

MORE WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Notes of Instructions delivered by
Rev. Daniel Considine, S.J.

Arranged by Rev. F. Devas, S.J.

FOREWORD

So widespread was the welcome given to the first series of **WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT**, so many were the expressions of gratitude, and so sincere the assurance of help derived from the little book on the part of men and women of different stations in life, some indeed not members of the household of the Faith, that I am asked by the **CATHOLIC TRUTH SOCIETY** to read through yet more notes taken by various hands, of sermons and instructions delivered by Father Considine, with a view to reaping a second harvest and publishing a second series of **WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT**. This labour of love I have gladly undertaken, and successfully, in that with very little repetition, and that justified by slight variation in language and setting, I have been able to compile another book which will, I hope, be as widely welcomed as was its predecessor, and give to many souls that stimulating, sympathetic help which Father Considine gave so richly and so skillfully during his lifetime.

F.C.D.

Don't be Morbid!

THERE is a danger sometimes of a sort of Jansenism creeping into our spirituality, an idea that we must never be happy or satisfied unless we are unhappy. It is true there is a good deal of suffering in the world, but it is a pity to be looking in every hole and corner to find it. It is a mistake to think that every little accident and contretemps—even too much salt in the soup—is a design of Providence, specially brought about for the benefit of our souls. It is true that in the case of a few mystical saints God has sent very special trials, but as a rule, with those who are striving to serve Him faithfully, God's direction is wonderfully mild. Don't take it into your head that every little accident is devised for your special torture. It is a false, incorrect view to imagine that you cannot be pleasing to God unless you are always suffering. As a rule, the outward life of a saint is very much like everybody else's. There are the contradictions that come inevitably. A good life is always a sort of reproach to those who don't lead it, and that brings opposition. If we try to push forward God's cause, of course the devil will try to oppose us.

Don't let us think there is any virtue in suffering as suffering. Don't be morbid! It was all in the day's work in the case of the saints. Remember suffering was not intended from the beginning: there are plenty of things God *permits* but does not *wish*; certainly we should never be indifferent to the sufferings of others, but try to diminish them as much as possible.

Joyful Service

St. Paul says, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice." (1 Phil. iv. 4.). If we want to serve God, joy should be not only an element; it should be the staple of our life.

Our difficulties are so great, our enemies so many, that unless we are supported by joy, we shan't do what God wants us to do. It is a point of great consequence. There is a sort of impression that in the service of God there ought to be a certain sobriety, an earnestness—yes, *sadness*, which makes the distinction between the service of the world, and the service of God; and that those who serve God must expect more tribulation and uneasiness of mind. Entirely false. St. Paul, speaking under the dictation of the Holy Spirit, says, "Rejoice, again I say, rejoice." If we think the ideal of a religious person is to be sad, it is quite wrong, it is the direct opposite to the truth. We are never so much fitted to cope with the difficulties of the spiritual life as when we are in joy. Often, when difficulties are to follow, God strengthens

souls by an extra dose of joy. He expands the heart, and fills us with more faith and hope and love, and so makes us ready to overcome our enemies.

Read carefully the Acts of the Apostles: no one can read them without being struck by the spirit of buoyancy and exaltation that fills and pervades them; one might almost call it high spirits. The Apostles carried their lives in their hands; they were scourged, and came forth from their severe flogging full of joy, rejoicing they were found worthy to suffer for Our Lord. We certainly then can't be doing wrong in making our lives lives of joy.

This matter bears on our daily life. Is this our view? We are so apt to think others have so much to make their lives happy. "They ought to rejoice." The question remains: does God mean **ME** to rejoice in Him? Don't evade the difficulty *by* saying, "Oh, it's some sort of spiritual joy which I don't understand: ordinary joy I can't feel." "What is meant if not real joy, real happiness, and if you don't feel the service of God produces this, there is something wrong with you.

It is a very common error—that God sends us trials for their own sake. Looking on pain and trouble as good things is not a sound view. It does us harm by making us think God takes pleasure in seeing us suffer.

The greatest possible happiness to be got out of life is in the service of God. God doesn't like to see us cry, even though it is good for us. It pains God for me to suffer pain—that is a lovable and **TRUE** view of God. To think of the Passion as God heaping torments on His Son is Jansenist.

Taking our lives as they are, and being happy in them, is a true way to perfection. Very few crosses are **DIRECTLY** sent by God. God permits them, but they come from someone, or something else, or from ourselves—being disappointed in something we had aimed at. We should cut down our estimate of what God really sends us very considerably.

What does He want of me? He wants you to take your life as it is, bearing your trials and disappointments as quietly as you can. Empty lamentings over things not being as they ought to be, must be eschewed. The way to make things better is not to be doleful, but happy and cheerful. "Your joy no man shall take from you..." (I John xvi. 22). Our life is as it *is*: in that I am to find the material for serving God. Supposing even my trials are my own fault *really—the* results of my own actions staring me in the face. If I can't put it to rights, let me be sorry for what is wrong and go on cheerfully. Start afresh. The service of God is from hour to hour and from day to day. If things are going contrary, it is a pity to be thinking we have great crosses and trials, and bemoaning ourselves: the way to do work for God is to be full of happiness. . . . No heart was ever so tender as the Heart of Our Lord; He couldn't see a person weep without wanting to stop their tears.—Then how am I to account for my life being so full of misery?—*Is* it all as I think? If the fault is in myself, it is hard to put it all on God.—You don't think your temper, for instance, comes down straight from God?—God respects our free will. Should we like to be milksops in God's service? One of Our Lord's favoured servants prayed to Him to take away certain faults of temper in her Superior. "Not at all," Our Lord answered her, "they are very good for you, and for her too. She is so sorry for them. I love her all the more.

We need not be dissatisfied because we have no special trial; bearing with our wretched bodies and souls is the staple of our service to God. "*Traffic* till I come." (Luke xix.13). Bear the cross and all your difficulties well—don't make much of them. We ought to be ashamed to run like children with a hurt finger for sympathy and consolation in every little trouble. God loves His own as the apple of His eye. Bear all then in love and patience for His sake.

