

# NOTEBOOKS

Fr. Stanislas Falleur, SCJ

Conferences and Sermons of Fr. Dehon to the Novices

November 9, 1879—October 21, 1881

*with Appendices:*

Notes on the Conferences of Our Fr. General

October 2, 1885—September 10, 1886

First Chapter of the OCJ Constitutions

Versions A and B

Advice to Novices and Daily Practices

Introduction by Fr. Giuseppe Manzoni, SCJ



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# INTRODUCTION

We are at the beginning of the Institute [1878-1881] and we are not surprised that Fr. Dehon was also the first Master of Novices. These are years of great fervor; we are waiting for a great trial, the *consummatum est*, which will mark the Congregation with its seal as a work of God. During this first Novitiate, everything is neither ideal nor perfect. Fr. Dehon realizes with great realism the imperfections and defections of his novices.

Novices are few! Only two or three in 1879 [cf. CFL I:36]. Fr. Rasset made his profession September 8, 1879. By the end of the year, they were four: Frs. Paris, Falleur, Legrand and Lamour. One of these novices, Fr. Stanislas Falleur, left us five notebooks on the instructions or occasional talks that Fr. Dehon gave to the novices in the House of the Sacred Heart from the end of 1879 to the first half of 1881.

## The Five Falleur Notebooks

Fr. Falleur's notes cover the period from November 9, 1879 to October 21, 1881. In reality, with regularity, until June 3, 1881. After this date there are only two rather brief fragments of the conference given the day before the Feast of the Sacred Heart, June 23, 1881, and the conference of October 21, 1881. A month later, Fr. Falleur made his first profession with Frs. Legrand and Dessons.

How to explain this gap of almost four months? Let's take the opinion of Fr. Denis in a study published so far only in English. "At the end of May 1881, Fr. Founder gives a small retreat...in view of the profession of Fr. Thaddeus Captier, on June 3, 1881...From this day forward, we can say the functions of 'Novice Master' were finished for Fr. Founder...Who replaced [as a substitute] Fr. Dehon in his office of Novice Master from 1881-1883, given that in 1883 it was Fr. François-Xavier Lamour who is Novice Master at Sittard [Holland]?" Fr. Lamour made his first profession on January 7, 1881.

It seems that Fr. Dehon's deputy in charge as "Novice Master" was Fr. Captier. The Dehon Archives are silent on this subject, but we have some texts in Fr. Falleur's own hand and which, presumably, are Fr. Captier's instructions to the novices of the Sacred Heart. They have the title, *The Path to be Followed by the Novices of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*. There are elements of solid doctrine here, alongside certain eccentricities which betray an unbalanced man.

In a sixth notebook Fr. Falleur left us some brief notes of conferences given by Fr. Dehon to the religious of the House of the Sacred Heart in 1885-1886. It seemed useful to reproduce these notes in an appendix.

In a certain sense, the notebooks of the Novice Falleur have received the approval of Fr. Dehon. They come from his archives and on the cover or the first page, they carry, in Fr. Dehon's handwriting, the indication: *Conferences and Sermons*.

### **The House of the Sacred Heart**

The novitiate was in Sacred Heart House, the Motherhouse of the Congregation. For Fr. Dehon, the house and the garden were a sign of the benevolence of God. On July 16, 1880, Fr. Dehon said in his instruction to the novices: "This feast [Our Lady of Carmel] reminds us of an important grace: this house was purchased two years ago today. On this day when she gives her Carmel garment to her children, Mary wanted to give us, who already have as their main garment that of St. Francis, the first shelter of the Work, Bethlehem and Nazareth" [CFL III:35].

The house in question had been acquired by the Sisters Servants to start a new work. But since it was very close to St. John Collège, it was perfectly suited for an Oblate Novitiate. Fr. Dehon could easily satisfy his double duties as Director of the Collège and Master of Novices at Sacred Heart. Also, the Sisters gave it to Fr. Dehon. "We were able to enter and celebrate Mass on September 14 [1878], the day of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Divine Providence has these enlightening coincidences. Was it not necessary for a work of reparation to be founded on the cross? The first novice, after Fr. Rasset, was Fr. Joseph Paris, who entered on October 4 [1878]." And so, began the first novitiate of the Congregation.

### **The First Novices**

Sacred Heart House was a typically bourgeois building at the corner of Rue Richelieu [on which St. John Collège was located] and Rue Royale. In addition to the ground floor and a first floor, there were attic rooms. Fr. Dehon usually resided at St. John as the collège superior, but every day he went to Sacred Heart. The number of novices increased little by little.

In the instruction of January 4, 1880, Fr. Dehon invited his novices to thank the Sacred Heart because Bishop Thibaudier granted to the community, composed of "two or three poor sinners, an altar, a tabernacle" [CFL I:36]. Such was the numerical situation in 1879. On February 25, 1880, speaking of "the gentle and continuous immolation of the little things in the Rule," Fr. Dehon says, "So we are twelve here...we are therefore twelve crucified, and the nail is 'obedience'" [CFL I:61]. On January 19, 1881, dealing again with self-immolation, he states, "We are now 16 and the graces we attract are prodigious" [CFL V:27].

Some novices are already priests. In addition to Fr. Rasset, who made profession on September 8, 1879, are Frs. Lamour, Jacques-Marie Herr, Dessons, and Captier. In general, these novices are already of a certain age. In 1881, Fr. Captier was 50 years old, Fr. Lamour 38, Fr. Legrand 32, Fr. Dessons 29, Fr. Philippot 26, Fr. Augustin-Marie Herr 26, Fr. Jacques-Marie Herr 25, Fr. Falleur 24, Fr. Paris 23, Fr. Waguet 19, Fr. Stemplet 18. The Master of Novices, Fr. Dehon, was 38 years old. At St. John's Collège, Fr. Dehon is the *Father Superior*; in the city, he is *Abbé Dehon*; in the novitiate, *Fr. John*.

### **The Garden of Joseph of Arimathea**

In 1879, Sacred Heart House had no garden. It was next to a large garden that would have been ideal for a community, but the owner did not want to sell it and Fr. Dehon did not have the means to buy it. Providence came to his aid in a rather surprising manner. After founding the Congregation, Fr. Dehon organized a sort of Third Order, with aggregates and associates, open to priests and laity [cf. NHV XIV:61-63]. Among the aggregates, there was a certain Mr. Lecot, who took the name of Joseph of Arimathea. Suddenly, Mr. Lecot decided to buy the garden, if the owner would sell it.

On Good Friday [1880], the owner unexpectedly decided to sell his garden. The price was high [90,000 francs] and the affair had to be settled before three o'clock; otherwise the deal would fall through. Mr. Lecot agreed, and at three o'clock he signed the contract. Fr. Dehon comments on the fact. "It was the day and the hour when Joseph of Arimathea had given his garden for the burial of Christ" [NHV XIV:21]. Mr. Lecot yielded the use of the garden to the House of the Sacred Heart.

In 1886, however, Mr. Lecot took back his word [cf. NHV XV:62-63] and Fr. Dehon had to pay for "Joseph of Arimathea's garden," by yielding a property to Mr. Lecot that his father had valued at 72,000 francs, "Which earned me harsh reproaches from my brother," he writes [NHV XV:56]. In the *Diary*, we know that this property was in Wigneihies. Fr. Dehon also recalls the harsh letter from his brother Henry and concludes, "I offer this humiliation for the reign of the Sacred Heart" [NQT III/1887:108]. Thus, perhaps in a somewhat adventurous way, the House of the Sacred Heart obtained what it needed.

### **Life in the Novitiate**

Fr. Dehon was very busy at St. John's and could not give himself totally to his novices as he would have liked. In 1880, there were even complaints, because the leadership of the Novitiate was deficient. On May 14, 1880, Fr. Dehon spoke to the novices about this important matter. "The Heart of Jesus is truly our founder and our superior...He alone has done everything, he

does everything again, and he will do everything. He alone wants to be the direction, the Rule, and the life." To show that he must be everything to the Oblates, he allows his representative [Fr. Dehon] to be unable to devote himself entirely to the Work.

He exhorts the novices to conduct themselves with the Sacred Heart as one conducts himself with the best of the superiors: to ask him the small permissions, to make the Culp, to ask for a blessing. "The Heart of Jesus is there, let us turn to Him. May we no longer complain of lack of direction; it would be an ungrateful word" [CFL II:30-31]. The daily schedule was rather severe [according to our mentality]: rising at 4:30 AM and retiring at 9:15 PM.

### **Prayer Life**

For the life of prayer, the Mass "is the culminating act of the day, the divine act, it is the act that characterizes us...The raison d'être of the Oblates" [CFL III:62]. Masses of Reparation [cf. CFL IV: 24], and Votive Masses of the Sacred Heart [cf. CFL IV:47-51] will often be said, and it will be a privilege to say Mass without stipends [cf. CFL IV:69]. During Adoration, all have St. Gertrude's *Manual of Prayers* to help, said Fr. Dehon. There is also a little prayer book which will be enriched even more, until forming the collection, *Our Prayers of the First Years*. Fr. Dehon writes under the title of the manuscript, "They have great beauties."

The psychological reaction of a reader of our time is both admiration and discomfort. Discomfort due to some tangible tension that annoys and in the long run, fatigues; of admiration for the enthusiastic fervor and undoubtedly the genuine love that these prayers express. According to the well-known axiom: *Lex orandi, lex credendi*, the prayers of the first years are of interest to us because of their content; they express the original values of identity that the first two chapters of the Constitutions express more soberly [for further developments, cf. M. Denis, Projet du Père Dehon, pp. 76-87].

Among the community's exercises of piety, there is the partial recitation of the Breviary, reflection on the Mysteries of Christ, the Rosary, and the Chaplet of the Sacred Heart, introduced by Fr. Captier in 1881. For the most part, it would be preserved in the "Crown of the Sacred Heart" or "Triple Crown of the Sacred Heart of Jesus."

They had Adoration every day, but at the beginning did not have permission for the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Finally, in February 1880, Bishop Thibaudier will grant permission for the First Friday of the month. "Fr. Dehon does not know how to thank the Lord...this is great news and must frighten us, we so miserable, called to such an honor" [CFL I:62]. "Father asks that we make a novena of preparation by prayer, penance, and silence at the evening recreation: What an honor Jesus prepares for us poor sinners, 12 wretches who deserve nothing" [ibid.].

The following year, Father can announce that the First Friday, March 4, 1881, "is the first of every week when we will have the happiness of having Jesus visibly among us" [CFL V:50]. Bishop Thibaudier gave permission for the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament every Friday. Fr. Dehon is pleased with this weekly exposition and he tells the novices, "We will begin a novena of thanksgiving" [CFL V:48]. During Lent, Fr. Dehon encouraged everyone to make the Way of the Cross daily. On Fridays, it was done in community [cf. CFL V:51]. In making the Way of the Cross, an Oblate learns to be even more like Christ [cf. CFL V:107].

### **Other Occupations**

The time which is not used for exercises of piety, is devoted to work, especially intellectual. It is done in a common room and, unfortunately, the library is not well stocked. For some, it is a question of studying theology, with the help of the confreres who already know it [cf. CFL III:70]. Others, like Fr. Philippot, are employed teaching morning classes at St. John Collège. All must use their free time to study, whose goal is the "art of holiness": theory and practice. Any other study is contrary to the novitiate, it is not the moment to be learning something else [CFL III:70].

During meals, one remains silent. At lunch and dinner, there are readings. Fr. Dehon grants a short recreation after breakfast, noting that, "this recreation is not typical in other Novitiates, where one immediately begins manual labor. Here, as we cannot have work of this kind...we take these few moments of recreation before returning to an intellectual occupation" [CFL III:68]. The only real recreation is at noon after lunch. After dinner, recreation is optional. The novitiate lasts two years, because, according to Fr. Dehon, one cannot destroy bad habits and acquire virtues from one day to the next [cf. CFL I:40].

### **The Founder, Master of Novices**

Fr. Dehon was good, but also very demanding with his novices. He shows himself particularly energetic and even severe with some who live the religious life at Sacred Heart House without being preoccupied with the spirit of love and reparation, particular to the Oblates. He concludes a conference on this argument: "Let this conference be the starting point for an important reform for some who resist. Our Lord is not pleased with the ill-will that some bring and if he is discontented, how can one hope for anything but disgust and aridity?" [CFL III:50]. "The cause of the dryness of some is that they do not enter the spirit of the Congregation and persist in following their own ideas for their perfection: for authors, that will be beautiful for them!" [CFL III:49].



## Silence

Fr. Dehon is very demanding when it comes to silence. He complains of the novices who too often lack it. "One must not speak without a real necessity, and even to speak, when a sign would suffice, is to fail the rule of silence" [CFL V:21]. The place where people talk most needlessly is in the kitchen [cf. CFL V:49].

Silence must be observed rigorously during Lent and after Evening Prayers, during the grand silence. "To break grand silence is...a big venial sin" [CFL VI:9]. "Outside of recreation, if you have to speak, do it quietly and briefly. A religious who loves silence is noticed even during recreation: he does not shout or laugh immoderately. There is also the silence of action, for example: do not slam the doors. In short, silence, with charity and the three vows, is an essential element of religious life" [CFL VI:9-10]. These observations on silence were made to the professed religious during a conference on December 18, 1885. They are even more valuable during the novitiate.

Returning to the novices, he said to them, "When I see you talking needlessly outside of recreation, I would rather receive a blow" [CFL V:53]. Fr. Dehon does not exaggerate. He thus expresses his intense love of Christ and, at the same time, his suffering for the failings of the souls that Christ has entrusted to him. "It is as if you then said to our Lord: I do not need your graces right now" [CFL V:53].

## The Spirit of Mortification and Humility

Fr. Dehon reminds his novices of the spirit of sacrifice. "There is a little laxity. There is still too much freedom" [CFL V:60]. Some novices have a difficult character. In the conference of November 16, 1879, he comments on, "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth" [Matthew 5:5], and states that gentleness is very necessary in the House of the Sacred Heart. "A great defect still reigns here: bitterness and hardness of heart" [CFL I:7]. "'Learn from me for I am gentle and humble of heart' [Matthew 11:29]...Without this, our place is not here and we do not deserve to remain under the same roof" [CFL I:58].

Also, there is often someone fasting on bread and water. One fasts for vocations [cf. CFL I:52], and to prepare for Adoration with the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament [cf. CFL II:39]. On January 19, 1880, Fr. Dehon reads this notice at midday: "Our Lord has been offended for a few days in the Novitiate. We must expiate and console the Heart of Christ by a novena of penance. At lunch, we will read the penitential psalms. Each day one religious will fast on bread and water. Fr. Alphonse-Marie Rasset will begin. Fr. Dehon will do it on Friday" [cf. Appendix III]. As one sees, one does not lose oneself with vain words and sterile groans. One



moves on to concrete actions. During Forty-Hours, Adoration continues until midnight [cf. CFL I:53].

It is necessary to humble oneself to learn the spirit of sacrifice. Fr. Dehon introduced Culp to the novitiate, that is to say the accusation of external faults before the superior and the whole community. Culp is done while kneeling and one receives a penance. Fr. Dehon himself gives the example. The novice Falleur notes, "Father [Dehon] announces...that he will ask for humiliation this week [for the Fridays of Lent and Holy Week]. He reminds us that we will proceed to Culp by insisting on the practical imitation of Jesus in the Passion. He will begin himself and ask for a penance that my memory will not forget [February 29, 1880, CFL I:67].

He exhorts everyone to make inner acts of humility and concretely sets the numbers: 20 for the Fathers, 10 for the other Religious, 5 for the younger ones; and Fr. Dehon will indicate them [cf. CFL I:60]. It is also necessary to add external acts of humility, such as kneeling when talking with the superior [cf. CFL I:60]. After the conference, Fr. Dehon is in the habit of asking one or another novice about the subject of God's presence chosen in the morning and the virtue which he wants to practice during the week. Whoever does not know how to answer, receives a penance [cf. CFL IV:12-13]. To exhort the novices to modesty of their eyes, Fr. Dehon makes this curious observation: in the Gospel it says that Jesus *lifts his eyes to heaven*: which suggests that he usually keeps them lowered [cf. CFL 1:71].

Fr. Dehon is interesting when he enters into details. In the study room he recommends not to sit near the fire [Conference of March 7, 1880]. If one is cold and cannot work, one can go to warm up for five minutes, and then one goes back to his place [cf. CFL 1:72]. In the chapel, one does not rely on the armrest and one does not squat. The Fathers hold their breviary when they recite it and do not put it on the bench [cf. CFL I:72]. The common recitation of the Office is made slowly, otherwise it is only a private recitation [cf. CFL IV:13].

Novices must practice detachment [Conference of November 22, 1880]. Fr. Dehon notes that some people accumulate books of piety in the chapel on the pretext that they love them and that they do them good spiritually. Father wants everyone to make a complete list of books in his personal use, and then he will keep only those that are allowed him. For other books, the professed can keep them for a week, no more; novices only from time to time, then they will put them back in their place and take them back if they still need them. It is a continual exercise of detachment.

The simplicity and the cleanliness of clothing also calls for detachment and mortification. On ordinary days a poor garment suffices; a better one when you have to go out. It is necessary to be careful about cleanliness, because filth is the daughter of laziness and it's a habit of the rich.

If, indeed, a novice stays in bed like the rich do, he does not have time to polish his shoes and he comes to the chapel with muddy shoes. Each novice must make his bed and sweep his room [cf. CFL IV:57-60]. All in all, it's about a sober and poor life.

### **Common Life and Fraternal Charity**

Fr. Dehon is very demanding concerning the common life [the greatest penance]. Neither age nor seniority can dispense with the common life [cf. CFL IV: 61-62]. In the common life, the Oblates, by practicing charity, demonstrate that they are consecrated to the Heart of Jesus and in addition, they repair what little love that religious and priests generally have among themselves. "We must admit it between ourselves. Among religious and priests, we love each other very little. How easy it is to see during their meetings where the absent and the present are equally wounded" [CFL V:90].

Later, in the conferences of 1885, he returns again to community life and fraternal charity. Some religious of the House of the Sacred Heart prefer to isolate themselves with a friend. The Fathers of St. John Collège would do well to participate from time to time in the recreation with the religious at Sacred Heart House. They must show that they form only one community, even if they live in two separate but neighboring houses [cf. CFL VI:5-6]. No doubt, Fr. Dehon's exhortation did not have the expected result, because on January 8, 1886, he decided that the religious of Sacred Heart House would spend Tuesday night's recreation at St. John's to increase fraternal charity [cf. CFL VI:11].

Spontaneous manifestations of kindness were very agreeable to Fr. Dehon. On his feast day, he enjoyed receiving the wishes of his novices. He embraced them one by one. Both his novices and the Sisters Servants expected him to celebrate Mass, so, to please everyone, he chose the two oldest novices, and accompanied by them, celebrated Mass with the Sisters Servants [cf. CFL V:9].

### **Obedience**

Fr. Dehon deals at length with obedience according to a strictly ascetic conception, worthy of the best "Rodriguez" and according to scholastic doctrine [CFL V:40]. He accepts dialogue with the superior, because the observations of the religious can be good and useful. But they must be done with detachment relative to their consequences. To insist on "tiring the superiors" is dangerous. One ends up doing only one's own will, not that of God [cf. CFL V:42-43]. But also, becoming a martyr of obedience, like the Jesuit Pierre Lefevre, subjectively can be an act of heroism, but is not an example to imitate. It is an obedience according to the letter, not according to the spirit. No superior, let alone St. Ignatius, would ever have imposed on a

gravely sick person to set out on a journey, with the risk of dying, as in fact happened [cf. CFL V:44]. [This is a judgment consistent with our mentality, but not with that of Fr. Dehon].

Fr. Dehon rightly expects greater perfection in obedience from his novices: "There was some relaxation on this point in someone. It is time to return to perfect obedience to be very generous in the end" [CFL V:28]. Speaking of promptness in obedience, he says, "Remember this as very important: all that is done after the bell belongs to the demon. The bell for rising is given; you stay in bed for 10 minutes, it belongs to the demon who has the first fruits. The same holds with study: if we continue after the bell, we give the devil the conclusion of the exercise and the first fruits of the next" [CFL V:42].

Fr. Dehon is courageous. In a conference he deals with the whims of the superiors. "Superiors are rarely perfect. They are made to suffer, but also to cause pain" [CFL V:65]. After this realistic observation, he consoles his novices with a word from Bossuet: "Whatever is capricious in your superior is, in your regard, the completely pure will of God" [CFL V:65]. The permissive will of God, one must understand, for the sanctification of inferiors. In the last lecture on obedience, he does not hesitate to say to his novices, "When I think that you will have to give an account of all that you have heard in these conferences, I fear for you, who are still so disobedient and, far from being perfect, still lacking in the simplest points of obedience" [CFL V:66].

The Falleur Notebooks conclude with a thorny note on the relations between superiors and inferiors: "Let us not be for superiors a thorn bush, on which one dares not to lay a hand without any precaution, and still get pricked" [CFL VI:23]. The conference deals with Ignatian indifference or total abandonment to the will of God and is addressed to the religious at Sacred Heart House and St. John Institute [September 10, 1886].

### **Immolation and the Vow of Victim**

Fr. Dehon is even more courageous when he insists at length and with impressive clarity on the need to practice self-immolation and to make the vow of victim to be authentic Oblates [cf. CFL V:73ff.]. It follows clearly that the Oblate charism does not reproduce a marginal aspect of the life of Christ, but his mission as Redeemer, Priest, and Victim, Oblate out of love of the Father and for the Father for the salvation of the world [cf. CFL V:92-93]. "Let us understand our vocation, and like Jesus, let us immolate ourselves. Like his, our death will give life to souls. This is what St. Paul observed in himself, 'Death is at work in us, but life in you' [II Corinthians 4:12]. The death of some to the life of nature gives to others the life of grace" [CFL V:95, VI:6-7].

Fr. Dehon does not hesitate to exhort his novices to offer themselves by the vow of immolation to divine justice, to obtain his mercy, especially for the infidelities of consecrated souls: “Therefore, let us be generous and offer ourselves to justice to bring down mercy” [CFL V:100]. One must not be afraid to ask God to walk the path of suffering in order to be united to Christ in the various mysteries of his life, “especially those where one is more of a victim” [CFL V:106]. He also urges his novices to make the Way of the Cross often to be more and more like Christ crucified [cf. CFL V:107].

The distinctive profession, that of victim, aroused opposition, perhaps even among the Oblates. Some found it too difficult. Fr. Dehon intervenes and exhorts his novices not to engage in discouraging and defeatist discussions. He appeals to hierarchical authority, to Bishop Thibaudier. One must trust. But it’s precisely Bishop Thibaudier who will have reservations about the public vow of victimhood, because its substance is difficult to define [cf. NHV XIV:97-98]. Rome will agree with Bishop Thibaudier. However, Bishop Thibaudier was not opposed to a private vow of a victimhood, while admitting that it was a delicate matter. On the other hand, he was very much in favor of the counsel to live in a spirit of victimhood [cf. NHV XIV:98].

It is interesting to note, on the other hand, that for Fr. Dehon, there is nothing extraordinary or prodigious in the Oblates’ vocation. “The main elements of the catechism should be enough to fill us with the spirit of our vocation” [CFL III:1]. Fr. Dehon refers to sin, to the satisfaction due to sin, to the duty of every Christian to repair his own sins and those of the world. “So, you see that, without appealing to any extraordinary light, the spirit of our vocation is obvious” [CFL III:2].

Speaking of mental prayer, Fr. Dehon insists on the affections, “and among affections,” he says, “two must dominate all others and return in all subjects: love and self-immolation or offering, because it is our vocation to make offerings; oblation means offering and oblation means who is offered and the one who offers...without forgetting the other parts of the sacrifice...Always offer acts of love and immolation, that’s our vocation and that’s what makes it easy. We are rich, extremely rich. We can offer all of Jesus, but especially his Heart, at any moment without being able to exhaust the treasure, without the next offering damaging the previous one; the offering is always accepted...Jesus himself offers himself through us. ‘He offers and is the offering’ [St. Augustine, De Civitate Dei, Book X, Chapter XX]. With this offering we must also offer ourselves, all wretched that we are, since Jesus also asks that we join our offering to his” [Wednesday, July 21, 1880, CFL III:39-41].

In summary, one could say that the vow of immolation proposed by Fr. Founder, is above all a vow of oblation. And among these offerings there are, of course, crosses and sacrifices, but they are seen in their positive aspect and not in the nihilistic perspective of a certain French

School, or also in their apostolic aspect. Fr. Founder understands in a very healthy way the life of a victim. For him, it is the normal state of the Christian: "We are all victims under the great law of reversibility, the communion of saints...Because in a family, all are supportive and it is to some to repair and to endure the faults of others. We commit ourselves to it by vow" [CFL V:102].

However, after two years of novitiate, there must still be difficulties and resistance to religious life in general. How could one then, at least for some, speak of victim spirituality and a vow of victim? In between the lines, one sees a certain dissatisfaction in Fr. Dehon's soul with regard to some of his novices, at least by the evangelical comparison he uses at the beginning of the six-day preparatory spiritual exercises for Pentecost of 1881. The devil is furious, according to Fr. Dehon, because he hates the Work and he unleashes himself especially during the retreat. One Sister Servant has already lost her vocation during the retreat; "Let us be generous: out of fidelity and order. If our Lord came back here, he would probably do as in the temple: take a whip to drive the novices out of the places they should not be...May everyone...be faithful" [CFL V:111].

Fr. Dehon, however, never loses courage. To characterize the vocation of the Oblates, he recalls that in the Old Testament, the heart and the right arm of the victim were reserved for the priest. Since the coming of Christ, ourselves being united to him, priests and victims of his priesthood, we offer him our heart and our right arm: "The heart in love and reparation, and the arm in action. This is the way that Jesus took: charity for God and for souls: 'walk in love' [Ephesians 5:2]" [CFL V:130].

### **Priestly Reparation**

While the notes of the novice Falleur have been interrupted for four months, let's transcribe an isolated note of October 21, 1881: "The proper spirit of the Order of the Sacred Heart must be the love of the priest. Above all, that our reparation is not based on contempt. Let us love the heart of the priest, for it is from there that all his functions must be animated" [CFL V:131]. Fr. Dehon speaks quite frequently to his novices of *reparation* for priests, for the *chosen people*, for *consecrated souls*. But this is not the only and exclusive reparation of Fr. Dehon's Congregation. Reparation, a fundamental element of the Dehonian spirituality, is according to the Founder, universal as that of Christ.

Let us note how Fr. Founder often likes to express reparation in this form of cooperation in the work of redemption. This idea was already long standing, because it is found in a sermon of 1875: "Christ is the perfect remedy. Let us be with him, in him, and through him, the auxiliaries of reparation. Justice demands it from our conscience; charity demands it from our heart." It has been rightly remarked that in the writings of St. Margaret Mary, there is above all a

question of reparation offered to God the Father in union with Christ the Mediator, rather than of consolation offered to the suffering Christ.

As a consequence, Fr. Founder had to express in a very discreet way our solidarity with our brothers, the priests and religious. It remains however that Fr. Falleur, 52 years later [10th Chapter in Louvain, 1932], indicates to Fr. Philippe, in a personal letter, that which Fr. Founder said, in 1880, regarding the intimate goal of the Work. Proof that it had hit him. This way of supporting the intention seems to us to be an experience too often formalistic and to be satisfied at a high cost. It remains however that this solicitude for all our needy brothers can determine a very evangelical behavior of spiritual and even material solicitude [assistance to the unhappy priests, to the 'poor' priests, said Fr. André] [cf. Marcel Denis, Projet du Père Dehon, p. 22, note 1; page 40, note 4].

### **The "Revelations" of Sr. Mary of Saint Ignatius**

During these years [1879-1881] the great confidence that Fr. Dehon has in the "revelations" of Sr. Mary of St. Ignatius is obvious. It is expressed clearly several times, but more often by allusions or indirectly: "Our Lord wants to lead us by a miraculous Providence" [CFL II:2]. "Our Lord wants to lead us constantly by miraculous inspirations. If we do not listen to him, he will reject us" [CFL II:3].

Rarely at times, Fr. Dehon reads fragments from the "revelations" of Sr. Mary of St. Ignatius. There are no manifestations of exaltation or fanaticism, but an attitude of great faith and fervor, all with a great spirit of discretion. "Father reads...excerpts, which we listened to while kneeling, revelations instructing the Oblates regarding the dispositions required of them" [March 3, 1880, CFL I:69]. In the conference of April 23, 1880, Fr. Dehon affirms, "Our vocation is certain; it is encouraged by the hierarchical path and by the supernatural and mystical path, which furnishes us with thousands of proofs" [CFL II:13]. Here, and more often in other manuscripts [NHV and NQT], Fr. Founder always puts the approval of Bishop Thibaudier first, then in second or third place, the lights of Sr. Mary of St. Ignatius.

Fr. Dehon expressly refers to Bishop Thibaudier's distrust of Sr. Mary of St. Ignatius. The bishop, it seems, wanted to transfer her elsewhere. Fr. Dehon declares, "Sr. Mary Ignatius is our strongest support" [CFL III:31]. "Let us pray," he said to the novices, "that she may be kept for us." He is, however, fully willing to obey, even if Bishop Thibaudier was mistaken. "Although the Bishop decides, we will always obey and his will shall always be for us that of our Lord" [CFL III:30].

We know that Fr. Dehon had some inclination for supernatural manifestations. Unfortunately, there was also the lack of experience and knowledge of spiritual theology, necessary to

appreciate objectively the “mystical” facts produced in Sr. Mary of St. Ignatius, and not to confuse mere lights of mental prayer with revelations. The whole period, moreover, and in particular the milieu of the Sisters Servants, was imbued with mysticism. They involuntarily exaggerated extraordinary phenomena, which could have some authentic meaning, but which were not unmitigated or unambiguous.

The *Consummatum est* of 1883 had the great advantage of purifying Fr. Dehon's Work of all these more or less “mystical” incrustations and exaltations. It pulled him from the excessive influence of the Sisters Servants, including the inveterate and well-meaning “Chère Mère.” In her untimely zeal, she managed to provoke the “revelations” of Sr. Mary of St. Ignatius and energetically demand their execution. It delivered the Work from the megalomania of Fr. Captier and from the group of Poitiers around Bishop Gay. Fr. Dehon's Congregation resumed the simple and humble furrow of its beginnings, that which was outlined to him by the Spirit. In this, Bishop Thibaudier was absolutely right.

### **The Primacy of the Word of God**

One would be grossly mistaken if one thought that Fr. Dehon's lectures were based mainly on the “revelations” of Sr. Mary of St. Ignatius or on those of St. Margaret Mary [at that time she was only Blessed and Fr. Dehon quotes her 13 times]. Fr. Dehon's lectures to the novices are filled with scriptural quotations from the Old and New Testaments, as shown by the index of references that we have put in appendix [cf. *Studia Dehoniana* 10, 1979].

Fr. Dehon often interprets Scripture allegorically, but his instructions are always solid food, inspired by the Word of God. On the occasion of the entrance of new aspirants, investiture, or professions, he usually chooses a psalm or another passage from the Bible and comments, with practical applications, in harmony with his taste for allegory in the interpretation of the Word of God.

### **Anticipation of the "Consummatum Est"**

Fr. Dehon often speaks to his novices of the need to prepare for the ordeal or “Consummatum est” that will strike the Work. It will be a chalice to drink, not in one day, but over three months or perhaps even six months. After the ordeal, the Congregation will show its vitality and fruitfulness [CFL I:82, 86]. He recommends that novices do not engage in discouraging discourse during recreation [CFL I:86].

The frequency with which Fr. Dehon speaks to his novices to prepare for the trial clearly demonstrates the climate created in the young Congregation by the “revelations” of Sr. Mary of St. Ignatius [cf. CFL III:4-7]. The laws of persecution against religious orders explain, in addition

to the actuality of reparation [cf. CFL III:12], allusions to the probable authors of the great ordeal, namely the anticlerical Freemasons in the government. The “Consummatum est,” however, arrived for Fr. Dehon from where he did not expect it. It was from Rome that the death and resurrection would come.

### **Contemplative and Active Life**

In the conference of March 12, 1880, Fr. Dehon declares, “We are given to the contemplative life much more than to the active life, which will never be anything but an accidental one in our vocation...And of the contemplative life we form an adoring Congregation” [CFL I:74]. This is an affirmation not to be taken in its absolute sense. First and foremost, it is necessary to appreciate the overall life, writings, and affirmations of a Founder and give them an objective and real exegesis. On the other hand, the charism is not always completely known, explicitly from the beginning, even by a Founder.

The affirmation of the accidental nature of working life refers to the early years of the Institute of Fr. Dehon, to life in the novitiate, to the influence of the Sisters Servants and perhaps to the excessive activity and too many works which had filled the life of Leo Dehon and provoked in him, still a diocesan priest, a crisis of rejection and a strong aspiration to the contemplative life.

But Fr. Dehon is essentially a man of action, who turns contemplation and study into action. In this, Fr. Freyd was right when he advised against accepting a professorship at the University of Lille [cf. NHV XI:8-10]. Fr. Dehon would never have been a man of study, a researcher, a great teacher. He liked studying, yes, but to get it into action. The same must also be said of his books, which are not theoretical, but serve the spiritual or social life.

The same must be said of his Congregation, whose spiritual identity is in keeping with its apostolic and missionary identity. With the years, Fr. Dehon and his religious have always lived more in various fields of the apostolate according to their mission. However, already in his lectures to his novices, Fr. Dehon better clarifies his thought: “We, Oblates, we must especially keep silence because our life is contemplative especially during the novitiate, and in the works, it will be widely mixed within the contemplative life” [CFL II:2].

### **General Program of Instructions**

It may be interesting to see the general program of Fr. Founder's instructions during the novitiate. The quotations from the previous pages could have made believe that Fr. Founder spoke mainly of our own vocation. He spoke about it often, but within a framework followed by general training. During the 24 months of Fr. Falleur's novitiate, we note the following program: the beatitudes, the passions, the virtues [theological and moral], then a little treatise



on mental prayer. Then the different actions and exercises of the day. He expounds extensively on the Mass.

The second year begins on October 11, 1880. The Chapter of Faults with the Culp is inaugurated on Fridays. Fr. John speaks of the vows of religion, dwelling at length on obedience, where he sees, because of Jesus' own *Ecce venio*, the very heart of all immolation and oblation. The commentary on the Constitutions begins on April 19, 1881. Father takes the occasion to speak more specifically of the vow of immolation. On November 21, 1881, the Novice Falleur was to make his first vows [cf. Marcel Denis, Projet du Père Dehon, p. 46].

## Conclusion

We are publishing these conferences of Fr. Dehon especially for the persons in charge of formation, in particular for the Masters of novices and scholastics, and for Spiritual Directors. They will find the arguments, the ideas that Fr. Dehon inculcated, the practices he suggested to those who aspired to enter his Congregation. These are lecture notes; they are not ready-made conferences to be given as they are. They give suggestions and in particular describe the spirituality of the Oblates and create the climate for it.

“We see,” says Fr. Dehon, “already some Congregations devoted partly to the Heart of Jesus; but the Order of the Sacred Heart has the character of devoting the hearts of the members to the interior life of immolation, love and reparation” [CFL IV:66]. “Our Lord must be the most frequent subject of our meditations...Always offer acts of love and immolation, this is our vocation...You want to make reparation? But with what? The Heart of Jesus, Jesus in his entirety, but above all his Heart; we can offer it at any moment without being able to exhaust the treasure...the offering is always accepted...Jesus asks that we join our offering to his” [CFL III:39-41].

Fr. Dehon often speaks of love, reparation, and immolation; but the soul of everything is the oblation of love according to this beautiful affirmation: “The heart, as a symbol of the will and of love, this is the whole person” [CFL II:56]. The center of all hearts, according to Fr. Dehon, the heart of the whole world, is the Heart of Christ.

Let us conclude with these words of Fr. Dehon: “Every family of saints has its own character, its particular supernatural purpose, which leads it to holiness through the enthusiasm which inspires it...For us the supernatural goal, for which I would like to give you an extreme enthusiasm is the glorification of the Heart of Jesus, a victim of love and reparation. This is our very special goal, and that is what our whole life must strive for [CFL V:76].

Giuseppe Manzoni, SCJ

### ***Abbreviations***

- CFL** Falleur Notebooks  
**NHV** Notes on the History of My Life  
**NQT** Daily Notes

The bold numbers in the following text refer to the pagination of the original manuscript.



**FALLEUR NOTEBOOK I**  
**CONFERENCES AND SERMONS**  
**November 9, 1879 - April 4, 1880**  
**First Year**

**[1] Sunday Conference, November 9 [1879]**

It is within the Church's mind to bear her thoughts on the subjects she proposes to us principally by her feasts. Today is the Dedication of the Churches and this dedication makes us think naturally of the churches which are our souls according to the words of St. Paul, "God's temple...you are that temple" [1 Corinthians 3:17]. We are therefore the houses of God. Now, our Lord said, "My house shall be called a house of prayer" [cf. Luke 19:46]; therefore, we must be houses of prayer.

In these houses, one asks according to the word of Jesus, "ask and you will receive" [John 16:24]. Jesus says that to the simple faithful. To his Oblates he says, you are temples; I am the one who asks for them. What is he asking for? Conformity to his will, joyful surrender to him, self-immolation, compassion. He asks for victims who are for him what he has been for his Father. He has asked for altars. Images, we have hardly refused them, but there aren't any victims, we refuse them to him.

He is still looking for what he was looking for 1800 years ago, consolers, and he cannot find any. What troubles me most, he says, is the souls that are consecrated to me. It is the [2] anticipation of this abandonment / which has made him suffer more, the betrayal of the friends of the Heart: he seeks someone who immolates himself, who forgets his own personal interests to be occupied only with his, who immolates each minute with constant fidelity. He moans over the resistance he meets in his friends, his Oblates. The beggar of Paray-le-Monial still finds coldness and ingratitude; he has not yet found true consolers for his Heart.

**[3] Wednesday Conference, November 12, 1879**

*"Blessed are the Poor in Spirit"* [Matthew 5:3]

This is the first beatitude expressed, for many reasons, one of which is to better denote the opposition between Jesus and the world that places its happiness in wealth. This is the greatest beatitude. It makes us kings: *the kingdom of heaven*. It wants us to have no attachment to the comforts of the body, clothing, food, or anything else. The word *mine* is stricken from the vocabulary of a religious; the community lends to us. No further attachment, but detachment from material things whatever they are.

Let's practice it because it's a vow for us. Another reason is that we have to make reparation for the attachment of other religious to their small objects. No fear: Jesus will take care of us; he will allow us from time to time to feel real poverty for [...?]. Only those who do manual labor or those who are ill have a formal permission from the superior for snacks. This snack must consist of bread and water, the snack of a poor person. A poverty of mind which does not [4] love real poverty / is only fiction and lies.

Let's not pay attention if this or that food disagrees more or less with our stomach. Let's take what the community wants to give us. Where is the misfortune if this or that food shortens our life by a few months? It's another sacrifice for Jesus. Let's love to take the last piece; let's desire even the need in order to better prove our spirit of poverty.

No appropriation; all is the community's and nothing is ours; it is the community who lends us what we have: handkerchiefs, books, and everything. No more saying *my* book, *my* clothes. For the fire too. Do not hasten to obtain it. Do the poor have so many conveniences? Are they never cold? Let us always consider ourselves happy, when the opportunity arises to be like the real poor, and let us not say, I make a vow of poverty on the condition that I be provided with food, good clothing, a comfortable lodging. That would be mockery, that's not how we make reparation.

#### [5] Friday Conference, November 14, 1879

*"Blessed are Those Who Hunger and Thirst for Justice"* [Matthew 5:6]

These words of our Lord always have a vague and general meaning that applies to all the faithful and a special meaning for a religious. We have seen the beatitude of pure hearts, then that which consists in the understanding and the love of poverty, the dispossession, no more *mine* and *yours*, nothing but the usage. Today this bliss: *blessed are those*.

The word justice is usually understood as holiness. Our Lord promises satisfaction to those who desire to reach the perfection of his commandments, to those who also want to reach the perfection of his counsels. This hunger and thirst are like a *fire* that devours, to physically complete the comparison. It's *fervor, zeal*.

Do not say, I cannot. This is to deny God; it's insane. This means that Jesus, so rich in grace, would calmly see a soul address his Heart, ask for help, and he would refuse it! It's insane. This is speaking against faith, because desire, that is to say, hunger and the thirst to do well, are always satisfied and fulfilled, "for they will be filled" [Matthew 5:6]. "Ask and you shall receive" [John 16:24]. They will be satisfied by the consolations and the pleasantness of mental prayer and devotional exercises, calm and peace.

**[6]** These words have a special meaning for the Oblate. This justice is the justice of God, who wants reparation for the crimes of his chosen people. Happy and blessed are those who are hungry and thirsty to see justice satisfied and to satisfy it themselves; happy and blessed [I say it now, you may understand it only later, as our Lord told the apostles many things they did not understand until after Pentecost], happy *because they will be satisfied by the cross*. “Let anyone accept this who can” [Matthew 19:12]; “they will be pained” [cf. Joel 2:6], and with the crosses of happiness, this happiness so sweet, that one finds after having surmounted a small cross, a test.

You may have noticed that on the days when you made your desire for reparation with great love, that day you received crosses, coming from the world or from your brothers or from a lack of food, or convenience, etc. Happy and blessed are those who are hungry and thirsty to see divine justice satisfied by reparation, for they will have many crosses.

I want to end with the example of our Lord, to whom all the beatitudes apply. He longed for this justice with a great desire, he who came to bring fire [zeal] to the earth. He too had big crosses.

**[7] Sunday Conference, November 16, 1879**

*“Blessed Are the Meek, For They Will Inherit the Earth”* [Matthew 5:5]

In the preceding beatitudes, we have seen some remedies brought to the principal faults, to the capital passions which are the object of our struggles here, because *the novitiate is a spiritual combat*. To the lightness of mind, to the attachment to external goods, to the softness of heart, we see in opposition purity in intelligence and affection, poverty, and fervor. Today a much-needed virtue where a great defect there still exists: bitterness and hardness of heart. “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth,” that is to say, they will possess hearts.

Here our Lord indicates the immediate fruit: the kingdom of heaven will follow, because the one who is at the foot of the throne is a lamb, and gentlemen are the lambs of God, they will practice gentleness because Jesus invites us to it: *Learn*, because it is a virtue of the Oblate, “like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter” [Jeremiah 11:19]; because above all it is necessary for the Oblate to make a harvest of hearts for Jesus, to bring all hearts to him.

The gentle man finishes by having no more enemies but many friends. “Pleasant speech multiplies friends and mitigates enemies” [Sirach 6:5]. He attracts everyone and thus having **[8]** confidence and affection, he can lead them to the Heart of Jesus. / Gentleness is necessary to us here and now because we have bitterness and harshness in judgment, in words, and deeds for each other; characters are difficult, there are regrettable clashes, strains. This is not the way to attract others who will see these miseries.

Gentleness has its first degree in the mild, patient, silent acceptance of affronts, insults, contempt, etc. When one bears them with an indifferent face or at least a first reaction is immediately repressed, this is already a step. The second degree is to love these affronts for an opportunity to prove to God that it is easy to suffer for him. The third degree is to take pity on the insulter and despise the harm he is doing.

These three degrees are for all Christians; for the Oblates a fourth degree is to sympathize with the Heart of Jesus who is grieved by these affronts, and one of whose main torments in the Garden of Agony was to foresee the hard-heartedness of his people. Let us then be always gentle to respond to the spirit of our vocation, to be in full conformity with the Heart of Jesus, and to make our hearts beat in unison with his.

**[9] Wednesday Conference, November 19, 1879**

*"Blessed Are Those Who Mourn"* [Matthew 5:4]

Tears of patience, penance, compassion, love:

1. for the people of the world who falsely place happiness in joy.
2. for religious in general, because penance is essential to all religious institutes. For religious life is the voluntary deprivation of one's will, external goods, and the use of the goods of the body. Happy are those who arouse in themselves tears of penance and repentance; especially we who are grafted to the Order of Penance of St. Francis; we must seek these tears, especially those that today are aroused on retreat.
3. tears of compassion for Jesus and Mary.

Jesus weeps over the rich young man, over Jerusalem, in the Garden of Agony. About the rich young man: he cries to see him despise graces, he cries when he sees that he refuses to be one of his apostles, thinking of all the rich young people who later will do likewise as we see in our France where, since the Revolution, rich families refuse members to the clergy, vocations that could add zeal to the ways of following him and of realizing it. If we know well how to sympathize with Jesus' tears on this subject, we will be happy because we will be comforted by his Divine Heart [who knows too well that it is such suffering for us not to console him]

**[10]** who will hasten to bring wealthier families into the clergy, who can bring more delicate dispositions, a better education, better cultivation, and then more prepared and thus more suited to the clergy. He will introduce them especially into the Oblates.

Jesus cries over Jerusalem, over his hardened homeland. Let us pray and sympathize with the pain he had in seeing beforehand France, the people of predilection, the eldest daughter of the Church, and the privileged people of God and Mary, misunderstand and outrage him. Happy are we then because he will save her.

Jesus cries in the Garden of Olives. The sight of such little fruit of his redemption, the ingratitude especially of his chosen people, have drawn out tears from him and more than tears: blood. It is here that we must especially sympathize because this is our special vocation of consolation and reparation.

Let us do it at the Holy Hour and during the half-hour of Adoration each day. And Mary is also the model of those who have the happiness to cry: she cried at the foot of the Cross [*The sorrowful mother stood near the cross weeping*] and she miraculously survived the supernatural pain she experienced there. She is *our first model* who first comforted the suffering Jesus, united her heart to his Heart and *cried with him, which is the best consolation*; she cried at Paray-le-Monial and La Salette, especially because of the chosen people.

We experience tears of love when we feel utterly separated from the beloved. Let's ask for them and we'll be happy to have them.

**[11] Sunday Conference, November 23, 1879**

*"Blessed Are the Peacemakers"* [Matthew 5:9]

This beatitude offers the remedy for the capital vice of anger. The example of Jesus, "The God of peace" [II Corinthians 13:11], "Son of peace" [Luke 10,16], invites us to it. Happy are the people of peace; we can have this peace with our neighbor, with ourselves, with God.

1. *With our neighbor*: the first degree is not to be moved externally, to show nothing of the anger one has; the second degree is to repress the anger inside at its first movement.
2. *With ourselves*:
  - a. Do not get angry because we have committed some fault. This anger is bad, all anger is the product of disappointed pride. Being less virtuous than our self-love hoped, we irritate ourselves and by a foolishness that punishes our pride at the moment, we punish our soul by allowing it to go to more serious mistakes.
  - b. To lead us gently on the path of perfection, to treat us with great gentleness and humility.
3. *With God*: These are the two degrees of this peace: not to be in a declared war with him because of mortal sin, nor in a skirmish war because of an attachment to or the habit of venial sin. There it is, for everyone.

**[12]** There is a third degree for the Oblate: to be a peacemaker, to establish peace / between his brothers, between souls and God. That was Jesus' mission and the result of his coming into the world with his gospel of peace: peace between people, and between God and humanity. This is the purpose of his coming. For us, let us practice this peace well, especially the three degrees which consist:

1. in not having anger inside or outside;
2. to have no attachment to venial sin, for with this attachment, it is foolish to believe oneself an Oblate;
3. to calm our brethren and to reconcile souls with God through atonement, sacrifice, and immolation.

**[13] Wednesday Conference, November 26, 1879**

*"Blessed Are the Merciful"* [Matthew 5:7]

Our Lord has summarized his entire Gospel in eight words; this is the thought of the Fathers. Another beatitude that responds to the spirit of the new humanity. If we have God's compassion, what will we miss? Spiritually or corporally, temporarily or eternally? "I have compassion on the crowds" [cf. Mark 8:2]: that was the multiplication of the loaves. "He had compassion for them." [cf. Mark 6:34].

1. *Let's have compassion for our souls:* They are the masterpiece of Jesus, his chosen vine, so they are very great;
2. *Let's have mercy on our brothers:* to have only compassion, nothing else, for their imperfections, not to lie when we say two hundred times a day *have mercy on us*. Jesus replies: *Begin*, and we mock him, if we don't do so;
3. *Let's have pity on the Heart of Jesus:* that is the main point. He came to ask for our compassion at Paray-le-Monial. "All day long I have held out my hands to a contrary people" [cf. Romans 10:21]; he has begged, he extends his hands. Let us have compassion; it is our vocation.

"Blessed are the merciful" [Matthew 5:7]: we could make it the motto of our Work; have mercy on him, and to our compassion he will answer with *I have compassion* [cf. Mark 8:2] as in the desert. Let's meditate often on this beatitude.

**[14] Friday Conference, November 28, 1879**

*"Blessed Are Those Who are Persecuted"* [Matthew 5:10]

After having proposed the detachment of various goods through poverty, chastity, gentleness, Jesus opens the secret of his Heart: "Blessed are those who are persecuted." These words have a general meaning for all the faithful, a more special meaning for religious, because then he addresses only his disciples: "Blessed are you" [Luke 6:22]. He has proved it in the Church and especially for religious, the first called to speak of his Heart, proper to the Oblates. He will send us contempt, ridicule, even external persecution.



How to be happy with that? It is Jesus who will teach us; he, so superior in his intelligence, chose that in preference to everything; he will illuminate our mind to reveal the secret of his Heart. As to Blessed Margaret Mary, he will first give us his cross with roses; little by little he will uncover it and will make us penetrate this mystery which is to love, to suffer.

In closing, a thought that does not seem to relate directly. Our Lord, all beaten and crying, showing himself to the Blessed, said to her, "It is the secret faults of my friends who have treated me thus." She could not comfort him because Jesus needed comforters equal in rank to his offenders. He then sought victims for his Heart outraged by the sacred tribe: we, we come to offer ourselves, we priests and clerics; he will give us what it takes to comfort him.

### **[15] Saturday Conference, November 29, 1879**

Until now, three reasons for the Beatitudes:

1. It is our Lord who thus begins the instructions to his novices. Fr. John being only *a very unfaithful and very imperfect voice*.
2. They give an overview of religious life and are a preface.
3. They make us feel the happiness of our life, since in each beatitude there is a special meaning for us beyond the special meaning for religious life and the general sense for the faithful.

We are going to study the religious life in its details. Three parts: purgative, illuminative, unitive.

*Purgative*: three parts [passions], three to study in order to renounce and combat them, three great enemies.

*Illuminative*: to fill our soul with virtues, because a vase is filled with perfume only after being well cleaned.

*Unitive*: by prayer and meditation.

In each part we will always see what is special for us. Then come opinions and explanations of the Rules. At the end of the conferences, some time will occasionally be spent, to give some practical and timely advice.

### **Tuesday Conference, December 2, 1879**

#### **[16] *On the Purgative Life***

**[17]** We are going to begin to empty ourselves of our faults. Our passions are the movements of sensory appetite towards some object. The first three movements are: love, desire, pleasure. I like a fruit, a cell [room]; I desire; I enjoy it if I have it. There are three causes:

honor, utility, amenity. Since original sin, we are naturally inclined to these three movements. Our body leads us there.

*The pagans* had understood it: seeking a remedy they reasoned saying, I have better things to do than to yield to that; knowledge and virtue are preferable to that. *The Christian* has a stronger reason. He will have better in eternity, better fruit, a better cell, etc. *The religious* says to himself, "My Jesus has risen above that." *The Oblate*, "I want to make reparation for the enjoyments that the world gives itself in that; therefore, I must abstain from it to console Jesus and to have that door of hell closed." This must be his dominant thought.

It's a war: you have to know the enemy, who he is, where he is, what weapons he is going to [18] use. Will it be the sluggishness of sleep, chatter, gluttony? / The enemy is in ourselves and it is ourselves.

#### **[19] Thursday Conference, December 11, 1879**

*[Because of the preached retreat at the convent, there were no conferences for eight days.]*

We have seen that we are carried by three movements for three motives on three main roads or seven, which are the capital sins. The three movements have their opposites when we reject one thing: thus, I like a fruit, I desire it, I enjoy it, and reciprocally I have trouble with an evil, I hate it, I have some sorrow. Thus, in attraction and repulsion there are three equivalent movements. These inclinations, like these repulsions, have their principle in our fallen nature: we must never follow them whatever they may be, for there are good and bad, but they are all the voice of the inferior part, and it is up to reason to control them.

The pagan philosophers understood it. They reasoned about these appetites without submitting to them. We follow them inattentively all day long, which mingles good and bad actions. For there are inclinations suggested by Jesus, others by Satan. The Christian says to himself, "Is this what faith tells me?" The religious, "Has my Jesus done so?" The Oblate, my inclination pushes me to that; a moment, "Is there nothing better to do? Is this how I am going to make reparation? Well yes, I'm doing it to make reparation."

To submit all her inclinations to a supernatural motive, to make reparation. This is what the Blessed Virgin did who had only good inclinations. She reasoned about them, all while never following them blindly.

#### **[20] Friday Conference, December 13, 1879**

Passions are movements of sensory appetite that lead us either to seek or to avoid certain external objects. There are six movements of the concupiscent part of the soul. Three for:

love, desire, pleasure; three against: detestation, aversion, pain. We must not follow them, but reason with them and incite them according to reason.

There are still other movements. If obstacles are found to these first movements, two others arise: hope and daring: one which conceives and ponders, the other which executes the means of reversing the obstacle. It is still necessary to reason with them and then use them according to reason.

All these movements must serve to sanctify, because we are composed of body and soul, and they must both participate in sanctification. The pagan philosopher reasons this; the Christian submits them to his faith; the religious wonders whether he will imitate Jesus by doing so; the Oblate makes them serve for reparation.

### **Sunday Conference, December 14, 1879**

When passion finds an obstacle to the possession of a good, two movements are born in the irascible appetite: hope and daring. When it is an evil it cannot avoid, it excites despair, fear, anger. Like the others, fight against and reason with these movements as well.

### **[21] Wednesday Conference, December 17, 1879**

We have seen the eleven movements that occur in the sensory appetite on the occasion of a real or imaginary good or evil. We have seen that they must be reasoned with and then incited with a sense of faith, for they help powerfully; to make a saint, one must have passion [the passion to be without evil passions].

Now four observations or general reflections on the passions.

1. If we do not want our soul to be an uncultivated field where everything grows indifferently, a vineyard of the Lord that brings him nothing despite the graces around it, we must wage war on the passions and act as warriors: predict, calculate, watch day and night, examine.
2. There are movements that are combined: so, you avenge yourself with a hard word for a prickly one and your anger disappears, but you do not notice that it turns into a bad pleasure. Do not think you have dominated the anger because you feel happier after this retort?
3. We have three weapons against the passions: a thought of reason, a thought of faith, a thought conforming to our vocation. But these three ways are internal. Now, there are passions against which we must react externally by opposing the acts which are contrary to them. So, to go with unassertiveness towards an unpleasant person, to take the

**[22]** piece of food which is repugnant in the refectory. / It is often only by these external

means that one is victorious.

4. Seek the dominant passion and prefer to attack it. When a tree leans more on one side, we accomplish a lot if we almost straighten it. Let us turn this passion to supernatural good; it will be a great help to us, for we do not make a saint without passion.

### **Friday Conference, December 19, 1879**

#### *On Temptations*

All these passions tempt us. "But one is tempted by one's own desire, being lured and enticed by it" [James 1:14]; "For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit" [Galatians 5:17]. This inferior part of our soul revolts against the others; because there are three parts: the bottom part, the middle part that understands reason, and the upper part which contains natural law and all that is supernatural, which really comes from the Spirit.

To fight them, let us turn away from their course, and take them to a supernatural goal. To overcome the sense of the flesh, let us use the flames of hell. To resist the seduction inspired by the beauty of a person or a thing, let us think and attach ourselves to the beauty of Jesus, who is its source. This is a way of turning temptation to our advantage: "With the testing, he will also provide the way out" [I Corinthians 10:13]; "Do not follow your base desires" [Sirach 18:30].

### **[23] Sunday Conference, December 21, 1879**

There are three parts in man: the lower part where the eleven passions reside; the middle part which is reason; the upper part which is conscience enlightened by faith. From the lower part come the temptations: "But one is tempted by one's own desire" [Galatians 5:17]. Those which come from the external senses are easily repressed, for it is easy not to see or feel. One sense is excepted: the impure sense. It must be subjugated as the eleven interior movements already mentioned; impure fire is fought by the fire of hell and all such imaginings by an opposing crucifying imagination.

For the eleven movements, instead of suppressing them, their objective is changed. This is how St. Francis Xavier ambitiously turned his ambition into a zeal for souls. This is related to the conference on Friday.

### **Sunday Conference, December 21, 1879**

We have seen what must be removed from our souls: passions and temptations. This is the object of the purgative life. This life is the main occupation of the novitiate and we must always return to it in what follows. Because passions are reborn.

[Detailed comparison of the vase to be purified before filling it with perfume.] We are going to see what must be put in our soul: virtue “is a good quality which lives for the good and never [24] enjoys the bad,” / says St. Thomas. This is the sovereign good because it is sovereignly honorable, giving us the esteem of the heavens; supremely useful because it gives us peace in this world and glory in the other; supremely pleasing because it makes us taste happiness already, but especially because it attracts an eternal happiness to us.

