

ON HUMILITY

19th April 1874

My dear Daughters,

We are now reading the chapter on humility and on humility in employments. An excellent means of always keeping it is that of acting for the sole purpose of pleasing God, of having God alone in sight; of seeking the gaze of God alone and avoiding self-love, self-seeking which, unfortunately, every creature carried within him as a result of original sin, and which is the most dominant characteristic of the time in which we live.

At every level of society, masculine and feminine, each one has his own personality and wants to show its worth. And if you look back on your life and examine what imperfections people may find in you, that for which you are given observations, whatever your employment, you will see that it is always the personality which wanted to produce itself or preserve itself. When you can find employment distasteful it is because personality did not find its place and satisfaction in it. Alas, it is our personality who produces our happiness and unhappiness.

In order to do our employments well, to sanctify ourselves therein, to merit having God say to us one day: "Well done, good and faithful servant because you have been faithful over a few things;" because you knew how to make good use of the two, three or five talents I had confided to you "enter into the joy of your Lord," we ought to perform all our employments with God in sight; under the gaze of God, with the intention of pleasing Him, of promoting His glory, His service, of practicing virtue, of seeking the holy love of God and the good of our neighbour, without looking for anything of

what seems legitimate in our regard, such as our satisfaction, our consolation, which is always a bad sign in the order of perfection.

Fr. d'Alzon had a director whom I also had when M. Combalot sent me to make a retreat with the Dominicans, and this good M. Verniéne always said: The "I" and the "me" are the breath of the serpent; when the "I" and the "me" are in a speech, imperfection is there, all reasoning revolves around the me. Begin by ejecting the "I" and the "me" from it and you will arrive at putting them in a proper order of relation to God and neighbour." Today more than at any time, they put this "I" and this "me" everywhere in conversation, writings, speeches, words and books.

For us who are the opposite of the world and who should be a reparation offered to God for the world, let us remove the "I" and the "me" as much as possible, let all personality disappear! This is a great thing but it is not easy.

I have known men who had served God for a long time; they led holy lives and yet one sensed quite well their personality: it was big, visible, and came out from very pure, if it can be thus expressed, like those weeds which emerge from the earth at spring-time, without being noticed. If those personages, clothed with such lofty dignities, were conscious that their personality stood out so much, then would have tried to exert all their effort to destroy it. However, they did not see it, we are blind with regard to this matter. That is why we ought to ask the good God to enlighten us by humility: then the absence of self-will cover us like clothing and people will no longer feel personality in us.
