

ST. THÉRÈSE, OFFERING TO DIVINE MERCY

In the message given at San Marino in 1995, we find this:

“For the salvation of the world, be everywhere the faithful ministers of the Merciful Love of Jesus, and let yourselves always be led by Me, Who am the Mother of Divine Mercy, because only in the triumph of the Divine Mercy can the triumph of My Immaculate Heart come about.” (M. 547, 28th. June 1995)

We find ourselves today in the midst of a vast number of claims of apparitions and messages from our Mother. Fortunately, it is not for us to judge their authenticity, but for the Church, but it seems true to say that, if any messages do not have the call for mercy and prayer and sacrifice for sinners at their heart, one can say, with almost certainty, that they do not come from our Heavenly Mother. The Heart of our Mother is filled with sorrow, seeing the danger of the loss of souls, Her children, and the consequent loss to the Kingdom of Her Son, that She seems to seek every means possible in order to recall mankind to Him. That is the reason why She has come in these times when the situation of so many souls is so critical. She has come to save!

She made this clear at Fatima when, in the first apparition given to the little children, She asked them whether they would accept the sufferings which God would permit for them, in order to save some of Her poor children from Hell - from the beginning, showing the importance of the request in Her Heart. She repeats this to us today. We must always remember that, when we listen to our Mother's messages, we are listening to the Heart of that Mother Who stood at the foot of Her Son's Cross, and learned from Him that great, merciful love which drew Him from Heaven in order to save us. She learned the urgency in His Heart, and wishes to place it in ours too, so that we may be instruments of His Merciful Love for mankind. For this, She wishes us, Her priests, to be little so that, exercising our priesthood “with Her and through Her, for all Her designs of salvation”, we may be totally available for Her to make use of us just as She wishes precisely for this.

This is the heart of the Marian Movement of Priests. It almost seems to define us, and some of you may have the same impression as I that, so important is the whole question of Mercy to-day that I almost wish to speak of nothing else. Pope John Paul gave the same impression in "Dives in Misericordia" when he said that the "mark of the Church to-day is to utter loud cries to Heaven for mercy for a society which no longer understands the meaning of the word".

We saw this morning that our little sister learned her lesson of littleness, for the first time, in what she was to call her "grace" in Christmas 1886. But the work of grace did not stop at that point for her that night. She tells us that charity took possession of her heart, making her forget herself; her love for souls had begun.

She goes on:

"As I closed my missal after Mass one Sunday, a picture of the Crucifixion slipped out a little way, and I could just see one of the wounds in Our Lord's hands, with blood flowing from it. A strange new thrill passed over me. It pierced my heart with sorrow to see His Precious Blood falling, with no one bothering to catch it, and I made up my mind, there and then, to stay in spirit at the foot of the Cross, to gather up the dew of heavenly life and give it to others. The cry of Jesus as He died, "I thirst", echoed every moment in my soul, inflaming my heart with a burning love. I longed to satisfy His thirst for souls; I was consumed myself with this same thirst, and yearned to save them from the everlasting fires of Hell, no matter what the cost." (p.66)

She goes on to describe her intense prayer on behalf of a condemned man, who was refusing to repent, but who kissed the wounds on the crucifix at the very last moment of his life. She saw him as her "first-born".

"It had been the sight of the Blood flowing from one of these very Wounds that had give me my thirst for souls. I had wanted to give His Precious Blood to drink to wash their sins away, and here was my "first-born" pressing his lips to His Wounds. What a wonderful answer! After this, my desire to save souls grew day by day. Our Lord

seemed to be whispering to me "Give Me to drink" (John IV:7) as He did to the woman of Samaria; and so, hoping to quench His thirst, I poured out His Blood on souls, and offered them to Him, refreshed with the dew of Calvary, exchanging love for love". (p.67-8)

She was now a mother of souls. Some years ago, the Holy Father asked us to imitate the thirst of the Curé of Ars for souls, we who have the Precious Blood in our hands to offer each day. Thérèse illustrates what our Mother asks of us in the lived experience of her life.

What she is describing here gave form to her soul as a Carmelite as a person who had looked at the Cross and seen the great love which drew Jesus from Heaven in order to save us, and she longed to imitate Him in that great love. In those same words, she describes what occurred in the soul of our Heavenly Mother beside the Cross, and that very same love and longing for souls which the Immaculate Heart of Mary longs to implant in the hearts of Her priest-sons.

It is not that we can save souls; indeed, all have been saved in the one and only Sacrifice of Our Lord Jesus Christ, but this is efficacious if, and only if, a sinner asks for that pardon; in other words, that he repents. But the fact is that many simply cannot do that. Through lives in mortal sin, unrepented, the sense of sin and of the need to repent have been blunted with a spiritual blindness, and the path to mercy is blocked. Our Mother spoke of this in 1980:

"Alas, this message of mine has remained unheeded. And thus humanity has continued to hasten along the road of rebellion against God, in the obstinate rejection of His law of love. Thus it has come even to the denial of sin (we hear here the Holy Father's complaint that the world has lost its "sense of sin"), to the justification of even the gravest moral disorders, in the name of a falsely conceived liberty. Thus Satan, My adversary, has succeeded in making you fall into his seduction."

