

May the road rise up to meet you
 May the wind be ever at your back
 May the Good Lord keep you in the
 hollow of His hand
 May your heart be as warm as your heartstone
 And when it comes your time to die
 May the wail of the poor be the only sorrow
 you leave behind
 And may you be in Heaven
 10 minutes before the devil knows you're dead.

Retreat 1961

MATT TALBOT by "DIE DOHERTY

It was not every boy Matt would tell how to fend off the gentleman with the fund of dirty stories, not every man he would show the crucifix, saying, "See whom your hurting." not every person with whom he would talk about religion.

One must not throw pearls to swine;
 But no matter how carefully a man tries to hide his love from the world, he has no defenses when he meets one of his kind. Seeing another soul burning with adoration excites even the shyest lover of God so that he must reveal his love in all its shameless ecstasy. Thus he will stir his friend to further ardor, and his friend him; and both will be more pleasing to God, who is love, than either would be alone.

O good Jesus, accept this Holy Communion as my viaticum as if I were on this day to die. Grant that Thy most adorable Body and Blood may be the last remembrance of my soul; the sacred names of Jesus, Mary and Joseph my last words; My last affection an act of the purest, the most ardent love of Thee, and a sincere sorrow for my sins, my last consolation to expire in Thy divine arms, adorned with the gifts of Thy holy grace. Amen.

O my God, how could I have done the smallest thing, if Thou hadst not willed it. This is true humility, and in this lies true knowledge and holiness. The soul is holy in measure as it is humble, because in the same measure that it has holiness it has grace, and in the same measure it has grace it has humility, because grace is only given to the humble. St. Paul teaches us in Holy Humility we must believe all others to be better than ourselves, he also teaches us the way to accomplish this, namely, not by considering the good we have in ourselves, but that which others have or may have, "each one not considering the things that are his own, but those that are other men's".

THE TWO TREES

Gerald Vann

So we turn past sin into sorrow, and sorrow into sacrifice; and the sorrow will free us from our selfishness because it is the act of love. Sympathy-suffering with-that strange power of knowing in one's own heart the sorrow that some one else is suffering, you share in the suffering, but by sharing it you can make it better, you can heal.

There is an element without which love is ever really complete we call tenderness; and it means the desire to protect what you love from hurt and harm. When we sin we hurt God; when we try to fight sin by love we comfort, we protect God; and when we try to fight the effects of

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sin by healing the wounds of the world we comfort and protect God and man alike. Then love is fully alive in us. We can always suffer with suffering, we can always share that is the act of love.

"-THE HOME AND ITS INNER SPIRITUAL LIFE"

Humility is a virtue which is essentially a volitional habit; a trend to act in a definite way; to seek what God wants and to give up what we want. But it has its intellectual aspects; it sees the good in others without dwelling on one's own personal virtues. A humble man looks at others to find something to imitate, but at himself to discover something to correct. There are two characters or temperaments in each one of us struggling for expression. One is our natural temperament with all its selfish egoism demanding recognition and pushing itself forward; with all its uncorrected emotional defects, its vices and concupiscences. The other is a ~~divine character of Christ~~ ^{divine ideal}; one of the infinite ways in which the divine character of Christ may find expression. This divine in us, as in Christ, seeks to do only the will of the Eternal Father who sent each one of us in the world to accomplish something of value for the kingdom of Christ.

We attain to both volitional and intellectual humility by trying to do the will of Him who sent us, by ever looking for the divine in others in order to imitate it, and at the human in ourselves in order to correct it and divinize it. Nor can we say of anyone; there is nothing divine in him; for Christ sees in him something to love and would be crucified and would die again in order to save it. The most hopeless bad boy who is brought to the juvenile court, usually has a mother or sister or someone who says; after all, he is a dear little fellow and he is good at heart. "If we fail to see anything good in someone with whom we come in contact, we should say the fault is ours and ask our Lord to reveal to us that which He loves.

When the humble man looks at himself, he sees much that needs correction, and many ways in which he falls short of the divine ideal of Christ. It was by habitually, for years on end, ever looking for the good in others to correct it that some of the saints have finally and with an honest judgment said; I am truly inferior to all. And what they say is true, for that which they habitually see in others is something that reflects the divine ideal of Christ; and what they see in themselves is human sinfulness and imperfection. The divine in others infinitely surpasses the human in oneself.

THE HEART OF MAN GERALD VANN

The way to wisdom is humility; the way to humility is the sense of insufficiency, and the way to the sense of insufficiency is the sense of sin.

If you never learn to pray and so to become one with God and the world then, indeed, you may live completely enclosed in your isolation in this sense also that when you die you will leave no legacy, your life and your death will have made no more difference than the falling of a dead leaf to ground. But the saint, not by what he does so much as by what he is, transfigures the world; and even when he dies, his life and power remain with those who come after. Here and now we enjoy the addition of life that the saints have brought us, just as we reap the whirlwind which the sinners have sown. What we are we owe largely to others; and we in our turn can determine largely what others will be, and the long

process of receiving life and giving it goes on endlessly; so that if you today are a saint, the holiness of others in a thousand years time may be due to you. If you are a saint, your personality will never touch the lives of others without influencing them; by what you are you can reveal to them, or at least revive the thirst for reality which was dried up in them. If you are a saint you will give life to an immense multitude; but your own life will for that very reason be a great victory against evil; for when the multitude press upon you and try to touch even the hem of your garment you will do the exact opposite of what the false self would do; you will send them away from you to follow their Master. You will not send them away empty you will be sending them to the King's store rooms. You will build in shadow for sense of sin will be upon you, and the better you build the more you will see how bad a builder you are. You build in shadow because sometimes the loneliness of sin will come back upon you, and you will want to think God your enemy, you will want to be master and refuse to be a child. You build in a shadow because sometimes God will take from you, even what you have built well, even what He has given you--the family you have made, the love He has given--and you will feel discarded and forgotten, as Christ felt when He was making the sacrifice of the Cross. But these are just the times when you must build most hardily and with greatest intensity of labour, for these are the times when you will build best. If you live in the present you will not despair of the future. It is for God to give the increase.

What we need, God, what we finally need is a woman who would also be a saint" Peggy's Jeanne O'Arc

He did not live to please Himself; He lived to satisfy God and God's creatures because of God. (In the Likeness of Christ)

We are living in Christ in proportion to the degree of sanctifying grace that is in our souls. A great measure of sanctifying grace means a high state of vitality; a small measure low vitality.

St. Thomas regards as giving a moral certainty of being in the state of grace; namely--inability to discover in ourselves sins unrepented of, an aloofness from the things of this earth, and the faculty of taking delight only in God and the things that appertain to him. Having lost taste for created things as such, we acquire a taste for God alone. And when one has arrived at this state of esteeming nothing of any worth--except Divine Grace and Divine Charity, one has found--The Way of Peace."

DIFFICULTIES IN MENTAL PRAYER

The bread and wine that are changed into the Body and Blood of Our Lord at Mass once graced the earth in a glory of purple and gold--they were cut down, beaten and bruised, ground and pressed out of all recognition. Not until many changes had been made in them could the priest say over them the words that would make them the Flesh and Blood of Christ. Mortification, instead of meaning hurt to our selves, comes to mean giving pleasure, giving even life to Jesus.

Distractions at prayer St. Teresa, no attempt should be made to banish distractions. It is some what like a hostess entertaining a guest on the ground floor while her children are making noises upstairs. If she goes up to keep them quiet, she has to leave her visitor.

If God is pleased that we should stand before him like dumb animals or like a statue, is it not meet and just and right and fitting that we should do so. But then we shall have to find our happiness in pleasing God, not in pleasing ourselves.

If prayer cannot progress, then neither can friendship. If there does exist a well-marked ladder of prayer for each individual, it is by no means necessary, at least as a general rule, to know on which rung one is standing. The important thing is to avoid standing still, and to keep on climbing. The greatest value that we can set on Christ's suffering is to believe that they can make us holy even such as we are. We must, in fact, fill up the things that are wanting in the Resurrection of Christ in His Body--in ourselves--by letting Him rise in us through our holiness.

Prayer is the source of our spiritual strength and the center of our spiritual life.

ONE WITH JESUS by PAUL DE JACQUER

The ecstatic love of God is revealed especially in the twofold gift which comprises on the one hand the Incarnation and the Holy Eucharist and on the other, the presence of God in the soul which is sanctified and deified. How it would transform the lives of innumerable Christians, and even of priests and religious, were they only to realize the sublime truth; "A God is the Divine Guest of my soul, dwelling there day and night desirous of receiving the unceasing homage of my intimate friendship and of my love! Not enough stress is laid on the fact that God gives himself to us in the intimacy of our souls, and makes of them His heaven--his living tabernacles. It is always possible to withdraw, like St. Catherine of Siena, into ourselves to commune with the God of our hearts. We believe that no consideration would be more conducive than this to a life of unceasing prayer and continuous converse with God. Is not the love of interior recollection a familiar intercourse with God a special characteristic of interior souls? If they have great devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, they are equally devoted to Jesus the Eternal Word.

We must add that the doctrine of grace, and especially a firmly implanted belief in the presence of God within us, may have a great influence on the development of mystic life and mystic prayer. Passive prayer doesn't depend on our own efforts. It is a pure gift of God. The soul may prepare herself for the reception of this divine treasure. No better preparation for passive prayer than a habitual loving and active attention to the Divine Guest of our heart. Memory, understanding and will must be under strict discipline. Their natural activity must be repressed and reduced to a constant and loving turning towards God. Mindful of the precious jewel she guards within herself, she returns to it unceasingly in her thoughts and affections. All her affections are drawn by a magnet towards him, whose perfections charm her increasingly, while creatures fade more and more into insignificance and gradually sink into oblivion. All mystic souls naturally tend to seek God within themselves.

The great drama of Jesus' love for his Father is to be continued here on earth. For Jesus by his life and the redemption of mankind made for himself a mystical body, in which he continues to live, to love and to glorify his Father. In order to love the more he has united himself to new individual human natures, no longer hypostatically, but still by a very real and wonderful union. The complete Christ is the Christ united to the concourse of the faithful who will live forever; complete love of Christ is the love of the heart of Jesus, united to the love of millions of Christians who will love with him and in him to the end of time. He wants hearts that will surrender themselves up to him; abandon themselves completely to him.