But let’s not forget to mention the Heart of Jesus who loved virtue so much. He inspired the *Song of Songs* where he uses a veil to mark his love for the virtue that is his beloved Bride. Let us also relate virtue to the Heart of Jesus, which must be the center of our thoughts and our words at all times, *opportune, inopportune*, in our letters, our conversations, with our inferiors, superiors, children, elderly people. Let’s talk about him constantly. As St. Thomas says, “My God and my all” [cf. John 20:28]. We gave him a house; is it not useless if we do not give him the consolation of seeing virtue in us? If we do not want to be rejected because we do not respond to his expectations?

#### **[25] Tuesday Conference, December 23, 1879**

[One day earlier because of tomorrow's confessions.]

*Interior Dispositions for the Feast of Christmas*

What Jesus wants of us *obviously* [this word struck me] is to find his Bethlehem here: he already finds it in a certain way by coming into our poor and miserable hearts, but the feeling we must experience is that of an affectionate compassion or compassionate affection. No doubt he rejoiced in coming into the world as his work progressed, but he was already suffering because his work of redemption was to come about through suffering.

Above all, let us be sympathetic to the sentiments inspired by the dispositions of those whom he has come to save. There are the impious ones who do not think about Christmas, the indifferent who do not think about it anymore, the lukewarm people who think about it only because of the joy and the rejoicing that it causes, the pious and fervent people for whom the creche has its charms, but who stop at the exterior scenery and give no more than one thought to the Divine Child.

Who will receive him as he wishes? The Oblates, who will enter into the feelings that the harshness of the inhabitants of Bethlehem caused him. He was smitten among the privileged, in all kinds of people. “And his own did not receive him. [John 1:11]. There were among them [26] consecrated souls, Levites, scribes. / Ingratitude and hardness everywhere. Let us, therefore, affectionately sympathize with the refusals which he especially suffered from

consecrated souls, and ask him for graces in this sense, because *we will needlessly ask it of others*, as sensible consolations, etc.

By these dispositions, but especially by a greater regularity, let's sanctify the night before, the day, the next day, the octave. Let us not be so happy that the regulations seem boring and saddening; more exactness, more gentleness. If we have more free time than usual, let's spend it at the foot of the manger; no room for boredom. *It is to grossly injure our Lord to be bored here when he lives here.*

We will draw small notes that indicate a responsibility for each of us near the child Jesus. Let us fill them out with faith, let us study the symbolism: that Jesus finally finds what he wants to find: Bethlehem.

### **[27] Thursday Conference, December 25, 1879**

*Investiture of Fr. Francis-Xavier Lamour*

"You will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger" [Luke 2:12]. It might seem that the solemnity of this day cannot be reconciled with and erases the solemnity of the investiture. However, they agree very well. What is the religious? Is not this the one to whom Jesus says, "Follow me" [Mark 2:14]? This is the word he addresses to all those he invites to religious life. If the religious must follow Jesus, must he not follow him at the first step? This first step, we see today. Jesus is there, wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. These swaddling clothes are a link that symbolizes the cord of the religious and they are a garment that represents the modest dress of the religious. From his manger, Jesus invites us to accept the religious habit as he does.

But let's go to the Heart of Jesus, because it is the privilege of the Oblates to imitate the Heart of Jesus. We see the feelings that animate him in his crib: love and reparation. He makes reparation lovingly and he loves making reparation. His tears atone for our pleasures; his poverty, our comforts; his smallness, our pride. He gives to the religious, from his first step in life, the example of renunciation of *external goods* [his poverty], *the goods of the body* [cold and tears], *those of the soul* [swaddling clothes, bonds].

Retain as a remembrance of your investiture, this lesson of the Heart of Jesus, which shows **[28]** you how religious life begins. It will be at his manger that / the main devotion of your novitiate will be. Later, on the day of profession, you will see Jesus donning the robe of ignominy, the nails, the cross, and it will still be very fitting for an Oblate.

**[29] Friday Conference, December 26, 1879,**

*Vigil of the Feast of St. John*

In honor of one of our patrons, let's leave the framework of our conferences. St. John was the perfect model of the Religious-Oblate.

1. *Of the Religious*

*His poverty.* He was a disciple of St. John the Baptist, so poorly clothed and nourished, and whose vocation demanded this poverty; and the disciple preferred it. It was how he answered his vocation better and resembled his master better. Next, a disciple of Jesus who had no place to rest his head. Guardian finally of the Blessed Virgin, who also loved poverty. Finally, according to the Fathers, he led a very poor and mortified life.

*His obedience.* He sees a prophet; immediately he obeys his voice and makes himself his disciple, his imitator. This prophet sends him to Jesus: with the same docility, he goes to visit him. Later, Jesus said to him, "Follow me" [Mark 2:14]; he leaves everything. "Left their nets and father" [cf. Matthew 4:20]. He follows Jesus to Tabor, to agony, to passion, to the cross. Same docility to the Blessed Virgin. He obeys her like a son, he lives near her during these sad days, shares her exercises and her life.

**[30]** Docility towards St. Peter: Jesus gives him to him as superior; he obeys him, we see him following Peter to Tabor and the Garden of Agony. / Afterwards, in spite of Peter's fault, he again rendered him an obedient service by having him enter the high priest's house. He accompanies him to the tomb, and by a very delicate deference, lets him pass before him. He had previously informed him of what was happening at the tomb. After Pentecost, he follows Peter going to the Temple. It is Peter who heals. He follows him to the judges who have them flogged. Later he will visit him in Rome.

*His purity.* "The virgin of virgins entrusted to the virgin." This is a preview of his extreme purity; the Blessed Virgin could not have lived with a man whose thoughts were not pure.

2. *Of the Oblate*

St. John led a life of immolation through love and sacrifice. He loved Jesus: he was the friend of Jesus. Now, Jesus said, "I love those who love me" [Proverbs 8:17], and he proved it by the privilege granted to the beloved disciple of his Heart at the Last Supper. St. John loved Jesus faithfully. Despite a little hesitation at first, he quickly recovered and after his sleep and momentary flight, he obeyed the Blessed Virgin, who sent him back to Jesus. It was necessary to love Jesus flogged, conspired against, mocked, crucified. He had, and often since that very moment he received the title of child of

Mary and the care of his Mother. His love made him choose, says St. Augustine. His gospel and his epistles are a perfect act of love.

And the sacrifice? Did he not suffer in Jerusalem, in Rome, on Patmos? He led the life of a victim with Mary, hidden and without exterior brightness, because we do not see that like the others, he has evangelized a whole great country. He loved Jesus and intertwined his life of love with some external works. Thank Jesus for giving us such a beloved patron of his Heart who, together with Mary, was the first Oblate of the Heart of Jesus, because his life after the Ascension, as Mary's, was a martyrdom of love.

### **[31] Saturday Conference, December 27, 1879**

With the community expressing their festive greetings to Fr. John and declaring their desire to be united to him and to follow him as St. John followed our Lord, Fr. John replied that he was happy about this small manifestation, that our Lord wanted it, that he would bless the Work and give extraordinary graces to a few the next day. He has recalled and brought out, with greater emphasis, the principal characteristics of St. John, proposed for our imitation.

### **Sunday Conference, December 28, 1879**

We are going to talk about the virtues without extending ourselves too much, since we want to go through all of religious life in a few months and then start again. There are the supernatural virtues that are outside of our nature.

The first is faith. "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" [Hebrews 11:1]. Faith is necessary to all, and especially to religious because it tends toward a virtue essential to the religious state: obedience. I believe in what God has revealed and I also believe that God speaks through the Rule and the superior.

Here are three ways to have a very strong and practical faith, which can be used, except in temptations against faith, because then we must let the storm pass and focus on a vocal prayer, the *Our Father* for example, and to say it even mechanically. Because these prayers from God operate almost like sacraments. Besides, there are temptations which only occur in the novitiate, and that of faith is not ordinarily one of them.

1. Incite one's will. We have faith in the will. We want to do well, to say to ourselves, if I want to believe, that's what I must do; so, a hundred times a day and soon we'll be holy.

**[32]** 2. When our will begins to fade, to excite the faith of the intelligence by the representation of the ideas of faith, of the divinity of Jesus, of the Church, of its doctrine, and thus to give a powerful motivation to our will.



3. The means proper to the Oblates: to say to themselves, but don't I believe that the Heart of Jesus loved humanity so much and that he wants us to render love for love? This tender Heart says it to our heart. Before each exercise, offer him the action that will be done to satisfy this divine beggar, who claims our whole self, and which our faith will represent before us the divine beggar bleeding, torn, and eager for consolation. Will we dare to deny him the exactness of an exercise, the good use of time during this exercise? This can lead us to the highest holiness.

**[33] Wednesday Conference, December 31, 1879**

Let's leave the usual course of our conferences once again. There is no harm in resting a little from time to time and besides, this interval allows us to make acts of the virtue of faith upon which we have focused.

Today, on the eve of the New Year and at the end of this year, let's look at all sides of the interest, the proprieties, the very affection, and the thanksgiving pushing people to express wishes to each other. Jesus is put aside, and rare are they who think to thank him on this occasion. Tonight, we will make a Holy Hour to finish and begin the year at the feet of Jesus. The subject of our meditation during this hour will be this: at this moment, what does Jesus think and what are his feelings?

Here is a year that ends. He was quite outraged during this year, the little children that his Heart cherishes were removed from him. The religious who bear his name are persecuted; the universities which propose to glorify him are attacked; he has been especially injured in the devotion to the Sacred Heart; we want to drive him out of France. During the course of this year, billions of sins have been committed on the earth; the sacred tribe and the chosen people have been to some extent part of these offenses: this is the earth's share this year.

Jesus has sent his most abundant graces, he sustained the whole world giving movement and life to each being, he helped and vivified intelligences and human wills; above all, he directed them to their supernatural end, showed them his Heart, gave them all the necessary help, and more than enough to fix them in perfection; he was not discouraged by our coldness, our crimes, our ingratitude.

**[34]** During the three mortal hours of his agony, he foresaw this year. He saw crimes and human perversity during this time; what pain he must have felt then! But what should his love be, which, all the while foreseeing horrors, however wished to merit and to give so many favors to the earth! He also saw the year 1880: he saw the Antichrist about to ruin his reign everywhere; he has seen the miseries which will still occur, and yet his Heart overflowing with love wants to make a year of graces, the year of the Sacred Heart, as Leo XIII said. For us, this

year will be a year of mercy and hardship. Trials, then very great graces. That's what he has for us. During this night, we offer ourselves to him as victims of love and reparation: which he loves so much to see us do.

### **Friday Conference, January 2, 1880**

#### *On the Virtue of Hope*

We have seen the passion of this word. It's a movement of our soul towards an object despite the obstacle. But often, this object is bad; the virtue of hope has a supernatural objective. It is a habit that makes us relate to these supernatural objects especially since there are more objects.

Four reasons to strengthen us in hope:

1. God's mercy: God cannot see a well-intentioned soul in front of him and not help it, comfort it. It is in his nature to do good and he does so as soon as there is no obstacle. It is insane and heretical to think otherwise.
2. The merits of our Lord: It is not possible for God to deny something to a soul that reminds him of what Jesus did for it, who puts before him his flagellated, crucified Son.
3. The promises of Jesus: "Ask and you will receive" [John 16:24], "If you ask anything"  
[35] [cf. John 16:23]. And many other places of scripture testify to us / that we can all hope for mercy.
4. The Heart of Jesus, for us Oblates: "Heart of Jesus, in you I hoped, I will not be confounded forever." The Heart of Jesus, for whom we have left everything, to whom we have given ourselves entirely, this generous and infinitely liberal Heart, cannot refuse us anything. He only wants to return some sacrifices to us. This is the most powerful motive for us, the most apt to strengthen us, to make us say with Job: "Even if it kills me, in him will I hope" [Job 13:15]; with St. Paul: "We have this anchor...sure and firm" [Hebrews 6:19].

Judging from the ordinary course of things, it is to be expected that this year will be a year of contradiction for any Work. People begin to know us in the city, outside we must expect the test. If we know how to rely on these motives, our hope will be sure and firm.

### **Sunday Conference, January 4, 1880**

We have seen how we must rely on hope as on a solid anchor. Let's look at charity. The other virtues lead to it. It supposes them. She is their queen: "Over all this is love, the greatest of these is love" [cf. I Corinthians 13:13]. We must practice charity. This is the first word of the Decalogue. We must, above all, practice it because it is our vocation as Oblates of the Heart of Jesus.

Religious are often distinguished by the color of their clothing; the garment of our soul before God must be love, and if two were needed, the second would be compassion. No Oblate without this; it is absolutely necessary. As men of the Heart, we especially honor the Heart of Jesus. Let us say to those who ask, our home is the Sacred Heart. We have raised this sign at the top of the house. He is everywhere before our eyes. It must be a sign that speaks to us.

**[36]** He showed us in an ambiance of flames and shooting flames to show that the first virtue of the Heart of Jesus is love. We, his Oblates, who must form ourselves on him, must have love like him, a burning love; and to excite it in us by frequent ejaculatory prayers in order to become perfect Oblates. For this purpose, let us often remind ourselves of the themes of love: love of preference, love of gratitude.

1. Love of preference

What is noble and great attracts us. We love and we glorify ourselves on approaching it because we grow on the approach of what is great. For example, all those who have seen Pius IX are proud of him. It seems that the honor of being at one of his audiences has made them participate in the nobility and dignity of this august figure. What wouldn't we give for honor and reputation? Well, God has all of this and to an infinite degree. What is beautiful inspires us, from the inanimate stone to the most gifted person. All this is from God who has it infinitely. Does he not deserve our love? St. Paul wanted to die to see Jesus: "I wish to depart and be with Christ" [cf. Philippians 1:23]. The Blessed Virgin and many saints have died from the desire to contemplate him. How great his beauty must be in his glorious body!

2. Love of gratitude

*Behold this Heart which has so loved humanity:* gives life, promises redemption, preparing it through a chosen people, by the wonders of Egypt, the desert, the Holy Land before the captivity, the return, by the Incarnation, Passion, Agony; giving his Heart and inventing what human love could never have discovered: the Eucharist, the sacrament of love, vocation. Finally, for us, the gift of his Heart, disposing the Bishop to grant, for two or three poor sinners, an altar, a tabernacle, the Heart of Jesus putting his Heart everywhere under our eyes to tell us: *Behold this Heart which has so loved humanity.* Is it *not enough* to excite us to the charity and love of the Heart of Jesus?

**[37] Wednesday Conference, January 7, 1880**

Again today, to dwell on the last conference, let's leave the ordinary framework and consider the Magi. They were really Oblates. Why did they leave everything? Wasn't it to offer themselves with their gifts? "They offered" [Matthew 2:11]: the Church also venerates them and they have a tomb more splendid even than that of St. Peter.

During this octave, what to offer to Jesus in union with them?

1. *Gold*, or the sacrifice of the will and self-love; of bags of this gold since we have no other, but self-will in a day, in an exercise! Let us offer everything to Jesus, and take the motto: whatever Jesus wants. It is half of our vocation, the immolation of the will, the other is the gift of the heart, of love.
2. *Incense*, or prayer by frequent ejaculatory prayers, as: "Let the Heart of Jesus be praised and loved everywhere," "In you, Heart of Jesus I have hoped." By all the exercises of piety, especially by the Divine Office well-recited, which is a perpetual incense, each verse a swing of the censer, if it is well-recited.
3. *Myrrh*:
  - a. of mortification: our souls are a death for Jesus. They have a fetid taste to him. Let us use mortification to keep for Jesus a body he has made his own and with members that are his members. Mortification by comportment, by promptness at rising, by the reserve at meals indicated by the director himself, by wearing a hair shirt for those who are still young and vigorous. That's the myrrh to offer.
  - b. of compassion: by embalming the wounds of Jesus, Mary and Magdalene and St. John certainly offered this myrrh of compassion for the pain caused to Jesus by sinners, especially by Judas, whom we resemble, we Oblates, more or less by our betrayals.

So, let us offer Jesus these presents, carrying us by thought to his manger in the course of the day.

### **[38] Friday Conference, January 9, 1880**

We have seen that we must believe in veracity, hope in kindness, and above all, love God's goodness to us. Charity summarizes the first three commandments toward God: charity for the neighbor summarizes the seven others that concern our neighbor and ourselves. You will love your neighbor as yourself, [therefore: *and* yourself]. But as it is God whom we must love in our neighbor, in reality everything is reduced to loving God. "To God alone be honor, glory, and love" [cf. I Timothy 1:17].

Why must you love your neighbor?

1. Because God loves him. God loves him: this is his work, his masterpiece. He has redeemed him, he calls him to glory: "Wonderfully created, wonderfully redeemed" [from the Liturgy]: created, redeemed, called to glory. God loves him because he comes from him; let's love him for the same reason: we love what belongs to someone we love, his house, his properties, all that is his has our affection and our care.

2. Our neighbor is of the flock of our Lord. These are his sheep. If the son of a king raised little lambs, and we were allowed to visit them, to pet them, what eagerness we would have knowing how to please the prince and if upon leaving the fold we meet one wounded and soiled by its falling out of the fold, what care to catch it, to bring it back, to groom it, and to offer it to the king's son?
3. People are still adopted children of God. What would not be our servility to the king's own son?

These are the motives for loving every person. There are certain categories that must be loved more particularly: the superiors who take the place of the king himself, those suffering in body, mind, or soul and these because our Lord loves them more especially; in a family, one strives to love those disinherited by nature. Our Lord persists in loving the tempted, the sinners because [39] he prefers those to whom he can do more good, / those who give him more opportunity to show his mercy, because he is above all merciful, which means, endowed with a Heart that inclines towards the wretched. Let's not forget it.

If we meet one of these wounded sheep, will we reject it instead of seeking to heal it, to give it back to its shepherd? Our Lord gives himself this title of shepherd more often than any other to show his gentleness, his devotion, and to arouse our charity. There is still a more special category that we must love: no doubt, *our brothers* according to the flesh; we can pray for them, but our Lord will take care of them and will be more careful than ourselves. Above all, *the brothers in vocation* must be loved especially and it is the Holy Spirit who will establish this charity among us, this charity that will make us kind, considerate, tolerant, compassionate for the trials and temptations of our brothers.

### **Sunday Conference, January 11, 1880**

We are undertaking a great work by studying what we are, by the consideration of the passions; what we must be, by the meditation on the virtues. We have seen the theological virtues and spent more time on prolongation of the third, which is charity toward neighbor.

Let us look at the moral virtues that form our manners, our life. Let us relate what we study to this division concerning the spiritual life in various authors. The virtue of *prudence* regulates the intelligence; justice, the will, and the sensibilities, where we have discovered the concupiscent appetite and the irascible appetite under eleven movements; is regulated by *temperance* and *fortitude*, which represses the irascible appetite or arouses it if one is inclined to fear or despair.

[40] Each of these virtues is natural or rational and also supernatural or from grace. Reason tells us that at table we must not eat all that we could take so as not to have indigestion and to

have a freer mind; grace urges mortification to better dominate the body. Reason says that you can walk along the precipice without falling, grace says that it is better to distance oneself a little to preserve oneself more surely.

Each of these virtues is augmented by sanctifying grace, but—a *very important observation in the novitiate*—this increase, this supernatural taste, does not destroy contrary habits already acquired. This explains *two tests of the novices*: The *first* is that on arrival, you feel full of fervor. We have left what we had, we are even proud of it as St. Peter, who had only a few nets full of holes and a rotten boat. It resembled that which Fr. John had seen on the lake of Gennesaret. This did not prevent him from boasting, “Look, we have left everything and followed you” [Matthew 19:27]. This first fervor finds everything easy. To give us more security, the demon himself does not show up. Suddenly, after some time, come occasions, temptations, and the novice is surprised not to be a saint yet; there is not a great distance from surprise to discouragement.

Then comes the *second* test: enlightened by these first graces one sees oneself better, one knows oneself more intimately and one says to oneself, “I am worth less than before entering the novitiate.” One concludes that one does not have a vocation, one wants to leave, one abandons the Rule, one loses confidence.

All this ignores one thing: that one brings with oneself acquired habits of vice that the grace of God does not destroy, but that it helps to fight. What is needed, therefore, are acquired habits of virtue, and we shall have these habits only by acts repeated every day. It is therefore a daily struggle that will make us obtain virtue and that is what the novitiate is reserved for. That's why it lasts two years; otherwise it would take only an hour if vesting [with the habit] were enough to be holy.

What must encourage us Oblates in this daily struggle is the sight of the Heart of Jesus. Think of him by struggling, struggle to console him and console him by love and compassion, resist temptation out of love for the Heart of Jesus and suffer with him, cast a glance at that Heart that so loved humanity.

#### **[41] Wednesday Conference, January 14, 1880**

Prudence is an awakened look on what there is to do, always followed by a prompt action. *The prudence* of a novice consists in not having prudence. *An awakened look* on what there is to do in the future or presently. *In the future*: it is useless and that of the novice master is enough. It is the work of older novices who had to cultivate it in the world. *In the present*: It is a part of prudence, diligence: to attach oneself to present action, “From day to day and hour to hour.” St. Louis Gonzaga: “I will not be concerned with future contingencies.” The most

diligent novice is the first to get up, the first to exercises. As soon as he is awake, he makes the sign of the cross. He ponders these words: "*Behold this Heart which has so loved humanity.*" With that he has enough to sanctify his whole day.

The reasons for having this awakened look on what is to be done presently are the joy that one feels and the advantage that one draws from it, while negligence attracts the disgust of God: "Because you are lukewarm...I will spit you out of my mouth [Revelation 3:16], and soon the curse: "Accursed is the one who is slack in doing the work of the Lord" [Jeremiah 48:10]. Diligence attracts God's friendship: "God loves a cheerful giver" [II Corinthians 9:7], and his blessing. We earn merit every moment through these actions. Let's consider and imitate the diligence of the people of the world: in order to acquire a little gold, they do not fear to shorten their lives. The prophet Baruch depicts them in a few striking pages.

**[42]** A third theme for us is the consolation of the Heart of Jesus who finds his Bethany in the diligent novice, his Bethany, that is to say, the spiritual eagerness of Mary and the more external eagerness of Martha. He finds his Nazareth there, seeing a copy of the diligence of Mary his mother, who was the strong woman *par excellence* and who did not act lukewarm. He finds there the consolation he wanted to find by calling us here. There is much to be done on this point and our Lord is not happy with the negligence that reigns among both the Fathers and the Brothers. If we do not comfort him by our diligence, it will only remain to him to close his house.

### **Friday Conference, January 16, 1880**

Let us consider only one part of justice: obedience, which is justice towards superiors. It is the main virtue of the novice, it is the link between all the others, because all the other virtues are controlled by the Rule. To execute the Rule is the life of the novitiate [?]

"Give me an obedient novice who has observed all his rules and listened to his superiors," said one of our last popes, "and I will canonize him." This virtue is an extension of faith: it considers Jesus in the superior: "Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me" [Luke 10:16]. This assimilates man to the angels by making him a minister as quick as the wind, as ardent as the flame: "Who makes his angels spirits, his ministers a flaming fire [cf. Psalm 104:4].

**[43]** All the founders of Orders praise it greatly and they agree with Holy Scripture, which praises no virtue as much as obedience: "The obedient man will testify successfully" [Proverbs 21:28]. Obedience makes us live in heaven by assimilating us to the angels of God.

The excellence and beauty of this virtue is even more evident to us Oblates. Indeed, what do we have to do? To console Jesus for the sins of the world. But in all sin, there is disobedience, and so millions of disobedient acts accumulate on the Heart of Jesus. Today, Friday, millions and millions of disobedient people casting insults at Jesus' face like Herod's soldiers, will despise the precept of abstinence. Add to all this the disobedience of pride and covetousness, and you will see the bitter flood of disobedience ascending to heaven. Is it not consolation to Jesus seeing that we obey to make reparation for all this, but also what sorrow if he sees the same disobedience here? "But it was you, a man my equal" [Psalm 55:13]. It's the most heartbreaking of wounds. Oh, let's all do something when this unhappiness occurs here, let's all do something to repair this fault and console Jesus for fear that he will reject us and fall back anew into his state of begging for consolation. Let us call upon him to give us this virtue.

#### **[44] Sunday Conference, January 18, 1880**

We have seen *the excellence* of obedience: it makes us live like angels, pointing to God as he is served in superiors. Its *advantage*: it gives all security. Jesus cannot condemn us on judgment day. With obedience, we always do what is most perfect. Today a few more themes and some words about the practice of obedience. [Fr. John comments on the Rule here.]

1. *The example of Jesus*: thirty years of his life are summarized in obedience: "He was obedient to them" [Luke 2:51]; last three years: "He became obedient even to death [Philippians 2:8]; "Although he was the Son of God, he learned obedience through what he suffered, and having been made perfect" [cf. Hebrews 5:8-9]. There are still other reasons.
2. The other Orders command and advise concerning obedience; they advise internal resignation; here, for the Oblates, it is required because of the vow of victimhood, which perfects the other vows and as a result it demands the perfection of obedience which is precisely this inner resignation.

Let us consider again that it will happen, and it happens that the superiors are less intelligent than the subordinates, and the latter would be better abandoned to their own mind; however, they do more meritoriously. Let's look at these intermediate superiors as the representatives of God. Let us not forget that we are called to the perfection of obedience. When we witness a disobedience, let us try to repair it. Let those who disobey, beware of being rejected and replaced, for it is certain that there is a certain limit to graces and Jesus has so far been incredibly merciful.



#### **[45] Wednesday Conference, January 21, 1880**

##### *Penance is Attached to Justice*

The fate of the bad angels is a terrible proof of the necessity of atonement. But penance is not only the atonement made by humanity. It is atonement and reparation because of the cross of Jesus. To the voluntary penance of humanity, Jesus adds proper satisfaction and thus brings mercy upon the sinner. When voluntary penance is lacking, justice takes its course alone and mercy must abstain from manifesting itself. This is one of the threats of this era. The Blessed Virgin also asks for penance at La Salette, at Lourdes.

This virtue of justice is the basis of our Congregation: it is to attract mercy to the world that we *offer ourselves voluntarily* to God. "He was oppressed because he willed it" [Isaiah 53:7]: it was also the goal of Jesus and it is with him that we say, "Ecce venio" [Hebrews 10:7].

#### **Friday Conference, January 23, 1880**

##### *Penitential Themes*

*From God: his majesty.* We have a feeling of sadness within when we see offended a great one of the earth. Justice shows us the necessary penance there. *His goodness.* What do we not owe, we, above all, who for 1800 years are the most privileged? We become Judases if we do not do penance.

*From us:* the harm we do to ourselves, the benefits we deprive ourselves of, after having **[46]** offended without reparation, a Father, a benefactor. / *From what is near:* the Church, France, our community, because of the communion of saints...*Especially* the sentiment of the Heart of Jesus. This is his main sentiment. He has come to do penance, to remove the obstacle and to lay down the sources of mercy. That is why we must love this virtue and practice its actions. It is not necessary that after having received the most beautiful vocations which have been given for 1800 years [?], we would show ourselves so unworthy by offending him? Every fault committed here must be expiated by some penance: let us sacrifice ourselves to the Rule by penance instead of violating it by enjoyment.

A Reparative Association of the Penitent Heart of Jesus has been formed [Father gives us some details], but our Work is better. There, Jesus appears bound by the sins of the world. It is up to us to undo it by reparation for priestly faults. There, he promises the salvation of the Church and France. For all the more reason will we obtain it by softening the most sensitive wound of his Heart: may this sentiment of salvation be an encouragement to make reparation well, to make us worthy of our vocation so as not to be rejected.

[For the month of March, St. Joseph prepares graces of the cross.] This word of Fr. John reminds me of the deceased: the month of March 1880 will be memorable.

#### **[47] Monday Conference, January 26, 1880**

Yesterday began a novena in honor of the Purification and for two reasons: one *general*: this festival has a special relationship with our Work: it is the double manifestation of the oblation of our Lord, the *Ecce Venio* pronounced in the Father's bosom. Especially on this day, the Blessed Virgin also offered her dear Jesus, and the prophecy of Simeon showed her all the sufferings reserved for the Son and the Mother. Let's enter into those feelings.

*One particular*: Our Lord chose this feast two years ago to give extraordinary supernatural lights to the Work, which have not faded since. He chooses this day to give us special graces and this year we must expect everyone to receive purifying crosses during this novena. Let's know how to profit from and cooperate in the work of Jesus.

To follow the plan of our conferences, we have to speak of *gratitude*, which is justice for the goods received from God, as penance is justice for the evil done to God. And so, we see justice in its different relationships. Penance is the basis of our Work: it is like the deep color of the robe of virtues in which we must appear in the eyes of God. Gratitude is one of the most apparent colors on this background. It is part of the ends of the New Testament sacrifice which the sacrifices of the Old Testament prefigured.

#### **[48] Sunday Conference, February 1, 1880**

**[49]** Mary's feelings toward the purification were humility, mortification, penance, and reparation, for she had just undergone legal excommunication, being deprived of connections with the sanctuary and ordinary prayers. Our Lord came to offer himself again, on the same mountain as Isaac, but this time accepted. He knew that his immolation was agreeable, but that the sacrifice would be made for 33 years, from day to day, until the supreme end, Calvary. His love accepted everything: he had the two doves offered to signify that he was the victim of adoration and the victim of atonement. St. Joseph also offered Jesus with the feelings which the greatest of the patriarchs could then have had. "Let this same mind be in you as was in the Heart of Jesus and Mary" [cf. Philippians 2:5].

#### **Monday Conference, February 2, 1880**

The works of God always have a certain analogy with the very life of Jesus, and we see this analogy in our Work. It began a few years ago or rather it was as announced by the desires and aspirations of some women, who were like the Marys, who had a vague but persistent idea,

[50] feeling that God wanted some Work while not knowing too much about which one. / Then came Christmas: the life of the Work was that of Bethlehem, unknown, obscure. Today the Heart of Jesus gives it some publicity by acquiring and uniting elite souls to it as were Simeon and Anna. It is no longer only Joseph and Mary and the shepherds, but it is the regulars of the Temple who come to recognize Jesus and his work. Let us hope that he will send souls more generous than us, to continue and perfect what has begun. For us, let us try not to attract reprobation but strive to make ourselves docile to our Work.

### **Wednesday Conference, February 4, 1880**

Fr. John returns to penance which is the basis of the Work. After having recalled the first motive, which is the offended majesty of God, and insisted on the transaction made between mercy and justice through Jesus, he shows us in penance an advantage, a grace spread by the penitent Heart of Jesus: developing and commenting wonderfully on the Mass of the Passion said on Sexagesima Tuesday: "What are these wounds on your chest?" "These wounds I received in the house of my friends." [Zechariah 13:6]. They loved me, however, behold what they did to me. Fr. John recalls the impression produced by his conference on penance and guarantees it. He urges us to renew it in ourselves. He ends in word and deed by the, "I will strike the shepherd" [Matthew 26:31, Mark 14:27; cf. "Strike the shepherd" [Zechariah 13:7].

### **[51] Friday Conference, February 6, 1880**

#### *On the Virtue of Religion*

We have seen justice: toward the superior, as representative of God, considered as master, this is obedience; toward God, considered as giving goods, this is recognition; as offended, this is penance. Justice toward God as eminently holy, this is *religion*, virtue which impels us to treat the things of God and God himself with holiness. Our very name of religious commits us to it: a *religious* respect; this very term says everything: to see God in everything because he is everywhere, because everything is his and from him. This house is God's, angels are appointed here: an angel is the guardian of each room, cell.

Our religious habit must also remind us of God: the cassock, which must be blessed if it is not, our scapular, the cord, all this reminds us of God and commands our respect. In the chapel, especially where legions of angels are present with Jesus, our respect must be deep during each exercise. One religious theme is the horror commonly inspired by its opposite: profanation. This word always sounds bad, even for the people of the world. Desecration is the use of a sacred object for common and vulgar use.

Let us arouse in ourselves this respect for God and the things of God, of our brothers, of our clothes, of our dwelling, of the chapel. Speaking of pious exercises and other points where religion is in question, we shall treat it less summarily.

### **[52] First Conference, Sunday, February 8, 1880**

It is good to remain for some time on the virtue of religion before moving on to another, to form us to inspire all our actions. Today, let's talk about three points, special notices.

1. *Pray for Vocations to our Work.* God calls, but immediately the demon opposes and raises a thousand obstacles. Among these hesitant vocations, one especially asks for our prayers, the one whom Fr. John wants to name Peter: to help him and to drive out the devil, we are making a novena: we will recite the Litany of St. Peter and during this novena on Wednesday and Friday, two religious of good will shall fast rigorously, eating bread and drinking water at noon: "prayer and fasting" [Mark 9:28]. Fr. John quotes some passages from the letter he received from this Peter.
2. *Forty Hours:* if an angel came to tell you that Jesus expects something from us during this period of licentiousness, we would not be surprised. If it were given to us to see the joy of wild debauchery of those nights of dancing and drunkenness in which those who are usually well-off let themselves be led to offend God by abandoning themselves to the lowest enjoyments, we would understand better that Jesus turns to us. He said to himself: what will they do, the friends of my Heart? And his eyes are fixed on this little nest of the Sacred Heart by repeating "I am asking." We will do something. While waiting for the Work to grow and having passed over the *Consummatum est* and Pentecost, being able to make numerous and great reparations, let us do a little mortification; here is what can be done.

### **[53] Second Conference, Sunday, February 8, 1880**

Today, Adoration of one only until 9 o'clock. Holy Hour for two or three valiant ones. Tomorrow from 7 AM until 9 AM, Adoration of one each, every half-hour. Tuesday, worship of two all day until midnight, especially if we can get exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

Monday and Tuesday abstinence. Do not fear these mortifications. Jesus knows how to pay them back. It is especially that of the heart, which he asks. Let's not forget that he told Blessed Margaret Mary that one soul alone can repair for a thousand and console him for their faults. His infinite goodness multiplies the little that is offered to him by penance.

3. *Lent*. Instead of devoting a cycle of 33 years to honor and represent the life of Jesus, the Church wanted to renew us in the spirit of the Nativity, the Passion of Jesus Christ every year. She spends 40 days honoring the penitential life of Jesus. Let's join with her. In a way, this Lent is the first one of our Work. Last year, we were 3 or 4. If we do it well, there will be special graces, even tangible ones. As it was for the Purification. What is needed above all is the mortification of the heart: silence, regularity throughout the house. Especially in the kitchen where we meet so easily to talk. This is the world, this kitchen—Pilate's kitchen—where St. Peter dissipates all his fervor to talk and prepares to deny Jesus three times. Let's have the courage to say: be quiet, we are in Lent.

#### **[54] Wednesday Conference, February 11, 1880**

At the beginning of Lent, it is good to speak a little about penance. Until the 11th century, the Church imposed very severe penances, but on the other hand one hoped to obtain a complete remission of sin. Now we give only minimal penances because of a weakening of faith. Rather than extinguish the smoking wick, the Church allows, in the other life, to expiate the more terrible penalties and grants the remission of sin. However, the disappearance of voluntary penance has weighed down the arm of God, and since then Jesus always appears to be suffering, claiming men for voluntary penance—heart and body—to unite it with his own penance and appease the justice of his Father. This is the source of this spirit of reparation that is passing over the world right now.

Fr. John reads a few ancient penitential canons—terribly punishing the slightest faults—to give us an idea of what we have to do if we want to respond to our vocation and help us to have an affection for what little we do.

#### **[55] Friday Conference, February 13, 1880**

On every Friday of Lent, we meditate on a subject offered by the Church. Today's is one that relates well to our vocation. Fr. John comments and explains Isaiah's words about the Passion in the Office of the Holy Crown of Thorns. He insists especially on this point that it is for the sins of others that Jesus has suffered. The prophet repeats it 9 or 10 times. Beside this unspeakable suffering, he shows the reward, "seed of longevity" [Isaiah 53:10]: the price of immolation is a numerous posterity. So, it was for Abraham, for the martyrs under whose patronage the parishes sanctify themselves. This is the remark of Pope St. Clement in his *Constitutions*.

Is it not very encouraging for us to devote ourselves to our vocation which is the imitation of the immolation of Jesus? Let's be generous; let's accept the sacrifice; to refuse it would be to incur damnation. Let us immolate ourselves in the little things that are asked of us: silence,

regularity, the mortifications of Lent. To be comforted, Jesus asks only that of us, a voluntary penance. Let us agree to it and comfort this gentle Savior by sharing his hidden, obscure immolation. For this will be our vocation rather than great exterior works. There will be teaching and some work outside, but above all immolation and the hidden life.

**[56] Sunday Conference February 15, 1880**

**[57] *On Temperance***

We will say little because we have already talked about it during Lent. Let us pause for a moment on sobriety and abstinence, two forms of temperance. Sobriety guards itself from excess. Abstinence remains on this side, even of sobriety. Abstinence and sobriety are the secret of the great role played in history by certain peoples: the Persians, the Spartans, the Romans. There they found the vigor of the body and mind that distinguished them. To acquire this double vigor has been their aim, and that of every honest and reasonable pagan.

The Christian has other reasons: to be more fit for the things of God, for meditation. It is impossible to meditate for him whose mind is full of coarse, bodily food. Besides, the overly cared-for body weighs down the mind and a frail body is more apt for contemplation. St. Bernard preferred these kinds of subjects.

Holy Communion is also a motive for material abstinence. We are cold for heavenly food when we are on fire for earthly food. A particular theme for the Oblates is that Jesus most certainly wishes to communicate to them very special sweet words in Holy Communion. That's where he wants to converse more intimately with them. Let us not place obstacles there to our virtue and vocation by guilty and dangerous intemperance.

**[58] Wednesday Conference, February 18, 1880**

***On Humility***

Within the group of temperance is also humility, the virtue that pushes us to hold the mind in the rank which is due to it. If faith is the first, because it supernaturalizes all other virtues, if charity is the best, because it is the purpose and the end of all virtues, humility also excels at this point of view in that it prepares, obtains, and consecrates the virtues: "He gives grace to the humble" [James 4:6].

In relation to the people to whom it is exercised, its

- 1<sup>st</sup> degree is submission to superiors,
- the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, to peers,
- the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree, to inferiors,
- the 4<sup>th</sup> degree, to all people whomever they may be.

In relation to the way it is exercised:

- the 1<sup>st</sup> degree is to esteem oneself the least of all,
- the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, to wish to be watched the least of all,
- the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree, to show that we are the least of all,
- the 4<sup>th</sup> degree, to love that others treat us as the least of all,
- the 5<sup>th</sup> degree, to show love and gratitude to those who treat us as the least of all.

The reasons are:

1. Truth: One sin is so ugly, so humiliating, so contrary to justice, to reason that if we had only original sin, it would be enough to consider us as the most miserable of beings. But to this are added personal sins so humiliating, so unreasonable, that we are justified in believing that another with the same graces would not have committed them. And if this sin is that of a religious, a cleric, a favorite of Jesus, who can believe himself worthy after being equal to Judas, the Jews, the executioners?
2. Spiritual interest: If we wish great things for God, we will have grace only in proportion to humility. "He gives grace to the humble. God opposes the proud" [James 4:6]. "He has done great thing for me...who has looked on the lowliness of his servant" [Luke 1:48-49].
3. The example of our Lord: This is the most noble for the Oblates of his Heart. Study and imitate his Heart. "He humbled himself" [Philippians 2:8]. "Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart" [Matthew 11:29]. All his life he hid himself, humiliated *by truth*, for he was charged with all the sins of men and was overwhelmed with infinite shame. This is the only way to be his brother, his friend: "For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother" [Matthew 12:50]. Without it, our place is not here and we do not deserve to remain under the same roof.

### **[59] Friday Conference, February 20, 1880**

*At the Reception of Fr. Paul-Marie Philippot as a Postulant*

"I have been crucified with Christ" [Galatians 2:19]. Today the Church invites us to venerate the lance and the nails: three nails and the lance; and these words, "I have been crucified with Christ" apply well to this context.

But besides the general sense of a mortified life that the apostle gives them, there is a more special meaning for religious and for us. That by which we need to be crucified at the cross of Jesus is the spirit, the will, the body, the heart. This is the immolation, the real martyrdom at every moment that gives us the crown; the spirit, by the submission of judgment and the regulation of one's occupations; the will, by regularity and obedience. The body is figured by the nails of the feet, by the mortifications that the Rule imposes especially during this time of

penance. The heart, it is there the lance which will open the Heart of Jesus. The crucifixion of the heart, even of its most legitimate affections; the total immolation of its desires.

### **Sunday Conference, February 22, 1880**

*Humility, continued*

We have seen the theory of humility. Let's see its practice. There are the *inner acts* that are done within the soul. External acts that are without witnesses are attached. These are feelings and confessions of our misery. One can make a million a day in a thousand ways. Thus, to consider only God and us, his *commandments* and his benefits, we can accuse our misery, for example, based on the first commandment: I pray so badly, I have sinned so often and in prayer, how miserable am I! So, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> commandments. On those who examine purity, passing over lightly. Because our misery is so great that we might still be sinning at the memory of our faults, so much humility is a veritable truth by accusing our misery and our weaknesses.

Its *benefits*. The mind, the memory, the will, the body: I have used them so badly! How miserable I am! And the supernatural gifts: the graces reported, so many Communions, the inspirations of salvation, what abuse I have made of them! It is so shameful that I can very likely assume that the worst of the galley slaves would not have acted so treacherously if he had been so filled with grace. This consideration is enough to belittle me.

*Between neighbor and us*: the inner acts consist in the desire for humiliation and the fear of [60] praise. / If he knew me well, he would despise me very much.

*External acts*: to seek the last places, the lowest jobs, the humiliations of modesty, such as speaking to the superior on your knees. These external acts *are made by us*.

Those which are done *to us*: one imposes an opinion on us, one makes a reproach toward us, deserved or not, any affront whatsoever: to receive it with gratitude and joy, a smile on the lips and say: this one puts me in my place on earth, so much the better. God will be satisfied with it and will not give me the place in hell, for which my sins destine me. Every affront is a grace. We receive the punishment for it that otherwise we will go to hell. Fr. John insists on this. And for that, love humiliations because they are a safeguard from hell. God does not punish the same fault twice. Each Brother will perform 10 inner acts, each Father 20, and on the first Wednesday of March, 4 or 5 young ones will have 5 intentions given by Fr. John.

### **[61] Wednesday Conference, February 25, 1880**

Again, to better maintain us in the virtue of humility, we do not treat a new topic today and speak of another very necessary thing as well: the habitual spirit of our vocation, the spirit of



immolation. We could only say a few words on the day of the reception into postulancy. “I have been crucified with Christ” [Galatians 2:19].

There is in every Christian something of Jesus Christ, but Jesus Christ wanted there to be more in one than in the other of this or that resemblance with him. Thus, some reproduce rather his public life, others his vigils, others his hidden life; all, however, summarily imitating the whole. As for us, what we have to imitate is his life of immolation. Jesus Christ immolated himself visibly on the day of his Passion where his body was nailed to the cross. Since then there have been those still crucified bodily and if he asked for it from us, we should respond to his grace. But for the moment, this is not what he is asking us. He wants us to imitate him in his immolation at Nazareth, as well as in his public life if it is necessary, but especially in Nazareth: a continuous and *gentle immolation in the little things of the Rule*. So, we twelve are here by his will, not ours; so, we twelve are crucified and the nail is obedience.

Immolation of the will in each exercise. In the morning at the first bell: feet on the floor. Jesus wants them there to nail them there. To leave them in bed is to refuse them to the cross and to lose merit for us, honor for God, and profit for the souls that Jesus expects from each of our immolations.

**[62]** He offers himself continually to the Father in his immolations and he wants to be able to say to his Father: look at those who immolate themselves with me. Then he pours out his graces on the world and on us. Our refusal to do this commanded action is to refuse our hand to Jesus who asks to nail it to his cross. We give ourselves over to intellectual works that do not have approval, which are even forbidden to us, this is refusing to immolate our mind. Let's not believe we do great things by doing our own will. It is a mistake. Let us obey and if something is missing as a result of our obedience, Jesus will make up for it. Let's immolate ourselves completely, we will have rest only on the cross.

### **Friday Conference, February 27, 1880**

We are authorized to have exposition of the Blessed Sacrament on the First Friday of the month. This is great news, and called to such honor it must frighten us, we are so miserable. Jesus wants to find Nazareth and Bethany here. First Friday will be the first day regularly allowed. In a few months it will be every Friday, in a year or two every day. Then, afterwards, other houses will be founded, which will also begin Adoration day and night: Friday the first day of thousands and perhaps millions of Oblate exposition days. What an honor Jesus prepares for us. Let us prepare ourselves, poor sinners, twelve wretches who deserve nothing, who offended him, still offend him. [Fr. John insists very much on our unworthiness.]

**[63]** Let us prepare. If we were to receive the visit of a bishop, of the Pope, minds, hearts, bodies, everything would contribute to prepare for it, nothing spared or too much. And on Friday we will be visited by the King of Kings. I remember the audience granted by Pius IX to the pilgrims who came from afar. They were informed of the ceremonies, prepared their petitions, and put all the splendor possible into their preparation. Does not our soul have to do so for Jesus? He too is getting ready and I'm sure I'm not wrong in affirming this. He is preparing to receive his Oblates for the first time and he prepares his graces, he will give of himself as in Nazareth and Bethany. Pius IX inquired about those who visited him and prepared what he knew would please them, stripping himself of all his belongings for them.

As means of preparation, let's impose some mortifications upon ourselves. Take away a few bites in the refectory, something that pleases, greater accuracy, do everything more perfectly, during the evening recreation we will remain in silence or consecrate a part of it to go humbly before our Lord to make a good review of past and present faults. Those who are authorized to wear the hair shirt or use the whip may ask for an increase of penance in this respect.

**[64]** As for interior dispositions, no more laxity or resistance; purify your soul by acts of humility, adorn it with acts of love and contrition for the visit of the King of hearts. Let us prolong our novena of acts of humility until Friday by adding so many more acts of love.

**[65] Sunday Conference, February 29, 1880**

To remain longer in our novena of inner acts of humility, we will speak again today of humility and we will see the practice of external acts of humility in greater detail. This virtue is so necessary to us! We want to build a great building; humility will make us place the foundations on the rock of faith. Until now, we have built on the clay and sand of our bad nature; it is time to dig deep so that our edifice does not sink but rises to heaven to comfort the eyes and the Heart of Jesus. The greater our humility, the stronger the foundations will be.

Let's look at the foundation of the Church, see the humility of Jesus and the Apostles. Has anyone been more humiliated than Jesus? It is not in the splendor, nor in the ease, nor in ordinary poverty, nor even in a common stable, it is in the hollow of a rock that Jesus wanted to be born. The following three words summarize 30 years of his life: "He was obedient to them" [Luke 2:51]. Obscurity, silence, submission. And his Passion! He humbles himself in every way: people think he is a fool, his body is overwhelmed by all the affronts, all the sufferings. Fr. John expounds on the portrait Isaiah traces: "Despised and rejected by others" [Isaiah 53:3-4]. An entire cohort strikes him on the head with a reed, and spits in his face like a soldier knows in all conscience how to spit and strike at the same time.

[66] And the Apostles? Listen to St. Paul: “We have become like the rubbish of the world,” the sweepings, which are the most repulsive, “And the refuse of all things” [1 Corinthians 4:13]: the spittoon of everyone. And in effect, they had trials of all kinds.

This is how the Church began: the slaps, spitting, blows, contempt; it has been the “cornerstone” [cf. Ephesians 2:20]. This is the ideal for the practice of humility, because is the Passion of Jesus just a legend? Isaiah adds an astonishing word: “We should desire him” [Isaiah 53:2]. This Jesus, who was conspired against, we have desired him. This is really addressed to only a few souls: we may wish to go through great trials too, but *let’s remember this*: we will have courage for the ordeals sent only as long as we are prepared by habitual interior dispositions of humility, without which we will weaken.

Since humility is so necessary for our Work, let us therefore love *the lowly jobs* [Fr. John repeats this expression three times], like sweeping, emptying the vases, the last place, the affronts: let us not pretend that there are students there: even so, would we know it? Do we not know what's going on in other novitiates? It was said recently at a table in town that at the [67] novitiate of the Dominicans, / all the confreres had spit in the face of a proud young father to chastise his pride. Let’s not fear all those physical humiliations, those mortifications we deserve. When we are good masters of our body, then we can do something. Moreover, we will try to bring the students to this spirit of mortification that should prepare us for the day on Friday.

Fr. John then announces that he will ask for humiliations this week to prepare for Friday and Holy Week only. He reminds us that we are going to proceed to Culp by insisting on the practical imitation of Jesus in his Passion. He himself will begin and asks for a penance that my memory will not forget.

### **Sunday Conference, February 29, 1880**

#### *Overture to the Month of St. Joseph*

During his life, St. Joseph offers analogies with our life as Oblates. We see him, born in Nazareth, humbly spending his life there in obscurity, like Mary; it is the royal family completing, before the birth of Christ, the great expiation begun at Babylon.

[68] His union with Mary had barely made him enter more directly into the life of reparation, then the trial takes place. *You will always find a trial in a life of reparation*, in a life of atonement. But his confidence certainly merited the angel's arrival to deliver him from anxiety. Then other joys succeeded other sadnesses. Then the intimate life of Nazareth.

During this month, let's try to guess at the intimate conversations with Jesus. He must have known the scriptures, to have special insights on them. So, let's look at Joseph and imitate him during this month in his hidden life of Nazareth.

**[69] Wednesday Conference, March 3, 1880**

Today ends our novena. It was conditional. Have we fulfilled the conditions? Has our casualness omitted nothing of the prescribed acts of humility and love? We wanted vocations. It happens to us: *days have not gone by that St. Joseph brings several*. Have we merited the favors of this great saint?

But this is but a secondary goal of the novena. The other, the main one, is preparation for Friday's graces. Have we purified and adorned our souls? Fr. John then reads excerpts that we listened to while kneeling, revelations instructing the Oblates on the dispositions requested of them. He briefly commented on them and said, among other things, that one must prepare by a good Confession, spend all one's free time before the Blessed Sacrament and not look at one's hour as a burden, to be served in the dryness of books of piety. He reminds us that our hearts are the temple where Jesus wants to be so much more consoled there than he is more outraged elsewhere. The altar of these temples is our heart where the sacrifice of confident and pure prayer must be raised, the perpetual holocaust of the will. Recall the instruction from the Dedication, our Lord said again. [*cf. Sunday Conference, November 9, 1879*] Friday: silence, calm, cessation of all work.

**[70] Sunday Conference, March 7, 1880**

**[71] *On Modesty***

It remains for us to speak of a virtue which the entire group of temperance supposes: it is the flowering and the external radiance of all the others of this group. This is modesty, which regulates the external movements of our body, especially the eyes. How it is so necessary! The immodesty which has lost one of our brothers indicates how much. The motives of this virtue are the beauty it gives to the soul, the imitation of Jesus and Mary.

There is the natural and physical beauty that excites the senses, moves the passions, leads to evil, but there is the heavenly beauty that touches, that draws itself to the good. This is modesty, it is that of which is spoken when one declares our Lord the most beautiful of the children of men. For according to some of the Fathers, our Lord would have pushed his annihilation to the point of refusing physical beauty.

Jesus was modest. When he is represented doing some important act, the Gospel says that he looks up, so he normally kept his eyes down. Mary was modest. Modesty is instinctively

understood in this qualification of virgin that is given to her: the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of virgins. This beauty is that of the saints, which attracted everyone and made them agreeable to all. There is another theme: the presence of God of which it is the consequence, and also the proof and the mark.

**[72]** Above all, we must be modest because our Lord more especially lives here: last Friday we tangibly breathed a divine atmosphere. He gave himself and spoke to the heart. So, let's be modest here, and to go into detail:

1. In the study room, let us regulate our actions. Let's put them in order. Do not work near the fire, but if it is cold, go honestly to warm your hands for five minutes. Be sure that our Lord asks it, because if not, the work might not be easy or profitable. Then return to your place. Focus on your own work.
2. In the refectory, do not lean on your elbows because modesty includes everything: honesty and propriety.
3. In the chapel, go to your place, it is elementary; then do not lean on the pew and on your behind at the same time. Because we often enter the chapel many times during the day, we lose respect. The high priest at Jerusalem entered the Holy of Holies only at great feasts, and prepared by vigils and fasts, and yet the body of Jesus was not present. The Fathers especially couldn't forget this respect, they who often recite the Office there. During this exercise, don't put down your book and don't read from a distance with the book sitting on the on the pew.

**[73] Wednesday, March 10, 1880**

Fr. John was absent and had two chapters of the *Apostleship of Suffering* read during the usual hour.

1. *The qualities* of the apostle of suffering: pure and innocent: *Lamb of God*. "For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners" [Hebrews 7:26].
2. *The dispositions*:
  - a. spirit of faith,
  - b. spirit of humility. *Of all the spiritual maxims, the most important to remember when one aspires to perfection, especially when one wishes to contribute to the salvation and perfection of souls, is the following maxim: "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble" [I Peter 5:5].*
  - c. patience and conformity to the divine will. It is God who has chosen us for his victims; it is for him to choose our cross and impose it on us: "O, good cross."
  - d. spirit of love: "love and do what you will" [St. Augustine].
  - e. spirit of zeal: "who is not zealous, does not love" [St. Augustine].

## [74] Friday Conference, March 12, 1880

### *Modesty continued*

It is the flowering of the virtues in the temperance group. Here, Fr. John briefly summarizes the last conference. The rules are the same for all Congregations. Here is something special for us.

We are devoted to the contemplative life much more than to the active life, which will never be more than accidental to our vocation. But contemplative life requires more modesty than the active life. And from the contemplative life we form a Congregation of Adoration. We aspire to the familiarity of Jesus, who must find in us Nazareth, Bethany, St. John, St. Joseph, Lazarus: be constantly with Jesus, see him in our midst. In a short time, we will spend part of the day at the foot of his altars: this Society demands extreme modesty both internally and externally.

Fr. John develops St. Ignatius' rules of modesty and says, among other things, all extremely useful to record:

1. that the face should always breathe *a sweet joy*, the joy that one makes appear, helping inner joy to come and vice versa; otherwise we will drive away the neighbor, who will judge our vocation by that;
2. conversations, which must not run on the exterior things of the world, must be held cheerfully, but without laughter;
3. departure and return, if you go out, without having seen anyone through modesty of the eyes. Hold your head straight without pretension of devotion by tilting it; be sober in gestures, hold your body straight by mortification. Have clean clothes, especially for chapel and the conferences.

## [75] Sunday Conference, March 14, 1880

### *On Chastity*

In the temperance group, after modesty comes chastity, which represses the movements of the flesh and abstains from the sensual pleasures related to these movements. For this virtue, as for the others, let's examine its *excellence*, its *practice*, its *motives*.

1. She seduces our Lord who celebrates his wedding day with the chaste soul everywhere: the *Song of Songs* is the lyric ode of his union with the Church, with Mary, with the chaste soul. It is virgins whom he makes sing that they are *the brides* of Christ: "Come, spouse of Christ." On earth, he has surrounded himself with chaste souls: for thirty years in Nazareth, Mary and Joseph; at Calvary, Mary and St. John; and also, for the consolation of those who have not preserved, but only repaired innocence, at Calvary he associates St. Magdalen with his passion. However, it is souls with chastity preserved with whom he preferably surrounds himself and he will do the same in our Work:

*choosing children he will confide to Mary and Joseph until the moment they enter into the Work*, however, not excluding repaired innocence because our Work is a Calvary where the repentance of Magdalen can comfort him.

2. The *practice* of this virtue consists above all in flight: changing one's thoughts, one's occupations, one's concerns, even changing one's place physically if necessary, because we will always have to fight. For God will not give us the grace to spare us from such attacks as with St. Joseph and most probably with St. John. / He will say to us as to St. Paul, "Your grace is sufficient for me" [II Corinthians 12:9] and lets us be buffeted by these attacks of Satan.

One more way is prayer to Mary, St. Joseph, St. John, and the patrons of the novitiate, St. Louis Gonzaga and St. Stanislaus. Another means is abstaining from pleasures not only unlawful as undue familiarity and weaknesses of all kinds, but also permitted pleasures, although the Rule has provided for the moment when it is softened because of our weakness. Our Lord will not allow these softenings to be fatal to us. There is a hard layer, let's not flee from it because we would be punished; we can affirm this without being a prophet. There are the vigils, they are very small, at least let's not diminish them, let's not delay rising by 1 hour, ½ hour, or 5 minutes. It's very dangerous. There are still the fasts and abstinences of the Rule. In this respect, we observe much, for all sensuality in the refectory is soon punished there; even if the temptations are more vivid, let's ask for additional fasts without believing what nature says. However, we are consciously obliged to be dispensed from whatever destroys our health. The Rule does not order suicide.

Let us abstain from the pleasures of the senses such as sight: let's not lurk in the libraries passing from titles to pages and reading all kinds of things. In the same way, for hearing, no pleasure from music if it is not religious music. We attach more to thought than to air. Let's be extremely cautious about touch. Let us say as our Lord to St. Magdalen: "Do not touch me" [John 20:17].

- [77] Let's mortify the sense of taste in the refectory by paying more attention to the reading than to the food and preferably by choosing the dishes that come back to us the least.
3. *Motives*. The first and the most powerful motive is our vocation, which asks us to be dutiful with our Lord and his familiars. For our Lord only surrounds himself with virgins in Nazareth, as on Calvary. We must spend the day with him: the morning with Jesus, Mary, Joseph at Nazareth; in the afternoon, the hour of crucifixion at Calvary; in the evening with Jesus alone in Gethsemane, because unfortunately he was alone there.