(M. 211, 13th. October 1980)

The Heart of a Mother, however, cannot abandon Her children, however serious their sins, and so She finds ways of recovering them, even when they are incapable of cooperating. And so She

appeals to Her priest-sons and children consecrated to Her Immaculate Heart for help:

"All men redeemed by My Son are also My children: they are My children in the fullest sense of the word. Even those who are far away, even the sinners, even the atheists, even those who reject God, those who fight against Him and hate Him: they are all My children. And I am a Mother to them. For many of them, I am the only Mother they have, the only person who is taking care of them, Who truly loves them. And so My heart is continually consumed with sorrow and with a greater love for these children of mine. I want to help them, I want to save them. ... But how to help them? How to save them? I have need of much prayer. I have need of much suffering. Only through the prayer and the suffering of others, of the good and the generous, will I be able to save these children of mine. And so there is then the Movement of My Priests".

(M. 21, 16th. October 1973)

In what way will our Mother save them? Jesus has already saved them, it is true, so how? By obtaining from Her Son, through the prayer and suffering of Her children, an extra grace which will enable the sinners to come to repentance.

As we see, it is for this that the Movement exists, united with the Eternal Son in His Work of Salvation, through the Immaculate Heart of the Mother. And we must remember that many of these in need of our help are our brothers in the priesthood. We know what a vast number have been tempted from the priesthood in our time, and our Mother has entrusted them in a special way to us:

"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." (M.74, 9th. July 1975)

At our side, with this same concern for priests (including ourselves), we find our little sister: she tells us:

"I declared my reason for coming to Carmel during the solemn examination before Profession: *I have come to save souls and above all to pray for*

priests', and when one wants to attain some end, one must take the means. As Jesus had made me realise that the Cross was the means by which He would give me souls, the more often it came my way, the more suffering attracted me". (p.107)

She was aware of the personal needs of priests, but there was another aspect of her prayer for them: she would feed the mission of mercy which they exercised for souls, as we have seen in her discovery of her personal vocation. We have seen how, while seeking to be in the Heart of Mother Church, she found the means of entering into every vocation within the Church's apostolate: the Saint's apostolate acquired the dimensions of the entire Church and the world.

Without the heart, the Church does not function; now she must be the heart for priests, in order to nourish their mission. In a similar way, when our Heavenly Mother asks Her priest-sons to have a great love for the Church, She asks us to exercise this mission in the heart of the Church, to themselves be the new heart of the new Church, not only in the sense of bearing the spirit of the Immaculate Heart as an example for all but also, as in Thérèse's case, nourishing the Church in every part of the world - all this through our consecration to the Immaculate Heart of our Mother. Bearers of Mercy through the ways of grace through that Immaculate Heart, and this side-by-side with the mission which each exercises in the apostolate given to him juridically. In this way, our Saint became Patroness of the Missions throughout the world; for the Movement, through a life of prayer and sacrifice, the possibility of feeding the very life of the Church. Something possible for every soul, if it is sufficiently generous.

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All of this was sealed at the moment when she felt inspired to make her offering of herself as a Holocaust Victim to the Merciful Love of God, an act which sheds light on our Act of Consecration to the Immaculate (and Merciful) Heart of our Heavenly Mother. We listen to the prayer which sprang from her heart:

"O my Divine Master, is it only Your Justice that shall find atoning victims? Surely Your Merciful Love has need of victims too? It is rejected and ignored on every side; the hearts on which You yearn to lavish it turn towards earthly creatures, seeking their happiness in a momentary affection, instead of running to Your arms to be consumed in the enrapturing furnace of Your Infinite Love.

O my God, must Your Love remain disdained forever in Your Heart? It seems to me that, if You found souls offering themselves to Your Love as holocausts, You would consume them speedily, rejoicing that the rays of infinite tenderness had no longer to be imprisoned in Your Heart. If Your Justice must be satisfied, although it extends only to earth, surely Your Merciful Love must long far more to fire our souls, because *'Thy Mercy reaches even to the Heavens'* (Ps. XXXV:6).

O Jesus, grant me to be Your happy victim; consume me in the fire of Divine Love, Your little holocaust".

