

FEAST OF THE MOST HOLY NAME OF JESUS

12. 1. 75.

ON THE WORD: "THIS IS MY WELL-BELOVED SON IN WHOM I HAVE PLACED ALL MY DELIGHTS, HEAR HIM."

My dear Daughters,

After the beautiful and pious word you have just heard, one is not very encouraged to add anything. But, however, we see so many things in the mysteries, we see so many things in the mysteries of this season, that speak to us of the love of God that we cannot too often speak about them.

I ask myself if several among you have meditated enough on this mystery of Jesus Christ going to the desert to find John the Baptist and receive Baptism from him and finally on this second manifestation at the Jordan on this word from heaven: "This is My well-beloved Son in whom I have placed all My delights, hear Him" (Mt. 17:5).

You know that the Church honors in the feast of the Epiphany a triple manifestation at our Lord. The first is the adoration of the Magi, the second, the supreme manifestation at the Jordan, and the third is the first miracle of Jesus at the Wedding of Cana by changing water into wine-mysteries which are reunited in a same feast because they have been accomplished on the

same day although on different years.

Well, it seems to me that this word: "This is My well-beloved Son in Whom I place all My delights, hear Him", is one that must occupy the religious soul during all this season of the Epiphany. One must often come back to this thought of God delighting in Jesus Christ. On earth, God was able to take but some pleasure in the Patriarchs, in the Prophets, in those who waited for the Messias. If He had great joy in seeing Job walk through straight paths, to find Abraham firm in faith and in hope, He was not, however, fully satisfied. But see here Him in whom He has placed all his delight - Jesus who renders to His Father all honor and all glory; see here Him who gives Him pleasure without limit, who is the object of all His attention, of all His thoughts and of all His joys.

This Jesus, Sisters, is yours, is mine, belongs to all of us and He has so made us His children, He has so adopted us that, if we truly walk after Him, if we establish a similarity such as God would like to find between Him and us, then God will certainly say of us also: "Look at this soul, I have put in her all My delights." This is very beautiful, my dear Daughters, and must be for us a subject of reflection.

We can arrive at a very close union with God through imitation of Jesus Christ, through the acceptance of what has been here below the condition of His human life, through poverty, humility, renunciation, through sacrifice and suffering, through a life in which there is nothing that pleases nature nor the world, but in which all is conformed to the spirit of the Gospel. It is thus that we can become objects capable of pleasing our heavenly Father.

Following the thought that St. Augustine developed in his "City of God", there are two loves that the world shares: that in which love of God grows until contempt of self, and that where love of self grows to the contempt of God. It is between these two ways that the world walks and agitates itself. It is necessary, Sisters, to examine oneself from time to time to see where one is in this regard. One must ask oneself in which of these two ways one precisely is and in what measure one works to form in herself the resemblance to Jesus Christ so that our life may be a reflection of the Gospel.

In our Lord Jesus Christ, everything is renunciation, humility, sacrifice. See Him on the Cross, see Him at the beginning of His earthly life, in the poverty of the crib, see Him in Egypt, fleeing from the persecutors with His mother and His father who live from the work of

their hands, see Him hidden despised, ignored, unknown, see Him later in His public life treated as a seducer, as impious man, prosecuted, obliged to go from one place to another to escape from His enemies. And who are His companions during all this time? Some poor, ignorant and rough fishermen having nothing that can give consolation neither according to nature nor according to grace since we hear Jesus Christ reproach them and tell them: Nescitis cujus spiritus estis? You know not of what spirit you are, and to St. Peter "Go behind me, Satan, " and so many other words.

This is the life that Jesus Christ deigned to embrace for us. That is how He lived. Then He finally died on the Cross in the midst of all sorts of sufferings, of all the humiliations, of all the pain and this cruel death was always before His eyes.

And so, we must ask ourselves in what measure we accept these conditions of similarity with Jesus Christ, in what heartfelt affection we face all the dispositions of providence, what courage we put therein so as not to reject anything, not to deny anything even when something more painful or more difficult presents itself.

We must not forget another word of the Gospel, a terrible word, but one that is very good to make us think - "He who is not with Me is against Me,

he that does not gather with Me, scatters". One sees without ceasing that one must give all to God without reserve, without restrictions all in the measure, in the light of the Gospel, that is, until down to iota, since all must have its fulfillment. Without that we place ourselves in a dangerous and doubtful situation, we risk entering in this way where we take pleasure in ourselves, instead of God taking pleasure in us, in this way where love of self begins to diminish love of God, in this state where one goes to the extreme of making love of self banish love of God.

