

5 May 1878

IX. DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT, ATTACHMENT
TO THE HOLY SEE RESPECT FOR THE WORD OF GOD

After discussing the fruits which the spirit of the Assumption helps us draw from the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ, there is still something I wish to say on this subject with the simplicity that befits us.

We must ask ourselves where we can find Jesus Christ because He is not someone who only came on earth for a certain time. Even after ascending into heaven, He has not deprived us of His presence. The loving soul which desires to know and serve Him must first seek Him in the Blessed Sacrament. You can therefore understand why devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is a very particular characteristic of the spirit of the Assumption and why we pass so many hours, in fact as much time as we can, before the tabernacle He whom we love and to whom we wish to belong is there.

He is there mysteriously, hidden, full of grace and the model of all virtues. It would take too long to go into all the details. I simply want to show you how closely adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is linked with our spirit. I would even say that this adoration is the fulfillment of our spirit because to remain close to Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist is the logical consequence of our need to know Him, to serve Him and to love Him perfectly.

Our Lord is on earth in yet another manner. He is the Head of the Mystical Body which is the Church. He is in His Church. The Gospel teaches us that He dwells in those who belong to Him. They are His brothers and sisters, His members. The Church is His Spouse and His Body.

Thus the second characteristic of the spirit of the Assumption is love of the Church in living faith, so that in honoring the Head, we also honor the one who represents Him on earth. Jesus Christ is the irreplaceable cornerstone, but He placed a man on earth to be the visible stone upon whom the edifice of the Church rests. This man is the Pope, the Vicar of Christ, another Christ on earth.

What respect, what love we should have for him whom we read in the Constitutions, is the head, the heart and the voice of the Church. Head, because he governs all, heart because he is the center of the life of the Church and voice, because he speaks in Christ's name and from him the faithful receive the words of life and of salvation. If the Religious of the Assumption were not deeply devoted to the Holy See, if they did not obey this supreme authority, if they did not receive all that comes from the Church with love, they would not have the true spirit of the Assumption.

Even after having lost the saintly Pius IX whom we deeply loved and from whom we received so many graces, for he approved and blessed our work, we remain strongly attached to the Vicar of Christ who is, as I just said, the head, the heart and the voice of the Church.

But our love must not stop at our Holy Father, the Pope. We must love the Church in her teachings, her practices, her history, her traditions and her devotions. We must love her in all she proposes, in what she has been, in what she is today. We must love her in her hierarchy. One of the devotions of the religious of the Assumption should be to pray for bishops, priests, the teaching Church, for all those who have the charge of souls and who give them the sacraments. Lastly, we must love the Church in each of her members, desiring to see them grow in fidelity and devotedness, becoming deeply Christian and Catholic.

You should think of this a great deal in your work of education. You should seek to form faithful members of the Church. In your relationships with those of different confessions, you should bear in mind the extension of the Kingdom of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Church, according to the motto of the Assumptionists, "Thy Kingdom come."

How is the reign of Christ to be extended on earth? By the Church which obtains by prayer the rooting out of heresies, by the unity of the faithful and by the submission of all to one Shepherd. You should work for the extension of the Church by instilling in souls deeper notions of faith, respect, love, a more profound Christian spirit and more Catholic ideas.

Let me add that this love for the Church leads us to desire to see new members join the Church and to long for the conversion of sinners. You will very rarely have the opportunity to work at this in a direct way but you can and must through your prayers, help confessors, missionaries and all those throughout the world who devote themselves to the extension of the Kingdom of Our Lord Jesus Christ. You can and must work towards the diffusion of the Spirit of God in your relationships with those who do not know the truths of the Church or who have misconceptions as a result of indiscriminate reading.

Do not make the mistake which has lost many souls. Never read any of the books from which those who wish to convert you have drawn their objections. It might seem that such a book is not very bad and that you can read it in order to refute it. Do not fool yourselves! It is necessary to be nourished by light in order to give light.

You must never feed on error under the pretext of combating error. This is another characteristic of the spirit of the Assumption. Our liberty does not consist in studying error in order to draw good from it. Our liberty, according to the teachings of the St. Augustine, flows from light and goodness and the least error and evil is a hindrance to it.

To do good, we should always seek knowledge, teaching and life in true light and goodness. Then you will be calm, joyful, kind and patient when you go to those to whom you wish to bring truth. Great patience is needed in dealing with misguided souls, for the domain of error is not a joyful one. It is not easy to deal with those entrenched in error and deep in sin because there is always a certain amount of obstinacy. You must not demand that these souls be other than they are, but you yourselves must be filled with goodness for you are born from on high and your mission is similar to that of the angels. In our relationships with others, when we bring them something that is of God, we have the same mission as that of the angels and we must be like them in patience and keep our heart transparent with innocence.

We should also show ourselves very firm in what we believe. Making concessions convinces no one. Goodness and gentleness do, if we maintain the truth whole and without alloy. In presenting the truth, we give something that is good, whereas in giving an adulterated or confused truth we are not giving something that is good and furthermore, this is not in conformity with our spirit.

You will therefore find Our Lord first of all in the Blessed Sacrament, and this should be your primary devotion. You will also find Him in the Church for which you ought to have an ardent love that is lived out in prayer and in works of zeal. If you could see into the heart of a Religious of the Assumption, you should find these three loves: Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin and the Church.

There is yet another place where we can find Our Lord and this is in His Word. When Jesus Christ became man, He was a man like other men. When He spoke, the Word took a tasting form which is the Gospel. Read it with great respect, convinced that beneath is the Gospel. Read it with great

respect, convinced that beneath each of these simple words lies the divine Word. Our Lord came down from heaven, He spoke to men and suffered in order that we might, through the grace of His Blood, have the strength to practice the Gospel and to live it. The Imitation of Christ tells us, "Two tables are placed among the treasures of the Church, one is the table of the sacred altar on which is placed the sanctified bread that is the precious Body of Christ. The other is the table of the divine law, containing true doctrine, and which teaches the true faith."

Thus, respect for the Word of God contained in the Gospel and in the Old Testament must characterize the Assumption which seeks Jesus Christ everywhere in great simplicity in order to love Him more and more. All that we have said here can be applied to every faithful and fervent Christian. It applies to us with the qualification that our spirit must be very Catholic. Without doing anything unusual or extraordinary, we must draw our life from the life of the Church.