We must get out of our heads the idea that we can only be religious by being miserable. If you will think of God as difficult and unapproachable,—if you are afraid of Him, and think He is high and haughty, and far away from you, you won't love Him. One of the ruses of the devil, whenever we fall short of the highest standard, is to tell us: "You art not one of those chosen souls who are called to love God." You must think of Him as one who knows our poor craven natures. He knows it all seems flat and monotonous, and that you feel weary of well-doing. It will all pass: Our Lord hasn't abandoned you. Hold on—it will all come right again. When we are unfaithful, to believe that Our Lord will give us up, that is utterly false. We can never love Our Lord as we should, if we think He remembers things against us. Remember the way He behaved towards His Apostles.

Little Crosses

Suffering which comes to us from God is best; and that comes to us through our circumstances, our surroundings, ourselves, and those we live with: these come from God, being permitted by Him. They are the warp and woof of our spiritual life. Some big thing may come to us on Monday or *Tuesday*, and we say, "Oh, I took that very well, I am getting on," but what about Wednesday, and Thursday, and the rest of the week? The spiritual life is a growth: we don't grow on odd days. If you want to become solidly virtuous, your life from moment to moment gives you occasions of bearing lovingly for God's sake any amount of suffering. People forget to sanctify the daily little crosses of life; they must be big and marked with a red cross, that we may recognise they come from God. But we can't get away from these little crosses and mortifications, they are woven into our life—a clear sign they come from God.

Some one slights you, or speaks unkindly of you, and you get over it in a week, and think yourself very virtuous: God wants you so to overcome your pride that you should not be affected by it at *all*.

Do we receive crosses as a great deal less than we deserve? Do we take them in a spirit of resignation, and a sense of their justice? Shouldn't we eliminate a good many altogether if we did this? Our limitations, of nature, position, intellectual gifts, are very real mortifications and crosses; but if we have some realisation of what we have deserved for our sins, we shan't be lost in admiration of our patience, but we shall accept them quite naturally, and bear them as brightly and cheerfully as we can.

There is nothing so good for the education of character as having something to bear. It brings out all that is best in us. If I have all I can desire, excellent food and lodging, and no cares and anxieties, what is there to try my temper? What is there to admire in me, if I am amiable and cheerful under these circumstances? We admire those who, in spite of difficulties, bear their burdens cheerfully and unselfishly, thinking of others sorrows rather than their own. How then shall we carry out what we believe of the value of suffering into our daily life, and let it, as it ought, bring out what is great and noble in our characters? We must have a *harder* ideal, and profit by the difficulties of life. Wouldn't it be well to *act* upon what we acknowledge in theory to be excellent? Our good God desires us to have happiness in His service. Often you will see that the heavier the cross, the lighter is the step, and the more cheerful the countenance with which it is borne. Why let yourself be so easily disturbed? What are you worrying about? You are not living with saints and angels, you are not one yourself. It is a blessing to be rid of the crosses coming from my own fault, but those that God sends, accept them gladly. God allows natural laws to create difficulties, and then helps us to overcome them. Have absolute confidence in God.

Lessons from Our Lord's Agony

To some of us will come at times some taste of that horrible perplexity Our Lord had in the Garden of Olives. At times it will seem almost impossible to do what we know God wants us to do. There was a moment when Our Lord seemed to waver and balance as to whether he would go on with His Passion. It must cost us something, if we mean to do something memorable for God. That is the time of the greatest anguish of mind, when we are balancing the question. Thereafter came that complete calm which Our Lord never lost during His Passion, save in that moment of His dereliction on the Cross.

The devil does his best to mislead us. He says, if you were able to do it, you wouldn't have all this extraordinary difficulty. On the contrary, the disturbance comes from the world, the flesh, and the devil, and they wouldn't make such a stir if the matter were not so important. Therefore, when we have to take resolutions which cost us much, let us look at the Garden of the Agony, and take comfort from Our Lord. And observe, all was in the natural course of events, God allowing creatures to work out their designs. We need not think He interposed to provide special ignominy for Our Lord.

As soon as the conflict had ceased, and Our Lord had fully accepted the sacrifice, He was perfectly self-possessed. Let us too be calm, and united with God, and that will give us strength to endure that suffering we had dreaded and shrunk from. To all outward appearances Our Lord's life was a failure; so will it often be with us. Yet it is just then we are most like Him, and in our very failure will be our success in the sight of God.

Our Lord's agony was an anticipation of suffering: especially helpful in these days, so full of subjective troubles. "My

soul is sorrowful even unto death.” (Matt. xxvi, 30). A sadness of itself such as to produce death. His soul, generally in such peace and calm, was taken possession of by suffering that was enough to take His life. What was the cause? The knowledge, the anticipation of His Passion. “He began to fear and to be heavy” (Mark xiv. 33.) —a sickness of heart—agony—fear. Jesus was mortally sad. This fact ought to be of the greatest comfort and consolation to us. To find a parallel to our sufferings in the Blessed Son of God! *it* is a lifelong asset of consolation that can’t be prized too highly. If that most perfect soul of Our Lord could, without grossest injustice, be so dimmed by sadness that there and then the soul might have parted from the body, what right have you or I to think our lot hard? Whatever our trial is, the thought ought to follow us all day, whether our trouble be physical or mental. When I am sad, I am only undergoing the same experience as my Lord and Master.

Much less is it wrong that I should undergo this sadness. It is the very best proof of love I can give Him, and if it knits me nearer to Him, I ought to look upon it as a gift from God.

There are so many of us over whose life hangs a continual shadow. Our lives wrecked—everything gone wrong—got myself into such a mess—impossible I can do anything for God. Jesus in that mortal sadness showed the depth of His love for us more than at any other time.

I am probably never serving God so well as when I am bearing the Cross, standing under its shadow. Some of us think that if we feel sad when we have something to do for God which is hard and unpleasant, we are doing wrong. If my sorrow comes from anticipated trouble, my Lord’s sorrow was from the same cause. . . . The devil likes us not to humble ourselves, because when the saints did it they were exalted as if they were walking on air. . . . When Our Lord came to grips with His pain, He did pray, “If it be possible, let this chalice pass from me.” (Matt. xxvi. 39.). When we have no courage, the devil says go back. *No; go on.* It is nonsense to say the mortifications of the saints cost them nothing. To feel dreadfully afraid, and as if we cannot do what we have made up our minds to do, proves nothing. Remember Our Lord’s prayer. Finding Himself in this dreadful depression, He set Himself to pray, and cast Himself down on His face.

