

**Haudet-Diary 2**  
1811  
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**Leopoldina Haudet**

**Spiritual Diary**

**Volume II**

**1811**

[St. Gaspar Bertoni – Spiritual Director]

[ed. M. Bonato and P. Accordini]

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## A Biographical Note

Leopoldina Naudet was born in Florence on May 31, 1773. Following the loss of her mother, in 1778, with her sister Luisa, she was accepted in the Convent of the Augustinian Tertiary Oblates. Five years later, in accord with her father's will, the Naudet sisters moved to France, and were living in the Convent of the Madames of Our Lady of Soissons, for the continuation of their studies.

In 1789, Leopoldina returned to Florence and lived once more with the Nuns of her childhood years. After a short time, the Grand-Duke of Tuscany, Leopold I, chose her to be the instructress of his own children. And it was at this time that Leopoldina began her experience as a school teacher. This experience in education would remain as the specific apostolic finality for the foundation of the Sisters of the Holy Family.

1790, the Naudet Sisters followed the grand-Duke to Vienna. After a few years, when Francis II's sister, the Arch-Duchess Maria Anna Ferdinanda, was named to the responsibility of the Abbess of the noble Chapter of the Canonesses of St. George in Prague, the Naudet sisters were chosen as ladies of honor. Thus, Leopoldina would conduct precisely within the royal palace an extremely retired way of life and was totally committed to charitable works.

In 1799, after nine years had passed since their arrival in Austria, the Naudet sisters and the Arch-Duchess, all manifested the interest in a foundation for women in the Ignatian spirit, of the so-called *Beloved of Jesus*, and very soon they gave their lives to this project developed by Fr. Nicholas Paccanari. A variety of vicissitudes immersed this new congregation, even before its coming to Vienna and then later, its arrival in Italy. However, their charism was encouraged and affirmed by Pius VII, and the group of the *Beloved of Jesus* established a residence first in Padua, and then moved to Loreto, Spoleto and Rome. Leopoldina Naudet was elected the superior, and in the meantime, there came into being the filial communities in France and in England.

However, Fr. Paccanari fell 'into disgrace', and the congregation of the *Beloved* was dissolved. The group in France, guided by St. Sophie Barat, became the Congregation of the *Madames of the Sacred Heart*, and the few sisters who remained in Italy, followed Mother Naudet, and they brought into being the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family.

In 1805, Mother Naudet and her companions began their pilgrimage once again. They were in Padua for a while, and then in Venice. In this Venetian capital, they met the Apostolic Missionary, Msgr. Louis Pacetti, who invited them to make their contribution to the initiative which was then under the direction of Madeline di Canossa.

In 1808 Leopoldina and her companions eventually came as guests of Mother di Canossa in the Convent of Sts. Joseph and Fidentius in Verona. It would be here that Mother Naudet would come to know St. Gaspar Bertoni, a 'key' figure for her spiritual experience. While maintaining distinct their own proper spiritualities, Mother di Canossa and Mother Naudet collaborated for eight years, consolidating the Canossian experience of the foundation of the Schools of Charity.

In 1816, Mother Naudet, with a group of her companions, left the Canossian retreat and brought into life the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy family in the Convent of St. Teresa, in Verona as well.

The new Congregation while also maintaining the Cloister, was committed in their new quarters to the apostolate of the school for the benefit of the young girls of noble families; they included the care of the poor children, who attended the tuition-free schools; they taught catechism in the parishes for the preparation for the reception of the sacraments of Christian Initiation; they also welcomed young girls and ladies for spiritual meetings and for retreats. In the foundation of her Congregation, Mother Naudet *was convinced* - as Fr. Joseph Cappellina, Stigmatine, and a student of Mother Leopoldina's spirituality - *that only a serious foundation in culture and the Christian conviction would have permitted the young to overcome the dangers and the contradictions to which women were exposed in the society of that time.*

Not even a year passed from the approbation of the 'new religious order', on the part of Gregory XVI, when Leopoldina Naudet rendered her soul to God, on August 17, 1834. She had just stated: ... *This is enough. God does not anything more of me. I can now say: ;Now dismiss Your servant...*

During her lifetime she was totally abandoned to the divine will; she allowed herself to be guided in total abandonment, convinced that *it is always God Who accomplishes everything* : now she could close here eyes to conclude in perfect joy her union with God.

**Robert Marzocchi**

## INTRODUCTION 1811

*With these pages, there is presented the first year of that part of the Spiritual Diary that would correspond to the time that Mother Naudet was under the direction of St. Gaspar Bertoni. At this time in her life, Mother Leopoldina was living in Verona, in St. Joseph's Monastery, a guest of St. Madeline di Canossa, and she worked with her for about eight years.*

*It was here that she had the opportunity and received the real gift of coming to know St. Gaspar - first as her Confessor and eventually, as her Spiritual Director.*

*At first Leopoldina resisted submitting her soul once more to another Director, but with the passing of time, she came to see in this the Will of God. It gradually became clear to her that she was to entrust herself to the care of Fr. Gaspar.*

*This was the stage of Leopoldina's real spiritual maturity. This time was marked by notable progress in the virtues and in her being endowed with numerous mystical gifts.*

*It is becoming ever more evident that her mission as Foundress of a new religious institute under the name and the protection of the Holy family was being clarified.*

*The divine inspirations she was receiving during these years moved her to form a group of women totally vowed to God, in both contemplation and action. She was being called to become, as it were, the corner-stone of the new Institute in her humility and love.*

*In this time of her life, her quest and then fulfillment of the will of God regarding herself and in all that pertained to the new Institute achieved a rather elevated level.*

*What follows here [and in the next volume, from 1812-1831 is the most sublime and the most important part of her Spiritual Diary.*

# 1811

## The Diary began on January 9th

9. I exposed the desires I had of obeying, and it seemed to me that the Lord could very well have willed that up to that moment that I should carry on by myself for **Him alone**: but now it seemed to me that He willed that I accept outside help. I explained my difficulties: a certain pleasure that I have of **God alone** in all matters. And therefore, in a time of prayer, as I told the Lord that I was getting on well with Him, it seemed to me that He responded that it was so that I would even stand better before Him, that He wanted this. He explained just how this obedience would be carried out: it was to assist, to further those internal operations toward the exterior activity. And it was established in this manner, that I should make use of these external means precisely as a means, and to keep look only to the end.

After this, before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, I submitted myself to His most Holy Will, since in so far as having another means of correspondence to His will available to me, this brought me consolation.

Having returned then to my room in order to attend to other duties, I felt being called within to prayer, and following this inspiration, I did precisely that. All that I experienced, then, was approbation of the manifestation that I would make and of the most convenient manner of carrying this out.

That evening, prior to falling asleep, I offered further prayer in which I thought that my vow would have even greater merit and it would give me greater facility in carrying it out.

10. Tonight I offered prayer during which the Lord engaged me for two and a half hours. This passed in continuous communication. It seemed to me that the Lord was consoling me for having willed to submit myself to external help. I would almost say that this was His justifying Himself, bringing me to understand that He would not have asked this of me to be under any other person's guidance. It was solely because this person, this individual whom He asks me to follow, adheres to all that He wants of me, in assuring me that He wants to remain the Master of my spirit.

He led me to understand that in order to help me that it was necessary only to ask counsel of Him, and to trust that it would be His way to offer His light. I understood the good of this and I experienced supreme consolation that everything would come from the Lord, as the center and principle of all. It seemed that He said to me that in order to direct me, it was not knowledge so

much that was needed, because there is only one reality that is working within and that is Love: this is the principle operation. Therefore, assistance is needed in this, which can be developed only from this same Font, i.e., from God, and not so much from knowledge. And so it was not necessary to ask counsel of anyone, but to await all from Him.

It would be impossible to express how many sentiments and affections these communications brought, so interior and prolonged, that excited my heart. Their effects were even sensible and therefore, those two and a half hours passed very quickly.

Different from all the other prayers, which I had offered up to this point, when this time [in which it seemed to me that I was engulfed and totally lost in the Lord, not doing anything other than to receive and to love] had passed, it seemed that He provided me with a kind of summary of all this, in which I understood that the principal matters were those which I have explained. And so, therefore, as usual, I would be unable to render any further account of this kind of prayer than simply to say that I experienced, I loved, I rejoiced, that I only wanted to love, and to unite myself further to this love, and so on. I understood that since all of this was being concluded with the Lord, it was precisely because He Himself willed that I make some account of it. And I did not contradict Him. Only, moved by the present affection, I said to the Lord that there are certain matters, which it seemed to me would otherwise be diminished when manifested, and that it seems to me only right that there should be certain secrets between Him and my soul: these are those certain most intimate communications and it is most difficult to manifest these, as the soul so loses itself in them.

On the following day, the Lord also led me to understand that in order to protect that center, where He dwells within my soul, that it would only be proper to place there a hedge. It seemed to me, from its name, what *mortification* should mean. And just as my health does not permit me to undertake many of these, I did make a certain reflection on them. But, I know that the Lord is not asking penances of me, but rather custody. This is something that cannot be accomplished unless through the virtues, which can protect charity, which the Lord has placed in my soul.

A few days later, there having been prescribed for me as the particular examen, that of considering of myself as always in the presence of God, and to accomplish that which is known to be His good pleasure, I came to know, in beginning to practice this, that it would be that hedge, that externally could protect that center.

In prayer, the Lord brought me to grasp my own ingratitude in my continuing failures, which I commit, concerning this examen. He gave me a great

desire to expose how much I should be corrected regarding my ingratitude toward God in this matter. This is so great that I even feel in a sensible way, His continuing presence within me and that He remains with me, not as though He were merely standing at my side, for then it seems that it would be necessary to turn toward Him, to address myself toward Him. However, experiencing that He is already within me, together with me so much so that I feel that I am also within Him. Since I am unable to operate without Him, so I should never be ever found wanting in the present reflection and activity

One night beseeching the Lord, after about one or two hours of prayer, the permission to be able to sleep, fearing the length of my vigil might prejudice my health, and then being unable to serve Him the next day, I felt myself responding to these words: *I want you to be a slave of love, and not of health.* I did not make any further reply.

In another prayer, the Lord brought me to understand that I ought always to have charity, love toward Him as the Principle, the Cause or End of every word, of every motion, of every even minimal activity.

The Lord granted me a great desire to be corrected even externally, for my ingratitude, whenever I do commit any failing regarding the particular examen. It seems to me that this would be a great help, this I hesitated somewhat to expose it, but then I just did it.

In another period of prayer, the Lord brought me to understand that I ought humbly to await and to receive those assistance that He will be able to grant me by means of His minister, and not to have the presumption to ask for them, which is something that my pride could easily do. But I can only, under the title of charity, beg of him to assist me in the desire that I have of pleasing the Lord.

Another day it seemed to me that I understood that I no longer had the use of my own powers, but that the Lord benignly had taken possession of them, since I was only able to think and understand that which He wills, being reminded of that which I recalled and that it is **only He** Who loves and wills.

He bestowed on me great desires to grow and to aspire to go always onward without stopping. On this matter, I represented to the Lord that I am not even good enough to do that which He makes me now understand, that the debt that I have of moving and working in all my undertakings, solely for the sake of pleasing Him and that in this I commit many failings. I asked Him, therefore, that just as He has taken over the use of my faculties, so that He might place me more so in the sweet necessity of not being able to accomplish anything in a material way and without an actual intention and will to please Him.

### *Light*

Always to have charity, that love for God as the Principle, Cause and End of every word, of every movement of even of my least activity.

Ask for two gifts: one, to expose the desire to be reminded and corrected for my ingratitude toward God, in the many failures that I commit regarding my particular examen. And this is all the greater in that I feel even sensibly that God is with me, and not just that He is standing near me, for then it would seem necessary that I would have to turn, to address myself to him - but, that He is within me, and at the same time, in that I also feel myself to be within Him. Therefore, as a general rule I cannot work without Him, and so I should not be lacking even in the present reflection and activity.

The second is that I should make an examen on that which I think. Virtues, defects, inclinations.

The profit of such an examen: that this be the sieve, or the custody of that charity which the Lord works within me.

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### *Charity: four failings* <sup>1</sup>

Pleasure in hearing friendly expressions from a friend. These are not pleasing to the Lord, Who not only wishes that I should not have affections for any person, but even more that I should not care when they should have any for me and that I should not place any stock in them. I allowed sleep to take over and therefore, did not make my prayer-time.

I have been ungrateful to the Lord for being impeded to do something in His service, because of a headache, but since this did provide me with more time for prayer, this complaint did not please the Lord, since He wishes that the principal matter now is charity toward Him.

I did not profit by this suffering when I could have offered prayer have allowed both to speak to me.

### *Failings against charity*

19. I accused myself of four. I took some pleasure in those friendly expressions addressed to me by a friend. And this is what is displeasing to the Lord, Who wills only that I have affection for no one, but even more that I should not want anyone to have affection for me, and to think I am worthy.

In the night, I gave myself over to sleep and this kept me from offering prayer which in that time is more precious.

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<sup>1</sup> These thoughts without any date, which record such meticulous examinations of conscience on charity, repeated some times, and which most likely accompanied the spiritual notes that Mother Leopoldina then recorded in her *Diary*.

One morning having a head ache, because of which I had to stay in bed all day, and I complained to the Lord that I was kept from doing some things for my companions, which were for His service. However, since this ailment also brought for me more time for prayer, and so the Lord was not pleased with this complaint of mine, since what He wanted my occupation to be now is to perfect charity towards Him.

