

14 November 1875

## TO LOVE, TO IMITATE MARY OUR MOTHER

My dear Daughters,

I have spoken to you the last time of the acts of the heart which you can make throughout the day to occupy yourselves of the love of the good God, to develop it in your souls, and to live in this love. Today, I want to propose to you a practice which appears to me to be one of the most powerful means to form in oneself this habitual love, this fervent love, this perfect love which ought to be the soul of the religious life: it is to give oneself to the most Blessed Virgin in order to enter into the dispositions which she had towards her divine Son.

The past century had a devotion which has not been approved by the Church in its entire scope, because it was formulated in a manner, too stiff and too peculiar. At the bottom of this devotion, there is, nevertheless, a thought which could aid you and which I want to explain to you. It is this which one finds in the authors of the time, under the name of “slaves of the most Blessed Virgin” and which consisted in giving oneself to the Blessed Virgin as (which is true and approved by the Church) her children and to go to her as to a Mother whose sentiments ought to pass into the heart of her children.

This devotion consisted, as it consists today, in offering one’s heart to the Blessed Virgin, in confiding it to her, so that, through her goodness, which is very great, through her power which is immense, through the continual care which she takes of us, through her example, she may form in us the sentiments which we ought to have for Our Lord Jesus Christ. And this

puts in one the examination of which Mary was for Our Lord during her whole life.

And when you are in dryness, when you do not know how to make acts of love Of God, how to occupy yourselves with Our Lord, if you enter into this marvel of holy love which is the Blessed Virgin, you will always find there what you lack. If you take now the sentiments of the utmost desires which the Blessed Virgin had for Our Lord, even before He descended into her chaste womb, you will have the fervor, the desire, the call, the expectation which are not in a soul which does not feel in herself the presence of Our Lord.

If it seems to us that Our Lord is far, why do we not enter into the sentiments which the Blessed Virgin had in the temple, when, with the holy prophets and all the patriarchs, she called with all her heart, all her desires, on the only Son of God who would incarnate Himself in the womb of a very pure virgin (and she was not aware that it was she)? There is the picture of the desire of a soul in privation.

Again, if you think of the moment where, after the Incarnation, Mary carried Our Lord in her womb, see her profound humility, her ardent love; then look at Our Lord Jesus Christ in the womb of the most Blessed Virgin, confined for us, poor for us, abased, humbled, enslaved, because it is He who is enslaved for us, who gave Himself and delivered Himself so entirely to the most Blessed Virgin without whom He could not make any movement.

Soon, Advent will be here, let us adore Jesus there, in Mary; let us try to enter into the sentiments which Mary had for Him, sentiments of faith, of adoration, of love, of perfect

abandonment, of imitation, of recollection. There is nothing which you cannot find in this treasure.

When you have difficulty in recollecting yourselves, go there; ask Mary your Mother to whom you belong as Christians, as baptized creatures, as Religious and as Religious of the Assumption, ask her to make you share in some of these dispositions which have so much glorified the divine Savior, which have so pleased Him that He did not shrink back from the womb of this incomparable Virgin. It was in Mary that He found, without doubt, the most love and fidelity. He was pleased to call her as His Mother, in making her cooperate in the salvation of the human race. and deposited in her all the treasures of heaven.

If you continue thus in following the life of the Blessed Virgin, look at her when Our Lord was just a child, and when she carried Him in her arms. What did she do to serve Him, to love Him, and to give Him the smallest services of life? I recommend this above all to lay Sisters, she washed the clothes of the Infant Jesus, prepared also His food, swept the house for Him, rendered Him, in one word, all the services which you render to creatures, to children who are the images of Jesus Christ.

She could not, it is true, bestow the truth in a soul, full of truth; but she was a Mother and always careful for Him. You, my Sisters, who have to teach, have to give the truth to the souls of the children. Remember, then, the services which Mary gave the Infant Jesus; fill yourselves with the sentiments of Jesus for Mary, because here, the order is reverse: it is you who give and the children who receive; whereas, it was Mary who received and Jesus who gave. But

all that you do to form Jesus in the hearts of the children, Jesus will hold as done to Himself.

I cannot continue, because I would be endless in speaking of the life of the Blessed Virgin; but what I do not do, you will do at meditation; you will understand her joys, you will understand her sorrows. Mary knew that this divine Savior would be, for her, the cause of the most cruel sorrows; she knew that she had to see Him on the Cross, and that she would share with Him this sorrowful martyrdom. If He was pledge, a gift, a joy, He was also a sacrifice, a living host which the most Blessed Virgin unceasingly offered to God to appease His justice and to obtain pardon.