The repulsion was so great, it set up a kind of wrestling—a struggle, that brought a pressing of the blood from the veins in such abundance that it soaked His garments, and dropped on the grass. Some people think that the saints drank down pain like a sweet draught. A mistake. Our Lord *shrank* from the pain presented to Him. The use of the will had to be so strong that His whole Body was bathed in blood.

He began “to be afraid.”(Mark xiv. 33). Fear seized upon Him by His own permission. He was pale, and shudders went through His Body. There is nothing so terrible as to see a man afraid. They seem to lose the power of guiding themselves. It might have seemed impossible that Our Lord should have felt fear. If, with great reverence, we could watch Him—how He stoops for love of us! Learn from this that fearing our trouble is no sign of unfaithfulness to God.

Meanwhile He prays. His very trial consisted in putting aside the consolation He might have had. What makes our darkness so dense is that God does not let us have the consolations we had expected to feel in time of trial.

An angel appeared, strengthening and comforting Him. We come away from the Tabernacle perhaps without an atom of consolation or sweetness, but He always strengthens us.

No matter what sins you may have committed, He forgives you all; and no matter how late you come to His service; He will in one moment help you to amend the past.

The Value of my Life

There is no such thing as “the world” to God. Each one of us is a world to Him. It is a common mistake not to think half enough of ourselves. To think of ourselves in “general” is an imperfect way of thinking. We each cost the Eternal Son of God His Blood. We are so important to God, we carry out His Will. In spite of my sins and imperfections, God follows all my history with incessant care and interest. What does it matter if in this year I am a little better or a little worse? In God’s eye a great deal. It is not only possible, but practicable, for us all to make a mark in Divine History. Acts of virtue, acts of love of Him will make me memorable for ever and ever. The thought of this, and the effort to fulfil it will colour my grey life, and make me ashamed if I dare to think it empty. My poor life is of the utmost value in God’s eyes. We must

try to realise our nearness to God, and His claims upon us. One great privilege of the spiritual life is, there is no time in it. The intensity of an act needs no time, and one moment can hold more than ten years.

There is more danger of our not hoping enough than of our hoping too much. Don't put your standard so low. If you want to go high, the higher the things you think God wants of you, the better. Breathe the air of God's promises, and raise your hearts high. God wants a great deal of us. You have never hitherto believed that He really does. You say to yourself, if God wanted me to be a saint, He should have given me a very different character. Whether you are a Carmelite or living in the world, there is not the smallest difference in the love God wants of you. Hitherto I have not realised what God wants of me. The highest gifts of prayer, what are they compared with the gift of His Body and Blood! When He asks us to look up and see His face, we *will* look down. When He wants us to walk forward, we *will* shut our ears to His invitation. Difficulties will vanish at once if we can only bring ourselves to believe that God loves us so. Unconquerable Hope in spite of apparent difficulty. Don't let your heart sink with the false feeling that "somehow God doesn't care specially for me." The saints combined humility with the unshaken belief in God's great love for them.

The Spirit of Penance

We ought not to lose heart when we find there are plenty of occasions on which we might very well practise mortification—and don't.

It is much better to take two eggs and say to yourself, "How unmortified I am!" than to take only one and wonder how soon it will be before you are canonised. Honesty is another name for humility sometimes, and if only you are honest, you'll very likely get so thoroughly ashamed of yourself that you'll get mortified and do with no egg at all. If you are dishonest with yourself, you'll never get on: *not* to practise mortification, and then to find false reasons for our neglect, is bad.

Saint Paul said: "I chastise my body and bring it into subjection"(1Cor. ix. 27), but we should not be discouraged because we can't carry out much bodily austerity, or think that on that account we can't hope to get very near to God.

Self-mastery has no *necessary* connection with bodily austerity. What is wanted is the subduing of the spirit: the body counts for nothing. But if the body is a difficulty and a hindrance to this end, we must bring it into subjection.

When God wants great bodily mortification He makes a soul know it, and gives the desire for it so strongly that the soul would suffer more by *not* doing it than it does in the austerity.

You ask, then, is it possible for *me* to be a true servant of God without performing wonderful austerities? Yes, great grace is often given without great bodily penance: the Little Flower of Jesus is an instance of this.

If you don't get what you desire in the spiritual life, it has nothing to do with your not fasting every day.

It is no small penance in these days merely to bear with yourself; and if you bear properly with yourself and with your neighbour, God will give you the highest graces. With yourself: nervous apprehension, variability of temper, depression, succession of moods—these have a great tendency to interfere with our peace, making us think we are vacillating in our love of God when that is not really the case.

Don't be idiotic! When you have found this or that disturbance produced by a fit of nerves, don't straightway fancy something is wrong with your soul. You are being carried away by false notions and making a great mistake if you think you can't *be* good because you don't *feel* good. To feel "rotten," and yet have patience with yourself, remaining quiet and keeping your recollection: to maintain evenness of temper; not to be influenced by changing moods; to be always serene; this is to practise real austerity and high virtue.

The feeling of depression, when all faith and hope seem lost, and we can't do anything, is a great trial. But to endure it patiently is great virtue.

Read Saint Teresa with intelligence: she says the most trying part of sickness is the inability to *fix* our thoughts on God. But she says we must not let that matter: the important thing is to submit to the will of God, to accept our sickness with patience, and suffer for God even if we cannot keep our thoughts fixed on Him.

Indigestion, ennui, bodily weakness, are often more difficult to bear properly than bodily austerity.

Some people are impatient because they cannot go daily to Holy Communion. If you can't go, bear the deprivation quietly for God's sake.

And don't *talk* to everybody about your health, and, above all, about your nerves. To hear some people talk, you would think they didn't believe God knows what nerves are.

Accept your sickness from God, and in these black hours be very content to have Him and no other as a witness to your pains of body and of mind.

If you can't do more than suffer in silence, be willing not to do more. If you know some one who acts in this way, you know some one who is very pleasing to God.

With your neighbour: most of us have a good deal to put up with from our neighbours, yet we generally forget what they have to put up with from us.

Still, we have difficulties even with very good people. They are not omniscient, they often make mistakes, and they treat us according to their ideas. It is part of the way in which God wishes to sanctify us.

Conceited as we are, we should be much worse if we were not corrected by others. There are many excellent parts in our characters, but some dreadful gaps. We are like trees that have not grown straight. If we would let Our Lord have His way, and bear with what He does for us through our neighbour, we should grow more symmetrical.

Why are we not more considerate? Why do we form such harsh judgements? Here indeed have we great scope for true austerity.