*I have good reasons to believe that this is the Lord's will for us.* If we must always be with Jesus, then let us be chaste because he wants only chaste souls with him, as he shows in a thousand places of Scripture. If you want a reason for such interest: be chaste and you will have many graces, because chastity attracts our Lord, the source of graces. Let's practice chastity during these two weeks which is a time, *par excellence*, of penance and of repression. Let us practice all the virtues of the temperance group. This is the best time, since repression and renunciation are imposed on us more than ever.

**[78]** Let's exercise modesty. This is the business of the entire novitiate, not just one day. The most important thing of the novitiate is to acquire the principal virtues to a sufficient degree in order to be able to perfect them later in life, so as not to pronounce reckless vows by committing oneself to virtues that have never been practiced.

### **Wednesday Conference, March 17, 1880**

Friday Exposition: one should be prepared. Have we done it? We still have our lukewarmness, our negligence. Let's get ready today and tomorrow.

How to spend this day of Friday? Like Joseph in Nazareth: on this occasion Fr. John reads to us some passages from the life of Mother Marie-Thérèse, religious adorer and repairer, and quotes the two main ideas of the book:

1. The thought of making these Houses of Adoration a Nazareth for Jesus. That is to say, to see the spirit of Nazareth reign there, in obscurity and love.
2. The thought that her work was incomplete without a similar work of priests, to reproduce Nazareth more faithfully. This Mother expressed the conviction that this work would be done.

Fr. John then read other excerpts to us: he took them from the revelations [of Sr. Mary of St. Ignatius]: what divine things! I was transported. The Oblates are committed to the life of Nazareth, from Joseph, whose patronage is so justified: at Nazareth silence, solitude, purity, light, he said. Fr. John commits us to make March 19 a day of St. Joseph in Nazareth. That is: incessant spiritual communion accompanied by acts of communion, adoration, love, thanksgiving.

### **[79] Palm Sunday, March 21, 1880**

It is during this Holy Week more than ever that we must be faithful to the spirit of our vocation. Let's join with Jesus, seek to have his feelings, arouse ourselves to penance and mortification and to an affectionate compassion and reparation. Feelings of penance and compassion: that is what must be sought without mental discord: this would be from nature; without anxiety: this



would be from the demon; but gently, in union with Jesus. If we don't have a tangible grace of compassion, let us at least act with this thought of penance and reparation.

Let's accept the big and small crosses that Jesus will send. We will be more tempted this week and more afraid of this life of penance and mortification that our vocation imposes upon us: temptation to retreat, cowardice before sacrifice; let us resist. The predominant thought of compassion will be for the most painful wound of the Heart of Jesus: the abandonment of his own. The Church herself invites *all* her children in yesterday's Office: "My brothers and my friends have abandoned me" [cf. Job 19:14, Second Nocturne Responsory] from the mouth of Job, one of the most beautiful figures of our Lord. And Jesus at Paray-le-Monial also invites everyone there. The events of each day will serve to maintain these thoughts in us. We already have the flight of the apostles, the betrayal, the denial and the abandonment of those hundreds of disciples *who followed him from Galilee*, says St. Luke [cf. 23:49].

**[80]** From today on, let us use the triumph of the palms for this purpose. That's what our Lord did. Two of his disciples approach him to say: see what triumph; even the pagans want to talk to you. Jesus answers them: "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, unless the grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain...Now my soul is troubled" [John 12, 23-27]. In the midst of triumph, Jesus thinks of his death: horror seizes him at the sight of the sacrifice: "Save me from this hour" [John 12:27]. It is a natural cry, but he remembers his vocation: "But it is for this reason that I come to this hour" [John 12:27]. Finally, the cry of grace: "Father, glorify your name" [John 12:28], followed by the divine response: "I have glorified it and I will glorify it again" [John 12:29].

The angel of consolation. Let us use these words during the temptations that we can have especially in our vocation: "I have come to this hour" [John 12:27]. Penance and compassion, especially for the abandonment of friends. Let each one deprive himself in the refectory and accept all crosses well. During Culp, someone accuses himself of having lost time in the yard to smell the air and the spring sun. Fr. John said that this was forbidden to our vocation.

### **[81] Good Friday, March 26, 1880**

It will be less of a conference than a communal contemplation that will place itself in the course of the individual contemplations we make. Today it is impossible to look away from the cross. With St. Paul we say: "I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified" [1 Corinthians 2:2]. We follow him every step from Gethsemane to Calvary. At this moment, we see him going from the Praetorium to Calvary. This is the carrying of the cross. Let's consider and imitate St. Veronica. Jesus is no less jeered now by these baptized Christians who despise him and insult him especially even today.

Let's go as Simon the Cyrenean to carry the cross with Jesus. It is no less heavy now than it was then: what is heavy is not wood. Our Lord had not weakened under that weight alone; it is the weight of the heart, the weight of sins, that are committed every day by millions. Let's unite ourselves to Mary, who had been prepared for this painful path by torrents of grace that she used worthily for our redemption. She is our Mother, the Mother of Compassion. Let's see and imitate St. John, who makes his novitiate so perfectly in one day; his heart, so gifted with love, must have suffered much. Let us stand with him and Mary at the foot of the Cross and comfort Jesus by loving him and mortifying ourselves like him.

### **[82] Friday Conference, April 2, 1880**

Today is a day of retreat dedicated to union with the agony of our Lord, following his desire. This is the appropriate day to talk about the preparation we are going to have to make and with which we must occupy ourselves every day. The test approaches, we are at the moment of the counsel: "They looked for a way to deliver him" [cf. Mark 11:18]. Even without having supernatural enlightenment, which is far from lacking, one can expect the test: Satan is preparing

- ✓ *because* it is a Congregation that will take care of teaching and he does not want any more Congregations nor Religious teaching,
- ✓ *because* it is a work of priestly and religious reparation,
- ✓ *because* it is the work of the Heart of Jesus where Satan directs his most poisoned treacheries.

We are sure he has reserved the best blows for us. The council is held: is it in the saloons, is it by civil authority, I do not know, but it is held at the house of Caiaphas. It is therefore time to unite ourselves to the agony of Jesus. During the deliberations of his enemies, he, too, was preparing himself in the garden of agony. He had prepared himself during the last year of his public life, which was called the sorrowful year because of the contradictions of the Pharisees, the scribes, and the abandonment of some disciples as we see it when he speaks of the Eucharist.

**[83]** What does the test have in store for us? God knows. Certainly calumnies, contempt, perhaps some external suffering. Let's prepare if we do not want to weaken during the test. The agony will be painful, but if the angel of consolation comes to show us the immense fruits of the Work, its rapid extension after the trial, which after all is necessary because it is the seal of the divine work, in comparison with all these advantages: the innumerable graces that will result for the world through which the Work will sow reparation, the reparative sacrifice offered in the countries where Satan has been unleashed the most, the test will appear light: "slight affliction, eternal weight of glory" [cf. II Corinthians 4:17].

As preparation and then to arrive at saying well, “Ecce venio” [Hebrews 10:7], “Arise, let us go” [Matthew 26: 46], let’s be generous in accepting our little cross each day. Let’s be faithful in carrying them; in this our preparation will consist and the fidelity during the test will be in proportion to the preparation. Let’s pray and *strengthen ourselves in humility. Thus, generosity and humility; there is our preparation.*

#### **[84] Sunday Conference, April 4, 1880**

We spoke Friday of the state in which we must hold our soul during the present time; let’s complete what has been said. Our Lord has shortened the time of preparation for us, and our Work is in Gethsemane before Calvary. It will go through the test by the cross. “Do not fear those who kill the body” [Matthew 10:28], “With desire, I have desired” [Luke 22:15]: to desire and not to fear, to desire the “*Consummatum est*” [John 19:30], because the confirmation will date from there, the immense graces reserved for the Work, the multiplication of its members.

From the Heart of Jesus, opened by the lance, came the Church with grace and glory, so the test will bring out fruitfulness for our Work. To desire the test, therefore, but not to fear. To match the chalice to our weakness, Jesus will not make it to be drunk in a day, he will give three months to drink it, perhaps six months, but he will give it and the period of the trial has begun. Do not fear those who can kill the body, but those “who can destroy in hell” [cf. Matthew 10:28], the enemies, the friends who will advise this or that, to flee here or there, to take this means or that one. No agitation, no preoccupation on how to deal with the persecution. Leave this to the superiors—Bishop Thibaudier and others. When it's time to take no more, let's leave Jesus do it. We would lose ourselves looking for it.

**[85]** Let us have only one preoccupation: remaining faithful to our vocation. Let's look for the thought of the Heart of Jesus to unite ourselves with him. At this moment, he allows his Heart to be torn again. Why? Because in Religious Congregations there are fervent ones and he wants to unite them to his sufferings by making them suffer. Let’s place ourselves with them in the Heart of Jesus to receive the lance blow of persecution.

But there are also lukewarm ones, those who are in a path of irregularity and opposition to the spirit of their founders. Jesus has been complaining of it for a century, for three centuries even. For he already speaks of it in Paray; the Church itself seems to confirm this by dealing with the beatification of persons to whom supernatural light has been given about the ingratitude of the chosen people. According to authorized persons, this would be a part of La Salette's secret. For these Congregations, set free from the spirit of the foundation, there is punishment. Jesus purifies his area: they will be dispersed and persecuted legally or violently. Some members may be happy with this opportunity to withdraw, others will no longer answer a second call.

**[86]** With the fervent Congregations, let us unite ourselves with the Heart of Jesus suffering from the lax Congregations. Let's accept the test in reparation. "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus" [cf. Philippians 2:5]. Jesus will suffer in his chosen members: in his head, by the contemplative Congregations; in his hands, by the Congregations employed in works; in his feet, by the Congregations that send evangelizers abroad; in his Heart, by the Congregations of reparation.

He lets himself be struck in his chosen members. Let's not allow ourselves to go to anger, to hatred, to the natural and human ways to repel the persecution. Let the executioners go. Jesus didn't worry much about it: "They do not know what they are doing" [cf. Luke 23:34]. Let's work to console him, let's think of his pain. On the Cross, he was thinking of his apostles. Like him, let us think of the unfaithful privileged souls, of which there are all categories from Judas to St. John.

To these feelings of union and of compassion with Jesus, let's add that of absolute confidence. Only what Jesus wills will happen, when He wills it, as He wishes, in the measure that He wishes. During the sorrowful year, the Gospel, which, however, didn't tell us everything, tells us three or four times that the Jews wanted to seize him, but the time had not yet come. Let's abandon ourselves completely to his holy will.

Love—trust—compassion. [Fr. John recommends not holding discouraging discourses on this subject during recreation.]

# FALLEUR NOTEBOOK II

## CONFERENCES AND SERMONS

April 7, 1880 - June 13, 1880

### [1] Wednesday, April 7, 1880

*On Gentleness: Its Excellence, its Practice, its Motives*

1. This is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. The mistress of the most violent of passions: anger. The favorite virtue of our Lord, the first he teaches: "Learn, for I am gentle" [Matthew 1:29].
2. To practice it well, let's explain the degrees:
  - a. not to manifest the emotion one experiences internally,
  - b. resist the emotion promptly and easily,
  - c. not to be moved even by what can excite anger,
  - d. rejoice,
  - e. to be sad that the offender has done wrong,
  - f. to be sad that Jesus is being saddened by an offense.

So much for the inner actions. For external acts: to show oneself smiling, to speak softly and cheerfully, to oblige those who offend us. One remark: God will often allow us to be offended in appearance without actually being offended: this happens in a novitiate.

3. General motives: the first motive is the interest of conquering the strongest of passions; the second is to conquer hearts: it is by gentleness that the martyrs and all the saints have caused the Gospel to triumph. Special reasons:
  - a. our Lord's favorite virtue: "*I am gentle,*"
  - b. we want to be victims. But all the victims are lambs. On this subject, Fr. John, referring to the death of the Sisters, says that at the Presentation, our Lord reserved the lamb, but allowed the immolation of the doves.

### [2] Friday, April 9, 1880

*On Silence*

An admirable instruction that I would have wanted to have word for word, especially the special reason.

We, Oblates, must especially be silent because our life is contemplative *above all in the novitiate, and in the works, it will be largely mingled with the contemplative life.* But contemplation is the inner conversation with our Lord and to hear it you need silence. For us,

this point is an absolute certainty: silence or leave. Our Lord wants to lead us by a miraculous Providence.

A very important virtue is silence. One expresses that one is a religious and one is silent by saying that one lives in solitude. The importance of silence arises from the considerable place it occupies in the Constitutions of great religious. [Fr. John gives some examples of what is prescribed.] Our Lord promises to speak to the silent soul: "I will lead her into solitude and there speak to her heart" [Hosea 2:14].

There is a practice of inner silence and outer silence, both which stand together and do not go one without the other. Inner silence is the peace of the soul, the attention to God or the only attention to what is prescribed at the moment by the will of God. Its definition shows its excellence, and its practice is also apparent.

**[3]** Outer silence includes the silence of speech and silence of action. The silence of action consists in avoiding any noisy action: running down the stairs, closing doors abruptly. The silence of speech is the one to whom the most attention is given in all the rules because language is the source of many sins. We break it when we speak without necessity. What can you do if a confrere tempts you? Do not answer without worrying about displeasing: "If...pleasing people, I would not be a servant of Christ" [Galatians 1:10]. Answer in very few words if necessity requires it. [In this regard, Fr. John recalls that the Rule obliges every novice to reveal any external failure to the superior, both his own and those of others. For the practice of this rule in regard to the other, here is what he said: tell Father at the time of direction: I have noticed certain external failings, does Father judge it appropriate that I make them known to him? This is to act according to charity and the opposite would be diabolical charity.] The reasons for silence are: 1. to avoid sins, 2. to flee the occasion; 3. [?].

For the Oblates, it is necessary; it's silence or destruction. Our Lord wants to lead us constantly by miraculous inspirations. If we do not listen, he will reject us. He wants to be our Father, our brother, our friend, our novice master. But you have to listen to him and follow him, and for that: silence.

**[4] Sunday, April 11, 1880**

There are certain teachings that the Church proposes in the course of the liturgical year that we cannot allow to pass, and moreover it is good to have a few days to meditate on the virtue of which has been spoken. Today, especially, the teachings of the Church are for us to meditate upon. Jesus gives himself the quality of a good shepherd and he immediately adds that *what makes the goodness of this shepherd, what characterizes him is that he gives his life for his sheep, it is that he is a victim-shepherd*. Jesus loves this title. The figures he has created relate

to it. Abel the first righteous one was a shepherd. David, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and Aaron were shepherds. All these shepherds were victims through immolation. *There are two kinds of immolation: violent self-immolation and the gentle self-immolation of every day, the life of self-immolation.*

Abel shed his blood, he raised lambs for the Lord: he chose the most beautiful, cared for them more particularly, loved them more, so as to sacrifice his heart by sacrificing these favorite lambs. Abraham too was a victim, a victim of the heart, resigning himself to the sacrifice of Isaac. Jacob too, suffering the sacrifice of his two children, Joseph and Benjamin. These shepherds were victims, and Jesus, whom they pre-figure, was more so than anyone else.

**[5]** But he too was a shepherd of victims. / These victims are the martyrs of the first centuries, then the great monks, then the confessors, the souls especially who made and make the vow of victim. For those especially, Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd and invites them to follow him, to give their lives like him, to be victims.

This is our vocation: Jesus chose a fold within the fold; he chose souls to fatten them, embellish them, and then sacrifice them to his Father, as the shepherds of the Old Law specially fed a few favorite lambs to sacrifice them. Our life is immolation and it will always end with self-immolation. The apparent end may be a disease, but the real cause will be a sacrifice of Jesus immolating himself in his favorite sheep. *Certainly, some are called to shed their blood, but usually, it will be an ordinary death that will end life.*

Shepherds chose caressing, loving lambs, who ate well, were white, well built, and neglected those who did not respond to their care. Let us strive to be like that for the Good Shepherd of loving, confident, caressing lambs. Let us grow fat with his doctrine and Holy Communion. Above all, let us not fear responding to his care, because we would be *rejected without fail and we would disappear during the ordeal.*

### **[6] Wednesday, April 14, 1880**

#### *On Poverty*

1. Importance: It is the object of one of the three great vows and the first of the Beatitudes, it leads to perfection: "Go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor" [Matthew 19:21].
2. Practice: There are a thousand ways of practicing it internally by thoughts, desires, feelings. It is practiced *externally* by seizing the opportunities that arise from being deprived of luxury in clothes, of living comfortably with material goods, being content with the worst cell, the worst morsel of food, suffering the cold, and all kinds of inconvenience that may have poverty for its cause.

3. Motives:

- a. General: It is a protection from one of the three great concupiscences; that is the great motive: the concupiscence of the eyes. The religious is preserved and healed from the great evil that damns so many men. To this reason of *interest* is added a consolation. God does not fail those who trust in him. Jesus Christ, the Holy Virgin, passionately loved poverty: "Yet for your sakes he became poor" [II Corinthians 8:9]. All the saints have cherished poverty; thus, it is a great virtue, thus it is a great means of sanctification for us.
  - b. Special: To repair all the attachments of religious to earthly goods, attachments that so grieve our Lord. / Sometimes this phenomenon happens only after having left a lot, and one attaches oneself intensely to anything that the Rule puts to our nature. The objects which serve man have this quality to attract his taste, to be sticky as it were, and detrimental to detachment.
- [7]

Fr. John generally recommends inner acts of virtue because ultimately the virtues must be interior.

**[8] Friday, April 16, 1880**

*On the Love of Jesus*

We often resolve to be faithful to the spirit of our vocation. Today, to strengthen this resolution, let us leave the ordinary course of conferences and entertain the love of Jesus. The death of our Sister also gives us an opportunity to talk about it, because this love was one of the salient features of her life. She almost always had it tangibly, and it was found that she had died of love. Tuberculosis and affection of heart, said the doctor, in the report of her death. During her last days, she did nothing but acts of love: *Jesus I love you*, reiterating them in a thousand ways. May we also die in love for Jesus. The apostle who has best spoken of this love is St. Paul. His ardent heart is especially expressed in the epistle to the Romans, where he recalls the reasons for love and declares his unshakeable and unwavering attachment to Jesus: "for those whom he foreknew" [Romans 8:29].

To these reasons, let us add all that Providence has done for us since baptism in our Oblate [9] vocation, and the great wonders that Jesus has made in this Work, / and say with him: "Who will separate us from the love of God" [Rom 8:35]. It will be neither the angels, who have power only over the body and the imagination, nor men who have power only over the body; neither hunger, nor persecution. In prison, they cannot stop me from doing acts of love. Nothing can stop me from doing acts of love. Let's multiply them all day long and before all other acts. The acts of reparation come next and they go together. Let's love Jesus who loved us so much.



[Here are inserted two pages from the newspaper: one on the funeral of Sr. Marie of the Five Wounds and on her other young deceased companion sisters, and one on the Jesuits from the house in Liesse, officially expelled under the terms of the March 29, 1880 decrees.]

### Voluntary Victims

On Thursday [April 15, 1880], for the fourth time in the last few months alone, the Servants of the Heart of Jesus, this Franciscan community so pious and so popular today in St. Quentin, led the mortal remains of one of their Sisters to her final resting place. We followed this cortege—we were going to say this triumphal march—and on the way we received various appreciations. All were sympathetic; what's more, some were worried. One was astonished at the repeated blows that death struck in the middle of this convent in the suburb of St. Martin, however so well situated; these multiple deaths were given different kinds of explanations.

There is only one truly accurate. The humble Servants of the Sacred Heart are voluntary victims; they offer their prayers, their labors, their sufferings, and above all their lives for the glory of God, the perseverance of the righteous, and the conversion of sinners. God takes this daily immolation seriously; and the poor Franciscans thus become the benefactors of the Church, and especially of this city. As such, in exchange for the services rendered to us by this incessant reparation and the evils which it turns away from us, we owe these fervent nuns the homage of our gratitude and the expression of our veneration. We offer these to them in the name of all of our friends who appreciate, like us, their supernatural mission and its tutelary consequences.

[*Conservateur de l'Aisne*, April 1880]

Chase them out the door, they come back through the window! This is about the Jesuits, that is. We know that on the eve of the execution of the decrees of March 29, the five Jesuits who officially resided in Liesse broke with their community. We had reason to think that the Department was definitely rid of Loyola's sons. If we believe various rumors circulating in the public with great persistence, it would be nothing.

A Congregation of ladies residing in the district of Laon, and which the rule of St. Francis appears to govern, would have charitably given shelter to a dozen good Fathers, who, hidden in the shade of the cornets of these ladies, would brave government thunderstorms safely. We have heard this adventure told by various people who are absolutely trustworthy; we also believe that the competent authority would do well to take steps to verify the accuracy of these rumors. A little search in the comfortable catacombs where the good Fathers would be, formed a few leagues from here, one

says, would quickly edify the authority regarding the degree of respect which the Jesuits profess for the existing laws.

**[10] Wednesday, April 21, 1880**

*Exhortation to Generosity in Our Vocation  
On the Spirit of Our Vocation*

Since some are absent today, instead of continuing the ordinary course, let us pause a little to meditate on the spirit of our vocation. So, isn't that for us all, and if we don't miss it, won't everything be perfect? We are golden vessels in the house of God. There are vases of every value, vases of clay, and among them common vases and vases of ignominy. *We are the vessels of sacrifice, the chalices, the favorite servants of the prince, his aides-de-camp in the war of immolation, because the war he fights is the war of renunciation and sacrifice. This is by making himself suffer. We are not his chamberlains, his ministers, but the ministers and officers who accompany him into the war.*

The reasons we have to show ourselves as his faithful are love and reparation: our goal. We owe him love because of baptism, graces of every kind, and above all the graces our vocation has given us, unparalleled graces since the beginning of the Church. Isn't the reparation of our faults and those of the chosen people also quite urgent? Jesus is waiting for it to be able to pour out his greatest graces, unheard of graces on his chosen people, then on the world.

**[11]** Do we want the work of the Heart of Jesus; this Work? Yes, since we've come here. And so, to accomplish it, *let's be generous.* Let's consider the day lost when we have had no cross to offer to Jesus. No fear before the cross: it is gentle, "a gentle yoke," and Jesus bears the greatest part of it. *If we refuse it, it will come anyway and be heavy, bitter, unfruitful. If we accept it, it will be light, sweet, and abundant in grace for us, for souls, and for the world.* Let's learn to profit from it *generously.* To these unforeseen crosses let's join the gentle and constant immolation of Jesus at Nazareth, offering all our actions in the spirit of love and reparation; the immolation of the body in the small mortifications of the refectory, that of the mind by attention especially to prayer, that of the heart by detachment from all that is not Jesus.

**[12] Friday, April 23, 1880**

*Another Exhortation on the Necessity and Manner of Corresponding to our Vocation*

Our vocation is to live an intimate and hidden life with Jesus, an interior life. Others have more brilliant, more external missions. For us our life is there. We must be faithful to it. Above all, we are not going, by a false humility, as the demon excites in bad moments, moments of temptation, to consider ourselves unworthy of this vocation and reject it for this reason. Does

not our Lord choose the weakest instruments to better show his own action? And were the apostles worthy? Couldn't they have said: we are unworthy, look elsewhere? So, they were right then to flee during the Passion? And was St. John a Pharisee, who did not think himself unworthy to follow our Lord to Calvary to console his Heart? Jesus, suffering and wounded by a very painful wound, lets others on the road far more worthy than us pass by. He stops us and tells us: you, comfort me, console me. Will we answer with humility: Lord, I cannot; look for others, I am not worthy?

**[13]** Because we often fall again, should we be discouraged? Not at all if we know how to get up immediately and show a fidelity, if not constant, at least constantly being renewed. The fall is quickly forgotten by our Lord, when we always get up courageously. And the way of our vocation is non-intervention, to accept what happens and to have only a fixed thought dominant in the very midst of our works. Jesus will supplement what this fixed idea might make us neglect in these works. A dominant idea, the *one thing necessary* for us; this dominant idea is to think of the sufferings that his chosen people cause our Lord to endure, in each of the exercises that are common to us with the chosen people.

At rising, for example, Jesus commands it for several thousand; how is he obeyed? Let us show an eagerness to console him for the cowardice he finds elsewhere. At each moment there are 5,000 priests at the altar. How do they treat Jesus? It is not reckless to suppose a Judas, or a St. Peter with Caiaphas. Has there not always been chaff in the good grain? And Communion, Divine Office, work, meals?

Think of each of these exercises to repair what offends our Lord in the same exercise done by the consecrated souls, and also to have a special thought for the outrages he can receive at that time in Masses which are said in this moment, because it is there that the outrage is more direct and more painful. Our vocation is certain, it *is encouraged by the hierarchical channel and by the supernatural and mystical channels* which provide us with thousands of proofs.

**[14] Sunday, April 25, 1880**

*On Patience*

This virtue, which has points in common with gentleness, is different however. Patience represses sadness, a passion of the concupiscent appetite, which is like a collapse of ourselves. Gentleness represses anger, a passion of the irascible appetite, which is an outburst, an exaltation of ourselves.

1. St. Paul shows us excellence by designating it as the first jewel in the crown of charity: "Love is patient" [I Corinthians 13:4].

2. Practice: Interior actions are made by the anticipation of evils which may present themselves to endure evils of the body, of the mind, or of the soul; and to arouse oneself to the courage and the desire to suffer these evils. External acts are the simple or joyous acceptance of these same evils.
3. Motives: Every cross carried by us weighs much less than the cross of Jesus. During his Passion he foresaw all the refusals of crosses that would be made, and he took and carried the refused crosses, so that by accepting our cross we are assured of having alleviated the sufferings of Jesus by lightening the weight of his cross; likewise, the contrary, to have increased them by increasing their weight by our refusals. This motive is the most noble, the worthiest of us, Oblates.

**[15]** One interesting motive is the suffering that makes us conform to Jesus Christ. On the day of judgment, the more that patience will have made us conform to Jesus Christ, the more the judge will be favorable to us. This motive can be ennobled by the thought of the glory that Jesus will have by this greater resemblance.

This is above all the example that commits us to patience. “Was it not necessary that Christ should suffer!” [Luke 24:26]. Jesus Christ was patient. That has been his vocation. “He suffered for us” [1 Peter 2:21], and *we, our vocation*, are his own. *Our vocation is patience*. It is the martyrdom of the heart, like St. John and the holy women. Rarely will it be Calvary; usually it will be the passion and patience of Nazareth, the immolation of each day.

Another example is that of all the saints. In a certain sense, we can say that all who are in heaven are martyrs. “They who have come out of the great ordeal” [Revelation 7:14]. All were patient and martyrs at least of heart: the virgins by their constancy, the confessors by their zeal. Our vocation is patience. *It can be summed up in these two words: Love is patient*, or in those **[16]** of St. Teresa: *to love and suffer*, to suffer to show our love / to suffer in order to repair, to suffer because Jesus suffers, no more because we have personal pains—we must forget them because we must think only of the painful wound of Jesus—suffer because he is offended and we are wounded in the heart, because his Heart is our heart because it is our treasure to suffer in order to show our love.

**Wednesday, April 28, 1880**

*Our Life of Reparation*

It is good to leave a few days at our disposition to meditate on the virtue of patience. Today let's talk about our life of reparation and meditate on some points. There is one extremely consoling and formidable thing that our Lord demands perfection from us. He has said it often by the supernatural enlightenments he gives us: perfection or destruction. The reason itself shows us the relevance of it. What is our goal? To make reparation. But must what we offer in

reparation not be of a nature to completely compensate for the offense, and can the thing offered for this purpose have the same defects as the thing which has caused the offense?

**[17]** Look at the great ones of the earth: do we offer them a faded, withered bouquet? Or even a beautiful bouquet, but containing a stinking flower in the middle? We would reject the entire bouquet. So for us: this bouquet consists of the works of each day, of the whole community, or of a single member, or, if you want, of a single action of a single member; because in this action one can consider the various feelings that one has in doing it and reunite them like the flowers of a bouquet. Well, Jesus will reject any bouquet containing one stinking or even odorless flower. In the same way, if one saw in the king's guard, men who were badly dressed, comporting themselves badly, it would seem that this king is not respected and is unworthily treated; so, with Jesus, if we are not perfect, for we are his bodyguards. *A community of reparation must be an elite body.* Our special mission of representing the Heart of Jesus also tells us that being the most perfect of vocations, it asks for the most perfect life.

**[18]** This sublime vocation of being perfect is extremely consoling, because we can be assured that Jesus will take the means to achieve this end, and since he wants us to be perfect, he will grant graces accordingly. But do not be discouraged by the greatness of the goal. At this moment, moreover, and until the complete establishment of his Work, Jesus will still tolerate a great deal. We are only novices and he knows our misery, "For he knows how we were made" [Psalm 103:14]. He will tolerate us until the confirmation of the Work. Then we will receive special graces which will strengthen us in our vocation and better show us our duties. Until then he still wants to wait.

What he hates above all: the stinking flower of the bouquet. It is less the temporary fall that he will always tolerate if one knows how to recover quickly, than the habit, *the attachment that lasts*. Oh! This he will pitilessly pursue, *he will shake the souls and agitate them* until they leave their bond; and if they refuse, he will reject them and the Work itself with them, if the superiors were accomplices to a certain degree. No attachment to external goods, especially not to judgment or self-will.

**[19] Friday, 30 April, 1880**

*On Magnanimity*

After the patience that develops the strength of resistance, let us meditate on magnanimity, that is the will to do things greatly. To act *generously is magnanimity*. Its excellence comes out of its definition. Interior acts can extend to all other virtues. I see the penance of St. Magdalene; I wish to be as great as she is. So, with all other virtue.

The external acts are numerous: do everything greatly, the fulfillment of the rule greatly, modesty greatly, mortification greatly, be the first to ask for it. Let's formulate the desire, then submit ourselves absolutely. Is it not pride that attributes to itself the honor due to God? Magnanimity has the direct aim of waiting for the good of all its natural and supernatural forces. It is therefore legitimate! It is even commanded: "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" [Matthew 5:48]; "I have set for you an example" [John 13:15]. Like the saints, act greatly, generously. The saints had the custom of arousing magnanimity in themselves by the sight of the virtues practiced around them. This one is modest, exact; I also want to be so greatly.

**[20]** What is more special to us is magnanimity in sacrifice and love. Jesus wants generous hearts. *Nothing is small in sacrifice.* Let us immolate ourselves generously. What would be said of the king's special guards who would refuse to serve him generously and treat him without respect? Let's not deny him anything, let's enlarge our hearts, they will never be too big for him.

### **Friday evening, April 30, 1880**

*At the Beginning of the Month of Mary*

There is a thought that comes especially to us Oblates, when entering this month: it is a preparation for the greatest month of the year for us. This year especially, we greet it more particularly because Providence provides us with trials that will be graces during the month of the Sacred Heart, and the month of Mary will be precisely a preparation for these graces. This good Mother will prepare us by showing us that it is through Mary that we go to Jesus: from the Heart of Mary to the Heart of Jesus.

What does she want more especially from us during this month? Flowers, songs, praises? It is **[21]** hearts / that she asks for above all, and in these hearts she wants to see purity there, purity in the little things, purity of heart, purity of intention, *the love of Jesus* and especially the spirit of *immolation, of reparation.* As she had during her life, these are the three things Mary asks of us during this beautiful month.

### **Sunday, May 2, 1880**

*On the Heart of Mary*

1. Custom of talking about it today: three reasons:
2. Her tenderness for us. Her Heart is not well known. We are as dazzled by its brilliance, its grandeur, and we dare not approach to consider it. However, she has a "heart of flesh" [Ezekiel 36:26], a heart that loves like other hearts. The greatest punishment is to have a heart of stone; the greatest grace to have a burning heart. Mary is the most

**[22]** adorned in grace. She is the Mother of mercy. / That is to say, she has a compassionate heart for the wretched. Imagine everything you would want to be tender, more delicate; in fact, the heart of Mary exceeds all.

See *a sister, a wife, a mother*. The heartbeat of a sister for a beloved brother, her whole life is attuned to the circumstances that this brother encounters [?]. A mother is ready for everything for her child. The child lives in the mother's heart. But Mary's love is much greater than that of a natural mother. She bore us in pain at the foot of the cross and her love is proportionate to the sufferings we have cost her.

**[23] Thursday, May 6, 1880**

*The Ascension*

We get our subject from the feast of the day. St. Mark alone reports a very striking circumstance of the Ascension. Upon departing, it seems that Jesus wanted to leave a word of affection to those whom he had loved until the end and to express the love of his Heart to them, and yet it was not so: "He upbraided them for their lack of faith and hardness of heart" [Mark 16:14]. If our Lord showed himself here in person, he would *certainly* reproach us. We too lack faith. However, has he not given proof of our Work, of our special vocation: he has multiplied them, the miraculous and extraordinary testimonies, and yet we do not believe or rather we act as if we did not think about the divine nature of this Work. "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" [Matthew 14:31], "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted?" [Psalm 42:5]. Let's also say, "Increase our faith" [Luke 17:5]. But it is especially hearts that Jesus wants and our heart is hard: *hardness of heart*. Who among us really loves him? Who among us fulfills his mission as a victim from morning till night?

**[24]** Who knows how to / refuse, who knows how to renounce his will, his freedom? He gave us his Heart. To others he gives the power of speech or works; to us, the effusion of his love. In return he claims our heart: "My son, give me your heart" [Proverbs 23:26].

The feast of the martyrdom of St. John was the occasion of a few words of celebration addressed to Fr. John on behalf of the community by its first member, Fr. Alphonse, who ended by wishing that we leave the ordeal *puer and swifter*. Fr. John guaranteed a happy outcome if one had faith, a great faith in the future of the Work, saying that the apostles had the graces sufficient for all of them to be St. Johns. Let's all be St. Johns. Let us all be St. Johns or at least St. Magdalenes. If we know how to give ourselves today without reserving anything, God will give us the graces that can make heroes at the time of trial; and it can be said, this time is near; Jesus is going to come and tell us: arise and come, time has arrived.

**[25] Friday, May 7, 1880**

**[26]** *Two Investitures* [Fr. Paul-Marie Philippot and ?] and *One Postulant* Fr. Jacques-Marie Herr]

Every Friday, principally, these words strike our hearts: *Here is the Heart that has so loved humanity and receives nothing but coldness and indifference.* Today, the First Friday of the month of Mary, is it not the Blessed Virgin herself who repeats these words to us by showing us her Jesus in Nazareth where she loved us while enduring the works, the vigils for us, and especially at Calvary, where she is at the foot of the cross: this is the Heart pierced for you, and it finds in you nothing but coldness and ingratitude. This is the complaint that this good Mother has reason to make about us; it is only too well founded. Yet no discouragement, but humility, not the humility of Judas, but the humility of Magdalene and Peter.

**[27] Sunday, May 9, 1880**

*Exhortation on the Gospel of the Day*

One reason for the opportunity of this exhortation is that this Gospel records the words of Jesus from the Cenacle to Gethsemane: our work is also at this period between the Cenacle and Gethsemane. Remember three things:

1. The intimate union with Jesus: "I am the true vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them, bear much fruit...abide in my love" [John 15:1, 5, 9].
2. Love not only Jesus but the souls of your brothers. Exhortation to charity. Love them to the point of giving your life. You must always have this disposition to give your blood in immolation.
3. Prepare for the test, let us hasten it by our desires. This blessed moment of the *Consummatum est*: Jesus tells us: "I have made known to you everything that I heard from my Father." I told you everything supernaturally. "Remember the word that I said to you...But I said these things to you so that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you about them...and you also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning" [John 15:15, 20; 16:4; 15:27].

Yes, we first are called to form the crowd who will follow. From this moment, let us enter into the spirit of our vocation. "I have chosen you out of the world" [John 15:19]. The world hates you and everything in the world, even in the chosen people. Let's await this hatred.

**[28] Wednesday, May 12, 1880**

*On Perseverance*

One of the moral virtues that together constitutes the cardinal virtue of strength, one that is like a wall and protects all others, is perseverance. It's the habitual disposition of the will ready



to persevere. Interior acts can be performed in various ways, depending on the circumstances in which one might be exposed to no longer persevere, and this leads us to distinguish perseverance from constancy, which is a variant of it. It is perseverance in the face of obstacles that it overcomes. At the present time, let us practice constancy and perseverance a great deal. We are stronger in front of the obstacle. One says to oneself: I'm not surprised, I had planned this.

A first motive is concern *for the reward*. If it were necessary to persevere a thousand years, I am ready what is that [?]. If it were necessary to give a limb or my life, I will persevere, because I will find everything again at the resurrection: "Who endures to the end will be saved" [cf. Matthew 10:22]. A second motive is the example of our Lord, who persevered with a [29] feeling of love and reparation for the divinity and especially for us; this is everything. / A third motive is the word of Jesus who would say to us: "And do you want me to release you?" We respond: "To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" [cf. John 6:67-68]. Our vocation is here: the will of God is known to us: it is our sanctification through a life of love and reparation. It must be followed courageously.

A fourth motive is the example of what is practiced in the world. I know some who after four bankruptcies managed not only to pay the debts of the first bankruptcy and the others, but to get possession of a considerable fortune. Let's do the same, let's not be discouraged. It will be a frequent temptation for the Oblates to say to themselves: I have come to make amends and I am constantly adding to the debts I want to repay. Let's always get up anew; it will be like the rock of Sisyphus falling again and again. Perhaps we will be able to mount it and to mount even more, because we have the treasures of Jesus Christ and the saints to pay our debts. Finally, a repulsive motive: he who has entered and does not persevere, keeps something of Cain in his heart and sometimes on his face.

### **[30] Friday, May 14, 1880**

The Heart of Jesus is truly our founder and our superior. We must allow some time for our resolve to persevere to mature. Let's talk today about something very important. The Heart of Jesus is:

1. Our founder. It is theologically so. In fact, redemption emanates from the Heart of Jesus, therefore also reparation, which is its continuation. The Heart of Jesus is the most affected organ of his feelings of love and reparation and the most sensitive sign of redemption. The theology of the Heart of Jesus has been studied more thoroughly and it is from this source that reparation originates. It is the center of reparation. It is a fact: since St. Gertrude and Blessed Margaret Mary, as far as the revelations that concern us, it is the Heart of Jesus who asks for reparation, who sustains it in all its forms.

2. Our superior. He alone has done everything; he does everything again and he will do everything. He alone wants to be *the direction, the Rule, the life*. It is he who has enlightened us all, illumined us, led us here by different paths and it is he who wants the providential circumstances / which prevent his representative from being entirely for the Work. He wants to prove that he did everything, that there is nothing of the work of men in his Work.
- [31]

The Heart of Jesus is our superior. Let's apply this thought in practice and in detail. Let's go to him as we go to the superior in the regularly organized houses. When we cannot access the channel which he uses to communicate his will to us, let us go to the source: the water is even purer than at the canal. Have we fallen: let's go and make our Culp before his Heart. Is it about going out or returning: let's go inform him when going out or returning by asking for a blessing. In the refectory, at the office: let us see him giving the blessing himself. He will give us great graces if we know how to look upon him as the true superior.

This is a reason for unshakable trust during temptations, doubts, falls: let us turn to him; he will answer. At the time of the test, *will the representative be present, will he be faithful?* No matter, the Heart of Jesus is there; let's go to Him. May we no longer complain about lack of direction. *This would be an ungrateful word.*

[Synoptic table of the previous conference]

1. What the Heart of Jesus is for the works of reparation; especially ours.

*Founder:*

- a. *necessarily*: reparation is the continuation, the extension, the application of the redemption. For the Heart of Jesus is the center of operation, the home, the source of the graces of redemption. Operation center, distribution center, so he is the author of all reparation;
- b. *positively*: our Lord manifested his Heart to St. Gertrude, at Paray-le-Monial, and elsewhere, asking for reparation;
- c. *especially for us*: he alone inspired the Work here by a supernatural providence, permanent and perpetual.

*Director*, he must be it, he is it, he will be it; how, why:

- a. *logically*: he alone having inspired it, only he can and will direct his Work;
- b. *positively*: he wants us to have recourse to him in everything and always to show that he is the whole of the Work, that it is his;
- c. *effectively*: he has been it, is it, will be it in all needs, temptations, trials;
- d. *eminently*: the efficaciousness of the direction is in grace. Men are the channels. We draw it from the very source, his Heart.

*Superior:*

- a. practical need to have recourse to the superior;
- b. impossibility of fact—sometimes insufficiency;
- c. permissible and desired disposition of God;

His Heart wants to make up for everything and fulfill the duties of a superior for us.

2. What we must be for the Heart of Jesus, what he asks of us.

*As founder*, he asks for:

- a. *acts*: to fill us with his Spirit, to unite ourselves with him in everything and everywhere, not for us to stop at people, things, difficulties, trials, but with him;
- b. *feelings, dispositions*: *Cor Jesu et omnia*—the Heart of Jesus is everything for us.

*As director*, he asks:

- a. *acts* in the chapel or in oneself: to resort to his Heart through Mary in all internal and external sorrows, temptations, weaknesses, aversions, uncertainties, doubts; when the external direction is insufficient or impossible, for want of time, means;
- b. *feelings, dispositions*: a great habit to ask him; and fidelity and docility to follow his inspirations.

*As superior*:

- a. *acts or requests* for permission to act outside the Rule, advice on what to do; blessings on oneself, one's actions; ask the Heart of Jesus for a blessing at Office, at table; for forgiveness when one has missed something, to get up again;
- b. *feelings, dispositions*: the greatest confidence in the action of his graces, lights, and strengths, etc., in the infinite mercy of his Heart to receive us.

*Summary:*

- a. Text: *Cor Jesu et omnia*
- b. Subject: Heart of Jesus: what he is for us, what he asks of us: that we look to him as our founder, our director, our superior, etc., etc.
- c. Goal: To increase, maintain our confidence in the midst of obstacles, trials, present and future imperfections.

### **[32] Sunday, May 16, 1880**

#### *Succinct Summary of the Pentecost Conference*

All works participate more or less in the graces of the life of our Lord. For all works as for souls, there must be a Pentecost. This Pentecost is a new outpouring of the graces of the Holy Spirit into well-prepared hearts. The feast is not a commemoration of a miracle, but a new

communication of the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit. All the faithful, therefore, have for today and during the entire octave at least the graces of insights, anointings, and strengths. Others have a participation or an increase in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Others finally receive particular graces, the fruits of the Holy Spirit mentioned in the hymns and prose: *Veni, Creator* and *Veni, Sancte*.

Special graces are given or shared according to various vocations, predestinations, mission, dispositions, and necessities. St. Paul enumerates them in his Epistles. If there are special graces for the different members or different lives of the Church, there is certainly one for the life of a victim, the vocation of Oblate.

*What is the nature of this grace?*

The same as that of our Lord to carry out the work of redemption, of which the life of victim, of an Oblate is a more direct participation. The same as that of the apostles. Our Lord says, I will send you my Spirit. This Spirit is a spirit of fire: "I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!" [Luke 12:49]. But fire enlightens, warms, purifies, consumes: this fire is the Holy Spirit.

**[33]** *What were the operations of this grace of fire in our Lord?*

The same as fire for the victims of the Old Law. This fire has consumed Jesus who has been a victim all his life.

*Mode of operation of this fire.*

From the moment of the Incarnation, the Heart of our Lord was filled with this fire, it became a furnace whose desires of love and reparation were the flame, and this flame was nourished by all his thoughts, his feelings, his intentions, his actions, all the trials of his hidden life, all the contradictions of his public life and all the sufferings of his passion.

*How our Lord lives the life of a victim.*

From the moment of his Incarnation, the Heart of our Lord became an altar on which the fire of the Holy Spirit consumed his humanity, united hypostatically to his divinity. This fire made our Lord priest and victim—the only victim and only priest worthy of God, able to repair the honor of God.

*How does our Lord live the life of a victim in his members—communicates this life to them?*

By this fire, the Heart of our Lord was not only sanctified for himself, but also sanctified for others. The fire of charity, which must consume spiritual victims, of which the others were only the figure, spreads from the Heart of Jesus into the heart of Mary, co-redemptrix and repairer, and from the heart of Mary to the cross, on the altar of the cross, into the heart of John; from

the heart of Mary to the Cenacle, into the hearts of the apostles: same fire, same hearth, same mediator. Priests, Christians, and victims are consumed by the fire that has consumed Jesus and Mary. It's not a similar fire, it's the same Holy Spirit. Thus, are realized the figures of the ancient sacrifices.

*How did Jesus Christ bring this life into his members?*

By grace and especially the Eucharist, Mass, Communion.

*How does the fire of the Holy Spirit transform us into victims?*

In the same way that he transforms the humble species of bread and wine into his Body and Blood. Thus, the fire of charity changes all our miserable beings, our miserable operations into beings and operations that are one with the victim of our redemption. Miracles of transformation.

*What must we do to be transformed into victims with Jesus Christ?*

Purify ourselves of all sin, to participate in his Spirit. What must be avoided? Sin, especially those for which we repair.

*In how many fires has Jesus Christ been consumed?*

Two fires: interior: love and reparation; exterior: trials.

*In how many fires will we be consumed as victims?*

From two fires: interior and exterior; trials, tribulations.

*What must we think of external fire?*

It cannot harm us if we do not harm ourselves by sin.

**[34]** [Synoptic table]

*Conference on Ascension Day, [May 6, 1880, cf. above, 23-24] a fitting discourse*

1. Text, subject, and resolution

The occasion of the double reproach of incredulity and hardness made by our Lord to his disciples shortly before ascending into heaven. Let us address the same reproaches to better enjoy the graces of this feast. "Now it begins, that the right hand of the Most High has changed" [Psalm 77:10]. My God, for *good*, I give you my *whole* heart *without* reserve.

2. Reproach of disbelief: God can reproach us for the injury we make to him.

a. *We lack faith in the work of reparation*

- i. in its supernatural origin—apparitions—appearances to the apostles—resolutions
- ii. to its excellence—the excellence of its object, of its end—Heart of Jesus
- iii. to its effectiveness—the graces that must result from it, for oneself, for others; amazing
- iv. to its future—if we are faithful, God takes care of it.

*b. We lack faith in our own vocation*

- i. made tangible, obvious since childhood, by the special care of Providence
- ii. made tangible by the extraordinary signs, the providential circumstances that preceded us, led us, accompanied our entry to Sacred Heart
- iii. by the very great and very tangible graces we have received, whether from God or from men, in spite of our miseries, a supernatural confirmation for some.

3. Gravity of the reproach

Refusing to recognize such favors, a Work marked by the finger of God, so noble a vocation, to doubt it, or really or practically to live as if one did not believe it, is to make a serious injury to God. He asks for our adherence. Let's give it full and complete.

[35] 4. Reproach of hardening

God requires not only the adherence of the intellect, but the gift of the heart as a priest, as an Oblate cleric.

*a. Gravity of this reproach: hardening is contrary to*

- i. the duty of the love of God:
  - ✓ the gift of the heart is most essential: *"Give me your heart* [Proverbs 23:26];
  - ✓ the gift of the heart is essential, necessary to the clerics, to the priesthood;
  - ✓ the gift of the heart is absolutely the goal of the Oblates;
- ii. the duty of recognition: God promises us and gives us his Heart; what folly, what ingratitude, what cowardice to keep ours, to refuse his.

*b. Truth of this reproach of hardening:*

- ii. evidence from feelings we do not have and should have:
  - ✓ feelings of God's love: where are they?
  - ✓ feelings of union with our Lord by the consideration of his reparative hidden life in Nazareth, Calvary, Gethsemane;
  - ✓ feelings of compassion, consolation;
  - ✓ desires of reparation for oneself, for others: where are they?

- ii. Evidence from the works: “Proof of love produces works”:
  - ✓ commissioned works, recommended: Rule—prayers—studies—homework—Masses—Communions: How? Why? Omission?
  - ✓ works of devotion: how little do we do? How badly are we doing them? How little do they last?
- c. *Consequences of this hardening*
  - i. for God: imperfection needs reparation, need to repair;
  - ii. for the Work: the Work is compromised, it misses its goal, its means; danger that God will reject it if this state is permanent, habitual, without amendment;
  - iii. for us: privations of graces effective for sanctification, for the very next test—*“Besides, you know what time it is”* [cf. Romans 13:11].

Perfection is in conformity with the divine will; but the divine will is all that happens to us—our sins; therefore, perfection is in conformity with all that happens to us. The perfection of love consists in the fusion of hearts or wills; but conformity establishes this fusion of wills, that is to say hearts; therefore, conformity is the perfection of love. Conformity makes our will resemble that of God; for the divine will is God himself the sovereign perfection; therefore, conformity is perfection in proportion when it is more complete.

**[36] Wednesday, May 19, 1880**

At the moment of the test, one must be ready especially inwardly. There are three great interior dispositions, they relate to the three theological virtues. Today let us see those which are based on faith.

1. A thought of faith that must strengthen us is *faith in Providence*. Nothing will happen except what Jesus wills, as he wills it, wherever he wills it. We will only do what he allows and we are assured that the graces will be proportionate to the test. So, do not be troubled, worried, or looking for what will happen, or say to yourself: what will we do? All that comes from the devil. Jesus repeats it, perhaps ten times in his Gospel, that events occur only at the time marked by God: *“The hour has not yet come”* [John 2:4]; *“This is your hour”* [cf. Luke 22:53]. As long as his time did not come, we could not take it.
  2. Faith in the cross: Have principles and views opposed to those of the world about honor, pleasure; value what it despises and despise what it values. This is necessary
    - a. to be his friends, his ministers; for his kingdom is not of this world, it is opposed to that of the world.
    - b. for reparation. It is through the cross that Jesus / has made reparation; by it that redemption has been made, through it that he shows his love for his brothers. The
- [37]**

whole world has merited suffering, poverty, ignominy. God really wants to content himself with a few who sacrifice themselves for the others and thus show their love for their brothers: *"No one has greater love"* [cf. John 15:13].

- c. to prove his love towards Jesus. *"Since being accepted by God, you needed to be tested"* [Tobit 12:13]. You have to see if it's gold or pure slag, and the fire will make it visible. If the house of our soul is built solidly and tribulations come to try it, if the tree has roots and the wind shakes it, because this house, this tree must be transplanted in heaven and it is necessary to see if it's worth it. The greatness of the test will be the measure of the acceptance that God makes of it and the graces that he will communicate to it.
- d. to be like Jesus who has suffered so much and so loved the cross. This reason alone suffices to make us consider the cross as excellent since he has loved it, he has suffered all kinds of trials; let's prepare to suffer: the disciple is not above the master. The wind will come by shocks to shake the tree which will wobble a bit; the largest oak trees also move, but they do not uproot. Let's also remain solid.

**[38] Friday, May 21, 1880**

*Reasons for Trust During the Test*

Our reasons for faith are faith in Providence, which directs everything, and faith in the cross, which is the source of reparation and the seal of divine works. Let us meditate on the reasons for trust and apply them especially to our Work and circumstances.

One day, we understood the need for reparation and pushed by grace, we came here to make reparation by the cross. Reparation is requested by the voices of heaven and earth, someone said. We too feel the need. We left everything to follow the cross: *"We have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?"* [Matthew 19:27]. Our confidence will be due to our detachment. If we keep some attachment, we will falter in the test because we will not be able to satisfy it then. The similarity with Jesus, that the trial for the work of reparation will give us and all the saints, is an encouragement to endure it. The test is the mark of Jesus' acceptance of our Work. The slanders that have spread throughout the region, even to the central power, the rage of Satan against us, is an endorsement of Jesus.

**[39]** The more there is to suffer, the more our confidence must increase because the more there is an analogy with the work of the redemption, the work of reparation *par excellence*. In all the divine works, moreover, we see an analogy with that of Jesus Christ, and our Work is one of those which has the most, and persecution will only increase it. No doubt there is not and there cannot be similarity because there is always something dependent on human freedom, but of all the works, as of all the saints, we can say: *"No one has been found like him"* [Sirach 44:19].



Our Work has had its Bethlehem where the shepherds and magi have been represented; it now has slander as our Lord has experienced it. There is no lack of Judas, but I have the consolation of believing he is not here; he was called and he did not enter. Just as our Lord wanted to wash the feet of his disciples before the Passion, so we too must be purified before the ordeal. The Work of nocturnal Adoration asked for an additional Holy Hour. We feel the need to prepare for the general test. All the more reason we must prepare ourselves for the special test.

**[40]** We are not pure enough, there are still attachments. If the apostles have weakened, it's because they have not purified themselves enough. If we want to be faithful, let us purify ourselves: let us provide oil for the coming of the Bridegroom. We will do a purification novena to prepare for the fast approaching event. First there will be vocal prayers: a prayer for our sins [*"Divine Host for Sins,"* St. Gertrude], followed by a *Miserere* and acts of faith, hope, charity, and contrition; at 3 AM for the community, at 6 AM for the absent ones. There will also be daily fasting on bread and water while kneeling. Let's not be afraid to weaken the body. If the body is a little weak, the soul will be stronger. *It is St. Bernard who says it and he understood it.*

But the principle of this novena will be the purification of our interior: no more attachments to judgment, to the will, to the senses. If there were any left, we could not satisfy them during the trial, and then we would be exposed to fainting in place; if only wanting the cross, we will be happy during the persecution, because we will find what we want.

**[41]** [Synoptic Table]

*Preparatory Discourses for the Trials Providence Must Soon Arrange for Us in His Mercy*

1. What Providence especially asks of us:
  - a. augment the supernatural life by increasing
    - i. faith: not to mysteries in general, but especially to supernatural Providence—in the cross—mystery of our life;
    - ii. hope: full and firm confidence in the great goods that must come from the trial for the Work, for each one of us;
    - iii. charity: the wood that must feed the fire of charity;
  - b. to enter the feelings, dispositions of our Lord before his passion
    - i. desires: *"I have eagerly desired"* [Luke 22:15];
    - ii. courage: *"Get up, let us be going"* [Matthew 26:46];
    - iii. obedience: *"Obedient to the point of death"* [Philippians 2:8];
    - iv. love of reparation: glory of God, salvation of men.

2. To increase one's faith not so much in speculative truths, but in practical truths, especially:
  - a. In Providence:
    - i. principle: nothing happens unless God ordains it or allows it or lets it happen—Gospel: only one single hair, sparrow, lilies of the fields: *“How much more?”* [Matthew 6:30];
    - ii. consequences for us:
      - object: only what God wills will happen to us;
      - time: when God wills: *not yet the hour; already the hour;*
      - manner: as he wants it, we will not be hit with one strike more.
  - b. In the cross:
    - i. the cross is the mystery of the Christian, priestly, religious life;
    - ii. it is the mark of resemblance to Jesus Christ;
    - iii. the seal of all divine work, a test that purifies;
    - iv. the great means of reparation.
  
3. Increase our confidence by considering:
  - a. *The bases of our trust:*
    - i. General bases of our trust:
      - our Lord's promises to his disciples—our part;
      - promises in supernatural manifestations: all the voices of heaven and earth cry out for reparation, salvation;
    - ii. Special bases:
      - promises in special manifestations to the Oblates;
      - beginning of the fulfillment of his special promises in the care of supernatural Providence: vocation, direction, protection;
      - in the care of natural Providence, resemblance to Jesus begun: love of the good, hatred of the wicked; temporal assistance, universal solicitude.
  - b. *The conditions put by our Lord to his promises:* the conditions required by our Lord for his apostles:
 

*“Look, we have left everything”* [Matthew 19:27], leave everything:

    - i. attachments to our judgment—simplicity;
    - ii. attachments of our heart—charity;
    - iii. attachments of our will—obedience;
    - iv. attachments to our comfort—Rule, mortification;

*“And we have followed you”* [Matthew 19:27], follow our Lord:

    - i. in the way of reparation by the cross;
    - ii. by the union of our thoughts, feelings, actions: life of Nazareth, Calvary,

Gethsemane; in his private life, public, suffering.

- c. *By working every day to their accomplishment*: fulfillment of conditions:
- i. to make reparation for the past: recognizing, regretting, repairing what we have not done; to leave everything, to follow our Lord;
  - ii. to sanctify the present: to do every action thinking that we must make reparation by this action, for ourselves, for others
  - iii. prepare the future by getting rid of the dross: *“Now you are clean, but not all”* [cf. [John 13:10];
  - iv. to wash the feet of daily imperfections for the Passion;
  - v. exterior means: novena of reparation.

### **[42] Sunday, May 23, 1880**

After the dispositions of faith and hope, preparatory to the test, come the considerations of charity and the practical advice which flow from it. We are not able to drink more than one drop of this cup of love.

A first motive to love God is his infinite beauty. All that is beautiful in nature is nothing close to it: it eminently contains all beauty. Faith teaches it to us, that is enough for us and we will see it in heaven one day.

A second motive is his goodness. The general and particular benefits that merit for him a love of gratitude. Natural benefits: St. Madeleine de Pazzi was in ecstasy in front of a flower over the goodness of God. The supernatural benefits, which have their source in the humanity of our Lord, in his Passion and death. He loved us so much that he would have died for everyone if it had been necessary; that he would have stayed on the cross or in the grave until the end of the world if his Father had demanded it for our salvation. And in fact, he wanted to somehow suffer until the end of the world, because the sufferings of his Church and of his saints, he had suffered them first and offered them to his Father; he suffered from what we would suffer, and **[43]** in his agony / he endured all the sorrows of his saints. If he did not stay on the cross until the end of the world, it is by another excess of love: he wanted to leave us the honor and the profit of suffering in his place and carrying his cross while suffering himself in the agony of our sufferings and our crosses.

