

CHARLES DE FOUCAULD  
Hermit and African Explorer  
by Rene Bazin, trans. by Peter Keelan

Charles Eugene de Foucauld, whose history I shall try to relate, was born at Strasbourg on September 15, 1858. p. 1

In him two sentiments which might call the past to life survived-- respect for the priest and most tender attachment to the family. Nay, more, he had a taste for reading. p. 6

"When you start with saying what you are going to do you must not come back without having done it..." p. 55

Holiness is the most powerful attraction for drawing souls together. p. 67

"Let us be sad, but let us thank God for our sadness." p. 76

"I must get strength from my weakness, employ this weakness itself for God, thank Him for this suffering and offer it to Him... I ask Him from the bottom of my heart to increase my suffering if I can bear a heavier load, so that it may afford Him a little more compensation and do His children a little more good: that He may diminish it if it is not for His glory and according to His will, but I am sure it is the will of Him who wept for Lazarus..." p. 80

"There is more strength in my words than in my heart." p. 81

"I have nothing to bear; He bears all." p. 82

"The faithful thought of Him and of those I love...forms my life." p. 87.

"Thy happiness suffices me." p. 88

"Let us pray for each other, in order to be faithful to what God desires from us each in our own lives. They appear very different, but it is only in the appearance; when God makes the foundation of life as it ought to be, all lives resemble each other, the rest is of little importance." p. 90

The ceremony of Brother Marie-Alveric's religious profession took place on Candlemas Day, February 2, 1892. p. 90

"Think no more about it," was substantially the prior's reply, "and wait in peace, for the good God, if it comes from Him, will well know how to provide the occasion." p. 95.

"It is the happiness of the country to be able to surround ourselves with all those we love...to have always round us those we love, this indeed is sweet...Why did I go so far away, you will say to me, if I feel this happiness so keenly? I have in no wise sought joy, I have sought to follow 'by the odour of His perfumes' Jesus, who, has loved us so much ...and if I have found my delight in following Him, it is without having sought it. But this delight does not prevent me from feeling profoundly the sorrow of being separated from all those I love" p. 98

"The opportunity of offering a sacrifice to God--that is still the greatest blessing, the only true one there is in life, the one which unites us most to our blessed Saviour--When one loves, what is sweeter than to give something to the beloved; above all, to give Him something to which we are attached, to suffer for love of Him, to give Him all our heart's blood?" p. 102

"If there are two persons on earth who should speak only of God, are they not we in whose friendship there is nothing terrestrial? Let out conversation be, then, that of the angels, my dearest Father... But whilst the angels have tongues of gold and hearts of fire, we stammer and are lukewarm; let us do what we can...that will be a reason for helping each other, for praying much for one another, for loving each other all the more because we are weaker, for having to sustain one another from afar, in order to follow, like our Lord, the sorrowful way which He has shown us: 'Take up your cross and follow Me.'" p. 103

"Consult your director in everything, above everything, even little things. I tell you this because I was always the better for doing so, and the worse for doing otherwise; I wish you to profit by my experience. This habit of asking what one should do, even in little things, has a thousand good effects: it gives peace; it accustoms you to conquer yourself; it makes you look upon the things of this earth as nothing: it gets one to make a host of acts of love: to obey is to love; it is the purest, the most perfect, the highest, the most disinterested, the most adoring act of love; it makes one, especially at first, perform not a few acts of mortification..." p. 104

"There is no vocation in the world as great as a priest's; and in truth, it is not of the world, it is, even here, of heaven...The priest is something TRANSCENDENT, exceeding all...What a vocation, my dear Brother, and how much I praise God for having given it to you..." p. 108

"BLESSED ARE THE POOR; that is the beatitude I want. I have already been offered a corner where I believe my soul will be well. In any case, He who assigns each leaf its place can put me in mine." p. 110

"My God, how good Thou art to have shattered all around me, to have so reduced to nothing all that would have prevented me from being Thine alone!" p. 124

They also wondered at the joy which they detected in this homeless man, without relations, riches, and without position. p.128

He would have liked the desert: at any rate he found out and made himself a solitude everywhere. p. 139

"Jesus did not lie down at full length on the Cross." p. 153

"Unintentionally, I have certainly invented a new air." p. 159

"Alas! I am so cold that I dare not say I love; but, I want to love! That is why I love watching. Unhappily, less and less am I able to watch..." p. 185

"Every time I pray to Jesus, the same answer seems to come back: 'Do miracles for Me, and I will do them for thee'..." p. 189

"Speak much and always so as to improve and uplift and bring souls nearer to God, and prepare the ground for the Gospel." p. 189

"When people are getting conversation more easily takes a serious and intimate turn." p. 189

"While evangelizing the poor, do not neglect the rich." p. 190

"If we are holy, that will be preaching without words, and strengthening our authority." p. 190

Father de Caussade's doctrine: "The present moment is always like an ambassador, declaring God's command. All our learning consists in recognizing His command in the present moment." p. 202

"Dread is the sign of duty." p. 210

"How long will it be before their feelings are what they pretend to be? Perhaps they will never be." p. 223

"Jesus chooses for each the kind of suffering which He sees best suited to sanctify him, and often the cross He imposes is the one that we would have refused had we dared, while accepting all the rest. The one He gives is the one that we least understand..." p. 228

"Should we dare have hope if God did not make it our duty?" p. 228

"One can, in this life, only embrace Jesus by embracing His Cross." p. 229

"Prayer and penance! The farther I go, the more I see that these are the principal means of acting on these poor souls. What am I doing in the midst of them?" p. 262

Proverb: Part your tents, bring your hearts together. p. 279

Proverb: Living people often meet. p. 279

"To work more directly for the one end: to see more people, and to give more time to prayer and spiritual reading!" p. 281

Simplified rosary for the use of infidels. At the beginning they would make an act of charity, and then, in any language, say on the little beads: "My God, I love Thee"; and on the big beads: "My God, I love The with my whole heart!" p. 282.

"Laughing puts the person who is talking to you in a good humour; it draws men closer together, allows them to understand each other better; it sometimes brightens gloomy character, it is a charity." p. 285

"Not mixing with them, but on the edge, not to be in the way, but ready to receive them should they wish to come." p. 286

"Yes, Jesus is enough: where He is, nothing lacks. However dear be those in whom His likeness shines, it is He who is all. He is all in time and in eternity." p. 293

"The soul is not made for noise, but for meditation, and life ought to be a preparation for heaven--not only by meritorious works, but by peace and recollection in God." p. 297

"They can receive the Gospel only by authority, and the authority necessary to make them adopt it and reject all they know, love and venerate can only be acquired after long and intimate contact, by great virtue and God's blessing." p. 300

Civilization "consists of two things: education and gentleness." p. 300

"...to establish contact, to make themselves loved, to inspire esteem, trust and friendship." p. 307

"The apostolate of kindness is the best of all." p. 313

"You can do good only when you know and are known." p. 313

"Much patience and gentleness." p. 313

"To cease believing what one has always believed, what one has always seen believed around one, what is believed by all whom one loves and respects--this is difficult." p. 316

"If only I might serve!" p. 322

"We are in the hands of God; nothing happens except what He permits." p. 327

"How good God is to hide the future from us! What a torture life would be were it less unknown to us! and how good He is to make so clearly known to us the heaven hereafter which will follow our earthly time of trial!" p. 336

God had only made him for sowing. P. 339

"As Christians we should give an example of self-sacrifice and devotion. It is a principle to which we must be faithful all our life, in simplicity, without asking ourselves whether pride does not enter into our conduct: it is our duty, let us do it, and ask the well-beloved Spouse of our soul that we may do it." p. 338

He died on the first Friday of December, the day consecrated to the Sacred Heart, and in the manner that he wished. p. 346

Pray for us, dear Little Brother!

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Hope is the secret of true asceticism...We rejoice in hope. p. 43

All sin is a punishment for ingratitude...If we do not love Him we show that we do not know Him. He is love. Deus caritas est.

Our knowledge of God is perfected by gratitude. p. 47

We do not know Him unless we are grateful.

Those who are not grateful soon begin to complain of everything...  
Tepidity is hate disguised as love. p. 48

True gratitude and hypocrisy cannot exist together.

To be grateful is to recognize the Love of God in everything He has given us...Gratitude takes nothing for granted. p. 49

To really know our "nothingness" we must also love it. And we cannot love it unless we see that it is good. And we cannot see that it is good unless we accept it. p. 51

We must repudiate nothing that is our own, nothing that we have, nothing that we are.

To love our nothingness we must love ourselves. p. 52

Knowing that he has nothing he also knows that he needs everything and he is not afraid to beg for what he needs and to get it where he can. p. 53

If we are to become spiritual, we must remain men. p. 55

Embrace reality.

Without the light of faith, we cannot see to make the right decisions. (God's will is to be found in our everyday life.)

We must not lose our sensitivity to spiritual inspirations. p. 56

There is no such thing as a prayer in which "nothing is done." p. 59

God, in His mercy, accepts our unsuccessful efforts in the place of a real meditation. p. 60

The only thing to seek in contemplative prayer is God...He would not have inspired us to seek Him unless we had already found Him.

We accept our poverty in peace, expecting nothing from ourselves and everything from God. p. 64

We must go out of ourselves and above ourselves and find Him no longer within us but outside us and above us. p. 65

The value of our weakness and of our poverty is that they are the earth in which God sows the seed of desire. p. 66.

A life is either all spiritual or not spiritual at all...Your life is shaped by the end you live for. You are made in the image of what you desire. p. 67

Wisdom is the very life of the monk in his monastery...Life reveals itself to us only in so far as we live it. p. 68

He is glorified only by His own gifts. p. 69

Often the poorest man in the community is the one who is at everybody else's disposition. p. 71

The eccentric man is not poor in spirit.

What one of us, O Lord, can speak of poverty without shame? p. 72

Poverty means need. To make a vow of poverty and never go without anything, never have to need something without getting it, is to try to mock the Living God. p. 73

Reading ought to be an act of homage to the God of all truth. p. 75

Books are no substitute for persons. p. 76

If we were really humble, we would know to what extent we are liars!

The more we struggle to be true, the more we discover our falsity. p. 80

True humility is, in a way, a very real despair: Despair of myself, in order that I may hope entirely in You. p. 81

If I am, then He is. p. 86

He has willed to identify Himself completely with me by that love which brought Him to death, for me, on the Cross.

Father, I come to You in your own Son's self. p. 88

My life is a listening, His is a speaking. My salvation is to hear and respond. For this, my life must be silent. Hence, my silence is my salvation.

The soul is offered to Him when it is entirely attentive to Him.

Interior silence is impossible without mercy and without humility. p. 92

He alone knows his secret, which is too precious to be revealed to men.

What we venerate in the Saints, beyond and above all that we know is this secret; the mystery of an innocence and of an identity perfectly hidden in God. p. 93

Idolatry is substituting falsehood for the truth of God.

A false conscience is a false god. p. 96

Wisdom knows God in ourselves and ourselves in God.

Every man is a liar, for every man is a sinner.

The beginning of wisdom is the confession of sin. p. 97

The solution of the problem of life is life itself...For until we have begun to live our prudence has no material to work on. And until we have begun to fail we have no way of working out our success. p. 98

A man becomes a solitary at the moment when, no matter what may be his external surroundings, he is suddenly aware of his own inalienable solitude and sees that he will never be anything but solitary. p. 101

\* My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please. And I hope to have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore I will trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone. p. 103

Sanctity may mean learning from God to be without anxiety in the midst of anxiety. p. 105

It is only when we prefer analysis to silence that they become a constant and insoluble problem. p. 106

In solitude we remain face to face with the naked being of things.

Words stand between silence and silence...We no longer trust entirely in language to contain reality. p. 107

Truth rises from the silence of being. p. 108

A man knows when he has found his vocation when he stops thinking about how to live and begins to live...Thought and life are one. p. 109

It is necessary that we find the silence of God not only in ourselves but also in one another. p. 111

Humility seeks silence not in inactivity but in ordered activity, in the activity that is proper to our poverty and helplessness before God...The words of humility are so simple, so gentle and so poor that they find their way without effort to the silence of God. Indeed they are the echo of His silence, and as soon as they are spoken His silence is already present in them. p. 113

It is not speaking that breaks our silence, but the anxiety to be heard...The humble man speaks only in order to be spoken to.

Silence is ordered to the ultimate summing up in words of all we have lived for. p. 114

When I am liberated by silence, when I am no longer involved in the measurement of life, but in the living of it, I can discover a form of prayer in which there is effectively, no distraction. My whole life becomes a prayer.

Our very poverty prevents us from being "pulled apart" (dis-tracted). p. 117

If my prayer is centered in myself, if it seeks only an enrichment of my own self, my prayer itself will be my greatest potential distraction.

In the gift of silence, and poverty, and solitude, everything I touch is turned into prayer.

I must seek nothing: but I must be content with whatever I have from God. True poverty is that of the beggar who is glad to receive alms from anyone, but especially from God. p. 118

True poverty is a receiving and giving of thanks, only keeping what we need to consume...False poverty refuses gratitude for anything at all. p. 119

We find Him by His Will, bringing us grace within and arranging our lives exteriorly, carrying us infallibly to the precise place in which we can find Him. p. 122

Though we seem to be in the middle of our journey, we have already arrived at the end. p. 123

Every moment is a new discovery of a new silence. p. 125

The martyr is a man who has made a decision strong enough to be proved by death.

The solitary lives all day long in the face of death...It is the Holy Spirit Himself who makes the decision that segregates martyrs and solitaries in Christ. p. 130

The life of prayer is founded on prayer of petition--no matter what it may develop into later on.

Ask for everything. Our prayer is an expression of our poverty.

Gratitude is the heart of the solitary life. p. 134

Imitation consists in being and acting in the same relation to Jesus as Jesus to the Father. p. 137

Be nourished by no other spiritual food than Jesus. p. 138

The solitary is necessarily a man who does what he wants to do. In fact he has nothing else to do...He must become a saint by doing what he wants to do, instead of doing what he does not want to do. It is very hard to be a saint by doing what you like. It means that what you like is always God's will. It means therefore that you are not likely to like what is not God's will, and that God Himself will cover your mistaken choices by accepting them, in good part, as "His Will." p. 140



The desire for solitude implies the grace to please God by making our own decisions in the humiliating uncertainty of an everlasting silence that never approves or disapproves a single choice we make. p. 141

Landscape is a good liberator from all images, for it calms and pacifies the imagination and the emotions and leaves the will free to seek God in faith.

The peace produced by grace is a spiritual stability too deep for violence. p. 144

Many of our most cherished plans for the glory of God are only inordinate passion in disguise...the God of peace is never glorified by violence. p. 145

I can live for God, or with Him, or in Him.

To live with Him it is necessary to refrain constantly from speech and to moderate our desires of communication with men, even about God.

Do not flee to solitude from the community. p. 148

We find God in our own being.

We cannot find the depths of our being by renouncing all activity. p. 151 Actions are the doors and windows of being.

To find our spiritual being we must travel down the path made by our spiritual activity.

His actions in us reveal His being in us.

The whole of life is to spiritualize our activities by humility and faith, to silence our nature by charity. p. 152

God does not tell His purest secrets to one who is prepared to reveal them...The mere desire to tell them makes us incapable of receiving them. p. 153

The great work of the solitary life is gratitude. p. 155

In our extreme poverty and humility, we have nothing else to live by except the fruits of the Psalms and the Scriptures...We must find God in them when we are in greatest need--and usually when we can find Him nowhere else and have nowhere else to look! p. 157

It is my lowliness and my humanness that have drawn You to make me Your equal by condescending to my level and living in me by Your merciful care. p. 158

It is Your desire, not that I give You the thanks and recognition You receive from Your great angels, but the love and gratitude that comes from the heart of a child.