“Are they not all Ministering Spirits?”

(Hebrews 1. 14.)

The holy Angels are our models. It would be an excellent encomium on our lives if we could claim some title to the name of ministering spirit. “Ministering spirits”—minister—what is a minister? One in a lower position, a servant. Our Lord said He had come not to be ministered to, but to minister; He had come to work Himself. The more blessed thing is not to have authority, but to be under others. When we arrange plans, somehow or other we are always leader in the work to be done. To be under others, working for others, is so much more pleasing to God.

I am put in the world to be a servant. So many of my troubles are concerned with what I consider my due: not to be under, but above. When we are out of humour, why are we distressed? Isn't it often our wanting to be above others? We can't admit that to ourselves, we don't *want* it, we say, it *must* be so. We are meant to do work. Am I to be allowed to be head, or to work under others? When I am inclined to shrug my shoulders and say, “there's no work for me to do,” what do I mean? Am I useful? What good have I done to others? This world is palpitating with misery and need of every kind. Am I one of the great unemployed in God's service? Are there no broken hearts to bind up, no family difficulties to smooth over? I needn't draw attention to myself—(though that's the very thing I want). As to the humdrum work of every day,—not insisting on my rights, bearing troubles quietly, etc.—how much have I done? There is not much difficulty in finding people to do conspicuous work. Those who are humble bear God's universe. I am intended to minister. God must choose my work, and He speaks by circumstances. We are surrounded by exactly the persons most fitted to enable us to work out our salvation, the path lies straight before us. Don't try to be put forward, but do your work—nothing out of the common—well and cheerfully, and with thankfulness to God. . . . I must work in any capacity; if in obscurity, so much the better. Whatever our position, we are all ministering spirits. The angels always work, day and night: they watch all the incidents of our life, hear all we say, love us with a marvellous love, take the keenest interest in us, unselfishly, for their reward is only that we serve God better. Nor are they less zealous because of our ingratitude. Let us endeavour to imitate them by ministering. To anyone who folds his arms and says “It is not in my line,” I ask, “What is in your line?”

If the *Son of God* came to minister, I should have thought *we* might find it a privilege to be allowed to minister in any form whatever.

Humility

The only class who can hear themselves praised without satisfaction, or blamed without displeasure, are the saints. A saint with a habit of humility doesn't look upon a slight with distress.

But we, who are not saints, or not yet saints, when we receive a snub are disappointed; we feel sore; that is inevitable, and we ought to accept it as our own normal position. Like our stature, we can't alter it by "taking thought." (Matt. vi. 27). Unless you are practically a saint, those feelings will come. You can't help it. Of course, you can train yourself to mock humility. Accusing yourself of feeling pleasure in praise may be for your confessor to see what an elect soul he is guiding. You make a resolution: "I will never be proud any more." And then you are miserable at a thought of vanity. Why are you so stupid? Of course, your resolution flies. I wish there were any recipe for thinking oneself into humility. God never finds fault with what we can't help. I can't help having the feelings, but don't let me give way to depression in consequence. The feelings won't harm me. Then, if I feel stirrings of jealousy, is it a conclusion that I am to remain in that condition? Bear the jealous feeling quietly, and by degrees that will make you humble. If you pretend you have no feelings, you are rebelling against facts, and that is only a continuance of pride. You are on the high road to humility when you confess to yourself that you are horribly jealous, and take it quietly. Be patient. You are so—a very great pity you are so—but be sorry; don't get angry about it, accept it. Say, "If ever there was a more conceited person than I am, I am surprised." I do think that if that advice was followed, people would begin to be humble. I quite agree with you, you are a mass of conceit, but bear it, be patient with it. You show you are very proud, because you are in such a hurry to be humble. Do you know if you *were* humble, you would be a saint? When you have done something particularly proud, leave it alone. Or something very gauche; leave it alone. The less you think on what you have said the better. The recipe is exceedingly simple. You'll find the impression gradually deepening in your mind, what a conceited wretch I am! If you are sorry you have cut an unfavourable figure, leave it alone. If you brood on it you will soon feel, "I am not sorry because I have offended God, but because I have lost my self-respect, or forfeited the good opinion of some one"; and that is neither contrition nor humility.

Hounds of the Lord—or Poodles?

What are you doing for God? People examine their consciences at night to see if they have offended God. But have you loved God? served God? conquered yourself? helped your neighbour? "Oh no, but I have avoided distractions—and to do so I say as little prayers as possible." You have joined that Association for helping your neighbour? "Oh no, I find it distracts me, and gives occasion to me to go into a passion." It is much better to do good, and be guilty of faults, than not to do good and commit fewer faults. St. Mechtilde thanked God for preserving her from the temptations to which the poor fathers who preached were subject. The saint had belonged to a great family in the world, and Our Lord said to her: "My daughter, you must have noticed, when your father's hounds came in from the chase, how they were all covered with mud and froth, etc., and your mother would never have suffered them in the drawing-room. Yet poodles were there. Which of them were the better dogs? Which did the master of the house value most?" . . . Those who give themselves up to the service of God might well have contracted little stains, even mud, blood, etc., but they are of much greater worth than those who, sleek and clean, have been sitting at home doing nothing.

How shall we avoid an accumulation of *debt* for venial sin? A person who tries to work for God will have a much smaller debt than one who leads a negative, colourless life. What about sins of omission? What are you going to answer when you realise for the first time the good you might have done in the world, and have not done? Every one has his own place in the world, and acts and reacts on others: we are all members of one family. A sin of omission is not fulfilling that mission which God has given us to do. Remember the man who had only one talent and hid *it* in the ground. What a hard judgement he had! God has given us all a talent. You say you have nothing to do in the world? It is very odd that God should have put you here with nothing to do. You needn't start another religious Order. There is always work to be done. You may be perfectly certain you are not in the world for nothing. If it's only to make your home happy, and bear the trials God sends you,— that's not only avoiding evil, it's doing good. Am I growing into that stature God intended for

me? That is a very home question for us all to ask ourselves. Why have I not exerted a better influence? Am I falling short of God's purpose in creating me?

