

DETACHMENT FROM ALL THINGS

18 July 1875

My dear Daughters,

In my readings of Saint Therese these past days, I have noticed how much she insists on a great detachment from all creatures as being an essential point for the life of prayer, the interior life, the religious life. However, it would seem that religious -- cloistered, enclosed, and separated from the world -- would have less need of it than we who have necessary and frequent relations with the outside world.

Our own title: Religious of the Assumption, seems to give us a particular duty of detachment from the evil in the world. The word, Assumption, my Sisters, indeed signifies that one has passed into new territory -- a superior region; that one has in some way, passed beyond the limits of this life to share in the dialogue of heaven, following the word of St. Paul: "May your conversation be of heaven."

We must look at ourselves often to see what is the measure of detachment in our souls. There is no age where it is no longer necessary to examine ourselves on this point, for it is not easy

to maintain this state of entire detachment by which one no longer holds on to anything, to any place, to any of the conditions of our life.

I am starting by the inanimate objects: not to hold on to one employment or another, to this type of lesson or occupation or another, There is much to be done in order to entirely detached as such, in order to have one's heart completely in heaven.

I said entirely; for, in speaking of detachment, my Sisters, I am not only speaking of detachment from what one does, but also from what one would like to do. When a certain occupation is given to us, often it is not difficult to be ready to leave it, because one feels its pains and its worries. Then, this is no longer detachment; it is rather, a lack of detachment, which brings us to want something else, to think that we would do better in such and such an occupation. Detachment makes us ready either always to do the same thing or to change willingly when we are asked.

This is for material things. I am coming now to persons. The most tender charity must be in our heart. We must sincerely

love each of the persons with whom we live. We are even allowed to love certain persons with a more tender affection, for the virtues that we see in them or for what they have done for us. An affection based on these motives is not contrary to detachment from creatures. But as soon as anxiety comes in, as soon as one runs after the presence of the loved ones, of the consolations that they give, as soon as one has the need to be loved, which is very different from loving; as soon as one needs that which gives attachment to creatures, to all that one can receive from the creature, one is no longer in the detachment that God asks of His spouses. Detachment is not contrary to charity; but it is opposed to all ties, to all the threads by which one remains attached on this earth and held back from God.

In speaking of that today, I would like that, from now until the retreat, each one of you truly live what she has to do in that respect, to be disposed to being a daughter of prayer, united to God in prayer, in meditation, in the recitation of the Prayer of the Church, in the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

The Blessed sacrament, my Sisters, is truly the perfect model of this impartiality which I am speaking about. There Our

Lord loves us very tenderly, He desires us, calls, waits for us. He is there, always ready to take what we give Him, to return His honor and adoration to His Father. But He does not follow us everywhere; He does not come begging at each instant for consolations. He takes what we give Him, and at the same time, He is always giving.
