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Agnes Grazi (69)

Presentation

August 4, 1738

J.M.J.

My Beloved Daughter in Jesus,
The pure love of Jesus and the effects of divine grace be always in our hearts. Amen.
I received your note, which was dearer to me than the others, for in it I read the news of the drop of suffering that you are drinking willingly from the loving chalice of Jesus. Oh, how precious are these pains in nerve and bone! Oh, how necessary it is to hold them dear. I wish that even in your pains you annihilate yourself and make nothing of them, without fixing your thoughts on them, without, so to speak, looking them in the face. Above all, I would not have you show them in your exterior, or at least as little as possible. Show yourself, as much as you can, with a serene and happy face as the true lovers of the holy cross are accustomed to do. I said you are not to look your pains in the face and not fix your attention on them. By that I mean with the higher part of your spirit, for you already know that the lower part cannot help feeling them. If it did not, there would be no pain. I say this so that you do not lose sight of the Sovereign Good, but remain on the cross as a victim of love, united to our sweet Jesus and all on fire and consumed by the fire of his infinite love.
O my daughter, this is a high science understood only by the truly humble of heart. Therefore, remain always deeper in your annihilation, in total self-contempt, desiring only that in the estimation of creatures you be esteemed as a stinking sewer of excrement, in whose vicinity everyone holds their nose to avoid the stench. With such sentiments of total annihilation and despoilment throw yourself with all confidence into that depth of every good, and abandon the care of your soul to that Infinite Good to perform his divine operation in you, that is, to illumine it with the rays of his divine light and transform you entirely into himself by love, to make you live of his Divine Spirit so that you live a life of love, a divine life, a holy life.
Let this poor butterfly, after flying around this divine light with the wings of the desires of humiliation and, above all, of lively faith and charity, thrust itself into that divine light that is God himself, and there be reduced to ashes and more than dead so that it will live a life not its own, but the life of the Sovereign Good. These are the heavenly works that His Divine Majesty performs in souls that annihilate themselves, that make themselves as small as possible, that give all the glory to God for his gifts, and that return them with a humble and loving surrender in the Divine Sight as a sweet incense.
Read these sentiments with attention, with a heart humble, simple, and open as a mother-of-pearl or a seashell that receives a drop of dew falling from heaven and, penetrating to the depths of the sea, fashions it into a precious pearl.
I tie all this together and say that in prayer, after you have prepared yourself with great faith and deep humility, you allow your soul the freedom to fly to its Good, as a butterfly, and allow God to impress you

with the light, the grace, the love that pleases His Divine Majesty. In the act of holy prayer lose sight of everything, and these very gifts, and fix your thoughts, your heart, your mind and your whole self only on that Sovereign King, who out of his infinite goodness is pleased that a poor little woman like you should treat with him in this angelic conduct of holy prayer.

If your pains continue, let up on your penances. In this I allow you to act on your own sense of things. But the truth of the matter is that when the body has the penance that God sends, voluntary penances must be lessened. However, there are loving souls who even in sickness do not entirely relinquish their penances. I am not there, and so I cannot know how strong you are. Therefore, govern yourself as I have advised you at other times. If your illness increases, leave off the discipline and hair shirt. If things are the way they were when I was there, you can continue, but more lightly.

Continue to recommend poor Paul to God, along with the rest you know about. I do not omit remembering you before the Almighty at the altar. My heart has no greater desire than to do the Will of God in all situations; however, for this it is necessary to remain waiting until His Divine Majesty grants me the grace. If your sickness continues, stay in bed or, at least, get up later. To the extent that you can, see that someone accompanies you to the Divine Table and remain seated, at least as long as you are sick. I mean to say that you be seated when you feel burdened. And I don't want you to become scrupulous about use the freedom of the dear children of God.

I end by telling you that your inability to write me is not important. When God wishes, he will give you the strength. Continue to keep yourself detached from all that is not God and to keep on pruning away whenever you feel your heart in any spiritual union with creatures in order to separate the dross from the purest gold of holy love.

One never prunes enough. But when you have done your part and a union ensues, and you rise up a bit into God and are more in love with God and virtue is more strongly impressed, in such a case there is no point in hesitating. These are spiritual realities, as I have said and written.

Let us not doubt. Let us trust in God and let us distrust and fear ourselves, and we shall not be deceived. God bless you. Amen.

I am sending you two letters for Pereta. Do me the favor to have then sent to the boat so that when occasion offers, we can have them forwarded. Thanks be to God.

If letters come for me by post, have them sent to me by Peter. I am telling him to expect them.

Your servant in Jesus,

Paul of the Holy †