My dear Daughters, that is very serious. You will perhaps find that it is not the word for a feastday, but I have been very much struck by it and I wanted to tell you how necessary it is to enter into oneself to see the degree of one's sacrifice with regard to God and what is the degree of one's detachment, one must even say of hatred, with respect to self. Hatred is a very strong word, but it is in the Gospel. Yes, we must despise ourselves, we must deny ourselves all the days of our life. We must separate ourselves from all that gives joy and sweetness to nature and may that be offered and sacrificed to God by mortification in order to have the joy of hope, the joy of love, the joy of union.

There certainly is great joy for a poor creature to think that she can absolutely be agreeable to God and become an object on which God fixes His glance with pleasure, who consoles His heart, who gives glory to His divinity, whom He can show to His angels, as He at other times showed them His Son saying: "See this creature, see how she follows the footsteps of My Son, see how she has entered into the spirit of faith, of generosity, of sacrifice that My Son came to teach on earth, see how there is in her no exception, see her generosity in all the dispositions that I ask of her! Whether I ask her much or little, she does not refuse anything. I can do with her as I please leave her or crucify her, impose on her a big or small sorrow, it matters little to her, she is in My hands. See there is nothing in her that is unlike her Spouse, that is not completely abandoned".

I conclude with this thought because, if the first thought had something severe, this one is infinitely consoling since it shows us the union that sacrifice, generosity, such gift of self that God who is absolutely the Master prepares for us and that He can dispose of us in all things.

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THE MIRACLE OF CANA, FIGURE OF THE EUCHARIST AND
MODEL OF THE TRANSFORMATION THAT OUGHT TO TAKE
PLACE IN OUR SOULS

24. 1. 75.

My dear Daughters,

I spoke to you last Sunday of one of the manifestations of Our Lord, that of His baptism. But I have not told you anything about that of the Wedding at Cana, the first miracle that Our Lord made at the request of the Blessed Virgin.

This miracle is, however, one of those that ought to occupy our soul because it is in a certain sense the miracle that fills our whole life. In one way, because we live of the Eucharistic Blood of Our Lord and that this transformation of the wine into the Blood of Our Lord and of the bread of His Body is precisely the mystery of which the transformation of water to wine at the wedding at Cana was the first figure. In another way, because we ought to work without ceasing to change ourselves, to transform ourselves into something divine, supernatural, and heavenly, which is truly to change water into wine, because our nature in relation to this super-eminent state of grace to which God calls us, is like water, weak and without strength, that ought to be changed into a wine generous and divine.

You all know that the mystery of transsubstantiation is also the mystery and the model of our own transformation. As it is said in the

Canon of the Mass, we ought to be changed into something divine by the grace of this mystery. We should work on this all our life. We must know also that one is nothing but water of oneself and always do one's utmost to change this water into wine. Two great means are given us for this: faith and prayer.

Many persons grieve and are surprised after having worked on this for a long time, to see that their nature is not changed. No, nature does not change at all; it is always poor, always infirm, always subject to temptations, always carnal and earthly and having sensual and earthly inclinations. Sometimes, however, as one advances in life, the supernatural invades the soul more, but not nature. It reigns more in the will, in the intelligence, in this holy of holies, in this reserved sanctuary of which St. Francis of Sales speaks, in which the soul entertains itself alone with God.

And the means of changing oneself thus, of transforming oneself in this divine manner, is to live of faith, to live of prayer. It is to retire often where creatures do not reach, where human seductions do not penetrate, because there is an intimate depth where he cannot enter, that God alone sees and knows. It is also the foundation of this great rule of St. Ignacius: "That, when the soul changes by a profound impression coming through the senses, it is ordinarily God that acts,

above all if this impression makes us love God more makes us expands, makes us enlarge our heart, and makes us act for God."

Thus, the best way, then, to arrive at this transformation is to live by faith and to work at separating oneself from impressions of exterior things. It is to give them up, to leave them.

Think at times, Sisters, know hard and difficult the conditions of Christians in the world is because they also must work at this transformation. The Divine Blood has been shed for them as well as for us. What is said at the Canon of the Mass, that this sacrifice is the model of the one which ought to take effect in our souls, is also said for all Christians. But how difficult it is for them to be alone and not to feel impressions of exterior objects!

For us, many things already separate us and deprive us of them. We have renounced that which is the most agreeable in the world, its pleasures, its distractions. We are obliged as if by force to re-enter into the intimacy of the soul, into this holy of holies, to love of faith and listen to God in prayer. For those who do not do this, I admit that they have the first sparks of faith and of love necessary to save them, but think what work there remains to be done at the moment when they will fall into purgatory! How this intelligent and purifying fire must cleanse their soul

of all these pleasures, of everything that has remained of these more or less muddy waters of the world, that have penetrated all their faculties.