And the Eucharist: another testimony of his love. To be nearer to us, he has condemned himself to be a prisoner in our tabernacles. This love is incomprehensible, it is folly to our reason. The folly of the cross and the Eucharist: we will only understand the wisdom of this love in heaven. The special benefits of baptism, of a Christian family, of a good education, of a vocation, of everyday graces, of all our Communions, so many reasons to love him!

Let us remember these motives and seriously think of loving him first of all by refraining from offending him *“Love is not boastful”* [I Corinthians 13:4], it is the preparation for love. If we tell him that we love him and offend him, he will not believe us. No doubt there will always be faults through frailty, but deliberate mistakes cannot be made with love: you cannot love and offend. Let’s precede our acts of love, with acts of repentance if we do not want to lie.

**[44]** A second way of loving is to make inner acts of love in our pious exercises, external in the manifestations of worship and in any works, teaching, whatever actions. A third way of loving is to detach ourselves from everything that is not Jesus. St. Teresa was deprived of graces for several years for not wanting to detach herself from a legitimate affection. Oh, that’s absolutely necessary, otherwise we will never love and Jesus will never be united to us. Whether the bird is attached by a wire or a cable, it is nonetheless unable to rise. Let us detach ourselves from everything in order to attach ourselves only to his will. If he wants me to be in pain, I will love the pain; if he wants me in joy, I will accept joy. He will pursue us until we are detached. The love of Jesus is like a wine press that will tread upon our heart and press it relentlessly. *“For the love of Christ urges us on”* [I Corinthians 5:14]; *“Love does not insist on its own way”* [I Corinthians 13:5]. The fourth way of loving and the most sublime is to suffer. The saints rejoiced. St. Francis, said: “Jesus does not love me anymore; today he did not deign to give me his cross.” St. Elizabeth of Hungary, driven from her palace, had a *Te Deum* sung to thank God.

**[45]** Suffering is better than consolation. This puts us in debt to God and it is not good to be in debt: there is the responsibility for the graces received. Suffering makes God our debtor and it’s a huge advantage. Let us often put in our memory the motives for charity, for our nature is so weak that it would run wild if we wanted to do acts of charity without often thinking of motives. Let us deal with this in our Adoration, our visits to the Blessed Sacrament, our examinations.

### **Wednesday, May 26, 1880**

We must be thirsty for justice, for purification, for immolation, for union with our Lord because of the present circumstances.

First, the Feast of the Sacred Heart, which later will be our biggest feast day. Let us substitute fervor for solemnity: *“This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it”* [Psalm 118:24]. On this day, joy for the homage paid to him; on this occasion, sadness for the failures and lukewarmness of consecrated souls. This last feeling must always accompany our **[46]** joys. When our Lord asked for this feast of his Heart, / we must believe that he had a special thought for his Oblates, desiring above all to be celebrated by them on this day. If that’s not the case, we mustn’t believe anything anymore.

A second point from the Examen of Foresight that we have to make as a preparation, is the Feast of the Blessed Sacrament. It's a very special feast for us, the feast of love *until the end of time*. He has set the height of his love by instituting the sacrament of love. The Heart of Jesus offers us many graces on such a day as also for the day of the Sacred Heart, graces which may be invisible but still real, *preparatory graces for the trial which itself will be a still greater grace*. We have the use of a very great favor: Exposition, from Mass until Vespers, during the whole octave. We will still be in the Cenacle until the Feast of the Sacred Heart.

The Feast of the Sacred Heart will be a day each year when there will be the most solemnity, the day when vows will be pronounced or postulants and novices will be admitted. We will prepare for it by a retreat. This year the coincidence of Exposition already puts us in a disposition for retreat. Some meditations will be added and silence kept.

**[47]** One more reason to pray well and respond to the graces we receive is First Communion. Among these children, there are certainly Oblates, and the desire of our Lord is to see us take a keen interest in everything concerning his Work. He will gladly see us pray for these children during such an important occasion in their lives.

Let's be generous. Our Lord asks a lot of us. Do not deny him anything. That, moreover, would become easy for us with the graces we receive.

### **Friday, May 28, 1880**

We spoke summarily of passions, of virtues; it remains to treat vices, then the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. Finally, by adding the Beatitudes, of which we have already spoken, and a little treatise on mental prayer, we will have gone through all the things that are necessary for a novice to know. Today, let's talk about a vice that is very important to fight against. It is a great skill for a warrior to acquire a perfect knowledge of the opposing enemy.

Pride is the disorderly appetite for excellence that attracts tributes and external honors. This vice takes:

1. Several forms:

- [48]**
- a. The first form: the proud person attributes to himself the qualities which are in him;
  - b. The second form: it is one of his characteristics to attribute to his own merits the qualities which he recognizes as belonging to God;
  - c. The third form...
  - d. The fourth form: he believes he possesses these qualities in a degree superior to others; here there is comparison.
  - e. One further form divides pride into 12 degrees to correspond to the 12 degrees of

humility: including the haughty look, boasting, presumption, and the inept laugh.

2. The remedies are considerations of true humility:
  - a. our nothingness, what we are of ourselves: *I know myself*;
  - b. the greatness of God, that confounds pride: *I know you*;
  - c. the sight of our sins, the abuse of graces.

To arrive at what is particularly special to us is that our vocation is reparation. For reparation has three mountains to conquer between God and us: pride, concupiscence of the eyes, and concupiscence of the flesh. The main one is pride. That's why we need exceptional, deep humility. Humility, patience, and charity are our three friends, three special spouses who must **[49]** attract all our care. To make reparation for the sin / in which there is always pride, one must always have humility.

### **Sunday, May 30, 1880**

Let's complete the last conference. A more authoritative division, adopted by St. Gregory and St. Thomas, places pride as the king of capital sins, and puts vainglory first. The daughters of vainglory are:

1. Disobedience that wants to see my will excel and believes it better. This sin is frequent in novitiates, it is the most common: out of 10 vocations, 9 are lost.
2. Boasting, which relates its exploits, and asserts itself: still frequent in the novice, it defiles many recreations. Recreation is also the most difficult exercise because it falls into either taciturnity or intemperance of language.
3. The presumption of novelties, which seeks to stand out by actions not like the others, affecting certain particular opinions.
4. Hypocrisy, which seeks to show its deeds in a good light, concealing all its faults, its errors of mind in the chapel, under an apparent devotion in deportment, hiding its irregularities.
- [50]** 5. The stubborn feeling that attaches itself anyway to his good opinion.
6. Discord that does not want to give up its *good or bad* feeling.
7. Contention, which is the result of stubbornness and inspires quarrels.

After vainglory, and its huge retinue, comes envy which hates the excellence of others. It has five satellites:

1. the hatred that cannot suffer the good of others. In the novitiate, it is focused on spiritual things, on the graces of others as we see in the history of all the saints. The demon, who wants us to believe that we are small perfections, does not tempt us over poverty and chastity; he seeks only to attach us to graces, to spiritual favors, and to envy those in others. We envy the regularity of others, their modesty, or the favor we

think they have near their superior. Envy also reigns in this novitiate, although there really is hardly any object. After hatred comes:

2. *slander* that speaks badly in the absence of the neighbor,
3. *detraction* that tears him apart in his presence,
4. *sadness* for the good that happens to him,
5. *joy* for the evil that we see in him.

We must hate all these vices because they are all opposed to our spirit of reparation.

**[51] Tuesday, June 1, 1880**

Retreat Conference: *On Sin*

During these three days, our conferences will deal with retreat topics. Sin is a mystery. "*Who can understand their transgressions?*" [Psalm 19:12].

1. Nature. How to understand an offense against God in two terms? *Offense* against God? The offender and the offended? A being so small, offending an infinite being. Who can understand the whole of God, his wisdom, his goodness...Who can understand the nothingness of man? Sin is an *insane negation* of God. God says, "I am good and merciful." The sinner says: no. "I want you to be good." The sinner says: no. *Sin is the greatest evil*; it is moral evil above physical evil; it is God's pain. It would kill God if it could. So, when God was mortal, sin killed him. *Sin is opposed to Jesus*. Jesus teaches suffering; the sinner does not want it. Jesus gives himself in the Eucharist; the sinner does not want it. *Sin is hell*.
2. Effects. Among its effects we see the death of Jesus. In contemplating sin, Jesus wanted to expiate this horrible offense against divinity by dying. He then said his "*Ecce venio*" [Hebrews 10:7].

The knowledge and horror of sin: there is the basis of our vocation; that is what it must rely on.

**[52]** Sin demands reparation; there is certain proof. Jesus accomplishes reparation and wants me to accomplish it by following him in suffering by a life of sacrifice and immolation. So, sin imposes on me a life of immolation.

**Tuesday, June 1, 1880, at 3:15 pm**

Let's finish what has been said by considering the state of our souls with regard to sin. Sin is a mystery, it's a disorder. To understand it better, let's take analogies from nature. The disorder, the ugliness that we see there is the image of sin in us. In the mineral kingdom, what is most vile as matter is the mud of an open sewer, and what is most precious is the diamond, the precious stones. So, the soul defiled and the soul righteous. In the plant kingdom, what

displeases most is a faded flower, withered, covered with mud and trampled, and what is admired is a beautiful lily turning its white petals towards the enlightening sun: again, an image of sin and an image of justice in the soul. In the animal order, the tiger and the snake represent what is most repulsive, and the lamb and the dove, what is most pure.

**[53]** Imagine what is more unpleasant to our senses or more pleasant, and you will still have an image of sin and purity in the soul. St. Philip Neri had the gift of physically feeling the state of the soul of those who approached him, who authorizes this analogy as well as the comparisons of lamb and dove often employed by Scripture. And next to God, what is the state of the sinful soul? It turns its back on this life-giver, who gives it everything despite its ingratitude. It is an object of appalling disgust for God and the angels of paradise, whereas it has a chain around it and of which the demon holds the end ready to return to its place if this soul were to be separated from the body.

Venial sin has something similar to ugliness and if the soul appeared with a venial attachment, it would hear it said, *"I am about to spit you out of my mouth"* [Revelation 3:16]. Let us beware of mortal sin but also of the attachment to venial sin, we who want to comfort the Heart of Jesus. We will see in the following conferences the means of repairing and preserving ourselves from dreadful sin.

#### **[54] Wednesday, June 2, 1880**

##### *Contrition*

In sin, we have seen the offense done to God, death given to Jesus, the disorder placed within us. What are we going to do to fill this abyss? We can say, *"I know my transgressions"* [Psalm 51:3], listening to the multitude of his mercies. God has put in us a means by which he wishes to give efficacy through his merits: it is penance, the tears of regret, the humiliation of the spirit, the broken and humble heart. But all this can fill this abyss only with the first stone which is Jesus. Jesus was the first stone thrown into this abyss and he invites us to fill it with our brokenness and our sacrifices. We are not allowed to sacrifice our lives. The sacrifice required is a contrite heart: *"A sacrifice to God is a broken spirit"* [Psalm 51:17]. Tears should be our daily bread, for Jesus who became a sinner could say, like David, *"Tears have been my food day and night"* [Ps 42:3].

It is the vocation of the Christian, the religious, it is the formal and determined vocation of the Oblate. With what do we sign the Christian at baptism? With the cross. At confirmation? With the cross. The cleric? With the cross. To the priesthood, where a large one is placed on his shoulders; the religious pronouncing his vows has a crucifix in his hands.



[55] Jesus cried for Jerusalem and for Lazarus, / he cried also in Gethsemane because we know his Heart enough to affirm it, and the pain had to be translated into tears before being translated into blood. Following his example, we cry too. We cry out; when we are alone, we cry with him. Nothing unites like crying together, it strengthens friendship and souls merge into one. The tears will be sweet to us because we have a compassionate friend.

He promises us a reward despite our weaknesses. He said to his disciples after the Last Supper, *"You have stood by me in my trials; I prepare for you a seat in the kingdom of my Father"* [cf. Luke 22:28-30]. What, Lord, do you no longer have knowledge of the future? Who stayed with you at Caiaphas' house? Peter who denied you? At Pilate's court? Nobody. At Calvary? Only one. Yet these words are spoken by Truth itself, and there is some truth in these words. He had tribulations before and then they stayed with him, but he excuses them: *"Satan has asked to sift you; I have prayed for you"* [cf. Lk 22:31-32]. They came back quickly. It would be presumptuous to believe that there will be no failure at the time of the test, but we will return after or we will recover soon.

[56] Since I have commented a little on the *Miserere* and have long desired to because it is so often recited, let us think of these words of the prophet longing for the temple of God: *"Do good to Zion"* [Ps 51:18]. Jesus said them with a sigh after the establishment of the Church and I believe that it is according to his will that we *apply them to the spiritual Jerusalem which is our Work and to the material Jerusalem which is our chapel*. Let the walls be built, let the *Consummatum est* arrive, because until then our *reparations are not valuable*. Only then will Jesus accept our sacrifices and offerings. Let's say these verses then as prayer and as a hope.

**Wednesday, June 2, 1880, at 3:45 pm**

*"Set me as a seal upon your heart and upon your arm"* [Song of Songs 8:6]. This morning, the sign that we have placed upon our heart is the cross, sacrifice. But this is not enough. The heart as a symbol of the will and of love is the whole person. But as a duty of atonement, it is not enough for the task: it is not only the heart that has sinned, in man all the faculties have [57] been defiled, and God who willed to repair everything / in Christ, *"To restore all things in Christ* [Ephesians 1:10], made him suffer in his heart and body as in external goods, which man abused by slandering, insulting, misusing them.

Christ did not content himself with suffering alone, he extended his body in the Holy Eucharist, but also in his Mystical Body, which is the Church composed of Christians: *"Members of his body"* [cf. Ephesians 5:30]; he wanted to give himself to them, to communicate his life to them in order to suffer in them and thus multiply reparation and victims through the centuries, because reparation is included in the Christian life to a certain extent and it enters into its essence. It has made worthy the holy souls of all times.

In order to imitate Jesus, we must therefore sacrifice ourselves not only with the heart but also with the body and with external goods: *gentle but firm* corporal mortification, *prudent but faithful*, loving poverty. It will happen that we will have moments of weakness at the sight of sacrifice, but they will disappear if we look at the cross that must be embraced. But Jesus [58] himself condescended / to feel and show weakness: “*Let this cup pass from me*” [Matthew 26:39], to show us a model in these moments of despondency; he wants these moments of weakness and impotence, but let us also say, like him: “*Yet not my will by yours be done.*” Thus, we repair by the three great mortifications opposed to the three concupiscences. Yesterday, we saw sin as the reason for reparation, and today we understand the exercise and means of reparation. Let us work to fill this chasm of divine justice.

### **Thursday, June 3, 1880, Vigil of the Feast of the Sacred Heart**

It remains for us to consider what the consummation of love and the reparation for sin is like: abandonment. The theory of abandonment is based on two rational principles: first, God is the principle of all beings, that is, he is the author of all that happens; second, he is infinitely good, that is, he can do only good.

The consequence is that everything that happens to us is for our greater good. [Fr. John then [59] goes into detail and says about sin]: that to a certain extent, God wants the evil / that comes from misused freedom because he wants this freedom, which man abuses. But this is not to be misunderstood, and if his goodness and mercy wanted liberty to make recompense possible, his justice intervenes with his power to draw good from the evil done by the abuse of liberty. Thus, God wants everything that happens to us and what happens to us is the result of an act of his will.

This act emanates from the Holy Trinity, clothed with the authority of the Father, the wisdom of the Son, and the love of the Holy Spirit. This act passes through the Heart of Jesus, who accepts it in our name, because we are his since he has redeemed us through the Heart of Mary, who also has accepted it through love for us. The angels and saints of heaven adore him in his passage, and this act comes to us, thus accepted by the whole of heaven. Instead of uniting ourselves with this heavenly acceptance, we reserve our judgment and put up an act of defiance, then we examine: is it in conformity with nature, with the senses? We accept it. Is it contrary to them? We reject it, considering the secondary causes too much and the principal one not enough.

[60] In the practice of this abandonment, we have Jesus Christ as an example who has abandoned himself only to the will of his Father. And when we are tested by the persecution or injustice of our brothers, if we are tempted to say that God is not the author, do we see

redemption? *“Assembled against your child, Jesus”* [cf. Psalm 2:2]. Is it not God who wanted it? Therefore, he wanted the hatred of the Pharisees, the cruelty of the executioners, the crucifixion and the death of Jesus. How close to that are the evils we suffer from?

Holy abandonment is more perfect than the love of suffering. To prefer sufferings to the will of God would be like a beautiful flower which would refuse to be put in the middle of the bouquet by the florist and would desire to be hidden under the others. It is by this path that God leads souls whom he wants to do great things. He begins by making them feel their nothingness to separate them from themselves and to attach them to him. This holy abandonment was the practice of the saints and the reason for their calm and peace.

**[61]** St. Ignatius calls it indifference, and in this all the *Exercises* consist, everything leads there. I prefer the word abandonment which is not negative and better marks love, the gift of oneself. Rodriguez calls it conformity. This word indicates a state rather than an act. But the thing is the same for all, there is only a nuance of words.

For the Oblates it must be their entire life that must be spent in the exercise of this abandonment. Nature can be repugnant; Jesus wanted to feel it in his agony, but the summit of the will must always accept and say: *it is good*, following the example of the Holy Trinity and heaven.

Surrender as a child to his mother. Sometimes he is obliged to receive treatment that makes him suffer. Does he stop loving his mother? No, he has no repugnance except for the treatment he needs: there is some mystery in this recommendation to be like children *“Become like little children”* [Matthew 18:3]. The child always believes himself safe in the arms of his mother; he does not doubt her love, her power. Let's do likewise.

**[62] Friday, June 4, 1880** [Feast of the Sacred Heart]

By faith, let's reproduce today what happened miraculously for Blessed Margaret Mary. Our Lord appeared in the form of an *Ecce Homo* or the Heart surrounded by thorns, asking her for love and reparation; the wounds of the body shown as the work of ordinary Christians, but those of the Heart, from the chosen people. And the Blessed, feeling completely powerless to repair and console, said to him: I am nothing, I can do nothing, do everything yourself. And Jesus, taking the heart of the Blessed, put it inside his, and it appeared, as she said, like a heart of flame or a flame in the shape of a heart.

We too, especially those who go one step further in the path of reparation, let's also tell Jesus of our helplessness to comfort him, let's pray to help him. The Blessed said again, “I am ignorant, how can you choose me?” And our Lord answered her, “I have chosen you because of

your ignorance and weakness, that it may be clear that everything is from me.” He tells us these words again today because *he is here, this is certain*. These words were said with an inflection of extraordinary conviction: he would have actually seen our Lord with the eyes of the body had he not spoken with more conviction.

**[63] Monday, June 7, 1880**

*The Day after the Feast of the Very Pure Heart of Mary*

After the Heart of Jesus, we have nothing dearer than the heart of Mary, and yesterday’s feast offers it to us for meditation and study. The Heart of Mary was holy because it formed the Heart of Jesus *physically* by its beats, and *morally* by the direction that the obedient Jesus wanted to receive from it.

Like him, growing in wisdom, Mary could say, *“I am the mother of beautiful love”* [Sirach 24:18], that is to say, all love of the Heart of Jesus, since it was formed by substantial love; and in a larger sense, mother of beautiful love, that is to say of the disciple of love, Christians animated by pure love. Love has filled her whole heart, and a pure love excluding all other loves. Her heart was reserved for God alone; *mother of fear*, she had but one unique fear: to displease God, but filial fear without agitation; *of knowledge*: she studied the Heart of Jesus; she knew the love of her God and was grateful for it; *of holy hope* [Sirach 24,18]: she has also experienced holy hopes and these four words contain the sentiments of the Heart of Mary.

**[64]** God said to her, *“Set me as a seal upon your heart”* [Song of Songs 8:6] and this seal was placed on her heart from the moment of her conception, at the Annunciation, at Nazareth, on Calvary, when she pressed her Jesus, dying and dead, on her heart, and this seal has never been broken; neither the world, the devil, nor passion have had access to it.

What can we conclude? Let us also listen to God who says to us: *“Set me as a seal upon your heart”* [Song of Songs 8:6]. He also put a seal on our souls at baptism, confirmation, and the priesthood. We have often broken it. It is no longer the sealed fountain, the closed garden. The vows of religion also put a seal, which without having the nature of the sacramental character, has no less solemnity and importance. He inscribes us in the book of God’s estate; we give ourselves to him; we are no longer our own. Let’s not break this seal anymore. Let’s refuse access to anyone other than the Prince. Let’s renew our resolution of abandonment taken a few days ago. Finally, let’s deliver ourselves, like Mary, to beautiful love, pure love.

**[65] Wednesday, June 9, 1880**

*On Gluttony and Greed*

Gluttony has five forms: the immoderate appetite for food:

1. sumptuous form of expensive things;
2. delicately prepared things;
3. outside the hour;
4. intemperance;
5. with greed.

These last three forms are the only ones possible in community, the fourth especially must be repressed, because if temperance is enough for a simple Christian, it is not enough for a religious, and would it be enough for a religious, it would not be enough for an Oblate. Let us understand once more the necessity of the holocaust. Mortification is necessary; without scruple, but with generosity

The daughters of gluttony are chatter and mad joy; not, however, that which reigns here too often, the stupefaction of the spirit, the off-color remark—*moral foulness*—because it leads to impurity. From the beginning, avarice is repressed by poverty, yet it still has its empire; the severity that one refuses to accept, the anxiety of what one will have, comes from it; there is still a way to be greedy.

**[66]** *An important observation:*

Do not discuss the *Rule*. No worries on this subject: it will be submitted for the approval of the Church, besides Bishop Thibaudier has read it; besides, it is derived from approved Rules. Our Lord, in prescribing points to add to it, has not yet indicated removing anything. He promised to intervene on that. Confidence, then.

Two reasons to dispel all worries:

If there are difficult points, first our Lord will give us the grace to execute them; if not, we will not have to be distressed over it. Then there must be some there. This is what is special to us after the three vows: *there is as much difference between us and other religious as between the holocaust and the other sacrifices*. The others place the three counsels of precept, we put more under the precept. Two things that our Lord asks, first of all: this is what relates to his worship, Mass, the Office, and then authority, a great respect for authority; to say before an order: Jesus wants it. How to make reparation without that?

**Friday, June 11, 1880**

**[67]** To continue our discussions on the deadly sins would have too little in keeping with the favor we have today to have our Lord especially in our midst. Let's talk about the feelings we must have in the presence of our Lord. This will serve us for today and for all our Adorations.

The very certain will of our Lord is that we are friends with him as he had during his mortal life. Here he wants to find Nazareth, Bethany, and the affection with which his apostles surrounded him during his apostolic life. [Fr. John develops the thoughts that those who were friends of our Lord during his mortal life had feelings of love and compassion, reparation.] In Nazareth, let us contemplate all the signs of love that have been given to him in all circumstances by Mary and Joseph, by the friends of the family, by his childhood friends whom the first Fathers of the Church report to us that they are said among themselves, *“Let us go to what attracts us”* seeing in him the ideal of gentleness and amiability, expressing himself with an innocent simplicity.

If Nazareth doesn't suffice, because we have such a changeable and mobile imagination, let's look to Bethany where Jesus was loved and where he loved so much according to the Gospel, **[68]** where the contemplative love of Mary, the active love of Martha, and the affection of Lazarus attracted him, especially during the last days of his public life.

Let's see him with his disciples again, who were quickly won over by his amiability, and who also showed him their love as much as their gross nature could; especially see our model, St. John. But we have done only half of what we have to do while loving: no love without reparation and, I would dare to say it, it is a privilege that we have above the angels and saints in heaven. They cannot help but love. This is what made the saints say before they died: suffer always; do not die.

Did not Mary and Joseph first feel compassion for Jesus in Bethlehem, then later in the Temple? Did not Mary, above all, understand by the prophecies what her little Jesus was to suffer? She moaned to see him misunderstood, persecuted already in Nazareth and in his childhood, because he had to be among those who were bad in this city. And was not compassion aroused **[69]** in the hearts which loved him there, for he would have certainly said / something of what he had to suffer on the part of humanity?

Compassion also in Bethany, compassion of the apostles in the various circumstances of his life where they saw him persecuted even before his Passion and when he spoke to them about his sufferings to come. In the Cenacle for example, did not St. John, the first priest-repairer, feel the need to comfort him with much love for the indifference he must have foreseen on the part of humanity when our Lord had made the permanent institution of the Holy Eucharist understood; did he not read in the Heart, where he rested his head, the bitterness which the ingratitude of humanity provoked? So, let's live in these feelings of reparation. Love and reparation, not one without the other, but with each other, one after another. May these be our habitual feelings.

**[70] Sunday, June 13, 1880**

Let's continue our ordinary conversation by talking about two deadly sins.

1. Anger: vice and passion. As a passion, it is either good or bad according to whether one directs it well or badly. As a vice, always bad, it is the badly directed passion. Fr. John *divides* and *characterizes* it.

Its daughters are:

- a. fights;
- b. [...] these two are not found in the communities;
- c. swelling of the mind;
- d. indignation,
- e. clamor, insult.

It has three characteristics:

- a. anger or sourness which does not last, but is born from the smallest causes;
- b. bitterness, which lasts a long time against the one who has not shown us the consideration which we think we deserve;
- c. violence, which is expressed by words or acts tending to vengeance.

Above all, the remedy is in the imitation of the Heart of Jesus: "*Learn from me...*" [Matthew 11: 29]. Gentleness has been his most manifest virtue.

2. Lust, a shameful vice that has five ways of doing things:

- a. thinking,
- b. feeling,
- c. delighting,
- d. consent,
- e. action.

Considered objectively, it is divided into fornication, stupor, etc. Its consequence for the body is degradation; for the soul, the obscurity of the spirit: *Moral blindness: thoughtless, unrestrained; for the will, subversion of law [?] hatred of God.*

We fight this snake by flight: the lion of anger in... Fr. John says, to divert the spirit of those hideous vices that can do harm even in thinking of them, to fight against them, and comments on the psalm "*Praise the Lord in his sanctuary* [Psalm 150:1] by applying it to the Heart of Jesus, for whom we ask thanksgiving, reparation, triumph.

Think of the Heart of Jesus, while reciting the Office.

# FALLEUR NOTEBOOK III

## CONFERENCES AND SERMONS

June 16 – August 11, 1880

**[1] Wednesday, June 16, 1880**

*On Satisfaction*

The principal elements of the catechism should be sufficient to fill us with the spirit of our vocation. We know that sin is an offense against God and that this offense requires satisfaction. We know that Jesus Christ alone was able to satisfy fully this offense. But we also know that our personal satisfaction is necessary for the superabundant satisfaction of Jesus Christ to be applied to us.

The Protestant heresy teaches, and this is one of its great errors, that no satisfaction is necessary after that of Jesus Christ. This is, it says, to insult the Savior to look upon his satisfaction as insufficient. Catholics do not regard the satisfaction of Jesus Christ as insufficient in itself, but the effects must be applied to us by means of our own satisfaction.

But how can we satisfy God? By the means we teach to children in the catechism, first by the sacramental penance that the confessor imposes. But we know that this penance, while completing the sacrament, leaves debts to be paid either in this life or in purgatory.

We must therefore complete our atonement with voluntary penances, which are divided into three categories: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. And this division from the catechism is based on the very nature of things. It responds to the three major categories of sins. Prayer includes all the inner acts that can be done in the spirit of penance; it is the reparation for sins of the soul. Fasting embraces all bodily sufferings meant to atone for sins committed by the senses. Lastly, alms, which here generally designate the stripping of all external goods, expiate sins committed in the use of these goods.

**[2]** We teach others / by the same token that every Christian is a sinner who must satisfy and make reparation by voluntary penance. As for us, we are especially held to it as religious and priests. So, you see that without appealing to any extraordinary light, the spirit of our vocation is quite evident. And if now we reflect on this fact that our Lord himself has deigned to ask us for reparation, is it possible that our entire life is not a holocaust? How far that is from offending God, as is done every day. Whenever we sin, far from being Oblates, we are neither priests nor religious, nor even Christians.



Today, we will begin a novena to St. John the Baptist, the one whom our Lord proclaimed the greatest among the children of men. He was certainly the holiest of men at that time. For the rest, we leave aside the scholastic debate. This saint can only be honored by penance. We will therefore do some corporal mortifications.

This novena will be made for the intention of our Sisters, for whom we must not show ourselves ungrateful. If our Work exists, it is because they have offered themselves as victims for fifteen years to call for priest-repairers, and our Lord has accepted their offerings. He has largely granted them the three principal means of atonement: he has allowed them to experience extraordinary temptations and all the sufferings of the soul; he sent them bodily suffering, sickness, and death; as for temporal goods, one must be, as I am, aware of all the details in order to be able to affirm that they live only by miracles. We will offer this novena especially for the Sister who is like John the Baptist, the precursor of the Work. If she receives graces, she also has great obligations, and she needs assistance.

**[3] Friday, June 18, 1880**

*On Laziness and Vices in General*

1. Laziness, which is the disgust of spiritual good, has for daughters, the cowardice of will, pusillanimity in counsel, and the levity of spirit. In the body, it is reflected in the anxiety of the body which is never at rest, never at enough ease. No need to talk about listlessness and weakness. Here are the daughters and the forms. The most common is the laxity of spirit, especially during religious exercises: one abandons one's mind to all the thoughts that come; we do not bother to be logical, to follow an idea. The remedy is in the virtue of diligence, supported by thoughts of faith, as the value of time and eternity. Another daughter of laziness: indignation against the one who wants to remedy this disgust of the spiritual good, in Latin "rancor." It is found in novitiates.
2. Some general observations on the vices and virtues.
  - a. A single act can belong to several vices or virtues according to the different intentions that we had while doing it. He who steals in order to uplift himself by his wealth commits an act of pride and injustice. To serve at Mass in order to render service, is religion and charity. One can thus multiply the acts according to the intentions.

**[4]** In a garden there is not a single species of flower, / the same for souls; there is variety: "No one has been found like him" [Sirach 44:19]. One Congregation has one specialty; another Congregation has another. In beginning all their actions, at least the principal ones, the Oblates must make an act of love and reparation. This is

what one must be or better, so as not to be torn out by the Master who would not find what he wanted to find. Make this intention at least 30 times during a single day.

- b. General observations. Let's attack only one point and the strongest; everything else is acquired with it. We have seen that capital vices and virtues are accompanied by a crowd of daughters; in rejecting one, others are chased away who enter only through the gap which it has made, just as the acquisition of a virtue leads to that of others. If, for example, I want to be gentle, I will foresee the opportunities, etc.; this is prudence, and my resolution to be gentle, causing me to make a continual use of it, will at the same time acquire the virtue of prudence. If I bring all my energy to be gentle, I practice the virtue of strength in all occasions where one must be gentle, and my will / also strengthens and acquires the virtue of strength.

[5]

### **Sunday, June 20, 1880**

Today, let's take leave of the ordinary course of our conferences to renew ourselves in the feelings we must have because of the trial that is coming and will come if we are worthy of it. It would be the most terrible test to have no trial. It has been announced to us supernaturally, but naturally we can guess it, because a Work like this cannot be established without receiving this guarantee of divine acceptance.

Watch and pray. The year that ended in the Passion was the year of contradiction for our Lord. He had announced it to his apostles, thus preparing them for great agony: the Son of Man will be delivered...I will destroy this temple, "when I am lifted up from the earth" [cf. John 12:32], as Jonah had been three days. His apostles barely prepared for it, living in habitual recklessness. [6] St. Peter even begged him not to go / to Judea, but Jesus replied, "Get behind me, Satan" [cf. Matthew 16:23]. In various ways, he prepared them for the great contradiction; he took three of them in particular, whom he strengthened by the visions of Tabor, and yet they were not faithful to him.

At the moment of the test, they continued what they had done all year long: they were asleep. In a moment of fervor, however, they had declared themselves ready for anything. St. Peter: "I am ready to go with you to death!" [Luke 22:33]. St. Thomas: "Let us also go, that we may die with him" [John 11:16]. And when Jesus tells them to watch and pray, they do not listen to him; they fall asleep until Jesus says to them, "Sleep now, and take your rest" [Matthew 26:45]. My words could not wake you up, sleep well, the Savior told them with a sweet irony; others will come to wake you and Judas advances with his troop.

The reason for these failures is quite clear: they were not prepared for the ordeal despite the warnings of the Savior, who had so often warned and strengthened them. *The grace of perseverance during the test is proportionate to the vigilance and the actual prayer.* Like the apostles, we are forewarned and strengthened; every day we have more than sufficient graces.

**[7]** Are we not sleeping? Are we vigilant in mortifying our body well, not to grant it the material sleep that it solicits, to sacrifice our own judgment, our own will, to perform our devotional exercises with a spirit of vigilance and prayer? Are we not always the same? Let's be careful not to sleep. Let's take advantage of the graces we are given so generously.

Let us not be like those Sisters, whom our Lord requires dismissal after 6 or 8 years of residence; they are, he says, like a hungry person near the best-served table, like a thirsty man near the most abundant spring, they are in the darkness near the brightest light, they are cold near the most ardent sunlight. Indeed, up there is a house of grace, we feel better every time we go; but here it is just as much a house of thanks. Are we not like those rejected Sisters? Should we not fear the same fate if we follow the same course? Watch and pray: let us not neglect the graces given to us, in order to be firm at the time of the trial.

**[8] Wednesday, June 23, 1880**

*On the Gifts of the Holy Spirit*

They differ from theological virtues and moral virtues. Theologians place them in order of dignity from the first to the last.

The theological virtues are habits, aptitudes that the soul receives for a life of union with God; the moral virtues are habits, aptitudes to follow the light of reason in our behavior; the gifts of the Holy Spirit are habits, aptitudes that make us fit to receive the movements of the Holy Spirit.

Wisdom, intelligence, counsel, and knowledge reside in the mind; piety in the will; strength in what is irascible; the fear of God in what is concupiscent. We especially need the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Since our life must be habitually heroic, we must always be ready to receive the movements of the Holy Spirit. So, all the invocations to the Holy Spirit that we encounter in our prayers every day must be very precious to us.

**[9] Friday, June 25, 1880**

**[10]** Let's speak about the fruits of the Holy Spirit. In a broad sense, we understand this more strictly as every grace and gift; it is a definitive state of mind accompanied by a certain mellowness. It is the result of virtue. St. Paul enumerates twelve. As fruits are the definitive

results of all vegetation, so the fruits of the Holy Spirit are the fulfillment of virtues. These fruits can be seen in these holy men, these men of God whom we sometimes encounter: through them we recognize that they have the Spirit of God.

**[11] Sunday, June 27, 1880**

Some opinions on what to do and think during the present circumstances. First there is ordination: we must never be indifferent to it. Jesus loves his priests so much and so strongly desires their sanctification! We who deliver ourselves as victims for them, let's think of what our vocation requires of us. We must always have feelings of respect, of charity for priests, and to manifest them on every occasion. We will often be suspected of judging others and being contemptuous: let's destroy this prejudice as it happens. But to the general interest of the priesthood is joined a special interest to pray a great deal.

This is the first time that the Oblate Congregation is taking part in an ordination: a priest-repairer will be given to our Lord; he will be able to offer him his Masses of reparation so sweet, so pleasing to our Lord, as is all that the priest does in a spirit of love and reparation: confession, preaching. Two others are advancing more or less toward this reparative priesthood: we must therefore do something to obtain from our Lord what is necessary for those who will move on this path.

**[12]** Another occasion arrives to demand something from us on this date of June 29: the decrees against the Jesuits. All that is from perverted men; evil men will rejoice. Satan will give them his satanic joy; an immense and heavy smoke will rise from France to heaven on this fatal day of June 29. But beside this popular joy there is the official action: near those who shout, "Away with him, away with him!" [John 19:15], there are Pilates, Herods, and Caiaphases who act in the name of the nation, and our Lord could inflict upon France the chastisement of the Jews, and deliver it to its enemies, if there were not found the number of the just whom he wants to see there.

In addition to these popular and official insults, there is the wound made to his Heart, from whom one snatches what he loves most: the religious, the children, the unfortunate. Satan takes away those he calls to himself. Did he not say to the religious, "Come, follow me" [Matthew 19:21], and Satan expels them. These Offices which have been sending prayer from all parts of France will cease. Some cowardly souls will take advantage of the turmoil to secularize themselves. There will be popular riots and the Body of our Lord is well exposed to **[13]** be thrown / into the mud. *I have the conviction* that there will be bloodshed: it is a grace for the souls who will be favored, but these murders are nonetheless a very cruel wound for Jesus, because one wounds him by wounding the Holy Church, his spouse.

And the children he loves so much are prevented from going to him because it is education especially which is affected by these decrees. He said, "Let the little children come to me" [Mark 10:14] and they are torn from him. From all sides, Satan rejects the wretched of all conditions, he does not care from where, provided he prevents them from following Jesus' call, "Come to me all you who labor and are burdened" [Matthew 11:28]. This is the lance wound that Jesus is going to receive: "Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow" [Lamentations 1:12]. Will not we have compassion for his sufferings, we who want to comfort him?

These days are not common days and the one who would spend them as such would not sense his vocation. You have to love and repair doubly from now on. Let's be generous in following our vocation. The general test is going to become special for us, it has already started for our **[14]** Sisters, announced a few months ago. Only a small group of holy women will remain for the supreme moment of the *Consummatum est*.

For us, we must be worthy of the ordeal, otherwise our Lord will reject us and do his work elsewhere. We have a lot to do; we must not believe that everything is done because we have been called supernaturally. What is, in fact, the responsibility incurred; what there is to do is acquiring the merits to be worthy of this vocation, not to believe ourselves elected because we are called: "Many are called, few are chosen" [Matthew 20:16].

Fast tomorrow for the vigil of St. Peter and the night before June 29; besides, a Holy Hour from 9 AM to 3 PM for those who are here. There will always be two adorers before the Most Blessed Sacrament. But all this is nothing if the inner feelings do not respond to it. By grace, Satan will not find any satisfaction here; he will have enough elsewhere. Let us gird ourselves with mortification to repair and take in our hands the torch that symbolizes love and fidelity.

### **[15] Wednesday, June 30, 1880**

*First Mass of Fr. Jacques-Marie Herr* [no conference]

### **Friday, July 2, 1880**

Let's consider the sorrows of the Heart of Jesus during these times of hardship and see what we have to do on this occasion. Many persecutors offend him at this moment because it is he who is chased from France in the person of the religious who bear his name: "Who hates you, hates me" [cf. John 15:18]; "Whatever you do to one of the least of mine, you did it to me" [cf. Matthew 25:40]. But for these persecutors, he repeats the Calvary prayer, "Forgive them for they know not what they do" [cf. Luke 23:34]. No doubt they are guilty because they have received the grace of Baptism and despise sufficient grace. However, their hatred is blind, they are not enlightened on the greatness of their crime.

Do you believe that this is the greatest pain of the Heart of Jesus at this moment? *I very firmly believe* that the indifference of his own is much more painful to him than the gross insults of these ignorant enemies. This is the meaning of these words of the Messianic psalm: “If my enemy taunted me—I could bear that...but it is you...my guide”—a priest; “my acquaintance” [Psalm 55:12-13], a religious.

To this testimony of Holy Scripture is added the authority of the revelations of Blessed Margaret Mary: what is most painful to me is the indifference of the souls who are consecrated **[16]** to me. He complains / of the ingratitude of others and he suffers more from the indifference of these. Yes, this is a truth that a saint, Peter of Blois, expresses thus, “What is venial is the people; what is mortal is the priest.” This word is understood in several senses, but above all it is taken in this way: that a venial sin is worsened by the scandal which it causes, by the contempt of the benefits which it betrays, because finally the one who has sinned has more enlightenment.

Do not we feel it ourselves? An insult received from an enemy on the street does not make a great impression on us, no matter how rude it may be, but a murmur, a note of neglect, or forgetfulness on the part of a spiritual director or a close friend hurts deeply because we are expecting only signs of affection and interest. It is therefore certain that at this moment, what most saddens the Heart of Jesus is our lukewarmness and our imperfections, the failings of silence, the secondary points of our Rule. We have no right to hide the greatness of our vocation. We have been rescued from very low to be raised very high: we are called to represent his Heart in his Mystical Body which is the Holy Church, and of all the consecrated **[17]** souls, his Oblates are the most / cherished, the most privileged. How many graces he lavished upon them; we all have more or less personal and supernatural proofs of our sublime vocation. When will we respond to all that it demands of us?

Let's remain vigilant because the ordeal is approaching: we've been waiting for it these days. It did not come and we immediately gave ourselves latitude. Let's keep watch because it is only postponed and it will only be greater. Jesus loved us so much that he will love us so far as to send us a strong trial. So, take care to have oil in our lamps. We do not know when he will come; therefore, let's always be ready for his coming.

Let's see today, just now during the little Examen, that which we have to reform in order to no longer grieve the Heart of Jesus, but to console him for all ingratitude and indifference. The ordeal is made to wait, but it is coming. Are we going to be like the foolish virgins and not put oil in our lamp? The test will come when we don't expect it, we will not be ready and the Bridegroom will tell us: I do not know you anymore.

**[18] Sunday, July 4, 1880**

*It is certainly the desire of our Lord* that we meditate together on today's feast day. You could have noticed during the Divine Office, first of all, the material, physical fact of bloodshed, then, as the mystical shedding of this blood, the symbolism which represents it, the mystical fact concealed under the material fact, the lyricism employed to celebrate it, finally, the invitation of Jesus, of the Church, of St. Paul to show us worthy:

1. of the first blood shed at the circumcision: "After eight days..." [cf. Luke 2:21];
2. the agony: "Sweat became like great drops of blood" [Luke 22:44];
3. the betrayal made by Judas, and Pilate's flogging, the thrust of the lance which opened his side.

Christ, says St. Paul, pontiff for future goods in the temple of the same divinity, that is, in the bosom of his Father or again, in the temple of his humanity on the altar of his Heart, poured out his blood, thus bringing about eternal redemption: "Jesus suffered outside the city gate in order to sanctify the people" [Hebrews 13:12].

Christian poetry celebrates this great blessing, it calls all Christians to rejoice: "They proclaim the festival day..." [Liturgy]. It shows the blood of Jesus poured out by love. As the flood had [19] been sent by a just anger, / it borrowed its comparisons from inanimate nature, then from animated nature, plants, animals, ferocious beasts, and finally to what is highest in nature, man: "A slave was worthy of death, a valid punishment atones for the guilty." What is there that relates more specifically to our vocation? This is the feast of the great victim, but there are some words in praise for the other victims: "Those who are robed..." [cf. Revelation 7:13].

This is the great model of our life as a victim: let's imitate him. "Jesus suffered outside the city gate in order to sanctify the people by his own blood." We who want to save souls like him, "let us go outside the camp," outside of the world, in solitude, in the life of a victim; let us carry his cross: "bearing his reproach" [Hebrews 13:12-13]. Do not be afraid to ask for the grace of immolation as far as bloodshed for one or several of you, sooner or later. "You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood" [Hebrews 12:4]. The ordeal began in the month of the Heart of Mary, it was decreasing during the month of the Heart of Jesus; will it be completed during the month of the Precious Blood or will we have to wait for months?

**[20]** Let's prepare ourselves for this moment whenever it is, during this month, especially by the worship of the Precious Blood. For this intention, an exercise will be done every day in honor of the Precious Blood.

**[21] Wednesday, July 7, 1880**

In order to complete the course of these instructions, we should now speak of free gifts, but to tell the truth they do not fit in with our goal since we are dealing only with what relates to personal sanctification and these gifts are given especially to people, who are generally holy, for the sanctification of others.

After having traversed the field of virtues, we must treat of the exercises which are the means of attaining them, and beginning with the most important, let us speak of mental prayer, or rather of prayer, which is a genre under which mental prayer is included. It is also a question of virtues because prayer is an act of the virtue of religion, a virtue inferior to the theological virtues because it does not have God as a direct object, but superior to all other moral virtues because God is its direct and ultimate end while in others it is a distant end.

Prayer is an elevation of the soul to God, it has four forms like sacrifice: the prayer of adoration, thanksgiving, reparation, and supplication. We can already deduce its excellence from its very nature: it is an audience with God. If we so esteem an audience with a prince of the earth, and **[22]** if this audience was a moment in life when we had this honor only once; if still / it is such a sought-after honor to live habitually at court and have the honor of often seeing the prince every day, what is the honor of an audience with God or the usual conversation with God, that is, prayer and the spirit of prayer?

A second reason for its excellence is the example given by Jesus Christ. He prayed 30 years in Nazareth, 40 days in the desert, and during his public life he undertook vigils and night watches.

In the Old Testament, we see pointed out the prayer of Abraham in the desert at Mamre. We also see the greatest of the prophets, Elijah and Elisha praying in the cave of Mt. Carmel. Beside these ancient examples, we notice the spirit of prayer in all the saints of the New Law, in all the founders of Orders who, in their Constitutions, give a so much greater place to the prayer they want for themselves to devote more exclusively to our Lord and less to the care of souls.

A third reason can be derived from the effects of prayer. For seeing on one side a sovereignly rich person, and on the other an essentially poor person, and this sovereign rich person being at **[23]** the same time sovereignly communicative with the other essentially needy person, / it is not possible that the audience would be useless and the prayer without result.

But a very powerful reason for demonstrating the excellence of prayer is the importance attached to it by the enemy. When he sees that someone is going to use this means, he uses all his forces, he puts all his tricks in play, he deploys all his resources, he puts out afresh all his



intelligence, because that is not what he is lacking. He completely uses the direct power he has over the body, over the memory and imagination that is its instrument; and the indirect power he has through the imagination, on the mind and the will. For him, the moment of prayer corresponds to the decisive moment in a great battle; the other exercises are only skirmishes, however, in which he is still trying not to allow us to be strengthened.

These are good reasons for the excellence of prayer and the practical conclusion that follows from it is to want and love it. To love prayer and to say a word that is more particular to our **[24]** vocation, to love the forms of prayer / that most closely correspond to our vocation as Oblates of the Heart of Jesus: the holocaust prayer which includes adoration and love, that is, affective prayer; then [?] the expiatory prayer.

Let's love prayer. What I say here will suffice for vocal prayer. I will speak of mental prayer or meditation which is the most excellent form of prayer, as prayer is the most excellent act of the virtue of religion.

Regarding vocal prayer, there is above all Holy Mass and the Divine Office. Let us love them, and let us not forget that we enter into this communication of merits with all the children of the Church; likewise for the prayers of the Rule: if we are not strictly religious since we have only the verbal approval of Bishop Thibaudier, we are all tertiaries and by our prayers of the Rule we enter into communication with all the Franciscan Orders and the Orders which communicate their merits to them. Let us also love our private prayers and spiritual direction: they have, none the less, the excellence of all prayer.

**[25] Friday, July 9, 1880**

*On Mental Prayer*

Meditation or mental prayer has this excellence over vocal prayer in that it does not enclose the soul in already fixed formulas but leaves its free flight to God; it elevates the soul above the senses and places it in a divine milieu.

It still has the advantage of procuring the good that we have seen being the object of the passions, and which divides itself into a very useful, honest, and agreeable thing. It procures a useful good by detaching the soul from material goods, sometimes to such an extent that they become absolutely useless. We have seen people living only on Holy Communion, always decreasing their bodily needs. The honest good is quite evident since it brings us closer to God, which is the greatest honor of the creature. As for the pleasant good, there is no one who has not tasted how much there is in mental prayer. This is how the contemplative life, to which we are all called, reduces material needs and elevates the soul. To excellence is joined ease: it is in

our very nature to expose our needs to God, and moreover the simplest people make great progress.

**[26]** *As for the method*, it basically does not differ essentially, it is always the elevation of the soul towards God. Meditation examines and deduces consequences; contemplation feeds on a proposed mystery. Sometimes, often even, the method is no longer necessary. The Holy Spirit penetrates the soul, seizes it, and itself directs it; so, it just has to let it go. However, for beginners, and sometimes for more advanced souls, the method is necessary. "Before prayer, prepare your soul" [Sirach 18:23]. The preparation is of two kinds: remote and proximate.

The remote preparation consists of two things:

1. to discard and flee from the occasions for distractions during the whole day, for example, such as readings outside of the Rule, such as a useless walk;
2. to discard and flee from all useless cares, preoccupations more dangerous than the voluntary distractions. We are occupied with the past, the present, how will we do something, how shall we go about it, what shall I do myself in such circumstances in the future, what will be done here, what will be done with us? This completely destroys mental prayer.

The proximate preparation:

**[27]**

1. for the body, it consists simply in a respectful and collected posture, the kneeling body: it is about all that the conventual life allows where the prayer is not private; it is also usually done in the church except for a few Congregations whose special purpose is to do it in private and which allows special arrangements for the body.
2. Among us, it is especially the soul that needs to be put in place and as conveniently as possible for mental prayer. This is done by considering that we are addressing ourselves to God. God and us: to consider all the greatness of God and to feel all our misery. This consideration of infinite greatness and of infinite lowliness disposes our soul perfectly to receive the graces which God gives it.

**[28] Sunday, July 11, 1880**

*On the Present Circumstances*

It is certain that the ordeal is approaching. No doubt there will be something unforeseen, something fortuitous, but there are also things that can be expected. Our Lord knew all that was being prepared against him in Jerusalem; the apostles were not unaware of the designs of hatred against their Master; St. John himself knew that Judas was going to betray him.

Likewise, here we have signs of the approach of the trial while awaiting dispersion, even abandonment by the Father through dryness at the height of the test. We are already abandoned by all the lukewarm Catholics here; a newspaper which had promised its assistance has deserted the cause, and Bishop Thibaudier himself seems to believe that there was imprudence. Although it is only a shadow, this simple suspicion is a thousand times more heartfelt than anything faithless journalists can say. Confidential warnings announce a sequestration trial that will continue in court. I will probably be involved and that is how the test of their community will be the *Consummatum est* [?] of ours.

**[29]** What our Lord wants from us at this time is what he said to the apostles: “Watch and pray” [Matthew 26:41]; vigilance: he asked for it with tears because he shed them in this garden of agony. Let’s not be content with what we usually are; in doing so we would have no understanding of our vocation as victim. And let us pray: let’s make our prayers of the Rule without voluntary distractions, and those that circumstances require us to do. Vigilance and prayer: can you not then watch one hour with me, says our Lord, if we do not want to have bitter regrets like the apostles who all blamed each other for their flight and experienced sad moments during the great ordeal.

Third disposition: to rejoice. The test is a sign of divine acceptance: a sign of love. Our Lord does not punish us where we have sinned: he allows us to be accused of atrocities that we have not committed while we are allowed to rest over those we have done. It is a great sign of love because it makes us suffer for him alone and not for our faults. Let us rejoice at being judged worthy to suffer for Him.

**[30]** “They rejoiced that they were considered worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name” [Acts 5:41]. The cross begins to weigh; but trust, it is he who carries it. As he supported St. John at the foot of the cross, he will support us and give us all necessary graces. He likes to be crucified in his friends; but he is pleased to bear the cross with them, and it would be a misfortune if we did not feel this cross; this is because his love would be withdrawn from us. These are our dispositions.

Let’s pray for our Sisters, they are filled with excellent dispositions, but the apostles too had resolved to die. Pray that the strength of Jesus will sustain them. Let us also pray for Bishop Thibaudier to do what Jesus wants with us. God has two wills: what he would like one to do and what superiors do even when they are wrong. Whatever the Bishop decides, we will always obey and his will shall always be that of our Lord for us. But let’s pray that he will only want what our Lord wants. Let’s pray that a dispersion will not happen to us, which in these circumstances would resemble a flight and make us seem guilty.

[31] The Bishop also seems to want the removal of Sr. Marie-Ignace who is our strongest support. Let us pray that he keeps her. Let us pray with ardor and confidence, and let the will of God be done completely.

[32] **Wednesday, July 14, 1880**

*On Mental Prayer*

We talked about the excellence of mental prayer. After the Holy Sacrifice and the sacraments, it is the most important act of the day. It is a truth taught in the catechism that grace comes to us through the sacraments and prayer. Like them, it does not have grace *ex opere operato*, but it certainly gives it in virtue of the promise of our Lord and his merits. Moreover, as a conversation with God and a divine audience, it's still contained within the other exercises.

We have spoken of remote preparation consisting of two things: habitual recollection and the absence of exaggerated care; then the proximate preparation, which consists of two things: the presence of God and reading. The composition of place is added, but according to some, it is included in the presence of God. This composition of place is made above all to occupy the imagination and use it instead of letting it cause harm. The presence of God is taking a look at the *greatness* and *goodness* of God in order to draw out two feelings: *respect and love*; then a look at oneself: to consider one's misery—a misery ascertained by the sight of our sins and shown by our present needs.

[33] After that comes the reading of the subject. Sometimes the subject has been read in advance, sometimes even the subject indicated by the reading will not be meditated upon, when a soul will feel impelled to meditate on such or such a point which will have deeply touched him during his spiritual reading or his Adoration. After this preparation, which can be done before or after the reading, only then mental prayer begins.

First it is the intelligence that is exercised, that is penetrated by a truth; then, not being satisfied with seeing this truth, we must go from there to affection and this is the role of the heart. Finally, we arrive at resolutions and this is the main thing; otherwise the rest is useless. That is all the work of mental prayer, work that will perhaps be repeated several times according to the aptitudes of each and the subject. But beside this work of the soul, there is the divine action that is felt within mental prayer: we must abandon ourselves and let God act. But beware of the illusions of Satan: sometimes, for example, he transforms into an angel of light and excites the affections so as not to allow one to pass to resolutions.

[34] But when the Holy Spirit himself does not make the mental prayer, it is always necessary to do the work that draws fruit from it and not allow oneself these vulgar and coarse manners of wasting time like sleeping or thinking of other things. Moreover, the divine action is

ordinarily felt because dryness is not an ordinary state. Our Lord only once said, My God, My God, why have you abandoned me?" [cf. Psalm 43:2].

We must adhere to the method if we want mental prayer to be profitable. It is the poorly made mental prayer that compromises the novitiate and prevents ever making progress in perfection. A good way to remedy this is the account of mental prayer one must make in the novitiate. At least every week at the same time as on other points, meditation will be spoken of.

### **[35] Friday, July 16, 1880**

Let's leave time for the practical things said about mental prayer to mature. Too much food taken does not digest. Let's talk about Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. It has been a long time since we spoke of the Blessed Virgin and today the occasion is legitimate in more than one way. This feast day reminds us of an important grace: this house was bought two years ago today. On this day, when she gives the garment of Carmel to her children, Mary wanted to give to us who already have as the main garment that of St. Francis, the first shelter of the Work: Bethlehem and Nazareth. There is something providential in this coincidence.

Besides, nothing is indifferent for religious, nothing indifferent to a newborn Order, nothing indifferent especially for a Congregation dedicated to the Heart of Jesus. For them, there is a very special and extremely loving providence. We must therefore see, and this is certain for those who have a little sense of the things of faith, a real action of Providence and a sign of the goodness of Mary. She who first offered shelter to Jesus in her bosom, then in Bethlehem and Nazareth, then in her bosom again after the crucifixion, could she prevent herself from giving sanctuary to the Work of the Heart of her Son? Is it not to him that she gives it?

**[36]** This house is particularly consecrated to him and his statue is enthroned above the first altar where Jesus was offered for the first time. There she is presenting us the Heart of Jesus. Until now, we have had lukewarmness, indifference, ingratitude for the Heart of Jesus, but even more so for the Heart of Mary. We do not have enough recourse to her and if she was there in front of us she would say to us, "Come to me, all of you..." [Matthew 11:28], "I am standing at the door, knocking" [Revelation 3:20], I am there, hands laden with graces for you and ready to spread them as soon as you ask for them. We do not think enough that she is our Mother. Let's go to her with confidence, simplicity, candor. Let us repair our negligence towards her by directing all our actions to the Heart of Jesus. Before each exercise we say, "Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us." If we said it from our heart, we would not have to blame ourselves for so many mistakes; we would be stronger.

Let us address ourselves to her in order to be able to repair by present actions the faults or the omission of other actions. Above all, no discouragement: a well-done exercise [and it is Mary

who will help us to do it well] repairs the previous one and puts it back into a state of grace. It [37] is impossible / to give oneself entirely to an action of the Rule without doing an act of perfect contrition, which, accompanied by the resolution of confessing, brings grace back into the heart.

Reparation to Mary for our forgetfulness, and trust in her maternal goodness, which always brings us new graces. Among these graces there are above all the trials which are so useful when one endures them well. The trials that come from a cause other than sin are an immense grace that marks the love of Jesus and the divine acceptance of us and of the Work. Even the trials that are our failures, even though they are not directly a present from God, who only permits them, must also be used for our good: "All things work together for good, even sin" [cf. Romans 8:28]. Today, I have the hope that Our Lady of Mt. Carmel will grant some favor or safety [?] for us such as someone's vocation, or will send to one or the other trials in one way or another.

