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Justinian Anthology



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INTRODUCTION

Twenty-six volumes of the writings of our Blessed Founder, Fr. Justin M. Russolillo have been published between 2004 and 2012 with the help of the Lord and the good will of some Vocationist Fathers and Sisters. Undoubtedly the writings of Fr. Justin are deep in their ascetic-mystical content and complex in their classic Latin form.

During the XIV General Chapter of the Vocationist Fathers several confreres asked for the publication of a booklet with the basic thoughts of Justinian spirituality. Others solicited an anthology of the most salient points of his spirituality; yet others asked for a dictionary of the terms used or created by Fr. Justin. The Fathers of the General Chapter have thus expressed their desire to make the writings more easily understandable, and make accessible the treasures of the teachings of the Founder to a larger group of readers.

This Anthology contains Justinian thoughts, teachings, principles, maxims, and exhortations, all drawn from the *Opera Omnia – The Works*. Each quotation is followed by the reference to the volume and the page from which it was taken, to give the interested reader an opportunity to better understand the scope of each quotation within the original context; the Roman numeral refers to the volume and the ordinal number to the page of the various volumes published in Italian. The selections and the group-

ing into chapters are purely subjective, and many principles and teachings can easily be classified into one category or another.

The objective of this volume is to render easy and understandable so many valuable lessons and thus stimulate interest in further study of all his writings, in the hope that many souls will fall in love with our spirituality and by practicing it may ascend the mountains of divine perfections and progressive ascension to the divine union with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to know Fr. Justin without knowing his writings; it is important to see how much he wanted his writings to be preserved, stored and disseminated, conscious of the fact that they would do much good to many souls.

Our Blessed Founder prays: *Thank you, Father, that you put in me the passion, to the point that it became a torment, for school, books, white paper waiting for the track of ideas* (III, 154). In an ecstasy of love the Lord says to the writer: *You're all a pen with which the Word spells a word in the souls, the word of God's glory. The Spirit enables the souls to read and enjoy it with his gifts. Clean, refurbish this pen; use it for this purpose* (XII, 65).

Fr. Justin, avid reader and student of every good book, has developed his and our spirituality. He has synthesized all the schools of spirituality, and the teachings and doctrines of the holy Fathers, Doctors and Founders. He gives thanks to God with these words: *I bless you eternally for every holy book of each of your servants, every Father and Doctor of the Church, of every pious ecclesiastical writer, every zealous pastor of souls, of every enlightened director of consciences, every apostolic catechist of all your faithful servants* (III, 159). He then concludes: *How good would it be to have an anthology of all the most famous stories of vocations, deaths of the saints, vows of perfection ...* (XI, 266). I would like to see this publication as a response to this wishful thinking, seeing his will in his desire.

Through good books, the Lord continues to speak to each of us and break the bread of the word of God. Aware of the gravity of human ingratitude, Fr. Justin does not hesitate to praise and thank the Lord for the sacred authors and their writings: *I acknowledge and adore the providence that has provided me with so much knowledge and wisdom in the good books, and gave me hunger, thirst, passion and torment for good books. I was chosen and sent, offered and presented with the gift, the nourishment and the feast of the book*¹ (III, 159).

For himself, for us and for all humanity Blessed Justin asks: *Continue to grant me, O Lord, this special providence, so that it may never be extinguished in me this hunger and thirst, this passion and longing for the good spiritual, philosophical and theological, ascetical and mystical, as well as scientific and poetic book, until I will celebrate my entrance to heaven* (III, 160).

My wish for the reader of *Justinian Anthology* is the same wish that Fr. Justin had for the reader of *Spiritus Orationis*: *I wish that you may grasp, in every phrase that particular truth or principle contained in it and the practice of asceticism that blossoms, but also to take example to assimilate all the external and internal world in your life of prayer* (II, 22).

The gifts that the Lord gives to his saints are not given solely for their personal benefit, but for the good and salvation of all souls. The Saints write to facilitate the circulation of divine goods in the mystical body of Christ. Fr. Justin believed that writing was part of his work and apostolate. He states: *I consecrate myself to write endlessly in this time of my life. What I receive is for my spiritual family. I cannot squander these goods, which are the patrimony of the Congregation. I will preserve and compile them so that after my death the Congregation may derive great profit from them* (X, 286).

