

3 February 1878

## I. OF THE SPIRIT OF THE ASSUMPTION

My dear Sisters,

I would like to ask you all to reflect on the spirit of the Assumption so that we can discuss it together. We are all well aware that something very special makes up our spirit. What is it? What is its essence? What is it in relation to God? What is it in relation to our neighbor and to ourselves?

What makes us say with such conviction, "This is not our spirit?" Is this not a clear and sure admission that we do have a spirit that God wants us to manifest as Religious of the Assumption?

Perhaps what I am going to say to you may appear presumptuous. I feel however, that from whatever angle you consider this spirit, it requires a higher degree of virtue than most others. I do not say that we are holier than other religious. I simply want to point out that the spirit of the Assumption demands total self-effacement. We must seek God alone, desiring only God and His service. We must seek only His Law and His Kingdom, His presence in others. We seek Him alone in our lives and in our relationships with others.

This requires great courage, for it means that we truly go beyond self, in a way that excludes self-seeking. It raises the creature above all natural things. If we stop at a purely natural level we know that we are not what the Congregation wishes us to be. It is only when we have given ourselves totally and completely to God that we become good religious and can be of service to the Congregation. This applies to every sister, from the cook to the sister who answers the door, from the teachers to the infirmarians. Each of us must be very aware of this.

I would like, therefore, sisters, to talk to you about the nature and characteristics of the Assumption Spirit.

I ask you to pray and meditate on this during the week, so that we can discuss it together. I would like those with a clear opinion about it to let me know. I would thus be better able to give you my own.