We too, Sisters, still have much to purify. It is a work we do everyday and to which I still wish to exhort you.

"The just man lives by faith" (Rom. 1:17), and, the greater the faith the more it transforms the soul. The more faith animates our prayer, the more we have continual recourse to God; the more we separate ourselves from external things, the more do we enter into the intimacy of the soul, and, as St. Therese says, into this mansion of the soul, into this abyss where God is as a sun, and where He wishes to penetrate us with His light, provided that our soul be like a pure crystal through which this light can shine. The more we do that the more do we make our Novitiate of heaven and of eternity, which is the only and unique reason for which God has placed us in this world.

Because this world is nothing but a passage, it is a trial. We should find there neither our dwelling nor our rest. This is not the place that we ought to seek to create relations. "That one would be insane", says St. Therese, "who, during a journey would stop at each inn that he would come across on his way saying: 'I am well here. I find people that agree with me. I

am going to make my abode there'".

And he is infinitely more foolish who believes that he can stop time. Time takes hold of us, it carries us away, at each instant. We see it with our Sisters. What is important is that death find us nearer the end which is God because the only reason for which we are subjected to the trial, the only motive of our life as pilgrim here below, is eternal life.

It is in this constancy, in this fidelity, that we succeed, my dear Daughters, in possessing God as much as it is possible to possess Him on this earth, and that we assure ourselves of seeing Him and of possessing Him without a very long delay between the hour that we leave this world and the time when we reach the object of all our desires.

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THE ONLY WAY OF PLEASING GOD IS TO
IMITATE OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

21. 2. 75.

My dear Daughters,

We have in the Gospel of today (Second Sunday of Lent), a word which I think have spoken of some time ago with regard to the Feast of the Epiphany, a word which descended twice from heaven on Our Lord: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear Him". If Holy Church recalls to us this word, it is because everything consists for us in listening to Our Lord Jesus Christ and in listening to Him according to the two senses given to this word by Holy Scriptures.

To listen is also to obey. It is not only to give the attention of one's mind, but it is to give the attention of one's heart. The mind ought to be to be filled with truth, it ought to be filled with the words of the Gospel, of all that Our Lord has said, of that which He has done, of that which He has taught. Then, it is necessary all the days of one's life, through meditation, to put before one's eyes some words of this divine life, in proposing to oneself to imitate it. This is the way the mind is filled with Jesus Christ.

Then comes the attention of the heart, the attention of the will that urges us to do what our Lord has told us, what He teaches us, what He shows us. Let us not forget that if He is the well-beloved Son, we can be, after Him the well-beloved

daughters of our heavenly Father. If we then wish to please God, let us enter into this divine sonship that will render us very agreeable in His sight, but let^{us} remember that one does not enter therein except through resemblance to Our Lord Jesus Christ, the only and unique manner to please God.

Often, if instead of these complicated examines in which one loses one's time in coming back with anxiety on each of the actions of the day, in which one does not apply oneself to anything but vague things, one would ask oneself: "How do it stand in the resemblance that I ought to have with Our Lord Jesus Christ? I see on one hand the perfect, divine Model, so Holy, so humble, so poor, so gentle, and at the same time so strong, so given to others, doing the will of God at all hours of the day, always doing that which pleases His Father". (Jn.8:29). And behold, me on the other side, where am I in the resemblance to Jesus Christ? Is there anything that resembles Our Lord in my behaviour, in my thoughts, in my sentiments, in my words, in my manner of making my spiritual exercises and in each of the actions of my day? Like Jesus, is it faith that rules all my relations with my Superiors, with my equals and my inferiors?" how everything would go better if we did this!

This is, Sisters, an examen that is not a detailed one, that is not of a kind that will give distractions but which, I believe, is an examen of perfection and which will help us singularly to do a greater effort to resemble Jesus Christ more, and to accomplish this word come down from Heaven: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear Him".

We all know by faith that Our Lord is the dear and well-beloved Son of the Father, that God puts in Him all His delights. All that remains now is to accomplish the last part of the word: "hear Him", hear Him, that is to say, fill your heart with His teachings, do what He tells you. Hear Him with this ear of the heart that brings about the accomplishment of the Will of God, because it obtains the accomplishment of sanctity which is in Our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is nothing in this examen that can give us scruples. It would be absurd to torment oneself because one does not entirely resemble Our Lord Jesus Christ. Everyone knows well it is one of these examens that brings the soul more keenly to shake off all the grains of dust of imperfections, to acquire the divine resemblance.