¹ The Vocationists celebrate the “Feast of the Book” during the Octave of Pentecost, with a small procession of the “Holy Book” every evening.

The great thoughts of good to be done, the great desires of good things to be received are messages from God. They are like the dawn of new graces, feelings of humility and contrition, with which the soul purifies itself; they are the longing, the ardor of new bonds with the Lord, with which the soul prepares itself to belong and be possessed more intimately by God. To possess and be more possessed by God (XXV, 185)!

The following thoughts, teachings and exhortations should not be used as a simple, continuous reading, but studied, pondered and assimilated.

This book is a translation of the original published in Italian in 2012 with the title: *Florilegio Giustiniano*. I hope that the English-speaking Vocationists, Friends and Devotees become more knowledgeable, enjoy and participate in Fr. Justin's spirituality and wisdom.

Palisades Park, N. J. May 11, 2013.

Father Louis M. Caputo, S.D.V.

BLESSED JUSTIN MARIA RUSSOLILLO

Blessed Father Justin Maria Russolillo, was born on January 18, 1891, in Pianura, Naples (Italy) in the diocese of Pozzuoli. He was the son of Luigi Russolillo and Giuseppina Simpatia. He attended the seminary in Pozzuoli and the Regional seminary in Naples where he studied theology. He obtained excellent grades and was awarded the acclaimed golden medal at the end of his theological studies.

Father Justin was ordained on September 20, 1913 in the Cathedral of Pozzuoli. It was his deep desire to found a congregation for vocations. On April 30, 1914 he attempted the first experiment of community life. The first group of boys that joined Fr. Justin were members of a group, previously organized by the Founder, known as “fedelissimi” (the most faithful), they lived together at his parents’ house. However this experiment did not last very long due to the disapproval of the Bishop.

In 1920 he became Parish Priest of St. Giorgio in Pianura. He revived the community life with 12 young men in the Parish House. This time his efforts were rewarded as he had the approval of Bishop Pasquale Ragosta. The Vocationist Fathers celebrate as their birthday the date of October 18, 1920.

On October 1, 1921 Fr. Justin welcomed some young women from the “Pia Unione” (Pious union) and founded the religious congregation of the Sisters of the Divine Vocations.

The growth of the female branch was helped immensely by Mother Giovanna Russolillo, sister of Fr. Justin, Superior General of the Sisters from 1926 to 1969. Some other young women, who were not called to traditional consecrated life but shared his love for vocations and followed the Vocationist spirituality, became first Cooperators and later formed the Secular Institute of the Vocationist Apostles of Universal Sanctification.

The main center of the new foundation was the Vocationary, where all those who showed signs of a vocation and had not yet decided whether to enter the seminary or join a specific Religious Community were welcomed and formed, both spiritually and academically, free of charge. Poverty was not to stop them from realizing their vocation.

The parish that the Lord had entrusted to the pastoral care of Father Justin proved to be an instrument of divine providence. Saint George Parish was the providential garden in which bloomed flowers of holiness and matured fruits of religious and priestly vocations.

He preached every day and a lighted candle always burnt on the altar during the homily to remind everyone that Jesus was the light present in his words. He used to celebrate Mass at 4:30 a.m. every day in order to enable thousands of workers to go to Mass and receive Holy Communion before going to work.

Father Justin was an apostle of the courtyards. It was in the courtyards of the town that he would teach, preach and pray. It was there that his parishioners were formed. In the courtyards he would pray the Rosary and organize catechetical classes for the children. Through this courtyard ministry he assured help and support to the sick and the poor with the assistance of the catechists.

His work for vocations became increasingly difficult on account

of the excessive number of aspirants, the poor conditions of some of the first residences and the continuously worsening of the economic situation of Italy after World War One. The situation was aggravated by the opposition of Bishop Castaldi of Pozzuoli who wanted to make of the Society of Divine Vocation a congregation of Oblates dedicated exclusively to the service of his diocese.

Restrictions imposed by the ecclesiastical authorities prohibited new admissions to the novitiate and to religious profession and rendered more difficult priestly ordinations for seven long years (1934-1941). This was felt and lived as a slow agony for the Vocationist family and its founder. The holiness of the founder, the support of many diocesan bishops and the intervention of the first Apostolic Visitor cleared the obstacles. The Congregation continued its growth and expansion and in 1948 was elevated to Congregation of Pontifical Right.

