



December 14, 1879

3rd Sunday of Advent

Saint Marie Eugenie of Jesus

My Dear Daughters,

You have all noticed, either while going through the readings of the Mass on the Sundays of Advent or while reciting the words of the Divine Office, how many consolations, joys, and blessings of every kind are promised to us during Advent through the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. This should not surprise us, since in him we have a Savior who comes to uplift our souls, sanctify them, strengthen them, and bring them every good thing. However, since we do not always experience this joy, this peace, this removal of all obstacles, we may wonder why the Church renews this promise in every way during Advent.

I felt moved to tell you today that it is because Our Lord Jesus Christ, born in the form of a perfectly obedient child, comes above all to teach us to give our will to God. If obedience, true submission, enters our souls, there will be perfect union of our will with God's. Then these blessings, this peace, this joy, these consolations will come to us.

When Our Lord was born, the angels sang: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will. You see, it is to the will that God grants this peace, this consolation. Our Lord, by becoming a little Child, by surrendering Himself completely to the will of His Father, surrenders Himself in such a way that it is to Him that this word from the Psalms is applied: 'Behold, I come, my God... to do your will'. The Church urges us to enter into similar dispositions. She invites us to lay down all our worries, to place our will in the manger of the Child Jesus, and to realize, by imitating the holy Childhood, this word that we repeat so often: 'Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven'.

But how is this holy will done in heaven? You understand, Sisters, with what love, with what adoration, with what joy the blessed and the angels embrace the divine will in heaven. All that was to be purified is purified; nothing remains but the will of man fully united to the will of God. And even in purgatory, where this purification takes place, the will of man is entirely united to the will of God.

The souls in purgatory suffer. They endure physical pain by God's permission, which allows suffering where there is no body, just as we see wounded people on earth suffering in the limbs that have been taken from them. They also endure inner torments for the purification of the soul, which are like a kind of flame of God's justice and holiness, penetrating within to purify every stain, every defilement, everything that remains in a creature that is imperfect and contrary to God's will. But in this state of suffering and purification, these souls are united to God's will; they desire nothing more, nothing less. Their love is admirable, their patience boundless.

Well, Sisters, the earth partakes of both heaven and purgatory—I'm not speaking of hell, because for us Religious Sisters, that idea is inadmissible. It partakes of heaven because we have Jesus Christ on earth. We serve Him. We surround Him. We live for Him. Through praise, through blessing, through the sacrifice in which we enter into union with the divine Victim, Christ Jesus, in short, through everything the Church gives us, we can participate in the state of heaven and enter into the disposition expressed in the Lord's Prayer: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

The earth also partakes of purgatory in that we will always have to suffer there, because we have deserved it. There is no other reason to seek: all suffering, however great, we have deserved. How very proud would be the one among us who would think that, suddenly leaving this life at this moment, she would go directly to heaven, without having anything to purify in the fires of purgatory.

However, this is the opinion one should have of oneself to find that one does not deserve the sufferings of this life, which are far less than those of purgatory. Theologians teach that long years of suffering here below do not equal an hour of those endured in purgatory.

We have therefore all deserved contradictions and sorrows. When they come, we must accept them in love and in the union of our will with God's. But what should this union be? It must be a union as particular as it is general. A union that everywhere sees God's will, that everywhere follows it, and that not only follows it, but loves it and prefers it to everything else. If in everything, in what is great as in what is small, we seek only God's will; if we become perfectly obedient like the Child Jesus; if, through its inner dispositions, the soul always praises, always blesses, always accepts, always pays little heed to the feelings that arise within it, in order to follow God's will—then we understand very well that everything promised by the words of the Church during Advent is fulfilled with certainty.

Every path is made straight, every hill is leveled, every valley is filled. If the dew falls from heaven, it finds a heart ready to bear fruit through the imitation of our Lord Jesus Christ, a heart free from worry, a heart that knows how to suffer like the souls in purgatory, and that receives consolation like a break in the clouds.

Let us therefore prepare ourselves to receive our Lord, who comes like a very gentle, very humble, very submissive child, abandoned into the hands of His creatures, given over to such great dependence that, like other children, he will remain for a number of months wrapped in swaddling clothes, lacking the strength for the most essential needs of human life, to which He chose to submit Himself. Our Lord did not come to earth neither eating nor drinking: he came, submitting himself to all the needs of our human nature, wanting to live our life.

So Jesus is submissive to creatures. Above all, He is submissive to His Father, as His entire life demonstrates. He will be born in a stable, shepherds will gather around Him, the Magi will arrive from afar, Herod will pursue Him to His death. He will have to flee to Egypt, live in poverty among idolaters, then return to Nazareth to lead an obscure and unknown life for thirty years: all of this is adored, all of this is loved, and the response to all of this is: "Behold, I have come to do your will." From morning till night, in all things, on every occasion, when Joseph told Him to take a saw and cut a plank, when Mary asked Him to sweep the house, His will was always full of submission and obedience, always adoring, always loving.

This is our model: the Savior, through whom we are all renewed, the one in whom we are born again in baptism, in whom we must live, since every Christian must be another Jesus Christ. This is not just about Religious Sisters. The Church teaches us that all the baptized are buried in Jesus Christ and must live the new life brought by the Savior. All this joy, this peace that it proclaims, these magnificent promises that it makes, are not for Religious Sisters only, but for all the faithful. Even in the Christian life, we must have the mind of Jesus Christ. It is to everyone that Saint Paul said: "Have this mind among yourselves which is in Christ Jesus." But we, brides of Jesus Christ, must enter into His mind in a

particular way. If we are faithful, we will also participate more intimately in all these blessings that the Church promises.

Let us therefore strive, between now and Christmas, to submit our will perfectly to God's; let us say to Him: Behold, I come, O my God, to do Your will. As You will, where You will, when You will, through whom You will, in all things, without exception, at every hour, at every moment. The hymn is a little monotonous, says Saint Francis de Sales; but it is that of the Divine Lamb, and it suffices for the soul that loves Jesus Christ.

This is what we must do if we wish to receive all the graces that the Church promises, because then the peace promised to souls of good will will descend upon us, and because, being freed from all concern other than that of doing God's will, we will enjoy peace of soul and freedom of heart, to draw near to Him who desires to bring us so many graces and so much love.