

18th July 1880

ON FAITH

Saint Marie Eugenie of Jesus

My dear Sisters,

I want today to call your attention to some words read this morning at the Gospel. Our Lord said to His Apostles: "I call you friends, I shall not call you servants anymore". These words of Our Lord can be applied to us also: we are no longer servants. Certainly we are servants in the sense which made Our Lady say: "I am the handmaid of the Lord" (Lk. 1: 38); but we are more than that, since we are Our Lord's spouses. It is to us that these other words are addressed: "I appointed you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last" (Jn. 15: 16). What is this fruit, dear Sisters? Why have we been called to this Congregation? So that we may bear fruit and this fruit may last.

Think of all the Congregations, all the religious Orders. What is precisely the abundant fruit that the first religious of these Orders or Congregations have borne? Many did not do great things; nevertheless, they bore fruit, the fruit of good example and the practice of all religious virtues. This is the excellent fruit Our Lord expects of His spouses and that we have to bear so that it lasts.

Do you remember St. Clare? What did she do? She went in spite of many obstacles, to enclose herself in a little monastery which I saw at Assisi... It is there that she lived in poverty, with some religious, enclosed and unknown to the world; nevertheless, they bore fruit and that fruit has lasted. What was this fruit? It is very important to study this, so as to seek which is the main fruit Our Lord expects of us.

At times one is prone to think that one is a good teacher, that the children succeed, that one is a good talker: but this fruit is not worth much; I shall come back on this subject.

The most important fruit is the fruit of a holy life, which is the foundation of a religious Congregation. The remembrance of these beginnings will teach those who will enter later on how to lead a holy life, for we have been "appointed to bear fruit, fruit that will last". One cannot sufficiently ask oneself this question: "What is the fruit I bear? Is my whole life really a life of abnegation, obedience, humility, poverty, regularity? Are these the examples I have given in my work, during illness, during my whole life, and which I shall leave after my death? Will they be able to say: "How one would wish to live as this sister has lived, to work, to be ill and to die in her dispositions?"

In order to do this and to have the spiritual strength for it, I shall now point out what is its foundation. All religious in general and specially the religious of the Assumption should have a great spirit of faith. The more faith we have, the more we shall bear fruit; the more we shall look at things the way God looks at them, the more we shall become what the Congregation wants of us. Each Congregation has its own spirit; our spirit consists in being enlightened by the light of faith, the light of prayer which should illumine our whole life; our spirit is to put all things which faith shows us as important, infinitely above all things prized by the purely human mind. The fruit for a religious of the Assumption is to leave aside this life of earth, the life of the senses in order to show a great spirit of faith towards all earthly things.

You all know, Sisters, what is the virtue of faith. It is a supernatural virtue infused at baptism, and which makes us say: "I believe, I am a Christian". It is a virtue which goes Godwards, and what we

believe is not necessarily what our intelligence judges as wise. But we believe in God, in the divine truths revealed which will lead us to eternal life, that is, to the supreme good.

God gives us light. He puts into our soul grace, through which we firmly believe in this light given to the Church, brought to earth by His only Son... But so that this virtue may blaze out, shine and be powerful in us, so that this grace brought by the sacrament may be greater, we must ask for its increase. The Apostle St. Peter said: "Lord, increase my faith. Let it pervade my whole life, and let the spirit of faith seize me more completely."

All the virtues of our state of life should rest on the spirit of faith. We should ask for faith not only for ourselves, but also for others. We should be full of zeal and in a habitual prayer we should ask for those who already believe, courage and firmness in their faith. How many souls have been baptized and later have denied this divine faith. How many trust more to their own reason than to the ways and thoughts of faith, because these do not agree with their own thoughts and also with the disorder of their hearts. We should so pray for them so that faith may be kept in our country, in the places where the Church has been established, so that it may shine and be stronger in those consecrated to the works of faith, such as priests, religious, lay apostles, and ask God that it may not be the human spirit but the spirit of faith which inspires them and guides them.

I shall speak now of the children we have in our care. I told you before that to make them succeed in their studies was not very important. The main thing is to establish faith in the soul of the children, to make them real Christians who, through faith, do the work Our Lord taught us to do, who love Christ, His Church, truth, and live by the truth. This requires a tremendous effort. Their intelligence should be penetrated by the light of faith; their heart too, so that they may hate sin and have a lively faith. When one knows what sin is, that it separates us from the sovereign good, it is the evil one fears most. This does not mean that no one will ever fall into it, but if some one with deep faith sins, anguish and remorse will seize her soul until she makes a complete break with this dreadful evil.

Finally, let us ask for ourselves and for others a spontaneous faith. I mean by this a deep-rooted faith, ardent and lively, which resents any offence made to God, to the Crucifix, the Virgin Mary and the Saints. We should ask for this real love which prizes all we possess in the supernatural, divine order, which leads us to eternal life.

I would have still much to tell you. Don't forget specially to ask for a great faith, weighing according to faith everything in your life, your work, your difficulties, your likes and dislikes, holding as little what faith does not consider important.
