

## A Spiritual Profile of a Priest Consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

### *Meditation I*

This phase of the life of our Movement is designated for us by our Mother as a time of deep reflection on the treasure we have received:

“The public messages which I have given you for twenty-five years are being concluded: now you must meditate and live them and put them into practice”.  
(M. 604, 31st. December 1997)

It is the purpose of this reflection to offer a meditation on the depths of the spirit which our Mother asks of us if we are to live our consecration to Her Immaculate Heart or, rather, that which She intends to implant in us. In fact, when we come to examine our spirit, we find that living it consists not so much of what we do for Her than a pure gift which we have received from Her:

“If you but knew, My beloved sons, the gift you have received by consecrating yourselves to My Immaculate Heart”.  
(M.131, 29th. July 1977)

That spirit concerns entirely the interior life. Like the One Who founded our Movement Herself, the Blessed Mother of God, we can say of this spirit “*Here everything takes place within*” (B. Elis. Of the Trinity, “Last Retreat”, 15<sup>th</sup>. Day). There is no need for any outward sign or symbol; there is no external activity in its life other than the cenacles and they, of course, relate to prayer, the interior life. The Movement is a “spirit”, as the Holy Father once told Don Stefano, and that spirit is entrusted by our Mother to those who enter into the consecration to Her Immaculate Heart. It is entrusted to them, not because they are something special in themselves, but that they may hold it in the heart of the Church on behalf of every priest in the Church. It requires no external sign or anything juridical, as that would make the Movement something partial or separate within the Church (like a religious order, which exists just for those who belong to it), but rather it is for all, irrespective of whether we are diocesan priests or in the religious life. Our Mother tells us:

"They must understand that to belong to the Movement nothing external nor any juridical act is necessary; what is indispensable however is an interior consecration of one's whole self, and the total offering of their Priesthood to My Immaculate Heart". (M.9, 29th. July 1973)

That consecration, She tells us, must be *interior* and a *total offering*; a mere recitation of the prayer of consecration without the commitment of the heart is clearly insufficient. The recitation of huge numbers of those who make the act of consecration is without meaning. Jesus has given us to His Mother, but it is a gift which must be affirmed by each one personally:

"for this it is necessary that each one of you offer himself to My Immaculate Heart and entrust himself completely to me just as Jesus entrusted Himself completely to me..." (M. 5, 16th. July 1973)

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What we have to consecrate is the priesthood. Perhaps this is the first reflection we must make. In departing from the earth, Jesus placed within it a great treasure: the continuation of His presence. We are particularly conscious of this in the Holy Eucharist, but it is also true of the priest in another way. He lives and acts, as we have seen in other meditations, *in persona Christi*. In virtue of the priestly character imprinted on the souls of His priests, Christ is present with His power in every corner of the world. It is a work of divine Joy, and should be the cause of the greatest felicity in the Sacred Heart. Yet, as we know, it is because of what has occurred in the priesthood that the Heart of Jesus has received perhaps its deepest wound, Our Mother speaks of it:

"The most painful thorns are those caused me by the most loved and especially chosen of My children: the Priests. Along with those who, like Judas, daily betray My Son Jesus and His Church, how numerous now are the wavering, the doubting, the unfaithful! They celebrate Holy Mass, they administer the Sacraments and they no longer believe... Their sacrileges have now reached that limit which cannot any longer be exceeded without abusing the very justice of God". (M.31, 28th. December 1973)

It was necessary for our Mother to act, to defend Her Child, present in the priests in a special way. We are, as a Movement, born of a Mother's sorrow, of a Mother concerned for Her children, in danger.