I did not profit by this in order to free me from every care and solicitude, as I should be, in order to tend only toward the Lord. He has made me understand that this did not please Him.

†

21. I engaged another person in conversation without necessity, in place of employing the time with the Lord.

†

22. Having set up a natural barrier in speaking with a companion, and in wanting to persuade her in a matter: the Lord led me to understand that the result and the efficacy of that which I say and do, I have to await from Him with entrusting what to give Him, and not to believe that I am independent from the manner in which I express these matters.

I showed some pleasure for a consideration made of me, with expressing words of gratitude: the Lord would want that there be no other sentiment, whether internal, or expressed externally, than for **Him alone**. Speaking of a necessity of life, that of taking time to eat, I said how I wish that this was not necessary! And deep within I heard: 'who put these needs in you?' And from this I came to understand that not having had a single intention that was not directed toward the Lord, in saying these words, justly and mercifully He took me up on them.

I disputed on this matter that could be a failing and the Lord corrected me in that I wanted to mix my own reflections in with that about which He had admonished me. I let myself fall asleep one night, and the Lord brought this to my attention.

†

31. I spent some time reading a profane book which had as a result that of having some useless thoughts, that I knew came from this failing.

The conversation went to speak about some unimportant matter, and I joined in. And the Lord, on the spot, corrected me for engaging in something other than Him, or on matters that would have His service as their scope.

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1. Having failed in a thought, which was that this should not be put into words, from one who could tell me these things that there is nothing so powerful and necessary. That for which the Lord corrected me, was that I

needed to trust in Him, and that since this was so necessary, He would not fail to inspire it.

I made some reflection on a matter which shames me and is that whenever I manifest a certain thing, no question is addressed, and this makes my talking easier and less difficult. The Lord corrected me in this matter, all the more so that having always given me the sentiment of rejoicing in that which mortifies me, now more than ever, by giving me so many graces, I have to do this. Thinking then that it might not be said to me, for my profound spiritual benefit, as much as it is to others, and fearing that this is a punishment for my pride, and even more than this, I felt the response to me from the Lord that I ought to trust in his Mercy, of which I have so many proofs, and in all these matters, I failed in charity towards Him.

†

6. I failed in saying some words, even in jest, but this was to seek my own comfort.

I was involved in a political discussion, which did not have any relationship with religion.

†

9. I sought sleep in the night, in place of offering my prayer.

I manifest contentment in the recollections of a person, which was not pleasing to the Lord, Who does not want these expressions used in a material way.

†

13. I failed in making known the destination of my going out, without first asking the Lord's permission for this - or, to put it better, without first consulting Him, about what it would be that He would have wanted me to do.

†

16. I reread twice in a letter, certain expressions of esteem for me that it contained, which is something that I ought to flee, not caring at all for this sentiment, from any person whatsoever, now matter how holy the individual might be<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> There follows now several pages of biblical citations from the Latin Vulgate, in Mother Leopoldina's own handwriting and placed among the sheets of her *Spiritual Diary* - without any precise date.

...Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits if they be of God [1 Jn 4:1].

Wherefore, by their fruits, you shall know them... [Mt 7:20].

...the Lord is the Weigher of spirits ... [Pr 16:2].

... I have run the way of Your commandments, when You did enlarge my heart... Ps 118:32:

... Search the Scriptures, for you think in them to have life everlasting; and the same are they that give testimony of me ...[ Jn 5:39].

... The King brought me into the cellar of wine, he set in order charity in me...[Ct 2:4].

... my heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God ... [Ps 83:3].

... There is a way that seems to a man right: an the ends thereof lead to death... [Pr 16:25].

...Woe to you that call evil good, and good evil, that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter... [Is 5:20]

The divine wrath ceases if human confession precedes. [St. Augustine]

...he that hates his life in this world, keeps it unto life eternal ... [Jn 12:25].

... Let us search our ways, and seek, and return to the Lord ... [Lm-Jr 3:40].

... The just is the first accuser of himself ... [Pr 18:17].

In the sea of the divine Scriptures the lamb frolics, and the elephant swims. [St. Gregory, Prologue]

...Now, we have received not the Spirit that is of this world, but the Spirit that is of God; that we may know the things that are given us from God... [1 Co 2:12]

... And do you all insinuate humility one to another, for god visits the proud but to the humble He gives grace ...He humbled you, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in the time of visitation... [1 P 5:5, f.].

... unto the place whence the rivers come, they return, to flow again ... [Qo 1:7].

... For if any man think himself to be some thing, whereas he is nothing, he deceives himself ... [Ga 6:3].

... For whoever shall do the will of my father, that is in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother ... [Mt 12:50].

... My eyes are ever towards the Lord; for he shall pluck my feet out of the snare ... [Ps 24:15].

... But the sensual man perceives not these things that are of the Spirit ...[ 1 Co 2:14]

... But they that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall take wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint ... [Is 40:31].

...For I wil not trust in my bow: neither shall my sword save me... [Ps 43:7]

## February

1. For the past few days I have not been experiencing those sensible effects of that sentiment of charity, which the Lord has enkindled in me, and this has not diminished in any way. This leads me now to make greater acts and to rejoice in being able to assure my dear Lord that I love Him, and want Him, and not His consolations.

I also feel as a result the commitment to be faithful to Him, and satisfaction in this, having greater freedom, i.e., understanding better and being able to accomplish more than sometimes I am engulfed and totally concerned about the Lord.

I am therefore equally content in any manner that the Lord wills me to be and to work, and it is enough that he would only grant me the grace to love Him and the commitment to please Him in everything.

†

2. This morning, at Holy Communion, I experienced much consolation in preparing myself, with the reflection on the Mystery remembered this day. And among the sentiments that I had was the pleasure that I experience in these, where there was also St. Joseph, for the special devotion that I have towards this Saint. This is making so much impression upon me and the affection of devotion thinking of the recollection, admiration and other sentiments, that this blessed Saint had in contemplating Jesus. He was so humbled in the view of human beings in submitting himself to the laws, that for these had been applied.

The interior life of St. Joseph serves me very much in order to gain for myself in some of these sentiments.

After Holy Communion, thinking the Most Holy Virgin who presented that which she held to be the more dear and precious, with the offering up of her own Divine Son, I felt suggested deep within me of not only making the offering, but also of making a gift of all the either or internal sensible consolations, which I enjoy in the possession of Jesus.

It seemed to me, however, that I had not been accepting as willingly this inspiration and I resisted it somewhat. However, the Lord, Who is of such goodness and mercy in my regard, Who straightened the matter out immediately and I remembered that Mary Most Holy ransomed Him for five sheckels: therefore, I could re-purchase this oblation by submitting myself to His most Holy Will, by means of which I came to buy Him back, understanding that this was usual within me, in every moment, with all that that could the more unite me to Him. And I remained content and most disposed to the sacrifice, or the offering.

†

3. The Lord granted me this morning a great contentment even in not feeling well. And this was changed by the pleasure of not doing my own will, but His.

I had already planned out on that day to occupy myself in different matters which to me were in His service. However, He did not want these, since He impeded me from doing them and He brought me to rejoice very much at my own expense.

Various circumstances also brought me to rejoice that had come together on that day and which I foresaw, that were in no way in accord with my own nature and humanity. And indeed this rendered these matters all the dearer.

These sentiments which the Lord granted me, were sentiments not only in my higher nature, but also my lower nature participated in these, since I was totally satisfied and content in doing the Divine Will, contrary to my own personal projects.

†

5. Having employed a certain negligence regarding myself, concerning the particular examen and other matters, the Lord brought me to understand this during prayer. It seemed to me as though I had been something of a vagabond and then returned to take refuge in the arms of my Lord. He gave me sentiments of compunction, for which I cast myself at His feet, asking pardon of Him of having, for a certain stretch of the day, neglected that vigilance that I ought to maintain regarding myself, the sole means with which I might demonstrate to Him that little gratitude for so much love that He bears for me.

6. This morning, the Lord represented Himself to me as way on high, and this brought me to tend the more ardently toward Him. It seemed to me that after yesterday, He brought me to understand to what point He would draw me, if I would not place an impediment to so much that He would like to work in my soul. He represented to me ever more vividly my own ingratitude, not as a correction, but as mistakenly I employed toward God, when I committed so many miseries and I did not vigilantly take care to eliminate these. Among other things, the Lord brought me to understand that certain little matters, that in other Sisters may be nothing, and do not offend. However, in me, He does not want them. Among other aspects, there is that empty, useless conversation, of odds and ends that serve only to distract me and to make me lose that attention I owe to Him, which I understand that I should always have.

†

7. I began this day in examining myself each hour, as this had been suggested to me. I had occasion to discover thousands upon thousands of

defects, which I commit, which distract me and impede me from running after the Lord, as He would like.

†

8. This morning, just after Communion, in the prayer I was offering, I came to understand the great benefit from the frequent examen that I have undertaken. Through this, I recall myself to a greater vigilance over myself. This brought me contentment to be able to do something, which is a proof of the desire that I would have of being able to correspond to the grace of the Lord, and to that in particular, that of His love for me, from which this brought me to feel its many effects. The contentment, that these reflections and sentiments brought to me, excited greater desires in me and to execute perfectly this vigilance. And I thought that I would begin this day, a Friday, the Novena of Jesus the Nazarene, with the sentiment of prostrating myself nine times in this day at His feet to implore His grace.

†

10. In prayer this morning the Lord bestowed on me great desires of hurrying along and advancing on my path. I felt that love cannot remain inactive, and always yearns for more. These yearnings procured for me in this prayer a more accelerated movement in the beating of my heart and in breathing.

†

9. Wishing to agree with the Lord regarding certain external matters, in which I feared not pleasing Him, He made it clear to me that for these I have to ask His minister, and I resigned to do so.

†

17. In all these passed days, I experienced continuous desires to advance in the love of God. These were my preoccupation in all my prayers, or, to put it better, it was the object of which the Lord engaged me, giving me vivid yearning.

This morning I was again accompanied, and these yearnings were accompanied by the bitterness and sorrow regarding my own misery. It seemed to me that my ingratitude is what impedes the effect of these desires.

I thought further that the love that I feel for the Lord, is all affection and tenderness, but is without works. It seemed to me that there is nothing else in me than the negative, in that I no longer want to displease the Lord, but there is nothing positive in me and I do nothing for Him.

In the evening I experienced greater yearnings, I made continuous acts of love for the Lord, I experienced also sensible effects, ardor, an increased rapidity in the beating of my heart. And I had to seek other thoughts in order to be quiet and to sleep.

†

18. The Lord made me experience displeasure and regret in having distracted myself from the thought of His love, having felt the effects of this that I experienced in my physical nature. It seemed to me that I ought to have more courage and not allow myself to be concerned by fears for my health, as the Lord Himself having brought me to understand that I ought to be the slave of His love and not of my health.

†

26. All these days passed in desires, more or less vivid, of making progress along the path that the Lord wishes that I follow, that of charity.

The acts of ingratitude that I continuously commit regarding this, and the many times that I lose from sight the object upon which I make the particular examen. This brought to me even greater desires like those experienced other times, that these be energetically taken up again, whenever I accuse myself of these things, and the yearning to be disdained.

All seemed to me to be excessive, even those bad elements such as food and other things, for an ingrate such as I am. I desired further to do penance because it seems to me that this would be an alleviation in the increasing hardness I have undertaken against myself in some way.

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27. At Holy Communion I renewed myself in the desire of following the Lord's inspirations with a very great fidelity and to listen to them also with that respectful silence and attention in order not to lose anything of them. I made a sincere proposal concerning these matters, as the Lord was making known to me what He wanted of me.

During prayer, the Lord let me understand that in order to live and to move ahead in activity with having abandoned everything in Him, without any further feeling the use of my own powers, for all this there were necessary great courage, faith and confidence in Him. There was explained to me the occasions where each one of these virtues are necessary in order to keep oneself constant in this pathway. It seemed to me at another moment that the Lord had given me this to understand, in order to grant me sentiments of gratitude towards Him. I came to realize in knowing myself the facility that I experience comes totally from His grace, and not from the matter at hand and therefore, for a moment this seemed to me to be quite difficult.

The Lord showed me further how many gifts and lights that He would communicate to my soul, but He wishes that I become more despoiled of myself, and even totally stripped of any self-satisfaction whatsoever.

He explained to me the need of this with His customary mercy and love that He employs in my regard and all this was with making me understand that He is jealous of His own glory, and perfection of soul. Therefore, both would be

compromised with entrusting His gifts to anyone not so despoiled of self, since such a person does not leave all to Him, when self-love leads one to take delight in what is purely of Him alone, and even one's own perfection loses its way with such self-satisfaction.

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28. Beginning this evening the month of March, dedicated to St. Joseph, and after having recommended to him all the interests of my soul and those of the Institute, it seemed to me that the Lord did not will that there should enter here its temporal concerns. These, it seems to me, He wants to accomplish Himself, as He said in the Gospel, to hand over all these matters ever more. He does not will, though, that I should seek them out and ask them of Him. And further, it seems to me that there is a kind of diffidence through which I wish to recommend all these to Him, and as a result, He always admonishes me to trust solely and to abandon myself without any further thought on the matter.

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### March

During Holy Communion, there were great desires of total transformation into God.

