

THE DEVOTION
TO THE
SACRED HEART OF JESUS



“Behold this Heart which has so loved men!”
—Words of Our Lord to St. Margaret Mary

(This painting of Our Lord, St. Margaret Mary and Bl. Claude de la Colombe by Filippo Costaggini is in Sacred Heart Basilica, Hanover, Pennsylvania, the oldest church in the United States dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The church is also known as Conewago Chapel, having begun as a Mass station and log chapel in colonial days [1741]. The Basilica was built in 1787; around 1800 it was the largest parish in the United States, numbering nearly 5,000 souls. The Basilica is located near Gettysburg.)

THE DEVOTION
TO THE
SACRED HEART OF JESUS

HOW TO PRACTICE
THE SACRED HEART DEVOTION

By

Father John Croiset, S.J.

Translated by

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published at Lyon in 1694*

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“One day I saw the Son of God, holding in His Hand His own Heart, which appeared more brilliant than the sun and which was casting rays of light on every side; then, this amiable Saviour gave me to understand that all the graces which God unceasingly pours forth on men, according to the capacity of each, come from the plenitude of the Divine Heart.”

—*St. Mechtilde*

(*quoted by Father Croiset*)

Dedicated by
the translator and his brother
to the memory
of their dear parents.

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FOREWORD TO THE FIRST EDITION

The complete edition of *The Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus* by Father Croiset, S.J., is presented to the public for the first time in English. This book was composed during the lifetime of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque and published in 1691, the year after her death. The letters of St. Margaret Mary which we quote below show that the book was written at the request of Our Saviour Himself, conveyed to Father Croiset by St. Margaret Mary; in her letter to him asking him to compose this book she assured him on the part of Our Saviour that he was to get special assistance, and when the work was near completion she told him that it was so completely in accordance with the wishes of Our Lord that it would never be necessary to make any change in it. The book, then, rests on the authority of Our Lord Himself; as He promised, no change in it was ever found necessary—even now, after the lapse of two and a half centuries during which time innumerable books on the devotion have appeared, it still remains the most practical book on the devotion to the Sacred Heart.

As will be explained later on, the book remained only thirteen years in circulation, during which time it was translated into nearly all the European languages. At that time the Catholic religion was being persecuted in England; Blessed Claude de la Colombière, who had introduced the devotion to the Sacred Heart there, was first imprisoned and afterwards banished from England, so no translation of Father Croiset's book was made into English. Since the book was restored to circulation at the end of the last century, a very much abridged edition has appeared in English, in which the space available

did not permit the inclusion of many important chapters.

The following are the circumstances under which the book made its first appearance: St. Margaret Mary Alacoque wrote many times to her director, Father Croiset, at the behest of her Divine Master, asking him to write a book to make the devotion to the Sacred Heart (which hitherto had been practiced by chosen souls as a private devotion) known to the general body of the faithful. In her letter to him of April 14, 1689, she said:

“If you knew the ardent desire which urges me to make the Sacred Heart of my Sovereign known and glorified, you would not refuse to undertake this work. If I am not mistaken, He wishes you to do so.”

And on September 15 of the same year she wrote to him: “Since you wish me to tell you what I think about your plans for honoring the Divine Heart of Jesus, I believe (if I am not mistaken) that they are most pleasing to Him. . . . And I tell you that you are happy to be among the number of those whom He will employ for the execution of His designs, as I can have no doubt but that He has chosen you for this work; follow the lights which He will give you for the execution of it. With regard to all that you propose to me in your letter both about meditations and the indulgences, it seems to me that I see clearly, and in a way which leaves no doubt, that it is He who has inspired you in this manner with these ideas. He has given me to understand that this manner is so pleasing to Him, that none other but Himself could have arranged everything so much to His wishes, and I believe that He will be very much glorified by it.”

When she was aware that Father Croiset had undertaken the work she said to one of the sisters in confidence: “I shall certainly die this year in order not to be an obstacle to the great fruits which my Saviour intends to draw from a book on devotion to His Sacred Heart which Father X. will get printed as soon as possible.”

In two letters during the last year of her life, while assuring Father Croiset again of special divine assistance for his

work, she warned him of how much he would have to suffer on account of the publication of his book. On January 17, 1690, she wrote to him: "If I am not mistaken, our amiable Saviour seems to promise me that He will furnish you with all the graces and helps necessary, and even that He will supply on His part for all that may be wanting on ours. But all that will not be accomplished without much pain and suffering, which you are to receive as the strongest proofs of His will." On August 21 of the same year, she wrote to him: "You are surprised at that (some trial he had to endure), but that is nothing; more is to come, for you must be purified like gold in the crucible for the execution of the designs of God. Those designs are truly great; therefore you will have much to suffer from the devil, from creatures and from yourself. But what will appear to you hardest to bear, will be when God will seem to take a share in making you suffer, but you have nothing to fear, for this is the way to show that He loves you. . .

"But to return to the question of your work on the adorable Heart of my Jesus, I have no doubt that He has assisted you, since the whole work, if I be not mistaken, is so perfectly in accordance with His wishes, that I do not think that it will be necessary to change anything in it . . . Once again I pray you not to be downcast on account of all the contradictions, troubles and obstacles which this work which you have undertaken will encounter. Consider that He for whom you are doing it, being all-powerful, will not allow you to lack any of the helps necessary to accomplish it perfectly according to His desire."

Everything happened as St. Margaret Mary had foretold: she died before the end of the year; her death removed an obstacle to speaking freely about the revelations which she had received, and permitted Father Croiset to include an account of her life and the favors which she had received; the book was published as soon as possible during the year after her death; God was very much glorified by it, for in a short time it was the means of spreading devotion to the Sacred

Heart to the ends of the earth; and finally it was a cause of great trouble and suffering to Father Croiset himself, for after being translated into most of the continental languages and enjoying an immense circulation for thirteen years, it was put on the Index by a Decree of the Congregation of the Index of March 11, 1704, because the author, though in good faith, had omitted certain formalities required for a book dealing with such an important subject.

During these thirteen years, other books on the devotion appeared; among these was a book by Father Galliflet, who had been a novice under Blessed Claude de la Colombière. Other works continued to appear in various languages by distinguished authors; in the course of time several papal encyclicals explaining and advocating the devotion were issued, and Father Croiset's book became forgotten for the space of nearly two hundred years.

However, when Divine Providence deemed the time opportune, the book was restored to circulation by the same Congregation that had ordered it to be withdrawn. The letters of St. Margaret Mary make it clear that the book was completely in accordance with the wishes of Our Divine Saviour and was published according to His desires, and that the withdrawal from circulation was foretold and permitted for His own wise purposes: we are, therefore, justified in concluding that the reappearance of this book by the permission of the Church in modern times is also providential, and that reappearing at a time when Our Saviour has issued a new appeal from His Sacred Heart to a world that is turning away from God, it is given to the Church to aid in restoring the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus to its original fervor.

The following are the circumstances under which this book made its reappearance: when the hierarchy was reestablished in the former Turkish provinces of Bosnia and Hertzegovina, Monsignor Stadler, Professor of Theology at the University of Agram, was appointed to be the first Archbishop of Sarajevo. Immediately after his appointment, he announced his intention of consecrating his archdiocese to the Sacred Heart of

Jesus, and of putting all his trust in the Sacred Heart to reestablish the Catholic religion in these provinces. No book on devotion to the Sacred Heart existed in the language of his archdiocese. He selected Father Croiset's book as what he considered to be the most suitable book to explain the theory and practice of this devotion to the priests and laity of his diocese; he translated it, had his translation printed and was about to circulate it when he was informed that this book was on the Index. He wrote to the Sacred Congregation of the Index asking for permission to publish his translation. When the Sacred Congregation suggested to him that he should select some other of the numerous books on this devotion, he replied that he could find none other so suitable for his purpose, and requested the Congregation to have the book examined and to make any changes deemed necessary. The Sacred Congregation acceded to his request, and had the book submitted to a rigorous examination in the light of the papal encyclicals and decrees of the two centuries that had elapsed since the book had been written. The result of this examination was that no error whatever could be found in the book and no change necessary; the book was removed from the Index, and permission given to publish it in all the languages of the world, as the author had written it.

Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque that no change would have to be made in Father Croiset's book, as it was perfectly in accordance with the wishes of Our Lord.

In recent years Our Saviour appeared to another member of the Visitation Order, Mother Louise Margaret, with a new message from His Sacred Heart for His priests to be conveyed by them to the world. The message is, in brief, that He wishes His bishops and priests to unite in a new association for the purpose of promoting devotion to His Sacred Heart. The Holy See, while not pronouncing on the supernatural origin of this message of Mother Louise Margaret, has sanctioned the establishment of the Priests' Universal Union and three allied societies for religious and laity of both sexes for the

purpose of promoting devotion to the Sacred Heart as Mother Louise Margaret had asked.

Mother Louise Margaret in *The Book of Infinite Love* urges the clergy not to be content with a mere superficial knowledge of this great devotion, but to make a deep study of it so as to be able to explain it to the faithful who do not all yet understand the treasures of grace and regeneration which are found in the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

To help towards acquiring a knowledge of both the theory and the practice of this devotion, what book could be more suitable than the one which was written at the command of Our Lord Himself, under the direction of His chosen apostle of the devotion, St. Margaret Mary, by her director, Father Croiset, specially selected and assisted for the accomplishment of this work!

Father Croiset states in his preface that the essence of the devotion to the Sacred Heart consists in the perfect love of Jesus Christ, especially in the adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist, and *that this perfect love of Jesus Christ forms the subject matter of this book*. It is evident, then, that this book, while intended for all who wish to acquire true devotion to the Sacred Heart, is specially suitable for priests and religious.

Some small changes have been made in the order of the book. The life of St. Margaret Mary, which was placed at the end by Father Croiset, has been transferred to the beginning. The book had been compiled before the death of the Saint; her life was composed by Father Croiset immediately after her death and inserted at the end. As St. Margaret Mary's life on earth was a living exposition of the theory and practice of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and as Father Croiset's account of it contains the passages from her writings which give the essential elements of the devotion, we think that this life, now that she is canonized, will form a most suitable introduction to the book.

For the convenience of those who wish to use the meditations and prayers, we have placed them at the end of the book.

Instead of the few prayers of St. Margaret Mary given by Father Croiset, we have given all her prayers. The book will thus be a complete manual of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, suitable for visits to the Blessed Sacrament and for the Holy Hour.

May our adorable Saviour deign to bless this humble effort to make His Sacred Heart more widely known and honored, and more perfectly loved!

Patrick O'Connell
March 17, 1948

FOREWORD TO THE SECOND EDITION

The first English edition of *The Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ* has been very favorably received and is now exhausted. This new edition is brought out in response to requests received from the various countries in which the first edition circulated: Ireland, England, America, Australia, India, Africa. The first edition was published as a companion volume to *The Sacred Heart and the Priesthood* and *The Book of Infinite Love* to fulfill one of the objects of The Priests' Universal Union of the Friends of the Sacred Heart, which is to promote deeper study of the devotion to the Sacred Heart; this second edition has the same object in view. No more suitable book could be found for that purpose, for Father Croiset was designated by Our Divine Lord Himself as the person who was to write the first book on the public devotion to the Sacred Heart and was promised all necessary assistance.

In this new edition a chapter of selections from the writings of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque has been added. Father Croiset was prevented by many circumstances from quoting from her writings as he would have wished: she was still alive when the book was being composed; only a small portion of her writings were available to him, most of them consisting of letters written to sisters in various Visitation convents; her writings had not yet been examined by the Holy See, nor had the cause for her beatification been introduced. These selections are intended to illustrate two aspects of the devotion: the full list of the promises given will illustrate the mercy of the Sacred Heart, while the other selections, which include the prayers of St. Margaret Mary, will bring out the idea that the Devotion to the Sacred Heart is a devotion that leads to

the perfect love of God.

Readers who wish to have larger selections from the writings of St. Margaret Mary, illustrating all aspects of the devotion, which include her prayers for the Holy Hour, will find them in *The Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus the Essence of Christianity*, a book intended to supplement the present one, and to provide directors of Sodalitys of the Sacred Heart with a complete manual of the Devotion, suitable for the Holy Hour.

May Our Divine Lord deign to bless this humble attempt to make His Sacred Heart more widely known and loved.

Patrick O'Connell
January 1, 1959

PREFACE

by *Father Croiset, S.J.*

The extraordinary ardor and eagerness shown towards the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the great fruit that has been derived from it and the great esteem which persons of universally recognized merit have for it, compel us to bring out a new edition of this book to satisfy the demand of the faithful.

