



7 July 1878

Feast of the Most Precious Blood

Saint Marie Eugenie of Jesus

My dear Daughters,

I do not wish to let the feast of the Most Precious Blood pass without speaking to you about this very great devotion which includes both the Holy Eucharist and the Passion. It is for this reason that this devotion is so much recommended by the saints who without ceasing placed themselves under the effusion of the Precious Blood.

I would like above all, to address myself to those who are beginning their religious life, by telling them that religious life is a life of peace and happiness; but it is important to know under what conditions. It is love and generosity which make us find peace and happiness in our state of life. It is not in avoiding a particular thing which costs but it is in embracing it for the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, the root, the power, the strength of this love is the outpouring of the Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is certain – and we must not conceal this – that in becoming a religious, one embraces a life of privations. It is certain that one renounces natural satisfactions which one finds and enjoys without sin in another state of life when these are within the commandments of God – permitted satisfactions, it is true, but which are troubled by the tribulations of the flesh and which, as Bossuet says, tend toward pain, separation, and death.

What then is this mysterious choice which makes one tell God, “My God, I leave all things, to be Yours alone!” Father Faber said that it is the remembrance that a soul has of the Blood that Our Lord Jesus Christ shed from His entrance into this world – at the Circumcision, at the Last Supper. This last was a mystical immolation; it is the non-bloody sacrifice always renewed on our altars; but it is a real sacrifice in which the blood of Christ is shed for the remission of our sins.

In the Garden of Olives there was the shedding of blood which Jesus Christ poured forth because of love, in the most extreme suffering, in the acceptance of the greatest of pains, in the

most intense anguish; finally, all the outpouring of blood during the Passion – through the flagellation, the crowning of thorns, the crucifixion, and by the lance which pierced the heart of Our Lord after His death on the cross.

The soul, when it is drawn by the desire to give itself to God, sees before it the sacrifices and love Jesus Christ has showered on her in advance: the love with which He has loved her, the sacrifices He has made for her. And if at the time the vocation call is heard, someone offered her a pleasant life according to the world's standards, a life surrounded by all the comforts which all natural satisfactions can procure, this soul would hold it in abhorrence if she compared it with the life of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

I consider here the life of Our Lord under the aspect of His Blood shed for us, but it must also be taken under the aspect of poverty, humiliation, of reparation, of sacrifice. In fact, it was nothing but cross and sacrifice from beginning to end.

It is this, more or less, which attracts the soul called by God to belong to Him; it is this which the religious soul wants to give back to Our Lord by a love greater than that of other creatures. She wants to give Him the only thing which He cannot give Himself. Whatever has to do with the development of intelligence, of the exterior setting up of things, God can give Himself, He Who by His almighty power can raise up children of Abraham¹ from stones; but there is one thing which He cannot give Himself – it is the true and profound love of a heart who has the choice, the liberty to give itself.

Our Lord wants man's heart. He extends condescendence to the point of asking for it. "My son, give me your heart²", He says in Holy Scripture. And it is what He asks of the soul whom He calls to the religious vocation. He asks of it a love that is full, free, generous, devoted, a love which, in exchange for His, does not refuse any sacrifice. Without doubt, the religious soul, must, all her life, have these thoughts before her eyes; but if there is a time when one must recall them, it is in the midst of temptations which sometimes assail the soul at the beginning of the religious life. One must repel these by saying, 'I have chosen to love Jesus Christ and to offer Him a love always ready to embrace that which to Him is most pleasing.'

Here is the reason why true religious commit themselves to practise the counsels, to lead a life of prayer, to pass long hours before the tabernacle; because Our Lord loves to find before Him a soul who offers Him a love pure and faithful, and this He does not easily find in the world. In the world, He finds servants, but rarely souls consumed by this love; whereas in the religious communities, this is the state to which all of us have to tend. Not only must we be servants, humble and faithful, but also spouses full of a love, generous, tender, constant, devoted, always rising above repugnances and sacrifice, and embracing all the rules through a motive of love.

There is much to meditate on this before the effusions of blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ renewed daily on the altar and nearly every day within our own heart.

Why has Our Lord thus lavished His Blood? His motive is that we may love Him, that we may resemble Him, that we may have a love of God joined to a love of neighbour which resembles the ardent charity with which His Sacred Humanity was filled. Certainly, if we could let this penetrate into our hearts, we should attain something heroic in our dispositions. Neither heaven,

¹ Mt 3:9; Lk 3:8

² Pro 23:26

nor hell, nor death, nor sacrifice, nor humiliation would surprise a heart entirely given to God under the effusion of the Precious Blood.

These thoughts seem to me to be in harmony with the feast we celebrate today. They should give us a great devotion to the Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

While reciting the Office, ask Our Lord to purify you. It is proper of the Blood of Jesus Christ to purify souls. But He sets them also on fire so that God may love them more. In communicating purity, He communicates also generosity and detachment of the things of earth. In fact, when is a soul pure? When not a worldly stain nor an earthly blemish is left on it. The purity imparted by the Blood is preserved only by generosity and detachment.

Thus, may those who are beginning their religious life establish themselves in these virtues. It is not enough through one act to have conquered heaven, earth, ourselves, our families. We must maintain ourselves in this fidelity to be able always to triumph, always to love, always to preserve ourselves from the little attachments, the little stains, the little failures which can enter the soul little by little, because we still have our feet on earth, and we keep certain habits of venial sin and certain imperfections.

May the novices then understand well this high and pure attraction of the vocation; may the professed Sisters renew this aspiration in them, remembering that as they advance, they should acquire a greater love of God and a greater detachment of all that is not in the order of this love. Then, all of us will be better capable to receive the communication of this Precious Blood; and when we assist at Mass, we shall have purer hands to receive the Blood of Our Lord, to pour it more abundantly on sinners, on unbelieving and schismatic peoples, on the Church, on the souls in purgatory, on our families, and all our religious family. We shall distribute this Blood in such a way that it will bear fruits of holiness and salvation.

It is not a strange thing that the Blood of Our Lord flows on so many altars so many times a day, and nevertheless, hearts remain cold? Ah! It is because we are not ardent enough, it is because God, having left something to our cooperation, we do not pray enough, we do not dispose enough of the treasures that we have in our hands. Let us try then to profit from them more in order to have a greater action in the salvation of souls, by the power of the Blood of Jesus Christ.