It is necessary that I be human and remain human in order that the Cross of Christ be not made void. p. 159

It is a great evil for a soul beset by so many dangers to be alone. I believe if I had had anyone with whom to discuss all this, it would have helped me not to fall again, if only because I should have been ashamed in his sight, which I was not in the sight of God. For this reason I would advise those who practise prayer, especially at first, to cultivate friendship and intercourse with others of similar interests. This is a most important thing; if only because we can help each other by our prayers, and it is all the more so because it may bring us many other benefits. Since people can find comfort in the conversation and human sympathy of ordinary friendships, even when these are not altogether good, I do not know why anyone who is beginning to love and serve God in earnest should not be allowed to discuss his joys and trials with others--and people who practise prayer have plenty of both. p. 106

Self-defence compels him to seek the companionship of others until he is strong enough not to be depressed by suffering. p. 107

This is one of the most grievous kinds of life which I think can be imagined, for I had neither joy in God nor any pleasure in the world. p. 108

When people practise prayer the Lord Himself bears the cost. p. 112

Dear God, what a soul suffers and what torments it endures when it loses its freedom to be its own master! p. 117

Only once in my life--at a time when I was suffering from great aridity--do I remember having asked Him for consolations, and when I realized what I was doing I became so distressed that my very shame at finding myself so lacking in humility gave me what I had presumed to ask. p. 118

Unless we realize that we are receiving these gifts, we shall not be aroused to love Him. p. 120

Whatever is bad is my own work. p. 123

You know what I am more clearly than you have permitted me to say here. p. 124

We think we are giving God everything, whereas what we are really offering Him is the revenue of the fruits of our land while keeping the stock and the right of ownership of it in our own hands. p. 125

It will be a pleasure to me for him to laugh at my explanation if he thinks it foolish. p. 128

Even if this aridity should persist his whole life long, never let Christ fall beneath the Cross. p. 129

May it never please Thy Majesty that a gift so precious as Thy love be given to people who serve Thee solely to obtain consolations. p. 130,  
131

Water must always be drawn when there is any there. p. 133

The soul can rejoice with Him in its joys and yet never allow its joys to make it forgetful of Him. p. 134

In the early stages one should strive to feel happy and free. p. 137

There are not many who are so perfect as to be able to relax when occasions present themselves which tempt their own peculiar disposition. p. 137

In everything we need discretion. p. 137

We must always keep humility before us, so that we may realize that this strength cannot proceed from any strength of our own. p. 138

My devotion was of no value at all until I resolved not to worry any more about my body or my health. p. 140

Whenever the devil suggested that I should ruin my health, I would reply: "Even if I die it is of little consequence." "Rest, indeed!" I would say. "I need no rest; what I need is crosses." p. 140

Since I have been less self-regarding and indulgent my health has been very much better. p. 140

Give no impression of wanting to teach others. p. 140

When I tried to get others to practise prayer, and when on the one hand they would hear me saying so much about the blessedness of prayer, while on the other they would observe that I, who practised it, was so poverty-stricken in virtue, it would lead them into temptations and various kinds of foolishness. p. 140, 141

The devil seems to make use of the virtues which we have, and which are good, in order to give such authority as he can to the evil which he is trying to make us do. p. 141

Safety for the soul that practices prayer will consist in its ceasing to be anxious about anything and anybody, and in its watching itself and pleasing God. p. 142

Let us strive always to look at the virtues and the good qualities which we find in others, and to keep our own grievous sins before our eyes so that we may be blind to their defects. p. 142

I advise those who can make use of their reasoning powers not to spend all their time in doing so. p. 142

To stop working, they think, would be a loss of time, whereas my view is that this loss is a great gain. p. 142

This matter of self-knowledge must never be neglected. No soul on this road is such a giant that it does not often need to become a child at the breast again. p. 144

There is no state of prayer, however sublime, in which it is not necessary often to go back to the beginning. p. 144

His Majesty knows better than we what kind of food is good for us. p144

I am often amazed that learned men, and religious in particular, will give me the benefit of what they have gained with so much labour, and at no cost to myself save the labour of asking for it. And to think that there may be people who have no desire to reap such benefits! p. 146

Blessed be Thou, Lord, Who has made me so incompetent and unprofitable! P. 147

God, of His greatness, desires the soul to realize that His Majesty is so near it that it need not send Him messengers, but may speak with Him itself. p. 150

I realize clearly that it is not I who am saying this; for I am not putting it together with my own understanding and afterwards I cannot tell how I have managed to say it at all. This often happens to me. p. 151

May it please Thy goodness, Lord, that I may be alone in my ingratitude. p. 153

Let it not be Thy will that a soul which Thou hast purchased with so many trials should be lost. p. 153

I beg the souls whom His Majesty has granted so great a favour as to attain to this state to learn to know themselves, and to hold themselves, with a humble and holy presumption, in high esteem. p. 155

What the soul has to do at these seasons of quiet is mere go softly and make no noise. p. 156

The soul should become a fool, as in truth it is in His sight, for it is due to His Majesty's great humility, we being what we are, that He suffers it to be near Him. p. 158

Mental prayer mustnot be completely given up, nor yet must vocal prayer if we ever wish to turn to it and are able to do so; for, if the state of Quiet is intense, it becomes difficult to speak except with great distress p. 159

Let us all be mad, for the love of Him Who was called mad for our sakes. p. 166

There is no one who knows himself as well as he is known by those who see him if they observe him lovingly and are anxious to help him. p. 166

He does not desire the soul to undertake any labour, but only to take its delight in the first first fragrance of the flowers. p. 168

He allows it to share the fruit with others only when it has eaten so much of it that it is strong enough not to consume it all by merely nibbling at it and not to fail to get profit from it, nor to omit to recompense Him Who has bestowed it, but to maintain others and give them food at its own cost while itself perhaps die of hunger. p. 168, 169

Consent that the Lord shall grant it favours and receive them. p. 169

THE SIGN OF JONAS  
by Thomas Merton

"Humanly speaking, our efforts to show our love for God by purifying our hearts, refresh and delight Him. It is for this that He "thirsts." His SITIO is for the purity of our hearts, the emptiness of our hearts, that His joy, His freedom and His immensity may fill them. If He can be said to thirst it is because He thirsts to do us good, to share His infinite Life with us. But we prevent Him by our selfishness from doing so. Detachment will procure for us the greatest good, the pure love of God for Himself alone because He alone is good: AMOR AMICITIAE. That is the bond of perfection that unites us to Him. "Above all things have charity, which is the bond of perfection and may the peace of Christ exult in your hearts, in which you are called unto one Body. And be grateful." It seems to me that all mystical theology is contained in those two lines. SUPER OMNIA: this love is above all things because it is the end for which we were created. It is perfection and sanctity. It is the only thing necessary. It is beyond all mode and all law. It is the bond that unites us to God. It unites us immediately to Him and it unites us to one another in Him. And so we become one in Christ and Christ lives in us and His peace exults us. There is no other true joy. PLENTITUDO LEGIS EST DILECTIO. p. 39

"Also criticism by itself, even true criticism, does not do much good in a monastery. We stand much more in need of encouragement, of positive and clear direction. We know well enough what is wrong with us, but the monotony of the life sometimes makes us so dejected that we cannot seem to do anything about it. What we need above all are words that will make us love one another and advice that will strengthen us to overcome evil with good. However, when a Superior uses his authority to correct an abuse, the effect is quite different. It is the Superior's business to correct abuses--tactfully, of course, but he must correct them. When he does so in the right way the whole community feels cleaner, and there is peace. p. 43

"Insomnia can become a form of contemplation. You just lie there, inert, helpless, alone, in the dark, and let yourself be crushed by the inscrutable tyranny of time. The plank bed becomes an altar and you lie there without trying to understand any longer in what sense you can be called a sacrifice. Outside in the world, where it is night, perhaps there is someone who suddenly sees that something he has done is horrible. He is most unexpectedly sorry and finds himself able to pray... p. 44

"Charles de Foucauld had a terribly hard life in the desert. One look at his picture will tell you all you need to know about it. p. 71

"All my desires draw me more and more in that direction. To be little, to be nothing, to rejoice in your imperfections, to be glad that you are not worthy of attention, that you are of no account in the universe. This is the only liberation. The only way to true solitude. p. 111

"Somehow, I have to give up this thing that I love above everything else on earth BECAUSE THE LOVE OF GOD IS GREATER. It seems like a contradiction: because what I have to give up is, in the last analysis, what I am convinced is the most perfect way I could love and serve God! But that

is PER SE. PER ACCIDENS there is something greater: to renounce the purest of all vocations simply because it is not the one God had chosen for me--to accept something in which it seems likely that my highest personal ideals will be altogether frustrated, purely because of His love, His will. He who loves me prefers it this way, and to accept His love is to send up to Him the incense of the purest prayer, the sweetest praise, without pleasure for myself--and yet in the end it is a supreme joy! ADOREMUS DOMINUM QUI NOS REDEMIT PER CRUCEM. p. 175

"This week, the week full of the Holy Ghost--I found out once more something of the joy there is in being nothing and in depending on Our Lady for everything. This is the key to the simplest and easiest way of the interior life: To have no greatness or holiness or distinction that one can claim as one's own but to rely entirely on her love and her protection--knowing that she will obtain for us, at the right moment, grace to do the good thing that God wills us to do. From then on the whole spiritual life becomes nothing else but a question of looking to her in confidence and faithfully receiving everything that comes to us through her without clinging to it or keeping it as our own, and without reflecting on ourselves. p. 199

"No matter how simple discourse may be, it is never simple enough. No matter how simple thought may be, it is never simple enough. No matter how simple love may be, it is never simple enough. The only thing left is the simplicity of the soul in God, or, better, the simplicity of God. p. 216

"To belong to God I have to belong to myself. I have to be alone--at least interiorly alone. This means the constant renewal of a decision. I cannot belong to people. None of me belongs to anybody but God. Absolute loneliness of the imagination, the memory, the will. My love for everybody is equal, neutral and clean. No exclusiveness. Simple and free as the sky because I love everybody and am possessed by nobody, not held, not bound. In order to be not remembered or even wanted I have to be a person that nobody knows. p. 253

"There are many declarations made only because we think other people are expecting us to make them. The silence of God should teach us when to speak and when not to speak. But we cannot bear the thought of silence lest it cost us the trust and the respect of men. DABITUR VOBIS IN ILLA HORA QUID LOQUAMINI. p. 267

"Our obedience and even our patience are tasteless and without savor to God unless He be the cause of all our actions and of our acceptance of suffering. p. 282

"Yesterday, out in the beginning of a snowstorm, dipped into the spiritual notes of Charles de Foucauld and was moved by their intensity. He speaks to God in a clear and vibrant voice, simple words, sentences of fire. This voice rings in the ears of your heart after you have put the book away and turned to others less saintly, even though they may be religious voices too. p. 286

"The terrible thing about sickness is that you tend to think you are sick. Your thoughts are narrowed down to your own little rag of a body. And you take care of her. My God, forgive me. I take care of myself too well... p. 293

"It is the impurity of immature penance that brings distress, but deep and hidden suffering is joy. Part of this depth and this hiddenness comes from the fact that such suffering really DIMINISHES you, reduces you to nothing, places you in darkness, and tells you you are nothing and that, as the IMITATION says, 'The old man is not dead.' And yet, love can easily get rid of him--though not so much our love as Christ's, which becomes ours. p. 320

"Famous but unknown, tired and powerful, a man without virtue and without prayer, impotent, hungry, at peace, unable to speak, looking at the valley: WHO IS LIKE UNTO GOD!

God, my God, here is a traitor who loves You beyond speech! And yet I have no love. I have no moon. I have no valley. p. 326

"What is my new desert? The name of it is COMPASSION. There is no wilderness so terrible, so beautiful, so arid and so fruitful as the wilderness of compassion. It is the only desert that shall truly flourish and blossom and rejoice with joy. It is in the desert of compassion that the thirsty land turns into springs of water, that the poor possess all things. There are no bounds to contain the inhabitants of this solitude in which I live alone, as isolated as the host on the altar, the food of all men, belonging to all and belonging to none, for God is with me, and He sits in the ruins of my heart, preaching His Gospel to the poor.

Do you suppose I have a spiritual life? I have none. I am indigence. I am silence. I am poverty. I am solitude, for I have renounced spirituality to find God, and He it is Who preaches loud in the depths of my indigence, saying: 'The place is too strait for me, make me room to dwell in' (Isaias, 49:20) I die of love for you, Compassion: I take you for my Lady, as Francis married poverty I marry you, the Queen of hermits and the Mother of the poor. p. 334

"...as is usual, in the Kingdom of Heaven, by giving up what I wanted I ended up by having more than I had thought of wanting. p. 343

"WHAT WAS FRAGILE HAS BECOME POWERFUL. I LOVED WHAT WAS MOST FRAIL. I LOOKED UPON WHAT WAS NOTHING. I TOUCHED WHAT WAS WITHOUT SUBSTANCE, AND WITHIN WHAT WAS NOT, I AM." p. 362, the voice of God heard in Paradise.

+ + +

Said the Robin to the Sparrow,  
"I should really like to know  
Why these anxious human beings  
Rush about and worry so."

Said the Sparrow to the Robin,  
"Friend, I think that it must be  
That they have no Heavenly Father  
Such as cares for you and me."  
Elizabeth Cheney.



The Autobiography of  
ST TERESA OF AVILA

I have learned what great advantage comes from good companionship. p.70

Blessed be Thou, Lord, Who for so long hast suffered me! p. 72

I have always been well treated everywhere, and yet the only service I have rendered Him is to be what I am. p. 74

If I strengthen my purpose by resolving to do a thing for God's sake alone, it is His will that, from the very beginning, my soul shall be afraid, so that my merit may be the greater; and if I achieve my resolve, the greater my fear has been, the greater will be my reward, and the greater, too, will be my retrospective pleasure. p. 77

The difference between Thy nature and mine. Certainly distress for my great sins is often tempered by the joy which comes to me at being the means of making known the multitude of Thy mercies. p. 78

If the will has nothing to employ it and love has no present object with which to busy itself, the soul finds itself without either support or occupation, its solitude and aridity cause it great distress and its thoughts involve it in the severest conflict. p. 81

May He be for ever blessed, Who has endured me for so long. p. 83

I beg him, for the love of God, to excuse none of my faults, for they only reveal the magnificence of God and His longsuffering to the soul. p.89

My fear was always swallowed up in love, for I never thought about punishment. p. 92

I believed that I should serve God much better if I recovered my health. That is the mistake we make: we do not leave ourselves entirely in the Lord's hands; yet He knows best what is good for us. p. 92, 93

I was very much troubled that they should have such a good opinion of me, as I knew what sort of person I was inwardly. p. 96, 97

I used to have the greatest desire to be of use to others. This is a very common temptation in beginners. p. 101

Even despite illness, or other hindrances, we can still engage in true prayer, when there is love in the soul, by offering up that very impediment, remembering Him for Whom we suffer it and being resigned to it and to a thousand other things which may happen to us. It is here that love comes in; for we are not necessarily praying when we are alone, nor need we refrain from praying when we are not. p. 102

Thou didst chastise my faults with great favors. p. 106

When I find myself receiving new favours, after making so poor a return for those I have received already, I experience a kind of torture which is terrible to me. p. 106



It is much better to be so diffident that you risk not sharing it with them at all, than to throw it all away by trying to give it to other people before you have received it yourself. p. 175

The highest vocation in the Kingdom of God is that of sharing one's contemplation with others and bringing other men to the experimental knowledge of God that is given to those who love Him perfectly. But the possibility of mistake and error is just as great as the vocation itself. p. 176

Often we will do much more to make men contemplatives by leaving them alone and minding our own business--which is contemplation itself--than by breaking in on them with what we think we know about the interior life. p. 177

In His own time He will set our hand to the work He wants us to do, and we will find ourselves doing it without being quite able to realize how we got there, or how it all started. p. 178

Tranquillity is learned most of all from the Blessed Eucharist. p. 181

Love Loving in Freedom. p. 185

You do not have an experience, you become Experience. p. 185

God living in God and identifying a created life with His own Life so that there is nothing left of any experimental significance but God living in God. p. 186

How can a man be proud of anything when he is no longer able to reflect upon himself or realize himself or know himself? p. 187

He does their will, because His will is their own. He does all that they want because He is the One Who desires all their desires. p. 190

I had a confessor who used to mortify me a great deal and would sometimes distress and try me greatly by unsettling my mind: yet I believe he is the confessor who has done me most good. p. 245

Once the Lord told me that I was not obeying unless I was determined to suffer. p. 245

His Majesty Himself has been to me the Book in which I have seen that is true. p. 246

If we are not helping Him to carry His Cross with the Cyrenean, shall we not at least weep with the daughters of Jerusalem? p. 253

What wisdom will be attributed to the man who rejoiced at being accounted mad, since madness was attributed to Him Who is Wisdom itself. p. 254

Everything I say tells against myself. p. 257

I could not understand why the Lord revealed Himself gradually like this since He was later to grant me the favour of seeing Him wholly, until at length I realized that His Majesty was leading me according to my natural weakness. p. 258

I would not think one thing and say another. p. 259

So great was his humility that he thought that there was value in the prayers of this miserable creature, which made me very much ashamed. p. 278

Those who believed it was His work would praise Him and those who did not would condemn me without my having done wrong, and either course would be advantageous to me and therefore I must not be troubled. p. 293

I can see nothing in the world that seems to me good save its refusal to allow that good people can ever do wrong and the way it perfects them by speaking ill of them. p. 294

They must not be troubled, but hope in the Lord; for what they now are in desire His Majesty will, if they pray and do what they can for themselves, make them to be in very deed. It is most necessary that this weak nature of ours should have great confidence, and not be dismayed or think that, if we do our utmost, we can fail to come out victorious. p. 295

May it please His Majesty to give me grace so that I may not always remain a beginner. p. 299

I was in the habit of repeating to some of the nuns the things taught me by the people I met and these did them a great deal of good. p. 304

Although the Rules of the religious Orders were mitigated, I was not to think He was very little served in them, for what would become of the world if it were not for religious? p. 305

Run, don't walk a step at a time. p. 314

"My Lord, how is it that Thou commandest me to do things which seem impossible?" p. 315

I never see a person whom I like very much without immediately wishing that I could see him wholly given to God. p. 323

He was very pleased when people found their delight in talking of Him. p. 328

Their distraction was not due to their poverty, but their poverty was the result of their not being recollected. p. 331

Blessed be Thou, Lord. Let the angels and all creatures praise Thee, Who measurest things by our weakness, so that, while we are rejoicing in Thy sovereign favours, we may not be so much affrighted by Thy great power as not to dare, because we are weak and miserable creatures, to rejoice in those favours. p. 368

Do Thou put worth into what I do, since Thou hast such love for me. p. 380

There is none who never changes save God. p. 382

All the harm which comes to the world is due to a failure to know the truths of Scripture in the clarity of their truth. p. 386

Knowest thou what it is to love Me in truth? It is to realize that everything not pleasing to Me is a lie. p. 387

We need not go to Heaven, nor any farther than to our own selves. p. 389

Anyone who is to hold a position of authority should be very far from desiring or wishing for one. p. 392

"To die, Lord, or to suffer! I ask nothing else of Thee for myself but this." It comforts me to hear a clock strike, for when I find that another hour of life has passed away, I seem to be getting a little nearer to the vision of God. p. 394

In myself I find no great propensity either to joy or to sorrow. p. 395

No one could bear to receive as much as I have done and pay nothing in return. p. 204, 205

If the Lord had not taught me, I could have learned little from books. p. 210

It is by the door of His most sacred Humanity that we must enter if we wish His Sovereign Majesty to show us great secrets. p. 212