**Sunday, July 18, 1880**

*Conference on [?]*

**[38] Wednesday, July 21, 1880**

Let's talk about meditation again today. The meditation in which the Holy Spirit does everything, where the tangible consolations, the affections abound, is ordinary enough for beginners during one part of the novitiate. But this is not a type of elevated prayer where the soul is intimately united to our Lord. Let's talk about ordinary meditation, such as the one in which prayer is a work of the soul and to which you all seem to be called for the moment.

I have already said that the first operation of the soul in prayer is the judgment borne upon a truth or a mystery, but this judgment is following an affection produced by the passions, which the judgment brought into activity. Thus, in the meditation on hell, where I judge it is frightful, etc., it is the passion of fear which directs our affections. This is how we must use the passions that are in us. After affection comes the resolution it has provoked in the will.

These three movements of the soul are reproduced in each point of prayer and even for those who have a lively understanding, ardent passions, an energetic will, the same work can be done several times on the same point. But finally, it is always necessary to summarize the [39] resolutions, which should not ordinarily be more than three, one comprising something practical to do several times a day and on which one will examine himself during the Particular Examen and the Evening Examen so that the prayer bears fruit.

But we must especially insist on the affections at the end of the meditation. This is part of the heart and in us it is the heart that must dominate since we are dedicated to the imitation of the Heart of Jesus. And among the affections, two must dominate all others and return in all subjects: love and immolation or offering, for this is our vocation to make offerings. Oblation means offering and the oblate means that which is offered and who is offering. To produce the affections of love and reparation in us without, however, forgetting the other parts of the sacrifice, and to offer these affections. All subjects supply them to us if it concerns the life of our Lord [and our Lord must be the most frequent subject of our meditations], to see his goodness and his virtues in this mystery and to make acts of love, to see in relation to this **[40]** mystery what is lacking in / consecrated souls and make an act of reparation to him.

If it is about a virtue, see it in the Heart of Jesus and love him for his goodness to make it known in him and to practice reparation for the offenses he receives on this side from consecrated souls. For he complained of the offenses by consecrated souls to Blessed Margaret Mary, and it is to be believed that he still feels these offenses because these souls have not been confirmed in grace.

Always to offer acts of love and immolation is our vocation and that is what makes it easy; because we are rich, extremely rich. This is the answer to the objection of those who will tell us, “You want to repair? But with what? What do you have to offer in reparation?”

We can offer the Heart of Jesus—Jesus in his entirety, but above all his Heart—every moment without being able to exhaust the treasure, without the following offering damaging the previous one; the offering is always acceptable. We have, it is true, the offering of the Holy Sacrifice, of Holy Communion in which the offering is more widely accepted, but we can also offer Jesus at every instant: he himself offers himself for us: “He offers and is the offering” [St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, Book X, Chapter 20]. With this offering we must also offer ourselves, **[41]** as miserable as we are, / since Jesus also asks that we join our offering to his.

Tomorrow we will begin a novena to St. Magdalene for the reparation of all our faults since the beginning of the Work, and to place ourselves properly as she did at the foot of the Cross. At the same time, we will ask for a temporal grace: the preservation of the property bequeathed to the Work by Sr. Mary of the Five Wounds and which the faithless heirs want to remove by breaking the will.

Our Lord certainly wants to give us a cross there again, and to join it to others and we must accept it with joy, but it would be cowardice, moreover, to abandon without prayer the good which is given, not to us, but to his Work. He will certainly be pleased to see our prayers for this purpose, and these goods seem providentially destined for the Work, because before the

Revolution they belonged to the Daughters of Calvary and they will return to another Calvary after a little providentially arranged detour. There is some bodily mortification that each will ask.

Next, we will mark the octave of St. Ignatius because it is on his feast day that my resolution seriously to begin the Work after a retreat made three years ago on that date, and where I certainly received particular graces for this purpose.

**[42] Friday, July 23, 1880**

*On Mental Prayer*

We spoke of two kinds of affection to be developed mainly at the end of our prayers: love and reparation, and corresponding to the two ends of sacrifice. But as our life must be a complete sacrifice—like that of all religious, of all priests, but more special than them since it is more particularly our goal—it is advisable not to put aside two other kinds of affection corresponding to the two other parts of sacrifice: thanksgiving and prayer.

Here is the proof that thanksgiving is necessary: when our Lord complains to Blessed Margaret Mary, he says, what causes me the greatest pain is the *ingratitude* of souls who are consecrated to me. He usually uses this word ingratitude when he speaks of these souls. This is because he seeks the opposite, that is, gratitude. These affections are formed quite naturally with affections of love, and preferably selfless love, and is followed by the love of gratitude for the memory of all the graces: redemption, vocation, personal graces we know ourselves.

**[43]** In every subject of mental prayer, there is matter to these affections, for we quickly discover divine goodness in some relationship. We also have to thank him for the consecrated souls, of whom we are part. They do not thank him enough for the continual graces that are made to them each day, and this is the subject of his sorrow: “My guide, we took sweet counsel together” [Psalm 55;13-14].

Concerning prayer, the subject of meditation will soon indicate a need for us, for the Church, and the chosen people and, if we do not pray to obtain the satisfaction of these necessities, it is because we do not love consecrated souls and indeed this is, I believe, one of the thorns in the Heart of Jesus. Consecrated souls do not pray enough for each other. If we do not pray for our conversion, we do not want the work of God to be done and souls to be saved. And if the subject does not give us enough reasons for trust, we have three who can revive it: the *infinite* bounty of God who gave us his only Son. After that, believe that he can refuse us something: “How shall he not, with him, freely give us all things?” [Romans 8:2] [*This text comes to my mind: it was not quoted.*]



**[44]** We have the promises of our Lord, infallibly to obtain: “Whatever you ask...” [cf. John 14: 13-14], if we ask it with faith and without hesitation as St. James recommends. Affections, therefore, must occupy the greater part of our mental prayer, but always end with some sober and energetic resolutions.

After this work of the soul and when the signal has indicated that there is little time left: make a review of the preparation and the work of the mental prayer and then at the first free moment, note the resolutions and what has touched you the most during the mental prayer. It is the way to draw fruit and to be able to give a true account of one’s mental prayer as well as to make the next mental prayer better by making known what has been missed. Now you have the key to the treasures, it is up to you to draw heavily upon them.

**[45] Sunday, July 25, 1880**

*On Pure Love*

Let us leave what has been said about mental prayer to penetrate our mind and pass into our habits, and speak today about pure love. There are many kinds of love: imperfect or interested love, and perfect love or pure love, the love of friendship that delights in the good of the beloved object, and there is a subject that enters well into our vocation, for we are devoted to love and reparation. For pure love is linked to reparation: *because it leads to reparation and reparation is not made without pure love, one generates the other.*

It is an elementary truth taught by Scripture, by the Church at the Council of Trent, that pure love erases the punishment of sin [the devil uses all his ability to make us forget these basic truths so connected to our vocation]. Pure love also removes the pain due to sin; it is still very certain and you see how easy our vocation is: it is only a matter of doing acts of pure love to pay our own debts as soon as possible to avoid purgatory or decrease it for ourselves in order to be able to pay then for other consecrated souls.

**[46]** What, then, is the pure love that renders our vocation so easy: it is *a love which, forgetting itself, is filled with pleasure for the good of the beloved object and is displeased in the evil of this object.* For example, it experiences joy in seeing God served and obeyed; and sadness in seeing him offended simply because he finds good there and evil here.

This love gives birth to two feelings in the heart that is animated by it:

1. The zeal for the good to be procured, zeal which is reduced for novices to the prayer and the desires and the small functions entrusted to them in the interior of the house and for the others in the works they direct.
2. Reparation for the evil done to God by sin and which urges an embrace of the means of repairing it.

This is what our Lord asks of us. Reparation by pure love is what he himself has done throughout his life. This is what he demands today, because the salvation of the Church and the people is found here; this is what decides any current social question. If all societies are on the way to ruin, it must be said between us, that it is necessary for an increase in the graces of **[47]** priests and / consecrated souls, because it is through them that the uplifting of peoples will take place and this increase of graces is reparation for consecrated souls and priests who prepare it and determine it. This is a peremptory proof of the necessity of our Work. To grant this increase of grace, our Lord sends the trial and asks for reparation, or rather demands reparation only because the trial is a means of reparation for those who know how to accept it.

Our Lord wants to give much: the salvation of the world. Wanting to supply his riches, he asks little of us. In view of the greatness of our duty, there is no timidity: if he has imposed a great duty on us, he gives us the grace for it: "I can do all things through him who strengthens me" [Philippians 4:3]. No fear: we're not on Calvary every day, and after the present redemption of peoples there will be fewer external and internal troubles than at the present moment where it is a question of obtaining salvation by the justice of God.

**[48] Wednesday, July 28, 1880**

*On Exercises in General*

Importance of being there and being there properly. We have seen how we repress passions; we acquire virtues, we talk with God in mental prayer. After that, it is by our exercises that we will arrive at union with God, and by exercise we must hear all that which is indicated by the Rule and the modifications which are indicated by the superior, as in teaching a course for someone. Our exercises are the will of God, it is there that we will have the graces of union which make interior holiness.

God acts like the rich for alms; he has his days and his hours to distribute his graces, and he is always the first to the exercises, waiting for you with hands full of graces and different gifts according to the exercises. If you are there, and as he wants it, with body, mind and will, in every verse, to every thought he will add a light; to each affection, a motion; to each resolution, a strength.

Above all, he brings graces here in accordance with the spirit of love and reparation. If you ask for them, and search for others than the ones he destines for you, you will have nothing at all **[49]** and it is / here that one can have only great graces or great rejections and droughts. The cause of dryness for some is that they do not enter the spirit of the Congregation and persist in following their own ideas for their perfection: as authors, that will be beautiful for them! "If anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know" [I Corinth-

ians 8:2]. St. Paul, who was not a fool, but a great scholar by reputation, gave up all his knowledge for the knowledge of Jesus Christ: "I decided to know nothing except Jesus crucified" [cf. I Corinthians 2:2]. Yes, those who relate to themselves do not yet know the first thing about leadership: it is not necessary to know anything, but to allow oneself to be guided according the spirit of the Congregation.

If you are fully in the exercise, Jesus is with you and you are, I dare say, in his arms and you will receive very great graces, for it pleases him to come here, but above all, be there completely, I say this especially to the priests at Mass. This is where diabolical lights give a long-sought solution. Reject it and ask your good angel to call you back after Mass. What is said of the **[50]** Mass means Holy Communion and other exercises, / more or less according to their importance.

*Let us attend it well* because it is there and not elsewhere that we will have graces, there that we will be with Jesus. To be elsewhere than where he wants, we would be with the devil and our passions, which would assuredly be our loss. Being with him, our passions and the demon are hardly disturbing. Let us do our exercises in the spirit that he asks for, the only way to be supported, and here is the spirit of love and reparation; do not look for another: "the Spirit blows where it chooses" [John 3:8], that's what he wants here. May this conference be the starting point for an important reform for some who resist. Our Lord is not pleased with the ill-will that some carry, and if he is discontented, how can we hope for anything but disgust and dryness?

#### **[51]** Synoptic Table

*Pure love:*

- ✓ benefits
- ✓ ease
- ✓ opportunity
- ✓ nature
- ✓ love of kindness
- ✓ love of condolence, compassion, and reparation.

*Benefits of pure love:*

1. For sins: pure love justifies the sinner even before the reception of the Sacrament of Penance; erases not only the guilt, but the pain according to its intensity.
2. For the Oblates: it is the life of the Heart of Jesus; it must be their life. By this they repair effectively without punishment.

*Ease of pure love:*

1. It is a duty of every Christian: with one's whole heart. For a duty is always easy with grace.
2. Consideration of infinite kindness and perfections. Desires for God to be known, loved, honored.
3. Oblation of the Heart of Jesus and of the saints, who love God perfectly and for the love of himself.

*Opportunity of pure love:*

The world is about to be overwhelmed if the justice of God is not appeased. For the justice of God is only appeased to the extent of pure love. What attracts punishment above all is the infidelity of consecrated souls who don't have pure love.

*Nature of pure love:*

Love of God for himself without motives of self-interest; generous, selfless love. The soul, neither for the sake of benefits, much less for fear of punishment, is delighted in the beloved object.

*Forms of pure love:*

1. Love of kindness in the interior and exterior glory of God.
2. Love of condolence: sadness, compassion, reparation because God is not, has not been known, loved, served as he ought to be by us, by the faithful, especially by consecrated souls.

*Love of kindness:*

1. First object: Its first object is to delight in the beloved object, in the infinite perfections of God. Manifested externally by greetings, praise.
2. Second object: to take pleasure, to praise, to be pleased that God is known, loved, served, as he must be by all creatures. Union with all the triumphant, militant, suffering Church that honors and serves God. Union especially with the Heart of our Lord who receives and renders this joy to the Holy Trinity.

*Love of condolence. First manifestation: compassion:*

1. *Necessity:* when you love someone, just as you rejoice in their happiness, so you grieve, you grieve at what gives him pain.
2. *Compassion:* *Jesus Christ incarnate* wanted to take upon himself and suffer all that could wound God. So, we must empathize with his pain.

*Love of condolence. Second manifestation: reparation:*

1. *Necessity:* all love that empathizes, but does not relieve, is not sincere. Parable of the Good Samaritan.
2. *Manner:* to offer constantly on the altar of the Sacred Heart:
  - a. the infinite satisfactions of our Lord Jesus Christ,
  - b. the superabundant satisfactions of the Blessed Virgin and the saints,
  - c. our own satisfactions united to theirs.

**[52] Friday, July 30, 1880**

*Upon Rising*

If we have practiced what has been said for the reform of the passions, the acquisition of virtues, and conversation with God, we are ripe for union with God. But this union is accomplished in our exercises. This is where the Heart of Jesus awaits us to give us his graces, where he communicates himself, where the mysterious union of the Spirit and the soul takes place, where he gives his extraordinary lights that become natural in the supernatural life. Even for gratuitous graces, he takes the opportunity of the exercises, required of the person who does them, and conforms himself to give them to the exercise of the Rule. Re-read the life of St. Mechtild, of St. Gertrude, of Blessed Margaret Mary: it is therefore in our exercises and not elsewhere that we will have the graces of holiness.

Let's talk about waking up. There is a special grace attached to this exercise for those who do it promptly; great graces for them and *graces of choice for those who are most prompt*. I believe they receive some of what was reserved for those who are less prompt. It is in accordance with the word of our Lord: "To those who have, more will be given; and from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away" [cf. Mark 4:25].

**[53]** In some Orders, it is even a convention to give up some of the merits of the day to the one who has been the most prompt at doing this exercise well. The first thought must be for the Heart of Jesus; the first act, the sign of the cross; then a point which cannot be detailed in a rule, but which is advised, is to prostrate oneself upon rising from bed and this is the very moment to offer one's day and to formulate one's intentions according to one's vows.

After that there are three things to do whose omission explains the little or no progress that many people make. First, place oneself in the presence of God, there are a thousand ways of doing it. For us it is much more limited: the manner is indicated to us supernaturally, but it is so consistent with our vocation that it can be accepted even outside of everything supernatural, and coming from God by the superior who represents him: it's to put ourselves in Nazareth, either by going there mentally, or by representing oneself living thus until noon or the midday *Angelus*, while being able to vary according to the different roles of Nazareth.

From noon to Matins or to the evening *Angelus*, we transport ourselves to Calvary and make our stations there. The Way of the Cross gives us examples of these stations. Finally, from the evening *Angelus* until bedtime, to transport ourselves to Gethsemane. In this way, establishing ourselves there for 3 or 4 minutes in the presence of God is the first thing to observe. The second is to take a look at the virtue of the week or month, that of the Particular Examen determined for each during direction. It's like a short examen of this virtue's practice during the day.

The third thing is to think about the subject of prayer indicated in whatever manner it may be. After that, go downstairs at the first bell. Here too, there are graces for the promptest ones. Make a prostration at this first exercise until circumstances allow it to be done at all exercises. Then go to your place using the time remaining until the moment to begin the preparation. But especially in this time of the Grand Silence allow nothing to disturb it. The day would be lost with mental prayer and that is the cause for such little progress by a few.

[55] It is permitted to sit only after making the preparation after the reading of the subject of mental prayer. Sit, do not stretch out or lean on your elbows. At the audience of the king, one is always held to the requirements of etiquette. What would this be during an audience with God; and this observation applies to the other exercises in the chapel.

[56] **Sunday, August 1, 1880**

*St. Ignatius*

Here, the founder is the Heart of Jesus, but in second place come St. Francis and St. Ignatius, from whom we have borrowed a part of our Rules. Therefore, we must love him. But not to remain in a platonic veneration and a sterile love do we envision imitating him. In order to imitate him, we must penetrate his mind. For the mind of St. Ignatius [and the mind of St. Ignatius, as that of all the saints who have left writings, is easy to know]: his is easier than the others because he has condensed it into only one work: *The Exercises*.

Struck down like St. Paul and hearing the voice of God as he did but also following the example of St. Augustine, St. Ignatius meditates on the greatness of Christian truth. His great intelligence soon ignited him and he was strongly seized. As any man who is strongly seized with truth feels the need to communicate it, St. Ignatius also feels the zeal of the apostolate joined to his zeal for perfection. But seeing his life as a soldier unfit for this dual purpose and feeling that religious life alone can provide this end, he retires to Manresa to listen to the voice of God.

It is there that he composes his book of *Exercises* to serve toward the perfection of his religious and their apostolate. It is divided into four parts and encloses a quadruple spirit that characterizes St. Ignatius and his Company.

The first part, called the Foundation, aims at one point: indifference. Placing the man in front of God, it makes him understand that he is God's, and for God, and that the way to go to God is to use the creatures that God has placed between him and his Creator. Indifference over the means and faculties that God gives him to work for his glory, whether on earth by the apostolate, or in heaven by praise. This is the foundation of his mind for all religious life in general. For meditation and contemplation, St. Ignatius gives the mystery of the Incarnation, of the Nativity as a model of this indifference in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The second part embraces the evangelical life of our Lord and leads to the zeal of the apostolate and this is the spirit proper to St. Ignatius and it is the main character he wanted to **[58]** give to his Society. / And it is noteworthy that he proposes election in this second week while the retreatant is found completely under the influence of this spirit of zeal to inspire those he wants to make his children.

In the third and the fourth week, the spirit that dominates—while truly desired by St. Ignatius—is intended as an auxiliary to the spirit of zeal. In the third week, the spirit of penance and mortification is taught by meditation on the mysteries of the suffering life of Jesus from Gethsemane to the grave. If the election had been proposed when one was under the influence of this spirit, the penitential Congregations would have benefited from the election made then, that is what St. Ignatius did not want; St. Ignatius proposed the apostolate. In the fourth week, we end with the spirit of love by the meditation on the glorious mysteries: with Magdalene at the resurrection or the apostles in the Cenacle. The election was not placed during this fourth week for the same reason. This is the quadruple spirit of St. Ignatius, which is only one: zeal based on the indifference of means and results with penance and love as auxiliaries.

**[59]** This spirit must be ours, as well as our goal. First of all, indifference must also be dear to us since it is the basis of everything, then comes zeal; but for us the apostolate is less exterior. For the Jesuits, it is the ardor of the warrior, of the general of the army in front of the enemy who faces everything and receives the first blows. With us, it is the more restricted and gentler activity of the pastor who leads a flock. We will always have works, but the main occupation will be the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

The spirit of penance must be dear to us, as well as to St. Ignatius, but we must enter further into the example of St. Francis, the second patron of the Work, as a responder to the suffering

life of Jesus that we want to console. The spirit of love will also be ours because we are vowed to the Heart of Jesus and he wants our heart before everything. Jesus made the children of St. Ignatius the heralds of his Heart; we are his children. By their apostolate, he wanted to spread [60] devotion to the Sacred Heart to all shores. / For us, he has opened the treasures of his Heart more particularly with a miraculous abundance. They are warriors; we are pastors. St. Ignatius has the name of Jesus for his standard, which he bears to all peoples; the crest of our coat of arms is the Heart of Jesus that we have to console above all in the Eucharist. They represent the mind, we the heart; they the evangelical life, we the life of reparation and love. Let's look at them as a sister Company without ever being jealous of them since St. Ignatius is also our father. Let's imitate his spirit more particularly in what relates more to our vocation.

### **Wednesday, August 4, 1880**

No conference, distribution of prizes at St. John College

### **[61] Friday, August 6, 1880**

*On Holy Mass*

After rising and Morning Prayer and the few moments that follow it, comes Holy Mass. These few moments separating Morning Prayer from Holy Mass can be used to note the lights that have struck, as well as the resolutions of the prayer, then to note the impressions for the day. This practice of having one's little notebook is the practice of the saints. St. Louis Gonzaga had entitled his, "Admonitions and Pious Resolutions."

Then comes a sublime act: Holy Mass, which ordinarily is included among the exercises, but which is not one of them, which cannot be counted among them, any more than God is counted among the beings which he excellently holds and that he surpasses, no more than one counts the finite with the infinite. It is a strange abuse to regard Holy Mass as an exercise. In our exercises, it is we who offer to God, either a prayer or a work of mind or bodily cares. There, it is God himself who offers himself and who is offered. The priest is only a shadow, an appearance, his hands are an instrument that Jesus uses to offer himself as a victim.

[62] This bad habit to regard Holy Mass as an ordinary exercise is a cause for the little fruit which many Christians derive from it. It is commonly said, "I am going to say Mass." [Maybe I say it sometimes, but it is because of the influence that one endures in spite of oneself in a milieu which has this habit]. Here we must say and *the Oblates must say*: "I am going to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass," "*I am going to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice.*" *You will be understood by speaking this way and that's all you can desire.*

*It is the culminating act of the day, the divine act, it is the act that characterizes us and it seems to me that it is the raison d'être of the Oblates and one should say all that we must be if we*



answer when someone asks what the Oblates do: they say the Mass with piety, they attend Mass with piety.

When we attend Mass or celebrate it, we move *heaven*, making it manifest power, justice, mercy; *purgatory* by bringing a refreshing drop to parched lips; the *earth* by raising it one **[63]** degree closer to heaven by the virtue of this sacrament. / It is here that we respond most to our vocation, where Jesus wants us to be Oblates more than anywhere, because that is where he is himself.

So, let's not look at Holy Mass as an exercise. If I talk about it right now, it's protesting against the way this custom looks at it, and only because I'm regarding when it takes place, but not at all like an exercise. During Holy Mass [it is a truth that it would be rash to contradict], there is a legion of angels who attend and the saints are themselves moved; they bring love, praise, and respect there, and we, *to assist worthily, must be there angelically*.

Unless lightning strikes or the house is burning, we must reject any thought other than that of the great sacrifice that is going to be offered. We must unite ourselves, absorb ourselves: for the priest, at the moment of consecration; for others, at the elevation where God reveals his power, his justice, his mercy. If we cannot do so appreciably, let's follow the words of Holy Mass and the attention will come. We will understand that we are gods, since we are performing a divine action. Let's be great then and worthy of our role.

#### **[64] Sunday, August 8, 1880**

##### *Dispositions to Bring to Holy Mass*

The spirit of immolation based on five themes:

1. The justice of God. After sin, God had ratified the judgment: "You will die" [Genesis 2:17]. Guilty flesh must perish. Jesus, the Divine Word, takes a body and also pronounces the death sentence: *You will die*. God's justice demanded this punishment, and the Word, taking upon himself all the faults of humanity, submits to this judgment by his death on the cross. Mercy prevails over justice. God asks only for love, and his grace is a principle of fertilization, which extending from himself, spreads to fertilize the souls who give themselves to his action in peace. It is a beneficial water that flows calm and fertile, but when it meets a dam, that is the ill will of man, then it backs up, gets bigger, is changed into justice and like a torrent causes all the horrors of devastation. It is this torrent that Jesus lets pass over him to save us and restore the beneficent course of mercy.
2. Hatred of oneself. Who would not be disposed to these feelings and the life of immolation upon seeing in himself the wretch who deserved all the punishments of

[65] divine justice? Lately, / the newspapers reported to us that impious people had entered a shrine of our Lady, put a rope around the neck of her statue, and dragged it into the brook during the night. These wretches are us. We are the image of God and we have dragged this image through the mud of sin. Are we not worthy of hatred, and is it any wonder that Jesus invites us so often to hate ourselves?

3. Wisdom of the mind. "The mind of the flesh is death" [Romans 8:6]. The wisdom of the flesh that sacrifices the whole soul. One takes care to place this body on a down comforter, to delight the eyes with gracious spectacles, the hearing with concerts. "The mind of the spirit is life and peace" [Romans 8:6]. St. Paul speaks thus. The wisdom of the mind immolates this body which it knows to be a bitter enemy of the soul. It is happy with all that weakens and hinders it, and it mercilessly sacrifices all that it sees from nature to give it the advantage. These three feelings, with which one can converse up until the consecration, purify the soul.

4. There is another which unites it to Jesus; it is love. The love of immolation, the [66] immolation by love like Jesus. / To be immolated in order to imitate the immolated Jesus, out of love for Jesus, out of love for us and souls. This reason, which is particularly special to us, is consigned to every page of the writings of Blessed Margaret Mary, who had drawn it from the Heart of Jesus: to be consumed by love. From the Consecration to Communion, this will be our nourishment: to unite us to Jesus, immolating himself on the altar.

5. Finally, a fifth theme: the spirit of religion: to recognize the sovereign domain of God by giving oneself entirely in the spirit of a holocaust: the body, the soul, the will. To say to God: here I am completely, do with me what will please you, I submit to everything, to joy or sadness, to health or sickness, to be here or to be there, I want to do your will. To give oneself to be consumed as a sacrificial holocaust, in communion.

These must be our dispositions during Holy Mass. Let's not look at it as an ordinary exercise; it must be like the *sun of the day* toward which converges what precedes it as the preparation, and what follows it as consequence. Let us then be there as is necessary and enter the sentiments conforming to the four ends of sacrifice.

[67] **Wednesday, August 11, 1880**

*Breakfast, Recreation, Class, and Work*

We have said what spirit to draw from during Holy Mass. This exercise must be the high noon of all the others and enlighten them with its light, that is to say that the feelings that we had there must be reproduced in each of the other exercises.

After that comes breakfast. As it seems that this exercise can only be done for the body, St. Paul has taken the trouble to designate it in particular: "Whether you eat or drink, all for the glory of God" [cf. I Corinthians 10:31]. To do it well, there are three things to observe, with that we will do it perfectly:

1. *Nourish the soul*: at breakfast, one can use the spiritual bouquet of meditation or thanksgiving to savor while instinctively giving the body what is necessary for it; at noon and in the evening, we have readings at table.
2. *Mortification*: always perform mortification. It is necessary for the religious, even more necessary to the Oblate who makes reparation. To mortify himself on the *quantity* in the morning, one is only more apt for intellectual works until noon; and in the evening, health has always found good in it. On the *quality* at noon, taking less or no dish or drink that pleases most, such as dessert.
3. *Charity*: ensuring that nothing is lacking for our neighbors, even suffering to be deprived ourselves, without, however, going to an obsequious eagerness which then tires more than it pleases. One obstacle to that is the distractions in which one lets oneself go, which by the thought about one's classes, by his works, or by a reading that he should or could not be permitted. If these distractions come from the fact that the mind is absorbed by a pious thought coming from meditation or table reading, it would be forgivable because at least one would still be with God.

With these three principles, you will be perfect in these exercises, and holiness is there: to be holy in each of one's exercises. And it is not without reason that two popes said, "Give me a novice who has faithfully observed the counsels of his Rules and I will canonize him."

Then comes recreation. It is not customary in other novitiates, where one immediately begins manual labor. Here, as no work of this kind can be done because of the apostolate and because of schoolboys to whom the respect of the cassock is due, we take these few moments of recreation before returning to an intellectual occupation. That will continue for some time, and it is, I believe, in keeping with the will of our Lord that this recreation exists.

**[69]** What is there to observe during this recreation to be holy? One thing, and this goes for other recreations; one principle: charity. Be charitable towards those who are present and those who are absent and you will spend a holy recreation; charity which leaves the word mainly to the oldest, to the most senior, without, however, appearing sullen and mute.

In some novitiates, recreation is spent around the novice master and one asks for permission to speak on one's knees. I do not believe that our Lord asks this austerity of us. Among the Jesuit Fathers, it is spent in groups with the admonition to devote a large part to matters of piety.

This is what we can do but without mental tension, without talking about a high spirituality that would tire our listeners.

The world has two motives for its conversations: either interest—one chats about affairs—or mockery; that is avarice or pride. I do not speak of the immoral world whose aim is lust. We only hold one: charity; the rest will come from itself.

After the morning recreation, the class, that is to say, a work of zeal that replaces the manual **[70]** labor of novitiates. What is needed is charity accompanied / by zeal, which adds activity, eagerness, and the interest of those with whom we are concerned. For a few of you, this class will be replaced by a mutual teaching of theology in October.

After this comes the personal work of free time. A principle to observe: to devote oneself to it with faith: “The one who is righteous will live by faith” [Romans 1:17]. Count on the enlightenments of the Holy Spirit as much as those of nature. Besides, this study has and can only regularly have the goal of the knowledge of holiness: theory and practice. Any other study is contrary to the novitiate: this is not the time to learn anything else. So, do all the exercises in the spirit that is assigned to them.

# FALLEUR NOTEBOOK IV

## CONFERENCES AND SERMONS

August 13 – December 17, 1880

**[1] Friday, August 13, 1880**

*Reception at the Investiture of Fr. Berchmans*

*“Praise, you children of the Lord” [Psalm 113:1]*

It is one of the most interesting aspects of the Savior's life that marks his affection for children: he loves to see them near him and he calls them to his blessings: “Let the children come to me [Mark 10:14]. We feel it again during his triumphal entry into Jerusalem among the crowd who cheered him, and by children we can understand the wider meaning up to teenagers and it is one of them who addressed the Savior to learn about the perfect life.

Not content to call them to his blessings and his joys, he does not separate them from the apostolate and we see the teenager John rank among the apostles and even become the favorite: because he still had something pleasing from childhood, that something which is even necessary for heaven: “Unless you become like little children” [Matthew 18:3].

But it seems that the affections of the Lord were limited there. Could he call the innocent, who **[2]** did not know evil, to suffering? And yet / it is children who are the first of those glorious troops of martyrs who will follow Jesus to heaven. After the Holy Innocents there have been many child martyrs or those called to heaven prematurely, and one can even say to the Church triumphant: “Old and young together, praise the Lord” [Psalm 148:12, 13].

Again, we see them called to holiness during the course of the centuries and today we celebrate the feast of one of them welcomed by the Church, as the Savior welcomed those of his time. Because the Church, following the divine spirit of its founder, has always admitted to the practice of the life of perfection these adolescents of 16, 17, and 18 years: we have admirable examples in St. Louis Gonzaga and St. Stanislaus Kostka.

In them, Jesus showed the privileges of his Heart, and I can say today without presumption that even now, when a child is so called, he is not the least loved. [*This has been said to establish that the new Father was the object of a special affection of our Lord.*]

For our edification and the instruction of the one who will be admitted in a moment, I want to point out to you the two salient sides of the life of the Blessed whose name will be given to the new member.

### [3] *Simplicity and Tenderness*

Simplicity: he has shown it in everything, obeying as a child without concern for what is happening around him and receiving everything as orders from God his Father. His filial tenderness had taken a very gentle direction and brought him to the love of the Blessed Virgin. He has always had a tender affection for her, and the story of his life furnishes us with enough proofs.

One more title to our affection: that he belonged to this Company of Jesus, to whom we owe much and which has paternity rights over us, for although our principal patron is St. Francis, to whom we are united by the spirit of penance and reparation and by the fundamental Rule, we also recognize St. Ignatius as a father, whose Constitutions we have borrowed. We see his sons as brothers, whom Jesus chose to be the heralds of his Heart, as he has destined us to become apostles as much as he wishes. Blessed Berchmans, I dare say, belongs almost as much to our Congregation: for his life and his death make him a hidden friend of Jesus rather than a soldier and sentinel.

[4] Today he has a special audience in heaven in order to speak of the things of heaven as those of earth, in order to be understood: well, it seems to me that he will ask for two things: first the grace that the test of his brothers will be a purification rather than a destruction, and then that God have pity on this fledgling little company made up of wretches, which needs more generous hearts to lead it on the path that Jesus wants it to follow in order to console him.

### [5] **Sunday, August 15, 1880**

*On the Assumption*

*"We hear of it in Ephrathah...in the place of his footstool" [Psalm 132:6-7] in paradise.*

"Who is that ascending from the desert" [Song of Songs 8:5]. On this glorious feast of Mary, there are two scenes, two parts: one celestial "ascending," and one terrestrial "from the desert."

Before Mary, all the glories of heaven are advanced and she surpasses them all. All have been glorified by those faculties in which they have more merit, but she is glorified in all her faculties. She is the queen of those who carry the martyrs' palms: conquered by sufferings and tortures or their equivalent, the sufferings of the body. She is the Queen of Apostles and Teachers, and she sits on a throne higher than their twelve thrones. We can say of her: "Sit at the right hand of God [he sat at the right hand of God]" [Mark 16:19], at the right hand of God his Son as the Son sits at the right hand of God his Father. On this feast of her Assumption it is like a

redoubling of love, of praise from all the blessed who cast upon their queen a glance of admiration for all the graces with which she is filled.

[6] But there is a second scene in the desert: the desert of the world, the desert of souls. Mary travels through it and seeks an oasis, because there are oases in this desert of aridity and drought: these oases are the souls that give her a heart full of love and praise, the consecrated souls, the communities that serve and imitate her. There she stops and looks for shade, for water, for fruit, and if she does not find them, especially in the communities dedicated to love and reparation, will she not pronounce the sentence of the barren fig tree? Will not these fruitless souls be cut off and rejected?

She seeks rest in love and reparation in the hearts that are open to her. Will we refuse her? Today in this celestial scene of which we speak, figures a group of our Sisters, and in this journey of Mary through the desert, will they bring her here as an oasis?

Do you want her to find goodness here? Yes, you want it. Well, set your hearts to give her this rest that she seeks through consolation and reparation. On the occasion of this feast, do not [7] give the body that dangerous neglect which is / given to it elsewhere, and by your vigilance make reparation for the carelessness of other souls on this point. Offer the Heart of Mary with all its greatness to the Heart of Jesus and the Heart of Jesus to the Holy Trinity, to where all our homage must lead.

### **Wednesday, August 18, 1880**

#### *Mary's Maternal Goodness for the Apostles and the Disciples*

We must not spend the octave of the Assumption, however, without speaking of Mary. It is an urgent need for all of us to praise this good Mother and we all feel zeal for her. One way to maintain and increase this zeal is to meditate together or rather to contemplate some aspect of this subject which is too vast to be fully embraced.

I want to talk to you about the goodness of Mary for the apostles, and as my goal is to draw her goodness upon you, I want to praise, with you to praise this bounty, because the saints teach us that this is a means to obtain the mercy of the Heart of Jesus and Mary rather than to praise and bless their mercy.

[8] Loving Jesus very much, Mary loved all things that touched Jesus, and looked with maternal solicitude on what concerned him. From there, we see, *a priori*, that she very much loved the apostles whom Jesus destined to be like himself. The Gospel, moreover, confirms us in this thought. At the wedding of Cana, where Jesus was in the midst of his disciples, Mary perceives that wine is lacking; it was something necessary only by custom. What does matter, is that the

heart of this good Mother is moved by it and the vivacity of her desires obtains more than a miracle, since she advances in a way the moment of redemption. The seemingly cold response, which was a gain for her humility, does not disconcert her; it was made to instruct us.

Later, in Capernaum where our Lord had his home and where he lived sometimes with his mother in a small intimate place or sometimes with one of his rich disciples, she certainly had the opportunity to give the apostles marks of her goodness, either by repeating the talks with her Son to them, or by telling them the details of his life. She also provided for their material needs, and she had to watch over their robes and cloaks. She begged from Lazarus and his [9] sisters / to provide for her Son's necessities, and Jesus, who usually had a certain number of disciples around him, resorted to some rich disciples like Lazarus and Joseph of Arimathea.

Following Jesus, Mary was with the apostles at Jesus' various sermons; she was with them at the Last Supper. She comforted John on leaving Gethsemane and found herself with him at the foot of Calvary, where the Evangelist reports it: "She stood" [cf. John 19:25]. At the moment of Ascension, then to the Cenacle, she is still in the midst of them encouraging and praying for them: more so when they are scattered, her heart accompanies them and works with them to spread the Gospel with an efficacy superior to theirs; the Church authorizes us to believe it, for the Church calls her their Queen: *Queen of Apostles*.

Finally, she lives with St. John, and St. John with her, for the time that he has yet to spend on earth. She is the same with us; and if our mission is less vast, Mary does not love us any less, for we also work for her Son, we participate in his priesthood, and we live in religion with a mission especially dear to his Heart.

[10] Like the apostles, we have our hard heads too, but Mary is ready to help us, and if our confidence responds to her kindness, there is no sanctification, no work, no mission that is not possible for us. Therefore, let us think of invoking her and renewing ourselves in the sentiments of faith, hope, and love for this good mother.

### **Friday, August 20, 1880**

#### *On Regularity in General, the Particular Examen, and Adoration*

We have already shown the importance of accuracy and fidelity to the Rule by saying that the will of God is found there and with his will, his Heart, his graces, his blessings. But the importance of fidelity to the Rule is so great that we are going to ponder some more themes.

Our Lord insists on this point and returns to it frequently: "Let your waist be girt about and your lamps lit" [Luke 12:35]. What does it mean except that we must be what God wants through



discernment and activity as the lamp and the belt signify, and our Lord confirms by proclaiming happy the one whom the Master will find so vigilant: "Blessed is that servant" [Matthew 24:46]. The parable of the foolish and wise virgins has the same meaning; that of the nuptial feast of the king's son is also related; that of the five talents especially has the same meaning.

**[11]** And our Lord asks for this exactness and fidelity with generous promises as well as with terrible threats: "Well done, good and trustworthy servant," courage, "you have been trustworthy in a few things" [Matthew 25:21].

The smallest thing done with exactitude brings salvation from him, an encouragement. If we were intelligent, we would not miss any opportunity to receive these precious greetings, because in every exercise, however small, he is there and tells us: courage, "well done." But he does not say it if during this time we are sleeping or doing some reading of novelty; then he makes threats. He will take away the talent from him who buries it, he will throw him into the outer darkness. It is a question of the loss of vocation for some, if they persist in their irregularities, and of their very salvation, for it is certain that one can only effect his salvation with much difficulty outside of his vocation. It is in the interest of the Work, to which they are doing wrong by retreating from its establishment, from the interest of souls, from the world, from the Heart of Jesus, against whom their freedom sets up an obstacle which his love cannot cross. Let them beware, because his mercy, while controlling his justice, does not destroy it and he cannot cast off his duties.

**[12]** The Church has the same solicitude for the religious Rule. / *A priori*, one could conclude so, but one sees it manifested enough by all the blessings, the favors it accords to Congregations by the Bulls, the Decrees, etc., the canonical laws which are the proofs and the voice of this solicitude. The saints who have received special assistance from the Holy Spirit to speak about it, advise directing her attraction towards the Congregations where the Rule is in force. Thus, everything invites us to regularity: the word of our Lord, the spirit of the Church, the doctrine of the saints, reason, the Rule. Let's devote ourselves resolutely to it.

An exercise that contributes greatly to regularity is the Particular Examen. It must first be done on the material that is read, then the mode of God's presence that was determined in the morning, and finally on the virtue of the week which was determined in confession and to which we thought about when rising. At the beginning, this virtue is a difficult virtue according to individuals, whereas the dominant defect hinders greatly the progress to be made; but then the subject of the examination will preferably be one of the virtues of our vocation: love or reparation, but it must never be neglected, and sometimes I will ask one or the other after the **[13]** conference what subject of God's presence he / took this morning and what is his weekly virtue. If he does not answer, he is liable to a penance. A little before the Angelus, one

determines his presence of God for the afternoon. He is then at Calvary and one can take either one of the seven words of our Lord on the cross, or some other circumstance, or even one of the Stations of the Cross and incidents following Jesus' arrest.

There is still Adoration: the way of doing it differs from one person to another, but it will be necessary to practice preferentially the acts of the virtues of our vocation. We will also be helped there by visits to the Blessed Sacrament. It will always be followed by a visit to the Blessed Virgin for which one can be helped by the prayers of St. Gertrude or any other book that deals with it.

Please, let us be regular and exact in the exercises, not only in bodily appearance which is the exactitude of the Pharisees, but in the dispositions which our Lord wishes to find in us in order to give us his graces.

Observation. The psalmody of the Office tends to change into private recitation by the much too great haste with which it is done, and which results when the first one takes it quickly, and the others hasten to his example.

**[14] Sunday, August 22, 1880**

*On Exactness and the Presence of God in the Exercises*

The exercises of the afternoon being the repetition of those of the morning, one finds that the arrangements to be made are indicated.

Today, still two general observations on the exercises.

1. To be exact. Exactness is due to the virtue of diligence, an extremely precious virtue that belongs itself to the category of the virtue of strength. Exactness is a condition of grace: I maintain that by missing ten or twenty percent of the exercise, you lose half of the graces that are intended for you. Although our Lord does not behave like humans, according to impressions, it is nevertheless true that he experiences an unfortunate impression which is based not on appearances, but on the very truth he discovers at the bottom of one's heart.

Inexactness is part of lukewarmness, and lukewarmness, as you know, provokes the disgust of our Lord; it is something of the kind that Jesus feels at the sight of inexactness. Is it surprising that he diminishes his graces for that? A chamberlain who arrived five minutes late would certainly lose more than half the favor he would have gained for an hour spent close to the prince.

[15] Exactness, by the way, is a mark of love. It is generosity shown to the Divine Master to obey at once and to go wherever he wills: “God loves a cheerful giver” [cf. II Corinthians 9:7]: to give oneself promptly, with joy, this attracts grace and marks love. That is why the saints, especially holy novices, have pushed exactness to a scruple, understood in a good way. There is not one of the lives of St. Louis Gonzaga, of Berchmans, of St. Stanislaus, where it doesn’t recall that they went so far as to leave a half-formed letter, a half-pronounced word, to respond to the call of the Rule. Not being there, I don’t know what it is like at the end of the study, but there is one point that I have already recalled and which has been forgotten; it is that the recreation ends at the sound of the bell: there are more than three minutes, not to chat, but to take little precautions and for goings and comings. This is observed even in colleges and seminaries.

2. The exercise of the presence of God. Remember, that of all the advice I can give you in a year, this is one of the most important: to establish well in the morning and to follow

[16] one’s presence of God. There are several presences of God: spiritual writers / also call it union with God. “Union” expresses more, but “presence” is employed more. There is also the presence for everyone: everyone is in the presence of God; the demon and the damned themselves and we too are there for an eternity; but we speak here of the presence of union through the thought or the imagination frequently brought toward its God.

There is a presence which is more like a rest at the feet of our Lord, like Magdalene at Bethany: the soul, ceasing its operations, remains calm at the feet of Jesus, happy to consider him within the aspect under which it is represented. There is the more active presence which produces different acts, according to its different exercises and the different thoughts that are presented to it, but always it is represented at the feet of Jesus.

Some represent it by thought, placing themselves in front of the Divine Being. But in general, for all of you, the presence of God that I advise for you is that which consists of representing his humanity in a circumstance that you are free to determine yourself three times a day: upon rising in the morning choosing a moment from his birth to his passion; at the end of the Particular Examen, from his arrest until his death; towards the evening Angelus, during his agony in Gethsemane.

[17] The great, the immense advantage of this presence of God, lauded so much by all the masters of the spiritual life, so essential to perfection, is to permit one always to stumble upon some unforeseen event which happens: to find oneself immediately before Jesus at the slightest sign. So I urge you to practice it continually and in

everything, to make yourself present to God in everything, in your confreres, in events, in your superiors, where it is not, it is true, a substantial presence but a presence by representation and certainly much more than you think. Get used to seeing him in everything.

[18] There is, however, an occasion where this ordinary presence of God is not enough: it is when one feels suddenly carried away by passion. Passions are like a training, and for the one who observes them in his soul, there is a very curious physiological phenomenon to study. What to do when you feel it rising up so? Like a river that comes with impetuosity and will overturn the house that is in its path. It can be stopped by building a solid, high dike or an immense reservoir that would receive its waters, but that would take a long time; / a much more expeditious way is to dig a small stream that shifts its waters to the side and all impetuosity is thus diverted. Likewise for passion: if you seek reasons to fight it to its face, if you rely only on your ordinary presence of God, you will not succeed in stopping its momentum, you must change its object, and leave it to its impetuosity, and you will have found an opportunity for great merit at the same time as playing a good trick on the devil who is often, for his part, in the rising of passion.

Let's take, for example, the passion of love: it is engaged in an object forbidden for any reason whatsoever; leave it its ardor, but direct it to our Lord whom you have a thousand reasons to love. Likewise, for the hatred that engenders aversion, audacity, or sadness, feed it with such and such a circumstance of your life where you have most offended God and which you have often regretted bitterly in consideration of our Lord.

[19] This is no longer the moment to seek to maintain oneself in peace, it is the moment of combat; let's make war and not strike our friends but our enemies; this tactic is the summary / of the "spiritual struggle" which St. Francis de Sales always had with him, and who, despite these warlike counsels, has none the less given him that character full of gentleness which we admire in him.

### **Sunday, August 29, 1880**

#### *On the Intention of our Actions*

To the general practice of God's presence by representing Jesus in one of his activities or words, we must add another equally important one, that of the direction or intention of our actions. Formerly we said "direction," but today "intention" is used more. This capital practice is taught to us by our Lord himself, and Scripture points to many examples.

When he was about to begin the redemption, he formulated his intention: "Then I said, 'Behold I come...to do your will'" [Hebrews 10:7], and it is certain that he renewed it before each of his actions. The Gospel often recalls this renewal and the Church authorizes us to believe it by the prayer that precedes the Divine Office: "In union with that divine intention with which you on earth rendered praises to God" [cf. *Aperi, Domine*]

**[20]** We too must have an intention; we must first offer it at the beginning of each day. We have seen that there are two very simple things to do right at our rising:

1. to put oneself in the presence of God, that is to say, to represent it in an attitude or a word of one's choosing, but that it would need to be determined if, for example, this freedom led to inaction, and to renew this representation at the beginning of each principal action and a hundred times a day.
2. to take a look at the virtue of the week, a look which is rather an Examination of Foresight than a reparation and which consists in saying to oneself, "Today I will have this or that occasion to practice this virtue."

After these two things, one can direct one's intention and develop it. Our Lord wasn't content with himself by saying: "*Ecce venio,*" nor even: "*Behold I come...O God to do your will*" [Hebrews 10:7]; but he expressed the four ends of sacrifice, which, moreover, were so clearly represented in the various sacrifices of the Old Law in anticipation of the perfect holocaust which he himself was to accomplish.

The development of this general intention of the day can also be done during mental prayer or Holy Mass, whose purposes are the same, and where the offering, the intention or direction occupies such a large place, and this may help in these exercises which are themselves unable to be dealt with elsewhere. We can still help the development of this intention with the prayer **[21]** which is recited before Matins and we are sure to please / our Lord. For the rest, it is enough to look at God first:

He is perfect, so *worthy of praise*;  
he is good, we must *love him with gratitude*;  
he is offended, *we must make reparation*;  
he is merciful, we must *ask*.

Next regarding ourselves: miserable as we are, we only have a right to humiliation, annihilation, contempt, and hatred. That's why we need to make an offering. But with what? In union with the Sacred Heart of Jesus, enshrine our poor day as a little stone within the golden merits of our Lord. This is the main thing, but we must not neglect the secondary ones, and unite ourselves also to the Heart of Mary, to all the saints of the Church triumphant or militant; it is therefore an act of communion of the saints which gives our day all its value.

This offering is formulated, but insufficiently, in the morning prayer where it is offered to the Heart of Jesus and to the Blessed Virgin. Let us not forget after having offered it to Jesus to offer it to the Blessed Virgin with a feeling of filial respect and honor.

To summarize, then, it is to offer one's day in union with Jesus, Mary, and all the saints and consecrated souls for praise, thanksgiving, reparation, and petition, and as an act of contempt and self-hatred.

**[22]** But to the general intention, must be joined the special intention, the intention before each act, and it is not enough to renew oneself in the presence of God before each act. We have seen which virtues to practice during each of our acts, that our intention before each act is to remind us of the practice of these virtues, and that it consists in asking for its grace, for example, at mealtime: "My God I am going to take my meal. My sins have earned me something else, but your Providence wants to give this to me. Grant that I may nourish my spirit and practice charity and mortification."

The same goes for other acts like recreation and sleep that can provide an opportunity for sin. This does not require much time: one can do it very well while going to one's seat or passing from one place to another.

During the nine days preceding the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, we are going to make a novena with a triple intention:

1. to redeem all our recent faults,
2. to offer a little reparation for the overflowing of offenses which the relaxation of the holidays produces everywhere, even among consecrated souls,
3. to obtain from the Blessed Virgin an increase in our filial trust for her.

The Penitential Psalms and Litany of the Saints will be recited at the 3 o'clock exercise.

**[23]** There is a real effectiveness in this practice, which those who are tempted could find a useful experience if they made a habit of it. In addition, one will be able to ask to perform some corporal mortification.

### **Sunday, September 5, 1880**

#### *The Recognized Need for Reparation by Priests*

To convince us once more that the Spirit that blows here is really the Spirit that inspires the Church, let us read today some pages from "Ecclesiastical Studies." These pages, placed as a solemn exordium at the head of the last issue, were written at Paray-le-Monial upon the return of a pilgrimage to Rome.

"A universal cataclysm is about to upset society; not to recognize it would be blind optimism. The horrors of the Commune will be renewed one day or another on a much larger scale. The Church will not perish because she has the promises of Jesus Christ, but many souls can be lost for eternity. Divine justice must be satisfied, either by the scourges it imposes or by the expiation and voluntary penance of men. Priests of the Lord, it is you who hold in your hands / the salvation of a society in peril...the offering of the Sacred Host, that is the sovereign atonement...it is the Holy Mass which preserves the world...how is it that with the multiple and continual offering of the Host of propitiation, the wrath of God is not sufficiently appeased? Perhaps the Holy Sacrifice is not offered particularly enough with the intention of expiating and repairing, and on the other hand it is not always and everywhere accompanied by perfect enough dispositions on the part of the priest himself which from then on provokes a new curse.

"First of all, it would be advisable to multiply the Masses of reparation...then it would be desirable for him to be ready to celebrate these reparative Masses with a serious review of himself...where he would examine the special sacrifice that Jesus Christ rigorously demands or simply desires...to unite him more closely to his Sacred Heart at the holy altar...In fact...the priest must be a mediator and a victim with Jesus Christ...he must, by his personal immolation and his daily sacrifices, accomplish particularly what is lacking in the Savior's passion.

"Providence...in its ordinary course, strikes...guilty people where a Moses is lacking to pray on the mountain or when yielding to lassitude, they drop their arms, instead of leaving them constantly raised...by the persevering generosity of sacrifice.

[25] "These Moses' of the New Law, the priests of our day, would seem to be wanting since the anger of the Lord is ready to overflow...This is what leads us to hear the divine voice speaking in our days sometimes by the mysterious organ of several privileged souls all unanimous on this subject; even solemnly through the express complaints of the Blessed Virgin crying at La Salette; and finally openly and in the most authentic way by the venerated leader of the Church. Pius IX has not ceased, especially in the last years of his pontificate, to awaken in this regard the attention of the priestly tribe. His worthy successor, Leo XIII, in his address of December 14, 1879, insisted mainly on this crucial point...It follows that, while every priest is always bound by his state to apply himself incessantly to the work of his personal sanctification, the critical circumstances of the moment give him a stricter and stronger obligation and require an effort beyond ordinary generosity and dedication on his part.

“Moreover, this generosity and dedication will even rise to the heroism of martyrdom in the near future according to many probabilities during the month for certain countries [France and Italy]. It is, therefore, good to be ready, and with the help of grace, to accept in advance his sacrifice by arrangements that will make it abundantly meritorious before God for himself and for the Church.

“It is up to the priest to say to himself: “The Good Shepherd gives his life...” [John 10:11] and again: “Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins” [Hebrews 9:22]. Should he not be one of the victims marked in eternal decrees, he would nonetheless have the precious merit of sacrifice and atonement before God who crowns the sincere disposition of the heart, the anticipated acceptance of a bloody immolation as well as its real accomplishment...If these beautiful dispositions met miraculously at this moment in the soul of every priest of the Catholic Church to the degree of perfection that we see in everything regarding faith and union of beliefs with the Sovereign Pontiff, if there was such a degree of sacrifice of love for our Lord at the altar...heaven would soon be appeased...

[27] “It is for each to work towards the realization of this happiness. Nowadays, more than ever, extraordinary graces are in store in the holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary for priests of good will. Unknown souls of the world have for a long time solicited these miraculous graces of special sanctification / for the clergy, and their sacrifices and immolations united to their ardent sighs and their incessant prayers have already accumulated magnificent treasures for this transformation, intended to reproduce new Curés of Ars and Saints Vincent de Paul...The rendezvous for all is at the holy altar. O priests, he tells you, you, my friends, you, my elected co-operators, *I thirst*, I thirst for the honor of my Father...thirst for the happiness of souls; hurry to refresh my devouring thirst a little, by pouring into the chalice that I entrust to you the tears of your atonement and your holy reparation...Pray, humble yourself, immolate yourself.”

To this reading Fr. John added some comments to indicate the striking similarity of our Work with these aspirations. These Moses', he says, are ourselves more than all the others, because it is also necessary for Joshuas on the plain and when it speaks of probable martyrdom, Fr. John expresses a *Thanks be to God*, which shows well his own desires. He invites us to show this good will to whom the Hearts of Jesus and Mary reserve the extraordinary graces conquered by [28] unknown souls: it is for us that the souls on high offer their immolations every day. / So much grace if our lukewarmness does not hinder it.

In these aspirations are found our vocation: to consecrate, by a formal vow, this manner of repairing by Holy Mass and by the spirit of immolation communicated to each of our acts. And



this is our vocation: total surrender, absolute resignation, continual renunciation of ourselves in the hands of God. This is how we must respond in order to acquire these graces.

**[29] Friday, October 1, 1880**

**[30]** *The Father in charge of the teachers' retreat, having let us down this morning, Fr. John began the retreat and here are some of the reflections he suggested for meditation.*

We have seen the end of man in this fundamental meditation: to love and serve God; this is a truth which is proven. St. Ignatius then considers other things outside of man as means to his end: these creatures are not only the things of nature, the sky, and the earth, but also the events of whatever happens through his express permission and even his will in what is positive; "I create woe...I create darkness" [Isaiah 45:7], he said in the Wisdom Books and he often declares himself in the Holy Scriptures as the author of the evils that afflict individuals or nations. These creatures are therefore a means to go to God. Here begins our examination: have we looked at them as such?

1. Creatures tell us again of the power of God, his goodness which furnishes them to us, the bursts of his beauty, which they reflect. **[31]** Is this the image we have made of it?
2. Creatures serve our necessities like food, clothing; for our usefulness, or finally to reasonable and legitimate pleasure; it is the second way of using creatures, and has not this use become abusive by intemperance? Are we unconscious of opportunities for falls?
3. A third use of creatures, more in keeping with the present condition of man, is the privation of creatures, the mortification which procures atonement and reparation; it's the best use we can make of them.

**Tuesday, October 5, 1880**

Today, circumstances tell us the subject to ponder: the next separation invites us to strengthen the union. Our Lord has never spoken more of charity and union than the day before the dispersion. Likewise, it is like closing the year for a number of people who entered around this time.

Commentary on Book Three, Chapter Five of *The Imitation of Christ*.

**Monday, October 11, 1880**

After dealing with passions, virtues, and vices, we will speak of the vows. We will add to the conference on Friday the exercise of modesty also called "The Chapter" in the great old Orders and also "Culp." So much for the name. The nature of this exercise consists in the accusation of external failings of each one to the Rule. This accusation can be made either personally or reciprocally. The second way, also adopted by the Society of Jesus, will be ours, but only the novices will be the object of this reciprocal accusation. It is a serious trial, and one that does not put up with those who have entered religion with human and worldly views.

The first vow is Poverty. It is placed first because of our Lord's special predilection for poverty. Our Lord also gives it as the principle of perfection: "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell all you have" [Matthew 19:21]; then because it is poverty, that is to say, the renunciation of external goods which first strikes the new novice; it is with poverty that he must begin upon entering.

The first reason for embracing poverty is the example of our Lord: he did it, so it's good. Thus, must think every Christian and especially the Oblate who hastens in the footsteps of Jesus. The example of our Lord is very striking: at the manger, in Egypt, in his public life where he has no [33] place / to rest his head, and lastly and above all on the cross where he dies stripped of everything.

Why did our Lord so love poverty? That is, what is the ultimate reason for embracing it? It's because he saw a safeguard and a reparation in it for us: he instructed us by his example to make us accept this safeguard, which he himself did not need; but he has divinely profited by this quality to make reparation.

People were lost in large numbers by attachment to external goods; he wished to divest himself of them in order to expiate the faults which this attachment had caused them to commit. Above all, he wanted us to commit ourselves to expiate, like himself, by a voluntary detachment, the guilty attachment of so many of our brothers; so he praises the poor so much and has so many menacing words for wealth: "Woe to you who are rich" [Luke 6:24], and when he lifts a corner of the veil that covers hell, it is to show the evil rich. Poverty therefore, is reparative but it is also preservative.