Venial sin makes the soul very languid. Rheumatism and gout don't kill, but they make life extremely uncomfortable. When we have habits of venial sin which we take no pains to correct, exactly the same sort of effect is produced in the soul as rheumatism and gout produce in the body; they take the zest out of life. I am speaking of definite habits of venial sin. Our spiritual life flows sluggishly, and we find it difficult to move and progress. With toothache and earache you get angry and cross, not with people, but with the pain. In venial sin you won't read "that pious twaddle," find pious people bores, long prayers, meditation, impossible—why can't they leave me alone! Some pronouncement of the Church or the Holy Father—that also annoys us, everything is wrong, because your spiritual blood is in a bad condition. We see things discoloured when in venial sin. There is no happiness in the thought of God. The truth is, you are not in a *fit* state to get good out of it.

Interior Stillness of the Soul

If God calls a soul to prayer, it more and more withdraws itself from the outer world. Even in the midst of outward stress there must be an interior stillness of the soul, where God dwells. . . . If you want the gift of prayer you must pay the price. You must possess your soul in quietness. If you set your heart on anything, it takes possession of you, you are penetrated by its atmosphere. The spirit of prayer withdraws us into the inner and secret atmosphere of the heart. A person may be exceedingly busy, yet there may be still that quietness of the spirit necessary to prayer. You need not give up the most troublesome and onerous line of life, but if you desire to set your heart on God, there must be quietness from the noise of the world. So will you be with God, and God with you. It is not impossible for a person to be apparently deeply interested in what is before him, and yet be recollected in God, for God is always with you, and if you will keep a corner for Him, He will be with you in a special way, and keep you in His presence.

It is not the solitude of the Himalayas that makes prayer. The essence of prayer is the company of Our Lord. The more we understand that He is everywhere present, that He is within us, that we are always in the presence of God, the more easily we pray. There is no peace of soul so great as that given by the thought of the presence of God. Whether you think of it or not, He is always there. If you want to learn, ask Our Lord to teach you to pray. "But who am I that I should ask so great a thing?" You are only one of those for whom Our Lord laid down His life, and of whom He is always thinking, day and night—to whom He gives Himself every morning in the Holy Eucharist. So I do not see where the impertinence of the request comes in. Ask Him: He will like nothing better.

Waste of Time

We throw time away through want of order. When asked to do anything for God, or to make time for our spiritual duties, a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, for instance, we have no time, because we are stupid in the art of making arrangements. It is a great pity we have not more system in our lives.

How much time is lost in useless regrets; I have made a fool of myself—even done something wrong—wasting time instead of going back straight to God with an act of contrition. Never go back on the past. Don't stop, thinking over something foolish you have done or said and regretting it. When a thing is done, let it be done. We are very poor creatures, and there is nothing so wise as to live in the present.

Another fruitful waste of time is daydreaming: holding imaginary conversations, or fancying ourselves in positions where we play a very satisfactory part. It softens the mind.

Another is fussing. Fussing never saved time. A very celebrated surgeon, on the point of performing a critical operation, is said to have addressed the students about him with: "Now, gentlemen, don't let us hurry, because we have no time to lose." There are some people who are never quite self-possessed—always in a flurry. You know the saying, "If you want a letter answered, write to a busy man." These people hurry to Mass, hurry to meditation, hurry to breakfast, hurry all day long. A saint couldn't remain a saint under those conditions. Hurry is an enemy to the interior life. The worst

thing after sin is to have too much to do. Some day we shall say, "If only I had not lived in that continual fuss." The saints lived large days. One characteristic of them is always calm and peace. There *may* be union with God in the midst of great distractions, but that is not the ordinary way. Don't let it be said of you as of someone, "He seemed to have lost a quarter of an hour in the beginning of the day, and to be all day chasing it." Before meditation, give yourself a moment's pause. . . . God doesn't cease to be in heaven because you have got a bad piece of news. You'll never get great holiness unless there is calm: holy people are able to recollect themselves.

Becoming Saints

The sad thing is, there are so many saints *manquês*. Our Lord longs for us to become saints. Visions, etc., are not necessary for sanctity. The impression that sanctity belongs only to a very small class is quite a mistaken one. . . . It is a great mistake to think that when Our Lord asks anything, and we don't give it, He turns away and leaves us. In order to become a saint, it is not necessary never to make a mistake, never to keep Our Lord waiting. Sanctity is much easier than we suspect. People *will* say, "it is not for the likes of me." If people unfortunately won't believe Our Lord wants their friendship, they tie His hands. "Of course, Our Lord can't ask that of *me*." Many would be quite willing if only they could bring themselves to believe Our Lord is asking it of them.

What makes a saint is a very tiny spark of the love of God. It suddenly strikes me that God really loves me, and that, if I don't do that little thing, it hurts Him.

If you try to serve Him out of love, He puts up with blunders, sulkiness, frailties, etc. There are plenty in the world who'll work out of love; many will do for another what they won't do for themselves.

How long it took the saints to become saints! What disappointments they had! Yet every one was persuaded that Our Lord loved them. Never be afraid of desiring the highest graces. Even the higher kinds of prayer—there is no room for vanity—no one need ever know anything at all about it.

The Shepherds at the Crib

Examine the conduct of the shepherds.

They were doing their work; they were exactly where they ought to have been. We shall not be asked if we were exalted or lowly, good-looking or plain, rich or poor. I shall be in congenial temper with God if I am doing the work God has given me to do. The shepherds' work meant a certain amount of hardship. They were inured to it, perhaps, but still it meant sacrifice, hardness of life. If our life doesn't mean this, sprinkle a little of the salt of mortification upon it. Do I know what my work is, and am I faithful to it? And if hard, do I embrace it willingly?

Some people look for God anywhere but at home, in their everyday clothes and humdrum life. Every work we have to do is God's. We quite forget, though God is in heaven, He is in my heart and soul, and as much in my kitchen as in my drawing room. Don't let us dream our lives away, or wait for some great occasion of sacrifice which may never come. "Oh, if only I had the facilities another person has, what a wonderful person I should be!" A fallacy. Your sanctity consists in dealing with your present circumstances. Do those things which are close under your eyes and God will give you more to do. The saints became saints by using the opportunities which others disdain.

"God couldn't have meant me to do such a work in my circumstances." We can leave that to God quite safely, and if I allow Him to direct me, all will come right. To be willingly where we ought to be, attracts to us the invitation of Our Lord.

These shepherds were certainly not men of any mark or ability, nor out of the common outwardly. But they were, you may be sure, God-fearing men, striving to love God.