We are unprofitable servants; what do we suppose it is in our power to accomplish? p. 215

When people tell you that they are beginning to taste of God, do not believe them if they think they are making more progress and receiving more consolations by making efforts of their own. p. 216

The companionship of good people does not afford us such profitable conversation in one day as in many; and if we have the help of God and are long enough in their company, we may become like them. p. 218

I was such a slave to my little bad habits that I could not bring myself to realize that they were bad at all. p. 221

God might perhaps be giving me ill-health just because I did not perform penances--that is, that His Majesty was being pleased to give me the penances Himself. My confessor ordered me to practice certain mortifications which I did not find very agreeable. But I performed them all, because his commands seemed to me to come from the Lord, and I thanked him for giving them to me so that I could obey Him. p. 229

Unless I know that a person loves God and practices prayer, it is a real cross for me to have to do with him. p. 231

The soul must be convinced that a thing comes from God only if it is in conformity with Holy Scripture. p. 238

False humility is devoid of tranquillity and gentleness. p. 238

If someone would but proclaim throughout the world how faithful Thou art to Thy friends! p. 240

Thou seemest, Lord, to give severe tests to those who love Thee, but only that in the extremity of their trials they may learn the greater extremity of Thy love. p. 240

What a powerful Lord! He gives not only counsel but solace. His words are deeds. p. 241

It is most unseemly that a soul should act like a coward, or be afraid of anything, save of offending God. p. 243

The ways of God are not like the ways of men. He understands our weaknesses and by means of strong inward instincts the soul is made aware if it truly loves Him. p. 244

Prayer and love are learned in the hour when prayer has become impossible and your heart has turned to stone. p. 133

If you have never had any distractions you don't know how to pray. p. 133

If you think you are obliged to stave these things off by using a book and clutching to its sentences the way a drowning man clutches at straws, you have the privilege of doing so, but if you allow your prayer to degenerate into a period of simple spiritual reading you are losing a great deal of fruit. You would profit much more by patiently resisting distractions and learning something of your own helplessness and incapacity. And if your book merely becomes an anaesthetic, far from helping your meditation it has probably ruined it. p. 134

The distractions that do harm are the ones that draw our will away from its profound and peaceful occupation with God and involve it in elaborations of projects that have been concerning us during our day's work. p. 135

It is the will to pray that is the essence of prayer. p. 136

While you are free to come and go, yet as soon as you attempt to make words or thoughts about it you are excluded--you go back into your exterior order to talk. p. 140

We must realize to the very depths of our being that this is a pure gift of God which no desire, no effort and no heroism of ours can do anything to deserve or obtain. p. 142

Contemplative prayer is only truly what it is called when it becomes more or less habitual. p. 146

Sometimes the soul makes a mad effort to squeeze some feeling of fervor out of itself, which is, incidentally, the worst thing it could possibly do. p. 148

The man who is not afraid to abandon all his spiritual progress into the hands of God, to put prayer, virtue, merit, grace, and all gifts in the keeping of Him from Whom they all must come, will quickly be led to peace in union with Him. p. 149

The mere absence of activity does not IP SO FACTO turn you into a contemplative. p. 152

Spiritual life will not really begin until one has learned in some measure to get along without the stimulus of emotion. p. 155

For a contemplative there is supreme value in the ordinary routine of work and poverty and hardship and monotony that characterizes the lives of all the poor and uninteresting and forgotten people in the world. p. 158

The surest asceticism is the bitter insecurity and labor and nonentity of the really poor. To be utterly dependent on other people. To be ignored and despised and forgotten. To know nothing of decency or comfort. To live in much dirt and eat bad food. To take orders and work hard for little or no money. p. 158, 159

Destitution is not good for monks or for anybody else....And though it may be good for a monastery to be poor, the average monk will not prosper spiritually in a house where poverty is really so desperate that everything else has to be sacrificed to manual labor and material cares. p. 160

One of the first things to learn if you want to be a contemplative is how to mind your own business. p. 161

Before you can be a saint you have got to become human. An animal cannot be a contemplative. p. 162

It may easily happen that our resolutions are dictated by the vice we need to get rid of. p. 162

You werenot created for pleasure: you were created for spiritual JOY. p. 164

Joy, in so far as it is true, is above pain and does not feel pain. And that is why it laughs at pain and rejoices in confounding pain, It is the conquest of suffering by disinterestedness. p. 165

Keep still, and let Him do some work. p. 166

The grief, the anguish of being helpless to be anything but what you were not meant to be, this is compunction. p. 168

The whole meaning of our life is a poverty and emptiness which, far from being a defeat, are really the pledge of all the great supernatural gifts of which they are a potency. p. 169

In the contemplative, all complexities have begun to straighten themselves out and dissolve into unity and emptiness and interior peace. p. 170

When we taste the experience of loving God for His own sake alone, we know by experience Who and what He is. p. 173

If we could possess Him for ourselves alone we would not possess Him at all. Any joy that does not overflow from our souls and help other men to rejoice in God does not come to us from God. (But do not think that you have to see how it overflows.) p. 174

He finds himself speaking of God to the men in whom he hopes he has recognized the light of his own peace, theawakening of his own secret...his contemplative live is still imperfect without sharing, without companionship, without communion. p. 175

SEEDS OF CONTEMPLATION  
by Thomas Merton

Every moment and every event of every man's life on earth plants something in his soul...Such seeds as these cannot spring up anywhere except in the good soil of liberty and desire. p. 11

If His will would grow from my freedom, I would become the love that He is, and my harvest would be His glory and my own joy. p. 12

In all that happens, my one desire and my one joy should be to know: "Here is the thing that God has willed for me. In this His love is found, and in accepting this I can give back His love to Him." p. 13

By accepting all things from Him I receive His joy into my soul, not because things are what they are but because God is Who He is, and His love has willed my joy in them all. p. 13

A saint is capable of talking about the world without any explicit reference to God, in such a way that his statement gives greater glory to God and arouses a greater love of God. p. 15

Until we love God perfectly, everything in the world will be able to hurt us. p. 16

Your sanctity will never be mine and mine will never be yours, except in the communism of charity and grace. p. 20

To be unknown of God is altogether too much privacy. p. 22

The secret of my identity is hidden in the love and mercy of God. But whatever is in God is really identical with Him, for His infinite simplicity admits no division and no distinction. Therefore I cannot hope to find myself anywhere except in Him. p. 23

If I find Him, I will find myself and if I find my true self I will find Him. p. 23

God utters me like a word containing a partial thought of Himself. A word will never be able to comprehend the voice that utters it. But if I am true to the concept that God utters in me, if I am true to the thought of Him I was meant to embody, I shall be full of His actuality and find Him everywhere in myself, and find myself nowhere. I shall be lost in Him. p. 25, 26

Our discovery of God is, in a way, God's discovery of us. p. 26

We become contemplatives when God discovers Himself in us. p. 26

To keep my mind free from confusion in order that my liberty may be always at the disposal of His will; to entertain silence in my heart and listen for the voice of God; to cultivate an intellectual freedom from concepts and the images of created things in order to receive the secret contact of God in faith. p. 30, 31

In order to become myself I must cease to be what I always thought I wanted to be. p. 32

When a proud man thinks he is humble his case is hopeless. p. 34

I must look for my identity, somehow, not only in God but in other men. p. 35

There is no true peace possible for the man who still imagines that some accident of talent or grace or virtue segregates him from other men and places him above them. p. 36

TO ADMIRE EVERYBODY ELSE gives a vision that can find good in the most terrible criminals. It delivers from the burden of judging others condemning other men. p. 37

If the holiness of all the saints had always been plainly evident to everybody they would never have been polished and perfected by trial and persecution and criticism and humiliation and opposition from the people they lived with. p. 39

They are able to exult in the virtues and goodness of others more than they ever could have done in their own. p. 39

They take their own insignificance for granted and are no longer interested in themselves. p. 40

Love is my true identity. Selflessness is my true self. p. 40

I shall discover who I am and shall possess my true identity by losing myself in Him.

And that is what is called sanctity. p. 40

Self-hypnotism is the exact opposite of contemplation...This business of doping your mind and isolating yourself from everything that lives, merely deadens you to all the opportunities for love which is the source of contemplation. p. 41

The more I become identified with God, the more will I be identified with all the others who are identified with Him...We shall love one another and God with the same Love with which He loves us and Himself. This Love is God Himself. p. 41

Our contemplation would be incomplete if it were not shared, or if it were shared with fewer souls. p. 42

I will have more joy in heaven and in the contemplation of God if you are also there to share it with me; the more of us there will be to share it the greater will be the joy of all. For contemplation is not ultimately perfect unless it is shared. p. 42

The more we are alone with God the more we are united with one another; and the silence of contemplation is deep and rich and endless society, not only with God but with men. p. 42



My true personality will be fulfilled in the Mystical Christ in this one way above all, that through me, Christ and His Spirit will be able to love you and all men and God the Father in a way that would be possible in no one else. p. 43

We remain more truly with them (individuals) when we no longer clearly know them. For we are still in transition, waiting to find God in them visibly and clearly. Until then, we find both them and God in one darkness, which is contemplation. p. 43

As long as we are on earth, the love that unites us will bring us suffering by our very contact with one another. p. 48

It is principally in the suffering and sacrifice that are demanded for men to live together in peace and harmony that love is perfected in us, that we are prepared for contemplation. p. 49

It is precisely in the recovery of our union with our brothers in Christ that we discover God and know Him: for then His life begins to penetrate our souls and His love possesses our faculties and we are able to find out Who He is from the experience of His own selflessness reflected in our purified wills. p. 49

The only way to find solitude is by hunger and thirst and sorrow and poverty and desire, and the man who has found solitude is empty. p. 52

This is a country whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere. You do not find it (solitude) by traveling but by standing still. p. 52

There should be at least a room, or some corner where no one will find you and disturb you or notice you...

Once you have found such a place, be content with it, and do not be disturbed if a good reason takes you out of it. Love it, and return to it as soon as you can. p. 52

Newspapers are a penance, not a diversion. p. 54

If you seek escape for its own sake and run away from the world only because it is (as it must be) intensely unpleasant, you will not find peace and you will not find solitude. p. 54, 55

People are in a hurry to magnify themselves by imitating what is popular--and too lazy to think of anything better. p. 60

The saint is unlike everybody else precisely because he is humble. p. 60

You must have the humility to work out your own salvation in a darkness where you are absolutely alone...p. 61

One of the first signs of a saint may well be the fact that other people do not know what to make of him. p. 63

If a writer is so cautious that he never writes anything that cannot be criticized, he will never write anything that can be read. If you want to help other people you have got to make up your mind to write things that some men will condemn. p. 65

A Catholic poet should be an apostle by being first of all a poet, not to try to be a poet by being first of all an Apostle. For if he presents himself to people as a poet, he is going to be judged as a poet and if he is not a good one his apostolate will be ridiculed. p. 65

If you write for God you will reach many men and bring them joy. p. 65

If you write for yourself you can read what you yourself have written and after ten minutes you will be so disgusted you will wish that you were dead. p. 65

You can only believe what you do not know. p. 72

The more perfect faith is, the darker it becomes. p. 75

Beware of the contemplative who says that scholastic theology is all straw before he has ever bothered to read any. p. 83

No one can dismiss the Man Christ from his interior life on the pretext that he has now entered by higher contemplation into direct communication with the Word. For the Man Christ is the Word of God. p. 85

It is not enough merely to imitate the Christ we have in our imaginations. p. 87

If we depend on our own ideas and our own judgement and our own efforts to reproduce the life of Christ we will only act out some kind of pious charade which will ultimately scare everybody we meet because it will be so stiff and artificial and so dead. p. 88

It is the Spirit of God that must teach us Who Christ is and form Christ in us and transform us into other Christs...For me to become Christ is to enter into the Life of the Whole Christ, the Mystical Body. p. 88

Let Christ form Himself in you by His cross. p. 89

It is the easiest thing in the world to possess this life and this joy; all you have to do is believe and love. p. 90

What people find to say about her sometimes tells us more about their own selves than it does about Our Lady. p. 93

I can find her if I too become hidden in God where she is hidden. To share her humility and hiddenness and poverty and concealment and solitude is the best way to know her: but to know her thus is to find wisdom. p. 94

To love her and to know her is to discover the true meaning of everything and to have access to all wisdom. Without her the knowledge of Christ is only speculation. But in her it becomes experience because all the humility and poverty, without which Christ cannot be known, belong to her. Her sanctity is the silence in which alone Christ can be heard, and the voice of God becomes an experience to us through her contemplation. p. 94

Her highest privilege is her poverty and her greatest glory is that she is most hidden, and the source of all her power is that she is as nothing in the presence of Christ, of God. p. 95

Vanish into nothingness in the immense poverty that is the adoration of God. p. 96

Unless we find her, also, hidden in Scripture wherever and in whatever promises contain her Son, we shall not fully know the life that is in Scripture. p. 97

He loves them, and you cannot be united with Him unless you love them too. p. 99

Perhaps he is your enemy because he thinks you are a savage... And perhaps if he believed you were capable of loving him he would no longer be your enemy. p. 99

Do not be too quick to assume that your enemy is an enemy of God just because he is YOUR enemy. Perhaps he is your enemy precisely because he can find nothing in you that gives glory to God. Perhaps he fears you because he can find nothing in you of God's love and God's kindness and God's patience and mercy and understanding of the weaknesses of men. p. 99, 100

If you want them to believe you--try to share some of their poverty and see if you can accept it as God's will yourself! p. 101

If we were incapable of humility we would be incapable of Joy, because humility alone can destroy the self-centeredness that makes joy impossible. p. 103

A humble man is not disturbed by praise. p. 105

A man who is not humble cannot accept praise gracefully...he passes it on to God so clumsily that he trips himself up and draws attention to himself by his own awkwardness. p. 105

One who has not yet learned humility becomes upset and disturbed by praise...he gets irritated by the sense of his own unworthiness. p. 105

How can you be humble if you are always paying attention to yourself? p. 106

If you were truly humble you would not bother about yourself at all...You would not need to be hampered with a lot of excuses which are really only framed to defend you against the accusation of pride--as if your humility depended on what other people thought of you! p. 106

A humble man is not afraid of failure...He is not afraid of anything, even of himself, since perfect humility implies perfect confidence in the power of God. p. 107

Living with other people and learning to lose ourselves in the understanding of their weakness and deficiencies can help us to become true contemplatives. p. 108

Christ will not even live within you if you cannot find Him in other men. p. 109

Try to make all your activity bear fruit in the same emptiness and silence and detachment you have found in contemplation. Ultimately the secret of all this is perfect abandonment to the will of God in things you cannot control, and perfect obedience to Him in everything that depends on your own volition, so that in all things, in your interior life and in your outward works for God, you desire only one thing, which the fulfillment of His will. p. 110

It is above all in this silent and unconscious testimony to the love of God that the contemplative exercises his apostolate. For the saint preaches sermons by the way he walks and the way he stands and the way he sits down and the way he picks things up and holds them in his hand. p. 110

The most dangerous man in the world is the contemplative who is guided by nobody. p. 111

The simplest definition of freedom is this: it means the ability to do the will of God. p. 116

It is often rigidity and unbending formalism of pious men that keep them from becoming truly detached. p. 119

Attachment to spiritual things is just as much an attachment as inordinate love of anything else. p. 120

You will never be able to have perfect interior peace and recollection unless you are detached even from the desire of peace and recollection. p. 122

Learn how to meditate on paper. p. 128

The more helpless you are, the more you seem to desire to see Him and to know Him, and the contradiction of your desires and your failure generates in you a painful longing for God which nothing seems able to satisfy. p. 130

Knowing by faith that He is present to you and realizing the utter hopelessness of trying to think intelligibly about this immense reality and all that it can mean, you relax in a simple contemplative gaze that keeps your attention peacefully aware of Him hidden somewhere in this deep cloud into which you also feel yourself drawn to enter. p. 131

## AN UNEDITED PAGE ON THE REVIEW OF LIFE

During the Month at Ephram, Jorge Matte, of Chili, spoke so eloquently on the Review of Life, that many of those present as well as many of those who read the mention made of his talk in the monthly account, asked that it should be published in the "Daire General".

The following article is in response to this request.....Jogge said;

1. "Personal encounter with Jesus in the fullness of His Being"..... this is a simple definition of what a Review of Life can be in the Fraternity;

-Mat. 18,20 "For where two or three are gathered together for My sake, there am I in the midst of them."

-Mat. 25,40 "And answering the king will say to them, 'Amen I say to you, as long as you did it for one of them, the least of my brethren, you did it for me.'"

11. A good review of life depends on three things;

a) The presence of Jesus in our daily life. It is not a matter of placing ourselves in front of ourselves in order to examine the details of our life, but we should place ourselves in front of Jesus, a Living Person. It is in Him, living in us, and in others, that our person to person contacts become living facts. Otherwise, the tone of the meeting may become moralising. This is not what we are seeking. In going over with Him the month just past, He will help us to choose, with greater clarity and courage, the fact that He finds has been most important.

b) It is a question of a presence and a friendship that are very tangible. (incarnate.....flesh and blood realities).

A friendship without a human basis is not the type of friendship Jesus knew. In this sense, we can say that there is nothing more humiliating than to be loved "for the love of God."

This implies real contacts as frequently as possible with the priests of our Fraternity, sympathetically prejudiced, knowing and loving the other, as he is, with a knowledge full of admiration, in faith. This cannot be improvised on the spot at a reunion. We speak easily of "seeing Jesus in others". This is essential for the Review of Life. But are we not satisfied very often in "seeing Jesus behind others"? It is as if we loved the Blessed Sacrament which someone has just received, but not the person who has just communicated.