Father Justin honored the Holy Virgin under the title *Celestial Superior* and *Our Lady of Divine Vocations*. He entrusted all his works to her. He was faithful to the motto "contemplation in action and action for contemplation".

The Holy Trinity was the center of his spirituality and his apostolate. His intense love of the Holy Trinity made him work for Universal Sanctification by promoting an ascetical and mystical life and propagating religious life in every walk of life. He used to greet everyone with the wish-prayer-invitation "Become a Saint".

Fr. Justin lived a life of continuous prayer, exceptional austerity and untiring ministry. He was endowed with mystical gifts like, prophecy, ecstasy, visions, discernment of hearts and the gift of healing. In addition to being Parish Priest, he was founder, teacher, spiritual director, preacher, confessor and writer. Most of his writings have been published in the Opera Omnia which consists

of 26 volumes. His spirituality continues to attract and inspire faithful and followers everywhere.

Father Justin, the zealous parish priest, founder of the Society of Divine Vocations: Vocationist Fathers (1920) Vocationist Sisters (1921) and Vocationist Apostles of the Universal Sanctification (1977), died in Pianura on August 2, 1955.

As the devotion to the holy and humble Parish Priest of Pianura spread and intensified, the Vocationist Fathers petitioned the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints to initiate the process of his Canonization. On January 18, 1998 Pope John Paul II raised him to the dignity of Venerable and on May 7, 2011 Pope Benedict XVI included his name in the list of the Blessed.

The Vocationist family, made up of Vocationist Fathers, Vocationist Sisters, Vocationist Apostles of Universal Sanctification, Friends of Fr. Justin, Vocationist Missionary Cooperators, Servants of the Living Christ, Sons of the Light, Fr. Justin's Prayer Groups, Vocationist Fraternity and Shepherds of Youth, works in 14 countries and continues to follow and develop both the charisma and mission of Blessed Fr. Justin.

Fr. Justin passed on to his sons and daughters his love and concern for vocations in general and for the vocations of the poor in particular. Just like Fr. Justin, his children nurture "a real veneration for each vocation". Fr. Justin dedicated all his life to the service of vocations to the priesthood and religious life, because these in turn were supposed to dedicate themselves to the apostolate of universal sanctification. He believed, preached and promoted the universal call to holiness before Vatican II.

Thanks to Fr. Justin, hundreds of young men who live in poor areas are preparing for the priesthood in various Vocationaries. Thousands of young people are receiving a solid Christian edu-

cation in schools run by Vocationist Fathers and Sisters. Millions of people are made aware of and helped in their response to the vocations to holiness. The hopeful greetings that Fr. Justin used for his contemporaries as well as his “future friends” remains: “BE A SAINT ... become a real saint because everything else counts for nothing”.

CHAPTER I

Just to Start

Always more always better, always forward and always upward¹ (summary of all syntheses).

In the sense of forward and upward life develops; in the sense of more and better, love becomes a reality (III, 262).

Only advancing ever forward, only tending ever upward, I will be able to know and love you more and better, for all eternity (III, 262).

Even in your eternity I will know you better, progressing upward and forward, since I have ruled out of eternity any idea of past and future (III, 263).

It is more helpful for me to think about eternity looking to the future than to the past (III, 263).

He who thinks of eternity looking to the future becomes certainly an ascetic Christian, a saint, completely dedicated to divine glorification and love of God and neighbor (III, 263).

¹ This is not a direct quotation from Fr. Justin, but it expresses clearly his thought, his way of acting and guiding others. It is commonly used to synthesize his spirituality and method of formation.

I have to treasure the past while pushing with greater perfection forward and upward (III, 264).

I will encounter the Lord by tending towards the future and leaving behind all the past. I will be one with the Lord and in this progressive ascension² and ascensional progress, I will please the Lord ever more and enjoy his confidence and favor (III, 265).

² Blessed Fr. Justin sees life as a continuous ascension.

CHAPTER II

Principles of Wisdom

Being is always better than not being (III, 269).

It is more laborious to recapture something than to conquer it the first time (XXVI, 86).

The incomplete is false, because it is incorrect (XXVI, 86).

It is more blessed to give and to give all the time rather than to receive (XXII, 111).

Light, peace, strength and victory are within you, they do not come from outside (XI, 123).

