

TRUST IN THE GOODNESS OF GOD

13th January 1879

My dear Daughters,

The Christmastide mysteries urge me to come back to something that I have often spoken about and that one can never ponder on enough. It is this. God's motive for all He does for man in the mysteries of our Redemption is His infinite goodness.

As a rule, interior souls who pursue perfection do not lay enough stress on trust in God nor have they a sufficiently deep-rooted conviction that His goodness is really infinite, and that in His kindness He wants to lavish it on us. Yet in reality, what helps us more than anything else in prayer, and temptation, in difficulties and trials, is to have deep down in our heart a confidence that is ever born afresh, a trust that enables us to face things, even death. To lose those we love is a great sorrow. In Religion we love one another and often our hearts ache when a Sister dies. That is the time to renew our belief that God does everything out of love and that He is always watching over us and preparing what is best for us.

Likewise with our faults. We have to struggle against ourselves endlessly, and we are always coming up against our miseries and infirmities. What helps us most to fight against them and makes us give ourselves trustfully to obedience and poverty, and to the labour of mental prayer, is to count always on God and continually to stir up in our hearts the thought of His boundless goodness.

That puts an end to scruples and to too much introspection. What does Infinite Goodness want of us? Only that we should do what we can and that we should confess the sins that we remember. But

there is no commandment that tells us to have a faultless memory nor such clear-sightedness as to see all that goes on in our own mind and heart. If we forget some of our transgressions, that comes from our infirmity and we must not fuss and worry and make endless examinations of conscience. That would not honour God. He wants us to go to Him simply and generously, working at our spiritual progress and going forward, not always looking back. St. Paul gives us the formula for this when he says: *“Forgetting what I have left behind, intent on what lies before me, I press on with the goal in view, eager for the prize, God’s heavenly summons in Christ Jesus.”*¹

What our Lord asks us to do is to seek Him, to go to Him, to go forward always, leaving what is behind us, no looking for trouble by useless self-examination, forgetting self by abnegation, banking only on God’s goodness that watched over our birth and what is much more important, over our Baptism. It is such a huge grace to be baptized, to become God’s child, to receive the Blessed Trinity as our guest, to be made the Temple of the Holy Spirit. And God gives this grace to everyone out of His pure and Infinite Goodness, before we have done anything to deserve it.

And who can count the graces received since Baptism? There is our Lord’s presence, the renewing of His mysteries, His life in the Tabernacle, such a life of love! When you go to Him, doubtless, you have to adore His greatness and His majesty, but besides that you must adore His infinite condescension, His merciful kindness, His hands full of graces that He wants to pour out on you.

¹ Phil. 3:13-14

The more you develop this habit of adoration the more generous you will become. The things that cramp souls the most are, lack of sufficient trust, getting tied up in too many details and looking too much at self. The reason why souls do not give themselves completely is that they do not realize all that God gives them. “Set the house on fire” says St. Francis of Sales, “and the furniture will soon be thrown out of the window”. Set the heart on fire with love at the thought of the love Our Lord has lavished on it, and it will count nothing too dear to be sacrificed, and sacrificed willingly.

Come back after to these thoughts, deepen your understanding of them more and more. They are the mysteries of God’s love for us. He made Himself so small, He accepted such lowliness and humiliation that when He drew the shepherds and kings to His crib and let Himself be given to them, their adoration and their faith were enough to save them and sanctify them.

We too must go to adore Him and to pray. There is no fear that He will be less generous towards us than He was towards them, nor do less for us than He did for them. By adoring they learned to believe, by believing they learned to love, and by love they became saints and earned Eternal happiness in Heaven.