Otherwise *they* would have been scandalised at being called on to worship the tiny Child in the cold stable in the arms of His Mother. It is much easier to understand that the Magi could recognise Our Lord. But these poor shepherds rose to the great act of faith required of them, because they had already given their hearts to God. They were simple men. Are we simple? God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble. He actually opposes the proud, drives them from Him. If we

could see a material barrier round that Crib, we should see how we are prevented from getting nearer Him by—usually—pride. They saw the Divinity which their more learned countrymen could not see, because of their simplicity. The more we advance in the spiritual life the more we become as children.

Let us pray to grow in this simplicity and that *desire* to see Him which is the prelude to His coming. If we long, He will satisfy our longing. Wherever we are, God will come to us, if He finds us trying to be perfect. Desire Him to come as He has never come before. Offer Him the homage of rejoicing and offer Him your heart, desiring to be rid of your failings.

Distractions Again

What *is* a distraction? Those who understand what they are, don't bother about them. (I am speaking, of course, to those who are really striving to serve God.) A distraction is a wilful turning of the mind away from God. If we are talking with some one, and we deliberately turn away and look out of the window, it would be a serious breach of manners, of which no well-bred person would be guilty. If we don't do this with our friends, why should we do it with God? The fact is, we *don't*.

I put down to these imaginary distractions the difficulty good people find in prayer. "How are you getting on?" "Not at all, father, my prayer is nothing but distractions. How can I pretend I love God? If I read a book, or talk to a friend, my attention does not wander." Conversing with God is more difficult because you have not your senses to help you, nor an answering voice. But your distraction is absolutely inculpable, and does not interfere with the fruit of your prayer, unless deliberately, of your own accord, and when you can quite well do differently, you turn away your thoughts from God to something else. It is very unlikely any good person would do it. How much we are at the mercy of incoming thoughts! Sometimes we seem the centre of a whirlwind of thought we cannot govern. Most of our distractions are not distractions at all. I am talking of what is culpable in God's sight. If you would only make up your mind that God doesn't care twopence about them! Few things are so bad as to find so many excellent people put off by this snare of the devil. It is useful to learn how little control we have over our own thoughts.

If you have a great sorrow, or have received some injury, or some great temporal misfortune, I defy you to keep it out of your thoughts. Distractions are nothing to be afraid of. As you are outside the chapel, so you will be inside. You can't believe our Lord is angry with you, because you haven't a mind you can turn off and on at will. You can say: "Well, Lord, you made me so." Our Lord is not angry, but I'll tell you who chuckles in a corner if you let these distractions discourage you—Our Lord's enemy. Don't confess distractions unless you are absolutely sure they are wilful. Write off distractions permanently. At the same time remember there is nothing about which we should give ourselves so little quarter as *wilful* distractions. Any turning away of your heart from God displeases Him. Distractions don't interfere with our union with God. Do you think when He gives Himself to you in Holy Communion that Our Lord inquires what we are thinking about before He will do us any good? And that you make a barren, profitless Communion in a time of great sorrow, or if your mind is full of some recent injury? "I have been thinking of it all the time—what an awful sacrilege!" Not at all—you are acting in a human way, and Our Lord doesn't care a bit about it. If your intention of serving Him is the same, you are praying all the time. Your love is shown by what you do.

Spiritual Progress

The devil puts it in the head of a fervent person, who desires to mortify such and such a defect, or to practise such and such a virtue! "You must do it always, and on all possible occasions." God doesn't ask this. Seldom is a great grace given so completely that coming into a room a monster of pride, one goes out of it a pattern of humility. He plants an acorn of humility in our hearts, but it takes time for it to grow into an oak. Gradually one's whole nature gets leavened. Acting up to grace means doing what is easy at first—a little, day by day. But to say "I'll mortify myself in all possible circumstances—always sit up straight—tumble the mustard into the soup," we can't go on with it. Then the devil says, "I told you so, you can't be a saint." Do a little, and do it humbly, and God will help you to go from little to greater things.

You think you crave very much for God's special presence; so I daresay you do to a certain extent, but God is so generous, and wants us to love Him far more than we wish to love Him, and so it would be unreasonable if He refused us. But there is a want of preparation, a want of showing God our earnestness in the matter. A child wouldn't understand what a jewel was; all "pebbles" to him. That we should appreciate the difference requires some knowledge. It is the same in the spiritual life. "I have been trying for these graces for years." Are you sure you value them as much as you think? Have I that appreciation of God's gifts, that longing for graces which shall make the practice of virtue easier, which I think I have? "The presence of God," "prayer." If God doesn't give these, the only reason can be we are not fit for them. Quite a mistake to think that God picks out a small aristocracy of virtue. I don't say He doesn't give more to some than to others, but He wants to make saints of us all. "Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect." Be quite sure that he wants every one of us to love Him very much. "Why I don't love Him more is because I don't belong to the select few." Quite wrong. "Why am I not nearer to God? Why don't I get as much help as others seem to get? I am a poor soul, and God has left me out, and I am to proceed at a jog-trot for the rest of my life." It can't be true. He laid down His life for us. "He that spared not His own Son, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" He who became a little child for us can't be so unreasonable *that* if we hold our hands out He will say, "Oh no! these graces are kept for certain people." Supposing we start with a small stock, accept that grace, He'll give you another. No one has any right to say, "for me sanctity is out of the question." God is *delighted* to give any one of us what we need. The only thing He wants to do— He has no greater pleasure—is to give us His love. We shouldn't approach Him in an indifferent way and say, "If you have anything for me this morning, I am willing to take it, but I don't care very much about it. . . ." You should be greatly encouraged if you feel more and more that you *want* God. The more faithfully the obstacles are being removed, the nearer you get to Him, even as in approaching a fire you feel the heat increase. If any one can honestly say,—I do feel I want God more than ever before— I look back over twelve months, and other interests seem to have dwindled, and God's interests have taken a larger part in my life—that is excellent. More independent of worldliness, seeing His will more clearly and the longing getting real—all excellent.

Lessons from the Cross

"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Our Lord was in great physical agony, and in great mental agony: in that desolation of body and soul when we should have expected His Father to come to His help. He generally comes to the aid of His saints in such circumstances. Our Lord does not call Him "Father," but "My God," as if God no longer loved or cared for Him—a mystery, but no less true. Solitude—or abandonment, with some souls this trial recurs—this awful wilderness. The nearer we get to God, the more we feel there is no one but Him. We must be severed from creatures if we are to get near Him. This severance is necessary if we are to get high in the spiritual life. Only one Being we love in the whole world—and that is God.

