

## **ZEAL FOR OUR INSTITUTE**

12<sup>th</sup> July 1874

My dear Daughters,

For quite sometime now, we are being asked to make new foundations of the Assumption. This should make us be conscious of the importance of having true zeal for our Institute. If it is God's will and the wish of men that it spread out, it must indeed be God's will that it be holy. We prove our zeal for our Institute when in all we are and in all we do we strive to establish the holiness proper to it.

I remember having sometimes said in passing that we must be careful above all of what we say. In fact, our words hold on absolute importance in all our life. How do we communicate with our neighbour? How do we know each other, unless it be by what we say? And among our words are there not some which aim at destroying something good? We should often recollect ourselves and thus try to attain the height wherein all we say leads to God, to the esteem of our Rules and of our Institute, whether it be at recreation or in our work, speaking above all what is in accord with the spirit of the Gospel.

Let us be convinced that each one of us is to some extent responsible for the Institute which is only at its beginnings. Were each one of us a saint; were each one fervently to reproduce in her conduct what the Rule demands of simplicity, of obedience, of charity, of humility, of zeal for souls, of mortification - not extraordinary penances, - but the generous and habitual mortification of the senses and of the passions, in short, were each one zealous in the practice of all the other virtues pointed out to us,

can you imagine how our Institute would be pleasing and precious in the eyes of God, how useful it would be for the world, and what inward strength it would possess?

What worries and what gives assurance in a foundation is to confide it to a person who has the spirit of God; but you can understand what a relief it would be if, with a superior, we could find three of four Sisters possessing a supernatural spirit. What tranquillity for us, what a blessing for a house! The spirit of God is extremely removed from our own spirit. We must despise ourselves and be accounted as nothing. God does not do His work through persons who value themselves in their own eyes; but He gives Himself to those who think nothing of themselves and are completely devoted to His will, His glory and the service of souls.

Let us try, my dear Daughters, to manifest this in our life, in the works which are entrusted to us, and let us have the courage to eliminate from our conduct anything opposed to this. If we are sincere with ourselves, we will all discover as we examine our innermost depths that we have some defects or some inclination which is the opposite of what I have just pointed out. However, to face it or to recognize it is not enough: we must strive at getting rid of it. Two years ago, I was speaking to someone whose vanity had induced into serious mistakes as far as I could see, and I was telling her: “Don’t you know that you are vain?” She replied: “I know it”, and there she remained. How is it that, knowing she was vain she did not fight against it? Why did she not take the absolutely necessary contrary path of humility?

Each of us as she looks into herself can easily discover her dominant fault and tell herself: “Yes, I know I have this defect; but why would I not have the courage of combating it, of practising on this occasion the virtues contrary to it?” This is what we must do if

we want to edify those around us; whereas if we say: “Yes, I know I have this defect; but I cannot get rid of it, it is part of my temperament; people must accept me as I am”, then we resign ourselves to it, we let it take root in our soul; and we have no idea to what falls, what imperfections, a dominant fault seen and condoned can lead us.

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