What must we do to realize we can transform and render our whole life

sublime. One thing only. In every action we perform, every prayer we say, every suffering we endure, in our every act of love, we must bear in mind that we are "Christ", that Christ wishes still to act, pray, suffer and love in us. We are to surrender ourselves to Christ so completely as to become purely his instrument; we must offer ourselves to Christ that he may live his own life in us.

The soul no longer prays for his own sake as she did formerly; her prayer is not hers alone; it is, before all, the prayer of Jesus; Above all, she loves God passionately for Jesus, and in the Name of Jesus, she loves him, also for those countless millions of men who do not love him, or who, alas! love him too little. Her prayer is not confined to the fixed hours of formal converse with God. The whole day gradually becomes an uninterrupted prayer. She does everything together with the Lover of her soul. United to Jesus in his Name, she speaks constantly to the Father and the Holy Ghost. She does this quite simply, without any noise of words. A loving glance, a silent turning of the soul and of Jesus towards God, which, silent as it is, yet most eloquent. For her, God is Beauty, God is Goodness itself, the very source of all that is lovable, pure and holy. It is God that she sees and loves in every creature. Her love has become so pure that in loving her very self, it is God whom she sees and loves. True love is a gift of oneself. We love wholly only when we give ourselves without any reserve. What is true humility but the love of God, unto contempt of self? Does not such a soul, each day of his life, ardently desire to be nothing, but that Jesus should be all in her?

She has learnt the secret of true "lowliness" of heart. Each fresh revelation of her inherent wretchedness and imperfection, instead of troubling her, give her joy. She loves and is thankful for the miseries permitted by God.

The union of the soul with God supposes the blending of two wills into one. From this time the soul no longer entertains, at least voluntarily, any personal or selfish feelings of joy, regret, fear, or hope. She admits within her none but the thoughts and desires of God. Such are the conditions of the unitive life. Sanctity consists in making ever more and more room for Christ, until she is like the Host in the Tabernacle, retaining human appearances, but interiorly quite divine, wholly identified with Jesus and wholly transformed into him. "Renounce yourself in order to let Christ do all things in you" At each hour, in every action you perform, say to yourself; I will not live this, but let Christ live it in me. This idea comprises in itself the practice of all virtues & practice all the more perfect in as much as it adds a motive of love to each act of virtue. Such a soul has no need of lengthy reasoning to excite herself to patience, humility, charity, or self-forgetfulness. It suffices her to be faithful to her desire of letting Christ produce in her his patience, his humility, his charity, and all his virtues. The mere consciousness of him is enough for her. Formerly her spirituality was more complicated.

How much more would they gain by thinking less of self and more of God! They should apply to themselves the words of our Lord to St. Margaret Mary; "Forget yourself entirely and I will think of you" The great act is to forget oneself entirely. She does not look at herself, because she fixes her eyes on Christ.

Her whole spiritual life consists in being attentive and docile to God's action, in following all his inspirations, so that she may be nothing & Christ everything in her. Her favorite virtue is neither humility nor mortification, nor any other in particular; it is a virtue which includes all others--a loving docility to the guest of her heart.

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"Night of the spirit", the great trial of passive purification, by means of which God works in the very depths of the soul; and thus prepares her for the supreme ascent and final transformation. This trial is a terrible one, a veritable purgatory here below. Spiritual directors generally feel powerless to comfort the soul in this phase of the spiritual life. God holds her under his chisel and sculpts her as he wills. He alone has inflicted her wounds; therefore he only can cure.

"I must make up what is wanting to the Passion of Christ", I must be crucified with him, Jesus, as he reproduces and continues his own life in me, wishes also to reproduce in me the mystery of his Passion. Besides he willst through me to continue his work as the Saviour, Redeemer and Repairer. Habitually thinking like this, I shall face sufferings joyfully and bear them valiantly. To begin with, like Jesus himself I must love God alone. I must see him and love him in everything. I must not love any creature for itself I shall detach myself more and more from the purely human and material side of things as appealing to the senses and see in them nothing but the divine side, so that they may help me grow in knowledge and love of him and of his Holy Will.

Doubtless in order to be truly identified with Jesus, it will be necessary for the soul to reproduce all the states and virtues of Jesus; for her entire life to be one of abnegation and sacrifice; it will be necessary for her to reproduce the sufferings and Passion of Christ, to be crucified with him. Jesus fulfills in a special way or another the state of his mortal life. Teresa of the Child Jesus, he will again live ~~see-eark-dell-at~~ this childhood at Nazareth; in others, again he will reproduce his life of espousal and obscure labour. In the case of Dominic, & Francis of Assisi; an Ignatius, he will continue his life of preaching and apostolate; while, in a Lydwine, he will in a special manner fulfil his Passion,. But all are called to put on Jesus Christ to be transformed in him-the life of Christ is carried on among all the faithful.

"PRAYER TO UNITE ONESELF TO JESUS"

"O Jesus, my loving Saviour, you have so repeatedly said ~~that~~ you are thirsting for our souls, thirsting to continue loving, within us and through us, Your heavenly Father, for whom you died on the cross. You long to have millions of lives, millions of hearts to go on loving Him with, to the end of time.

I come then, O Jesus, to give and consecrate myself entirely to you will all I have and am. May I henceforth be your full property; not belonging any more to myself, but wholly to you, existing no more for my own enjoyment but for yours. Do in me and through me all you wish to, and may I, be fully identified with you, become like another humanity to you, enabling you still to love passionately your Heavenly Father and Blessed Mother.

May my eyes becoming your eyes, look only at what you wish to see, may my lips utter only your words-words of meekness, kindness and loving charity. May my mind be filled with your divine thoughts and may my heart, dead to self-love, be inflamed with your ardent love for the Father and your untiring zeal for souls

Help me O divine Master, to do everything with you and for you. Make me obedient to your divine inspirations, so that I may at each moment fulfill perfectly your least desires. Help me to forget myself and fill me to the brim with you, that like the apostle of the Gentiles, I may not live any more but you alone live in me,. In a word, be the life of my life and the soul of my soul. May my one desire here on earth be to express continually your love to the Father, and my one joy to be your joy, by giving you to God, to the Blessed Virgin Mary and to the souls through every act of mine. Amen

HIS WILL IS OUR PEACE by GERALD VANDY

The Fruits of the Spirit are Charity, Joy, Peace, In Gods' Will is our peace.

We are more than merely involved in the sorrow of the world; we must accept our share of responsibility for it. Suffering is the fruit of sin; and we are sinners. Then we must go on to accept the situation as it is, and it is in that acceptance that we shall find peace. My eyes are ever on the Lord, joy and peace come after love, come out of love- love, because it is love that makes the soul fix its gaze on God, instead of ourselves and want to serve God instead of ourself.

There are times when the body needs rest, the mind needs relaxation and if we refuse them, we lessen our power of resistance to these temptations. The sight of our sins, the sight of the evil in the world at large, should fire us with a divine discontent if there is love in us, but of this too it is true to say that it will not destroy our inner peace. The greater our determination to make things better with ourselves and with the world, the greater our peace. It is not an easy thing to acquire, this ability to keep our eyes on the Lord, to keep our will in calm and humble and joyful union with His will. If we could do it completely we would be saints. We can find out how we are to set about it. And even to have begun is to achieve some measure of inward peace; for to have begun means to have remembered Christ's words of encouragement, and to have been heartened by them; Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. St. Teresa tells us that after Communion we must forget about the world and about our bodies and go deep down into the soul and find the Presence there within us and with that Presence be still.

We can learn to genuflect well when we go to church. It is a sign of submission, of dependence, loyalty and service as a subject to his King. It means I am thy servant and the son of thy hand maid. It is sacramental. It can be an occasion of actual grace for me, it can bring us nearer to God, second, form a conscious habit to counteract the effect of the unconscious effect of routine. We shall choose some phrase which for us individually expresses vividly and cogently the sense of worship and of creaturely concentration on God and the will of God. Genuflect to allow us to say the phrase in our hearts with our eyes and our mind on Christ in the Tabernacle. Addressing the prayer to Him; and so we make his presence an reality to ourselves until perhaps in time the sense of that presence becomes habitual with us when we are not in church what we aspire to may begin to be true of our own lives. "He took to himself our humanity that he might raise us to his divinity."

Every sin is a form of egoism. There are human beings who in so special a sense can be the habitation of God and who therefore should speak to us so powerfully of His presence. First, you take someone of whom you are particularly fond, and whom you spend a great deal of your time and share many interest, and you talk sometimes to God about them and sometimes to them about God and the things of God, and some times too you stop and reflect that God made them and loves them and dwells within them and that it is for you to share with them in the search for God. Then secondly you take someone whom on the other hand you find it hard to like or some poor person about whom there is little that is attractive and again you make the conscious effort to remind yourself that they too come from God, and that he loves them and so about them too the presence of God will begin to be discernible. You will have begun to make creative not a hindrance but a help to God.

HIS WILL IS OUR PEACE

If we want to be holy and happy we have to learn to love God enough to make our will identical with His.

What does it mean to love God's Providence??? It doesn't mean in the first place, the fatalism that makes no effort, nor does it mean purely natural placidity of temperament that some people enjoy. Nor again is it a merely passive resignation, as the word is often understood; a reluctant admittance that what can't be cured must be endured. NO! the Lord is our shepherd. His love has ceaseless and untiring care of us; He is with us. And we are to have faith and trust that His plan is a loving plan; that though things are very black, His wisdom and love and power are there to serve and to heal, to bring good out of the evil. God, tells us that we must not be always worrying and fretting and making a great commotion as though we and not He were responsible for the universe.

Live in the present; at this moment it is this job, this pain, this joy, that God gives us; then let us make of it as full and deep an act of praise as I can. So you cease to fret and worry and so you find peace.

I have lifted my eyes to the mountains; it is from thence that help shall come to me.

"I want to do what you want," It is by gazing on His beauty and His purity that we learn to see ourselves as we really are in all our pettiness and squalor. One of the fruits of the Spirit is FAITHFULNESS.

