

Live by the spirit of Faith

6th August 1873

My dear Daughters,

Our Assumption spirit is one of great faith, of great zeal for souls and of great and filial devotedness to Mother Church.

This is said in our Constitutions at the end of the chapter on the Aim of the Congregation, and it is important nowadays. In the world of today faith is diminishing, or at least it seems to be becoming weaker. People are keen on little things, such as miracles, prophecies, revelations. One might think it needed stronger faith to believe in these extraordinary things, but I wonder...is it not perhaps on the contrary, a sign that faith is growing weak?

Strong, deep faith does not need the witness of the senses. It is satisfied with God's work. Look at St. Louis. One day at Mass he was told that Our Lord was showing himself visibly in the priest's hands, in his human form, with his wounds. The King refused to go and look, and merely said: "My faith could not be made stronger by this marvel, and it might become less meritorious".

We are Religious, and as such we have to live by a great spirit of faith and count on supernatural truths. We ought to adopt St. Vincent de Paul's practice: in troubles and difficulties he used to say the Credo very slowly. We might do that when things are not easy with our neighbour.

When you learnt your catechism you must have been taught to notice that we do not say “I believe about God”, nor, “I believe God”, but I believe in God, in Jesus Christ” which means that we lean on these great truths with full trust. In human things, to give one’s faith, to plight one’s troth, is to give one’s whole self to a person, or to count wholly on a thing or an undertaking. That is how we must put our faith in God. I know nothing better calculated to help anyone in trouble than this practice of saying the Credo. What a help it is in difficult moments to remember God, the eternal truths, the happiness that awaits us in heaven.

Our interior sufferings generally turn on our weakness. What troubles us is our own misery, and not anything that can be lacking in God. Nothing can ever be lacking in Him. We suffer from our inadequacy, our inability to know and love him. Now if our faith is strong, if we have the spirit of faith, we shall think of God, of what He is, of his almighty power that can “raise up children to Abraham from these very stones”¹, of his kindness, his holiness, even of his justice, although this is terrible when it punishes a sinner, it is a perfection and a beauty in God, and form of his holiness.

Say with St. Francis of Sales: “What does it matter what I feel or what I am, as long as God is what He is.” If we could manage to forget ourselves in this way and to think of God our troubles would soon vanish. God is our soul’s light. If you were in a dark room, you might grope about in vain looking for things. The best plan would be to get a candle.

¹ Mt. 3:9

Now in our dark room, God alone is light, and what we have to do is to get near Him.

So then say: "I believe in God, in all that He is: holy, perfect, good; I believe in Jesus Christ His only Son who is clothed in our flesh to be more accessible to us, more wholly given to us. I believe in all his mysteries which are proofs of his love. I believe in the Blessed Virgin Mary by whom Christ Our Lord was given to us to be our mediator with the Father. I believe in the Church, in all she teaches, in all she promises."

And finally there comes the hope of heaven, of everlasting life, because God is not only our Creator, our Judge: He is also our last end. Our soul was made for him, made to possess him forever, to be endlessly happy in the company of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to enjoy the Blessed Trinity. And each soul will do so in proportion to its capacity and merits. There you have our true destiny in Christ, who alone had the right to enter heaven but who can, and who wills to take us there too, to be with Him forever.

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