



16 March 1879

The Fruits of Light are Goodness, Justice and Truth

Saint Marie Eugenie of Jesus

My dear Daughters,

It is a good many years ago now, when upon entering a monastery of the Visitation, I was touched to see in the cell of one of the Religious most dedicated to study, a sentence, the last lines of which were the last words of today's epistle: "The fruits of light are goodness, justice, and truth."¹

For us, dear Sisters, who profess to live in the light, it is necessary to find out what should be these fruits in us, in our spirit, in our conduct, in all ourselves: fruits of goodness, of justice, of truth.

But what is this light which we profess to follow? You know very well that it is the Word, the light that illumines all men coming into this world²; it is the eternal wisdom of the Father come down to teach us all truth, to give us wisdom, to communicate to us all that we cannot know by our darkened lights, and to give us supernatural and divine wisdom.

The first characteristic of this light is goodness. Thus it was said of Our Lord appearing in this world: "When the kindness and love of God our Saviour for humanity were revealed."³ it is an absolute and entire kindness. It is through goodness, kindness that God deals with His creatures. He is good and He wants His creatures to be good.

Since I take the liturgy of today, note that before this we read the story of Joseph, of whom St. Ambrose said that even before having known Our Lord Jesus Christ, because he was already filled with a particular grace, he was able to forget the greatest wrongs and return goodness for them. This is the goodness that enables us not to keep any coldness, any resentment, any grievance towards people who have been for us – how shall I say it? – a cause for pain in our life, or who have personally pained us.

It is a great thing to be able to blot out completely from our mind all remembrance of bitterness, of coldness, of all hurts, and to put there instead an absolute goodness, openness, kindness

¹ Eph. 5:9

² Jn. 1:9

³ Apparuit benignitas Tt 3 :4

towards all who have caused us some pain. Sometimes one says: “I have nothing against this person; but I prefer to have no dealings with him at all”. I don’t need to go into details, but while being Christian, by forgiving, there is still a way of keeping something which is not true goodness, kindness or the complete effacement of pain received, and of injuries, great or small. The fruit of light is not there. The fruit of light is real, true goodness; but it is not possible unless one is established in justice and in truth.

At this time of the year where we are, almost all of you meditate on the Passion. Behind all particular thoughts is there not this one that in justice you should have been treated like Our Lord, that all the contempt, the offenses, the bad treatment should have been for you? Whereas, Our Lord, absolutely innocent, worthy of admiration and praise, should not have received anything except adoration, praise, blessing, being on earth the object of benediction and love from all men? Our Lord has reversed the roles; He took upon Himself all that was humiliating, painful, and hard. And He wants us to imbue our souls with sentiments of justice saying: “This is all I deserved, what was due me; for me all those things would not be unjust, but it was an injustice for the Son of God.” Then when you think of all the occasions that have caused you pain, you understand how they would disappear in the ocean of sufferings and humiliations of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord, coming into the world, taught us that it is by the cross that we go to heaven; He has traced a new route for us, and we have learned that by humiliation, by abasement, suffering, death to one-self, death inflicted by others, we reach eternal life. After the Passion, this is the real way, true; illumined by light, that Our Lord has come to teach. If you want the light to produce in you these fruits of goodness, of justice, and of truth, you should strive to have this light shine in you through the Passion of Jesus Christ, and you should put yourselves in the disposition to accept all that is in the Passion of Jesus Christ, and everything is there!

There is no false accusation, no treason, no abandonment, no suffering, no anguish of the heart that is not found in the Passion; no hard feelings, painful, cruel, no separation, no pain that Our Lord has not suffered in His Mother, in His Apostles, in Himself, in the disciple who betrayed and sold Him, in those who judged Him; and in all that we suffer, we are obliged to say: “Our Lord suffered more for me”. Pain is found in the Passion in so eminent a degree to show us that this is the way that leads to heaven.

If you seek to draw these fruits from the more abundant light that you have because you are better informed, closer to Jesus Christ, because you are adorers, because you pray often, because you have, I hope, the spirit of faith, the spirit of the Church – if you draw, as I said, these fruits of light, you are, most assuredly in the way of sanctity and perfection. Nothing can separate you any more from the charity of Christ: What can separate me, said St. Paul, from the charity of Christ? Persecutions? Injustice?⁴ There is no injustice for you, you will never be more ill-treated than Jesus Christ. What will draw you away from the way of the Gospel and the Passion? Nothing, because you will love Jesus Christ above all things, and you want to walk in truth.

I know that this is hard. Our Lord knows this, He who came that we may learn from Him; but if you are united to Jesus Christ, if you ask Him without ceasing for these three things: to see the truth, to love it, to want it, the way will be smooth. You ask for an excellent thing, to live in the love of Our Lord, in the truth of the way He marked out; you ask for the perfection of charity, a great sentiment of justice towards yourselves; you ask to know the true way, all the

⁴ Rom. 8:35

deep sentiments of Our Lord, in order to adapt yourselves to them; if you as this often, how can Our Lord ever refuse it to you? It is here that we apply these words of the Gospel: “What father among you, if his son asked for a fish, would hand him a snake? Or if he asked for an egg, hand him a scorpion?”⁵

We have often spoken of the interior life; here is an aspect of the interior life, very solid, very much assured, very sanctifying, without which no one can pass to any degree of Christian life: it is necessary that everybody pardon his enemy, recognising that in justice he is also a sinner. If everyone in the world has to establish himself in the truth of the gospel, how much more eminently ought we to do so, with so much more love, more perfection, more delicacy. Our Lord coming to us should find in us all the perfection of the spirit in which he wants to rule us.

He will often bring us His cross; but a cross loved, revered, a cross in which one finds peace, because all that is loved, one carries with sweetness. There are saints who in the midst of great anxiety have proclaimed themselves the happiest of men, because they were filled with the love of Jesus Christ. Take the world, everywhere you will find sinners who in the heights of glory, of honours, do not have joy and contentment.

At one time Napoleon asked those who surrounded him what day was the happiest in his life. They named Marengo, Austerlitz, the Pyramids, the ceremony of coronation... “Gentlemen, you have not hit upon it; the happiest moment in my life was that of my first Communion.” See how that which is purely human does not give happiness – what man has had to such a degree praise, success, domination? – but all this is nothing. It was not on one of these days that he was happy; it was the day of his first Communion because he was united to Jesus Christ.

I drew from this that one who knows Our Lord intimately, as a Religious who unites herself intimately with Him in the way of the Passion, finds there the joy which is not an earthly joy, but that supernatural and divine joy, a joy infinitely more perfect than anything that can be found in wealth, the rejoicings, any satisfactions that a human being can ever dream of with all his imagination and his enthusiasm.



⁵ Lk. 11:11-12