

CONFORMITY WITH THE WILL OF GOD

26. 04. 1881

My dear Daughters,

During the anxiety of this last month (M. Therese Emmanuel's illness) the great lesson we must all have learnt is that of submission to God's will. It really is the only thing that matters. The soul that has no will but God's, in great and little things, is nearest to perfection. Our motive in our every action ought to be God's will. We keep the commandments because they were given by God. Nuns follow the Evangelical Counsels because Our Lord gave them as the expression of his will of his good pleasure. If we want to be like Him, we must imitate Him by doing His Father's will. That is all He did on earth. It was what He came to do as He Himself said: "My meat is to do the will of Him who sent me." (Jn.4: 34). Love and adoration must keep us in real true dependence on His sovereign rights to which we owe obedience at every moment. And we who, by our state, must tend to perfection have to keep our souls before all and above all in readiness to do God's will, to seek God's will, to unite ourselves with God's will, not only accepting it, submitting to it, but loving it, and training ourselves till we have but one will with God.

The first reason for this is the existence of God who has a sovereign right over us. Another reason is that we ought to love Him above all things and much more than ourselves, as we say everyday. So on account of our love for Him, his will must be the sovereign ruler of our hearts. St. Francis of Sales said that if he knew he had a single fibre in his heart that was not for God, he would immediately snatch it out. The souls in which God's will is truly sovereign ruler is, by

that very fact, established in submission to Him, and is one with Him in the most complete union.

There is another reason, but a secondary one, since it regards ourselves, for this attitude of submission to God's will fosters holiness in us. We do not always recognise His love in what happens to us. But always God is kind even when He smites us because what He wills is for our good. That is why our mind and heart and will and behaviour should always be in perfect submission to whatever He sends.

When Religious are in these dispositions they obey; they do the will of their Superiors, they keep the Rule. For them the Rule is the expression of the divine will. Interiorly, they are faithful in what occupies their mind, in their thoughts and prayers; they strive to carry out God's will for them. They know that the God of infinite wisdom and holiness is above all kind, that His will is always holy and adorable even when it is hard and demands sacrifice.

Our Lady stood at the foot of the Cross and saw Her Divine Son dying for us. That was the will of God and greatest sacrifice she could have made. Our Lord was the Victim who appeased God's anger and united Heaven and earth. By this sacrifice He won His Kingly rights and paid for the redemption of mankind and the salvation of souls, and acquired the immeasurable glory that His sacred humanity was to take with it to Heaven. And Our Lady became Queen of Martyrs and the Mother of all men. Her love for God makes her submissive and without resistance in His hands. Her will was not separated for one instant from the Will of her God. And her growing love and perfection made her most intimate with her Divine Son's plans. So you see what great glory and consolation God destines to Our Lord and His Mother in this tremendous sacrifice.

Is your will wholly one with God's? Examine yourself on this. I once

heard of a woman of the world who had suffered a lot and whose will was so one with God's that He found no obstacle in her. Be faithful to the idea that a nun should be like that. This does not mean that we are not to send up ardent prayers and loving supplications to God. But what one should never allow herself to be is a person who separates herself from the Divine Will or opposes it. There must be no unwillingness, no slightest opposition to anything God wills. And, Sisters, I can assure you that this brings great peace of soul.

God looks less at what we do than at the motive for which we do it, says the *Imitation*, and that motive must be for the love of God and conformity with his will.

During the past month we have had so many hours, so many minutes and seconds, in which to learn this conformity that I am sure everyone of us has made progress in it. Undoubtedly it is because of our countless acts of conformity and submission that God has in the end given us the joy and consolation that we so ardently longed for. He does not do so always. He sometimes requires complete sacrifice, and then is the time to stand in perfect resignation and submission with Our Lady at the foot of the Cross.

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