I do not want to be loved by one for whom it is indifferent to be near or far (VII, 247).

There is no rule more inconstant than people's opinion (XI, 20).

In what is public is necessarily included the private, in what is social is included the individual (VII, 232).

The general things do not move us much, and therefore they do not move us at all, or very slowly and very weakly (V, 262).

The one who mourns wonders why others do not cry. The one who does not cry wonders why others weep (V, 91).

Every created being is, in its species, relatively the best in the thought and in the will of God (III, 269).

Every law and every authority is for the common good, not private (I, 325).

The seed does not know the flower that will blossom from it (V, 218).

It is better to be a sheep rather than showing your teeth and be a wolf or other unclean animal (VI, 84).

It is foolish and impossible for superiors to ask and for others to give them special rules for individual cases and subjects; the common and particular laws are sufficient (I, 312).

Do not ever cease to think, will, try and do in everything always more in quantity, always better in quality (III, 211).

If it is repugnant to human nature to think that something may exist without a beginning (except God); it is not repugnant to admit that something created may have no end, having been created by God (IV, 175).

I am true master of myself only when I am intelligent and attentive, prudent and in control of myself and execute what is my greatest good (IV, 133).

The more you sleep, the less you are alive (VI, 17).

Each entity is not what it is now, but what it becomes at the end (not in time) (XI, 282).

It is not by chance that divine providence lets us know some things and lets us ignore others (VI, 37).

Praise is like an intoxicating drug, very dangerous, reserved for extreme cases (XXII, 103).

What does not come from God is not really a manifestation, but a counterfeiting of God (V, 228).

The old do not enjoy the sympathy of anyone; they realize this and suffer for it (VI, 39).

We find it easier to sympathize than to rejoice with others; condolences are more spontaneous than congratulations (VI, 201).

Confiding our secrets leads to predilections (VI, 204).

We can achieve what is missing in us, and once we begin to long for it, we begin to have it (VI, 310).

When a man of God indulges in pessimistic visions and criteria, he moves away from the truth (VI, 403).

CHAPTER III

Love

The idea of exchange is the most basic in the language and relationship of love (XXVI, 46).

Love is transporting one's self to another in order to please and increasingly give himself to the other (III, 131).

Love is essentially an attraction to do more and better for the beloved: to know him more and better, to please him better and more, to more and better offer himself to the other, to possess the other more and better (III, 210).

Love is the supreme, ultimate goal of creation, redemption and sanctification and of the whole man in light of revelation and in the elevation to the supernatural (XI, 180).

Only knowledge of and correspondence to love creates friendship, which is mutual love, manifested and cultivated (III, 132).

Love is always graceful, and refines ever more the lover. Even the rudest person as soon as he begins to love softens and becomes more gentle (V, 94).

The law of love is the correspondence to love (III, 237).

Every true love tends to become more and more personal, di-

rectly personal, explicitly personal, in the image of the divine persons and relations (III, 132).

The will is inflamed, the feeling flares and the heart is raptured in a trance of love through the eyes of the body and of the spirit, when they perceive the beauty and the heart of the beloved (III, 165).

Every love is necessarily particular (X, 121).

Blessed are the souls-stars, the souls-suns; blessed are we that the Lord has wanted luminous worlds of light of his infinite love (III, 133).

If the heart is not emptied of defective love and delight, it cannot be filled with virtuous love and delight (X, 295).

The bond of love is stronger than any other bond of flesh and blood (V, 118).

Charity establishes between Jesus and us a bond that can equal, and we do not hesitate to say, surpasses any blood relationship, when love is really strong, great in *spiritu et Veritate – in spirit and truth* (V, 118).

Love is never fully satisfied with its effusions and communications to the beloved. It is never fully satisfied with the correspondence and exchange that it expects from its beloved (IV, 159).

The desire for love, the need for love, the torment of love, the impetus and vehemence of love of the beloved creature, are, for the infinite love of God, as many powerful attractions to pour out and give himself personally to the beloved. (IV, 173)

A love that is not given in full to God, who loves, is not true love of God (IV, 127).

The choice or election is the first act of love. Love leads to friendship and to the highest form of friendship, which is the nuptial love; any other love, such as filial and fatherly love does not choose its object (IV, 87).

