

**Examine what is contrary to the reign of God in us**  
17th November 1872

My dear Daughters,

As we end today the novena for our poor France, we need to come back to ourselves and not be content with asking pardon for others.

If in a State, everything religious, everything priestly were perfect, God would pour extraordinary graces on that nation and on the entire world. Let us then see what there is in us opposed to this religious perfection through which we could disarm the anger of God and draw salvation on the world. Let us ask pardon for all that has been an obstacle to the good that we could have done in our relations, be it with our neighbours, with the children, with outsiders, among ourselves - in short, for all that, in the whole of the community, has been opposed to this perfection which touches the heart of God and draws graces on the people.

For that, we must place ourselves at the special point of view of the perfection that the religious life demands. It is very true that we keep Sunday holy, that we do not miss Mass, that we do not blaspheme. But if St. Catherine of Sienna could say that the evils of her time had come about because of her sins, that if she had been more faithful, God would not have permitted the Roman people to revolt against the Supreme Pontiff, we can make similar reflections.

We are placed between the people and God as mediators. Let us ask ourselves if we have responded to this holy vocation, and if, having received such great graces, we have drawn on our country the plenitude of the mercy of God. The one who has received much must give much. Ah! if we had always been really faithful to God, we would today have reached a degree of grace which would make us be very agreeable to God and all powerful over his heart.

This concerns all of us, and do not think that it makes no difference to the children. If they always see you perfectly religious, silent, recollected, edifying, they will draw great good just by seeing you pass by.

You know this aspect of the life of St. Francis of Assisi. One day he took one of his religious and said to him: "Brother, let us go and preach." Then they went round the town and returned without having said a word, and the Brother said to St. Francis: "But Father, what is this preaching that we have just done?" "We have preached," replied the saint, "by our poverty and modesty."

And so, Sisters, we too can preach by our modesty, our poverty, our detachment, our humility, our patience, our obedience. In this way we can do great good in the heart and mind of the children. None of us is dispensed from this kind of preaching. It should be able to be said of each one of us that it is impossible to approach her without becoming better, as was said of St. Catherine of Sienna.

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