Tell yourself: "Poor soul, that you are, it is necessary that you, who are also a daughter of God, do what you can so that He may be able to put in you His delight. Remember this: you have left

all, you have had the good fortune of being taken and drawn from the midst of men, and chosen by God. had done a real miracle in placing you in the religious life in order that men may find in you the Holy Gospel. If it were lost, people ought to be able to read it in the life of a Christian and, with greater reason, of a religious. And so, my poor soul, at what point are you in this work? Do you truly work to form in you the resemblance with Jesus Christ? Do all your efforts go there? Is there what occupies the dreams of your nights and the thoughts of your days? Is it the end of all your desires, of all your ambitions, of your preoccupations, of your reflections? Is that the object of your wishes and of your fears? What troubles you, is it the worry of not yet being similar to your divine Master or the fear of not arriving at that? The only important desire in this world and the only fear that is allowed.

Therefore, instead of troubling yourself if you have not been able to achieve a detailed examine, remember that this would be better than all the details and that besides, it encloses all. For, in reality, how well a person who would act thus, would make her oraison! With what recollection she would assist at Holy Mass! How well she would receive Holy Communion, and make her thanksgiving! How religious she would be at recreations, how faithfully she would discharge her employments, how perfect she would be with regard to works of zeal, if every-

where she carried this care, this preoccupation, this attention, this desire to resemble Our Lord, if all her applications were to listen to Him in prayer so as to follow and imitate Him all the rest of her life.

Now, in this our time, there is something particular: the time for gaining the jubilee has come. Why do we not all wish to gain it as perfectly as possible? Why should we not all wish to profit of this time of graces in order to be purified of our past sins?

What is required above all, is that we may gain the jubilee, is great purity of heart, habitual contrition, hatred of the imperfections into which we ordinarily fall, profound regret of all the venial sins from which we wish are obtained above all in looking at Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Since we will be in the stations very soon, why should not we try to bring therein this spirit of love, this true evangelical zeal, which on one hand, hates all that in ourselves is not Jesus Christ, and which, on the other seeks to develop in us everything that has been deposited by grace in order to make us resemble Jesus Christ? This is a disposition in which the soul would purify itself marvelously and would marvelously win the jubilee.

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THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER

2. 5. 75.

My dear Daughters,

As we begin this month of Mary, I think that what I should recommend to you is, the spirit of prayer. This is certainly the foundation of the religious life; but there are moments when it would be good to renew and rekindle oneself in it.

To begin with, silence is given to us in order to facilitate the spirit of prayer, in the same way that separation from the world and the exercises of the religious life do; but to possess it, to establish it deeply in one's soul, one must always recapture it, give oneself to it with fervor. Upon entering one's cell at night, one must be occupied with God and the things of God. If one cannot sleep, one must turn oneself towards the Blessed Sacrament. Upon awakening the next morning, the first movement of the soul should be to enter into the spirit of prayer so that the Great Silence penetrates the soul with thoughts of the Saints and unites her to God before she comes in contact with creatures. The Blessed Virgin always lived in the spirit of prayer. The Fathers say that while she slept her heart kept watch. Even in sleep this privileged creature did not interrupt the habitual act of love and union with God. This she asks also of her daughters. During this month consecrated

to her, she invites us to spend as much time as we can during the day, talking to her, calling on her for help, putting ourselves under her maternal protection; she calls on us to fill with devotion those hours dedicated to prayer, because between this Office well said, this prayer well made, this visit to the Blessed Sacrament, we recollect ourselves frequently and renew ourselves as often as possible in the presence of God.

Happy are those whose employments do not over burden them with responsibility. There is nothing better in religious life than to be in an employment that does not require a great deal of preoccupation, and leaves one a certain liberty of spirit. Thus, the coadjutrix Sisters do not have preoccupations of mind in their work and can easily immerse themselves in God during the hours of the day. This also applies to other employments. For instance, when a sacristine or a linen room Sister is at the moment doing her work, or when a Sister is keeping the children at a time when hardly anyone talks to her, each of them can remain in this state. If prayer is mingled with action you may be sure that more good is being done.

I would like this month of Mary to be for each one of you, Sisters, a renewal in this spirit that I have recommended to you today.

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A VERY LIVELY FAITH IN THE PRESENCE
OF JESUS IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

22. 8. 75.

