



February 5, 1893

Reparation through Jesus Christ

My dear Sisters,

We are about to enter Lent during this Quinquagesima season, when prayers of reparation are offered everywhere for the sins and offenses committed against God by both the people and the world. Poor and rich, everyone offends God during the feasts, and He is also offended even during Lent by the persistence of so many worldly people in holding parties and continuing to enjoy themselves. This has become part of public custom; in the past, it would have been a great scandal.

The severity of the fasting law was so great at one time that there were only four butchers in Paris authorized to sell meat; it was thought that this was quite sufficient for the sick.

Authorization was required to obtain meat. This is no longer the custom of our time: no one is embarrassed, and the law of the Church is no longer respected.

For us, we cannot add much to our already very full lives. It is said in the Chapter on Mortification: *"The laborious life they lead is usually enough to expend their strength."*

This is true, and we see how often it is still necessary to replenish one's strength; but mortification is not only that of the body, and I wanted to suggest to you that you cultivate a greater spirit of prayer during the feast days and during Lent.

Have the very special intention of offering Holy Mass in expiation and reparation for the offenses of which God is the object through the excesses of the love of pleasure. In Holy Mass, we have the greatest treasure we can offer to God: Our Lord Himself, offering Himself in a non-bloody sacrifice, rendering to God all the adoration, honor, praise, glory, and blessing He deserves—all that we could possibly desire to offer to God. We must intend to benefit from this treasure as well, otherwise we do not give this action all the merit it can have.

Mother Marie-Marguerite was recently speaking to me about Canon King and his very particular devotion to the Holy Mass; it is a devotion that should be universal. This holy priest spends his morning not only saying Mass, but also listening to it, and this is very right because in no other activity of life do we have the riches found in the Holy Mass; let us therefore offer it in expiation, in reparation, and as a tribute of adoration to God.

We can do nothing by ourselves; we are but sinners, utterly wretched and weak in all that we do and offer to God. But in Jesus Christ, we have at our disposal all the homage, all the honor, all the adoration that are due to God. He is honored by a Mass commensurate with all His grandeur, and it is no exaggeration to say that there is then equality between what is due to Him and what we offer Him. Then we honor God as much as He deserves to be honored.

I propose this to you during the Forty Hours Devotion and during Lent; we cannot do anything better. You often say to God, "I am nothing, I can do nothing." And it is true. But that is not enough; we must compensate for this powerlessness as much as we can, and the Mass gives us the means to do so. Make it a point to attend all the Masses said in the house; it is not easy to get to the 7:30 Mass, one must hurry, but make it a point of devotion; I recommend it to you with all the insistence I can muster.