During prayer, the Lord brought me to know the great purity with which He wants my soul to be embellished, and in a particular manner, that total despoilment of all self-love and satisfaction in matters. This is a disposition that He demands of me also so that He might communicate greater graces to me.

No matter how many times He has infused light into me regarding this, it was, however, never as subtle as this time. Yet, the expressions with which I can express this matter are the same, but the substance of all this is different, increasing always the meaning of it all. With the Lord's raising me up, little by little, granting me a kind of veil for my eyes, so that after having shown me a level of purity that He wants from me, He goes on leading me to understand another level which is even greater.

Now, therefore, this is all very subtle so that it comes to seem to me that I am understanding total death of myself in everything.

In seeing the difficulty from the human perspective, without this however terrifying me, I marveled at not feeling myself being engaged by what is so difficult, but rather found myself most consoled to struggle on toward it. And the Lord brought me to understand that this I owe to the desires, which in the preceding days He had placed within me. As these were very strong and ardent, this rendered so easy every difficulty which had to be overcome, in order to tend toward, and to arrive at uniting myself to the object of my

desires. And I now know that it is with the purity, being stripped, despoiled of myself, that will bring me the more quickly to arrive at it.

I love all that brings me light to procure these goals, not looking at the sublime height where I have to arrive, not watching the journey, so that with even greater courage I set out. The reason is that I know how good is the Lord and how much He wants to assist me, so that it seems to me that it is not I who have to do all this, but it is He, as I know, Who is in all things.

It was said to me to begin the particular examen on these words from St. Gregory: *In every action, look always toward Him: He always rectifies one's life and directs it toward Him, Who in his humanity, has set the parameters of the elect.* <sup>3</sup>

During prayer which I offered after this had been said to me, I experienced much consolation for having a means to consider the Redeemer more often, and consequently also a means to unite myself to Him, since it is difficult to think of Him without feeling my being drawn toward Him. The entire operation passed in this consideration and in desires to learn to imitate such a model.

The lights that the Lord gave me, concerning that sublime purity that He wants of me, and at the same time I discovered within me that injury that is done to this. And this is particularly so of a soul whom He draws lovingly toward Himself, whenever reservations are placed in the way of the total death to oneself. This is so necessary, in order to have **Him alone** dwell within us and to give to Him all the glory.

The insight, therefore, of how grave the committed offenses against Him are, this led me to desire to confess those that I committed about four years ago, in that it seemed to me that I now have greater lights, and I will conceive greater sorrow for them.

6. Having had some occasions of distractions, some of these came from not having followed the Lord's inspirations, by getting up from them in time, I made some reflections before Holy Communion and afterwards, with acts of sorrow and thanksgiving to the Lord for the good advice that He gives me in this regard.

During prayer, it seemed to me to see a certain haven in which my soul should always remain, and this is precisely Charity. By remaining in this, I will remain in Him, as the Lord says: ***Whoever remains in Charity, remains in***

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<sup>3</sup> The specific citation for this text from St. Gregory is not given. [Translator's Note: These texts might have been familiar to Fr. Bertoni as in these years he was giving conferences to the Seminararians of Verona, using as his text the Commentary of St. Gregory the Great on *Primum Regum*.]

**Me** <sup>4</sup>. So, all that I do, no matter how insignificant it might seem outside of this haven, leads me off the path, and consequently, fills me with distractions, annoyances, complaints, and the like.

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### April

During these past days, the same sentiments of total abandonment and loss of my entire self in God.

One day, after Holy Communion, there came to my mind the example of the phoenix, since I would have to die in order to live anew in a new life, totally of God. I feel that I should no longer live, I, but Jesus in me.

I experienced in prayer sentiments and desires of obedience and greater subjection, which I thought I should make known. However, not having done this, the Lord drew me to Him more closely in another period of prayer, leading me to understand that I ought to do it by placing myself truly before Him. He had willed that I should submit myself to His minister, and giving me the proofs with making me understand that I feel one thing only, that is, in a manner that there has no confusion, but that all comes from Him.

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3. Since it had been said to me that I ought to busy myself in reading Constitutions and rules, and to make reflections on them, I knew this again how much this was uniform to what the Lord, a few days earlier, had led me to understand, and I took consolation for having in this come to know that which the Lord assured me, that is, that this direction would derive from Him, and that He would be the Center from which all matters would come to me, either because He would lead me to know these immediately, or that it would be through His minister.

4. Since I had once again spoken about this point, but in a more extended manner, and I had to note the reflections, in order to see that which is more appropriate for us, and so, in that very moment it seemed to me that I felt my incapacity for this. However, at the same time I took courage, having understood the obedience, and this thought gave me strength to say 'yes' to this and to do it.

But, then there come once more the thought that I should make a vow, or at least that with this I would be more equipped to perform certain tasks that are prescribed for me to perform.

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<sup>4</sup> From the Latin Vulgate: 1 Jn 4:16.

I seek, it is true, to do that which has been said to me, but with the vow of obedience it seems to me that I would have more to know how to do, and I would succeed better in these matters which of myself, I am not capable.

I thought that I would expose this again, and to keep myself to hold myself to what has been said to me.

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5. In prayer, on this day, I found myself deprived of all sensible sentiment, as happened also yesterday. I assisted myself with the faith, and I tried to be content with being able in unadorned faith to protest to the Lord that I wanted **Him alone**, and not His consolations, that I would persevere at His feet on the crest of some annoyance which assailed me.

These sentiments became ever stronger, and with these, it seemed that I gave them much space, as in fact I succeeded in doing. I found in the faith some consolations which were of the quality of those which procures fervor and a vivid sentiment of union with God. These were, though, of relief and comfort to my spirit.

The state of the preceding days continued in prayer today, and on my part, I tried, in spite of some business that I had to attend to, that it would be more right to stay, and not to set aside not even a quarter of an hour, the usual time that I would employ in this exercise.

I occupied myself in abandonment that Jesus willed to suffer on the Cross, and I consoled myself in being able in these days to have something in order to unite myself to him. I spent a part of my prayer in a profound humiliation of myself, seeming to myself to be quite lowly, vile and wretched before the divine presence.

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10. In the morning prayer, just as soon as I started it, it seemed to me that I was touching the Lord's feet, and immediately I experienced consolation. This showed itself to me to be very grand. But as much as I saw myself to be very lowly, nonetheless I felt confidence that having touched His feet with His help, or, to put it better, having placed myself immediately in that place, He wanted to draw me once more on high, with His own infinite goodness and mercy.

I found myself very well at the Lord's feet and I would never have abandoned them. I received many lights and it seemed to me that in my spirit that the day had come that was so clear and serene, I thought that if there is such light being at His feet, what will it mean by His drawing me on high, ever toward Him?

Among the lights I received, these came over me for my benefit. Regarding that which I experienced in the past days - the assistance of faith in prayer, that of the presence of God and the usual sensible union - I had already

been all right, but I had to use this for my own assistance also in all the rest of my practices, in which I had become accustomed to negligence. This was especially so in the particular examen and in interior recollection and occupation with God. That is what I ought another time to procure, since now is the time of making on my part some effort, and to make use of a greater vigilance and attention regarding myself. The reason is that in fact as usual, I had borne myself with the greatest ease, and without, so to speak, realizing it, in all that tends toward God.

It seemed to me also that I knew that my spirit is weak, wavering, and when the Lord wishes from time to time to draw it, I am without zest, nor do I surrender to what He wills and does.

In the evening prayer, it seemed to me that I realized anew that my spirit has still rather rough edges, that that clarity which the Lord wishes to shine into it cannot penetrate, nor produce those effects that it should, because of this roughness. It seems to me that I see it like a bit of mineral in which there may be noticed veins of pure gold, but this gold is all mixed in with much earth. It is fitting that this be totally removed so that that metal might remain pure and beautiful.

I prayed to the Lord that He accomplish this work. The veins of gold seemed to me would be those rays of light that the Lord shines into it.

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11. In my prayer this morning, there continued the view of my miseries, and in a particular manner those of my spirit. And it seemed to me that I am not able to be relieved from the weight of this earth, and united to the Lord to the extent that He would will. I tried to form acts of humiliation.

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12.13. I was occupied with the Lord's Passion with the continuance of the view of my wretchedness. This appeared in contrast to the many mercies of the Lord.

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14. I found comfort this day in sacramental absolution, the consolation of the resurrection to which by means of that, it seemed that I could share in it with greater joy.

In prayer, in place of seeing as in the passed days that which I really am, I saw by means of a light shining above my darkness that which I ought to be.

The Lord brought me to see this by means of a certain intelligence that is difficult to express. It seemed to me that I could see my soul totally spiritualized, not being all tied up in so many bonds, in so many miseries and therefore, having acquired an agility that would bear it with greater fervor and readiness toward God.

In the evening prayer, the Lord further led me to know that which He wills from me, and this with such an understanding, that it enkindled me to desire this state. I felt myself vividly moved and I had to make a real effort to hold back the tears.

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15. Today the same deep feelings, excited by the same view of that state that the Lord would want that I should have already reached, and was displeased to see myself all hemmed in by so much mud and miseries which impede me from flying towards Him. I had great desires to shake from myself all that impedes me from that agility and subtlety that I ought to have. And I thought that I would have need of the purgative way, and that the Lord had wrought in me, as when the Exercises were made, when all the ways are passed over, but it is then fitting that one be returned to the one that is proper for her. And so, still now I need to set myself along this way, which is the one fitting for me. I thought that I would submit everything as I should.

In the evening prayer, since I was still occupied with my miseries and with that state that the Lord wants that I should achieve, in addition to the sentiments of humiliation on the one hand, I also experienced affection and love for the Lord.

It seemed to me that the Lord was leading me to understand that, with all the work that there is still to do here, He wills that it be accomplished by means of charity. I felt myself borne to form acts of it: and this is what I did.

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16. Today I busied myself in prayer with charity, as a stimulus for the correction of my defects, as a means quite efficacious to obtain the intention.

Because in my adoring Him, He then communicated to me with a sentiment of faith, united to a most particular appreciation of His omnipotence in the changing of the species of bread and wine, into His Most Holy Body at the words of the Priest. This gave me light and animated my confidence to hope that He would work out in me that...<sup>5</sup>

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22. I began prayer with a greater abandonment in God, with regard to the manner and the commitment of this time that I could dedicate to it. And the Lord granted me the light to understand, and the manner with which He wills that I should always do this, and other matters that served me for instruction and also admonition.

I knew, therefore, that He wills that I should go on and He kept me in prayer in that total silence of my faculties and repose in Him and that I am in

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<sup>5</sup> The sentence is left incomplete.

this more passive than active. The will that I should do something on my part is what disturbs that which He wills to do in me, without me, and I would almost say, without my even noticing this.

The Lord then went on to bring me to understand that it is repose in Him, which He wills that I should also have outside of prayer. And that since it is He Who is in possession of my faculties, the use of them that I wish at times to make, brings to me some defects, fears, cares, impatience. All these I only experience then, and even then only for a while, as when I add my own part in that which I am doing and when I do not remain in that total abandonment that He wills of me.

In coming to know these matters, I exposed to the Lord the difficulties that seem to be in that which He wants in such an absolute manner, having understood the activities of the active life, which seem to make necessary for me the use of one, or other of these faculties. And the Lord in response reminded me of that light which He gave me a month ago, that there would be the necessary courage and constancy, faith and confidence in Him, for this way, and that this is what He wants.

I submitted. And then I understood the advantages that I would garner, if truly I followed this in that extension which He asked of me, since it was I who had placed limits here. There followed greater difficulties, placing with this an impediment to the lights that the Lord would grant me in the different circumstances where I would have need of them, if in place, therefore, of fearing and seeking with difficulty the manner of operating, I addressed myself to Him with tranquil and loving confidence.

The Lord led me to understand these matters clearly, joined then to the good that would be not only for me, but also for all, I would accept this total abandonment. I reflected that each and every time that gives me these sentiments, all was quieted within me. It is whenever only I partially distance myself from Him, I find embarrassment and restlessness.

The Lord also made me understand that this was a binding of my faculties, by means of which they are purified, but this was so necessary, keeping in mind the abuse that I have made of these.

This made me propose to make use of them in order to humble myself, according to the circumstances. This is particularly so with regard to memory, which seemed to me to be a matter that was so good for my use, and I have much need of it. Now that I have little of it, on the occasion of having neglected some defect of it, I will confess that I am deprived of it and I will humble myself.

23. In prayer I experienced confusion and humiliation in seeing that the Lord made clear certain matters to me, while I would have need that after so much time that He instructs me to obey Him with simplicity and love, and not to need so many excuses. I thanked His infinite goodness, in the same moment that I had to recognize my own weakness.

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24. Following my prayer this morning that sentiment of abandonment in God, of silence of all my faculties, and of repose in Him, He continued to teach me. I concentrated particularly on the difficulty that I experience in remaining always fixed in that abandonment, whenever I must of necessity do my part, i.e., to resolve a certain matter, to deal with some enterprise.

He brought me to understand this in all that I find myself duty-bound to do. I need to keep in mind my enterprise, in which I am not to consider myself as the mistress, but only as a servant. I need to remember that these are not my interests, but those of the Lord. And I am to obey His every hint, awaiting the orders from Him.

This pleased me and persuaded me much, but at the same time I realized that He wanted from me, from my part, a greater detachment of myself, a total death. In brief, that every impediment and obstacle comes from me, as the Lord in asking and willing this abandonment and trust, He still wills to grant me all the lights necessary to carry out my duties well.

