

Consecration of our Congregation and of ourselves to God

10th November 1872
Feast of the Dedication of the Church

My dear Daughters,

The feast of the Dedication of the Churches of France which we celebrate today was instituted in order to replace the diverse feasts of the dedication of particular Churches which existed before the Revolution. As great number of these Churches have been destroyed, and these feasts were no longer celebrated with the same solemnity, it was decided at the time of the Concordat, that a solemn feast would be instituted in the Church to represent them.

This feast applied only to the consecrated Churches because, as you know, Sisters, there is a difference between the consecration and the blessing of Churches. Certain conditions are demanded for a consecration. Thus it is necessary that one may be able to go round the Church on the exterior as well as the interior, that the Church be not above any profane building nor contain any, that the Bishop makes twelve anointings on the walls with the holy chrism at the places marked by crosses, which you yourselves have noticed in consecrated Churches.

You also know that consecrated things should no longer serve for any other use. Thus, when the sacred

ornaments can no longer be used, they must be burned. However, when the Church is destroyed, the stones can be used for other purposes as a religious building no longer exists.

Starting from this, we remember the words of St. Paul: "*You are the temple of God!*" You are temples as Christians and much more as Religious in such a way that, if a Christian may be compared to a blessed Church, you are like a consecrated Church being truly consecrated by your vows, by the perpetual promises that you have made. So everything in you which should serve in the worship of God.

I have often said this to you and I repeat it because I have the opportunity of doing so. It is absolutely useless to occupy oneself with the correction of others when one is not in charge of them and one can do nothing to correct their defects, whereas one can do much to correct one's own.

And if I speak to you of this particular consecration of your being to God, it is to make you reflect on the use that you make of all your faculties. What do you do with your intelligence, your heart, your memory? Where do your hands, your feet, your thoughts, your words, which are so important, go? Where do your affections go?

From the depths of one's being which, like a Church has received not only a blessing but a particular and a solemn consecration, there must always come the perfume of incense - that is, the perfume of prayer, of homage to God

by adoration, of service by works - without being diminished for a single instant from this magnificent occupation.

St. Alphonsus Liguori made a vow not to waste a single moment. This vow seems at first sight frightening to human weakness but it is explained by prayer. One can always love, always pray, always adore. I do not wish to say that for us prayer suffices. We have employments that ought to occupy our time and God wishes that we serve Him by work as well as by prayer.

This feast of today - and it is a big feast - ought to arouse in us a renewal in faith, a respect for the holy places.

There are many things I could tell you about the structures surrounding the Chapel; these buildings, these monastic rooms are like the cells of bees grouped around the chamber of their queen. Our Lord is our King. In the chapel we surround Him as the bees surround their queen. The Chapel is like the royal chamber around which all our cells are constructed.

But I would like to insist above all, my Daughters, on the respect for ourselves, on this absolute consecration that will make us prefer destruction rather than not to be at the service of the sole worship of Jesus Christ.