"But more than all others, My beloved sons are the Priests. In striking them, My enemy has truly struck at My Heart". (M. 46, 30th. April 1974)

It is a gigantic rescue operation, for it can be said that, in one way or another, we have all been infected by the evil in the air, that we are the demon's targets, and Mother must purify us from this deluge. What a privilege it is to be the object of our Mother's concern. That concern She has entrusted to us to share in our prayer in our Act of Consecration, recalling the fact that "*desecration has entered into the Holy Temple of God*" (which must refer to the diabolic attack on all that is sacred in the Church). In fact, She entrusts to us the priests who have succumbed to the attack, in strong but compassionate language:

"I have wanted you to taste just a little drop of the great bitterness which overwhelms My Heart because of so many of My poor Priest-sons of whom Satan has now taken complete possession... My poor sons, what anguish they cause me... Priests, of My Son, they no longer believe in My Son and continually betray Him; Priests called to be ministers of Grace, they now live habitually in sin: their life is an uninterrupted succession of sacrileges. Priests sent to proclaim the Gospel of salvation, they have now become propagators of error. Priests chosen to save many souls, they lead so many souls along the road of perdition. This is the hour when the abomination of desolation is truly entering into the holy Temple of God. They are no longer the salt of the earth, but salt without savour, corrupted and nauseating, good only to be strewn on the ground and trampled under foot by everyone. They are no longer the light on the candlestick, but darkness which makes the night even more obscure. They are all poor ailing Priest-sons of mine, because they have fallen under the dominion of Satan.. My beloved son, how can My Heart not be submerged in an unbounded sea of sorrow?". (M.74,9th. July 1975)

It is an essential feature of our Movement's spirit that we cultivate within ourselves a great love and respect for the priesthood, and seek to grasp the supernatural wonder of the gift which is ours: *the mystery which is Christ in you, the hope of glory (Col: 1:27)*, in order to accept and exercise the trust to defend and support the priests who fall into crisis and be for them the expression of our Mother's merciful love:

“Priests of My Movement, beloved sons of My Sorrowful Heart, what must you do in order to save all these Priests who are so ill and so much in need of My motherly help? Help them, without everjudging them...Love them by your suffering, by your suffering, by your witnessing, by your good example. Be an example to them by defending, even exteriorly, your dignity; you should never abandon the ecclesiastical dress, thus obeying the will, time and time again expressed, of the Vicar of My Son, the Pope. Pray for them: Much prayer is needed to obtain from the Heart of Jesus the conversion and repentance of these poor sons of mine. *You have been chosen by me for the triumph of My Immaculate Heart in the world. But this triumph will begin with the salvation of many of these poor Priest-sons of mine, who have gone astray...*” (ibid.)

How marvellous and consoling is our Mother’s plan which entrusts our brothers to us! It must be close to our hearts. We are planted in the garden of the Church to be little servants and instruments of the renewal of the Priesthood in Her Heart, in the Mother’s Immaculate Heart, and so for the renewal of the world.

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How does our Mother intend to achieve Her purposes within us? What is the nature of the healing which She brings to the priesthood? Its safety and its refuge? It is the Immaculate Heart of Mary. A priest consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary is one who has made of Her Heart the whole spiritual atmosphere within which he leads his life. It is not always understood just how deep this union is, but our Mother makes it clear by use of the word “possession”:

“Learn to let yourselves be possessed by me, so that in everything you do, it will be I who am doing it through you. It is so necessary that it be the Mother Who acts: and I want to act through you”. (M.3, 9th. July 1973)

“Let them live solely and always looking to me, remaining with me, loving with me, praying through me. From the way they allow themselves to be possessed by me they will be recognised as Priests of My Movement”. (M. 35, 23rd. January 1974)

This is very important. The spirit of our Movement does not lie in our words or our learning, nor in our intellectual capacity to say many fine things, even about our Mother Herself. She will

allow Her Presence to be perceived in the one who truly allows himself to be possessed by Her: She Herself will be that sign, and will allow others to be aware of the authenticity of Her Priest by letting Her light be sensed in him.

“I have already told you, and I repeat again, that no external interference will be able to harm this Work of mine. It is the sign that I am today giving to My Church. At the moment of its greatest confusion, on the very eve of events which will upset the faith of so many of My children, this is the sign which I will give: *My very self*”. (M.63, 7th. December 1974)

“There is only one sign which God gives to the world and to the Church of this day: *I Myself*”. (M.62, 30th. November 1974)

In the light of what we have been listening to in these words of our Mother, we can see something of what She means by the words:

“Your presence, My son, should be like an act of reparation. It must therefore be a presence of love and prayer, *a presence of life with Me*”.