There had been, it appears, in the beginning some reason to fear that the very title, *The Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus*, while attracting several people to read this book, might turn away many others and prevent them from forming a just idea of this devotion. It is in order to anticipate this difficulty that we have judged it proper to explain in the beginning of this book what is meant by the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Experience has taught us that all those who have formed a clear idea of what this devotion consists in, become convinced that it is reasonable, solid and very useful both for attaining salvation and arriving at perfection.

We have followed practically the same order in this book as in the previous one. Having explained in Part One the motives which should urge us to practice this devotion, we give the means for acquiring it in Part Two, while in Part Three we explain the practice of the devotion and give a number of special exercises of it.

And inasmuch as the essence of this devotion consists in the perfect love of Jesus Christ, particularly in the adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist, the perfect love of Jesus Christ forms the subject matter of this book. We dwell at greater length on visiting the Blessed Sacrament, on the august Sacrifice of the Mass and on receiving Holy Communion because, of all spiritual exercises, it is these which bring us closest to Jesus Christ, and are most suited to honor His Sacred Heart and to inflame our hearts with ardent love for Him.

We trust that reflection on these subjects will help to persuade many to adopt the practice of the devotion and at the same time teach them how to practice it with fruit.

Those who know of the singular merit and sublime virtue of Blessed Claude de la Colombière, and are aware that God had chosen him in a special manner to propagate this devotion, will be very pleased to find in many places of this book the thoughts and sentiments of this great servant of Jesus Christ about this devotion.

Although it is no way necessary to quote authorities or revelations or examples to urge Christians to practice this devotion, since it is sufficient to know that its only object is to make people love Jesus Christ perfectly, yet we have judged it advisable to devote two or three chapters of this book to the revelations made to St. Gertrude and St. Mechtilde about devotion to the Sacred Heart; at the same time we are convinced that it would be manifest prevarication on our part, if, through fear of being reputed too credulous, we refrained from giving an account of the admirable means of which God has made use in recent times, to renew devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus (through the revelations made to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque).

To deny that there have been pure and chosen souls in every age who have received confidential communications from God would be to condemn what the whole Church believes; and although these divine caresses and familiarities are exceedingly rare, nevertheless no century has passed which has not furnished examples of such in the case of some saint. "Those who have never received favors of a similar kind," says St. Teresa, "sometimes find difficulty in believing in these extraordinary gifts. But such people should consider that if it is a sign of simplicity to believe in all alleged favors, it is a sign of temerity to refuse to believe in any." Now we think it opportune to remark here that the revelations made to St. Gertrude and St. Mechtilde which have been quoted three times in the course of this book, have been examined in our time by the most learned men in Flanders, France, Italy and

Germany, as well as in the most famous universities; and that all were agreed that these revelations were full of the spirit of God, who alone is the author of them; that learned prelates and great saints have esteemed them and approved of them; that the greatest doctors have quoted them with approval, one of them (Blosius) asserting that after the examination to which these revelations have been subjected he did not think that any really prudent and solidly virtuous person would refuse to have respect for them.

The Spiritual Retreat of Blessed Claude de la Colombière has already made known several years ago the admirable means of which God made use to propagate this devotion. But as the person of whom this great servant of God speaks in this book (St. Margaret Mary) as having received confidential communications from Our Lord, has always taken extreme care to lead an obscure and hidden life—although God has honored her with these extraordinary graces which are the privilege of the greatest saint—we deem it proper to give an account of her life in this book, since providence, by taking her out of this life, has given us complete liberty to tell the world about the rare and sublime virtues of this holy soul whom God has chosen to propagate this devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. At the same time, it will be seen in the person of this saintly religious that the arm of the Lord has not been shortened, and if the present is not a time for great miracles, there is no century of the Church's history that is not suitable for great saints.

The revelations made to those chosen women are known to the whole world, and have been approved of by pious and learned men; and holy fathers everywhere quote them in their writings and their books. The revelations of St. Gertrude were most diligently examined by very learned men, both before and after her death, one of whom gave his opinion as follows: "Having prayed for divine light, I feel that no one who is enlightened by the spirit of God could speak evil of or attack what is written in this book (of St. Gertrude), for it is Catholic and holy." (Blosius, *De Auctoritate Revelationum*, Chap. IV).

LIFE OF ST. MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE

St. Margaret Mary Alacoque was a religious in the Convent of the Visitation at Paray le Monial in the province of Burgundy.

God had specially chosen her to make known the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ. For this end He lavished on her from the very cradle His choicest blessings with such profusion, and in ways so extraordinary, and she corresponded so faithfully, that the sublime virtues which she practiced from her tenderest youth appear truly miraculous. Her extreme love for contempt, for an obscure and hidden life, and the inviolable silence which her profound humility made her always keep about everything that could bring her honor, would have robbed us of the knowledge of the most of these graces, had not the distrust which she always had for her own lights, her fear of illusion, and the perfect submission which she always had for the orders of her confessor and the commands of her superiors, sometimes obliged her to consult persons in whom she had confidence and to make a record of the most remarkable favors which she received from God. The repugnance which she felt in doing this was so strange, that, not being able to conquer it otherwise, she was obliged to make a vow to obey blindly. The following account of her life is drawn from these records written by herself, of graces received, and from information given by her superiors.

As God had destined this virtuous soul to make known a devotion whose object is to make Jesus Christ ardently loved, He had inflamed her almost from the cradle with such ardent love for our divine Saviour, that almost from the time that her life began she allowed herself no enjoyment except what she thought was pleasing to her divine Spouse. From the age

of two or three, she had such a horror of even the shadow of sin that her parents, who were aware of it, found it sufficient to say that a thing was an offense against God to make her desist from doing it. Divine grace, anticipating the use of reason and supplying for the weakness of youth, inspired her with such noble and generous sentiments that we have good reason for believing that the like of her had not appeared on the earth for several centuries.

From her earliest childhood, a time little suited for the practice of exalted virtue, the heroic actions which she performed give the idea of a person already arrived at the pinnacle of perfection. The Holy Spirit Himself taught her the chief requisite for the interior life by giving her the spirit of prayer, for she had a great gift of prayer. Although she had never learned how to make a meditation and had no practice in it, she found herself suddenly elevated to a high degree of contemplation. From that time all her pleasure was to spend whole hours in prayer; and if she was not found in some corner of the house on her knees, she was sure to be found in the church, motionless before the Blessed Sacrament.

At the tender age of four, she made a vow of perpetual virginity, which she was accustomed to renew at every Mass after the Consecration. All her life she had a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and she was tenderly loved by her. When she had suffered for four years from a kind of paralysis, all remedies were found useless until she was consecrated to the service of the Blessed Virgin for the rest of her life, whereupon she was miraculously cured.

From her earliest youth, the spirit of mortification was joined to that of prayer; she conceived such a hatred against herself and such a great love of the Cross that her only desire was to suffer. She passed entire days without eating, and always abstained from what was pleasing to the taste. She was accustomed to macerate her body with instruments of mortification that would have frightened the most austere penitents; she tied herself so tightly around the arms with little iron chains that the flesh grew over the chains, and they

could only be removed by tearing with them pieces of her flesh. From the age of ten or twelve she usually slept on the ground, passing a part of the night in prayer even in the depth of winter.

This ardent love for Jesus Christ, which was the motive of all her austerities, inspired her with extraordinary love and compassion for the poor. She had such veneration for them that she often prostrated herself before them. Her charity drew to her a crowd of poor, in whose favor she used frequently to deprive herself of food, and she never sent them away without teaching the principal truths of our Religion to those who were ignorant of them.

Thus did this saintly girl occupy the time that she was obliged to spend in the world, where the greatest sin that she remembered to have committed, and which she expiated with so many tears and such austerities, was to have taken too much care to dress herself neatly—and even this was to please her mother, who ordered her to do so.

Such extraordinary and sublime virtue soon showed that this soul, so cherished by God, was not for the world. She had long sighed after solitude, as she found no enjoyment except in God, and as worldly amusements were a torture to her, religious life alone had any attraction for her. But her parents could not bring themselves to part with her, until after many prayers and eager solicitations she finally obtained what she had so passionately desired. God had endowed her with a great intellect, a solid, fine, penetrating judgment, a noble soul and a great heart. Her perfect modesty, her unalterable meekness, her attraction for prayer, her extraordinary devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin, her mortification, and especially her profound humility, which caused her to perceive none of these virtues in herself, were the effects of this ardent love for Jesus Christ which may be said to have, properly speaking, constituted her distinctive character.

With these fine qualities and these admirable virtues, she entered the Order of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin

Mary, where she failed not to cultivate with great care such a rich endowment, and where she soon reaped all the fruits which might be expected from such virtue.

As she brought to the religious life a heart purified from all passions, a thing which costs so many combats to others, her whole occupation consisted in perfecting those virtues which she brought from the world. This was done under the direction of obedience, which served rather as a break to moderate her austerities than as a stimulus to fervor. Persuaded that the observance of her rule was the surest way to arrive at the high perfection to which God had called her, she made it an inviolable law for herself to keep her rule all her life with great exactness; and she kept it so well, even to the letter, that it would have appeared excessive, if it was not clear that this extraordinary punctuality proceeded from her great fidelity, which caused her to neglect no occasion to increase in grace with God and to render herself pleasing in His sight. Besides, she sustained this excessive regularity with such an air of sanctity, and with such a number of virtues, that all that she did was capable of attracting veneration. She had, especially, such a high idea of obedience and she was so perfect in this respect, that it may be said that it was the virtue in which she excelled. She had not even those natural inclinations which ordinary people never completely master and which urge them instinctively to do or to desire differently from what they are ordered. Although honored by Heaven with such extraordinary graces, she had never any other rule of conduct but the will of her superiors, being persuaded that whoever withdraws from obedience necessarily recedes from the Spirit of God.

It is difficult to conceive to what lengths she went to detach herself from everything which was not God. She would never agree to accept a pension which her parents wished to give her, and all the remedies which she was obliged to take during her continual illnesses were only tolerable to her insofar as they were compatible with the greatest poverty; during her life, she carried this virtue of poverty to refinement.

Whatever was her occupation, she was always in prayer. She was so closely united to God, particularly during the first ten years of her profession, that even sleep rarely interrupted this consciousness of His presence, or rather this thought of His presence interrupted her sleep. Her meekness and evenness of temper were all the more admirable because they did not proceed from her natural disposition; she had acquired that admirable tranquillity of soul by constant vigilance over herself, by constant interior mortification, and especially by continuous union with God; and grace elevated her to such a high degree of peace and evenness of spirit that she was proof against all the vicissitudes and occupations of life. She was the enemy of all singularity and regarded as temptations all thoughts of devotions that seemed incompatible with the least duties of her state.

Far from being preoccupied with the care of her weak health, she incessantly importuned her directors and superiors to obtain permission to macerate her body with new austerities. It would have been difficult for her to add any austerities in religion to what she had practiced in the world, and obedience served only as a break to prevent excess in this matter. However, although she had been all her life weighted down with illness and was of extremely delicate constitution and was, nevertheless, always practicing extraordinary mortifications, in her humility, she regarded all this as nothing. The severe mortifications practiced by this sister, who was a lifelong invalid, afford material to confound the cowardice of many people who pass for pious.

Her extreme care all through life to seek occasions of mortifying herself and her great fidelity in profiting by these occasions, were a great source of these great graces which Heaven lavished on her. She had such a great natural repugnance to a certain kind of food that her parents thought themselves obliged to make it a condition of their permission to her to enter that she would never be asked to take it. Towards the end of her novitiate one of the sisters offered her, by mistake, this food; she thought it would be a good opportunity

to make a little sacrifice which would be as pleasing to God as she found it difficult. Pressed by her desire to deny no sacrifice to God, she overcame her repugnance. Jesus Christ liberally rewarded the generosity of His servant. On that evening at prayer, she felt her heart so inflamed with ardent love for Jesus Christ that she could not contain its vehemence. The Son of God showed her how many graces and signal favors this act of generosity was to gain for her. From that moment interior lights were more vivid, inspirations stronger, graces more abundant, and favors of Heaven more frequent. From that moment, she no longer found any obstacle capable of stopping her on the road of piety.

Her silence, her conversation, and her whole outward demeanor inspired veneration for her person and love for virtue. Those who knew her had no doubt that she preserved intact her baptismal innocence. Her directors spoke of the extreme purity of her soul, and say that it was an example of the height of innocence, delicacy and sublime virtue which a soul governed by God and honored from the cradle by His greatest graces can reach.