Before the birth of Our Lord, Mary carried Jesus at the time of the Visitation, she crossed the mountains of Judea with much pain in the state that she was in, in spite of her youth, the dangers, the difficulties of traveling at that time.

Much later, she goes farther still; she crosses the desert, goes to Egypt carrying the child Jesus in her arms, without accommodations, without knowing how she will live; if you consider the time that she spent in the midst of an idolatrous people, you will see her giving Him all the homage which this people did not give Him; she suffered in the desert, but with Jesus, it did not matter where she went. It is true that St. Joseph was with her. You too, my Sisters, wherever you will go, you will find a counsel, a support, a director, a Superior: and besides, let nothing disturb you, you will have Jesus Christ.

When Our Lord grew, Mary lived with Him in Nazareth where Jesus certainly received the most perfect of honors which He could receive on earth. He was surrounded by these perfect creatures, Mary and Joseph, and received more love,

obedience, respect, recollected adoration than He would receive in the most fervent monasteries, even more than He received from the Apostles, the greatest saints and the entire Church.

If you consider the public life of Our Lord, you will see that Mary suffered much, that she had many privations, on the part of her divine Son. He is concerned with His Father's business. Mary can hardly approach Him and when she sees Him, He is occupied with the service of His Father, as He had told her at the age of twelve.

Find out what was the zeal of the Blessed Virgin, what was her fidelity, what was her apostolic spirit. Always imitate her so as to form in you this strong and generous love which cannot, of course, equal hers but which imitates it since you are her daughters. Think how Mary cooperated in heart and by her prayers to the teachings of Our Lord during His public life; she saw how this well-beloved Son drew farther away from her in order to go into the midst of the wicked; she saw Him insulted, blasphemed; she saw all the things that would make up the painful scenes of Calvary materialize. She saw all that and you can imagine what Mary then Was with regard to Jesus, what reparations, what submissions, what prayers, what desires she offered to God for the conversion of the world, so that the word of Jesus would bear fruit! With what zeal the Blessed Virgin tried to repeat these divine words to make them penetrate in souls.

It is believed, and this is a general opinion that St. Marthe went near her to receive admirable faith which was so great, so triumphant in this Virgin that one cannot find in the Gospel a response of faith similar to her after that of St. Peter. Both have similarly confessed the divinity of Jesus Christ in saying:

“Credidi, quia tu es Christus Filius Dei vivi qui in hunc mundum venisti.” In that time, this was heroic. The other apostles did not say much before the Resurrection!

One also believes that when the penitent Magdalene was converted, she was received by the very pure and holy Virgin Mary and that she received from her much graces, much love, light and lessons. Besides you can see that they were with Mary on Calvary. These holy women taught the Queen of all Virgins, by this marvel of sanctity, stronger than men, persevered, ready for everything. They were faithful until the end and not being able to give their life for the divine Master, they at least gave Him their love.

Follow Mary with them to Calvary, to the sepulcher, to the Resurrection, to the Ascension. Try to find out the sentiments that she felt for Jesus in these various mysteries and ask her to form them in you. May she make you understand what a faithful, zealous, generous love, full of faith, of attention for the Person of Our Lord Jesus Christ, for His teaching, for His Word, for His interests, for His glory, can make you do and can form in you. May she make you understand all that Jesus found in her of love and consolation, because Our Lord had very great consolations and love in the heart of His Mother.

One must not doubt that if the very pure and tender heart of the Blessed Virgin was a cause of sorrow for Our Lord on the way to Calvary, because it felt everything that made Him suffer, meanwhile, the perfection with which she served God and with which she united herself to Him was for Him a great consolation and great joy. Because there was no creature more perfect than Mary, she was the most precious fruit of the blood of Jesus Christ and of His mission on earth. She is the perfection that angels as well as men admire. The Sacred

Mother of men through the Blood of Our Lord, brings after Him a multitude of virgins. May it please God that all be like her, a perfect fruit, a blessed fruit, a fruit of election and consolation, that the Savior can show to the angels asking them if in heaven, one find more love than on earth.

That is very beautiful, my dear Daughters, but after all, you can attain it with the help of the Blessed Virgin. Offer yourselves then to Mary, loving her, giving yourselves to her, not through a holy servitude, but, as I told you, in the beginning, through the holy and true sentiments of a daughter towards her Mother than a slave to its master and carries her image and resemblance much more.

Draw near to Mary. She will teach you all human things, because she is a pure creature. In Our Lord, there is a God we cannot reach. In Mary, there is the Mother, there is the woman that we can approach, that we can imitate and whose dispositions and virtues we can easily have.

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