The more God loves and is corresponded to, the more he respects human freedom (IV, 107).

From the joy that one feels he understands and manifests love (VI, 102).

A love is said to be ardent when it burns, when it scorches, and then it is really felt (VI, 42).

Love has no worse enemy than forgetfulness, produced by the absence of friends in time and space (II, 114).

Confidences, as revelation or communication of the interior, are a requirement of love (V, 276).

We are something only for the one who loves us and for no one else (VI, 61).

Everything I have granted to the saints, I want to grant to you (VI, 70).

All that is not done for the glory of God, in his will and with his love, is lost (II, 256).

If the Lord asks me for a sacrifice from the heart, it is because he wants to grant me an affection of higher love (VI, 105).

The creator creates only out of love, and cannot but love the creatures that he created only for love (IV, 41).

Love can only be repaid with love. The Lord's love for the

soul can be repaid only with the love of the soul for the Lord (III, 286).

Only love communicates life (III, 291).

Only love elevates; only the one who loves ascends (V, 151).

Without affective love, effective love either does not exist or, if it exists, is undernourished and does not develop normally (V, 117).

Love always depends upon knowledge and esteem, both in the natural and the supernatural order (IX, 197).

Acts and states of sensitive and intense love are the flowers of the soul in love, are the flowers of love in the soul. Do not strip the spring of its garlands of flowers, otherwise you could not harvest any produce in the other seasons! Greet the flowers of spring with all the smiles of complacency as you welcome spring itself (see IX, 199-200).

Love always wants to give endlessly and, above all, always wants to give itself (V, 164).

The creating love creates only out of love, for no other purpose; there could not be any other, neither worthy of him, nor possible to him nor superior to him (XXVI, 106).

Love as such wants no other dependence than correspondence (XXVI, 107).

A living, sensitive being exhibits his personal prestige, even if only physical, not in order to obtain some praise, but always in order to excite love, always (XXVI, 246).

True, full love must be felt and must always grow, otherwise it is thought of as being false and agonizing (XI, 31).

A love that does not concentrate totally in the need of being corresponded to is not love (XXVI, 246).

Giving yourself to someone outside of you, by way of love, entails self-forgetfulness (X, 23).

True, authentic love does not need teachings and lessons (XXVI, 349).

When Jesus and his representatives entrust some souls to our care, they give us a clear proof of love.

CHAPTER IV

Love of God

God loves us and wants to be loved by us (XI, 219).

When the Lord God becomes my permanent love, or rather, when I permanently abide with all my love in him, takes place my birth in God, in his Holy Spirit, and as my deification by grace in the Blessed Trinity whom I adore (X, 145).

The one I love is the perfect man, is the only man, more than any genius, more than any hero and more than any ideal, he alone is also God. The one I love is the man-God, Jesus (XXVI, 12).

You are the one who loves me, you have come to me, unknown and hidden, you have become my way. O white point, you are my star in whose orbit, from the zenith to the nadir, I reach my God in my heart (XXVI, 13).

It's nice to be defended by our Lord himself, and our Lord always takes the defense of certain souls without even telling them (V, 109).

It's nice to be defended by the Lord, but he does not always defend us as we would like, then and there. At times he postpones, and for many he postpones until the end of the world (V, 109).

Whenever the love for God aims at a specific purpose, it may well be a very good thing, but it is not pure love (V, 111).

Those who directly apply themselves to the love of God, not caring that all may go wasted, that everything in the world may go to ruin, but always go directly to God, to his love, they are more successful in everything they do, because the Lord takes their defense (V, 112).

Nurture and exercise every highest desire of heroic virtues, when it concerns the love of God, (XXII, 79).

God is God and I am his first and last lover (V, 165).

All my duties are correspondence to divine love (V, 291).

The Lord has positioned in nature, the seasons, the sky, the earth, the flowers and the stars as background and frame to his and our loves, so that they may be heartfelt and intense (XXVI, 140).

To those who love each other very much it is no longer enough to stay close and embrace each other in direct contact. Almost irresistibly they rush into each other's arms, as if to form a single being out of the two that they are, almost wanting to give each other all their soul in a breath of love (IX, 211-212).

God is infinite love in his perfections and operations, in his persons and missions (XXII, 334).

True and pure love is one; it has God as its formal object, even when it is applied and directed to our neighbor (VIII, 145).