It was by means of this great innocence and by the exercise of many virtues that she arrived at that height of contemplation to which she was elevated. If the lives of St. Teresa, of St. Catherine and of several other saints had not made us aware of the marvels which God sometimes works in the souls of those whom He honors with His visits, and to whom He deigns to communicate Himself in prayer, the life of this saintly religious would be sufficient to do so. In fact, the extraordinary graces and great favors conferred on her by God, and the familiar communications which she received frequently from Jesus Christ, were such that we have reason to doubt whether anything more admirable was ever seen in the Church since the days when Jesus Christ conversed familiarly with His Apostles. As she was endowed with a clear intellect and very good judgment, and was extremely humble, on the one hand she could have hardly any doubt that these communications were the work of the Holy Spirit, and

on the other, her humility found it difficult to believe that God would deign to confer such favors on her. In this perplexity, she was obliged to break the silence which her humility had made her keep so long about the extraordinary favors which she had received. She consulted her directors on the matter, but in order to try the virtue and increase the merit of His servant, God permitted that some of her directors should not understand her. They even condemned her great attraction for prayer, treated her as a visionary, and forbade her to follow the inspirations of the Spirit that guided her. One can understand the torture which this treatment caused a person who had too keen a judgment not to see that her directors were deceived, and too great humility not to obey. She spent several years under this hard trial, which she assures us was the hardest she could suffer in this life. But Our Blessed Saviour, to whom she confessed her fear that she might be living under an illusion, told her that He would send her one of His great servants to reassure her.

This great servant was [Blessed] Claude de la Colombière,* who was sent as superior of the Jesuits at Paray le Monial. This wise director, so enlightened in the ways of perfection in which he himself had made such great progress, soon recognized that there was something extraordinary in this soul. He examined with great care all that had reference to her interior dispositions. He discovered such treasures of graces in her that he said that he did not think that there was then in the world a soul more cherished by God, or one that Jesus Christ favored with such intimate communications. He reassured her, and ordered her to allow the Spirit of God, which she had hitherto resisted through fear of illusion, to act freely in her. From that time Blessed Claude held her in great esteem; he even consulted her in many important enterprises, and assures us that he received great help through her prayers. When Blessed Claude was about to leave Paray le Monial, St. Margaret Mary sent him a note telling him that our Sav-

* Blessed Claude is now *Saint* Claude. He was canonized in 1992.

our wished the sacrifice of his life at Paray. Though he had at the time no appearance of death, yet he died soon afterwards, as she had foretold.

Under the guidance of this saintly director, St. Margaret Mary made extraordinary progress on the way to perfection. Among all her virtues, that which constituted her special character was a most ardent and altogether extraordinary love for Jesus Christ. The divine fire with which her heart had been inflamed since her youth, went on ever increasing, and, if the love of Jesus Christ is capable of causing death, she (according to the testimony of the sisters) died of an excess of this ardent love. As soon as she appeared before the Blessed Sacrament she made prodigious efforts to contain the transports of her love. When she began her prayer God took possession of her in such a wonderful manner and poured into her soul such an abundance of lights and consolations, that when she had finished her prayer her whole person was affected by it. These divine ardors became so perceptible during the last years of her life and made such changes in her body, that she suffered from them in an extraordinary way; especially after the Son of God, by a grace similar to that which He had conferred on St. Catherine of Siena and St. Gertrude, had purified her heart in a sensible manner. She experienced the sweet effects of this extraordinary favor until her death.

From the same source, *i.e.*, from her ardent love for Jesus Christ, proceeded this extraordinary love which she had for humiliations, contempt, self-denial, and all kind of suffering which she called her delicious bread. And although God complied with her wishes so liberally on this point, she was all her life so hungry for these humiliations and sufferings, that she often said that she suffered in a strange manner by the very fear which she had of being a single moment without suffering.

The violence which she did herself continually to conquer her extreme delicacy, the victories which she gained in this matter, are so heroic that we would find it hard to believe that there was ever a person of such strength of will and

courage, if we did not know what grace can accomplish in a soul that is specially cherished by God. She was subjected to such rude trials that visible miracles were necessary to sustain her in them. The devil, not being able to overcome her, omitted nothing to make her suffer; but this was not the way to terrify her, because she found only repose and pleasure in suffering.

If obedience had not moderated her fervor, her extreme desire to suffer for Jesus Christ would have carried her to excess. Having one day heard that the last complaint which the Son of God made upon the Cross was of the thirst which He suffered, always ingenious as she was to find new means of imitating her divine Master by sharing in His sufferings, she resolved to pass from Thursday evening to the following Saturday each week without drinking. Although this abstinence was very difficult, she practiced it for a long time until her superior, having learned about it, forbade her to continue it; and to try her obedience still further, she ordered her to drink two or three times outside of meal times on those days. She obeyed, but she soon found new ways of mortifying herself, while obeying. She considered that it would not violate obedience to drink the dirtiest water she could find on those occasions, although this caused her the greatest repugnance. The very thought of it made her shudder, but the only effect this repugnance had on her was to make her reproach herself for her too great delicacy, and resolve to punish her cowardice by drinking it. She did so for several months, causing herself terrible suffering. When her superior learned of her ingenuity in mortifying herself, she concealed her admiration for such extraordinary fervor and generosity. She called her and reproved her so severely that this saintly sister for the rest of her life regarded this action, which is indeed worthy of the greatest admiration, as one of her greatest faults.

One of the surest marks by which we can infallibly recognize whether people are led by the spirit of Jesus Christ, is the esteem and love which they have for obedience, always

distrusting their own lights and always deferring to the opinion of their superiors. It is by this mark that the Spirit of Jesus Christ has been recognized in the conduct of this virtuous religious.

She writes: "Although my divine Saviour has made Himself my Master and Director, nevertheless He wishes me to do nothing of what He orders me without the consent of my superiors, whom He wishes me to obey, in a manner, more exactly than Himself. He teaches me in particular to be on my guard against myself as my most cruel and most powerful enemy; but He assures me that if I put all my confidence in Him and have perfect obedience, depending in all things on the will of my superiors, He will protect me. He tells me not to be troubled by anything that may happen, but to regard all the events of life as ordered by His holy providence and will, which can, when He pleases, turn all things to His glory. On one Easter Sunday, I happened to be engaged in an employment which frequently prevented me from joining in the prayers of the community, and I experienced a sentiment of grief. My divine Master reproved me for it immediately, saying: 'Know that the prayer of submission and sacrifice is more agreeable to Me than contemplation or the holiest meditation.' That impressed itself on my memory, and since that time I have no longer experienced any pain at anything which my superiors ordered me to do."

And in another place she writes: "From this time on, my divine Master has never ceased to reprove me for my faults and to show me how hideous they are. What displeases Him most and what He reproveth me for most severely, is want of respect and attention before the Blessed Sacrament, especially at the time of Office and prayer. Alas! of how many graces have I not deprived myself by distractions, by looking around from curiosity, by a more comfortable but less respectful posture? The sorrow which I feel as soon as I perceive that I have offended Him in anything obliges me to go immediately and ask for some penance, for my divine Saviour assured me

on many occasions that the least penance performed under obedience was more pleasing to Him than the greatest austerities of my own choice. This I can say with certainty, for my divine Saviour assured me a hundred times that there is nothing more injurious to a religious than want of obedience to superiors or to the rule, however little it might appear, and that the least objection on this point, the least sign of repugnance, is an intolerable fault in the eyes of God. 'You are deceiving yourself,' my Saviour said to me, 'by thinking that you can please Me by these kinds of actions or mortifications of your own choice; know that I reject all these things as fruits corrupted by your own will, and that I have a horror of them especially in a religious; it would please Me more that a religious accept under obedience all her little comforts than to afflict herself with austerities and fasts of her own choice.'

"I have found by experience that if I happen to do any of these kinds of mortification without the express permission of my superior, my divine Saviour does not permit me to offer it to Him, but punishes me for it instantly. One day when I wished to continue a penance imposed on me under obedience, I heard the voice of my amiable Saviour saying to me: 'What you have done so far is for Me, but what you are going to do is for the demon.' I desisted immediately and resolved to die rather than deviate in the smallest from the orders of my superior; to accomplish this I am resolved to sacrifice everything: inspirations, desires, visions, and extraordinary graces."

God showed by miracles how pleasing this perfect obedience is to Him. The following, which bears out this, was written by one of her superiors after her death:

"When, on one occasion, I went to visit her in the infirmary, where she had been for more than a year ill, suffering from a strange malady, she asked me for permission to rise the following morning to assist at holy Mass, and anticipated any objections by assuring me that if I consented God would give her sufficient strength. Although there was no prospect

that she would be able to do so, I permitted her on condition that she should not get up early and that she should not be fasting. She desired to receive Holy Communion, and wishing to be dispensed from this condition, she asked the sister in charge of the infirmary to obtain the complete favor for her, which was the permission to receive Holy Communion. This sister promised to do so, and on the following morning assisted her to rise, not doubting but that I would grant the permission. God so permitted that I should enter the infirmary just when the infirmarian had gone out to look for me. Astonished at seeing the patient up contrary to my orders, I reprimanded her severely, exaggerating the pretended defects in her conduct, especially her disobedience and her attachment to her own will. 'You will go to Mass,' I added in a tone of displeasure, 'you will receive Holy Communion; but since your own will can give you sufficient strength when you wish, I also wish to command in my turn. You had sufficient strength to get up when you wished and sufficient strength to go to Mass. You will then be able to follow the exercises of the community for the future; return to your ordinary room, I forbid you the use of all medicines; leave the infirmary now and do not return to it for six months, except to visit sick sisters when there are any there.' This holy sister received my correction on her knees with her hands joined, with extraordinary meekness and humility. She humbly asked pardon for her fault and a suitable penance. She then got up as if she had not been ill, and carried out to the letter all that I commanded her. You know, my dear sisters, that during the six years that I was superior in your house, this holy sister had never been in health except during these six months. We all looked on this as a visible miracle, since at the very hour when the six months were up, she fell sick suddenly just as she had been before."

However great the pain she might suffer, she never asked for any relief. When sometimes there was a short interval between her long periods of illness, it was always remarkable for some excess of fervor. Though she was weak during these

intervals, yet she always remained on her knees before the Blessed Sacrament. "On one Holy Thursday," writes her superior, "just as she was recovering from a heavy fit of illness, she asked me so earnestly for permission to spend the night in the church that I could not refuse her. She knelt down in the choir in the evening and remained there motionless until eight o'clock the following morning, when she went and took her place with the other sisters to recite the Office. She told me afterwards that during the night Our Lord made her share in the extreme sorrows of His agony, and that she had never passed any time of her life in a state more conformable to her inclination because she had never before suffered so much."

This great desire which she had for suffering is brought out in her letters to a Jesuit Father (Father Croiset) in whom she had great confidence and to whom she revealed her most secret thoughts, for she always feared lest she might be suffering from delusions.

She writes: "Nothing in this world is capable of pleasing me except the Cross of my divine Master, a Cross like His own, heavy and ignominious without sweetness or consolation or relief. Let other people be so fortunate as to accompany my divine Saviour in His ascent to Thabor; for my part I wish to know of no other road but that to Calvary, for nothing but the Cross has any attraction for me. My lot will be, then, to be on Calvary until my last sigh, amidst the scourges, the thorns, the nails and the Cross, without consolation or pleasure but that of having none. And what happiness to be able to suffer always in silence and finally to die on the Cross, crushed under the weight of all kinds of misery of body and mind, forgotten and despised, for the one cannot please me without the other! Then, Reverend Father, bless and thank my sovereign Master for me, that He honors me so lovingly and so liberally with His precious Cross, not leaving me a moment without suffering. Ah, without the Cross what would I do in this valley of tears, where I lead such a criminal life that I regard myself as a most miserable wretch? That thought makes me fear lest I render myself

unworthy of the happiness of bearing the Cross and of making myself resemble my Jesus in His sufferings. I beg of you, if you have any charity for me, to ask this amiable Saviour not to reject me on account of the bad use that I have hitherto made of this precious treasure of the Cross and not to deprive me of the happiness of suffering; for that is all the alleviation that I find for the length of my exile. Let us never weary of suffering in silence. The Cross is good at all times and in every place to unite us to Jesus Christ suffering and dying. We cannot really love Him without suffering for Him; and I can say that I do not love Him at all, since it seems to me that I suffer so little, that my greatest suffering is that I do not suffer enough. I make it my pleasure to know that others are filled with the sweetness of the love of enjoyment; for myself I wish for no other pleasure than to see myself sunk in the abyss of the sorrows of pure, suffering love. But I perceive that I am yielding to my own satisfaction in speaking about suffering, but I cannot do otherwise, for my ardent thirst for suffering is a torment which I cannot describe to you; nevertheless I know well that I neither know how to love nor suffer, which shows me that all that I say about it is the effect of the self-love and secret pride which lives in me. Ah! how I fear that all these ideas about suffering are only artifices of the devil to amuse me with vain and sterile sentiments! Let me know simply what you think of all this."

