



The great love of Mother Therese Emmanuel for the Liturgy.

Mother Marie Eugénie, July 15th 1888

My dear daughters,

I have spoken to you once about Mother Therese Emmanuel; I would like to add something today and will talk to you about her great zeal for the Liturgy. You have all known her zeal, and those who lived with her remember her great love for the Office. It is certain that at the beginning (of the Congregation) she insisted more than anyone else that we should say the Office. She desired it ardently and she was always strongly attached to it, and inspired the Novices with love and devotion for the Office of the Church all the time she had charge of their formation; she taught them to say it with respect and attention and to make it the foundation of their spiritual life.

As for herself, when you know her interior life better, as it is revealed in her papers and in her intimate notes, you will see that the life of the Church, the liturgy was prominent in her interior life; she carefully followed the feasts of the time of the year; she always joined the object of the devotion of the day to her own habitual interior occupation. If, for instance, the Church celebrated the Passion of Our Lord, then she would see how Our Lord was small silent and humble during his Passion as he had been in His Infancy.

Her spiritual life was nourished by the words of the Office and by the psalms we recite according to the time of the year. She was so fervent and faithful in this devotion that last year she still left her door open so as to take part in matins, to be able to hear the singing of the Te Deum and unite her prayer with it. Sometimes, although very tired and suffering she wished to take part in the sung masses, even when she had been to communion already and during the day however much she was suffering it was her devotion to join in the recital of Vespers or whatever part of the Office was being said.

One of the greatest sacrifices during her last days at Cannes, was that she could not go to the Chapel, nor take part in the ceremonies there because her room was too far away. She said to me. “Mother, I really feel the deprivation of the Chapel. How shut in I am here, not being near the Chapel.” !

She lived the feasts; she celebrated them with touching devotion. The sorrows and joys that the Church expresses in the Office, resounded in the very depths of her soul. I would be happy to

see you all as full of this spirit which suits us so well. Père Hildebrand, who saw Mother Therese Emmanuel at Cannes, wrote to me, “I hope that she is now celebrating in heaven the feasts she so loved to celebrate on earth.” This devotion had struck the Father very much. An office well said, a Mass well sung, priests, like the Benedictines carrying out the ceremonies with devotion... all this was a real joy for the soul of Mother Therese Emmanuel.

This is what we must imitate, Sisters. Mother Therese Emmanuel’s participation in the feasts, her devotion for the Office, the way it fed her spiritual life. I think she often brought this out in her teaching; and you must all recall with what feeling she prepared for each of the feasts and the ardent desire she had that everyone should participate.

