



December 3rd, 1882

ADVENT

Saint Marie Eugenie of Jesus

My dear daughters,

We are beginning Advent and the liturgy is filled with pleading and desire for the coming of the Messiah. Is this just a time of commemoration, of celebration of the long wait of four thousand years during which the patriarchs and prophets longed ardently for the coming of the One who would bring the perfect law, the law of love? It is that, certainly but it is also very much more. When the Church places on our lips words of longing for Jesus Christ, this is not just to remind us of the desires of our forefathers, but it is to arouse our own longing for the coming of Jesus Christ in us. You are familiar with the text, so precious to the Assumption, which we repeat every day, “Your Kingdom come”, from the Our Father. During this season we should pray with extra fervor, that God’s kingdom may come. The reign of Our Lord is not yet complete in any of the three domains of which I am going to speak.

First, I will speak of the Social Reign. Never before, perhaps has the reign of God been as little known as it is today. Despite this, it is not the moment to be discouraged. Consider the lives of the saints who never became discouraged in spite of the difficulties of their times. They never stopped praying for the coming of the kingdom, for the honoring of His name, for the triumph of the Gospel in the world. Every day we say in the Office, “Let us bow down in worship before the Lord because He is our God.” This invitation is not just for us. We are not alone at Our Lord’s feet for the whole Church and all creatures are there with us. We should never stop asking that the universal social reign of the Lord may come, no matter how bad the situation may be.

When England was bowed under the yoke of Protestantism when there were few churches left, a mere scattering of Catholics and a few priests living in hiding who risked all to celebrate Mass. God’s worship decreased in the land. Yet a few faithful Christians prayed constantly that the true faith might return to the Isle of Saints, and they were heard. For although faith does not reign completely it has developed amazingly. How many churches, monasteries, priests and religious are found there now! There are also numerous conversions, thanks to all the prayer.

During the persecutions in the first centuries, the Church was bathed in blood. Yet the martyrs hoped and prayed for the conversion of the world and triumph of the Church. We should never tire of

praying for the kingdom even at a time like ours when the boldness of those who deny God, seems to be complete. They seem to say, “You do not exist, I do not recognize You. I shall take Your place.” This reminds us of the words placed on David’s lips by the Holy Spirit, “The fool has said in his heart, there is no God.”²⁶ It is not only in their heart that unbelieving men say this. They express it in their laws and institutions. But these men of pride and negation will pass away, as Our Lord says in the Gospel, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words will not pass away.”²⁷

It is fitting then that the faithful ask God to establish His kingdom in this world even though it no longer seems to want Him. It is good to pray with ardor and to say, “Come with Your gentleness which converts, with Your power which subdues. Come with the charm of Your wisdom and beauty. “Come with the splendor of Your doctrine and Your truth. Come, enlighten the world, come and save us.” These days we often repeat in the liturgy, “Come Lord Jesus, come and save us.”

From another point of view we who are His servants and who profess to recognize Him as our sole Master, should pray for the Lord’s coming. We should pray for His reign in us. Certainly He already reigns there and we can say with all our heart that He is our sole Lord and King. But is His reign fully established in us? Do we not feel there is something more to add to the reign of Our Lord? We should ask Him to become ever more the Master, the Savior and the Spouse in us. Whatever we do, His presence should be manifest. Our teaching, administration, all our actions should show the action of the Lord. None of our abilities or talents can escape Him. We should pray that the words of John the Baptist be realized in us, “He must increase and I must decrease.”²⁸

This is the essence of religious life, to grow less so that the life of Jesus Christ may increase and grow in us. When we can say of a religious that in seeing her we see Jesus Christ who lives, reigns, acts, works and serves in her and not her proper personality, then we are edified. We should tend towards this and as it is not always the case in ourselves, we should ask with ardent longing that Our Lord reign in us completely and that His coming be renewed in us.

There is another social coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ to which we are directly committed. We are engaged in various works of zeal. Is our main concern in our work with the pupils, that they pass their examinations, that they know more history or geography? No, our first concern is that the reign of Our Lord be formed in them, that His kingdom should come in them and that through our education a Christian family may be formed. We all recognize the marvel of a family in which the Christian spirit reigns in such a way that from birth the children are filled with all that should make them true Christians.

If through education we first form Christian girls and then Christian women and families, shall we not have contributed to the social reign of Jesus Christ? Young people are, as it were, the root from

²⁶ Ps. 13, 1

²⁷ Mt. 24, 35

²⁸ Jn. 3,30.

which Christian families will spring. From them others will come. If a new generation like this results from our teaching, we shall have worked truly for the coming of the reign of Jesus Christ in society.

We must also pray for this as we are too weak of ourselves to carry out the works of God. When we pray for the Church and the coming of the kingdom we are praying for benefits we do not touch directly, but only through Jesus Christ, who acts in all things. When we pray for our own sanctification and for our communities that God may reign there, when we pray that our pupils in whom we have established the reign of Our Lord may give purity of faith and the dynamic principles of Christianity to their families, then this is something we do touch directly. We can work for this with great ardor and pray that it may be effective. During this Advent, let us be fervent in our desire, faith and prayer. This ardor will penetrate all we do and make our actions more fruitful in proportion to our desires for the coming of the Kingdom.

People should feel that in us and our pupils and their families, there is a creature totally seized by God, in whom His reign is fully established so that our pupils, having realized this, may show it to their families.