

# **RETREAT NOTES**

**St. Peter Julian Eymard**

**Second or Great Retreat of Rome**

*January 25-March 30, 1865*

---

From the French critical edition

*Introductions:* E. C. Nuñez, S.S.S.

*Critical edition:* E. C. Nuñez, S.S.S.

A. Garreau, S.S.S.

*Translation:* William LaVerdiere, S.S.S.

---

New York  
Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament  
1969

NIHIL OBSTAT

Rev. Wilfrid Thibodeau, SSS  
*Censor Deputatus*

IMPRIMI POTES

Very Rev. Normand Falardeau, SSS  
*Provincial*  
New York, February 5, 1969

AD USUM PRIVATUM

*Printed by the Abbey Press, Saint Meinrad, Indiana, U.S.A.*

## FOREWORD

On the occasion of the centenary of St. Peter Julian's death, His Holiness Paul VI honored him - and us - with an autograph letter, dated July 19, 1968. He praised our Founder and his life work, and expressed "wonderment at what, under the pressure of a certain supernatural instinct, he accomplished for the glory of God and for the good and honor of the Church." Furthermore, the Holy Father viewed this centenary as a providential occasion for our filial piety to honor our Legislator by greater fidelity to his way of life, to set greater store by his example and ideals, and above all to make the most of the spiritual legacy he has left us.

It remains for us to comply with the counsels of the Vicar of Christ by implementing them. I suggest that the best way to do. So is to *begin* by acquiring a more complete knowledge and deeper understanding of who St. Peter Julian is and what he stands for. We can get off to as good a start as any by familiarizing ourselves with St. Peter Julian's RETREAT NOTES. As he meant them for no eyes other than his own, he jotted them down with utmost candor and merciless honesty. Nowhere else does he reveal so clearly the key thoughts and sentiments which, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, oriented his soul to God and to sainthood.

To understand these NOTES and profit by them, we should read and study them in the spirit in which they were written. They are not the studied expositions of a professor bent on exploring or solving theological problems; they are merely the authentic record of what St. Peter Julian experienced in his soul as he communed with his Eucharistic Lord and of what he resolved to do for Him. If only for that reason, these NOTES should prove of untold value and interest to us; for in committing them to writing, St. Peter Julian was unsuspectingly painting a faithful likeness of himself and of what a Blessed Sacrament religious should be.

We are all aware that although our sanctification and salvation depend on our free acceptance of grace, they are primarily the work of God. As St. Augustine has it, "God begins by moving our will to act, and while our will is acting, He perfects, its action by working with it."

The RETREAT NOTES read like a running comment on this Augustinian principle of "holiness in action." They tell us of the promptings, of the Holy Spirit in St. Peter Julian's soul and of the latter's active response. Neatly outlined for us to see are the ways and byways along which St. Peter Julian plodded resolutely to the summits of holiness. As we follow him step by step, we cannot help but wonder to what divine lengths God's love is ready to go to transform any clot of a man into a saint; indeed, the basic ills and problems of our Founder, as catalogued in these NOTES, are recognizedly very much our own. We need not think less of St. Peter Julian because of that; for much of what he had in common with us at the outset, he gradually transformed or discarded before crossing the finishing line. Neither for that matter should we think less of ourselves; we may be "of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot," but what is impossible to man can be the speciality of the "Designer Infinite" - if only we let Him knead and model the clay.

I profit by the publication of the RETREAT NOTES to express my sincere appreciation to those who have made it possible. I am referring first of all to Father Eugenio Nuñez, who devoted months to painstaking study of the original manuscript and to often thankless research into the history of these three retreats. I also have in mind Father William LaVerdiere; he alone knows the countless hours spent in trying to convey in English the exact thought of St. Peter Julian Eymard. To Fathers Nuñez and LaVerdiere, this has been a labor of love; perhaps that is what accounts for the excellence of their work. While congratulating them, I also pray that these meditations may be a source of light and strength to all our religious.

Roland Huot, S.S.S.  
Superior General

Rome, August 3, 1968

# **GREAT RETREAT OF ROME**

## **Contents**

Introduction .....	1
I - Historical background of the Great Retreat of Rome .....	1
1 - Ransom of the Cenacle, occasion of the retreat .....	1
2 - Monastery of the Redemptorists, place of the retreat .....	3
3 - Schedule of the retreat .....	4
4 - The Congregation in 1865 .....	5
II - The Great Retreat in itself .....	5
1 - Characteristics of the retreat .....	5
A - An occasional retreat .....	5
B - Personal characteristics of the retreat .....	6
2 - Nature of the retreat .....	6
A - A period of intensified action of grace .....	6
B - A period of spiritual endeavor .....	7
a - Through prayer .....	7
b - Through meditation .....	7
c - Through contemplative prayer .....	7
d - Through examens .....	7
e - Through profound analyses .....	7
f - Through “confessions” .....	7
g - Through resolutions .....	7
h - Through readings .....	7
3 - Orientation and plan of the retreat .....	8
4 - Literary style .....	10
5 - Soul of Father Eymard .....	10
A - The human element: imperfections .....	10
B - The element of holiness: virtues .....	12
C - The divine element: graces; the mystical factor .....	13
6 - Main idea of the retreat .....	15
A - Occasional and semi-occasional topics .....	15
B - Ascetical topics .....	15
a - Humility .....	15
b - Poverty .....	15
b - Observance of the Rule .....	15
d - Modesty .....	15
e - Meekness .....	15
f - Mortification .....	15
g - Other virtues .....	16
C - Major themes of theology .....	16
a - Sin .....	16
b - Key dogmatic realities .....	16
c - Interior life .....	16
d - Love of God .....	16
D - Person of Jesus Christ .....	16
a - Model and teacher of holiness .....	16

b - Passion of Jesus, His presence in the soul .....	16
c - Incarnation .....	16
d - Eucharist .....	16
e - Interior life of union with Jesus Christ .....	16
f - The divine Mother .....	17
E - Eucharistic vocation .....	17
a - Gratitude for vocation .....	17
b - Eucharistic service, an interior service .....	17
c - Eucharistic adoration .....	17
d - Eucharistic apostolate .....	17
F - Gift of self: vow of his personality .....	17
7 - Value of the notes of the retreat .....	19
A - Revelation of the soul of Father Eymard .....	19
B - A definite model of spirituality .....	19
C - An incentive to self-sanctification .....	20
D - A remarkable document of spiritual literature .....	20
8 - Manuscript of the retreat .....	20
9 - French edition and English version .....	20
<hr/>	
<i>Major resolutions</i> .....	22
<i>First day</i>	
First meditation: On. St. Paul .....	22
<i>Second day</i>	
First meditation: (Indisposed) .....	23
Second meditation: "Why do you persecute Me?" .....	23
Third meditation: "Lord, what will You have me do?" .....	24
<i>Third day</i>	
First meditation: On Jesus Christ and sin .....	25
Second meditation: On my sins .....	26
Third meditation: Passion of Jesus Christ .....	26
<i>Fourth day</i>	
First meditation: Service of our Lord by the gift of self .....	27
Second meditation: Gift of self; its consequences .....	28
Third meditation: Levity of character .....	28
<i>Fifth day</i>	
First meditation: (included in summary of third meditation of preceding day, Fourthday) ...	31
Second meditation: Insensibility of heart .....	31
Third meditation: (not included) .....	32
<i>Sixth day</i>	
First meditation: Levity, insensibility: causes and remedies .....	32
Second meditation: (not recorded) .....	32
Third meditation: Mortification .....	33

<i>February 1</i>	
First meditation: Eucharistic vocation .....	33
Second meditation: Characteristic virtue of an adorer .....	34
Third meditation: Reasons for self-abasement of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament .....	35
<i>February 2</i>	
First meditation: The Presentation .....	36
Second and Third meditations: (not recorded) .....	37
<i>February 3</i>	
First meditation: The presence of God .....	37
Second and Third meditations: (not recorded) .....	38
<i>February 4</i>	
First meditation: Trial .....	38
Second and Third meditations: (not recorded) .....	38
<i>February 5</i>	
First meditation: Anniversary of my holy Baptism .....	39
Second meditation: God's goodness since my Baptism .....	40
Third meditation: The flesh, enemy of the Holy Spirit .....	40
<i>February 6</i>	
First meditation: Character of the life of Jesus Christ .....	41
Second meditation: Jesus mortified .....	42
Third meditation: Interior warfare .....	42
<i>February 7</i>	
First meditation: Mystery of the Incarnation .....	43
Second meditation: Spiritual Incarnation; sanctification; union .....	44
Third meditation: (not recorded) .....	45
<i>February 8</i>	
(No meditations recorded) .....	46
<i>February 9</i>	
First meditation: Union .....	46
Second meditation: Does God love me? .....	46
Third meditation: Reasons of God's love for me .....	47
<i>February 10</i>	
First meditation: Do I love God? .....	47
Second meditation: On the Cenacle .....	48
Third meditation: Adoration at St. Agatha (40 hours) .....	48
<i>February 11</i>	
First meditation: Interior service .....	48
Second meditation: (omitted) Letters-cattivo (bad) .....	49
Third meditation: (omitted) Confession .....	49

<i>February 12</i>	
First meditation: Dangers of working for others .....	49
Second and Third meditations: Same subject .....	51
<i>February 13</i>	
First meditation: Exterior modesty .....	51
Second meditation: Reparation for sins against modesty .....	52
Third meditation: Practice of modesty .....	52
<i>February 14</i>	
First meditation: Modesty, a royal virtue .....	52
Second meditation: (in town) .....	53
Third meditation: Modesty as a virtue .....	53
<i>February 15</i>	
First meditation: Chastity .....	54
Second meditation: On the text of the Imitation (Bk. III, Ch. 53) .....	55
Third meditation: Chastity of the heart .....	56
<i>February 16</i>	
First meditation: Gift of self .....	56
Second meditation: Same subject .....	58
Third meditation: The spirit of our Lord .....	58
<i>February 17</i>	
First meditation: Means of acquiring the spirit of Jesus .....	58
Second meditation: Same subject .....	59
Third meditation: Spirit of Jesus through love, <i>quid?</i> (What) .....	60
<i>February 18</i>	
First meditation: Jesus, humble of heart .....	61
Second meditation: Act of reparation; negative and positive humility .....	63
Third meditation: How can I acquire humility of heart? .....	63
<i>February 19</i>	
First meditation: Spirit of the poverty of Jesus .....	63
Second meditation: Failings against poverty .....	65
Third meditation: Same subject .....	66
<i>February 20</i>	
First meditation: Spiritual poverty .....	66
Second meditation: Poverty, a remedy for vanity .....	67
Third meditation: Eucharistic vocation .....	68
<i>February 21</i>	
First meditation: Service of Jesus Christ .....	69
Second meditation: (not recorded) .....	70
Third meditation: Eucharistic service .....	70
<i>February 22</i>	
First meditation: Servant .....	71

Second meditation: Same subject .....	72
Third meditation: (on pilgrimage) .....	73
<i>February 23</i>	
First meditation: Work for our Lord .....	73
Second meditation: The glory of our Lord .....	74
Third meditation: Inventory of my soul .....	74
<i>February 24</i>	
First meditation: Minister of Jesus Christ .....	75
Second meditation: Thanksgiving .....	76
Third meditation: Society; graces .....	76
<i>February 25</i>	
First meditation: The Society and I .....	77
Second meditation: (in town) .....	78
Third meditation: Need of God .....	79
<i>February 26</i>	
First meditation: Adoration .....	79
Second meditation: Quis dabit mihi pennas sicut columbae? .....	80
Third meditation: Dangers of the world .....	80
<i>February 27</i>	
First meditation: Adoration .....	81
Second and Third meditation: (day off at Castel Gandolfo) .....	82
<i>February 28</i>	
Morning meditation: (adoration at the Gesu - Closing of 40 Hours) .....	82
Evening meditation: Recollected prayer at the feet of our Lord .....	82
<i>March 1</i>	
First meditation: On penance.....	82
Second meditation: Quam dilecta tabernacula .....	84
Third meditation: The Rule .....	84
<i>March 2</i>	
First meditation: The Rule, my virtue .....	85
Second meditation: Thanksgiving .....	85
Third meditation: Life or death of the Society .....	86
<i>March 3</i>	
First meditation: Jesus sacramental is not loved .....	86
Second meditation: Propaganda .....	88
Third meditation: The Sacrifice of love .....	88
<i>March 4</i>	
First meditation: The eucharistic center .....	90
Second meditation: Propaganda .....	91
Third meditation: +++ .....	91



<i>March 5</i>	
First meditation: Center of Life .....	91
Second meditation: Recollection .....	93
Third meditation: Goodness of the divine center .....	93
<i>March 6</i>	
First meditation: The law of this center .....	93
Second meditation: Re-creation .....	94
Third meditation: Why is our Lord so little loved in Himself? .....	95
<i>March 7</i>	
First meditation: Religious service .....	95
Second meditation: Act of reparation .....	97
Third meditation: Thanksgiving .....	97
<i>March 8</i>	
First meditation: Presence of God, a rule of love .....	97
Second and Third meditations: (not recorded) .....	99
<i>March 9</i>	
First meditation: Poverty of our Lord-religious poverty .....	99
Second meditation: (not recorded) .....	100
Third meditation: Tumult .....	100
<i>March 10</i>	
First meditation: Reasons for holy poverty .....	101
Second meditation: Virtue .....	102
Third meditation: (not recorded) .....	103
<i>March 11</i>	
First meditation: The Most Blessed Virgin .....	103
Second meditation: Submission .....	104
Third meditation: Jesus the Master .....	105
<i>March 12</i>	
First meditation: Interior meekness of our Lord .....	106
Second meditation: (not recorded) .....	107
Third meditation: Exterior meekness of our Lord .....	108
<i>March 13</i>	
First meditation: Meekness of the silence of Jesus .....	109
Second meditation: Means of that virtue .....	111
Third meditation: Eucharistic meekness .....	112
<i>March 14</i>	
First meditation: God is love .....	113
Second meditation: State of my soul .....	115
Third meditation: (St. Peter's - 40 Hours, St. Frances of Rome) .....	115
<i>March 15</i>	
First meditation: On silence .....	115

Second meditation: + (in town) .....	116
Third meditation: Patience in humility and confidence .....	117
<i>March 16</i>	
First meditation: Rules for supernatural living .....	117
Second meditation: + (three Cardinals; the Cenacle) .....	118
Third meditation: Personal love of Jesus - Knowledge .....	118
<i>March 17</i>	
First meditation: Jesus' life of love for me .....	119
Second meditation: The Most Blessed Virgin .....	120
Third meditation: The Sorrows of the Most Blessed Virgin .....	120
<i>March 18</i>	
First meditation - Personal Passion of our Lord .....	121
Second and Third meditations: (not recorded) .....	123
<i>March 19</i>	
First meditation: St. Joseph .....	123
Second meditation: Consecration to St. Joseph .....	124
Third meditation: St. Joseph, adorer .....	125
<i>March 20</i>	
First meditation: The life of the Holy Family .....	126
Second meditation: The Seven Sorrows of St. Joseph .....	127
Third meditation: Crosses .....	127
<i>March 21</i>	
First meditation: Crosses of the saints; perpetual vow of personality .....	128
Second meditation: Vow of personality .....	129
Third meditation: Same subject .....	130
<i>March 22</i>	
First meditation: Union of our Lord with us .....	130
Second meditation: My union with our Lord .....	132
Third meditation: Crosses in our Lord .....	133
<i>March 23</i>	
First meditation: Life of union .....	133
Second meditation: Sustenance of union with Jesus Christ .....	134
Third meditation: Center of union .....	134
<i>March 24</i>	
First meditation: Jesus Christ, guest of man .....	136
Second meditation: The Passion - Compassion of our Lady .....	137
Third meditation: (not recorded) .....	137
<i>March 25</i>	
First meditation: On the love of God in the Incarnation .....	137
Second and Third meditations: (at the Minerva - the Holy Father) .....	138

<i>March 26</i>	
First meditation: The Most Blessed Virgin's first adoration of the Word Incarnate .....	138
Second meditation: Adoration of the 40 Hours .....	139
Third meditation: (in the evening, the same) .....	140
<i>March 27</i>	
First meditation: Review .....	140
Second meditation: Jesus, our King .....	141
Third meditation: (40 Hours) .....	141
<i>March 28</i>	
First meditation: What more could our Lord do for me? .....	141
Second meditation: Our privilege .....	142
Third meditation: Self-surrender .....	143
<i>March 29</i>	
First meditation: Eucharistic militia .....	143
Second meditation: (Propaganda) .....	145
Third meditation: Via Crucis .....	145
<i>March 30</i>	
First meditation: Offering and fortitude .....	145
Footnotes to the Great Retreat of Rome .....	146
<hr/>	
Appendix: Public Worship of Adoration .....	149
Appendix: Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament - our Patron .....	150
Appendix: Alphabetical Index of Subjects .....	151

# GREAT RETREAT OF ROME

---

## INTRODUCTION

Traditionally this retreat has been aptly called *La Grande Retraite de Rome*. That the translator should have to vindicate his English rendering of this title is none too promising a start; but that is only the first, and not the greatest, of the many challenges encountered in this two-month-long wondrous story of God's action in the soul of St. Peter Julian. The french word *grande* is very rich in meaning, almost too much so. The editors of the french edition inform us that the retreat is called *grande* to distinguish it from a previous retreat made at Rome by Father Eymard from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> of May, 1863, but also and especially to stress its duration, 65 days, and to indicate the size of the manuscript, 412 pages.

Book titles are admittedly the hardest test a translator can be subjected to. We certainly cannot agree to call this book the "Grand Retreat of Rome," although there is so very much about it that is really grand. The "Long Retreat of Rome" would not be too felicitous either, and the "Second Retreat of Rome," for its being exact, would savor too much of statistics. Perhaps the Province of St. Ann should be polled for a vote - or should it? In desperation, we called it "The Great Retreat of Rome," in the same sense that we call St. Augustine's *Confessions* a *great* classic.

In the opinion of St. Peter Julian's favorite son, Father Albert Tesniere, this retreat is "the most important document we have on the interior life of our Founder ... as much for the length of it as for the analytic depth and untold richness of the traits recorded." We may add that it constitutes a priceless document for hagiographers.

In order to appreciate its wealth and objectivity of content, one needs a certain background of information, which this introduction is meant to supply. We do not claim to solve all the problems raised by such a lengthy and profound document and still less to analyze and study exhaustively its doctrine, experiences, avowals, examens, resolutions, etc. We have merely endeavored to set up a sort of backdrop, against which the precious candid jottings of St. Peter Julian may be read in their proper perspective and a faithful image of his soul be projected as "he attended exclusively to himself for 65 days in holy retreat at the feet of the Lord" (Const. 91).

### I - Historical Background of the Retreat

1 - *Ransom of the Cenacle*, the occasion of the. Great Retreat of Rome. - For a general survey and complete story of the attempt to ransom the Cenacle from the Mohammedans, the reader is referred to the biographies of St. Peter Julian. Here, in capsule form, are the several stages of this magnificent, if hopeless, undertaking.

On *January 6, 1864*, the General Council of the Congregation took the "resolution to go to Jerusalem in order to found a house of adoration there, and to endeavor to ransom the Cenacle, the first Church of Christendom" (Lett. Jan. 6, 1865, to Msgr. Capalti - original in Propaganda Archives).

In pursuance of that resolution, Father de Cuers made two journeys to Jerusalem and one to Rome in 1864, which ended without any positive results, due to the difficulties encountered and the tactlessness of Father de Cuers.

On *February 2, 1864*, Father de Cuers presented a petition from Father Eymard to Pius IX (Orig. in Prop. Arch).

The Blessed Sacrament Fathers realized that ransoming the Cenacle was impossible for the time being; that is why they were seeking "a foundation in Jerusalem with the ransom of the Cenacle in mind." The difficulties involved were considerable; "the most formidable: the privileges granted to

the Franciscans are opposed to all foundations in the Holy Land” (Report to Card. Barnabo, Nov. 24 - Orig. in Prop. Arch).

In order finally to obtain the authorization for a foundation in Jerusalem, by a waiver of the Franciscan privileges, Father Eymard decided to go to Rome to expedite on the spot “the great and colossal enterprise ... of a nature to frighten one with its magnitude and consequences” (Lett. I, p. 238, 168). “The religious question,” wrote Father Eymard to Father de Cuers, “lies at the bottom of it all and is the formidable and only problem” (Lett. I, p. 166).

What follows is a brief summary of the diverse phases of this project; besides serving as a historic framework for the Great Retreat, they occasionally provided the subject-matter of St. Peter Julian’s meditations.

*November 14, 1864.* Arrival of Father Eymard in Rome. In the evening, visit to His Eminence, Alexander Cardinal Barnabo, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda, “who gave me little encouragement” (Lett. I, p. 166). - (Until 1917, when the Sacred Oriental Congregation was established, the countries of the Orient depended on the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda.)

*November 17, 1864.* Audience with Pius IX. His Holiness “listened attentively to my petition.... He raised no objections although I submitted everything.... The Pope told me that he would refer the question to the General Congregation of the Cardinals of the Propaganda; that is the only possible procedure as this was the Congregation that had issued the contrary Decree” (Lett. I, p. 167 - Orig. of Petition in Prop. Arch).

*November 24, 1864.* Father Eymard gave Cardinal Barnabo a report in which he exposed the project and answered the main objections that could be brought up against the foundation (Orig. in Prop. Arch). - (It was during these busy days, on December 8 to be exact, that Father Eymard drew up the Regulations of the Novitiate and mailed them to Father Chanuet - Lett. I, p. 293, 297.)

*December 12, 1864.* Interview with Cardinal Barnabo, who suggested to Father Eymard that he “draw up a brief report on the question of a religious foundation in Jerusalem” (Lett. to Mgr. Capalti; Orig. in Prop. Arch).

The same day. Letter to Mgr. Annibale Capalti, Secretary of the Propaganda: “I come to beg you, in your charity, not to forget or to put off this affair too much” (Orig. in Prop. Arch).

*December 23, 1864.* Audience with Pius IX. “The works of God,” the Pope told Father Eymard, “are always put to the test.... The greatest trial is the one that comes from the ministers of God” (Lett. IV, p. 107). - (The Pope was possibly alluding to the difficulties of the project. - It was during this Christmas season that Father Eymard delivered the two sermons published in “Fêtes et Mystères,” I, p. 93 and 99.)

*January 6, 1865.* Letter to Mgr. Capalti. “The Sacred Congregation is to convene one of these days to reach a decision on the religious question relatively to the Holy Places. I hope that the glory of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament shall win a victory.... Forgive my boldness, Monsignor, in writing you; it is only that you may give still greater attention to our cause” (Orig. in Prop. Arch).

*January 16, 1865.* The General Congregation: “Our case has been put off for 15 days or perhaps three weeks” (Lett. I, p. 171; II, p. 299).

*January 25, 1865.* Realizing or suspecting that the case concerning the Cenacle would drag on indefinitely, Father Eymard began his Great Retreat at the monastery of the Redemptorists in order to use his time profitably.

*January 30, 1865.* General Congregation of the Propaganda. The affair of the Cenacle was again postponed. In the first meditation, February 3, of the Great Retreat, Father Eymard recorded his reaction to this setback: “God permitted the illness of the Cardinal Prefect, the prolonged discussion on finances, Mgr. Capalti’s attending to other business.... *Sit nomen Domini benedictum* (Blessed be the name of the Lord - Ps. 113, 2).

*March 3, 1865.* Visit to Cardinal Barnabo. The affair would not be dealt with on the 6th. “I almost decided to leave immediately.... What a sad day I spent.... I learned incredible things about Jerusalem from the Cardinal Prefect” (Lett. I, p. 174).

*March 6, 1865.* The General Congregation did not convene. “Since I have now waited for so long ... I am waiting yet a little longer” (Lett. I, p. 241).

*March 28, 1865.* The General Congregation of Cardinals gave its decision: Non expedire annuire alla domanda del P. Eymard, Superiore della Congregazione del SSmo Sacramento di Parigi, di aprire una casa del suo Istituto in Gerusalemme (It is not expedient to grant the request of Father Eymard, Superior of the Congregation of the Most Blessed Sacrament in Paris, to found a house of his Institute in Jerusalem. - Acts of the Sacred Cong. of Prop. 1865, Vol. 229, p. 196, 198).

“The Sacred Congregation decided to keep the status quo and to effect no change in the existing order of things.... Let us adore the designs of God and bless His holy will.... All I can say is, *Fiat voluntas tua*” (Your will be done - Lett. I, P. 176). Father Eymard was informed of the decision on the 29th. The Cardinals present at the meeting were: Patrizi, di Pietro, Reisach, Barnabo, Sacconi, Panebianco, Pitra, Roberti and Mertel. Pius IX ratified the decision on April 9, 1865.

*March 30, 1865.* Father Eymard left Rome for the third and last time. - End of the Great Retreat of Rome.

2 - *The monastery of the Redemptorist Fathers* (Villa Caserta), where Father Eymard made the Great Retreat. - During his Great Retreat, from January 25 to March 30, 1865, Father Eymard occupied a room on the second floor of the monastery of the Redemptorists at Rome. This monastery is located at about 200 yards from St. Mary Major, between that basilica and that of St. John Lateran.

The residence of the Redemptorists was the main building of the Villa Caserta. This property, which covered some 41800 square yards, could certainly be considered as suburban in 1865. Built in the 16th century, the house belonged to the Princes Caetani, Dukes of Caserta, since 1725. (From 1300 to 1751, the Princes Caetani were the Lords of the Principality of Caserta. In 1751, this Principality passed into the hands of King Charles III of the Bourbon family, and Vanvitelli erected there the famous Royal Palace. The Caetani family, however, retained the title of Dukes of Caserta and called their Roman Villa “Villa Caserta” in order to perpetuate the family title.)

In 1855, the Villa was bought by the Redemptorist Fathers, who, by making some alterations and adaptations, transformed the Palace of the Villa into a monastery and made it their Generalate. In 1865, some 30 to 40 religious resided there. In 1873, the Government expropriated five-sixths of the property for streets and other purposes according to a newly drawn city-wide plan. In 1930, the monastery was demolished and replaced with a more modern structure. It was then the Redemptorists offered to, the Blessed Sacrament Fathers the door and the two window frames of the room occupied by St. Peter Julian during the Great Retreat; they are preserved in the small chapel of our Founder at the Generalate in Rome.

Shortly after purchasing the property, the Redemptorists erected a church next to the residence and dedicated it to St. Alphonsus of Liguori; it was consecrated on May 3, 1859. The famous Byzantine image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help has been venerated there since April 26, 1868.

We learn from Father Eymard’s correspondence the reasons that prompted him to select this spot for his retreat: “There, I shall be away from the city” (Lett. I, p. 173); “a little more in the country” (Lett. 11, p. 300) “away from the city and from visitors” (Lett. IV, p. 275) “comfortable outside Rome; I live like a hermit” (Lett. I, p. 176).

In 1865, Rome had a population of about 200,000. The *Annuario Pontificio* for 1865 and 1866 informs us that at Easter of 1864 the population of Rome was 203,896, and at Easter of 1865, it was 207,338. The city proper was not too extensive at the time. The eastern section covered a triangle, with the Quattro Fontane, St. Mary Major and the Colosseum at the angular points of the triangle

respectively. The Villa Caserta, which was one of the outermost structures of the eastern section, stood next to the vineyards and gardens of the area between St. Mary Major and the Lateran. So that the Villa was really “in the country ... away from the city ... outside Rome,” while still located within the Aurelian Walls and a part of the Servian Walls.

It is likely that the Villa was recommended to Father Eymard by a friend of his, Father Freid, Rector of the French Seminary, who had himself made a retreat there in 1864. A word from the same may have helped Father Eymard’s request to reside at the Villa (Lett. I, p. 159-160).

A letter dated February 21, 1865, tells us how Father Eymard felt about the Community that gave him hospitality: “I am still on retreat with the good Redemptorists” (Lett. I, p. 241) ; and on March 30, 1865: “The Very Rev. Father Superior of the Redemptorists was extremely good to us and to our cause; he went out of his way for us and is most deserving of our gratitude” (Lett. I, p. 176-177). We may thereby infer that Father Eymard conferred frequently enough with the Very Rev. Father Mauron, Superior General.

On his side, Very Rev. Father Mauron wrote on January 1, 1886: “The Rev. Father Eymard was our guest at the Villa Caserta in 1865.... During that long retreat he edified the Community very much by his piety and recollection. The general impression he left among us is that of a true Servant of God and of a man extraordinarily devout towards the Most Blessed Sacrament” (Summarium I, 887-888).

3 - *Schedule of the Great Retreat.* - We have no idea of the retreat pattern Father Eymard followed from January 25 to February 5, although the meditations recorded on these days are quite important. It would seem that up to February 5, he did not adhere to a strict schedule but spent some time at the French Seminary and attended more freely to outside business. We may conclude as much from two letters dated February 3, 1865, one to Father de Cuers (Lett. I, p. 173) and the other to Mother Marguerite (Lett. II, p. 300), and also from another letter, dated February 4, to Mrs. Lepage (Lett. IV, p. 201).

From the 5th of February, however, Father Eymard must have followed his usual private-retreat schedule which, according to his notes and other documents, went as follows.

*First meditation* on rising. Each meditation must have lasted about an hour. He most likely jotted down his notes immediately after meditation, thus prolonging it. Now and then the notes seem to be a commentary on the meditation rather than a summary of its thought-content.

*Holy Mass*, followed by a rather prolonged thanksgiving. However, he mentioned thanksgiving only a few times: February 12 and 27, March 3 and, especially, March 26.

Reading of the *Imitation of Christ* during breakfast.

*Second meditation* around 11:00. He mentioned making it once at 10:00 (Fourth day, 3rd med), once at 11:00 (Feb. 17, 3rd med), and twice at noon (March 11, 2nd med, 3rd med).

*Third meditation* in the evening, and assistance at Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament. - From January 25 to March 30, Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament was given between 5:00 and 6:15 p.m. We do not know whether this third meditation preceded or followed Benediction.

To that schedule should probably be added, at least often enough, eucharistic adoration and the Stations of the Cross.

Father Eymard most likely took full advantage of the spacious and quiet gardens of Villa Caserta for purposes of relaxation and reflection. Naturally the question of the Cenacle often obliged him to leave the monastery and go to the Propaganda or call upon persons involved in the matter.

He frequently visited the churches where exposition of the Forty Hours was going on and availed himself of that opportunity to make his adoration. He must have visited specially the chapel of the Sisters of Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament at the Quirinal. - This chapel was torn down in 1887-1888; the area where the chapel stood is now the public park in which the

monument to Charles Albert is located. - Concerning his visits to churches where the Forty Hours devotions were being held, see Lett. II, p. 228; IV, p. 106; V, p. 37, 140.

We shall deal later with his spiritual reading during the retreat.

He seems to have made the retreat entirely on his own without the assistance of a Director.

4 - *The Congregation in 1865*. - First a summary of the principal dates: foundation, May 13, 1856; inauguration of the house of Paris, June 1, 1856; first exposition, January 6, 1857; foundation of Marseilles, November 9, 1859; foundation of Angers, December 29, 1862; Papal Approbation, May 8, 1863; taking of first canonical vows, August 23, 1863; distribution of the printed Rule to the religious, May, 1864.

There is no official list extant of the personnel for 1864 and 1865. As far as we may gather from the records, there were 26 religious in the Congregation at the beginning of 1865: nine priests, three of whom left the Institute; seven scholastics, three of whom also left; and 10 brothers, five of whom did not persevere.

The beginnings of a foundation are, for many reasons, mostly always perplexing, difficult, crucifying and heroic for the Founder. We should not then be surprised that the retreat notes of Father Eymard should reflect the anxieties he experienced concerning the Congregation: its spirit, its apostolate, its structure, the supernatural level and spiritual maturity of the personnel, etc.

Among the members of the Institute, a "dear confrere, who cannot see beyond his old-fashioned ideas" (March 9, 3rd med), was for a long time the occasion of intense suffering, which transpired here and there in the retreat notes and was the subject of many meditations. It is not difficult to identify this "messenger ... to harass me" - 11 Cor. 12, 7 (Fourth day, 1st med), "who acts in good faith and thinks he is doing the right thing ... who clings to what he thinks is best and is afraid to surrender unconditionally" (March 10, 2nd med). In his biography of St. Peter Julian, Father Tesniere wrote: "It pleased the divine Dispenser of all grace to transform the time of the retreat, which was also a time of negotiations with Propaganda for the ransom of the Cenacle, into one long assault of discontent and of abuse launched by Father de Cuers against his poor Superior, who was already in great distress over the delays in obtaining a decision and over the final fiasco."

## **II - The Great Retreat in Itself**

### *1 - Characteristics of the Retreat*

A - An *occasional* retreat. We must ever keep in mind that the Great Retreat of Rome was occasioned by Father Eymard's having to tarry so very long in Rome for the affair of the Cenacle to be settled and that, in the course of the retreat, this all-important question of the Cenacle dominated, at times predominated, his state of mind and accounted for the hesitancy and anxiety detectable in his notes.

Thus, for instance, he wrote on January 21, 1865: "Our affair ... has been postponed.... I shall therefore stay on for 15 days. Then if I find that it is to be one postponement after another, I shall return to Paris" (Lett. I, p. 240). And on February 3: "Our case was supposed to come up on Monday (Jan. 30) when an incident caused it to be put off.... If I listened only to my disappointment, I should leave immediately; but they all tell me that I would be making a mistake, that since I have accomplished so much, I should stay on for a month.... I have therefore decided to wait" (Lett. I, p. 172). Then on February 18: "I am still in Rome until the 11<sup>th</sup> of March.... I shall therefore be in Lyons only around the 18<sup>th</sup> of March" (Lett. IV, p. 54; V, p. 200). On March 4: "I had almost decided to leave immediately when I found out our case would not come up on the 6<sup>th</sup>" (Lett. I, p. 174). But on March 7, he added: "Since I have waited so long, I am waiting a little longer" (Lett. I, p. 241). And on March 11: "I am staying on a few more days to see whether Propaganda will at last give us an answer. If not, I shall leave without it" (Lett. V, p. 209).



This *occasional* characteristic explains why the retreat is not, in fact could not be, organized methodically and why it is often conditioned by circumstances and happenings, or by the actual dispositions of soul of Father Eymard. So that to look for a treatise of his spirituality in the Great Retreat - although it does contain precious elements of that spirituality - would be to pursue a course not founded on fact and could lead to over-systematic and arbitrary conclusions.

B - *Personal* characteristics. On the first page, Father Eymard jotted down the “major resolutions,” the second of which was: “Work only at my personal sanctification, to the absolute exclusion of all persons and things. *Quid mihi de aliis?*” (Why should I be concerned with all else?). The Great Retreat was the retreat of the individual person that was St. Peter Julian Eymard, with all that he was, and with all his graces, his responsibilities, his character, his temperament, etc. In the light of God’s grace, St. Peter Julian centered his detailed, sincere and profound examens on what was most personally himself.

Moreover, as he was Founder and Superior and a religious of the Congregation of the Most Blessed Sacrament, he naturally and often enough focused his attention and his examens on the duties of that threefold state, and thus gave us wonderful pages on the duties of a Founder, of a Superior and of a perfect religious.

That is why if we are to interpret, understand and especially profit by these retreat notes, we should by all means keep in mind these two aspects, the one considering him as an individual, and the other as Founder, etc.

Many of these notes are strictly personal, that is, they apply to Father Eymard alone; so that it would be a mistake for anyone with a different psycho-physical character and constitution to attempt applying them literally to himself. On the other hand, a good many of the notes apply to Father Eymard as Founder, Superior and religious, and as such are priceless beyond measure for all his spiritual children.

It is not always easy to distinguish and to define what refers exactly to Father Eymard as an individual, and what to Father Eymard as Founder. But it is important always to remember this twofold distinction in order to stay clear of inexact and unfounded interpretations and applications.

We should add that the Great Retreat was *providential*. It is a plausible conjecture that our Lord arranged the affair of the Cenacle of Jerusalem in order to beautify the cenacle that was Father Eymard’s soul with greater sanctity, make him better known to us and give him the opportunity to teach us eucharistic perfection. Father Eymard himself seemed to think so. “I admire,” he wrote, “how the good Master knew just what to do in order to force me to retire into solitude; today I am quite happy over it. Not that I want more than that, no, but that I understand better” (Lett. V, p. 209). “I thanked our Lord for having stalled this business of the Cenacle. I would have left with a mere rag of a retreat, without depth, without having practiced any virtues; here it is so easy” (Feb. 12, 3<sup>rd</sup> med). “What did me good was to understand that one act of self-contempt would give more glory to God than the success of the Society through me, than even success concerning the Cenacle, because by such an act I would be ransoming the cenacle in me and glorifying God through me” (Feb. 5, 3<sup>rd</sup> med).

## 2 - *Nature of the Great Retreat*

A - The Great Retreat was a period of the intensified action of grace in the soul of St. Peter Julian. Throughout the retreat, we can detect the supernatural in action under the form of enlightenment, of self-renewal, of progress, of keener perception of various truths, of fuller understanding of his obligations, of closer union and intimacy with our Lord, etc. Without presuming too much, we may also take for granted certain operations of grace in St. Peter Julian which he does not mention in his notes. We shall endeavor later to examine the nature of these graces under letter C of part five, *The soul of Father Eymard*.

B - The retreat lasted 65 days. We say 65 because from the 25<sup>th</sup> of January to the 30<sup>th</sup> of March (these two days included) there are, in a non-leap year, 65 days. Among these 65 days we include the 27<sup>th</sup> of February on which, in spite of taking the day off, Father Eymard made an important meditation, and also the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 28<sup>th</sup> of February, on which days no meditations are recorded. If we prefer, we may speak of a 61 or 62 or 64-day retreat, or again, to be less specific, of a two-month retreat. In any case, the Great Retreat was, in a special way, a prolonged period of spiritual, intense and sincere endeavor which, as we learn from the notes, took on various forms.

a - *Prayer*. On March 11, Father Eymard wrote: "I am most grateful to the good God for granting me the grace to make a month's retreat here in solitude, close to St. Mary Major, away from the city and visitors. If I come out of it without having improved, I will at least have learned more about an excellent door, that of prayer, which opens at one's good pleasure" (Lett. IV, p. 275). As to mortifications, at least of a somewhat extraordinary nature, we cannot, from available documents, conjecture anything. On the other hand, we gather from the notes of the retreat that he was plagued with ill health, which was penance enough along with the rudeness of Father de Cuers and the problems and contrarities arising from the affair of the Cenacle.

b - *Meditation* or reflections on fundamental truths, the divine mysteries, the person of Jesus Christ, the Eucharist, the "sacramentine" vocation, personal duties, the virtues, the awareness of graces received, etc.

c - *Contemplative prayer*, in which he contemplated and admired in Jesus Christ the perfection of every virtue, the center and end of his perfection, our Lord's love for him, etc.

d - Examinations made with utter sincerity and a full determination to amend his ways or seek greater perfection; he examined closely his interior and exterior life, his intentions and actions, his priestly and eucharistic life, his virtues, his duties, his attitudes towards grace, etc. He delved repeatedly into the condition of his soul.

e - The *profound analyses* of his personal psychology, in the course of which he left us precious insights, concerning the human and the divine in the soul of a saint and described realistically his psychic make-up, his tendencies, his wonderings, his reactions, his own little interior drama, his graces, his virtues, his imperfections, in short, all that the man and the saint experienced in himself.

f - The confessions, in which he addressed himself directly to God, unburdened his soul to Him, expressed his sentiments, particularly his gratitude and, under the light of grace, spoke to himself in terms of a humble and altogether supernatural sincerity.

g - *Resolutions* taken in a spirit of sincerity and firmness in specific terms and with practical guarantees for positive, effective and lasting results.

h - *Readings*. We can take it for granted that Father Eymard read much during his retreat. *Serpens decepit me ignavia matutina et pridie lectione prolongata, tum insomnia laboravi nocte* (The serpent tricked me into morning idleness and prolonged reading yesterday, and I suffered from insomnia during the night - Feb. 12, remark before 1<sup>st</sup> med). "On the impression made on me by my reading about the dangers of the world" (Feb. 26, 3<sup>rd</sup> med). "Come, O my soul, let us gather a bit of honey and, like the bee, learn how to increase its, store every day.... And so the three hours I devoted to study yesterday instead of attending the ceremony were a total loss" (March 27, 1<sup>st</sup> med). However, the principal book of the Great Retreat - after the New Testament, of course - was the *Imitation of Christ*. He read it regularly at breakfast, and he frequently copied lengthy quotations from it in his meditation notes.

The number of these quotations, 89 transcriptions in all, indicates that the doctrine of the *Imitation* was for Father Eymard an important source of spiritual nourishment during his retreat. First of all, the *Imitation* amounted, as it were, to a synthesis of traditional asceticism, which his own reflections confirmed, clarified and completed. But most especially it helped our Founder to understand more clearly the nature of the "gift of self," as also to resolve upon it with greater determination, by providing him with an ascetic foundation for this form of spirituality, which he

was to perfect in a perspective of eucharistic love and service. (See *Imitation of Christ and Great Retreat of Rome in Spirituality*, p. 47-54.

A few other authors are quoted, Plati and Lancicius, (Feb. 14, 3<sup>rd</sup> med. - Feb. 15, 3<sup>rd</sup> med. - Feb. 24, 2<sup>nd</sup> med. - March 7, 2<sup>nd</sup> med). A more or less textual quotation from “Monsieur Olier” is evidence that Father Eymard at least used *Catechism of the Interior Life*” by the Founder of the Sulpicians (March 21, 1<sup>st</sup> med. - under sub-title *Thanksgiving*).

From the notes given above, under letters *a* to *h*, we can conclude that the Great Retreat belongs to the same type of literature as the *Confessions* by St. Augustine, the *History of a Soul* by St. Theresa, and the like. That is something we should take into special account if we are to interpret the Great Retreat with any kind of objectivity.

### 3 - General Orientation and Plan of the Retreat

The *occasional* character of this retreat did not lend itself to an organic plan or definite orientation that called for a methodical program to be carried out with regularity and serenity. There actually was no plan or general orientation to give unity to the spiritual endeavor of this 65-day retreat. Father Eymard was certainly most specific in his meditations and exercises, but the choice of subjects to be considered was dictated by circumstances, the liturgical cycle, the developments of the affair of the Cenacle, the letters of Father de Cuers, the actual sentiments of his soul, the operations and orientations of grace, etc.

That is why we find in the retreat a great variety of subjects not linked together with any logical sequence. So that we must be content with identifying the several courses taken by his soul and with observing how the grace of God enlightened him progressively through varying phases.

Thus on the second day, he discovered “a basic and luminous truth which is the key to my life.... I have loved our Lord and His service ... with a love of God inspired by vanity” (3<sup>rd</sup> med).

On the fourth day, he wrote concerning the gift of self: “Such was my meditation - a basic meditation; that is what I must build upon” (1<sup>st</sup> med).

On the sixth day, concerning the spirit of mortification, he jotted down: “At last, at last, I see my way” (3<sup>rd</sup> med).

On February 1, after a meditation on humility, “characteristic virtue of an adorer,” he wrote: “I am convinced that for me this is the most important meditation” (2<sup>nd</sup> med). And on the 6<sup>th</sup> of the same month, he calls “fundamental” the meditation on the “mortified character of the life of Jesus Christ” (1<sup>st</sup> med).

February 7: “Mystery of the Incarnation. At last I am penetrating into the mysteries of our Lord; I shall find life therein” (1<sup>st</sup> med).

February 14, he meditated on modesty, “a royal virtue,” and began with these words: “Here is one of the most important graces of my retreat. Our Lord has at last given me to know and understand that the sovereign virtue of an adorer is modesty” (1<sup>st</sup> med).

February 16, he noted at the beginning of his meditation: “I am more than convinced that all I have done, said and resolved in this retreat is not the real thing” (1<sup>st</sup> med). This basic meditation elaborated on the gift of self; in the second meditation of the same day, he wrote: “This morning’s meditation is, fundamental: I am the servant of Jesus Christ.”

The 20<sup>th</sup> of the same month, he began his third meditation, on the “eucharistic vocation,” with this exclamation:

“At last I am in my grace! Such an endless desert I went through!”

The 21<sup>st</sup>, he jotted down: “Towards the end of my meditation, a beautiful thought came to me, assuredly from the mercy of our Lord.... ‘Be to Me in My Sacrament what I was to My Father in My Incarnation and in My mortal life’. . . . I shall pray for the grace to understand this truth” (3<sup>rd</sup> med).

The 23<sup>rd</sup>: “Our Lord alters my way, my grace, by keeping me close to His divine Person” (1<sup>st</sup> med).

And the 25<sup>th</sup>: “I failed then to see something of great importance to me: that I should give myself, my very self, my innermost being, to the Most Blessed Sacrament in order to glorify it by that immolation and burial of self. At last, today, after a month on retreat, I see it faintly” (1<sup>st</sup> med).

March 5, he realized that “it were better to have a subject with more unity to it” (2<sup>nd</sup> med).

The 7<sup>th</sup>, he wrote: “Would this grace - (our Lord drawing me to Himself by His interior life) - indicate ... a changing of my particular grace?” (3<sup>rd</sup> med).

The 11<sup>th</sup>, he stated: “Therefore the road I followed was the right one. I am standing at the door; I must surrender myself, give myself and abide in Jesus” (2<sup>nd</sup> med). The same day in a letter: “Not that I want more than that, no, but that I understand better” (Lett. V, p. 209).

The 12<sup>th</sup>: “Place your hope in God, O my soul! You are now working on the fundamental virtues” (1<sup>st</sup> med).

On March 14, he opened his first meditation on “God is love” with these lines: “At last, after passing through the desert, I have reached the mountain of love. What a difficult journey! What a laborious cruise! Here I am before the throne of love; God be praised!”

We must remember this variety of phases, this momentary predominance of certain virtues or spiritual attitudes, this progressive orientation and stabilization - of which the texts just now quoted give us only a cross section - if we are to understand objectively many of the statements made in these retreat notes. Thus, to mention only one case, after a meditation on humility as the “characteristic virtue of an adorer,” Father Eymard wrote on February 1: “I am convinced that for me this is the most important meditation, because it must determine the form, the substance and the law of my holiness as a religious” (2<sup>nd</sup> med). This statement could be true the 7<sup>th</sup> (or 8<sup>th</sup>) day of the retreat, but it must be read in the light of the statements and explanations of the 57 days that follow.

On the other hand, in spite of the lack of a general, fixed, precise and systematic orientation, we notice a certain order determined by two factors: a grouping of subjects and an over-all orientation which, somewhat hazy and none too perceptible at the start, becomes gradually more consistent and finishes by predominating.

To begin with, we come upon groups of subjects treated with logic and continuity; thus, for instance, humility, the religious virtues of poverty, chastity and obedience (to the Rule), modesty, meekness, patience, defects of character, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, Baptism, sin, crosses, love of God, the person of Jesus Christ, etc. They will be dealt with later under *Main Ideas of the Great Retreat*.

We should keep in mind most particularly the principal orientation of the retreat, which is evident from the very first days (Fourth day, 1<sup>st</sup> med), shows up frequently, though at times not too noticeably, in the course of the 65 days, and materializes most especially towards the end according to an explicit and sufficiently methodical and organic pattern: the purification of “self,” particularly of its vanity, by means of humility; the gift of self as a requisite of eucharistic service and love; the life of Jesus Christ in the soul; and life in Jesus Christ, who is the center of the soul and who subsists without a human person in the person of the Word.

That is why vanity, humility, the gift of self, love, eucharistic service, the Eucharist, the person of Jesus Christ and His virtues, Jesus Christ as center and model of virtues above all in His Incarnation, make up the great themes, or better, the one great theme under varying aspects, the principal and central theme of the Great Retreat. The personal work of Father Eymard, enlightened and guided by divine grace, gradually reached a definite orientation and specific expression, culminating in the most significant act of the Great Retreat-certainly its “finest hour”-the *vow of his personality*. (See *Spirituality*, p. 47-53.)

#### 4 - *Literary Style*

Father Eymard recorded the notes of the Great Retreat solely for himself in order to prolong, in a way, the effect of his meditations, give some permanency to fleeting insights, impressions and sentiments, and draw from them when he later felt the need of renewing himself in the fervor and grace with which he had been blest during these days of solitude.

We must emphasize the fact that Father Eymard wrote only for himself, in terms that were intelligible and familiar to him and richly evocative for his memory, his intellect and his mental processes. That is why he did not bother about literary form. In point of fact, we run into words and phrases that are defective, expressions and sentences that are unintelligible to us, gaps and ellipses that defy all efforts at bridging them, entire lines, or parts of them, underscored to no apparent purpose, and signs with a vague meaning, for instance, the often repeated mark of a cross. Likewise, on the point of doctrine, Father Eymard had no intention of teaching or of formulating a special doctrine, but simply of describing, expressing and recording for himself what he thought and experienced - which accounts for many a lack of doctrinal precision throughout the retreat.

Another point we should not forget is that, having more of the orator in him than of the writer, Father Eymard often gave an oratorical twist to the expression of his feelings and impressions; pulpit oratory does have a style of its own and enjoys certain literary privileges.

Finally, we should remember that a natural talent for eloquence, coupled with a highly refined emotivity, led Father Eymard to the frequent use of hyperboles in the form of sweeping and categorical statements and expressions, which should be understood only in a relative sense. Father Tesniere took notice of this - and it can apply to other instances - when speaking of Father Eymard's assertions concerning modesty: "Father Eymard goes so far as to call modesty 'the royal virtue, the first of the virtues.' That can be true only in a relative sense. His most ardent piety, carried away by the virtue he was meditating upon, led him easily to unearth in almost every virtue something unique and royal. Such a pious excess of language spoke at least of the importance he attached to the acquisition of these virtues. Out of sheer rapture over the moral beauty of holy modesty, he exclaimed: 'It must be my virtue, my royal, sovereign and dominant virtue. It will be for me the summary of all the virtues, since it includes and perfects them all'" (Feb. 14, 1<sup>st</sup> med).

#### 5 - *Soul of Father Eymard*

The Great Retreat of Rome is in a special way a revelation of the soul of Father Eymard, "wide-open before God" (Tesniere). The Great Retreat manifests the soul of our Founder in all its transparent and objective reality, with its human nature quite distinct and specifically his, with however the supernatural character and graces of a saint.

A - The *human element*: imperfections. - In all candor and with anguish of soul, Father Eymard accused himself of his imperfections; he rendered, so to speak, palpable to us his human experience, which is the really and specifically human foundation of his holiness. This self-accusation brings our Founder closer to our own wretched condition and at the same time encourages us to work our way with him to the level of holiness our Lord expects of us.

The principal imperfections he deplored are: vanity, hyper-activity of the mind, passion for study, levity of character, hardness of heart, attachment to creatures, excessive apostolate, expansiveness, lack of recollection and of interiority at adoration, failings against regularity, against silence, against modesty, against poverty, against meekness, against reverence, etc.

a - Let us first take note that Father Eymard considered his soul and its interior and exterior attitudes from his own elevated vantage-point, with a refined sensitiveness to things spiritual, in the light of special graces and against the perspective of his correspondence with these graces. Under a brighter light, with improved visibility and sharper vision, we can see more and better. It would be

somewhat reckless and conceited of us to appraise Father Eymard's *confessions* according to our own spiritual condition.

b - Moreover, all saintly souls feel the need of humiliating themselves and indulge in deploying before their conscience and before God their imperfections, miseries and weaknesses to make of them the subject of self-humiliation and self-contempt. Humility is truth; but truth also takes in our nothingness, our wretchedness and the greatness of God.

c - Besides, it should be noted that neither grace nor holiness suppress the consequences of original sin, or the defects of one's physical or psychological make-up. Father Eymard experienced the fact that he was a man, a child of Adam: "That is what I am looking for but cannot find, the soul of what is evil in my soul. My life is a mystery to me; I seem to want no one but God alone, and yet at every moment I find myself loving no one but myself" (Feb. 15, 3<sup>rd</sup> med). It would be easy to multiply statements of this sort.

Father Eymard analyzed his character as "nervous, spirited and averse to all constraint" (Feb. 13, 3<sup>rd</sup> med); "too ... expansive" (Feb. 14, 3<sup>rd</sup> med); "excessive expansiveness" (March 8, 1<sup>st</sup> med); "impressionable" (March 9, 3<sup>rd</sup> med); "so easily influenced" (March 23, 2<sup>nd</sup> med). And then he himself wrote that "levity of character ... is natural to me as a result of headaches in my youth" (Fourth day, 3<sup>rd</sup> med).

It should not, therefore, be cause for wonderment if this assortment of human frailties brought on a few faults of surprise and proved a hard testing-ground in the unrelenting work of his sanctification.

d - Lastly, let us keep in mind that Father Eymard's literary style, abetted by humility, found a congenial outlet in enlarging on his defects. Thus no one will take to the letter expressions such as these: "I am in a state of tepidity, of unfaithfulness" (Feb. 9, 3<sup>rd</sup> med); "I have done but little good and much evil; and even what little good I have done, I have done badly, most imperfectly" (Feb. 20, 1<sup>st</sup> med); "It is I that deserved to be expelled from the Society as unworthy, to be deposed as incompetent" (Feb. 24, 3<sup>rd</sup> med); "And yet all these kindnesses have not even succeeded in making a fairly good Christian out of me" (Feb. 27, 1<sup>st</sup> med); "I am not yet a real adorer, I have not the elementary holiness of my state, the rudimentary virtue of my religious vocation" (March 3, 3<sup>rd</sup> med); "How putrified and foul everything is! I always thought I had something good to give to God, my heart; but I realize I have not. The best there is in me is what should be the worst, my poor body" (March 6, 2<sup>nd</sup> med); "I was directly responsible for the poor service of our Lord, for the little glory He received from the Society, so beautiful, so promising" (March 18, 1<sup>st</sup> med).

Speaking of Father Eymard's self-accusations, Father Tesniere wrote: "Nothing is so beautiful as the soul of a saint who humbles himself; the accusations he heaps upon himself are evidence of the generous efforts he is making to practice virtue ever more perfectly. In spite of the sincerity of this long confession, very thorough and detailed, nothing in it implies a grievous fault or a sinful habit. On the contrary, on many an occasion he gives proof of outstanding and heroic virtue even though his humility really runs riot and so readily exaggerates his failings.... At the period of life when he made this retreat, Father Eymard, who had never committed a mortal sin, had succeeded in ridding himself of all attachment to venial sin; he battled less against the temptations of sin properly speaking than against certain natural imperfections, such as the intense activity of his mind that interfered with the union of his heart with God, or the problems his interior life ran into due to excessive zeal or to the responsibilities that lay upon him."

In his report on the writings of Father Eymard, the Censor of the Sacred Congregation of Rites himself, referring to volume R2 17, which includes the Great Retreat of Rome (256-606), said: "Wonderful is the piety and generous is the desire for perfection of this priest, later a Marist and the Founder of the Congregation of the Most Blessed Sacrament. But according to his account, perhaps too humble, of the state of his soul, defects can be pointed out which prove how great were the

efforts he must have made to achieve holiness - a real encouragement for those who aspire to Christian perfection.”

B - The *element of holiness*: the virtues. -The virtues, the holiness and the work of personal perfection, recorded by Father Eymard in his retreat notes, take on their rightful proportions and are viewed in their proper contrast and authentic realism when projected against the backdrop of the “natural” imperfections that enable us to see and sense in the Great Retreat of Rome a truly human reality, lived specifically in an existence pretty much like our own.

It is helpful to recall that while Father Eymard noted down his imperfections and his faults, examined and analyzed them with profuseness and enlarged on them with humility, he had also to respect the inflexible demands, of truth, to be sincere about his findings and to recognize God’s graces. That led him to jot down every now and then something about his virtues and his views on spiritual perfection. But he normally dwelt more at length on his imperfections than on his virtues, although the other way round would have been closer to reality. In spite of that, or precisely because of that, we frequently come upon statements of great spontaneity and sincerity that reveal the state of his soul, his virtues, his sentiments of union with God and of love for Him, the graces he received, his generous efforts at pursuing holiness, his spiritual gifts and his high degree of sanctity.

First of all, his *confessions*, a reflection of his inner soul, are beautiful and recur quite often: “Our Lord... loved me more, gave me more graces ... and never refused me anything” (Third day, 3<sup>rd</sup> med); “God draws me by working on my heart.... O my God, when will You fill this heart which was made for You, stands so much in need of You and longs for You alone” (Fourth day, 3<sup>rd</sup> med); “The good God has loved me so much! ... The Most Blessed Sacrament has always dominated my life” (Feb. 1, 1<sup>st</sup> med); “It is a blessing that God’s love be not tender towards me just now; I would stop right there” (Feb. 9, 2<sup>nd</sup> med); on the 12<sup>th</sup> of February, he considered it a “temptation to take a book, to read some prayers” during adoration and thanksgiving (1<sup>st</sup> med); “I thanked our Lord for His having preserved my virginity in the secular state, my chastity in the priesthood and my vow in the religious life. I realized how great was the grace our Lord gave me” (Feb. 15, 1<sup>st</sup> med); “Glancing rapidly over the past, I saw that it was always our Lord who guided and instructed me, who wanted to be my one Master in everything” (Feb. 17, 1<sup>st</sup> med); “Sadness usually grips me when I go out into the world; I find myself in danger, out of place, outside my center, and I am frightened. How quickly I return to my cell” (Feb. 25, 3<sup>rd</sup> med); “I am too attached to peace of heart, to the sweetness of recollection, to the enjoyment of God” (Feb. 26, 1<sup>st</sup> med).

On March 1, he was amazed that “twice this evening I failed to think of God even once during a whole hour. How wretched of me” (3<sup>rd</sup> med); on March 14, he declared with deep emotion: “Upon my oath, I love You in life and in death” (1<sup>st</sup> med); “I will get more grace out of it; I will perhaps love the good God a little more” (March 20, 3<sup>rd</sup> med); “My God, here I am, with Jesus in the Garden of Olives. Is it Your will that all should desert me? That all should disown me? That no one should recognize me? That I should be something of a burden, a source of embarrassment, a disgrace? *En ego, Domine, hic ure, hic seca; hic exue, hic humilia; amorem tui solum cum gratia da. mihi hodie, et eras crucem, cum penuria, sed scabellum esse tui, in sanctissima Hostia* (Here I am, Lord; burn and cut, strip and humiliate; give me but Your love and Your grace today, and Your Cross and poverty tomorrow provided You let me be the footstool of the most sacred Host - March 21, 1<sup>st</sup> med); “I die, or at least agonize, away from this divine Heart.... I really feel that my health, like my intellect, is sustained only by our Lord and in our Lord” (March 23, 1<sup>st</sup> med).

Taking the Great Retreat as a whole, we may also admire a beautiful tableau of the virtues which Father Eymard lived and revealed in his notes: love of God and of Mary, interior life, life of intimacy and of union with Jesus and Jesus eucharistic, eucharistic service of adoration, a generous and unfailing will, theological virtues of faith and hope, humility, religious virtues of chastity and poverty, fraternal charity, love of the Cross, modesty, patience, sincerity, responsibilities as a Founder, life of prayer, zeal for worship, etc.

Quantitatively speaking, the recording of these virtues takes up little space; what does, however, take up considerable space and is of paramount importance is the sustained, positive and sincere effort of Father Eymard to acquire the virtues or, better, to perfect himself in the practice of them.

This work of acquiring the virtues goes through diverse stages or perspectives: the analysis of a virtue in itself, of its nature and advantages, etc., the study of that virtue in his soul and the specific resolutions concerning it; consideration of that virtue in Jesus Christ and as practiced by Him. For Father Eymard, the virtues are essentially *Christian* in the literal sense of the word.

That is the technique, we might say, which Father Eymard followed in working on humility, poverty, fidelity to the Rule, modesty, meekness, patience, acceptance of crosses, etc. However, the supreme virtue which called for the greatest effort and on which he specially centered his thoughts during the retreat-exercises was the gift of himself to Jesus Christ in order to unite himself with Him in imitating the condition of Christ's human nature United to the Person of the Word. But more of that later.

C - The *divine element*: graces, the mystical factor. - The work of correcting imperfections, of acquiring and perfecting virtues, that is, the positive and personal work of asceticism, is the element that predominates in the Great Retreat.

Father Eymard, of course, effected all this spiritual work with the help of grace and of the supernatural forces accompanying grace, in a state of soul which, according to the opinion of many, could be called *mystical*; but it seems to us that it is the *ascetical* factor that predominates.

The predominance of the *ascetical* factor need not exclude the *mystical*. However, to verify with certainty the presence of the *mystical* element, and particularly to determine and define its workings, is no easy matter; in point of fact, it is very difficult to be in any way conclusive in that respect. The first difficulty stems from the authors of Ascetical and Mystical Theology. In what does mysticism consist? What is required for a reality to be mystical? What is natural, in the sense of normal, in the supernatural order?

Secondly, identifying the realities of the mystical life is a perplexing process open to error. "It is altogether beyond the power of the human mind to know and to, gauge exactly all the causes, interior as well as exterior, which influence the soul and affect her condition at the exact moment of a divine intervention. At times, it is true, man may be more or less conscious of being subjected to a force, to an intervention which, coming from the outside, acts on his inner self, and he may also, be able to conclude with more or less probability, if not with certitude, that the intervention experienced is of divine origin; but mostly it will be impossible to differentiate the specific action of grace from the action of natural factors, and in the more exceptional cases, in which we can suspect the action of grace, our experimental knowledge of it will not generally go beyond a strong probability" (De Guibert, *Leçons de Théologie Spirituelle*, I, p. 259; *Our Rule - A Commentary*, Vol. I, p. 112).

Let us also keep other important factors in mind: the personal character of Father Eymard, his, emotivity, his impressionability, his introspectiveness - three highly refined and well controlled traits of his; and his personal literary style, spoken of earlier.

Taking these particulars into account, we feel we are justified in holding the following opinions about the Great Retreat of Rome.

a - Mention is made of some extraordinary graces due to a special action of God. We do not mean that every time Father Eymard said, "Our Lord told me ... Our Lord made me..." we should conclude to his having received a really extraordinary grace. But in several instances, the text and context are more simply and easily understandable if we admit a divine intervention in the intellectual, volitional or affective order. A detailing of these graces would seem to us a somewhat presumptuous and none too objective a venture.