My dear Daughters,

As I told you that the last time, I seek in my instructions to recall to you the things that you know but which it is always good to reawaken in our souls. Today, I will treat of a subject on which one cannot go back too often because of our vocation of adoration and of prayer. I will speak to you of the very lively, very ardent faith that we ought to have in the presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

Religious, of the Assumption are essentially adorers. Half of their life is spent at the feet of the Blessed Sacrament, the other half in making Our Lord known and loved, in order that He may live among the Children: in bringing them to this love, to this fidelity, to this devotedness of which they ought to first of all fill themselves.

The first condition to be truly adorers is the vividness of faith that makes the soul to see always our Lord behind the Sacrament species. St. Teresa laughs good humorously at those people who regret not having lived at the same time as Our Lord. However, Sisters, to be near Our Lord during His mortal, life, to see Him, to touch His garment, to receive His word, to hear Him teach His apostles, to contemplate His look, His divine beauty, His divine goodness, was a great grace,

a great good, a great gift!

Certainly St. John, St. Peter, St. Marthe, St. Magdalene, all those who had lived in the intimacy of Our Lord had been very privileged. No one ignores that one look of Jesus transformed Peter, that his look also acted profoundly on the poor Magdalene. Jesus would look at a sinner and this unique look would make of this sinner an apostle.

True, it was a great grace, but we have nothing to envy them for. We have our Lord in our midst in the Blessed Sacrament. St. Teresa resumes: "If I had been in Judea at the time of Our Lord, I would not have been able to see Him from so near, no above all to approach Him so often. The crowd would have been between Him and me as for this poor Zaccheus who was obliged to climb a tree to see Him pass by because he was small. Whereas in the Blessed Sacrament our Lord is always near-all that is needed is that we render our soul very attentive to His presence and are penetrated very particularly of this divine presence when we receive Him in Holy Communion. Then He not only enters our exterior home as when He went to Magdalene's, but He descends into the interior home, into the depths of our soul where we can keep ourselves at His feet, pour out our tears, our desires, and obtain all His graces. Even more; when we do not have the happiness of

communicating, we can, through spiritual Communion, approach Him, constantly, see Him, speak to him, listen to the words that He has left to us in the Holy Gospel, and receive from Him all the graces we need."

That is why St. Teresa thought and could say, that she had Our Lord more than if she had drawn near to Him in His mortal life. We all know it. In reality, we are all like St. Louis to whom someone said that a great miracle had taken place in one of the Churches of Paris, that the adorable Face of Our Lord appeared in the Blessed Host, and as one pressed him to go there, the king said: "I will refrain from it, I believe in the presence of our Lord in the Holy Eucharist and I would diminish a little merit of my faith if I went to see such a miracle". We are all like him. Like St. Louis, we do not need to see a miracle to believe in the Real presence, but we have need to renew ourselves often in these thoughts to keep towards the Holy Eucharist two dispositions indispensable for Our faith.

First, a very profound exterior respect in our bearing, in our attitude, our behavior in the chapel, an exterior respect that manifests that in the interior we are penetrated of the presence of God, and besides this respect that should never leave us, confidence, a confidence without limit, a true confidence a childlike confidence.

I heard a priest say of a person whom he know (it was a Religious of the Assumption), that when she made a simple genuflection before the Blessed Sacrament, he noticed in her such a character of faith, of filial confidence towards our Lord that he was penetrated by it. Why do we not all have this visible disposition in us? There are a thousand, ten thousand ways of preaching- who would believe that a simple genuflection made with faith, respect, love could be a sermon?

All our actions are good, evil or indifferent. If they are good, they bear it for eternal life and even for this life because of a holy and edifying life brings souls to Jesus Christ.

It seems to me that nothing will help us more than this thought: "I can always be an apostle, even by a gesture, by a fold of my veil. I can always help, console, gladden the others, according to God". "The office of the good Spirit", says St. Ignatius, "is to gladden the soul, to expand souls, to excite in them the desire for perfection? Why would we not ^{have} always this spirit of zeal? What can we do that equals this work? What can we say of more value? What is the small affair, the small satisfaction, the little story, that brings to us (if we seek ourselves), and equal good, a consolation similar to that of being always in peace and joy in imitation of the good angel, in imitation of the Holy Spirit, in imita-

tion of all the saints when they were among us?

If people like to come near the saints, to see them, to listen to them, it is that in their action, their words there was something (I do not know what) that I would call the outpouring of the good spirit that brings one to God, elevates above the earth, consoles and gladdens, and nothing gladdens good souls more than to be carried towards God. Try it yourselves and you will surely experience it.

Act in such a way, my dear Daughters, that everybody may have this to be grateful for. Then God will be pleased. All your words will be good, all your actions will be holy. You will have found this true joy, this charity without ally that ought to unite souls in the religious life.

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