Riches bind freedom by the care and embarrassment they cause to their owners. St. Paul remarks, as he still remarks, that the wife is less free than the virgin to think of God and the

**[34]** things of God, / and indeed, the rich are concerned only with ways of preserving and, above all, increasing their fortune. The poor man has none of these worries and he is not hindered.

Wealth excites greed or the desire to possess. This desire to possess is good in itself; the object alone is bad in the rich who amass treasures. Moreover, the rich are divided into two classes: those who amass for enjoyment and those who amass because of greed. These two vices, sensuality and greed, but especially the first, populate the hell of rich people. The poor have in their poverty an all-powerful safeguard: it is less of a danger of falling into hell.

For the Oblates, poverty has a special attraction: not only do they embrace it because it is preferred by our Lord, but above all to make reparation for the offenses that wealth has committed. It is an established point in history that the slackening and disorder of most convents at the moment of the Revolution, came from their great wealth; with riches came attachments, luxuries, lukewarmness, and finally ruin.

**[35]** If, therefore, we wish to make reparation for these faults, / it is through poverty that we can comfort our Lord from the bitterness that wealth has given him, and since it is by this very fact that he has been the most offended and that more than souls are lost, it is also there that we must excel in reparation.

**Wednesday, October 13, 1880**

*On the Necessity of Poverty for a Community*

Our Lord establishes it perfectly by a comparison: If anyone wants to build a tower, he says, he first counts the expense of the enterprise so as not to bear the shame of abandoning the business. A king who wants to make war on his neighbor, examines whether he is not inferior in strength [cf. Luke 14:28-32].

At first sight it would seem that it is not about poverty since it is a question of procuring wealth for a war or a business; yet it is: he has just spoken of the conditions of the perfect life, the hatred of all that is not him and the carrying of his cross. He then gives these two comparisons and he concludes: "So, therefore," by two words that testify to the connection of what he has **[36]** just said with what he will say: so, if you are not poor / you cannot think of the religious life which is the life of perfection where we follow him closely as a disciple. To build the edifice of perfection, you need the foundation of emptiness, contrary to material constructions; to make war on one's passions, the world, and the devil, one must be detached from everything.

**[37] Saturday, October 30, 1880**

[No notes]

**[38] Monday, November 1, 1880**

*The Profession of Fr. Joseph-Marie Paris*

“Alleluia! I believed even when I said” [Psalm 116:10]. I believed in my misery, I had faith in the mercy of God, and that is why I spoke, not by mere words, but by promises, by vows. “*I believed,*” this word means faith and trust: “I said in my consternation, ‘Everyone is a liar’” [Psalm 116:11].

I have seen the misery of my brethren throughout the world, of my brothers who are more intimately united to me by a consecration, and at the sight of their misery I said: every man is a liar; I too have been humiliated and for that I believe and speak; humiliated by numerous faults and failures, and I repeat: every man is a liar, a sinner.

I had confidence because, beside the greatness of the God whom my misery has offended, I have seen mercy, I have believed in his goodness and in his beneficence, in the sight of that goodness which has borne my misery for such a long time, I said, “What shall I return?” I will make a sacrifice to the Lord: “I will lift up the cup of salvation” [Psalm 116:12-13]: the sacrifice of the holocaust pre-figured by the one made by the chalice in the portico of the temple: “In the courts of the house of the Lord” [Psalm 116:19], and I will make this holocaust by rendering **[39]** my vows: / “I will pay my vows to the Lord” [Psalm 116:18]; admire this expression: “*I will pay.*” The prophet knows well that everything belongs to God, he does not say: I will give, but I will pay back: through vows I will give back to God what he has given me: my intellect, my will in obedience, the faculty to enjoy, by chastity, external goods, or at least the facility of disposing of the little that I had, by poverty. I will render all this to the Lord through the sacrifice of the holocaust: this is a precious and holy death, for every sacrifice, every immolation, is a partial or total death: “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful ones” [Psalm 116:15].

And you who are going to make this sacrifice, oh, after that you say: “O Lord, I am your servant...and son of your handmaid” [Psalm 115:16]: Yes, Lord, I am your slave bound and chained by my vows, the slave of your love, and as the prophet tells you again to better affirm it; and the son of your handmaid, that is, this grace of being yours has been prepared for me by holy souls who have asked the Lord for me, who have devoted themselves to this end: *I am the son of your handmaid.*

**[40]** And all of us, too, say, “I will offer a sacrifice of praise” [Psalm 116:17]: we will render to the Lord vows from the heart, as those who will make formal vows to him, and as the gifts of the Lord are without regret, may ours also be without regret.

**[41] Wednesday, November 10, 1880**

No conference last Friday [Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament]  
nor on Monday [trip by Fr. John to Saint-Médard]

We have read the five obligations of the vow of poverty: do not give anything...But all this concerns all the Congregations who make this vow. For us, there is something more and that is what will be the subject of this conference and the two that follow.

Our fourth vow adds bearing on those of poverty and obedience, but not that of chastity which must always be total, that is, internal and external. To fully understand what our spirit as victim adds to our other vows, we must distinguish three things: the vow, its virtue, and perfection, that is, what is advised for an excellent practice of the virtue.

The vow, as we have just seen, by its obligations only engages something external so that one can be internally attached to everything and still not violate the vow if one observes all of its obligations. Virtue, on the other hand, requires interior dispositions: the virtue of poverty does not content itself with actual or external detachment, but requires emotional or interior detachment.

**[42]** It consists of three things above all: not to regret what one has left behind, not to attach oneself to the goods which one has to use, and not to desire those that one does not have; these three interior dispositions are insisted upon for us as a result of the fourth vow, and one would violate these vows by contravening them.

After that comes advice for the perfection of virtue: there are two degrees:

1st degree: to desire, to seek what is poor—as a job, clothes, etc.; for example, our brothers at Saint-Médard have a painful and humble job; in accepting it they only satisfy the vow of poverty; not to be there and to desire to be there because it is poor and humiliating would be perfection.

2nd degree: the highest, rejoice to be without necessities, and it could happen. Perhaps our Lord reserves this trial for us; perhaps some Fathers would be obliged to beg; our Sisters do it. It is so much in the spirit of victim and in the Franciscan Order that I would be rather surprised if it did not happen. To go somewhere and beg as St. Joseph in Egypt, and rejoice in it, would be the height of perfection.

[Fr. John then reports some details of his trip to Saint-Médard.]

**[43] Friday, November 12, 1880**

*On the Oblates' Special Obligation Regarding Poverty*

Besides its particular obligations, the fourth vow of victimhood adds to the other vows, not however to the vow of chastity which is everywhere complete, that is to say, extending to the interior and exterior.

The vow of poverty is a means to reach the perfection of poverty, but our vow of victimhood encloses the very virtue of poverty within this vow with its three parts: not to regret, nor to retain, nor to desire the goods left behind or in use by the community: this would be to take back his sacrifice, his burnt offering on the altar itself, to regret, to attach, or to desire; one would sin not against the vow of poverty but against the vow of victimhood.

These three points: regrets, attachments, desires, which are something interior, are thus enclosed in the vow, and this is our special obligation. There is the perfection of this vow, which is only advice:

1. to desire, to choose what is less in employment, clothing, etc.
2. to deprive oneself of necessities sometimes, however always with permission, and to rejoice when a necessity is lacking.

**[44]** This conference is the summary of the previous one according to Fr. John and he has come back to it to further engrave this special obligation in us. After the *Sub tuum* [Editor's note: *a traditional prayer said at the conclusion of a task*] he adds: we offer our wishes in the Heart of Jesus to Fr. Stanislas Falleur, whose patron we celebrate tomorrow. Everyone will pray for his intentions tomorrow.

**Monday, November 15, 1880**

*St. Gertrude*

Today let us leave the ordinary course of our conferences to adopt a subject for the occasion and take St. Gertrude for the purpose of today's exhortation. She is entitled to our homage because she was the herald of devotion to the Sacred Heart: she spoke of it before the other instruments chosen by God to spread the cult of his Heart.

Entering as a child like the Blessed Virgin in the temple, she lived since the age of five in Helfta Abbey, one of those great Benedictine monasteries of women which was like a women's university where letters were taught. She came to great knowledge and perfectly mastered her humanities. Her works show us that she expresses herself very well in Latin.

**[45]** She was of the family of St. Mechtilde and, like her and St. Hildegard, she acquired this glory in the order of St. Benedict for having produced what is most prodigious and profound as an outpouring of grace in creation and to have been greatly advanced in supernatural mysticism. One can know St. Gertrude by her special character and her principal devotions.

She was the saint of praise: she praised God as an angel; she possessed purity, and it gave her a very intimate familiarity with our Lord. As St. John himself went to our Lord and rested on his bosom, she also had this favor, and also another grace, granted to only a few souls, to exchange her heart with that of her heavenly spouse, so that she loved God with the Heart of Jesus, which she used as her own. She praised God because she loved him; all her prayers breathe this love of the Heart of Jesus and her love. She is our model in the life of love in the Heart of Jesus by this tender love that consumed her; she is so in our life of self-immolation because Jesus made her endure suffering and sickness.

**[46]** So, on this day, she must be particularly benevolent to the Order of the Sacred Heart, whom she loved so much, and which, like her, must honor this Divine Heart especially by the interior life. She has special graces for us.

After her devotion to the Heart of Jesus, which is our model, comes her devotion to Mary. This is not surprising: whoever loves his Heart, loves his Mother, because his Mother lives in his Heart and his Heart lives in his Mother. She spoke with her several times. Then, it is St. John, the apostle of the Sacred Heart, who attracts her homages; then St. Benedict, the patriarch of her Order: her devotion to him was great, she wanted to honor him today by giving us a Fr. Benedict and soon a Fr. Gregory for the honor of St. Gregory the Great, also from her Order and the restorer of our liturgy. St. Augustine too, who is considered the apostle of love in the Church, also had special homage from her; and finally, St. Magdalene was one of her favorite saints. We owe St. Gertrude great gratitude for giving us a model of devotion to the Sacred Heart, then for the benefits of today.

**[47]** God has promised her to answer anyone who asks in her name. We, above all, are sure to obtain especially that which concerns our Order, as vocations, conversions, etc., and also for the other spiritual goods which our relationships make us desire for others. We owe it to her to facilitate our understanding of the devotion to the Sacred Heart by this Manual of her prayers, which has helped us to understand and to taste of this devotion since our entrance here. Let's show her our appreciation by using this Manual more often and with more affection and ask her to help us respond to what our vocation imposes on us in this Order of the Heart of Jesus.

**Wednesday, November 17, 1880**

Today, let's leave our conferences on poverty once again because convention gives us a duty to discuss another subject: our new custom to celebrate the Votive Mass of the Sacred Heart on semi-double days and that of the Blessed Virgin if the semi-double is Saturday. [This custom, **[48]** said Fr. John in the last conference, was determined by our Lord who / had even added that it could have been guessed by his earlier statements.]

Today, when we have begun to say this Votive Mass, it is convenient for us to talk about it. Moreover, since our Lord wants it, he must give us special graces to profit from it and enter fully into the spirit of the words of the liturgy, and one of its ordinary means is to use the Father as an intermediary near the children. Finally, as we must form only one heart and one soul, that which is said of Christians, still more of priests, and especially of Oblate priests. By meditating in common on the words of the liturgy, we will all have the same feelings on this point. In these words, we find what Jesus shows us and what we have to offer him.

Jesus presents himself as at Paray: This is the Heart that so loved humanity: "He will have compassion according to the abundance of his mercies" [Lamentations 3:32]; "Having loved his own, he loved them to the end" [John 13:1]. His infinite love: "abundance"; in the end: "the **[49]** Lord is good" [Lamentations 3:25]. / This is the first thing he presents to us.

In second place, his sorrow, which receives nothing but indifference and ingratitude. "Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow" [Lamentations 1:12]; "He does not willingly afflict" [Lamentations 3:33]: he did not belittle men in his Heart due to their offenses, but he endured them.

After his pain: "despised by people," "a worm and not a man," "they mock me" [Psalm 22: 6-7], what he offers us to meditate upon are his virtues, his perfection: "Learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart" [Matthew 11:29]. His infinite love, his deep sorrow, his perfection, these are the three great traits in which he presents himself to us in the words of the liturgy: as he showed himself at Paray-le-Monial.

But we also find in this same liturgy what we must offer to this divine Heart. First, a sacrifice of praise: "Forever I will sing the mercy of the Lord" [Psalm 89:1]. Celebrate his love, because the word *miser cordias* translates well a compassionate and affectionate Heart. "Exalt and praise, inhabitants of Zion" [Isaiah 12:6]; the prophet invites Zion, but this Zion is also the Church, **[50]** especially our small community of Oblates. It is from here also that the praise of the Heart of Jesus must be raised: "Make mention that his name is exalted" [Isaiah 12:4]. The Epistle is filled with these feelings of praise. Already the Introit has begun the praise: "The Lord is good" [Lamentations 3:25].



After the sacrifice of praise, the sacrifice of reparation. This one our Lord asks especially in the Gradual: "Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow" [Lamentations 1:12]; then in the Communion: "Reproach has broken my heart...I looked for some to take pity and there were none" [Ps 69:20]. His mercy is great: "He will have compassion according to the abundance of his mercies" [Lamentations 3:32], he did not reject men: "He does not abandon the children of men" [Lamentations 3:33], but his pain is immense, he asks to be consoled: "for comforters but I found none" [Psalm 69:20].

The sacrifice of thanksgiving occupies a large part: at the Offertory, it is clearly expressed: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits...who satisfies you with good things" [Psalm 103:2, 5], all the graces he has made and which are so numerous in his Work.

**[51]** The Gradual already has a word of gratitude: "The Lord is good to those who hope in him" [Lamentations 3:25]; but the Epistle is filled with it: "Behold, God is my savior...the Lord is my strength and my song...Praise the Lord....Sing praise to the Lord for he has done marvelous deeds...Exalt for great is the Holy One of Israel" [Isaiah 12:2-6].

As for the sacrifice of prayer, it is expressed in the different orations: in that which follows the Introit where the fruits of the love of the Heart of Jesus are claimed; then in the Secret where to become a victim one asks to be consumed by the flames of divine love; finally, in the Prayer after Communion, where one is recommended to his virtues of gentleness and humility, in order to detach oneself from vice and the worldly life.

This is what we must offer to the Heart of Jesus: the fourfold sacrifice of praise, reparation, thanksgiving, and prayer. Some might incline more to praise, others to reparation, others to prayer, but all this will make one holocaust. Let us meditate on these words by saying them and hearing them; our Lord will always uncover for us there, new insights into what they contain.

**[52] Thursday, November 18, 1880**

*On the Perfection of Poverty*

We have seen the obligations of the vow of poverty and the obligations of the virtue of poverty; these last are for us obligations by vow, not of poverty but of immolation, which requires an interior poverty. These obligations of the virtue of poverty are summed up in four: not to regret what one has left, not to attach oneself to what one uses, not to seek to have what one does not have use of, nor to love its amenities.

After that comes what is perfection, and one advises

1. to consider willingly that one lives by alms made to oneself by the community;
2. to consider that these goods which we use are given by God.

Frequently perform acts of inner poverty of this kind to advance in this virtue and persevere in the opportunity because that is where we recognize it. At this moment we tell ourselves that we do not care, but when another uses objects for our use, we internally feel a revolt and a desire to protest.

**[53]** Do not take advantage of the goods that are given / to the community, especially around strangers in the parlor, where so many vocations are lost or weakened. Since we have nothing left, why take advantage of what we no longer have; that is what is most vain in wealth: the glory of possessing.

**[54] Sunday, November 21, 1880**

*The Investiture of Fr. Thaddeus-Marie Captier*

*"How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!"* [Psalm 84:1].

Such was the thought of Mary when she entered the temple; she desired to live there: "My soul longs and faints for the courts of the Lord" [Psalm 84:2]. As the *active sparrow* finds a home and the *contemplative turtledove* a nest for its little ones, so Mary found her home there to be occupied in the service of the temple of God and in his temple to pray to this God whom she served.

Happy, she said, those who live in your temple: "Happy are those who live in your house" [Psalm 84:4]. Happy the man to whom you come to aid, you will bless him, he will go from virtue to virtue by the degrees that you establish in his heart. Better one day in your tabernacle, than a thousand in the world; it is better to have the last place than the first in the world.

God has so much love: "He loves mercy" [Ps 84:11], he has a Heart so compassionate that he will give to the one who lives in his temple grace here below and glory in heaven, grace to love him and glory to see his Heart filled with love in heaven. Such were the sentiments of Mary when she entered the temple and yet there was only the shadow of God in this temple while we have God himself: "We have an altar" [Hebrews 13:10].

**[55]** We have a temple where the priests of the Old Law are powerless, for it is infinitely superior to their temple: "We have an altar from which those who officiate in the tabernacle have no right to eat" [Hebrews 13:10]. We priests, who serve in this temple as Mary did in the old temple, must we not also say: "How lovely is your dwelling place" [Psalm 84:1]. These are

the altars of God himself: "Your altars, O Lord" [Psalm 84:3]. Happy are we to be there, to offer the immaculate victim, for we will be blessed: *The law-giver bestows a blessing*, to grow in virtue: "They will go from strength to strength" [Psalm 84:7]. The psalmist said these things about us and it is our happiness about which he sang.

But a religious can also say: *How lovely* because he too is in the house of the Lord; there he finds these good days so much superior to those of the world: "Better one day" [Psalm 84:10], and he prefers to be buried there in the last place than to be anywhere else; there he experiences these ardent desires of love: "Longs and faints" [Psalm 84:2].

*And if this religious is an Oblate*, he has even more reason to say: *How lovely is your dwelling* [56] *place*; he finds in the temple of God / a mystical tabernacle where he lives with love, where love is communicated to him, where he offers his love. And when this blessed place he has sought for years and desired with all the ardor of his soul [*longs and faints*] as deer longed for a source of water, when he finds this Order of the Sacred Heart, the object of his passionate desires, this temple of the Heart of Jesus, then he repeats with the psalmist: "My heart and my flesh exalt in the living God" [Psalm 84:2].

Yes, the Lord led him by the hand, Providence brought him by degrees: "who has set his heart on pilgrimage" [Psalm 84:5], and finally led him to the place that God himself has chosen: "In a place which he ordained" [Psalm 84:7]. Like the sparrow and the turtledove, he has found a place to live, he is happy at last; even if he is in the last place, he much prefers it there than to the other places where he has lived. Yes, let us repeat it: "God bestows mercy" [Psalm 84:11], God is good, God is filled with love for us. He will also give us his grace here below to respond to our vocation, to love him, to console him, and after this life, he will grant us the glory, the only glory that an Oblate wants, that of loving him forever in heaven: "And God will give glory" [Psalm 84:11].

### **[57] Monday, November 22, 1880**

The vow of poverty obliges us to external poverty; by the vow of immolation we are bound to internal detachment. Here are some more counsels relative to the perfection of this detachment which are good to put into practice if one wants to keep his vow because it is necessary to reach higher to properly attain it. Moreover, for us who want to console the Heart of Jesus, we know that a friend is consoled by offering him what pleases him most and not what is imperfect.

We have seen the first suggestion, which is to love by considering oneself as possessing nothing, but stripped of everything and living off the alms of the community. Do not boast neither externally nor internally of the good provided to the community.

Another counsel is to get rid of useless things, and from time to time, review objects for our use and hand over those which are no longer useful. The professed can keep the books that serve them every day or every week, nothing more. For novices, nothing other than those which serve them for work indicated during free time. St. Louis Gonzaga was faithful to this review of all objects for his use.

**[58]** A remark about the pious books in the chapel. First, do not appear jealous of the objects we use and suffer when another takes them to use. Then do not pile book upon book and build oneself a library in the chapel. Here we will remove what is not used for the novices and we will put the books of piety, which are not used daily, in the chapel, for example the manuals for Holy Hour that will be found here on Thursdays, if one still needs it in his poverty. To regulate this well, everyone will make a small list of what he has in the chapel and give it to me. Then he will keep only what is allowed. We have a lot of books there and we say to ourselves: this book is good for me; which one believes at least, because there is some spiritual enjoyment there.

As for poverty in clothing: we must tend to two things: simplicity and cleanliness. Simplicity is satisfied with clean clothing that is not sought after. St. Paul was content with livelihood and clothing. He does not say: feasting and adornment, remarks St. Basil. Seeking after, says St.

**[59]** Chrysostom, indicates that the soul is poor: when the body is richly clothed, / the soul is reciprocally poor. As for the value of objects, it is not left to the novices to determine. As for the number, it seems to me that one poor habit for every day and a cleaner one for days going out of the house or for other days can suffice. Those who have more, will have to return them to the common wardrobe where they would find them at a useful time.

Cleanliness is demanded by poverty since uncleanliness is wealth because it is laziness. We enjoy our time in the morning; instead of getting up, we stay in bed like the rich. That's why some dare to come to the chapel in the morning with dirty shoes or with clothes whose hem is stained with mud. The cleanliness of the room is also the responsibility of the novice; he must throw out the water himself. At this moment, it is no longer done because of the temporary dormitory on the first floor, but we will come back to it. He must also sweep his room himself. When you have a suitable building, novices can be furnished with what is needed to clean their **[60]** cell; in the meantime, they can / find a broom somewhere. They also make their bed.

It is by all these practices that we get rid of these thousand habits of wealth practiced in the world and contrary to the spirit of poverty. Let us not fear to subject ourselves to it: it is here that we merit grace. Perhaps some will have the grace to miss everything: that is how they will prepare for it. It is by these little things that they will deserve the great ones: "You have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things" [Matthew 25:21, 23].

Then let's be faithful to this. For books especially: at this moment we feel a little poverty in this respect, we have no library where we can work and another that is a work room for the professed. So much the better. Through poverty, we will be able to merit that which we do not have occasion to do often. Let's support this poverty that attracts the favor of the Heart of Jesus to us.

**[61] Wednesday, November 24, 1880**

*The Perfection of Poverty*

The first counsel for the perfection of poverty is to make internal acts of detachment often; the second is to keep nothing that is unnecessary; the third is to observe simplicity and cleanliness in garments. A fourth is to follow the common life as much as possible.

“My mortification is the common life,” said St. Louis Gonzaga. All good religious observe this rule. Frs. Franzelin and Perrone, whom Fr. John knew in Rome and who, because of their great labors, could have dispensed with the common life altogether, lived very poorly, living in one cell for their bedroom and working in the common library.

However, in the case of sickness, when the indisposition departs a bit from the ordinary small infirmities of nature, one must inform and then simply stick to what is prescribed; we must express simply what we feel and submit to the regime imposed, however contrary it may be to the ordinary.

**[62]** Above all, not to take advantage of the goods provided to the community to claim exemptions from the common life: neither age nor seniority are acceptable reasons.

One last piece of advice is that you do not dispose of goods inherited or donated unless following the counsel of superiors or of enlightened and virtuous people. This will not happen with us, where before profession we must dispose of past and future goods, as before solemn vows, which we will have done everywhere that this is possible.

As for the disposition of these goods, there will be no want of excellent reasons for leaving them to one's parents; but it is better to follow the Gospel: “Give to the poor” [Mark 10:21]. Now, there are the involuntary poor, materially. These will never have great gratitude and can do without it, supported as they are by charitable associations. There are the voluntary poor, who pray for their benefactors, the poor religious whom the world easily forgets and who cannot go and show them their misery. It is in favor of the latter that we must dispose of the property we possess.

We are now in a period of vocations. Our Lord commits himself to multiply them to the extent of our generosity. The more we immolate ourselves, especially by fidelity to the little things, the more we will give rise to vocations, the more therefore we will advance and we will hasten the Work dear to his Heart.

**[63] Friday, November 26, 1880**

*Considerations to Increase the Practice of Poverty*

Having seen the material side of poverty, we are going to see considerations more edifying than instructive. There are, first of all, among the reasons for love of poverty, the reasons of interest: these are for all ordinary Christians and for us, too, when we have lost our compass, which is the Heart of Jesus, and when we feel off our special path. These reasons are good, moreover, since our Lord himself advises and gives them; but as in all the words of our Lord, there is, even in those which provoke action out of interest, a special meaning for us, for the divine Word has multiple meanings and considerable richness.

The first reason for increasing poverty is: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" [Matthew 5:3]; "You who have left all will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life" [cf. Matthew 19:29]. There is, for all, the hundredfold in this life for the practice poverty. How? Because we are happier. Wealth gives countless worries: fear of losing what one has; especially the desire to double, to triple one's fortune; the sorrow of being **[64]** deceived; / the bitterness at seeing others succeed more; it seems that they steal what they get, by more skill or better circumstances; sorrow and anxiety at death when we separate from all the riches we have so much sought after, of which we only see the vanity.

The voluntary poor one has none of these desires: not being anxious to possess, he is not anxious to increase. The measure of happiness is that of desires and needs. God, says Socrates, is happy because he needs nothing; the poor are happy because they have few needs; and the happiest man is the one who most resembles God, whose happiness consists in having no need. This is the happiness of poverty for all: it delivers them from the tyranny of desires.

But for us, what is this hundredfold promised by our Lord? What do we gain from having fewer desires and more freedom? The ease to think more of the Heart of Jesus, to give ourselves more to him, to accord him more of our heart and our mind. This is what St. Paul said when talking about spouses: "He knows the affairs of God, how he may please the Lord" [cf. I Corinthians 7:34], "I want you to be free from anxieties" [I Corinthians 7:32]. He does not want **[65]** us to worry, so that we can live / like Jesus for Jesus: "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me" [Galatians 2:20], that is to say, I do not seek my interest, but the consolation of my Jesus. This is the hundredfold of an Oblate in poverty: to further comfort the Heart of Jesus. Is this not better than the promised personal happiness?

What is the relation between these two propositions: my happiness, my interest, and the satisfaction of the Heart of Jesus? Which is the more important of the two? Can we prefer ourselves to Jesus? Let us live only for him, and let us detach ourselves from all goods as much as possible in order to attach ourselves to him alone. Moreover, as he promised to St. Catherine of Siena, if one forgets oneself for him, he takes care of thinking about us. Therefore, let us forget ourselves entirely, let us detach ourselves with no other desire than to console his Heart. Affection, not detachment, because it gives us more happiness. Let us live for Jesus: "It is not I who live," and then nothing will be able to separate us from Him.

**[66] Friday, December 10, 1880**

Every Order of persons called to perfection imitates one of the characteristics of our Lord; for example, the Mendicant Orders, his poverty. For us, what characterizes us is the inner life of the heart in conformity with that of the Heart of Jesus.

We already see Congregations devoted in part to his Heart, but the Order of the Sacred Heart has its own character, to dedicate the hearts of its members to the interior life of immolation, love, and reparation; the inner life: "All glorious...within" [Psalm 45,13], the life of the heart: such was the life of the Heart of Jesus: a continual immolation to the will of his Father to mark his love and accomplish reparation; Victim-Heart: "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, then I said, 'Here I am'" [cf. Hebrews 10:8-9].

From the moment of the Incarnation, he immolated himself to replace the victims of the Old Law; he immolated himself to this holy will: "not my will but yours be done." This is what we **[67]** must do, too: only on this condition will we fulfill our vocation / and sanctify ourselves greatly because we are all called to an unusual holiness.

Immolation will attract abundant graces for us, but if we want to do only our will, we will have only the bare necessities and we will fall very low: "Corruption ruins all that is best." Inner self-immolation by love and reparation is what we are especially asked to do because it is our Lord's. A heart pierced with arrows of love and wounded by the sword of the sins of humanity, such was that of our Lord. It was not Longinus' lance that pierced it at first, it had been pierced well before; that was only secondary and it only happens to him after his death, only as a sign of the inner wound.

This is our vocation: to live inwardly in the immolated life of the Heart of Jesus; it is sublime, but let us not say: I am not worthy of it; if the apostles had thus reasoned, who would have remained? But the grace of Pentecost has strengthened and helped them. Let us trust in the Heart of Jesus, too.

**[68] Monday, December 13, 1880**

*On the Reasons for Poverty*

We have seen one: “Blessed are the poor” [Matthew 5:3], and in these words the main meaning is: happy the poor because poverty allows God to reign in them: freed from the thousand ties that carry along the wealthy, they are freer to give themselves entirely to God and to make him reign in their hearts and minds.

Here are three beautiful thoughts of St. John Chrysostom:

1. The further we get from the world, the closer we get to God.
2. The more we empty ourselves of the world, the more we are filled with God; the more we get rid of the world, the more we take on God.
3. The more you get rid of the world, the more you get rich with God.

Each of these thoughts would suffice for long meditations, because they abound in applications.

Let us listen to the beautiful prayer of St. Francis of Assisi who loved poverty so much. We must imitate his inner poverty since he is our father. We can scarcely imitate his external poverty because we do not have, like him, this special purpose; rather, the life of love and immolation **[69]** of the Heart of Jesus, and poverty is a way / of immolating oneself as Jesus has, indeed, put into practice well. St. Francis asks to love poverty always because, he says, it is neglected and persecuted even by those who particularly profess to honor it. By practicing it, this great saint also had a goal of reparation

Let us also offer the same prayer. If we do not bear the outward signs of poverty like him, we must be poor inwardly. Perhaps we will have to beg for alms, our Sisters will always beg. If we do not do it, let us ask at least never to have any wealth at our disposal; above all, never to be stripped by the Holy See, for whatever reason, of this beautiful privilege of saying Holy Mass without a stipend, in order to have more freedom to think only of the Heart of Jesus; we will give him alms.

Yes, we who have the honor, although unworthy, to be the first to be called and as the patriarchs of the Order, ask this for our children and grandchildren, and God listens especially to the prayer of the first members.

**[70]** Let us ask to be obliged always to live in this respect in abandonment and trust in Providence.



**Wednesday, December 15, 1880**

*Preliminary Considerations on Obedience*

Let us consider the obedience of Jesus: this is where he began the redemption: “*Ecce venio. Behold, I come to do your will*” [Hebrews 10:7]. One had disobeyed; one obeyed. By disobedience, there were many sinners and sins; by the obedience of one, there are many righteous.

Not content to obey his Father, he obeys Joseph and Mary. To prevent the objection that he was only subject to holy will, he is obedient to Caesar, who commands by pride; he is obedient to the Law of Moses, which even so he had come to abolish. He then obeyed Pilate, Herod, and the executioners; and obeyed to the death in order to atone for the fault of Adam, who had disobeyed to the death. Rather die than obey, said this one. Rather die than disobey, reprimands his Redeemer. We see him obey all the creatures who are for him the voice of his Father's will.

**[71]** Let us learn from this the merit of obedience. It is a universal virtue: it deprives us of everything and especially what is closest to ourselves which is our will, the master faculty; and by commanding it, it commands the others. Through it, one sanctifies oneself very quickly and one ascends higher in perfection because there is nothing more perfect than to submit one's will and judgment to the will and judgment of God and so it is the key to heaven.

**Friday, December 17, 1880**

*The Excellence of Obedience*

Obedience make us resemble our Lord, for he was above all, obedient. We don't sufficiently understand the meaning of the words spoken by the prophet: “Oblations and holocausts you do not desire” [cf. Psalm 40:7-9; Hebrews 10:8], that is to say, you no longer wanted oblations, in other words the sacrifice of dead things; nor holocausts, or living things. Put in other terms: neither the poverty which immolates things without life, nor the chastity that sacrifices the animal part, are any longer sufficient. What is necessary, is a more intimate sacrifice, a higher sacrifice, that of the will and judgment; thus, I am here to do your will and immolate my judgment and will to your judgment and your will.

**[72]** “Then I said, ‘*ecce venio*’” [Hebrews 10:7]. To demonstrate his interior obedience, he says: “I do not seek my own will,” and to indicate how much he loves it, he declares that it is his nourishment: “My food is to do the will of my Father” [John 4:34]. How can we not appreciate what Jesus has so appreciated and loved?

1. Obedience is the source and the guardian of virtues. The obedient one, by executing God's law and his rule, accomplishes by the same, acts of other virtues that are made through obedience. There is no other virtue that he does not practice if he is really obedient. This is why some Orders haven't asked for other vows than that of obedience; itself being well observed, contains all the others.
2. Obedience is a reward of predestination. The obedient one will say to our Lord: I have always done your will; to be with you in heaven, it is necessary to be with you on the cross. Yes, obedience has always attached me there on the cross, has always held me there; I have wanted nothing other than your will. For what have you to reproach me?

And to add what is special to us: we say that our obedience, being not just that of the obedience of execution but of interior obedience itself, that is to say the submission of mind and judgment. It eminently possesses the advantages of obedience, which we have discussed.

**FALLEUR NOTEBOOK V**  
**CONFERENCES AND SERMONS**  
**December 20, 1880 – October 21, 1881**

**[1] Monday, December 20, 1880**

*The Necessity of Obedience*

We have seen how excellent the obedience is that brings us closer to Jesus and makes us resemble him, who is the source and guardian of virtues, and pledge of salvation. But we must also love it because of its necessity, for it is necessary both for the Order and ourselves.

Unity is needed in any community, without which there is disorder. Look at the Holy Trinity: there are three persons, but a unity within this Trinity. There is the substantial obedience of the Son, who ensures this unity, and the Holy Spirit fortifies the union between the Father and the Son, establishing the authority of the one and the obedience of the other.

In the celestial city, the same unity: the inhabitants of heaven, however different from each other, form a single body of saints singing the praises of God. In nature, in spite of the mysteries still found there, and whatever the claims of science may say, we can very clearly distinguish the general law which unites all beings, which subjects one to another to centralize and unify them.

**[2]** In the Church, we also see the unity of the members with the head, the faithful and pastors; for there is only one flock and one shepherd. In society, in the family, unity always among the members, otherwise disorder intervenes immediately. If then, we see the necessity of unity everywhere there is society, should we not admit it in a Congregation which is like a small family in the Church? Order requires unity, and unity requires obedience; each member must accept the role assigned to him. What would happen if the foot wanted to be the eye? This makes you laugh, but the deformity is no less when a subject refuses obedience and wants something other than what is assigned to him in the body of the Order.

Obedience is even necessary for our freedom. It delivers and frees us from the errors of our own judgment and our own will, errors so easy and so profound; showing us the judgment and the will of God.

It always offers our freedom a safe path where it can run without fear. It would seem, **[3]** however, that obedience places obstacles to our liberty, / for the bad, yes, not for the good, for there is in us, says Bossuet in a sermon on clothing, two liberties, that of mischief and

that of doing good. They often contradict each other and cancel each other out; obedience removes the bad and favors the other. This is explained by several comparisons: take a locomotive: it seems to have great hindrances; it cannot go to the right or to the left; it is on rails that hinder its freedom in both directions; and yet these hindrances favor its freedom to advance, to run, to fly in the direction that is designed for it. These constraints deliver it from the obstacles it would encounter on the ground.

Let us consider the water of a canal: it's not free to spread out and to flood its surroundings at will; but what strength it possesses with the shackles imposed on it! It can carry boats and regularly irrigate the surroundings.

#### **[4] Wednesday, December 22, 1880**

*Concerning the Feast Days at Christmastime*

Today, for our last conference before Christmas, it is good to speak a little about the feast days that will follow. There are five feast days that require special attention from us. First, the Feast of Christmas, that of St. John, the end of the calendar year, the outpourings of grace which our Lord has filled us for two months, and finally the resistance and miseries that He finds in us.

We have only one desire, that of pleasing Jesus. On this feast day of Christmas, it is not by seeking the sensory side of grace while experiencing a natural joy that we will satisfy it. He went up only once to Mt. Tabor, where he spoke again of his Passion and forbade his three disciples to revel in the memory of his transfiguration by recounting it. Never is it said that he laughed, and it's reported 7 or 8 times that he cried. No doubt he does not want our sadness, but that we surrender ourselves to him in both. He does not forbid us the peace promised to [5] men of good will, but / what he especially asks for is a life of love and reparation to compensate him by our immolation for the pain he experiences during these feast days upon seeing even his friends focus too avidly on their joys and their contentment.

On St. John's Day, in memory of the privilege of the Beloved Disciple, let us ask him, above all in Communion, for the graces which are necessary for us to console Him.

This year has been a year of contradiction; I know it better than anyone because I have not been able to tell everything, but those who have been informed a little bit know it too. By the grace of the Heart of Jesus we have triumphed. It is preparation for the test and *Consummatum est*. We have received immense graces this year, thanks to the strengthening of the Work outside and inside, in your hearts. None of you would dare to doubt his divinity any longer. Doubt would be a blasphemy; thanks to a growth in vocations realized or hoped for; and inner graces received by each one. All this requires our gratitude. We will also finish [6] with a novena of thanksgiving by singing the *Magnificat* five minutes before 3 o'clock.

But after the feeling of gratitude, which is the lesser form of sacrifice, must dominate a feeling of atonement and reparation for all our miseries. Gratitude is something too sweet for a victim; reparation suits him better and it is in this sense that Jesus will direct us unless he has a particular attraction that he himself would develop in someone. We will add to the *Magnificat* the song of a penitential psalm to expiate all our faults of the year and not to bring it to a close with a light penance of one day.

Finally, on the occasion of Christmas, and in view of the abundant graces poured on us by the Heart of Jesus, let us express our desires to the Divine Child, but without eagerness and anxiety, and rather with a complete abandonment to the outcome. Let us not worry about the extent and development of the Work: there will be time to think about that only with the *Consummatum est* and Pentecost.

[7] Let us express our feelings to the Divine Child in a little letter that will be placed under the crib during the octave of Christmas. If we want, let us ask him for the vocation of some souls who would be dear to us, so that he calls them to be his doves or his lambs; but let us do everything in peace and abandonment. This is the best way to ask well.

### **Sunday, December 26, 1880**

*Wish for the Feast Day of St. John*

Fr. Alphonse Rasset, on behalf of all, said in essence: In place of a bouquet, we present you with a crown, the crown of our patron saints: St. Alphonsus, the last of the doctors, speaking in the name of all; St. Bartholomew, who found nothing better to give than his skin; St. Thaddeus...Sts. Stanislaus and Berchmans, the spoiled children of the Blessed Virgin; St. Matthias, who must have had confidences like St. John, since he replaced the one in whom our [8] Lord had / least confidence; St. Mark, one of the intimates in the Cenacle; St. Martin, who, among other miracles, was like St. John making the lame walk; St. John the Baptist, a friend of Jesus and St. John; St. Andrew, who had a special affection for the Blessed Virgin, and according to tradition, whose apostolate bore fruit only through her.

Fr. John added: to this crown must be added the precious stones promised in the future. Next, he said: I was expecting your wishes as you counted on mine; let's offer them all together to St. John on his feast day. Here is what should be the memo for today and tomorrow: we were a bit greedy in our requests to the little Jesus. We asked for a lot of births. Now, "in pain you shall bring forth children" [cf. Genesis 3:16]. No births without pain. If we want to be answered even partially, we must offer hearts full of compassionate love to Jesus through St. John. Such were the feelings of the Blessed Virgin: she was the Mother of all Christians only because she was superabundantly the Mother of Sorrows.

**[9]** “She treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart” [cf. Luke 2:19]. Seeing the doors shut, she saw hearts rebellious to Jesus; she moaned and loved him even more to make reparation for this hardness. Seeing the poverty of the barn, she saw Jesus entering into impure hearts, open to all the winds of passions, even consecrated hearts. She inflamed her love for Jesus and offered to make reparation by the greater cleanliness of hers. I ask that everyone make an extra half-hour of adoration today near the manger, reflecting in his heart on what we have just said.

Fr. John announces that the Sisters are asking for their turn for the Mass of St. John. To unite the communities a little, Fr. John will take the two oldest non-priest novices to serve him. He ends with the accolade he gives paternally and kindly to all. He then addresses a few words to the guests who have come to wish him well on his feast day.

**[10] Wednesday, December 29, 1880**

*On the Mystery of Christmas*

After the four weeks of preparation for the coming of the Savior, which remind us of the four thousand years before the birth of Jesus, which are dedicated to penance and purification and are the symbol of the purgative life, comes Christmas, the great feast day of Christmas, the day when the sun of righteousness appears to illuminate all with its divine light. This is the image of the illuminated life: these are the graces of enlightenment that we will find near the manger. At the time of the year when darkness is the most enduring and which illustrates the state of the world at the birth of the Savior, the moment also when the light begins to win back the darkness, our Lord wanted to be born and come with his grace to enlighten all humanity. Let's go to the manger, where we will be enlightened on the virtues of the Savior's childhood. No doubt, there are graces for other virtues, but now these are the most abundant: his humility, his gentleness, his simplicity above all, and his confidence. These virtues are the distinctive signs of an Oblate, of a victim.

**[11]** Next to Christmas are the great octaves that the Holy Liturgy has associated with the great celebration. It is like the homage that the different categories of saints are coming to give to the divine Child. It is first of all St. Stephen offering him the crown of martyrdom. Crown bearer and standard bearer, St. Stephen, leader of the martyrs, comes in the name of all the 20 million martyrs to offer his blood to Jesus in return for his. He comes first because the martyrdom of blood is the most vivid mark of love: “No one has greater love than this” [John 15:13]. He comes as the first to represent the era of martyrs—the first of the Church—and which lasts 300 years.

After him, St. John, apostle, doctor, evangelist. St. John, the Virgin, comes to offer the first fruits of the era of the doctors which follows that of the martyrs, and virgins of both sexes who shine in the Church after the martyrs and the doctors. An apostle in his Epistles, an evangelist

in his Gospel, a prophet in his Book of Revelation. To this triple crown, St. John joined that of virginity, which made him privileged.

**[12]** According to tradition, he would have left not only his nets but a wedding engagement to follow Jesus. Hence his privilege at the Last Supper, his privilege of being associated with the virginity of Mary and of receiving her as his mother. St. John comes to offer to the divine Child all the virgins who followed him out of love for Jesus.

Finally, the Holy Innocents begin this multitude of children who died in infancy and whose innocent souls go to heaven to adore their God. These are the first fruits of all others, and with their innocence offer their own blood. They teach us that God loves innocence and simplicity.

Let us unite with these mysterious symbols of the Holy Liturgy and take advantage of the graces of enlightenment that the holy child Jesus reserves for us near the manger. If we have not yet come out of the purgative way to win back this time, let us hasten with prompt penance in order to gather sooner the graces of enlightenment.

**[13] Friday, December 31, 1880**

*Wishes for the New Year*

On this day, the bonds of gratitude are renewed and consolidated. Each begins with those to whom his heart most carries him. The child goes to his father, the sister to her brother, the wife to her husband. But do you not find all these titles in my divine Heart? Thus, it is to me that you must first address yourself, but with feelings of repentance and forgiveness for unused graces and benefits.

What can you wish for me that is more pleasing to me than the love of the souls that I have redeemed with my blood and above all the souls that are especially dear to me and who are often more ungrateful than ordinary Christians who have not received the same lights and the same graces? What do I desire if not to see these souls lead a life filled with faith, hope, faithfulness, and abandonment?

Invite my holy mother and St. Joseph, my foster father and yours, to present you to me

**[14]** themselves, in order to be accepted with more kindness. / Do not they know better than anyone what is pleasing to their divine Son, and hasn't their presence beforehand disposed my divine Heart in favor of those whom they take under their protection?

It is first of all my Sacred Heart, the source of all grace, the summary of all virtue, of all merit, which deserves gratitude and love. Address yourself also to the heart of Mary and St. Joseph. Greet them through my divine Heart which was their greatest happiness on earth and which now comprises their joy and happiness for eternity. Its happiness is their happiness, its joy is

theirs; so, they are saddened if they see my Heart saddened, and its pain and suffering are again theirs. Address yourself to all the saints, especially those whom I have given you as patrons, and who through their life of suffering and sacrifice have more faithfully reproduced the life of my Heart. Offer them this divine Heart which is for them the source of graces and happiness; do this in recognition of the graces they obtain from you by their protection.

**[15]** But so no one is forgotten on this day of joy, think also of the angels and especially of your guardian angels who assist you with so kind a protection, and in return for their services offer them my divine Heart in whom they find all their happiness. Praise God in his angels and saints.

**[16] Monday, January 3, 1881**

The year which has just ended has been a year of contradictions: less apparent to you, above all those concerning direction and administration, they have none the less been real; moreover, external contradictions are not made for the novices; they encounter enough of them in the matter of their formation.

According to all the forecasts and the ordinary course of supernatural things, we must expect the jolts that Providence affords to every work that begins to consolidate. The many vocations of this year extended the Work and made it known. Satan, who worries about it, will engage his henchmen, and as he imitates the works of God, he will also know how to make them know what he expects from them concerning this Work. To protect us from his attacks, we are going to take as a secondary patron a very powerful saint against him and this devotion will respond well to your desires: we will have recourse to St. Michael the Archangel. We will make a **[17]** novena by reciting the Chaplet of St. Michael, which is not very long / and we will beg him to protect the Work of the Heart of Jesus. Like a general who leaves the ramparts to defend his soldiers, but who goes himself to the defense of the citadel, St. Michael will take to heart the defense of the Heart of Jesus, which is the citadel of the Church.

Another saint to whom we are going to start a novena is St. Francis Xavier. On Friday, we are going to make him a present which, it is true, is not very much: a Father who will make his vows. On this occasion, let us ask for two graces in return. A temporal one: the success of a litigation, not for the temporal result itself, but to avoid the scandal of going from appeal to appeal and then not to be obliged to support a less exact thing that would win it. Let's ask him also that he gives us a Sister as he gave us a Father. This vocation is still pending. The holy apostle will not refuse us what we ask; he will do it. This novena will be recited with the prayer used for the novena of grace. We will begin the two novenas in Soissons and Lille; what they will do after us will be in thanksgiving.

**[18]** Yesterday, Fr. Augustin-Marie Herr was given to us and today two announced names have been designated. But to conquer the resistances that some of those called make to grace, in



particular Fr. Augustin, we must pray a great deal. Today, we will have Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament from noon until 7 o'clock, two adorers always. Let's hope and pray.

### **Friday, January 7, 1881**

"Give to the Lord, you sons of heaven" [Psalm 29:1]. Today we come to offer a sacrifice to the Lord. One Father who devotes himself entirely to self-immolation, another who goes one step further in this direction, and a third who is just entering [*i.e. the first profession of Fr. Francois-Xavier Lamour, the investiture of Fr. Martin-Marie Wagnet, and the entrance of Fr. Augustin-Marie Herr*].

For this offering it is well to ponder this psalm of oblation that the Holy Liturgy placed yesterday at the beginning of the Office. "Worship the Lord in his holy court" [Psalm 29:2]: adore his Heart because it is the most intimate and holy sanctuary. Yes, let us adore him, because he has spoken; his voice was heard over the waters, that is, in the midst of the world. "Many waters, many people" [cf. Revelation 17:15], says St. John. His voice had the flash of lightning, **[19]** "God...thunders" [Psalm 29:3] / and he spoke louder than a very strong world, "Over many waters" [Psalm 29,3]. He has displayed power, "The voice of the Lord is powerful," or again, he has spoken to the strong "in power," and to those who lived in luxury, "in majesty" [Psalm 29:4]. He has broken their resistance like a cedar of Lebanon and has crushed them like the heifer of Lebanon. He has extinguished all the flames of earthly affections, "The voice of the Lord brandishes flames" [cf. Psalm 29:7-8], he has spoken in the midst of this desert of a world.

And then, after manifesting himself in his power, he manifests himself in a flood of grace: "The Lord sits enthroned over the flood" [Psalm 29:10]. He rewards sacrifice by proportionate graces. "He gives strength to his people" [Psalm 29:11]; then that which follows the sacrifice, his blessing with the peace of heart: "He blesses the people with peace" [Psalm 29:11].

### **Monday, January 10, 1881**

#### *The Advantages and Necessity of Obedience*

We have seen its excellence, its development, and also its necessity for the religious himself **[20]** and for the Order / of which it is the base and the strength, because it creates a union. Obedience is still a source of merit. It is the immolation of all that is most intimate in us and therefore it is the most pleasing sacrifice to God. There is not an act whose obedience does not double the merit. To pray is excellent, to pray by obedience is twice excellent. It sanctifies everything while immolating our will and our judgment in everything.

The perfection of obedience is necessary to us Oblates, the victims of the Heart of Jesus. We do not have the austerities of the Capuchins, the Carthusians, or the Trappists; we are left to be victims only by practicing interior immolation; but is not its usual form obedience?

We will not have extraordinary sacrifices every day, loss of parents, inner sorrows; but every day, obedience gives us the elements of interior immolation, which is the only one that our Lord habitually asks of us. Either our obedience will be perfect or we will not be. The promises [21] of the Sacred Heart are for those who have devotion to him, / but especially for the Order of his Heart. If we are not good victims with him, we will have no part in his promises and his graces, and grace being lacking, those who would have thus been deprived of them would lose their vocation. Now, we are only victims through obedience, which is in every moment and on every point whatever, for example in silence, which is so often violated. It is not necessary to speak without a real necessity, and even to speak when a sign would suffice is to break the rule of silence. As we allow ourselves to be immolated by obedience, our Lord gives his graces; but as soon as we resist it, the graces stop. It is an unfortunately frequent experience.

**Wednesday, January 12, 1881**

*The Necessity of Obedience for the Success of Our Works*

On Monday, we saw that obedience multiplies our merits by making each act a sacrifice, a holocaust, an immolation of what is most intimate to us; it makes us more like Jesus, whose whole life has been nothing but an immolation of the will.

[22] Today, let us consider the necessity of obedience for the success of our works. When we act by obedience, it is no longer we, but God himself who acts; it is he who commits himself: action is supernaturalized and enlivened by divine life which operates in all that is supernatural. "Who lives the Rule, lives in God." God is the actor and we are an instrument, and if he is not powerful enough for success, would we be more than he? Can success be better assured than when he himself pursues it? Perhaps, if in appearance, we are far from success, let us obey even blindly. Look at Isaac; he obeyed blindly, he carried wood without seeing the victim, he laid himself on the altar at the word of his father without knowing why, but guessing his death. Humanly speaking, what could he expect? And yet, God began there the glory of being the father of the Messiah and of all believers. What an immense consequence this act of obedience has had!

[23] St. Joseph, having miraculously obtained a chaste wife, / sees her becoming a mother; he does not understand anything. An angel reassures him and instructs him. It is said that this child must reign over Israel and be born in a stable; he must be worshiped and persecuted; it is necessary to flee to Egypt, it is ordained for him; he does not understand anything. He obeys, however, and undertakes the perils of immigration. Likewise, this heroic obedience was worth it to cooperate with Jesus in the work of redemption by hastening the moment.

We, too, obey blindly: it is the guarantee of success: “The obedient man speaks successfully” [cf. Proverbs 21:28]. The more we obey, the less of us and the more of God; and the more of God, the more perfect is the work.

Although I seldom speak of myself, having hardly any good to say, I confess that the act of obedience, which made me come to Saint-Quentin in spite of my repugnance for the secular ministry, was the starting point of immense graces: for it was there I discovered the Order of the Sacred Heart.

**[24] Monday, January 17, 1881**

**[25] *On Sins Against Obedience***

One sins against the vow of obedience by external disobedience, because the vow does not impose anything else. This disobedience is serious:

1. when the superior has commanded by virtue of holy obedience,
2. when he has commanded in a solemn tone,
3. when simply commanding, the disobedience causes serious harm to the community or a third party.

One sins against the virtue of obedience by grumbling internally against what is ordered, that is, when one does not link inner obedience or judgment and will to the obedience of action.

Obedience, like poverty, also has its perfection, which is only a counsel, and which, being unobserved, does not lead to sin, it is:

1. to consider Jesus Christ in the person of the superior,
2. to neglect no rule, but to attach to all the same importance.

For us, to whom the vow of immolation imposes the virtue of obedience, we sin against vows by sinning against the virtue of obedience. The solemn vow removes from him who makes it **[26]** any free disposition of himself, and every act coming from him / outside of obedience is invalid. The simple vow only makes these acts illicit.

Solemn vows, which gives obedience all its perfection, is a very legitimate reason for us to request it of our Lord and to desire the approbation of Rome, without which it is impossible. This approbation would bring us more into the order of the Church and place us within the hierarchy that composes it. During the novitiate, let us practice obedience so that at the time of making vows we have neither fears nor scruples and we do not violate it thereafter.

**Wednesday, January 19, 1881**

We will continue to talk about obedience for a few weeks in order to strengthen it more and more. It must be the foundation of our life because through it alone, are we able to immolate

ourselves unceasingly, nor can we apply it to ourselves too greatly. It must be like the seal of our life. By it we can be martyrs. It is quite possible that the grace of martyrdom may be given [27] only to a few, but if all cannot give their lives / in such abbreviated form, all may give it in the long run and moment by moment. And surely our Lord will accord something of the glory of martyrdom to those who will have been so immolated throughout their lives.

One counsel toward the perfection of obedience is to observe the smallest rules. The vow does not oblige this, because it obliges only to the execution of the formal commands and the major rules. However, to obey perfectly, one must not neglect the slightest rules.

A second piece of advice to perfect oneself in obedience is to do everything by obedience and to leave nothing to one's free disposition; to regulate all that would not be settled, to practice by way of obedience all the exercises, the special virtues which are recommended there, to foresee the desires and orders of superiors and even ask their will on things left unregulated. This is how we will multiply our immolations and respond to the desire of the Heart of Jesus, who now expects much.

We are sixteen members now and what we can attract is prodigious. Each immolation brings a grace for the Work and when we know its price, when we are aware that each grace is like the [28] link of a chain, / that with but one grace disdained the chain is broken, it must be very cruel not to respond and thus tear the Heart of Jesus. Our Lord is waiting for our help.

Doubtless his Heart does most of it, but in all divine work it is necessary to have the participation of a person who is the instrument: "I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions" [Colossians 1:24]. This help is the obedience that ensures carrying out our immolation. It is obedience which makes us perfect, because if one wants to obey, one will practice all the virtues as this is the best mortification in the judgment of St. Louis Gonzaga; and Pius IX said of an obedient religious: give me a novice who has always observed his Rule and I will canonize him. There was some reaction to this point by someone. It is time to return to perfect obedience and finally be very generous.

**Friday, January 21, 1881**

*On the Perfection of Obedience*

To execute the smallest rules as the most important, to foresee and even ask for orders for free [29] choices, / these are two counsels on the perfection of obedience. A third is to consider God in the superiors. To obey with love, respect, joy, and confidence: where these four feelings are missing, the spirit of God is absent. The authority of the superior comes from God through the Church: it is incontestable and it is God himself that one obeys: "Obey your masters, even those who are harsh" [cf. I Peter 2:18, Colossians 3:22]: even imperfect superiors.

To better establish this doctrine, let us read a few lines, whose origins some will detect, pronounced on the occasion of New Year's gifts to the superiors.

“We offer them statues...it is you who must offer yourselves as living statues representing the saints whose names you bear, or at least as matter offering oneself without resistance to the worker who wants to transform them; we offer them images and flowers, be yourselves those flowers which, like the lily and the violet, are given by the gardener as a present to the master of the garden. Be lambs and doves that he can offer in sacrifice, and not hedgehogs that cannot be sacrificed. [A warning to those who do not want to lose their vocation, says Fr. John.]

**[30] Monday, January 24, 1881**

This year, we are going to celebrate the Purification in a very special way: our Lord will grant us immense graces of purification if we do it well. Perhaps, we have exceeded our desires for the growth of the Work. Only one sole sentiment is necessary: purification must absorb us entirely. A preparatory novena will be made: first, rigorous abstinence at noon for all by each of the Fathers; after, the rosary, the penitential psalms, and litany; during the day and in particular recite the ten decades of the chaplet that must complete the rosary.

**Wednesday, January 26, 1881**

[no notes]

**[31] Monday, January 31, 1881**

The devil is furious with the growth of the Work; he is looking for someone to devour. Watch and pray. There will be a shock for everyone, an inevitable gust of wind. It is necessary for strengthening our vocation. It is, moreover, in the plans of God: he himself will affect our purification by letting us be attacked on the weakest side. A little fasting is no big thing; a Holy Hour is done without much trouble; also, to complete this, our Lord intends to impose on each one a special cross to support, to which is attached the purification of so many faults and negligences during the preceding years.

**Wednesday, February 2, 1881**

*Investiture of Frs. Augustin Marie-Herr and Marc-Marie Stemple, profession of Fr. Simeon, and entrance into postulancy for Fr. André-Marie Ozenfant*

“I receive the Levites for...the firstborn” [Numbers 3:12]. It was an established practice to consecrate to God the firstborn as victims for others; in his justice, God imposed this sacrifice on the Egyptians; and his mercy enabled the Hebrews to redeem their firstborn. But he adopted an entire tribe to replace the firstborns thus redeemed. At the census, there were

22,000 adults in the tribe of Levi, and 22,000 firstborn in all Israel. These were replaced by those who then received the mission to offer sacrifices for the people. "Watch," says the Lord, "so that the wrath of the Lord will never arise over the people" [cf. Numbers 18:5].

But it was only the figure of the great Firstborn, offered on this day by Mary, and as a priest, offering the sacrifice that was to save the world. It was the Savior whom Simeon had before his eyes, because "salvation" [cf. Luke 2:30] in Hebrew is the same as "Savior" or "Jesus."