Jesus knew what was in the heart of man. It is difficult for others to listen to the voice of Jesus through our voice, if we do not know them, if our words touch only the surface of what the other is.

c) Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament immediately before the Review of Life helps us in two ways; it separates us from ourselves as the centre of our conscience so that Jesus may look at us as we are. We take off our masks before Him....He knows us too well.

If this is done, we can then look at Jesus as He is and not as we think He is, and at the same time, look at others through the eyes of Jesus.

When there is nothing to hide from another's gaze, the face of this person becomes more simple, more wholesome (understanding, comprehensive, comprehending), more lucid. More exacting, too, but no longer through constraint. To see through the eyes of Jesus brings one to love with His Heart.

III. It is thus that the Review of Life becomes the Complement of Adoration.

Then Jesus will continue to speak to us during the meeting. In order to listen to Him, while listening to others, we must remain in the same atmosphere as that we find before the Tabernacle. If we speak ourselves, we should do so from within the silence He has created within us. In this way, we shall show ourselves as we are and we shall see Jesus in the brethren.

We do not come together to seek either personal or pastoral solutions, nor in order to find out if we have acted well or badly; we come to meet Jesus living in the brethren. It makes a difference, as well for ourselves as for the others, to put ourselves in this perspective.

Often in prayer, we do not succeed in listening to what God wants to tell us. But now, He has the opportunity of doing so, and we can no longer excuse ourselves saying: "But, Lord, when did it happen that I saw Thee hungry, thirsty....."(Mat.25,44)

There is a difference between telling Jesus of some happening in the chapel and telling it before friends. The happening appears in all its reality and concreteness when it is listened to by others. This comes from the fact that in the chapel, we are too often in face of ourselves.

To want, therefore, ourselves and others, to be before Jesus at the reunion, this obliges us to see, love understand and speak as Jesus would have done.

IV. Each Review of Life thus understood, changes and removes the limits within which we place Jesus. This helps us to find Him more often when we meet others, helps us too, not to find only ourselves, and also not to see Him "behind" others. This will make Him more present and more real during our prayer times as well as during the rest of the day.

V. Some required conditions; (Some practical conditions)  
Profit by all contacts with members of our Fraternities and seek them out. Write out the Review of Life. Why not pass them around during Adoration? This would oblige us on the one hand to prepare them carefully and on the other to make ourselves responsible for others in our prayer.

Ephrem, July 1962

Jorge Matte.

Exerpts from Letters to Mother

August 16, 1963

"I'll remember you during Mass, Will you remember me?"

Early yesterday morning I rushed to your tomb. Of course I knew you wouldn't be there. But there was such a sweet smell, sparkly dew, and through the clouds a glow I hadn't seen before. My feet wished to dance ~~through the clouds a glow I hadn't seen before. My feet wished to dance~~ in following, but they knew they couldn't follow, not yet, to where all feet skip lightly and children dance for joy. I lay upon the earth that cradled your beautiful body and squinted at the sky. Somewhere up there you were watching. All your life had only one desire compelled you, to be with Jesus. And at last He takes you to Himself, to crown you Queen of His Heart and to keep you with Him <sup>from</sup> always, where all dreams come true. And here I sit, on the earth <sup>from</sup> which God fashioned such a Mother, and here I wait for only One, a tremendous Lover Who waits to draw me to Himself with His Mother's arms.

All the way to town my heart, and my lips, sang of my Mother, of God's earth, of sunshine, tall corn, lovely breezes, little houses, little children, our family, our universe and God's infinite heaven. How can so much joy be in one tiny spot? Jesus is so little.

You returned with me to Calvary. You must ~~always~~ show me the way there. I wander off on little paths that smell of sweet flowers and sing with little birds and sparkle with rainbows. And then I get lost. I can't find Jesus, for this wasn't His way, nor yours. Then your voice calls. And I look up to see a Cross. It's not beautiful. I wish to run the other way. But you call gently, patiently, passionately. Jesus is the Way. And He hangs on the Cross. O please keep calling. And tell Him I'm coming, so slowly; He's waiting so patiently. Oh if only I might run!

It was time to make my promises to Him. It seemed it would never come, yet that minute, as so many others, caught me unawares. A little whit host was offered to God. Thoughts of Poverty, Chastity, Obedience fled. Those thoughts with which I'd nourished my soul all this month. And only one desire possessed me. Only to be like you for Jesus. To be. A little co-missionary for today's little Christ. To be the least in the crowd, to be the furthest from the sight of the Master, to be jostled by the anxious, the curious, the hostile, to be content with whispers of him that reached your listening heart. To be happy because somehow, somewhere, you hear the Word of God, and keep It always as your own. That is enough, for that is my everything. It's yours.



in his pet pleasure. This can very easily happen, for example, in the case of a sentimental friendship. p. 165

"...We have to deny ourselves because, in practice, love that is centered in ourselves is stolen from God and from other men. Love can only live by giving... p. 173

"Saint Gregory Nazianzen calls the soul of the spiritual man--the mystic--an instrument played by the Holy Spirit: ORGANUM PULSATUM A SPIRITU SANCTO. The Holy Ghost draws from this instrument harmonies and a melody of which reason and the will of man alone could never even dream. It is this music vibrating on the well-tuned strings of a perfect human personality that makes a man a saint. It is when special harmonies are wrong from a human instrument that the Holy Ghost makes a man a contemplative. What part has reason in this silent song that God sings for Himself and for His elect in the soul of a mystic? It is the function of reason not to play the instrument but only to tune the strings. The Master Himself does not waste time tuning the instrument. He shows His servant, reason, how to do it and leaves him to do the work. If He then comes and finds the piano still out of tune, He does not bother to play anything on it. He strikes a chord, and goes away. The trouble generally is that the tuner has been banging on the keys himself all day, without bothering to do the work assigned to him: which is to keep the thing in tune. p. 181, 182

"...And I may add, parenthetically, that the convert whose faith is emotionally "cold" and is not inflamed with an element of quasi-mystical experience is not therefore less virtuous or less pleasing in the sight of God. It may, in spite of temperamental or hereditary disinclination, by force of rational demonstration alone, to an unemotional acceptance of the faith. p. 212

"...And by this lifting up of the heart, the heart itself is not exalted--as happens in the case of acquired knowledge, for knowledge puffeth up and the proud heart goes before a fall--but by the Gift of Understanding the heart is lifted up to exalt and praise God, and not its own self. p. 214

"The soul has such satisfaction in God that although the other two faculties may be distracted, yet, since THE WILL IS IN UNION WITH GOD for as long as the recollection lasts, its quiet and repose are not lost, but the will gradually brings the understanding and memory back to a state of recollection again. For although the will is not completely absorbed it is so well occupied, without knowing how, that, whatever the efforts made by the understanding and memory, they cannot deprive it of its contentment and rejoicing; indeed, WITHOUT ANY LABOR ON ITS PART, it helps to prevent this little spark of love from being quenched. p. 222, 223

"The function of discretion in the beginnings of mystical prayer is to discover the true way that lies between extremes. Reason guided by faith must be on the alert and give the will sufficient light to reject either impulses to overactivity or tendencies to sloth. p. 229



"...That is why it is so dangerous to let contemplative souls fall into the hands of directors who have pet theories about the spiritual life, who are passionately devoted to one side or another in some disputed speculative question, and who chop or stretch their penitents in order to make them fit, by violence, into the Procrustean bed of their own cherished opinion. p. 229, 230

"...when a soul reaches contemplation, its discursive activity, meditations, particular formal affective acts of the will, and so on must all be greatly simplified and reduced. As a matter of cold fact, they also admit that when contemplation is clearly passive, or infused, the activity of the faculties is at least to some extent impeded by the action of God. p. 230

"...All equally agree that as long as the soul finds profit and peace in the ways of meditation and affective prayer, these should not be dropped. Therefore, in practice, no matter what theoretical views a director may hold, he will not encourage an interest in mysticism which produces a proud contempt for the "ordinary ways" of the spiritual life and weakens the soul in its mortifications and devotion to prayer. But he will place no obstacle in the way of a soul who possesses deep humility and a fervent desire to reach union with God, and who is also strongly attracted to silence and solitude and to simple wordless forms of prayer. p. 231

"St. John's three signs of the soul called to contemplative prayer are well known...

"First sign: the inability to meditate...

"Second sign: lack of interest in PARTICULAR objects of thought...

"The third and surest sign is that the soul takes pleasure in being alone, and waits with loving attentiveness upon God, without making any particular meditation, in inward peace and quietness and rest, and without acts and exercises of the faculties--memory and understanding and will--at least without discursive acts, that is without passing from one thing to another... p. 232, 233

"...Saint John of the Cross goes on to remind us that mystical contemplation as no other end than to make us perfect in the theological virtues: especially in charity. p. 235

"...The activity he requires of the soul must be elicited by the understanding and will together. It is very simple. It has three stages or "moments."

"First: a remote general disposition to receive the inspirations of passive or mystical prayer. The 'chief care of the soul will be to see that it places no obstacle in the way of the guide, who is the Holy Ghost.'...

"Second step: as soon as the mind is recollected in prayer and the will is centered upon God and able to rest in Him, there remains but one very simple activity to be performed. The soul keeps itself in an attitude of 'simple knowledge or awareness,' so as to receive the infused knowledge and love which come to it from God'...

"Finally, the third moment. As soon as there is a positive indication (which the soul must recognize by experience) that it is being passively drawn by God into deep interior silence and solitude and absorption, the faculties abandon all activity whatever... p. 237, 238

"...Mystics are made by the same Holy Ghost Who is the Divine Teacher of the Church, and the life of contemplation is simply the full flowering in the individual soul of the grace which is poured out through the whole Church... p. 253

"Conclusion; in the deepest spiritual darkness, in the most profound night of unknowing, in the purity of naked faith, God unites the soul to Himself in mystical union. p. 257

"So perfect is this union of Love that the soul actually lives and acts in its substance and in its faculties by the life and activity of God and feels itself as it were 'transformed' into God, so that there remains no apparent distinction between itself and God... p. 260

"...As Cardinal Newman said: 'A thousand difficulties do not make one doubt.' We cannot expect to understand with clear intrinsic evidence what is essentially obscure to our natural intelligence. Saint John of the Cross explains why. Faith makes us believe truths that are beyond all proportion to human understanding and are only known in so far as they are accepted on Divine Revelation. p. 262

"...As Saint John of the Cross already explained at the beginning of his CANTICLE: 'He that has to find some hidden thing must enter very secretly into that same hidden place where it is, and when he finds it, he too is hidden like that which he has found.' p. 271

"...from the moment our contemplation transcends concepts, from the moment the intelligence enters this divine darkness, our knowledge of God is dominated by love and flows from love... p. 274

"...The greatest saints in heaven are those who can give God the most love there. Those who can give Him the most love are those who know Him best. And those who know Him best in heaven are those who have best loved Him on earth. Consequently, love is also the most important thing in the contemplative life... p. 282

✓ "May I be so transformed in thy beauty that, being alike in beauty, we may both see ourselves in Thy beauty, since I shall have Thine own beauty; so that when one of us looks at the other each may see in the other his beauty, the beauty of both being thy beauty alone, and I being absorbed in Thy beauty...p. 303

✓ "Suffering is a means, to the soul, of entering farthure into the thicket of the delectable wisdom of God; for the purest suffering brings with it the most intimate and purest knowledge, and, in consequence, the purest and loftiest joy which comes from having penetrated into the deepest knowledge. p. 306

THIS TREMENDOUS LOVER  
by M. Eugene Boylan, O.Cist.R.

"For the common bond--the bond of all perfection, is love, and the magnificence of the whole is the unity of love. The model according to which the whole is designed is the Blessed Trinity itself--THAT THEY MAY BE ONE AS WE ALSO ARE ONE. And the final consummation and achievement of the whole is summed up in one daring pregnant phrase of St. Augustine: AND THERE SHALL BE ONE CHRIST LOVING HIMSELF. p. viii

"the Christian...is composed of 'a body, a soul, and the Holy Ghost.' p. x

✓ "In fact, if one is going to achieve the heights of the spiritual life, it is necessary to pass through a stage where one's apparent spiritual activity is reduced to a dry act of willingness to conform one's self to God's Will, in the darkness of a sheer decision to BELIEVE in God without light of any sort. p. xii

✓ "In any case, abandonment to the divine will and complete humility form no small program. It should be noted that we use the word abandonment in an active as well as in a passive sense, to imply not only a generous acceptance of all that the divine will allows to happen to us, but also a prompt and generous performance of all that the divine will clearly asks of us. What we would emphasize is that it is the will of God which gives its value to what we do. For love is the conformity of our will to the will of God, and love eventually is all that matters. p. xiii

"love either finds equality or makes equality. For the proper love of friendship between two beings, some equality of nature is necessary. p. 6

"And mercy is the attitude of goodness confronted with misery. p. 14

"But these every difficulties are by God's mercy to be the very instruments of a still higher happiness. His original proposal was that we should be happy here below and, after a term of probation, should enter into an eternity of happiness with Him in heaven. This proposal for our happiness here below was rejected, but He has deigned to make the very miseries of our fallen state a means by which we can earn still greater happiness in heaven. p. 16

"the life of our Lord, and in particular His Passion and Death, may be regarded--if the comparison be not irreverent--after the manner of an incompleated motion picture, which has to be re-taken to allow some character to play his part in the different scenes. There is, for example, some such technique in use to allow one actor to play two parts. Our part in Christ's life and death is being played NOW; the re-running of the film starts with our baptism and ends with our death, and we have to fit in our actions in the place left vacant for us in the original taking of the film and to make our part harmonize with Christ's when He lived His part. Any thing we do that is out of its proper place or out of harmony with His plan is useless and harmful. p. 53.

"No matter what we do, unless we do it in the love of God, it profits us nothing. God wants our love. He will be satisfied with nothing else. That is what He principally looks for in our works. The things we do or achieve are not of primary value to God, for He can create them by a mere thought; or with just as much ease He can raise up other free agents to do what we do. But the love of our hearts is something unique, something no one else can give Him. True, He could create other hearts to love Him, but once He has created us and given us free will, the love of our particular heart is something unique and in a way irreplaceable. In any case, it is not for His own sake that He wants our love, but because He desires to make us happy with Him forever, and He can only do that if we are in love with Him. p. 68

"There is a very close analogy between the human and the divine, which we intend to stress in this book. But there is one important difference in regard to the love of God. There, instead of speaking of a soul falling in love, it would be nearer the truth if one spoke of love falling into the soul. p. 69

"The most wonderful person that God ever created was His Mother, and she knew it. She even knew she was humble. In her great poem of praise to God--the MAGNIFICAT--she tells us that it was her humility that attracted God's attention and grace. But she ascribes all that she sees within herself to the mercy of God. p. 84

"It (humility) and its shadow, meekness, are the only virtues our Lord pointed out in Himself for our imitation. LEARN OF ME BECAUSE I AM MEEK AND HUMBLE OF HEART. His own humility is best seen in His life of obedience. We know, too, that He always insisted on giving all the credit to His Father for all the works that He performed. But His humility went further; He seems to have laid His own "personality" completely, in the sense that He allowed the Holy Ghost to take complete charge of His life and was subject to Him in everything.

"There are four great ways of getting in touch with Him; prayer, the sacraments, reading, and doing of God's will. The latter, in fact, would include them all, but we are here thinking for the moment in terms of obedience to the commandments and the duties of one's state in life. There is a fifth way, which needs a special place for its consideration; it is both a highway and still a short cut; it is to go to Him through His Mother. p. 95

"THE LORD LOVETH A CHEERFUL GIVER; and it is far better to give Him one minute cheerfully than ten minutes under duress. p. 100

"We must believe that God will speak to us in our reading, and when He does speak, we must be ready to listen to Him and heed His words. In fact, if one asks in what dispositions should one read, the answer is: 'with faith, hope, charity, humility, and submission to God's will.' p. 123

"You must make a grim, ruthless resolve, that never, never, never, on any account whatsoever, will you give up the practice of ATTEMPTING to pray thus daily, no matter how fruitless your attempt may seem. p. 131

"The layman has to choose his own advisor and use considerable prudence in accepting his advice. It is necessary to draw attention to this point, for one not unfrequently meets people who are in serious difficulties through trying to follow blindly advice which is obviously unsuited to their individual circumstances and which was probably the result of a misunderstanding. p. 136

"There are times when one has to be a fool for Christ's sake. p. 148

"For when one loves, one goes forth as it were from oneself and enters into the beloved, and holds the will and the good of the beloved as one's own; when one loves, one identifies oneself with the beloved, and wills and acts for the sake of the beloved as for one's own sake, making the beloved another self. The tragedy of all human love, even in its highest forms, is that this complete identification is impossible. But with God all things are possible and the loving Heart of Jesus has designed in this ineffable manner of achieving this union and convincing us of its intimacy by means of Holy Communion. With St. Paul we can cry out: I LIVE, NOW NOT I: BUT CHRIST LIVEST IN ME. p. 164

"All the worship we owe God was given to Him in that one sacrifice; all the satisfaction we owe God was given to Him there also. All that we need from God, was merited for us there; and all the thanks we should give God are given there. Nothing remains but to make that sacrifice our own. And it is in making that possible, that our Lord's loving ingenuity is most wonderfully employed. p. 178

"The exact details of His will in an individual case may not be easy to determine. In fact, sometimes it would seem that He wills that His will be unknown. But, at least by prayer and counsel, one can always decide upon the immediate future in such a way as to please God. p. 193

"By doing the will of God then we are formed into Christ, we are "digested" by Him, we are received into Him and transformed into Him, as the food is taken by the roots and transformed into the vine. When we do the will of God, Christ, our High Priest, takes us into His hands, and blesses us, and says: "This is My Body," and offers us up to His Father in Himself, and receives us into communion with Himself. The perfect union with Christ is to do the will of God for the love of God. There is nothing higher than that. Therein lies all holiness and all happiness; therein lies all that we may ever become, all that we ever dreamed of being; for it renews us in Christ and unites us to Him who is our God and our all! p. 197