Every one had abandoned Our Lord. God doesn't really forsake the soul, but for our training and discipline seems to. Our Lord prays, we ought to pray, though it seems as if we were praying to wood. Sometimes the darkness seems peopled with horrors: our past sins confront us, everything we have been taught seems a mockery. "Curse God and die." That is the temptation to which we are exposed. Is it too hard to bear? Our Lord says, "Very well, if you won't bear this little thing for me I must treat you as a child, and give you milk." We must pray to God, and He will certainly come to our help. As He did to Our Lord, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." The lesson to us is, if we want to love Him we must make up our minds there is no doubt about the suffering that will come. When it comes, don't let us lose heart, or think because we don't feel His Presence He is not there. Or cry out too soon, or think the trial is going to last for ever. How else shall we get strong? Don't we want to make some return to Our Lord? Surely we don't want a life without any trials or troubles? Let us make ourselves very familiar with Our Lord's Passion. We get much nearer to Him through faithfulness in times of stress and difficulty than through sweetnesses and consolations.

"Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." Our Lord kept repeating these words—for His executioners, the priests and others who had compassed His death. What wonderful love—pleading for them. The reason— "For they know

not what they do.” They did not know He was God, but it was their own fault. The prevailing sentiment with God is one of extraordinary indulgence. In spite of all our sins, Our Lord truly loves us. Throughout all we do there is that element of ignorance and weakness which enables Him to look pitifully on us and love us. Yet how many of us are saying, “He can’t love *me* quite sincerely. He can’t forget.” He makes such wonderful allowance for us—we don’t make enough ourselves. Even *we*, wretches though we be, if someone behaves very badly towards us, we entirely forgive. It passes out, not of our memory, but of our hearts. We shall never be on proper terms with God till we believe in His real love for us. He, knowing how difficult it is for us to be consistent and good, forgives us so absolutely. Don’t make the huge mistake of thinking it a virtuous thing to feel you can’t hope to be in God’s favour . . . you can’t have too strong a conviction of the infinite compassion of Our Lord.

Lessons in Loyalty

The two disciples going to Emmaus are encouraged to open their hearts to Him. Our Lord deliberately, of set purpose, concealed from them who He was. He liked to listen to His praises from them, and practised a loving deceit on them. The disciples tell Him all that had happened and all they had expected. . . . “Those were our hopes, and it is all gone. And we, His followers, are all scattered, and we don’t know what to do. And there is an extraordinary sequence to this matter. Some women of our company say that they have seen angels in the Tomb, and the Body is not there, and we have been in sore trouble ever since.” Their hearts were so full, they have let it all out.

It is a great gift of God to be capable of a great enthusiasm. What are my ways of looking at persons and things? Although these two men had given up all hope, nothing would induce them to turn against Him. It might have meant serious trouble to them, but they were absolutely loyal. We may have hopes, well-favoured hopes, and yet they seem dispelled. Although correct in the main fact, they were wrong in the way they expected things to come about. And we make exactly the same mistake. We pray to God to help us, and we are good enough to point out to Him how it is to be done. Our way is probably a very bad way. He says, “Knock, and it shall be opened,” but He doesn’t say *how*. We may be quite right as to substance, but quite wrong as to means. When we pray for favours, I *hope* we don’t find fault with God. We are very like spoilt children, and cry and think we have good reason to sulk when things go as we don’t like. It may be God does answer our prayers, and we don’t know it. You can’t lean too heavily on the persuasion that God will help you, but not that it is to be at such a time and in such a way. Our Lord heard the disciples with the greatest delight. “O foolish and slow of heart,” He began. That is the matter with so many of us—wanting to measure everything according to our own petty notions. If we had only a little quickness of heart and trust in God we should understand the Holy Scriptures so much better. “*Ought not.*” Ought not I so to suffer? Unfortunately, we so often go the other way. Suffering and glory are inseparable. What a privilege to have heard the Inspirer of the Scriptures explain them.

Meanwhile, it is near sundown. Our Lord makes as if He must push on. Another deceit on Our Lord’s part. Why did He pretend? In the language of love there are so many of these little devices. They constrained Him. You *must* stay and dine with us. As soon as He communicates them they know Him. Their hearts had burned within them—with love. So wonderful to hear His explanations. See, if you want to please Our Lord, how much He likes us to speak of Him. Love Him, want to do your best for Him. He doesn’t mind our stupid mistakes, our involuntary faults. Be sure He will make our hearts burn within us.

These men’s fears were by no means unfounded, but they are so full of Our Lord, and the memory of His sufferings is so keen, they say it all out. Not a word in disparagement of Him. A lesson for us. As long as Our Lord gives us bonbons, and every one says how good we are, all is well, and we think it a fine thing to be on Our Lord’s side; but when things go wrong it is a very different matter. They had had a stunning blow, and were dazed. Such a terrible catastrophe the world had never seen, nor will again. A young man cut off in the prime of life, under the eyes of His Mother, in such circumstances of pain and ignominy! They thought there was an end to all their hopes. So many times we have thought we were going to get a solution to our difficulties, prayer getting easier, and then, all seems to go back again, and we say, “We thought at one time Our Lord was going to give us this, and now—” At that very moment Our Lord was walking

with them! How truly He may say to us, Fools, Children! not to be able to understand what is as plain as the sun at noonday. We don't understand Our Lord *has done* for us what we asked Him. Because Our Lord does not grant our petition by the next post, He is not going to attend to us at all. "Oh, don't ask *me* to pray. God never answers *my* prayers." What idiots we are! No one has ever yet said a real prayer and not received an answer from God. It is giving God the lie to talk such folly. It is not even necessary to be in a state of grace to get an answer to prayer. Further, God desires to answer our prayer much more than we desire to make it. That kind of stupidity God doesn't love. "Slow of heart," He calls the disciples because they won't trust in Our Lord. We tap very gently, and because the door is not at once opened, we go away and think union with God refused us. . . . Where has God said He will only hear the prayers of holy people? "Slow of heart" to believe God really does want us to be saints. He says He does; we say He doesn't: which is likely to be right? If that sort of distrust is my habit of mind, my prayer is no use: it is all wrong. What Our Lord wants is for us to love Him. . . . They ought to have understood that Christ *ought* so to have suffered. We want virtue without trouble: to be humble without humiliation, sympathy with Christ's sufferings without a finger-ache ourselves. Try and reconstruct your lives by the light cast on them by these sayings of Our Lord. It has all been a huge mistake. May you not say all those disappointments, all that apparent waste of energy, those contradicting circumstances—all are part of your discipline for eternity? *Ought* not that to have been? . . . Forgiven sin even may be a great help in the service of God. Your life has been as God permitted. There is no truth in talking of a life thrown away— marred—no truth in it. Besides, one minute's sorrow will undo it all, and make you at the present moment very dear to God. Whatever has been, has been allowed to be, and will lead on to your eternal happiness. . . . They constrained Him. When Our Lord seems to refuse us a favour, constrain Him.