Many instances are, of course, open to question. For example, the “*éclatante lunlière*” (very clear vision or understanding) Father Eymard wrote about to Mrs. Natalie Jordan (April 9, 1865) is not too definite. (See text of Mrs. Jordan’s letter, at the end of letter *F* under section *Main Ideas of the Retreat*; letter *F* treats of the gift of self.) The “tears,” mentioned here and there could be a special grace or could also be accounted for by the strong emotivity of Father Eymard.

b - Certain descriptions and *confessions* are found in the Great Retreat which seem to refer to states of passive purification - the “nights of the soul,” according to the terminology of St. John of the Cross.

c - Concerning the degree of the mystical life or, in other words, the “spiritual age” of Father Eymard during the retreat, it is our opinion that too few indications are given in the retreat to warrant our venturing a sure and definite statement.

For the same reason, any attempt to unearth and especially to outline “the ascetico-mystical itinerary” of the Great Retreat seems to us an impossibility; in view of the lack of documentary evidence, such an attempt could result in a study marred by preconceived ideas and a distortion of the texts and of the facts.

The graces of Saint Romans, of St. Paul of Lyons (1845), of Fourvière (1851) and of La Seyne-sur-Mer (1853), granted before the Great Retreat of Rome, must have left a deep spiritual impression on the soul of Father Eymard.

The last retreat of Father Eymard, which he made at St. Maurice (April 27-May 2, 1868), disclosed instances of “purification,” of nights of the soul; he also explicitly spoke therein of the graces of Fourvibre, of La Seyne-sur-Mer (and probably of St. Paul of Lyons) ; but he made no clear, explicit mention or reference concerning the Retreat of Rome, finished some three years earlier, unless we must trace back to the Retreat of Rome the beginning of a state of spiritual desolation and suffering alluded to in the retreat of St. Maurice, in which he spoke twice of having been afflicted by this state of desolation for two years and a half and, in another meditation, for three years.

The very act of the gift of his personality by a perpetual vow, which we may look upon as the summit or turning point of the retreat, does not seem to have been accompanied by special graces of an extraordinary nature; at least we have no convincing proof of it.

We are therefore of the opinion that the very high degree of the spiritual life of Father Eymard’s soul during the Great Retreat, which attained its highest peak in the gift of his personality ratified by a vow, is difficult to determine and classify clearly, especially if we resort to a terminology and system of classification that are not Father Eymard’s.

What however is a sure and duly evidenced fact is that the Retreat of Rome was for Father Eymard a precious “point of departure.” “He received there,” wrote Monsignor Trochu, “an extra ‘step forward’ in holiness; he was fixed in the unitive way, bordering on the sublime heights to which a special grace elevates the supremely generous soul that is resolved not to refuse God anything” (French biography, p. 361).

Father Tesniere, who in his 170-page-long study on the Retreat of Rome did not specially stress the element of mysticism, speaks of the effects of this retreat on the life of Father Eymard in these words: “Having observed him very closely in the last three years of his life which followed this very serious spiritual renewal, we assert, on our soul and conscience, that the Servant of God put faithfully into practice all the resolutions taken during these holy exercises, and that it was not only in desire but in reality that he was, in a sublime fashion, humble, meek, modest, chaste and mortified, patient in suffering and resigned to God in the greatest difficulties, filled with faith, hope and charity, kind and devoted to his neighbor, zealous and active to the point of exhaustion, above all recollected, united to God, interior, more assiduous at prayer than ever, a totally spiritual man, drawing closer by a continual ascent to the life of heaven, which was soon to be his forever. We do not believe that works of holiness could have ever sustained good desires and holy resolutions more

effectively; his soul, aflame with such intense charity, loved God not only ‘in word ... but in deed and in truth,’ according to the recommendation of St. John” (I John, 3, 18).

## 6 - *Basic Ideas of the Great Retreat*

When speaking of the general orientation of the Great Retreat, we stated there was no organic unity in the development of the subjects. However, in spite of this lack of methodical structure, we do come upon a few important subjects which are treated serially in successive meditations, or upon some basic ideas which, consistently woven into the fabric of Father Eymard’s thought, would form a certain organic whole if properly strung together. It is essential that we take due notice of this if we are to judge correctly of the over-all character of the Great Retreat of Rome.

A - To begin with, some meditations and spiritual analyses are purely *occasional*. They reflect Father Eymard’s natural and supernatural reactions to new and unforeseen events: incidents connected with the ransom of the Cenacle, with the letters of Father de Cuers, and with personal sentiments or states of soul. To describe that occasional state of soul, an entire meditation may be required; or a single phrase, even only an exclamation, may suffice.

There are also meditations we may call *semi-occasional* or appropriate, such as those suggested by a particular day, a liturgical feast or special circumstances: for instance, First day (Jan. 25), meditation on the conversion of St. Paul; March 1, Ash Wednesday, on penance; March 11, a Saturday, on the Blessed Virgin; March 19 and 20, on St. Joseph; March 25, on the Incarnation; March 26-28, the Forty Hours in the church of the Redemptorists. It should be noted, however, that often enough these *semi-occasional* meditations are channeled back into the main themes of the retreat.

B - We said earlier that Father Eymard devoted a considerable portion of the retreat to asectical work, that is, to the examen and study of the virtues and to diligence in perfecting them. The virtues on which he concentrated the most are the following.

a - *Humility*, “the dominant virtue of an adorer” (Feb. 1, 2<sup>nd</sup> med), the virtue of the gift of self, a virtue that fits into the temperament of Father Eymard, who often deplored his vanity. He studied it in the Gospels and especially in the Eucharist in order to put it into practice in his personal life as humility of heart, humility of mind, humility in time of success, and practical humility in humiliations.

b - He considered *poverty*, a sister-virtue of humility, as practiced by Jesus Christ and as a requirement of the religious life. He used resolute language in determining to practice it in both its interior and exterior aspects. When he speaks of spiritual poverty, he uses expressions that recall the *nada*, the *nothing*, of St. John of the Cross.

c - He made three meditations on the *observance of the Rule*, considered as grace and exemplar for all his religious.

d - *Modesty* is a virtue which seems to have cost Father Eymard much effort. In the Great Retreat, he spoke of it at some length, and he proposed to practice it in its interior requirements, as well as in its exterior expressions of orderliness, silence and recollection.

e - *Meekness*, like modesty, cost him a great deal, and was put to a severe test during the Great Retreat, particularly by the letters of Father de Cuers (see March 9 and the days that follow); as he did for modesty, he contemplated meekness in Jesus Christ, in Jesus eucharistic, and in Mary in order to succeed in practicing it interiorly and exteriorly.

f - He was given many occasions to practice *mortification* and to suffer intensely in the course of the retreat: the affair of the Cenacle, the rudeness of Father de Cuers, ill health, etc. In his meditations on mortification, on the Cross, on the crosses of the saints, we are given glimpses of his

interior dispositions in time of suffering; we also find therein priceless evidence of his patience, of his acceptance of the will of God.

g - To these virtues, which were the subject of special meditations during the Great Retreat, we must add many others which, for their being less emphasized, were none the less the object of his concern, study and resolutions - an indication of the sincerity and depth of the work done by Father Eymard during these exercises.

C - During the Great Retreat, he also touched upon, meditated and studied some of the *major themes of spiritual theology*.

a - He centered some meditations on sin in itself, on its effects upon the soul, on his personal sins, and on sin considered as the cause of the Passion of Jesus Christ.

b - He dealt here and there with the great dogmatic realities of Creation, of Providence, of man's elevation to the supernatural order, of the fall of man, of Redemption and of grace.

c - He devoted much time to the interior life and considered it especially under the form of the presence of God, of union with the Holy Spirit, and particularly of union with Jesus Christ present in the soul.

d - He wrote striking pages on the *love of God*; the love of God in Creation, in divine Providence, in the Incarnation, in the eucharistic vocation, in the foundation of the Congregation; love of the Word Incarnate in its many manifestations, most especially in the Sacrament of love; correspondence with that love is a topic that recurs frequently; the love of God - is more of this later - the chief determining motive, the atmosphere, the virtue of the gift of his personality.

D - The *Person of Jesus Christ* was the dominant and effective factor in the Great Retreat, which we could call "Christo-centric."

a - First of all, Jesus Christ was the model and grace of the virtues, the Teacher of holiness. In the practice and exercise of the virtues, the example and spirit of Jesus Christ had a more efficacious and positive influence on the soul of Father Eymard than the psychological or philosophical analyses, than the studies and beautiful thoughts concerning this or that virtue.

b - The Passion of Jesus Christ, the Redemption, as also the presence of Jesus in the soul - the *interior Jesus* - recurred frequently enough in the course of his meditations.

c - Among the mysteries of Jesus Christ, Father Eymard considered the Incarnation particularly as the work of the infinite love of God and especially as a defining of the state proper to the human nature of Jesus Christ, existing in the Person of the Word without a personality of its own. Father Eymard returned rather frequently to the consideration of this state of the human nature of Jesus Christ. He referred to this state when, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> meditation of February 21, he mentioned receiving a special grace; indeed it is on that state that he was to pattern the gift of his personality, which would enable him to reproduce psychologically in his soul what was, in Jesus, an ontological reality.

d - The Founder of the Congregation of the Most Blessed Sacrament considered Jesus Christ specially in His sacramental state. The *Eucharist*, Jesus sacramented, is the great Christological reality of the Retreat of Rome. Many beautiful pages deal with the Institution of the Eucharist, eucharistic love, the eucharistic virtues, the Kingship of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, His rights to our love and service, to our effective gratitude, His role as center of the soul, etc.

e - Still another point, which Father Eymard set off in bold relief and to which he often devoted the best of his spiritual energies, was the *interior life* of union with Jesus Christ which, by fostering the grace of Baptism and finding its center in the Eucharist, constituted in practice the life of the vow of his personality. The meditations, considerations and resolutions to that effect are many: "In order to live in our Lord, I must look on Him as Master, Model and God of my heart" (March 11, 3<sup>rd</sup> med).

f - Close to Jesus he placed the *divine Mother*, not so much by making lengthy and frequent meditations about her as by making her presence felt all through the retreat. And close to Mary, we find St. Joseph the first man-adorer of the Word Incarnate; he devoted a few meditations to the foster father of Christ.

E - His *eucharistic vocation*, with its excellence and its duties, was the object of many meditations and examens.

a - Gratitude was the all-absorbing sentiment of his soul whenever he considered the divine call, the *vocation* to the Congregation of the Most Blessed Sacrament. He was particularly grateful for his mission as Founder, which he looked upon as a mark of love, of honor and of trust on the part of God and of the Church, as also as a source of responsibility and of concern; he made of it the object of sincere examens.

b - He pondered at length on his *eucharistic service*, on its nature, its greatness, its comprehensive scope, its duties, etc. "Servant of the Eucharist! Such therefore is my royal and divine title" (Feb. 21, 1<sup>st</sup> med). He analyzed the concept of service as a special requirement of his vocation, as "the sovereign law of my life" (Feb. 21, 3<sup>rd</sup> med), and he drew inspiration from contemplating the "service" of the human nature of Jesus Christ towards the Godhead: "I must belong to our Lord as He belonged to His Father.... But I see that the Heavenly Father gave our Lord the title of *Servus meus* (My servant).... The Savior took the title of Servant" (Feb. 22, 1<sup>st</sup> med).

But even while speaking of eucharistic service in all its comprehensiveness, Father Eymard's special concern in the Great Retreat centered on *interior* service. Interior service was above all a service rendered by members of the family, a household service, "of a closely-knit family" (Feb. 11, 1<sup>st</sup> med); but interior service was particularly "His interior reign, which is, the supreme glory our Lord expects... especially of the adorer" (Feb. 11, 1<sup>st</sup> med). This interior service, considered in all its perfection and depth, was to lead him to the total gift of self: "I must give myself to Jesus Christ and serve Him by the gift, the holocaust of self. *Non tua volo, sed te*" (I want not what is yours, but you - Fourth day, 1<sup>st</sup> med); "Our perfection consists in giving good personal service.... Few are content with God alone and give themselves exclusively, absolutely to God. *Non tua sed te volo*" (I want not what is yours, but you - Feb. 11, 1<sup>st</sup> med); "Give myself, my very self, my innermost being, to the Most Blessed Sacrament in order to glorify it by that immolation and burial of self" (Feb. 25, 1<sup>st</sup> med).

c - To adoration, which constitutes the primary and principal act of the eucharistic service, St. Peter Julian devoted many beautiful pages and sincere examens. His notes tell us the difficulties he had to overcome, the efforts he had to make so that his adoration might be "a homage of justice and love to our Lord Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar, solemnly exposed for *me*. Adoration of Him by *me*; that is the essential thing. *Non quaero quae tua sunt, sed te*" (I seek not what is yours, but you - II Cor. 12, 14-Feb. 26, 1<sup>st</sup> med). From these notes we can also perceive the beauty and spiritual depth of Father Eymard's adoration, and identify the principal acts exercised in his adorations: virtue of religion, love, worship, contemplation, gift of self, etc.

d - He said very little about the *eucharistic apostolate* proper. He examined himself rather on its dangers, specially that of seeking his personal glory and allowing himself to become too absorbed in exterior ministry to the detriment of his interior life and his life of adoration.

F - *The gift of self*. The Great Retreat of Rome has been rightly labeled the retreat of the gift of self of Father Eymard. We should add that it has also been the retreat of his *perpetual vow* of gift of self or gift of his personality.

The main orientation of the retreat, as we have already pointed out, was precisely a purification, a renunciation, an abnegation, a holocaust of his *personality* which was to reach its summit in the *perpetual gift of that personality, ratified by a vow*. Grace chose to orient the soul of Father Eymard

in that direction, and he responded by lending himself to the work of grace with sincerity and humility, and without any compromise.

Our Founder noted first that the human *ego* manifests its egoism and selfishness under subtle forms: vanity, self-love, exterior glory, self-seeking, etc. Observations to that effect and fine analyses of human and spiritual psychology abound in the retreat.

He saw in the natural *self*, in the “personality of Adam”. (March 23, 2<sup>nd</sup> med), the most profound, most radical and most interior obstacle to holiness; and so the only spiritual strategy he could adopt was to overcome, neutralize and renounce that *self*, to go to the very bottom of this root of all imperfections and pursue it to the death or, according to the now familiar expression, to practice “abnegation of self” - *Absque sui proprio*.

Self-denial or abnegation, however, is rather negative in character. Father Eymard gave it a positive character by summarizing the practice of it in his gift of self to Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

We can truly say that the *gift of self* is the most frequent and dominant spiritual attitude found in the Great Retreat although it is not exclusively characteristic of it, since the “gift of self on the first day of the year” (Second day, 3<sup>rd</sup> med), seems also to have been quite important, for he recalled it and renewed it. (For evidence of the “gift of self as the most frequent and dominant spiritual attitude found in the Great Retreat,” consult Alphabetical Index of Subjects under the words *gift, self, personality*.)

This gift of self was doubtlessly motivated in part by the psychological make-up of Father Eymard but particularly and principally by the requirements of his eucharistic vocation - (a vocation of service, love and self-surrender) - by the life of grace which calls for a blossoming of the life of Jesus Christ in the soul, and by the exigencies of sacramental Communion. As we have said, he modeled the gift of self on the state of the human nature of Jesus Christ in its relations to the divine Person.

But what is specially distinctive of the Great Retreat is that this gift of self is made the object of a perpetual vow and, we like to add, a vow characterized by its *totality*. The thanksgiving of March 21, 1865, registered the most crucial moment of the Retreat: “Towards the end of my thanksgiving, I made the perpetual vow of my personality to our Lord Jesus Christ in the hands of the Most Blessed Virgin and of St. Joseph, under the patronage of St. Benedict (his feast-day): nothing for me as a person - with a prayer for the grace that is essential to this gift; nothing by me. The model of this gift: the Incarnation of the Word” (1<sup>st</sup> med).

In his analysis and study of the gift of self in the notes of the Great Retreat of Rome, Father Tesniere aptly commented as follows: “The interior life of Father Eymard consisted not only in avoiding all sin and controlling his passions; nor in imitating as faithfully as possible the virtues of Jesus Christ; nor in living in the presence of God through recollection; nor in being united to Him by the awareness of the mind and the heart’s peaceful repose in the goodness and love of God; nor even in an unreserved and continually renewed adherence of his will to the actual will of God.

“He wanted to push on much further and to consecrate this interior life with a vow, to make of it a state of union and of life with our Lord Jesus Christ, a state of dependence upon Him, modeled on the state which, as a consequence of the Incarnation, was that of the humanity of the Savior relatively to the Person of the Word, and corresponded to the essential effect of Communion, the most perfect supernatural union imaginable of man with Jesus Christ and with God.

“In itself, this union is not an innovation, for Christ taught it formally when He foretold and instituted the Eucharist: ‘He who eats Me abides in Me and I in him.... As I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me will live because of Me’ (John 6, 57 and 58). The Apostle Paul also taught it and put it into practice: ‘It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me’ (Gal. 2, 20). It is the precept of evangelical holiness put into practice: ‘If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, *abneget semetipsum*’ (Matt. 16, 24). All the authors of the spiritual life, the author of

the *Imitation* more than any other, taught it when they preached not only the avoidance of sin and detachment from earthly affections but the gift of self to God, the abasement of self, under the action of God and the supreme dominion of God....

“What is new in the teaching of Father Eymard is that he translated these examples and teachings into a process or system of sanctification for himself and for others; that he pointed out the incarnate state of the Son of God as the ideal of the life of God in man and of man in God; that he presented the gift of self to Jesus as called for by Christ’s gift of Himself to man in Communion; that he called this gift the free gift of the human personality to reproduce (psychologically) the (ontological) state of the privation of a human person in which state the human nature of Jesus Christ was fixed from the first moment of its existence and, with no possibility of any resistance, was in the possession and under the control of the divine Person of the Word; and finally that he made of this gift of his human person the object of a perpetual vow, which he called the most perfect of vows, for ‘if by the other vows we give our possessions, by this one we give our very selves, which is more.’”

Father Tesniere then explained the formula of this vow of the gift of self: “This formula of the vow of *impersonality* is perhaps too brief: nothing for me, nothing by me, no one.... What, however, we perceive most clearly in this vow is the spiritual annihilation, so to speak, of self by its declining to be, to do or to receive anything whatever either as principle or as end. By this voluntary renunciation to his rights as a person, Father Eymard wished to reproduce in his spiritual life the state in which the Incarnation had constituted the humanity of Jesus; and he wanted to do this in order to belong entirely to Jesus, to act only for Him and by Him, just as the sacred humanity, on its being possessed, dominated and controlled by the Person of the Word, lived, willed and acted only through and for that Person, and consequently, for God alone. At any rate and for all practical reasons, this vow must have kept Father Eymard in a very close union with Jesus Christ, in a total dependence upon Him in everything he did, in a spirit of perpetual adoration, and in a state of the most selfless and faithful love.”

Mrs. Natalie Jordan makes an interesting reference to the Great Retreat in a letter to a Miss Gérin: “Lyons, April 11, 1965.... Father Eymard has just been with us for three days.... He had just come from Rome.... Sunday (April 6), at 6:00 o’clock in the morning, we conversed with him for two hours and a half. He spoke about his retreat of two months close to St. Mary Major, and told us what God had revealed to him for the good of his soul, among other things that what we must give to God is our mind; we give Him our heart, for He asks for it. He does not ask for our mind, and that is the gift which is the most agreeable to Him. He understood most clearly what it is to make Jesus Christ grow in us into the state of a perfect man (Ephes. 4, 12); we succeed by denying self.”

### *7 - Value of the Notes of the Great Retreat*

A - The notes of the Great Retreat introduce us into the inner sanctuary of the soul of our Founder. They reveal to us the authentic Father Eymard with his holiness, his graces and his virtues as also with his human nature, his character and his imperfections. Without these notes, much of his soul would have remained hidden to us and it would have been impossible for us to have a definite idea of his spiritual gifts in the supernatural and natural order, of the great effort the work of his sanctification cost him, and of all the difficulties he encountered as a Founder.

B - The Great Retreat also leaves us with a definite model of our spirituality. It depicts Father Eymard in the fulfillment of his duties as Founder, Superior and Religious of the Most Blessed Sacrament. It puts us in live contact with a man who lived concretely, day in and day out, his interior life, his union with God, his life of adoration, the practice of the religious virtues and especially the spirituality of self-immolation, of service, of love, of gift of self, and endeavored constantly to do so more perfectly. Most particularly, the Retreat of Rome is a comprehensive

explanation of the doctrine and practice of the gift of self, which our Founder more fully understood and lived. Better than any treatise of spirituality and in a more effective and direct manner, the notes of this retreat teach us how to acquire and live the form of holiness proper to us as Blessed Sacrament Religious.

C - The Great Retreat of Rome stimulates us specially to work with determination and serenity at our sanctification. Indeed, we realize that holiness here below does not consist in a pleasurable and peaceful enjoyment of our Lord, nor in a state that shelters us from imperfections, nor in a grace that makes us live outside our human nature, but that, on the contrary, holiness embodies itself, so to speak, in our human nature as such, that it is lived and matured through persevering and repeated effort - not without being occasionally subjected to humiliating defeats - in the midst of crosses and sufferings, in a word, in the same down-to-earth conditions of our own everyday spiritual life.

D - We are also of the opinion that these notes constitute a remarkable document of spiritual literature. From the “Confessions” of St. Augustine to the “History of a Soul” of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus and other similar accounts written since then, many works of this type have been published. Among all this literature, the notes of the Great Retreat of Rome have a value second to none by their scope, by their depth of analysis, by their wealth of actual experience, by the realism and concreteness of the action of grace and of the soul, and by so many other priceless factors.

#### 8 - *The Manuscript of the Great Retreat*

The notes of the Great Retreat of Rome form a small volume bound in black, with leather-back and cloth-boards. The title *Meditations* is stamped in gold on the back; would this title be from Father Eymard himself? There are 412 pages in all, 404 of them written on and eight left blank.

The handwriting is racy, spirited, not too distinct, but in general is legible enough; here and there, however, it is unintelligible.

The numbering of the pages is defective, possibly due to Father Eymard's being distracted.

The text is generally correct. But there are a goodly number of errors, gaps and omissions of words. Punctuation is often defective, and mistakes of spelling are not wanting.

The quotations from Scripture are often inexact because Father Eymard was either quoting from memory or transcribing only the words more directly related to his subject; and again it may have been due to his being distracted or writing too hurriedly.

What is said of the quotations from Scripture applies to the quotations from the *Imitation of Christ*.

It is impossible to determine which edition of the *Imitation* Father Eymard used during the Great Retreat; in any case, it was a good one. It does not seem to have been the Valleyre edition which, according to the testimony of Father Stafford, Father Eymard “always, carried on his person.” That is the edition preserved at the Generalate in Rome.

Father Eymard seldom indicated the source of his quotations from the Fathers of the Church. The research done in 1956 by Father André Gaudreau, of the Province of St. John the Baptist, proved a tremendous help in identifying the authors of these texts. There are some 15 Latin quotations the authors of which could not be traced; most of these quotations seem to be of Father Eymard's own composition.

#### 9 - *The French Critical Edition and the English Version*

There is no need to apologize for our not going into detailed remarks about the French critical edition. Most of these remarks would have little or no point as far as the English version is

concerned, for the simple reason that many of the qualities and defects of the original manuscript, even after having been critically edited, cease to exist when duly processed for transference into the English language. So that if you do not wish to be too disappointed with this translation, you should expect from the start to miss a lot of the Great Retreat as our Founder wrote it.

You will miss the flavor and spontaneity of the original; the oft-hurried and stumbling yet meaningful and telling phrase, which is so typical of jottings not meant for the outsider's eye; the obscure word that conveys a clear message to the writer but that is "greek" to the reader; the thought apparently still-born but, in reality, teeming with life and all the richer in meaning for its being hardly viable and so indefinite. You will miss all that, and that is a lot. But obscurity as such cannot be translated; it had to be spelled out, with much travail, into something definite. Neither could irregular or ungrammatical sentences be phrased in English with equal irregularity or ungrammaticality. Whatever be the merits or demerits of this version, we hope St. Peter Julian recognizes it as the faithful expression of his mind; for indeed there is no better personally guided tour of St. Peter Julian's soul than the Great Retreat of Rome.

*Translator's note.* – The *Revised Standard Version* of the Bible, Catholic edition, is used throughout; the English text of the *Imitation of Christ* is that of Ronald Knox and Michael Oakley.

I am deeply indebted to Rev. Wilfrid Thibodeau, S.S.S., for reading the typescript, clarifying many obscure passages and improving the text generally.



## SECOND OR GREAT RETREAT OF ROME

January 25, 1865 – St. Paul

Redemptorists

Rome

A.R.T.E.

---

### RETREAT

#### Major resolutions

1 – Concentrate entirely on what I am actually doing. When tempted, or inclined to levity, lay my hand on my heart, or look at the crucifix or towards the altar, or kiss the floor.

2 – Work only at my personal sanctification, to the absolute exclusion of all persons and things.

*Quid mihi de aliis?* (Why should I be concerned with all else?)

*Quid pro me, aut pro Deo in me, in hac re, aut cogitatione?* (What is there for me, or for God in me, in this particular thing or thought?)

3 – *Totus gratiae momenti et huic uni* (Devote all my attention to the grace of the moment, and to it alone).

---

First day - First meditation

#### On St. Paul

1 - How our Lord pursued St. Paul.

2 - How St. Paul answered the first grace.

3 - Conditions of that grace.

I - *What Saul was*

1 - *Saulus autem devastabat ecclesiam per domos intrans et trahens viros ac mulieres, tradebat in custodiam.... Saulus autem adhuc spirans minarum et caedis in discipulos Domini, accessit ad Principem sacerdotum et petiit ab eo epistolas in Damascum* (But Saul laid waste the Church, and entering house after house, he dragged out men and women and committed them to prison.... Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the High Priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus - Acts 8, 3, and 9, 1).

2 - *Ut appropinquaret Damasco, subito circumfulsit eum lux de caelo. Et cadens in terram,* (As he approached Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed about him. And he fell to the ground - Acts 9, 3).

3 - *Audit: Saule! Saule! Quid me persequeris?* (He heard a voice saying: “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” - Acts 9, 4).

II - *Saul's answer.*

*First grace - Quis es Domine? Ego sum Jesus quem, tu persequeris.... Durum est tibi contra stimulum calcitrare* (Who are you, Lord? I am Jesus whom you are persecuting - Acts 9, 5 - It hurts you to kick against the goads - Acts 26, 14).

*Second grace - Et tremens et stupens dixit: Domine, quid me vis facere?* (And he, trembling and amazed, said: “Lord, what will You have me do?” - Acts 9, 6).

*Third grace - Dominus: Surge et ingredere civitatem, et ibi dicetur tibi quid te oporteat facere.... Surrexit Saulus de terra.... Introduxerunt eum Damascum, et erat ibi tribus diebus, non videns et non manducavit neque bibit.... Orabat* (And the Lord said to him: “Arise and enter the

city, and you will be told what you are to do - Acts 9, 6. - And Saul arose from the ground - Ibid 9, 8. - They brought him into Damascus. And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank - Ibid 9, 8 and 9. - He is praying - Ibid 9, 12).

### Summary of my meditation

I marveled at the great goodness with which our Lord waited for Saul up to the gates of Damascus and, in His mercy, struck him down just when he was at his angriest; with what gentleness He spoke to him, called him twice by his first name and reproached him in general terms without going into humiliating details.

The *durum* indicates that grace had been pursuing him a long time in vain.

### Personal application

The thought which made up the body of my meditation is:

1 - *Quid me persequeris?* (Why do you persecute Me? - Acts 9, 4). Externally in My Society, in which you are an obstacle to the life of grace and of holiness through the little care you take in educating My children, in teaching them self-abnegation, in helping them amend their ways, in training them to the true religious life by a systematic formation and especially by example.

*Instead of that*, you have allowed yourself to become absorbed by studies that are irrelevant or of little use, by exterior things, by works of zeal of lesser importance that took you out of the house and away from your family. Hence so many defections! So many poor little plants, wilted and fruitless!

2 - *Quid me persequeris?* (Why do you persecute Me? - Acts 9, 4). My grace in you; the Holy Spirit, My mission in you and by you.

\* \* \* \* \*

The first *persequeris* moved me somewhat, but not to tears. *Arui tanquam, testa virtus mea* (My strength is dried up like a potsherd - Ps. 22, 15).

Tomorrow I shall take up again the second *persequeris*.

The Stations of the Cross after my meditation did me some good.

---

*Second day* - First meditation (*Indisposed*)

---

*Second day* - Second meditation (*Still indisposed*)

### Why do you persecute Me?

1 - *Quid me persequeris in te?* (Why do you persecute Me in yourself? - Acts 9, 4). Find out in what-how-and for how long.

2 - *Durum est tibi contra stimulum calcitrare* (It hurts you to kick against the goads - Acts 26, 14). What is this *stimulum*? This *durum*?

## Summary of my meditation

Fairly recollected, but cold.

My soul is empty of God. I no longer feel God in me except when He chastises me.

What is the cause of this empty feeling? It comes from my mind's being always taken up with exterior means or with matters that absorb it or with studies it is fond of. I do not attend to God in me; thence all the interior turmoil.

I do not consult God but the impression of the moment, or of creatures; I am very sensitive especially to exterior breaches of order that hurt the pride I take in the success of the Society. Thence enslavement to exterior means for the sake of success, or to persons in order to retain my personal liberty. Thence my impatience when I am called away from something that absorbs me. Thence my hastiness in getting rid of what stands in my way, in making short shrift of it. Thence the restlessness of my heart, which no longer feels God and is lured away by the phantasies of the mind or cannot make its pleas heard by the mind. Thence weakness of the will, little disposed to virtue, a slave to vanity or to intellectual pursuits.

But here is the *persequeris*. God comes into me; I am not at home. God inspires me; I do not hear Him. God insists; I say *yes* to everything without delay in order to get rid of God Himself. And I am not conscious of it because there is something good in what I am doing; but as it is something personal, my *ego* ends by being the center and the end of it. Thence the *durum* which I hardly feel, except when I am at adoration or at prayer; thence also the temptation to speed things up and go back to my work.

I flee God because I am afraid of myself and no longer feel His presence. Thence the loss of interior graces, to the detriment of my brethren, to whom I was supposed to communicate these graces; for the graces of the Society come through the Superior. And so I find the brethren to be like myself; I communicate my own spirit to them, or rather I abandon them to their natural weaknesses.

I do not have the *zelum Dei* (zeal of God - I Mach. 2, 54) my zeal is that of a craftsman with an eye to success, who relies entirely on his own personal means.

I looked into the *stimulum of God*, but not sufficiently; I shall do so again this evening.

*Resolution:* I must say *Miserere mei* at every ring of the clock.

---

*Second day - Third meditation*

### On these words: Domine, quid me vis facere?

I did not consider the *stimulum*, because my soul cannot as yet understand it; I feel the *durum* and nothing else.

In my meditation, painful to body and soul, I came upon a basic and luminous truth which is the key to my life; a truth I had now and then glimpsed only fleetingly, as if I was afraid of it. The reason is that I said the *Domine, quid me vis facere* (Lord, what will You have me do) only for the greatness and glory of God's service, only for the love of our Lord's glory, only for His triumph through works of zeal, through the success of His service of worship.

To put it more clearly, I have loved our Lord and His service like the servant of a great king, like the dear friend of the good Master, like one favored with His graces and with the trustfulness of souls that are close to God, like the confidant of the marvelous operations of His grace; in a word, mine is a love of God inspired by vanity.

If I examine my ordinary and extraordinary sins, I find that they all spring from vanity or that vanity has crept into them; my *ego* has crept into everything, has dominated my speech, my innermost thoughts even in the care of souls, in the works I do for God.

I have followed our Lord, King of glory and of love, but with a love that sought glory and privilege.

It is true that our Lord left me open to this by making me successful, by sending me congenial souls. But, disloyal and ungrateful me, was that a reason to rob Him of His glory? To take for myself some of the love owed to Him? To make capital out of my being His disciple?

Why make the supernatural serve me? Why seek over-much a manner of preaching or of spiritual direction that is distinctively mine! I could do all that, but self-eflacingly. *Oportet illum crescere* (He must increase - John 3, 30).

O my God! So many sins of vanity! So much confusion! So many precious graces spoiled! So many souls in sufferance!

And that in spite of the *abneget* (Let him deny himself - Matt. 16, 24); of the *absque sui proprio* (Perfect self-abnegation - Const. No. 94) ; of our Lord's drawing me to this self-abnegation; of my gift of self on the first day of the year; of the humiliations which pursue me like graces of salvation.

That is the *stimulum*! I must die to self, or rather I must give myself totally to our Lord by the natural virtue of a faithful servant. Service is the law, the virtue, the reward of the servant; the servant has no name; the glory is for his Master.

---

*Third day - First meditation (Physically indisposed)*

### **On Jesus Christ and sin**

*Posuit Dominus in eo iniquitatem omnium nostrum* (The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all - Is. 53, 6). Love of the Father.

*Vere languores nostros ipse tulit* (Surely He has borne our griefs - Is. 53, 4). Love of the Son.

*Longe a salute mea verba delictorum meorum* (Why are you so far from helping Me, from the words of My groaning - Ps. 22, 2). He weeps over our sins as if they were His own. *Magna est enim velut mare contritio tua* (Vast as the sea is Your ruin - Lament. 2, 13). *Defecerunt oculi mei* (My eyes grow dim - Ps. 69, 4). His eyes are, as it were, glazed and lifeless from weeping.

*Defecit in dolore vita mea et anni mei in gemitibus* (My life is spent with sorrow and My years with sighing - Ps. 31, 10). He spent His life suffering and grieving.

*Cum clamore et lacrimis offerens* (Jesus offered ... with a loud cry and tears - Heb. 5, 7). In the Garden of Olives - On the Cross.

*Salvum me fac, Deus, quoniam intraverunt aquae* - bitterness, anguish - *usque ad animam meam* (Save Me, O God, for the waters have come up to My neck - Ps. 69, 1). Look upon Him, O my soul!

*Operuit confusio faciem meam* (Shame has covered My face - Ps. 69, 7). *Factus pro nobis maledictum*, (Having become a curse for us - Gal. 3, 13).

*Non est species ei neque decor et vidimus eum ... despectum et novissimum virorum virum dolorum, et scientem, infirmitatem et quasi absconditus vultus ejus et despectus ... et nos putavimus eum quasi leprosum et percussum a Deo et humiliatum* (He had no form or comeliness that we should look at Him, and no beauty.... He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces He was despised.... We esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted - Is. 53, 2, 3, and 4). Such is His exterior appearance.

*Attritus est propter scelera nostra* (He was wounded for our transgressions - Is. 53, 5). *Qui peccata nostra ipse pertulit in corpore suo super lignum* (He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree - I Pet. 2, 24).

*Deus ... ut quid dereliquisti me?* (God ... why have You forsaken Me? - Matt. 27, 46).  
Abandoned even by His Father.

Behold the victim of sin. *Ipse autem, vulneratus est propter iniquitates nostras; vere dolores nostros ipse portavit* (He was bruised for our iniquities.... He carried our sorrows - Is. 53, 5 and 4).

---

*Third day* - Second meditation

### **On my sins**

I reviewed the sins of my childhood. *Tantillus infans, tantus peccator* (Such a tiny infant and yet such a great sinner - Aug. Conf).

How imprudent I was as I advanced in the priesthood, in office, and how the good God watched over me! I did not deserve it.

I saw that vanity was always the cause of all my sins. Vanity even reformed me and often saved me.

I saw that I never gave myself, the core of me, to God; it was always me with God, God with me, through me, for me, the glory of His service, the sweetness of His peace. I sinned like the angel, I robbed God of His glory, I exploited His grace, I crowned myself with His goodness and with His love.

And yet I must give Him this *fundum agri* (the substance of the soil), this *medullam animae* (the marrow of the soul), this me. But that means death through the *exinanivit* (emptied Himself – Phil. 2, 7); *death*, and I fled from it, and I was never serious about clutching the sword of Abraham in order to immolate Isaac.

Death implies humility, humiliation, contempt, abandonment.

Death implies the exterior poverty of Jesus Christ, that is, the livery of humility, the condition of the servant - unfaithful me!

Death implies self-bnegation at the service of the Master.

Death implies penance, mortification of the “old self,” of the rebellious slave, always rebelling or always on the point of doing so. Such is the *fundum* I must give.

This meditation was sufficiently recollected and consistent, but the *durum* remains; this rock has yet to flood me with its waters - Abraham, Joseph.

---

*Third day* - Third meditation

### **Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ**

Our Lord expiated all my sins; and I made Him suffer more than everybody else because He loved me more, gave me more graces, shared His mission with me, loaded me with honor and confidence through the Society of the Most Blessed Sacrament, and never refused me anything.

I still make Him suffer; for my conduct, my life of vanity, etc., are an obstacle to His graces in the Society, to the growth of His love for me. I paralyze His goodness and His power.

This meditation moved me a little but left me dry-eyed, crestfallen. I lack feeling in prayer; I would need to pray and shed a few tears.

---

Fourth day - First meditation (1:00, o'clock)

### Service of our Lord by the gift of self

I saw how I have given myself to our Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament only through the devotedness of love, only through service, worship and zeal. That suited my nature, as also the vanity and activism of my mind.

The zest of combat and of works of zeal produced in me a warmth of piety, of fervor, a momentary sentiment of love; and that was all.

I complained to God for His having spoiled me in that respect.

I thanked Him for the trials from my subjects and even for the lack of subjects; assuredly I was not in the right spiritual condition to raise them up properly, to nourish them, to communicate to them the interior grace of the Society. Thence the deserters, and men with self-centered ideas. I thanked our Lord for the angelus qui me colaphizet (A messenger ... to harass me - II Cor. 12, 7) ; it was a great grace; fear either stopped me or goaded me on. Strange indeed these storms on my return from Rome, on both occasions, before each event, each undertaking, each foundation; strange these scourgings - but wonderful graces!

\* \* \* \* \*

What must I do? I must give myself to Jesus Christ and serve Him by the gift, the holocaust of self. *Non tua volo, set te* (I want not what is yours, but you).

Our Lord gave me to understand that He prefers the gift of my heart to all the exterior gifts I might offer Him, even if I were to give Him the hearts of all men without giving Him my own. *Praebe, fili mi, cor tuum mihi* (My son, give Me your heart - Prov. 23, 26).

Consequently, our Lord prefers an act of personal humility to all the glory I may give Him; an act of personal abnegation to all the homages of success, of zeal, of conversions - for then I give Him something of my personal self; an act of personal poverty to all the external expansion of the Society and even of His external kingdom through the Society; an act of mortification to all the virtues of devotedness, because that comes from me, and the rest is outside me.

That is what I have never given or looked into seriously; that is what I have been afraid of. It is high time that I put an end to this, especially since our Lord has shown me what harm I do to His glory, what damage I inflict on my struggling Society, what troubles I bring upon myself, even physical miseries.

Such was my meditation - a basic meditation; that is what I must build upon.

Three times I drew the following from the *Imitation* (Bk. III, Ch. 13): *Citius namque exterior vincitur inimicus, si interior homo non fuerit devastatus. Non est molestior et pejor animae hostis quam tu ipse tibi non bene concordans spiritui.*

*Oportet omnino verum te assumere tui ipsius contemptum, si vis praevalere adversus carnem et sanguinem.*

*Quia adhuc nimis inordinate te diligis, ideo plene te resignare aliorum voluntati trepidas.*

(The foes who assail you from without are sooner overcome if there has been no ravaging of your inmost self. Your soul has, no worse enemy, none more troublesome, than you yourself, when you are out of harmony with the spirit.

If you want to win the mastery over flesh and blood, it is of paramount necessity for you to acquire a real contempt for yourself.

You are still over-fond of yourself in the wrong kind of way; that is why you flinch from submitting yourself wholly to the will of others.)

That *voluntati* (will of others) is evident when I am called away from what I am doing for pleasure or merely for good riddance; God goes on ever detaching me and crossing me.

### Gift of self; its consequences

I meditated on the gift of self, on its consequences. Gift of self is true love, the only true love.

I meditated on these words of the *Imitation* (Bk. II, Ch. 11): *Diligere Jesum propter seipsum.... Ubi invenitur talis qui velit Deo servire gratis? Raro invenitur tam spiritualis aliquis qui omnibus sit nudatus. Nam ... si dederit homo omnem substantiam suam, adhuc nihil est, et si fecerit paenitentiam magnam adhuc exiguum est, et si apprehenderit omnem scientiam adhuc longe est, et si habuerit virtutem magnam et devotionem nimis ardentem adhuc multum sibi deest.... Quid illud? Ut omnibus relictis, seipsum relinquat et a se totaliter exeat, nihilque de privato amore retineat.*

(Those who love Jesus for His own sake.... Where will you find a man willing to serve God without hope of reward? Rarely will you find anyone so spiritual as to be stripped bare of all things.... If a man were to give away everything he had, it would still be nothing; if he did severe penance, it would still be but little; if he were to have a grasp of all knowledge, he would still be a long way off. Even if he had great holiness and fervent devotion, there would still be much lacking to him.... And what is this one thing? That having left all things behind, he should still leave himself, renounce himself completely, keeping back nothing of his self-love.)

Consequences: the gift of self in a spirit of humility-as a form of reparation, of penance.

Humility that accepts poverty as its state in life, humiliation as its expression, mortification as its remedy against an inflating vanity.

I was deeply affected by the thought that this sort of humility is not a gift of love, not even a positive virtue practiced for the love of God, but that it is strictly an act of justice, an indispensable remedy for my salvation, which is, in danger.

How humiliating!

I tried to ask God to forgive me the wrong I have done Him.

I thanked Him for having led me here in order to, open my eyes.

However, I am afraid of the conflict; I need to pray.

\* \* \* \* \*

What moved me deeply is to see how a soul, given to external devotion only, is exposed to living a life of vanity, of sensuality, of enslavement to creatures - as it happened to me. The reason is: *Radix in terra sitiendi* (Like a root out of dry ground - Is. 53, 2).

### Levity of character

I thanked our Lord sincerely for having revealed to me this naked truth about myself, which is the clue to my whole life, the leading and over-all obstacle to my sanctification.

I therefore examined two things: the question of fact and the why of it.

I saw that levity is at the base of my character and of my way of acting in things which are not of my choosing or to my liking. And so, levity of mind in mental prayer, in prayer, in my examens; my mind always goes for action, for liberty. My mind busies itself readily with all that is food for its activity, for its curiosity, for its zeal, for the glory of our Lord - at least His exterior glory. But when it is a matter of facing up to this truth, (levity) in the sacrifice of self and of its liberty, or of remaining at the feet of our Lord, of listening to Him in peace and humility, I cut matters short; like Pilate I ask, "What is truth?" But I do not wait for an answer; I am afraid of it. I steer clear of the

truth as a personally binding law, and so I do not benefit by its light and its divine unction; I do not abide in the truth of God.

In order to avoid truth as a law that is personal and that goes down to details, I say *yes* to everything out of sentiment; I seek its glory, its exterior conflicts, its triumphs, because my activism delights therein, enjoys the liberty to choose and to apply itself to this or that, and finally because my “religious” vanity gets something out of it.

My mind is like an eel that slips through one’s hands.

Oh! This *serpens antiquus* (old serpent) is most cunning; he has much power over me.

My heart is flighty because it lives on a passing sentiment and does not feed on lasting and personal truth. My heart also skims over everything, seeks for peace, for the feeling of God, loves to speak about our Lord, about His love because that does it some good.

Oh! How my heart needs God, is famished for God, would need to shed tears at the feet of God! But my restless, whimsical and flighty mind takes it elsewhere, or throws it in a daze through external relationships, or exhausts it and renders it fitful with its, imaginings.

And so my heart does not enjoy God because it is superficial; it does not go beyond the surface, beyond a token gesture towards what is good. And yet God draws me by working on my heart; He wants my heart to be recollected, and so He creates therein a sense of emptiness, of distaste for everything. O my God, when will You fill this heart which was made for You, stands so much in need of You, and longs for You alone!

A will that is flighty and insconstant; a will that grows enthusiastic over sublime resolutions but cringes the moment it has to make the least sacrifice or overcome itself in anything; a will that is most generous for external things, devoted to everything and to everybody as long as it suits its liking, its vanity or its desire for liberty; a will that goes all out for itself alone - a most revolting cowardice.

A will that is afraid of God, afraid to know too clearly what He wills specially and personally for me; a will that always avoids the point at issue and switches to something else, that devotes itself to His glory when it should seek humility, to external sacrifices when it should deny itself, to works of zeal when it should recollect itself - *such is the illusion*. I have not said like St. Paul, *Quis es Domine?* (Who are You, Lord? - Acts, 9, 5); I took it for granted. I immediately made an act of contrition so as not to have to listen to the law or to my condemnation.

Concerning my interior life, I have never said sincerely, *Quid me vis facere?* (What will You have me do? - Acts 9, 6).

\* \* \* \* \*

Why? And whence this levity?

It is natural to me as a result of headaches in my youth; it is a habitual temptation of false liberty, for I am not flighty when it comes to studying or doing the things I enjoy; it is really a wilful cowardice, because I am afraid of being recollected in God *and within myself*.

Such are the three reasons for my levity.

This levity breaks out even into my exterior life, my relationships and my conversations. I am concerned about a personal idea or desire, and not about others.

I read the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of the first book of the *Imitation*. Really God Himself picked it out for me, *De Pace Acquirenda* (How to Attain Peace). I shall make of it the subject of my meditation at 10:00 o’clock.

\* \* \* \* \*



*First cause.* - We do not have peace because we make too much of what others say or do, of what does not concern us: *Multam, possemus pacem habere si non vellemus nos cum aliorum dictis et factis et quae ad nostram curam non spectant occupare.*

(We could have peace to our heart's content, if only we would not concern ourselves with the things other people are saying or doing, things which are no business of ours.)

*Second cause.* - We are too dominated by our own passions and much too preoccupied with transitory things. *Nos nimium occupamur propriis passionibus, et de transitoriis nimis sollicitamur. Raro etiam. vitium unum perfecte vincimus. ... Si essemus nobis ipsis perfecte mortui et interius minime implicati, tunc possemus etiam, divina sapere et de caelesti contemplatione aliquid experiri. Totum et maximum impedimentum est quia non sumus a passionibus et concupiscentiis liberi, nec perfectam Sanctorum viam conamur ingredi.*

(We get wrapped up in the objects of our own affections, worried, too, over transitory things. Seldom do we conquer a single fault.... If only we could die to self altogether, and enjoy complete interior freedom! Then the rest would follow; we should be able to taste the flavors of the spiritual life, and have some experience of what is meant by heavenly contemplation. There is only one obstacle, but it is a formidable one - we have not got rid of passion and desire; we are not really trying to set our feet on the ideal path that Saints have trod.)

Here is the *third cause* of this evil in me, still greater than the first two: *Quando etiam modicum adversitatis occurrit nimis cito dejicimur, et ad humanas consolationes convertimur.*

(When we encounter even the slightest degree of difficulty, we are all too ready to turn, in despair, to human consolations.)

What did the Saints do? *Seipsos mortificare ab omnibus terrenis desideriis studuerunt; et ideo totis medullis cordis Deo inhaerere, atque libere sibi vacare potuerunt.*

(They made it their business to wean themselves away from all earthly desires; this left them free to cling, with every fiber of their hearts, to God, and attend to the business of their own souls.)

\* \* \* \* \*

*Reading:* Levity – its causes

1 - *Quiesce a nimio sciendi desiderio quia magna, ibi invenitur distractio et deceptio.*

(Why not take a rest from this exaggerated craving for mere knowledge which only has the effect of distracting and deluding us - Imit. Bk. I, Ch. 2.)

2 - *Vanity, for Scientes libenter volunt videri et sapientes dici.*

(People are so fond of passing for learned men, and being congratulated on their wisdom - Ibid.)

3 - *Lack of mortification of the heart. Quis te magis impedit et molestat quam tua immortificata affectio cordis? ... Purus, simplex et stabilis spiritus in multis operibus non dissipatur quia omnia ad Dei honorem operatur, et in se otiosus ab omni propria, exquisitione esse nititur.... Prius intus disponit, quae foris agere debet.*

(There is no worse enemy to your freedom and your peace of mind than the undisciplined affections of your own heart. ... Freedom of heart is his, and simplicity of intention, and fixity of resolve, and he finds that he is no longer distracted by a variety of occupations; he acts now only for God's glory, and does his best to get rid of all self-seeking.... Really good and holy people plan out beforehand in their minds how they are to behave in given circumstances - Ibid, Bk. I, Ch. 3.)

4 - *Imprudence. Perfecti viri non facile credunt omni enarranti.... nec audita vel credita mox ad aliorum aures effundunt; ... sed caute et longanimiter rem secundum Deum ponderant.*

(A fully formed Christian does not believe everything he hears ... nor is he too ready to hand on to others the rumors he hears and the secrets entrusted to him;... but with patient care he weighs up the pros and cons of the business as God sees it - Ibid. Bk. I, Ch. 4.)

5 - *Trahunt desideria, sensualitatis ad spatiandum; sed cum hora transierit quid nisi gravitatem conscientiae et cordis dispersionem reportas?*

(Always the lure of the senses will be tempting us to take a stroll abroad; but what is left after a brief hour of enjoyment? All you carry home with you is a troubled conscience and a distracted mind - Ibid. Bk. I, Ch. 20.)

---

*Fifth day - First meditation (included in the summary of the Third meditation of the preceding day, Fourth day)*

---

*Fifth day - Second meditation*

### **Insensibility of heart**

I did not meditate on the prepared subject, from the 11<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the *Imitation* – “How to Attain Peace.” Grace led me to study the second ailment of my soul: the insensibility of my heart to the things of God.

Assuredly that condition springs from a lack of fidelity; it is a punishment. For my heart, which is so sensitive by nature, so compassionate with those in sorrow, so grateful for favors received, so eager not to overlook them, is however absolutely without feeling towards God, and even at the sight of my sins, of the Passion of our Lord.

The reckoning to come, the loss of merits, all that leaves me cold. One thing, however, affects me, the humiliation of sin, at least the external humiliation, over my not being at peace with God, the peace of friendship.

And this spiritual insensibility is even becoming second nature. I have little feeling for my brethren. I do not like their marks of affection, or that of anybody; my poor sister fares no better. Death moves me little; suffering however moves me a great deal.

It has been a very long time since I felt compunction of heart or wept at the feet of our Lord. I could weep more easily at the feet of the Most Blessed Virgin, with Magdalen, St. Peter and St. John on Calvary - out of compassion.

\* \* \* \* \*

I thanked the good God for not having treated me like a thief, an unfaithful servant, a fraudulent bankrupt; for having kept me in the religious life, for letting me function as a priest and even enjoy the reputation of these two states - undeserved, decidedly so.

I understood that I do not deserve to shed tears of devotion, still less of love, not even of sorrow and repentance. That would be too great a consolation, too great a proof of the goodness of God; I do not deserve the honor conferred on Magdalen, or the visit made to Peter.

A dry-eyed contrition - such is the lot of a wounded pride, of a heart which for too long hap, loved itself for its own sake.

What is there that could melt this heart of steel, this heart of ice? The fire of love. I must see the love of our Lord for me, what His love prompted Him to put up with from me in order to win me over, to do me good, to wait for me. *Dilexit me prior, cum inimicus, indifferens, infidelis* (He has first loved me - I John 4, 10 - when I was unfriendly, indifferent, unfaithful).

The day my pride, my self-love comes, under the weight of so much love on the part of our Lord, perhaps the ice will melt. But I recoil before the demands of God's love for me and of my love for Him. Therein is the *Domine, quid me vis facere?* (Lord, what will You have me do? - Acts 9, 6).

For so long have I snubbed the goodness of God who calls me, invites me, entreats me, comes to me. I did not listen to Him, I deserted Him, and I hastened to where He did, not want me. *Par pari refertur*. (This latin saying refers to the *lex talionis*, law of retaliation, whereby the punishment is equal to the injury done - which would indicate that St. Peter Julian paid a price equal to his *snubbing* of the goodness of God. *Translator's note*.)

---

*Fifth day - Third meditation (not recorded)*

---

*Sixth day - First meditation*

### **Levity, insensibility: causes and remedies**

I saw that my mind was frivolous, fickle and superficial because I did not give it a well-determined interior occupation but relied too much on general resolutions, or on resolutions that were specific but impractical and without a sanction.

Now here is an effective remedy. - Since neither the good of my neighbor, nor zeal, nor the external glory of God but the external practice of humility must be my virtue in external relationships, I will train myself to it by means of a quotation, an outlook, or an example, so that my mind may find its bread already cut, its task assigned; and I will follow this up with an examen - without fail.

As to the aridity of my heart, I saw that it is a natural consequence of the levity of my mind, ever a vagabond. My heart could have thrived on God, on holy recollection, on life in God, on life in our Lord.

The reason that prompts me to act is ever the same. There is a vanity of the mind as there is a vanity of external things, of position, of affection, of reputation, even of zeal for and success in the conversion of great sinners.

I was then laboring under a great illusion in thinking I loved no one - not that my affection was really evil but that it was quite dangerous, since it was inspired by vanity without my suspecting it.

How can I get rid of so deeply rooted a vice? That is what I will ask of our Lord this evening.

\* \* \* \* \*

The answer lies in the seventh chapter of the third book of the *Imitation*: *Fili, utilius est tibi et securius devotionis gratiam abscondere, nec in altum te efferre, nec multum inde loqui, neque multum ponderare sed magis temetipsum despicere, et tanquam indigno datam timere.... Si scires semper humilis et modicus in te permanere, neenon spiritum tuum bene moderare et regere, non incideres tam cito in periculum et offensam*.

(It is more to your advantage, more to your safety, if you conceal the grace of devotion; you must not boast of it, must not talk about it, must not set too high a value on it. Instead, you should think the worse of yourself and fear that grace has been given to one who does not deserve it.... If you knew how to remain always humble and unimportant in your own eyes, knew how to give your spirit proper guidance and direction, you would not fall so quickly into danger and wrongdoing.)

---

*Sixth day - Second meditation (not recorded)*

---

### Mortification

How good is the good God! At last! I see my way, what I must do to reach our Lord.

I will reach Him through the spirit of mortification, which will include and regulate every kind of mortification.

And this spirit of mortification will come from the very fact of my sinful state, from the necessity of making penance, of paying my debts, of taking the place that is naturally my due, a place of contempt and oblivion. Thus the spirit of mortification becomes a sheer matter of justice.

But I will aim still higher to the spirit of mortification out of love for our Lord Jesus Christ in order that I may be grafted in Him, on His very Self, since that is the only *effective* means; a means therefore of union with Jesus Christ, with His grace, with His life, which will be infused into me; the strength of Jesus in me by mortification which makes Him live again as Savior in me and as glorifier of His Father through me. *Adimpleo* (In my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of His Body, that is, the Church - Col. 1, 24).

There it is! Did I sense the *coup de grâce* that nature dreaded?

The devil mocks me and still hopes to throw me back into that exterior life which has done me so much harm. The spirit hopes to regain the upper hand, but the heart is afraid.

*Hoc signo + vinces* (By this sign you shall conquer - Eusebius).

*In cruce amor* (In the cross is love).

*Mors in cruce et resurrectio* (In the cross is death and resurrection).

---

February 1 - First meditation

### Eucharistic vocation

1 - The good God has loved me so much! He has led me by the hand to the Society of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

All my graces have been graces of preparation; every state of my soul was a novitiate. The Most Blessed Sacrament has always dominated my life.

2 - It is the Most Blessed Virgin that has led me to our Lord, to weekly Sunday Communion through the "Laus" at 12, from the Society of Mary to that of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

3 - Our Lord took advantage of my weakness: the service of His glory, the love of His worship and of His triumph. Thus my vanity developed into an exterior virtue.

4 - For a wonder, I gave myself to the service, to the glory, to the love of our Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament but according to the law, by the gift of my life, the gift of devotedness.

I devoted myself not by the gift of self, not by interior but by exterior self-denial, not by the self-effacement of love - although I may have made a few acts of it, for I felt the need to do so. My soul suffered from a lack of it for a long time, sensed a wall of separation, felt cramped and oppressed. I can see it now.

*Da totum pro toto* (Give all for all - Imit. Bk. III, Ch. 37).

*Da ad mortem in gloria Christi* (Give unto death to the glory of Christ).

I was struck by these words of St. Ignatius Martyr: *Frumentum Christi sum* (I am the wheat of Christ - Lett. to Romans). I added, *Mortificatione molar, amoris igne coquar ut panis mundus inveniar* (May I be ground by mortification, may I be baked by the fire of love that I may become a purified bread).

And these words of the Master: *Nisi granum frunzenti.... Si autem mortuum fuerit, multum fructum affert - Amen! Amen!* (Unless the grain of wheat.... If it dies, it bears much fruit - So be it! So be it! - John 12, 24).

*Resolution:* I absolutely must get down to work! Modesty of the eyes; gravity of deportment; silence about myself let others talk; mortification at meals.

\* \* \* \* \*

At breakfast I read chapter 37 (Imit. Bk. III).

*Fili, relinque te et invenies me. Sta sine electione et omni proprietate et lucraberis semper.*

*Nam et adjicietur tibi amplior gratia, statim ut te resignaveris, nec resumpseris.*

*Domine, quoties me resignabo et in quibus me relinquam?*

*Semper et omni hora; sicut in parvo sic et in magno. Nihil excipio, sed in omnibus te nudatum inveniri volo.*

*Alioquin, quomodo poteris esse meus, et ego tuus, nisi fueris ab omni propria, voluntate intus et foris spoliatus! Quanto hoc celerius agis, tanto melius habebis,... tanto mihi plus placebis, et amplius lucraberis.*

(Leave yourself behind, my son, and you will find Me. Have no choice of your own, no personal preference; you will be the winner every time.

The moment you surrender yourself to Me, never to take the gift back, a greater store of grace will be added to what you already have.

How often am I to surrender myself, Lord, and in what matters am I to leave my own preferences behind?

Always; at every moment, in small things as much as in great. I make no exceptions; it is My wish that in all things you should be stripped naked of self.

Otherwise, how are you going to be Mine, and I yours, unless you take off every shield of your self-will, whether it shows outwardly or not? The sooner you do this, the better you will feel for it; ... the more you will please Me, and the greater will be your gain.)

---

*February 1 - Second meditation*

### **Characteristic virtue of an adorer**

I am convinced that for me this is the most important meditation, because it must determine the form, the substance and the law of my holiness as a religious.

Which ought to be the principal virtue of an adorer?

I had thought of the virtue of religion. I now see that it is not; for the function and perfection of that virtue is outside us, and it pertains to both interior and exterior worship, with God as its immediate end. Moreover, everyone is bound to render this worship to God more or less frequently; it is of the essence of religion.

I had thought of love as our great distinctive virtue; but although we should have a great love for our sacramental Lord, love is the law, the duty and the sanctity of all. Our Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament belongs to all.

It must be a virtue that is sovereignly and perpetually eucharistic, of which our Lord is perpetually and universally the present model, the grace and the actual end.

*Exinanivit semetipsum in formam. panis accipiens* (He emptied Himself, taking the form of bread - Phil. 2, 7).

Our Lord veiling His divine and human glory in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Our Lord binding His divine and human power.  
Our Lord sacrificing His divine and human freedom.  
Our Lord renouncing all ownership in heaven and on earth.  
Our Lord immolating His will.  
Our Lord veiling even His virtues, His goodness, His meekness, His exterior love.  
*Vere tu es Deus absconditus* (Truly You are a God who hide Yourself - Is. 45, 15).

Such is the true and perpetual virtue of a religious of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

This virtue sanctifies him in his whole soul, in all his senses, in his whole life.

It is sympathetic to the sacramental state of our Lord; it completes that glorious state in itself by the free and meritorious virtue of His adorer, who becomes anew, as it were, His body, one of His members.

It is a true Christian virtue, for all of our Lord's virtue lies in these words: *Humiliavit semetipsum* (He humbled Himself - Phil. 2, 8).

His self-effacement, like His humility, has become the character, the life, the proof of His love; the same goes for us.

Therefore, O my soul, therein is the whole law of your holiness; therein all the personal and real glory which God expects of you, in you, through you. *Exinanivit* (He emptied Himself - Phil. 2, 7). *Oportet illum crescere, me autem minui* (He must increase, but I must decrease - John 3, 30); I must become, at it were, a sacramental species, which is certainly without pride or vanity, since it has no life of its own.

---

*February 1 - Third meditation*

### **Reasons for the self-abasement of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament**

This meditation moved me deeply. I examined why our Lord chose this state of self-abasement, and I found two principal motives for it.

1 - His love, putting up with so many sacrileges, etc., without taking revenge, without even complaining. I went into details; it is frightening. Why such patience? So as not to have to be always chastising. So as to keep man in fear, for if our Lord had to be ever meting out punishment, whoever was spared would believe himself innocent.

I also saw the patience of our Lord in receiving the imperfect and the perfect, the lukewarm and the fervent, and that without manifesting any partiality, so as to keep the former trustful and the latter humble.

I saw that the motive of sacramental self-abasement was to test, to purify, to strengthen and to perfect faith, as also to make reparation for the Fall, to renew the divine testing in order to reward fidelity, to purify, stimulate and nourish love.

\* \* \* \* \*

But how can I know whether Jesus loves me, whether He is pleased with my service! That is easy; if I fulfill a duty in His presence, if I obey a law, or if of my own accord I give Him a proof of my goodwill, if I visit Him, if I perform an act of the virtue of religion, I am sure to please Him.

But if I do so badly? Or if I am not feeling well spiritually? In order to please Him, it is enough that I loathe my badness, that I humble myself, that I wish to do better. For I am then drawing closer to Jesus, and that is what pleases Him. He it is that has put this good thought, this good desire in me; He therefore wants me and loves me.