Concerning this, I experienced a deep persuasion, which was sustained in seeing that which I cannot express other than saying that it seems to me that I do know that the Lord employs all His omnipotence and His goodness for anyone who abandons herself intimately in Him.

On finishing the prayer, the Lord gave me a deposit of assistance which from this abandonment I can draw on in order to be united to Him. He allows me to experience a taste of it, and to experience the good of losing myself totally in Him, as I do not find myself in anything else.

I desired that transformation in God, which renders stable in me this union, to the extent that this can be found not only in prayer, but in my whole undertaking, and that nothing other can take me from this.

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25. In the prayer of today, I found myself again in the same state of quiet abandonment. This quiet procured, formed a great facility in uniting me to God, without having any need of a preamble. It seemed to me in this operation, that my spirit is purified, and that even the faculties of the soul are being purified.

At the end of my prayer, in organizing the activities of the day, and having to take care of a certain matter, the Lord brought me to understand

that as I had to take care of this day by day, I trusted in Him and without any thought of what was coming later, nor of the business at hand. In this, each day I take care of business, and there will always be something to do later in order to continue it and to bring it to its conclusion.

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26. At Holy Communion, that is, in the time after It, there was came to mind a temptation against the faith which a person had manifested to me, and there was real sorrow at the explanations of this temptation. At the same time, though, I thought that this could also happen in me, and I felt that it would involve the matter that could afflict me the most, keeping in mind that sentiment of affection and love that I do have for the Lord. He then consoled me about this fear and said to me: *If you remain in that Center where I want you to dwell, you have nothing to fear, but outside of this, there is a bit of everything.*

I knew then that the Lord with these words wished to stimulate me to find my repose in Him, against the fears that my nature experiences in the total loss of myself and that only by means of this could I avoid all evil. I then made new acts of abandonment, wishing really not to know anything about myself and to find my rest continuously in God.

The Lord then said to me with an internal locution that it is not enough to abandon myself in Him, that by means of those renewed stimuli of abandonment, He wishes to draw me to the total transformation into Him, so much so that it would no longer be me who lives, but that He would live in me, explaining to me the effect that this is to produce. This seemed to me to be a higher level of simple union, having present my own wretchedness, I could do nothing less than to expose to the Lord, in the simplicity of my heart, that I was passing too brusquely from one to the other, that I do everything in such a superficial manner, and that I am full of miseries and wretchedness.

But, He explained to me that He is the Master and that I ought to obey, as it is not up to me to seek out these things, and that on my own I would not even be able to think of them, nor to understand them, but that He making His will known, and manifests to me His Will.

I made acts of submission and humiliation.

Following this, my prayer was on how much the Lord had wanted to make me aware of this. I gave it all some serious thought, making myself a bit afraid in seeing that the activities within me do not correspond to that which the Lord makes me understand that He wills of me, to the extent that it seems to me impossible that this is true.

On the other hand, I do have natural fears, as it seems to me that I am not good for anything in this absorption of everything in myself. But above it all,

the Lord comforted me and made me understand that bestowing it on me, I come to make that gain that a poor person would make, who on having received a single coin, through one who would like to give him a hundred thousand ducats.

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## The Spiritual Exercises

### The End of Man

*1st Point* : That with my pride and self-love, I am often distanced from my End. This most noble End, for which God created me, which was to praise, revere and serve Him, in order to lead me to the possession of Him. And in this, I have given the impression of being one of the great ones, one who would be called to the court of a sovereign, in order to make up part of his cortege, to serve his greatness and glory. And in place of this he Himself would want his honor and glory to redound, as he is called to give and not to receive.

*2nd Point* : As regards all those things that God has created for humanity, I saw that the greater part could be made to arrive more certainly for the negative part, with mortifying myself in their use. And it is clear that the lack of mortification has at times distanced me and at other times, slowed down my tending toward Him as I should.

The proposals that I felt I should make on both of these dimensions, was for a half a minute examen to scrutinize only the correction for the future.

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### Second Meditation on the End. Concerning the Indifference of the Means.

I found the defects in the past, and I found that in my present disposition I have to formulate many acts also in this moment.

These relate to charity with a preference rather for disdain than to honor, to poverty, and so on - but personally for me, and having grasped that by means of these God is the more easily found, Whom I aspire to please and to rediscover.

Indifference in that I do not have a regard toward one thing over any other, in that which touches my whole endeavor, that is, the Institute, and I rediscovered many defects into which I fall in this, and these came to mind without my thinking about this.

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#### Fourth Meditation. Repetition of Sin

I knew that this impedes my uniting myself to the Lord: it is nothing more than this earth in which my spirit is all entangled, and that this renders very cumbersome that flight that the Lord would want of me.

The Lord brought me to understand, in the process of sins, that which He wanted of me in the different states, in which I found myself, and that in all of them, He had particular designs over me.

During infancy and the time that I spent in the cloister, providing me with a thousand graces, He wanted me a saint already then, and to be a model in that state. But I only abused His gifts which I employed to offend Him.

He wanted me in the royal court, and with those sentiments that He had placed in me and which He continued to infuse, He wanted that in the court that I should come to know that one can indeed live there without participating in its pomps, vanity and pass-times.

And I made use of these very gifts and arms that He gave me for this, to participate in that life with greater assurance or, I would say, more presumption, that it now brings terror in seeing how I was able to come out of all that safe and sound. He called me then to the Institute, and then there even seemed to increase my ingratitude and sins.

And now He wants to entrust everything to me. What will become of me, if I do not correspond?

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#### Second Week

##### *1st Day*

In the time that I employed in thanksgiving after Holy Communion, a few distractions passed through my mind of matters pertaining to some business that I have to take care of, I recall that affection that had been demonstrated to me, and so on. And the Lord said to me clearly that indifference is not enough in me for all these things, but that He wills also that I should not even give them a glance, nor do I pay any attention to them, not only for thee days, but always.

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##### *Meditation on the Reign of Christ*

This I began with much emotion, changed by a sentiment of affection towards Jesus Christ and to call to my mind that the Lord, for many years, often repeated within me those words: *The Reign of God is within you*, inviting me with these to continue to follow Him, then when I was more abusive of this internal invitation.

I undertook this meditation with the exercise of the intellect in the first part, but I felt myself being drawn in the second, thinking that I ought to rivet my attention on that which was only a similitude.

I passed with pleasure to the second part in order to fix my intellect and all on Jesus Christ. I reflected that that earthly king, in order to weaken his enemies and subject those peoples to his dominion, needed his subjects, since alone he could not conquer. It is true that he offers them rewards, but momentary ones, though, and temporal, which in order to have them it was necessary for him to make use of them.

But, Jesus Christ in order to reign in His glory, to weaken His enemies, has no need of us. If He calls us it is only because He directs His love toward us, so that point that even though He does not command that He be followed, it seems that with His love, so to speak, He does subject our heart and determines it in a way that it cannot be resisted.

I thought how sweet was the dominion of this King, how easy to serve Him. I passed also to consider that that other earthly kings could not do anything beyond promising great rewards to whomsoever would follow him, but that he could not supply them with the power to expel enemies, nor could he give strength to them in dangers.

But, Jesus Christ not only calls with such love, but also further gives the strength, and gives courage to them in every moment where there is greater danger and where the enemies more greatly assail us.

I also thought with that saying of Jesus, *that you become fatigued with Me*, it was with the last words - *with Me* - that there is removed the hardship of *you become fatigued*, since all fatigue does cease when one works with Him, and the following Him alone more from close at hand, that every weight is alleviated.

Considering then those words *and so the reward will correspond to the fatigue*, I thought that everything on the contrary regarding an earthly king. Usually, such a one promises more than he can deliver, and it is not any earthly reward that might be adequate to that life, which for Him the subjects expose themselves.

Our King, Jesus Christ, promises more than every fatigue is worth, and it is not possible ever that there would ever come to bear any effort and no pain of ours that could equal the reward which He has prepared, by His adding Himself the intrinsic price for our operations, which they do not have of themselves.

Having established this, one would not be of a healthy not to follow Him willingly, and to give over everything to Him.

I desired to follow Him very close at hand, to meet not only with Him in each danger, but also to prepare the blows that He would like to inflict on His enemies, with adding my zeal for His glory and to strive that there be impeded any offense against Him.

This act of the will excited in me many affections, by means of which I truly was sorry for my own faults and to have served Him so badly. I protested that I wanted from now on always to have my eye, mind and heart fixed on Him, without ever casting a glance on anything else.

- *Colloquy*

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## *2nd Day*

### **Meditation on the Incarnation**

Humility, the hidden life, recollection - that I admired in Mary most Holy.

I stopped and came to know the most sure disposition for greater graces and favors of heaven.

Desire for humility.

In the *2nd Point* at the words which the Angel addressed to the Blessed Virgin, *that nothing is impossible to God*, it seemed to me that the Lord was speaking of confidence against those doubts which my faults and ingratitude give me, that I could ever be an instrument for His Glory, and He gave me courage to hope, in His omnipotence and goodness, that which as far as I am concerned on my own, is really impossible.

I took courage then in the Lord as I found myself embarrassed and tired from the many remnants of sin that I have, from the inconstancies that I have brought to the exercise of virtue and mortification, from those habits of pride, of seeking myself and my own self-love, from all that where I find myself impeded in all I ought to be doing and that he brought me to understand what He would want of me.

I begged Him therefore to loosen these remnants of the bonds, which while they do not hold me back entirely, they do impede me. I asked this of Him through the infinite merits of my Redeemer.

***Meditation on the Nativity*** : This made a greater impression on me and devotion to Mary Most Holy in the midst of so many sufferings, she is recollected, intent on the contemplation of her Divine Son, and more occupied with this than what she was suffering.

I considered also how the Lord wanted immediately, even before being born, to make known that His reign is not like those of this world, and to the two of the greatest personages of this world, Mary and Joseph, that the divine honors bear with them external sufferings and inconvenience, in the act that God sustains within.

I considered further St. Joseph, diligent and solicitous in seeking lodging for the Mother of God. But this diligence and solicitude were all according to the Spirit of Jesus Who was about to be born, as his was a quiet solicitude, resigned to the Divine Will. And having known the Divine Will from circumstances, he quietly sought outside the town a cave and diligently set about to repair this as best he could. I thought that he could serve as a norm in zeal for the glory of God. This means not to spare, nor neglect on our part, any diligence that we could possibly do, but with resignation, without haste, disturbance or bitterness, which are all reactions that flow more from our nature, than from zeal for the divine glory.

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### ***3rd Day***

#### **Meditation on the Presentation of Jesus**

There was admiration for the humility of Jesus and submission to the Law, which are virtues imitated by the Most Holy Mother and St. Joseph.

It seemed to me that I saw St. Joseph as a light, who illumined those two holy personalities. I thought further that the greater dignity that the Lord could possibly have granted, was that which Mary Most Holy had, but which was a dignity that had to be totally accompanied by humility, poverty. And she did only appear before the human eyes under that aspect.

I drew from this for myself the desire of imitation and affection.

I observed how in all that city two persons alone were called by the Lord to the temple, to contemplate Jesus there, and they were just.

I admired how already in this world He shares His favors with those who desire it. I saw further how in spite of humiliations and annihilation of Jesus, the Eternal Father from heaven took care in every principal encounter to exalt Him and to make Him known to some person for that which He was. And seeing the holy old man Simeon desire death after having seen the divine Infant, I took confidence in exposing to the Lord what I also still yearned for, after He being made known to me with all His communications, to be freed not from the bonds of the body, willing only what He wants of me,, but by being freed from so many necessities, which little by little have been introduced into my life-style. Of the many remnants of sins and inconstancy in virtue which hold me subject, and impede me from the imitation of the life and virtue of Him.

***Flight into Egypt.*** I had sentiments of satisfaction in admiring the glorious St. Joseph, his peace, his continual contemplation of Jesus and Mary, and as though to this alone was he intent, without seeking information on what is going on in the world. God already took care of this sacred Three-some and sends an Angel to him. Joseph receives the order of departure with the same submission.

I paused for a few moments to contemplate these saints, personalities in their journey, with some emotion, since the Holy Family is my special devotion.<sup>6</sup>

Then, noting the poverty and deprivation of every comfort for these companions, I desired anew to be delivered from so many things that seemed necessary, and they brought to me more than ever confusion in meditating on the life of the Divine Redeemer.

I resolved to go on, getting up the best that I could and testing little by little also those things that seem necessary for my health.

There came to me the concern that I had of not increasing those goods that could become necessary, when I was about to embrace the religious state, and I thought that now I ought to set aside all the more in the interests of that more particular perfection to which I feel myself called.

†

#### *4th Day*

#### **The Going of Jesus to the Temple**

In the precision of Jesus in carrying out every point of the law and customs, after His having come into the world in order to establish new ones, I came to understand the my own failure in dispensing myself, often under the pretext of my other responsibilities, in taking part in the common acts and practices of the Rule. I saw also that according to the example of Jesus, I should in certain areas adapt myself, as so many of these items should not be taken care of in a day. And I would like to bring all my activity into a genuine spirit of humility in imitation of Jesus. To imitate Jesus also, in His modesty in the Temple, while he was being interrogated and instructing. And when my own opinion is asked for, to say it with humility, modesty, discernment, all according to Jesus' example. And not to respond with that pride, persuasiveness of my own opinion, all such are the result of my own spirit, and not that of Jesus.