In another letter she writes: "My Reverend Father, I seem never to be at rest except when I see myself in the abyss of humiliations and sufferings, unknown to everyone, and buried in eternal oblivion; or if anyone thinks of me, that it will be only to despise me the more and to give me some new occasion to suffer something for God. This is what I am incessantly demanding from my divine Saviour; I do not know whether there is any illusion in this, but I can assure you that with the exception of His love, I cannot ask for anything else; or rather I only know how to ask for one thing for myself—namely, an ardent love for Jesus Christ crucified, and consequently, a suffering love."

In another place she writes: "I do not know whether I am deceived, but it seems to me that my greatest desire would be to love my amiable Saviour with a love more ardent than that of the Seraphim; I would not object, it seems to me, that it should be in Hell I would love Him. The thought that there will be a place where during all eternity an infinite number of souls redeemed by the precious Blood of Jesus Christ will never love this amiable Saviour afflicts me to excess. I would wish, O my divine Saviour, if it were Thy will, to suffer all the torments of Hell, provided that I might love Thee as much as all those wretched souls who will suffer forever and never love Thee, could love Thee in Heaven. Is it reasonable that there should be a place where for all eternity Jesus Christ will not be loved? Truly, if it were known how ardently I desire to suffer and to be despised, I feel sure that charity would urge everyone to satisfy me in this respect."

But the virtue of patience does not consist in the mere desire to suffer; we have reason to be on our guard against this kind of desire so long as Heaven does not put our virtue to the test, and it is properly only in the exercise of humiliations and sufferings that we can judge whether we really love the Cross. We have already seen that the life of humiliations and sufferings of this virtuous sister was in perfect harmony with these sentiments.

Her superior, who was a religious of great virtue and merit, seeing the great treasures of graces that God poured out on this saintly sister, did all in her power to help her to attain the high degree of virtue to which God had called her; she believed that the surest and most efficacious means of doing this was to exercise her virtue by humiliating her on every occasion that offered. She succeeded in doing so, for profiting by the unfavorable dispositions of the most of the sisters of the community towards this saintly sister, she paid no heed to her virtue externally, she disapproved of her conduct, she showed that she distrusted the extraordinary ways by which God was conducting her. This severe treatment which she received would have persuaded any other that she

might at least try to justify herself with her superior without doing anything against perfection. But she did not give heed to this sentiment. Everything which she did was interpreted in an unfavorable sense; whether she gave an account of her conduct under obedience in order to appease the sisters, or accused herself in the excess of her humility, she was always blamed. When accused of suffering from imaginary sicknesses, when called a hypocrite in her devotions, a visionary in her prayers, humiliated within, condemned from without, always persecuted, she never allowed the smallest word of complaint to escape from her, never could the smallest sign of sadness or vexation be observed in her actions or on her countenance.

A person must sometimes do violence to himself not to show forth the sentiments of his heart, but how difficult it is to keep silence when a single word would suffice to avoid confusion that is not merited! A person must have reached a very high degree of perfection not to be even moved by such kinds of humiliation. This was how this holy sister always acted in these circumstances, to the admiration of those who knew her. As an example of this we give the following: One day when the parlor was occupied, her superior permitted her to give an account of the state of her conscience in the confessional to Blessed Claude de la Colombière. Some of the sisters who were not aware that she had permission to use the confessional, complained to the superior. She was severely reprimanded in the presence of the community and punished by the superior herself, who had given the permission. The edification of her neighbor and a hundred other reasons should have, one would think, obliged her to justify her conduct; but the joy which she experienced at seeing herself despised and humiliated made her embrace these little crosses and thank God fervently for them. She received this great humiliation with amazing submission, and no one ever heard her make any complaint about it.

The pleasure which she experienced in being humiliated inspired her with special affection for all those who procured

humiliations for her. One of her superiors at Paray le Monial wrote: "It is true that this illustrious sister who has died, had great affection for me, but it gives me great pleasure to tell you the source of this affection. Being fully persuaded of her sincere desire to suffer and to be humiliated, I was accustomed to use no moderation in her regard and allowed no occasion to pass to exercise her virtue. When the superior who succeeded me treated her more gently this saintly sister wrote to me as follows:

"How can it be that with so many faults and miseries my soul is always hungry after suffering? But when I think that you were accustomed to do me the favor of sustaining it sometimes with this delicious bread so repugnant to human nature, and that now I am deprived of this happiness because, no doubt, of the bad use which I made of it, I am overcome with grief. I assure you that nothing has attached me to you so much as your conduct towards me; which I cannot think of without sentiments of the tenderest gratitude; for you could not have given me more certain or more agreeable proofs of perfect friendship than by humiliating and mortifying one so imperfect as I have been. Although you have not done so sufficiently, considering the reasons I have given you, however, the little consoles me and sweetens the bitterness of life, which is insupportable to me without suffering when I see my divine Master on the Cross. However, I have never learned well how to suffer, there is nothing which I do so badly, although there is nothing which I desire so ardently. The reason is that I do not love God enough, because I love myself too much. O my dear Mother, how bitter it is to live without loving God, and how can anyone love a God crucified without loving the Cross? without living and dying on the Cross? It seems to me that I lived in security under your control because you had the charity to contradict my inclinations sometimes; alas! I have made myself unworthy of these favors. However, my love for humiliations increases, and I do not know whether it is because I suffer hardly anything at present that the desire to die presses me more than

ever. I could never resign myself to ask of God the years which you have advised me to demand, except on condition that they would be employed in honoring the Sacred Heart of my Jesus in silence and in penance, without ever more offending Him, remaining night and day before the adorable Sacrament of the Altar, where this divine Heart is all my consolation here below.’

“It might be said that her great desire to suffer constantly was efficacious; and when the universal esteem and remarkable veneration which people had for her exalted virtue prevented her from finding new occasions of suffering, God Himself exercised her patience by interior crosses which sometimes reduced her to extremity.”

Writing to one of the Jesuit Fathers she said: “My Sovereign Master has granted me much consolation from reading the letter which you were so good as to write me, but this was only after He had, for quite a long time, forbidden me to read it because of my too great eagerness to seek consolation from it in this painful, suffering state in which He has placed me during this time of the Carnival when so many sinners offend Him and abandon Him. For this seems to me to be a time of such great sorrow and bitterness for me, that I am incapable of seeing or tasting anything but my Jesus in His sufferings, compassionating Him in His sorrows, with which my divine Saviour penetrates me so vividly that I no longer recognize myself. Everything serves His divine justice as an instrument to torment this criminal victim in such a way that I cannot do otherwise than sacrifice myself as a victim of immolation to His justice; and I seem to suffer in such a strange manner that I confess that, if His infinite mercy did not sustain me while His justice makes me feel the weight of its rigor, it would be impossible for me to endure it for a moment. Nevertheless, all this takes place in unalterable peace. I content myself with acquiescing in His good pleasure; it suffices for me that my divine Saviour is satisfied. I did not think that I could write to you, for I would not wish to say anything in the state in which I am

except these words of my amiable Saviour: 'My soul is sorrowful even unto death' or these others: 'My God, why hast Thou abandoned Me?'

"However, I can assure you that the more I suffer, the more I feel increase the ardent thirst which I have for suffering; I even fear that I take too much satisfaction in suffering. Finally, the attitude which I am resolved to adopt in all this is to abandon myself and submit myself perfectly to the infinite goodness of my sovereign Master, even moderating the ardent desire which I have for sufferings, leaving to Him the care to do everything. And since I desire nothing in the world except to do His holy will perfectly, it matters little whether it be in consolation or affliction. You could hardly believe how much I suffer in writing all this; for although I am persuaded that I have done nothing at all to merit the graces of my Sovereign Master, the lack of correspondence with them will perhaps be the cause of my greatest condemnation; nevertheless I suffer a kind of martyrdom when He obliges me to speak to you of them."

Urged by the same motive, she desired most eagerly to lead a hidden life and to be forgotten. The first thing which she did on entering religious life was to forbid herself the remembrance of everything which she had left in the world. She regarded the parlor as a place of punishment, and although she concealed her great repugnance when sometimes her superiors obliged her to go there, it is incredible how much this act of obedience cost her.

One of the former superiors of Paray le Monial wrote to one of the sisters there: "When, as you may remember, Sister X fell down with a fit of apoplexy, fearing that she should die without the Sacraments I ordered Sister Margaret Mary to go immediately before the Blessed Sacrament and ask Our Lord to restore to this sister the use of her reason. She obeyed and soon afterwards she told me that Our Lord made known to her that He would hear her prayer on condition that she made a vow at that moment to sacrifice to God what cost her most; this was to go to the parlor without showing repug-

nance, whenever she was called there. As I knew the great pain it caused her to conquer herself in this respect I exhorted her to make this vow. No sooner had she obeyed than the sister who was ill recovered the use of her reason and received all the Sacraments. I thought that this vow would have lessened her extreme repugnance; but God willed that she was obliged to do violence to herself up to the time of her death to fulfill her vow; on every occasion that she was obliged to go to the parlor, it seemed to her that she was going to violate her vow, so great was her difficulty in concealing her repugnance.”

She had made it an inviolable law never to write to anyone except when absolutely necessary; and then an express command to do so was required.

This great desire which she had to remain hidden and unknown can be seen in her letters and in the extraordinary care which she took to hide the great favors which she had received. She requested those to whom she wrote under obedience to burn all her letters and to keep her secrets inviolable. Her secrets were kept during her life, but the glory of Him who conferred such great graces on her, and the edification of the faithful, demanded that those treasures of graces be made public after her death. She retained this desire to be humiliated and to remain unknown until her last breath. A few hours before her death, she begged her superiors never to speak of anything she had told them in confidence that might be advantageous to her, and she asked one of the sisters to write to a certain priest asking him to burn all her letters.

Such heroic and solid virtue soon raised her to the sublime degree of perfection for which God had destined her. Although she had long lived a life of such perfection, she thought she had done nothing unless she bound herself by an express vow to do always what she believed to be most perfect. Few people, however holy, would be capable of executing such a project; it would require a St. Teresa to exercise such heroic virtue. A matter of such importance demanded long and serious consideration; it was only after observing

faultlessly for years what she proposed to bind herself by vow to do, that she asked permission to make it. Her director and superior, who had perfect knowledge of the state of her soul, granted her the permission. She made this vow on the vigil of the Feast of All Saints, and wrote down all the details with her own hand. A glance at the contents of this vow is sufficient to show that when she made it she had already arrived at the pinnacle of sanctity:

“The following is the subject matter of the vow which I have long felt myself urged to make to God and by which, however, I have not wished to bind myself without the advice of my director and the permission of my superior. They, having examined it, have permitted me to make it on the condition that if it should cause me trouble or scruples, my superior can dispense me from it and make my obligation cease in whatever articles might cause me trouble. The sole object of this vow is to unite me more closely to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ Our Lord, and to bind me inviolably to what He shows me that He desires of me. But, alas! I feel myself so inconstant and weak that I would not dare to make any promise except relying on the goodness and charity and mercy of this adorable Heart of Jesus, for the love of whom I make this vow, not intending by it to make myself more troubled and constrained, but rather more faithful to my Sovereign Master.

“My divine Master has given me grounds to hope that He Himself will give me all the assistance necessary for the practice and the perfect accomplishment of this vow. I seek only by it to give proof to God of more pure and ardent love by crucifying my flesh and my senses for love of Him. May this God of goodness grant me this grace! Amen.

May God be praised!”

“Vow made on the eve of All Saints to consecrate myself, immolate myself and bind myself more closely and more perfectly to the Sacred Heart of Our Saviour Jesus Christ:

“1) In the first place, O my only Love, I will endeavor to subject to Thee and to keep in submission to Thee all that is in me, always doing what I believe to be most perfect and most pleasing to Thy Sacred Heart. I promise Thee that I will spare nothing that is in my power, and that I will not refuse to do or suffer anything whatsoever that presents itself, which conduces to make Thee known, loved, honored and glorified.

“2) I will not neglect or omit any of my exercises or the observance of any of my rules except for motives of charity or real necessity, or of obedience, to which I submit all my promises.

“3) I will endeavor to make it my pleasure to see others elevated, loved and respected, thinking that this is due to them but not to me, who ought to be annihilated in the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ. I will place all my glory in bearing my cross, in living poor, unknown and despised, desiring never to appear except to be humiliated and opposed, whatever repugnance my proud nature may find therein.

“4) I wish to suffer in silence without complaining, no matter how I may be treated.

“5) I will not avoid any occasion of suffering whether it be bodily pain or humiliations, contempt or opposition.