\* \* \* \* \*

2 - Second thought - Jesus in His self-abasement is the model, the grace and the end of our self-abasement, of humility, of patience, of forgiveness, of poverty, of humiliations. And always He tells us: *Discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde* (Learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart - Matt. 11, 29).

---

February 2 - First meditation

### The Presentation

1 - I meditated on the offering of Jesus Christ: *Ingrediens mundum, dicit: Holocautomata, non tibi placuerunt, tunc dixi: Ecce venio ut faciam Deus voluntatem, tuam* (When He came into the world, He said: "In burnt offerings ... You have taken no pleasure." Then said I, "Lo, I have come to, do Your will, O God" - Heb. 10, 5).

This divine will of the Father was the way of life of Jesus, poor, lowly, obedient; and then the Cross.

*First offering*, in the virginal womb of His holy Mother, humbled there and in bonds, but in a paradise of purity and love.

*Second offering*, when born in Bethlehemi suffering (it was cold), then poor (He had nothing), and finally, humble, obedient.

*Third offering*, in the Temple; it was legal and authentic, the gift of Mary and Joseph. Mary and Joseph offered themselves with Him, for Him. - Thoughts of Jesus at that moment: gift of Himself to His Father, *Et veniet ad templum sanctum suum Dominator Dominus* (And the Lord will suddenly come to His temple - Mal. 3, 1).

I renewed my vows in union with Jesus and also the gift of my whole self into His hands, so that today He might have so mething to offer and give to His Father from the fruits of His Redemption and of His love. - Alas! After 30 years of priesthood, preceeded by 24 years of preparation, what fruits has the Master reaped from this field, which He watered with so many graces and cultivated with so much care? *Spinas et tribulos* (Thorns and thistles - Gen. 3, 18).

The sight of it all distressed me deeply.

I renewed the holocaust of my religious state, and especially my rule of conduct towards N.... the control of my tongue concerning myself and all that may be commendable in my works, my acquaintances, my brethren.

2 - Secondly, I examined why God revealed so soon to Mary the sufferings of her Son. She loved God enough to accept and bear this sacrifice. God wanted to give a companion to the Savior. *Hic positus est* (This Child is set... - Luke 2, 34).

She had to sustain herself with the ardor of His love for man.

How the good God spares me! I am so weak!

I am going to offer Mass at St. Mary Major.

At breakfast, I drew the 19<sup>th</sup> chapter of the third book: *Nec dicas non valeo.... Insipiens est talis cogitatio.... Sed indifferenter ab omni creatura, . . . totum hoc de manu Dei gratanter accipit. Et ingens lucrum reputat.*

(Don't say, "I can't...." That's a silly way of thinking.... No matter who is at the back of it, he takes it all thankfully from the hand of God, counting it as a substantial gain.)

\* \* \* \* \*

During the Mass at St. Peter's,<sup>1</sup> I considered the second reason for our Lord's sacramental self-abasement, namely the glory of His Father. He wanted, in His glorified state, to honor and glorify the Father, and, by His sacramental state, to sacrifice to the Father the properties of His glorified Body:<sup>2</sup> its radiancy by veiling Himself ; its agility by fettering Himself; its subtlety by remaining imprisoned beneath the Sacred Species; its immortality by keeping His state of death and of victim through letting Himself be consumed in Communion or through the corruption or destruction of the Sacred Species. Thus the humiliation of the Incarnate Word in glory glorifies the Father; only Jesus Christ can do that.

There you have a splendid model of humility, O my soul, when the glory of honors, of success and of prosperity is ours; with all that glory we are but sinners or nothing. And yet, I see the Savior becoming a sacramental non-entity for my sake, that is, to make me love self-abasement in the practice of virtue as a means of union with Him and to tell me that even if I can never abase myself to that degree, I should at least aspire to it.

The visit I made was, like my nature, garrulous and effusive. However, I was perhaps more reserved. But how fragile is the vase that contains the spirit of God! How volatile is grace!

\* \* \* \* \*

*(In the original manuscript, St. Peter Julian sketched here a royal crown topped with a cross.)*

---

*February 2 - Second and Third meditation (not recorded)*

---

*February 3 - First meditation*

### **The presence of God**

1 - I saw clearly that everything will soon evaporate and come to nothing if I do not apply myself to the habitual presence of God, which is an absolute necessity for me if I am to keep my mind under control and in communion with God, my heart in the goodness of His service and of His love, my will at his disposal, my body in a respectful attitude.

The presence of a grave, wise, loved and dignified man works like that quite naturally on those around him; it becomes for the moment something of a supreme law to them, so that they exercise self-respect in his presence.

Such, and still more effective, is the presence of God, respected and loved, who sustains us in the proper state of soul by the sweet unction of His grace. *Ambula coram me* (Walk before me - Gen. 17, 1). *Vivit Dominus* (As the Lord lives - 2 (or 4) Kings, 2, 2). *Providebam et ego semper tecum* (Adaptation of text: I keep the Lord always before me - Ps. 15, 8). A fortiori the S.S. of the New Testament.

2 - I need the presence of God not only to help me remain within the law of what is right and avoid what is wrong, but above all to overcome the vanity of my mind, its excesses, its hopeless levity.

I need this presence still more to prevent my heart from seeking the consolations of piety and of a good reputation, to rouse my will out of the false freedom that makes it slothful and apathetic. I have a sovereign need of the divine presence to counteract the harassment of conflict; one cannot ever be on the run, on the field of battle; one needs some repose in God. *Venite seorsum, in desertum locum* (Come away by yourselves into a lonely place - Mark 6, 31).

But how can I acquire the habit of the presence of God? By working at it gradually, by starting with something easy such as the frequent offering of oneself, the repeating of a few simple sayings;



I must proceed mechanically according to fixed signs, at predetermined moments and places, for instance, when the clock rings, when I have to speak to someone; and then I must render an account of it to God, like a child to his mother.

But above all, what is needed is a corporal penance; otherwise everything will go up in smoke.

\* \* \* \* \*

At breakfast I read a chapter from the *Imitation* which certainly suited the day, the 40<sup>th</sup> of the third book: *Domine, nihil sum, nihil possum, nihil boni ex me habeo, sed in omnibus deficio et ad nihil semper tendo.*

(Lord, I am nothing, can do nothing; I have no goodness of my own, in nothing do I reach perfection, but have a constant tendency towards nothingness, etc.)

*Propaganda*

\* \* \* \* \*

My whole day was restless. I spent my meditations (second and third?) telling myself that what God wills is best. We should adore His holy will; later we shall understand.

God has permitted the illness of the Cardinal Prefect, the prolonged discussion of the Cardinals on finances, Monsignor Capalti's attending to other business in spite of his two promises.

In any case, the good God gave me the grace of not saying anything out of the way, of not fouling up anything at the *Propaganda*. *Sit nomen Domini benedictum* (Blessed be the name of the Lord - Ps. 113, 2).

---

*February 3 - Second and Third meditation (not recorded)*

---

*February 4 - First meditation*

### **Trial**

I made my meditation on the present trial; my soul is beginning to regain a bit of calm.

At breakfast, I read the seventh chapter of the third book of the *Imitation* up to *quidam, incauti* (Some people, for want of prudence); it is written for me.

*Non enim semper est in potestate hominis via ejus; sed Dei est dare et consolari, quando vult et quantum vult et cui vult, sicut sibi placuerit, et non amplius.*

(The road a man is to tread is not always his to decide; it is for God to give and to comfort, when He wills, in the measure He wills and whom He wills, as seems good to Him and no more.)

\* \* \* \* \*

An exhausting day, in letters, in visits; my soul is completely parched from it.

I felt at Santa Maria della Pace<sup>3</sup> that an ounce of recollection is worth more than a hundred pounds of exterior graces.

---

*February 4 - Second and Third meditation (not recorded)*

---

### Anniversary of my holy Baptism

I made my meditation on the gratuitous and all-merciful grace of the holy Baptism that I received.

I understood what it is: a - new creation in our Lord Jesus Christ, a second life in Jesus Christ, but in Jesus crucified. *Quicumque enim in Christo baptizati estis, Christum induistis* (For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ - Gal. 3, 27). *Qui autem Christi sunt carnem suam crucifixerunt cum vitiis et concupiscentiis suis* (And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires - Gal. 5, 24). *Consepulti cum Christo per baptismum in mortem* (We were buried therefore with Him by Baptism into death - Rom. 6, 4). *Et qui non odit animam suam non potest meus esse discipulus* (If anyone ... does not hate ... his own life, he cannot be My disciple Luke 14, 26).

And so, that is the nature of my second generation: a separation from the world, a crucifixion, a war, a continual death.

I saw the graces that made up the dowry of my Baptism - beyond all computing: a son of God, a member of Jesus Christ, a child of the Church, a brother of the Saints; a right to the grace and to the glory of Jesus Christ.

\* \* \* \* \*

What made me weep is the sight of my three vocations: to a devout life, to a priestly life, to the religious life.

A review of my childhood was heart-rending. I sinned out of vanity; I reformed also out of vanity.

How good and wonderful Providence has been to me! It is an endless miracle.

I saw the good done by the holiness of St. Francis of Assisi, of St. Dominic, of St. Ignatius, of St. Alphonsus. I have received the same graces. And then I wept. *Serpens decepit me* (The serpent beguiled me - Gen. 3, 13) through a life of activity, through personal study and zeal for pursuits foreign to, my calling.

I thanked our Lord for this second retreat<sup>4</sup> which I am to make. It will be the illuminative part of the retreat: our Lord as my law; and our sacramental Lord as my end.

But I must walk the right road - the stripping of the "old self"; it is the only safe road. Any other is either an illusion or a device of sloth.

Well, so be it! *Quotidie morior in Christo et pro Christo* (I die every day ... in Christ and for Christ - I Cor. 15, 31 and 32).

At breakfast, the *Imitation*, Book III, Chapter 13: *Oportet omnino verum te assumere tui ipsius contemptum, si vis praevalere adversus carnem et sanguinevs. . . .*

*Ita subjectum et parvulum te exhibe, ut omnes super te ambulare possint et sicut lutum platearum conculeare. Quid habes homo inanis conqueri? Quid sordide peccator potes contradicere exprobrantibus tibi, qui toties Deum offendisti, et infernum multoties meruisti? Sed pepercit tibi oculus meus, quia. pretiosa fuit anima tua in conspectu meo, ut cognosceres dilectionem, et gratus semper beneficiis in eis existeres. Et ut ad veram, subjectionem et humilitatem, te jugiter dares, patienterque proprium contemptum ferres.*

(If you want to win the mastery over flesh and blood, it is of paramount necessity for you to acquire a real contempt for yourself.

Show yourself so submissive, so unimportant, that everyone may walk over you, trample you like mud in the streets. And if they do, what reason have you to complain, you worthless man?

Filthy sinner that you are, what answer can you make to those who reproach you, you who have so often offended God, so many a time deserved hell? And yet My pity spared you, because your soul was precious in My sight; I wanted you to come to the knowledge of My love, to be ever grateful for My kindness towards you; to give yourself unceasingly to true submission and humility, and to bear with patience the scorn of others.)

---

*February 5 - Second meditation*

### **God's goodness since my Baptism**

The goodness of God since my Baptism; His divine Providence in drawing me away from dangers, in effecting a change of place, of condition, even of health, in order to preserve me from enslavement to studies, from the vanity of success, from attachment to creatures, from the servitude even of gratitude. Our Lord wanted to be my Master in everything, pretty much as He was St. Paul's, because I would have loved too much those who were good to me or loved me. I have been a bit like Jacob, always on the move.

The purpose of all this was to lead me to the eucharistic vocation. I needed Marseilles to render my love for that vocation exclusive, to make of it a center; I needed Lyons to give me the practice of it and to set me on the road to the Cenacle. Now, this dear Cenacle, in God's own good time.

What humiliated me on this holy anniversary of my Baptism is my natural pride, the realization that I, so grateful towards man, so devoted by nature, so ready to renounce my own ideas in order to please a teacher, have been so ungrateful towards our Lord and so little devoted to the Most Blessed Virgin; that in spite of it all, God has always been obliging to ungrateful me, has showered me with honors and graces, has always waited for me with His hands full and a receptive heart.

I see it clearly now: the great mistake of my life has been to live too much in the mind, according to the mind.

I am reduced to apprehension concerning the external acts of virtue, and even the beauty, the grandeur and the glory of the service of God.

I even fear the peace of prayer, the sweetness of recollection, the exterior and unaccustomed inspirations.

Really, is not that enough to humble me to the very limits of nothingness!

I must then be stern in resisting my over-active mind in order to acquire simplicity in prayer and humility of heart.

The Stations of the Cross, made in reparation, did me some good.

*February 5 - Third meditation*

### **The flesh, enemy of the Holy Spirit**

This meditation humiliated me profoundly; it revealed to me the influence of the flesh over the spirit, and of the carnal spirit over my service of God, the cunning of that serpentine spirit.

It revealed the complicity of the flesh in favoring the works of the mind, of zeal, of the external service of God and even in prompting me to a holy indignation, that is, a lecturing of others in my mind, a show of force in imaginary encounters, a strength of character in censuring the great; all that is but a footstool for my *ego*, a comfort to my sloth, a fletitious display of force by my cowardice. That is not the spirit of our Lord but the spirit of lording it over others and of self-sufficiency.

I also saw the illusion of my apostolate of love, of that mysticism which seeks to show off and so easily finds fault with others; all that is either vanity or cowardice. Here I am, reduced to the reality of my wretchedness.

What did me good was to understand that one act of self-contempt would give more glory to God than the success of the Society through me - than even success concerning the Cenacle, because by such an act I would be ransoming the cenacle in me and glorifying God through me, which God prefers to all the homages I might offer Him without myself, apart from myself; that is a royal truth.

---

February 6 - First meditation (*fundamental*)

### Character of the life of Jesus Christ

Our Lord came to restore all things in Himself, says St. Paul; for our sake He is, has become, our way, our truth, our life. To bring about such a restoration in ourselves, we must begin by subjecting the flesh to the spirit, and the spirit to God. We must keep the flesh in subjection by force, for it has neither faith nor hope nor even reason; it merely follows its wayward inclinations, and when the mind itself connives with it, total rebellion follows. That is what happens in me, though in a more subtle and delusive way, for it is based on something religious and takes on the form of virtue; my self-love has found a means of masquerading as the love of God.

How can I reverse that? In two ways.

1 - The *first* is to live the life of Jesus Christ in me, to form Him in me, to give Him new birth and growth. That is precisely the mission of the Holy Spirit. *Spiritus Sanctus superveniet in te,... ideoque et quod nascetur ex te sanctum vocabitur filius Dei* (The Holy Spirit will come upon you,... Therefore the Child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God - Luke 1, 35).

That is the mission of the priesthood: *Filioli mei, quos iterum parturio donec formetur Christus in vobis* (My little children, with whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you - Gal. 4, 19)

If Jesus Christ is in us, His truth, His ways, His virtues, His love are there with Him.

He is conceived in good desires; He is born in goodwill; He grows in our virtues; He becomes perfect in His crucified love in us.

Oh! What a beautiful thought that is! It is then through Jesus in me that I will wage war on the "old self." It takes two for a fight; and as our Lord grows in me, I shall become stronger. What is essential is that I nourish Him well and diligently.

2 - The *second* way is to follow Jesus Christ in His war against the flesh and the spirit of the flesh. He began by doing what He commanded me to do. Our Lord mortified His senses humbled His intellect, and chose a life of poverty, of toil and of humiliation; He afflicted His innocent flesh with what is a remedy for my own sinful flesh. And He did all that in order that I might be less humiliated, less discouraged, or rather that I might find honor and glory in resembling Him.

I need only consider His exterior modesty, every attitude of His body, every action of His senses, every word and look of His; everything about Him is earmarked with the virtue of simplicity and also points out what there is to correct in me.

Moreover, there is no longer any room for doubt. *Si quis vult post me venire abneget semetipsum, tollat crucem suam et sequatur me quotidie* (If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me - Matt. 16, 24). *Vos ... qui permansistis mecum in tentationibus meis* (You ... who have continued with Me in My trials - Luke 22, 28). *Non veni pacem mittere sed gladium* (I have not come to bring peace, but a sword - Matt. 10, 34). So that the mortification of Jesus Christ is the incision of the divine graft, His victory over the "old self."

\* \* \* \* \*

At breakfast, *Imitation*, Book III, Chapter 54: *Natura libenter honorem et reverentiam accipit.... Confusionem timet et contemptum....*

*Quaerit habere curiosa et pulchra, abhorret vilia et grossa....*

*Irritatur levi injuriae verbo....*

*Inclinat ad creaturas, ad carnem propriam, ad vanitatem et discursus....*

*Libenter aliquod solacium, habet externum, in quo delectetur ad sensum.*

(Nature is glad to receive honor and respect....

Nature is afraid of disgrace and scorn....

Nature collects rare and beautiful things and disdains what is coarse and cheap....

Nature is stung to anger by the least unkind remark....

Nature has a tendency towards creatures, towards a man's own body, as well as to foolish pastimes and unnecessary gadding about....

Nature is glad of any outward comfort that pleases the senses.)

---

*February 6 - Second meditation*

### **Jesus mortified**

Our Lord suffered His whole life long; why did He do so?

1 - In order to make amends to the glory of His Father impaired and sullied by the sensuality, the pride and the greed of man, by sin and its pleasures.

2 - Our Lord suffered but without honor, without consolation, without relent - a state of suffering, motivated by love. His suffering was, so to speak, natural to His state.

Alas, my sufferings have not had that character!

I failed to hide them, to make them simple and natural; I spoiled and sullied them; I lost much merit for the sake of worthless consolation and relief.

3 - Suffering, the proof of love, the nutriment of love, the perfection of love.

Our Lord has given me so many proofs of that; where are mine? And yet the little sufferings of my state were great graces and those I might have voluntarily brought on would have been beautiful flowers of love.

What is said of prayer, should be said of suffering: *Domine, doce me pati et sperni pro te* (Lord, teach me how to suffer and be despised for Your sake - St. John of the Cross).

---

*February 6 - Third meditation*

### **Interior warfare**

This meditation resulted in a revolt of my whole nature against the law of contempt by others, against the love of suffering, of humiliations, of persecutions. I could not bear the thought that the flesh, the mind, the heart of flesh will always be in a state of revolt and opposition, ever disposed to resist or at least to battle the spirit of our Lord in me, and consequently that an armed and incessant warfare, a round-the-clock alertness is in order.

A life in the battlefield does not suit my sloth, my cowardice, and yet it has so to be.

Our Lord gave me a good insight into myself. I work too much with the mind. I have too many thoughts and I look too much for them, with the result that my heart is, arid and lacks the calm of affection, the unction of its interior acts; the soul is over-stimulated by intellectual effort.

---

## Mystery of the Incarnation

At last I am penetrating into the mysteries of our Lord; I shall find life therein.

I considered three things in the Incarnation.

1 - Its preparation by the desires of faith and of love.

God wants to be desired. Desire for our Lord detaches and preserves from the world, and stimulates love. Desires of the Patriarchs, of the Prophets, of the Just, of the Most Blessed Virgin.

*And I*, I do not desire heaven; I am afraid of it because I am empty-handed, because I have done nothing, because I have a long and hard purgatory awaiting me.

I have not desired, or negligibly so, the coming of our Lord in me because I gave myself entirely to exterior things. I have not desired Holy Communion because Communion calls for recollection and would restrain my love for study and for exterior works.

2 - Life of Mary in the Incarnation.

She overflowed with joy in the possession of, and union with, the Word Incarnate. *Exulta et lauda filia Sion, quia magnus in medio tui* (Rejoice and exult, O daughter of Sion.... The Lord is in your midst - Zeph. 3, 14 and 15). She was all attention to her divine Offspring, Her Emmanuel, the principle, center and end of her life. The one concern of her soul consisted in marveling over His state of abasement, in praising His goodness, in adoring Him, in loving Him and serving Him. With her Beloved, she was happy everywhere.

Such is the life our Lord expects of me - the happiness of my vocation; I was so happy while waiting and preparing for it.

If I form Jesus in me, live in Jesus in me and do everything for Jesus, He will be my counsel, my strength, my consolation, my center of love.

That is the goal I must reach at any cost; the rest is nothing.

3 - Life of Jesus in the Incarnation.

He adored His Father in His state of humiliation, weak, bound, imprisoned; He thanked Him for His bounties which increased constantly with His growth in age and natural strength; He offered to Him the virtues and the love of His good and worthy Mother - who completed His offering.

The Word Incarnate sanctified His divine Mother, united Himself to all her thoughts, desires and actions, and made them His own in order to adore, love and serve His Father with them; in this new heaven He enjoyed the delights of purity and the holiness of love.

Oh! How agreeable to the Word Incarnate were these nine months, and how sweet to His divine Mother! What a happiness was Mary's! How pleased was the Incarnate Word to dwell in this virginal body, in this loving heart, in such a beautiful soul!

Jesus wants me to share the grace of Mary in His Incarnation by coming to live in me so that I may live in Him and for Him; so that He may be my counsel, my center of operations, my happiness, my paradise of grace *ut operaretur* (in which He may work). I have been drawn for so long to this interior life with Jesus, but always the devil, my over-active nature and over-independent mind, and especially my cowardice have kept me away from it.

Alas! Must I begin at 54 what I should now be finishing! How saddened and humbled I was at the sight of all this! By the mercy of God, I love no one, I have never loved anyone; I have loved only myself out of vanity, but not out of sensuality or avarice, *no! no!* Well, with the grace of God, I will begin by uniting myself today to Mary's adorations of the Word Incarnate, to her love and service of Him; I will do that before and after each one of my actions, at the sound of the clock.

### Spiritual incarnation

Subject and thoughts: Creation. In the creation of man, God had reserved to Himself the royal dignity of man's soul as also the glory of man's life. *Anima justi sedes Dei* (The soul of the just man is the throne of God - St. Gregory, Moral).

God was to perfect His image, His resemblance in man by enlisting man's cooperation. But sin upset everything. Fallen man no longer wanted to dwell with God in his soul; he became concerned only with exterior things - a slave to them.

To drive man back to his inner self, God first caught his attention through the Incarnation; then after having revealed Himself to the eyes of man, won the love of his heart and let his hands touch Him, Jesus Christ veiled Himself, hid Himself in man's soul; that is where He speaks to us, counsels us, comforts us and sanctifies us.

He wants to establish His kingdom within us, and thus force us to dwell with Him in us, to do for Him what the Most Blessed Virgin did in His Incarnation.

Then if we are faithful, He comforts us and gives us His peace. *Bonum est nos tecum esse* (It is well that we are here - Matt. 17, 4). That is why He says to sinners: *Redite ad cor* (Recall it to mind - Is. 46, 8) ; *Praebe, fili, cor tuum mihi* (My son, give Me your heart - Prov. 23, 26) ; *Diliges Deum* first of all *ex toto corde tuo* (You shall love your God with all your heart - Matt. 22, 37); the heart is life - *Deus cordis mei; ubi thesaurus, ibi et cor tuum erit* (God of my heart; where your treasure is, there will your heart be also - Matt. 6, 21).

### Sanctification

When God wants to make someone a great saint, He separates him from the world by trials and persecutions, or by giving him through His grace a horror of the world, a love of solitude, of silence and of prayer.

God's greatest gift is a gift of mental prayer, whereby the soul is forced to live by herself, to recollect herself, to spiritualize herself, to mortify herself.

And when the soul is not generous enough, God afflicts her with infirmities, sickness and interior trials in order to detach her still more; storms purify the atmosphere.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Gospel of St. John, chapter 15 - Union

*Manete in me et ego in vobis. Sicut palmes non potest ferre fructum a semetipso nisi manserit in vite, sic nec vos nisi in me manseritis* (Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides on the vine, neither can you unless you abide in Me - John 15, 4). Our union with Jesus Christ should therefore be as close as the union of the branch with the trunk and its root. It is a *union of life*.

But this divine sap of the true vine is very powerful and fruitful. *Qui manet in me et ego in eo hic fert fructum multum, quia sine me nihil potestis facere* (He who abides in Me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing - Ibid. 5).

But if we are united to Jesus Christ not only by the state of grace and fidelity to grace but also by attachment to His words (which are spirit and life), we shall be all-powerful. *Si manseritis in me, et verba mea in vobis manserint; quodcumque volueritis petetis, et fiet vobis* (If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will and it shall be done for you - Ibid. 7).

But there is a practical union of love which enraptures the heart of the Most Holy Trinity. *Si quis diligit me, sermonem meum servabit et Pater meus diliget eum et ad eum veniemus et mansionem, apud eum faciemus* (If a man loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him - John 14,23).

Our union with Him; such is the object of Jesus Christ's last prayer. *Ego claritatem quam dedisti mihi dedi eis, ut sint unum, sicut et nos unum sumus. Ego in eis et tu in me ut sint consummati in unum et cognoscat mundus quia tu me misisti et dilexisti eos, sicut et me dilexisti* (The glory which You have given Me, I have given to them, that they may be one even as We are one, I in them and You in Me; that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them even as You have loved me - John 17, 22 and 23). Thus the Savior wishes that we be one as He is one with His Father, that the Father have for us the same love He has for His Son.

St. Paul says that we are the members of Jesus Christ, that Jesus Christ is our Head; he says that we are the body of Jesus Christ; Jesus is therefore our soul, again according to the words of St. Paul: *Vivit vero in me Christus* (But Christ who lives in me - Gal. 2, 20).

Union through the Eucharist, a substantial union:<sup>5</sup> *Qui manducat... in me manet et ego in illo* (He who eats Me... abides in Me and I in him - John 6, 57 and 56).

We receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in order to be united more intimately to His spirit, to His soul, to His works, to His virtues, to His merits, in a word, to His divine life.

We take food in order to be strong.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Summary

1 - There is a *union of faith* with Jesus Christ. *Christum habitare per fidem in cordibus vestris* (That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith - Eph. 3, 17). *Fides quae per caritatem operatur* (Faith working through love - Gal. 5, 6). That is union with His truth.

2 - There is a *union of love*. *Manete in dilectione mea* (Abide in My love - John 15, g). This love of Jesus Christ brings about the observance of His commandments; it is a union of obedience, followed by a union of sentiment. *Hoc sentite in vobis quod et in Christo Jesu* (Have this mind among yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus - Phil. 2, 5). Then there is the union of the spirit, which is, properly speaking, the life of Jesus Christ in us. *Si quis autem spiritum Christi non habet hic non est ejus* (Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him - Rom. 8, 9).

3 - Lastly, there is a *union of incorporation*, which is the closest thing to the hypostatical union of the human nature with the divine nature in the person of the Word, wherein human nature is minus its personality, which no longer exists as a person but gives way to the divine person of the Word.

To help us attain that union, our Lord has instituted the Eucharist, which is a substantial communion with His Body, with His Soul and with His divinity.

\* \* \* \* \*

This second meditation was poor, distracted; I made it at the Lady Adorers' chapel and I was somewhat tired. This virtue, the grace of union, is none too clear in my mind.

---

February 7 - Third meditation (not recorded)

---



February 8 - (No meditations recorded)

---

February 9 - First meditation

### Union

There can be no doubt in my mind that without union with our Lord, even the most promising and holy resolutions as well as a thorough knowledge of self and of God would remain ineffective in me because I would not be acting in union with our Lord, would not be aware of it, and would be all taken up with exterior actions or with actions to my own liking.

Union is necessary; but how attain it? It is very simple; by union itself. What need have I of so many resolutions? Of going into so many details and so much soul-searching? All that merely helps to amuse the mind. We must take our abode in our Lord, *Manete in me* (Abide in Me - John 15, 4), without examining how it is done; we must accept the divine will of the moment, desire nothing outside that divine will, fulfill it according to His wishes and be entirely devoted to it out of love-in order to please our Lord. A complete surrender to that will through grace, through the virtue of the moment, that is all there is to it; the secret of it is very simple: *Manete in me* (Abide in Me - John 15, 4); *Qui manet in me* (He who abides in Me - Ibid. 5).

When we are guests of someone greater than we, we pay him honor; when we are guests of a sovereign, we obey him; when we are guests of a royal friend, we seek to please him; as guests of our Lord Jesus Christ, we do *all that*.

But how can I become conscious of that union? By thinking of it, by wanting to think of it, by making of it the law and the ruling virtue of my life, by carefully determining my intention, by offering my intention, by offering and reoffering my action, and later by examining wherein it was defective.

In order to accomplish that, I must keep God present to mind. *Ambula coram, me et esto perfectus* (Walk before Me and be blameless - Gen. 17, 2). *Providebam Dominum in conspectu meo semper* (I keep the Lord always before me - Ps. 16, 8). *Vivit Dominus ... in cujus conspectu sto* (That we live before Him - Hosea 6, 2 - an adaptation). *Et ambulavit Enoch coram Deo* (Enoch walked with God - Gen. 5, 22).

\* \* \* \* \*

At breakfast, *Imitation*, Book III, Chapter 55. The need we have of grace. How charity takes the place of everything. This is, for me, *the* most beautiful chapter.

---

February 9 - Second meditation

### Does God love Me?

The great and only subject!

I cannot doubt that God has loved me in the past, and with a privileged love; the proofs of that love are still greater now.

1 - Everything I desire is granted me in a wonderful way, even what brings me pleasure.

2 - The Providence of God precedes me, accompanies me, and follows me; I see it, I feel it.

3 - God draws me more forcefully to life in Him, in a most gentle and compelling manner - most crucifying, too, when I pull away from Him.

All that tells me that God loves me with a very great love.

But it is not a tender love; why is that? It is my fault, for in the past I was afraid of the tenderness of God lest I be obliged to follow Him in His sacrifices, in a state that I dreaded.

It is my fault, it is because my mind is, too active and my heart not enough so in the contemplation of active mental prayer.

Then, it is a blessing that God's love be not tender towards me just now; I would stop right there, whereas I must forge ahead towards a life of death (to self).

My God! How difficult it is for me to think of God when I am not taken up with God, when I am attending to my neighbor or to some business or other!

---

February 9 - Third meditation

### Reasons of God's love fore me

I examined why it is that God loves me.

Of a certainty, I have nothing in me worthy of His love! I have done nothing great for Him!

I am in a state of tepidity, of unfaithfulness. I therefore have no right to the love of God; on the contrary I would very much deserve that He take vengeance upon me, or at least forsake me.

However, God loves me! He allows me to live, He offers me His graces, He leaves me with the signal honor of the priesthood and of the religious life.

Why does the Heavenly Father love me? The Father loves His divine Son in me, His mercy, His priesthood, His life - in its externals at least; He loves me because Jesus loves me.

Why does Jesus love me? *Serve male et piger, villicus iniquitatis!* (Bad and lazy servant! Dishonest steward - Luke 16, 8).

Jesus loves me because His holy Mother has given me to Him, has loved me from my childhood. I also love her, especially since the "Laus," since the death of my dear mother when I gave myself to Mary; she has taken care of me like a real mother. I must therefore have a great love for her since all good things have come to me with her love.

---

February 10 - First meditation

### Do I love God?

God loves me; that is a comforting truth.

Mary loves me; that is my hope.

But do I love our Lord? On first thought, yes; but on first thought only. Yes, my whole soul rebels at the thought of the contrary.

I put myself in the place of St. Peter as he answered our Lord: *Domine, tu scis quia amo te* (Lord, You know that I love You - John 21, 15). And then I told Him my devoted love, that I loved Him in creatures and that He knew it well. And in the saying, my heart and my eyes were eloquent; I had no distractions. But at these words, *Diligis me plus his* (Do you love Me more than these - John 21, 15), I saw how little I loved our Lord in following Him in His humble and crucified life, in His solitary and interior life, in His holy recollection; my mind was troubled and my heart was saddened over it. It is true; I have not loved our Lord for His own sake but for His exterior glory; or rather my nature delighted in His love, found it to its advantage. And yet this love of Jesus must be sympathetic to me; Jesus above all things; His person is paradise; where He is, there my treasure is!

And then giving some play to my imagination, I submitted the following case to myself. If our Lord no longer wanted me in the Society, no longer wanted me to return among my brethren, but wanted me to be an Alexis (feast day, July 17), a priest without means, coarsely dressed, brushed aside and unknown, living on his Mass stipends, staying in the corner of a church with our Lord, seeing no one, no longer hearing confessions or preaching, not counseling anyone, but living the hidden and penitential life of our Lord, and dying alone and uncared for, well, O my soul, what would you do? My first loving answer was: *Domine, tu scis quia amo te et sequar te quocumque ieris* (Lord, You know that I love You, and I will follow You wherever You go - John 21, 15, and Matt. 8, 19). Who knows what the good Master, in His mercy, has in store for me!

*Deo!* (All for God!)

---

*February 10* - Second meditation

### **On the Cenacle**

I meditated on the Cenacle, a description of which I read in Mariano da Maleo.

---

*February 10* - Third meditation

### **Adoration at St. Agatha (*Forty Hours*)**

*February 11* - First meditation

### **Interior service**

My meditation was good; I was in my grace.

We are attached to the household service, the interior service of the very Person of our sacramental Lord Jesus Christ; and consequently we stay with Him like the angels who make up His court, who are always ready to execute all His orders and, if there are no special orders, to honor Him, to praise Him, to thank Him, to love Him, to wish to please Him, to glorify Him. Such is our lot: we are the bodyguard of our Lord, we are part of His household.

Our life must therefore be that of a closely knit family, a life of order, of peace and of union.

Our perfection consists in giving excellent personal service, in becoming proficient in that service and acceptable to our Lord; a perfection that is really personal.

Adoration in spirit and in truth, such is our vocation. *Pater tales quaerit* (For such the Father seeks - John 4, 23), for there are not too many. Consequently, *quaerit* (He seeks); few are content with God alone and give themselves exclusively, absolutely to God. *Non tua sed te volo* (I want not what is yours, but you).

We always insist on glorifying God through exterior things, through our abilities, but not within ourselves, not in Himself through His interior reign which is the supreme glory our Lord expects of every man and especially of the adorer. The reason is that exterior service is more flattering to the senses, becomes a center for one's *ego*.

Meditating on this personal service, I thought of the angel Raphael. *Ego cibo spirituali utor* (I use an invisible meat - Tob. 12, 19). He kept his eyes on God, He lived on God, while accompanying Tobias. That is what I must do.

I thought of the life of the fire, which is entirely interior: *Ardet in se, lucet aliis* (It burns in itself and gives light to others). It is never so powerful as when confined or beneath the ashes; it lasts a long time.

I thought also of the root of a tree which, in winter, digs deep into the bowels of the earth in order to preserve its life, find nourishment and renew its fecundity.

That is the *manet in Deo, in Christo* (abiding in God, in Christ).

\* \* \* \* \*

Coming down to the practical, I saw that in order to become a true religious and Superior, I must live this interior life of adoration, content myself with our Lord Jesus Christ, and be apprehensive of exterior ministry; for it is better to work at forming my brethren, better to burn than to shine, better to be root than branch.

As for me, I should even shun the exterior glory of our Lord for the time being - and for always, if our Lord favors me with retaining me close to His adorable Person, at His personal service.

I must avoid everything that can be for me a distraction - an occasion to work outside my grace, to be seen, to be sought after; that would draw me away from my divine center.

Resolution, the same as yesterday: ejaculatory prayers; renewed three times for every action, before, during and after.

*Praebe, fili, cor tuum mihi et cogitationem et desiderium et opera* (My son, give Me your heart, your thoughts, your desires and your works - Prov. 23, 26 - adapted). *Deus meus et omnia* (My God and my all).

\* \* \* \* \*

At breakfast, *Imitation*, Book III, Chapter 7: *Fili, utilius est tibi et securius devotionis gratiam abscondere* (My son, it is more to your advantage, more to your safety, if you conceal the grace of devotion) - Sister Benoite, my sentiments; *nec in altum, te efferre* (You must not boast of it) - exalting too much the excellence of my vocation; *nec multum inde loqui* (You must not talk much about it) - be silent about myself and my graces; *neque multum ponderare* (You must not set too high a value on it) - because vanity slips in easily.

*Sed magis temetipsum despicere et tanquam, indigno datam timere.... Si quis vera fuerit humilitate fundatus et divina caritate repletus; si Dei honorem pure et integre semper quaerat; si seipsum nihil reputet, et in veritate despiciat, atque ab aliis etiam despici et humiliari magis gaudeat quam honorari - en meritum!*

(Instead, you should think the worse of yourself and fear that grace has been given to one who does not deserve it.... A man is meritorious when his spiritual life is based on real humility, when he is full of the love of God; when he is always seeking, purely and wholly, the honor of God; when he thinks of himself as good for nothing, really takes a poor view of himself, and is much happier when others look down on him and humiliate him than when they honor him.)

---

February 11 - Second meditation – *Letters - cattivo (bad)*

---

---

February 11 - Third meditation - *Confession*

---

February 12 - First meditation

*Serpens decepit me ignavia matutina et pridie lectione prolongata, tum insomnia laboravi nocte* (The serpent beguiled me into morning idleness and prolonged reading yesterday, and I suffered from insomnia during the night.)

## The dangers of working for others

*Imitation*, Book III, Chapter 27.

I prolonged my thanksgiving by one hour to make up for omitting my meditation.

\* \* \* \* \*

How good God has been to me! Never have I understood so well what is wrong with me, always working as I do for others, studying, preaching, directing, and all that under pretext of glorifying God, of doing good.

Thence those adorations made in that spirit, and not with our Lord and for myself.

Thence those thanksgivings not with our Lord, but for others.

Thence my finding them long, the temptation to take a book, to read some prayers; then if on leaving I meet someone that I like, I easily lose my time talking; or else I take to the newspaper, or again to a cleverly written book or one that appeals to my intellect. Oh! How I felt the deep wretchedness of my mind, of my imagination, of my senses, which readily make a sacrifice to cater to the vanity of the mind, to false liberty, to the desire to get through in a hurry with a task begun, and read letters and visiting cards a second time. Next, I find myself putting off and postponing everything, my prayers, the breviary. Then I feel tired from overwork and get excited if I am disturbed. Ali! Shameful slave of a false liberty, of which I have been the plaything for so long! Why not do what the *Imitation* suggests! *Sta ad beneplacitum meum et nullum patieris detrimentum.... Si fuerit amor tuus simplex et bene ordinatus, eris sine captivitate rerum.*

*Noli concupiscere quod non licet habere* (either because it is forbidden, or untimely, or outside my grace). *Noli habere quod te potest impedire et libertate interiori privare* (like putting myself always at the service of others, devoting myself for them). *Non attrahas tibi res aliorum nec te implices causis majorum* - Bk. I, Ch. 21.

*Juvat igitur, non quaelibet res adepta vel multiplicata exterius, sed potius contempta et decisa ex corde radicitus.... Munit parum locus, si deest spiritus fervoris.... Nisi steteris in me, permutare te potes, sed non te meliorare.*

(Wait on My good pleasure, and you shall come to no harm.... If your love is sincere, simple and under control, you will not be held prisoner by things.

Do not desire what it is not right for you to have (either because it is forbidden, or untimely, or outside my grace). Do not possess anything that may get in your way and deprive you of inward freedom (like putting myself always at the service of others, devoting myself for them). Don't make other people's business your business - (This last sentence is from Bk. I, Ch. 21).

There is nothing to be gained, then, by acquiring and increasing outward possessions; what *does* do you good is to think nothing of such things, cut them right out of your heart, root and branch.... The place you live in can be but a poor defense, if you lack fervor of spirit.... If your heart is not standing on its proper foundations, on Me, I mean, you can find somewhere else to live in, but it will not make you any better - Bk. II, Ch. 27).

\* \* \* \* \*

Therefore, O my soul, read, study, pray, and work like a gardener tending a sick plant.

*Attende tibi* (Take heed to yourself - I Tim. 4, 16). Wait for the command of God, for the law of duty to tell you when you should attend to others.

February 12 - Second and Third meditation

### Same subject

On the same subject; I found plenty to meditate upon.

At the noon, meditation (2<sup>nd</sup> med), I made an act of reparation; I saw the harm done to me, and still more to God, to His glory.

At the evening meditation (3<sup>rd</sup> med), I thanked our Lord for having stalled this business of the Cenacle. I would have left with a mere rag of a retreat, without depth, without having practiced any virtues; here it is so easy. The day was good; I feel all the better for it.

---

February 13 - First meditation

### Exterior modesty

I adored the modesty of our Lord; I followed it in all its stages up to the Blessed Sacrament.

I honored and praised the modesty of the Most Blessed Virgin.

I asked myself why I lacked modesty. Because I lose sight of the presence of God; because I do not pray; and then the laxity and listlessness of the senses get the best of me. It is quite evident that modesty is a great mortification for me since it makes me suffer; but why should I not behave in God's presence as others do in the world according to the laws of politeness and of good breeding?

Why am I not modest in the streets? I am modest in respect to indifferent and paltry things; but I am curious, and that curiosity springs from *vanity*. I want to see things in order to study them and talk about them. *Hoc vanitas vanitatum* (Vanity of vanities - Eccles. 1, 2).

I have often paid a heavy price for my vanity: a frivolous mind, a disturbing image, distractions, and often temptations. The holy man Job observed custody of the eyes lest he have so much as the image, the memory of a chaste virgin.

I must therefore take up holy modesty, not like St. Francis in order to preach, for in my case that would be vanity; not to be an example to others, for that would externalize my interior grace. I must be modest to honor God by my senses, to keep them in a state of reverence and of penance, so that my soul may be always ready to adore, always ready to pray and ponder some beautiful truth about our Lord, always free from troublesome impressions.

But how shall I go about being modest in the parlor, in the house? For that is where I am given to negligence, to familiarity.

I have found so few devout persons, even among religious, who practice modesty of the eyes while conversing in the parlor. How difficult that is! What does modesty on the street amount to! It requires less virtue than that practiced at home. I must absolutely look for an effective means. It is a simple thing: avoid being face to face with persons; look at a picture in front of me; hold a devotional article in my hands; remain in the presence of our Lord; pray while talking. But I must *really want* it. I shall try modesty in the corridors and with persons.

*Imitation*, Book III, Chapter 43: *Plus proficit in relinquendo omnia quam in studendo subtilia.*

Chapter 44: *Fili, in multis oportet te esse inscium et aestimare te tanquam mortuum super terram et cui totus mundus crucifixus sit.*

(He has done better for himself by giving up everything than he would have done by studying intricate arguments.

There are a good many things, My son, about which you should be ignorant. You ought to think of yourself as being dead, though still on earth; the whole world ought to seem to you as dead as if it were nailed to the cross.)

---

*February 13 - Second meditation*

### **Reparation for sins against modesty**

In reparation for all the sins committed and the bad example given against modesty, for all the glory of which I have deprived God, for all the graces and all the merits of which I have deprived myself.

---

*February 13 - Third meditation*

Practice of modesty

I confess I am seared of this law of modesty which I must practice in everything and always, at home as well as, away from home.

I understand that I am bound to it as a Christian, since I must live according to the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was modesty at its best; as a priest, since it is the nobility of Jesus Christ in me; as a religious, since I am a member of His family and I must honor Him like the angels; as a Superior, since *forma gregis ex animo* (being examples to the flock - I Pet. 5, 3).

I dread the practice of this law of modesty of the eyes with persons who have been close to me; I fancy they will think me uppish, scornful, bored with them; I believe that modesty in the streets will cost me less; but to look only twice at a visitor, once on greeting him and once on taking his leave, that seems quite difficult.

The law of modesty concerning the right posture of the body will also be most demanding since I am nervous, spirited and averse to all constraint.

But it all must be, cost what may. Our Lord wants it, and it is my duty; as long as I please my Master, what matters all else! I shall be that much freer and, for that matter, more independent.

---

*February 14 – First meditation*

### **Modesty, a royal virtue**

Here is one of the most important graces of my retreat.

Our Lord has at last given me to know and understand that the sovereign virtue of an adorer is modesty; that it is the virtue of the king's servants, the virtue of the angels in the presence of the divine Majesty; that it was the virtue par excellence of Mary, His most holy Mother; that it was His own dominant virtue: *Obsecro, vos per mansuetudinem et modestiam Christi* (I entreat you, by the meekness and gentleness. Of Christ – 2 Cor. 10, 1); *Et mirabantur quia cum muliere loquebatur* (They marveled that He was talking with a woman – John 4, 27); *Elevatis oculis in discipulos* (And He lifted up His eyes on His disciples – Luke 6, 20); *Cum sublevasset ergo oculos Jesus* (Lifting up His eyes, Jesus – John 6, 5).

It must therefore be my virtue, my royal, sovereign and dominant virtue.

\* \* \* \* \*

It will be for me the summary of all the virtues, since it includes and perfects them all.

Interior virtues: in the presence of God, modesty must be pure, humble, devout, and devoted - but devoted for love, for the sake of His good pleasure. It is both the soul and exercise of interior recollection, since it recollects the soul in the presence of God, like Mary at the feet of God.

Exterior virtues: modesty of the eyes means Christian vigilance; it is a continual mortification, a penance, a reparation that is due.

Modesty, of speech supposes prudence and wisdom, meekness and humility, temperance.

Modesty of the senses is a matter of propriety and good manners, of the honor and respect due to one's neighbor.

Modesty in one's walk: practice self-restraint, avoid levity and frivolity, respect oneself or rather God in oneself.

Modesty in the general deportment of the body; resolute without being stilted, proper without being affected, dignified without being vain or flattering, as if one were in the presence of God; such is the reverence due to God.

Modesty at table means sobriety, propriety, mortification; it is the most difficult, for one weakens all too easily.

Modesty in one's relationships is the effortless practice of humility and charity; a self-effacing humility, a magnanimous charity.

For an adorer in the presence of God, the exercise of modesty is the virtue of religion in practice.

Besides, modesty expresses the way of life of the religious of the Most Blessed Sacrament; he is the royal servant of our Lord Jesus Christ, His angel, His eucharistic apostle.

O God! How can I acquire modesty!

1 - By prayer; pray every day for this virtue.

2 - By the presence of God, of the Most Blessed Trinity in me, of Jesus Christ in me.

3 - By frequent examens, always accompanied by an atoning sanction.

4 - By making of it the one end of the virtue of the moment; by practicing it everywhere in order to acquire the spirit of it.

\* \* \* \* \*

At breakfast, *Imitation*, Book III, Chapter 31: *Proh dolor!*

*Statim, post modican. recollectionem, foras erumpimus; nec opera nostra districta examinatione trutinamus.*

*Ubi jacent affectus nostri non attendimus, et quam impura sint onnia non deploramus....*

*Ex puro corde procedit fructus bonae vitae.*

(The sad truth is that after a little time given to meditation we rush straight away and plunge into our outward life, never thinking to weigh on the delicate scales of conscience all that we do.

We do not consider where our affections lie, nor grieve for the sinful imperfections of all our actions....

Only from a pure heart comes its natural fruit, a good and holy life.)

---

*February 14 - Second meditation (In town)*

---

*February 14 - Third meditation*



## Modesty as a virtue

This meditation, which followed a reading of the Venerable N. Lancicius,<sup>6</sup> was very laborious. I had read with too much avidity, too much for the purpose of taking notes and, consequently, for others; this left me tired and distracted.

However, after a quarter of an hour, I was able to concentrate on my subject; modesty considered as a virtue and the source of all other virtues.

I saw the danger of excessive self-reproach for my acts of imprudence, for unintentional failings; that serves only to impress more deeply the feeling, the remembrance, the image; it is a trick of the devil to upset me. True virtue avoids even the sight and remembrance of the past and, especially by contrition, looks up to God and tells Him it loves Him.

The devil and my imagination also exaggerate my imprudence in order to trouble me still more. Now I am aware of the danger.

I saw the struggles that await me; the most challenging is that of being completely supernatural with people. That is the whole secret of it: supernatural in receiving visitors and in speaking with them, dignified in my manners. For I have three defects to avoid:

paying too much attention to people's clothing out of politeness, or from boredom or childishness;

talking too much, trying to please, to be helpful; then the natural takes over and, if vanity or sympathy creeps in, I lose my time;

too candid, childish and expansive with persons whom I know or to whom I owe some gratitude; or too motivated by a false charity or a false zeal.

1 - I must then practice modesty of the eyes, look without seeing, without having the image of the person in my mind.

2 - I must be dignified in my bearing as a *minister Christi* (minister of Christ - Rom. 15, 16) and out of the respect due to our Lord and to His saints.

3 - I must avoid any indulgence in talking about myself, in using expressions that might take on too natural a meaning in works of zeal; I must avoid touching hands.

Prayer obtains everything.

*Propterea adii Dominum et deprecatus sum illum* (I appealed to the Lord and besought Him - Wis. 8, 21). And after that, I should make penance.

---

February 15 - First meditation

## Chastity

I thanked our Lord for His having preserved my virginity in the secular state, my chastity in the priesthood, and my vow in the religious life.

I realized how great was the grace our Lord gave me in spite of my imprudence, my naturalism, my vainglory, and *that* laxity in my sympathies.

God was so good! I was never involved in scandals, I never ran into provocative occasions; no one was ever lacking in respect for me.

Alas! O my God, I would have been too weak! Your mercy protected me.

God was so good! He chided me when I became too expansive, when I dwelt too often on certain ideas, or when I thought too frequently about this or that devout person.

Our Lord gave me such a horror for the servitude of impure affections, or of affections that could become so! And He even used my vanity to do that. Since He could not win me over by His love, he did so by playing on my dominant defect. That is how He corrected me in my childhood. Oh! I have not thanked Him enough for it, nor the Most Blessed Virgin to whom I owe so much. I ought to have been punished hundreds of times.

I meditated on the excellence of chastity; through it our body becomes the pure and ornate temple of the Most Blessed Trinity; His enemy defiles that temple and disturbs the peace of it.

By chastity we join the angels in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Et ministrabant angeli* (Angels ministered to Him - Matt. 4, 11); purity alone may serve Him.

By chastity we become friends of the King. *Et habebit regem amicum* (He - who loves purity of heart - will have the king as his friend - Prov. 22, 11). A sympathy of condition and of life exists between both. Jesus loves the Virgin Mary in us.

By chastity we become worthy ministers of the altar, worthy apostles of Jesus, to whom Jesus safely entrusts His spouses for the day of eucharistic and, later, heavenly nuptials.

By chastity the soul becomes the heaven of God, the altar of love on which she offers herself unceasingly as a pure, holy and immaculate host (the Mass).

Chastity must, therefore, be the queen of virtues, and modesty must be its safeguard, its defense, its ornament and its garment. Viewed in this light, modesty becomes glorious both as a means and as an absolute condition (of chastity).

Resolution for the day: modesty of the eyes, of the body; prayer.

At breakfast, *Imitation*, Book III, Chapter 53: *Fili, pretiosa est gratia mea, non patitur se misceri extraneis rebus* (business alien to my state, imprudence in devotedness, zeal for worthless propaganda), *nec consolationibus terrenis. Abjicere ergo.... Pete secretum, tibi; ama solus habitare tecum; nullius require confabulationem sed magis ad Deum, devotam effunde precem, ut compunctam teneas mentem et puram conscientiam.*

*Totum mundum nihil aestima, Dei vacationem omnibus antepone....*

*A notis et caris oportet elongari....*

*Si temetipsum perfecte viceris, caetera facilius subjugabis.*

*Perfecta victoria est de semetipso triumphare.... Hic vere victor est sui, et dominus mundi....*

*Tunc erit pax magna et tranquillitas erit continuo.*

(Son, My grace is something precious; it will not stand being mixed up with worldly interests - (business alien to my state, imprudence in devotedness, zeal for worthless propaganda) - and earthly comforts.... You must remove everything.... Search out for yourself some out-of-the-way spot, and make it your delight to live there alone by yourself. Don't go looking for neighbors to pass the time of the day with, but talk to God in prayerful entreaty, if you want to remain sorry for your sins and keep your conscience clean.

Count the whole world as nothing; put your waiting on God before all outward things....

Friends and acquaintances you should keep at a distance....

Once you have gained complete mastery of yourself, it will be all the easier to bring everything else under control.

There can be no greater victory than to triumph over oneself.... Such a one is indeed master of himself and ruler of the world....

He will at once be conscious of great peace and inward quiet.)

---

*February 15 - Second meditation*

## On the text of the Imitation

My soul got much nourishment out of it and tried to be a little more recollected; my poor mind was beginning to be distracted and my heart to suffer from aridity.

---

*February 15 - Third meditation (good)*

### Chastity of the heart

I began by thanking our Lord profusely for giving me the means of acquiring knowledge, for Plati.<sup>7</sup> Really, our Lord hardly gives me the time to desire anything but that He grants it to me immediately.

What filled my thoughts and impressed me in my meditation is that it is myself I love in all creatures and things; there is in me an inordinate and hidden love that shows up under every possible form and is present in everything. What is this inordinate affection? What is the soul of it? What is its governing principle? That is what I am looking for but cannot find, the soul of what is evil in my soul. My life is a mystery to me; I seem to want no one but God alone, and yet at every moment I find myself loving no one but myself, working only at what appeals to me, devoting myself only to what I desire, love or hope for.

I seek God but I fail to find Him in virtue, even in prayer or in the saints; when I think I am on the point of finding our Lord in something, there is nothing I will not do to get hold of a holy book, a picture, reading material. I seek Jesus like Magdalen in the garden of His burial.

How the soul suffers in that state! She finds nothing but bitterness in everything and can but say: that's not the place, that's not it.

I have not yet found this divine Gardener in my soul; I love those who love Him; I even love them too much.

I love even too much what may seem to give Him to me; but *tristis est anima mea* (My soul is very sorrowful - Matt. 26, 38).

There is a bond to be broken somewhere, a mere nothing perhaps.

---

*February 16 - First meditation (fundamental)*

### Gift of self

A trying and depressing night! How I suffered! It is the result of last night's meditation. I am more than convinced that all I have done, said and resolved in this retreat is not the real thing.

I based my conviction on my sadness of heart, on my need for a certain something, on my eagerness to read something that may give me the secret. It is even fortunate that I no longer feel compunction rising within me; my heart would bank on it.

On waking up this morning, I thought several times of this passage from the *Imitation: Mirum, quod non ex toto fundo cordis teipsum mihi committis, cum omnibus quae desiderare potes vel habere.*

(How strange it is that you do not trust yourself to Me from the bottom of your heart, together with all that you can desire or possess - Bk. III, Ch. 27.)

On rising I prostrated myself on the floor and prayed for light and grace.

Our Lord compensated me generously for rising earlier in spite, of a bad night.

I looked for the chapter of this *mirum*, (how strange); it is the 27th of the third book. Therein I read the following: *Fili, oportet te dare totum pro toto, et nihil tui ipsius esse....*

*Quare vano maerore consumeris? Cur superfluis curio fatigaris?*

*Sta ad beneplacitum meum, et nullum patieris detrimentum....*

*Munit parum locus* (retreat at Salaise)<sup>8</sup> *si deest spiritus fervoris, nec diu, stabit pax illa quaesita forinsecus, si vacat a vero fundamento status cordis; hoc est nisi steteris in me; permutare te potes, sed non meliorare.... Confirma me, Deus, per gratiam Sancti Spiritus. Da virtutem corroborari in interiori homine.... Da mihi Domine caelestem sapientiam, ut discam, te super omnia quaerere et invenire, super omnia sapere et caetera, secundum ordinem sapientiae tuae, prout sunt intelligere.*

*Da prudenter ... da patienter.*

(My son, you must give Me all for all, keep no aspect of yourself as your private concern....

Why waste away in useless grief, why wear yourself out with unnecessary cares?

Wait on My good pleasure, and you shall come to no harm....

The place you live in - retreat at Salaise<sup>8</sup> - can be but a poor defense, if you lack fervor of spirit; if you seek for peace in outward affairs it will not stay firm for long, if your heart is not standing on its proper foundations, on Me, I mean. You can find somewhere else to live in, but it will not make you any better.... O God, strengthen me by the grace of your Holy Spirit. Make firm within me my efforts to be holy.... Lord, give me Your heavenly wisdom, that I may learn to seek You more than anything; let me see all other things as they are, in the way Your wisdom has disposed them.

Give me the prudence ... the patience....)

There, now, I have found the whole secret of it: the unconditional gift of self to our Lord.

I made this gift and took an oath on it before the Most Blessed Sacrament at the Consecration; my tears ratified it. At Communion, I placed my heart - in the act of giving itself - in the ciborium that it might itself become a ciborium.

Jesus wants to be my Raphael, my *means*, my center. *In me manet* (Abides in me - John 6, 56). *Vos ... qui permansitis mecum* (You who have continued with Me - Luke 22, 28).

I must be a servant dwelling with his Master, entirely and always at His disposal for everything indifferently and lovingly, more lovingly and cheerfully for what pleases Him the most than for what I may desire.

I shall renew, my gift of self with my every breath.

I now feel that I was fleeing from this divine servitude, that I wanted to choose what I should give and to hold fast to my *ego*.

*Totus tuus* (All Yours); but no pilfering!

At breakfast, *Imitation*, Book I, Chapter 15 (always the same thought): *Qui veram et perfectam caritatem habet in nulla re seipsuin quaerit, sed Dei solummodo gloriam, in omnibus fieri desiderat. Nulli etiam invidet quia nullum privatum gaudium amat, nec in seipso vult gaudere, sed in Deo super omnia bona optat beatificari.*

(True charity, charity that goes the whole way, leaves no room for self-seeking; it is God's glory that must have, everywhere, preference. A man who has charity of that kind does not envy other people; how should he, when he cares nothing for selfish pleasures? Not for him the joys that are centered in self; in God, high above all earthly good, he finds his hope of blessedness.)

February 16 - Second meditation

### Same subject

On the *Imitation*. I repeated this morning's meditation. From the impression of grace that has stayed with me, I feel that this morning's meditation is fundamental: I am the servant of Jesus Christ.

February 16 - Third meditation

### The spirit of our Lord

I gave myself entirely to our Lord as to my Master in order to serve Him in everything and no longer belong to myself or exist for myself. That is what I should always have done, since I am His creature, His Christian, His minister and His religious, and as such I am bound to God by as many obligations and titles.

I feel very guilty for not having done so! Why have I not done so? Or rather why have I done it so badly, so wrongly? *Serpens decepit me* (The serpent beguiled me - Gen. 3, 13). The "old self" got the better of me. I wanted to use the service of God to build myself up. The spirit of the world, a spirit of vanity, has filled my life. In order to put an end to this Babel tower of learning, of studies, of frenzied application to work, God had to make me travel, to afflict me with sickness, to send me headaches, those headaches which stayed with me until my vocation to the Most Blessed Sacrament; it was God's mercy putting a stop to my work on the tower of Babel. Study and work have been my keenest, I might say, my one passion. Alas, O my God, You used my very failing to correct me, and You saved me from the pitfalls of the world by my vanity and by what fostered it.

Now that I want to belong entirely to our Lord as His servant, it is quite evident that I must study His spirit in order to serve Him according to His wishes, His will; that is my first task. It will be easy for me to know what is the spirit of Jesus, for He Himself reveals it to me: *Discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde* (Learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart - Matt. 11, 29). And when the sons of Zebedee wanted to bury a city that was hostile to our Lord, He rebuked them: *Nescitis enim quis spiritus estis* (You do not know what manner of spirit you are of - Luke 9, 55). That is the essential point. I am without meekness and, to a still greater degree, without humility, especially humility of heart. But who will reveal to me this spirit of Jesus? The Holy Spirit that is in me; it is His divine mission and He has been given to me for that purpose. It is therefore by praying to Him, by being recollected, by consulting Him continually, by wanting to act only according to the law of the spirit of Jesus and of His holy grace that I will succeed.

---

February 17 - First meditation

### Means of acquiring the spirit of Jesus

It is quite clear that I must abide in our Lord, *In me manet* (Abides in Me - John 6, 57), since I am His adorer, His servant attached to His adorable Person; but what is essential is that I live according to His spirit. *Qui spiritum Christi non habet hic non est ejus* (Anyone who does not have the spirit of Christ, does not belong to Him - Rom. 8, 9).

What moved me deeply in this meditation is the realization that our Lord wants to be not only the Master of my service but the Master of my education; it is He Himself that wants to bring me up, to train me, and to perfect me in His service and in that of His Heavenly Father, my God. Glancing rapidly over the past, I saw that it was always our Lord who guided and instructed me,

who wanted to be my one Master in everything. I would have become too attached to a director, a devoted counselor. Besides I was a bit like Jacob; then I felt within me that I was not being told what I was really after. When I was young, I had no thought of seeking man's help; I went to Communion and said my prayers; nobody ever showed any interest in me, not even of a spiritual nature; I did not feel the need of it.

Well, it is then our Lord who is to be my Teacher, who wants to train me, to enter into partnership with me. I feel that therein is everything for me, and nowhere else' grace, peace, liberty, life. I feel that I am in my element by being under the direction of our Lord. Oh! How clear He made it to me! Is He not beauty itself to my mind, infinite goodness to my heart, holiness to my will, glory and strength to my body freed thereby from all this feverish activity, from all excess of fatigue and from all servitude!

Do not the saints find everything in Him! Are they not happy! Our Lord wants even to be my happiness and my glory.

In all this, what an honor for me to have such a Master! What happiness to be always with Him, to live by His words, to live His very life!

Really, how could this good Master have waited outside the door of my soul for 54 years! How could He have waited until today, and that only for my good!

Today, I shall renew the act of my gift of self; I shall draw it out of the *Imitation* so as to have a summary of the nature of this gift and a small provision of good thoughts.

At breakfast, *Imitation*, Book III, Chapter 42: *Si scires te perfecte annihilare atque ab omni creato amore evacuare, tunc deberem in te cum magna gratia emanare.*

Book IV, Chapter 7: *Non est enim oblatio dignior, et satisfactio major pro peccatis diluendis, quam seipsum pure et integre cum oblatione Corporis Christi in Missa et in Communionem Deo offerre.*

(If only you would reduce your self-seeking to nothing, and empty your heart of love for anything created, my grace would be bound to flood your heart in fathomless streams.

There is no worthier offering, no greater means of making amends in order to wash away your sins than to offer one's self wholly and purely to God, together with the offering of the Body of Christ in the Mass and in Communion.)