THE SEVEN SWORDS BY GERALD VANN

Fr. Vincent McNabb once said; "When our Lord looks on a sinner he isn't a sinner: he used to be."

Sorrow is creative.

It is of little avail to train the will to choose the right and resist the wrong unless at the same time you are training the whole personality to see and love.

A life which looks externally very humdrum may in fact be very precious precisely because it is so simple in the philosophical sense also, so unsullied, so single-minded, so sterling, so pure.

It is not reason but the holy Spirit that moves them and makes them so unpredictable to more earth-bound minds.

Sympathy means experiencing directly in oneself what another is suffering.

Saints, unlike sinners, are never shocked.

Fear is not something to be simply escaped from and as far as possible forgotten, but something to be faced, and understood, and transformed

The sword is always there, but so is the song.

Mary's life is a song at once of innocence and of experience; and as this double richness means a double fear, so it means also a double love; and the love in its turn produces a double wisdom, a double trust and therefore a double courage.

Love drives out fear; but it does not leave a vacuum behind it; it leaves joy in its place.

A divine joy is her selfless pride in her child.

Sorrow for sin is creative; it has so increased their love of God, it has brought them so close to God, that they become like to God; and the man who is like to God is strange to sin.

Be it done unto me, then, in order that now at long last there may be and I, and all the old falsehoods and fictions of pride and vanity may be swept away.

The human personality is not contained within the confines of the physical body. To be fully alive a man must have a setting.

The human home that endures is not this house, this garden these material things, but these human beings whom you love and the mutual love in which you all live and which makes you all a single entity.

We shall not become poor in spirit suddenly, when danger most acutely threatens. It is when God's yoke seems light and his presence near that we need to school ourselves to meet the darkness; and to school ourselves not by occasional dramatic renunciations but by constant daily attention to his will in tiny things.

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God's creatures can no longer endanger their love of God, they can only help to express it.

God has austere lessons to teach. Later on he was to feel abandoned by His Father on the Cross: it was an essential part of his work on earth, his sacrifice; and she who is so closely in that work and that sacrifice must experience something of the same thing.

First to love God; then to love others as coming from him, as given us by him, as his other children: this is what we have to learn if we are really to love.

We are like children stumbling in the dark; and if God in his tenderness gives us another of his children to companion and comfort and help us we must know the heaviness of our responsibility.

Greed will destroy human love; greed which means loving only for what they can give us.

God offers not things but himself. He asked the two disciples, What seek ye? and they answered him, Where dwellest thou?--they wanted not a what but a who.

Of course I love you: I would do anything in the world for you, we say yes, but why? Sometimes giving can be a form simply of pleasure-seeking, of self-indulgence. I am only trying to show you how I love you we say; when really we are snatching at a purely selfish sensuality of our own. Look at all the things I have given you and done for you, we say: not realising that it was simply because it gave us pleasure, or even--poor fools that we are---because it ministered to a sense of power.

Mother's whole vocation consisted in living for his vocation.

What we need is real love of real people, to heal our loneliness; and that means seeing them as they really are, and loving that.

Touch creatures very gently lest we destroy them and ourselves.

There is first the lesson to be learnt---the loneliness, the disappointments, the sorrow that can teach us not to be greedy--but then there is the union, the companionship, that nothing can shatter, that even death cannot dissolve.

It is not for her to find an emotional outlet for her grief, for she is here because of him.

In her is the silence of strength, and so she can give him the strength of her silence: it is what she is there to do.

Get to know yourself so well that you cannot contemplate yourself without flinching.

It was love and friendship that God wanted most of his creation; it was to make love possible that he gave some of his creatures freedom.

All power is given to me in heaven and on earth: but it led him to lie naked and dead on the lap of his mother; for his work was to do the will of him that sent him, and all his life was a self-offering to his Father from whom alone the power came. We shall not use our powers aright unless we use them in the spirit of Christ washing his

disciples' feet; we shall not use our powers aright unless like him we put them back into God's hands to be at his disposal. But if at all times we try to turn to God: to God our Father, in childlike trust and obedience; to God the Son our Friend, waiting to learn how we can fulfill friendship by sharing his work and his sacrifice; to God the Spirit within us, listening for that inner voice which instructs the heart and begging him to identify our wills with us: then we can know that our power is in better hands than ours, in hands that will never abuse it as ours would because they are as gentle as they are strong.

If ever your help has about it an atmosphere of condescension or impatience it will not be following the divine pattern: you can only help as God helps if, like him, you go down on your knees, knowing that this is not so much something you give as something you are given.

Joy is a song that is sung, not in forgetfulness of the squalor, nor in defiance of the squalor, but as itself the transformation of the squalor.

The Autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila

I have learned what great advantage comes from good companionship.

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

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

If I strengthen my purpose by resolving to do a thing for God's sake along, 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.

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.

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.

May He be forever blessed, Who has endured me for so long.

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

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

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.

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.

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

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.

Thou didst chastise my faults with great favors.

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.

It is a great evil for a soul beset by so many dangers to be alone. I believe if I 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.

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

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.

When people practise prayer the Lord Himself bears the cost.

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

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.

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

Whatever is bad is my own work.

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

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.

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

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

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.

Water must always be drawn when there is any there.

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

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

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

In everything we need discretion.

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

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

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."

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

Give no impression of wanting to teach others.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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

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.

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

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

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.

Blessed be Thou, Lord, Who has made me so incompetent and unprofitable God, of His greatness, desires the soul to realize that His Majesty is so near, that it need not send Him messengers, but may speak with Him itself.

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.

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

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

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

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

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.

Mental prayer must not 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.

Let us all be mad, for the love of Him Who ~~was~~ called mad for our sake.

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.

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

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.

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

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

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Union is two different things becoming one.

Thou givest according to Thine own nature.

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

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

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

Never dose He weary of giving and never can His mercies be exhausted; let us, then, not grow weary of receiving.

No one could bear to receive as much as I have ~~done~~ and pay nothing in return.

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

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.

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

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.

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.

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

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

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

False humility is devoid of tranquility and gentleness.

If someone could but proclaim throughout the world how faithful Thou art to Thy friends.

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.

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

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

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.

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

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

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

Everything I say tells against myself.

I would not think one thing and ~~say~~ say another.

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

There is none who never changes save God.

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

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

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

Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend this joy, this sorrow, this problem, this decision; into thy hands I commend each moment as it comes each event as thou sendest it to me; into thy hands I put this thing I have to do or suffer; into thy hands this love, this responsibility; into thy hands this weakness, this failure, this wrong thing that I have done; and so, finally, into thy hands I commend my life as a whole, all that I am; be it done to me according to thy word--that is the thing that is asked of us. And in the last resort that is the only thing that is asked of us. And if we are trying to do this we need not fear; and if in the end we can succeed in doing it wholly and gladly we shall have shared fully in the manus tuos of Christ, and so we shall be able to share also in His Consummation est; we shall have learnt full the meaning of love, and so, with Christ in His glory, we shall have come home---

Pain always is the expression of Love, that it is only an evil to those who do not love, and that it is a positive joy to those who, by love, accept and welcome it.

The Cross is of time; the Resurrection for eternity.

GUILT

After he had sinned, the presence of God did not make Adam more aware of God's love and goodness, but of himself and his own humiliation. Men have not changed since Adam. The more a man looks into himself and probes the sores of his own sin, the more self-conscious he becomes; the more he feels the pain of his own wounded vanity and remorse. And the more aware he becomes of himself, the less aware he becomes of God; the more he loves himself, the less he loves God.

In Gethsemani Christ faced the crises which so many millions must face when they are challenged by love--will they be stripped of all pretenses and be naked, themselves, before love? Will they consent to the revelation of the secret of self, and the mystical death of Love? Will they take up the cross of daily hardships and poverty and sacrifice of self, and carry the burdens of life, for love of others? This is the challenge which comes in turn to everyone--Can you drink the chalice that I must drink? It came to Christ in Gethsemani, and his consent led on to the consummation of his love on the Cross.

Men are beginning to discover now that they have largely lost the power to love, and in this is their failure as human beings. In Christ is the whole secret of love. Only by living Christ's life can men find the way to love, and so to the fulfilling of their human nature again.

Without being under any necessity to do so in his glorified body. Christ did ordinary things. He walked and talked and ate with men, built a little fire and cooked for them, comforted them and renewed their faith, but not by compelling them to be shocked into faith--even by a shock of joy--but by approaching each one individually through the individual's own mentality and temperament. He used the same means as before--words, kindness, going on a journey, setting his pace to the pace of others, accepting their invitations, preparing food for them with his own hands, and that most wonderful and yet simplest of all, the breaking of bread, the giving of himself sacramentally.

Sex is a glorious medium of life-giving love, but it can only be lived fully if the love it expresses meets with no hindrances.

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We think with amazement of the privilege given to those craftsmen who are entrusted with the work of making the chalice to hold the precious blood of Christ-or to those who make the bread that is to be changed into the Body of Christ; but husband and wife share the privilege, they make the children of flesh and blood, to be changed into the Mystical Body of Christ on earth.

Deep in the heart of everyone living is the longing to be in communion with other men. It is this longing which gives even selfish people an instinctive wish that they were of the fibre that is willing to bear its share of the common burden of effort and hardship. Of all the sufferings of the insane, none is so terrible as isolation, and the cruellest conflict that torments the neurotic is the conflict between his fear of humiliation, which makes him withdraw from other people, and his longing to be one with them. In Christ, all those who are members of his Mystical Body are one in a way that our generation, divided and torn as it is, can hardly imagine. It is ~~so~~ a far closer oneness than that of husband and wife, of a mother and her unborn child-of a man with his own thought.

Here is a description of the union between Christ and those who belong to His Mystical Body; Our relation to Christ is closer than the natural relation to brothers to a brother or even of children to a parent. It is that of cells in a body to the person whose body it is. It is therefore closer than any natural relationship that one human being can have ~~for~~-with another. By membership of the Mys. Body we are more closely related to Christ Our Lord than our Lady is, simply as his mother in the natural order.

Each one of us is more closely related to every other member of the church by his life of grace than to his own mother by the life of nature. And you are Christ's body, organs of it depending upon each other. This is easy enough to say. But if we were even to let ourselves look squarely at it and really try to live by it, its immediate effect would be a remaking, of ourselves so thorough that nature shrinks from it; and the ultimate effect would be to renew the face of the earth.