(M, 75, 24th. July 1975) and

“Whoever looks at you, listens to you or passes by you should be able to sense in his soul a touch of this supernatural perfume of mine and the tenderness which My Mother’s Heart has for all Her children”. (M.737th. June 1975)

These words are very precious; they are not simply for information, but must be contemplated with care and great humility. They help us to understand a little of what our Mother says, as we have seen, that we should understand the privilege we have received in consecrating ourselves to Her Immaculate Heart. Our Mother is at work and wishes to give a sign of Her Presence, not with many extraordinary miracles, but in the lives of Her priests. It is a sign which She gives from within us. The danger is that, if we do not dispose ourselves in living the spirit She offers us, the force of Her sign is, in some degree, lost.

“I want all the Priests of the Marian Movement of Priests to be like this. They must be My Priests! I say it again: Mine!”. (M.13, 24th. August 1973)

“Since they have consecrated themselves to me, they belong to me, they are mine. If they are mine, they can no longer belong to themselves, they can no longer possess anything that it is not My very self”. (M.38, 11th. February 1974)

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Clearly, when we speak in this way, we are speaking of a very deep union indeed, something which we must cultivate within ourselves. Clearly, our Mother is looking for priests who will dedicate themselves to prayer and the interior life. It is true that She lists the forms of prayer which She asks of Her priests in terms similar to those of Canon Law and the practice of prayer learned in our earliest formation: She speaks of the Mass well offered, the Liturgy of the Hours faithfully recited, the Holy Rosary, our daily meditation. What an example it is to see the parish priest making his daily meditation in the church (I remember being deeply impressed by a parish priest with whom I had the privilege of working, seeing him every day in the church, and I am sure this made a deep impression on his people – sadly, it is a rare sight in many places!) But having said this, our Mother is asking us for something so much more.

Rather than many acts of prayer or specific prayer for many intentions, She is looking for a continual *state of prayer* which is the condition of the heart. In the Gospel, we read that Our Lord asked us to pray always, and our Mother offers us a way of reaching this goal, which can seem impossible, through Her: She becomes the forum of our prayer. “Remain in My Immaculate Heart”, “Remain in the Cenacle of My Immaculate Heart” are expressions which She uses to denote this, the Cenacle of Her Immaculate Heart referring to the state of permanent union with Her, rather than a particular occasion of cenacle.

“Your life is so precious, son, that you must not waste it even for an instant. Therefore train yourself *to remain in me, in My Heart, and to always act with me: to think with My mind, to see things with My eyes, to touch them with My hands and to love them with My Heart.* There are moments when you are particularly aware of this, and this is when you are at prayer with me: it is then that you feel you are truly a child upon the Heart of its Mother and thus your soul tastes these moments of paradise, which I reserve jealously for My beloved sons. When you come from prayer, it seems that everything else becomes tiresome and boring. This is another gift which I am giving you. Even when you are not at prayer, you must

always be in the attitude of prayer and you truly are if you live habitually in me. So then even when you are talking or amusing yourself, or taking a trip, *you always remain in me, because you do everything with me... I want all the Priests of the Marian Movement of Priests to be like this. They must be: My Priests! I say it again: Mine!*” (M. 13, 24th. August 1973)

In this way, the prayer of Her priest becomes an intimacy of life with Her. What She is looking for is a union of life, a shared life, so that, with each one of us, She establishes a kind of partnership, so that my life now becomes not just mine, but mine and Hers together. In this way, in my view, we come to the apex of the wonderful consequences which flow from the consecration of our lives to Her Immaculate Heart. She describes this in the message of Holy Thursday, 31<sup>st</sup>. March 1988 (M.377). We know it perhaps as one of the great eucharistic messages in the Book, and so it is but, since it is the message of Holy Thursday of that year, which was the Marian Year, it is also concerned with the priesthood as it should be lived, and with Her place within it in each of us:

“I am the Mother of you Priests, because you have been entrusted by Jesus to me in a special way, in the person of your brother John. Enter today into the Cenacle of My immaculate Heart. Open to me the door of your priestly house, so that I can come in as the Mother Who loves you, forms you and leads you and in this follow out the desire which My Pope, the first son of My motherly predilection, has made known to you today with his letter. This is the most beautiful way of living the Holy Thursday of the Marian Year consecrated to me. Then I lead you to completely fulfil the mystery of love of your Priesthood; I help you to be faithful to the commitments which you have taken on, in particular to that of celibacy; I point out to you the road which you have to travel in order to respond to so great a gift, which was given to you by My Son Jesus. *I lead you to be Priests according to His Divine and Merciful Heart.* For this reason, I cause you to grow in a profound intimacy of life with me, in the dwelling of your priestly life, just as I lived with the Apostle John in his house”. (M 377, 31<sup>st</sup>. March 1988)

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We have said that our Mother is establishing a partnership with us in our lives: Within that partnership, it is She who predominates, She Who is at the root of the initiatives in our lives, who gives the true meaning and direction to the life of each one. This is something in which the Priest consecrated to our Mother's Immaculate Heart must believe absolutely: the desire and the efficacious intention of the Mother to intervene in the life of each one and bring it to fulfilment:

"With the act of consecration you have put your life in My hands: now it belongs to me, it is mine. I have taken possession of it and now, bit by bit, I am transforming it according to My will". (M.22, 20th. October 1973)

"Learn to let yourself be possessed by me" (we see this again), "so that in everything you do, it will be I who am doing it through you. It is so necessary now that it be the Mother Who acts: and I want to act through you...". (M.3, 9th. July 1973)

"I want to live in you and act through you". (M.575, 27th. June 1996)

The fact is that She is the senior partner of our life. When we consecrated ourselves to our Mother's Immaculate Heart, we committed ourselves to make our own everything which it contains. Within it, there is a plan for the salvation of the world, flowing from the Heart of the Blessed Trinity, in which She has a very special place for us. The difficulty is, of course, that we have to live this in the most difficult condition: that of knowing nothing, of having to wait for God while knowing nothing. Our task is to live with total confidence whatever she places in our life for us with total confidence, sure that we are being led by Her hand. It was Her way, the way of the constantly-repeated "Fiat", the way of living in the Will of God, of which She is the Mediatrix for us. It is a way which is only possible to a soul which lives in much *Trust and Love*. We learn from Her:

"Beloved sons, contemplate your Heavenly Mother today, at the moment when She spoke Her "Yes" to the Will of the Father. You also are called to repeat it now, that the designs of the Father for you may be fulfilled. I welcome into My Immaculate Heart your "Yes", which each of you

pronounces today. ... Say your "Yes" that the Will of the Father may be accomplished. In this, way, you are called to penetrate ever more deeply into His own secrets. And thus you are able to become, today, the very voice of God, His Word lived out. Pronounce with me your "Yes" to the Cross, dearest sons of mine, because for you also the hours of the Passion and of Calvary have come.

As in My virginal womb I received the Word of the Father, so also I enclose each one of you today in My Immaculate Heart, while I already contemplate you at the moment of your offering of reparation. Your "Yes", My little children, within the "Yes" which your Heavenly Mother continually repeats, with joy, to Her God... Then, in you also, the Will of the Father can be fulfilled, and My Immaculate Heart will become the altar upon which you will be immolated for the salvation of the world". (M.196, 25th. March 1980)

This is the spirit of the Mother Herself, and in the atmosphere of this gentle docility, She works to transform our souls:

"Be, first of all, more and more docile. Only thus can I nourish, lead and form you. These are the time when I am working the greatest wonders in hiddenness and silence. I am working My greatest miracles in the hearts and the souls of My beloved sons. Without you or others noticing it, I am leading you to great holiness. I am giving you My own spirit, and thus the Spirit of the Father and the Son will be irresistibly drawn to descend upon you as He descended upon me, and He will transform you completely. You will become great in love, in virtue, in sacrifice and in heroism. And thus you will be ready for My plan". (M.148, 11th. February 1978)

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This "Yes" find its expression in the most ordinary ways of life. As one has the privilege of travelling the world, often among the simplest of people, whose life is made up of things and activities of the simplest kind, who have nothing else in the world, one thinks of men working in the fields and on the roads, of women, even children, carrying buckets of water long distances on their heads on very rough ground, of lives not so very much different to that of the little family of Nazareth. We do not always remember that, within those lives, there is the opportunity for the highest of sanctity, precisely because they are fulfilling the will of God for them.