I realized that little by little as I went on meditating on His life, with the application that I make to my own actions, I resolved to correct them all, and to order them according to His life.

The Lord brought me to understand that whenever I would experience some difficulties in this meditation, it will serve me much to unite myself to Him, with coming to know Him better and to ponder His life.

I thought further to imitate Jesus in those words with which He responded; *Did you not know that I had to be about My Father's business...*<sup>7</sup> - I resolved to say this often to myself.

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<sup>6</sup> This is the first time that there appears a reference to the Holy Family as a special devotion of Mother Leopoldina.

<sup>7</sup> Lk 2:49 - Latin Vulgate.

Whenever my self-love would like to be that which dominates, whenever I seek out the comforts for my own nature, when human respect will invade perhaps in my actions, I will protect what are the interests of the glory of my father who is in heaven and be conform to His actions, and not wanting any other rule of conduct.

***And He was subject to them - and Is He not the carpenter's Son?*** <sup>8</sup> Jesus' obedience was based on his ending toward that which was for the glory of His eternal Father.

The Lord made me understand, despite the fact that He had come for a great work, yet he stayed hidden, humble, and allowing it still to be believed that he was a simple carpenter.

And that I ought to make use of this as an example against my own pride, which leads me to believe sometimes that it is necessary to make oneself known.

It displeases me not having appeared more of what I have worked out, and all of this is represented under the pretext of the interests of the Institute, and not of my own person. But, I ought to quiet myself down, and to follow rather His Spirit, which instructs me to remain hidden, and that He will know at the right time, to do all.

†

### ***5th Day***

#### **Two Standards**

***Repetition*** : Little, or to put it better, no fear of the devil, but only from distancing myself even a little from the Lord, and it seems to me that from this every evil follows.

I find myself, often in the bonds that the devil attends, in those particularly of pride and worldly fear, but this came to be understood that I was not following Jesus, nor did I hold myself so close to Him as I should, and He wanted me to do. I saw, therefore, more than ever the minimal power of the devil, or, to put it better, his weakness, when one stays close to Jesus. I passed with pleasure into His camp, I allowed myself go on to contemplate Him, since He is supremely lovable. Reflecting that He is the Master of this entire world, I felt within myself always more peace and quiet under His dominion and closeness, *concerning all my undertakings*.

***Three Classes*** : I stopped on the ***Second Prelude*** experiencing consolation in seeing myself before the Lord while He was looking at my desire to please Him, the sole reality to which I aspire.

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<sup>8</sup> Lk 2:51 - Latin Vulgate.

I paused for a while on the Third Class of men and it seemed to me not to need the examen concerning myself in order to know that I really want that which is in conformity to the glory of God.

I found myself in this disposition also concerning all that pertains to the Institute for the article of the Rule whether to allow possession, or not. It seemed to me that the motives I have for the affirmative are only relative to the greater glory of God and not to know whether He would wish otherwise. However, I do feel myself ready also for the contrary, whatever He would want.

Representing to the Lord this disposition of mine, I felt myself doing it with this expression: 'Behold, Lord, that which Your love, Your charity has produced in me and the disposition in which You have placed me.' Recognizing that I have nothing of good, nor can I have any.

†

### **6th Day**

#### **The Baptism of Jesus**

The Lord gave me sentiments of fervor and the desire of going slowly investigating what He did before He began His active life, to be able to begin to follow in His footsteps. I attached myself to be close to Him, by contemplating Him. I admired His humility. I prayed that He might infuse into me this virtue of which I am lacking.

I saw in the Baptism that He received, an example of the cleanliness that the active life requires, which renders one occupied for others. I paused over these minutely. I desired to know that which might still be in my soul not yet purged.

I prayed to my Lord to help me Himself to scrutinize the cleanliness and the purity of conscience that I ought always have from now on, the total nudity in which wills for me from so many small satisfactions and self-seeking.

The desires of esteem and approval. These are all remnants of that radical and habitual pride which has always dominated in me, but which now stops me and impedes me both for myself as well as for being suitable for His glory.

I reflected on those words which in the Baptism of Jesus were heard: ***This is My Beloved Son***<sup>9</sup>. I also noted how in every encounter where Jesus is humbled, the Eternal Father was careful to exalt Him.

I drew from this the reflection that the same happens to those who follow Jesus in humiliations, that He takes care of them, of defending them, and the like.

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<sup>9</sup> Mt 3:17 - from the Latin Vulgate.

*The going out into the desert.* I continued to attach myself very closely to the Lord and to follow Him in His steps to draw from this an instruction.

Humility and cleanliness I drew also from another meditation. In this, I saw another disposition for the active life: solitude, but a solitude employed in prayer, fasting, penance.

It seemed that for the Lord it should have sufficed to having given us the example of 30 years of a hidden life, but this was not enough for Him and He chose to give us this other instruction.

For us still He chose to be tempted and with His admirable words to teach us how to conduct ourselves in temptations, by opposing not with arrogance, and not with one's own and insufficient arguments, but with the words of Scripture. I paused to contemplate Him and I remained with pleasure close to Him.

*Repetition* . Beyond the above-noted sentiments, which continued for me, the Lord provided me with some light which seemed to penetrate through the darkness, or the partition, which seemed to place the meditation between Him and my spirit. This was avid to receive them and to savor them, but it seemed as though they were unable to penetrate.

However, being in an internal recollection, it seemed to me that the Lord consoled me and said to me that all that which now does not penetrate, He will grant me when there will not be any other impediment and will be the fruit of this present meditation.

Going on then to see that after the devil took his leave from Jesus, the Angels came to serve him. I thought that after the temptation consolation comes. I found myself at the end of the prayer, or meditation, absorbed in the Lord, but without lights, not any particular cognition.

*Application of the senses.* This succeeded for me better than usual, enjoying much in the Lord and it seemed to me, that in place of what I do in my customary prayer, that His spirit attracted me and I stood at His feet, firm in this contemplation.

†

### **7th Day**

#### **The Vocation of the Apostles**

I observed in the condition of these men the humble genius of the Lord, Who could equally have called others. Also the gentle manner of His call: without either force, or words. One alone sufficed. I experienced pausing much over the grace that the Lord has granted to me, calling me from the royal Court. This was a two-fold grace which asks for a two-fold correspondence.

I experienced sentiments of gratitude and the desire to stay very close to the Lord, having so much need of that, in that I have so much residue of the past, regarding pride, self-love, self-seeking, and the like.

In this meditation, the Lord once more consoled me by leading me to know that these meditations, which are as a kind of interval between Him and me, will serve, however, to remove that which I often found to be an obstacle in my spirit: that earth which I saw, those remnants of the miseries, and so one interval will remove the other, because one will correct the other.

*First Miracle of Jesus.* Sentiments regarding the simple exposition of the Blessed Virgin regarding the needs of those spouses.

This is a Model for our prayers: to represent by means of Mary with simplicity and confidence and to await patiently the moment of the Lord, doing in the meantime that which He wants and that which inspires us.

In a visit that I made to the Most Blessed Sacrament, I found myself in great peace and internal consolation, regarding whatever the Lord had made known in the morning meditation, I was taken over the thought that the Lord, by making everything so easy for me, it seems that He wants me to give all in this world.

I formed the thought to expose this fear of mine, but the Lord willed for the moment to console me, giving me an internal hope that was very strong in having to enjoy Him one day that will be forever.

I found myself then to be in such confidence and consolation, that there was so dissipated that fear that I usually have concerning my sins, that I could do no less than to say to the Lord that if this sole consolation He had bestowed on me in this retreat, there was well spent every suffering my every fatigue.

I experienced a supreme desire to employ all the rest of my life for the glory of Him, without any regard for my own health, nor to anything else and it seemed to me that I received some courage, that lifted me above myself.

*Repetition.* There came to me also the desire to seek every means to give glory to God. These seemed to me to be produced by the sentiment had in the visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament. I regretted before the Lord in not feeling zeal to employ myself for the glory of Him.

I saw in myself so many obstacles, that it was said to me that if there will be my commitment in this regard, and this would render me a suitable instrument to accomplish something, since I am so good for nothing, it will be such a great miracle, as was the changing of the water into wine.

### 8th Day

In awaking this morning I heard what seemed to be a question: 'Who introduced charity into you?'

I responded: 'You, o Lord,'

'And this is the way it will be for all that is lacking to you.'

*Sermon on the Mount.* I experienced the desire to read often and to consider so much the eight Beatitudes which He, Jesus, taught to His Apostles, as also the rest of that admirable sermon delivered on the mountain, since every word is for my instruction.

*The calming of the Storm.* I thought how, in this sea of the world, the Lord has put me in a small boat, that He is also there as He was in that of the Apostles. I drew close to Him and I thought that in every storm that might arise, since He is with us, there is nothing to fear, even if he seems to be sleeping.

I experienced full trust in Him and in His power, and I thought that without wonder I would see ever storm calmed by Him, recognizing Him to be omnipotent, good, merciful.

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### Third Week

#### The Supper

In those words that the Lord said: *One of you...*<sup>10</sup>, I made my own reflections.

I paused very much on the institution of the Most Holy Sacrament, with gratitude and love, thinking that one of the effects of the Most Holy Communion is that of transforming us into Jesus Christ [an effect that He often moves me to desire], I thought how far I still am for having achieved this, notwithstanding the fact that I do so every day.

Those remnants that I have, and which displease me so much, have come once more to my mind, and it seems to me that I would need much contrary virtue to smother them, particularly with a great disdain of myself, seeing that the principal root of this is my pride.

*The going forth and Prayer in the Garden.* Devotion, compassion, love: to this last mentioned, I experienced myself much moved.

There came to me those desires of the past, when I would meditate on the Passion, desires to suffer, which served me so well in the past. I thanked the Lord for His help.

That which now dominates is love. This meditation brought me much consolation, but for the most part I contemplated and made acts of love.

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<sup>10</sup> Mt 26:21 - from the Latin Vulgate.

†

## ***2nd Day***

### **Jesus before Pilate**

Barabbas was preferred over Him.

I desired to overcome every human respect, not only in the observance of the divine law, and of that which regards faith, but also in those counsels of Jesus Christ. The yearning to destroy in me those remnants of mere human prudence, with which at times I arrange things to give glory to God, and the conditions that this leads me to put down in order to commit myself to this.

*Jesus Christ in the House of Herod.* At the end of the meditation, I set myself to contemplating Jesus, so disdained and derided, and I felt greater confusion of my pride, and of all those defects that derive from this. I detested them with an ever greater desire of correct them from myself, not being able to endure myself in the face of such humility which Jesus exercised.

Love seeks for similarity. If therefore, I love Jesus, I have to be like Him, and with courage put my hand to the defects.

I thought that up to now I went ahead with extended means, and that from now on it no longer has to be like that.

I fixed before myself the example of St. Ignatius, who precisely did have pride and he was attached to earthly honor, but very soon he corrected himself. He took up strong means that directly truncated and brought death to these defects of his. Then I proposed to note what would bring it about that I might be able to destroy them in me more surely, and with courage to put this into practice.

I trusted in the divine assistance and mercy to obtain the contrary virtues.

†

## ***3rd Day***

### **Jesus' Words on the Cross**

I put myself with the greatest devotion that I could in this meditation, and with great desire of suffering with Jesus in His pains, and to draw from them some profit for my soul. But, I did not accomplish anything.

*The same Subject*

Before beginning this meditation, the Lord gave me light in order to know the failing I committed in the other, where I thought of everything other than with suffering with Jesus, enduring with Him the displeasure to find me without sentiment and affection for Him. I sought then to unite myself to the internal sufferings of Jesus on the Cross, and to that particularly which He

demonstrated with those words: *My God, my God, why have You abandoned Me?*<sup>11</sup>.

Then, there seemed to pull back those clouds and that hardness I experienced in the other meditation.

I paused a long time on these words of the Lord, which brought me light on those words that I ought to avoid saying and the motives that I ought to have in those that I do say.

*I Thirst.* Also on these words I paused, as it seemed to me that the Lord said to me: 'Souls, Souls', and I experienced sentiments and desires to do much for these, and to impede that he be offended.

I had some distractions, as there came to my mind to do some or other, for this.

†††

#### *Fourth Week*

##### *1st Day*

Making an examen of the first meditation in that manner in which it was prescribed for me to do so ,i.e., with asking with humility the Lord to lead me to know the defects in which I was enveloped, He drew me more intimately to Himself and led me to understand that in this I was not abandoned or, to put it better, having left aside that love with which He drew me toward Him. The fact is that I am too restrictive with Him: on my part, I always place some limit and boundary that He does not me to place there.

I proposed the correction.

In the examen of the second, I came to know that in order to correct my defect which in the other I did recognize, I was making too much effort, while I should allow myself sweetly to let Him to do His work.

The Lord made me know anew the defect that I often commit in holding myself back, and that I am often too restrained with Him and fearful, not yet realizing how much He would want to achieve in me by means of charity, which increases in prayer.

In the examen for the third, I came to know that I allow myself to be too busy, in the beginning, with a defect that I had committed, with some fear of being deprived for this reason with that customary fervor, while I ought immediately to do that which I did after my becoming aware of it, i.e., to humble myself and to trust in the Lord's goodness and mercy.

In the fourth, I came to know that I had sufficiently quieted my faculties, the only contribution that I should make on my part, and I had some distractions.

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<sup>11</sup> Mt 27:46 - from the Latin Vulgate.