Perhaps it is because of the tremendous implications--and sometimes terrible implications--of this mystery that many pious people prefer to shrink into themselves and their own devotions, rather than to allow the whole wonder of their life in Christ to break down every barrier to the uncompromising charity which it commits them to.

The responsibility of all love of all the ages of the world belongs to each one, through each one flows the whole torrent of life that is given from generation to generation by love; love, which through the miracle of the Incarnation is made tangible and audible in us, so that its music is heard in our voices-in the plighting of our troths, in our marriage vow; in our words of comfort and pity and joy, in our laughter, in the songs beside our cradles, in our choirs of adoration; love, which we transmit with our track, with the work of our hands, with the labours and pains, the ecstasies and the embraces of our bodies, in the act of procreation of giving birth, in nursing and sewing, and in closing the eyes and bathing the limbs of our dead; love, which holds the timelessness of God in a moment of time, which-with the sacramentals of our flesh and blood, our hands, our voices, our hearts, our minds, forgives, redeems, heals, generates, adores.

I have spoken of the suffering a saint seems to choose, because in fact the saint very seldom chooses anything; he merely surrenders to his destiny, which as often as not he understands as little as we do. In every circumstances, even such a matter as his own temperment, he sees the will

of God, and because he is "a Christ" he does, not his own will, but that of his Father. As Christ too, he is led by the Spirit, driven on by an inward compulsion to acts which seem ludicrous to utilitarian Christians. There is nothing cold and calculation, in sanctity.

No one ever lives who has not at some time or other the possession of suffering; it is one thing man possesses by his own right, and it is certainly essential for any achievement or success that he desires. It seems too, that he cannot have anything else essential to his happiness, unless he has suffering with it--above all that greatest essential of all, to be able to love. Directly a man loves, he suffers.

The person who will not take any risk to enter into contact with others, to pay his part of the debt of human conflict and suffering, inhibits his capacity for love, until it actually becomes so weak from sheer inaction that it is no longer a power in his life at all, and cannot be his driving force to experience.

He is afraid to know himself and to be known. To this fear love is the ultimate challenge. For the first condition of love is the total surrender of the secret of self. To love is to know and to be known. Love reveals himself, and to her whom he loves, exactly what a man is; it reveals also his potentialities, his power to suffer, his capacity for responsibilities and for joy, his ability for self-sacrifices.

The capacity for love is not really dead in any living human being, for every human being is made in the image of God, who is love.

A saint is one who is continually and always aware of the beings of God, even when his awareness consists in a sense of having lost or been abandoned by him. It is this objective love of God and his continual awareness of his being which makes the saints' attitude to guilt different to that of all other men, and which makes his realization of it an incomparably greater suffering to him than it is to any other. This suffering as it is experienced by a saint is unimaginable to those who know it only as the misery of scrupulosity, the obsession of wounded vanity, or the slow festering of remorse. Yet it is only the saint who accepts the realization and responsibility of guilt and is not broken by it. He makes no attempt to escape. He wishes to participate in the world's sorrow. He acknowledges his debt, which must be paid in the coin of suffering.

Moreover, history shows that no saint has ever been canonized who did not suffer, in an overwhelming degree, those very things which twist and warp others; yet these same things have had precisely the opposite effect on their personalities.

The willingness to suffer is the key to natural happiness and balance in a world of universal suffering and neurosis. The willingness to suffer is not the explanation of sanctity, but it is the explanation of the sanity of the saints.

It is characteristic of the saints' willingness to suffer that it includes no choice, he does not choose what he will suffer, or take one suffering to avoid another, or as an indirect means to pleasure. On the contrary, in his attitude in this, as in all else, is a tremendous surrender of self. He does not choose suffering at all, but he accepts it without conditions, because he surrenders himself to life and his personal destiny and makes no conditions.

The one essential for sanctity is the capacity to love. C

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Certainly this means, first of all, the capacity to love God. But because it is impossible to love God without loving man simultaneously, it necessarily includes the capacity to love other people. Sanctity is a genius for love. This is why the saint never complains of not being fulfilled. No matter what the circumstances of his life are, the saint loves to his fullest human capacity, not only supernaturally, though this is what matters, but naturally, too; and it is on the degree of his capacity for objective love, and on nothing else, that the fullness of any man's life depends.

It does not depend upon circumstances or chance, on whether he is gifted or not, on whether he has a happy or a melancholy temperament, on whether he is rich or poor, married or single, on whether he has a magnificent vocation or a humdrum one, on whether he travels the world over or is restricted to the same few streets for the whole of his life, on whether he is good-looking or plain, on whether he is healthy, or un healthy; it depends upon one thing and one thing only-whether he has or has not got the capacity to love. The only thing that distinguishes a saint from other peoples on earth is his capacity for love.

Discouraged as man is, he accepts his sense of human failure, because he believes that any effort to restore God's image in himself would inevitably lead to greater failure and greater humiliation. This is one of the legion-legions of evils resulting from seeking self-knowledge by introspection in looking at self, instead of looking away from self to God. trying to know self not only through self-analysis but even through the most distasteful mirror there is, self-pity, instead of trying to know self through knowing God.

Although God lacks nothing and cannot need us, it is his will and his choice to want us, to want us to be the answer to his love. He who needs nothing, wills to have us to be the objects of his love, the creation of his love. God created us to want us. God created us to love us. Once we realize this, it must become obvious that we have no need to be ashamed of our feeling of personal insufficiency, or to be surprised by the pattern of our neurosis, with its apparently insane egoism and unreasonable demands, or of our torturing sense of helplessness and nothingness, or of our seemingly inordinate and insatiable longing to be loved. Naturally when these demands are directed to other human beings instead of God they cannot be met and must become grotesque and ludicrous, but in themselves they are right and reasonable.

The only really effective way in which anyone can educate a child is by educating himself. The only really effective way in which anyone can form a child is by forming himself. If he has integrity, he can give that to his child. An integrated person is one who has become whole, and wholly himself, through oneness with Christ, and thru Christ's response to the Father. It is necessary for the child's self-confidence that the father should be perfect, and necessary for his self-esteem that the father should love him and approve of him, and he himself should be like his father.

Through the ages Christ lives on in man, and because Christ is love itself, mature man is a lover, his maturity is love. The meaning of man's life on earth is to transmit life thru love. He lives fully only when his living is a giving and interchange of life; and this, in God's plan is not to be done in a vague insubstantial way, but thru visible, tangible things, thru the profound simplicity of the sanctity of natural love.

This is the miracle of heaven on earth, that the love of God, men give to one another in hidden-but hardly hidden-in ordinary, common things. It is the bread on the table, touch of water, smell of newly cut lemon, grain

in the wood, taste of wine and food, flowers in a garden, flame in the lamp, roof and walls of the home. And it is in fact, invisibly as well as visibly, sustenance, purification beauty and security.

And men give this love to one another thru their ordinary human relationships and the ordinary means by which everyone communicates. What is in his mind as his heart to another by his words and his silences, by his labours and his rest, by his caresses or the withholding of his caresses, by his sympathy and by his delight in the one he loves. He gives himself, and in himself Christ to others, quite literally with his own hands just as Christ did on earth himself, when he took bread into his holy hands and gives his Body and Blood in it, to be the life of men.

The woman sews a dress for her child, or mends the man's shirt, she kneads and bakes the bread for the family, and her own life goes into the old patched garment, the little dress and the loaf.

In the passion of the arms nailed back on the cross was all the restraint all the tenderness and forbearance of all the love of the ages of man kind. In every human love the drama of the crucifixion is repeated; every surrender to love is a dying to self, every dying to self is a resurrection. The same pattern of love, death and resurrection of Christ, is evident in all manifestations of human love. Love between a man and woman is a little Mystical death, and man wakes from the deep sleep of that death a new man; his awareness of the morning is the awareness of first love.

The beginning of getting to know God truly is to look away from self to God, Read Gospels, Objective prayer (prayer of adoration and thanksgiving to God for being as he is, lifting the mind out of its habitual wallowing in the prayer of self-pity and self-love. Next the objective attitude to God which is being learned, must also be practised towards man, and this cannot be done in a better way than through practising the contemplation of Christ in man, but now we know that he is in man, in those of our own household in whom he is most hidden from us. A continual seeking for him in them, an unflinching effort to penetrate his disguise and discover in which of the infinite variety of ways possible to him Christ is living in each one of those who are part of our own lives, cannot fail to draw off the concentration from self; and the necessity to serve Christ in others, cannot fail to break down the barriers of self-protection, self-consciousness and self-love which lead to the frustration of the uncured ego-neurotic.

It is not only in others that he must know Christ, if he is to overcome the strangling inhibitions of his self-love and gain the courage to live the creative life of love and compassion towards other men.

Only the knowledge that it is Christ who acts within, who speaks thru his mouth and works with his hands, will enable the ego-neurotic to overcome his shrinking from human contacts, his undefinable fears, his shyness, self-consciousness, and his sense of personal humiliation.

Baptism gives Christ's life. (making one a Christ) The Holy Communion is receiving Christ whole and entire and thru him becoming one with all men. Confirmation gives the Holy Spirit to the spirit of man. Matrimony enables men and women to increase Christ in one another thru natural love. Holy Orders enables men to increase Christ in the whole world thru supernatural love. Extreme Unction brings the strength of Christ's trust to enable man to surrender himself to the eternal love in the hour of death.

At Low Mass every day, is the whole life of man---the pattern of life

which, if it is lived out in the same way, restores men to his real sanity and is a cure not only for ego-neurosis itself, but for guilt which is the cause of ego-neurosis.

The structure of the Mass is this, First, man comes out of his hiding and in the power of the Trinity puts himself into the presence of God. (From the Sign of the Cross to the end of the Confiteor) In the light of God he knows himself to be a sinner; he asks for forgiveness and comes closer to God. Now he breaks into a song of praise and joy; he is looking away from his sins to God's glory. (From the end of the Confiteor to the end of the Gloria) He listens to the words that reveal God to him, and learns more about God; he professes his faith in him. (From the end of the Gloria to end of Creed) and now he surrenders himself wholly to his Christhood, he offers himself to be made inseparable from Christ, to share his destiny. (From end Creed to Consecration) now he is restored to his Christhood, with Christ he enters into his Passion, in him he is lifted upon the Cross, in him he adored God, with him he redeems's man (From Consecration to Communion) Finally he receives Christ into his soul/ again, and his communion with him becomes one with all men and goes out from Mass to carry Christ into the world in which he lives his daily life.

