



## SIMPLE ABANDON TO GOD

*14 November 1884*

I have told you about meditation and about how to avoid being encumbered by it, so that instead of becoming a help it becomes a worry and an obligation. I want to tell you now about another manner of praying that is easier and more fruitful for many people. But it should not be used generally when one can follow the usual manner. This is a good prayer for the time spent before the Blessed Sacrament.

When you are at our Lord's feet, it should not be hard for you to be convinced of all that is lacking in your spiritual life, especially the supernatural spirit and virtue(s). Add to this what you already know by faith, that there is nothing in you that you have not received, that if you have some talents, it is God who has given them to you and that the one who has given you everything in the natural realm, also gives you everything in the realm of grace.

When you are at the feet of Jesus Christ, the author and dispenser of grace, you are at the feet of the one who wants to give you all good things, if only you ask him for them. *Up until now you have not asked anything in my name. Ask and receive that your joy may be full,* (John 16:24). If you are lacking so many things, it's because you have not asked for them, that you have not been sufficiently under the influence of the Holy Spirit, under the action of Our Lord Jesus Christ who is present in the tabernacle to distribute his most perfect gifts and to accomplish in us all that concerns salvation and holiness.

When it is hard for you to find a subject of meditation and stir up your affection, when you cannot meditate, stay at our Lord's feet as the greatest poverty before the one who is rich in everything good and can give all to you. Several comparisons have been made: You are a poor earth which produces neither fruit nor flowers, miserable, arid soil that needs to be watered by grace. This grace comes from Our Lord. The earth has to be warmed and He is the son of justice and holiness; let his rays shine on you.

In this prayer, then, where you are filled with the feeling of your poverty, with the feeling that God is there, your Savior full of kindness desiring to give himself to you, try to place yourself with him in a relationship of adoration, love, profound attention, pleading that he makes his grace flow into you.

If your lips are dry and a spring is before you, you know that, if there is nothing to unite your mouth to the water, you will stay thirsty. It's not enough that the spring is close, that Jesus is in the house, or that you go to chapel: you have to create a channel between the water and your poor, dry and cold soul. Try to create it by attention, by supplication, by ardent desire.

You don't need many words. Look at the Samaritan. Jesus said to her: *If you knew the one who tells you 'Give me a drink,' you would ask him for living water.* And she exclaimed: *Lord, give me that water,* (John 4:10). God sees your heart; in this prayer of simple presence to God, let this be the intimate cry of your heart. Ask Jesus to give you his grace, his Spirit, himself.

You are cold. Who isn't cold in comparison with the saints? Present yourself to God as a person freezing with cold would seek the sunshine. Stay there as long as you can and let yourself be penetrated by the son of justice and love. The longer you remain in his presence in this attitude of faith and humility, the more grace will come to you and the more fruit you will receive. You lack virtues. As we receive grace and the ardor of love from Jesus, we can expect his virtues to come into our souls in the measure that we are united to him and give our-selves to him. By the ardor of your prayer, try to establish this bond which will make Jesus living in you overcome your defects. Beg him to cure you as the poor sick who, followed after him in Judea. Tell him that you want to sacrifice everything so that he can live in you. Ask him for grace and strength. Praying this way becomes easy.

Make acts of desire, of adoration, of love and thanksgiving. Recognize your weakness and poverty, but without forcing yourself and without activity which would distract in the least way from your attention to the presence and person of Our Lord Jesus Christ. If your desire is sincere; if your prayer comes from the depths of your heart, you will try to correspond with grace throughout the day, make acts of virtue, put yourself often under the action of our Lord, and turn away from all that does not love. This prayer is quite common. M. Olier stresses the three acts in it: adoration, communion, cooperation. We try to be with Jesus, to practice virtue and walk in his way. Although everything comes from him, we have to cooperate.

Sainte Jeanne de Chantal calls this prayer, the prayer of simple abandon to God. A person who is united to the holy humanity of Our Lord arrives at a point where she is totally given to God's will and is abandoned in his hands, as Jesus. This is, indeed, the aim of religious life.

... When you are in this prayer of simple abandon to God, you belong to God, you ask for the graces you need for that to be true, so that you depend on God, so that you are truly a living branch, living on the sap of the true vine, Jesus Christ.

... I have two other remarks: the first less to occupy and hold it. I don't advise you to use this prayer before having practiced meditation. You will be disposed to remain in the air. Your attention easily goes off to other thoughts... is that, when you pray this way, you are often distracted your mind, having no considerations to make, no reasoning to follow, or to find. If a person has never meditated or studied the Gospel to apply it to her life, it will be hard, without a special grace, to stay without distractions. As an antidote, it is good to take a word of the Gospel as a help and support, even beginning your prayer this way.

Suppose you take the word: *If you had only recognized on this day, the way to peace*, (Luke 19:42). You would find a support there. You would pray: My peace is to be in your hands, Lord, my peace is to have no obstacles between you and me. Then, a thousand thoughts and distractions come to interfere." But with a word, you will come back more easily to your prayer. Or *I must be about the affairs of my Father* (Ibid. 2:49). When your attention gets carried away, you can pray: I want to be about the affairs of God, given entirely to God, to God's will, God's plan and not with these distractions." These words are not the best, but serve as examples. The Gospel is full of such words you can use. There are many in the Discourse after the last Supper.

The second remark is that you have to try to live under the action of the Lord all during the day. How can you come and find the Lord easily, depend on him if, as soon as you finish your prayer time, you seek distractions, give in to your moods. It's impossible. You can be established in this prayer only if you remain under the action of the one who lives in you. He is your head, you are his members. He is your spouse. He lives in you and transforms you. When people come to you, they don't come to find Madame so and so with her character and mood, but a spouse of Jesus Christ who resembles him in thought and feelings, who lets Jesus live in her

Finally, don't fix yourself in any will of your own whatever it may be, for willfulness will close you forever to the prayer of simple abandon in God. You can't say: "All that you want, I am yours, give me only what is you;" or as St Augustine: "Give me what you command and then order whatever you want, let me do your will in everything;" and then insist on your own will, even in the smallest thing.

Do not believe that there is any exception. The "will" that seems the most legitimate to you will not be less of an obstacle to union. You can't say: "All that you want, but I can't live without music," or "I can't live with music" – Whatever it may be to which you are stuck will make the prayer of simple abandon to God impossible.

Saint Francis de Sales held this prayer in such esteem that he told St Jeanne de Chantal: Those who meditate serve themselves various dishes from the Savior's table, but the person who stays totally abandoned in his hands is like St John resting on Jesus' heart.

This prayer that is fruitful is not difficult. It doesn't require special talent, great intelligence but great love, great sincerity in the relationship with our Jesus and an ardent desire to be one with him, to do what pleases him.

Lastly: The Lord who is our goal is also the way. Don't ever forget this. You can do nothing without him. To have success in prayer, you have to expect everything from him with a trust that goes beyond all trust. . You call me good master Our Lord said, *only God is good*, (Mark 10:18). Jesus says that for us in the Gospel to let us know that he is God. It is as God that he has this infinite goodness that makes him say Good Master. And he wants to grant us everything. He wants to be our means by his blood, his sufferings, and his total sacrifice for us, by all that he did on earth.

Let him do what he wants. Do not resist but hand yourself over to his action. It will make you little and poor, even lead you to the Cross. But with him, you will be happier on the way of the cross than on any other way in this world

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