious, who will be shaken by the revolutionary tempest, the strength to remain always on the true vine, to be faithful to their vocation, and to show the world the testimony of the evangelical virtues. Beg Our Lord not to abandon his Church, and you will easily do it aided by the words of the Gospel.

Thus, little by little, these words will penetrate you, they will remain in you, and will bear fruit. This is what one should ask from Our Lord not only during prayer, but the whole day long, when we can raise our mind to God.

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD,
SOURCE OF THE SACRAMENTS AND OF ALL VIRTUES;
PURGATIVE, ILLUMINATIVE AND UNITIVE WAYS.

July 4, 1880

My dear Daughters,

In devotion to the Precious Blood we find the Blessed Eucharist, the Passion and the source of all the sacraments, all of which draw their efficacy from the Precious Blood. From Our Lord's open side came forth the waters of baptism tinged with his Blood. And this Blood, offered up beforehand, is what fills the chalice on our altars. So that is where every soul is cleansed and gets the whiteness of the garments that make it fit for the eyes of God. The glory and purity of the elect have the same source. "Who are these people dressed in white robes and where have they come from? These are the people who have been through the great persecution and they have washed their robes again in the Blood of the Lamb" (Apoc. 7:13-15). And all that beautifies this dazzling whiteness, all the virtues, all the haloes, the beauty of the Saints, the beauty of heaven is the fruit of Our Lord's Precious Blood. It brings forth thirty-fold, sixty-fold, and even more, the Church tells us in St. John the Baptist, according to the faith, the love and the fidelity, with which a soul receives this heavenly dew.

When our last day comes and we leave this life I hope that none of us will leave it without having been washed once again in this Precious Blood by receiving God's Sacraments, and that even our body will have been purified by the holy oil that draws from Our Lord's Blood the power to sanctify all our senses. But besides these heavenly gifts, and even more if

they were lacking, may our soul's last élan be to put itself by faith and love under the outpouring of Our Lord's Blood, before which divine justice itself has no hold.

And you see, Sisters, what we hope to do in our last moments, we should do many times during life. So let us go often to the foot of the Cross, and before the altar, to receive drops of this Precious Blood and be wholly purified.

This adorable Blood was shed for every soul. Then how does its infinite value reach only a limited number of souls? How does it come about that on this earth where the Precious Blood still flows on so many altars, century after century, plotting goes on against the Lord and against his Church, his laws, all his teaching? We see this, dear Sisters, and we can quote "Why are the nations in turmoil?" (Ps. 2:1). Why, since it is a question of a kingdom of justice, goodness and mercy, and since the Lamb who is above all brings nothing but good to men? Yet it is against him that the turmoil rages, and, on account of him, against his servants.

We live in an age when the history of the Martyrs must be specially studied. You remember how often when the Saints who had borne witness to Jesus Christ had by their sufferings and miracles won over to God a portion of the people present, deep darkness was seen to fall on the persecutors and their henchmen, a darkness so great that it seemed to bury them, while at the same time the Blood of Jesus Christ, like dew, spread light on those who bore witness to him. This is a mystery which is happening to-day: some people are in the light, and we have the happiness to be among them, since we are children of the Catholic Church; others, the Church's enemies, the ungodly, are in darkness, and the Devil uses his power to increase the darkness around them. There is little we can do for these people. We must pray for them. One

or other of them may come to the light of God, suffer, and bear witness with us. Even the Martyrs, holy as they were, did not win over all their enemies to God. But what we can do is to develop the action of the Blood of Jesus Christ in us so as to become perfect children of light.

To be baptised is not all. To belong to the Church is not all; even to be in religious life is not all. There must be something more. Our Lord says: "Your light must shine in the sight of men" (Matt. 5:16). This light is of course good works, but still more it is the practice of all the virtues. How far have we gone in this matter, Sisters? We have received the light, but are we ruled by its influence? Is there no room left in us for darkness and the spirit of the world? I mean, the world that Our Lord would not pray for, and which he declared alien to him; because this word "world" must not be taken to mean the world as made up of Christian families in which everyone according to his condition in life tries to keep the precepts of Jesus Christ. The world that Our Lord did not bless was the one characterized by the seven capital sins, and where are found pride, love of money, impurity, that should not even be mentioned here; but alas, where can one find holiness in life, horror of sin, in this world for which Our Lord did not pray? Who nowadays is ashamed of gluttony or sloth? To do nothing, to indulge oneself in everything, are things that in the world are easily accepted.

This is the spirit of the world. It is quite opposed to the religious spirit which is based on poverty, chastity and obedience. However, we should be deceiving ourselves if we imagined we have nothing left in us of the

roots of the seven capital sins. It is a life-long work to pull up these roots so as to have no tendrils of pride, of sloth, of anger, or envy, of all those things which are characteristic of the evil world. Now, Sisters, since what must be uppermost in us is light, if we are to fulfill our mission as we should, we must be marked by opposite characteristics of the capital sins. First of all comes humility; next poverty; then purity and mortification that go together; fourthly, charity and kindness and the absence of all self-assertion; fifthly temperance; sixthly patience; and seventhly diligence in work.

You know that the old masters of the spiritual life spoke of three ways: the purgative way, the illuminative way and the unitive way. I want to impress upon you in this connection that this does not mean three separate kingdoms as it were, to be taken in succession, as though one left Portugal to go to France via Spain. No. One does not leave the purgative way to enter the illuminative way and then the unitive way.

The purgative life must go with the illuminative life and the unitive life. In the illuminative life one looks back to the purgative way which purifies and forward to the unitive way that unites. Although it can be said that one state of the soul is more marked by purification it must not be thought that a more advanced soul no longer needs purification. St. Teresa says that a soul who does not daily eat the bread of self-knowledge runs the risk of going astray. St. Teresa was in a very advanced state but she never stopped trying to purify her soul into which Our Lord poured so many lights. We too, Sisters, must strive, on the one hand, to purify ourselves of vices, and on the other hand to grow daily in virtue: so that our Sisters may be able to notice in us the impress of poverty, purity, love, humility, patience, generosity, courage in

God's service, as well as the virtues that belong more specially to the religious life, such as obedience, regular-observance, fervor and simplicity.

Besides trying to get rid of vices and to acquire virtues, we must tend continually to union with Christ Our Lord. From the time of our first steps, when we still had many faults, Our Lord came down to us in holy communion, and we received the grace and the strength that Our Lord's presence and strength and spirit give to the soul. The other day I was saying to you that without him we can do nothing, - nothing especially in the matter of progress towards him. He who is our aim must also be our means. Don't forget that, Sisters. It seems a peculiar thing, doesn't it, that Our Lord who is God, and so great, and worthy of our adoration, should be seen as a means. But that is absolutely true. Our Divine Lord chose and willed to become our means for everything: for doing good and avoiding evil, for acquiring every virtue and for going to heaven, for doing what of ourselves we cannot do. That is why he said: "Cut off from me you can do nothing" (Jn. 15:5).

We must so act, that, looking sometimes at ourselves, and often at Our Lord, we become truly children of the light. May those who live in darkness receive as it were a shaft of light from the Sun of justice through the virtues that shine in us. And let us strive by our nearness to Christ to win those poor souls to him.