THE TEMPTATIONS OF CHRIST

Christ's temptations are meant to be a comfort to us, a source of strength and victory. We in our struggles are to look with confidence for help. Our Lord was really tempted; his struggle was a real struggle. Soul is a battle ground, senses or emotions pulling in one direction, the mind and the will in another; Satan's purpose was to seduce our Lord from fulfilling that ministry in the manner willed by his Father.

But even those in whom there is no lack of good will, no serious failure to respond to God's grace, may still feel unhappy about what they regard as their lack of progress; instead of rising to great mystical heights, great spiritual achievements, they find themselves still pursuing very ordinary courses, always engaged on what may seem to be very humdrum or trivial or even ignoble tasks in the spiritual life. And they may imagine that if only the Spirit would help them more vigorously, if only they had this or that grace they would quickly rise to the heights of holiness.

It is at such times that the thought of Jesus being led into the desert to be tempted can be of great value. For indeed what destination or purpose could be more unlikely? Yet it was the Spirit that led him. The virtue of patience included the ability to be patient with oneself, with one's own slowness and lack of apparent progress, with one's own very pedestrian achievements. What we have to learn is simply to do the best we can and leave the results, our rate of progress, the direction in which we develop, in God's hands. When we seem to be doing what God wants of us and yet find ourselves weighed down by weakness, failure, temptation, aridity, we can remember that it is God's way to ask unlikely or difficult things of us. We are here to glorify him in ways not of our own choosing but of his.

Trying to be perfect means trying to make the possible use of the gifts, natural and supernatural, which God has given us and that in turn means being aware of, and accepting, our physical, psychological and spiritual limitations. Being a perfectionist means fretting at those limitations, refusing to accept them, eating one's heart out because one cannot be something which in fact is out of one's range. The perfectionist may be highly talented but he will be dissatisfied with his talents and perhaps

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come to hate them if they don't take him to the top of the tree. He may be a good painter or sculptor or singer but he will be angry with himself and with fate and perhaps refuse to use his gifts at all if he finds he cannot be a Leonardo, Michelangelo, a Caruso. So instead of having himself and others the joy his gifts could have brought him, he becomes frustrated and embittered.

It is the same in the spiritual life. God gives his grace in greater measure to some than to others. Trying to be perfect means trying to do your particular best, with the particular graces God has given you. You cannot pray like St. Teresa, anymore than you can sing like Caruso but how foolish if for that reason you give up trying to pray at all. What God asks of you is that you do your best, not St. Teresa's best. But the root of perfectionism is a perhaps unconscious pride which will not allow the ego to accept its limitations in the moral life the ego's dark broodings over its unalterable short comings may easily be mistaken for sorrow for sin or that divine discontent which spurs the soul on to great spiritual achievement, and quite false moral standards may be set up as a result. The trouble is often intensified, if indeed it is not begun, by foolish admonition's and counsels. Just try harder, make more effort, and you'll be a great mystic like St. Teresa; Just pull yourself together and pray and go regularly to the sacraments, and the most deeply engrained bad habit will disappear--To say things like that is not only stupid, it can be terribly harmful. Either the ego will be momentarily inflated with the thought that the limitations can be overcome after all only to sink deeper into gloom when it becomes apparent that this is not true; or else the unfortunate person so admonished, knowing by bitter experience that the advice is not true may be so discouraged as to give up the struggle altogether. Some kinds of compulsive habitual failings have to be treated as psychological rather than moral issues; and intense concentration on them, and tremendous attempts to conquer them by will-power, will only make things worse. Again, the continuance of small temperamental failings is quite compatible with great growth in the love of God, compatible indeed with holiness; and if they prove ineradicable despite long years of arduous struggle they must simply be numbered among the short-comings which have to be accepted with a good grace. It is tragic folly to concentrate on trying to be what one cannot be, and so to have no time or energy to give to the real task of trying to become what one can be.

Be not solicitous, our Lord said, you are to work, to struggle, to pray, but not to fret because you are what you are; your heavenly Father has care of you, in this as in all other matters; for you then to remember the words of the psalmist. I have chosen to be an outcast in the house of my God; he has not been called to be a John of the Cross, a Teresa of Avila, but something much more lowly---and holy is God's name.

To be led by the Spirit, to be docile to his leadership, is to be led according to the measure of our God-given strength; It is not to be immune from trial and temptations. For the perfectionist a temptation is an affront; he is hurt and bewildered by it, for he cannot fit it into his self-made ego-pattern. If on the other hand you are simply and humbly trying to do your best with your individual capacities, and are fully aware of your own limitations, temptation will come as no surprise; it will be indeed be for you an honour if you feel that the Spirit is leading you into trials as he led our Lord.

And having led you there he will not leave you helpless. For he is the Spirit who not only leads but comforts, strengthens as well. The true meaning of 'to comfort' is indeed 'to strengthens' not a soft sentimental attempt to persuade us that all is well when all is far from well, but an attempt to pour into us new strength and courage to meet whatever demands

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are to be made on us--If then we are perplexed and hesitant, the Spirit enlightens us, if we are ignorant he teaches us, forgetful, he reminds us, and when we are weary and discouraged he puts new heart into us. Whatever the trials to which he leads us, he is there to strengthen us. and to go with us through the ordeal to the end.

It seems to be a general rule that times of Great spiritual privileges or exaltation are followed by great temptations or spiritual crisis.

Command these stones be turned into Bread.

Gluttony is not just a matter of over eating or excessive hankering after food., we can sin by eating too much, too variously, by keeping too sumptuous a table, excessive niceness about what we eat or not eat. Sin by too impatient to wait for the proper time or manner. Had Satan merely suggested that it would be a good thing for Our Lord to eat, now that his fast was accomplished that would have been nothing evil in the suggestion. He urges Our Lord to use his supernatural powers for this purpose and this would have been wrong. 1. It is wrong to seek food for oneself by miraculous means (grace is not a substitute for nature) It worked in and thru nature healing and perfecting it and raising its activities to a higher plane. Nothing could be more misguided than to suppose that we may expect God to achieve for us by a miracle what can be done for ourselves by a little hard work. Our Lord was tempted to use his supernatural powers for his own purposes. (He was not to use them for his own advantage no legions of angels were to rescue him from torture and death at the end for it was to suffer torture and death he came into the world. It was obedience to his Father the Word had ~~he came into the world.~~ --It taken on himself the form of a servant; it was not for him to satisfy his own needs in super human ways.

We may think we see no sign of progress in spite of all our labours; We forget that continuing to struggle is itself a sign of progress.

First we must serve God, and only then be concerned with bread; and our efforts to earn our bread can never be dissociated from our worship of God; must always be within the frame work of God's will and his care for us. The same is true of the church; its first concern must always be the worship of God; its second concern, bringing souls to God, to eternal life; and only in the third place can it be concerned for men's temporal welfare.

God did not in fact desire Abraham's human sacrifice of Isaac and took this dramatic way of teaching his people there are few things harder to say than Even tho he wishes to slay my only son, yet will I trust him and it is because of that gigantic act of Faith and trust and obedience that we recall the Sacrifice of Abraham every day in the Mass.

Then the devil took Him up to the Holy City and set him upon the pinnacle of the temple. Apostolic zeal therefore is best expressed, not by endlessly talking about the faith, which may sometimes only serve to drive people further from it, but by living it, by trying to be "other Christs" It does mean that we should humbly and quietly try, as the Collect of the Ascension tells us, to live in mind and heart among heavenly things. It also means that we should be very much on our guard against doing harm to others by our example. The Church is judged by the conduct of its members.

If anyone deludes himself by thinking he is serving God, when he has not learned to control his tongue, the service he gives is vain. God gave us the gift of speech that we might help each other. The tongue is to be used to gladden the heart, as, when lovers whisper to each other; it is

used for blessing, magnificently in the Mass, humbly when we say to one another. "God bless you", it is to be used for the healing of the heart in words of comfort, and the healing of the soul in the words of absolution, it is used to give courage and strength to the departing soul.

When we feel the only reasonable thing is to pick ourselves up again -or rather, to beg God to pick us up again-and to make a fresh start using our failure as a means to humility and a greater reliance on God, but not at all as an invitation to discouragement or growing anxiety. The gravest sins of all are the sins immediately directed against God; infidelity, for instance and hatred of God. Next comes the grave sins against love of our neighbor; Six things on which the Lord hated and the secenth his soul detestedth; haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that deviseth wicked plots, feet that are swift to run upon a mischievous errand, a deceitful witness that uttereth lies, and him that soweth discord among brethren. These are seven deadly sins, not one; and the one that receives all the attention nowadays as not to be found among these things that the Lord hateth, still less is it the one his soul detesteth.

If Thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down
If it be God's will to exalt a man he will first of all humble him. for otherwise his exaltation will destroy him. Satan does not himself cast our Lord down; he must try to persuade him to do it himself. For that is the limit of his power; he cannot do us spiritual harm except by inducing us to harm ourselves. When he enters into a man it can never be by forcing an entry; We have to open the door, to make him welcome. Throwing our Lord down, physically, would of course not have answered his purpose; he is bent on making our Lord sin and there would be no sin in that. We compass our own downfall.

The sight of our Lord borne up by angels when he cast himself down from the pinnacle, would not only compel the wonder and admiration of the crowd; it would fit in exactly with their conception of what the Messiah was to be, and so it would be easy for him to compel them to accept him as their Savior and King. The crowds would seek to make him their King, would distort the meaning of his miracles, would be for ever asking for a sign-a sign of the sort they were looking for- They wanted to be dazzled by a display of worldly power; they wanted a political leader who would free them and make them supreme among the nations- and in this second temptation to achieve immediate recognition of himself as the Messiah by a dramatic display of his power. In so doing he would not only escape all the hardships, bitterness, sufferings and defeat, he would have to encounter along the way mapped out for him by his Father; he would win the whole people to him at a single stroke, and he himself would receive the honour which was often all his due.