Ask, ask always, ask a lot and in detail, as the resolves of holy meditation must be specific, so must be the graces that you ask. This is necessary for you in order to enter, remain and progress in intimacy with Jesus (X, 128).

When you feel the need to love and to be loved, think of Jesus, call him, long for him, sing to him your love in the secret of your heart. Do not waste your love on the creatures of this earth (XIV, 326).

CHAPTER V

Fraternal Love

When we love according to the heart of God, we must first convince ourselves of a great truth: In order for us to really love our neighbor, our duty is to help him and not to please him (XXVI, 248).

The best I can do to glorify ever more my Lord in love, is to communicate all the good of truth and charity received to my dear neighbor (III, 171).

I can and I want to love all souls as a brother and friend, which are all in the supernatural world (II, 260).

We should see in all the faults of others our own ability to accrue equal and more guilt; we should pity our neighbor and amend offenses to the Lord (IX, 171).

We should nurture effective and affective love for the person of the superiors in their function (XXII, 90).

If we reach perfect understanding about our neighbor, merely appearing among people, we will have a beneficial influence on others. We are not able to explain to what extent that influence may be perceived. We will produce in souls a distaste for sin, a desire for good, a profound joy and such a peace that it will move even sinners to a virtuous life without action, without speaking a

word. As on the contrary, if we are tainted by selfishness, aversion to the neighbor, we will pollute the air and disturb the conscience at our appearance (XXVI, 208).

A soul that does not long for internal solitude to concentrate on God, a soul that does not feel the need to stay all alone with God always and everywhere, may well be in the grace of God, but is not yet a lover of God in the truest and most beautiful sense (VI, 310).

We must become, or at least wish to be, all things to all people with a real ability to empathize, rejoice and cooperate (XXII, 1004).

When a soul separates from the world, leaves creatures, gets away from society, from men, we must think not that it wants to be alone, but that it is looking for a companion, and not finding one to its liking among those around it, the soul searches elsewhere, expecting him elsewhere. It is not possible otherwise (VI, 305).

I'll make sure that the evil of my neighbor will remain buried in me, and that my neighbor will resurrect to all good, through me (I, 265)

The true good of others or the common good never excludes personal and private good (IV, 48).

The more a man is perfect and holy, the more he is sensitive to his neighbor (VI, 305).

The need to be alone with the loved one is common to all lovers of any sacred and profane love; it comes from the very nature and essence of love (VI, 309).

When we become aware of an error, a fault of others, this news

should remain buried in us, immersed in a sea of compassion and sweetness (I, 221).

The more you love God, the more you practice the other virtues, especially love of neighbor which, in essence, is zeal for the salvation of souls, of which Jesus is the head (XXVI, 205) .

Our life is an ongoing love story. There is no form of life that is higher, more festive than that spent totally in the relationship of love between the soul and God (XXV, 385).

Love wants to give. God wants all forms of love. Since we are not able to exercise this form [of giving] with God, he has enabled us to give to him in our neighbors (XXVI, 386).

Eternal hatred to death for every sin! Eternal love for every soul (IX, 105)!

You should intend to do, to want, to tell God, what you desire, say and do to your neighbor (X, 243).

From what you like or dislike in your brother you can deduce what in yourself pleases or displeases the Lord (X, 243).

Every soul must be treated as the bride of the Lord! Brotherly love should be animated by this vision (XI, 205).

A sweet bond of fraternal charity should unite clerics with one another, so as to form a single family (XXV, 246).

It is not true that you have no friend. So many souls love and respect you more than any other person in the world. And this in the present and in the future (X, 143)!

Practice amiably fraternal correction, without supposing incorrigibility (XXII, 101).

Lovingly offer your services, in things that are unpleasant (XXII, 101).

Do not ever invade the activities of another, in things that are pleasant (XXII, 101).

Always give something good for the soul to anyone who approaches you, saving the religious poverty (XXII, 101).

Divine charity is the life and the value of every virtue; we want it to animate all our actions, all our work (IX, 192).

Only by becoming all love shall we be the image and likeness of God, who is all love in his divine nature, is all charity in his divine persons, infinite relationships of love (IX, 99).

Holiness consists essentially in love; every act that is not in some way and to some degree at least equivalent to an act of love, does not sanctify neither the doer nor the receiver (VI, 469).