"Sometimes the case is not so clear. Then a man may have to seek guidance by prayer and counsel. The reply may not be immediate, but where one is ready to do God's will, God generally makes His wishes clear. If He does not, then it is His will that one should be in doubt, and He wishes one to choose as best one can.. This one should do with an easy mind. p. 206

"Now one of the first acts of spiritual life--and an act which, if generously performed, will advance us far at one bound, and open a door for us to an undreamed of peace--is to accept all God's "wills" for us, TO ACCEPT OUR PRESENT SITUATION IN ITS ENTIRETY. In this matter there one can obey because God is supreme ruler; one can decide just "to put up with it;" one can submit as to superior force--"Well, if it must be so, it must be so"; one can obey because God is Supreme Ruler; one can be resigned; one can take up an attitude of acquiescence, or of conformity. All these are good in different ways. But the highest of all ways of accepting God's will is a joyous and cheerful abandonment into His hands. "To abandon oneself is to renounce, to quit, to alienate oneself, to disappear, it is to yield oneself altogether without measure, without reserve, and almost without noticing what we do, to Him who has the right over us. To abandon oneself is to pass away...Abandonment is the soul's Passover; on one side it is its immolation, on the other it is its divine consummation." p. 213

"Worry is usually a result of lack of confidence in God. p. 216

"We have a duty to everyone even in our thoughts. Rash judgements and suspicion, envy and ill-will against one's neighbor, have no place in the deliberate thoughts of the true Christian. And in passing let it be noted that nearly all avoidance of evil and all practice of virtue must begin in our thoughts. If we deliberately allow ourselves to think evil, we shall soon find ourselves speaking evil And doing evil. Even in our thoughts and imagination we must apply the principles and ideals which we wish to be dominant in our daily life. p. 223

"Our Lord wishes also to use us as a means of letting others show their love for Him through the things they do for us. p. 225

"The greatest service we can render our neighbor is to sanctify OURSELVES. p. 227

"There are few works of fraternal charity so valuable as this (willing acceptance of our crosses). It has the further advantage, that we do not see the good we do, and hence the temptation to vainglory is not so obvious. p. 228

"In His service failure is often the greatest triumph. In the particular case under consideration, our efforts to serve Him lose nothing of their value in His eyes, when they do not meet with success. Their value as acts of love and service for Him is quite independent of their outcome. It is true, especially where we have a clear duty to strive for a particular purpose, that we have to use prudence in choosing means which are likely to achieve that purpose. But that is the end of our obligation. It is God who giveth the increase, and if He does not give it, that is His business. p. 229

"In everyone with whom we come in contact during the day, Christ can be found, Christ can be loved, Christ can be served. Faith, of course, is required, and so is courage. But so also is prudence. Christ is to be served in each of our neighbors according to the particular circumstances of our relations with each one. p. 230



"The first thing to do is to ask in prayer for the grace of humility, and to ask sincerely. The second thing is to accept humiliations when they come our way; but, let us never forget that there is an enormous difference between being humble and being humiliated. The next thing is to accept as lovingly as we can, our own limitations, our own defects, our own lowliness, and even to be resigned--if we cannot be glad--when these shortcomings become known to others. Human nature being what it is, all this is not easy; in fact, without confidence in God, it is morally impossible. P. 241

"The wise man prefers to be conscious of his own weakness, and even tries, at least, to be glad when others perceive it, for then the glory of his work belongs to God and not to himself; he has no wish to do great things, but rather to love God greatly in doing little things; and since he only seeks to please God, he is indifferent to what others may think of his achievements. p. 243, 244

"The mere desire for independence is at least a limitation to one's love--and where love for Jesus is concerned, there can be no limitations. p. 249

"What then does He ask of us? Nothing but blind faith, confident hope, ardent love, cheerful humility, and loving abandonment into the arms of our tremendous lover! p. 258

"God is a tremendous lover, and love knows no half measures. Love will not be satisfied with anything short of all; no degree of union short of the closest possible, will satisfy it. In fact, if it seeks less or if it is satisfied with less, it is not love. God will not be satisfied with anything less than everything: THY WHOLE HEART, THY WHOLE SOUL, ALL THY MIND AND ALL THY STRENGTH. Jesus will not be satisfied until we are transformed completely into Him. And to that end He sends us suffering, so that we may be united to Him and be transformed completely into Him. p. 268

"He added the assurance that they would RECEIVE A HUNDRED TIMES AS MUCH, NOW IN THIS TIME. But really we should not be surprised at this discovery; for our Lord Himself assured us that His yoke was easy and His burden light. WHY WILL WE NOT TAKE GOD AT HIS WORD? p. 269

"He can take away our hearts of stone, and give us hearts like His own. Sufferings--the sufferings HE sends--will do that. p. 271

"The lover, however, embraces the Cross, and delights to share the life and even the death of his beloved. It is not the suffering as such that he loves; that would be the desire of a diseased mind. It is rather the one who suffered. For the lover seeks no reasons; if Jesus suffered, that is enough; His lover must suffer too. There are souls for whom it can happen that the greatest suffering is not to suffer. p. 272

"Prudence and caution are of course necessary to avoid reveries and day-dreaming, but prudence must not be overdone in this matter, and when one feels the need to pray in this way, there should be no anxiety in doing so, even when it means an absence of distinct acts. p. 278

"Discursive prayer, affective prayer, simplified prayer--it would seem that any of these three ways of praying may present themselves--and may even be necessary--at almost any stage of spiritual development. It is the one which predominates that is usually in harmony with the extent of one's progress, and that determines one's "state" of prayer. p. 279

"Somewhere, however, during this process, God may intervene to lead the soul to ascend still higher in the paths of prayer. One is not directly conscious of its effects. One can no longer "pray"! When the time for prayer comes, the mind seems to have lost all its power of action. There are no good thoughts, no good affections; complete sterility and aridity reign, and ordinary effort cannot dispel them. This powerlessness of the mind is only evident at the time of prayer. At other times the mind functions with normal vigor. At prayer, however, it seems dead; the imagination may run riot, and the senses may clamor for earthly things. But in some obscure way, the will wants God. p. 280

"But if the will still wants God, and does not want anything else, then we have a very safe sign of God's action in the soul. The soul must be careful, henceforth, to second God's action, and not to interfere with His work by trying to proceed on its own. God has changed His manner of presenting Himself to the soul. His grace no longer carries any appeal or effect for the senses and the imagination, or even for the intellect. He is working deeper in the soul, and only the will is affected by His operations. p. 280, 281

"The will must second this action by an attitude of loving faith. There is no use whatever in trying to form good thoughts, to stir up pious feelings. In fact, it would be a mistake to make such attempts, as well as being useless. God wants our loving faith, unadorned by anything else. And He wants us to realize that we are completely helpless without Him. NOT THAT WE ARE SUFFICIENT TO THINK ANYTHING OF OURSELVES AS OF OURSELVES, BUT OUR SUFFICIENCY IS FROM GOD. We can only live by faith, and look at God by faith, and, one might say, love God by faith. We are like a mother sitting in the dark near her sleeping child, And like that Mother we are NOT inactive. We love, and we love God, not our own piety or prayer. And that is what God wants. p. 281

"Our very inability to pray, is a perfect prayer; our very inability to express ourselves is the best expression of ourselves; our very inability to see God, to hear Him, or to "feel" Him, is the very best vision of God, the very best hearing of God, the very best "feeling" of Him. For God is above all we think Him to be. As the mystics say, we know Him by not knowing Him. p. 285

"We can be just as much attached to our spiritual goods and attainments to our spiritual joys and powers, as we can be to the temporal. p. 286

There is a dialogue between an enquirer and a statue cited in THE LOVE OF GOD by St. Francis de Sales, which will bring comfort to those souls who are powerless at prayer, for St. Francis makes the statue typify the soul in this condition. To the question, why it stays there doing nothing the statue replies: "Because my master did not place me here to do anything but simply remain motionless!" Asked what advantages it has from such a proceeding the statue replies: "I am not here for my own interest or service, but to obey and to accomplish the will of my master and maker,



and that is enough for me." Asked how it can be satisfied to content a master whom it cannot see, it replies; "I do not see him...but my master sees me here and likes to see me here, and that is all I want to make me happy." To the protest that it should at least desire to have the power to do some better service for the master, the reply is that it desires nothing except to do the will of its master: "I desire nothing else as long as ever my master wishes to leave me here, because my sole happiness is in contenting Him to whom I belong, and by whom I am what I am." p. 289.

"All we have to do is to concentrate on the first step and NEVER CONSIDER THE DIFFICULTY OF THE NEXT ONE. p. 295

"He appoints--quite clearly we think--this particular work for us or that particular aim; and then He seems to arrange His whole providence to prevent us achieving it. He even seems to waste our whole life, to destroy our works, to take away all our means of serving Him. Yet we must never lose our confidence in Him, and the more contradictory His ways seem, the more complete our trust in His fatherly guidance must be. p. 298

"We really never exactly know where God is leading us; and we must eventually give up all attempts to know. Very often our own ideas are quite wrong; we are thinking of great works for God, but God is thinking of great love from us. p. 298

"Love demands expression and love is nourished by expression, and that is true even of the most spiritual love. p. 315

"Love can never merely be taken for granted; it does not stand still; it lives and develops--or else it dies. p. 316

"True devotion to Mary consists firstly, in a complete and permanent consecration to her of all that one is, or has, or will be, or will have, in the natural and in the supernatural order, in time and in eternity; and secondly, in living in habitual and entire dependence on Mary by complete and cheerful abandonment to her maternal care. In this way we belong completely to her. She can dispose of the value of all our acts, our satisfactions, and our prayers, of all our spiritual and temporal treasures, even the prayers that are said for us; she can apply all to whom she will. She can use our prayers as she likes, for although we still express our "intentions," it is always with the understood condition that she may change each intention to her own. She may influence God's providence to do what she wishes with us; we are completely in her hands. We are all hers, and all ours is hers. p. 339

"He has invented an eighth "sacrament"--one might say--in as much as He so identifies Himself with our neighbor that not only is He in us to love, but He is in our neighbor to be loved, for whatever is done to the neighbor is done to Christ. p. 347

"All He asks is that we put our faith and hope in Him, that we love Him with our whole heart, that we renounce our own pretended strength and our foolish plans by humility and abandonment; He will do the rest. p. 348

"There is no more acceptable gift of love to God, there is no greater comfort we can offer His agonizing Heart, than to cast ourselves on His mercy in our complete poverty and powerlessness, joyfully accepted and gladly acknowledged, so that all may come to us from Him. p. 365

God's plans for our sanctification are never quite what we expect them to be; and are often quite contrary to our own ideas, no matter how well ~~we~~ are acquainted with God's ways. He always hides His sanctifying work from our eyes, for He must preserve in us that humility and poverty of spirit which is essential for sanctity. p. 366, 367

+ + +

#### GIVE THANKS

"It is truly meet and just, /....At all times  
 To give thanks."---The Preface  
 Teach me, Lord, to live this prayer,  
 That I may thank Thee every day  
                                   for everything.  
 I do at times give thanks  
                                   for what seems good:  
 For health, success; for love and gain;  
                                   for all that pleases self.  
 And yet how thoughtless--Blind--  
 To thank Thee not for what is truly  
                                   good:  
 for pain; unkindness, censure, blame;  
                                   For every hurt that comes  
                                   from person, place or work.  
 By those keen instruments wouldst Thou,  
                                   Divine Physician,  
 Remove the harmful growths of self,  
 To give new life; Thine own true life,  
                                   And peace--Abundantly.  
                                   But I am blind--see not  
                                   Thy loving Hand;  
                                   Then in resisting, suffer more  
                                   and spoil Thy work.  
 Had I accepted all with gratitude,  
 I might long since have been a saint,  
                                   and happy---  
 A grateful heart cannot be otherwise.  
                                   Forgive, then, Lord,  
 My blindness and my squandered life.  
 And give me grace, this day, to see  
 Thy chastening Hand in all my hurts---  
                                   Nor blame Thy instruments;  
 Thy grace to take each purifying cross,  
                                   And then---  
 Give thanks with all my heart.

LOVE DOES SUCH THINGS

Rev. M. Raymond, O.C.S.O.

It is utterly impossible for anyone to have a truly merry Christmas until he has heard God greeting him -- and has returned His greeting. p. vii

God speaks by silences. "While all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, Thy Omnipotent Word, O Lord, came down from Thy royal throne." p. viii

It is a love story, for God knows no other. But like all stories that tell of true love, this is filled with mystery. p. x

If you should be asked this moment: "How long have you lived?" would your instantaneous reply be: "As long as God!"? It should be; for that is the literal truth. And you should be ready and happy to add: "And I shall go on living as long as God goes on loving." p. 3, 4

You need to know your own worth if you are to live a happy life. p. 4

Your Christmas story really begins with: "Once upon eternity, God fell in love with you..." p. 6

If there had never been any "forbidden fruit"...you would have had God who became Man, but you would never know that He loved you to death; for there would have been no MASS. You would have Christ but no ChristMAS. p. 7

God was determined with all the determination of His omnipotent will to love you to death; to beggar Himself if need be to win your little heart. p. 8

Never forget that your soul is a capacity for God and nothing else. p. 11

It is not often you think of wind and rain as instruments in the hands of God who is working for you. But now that you have been reminded how the Cave was fashioned, every storm of wind and every shower of rain will be the Voice of God speaking lovingly to you. p. 11

You have learned that it is more than general, (Divine Providence) governing the whole world; more even and particular, having special regard for men; you have learned it is personal--that in all truth God is ever acting for you. The realization sets your whole soul singing. But to make your song a proper Christmas carol, let it be a shepherd's song. p. 12, 13

TODO Y NADA. All and nothing. The two words contain the theology of St. John of the Cross. Toto--all--is God, Who contains in Himself eminently the perfections of all things. For Him we are made. In Him we possess all things. But in order to possess Him Who is all, we must renounce the possession of anything that is less than God. But everything that can be seen, known, enjoyed, possessed in a finite manner, is less than God. Every desire for knowledge, possession, being, that falls short of God must be blacked out. NADA! p. 52, 53

"In order to come to union with the wisdom of God the soul has to proceed rather by unknowing than by knowing...Any soul that makes account of all knowledge and ability in order to come to union with the wisdom of God, is supremely ignorant in the eyes of God and will remain far removed from the wisdom...for ignorance (in the bad sense) knows not what wisdom is...Those alone gain the wisdom of God who are like ignorant (in the good sense) children and, laying aside their knowledge, walk in His service with love. p. 74

"...We shall see later that the VIA NEGATIONIS of the intellect also requires a VIA AMORIS for the will; on this dark way both intellect and will must ultimately be possessed and transfigured by the action of divine grace in the special inspirations of the Holy Ghost. p. 95

"Here are the words in which Saint Thomas describes the end of this ascent to God. 'The final attainment of man's knowledge of God consists in knowing that we do not know Him, in so far as we realize that He transcends everything that we understand concerning Him.' 'Having arrived at the term of our knowledge we KNOW GOD AS UNKNOWN.' p. 100, 101

"It is terrible to know God and not love him... p. 105

"...According to the Angelic Doctor, man must seek above all else to love God with all his power (EX TOTO POSSE SUO) to arrive at a state in which everything in him is ordered to the love of God. Saint John of the Cross says the same thing: 'The soul that is perfect is wholly love...all its actions are love, and it employs all its faculties and possessions in loving.' p. 156, 157

"...the true path of asceticism is a path of simplicity and obscurity, and there is no true Christian self-denial that does not begin first of all with a wholehearted acceptance and fulfillment of the ordinary duties of one's state in life. Everyone guided by grace will spontaneously desire to add something on his own account to the sacrifices demanded by Providence and by his state of life. But the best of these mortifications will always be the ones that are seen by God alone and do not attract the attention of other men or flatter our own self-complacency. It is very bad in practice to allow ascetics to indulge in penitential rivalries with one another, for this generally fixes their attention upon themselves and gives them a narrow outlook, depriving them of the interior liberty which is absolutely necessary for progress in the ways of prayer. p. 159, 160

"However, it is easy for us to deceive ourselves in judging the purity of our intentions when we taste great pleasure in created things. A devout man can form a habit of attachment to some created pleasure by frequently using it, in good faith, as a motive of prayer. In actual fact, his desire for the pleasure soon becomes greater than his desire to pray. Without his realizing it, he has made prayer the motive for indulging

I. JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

"Lord, that I may see!"

Give me light to see You in my even-Christian,  
and to see my even-Christian in You.

Give me faith to recognize You  
in those under my own roof;  
in those who are with me, day after day,  
on the way of the cross.

Let me recognize You  
not only in saints and martyrs,  
in the innocence of children,  
in the patience of old people  
waiting quietly for death,  
in the splendour of those who die  
for their fellow men;

but let me also discern Your beauty  
through the ugliness of suffering for sin  
that You have taken upon yourself.

Let me know You in the outcast,  
the humiliated, the ridiculed, the shamed;  
in the sinner who weeps for his sins.

Give me even the courage  
to look at Your Holy Face,  
almost obliterated,  
bruised and lacerated,  
by my own guilt,  
and to see myself!

Look back at me, Lord,  
through Your tears,  
with my own eyes,  
and let me see You,  
Jesus, condemned to death,  
in myself,  
and in all men  
who are condemned to die.

## II. JESUS RECEIVING HIS CROSS

Lord, let me receive the cross gladly;  
let me recognize Your cross in mine,  
and that of the whole world in Yours.

Do not let me shut my eyes  
to the magnitude of the world's sorrow  
or to the suffering of those nearest to me.  
Do not let me shrink from accepting my share  
in that which is too big for me,  
and do not let me fail in sympathy  
for that which seems trivial.