A new tribe has replaced the old one. This one must also immolate itself for the salvation of the people and remove the obstacle that mercy encounters in order to pour itself out onto the world. This obstacle is sin; and if this obstacle is posed by those who should themselves remove it, who will remove it if not other priests? This is our Work in all its simplicity.

**[33]** Let us then understand its greatness: let us offer the sacrifice that must save the world, that is to say, the sacrifice of ourselves, of our will. Let us stop being children in order to respond to the greatness of God's purposes. May the elders renew their sacrifice with ardor, and let the new ones begin without hesitation.

#### **February 4, 1881**

##### *First Friday of the Month*

Although it is not customary to gather for a conference on days of Exposition, I wanted to gather you today to unite us more by the union of thoughts and sentiments that we must have.

First of all, I want to talk to you about a holy adorer of the Heart of Jesus, Fr. Claude de la Colombière, whose birthday is on February 15. He is not yet canonized, but a Father of the Society of Jesus, one of my good friends, is actively taking care of this, and when he is, his feast will be celebrated among us.

Fr. de la Colombière was the first promoter of devotion to the Sacred Heart. Appointed **[34]** superior of the Jesuits at Paray, / he was the confessor of Blessed Margaret Mary and soon recognized the divine nature of her revelations. He consecrated himself then as a victim to the Sacred Heart; our Lord approved it because soon he was sent to England where he had to undergo all kinds of contradictions, even prison, and finally was driven out.

This is because our Lord gives the victims of His Heart a cross to bear. He proportions it to their strengths, but he does not dispense them from it. Through the Superior of the Visitation, Father received notes from the Blessed informing him what he would suffer and to tell him what he had to do. Back in France, he returned to Paray, where he died at the age of 42. For us, he is a model and also a protector. On Sunday, we will begin a novena in his honor to ask

him for two graces: one spiritual...and yet another: the prompt arrival of the one who is to be Fr. Claude among us [*i.e. Fr. Claude de la Colombière Lobbé*].

Let's also talk about the Purification, whose feast day was so good for us. Like today, we felt **[35]** the sensory presence of our Lord. Let us not forget gratitude for the graces we have been given. But at the same time, we have not responded to all that has been asked of us; let us regret this cowardice and may that feeling of repentance be alive in us. Finally, let's be vigilant.

According to all probability, this year is that of the trial necessary for all of God's work. It has been three years since our own Work was born, because it is from this day that its existence dates and just as the Passion took place in the middle of the fourth year of our Lord's public life, our Work, too, will not be long in passing by the cross. Be it official dispersion or anything else, let us be vigilant so as to weaken only as little as possible; let us all be St. Johns at this moment. Doubtless he had a moment of forgetfulness; he went to the side of Mary, who sent him near to Jesus and the cross. Let's pray to him to help us at this moment.

**[36] Tuesday, February 8, 1881**

*On the Practice of Obedience*

See God in the superiors and in the details. Get used to considering each act of obedience as done to God himself. Just as the father holds the place of God in the family, the prince in the State, so too, the superior is the intermediary of the orders of God for the religious.

St. Paul advises that, but for slaves, that is to say, about a more questionable authority than all others: that of the master over the slave. "Slaves, obey...earthly masters as Christ" [Colossians 3:22]. Without doubt, if we do not see God in our superiors, we are the worst of slaves. This was the thought of St. Louis Gonzaga, but if we obey God in their persons, we are the most honored of servants.

**Wednesday, February 9, 1881**

We have seen that one counsel on the practice of obedience is to see God even in the superior; **[37]** but that is for all religious. For us, we must add to that the consideration inspired / by our own spirit. In place of God we put the Heart of Jesus. Thus, our life is an immolation, because obedience is the usual form of immolation. Therefore, we must practice seeing God in our superiors as a direct immolation.

Likewise, for other reflections on this subject. We compare the obedience of the religious to that of the child between the arms of his nurse, or that of the lamb who follows its master. Who feeds us better than the Heart of Jesus? Who wants to see us as lambs more than the Heart of Jesus, Lamb himself all the way to heaven where he has the name and the form? We

can compare it again to soft wax that can be shaped without resistance into any form. Is not this what the Divine Heart wants: to shape us in his likeness?

Finally, let's be generous. Let us respond to his graces with complete obedience. He is only waiting for that to do his work of salvation in the world. It is very certain that he depends on us to hasten his Work. He leaves that to our generosity. Let us not sadden him with our cowardice.

**[38] Friday, February 11, 1881**

*On the Perfection of Obedience*

The first counsel of the perfection of obedience is to see God in the superiors.

First consequence: to consider their orders as those of God himself.

Second consequence: to put oneself completely in their hands as in those of God.

St. Anthony greatly esteemed this disposition as well in order to strengthen his disciple St. Paul the Simple. He made him make baskets and then undo them; to set the table as if to eat, sit down, then get up as if he had eaten; to pick vegetables for days and throw them to the ground. There is no other reason for this than the sacrifice of the will, what is most intimate in us. That alone would be an excellent reason. This is why it will be for us, who are bound to the inner obedience of judgment and will, the first and best reason: the superior wants to immolate my will.

**[39]** As strange / as the orders we receive may appear to us, whatever may be the part that caprice or weakness may appear to us to be there, we can always suppose that it is to immolate the most intimate part of ourselves, that is to say, to make us live the life of immolation that we have come to seek.

St. Francis of Assisi greatly loved this abandonment of the religious to his superior. "Take," he said, "the body of a man who has been dead for a few hours, dress him in purple or rags, place him on a throne or on the bare ground. Do you think he will object? Thus, it must be for the religious: the indifference of a corpse for what one does with him." It is from him that St. Ignatius borrowed the expression.

St. Bernard, who knew obedience in religious life, admired these words of St. Paul: "Lord, what do you want me to do?" [Acts 9:6]. Going forwards or backwards, in this way or another, nothing is reserved; it is an effective word for those who repeat it again: for it is one of those short aspirations that can be repeated often. Let us also love to repeat it, but in determining **[40]** what's / proper to our vocation: what to do to love and make reparation? This first counsel of obedience to God in the superiors may lead to the highest perfection of obedience



and therefore may suffice for the obedience that is required of us. Another counsel is not to judge the orders of the superiors; we have just seen what the saints thought.

### **Monday, February 14, 1881**

We have seen how we must perform inner obedience, and that one of the reasons for complying with it is this: the superior must have good reasons to demand that of me. The internal obedience that is essential to us is strongly recommended by all the founders of Orders.

St. Ignatius demands blind obedience because, he says, it is necessary to make the religious a child of God and not a convict. Without it, indeed, the religious has the condition of a convict; while with it, he has that of a child of God. There is no fear of lowering one's judgment and will by blind obedience.

**[41]** What is, in effect, the supreme rule of judgment and of the entire will? Is it not the will and judgment of God? Now, where can we find them better expressed than in the will and judgment of the superiors who immediately take his place?

Blind obedience is still a remedy against a temptation that has already taken place here for some novices. To show them what their judgment is, our Lord takes a light away from them without which they see no more than irrationality and lack of common sense in the superior's conduct. Everything he does seems bad to them; only blind obedience can overcome this temptation.

### **Wednesday, February 16, 1881**

#### *On the Promptness of Obedience*

The submission of judgment and will entails the promptness of obedience. Once we have decided, we do not take long to execute it. Our vow obliges us to subdue judgment and will promptly, but the promptness of the action can only be a counsel. Otherwise, there would be matter for a scruple to know if the sin against the vow begins after one or five minutes of delay.

**[42]** But the promptness of action follows the promptness of the obedience of judgment and will. Among the saints it was quite remarkable. At the voice of the Rule, they left everything. Even the apostles, St. John and St. James, immediately at the call of Jesus, they did not waver: they did not weigh the considerations of delay. This is very different from those religious who, upon receiving an order, begin by looking for its reasons and approve it only after having guessed it.

Remember this as very important: all that is done after the bell belongs to the demon. The bell for rising is given, you stay in bed for ten minutes: it belongs to the demon who has the first fruits. The same holds for study: if we continue after the bell, we give him the conclusion of the exercise and the first fruits of the next.

The promptness of the submission of the will and judgment does not prohibit the observations which can sometimes even be good and useful to make; but you must do them with complete indifference to their result.

But a religious must not tire his superior by continual observations, which would tend then [43] to have his will done by the superior instead of that of the superior. Accept what is imposed, explain one's incapacity if one believes it real, and then obey if it is necessary. God will help and make up for incapacity through the help of his Providence, for it is his ordinary Providence to help the obedient. There are examples of miracles thus performed by obedience.

If, on the contrary, a religious succeeded in bringing the superior to his desire, this religious would find no more grace in a position thus obtained: God would leave him to himself, since he would have done his own will.

### **Friday, February 18, 1881**

#### *On the Qualities of Perfect Obedience*

Let us see some precepts and examples of saints on the promptness of obedience. Being in ecstasy, St. Bernard heard the bell for a simple exercise like sweeping or another similar occupation. He leaves our Lord, goes to this job and comes back to pray; he finds our Lord who says to him: "If you had not left me, Bernard, I would have left you." Proof of the importance that our Lord attaches to obedience in the smallest things.

[44] St. Lutgard, being in the same situation, said to our Lord, "Wait for me here, Jesus, I will return." And indeed, our Lord waited for her. Blessed Peter Lefevre, one of the first companions of St. Ignatius, being ill at Naples, receives orders to return to Rome. The doctors and his friends opposed it. One could have composed a beautiful dissertation to dispense with obeying it, but he answered with this beautiful word: a religious did not make a vow to live, but he vowed to obey. And he obeys indeed. His obedience cost him his life. This martyrdom of obedience earned him immense glory in heaven as he himself revealed it to a person to whom he appeared.

St. Bernard has an exaggerated expression to make clear what must be the promptness of obedience: the truly obedient person, he says, has obeyed earlier than was commanded. For

his part, St. Basil says that the perfect obedient person must indulge in obedience like a starving person in the refectory.

**[45]** Another quality of perfect obedience is to be complete: not to stick to what is strictly ordained, but to include everything that is legitimately contained in the order. St. Ignatius said: to obey a formal order is good; to obey a simple order is better; but to anticipate an order and to execute a desire is perfect obedience.

Finally, still another condition: it is joy, to obey joyfully. We could write this in the first chapter of our Rules: joyful obedience. Indeed, what have we come to do but console Jesus? He is not comforted by sadness. One increases one's own sadness when one makes a sad face to one's superior, for it is to oneself that one does it. We want to console him with sacrifices; but this gift must be joyful: "God loves a cheerful giver" [II Corinthians 9:7]; and not done with sadness and out of necessity. We could take the words of St. Paul as a motto.

We must consider ourselves happy to suffer because we are then better able to respond to our vocation. The more sacrifices there are, the more you have to be happy and, on the contrary, to think little of a day without suffering. There are some religious who do not want to **[46]** understand that, / who make a sad and bored face to their superior, who have all the material merit to practice patience with their superior and who do not understand that it is to our Lord himself that they show this sadness. These are far from perfect obedience, and their sacrifice is not pleasing to our Lord.

### **Monday, February 21, 1881**

Let us return again to our dear obedience; it is through obedience that we can offer sacrifices every day. A counsel for the perfection of obedience is to obey all kinds of superiors. That is to say, first of all, to the intermediate superior as well as to the major superior, to those whose job puts them above us. It is always God who is the superior in their person; that is why we owe them as much obedience.

But it is also to any superior, whatever he may be, that is, whatever may be his qualities or imperfections, that we must obey; and St. Peter expressly commits us to it. He prepares the Christians to whom he writes in advance, and indicates to them in what dispositions they must **[47]** be: "Therefore, put away all malice...like newborns" [I Peter 2:1-2]; / like little children, desire reasonable milk, that which nourishes your souls. "Without deceit...long for" [cf. I Peter 2:1-2]. Just ask for what you need.

Be submissive to your superiors even when unappealing. Indeed, what merit is there to obey when you are gently ordered what pleases you, but to obey when the order displeases, either on its basis or form, "This is the grace of God" [cf. Romans 7:25]. This is what pleases God when

someone, being aware that God is in his superior, overcomes all the pain that an order causes him and endures the troubles which arise for him without having deserved it: "If for the sake of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly" [I Peter 2:19].

Indeed, where is the merit of bearing a punishment that follows our sin? But if we act well and yet suffer patiently, it puts us in God's favor. It is your vocation, continues the apostle; how much more so is ours. "Christ suffered" and yet, "he committed no sin," he was innocent, "he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly" [I Peter 2:21-23]. Likewise, when we also [48] would be dealing with imperfect, hard, careless superiors, the least / in the house in more than one respect, we obey anyway. "For this is acceptable with God" [I Peter 2:20].

Today, to thank our Lord for having granted us Exposition every Friday—for it is he who allowed it through the intermediary of Bishop Thibaudier—we will begin a novena of thanksgiving.

### **Friday, February 25, 1881**

#### *Announcement and Direction*

There are several points that leave something to be desired. One of the first is the recitation of the Divine Office, in particular, the habit of saying it causes this recitation to speed up. Here, however, more than elsewhere, the psalmody must be serious, and the Office recited well to be real reparation. One sure way to do this is not only a general attention, content with the notion of a psalm or a nocturne, but the literal attention which attaches itself to every verse and sentence of the psalm. This attention will naturally force us to moderate the speed; and in order to offer a truly reparative Office, we absolutely need this literal attention.

[49] Another often neglected point is modesty. On this point there are rules of the Society of Jesus which are adopted by modern Congregations. Each novice must copy them so that they can read and re-read them at their leisure. Modesty rules all our exterior. For example, it forbids us to run on the stairs like we do. It prohibits all wrinkles on the forehead, even on the mouth and nose, because we must always witness to our calmness and show a quiet joy rather than a sad face. It is always a violation of the Rule to appear with sadness on the forehead.

Silence too is an important thing; by not observing it, one deprives oneself of precious graces. It must be kept everywhere, except during recess: everywhere, even in the kitchen where we so often believe that we can talk. You must never laugh out loud, but be content to smile so as not to be drawn to dissipation.

**[50] March 4, 1881, First Friday**

*Investiture of Frs. Michel-Marie Venet and Paul de la Croix-Marie Delgoffe*

“Exult and give praise, inhabitants of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel” [Isaiah 12:6]. Let us rejoice for three reasons:

1. this day is the anniversary of the vows of victim made by some holy souls for the Work of the Heart of Jesus;
2. this day is the first of the Fridays of each week when we will have the happiness of having Jesus visibly among us. Bishop Thibaudier has approved our Adoration on every Friday. One year ago, on this day, he granted us Adoration on every First Friday;
3. this day is one of growth for our Work which will have two more members.

Let us repeat with Isaiah the canticle of the Sacred Heart, let us repeat it with the Church, which made it the epistle of the Mass of the Sacred Heart: “I will give thanks to you, O Lord, because” [Isaiah 12:1] his anger yielded to love; from the law of fear, his people have passed to the law of love. Why? Because he came, “behold” [Isaiah 12:2] the Savior God or Jesus, because it's all the same in Hebrew: trust, “act with confidence,” and no more fear. God is my strength, he is **[51]** my glory, / and the Hebrew word also means “my song.” The object of my songs: “the Lord” [cf. Isaiah 12:2], in Hebrew will be, “Jehovah,” that is, “God from God, God of God,” in a word, Jesus Christ. He came to save me: “he has become my salvation” [Isaiah 12:2].

“You will draw water” [Isaiah 12:3]: the water of grace, the water of love; you will find it in his Heart and you will all be happy, “and you will say on that day”: yes, you then say in these last times, you who will have all his Heart: “Praise the Lord” [Isaiah 12:4]: let us recognize God and invoke his Heart, make known to all peoples the designs of his love: “deeds” [Isaiah 12:4], what a beautiful word! Let us sing the excellent things he has revealed to us and let them be known to all the earth. “Exalt and give praise” [Isaiah 12:6], rejoice and praise, little Zion, for the Heart of Jesus is great and he is in your midst. These last words suit us well today for the reasons we have to rejoice.

[The afternoon was blessed and began at 3 o'clock with the Way of the Cross. Fr. John committed to do it every day especially during Lent, and on Friday we will do it publicly.]

**[52] Monday, March 7, 1881**

*On Lent*

Let us leave once again our ordinary course of lectures to speak of Lent, as it has been some time since we had a conference and it is time to put our thoughts in unison for the dispositions to be had during these holy forty days.

It is a time of grace that must be spent profitably. He who spends it with lukewarmness and negligence is like the sailor who, before leaving for a long voyage, would scarcely think of provisions of food or of ammunition of all kinds, which are necessary to him. He exposes himself to losing his vocation. If all were like this, our Lord, seeing his graces interrupted, would go elsewhere to beg for hearts. If only a few had this negligence, it might happen to them not to spend the year without being rejected so that they do not interrupt the graces. Each of your actions, however small, is of immense importance, because it hampers or accelerates the development and growth of the Work.

**[53]** The mortification that is required of us is not corporal mortification and rigorous austerities, as with the Franciscans, for example, because we have only what is asked of the Third Order of St. Francis as a Rule. Above all, it is interior mortification, the mortification of the heart and the mind. In other communities, they deny as much as possible, satisfactions and pleasures such as the parlor. Those who have permission to see their parents, will do well to ask if there is no need to restrict them.

To this privation of visits add the observation of silence; no more unnecessary words. In a novitiate, there are always internal faults but there should be no external faults. When I see you talking unnecessarily outside of recreation, I would prefer to be struck. It is as if you then said to our Lord: wait, I don't need your graces at this moment. As a mortification of the spirit, strive to maintain the recommended dispositions during daily practices.

**[54]** It is mortification that leads to perfection; by doing each action in the manner that is advised, we will do it perfectly. That is why you have to remove any other thought from your mind. A novice must think only of the present moment. His good judgement in regard to the future is that of the superior. Think only of using the present moment well, this is what is necessary for all of you; to all according to the word of our Lord: "Do not worry about tomorrow" [cf. Matthew 6:34]; for you to live in peace and do this action perfectly. This was the way for St. Louis Gonzaga.

All thought foreign to my present situation comes from the demon [cf. I John 3:8]. I have to live from day to day and from hour to hour. At this moment, for example, I must think only of perfect attention at the conference, a moment ago, to perfect attention during the Particular Examen, then at the meal, and then at recreation. I do not get tired of repeating it, because it is a sure way of perfection for you.

**[55] Wednesday, March 9, 1881**

One of the last counsels concerning the perfection of obedience [there are 14 of them] is to put oneself in a position to compromise an entire work, however important it is, rather than to fail in obedience. St. Ignatius was so sure of this disposition in St. Francis Xavier that he would say

that it would be enough for him to have a single letter, the letter “I,” which means “come,” accompanied by his signature to draw this great apostle back from India. And yet he could have alleged many pretexts not to return. The reason for this advice is that God does not need us. Obey above all: the sacrifice of obedience is more glorious for God than all possible works.

One more piece of advice is to put oneself in the disposition to annihilate oneself to obey, to bury one's talents, if obedience wills it. It is a temptation that will come for many: if I had stayed in the world, I could have done much more than here. Mistake. Sacrifice renders more [56] glory to God and is more fruitful to souls / than any action no matter how great. And for us, the sacrifice is the main part, the action remains only secondary. That is why we will always encounter many obstacles in our external works, and our works themselves will not have that external brilliance which is noticeable in works where action has the main part.

In closing, I recall Monday's counsel: to perform each action as if there were only that one left before dying: to attend devoutly the conference at this moment, and then the Particular Examen; no other wisdom than the last few minutes of mental prayer and the Particular Examen, in which an Examination of Foresight is made. This counsel, well-followed, would soon lead us to holiness in the footsteps of other holy novices such as Sts. Louis Gonzaga, Stanislas Kostka, and Berchmans.

### **Friday, March 11, 1881**

#### *The Feast of the Holy Spear and Nails*

[57] Today's feast has too much to do with our vocation for us not make it the subject / of our little instruction. This feast, although a secondary rite, has a real solemnity for us. What is most striking in the liturgy of this day is the Epistle that the Church has taken from a passage of Zechariah; let's look at it together [cf. Zechariah 12:10-14].

“I will pour out...on the house of David.” This house of David means the privileged souls, because David in Hebrew means privileged, “beloved,” ...“and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem,” these inhabitants of Jerusalem are the children of the Church. When the prophet announced this, his words certainly applied to us, and the Holy Spirit enfolded us in the sense that he attached to it: “the spirit of grace.” In the Syriac text, the word means compassion and this meaning better accords with the following: “and they look on me whom they have pierced.” The spirit of compassion will follow the prayer, will seize them at the sight of the one they have pierced. They will weep for him. This wound, which will evoke tears, is less the material wound than the wound made to the heart by chosen souls.

[58] This wound is the most painful, as Jesus himself has revealed, and this wound of the heart is caused by the indifference, coldness and ingratitude of the chosen people, while the blows and the spitting of the Passion represent the blasphemies and faults of ordinary Christians.

“And they shall mourn for him,” they will weep as for an only son. “On that day, the mourning in Jerusalem will be great.” The prophet announces the contrition not only of those responsible for the death of Jesus, but also of penitent sinners. “All the earth will weep,” he said: men on one side and women on the other; and he lists four families: that of Levi, who represents the priesthood; that of David, who represents the friends, that is to say the religious and the devoted souls; those of Nathan and Shimei, who represent the prophets and the teachers, that is to say, the different Congregations devoted to external works and to teaching. All will cry, he says, and then [cf. Zechariah 13:1] “a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”

**[59]** The interpreters see here the Heart of Jesus / revealed in the last times, and spreading its graces first on the privileged, “the house of David,” then on all Christians [and the inhabitants of Jerusalem]. One will say him who was so badly treated, and pierced with the spear and the nails, [Zechariah 13:6] “What are these wounds?” He will answer [Zechariah 13:6], “These wounds, it is those who loved me who made them.” Is this not the lament of our Lord concerning consecrated souls?

Let us meditate especially on these last words. The following relates to the Passion when God’s justice struck the victim and the apostles fled: “Strike the shepherd that the sheep may be scattered” [Zechariah 13:7]. May it not be so with us. As religious in the Order of the Heart of Jesus we must all be St. Johns, disciples of his Heart, at the moment of trial: some will flee, others will deny for a time as did Peter; but we must all stay like St. John. For that, be strengthened by carrying all the little crosses of each day, to be stronger when one receives the cross of the test which is necessary to all work of God and which will not be lacking to us.

**[60] Wednesday, March 16, 1881**

*On the Spirit of Sacrifice*

Today it is necessary to return to it because there is a little laxity. There is still too much freedom. There are points on which we do not want to mortify ourselves. And yet sacrifice is what we best possess: by it we merit, through it we advance the Work. We must consider as good fortune a sacrifice that presents itself to be made. During the Particular Examen let us rejoice if we find that there has been much to suffer; on the contrary, do not think highly of the day when there was none.

**Saturday, March 19, 1881**

We can only speak of St. Joseph, and especially of St. Joseph in his relations with Jesus, host and victim, that is, of his compassion for his adopted Son. This compassion is very well expressed in Chapter 53 of Isaiah that the Church uses on the feast of Our Lady of Compassion. What is said



there applies to all the saints whose life has been a life of compassion, that is, of union with the suffering Jesus.

**[61]** There is the secret of holiness; what did Jesus come to do, if not to atone by suffering? Redemption is nothing but expiatory suffering and reparation is only the redemption continued and performed by souls walking in the footsteps of Jesus through a life of compassion, and by contemplating the sufferings of Jesus.

After Mary, no one more than Joseph took part in this life of compassion. The other saints had to resort to contemplation to follow this path, St. Joseph had only to see with his own eyes his suffering Savior, first in the manger, then in Egypt, then in Nazareth.

Isaiah, too, saw it in a prophetic light and he was frightened by it: "Who has believed what we have heard?" [Isaiah 53:1]. To whom has the power of divine justice been revealed? "We have seen him...he was despised, rejected by men" [Isaiah 53:2-3], the least of men; our Savior must be so to atone; he was offered, and voluntarily, "because he willed it" [Isaiah 53:7].

**[62]** He accepted this state of suffering and humiliation, he willed it because God placed on him the iniquities of all: "He laid on him the iniquity of us all" [Isaiah 53:6]. So, like a lamb he did not open his mouth; he was a victim. "The Lord willed to crush in infirmity" [Isaiah 53:10], God crushed him under the rigors of his justice.

This is sacrifice and suffering. Then come the promises: "When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his aged offspring and the will of God will guide him by the hand" [Is 53:10]. He will have a long posterity and the Lord will accomplish his will. This is said of Jesus, the Redeemer, but also of those who, uniting their sacrifice to his, continue his work through reparation. "For from the work of his soul, he shall see and be satisfied" [Isaiah 53:11]: he will see miracles of grace.

If we are called to reparation, we walk in the footsteps of Jesus, all these promises will have their fulfillment: "He will justify many" [Isaiah 53:11]. We will redeem many and God will grant us many conversions and vocations: "I will allot him much" [Isaiah 53:12]. Moreover, those **[63]** who are far away, we will bring them back, or we will even obtain their vocation; / by our sacrifice we will gain strong souls who can put in the service of God a lively intelligence and an energetic will: "he will divide the spoils with the strong" [Isaiah 53:12]. For all this, it is enough to bear our little every day crosses, with the ordinary cross of regularity and of silence. Let us be generous and worthy of fulfilling these promises.

## **Monday, March 21, 1881**

Last Saturday, we felt that we could have had more graces, and this is in keeping with what our Lord said: I gave graces but not all that I had prepared; why so?

Due to our unfavorable dispositions: some had prepared a little coldly, the others did prepare only a few days before or even the night before. It is the interior graces especially reserved for us, graces of confidence, of abandonment to Providence, all the same kind as those which bring about the glory of St. Joseph. We have had some of them, it is true, because of the infinite mercy of God and the intercession of St. Joseph.

**[64]** But we can regain them by a greater generosity; we are still in the octave of the feast day and next Friday is the Annunciation when we must take advantage to regain these graces.

This feast of which our Lord said must be one of the main feasts of our Order. Indeed, it is the feast of the oblation, of the *Ecce venio* of Jesus, of the *Ecce ancilla* of Mary, of the "I am your servant" of St. Joseph. On this day the Heart of Jesus was formed, and Mary's union with him was more intimate.

Let us prepare ourselves through the acceptance of sacrifice. This word, "sacrifice," frightens our nature; however, we are created for this and ever since the loss of the paradise of pleasure, it is in sacrifices that life is consumed. If we do not accept it willingly, we will have it anyway and we will not escape it. So, let us strengthen ourselves in the resolution to be generous with this acceptance; let us rejoice in suffering and we will regain what we have lost.

## **[65] Monday, March 28, 1881**

### *On Obedience to the Whims of Superiors*

Whoever wants to obey perfectly, must obey even what may be a whim of his superior. Superiors are rarely perfect; they are made to suffer, but also to cause suffering, because, vigilant over the general interest, they must often disregard private interests, and this is the mortification of the common life. Moreover, it is difficult for them to maintain calm and equanimity of mind in the midst of multiple cares. Hence these inequalities, these orders which may appear or even be capricious.

Even then, obey: because, says Bossuet, what is capricious in your superior is in your regard, the completely pure will of God; it is he who wills this trial to perfect you; your self-esteem and proper judgment will only be mortified, and it is the greatest good that can happen to you.

**Wednesday, March 30, 1881**

*On Obedience* [the conclusion]

**[66]** This is the last lecture on obedience, / and when I think that you will have to give an account of all that you have heard in these conferences, I fear for you, who are still so disobedient and far from having arrived at perfection, who still fail at the simplest points of obedience. Let's conclude with some thoughts of Blessed Margaret Mary. "The one who will be most obedient, will have the most credit in the Heart of Jesus." Note this expression, "credit." It means that the Heart of Jesus will be in debt to us. Let us obey and we will have what we want. To ordinary Christians, Jesus says: ask and you will receive; to his Oblates he is entitled to say: give and you will receive; give immolations, sacrifices, and you will obtain graces, vocations, whatever you ask for.

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**Friday, April 1, 1881**, Feast of the Precious Blood

*On the Mystery of the Blood of Jesus*

It is especially appropriate for us to meditate on the mystery of the blood of Jesus. What, indeed, do we most love in him? Is it not his Heart?

**[67]** Now, blood is the fruit of the heart, like wine is that of the vine. We must therefore pay special attention to it. And besides, it is good to know this mystery at the moment of the Passion, which recalls its principal outpourings. The figure of this divine blood is in the wine that God in his goodness has given to humanity. The bread and the wine are the figure, that of the flesh, this of the blood of Jesus. These two elements, which in the natural order are human nourishment, are the figure of flesh and blood which in the supernatural order are the food of the soul. They give life and joy as the flesh and blood of Jesus give life and joy to those who eat and drink it.

The outpourings of this divine blood are documented in seven circumstances: at the circumcision, where in order to obey the Law our Lord shed the first drop of blood; during the agony where a sweat of blood flowed to the ground: this miraculous sweat could only be produced by a pain without example, an unspeakable pain of the Heart of Jesus. What is **[68]** causing him the most pain at this terrible moment? He tells it at Paray-le-Monial: / that there are consecrated souls who show me this ingratitude. This is why the memory of this outpouring must particularly affect us.

A third effusion of blood took place during the flogging under the blows of those whips' metal blades that tore his flesh; still another is the crown of thorns. He wanted this crown of thorns to atone for the sins of the head, of thought, that is to say, of those who, more usually in intellectual occupations, sin more easily by thought; or again, say the interpreters, to expiate

the sins of the head of the Church, that is, priests and religious. Reason for us to unite lovingly with the pain caused by this bloodshed.

A fifth outpouring took place when they took off the clothes stuck to his flesh; the sixth, when they pierced his hands and feet. Finally, the seventh, the one that goes most to the heart, is the shedding of the blood of his Heart. He wanted to give the last drop and at the same time **[69]** open this Heart to give us shelter. This one more than any other / must captivate all our thoughts and our contemplations.

The perpetuity of his blood has been assured to us in the Eucharist, this relic and memory of his wonders. The saints left us relics. It was agreed that the Holy of Holies would exceed them all in this too: "He gained renown by his wonderful deeds" [Psalm 111:4]. It is the marvel *par excellence*: "What marvelous works, choice grains and wine sprout forth virgins," said a prophet [cf. Zechariah 9:17]. This wine we will drink in heaven, as our Lord says on the day of the Last Supper: "I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" [Matthew 26:29].

But we must arrive at some applications. The holy martyrs are those who have walked with greater brilliance along this path of immolation, and they have done it very generously. Witness a St. Ignatius of Antioch [of whom we are happy to have today a spiritual child [*i.e. Fr. Ignace Lefèvre*]] who turned his brothers away from praying for him, fearing that he would lose the opportunity of martyrdom: that I should become the wheat of Christ and that I should be crushed like grapes to be a delicious wine for him.

**[70]** But it is not only martyrdom that sheds blood: all that wears life out is an outpouring of blood in a way, a loss, a consumption of blood. And there are two things that wear it out more than any other: love and suffering. This is where we can give our blood. Some may have the grace to pour it out in a brilliant way by martyrdom, because we will have missions; but all can give it, for example, by being consumed in the service of the Heart of Jesus, by regularity, the mortifications which present themselves, and especially by love. Those who will give it thus, will certainly have deserved and will obtain the palm of martyrdom.

### **Monday, April 4, 1881**

#### *Motives for Union with the Passion of Our Lord*

We must unite ourselves to the Passion of our Lord since his sufferings are the dogmatic foundation of our Work. Like that of Jesus, is not the life of sacrifice the foundation of our life? We have five motives to ponder:

#### **[71]**

1. Atonement and personal reparation; it was the most common motive in the Old Law; and Job, who suffered so much, saw himself asked by his friends what crime he had

committed to be so stricken. And he himself in the excesses of his sorrow, lamenting like a victim, wondered why he was suffering thus while not aware of any great crimes, but he added that even slight faults committed against the Infinite Being are always a great offense.

2. To this generally adopted motive of suffering, was added the motive of the test; and Job also accepted it. God is the master, he said; he wants to test my fidelity; let his will be done.
3. To these motives of justice and trial, which prevailed under the Old Law, join under the New Law—the law of love—the motive of compassion for the sufferings of Jesus. Jesus suffered so much for me, I must suffer for him; since he loved me to the point of enduring death, I must love him to the point of suffering what Providence imposes on me. The apostles St. Peter and St. Paul have filled / their epistles with these sentiments which were only the expression of their suffering: they regarded as happiness, a gift, to suffer for Jesus: “Leaving the council, they rejoiced that they were considered worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name of Jesus” [Acts 5:41]. “For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well” [cf. Philippians 1,29]. “Rejoice as you are sharing Christ’s sufferings” [I Peter 4:13].
4. With this motive of love for Jesus, is added the one of God’s glory. It is through suffering that Jesus, the infinite wisdom, procured the greatest glory of God. This is where we will work as well. When God announces that he is going to make St. Paul a chosen vessel and a great apostle, what means does he reserve for this purpose? Suffering: “I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name” [Acts 9:16].
5. One last motive: the love of souls, the reparation that suffering accomplishes. Through suffering, Jesus redeemed them; through suffering, we will become co-redeemers like Mary was. “In my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ’s passion” [Colossians 1:24]. Jesus wanted to leave us a little to do by following his example: let us therefore conclude as the apostle: “Since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same intention” [I Peter 4:1]: arm yourself with the thought that he had; but he had only one, I believe, a foundational thought from which all the rest came: “Behold, I come...to do your will” [Hebrews 10:7]. Let us suffer, also, in this thought; but let us suffer above all with the spirit and the heart, not contenting ourselves to accept the cross externally. Let us suffer the privations demanded by the Rule, such as silence and mortification. Thus, let us sanctify this time of the Passion of the sufferings of Jesus.

### **Wednesday, April 6, 1881**

#### *On the Vow of Immolation*

After three months of lectures on obedience, everything about it must be clear to us. We know that an obedience of judgment is necessary, which accepts all that the superior orders as well as obedience of will, that is, prompt obedience.

**[73]** He then goes on to talk about chastity, but since we can hardly talk long about these matters, we will only talk a little about them. I long to speak of the vow of immolation which is the basis of our life.

Monday's conference was a good preparation for this subject, making us think of the sufferings of our Lord. To "suffer," this is the word that is always found in the mouths of the two great spokesmen of Jesus, Peter and Paul: to suffer in union with our Lord, to immolate oneself like him and with him, to prove that we understand his love who immolated it for us, self-immolating himself.

The life of immolation is what makes up the heart of the Gospel, and the *Imitation of Christ*, which is the codified gospel, preaches it on every page. Well, is it not right to find within these counsels of immolation some particular points which one undertakes to observe through a vow? What is more just and less fearless? Those who are offended do not prove any interest [?].

**[75]** Before going on to detail the obligations of this vow, it is good to consider the purpose: when we have a definite goal, we advance more surely; when we perceive it well, we are capable of everything. How far does the man go who has a specific goal for which he is enthusiastic: honor, for example? One goes so far as to be heroic; the same for riches, the same for love even natural and permissible; no sacrifice is without costs; we do not shrink from any immolation to achieve this goal we have proposed. That's what a natural goal can do. And a supernatural purpose? Does not the possession of God, and with him all honor and riches, bring about similar heroism in Christians?

For the glory of God, and for proof of the superiority of the supernatural over the natural, millions of martyrs, saints of all times and places, are here to testify that the supernatural purpose is still more powerful to make heroes. But this supernatural purpose is diversified **[76]** according to the saints and we can say of each one: "No one has been found / like him" [Sirach 44:19]. Every family of saints has its character, its particular supernatural goal which leads it to holiness through the enthusiasm it inspires. Thus, some were meant to reproduce the poverty of our Lord.

For us, the supernatural goal for which I would like to give you an extreme enthusiasm is the glorification of the Heart of Jesus, victim of love and reparation. This is our very special purpose and that must be our life. It is toward this that all the Rules and Constitutions can be summed up in two words: to offer one's day in the morning, and to accept all the crosses that Providence brings to us in the course of the day. This is the immolation that is asked of us. Let

us be generous in responding to it and strive to achieve our goal with the ardor devoted to far less noble purposes.

**Friday, April 8, 1881**

*Feast of the Compassion of the Blessed Virgin*

This feast cannot go unnoticed for us, because it is the feast of all the disciples of the cross and not only of the most Blessed Virgin.

[77] It is even the thought of the liturgy to celebrate on this day the compassion felt at the foot of the cross by all who loved Jesus. It is therefore the feast of the first victims of his Heart, and our older brothers and sisters. No doubt that after the grief of Jesus, there was no more pain in creation than that of Mary; but great also was the grief of St. John, Mary Magdalene, and the other disciples of the cross. In the Introit, the liturgy recalls the memory of this group of faithful friends, and it reproduces it still more clearly in the Collect, then in the Secret, invoking the intercession of all these compassionate saints.

The thought of the Church, in placing this feast for all Christians immediately before Holy Week, was to invite us to unite ourselves more particularly to the Savior's Passion as did the Blessed Virgin and the other disciples of the cross.

The "*Stabat Mater*" is nothing but a praise to Mary and a prayer to ask her for this spirit of [78] compassion that possessed her so fully. We do not recite often / the complete "*Stabat*," except for one stanza, which, however, sums it up entirely, and contains no other feeling than compassion.

I can tell you that it is also our Lord's thought that we unite ourselves especially to this life of compassion of the disciples of the cross by a constant generosity during these ten days, so that he can give us abundant graces on the day of resurrection. If we respond to him, we will not miss it. Therefore, let's be generous. It is so easy and so sweet, this sacrifice of regularity and silence. And if to those are exceptionally added others such as sadness, obscurities, temptations, accept this trial and endure it in union with the sufferings of Jesus.

**Monday, April 11, 1881**

As we have seen, immolation is the foundation of the Christian life. Jesus came to earth to immolate himself in the justice of his Father and invite humankind to follow him on this path: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" [cf. Matthew 16:24, Luke 9:23].

**[79]** He first manifested / himself as a victim in the figures of the Old Law: Abel, the paschal lamb, and the bread of the sacrifice, Isaac; in the New Law he wanted his most ordinary image to be the crucifix, that his most frequent reality was the host in the Eucharist, and what does it mean to be a host, if not a victim?

It is therefore as a victim that we see him most often. But just as it is right that certain Orders adopt certain virtues of the Savior to imitate particularly and make them a characteristic proper to themselves, so it is right that the virtue of immolation becomes the characteristic of the Order of His Heart. It was also fitting that it should be so in answer to the request made to Blessed Margaret Mary: I seek victims for my Heart, and for other reasons as well.

If, therefore, we wish to imitate the virtue of immolation more particularly, let us examine what is necessary for it: he has immolated himself: *Ecce venio*. How? “That I may do your will” [Hebrews 10:7], by doing the will of his Father. Let's do the same. For this we have to make an **[80]** offering at the beginning of each day: the offering of our prayers, / of our actions, of our sufferings, of our life, in union with the Heart of Jesus, as a sacrifice of reparation, of atonement, gratitude, and love.

### **Monday, April 18, 1881**

During these days of joy when the whole family is together, let's not believe that it is necessary to spend them all at rest; let's take advantage of them for the future. Rest is not found here below: “I have not come to bring peace, but war” [cf. Matthew 10:34]. Let us bathe ourselves anew in the spirit of self-immolation: making the sacrifice that the Rule demands from us at every moment. It is by these small sacrifices that we merit making great sacrifices, during the days of trial which, even according to natural forecasts, but supernatural as well, are reserved for us in the not too distant future. These great sacrifices are easier because grace is proportionate, that the brilliance diminishes the bitterness, but we can merit them only by the small sacrifices of every day: “Because you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things” [Matthew 25:21, 23]: If you are faithful in small sacrifices, I will give you even more glorious sacrifices to accomplish.

**[81]** The sacrifice of our life that all of us are called to make, which for some will be far off, for others much less distant, and which may be a very obvious sacrifice or only interior—for no death will be natural for us—it will always be related to some supernatural cause, this sacrifice will be prepared by daily immolation, by the death of every day: “I die daily” [I Corinthians 15:31]. This is what happened to the apostles who went away joyfully to have had to make a sacrifice. We will experience this joy, if such an opportunity presents itself, on the condition of daily immolation.



**Tuesday, April 19, 1881**

*Commentary on the First Chapter of the Constitutions*

During these four days, we will comment on the first chapter of our Constitutions. "The Oblates aim to: 1. glorify God." A general goal of all Christians and all religious. The more specific purpose is the Heart of Jesus: "by praising, loving, and comforting especially the Sacred Heart of Jesus," that is, devoting the intellect to him by praise, the heart and the will through love, and themselves entirely by reparation. More particularly, we want to honor his love, whose Heart is the practical form, as others have honored his poverty and humility.

**[82]** And as a means to reach this more specific goal:

1. To make an honorable amend. Making amends is our vocation; that's what Jesus did for us. Also, in the morning, let us enlarge our thoughts by saying that it is not merely a personal thing but something official: let us speak in the name of our brothers, of all consecrated hearts; offer them with us and when the Order is recognized by the Church as an Order of Reparation, then we can speak on behalf of the Church. But there is the honorable amend of action: this is the one that must be done all day long; otherwise that of the morning is only a lie, a non-formal lie, it is true, because it is by fragility, or forgetfulness, that we ignore it.
2. To offer oneself as a victim of his good pleasure. We want to copy the Heart of Jesus; for the Heart of Jesus has been a victim more than anything else, as we have already proven by the name and the figures he has chosen most often. He offered himself as a victim at the pleasure of his Father and we want to offer ourselves with him to his Father, and to offer ourselves to him as he offered himself to his Father.

**[83]** The good pleasure of God: that is where our whole vocation lies, where we are, what we need; if we leave it, we fall into the traps of Satan; if we stay there, everything is safe. Not that we will not have temptations, but then temptation is a grace, while apart from the good pleasure of God, it is a punishment. Let us aim only at this so as not to lose the spirit of reparation and love, that is, to remain Oblates.

**Wednesday, April 20, 1881**

*Commentary on the First Chapter of the Constitutions* [continued]

The second goal of every man and every religious is to tend to his salvation either by observing the precepts or by that of the precepts and the counsels at the same time.

The monk strives for perfection to better imitate Jesus Christ, but for us, who always have as center, as sun, as compass, the Heart of Jesus, to what perfection shall we aim? To that of the virtues of this Heart, not the most perfect, all being of equal degree, but to its most brilliant and

most manifested virtues: gentleness and humility; he himself declared it, immolation, because it is most often indicated and announced in Scripture.

**[84]** But it is not enough to perfect oneself; how must this perfection serve our neighbor? It's by fully filling oneself with the love of the Sacred Heart that we can spread it around us and especially among the chosen people; and for this perfection of neighbor, let us have no scruples to press for a religious vocation. Priesthood requires a vocation of choice that makes it more difficult, but it is not the same with religious life: it is here that salvation is achieved with greater security and we have for ourselves the authority of the greatest theologian of the Catholic Church claiming that it is always good to advise the religious state because it always offers more security for salvation.

After these different goals comes the mind that follows the goal. That's why I've put it as a consequence. The Constitutions clearly indicate the spirit of reparation, of compensation offered to our Lord for the actions in which he is offended; his Heart and his wounded Heart is always the object of the Oblates' worship and what they seek most is to heal the most painful wound.

**[85]** So, the special object of their attention is all that can most please this divine Heart, such as the practices requested by our Lord to Blessed Margaret Mary. The feast of the Sacred Heart will be the patronal feast: nothing too splendid for this day which is on the same rank as Easter and Christmas. Devotion also to the holy heart of Mary but to her pierced heart; we do not think enough of the Holy Virgin's lamentations to the Blessed and which also have the chosen people as subject.

St. John, as a disciple of the Heart of Jesus, is our special patron: we must all be St. Johns to console the suffering Jesus. Blessed Margaret Mary as victim of the Heart of Jesus will also be invoked. Then comes St. Francis of Assisi, our patron, not only for the rule which we borrow in part, but also because of the sacred stigmata; and St. Ignatius, whose zeal must be imitated.

**[86] Thursday, April 21, 1881**

*Commentary on the First Chapter of the Constitutions* [continued]

"This Order, uniting the contemplative life with the active life, responds to the need of many souls who, attracted by grace to a life of immolation and sacrifice, hidden from the eyes of the world, burn equally with an apostolic fire."

These two lives will really be found in the Order; some according to their aptitudes will put into practice the contemplative life, the others while leading the active life will nonetheless give a large part to the exercises of the contemplative life. It is this part which consists of mental prayer, the Examen, and Holy Mass.

The Jesuits and other Congregations inscribe in their Rules that they have a contemplative life and an active life, but the first is represented only by the exercises of mental prayer and other prayer, whereas with us there will be a purely contemplative life.

“The Oblates of the Heart of Jesus will work on their personal sanctification.” This is followed by the enumeration of the exercises of the contemplative life. It is in this life that we can repair by contemplating the sufferings of Jesus; but there is also reparation in the active life and that is one more reason to bring the two lives together.

“They will only have the desire to multiply homage and reparation to the Heart of Jesus, and they will particularly take care to perfect themselves peacefully and to perpetuate their Order with unity and solidity by the admission of pious subjects, and filled with good will who, tasting their way of life, will be encouraged to embrace it generously.”

**[87]** This zeal for vocations, the only one we have had seriously so far, could have natural motives, for example the pleasure of being in numbers, or the satisfaction of being joined by one’s friends. I do not believe it to be so, but to prevent this and to sanctify this desire it is good to expose a very pure motive: to have no other reason to multiply than to multiply reparations. Well, this motive of multiplication will thus be a reason for sanctification: indeed, if we become holier, will we not multiply acts of reparation in number and value? And the holier we are, the more this result will be achieved. Let us put as much zeal toward our sanctification as toward asking for vocations, and we will arrive at the same result, the consolation of the Heart of Jesus.

“They will strive to bring about the salvation and sanctification of neighbor through works, but especially those that will best reconcile with their interior life.” Here are the exercises of the active life, but this life, however active it may be, must never interfere with the interior life, and any work that does not accommodate it can only, by exception, be accepted; thus Lenten **[88]** preaching, / isolated missions in far-off lands, will always be outside our customs. Everywhere, works that can be reconciled with the conventual life.

“The members of the Order are divided into two degrees. In the first place, there are the professed priests who have the highest rank and can alone undertake the main duties. In the second place, there are lay coadjutors employed either in secondary work or in domestic work.”

The lay coadjutors. Do these as well have their reason to be in our Order? Are there not thousands of religious souls who do not add the priesthood to their vows of religion but who are consecrated souls? They are the most numerous among the consecrated souls, those who

devote themselves to teaching, for example. In his complaints, our Lord did not say 'the chosen people' only, but 'the consecrated souls.'

In closing, an opinion that has its *raison d'être*. Since Sunday, instead of being kindled with fervor at the sight of this great number, we slacken, we weaken; therefore, more graces; we are all in solidarity. It is impossible to redeem this weakness only by personal sacrifice. Let us be generous, we are no longer allowed to doubt the Work: it is now well established in our eyes. By our cowardice do we want it to be rejected by our Lord? Let's think about it and be generous.

**[89] Friday, April 22, 1881**

*Commentary on the First Chapter of the Constitutions [conclusion]*

We have seen the purpose, the spirit, the patrons, the models of the Oblates; then the two lives that they can lead with the direction proper to each one, the works that will be attributed to them, the degrees of the various members; finally come the works. To understand their spirit, the bonds that unite the members are still to be examined.

"Those who present themselves to enter." Hitherto, their vocation has been very easy to establish: we have always had supernatural marks; but it seems certain to me that among all the graces of choice reserved for the Order of his Heart, our Lord will always grant a great light to recognize vocations. Only by exception will someone be dispensed from a year of novitiate; but only very exceptionally will one ever be dispensed from less.

"All the members of the Order." The charity which is here prescribed must reign above all between religious; but we have still more reasons than other Congregations, as the Order of **[90]** the Heart of Jesus, a source of charity. / It is necessary that others can say of us: see how they love each other, and it is the spirit of our vocation that demands it. How to honor and imitate love without love?

Another reason is reparation: we must admit it between ourselves; among religious and priests, we love each other very little. How easy to see in their meetings where those who are absent and those who are present are equally wounded. A motive for us to love each other and to love consecrated souls in order to console the loving Heart of Jesus for this offense. But because it is one of our main duties, the devil will always tempt us at this point. As soon as he sees us a little ill-disposed by some fault or another, he will arrive and we will feel very cold toward our brothers; we could go far if we do not resist.

Another danger is spiritual jealousy, a hateful vice classed as one of the sins against the Holy Spirit, from which is difficult to recover. It is odious because it directly attacks God who is

accused of the graces given by him to others whereas if one had wanted to receive them oneself, one would have just as many.

**[91]** It is a very sad vice that leads to sad consequences. We are dissatisfied with those who are regular and fervent, that turns to hatred; we incriminate all their actions; in their best actions we see a reproach, an accusation, bad intentions; we cannot be aware of them. This is the opposite of charity. Let us draw charity from the Heart of Jesus: where the others draw abundantly, let us draw superabundantly to penetrate more and more into the spirit of our holy and sublime vocation.

**Friday, April 29, 1881**

*Reasons for Fervor*

It's time to abandon our cowardice. Our Lord gives us nothing because we give him nothing. What has happened these fifteen days is proof of this word: "I love those who love me" [Proverbs 8:17]; I seek those who seek me; I give to whomever gives to me. It is not only to obtain graces, but also for our brothers that we must be fervent: we are in solidarity, and the faults of one stop all the graces destined for the Work.

Let us also fervently prepare ourselves for the feast of May 6 [*i.e. the Feast of St. John Before the Latin Gate*], during the month of Mary; until May 6, we will recite some prayers at 3 o'clock.

**Monday, May 2, 1881**

Let us now return to the explanation of our fourth vow. To conclude what we have said in general considerations, let us remember that immolation was the dominant character of the life of our Lord. It is therefore in this respect that he is represented by many more figures, and we have forgotten one which well describes what our life must be, finding its reason in immolation.

This figure is the perpetual sacrifice, the "Jewish sacrifice" [Daniel 11:31]. It consisted of the daily holocaust of two lambs similar in everything to the paschal lamb. This sacrifice took place at all times: a white male lamb, one year old and unblemished, was immolated in the morning and had to be consumed slowly on the altar until evening; and in the evening when it finished being consumed, a second one was burned, which was similarly immolated until the next morning.

**[93]** It was indeed the figure of the Eucharist, of Jesus immolating himself continually for us in the tabernacle, of his whole life consumed as a holocaust. Since the life of Jesus was above all a life of immolation, our vow is quite legitimate.

The first obligation of this vow of self-immolation is the offering of the day from the moment of awakening: this offering is contained in the prayers of the Rule which are recited in the morning and again in the *Prayer of Honorable Amends*. We mustn't have any scruples about this obligation which is always done if we recite the prayers of the Rule, but we must not think either that this offering is revoked in the course of the day, nor that it is necessary to think about it constantly, but not formally denied.

The second obligation is abandonment to the will of God known through events, by superiors, or by the Rule. We must submit to it as soon as it is formally known, regardless of the repugnance. To say to oneself: I no longer have the right to any feelings of repugnance. We can feel them, but we must push them away and ignore them.

**[94]** One obligation which is the corollary of the preceding one is that of generously accepting the sacrifices that God imposes on us; to give what we have, our very life, if he asks, and Jesus has shown us the example. Like him, one can experience the failures of agony and exclaim: "Let this cup pass from me" [Matthew 26:39], but you have to rise up with him and say: "Not my will, but yours be done" [Luke 22:42].

An objection may arise: are we obliged even to the sacrifices which the will of God recommends? We are only obliged to the sacrifices which it imposes and not to those which it proposes as recommended, so that we do not fail to keep our vow by not following what is only recommended in the Rule nor even what the Rule orders and which would not be a serious breach in itself or by the circumstances, because the Rule does not oblige under pain of sin.

This double obligation of abandonment to the divine will and acceptance of the sacrifices that are encountered, is a variant of the inner obedience with this difference, that internal **[95]** obedience only applies to the / orders emanating from superiors, while the vow requires the acceptance of the divine will manifested by the Rule, events, and the will of the superiors.

Our vow of immolation is not a vow of perfection either: this last vow cannot be a vow of the community, but a vow made by some elite souls. The vow of immolation obliges what the will of God imposes; the vow of perfection obliges what the will of God imposes and what it proposes as advice.

So, let us understand our vocation and how we immolate ourselves like Jesus. Like his death, ours will give life to souls. This is what St. Paul observed in himself: "So death is at work in us, but life in you" [II Corinthians 4:12]: the death to natural life of some gives the life of grace to others.

### **Thursday evening, May 5, 1881**

*Feast Day Wish [i.e. the Feast of St. John Before the Latin Gate]*

"We are all united," said the oldest, "to say a word to you from St. Augustine, who is never grows weary of repeating, who never tires; we come to tell you that we love you with all our [96] hearts; we do not content / ourselves with words, we give you our hearts as you throw them into that hot boiling oil that will rejuvenate and purify them in the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ. Allow me to express a wish: it is to be able to wish you a feast day in Rome soon; in the Church of the Martyrdom of St. John; we ask a quick increase of members to be able to do it."

Fr. John replied, "Thank you for your good wishes; I make one too, and our Lord has formulated it himself: May you all be St. Johns, that is to say, love our Lord more than the others. You will recognize him as did St. John, since you will think like him: this reminds me of a little feature of his life that he himself tells us. The apostles, after the resurrection, had gone fishing on the lake of Gennesaret, where they had fished the very same night; at least they had more courage than some novices. Suddenly they see the Lord on the shore and he is calling them: they are amazed! John, more loving than others, recognizes him faster: "It is the Lord" [John 21:7], he [97] says. / Jesus then directed their fishing: throw your nets on the right, he says, and they caught 153 big fish. Let us do as they do: let us cast the nets as our Lord wills it, and we will have graces tomorrow; he reserves a miraculous catch for us. Let's be faithful to listening to him.

### **Friday, May 6, 1881**

"We know the love of God by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another" [I John 3:16]. It is St. John who gives us this teaching and he himself practiced it well. Such a day is well suited for a postulancy and clothing ceremony. Here we find the example in St. John, of an Oblate passing through the various stages of religious life and arriving at his last sacrifice. St. John was first a postulant: he was looking for the perfect life and after following John the Baptist, he recognized that he had to follow Jesus and he goes to find him: "What are you looking for?" [cf. John 1:38] the Lord said to him. Is it not the same question addressed to the applicant? My brother, what are you asking?

Then comes a three-year novitiate; the last especially was a year of hardship; and every [98] novitiate must be a time of trials. He weakened sometimes, / he slept in the Garden of Olives and fled for a moment, but he soon returned: a reason for confidence for the novices whom the test sometimes finds too weak.

He finally makes his profession at the foot of the Cross. That is, he receives two presents: Mary for Mother and the cross for sharing: one visible, and the other just as real. There is no

profession which is not accompanied by the giving of the cross, and it must have been engraved in the heart of St. John, where it has received a more lasting impression than the others.

Let us take him as a model and may his charity be a mirror for ours: his charity for God, who leads him to the foot of the cross and supports him in his martyrdom; his charity for neighbor, which makes him use his long life for his brothers in return for the love God has shown him.

He drew out from the Heart of Jesus all his secrets, but he did not release them because the time had not come, as he himself said to St. Gertrude. Yet in his writings, one feels that he has [99] a secret; he has, he says, rested on the breast of Jesus; he does not say: / on his Heart; and speaking of Jesus, he says: "This is the one who came by water and blood" [I John 5:6], a text that has long embarrassed his translators. Was it not simpler to say: by his Heart? But he had to keep the secret and he does not want to deliver it.

### **Monday, May 9, 1881**

#### *Fourth Obligation: To Offer Oneself to Divine Justice*

A fourth obligation of the vow of self-immolation, which is frightening at first, is to offer oneself to divine justice in expiation for the sins of the chosen people; we would like to offer ourselves only to mercy, we need it so much; but where would we be if Jesus had not offered himself to the justice of his Father?

We imagine that it will often be necessary to carry the cross; yes, if we are to accept it generously; but then joy will accompany the sacrifice and the cross will not be heavy; besides, St. John tells us: the burdens of the Lord are light, "His burdens are not heavy" [cf. Matthew 11:30]. We must offer ourselves to justice for mercy to intervene, because this one does not cancel out the rights of that one.

[100] Here are some encouragements for those frightened / by the sight of the cross of Jesus: he has given them on February 15, the day when the Church begins to celebrate the mysteries of the Passion; the Feast of the Prayer in Gethsemane. Our Lord, recalling his sufferings at this hour, declares that this chalice was so bitter at the sight of the ingratitude from those whom he loved; to see his Father angry was a pain for him: to see him angered against those whom he himself loved gave a new degree of violence to his grief; there is no pain like that of being between two enemies whom we both love; he accepted the chalice to take the most bitter from it and make it sweet for us. Besides, if like him we say: "Not my will, but yours be done" [Luke 22:42], the angel of consolation will come immediately; and most often he too will be content with good will. So, let us be generous and offer ourselves to justice to bring down mercy.



**Friday, May 13, 1881**

*On Mental Prayer*

**[101]** Everyone must have in his prayer book the little / collection of daily practices: this collection is particularly made for our vocation and it responds so well to it that we would quickly attain perfection by not missing it. Among the advice it gives, there are those on mental prayer that it is useful to review and explain today.