---

February 17 - Second meditation

### Same subject

Before the Most Blessed Sacrament exposed - 45 minutes. I meditated again on the subject of this morning's meditation. I saw clearly that in order to acquire the spirit of our Lord, I had to live by it, and that in order to live by it, I had to draw inspiration from it unceasingly and nourish it by pondering it in my heart and honoring it by my works. A storm arose in me over the thought that acquiring the spirit of our Lord was beyond me, what with my mind so vain, so frivolous, so caustic, and my nature so used to an active and exterior life.

In spite of attempts, at recollection, my mind wandered at every instant, my imagination followed it, and everything in me went with it.

The *stabilis spiritus* (resolute spirit) of St. Aloysius Gonzaga seems then impossible to me.

I will say more: our Lord does not ask it of me. Alas!

What a humiliation, especially for a nature like mine which ever wants to make short shrift of duties and sacrifices! And now I have to fall back on patience with this fool of a mind, on continual humiliation because of its silliness, its vagaries and the fascination it exercises on my heart - and on

my weak will which, having lost its way, merely jogs along. Such is the reality of my condition! I had to come to the Lady Adorers to pluck this poor little flower.

However, towards the end, our Lord seemed to tell me: "Make acts of love for My goodness, my providence, my mercy; you do not need any brains for that; acts of love are quickly done. Make My intention your own whatever happens; adore My will in itself; offer yourself to My heart with your heart. You do not need any brains for that, either. My grace is a good substitute for brains; and the spirit of faith for your weak intelligence."

With these thoughts I was able to pray a little. But what a wretched time I had of it! What a conflict awaits me! I owe nothing but contempt to this fool mind of mine; it will surrender to humiliation, perhaps.

---

February 17 - Third meditation

### **Spirit of Jesus through love, *quid?* (What?)**

On taking up once more the subject of today's meditation, and especially the good thought of 11:00 o'clock, that my heart must draw its inspiration from the Heart of Jesus, it occurred to me at this evening's meditation that love alone forms the mind, inspires and nourishes it, that thought depends on love, and that love induces imitation and cooperation of the mind.

Our Lord said: *Ubi thesaurus tuus, ibi et cor tuum erit* (Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also - Matt. 6, 21). If Jesus is my treasure, He will be the burden of my thought.

Our Lord does not ask for the mind but for self-abnegation. His law opens with *Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo* (You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart - Matt. 22, 37); the rest follows quite naturally.

*Manete in dilectione mea* (Abide in My love - John 15, 9). Love is the Christian and divine sense which our Lord has come to bring: *Ignem veni mittere* (I have come to cast fire - Luke 12, 49). I must therefore strive to acquire love in order to have the spirit of Jesus, who will then be the spirit of my heart; and my spirit will be crucified.

Then I examined the nature of the spirit of Jesus expressed in these adorable words, *Discite a me* and *mitis* (Learn of Me... gentle - Matt. 11, 29). Jesus is meek, meek interiorly, meek exteriorly. He is the lamb, He is the dove, He is kindness itself.

I examined this exterior meekness of Jesus in His words, always dignified, tender, kind, even when He spoke of impending woes: *Jerusalem! Jerusalem! Quoties! ah, si tu cognovisses!* (Jerusalem, Jerusalem.... How often - Luke 13, 34 - Would that you knew - Luke 19, 42).

In dealing with His uncouth disciples, He was always the good Master; with strangers, always accommodating and patient.

With Judas, still the same kindness, without so much as an indirect hint, never! Only at the very last moment did He reveal his betrayal, and that so discreetly; and then His *Amice, ad quid venisti?* (Friend, why are you here? - Matt. 26, 50).

His meekness in His actions; everything denoted meekness, goodness, serenity of life, of virtue and of character is interior meekness: no hatred, no repressed anger, no thought of vengeance, no arguing within Himself about His rights, nothing of all that; a dove without gall, a transparent mirror of mercy and of goodness.

Well, meekness is what I must acquire in order to have the spirit of Jesus.

How often I have failed on that point! Interiorly: these arguments, these vindications of self, these energetic answers, these extreme measures, these thoughts of a knock about comedian! How unlike the Lamb is all that! It is

Self-love that sees only self, the duties of others, the virtues they ought to have, the heroism of obedience, the power of authority, the duty to humiliate, to break, to make an example. All that is not worth one act of meekness of heart. I am neither a soldier on the battlefield nor an army commander. But I must be *Servus servorum* (Servant of His servants), the disciple of my Master, meek and humble of heart.

And also why make such display of energy against opposition, why so much anger, which is far from being righteous, against what is wrong, faithless, etc... Alas! At bottom that is a lot of vanity! I want to give proof of energy, and I have nothing to show but impatience and cowardice. Our Lord would have had pity on such people, would have prayed for them, and would have tried to honor His Father by meekness and humility.

Then this sort of energy, stinging and damning as it is, can and must give bad example; everyone tends to do as much in like circumstances. It puts on a front of power, of independence, of zeal. Alas! *Parce, Domine servo tuo* (Keep back Your servant, Lord - Ps. 9, 3).

\* \* \* \* \*

How can I become meek? Not by arguments or by humility of mind, nor even by the spirit of penance or of mortification; no, no, all that stirs up too many conflicting ideas; it is too militant! I will try to concentrate on the good example of our Lord Jesus Christ, on what He wishes, on what pleases Him. That will be the best means; nothing therein but beauty, love and light.

---

February 18 - First meditation

### **Jesus, humilis corde (humble of heart)**

I meditated on the spirit of Jesus, meek and humble of heart.

I began by renewing my gift of self. I thanked Him for last evening's meditation and prayed anew for the spirit of His meekness. But meekness is the flower of humility, and that is why our Lord attaches the word *corde* (heart) to the two (meekness and humility), or better to *humilis* (humble of heart). Humility of heart, such is the tree that yields the flower and fruit of meekness.

Was not then Jesus humble of mind?

Jesus could not have the humility of the sinner since He was without sin; He had nothing to be ashamed of, whereas I have everything to be ashamed of. As the Good Thief said, *Nos juste,... hic autem. nihil mali gessit* (We justly,... but this man has done nothing wrong - Luke 23, 42). I have done much wrong, and I am not even aware of all the wrong I have done.

Jesus was not afflicted with ignorance, but I know nothing; I know what is wrong, and I even vitiate the notions of truth and justice. Jesus knew all things, and He acted humbly during His 30 years at Nazareth as if He knew nothing. Jesus was endowed with all the gifts of nature; He knew everything and could do everything to perfection, but He did not show off; His work lacked finish, like that of apprentices; *Nonne fabri filius?* (Is not this the carpenter's son? - Matt. 13, 55).

Jesus never showed that He knew everything, even during His evangelical life; He merely repeated the words of His Father; He limited Himself to His mission and fulfilled it in the simplest and humblest way.

Jesus then acted like one who had humility of spirit. He did not glorify Himself over anything. He never sought to shine, to play the wit, to appear more learned than others even at 12, *audientem et interrogantem illos* (listening to them and asking them questions - Luke 2, 46).

Jesus had the positive humility of spirit. He depended in all things on His Father and on those constituted in authority by His Father: *Formam servi accipiens* (Taking the form of a servant - Phil.



2, 7); obeying without glory. He returned the glory of everything to His Father: *Si gloriam meam quaero, gloria mea nihil est* (If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing - John 8, 54).

The humility of spirit of Jesus is then wonderful, magnificent; it is most glorious, inspired entirely by the virtue of love.

I must for two reasons live according to the humility of spirit of Jesus: out of justice, for I am nothing and a sinner, and I am in a state of ignorance; then because of my discipleship and of my stewardship.

And yet Jesus speaks to me only of humility of heart. It seems to His love that He would humiliate me too much if He asked me for humility of the mind, for it would bring up too many miseries, too many sins, too many reasons for self-contempt. Love veils that aspect and tells me to be like Him, *Discite a me* (Learn from Me - Matt. 11, 29), humble of heart.

In what then does humility of heart consist?

In loving the humility of Jesus Christ; in receiving from God with a docile heart the exercises of humility as something good, as a virtue which gives Him much glory; in accepting one's state and one's duties, and in not being ashamed of one's condition; in being, so to speak, naturally supernatural. If I love Jesus, I must resemble Him: *Discite a me* (Learn from Me - Matt. 11, 29); *Sequere me* (Follow Me - Matt. 8, 22); *Discipulus sicut Magister* (A disciple is not above his Teacher - Luke 6, 40). If I love Jesus, I must love what He loves, what He does, what He has preferred to all else, for it is preferable, more honorable, more advantageous.

Humility of heart is easier than humility of the mind since it is only a matter of sentiment, and of a very exalted sentiment, the imitation of Jesus Christ, of His love, of His glory in these sublime circumstances of humility.

Have I got this humility of heart? I have the humility which goes with devotedness, with glory, with success, which gives and devotes self, but not that which lowers self like that of John the Baptist. I love incense, but not the grain of incense.

O my God, this is the hour for real combat, for an attack on the very heart of the fortress; I must take it by assault with the help of Your holy grace.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ejaculatory prayer: *Bonum mihi Domine quia humiliasti me, ut discam justificationes tuas* (It is good for me that I was afflicted that I might learn Your statutes - Ps. 119, 71). Repeat that at every hour. *Jesus mitis et humilis corde* (Jesus, gentle and lowly in heart). Reread in the *Imitation* what concerns this virtue.

Avoid feeding the mind with idle talk about the motives of humility. I know enough of that; it amuses the heart instead of edifying it.

At breakfast, *Imitation*, Book III, Chapter 12, on patience: *Obsigtet inolita consuetudo, sed meliori consuetudine devincetur.*

*Remurmurabit caro, sed fervore spiritus fraenabitur.*

*Instigabit et exacerbat te serpents antiquus sed oratione fugabitur.*

(Lifelong habits will bar the way, but better ones will wrest the victory from them.

The body will complain, but fervor of spirit will hold it in check.

The Old Serpent will goad you and work upon your feelings, but prayer will put him in flight.)

The hour of battle has struck.

February 18 - Second meditation

### **Act of reparation; negative and positive humility**

Alas! There is the humility we practice in times of prosperity, of abundance, of success, of honors, of enjoyment. That sort of humility ought to be easy; for we enjoy all these things while humbling ourselves, that is, while referring all the glory of them to God. That is negative humility.

There is the humility we practice in times of interior and exterior humiliations; that is positive humility. It involves the mind, the heart, the body and our works. *Tempestas demersit me* (The flood sweeps over me - Ps. 69, 2). It is the humility of our Lord and of practically all the saints. It has not been mine whether in time of calumnies, of detractions, of public humiliations, or of anything; is it a grace? Yes, but the grace of an invalid, of a little child; and it may be a punishment for my having avoided them by eluding them or by just being weak.

Have I practiced negative humility, which is easier and most laudable? Occasionally, but I spoiled it by vanity.

This meditation deeply humiliated me, especially as I felt dull and very dry; it could be that my self-love was much hurt over looking so vile.

---

February 18 - Third meditation

### **How can I acquire humility of heart?**

Again by the spirit of our Lord in me; that is the most indispensable means for me. If I proceed by reflection, I am exposed to the temptation of the mind, that is, I will imagine myself humble because I have beautiful thoughts about humility, or because I plan on doing beautiful things; and that is as far as I go because I think no more about it, absorbed as I am in something else or drawn elsewhere. What shall I do? Place myself in the spirit of our Lord, contemplate Him, consult Him, act under His divine influence, in partnership and in union with Him, but always according to the same old strategy: I must think of it, I must recollect myself in our Lord, in His holy and lovable humility of heart.

And what will I do to make sure I think of it, and frequently? By wanting that one thing alone; therein is the whole secret. Then by humiliating myself and begging forgiveness each time I fail to form my intention *before*, to offer it *during*, and to make an examen *after*; there is no other way to success.

---

February 19 - First meditation

### **Spirit of the poverty of Jesus**

The spirit, the virtue, the life of Jesus is a spirit, a virtue, a life of poverty, and of absolute and perpetual poverty. I meditated on that poverty. I saw the Incarnate Word espousing it at Bethlehem, beginning with the worst humiliations poverty had to offer, the abode of animals; with what was most trying about poverty, the stable, the crib, the straw, the cold, the night, away from every habitation, from all assistance.

In order to be poorer still, the Incarnate Word was born in the course of a journey, and was turned away by everybody because of the poverty of His parents.

Then He spent His early childhood in Egypt, where His parents were to be still poorer and still more forsaken.

Finally He came back to Nazareth and remained there 30 (?) years in the practice of poverty.

Poverty in His home; one has only to see Loreto; and a section of the house was hewn out of the rock.

Poverty in the furnishings; what was most strictly necessary. And these scant furnishings were of the plainest, the best adapted to the use of the poor; one need only see the wooden spoon of the Most Blessed Virgin at Loreto.

Poverty in His garments, made of rough wool; as can be seen from His sacred robe at Argenteuil, from the cloak of St. Joseph at St. Anastasia's in Rome, and from the coarse linen of our Lord's swaddling clothes at St. Mary Major.

Poverty in His food, the fruit of the work of a poor carpenter, the barest necessity.

Poverty in His appearance; considering Himself as the least always and everywhere; taking the last place in the synagogue; respecting and honoring everybody as the poor do; remaining silent in the presence of everybody; listening humbly to the law of God and the explanations of the doctors of the law; never giving occasion for his learning and wisdom to show or to be known, but living the life that was common to those of His condition and assuming the form of it as well as its obscurity.

In all He did and sought for Himself, He always aimed at having the least possible and the poorest.

In His evangelical life, Jesus kept His same worker's garb, His same living habits; praying on His knees on the ground; often subsisting on barley bread, receiving alms and the hospitable invitation recommended by the law.

He traveled like the poor.

He suffered hunger and thirst.

His poverty made Him contemptible in the eyes of the great, of the Scribes.

He was not afraid to call out: *Vae divitibus* (Woe to you that are rich - Luke 6, 24).

He wanted only disciples that were as poor as He.

He commanded them not to have two tunics, not to take provisions, money, or a staff for protection - *nothing*.

He died forsaken, and stripped even of His garments. *Vermis sum* (I am a worm - Ps. 22, 6). And He was buried in a tomb of charity.

After His resurrection, He retained the same livery of poverty with His disciples.

And lastly, in the Most Blessed Sacrament, He dons the mantle of poverty by veiling the glory of His divinity and His sacred humanity in its totality, by depriving Himself of all exterior liberty, of all self-defense, of all movement, of all ownership, and of every exterior activity. He is there as in the womb of His Most Blessed Mother, wrapped in the Sacred Species, at the mercy of the charity of man to give Him the matter of His existence and the objects necessary for His worship.

Such is the poverty of Jesus.

But why did He choose a state so poor?

1 - Because He made Himself a child of Adam the sinner, exiled and despoiled of every right of creation that was his before the Fall; the Savior espoused the state of poverty.

2 - He chose the lowest degree of poverty in order to be the poorest of the poor and to sanctify in Himself every possible act of poverty.

3 - He became poor, says St. Paul, to communicate to us the heavenly riches of His Godhead, and to transfer them to us by this indispensable channel. He became poor so that the poverty which is our state, our penance, our reparation, our perfection, might become honorable to us and lovable in Him.

4 - He became poor to prove and show His love for us.

5 - He remains poor even in His state of glory (in the Eucharist) in order always to be a living and visible model to us.

6 - He wanted His Mother and His disciples and His Church to be poor. Whoever wants to be a saint must love poverty; and whoever wants to be a great saint must both love poverty and make of it his state in life.

So that perfection, holiness pure and simple, consists in always having less than more, in simplifying one's life by cutting down on one's possessions, in *pauperizing* oneself for the love of Jesus, briefly, in making of poverty the interior and exterior law of the life of Jesus in us.

I adored the poverty of Jesus; that says *everything*.

\* \* \* \* \*

At Holy Mass our Lord pointed out to me a great defect: I always want to finish a task begun by drawing on the time of another task; I must then learn to cut things short, to set everything aside when duty or the good Master calls me elsewhere.

Another piece of wretchedness, which I saw during my thanksgiving and which I deplore, is the levity of my mind in prayer, especially vocal prayer. Reason may tell me it is an absurdity, a loss of time, an offense against God, an infidelity to the grace of the moment to think of what I am to do later, but I keep on losing, or at least diminishing, my actual merit and I merely upset still more my inner peace by violent reaction or belated regret. What a heavy price I pay for this false liberty of spirit! I must stabilize that spirit or nullify its action with the heart.

At breakfast, *Imitation*, Book III, Chapter 56: *Fili, quantum a te vales exire, tantum in me poteris transire.*

*Sicut nihil foris concupiscere, internam, pacem facit, sic se interius relinquere, Deo conjungit.*

*Volo te addiscere perfectam abnegationem tui in voluntate mea, sine contradictione et querela.*

(The more you can leave yourself behind, My son, the more you will be able to enter into Me.

Just as desiring no outward pleasure gives you inward peace, so does the surrender of your inmost self unite you with God.

I want you to learn perfect self-denial, to obey My will without argument or complaint.)

---

February 19 - Second meditation

### Failings against poverty

Act of reparation for sins committed against religious poverty.

The first cause is really contemptible: vanity in things for my personal use, under the pretext that finer material is better and lasts longer.

What I should have done in the first place was to consult the virtue and spirit of poverty. An act of poverty would have done more good to my soul and to the Society than 10 acts of pretended advantage or economy in *finer* garments.

The other reason is still more contemptible; it concerns care of the body. I acted like the rich and the great when travelling, which is most unworthy of the poor of Jesus Christ. We do not have to go to luxurious hotels to convert the great or seek occasions to edify them at a *table d'hôte*. All that proves that I have not the spirit, the love, or even the lowest degree of religious poverty.

A third motive, yet more shameful: the precautions taken against illness, or preventives against pain; or the patronage and friendship of the wealthy in case of need. I will not admit it to myself, for my self-love rises in protest; but I am sure that at the bottom of it all there is a feeling of reliance on

human providence in ease of need; thence excessive attentions to the great and a tendency to compromise with them.

As a result my brethren are not lovers of holy poverty; I do not give them the example.

I do not impart to them the grace of poverty since I do not myself practice the vdrtue of poverty, from which I might merit to receive a grace for myself and for others.

\* \* \* \* \*

With my hand on my heart, I declare that nature in me is more afraid of the practice of personal poverty than of humility, than of modesty; than of any other virtue whatever.

And that consequently I must begin with poverty in my clothing, that is, buying things in keeping with the *grosse vestiuntur* (dress rough) of the *Imitation* (Bk. I, Ch. 25); doing away with our silver buckles; selecting shoes poorer in appearance. The next hat I buy shall be of an inferior quality.

No more precautions against fatigue, and I must see to that right now; it is the *Frena gulam et omnem carnis inclinationem facilius frenabis* (Restrain your appetite for food, and you will find it easier to restrain all your bodily appetites - Imit. Bk. I, Ch. 19); at meals there must always be a homage, some dish or other to honor the holy poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ, my Lord and Master.

---

February 19 - Third meditation

### Same subject

A wretched meditation. My mind was tired; it was really poverty of spirit.

The salient thought was the *pellem pro pelle* (skin for skin - Job 2, 4) of Satan in reference to Job; depriving ourselves of things costs more than (having them and) not enjoying them.

However, I sensed much peace and joy in this stripping of self as I recalled a few actions of the past.

But I must get started; all these reasonings are not worth a *single action*. I must taste of this bread (of poverty); I must beg God for some.

---

February 20 - First meditation

### Spiritual poverty

This meditation always does me much good; it renews the first grace in me. The reason is that it is the truth.

1 - I know nothing; therefore, I must remain silent and listen. Our Lord who knew everything - the Word of the Father - kept the silence of poverty for 30 years and did not defend Himself before the tribunals. *Jesus autem tacebat* (Jesus was silent - Matt. 26, 63).

Oh! How many sins of the tongue I have committed! My heart must be most undisciplined since my tongue, through which it automatically expresses itself, is so inconsequent, so gossipy, and especially so full of spiritual vanity. As if my direction, my knowledge of spiritual and religious things were better than that of others! Alas!

2 - I have nothing good in my heart; it is cold, dry, *arid*, stupid.

I stand before God not like a beast but like a stone, or like a man feverish to the point of delirium. My heart knows not what to say to God, to our Lord, to the Most Blessed Virgin.

If I examine what the grace of God has accomplished in my heart for the last 50 years, alas, *Ex paradiso voluptatis.... Spinis et tribulos* (Garden of Eden.... Thorns and thistles - Gen. 3, 23 and 18). And what is worse, my heart is evil.

3 - I can do nothing well; everything is evil in me. I have done but little good and much evil; and even what little good I have done, I have done badly, most imperfectly.

Such is my interior poverty.

But how can I transform it into a virtue? By approaching our Lord through this state of poverty, by making acts of it like a child that is weak, poor, ignorant, a spoil - all, and yet is happy, at peace with himself because his mother favors him.

The poor man is without resources, without learning, without prestige; he lives quietly according to his state, loves his rags which are his eloquence and his nobility; and if he is plagued with sores, he loves them still more, for through them he earns his bread.

But is not our Lord better than a mother? Is He not my dear Providence, my light, my all? I must therefore serve Him in a spirit of poverty and keep in the world the virtue of poverty, which is true humility of heart. I must remain in the world without protection; a poor man has none and goes everywhere; thieves can take nothing away from him, the worldly have no reason to envy him, and the miserly have nothing to give him.

I marvelled over the interior and exterior poverty of Jesus, Mary and Joseph; I will try to have my ejaculatory prayers bear on poverty of spirit.

A poor man has nothing, holds to nothing, can do nothing by himself, knows nothing of benefit to others; otherwise, he would be very rich.

\* \* \* \* \*

At breakfast, *Imitation*, Book I, Chapter 25: *Illi maxime prae caeteris in virtutibus proficiunt qui ea quae sibi magis gravia et contraria sunt virilius vincere nituntur.*

*Nam ibi homo proficit, et gratiam meretur ampliorem, ubi magis seipsum vincit et in spiritu mortificat....*

*Duo specialiter ad magnam emendationem juvant: videlicet subtrahere se violenter ad quod natura vitiose inclinatur; et ferventer instare pro bono quo amplius quis idiget....*

*Tantum proficies quantum tibi ipsi vim intuleris.*

(The plain fact is that the people who get ahead of their neighbors in the fight for spiritual advancement are precisely the people who launch an attack just where the going is difficult, just where everything seems against them.

Conquest of self, inward mortification - that's what wins you ground, that's what earns you fresh grace....

For a real amendment of life, you need two things above all - you must wean yourself away from the faults to which your nature is specially prone, and you must press on hard in pursuit of the good quality you most need.

The more constraint you put on yourself, the more progress you will make.)

---

February 20 - Second meditation

### **Poverty, a remedy for vanity**

Before the Blessed Sacrament exposed at the Lady Adorers.

One thought made a deep impression on me during this meditation: the spirit of poverty and even religious poverty must be the natural remedy to my dominant defect, *vanity*, the desire for the means of drawing attention and of achieving success, the sensuality of the mind; in a word, the three concupiscences in me with their characteristics proper to my state.

Poverty becomes the natural remedy to all the passions in me; and I need not make any effort since it is my natural and supernatural state: poverty of spirit, of heart, of energy, of constancy, of strength.

It is a question of going to God with the sentiment of this state as a starting point, by depending on God in everything:

on His light for my mind;  
on His grace for my will;  
on His love for my heart;  
on His Cross in my suffering body.

Especially in my exterior life, and that is the all-important point, so that the humility natural to my state may further the humility of grace and that I may thus remain underground, at the root level. *Radix in terra sitienti* (Like a root out of dry ground - Is. 53, 2.). But in order to become a real virtue, all this poverty must live on love for, and in gratitude to, our Lord.

---

February 20 - Third meditation

### **Eucharistic vocation**

At last I am in my grace! Such an endless desert I went through!

1 - I meditated on the mercy of God calling me to the eucharistic vocation.

a - In spite of my unworthiness. *Peccavi nimis* (I sinned exceedingly). I have been and am guilty of the sin which God holds the most in horror: the pride of vanity.

b - In spite of my poverty. I have brought Him nothing commendable, nothing that I acquired, no virtues, no merits. On the contrary, I brought Him a frail body, a flighty and weak mind, a poor heart that loves Him, alas, for its own vanity and satisfaction.

c - In spite of my spiritual infirmities, which were to last so long and which He was aware of.

Yes, *Elegit Deus, in me, infirma, stulta, ignobilia et contemptibilia et ea quae non sunt* (In choosing me, God chose what is weak, what is foolish, what is low and despised ... even things that are not - I Cor. 1, 27 and 28).

Surely, among all the saints chosen by God for His work, there are none alike in their origin, in their studies, in their success against nature. Should I not therefore be a saint since the Eucharist is the Most Holy Sacrament? Oh! Yes, I want it! With the grace of God!

2 - How did God call me and bring me to His feet?

a - By Himself; with what gentleness and insistence has He not invited me, drawn me, taken hold of me during four years of waiting!

b - By authority: Father Alphonse, Father Touche, Father Colin - so much for my special grace; for the Society, the Holy Father on two occasions through Father Jandel and Father Touche, the three Bishops of Paris - the (Marist) Society agreeing to this retreat and to its decision.

c - How did He lead me to His feet? He kept me in the retreat-house; that was none of my doing. He had the Archbishop offer us the house we occupy. He supplied all the funds plus. He launched the beginnings with gentleness, honor and power.

He has granted us exposition according to our strength, and on Holy Thursday according to His love and all our wishes; then perpetual exposition, and that in spite of everything and everybody.

Since then the fire has not died out. Our Lord did not lose anything from the defection of unfaithful and unworthy subjects.

In very little time, He obtained for us the praise of the Holy Father, January 5, 1859, and his approbation, May 8, 1863, seven years after the foundation.

Is that the work of God! Yes, certainly; man contributed nothing to it, did nothing towards it.  
*Haec dies quam fecit Deus* (This is the day which the Lord has made - Ps. 118, 24).

---

*February 21 - First meditation*

### **Service of Jesus Christ**

By my eucharistic vocation, I am attached to the service of the very Person of our Lord Jesus Christ through my religious state.

I am therefore set apart not for the service of a saint, or for that of an angel, or even for that of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, which is certainly most honorable and gratifying, but for the service of Jesus Christ in person; and no one other than our sacramental Lord Jesus Christ has a right to my service.

And to what service? To all that is greatest in heaven and most sacred in the Church, to adoration of our Lord in His solemn state in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar, through the Church's most festive form of worship, by the four ends of the Sacrifice, and in the very name of the Blessed Virgin who gave us this sublime and angelic mission.

And what is most honorable, we are the first religious adorers of the Most Blessed Sacrament exposed,<sup>9</sup> and are approved for that as our end.

Since I am therefore attached and dedicated to the service of the adorable Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, I owe Him the service of my whole person, of my whole soul, of my whole body, of my whole strength, of all my actions.

It were thievery to filch some of these actions, a sacrilege to sully them, a treason to do them for others.

Jesus sacramental must then be the center of my life, as He is its first and only law.

*Servant of the Eucharist!* Such therefore is my royal and divine title!

But alas! How have I acquitted myself of my service? I have been an agent of our Lord, His doorman, His military orderly rather than His personal servant. I spoke much about Him but little to Him personally. I was busy about many things like Martha, whereas this good Master wanted me at His feet; and when I was in adoration, I spent my time having Him adored by others rather than adoring Him myself, talking to Him about others, and studying for the benefit of others, and all the while it was *me* this good Master wanted. He kept telling me, "Talk to Me about yourself, speak your heart out to Me, your wishes, your sorrows." But like the clouds that are blown away by the wind, like the wind that whistles and is gone, I busied myself excitedly with irrelevant tasks, useless and even harmful since they were depriving me of the grace of my action and were displeasing to our Lord. How stupid can one be to tire oneself uselessly by doing what our Lord does not will at a given moment!

Ah! My soul! Admit it right now; you did not mind gadding about; what you dreaded was, sacrifice or reproach.

I offered Holy Mass at St. Praxedis,<sup>10</sup> at the pillar of the flagellation; feast of the Passion.

At breakfast I read (*Imitation*, Book III, Chapter 52)

*Nihil dignus sum quam flagellari et puniri quia, graviter et saepe te offendi et in multis valde deliqui.... Ideo juste mecum agis quando me inopem et desolatum relinquis.*



(All I deserve is whipping and punishment, for many is the time I have offended You - gravely too - and many the evil deeds I have done.... When You leave me poor and forsaken, I am getting no more than my due.)

That certainly applies to me today.

---

*February 21 - Second meditation (not recorded)*

---

*February 21 - Third meditation*

### **My eucharistic service**

Our Lord wants me dedicated entirely to my eucharistic service; and certainly He is great enough, important enough, to ask for all that I am.

Our Lord wants this eucharistic service to be the sovereign law of my life. It is only right; the service of the *King* comes before that of His subjects. To give preference to the latter, or even to give it only a quota of service, would be an insult to the King. *Dominum Deum tuum adorabis et illi soli servies* (You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve - Matt. 4, 10). That is the first commandment of an adorer.

But what does this eucharistic service entail? Two duties for me.

1 - Perform my duty as an adorer like any other religious; for after all I am a religious, I am in the religious state not to be a Superior but to be a simple religious.

I owe this service to my Master; and I owe it to myself as the nutriment and life of divine love, as my royal virtue..

I would be deservedly punished if I did not perform this duty.

2 - Make of the brethren good religious, good adorers; that is my second duty, or rather it is included in the first; it both depends on the first and completes it: to adore and make others adore, to serve and make others serve as perfectly as possible.

I am distressed to have to confess before God how much I have failed in these two duties, by my carelessness, by my enslavement (to outsiders), by my endless entanglements.

Briefly, I have not been totally dedicated to my service, pretexting the exterior glory of God and the good of the Society. What came of it? All these visits, all these attentions to outsiders have not bettered the Society, have not brought in any solid vocations; all that publicity, all these friends, all these admirers, all that has come to nothing.

The reason is, *Nemo venit ad me nisi Pater meus traxerit ad me* (No one can come to Me unless the Father ... draws him - John 6, 44). The vocation of an adorer comes from heaven and not from the world. *Pater tales quaerit* (Such the Father seeks - John 4, 23). Such a vocation is the fruit of adoration itself, of the Father's being satisfied with us, of Jesus Christ's being pleased with His servants. It is then we enjoy His confidence. And since He knows all the good vocations, His Providence would even send an angel to direct them to us, if I were a good Superior and a faithful adorer.

It is I who am the cause of that sterility, since *Aruit cor meum quia oblitus sum comedere panem meum* (My heart is ... withered; I forget to eat my bread - Ps. 102, 4).

\* \* \* \* \*

Towards the end of my meditation, a beautiful thought came to me, assuredly from the mercy of our Lord. I was asking Him just how He wanted me to serve Him. And then it seemed to me that I

heard these words: “Be to Me in My Sacrament what I was to My Father in My Incarnation and My mortal life.”

That thought made a vivid impression upon me; I thanked the good Master for it, and I gave myself anew to Him to be entirely His as He was His Father’s. But how does Jesus belong to His Father in His divine life of the Word, in His mortal life, in His sacramental life? That is what I must examine and reproduce in me.

Oh! What a beautiful thought! I must be to Jesus what Jesus was to His Father. *Ego in eis et tu in me* (I in them and You in Me - John 17, 23). *Sicut dilexit me Pater et ego dilexi vos. Manete in dilectione mea* (As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Abide in My love - John 15, 9). It is St. Paul’s *Vivit vero in me Christus* (But Christ who lives in me - Gal. 2, 20).

I shall pray for grace to understand this truth and to surrender myself with all that I am and all that I have.

---

February 22 - First meditation

### Servant

I must belong to our Lord as He belonged to His Father; for the Word was made flesh to communicate His divine life to us.

But I see that the Heavenly Father gave our Lord the title of servant, *Servus meus* (My Servant): *In scientia sua justificabit ipse servus meus multos* (By His knowledge shall ... My Servant make many to be accounted righteous - Is. 53, 11).

The Savior took the title of Servant: *Servus tuus sum ego* (I am Your Servant - Ps. 119, 125).

But what does a good servant do? Three things: he remains always close to his master; he obeys all his wishes promptly and lovingly; he works only for the glory of his master.

Our Lord as man has excelled in these three qualities of a servant.

1 - He was always close to His Father, with His, Father. His mind contemplated Him unceasingly, and adored His truth, contemplated His beauty - for He enjoyed the Beatific Vision outside the time of His Passion.<sup>11</sup> In fact, in the Holy Gospel we see our Lord speaking to His Father as if He saw Him, and the Father, as also the Holy Spirit, appeared above Him. Besides, our Lord said two things which reveal Him perfectly: *Filius hominis non potest a se ipso facere quidquam, nisi prim viderit Patrem facientem* (The Son can do nothing of His own accord, but only what He sees the Father doing - John 5, 19). So that He always looked up to His Father in order to do, to say and to think the same thing as His Father.

The other thing He said is: *Pater in me manens ipse facit opera* (The Father who dwells in Me does His works - John 14, 10). The Heavenly Father and our Lord. were then associated together.

The Holy Gospel says: *Ductus est a Spiritu Sancto in desertum*, (Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness - Matt. 4, 1). He was then under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Well, such is my place by the side of our Lord; it is that of the adoring angel, waiting for orders from God; it is that of the servant: *Sicut oculi servorum in manibus dominorum, suorum, ita oculi nostri ad Dominum Deum nostrum* (As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master ... so our eyes look to the Lord our God - Ps. 123, 2).

The servants of a king stand close to his person and observe him. That is what all the saints have done: *Ambula coram me* (Walk before Me - Gen. 17, 1); *Et ambulavit cum Deo* (Walked with God - Gen. 5, 22). Enoch and Noah, and the saints of the New Testament; wherefore it is possible and necessary.

But it was no effort for the soul of our Lord, for the Most Bleised Virgin, for the angels, to remain close to God. That is true; it was a delight; but I have the grace of God to do so.

Then, it is with the heart that we abide with our Lord; and for a heart that loves, it is not hard to abide in the person loved.

That is what seems, and is, very difficult for me: to abide habitually and wholly with our Lord, My poor mind has so soon done with luring my heart away; and there is my old habit of merely skimming over everything unless it be a specially chosen study or something congenial.

2 - Our Lord reproduced the action of His Father and fulfilled His will in all things. He was the echo of the Father's voice, the human and divine reproduction of the thought, of the word, of the action of the Father - a telegram of the Father, as it were.

But what have I to reproduce? I have to obey our Lord and do what He wills at this particular moment, in the practice of this or that virtue; I have to practice it in my soul and my body, and consequently to draw inspiration from His thought and His wishes, and to accommodate myself to them with love and fidelity. It is a life of intimacy. But I must not forget it is within me that our Lord wants to work. *Pater in me manens ipse facit opera* (The Father who dwells in Me does His works - John 14, 10).

3 - Our Lord worked only for the glory of His Father; He refused for Himself and promptly referred to His Father everything attributed to Himself as man. *Quid me dicis bonum?* (Why do you call Me good? - Luke 18, 19). *Gloriam meam non quaero* (I do not seek My own glory - John 8, 50).

The good servant seeks only the good of his master, more than he does his own. That is what we commonly say, because that is the proper thing for the servant to do.

I must then seek only to please our Lord, my Master, and make His grace and gifts bear fruit for His greater glory.

At breakfast, *Imitation*, Book III, Chapter 7: *Melius est sapere modicum cum humilitate et parva intelligentia quam magni scientiarum thesauri cum vana complacentia.*

*Melius est tibi minus habere quam multum unde posses superbire....*

*Si scires semper humilis et modicus in te permanere, nec non spiritum tuum bene moderare et regere, non incideres tam cito in periculum et offensam.*

(It is better to know but little, to be not very clever, and to be humble about it, than to own vast stocks of knowledge, if you are so foolish as to be self-important about it.

You are better off with a little, if having a lot is going to make you conceited....

If you knew how to remain always humble and unimportant in your own eyes, knew how to give your spirit proper guidance and direction, you would not fall so quickly into danger and wrongdoing.)

\* \* \* \* \*

That is really most enlightening! God is so good!

---

February 22 - Second meditation

### Same subject

Act of reparation; petition.

Seeing our Lord in that light seems so natural and consoling, and yet it becomes so difficult for me; the reason is that my heart has not yet found its treasure therein, that I am always looking for what agrees with me and not for what I must have, that I do not do violence to my feelings, that I am weak-willed.

### Work for our Lord

I considered our Lord again in His absolute dependence on His Father, repeating His words and actions with fidelity and love, carrying out His orders perfectly, doing and saying nothing on His own.

I marveled over our Lord at Nazareth, living a life useless to the world, hidden from men, and so simple in itself; and yet the Father preferred it to all others. He preferred to have His divine Son and our Savior glorify Him and sanctify us in obscurity with Himself as the only witness; to have Him work according to His state at such worthless tasks. The reason is that this hidden life belongs entirely to God by the sacrifice of self; that it glorifies God more than the complete sacrifice of things outside self; that it is the kingdom of God in us; that there are more laborers than foremen; that the contemplative life is more perfect than the active life, for it is the death and grave of self-love.

Our Lord alters my way, my grace, by keeping me close to His divine Person, by drawing me to Himself more interiorly; it is then a really great grace.

I shall work with the King in His study; I will be His confidant; I will carry out His orders directly; I will utter His very words and none other; I shall do the actions which He shall indicate; I will execute the plans He has drawn for me. I will be a *replica* of Him, the body of His soul, the freedom of His desires, the human execution of His desires which He will make divine by our union.<sup>12</sup>

But what must I do primarily? Work on my soul, on my inner life, on myself first of all. *Christus in me manens ipse facit opera* (Christ who dwells in me does His works -John 14, 10; adapted: *Christ* instead of *Father*). But how shall I succeed in making Him dwell in me? By dwelling in Him; our Lord will dwell in me in proportion to my dwelling in Him. This dwelling results from the repeated gift of self, from a homage activated by acts of virtue, fortified and sustained in love but an effective love, not a self-gratifying love. Fire is not its own end, neither is life, since it spends and devotes itself.

Our Lord has been drawing me to Himself now for so long a time, and always I have fled from Him to exterior things, imagining like the illiterate that nothing is worth anything except action, exterior work and outward zeal; whereas the real reason was that no one likes to stay always in a house where misery, illness and sorrows predominate; we leave it from boredom or because of some outside interest, or is it the fumes of vanity that are escaping!

Ejaculatory prayer: *In me vive, regna et impera* (Live in me, rule over me, and command me).

At breakfast, *Imitation*, Book III, Chapter 43: *Fili non te moveant pulchra et subtilia hominum dicta, non enim est regnum Dei in sermone sed in virtute...*

*Numquam ad hoc legas verbum ut doctior aut sapientior possis videri...*

*Plus profecit in relinquendo omnia, quam in studendo subtilia...*

*Attende verba mea, quae corda accendunt, et mentes illuminant, inducunt compunctionem, et variam ingerunt consolationem.*

(My son, you must not let yourself be impressed by the fine and clever things you hear men say; it is power that builds up the kingdom of God, not words - I Cor. 4, 20.

Never read anything to enable you to appear better educated or wiser than your fellows. . .

He had done better for himself by giving up everything than he would have done by studying intricate arguments....

Pay heed to My words, which bring fire to the heart and light to the mind, piercing the heart with sorrow for sin and filling it with comfort in many ways.)

---

February 23 - Second meditation

### The glory of our Lord

I meditated on our Lord seeking only the glory of His Father. Everything that was great, miraculous and good, He referred to His Father. *Quid me dicis bonum?* (Why do you call Me good? - Luke 18, 19). *Gloriam meam, non qtmero* (I do not seek My own glory - John 8, 50). *Sed gloriam ejus qui misit me Pater* (But the glory of the one who sent Me, the Father - John 7, 18, adapted). *Si gloriam meam quaero gloria mea nihil est* (If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing - John 8, 54).

Our Lord said of Himself that He was *sent*. He did the work of His Father and not His own. *Opus consummavi, quod dedisti mihi ut faciam* (Having accomplished the work which You gave Me to do - John 17, 4).

But He kept for Himself everything that was a source of humiliation and of suffering, everything that was abject. *Filius hominis; servus* (Son of man; a Servant).

Such is my task; I must not answer to any name in the service of our Lord except to the generic name of *servus* (servant), to whom no glory is due, nor affection, nor any other title. The angels are without a name, except the three princes, who were certainly the most humble.

On examining my behavior in this respect I had much reason to humble myself concerning my service, like the domestic of Lyons who had hung the beautiful painting of his master at the exhibition and prided himself on it.

My ruling defect has always been success: succeed, have others serve, adore and love; and stand there as if that was all I had to do, as if I were but a post or a road-sign, or even ... (incomplete phrase).

---

February 23 - Third meditation

### Inventory of my soul

I made an inventory of my soul and of its condition.

I am greatly terrified to see how, given the least occasion, the natural in me always returns to its vomit; the mind to its activity, its levity, its trickiness, and its spiritual gaiety; the heart to its pursuits and to its devotion to others; the will, so tenacious, to what it does out of pleasure or sheer sense of freedom; then my inner self, often calm and recollected in prayer, becomes completely disoriented in an instant and is, no longer mindful of God; and when I am with my neighbor, I am forgetful of God.

That is the natural man, who is not dead in me, nor even tamed or chained, and who constantly breaks loose. The tree of my spiritual life has no roots. I am like a plant in a greenhouse, which either fades or is nipped by the frost as soon as it is moved outside. My spiritual life is then only artificial-ardent when close to the fire and cold when left to itself.

Whence is that? From two causes.

The *first* is that outside the time of prayer, I do not find spiritual nourishment in what I do; I do not apply myself to study with devotion but out of zeal; I fritter away my time with my neighbor

instead of working with God for my neighbor's good. All that is like a fever in me, which weakens and consumes me.

I must therefore work and find nourishment in the virtue proper to that particular work, in a spirit of recollection in God, in harmony with His holy will. I must be master of myself and say to myself; I will honor God in this.

The *second* cause is that I lack a center where I may rebuild my strength and replenish it while it spends itself in action. I drain off like a torrent; all this action is nothing but the speed and noise of exploding powder.

I should have the habitual sentiment of God, of His presence, or of His will, or of His glory, or of a mystery, or of a virtue. In a word, I need what St. Paul recommends: *Hoc sentite in vobis quod et in Christo Jesu* (Have this mind among yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus - Phil. 2, 5).

That sentiment is a grace and a virtue. *Delectare in Domino* (Take delight in the Lord - Ps. 37, 4).

But how can I attain that? Through love, says the *Imitation*.

---

February 24 - First meditation

Minister of Jesus Christ

I meditated on our Lord, acting as an envoy under the absolute dependence of His Father in His words and actions.

1 - In His words: *A meipso non loquor* (I do not speak on My own authority - John 14, 10); *Quaecumque audivi a Patre meo nota feci vobis* (All that I have heard from the Father, I have made known to you - John 15, 15).

Such was our Lord. He uttered no word on His own; He listened to the Father and consulted Him, and then He repeated that divine word faithfully without adding or omitting anything. He was the Word of the Father, *Verbum Patris*; He repeated this divine word with respect, for it was a grace, *spiritus et vita sunt* (spirit and life - John 6, 63); He repeated it with authority, for it was meant to sanctify the world, to create it anew in the light of truth, to rekindle it in the fire of love, and to judge it one day. *Nonne cor nostrum ardens erat in nobis dum loqueretur nobis in via?* (Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked to us on the road? - Luke 24, 32).

The word of Jesus is *spiritus et vita* (spirit and life - John 6, 63); it is all-powerful, *Si verba mea in vobis manserint quidquid volueritis petetis et fiet vobis* (If My words abide in you, ask whatever you will and it shall be done for you - John 15, 7); *Dixit et facta sunt* (He spoke and it came to be - Ps. 33, 9).

The words of Jesus Christ were the rays of this sun of truth. *Ego sum lux mundi* (I am the light of the world - John 8, 12). They were light in the midst of darkness.

That is what I must be for my brethren and my neighbor: *Verbum Christi* (the word of Christ). That is what the Apostles were: *Sed Spiritus Sanctus loquetur in vobis, et suggeret omnia quaecumque dixi vobis* (The Holy Spirit ... will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you - John 14, 26). And St. Paul: *Verbum Christi habitet in cordibus vestris* - (Let the word of Christ dwell ... in your hearts - Col. 3, 16).

I must therefore listen to this interior word of Jesus Christ, understand and repeat it, listen to it with faith, accept it with respect and love, transmit it with fidelity and confidence, with meekness and power.

Alas! How seldom have I sought inspiration from the words of Jesus Christ, but how often from love of self, from the natural love of my neighbor! And so I spoke the language of passion, of

concupiscence, veiled under the appearances of zeal for our Lord and the Society. And how sterile my words, how meaningless, how unworthy of a minister of Jesus Christ!

How quickly my self-love seizes upon the weak and strong natural points of my neighbor! And how easily it talks the language of each one! Then in order to expiate this worldliness, I end up with our Lord Jesus Christ, but alas, too late; I do so to hush the cries of my conscience and the reproaches of the Holy Spirit.

2 - Our Lord did only the actions which the Heavenly Father commanded and determined to the last detail. *A meipso non facio quidquam* (I do nothing on My own authority - John 8, 28). Our Lord accomplished to the last jot and tittle the holy will of His Father .

Well, that is the function of a true servant, of a true minister of Jesus Cluist; these two words say enough.

Is it not already a very great honor to have Jesus Christ for a Master, to see Him condescend to directing me in everything to the very smallest detail! And why then should not I, His apprentice, do what He does, the way He does it, and for the reason He does it. If I acted thus, I would have liberty, peace, and union with God; my center would be our Lord and not what I am doing: *In me manet* (He ... abides in Me - John 6, 57). I would cling only to what our Lord wants and for as long as He wants. *Veni et venit; vade et vadit* (Go, and he goes.... Come, and he comes - Matt. 8, 9).

But that calls for a change of command, of leadership, of principle; a revolution is in order, one of sheer power that resorts to fire and chains, and brings on the death of the "old self."

How should I proceed? *Spiritus superveniet in te et induet virtute ex alto* (The Holy Spirit will come upon you - and will clothe you with power from on high - Luke 1, 35 - last part of text not really quoted but applied).

I took the resolution to read the word of God with a very deep respect and to pronounce with affection the liturgical prayers of Holy Church, inspired as they are by the Holy Spirit; it is the prayer of the Holy Spirit offered by His spouse.

---

*February 24 - Second meditation (half-hour)*

### **Thanksgiving**

Thanksgiving for the wonderful things of Plati. (See note 7.)

*February 24 - Third meditation*

### **Society-graces**

1 - Our Lord honored me greatly by giving me the grace to work for the Society of the Most Blessed Sacrament. He could not have done me a greater honor, nor could such an honor have fallen to one more unworthy, more insignificant in the world.

For such a Society, the foremost prince in the world, the most gifted priest, the most perfect religious would have been in order. That is the glory of other religious bodies; they all had a celebrity, or at least something striking, to mark their origin.

The Society of the Most Blessed Sacrament was destined to draw its glory from its divine Master alone; and that is glory enough since He is actually living, and all the other Societies honor only a mystery of the past or profess only evangelical perfection.

And these graces through Sister Benoite,<sup>13</sup> etc.! Without danger as without vanity.

2 - God showed me much love and kindness in entrusting me with such a mission: the Heavenly Father who gives us His Son and entrusts Him to us; our Lord who accepts to dwell with us; the Holy Spirit who accepts to form us in this new life.

There is yet more! The Father who sends us vocations, for *nemo venit ad me nisi Pater meus traxerit eum* (No one can come to Me unless the Father ... draws him - John 6, 44). The Savior who gives us the mission of forming them, and the Holy Spirit the grace to do so.

But here is the limit!

I am unknown to the Church, I have no personal claim to her benevolence, I have done nothing noteworthy for her, quite the contrary; yet she approves the Society, entrusts her priests and her children to us, lends us her authority and her prestige, grants us the power to call men to the priesthood and to train them for it, to receive vows in her name and to form true religious. She wants to remain the sovereign mother of this new family.

Is not that a great miracle?

3 - But here is the greatest wonder for me: the survival of the Society in spite of the elements it had to work with. It was bound to perish for lack of strong and consistent guidance. I was too absorbed by trifles both outside the Society and within; someone could have gotten hold of it and driven it off course. For lack of a strong central authority, a faction could have arisen; it could have so easily happened due to conflicting temperaments, viewpoints, and human frailties, all of them well-meaning and guiltless, I suppose; they started off with a diametrically opposed principle and did not give enough importance to the all-vital principle, the first law of a body in its initial stage: the principle that religion is based on a teaching authority; the law of the Gospel was the message of the Apostles, but the Gospel was written much later. *Ite docete* (Go, and make disciples - Matt. 28, 19). *Qui vos audit* (He who hears you - Luke 10, 16).

Because of responsibilities that were beyond our resources; and also because of my lack of a sense of order and of economy.

Because of a harmful spirit, or of a spirit foreign to the soul and the end of the Society.

Because of my discouragement when I felt alone, when I ran into opposition that was followed by departures, etc.

Well, all that served only to bring light and grace, and to solidify the structure; a great grace usually followed upon a violent storm.

Oh! Yes, God has loved me very much. He loves me, and He gives me evidence of it. It is I who deserved to be expelled from the Society as unworthy, to be deposed as incompetent, only too happy to be tolerated in some little corner to adore our Lord in a grave of oblivion. Our Lord should have made me die after the approbation; for alas, alas, I was possibly good at launching the Society, but I am not at strengthening it, at forming it, at perfecting its first grace.

Here I am, O my God, entirely at Your disposal! Consider Your glory and the good of the Society. It seems to me that just now and for the last few days I would gladly agree to go bury myself, poor and unknown but with a tabernacle, in some solitude or in a forelorn unknown country.

*Fiat gloria tua!* (May Your glory come!)

---

February 25 - First meditation

### **The Society and I**

I made an examen on how I have responded to the honor done me and the trust placed in me by God and the Church.



How I grieve to realize what little glory I have rendered to God, an exterior glory, an exterior kingdom! As to the interior, there is little of it, and this little is as yet very imperfect.

And I will never be able to retrieve this loss and make up for it; the opportunities are gone. Of what good is it to me now to have put myself so much to the fore, to have insisted so much on, our graces, on the attractive side of the Society and of our vocation, on the sacrifices it had in common with others; all that was tainted with naturalism, with personal vanity. Why not glorify our Lord with an absolute silence on things personal!

And would I not have done better to work at the interior holiness of the Society than at its glory, its good name and its expansion! It would be well rooted by now, and the birds of the air would come to perch on its branches and build their nests.

Comfort, learning and exterior qualities can attract to a religious Society none but selfish people, whose mind and egoism find therein a well-laden table.

Holy vocations are attracted only by the grace of holiness, by God's satisfaction with a religious Society; and they become attached to the Society only by the means and graces of holiness because they thereby become detached from self and more intimately united to God in their vocation. When glue loses its power of holding two bodies together, these bodies become detached from each other and separate.

There is no doubt but that the devil fostered this absorption which, by affecting me to the point of fatigue, rendered other duties difficult, led me always to postpone them, and then to set them aside and excuse myself.

The essential point of this meditation, however, is a review of the beginnings of the Society, given entirely to the glory of the Most Blessed Sacrament, to its apostolate and to its organization; but I failed then to see something of great importance to me: that I should give myself, my very self, my innermost being, to the Most Blessed Sacrament in order to glorify it by that immolation and burial of self.

At last, today, after a month on retreat, I see it faintly, and assuredly that is the greatest of graces. I was not aware of it.

I sense it today, and I must call that sentiment a great mercy. For if I dwelt too much on the guilt of (my blindness), my poor head would say nothing, and my heart would want to deny all blame without giving any reasons, or to withdraw into itself and choke over such a poignant sight in the life of one who, has left everything, sacrificed everything, and for whom? For a man? No! Then for what? For a personal liking? No! For the glory of this religious world? That is folly. For well-being? I was better off before. Wherefore then? Alas, that *wherefore*. It is the *serpens decepit me* (the serpent beguiled me - Gen. 3, 13). Self-love found the means of sneaking into the love of God, and the natural into the supernatural.

That is the answer to the mystery. *Quid faciam? Rem* (What am I to do? Attend to my business).

At breakfast, *Imitation*, Book II, Chapter 3: *Bonus pacificus homo omnia ad bonum convertit.... De nullo suspicatur.... Est tamen tota pax nostra in hac misera vita potius in humili sufferentia ponenda quam in non sentiendo contraria.*

(Your peaceable man sees good everywhere.... He isn't suspicious of others.... In this imperfect life, when all's said and done, peace doesn't mean having no enemies, it means being ready to put up with ill treatment.)

---

February 25 - Second meditation (*In town*)

---

February 25 - Third meditation

### Need of God

I meditated on the need of God. How the soul suffers in the world, where everything she sees distracts her, everything she hears diverts her attention, disturbs her, and is often an occasion of temptation, of vanity, of a pouring out of self into creatures.

And so sadness usually grips me when I go out into the world; I find myself in danger, out of place, outside my center, and I am frightened. How quickly I return to my cell! To the feet of our Lord!

I was exhausted with all that noise; I had difficulty in recollecting myself. Towards the end, however, our Lord blessed my poor meditation by recollecting my soul a little. I can see that it (external zeal) is not my grace for the time being.

My grace is a grace of interior life. I no longer know how to act, to protect myself, and to hold my tongue in the world. It would seem that expansiveness with our Lord makes me still more expansive with others; and that is bad for me, for I do harm to my soul. Then in my exterior relations, there always crops up the curiosity to know and see what may be the right thing to say; in a word, it always winds up with my vanity's reaping its own little harvest, or with a temptation, or often, even very often, with a failing.

---

February 26 - First meditation

### Adoration

I meditated on adoration.

I realized first of all that my adorations are very defective in two ways: excessive vagueness in my thoughts; undue attention to works of zeal.

Adoration, O my soul, is no time for playing the apostle or the Superior; I must be an adorer only, that is, I must make of my whole being, of my whole life, present and future, a homage of justice and love to our Lord Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar, solemnly exposed for *me*.

Adoration of Him by *me*; that is the essential thing. *Non quaero quae tua sunt, sed te* (I seek not what is yours but you - I Cor. 12, 14).

I must adore our Lord, His love in the Most Blessed Sacrament, His sacrifices, His state, His goodness, in a word, the cause of the institution, of the perpetuity, of the multilocation of the Eucharist; I must also get in touch with the health-giving and nourishing grace of this divine Sacrament. I must unite myself to our Lord by that grace, and glorify Him in His sacramental state; then will my soul abide in His love. *Manete in dilectione mea* (Abide in My love - John. 15, 9). I must go to the Eucharist not through the mysteries and virtues of our Lord, but rather from the Eucharist to His mysteries and virtues. It is the sun that produces the rays; it takes too long to trace our way to the sun along one of its rays; we are apt to stop on the way up.

The principal grace of my meditation consisted in my seeing the excellence of our vocation, which makes of adoration a permanent state, the main exercise of our life, and the very end of the perfection of the religious state; we do out of duty and by vow what in the world is done freely and so seldom; we are thus the Society of our Lord, His divine bodyguard; we do what is done in heaven.

But my mind was crowded with too many thoughts; my soul rambled too much, wanted too much to see the beautiful and the excellence of God's love instead of the goodness of His love for me.

I shall take this up again. Resolution. Thanksgiving - one hour.

\* \* \* \* \*

At breakfast, *Imitation*, Book III, Chapter 7.

A capital truth, which confirms me in the enlightening grace our Lord gave me, namely, that I am too attached to peace of heart, to the sweetness of recollection, to the enjoyment of God; and that when I have been too light-headed, or have become and and dry, I am too distressed over that condition and find myself trying hard to recover the sentiment of God and acting like a child that does not cease asking forgiveness of his mother until she has embraced him. That is what I do, and so I lose my time; it were better to humble myself once and for all, accept that state of distress, and get back to work.

*Nec est in eo tantum spiritualis vitae profectus, cum consolationis habueris gratiam, sed cum humiliter et abnegate, patienterque tuleris ejus subtractionem; ita quod tunc ab orationis studio non torpeas, nec reliqua opera tua ex usu facienda, omnino dilabi permittas.*

*Sed sicut melius potueris et intellexeris libenter quod in te est facias, nec propter ariditatem, seu anxietatem mentis quam sentis, te totaliter negligas. Multi enim sunt qui cum non bene eis successerit, statim impatientes flunt aut desides.*

(When you receive the grace of divine comfort, it is not a sign of much progress in the spiritual life; you *are* making progress, though, if you bear the withdrawal of grace with patience, humility and resignation, not flagging in your zeal for prayer nor completely abandoning the other acts of devotion you are in the habit of performing.

Do willingly whatever you can, as best you can and as seems best to you; do not give up attending to your soul on account of any dryness or mental torment you may feel. There are many people who, as soon as things go contrary to them, immediately become impatient or lose heart.)

That is a great grace which reveals to me a great defect; attention therefore! And thanksgiving!

---

February 26 - Second meditation (*At the Passionists*)<sup>14</sup>

### **O that I had wings**

*Quis dabit mihi pennas sicut columbae* (O that I had wings like a dove - Ps. 55, 6).

---

February 26 - Third meditation

### **Dangers of the world**

On the impression made on me by my reading about the dangers of the world, the number of those who are damned, and what a sovereign grace of salvation is religious life which snatches us, from dangers, defends us against the snares of the world and fortifies us against our personal temptations and our passions - always violent in spite of being held in leash.

How great is the despair of thousands of Christians on waking up at the tribunal of God after having lived peacefully in sin!

---

## Adoration

My meditation was better than that of yesterday morning. I was more prayerful and more vigilant on rising, and I avoided the pitfall of letting my mind dwell on worldly and irrelevant things.

I got my meditation under way with sentiments of thanksgiving for my vocation and of happiness over my being attached to the personal service of our Lord. That sort of beginning fixed the attention of my soul and made it easy for me to be expansive.

1 - In itself adoration is the worship of latria offered to our Lord Jesus Christ, a worship of respect, of honor, of dependence, and of homage.

Such was the worship of the man born blind: *Procidens adoravit eum* (Falling down, he worshipped Him - John 9, 38). And that of Thomas: *Dominus meus et Deus meus* (My Lord and my God - John 20, 28), supposedly prostrating himself. And also that of the Magi: *Et procidentes adoraverunt eum* (And they fell down and worshipped Him - Matt. 2, 11).

The exterior worship, of respect is the profession of faith, the worship of Holy Church prescribed to us: the homage of the body. Everything ceases to be anything before our Lord. *Dominus meus Rex meus* (My Lord and my King).

I must no longer pay any attention to anyone before the Most Blessed Sacrament especially when it is exposed; I must no longer know anyone; I must be absorbed in my Lord like the angels. I have much to reproach myself on this, under pretext of policing the chapel and keeping an eye on things. It is not the time for that; at least, the need for it must be evident; I should not be looking for it.

So much for the *Dominus Rex meus* (the Lord and my King).

What makes this exterior worship still more honorable is that it is the worship, the ceremonial of Holy Church, her ritual which we carry out, and consequently an excellent form of worship, perfect in itself; we are sure that it is agreeable to our Lord because it is the worship offered to Him by His spouse and inspired by the Holy Spirit.

I must therefore offer this exterior worship to our Lord in the interior spirit of the homage of my whole being and also according to the spirit and intention of Holy Church, who wishes to honor her divine Spouse, her Savior, through me as her delegated adorer.

2 - It is a worship of love, of homage to the love of our Lord; a worship of the outpouring of this boundless love in His divine Sacrament; then a worship of praise and benediction at the sight of so many sacrifices of His sacramental state; lastly, a worship of thanksgiving to His infinite goodness for having so loved us, for having so loved me, so poor, so despicable, so sinful, so ungrateful.

For His having loved me without fail during the 30 years of my priesthood, the 25 of my religious life, and the 43 since my First Communion. And yet all these kindnesses have not even succeeded in making a fairly good Christian out of me. And the best part of it is that His goodness is still granting me its greatest, most lovable and most precious grace, the eucharistic religious life, which includes all the good things, all the joys, all the glories of the divine Eucharist, and even all the rights and titles to the possession of it.

What kind of worship of love have I rendered to our Sacramental Lord?

It is forbidden to enclose anything in the most sacred tabernacle along with the Eucharist; even the most venerable relics may not be exposed on the altar of exposition. And I would put myself there? I would dare set up two thrones there?

Our Lord is not good enough, lovable enough, great enough to have my whole heart and my whole service at adoration? But, O my soul, the Eucharist is a fire which purifies and consumes, which beatifies and crucifies!

Why have I not loved sufficiently and well? Because I did not know how to make a real adoration of love or was unwilling to do so; I was too speculative in my contemplation; I meditated too much and did not love enough, did not love in our Lord, did not offer Him personal love.

Today, therefore, thanksgiving at the sound of the clock.

\* \* \* \* \*

At breakfast, *Imitation*, Book III, Chapter 17: *Fili, sine me tecum agere quod volo; ego scio quid expedit tibi.*

*Tu cogitas sicut homo; tu sentis in multis, sicut humanus suadet affectus.*

(My son, let Me do with you as I will; I know what is best for you.

It is but as man that you think; your feelings in many matters are swayed by the human way of looking at things.)

---

February 27 - Second and Third meditation (*not recorded*) - Day off at Castel Gandolfo<sup>15</sup>

---

February 28 - Morning meditation

### **Adoration at the Gesu (Closing of 40 Hours)**

---

February 28 - Evening meditation

### **Prayer of recollection at the feet of our Lord**

---

March 1 - First meditation (*Ash Wednesday*)

### **On penance**

I considered God imposing penance on our sinful first parents.

How the goodness and mercy of God shine in this circumstance when He should have gotten very angry. On the contrary, He set the guilty ones on the road to forgiveness by offering them an occasion of humility and of repentance; but sin makes one insolent.

God does not take offense over their insolence. He does not punish them like the rebellious angels; He does not have them beaten or thrown into chains, or humiliated by other creatures; they are His poor creatures, miserable enough as they are. He is a Father who corrects them in order to forgive, who will even accompany His poor sinners; He will Himself leave paradise as a father leaves a home deprived of its children.

