

DECEMBER

RELIGIOUS PERFECTION

December 1: Blunders need not be an obstacle to God's grace. I can say from experience that it is often after these mistakes that the good God makes use of us, because then He finds us in our proper place, and really humble. There is nothing which gives freer course to the operations of grace than the state of abasement in which we are at such times.

2: My dear daughters, walk quite simply and uprightly in the way of the Lord. It is there that you will find the true science of the Saints, because there is to be found purity of heart and that enlightenment of spirit which makes us truly humble.

3: My dear Sisters, let us go forward with courage. May our sole ambition be to work hard in order to glorify the good God - each one according to her little measure of ability.

4: What shall I say to all my dear daughters? I hope the good God is the Soul of their souls. May all, all without exception work hard to become holy, by maintaining great purity of intention in all they do.

5: May all my dear daughters, advance with giant strides in the path of humility of both mind and heart....We can all find matters in ourselves to keep us humble, since none of us have any good of our own, I, least of all.

6: God does not, in religion, ask great sacrifices of us everyday. But He does exact, everyday, continual little sacrifices, nameless acts of self renunciation, which fidelity to the Holy Rule imposes, namely, carefulness in all our duties, and the exact observance of the least customs in use in the Institute.

7: We ought to be on our guard against a certain self seeking. In the service of God we should like a constant assurance that we are doing well, and this proceeds from a desire of self complacency, which dislikes the sight of any defect in one's self, as women in the world turn round and round before the glass to see if anything about them is lacking. Oh, how sensitive grace is! Let us practice in this regard the greatest possible simplicity.

8: Her great gift of sinlessness did not make Our Blessed Lady think more of herself. But although she never sinned she understands our miseries and weaknesses. Her heart is all the more compassionate and prompt to help us in our pains and to raise us up after our falls, just because she is so pure, so holy, so strong, and so completely filled with God.

9: A Sister of Notre Dame must put all her glory in being exact in keeping her rule perfectly, and in studying the spirit of our Holy Institute in order to make it entirely her own.

10: How much I should like to be able to say to each one of my good daughters: "Empty your soul completely of self, and then the spirit of God will fill it to its utmost capacity.

11: Our Divine Master in the Sermon on the Mount said: Blessed are the poor in spirit: that is to say, those who, through renouncing their own judgment, have destroyed self-love, which they look upon as their greatest enemy. Here is something at which every Sister of Notre Dame must work, without ever being discouraged.

12: I earnestly beg all my good daughters to live by faith and by the spirit of our Holy Institute. I hope they are all working wholeheartedly to attain this, and to form themselves well for their vocation.

13: My dear child, try to moderate, as much as you can, the first impulses of your will, and do not be at all angry with yourself because you think you are always the same. Go in all simplicity to the good God and tell Him how insensible you are to good. That is the way I do, by the grace of God. I humble myself before Him: then, as a good Father, He heals all my miseries.

14: People come into religion thinking they will have nothing to do from morning till night but pray. They are right if they understand this clearly in the true spirit of our Institute. Many are called but few are chosen, so soon as there is need to take up a share of the cross. As the Imitation of Christ says, Jesus finds many ready to eat at the table, but few, very few, who will climb up Mt. Calvary with Him.

15: God's interests alone must fill our hearts! What a blessing this would be! Have we ever thought seriously about it, I wonder? Forget self. Try to put yourself in this disposition by great purity of intention, so that we may procure for God all the glory He expects from us, from each one of us individually.

16: I do not wish, dear child, that you should brood so long over your misfortunes in letting me see the tips of your horns. You must not be at all astonished if they peep out again from time to time. The point is to make good use of it. The moment you perceive these little bits of horns, show them to the good God in all simplicity of your heart, without giving them time to increase, as we are naturally inclined to do. We will make a saint of you yet, daughter, but a saint without any horns, mind!

