

GOD ALLOWS OUR TRIALS TO STRENGTHEN OUR LOVE AND TO MAKE OUR VIRTUE SOLID

11th March 1877

My dear Daughters,

I spoke to you lately about the life of prayer and I said that there was an obstacle to this life. This obstacle consists in trials that come from within and without.

Just because He is so kind God does not let us go through life without many afflictions. There are afflictions from the heart, and there are others that come from political upheavals, as in the case of the poor Polish and German nuns driven out of their convents and our own dispersal during the Commune. There are, besides, interior trouble and temptation and suffering.

But why all these trials? Because God loves us and wants our greater good. He wants our virtues to be solid, the kind of virtue that consists in being attached to God alone, seeking Him alone and serving Him even in trial and affliction. This is a supreme love for God that makes a soul obedient and faithful always and everywhere. That explains why God allows trials. It is to make our love and our virtues more solid.

It is beyond our power not to feel deeply disturbed, when we experience the revolt of nature and the anguish of having our soul plunged in sadness and distress. Our Blessed Lord went through this in the Garden of Olives. It even made Him weep. So it is beyond our power not to fall in the lower part of our soul all kinds of struggle and strife. But by our will we have to rise above nature and submit to God, kiss His hand, accept the trial He sends, and show that our heart is faithful to Him in all submission and love.

These are the times when we learn to take refuge in the Heart of Jesus. Our Blessed Lord wants His Sacred Heart to be our place of refuge in all our troubles and dangers.

The Fathers of the Church see in Our Lord's open side a figure of the Church and the Sacraments. From it flowed water and blood, the source of Baptism and the Blessed Eucharist, which He had previously ordained and now confirmed. But if He willed the water that was to feed us to come from His Sacred Heart opened by the wound, He willed no less that we should seek in the five precious wounds of Our Lord a safe refuge where no enemy can reach us, above all in the sufferings of the heart it is to the Heart of Jesus we must go.

That was the devotion of many saints. St. Gertrude, St. Bernard, had their home in the open side of Our Lord, and there they found His sufferings and His great love.

So you see, Sisters, it is for love of us that God allows us to suffer. He wants us to take everything from His hand and to submit to His will. He wants us to show Him our love and fidelity in moments when, left to mere nature, we should crumple up. And He wants us to draw our strength and consolation from His Divine Heart. That is the source of the great devotion, the devotion to the Sacred Heart and if we want to understand its full meaning we must seek it on the Cross.