We are never to seek glory for our selves or others unless it is such as will ultimately give glory to God. 'Not to us, Lord, not to us the glory' let they name alone be honoured. To seek honour for ourselves apart from or in defiance of God's will is not to honour but to dishonor him. We are not to repudiate glory if it should be God's will for us, any more than, we are to try to repudiate the glow of pleasure which must come with any recognition of achievement, any sort of praise or esteem. But applause is heady wine; and can easily lead to a purely self-centred pursuit of it. God is not glorified by any light reflected from us; it is we who if we do in fact achieve any glory, achieve it by the light reflected from him. If some outstanding personality becomes a Catholic he does not thereby throw lustre on the Church; it is the church that throws lustre on him.

Again the devil took him up into a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.

No, resistance will not gain us a final freedom from attack. Satan is sometimes called Beelzebub, the Lord of Flies. you wave a fly away but again it comes back and Satan has the same persistence.

The third attack is more open than the others. In the first place he came feigning sympathy for our Lord in his hunger; next he pretended to want to help to promote our Lord's work, and offered a suggestion as to how that work might be done more quickly and brilliantly. But now he casts off all pretence; he appears in his own character as prince of this world. And like a prince he will not bargain; he offers all he has and his possessions are princely indeed to induce our Lord to commit one sin. One sin only; but it would have brought about the defeat of all mankind.

The bait in this case is power in itself, and pleasures that power can provide. But in our Lord's case it is much more than that. Satan is saying in effect. Accept me as your overlord and I shall show you how to win the whole world, and win it easily and finally. Reject the way I offer you and you will fail, your work will be a failure. Satan should be conquered by patience and humility, not by power. He would draw all creatures to himself, but he would draw others with a cross, not a crown. For the service of God is the Freedom of the son's of God; it is the service of Satan that is a slavery. Satan's implication in this third temptation as in the first is that God is a poor provider, that he offers a meagre reward for faithful service; it is to Satan himself we must look if we want prosperity and glory. And on a very short-sighted view there is truth in the contention as the psalmist observed, it is the wicked who prospers, grow-rich, where as the reward of the righteous in this world is often poverty and- So it is easy to weary in well doing and then to fall an easy prey to some glittering offer from Satan. Satan promised our Lord the kingdom of the world if he would fall down and adore him; the bait is eminence, excellence, glory, but the actual result is degradation. So he promised the first human beings that they would be as gods; Where as in fact they became like the beasts that perish. The service of God on the other hand may seem to offer only hard and lowly things, but they lead in the end to glory. So a great man, in a moment of extreme international peril, offers his countrymen only blood, tears, toil and sweat, but he leads them thereby to their finest hour.

It is wrong to lose one's temper, but it can be wrong also not to be angry.

(The anger, to be a just anger, must be all the time under the control of reason, and therefore it is easy for us to sin by excess, to allow the anger to get out of hand; but to fail to be angered by such things as blasphemous insults to God or diabolical cruelty to men is to sin by defect, for it argues either a very unworthy weakness and lack of spirit or else the sort of tolerance which is in fact a complete lack of principle or moral sense, ~~which is in fact a complete lack~~ - God will not allow us to be tempted beyond our strength. He doesn't altogether spare us the trial, but he checks and restrains the tempter; so that the temptation itself may become in the end a good rather than an evil experience. He could of course make things easier for us shield us from every attack, and that would indeed be a mercy; but it is a greater mercy to suffer us to be tempted while ensuring that by his grace we came through the ordeal unhurt. For endurance --- gives proof of our faith and a proved faith gives ground for hope. Then the devil left him; and behold angels came and ministered to him. That is often the order of things in the ways marked for us by God. first the trials, sufferings, difficulties and afterwards comfort, joy, peace. If we pray for

strength it will not be denied us, if we ask our Heavenly-Father for bread he will not give us a stone. In fact, God's supremely strengthening gift, the eucharistic Bread, is daily offered for us; and when we go down from the altar, back to the world where so many temptations await us, we go armed against them because of the power the Bread has given us. And in that power is freedom. If we are proud and refuse to ask God's help we fall inevitably into slavery, into the power of Satan; if we keep our eyes steadfastly on the mountain when help comes to us, being constant in prayer and above all constant and fervent in our approach to the altar. Then we can hope to find freedom, the freedom of the sons of God and so come in the end to possess some share of that power and that quiet assurance of which St. Paul speaks when he tells us 'I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me'

THE COMPARING OF CHRIST
by HOUSELTON.

Christ's values are Humility, Truth, Love, the knowledge that we are part of Christ's body, should make us glad to have the highest place or the lowest, to do the most splendid or the humblest task, not because we are indifferent and don't mind what we do, but because what ever we do is something Christ is doing.

Humility is knowing ourselves as part of the whole body of Christ. The certain outcome of humility is a will to know and accept truth. The only certain way of giving truth to others is by showing Christ to them in ourselves.

Faith is an unquestionable acceptance of anything at all that Christ has told us.

Love is Christ giving Himself thru us, in our hands in our words, in our tenderness, in our restraint, in all that we do.

What ever we do now, we did to Christ in his passion. It is consummated, the sacrifice is perfect. Father into thy hands I commend my spirit (Father into thy hands I surrender my soul) Thy Kingdom Come, The Kingdom is in man's heart; the patient soul who rules her own heart with an ardent tenderness, pity and kindness, the mind that keeps the poetry of life in flower, that is the soul who possesses the Kingdom of God.

"Thy Will be done," means let your love flower and blossom with life, and since we have sinned, let even our bitter sorrow, not willed by God, give life through His mercy; Through trusting Him we can trust that thru what ever happens to us His will will be done.

"Give us this day our daily bread," first for the Blessed Sacrament secondly, for food for our bodies, life itself, the life in the seed, the life in the wheat, that God alone can give.

Mass, Let Great Sorrow for sins, and asking Gods pardon for the world,
2nd Statement of Faith (Gospels and Creed)

3rd Offertory, offering of bread and wine to God, to be changed into the Host.

4th Consecration when miracle has happened and Christ is there

5th Communion when he is united to us in a oneness

1. Sorrow for sins. I accept all as just. I offer all in atonement. I acknowledge that I am not fit to approach God. I ask his pardon
2. Offering; I offer myself and all that I have, to God.
3. Consecration. God accepts my offering in union with the offering Christ made on the Cross.
4. Communion. I gave myself to God; now, in Christ, He give Himself back to me. There is no beauty in the boast of virtues, even if it be true. There could be no sorrow for sin, without sin. The saints don't accept suffering, they rejoice in it. To look for God's gift in the moment is the way to learn to trust.

Prayer is the first defence of the mind (heals the mind and gives it power to think) The Christian knows that if sorrow comes to an end, the world will come to an end with it. While this world lasts, poverty and pain and death will last too, the torment of the will go on and while these things go on, that response of the Christians must go on.

THE COMPOSING OF CHRIST

One tear, one act of the will that draws the pity of God earthward, brings peace closer to us than a thousand battles or sermons.

Besetting sin is the want of shame, a callousness to wrong. ^{being} Answering this is the condition known as "guilt complex" innocent who are humiliated by the sense of it. A vocation to feel guilty, to feel guilty for all those who are guilty and don't feel it. The way one suffers must make the world sadder or happier.

Without me you can do nothing, without God you are nothing.

First we need the Humility of Childhood, to know and confess that we are nothing, that we are helpless; then we need to surrender ourselves to God's love, to let him show us how He loves us.

A resolution to think of God, whenever we find ourselves thinking of ourselves; simple to change the subject. Perfect love casts out fear.

The beginning of Reparation is just in looking, seeing, knowing, facing the fact of suffering, allowing ourselves to feel it.

Then we must not judge people. We know of course that there is definite right and wrong, that certain things in themselves are sins, but we do not know and never can know the degree of responsibility and guilt of the individual who commits the sin.

If we see every sinner as someone who is wounded by the cruelty of the Devil, whose misery is used by the devil to add yet more to the burden crushing humanity, instead of condemning (a bitter sin in itself) we shall grow stronger in pity and love, in the power, to redeem and mend.

I had got to the stage when I could feel the weariness of the man beside me aching in my bones----That is the stage that we must get to, if we are to begin to understand what is meant by REPARATION.

War is the Passion of Christ.

Jesus falls under the cross, the cross made of wood, matter of a tree, that he made Himself without effort, a cross, a thing made by man. He wants to show us what our cross is; material things, man-made difficulties. When I can't stand up to things, he wants to show me something; that I am not greater than Christ, that no one is, that I must despise no one who falls under the cross, that I must be patient with myself. And when I fall, the first time especially, what a light I have on myself! I thought I was strong, that gross temptation would not move me, that I would be faithful in all sorts of environment I am down-in the dirt-I know myself now! But I know God too, as I did not before, now I know the radiance of the shadowless light. I know now what sin is. Before I scratched at my soul for scruples, concentrated on myself. My "Perfection"--now I am in the dirt and I know, and I know what it is to be forgiven, the goodness of God, the mercy of God, God's love, what can I do but get up, fix my gaze on God and rejoice in Him.

The whole circumstances of our life may be a cross, forced on us, we think we chose wrongly. Our job is unconsensual, we could do wonders in another kind of job, but it isn't wrong. In the beginning we are forced to share his burden, but it is the only way for us. If we had chosen, we might have missed His cross--we might not have had the chance to help Christ in

THE COMFORTING OF CHRIST

His Passion, there is no irony in life, only God's mercy. And when we realize! when we are no longer forced, but every day gladly comfort Christ in all those trying people, gladly share his burden in the world-I cannot guess the Heaven of that. I can only be grateful that I too am forced to take up the cross of Christ and may one day understand.

THE REED OF GOD

by CARLYLE ROUSELLENDIA

God is everlasting, certain, unchanging what is certain about him is that he is love, that he loves both you and the person that you love, more than you do.

"Be it done unto me according to thy word." It means trusting, that what ever God does with you and with yours is the act of an infinitely loving Father.