17: Come, let us cry out all together: Our hearts belong to our good Jesus for time and for eternity...it seems to me that Our Lord loves all my good Sisters, and as soon as He sees we forget ourselves to think only of His good pleasure, His interests and His greater glory, He will forget all our little faults and weaknesses. So do not trouble

yourselves about them anymore, dear children.

18: How good is the good God! How much we ought to thank Him, dear daughters, for being mindful of His little handmaids. "Leave all, and you will find all," the Imitation of Christ tells us, and we find for ourselves that is true.

19: Yes, that is the path - an habitual disposition to remain the victim of God's good pleasure in all the changing conditions by which this good God wills to try us....You know the course to follow in time of darkness: it is to be always disposed, as the prophet-king expresses it, to bless the Lord at all times.

20: Let us all pray for one another that we may fulfill perfectly the adorable designs that Jesus has upon us, being quite sure that His great goodness will come to our aid. He knows just what we can do.

21: Pray much that the good God may bless our work, for the devil is jealous because we deprive him of his prey - those poor unfortunate little girls, who otherwise would be running the streets. Above all, let us recommend to God, everyday in our life, all the little poor children who throng our schools.

22: My dear good daughters, let us all continually offer ourselves as victims to the great God. How much I long to obtain for each one of you a plenitude of grace and light, especially the grace of walking always in God's presence, and of performing all your actions in union with Our Lord.

23: You know all that I ask the good God for you. Oh! may He alone, He alone possess your heart without reserve, without division and forever. Everything else is unworthy of us: we are destined for an end too noble too glorious, to think of resting in created things. A far grander object ought to fill these hearts of ours.

24: (Written Dec. 23, 1786) Let us be born anew with our good Jesus in the crib: let us strip ourselves of the old Adam to be clothed again with the New. Let us go to Bethlehem with the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph to study there the lessons of humility and poverty they will preach to us.

25: GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO! Glory be to God on high, and peace to men of good will. That would mean Paradise upon earth: the peace our good Master and Savior came to bring us, at such cost to Himself. God's peace will reign in the heart of each one of you, and we shall all do our best to bring it into the hearts of others.

26: A Sister of Notre Dame who understands her vocation has no time to spend on idle words, nor in thinking of trifles...She is busy about the salvation of souls, and so it comes about that, unconsciously and almost without effort, she remains united to the good God, because she tries to be faithful to the rule of silence.

27: Ah, dear daughter, we have all a long way to go before we are perfect. Let us trudge on, trudge on, everyday one step further, daughter --- then patience! Patience with ourselves, patience with others. Heaven is our reward. (Written Dec. 27, 1814)

28: For a Sister of Notre Dame there is no middle way, for when the good God favors a soul with a vocation so great, and multiplies upon her strong and unusual graces, He is jealous of that soul and exacts from her a constant fidelity, since His love never asks any sacrifice for which He does not send an accompanying grace.

29: My dear Sisters, you must be filled yourselves with the spirit of our holy Mother Church, before you can communicate that spirit to others, that is, to the children whom you teach. Never mind if only a few seem to profit by your instructions. Let us always go on sowing the good seed.

30: My dear good daughters, love the rule of silence and keep it well. Then each of our houses will be a temple where the good God will dwell, and the heart of each sister a tabernacle in which He will abide. There will He make known His will to her, tell her His secrets, receive her continual adoration and converse familiarly with her.

31: Well, my dear daughter, you are always reproaching yourself with your blunders; but why? There is nothing in them that should surprise you. My poor child, be only too happy that the good God gives you the grace to recognize them. I beg of you, above all things, as soon as you perceive them, to show them to the good God with the same tranquillity a child would have in showing her mother a little harm she has done herself, in spite of her watchful care. Would the mother add to the child's pain because she has hurt herself? No. She would apply whatever little remedies she believed would be useful. Now, my dear, the good God asks of us, when we have done ourselves harm by our haste or activity, that we repair our faults by acts of humility, and accept the little humiliations which come to us in consequence of our failings.