In every person recognize, revere, serve and please Jesus and the other divine persons (XXII, 102).

The intellect necessarily aspires to join with the absolute truth, God in the Word (III, 116).

It is charity that saves; when charity is perfect, it obtains forgiveness of sins even before absolution. It gives value to every action. It is the source of every other merit, the soul of every virtue, and without it everything is dead (V, 153).

We need to be aware of the fact that it is always a sin against justice, or against charity, or against many virtues together, whatever in any manner, time and place, is not of praise or good for others (II, 208).

Religious observances are established to develop charity in us; from this we can also understand what to think of those souls who no longer endure to be under a rule (VI, 470).

Sacrosanctly I want to do and suffer anything, even death, in order to offer to the Lord, in every place, the greatest pleasure possible (II, 134).

All things have been ordered to nourish our charity (V, 159).

Spiritualize all things in the love of God and neighbor. Unify everything in the love of God and neighbor (V, 168).

For God the exercise of charity consists in giving; for us toward God the exercise of charity consists in receiving (XXVI, 382).

[Humanly] we love less when we love many. The bond of love becomes more tenuous, and therefore much easier to break down, in proportion to the number of people, whom we love. Supernaturally it is not so (XIX, 108).

CHAPTER VI

Ascetical Principles

Be a particular friend only of Jesus Christ (XV, 37).

Life passes; let us make haste to respond to its grace. When life ends without having reached divine union, it has been lost (VI, 40).

He who goes to God must walk in the night: in the night of the senses, in the night of the heart, in the night of the spirit (V, 59)!

The verb of the Christian is to “do” not to “say” (IX, 108).

Every truth is eminently understood in love (VIII, 22).

Nature triumphs in comforts and creates decadence. Grace triumphs in discomfort and creates spiritual ascension (XI, 121).

Religious superiors should have a room only to rest at night; in general their room is the whole house. They must be so present to everything and to everyone, as to honor, and remind others in a certain way of the divine omnipresence, in its immensity (I, 322).

Everyone must feel the presence of the superiors as an image of the divine presence, as a sign of God’s presence (I, 322).

All the difficulties map your way; they do not block it (XVI, 249).

Those who want to attend to their own satisfaction and physical well-being will never become saints (VI, 99).

The Lord never acts by force, never in a hurry (XXVI, 207).

Either man is constantly changing for the better or is always changing for the worse (VI, 55).

Often we are troubled because we have not consoled others (I, 302).

Every affliction of any kind will be considered and used as a grace of purification and elevation (I, 303).

All the inconveniences and dissatisfactions with the world and ourselves are as many voices that urge us to leave the world and enter into ourselves, in order to live with God (VI, 172).

Any impulse to go down to a lower good than that in which we find ourselves is considered a temptation (I, 246).

We should be aware and keep in mind that we are about to fall into the power of temptation when we feel in a bad mood, dejected, discouraged, irritable, especially lax, curious and desirous for sensible things, or otherwise disturbed (I, 247).

Every fault is so closely linked to its occasion, that you cannot hate the one without the other and you cannot run away from one without hating the other (IX, 173).

Cultivate a spirit of indomitable joy; this is one of the best defenses against temptations (I, 249).

Aim to belong ever more to God and to possess ever more the Lord (VI, 337).

When you feel a special transport and tenderness toward a person, you would try in vain to suppress what is by nature. With the help of grace you need to elevate and transfigure that attraction (X, 242).

The direct seeking and enjoyment of any pleasure, even in the most legitimate forms, wanted and enjoyed for its own sake, always contains at least an initial disorder, and it is always a danger (II, 268).

He, who stops and does not move, runs the risk of remaining eternally behind, and of falling eternally to the bottom (VI, 337).

I can well imagine what pleases the Lord from what appeals to my intellect and will (II, 257).

If we do not want to commit mortal sins, we must engage in the struggle to remove venial sins; while we are engaged in this struggle we must necessarily eliminate all unnecessary things (XXVI, 254).

A soul that is satisfied with what it is and what it does is already a morally perverse soul, or near to becoming such (VI, 385).

The world needs man ever more, and man needs God ever more (II, 228).

You are, in your own self, heaven and paradise of God (IV, 210).

The ascetic, who on his own is always against himself, is the only one who can successfully seize all occasions of virtue (I, 218).