As a child I was very much inclined to give my mother my own favorite candies for her birthday, though she didn't care for them. We are apt to treat God this way.

Advent is the season of the seed; The seed is the word of God sown in the human heart.

If Christ is growing in us, if we are at peace, recollected, because we know that however insignificant our life seems to be from it, He is forming Himself, if we go with eager wills, "in haste", to where ever our circumstances compel us, because we believe that he desires to be in that place, we shall find that we are driven more and more to act on the impulse of His love.

We need to say to ourselves a thousand times a day "Christ wants me to do this, "Christ wants me to suffer this."

In giving her humanity to God, Mary gave all humanity to Him, to be used for His own will.

Just as no one can have an ordinary child of flesh and blood without ~~the~~ there being a union of flesh and blood first, no one can generate spiritual life without first having union with the Spirit.

An old man whose love for his fellow creatures endeared him to them all confessed that when ever he met-before greeting him out loud, he greeted Christ within him in secret.

Our conception of Christ colors our whole life, it informs everything we touch with its spirit, it makes us what we are. "We become what our conception of Christ is"

In the degree of the truth of our conception of him our minds grow broader, deeper and warmer; our hearts grow wiser and kinder our humor deeper and more tender, we become more aware of the wonder of life; our senses become more sensitive, our sympathies stronger; our capacity for giving and for receiving greater, our minds are made radiant, with a burning light and the light is the light of Christ.

Our conception of Christ make us what we are, makes our effect on others what it is, influences us and influences everyone with whom we come in contact.

We know Christ only by continually learning him anew; we get away from false gods only by continually seeking Him; we hold him only by losing Him;

He goes away that we may seek him; The sense of loss, the awareness of insufficiency, makes us long for him as he is. It makes us willing to go out from ourselves and find him where he is.

Mary saw but one man abiding in man kind.

The first was complete surrender.

Advent was a folding upon the life growing in our darkness.

Seeking is a going out from our selves.

Faith, believing something because God told us that it is so.

By God, I believe that you are with in me.

Faith tells us we should treat one another with reverence like that which we give to the Host.

THE SEVEN SWORDS by GERALD VANN

A purely external and formalist frequenting of the sacraments will never make us saints; Character is the sum of many habits. It is a part of that training of the will which in turn is part of the aim of education,

Thy own soul a sword shall pierce:

There is no love without sympathy; but sympathy means experiencing directly in oneself what another is suffering. You could not be a saint without a sense of sin. Despair invites disaster, the will-to-death; only faith and hope and love can combat it, bring the will-to-life.

'Behold the hand maid of the Lord' Mary's song of innocence whatever may come it will be well, because it is his will, because he is Love.

Sorrow for sin is creative; it has so increased their love of God, it has brought them so close to God, that they become like to God; and the man who is like to God is strange to sin. It is not enough to say that a growing sense of sin means a growing love of God and therefore a growing closeness to God and therefore the recapturing of a primal innocence.

'The eyes of the saint make all beauty holy; and the hands of the saint consecrate everything they touch to the glory of God, and the saint is never offended by anything and is scandalised by no man's sin because he does not know sin. He knows nothing but the love and mercy of God.'

11. Flight Into Egypt;

Poverty of spirit-to love the things that God has given you to complete your life, but to be ready to give them back to him if he requests them and to give them at once, not grudgingly, not with reservation and grumblings, but readily, eagerly, if possible joyfully; and to give them back even though it is in the darkness even though there seems no sense in it and the future is black and the world seems in consequence empty and cold.

THE SEVEN SWORDS

Egypt is the land of darkness; For some the sojourn in the darkness is a long one, even the sunniest lives have their times of darkness; these things have their purpose, if only we can see and welcome it, they are teaching us to be poor in spirit. The land of darkness too, is a land of peril, filled with evil powers and presences who seek to destroy. Sometimes it seems easy to love God, but there are the black moods, the times when the dark waters seem to be closing in on us, we seem to turn inescapably to evil thoughts and things, we have a devil. It is there that, unless we have learnt to be poor in spirit, the material world can turn on us and rend us, can drag us down and humiliate us, can blot out altogether the presence of God. For the black moods are an uprising from the human under world within us, an uprising which reduces--perhaps for a time almost to nothing--the power and authority of spirit; and it is then, unless we have really learnt to be poor in spirit, the material world can dominate and tyrannize over us, we can become the slaves of our own flesh, and the loveliness of Gods' earth can turn for us into an evil beauty like a lovely face ravaged by greed and cruelty and lust. It is when God's light seems light and his presence near when we need to school our selves to meet the darkness, by constant daily attention to his will in tiny things. But when Herod was dead, we are told, an angel appeared to Joseph saying. Arise and take the child and his mother and go into the land of Israel, for they are dead that sought the life of the child. Those who have learnt how to love the harshness as well as the tenderness of Love, to greet with gratitude the buffetings of God, come in the end to a state in which poverty of spirit is perfect in them, greed and possessiveness are dead in them, they are free to return to the world to love the world, to gather all Gods' creatures into the embrace of their love, because Gods' creatures can no longer endanger their love, ~~bees-see-3~~ of God, they can only help express it. The saints lives follow this pattern; first the flight, the darkness, the searching for God; but then the retirement to the world of men, the search for men, the fulfillment of the love of God in the continuation of Gods' work for men.

III; The Lost Child;

The love of material things can be merely greed and possessiveness; the lust for pleasure or power; but the love of human beings can be these things also, and then it is not real love at all, though we may deceive ourselves into thinking it to be. Because of our selfishness, to love in this real and deep sense is not an easy thing, not something given, but a hard thing, a thing that we have to learn, to create. First to love God; then to love others as coming from him as given us by him, as his other children; This is what we are to learn if we are really to love. If God in his tenderness gives us another of his children to companion and comfort and help us we must cherish the gift more than all riches, but we must know the heaviness of our responsibility; we must be always at pains to keep it in Gods sight and Gods' care; We need human love to help us on the way; but thru things will destroy it and leave us bereft and lonely and they are things to which we are prone. Greed will destroy it; greed means loving persons for the sake of things, loving human beings only for what they can give us, we are to see people as they really are and loving that; and that means not worshipping them as flawless ideals and deities, but helping them, and being helped by them, to worship God. Disappointment comes to us for a purpose; separation, the loss of love, the death of one we love or the death of love itself; and it is then that we have to try not to grumble or rebel, but to learn from what is being done in us. For we shall never love all beings unless we love God more than all beings--God is said to be a jealous God, because

THE SHOWN WORDS

he will not have rivals. The love of God, is a question essentially not of emotion but of devotion of the will. To love God more than anything else is to love His will. Youth has lovely qualities. It has a freshness and charm, a shy grace, clarity of vision, sincerity that later years can never recapture. Boy-Christ teaches his mother to realize, This child is not mine but God's. The first essential is that, like Christ in the Temple, we should be near to the Father; the second, that with those we love we should together be near the Father. They sought him sorrowing, but in the end they found him; In the end it tells us; though for long days and months and years you seem to be bereft of God, to have lost God, in vain to have sought him sorrowing, still you must be of good heart the search will not be in vain in the end; They found him, as with human love so with divine love, there is the first lesson to be learnt, the loneliness, disappointments, sorrow that can teach us not to be greedy-but the union, companionship that nothing can shatter, that even death can not dissolve.

IV: Way To Golgotha;

The way to Golgotha lies thru the narrow, torrid, dirty streets of the city. You think of the jostling, jering crowd, noise and tumult and then in the midst of it all it is a -----a silence falls as he meets his mother; a private silence for these two alone as everything else is blotted out and they are conscious only of each other (That concentration of gaze, that rapt and exclusive attention is what our daily prayer should be) They cannot speak so their sorrow is the greater for Mary; a double sorrow, the mother sorrow, girls sorrow, yet she is silent, it is not for her to find an emotional outlet for her grief, for who is here because of him; she is here to fulfill her vocation as a mother by helping him to fulfill his.

Sharp contrast between his mother and the women of Jerusalem to whom he spoke and the contrast is in the fact that he spoke. They loved him and he sorrowed for him, but their sorrow seems to noisily as though there is a element of self pity in it as if they are calling attention to themselves instead of consoling him, they look for him to console them. In here is the silence of strength, and so she can give him the strength of her silence. In her are two contradictory agonies; the longing to save him from his unbearable agony, the effort to help him, to finish his work. We are not merely to avoid confessing true pity with sentimental pity, we are to keep clear the distinction between them. We are not very often asked to carry heavy crosses, but the small ones come our way and fill us with self pity, they make us yearn for and expect and perhaps demand, sympathy till in the end we make others miserable in their turn, we should compare our noisily lamentations with Mary's silence. At Mass the priest raises the chalice in offering to God, with it the lives, work, joys and pains of his people; It was not only, Simon who eased the weight from his shoulders it was all those from his mother onwards, all those then present and those to come, whose love consoled and strengthened him; To turn a small trial into a trough of self pity is to make it and ourselves still more petty. To share it thus with him is to turn it, how ever small it may be into a thing of grandeur, a giving of life. Good people are so often distressed because they feel no devotion, they feel no love of God in their hearts, feelings are of no account. Devotion is a question not of feelings but of will. True, emotions can be a great strengthening for the will. God give us that to show us that his burden is light and to help us form the habit of working for him, but if he takes the joy away and gives us fatigue and boredom; if our hearts feel dead within us, if everything connected with his service seems purposeless and

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Futile, provided we go on with the thing to be done have we cause for despair or depression? On the contrary it is then that we can show and know, that we really are devoted, it is then we can show and know it is really God we love and not his gifts and that love for that very reason, can grow to perfection; for love and devotion are not in the emotions but in the will. Then ever you do what God tells you, you are growing in love of God no matter what your feelings maybe. Fill the water pots with water and they did it thoroughly, they filled them to the brim. And so the water was changed into wine, so Simon's reluctance was turned into joy in the end and so every act of obedience, how ever dry or dead the heart may feel, safeguards and deepens love in the soul. But good people worry again, because they say I never become any better, I go week after week and year after year committing the same sins, being equally unsuccessful at any attempts at prayer, never becoming any less selfish, never apparently drawing any nearer to God-----are they so sure??? We live on lives at many different levels and the events on the surface, we can see and access, but we may know little or nothing of what is going on deep down beneath the surface. They constrained Simon and perhaps God constrains those who love him but think they do not love him, so that in doing of the work, the bearing of the cross, he give them, their love may grow and deepen though they remain unaware of it till in the end they find that beneath the apparent dryness and sterility great things have been going forward in them and holiness has been born. It is not only God's cross we are called to share with them, but those of his other children too; The question again is not whether we are eager to help (if at any time we are it is a great gift) but whether in fact that we do help. These crosses are all on cross, to help other men out of Charity is to help God in his agency and to help God is to help the race of men, so even the smallest action can have a cosmic significance and where ever in the midst of noise and heat and hustle of the world there falls a moment of silent sympathy, the giving of comfort and strength for doing of God's will, there the redemption is operative and the wounds are being healed.