Mental prayer, as I mentioned last year, is still badly done or not done. Instead of working on it, the mind finds repose there; meditation, however, must be work; it is a French composition which one makes on the subject proposed without writing it down; in the beginnings, especially, one must hold oneself to this work by exercising the memory, the intelligence, and especially the heart which is the main part of us. When one is a little more advanced, one sometimes prefers to linger at such and such a state or such a mystery in the life of our Lord. This is contemplation. The mind is occupied by it, and the heart is warmer; grace does more than we do, but we must not take pride in it. It is only a form of mental prayer, which is not the most sublime.

**[102] Monday, May 16, 1881**

Before proceeding to the explanation of the perfection of the vow of self-immolation, a word on the first obligation: the offering of the day. This offering of prayers, works, and sufferings must be done not only at the beginning of the day, but also at the beginning of the principal actions, which for the non-ordained religious are Holy Communion and the Divine Office; and for the ordained any priestly act like preaching, the administration of the sacraments, etc.

We now know what our vow demands of us: to be victims; but we are all victims in a small way without the vow. As Christians, by virtue of the great law of reversibility, of the Communion of Saints, some must expiate for others. As priests and religious, still more is required because in a family all are united and it is for some to repair and suffer for the faults of others. We commit ourselves to it by vow: therefore, there is no fear in offering ourselves to divine justice, since **[103]** we are offered for our own sins / and for the sins of Christians and religious.

Let's move to the counsels of perfection for this vow.

1. *Constant Union with Our Lord.* To live a life of immolation, can we do better than to abandon our entire selves to him and at every moment in thought, through the heart; can we comfort him better than by living continually with him and in his grace?
2. *Perfect Fidelity to Grace.* What do we want to repair, if not infidelities? The more we are faithful, the more we will repair these infidelities and the more we will be perfect in our vocation.

**Wednesday, May 18, 1881**

We are at the perfection of the vow of immolation, because to reach a goal we must aim higher, so to reach our obligations of immolation, we must aim to acquire the perfection of immolation.

First Counsel: *Constant Union with Our Lord*. It is above all the feelings of his Heart that we must envision: "This attitude in you that is in the Heart of Jesus" [cf. Philippians 2:5], and among these feelings, those of love and reparation. In the morning our union must [104] be made in Bethlehem or Nazareth, / at noon at the foot of the Cross, in the evening at the agony, but whatever the place, always in union with the feelings of reparation and love experienced by his Heart. At noon, as recreation immediately follows, it is good to renew the establishment of the presence of God. After the Rosary, by remaining 2 or 3 minutes more; and in the evening, recreation being free, we can use the necessary time after supper in the presence of God.

Second Counsel: *Fidelity to Correspond to Grace*. This fidelity is the result of union with our Lord. Grace cannot occur without this union that attracts it. But if we are faithful to receive it, it will not fail to be superabundant. Enlightenment and inspiration, these two manifestations of grace, are never lacking in a soul of good will. Let us not accuse grace to be lacking in us, it is we who are lacking: we will always have designs of faith that will present themselves; we will have only to welcome them, and this reception will attract us to them more and more; this is in the order of Providence and there is nothing of which to boast.

**[105] Friday, May 20, 1881**

*On the Chapter of Faults*

The renunciation of self is absolutely necessary, especially to us: without it no mental prayer is possible and without mental prayer, no holiness. By mental prayer we rise to God. But by renunciation one detaches from the world, and one cannot rise to God unless one is detached from the world.

One of the practices of mortification and renunciation is the Chapter of Faults. The novice who undergoes it renounces for a moment a kind of natural right and consents to his faults being denounced publicly [he must also at the same time consent to renounce his faults and faulty deeds to the Superior for his greater good]. He renounces a right he has, that his reputation not be compromised; but if his faults are serious, the duty of fraternal correction passes before this right. [Fr. John reads what the Rule says about the Chapter of Faults.]

We must not talk about things said at the Chapter of Faults during recreation or elsewhere, because this renunciation of the right at the time of the sin does not entail a permanent

[106] renunciation. The novice then has the / right to preserve his reputation without stain. This point needs to be understood, because a lot of mistakes have been made during this week.

**Monday, May 23, 1881**

*On the Perfection of the Vow of Immolation*

After union with our Lord in the different mysteries of his life, but especially in those where he is more a victim: in the morning, from the manger to his public life; the afternoon in his Passion; in the evening in agony, a second counsel is fidelity to grace, a fidelity always easy when one wants it, because our Lord always speaks when we listen.

In the third place comes the ejaculatory prayers of love, of reparation, of thanksgiving, of prayer. It must be fervent and in almost continual use. They consist of a word, a repeated feeling which maintains union with our Lord. It is like a continuous attestation of the desire to immolate oneself with him and this kind of union is highly recommended by the authors of the spiritual life; it is the necessary prelude to every interior life and maintains the presence of God in us.

[107] Finally, a fourth counsel that can frighten weak souls, although wrongly, since it is a counsel and not a vow, is to desire to be led on the path of suffering. We cannot do it all at once. In moments of fervor one must arouse this desire in oneself; by making the Way of the Cross [which must be done frequently and even every day, taking only one minute for each station], we must achieve this desire. To rejoice when a little annoyance, a small unexpected cross presents itself and to wish to carry it a little each day to the extent of our strengths, in order to make a good supply so that at the entrance to heaven we can show enough to prove our resemblance to Jesus Christ. In these little trials of each day, look at his crucifix: it suffices for a single serious look cast on him to come alive to carry the cross: we do not beg for ourselves agony or all the torments of passion; our cross is softened at the sight of these great sufferings of Jesus for us.

**Thursday, May 26, 1881**

[108] *The Ascension*

We meet today to enter into the spirit of the feast and to make reparation for our morning meditation which some may have done but lightly. It is another feast that brings the Savior and his disciples together. It is the Cenacle where the Last Supper took place: in a room with the Lord and the eleven apostles; in a separate room below the disciples were the Blessed Virgin and the holy women. They are all as before the dispersion. Our Lord has reunited his flock again.

At the Resurrection, he found the Blessed Virgin, then the others, and all are there with their memories: Peter thinks of his denial, John of his momentary flight, the eleven of their abandonment. Was there a Eucharistic meal? The gospel does not say it; but it was like the farewell dinner on Holy Thursday: our Lord had instructed his disciples, conferred Holy Orders on those of his apostles who had not received them at the Last Supper. During these 40 days he had settled everything concerning his Church, the sacraments, and its administration.

**[109]** He was going to bring the treasures of redemption to the Father to pay our ransom and make us reap the fruits. After the meal, we head to the Mount of Olives. In order to reach it, it was necessary to pass by Calvary, Pilate's courtroom, the rushing stream of Cédron; it was the fulfillment of the words of the prophet-king: "From the rushing stream by the path; therefore he will lift up his head" [Psalm 110:7]: he will drink the water of the rushing stream, that is to say the waves of bitterness and grief, he will pass and repass by all these places of his sorrows, and near there, because of that, he will raise his head.

The Lord climbs the Mount of Olives; with his followers gathering on the route, 500 good people arrived there, but our Lord was visible only to his own by crossing the city. What must have been the feelings of the Blessed Virgin and of the disciples when they saw him rising and leaving them: sadness and joy; sadness to lose the one they loved passionately, but the joy of seeing him glorified, the joy of seeing heaven opened by him to them.

**[110]** All of heaven came to meet their Lord and he arrived there with the millions of saints of the Old Law: the Blessed Virgin and the Apostles may have heard an echo of the songs of the Church Triumphant, so absorbed that angels had to remind them of their state: what are you doing here? While descending, what were their feelings? To live in heaven with Jesus, by thought, by heart; such was their life until Pentecost, inside the Cenacle, where the Savior had advised them to wait for the consoling Spirit.

We, too, live in heaven and prepare ourselves for Pentecost with a life of recollection. Tomorrow evening will begin a six-day retreat to prepare ourselves for the great solemnity of June 3: there will be a conference and meditation topics and the occupations of free time will be indicated. Those who are on the faculty at St. John will not take part in it; I will organize one for them during the holidays with our brothers from Soissons and Lille who also need it. I can **[111]** say it: our Lord has promised very great graces if we know how to respond to them / and make a good retreat; but also the demon will be active, for he hates the Work and what is done there in general; he especially abhors retreats; let us keep ourselves on guard: for it has already happened to our Sisters that the retreat was an occasion for the loss of a vocation.

Let's all be generous with fidelity and order. If our Lord returned here, he would probably do as in the temple: take a whip to drive the novices out of the places they should not be; but we will

be merciful to the end. Let everyone remain where they should be and show themselves to be faithful.

**Saturday, May 28, 1881**

*Third Retreat Conference*

Opening Conference: *"Happy the man who meditates on God's law"* [cf. Psalm 1:1-2]

Second Conference: Fundamental Meditation: The End of Humanity

Third Conference: The Use of Creatures

First use: the contemplation of the perfections of God in them, the most noble and the greatest use being entirely for God.

**[112]** Second use: privation. Excellent use that protects us against abuses. Because until now, following the inclinations that came after sin, we have abused creatures. Use that repairs, and this is the one that must be closest to our hearts.

Creation is divided into three groups. We renounce external goods through poverty, we renounce the flesh through chastity, we renounce self-will and self-judgment through obedience. But as these three vows are less repairers than preservers, we add to them the acceptance of all the crosses that might befall us, in order to better repair and respond to the special law of God for us as to his more general law.

Let's list those creatures which are as dangerous to us by seduction as by repulsion; let's examine ourselves, and prepare a battle plan for the use of creatures.

**May 28, 1881, 3 PM**

From an exaggerated desire for perfection, then scrupulousness and discouragement, it may happen that some will be tempted to laziness, others will be sad or bored. The cure for everything will be to open oneself up; if we do not have these temptations, let grace act quietly within us.

**[113]** We have seen the end of man which is God; the end of creatures, man; to make use of creation to reach our end: use through contemplation, ordinary use, use by privation. Let us see in which dispositions we must use creatures. We have so little reason and faith that we must extend ourselves beyond these considerations and principles of reason.

Creatures are by themselves indifferent; it's up to us to make good use of them; for that, let us return to Providence with absolute indifference: health can be useful for us to do great things; to another it could be harmful, and so to other creatures, taking that word "creature" for all that is created.

For us there is a special providence of the Heart of Jesus, which extends to the least detail: when he destines a soul to a higher holiness, he gives him more graces; we can rest assured that the smallest incidents are permitted or ordered by him; everything comes from him and flows from his Heart. Let us use creatures only for our end and consider how we have done so far.

**[114] May 28, 1881, 6 PM**

*On Abandonment*

“Behold I come to do your will” [Hebrews 10:7]. The entire day has been spent on considerations addressed only to the mind: most can be tiring and it is good for us who live more a life of the heart, to meditate on something that speaks more to the heart.

We have seen the end of man, God; the end of the creatures, man, and the conclusion: the habitual indifference for creatures in themselves. This indifference, this abandonment is the whole life of our Lord, the habitual disposition of his Heart which comprises the basis of our life as a victim.

Our Lord has constantly done the will of his Father. He always said, *Ecce venio*; he always offered himself for the good pleasure of his Father: in joy and sorrow, on Tabor as on Calvary, in the midst of a crowd and in the desert, to the *Hosanna* and to the *Tolle* [i.e. “*Away with him*”], always this disposition. For us, he wanted to undergo a temptation against this indifference, in agony, and “Let this cup pass from me” [Matthew 26:39] is the expression. But he then taught us to fight it: “Not my will but yours be done” [Luke 22:42].

**[115]** By these words he has overcome temptation, nature rebelling against the will of God. We repeat them so often in temptation. These words of our Lord expressing indifference and surrender to the divine will are marvelously effective. Let us repeat them with faith and we will experience them.

If he had a preference, it was for the cross: “With joy, endured the cross” [cf. Hebrews 12:2]. “My heart awaited insults” [Psalm 69:20]. “Get up. Let us be going” [Matthew 26:46]. “With desire, I have desired” [Luke 22:15].

And the Blessed Virgin? What a model of abandonment! “Let it be with me according to your word” [Luke 1:38]. She relies entirely on the will of God. The Magnificat breathes this abandonment. At the foot of the cross itself she did not part with it. *Stabat Mater*. This “standing near the cross” [John 19:25] is like the echo of “Get up. Let us be going” [Matthew 26:46]. St. Joseph is also a model of conformity to the divine will for us. His actions sufficiently prove it to us. Let us then follow these three models of perfect abandonment to the good

pleasure of God. This is the foundation of our vocation. It is the most perfect imitation of the Heart of Jesus.

**[116] Sunday, May 29, 1881, at 5 AM**

Today, let us consider sin, having seen last night the path that was traced for us, conformity to the general law of God and to his special law, proper to us. Consider the consequences of a single sin: that of the angels. They had received much, they also had no forgiveness, but a terrible punishment.

But next we see the sin of man again, the disorder in all nature. The sin of Adam just proves to us again the malice of sin: all his descendants inheriting this fault and condemned like him to all evils and the most terrible of all, to death after a life of struggles and suffering. Let's learn to hate sin.

**May 29, 1881, at 10 AM**

*Conference on the Nature of Sin*

**May 29, 1881, at 3 PM**

What has been said of sin must be applied, proportionately, to all venial or mortal sin. Now let's seriously examine ourselves, revisiting the places where we have been since **[117]** childhood: have we not sinned after a more particular consecration to God, after the clerical state, Holy Orders, after the more abundant outpouring of grace near to Communion, during Communion itself, in the holy place? To each of you, make a serious examination to prepare for Confession in the days that follow.

**May 29, 1881, 6 PM**

This morning we have considered sin historically; at 10 o'clock we saw sin as the evil against God through ingratitude and as an attack; at 3 o'clock we examined it as the evil against man, which deprives him of grace, of the love of God, of heaven, of merit.

Tonight, let's look at it as the sickness of the Heart of Jesus. "Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow" [Lamentations 1:12]. He had come to do the Father's will, but what God wants, what he does not despise, is a contrite and humbled heart, a crushed heart. Wishing to make reparation for sin, he took it on himself and said to his Father: Accept that it is **[118]** me who did it and strike. He took on himself the shame of Cain, of Judas, / a shame so violent as to cause him to die. The shame of all traitors, of all sinners. To truly feel the ugliness of sin, one should understand the wrong it is doing to God. Jesus understood it so well that one sin only was so frightful for him to see that without a miracle his life would not have been

maintained. What to think of all the sins combined? So, when this torture was at its peak, his blood was escaping through all his pores.

And all his life he saw sin and sins, since he came to atone for them and to make reparation for them. All his life his Heart has been crushed and broken. This is the Heart that has suffered so much. But this is a special subject of consideration for us: what was most painful to him were the sins of consecrated souls, the ones he loved most, who had a greater portion of his blessings. Those have sinned like the others, and his Heart has been more deeply stricken.

If common souls were the only ones to offend me, I would bear it, but you, chosen among thousands and thousands, you, favored with a special vocation, you rewarded with daily favors, you who have received the name of friend and a miraculous call, you who are masters of a new order during these last times, you still offend me, you still hurt me, and that is more painful to me than all the rest.

Let's think about these complaints. Let us see to what extent we have provoked them and hasten to put an end to them through more generosity. If anyone does not understand this pain of the Heart of Jesus, let him be pitied!

**Monday, May 30, 1881, 5 AM**

*On the Last Judgment*

“The books were opened, and all were judged” [cf. Revelation 20:12]. It is St. John who points out this scene of judgment. To understand its grandeur a little, let's picture heaven and earth in upheaval, people crying with fear, then at the sound of the archangel's trumpet, all are resurrected and are arranged by the angels in two camps: the good ones and the sinners. Above, the angels are also in two camps.

**[120]** Then there appears the sign of the Son of Man, the cross, and finally the Savior coming to judge all men. The demons will come and say to our souls: Have you not given me such and such a thought, such an act, such a faculty, did you not give your body to me? Then our works, like a speaking canvas, will come to accuse us. Our good angel and our protectors will say: and what did you do with our inspirations, our lights?

Sinners will say: if we had had all of these graces, we would be saved. The saints who have not had more graces than us will say: if you had responded like us to grace, you would be one of us. But above all, the judge's voice is more terrible than anything else: Depart, damned ones! Then, the terrible separation.

Think about it; we cannot escape it, and without too much to fear we must fear enough. Let us not expose ourselves to the loss of a vocation, that which could lead us to the final loss.



**[121] May 30, 1881, 10 AM**

*On the Particular Judgment*

“We will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ” [Romans 14:10]. Before the general judgment, the particular judgment. Let’s consider the judge, the accused, the accusers, the examination, the sentence.

Christ, the judge, is always good, but now armed with the attribute of justice. The accused is alone before his judge to defend himself, clearly seeing his faults. The accusers, the demons, incriminating everything: thoughts, words, acts. Angels and protectors claiming the uselessness of their intervention during life. Severe examination will be done on an entire life, in the light of the truth. Then will come the sentence. Let us fear for our salvation. Let's think about this judgment to prepare for it.

**May 30, 1881, 3 PM**

*On Death*

“Mortals die and are stripped bare; humans waste away, and where are they?” [Job 14:10].

Three things are presented according to these words of Job to define death: it is a stripping; a wasting away; and for those who survive, an uncertainty about the state of the dead.

**[122]** Let's get better acquainted with the thought of death. Nothing is more useful to life than this thought. What will we be at this moment? Laid out on our cot of the religious—please God that we are not in a bed in the world, having lost our vocation, surrounded by people who hide us from the approach of death, but in a cell—surrounded by generous brothers praying around us, others before the Blessed Sacrament and encouraging us, helping us to die well. What will our thoughts be then? We will see what our religious life has been. Let us prepare now for consoling thoughts.

Dying in the world with a lost vocation, Satan could use it to throw us into despair; but dying in religion, after having each day comforted our Lord by carrying some cross to redeem souls with him, we will say with one of our Sisters “Oh, how sweet it is to die in the Heart of Jesus!” It would be blasphemy to think that after having lived an entire life for this Divine Heart, he would abandon us at the last moment. And Mary, whose Son we shall have consoled, will she be able **[123]** to refuse us consolation? / Will she not be able to satisfy us with her assistance? Yes, if we are faithful every day to live according to our vocation, to carry some cross every day, it will be so sweet for us to die in the Heart of Jesus.

To prepare ourselves well for this terrible moment, let us be faithful to the monthly preparation, to the weekly preparation, at the moment of Confession, to the daily preparation at the time of the evening Examen. Today, let's purify ourselves either by Confession or at least through the examination and contrition. Tomorrow is the feast of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. We must be reborn to a new life to end the month of Mary and begin the month of the Sacred Heart.

**May 30, 1881, 6 PM**

*On Lukewarmness: Its Characteristics, Its Causes, Its Consequences, Its Remedies*

One recognizes lukewarmness in a soul when it attaches little importance to small things, when it is said: that does not lead to mortal sin. It is still recognizable in seeking out the less fervent, rather than preferring the more fervent.

**[124]** Its causes are acts of negligence on small points which accumulate and always grow, the indifference to fervor, etc. Its consequences are to provoke disgust in our Lord, to give a false security, to be blinded to its state, to lead to chasms. Its remedies: they are difficult to apply, because the lukewarm soul is not low enough to be struck by its state; she tells herself that she is doing well as is: "You say I am rich and I need nothing" [Revelation 3:17]. We have a great remedy, the Heart of Jesus, prayer to the Heart of Jesus. Let's ask him to get out of this state. Compare our lukewarmness to the Heart of Jesus, this ocean of flames.

This meditation on lukewarmness is a comparison of our heart with the Heart of Jesus: prayer to his Heart, comparison with his Heart, confidence in his Heart are for us powerful remedies. Let's use them! And let's leave a state that is completely contrary to our vocation of reparation and love as quickly as possible.

**[125] Tuesday, May 31, 1881, 5 AM**

*The Oblation of Jesus*

To imitate our Lord well, we have to study him in his mysteries, first in his oblation. "Behold, I come to do your will" [Heb 10:7]. If we wish to fix our imagination on a great spectacle, let's contemplate the world at the moment of the Incarnation. Men delivered unto all vices, souls going to hell in crowds, the chosen people of God falling into various errors. The Redemption was most necessary and Jesus had to say with eagerness: *Ecce venio*. Let's follow his example and offer the reparation he asks in union with his own. All priests must make their oblation, but for us it is the principal part.

**May 31, 1881, 10 AM**

*Jesus in Bethlehem: Model of Humility, Purity, and Charity*

Possess these three virtues and you will be a perfect victim.

*Humility.* We are surprised at so many abasements. Our astonishment proves our  
**[126]** pride. Going now to seek honor when Jesus is ignored, / repulsed, lodged in a barn with an ox and a donkey.

*Purity.* As sensuality is well satisfied. Straw for a bed, a stable for habitation. Is it the taste which is flattered? We do not understand it at all. Could it be hearing? No more. Sensuality finds nothing there.

*Charity.* For his Father, he consents to suffer thus for us, and he suffers in order to give us the example.

**May 31, 1881, 3 PM**

*Jesus in Nazareth*

He spends his life there from twelve to thirty-years old. This is where he is most our model. We are not at Calvary every day, but we are in Nazareth every day, and our Lord has asked us to find his Nazareth here. It will be found through our union with him, union of thought, of heart on this mystery of his life. You who think to advance reparation by your knowledge, your talents, the brilliance of preaching, how this long-hidden life eludes you.

Jesus doesn't care. He wants us rather to have a hidden, interior life, a life of union with him,  
**[127]** a life unknown to the world. See there also a model of obedience. He had to obey not only Mary and Joseph, who were still only creatures, but people of every condition who made him work, and the people we serve are not used to giving compliments. Let us obey everything God wants and commands by his creatures.

**May 31, 1881, 6 PM**

*Jesus in the Temple: He Goes There to Pray with Joseph and Mary*

**[128] Friday, June 3, 1881**

**[129]** "Be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" [Ephesians 5:1-2]. With these words, St. Paul shows us that the sublime vocation through which a victim is offered to God is the very imitation of that of Jesus, and that it is by love that this immolation is consumed. He proposes to all Christians, particularly to all priests and particularly to consecrated souls to imitate Jesus in this manner.

Priests are enlisted as a substitute for the former priesthood, which was itself a victim substituted for the great victims, the first-born of each family leaving Egypt [*"You will separate the Levites from the people, you will purify and consecrate them as an offering to God,"* cf. Numbers 8:13-18]. The priests of the Old Law were themselves replaced by a victim immolated with extreme care in their place [note the rite]; the heart and arm of the victim were separated: "You will separate the breast and shoulder" [cf. Exodus 29:26]. It was like God's part, chosen from what was most delicate.

**[130]** Hitherto, we had imitated Jesus Christ in his holocaust by nailing ourselves to the cross by the three vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity. Today and for the last 200 years, it seems that he came down from the cross to present us his Heart and tell us: immolate your heart again, for I myself have immolated mine.

Let us join ourselves to those victims of the Old Law and sacrifice to God the heart and the right arm, that is to say the heart through love and reparation and the arm by action. The means is the one which Jesus took: charity for God and for souls: "Live in love" [Ephesians 5:1].

**[131] Thursday, June 23, 1881**

*On the Vigil of the Feast of the Sacred Heart*

Today, let's read some excerpts from Blessed Margaret about the revelations that brought about tomorrow's celebration. In this way, it is our Lord himself who will prepare us for this feast. [Fr. Jean then reads about the establishment of the Feast of the Sacred Heart and emphasizes the most painful wound revealed by the Heart of Jesus.]

**[131] Friday, October 21, 1881**

The spirit proper to the Order of the Sacred Heart must be the love of the priest. Above all, our reparation must not be based on contempt. Let us love the heart of the priest, for it is his heart that motivates all his functions.

**Appendix I**  
**FALLEUR NOTEBOOK VI**  
**NOTES ON THE CONFERENCES OF OUR FR. GENERAL**  
**October 1885—October 1886**

**[1] Friday, October 2, 1885**

*First Conference*

The subject was the rules of modesty which are not in our own Rules, but which we borrow from St. Ignatius. Fr. John insists on these rules, because they serve the interior life.

*[I was absent, replacing Fr. Alphonse in Saint-Éloi.]*

*Second Conference*

The subject was the interior life. It can be reduced, he says, to a general disposition which is conformity to the will of God, which marks as well our Particular Examen. This will of God varies according to the Exercises. It recommends some principal virtues for each of them to practice, and the subject of the Examen must be to see if during each exercise one has been faithful to the practice of these virtues.

**[2] October 16, 1885**

*Third Conference*

Fr. John considers these conferences as a meditation on our vocation. It's why he will take as his subject the chapters of the Constitutions, which speak of the virtues proper to our vocation.

He spoke of the interior life, facilitated by the observance of the rules of modesty, obtained and maintained by a disposition of conformity to the divine will, diversely accommodated to the various exercises provided by the Rule, and being reduced to abandonment, patience, and charity for the unforeseen trials of Providence. Today he speaks about the purity of intention.

It is through the interior life, especially through the Sacred Heart, that we must live. On the outside we resemble Congregations existing already, except for the special exercises of devotion to the Sacred Heart: the Holy Hour, First Friday exercises, etc. But it is the purity of intention that gives acts their value.

The general disposition is to please and to ransom the Heart of Jesus; as Christians we are not **[3]** dispensed from the purity of intention; for them it is more vague, for us more determined;

for every intention must be renewed before each main action of the day under penalty of working in pure loss. We have prayers before the exercises to bring us back, and it is for this purpose that the Church has composed them and that the ascetic writers propose all of them.

There are different nuances regarding this purity of intention. If we are careful before the exercise to make the intention, which is our own, we will do it better [I know from experience, says Fr. John]; nothing as good as being in the current of grace, in the canal; we do what is necessary more easily. It is for this reason that in religious life it is easier to sanctify oneself, because one is inevitably reduced to the purity of intention through the path of obedience within the current of grace.

Sometimes our Lord formulates his conformity to the divine will by the search for divine glory: “I do not seek my own glory” [John 8:50]; sometimes by the fulfillment of the divine will: “I always do what is pleasing to him” [John 8:29].

[4] *I was not present at the following conferences.*

#### **October 30, 1885**

I attended the conference on self-denial only on October 30. It is the mortification of one's own will and one's own judgment. The mortification of the senses and the imagination is called by the ordinary name of mortification.

#### **November 13, 1885**

On the Feast of St. Stanislaus, Fr. John interrupts the ordinary course of his lectures, first of all to remind us of the application to do all things well, especially the small ones; then to put forward some practical reflections on the vow and virtue of poverty. He says that by negligence one can very easily make serious mistakes.

#### **November 20, 1885**

##### *Renunciation of One's Own Will*

Fr. John re-reads what the Rule says about obedience. From an administrative point of view, the important thing is obedience. From the supernatural point of view, it is the channel of grace.

[5] One can sin seriously against the virtue of obedience, / without sinning against one's vow. To examine oneself about this in his confessions. The habitual disposition, the spirit of obedience seems to me to be the capital point of our vocation. With it one practices all the virtues as Jesus did at Nazareth. Besides, all are contained in the Rule. We know which ones should dominate each exercise. Let us practice them by obedience. We should always be able to justify every action by saying: I do what obedience wants. To live always in this disposition: “What do you want me to do?” [cf. Act 9:6].

**November 27, 1885**

*On Fraternal Charity*

After the three vows, this is what is most recommended in the religious Orders. There is a duty to correct character defects and a need for patience among those who live in common. After a flash of mood or character, always make excuses, because there is scandal to repair.

Have more charity between you. There is at Sacred Heart House an inclination to separate or to [6] live alone with / only a few. The Fathers of St. John Collège would do well to come to the noon recreation from time to time. More charity between houses. Take an interest in what is happening there. Forget the wrongs that may have put a damper on things. During the Particular Examen, meditate a little on the subject of the conference until the next one.

**December 4, 1885**

*First Friday of the Month*

The Very Good Father leaves the ordinary course of conferences a little longer to deal with the trend of reparation which is now passing throughout the Church. He quotes a textbook from Montmartre and comments on a few ideas. The spirit of victim is only the perfection of Christian penance. Two elements of penance, regret and satisfaction, can extend beyond the person. So, it is within the Orders and Penitential Third Orders.

The dispositions desired for the victim-soul are affective renunciation, the effective deprivation [7] so easy to find in the little things / of life, chosen or providential, and, thirdly, the request for suffering; it is then that one offers oneself as a victim.

An appeal is made to the clergy, to religious, and to victim-souls. We are of all three classes, although to a minimal degree to the third. This appeal largely reproduces Bishop Gay's circular last year which took its starting point here.

Let us strengthen ourselves in our vocation by the daily practice of penance through love, by the union of our penitential feelings with Jesus-Victim, either during his mortal life or his Passion, at the altar, or in the Eucharist. The Very Good Father says that one of the forms of penance through love is Adoration or union with the Heart of Jesus-Victim exposed in the Blessed Sacrament. We can hardly do it because of everyone's active work to earn our daily bread. Let's hope for and ask for better days.

**[8] December 10, 1885**

The Very Good Father speaks of particular exercises. He insists on the complete observation of the entire Rule: it contains all that is necessary to give us the sap and life to bring us to a rapid development.

Morning Prayer with special invocations in the morning and evening. The meditation that must be done seriously for half an hour. The best method for each, he says, is the one that works best for him. That's all he imposes. Let each take the one that benefits him and if he is distracted let him try another method.

Holy Mass must dominate the whole day. I celebrated this morning; I will celebrate tomorrow. Prepare yourself for a few minutes or at least at the end of the meditation. If thanksgiving is usually distracted, if strange thoughts follow us to the altar, if we are not what we must be, [9] then take / *The Priest at the Altar* as spiritual reading for a while.

We must feel a certain repugnance to say Holy Mass for stipends. Let us not forget the reparative intention and let us hasten by our desires and with a certain delicacy to follow this situation, the moment when we will be able to say our Masses of Reparation.

### **December 18, 1885**

The Very Good Father believes he must return to religious obedience, the observance of the Rule and regulation. He will add to the rules a general regulation and special rules, from which to live there from tradition.

He draws attention to obedience on the point of silence. Breaking the grand silence is, according to him, a big venial sin. Observe ordinary silence; break it outside of recreations only briefly and in a low voice. Speak in the rooms only with an open door. Silence also requires that during recreation there be no shouting or bursts of laughter. There is also the silence of [10] action; do not run, slam doors. Silence with charity and the three vows / constitutes religious life. It's an element that comes in the fifth place.

For permissions to go into the city: where, for what? Take a companion.

Another opinion again: when one has permission from the superior to have something, do not suppress the intermediary. His permission means: address him who is in charge of that. If he who is in charge sees a disadvantage there, he will say: I must make an observation to the superior, but he must never permit himself to make it to him who addresses him.

When we miss an exercise or we could not foresee it in advance, always inform afterwards.

### **Friday, January 8, 1886**

The Very Good Father speaks of the exercises of perfection: mental prayer, examen, charity, silence, regularity. There we have the means of correcting what is defective in us, even a better way than an explanation of the chapter of the Rule which relates to this defect.



[11] If we experience desolate, saddening, lamentable falls, / it is because we are doing one or more exercises poorly. The reason is that being a newly formed Congregation and a Congregation of the Sacred Heart, we receive abundant graces. If we reject them, we are then strongly rejected: “the mighty will be mightily tested” [cf. Wisdom 6:6].

The Work must progress; it is our fervor, that is, our exercises done well, which will attract divine blessing and the vocations that will come from the influence, not of our natural qualities and talents, but of our virtue. Let's examine each of the few attachments that prevent us from moving forward and use the exercises to correct them.

In closing, Fr. John asks that the Fathers of Sacred Heart House go to St. John Collège for recreation on Tuesday night to increase the charity between the members of the two houses or rather the two sections of the same house.

**Friday, January 15, 1886**

*I was in Saint-Éloi.*

**Friday, January 22, 1886**

The interior life is indispensable to us. There is union with Jesus, as a means of conversation, [12] but according to the mode which is peculiar to each one. What best serves us / is the best for us, said the superior of the French seminary. We cannot specify the means of union with Jesus in an exact way, under pain of exposing it to aridity, to inner confusion. There is an intimate direction that our Lord reserves unto himself. We will unite ourselves according to the mysteries which have more attraction.

**Friday, January 29, 1886**

*[I arrived near the end.]*

Fr. John explains this maxim of St. Francis de Sales: one must remain equal in holy love. This saint thus interpreted the word of St. Paul: “who will separate me” [cf. Romans 8:35]. This evenness of soul, he treated with his nuns under the name of conformity to the will of God, defined by the commandments, the councils, the orders of the superiors, duties of state, inspirations even prudently recognized, and to the indeterminate will or the good pleasure of God all that happens from seasons, diseases, events, those who surround us, etc. Let us work to acquire that evenness of soul that not one of us possesses and which is so necessary to us.

**February 12, 1886**

[13] Fr. John reads excerpts from pamphlets about holy / souls who are completely in the spirit of our Work. He quotes striking words of similarity. He points out that the saints of the earth can give us a direction, like the saints of heaven. He reads a letter from Pius IX in 1870 recognizing priestly reparation.

### **Friday, February 19, 1886**

Fr. John reads excerpts from the life of Mother Therese of Jesus of Lavour, to establish that she had particular views on the dignity of the priest and that the means given to her to cooperate in the sanctification of the priest is conformity to the divine will. Do not worry about anything or about tomorrow. From moment to moment. Our Lord's complaints about time unnecessarily wasted by the priest.

### **Friday, March 5, 1886** *First Friday of the Month* *Mother Therese of Jesus' Views on the Priest.*

What is most harmful to the Church is less the bad priests recognized as such, than the [14] weakening of the sacerdotal spirit, the impurity of zeal. / The priest is like a mother; if he does not have the dispositions of a true priest, he communicates only a languid life.

Let's revive ourselves again today, by rereading the resolutions of our retreat. This month cuts the year in two. Let's be faithful to the month's account of conscience. Let's make an Examen in writing.

### **Friday, March 12, 1886**

Fr. John recalls the paragraph of the Constitutions which relates to personal sanctification: they [the Oblates] have the obligation to aspire to an uncommon holiness. He proves this obligation and demands that we shake off all lukewarmness. Challenge of the week: fidelity to small things, both interior and exterior.

### **Friday, March 26, 1886**

Reading of a letter from Bishop Thibaudier, encouragement and advice. Approves the views of Mother Therese of Jesus on priestly work. Recommends that we ourselves begin to be men of [15] light, of doctrine, modest, selfless, zealous, indulgent with others / and with a certain severity for ourselves. The Very Good Father recommends this especially to those who will be of service to the clergy during Lent.

Constitute and declare ourselves humble and devoted auxiliaries of the clergy, proving it in everything. The best service is to suffer for them and to immolate oneself for this purpose from moment to moment. No need to highlight this service. There are outside services that will attract more sympathy for us.

The Very Good Father comments one by one on the words of Bishop Thibaudier: men of light and doctrine by study...reviewing one's moral theology each year, the rubrics of the Mass and the Breviary; modesty: the good does not make noise and noise does not do good; disinterested; purity of zeal, without vanity; to give oneself completely and to make an abnegation of one's judgment and will.

Challenge of the week in connection with the Annunciation: "Ecce venio" [Hebrews 10:7]. This word was a complete gift, and after that our Lord never again did His own will.

**[16] September 9, 1886**

**[17] *Opening of the Retreat***

**6:45 PM**

"Come to a deserted place and rest a while" [Mark 6:31].

After a year of work, we take a vacation. What is necessary for the body to rebuild is also necessary for the soul. Spiritual holidays are necessary, just as there is a bodily vacation; and those are more important than these, because the health of the soul, holiness, is far above the health of the body. What has fatigued the body is continuous exercise, undertaken with too much ardor perhaps. What tires the soul is spiritual laziness; and what will rest it, what will restore it are the spiritual exercises.

Who will be the superior of the retreat? Our Lord! It is with him that it must be done; and the great means is to live in great union with him during all these days. To maintain this union, an exact observation of silence; the absence of this condition makes many ecclesiastical retreats fail. Practice of modesty.

Listen to our Lord: "Come to a deserted place." Come, whoever you are, were you deprived not only of health, but even of spiritual life. Jesus says to you, a new Lazarus: "Come out" [John **[18]** 11:43], come out of this state of death and come to me; / "Come to me all of you," and I will heal you, and "I will refresh you" [Matthew 11:28].

Goodwill especially. Without a doubt, our Lord will not do everything; so, do what is possible for you: give your heart. It's not so much a work of the head that he asks, but your heart. He does not ask for the head but the heart.

**8:30 PM**

*Points of the Fundamental Meditation*

1. I have everything from Jesus.
  2. I must belong entirely to Jesus.
  3. Jesus wants to give himself completely to me.
- 
1. I have everything from Jesus.
    - ✓ As a man, I inherit the being of Jesus: "Through him all things were made" [John 1:3] and currently, if I have it, it is thanks to him: "In him, all things hold together" [Colossians 1:17] - *Creation*.
    - ✓ As a Christian, the grace that makes my life comes from him - *Redemption*.
    - ✓ As a religious, it is from him that I draw my sanctification - *Sanctification*.

- ✓ As a priest, it is he himself who gives me his power.
- 2. I belong to Jesus, more than the painting belongs to the painter, because he has drawn me from nothingness and I always depend on him.
- 3. Jesus wants to give himself completely to me by his word, by his grace, by himself in the most Holy Sacrament.

[*This meditation was not developed in the morning by Fr. John.*]

**[19] September 10, 1886**

**9:15 AM**

*Second Meditation: On the Use of Creatures*

“In truth, the rest are created for man” [Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius].

Ordinary introductions, invocations.

“Are created” – Consequently, created things don’t deserve my homage, my heart; these are the means, and the great rule of St. Ignatius says that we must take those which bring us closer to our ends, and guard against those which distance us from them.

But these are only the means. One must attach oneself there only as a means but not as an end. When one has crossed the sea on a ship, one no longer worries about the ship after disembarking, so is it with creation.

1. The use of creatures: to regard them as an image of divine perfections; “Invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made” [Romans 1:20]. [A common man and an artist in front of a beautiful painting by Raphael.]
2. To serve them for the use God has given them.
3. To use it by renouncing it; the more we renounce and the more we sacrifice, the more the use made of it is good. So, Abraham gives up his son; that is why he was so greatly blessed. / Thus, the religious who sacrifices external goods by the vow of poverty, the good of the body by chastity, his will by the vow of obedience, makes the best use of many creatures.
4. By imitating them; for 6000 years the sun shines and the other creatures do the will of God by fulfilling the end which he has given them; we glorify God and save our souls.

**[20]**

**3:00 PM**

*Conference*

Fr. John states and comments rapidly on the Additional Directions from St. Ignatius. Think about meditation in the evening in the space of an *Ave Maria* and intend to rise precisely [at

least, says Fr. John, like the private soldier]. Think about it in the morning after giving your heart to God. Keep yourself in the most favorable position for mental prayer. If one has a good thought that strikes, stop there. To be good, mental prayer does not have to be a well-chosen speech addressed to the good God. A thought that has struck and stopped us is enough to make it good.

Review: Let's examine ourselves about why it was badly done; have we come into the presence of God? It must be done for the exercises of piety, Holy Mass and Divine Office. Thank God if we did the prayer well.

**[21]** Practice silence and modesty to live in the recollection necessary for mental prayer. / On this subject, let us be fond of silence and modesty. Let us profit from the retreat to reinvent ourselves in these two essential conditions of the interior life; they are the two characteristic external traits of the true religious; the world must see that you are religious and not only priests of the world.

These recommendations and additions are little in themselves, but in the order of sanctification God produces great effects with very small things. The sacraments: so, in the order of sanctification *ex opere operantis*.

After the fundamental meditation, St. Ignatius speaks of the Particular Examen. To repair the disorder of our life, we must fight passions and defects: "deny one's very self" [Matthew 16:24], it must cost; otherwise we will not achieve anything. Besides, is it not so in every kind of science and art? Would it be desirable that in the science of salvation and for the glory of heaven there should be no pain?

### **5:30 PM**

#### *Conference*

Fr. John completes the 3 o'clock conference by speaking of the spirit of prayer and mortification **[22]** necessary for mental prayer. / One separates us from the earth; the other attaches us to heaven.

Mortification: St. Ignatius divides it into three: food, common life, sleep. What is given to all. Mortification is to lie down and get up on time. Voluntary mortification: the Discipline; it is good to use it, sometimes necessary, always with permission. Mortification expiates sins, as if with one franc a debt of 100,000 francs was paid. It obtains graces: "You have a student, you are sincerely interested in the salvation of his soul; offer some mortification for him."

#### *Meditation on Indifference*

This indifference or conformity to the divine will or abandonment can be divided into three:

1. Indifference with respect to intelligence. It consists in seeing that the end of man is God, that creatures are only a means for man. This is the truth, the light; if we leave it, it is darkness, it is a disorderly life. This indifference is that of the divine intelligence itself: "Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness" [John 8:12].

[23]

2. The indifference of the will consists in loving things / only in God and because of God. God also loves himself and loves creatures because of himself, and it is to have the same will as God, a will that conforms to his.
3. Indifference of the senses consists in not nourishing voluntarily too violent attractions or excessive repugnance for such and such a thing. We are not masters of feeling nothing, but knowing the will of God, we must sacrifice attractions and repugnancies to this divine will. After all, we have only one thing to do to be holy: the will of God. This is the secret of happiness and holiness. Let us not be for superiors a thorn bush on which one dares not to lay a hand without any precaution and still gets pricked.

# FALLEUR NOTEBOOKS

## Appendix II

### THE FIRST TEXTS OF THE CONSTITUTIONS

On October 13, 1881, Bishop Thibaudier gave his opinion on the draft Constitutions. He found them to be serious, beautiful, and full of the true religious spirit. However, he had strong reservations about the fourth vow of immolation, not finding it a sufficiently specified object, nor even a determinable one in practice.

Bishop Thibaudier left for Rome three months later. He spoke to the Holy Father about the nascent Congregation and Leo XIII advised him to consult Cardinal Ledóchowski. The bishop gave the venerable Cardinal the most recent notebooks containing the communications of Sr. Marie-Ignace with the project's freshly revised Constitutions. Bishop Thibaudier also confided the documents for two days to a friend of Fr. Dehon, Fr. Daum, from the College of Santa Chiara. The Cardinal made a report to the Holy Father and wrote to Bishop Thibaudier recommending prudence and reserve. Fr. Daum found the Constitutions still incomplete in various respects and hoped for an excess of caution concerning Sr. Marie-Ignace's communications.

These Constitutions were later sent to the Holy Office with other unfortunate and some false documents, such as letters of denunciation from malicious people. We cannot get an exact idea of their content. However, regarding the First Chapter—the most important for us—there are still three copies in lithograph. These texts certainly predate the year 1883. The simple formulation as it is presented would have been unthinkable in 1884 and the following years. On the other hand, we have an important confirmation of the original value of these texts in the commentary made by Fr. Founder. On Tuesday, April 19, 1881 he declares in his instruction to the novices: “We will comment for four days on the First Chapter of our Constitutions.”

The texts commented on are those from the lithographed sheet, Text A. There are, in fact, only abbreviated citations, but convincing ones. Let us note that Text B does not speak about the vow of immolation, in addition to the three other vows, whereas a mention is made of it in Text A. It is certain, however, that the Constitutions presented in Rome by Bishop Thibaudier in 1882 spoke of the vow of immolation [see M. Denis, *Le Projet du Père Dehon*, pp. 8-9, 18].

# First Chapter of the OCJ Constitutions

Annexed to the Falleur Notebooks—April, 1881

## Text A

OCJ Constitutions  
Chapter One  
Spirit and Purpose

1. The Oblates of the Sacred Heart of Jesus have as their goal:
  - a. To glorify God by praising, loving, and especially consoling the Sacred Heart of Jesus; to repair the injuries that are made to this divine Heart by making amends to him and offering themselves to him as so many victims of his good pleasure, in the spirit of reparation and love which is their distinctive spirit.
  - b. With the grace of God, to attend to the salvation and perfection of their souls, endeavoring to imitate the meekness, the humility, and the spirit of immolation of the divine Heart of Jesus.
  - c. To use all their strength, with the same grace, for the salvation and perfection of their neighbors, especially in propagating the devotion and love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and as far as possible by procuring through teaching, by retreats, and by associations, the sanctification of the clergy, which is the portion of the Church's flock dearest to the Pastor's Heart. Their

## Text B

OCJ Constitutions  
Chapter One  
Purpose of the Work; Its Spirit; Its Protectors;  
Summary of Notions About Its Organization and Its Proper Life

1. Goal: The Oblates of the Heart of Jesus have as their goal:
  - a. To glorify God by praising, loving, and especially consoling the Sacred Heart of Jesus; by making amends to this divine Heart for the injuries that are done to him, and offering themselves to him as so many victims of his good pleasure, in the spirit of reparation and love.
  - b. With the grace of God, to attend to their salvation and personal perfection, endeavoring to imitate the meekness, the humility, and the spirit of immolation of the divine Heart of Jesus.
  - c. To work with zeal for the salvation and perfection of their neighbors, especially in propagating the devotion and love to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and procuring as much as possible through teaching, by retreats, and associations, the sanctification of the clergy, which is name of Oblates was chosen to express this life of immolation.



the portion of the Church's flock dearest to the Pastor's Heart. The name of Oblates has been chosen to express this life of immolation.

2. The spirit of the Order is therefore an ardent love and tender devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, where all the Oblates will endeavor to imitate gentleness and humility to the extent of the graces which will be bestowed upon them for this effect.

They will seek to answer as best they can the painful complaints that our Lord expressed to Blessed Margaret Mary when, showing her his Sacred Heart, he said to her, "Here is this Heart which so loved men and which receives only ingratitude from most of them." adding, "But what is even more painful to me is that the hearts that are consecrated to me abuse it so."

The Oblates will therefore endeavor to satisfy with all possible ardor the desires expressed by this divine Heart, by compensating him for the coldness and indifference of so many men who carelessly abandon him, and especially by the lack of love and ingratitude and infidelities of his chosen people, through their worthy celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, through their fervent Communions, by their prayers, by their Adorations, by their good works, in a word by all the works of piety, zeal, and charity that are within their reach.

2. Spirit: The spirit of the Order is therefore a spirit of ardent and pure love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and as a result, a spirit of sacrifice and reparation to this divine Heart, to compensate for the outrages that are made to it.

The Oblates will therefore seek to respond as best they can to the painful complaints that our Lord made to Blessed Margaret Mary when, showing her his Sacred Heart, he said to her, "This is the Heart which so loved men and receives only ingratitude from most of them," adding, "But what is even more painful to me is that it is the hearts that are consecrated to me that abuse it so."

They will therefore strive to satisfy with all possible ardor the desires expressed by this divine Heart, by compensating him for the coldness and indifference of so many men who carelessly abandon him, and especially for the lack of love and the ingratitude and infidelity of his chosen people, through the worthy celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, by their fervent Communions, by their prayers, by their Adorations, by their good works, in a word by all works of piety, zeal that are within their reach.

But they will make a special obligation of the holy practices recommended by our Lord himself to Blessed Margaret Mary and which are: Communion and the Mass of Reparation; the special sanctification of the First Friday of each month; the practice of the Holy Hour, every night from Thursday to Friday; Perpetual Adoration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament; and finally, the propagation of devotion and love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as far as will be in their power.

The Feast of the Sacred Heart will be particularly dear to them, being their patronal feast day. They will celebrate it with the greatest solemnity and with the sentiments of the most lively gratitude and most ardent love.

3. The Oblates of the Sacred Heart of Jesus also have a special devotion to the Holy Heart of Mary and the Immaculate Conception. They will be sensitive to the complaints that the Blessed Virgin expressed at Paray-le-Monial at the same time as her divine Son, and that she appears to have renewed at La Salette, concerning the ingratitude of his people and in particular of persons consecrated to God.

As the Holy Sacrifice is the most effective act of reparation, the priests of the Order will only say Masses of Reparation without stipends. The Oblates will make a special obligation of the holy practices recommended by our Lord Himself to Blessed Margaret Mary and which are: Communion of Reparation; the special sanctification of the First Friday of each month; the practice of the Holy Hour, every night from Thursday to Friday; Perpetual Adoration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament; and finally, the propagation of devotion and love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as far as will be in their power.

3. Feasts and Protectors: The Feast of the Sacred Heart will be particularly dear to them, being their patronal feast day. They will celebrate it with the greatest solemnity and with the sentiments of the most ardent gratitude and ardent love.

The Oblates of the Sacred Heart of Jesus also have a special devotion to the Holy Heart of Mary and the Immaculate Conception. They will be sensitive to the lamentations that the Blessed Virgin expressed at Paray-le-Monial at the same time as her divine Son, and that she appears to have renewed at La Salette, concerning the ingratitude of his people, in particular of persons consecrated to God.

They also take the glorious patriarch St. Joseph for their special protector. They honor him with tender devotion and filial trust, as well as St. John the Evangelist, to whom they never cease to ask for the grace of possessing the virtues that have merited him to be the beloved disciple of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

St. John the Evangelist is the patron of the Novitiate with Blessed Margaret Mary, whom the Oblates must especially imitate in his entire life of love and immolation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

They will invoke every day, as their protector and their father, the seraphic patriarch, St. Francis of Assisi, whose ardent charity and perfect immolation they must imitate in order to respond to the purpose of their holy vocation.

St. Ignatius too must be honored as one of the authors and models of the Order, who must desire to imitate his ardent zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Thus, uniting the contemplative life with the active life, this Order responds to the need of many souls who, attracted by grace to a life of immolation and sacrifice hidden from the eyes of the world, also burn with an apostolic fire.

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St. Ignatius too must be honored as one of the authors and models of the Order, who must desire to imitate his ardent zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Those who present themselves to enter the Congregation are first subjected to an examination whose purpose is to ascertain their vocation; then they are admitted as postulants. After a month of Spiritual Exercises and Postulancy, they receive the religious habit and begin their Novitiate.

After two years of Novitiate, they pronounce their vows. Those who are already priests could be dispensed from the second year of Novitiate.

The members of the Order are divided into two degrees. In the first place there are the professed priests, who have the highest rank and can alone hold the principal offices. In the second place, there are lay coadjutors employed either in secondary work or in domestic work.

4. Organization: Those who present themselves to enter the Congregation are first subjected to an examination whose purpose is to ascertain their vocation; then they are admitted as postulants. After a month of Spiritual Exercises and Postulancy, they receive the religious habit and begin their Novitiate.

After two years of Novitiate, they pronounce their vows. Those who are already priests could be dispensed from the second year of Novitiate.

The members of the Order are divided into two degrees. In the first place there are the professed priests, who have the highest rank and can alone hold the principal offices. In the second place, there are lay coadjutors employed either in secondary work or in domestic work.

5. Means and Form of Life: With regard to the outward form of this life of love and reparation, one part of the members of the Order consecrate themselves to contemplation, choir services, and Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament, in which the divine Heart of Jesus lives and reigns; others devote themselves to works, but preferably, according to the spirit of the Order, to those whose aim is the sanctification of the clergy, such as apostolic schools, seminaries, retreat houses, etc.

4. The Oblates of the Heart of Jesus will work on their personal sanctification through the ordinary exercises of the contemplative life, mental prayer, examinations of conscience, spiritual readings and lectures, the exercise of the presence of God and other practices of piety, inspiring the spirit of love and immolation to the divine Heart of Jesus in all these exercises.

They will have the desire to increase only to multiply homage and reparations to the Heart of Jesus, and they will take special care to improve themselves peacefully and to perpetuate their Order with unity and solidity by the admission of pious subjects, and full of good will who, tasting their way of life, will be determined to embrace it generously.

5. They will endeavor to procure the salvation and sanctification of their neighbor by such works, but above all by those which will best reconcile themselves with their interior life. They will be able to staff junior high schools and seminaries and generally engage in works that are compatible with conventual life. But they will ensure that the staff is large enough so that all the pious practices proper to them can be performed regularly in each house.

They can also engage in preaching, teaching catechism, and spiritual direction. But they will not undertake, without serious reasons, preaching or missions that keep them away from their residences.

6. Personal Sanctification: The Oblates of the Heart of Jesus will work on their personal sanctification through the ordinary exercises of the contemplative life, mental prayer, examinations of conscience, spiritual readings and lectures, the exercise of the presence of God and other practices of piety, drawing inspiration from all these exercises of the spirit of love and immolation to the divine Heart of Jesus.

They will have the desire to increase only to multiply homage and reparation to the Heart of Jesus.

7. Works: They will strive to bring salvation and sanctification to the neighbor through works, but especially those that will be most relevant to their purpose and best reconcile with their interior life. They will give preference to works that are compatible with conventual life. They will ensure that the staff is large enough so that all the pious practices proper to them can be performed regularly in each house.

They will also be able to engage in preaching, teaching catechism, spiritual direction. But they will not undertake, without serious reasons, preaching or missions that keep them away from their residences.

6. The Oblates make the three ordinary vows of religion to which they add a fourth vow by which they offer themselves to the Sacred Heart of Jesus as victims of atonement and love. The obligation of this vow, like that of the three others, will have its explanation in its place.
7. All the members of the Order, without exception, will consider themselves as members of the same family, united by the bonds of divine charity, which they must draw superabundantly from the divine Heart of Jesus, who is its source, and they will endeavor to internalize each day more of the spirit of their holy and sublime vocation.
8. Union, love of the Order: All the members of the Order, without exception, will consider themselves as members of the same family, united by the bonds of divine charity, which they must draw from the superabundance of the Divine Heart of Jesus as its source, and to respond perfectly to the designs of Our Lord for the Order, they will endeavor to internalize each day more of the spirit of their holy and sublime vocation.

# FALLEUR NOTEBOOKS

## Appendix III

### Advice from the Very Good Fr. John to the Novices

[In Fr. Dehon's handwriting]

**November 8, 1879**

*Notice to Novices: Daily Practices*

#### [1] *Rising*

Sign of the cross. Deep prostration, forehead to the ground. Renew your oblation or vow.

#### *When Dressing*

Place yourself in the presence of God for the morning. Prepare your prayer. Privately recite the *Dominus pars* ["O Lord, the portion of my inheritance and my chalice, you are he who will restore my inheritance. Amen."] and the *Præcinge me* ["Gird me, O Lord, with the cincture of purity, and quench in my heart the fire of concupiscence, that the virtue of continence and chastity may abide in me. Amen."].

#### *Mental Prayer*

Reparative thought. Ponder each point:

1. memory to recall it;
2. intelligence to reason with it;
3. will to resolve oneself;
4. above all, to prolong it in the affections.

If you have the aptitude for contemplation, let your thought and heart communicate with the mystery you are contemplating.

#### [2] *Holy Mass*

For the assistants: follow the liturgical prayers; or meditate on the four ends of sacrifice: adoration, thanksgiving, atonement, prayer; or on the various parts of the sacrifice: sanctification, oblation, immolation, consummation, and communion.

#### *Meals*

Nourish your soul by reading; practice charity and some mortification.

#### *Recreation*

Modesty, charity.

### *Study*

Obedience, attention, zeal.

### *Silence*

Everywhere outside of recreation. If necessary, speak by sign in writing or in a low voice.

### **[3]** *Divine Office*

Solemn psalmody. Literal attention. Reparative thought.

### *Presence of God*

In the morning: Nazareth or Bethlehem with Joseph and Mary.

**[4]** In the afternoon: Calvary or the Passion with Mary and St. John.

In the evening: the Agony.

### *Account of Conscience*

Weekly for the novices; monthly for the professed.

### *Readings Proper to the Novitiate*

- Epistle to the Hebrews
- Union with our Lord in his life as victim
- Spirit of sacrifice in religious life
- Mary and the priesthood
- The priest at the altar
- The apostolate of suffering
- Rodriguez
- Saint-Jure
- The Heart of St. Gertrude
- etc.

### **January 19, 1880**

#### *To Be Read at Noon*

[The student reader excluded.]

**[5]** Our Lord has been quite offended these past few days at the Novitiate. It will take a great atonement to appease his righteousness and comfort his Heart. Let us offer him at least a penitential novena. For nine days:

1. At dinner, we will read the penitential psalms [in French] after the Holy Scripture.



2. Each day, one religious will dine on bread and water. Fr. Alphonse Marie will begin today, the others will follow according to their rank. If someone cannot do it because of his health, he will pass and refer it to me. I reserve Friday for myself.
3. We will not speak of this penance during recreations.

“Offer right sacrifices and put your trust in the Lord” [Psalm 4:5]. Let us hope that the Lord will accept our sacrifice and not reject us.

John of the Heart of Jesus  
Superior of the Oblates of the Heart of Jesus

### **February 24, 1880**

The peace of Christ.

[6] Fr. Mathias will remain on his knees during lunch because of the lack of charity that he frequently commits with his sad and sullen air.

John of the Heart of Jesus  
The Vigil of St. Mathias

### **March 26, 1880**

#### **[7] Good Friday**

*To Be Read During Lunch*

This evening, begin a good novena of thanksgiving to the Sacred Heart for a great grace that has been given to us today. Today at 3 o'clock, by the miraculous will of a merciful Providence, the new Joseph of Arimathea bought the garden where our chapel will be raised. [Do not talk about this acquisition yet.]

Thanks be to God.

For the novena, we will pray a litany, an Act of Honorable Amends, and a consecration.