“6) I will not seek or procure for myself any satisfaction, pleasure or contentment except that of having none in this life; and when providence will present me with any which I cannot avoid, then I will accept them, renouncing interiorly every sentiment of pleasure, and not thinking whether I am satisfied or not, but rather applying myself only to love my Sovereign, and seeking in all things and on all occasions only to do what is pleasing to Him.

“7) I will not procure any relief for myself but what necessity obliges me to seek, and I will ask for it simply according to my rule. That will deliver me from the constant pain caused by the fear I have of flattering this body and granting too much to this cruel enemy.

“8) I will leave my superior entire liberty to dispose of

me as seems best to her, accepting with humility and indifference the occupations which obedience will give me, showing most joy for the things for which I feel most repugnance.

“9) Without henceforth troubling about myself, I will abandon myself totally to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, that He may console me or afflict me according to His good pleasure; contenting myself with adhering to all His holy operations and dispositions, regarding myself as a victim which ought always to be in the continual exercise of immolation and sacrifice according to His good pleasure, and being attached to nothing except to loving Him and pleasing Him, by acting and suffering in silence.

“10) I will never inquire about the faults of others, and when I may be obliged to speak of them, I will do so in the charity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, thinking in myself that I would be very pleased to be treated in that way. And when I see anyone commit a fault, I will offer to the Eternal Father a virtue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus opposite to that fault to repair it in some way.

“11) I will regard as my best friends all those who will afflict me or speak evil of me, and I will endeavor to render them all the services, and do them all the good I can.

“12) I will endeavor not to speak of myself, or to speak of myself very little; and never, if possible, to praise myself or to justify myself.

“13) I will not seek the friendship of any creature, except the Sacred Heart of Jesus inclines me to bring that creature to His love.

“14) I will apply myself continually to conform and submit my will in everything to that of my Sovereign.

“15) I will refrain from dwelling voluntarily, not only on any bad thoughts, but on thoughts that are useless. I will regard myself as a poor servant in the house of God, who ought to be submissive to all the people in the house, receiving as alms whatever is given to me, being persuaded that whatever people give me, they always give me too much.

“16) I will, as far as possible, neither do nor omit any-

thing through human respect, or through a vain desire of pleasing creatures; and as I have asked Our Lord not to allow anything that is the effect of His extraordinary graces to appear in me except what will bring me some contempt and confusion or some humiliation before creatures, thus I will regard it as a great happiness when all that I say or do will be despised, censured or blamed, endeavoring to do or to suffer everything for the love and in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ Our Lord, and for His holy intentions, to which I unite myself in everything.

“17) I will study to do or say nothing except in view of procuring some glory for God, edification for my neighbor, and increase in virtue, making myself faithful and constant in the practice of the good which my divine Master will show me that He desires of me, committing no voluntary fault or at least not pardoning myself for any, but taking vengeance on myself for all faults by some voluntary penance.

“18) I will watch over myself in order not to grant human nature anything except what I cannot legitimately refuse it and without making myself singular, which I wish to avoid in everything. Finally I wish to live without any will of my own, being attached to nothing and saying at everything that happens ‘Thy will be done!’

“When I consider the great number of details in this vow which I am about to take, I am seized with such great fear of being wanting in some of them that I would not have the courage to bind myself, had I not been reassured and strengthened by those words which were said to me in the depths of my soul: ‘What do you fear, since I have answered for you and have made Myself your guarantee? The unity of My pure love will take the place of attention to the multiplicity of all these things; and be assured that this same love will make you repair all the little faults that you will commit against this vow by making you expiate them by mortifications and austerities.’

“These words gave me such confidence and assurance that,

notwithstanding my great weakness, I put aside all fear and placed my whole confidence in Him who can accomplish everything, and from whom I hope for everything, placing no confidence in myself.”

This vow shows what grace can accomplish in a generous and faithful soul, and what this same grace does in a heart inflamed with the pure love of Jesus Christ. A vow that extended to the smallest actions and to the least thoughts might appear to be very troublesome. It would have been so indeed, if the same Spirit that had prompted her to make it had not at the same time taught her a sure and easy way to practice it without scruple and without troubling her peace of heart. This means was none other than the continuous exercise of pure and perfect love of Jesus Christ.

“Whatever obligation your vow imposes on you,” said our Saviour to her, “of thinking at almost every moment of so many things, know that you will satisfy all by loving Me without reserve and without interruption; think and apply yourself to loving Me perfectly; pay attention only to loving Me and consequently only to pleasing Me on every occasion and in every thing; let My love be the object and the end of all your thoughts, actions and desires; breathe only My love, and endeavor so to love Me that you may love Me daily more. I assure you that, without troubling yourself about anything else, you will accomplish more by this holy exercise, than you have promised by your vow.”

This is the proper explanation of those words of our Saviour: “It will be sufficient to attend to the unity of My love in the multiplicity of all these things.”

Mediocre virtue usually remains in obscurity, providence does not deign to put it to the test; but it is not so with sublime virtue; in vain does it seek to hide itself; its brilliancy will show itself, but this external light will be the result of much exercise of virtue. God, who had destined this virtuous sister for the most sublime sanctity, willed that her virtue should resemble that of all the Saints—that is, accompanied with humiliations, contempt and sufferings. However

great the care she took to live forgotten and to lead an obscure, hidden life, her virtue was too great to remain long unknown; its brilliancy showed itself; her reputation extended far beyond the limits of the convent; she was spoken of as *the Saint*. But providence permitted that this high esteem for her virtue should only give occasion to certain people to exercise her patience; and her extreme desire to suffer would have been fully satisfied by the great sufferings which she had to endure and which she gladly bore, if her desire for suffering had not gone on increasing day by day. We do not propose to go into detail here with this subject; but when, later on, her life is written, her historian will find plenty of material from this period of her life to enrich his history with the most sublime examples of heroic patience. He will at the same time find occasion to show forth the wonderful ways of providence that allowed this great servant of Jesus Christ to be so long humiliated, although everyone was agreed about her perfect obedience, her continual mortification, her extraordinary merit and especially her profound and sincere humility.

A very meritorious personage, having listened to stories about this saintly religious from a person prejudiced against her, became of the same opinion about her at first. He even considered it his duty to try to undeceive other people who were better informed than himself and who had a high idea of her virtue. He did all in his power to discredit her; he accused her of hypocrisy; he called her a visionary infatuated with a fantastic kind of sanctity, who took pleasure in deceiving herself and who tried to deceive others by an appearance of virtue full of nonsense and illusions. The sentiments which this important person entertained about her got noised abroad and created a strange impression, disturbing the minds of many. The fear which she herself had of really suffering from delusion caused her great confusion. She describes it as follows: "I feel myself afflicted in many ways, but the most painful is to regard myself as the plaything of the devil. I see that everything in me is worthy of chastisement, since I

have been so miserable as not only to deceive myself, but perhaps by my hypocrisy to deceive others as well, although I do not think that I ever intended to do so. However, I should have no more doubt about the matter after the opinion expressed by this great servant of God. I have reason to thank Our Lord for having sent him to undeceive those who have been so simple as to entertain any good opinion of me. What great obligation shall I not be under all my life to this great servant of God for having rendered me this important service of making me known to myself and to others just as I am! I can assure you that nothing gives me greater consolation than to know that creatures have been undeceived and that I can now satisfy God's justice and remain in eternal oblivion. This thought consoles me and in a moment has alleviated all my sufferings."

The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the establishment of which God had chosen her, brought on her at first persecution that was all the more painful because it came from those very people who should have been the first to approve of it. Although their idea of her virtue was very high, she had no sooner spoken of this devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, than they called her a visionary and, without even knowing the meaning of the devotion, they forbade her to speak of it, and this continued until God, who is Master of all hearts, so changed the hearts and minds of those who put obstacles in her way, that she had the consolation of seeing this solid devotion approved of, preached and established almost everywhere a couple of years before her death.

It may be said that the amiable Saviour has, in our time, united in the person of this saintly religious all the extraordinary graces which He had in past ages conferred on all His greatest servants. She had the happiness of conversing familiarly with Jesus Christ frequently like St. Mechtilde and St. Gertrude. The Son of God gave her His Heart in the same manner in which He had given It to St. Catherine of Siena: He took hers, purified it and inflamed it with His pure love. He willed to leave her, as He had left St. Teresa, a contin-

ual and sensible proof of this extraordinary grace by a pain in her side so severe that no human remedy could relieve it; this pain accompanied her to the tomb. The bare enumeration of these extraordinary graces, and especially of the admirable lessons which she received from her divine Master, would fill a large volume. An account of these favors, written by herself, was found after her death.

But among such remarkable favors, the truth of which we have no reason to doubt because of the visible proofs which we have for them, what seems to be the greatest and most deserving of admiration is the low opinion which she always had of herself. She believed herself to be a hypocrite. She said that she had always been deceiving people, and that perhaps she was deceived herself; she not only said that she was unworthy to live among the holy sisters, but she conducted herself towards them in such a way as to show that she believed it. These were always her sentiments with regard to herself, and she died with these same sentiments. Such sincere and profound humility would have robbed us of the knowledge of the extraordinary graces which she had received, had not the person in whom she had particular confidence and whom she consulted frequently on matters of conscience obliged her, for greater security, to write down for him an account of all the remarkable favors which she had received from God. The great repugnance which she felt to do this made her put off for a long time the execution of this request, until God had made known to her that she was to do so and her superior ordered her to obey. We are then in the happy position of learning from herself of the great graces conferred on her by God as well as of all that concerns the devotion of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, for the establishment of which she received such remarkable favors. The precautions which she took to remain forever unknown while obeying in this matter are another signal proof of the sincerity of her sentiments. Thus we have been able to learn of some of the marvels which God has wrought in this saintly sister. At first we thought of publishing her letters in abridged form, but we

considered that it would be against the designs of providence to omit the smallest portion, for the reading over of these letters would always be productive of spiritual good and would never cause weariness. The following is what she wrote:

“Reverend Father, the ardent and just desire which, since my earliest years, has always urged me to live poor, unknown, forgotten and despised, would have prevented me from ever writing or appearing in the parlor, if obedience, which is an inviolable law for me had not ordered it otherwise by not allowing me to follow my own inclination. My only consolation is that I have the happiness to obey in writing to you.

“I confess that my divine Master conducts me on a road completely opposed to my inclinations. I have a strange aversion for all positions of responsibility in the community. I have an equally great aversion for the parlor and for writing letters. However, I was obliged to sacrifice my inclinations constantly in these matters, and found no repose day or night until I bound myself by vow to obey blindly in all these things, and as far as possible not to allow my extreme repugnance to appear. In spite of all this, I experienced even greater repugnance than formerly, but I accept this cross with all the others with which it may please my divine Saviour to honor me, and I confess that if I were a single moment without suffering, I would believe that He had forgotten me and abandoned me.

“You ask me to speak out all my sentiments. Alas! it is not in my power to do as you request; I must write as it pleases my sovereign Master. If you were aware to what extent He renders me powerless to say more than He wishes, you would advise me to keep silent rather than think of offering Him the smallest resistance. But amidst all the graces which I receive from His mercy, I confess to you seriously that I fear lest I may be deceiving myself and that I am deceiving those whom charity has prompted to entertain thoughts too favorable to me, and too far removed from what I really am. Do not you be among that number, but having examined before God all that I am about to tell in the strictest

secrecy, I ask you to write and tell me whether I am in error; for although I have been already reassured on this point, I cannot get rid of the fear that I may be under a delusion. For several years I have had, strictly speaking, no other director than my sovereign Master; for from the time when I commenced to know myself, He assumed such absolute dominion over my will that He obliged me to obey Him in everything, so that, in a certain sense, I could not escape from it. He Himself reproved me for my faults, even the smallest ones, with sweet severity. I then conceived such a horror for sin, that I was accustomed to hide myself in order to weep at leisure when I perceived that I had committed the smallest fault. My divine Master Himself taught me how to make mental prayer though I had never heard of it. My only pleasure was to spend whole hours on my knees before the Blessed Sacrament. I sighed constantly for some place of solitude where I might live poor, despised and unknown, and as soon as I entered religion, I doubted not that I had found the place of retreat for which I had sighed so long. Since that time, my amiable Saviour poured out His greatest graces in such profusion into the soul of His unworthy servant that I had difficulty in containing the joy and the ineffable sweetness which I felt in my heart. This joy was, however, for some time troubled by the fear that these great favors might insensibly bring me to dispense myself from my smallest duties; but this fear was soon dispelled by the promise which my divine Saviour made to me that He would so adjust His great graces to the spirit of my rule and to the obedience which I owed to my Superiors, that one would never be in opposition to the other.