In the evening, outside of the time for prayer, the Lord led me to understand that I had fallen into the defect of anxiety, concerning the correction of my faults. That the desire to purge myself of this had come from me. The yearning of doing much about this still remained. But the fact that I did add something more of my own contribution, was the reason why I had experienced that disturbance, when I committed that fault.

It seemed still that the Lord was saying to me that He wishes to be so the Master of my spirit that I do not have to enter into this with anything, that He wishes to take over the entire endeavor and that my care ought to be solely that of not allowing anything of myself enter into this, no matter how insignificant this might be, under no pretext of good, nor for what seems to be for my spiritual growth, or greater profit. There came over me a sense of gratefulness, and at the same time, some pain.

†

### *2nd Day*

At Holy Communion, the Lord brought me to understand that He wills all things that regard my soul, that I may desire them and procure them only to give Him glory, and that I might no longer have in my sights my own advantage, and that of all this that I leave the care to Him, being forgetful of myself.

Following this sentiment and light, which the Lord has bestowed on me, the moment that I received Him in Holy Communion, I dedicated myself totally to Him, in order to serve His glory and His love. It seemed to me, then, that this would assist me more efficaciously to despoil myself and not seek myself, nor find myself any more in my undertakings.

The prayers of this day I offered with some distraction, and committing some of those defects of yesterday.

†

### *3rd Day*

The Lord granted me greater fervor this morning than on the previous days, and I desire to pass these days all for the glory of God, not busying even my mind in any other thing.

In Holy Communion and in my prayers, I was occupied much in seeking everything and perfect for the pure object of giving glory to God and to serve His love, not looking any more for my own profit, but purely toward Him.

In the third prayer, I experienced consolation and joy in feeling myself once more animated and in not having anything other in life, and not serving anything other than divine glory and Love.

It seemed to me that I have acquired a new liberty of spirit, a superiority over myself, that flowed from this and the I grasped very well. I tasted so

much pleasure in manifesting myself to the Lord, being desirous solely of this and willing to renounce every thought of myself and all of my own profit.

Following what I had just experienced above, I represented to the Lord however, that the desires for profit and even that anxiety itself, that I had brought up against my defect, seemed to me to have had the intention of being able in that manner to please Him the more.

It seemed to me that the Lord was instructing me on all this, by bringing me to understand that when He gives me the sight of my own wretchedness [which He wishes to purge in the furnace of His Charity, by means of prayer], He does this because He wishes of me confidence and abandonment in Him. These do not flow from a general knowledge of His omnipotence in order to free my soul from every misery, but from an almost security of His goodness and love which He wants to do for it. As a result, I ought to trust and to think that He has greater cure in order to improve my soul, from all that I myself might have for it.

In the examen on this prayer, it seemed to me that I knew that when the Lord instructs me, I very soon come to enjoy that which He gives me to know, and I pause on this, where I ought to stop myself and listen to Him unto the end.

This evening I reflected outside of prayer time, on how far I am from loving the Lord, since I am not mortified, and it is easy for me to give in to every slight tiredness, and to immediately seek rest. And I thought that if love were really to dominate in me, it would overcome all these practices.

As a result, I humbled myself much over this.

†

#### **4th Day**

During the first prayer, I experienced beginning it with sentiments of humiliation, remembering the reflection that I had made yesterday evening.

At the sight of the love of the Lord for my soul, which I feel as He was drawing me to Himself. There came to me such a sentiment of my misery, that shone out at the supreme purity of God, and I felt very much moved.

It seemed that I could no longer see myself, and that this brought such terror that I feared the violence of the matter which did not come from God. I sought to quiet myself in Him, thinking that yesterday He made me understand that I ought to make use of this view in order to throw myself into His arms and to hope in His goodness.

I remained, though, with confusion and the desire to seek the means to mortify myself, and to overcome myself out of love for the Lord.

In the examen for this prayer, it seemed to me that what I was experiencing came from the Lord, also due to the effect that remained with me which was not restlessness, my painful.

In prayer after lunch, I was distracted and realized that this distraction came from having allowed some words to be said to me.

And I came to know how much better I would have done to follow that which had been suggested to me: that of not speaking with anyone in these days. And it seemed to me to be in conformity with the will of the Lord, I made proposals to begin immediately the day after not to see my companions any more.

At the last prayer, immediately as I began it, it seemed to me that the Lord had brought peace to me, and that what I had proposed was pleasing to Him. It is only that He asked immediately that which I had promised only for the following day. Then it seemed to me that I heard it said to me: 'this evening, and not tomorrow.'

I surrendered immediately, and this evening I executed this.

†

### *5th Day*

In my prayer of this day, there continued an ever more vivid knowledge of my wretchedness. Hence, this thought did not keep me from busying myself from Charity and union with God, which ought in these days to occupy me. I felt listless in these prayers, and I suffered much boredom. I tried to endure this willingly, to offer myself also to the Lord in order to suffer all that this state would please Him and I sought to not skim nothing at all from the usual time that I ought to give to it.

†

### *6th Day*

I passed the time of prayer with the customary listlessness, seeking however, to be content in the suffering, provided that there was no fault on my part. After a bit of time that I gave to this, I experienced some fervor. And the thought came to me that what I was then suffering, and that which from now on I could suffer, would be for the glory of God and for His love, having understood that the Lord was giving me the desire, and also helping me not to have any other motive. And when the thoughts came to me, either regarding my own advantage and spiritual profit, or suffering in order to lessen my sins, I immediately felt the renunciation that of all that I had done for the Lord, and I found myself content not to have any longer these motives.

I was lacking also in this day of those sentiments of affection and love for the Lord, seeing only my misery, worthlessness and ingratitude.

†

### *7th Day*

In a prayer, as I was recommending one of my companions, I thought of having this done by another. It seemed to me, then, that the Lord found fault with my little confidence in Him. I laid before Him the defects and wretchedness in which I am immersed and which it seemed to that He did not hear my prayers. But He brought me to understand that it was because I was looking at these alone, and not solely at His love, inclined to grant me whatever I would ask of Him, if only I had the confidence to hope for it, notwithstanding all that I see in myself.

In the final prayer, the Lord brought me to understand even more how much it displeased Him when I do not abandon myself with total trust in Him: the wrong that I do to His goodness, and that He becomes more disgusted with the fears that come to me from that hesitancy I have with Him, than He does from my defects themselves. The fact is that with my many reflections I do no more than burden Him Who wants to act **Himself alone**, and without noting contributed on my part.

It seemed to me to see how it is necessary that there be a continuous view and always directed toward the Lord.

How easy it is that a matter, even something insignificant, impedes that justice in which I ought to walk, without allow myself for whatever motive to draw to one side or to another, that creates confusion in my spirit, which the Lord wants that it be clear and limpid.

That all the virtues that are lacking to me I ought to hope that the Lord will grant me them, and all by means of charity. The fact is that other means will only accomplish to impede the sole occupation that he wants that there be nothing that would disturb the clarity of the spirit and impede that confidence and trust, which He wills that I have.

I recalled to mind also that which He said to me a little while ago, that is, that as He had introduced charity, so it would be regarding the other virtues and all that are needed for me.

All of this was with such an abundance of grace and consolation, that for the space of about a quarter of an hour, it seemed to me that I made so many expressions of love and affection with the Lord and that He reciprocally made with me. I made great promises: for no matter how many great defects that I might have committed, to wish to entrust myself to Him and not to remain a single instant lost on these matters, but to animate myself with love in the correction of them. I also renewed the will to do all out of His love and glory, without thinking any more of myself, not even of my own spiritual profit, since He has already thought of everything.

In brief, the Lord made me experience such consolation that I had to give also the quarter of hour for the examen for prayer to enjoy this.

There remained in me such fulfillment that lasted some time for me.

†

### *8th Day*

The Lord brought me also on this day to rejoice in him in that sensible manner. It seemed to me to have returned to live as before yesterday, having once again entered into the familiarity, which the Lord usually grants me.

So, I spent my prayers contemplating and loving, and loving, regretting that I had allowed myself to slip so easily in past times to that which I felt of listlessness and being disheartened.

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### *9th Day*

I spent this day in great desire of serving the Lord and to give Him glory in all things, and I exercised myself much in performing acts relative to this.

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### *Diary 1811*

I ended the retreat on June 2nd, the Day of Pentecost. After it, I experienced greater desires to seeking solely the divine glory, without mixing in anything of myself.

In presenting myself to the Lord in prayer and in feeling that usual joy of finding myself in His divine presence, and being able to occupy myself with **Him alone**, I experience this difference: that in place of imagining that there is nothing else in this world but God and I, now I feel that I should take account that even I am not present, but only God, as I no longer wish to think either of myself, or of anything else in my regard, but only for the glory of God, no longer looking at my own spiritual advantage, and wishing to live only for God and for His glory.

Committing myself one day to prayer, it seemed that I heard being said to me by the Lord that He wanted that we should be like two intimate friends, who would think for each other. The idea is that He will think fully of me and I ought to occupy myself uniquely for Him, for the sole motive of His glory and to give him pleasure.

I experienced enjoyment with these words and the entire abandonment into God. In the great part of the prayers that I offer, these sentiments occupy me, and it seems to that I am standing in the presence of God as a wretched being, but one whom He wants, however, to work and to be suitable for His glory.

I stand therefore with the knowledge of what which I am, but with trust in God, thinking that His omnipotence might make use of my most miserable

person for great undertakings in His service. It seems to me at times impossible, having understood that the Lord gives me light to see how great is the abyss of my misery, but I strive to make greater account of His omnipotence and mercy, that of any other aspect that might give me fear.

I feel at times a particular joy and a great consolation when I think that the Lord wills one day to be served by us and to find among us His delights. I desire then that that which He is by us continuously loved and glorified in all that extension that is never possible that it will be from His creatures.

†

### *July*

In prayer it seemed to me that I know that I proceed from the matters of the spirit with excessive slowness.

I found further that this spirit of mine is not yet purged, and is all entangled with minutiae, that can impede the lights of the Lord to penetrate there with clarity.

I understood that I ought to manifest this matter to His minister, who said to me that in prayer I ought to have all this consumed, totally in this as in a cross-roads, and that therefore I ought to have removed from myself such impediments, since in this all still has to be done.

26. In the prayer of this day, I experienced, as in that of yesterday, a confirmation of all that the minister of God had said to me and how the Lord Himself had led me to understand many times: He wants, by means of prayer, and of that particularly where I am only passive, as He works out the entire matter.

In seeing that the Lord always comes to the support of all that His minister says to me and this follows the divine will concerning me in that which he counsels me. This has renewed me in the desire to obey every more and the thought already had by me many times, of binding myself by a vow to this obedience.

Concerning that about which the Lord led me to understand how much I was already bound to this by His will, manifested by Himself in a manner that I could not doubt it.

And then I remembered the circumstances, and this gave me a knowledge and intellectual view of the origin, that came mediated from Him, this obedience and submission that I must give to His minister.

And it seemed to me that I would have in this a greater obligation than if by my spontaneous vow I would be obligated to it.

This recognition extended itself further for the duration of this obedience, leading me to understand the Lord Who could not make Himself

understood other than with the same manifest signs of His will to the contrary, with which He had wanted this of me. This would be different from a vow, to which there would have been a determined time, and limits would be brought to it, that the Lord does not want that these be placed on it. Rather, He wills that I be abandoned to Him and submitted without boundaries as from other limits that would depend on him. The desire that I had with regard to this, was being directed to God, in order to serve Him all the more, in order to demonstrate to Him also how much my spirit is disposed to those sentiments of obedience and total submission which He inspired in me, in order to find in the vow a greater help in fulfilling this and the assurance with which to do it and to surrender myself to that which the Lord had brought me to know the Lord: as I found in all this also even more in that light which the Lord gave me concerning all this. I became totally quiet and remained with a greater desire to obey, because of the greater knowledge of the duty that I have in this regard.

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### *August*

1. In prayer, thinking of the crucible that ought to serve me in consuming all that earth and rust in which my spirit seems enveloped I came to understand that there were three practices that could help me in this: charity, prayer and suffering.

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6. Having occupied myself on this day of the Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and thinking how in this life it is fitting to be fixed on Calvary, I thought that for Jesus Christ, this mountain was simply a calvary, that is, with all suffering, having chosen to be deprived of comfort that His Divinity could indeed have drawn there, but that for anyone who suffers for Him and in the following of Him, Tabor may be found on Calvary itself, keeping in mind the comforts that He grants to anyone who suffers.

†

10. Finding myself afflicted because of the health of a companion, it seemed to me on the one hand that this suffering was just and duty-bound, while on the other hand I suspected that there was in this some defect, in so far as far as that charity that is due to God not only ought to render me resigned to His divine will, but also ought to make me so abandoned in Him that I would leave to Him every thought.

In prayer, I found myself with this weight, and it seemed to me that I do not have that usual freedom of heart and spirit, that which made me desire to be freed from whatever defect that there would be.

So, in the evening [after having made known the state in which I found myself to His minister, He Who also knew that no matter to what extent I

ought to maintain the commitment, care, and the like that I had, nonetheless, it was good that I should free myself from the burden that I had], I remitted all the rest that I had into the hands of the Lord, of the Most Holy Madonna and of the glorious St. Joseph. Thus, they would come to give thought to it and that I would no longer be so concerned, with prejudice to that charity toward God, Who wishes me to remain fixed in His love and that this should be the rule of my every affection, concern, and so on.