What penance will God inflict upon them? A corporal penance; only that. *Maledicta, terra in opere tuo; in laboribus comedes ex ea cunctis diebus vitae tuae, spinas et tribulos germinabit tibi et comedes herbam terrae.*

*In sudore vultus tui vesceris pane donec reverteris in terram de qua sumptus es; quia pulvis es et in pulverem reverteris.*

*Fecit quoque Dominus Deus Adae et uxori ejus tunicas pelliceas et induit eos.*

*Et emisit eum Dominus Deus de paradiso voluptatis, ut operaretur terram de qua sumptus est.  
Ejecitque Adam.*

(Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you, and you shall eat the plants of the field.

In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust and to dust you shall return....

The Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them....

Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken.

He drove out the man - Gen. 3, 17 - 19, 21, 23, 24).

\* \* \* \* \*

How well we see in all this the heart of a father. He does not hand over the guilty one to the executors of His justice; He Himself speaks to him, notifies him of his punishment, makes him his first garment, banishes him from the garden of Eden and goes out with him.

Then the promise of a Redeemer; and of the Most Blessed Immaculate Virgin: *Ipsa conteret caput tuum* (She shall bruise your head - Gen. 3, 15).

But why that corporal punishment, the humiliation of that garment, that dust of his existence, that work, that sweat, those thorns of the earth; and for Eve, the sufferings and miseries of motherhood, that domination, that submission!

God punished the body because through it the soul became carnal, and He punished the soul because she loved the body more than she loved Him.

Besides, the body was the instrument of sin; it enjoyed the forbidden fruit; it is the slave that will forever rebel against the master, that is, conscience and reason; we must first subdue it and destroy the carnal root of the three concupiscences.

Thus penance of the body was a matter of justice, a restoration of the holiness of man and of the glory of God.

Then our Lord, the second Adam, came and, as a child of Adam, embraced our state in order to raise it to the level of virtue, to the level of His own perfection; He even practiced perfect love; He loved and glorified His Father by suffering, humility and poverty.

The most pure and perfect Virgin Mary, His divine Mother, lived the same way; so that penance is not only a virtue of justice for me, a great sinner, but a virtue of our Lord in me, a fruit of His grace, the most beautiful flower I can offer to His glory.

I am bound to penance not only as a sinner, but as a priest of Jesus Christ, as His coredeemer, in order to save souls, *et adimpleo* (In my flesh I complete - Col. 1, 24); and also as a religious, since penance is the foundation of the religious life, the soul of the vows, the true life of Jesus Christ: *Si quis vult post me venire, abneget ... tollat crucem ... sequatur me quotidie* (If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me - Luke 9, 23).

\* \* \* \* \*

In order to understand better the *sequatur* (follow Me), I followed our Lord into the desert and meditated on Him as He fasted and did penance. All these reflections found me dry and cold. I asked our Lord for the grace and spirit of penance: 1 - take nothing between meals; 2 - accept readily everything that comes from Providence; choose what (is mortifying).

At breakfast, *Imitation*, Book III, Chapter 51: *Sed necesse habes interdum ob originalem corruptelam, ad inferiora descendere et onus corruptibilis vitae, etiam invite et cum taedio portare.*

*Quamdiu mortale corpm geris taedium senties et gravamen cordis.*

(You have to come down to earth now and then - your fallen nature demands it - and shoulder the load of this life of constant decay, however much you dislike it and are weary of it.

So long as you wear this mortal body of yours, you will feel weary and heavy at heart.)

---

*March 1 - Second meditation*

### **Quam dilecta tabernacula**

*Quam dilecta tabernacula* (How lovely is Your dwelling place - Ps. 84, 1). This eucharistic paraphrase kept me recollected and did me some good. I see that in a state of aridity it is helpful thus to take up a familiar psalm.

---

*March 1 - Third meditation*

### **The Rule**

1 - I must observe the Rule of the religious life, especially its external obligations, like any religious because I am first of all a religious. I am bound to the Rule like everybody else; it is the life of my soul, and I also have need of nourishment. I have to practice the religious virtues of my holy state; I would indeed be most unfortunate and duly punished if I were deprived of the right to do so and of the ensuffig merit. So that I sin against God, the Society and myself when I break a rule through my fault.

I am Superior not to dispense myself from the rules or to interpret them in my favor, but to observe them still more faithfully than others since it is my duty to uphold, guard and defend them; and I shall have to render a strict account.

I confess, O my God, that on this point I am very guilty.

I did not manage, nor was I willing, to leave everything for the public exercises of worship or for the community exercises, because I always wanted to get things done, or was afraid to offend, to hurt the feelings of strangers, or because again I wanted to show off, to place myself above the law and the Rule; all that is quite wrong, imperfect, and most unsightly before God.

I will not do it again, O my God; forgive me!

2 - Then I owe good example to my brethren. How can I dare reprimand them if I am at fault myself; and I do fail against silence, against modesty of the eyes and of deportment, against regularity and punctuality.

I am weak in correcting failings because I am lax in avoiding them. Now, that must change.

My God, I have promised You this so often, but to no good. But I hope that this time Your mercy will have pity on me and will grant me the grace to begin at last once and for all to be *forma gregis ex animo* (Being examples to the flock - I Pet. 5, 3).

3 - I examined the actual state of my soul; that day off (at Castel Gandolfo) has shown me my weakness, how little I bother about the presence of God and the rule concerning conversation, how I can no longer manage to be recollected or to pray interiorly when I am with others; to witness, twice this evening I failed to think of God even once during a whole hour. How wretched of me! What then will it be when I am thrown into a ferment of business!

---

### **The Rule, my virtue**

Obedience to the Rule must be my first virtue since it is only through the Rule that I act as a religious, that I glorify our Lord as a religious, and even that I fulfill my duty, doubly bound thereto for the edification of my brethren.

To act according to a different principle would be the most dangerous of illusions since I would then be at the mercy of this erratic will of mine, and be always acting according to chance and passing whims.

Moreover, what assurance have I that dispensing myself from a community exercise or missing the beginning of it, especially for some irrelevant or personal motive, is more agreeable to God and glorifies Him more? No assurance whatever. Why be concerned about what others may say or think as long as I am where I am supposed to be, where God expects me to be and doing what He wants me to do! I must attend to God and to His Society first of all.

I stand in great need of reform on this point; it is a false virtue, a false liberty. I am placing myself above the actual will of God. But the saddest thing of all is that I am depriving myself of the first grace of a community exercise, of the first blessing and, consequently, of the authority, of the divine and apostolic power over others because I have not received the entire grace.

And finally, what esteem and affection can my brethren have for the Rule if I am not the first to demonstrate and prove to them that it is the sacred and inviolable law of the service of our Lord and the supreme law of their virtues, if I merely enforce the Rule without being myself its authoritative exemplar, its positive and active exemplar.

That for me is the supreme virtue which will cost me much in certain circumstances when self-love must be sacrificed and self-complacency crushed, when personal interests must be subjected to the general law of the service of God.

You shall consult God, your duty, His better service, O my soul, and if you seek only His holy will, you shall certainly receive light and grace. Pray, for it is on prayer that all the temptations and demons will converge or bear down, as also all the old passions of false liberty and of enslavement.

At breakfast, *Imitation*, Book I, Chapter 25: *Quando homo ad hoc pervenit, quod de nulla creatura consolationem quaerit, tunc ei Deus primo perfecte sapere incipit, tunc etiam bene contentus de omni eventu rerum erit.*

*Tunc nec pro magno laetabitur, nec pro modico contristabitur, sed ponit se integre et fiducialiter in Deo qui est ei omnia in omnibus.*

(It's not till a man reaches the stage of refusing consolation from any created thing, that he gets his first real taste of God. By that time, he has learned to be content, however things fall out.

He won't be elated by big results, or disappointed with small ones. In utter confidence he takes his stand upon God, who is everything to him in every connection.)

### **Thanksgiving**

Thanksgiving for a better understanding of the religious state.

---



### **Life or death of the Society**

The kind of life I lead is a matter of life or death for the Society.

If I am a holy religious adorer, I will be a good Superior; and if I am a saint, the others will also be: *Regis ad exemplar* (They will follow the example of the king). They will be saints because I will communicate them my grace and the spirit that is the bond of it; they will be saints because they will love and esteem their living Rule.

God will bless us all with the blessing of the faithful Abraham: *In semine tuo benedicentur* (By your descendants shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves - Gen. 22, 18). The tree depends on its roots. Therefore if I am a saint, the Society will live; not that I am its life, for our Lord is, the Church is; but that in the order of Providence, I am there as a condition of that life: *Erit populus sicut pastor* (The people will follow their shepherd).

But alas, if I am not a saint, I am a demon to my brethren, a Satan, since I do not edify them but, on the contrary, dis-edify them and lead them to laxity, to frivolousness, to tepidity, to a lack of esteem for the Rule; all that makes for an ailing, agonizing and dying piety. And if we are without piety in our vocation, if we do not enjoy God, His good service and His holy presence, at least now and then, we are as good as lost.

What, O my soul, this Society would die, for which you have left everything, sacrificed everything, for which God has worked so many miracles? I would let these poor children die of hunger? And for whom and for what reason? Who is worth the Eucharist?

No, O my God! The Society will live, these children will live, and by Your grace I will become what I ought to be. Mary, my good Mother, perfect in me what you have begun.

But how can I become a saint?

1 - By making of the good of the Society the law of my life.

2 - By making of its end the orbit, as it were, of my life.

3 - By seeing in the Society only the service of our Lord Jesus Christ by the collective person of the Society, made up of each one of its members.

Thus I should love the Society not in itself as an undertaking or as a body, nor its children as individuals; all that would become a temptation for me. I should love it as the Society of Jesus, sacramental, as a Society at His service which I must govern, sustain and perfect, just as a general sustains and directs his soldiers for the service of the prince to whom they belong, and for the service, combat and victory the prince expects of them.

I must then devote myself to their education, to the development of their virtues, to the improvement of their service. The King honors me and rewards me; but the soldiers are not mine, and they owe me nothing personally. As far as they are concerned, I am without a name as a person; I answer only to the name of an office, of a position of command in the name of the great King, and that for His glory only.

### **Jesus sacramental is not loved**

I saw that our Lord was not personally loved by the 500,000,000 pagans, the 20,000,000 Jews, and the 55,000,000 Schismatics because they do not know Him, or have wrong notions about Him.

Among so many millions of creatures with hearts made to love, how many would love Jesus if they knew Him as I do! I should at least love Jesus for them, in their stead.

I saw that among Catholics few, very few, love Jesus. They hardly ever think of Him, do not speak about Him, never speak to Him, do not come to adore Him or receive Him.

Why? Because they have never tasted Jesus, His sweetness, the delights of His love; because they have never known His goodness; they do not know His love in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

A few have faith in Jesus Christ, but not an active faith. They have a very elementary faith, so superficial that it does not reach the heart or does not go beyond what is strictly required for salvation. And even these are small in number compared to so many other Catholics who live like pagans, as if they had never known our Lord.

Why is it that Jesus Christ is so little loved in the Most Blessed Sacrament? Because the priests do not make Him known; they preach only faith in the Most Blessed Sacrament but little or never His life therein, His love, the sacrifices of that love for man, in a word, Jesus Christ loving man as an individual.

The second cause is that priests do not love Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament. The faithful judge them from the way they offer Mass; the faithful cannot understand the presence of Jesus Christ from the way priests pray, adore and act in church.

But if we know Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament, His love and the sacrifices of that love, the yearnings and blessings of that love, and if, in spite of that, we do not love Him, what an insult!

Yes, an insult! It amounts to saying He is not beautiful enough, not good enough, not lovable enough to be preferred to all else.

What ingratitude! After so many graces received, so many promises made to love Him, so many solemn engagements! To treat Him thus is to mock His love.

What cowardice! We do not want to know Him too much, to see Him, to receive Him, to speak to Him, for fear of being overwhelmed by His love and goodness, of not being able to resist Him, of being compelled to sacrifice our heart to Him without reserve, our mind without further thought, our life without condition. We are afraid of the love of Jesus Christ, and we flee Him. We become troubled like Herod, like Pilate, and even like Caiphas and their friends.

It must also be said that the world is afraid of that love and does everything to paralyze the effects of it, to prevent even the thought of it, by absorbing, enslaving and fascinating souls, and even by opposing that love in itself as something not required and impossible, or possible only in the cloister.

The devil fights constantly that love of Jesus, especially of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament, because there it is a living, substantial love that dominates souls. And so the devil takes away the thought of Jesus like the seed on the wayside, and paralyzes the effect and impression of that thought with temptations. If the fire persists in burning, he puts it out.

And yet, *Deus caritas est* (God is love - I John 4, 8). *Et Deus erat Verbum* (And the Word was God - John 1, 1). *Love Me sicut dilexi vos* (As I have loved you - John 15, 12). *Manete in dilectione mea*, (Abide in My love - John 15, 9). *Qui manducat ... in me manet et ego in eo* (He who eats Me ... abides in Me and I in him - John 6, 57 and 56). *Ignem veni mittere in terram* (I came to cast fire upon the earth - Luke 12, 49). *Deus Christus ignis consumens est* (God - Christ - is a devouring fire - Deut. 4, 24).

\* \* \* \* \*

## Thanksgiving

I finished this morning's meditation by making it more eucharistic. I also allowed myself to be carried away too easily into drawing a mental picture and sermon about the truth of my subject, so that when the end came, I was still dealing with considerations and not with affections. The mind got the upper hand again. Unsatisfactory meditation; beautiful and easy, but sterile for the heart.

During my thanksgiving I gave myself sincerely to the love of our Lord. These two thoughts, impressed me: 1 - It is by love and by love of the Most Blessed Sacrament that our Lord has drawn me, and therein is my grace; 2 - He has given me a mission of love, and of love for the Most Blessed Sacrament.

How can I correspond with these two - graces if I do not love with an absolute, unceasing and living love? Impossible without that love.

I renewed my gift; my resolution to reject with an act of love (whatever militates against the love due to the Blessed Sacrament).

I gave myself to the Most Blessed Virgin who has been so much of a mother to me, who has led me by the hand to Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament; and yet I had forgotten her somewhat.

At breakfast, *Imitation*, Book I, Chapter 22: *Nunc proponis cavere et post horam agis quasi nihil proposuisses.*

*Merito ergo nos ipsos humiliare possumus, nec unquam aliquid magni de nobis sentire; quia tam fragiles et instabiles sumus.*

(An hour has gone by, and those resolutions about avoiding it might just as well not have been made.

Haven't we good reason to be ashamed? Can we ever entertain a good opinion of ourselves, weak and wavering creatures as we are?)

---

March 3 - Second meditation

## Propaganda

What a hard time I had accepting this cross!<sup>16</sup> I am now resigned, convinced that the good Master will draw greater glory from it, and that He does all this for the best. It must be that I am not yet as He wants me to be if He is to make use of my poverty and forlornness for His purposes.

---

March 3 - Third meditation

## The sacrifices of love

We do not love our Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament because we either do not know or do not examine enough the sacrifices which His love makes for us in the Most Blessed Sacrament. They are so amazing that they overwhelmed me and moved me to tears.

1 - The Eucharist was instituted at the cost of the whole Passion of our Savior. And how could that be? The Eucharist is a sacrifice, but there can be no sacrifice without a victim to immolate, and later immolated; the immolation is the death of the victim; the offering is the actual offering of the victim; the eating of the victim is the participation in the merits of the sacrifice.

All that is contained in the Eucharist; it is an unbloody sacrifice because the Victim died once and for all and is perpetuated in its state of Victim: *Vidi agnum tanquam occisum* (I saw a Lamb ... as though it had been slain - Apoc. 50 6).

In order to be eaten, this Victim must veil its living and glorious state under a symbol, a sign of death; we eat only that which has been deprived of life by death; otherwise we would meet with resistance.

Now here is what is still more unbelievable. The Eucharist was instituted at the cost of the Garden of Olives, of the tribunals, and of Calvary. And then as it is by the Sacrifice of the Cross that Jesus has effected the work of our redemption, it is by the Sacrifice of the Mass that He continues it in order to apply its merits to us: *Quoties opus redemptionis tuae ages, idem sacerdos et victima* (As often as you shall enact the work of your redemption, the Priest and Victim are the same - Trent, Denz. 940, and Secret of 9<sup>th</sup> Sund. after Pent).

I profit even more by the Sacrifice of the altar than I would have by the Sacrifice of the Cross, where I could not have eaten the Flesh of the divine Victim or drunk His Blood, since He had not yet been exposed to the fire of the altar to become a food.<sup>17</sup>

And who knows but I might have been one of the most villainous executioners there at the foot of the Cross; now I have faith.

2 - By instituting the Eucharist, Jesus perpetuated the sacrifices of His Passion,<sup>18</sup> the desertions of Gethsemane, the betrayal of His friends, of His followers who were to become schismatics, heretics, renegades, Mohammedans; of Christians who were to sell the divine Host to the Jews, to the impious; the denials before Annas, the sacrilegious fury before Caiphas, the scorn of Herod, the cowardice of Pilate; then the shame of seeing Himself set aside for the devil, for a passion, for an idol of the flesh.

Then the sacramental crucifixion in the body and soul of the sacrilegious communicant.

Our Lord knew all that beforehand, knew all the new Judases and found them among His own, His beloved children, His priests. All that did not stop Him. He wanted His love to be greater than the ingratitude and malice of man; He wanted to subject Himself once more to man's sacrilegious malice and even outlive it.

Our Lord knew beforehand the tepidity of His own, my tepidity, the little fruit we would draw from Holy Communion; no matter, He wanted to love more than He was loved, to give more than man would be thankful for.

3 - There is yet more! And this state of death when He has the fullness of life and of an immortal life! Is it nothing to be treated as dead and considered so? And what does this state of death mean? It means that Jesus is without beauty, without movement, without defense, wrapped in the Sacred Species as in a shroud, and laid in the tabernacle as in a tomb; that He is there, seeing everything, hearing everything, enduring everything as if He were dead. His love has also veiled His power, His glory, His feet, His hands, His sacred mouth, and has left Him only His Heart to love us, and His state of Victim to intercede for us.

What must not the demons think at the sight of so much love of Jesus Christ for man, and of so much coldness and ingratitude of the Christian towards Jesus Christ! They must say to Him: "We give nothing to man, nothing that is true and good or helpful; we have not suffered for him, and we are better loved, better obeyed, better served than You!" And that is the truth.

What must not the angels think at the sight of Jesus in His Sacrament, and of man who does not even so much as look at Him but scorns and ignores Him.

What shall we think of the Eucharist after death on seeing all its goodness, all its love and all its riches!

O my God, my God! What must I think of myself, who have been receiving Communion so often for 43 years.

Whatever the Eucharist can give me of honor, of strength and of grace, You have given me. I have the mission of Your adorable and wonderful Sacrament in the whole world, and alas, I am not

yet a real adorer, I have not the elementary holiness of my state, the rudimentary virtue of my religious vocation. You are not yet my supreme law, the center of my heart and the end of my life.

What then is needed to triumph over my soul? Give me the Eucharist or give me death!

---

March 4 - First meditation

### The eucharistic center

Why the Eucharist? That it may be man's center of love.

The heart of man needs a center of affection, of expansiveness. God said on looking at the first man: *Non est bonum esse hominem solum; faciamus ei adiutorium simile sibi* (It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him - Gen. 2, 18). *Sine amico non potest bene vivere* (Without some friend, how is it possible for you to live a good life? - Imit. Bk. II, Ch. 8). *Ubi est thesaurus tuus, ibi est et cor tuum* (where your treasure is, there will your heart be also - Matt. 6, 21).

Our Lord wants to be the center of love of His disciples, the center of my love. *Sicut dilexit me Pater et ego dilexi vos. Manete in dilectione mea. Si praecepta mea servaveritis, manebitis in dilectione mea, sicut ego Patris mei praecepta servavi et maneo in ejus dilectione* (As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love - John 15, 9 and 10).

What does, "abiding in the love" of Jesus Christ mean? That we make of His love the center of our life. This center must be the Eucharist; for Jesus is in the Eucharist, our one center of consolation in the hour of trial, *Venite ad me omnes qui...* (Come to Me, all who - Matt. 11, 28); our one center in the hour of sorrow and disappointment, for that is when the heart surrenders with the greatest abandon; our one center in time of happiness, for it is, then that true love finds its joy in the Beloved and not in self, *In Domino gaudebo ... in Jesu meo* (Yet will I rejoice in the Lord ... in my saving God) ; our one center in our desire to see and please Him, to surprise Him with a bouquet or a gift, to do only what pleases Him or may be agreeable to Him; our one center of life, in which as in our center of love we think and deliberate and act in order to please Him. That is what these words of Jesus mean: *Qui manducat me, ipse vivet propter me* (So he who eats Me will live because of Me - John 6, 57); *propter* (because of Me), that is, either by Me as his principle, his law and his inspiration, or for Me as his end, in order to please Me, to prefer Me to everything.

Is Jesus the center of my heart? Yes, in time of extraordinary trials; yes, in the first moment of gratitude, in unusual circumstances, but not in everyday life. I do not think, I do not deliberate, I do not desire, nor do I act in Jesus as my center. That is a fact; all too certain, all too sad a fact.

Why is not our Lord my center? Because He is not yet the *self* of my *self*; because I do not love Him enough out of affection. My heart is all taken up with the glory of His service, not with the good pleasure of His heart.

How can I make that center a reality? By entering into it and abiding in it; by acting in, and for, this divine center. A child works for his parents, a wife for her husband, the angel for his God, the adorer for Jesus Christ.

My abiding in this center is made easy for me since I live with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist is the occupation and even the exterior law of my life. It will be easier for me than in any other state since it is my grace.

How should I go about it? By action, that is, not by trying to feel the peace and sweetness of this center, but by paying homage to it, by frequently reverting to it. A center is the focal point of a circumference, of the movements of an army, of the headquarters.

Come, O my soul, leave this world, go out of yourself, forsake yourself; go to the God of the Eucharist; He has an abode, and He wants you there; He wants to live with you, to give Himself to you, to live in you. Be to Jesus what His human nature, deprived of its personality, was to His divine Person in the Incarnation. As we live for *self* and *self* in us is the person, so our Lord's human soul and body lived only for the divine Person of the Word - who itself lived only for His Father and by His Father.

Resolution. Renew my gift of self, partial gift (sic), self-surrender. *Vivit vero, in me Christus* (But Christ who lives in me - Gal. 2, 20). But I must go as far as the most costly sacrifices, and make these sacrifices first of all in time of prayer.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Imitation.* Book II, Chapter 4: *Si rectum cor tuum esset, tunc omnis creatura speculum vitae et liber sanctae doctrinae esset.*

*Non est creatura tam parva et vilis quae Dei bonitatem non repraesentet.*

*Si tu esses intus bonus et purus, tunc omnia sine impedimento videres et bene caperes. Cor purum penetrat caelum et infernum.*

(If the dispositions of your heart were really true, everything in the world would be a mirror reflecting eternity, a book to teach you heavenly wisdom.

After all, there's no creature in the world so mean and insignificant that it doesn't reflect, somehow, the glory of God.

You'd see everything with clear eyes, fit everything into the pattern of your thought, if goodness and purity were at the roots of your being.

The pure heart has a range of vision that can reach the heights of heaven, the depths of hell.)

---

March 4 - Second meditation

### **Propaganda**

---

March 4 - Third meditation + + +

---

March 5 - First meditation

### **Center of life**

How good the good God is! He has uplifted my soul a bit; my soul felt rather low and might have easily succumbed to sloth.

According to my state and my vocation, the Holy Eucharist is my natural, supernatural and final center. The thought of it should then come easily.

By my state in life, I live with our Lord, near His altar, near His throne. To live with someone is to be with him altogether; to live with such a great King is to have a very honorable abode; to live with our Lord Jesus Christ is to live with goodness itself.

One must then be very stupid, very wicked, very ungrateful not to remain there.

The Holy Eucharist is the *materia circa quam* (central object) of my work. My lot is its direct service, that is, its worship, its adoration, its personal service, which calls for the full application of my thought, the full power of my intelligence, the full energy of my will, the full homage of my

body. Everything in me should therefore be a preparation for, as well as an application to, the service of the divine Eucharist.

The Holy Eucharist is the end of my life, the absolute end that includes all the other ends, since our Lord is the *Alpha and Omega* (the beginning and the end) of all things. To please Him, to love Him and to serve Him, such for me is the meaning of time and eternity. I follow and must follow my Master everywhere.

Living with our Lord, I am always with Him, I work always with Him and on Him as long as I am within the law and grace of my service, since it is I who must transmit His orders, organize and maintain His service.

But the eucharistic God must be the dominant natural and supernatural object of my thought, the focal point and law of my life; otherwise I might behave like a child with his toys, a drunkard under temptation, a slave of those I must lead to my Master.

This is the principal grace of my meditation, which I have well understood: I must abide with our Lord, work on Him and for Him, but not with my mind, for my mind must attend to what it is doing; my mind is a custodian, a watchman, a laborer, but not the master. I must abide with our Lord not by practicing a special virtue while serving Him; that would make of me a specialized worker, indulging. His one talent; moreover, to abide in a special virtue is to abide too much in self, to seek one's gain.

\* \* \* \* \*

I must therefore live with our Lord, abide with Him through a thought, a sentiment of affection, a devotion of love to Him and His glory. Everything must foster this thought of affection; and this thought in turn must nourish and perfect everything else, must be like the fragrance of the master-thought. Up to now, I have been occupied with the intellectual aspect of the Eucharist, with the study of the Eucharist, with the exterior means of success, but I have not yet penetrated to the marrow, to the heart of the heart of that divine love. That is why I have been so restless. I worked much intellectually, physically, exteriorly, but not with my heart, not with my affections. And so my center was in the intellect, in the science of the Eucharist, in the externals of the Society rather than in its center of life; a center which ought to be so easy for me since I have the concept and knowledge of it; a center which is the grace of my state; a center which should form and foster the Christian and evangelical virtues without my having to seek elsewhere; a center which gives me ready nourishment, since it is an atmosphere of light, of sweetness, of peace; indeed, it is our Lord.

But, O my soul, you must come out of yourself, you must live from within your heart in the goodness of Jesus Eucharist. Yours must be a nobly passionate love which takes up everything in one scoop, which surrenders everything in one act of giving. *Ipse vivet propter me quia in me manet* (He will live for Me because he abides in me - adapted).

But, O my God, why do You love man to the point of doing everything for him in this world? Of enlisting angels and saints at his service? Of placing even Yourself at my disposal? Of forgetting Your majesty, Your dignity, Your rights, in order to beg me to love You, beg me to requite Your love with mine, to prefer You to Your enemy, who is also mine, the devil, and not to attach myself to anyone other than You, at long last?

But do You forget that I am nothing, that all I have is the disposition of my heart? Would not one say that You cannot be happy without me? That You stand in need of me? And in spite of that, I still do not love You with all my heart! I want to be humored along, to be sought after! I am niggardly with You! How foolish of me!

\* \* \* \* \*

At breakfast, *Imitation*, Book I, Chapter 2 4: *Qui enim Deum ex toto corde amat, nec mortem nec supplicium, nec iudicium nec infernum metuit, quia perfectus amor securum ad Deum accessum facit....*

*Omnia ergo vanitas praeter amare Deum et illi soli servire.*

(Love God with all your heart, and you've nothing to fear, death or punishment, judgment or hell; love, when it reaches its full growth, is an unfailing passport to God's presence....

Everything, you see, is just meaningless, except loving God and giving all our loyalty to Him.)

---

March 5 - Second meditation

### **Recollection**

Recollection; it were better, however, to have a subject with more unity to it. (Recollection) is repose (for the soul), but the soul should do some work.... I will do just that tomorrow.

---

March 5 - Third meditation

### **Goodness of this divine center**

What I did was more in the nature of a review. However, what impressed me deeply in this meditation is the thought that this center, for its being hidden, invisible and wholly interior, is nevertheless most real, very much alive and most enriching. Jesus draws the soul spiritually to Himself in the altogether spiritualized state of His divine Sacrament.

Another thought which impressed me still more is the realization that the sustenance of this center is, for me, the *Egredere* (Go from your country - Gen. 12, 1) of Abraham, the stripping of self, the forsaking of exterior things, the fusion of self in Jesus; that this life of self-denial is more agreeable to His Heart, gives greater honor to His Father, is the homage for which His love craves the most.

*Egredere, veni* (Go from your country ... come - Gen. 12, 1); *Ducam dilectam in solitudinem et ibi loquar ad cor ejus* (I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her - Hosea 2, 14). For it is a preferential love, the gift of self, the (divine) union at work. The roots work underground; they are the life of the tree.

A penetrating insight into this truth, *Regnum Dei intra vos est* (The kingdom of God is in the midst of you - Luke 17, 21), is the great enlightening truth of my retreat.

Assuredly, the life of the Most Blessed Virgin and of St. Joseph in Egypt, at Nazareth, etc., was the most agreeable to God: that silence, that guarded secret, that hidden happiness, that life so beautiful and so unknown. But love thrived on it, for it was in its center.

---

March 6 - First meditation

### **The law of this center**

There is no center other than Jesus, and for me Jesus eucharistic.

In order to compel me (to live in this center), 1 - He makes it the law, the necessity of my life. *Sine me nihil potestis facere* (Apart from Me you can do nothing - John 15, 5). He alone is the



dispenser of His grace. He reserves to Himself the disposal of it so as to oblige man to go to Him, to ask Him for it. But why? To establish and foster union (with Him).

2 - He reserves for Himself His consolation and His peace so that in time of sorrow we may come to Him and in time of conflict may seek refuge in Him; and by this sentiment (of peace) He gives us a tangible proof of His love, of His presence.

3 - He wants to be the only happiness of our hearts. He has not given this center of repose to His angels and His saints; it is ours, *in pace in idipsum* (in peace ... for you alone - Ps. 4, 9).

But what is really amazing is that our Lord is entirely at our service; He is never too busy but always ready to receive us, always cordial.

He draws us constantly to Himself like a magnet; it is a perpetual attraction; the life of love is just that.

Why is that center mysterious? Because if it were visible, tangible, the senses would become engrossed in it, would revel in it, would make of it their paradise - which would defeat the very purpose of that center, that is, union through sanctification, through the virtues, through gift of self; and the soul would have to be satisfied with the scraps that reached her through sight, hearing, touch....

That center is mysterious because that is the nature of love in this world. We love what we picture to ourselves to be good, to be perfect, and we base our judgment on the testimony of the senses and of appearances. We see the soul, her sentiments and her love only through outward signs, through our relating these signs to the soul. We can love one another without ever having seen one another; it is enough to know that we are loved, that we love, that we are good.

This center of Jesus is more than the natural center of man. I have His word for it, I have His very Self, I feel Him in my soul; but this center is still very weak in me. My yearning for this center is infrequent and, even then, of a mixed nature; yet *in me manet et ego in eo* (abides in Me and I in him - John 6-57).

Resolution: Today I must inject new life into my ejaculatory prayers; they are growing spiritless. (At the ring of the hour.)

*Imitation*, Book I, Chapter 21: *Felix qui abjicere potest omne impedimentum. distractionis, et ad unionem se recolligere sanctae compunctionis.*

(Well for you, if you can manage to clear all distractions out of the way, and concentrate on a single point - the exercise of holy sorrow.)

---

March 6 - Second meditation

### Re-creation

I meditated on the need of a re-creation of my whole being. How putrid and foul everything is! I always thought I had something good to give to God, my heart; but I realize I have not. The best there is in me is what should be the worst, my poor body; at least, it is an animal which when tired seeks only to rest. Whereas my imagination is like powder next to a flame; my mind is always in a dither, in a smog of self-love and vanity; my heart is adept at exploiting this vanity; my will loves only what is to its liking or what tends towards naturalism. Everything therefore is foul, putrid.

What can I do except to say, *Cor mundum crea in me Deus et spiritum rectum innova* (Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me - Ps. 51, 10); *Dabo vobis cor carneum* (I will give you a heart of flesh - Ezech. 36, 26) instead of this heart of stone.

That is the well-known law of *qui non odit animam suam et corpus peccati* (If anyone does not hate ... his own life and his body of sin - Luke 14, 26 - not textually quoted). This lesson penetrates with difficulty into my soul; my second nature is so hardened.

\* \* \* \* \*

We would need more exercises of piety, either varied or fixed, and in public. Piety is left too much to itself.

The Lady Adorers in Rome recite out loud an act of reparation at every half-hour; the adorers have special assignments.

The Church prescribes special prayers to be said by the priests before and after Mass. The Holy Father, who is so devout, makes use of a prayer-book. The Chapter of St. Peter's assists in choir at the novenas made before the principal feasts of the Church. Our young men, and even all of us, lack that. We absolutely need a manual of prayers.

My God, give me this science of the saints! St. Liguori can well help me in this.

---

*March 6 - Third meditation*

### **Why is our Lord so little loved in Himself?**

There is a love to which one is bound in conscience; it is the love commanded by divine law and required for salvation.

There is a love of piety; it is the devout life spent in good works and prayers by good and devoted servants.

There is the love of friendship; few live by it, even among the devout, even in the religious life.

This life of friendship is a life of relationships within the soul, so that the soul thrives on interior sentiments, intentions and dispositions rather than on the externals, of life, sees the intentions, appraises the sentiments, surmises the thoughts, and looks on in wonder at the mysteries of our Lord's goodness.

Such was the life of the Most Blessed Virgin and of St. Joseph at Nazareth. Such is the life of every soul that lives not only for Jesus, but by Jesus, according to His hidden life, and that recognizes His hidden action in all things, that sees in everything the proofs of His love; it is like a conflict under the guise of love.

But in order thus to live the hidden life of Jesus, one must be free and calm; one must no longer abide within oneself or in others, but in the enclosed garden, the secret chamber of His divine charity.

But how happy is the soul in this hidden life of Jesus! And how unhappy when she loses it! How she suffers outside that life! Nothing can compare with her aloneness, with her agony: Mary at the tomb; the spouse of the Canticles seeking her Beloved; the panting hart; the child that weeps and calls for his mother. But what a joy when she says: Rabboni, mother, Jesus!

---

*March 7 - First meditation*

### **Religious service**

Our Lord rewarded me generously for my sacrifice in rising in spite of my fatigue.

One thought sustained me during my meditation; it must have come from our Lord, for I had not prepared it.

I must be without glory in the Society. Let other (Societies) glory in their Founder; it is only right, for he was the foundation, the form of their life. God was choosing a saint in order to form other saints through him. The virtues of these saints and the gifts of God glorified their mission; they needed the confidence and the esteem of their followers.

With us, it is our Lord who is the only foundation,<sup>19</sup> the life and grace of the Society; it is the Church that has the mission of adoring and serving Him with a sacred and authentic worship. So that in adoring our Lord, we are merely fulfilling our duty as Christians and children of Holy Church.

It is true that in order the better to serve our Lord Jesus Christ, we do two things demanded by the evangelical counsels: 1 - we live together in a Society; 2 - we live according to the laws of the religious life.

But all that is only to help us arrive more perfectly at a well-ordered service of the adoration, of the worship, of the apostolate of the divine Eucharist. If there is any honor, any glory, any esteem, any affection given to the Society, all that belongs to our Lord as to its one end and means. It is the fruit that must not be shared, the flower that must be offered in its pristine and untainted freshness.

Our Lord has placed me in this wonderful state and, in His divine goodness, keeps me therein. He has made an exception for His Society; He has chosen to be its Head and, again by exception, to be represented by a nobody, and even less than that, by only half a man, full of defects and without any of the qualities of a founder. The great man, the great saint would have made the Society; it would have borne his name; it would have clothed itself with his glory. But then it would not be the Society of Jesus, through Jesus and through His Holy Church.

Our Society is the only one that can say: my founder is Jesus Christ, since it is our Lord who alone has instituted the Eucharist, who is living and working in the Eucharist. I am only a sacristan, and a very poor one at that.

But what is my duty? To be a good religious, to observe all the rules like the others. The rank of Superior is not a state, but a stewardship, a mission from our Lord to be fulfilled close to Him and among the brethren. When I perform its duties, I am Superior in the name of our Lord. Once these duties done, I become a simple religious and I am entitled personally only to the same laws and rights as the other religious, and even to less since I sin much more than the others.

Our Lord wants to have me around Him only as a simple religious, is pleased with my service only as the service of a religious, not as that of a Superior; in the presence of the King, there are no other masters.

Such then is my standing, clearly defined; such are my first duties, neatly marked out; relatively to myself, I am but a religious; relatively to our Lord, but an unworthy religious; relatively to my brethren, but a poor religious entrusted with a mission. I have therefore no longer any reason to be distressed, to torment myself or to worry. I need only be a religious adorer.

\* \* \* \* \*

The truth of that is so evident that I cannot understand my stupidity.

Our Lord is the first Master, the only Master. But He is humiliated, poor, obedient in the divine Eucharist; He keeps nothing for His human nature; He gives back to the Divinity the honor and glory of everything, because in our Lord the human nature is not the end but the divine and human link. As for myself, what am I if not, like John the Baptist, the echo in the desert, the voice that repeats the order of Jesus Christ, the law of the Father, *et adorent eum* (and those who worship Him - John 4, 24), the angel, alas, of so many graces of love and of glory.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Imitation, Book III, Chapter 7: Merita non sunt ex hoc existimanda si quis plures visiones aut consolationes habeat - vel si peritus sit in scripturis aut in altiori ponatur gradu.*

*Sed si vera fuerit humilitate fundatus et divina caritate repletus; si Dei honorem, pure et integre semper quaerat, si seipsum nihil reputet et in veritate despiciat atque ab aliis etiam despici et humiliari magis gaudeat quam honorari.*

(A man is not to be accounted as full of merit for often seeing visions or feeling divine consolation, or being a great biblical scholar or being raised to a higher dignity.

No, a man is meritorious when his spiritual life is based on real humility, when he is full of the love of God; when he is always seeking, purely and wholly, the honor of God; when he thinks of himself as good for nothing, really takes a poor view of himself, and is much happier when others look down on him and humiliate him than when they honor him.)

---

*March 7 - Second meditation*

### **Act of reparation**

I made an act of reparation for having applied myself so little to the religious life, for not having given it first place. I busied myself with a thousand personal questions and studies, which brought me much suffering and wasted my time.

I gave thanks for Plati.<sup>20</sup>

---

*March 7 - Third meditation (In town)*

### **Thanksgiving**

Just a simple visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament, but it was worth a good meditation.

I thanked our Lord for drawing me to Himself by His inner self. Would this grace indicate that I should be more recollected and should prepare for eternity, or is it only a changing of my particular grace? Whatever it is, it is certainly a great grace that I have not merited, since it is ordinarily a reward. It is the Master who keeps us close to Himself, in His company; we become His confidants, His center of love. For now 30 years as a priest I have been gadding about! So much dust and mud in such an active life! So much gone up in smoke! Really if I were to die after that sort of life, I should be afraid! It has been empty of God, even while speaking of God.

But O my God, You will allow me to remain a little at Your feet to listen to You, to contemplate You, to rest and weep there a while. I dare not go to Your hands, or to Your heart; Your feet are enough for me. My place and my love are there.

---

*March 8 - First meditation*

### **Presence of God, a rule of love**

*Deo gratias!*

On seeing myself always so forgetful of God in my conversations, always so full of energy for study, so lacking in devotion in my readings, in a word, on seeing myself always the same, (except for a little more restraint in talking of myself or a little more self-reproach in matters of modesty), I asked myself what was the cause of this lack of self-amendment, of this lack of the presence of God, as also whence is it that I no longer examine myself after each visit or after I come in from anywhere. All that points to some hidden vice.

In my meditation our Lord showed me that my forgetting about Him comes from the same old defect of excessive expansiveness and laxity. Then the natural in me takes over immediately: I find myself with a particular person, taken up with the thought of that person, or of some experience, or of something that stimulates my curiosity, or of some service to render. *Cito enim inquinamur vanitate, et captivamur* (Frivolity is infectious, and makes easy prisoners of us - Imit. Bk. I, Ch. 10).

Then I do not examine myself afterwards because I find it boring. I would like to remain with a blameless conscience, with the assurance that I have been faithful to God and that He is pleased, so that I might not have to humble myself, to ask Him forgiveness and to impose a penance on myself. And so it is that I remain always the same. Whence is that? From the excessive freedom I give my soul to indulge its natural thoughts; and then I am carried away like a straw by the wind.

What then should I do? The presence of God! *Coram Deo cum Christo loquimur* (In the sight of God we speak in Christ - II Cor. 2, 17), as the Apostles said and did. *Attende tibi* (Take heed to yourself - I Tim. 4, 16), he said to Timothy. *Quid feci ad honorem Dei* (What have I done for the glory of God).

That is what I should do and follow. But how can I get to think about God during my work, during visits, in the world?

By acquiring the sacred habit of it in my private life, by greeting and adoring our Lord at the sound of the clock, by offering to Him what I am actually doing, by giving myself to Him, by praising Him, by renewing the resolution I took on rising, the gift of self.

By seeking self-betterment not in purity, not in the love of complacency, but in the humble confession of my wretchedness and of my sins, and, for the latter, the immediate imposition of an interior penance; by schooling myself in patience and confidence. That is all there is to be done.

That is the root which must nourish the tree; that is real love of God. Today therefore at the ring of the hour, or even at the quarter-hour, I will drop to my knees if alone, and I will make the three following acts: adore, offer, thank and, if I have already failed, beg forgiveness.

Another great obstacle to the grace of devotion (which, instead of studies, learning and honored devotedness, should be the soul, the light, the strength of my life) is that I work and study in view of the apostolate or rather, without my suspecting it, for the furtherance of vanity or of an intemperate zeal. That explains my search for what is beautiful, *secreta mea scire volunt* (some people ... would have my secrets - Imit. Bk. III, Ch. 4), for what is great, and even for what is sublime.

It is true that I grow enthusiastic for what is beautiful in the truth and greatness of God, in the goodness of His love and the glory of His service. But all that can be merely natural and very imperfect. It is only the exterior (of my service) and not the very marrow of the soul surrendering herself, not the principle of virtue immolating and denying itself; for in final analysis, there must be a gift of self, or something of self. As for me, that means the effusion of my being in our Lord, *egredere*, (Go from your country - Gen. 12, 1), but as in the Incarnation, *exinanivit* (He emptied Himself - Phil. 2, 7).

\* \* \* \* \*

*Imitation, Book II, Chapter 9: Sic singula considera ex summo bono manantia; et ideo ad me tanquam ad suam originem cuncta sunt reducenda.*

*Nihil ergo tibi de bono adscribere debes, nec alicui homini virtutem attribuas sed totum da Deo sine quo nihil habet homo.*

*Ego totum dedi ego totum rehabere volo. - Yes.*

(Look upon each particular thing as flowing forth from the supreme good; that is the reason why it is to Me, as to their origin, that all things must be brought back.

So, then, don't go writing good deeds down on your own account and don't attribute goodness to any man; give it all to God, without whom man has nothing.

I have given you all, and I want to have it all back. – Yes.)

---

*March 8 - Second and Third meditation (not recorded)*

---

*March 9 - First meditation*

### **Poverty of our Lord - religious poverty**

I meditated on *effective* poverty. I saw that *affective* poverty means very little without the reality of poverty. If we love poverty when we lack nothing and will lack nothing, when we have it good and very good - such as we would not enjoy if we had to earn a living - when we are honored, where are the glory and the merit of holy poverty?

I saw very clearly that I am not poor, that I do not even seek to practice poverty in anything, that I have neither the love nor the spirit of it; that as I do not set an example, I do not even know how to have it practiced by the brethren; that religious poverty is much in sufferance in Paris and, generally, in the houses where I am, because I do not communicate either the grace or the spirit of it.

This lack of poverty, or rather, this religious luxury, these bogus ideas that what is beautiful is better, lasts longer, is better suited to our kind of life, all that is the reasoning of vanity and of love of comfort. We belong less to the world than the missionaries. We do not have to go into the world.

I notice that here all the religious are neatly dressed, but with plain and even coarse cloth and shoes - even the Jesuits. Their cells have only what is strictly necessary.

I saw at St. Anastasia the coarse mantle of St. Joseph the same kind of cloth as our Lord's at Argenteuil.

Our Lord lived in poverty, loved the trappings of poverty as being natural to His, condition and gave them preference when it was a matter of choice.

And why?

The better to glorify His Father;

To make reparation for the abuses and excesses of man, for man's pride and inordinate love of the good things of this world;

To show us what is more perfect;

To make known to us the condition of His discipleship;

Because poverty is the first law of the religious life;

Because it is a sacred vow that I have made;

Because it is the state, the great virtue of the Most Blessed Virgin, my Mother;

Because it is my original condition.

I therefore play false to my parents, to my grace, to my promises, to the Society, to the divine Eucharist, if I am not poor effectively as well as affectively.

Effective poverty is to the virtue of poverty what humiliation is to humility. *Via, sine via non itur, sine ejus veritate non videtur, sine ejus vita non vivitur* (Without a way, a road, there can be no going along it; without His truth, no object of vision; without His life no living - Imit. Bk. III, Ch. 56).

The application is easy to make. *Elige semper minus quam plus habere* (Always choose to have less rather than more - Imit. Bk. III, Ch. 23). *Elige tibi semper quod grossius, simplicius et*

*communius. Vigila ne laedant, ordina ne excedant. Nihil aliud ego sum quam Dei et suorum dispensator, utinam fidelis!* (Ever choose for yourself the things that are coarse, simple and common. Be careful lest they be harmful to others; so ordain them as not to let them get out of hand. I am nothing other than the servant of God and of His servants... and would that I were faithful! - source unknown).

\* \* \* \* \*

*Imitation, Book III, Chapter 37: Sta sine, electione et onmi proprietate et lucraberis semper.*

*Nam et adjicientur tibi amplior gratia statim ut te resignaveris, nec resumpseris.*

*In omnibus te nudatum invenire volo.*

*Da totum pro toto.*

*Nudus nudum Jesum sequi, tibi mori, et mihi aeternaliter vivere.... Hoc ora, hoc desidera.*

(Have no choice of your own, no personal preference; you will be the winner every time.

The moment you surrender yourself to Me, never to take the gift back, a greater store of grace will be added to what you already have.

It is My wish that in all things you should be stripped naked of self.

Give all for all.

This is what you must... pray for, long for: naked to follow the naked Jesus; to die to yourself, and be for all eternity alive in Me.)

---

*March 9 - Second meditation (not recorded)*

---

*March 9 - Third meditation*

### **Tumult**

O God! What a storm assailed me for an hour! What thoughts crossed my imagination! My mind was troubled and harsh; my will had almost reached the boiling point. My heart, however, remained without rancor, without thoughts of revenge or rather of strong measures against what I thought contrary to the spirit of submission + + + and against an erroneous principle in this dear confrere<sup>21</sup> who cannot see beyond his old-fashioned ideas.

I ended by casting myself at the feet of our Lord and praying as He did in the Garden of Olives: *Transeat a me calix iste* (Let this cup pass from Me - Matt. 26, 39). I repeated *Jesus mitis et humilis corde, fac cor meum* (Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart). I promised to suffer this in silence. I saw our Lord calm and kind in the midst of those who, were to cause Him so much pain; I saw His love excusing Peter, loving them all while foretelling their desertion, their scandal - loving even Judas.

I saw that all this zeal of mine for authority, for correction, is a zeal *à la* Boanerges, a natural zeal, a zeal that is hurt. As long as I am in that state, I am not bound to take action; it is better to suffer, it is my duty to do so. Why make myself sick over a bit of good which is not sure, about a protest which would only cause trouble.

I also saw one of my weak points: allowing myself to be caught off guard by the reports of a few, acting on the spur of the moment and, as a result, becoming a grouchy leader instead of a father, a physician, a wise man of God.

Whence is this? From the fact they capitalize on a weakness of mine: the success of the Society, its wrongs, its lack of order, an urge to outdo others, and what not? That touches my self-love to the quick; there's the answer.

And so, in such cases, I judge of things by their opposites and not with the wisdom that knows how to wait, that takes into consideration the one who speaks and his impression, his passion perhaps, that weighs the circumstances in his favor or the chances of excusing him, such as human pettiness, a temptation, or ignorance, and perhaps a different point of view; in short, I must manage to keep silent, to suspend judgment until I get a clear understanding of the matter in God, in the clear light of truth, in the calm of charity and within the sacredness of the law.

To do that, I must begin by controlling my feelings, conquering self, remaining silent, praying – much praying; indeed, for some time now, I have grown impatient, impressionable and almost bad-tempered, over certain abuses and ways of acting.

\* \* \* \* \*

Briefly: in all my relations with my neighbor, examine: 1 - the reason behind the words of the one who accuses or denounces; 2 - the intention of the one accused of having done this or that; 3 - the state of my soul, whether I see things from God's viewpoint. - Then all will be well.

*March 10 - First meditation*

### **Reasons for holy poverty**

Poverty does not command esteem or love for its own sake, since it is a privation, a punishment.

It has been ennobled in our Lord Jesus Christ, who espoused it, made of it His state and form of life, the foundation of evangelical perfection, His first Beatitude, His divine heiress.

It is holy because it is the major virtue of our Lord, that which restores the glory of God lost through original sin and our personal sins. It produces the virtue of penance through the privations of one's state. It is the natural occasion for the capital virtue of patience, which is the perfection of Christian endeavor. It is the soul and sustenance of humility, the natural expression of humility. It presupposes meekness and the strength of character needed to suffer much and over a long period; for sheer suffering without consolation, without at least sympathetic help, constitutes its ordinary state.

As a positive virtue, it is meek; we give nothing to an angry beggar. It is honest; it respects everybody, especially generous benefactors. It is grateful; that is its power. It prays; that is its life. It is a source of glory to God. It thanks His holy will in all things. It is satisfied with the state in which God has placed it. Like Job, it makes use of everything that is part of that state as a homage to God. It adores and loves God above all things; its wealth is His holy will. It abandons itself like a child to His paternal Providence of mercy, of goodness and, at times, of justice. It is God's poor creature. *Jacta super Dominum curam tuam* (Cast your burden on the Lord - Ps. 55, 23).

Poverty is therefore very beautiful in the eyes of God when it is Christian; it is enrapturing when it is religious, spontaneous. It is true sovereign love through the gift of everything, through surrender of self in everything; pleasure lost man, poverty rehabilitates and beatifies him.

How wonderful is the poverty of Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament, deprived as it is therein of all glory, of every natural gift, of all liberty! He depends on the charity of man, is at his mercy; that is true love.

What has impressed me the most in this meditation is the realization of the goodness, the prodigality of this divine Providence towards me and the Society. How wrong I am not to be its



child, totally committed to it in minor trials, in the choice of what is for my personal use, in my travels, and even in every simple religious act.

And how I have sinned against this beautiful virtue! How little worthy I have been of the company of our Lord! Everything that is personal is opposed to this royal virtue.

I shall love St. Francis still more, its divine lover, its very powerful apostle.

\* \* \* \* \*

I returned to last night's resolution: no flattery or yielding for the sake of peace or of esteem, but act with calm according to the truth as personally known to me and according to the obligation of justice and charity.

*Imitation*, Book I, Chapter 7: *Jugis pax cum humili, in corde autem, superbi zelus et indignatio frequens.*

(To be humble is to enjoy undisturbed peace of mind, while the proud heart is swept by gusts of envy and resentment.)

This number came to me after my thanksgiving. I saw that my meekness was characterized by vanity; that my excitability, energy, threats, and strong measures all stemmed from the same source of vanity; this grace of light surely comes from God.

*Deo gratias!* That is the camp, the enemy, the battleground of God.

*March 10* - Second meditation

### *Virtue*

I thanked our Lord for this storm which every now and then stirs up the waves. I had to recite the *Miserere* on my knees with arms in the form of the cross. What a turmoil! This cannot come from the spirit of our Lord; it would be for me the cause of many sins if God did not hold me in check, and for the Society the cause of much trouble perhaps.

How hurt I have been, and grieved and stung by his manner, by his principles, by his contrariness! But all that does not justify a state of irritation, a disposition to humiliate him; that would be too personal. Besides, he acts in good faith and thinks he is doing the right thing. He is a man who clings to what he thinks is best and who is afraid to surrender at discretion. God does not make him see the light; he is not responsible.

I am wrong therefore in wanting to be too much the Superior with him. What I must do is to remain silent and await the moments of divine Providence; to overlook his problem and limit myself to silence, patience, meekness, charity, and to obtain by prayer what I must not obtain by the sword. But I must not tell anyone of my little trial; I would then be plucking the petals of the flower.

Really I would never have thought I had such a bad temper. I have grown impatient, garrulous and indiscreet in my speech and in my conversation. I could almost say that this is actually my chief defect. *Cor diversis cogitationibus fatigatum optamus relevare* (We want ail escape from the tedious whirligig of our thoughts), says the *Imitation* (Bk. I, Ch. 10).

What shall I do? I am well aware that nature cannot correct its evil dispositions, that I need the grace of God. I must then do a lot of praying; I have done a little more of that this morning.

I feel that since I am not strong enough, I should avoid the occasions or keep on the defensive by shunning conflict or remaining silent; that I should proceed in peace of mind and with the grace of God.

That is where the decisive battle must be fought; holy recollection and virtue will gain by it.

There is a certain amount of reason at the bottom of it all, and that is what has deceived me or led me to be especially severe interiorly. Then the whole trouble starts all over again: my

imagination exaggerates, the devil stirs things up and misguided zeal goads me on. Alas! When the house is in flames, it is no time to add fuel to the fire, but to water it down and isolate it.

I must refrain absolutely from arguing within myself. Instead I must pray and make allowances; I must accuse myself and humble myself before God.

Ah! If I had had greater perseverance in the practice of the Rule, more community life, more prayer, I would not have endangered my soul, my peace of mind, the Society.

I am the one who is then at fault, and not the others; I must above all deal first with God and with myself.

---

*March 10 - Third meditation (not recorded)*

---

*March 11 - First meditation*

### **The Most Blessed Virgin**

Today, Saturday, I meditated on the Most Blessed Virgin.

I thanked our Lord for having given us a Mother so pure, so holy, so great; for having made her His divine Mother in order that as her Son He might give her to us with her merits and her graces.

What love and gratitude I owe to this good Mother! So many good things have come to me through her! So many graces at the “Laus”! I owe her my safekeeping, my vocation and above all the grace of the Most, Blessed Sacrament. She gave me to her Son as His servant, as her tenderly loved child. And so many graces since 1856: graces of perseverance in spite of heartbreaks and the like; grace of unity in spite of influences to the contrary, for I was not enough of a centralizing force through my own fault, through my lack of outward appearance; personal grace against temptations; then all the graces granted to the Society as such.

But what touches me most deeply and dismays me is that I have responded so little to so much goodness, love and guidance of the Most Blessed Virgin; that I have been so little of a credit to her choice; that I have lost some of the tenderness and even of the practice of my devotion to her; that I have done little to have her honored.

What shall I do? What she did at the service of Jesus and for His glory.

She thought the thoughts of Jesus. She lived in a union of virtue and of work with Him; she busied herself interiorly only with Jesus or for Jesus or in Jesus. And then she was so gentle, so humble, so much at the service of everybody. She was aware of what Jesus was to suffer; she knew who were His enemies, His executioners, and yet she never let on that she knew; she was kind even to Judas. Hers was the charity of her divine Son.

I prayed this good Mother for the spirit of meekness, her meekness, her calm, her patient prudence and wisdom; I prayed to be delivered of this temptation. I took the resolution to think no more of my troubles or of their causes, to excuse him, to exonerate him, to praise his virtues, to act in all simplicity and brotherly fashion, and to confess my wretchedness before God. I am the one that is sick and in need of remedies, the one that is feverish and in need of pacifying, the one that is high-strung. A ruffled self-love is at the bottom of all this. Moreover, he is only an occasion; the badness in me would find another reason for grievance.

God be praised and Mary be thanked for having shown me that abscess and, I hope, for having lanced it.

*Imitation, Book IV, Chapter 2: Laetare anima mea et gratias age pro tam nobili munere et solatio singulari in hac lacrymarum valle tibi relicto.*

(Be glad, my soul; thank God for leaving behind for you in this vale of tears so precious a gift as this is, so matchless a comfort.)

And secondly, Book III, Chapter 5: *Tu es gloria mea et exultatio cordis mei. Tu spes mea et refugium meum in die tribulationis meae.*

(You are my glory, the comfort of my heart; my stronghold and my refuge in my hour of peril.)

It is our Lord who brings a little consolation to my weakness and lays a flower on my cross, a little oil on this running abscess; may the pus ooze out!

---

March 11 - Second meditation

### Submission

This morning's *laetare* had its explanation this noon at my second meditation. I saw that there is a certain amount of power in adopting a negative attitude with sacrifice + +, even in remaining silent, in shunning occasions and personal feeling; but all that does not mean victory. The conflict remains along with the reason for it and will often become still more terrible because of the repression of one's strong feelings; one unwary, prayerless moment, and the flames will flare up again like powder. Have I not experienced it? There is an old leaven in me, an old self-love that was hurt and had reason to be hurt; that is what strengthens and feeds it.

I therefore need a motive that triumphs over my reason and my heart.

In His merciful goodness our Lord has deigned to give me such a motive. Oh! A thousand praises and thanks! Our Lord wants this, this sort of thing, this contradiction, these negative protests, this systematic estrangement - which gives only as much as it receives, which remains on its guard or on the defensive, which fares well as long as minds are in agreement or in sympathy with one another.

Our Lord knows all that and wills it for my good, for my greater good. He does not demand of me an act of exterior submission, a deference, a humble acceptance; no, I should not do it for the sake of peace or of fraternal friendship; that would be weakness on my part; I would be shunning: sacrifice and mistaking the divine purpose of the will of God.

This is the divine purpose: that I should seek and have God alone for witness, judge and comforter, and not be concerned with harmonious relations on a natural level; that I should see in it a lesson, a correction, an alerting from God, for I could be lulled to sleep and grow neglectful of my duties; that I should seek the reason for this personal contrariety and make of it the noble and generous object of my sacrifice to God.

Briefly, 1 - God wills this state of + for my good because I am light-headed and cowardly.

2 - I should seek God's special reason for all this, if He deigns to reveal it to me by His grace, in order that I may immediately calm down my mind or my excitement.

3 - I should by all means excuse the person involved, and cut short any form of discussion while under emotion or while taking action, so that I may act only according to, the spirit of God.

\* \* \* \* \*

Another thought brought me much joy: that for me, in final analysis, it all comes to this: *Qui in me manet et ego in eo hic fert fructum multum* (He who abides in Me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit - John 15, 5); that is, consult our Lord in all things, act under the direction of His spirit, remain always at the disposal and wishes of His holy will, be His truly personal servant.

So that our Lord becomes my center: *In ipso vivimus, movemur et sumus* (In Him we live and move and have our being - Acts 17, 28). What is essential is to remain in Him, to foster union

unceasingly, now by the positive practice of the virtues, now by sacrifice, often by the simple recollection of love; that is repose in action.

I was telling myself: Have I then lost much time? No, for I had first to inject new life into sentiment benumbed by paralysis; I had to clean up the whole mess, empty the house, sweep it, adorn it with a few flowers, warm it up with devotion, in a word, make it fit to dwell in. Therefore the way I followed was the right one. I am standing at the door; I must enter in, give myself and abide in Jesus.

---

*March 11 - Third meditation*

### **Jesus the Master**

Our Lord changed the subject of my meditation<sup>22</sup>. The thought of the interior life of Jesus, dwelt upon at noon, came back to me still more definite, and so I made of it the subject of my mental prayer.

In order to live in our Lord, I must look on Him as Master, Model, and God of my heart.

As Master, He is the law, the rule of my judgment and of truth.

As Model, He is my way of life, the form of my virtues.

As God of my heart, He formulates its intention and is its end.

\* \* \* \* \*

Coming back on the + (cross) accepted and willed in the holy will of God, I saw that I had been wrong on one point, that is, refusing completely to weigh the good and the true when I thought it prejudicial to authority to admit it or seem to be influenced. I was in the wrong. I owed this homage to truth, without flattery as without weakness. Justice and equity protest; I will honor the rights of both.

I dwelt principally on our Lord as Master, because that is the all-important point for me - so that I may avoid the naturalistic way of living which takes me by surprise at every moment.

How can I get to think with Jesus? How can I see Him in action in order to imitate Him? How can His love be always sufficiently present for me to make of Him in all things the God of my heart?

My God, how quickly I become natural, light-headed, fastidious and worldly! I should despair were I not aware it is by the negative approach, that is, by patience, humility and the humiliation of sin, that we build up confidence and positive virtue.

Still another thought struck me most forcefully, a thought I perhaps never had before, or at least never deeply felt or understood: the soul's interior life in our Lord or in God, occupied with praising Him, with blessing Him, with loving Him in Himself, with basing the practice of the virtues on God in the exercise of contemplation - like the angels and saints in heaven who are not always wrapped up in their own happiness but much more in the glory, the perfections and the happiness of God in Himself.

And so, my soul, unless you live in our Lord, you cannot live that life of praise and of contemplation, which attaches the soul to God much more than the exterior or interior virtues in and for oneself.

That is what I must aspire to, for it is the true life in our Lord. Life outside our Lord is like that of a man who is hired to do one thing only and, after finishing it, does nothing else, takes it easy and waits for further orders. A son attends to everything and when he has no work to do, he finds his delights in the love of his parents and in the pleasure of their company.

### Interior meekness of our Lord

I meditated on the meekness of our Lord as the expression of His true character, of His spirit and of His life.

*Discite a me quia mitis sum* (Learn from Me, for I am gentle (meek) - Matt. 11, 29). He did not say, *Discite a me quia pauper, mortificatus, devotus, pius, sapiens, silens* (Learn from Me, for I am poor, mortified, devout, pious, wise, silent); nothing of all that, but *mitis*, gentle (meek), because fallen man is by nature irascible, full of hatred, jealous, easily offended, vengeful, homicidal in his heart, wild in his look, poisonous in his tongue, violent in his members. Anger is natural to him, because by nature he is proud, ambitious, sensual; because he is unhappy and humiliated over his state. He is an embittered soul, as we say of a man who has suffered from others.