“I have long enjoyed this sweet peace; but God permitted several people to believe that I was deceived by the Spirit that conducted me; they ordered me to resist all His inspirations, they forbade me to follow the impulses which He gave me.

“I made all possible efforts to obey, believing that I was certainly in error, but all my efforts were in vain. I then be-

came convinced that I was abandoned by God and that I was among the lost souls, because people made me believe that it was not the Spirit of God that possessed me; and I found by experience however, that no matter what efforts I made, it was impossible for me to resist this Spirit. I was in this most terrible state of mind until my divine Master sent Father Claude de la Colombière [now Blessed Claude] who, He told me, was one of His most faithful servants and dearest friends. This saintly director put an end to all my trouble by assuring me it was the Spirit of God that conducted me, and he ordered me to walk without fear in the way in which it might please Him to conduct me. From this time on, I entered into that great tranquillity of heart and into that sweet peace in which my dear Saviour has always preserved me amidst the crosses, humiliations and sufferings with which He has never ceased to honor His unworthy slave and in which alone I can find my consolation, my enjoyment and my repose.”

Subsequently in obedience to an express command she wrote the following letter: “I am obliged to make known to Your Reverence the great graces which my Saviour has granted me and of which I would wish never to think, because I never think of them without suffering extraordinary affliction at the sight of my ingratitude which, without doubt, would have precipitated me into Hell, were it not that the mercy of my divine Saviour and the all-powerful intercession of the Blessed Virgin, my good Mother, have disarmed the justice of God in my regard. To tell what I think, I never reflect on these great graces but I fear exceedingly that having deceived myself I may also deceive those to whom I am obliged by obedience to speak. I never cease to ask of God that He may grant me the grace to be unknown, annihilated and buried in eternal oblivion, and I regard this favor as the greatest that He has conferred upon me. For that reason, it is only under the two following conditions that I can bring myself to write to your Reverence as you desire: The first condition is that you burn my letter when you have read it;

the second, that you keep all that I write an inviolable secret. My Divine Master gave me to understand that He wishes this sacrifice of me, but I do not think that He wishes that any remembrance of so wicked a creature should remain on the earth.

“I tell you this once for all; your promise to observe these two conditions faithfully will alleviate the pain I feel in writing and will preserve my soul in great peace. I trust that you will give me your views, for I do not know what to think when I consider on the one hand so many graces, and on the other, a life so little in conformity with such great benefits.

“I will tell you, then, that the Divine Saviour having one day appeared to His unworthy slave said to me: ‘I seek a victim of immolation for the accomplishment of My designs.’ Then feeling myself penetrated with the greatness of this sovereign Majesty, I prostrated myself humbly at His feet and presented to Him several holy souls who would correspond faithfully with His designs. ‘No, I want no other but yourself,’ the amiable Saviour said to me, ‘and I have chosen you for that purpose.’ Then bursting into tears, I replied that He knew well that I was a criminal, and that victims should be innocent; that truly I had no other will than His, but that I could not make a resolution to do anything except what my superior should order me. To this He consented. I continued, however, to resist His inspirations through the great fear which I had lest these extraordinary ways might draw me away from the simple spirit of my vocation. But it was in vain that I resisted Him, for He gave me no repose until, by order of obedience, I had sacrificed myself to all that He desired of me—which was to make me a victim immolated to all kinds of sufferings, humiliations, contradictions, pains and contempt without any other intention than that of accomplishing His designs. When with all my heart I had offered myself for this, He told me that He knew what my fears were, but He promised me (as I think I have already told you) that He would so adjust His graces to the spirit

of my rule, to the obedience due to my superiors and to my own weakness and infirmity, that they would not run counter to the other. After this, He made me share in His graces in such profusion, that I did not know myself. So many extraordinary favors and such great benefits increased still more the fears that I had of coming under notice; this obliged me to ask of Him immediately that He would not allow anything to appear in me, except what would render me more vile and contemptible in the eyes of creatures, and it seems to me that He promised me this.

“In a retreat which I made some time afterwards, my amiable Saviour revealed to me the greater part of the graces which He intended to confer on me, principally those which I was to receive through the devotion to His Sacred Heart. Whereupon I prostrated myself at His feet and implored Him that in His mercy, He would give His graces to some faithful soul that would know how to correspond to them, knowing well that I was only fit to serve as an obstacle to His designs. He then gave me to understand that it was for that reason that He had chosen me, in order that being perfectly persuaded of my own nothingness, I could not attribute to myself any of the blessings which He would confer on me, and He promised that He Himself would supply for all that would be wanting in me.

“At another time this Sovereign of my soul, who takes delight in displaying the treasures of His merits in the weakest subjects and those least suited for His great designs, having honored me by visiting me, said to me (it seems to me) that He had come to tell me how much I would have to suffer for the rest of my life for His love and for the execution of His designs. Profoundly prostrated in His presence, I could not persuade myself that God would ever deign to render me capable of suffering anything for His love. Nevertheless, the desire of suffering for His love increased in me in such measure that I would have wished to see all the instruments of torture employed against me to make me suffer for Jesus Christ. Then my divine Saviour revealed to me clearly (it

seems to me) all the humiliations and sufferings which were to come on me till the hour of my death; and what consoles me still more is that He revealed this to me with such strong impressions that all these sufferings, which were then only in my imagination, imprinted themselves on me in a manner as vivid and perceptible as if I had suffered them all. Whereupon He told me that I should fear nothing because He wished to confer a new grace on me still greater than all the others which He had already conferred on me. This favor would cause me never to lose sight of Him, always having Him intimately present to me. I regard this favor as the consummation of all the other favors that I had up to then received from His infinite mercy, for since that time I have never ceased to have this divine Saviour intimately present. He instructs me, He sustains me, He warns me about my faults and He never ceases to increase in me by His grace the ardent desire of loving Him perfectly and of suffering for His love. This Divine Presence inspires me with such respect that when I am alone I am obliged to prostrate myself with my face pressed to the ground and to annihilate myself, so to speak, in the presence of my Saviour and my God; especially when I think of what I am—the most wretched of all slaves, who certainly do not merit even this position of slave of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, all these graces are accompanied with an unalterable peace, an interior joy and especially an ever-increasing desire to be humiliated, despised, annihilated and overwhelmed with all kind of sufferings in order to be a little less unworthy to be the least of the servants of Jesus Christ. But, Reverend Father, how can it be that poverty, contempt, sorrows, and humiliations have such an attraction for me that I regard them as delicious morsels for which my soul hungers unceasingly; how can it be true that these things are the marks of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and nevertheless I suffer so little that it seems to me that I suffer nothing!

“Besides, I confess to you, Reverend Father, that this Sovereign of my soul has assumed such dominion over me that,

if it is not the Spirit of God that possesses me, I would be damned in the lowest depths of Hell. I tell you all this as I believe I experience it. But alas! may I not be deceived? For I assure you that whenever I reflect on myself, I discover so many imperfections and miseries and so little fidelity and gratitude for so many favors that I cannot get rid of the thought that all these great graces of which I have already spoken to you and the others, which I am obliged by obedience to tell you of later on, are only the result of error and delusion. Write and tell me, Reverend Father, what you think of this and what I ought to do.

“I cannot undertake to give you all the details concerning the extraordinary favors which my Saviour has conferred on me in connection with the devotion to His Sacred Heart. The following is all that I am able to tell you to satisfy the orders of my Superiors:

“On the Feast of St. John the Evangelist, having received from my divine Saviour a favor almost similar to that which this Beloved Disciple received on the evening of the Last Supper, the divine Heart was represented to me as a throne all of fire with flames radiating its light on every side.

“It appeared more brilliant than the sun, and transparent like crystal. The wound which He received on the Cross appeared clearly. There was a crown of thorns around the Sacred Heart and It was surmounted by a cross. My divine Saviour gave me to understand that these instruments of His Passion signified that the immense love which He had for men was the cause of all the sufferings and all the humiliations which He willed to suffer for us; that from the first moment of His Incarnation, all these torments and all this contempt were present to Him, and that it was at this first moment that the Cross, was, so to speak, planted in His Sacred Heart, which then, in testimony of Its love for us, accepted all the humiliations, poverty and sorrows which His sacred Humanity was to suffer during the whole course of His mortal life; and in addition, It accepted the outrages to which His love was to expose Him to the end of the ages

on the altar in the most holy and august Sacrament.

“He then gave me to understand that the great desire which He had of being perfectly loved by men had caused Him to form this design of manifesting to them His Heart and of opening to them all the treasures of love, mercy, grace, sanctification and salvation which It contains, in order that all those who would be willing to render to It and procure for It all the love and honor in their power, would be enriched in profusion with these divine treasures of which this Sacred Heart is the source; and He assured me that He takes a singular pleasure in being honored under the figure of this Heart of flesh, the image of which He wishes to be exposed in public, in order, He added, to touch the unfeeling hearts of men: He promised me that He would pour out in abundance into the hearts of all those who would honor It, all the gifts with which It is filled, and that everywhere this image would be exposed in order to be specially honored, it would draw down all kinds of blessings; that, in addition, this devotion was as a last effort of His love, which wished to favor in a special manner the Christians of these last ages by proposing to them an object and a means which are at the same time so suitable to make men love Him and love Him solidly.

“After that my divine Saviour spoke to me (as far as I know) these words: ‘That is, My child, the design for which I have chosen you; for this have I conferred on you so many graces, taking special care of you from the cradle. The reason why I made Myself your Master and Director was in order to dispose you to receive all these great graces, among which you are to regard as the most precious that by which I reveal to you and give you the greatest of all treasures by showing and at the same time giving to you My Heart.’ Then prostrating myself with my face pressed to the earth, it was impossible for me to express my sentiments in any other manner than by my silence which I soon interrupted by my tears and sighs.

“From that time, the graces of my sovereign Master became more abundant. The result of these greater graces was,

that not being able to contain the sentiments of the ardent love which I felt for Jesus Christ, I tried to diffuse them by my words every time that occasion offered, thinking that others, receiving the same graces as I had received, would have the same sentiments. But I was dissuaded from doing so both by Father Claude de la Colombière and by the great opposition with which I met.

“Though these little exercises of zeal and fervor had no result at the time, at least they procured for me the pleasure and advantage of some humiliations and a little trial which lasted some years.

“The time destined by my Saviour for this great work had not yet come. Nevertheless He Himself took care, as He had promised me, to dispose me according to His desire for the graces which He wished to confer on me, and this was done by conferring on me graces still greater than those which He had already given me.

“The first was when, after a general confession of my whole most criminal life, I had received absolution. He showed me a robe whiter than snow which He called the robe of innocence, and clothed me with it saying, if I am not mistaken, these words: ‘Henceforth, My child, the faults which you will commit will humiliate you much but they will not oblige Me to withdraw from you.’ Then for a second time He opened His adorable Heart and said to me: “Behold the place of your eternal dwelling where you can preserve without stain the robe of innocence with which I have clothed your soul.’ From this time I do not remember that I have ever gone out from this adorable Heart. I dwell there always, but in a manner and with sentiments that it is not permitted to me to express. All that I am able to say is that usually I am there as in an ardent furnace of pure love.

“Another time, this divine Saviour commanded me to make a donation to Him of all that was in me capable of pleasing Him, of all that I could do or suffer to the end of my life and of all the good works that others might do for me.

“As obedience has always been the rule of my conduct, I

did not think that I ought to make this donation, which I regarded as a kind of vow, without having obtained permission. This act of obedience pleased Him as much as the act of donation which I made to Him when I had received permission. But this sovereign Master recompensed me liberally for the gift which I had made to Him of all that belonged to me, by assuring me that His Sacred Heart would always be open in favor of all those who would pray for me. I besought Him at the same time to be no less liberal in favor of those who would give me an opportunity of suffering for Him.”

On another occasion Jesus Christ appeared to her, and having lavished on her graces still greater than those hitherto conferred, said to her:

“My child, be attentive to My words and to what I ask you to do in order to dispose you for the accomplishment of My designs. You will receive Me in Holy Communion as often as obedience permits you, whatever mortification and humiliation it may bring on you, which you will receive as a pledge of My love; in addition you will receive Holy Communion on the First Fridays of each month; and on all the nights of Thursday to Friday I will make you share in that mortal sadness, which it was My will to feel in the Garden of Olives and which will reduce you to a kind of agony more painful to support than death. And in order to accompany Me in the humble prayer which I then presented to My Father in the pitiable state to which I was reduced, you will rise between eleven o’clock and midnight to pass an hour in prayer, prostrate with your face against the ground, in order to appease My anger by asking pardon for sinners, and to alleviate in some measure the bitter sorrow which I felt on seeing Myself abandoned by My Apostles, which obliged Me to reproach them for their cowardice, telling them that they could not watch one hour with Me. During this hour I Myself will teach you what you will have to do.

