



10 January 1875

AN ADVICE TO OLD SISTERS

Saint Marie Eugenie of Jesus

My dear Daughters,

The other day I spoke to you about the renewal we made before the crib of the Infant Jesus. There is something I wish to pick up again today, although it concerns only a limited number of Sisters. Since all will get to that, I need to speak to you about it.

As we advance in religious life we need ever more to renew ourselves in our vocation. If, upon entering, we had difficulties to overcome ourselves, struggled to avoid certain faults, to detach our hearts from the world, from too natural affections, from old habits, from certain attachments; if we had some difficulty to take up the manners and habits of the religious life - when all that has been done - we must take care that a certain “laissez aller” does not creep in and does not establish itself in us; and that instead of conserving ourselves in a generous obedience, in a fervent poverty, in prompt fidelity to the Rule and in an habitual care to mortify ourselves, we do not allow ourselves to fail in one thing or the other. We do not simply do things by habit, by custom, and as Father d’Alzon says, “doing things carelessly”.

I do not say that there is any religious in that state since we renew ourselves through daily prayer, but the main thing is that we begin again without ceasing for the perfection of each of the actions that make up our life; thus, renewing ourselves in the manner of saying the Office, of praying - to do it with care, with fervor, applying ourselves to it and not lose our time in it, renewing yourselves in obedience, in the common life, in fidelity to the vows and to the Rules - in a word, in all the points that ought to be the mark of the fervor of Novices but which must also mark with a more pronounced religious character the last years of our life as we approach the crown that is reserved for those who have fought the good fight (1 Tim. 6: 12).

The fervor of an order can be recognized by the quality of religious life of its older members. Oftentimes, we find a less profound religious character in those to whom age, fatigue, and infirmities seem to have brought a little more of “laissez aller”. I often noticed this in various communities I have visited. If on one hand we find humility and fervor in the old Sisters and respect, submission and modesty in the young, it suffices to spend two hours in that house to appreciate its religious spirit.

It is necessary, Sisters, that we give this profound religious character to our Congregation. May the old Sisters keep watch on all the points of humility and may the young keep deference, respect, modesty in order to arrive at that. And may all in this time of graces and blessings, find near the Infant Jesus what will make their life holier, more pleasing to God, more perfect - worthy of greater blessings and of greater graces on the day in which they will ask God the crown that we all hope for and for which He has called us to religious life.