1 - Our Lord was meek of heart. He loved His neighbor; He wanted what was good for him and wished him well; he thought only of the good He could do him; He judged His neighbor according to His mercy only and not His justice, for the hour of justice had not yet come. *Venit filius hominis quaerere et salvum facere quod perierat* (For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost - Luke 19, 10). *Qui male habent egent medico* (They who are sick need a physician - Luke 5, 31).

He was like a tender mother. Jesus Christ was the Good Samaritan. Every feeble child, sinner or saint, all had a place of tenderness in His heart. *Venite ad me omnes qui laboratis* (Come to Me all who labor - Matt. 11, 28).

In the heart of Jesus, therefore, there was no indignation against those who despised Him, who did Him injury, who wished Him evil, who actually did Him evil, who would do Him evil. He knew them all; He had only compassion and sorrow over their misfortune. *Et videns civitatem flevit super illam* (And when He... saw the city, He wept over it - Luke 19, 41).

But how could our Lord be meek towards His evil and malicious enemies, towards Judas?

He was meek by nature, *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God); He was meek out of virtue because it glorified His Father.

He was meek because His Father had given Him the mission to be so; meekness was to be characteristic of the Savior so that He might attract sinners, encourage them to come to Him, and win them over to Himself, to His law.

Meekness was to be the characteristic virtue of His followers because it is the fruit of love.

I stand in great need of this meekness of heart. I am without it, and I have only a semblance of it; indeed I often have thoughts and judgments contrary to it. Why is that? Because for some time I have not sufficiently fought off painful memories; because I allow my fancy to indulge in imaginary struggles, or conflicts, or actions of courage and forcefulness - somewhat like the fever-stricken who, once the fever has left them, can no longer walk; because I judge too much of things and of persons in connection with the success of the Society, or from the point of view of authority or of the exterior virtues of obedience, humility and discipline.

I ought to judge like our Lord, or according to His holiness or His mercy, or with the greater glory of God in mind. Then charity would be for me *jugis pax in corde humili* (undisturbed peace of mind in a humble heart - Imit. Bk. I, Ch. 7); *stat in Deo* (its stand is in God).

2 - Jesus is meek of mind. He sees only God His Father in the neighbor. He wants to look on man only as a creature of God. He is like a father who loves his child, deplores his waywardness, seeks him out to bring him back, binds his wounds no matter what the cause of them, and wants to restore the life of God to him. His mind is thus doing the duty of a father towards his son by taking effective means to relieve the misfortunes of his wretched child. It is the good of that child he is concerned about and works for, and this not in a spirit of anger, indignation or vengeance. - David,

pleading for the life of Absalom and shedding bitter tears over his death. - The Most Blessed Virgin, Mother of Sorrows; her compassion for Jesus and for sinners.

True charity finds nourishment for mind and heart in goodness, not in what is contrary to it. It never separates man from his supernatural state, either actual or to come, does not isolate him from God, for that would make of him an enemy.

*Caritas patiens est, benigna est; caritas non aemulatur, non agit perperam, non inflatur, non est ambitiosa, non quaerit quae sua sunt, non irritatur, non cogitat malum, non gaudet super iniquitate, congaudet autem veritati; omnia suffert, omnia credit, omnia sperat, omnia sustinet.... Caritas nunquam excidit.*

(Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.... Love never ends - I Cor. 13, 4-8).

\* \* \* \* \*

What I was saying about my heart, I must also and especially say about my mind and my imagination, which harass me during my meditations with the storms they suddenly stir up within me - veritable furies, a rebellious mob that can as well as not put everything to fire and sword.

I am at fault. I fail to trim this burning wick at the start. A little more promptness with a look towards God, and the storm would be lulled.

*Imitation, Book III, Chapter 28: Est non parva prudentia sitere in tempore malo, et introrsus ad me converti nec humano iudicio disturbari.*

*Non sit pax tua in ore hominum; sive enim bene, sive male interpretati fuerint non es ideo alter homo! Ubi est vera pax et vera gloria? Nonne in me?*

*Et qui non appetit hominibus placere nec timet displicere, multa perfruetur pace.*

*Ex inordinato amore et vano timore, oritur omnis inquietudo cordis et distractio sensuum.*

(It is a wise course, when trouble comes, to say nothing, and to turn inwardly to Me, refusing to be upset by what men think about you.

You must not let your peace of mind depend on what people say about you. The construction they put on your actions may be correct or false; that doesn't make a different man of you. Where will you find true peace, real glory? It is in Me, as you well know.

The man who is neither bent upon pleasing his fellows nor afraid of offending them will enjoy great peace.

It is from affections allowed to run wild and from baseless fears that all disquiet of heart arises, all distraction of the feelings.)

\* \* \* \* \*

How good the Master has been! This is really the complement to yesterday's grace and this morning's.

Place your hopes in God, O my soul! You are now working on the fundamental virtues.

---

March 12 - Second meditation (not recorded)

---

### **Exterior meekness of our Lord**

Jesus practiced meekness in all His exterior life. That meekness was like a sweet fragrance of His charity and holiness.

It regulated all the movements of His body. There was no abruptness to the gestures of His arms and hands; everything was calm. Gestures express one's thoughts and feelings.

His walk was calm, neither hasty nor impulsive, because wisdom regulated all His movements.

His body, His bearing, the condition of His garments spoke of order, calm and peace. It was the reign of gentle modesty or of divine modesty; for modesty is the meekness of the body as it is its glory.

He held His head in an unpretentious sort of way, not proud, not haughty or domineering, nor too crestfallen and timid; His was the bearing of a humble and simple modesty.

His eyes expressed no sentiment of anger or of indignation. For those in authority, He had a look of respect; for His Mother and, St. Joseph at Nazareth, a look of love; for His disciples, a look of kindness; for sinners, a look of tender compassion; and for His enemies, a look of tender forgiveness.

His mouth was the throne of meekness; He spoke with modesty and gentle gravity.

Our Savior spoke little; no buffoonery, no foolish, curious or improper talk ever crossed His lips; all His words were, like His thoughts, the fruit of wisdom; they were simple, always proper everyday words, adapted to His listeners, even the simplest among them.

In His preaching He did not indulge in personalities; He knocked only at professional corruption, at the vices and bad examples of a caste; He did not reveal the hidden crimes, the secret defects.

He did not shun those who hated Him, nor did He leave any duty undone or any gospel truth unsaid because of fear, to avoid being contradicted or to please a person of importance.

He reprimanded no one hastily, made no prophecy to individuals ahead of time as He might have to Peter, to Judas, to His executioners whom He knew. He lived among them, with equal kindness, simplicity and meekness. The time to act had not yet come, the order from heaven had not yet been given, and so the future was as though it did not exist.

Our Lord's patience with all the crowds that pressed upon Him was admirable. Never impatient but delightfully calm in the midst of all the restlessness, the requests, and the demands of an earthly-minded people.

But still more wonderful were the calmness, meekness and kindness of the life our Lord lived with His disciples, who were uncouth, unintelligent, touchy, vain over their Master, selfish. Our Lord loved them all equally; no confiding of a secret to this one, no preference shown for that other; no special love for any. His was the sweetness of honey, the same through and through, always even and unvaried in His manner.

For that reason, children loved Jesus; He was so good. The shy woman from the Orient dared speak to Him; He was so kind. The sinner dared address Him; He was so sympathetic. The sick told Him their ailments; He was so compassionate.

Learn of Me for I am meek. He is the Lion of Juda with the honeycomb in His mouth. He is the mysterious rock of the desert flowing with milk and honey. He is the true manna of heaven, sweet and nourishing. Such was the everyday meekness of Jesus in His dealings with others.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Examen.* If I compare my life with the meekness of Jesus, alas, how shameful and reproachful!

For some time my self-love has been like the edge of a sword, especially with a few persons whose life, character and actions have wounded my nasty self-love. Indeed these bursts of impatience, these reprimands and these cutting airs spring from an undercurrent of cowardice and sloth, which is eager to be rid or delivered of an obstacle, a sacrifice or a troublesome situation; and so I bring it to a quick conclusion or make short shrift of it.

Really, such an attitude, such airs, such words are ridiculous. I hope they will have served only to excite the pity of the good Master; I am just being childish or stupid.

I have observed that meekness with the great, or with those that can serve my vanity or one of the three concupiscences, is a weakness, a fawning, a cowardice, and that being forceful with the weak is a cruelty and humiliating them is often vengeance in disguise. O God! My Savior! *Quid est homo?* (What is man?) *Cinis* (Ashes). That is not strong enough, neither is *cadaver* (a corpse); but a Satan broken loose, yes!

---

*March 13 + (cross)*

*Imitation, Book III, Chapter 30: Fili ego dominus confortans in die tribulationis.*

*Venias ad me cum tibi non fuerit bene.*

*Hoc est quod maxime consolationem impedit caelestem, quia tardius te convertis ad orationem.*

*Nam antequam me intente roges, multa interim solacia quaeris, et recreas te in externis.*

(My son, I am the Lord; no strength like His in the hour of distress.

When things are not going well with you, come to Me.

The chief hindrance to your receiving heavenly comfort is your slowness in turning to prayer.

You do not come to Me straightway and pray to me earnestly, but first you go seeking other things to comfort you, trying to find diversion in created things.)

\* \* \* \* \*

Thank you, O my God; it is all so true!

---

*March 13 - First meditation*

### **Meekness of the silence of Jesus**

The greatest triumph of the meekness of Jesus lies in His virtue of silence.

1 - Silence of Jesus as a state for 30 years. So many vices to correct! So many people going astray! So many sins against divine worship among the Levites, among the leaders of the nation! But our Lord reproved no one, and did not expose their defects. He was content to pray, to do penance, to beg forgiveness for evil and not to connive with it. The time of His mission had not yet come; it was that of His hidden life.

What beautiful things our Lord could have said and taught in order to comfort others! He did not say them. Instead He listened to others; He attended the instructions of the Synagogue, of the Scribes, of the Doctors of the Law like a simple Israelite, like a member of the lower class. He could have reproved and corrected them, but He did not do so; the time had not yet come. *Nonne fabri filius?* (Is not this the carpenter's son? - Matt. 13, 55). *Quomodo hic litteras scit cum non didicerit?* (How is it this man has learning, when He has never studied? - John 7, 15). How sublime a silence!

The Word of the Father, increate Wisdom, who has created speech and is the very source of truth, remained silent, honored His Father by His meek and humble silence. He has reason to say,



*Discite a me quia, mitis sum et humilis corde* (Learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart - Matt. 11, 29). What a condemnation of my life!

I talk like a fool; I often say things I know nothing about; I am categorical on doubtful issues; I assert and, alas, impose my views! I say what I should not say; I reveal what elementary humility ought not to mention; I no longer know how to talk since I no longer know how to remain silent. And so our Lord treats me like a babbler, like an impudent fellow. He lets me do all the talking, and that to my embarrassment.

2 - Our Lord's silence was patient, beautifully so. He listened to the end to those who talked to Him, and that without interrupting them. He answered them directly Himself, reproved and corrected them with kindness, without humiliating them or hurting their feelings, as a good master would do with his pupil, with his own child.

He listened to unpleasant, irrelevant things, and always drew therefrom the occasion to instruct, to correct and to do some good.

Examen. On this matter I have much to reproach myself.

My eagerness to answer what I already, or only half, understand and my sharpness in cutting matters short, whenever I can, betray my annoyance at having to listen to what bores or offends me. That is not the spirit of our Lord, not even the spirit of a well-bred man, nor even of an honest pagan.

There are many occasions in life when patience, humility and meekness become the virtue of the moment and must be the only fruit of time supposedly wasted, of a boring and indiscreet conversation. If I was to offend God or do Him so little honor, I would have done better to stay away.

But how can I acquire this patience of silence? By saying to myself: God wills it, His glory demands it; it is I who am on the field of battle and not my neighbor.

3 - Silent suffering of Jesus. Here my heart begins to feel more guilty and more deeply moved.

Jesus remained silent before the incredulity of several disciples, before the wicked and ungrateful heart of Judas whose every thought and scheming He saw. Jesus controlled Himself, was calm and kind with everyone as if He was aware of nothing. He abided by the rule of normal relationships and respected the hidden secret.

Oh! What a lesson against rash judgments, suspicions and secret antipathies! The law of charity, of common duty and of public life prevailed even over our Lord's knowledge of the contrary because it was the law of Providence, of order, of the state of things, of truth as it appeared exteriorly.

Before the Judiciary, Jesus declared simply the reality of His mission and of His divinity. Before the High Priest, He declared that He was the Son of God and, before the Roman Governor, that He was a king. Before the curious and lustful Herod, He remained silent. He kept the silence of a condemned man when subjected to the sacrilegious and mock merry-making of the pontifical cohort and the pretorian guard. He suffered, without complaining, the stripes of the scourging and the insults of the *Ecce homo* (Behold the man).

He did not appeal the reading of His iniquitous condemnation. He took up His Cross lovingly and walked to Calvary in the midst of curses, of rough treatment, of insults of all kinds from everybody.

Then when men had exhausted their malice, when the executioners had finished their work and raised Him up on the Cross, His only words were, *Pater ignosce illis, non enim sciunt quid faciunt* (Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do - Luke 23, 34). *Sicut agnus coram tondente se obmutuit* (Like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb - Is. 53, 7). *Sicut ovis ad occisionem ducetur* (Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter - Is. 53, 7).

O God! Aware of this, *Obstupescite caeli super hoc* (Be appalled, O heavens, at this - Jer. 2, 12). A God-Savior, the all-powerful, insulted, scorned, crucified, had only one answer for evil, craven, ungrateful man, an answer of meekness and forgiveness. *Quid superbit terra et cinis?* (How can he who is dust and ashes be proud? - Sirach 10, 9).

\* \* \* \* \*

At Holy Communion, I renewed my gift of self, my three vows, with the, firm resolution to honor poverty in my dress and in my personal life; chastity by modesty of the eyes; obedience by making of my religious duties at home and of my duties as Superior the first object of that obedience and not, as I have done all too much, by neglecting home duties for those outside. I should curtail these outside activities.

---

*March 13* - Second meditation

### **Means of that virtue (meekness)**

It is easy to see the beauty, the good, and even the necessity of a virtue, especially of the virtue of meekness. But not to go beyond that is to act like a sick man who knows the right remedy but does not take it; like the traveler who is content to look at the road ahead of him.

How can I acquire our Lord's virtue of meekness? The capital answer is: by loving our Lord; love makes for identity of life. But how does love operate?

1 - We must start by putting out the raging fires of the contrary vices, that is, anger, impatience, etc., by warring against self-love which is subjected to the law or temptation of the three concupiscences. We flare up merely because we are pulled away from something we prefer to what is coming up.

2 - We must succeed in preferring what comes up to what we are doing. We shall then gladly leave everything; for we go with joy to what is better, greater, or more agreeable; that is sound logic.

But how bring about this transformation? Through the love of the current holy will of God, which prefers this or that for His greater glory and our greater good.

We are then acting like a merchant who overlooks a smaller for a greater gain; like a servant who leaves an insignificant master for the sovereign who is calling him by his name.

3 - How should we be meek? Like our Lord, our kind Master; and for the sake of our Lord, our kind Savior.

4 - The sanction required by this law of love is an examen after every action - and a penance.

5 - What is the particular grace of meekness as a virtue? Humility of heart. That is why our Lord places humility after meekness as its safeguard, as if to say: "I am meek because I am humble of heart."

But, O my soul, be gentle with your neighbor, and the neighbor who aggravates you, just as God is meek with you, as also are our Lord and the Most Blessed Virgin.

Be meek so that He may be meek with you: *Eadem mensura qua mensi fueritis, remetietur vobis* (The measure you give will be the measure you get - Matt. 7, 2). *Estote misericordes sicut Pater vester caelestis misericors est* (Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful-Luke 6, 36). That is the law of retaliation, in the natural as in the divine law.

O my poor soul, if you think of your sins, of what you have deserved and still deserve, you ought to melt and dissolve into meekness and humility of heart towards your neighbor when you see with what kindness, meekness, patience and honor our Lord treats you.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have noticed two defects or temptations.

Meekness with women is not a virtue but maudlin sentimentality, a weakness, and perhaps a desire to please. Sternness, a cutting air, an energetic show of courage is more of an act of vanity, of vainglory, and a counterpart of one's own weakness meant to conceal it under the guise of strength and simulated power.

The horse is not strong because it can run, nor is the ass because it can bray loudly; but the ox that can hardly move is strong, and so is the elephant with its lumbering gait.

Strength, says the Holy Spirit, is in patience, and patience is the fruit of humility, humility of the heart; humility is true love of God since it is the virtue that draws grace.

---

*March 13 - Third meditation*

### **Eucharistic meekness**

I meditated on our Lord's eucharistic meekness in His divine Sacrament: His kindness in receiving everybody, the great and the little, the rich and the poor, the young and the old; His affability in coming down to the level of everyone, of children, of the illiterate, etc; His patience in listening to them all as long as they wish, with all their aches and pains; His goodness in Communion, giving Himself to each one according to his condition and coming to all with joy as long as He finds in them the life of grace and some devotion, some good desires, some respect at least; giving His grace to each one according to his capacity and leaving with him a gift of peace and of love as a token of His passing.

Oh! *Quoniam tu Domine suavis et mitis et multae misericordiae omnibus invocantibus te* (For You, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call on You - Ps. 86, 5).

But how patient and merciful is the meekness of Jesus towards those who forget Him! He waits for those who do not even respect Him in His sacramental state. He does not protest against those who offend Him. He does not threaten those who outrage and betray and crucify Him by their sacrileges. He does not punish them but repeats the prayer, *Pater, ignosce illis, non enim sciunt quid faciunt* (Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do - Luke 23, 34).

What a surprise, what dismay, what terror, what despair when at death the ungrateful soul shall see her Savior come out of the divine Host,<sup>23</sup> or rather rend the sacramental veil and say, "It is I, but as a judge, a judge as strict now as I have been kind." No, the recognition of Joseph in the Egyptian prince by his brothers, who had so basely treated him, cannot compare with this. Joseph was still their loving brother; he embraced them and reassured them. But after death, Jesus will be the Supreme Judge, full of majesty and terrible in His justice towards the one who resisted love in this life.

\* \* \* \* \*

O my God, I who believe in You, who am consecrated to You; I should want to be dissolved with love or be confounded with shame and sorrow!

Oh, yes! In order to be meek, I will look up to the Eucharist; I will eat this divine manna so as to acquire an abundance of gentleness and of meekness; I will gather my provision for the day. I need it so much.

### God is love

At last, after passing through the desert, I have reached the mountain of love.

What a difficult journey! What a laborious cruise! Here I am before the throne of love; God be praised!

1 - God the Creator. *Perpetua caritate dilexi te, ideo attraxi te miserans* (I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you - Jer. 31, 3).

God has loved man with an eternal love, with the love of a father, with a tender love: *Dilexi te* (I have loved you). All of creation has been the preparation of God's love for the benefit of man, whom He created only on the sixth day, when everything was ready to receive and serve him.

I will never love, nor will ever be able to love my Creator as He has loved me because I am not eternal, infinite and all-powerful as He is.

I ought at least to love Him during my whole lifetime with all my being and all the power of my works; nothing more fitting: *Res fructificat Domino* (The harvest belongs to the owner). *Servus domino servit, filius parentibus devotus corde* (The servant serves his master; the devoted son serves his parents out of love). *Ideo attraxi te miserans* (Therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you - Jer. 31, 3).

God loved sinful man with a love of mercy, but He punished the guilty angel immediately; and yet man was not less deserving of hell.

God had pity on man and willed to save him in spite of His justice. And in order to save man, He drew from the consequences of his sinful state the very matter of his penance and of his holiness - even of the greater glory of God.

Pride had ended in humiliation, ambition in poverty, and sensuality in the waywardness of the senses. God made of humility, detachment and mortification the three virtues of perfection, the three nails of Calvary, the three titles of glory of our Lord and of man: *Humiliavit seipsum* (He humbled Himself - Phil. 2, 8); *Egenus factus est* (He became poor - 2 Cor. 8, 9); *Crucifixus* (Crucified - Gal. 3, 1).

Oh! How great was God's goodness to man! He cured him then and there; He was his Physician and was to be his Savior.

2 - God the Savior. *Quia Dominus visitavit plebem suam* (God has visited His people - Luke 7, 16). He came Himself in person to visit man, to console him, to tell him He loved him, to prove it to him by sharing and relieving his hardships. *Visus est et cum hominibus conversatus est* (Wisdom appeared upon earth and lived among men - Baruch 3, 38).

God loved man and to prove it to him He became a man in order to become his brother in the flesh. *Et Verbum caro factum est* (And the Word became flesh - John 1, 14). And He became poor, the poorest of the poor, in order to be able to include all men as His brothers. He came as a little child in order to be the brother of children, and of hovel-born children.

God has shared the life of man, the work and the bread of the poor. He has performed all the actions of man in order to experience all the difficulties and sacrifices of man.

God has loved man, and has given him all *He* is and all *He* has. The Father gave His Son; the Son gave His very Self; the Holy Spirit became man's habitual Sanctifier.

God loves man only for man's own good; He wants to make man holy like Himself in order to share His eternal happiness with him. The Incarnate Word dwelt 33 years among men to teach them what is good, what virtues sanctify them and make them pleasing to God. He taught men all the eternal and temporal truths they need in the present life.

Then in His sorrowful agony, in His humiliations at Jerusalem, in His sufferings on the Cross, He atoned, in His Body and in His Soul, for all the sins of thought, word and deed: pride, sensuality, and greed. He appeased the wrath of God and satisfied His justice; He fettered the devil, closed hell and opened heaven - where He awaits His followers to share His glory with them.

Oh! How grateful I should be to this kind Savior! He arranged for me to be born under the most favorable conditions of salvation, of the graces of redemption. He watched over me like the apple of His eye, His entire divine Providence enveloped me, and led me by the hand to the most beautiful and sacred of vocations. Yet the mixed values in the Christian and priestly world have proved so harmful to me that I still have not given myself fully to His service and His love.

3 - God, man's guest in the Eucharist. Our Lord so loved man that He could not separate Himself from him, even in His state of glory. The Eucharist is His Incarnation continued, multiplied, perpetuated to the end of time. He wants to live close to man and continue the three states of His life as Savior: prayer, sacrifice and life-giving food of souls.

He prays in the tabernacle, He immolates Himself on the altar, and He nourishes our souls in Holy Communion. He is man's good neighbor and friend, disguising Himself so as not to be a burden to him. It is a fellowship of love, of goods, of happiness in the measure that man's state as a traveler allows it. *Quid debui ultra facere vineae meae et non feci?* (What more was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it? - Is. 5, 4). Really, if we understood well the love of God, the love of Jesus in His birth, in His sufferings, in His Sacrament, we should die of gratitude and of remorse.

But, O God, Jesus is so little loved! How few there are that love Him just to please Him, with their mind, their thoughts and their will! How few love Him with their heart and its noble passion of love! Many believe in Him, respect Him, pray to Him, receive Him, but like servants, like beggars, for their own advantage.

How few there are for whom Jesus sacramental is *the* love of their life, the first love, a love of bliss! Our Lord is not loved as a spouse, or by very few; as a Master - so very few follow Him in all things; as a friend - few have for Him the thoughtful and selfless love honest-to-goodness people have for a friend. We say: what is natural is always easy. But what is supernatural is more powerful since it has a supernatural force at its disposal, since those who love our Lord supernaturally sacrifice with generosity and joy what is natural, and love Jesus by the contempt of everything, above everything, more than themselves.

The reason is that we love, but loving self all the while, that we want to love self while loving; that we are unwilling to give up our name, our country, our family like a true bride does to follow her beloved; that we are ready to share with Him but not to surrender self to Him.

We are like a ship fastened to the shore; it floats on the water of the sea, but it does not leave its moorings; it merely bobs up and down. We are like a swimmer who prefers to walk rather than take to the water. O my God, sever these moorings, loosen the thread from the wings of my soul; plunge me into the sea.

Upon my oath, I love You in life and in death.

*Imitation, Book III, Chapter 6: Fili, non es adhuc fortis et prudens.*

*Quia propter modicam contrarietatem deficis a coeptis et nimis avidè consolationem quaeris.*

*Prudens amator non tam donum amantis considerat quam dantis amorem.*

*Affectum potius attendit quam censum, et infra dilectum omnia data ponit.*

*Nobilis amator non quiescit in dono, sed in me super omne donum.*

(My son, you are not yet a strong and experienced lover ....

Because the moment you come to the slightest obstacle you give up what you have begun and seek for comfort with the utmost eagerness.

An experienced lover heeds not so much the gift of the lover as the love of him that gave it.

What he looks for is affection, not money; his Beloved is higher in his eyes than any gift.  
A noble lover does not rest content with a gift; he desires Me rather than any gift I can make.)

---

*March 14 - Second meditation*

### **State of my soul**

I meditated on my failings in my exterior relations; how easily I lose the presence of God; how I am carried away and become absorbed in conversation, in congenial company; how I am deprived of my liberty by the bondage of service and zeal I give to others; how I waste a considerable amount of time to the detriment of my duties, of piety, of holy recollection.

The sight of all this grieved me; and I wondered what could be the cause.

Everything about me is the cause, for everything about me is wretched; I am drawn to what is exterior rather than to what is interior; I seek to be interesting and to learn; I have in mind the good of the Society or my own; I am vain. Once I step on a terrain that is familiar or entertaining, or that makes me entertaining, I am done for. I am like a spirited horse, a feverish man. I end by wanting to be the center of it all, the object of esteem, of trust, and of what not. *Cito enim inquinamur vanitate et captivamur* (Frivolity is infectious, and makes easy prisoners of us), says the *Imitation* (Bk. I, Ch. 10).

Alas! How the sight of all this afflicted me! I begin by praying, I take good resolutions, I keep myself under control for a moment, and then I lose sight of the divine shore and find myself on the high seas at the mercy of every wind and storm. When I return to port, I feel wretched, I dread facing myself, I avoid self-examination, I humble myself in general, and I end by forgetting about it; but my aridity of soul persists.

---

*March 14 - Third meditation + St. Peter's - (Forty Hours, St. Frances of Rome)*

---

*March 15 - First meditation*

### **On silence**

I meditated on these words of the Holy Spirit: *In multiloquio non deerit peccatum* (When words are many, transgression is not lacking - Prov. 10, 19). So many failings due to fondness for talk!

Failings against truth: we seldom remain within the limits of truth; we often make affirmations that are only half true, and tell outright lies from vanity or from a tendency to label as true what is only probably so. Failings against charity, especially when one has wit, a nagging, antipathetic and conceited wit. Failings against respect due to sacred things, to Superiors; against the common courtesies due to persons, the honor due to their rank; a mind that is facetious, waggish, sarcastic, scornful, or tired will do that just for the sake of diversion. Failings against humility from vanity, adulation or flattery - the most common failing.

How do we contract all these defects? We are lured into them in conversation. The devil is then at the controls; the spirit of the world prevails; the senses of sight and of hearing are more unruly; sympathies shape up in no time; then if we chance upon someone who is clever at starting us off on a subject that flatters our *ego*, either we throw the doors of the heart wide open under pretext of zeal, of charity, of good breeding, of esteem, of confidence, or we inflame an old wound, we prick a sensitive spot, we let the horse loose in the arena, we give free rein to the heart out of misguided zeal.

It is the function of the worldly wise to get people to talk, to speak their language, to get them involved and then to lock battle with them. *Quoties inter homines fui, minor homo redii* (I never yet went out among men without feeling less of a man when I came home - Imit. Bk. I, Ch. 20, "Seneca's Letters," no. 7).

\* \* \* \* \*

But how acquire this virtue of silence or this wisdom and holiness of speech? The means is simple in itself; we find it in St. Paul: *Coram Domino in Christo loquimur* (In the sight of God we speak in Christ - II Cor. 2, 17). A servant is careful about what he says in the presence of his master; a friend, in the presence of his friend; a Christian, in the presence of Jesus Christ.

My capital mistake lies in letting myself be absorbed by things and persons, in losing sight of Jesus Christ and then, faced with nothing but conflict, concern, mortification and sacrifice - *quod violentum non durabile* (violence does not last) - I end by no longer noticing my wounds, like a soldier in the heat of battle.

Know, O my soul, that it is better to listen than to speak. St. Joseph did not utter a single word about the Incarnation. The Most Blessed Virgin spoke only four times in the Gospel: to the angel, to St. Elizabeth, to the Child Jesus, and to the waiters at the wedding of Cana. So many saints chose to glorify God through silence.

That is the course I must now follow. I no longer have a mission, or when I have to speak, I must limit myself, like my divine Master, to the mission of the words of God.

I must absolutely be done with any buffoonery, any play of wit, any show of shrewdness in discernment or of insight into character. St. Paul said to St. Timothy: *Ineptas autem et aniles fabulas devita.... Profana autem et vaniloquia devita, multum enim proficiunt ad impietatem.... Juvenilia desideria fuge.... Stultas autem et sine disciplina quaestiones devita, sciens quia generant lites. Servum autem Domini non oportet litigare, sed mansuetum esse ad omnes.* (Having nothing to do with godless and silly myths - 1 Tim. 4, 7. - Avoid such godless chatter, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness - II Tim. 2, 16. - Shun youthful passions - Ibid. 22. - Have nothing to do with stupid, senseless controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to every one - Ibid. 23, 24).

*Imitation, Book III, Chapter 5: Magnus clamor in auribus Dei est ipse ardens affectus animae quae dicit: Deus meus, amor meus! Tu totus meus et ego totus tuus.*

*Dilata me in amore, ut discam interiori cordis ore degustare, quam suave sit amare, et in amore liquefieri et natare.*

(A loud cry in the ears of God is that burning love for Him in the soul which says: 'My God, my love, You are all mine and I all Yours.'

Let love know no bounds; let me learn to taste with the lips of my inmost being how sweet it is to love, to melt in love's fire, to float on the waves of love!)

---

March 15 - Second meditation + (In town)

---

### Patience in humility and confidence

I have two great pitfalls to avoid.

1 - The first is my being upset over my broken resolutions, my failings in speech, my impulsiveness. But I must immediately look into my failings and not defer doing so till later - as I have done.

That is a specious temptation - under the pretext I will see more clearly when things quiet down. It is all the other way around; the devil steps in to exaggerate the failing; or I forget about it. I must pay my debts promptly and not keep my soul in the fog or my heart in painful suspense.

2 - The second pitfall is discouragement. I seek too eagerly for peace after some frivolity, or even after a failing; I judge of that failing too much from the privation of God and the distress of my soul; all of which brings on a state of slothful and even sensual dejection; the soul ends by indulging in this worthless sentiment as if it were contrition whereas it is only egotism.

### Rules for supernatural living

I looked into the rules I should follow in governing myself for supernatural living. Our Lord deigned to enlighten me on the course to follow and how to deal with my body, my mind and my heart.

1 - With my senses, *imperative et fortiter* (authoritatively and forcefully), as with slaves ever ready and disposed to rebel; as with peevish children; as with sluggards who say, "I can't." So acts a commander, a master; so acted St. Paul: *Castigo et in servitutem redigo* (I pommel my body and subdue it - I Cor. 9, 27).

So also the *Imitation: Frena gulam* (Restrain your appetite - Bk. I, Ch. 19), as you do to a horse; *Certa viriliter* (Strive hard - Bk. I, Ch. 21), because the first shock is formidable - a shock of violence; *Violenti rapiunt* (Men of violence take it by force - Matt. 11, 12), they seize without parleying, without so much as by your leave. The senses must learn that they have a hard and stern taskmaster who will yield to them only when they fall mortally wounded, and even then must they receive the death-blow standing.

2 - With the mind, *patienter* (patiently). It is weak, fickle, ignorant. We must coach it like a schoolchild by capturing its attention, by fostering its interest in things, by awakening a sentiment of God's good pleasure and of recollection in His fatherly goodness when it runs into difficulties, just as we tell a child, "Work in order to please your parents."

The mind must not be tense and absorbed but carefully directed. The thought of God consists, in a simple awareness of God, like children whose eyes meet those of the master; but it must be an awareness of love, a filial sentiment that aims to please.

3 - With the heart, *abneganter* (self-denyingly). The heart is strong; it is the strength of man. It always attaches itself to the creature for its own sake, *finaliter* (with itself as an end). It is miserly, it is selfish, it is continually stocking up for itself or seeking centers of repose. *Hic ure, hic seca, hic non parcas* (Burn, cut, do not spare), so prayed St. Augustine. *Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum* (If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself - Matt. 16, 24); such is the absolute condition laid down by our Lord. We cannot serve two masters opposed to each other.

I must then rule the heart with sacrifice, forcibly snatch away its idols, pitilessly break its chains, rescue it from the fire, from thieves, from the volcano, from the plague.



That is the first step. *Violenti rapiunt* (Men of violence take it by force - Matt. 11, 12), for the *regnum Dei* (the kingdom of God - Luke 17, 21) is the heart of man.

Having won its freedom, the heart will then cast itself at the feet of its Lord and God; for *fecisti nos ad te* (You have made us for Yourself - St. Aug. Conf.). And if it weeps, it is because it is feverish; if it suffers, it is because its wounds are healing; if it wants to look back, it must be chastised as for an offense of contempt against God. Who will deliver the blow? The *ego*; that is the only way to awaken a heart that is earthy or sluggish.

*Imitation*, Book I, Chapter 3: *Quia vero plures magis student scire quam bene vivere, ideo saepe errant, et pene nullum vel modicum fructum ferunt.*

*Certe adveniente die judicii non quaeretur a nobis quid legimus, sed quid fecimus, nee quam bene diximus sed quam bene religiose viximus.*

*Et vere bene doctus est qui Dei voluntatem facit et suam voluntatem relinquit.*

(How is it that there are so many people who put knowledge first, instead of conduct? It means that they are constantly at fault, and achieve little-sometimes next to nothing.

After all, when the day of judgment comes we shall be examined about what we have done, not about what we have read; whether we have lived conscientiously, not whether we have turned fine phrases.

The only educated man is one who has learned to abandon his own will and do God's will instead.)

\* \* \* \* \*

That is a good lesson! Sic vos *non vobis mellificatis*, *apes* (Thus, O bees, you do not make honey for yourselves - Virgil). I am quite certain I am doing just that.

---

March 16 - Second meditation + Three Cardinals. (*The Cenacle*)

---

March 16 - Third meditation

### **Personal love of Jesus**

The happiness of love consists in:

- 1 - Jesus thinks of me personally;
- 2 - He loves me tenderly;

3 - All that He does in the Most Blessed Sacrament, He does out of love for me personally, as if this good Savior and I were alone in the world. *Ducam dilectam in solitudinem et ibi loquar ad cor ejus* (I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her - Hosea 2, 14).

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Knowledge**

I had prepared the subject outlined above, but in His divine mercy our Lord changed it to another one, more helpful to my soul. I meditated on knowledge and study. I saw three capital defects in me.

1 - The first is my passion for select books or books that can be of some use in the understanding of our holy vocation; I neither spare nor would spare any effort to acquire valuable book; I put too much passion into it. I have had passion for books since I studied theology. I might have had a passion for study, but in His divine mercy God prevented that by illness and headaches, and then kept me busy with the ministry. Obstinate as I am in getting things over with, absorbed to

the point of leaving and postponing everything to settle an issue, I would have succumbed to the passion for study.

2 - I studied for the benefit of others and did not draw profit from it for myself; that is why study proved such a fascination for the vanity of my mind and heart, which could see no harm in it for themselves.

I ought to have done like the mother that turns everything into nourishment in order to feed her child with her superabundance, with her own substance; like the bee that first draws its food from the flowers and then makes its honey; like the fire that sustains itself with its own heat and gives only of its surplus; like the reservoir spoken of by St. Bernard: *Concha esto non canalis* (Do not be a canal but a vessel). If my studies had been a prayer, knowledge would not have caused my soul to wilt and be depleted. But alas! I was only a day-laborer, a hireling. I would have preached more effectively, would have done more good to souls, would have given glory to the good God, if I had begun by saturating myself with God. *Quoadusque induamini virtute ex alto* (Until you are clothed with power from on high - Luke 24, 29) - fully so. *Et repleti sunt omnes Spiritu Sancto et coeperunt loqui* (And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak - Acts 2, 4) - but not before.

3 - My third defect is curiosity when I am with others: the curiosity to learn, to make a study of what is new to me or can flatter my conceit. I study instead of edifying others or myself. Hence, those many questions, the loss of time, and sometimes the danger of my going too far; no indiscretion can match that of a curious mind.

Such was my meditation. I was deeply grateful to the good God for it. This wretchedness, only glimpsed at first, had eluded me, and I realize that it is basic and ingrained. *Lege et manduca* (Read and ponder). See Apoc. 10, 9: "Take the scroll and eat."

---

March 17 - First meditation

### Jesus' life of love for me

Jesus, my Savior and my God, loves me personally, tenderly. He thinks of me wherever He is present in the Most Blessed Sacrament, in all the sacred Hosts<sup>24</sup> in which He is; He thinks of me in heaven on His throne of glory, and finally as God, everywhere and always.

If thought is the inspiration and expiration of love, how little I love our Lord! It is dreadful to realize that I think of this good Master only as a beggar would who is hungry, as one would who suffers! Yes, I see very well that nature does not of itself tend towards God; on the contrary, it has to make an effort.

Then when the mind or the heart is under the influence of some passion, one must do violence to one's feelings – how distressing! Jesus looks at me, His eyes follow me; love is like that. He follows me from His divine ciborium, and He waits for our eyes to meet in order to give me a smile of love and bless me.

When we look at something, we transfer the image of it into our soul. Those who love Jesus see Him and follow Him. The sight of Him feeds their love and strengthens it in time of trial.

How slavish is my soul to sensible images, but so very little to our Lord! And yet, it would be so easy to fix my eyes on Him and retain that delightful image.

Jesus loves me tenderly. He gives me definite proof of it the moment I make some small sacrifice for Him.

It is my fault if He represses His tenderness within Himself, if He makes haste and "seeks a place to weep" (Gen. 43, 30) like Joseph at the sight of his brothers, especially of Benjamin – how he fled from them so as to weep alone.

I lack tenderness towards our Lord. Why? Because my love is not specific enough; it is too general; there is too much of the mind in it, not enough of the heart. I admire too much; I do not praise or thank Him or surrender myself enough.

That has always been my defect. I am expansive only out of self-love, and then I am ashamed of my being so when I find myself in the presence of the good God.

How I would need to be more tender towards our Lord, with our Lord! My heart would be so much more closely bound to Him. I do not mean that my heart should have feelings of tenderness, for it has none, but that it should be tender in its acts, in its gratitude, in its praise, in its giving.

I pictured myself as a man in the haze of the lowlands who needs to reach a higher level in order to see the sun; as a man in a cold region who has only a few steps to take in order to reach a fire. Arise, O my soul, proceed and go towards Jesus; He awaits you with joy; He shall welcome you with tenderness; He is so good; He loves you.

*Imitation, Book III, Chapter 55: Gratia ipsa fortitudo mea, ipsa consilium confert et auxilium; cunctis hostibus potentior est et sapientior universis sapientibus.*

*Magistra est veritatis, doctrix disciplinae, ablatrix timoris, nutrix devotionis, productrix lacrymarum.*

*Quid sum sine ea, nisi aridum lignum et stirps inutilis ad ejiciendum.*

(Grace is my strength, bringing me counsel and help, mightier than all my enemies, wiser than all who are wise.

It is Your grace that teaches us the truth, tells us what rule of life to follow, brings light to our hearts and comfort in our troubles; it drives away sadness, washes away fear, feeds our devotion and moves us to tears of repentance.

Without it, what am I but a tree without rain, a useless bit of timber fit only to be thrown out?)

---

*March 17 - Second meditation*

### **The Most Blessed Virgin**

I meditated on the Most Blessed Virgin's love for me since my childhood. I blessed Our Lady of the Laus and the day I took her for my Mother when my dear mother died.

Since then, so many graces!

At her feet in the chapel of St. Robert I prayed that I might one day become a priest. She alone led me by the hand to the priesthood, and then to the Most Blessed Sacrament.

The Most Blessed Virgin has been so good to me! I shed tears of tenderness over it, tears also of regret over my having loved her so little, especially since the grace of the Most Blessed Sacrament. I should have done a hundred times more.

I thanked our Lord profusely for having given her to me for a Mother, for having ceded to me His rights over her heart.

I took the firm resolution to pray to her more assiduously and to honor her sorrows today. - (Friday, March 17, 1865, was the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows.)

---

*March 17 – Third meditation*

The sorrows of the Most Blessed Virgin

With deep emotion I followed the Most Blessed Virgin in her sorrows, as she participated in all the sufferings of the Passion of our Lord, her divine Son; by the light of grace, she saw Him in the

Garden of Olives and shared His prayer, His sadness, His agony; there was so much sympathy of life and of love between these two hearts.

Then she saw Him betrayed by Judas, deserted by all, denied by Peter, alone before His judges, outrageously buffeted, treated like a clown - *ad illudendum, ad conspuendum* (quoted from memory: should be, *illudetur ... et conspuetur* - He will be mocked ... and spit upon - Luke 18, 32).

Poor Mother! How she must have suffered from so many desertions! Not even one friend, one soul brave enough to recognize Him and stand up for Him!

Then St. John came to inform her of the various phases of the Passion of Jesus, His jailing, His appearance before Caiphas, how He was brought before Pilate, and from there to Herod, who treated Him like a fool.

She came, a sorrowful Mother, to the Pretorium. She heard the lashes of the scourging, saw Jesus next to Barabbas on the balcony of the Pretorium, heard the *Ecce Homo* (Here is the man - John 19, 5) and the frenzied shouts of *Tolle, crucifige eum* (Away with Him! Crucify Him - John 19, 15). Poor Mother! She had only her tears to offer Him. She followed Him to Calvary and met Him; their eyes, their hearts, their sorrows became united in the same sacrifice.

Now He has reached Calvary. Mary saw Him stripped inhumanly, brutally, saw Him stretched on the ground upon the Cross, heard the hammer - blows that crucified His hands and feet; she saw Him, and she too was crucified - the repercussion of the blows affecting her like stigmata.

She saw Him as the Cross was raised; it had just about settled in place when, braving every obstacle, she reached the foot of the Cross of Jesus. There, in a sea of sorrows, *velut mare contritio tua* (vast as the sea is your ruin - Lam. 2, 13), she contemplated Him. She noted everyone of His sufferings; her soul stood congealed in the wounds of Jesus. Poor Mother! Stronger than death, but enduring a pain greater than any number of deaths.

She listened to every word of Jesus; she saw His Blood flowing and His life ebbing away; she heard His cry of thirst and could offer no solace; His cry over His being abandoned even by His Heavenly Father; then she heard His last words, *Consummatum est, et inclinato capite tradidit spiritum* (It is finished; and He bowed His head and gave up His spirit - John 19, 30).

Her Jesus was dead! What will Mary His Mother do? She will agonize with sorrow and love; she will receive His sacred Body and embrace it as His Mother; she will adore it as His disciple and will bury it as a widow her only Son.

Then she will weep; she will rehearse the sufferings of Jesus; she will retrace her way of the Cross from Friday night through Saturday to Sunday morning.<sup>25</sup>

---

*March 18 - First meditation*

### **Personal Passion of our Lord**

I meditated on the part I played in the Passion of our Lord.

Because the Passion of our Lord is over, because it has taken place almost 19 centuries ago, it would seem that I had nothing to do with it, that my sins did not affect Him, and that consequently I now profit by the merits of the Passion without having been responsible for it. That explains why the Passion affects me so little. But the truth is that, positively and directly, I have made our Lord suffer, and with a personal suffering He would not have experienced had I not sinned.

In point of fact, it is quite certain that our Lord was conscious of all my sins, that He saw them in the Garden of Olives, that He accepted them in order to expiate them, and that He wept over my ingratitude and all my sins, more painful to His heart than those of others because He loved me with a greater love.

The Prophet Isaias said: *Vere languores nostros ipse tulit, et dolores nostros ipse portavit* (Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows - 53, 4).

*Ipse vulneratus est propter iniquitates nostras; attritus est propter scelera nostra; ... et livore ejus sanati sumus* (He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; ... and with His stripes we are healed - 53, 5).

*Posuit Dominus in eo iniquitatem omnium nostrum* (The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all - 53, 6).

*Propter scelus populi mei percussi eum* (Stricken for the transgression of My people - 53, 8).

*Ipse peccata multorum tulit et pro transgressoribus rogavit* (He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors - 53, 12).

Now if Isaias laid his own sins upon our Lord, if our Lord expiated the sins committed before the Incarnation, He also expiated those committed after; otherwise how would we be redeemed? St. Paul tells us it was so for him: *Dilexit me et tradidit semetipsum pro me* (Who loved me and gave Himself for me - Gal. 2, 20).

But how could I have made our Lord suffer since I was not in Jerusalem? My sins were there. Our Lord saw them, knew all their guilt and malice since it was He that I offend presently; He is the same divine Person; His state alone has changed.<sup>26</sup> Does not the sight of an assassin, with the full knowledge of what is to take place, inspire horror? Did not our Lord weep over Jerusalem's calamities which he saw as actually taking place?

Thus my sins affected the soul of our Lord directly during His Passion. They were the direct cause of the sufferings of His Body as well as the positive cause of His crucifixion; one can die for several reasons, and die from torments of the soul, more than sufficient to cause death. As said St. Paul: *Christus pro nobis mortuus est et resurrexit* (To this end Christ died and lived again - Rom. 14, 9).

Granting all that, I was therefore present in the thought of our Lord, in the malice of the Jews and of the devil; by providing them with weapons, my sins wounded His sacred Body and caused His adorable Blood to flow.

Have I not done in kind what they did who made our Lord suffer? Have I not deserted Him like the Apostles and, like Judas, betrayed His doctrine, the proclamation of His truth, the profession of His holiness? Have I not denied Him like Peter? Alas! So many failings in that respect, so much compromise out of weakness, so many concessions to flattery, to worldliness!

And then what about my pride and my religious avarice, my all-too-human affections, my rashness and presumption? Have I not sinned from my youth, *tantillus puer*? (as a little boy - St. Aug. Conf ).<sup>27</sup>

If our Lord had suffered for me alone all that He has suffered, what would I think? What would I do? I should die of grief, of shame, of sorrow; I should not dare look at anyone anymore; I should go into hiding and weep.

If I told myself: it is I who am the cause of the sorrows of the Most Blessed Virgin, for I am the cause of those of her divine Son. And who knows whether our Lord did not make me known to this good Mother, since I was destined one day to be her child on two grounds: as her religious (Marist) and as a religious of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

She must have seen how unfaithful I was, how I afflicted her divine Son, betrayed my beautiful mission, and was directly responsible for the poor service of our Lord, for the little glory He received from the Society, so beautiful and promising.

The thought of having so aggrieved this good Mother should make me shed abundant and contrite tears.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Imitation, Book III, Chapter 5: Magna res est amor, magnum omnino bonum; quod solum leve facit omne onerosum, et fert aequaliter omne inaequale.*

*Amor Jesu nobilis, ad magna operanda impellit, et ad desideranda semper perfectiora excitat.*

*Amans ... dat omnia, pro omnibus et habet omnia in omnibus; quia in uno summo super omnia quiescit, ex quo omne bonum, fluit et procedit.*

(A mighty force it is, this thing love, mighty and altogether good; alone it takes the weight from every burden, alone it bears evenly the uneven load.

To love Jesus is a wondrous thing; it urges men on to mighty deeds, stirs up in them the desire for a life ever more holy.

A man in love ... gives all for all and possesses all in all, finding his rest in one who is high above all else, the source and origin of all that is good.)

\* \* \* \* \*

Love, such is my law, my way, my virtue, my strength, my joy, my happiness, my life, my death, my heaven! Amen

---

*March 18 - Second and Third meditation (not recorded)*

---

*March 19 - First meditation*

### **St. Joseph**

Our Lord granted me a precious grace today: the thought, gentle and strong, of consecrating myself in a very special way and without reserve to St. Joseph as to a father, a *ductor* (leader) and a protector. Our respective vocations are related to each other in so many ways.

1 - He was the father of Jesus, His legal father, His father by adoption, His foster-father. And I, as priest, am the father of Jesus sacramental.<sup>28</sup> I even have more intrinsic power over our Lord than St. Joseph. *Sacerdotes parentes Christi* (Priests are the parents of Christ - St. Bernard).

Our Lord obeys me as He did St. Joseph; He honors and loves me.

As father of Jesus, St. Joseph carried Him in his arms, worked for his upkeep, defended Him at the peril of his life; he also supported His divine Mother, comforted and protected her.

It is St. Joseph who, as head of the Holy Family, stood in command, who represented it and took care of all external business.

With what humility he gave orders to Him whom he knew to be his Creator and Savior! He did so, however, as St. John the Baptist was to do later on, because the Heavenly Father wanted him to.

With what humility he gave orders to the Most Blessed Virgin, his queen by virtue of her divine motherhood.

Such indeed are the sentiments that should be mine, not only as priest at the altar but as Superior. As in the Holy Family, so now it is the least worthy who commands, who receives the honors of the superiorate, who attends to public relations. I should therefore look on the priests as St. Joseph looked on our Lord Jesus Christ; I should look on my brethren as other Jesus Christs; I should look on women in the Most Blessed Virgin as mothers of Jesus if they are mothers, and as spouses of Jesus if they are virgins, religious.

Like Jesus, I should honor St. Joseph as my father. Our Lord gave him this beautiful title of father and respected all the rights attached to it; He honored, loved and served St. Joseph in that wonderful dignity. I shall do likewise.

2 - St. Joseph *Ductor meus* - my leader. My state in life is related to that of St. Joseph in several ways; I should therefore live his life, practice his virtues and have his spirit. Now, in what spirit did St. Joseph serve Jesus and Mary? In a spirit of love, for he was aware of the divinity of Jesus and of the greatness of Mary. The angel had revealed both of these truths to him, and at Bethlehem heaven and earth had offered him clear evidences of them. So that his very soul, flooded with light and grace, could not thank enough the Heavenly Father for having associated him with such great and sacred mysteries. He humbled himself profoundly over his unworthiness and offered himself joyfully and unreservedly to the fulfillment of God's will in all things. He devoted himself with gladness to the service of Jesus and Mary no matter what the difficulties and humiliations.

Well, O my soul, that is the way for you to follow with St. Joseph, since you have so many dignities and duties in common with him. You must humble yourself still more than this great Patriarch since you are not "a just man" - *Cum esset Justus* (being a just man - Matt. 1, 19). St. Joseph was therefore perfect, especially humble and pure.

You ought to serve Jesus and the *Jesuses* He entrusted to you, with joy and happiness, with the devotedness of St. Joseph. *Quidquid his minimis fecistis, mihi fecistis* (As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to Me - Matt. 25, 40).

3 - St. Joseph, *Protector meus* (my protector). My protector in my duties as father; I am his child, a very weak, frail and dull child. My protector in my duties as a member of the Society. I continue his office towards Jesus on earth; I must go about it like him and with him.

My protector in my duties as Superior. He had an angel to guide him; he must be my angel. He was the protector of the Holy Family; he must be the protector of my weakness and of the Society of Jesus sacramental. This wonderful Society of the Most Blessed Sacrament is the mother of Jesus,<sup>29</sup> His servant and His family. O good St. Joseph, be its father, for you have been that of the Holy Family; its guide, for it also possesses Jesus; its protector, for it must not have a human or earthly protector. Accept today to be associated with it; accept its love.

As for me, I will honor you, will love you, will serve you with Mary my Mother, and will never again dissociate you from her name and her love. I do not ask for temporal goods, for the growth of the Society; I do not ask to see it great and powerful. You saw Jesus only when He was little, poor and lowly; you were not to see Him in His glory or to assist at His triumphs. Oh! How I should like to be the poor artisan, the unknown Joseph, the despised carpenter, the fertilizer of the tree, the gardener of the good Master who never leaves his garden, who knows only his plants, who loves only his flowers, who lives only on its fruits, who dies in a corner of his little shack but in the arms of Jesus and Mary, whose burial place is unknown, whose body cannot be honored, who leaves behind only his mantle of poverty and humility!

*Imitation*, Book III, Chapter 56: *Fili, quantum a te vales exire, tantum in me poteris transire.*

*Sicut nihil foris concupiscere internam pacem facit, sic se interius relinquere Deo conjungit.*

*Sequere me. Ego sum via, veritas et vita.*

(The more you can leave yourself behind, My son, the more you will be able to enter into Me.

Just as desiring no outward pleasure gives you inward peace, so does the surrender of your inmost self unite you with God.

Follow me; I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.)

---

*March 19 - Second meditation*

### **Consecration to St. Joseph**

1 - I consecrated myself to St. Joseph as to my spiritual father; I will have no other, neither could I agree to have a man, however holy he might be, because of my temperament and my slothfulness.

St. Joseph will therefore be the spiritual master of my soul so that I may live the interior life with him, a life hidden with Jesus, Mary and Joseph, and may imitate especially his silence on himself, on Jesus, on Mary, even on his happiness.

Therein is everything I need: self-denial in the hidden life of our Lord through oblivion brought on by silence about myself or by life in common.

2 - I consecrated myself to St. Joseph as my leader and master in my duties as a Superior, so that I might fulfill them like him in meekness and humility of heart, in meekness with my brethren, in humility within myself, in simplicity before God. I took this good Saint as my counselor and confidant.

3 - I took him as my protector in my difficulties and troubles, and as the protector of the Society since it is the little family of Jesus. I did not ask him to be delivered from my crosses, from my trials, but from the self-love that vitiates them, from the vanity that might glory in bearing them.

I prayed our Lord to give me His father St. Joseph for a father as He gave me Mary for a Mother, to instill in me for St. Joseph the devotion, the confidence, the love of a son, of a client, of an oblate.

\* \* \* \* \*

I am sure this good Master has granted my prayer, for I feel more devout towards this good Saint, and full of confidence and hope.

---

*March 19 - Third meditation*

### **St. Joseph, adorer**

After the Most Blessed Virgin St. Joseph was the first and most perfect adorer of our Lord.

He adored Him with a faith greater than that of all the saints together;<sup>30</sup> with a humility more profound than that of all the elect; with a purity greater than that of the angels; with a love no other saint had or could ever have for Jesus; with a devotion as great as his love.

How the adorations of Mary and Joseph must have glorified the Word Incarnate and compensated Him for the indifference and ingratitude of His creatures!

St. Joseph adored the Word Incarnate in union with the divine and Virgin Mother; he united himself to all the thoughts and acts of adoration, of love, of praise offered by Jesus to his Father; he united himself to all the acts of charity of Jesus for men, for whose sake and salvation Jesus had become incarnate.

St. Joseph adapted his adorations to the mystery under consideration, to the spirit, the grace, the virtue of that mystery. For instance, the self-abasement of Jesus in the Incarnation; His poverty at Bethlehem, His silence, His feebleness, His obedience, His virtues at Bethlehem; St. Joseph had a very profound knowledge of the virtues of our Lord and he understood that they were meant as a sacrifice unto the love and glory of the Father.

St. Joseph adored, at least interiorly, all that Jesus did or said or thought. The Holy Spirit revealed it to him so that he might unite himself with the actions, words and thoughts of Jesus and glorify the Heavenly Father in union with His divine Son, our Savior. So that the life of St. Joseph was a life of adoration of Jesus, and of perfect adoration.

I therefore united myself with this good and holy adorer that he might teach me how to adore our Lord, that he might make me his associate, and that I might be the Joseph of the Eucharist as he was the Joseph of Nazareth.



### The life of the Holy Family

I meditated on the life of the Holy Family, that is, on the life of Mary and Joseph in Jesus.

I meditated on the three following points.

1 - Jesus was the center of love of Mary and Joseph. *Ubi fuerit corpus* (Wherever the body is - Luke 17, 37), *Ubi thesaurus tuus* (Where your treasure is - Luke 12, 34). So that the possession of Jesus was itself the whole center of the Holy Family. Neither Bethlehem nor Nazareth nor Egypt really mattered to them; Jesus alone was the home of their heart. With what joy and happiness St. Joseph hastened back to the home that harbored the divine Child. He spent as little time as possible away from Him. He knew that Jesus was divine Love Incarnate.

That is what my house, my religious family should mean to me. My center is Jesus in the house of the Society I dwell in; I must be like St. Joseph to Him, and be happy only - in that house.

2 - Jesus was the *end* of the life of Mary and Joseph they lived and worked for Him alone.

With what pleasure St. Joseph worked to earn a bit of bread for the little divine Child and His divine Virgin Mother. How happy he was to bring home the meager salary of his labor! And when he had to work a little harder, how pleased he was because he was doing it for Jesus.

Thus Jesus Hostia must be the end of my life, since I am the Joseph of His sacramental state. He must be the law, the joy and the happiness of my life. And what life is more beautiful than a life spent with the Most Blessed Sacrament!

3 - Jesus was the regular sustenance of the life of union and love of Mary and Joseph. They found so much happiness in watching Him, in listening to Him, in seeing Him work, obey and pray; He did everything so well.

But they found still greater happiness in contemplating His interior life and His intentions, in knowing His sentiments and the inspiration of His virtues, in seeing Him seek and select occasions for the practice of poverty, obedience and self-denial, in contemplating Him in His lowliness and self-abasement, in noticing how He referred everything to the glory of His Father and wanted nothing for Himself as Son of man or as man but returned all honor and love to the divinity.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph had but one life, but one desire; the glory of the Heavenly Father.

That is what I should do. To that purpose, I must become one with Mary and Joseph and share their life - their family life, their inner life, the secret of which was known to God alone.

My soul experienced much happiness in contemplating the hidden life of the Holy Family, what went on there: the family Gospel of Jesus, the glorious evenings spent in prayer and in heavenly conversations at Nazareth. Assuredly, Jesus explained to Mary and Joseph all that the Sacred Scriptures said about Him; He revealed Calvary to them with all its humiliating and painful details. He must have shown them the place of the nails in His hands and feet in order to initiate Mary and Joseph to the virtues of Calvary. He must have spoken to them about the Church, about the Apostles, about the religious, about wretched me and His love for me.

Nazareth had become the heaven of love and the earthly paradise, not of the first Adam but of the second Adam and the second Eve, the paradise of the most perfect virtues, of the most sacred love. What a rare and delightful fragrance must have risen from this heavenly garden, the abode of the Word Incarnate, of the Mother of God, and of Joseph the just man.

What a source of delight to the Heavenly Father! Of wonderment to the angels! Of terror to the devil! And of love to me!

*Imitation, Book III, Chapter 23: Junge me tibi inseparabili dilectionis vinculo quoniam tu solus sufficis amanti; et absque te frivola sunt universa.*

(Bind me to You with a bond of love that cannot be broken; for You alone are all-in-all for a loving heart, and without You everything else is but pitiful trash.)

*March 20 - Second meditation*

### **The seven sorrows of St. Joseph**

The holier one is the more one has to suffer for the love and glory of God. Suffering is the furtherance of God's grace in a soul and the triumph of a soul's love for God.

St. Joseph, the greatest of the saints after the Most Blessed Virgin, suffered more than they. The cause of his suffering was his veneration for the Most Blessed Virgin and his love for our Lord, such an understanding, tender and great love.

Why did God require St. Joseph to suffer so much? In order to make him holier; for he was already holy.

St. Joseph had his seven sorrows.

1 – His deep concern about the Most Blessed Virgin; as he was to leave her, to abandon her without even a word, what was to become of her? Who would take care of her? Yes, but he had to obey the law, which commanded such a separation.

2 - The refusal of all Bethlehem to lodge them; the hovel of the stable; what made him suffer the most, however, was the wrong done to the Mother and her divine Child, the sufferings inflicted on them.

3 - The circumcision of the Child Jesus; the sight of the wound and of the flow of blood; the sorrows and sufferings of the divine Mother.

4 - The prophecy of the sword of sorrow which was one day to pierce the heart of the Most Blessed Virgin, and which revealed and made clear to him the prophecy of Isaias concerning the sufferings of the Messiah (Ch. 53).

5 - The hurried flight by night to Egypt, his dread of Herod's soldiers, the lamentations of Bethlehem.

6 - His return from Egypt to Jerusalem, his fear of Archelaus, son of the cruel Herod.

7 - The loss of Jesus in the Temple.

Then who can imagine his tears, his sufferings, as he listened to Jesus telling him about the Passion, as he came upon details of the Passion in the Sacred Scriptures.

And whenever they came to Jerusalem, Jesus pointed out the places where He was to suffer so much; He wanted them even then to share with Him the merits of His sufferings.

How did St. Joseph suffer? In silence, in humility, in love. He neither had nor wanted any human consolation. He suffered not for himself but for Jesus, Mary and his neighbor.

Therefore, O my soul, we must suffer.

---

*March 20 - Third meditation*

### **Crosses**

I offered myself with St. Joseph to suffer what it will please God to send me. I offered the three crosses of today, which were weighing heavily on my mind and breaking my spirit.

For the first time I am fully resigned: my disposition will be one of silence, of patience, of self-surrender into the hands of God.

Come what God will! If, on my return, the storm is still brewing, God be praised! I will get more grace out of it; I will perhaps love the good God a little more, and will be enabled, I hope, to imitate a little more perfectly the silence of St. Joseph.

How I need to be silent during these moments of affliction! I must keep away from all important people, for I am not strong enough to remain silent about my crosses.

I must pray, be patient and thank God; that's all. I must see especially what there is of goodness, justice and truth in the Cross.

---

March 21 - First meditation

### Crosses of the saints

There is no saint who has not been crucified by the world, who has not crucified himself, whom God Himself has not crucified in a wondrous manner.

The holy Apostles and the founders of religious families are those who have suffered the most.

To found is to dig into the soil of one's heart, to quarry stones, to chisel them, to join and cement them together, to chip off their rough surface, to polish them, to deprive them of their "freedom" and even of their shape.

What did not St. Benedict suffer, whose feast we celebrate today! An attempt was made to poison him, and he was forced to leave his first Community. What did he not suffer from bad subjects!

And what of St. Francis, from Brother Elias and his supporters! What of St. Alphonsus, from his own, even from the king, even from Pius VI! Why so much suffering?

