

## **Purity of intention needed to avoid Purgatory**

**29.01.1888**

My dear Daughters,

Nearly every year about this time I am obliged to go away to visit the houses. These journeys are not always very long, but I think that this one will be longer than usual. You all know that it is about matters of the Congregation.<sup>1</sup> So pray specially then that God will bless it; that He will give us all lights, graces and heavenly gifts with the blessing of the Holy See, which I am seeking, so that everything may be regulated according to the spirit of the Church and in the best way possible for the Congregation.

Absence is always painful. In this world there is no means of being in one place without, at the same time, being far from another. This is a sorrow of this present life, whilst in eternity in one glance all will be united, will find each other in God, despite the different occupations of the Blessed – for one must assume that the Blessed look after those on earth – union will be perfect; there will be no more absences, no more separations.

This leads me to this thought: how hard it will be when we arrive at our last moment, to have prepared between our soul and Our Lord a time of absence. For what is Purgatory? It is a time of purification, but it is also a time

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<sup>1</sup> Journey to Rome for the approval of the Constitutions

of absence. Why should you not be quite ready at the hour of death, completely loving and faithful, so that you can go immediately to God and all the holy souls who await you? We must often think of this; for if we find it painful to be separated from those we love in this world, what will it be to be separated from God, even for a time, and in such suffering as we cannot imagine?

How can we avoid this? We must sanctify all the actions of this present life, accomplish them with more fervour; think over our vows to see how to put them more perfectly into practice; think over submission in obedience; detachment in poverty; purity and mortification in chastity – and then, as actions occur, do them as perfectly as possible.

St Vincent de Paul often asked himself: How would Jesus Christ do this action? How would he answer? How would He act if He were in my place? This question can be asked all the time, in all our actions and even in prayer. For Our Lord prayed and what an admirable prayer of adoration, submission, sacrifice and intercession! The prayer of Jesus Christ is the source of our prayer; for we pray through Our Lord Jesus Christ.

A person who performs the actions of everyday life with this intention; who seeks always to do the best possible, who does not consider how it affects herself – for it is a great misfortune to think of self and to say to oneself, 'It was difficult!' or 'I did not have an outlet.' (and whenever one considers things this way one is sure to commit imperfections); - but, I repeat, a soul that looks at things

from God's side so as to imitate Our Lord and to glorify God is sure to become as perfect a religious as she can in her present state, since each of her actions becomes holy, virtuous, pleasing to God and makes her capable of possessing God one day, and even in this life of reaching the perfection of charity. God asks nothing more of us; the love of God and our neighbour covers all imperfections and makes amends for everything in us that needs amendment.

One does not attain the perfection of love immediately. Constant effort is demanded in order to do always what pleases God most and what imitates Jesus Christ most. I ask you then, since I have to be away, to make much progress during this time. You can do it for God gives you His grace; He goes before you; He calls you unceasingly to rise higher in His love. May it be on my return, - and this would be a great joy for me - that I find that each one of you is more filled with the Spirit of God; more humble if she is proud; poorer and less negligent - for it is often by negligence that one fails in poverty - attached to nothing and detached from all: in short full of the love of God and of your neighbours, patient, loving, regular; faithful, in a word, to all that the Rule asks.

You will remember that Mother Marie Marguerite spoke to us of a preacher who said that there was no need to preach about charity to the sisters since they had such a beautiful chapter about this in the Rule. He took it for granted that it was practised and that this beautiful chapter had become a real part of the life of each one. I wish it were

so. If you could put into practice in your life what is said in the Rule on humility, charity, modesty and mutual respect, all that has to do more especially with our interior life and with perfection, it is certain that there would be no need to preach about these things to you and I would have nothing more to ask of you.

Be, then regular, humble, full of love for Our Lord; do each action for Him, imitating as far as you can what He showed you during his earthly life.

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