Let me realize  
that because You have made my suffering Yours  
and given it the power of Your love,  
it can reach everyone, everywhere--  
those in my own home,  
those who seem to be out of my reach--  
can reach them all  
with Your healing and Your love.

Let me always remember  
that those sufferings  
known only to myself,  
which seem to be without purpose  
and without meaning,  
are part of Your plan  
to redeem the world.

Make me a hint to bear the burdens  
of those nearest at hand,  
to welcome inconvenience for them,  
frustration because of them.  
Let me accept their temperaments as they are,  
nurse them in sickness,  
share with them in poverty,  
enter into their sorrows with them.

Teach me to accept myself--  
my own temperament,  
my temptations,  
my limitations,  
my failures,  
the humiliation of being myself, as I am.

Allow me, Lord,  
all my life long  
to accept both small suffering  
and great suffering,  
certain that both,  
through Your love,  
are redeeming the world.

and in communion with all men,  
and above all with You,  
let us accept joyfully,  
death  
and the fear of death--  
my death  
and the deaths of those whom I love--  
not with my will  
but with Yours,  
knowing that You  
have changed sorrow to joy,  
and that You have changed  
death to life.

### III. JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

Lord, we thank You  
for Your compassion for us,  
for the mercy of Your first fall  
under the cross.

We thank You  
because You have identified Yourself  
with us,  
who are ordinary, weak men and women.  
You have made yourself one  
with those who fail,  
who are humiliated,  
who are overcome by circumstances;  
those who fall at the beginning of the way.

We thank You  
because You fell  
at the beginning of the way to Calvary  
for us,  
fell for us under the material weight  
of the heavy wood.

You carried the burden,  
the heaviness of our circumstances,  
the load of material things,  
You accepted the difficulties  
that sometimes overwhelm  
each one of us.  
You took to Yourself  
the painful humiliation  
of our first fall.  
You gave us Your weakness  
to be our strength.  
Grant to us, Lord,  
that the shock of the first sin,  
of the first failure  
at the beginning of life,  
may give us self-knowledge  
and a truer knowledge of You;  
and help us to know ourselves and You,  
and to know the depths of Your love.  
May it teach us our dependence on You,

and that without You we can do nothing.

Turn the humiliation caused by our vanity  
into your humility,  
and lift us up in Your power  
and with Your courage to take the cross  
and to start again on the way,  
trusting now,  
not in ourselves  
but in You.

#### IV. JESUS LEETS HIS MOTHER

Mother of Christ,  
help me to be willing  
to accept the suffering  
that is the condition of love.

Help me to accept  
the grief  
of seeing those whom I love  
suffer,  
and when they die  
let me share in their death  
by communion.

Give me the faith  
that knows Christ  
in them,  
and knows that His love  
is the Key  
to the mystery of suffering.

Help me,  
Blessed Mother,  
to see with your eyes,  
to think with your mind,  
to accept with your will.  
Help me to believe  
that is is Christ  
who suffers in innocent children,  
in those who die in the flower of manhood,  
in those whose death is an act  
of reparation,  
in those who are sacrificed  
for others.

Remind me  
that their suffering  
is Christ's love  
healing the world,  
and when I suffer for them  
and with them,  
I too am given the power  
of His redeeming love.

#### V. SIMON HELPS JESUS TO CARRY THE CROSS



For,  
give us faith  
to know You  
in our direct need,  
in Your uttermost loneliness  
bearing Your heaviest load,  
and unable to bear it alone,  
in the most unlikely people,  
In those who do not look like You,  
who do not speak like You,  
who perhaps do not even know You  
though You are suffering in them.

Give us patience  
and fortitude  
to put self aside  
for you,  
in the most unlikely people,  
to know that every man's  
and every man's suffering  
is our own first business  
for which we must be willing  
to go out of our way  
and to leave our own interests.  
Give us,  
most humble service,  
the humility to forget ourselves  
and even our sinfulness,  
so that we may never allow  
consciousness of our own unworthiness  
to prevent us from helping You  
in any man  
whom we meet on the way  
in need.

Give us the wisdom  
that knows that there is no sanctity  
excepting in love  
and the living of love.

#### VI. VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

Saviour of the world,  
take my heart,  
which shrinks  
from the stark realism  
and ugliness of suffering,  
and expand it with Your love.  
Open it wide  
with the fire of Your love,  
as a rose is opened  
by the heat of the sun.

Drive me by the strength  
of Your tenderness  
to come close to human pain.  
Give me hands  
that are hardened  
by pity,

that will dip into any water  
and bathe any wound  
in mercy.

Give me Your hands,  
hands that heal the blind  
by their touch,  
hands that raise the dead  
and are nailed to the cross;  
give me your hands  
to tend the wounds of the body  
and the wounds of the mind.

Give me Your eyes  
to discern the beauty of your face,  
hidden under the world's sorrow.  
Give me grace  
to be a Veronica;  
to wipe away  
the ugliness of sin  
from the human face,  
and to see  
Your smile on the mouth of pain,  
Your majesty on the face of dereliction,  
and in the bound and helpless,  
the power of Your infinite love.

Lord take my heart  
And give me Yours.

## VII. JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME

Jesus Christ, exhausted on the long road  
to Calvary,  
fallen for the second time  
under the weight of the cross,  
allow me to be among those  
who come forward  
out of the crowd  
to Heave back the great load  
that crushes You  
in my even-Christian.

Do not let my hands or my mind  
or my heart be idle,  
or indifferent to  
or unaware of the conditions of life,  
the difficulties  
and problems,  
facing those who struggle against heavy odds  
to live the Christ-life  
and to share in the work of Your love.  
Grant that I may never  
dissociate myself from You  
in the Christian  
who has fallen under the burden of Your cross,  
who worn out

by the struggle  
against temptation,  
against circumstances,  
against public opinion  
and the opinions of His own people,  
is down in the dust,  
crushed by the burden of humiliation,  
failure and shame.

Give me grace  
to help to lift You up  
in that man,  
to set him on his feet,  
to help him on his way  
on the road You have trodden  
And when I fall,  
send me those  
who will lend their hands  
to lift my burden  
and enable me, too,  
to follow You  
to Calvary.

#### VIII. JESUS SPEAKS TO THE KNOX OF JERUSALEM

Father,  
do not let me find consolation  
in sensible devotion  
to the person of Jesus Christ  
while Jesus Christ passes me by  
unrecognized,  
unknown,  
unsought,  
uncomforted  
on the Via Crucis  
we travel together.

Do not let my heart  
be moved by pity  
for the painted Christ on the wall  
while it remains a stone,  
hard, insensitive  
to Christ suffering alone  
in the ugliness of shame and disgrace  
in the outermost,  
the shunned,  
the forgotten;  
in mental sufferers hidden away in hospitals,  
in prisoners serving life sentences,  
in people wrestling with bitterness and despair  
behind the Iron Curtain;  
in those fighting a losing fight  
with human weakness and degradation--  
in the unhelped,  
the uncomfortable,  
the unloved.

IX. JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME

Lord,  
fallen under the cross  
for the last time,  
grant to me, and to all those  
with whom You identified Yourself  
in the third fall,  
Your courage,  
Your humility,  
to rise in Your strength,  
and in spite of failure upon failure,  
shame upon shame,  
to persevere to the end.

Do not let us despair,  
Let us go on in Your power  
when those who believed  
in Your presence in us  
are disillusioned,  
and those who sought You in our lives  
are scandalized and have lost hope in You  
because of our failures.

Give us courage  
to go on, in Your name.  
even when Your enemies  
discredit You  
because of us.

Let us rise in Your strength  
even in this extremity,  
when we are alone before God,  
and He alone knows  
Your presence still abiding in us  
because in Your third and last fall  
under the cross,  
in the sight of God and men,  
You identified Yourself with us.

X. JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

Jesus,  
stripped of Your garments  
upon Calvary,  
give me the courage  
and the humility  
to be stripped before the world  
of all pretence;  
to show myself--  
even to that one whom I love  
and whose good opinion of me  
is vital to my happiness--  
Just as I am,  
naked,  
stripped of everything  
that could hide  
the truth of my soul,  
the truth of my heart, even from

the truth of myself, from them.

Give me  
Your own courage,  
Your humility,  
Your independence,  
which compelled You,  
for love of me,  
to stand on that hill of Calvary,  
naked,  
covered in wounds,  
without comeliness whereby  
we could know You.

Give me the courage  
and the dignity and splendour  
of Your love,  
to live openly,  
without pretence,  
even when there is that in my life  
which shames me.  
Give me the one glory  
if those who are disgraced  
and ashamed before the world;  
to be striped with You,  
Jesus Christ my redeemer,  
upon Calvary.

XI. Lord,  
wholly surrendered  
to the will of Your Father  
and wholly identified with us,  
Lord nailed to the cross  
by Your own choosing,  
Teach me to obey,  
to accept,  
to bow to the will of God.

Give us the wisdom  
and the strength  
to pledge ourselves,  
to bind ourselves irrevocably  
to the law of Your love.  
Let us so bind ourselves  
that we will not only  
adhere to You  
in times of consolation,  
in times of sweetness and devotion  
and when life goes smoothly,  
but yet more securely  
in the bleak and bitter  
seasons of the soul--  
in the hard iron of the winters  
of the spirit.

XII. JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

### XII. JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit!"  
And into Your hands, Jesus Christ  
my most merciful redeemer,  
Infinite Love,  
I commend myself in the hour of death--  
my body and soul,  
my heart and my mind and my will,  
all that I have and all that I am.

Into Your hands,  
the beautiful hands of a carpenter  
with their line and sinew and muscle,  
strong and sensitive hands  
nailed to the cross,  
I commend those whom I love,  
Hands that can heal the sick,  
can give sight to the blind;  
hands that can raise the dead  
and restore them to life with a touch,  
receive those whom I love;  
receive them and lead them from the cross;  
receive them, comfort them, lead and uphold them;  
unite them to Yourself  
and re-unite them to me  
for ever more in Your kingdom,  
Jesus, merciful Lord.

### XIII. JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

Mary, Mother of God,  
receiving the dead body  
of Jesus Christ your son  
taken down from the cross  
and laid in your arms,  
receive us,  
to whom He had given His life,  
and lay us with Him  
and in Him  
upon your sinless heart.

We are sinners,  
but save us from despondency and despair.  
Save us from morbidity  
which kills the soul.  
Save us from dwelling on the past.  
Take our heads into your hands  
and turn them gently  
to look upon the light of God.  
Let us feel the warmth and radiance  
of that healing sun,  
although we are still too weak  
to bear the blaze of its glory.

By the dead body of Christ  
laid in your arms,  
save us from the death of sin.  
Ask our Heavenly Father,  
whose will is your will,  
to restore us to life,  
to Christ's life in our souls,  
so that in each one of us  
you may see your only child,  
the Child Jesus  
and give us the heaven  
of your tender love.

By the passion and death  
of your only Son,  
give us His life.  
Make us new,  
give us the trust of children,  
give us the childhood of Christ,  
Grant to us, Virgin Mother,  
a new heaven and a new earth,  
because we see with His eyes,  
hear with His ears, work with His hands,  
walk with His feet, trust with His trust  
in His heavenly Father,  
and love with His heart.

#### XIV. JESUS IS Laid IN THE TOMB

Jesus buried in the tomb,  
Jesus in burial bands,  
You are life and the source of life.  
You are the seed in the earth,  
the secret of the eternal spring.  
You are the wonder of Heaven  
and love's unending flowering.

Let us  
poor sinners,  
die and be buried with You  
and so rise with You  
in Your glory.

Grant to us all,  
Lord Jesus,  
that in the soul's long winters  
we may wait patiently  
grow imperceptibly  
in the rhythms and seasons of Your love,  
and so enter into your peace.

Give us grace to wait patiently,  
without doubt,  
without impatience,  
without anxiety,  
for the dawn of the resurrection.

Lay every little death in life  
teach us how to die the last death

that is the beginning of true life.  
Be our life to us on earth,  
Lord Jesus,  
and our everlasting life.

Lord Jesus,  
today we accept  
from Your merciful hands what is to come;  
the times of trial in this world,  
the suffering of our death,  
the sorrow and loneliness  
of our last hours upon earth,  
the purifying, unknown pains of our purgatory.

Into Your hands, O Lord,  
into Your hands  
we commit our living and dying,  
knowing that You are  
the dawn of eternal day,  
the burning light of the morning star.



"My God, when shall my soul be wholly employed in Thy praise, instead of being torn to pieces in this way, and quite helpless?" p. 171

If the soul can communicate it, then it is not union. p. 174

Union is two different things becoming one. p. 174

Thou givest according to Thine own nature. p. 174

What progress, indeed, is there to be made which is not a turning back? As for giving Thee thanks for such great favours, there is no way of doing it, though sometimes I find it a help to utter foolishness. p. 174

It seems, my Lord, that men have an excuse for despising such precious jewels if Thou bestowest them upon a creature so wretched, so base, so weak, so miserable and so worthless, who, though she may strive not to lose them, by Thy help cannot make use of them to bring profit to any. p. 175

I count it a blessing to lose the greatest blessing which may be possessed upon earth, if Thou wilt bestow thy favours upon one who will derive greater profit from this blessing, to the increase of Thy glory. p. 175

My soul would have no power to attain salvation did not His Majesty bestow it on me with these great favours. p. 175

Next to doing what I am bidden, my chief aim is to cause souls to covet so sublime a blessing. p. 176

The Lord takes this little bird and puts it into the nest where it may repose. Having watched it flying for a long time, striving with mind and will and all its strength to seek and please God, it becomes His pleasure, while it is still in this life, to give it its reward. p. 177

In a room bathed in sunlight not a cobweb can remain hidden. p. 181

The soul realized that it has deserved to go to hell, yet its punishment is to taste glory. p. 181

Tears achieve everything: one kind of water attracts another. p. 182

He who never ceases walking, and advances all the time, may reach his goal late, but does reach it all the same. p. 187

The soul has great need of a director and of intercourse with spiritual people. p. 188

Never does He weary of giving and never can His mercies be exhausted: let us, then, not grow weary of receiving. p. 188

Do Thou ordain it, Lord, according to Thy pleasure, that this Thy handmaiden may in some way serve Thee. There have been other women who have done heroic deeds for love of Thee. I myself am fit only to talk, and therefore, my God, it is not Thy good pleasure to test me by actions. All my will to serve Thee peters out in words and desires, and even here I have no freedom, for it is always possible that I may fail altogether. p. 204

Ask yourself if men were allowed to choose their parents, the time, place, and circumstances of their births, how many would have chosen a peasant girl not out of her teens, a cattle shed, midnight, with no one but a poor carpenter and perhaps a beast or two near? p. 55

When God wishes you to be merry it is not for a day, not for a time, but for an eternity. p. 55

"Either Jesus Christ is deceived, or the world is in error."  
St. Bernard. p. 56

He was born far below Himself that you might be reborn limitless leagues above yourself. But His lowliness is the only way to His heights; His humility, obscurity, simplicity, and poverty the only way to His riches, grandeur, and glory. p. 57

If you write, I relish not your writing unless I read there the name of Jesus. If you teach or converse with me, I relish not your words unless I hear you say the name Jesus. Jesus is honey to the mouth, music to the ear, gladness to the heart. p. 63

To hug this Child is delight; but it is a contact that carries obligations with it. p. 65

God's works are perfect works. They ask for no sympathy; it is docility that they demand. p. 71

People who hear God speaking must be very, very strong. p. 73

Once you have grasped your own significance in the plan of Omnipotence your heart will ever be joyful for you will realize that you fill out Christ; that you are the latest syllable in the Word of God! p. 75

He wants you to be the offered! In briefest brief, God wants you to say Mass. That is why He made you. That is why He made the Christ. p. 80

At Christmas God showed you your worth. At the Epiphany it is your work He manifests. p. 81

A thing is not a gift when it is offered, but only when it is accepted. p. 83

How can you fail when your slightest act is latent with the possibility of saving a world so long as it is offered in Mary's Child? p. 86

Mother Janet Stuart, the saintly Madame of the Sacred Heart, in her last agony was heard to exclaim: "Oh, how He longs for me!"

