



Without date

3rd Advent Sunday

Saint Marie Eugenie of Jesus

Dear Sisters,

This week of Advent seems to be particularly a week for waiting for Jesus Christ. In the Office, we find many words that urge us to wait for the Lord: 'Behold, the Lord is coming and will not delay... Already the Lord is near. Come, let us worship him.'

We must reawaken our faith in the coming of Our Lord, since in ten days' time we will be celebrating the feast of his birth. We must prepare ourselves fervently, for the spiritual life is a real life. We must seek to enter into the dispositions suggested to us by the Church through the words that the holy Liturgy offers for this season.

In a few days, we will also celebrate the feast of the Expectation of the Blessed Virgin, who is like a model of the feelings we should have within us. She expected to see the face of Our Lord, to live with Jesus and also to suffer with Him. First of all, she expected to see the human face of Our Lord. Let us also seek the face of God: this is the goal of our life, and contemplating it in heaven will be our happiness for all eternity.

Already here on earth, through the shadows of faith, we can, by meditating on the Gospel, imagine Jesus as He was on earth. We can imagine what majesty, what love, what gentleness his human face revealed to men. But what we must seek above all is to form this likeness in ourselves. Jesus is the Image of the Heavenly Father, and those in whom God finds conformity to the image of his divine Son will be predestined.

We must apply ourselves more particularly, in these last days of Advent, to forming within ourselves the likeness of Our Lord, so that He may appear in us in dispositions of gentleness, patience, profound self-abasement, contempt for created things, and love for eternal things.

We wait for Jesus to come and bring us more holiness, but we must hope for it and desire it, whatever our poor little degree of love may be. Jesus Christ came to deliver men from sin. Thanks be to God, we are not plunged into sin, but we feel the miseries that are the consequences of sin, and we must lift up our hearts to God through trust in Him who is to come. The Church urges us to do so through the words of the Holy Scriptures. The Church wants the faint-hearted to take courage, and everyone to trust in the Saviour who has been promised to us. No matter how powerless or wicked we may be, we must hope in the Saviour.

The Blessed Virgin was expecting to live with Jesus. This is still a reality for us. Jesus became flesh to dwell with us, to be our companion in life. But if He comes into us, He does not want to be impeded; He wants to live a full, complete life in us. So we have to prepare our souls, our minds, to make room for him, to give him the freedom to instil in us feelings of adoration, love for his God, zeal for his glory and for the salvation of souls, and also to leave behind or reject anything that is contrary to these holy

dispositions. Our mind must be the light of his mind, our heart must be the light of his Heart, and our will must be entirely submitted to him.

At the moment of the Saviour's birth, the angels announced: 'Peace to men of good will¹.' What is peace? It is harmony with God, and that is all that is needed, along with good will, for Jesus to live in us. Then our soul will glorify God, in a life that may be hidden from the eyes of men, but which will be very pleasing to God if he can see in it something that appears to his eyes clothed in Jesus Christ.

Moreover, we must expect, like the Blessed Virgin, to suffer with Jesus and for Jesus. Mary has an extraordinary part in the life of Jesus Christ because she was immaculate, she went from virtue to virtue, and never the slightest imperfection slowed her progress towards God. Not only did she share his joys, but she also participated in his sufferings to a degree that no creature could claim. However, we all have to suffer with Our Lord to some extent, and who has never had a premonition of some suffering? Usually what stops our generosity is that we fear the sufferings, difficulties and worries we may encounter.

In order to prepare ourselves for the feast of Christmas, we must lift up our hearts, lift them up to be more generous to Our Lord by suffering with Him. His whole life was a life of suffering; we can say that He came for this reason, since He came to pay for our disobedience.

If we want to unite ourselves to Him, we must expect to suffer, but we must not be afraid of suffering. Our Lord is there to help us, as we said in the Office. He is our arm, that is, our strength, from the morning, and our salvation in times of tribulation.

Too often we anticipate tribulation, but do we think of the salvation that Jesus brings us, of the help we find in Him? It is not enough to carry the Cross on our shoulders; we must carry it in our souls so that on the last day we may be found like Jesus.

So when we foresee some pain, some suffering, instead of despairing, let us seek salvation in the One who will lead us through the waters of tribulation without being overwhelmed.

Let us intend, on this great feast of Christmas, to seek the face of God. It is up to Him to form in us the likeness of Jesus Christ. Let us give Him our personality so that He may replace our thoughts and feelings with His own. Then let us intend to live and suffer with Him, taking Him as our companion in life. If we wait for Him in this way, in union with the Most Holy Virgin, He will bring us even greater graces.

¹ Lk 2:14.