(Scr. Aut. A. 238)

She wanted to be a victim of love, not simply satisfying the Divine Justice. Becoming entirely little, She asked the Blessed Trinity to pour out Its merciful Love, rejected by sinners, in vast abundance upon her, who had no other ambition than to live by love and to please God in every way. As a victim, she wanted to become a holocaust, in other words, to be totally consumed in her sacrifice to obtain the Merciful Love of God, through filling even the littlest things of her life with a love which would be at once the answer to the Merciful Love of God and the magnet which would draw it onto her. Then she would be the source from which the waves of infinite tenderness of the Divine Mercy would overflow on her brothers and sisters, sinners, in the world. She, like her Divine Master, would sit at the table of bitterness with the sinners, in order for them to receive the Merciful Love of God through her.

Our Mother tells us of Thérèse:

"Today I give her to all of you as your little sister. She consecrated herself to the Merciful Love of Jesus. She allowed herself to be completely consumed by the blazing fire of His divine charity. Imitate her in this her little way. You too are to become, simple, humble, meek

and gentle. You are all to become little children, travelling the way of spiritual childhood, which she has traced out for you. You too offer yourselves as victims to the Merciful Love of Jesus so that, through you, He may very soon pour out upon the world the wonder of the Divine Mercy".

(M. 600, 1st. October 1997)

For us, the most compelling reason for wanting to be channels of the mercy of God is the fact that we are priests. Our Mass and our sacraments, entrusted to us, are the instruments themselves of the Divine Mercy. But, at the same time, we need to feed with our very lives the needs of the Church and of souls for this mercy, following her way of consecration.

All that Thérèse shows us can be found in the Messages, but our Mother has given us her life and spirit as a model of how to live our spirit, which she herself lived. Our Mother to us as our little sister, in order that we should find in her a lived example of the lessons which She Herself wishes to teach us in the Book.

Our mother wishes that we too should feel the urgent Love in Jesus's Heart, with its desire to pour out that Love through us, even where it has been rejected, in a life of sacrifice and prayer, and that we, like our little sister, should seek to lose no opportunity to please Jesus, even when this involves suffering. It is the Little Way, one which requires much prayer. In this, our Saint is our Mistress and help.

Our Mother spoke to us of this at San Marino in 1981:

"You cannot come down from this mountain without being transformed by Me into living victims, offered by the Holy Spirit to the Father, for the salvation of the world and for the imminent coming of the Glorious Reign of Jesus. Here you are being helped by Me to suffer.

And now, the cradle of My Immaculate Heart becomes an Altar, upon which I immolate you each day, in order to appease Divine Justice and that the Mercy of God may descend, like a rain, to renew the world. Here you are, above all, being formed by Me to the perfection of love".

(1st. July 1981)

It is a consecration to Merciful Love which we live with Our Heavenly Mother in our consecration Her Immaculate Heart, and therefore our life must reflect the urgency in Her Heart, which She has shown in so many ways in our times. We think of the many ways in which She has shown us Her comforting presence. All around us are many souls to whom She has spoken of Her desire for consecration for the salvation of souls in greatest need, and has asked in so many ways and of so many little souls, much prayer for the priests and the souls entrusted to them.. She is asking much suffering of very many little silent souls, in order that they may be channels of grace for many. She has given signs of Her presence, with miracles, even through Her images (as She tells us in Her messages). She travels the world. Recently, in England, we had the Pilgrim Statue of Our Lady of Fatima (which has been travelling for 50 years now), in a tour organised by the Marian Movement of Priests, which was an occasion of graces. She does not stop. And we have not yet said anything about the 25 years in which Her little instrument, Don Stefano, has travelled the world with Her messages and Her cenacles. Full of compassion, this Mother, Who cannot abandon Her children. Though rejected by many, She goes on, and we remember that these continuous journeys come, not just from Her, but from the Heart of the Trinity Itself, Which gave Her this Motherhood, by the lips of Her dying Son. Then throughout the world, She has placed many priests consecrated to this spirit, to exercise it among the faithful, who will be united in prayer to obtain this Mercy for their brethren.

“At the moment when the fury of my adversary is unleashed, and succeeds in sweeping away so many with the power of evil which is triumphing, I invite you, My beloved sons, to offer yourselves and to pray for the conversion and the salvation of all sinners. You yourselves be, with Me, the refuge of sinners”.

(228, 15th August 1981)

We are in the times when, with the Messages finished, we have to look back over them, see what they contain for us, and learn to live them. As they came to an end, immediately following the

message which gave us our little sister, as if to give emphasis to what had been said of consecration to the Merciful Love of Jesus, there was another message: “Conformed to Jesus Crucified”. Once again, the emphasis is on giving ourselves for the salvation of the world.

“You must become His Word lived and proclaimed to everyone with courage and faithfulness, so that the light of the Gospel may illuminate the deep darkness which envelops the earth. His Merciful Love wishes to be shown and to attract all souls into the blazing fire of His divine Charity, particularly those far off, those who are lost and those who live beneath the slavery of evil and sin”.