You have learned so much of that love that you might easily be lulled into false complacency. p. 95

Christmas is the season for toys. They can teach you profound truths about yourself and your God, your life, and your goal. See what the mere sight of a toy does to children. Their every feature takes on new light and life; their hands go out to have and hold; their hearts are filled with pleasure. That is the proper function of toys--and God has filled the world with toys for you! Every creature can be looked upon as just that--a toy, given to you by God, for your pleasure. Indeed there IS a Santa Claus. But His name is not Kriss Kringle nor even St. Nicholas. His name is that which the Chosen People dared not pronounce, but which we of the New Dispensation love to say over and over again. p.100, 101

Nass is the perfect martyrdom! p. 103

You are in Egypt. God will one day call you out for the same purpose. He called the true Paschal Lamb. It will be to say your Mass! p. 108

You are Christ -- Heaven will take as much care of you unto your predestined hour as it did of Jesus. There is no room for fear in those who live in Christ. p. 111, 112

Even this barren waste must have had a golden hue about it for the holy travelers. That is the way God would have every life lived: in joy! The exultant joy that comes from pleasing Him, from loving Him by doing His holy will. p. 113

One word will characterize perfectly what you will see there (at Nazareth). And it shows you the very source of the joy that is proper to Christmas and the entire life of a Christian. that word is ORDINARY. p. 114

Life cannot be the same once you have been greeted by God. Life cannot be the same once you have been baptized. For after baptism, as was said above, you ceased to be natural, purely human, ordinary, or usual in the common acceptance of those words. You became a human-divine being; you became extraordinary because supernatural! Hence to live up to your new nature you can never be natural of just human! p. 117

He has saved you from so much that it will take you all eternity to grasp the world of truth contained in the line "There is born to you a SAVIOUR." Think now on what He has saved you FOR. Briefly, He has saved you for HAPPINESS. p. 118

You must not only return His greeting but His gift as well. For you must BE Christ Jesus! p. 120

God really knows only the individual. p. 121

He is a Word who cannot live on earth without His syllables--His individual, separate, single syllables. p. 122

Love is always a call to things much above our petty selves. It holds a hidden command to unquestioning sacrifice, unselfing of self and a complete consecration to another. It is an invitation to heroism. And somehow or other it is one we never hesitate to answer. When that call comes from God through the annunciation of an angel, our lips form the single word FIAT. p. 20

Daily, hourly, almost every moment Gabriel is at your side-- with an annunciation. p. 25

Never think yourself anything but TREMENDOUS. Almighty God depends on you. Without your consent His Christ cannot be born anew. The weary of the world will not have their Wine. The famished will not receive their Bread. God Himself will not win that glory unless you consent to "mother Christ." p. 26

Life is a divine romance, or it is not living at all. p. 28

God's mercy is His love. p. 31

Love must act; joy must manifest itself; goodness, give to others. p. 32

He loves you so much that He must greet you in person! His voice was not enough. He gives you His WORD! p. 47

You need to be shocked into the realization that deliberately and with clarity of foresight and forethought, He very definitely chose this cave, this crib, these bands and these beasts, if beasts were there. Sympathy is out of place. There is room only for docility. Jesus is speaking to you through these accompaniments of His birth. He, the Word, knew and knows actions speak louder even than His words. So He would teach you by His careful choice what you are to choose if you will be wise with His wisdom. p. 50, 51

Can you not hear Him in His manger saying to you "Blessed are the poor in spirit"? Here is His first sermon. All the others were but reiteration and amplification. God is speaking in that little bundle of flesh Mary has wrapped in swaddling clothes. God is speaking from the pulpit of a cattle crib. God is speaking of values. p. 51

One treasure, however, He could not find there (in heaven), namely, the TREASURE OF POVERTY--of which there was on earth an abundance and even a superabundance, although man had no suspicion or its WORTH. It was for this, therefore, that the Son of God came down from His throne on high: to choose it for Himself, and by His choice to TEACH US ITS VALUE." (1st Sermon for Christmas Eve. Emphasis added.) St. Bernard. p. 52

THE DEED OF GOD  
by John W. Lynch

Utter gift accepts all consequence. p. 15

Yet for some moments here,  
The will that sent Him, summons quiet joy  
Around Him for a hidden space of peace,  
That He might know a rooftree and a home. p. 20, 21

Let nothing pass, lose not the faintest, least  
Impress of Him upon our earth. p. 37

He faints beneath the dark  
Identity He wills to be His own. p. 39

Love may tell itself  
Divinely in a last extravagance. p. 44

Can time be counted over pain? p. 46

A time forever ended and a time  
Just now begun. p. 58

To worship in Him as He worships God. p. 63

Crosses, unmistakably, are signs  
Inwoven on our bended chasubles. p. 67

They heard; they could not be content again  
With smaller speech. p. 73

....became anonymous,  
And DOING THIS had no more countenance  
Or name, or posture, attitude, no self,  
Or signature, or voice, but PUT ON CHRIST,  
Stitched and gowned himself in Christ, took breath  
Of Christ, lived by heartbeat not his own,  
Shed his body for the Other's form. p. 74

new needs  
Like hidden pulses under secret selves. p. 75

A wheel that turns but to begin anew. p. 125

Earth, the spinning earth, that reels through space,  
Bleeds holy in His hands for all the earth  
Is altar, and the altar lifts.....! p. 125

THOUGHTS IN SOLITUDE  
by Thomas Horton

Society depends for its existence on the inviolable personal solitude of its members. p. 13

There is no greater disaster in the spiritual life than to be immersed in unreality.

The death by which we enter into life is not an escape from reality, but a complete gift of ourselves which involves a total commitment to reality. p. 17

We cannot see things in perspective until we cease to buy the to our own reason. p. 18

The desert was created simply to be itself, not to be transformed by men into something else. p. 19

Everywhere is solitude. p. 21

We must learn to see that our temperament is a gift of God, a talent with which we must trade until He comes.

A man is good when his will takes joy in what is good. p. 23

The things that we love tell us what we are.

A man is known, then, by his end. He is also known by his beginning. And if you wish to know him as he is at any given moment, find how far he is from his beginning and how near to his end. Hence, too, the man who sins in spite of himself but does not love his sin, is not a sinner in the full sense of the word.

The character of his choices remains fundamentally free.

Coercion from outside, strong temperamental inclinations and passions within ourselves, do nothing to affect the essence of our freedom. They simply define its action by imposing certain limits on it. p. 24

Christianity is not stoicism. The Cross does not sanctify us by destroying human feeling. Detachment is not insensibility. p. 25

If we are without human feelings we cannot love God in the way in which we are meant to love Him--as men. p. 26

We must return from the desert like Jesus or St. John, with our capacity for feeling expanded and deepened, strengthened against the appeals of falsity, warned against temptation, great, noble and pure. p. 28

If a man is to live, he must be all alive, body, soul, mind, heart, spirit. p. 29

Unless we live as a unity we must die.

+

Living is the constant adjustment of thought to time and life to thought in such a way that we are always growing, always experiencing new things in the old and old things in the new. p. 31

Real self-conquest is the conquest of ourselves not by ourselves but by the Holy Spirit. Self-conquest is really self-surrender.

Yet before we can surrender ourselves we must become ourselves. For no one can give up what he does not possess. p. 32

In order to gain possession of ourselves, we have to have some confidence, some hope of victory. And in order to keep that hope alive we must usually have some taste of victory. p. 34

A false humility should not rob us of the pleasure of conquest which is due to us and necessary for our spiritual life, especially in the beginning. p. 35

Later on we may be left with faults we cannot conquer--in order that we may have the humility to fight against a seemingly unbeatable opponent, without any of the satisfaction of victory. For we may be asked to renounce even the pleasure we take in doing good things in order to make sure that we do them for something more than pleasure. p. 36

Laziness and cowardice are two of the greatest enemies of the spiritual life. And they are most dangerous when they mask as "discretion."... Indeed, it is discretion itself that must teach us the difference between cowardice and discretion. p. 37

Discretion shows us where effort is wasted and when it is obligatory.

We have to risk everything in order to gain everything.

Without courage we can never attain to true simplicity...In hesitation, there is no true faith. p. 38

What is the use of praying if at the very moment of prayer, we have so little confidence in God that we are busy planning our own kind of answer to our prayer? p. 39

When we understand the true nature of His love for us, we will prefer to come to Him poor and helpless...We can be glad of our helplessness when we really believe that His power is made perfect in our infirmity. p. 41

We must love our own poverty as Jesus loves it.

We must love the poverty of others as Jesus loves it...We cannot have true compassion on others unless we are willing to accept pity and receive forgiveness for our own sins.

We do not really know how to forgive until we know what it is to be forgiven. Therefore we should be glad that we can be forgiven by our brothers...In forgiving one another we act towards one another as He has acted towards us. p. 42

†  
"HOPE"

"God Speaks" through Péguy:

I am, says God, Master of the Three Virtues.

Faith is a faithful wife.  
Charity is an ardent mother.  
But hope is a tiny girl.

I am, says God, the Master of Virtues.

Faith is she who remains steadfast during  
centuries and centuries.  
Charity is she who gives herself during centuries  
and centuries.  
But my little hope is she  
Who rises every morning.

I am, says God, the Lord of Virtues.

Faith is she who remains tense during centuries  
and centuries.  
Charity is she who unbends during centuries and  
centuries.  
But my little hope  
is she who every morning  
wishes us good day.

I am, says God, the Lord of Virtues.

Faith is a soldier, a captain holding a fort,  
One of the king's cities,  
In the borderland of Gascony, in the borderland  
of Lorraine.  
Charity is a physician, a little sister of the poor,  
Who nurses the sick, who nurses the wounded,  
The king's poor,  
In the borderland of Gascony, in the borderland  
of Lorraine,  
But my little hope is she  
Who says how do you do to the poor and to the  
orphan.

I am, says God, the Lord of Virtues.

Faith is a church, a cathedral rooted in the soil  
of France.  
Charity is a hospital, an almshouse which gathers  
up all the miseries of the world.  
But if it weren't for hope, all that would be nothing  
but a cemetery.

I am, says God, the Lord of Virtues.



Faith is she who watches during centuries and centuries.  
 Charity is she who watches during centuries and centuries.  
 But my little hope is she  
 who goes to bed every night  
 and gets up every morning  
 and really sleeps very well.

I am, says God, the Lord of that virtue.

My little hope is she  
 who goes to sleep every night,  
 in that child's crib of hers,  
 after having said her prayers properly,  
 and who every morning wakes up and rises  
 and says her prayers with a new look in her eyes...

+ + +

The Holy Gospel fills our hearts with joyous hope:

It was the lost that the Son of Man came to seek--and to save. Lk. 19, 10

Your Father in heaven is merciful. Lk. 6, 36

Don't be afraid, you tiny flock! Your Father plans to give you the Kingdom. Lk. 12, 32

How happy are the humble-minded, for the kingdom of Heaven is theirs! How happy are those who know what sorrow means, for they will be given courage and comfort! Happy are those who claim nothing, for the whole earth will belong to them! Happy are those who are hungry and thirsty for goodness, for they will be fully satisfied! Happy are the merciful, for they will have mercy shown to them! Happy are the utterly sincere, for they will see God! Happy are those who make peace, for they will be known as sons of God! Happy are those who have suffered persecution for the cause of goodness, for the kingdom of Heaven is theirs! And what happiness will be yours when people blame you and ill-treat you and say all kinds of slanderous things against you for my sake! Be glad then, yes, be tremendously glad--for your reward in Heaven is magnificent. They persecuted the prophets before your time in exactly the same way. Matt. 5, 3-10

It is true that I am going away to prepare a place for you, but it is just as true that I am coming again to welcome you into my own home, so that you may be where I am. Jn. 14, 4

+ + +

1. What is the difference between the virtues of Faith and Hope?
2. How are Hope and Holy Poverty associated in "having nothing yet possessing all things"?
3. Why does selfish hope end in despair?
4. When do the virtues of Faith and Hope cease?
5. What is THE hope of the Old Testament? Of the New?
6. What are your hopes? How frivolous? How exalted?

+

"A Woman Wrapped in Silence" is left with nothing but waits for ALL:

She was alone. He would not come to her  
Again. She moved a little, and the sound  
Of movement lifted up against the day  
And fell, and did not rise. She was alone,  
And in her she could feel the flow of time  
That had begun and would go on, go on,  
To days, in silence, on and on. She was  
A woman ~~now~~ who was alone with time,  
And in her heart, the wait and ache of time."

+ + +

P.S. from a little hobo:

In a final act of Divine Kindness, Jesus whispers, "This is  
your Mother. THIS is HOPE!

3-21-64

## HUMILITY

St. John tells us history's most poignant lesson in humility: "The word of God became a human being and lived among us."

His way with men has been to take men's way,  
And that's the glory and the scandal both...  
O, not the thunders and the lifted gates  
He chose, and not exotic retinue  
To bring Him flaming through the breathless towns  
With swift compulsion and command, not this,  
But briefest pausing in the pulse of life,  
With all our old simplicities unmarred,  
With no rejections of the flesh we bear,  
The hearts we love with, and the pain we know.  
He slept our sleep, and with us dreamed our dreams.

Our own Mother has sung a song surpassing every poem our poverty of Love has written, and she began her immortal melody: "My heart is overflowing with praise of my Lord, my soul is full of joy in God my Saviour. For he has deigned to notice me, his humble servant and, after this, all the people who ever shall be will call me the happiest of women!"

It has not been granted us  
To watch, but were there moments when her heart  
Broke through to cry again of humbleness?  
And tried to search some virtue that she thought  
Unfrayed? And was there not a pause between  
The pulsebeats when the thoughts dared not to run  
Beyond the next faint movement, and the breath  
Was caught for fear, and half a world of women  
Seemed more gracious and more fair than she?  
"She who was lowest in her own eyes saw without tremor that she was highest in God's eyes, and she was glad of it because He was glad of it, and for no other reason." Herton.

She could not cling to Him  
In tears, nor give Him other than a freedom  
Glad for roads and towns, nor seek to be  
About His feet and slow them to her needs.  
Once the holy Gospel lets us see her standing on her tiptoes to have a glimpse of Him, to ease her loneliness that He looked well. It seems others push her nearer, in their anxiety unable to understand her selfless love. They interrupted His speech to whisper of her need their own need had supposed.

He'd learned  
That she was near, that she was near and stood  
So, just beyond the crowd's edge and had come  
To Him, and like a man hewed to larger  
Business, He'd dismissed her and gone on,  
Forgetting her.

He couldn't welcome her to anything beneath her dignity. She understood; there was no hesitation in her step as she followed Him up Calvary and humbly took her place as Queen of the world, and Mother.

1. How can one know if he's humble?
2. Of what importance is reputation?
3. What is the value of our imperfections?
4. Can you read the Gospel - comfortably?
5. So you fell again...are you surprised?
6. How are we to receive praise?

SUNSHINE BOOKLETS  
by Bruno Hagspiel, S.V.D.

CHEER UP!

The Sage of Concord, Emerson, urges us: "One topic is peremptorily forbidden to all rational mortals; namely, distempers. If you have not slept, if you have the headache, or leprosy, or a thunderstroke, I beseech you by all the angels to hold your peace and not pollute the morning. Come into the azure and love the day."

The darkening streets about me lie, the shame, the frets, the squalid jars; But swallows' wings go flashing by, and in the puddles there are stars. F. Langbridge

Disappointment--His appointment  
--Change one letter, then I see  
that the thwarting of my purpose  
is God's better choice for me.

When the outlook is not good, try the uplook.

You are stricken to earth? Well, what of that?  
Come up with a smiling face!  
It's nothing against you to fall down flat,  
But to lie there--that's disgrace.  
The harder you're thrown, the higher you bounce!  
Be proud of your blackened eye!  
It isn't the fact that you're beaten that counts,  
It's how did you fight--and why?

Edmund V. Cooke

Die when I may, I want it said of me by those who know me best, that I always plucked a thistle and planted a flower where I thought a flower would grow. Lincoln

Two buckets met at the well.  
One of them looked morose.  
"What's the trouble?" asked the second bucket sympathetically.  
"Oh!" replied the first, gloomy bucket, "I get so very weary of being dragged to this well. No matter how full I am, I always come back here empty."

The second bucket laughed.  
"How serious!" it chuckled, "why! I always come here empty and go away full. I'm sure if you started to think that way, you would feel much more cheerful."

"Do not say: another hour of life is gone--but I HAVE LIVED ANOTHER HOUR." Emerson

Do not worry if you stumble--a worm is the only creature that can't fall down. Hindu proverb

"I'm so full of happiness that I just couldn't be any happier unless I could grow." Out of the mouths of innocents comes wisdom.

If you  
cannot  
get  
what you like--  
why not try  
to like  
what you get?

#### FRIENDLY OBSTACLES

For every hill I've ~~had~~ to climb,  
For every stone that bruised my feet,  
For all the blood and sweat and grime,  
For blinding storms and burning heat,  
My heart sings but a grateful song--  
These were the things that made me strong!

For all the heartaches and the tears,  
For all the anguish and the pain,  
For all the gloomy days and fruitless years,  
And for the hopes that lived in vain,  
I do give thanks; for now I know  
These were the things that helped me grow!

'Tis not the softer things of life  
Which stimulate man's will to strive,  
But bleak adversity and strife  
Do most to keep man's will alive.  
O'er rose-strewn paths the weaklings creep,  
But brave hearts dare to climb the steep!

L.E. Thayer

#### BE OF GOOD HEART

Howoften our imagination creates trouble for us where none exists!  
How often our physical condition causes us to worry and fret!@ Let this  
be your rule: never to make decisions of any importance when plagued  
by ill health or undue mental pressure.

#### GIFTS

He came with burdens, laid them at my feet,  
"I bring thee gifts," He said. His smile was sweet.  
"These were my own. I give them all to thee!"  
I shuddered, staring at them fearfully.  
The tools which of His Passion were a part--  
The thorns, the nails, the spear which tore His heart.  
The massive cross, the cruel whips were there.  
"O God," I uttered, voicing deep despair.  
But then I glimpsed the sorrow in His eyes;  
"I--take them, Lord," I sobbed, reluctantwise,  
"I scarce am strong enough this cross to lift--"  
Eager, He spoke: "I have another gift  
Will strengthen thee. Ah, ~~this~~ I cherish most!"  
He placed upon my lips--a sacred Host!

Vera Marie Tracy

Little souls should keep diaries. Months later, years later, let them read in those diaries. Let them see how puny those vexations and irritations were, and how small a dose of poison can bring to naught the finest project. A mote of dust in our eye can seem like a mountain. Yet the bystander still sees only a mote.

THE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING  
God would not send you darkness, dear,  
If He felt you could bear the light;  
But you would not cling to His guiding hand  
If the way were always bright.  
And you would not care to walk by faith  
Could you always walk by sight.  
'Tis true He has many an anguish  
For your sorrowful heart to bear,  
Many a cruel thorn-crown  
For your tired head to wear.  
He knows how few would reach heaven at all  
If pain would not guide them there.  
So He sends you the blinding darkness,  
And the furnace of seven-fold heat,  
'Tis the only way, believe me,  
To keep you close to His feet.  
For 'tis always easy to wander  
When our lives are glad and sweet.  
Then nestle your hand in your Father's  
And sing, if you can, as you go;  
Your song may cheer someone behind you,  
Whose courage is sinking low;  
And, well, if your lips quiver,  
God will love you better so.