Because *in dolore paries* (in pain you shall bring forth - Gen. 3, 16). The same obtains in the supernatural order as in the natural. What did not our Lord suffer to re-create us in Himself! And St. Paul: *Filioli quos iterum parturio* (My little children, with whom I am again in travail - Gal. 4, 19). And the Most Blessed Virgin, at the foot of the Cross, to become our Mother!

The solidity and beauty of a house is in proportion to the exertion involved in laying its foundation and erecting it. The deeper the roots, the stronger the tree. The more a mother suffers, the sooner she will give birth. *Mortui estis et vita vestra abscondita est cum Christo in Deo* (You have died and your life is hid with Christ in God - Col. 3, 3).

But God has spared me so much. I have hardly suffered anything. I suffered much from my shortcomings, but not as a result of love for God and zeal for His glory. I have been a sick man but not a soldier. And so the Society is ever in the hidden travail of giving birth. Its spirit is not vigorous, its members are not strong and united, its growth is not secure; it lives on water; it vegetates.

My God, here I am, with Jesus in the Garden of Olives. Is it Your will that all should forsake me? That all should disown me? That no one should recognize me? That I should be something of a burden, a hindrance, a source of embarrassment?

*En ego, Domine, hic ure, hic seca; hic exue, hic humilia; amorem tui solum cum gratia da mihi hodie, et eras crucem, cum penuria, sed scabellum esse tui, in sanctissima Hostia.*

(Here I am, Lord; burn, cut, strip, humiliate; give me but Your love and Your grace for today, Your Cross with poverty for tomorrow, provided You let me be the footstool of the most sacred Host.)

\* \* \* \* \*

## Thanksgiving-Perpetual vow of personality

Towards the end of my thanksgiving, I made the perpetual vow of my personality to our Lord Jesus Christ in the hands of the Most Blessed Virgin and of St. Joseph, under the patronage of St. Benedict (his feast); nothing for me as a person - with a prayer for the grace that is essential to this gift: nothing by me. The model of this gift: the Incarnation of the Word.

Just as in the mystery of the Incarnation, the sacred humanity was deprived of its own person, so that it no longer sought itself as, an end, no longer had any interest of its own, no longer acted for its own sake - for it had another person substituted to its own, that is, the Person of the Son of God, who sought only the interest of His Father and had His eyes fixed on Him always and in all things; so must I be without any desires and interests of my own, and have none but those of Jesus Christ, who abides in me to live therein for His Father and gives Himself in Communion to do just that in me: *Sicut misit me vivens Pater et ego vivo propter Patrem; et qui manducat me et ipse vivet propter me* (As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me will live because of Me - John 6, 57).

It is as if my Savior said: In sending Me through the Incarnation, the Father has torn out of Me every root of self-seeking by leaving Me without a human person and uniting Me to a divine Person in order to make Me live for Him; in the same way, through Communion, you will live for Me, for I shall be living in you. I will fill your soul with My desires and with My life, which will consume and reduce to nothing everything that is personal to you; so much so that it will be I instead of you that shall live and shall desire everything in you. Thus will you be entirely invested with Me; My heart will beat within your body, My soul will act through your soul; your heart will be the receptacle and the pulsation of My heart.

I shall be the person of your personality<sup>32</sup> and your personality will be the life of My person in you. *Vivo ego jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus* (It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me - Gal. 2, 20).

\* \* \* \* \*

*Imitation, Book III, Chapter 48: Ibi sum ubi cogitatio, mea est. Ibi est frequenter cogitatio mea ubi est quod amo. Sed beatus ille homo, qui propter te Domine omnibus creaturis licentiam abunde tribuit; qui naturae vim facit, et concupiscentias carnis fervore spiritus crucifigit; ut serenata conscientia, puram tibi orationem offerat, dignusque sit angelicis. interesse choris, omnibus terrenis foris et intus exclusis.*

(Wherever my thoughts are, there am I; and my thoughts are usually with the things I love.

But happy is the man who for Your sake, Lord, has, so to speak, given all things created notice to quit; the man who gets tough with nature and crucifies the lusts of his body with the burning desires of his spirit. Such a man has put his conscience at rest and can offer You unblemished prayer; by closing the door on earthly interests, both in his life and in his heart, he is worthy to mingle with the choirs of the angels.)

---

March 21 - Second meditation

## Vow of personality

This vow must be the greatest, the most sacred of all the others, since it is the vow of the person in me, and of the person ever free to renew the gift of self.

Since it is to the person that honor, love and ownership are always referred, I can then no longer accept for myself either honor, love or possessions. And if anyone gives anything to me as a person, he is giving it to what does not exist. And if I had the misfortune of accepting it, I would be taking

back from God the gift of my person, which would certainly be something of a sacrilegious theft, a robbery in the sacrifice.

True honor consists in one's real right to it; a servant does not deserve the honors that are due his master.

Love consists in an exchange; but when someone, as a person, can no longer claim his heart as his own, he can no longer be loved for his own sake, nor can he love anyone other than the beloved of his soul, Jesus Christ. To accept love for oneself would then be adultery of the heart, which God forbid.

Ownership of goods supposes a person capable of ownership; but I am no longer a person with the right to amass a fortune for myself or to build up a career. I have to serve my Master, to watch over His possessions and invest them at a profit, to honor Him and not myself with them.

In His evangelical life our Lord respected admirably this law of oneness of person; He disclaimed everything attributed to His human nature as a person: *Gloriam meam non quaero* (I do not seek My own glory - John 8, 50); *Quid me dicis bonum? Nemo bonus nisi solus Deus* (Why do you call Me good? No one is good but God alone - Luke 18, 19); *Filius hominis non habet ubi caput reclinet* (The Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head - Matt. 8, 20).

He could do nothing on His own; He was continually under orders of His divinity. He merely carried out orders, repeated the words of His Father, and did the works the Father Himself did. *Pater in me manens, ipse facit opera* (The Father who dwells in Me does His works - John 14, 10).

Exteriorly, our Lord acted like a human person; for instance, while living at Nazareth: *Et erat subditus illis* (And... He was obedient to them - Luke 2, 51). During His evangelical life, He simply called Himself one that was sent.

There it is, O my soul: you will be the members, the faculties of Jesus Christ so that He may live and act in you in all things for the glory of His Father.

---

March 21 - Third meditation

### Same subject

Somewhat tired after my pilgrimage to St. Paul and to St. Benedict.<sup>33</sup>

---

March 22 - First meditation

### Union of our Lord with us

I meditated on the union of our Lord with us, a union that ought to be the life of the vow of my personality; *absque sui proprio* (perfect self-abnegation).

Why does our Lord desire that union so much? Why does He ask for it? Indeed, is such a union possible, fitting and beneficial to our Lord?

Our Lord desires that union in order the better to glorify His Father on earth by incarnating Himself in a way in every Christian and, by so doing, to become, as it were, the divine personality of each one and do for the Christian united with Him what His divine Person did for the actions of His own human nature, that is, elevate these actions, by the divine dignity of His Person and the strength and power of that union, to the point of making them divinely meritorious, of transforming them into divine actions.

It is our Lord therefore who desires to live again in us and continue through us as His members the glorification of His Father, so that the Heavenly Father may look favorably on all our actions;

that seeing and receiving them as coming from His divine Son our Savior, He may be pleased with them; that He may live and reign in all men as in so many members of Jesus Christ and, by this life and reign, paralyze and destroy the kingdom of His enemy Satan; that He may receive from all creatures and all creation the honor and glory due Him.

It is then for the love and glory of His Father that our Lord desires union with us. That is why St. Paul calls us so often *membra Christi* (members of Christ - I Cor. 6, 15), *corpus Christi* (the body of Christ - I Cor. 12, 27). That is why our Lord said to His disciples at the Last Supper: *Manete in me* (Abide in Me - John 15, 3); *Manete in dilectione mea* (Abide in My love - John 15, 9). That is the gift of self since we no longer abide in self, since we work for the one with whom we dwell and are at His disposal.

Our Lord desires that union out of love for us in order to ennoble us in Himself; the members of a family share the honor of the head of the family, of the one that rules the family. Our Lord desires that union in order one day to be able to communicate to us His heavenly glory and all that goes with it, power, beauty, and perfect happiness.

And since our Lord can communicate His glory to us only as His members, and His own members are holy, He wants very much to sanctify us in order to unite us to Himself and make us live His life.

By that union our actions become the actions of our Lord<sup>34</sup> and take on the merit of His actions according to their degree of union with Him; and that degree is proportionate to the life, virtues and spirit of Jesus in us. Thence the beautiful saying of St. Gregory, *Christianus alter Christus* (The Christian is another Christ) - [See Marmion, *Christ, the Life of the Soul*, Ch. II] ; and of St. Paul: *Vivo ego, jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus* (It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in Me - Gal. 2, 20); *Non ego solus, sed gratia Dei mecum* (Though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me - I Cor. 15, 10).

And when this union is simultaneously a union of the Christian, of the priest and of the religious, it has a three, fold dignity in our Lord Jesus Christ and a threefold corresponding power; it is thrice sacred and consecrated<sup>35</sup>; it has three sources of grace and glory.

This union is the fruit of the union of the love of Jesus Christ; it represents the full intent of divine Providence in both the natural and the supernatural order: that is, to lead man to union with our Lord Jesus Christ, to foster and perfect that union, since upon it depend all the glory of God and the sanctification of souls, in a word, the fruit of the Redemption.

This meditation, so beautiful by itself and so good in itself, did me good, even if I dallied too much with the truth and excellence of it and not enough with the practical side or, at least, with acts of the heart.

I renewed my recent vow and the three resolutions dealing with thoughts, with adorations at the first ring of the bell and with my conversations - before, during and after.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Imitation*, Book IV, Chapter 17: *O Deus meus, amor aeternus, totum bonum meum, felicitas interminabilis... offero tibi totum cordis mei affectum.... Quaecumque potest pia mens concipere et desiderare, haec omnia tibi, cum summa veneratione et intimo fervore praebeo et offero. Nihil opto mihi reservare, sed me et omnia mea tibi sponte et libentissime immolare.*

(O my God, my everlasting love, my all-embracing good, my bliss without end ... I offer You my heart's whole love.... Whatever a devout soul can imagine or desire, that do I offer You, that do I make You a gift of, with the deepest reverence, the love of my inmost being. Nothing do I choose to keep back for myself, but freely and with all my heart I make an offering to You of myself and all that is mine.)

### My union with our Lord

1 - The union of Jesus Christ with me will depend on my union with Him; *Manete in me et ego in vobis* (Abide in Me, and I in you - John 15, 3); *Qui manet in me et ego in eo* (He who abides in Me, and I in him - John 15, 5).

I am therefore certain that Jesus will abide in me if I want to abide in Him. Just as the air, according to the law of elasticity, rushes into a vacuum, and water, according to the law of gravity, rushes into the lowlands, so the Spirit of our Lord fills the vacuum which the soul makes in herself.

This union of man with our Lord constitutes man's dignity; dignity comes from the nature of the person that commands. Such was the divine dignity of the human nature assumed by Jesus Christ in the womb of the Most Blessed Virgin and elevated to a divine level by its hypostatic union with the Person of the Word.

By my union with our Lord, I become not a part of divinity, not something divine and thereby worthy of adoration, but something sacred and holy - like the dignity accruing to the relatives of a king according to the greater or lesser degree of their relationship to his person.

With our Lord, what makes for closer relationship is the degree of one's participation in His sanctity: *Quicumque fecerit voluntatem Patris mei qui in caelis est, ipse meus frater et soror et mater est* (Whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother, and sister and mother - Matt. 12, 50). St. Paul said: *Haec est voluntas Dei sanctificatio vestra*, (This is the will of God, your sanctification - I Thess. 4, 3). *Sancti estote quia ego sanctus sum* (You shall be holy, for ... I am holy - Lev. 19, 2). Such is the participation in divinity spoken of by St. Peter: *Divinae consortes naturae* (Partakers of the divine nature - II Pet. 1,4).

2 - From this union comes the power of man. *Sicut palmes non potest ferre fructum a semetipso nisi manserit in vite, sic nec vos nisi in me manseritis.... Sine me nihil potestis facere* (As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.... Apart from Me you can do nothing - John 15, 4 and 5). That is quite clear: *Nihil* (Nothing). If therefore the fruitfulness of the branch comes from its union with the trunk, my spiritual fruitfulness then comes from my union with Jesus Christ: *Ego sum vita* (I am the way - John 14, 6); from the union of my thoughts with His thoughts, of my words with His words, of my desires with His desires, of my actions with His actions.

The members of my body receive life from the blood of my heart, and the blood receives it from food; *Ego sum panis vitae; qui manducat me habet vitam aeternam* (I am the bread of life.... He who eats Me has eternal life - John 6, 48 and 54).

Such therefore is the principle and center of the power of my holiness and wisdom; union with our Lord. Barrenness of soul comes from the lack of that union; the branch has dried up, has been cut off.

From that union comes merit, a merit based on partnership. Our Lord takes my action and makes it His own, renders it deserving of eternal life, of an eternal reward because of the new dignity conferred on it - although only to a limited degree because of the imperfection of my nature. Everything then becomes deserving of a celestial merit,<sup>36</sup> due to this divine partnership; and the closer is this union with Jesus Christ, the greater also shall be the glory of sanctity.

Oh! How can I have so long neglected this divine union! So many merits lost! So many actions barren! So many graces without fruit! And me especially, with so many means, with such great and easy profits at hand! Alas!

Worthless tree! How merciful of God not to have already cut it down!

### Crosses in our Lord

When I am afflicted by these exterior crosses, how I feel within me the need to hide in the divine Heart of Jesus in order to be sheltered from every wind and man-made storm! My God, what a wretched thing is poor humanity! Were not Your glory and Your will involved, how I would go hide myself and place myself alone at Your feet and beneath Your feet. But You want me to suffer all these human afflictions, to live in the midst of them and with them and almost on them! So be it! Amen!

At least I shall be the better able to glorify You by patience, by meekness, by humiliations, by the loss of my freedom, by continual self-denial; in the midst of it all, favor me with the serenity of Your countenance, with interior peace in You and with love for my neighbor. Thus I will serve God my Savior more self-denyingly, more devoutly, more like a soldier - God be praised for it - but like an orderly of the great King, an orderly without a name of his own, without personal authority, without any special glory, like *minister Christi* (minister of Christ - Rom. 15, 16).

---

### Life of union

For a long time our Lord has been drawing me to this life of union by showing me the emptiness and the danger of creatures, my own nothingness, etc.

Ae wants to be my whole life.

1 - The object of my studies, of my ministry. It is therefore at His feet that I must educate myself. What good have I done when I relied solely on my work, on my studies, on my scant experience, and even on the experience of others? Nothing, less than nothing; I spoiled everything and had to start all over from scratch. The whole thing was worthless, for the first inspiration of it did not come from our Lord, from divine truth.

2 - The love of my heart, the power of that heart, its peace, its joy and, to that end, its center. My heart is so unhappy when it is alone, when it senses that the Heart of Jesus is unresponsive, is aggrieved or offended by me. What a torment! This divine Heart ought to be my natural habitat as water is to the fish, as air to one who breathes. I die, or at least agonize, away from this divine Heart.

3 - The strength of my will, By nature I am wanting in strength of body and of will. I am ailing. I am totally exhausted, and I could soon become helpless. My mind is so lacking in knowledge and consistence. My health is shattered. I really feel that my health, like my mind, is sustained only by our Lord and in our Lord, that there is a grace of strength in a well-kept schedule, that there is a grace, a superhuman strength in intellectual pursuits.

It is the grace of one's calling. I would be much stronger if I were more obedient to the first inspiration, if I mortified the mind more, *my* mind, the subtlety of my intellect, the curiosity of my reason, or, to put it better, if I were *humilis spiritu* (humble of spirit).

I must therefore be united to our Lord Jesus Christ as His human nature was to the authority of His divine Person, as Jesus was totally to His Father. But in order to be so, this union must be a vital one, received from Him and communicated by Him. This branch must first be warmed by the sun in order to receive the flowing life-sap. The seasoning sun which draws this divine fluid is recollection, holy desires, prayer, the gift of self - in a word, love. *Veni Domine Jesu* (Come, Lord Jesus - Apoc. 22, 20), *vita mea et unica spes mea* (my life and my only hope).



\* \* \* \* \*

*Imitation*, Book III, Chapter 43: *Fili, non te moveant pulchra et subtilia hominum dicta. Non enim est regnum Dei in sermone, sed in virtute.*

*Attende verba mea quae corda accendunt, et mentes illuminant; inducunt compunctionem, et variam ingerunt consolationem. .*

*Nunquam ad hoc legas verbum ut doctior aut sapientior possis videri.*

*Ego sum qui doceo hominem scientiam et clariorem intelligentiam parvulis tribuo, quam ab homine possit doceri.*

(My son, you must not let yourself be impressed by the fine and clever things you hear men say; it is power that builds up the kingdom of God, not words.

Pay heed to My words, which bring fire to the heart and light to the mind, piercing the heart with sorrow for sin and filling it with comfort in many ways.

Never read anything to enable you to appear better educated or wiser than your fellows.

I am He who teaches men whatever they know; to those of child-like simplicity I give a clearer understanding than any man can teach.)

That is the result of this morning's meditation. When will I ever surrender totally to this good Master!

Study for its own sake has caused me to lose so much time, so many graces, and so much devotion.

---

*March 23 - Second meditation*

### **Sustenance of union with Jesus Christ**

An act of union with our Lord is easy, but a life of habitual union is more difficult for a soul as weak and as flighty as mine, due to the enslavement of intellectual pursuits, to the lure of external activity. My soul is like gas in a belljar under water which the least bit of air causes to escape. Then, I am so easily influenced by everything that happens, so slothful when everything is calm.

My God, how can I live a life of union?

A grace of enlightenment made me understand that the best and only means is to nurture and fortify within me the interior man that is Jesus Christ, to conceive Him, to bring Him forth and make Him grow by all my actions, readings, prayers and adorations, and in all the relationships of my life. But to do that, I must renounce constantly the personality of Adam and live a life of dependence on Jesus in me; the frequency of ejaculatory prayers with that idea in mind will end by making the thought and sentiment of it natural to me.

---

*March 23 - Third meditation*

### **Center of union**

Where does union with Jesus Christ take place? Within me. That union is effected in Jesus Christ: *manete in me* (Abide in Me - John 15, 3). Whether as a practice or as a virtue, this union takes place in Jesus Christ within me.

That is most certain! *Si quis diligit me, sermonem meum servabit, et Pater meus diligit eum et ad eum veniemus et mansionem apud eum faciemus* (If a man loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him - John 14, 23). *Ego*

*in eis and tu in me (Pater) ut sint consummati in unum* (I in them and You in Me, that they may become perfectly one - John 17, 23).

St. Paul called our body *templum Spiritus Sancti* (a temple of the Holy Spirit - I Cor. 6, 19); He therefore dwells in us. Jesus Christ gave Him to us *ut maneat in aeternum* (to be with you forever - John 14, 16). The Holy Spirit tells us: *Regnum Dei intra vos* (The kingdom of God is in the midst of you - Luke 17, 21); *Omnis gloria filiae regis ab intus* (With all kinds of wealth the princess is decked - Ps. 45, 13); *Adveniat regnum tuum - id est, regna super nos* (Your kingdom come, that is, rule over us - Luke 11, 2, and Matt. 6, 10 - paraphrase of the *Pater*). And the *Imitation* says: *Eia anima fidelis, praepara huic sponso cor tuum, quatenus ad te venire et in te habitare dignetur* (Up with you, then, faithful soul, get your heart ready for the coming of this true Lover, or He will never consent to come and make His dwelling in you - Bk. II, Ch. 1). And St. Paul: *Vivit vero in me Christus* (But Christ lives in me - Gal. 2, 20); *in me* (in, Me), that is clear enough.

But why has our Lord chosen the interior of man as the center of that union? In order to force man to re-enter into himself.

Man fled himself as one flees, a criminal; he was afraid of himself as one is afraid of a prison. Man is all that. He is ashamed of himself, is a horror to himself; that is why he flees himself, takes leave of himself and clings to everything outside himself. As a result of man's desertion of himself, God also finds Himself alone and abandoned by His creature, which was to be His temple and the throne of His love.

God then is unable to work in man or with man. In order therefore to force him to re-enter into himself, into his soul, God comes into him. It is within him that God wants to converse with him: *Audiam quid loquatur in me Dominus Deus* (Let me hear what God the Lord will speak - Ps. 85, 8). It is in man's heart that He wishes to dwell: *Redite ad cor* (Recall it to mind - Is. 46, 8); *Praebe fili cor tuum mihi* (My son, give Me your heart - Prov. 23, 26). He wants the soul to be the one that opens the door to Him as to a brother and a spouse: *Ecce sto ad ostium et pulso.... Aperi mihi, soror mea sponsa* (Behold, I stand at the door and knock.... Open to Me, My sister, My love - Apoc. 3, 20, and Cant. 5, 2).

Our Lord comes into us sacramentally in order to live therein spiritually. The Sacrament is the casing which encloses Him and is broken open<sup>37</sup> by our heart's love just as ether, enclosed in a capsule, escapes in the stomach under the action of natural heat.

Our Lord wants to make of the interior of man His real temple - *Anima iusti sedes Dei* (the soul of the just man is the throne of God), says St. Gregory - so that man may have no difficulty in going to his Lord Jesus but may find Him easily and always at his disposal as his Master, his Model and his Grace; so that he need only recollect himself within himself in Jesus. Thus man can at any moment offer to his Lord the homage of his actions, the love of his heart, and can fix his eyes on Him with a look that says and surrenders everything.

As. the *Imitation* beautifully has it: *Frequens illi visitatio cum homine interno, dulcis sermocinatio, grata consolatio, multa pax, familiaritas stupenda nimis* (Where He finds a man whose thoughts go deep, He is a frequent visitor; such pleasant converse, such welcome words of comfort, such deep repose, such intimate friendship, are well nigh past belief - Bk. II, Ch. 1).

That truth astonishes me more than it elates me. Is it possible for God thus to pursue a soul, to place Himself at the disposal of that soul, to dwell in such a vile body, in such a wretched, earthly, ungrateful soul!

And yet, it is divinely true! I believe it, I thank You for it, O my God. I adore You in Yourself.

### Jesus Christ, the guest of man

Our Lord is therefore the guest of my soul and of my body since He is in me; that me of mine is composed of my body and of my soul.

He must therefore rule over the one and the other since, by my vow, He is that *me*,<sup>38</sup> is what a pilot is on his ship, a master in, his house, a father in his family, a soul in the body she animates - God being the life of the one and the other.

We owe a guest three things: the respect in keeping with his rank; the companionship of a friend; and the homage of a splendid banquet. It is the feast of the royalty of friendship.

Such are the three duties I owe to our Lord in me.

*Respect*, in my body, watchfulness over the temptations and the unruly passions of my soul in order to honor Him and not offend Him.

*Companionship*, since He is the first and real Master, the kind Friend, the divine Confidant of my joys and sorrows, the center of all my royal affection, the treasure of my heart.

*Banquet*. That is the homage of all my pleasures, the glory of all my actions, the end of, love of all my sacrifices; those are the divine food of the Savior, the living waters of faith and charity He thirsts for. *Da mihi bibere* (Give Me a drink - John 4, 7); *Sitio* (I thirst - John 19, 28).

But I am fully aware of it: honey is sweet, light radiates joy, fire brings warmth to chilled members. Mutual friendship is all that in the world; why is not our Lord all that to me? Because I am too imperfect, too weak. It might turn out to my detriment or at least to my lesser good. There are certain flighty temperaments that require a dose of bitterness, certain slaves a few strokes of the lash, certain over-sensitive souls a similar treatment; that's me.

\* \* \* \* \*

(Crosses + + +) See *March 20*

\* \* \* \* \*

*Imitation*, Book III, Chapter 27: *Fili ... quare vano moerore consumeris? Cur superfluis curis fatigaris? Sta ad beneplacitum meum, et nullum patieris detrimentum.... Confirma me, Deus, per gratiam Sancti Spiritus. Da virtutem corroborari in interiori homine et cor meum ab omni inutili sollicitudine et angore evacuare, nec variis desideriis trahi cujuscumque rei vilis aut pretiosi.... Da mihi, Domine, caelestem sapientiam, ut discam te super omnia quaerere et invenire, super omnia sapere et diligere, et caetera secundum ordinem sapientiae tuae prout sunt intelligere.*

(My son... why waste away in useless grief, why wear yourself out with unnecessary cares? Wait on My good pleasure, and you shall come to no harm.... O God, strengthen me by the grace of Your Holy Spirit. Make firm within me my efforts to be holy; empty my heart of all unnecessary worry and anxiety, and do not let it be carried away by the desire of anything whatsoever, whether worth the having or otherwise... Lord, give me Your heavenly wisdom, that I may learn to seek You and find You above all things else, to love and understand You more than anything; let me see all other things as they are, in the way Your wisdom has disposed them.)

### **The Passion - the compassion of our Lady**

On the Passion - and the compassion of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, of St. John, of St. Mary Magdalen and of the other two Marys.

I considered our Lord speaking His seven last words, and my heart was deeply moved over so much suffering because of our sins; I felt an intense horror for sin.

Then I contemplated the compassion of the saintly souls on Calvary, a compassion as great as the purity of their love, which deepened their feeling of compassion.

What then is sin that it should require such an atonement? What then is divine Justice that it should be so severe without ceasing to be just? It is so because it is true justice.

I united myself to all these adorations of compassion on Calvary, and I also wept over my sins.

---

March 24 - Third meditation (*not recorded*)

---

March 25 – Annunciation - First meditation

### **On the love of God in the Incarnation**

I meditated on the love of God for fallen man; on the love of the Father giving His only Son in the Incarnation that this Son might become like unto man, man's brother according to the flesh; on the Father's choosing for His Son a form of life, lowly, poor and suffering for the duration of His mortal life. In the gift of the Incarnation, everything was regulated and determined.

This gift included all the stages through which a human nature passes in order to reach maturity: conception, birth, childhood, etc.

This divine gift determined how the Incarnate Word would be the *via* (way), first of all a model for 30 years at Nazareth; the *veritas* (truth) during His evangelical life; and the *vita* (life) by His death on the Cross, like the brazen serpent of old in the desert, *vita* (life) also like the bread in the desert, the manna, *vita* (life) substantially in every man through the Eucharist, the extension of the Incarnation, so that every man, through the Eucharist, shares the honor, the happiness and the graces of the Most Blessed Virgin at Nazareth and of the Apostles.

And we must add *gloria* (glory). Our Lord reinstates, our dignity and restores our honor by becoming our relative according to the flesh, our associate according to the spirit of faith, and our Communion; then in heaven we are *coheredes Christi* (fellow heirs with Christ - Rom. 8, 17); *divinae consortes naturae et gloriae* (partakers of the divine nature and glory - 2 Pet. 1, 4 - not textually quoted).

Is it possible for the Most Holy Trinity to have so loved fallen man, and each man in particular! *O si scires donum Dei et quis est qui dicit tibi, da mihi bibere* (If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, Give me a drink - John 4, 10).

Oh! If man only knew what is the Incarnation and how much God loves him! What God does for him: the Father who gives him His Word; the Word who gives Himself to him, unto Calvary and the Eucharist; the Holy Spirit who makes the Word incarnate in Mary, present on the altar through the priest, and makes Him live in every man! But who thinks of all these marvels of God's love for man? Who meditates on them? Who adores them? Who glorifies them? Who loves the Word Incarnate? Alas! Our Lord is not known, is not preached, even by priests! He is not loved even by

His own! Love is not an act of zeal, an isolated act of virtue; love is a *life* - just as it was the human and divine life of Jesus Christ.

But should we not have both contemplatives and apostles in the Society,<sup>40</sup> both adorers and firebrands, since our Lord wants this eucharistic fire to set the world ablaze? Who better than religious of the Most Blessed Sacrament can and should spread it everywhere and make our Lord known, loved and adored everywhere?

We are not doing enough for Him. Who knows but that our Lord might want these two arms, these two flames, one to rise like fire towards the divine Host and the other to rise and spread out like the rays of the sun!

I will ask our Lord today what is His holy and adorable will.

The sight of so much love frightened me. What must the soul think of that love after death, and especially the soul that has forgotten, neglected, offended and spurned it? How she must cast herself with shame and horror into hell and say to herself: "So much love on the part of God and so much ingratitude on my part! I did not think of it, I forgot it, I was not aware of it." All that is no excuse for her crime, infidelity and contempt.

But also what ecstasy for the soul that sees the veil drawn aside, the glory of love appear, and receives the embrace of joy and love of our Lord Jesus Christ - as eager to crown her as she to be crowned!

\* \* \* \* \*

*Imitation, Book I, Chapter 2: Quando homo ad hoc pervenit quod de nulla creatura consolationem suam, quaerit, tunc ei Deus primo perfecte sapere incipit; tunc etiam bene contentus de omni eventu rerum erit. Tunc nec pro magno laetabitur, nec pro modico contristabitur, sed ponit se integre et fiducialiter in Deo qui est ei omnia in omnibus: cui nihil utique perit nec moritur, sed omnia ei vivunt, et ad nutum incuncter deserviunt.*

(It's not till a man reaches the stage of refusing consolation from any created thing, that he gets his first real taste of God. By that time, he has learned to be content, however things fall out; he won't be elated by big results, or disappointed with small ones. In utter confidence he takes his stand upon God, who is everything to him in every connection; the God for whom nothing is ever lost, nothing ever perishes - to whom everything is alive, obeying, instantly, the least expression of His will.)

---

March 25 - Second and Third meditation

### **At the Minerva - The Holy Father<sup>41</sup>**

March 26 - First meditation

### **The Most Blessed Virgin's adoration of the Word Incarnate**

Here, here is my model, Mary my Mother, the first adorer of the Word Incarnate. How perfect in itself must have been this first adoration of the Virgin Mother, how pleasing to God and rich in graces!

How perfect must have been Mary's adoration at the first instant of the Incarnation!

1 - An adoration of humility, of self-abasement before the sovereign Majesty of the Word, before the choice He had made of His poor handmaid, before the magnitude of so much goodness and love for her and for all men.

Such must be the first act, the first sentiment of my adoration at Holy Communion; such was that of Elizabeth: *Unde hoc mihi* (Why is this granted me - Luke 1, 43); of the Centurion: *Domine, non sum dignus* (Lord, I am not worthy - Matt. 8, 8).

2 - The second act of adoration of the Most Blessed Virgin must have been naturally an act of joyous thanksgiving to God for His infinite and ineffable goodness to man in giving him a Savior, of humble thanksgiving for favoring her, although unworthy, with so much grace and kindness in making her His happy handmaid.

The gratitude of the Most Blessed Virgin must have been quite naturally an act of love at the sight of so much goodness, an act of exaltation, of praise, and of benediction. Thanksgiving is all that; it is the effusion of self into the generous and loving benefactor. The gratitude of man is the very heart of love.

3 - The third act of adoration of the Most Blessed Virgin must have been an act of devotedness, *Ecce ancilla Domini* (Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord - Luke 1, 38), the offering and gift of herself, of her whole life to His service; happy to serve Him but regretting that she was of so little account, that she had so little to offer, that she could do so little to serve Him as worthily as He deserved; desirous of serving Him according to His wishes and at the cost of all the sacrifices it might please Him to ask for, all too happy to be able to please Him and thus to reciprocate His love for man in the Incarnation.

4 - The fourth act of adoration of the Most Blessed Virgin must have been an act of compassion for poor sinners, for whom the Word of God was taking flesh out of love in order to save them. She must have also interested His infinite mercy in their behalf and offered herself to atone for them, to make penance for them in order to obtain their forgiveness, their return to God; in order that they might have the happiness of knowing their Creator and Savior, of loving and serving Him, and of thus rendering to the Most Holy Trinity the honor and glory it has a right to from every creature, but especially from man, the tender object of the mercies and love of this God so great and so good.

Oh! How I should like to adore our Lord as this good Mother adored Him! I asked our Lord for a great grace, that of giving me the adorer that was the Most Blessed Virgin for my real Mother, of granting me something of her grace, of her state of continual adoration while she carried the Word Incarnate in her womb so pure, in that heaven of virtues and of love so great, in that spotless sun.

I feel this would be one of the capital graces of my life. - Today I will make all the acts of the four quarter-hours of my adoration in union with this Mother of adorers, the Queen of the Cenacle.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Imitation, Book III, Chapter 43: Cum multa legeris et cognoveris ad unum semper oportet redire principium. Ego sum qui doceo hominem scientiam et clariorem intelligentiam parvulis tribuo quam ab homine possit doceri.*

*Cui ego loquor, cito sapiens erit et multum in spiritu proficiet.*

(You may have done a lot of reading, and found a great deal about a variety of subjects, but the basic fact you must always come back to is this: that I am He who teaches men whatever they know.

To those of childlike simplicity I give a clearer understanding than any man can teach.)

\* \* \* \* \*

Oh! How I would need to place myself for good at the feet of our Lord in order to be taught by Him and to start with the knowledge of the heart, which gives a clearer understanding than all the studies of a lifetime!

---

March 26 - Second meditation (*Adoration of the Forty Hours*)<sup>42</sup>

---

March 26 - Third meditation (*In the evening, the same*)

---

March 27 - First meditation (*Forty Hours*)

### Review

I again placed all my troubles at the feet of our Lord, they all came back worse than ever as a result of two afternoons spent too frivolously.

*Boredom.* I would like to leave. The news I received brought on this moodiness. How true it is: *Bellum, tristitia et servitus - et saepe iniquitas, injustitia, suspicatio, expansio ligans, consolatio emolliens - a tali peste libera me, Domine* (Strife, sadness, and servitude - and often sin, unfairness to others, suspicion, an expansiveness that enslaves, a consolation that weakens - from such a plague, deliver me, O Lord.)

\* \* \* \* \*

I have placed myself anew in the hands of our Lord, begging Him not to listen to me when I behave like a child. *Fiat voluntas tua* (Your will be done - Matt. 26, 42).

False energy, false courage, violence of means, all that is but the flaring up of a restless soul, of pride in disguise, of a heart that is ailing or is too sensitive. Come, O my soul, let us gather a bit of honey and, like the bee, learn how to increase its store every day.

Enslavement to study, always for the sake of getting to the bottom of things, always without unction because I leave God out of it and study with my mind only. And so the three hours I devoted to study yesterday instead of attending the ceremony<sup>43</sup> were a total loss; one must thrive on one's work and not always exhaust oneself as I do.

*The mind.* What is this assault made on the mind as soon as I get to know someone? I paid dearly for it. All these people were like so many bees buzzing around me; my place was near the Blessed Sacrament. Curiosity in devotion is but a pious distraction and a waste.

*Conversation.* Alas, what weakness! I no longer know how to remain silent in time of trial or of concentration and mental fatigue; I think I get some relief out of it; I labor under the impression that I am pursuing some good or something, and then I forget my resolutions, I forget that my soul is in the hands of our Lord, and I talk like a fool either to please others or to seek my personal advantage.

That is what I submitted to our Lord during my adoration hour. My soul, however, minded her own business; the small sacrifice of rising in spite of fatigue was doubtless agreeable to our Lord.

I will therefore add to the three (sic), *Deus in adjutorium* (O God, come to my assistance).

\* \* \* \* \*

*Imitation, Book IV, Chapter 11: O quam munda debent esse manus illae, quam purum. os, quam sanctum corpus, quam immaculatum cor erit sacerdotis ad quem toties ingreditur Auctor puritatis!*

*Ex ore sacerdotis nihil nisi sanctum, nihil nisi honestum et utile procedere debet verbum qui tam saepe Christi accipit Sacramentum.*

*Oculi ejus simplices et pudici qui Christi corpus solent intueri. Manus purae et in coelum elevatae quae Creatorem coeli et terrae solent contrectare.*

*Adjuvet nos gratia tua, Omnipotens Deus, ut qui officium sacerdotale suscepimus, digne ac devote tibi in omni puritate et conscientia bona famulari valeamus.*

(How frequently does the source of all purity enter into a priest! Then how pure should those hands of his, be, how unblemished his mouth, how holy his body, how free from stain his heart.

From the mouth of a priest, who so often receives the Sacrament of Christ, no words should come forth but such as are holy, becoming and of benefit to others.

His eyes should be simple and chaste, for they often look upon the Body of Christ, his hands pure and lifted up to heaven, for they often handle the Creator of heaven and earth.

Almighty God, may we be helped by Your grace; that we who have received the office of priesthood may be enabled to serve You worthily and devoutly in utter purity and with a good conscience.)

---

*March 27 - Second meditation (Forty Hours)*

### **Jesus, our King**

I adored our Lord as King on His throne, a King of love who is all love, all gift.

I thanked Him for having done me the honor and the grace of being an adorer exclusively and *ex officio* (by calling).

I dedicated myself entirely to His service and glory.

Then my soul began to consider this divine kingship in itself; what it cost this divine King; how we are in fear of this kingdom of love, and have so little esteem and love for it; how we keep away from this throne. O my God!

We pray to the saints and to the Most Blessed Virgin, we make vocal prayers without effort, but if it is a matter of exploring the love of Jesus-Hostia and adoring Him with our heart, we do nothing.

That is what the Society must do: honor its divine King with its love and its zeal. How few are willing to share our beautiful vocation and, among us, how few are the true religious adorers, beginning with me, who am so far from the goal, so inept through my own fault, so lacking in zeal for this interior kingdom!

How I grieved over the thought of doing wrong to the Society, to her children and to the glory of God! And what caused me to grieve still more is to see how little I try to improve. What more can our Lord give me? What better lot than mine! I ended by casting myself at the feet of our Lord.

---

*March 27 - Third meditation (Forty Hours - A difficult meditation)*

---

*March 28 - First meditation - Adoration*

### **What more could our Lord do for me?**

*Quid debui facere vineae meae et non feci?* (What more was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it? - Is.5,4).

I made that the subject of my meditation. I considered that in His Sacrament of love, our Lord could not make Himself<sup>44</sup>

more little - a particle;

more humble - united to lifeless species;

more poor - He owns nothing;

more patient - He is bound to the condition of a motionless creature;

more gentle - He is all love;

more generous - He gives everything with Himself.



He cannot therefore be more loving; and yet He is not loved, His love is not appreciated; He is not even known, and very little even by His own.

He has devoted workers, a few devout adorers by vocation, but so very few spouses, so very few friends who visit Him out of affection, who converse with Him heart to heart, who are devoted to Him purely for His sake.

Our Lord favored me with an important grace in this adoration: that of giving myself to Him *non in sermone sed in virtute* (not in talk but in power - I Cor. 4, 20). I have done enough pondering and studying; I must now be up and doing; it is impossible to make the natural supernatural, to make self-love a divine love. I must then start from this: *Regnum Dei in virtute, virtus in sacrificio, sacrificium in abnegatione et cruce Christi, abnegatio ex amore et ad amorem* (The kingdom of God is in power, power is in sacrifice, sacrifice is in abnegation and in the Cross of Christ, abnegation comes from love and leads to love).

Therefore, *Veni mittere gladium, veni separare* (I have come to bring a sword ... I have come to set a man against.... - Matt. 10, 34, 35). *Qui non odit animam suam* (He who loves his life - John 12, 25). To come down to the practical: I must begin by overcoming my eagerness to talk, my impetuosity, my harshness in judging men. There is nothing of the spirit of our Lord in all that; at bottom it is self-conceit, and had I to face those concerned, I would cringe.

I must stop taking pride in my acquaintances, in my friends, in God, etc. All that is so much smoke and often pride.

Learn, O my soul, to say only what Jesus Christ would say were He in your place; learn to remain silent, to let others talk and to be content with answering.

*Imitation, Book III, Chapter 55: Ipsa gratia fortitudo mea, ipsa consilium confert et auxilium; cunctis hostibus potentior est, et sapientior universis sapientibus.*

*Velle bonum mihi adjacet, ut Paulus, perficere autem non invenio.*

*Tua ergo me, Domine, gratia semper praeveniat et sequatur.*

(Grace is my strength, bringing me counsel and help, mightier than all my enemies, wiser than all who are wise.

Like Paul, though the will to do good is within me, I cannot find the strength to obey it.

So let Your grace, Lord, always go in front of me and behind me.)

---

March 28 - Second adoration

### Our privilege

On seeing the Blessed Sacrament taken down from its throne 45 to be returned to its hidden state in the tabernacle, I understood better our happiness and our privilege. How fortunate we are! With us, it is a perpetual *Corpus Christi*; the throne of love is always set up and is occupied in our midst by the King of glory. How can it be that all do not flw to Him, to His service, to His paternal love?

How is it that I myself am so cold, so matter-of-fact before this burning bush, this Sinai of love, this perpetual Thabor! Alas! Alas! I am still so earthly, so egoistic. I give myself but I take myself back continually. O my God, the time has come for me to lock this chain, or to break this cable which binds me to the shore.

Be my wisdom, give me the gift of fortitude. I ask You only for that grace, for that gift; that is all I need to battle for Your love. I do not want to be wise for myself, nor

virtuous for my sake or for others, nor learned, nor eloquent; I want one thing only, the power of Your love, the power of Your truth, the power of Your service. *Omnia potero in eo qui me confortat* (I can do all things in Him who strengthens me – Phil. 4, 13).

And to begin with today, at the quarter-hours, I shall say: *Deus in adfutorium* (O God, come to my assistance), and in silence....

---

March 28 - Third meditation

### Self-surrender

Our Lord has always been so good to me even when I served Him poorly. Every day His goodness anticipated my needs. Again today, His goodness saw to it that I was told what I wanted to know. At every step this motherly Providence places on my way and, as it were, at my disposal the persons and things that I need or that are helpful to me, and even what I desire-like a child.

Oh! If I were entirely in the hands of God, if I were the true religious of His love and of His glory, the true adorer in the spirit of His love and in the truth of virtue, how much more would our Lord do for me, since then His love would not have to fear lest I be proud, or egoistic, or sensual of heart.

As an act of resignation, I surrendered myself to the holy will of God concerning tomorrow's decision, with the promise not to recriminate at all in case it is negative, or to show bad humor if it is again postponed till later.

I have placed myself at the good pleasure of God, but not in a state of indifference concerning the Cenacle, since I believe that the glory of God is at stake; and in spite of all that the T. R. P. R.<sup>46</sup> told me Sunday against Jerusalem, I am not shaken - all the contrary; we are going there for our Lord alone, at a sacrifice and for purposes of sacrifice.

After all, human judges are but the agents of the holy will of God; their motives are their responsibility; as far as I am concerned, the decision will come from heaven.

---

March 29 - First meditation

### Eucharistic militia

I meditated on the militia of our Lord Jesus Christ. Every man is part of it, and each one plays a subordinate role; He alone is King. Everything comes from Him; everything must serve Him and procure His glory.

Our Lord assigns to each his rank, his position as a commander or as a soldier. He is the reward of everyone and He loves everyone.

Our Lord has three armies.

1 - The first fights His wars in pitched battles in the world; it is composed of the pastors and the faithful.

2 - The second consists of the ministers, the ambassadors, the delegates, the apostolic missionaries, the plenipotentiaries of His mercy, the defenders of His rights, the apostles of His truth and of His love. *Sic nos existimet homo ut ministros Christi, dispensatores mysteriorum Dei* (This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God - I Cor. 4, 1).

3 - The third militia is the one attached to the service of His adorable Person as His bodyguard, His court, His family, in a word, His household. It is the most honored and best loved militia. They

are the 144,000 virgins who follow the Lamb everywhere to the Cenacle on Mount Sion, who are privileged to sing the mysterious canticle of love, who are the virginal brides of the Lamb; they no longer have a name of their own, *Virgines sunt et sequuntur Agnum* (They are virgins and follow the Lamb - Apoc. 14, 4); He is their leader, *et regit eas* (and He is their shepherd).

That militia is the eucharistic militia; it is we. What an honor, what a joy it is to adore Him, to love Him, to glorify Him always like the heavenly court! What a favor it is to act as His bodyguard, to pay Him homage on His throne as His guard of honor!

What a sublime mission it is to be the archangels of His eucharistic royalty, to be sent by Him as messengers of His grace, to kindle a new flame, to erect a new throne, to conquer a new kingdom for Him!

That is our lot.

*Tu autem, O homo unanimes, dux meus et notus meus qui simul mecum dulces capiebas cibos* (But it is you, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend. We used to hold sweet converse together - Ps. 55, 13 and 14).

I thought with sorrow of all those militia commanders who have betrayed our Lord, have demoralized his soldiers and have rebelled against their King, starting with Judas, Diotrophes, Arius, Nestorius, Eutyches, Pelagius, Luther, Jansenius.

And then I thought of all the militias led astray by their leaders and warring against the holy Church of Jesus Christ, against Jesus Christ Himself.

So much evil to atone for! So many soldiers deprived of their leader Jesus Christ! So many selfish and mercenary leaders who work only for themselves. *Quae sua sunt quaerunt, non quae Jesu Christi* (They all look after their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ - Phil. 2, 21).

To every commander our Lord entrusts the mandate of being *via* (the way); to holy Church, of being *veritas* (the truth); He reserves to Himself exclusively the mission of being *vita* (the life).

A commander must therefore always receive his orders from our Lord, see that they are faithfully carried out, and return to Him all the glory of the combat, all the honor of military service.

Such a commander is without a name as a man; his mission is divine. He must never lose sight of His Lord and God, since the Lord is always in the midst of His soldiers and close to His commanders.

Today we have the two great mandates of this militia: to serve and to fight. But we must have the military virtues; we must be absolutely free in order to, be absolutely at the service of the Master; we must have only one law, His service; only one desire, His glory; only one happiness, that of making Him known, loved and adored; only one ambition, that of gloriously giving our life for the love and greater glory of the Eucharist. Thus our lot is the most beautiful, as it is also the most timely.

It is no longer a question of defending a truth of the faith but of defending the King of truth who is under attack everywhere; nor of professing an evangelical virtue, but of serving our Lord abandoned in His divine Sacrament, of warring against the capital heresy of the century, indifference, of melting the ice that is hardening all hearts, of preaching the Eucharist in and out of season, so that in every social relationship, in every public act, our Lord may be given His due: *Dummodo annuntietur Christus, quid ad me?* (What then? Only that ... Christ is proclaimed - Phil. 1, 18).

A flower has always the same shape, the same color, the same fragrance; in heaven the hymn of glory and of love is ever the same. An adorer, who is also an apostle, should always adore and preach Jesus Hostia.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Imitation, Book III, Chapter 45: Da mihi auxilium, Domine, de tribulatione, quia vana salus hominis.*

(Help me in my trouble, Lord; there is no sure help to be found in man.)

I lingered over this first verse, heavy-hearted but resigned to everything.

---

*March 29 - Second meditation + (Propaganda)*

---

*March 29 - Third meditation*

### **Via Crucis**

There was nothing else for me to do. Our Lord was so good to me this morning; His grace and the element of surprise deadened the force of the blow. Then the confused visit of the Cardinal Prefect, who must have been embarrassed.

After that came the interview of the two (?) and the problem of knowing clearly what was to be done.

And a night of the Garden of Olives lies ahead. God be praised!

---

*March 30 - First meditation*

### **Offering and fortitude**

Our Lord favored me with the grace of keeping Him company in Gethsemane last night. I must have been ill. I rose at the usual hour, saying: *Non in solo pane vivit homo, sed in omni verbo quod procedit ex ore Dei* (Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God - Matt. 4, 4). I offered myself to our Lord, to His holy and lovable will, which does everything for our greater good. I thanked Him for everything, promised Him not to write to....

I prayed for the grace, the gift, the virtue of fortitude: fortitude in meekness and patience; fortitude in sustained regularity and in discipline; fortitude in the four vows; but a fortitude born of love, *fortis est ut mors dilectia* (love is strong as death - Cant. 8, 6); of pure love, which was that of our Lord in the Incarnation by the sacrifice of His human person.

I resolved to be silent concerning individuals; I am being given an opportunity to glorify our Lord.

---

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Pontifical Chapel in St. Peter's. At 9:30 Pius IX blessed and distributed the candles, followed by procession and Holy Mass, the latter celebrated by Cardinal Sacconi! (*Giornale di Roma*, Feb. 2, 1865, p. 105; *Osservatore Romano*, Feb. 4, 1865, p. 110). - (Feb. 2, 1<sup>st</sup> med.)

<sup>2</sup> That is just a way of speaking. In His sacramental state and beneath the sacramental signs, Jesus Christ does not really sacrifice the glorified properties of His risen body; He merely seems to do so. The same must be said of the expression used further on, *néant sacramentel* (sacramental non-entity); it is allowed rhetorically, and especially oratorically, but theologically it is incorrect. - (Feb. 2, 1<sup>st</sup> med.)

<sup>3</sup> In that church was held, from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> of February, 1865, the solemn triduum prescribed in the Brief of Beatification of Margaret Mary Alacoque, beatified on September 18, 1864. Pius IX assisted at the evening ceremony of the 4<sup>th</sup> (*Giornale di Roma*, Feb. 10, 1865, p. 129; *Osservatore Romano*, Feb. 7, 1865, p. 119). - Feb. 4, 1<sup>st</sup> med.)

<sup>4</sup> Second retreat of Rome; the first took place from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> of May, 1863. The words *second retreat*, however, may well refer to the second part of the "Great Retreat of Rome." - (Feb. 5, 1<sup>st</sup> med.)

<sup>5</sup> This expression, which comes up again a little later, should be understood in the sense given it by St. Peter Julian, that is, as a vital union, a union of lives, which is a substantial reality, and not in the sense it has in Scholastic philosophy. - (Feb. 7, 2<sup>nd</sup> med.)

<sup>6</sup> Nicolas Lancicius, S.J. (1574-1653), author of 21 short treatises. St. Peter Julian made a summary of the treatise on the Eucharist and copied some extracts from the treatise on modesty. The treatise referred to by St. Peter Julian is that on modesty. - (Feb. 14, 3<sup>rd</sup> med.)

<sup>7</sup> There is probably question here of Jerome Plati, S.J. (1545-1591), author of an excellent treatise, *De Bono Status Religiosi*. St. Peter Julian summarized it; this summary is preserved in the archives at Rome. - (Feb. 15, 3<sup>rd</sup> med.)

<sup>8</sup> Salaise is a city of Isère, in the district of Vienne, which is a subdistrict of Roussillon. St. Peter Julian may have made a retreat there - unless he meant *Salaise*, in the diocese of Belley, which is less probable. - (Feb. 16, 1<sup>st</sup> med.)

<sup>9</sup> St. Peter Julian was speaking of Congregations of men actually functioning as adorers, in 1865, that is, Congregations having for their primary end the adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament exposed. The "White Monks of Corpus Christi," founded in 1328, do not seem to have had as their primary end adoration of the Blessed Sacrament exposed. By 1865, the Congregation of St. Francis Caracciolo had apparently discontinued eucharistic adoration as its principal activity. Father Leroyer jotted down the following notes of a talk given by St. Peter Julian to the Community of Marseilles in 1862: "Name and end of the Society; the Society is new at least in its form of public and solemn adoration with exposition. There have been some like it before now. But they always had a secondary end which soon absorbed the primary end, either preaching or a boarding school.... We must first of all adore; then comes zeal for works. First the fire, then the flame." - (Feb. 21, 1<sup>st</sup> med.)

<sup>10</sup> Rome celebrated the "Commemoration of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ" on that day; this Mass is still among Masses authorized, at least until recently, for use in certain places (*Missae pro Aliquibus Locis*) - The Church of St. Praxedes is close to where Villa Caserta was located. In this church, already mentioned as early as the year 491, is the ninth-century chapel of St. Zenon; in that chapel is preserved a pillar brought from Jerusalem after the 6<sup>th</sup> Crusade (1223) and called the "Sacred Pillar of the Flagellation." - (Feb. 21, 1<sup>st</sup> med.)

<sup>11</sup> The opinion according to which the Beatific Vision was dimmed or suspended in the soul of Jesus during His Passion had its supporters even among eminent theologians, like Melchior Cano (*De Locis Theologicis*, L. XII, C. XIV *in fine*); Gregorio de Valencia (*De Incarnatione*, Disp. I, Q. IX, Punct. 2); Salmeron (*In Matthaeum*, C. XXVI, V. 27). However, the majority of theologians hold the contrary. A. Michel calls that opinion "rash and close to error" (D.T.C., Vol. VIII, 1299). In *Mystici Corporis*, Pius XII speaks of the Beatific Vision on the Cross. See St. Thomas, Summa, III, Q. 46, A. 8. - (Feb. 22, 1<sup>st</sup> med.)

<sup>12</sup> This must be understood in a spiritual and not in an absolute sense, that is, Christ will make divine the "human execution of His desires" by reason of the union of the soul with Him effected by *divine* sanctifying grace. - (Feb. 23, 1<sup>st</sup> med.)

<sup>13</sup> By February of 1865, the hoax of Sister Benoite's pretended supernatural experiences had not yet been exposed. On March 21, 1865, Father Eymard wrote Sister Benoite on the occasion of her feastday. See also the letter to Mother Marguerite, dated January 21, in Letters, II, p. 299. - (Feb. 24, 3<sup>rd</sup> med.)

<sup>14</sup> Probably at the monastery of SS. John and Paul, where Father Eymard had made his first retreat of Rome (May 17-25, 1863), and where his friend Father Basile was stationed. - (Feb. 26, 2<sup>nd</sup> med.)

<sup>15</sup> Castel Gandolfo, a well-known village, 15 miles outside Rome, with an altitude of around 1300 feet. In 1865, it had a population of 1000. A guidebook, dated 1865, gives the following details: "Picturesque village,... remarkable for its location near the lake (Albano) and for the papal palace.... Two roads, one called *Galleria di Sopra* and other *Galleria di Sotto*.... are broad avenues lined on either side with trees so old that some of them need supports" (*Rome en Huit Jours*, Spithoeve, 1865, p. 277-78). The Franciscan monastery (today the Church of Propaganda) had a great number of relics (B. de Montault, *L'Année Liturgique à Rome*, 1862, p. 198) - There was a daily coach service "Rome-Albano-Castelgandolfo" (A. Nibby, *Itinéraire de Rome et de ses environs*, according to Vasi - 1863, p. XLVI). - (Feb. 27, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> med.)

- <sup>16</sup> The projected foundation in Jerusalem was not dealt with on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March but was postponed to an indefinite date. - (March 3, 2<sup>nd</sup> med.)
- <sup>17</sup> Rhetorically speaking, for the Eucharist was already instituted; but Jesus Christ was present on the Cross in His own natural form and not in the sacramental form or state effected by transubstantiation. - (March 3, 3<sup>rd</sup> med.)
- <sup>18</sup> An oratorical way of expressing the sacramental state. In the Eucharist Jesus Christ perpetuates the sacrifices of His Passion not in their reality but in the nature of a sign or symbol. Similar expressions, more oratorical than theological, are found in this meditation. (March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> med.)
- <sup>19</sup> An expression of St. Peter Julian's humble and total dependence on our Lord, which we should understand correctly. It does not mean that he did not consider himself truly and really the Founder of the Congregation, with all the consequent graces and inspirations of his mission, the necessity of his being a model and the conviction that he was the vital principle of the Institute. In this retreat, he makes many statements which prove that he was conscious of his grace, of his authority, of his role and of his mission as Founder. - See February 24, 3<sup>rd</sup> meditation; March 2, 3<sup>rd</sup> meditation. See also Our Rule - A Commentary, Vol. II, p. 47, paragraph 3. - (March 7, 1<sup>st</sup> med.)
- <sup>20</sup> See footnote 7 - (March 7, 2<sup>nd</sup> med.)
- <sup>21</sup> Most likely a reference to Father de Cuers. See the meditation of the next few days and no. 4 of "Historical Background of (this) Retreat": "The Congregation in 1865." - (March 9, 3<sup>rd</sup> med.)
- <sup>22</sup> The prepared subject was probably "Meekness in relationships," a title crossed out by Father Eymard at the top of page 274 of the original manuscript. - (March 11, 3<sup>rd</sup> med.)
- <sup>23</sup> Oratorical way of speaking to describe the transformation from the state of faith to that of the Beatific Vision, when the sacramental Presence will be seen in the divine Essence. - (March 13, 3<sup>rd</sup> med.)
- <sup>24</sup> The act of the soul of Jesus Christ is absolutely one; but this act takes place in the twofold presence of our Lord in heaven and in the Eucharist - wherever the Eucharist is. The same remark applies to the expression used two paragraphs below: "He follows me from His divine ciborium." - (March 17, 1<sup>st</sup> med.)
- We find no trace of this thought in the Gospels. Calvary stood within the area in which the Jews were allowed to circulate on the Sabbath (See Acts 1,12). - (March 17, 3<sup>rd</sup> med.)
- <sup>26</sup> Jesus is no longer in a state of suffering, but sin always remains an offense against His sanctity - (March 18, 1<sup>st</sup> med.)
- <sup>27</sup> From what we know of Father Eymard's life and from the statements made in the course of this retreat, we should consider this expression hyperbolic. - (March 18, 1<sup>st</sup> med.)
- <sup>28</sup> A rhetorical expression; the priest is the minister of the transubstantiation which renders present the already existing body of Jesus Christ - (March 19, 1<sup>st</sup> med.)
- <sup>29</sup> A hyperbole. The Congregation devotes itself to the love, service and worship of the Real Presence as a mother would devote herself to her children. - (March 19, 1<sup>st</sup> med.)
- <sup>30</sup> This manner of speaking - and this holds good for the other statements that follow - indicate how highly Father Eymard thought of the virtues of St. Joseph; we need not, however, take him literally. - (March 19, 3<sup>rd</sup> med.)
- <sup>31</sup> These three crosses were perhaps: 1 - The slow progress of the Cenacle project; 2 - The attitude of Father de Cuers; 3 - The domestic problems of the Servants (See March 21, 1<sup>st</sup> med., March 22, 3<sup>rd</sup> med., Lett. II, p. 300-302). - (March 20, 3<sup>rd</sup> med.)
- <sup>32</sup> Expressions used by Father Eymard to indicate the close union and spiritual transformation of his soul that resulted from the vow of the gift of his personality. He used figurative language of the moral and psychological order, not of the ontological order. The vow of the gift of personality will be more clearly defined in the meditations that follow. - (March 21, 1<sup>st</sup> med.)
- <sup>33</sup> The words "St. Paul" surely refer to the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, and St. Benedict is probably "San Benedetto in Piscinula." The *Osservatore Romano* for March 20, 1865, p. 225, carried the following announcement: "Tuesday, March 21, . . . St. Benedict, Abbot, Founder of the Monks of the West; celebrated in his church 'in Piscinula.' His cell is open to visitors. The image of the Most Holy Mary before which he used to pray is exposed; the oldest known likeness of the Saint is preserved there." - (March 21, 3<sup>rd</sup> med.)
- <sup>34</sup> Not of course in a strict sense of the word but in a certain spiritual sense, by reason of sanctifying grace which is a mystical communion with Jesus Christ. - (March 22, 1<sup>st</sup> med.)
- <sup>35</sup> Basically there is only one kind of union with Jesus Christ effected in the Christian by sanctifying grace; but that union takes on a particular form in the priesthood by virtue of the sacramental character, and, in the religious life by virtue of one's consecration to the life of perfection. - (March 22, 1<sup>st</sup> med.)
- <sup>38</sup> Every good work done in the state of grace increases charity and, consequently, merit; since the union effected by the gift of one's personality increases charity, it necessarily increases merit. - (March 22, 2<sup>nd</sup> med.)
- <sup>37</sup> A rhetorical form of speech. The Sacrament contains the body of Jesus Christ, not in a physical but in a metaphysical manner, somewhat as our body contains our soul. - (March 23, 3<sup>rd</sup> med.)
- <sup>38</sup> In the psychological, conceptual order, not in the ontological order. - (March 24, 1<sup>st</sup> med.)
- <sup>39</sup> The feast of the Five Wounds of Our Lord Jesus Christ was observed in Rome on March 24 which, that year, fell on a Friday. - (March 24, 2<sup>nd</sup> med.)
- <sup>40</sup> This idea, which pops in and out in the course of this retreat, expresses, it seems to us, a fleeting thought of our Founder. We know that the Rule, printed in 1864 and in use at the time, officially recognized "Houses of Solitude" for

the “contemplatives” of the Congregation. The “contemplative” branch of the Congregation existed therefore officially, at least in the Rule. We are of the opinion that in the passage presently under discussion Father Eymard is asking himself whether it would be God’s will that a special “apostolic” branch should also be constituted. The lack of any subsequent reference to the matter would indicate that our Founder had given up the idea because he judged it contrary to the “holy and adorable will of the Lord.” - See “Our Rule, A Commentary,” Vol. I, p. 44; see also “Retreat of Saint-Maurice,” *Introduction, 1 - Topography and History of the House of Saint-Maurice*. - (March 25, 1<sup>st</sup> med.)

<sup>41</sup> As usual the Papal Chapel took place in the Church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva. “After the Mass, Pius IX admitted to the kissing of the Pope’s foot (i.e., the cross on his right shoe) the religious family of Dominicans and a large number of visiting priests and lay-men who had obtained the privilege” (*Giornale di Roma*, March 28, 1865, p. 281; *Osservatore Romano*, March 29, 1865, p. 283). - (March 25, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> med.)

<sup>42</sup> From the 26<sup>th</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup> of March, 1865, the solemn exposition of the Forty Hours was held in the church attached to the monastery of the Redemptorists, where Father Eymard was making his retreat. - (March 26, 2<sup>nd</sup> med.)

<sup>43</sup> On March 26, 1865, Fourth Sunday in Lent, at 3:30 in the afternoon, the relics preserved in the Church of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem were shown to the public and the Stational procession for that day ended at that Basilica, which was not too far from the Villa Caserta (*Osservatore Romano*, March 24, 1865, p. 271). Was Father Eymard alluding to that ceremony? - (March 27, 1<sup>st</sup> med.)

<sup>44</sup> Oratorical expressions which attribute to Jesus Christ what, in itself, does not apply to Him, or at least to His substance. - (March 28, 1<sup>st</sup> med.)

Closing of the Forty Hours in the Church of the Redemptorists. - (March 28, 2<sup>nd</sup> med.)