†

14. On this day, the Lord gave me a very powerful and internal sentiment on those words of the Our Father: *Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.*<sup>12</sup>

The final words of this petition were those which were strongly imprinted on my spirit, and the knowledge that this received from them, enkindled my will to desire the fulfillment within me of this request, and to carry out with all perfection the divine will, repeating within my spirit: *as it is in heaven* .

Feeling concern regarding the salvation of my companions, it seemed to me that the regular observance cannot be maintained so well, and that this might indeed be impeded by some defects in health, I represented to the Lord the need there was for the plans that He has regarding us.

To this, it seemed to me that the Lord led me to understand that He wills that my faith be like that of Abraham, believing and hoping that He is to fulfill that which He has determined in His mercy, regarding our union, from the perspective that I saw all our sick and those incapacitated.

My spirit came in harmony to this and my will felt itself being moved to love that truth and to embrace whatever trial the Lord might ask of me, with all trust in him, against every repugnance of my nature, that rebels in seeing my companions so ill.

†

15. This night, while I was awake for some time, the sentiments that I had yesterday occupied me, with my recommending myself to Mary Most Holy for everything, with every confidence.

And thinking that I should make a promise to the Heart of Mary to obtain the curing of my companions, I feared that this might be opposed to my sentiments of union to the Divine Will, that the Lord had given to me. I asked Him and it was said to me that I could follow this thought, without any prejudice to any such sentiment.

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<sup>12</sup> Mt 6:10 - from the Latin Vulgate.

21. On this day, I made the promise of a triduum according to the possibility of each one of my companions and chose precisely this day of Wednesday to present it to the Heart of Mary through my Protector, St. Joseph.

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25. Today, being the Feast of the Heart of Mary, I experienced in it much trust that there would be granted the petitioned grace. I prayed to her as she is the Principal Superior of the Institute and to protect it in every way, so that all might redound to the glory of God.

And as a sign of gratitude for the hoped for, and prayed for grace in the triduum prior to the feast, I was made to offer an act of thanksgiving that there might be shown to this Mother of God and our Mother, the trust that I had that she might obtain the grace for which I begged her.

†

26.31. In all this time, I experienced in prayer a great emptiness of myself and a great confidence in the omnipotence of God in order to make something of an instrument of me, being so wretched as I am.

This wretchedness makes me feel and understand powerfully, but at the same time sweetly and it seems to me that it is a knowledge given to me by the First Truth, which is God. This is not something of an abstraction. The effect impresses itself and makes me feel humble before God, but full of trust. In addition to this understanding, that the Lord gave me concerning my own misery, He also explained to me how He wills to make use of me for His glory, that there be consumed very slight sentiment regarding myself and trust in anything that there might be in me and that I would not see myself totally in God.

Praying to Him one day within myself that He might make use of my wretched person, and thinking that He could do this without leaving behind to accomplish that task that He is presently doing, as to purify my every thought, I felt that what he wishes to achieve in my soul is a slid and stable work.

What, therefore, He does not will is that in the works that He brings to me to accomplish for His glory, that there should not enter into these anything that is not directed toward, and that might harm, the sanctification of my soul by mixing in with this little satisfactions, I reflected on myself, and so on.

Therefore, He is consuming all, even to the point of having me enter into the truth of my own being and of His being alone, omnipotent and the Author of all good.

This knowledge excited in me the desire to see soon consumed and destroyed everything of myself within me, so that, being rendered empty of myself, this emptiness might be filled with God and His Spirit.

All these desires have for their end now solely His divine glory, no longer looking for my own personal interests, nor even my own spiritual advantage, but only His glory in all things.

The Lord many times brought me to understand that I might manifest everything to His minister. He repeated this to me in these days, and I surrendered with manifesting to him that the Lord wants this of me and that I am ready to do so.

The motives which at times have held me back have been partly due to the fact that I considered them insignificant, and not to be thought over, even thinking that I should not pay them any attention.

At Holy Communion, as the Lord gave me a great desire to love Him, I acceded to this and yearned to do it, as the Seraphim do. I felt that if I wanted to love Him as they do, then as they do, I should also carry out the divine Will.

†

### *September*

2. In prayer this morning, I was more than ever penetrated by my own nothingness, with great consolation of my spirit, which understands the great good in losing indeed myself in the Abyss of all, which is God.

And the more that He granted me the grace of knowing myself and not finding any more any support in myself, all the more do I find this in Him and I hope to find it and to advance in my knowledge of Him and in union.

It seemed to me as nothing to swim in that 'all' and I desired ever more to remain there in order to find He Who only is.

I consoled myself in not being, because He is All, and not to have anything of myself, because He has all.

†

3.4.5.6.7.8. In all these days there continued in me those same sentiments of my own nothingness, of my incapacity, always accompanied by that confidence in God, Who can do all things, and, having all, He will lead me to share in His goods, in the measure in which I will need them, for His glory and for the carrying out of His Will.

†

9.10.11.12. It seemed to me in these days that along with the usual sentiments regarding knowledge of myself, there began to be mixed in with it my own defect, by occupying myself excessively with this matter, separated from support in God and of His omnipotence.

It is not that I lost myself in this insight, but there conquered in me the displeasure of seeing myself so full of defects and pride. And the thought occupied me that this would impede me my commitment to the Lord and from giving Him all that glory that I would desire in my undertakings.

14. I came to understand this defect more clearly, that of not trusting in God in the sight of my own nothingness and I saw that no matter what my failings and defects might be, all, however, in me has to be done through charity.

And every time that I distance myself from this, wishing to take up the correction of my own defects, in place of arriving at this end, I seem to distance myself even more, since there is no other means that consumes in me all my rust and every defect.

†

15.21. Having had greater time to occupy myself with the Lord in these days, He went on showing His greatness in the midst of my darkness.

I felt desires to come to the fulfillment of all that He wants of me. I aspired immediately to be able to serve Him in everything in harmony with His will and to give Him that glory which He asks of us.

The Lord brought me to understand the obstacles that I might meet, telling me that He wants that Institute that we are to establish to be truly all for His glory and for our great perfection. I ought not take care of the business connected with it with that measure of how much I see going on in those works in which He does not ask for, and which have in the eyes of the world the appearances that sustain them, and so on.

In all this, I did not experience any difficulty, nor resistance, but I felt courage to overcome everything in the way. It seemed that all this was as nothing, since the Institute was to come into being to succeed in pleasing God and for His greater glory.

However, as I was a bit out of sorts from the unique sight of charity toward Him, this brought me to some confusion in my spirit. I feared that my usual defects and pride might be in the middle of what I came to know. The aspiring for a careful fulfillment of the matter proceeded from a certain tiredness with the present state that in this I was lacking in that perfect resignation to the Divine Will, which I so much to desire to carry out.

In this perplexity the Lord led me to understand that I should not remain in it, but rather refer the entire matter to His minister to whom He wishes that I would make everything known.

And in proposing to do this, all contrast calmed down.

21. On this day, I wanted immediately to obey all that the Lord led me to understand, in manifesting one aspect and then another, and the fear that my defects used to give me.

From that which was said to me, I saw that really that Lord showed Himself to be most benevolent in the midst of all these to make me understand

that which He wills, that is, to begin immediately to dispose my undertaking to carry out His most Holy Will.

I found comfort and riveted in my heart this text: *I keep my eyes fixed on the Lord* <sup>13</sup>, so that my every view will be truly pure and that is does not have to suffer from the mixture which then brings me to fear even the affairs of the Lord.

†

22. With my view fixed on **God alone**, it seemed to me that my defects evaporated, as I did not give them much attention any more as once when pride and other defects arose in me, but I riveted all on Him.

I experienced the rebirth of great desires to establish within the Institute a great interior spirit, and to work that in accord with this it be established also to the exterior and include all the undertakings of the active life.

†

23. I manifested these desires and even though they could still be dependent on my own spirit, which I do not want to follow, but only that of God. It still seems to me that God in having taken me on as His instrument in this Institute, He could will that I would follow Him in forming that which He gives me and these sentiments.

It seemed to me that when the Lord draws me to Him in prayer into a perfect recollection, detaching my entire self from every created reality, this ought to be the model of what I ought to form in others, and to put this as the foundation of the Institute.

This matter was approved for me, and from this approbation it was assured to me that God willed this. I felt coming to birth in my heart a great consolation, and a vivid yearning for its execution.

It seemed to me that with uniting myself to the Lord by means of the exercises of an interior life, there would be received such a power for every encounter and obstacle that I would have to meet in the carrying out of the divine will, which will overcome all.

And without this support, it seems to me that I would not be suited to support even the least matter.

I also had the desires to take care of those exterior matters that have some bearing on this life and which are suited to support and sustain this spirit.

I hope all from the Lord of lights from Whom I ought to depend, and with pleasure I see myself deprived of all, because I am more sure that every thing will come from Him, and that all will be in conformity with His most holy Will.

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<sup>13</sup> Ps 24:15 - from the Latin Vulgate.

24. On this day, the Church celebrates the Feast of Our Lady of Ransom, I began to employ an hour on the Constitutions to examine them.

I noted that it was fitting first to establish the end of the Institute, in order to proceed then to the means. I had prayers begun for this purpose. And under the patronage of Mary most holy, I began the undertaking, being most diffident as regards my being able to succeed in this, and based myself solely on the divine will which is manifest and on obedience which encourages me and leads me to hope to receive gradually the Lord's own light, for all that will be necessary.

†

26. The Lord called me this morning to prolong my prayer and feeling within me this stimulus, I surrendered.

In that time, that I added on to what was customary, I had reason to know how important it is to correspond to that internal invitation which the Lord extends to the soul, since precisely during this time, I felt that the Lord was going ahead purifying my motives in acting, and refining my intentions. They were all being directed them uniquely to Him and to His glory, quieting those other things that sometimes get all mixed in with this. Then, not only do I think of Him, but either on the fears of my own nature, or the combinations that I make according to humanity, and not according to His Spirit.

The Lord leads me to understand that on nothing else should I base my trust for the Work that He wills of me, but only on this: *the fact that He wants it*. And this should suffice for me in order to believe with every certainty that since it is so, surely it will be, and everything will succeed, without my having to have any fear about anything, no pay any attention to external circumstances, that might seem to be opposed to what He wants to be undertaken. It seemed to me, therefore, that I experienced being more animated and courageous.

### **October**

1. In prayer, this morning, the Lord drew me to Him with sentiments of trust, and making me understand what He wants to be carried out. This is the sentiment that for me is the most necessary, and that I have nothing to fear: only that of losing this trust and confidence in Him.

Everything else cannot hurt me.

From this, I came to understand the need I have of exercising those acts and not permitting myself even the least diffidence regarding that which He wants to be done.

†

3. After Holy Communion, I experienced the need that I had of remaining to offer prayer, without placing any impediment, nor interruption, but to go on

toward all that the Lord has made remain for me, since whatever interruption that I place, no matter how brief it may be, serves as a distraction.

The Lord led me to understand this to such an extent that I would willingly even take nothing for breakfast, as long as I find I have the physical strength. I thought, however, to submit this matter, so that I would not be working out of my own head, and to bring harm to my health.

In prayer, it seemed to me that it came to me that I would need a retreat in order to carry out the task the Lord wants of me, which is that of putting order to the scope and the means for His work, that He wills to be carried out. And it seemed to me that I would not be able to do anything without this, once it is understood the distraction that my regular duties of my commit bring with them.

And this, too, I thought of submitting to him.

†

4. The Lord in prayer brought me to understand that I should not wait that He would make clear to me all these matters, as He wishes, in addition to what He makes known to me, that there be carried out also that which His minister tells me. There have been other months in addition to this one that he has told me to remain after Communion in prayer as long as I could, as the Lord wishes much to keep me with Him.

I saw from this that I am slow in the carrying out of those things that could help me, and there is very little obedience in me, a virtue to which I feel that the Lord wants me to apply myself to some extent.

†

5. I submitted this day the lights received in these days and I had the permission to experience with regard to continuing prayer without losing anything as a result. And regarding the retreat, to do this in Advent<sup>14</sup>, and then to write all required for the Institute.

†

13. *In prayer I had the thought of placing the Institute under the protection of the Holy Family*<sup>15</sup>, and to determine that in all things to be established for this purpose of the imitation of Jesus Christ, in His hidden life, as well as in His public life.

Therefore, to see to it, to establish that no Sister should be committed in this, until 30 years of age.

It seemed to me thus that in that time of the hidden life they will have had the opportunity to base themselves in those virtues which Jesus practiced,

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<sup>14</sup> cf. the December entries in Mother Leopoldina's *Spiritual Diary* for this same year, 1811.

<sup>15</sup> This October 13, 1811, can be considered the key point for the charism of the Institute of the Sisters of the Holy Family.

and then they can go out and commit themselves a little for the benefit of their neighbor with a greater advantage of each, and less disorientation for the sisters.

†

27. Up until this day, everything passed in different sentiments regarding the occupation to which I ought to be completely intent. I had prescribed for the particular examen, union with God in prayer, and I found that many impediments for this come from remote matters, from many useless words that I say, and by other defects which I commit.

Therefore, from this examen, I passed to that of union with God in my activities, and with the exercise of this more than ever I had the motive to know how I need to exercise this in my actual circumstances, since while union is habitual in prayer, it does not engage me as much in activity.