So it can be with Christs' followers to take as really as devotedly as possible the crosses he sends, to bear them with him, and for him and to go on if necessary even to the mountain of mirth to the darkness and burial; that is the way to know in the end something of the joy that flooded so inexplicably, the soul of Simon; to know something of that far greater and more inexpressible joy of that other, later, meeting of son and mother, when indeed the day had broken, the dawn comes and there was only joy for them now and the shared happiness of their love, the love that, having gone down in silence together to the very depth of human agony, now rose together to the heights of more than human glory, to that joy of which no tongue can tell, but which is promised in degree in God's mercy to all those who in company with Mary, try to love and follow and serve her son.

V; Woman Behold Your Son;

"John but with him also the whole race of men, thy sons become my brothers. And her work will be to care and cherish them as she had cared for and cherished him. Here at this moment she is stripped of all human resources and thrown back entirely upon God. Later John will be there to help her others will be there to help her. No one can help her at this moment when she has eyes only for her dying son. When prayer seems most hopeless it may well be most fruitful; when the search for God and the attempt of love God seems most futile and barren they may well be most creative; why

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ative; why? Because if then we turn to God in humility, knowing our failure, we make it possible for him to work in us and under his creative touch the soul comes to life, the flame is kindled, even though we remain unconscious of it. Where at other times our efforts may, in fact be egoistic and self-reliant or greedy of reward, and when we fail, how ever convinced we may be of our success. "A man, writes Thos Merton, "who is not stripped and poor and naked within his own soul will always unconsciously do the works he has to do for his own sake rather than for the glory of God. He will be virtuous not because he loves God's will but because he wants to admire his own virtues. But every moment of the day will bring him some frustration that will make him bitter and impatient and in his emptiness he will be discovered. I am who am without love can't become love unless Love identifies me with himself. But if he sends his own love, himself, to act and love in me and in all that I do then I shall be transformed, I shall discover who I am and shall possess my true identity by losing myself in him. And that is what is called sanctity. How to do it? We have to go down into his death; we have to go down into the darkness within us, recognise the evil within us, the pride and the egoism and recognise how they colour and taint all the things we do, and how powerless we are to turn the darkness into light--there is only one thing, says St. Thomas, of which man is the first cause it is evil--and then in the nakedness of that self-knowledge we can give ourselves wholly into the hands of the Spirit and the Spirit can recreate us, for in the death of pride and egoism the soul is reborn as a child. Get to know yourself so well you cannot contemplate yourself without flinching. Then there will be room for hope. So, at times God takes away all props, all help from his children; leaves them apparently bereft; reduces them apparently to failure and desolation, so that some times they seem to have no faith left in him, in themselves, in anything at all; but it is all done with a purpose for at last when there is nothing left but dry bones, then, if they turn to him in humility, he can make the dry bones live.

When failure comes upon us, when we are tempted to depression or despair it is of these dry bones that we should think; and see whether in fact there is some work waiting to be done for God, and turn to him, and beg him to work in us in spite of our frailties and failures; and so in us, as in their greater ways in the saints, the failures and the frustrations become creative. There is a difficulty ~~of~~ which confronts all of us, a lack of will, we cannot conquer our sloth. We must not confuse sloth with physical or mental fatigue. Devotion means to give oneself readily to God's service; sloth means a refusal or perhaps a culpable inability to achieve the will to give oneself readily to his service. A culpable inability--the boredom, the lack of volition that assails one in the afternoon of the day or the afternoon of life, the middle-day, the second stage in God's service when the freshness and lyricism have gone, and what was once easy and exciting is now nothing but a hard grind, a clinging to God and his work only with 'naked intent of the will' How can we take him our failures and frustrations if we lack the will to go to him at all?

The scene of the foot of the cross is a double answer. First of all Mary that same unbreakable concentration of attention that we saw on the road to Calvary. Second place, the giving of this new duty, this new work; the mothering of humanity.

VI THE PIETA: God's mother holding her dead son in her arms is a symbol of the self-imposed powerlessness of God in the hands of men. Christ's

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BODY WAS STILL DIVINE IN DEATH AS IT IS DIVINE IN LIFE: divine, yet robbed of all its human, natural, powers; In the Mass too, God makes himself a passive thing, to be held and moved and broken by the fingers of the priest; But to every human being God gives a similar terrifying power over himself; the power to reject him if he will. Power is common place, and to some an attractive, thing; yet how terrifying also when we reflect upon it. A man has power over himself, over other men, over other creatures, over God himself; he has power in small ways or in great, to change history; he has power to save or ruin souls.

The Pieta is the symbol of God's love. If none had free-will, what a neat and tidy place the world would be; all things joining together in a song of praise to God; no hell, no hatred. No hatred; but also no love, no friendship, and it was love and friendship that God wanted most of his creation; it was to make love possible that he gave some of his creatures freedom. The terrible choice is given, you can put power at the service of love; and then it is creative, and beneficent and lovely as it is in God. Or you can divorce power from love; and then it becomes destructive, evil, ugly.

All power implies a corresponding responsibility-and the greater the power the greater the responsibility because the greater the danger. And so we come back to the Pieta; for the greatest and most terrible of all powers is the power that God himself gives us, to love or hurt him.

Yet power is given to us; Authority has to be exercised; personal gifts have to be used; how can we attempt to make sure that our use of power will not in fact be an abuse? Only by making ourselves powerless before God, as the dead body of Christ was powerless; only by becoming stripped and poor and naked within our own souls, so the spirit can invest us with his divine power and transform our impulses and cure our pride.

We shall not use our powers aright unless we use them in the spirit of Christ washing his disciples' feet; we shall not use our powers aright unless like him we put them back into God's hands to be at his disposal. But at all times we try to turn to God; to God our Father, in child-like trust and obedience; to God the Son our Friend, waiting to learn how we can fulfill friendship by sharing in his work and his sacrifice; to God the spirit within us, listening for that inner voice which interprets the heart and begging him to identify our wills with his; then we can know that our power is in better hands than ours, in hands that will never abuse it as ours would because they are as gentle as they are strong.

There is one use of power which is particularly divine and lovely; the use of power to protect the powerless. To use the strength of your body to help those who are weak to use the powers of your mind to help those who are less gifted to use that material power or authority you may have to protect others, above all, to use the power of your heart to bring comfort and strength and hope to those in sorrow and pain and distress; all that is power expressing love indeed.

If ever your help has about it an atmosphere of condescension or impatience it will not be following the divine pattern. You can only help as God helps if, like him, you go down on your knees, knowing that this is not so much something you give as something you are given. Only to him who has nothing will much be given., that he may give to others. Only the poor in spirit can truly feed the hungry; only the naked can clothe the naked; only those who having nothing possess all things are given the

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POWER AND THE REFUSIONS TO HERSELF THE HARMLESS, to lead home the homeless and the out cast and the lost.

VII And he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and went His Way; they are the words which close the Stations of the Cross; Baptism is not an end but a beginning; it gives us power to achieve; not the achievement. And we may fail. He rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre and went his way. It is so easy to lose vision and love. God gives you an insight into reality, a glimpse of himself, but the superficialities call to you, the world unlit by vision calls to you, and you may roll a great stone between you and what you saw, and go your way, and the vision is lost. It must always be ourselves, it is never God, who will erect the barrier; the only obstacles are those we make ourselves. God is always pursuing us with his love; it is we who try to escape, to blot out the vision. We blot it out by prolonged deliberate disobedience; we blot it out by open rebellion by hatred, to which prolonged disobedience can lead. God is never lost to us as long as we keep on trying, however unsuccessfully, to ~~save~~ ^{serve} him. The little imperfections, the transitory semi-deliberate failings, the frailties; these can never be a great stone of separation, no sinfulness, however great, which leaves humility and love in the soul can ever be a great ~~stone-of-separation~~ ^{stone of separation}. But good people imagine God is lost to them because he feels remote from them; they blame themselves for loss of vision because it is dark night in the souls, but the dark night comes to them from God. The sinner is not an outcast from christendom; he is at the very heart of Christendom. And just as the loss of stability and comfort, of friends and family, even to utter dereliction, may be sent us that we may learn to love God and find life; so too the loss of sense of presence, his inner reassurances and the joys of his service, may be sent us to ensure that we love him and not his gifts, to ensure that we are indeed stripped and poor and naked and are not pretending to ourselves that we love him, when in reality we love only ourselves. Joy is the keynote to Christianity, the joy of the martyrs facing death for love; the joy of the saints who make themselves poor and outcast for love; the joy of the angels over the sinner repenting, the joy of the sacraments, the joy of the Mass; all these are part of the one great poem of praise which is creation's purpose; and it is a song that is sung. Not in forgetfulness of the squalor, but as itself the transformation of the squalor. The spirit of God moved over the waters. and light was made and God saw the light that it was good. But the light and the song are not to remain merely creaturely, remote from the life of God. Though redeemed and love-possessed humanity they are taken up in Christ to the very heart of the Godhead, to join in that divine life which these sorrows of the Son have thrown open to us, the Trinity's own praise of the Godhead; the light growing more intense, more brilliant, more dazzling till it merges into the splendor of the light inaccessible; the song swelling and deepening till it merges into harmony of the Uncreated Love. And at the centre of that splendour and radiance and happiness there sits the Queen of the Seven Swords; and her song is still the song with which her life of motherhood began, and is the song too, of all those children whom her mother hood has helped to save.