



December 17, 1882

4th Sunday of Advent

Saint Marie Eugenie of Jesus

My Dear Daughters,

I will say just a word about one of the Advent antiphons.

This antiphon, which we had in the Divine Office this week, says: The Lord is coming. He will not delay. He will illuminate the darkness and reveal Himself to the nations.

Our Lord is often shown to us, in fact, as a great light that must enlighten us, shine upon us, and illuminate us. This is one of the effects of Advent and the coming of Our Lord that we perhaps need to cultivate most deeply within ourselves. It is this light that enlightens us, that opens our eyes to allow us to see all things according to God. Naturally, we would see things in a human way. God wants us to see them in a supernatural and divine way. This divine way of seeing things is that of Jesus Christ, that of the Saints.

You know that Saint Ignatius wants the servant of God to have no choice, no preference for one thing or another. He considers first places, people, jobs, then sickness or health, honor or contempt, desolation or consolation. He wants the servant of God, placing himself in the midst of all these things, to say: "I have no choice, no preference; I desire only the will of God." This is what he calls the second degree of indifference. This is not yet perfection: there is a third degree. The second degree, which he considers necessary, is holy indifference, which has no preference for anything except the will of God.

This is what opens the eyes, what enlightens the Religious soul: when, instead of seeing things in a carnal way, seeing events, contradictions, humiliations, and sufferings in themselves, with the horror that nature feels for them, it sees them in the will of God, it accepts and loves them because they come from Him, and embraces them with a will absolutely submissive and united to God's. This is a light; this is having more enlightened eyes. Many people believe themselves to be very enlightened, when they are not at all. One is enlightened to the extent that one is humbler, more submissive, more united to God, more readily accepting obedience, more content with what God does, more charitable to one's neighbor.

Unable to elaborate further, I will simply ask you to ask our Lord to be your guide this Christmas. See Him, the Word, the light that came to illuminate the world shrouded in darkness. See Him poor, humble, dependent, gentle, and patient; see Him persecuted, despised, contradicted, abandoned, and rejected—He who is your light, He who is divine Wisdom. If you wish Him to bestow upon you, at your birth, all the blessings that are within Him, you must first establish yourself in profound indifference to earthly possessions.

Note that if any soul, in the Religious Life, still had a taste for what is merely apparent, for what glitters, if it still loved what is vain, for futile satisfactions, for bodily pleasures that hinder the soul, for pleasures of the mind that are not according to God, that soul would still be in profound darkness; it would need to say to God: "My God, grant that, from this lowly level where I still am, I may rise above all that binds me here below. Open my eyes, enlighten my soul so that I may see all things as you see them. May I be attached solely to Your Will, and may I, from this level, ascend to that which I hope to reach, which is to love and embrace for love of You all that is costly to nature."

Then the soul arrives at that preference which leads it to follow and choose Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ even unto the Cross. The crucified body of Jesus Christ becomes its treasure. It embraces him. The object of its tenderness is that body bruised by the blows of the scourging, that Face covered in spittle, that scorn, those humiliations: that is its entire treasure. The soul, rising above good and evil, says to God: "I have no choice: let Your Will choose." Or, going to the heights where Saint Catherine of Siena stood, when Jesus presented her with a crown of roses and a crown of thorns, she hastened to choose the crown of thorns; the soul longs to feel the thorns of that crown which Jesus placed upon her head. It is difficult, Sisters, but it is also the highest degree that I propose to you last, and you must be very careful not to want to jump from the first degree to the third, as one might sometimes wish.

Saint Francis de Sales said that the Blessed Virgin was like a ball of wax, which could be turned and turned in every direction, and into which one could give any shape one wished. It was obedience to the divine will that made her so perfectly attentive to fulfilling it all. Let us begin there, Sisters. Let us firmly establish our souls in this holy indifference, so that God's choice alone determines them. Then, little by little, through the love of Jesus Christ, we will rise higher.

This, moreover, is how Our Lord begins. He first appears to us in a very humble state; He gives Himself to us in His smallness, His poverty, and His love. He does not immediately show Himself to us suffering and crucified, but He begins by preferring the manger and straw to riches, swaddling clothes to fine garments. Later, in Nazareth, He prefers the bread of the poor, on which His father and mother ate, to the feasts of the rich, and the carpenter's laborious work to an easy and pleasant life.

This, Sisters, is how the soul must begin with Jesus Christ, so that later, with Him, it may prefer the scorn, the humiliations, the sufferings, the crown of thorns, and the cross of Jesus Christ, if God judges the soul strong enough to raise it to that point.