“But amidst all these favors which I am conferring on you, take good care, My child, not to believe lightly every spirit

and not to trust yourself to them, for the devil will try every means to deceive you. Therefore, never do anything without the approval of those who are guiding you, in order that having the consent of your superiors you will never fall into the trap which the devil lays for you, for he has no power over those who are really obedient.”

This holy Sister did not fail to ask permission from her superior to do what her divine Master had ordered her; but she vainly protested that God had ordered her to do these things, she vainly pressed her demand and craved that it be granted. These Communions on special days, and this hour of prayer at midnight appeared to her superiors to be too singular to grant; they regarded these practices as unsuitable for a community.

Besides, she had been very ill for a long time, and no medicine had been able to give her relief. One day, when she made a new demand to have her requests granted, her superior promised to grant them on condition that she obtained from Our Lord the restoration of her health, adding that she would be able to recognize by this mark whether what passed within her came from the Spirit of God. When this humble sister conveyed this message to Our Lord, she was cured immediately. The Blessed Virgin appeared to her, and after a long conversation with her encouraged her to persevere on the painful road on which she would have to travel. These are the words which the Blessed Virgin used, and she added that she was taking her under her protection anew and that she regarded her as her beloved daughter.

This miraculous restoration of health caused great astonishment in the community. It was no longer doubted that she was guided by the Spirit of God; permission was granted to her to receive Holy Communion on all the First Fridays in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This custom was soon followed by the whole community and produced abundant fruit. Permission was granted to her at the same time to make the midnight hour of prayer which she had asked for and

which became to her a source of blessings and merits, for during this hour she participated in a mysterious manner, as she herself states, in the agony and sorrows of Jesus Christ. She tells of this sharing in Christ's sufferings in one of her letters as follows: "My superior granted me permission (to make this hour of prayer); I cannot describe what I suffered during this hour. It seems to me that this divine Heart pours into mine a share of the bitter sorrow of His Passion which reduces my soul to a kind of agony so painful that sometimes I seem to be on the point of death."

In another letter she writes: "Some time afterwards my divine Saviour showed me two kinds of sanctity in His Sacred Heart: one, the sanctity of love; the other, the sanctity of justice. The sanctity of justice obliges Jesus Christ to reject far from His Heart the impenitent sinner who has despised all the means of salvation that He has presented to him. Then God abandons the sinner to himself and the unhappy one becomes insensible to his own misfortune. He makes me suffer by this sanctity of justice when He is about to abandon some soul that is consecrated to Him in a special manner. The pains which I then suffer are so intense that I do not think that there is any kind of torture in this world which could equal them, and it seems to me that if I listened to the promptings of my natural inclination, I would prefer to be in a blazing furnace rather than to suffer such pains as I then experience.

"The sanctity of love is hardly less painful in its way. These sufferings are to make reparation in some manner for the ingratitude and insensibility of the hearts of so many ungrateful people who make no return for the ardent love of Jesus Christ. The sanctity of love makes me suffer by the keen regret which I feel at not being able to suffer enough, and it inspires me with such an ardent desire to love Jesus Christ and to see Him loved by the whole world, that there is no torment to which I would not gladly expose myself to make Him known and loved. It was then shown to me that these two kinds of sanctity would be continually made use

of to make me suffer, which fills me with joy that I cannot express.

“Indeed, Father, it seems to me that I could not live a moment without suffering. It is true that I would have succumbed many times, were I not sustained by a special grace, and it is in order to obtain this grace that my Saviour commanded me to receive Holy Communion on the First Friday of each month; or rather to repair, as far as is possible for me, the outrages which He has received during the month in the Blessed Sacrament. However, there is another circumstance that causes me still greater sorrow than all that I have hitherto described; it is when this amiable Heart was represented to me with these words:

“‘I have an ardent thirst to be honored and loved by men in the Most Blessed Sacrament, and I find hardly anyone who endeavors according to My wish to quench this thirst by making Me some return of love.’

“At another time, it seemed to me that I saw this amiable Heart like a sun projecting Its rays in every direction and on every heart, but in a manner differing very much according to the dispositions of those on whom these rays fell; for the souls of the lost became still more hardened, as mud becomes hardened by the rays of the sun; on the contrary, the souls of the just became more pure and were softened like wax. However, when receiving these graces I always felt myself urged interiorly to make the Divine Heart known. I could find no means of doing so until Father Claude de la Colombière was sent here. During the Octave of Corpus Christi, having received in abundance the greatest favors and no longer able to resist the approaches made to me by my divine Master who lovingly complained of my want of fidelity to His orders and of my timidity (which was nothing else than the result of my self-love), I had finally to go to this Father and disclose to him what I had always kept hidden with such care, because it was told to me distinctly that this great Servant of God had been destined to share in the execution of this great design.

“I am obliged to inform you, Reverend Father, that I cannot tell you any more; if you knew the great torment which I suffer in writing this for you, although you have made me aware that this is necessary for the glory of the Sacred Heart of my adorable Master to which I have sacrificed myself completely, and although my superiors have given me an express command to write, yet if you knew how much I suffer, perhaps you would think differently. I have told you all things simply and as I believe they took place. But once more alas! may I not have been deceived up to this, and may I not still be deceived? I know that God is sometimes pleased to confer His great favors on those who deserve them least, but do not my imperfections give me great reason for fearing that all this is but vanity and delusion? In all that passes within me I find nothing so solid as the humiliations which this has procured for me, and the happiness which I have experienced in suffering.”

It is certain that solid virtue and consummate sanctity do not consist either in reflections such as these or in extraordinary graces; but when all these extraordinary graces and these revelations tend only to make Jesus Christ loved more ardently and more perfectly, while they are accompanied with profound humility, continual mortification and perfect obedience, these extraordinary graces and these revelations are certain proofs of perfect sanctity.

St. Teresa says that a certain proof of holy transport is that it causes in the soul extraordinary desires to suffer, and that the soul never returns from these intimate communications with God without an ardent thirst for suffering and for being continually humiliated for the love of Jesus Christ. It is stated that Our Lord, wishing to console Blessed Angela de Foligno when she feared that her revelations and interior inspirations might not have come from the Spirit of God, spoke to her these beautiful words: “My child, the exterior, visible signs which you demand in order to know whether it is I who speak to your heart, are uncertain, and you might be deceived by them; but I will give you one that is infallible and

which the devil cannot counterfeit; it is such an ardent desire to suffer pain, labor and humiliations for the love of Me that you will experience no less joy in opprobrium than people usually do when treated with honor.”

Such signs as these have accompanied the extraordinary favors with which God has honored this holy sister, and are proofs that she was guided by the Spirit of God. The ordinary results of these great graces was an extreme desire to suffer and to be humiliated and especially to hide carefully these gifts of God, wishing that so far as it depended on her, no one would know about them. All these familiar communications which she had so often with Jesus Christ served only to make her more humble, more obedient and more mortified. The fear which constantly haunted her that she was under delusion made her regard all these great graces as means used by God in her regard to oblige her to work without relaxation to acquire solid virtue.

In her writings she tells how Our Lord came to her assistance: “As a remedy against the fear which I have constantly that there may be some illusion in the great graces and extraordinary favors which I receive continually from God, my Sovereign Master has deigned to give me certain marks by which I can distinguish between what comes from Him and what comes from the devil, from self-love, or from some other natural impulse.

“In the first place, these special graces and favors will always be accompanied in me by some humiliation, contradiction or contempt on the part of creatures; in the second place, after receiving some of these favors or divine communications of which my soul is so unworthy, I will feel my soul plunged in an abyss of annihilation and interior confusion which will make me feel as much sorrow at the sight of my unworthiness as I have received consolation by the liberality of my Divine Saviour, thus killing all vain complacency and all sentiment of esteem of myself.

“Furthermore, these graces and communications whether for myself or for others, will never produce in me the least

feeling of contempt for anyone; and any knowledge that He may give me of the interior state of others will not cause me to esteem them the less, however great their misery may appear to me; all this will produce in me sentiments of compassion and will cause me to pray for them constantly.

“In the fourth place, all these graces, however extraordinary they may be, will never prevent me from obeying my rule and obeying blindly; my Divine Saviour has given me to understand that He had so subjected these favors to obedience that if I should in the smallest depart from obedience, He would withdraw from me all His great graces.

“Finally, this Spirit that guides me and that rules over me with such complete dominion urges me in particular to do these five things: 1) to love my divine Saviour Jesus Christ with an extreme love; 2) to obey perfectly after the example of Jesus Christ; 3) to wish for suffering ceaselessly for the love of Jesus Christ; 4) to wish to suffer in silence without anyone perceiving that I suffer, if possible; 5) to have an insatiable hunger to receive Holy Communion, to adore the most Blessed Sacrament, to be humiliated, to live poor, unknown and despised by all, and finally to live overwhelmed with all kinds of infirmities and miseries.

“The sovereign Lord of my soul has deigned in His mercy to give this unworthy sinner these marks in order that I may know whether the graces which I receive come from the good Spirit or not; and if I be not deceived, it seems to me that all the graces which I have so far received have produced all these effects in me. For the rest I feel and I see more clearly than day that a life without the love of Jesus Christ is the culmination of all evils imaginable.”

Those who knew the state of her conscience are convinced that she had arrived at consummate perfection. Her love for Jesus Christ increased day by day; she could no longer speak of anything but of the devotion to His Sacred Heart. In one of her letters she says:

“Would that I could recount all that I know about this amiable devotion, and reveal to the whole world the treas-

ures of grace which Jesus Christ has stored up in His adorable Heart and which He intends to pour out in profusion on all those who practice devotion to It! I implore you, Reverend Father, to do all in your power to propagate it everywhere. Jesus Christ has given me to understand in a manner that leaves no doubt, that it is principally by means of the Fathers of the Company of Jesus that He wishes to establish everywhere this solid devotion, and through it to make for Himself an infinite number of faithful servants, perfect friends and truly grateful children. The treasures of blessings and graces which this Sacred Heart contains are infinite. I do not know of any other exercise in the spiritual life that is more calculated to raise a soul in a short time to the height of perfection and to make it taste the true sweetness to be found in the service of Jesus Christ. Yes, I say with assurance that if it were known how pleasing this devotion is to Jesus Christ, there is no Christian, however little his love for our amiable Saviour, who would not begin to practice it immediately. Endeavor above all to make religious take up the practice of it, for they will draw from it such help that they will require no other means to reestablish the first fervor and the most exact regularity in the most disordered communities, and to bring to the height of perfection those who live in the greatest regularity.

“People who live in the world will find through this amiable devotion all the helps necessary for their state of life, that is to say, peace in their families, solace in their labors, the blessings of Heaven on all their enterprises, consolation in their afflictions, and they will really find in this Sacred Heart of Jesus a place of refuge during their whole life and especially at the hour of their death. Ah! how sweet it is to die after having a tender and constant devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ. My divine Master gave me to understand that those who labor for the salvation of souls will labor with success, and will have the art of touching the most hardened hearts, if they have a tender devotion to His Sacred Heart and work to propagate this devotion and establish it

everywhere. Finally it is quite evident that there are none in the world who would not receive all manner of help from Heaven, if they had a truly grateful love for Jesus Christ such as the love shown Him by means of the devotion to His Sacred Heart."

She told Blessed Claude de la Colombière positively, when everything seemed to be against the establishment of this devotion and when there seemed to be little likelihood that it would be adopted, that even if she saw the whole world up in arms against the devotion, she would never despair of seeing it established, since she had heard our Saviour say: "My daughter, do not be cast down by so much opposition, I will reign in spite of My enemies and I will accomplish the design for which I have chosen you in spite of all the efforts which those opposed to this devotion may make." Indeed she had the happiness of seeing His promise accomplished some years before her death. She had seen a magnificent chapel erected within the enclosure of her monastery in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and she had the pleasure of learning that this example was being followed by many other religious bodies, and that this devotion was being every day spread with wonderful fruit. It is easy to see that all this was not accomplished without little miracles. The design for which Providence had chosen her was happily executed. It pleased God to call her to a happier life, thus granting the crowning grace to the others which He had conferred on her. For more than a year she had felt the interior fire which consumed her to be more intense than formerly, and she had arrived at that sublime pinnacle of perfection of which St. Teresa speaks, when a soul is so intimately united to God that it is no longer itself that lives but Jesus Christ who lives in it by its perfect acquiescence in His orders, and has no other desires or sentiments than those of Jesus Christ. Her profound humility made her at first regard the perfect tranquillity of heart which a soul in this state enjoys, as a chastisement from God.

