



ADVICE FOR THE END OF THE RETREAT

12 September 1875

... I think I have some advice to give you, some observations, about the end of the retreat and resolutions.

First of all, although there was fervor, the retreat was well preached and the good produced very real, it is probable that not everyone had feelings of consolation, love, fervor and the good that they desired. Nothing is lost for them however. They did not feel that Our Lord took hold of them, they do not feel renewed, their souls were not penetrated by light as they expected.

To them I say: Be assured; your retreat has started a process which should continue in the fidelity that you live out and that lets grace continue to act. What depends on you is, not being touched, but listening, being recollected, meditating, so that you can continue to be slowly influenced by your retreat.

Don't leave the retreat and throw yourself into action, into your various jobs and responsibilities. I say this for all of you, for those who felt themselves touched by grace as well as for the others. You still have some vacation time. Try to profit to foster and develop the action of the retreat until you are obliged to undertake your usual activities...

Secondly, let each one examine the exterior fault that is hers, for both God and humans expect this: that you correct what, in your exterior, can shock or fail to edify. In vain, you will take the best resolutions; in vain you will make beautiful promises to God, you will desire that you have no other will than God's; in vain, you will have wonderful feelings of innocence and fervor, if you keep an habitual fault: impatience, visible self-love, self-seeking, egoism in your responsibilities, bad posture in chapel. These may seem like little things to which you give in, just exterior; yet they are important, I believe.

...Sharpness in speech, little faults against poverty, habits of asking for things or doing things on your own, in your own way – all that should disappear. I say “exterior” because we may have illusions in these things and, at the same time, the best intentions in the world. People who take strange positions in chapel may think they do so to be more recollected, to pray better and a hundred other good reasons. But the fact is that it doesn't look religious or help other people.

Propose to make one of these imperfections disappear. Let the love that you have for God and for the Church, the love you have for your Congregation, make you want our communities to be as holy as possible. What a consolation for Our Lord Jesus Christ, for the Church, for our Assumption, when there are holy people in our houses!

... Lastly, begin today a year of supplication. Our Lord is committed to hear you. He said: *Ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened for you.*² Go to Him with confidence. He is there and is never more generous with his gifts and ready to give them than when exposed on the altar, awaiting our prayers and asking for our love.

Uses, then, this last day of the retreat to choose your resolutions and to give yourself totally to Our Lord Jesus Christ in thanksgiving for all you have received.

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-Do not be afraid to take energetic resolutions at the end of your retreat. Don't take too many, just one perhaps that is courageous and generous. Tell God: 'You chose me, now complete your work. I trust that you will give me all I need to please you...to obtain a greater love.

1 September 1878

-If our interior life were more constantly occupied with thanksgiving, there would be less agitation and the sadness which we allow to discourage us would be carried away on waves of praise and gratitude. If we continually thanked God, recognized all he has done for us – what no creature could ever imagine- our heart would be filled with gratitude instead of petty desires, little fears, agitation and sadness which are obviously less pleasing to God than thanks....Try a little thanksgiving, my sisters, in your spiritual life, along with the lights, knowledge and graces you have received, and you will see that it will take you higher and make you more generous in the love of the Lord and more united to Him.

We should pray not only for ourselves but also for others, for those whom we see in difficulty and for those with whom we find difficulty, and as the author of the Imitation says: "We should offer our prayers for those we have hurt, scandalized, caused troubles, and for those who have offended, saddened, blamed us, or who have done us some wrong or caused us pain."