God always gives us strength to bear our present burden, but He never calculated that we would add to that yesterday's grief, and tomorrow's worry.

"Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof."

#### TODAY IS YOURS

but if you do not use it, it is still yours--UNFORTUNATELY.  
Out of what is today, you are making your yesterdays and your tomorrows.

Today is always yours, whether you want it so or not.

It is better to have a little too much enthusiasm rather than not enough.

You will find you contribute more to life by being a little over-zealous and too cheerful than by being a wet blanket.

TRUST

Dark dark the starless sky,  
and blinded, Lord, I stand.  
Dark--so dark the night that I  
see not, but feel, Thy hand.  
Lord, be Thou leader mine--  
See, lay my hand in Thine,  
I lean my heart on Thine--  
Carry me, Heart benign.  
Lead me, O Love Divine;  
My Father, in the night  
I stretch my hands to Thee--  
And from Thy Heart to mine  
Doth pass Thy pledge divine--  
"Trust--trust in Me, child of Mine,  
Trust, for thy Father's strength is thine.  
Trust, O loved child of Mine.

In your worst misfortune there is humor if you have the grace to see it

HAVE CONFIDENCE

"Suffering itself becomes the greatest of all joys when we seek it as a precious treasure." The Little Flower of Lisieux

Don't you think she (Our Lady) was human and wanted to know just what the years ahead held for her and her son? But she had also that divine wisdom which told her that God had plans which were not revealed to her. They would come, in God's own time, when he would reveal those plans, but there must be confident acceptance meantime of whatever God willed.

Have you learned Mary's lesson?

Christ has every such condition of quiet and affliction, in a superlative degree.

He suffered at the hands of people: from Jews and Gentiles, from the rich and the poor, from rulers and servants, even from His friends and acquaintances.

He was mocked, repudiated, rejected. He was lonely. He was misunderstood. He was an outcast.

The best proof to give of complete confidence is to "be silent and pray" *tacere et orare*. As St. Arsenius says, "I have often repented of having spoken, but never of having been silent."

Leave sadness to the devil. A Christian has only joy for his heritage. Has not St. John of the Cross assured us that "the soul of one who serves God always swims in joy, always keeps holiday, and is always in a mood for singing"?

Jesus had none to share His burden,  
None with whom He could talk,  
Yet He went on.



Have confidence....! God would not let you suffer unless He knew this was the best way for you to gain heaven.

### TAKE COURAGE

"Courage is to grieve,  
To have the hurt, and make  
the world believe  
You are not caring."

What is spiritual childhood? Well, it is, first of all, to have humility, to think nothing of ourselves; it is to rely as children do, on their Father, with absolute trust and confidence; it is to abandon everything, including ourselves, to God's hand. Children have no fear, no worry, no dread of the morrow. Their world is bounded by their parents, who shield them from and direct their steps. Children show us the way to our common home, heaven.

He asked for health that he might achieve;  
God make him weak that he might obey.

God sent him weakness that he might feel the  
need of God.

One "Blessed be God!" in adversity is worth more than a thousand  
"Thank Gods!" in prosperity.

It is the chain of patient sufferings that forms the rings with  
which Christ espouses a soul to Himself.

A diamond is a chunk of coal that stuck to its job.

It takes a great sorrow to make a great saint. The saints of God are those who have locked up--life's failures, humiliations, disappointments in the tabernacles of their hearts where God alone may see the tragedy, while the world beholds only a joyful face. Remember that if Christ does not break the hearts over which He reigns, He comes of His own choice to reign in broken hearts.

### THE QUIET HOUR

My heart is tired tonight--  
How endless seems the strife!  
Day after day the restlessness  
Of all this weary life!  
I come to lay the burden down  
That so oppresses me,  
And, shutting all the world without,  
To spend an hour with Thee,  
Dear Lord,  
To spend an hour with Thee.

I would forget a little while  
The bitterness of fears,  
The anxious thoughts that crowd my life,  
The buried hopes of years;  
For that mortal's weary toil  
My patient care must be.  
A tired child, I come tonight  
To spend an hour with Thee,  
Dear Lord,  
One little hour with Thee.

I'm foolish, wayward, yes, I know--  
So often wandering;  
A weak, complaining child--but oh!  
Forgive my murmuring;  
And fold me to Thy breast,  
Thou who hast died for me,  
And let me feel 'tia peace to rest  
A little hour with Thee,  
Dear Lord,  
One little hour with Thee!

"Seeing her suffer so much, one of her sisters remarked: 'To think that it may increase!' St. Therese replied: 'It is quite a mistake to trouble ourselves as to what I may still have to suffer. It is like meddling with God's work. We who run in the way of love must never allow ourselves to be disturbed by anything. If I did not simply live from one moment to the next, it would be impossible for me to be patient; but I look only at the present. I forget the past, and take good care not to forestall the future. When we yeild to discouragement or despair, it is usually because we think too much about the past and the future.' How true! Hence, when she was told that some thought that she feared death, she answered: 'That may easily come to pass...It will be time enough to bear that cross when it comes; meantime, I wish to rejoice in my present happiness.' What strength and joy of soul would be mine in the midst of pain if I would but follow this wise teaching!"

Just this minute we are going  
Toward right or toward wrong,  
Just this minute we are sowing  
seeds of sorrow or of song.  
Just this minute we are thinking  
on the way that leads to God  
or in idle dreams are sinking  
to the level of the clod.

They said it couldn't be done, but the poor fool didn't know it and he went ahead--AND DID IT!

+  
LOVE

LIFT UP YOUR HEARTS!

There isn't anything on earth worth while until it is shared with somebody.

I tried and failed.  
I tried again and failed.  
I tried again and failed.  
I tried again and failed.  
I tried again and failed.  
I tried again and failed.  
I tried again and won.

LEAN HARD

Child of My love, lean hard  
And let Me feel the pressure of thy care.  
I know thy burden, child; I shaped it,  
Poised it in Mine own hand; made no proportion  
Between its weight and thine unaided strength.  
For even as I laid it on I said,  
"I shall be near, and while she leans of Me,  
This burden shall be Mine not hers;  
So shall I keep My child within the circling arms  
Of My own love!" Here lay it down, nor fear  
To impose it on a shoulder which upholds  
The government of worlds. Yet closer come--  
Thou are not near enough. I would embrace thy care,  
So I might feel My child reposing on My heart.  
Thou lovest Me? I know it. Doubt not, then,  
But loving Me, lean hard.

Laff every time you pheel tickled and laff every once in a while  
enyhow. Josh Billings

There is nothing more painful than suffering, and there is nothing  
more joyful than to have suffered. Suffering is a short pain and a long  
joy. Eternal Wisdom of Bl. H. Suso

FIAT

My God, your chisel hurts!  
Its strokes of might,  
Dealt with omniscient art,  
Unerring smite  
My quivering broken heart.

You wish a chalice fair, you say?  
Then use your knife,  
Cut, burn and burnish bright  
With dull monotones of life,  
My loving cup to you I plight.

He who would climb a tree must grasp the branches--not the blossoms.

The successful man was asked what helped him over the great obstacles,  
and replied: "THE OTHER OBSTACLES."

Unhappiness is the hunger to get; happiness is the hunger to give.

# THE PRAYERS OF THE ANIMALS

translated from the French by

Rumer Godden

Prayer of the Little Ducks  
Dear God,  
give us a flood of water.  
Let it rain tomorrow and always.  
Give us plenty of little slugs  
and other luscious things to eat.  
Protect all folk who quack  
and everyone who knows how to swim.  
AMEN

Prayer of the Cock  
Do not forget, Lord,  
it is I who make the sun rise.  
I am Your servant  
but, with the dignity of my calling  
I need some glitter and ostentation.  
Noblesse oblige...  
All the same,  
I am Your servant  
only...do not forget, Lord,  
I make the sun rise.  
AMEN

Prayer of the Butterfly  
Lord!  
Where was I?  
Oh, yes! This flower, this sun,  
thank You! Your world is beautiful!  
This scent of roses...  
Where was I!  
A drop of dew  
rolls to sparkle in a lily's heart,  
I have to go...  
Where? I do not know!  
The wind has painted fancies  
on my wings.  
Fancies...  
Where was I?  
Oh, yes! Lord,  
I had something to tell you!  
AMEN

Prayer of the Cricket  
O God,  
I am little and very black,  
but I thank You  
for having shed  
Your warm sun  
and the quivering of Your golden corn  
on my humble life.  
Then take--but be forbearing, Lord--  
this little impulse of my love:  
this note of music  
You have sent thrilling in my heart.  
AMEN

Prayer of the Tortoise  
A little patience,  
O God,  
I am coming.  
One must take nature as she is!  
It was not I who made her!  
I do not mean to criticize  
this house on my back:  
it has its points;  
but You must admit, Lord,  
it is heavy to carry!  
Still,  
let us hope that this double enclosure  
my shell and my heart,  
will never be quite shut to you.  
AMEN

Prayer of the Goat  
Lord,  
let me live as I will!  
I need a little wild freedom,  
a little giddiness of heart,  
the strange taste  
of unknown flowers.  
For whom else are Your mountains?  
Your snow wind? These springs?  
The sheep do not understand.  
They graze and graze,  
all of them, and always  
in the same direction,  
and then eternally  
chew the cud of their  
insipid routine.  
But I--I love to bound to  
the heart of all Your marvels,  
leap Your chasms,  
and, my mouth stuffed  
with intoxicating grasses,  
quiver with an adventurer's delight  
on the summit of the world!  
AMEN

Prayer of the Donkey  
O God, who made me  
to trudge along the road always,  
to carry heavy loads always,  
and to be beaten always!  
Give me great courage and gentleness.  
One day, let somebody understand me--  
that I may no longer want to weep  
because I can never say what I mean  
and they make fun of me.  
Let me find a juicy thistle--  
and make them give me time to pick it  
And, Lord, let me find again, one day,  
my little brother of the crib. AMEN

Prayer of the Elephant

Dear God,  
it is I, the elephant,  
Your creature,  
who is talking to You.  
I am so embarrassed by my great self  
and truly it is not my fault  
if I spoil Your jungle a little  
with my big feet.

Let me be careful and behave wisely,  
always keeping my dignity and poise.  
Give me such philosophic thoughts  
that I can rejoice everywhere I go  
in the lovable oddity of things.

AMEN

Prayer of the Dog

Lord,  
I keep watch!  
If I am not here,  
who will guard their house?  
watch over their sheep?  
be faithful!"  
No one but You and I  
understand  
what faithfulness is.

They call me "Good dog! Nice dog!"  
Words...

I take their pats  
and the old bones they throw me,  
and I seem pleased.  
They really believe they make me happy  
I take kicks, too,  
when they come my way.  
None of that matters.  
I keep watch!

Lord,  
do not let me die  
until, for them,  
all danger is driven away.

AMEN

Prayer of the Monkey

Dear God,  
why have You made me so ugly?  
With this ridiculous face,  
grimaces seem asked for!  
Shall I always be  
the clown of Your creation?  
Oh, who will lift this melancholy  
from my heart?

Could You not, one day,  
let someone take me seriously?

Lord.

AMEN

Prayer of the Little Bird

Dear God,  
I don't know how to pray by myself  
very well,

but will You please  
protect my little nest  
from wind and rain?  
Put a great deal of dew  
on the flowers,  
many seeds in my way.  
Make Your blue very high,  
Your branches lissom;  
let Your kind light stay  
late in the sky,

and set my heart  
brimming with such music  
that I must sing, sing, sing...  
please, Lord.

AMEN

Prayer of the Dove

The Ark waits,  
Lord,  
the Ark waits on Your will.  
And the sign of Your grace.  
I am the dove,

simple  
as the sweetness that comes from You.  
The Ark waits,  
Lord;  
it has endured.  
Let me carry it  
a sprig of hope and joy,  
and put, at the heart of its forsaken  
that, in which Your Love clothes me, grace  
immaculate.

AMEN

Prayer of the Ox

Dear God, give me time.  
Men are always so driven!  
Make them understand  
that I can never hurry.  
Give me time to eat.  
Give me time to plod.  
Give me time to sleep.  
Give me time to think.

AMEN

# "Yes Virginia, There is a Santa Claus"

Virginia...your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe... except what they see. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little in this great universe of ours. Man is a mere insect, and his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, is measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of the truth and knowledge.

Yes Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist...and you know that they abound and give to your life the highest beauty of joy. Alas! How dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus. It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginia's. There would be no childlike faith then...no poetry, no romance, to make tolerable it's existence. We should have no enjoyment except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus? You might as well not believe in fairies. You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would they prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine the wonders that are unseen and unseeable in this world. You may tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, can tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance can push aside that curtain and view a picture of supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real?

Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding. No Santa Claus? Thank God...he lives and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

Frank P. Church

ST. PATRICK'S BREASTPLATE

I arise to-day  
Through the strength of heaven:  
Light of sun,  
Radiance of moon,  
Splendour of fire,  
Speed of Lightning,  
Swiftmess of wind,  
Depth of sea,  
Stability of earth,  
Firmness of rock.  
I arise to-day  
Through God's strength to pilot me:  
God's might to uphold me,  
God's wisdom to guide me,  
God's eye to look before me,  
God's ear to hear me,  
God's word to speak for me,  
God's hand to guard me,  
God's way to lie before me,  
God's shield to protect me,  
God's host to save me  
From snares of devils,  
From temptation of vices,  
From everyone who wishes me ill  
Afar and anear  
Alone and in a multitude.  
I summon to-day all these powers be-  
tween me and those evils:  
Against every cruel merciless power that  
may oppose my body and soul;  
Against incantations of false prophets  
Against black laws of Pagandom  
Against false laws of heretics,  
Against craft of idolatry,  
Against every knowledge that corrupts  
man's body and soul.  
Christ to shield me to-day  
Against poison, against burning,  
Against drowning, against wounding,  
So that there may come to me abund-  
ance of reward.  
Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ  
behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath  
me, Christ above me, Christ on my right  
hand, Christ on my left, Christ when I  
lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ  
when I arise,

Christ in the heart of every man  
who thinks of me,  
Christ in the mouth of everyone  
who speaks of me,  
Christ in every eye that sees me,  
Christ in every ear that hears me.  
I arise to-day  
Through a mighty strength, the  
invocation of the Trinity:  
Through belief in the Threeness,  
Through confession of the Oneness  
Of the Creator of creation.

AN ANCIENT IRISH PRAYER

May the blessings of light be upon  
you, light without and light within.

May the blessed sunlight  
shine on you and warm your heart  
till it glows like a great peat fire,  
so that the stranger may come and  
warm himself by it, and also a friend.

And may the light shine out of the  
two eyes of you like a candle set in two  
windows of a house, bidding the  
wanderer to come in out of the storm.

And may the blessing of the rain  
be upon you--the soft sweet rain.  
May it fall upon your spirit so that all  
the little flowers may spring up, and  
shed their sweetness on the air.

And may the blessing of the great rains  
be on you, may they beat upon your  
spirit and wash it fair and clean,  
and leave there many a shining  
pool where the blue of heaven  
shines reflected, and sometimes a star.

And may the blessings of the earth  
be on you--the great and round earth.  
May you ever have a kindly greeting  
for them you pass as you're going  
along the roads.

May the earth be soft under you  
when you lie upon it, tired at the end  
of the day. And may it rest easy over  
you, when at the last you lie out  
under it. May it rest so lightly over you  
that your soul may be quickly  
through it, and on its way to God.



+  
LOVE

ACT OF LOVE

O Jesus, hidden Love, I run to Thee;  
With all the strength I have I worship Thee;  
With all the love I have I cling to Thee;  
With all my soul I long to be with Thee;  
And fear no more to fail, or fall from Thee.  
My soul is dark, away from Thee, my own;  
My eyes are dim in seeking Thee, my own;  
My flesh doth pine away from Thee, my own;  
My Heart leaps up to Thee, my own;  
My spirit faints receiving Thee, my own;  
Where, in the height of Heaven, is bliss like Thee?  
Where, in the depth of Heaven, is peace like Thee?  
Where, in the Home of Love, is love like Thee?  
With all my heart I give myself to Thee;  
And waiting, wait, O King and Spouse, for Thee;  
Till I am one for evermore with Thee.  
O sweetest Jesus, bring me home to Thee.

Free me, O dearest God, from all but Thee;  
And break all chains that keep me back from Thee;  
Call me, O thrilling Love, I follow Thee;  
Thou art my all, and I have nought but Thee;  
O hidden Love, who now art loving me;  
O wounded Love, who once was dead for me;  
O sun-crowned Love, who alive for me;  
O patient Love, who weariest not of me;  
Alone of all, Thou weariest not of me;  
O bear with me till I am lost in Thee;  
O bear with me till I am found in Thee.  
O Jesus, deathless love, who seekest me  
Thou who didst die for longing love of me,  
Thou King in all Thy beauty come to me,

White-robed, blood-sprinkled Jesus, come to me  
And go no more, dear Lord, away from me

O God, most beautiful, most priceless One  
O God, most glorious, Uncreated One,  
O God, Eternal, beautiful One,  
O God, O Infinite and Hidden One,  
O God, Immense, O God the Living One,

Thou, wisdom of the Everlasting One,

Thou, ever-loved and ever-loving One,

O Jesus, hidden Love, I run to Thee, With  
all the strength I have I worship Thee.  
With all the love I have I cling to Thee  
With all my soul I long to be with Thee  
And fear no more to fail or fall from Thee  
Where in the home of Love, is love like Thee  
With all my heart I give myself to Thee  
And waiting, wait, O Jesus for Thee.

from THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

sent me by Joe Reilly March 25, 1960