Here we hear how the preoccupations of our Mother’s Immaculate Heart are precisely those of which we have spoken and those which filled the heart of our little sister, Saint Thérèse. Our Mother continues:

“Jesus works the wonder of the Divine Mercy especially through your priestly suffering. For this, the moment has come in which I wish to render you all conformed to Jesus Crucified.

Conformed to Jesus Crucified in your daily priestly ministry. The times have arrived in which you, My beloved sons, must drink to the dregs the bitter chalice which the Heavenly Father has prepared for you. Interior sufferings are on the increase, caused by your own limitations, by human miseries, by your feeling in your life the weight of your weakness, which is so great. The intimate sufferings caused by lack of understanding and being set aside often by those around you are also increasing. I am asking you also to taste the painful hour of Gethsemane.

Conformed to Jesus Crucified, above all in your many exterior sufferings. I have need of your priestly sufferings. For each one of you I have prepared the moment of a personal crucifixion. ...You are approaching moments of grace in which you will see torrents of the Divine Mercy pour out upon the world”.

(M. 601, 21st. November 1997)

In our zeal for souls, we must remember two practical things:

- a. the normal and supreme work of Divine Mercy is in the confessional. A priest consecrated to our Heavenly Mother must also be a generous and good confessor. There is a neglect of this sacrament these days but, in some measure at least, this is due to priests, who either neglect to be available for confessions or discourage the faithful from the practice of frequent confession - or even suggest that confession is unnecessary if there is no grave sin, an attitude condemned by Pius XII.
- b. In order to be a good confessor, it is necessary that we ourselves make use of the sacraments. Our Mother has told us that She wishes Her priests to be weekly penitents. This should be a feature of the life of each one of us, consecrated to Her Immaculate Heart. To be a good confessor, it is necessary to be a good penitent.
- c. The great act of mercy, the Triumph of the Divine Mercy, will come about, as we have seen, in coincidence with the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary; that Triumph depends on the Second Pentecost, which, in turn, is the grace promised in answer to the prayer of the Cenacles.

"The Second Pentecost will come because the Cenacles of prayer which I have asked of you many times and with ever-increasing insistence, have already spread to every part of the world". *(M. 428, 28th. June 1930)*

There never has been such a need for the Divine Mercy, and it is because of this that we find such great divine initiatives of mercy from Heaven.

The proclamation of our little sister as a Doctor of the Church has come at a crucial moment in its history, so that she can be offered to us as a model and encouragement for the commitment of ourselves to consecration to the Merciful Love of God, to plead for the great act of mercy which will be the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, as also the Triumph of the Precious Blood of Jesus. Both the Movement and its little sister are "gifts

of Heaven for our time", for the eradication of evil and the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ in mercy.

"The moments you are living through are moments of emergency. This is why I have called you to a more intense prayer and to live with the greatest trust in the merciful love of your Heavenly Father". *(M. 218, 31st. December 1980)*

Against the tide of evil in the world, our Mother has erected a silent but powerful barrier in the form of a humble and very powerful force of holiness, intercession and sacrifice, which serves to make reparation for so much sin:

"Your heavenly Mother wants today to help you fulfil well, and only, the divine will. This is the will of God: your sanctification! By the gift of your sanctity, you place on the altar of the Lord a powerful force of intercession and reparation. For how many evils, how many sins, reparation is offered each day on the part of My beloved sons who, led by their heavenly Mother, journey along the painful way of their own sanctification!". *(M. 223, 25th. March 1981)*

We look round our world to-day and find the legacy of great sin everywhere. Millions have been killed in wars, hundreds of millions have been murdered in the establishment of regimes, particularly those of the communist states, so many babies have been murdered in abortion, we think of the vast edifice of violence, greed and impurity in so many forms.

But, at the root of it all is the rejection of God, atheism, which our Mother has told us is the devil's weapon of our century.

She tells us that the evil of our times is practical atheism, the indifference, which is so terribly condemned in the Apocalypse.

All this evil has, as our Mother told us at Fatima, caused the danger of very many of Her children being lost into Hell, most of them now unconscious of the danger, because they have lost God.

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Against this, our Mother has raised up this wonderful army of little souls to plead for mercy and to provide the means for them to be saved.

Our little sister Thérèse shows us, by her life, what this means when lived.

Our Mother has asked us, now that the messages have finished, to meditate on them and to put them into practice. By coming to understand our little sister, we do this. Let us conclude with the final words of her autobiography, at least in Manuscript B:

“But why this desire to tell others the secrets of Your love? Can You not, Yourself, reveal to others what You have revealed to Me? I know You can, and I beg You to do so.

I implore You, cast Your eyes upon a multitude of little souls; choose from this world, I beg of You, a legion of little victims worthy of Your LOVE”. (Man. Scr. B. 265)

Perhaps the MMP is part of God's answer to this prayer?

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