He can't hold out, against the constraint of true love. Then He broke bread with them, and they knew Him, and He disappeared. "Did not our hearts burn within us. . . .?"

Spiritual Pessimism

One of the greatest hindrances to our spiritual advancement is the persuasion that for some reason or other God is not pleased with us. Most of us are pessimists in the spiritual life. We think "It would not be right for God to give me great graces; I have refused too many in the past." Such thoughts are the work of the devil. God loves each one of us with such an intensity of love as it is impossible for us to conceive. He longs for our Communion, and misses us when we don't go. There is nothing God does while we are in the state of probation, the object of which is not to bring us to love Him. He allows trials to come upon us for our greater perfection. It should be a source of great comfort to us to know that the circumstances in which we are placed are just those circumstances in which, out of the whole world, we can serve God best.

Do not be afraid of presumption. He says: "My arms are open; come near to Me."

Always listen to the promptings of grace. When we hear an uncharitable criticism we often long to say: "I entirely agree with you." Remain silent. These small graces mount up and up. Our Lord says: "The first and greatest commandment is, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength." (Matt. xxii. 38; Mark xii. 30.). Is it for us to throw doubt on God's word? God intends us all to serve Him out of love.

When God wants a soul to come near Him He gives the invitation. He begins by giving the soul a desire to know Him, to love Him. If any one feels that desire, no matter how feebly, be assured it comes from God. He does not begin and leave His work unfinished. He will gratify the desire which He Himself has inspired, if we will but be faithful. Were He never to gratify us He would be acting like a mother who held a picture in front of her child, and whenever the child reached out for it, drew the picture away, merely teasing the child.

Do not say "All these years I have not served Him well; how can I now suddenly begin?" Time is nothing with God. Say rather, "He who has begun the good work in me will perfect it." (Phil. i. 6.). Let us say to Our Lord "It is Thou Thyself, Lord, who hast made me want to love Thee. Do Thou who hast filled me with this desire give me greater love."

Hurry and Worry

Many difficulties in the spiritual life are really created by ourselves. We worry and hurry and seem almost to think it a virtue to be impatient with ourselves. The best way to get something from God is certainly not to worry. Take things quietly: don't rush. The saints did not become perfect in a day; it took them a long time to mould their characters on the divine pattern, and what work is so wearisome as work on our character! Yet they were not impatient; they were amazingly cheerful. They never said, "There's no chance of my ever getting over this," as we are tempted to. They knew better. Why is there no chance?

Doesn't God love me infinitely? For improvement in the spiritual life we want a never-failing cheerfulness.

Our Lord says: "Don't worry; leave it to Me; serve Me; I will take care of you." Isn't *it* a pity you fritter and waste your time and strength. If a thing is to be regretted regret it; then put it away. Our poor little petty intellects and wills won't bear dividing. What a pity not to live in the present; a tranquil sorrow for the past, good; but no anxious retrospection or anticipation.

Would *it* please you if your children were always doubting whether you were going to love them tomorrow?

The saints of God lived in the present; they did their best, and left it to God.

Humiliations

Take the cup of humiliations and drain it, and every sun that rises and every sun that sets shall witness a glorious life. We can't help feeling the pain of humiliations; we can't help feeling beaten and bruised and broken all over. That does not matter; what matters is that we harbour no bitterness, cherish no resentment.

People told shocking falsehoods about Our Lord, said that dreadful thing about His casting out devils through Beelzebub. These things wounded the tender Heart of Jesus, but He bore them patiently, without bitterness, without resentment, gladly for my sake. Remembering this, let me say to Him: "Dear Lord, when You find that I am very cowardly, very impatient, and I say 'I can't bear this'; 'I can't endure that'; don't take me at my word; give me strength to bear and to endure; make me understand You better and love You more."

A Last Word on Prayer

It is a horrible doctrine to say that God does not want to speak to *your* soul. Prayer consists in getting into communication with God in some sort of way. The way does not matter in the least, and the easier the better. If only you are in earnest, you will reach Him, for He is yearning to give Himself to you. Do not sigh and say: "If God would only show Himself to me!" He will; He wants to; He will let you touch Him, feel Him, taste Him.

Short Sayings

Is it the pure love of God that makes you anxious about your prayer? Or is it only the desire to be saved trouble? Or, I have a faint, far-off suspicion, has it something to do with humility? Why can others pray with such facility and not I? Leave others alone and you will soon learn to pray.

Some people's one preoccupation—obsession we might call it—seems to be the fear that there is something they have forgotten and which God will spring upon them at their judgement. Where do these terrors come from? This contraction of the heart? This distrust in God's goodness? St. John says: "Perfect love casteth out fear." (1 John iv. x8.). And Our Lord used to say: "It is I; *be not afraid*." (John Vi. 20.)

Religion is not a question of perpetually *avoiding* something. Yet there are those who seem to think the essence of the spiritual life consists in examining their conscience, always thinking of their past, and having a catalogue of their sins ever before them. They take the last gleams of hope out of their unhappy souls and make of their spiritual life a perpetual shuddering. But Our Lord was gentle with His Apostles, and they with all their faults were never uncomfortable with Him. To avoid sin, do good.

God judges us not so much by details as by the whole, the purpose of our life. To be drifting, to have no settled aim in

life, is unsatisfactory for everyone: working nothing out, ending in nothing. Everyone ought to be living, working, for something. What are you at?

The nearer a soul gets to God, the more it loves to dwell on Our Lord's Human Nature.

Like a sponge plunged into the ocean, so must you lose yourself in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, that the waters of love may surround and deluge your soul on every side.

The love of God can *fill* your heart.

LAUS DEO SEMPER

First published: August 1934

Over 100,000 printed