We come back to the lessons of the little sister given us by our Mother, St. Thérèse, whose Little Way She asks us to imitate. The priest consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary must be aware of the value of time and of the little things which make up our everyday life, however banal they may be. Our little sister tells us that everything is of value in the eyes of God, if it is done for love of Him (somewhere she says "Pick up a pin for the love of God, and you can save a soul!") Our Mother forms us in littleness, because in that we find a special love which is truly Hers.

"For the love of God": there is the key. St. John of the Cross tells us that, at the end of life, we shall be judged on love alone. It is possible to do anything with human perfection and have nothing of the spirit of which we are speaking, because there is no love. St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians reminds us of that:

"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have no love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have no love, I am nothing". (1 Cor. XIII:1-2)

And so we look to our Mother for that love in our hearts, which She promises us:

"You cannot understand at this time: but in Heaven you will contemplate in yourself the glory of your Mother and the summit of love to which Jesus, with Her, has brought you". (M.111, 8th. November 1976)

Even our love, by which we respond to the grace of God, is itself a gift of Grace. But, at this point, our Mother allows us to look at a very great gift at the heart of the restoration of our souls, through our consecration to Her Immaculate Heart. Let us remember those words, so very short but so filled with meaning: "I want to give them My Heart". (M.27, 27<sup>th</sup>. 1973) We also find:

"You have given me your hearts. I will put in the place of your hearts, filled with sin, My Immaculate Heart, and thus I will draw down upon you the power of God which will form each one of you My Son Jesus in all His fullness". (M.148, 11th. February 1978)

It is not merely a figure of speech, but stands for that very complete union of hearts, which make of our lives a Presence of Mary, as we have seen. As we meditate the messages in the book, we find a phrase which recurs frequently, and which must, therefore, be of importance to our Mother. It is Her request that we do everything with Her:

"You see how everything wearies you and leaves you with a certain emptiness *when you do not do everything with me*".

(M. 22, 20th. October 1973)

"Learn to see me even in obscurity; learn to feel My presence even in abandonment, My son, *learn to do everything with Me, in Me*. Give me your whole self completely, at every moment". (M. 38, 11th. February 1974)

This contains a secret hidden in the consecration. If we live it deeply, every prayer, every thought, every action belongs to our Mother. They are placed on Her Immaculate Heart, purified by Her immaculate grace and become Mary's offering to the Most Holy Trinity. In other words, our life can become a communion between Mary and the Most Holy Trinity and therefore immensely precious. In a particular way, this is true of our prayer, and we find this in the Messages:

"Priests of My Movement, offer yourselves to me, so that I Myself, *in you and with you, may always pray and intercede with My Son* for the salvation of the world." (M.29, 19th December 1973)

The perfect example of this, and one to be shared with the people entrusted to our care, is the moment of Holy Communion. It is the most important moment in the day of anyone, when the mystery of the coming of Our Lord in Nazareth and Bethlehem is renewed in the life of each one who received Him in the Blessed Sacrament. We can think of the many occasions on which our Mother received Her Son in the same way at the Mass of St. John. It was always a sublime moment, as the Mother and Divine Son were reunited in Her soul. That same mystery can be renewed, not simply in a theoretical and symbolic way but really and truly in every one of Her children who invites Her to be the

One Who is at the door of their soul to receive, adore, welcome, and thank Jesus. It is so for us priests; it is so for our people.

The scope of this truth is wonderful as we look at the plan of the Most Holy Trinity for the restoration of this world. It is something which exists at present in a quiet and hidden way, in faith, for a small minority, perhaps, but it speaks of God's intention to renew the world in union with the Immaculate Heart of our Mother, Who is to be its voice and its holiness, as the Little Servant of Her Son.

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We began by saying that the act of consecration is no mere formality. It is the beginning of a deep and serious commitment for life, to be a Presence of the Mother Herself, to follow Her ways and to allow oneself to be formed by Her. Nothing else will do, as She is forming the Kingdom of her Son according to the ways of Her Immaculate Heart, which is the joy of the Most Holy Trinity. As the Holy Father said, the Marian Movement of Priests is a "spirit", a prophetic spirit, a great gift to the Church. We shall continue to examine its implications this afternoon.

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