She writes to her director: "I do not know what to think

of the state in which I find myself at present. I find three desires so ardent that I regard them as three tyrants which make me suffer a continued martyrdom without giving me a moment's rest. These three desires are: to love God perfectly, to suffer much for His love, and to die in this ardent love and by the ardor of this love. But at present I find myself in a certain tranquillity of heart and in a cessation of desires which astonishes me. I fear that this pretended peace may only be the result of the insensibility in which God sometimes leaves unfaithful souls, and I fear that, by my great infidelity to His graces, I may have drawn upon myself this state which is perhaps a kind of abandonment and reprobation; for I confess to you that I can no longer wish for or desire anything in this world, although I see how much I am lacking in the matter of virtue. Sometimes I wish to grieve about this, but I cannot do so, it being no longer in my power, so to speak, to act. I only feel a perfect acquiescence in the good pleasure of God and an ineffable pleasure in suffering. The thought which consoles me from time to time is that the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ will do everything for me if I allow Him to act. He will wish, He will love, He will desire for me, He will supply for all my defects."

She had arrived at this state of perfection when it pleased our Saviour to call her to Himself. There is reason to believe that she had certain knowledge of the time of her death long before she became ill. Three months before her death she wrote to the priest before mentioned, saying that it was her last letter. She told one of the sisters of the convent that she would die in the year that she died, saying that she was an obstacle to the exaltation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ and to the complete establishment of the devotion. At the time she spoke, the true sense of what she said was not apparent, but it became so after her death, because her death made it possible to publish the extraordinary graces which God had conferred on her in view of this devotion: "I will die assuredly this year," she said, "in order not to prevent the great fruits which my Divine Saviour intends to draw

from a book on devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus which Father (Croiset) will get printed as soon as possible." At the time she spoke, he wrote to her saying that it would be some years before he could think of publishing the book, so she could have no knowledge of the matter from human sources.¹

As soon as she became ill, she stated with certainty that she would die. Her illness appeared so light that her doctors said that there was no appearance of death, but she insisted on saying that she was dying. This certainty of death made her ask for the Holy Viaticum the evening before her death; and as the sisters said that her illness was not serious, she asked that she might at least get Holy Communion as she was still fasting. Her request was granted and she received Holy Communion with extraordinary devotion, saying that she received it as Holy Viaticum, knowing that it was her last Holy Communion.

The virtues which she exercised during her illness corresponded with the high idea entertained about her perfection during life. One of the sisters, who perceived that she was suffering terribly, offered to procure her some relief, but she thanked her saying that all the moments which remained were too precious not to profit by them; that in truth she suffered much, but that she did not suffer enough, because she found such pleasure in living and dying on the Cross that however ardent was her desire to die, she would willingly consent to remain in the state in which she was until the day of judgment, if it were the good pleasure of God, such was her attraction for suffering.

Never, it seemed, had anyone shown such eagerness to die. All those who visited her during her illness admired the extraordinary joy which the thought of death caused her. But God wished to interrupt for some time this abundance of interior consolations with which she was filled by inspiring her with such a great fear of His divine justice that she was suddenly filled with strange fears at the sight of the terrible judgments of God. By this way God wished to purify her soul. She was seen to tremble, to humble and annihilate her-

self in the presence of the crucifix and was heard to say: "Mercy, O my God, mercy." But some time afterwards all her fears disappeared, and her spirit found itself in great calm and great assurance of her salvation. Her joy and tranquillity of heart appeared on her countenance. An hour before her death she called the superioress who had made her promise that she would not die without giving her warning. She requested to get Extreme Unction and thanked her for all the little acts of kindness which she had done to relieve her suffering. She said that she was at the end of life and that nothing remained for her but to lose herself in the abyss of the Sacred Heart there to give her last sigh. After this, directing her eyes to the crucifix, she remained calm while Extreme Unction was being administered, and having pronounced the Sacred Name of Jesus, she rendered her soul into the hands of her Creator in the odor of sanctity, on the seventeenth of October, 1690, at the age of 42.

The death of this saintly religious created that impression of admiration for her piety which usually accompanies the death of saints. One heard both in the monastery and in the towns the words: "The Saint is dead." And far from feeling that horror which a corpse naturally inspires, people never tired of looking at her and remaining near her body. People said that there was something in her face that inspired that veneration which is felt for the relics of the Saints. There was an extraordinary concourse of people at her funeral; many demanded permission to touch their beads to her body, others asked for part of her clothes; all wished to have some relic, and the veneration for her went on increasing. There is no reason for doubting that God has revealed many secret things to this saintly religious. Blessed Claude de la Colombière and several others saw things happen which she had predicted long before, although what she predicted was against all appearances. There was hardly any of those who were privileged to speak to her but felt themselves extraordinarily touched by her words and went away from the interview with a new resolution to love Jesus Christ more ardently.

Several people affirm that since her death they have received particular favors which they prayed for through her intercession. These are convincing proofs that she received extraordinary graces from Jesus Christ and that she had revelations which are judged to be among the number to which we can safely give credence. But we can say that the very great love which she had for Jesus Christ, the perfect obedience, the prodigious love of suffering and the profound humility which she kept to her last breath, make her more estimable in the eyes of those who would know how to value sanctity, than the greatest miracles would do.

1. The first edition of Father Croiset's book was actually published in May, 1691, the year after her death.

—Part One—

THE MOTIVES
FOR THIS DEVOTION

Chapter I

*What do we mean by devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus,
and in what does it consist?*

The particular object of this devotion is the immense love of the Son of God, which induced Him to deliver Himself up to death for us and to give Himself entirely to us in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar. The thought of all the ingratitude and all the outrages which He was to receive in this state of immolated Victim until the end of time did not prevent Him from operating this prodigy; He preferred to expose Himself each day to the insults and opprobrium of men rather than be prevented from testifying, by working the greatest of all miracles, to what excess He loved us.

This has excited the piety and zeal of many people, for when they consider how little the world is moved by this excess of love, how little men love Jesus Christ in return, and how little pains they take to be loved by Him, His faithful friends have not been able to endure seeing Him treated with such contempt day after day; they have endeavored to show their just sorrow at such treatment, and by their ardent love, their profound respect and by special acts of homage, to testify their great desire to make reparation to the utmost of their capacity for this ingratitude and contempt.

With this end in view, they have chosen certain days of the year to recognize in a more particular manner the extreme love which Jesus Christ has shown us in the Blessed Sacrament, and at the same time to make some reparation of honor to Him for all the indignities and all the contempt which our amiable Saviour has received and which He still receives every day in this mystery of love. And certainly the regret which they show at the sight of the little love which men have for

Jesus Christ in this adorable Mystery, the sensible sorrow which they feel at seeing Him so badly treated, these practices of devotion which love alone suggests and which have as their sole object to make reparation as far as possible for the outrages which He suffers there, are certain proofs of the ardent love which they have for Jesus Christ and visible marks of their just gratitude.

The object and the principal motive of this devotion is, as has been already said, the immense love which Jesus Christ has for men who, for the most part, have nothing but contempt or at least indifference for Him. The end which is proposed is, firstly, to recognize and honor as much as lies in our power by our frequent adoration, by a return of love, by our acts of thanksgiving and by every kind of homage, all the sentiments of tender love which Jesus Christ has for us in the adorable Sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist, where, however, He is so little known by men, or at least so little loved even by these people who know Him; secondly, to make reparation, by all possible means, for the indignities and outrages to which His love has exposed Him during the course of His mortal life, and to which this same love exposes Him every day in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar.

This devotion consists, therefore, in ardently loving Jesus Christ, whom we have always with us in the adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist, and in showing this ardent love by our grief at seeing Him so little honored by men, and by our acts of reparation for this contempt and this want of love. But just as in the case of even the most spiritual devotions, we have always need of material and sensible objects which appeal to our human nature, act on the imagination and memory and facilitate the practice, so in the case of this devotion, the Sacred Heart of Jesus has been chosen as the sensible object most worthy of our veneration, and at the same time most proper for the end proposed by this devotion.

In truth, even if we had no particular reasons to give to these exercises of piety the title of "Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus," it seems that we could not better express the

particular character of this devotion than by this title; for indeed this devotion properly understood is nothing else than an exercise of love. Love is its object, love is its motive and principle, and it is love that ought to be its end. The heart of man is, says St. Thomas, in a certain manner, both the source and the seat of love; its natural movements follow and continually imitate the affections of the soul and serve to no small extent either by their vehemence or their weakness to increase or diminish the passions.

It is for this reason that we commonly attribute to the heart the most tender sentiments of the soul, and it is also that consideration which renders so precious the hearts of the saints.

From what has been said so far, it is easy to see what is meant by the devotion to the Sacred Heart: by this devotion we mean the ardent love which we conceive for Jesus Christ at the remembrance of all the marvels which He has wrought to show His tender love for us, especially in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, which is the miracle of His love; we mean the keen regret which we feel at the sight of the outrages which men commit against Jesus Christ in this adorable Mystery; we mean the ardent desire which presses us to leave nothing undone to make reparation for these outrages by every possible means. That is what we mean by the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and that is what it consists in. It cannot be reduced—as some people might think at seeing this title—to merely loving and honoring by special worship this Heart of flesh like ours, which forms part of the adorable Body of Jesus Christ.

It is not that the Sacred Heart is not worthy of our adoration; it suffices to say that It is the Heart of Jesus Christ; and if His Sacred Body and His Precious Blood deserve our respect and homage, who does not see that His Sacred Heart has still more special claim to respect and homage? And if we feel in ourselves such a strong attraction to the devotion to the Sacred Wounds, should we not feel ourselves still more penetrated with devotion to His Sacred Heart? What we wish to make

clear is that the word "heart" is taken here only in the figurative sense, and that this Divine Heart considered as a part of the adorable Body of Jesus Christ is, properly speaking, only the sensible object of this devotion and that it is nothing less than the immense love which Jesus Christ bears to us which is its principal motive.

Now as this love is altogether spiritual, it cannot be perceived by the senses. It was necessary, therefore, to find a symbol, and what symbol could be more proper and more natural for love than the heart?

For the same reason, the Church wishing to give us a sensible object for the sufferings of the Son of God which are not less spiritual than His love, represents to us the image of His Sacred Wounds; so that the devotion to the Sacred Wounds is, properly speaking, only a particular devotion to Jesus Christ suffering; in like manner the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is a more warm-hearted and ardent devotion towards Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, its principal motive being the extreme love which He shows us in this Sacrament, and the principal object, to make reparation for the contempt and the outrages which He suffers in this same Sacrament.¹

The Sacred Heart of Jesus has, certainly, as much relation to His love, for which we endeavor by this devotion to inspire sentiments of gratitude and love, as the Sacred Wounds have to His sufferings, for which the Church endeavors to inspire her children with sentiments of gratitude and love by devotion to these Sacred Wounds. Now if people had at all times such devotion to the Sacred Wounds of Jesus Christ, and if the Church, wishing to inspire all her children with love for Jesus Christ, unceasingly puts before their eyes these Sacred Wounds, what ought to be the effect of the remembrance and of the image of the Sacred Heart?

We shall see later on that this devotion is not new; that several great saints confirmed the use of it by their example. We can claim that the Holy See authorized the use of it under the same title, since Clement X, by the bull of October 4, 1674, accorded great indulgences to an association of the

Sacred Heart of Jesus in the church of the Seminary of Coutance consecrated in its honor, and our Holy Father, Pope Innocent XII, by a special brief, has accorded a plenary indulgence in favor of the devotion to the Sacred Heart.

It is not necessary to give here the numerous reasons which show the solidity of this devotion. It suffices to say that the immense love which Jesus has for us, and of which He has given such a signal proof in the adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist, is the principal motive; that reparation for the contempt with which men have treated this love is the principal end proposed; that the Sacred Heart of Jesus, all inflamed with love for men, is the sensible object; and that a most ardent and tender love for the adorable person of Jesus Christ ought to be the fruit?²

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1. The devotion to the Blessed Eucharist and the devotion to the Sacred Heart are not only two sister devotions, in reality they are only one and the same devotion. They complete each other and develop each other; they blend so perfectly together that one cannot go on without the other and their union is absolute. Not only can one of these devotions not be prejudicial to the other, but because they complete each other and perfect each other, they also reciprocally increase each other.
 2. "If we have devotion to the Sacred Heart, we will wish to find It to adore It, to love It, and where shall we look for It but in the Blessed Eucharist where It is found, eternally living? . . . The devotion to the Divine Heart infallibly brings souls to the Blessed Eucharist; and faith in and devotion to the Blessed Eucharist necessarily lead souls to discover the mysteries of Infinite Love of which the Divine Heart is the organ and the symbol."—Extract from the *Book of Infinite Love* by Mother Louise Margaret.