

## **Renewal for the Start of the Year**

7<sup>th</sup> January 1872

My dear Daughters

At the beginning of the year the Church offers for our meditation the mysteries of the Infancy of Jesus. Everything is joy in these feasts; and everywhere the year begins with joy: it is a renewal of the human. For us it is equally necessary that it should be a renewal of the divine. By doing a small interior review, we will see that we often fall into faults of pride, of impatience, of susceptibility, into shortcomings in obedience and so on.

We ought, then, at the beginning of this year, to make an energetic resolution to combat one of our faults. But which one should we choose? The one we are most reproached about; the one our neighbours let us know is most burdensome to them. It is St Ignatius who gives us this recommendation. His desire is that one should acquire the virtue contrary to the fault in us which shocks people most, which disedifies our Sisters, the children, or even persons in the world – because they are often astonished to see such things in a religious. If the voice of our neighbour does not make it known to us, we always have that of our Superior.

But you have to be 50 years old to believe that we should correct first of all what others find wrong in us. The young think: “Oh! But I know myself very well; it is precisely

this that I need most.” More often than not they are mistaken. Sometimes a lively, rough, hot-headed person, when they are reproached about this fault, will have a completely different attraction and will say to you: “Oh! If only I had the spirit of recollection, that would be enough for me!” It is true that the spirit of recollection is a very good thing; but believe what people tell you – the correction of such a fault is what is best for you.

If from one confession to another we were to set ourselves to combat this fault, if we were more on the lookout, if we were faithful to prayer, to turning to Our Lord, we would avoid falling again. Then the inclination gets weaker and weaker and in the end we give it up altogether, and as a result we can undertake another struggle.

But when we make an effort for a week, if a week later, we let it drop and follow our inclination there is no progress. Let us try then to struggle tirelessly so as to arrive at perfection. The author of the *Imitation* says that if we were to eradicate one fault a year, we would very soon be perfect.

\*\*\*\*\*