



Saint Marie Eugenie of Jesus

March 12th, 1876

Love of Jesus – Union with His Sufferings

My dear daughters,

At the beginning of Lent, I recommended that you meditate a lot on the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Today, I would like to encourage you to draw from this meditation a great love for His person.

Certainly, you all love our Lord Jesus Christ, but there are varying degrees of this love: there is the continual desire to progress in it. There is the joy of loving Him more and more each day, which is the great grace of religious life, and, I would also say, the special grace of the times in which we live.

We live in a time of anxiety and uncertainty. We do not know fully what the good Lord will do with us; but if in every persecution, in every contradiction, in every more or less painful waiting, we encounter the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ; if we remembered that all this can be related to the agony of the Lord, that it is a part of His chalice, I believe that love would make us very happy to place our lips on it after Him. Our Lord measures the trial by the strength of the soul, He gives from His chalice what each one can drink and wants to accept. If we are very generous, we will draw more from it.

You know well what is written in the Gospel, when the mother of James and John approaches Jesus to ask Him that her two sons be placed, one at His right hand, the other at His left in His kingdom, Jesus says to them: *Can you drink the cup that I will drink?* - We can, they answer. To which He says to them: *Yes, you will drink it, but as for being placed at My right hand or at My left, it is for those for whom My Father has prepared it*¹. - You see, for His apostles Jesus set this condition which is the mark of love: He offered them to drink the cup of His Passion. To which of us, my daughters, will He offer it, and to what extent, God alone knows. But if in the religious life, for every humiliation, for every suffering, for every anguish, for every pain that affects us, we dispose ourselves to drink wholeheartedly the cup of Jesus Christ, our life will be transformed.

To do this, we do not need to undergo the trials of politics or those of the streets. Certainly, each of us finds trials and humiliations within ourselves. When we know ourselves, and God allows us to pass through certain states, through certain pains, this abases us profoundly. So, do we drink the chalice with love? Are we content to drink from the chalice of Jesus Christ that which is perhaps the least bitter: humiliation?

What is humiliation, after all? An affliction that addresses only the imagination, the spirit, the will! When we have been humiliated, we become what we were before. We have not passed through the hands of

¹ Mt 20, 20-23.

executioners, nor through inconceivable tortures. And yet, how difficult it is to put our lips to the chalice of humiliation! This is why our Lord wanted to drink it without measure.

I will add something that is more difficult to accept: anxiety. God allows us to be anxious about the state of our soul, our dispositions, our prayer, the people around us, about a thousand and one things—anxiety in short. Our Lord did not completely remove them from Himself. He suffered them in such a vast proportion that His divine blood flowed to the ground during His agony. Note well, it was not a time of physical suffering, but a time of dread and the most excessive **anxiety\dread**.

Certainly, as Saint Bernard says, we would find it easier to carry the cross if we carried it in this spirit, with the help of the Spouse of the Church, Who is also our divine Spouse, if in what is happening to us we soothed² our souls by saying: "I am glad to taste the cup of our Lord," or again, according to the words of Saint Paul to the Hebrews: "Come now, courage, my poor soul, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood³. Why do you not want to go through this painful and dark night through which Jesus Christ first passed? He will be close to you to act and fight with you. Desire to know Him through His Passion. Ask Him to help you, to support you, to console you; He will do so with a love that will soften all your **anguish/dread/anxiety**."

We have in our sorrows what our Lord did not have. We can all turn to our Savior, God and man, Who tasted the cup of sorrow before us. Jesus in His agony was reduced only to what His holy humanity allowed, and God His Father had to send Him an angel from heaven to console and strengthen Him.

Finally, my daughters, if we do not participate in the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ through outward suffering, if we are not mistreated and sent out, we will all at least have to undergo suffering and illness. When they come, they will find in us only what we have prepared for them through meditation and prayer. We must not believe that we begin to sanctify ourselves during illness. Then, says Saint Therese, we demonstrate the virtue we have acquired in health. So, get to work, and try to acquire patience through union with Our Lord Jesus Christ in His sufferings. God may send you trials that will surpass anything you can imagine. If you are united to Our Lord, your patience will defy all, your strength will conquer all. This is why I urge you, during Lent, to draw from the meditation on the Passion of Our Lord that ardent love which makes us want to suffer with Jesus Christ, that we want to be victims with Jesus Christ, that we want to go through humiliations and interior pains, if God pleases to send them to us. This generous love which removes all contradictions, all worries, all opposition to the ways that divine Providence will have over us during the rest of our lives. Let us do this with a certain enthusiasm of heart; this is necessary to sustain us, without preventing us, alas!, from failing sometimes.

Saint Peter had this surge of heart when he said to Jesus: *Lord, I will lay down my life for you⁴. And again: Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death⁵*. The first time, however, he fails, but then, see how he accepted being in prison, suffering! How he asked, with admirable humility, to be crucified upside down judging himself unworthy of suffer in the same way as his Master!

One cannot therefore say that the ardor that leads the soul to suffer and die with Jesus Christ is useless. It is the same for all those that form in the soul. We will feel magnificent ardor. Then we will fall to the

² "Accoisions" : ancient word used by Mother Marie Eugenie.

³ Cf. He 12, 4.

⁴ Jn 14, 37.

⁵ Lk 22, 33.

ground and begin to collapse. But if we maintain our ardor, if we draw from our falls more confidence and fervor, a time will come when we will know how to suffer for Jesus Christ and show Him true love.