<sup>46</sup> The Minister General of the Franciscans at the time was the Very Rev. Roberto di Ponacchio; would he be the one referred to? See

Letters, I, p. 174 - (March 28, 3<sup>rd</sup> med.)

## APPENDIX

### Public Worship of Adoration

*A function performed in the very name of the Church*

Letter of Pope Paul VI to the Very Rev. Roland Huot, S.S.S.

To Our Beloved Son:

Inasmuch as it contains truly, really and substantially the very Author of grace, the saving sacrament of the Eucharist is the center of the life of the Church. It so dominates the minds of the faithful that they understand less from lengthy argument than from a certain insight that the worship of adoration should be offered to it. Indeed, through the worship of latria of the Eucharist is fostered and intensified the virtue of religion, by which the faithful soul acknowledges the transcendence and dominion of its Creator over nature and strives in all humility to keep its rightful place as a creature.

This adoration is also manifested by the body, which is offered “as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God” (Rom. 12:1); as St. Thomas Aquinas says, “Because in all acts of religion the external act is referred to the internal act as to the more important, exterior adoration is performed because of interior adoration; in other words, the bodily signs of humility which we perform increase our desire of submitting to God” (*11-IIae, Q. 84, a. 2*).

By making it their duty to adore Christ the Lord, present in the divine Sacrament, the religious of the Congregation you govern, Beloved Son, and of other like Societies, greatly strengthen the Catholic faith against those who deny God by their doctrine or their way of life, or who make light of the faith and belittle it while pretending to defend it.

But in order to set things in their true perspective, we should remember that adoration is not to be separated from the total Sacrament or Mystery of salvation “which is Christ ... the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27); in other words, the Eucharist should be considered not only in what pertains to the Real Presence, but “in all its fullness, both in the celebration of the Mass and in devotion to the Sacred Species which remain after Mass and are reserved to extend the grace of the sacrifice” (*Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery, no. 3g*). Wherefore, adorers prolong Eucharistic worship even outside the sacrifice in order to gather more plentifully the fruits deriving from it and to share in it more effectively. But if our daily life is to benefit from a more copious flow of this heavenly strength, we must also practice the virtues; in point of fact, when we offer devout worship to Christ hidden in the august Sacrament, we receive an increase of the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity, which dispose the soul more fittingly, “with all due devotion, to celebrate the Memorial of the Lord and receive frequently the bread given us by the Father” (*Instruction, no. 50*).

Moreover, this adoration - which, as already said, extends the grace of the Eucharistic sacrifice - is beneficial to the entire community of the Church. The prayers addressed to Him who is “Emmanuel” (*God with us*), exposed on the altar, are truly “catholic” inasmuch as they concern the universal Church and the whole world. We know this from history. For the prayers which the churches of Rome took turns in offering to this august Sacrament for 40 consecutive hours, in the year 1592, were approved and encouraged by Our Predecessor, Clement VIII, precisely to implore heavenly assistance for mankind in most difficult times (*Bull. Rom. V, 1, Rome 1751, p. 142*). Eucharistic adoration cannot therefore be satisfied principally with the furtherance of personal piety, but it “impels the soul to cultivate a ‘social’ love by which we give preference to the common good over the good of the individual, make our own the interests of the community, of the parish, of the Church, and extend our charity to the whole world because we know that everywhere there are members of Christ” (*Mysterium. Fidei, no. 69*).

Entrusted by a special and Church-approved charter with the mission of offering public worship of adoration to the sacrament of the Eucharist, let these Institutes and Societies keep in mind that they are performing a most excellent function, and are doing so in the very name of the Church. If



these religious live up to their vocation devoutly, faithfully and constantly, their life, no less than that of those who are dedicated exclusively to contemplation or to works of the apostolate, “appears as a sign which can and ought to attract effectively all the members of the Church.... To all men it shows ... the surpassing greatness of the force of Christ the King and the boundless power of the Holy Spirit” (*Cons. on the Church*, no. 44).

There is no reason therefore why the religious engaged in this super-excellent service of adoration should lose heart in our day as though - we hear it said time and again - such a service were an “obsolete devotion” and sheer waste of time when there is much more pressing work to do. Let them be assured that the Church stands in as great a need as ever of those who “worship ... in spirit and in truth” (*John 4:23*). And let them as much as possible endeavor with all due diligence to observe faithfully the rules and precepts We have laid down in this matter, whether in the encyclical *Mysterium Fidei* or in the *Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery*.

Accordingly, We hope that in the coming Roman Convention of those who are to take part in a special study of the worship of the Eucharistic Mystery, the excellence of the service of adoration will be rightly appreciated and even be seen, so to speak, in a new and brighter light, that appropriate resolutions will be adopted, and that spiritual energies, so very vital to the life of the Church, will be roused to action.

With these wishes, We cordially impart to you, Beloved Son, to the religious family you govern, and to all those who participate in this Congress, the Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of supernatural strength and consolation and as evidence of our benovolence and affection.

*Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month of January, in the year 1969, the sixth of Our Pontificate.*

Pope Paul VI

---

## **APPENDIX**

### **Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament**

Principal Patron of the Congregations of the  
Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament and of the  
Servants of the Blessed Sacrament

#### **DECREE OF POPE PAUL VI**

*For the record in perpetuity*

In a conversation with his religious on the subject of *Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament*, St. Peter Julian Eymard, the indefatigable apostle of the Eucharist canonized last year by Our Predecessor John XXIII, declared that although this title was recent, the reality of it was very ancient. With a keen spiritual insight, fostered by a life of close union with God, the author of this significant title had fully understood the many sublime and hidden relations that unite Mary with the Sacrament of love and, in consequence, he added this new name as a precious jewel to Mary's crown.

Doubtless, he had often pondered over the Church's invocation to the Eucharist as “the true Body, born of the Virgin Mary.” Indeed, when on earth, the Virgin was the living tabernacle of Jesus Christ whom she had borne and adored, and then offered and revealed to mankind. It seems then only right that she should be revered and invoked as a model of perfect worship by every adorer, and especially by priests who are the appointed ministers of this great Sacrament. On the strength of these considerations, St. Peter Julian opened a rich wellspring of piety to the religious

Societies he had founded; and shortly before his death, he left them Mary as a heavenly patron to be invoked under that title. He moreover directed the religious of his Congregations, whose purpose is the worship of the Holy Eucharist, to honor the name, the person and the virtues of Mary, who was the first to adore the Word of God made man. We note with satisfaction that the Congregation of the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament has been, and remains, faithful to this prescription of their Father Legislator.

Recently, Our beloved Son, the Procurator General of the Society, at the request of its General Council and in the name of all its religious, humbly begged Us to give solemn and public approbation to this patronage of *Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament*. We resolved to comply with this request, confident that these religious, with the help and under the patronage of the glorious Mother of God, would thereby attain the perfection proposed to them and would endeavor to the best of their ability to promote the reign of Christ.

Having therefore consulted with the Sacred Congregation of Rites, with secure knowledge and after mature deliberation, in the full exercise of Our Apostolic Authority, by virtue of these Letters and for all time, We declare and constitute the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, as *Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament*, the principal and heavenly patron before God of the Congregation of the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament and of the Society of the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament, with all the honors and liturgical privileges attached by law to the principal patron of associates, everything to the contrary notwithstanding.

We publish and determine and decree that the present Letters are and will be final, valid and binding in perpetuity; that they shall define and secure their effects in their fullness and integrity; that they shall benefit to the fullest extent, in all things and through all things, those presently concerned as also those to be concerned in the future; that they ought to serve as a norm in making and clarifying decisions; and finally that if any authority whatever should, knowingly or not, attempt anything contrary to these Letters, its decisions are null and void. Given at Rome at St. Peter's under the Fisherman's ring, the 12<sup>th</sup> day of September, 1963, the first year of Our Pontificate.

Secretary of State  
A.J. Cicognani

---

## APPENDIX

### GREAT RETREAT OF ROME

#### Alphabetical Index of Subjects

**Abnegation:** see *self-abnegation*.

**Action:** grace of the moment, 61; worth more than all reasonings, 140; deeds, means of making eucharistic center a reality, 183; see *active life*.

**Active life:** too much of it, 152, 154, 226; I do not find spiritual nourishment in what I do, 155; so much dust and mud in it, 195; contemplative life more perfect, 151-152; see *action*.

**Adoration:** examen on his adoration, 163-164, 165-167; the central object of his work, 185; living his adoration, 196; summary of one of his holy hours, 274; our privilege, 276; its nature, 163, 165; a worship of latria, 166; a perpetual *Corpus Christi*, 276; a worship of love, 166; a personal service, 108, 144-145, 163; interior, 108, 145; in spirit and in truth, 108, 275; according to the Four Ends, 145; and service of Jesus Christ, 144; and vocation, 163; and Church, 166, 192; like Mary's, 271; Mary's adoration, 269-270; St. Joseph's adoration, 245; and humility, 269; and poverty, 202; the *durum* felt at adoration, 64; worthless, 111; make my adoration like any other religious, 146; means of fortifying the interior man, 262; eucharistic militia, 278-280; vocations, fruit of adoration, 147; and religious life, 163, 192.

**Adorer:** self-examen as an adorer, 163-164; his duty as an adorer, 193; *ex officio*, 274; true adorers are few, 274; adorer and apostle, 280; apostolic, 280; and spirit of Jesus Christ, 124; characteristic virtue of adorer, 83-84, 85, 87; modesty, sovereign and royal virtue of adorer, 115-116.

**Angels:** what do angels think of man's treatment of the Eucharist, 181; their occupation in heaven, 209; archangels of His eucharistic kingship, 279.

**Apostolate:** concerned with the service of our Lord's person, 278-820; eucharistic, 278-279; illusion of my apostolate of love, 94; mistake in my apostolate, 161; an apostolic branch in the Congregation, 268; apostle-adorer, 280; apprehension of exterior ministry, 109.

**Aridity:** paraphrasing eucharistic psalms is helpful, 171.

Authority: fundamental to Congregation, 159; see *rule, superior*.

**Baptism:** grace of baptism, 90-93.

Blessed Sacrament: our Lord my law, our sacramental Lord my end, 91; Jesus our King, 274; personal love of Jesus, 232-233, 234-235; Jesus is not loved, not known, 176-177; we are attached to His household, 108; union through Eucharist, 102; self-abasement, 83-84, 84-85, 87; and humility, 84; and meekness, 221-222; and poverty, 199; its service, 144-145; adoration, specialty of our vocation, 163; it has always dominated my life, 81; see *Eucharist, Jesus Christ sacramental, Jesus Christ*.

**Body:** temple of Trinity, 119; respect our Lord in my body, 265; my health is shattered, 260; exterior meekness of our Lord in bodily deportment, 213-215; my body, the best there is in me, 190.

**Books:** passion for books, rare books, 233.

**Brethren:** make them good religious and adorers, 147; superiorate, a mission among men, 193; practice of the rule, example to them, 172, 173, 174; I must be the word of Christ for them, 156; preferable to form them than to devote myself to ministry, 109; gentle with them, 220; I have little feeling for them, 78; because of my bad example, they are not lovers of poverty, 139; see *fraternal charity*.

**Cenacle:** trials before foundations, 69; setbacks, 89; meditation on setbacks, 89; one act of self-contempt, greater than success of project, 94; thank our Lord for stalling business of Cenacle, 112; goodness of God in failure of project, 281; at God's good pleasure, but not in a state of indifference, 278; suffering over negative answer, 281; resigned, 277, 280.

**Center:** our Lord my center, 157, 208; I lack a center to rebuild my strength, 155; our Lord not yet my center, 181; eucharistic center, 181-187; interior, 187; its laws, 188; mysterious, 189; how it is fostered, 188.

**Character:** levity, 72-77; levity, base of my character, 73; causes of levity, 74, 76, 79; remedies to levity, 79; levity of mind, 73; levity of heart, 73; levity of will, 74; strength of character to practice poverty, 202; such a bad temper, 204; and vanity, 94, 130.

**Chastity:** thoughts in reference to chastity, 118-119; of the heart, 121; modesty, its guardian, 119, 219; and priesthood, 118, 119; no provocation, I would have been too weak, 119.

**Childhood, spiritual:** transform interior poverty into a virtue by making acts of it like a child, 140-141.

**Church:** Baptism makes one her child, 91; Church approves Congregation, is its mother, 159; is the life of the Congregation, 174, 192-193; adoration is the worship, ceremonial and sacramental of the Church as prescribed by her 166-167, 192; truth, her mandate, 279; pronounce with affection her liturgical prayers, 157.

**Communion:** its end, 102; goodness of Jesus in Communion, 221; its conditions, 221; nourishment of the soul, 225; and Incarnation, 225; and vow of personality, 251-252; first act after receiving, 269-270.

**Compassion:** of our Lord, 210-211; sorrows of Mary, 237-238; Mary's compassion for sinners, 270; of saintly souls on Calvary, 266.

**Confidence:** in spite of failings, 230.

**Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament:** founded for the glory of the Blessed Sacrament, 161; its end, to honor its divine King with love and zeal, 192, 274; its mission, 158, 280; at the service of our Lord, 175; society of Jesus sacramental, 175; it draws its glory from our Lord, 158; eucharistic militia, 278-280; should it have both contemplatives and apostles, 268; our Lord, its foundation and grace, 174, 192; Society of Jesus through Jesus, 193; its grace, a grace of interior life, 70; graces relatively to the Congregation, 158; and adoration, 163; its rule, 171-175; and religious life, 193; and poverty, 70, 138-140, 198-199; and divine Providence, 144, 159, 202; and Mary, 175, 205; and St. Joseph, 241; and Father Eymard, 70, 158-159, 160-161, 174-175, 192-193; and the Church, 159, 174; vocations, drawn by holiness come from God, 158, 161; its good, the law of my life, 175; damage I inflict on it without gift of self, 70; obstacles to its life, 63, 69; grace and honor for me to work for it, 158-160; strive for interior holiness rather than for its exterior glory, 160-161; I worked on its externals, not in its center of life, 186; conflicts and human frailties in it, 159; see *vocation*.

**Contemplation:** I was too speculative in my contemplation, 167; contemplative life, 209; more perfect than active life, 151-152; soul of active life, 152; death and grave of self-love, 152.

**Creation:** creation of man, 100; all creation, a preparation of God's love for benefit of man, 223.

**Cross:** sacrifice of the Cross, 179-181; Jesus Christ, our life by His death on the Cross, 267; crosses of saints, 250-251; foster union with our Lord by the Cross, 208; suffer crosses in union with our Lord, 259; acceptance of the cross, 179, 206-208, 209, 249-250, 281.

**Death:** death to self, 66, 68; judgment after death, 222; consideration of love of Jesus after death, 268.

**De Cuers:** a messenger to harass me, 69, 203-204; dear confrere who cannot see beyond his old-fashioned ideas, 200-201; I would never have thought I had such a bad temper, 204.

**Defections:** our Lord did not lose anything from the defection of unworthy subjects, 144.

**Denial of self:** see *self-abnegation*.

**Detachment:** see *stripping of self, self-abnegation*.

**Devil:** he fights the love of Jesus sacramental, 177; what he must think of our Lord's love for man, 181; I was present in the Passion in the malice of the devil, 240; our Lord's life in us paralyzes the action of Satan, 255.

**Devotedness:** for exterior things, 69, 73; I devoted myself but not by the gift of self, 81-82; third act of Mary's adoration, 270.

**Devotedness for others:** subordinate it and avoid excess, 110, 112, 117, 125, 145, 152, 196-197, 233-234; see *devotedness*.

**Devotion:** abiding in our Lord through a devotion of love, 186; working and studying for apostolate, an obstacle to devotion, 196-197; curiosity in devotion is but a pious distraction, 272.

**Discouragement:** worry and discouragement over failings, two pitfalls to avoid, 230.

**Enslavement:** to exterior means, 64; to an intellectual eucharistic approach, 186; to study, 262; see *mind*.

**Eucharist:** God as man's guest, Incarnation extended, Savior's life continued, 225, 267; Instituted at the cost of the Passion, 179-180; a sacrifice, 167, 179; sacrament of love, 179, 275; I must go from the Eucharist to His mysteries and virtues, 163; our Lord's goodness gives me all the good things of the Eucharist, 167; eucharistic meekness, 221-222; eucharistic emptying of self, 83-84; reasons for this self-abasement, 84-85; Jesus, model of self-abasement, 85; glory of the Father, second reason for this self-abasement, 87; Jesus, our life in the Eucharist, 267; our center, 181-190; center of my life, its first and only law, 145, 184-185; this center is interior, 187; no other center, 188; this center is mysterious, 189; this center, the exterior law of my life, 183; how make of this center a reality, 183; Jesus comes to us sacramentally in order to live in us spiritually, 264; adoration of the Eucharist, 163-164; adoration, our privilege, a perpetual *Corpus Christi*, 276; interior and exterior adoration, 165-167; Society given entirely to the glory of Eucharist, 161; my adorations are defective, 170; what should my adoration be, 170; what adoration is, 166; who is worth the Eucharist? 175; Give me the Eucharist or give me death, 181; the dominant natural and supernatural object of my thought, 185; my center was in the intellect, in the science of the Eucharist, 186; I have the mission of Your adorable Sacrament, 181; Eucharistic militia, 278-280; see *Communion, Jesus sacramental, Blessed Sacrament, eucharistic service, eucharistic vocation*.

**Eucharistic service:** service of Jesus Christ, 144-153; our vocation, 144; service of adoration, 144-145; in the name of the Blessed Virgin, 144-145; adore and make others adore, 147; service as religious, 192-194; its two mandates, serve and fight, 280; and Congregation, 174-175; personal interests subjected to the law of service of God, 173; we must enjoy this service, 174-175; eucharistic militia, 278-280; it calls for all that I have and am, 185; a devotion of love, 186; the power of this service, 277; I dedicated myself to His service, 274; Jesus Christ wants to perfect me in His service and in that of His Father, 126; by chastity, we enter into this service, 119; Servant of the Eucharist, my royal and divine title, 145.

**Interior service:** 108-109, 144-145; a life of divine love, 146; service based on our Lord's service of His Father, 147-148; our Lord, model of that interior service, 155-157; adoring Him with our heart, 274; serve Him unknown, 160.

**Exterior service:** I acquitted myself of my service more as a doorman than as a personal servant, 145; too exterior, 147, 154, 160, 160-161, 183, 186, 195-196, 196-197, 275; easier, more flattering, 93, 94, 108; exterior service inferior to bidden life, 151-152; see *servant, interior life*.

**Eucharistic vocation:** God's mercy in calling me, 143; and divine Providence, 92-93, 224; an interior, personal service, 108; a service of our Lord, 144-145; and adoration, 163, 165; and Mary, 178, 205, 236; piety, indispensable in eucharistic vocation, 174-175; see *Eucharistic service*.

**Examen:** I no longer examine myself, 196; I avoid self-examen, 227; examen after every action, a means of acquiring meekness, 220.

**Exercises of piety:** we should have more exercises of piety, 190; we need a manual of prayers, 191; see *devotion*.

**Expansiveness:** adoration, a worship of the out-pouring of our Lord's love in the Eucharist, 166; a pouring-out of self into creatures, 162; I am expansive only out of self-love, 235; excessive expansiveness, cause of my forgetting God, 195.

**Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament:** God granted us perpetual exposition in spite of everything and everybody, 144; God granted us exposition according to our strength, 144; our privilege, a perpetual *Corpus Christi*, 276; exposition and adoration, 144-145; our Lord, solemnly exposed for me, 163; we are His divine bodyguard, 163; pay attention to no one before the Blessed Sacrament exposed, 166.

**Exteriority:** the exterior of my service, 197; we insist on glorifying God through exterior things, 108, 227, 262; exterior service, a center for one's ego, 108; I should curtail my outside activities, 219; see *exterior service* under *eucharistic service*.

**Eymard:** damage inflicted on Congregation, 70; insisted too much on attractive side of Society, 160; should have worked at interior holiness of Society, 160; the kind of life I lead is a matter of life or death for the Society, 174; I must be without glory in the Society, 192; our Lord is represented in the Society by a nobody, 192; I am only a sacristan, and

a very poor one at that, 193; our Lord wants me as a simple religious, 193; Mary led me to the Blessed Sacrament 81; Jesus wants me to share the grace of Mary in His Incarnation, 99; so little devoted to Mary, 93; I must have a great love for Mary, 106; I gave myself to Mary, a mother to me, 106, 178; thanksgiving for and to Mary, 205, 236; Mary has been so good to me, 236; his mission, 181; my grace is a grace of interior life, 162; I sensed much peace and joy in this stripping of self, 139; inventory of my soul, 128-130, 154-155; see *founder*, *minister* under *Jesus Christ*, *liberty*.

**Failings:** danger of excessive self-reproach over failings, 117.

**Faith:** union of faith with our Lord, 102; sacramental abasement, a testing, purifying, strengthening and perfecting of faith, 85; faith superficial in many, 176; faith of St. Joseph, adorer, 245.

**Family of the Blessed Sacrament:** see *Congregation*.

**Father:** and Incarnation, 224; love of the Father in the Incarnation, 267-268; dependence of Jesus Christ on the Father, 148-149, 151, 155; our Lord listens to, repeats and does the word of the Father, 155-156, 254; Holy Family, a source of joy to the Father, 249; the Father entrusts His Son to us, sends us vocations, 158; see *Glory of the Father*.

**Flesh:** in revolt against the spirit of our Lord, 97; enemy of the Holy Spirit, 94; to be subjected to the Spirit, 94-96; follow Christ in His war against the flesh and the spirit of the flesh, 94-96.

**Fortitude:** see *strength*.

**Founder:** responsibility to his subjects, 174-175, 279-280; a founder is given the mandate of being the way, 279; founders suffer the most, 250; I am a superior in the name of our Lord, 175, 193, 280; a commander receives his watchword from our Lord, 279.

**Four Ends of the Sacrifice:** adoration of our Lord by the Four Ends of the Sacrifice, 144-145; see *adoration*, *Mass*.

**Fraternal charity:** its source, 102; failings against it, 228; silent sufferings of Jesus, a lesson against uncharitableness, 218; supernatural, 211, 212; and meekness, 211.

**Friendship:** nature of life of friendship with Jesus Christ, 191.

**Gift of self:** on first day of the year, 66; I must give myself totally to our Lord, 66; I never gave myself totally to God, 68, 224; I gave myself to our Lord only through the devotedness of love, 69, 81-82; I gave myself to the love of our Lord, 178; I dedicated myself to the service and glory of our Lord, 274; important grace in this adoration: giving myself not in talk but in power, 276; I must give myself, a holocaust of self, 70; our Lord prefers the gift of my heart to all exterior gifts, 70; gift of self is true love, 71; gift of self in a spirit of humility, 72; I renewed my gift of self, 86, 122, 124, 127, 130, 152, 178, 183, 219, 256, 274, 281; unconditional surrender of self to God, 123; our Lord's dwelling in me results from my repeated gift of self, 152; of great importance to me that I give myself, 161; enlightening truth of my retreat, gift of self, union, interior life, 188; gift of self, effusion of my being in our Lord, 197; gift of self by vow of personality, 251-254; see *self*, *vow of personality*.

**Glory of our Lord:** our Lord's glory, 153; silence on individuals, an opportunity for glorifying our Lord, 282; Baptism, a right to the glory of our Lord, 91; Mary's adoration a glorifying of the Word Incarnate, 245, 269-271; St. Joseph's adoration a glorifying of the Word Incarnate, 245; glorify our Lord with daily crosses, 259; if I were a true religious of His glory, 277; everything must procure His glory, 278; glorify our Lord with absolute silence on things personal, 160; glorify our Lord by observing the rule, 172; I failed to see that I should glorify our Lord by immolation of self, 161; working too much at exterior glory of our Lord, 109, 147, 160, 183; I should even shun the exterior glory of our Lord for the time being, 109; pretext of glorifying our Lord, 110.

**Glory of the Father:** by too exterior a ministry, I did harm to the glory of God, 112; our Lord seeking only the glory of His Father, 153; Christ gives back to the divinity the glory of everything, 193; and Incarnation, 99, 252, 254; our Lord desires union with us to glorify His Father, 255; our Lord's whole life for the glory of His Father, 149-150; our Lord's sacramental life, for the glory of His Father, 154-155; eucharistic self-abasement, for the glory of His Father, 87; sufferings of our Lord, for the glory of His Father, 97; humility of our Lord, for the glory of His Father, 131; poverty of our Lord and the glory of His Father, 198; St. Joseph glorified the Father in union with His divine Son, 246; glory of the Father, the one life of the Holy Family, 247; and vow of personality, 252, 255, 256.

**God:** He is love, 222-225; His mercy, 168-170; the Creator, 222-223; our Savior in the Incarnation, 223-224, 267-268; man's guest in Eucharist, 225; through Baptism, man becomes a son of God, 91; God comes into man after being abandoned by him, 263; He places Himself at man's disposal, 264; desire for and need of seeking God, 88, 98, 121, 162; presence of God, 88-89, 155, 172, 174-175; presence of God, a rule of love, 195-196; thought of God means of union with Him, 104, 231; God's will, man's only refuge in trials, 206-207; God's action in me and my response, 64-65, 78; too attached to enjoyment of God, 164; too enthusiastic, too natural for truth and greatness of God, 197; we must enjoy God in our vocation, 174-175; God called me to the eucharistic vocation, 143-144; act according to the spirit of God, 207-208; interior life of the soul in God, 209; study for God, saturate myself with Him, 233; vow of personality and God, 252, 253, 255; vow of personality, greater degree of participation in God's holiness, 258; love of God and patience, 221; dependence on God and poverty of spirit, 142; honor God by modesty of the senses, 113; patience in listening, because God wills it, 218; I sin against God by breaking the rule, 171; my soul is empty of God, 64; my life empty of God while speaking of God, 195; I flee God, I am forgetful of God, 64-65, 154; insensibility of the heart to things of God, 77-78; Mary's adoration of God, 269-271; see *presence of God*, *will of God*, *Providence*.

**Grace:** and nature, 204; furthered by suffering, 248; the grace of union, none too clear in my mind, 103; surrender to our Lord's will through grace, that is all there is to union, 104; our Lord alters my grace, 152, 195; you (Eymard) are an obstacle to the life of grace, 63; my grace is a grace of interior life, 162; state of grace and union, 101; grace of God to live with God, 149; I flee God, thence the losses of interior graces, 64-65; graces of Society come through superior, 65; so many graces spoiled, 66; humiliations pursue me like graces of salvation, 66; grace of the moment, 61; graces of my Baptism, 90-96; graces since my Baptism, 92-93.

**Guard of Honor:** we are the bodyguard, the court, the household of our Lord, 108, 279.

**Heart:** Jesus Christ, God of our hearts, 189, 209; Jesus, humble of heart, 130-132; presence of God, a help to control the heart, 88; penetrate into the heart of the heart of eucharistic love, 186; God wishes to dwell in man's heart, 263; our Lord, the love and power of the heart, 149, 260; the heart's knowledge, 271; meekness of heart of Jesus in me, 129-130, 206-207, 211; live in one's heart more than in one's intellect, 186; how to deal with the heart, 231; closeness of heart to Jesus through tenderness, 234; the heart needs a center, 182; compunction of heart, 78, 122; make acts of love, acts of the heart, 128; I worked not enough with the heart, 186; humility of heart, 93, 132; how acquire humility of heart, 134; meekness and humility of heart, 220; interior penance, or penance of the heart, 196; keep heart calm when one is upset, 200; my heart is famished for God but does not enjoy God, 73; my heart has not found its treasure, 151; chastity of the heart, 121; shortcomings of the heart, insensibility, 77-78; my heart is flighty, 73; restlessness of the heart, it no longer feels God, 64; heart in revolt against the spirit of our Lord, 97; aridity of the heart, its cause, 79, 98; lack of mortification of the heart, 76; sadness of heart, 122; the heart is selfish, 231.

**Heaven:** union with our Lord, the way to heavenly glory, 256, 258-259; Christ's welcome of love in heaven, 268.

**Holiness:** see *sanctity*.

**Holy Spirit:** and death of the old self, 157; he will reveal to me the spirit of Jesus, 125; he inspires liturgical prayers, 157; liturgical prayers, His prayers, 157; our habitual Sanctifier, 224; He forms us and gives us the grace to form new subjects, 159; He revealed our Lord to St. Joseph, 246; He makes the Word Incarnate in Mary, 267-268; our body, His temple, 262-263.

**Humility:** humiliations, graces of salvation, 66; death to self implies humility, 68; our Lord prefers an act of humility to all the glory I can give Him, 70; gift of self in spirit of humility, 72; humiliation over the silliness of my mind, 128; God did not have our first parents humiliated by other creatures, 168; I omit examinations so as not to have to humble myself, 196; I reveal what elementary humility should not, 217; humility, often the virtue of the moment, 218; humility, one of the virtues of perfection, 223; I humble myself in general, 227; fondness for talk, source of failings against humility, 228; glorify our Lord by humiliations, 259; resist over-active mind to acquire humility of heart, 93; what is humility of heart? 132; I must for two reasons live according to the humility of spirit of Jesus, 132; I would be much stronger if I were humble of spirit, 260; negative and positive humility, 133-134; humility, characteristic virtue of an adorer, 84, 87; external practice of humility, 79; How acquire humility of heart? 134; humility of mind and heart in Jesus, 130-133; humility of St. Joseph, 242, 245; by humility we build up positive virtue, 209; negative humility, a virtue of justice, 72, 132; and modesty, 116; and meekness 131, 220; and poverty, 141; and patience, 221, 230; and silence, 228.

**Illness:** in course of founder's life, 125; I must have been ill, 281; my health is shattered, 260; see *infirmities*.

**Illusion:** illusion of my apostolate of love, of that mysticism which seeks to show off, 94; I labored under a great illusion in thinking I loved no one, 79.

**Incarnation:** mystery of the Incarnation, 98-100, 224; spiritual Incarnation, 98-100, 100, 264-265; I did not desire our Lord, 98; Incarnation, model of my eucharistic life, 147-148, 183; gift of self, as the *exinanivit* of the Incarnation, 197; God's love of man in the Incarnation, 223-224, 267-268; human nature elevated to a divine life by Incarnation, 257; love of Incarnation, a pure love, 281; Eucharist is the Incarnation continued, 225; Incarnation, model of perpetual vow of personality, 251-252; see *vow of personality*.

**Infirmities:** our Lord called me in spite of my spiritual infirmities, 143; levity, result of headaches in my youth, 74; passion for study, checked by illness and headaches, 233; I am ailing, I am totally exhausted, my health is shattered, 260; see *illness*.

**Insensibility of heart:** to the things of God, 77.

**Intellect:** see *mind*.

**Interior life:** I sought too much the exterior in the service of our Lord, 65-66, 98, 152; I have been drawn so long to the interior life of Jesus, 99, 105, 152, 195; fortify the interior man as a means to union, 262; interior life of the Holy Family, 246-248; work on my inner self to achieve union, 152; Jesus drives man to his inner self, 100; interior of man, center of union, 262-263; my grace is a grace of interior life, 162; adorations fortify interior man, 262; interior life of soul in our Lord, 209; obstacles to interior life, 64; I must live the interior life of adoration, 109; hidden life glorifies God more than complete sacrifice of external things, 151-152; hidden life, of capital importance, 188, 244; St. Joseph, spiritual master of the interior life, 244; lack of interior life, 172; see *interior service* under *eucharistic service*.

**Jesus Christ:** Incarnation, 98-99, 224; spiritual Incarnation, 98-99, 100, 264-265; life of Jesus in the Incarnation, 99; without human person in the Incarnation, our model, 147, 183; the way, the truth, the life and glory in Incarnation, 267; model in Incarnation of vow of personality, 251-252.

*Word of the Father*, 155-156; servant, 148-150; in absolute dependence on the Father, 151; what He was to the Father, I must be to Him, 147; the Father loves us because Jesus loves us, 106; character of the life of Jesus Christ, 94-96.

*Mysteries of our Lord*, 98, 222-226; the Eucharist, 225; the Presentation, 86-87; His personal love for me, 232, 234-235; my love for Him, 106-107, 234; His Passion, 69, 238-240; His Passion and my sins, 66-67, 238-240; His kingship, 65-66, 274, 276, 278; our Judge, 222, 268; He was promised in Garden of Eden, 169; Baptism, a new creation in Him, 90.

*King of love*, adored and preached by Blessed Sacrament Fathers, 280; the King of truth to defend, 280; I shall work with the King in His study, His confidant, a replica of Him, 152; Founder of the Congregation, 193; the Congregation, His militia, 278-280; Congregation at His service, 158-160, 175, 192-193; our founder is His representative, 193, 279-280; vocations sent, a sign of His being pleased with His servants, 147; adoration of Jesus Christ, 163, 165-167; the worship of adoration is that of the Church, and therefore agreeable to God, 156; eucharistic service of His person, 108, 146-148; Master and Teacher of my service, 125-126; He wants me as a simple religious, 193; why He is not loved, 191-192; He is not loved or preached even by priests, 267-268.

*Center of the Holy Family*, 246-248; center of Mary's life, 205; He loves me because Mary loves me, 106; life of Mary in the Incarnation, 99; Mary's adoration of the Word Incarnate, 269-271; St. Joseph, father, adorer, servant of our Lord, 241-246; St. Joseph and our Lord's sufferings, 248-249.

*Minister of Jesus Christ*, modeled on our Lord as the envoy of His Father, 155-157; His spokesman, 156, 276; the person (self) of my person (self), 183, 264; my center, 181-189, 208, 262-264; our Lord my law, our sacramental Lord my end, 91; Master, Model and God of my heart, 92-93, 124, 126, 157, 193, 208-210; my Raphael, my means, my center, 123; Guest of man, to whom man owes respect, companionship, a banquet, 264-265; He is entirely at our service, 189; He is not loved as a spouse, master, friend, 225; I will be His replica, His confidant, 152; He sustains my mind, my health, 260; crosses in our Lord, 251, 259; and vow of personality, 123, 251-254, 255-259; principle and center of holiness, 259; my grace is to fortify in me the interior man that is Jesus Christ, 99, 152, 195, 262.

*Virtues*. His modesty, 95, 112, 115; His mortification, 97; mortification, a means of union with Him, 80-81; penance makes one coredeemer with Him, 170; His poverty, 135-137, 198, 201-202; His poverty in the Blessed Sacrament, 136; poverty ennobled in Him, 201; calm and kind, 200; and chastity, 119; His humility, 84, 85; humility in the Blessed Sacrament, 83-84, 85; humility of mind, 131-132; humility of heart, 132; His silence, 140, 216-219; His meekness, 125; interior meekness, 129, 210-212; exterior meekness, 129, 213-215; meekness of silence, 216-219; how acquire His meekness? 219-221.

*Means of spiritual life*. Live according to His spirit, 125-126, 127; acquire love in order to acquire His spirit, 129; His love, remedy to hardness and coldness of heart, 78; His life in me and my imitation of Him, the cure-all of my shortcomings, 95; seeking Him, 121, 195; consult Him in all things, 208; think with Him, 209; greet Him at the sound of the clock, 196; offer myself to Him, 196, 281; abide with Him, 152, 186; work for and with Him, 151-152, 186, 188; live for and of Him, 124, 125-126, 191, 208-210, 255, 260-261; life of union, 260-264; trials willed for our good, 207; see *glory of the Father, interior life, Eucharist, Jesus Christ sacramental, love*.

**Jesus Christ sacramental:** knowledge and love of Him, 176-177, 234; He has drawn me by love of the Blessed Sacrament, 179; my end, my center, 91, 246-248; He is not loved, 176-177; little loved or preached by priests, 176; His sacrifices are not known, 179-181; our Judge, 222; His humility, 83-84, 87; His poverty, 202; His meekness, 221-222; our mission of love, 178; Congregation is His Society, 175; see *Jesus Christ*.

**Joseph:** father of Jesus, 241-242; adorer, 245-246; Jesus, center of his love, 246-248; his humility, 242; his poverty, 247; his silence, not a single word about the Incarnation, 229, 244; and the Holy Family, 246-248; his seven sorrows, 248-249; imitation of St. Joseph, 241-248; consecration to him, 244-245; and Congregation, 243.

**Justice:** humility, a matter of strict justice, 72, 132; mortification, sheer justice, 80; penance, a matter of justice, 170; adoration, a homage of justice, 163; our Lord, terrible in His justice to the one who resisted love, 222; God's justice and man's first sin, 223.

**Kingship of Jesus Christ:** see *King of love* under *Jesus Christ*.

**Knowledge:** passion for books, 233; make of the pursuit of knowledge a prayer, 233; avoid curiosity, 234; seek knowledge from our Lord, 271; seek knowledge of the heart, 271.

**Levity:** of character, 72-74; its causes, 74-77; means of combatting levity, 79; see *character*.

**Liberty:** taking liberties with the rule, a false liberty, 172-173; excessive liberty given to the soul, 196.

**Life:** eucharistic service, its first and sovereign law, 144-145; 146-148; spiritual life of Father Eymard, his own self-analysis, 64-65, 72-81, 140-141, 145, 146-147, 154-155; see *active life, contemplative life, eucharistic life, interior life, religious life*.

**Liturgy:** resolution to pronounce liturgical prayers with affection, 157; liturgical worship, 166-167.

**Love:** it is a life, 268; three kinds of love, 191; gift of self is true love, 71, 188, 253-254, 260-261; our distinctive virtue? 83; my grace, my mission, 175, 176, 181; its divine and Christian *sense* 129; true religious of His love, 277; nature of love is mysterious, 189; penetrate to the heart of the heart of divine love, 186; what does abiding in His love mean? 182; fear of the love of Jesus, 177.

**Love of God for man,** 222-225; His love for me, 81-82, 105; reasons of His love, 105-106; my love for Him, 106-107; His love in the Incarnation, 267-268; His love in the Eucharist, 81, 176-177, 222-225, 234-235; sacrifices of His love in the Eucharist, 176, 275; Jesus Christ, King of glory, end of the Congregation, 66, 274; perpetual throne of love, 276; love of God and presence of God, 186, 195-197; His love for me, present and personal, 209, 233, 234-235.

**My love for Jesus Christ,** 106-107, 178; love and union with Him, 103, 255; deficiencies of my love, 152, 154-155; spirit of Jesus through love, 128-130; love of Jesus Christ and humility, 1.32; love, my center, 189; Eucharist, center of love, 181-187; Eucharist, a fellowship of love, 225; love and sacramental abasement, 84-85; adore His love in Eucharist, 163; adoration, a worship of love, 166-167; my adoration, too much speculation, not enough love, 167; Mary's adoration of love, 270; St. Joseph's adoration of love, 245; illusion of my apostolate of love, 94; I want the power of Your love, 277; our Lord has drawn me by love of the Blessed Sacrament, 178; reasons why our sacramental Lord is not loved, 176-177, 225, 275; extent of God's love, 222-226; working too much with the mind, an obstacle to love, 98; Why I did not love sufficiently, 167.

**Love and virtues.** And vow of personality, 253-254; and poverty, 137, 202; our Lord's love of poverty, 198; meekness through love, 219; meekness, fruit of love, 211; and patience 217-218; and justice at death, 222, 268; pray for love of neighbor, 259; suffering and love, 97, 248; devotedness of love, 69; devotion of love, 186; fortitude, born of love, 281.

**Man:** Jesus Christ, his Guest, 264-265; God his Guest in the Eucharist, 225; his dignity and power lie in union with our Lord, 257, 258; God loves him, 222-225.

**Mary:** and Incarnation, 98, 268; her sorrows, 237-238, 266; I am the cause of her sorrows, 240; a share of the grace of Mary in the Incarnation, 99, 267; and the Holy Family, 246-248; and St. Joseph, 245, 248-249; Jesus loves me because His mother has given me to Him, 106; and the Congregation, 144-145, 175, 205; her adoration of the Word Incarnate, 269-271; her adoration and my adoration, 269-271; and our founder, 81, 93, 178, 205-206, 236; Mary's life of love, 149, 191; her modesty, 113, 116; her poverty, 141, 198; her meekness 212, 220, 229.

**Mass:** a sacrifice, 179; and Calvary, 179-180; service according to the Four Ends of the Sacrifice, 144-145.

**Meekness:** of Jesus Christ, 129-130; interior meekness of Jesus Christ, 129, 210-212; exterior meekness of Jesus Christ, 129, 213-216; eucharistic meekness, 221-222; means of acquiring meekness, 130, 219-221; what is in meekness of heart, as seen in Jesus? 129, 210-212; I am without this meekness, why? 211, 215; will of God, means of acquiring it, 220; characteristic virtue of our Lord's followers, 211; the flower and fruit of humility, 131; humility, the grace of meekness, 220; virtue of poverty is meek, 202; and modesty, 214; fragrance of charity and holiness of Christ, 213; meekness of silence of Christ, 216-219; I prayed for fortitude in meekness, 281.

**Mental prayer:** God's greatest gift, 101; and holiness, 101; and union with our Lord, 261; a fortifying of the life of Jesus in me, 262; prayer obtains everything, 118; simplicity in prayer, 93; I even fear the peace of prayer, 93; the calm of prayer easily lost, 154; levity of mind in prayer, 73, 137, 212; and modesty, 113; and virtue, 204; make of studies a prayer, 233-234; outside the time of prayer, find nourishment in what I do, 155.

**Merit:** merit comes from union with our Lord, 258-259.

**Militia:** notion, mission, character of eucharistic militia, 278-280.

**Mind:** wretchedness of mind, 111; humility of spirit or of mind, 132; its natural tendencies, 64, 73, 111, 127, 154, 178, 190, 272; its levity in prayer, 73, 127, 137, 260; my mind is like an eel, 73; my mind and imagination harass me in meditation 212; its vanity, 111, 125; the mistake of my life has been to live too much in the mind, 93; the flesh and the spirit, 94, 97; the mind in revolt against the spirit of our Lord, 97; my mind lures my heart from abiding in our Lord, 149, 150; soul over-stimulated by intellectual effort, 98, 105; enslavement of intellectual pursuits, 262; how to deal with the mind, 231; educate the mind at the feet of our Lord, 260; too intellectual an approach to Eucharist, 186; mortify my mind, 260; I need the presence of God to overcome the vanity of my mind, 88; see *studies, enslavement*.

**Minister of Jesus Christ:** be the minister of Jesus Christ as He was of His Father, 155-157; see *minister of Jesus Christ* under *Jesus Christ*.

**Ministry:** see *apostolate*.

**Modesty:** royal virtue of the adorer, 115-116; summary of all the virtues, 115-116; and recollection, 116; and mortification, 116; and humility, 116; and virtue of religion, 116; and chastity, 119; and priesthood, 114; and meekness, 214; reason for practicing it, 113; means of acquiring it, 113, 116, 118; obligation of practicing it, 114; exterior modesty, 82, 112-113; why I lack it, 113; I have often paid a heavy price for my vanity, 113.

**Mortification:** death to self implies mortification of the old self, 68; one act of mortification preferable to all virtues of devotedness, 70; reach our Lord by mortification, 80; at meals, 82; spirit of mortification, 80-81; modesty is mortification, 113, 116; a means of union with Jesus Christ, 80-81; see *penance*.

**Mystery:** it is the nature of love to be mysterious, 189; my life is a mystery to me, 121; at last, I am penetrating into the mysteries of our Lord, 98; I must go from the Eucharist to the mysteries, 163; St. Joseph adapted his adorations to each mystery, 245-246.



**Mysticism:** illusion of a mysticism which seeks to show off, 94.

**Natural:** gift of self out of devotedness suited my nature, 69; the natural in me always returns to its vomit-the natural man, not tamed or chained, 154; nature cannot correct its vitiated dispositions, 204; unconcerned about harmony on a natural level, 207; how quickly I become natural, 209; grace of God and the natural, 204; the natural is always easy, 225; of itself nature does not tend towards God, 234; impossible to make the natural supernatural, 275; the natural sneaks into the supernatural, 161.

**Neglect:** of the interior for the exterior of the Society, 63; of my grace in You, of my mission, 63, 64 .

**Obedience:** to the rule, my first virtue, 172, 219.

**Passion of Jesus Christ:** He expiated man's sin, 224; caused by our sins, 69; personal Passion of Jesus Christ, 238-240; and the Eucharist, 179-181; revealed to Mary and Joseph, 247-248, 249; and Mary, 237-238, 240, 266.

**Patience:** with this fool of a mind, 127-128; the hour of battle has struck, 133; acquire presence of God by schooling myself in patience, 196; the road to virtue, 209; pray and be patient in time of trial, 250; glorify God by my patience, 259; patience of our Lord, 215; silent patience of our Lord, 217; my patience compared with our Lord's, 215, 218; fruit of humility, 221; patient meekness of our Lord, 222; be patient with one's mind, 231; strength in patience, 221, 281.

**Paul:** action of Jesus Christ on him, 61-62; his answer, 62.

**Peace:** reasons why we lack peace, 75-76; conditions of peace of mind, 139, 204; too attached to peace of heart, 164; learning to abide in eucharistic center by deeds, not by seeking the peace of it, 183.

**Penance:** death to self implies penance, 68; imposed on our First Parents, 168-170; shirking it, 196; corporal penance needed to acquire presence of God, 89; a consequence of sin, 223; gift of self, a forin of penance, 72; and poverty, 201-202; a penance for failure against meekness, 220; and obligation for priests, 170; Mary and penance for sinners, 270; see *mortification*.

**Perfection:** it consists in giving excellent service, 108.

**Personality:** to live a life of union, I must renounce constantly the personality of Adam, 262; see *gift of self*, *self*, *vow of personality*.

**Poverty:** personal poverty, 70, 135-140, 219; of Jesus, 135-137, 198; interior spiritual poverty, 140-141; failings against religious poverty, 138-139; fidelity in the practice of it, 139, 198; a positive virtue, 202; effective and affective poverty, 198; reasons of poverty, 198, 201-202; how make of poverty a virtue, 140-146; a remedy for vanity, 142; and holiness, 137; and call to eucharistic vocation, 143; and penance, 201-202; and St. Francis, 202.

**Prayer:** see *mental prayer*, *adoration*.

**Presence of God:** need of habitual presence of God, 88-89, 155, 172, 174-175; how acquire it? 89; bow easily I lose it, 226; a rule of love and life, 195-197; its loss accounts for lack of modesty, 112; a means of acquiring modesty, 116; means of acquiring virtue of silence, 228.

**Presentation of Jesus:** I meditated on the offering of Jesus, 86.

**Pride:** dry-eyed contrition, the lot of wounded pride, 78; priding myself on my acquaintances, 276; and god's love, 277; overcome pride by God's love, 78; see *vanity*.

**Priesthood:** bound to modesty as a priest, 114; by chastity, we become worthy ministers, 119; bound to penance as a priest, 170; Mary alone led me by the hand to the priesthood, 236.

**Priests:** they do not love or preach the Blessed Sacrament, 176; and St. Joseph, 241-244.

**Providence:** and Father Eymard, 91, 92, 105, 224, 277-278; and our Society, 202; and vocations, 147; union, the full intent of Providence in natural and supernatural order, 256; acceptance of the will of divine Providence, 89, 202, 277-278, 281.

**Recollection:** I no longer manage to keep recollected, 172; recollection will gain from my shunning conflict, 204; exterior relations, detrimental to it, 226-227; regulate the mind by it, 231; worth more than exterior graces, 90; a means of interior life, 100, 260-261; modesty, the soul of recollection, 116; I even fear the sweetness of recollection, 93; see *presence of God*, *interior life*.

**Redemption:** on Calvary, at Mass, 179; born under favorable conditions of the graces of Redemption, 224.

**Religion:** virtue of religion, not dominant virtue of an adorer, 83; at adoration, modesty is virtue of religion in practice, 116.

**Religious life:** eucharistic, 167; adoration, end of the perfection of the religious state, 163, 192; and the Congregation, 192; sovereign grace of salvation, 165; a defense against the snares of the world, 165; bound to penance as a religious, 170; poverty, its first law, 198; I applied myself so little to the religious life, 194; service of our Lord through the religious state, 144, 192; see *religious of the Blessed Sacrament*.

**Religious of the Blessed Sacrament:** a religious adorer, 193; an adorer-apostle should always adore and preach Jesus Hostia, 280; religious of the love and glory of the Eucharist, 277; should we have contemplatives and apostles? 268; eucharistic militia, 278-280; we are the first religious adorers of the Blessed Sacrament exposed, 145; my duty is to be a good religious, 193; religious and the rule, 171-172, 172-173; characteristic virtue of a religious adorer, 83-84;

modesty, royal virtue of religious of the Blessed Sacrament, 115; bound to penance as religious, 170; see *eucharistic service, adoration, adorer, mental prayer, religious life, rule, servant*.

**Resignation:** in time of trial, 69; our Lord wills trials for my greater good, 207; see *Providence*.

**Rule:** superior should observe the rule like the others, 171-172; superior owes its observance as an example to the brethren, 172; superior sins against God and the Society by breaking it, 171; obedience to it, superior's first virtue, 172; superior, its authoritative, positive and active exemplar, 173; its observance by superior, a matter of life or death for the Society, 174-175; duties of superior to his religious, 175; perseverance in its practice, 204, 219; see *superior*.

**Rules of supernatural living:** Jesus as center is the law of my life, 188; supernatural-living rules for body, mind and heart, 230-232.

**Sacrifice:** heart must be ruled by sacrifice, 231; sacrifices of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, 179-181; sacrifices of hidden life glorify God more than sacrifices of things outside self, 151-152.

**Saints:** what did the saints do? 76; Baptism makes me a brother of the saints, 91; formed by Jesus Christ, 125-126; their occupation in heaven, 209; and silence, 229; their crosses, 250-251; see *sanctity*.

**Sanctity:** holiness attracts holy vocations, 161; union with our Lord, principle and power of holiness, 257, 258; holiness of Father Eymard, condition of survival of Society, 174-175; means of holiness, 101, 175; God's way of sanctifying, 101; and suffering, 248; and poverty, 137; and silence, 101; meekness, the fragrance of our Lord's holiness, 218; see *saints*.

**Satan:** see *devil*.

**Scripture:** respect for the word of God, 157.

**Self:** Jesus Christ, my person, my self, 183, 251-252, 264; Jesus Christ, the guest of my person, 264; my ego, the center of my actions, 64, 227; my ego has crept into everything, 65; I never gave the core of me to God, 68; exterior service becomes center of one's ego, 108; it is self that I love in creatures, 121; the flesh, a footstool for my ego, 94; discouragement due to egotism, 230; egotism, obstacle to God's love, 277.

*Gift and holocaust of self* is basic, 70; gift of self is true love, preferential love, 71, 188; unconditional, 123; in the spirit of humility, 72; perpetual vow, nothing for me, nothing by me, 251-252; the center of union with Jesus Christ is in me, 260-261; I must die to self, 66, 68; adoration of Jesus Christ by me, 163; see *vow of personality*.

**Self-abasement:** examine self on self-abasement, 65-66; our Lord draws me to it, 66; a proof of Christ's love, 84; a virtue of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, 84-85; characteristic virtue of the adorer, 83-84; in Mary's adoration, 269; see *humility, vow of personality*.

**Self-abnegation:** so little of it, 66; death to self through *exinanivit*, 68, our Lord prefers an act of self-abnegation to so much else, 70; our Lord asks for it, 128; in hidden life of our Lord, 244; interior and exterior, 82; of the heart, 231; an act of self-abnegation preferable to success, 70.

**Self-contempt:** one act of it gives more glory to God than the success of the Society, 94; revolt of nature against the law of contempt by others, 97.

**Self-denial:** see *self abnegation*.

**Self-love:** I love self in all things, 121; accountable for my failures against meekness, 129-130; it takes advantage of break points of others, 157; my mind is in a smog of self-love, 190; touched to the quick over the shortcomings of the Society, 200-201; and love of Jesus Christ, 225; it managed to masquerade as the love of God, 95, 161; impossible to make self-love a divine love, 275; and observance of the rule, 178; and meekness, 215, 220; and conversation, 227-228; and neighbor, 157; expansive from self-love, 235; and hyperactivity, 64; my self-love was hurt, 134, 206; life of Jesus Christ in me, remedy to self-love, 95; contemplative life, the death and grave of self-love, 152.

**Self-surrender:** answer to our Lord's wishes, 183; and resignation to God's will, 250; forsaking of exterior things, a fostering of the divine center, 188; surrender to the will of God concerning the Cenaele, 277-278.

**Senses:** regulating the senses, 230-231.

**Sensuality:** inere external devotion exposes one to sensuality, 72; source of lack of peace, 75; it ends in waywardness of senses, 223; sensual of heart, 277.

**Servant:** worked only for glory of God's service, 65; servant of Jesus Christ, 123, 144-145, 148-150; eucharistic servant, 146-147; service of the person of the Master, 108, 123, 125-126, 146, 154; personal obligation, 108, 145; service is the law, virtue and renewal of the servant, 66; see *eucharistic service*.

**Service:** see *servant, eucharistic service*.

**Silence:** about self, 82, 160; about individuals, 282; failings due to fondness for talk, 140, 217-218, 227-228; how to acquire virtue of silence, 218, 228; silence about crosses, 250; give myself not in word only, 275; our Lord's silence., of poverty, 140; meekness of silence of our Lord, 216-219; silent suffering of our Lord, 218-219; and sanctification, 101; imitate silence of St. Joseph, 244.

**Sin:** cause of the Passion, 66, 69, 238-240; our Lord suffered to make amends for sin, 97; God's mercy for sinful man, 223; God's mercy for sin of our First Parents, 168-169; sins of the body, 169-170; on my sins, 68; my sins, cause of the Passion, 239-240; all my sins spring from vanity, 65-66.

**Sinners:** Mary's fourth act of adoration, an act of compassion for poor sinners, 270.

**Society of the Blessed Sacrament:** see *Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament*.

**Storms:** how to face them, 200-201, 203-204, 259, 272-273.

**Strength:** strength is in patience, 221; strength of man is in his heart, 231; our Lord, strength of my will, 260; grace of strength in a well-kept schedule, 260; I want one thing only, the power of Your love, of Your truth, of Your service, 277; offering and fortitude, 281; I prayed for the grace of fortitude in discipline, in the four vows, and for the grace of pure love, 281.

**Stripping of old self:** a condition of holiness, 91; detachment, a condition of holiness, 223; it fosters the divine center, 188; see *self, gift of self, vow of personality, self-abnegation*.

**Study:** passion for study, 125, 195, 233-234; Providence preserved me from enslavement of studies, 92; enslavement to study, 272; curiosity in study, 234; exaggerated craving for knowledge, cause of levity and vanity, 76, 125; learning for its own sake, a loss of time, of graces, of devotion, 261.

**Suffering:** a trying and depressing night, how I suffered! 122; a proof of God's love, 97; silent suffering of our Lord, 218; silent on one's suffering, 203-204; my meditation, painful to body and soul, 65; founders have suffered the most, 250; my sufferings spoiled and sullied, 97; I suffered much from my shortcomings, 251; and holiness, 248; and poverty, 201-202; suffer human afflictions, 259; acceptance of suffering, 179, 209, 249-250; see *crosses*.

**Superior:** channel of Society's graces, 65; defining what the superior should be and should do, 109, 193; edification of the brethren, 172; how to act with difficult subjects, 204; bound to the rule, 171-172, 172-173, 193; a living rule, 174; and the Congregation, 174-175; St. Joseph, model of superior, 241-244; and modesty, 114; see *brethren, authority, rule*.

**Supernatural:** charity never separates man from, the supernatural, 212; more powerful than the natural, 225; see *grace*.

**Surrender of self:** see *self-surrender, gift of self, vow of personality*.

**Tepidity:** I am in a state of tepidity, 106.

**Thanksgiving:** prolonged, 110; those thanksgivings not with our Lord, but for others, 111; towards the end of my thanksgiving, I made the perpetual vow of my personality, 251; during my thanksgiving, I gave myself to the love of our Lord, 178; finding thanksgivings long, 111; I thanked our Lord for stalling the business of the Cenacle, I would have left with a rag of a retreat, 112; I thanked our Lord for drawing me to Himself by His inner self, 195.

**Trials:** they detach the soul, 101; they go with sanctity, 101; resignation to trials, 69; trials from subjects, and even lack of subjects, 69; see *Cenacle, suffering, storms, illness, infirmities*.

**Trinity:** by chastity, our body becomes temple of the Trinity, 119; and the Incarnation, 267-268; and adoration of Mary, 270; acquire modesty by adverting to the presence of the Trinity in me, 116; see *Father, glory of the Father*.

**Truth:** defend the King of truth, 280; I do not abide in the truth of God, 73; live in our Lord as the law and rule of truth, 208; I want the power of Your truth, 277.

**Union:** with Jesus Christ, a union of life, of faith, of love, of grace, 101-103; means of acquiring union, 103-104; union of incorporation, 103; grace of union, none too clear in my mind, 103; foster union in order to make our Lord our center, 208; union with our Lord and vow of personality, 253-257, 257-259; substantial union through the Eucharist, 102, 103; life of union with our Lord, 260-261; sustenance of union, 261-262; center of union, 262-264; dignity and power of man, 257; Jesus, the sustenance of the life of union of Mary and Joseph, 247; our union with Mary and Joseph, 247.

**Vanity:** an obstacle to growth in love, obstacle to grace, 69, 196-197; mortification, a remedy against an inflating vanity, 72; interior and exterior vanity, 79; vanity developed into an exterior virtue, 81; restlessness, the escaping fumes of vanity, 152; my mind in a smog of vanity, 190; my meekness, characterized by vanity, 203; meekness with those that can serve my vanity, 215-216; harshness, an act of vanity in disguise, 221, 275-276; cause of my failings, 65, 68, 79, 91, 227, 227-228; in the service of Jesus Christ, 65, 125; love of God inspired by vanity, 65; in preaching and spiritual direction, 66, 113; iyiy soul is empty of God, thence vanity over success of Society, a slave to vanity, 64, 162; it even reformed me, 68, 91; of the mind, 111; of character in censuring the great, 94; spirit of vanity filled my life, 125; cause of levity, 76; source of curiosity, 113; and meekness, 130; and poverty, 138; and silence, 140; vanity in a mysticism that shows off, 94; breaking the rule out of vanity, 171-172; and modesty, 113; I have often paid a heavy price for my vanity, 113; God used my vanity to protect my chastity, 119; it spoiled negative humility, 134; poverty, a remedy to vanity, 142.

**Virtue:** perfected by trials, 204; and prayer, 204; I am reduced to questioning external acts of virtue, 93; the rule, supreme law of the service of our Lord, 173; by the negative, that is, by patience and humility, we build up positive virtue, 209; characteristic virtue of an adorer, 83-84; meekness, characteristic virtue of our Lord's followers, 211; modesty, a royal virtue, 115-116; obedience to the rule, my first virtue, 172, 219.

**Vocation:** see *eucharistic vocation, Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, adorer, adoration, apostolate*.

**Vocations:** the Father sends vocations, 147, 158; the fruit of adoration, 147; I did not go the right way about getting vocations, 147.

**Vow of personality:** first inkling of the gift of his personality, 147; Incarnation, model of this vow, 251-252; its nature, a vow of the person in me, 253; union of our Lord with us, the life of this vow, 255-256; and my union with our Lord, 257-259; and sustenance of union with our Lord, 261-262; and center of union, 262-264; by my vow, our Lord is in me, is that *me*, 264; I renewed my recent vow, 256; fortitude in the four vows, 281.

**Will:** I do not consult God, thence weakness of the will, 64; flighty, selfish, afraid (if God, 74, 154; presence of God, a help to keep my will at His disposal, 88; acquire humility by wanting that one thing alone, 134; our Lord, the strength of my will, 260; this erratic will of mine, 172.

**Will of God:** seeking it will bring grace and light, 173; be where God expects me to be, do what He wants me to do, 173; will of the Father, our Lord's way of life, 86; human judges are agents of the will of God, 278; love of the actual will of God, a means of acquiring meekness, 220; surrender to it, means of acquiring union, 104; committed to it concerning Cenacle, 277-278; it does everything for our greater good, 89, 207, 281; full acceptance of it, 251; virtue of poverty thanks the will of God in all things, 202; acceptance of cross in the holy will of God, 207, 209; and patience of silence, 218.

**Word:** united to Jesus Christ by union to His words, 101; the word of the Father repeated and carried out by Jesus Christ, 155-156; word of Jesus, spirit and life, 156; listen to interior word of Jesus Christ and repeat it, 156; read the word of God with respect, 157; excess in conversation, 272-273, 276.

**Work for others:** see *devotedness*.

**World:** Baptism, separation from the world, 91; it is afraid of the love of Jesus Christ, 177; horror of it, a condition for holiness, 101; sadness grips me when I go out into the world, 162; O my soul, leave this world, 183; its dangers, 165; religious life protects against it, 162, 165; the spirit of the world and silence, 228.

**Worship:** interior and exterior, 166-167; how adorer should behave at adoration, 166; worship of latria, 166; adoration, worship of love, 166-167.

**Zeal:** the lack of genuine zeal, 65; gave myself only through zeal, 69; complicity of the flesh in favoring works of zeal, 94; intemperate zeal, 196-197; false zeal, 65, 118, 204, 228; undue attention to works of zeal at adoration, 163; false zeal for authority, 200; Society honors our Lord with its love and zeal, 274.

\* \* \* \* \*

*A word about the Index.* - The alphabetical index follows the index of the French edition, with added and, at times, more detailed references. Indexing the "Great Retreat" alphabetically presented many problems, not the least of which is its rambling character, so typical of such notes.

References with two page-numbers may refer to two full pages, or to one paragraph only, the first line (or first few lines) of which is found at the bottom of the first page referred to and the rest of it on the following page. For instance, "spirit of mortification, 80-81" covers the entire third meditation of the sixth day, whereas "means of union with Jesus Christ, 80-81" picks up the last line on page 80 with the rest of the reference on page 81.

Most of the one-page references are mere transcriptions of a phrase, or part of a phrase of the text and can be easily identified. Others refer to the thought only, and these require a bit of exploring. Briefly, the alphabetical index shares the oddities of the structures of the "Retreat Notes." In spite of its apparent or real lack of systematic arrangement, it should prove sufficiently helpful to warrant its publication.