I felt myself being borne to such work which is indeed so necessary. And it seems to me, more than this necessity that I feel, there is stimulated the desire to please the Lord with purity of conscience and with the diligent care of not doing the least thing that would be opposed to His will regarding me, which I clearly know to be that I love Him and that I watch over the continual increase in this love and to draw myself to Him, without suffering that a moment be committed in my life that is not totally directed and addressed to Him.

It seemed to me, therefore, that this care to unite myself with him in my every action, can bear these effects, and this is a consolation to me. But, to continue with fervor, I need the Lord to stimulate me internally and that He move me. As for the purpose that I have to have now in everything, which is that of giving shape to the Institute, the care of which the Lord has given to me, I experience many great desires to do this and to put down the ideals, as He wants. In the manner that I would want in all matters, no matter how insignificant they may be, I need to be assured that they are to be pleasing to Him in a certain manner, and not to move myself in anything just through my own ideas, nor to regulate myself with my own spirit. Of this, I do have some fear.

This, though, I can remedy with obedience, which will enable me to ascertain the divine will. The Lord holds me in a state of the nothingness of myself, so much so that it seems to me that I do not have anything capital in me in order to be able to accomplish that which I should, and He wills.

Not even the suggestions of my own self-love, which makes presentations to my mind that which persons of merit have said in years passed concerning this, are now sufficient to flatter me. And I did not believe anything from them, not seeing really that a true lack of capacity is in me on

every side, seeing myself deprived of both natural gifts, as well as supernatural gifts.

This state it seems to me most of the times to be that which is precisely the more suitable to do that which the Lord wants, Who is pleased to choose the most weak and miserable instruments, in order to bring out His omnipotence the more. And so I rejoice that to **Him alone** will be all the glory.

Other times, though, He has given me diffidence in myself to be able to carry out the divine will, and there come to mind some times of whom he Lord might make use, rather than of me.

I do experience some regret when I think of this, because since it is His special mercy that He has chosen me for a work of His glory. I should not have these sentiments, which, at times, are covered over with the desire that I would have that the Lord might be served with every perfection, and that by this Institute He might be much glorified, and that to do all this, I seems to me that any other person would be more suited for it.

†

28. In a moment in which I was before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, I noted how defective is my diffidence regarding my being able to carry out that which the Lord wants. He reminded me of two lights that He bestowed on me about a month ago: the first, that ought to suffice for me is that *He wants this Institute* - and so, I have no doubts about it; and the second, that I should only to fear that there might lessen in me my confidence in carrying it all out, whereas I place it all in Him, but nothing else.

These two gifts are offended by my diffidence, and so I asked the Lord's pardon.

†

29. The Lord, in communicating to me this morning some lights concerning perfection, there came to my mind that in addition to the Constitutions, I could be writing something that might serve as an instruction and as a direction to carry them out. But, immediately I rejected this thought, saying to myself that not even I could accommodate the Constitutions. And so it does not serve anything that I should be thinking of other things, and I esteemed that the thought that I had was a moment of insanity.

But, when I came to realize that to think of such an idea as such, would have proceeded from my usual diffidence regarding myself, which keeps me from looking to God for that assistance of which I ought to hope for all that He would like for me to do.

†

I neglected to write and note some things that in this month that occurred to me in prayer. Most of the times, however, I passed this prayer with obscurity and aridity.

The Lord gave me some lights regarding the Institute, but I have been little attentive to keep them. Since, however, I have been recommended by obedience to do this and to note them, I proposed to carry it out point by point, and to follow with this the stimuli that the Lord gives me, concerning these virtues which make me loved, with the consideration that this is pleasing to Him and is most pleasing to Him.

The desires He placed in my spirit to please Him in all, and to seek every occasion to give Him pleasure, enkindle in me the yearning of not losing these encounters that I have to exercise this virtue of obedience, and to have them more frequently. And He makes me feel regret, as it seemed to me that the Lord does not permit that I would have the occasions to exercise it, since it is rare that I could have this consolation.

It serves me, however, to humble myself thinking that the Lord will see that these desires might find in me some difficulties, remembering my weakness and supreme misery.

The Lord gave me some lights concerning the manner of writing the regulations in the Institute for the Confessor, which in its time will be better explained.

†

### **November**

1. I began the Retreat for my companions with great aridity and little sentiment, but with trust in God, with both concern for my spirit, and also for my corporal strength. It seemed to me that feeling bodily weakness. It served me as a motive of trusting more greatly in the Lord. Who would give me this, and an occasion to exercise it with which He provided me.

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2. After Holy Communion, feeling the same aridity, which made me think how unsuited I am to tell my companions that which I myself did not experience, but I felt myself stimulated to supply with much prayer for this defect and to remain very united with the Lord, and with supreme familiarity, so that He might do by means of me that which he wanted.

This helped me much to have then, in meditations and instructions, a greater facility and also some sentiment. These were qualities that it seemed to me that I desired only for reasons of God's glory and for the benefit of my companions.

†

3. On this day, it seemed to me that I had to employ more trust in God in speaking, i.e., in giving the meditations and instructions to my companions.

I decided not to support myself so much on certain matters that I find here and there, and that as I experienced other times, I ought to offer prayer and then to trust.

Going on, after having had this sentiment, to give the instruction, which was on Prayer and allowing myself to continue with that which the Lord gave me to say, I experienced being taken over and occupied by His Spirit, so much so that I experienced an internal fire and ardor, that gave me a greater spirit in speaking, and I felt a supreme facility in expressing myself. There followed from this also greater fruit.

This ardor, however, left me with a great weakness throughout my whole person, which followed me throughout the day.

†

6. The ardor experienced yesterday lasted for me also today and it gave me a supreme facility in remaining united with God with the most intimate familiarity, that which I experienced in all the actions of this day. This was so true, that there came to me the fear that the Lord with this, and with the consolation that I experience in these days, might reward my poor efforts, desiring in this world only to give Him glory and to possess Him always in the other.

†

7. During this day, I complained lovingly to the Lord that he had not heard me, as I prayed to Him that He might grant me a little repose to one of my ailing companions. He, with His customary goodness and mercy, it seemed that He did not will that I would be able even to suspect that a favor that I had asked Him for with trust, He did not grant it to me.

Therefore, I felt that I should respond internally that I did precisely what loving mothers would do for their daughters, who are excessive delicate and look solely at what it is they suffer. He, though, seeing that it is advantageous that suffering to that soul, and making use of this as purification, therefore, He has not yet alleviated her.

This not only quieted me, but kept me from saying any more, loving more in everything, His most holly will.

8. Having spoken a number of times that it was all up to me to give and to deliver the Retreat, the Lord advised me internally that this was not pleasing to Him. He wanted to be the one to measure the fatigue, as from Him alone was given also the desire to wish that this be understood and that from Him the strength would be granted, both of spirit and of body.

So, I proposed to remain attentive to this, praising and thanking the Divine Goodness for this admonition.

On this day, I finished the retreat for my companions, and from these I derived fruit also for myself. And this was because it was with Him having granted to me in these days a particular union and familiarity with Him. From this I received such contentment in my spirit, that it seemed to me that in these ten days of having been free from every other thought, and I analyzed myself. He preserved me from thoughts of self-love, by placing me in the truth, which led me to touch with my hand the activity of God, without reflecting on myself. I everything that I did, I never felt myself to be alone, but God was always with me.

These are those few sentiments that I know how to express and the effects that I experienced from this, that it seems to me that some of these were greater than I would know how to express.

†

17. At Holy Communion, being the Patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary, I thought that She many times, I begged to be the Superior of this Institute, and there was presented to me anew the Holy Family, Jesus, Mary and Joseph, and for many things, St. Joseph.

One reason for this was that he was totally committed to the contemplation of Jesus and Mary, and having them always with himself, in the occupations of the active life, he never left off from this contemplation. Uniting wonderfully both the contemplative and active life, something in which I have to take up in imitating him.

The other reason is that he gave the appearance of serving as head of the household: he was in fact, but he was sustained by Jesus and Mary. This brought to my mind those words of the antiphon that the Church says on the day of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, speaking of the holy old man, Simeon: *The old man held the Baby, but it was the Baby who supported the old man.*

So, I thought of looking always toward Jesus, in order to imitate Him with that which, through this contemplation I will learn from Him and to sustain that burden which He has imposed on me toward my companions, His spouses. I will be sustained by Him, by His holy help, so that I will offer myself to this charge, but it will really be He Who will be the Head and Mary most holy the Superior.

†

24. After Holy Communion, he gave me a great regret for my faults, and those regarding His infinite goodness, and the opposition and impediment that I have placed in the way of those greater graces, which He wanted to bestow on my poor soul.

The fact of having placed these impediments displeased me, not because of the advantages of this, but because with greater graces I could have served Him better, now that there are given to me both the desire and the occasion to do so.

I paused a while in these sentiments, which seemed to me that they purified me ever more before Him and that he Himself suggested to me expressions within me to do precisely this.

†

28. After Holy Communion, the Lord clarified many thoughts which in these passed days I had suspected to be defects, but which I had not considered them to be in that mode. I saw then that I did not want to suffer and from this, there came other defects which I had committed.

And since I did not find myself without the presence and union with God in a sensible manner, I wished to seek supports in faith and in obedience.

That this was only right, but I was not able to find it in this latter, I had immediately to hand myself over to suffer without too much reasoning in it. And in that I had mixed up some of my wretchedness that kept me from reflecting, also in this virtue which I wish to practice, in order that I might exercise it better, I have had to submit myself to what has been said to me and which is quite repugnant to me.

I thanked the Lord for this light and I came to know clearly that whenever He deprives me from His sensible presence, I am no longer good for anything and I commit a thousand faults.

I experienced some confusion that I am so vile that I really do not want to suffer, while the Lord so many times has brought me to understand its benefit and supreme advantage. And further, even when this is not present, the mere thought that he suffered so much out of love for me, ought to have made me appreciate it and desire it more.

And since there is no occasion which brings me as much as the deprivation of Him, I ought from here on - whenever He will permit me to do it - support myself on faith in a nude manner. And since I am not able to do anything else, at least I should suffer this privation with constancy and willingly, not allowing myself to go on as usual, being content with the greater fatigue that I ought to bring to this.

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30. In this day, I experienced great trust in God for that which I have to undertake, and supporting myself on nothing but Him, I experienced even sensible consolation, not to have any other support.

†

## December

On this day, I began that period of Reflection, which is to be consecrated to putting in order the Constitutions which are then to serve the Institute for which the Lord wants me to commit myself.

I began without any particular light, but with trust in the Lord, Who in wanting this enterprise of me, He will also give me the help to carry it out.

In the evening of this day, the Lord gave me the great desire to establish a *demanding poverty in the Institute*. And as much as this would move me not to recognize that there should be the prescription of not possessing in common, however, this virtue ought to remain in full, and that such possessing should bring no detriment whatever to it.

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2. In beginning the prayer, the Lord gave me light regarding two matters:

The first, concerning not making any distinction in the different manners through which there would be admitted candidates into the Institute, according to the qualities of the same, but that no human respect should ever play a role.

The other matter is that no matter how necessary is a superior that should be over all the houses, nonetheless there should also be avoided specious titles, that serve more for ostentation than for anything else, while the sole service of God has to be considered in everything.

In all that I wrote on this day, I experienced the very powerful desire that all be exposed with humility and simplicity.

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3. Experiencing once again in prayer, the sleep of all my faculties, which after the Spiritual Exercises I experienced only a little and rarely, this brought me some contentment, freeing me from distractions and having my thoughts wander, and it seemed to me that God then worked with greater freedom in my soul.

The need I experience in my wretchedness is that He might take over, and so the desire of meeting in every even slightest matter His good ;pleasure and blessing, so that in an endeavor of so much importance and that it might have a long duration, that all be in accord with Him: these seemed to be the motives of the contentment and the satisfaction that I experienced.

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6. This evening, the Lord granted me an internal communication with Him, in which I experienced myself powerfully being drawn to establish a deep interior spirit in the Institute.

I experienced some fears that the external occupations and those realizations that which for this endeavor ought to be maintained, these brought some harm to the work. However, I thought to weigh every matter well

and to place every possible remedy to anything that might serve as a danger for a matter of so much importance. The Lord gave me as many more desires to establish everything with profound roots of humility. And it seemed to me to this there might be added an intellectual view of the depths of humility. Upon which there ought to be planted such a great edifice which the Institute is, which I yearned for with supreme ardor that it be indeed great before God and as insignificant as will be possible in the eyes of human beings.

The Lord brought me to internalize this view, desires and sentiments.

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8. After Holy Communion today, the Lord granted me new desires for the hidden life, unknown to the world, in a way that it seemed to me that I would have wanted to go into a cloister in order to hide myself.

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11. Having said a few words last night that were not in conformity with charity, this morning the Lord brought me to understand that I ought to do away with such words, that are so contrary to that perfection that He wants of me. I noted, therefore, how much these displeased Him, I repented of them and I proposed very fervently not to say anything more that could be displeasing to Him. I recognized this also in the advice that He gave me and in the very regret itself that I experienced, as well as in His infinite goodness and mercy as well as my own loving this perfection of which I experienced the effects in so many ways.

Having had an occasion to say something to a person, I thought that I should weigh well he matter about which I wanted to speak, thinking that I would not produce any good and that I might offend the person. Consequently, it would mean falling back into that defect about which the Lord led me to repent with so much love.

However, when the occasion did come, I did fall. This produced in me a very profound regret, because of the infinite goodness of the Lord which He had manifested to me in understanding all this, and the promises that I had made, being moved by all this.

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