

11th July 1880

OF LOVE AND PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH

Saint Marie Eugenie of Jesus

Today, dear Sisters, we celebrate the feast of all the Sovereign Pontiffs, -- of all those who have successively passed on the seat of St. Peter, suffering, spending their life for the salvation of souls, for the good of the Church. This feast ought to help us to renew within ourselves love for the Church, to pray especially for the needs of the Church which are so many and so great today! The Church suffers in so many countries!

What is the Church, dear Sisters? It is the assembly of the faithful under its legitimate pastors. The Church therefore, is the assembly of the faithful: all baptized persons belong to the Church. What is not done at this moment to snatch baptized souls from the action of Jesus Christ, from the action of the Church, from the action of legitimate pastors?

It is one of the greatest motives for prayer, for sacrifice, for efforts on oneself: to obtain the salvation of many souls which are exposed to a series of evil undertakings against the Church -- the souls of children, for example, who can offer no resistance. If they are not taught what is good, if nobody applies himself to destroy in them the evil roots left by original sin, can these poor souls defend themselves? Are they not exposed to be lost? These are the most innocent of the flock of Jesus Christ; they are defenceless; it is a massacre of innocents and there are those who want to snatch them and deliver them to the devil.

Prayer alone can react against this and along with prayer, holiness. One ought to try to put oneself in holy dispositions, in dispositions which are pleasing to God; to stimulate one's prayer with greater self-renunciation, greater love of God -- in order to save many poor souls, so that the power of God manifests itself and, making itself known, God may scatter His enemies.

It is certain that if prayer is ardent during difficult times, it can turn away calamities. We have examples of graces thus obtained. During the barbarian invasion, St. Leo stopped Attila before Rome; in France, we see St. Genevieve stopping them before Paris; St. Loup, at Troyes, St. Aignan at Orleans. If these Saints were able to do this it was because of the power they had before God in being His perfect servants.

At this moment, it is above all the religious who ought to exert every effort to become perfect servants of God. May each one of you, by the intimate knowledge of yourselves -- of what you ought to reject and of what you ought to keep, seek to sanctify yourselves so as to be more powerful in prayer and thus become a help to the Church.