The exercise of command is meritorious for superiors and for

those who are in charge, no less than in subjects is the duty to obey (I, 311).

Each one of our ascetical practices can fill our inner world and keep us well occupied in the court of love to the divine Trinity (I, 257).

The grace of the office has a parallel in the sacramental grace proper to each sacrament; it gives us access to all those aids, which are necessary for the attainment of the goal of authority in every area (I, 312).

Each one of us has in his temperament and character a weakness through which the enemy tries to surprise us and make us fall (IX, 300).

As far as moral and supernatural means, the more we know and use, the better we do (IX, 314).

The devil, in the struggle against the good, i.e. against souls, against God, does not follow the principle: *all or nothing*. He aims for everything, but usually by the way of little by little, since he cannot succeed in having it all of a sudden, entirely (VIII, 138).

God is no less God in creating a blade of grass to sustain an insect, than in creating a paradise for the blessedness of the saints (X, 21).

Justin, Justin, try to stay totally alone with your God more often during the day (X, 115).

Justin, Justin, come down to the particular in the examination and in judging, condemning and spurring, only in regard to your own things, just for your own self (X, 116).

If you, who are second, want to carry on as if you were the first, you will ruin everything and you will lose your soul. If he who is first wants to carry on as if he were second, he will ruin everything and lose his soul (XV, 223).

Always sacrifice your comfort and personal interest for that of others (XXII, 101).

Remain faithful at your place, even unto death, if necessary (XIV, 275).

Every conviction and disposition of things that seem to be spiritual, but that make us fulfill with disgust the present duty of obedience, is questionable and under the influence of the evil one (XIV, 358).

CHAPTER VII

Desires

The supernatural desire that the soul has and nurtures for God, attracts God to the soul, because it is an act of perfect charity and to every act of perfect charity corresponds an increase of grace, which means and implies a new coming of God the Father, a new mission of the Word and the Spirit, a new communion with the Trinity (VI, 267).

The good intention and disposition that the Lord wants to find in us, is our willingness to change ourselves, up to transforming ourselves into him (V, 76).

Exercise yourself in holy desires, in great desires; you can do this (XI, 234).

A desire is the principle of the holy work of God in the soul (XXVI, 414).

We can improve the good that we already do only by desiring a greater good (V, 12).

Desire the infinite in all things! It alone can satisfy me. Since the infinite in act is not possible [for me], then [I will live] the infinite desire (XI, 253).

“I have been sent to you because you are the man of desires”! The same must be said of you and of all Vocationists (XI, 261).

The Lord cannot repel the desire of the hearts of those who want to know him and who want to hear his voice (XXVI, 414).

Whatever the good Lord grants us to know, he intends that we should desire it (XXVI, 411).

With our desire we can reach the infinite! Desire, before God, has the value of an accomplished act, in bad as well as in good things (VII, 253-254).

A thing desired before we know it becomes even more desired when it is known; after having known and appreciated it, we do not want to leave it any more, we are fond of it and we keep desiring it ever more (XXVI, 226).

When we want a plant to grow strong and healthy, we uproot all the herbs that can weaken the life of the plant, and so it looms like a giant. Such must be the religious soul if it wants Jesus' desire to grow and be strengthened more and more. Abolish all others, even legitimate and good desires if they are not exclusively about Jesus and for Jesus, for example, the desires for good health, or for the accomplishment of any good thing can be abolished if they are not conform to the will of Jesus, and so we will choose Jesus (XXVI, 226).

I'm waiting for you, Lord, I'm walking towards you, I'm pining for you, I'll end up dying and death keeps delaying my coming to you (II, 259).

O my Jesus, my only friend, you want me to see in the desires, needs, sorrows, joys and fears of my heart's love, the desires, needs, pains, joys and fears of your heart (XVI, 156).

I will consider all that I want from my friends on earth or on heaven a sign and an image of what you, O Lord, want from me (II, 257).

We must compel people to multiply and intensify their wishes so as to make them adequate to the divine good offered to them (XXII, 85).

No image and likeness of yours is for me more alive and expressive than my own self. So I do not delude myself if in what I desire from others, I see what you want from me (II, 257).

The holy desires, protests and intentions of love have their great value before the Lord, in proportion to the degree of love with which they are made (I, 230).

Every good resolve is in itself an act that glorifies the Lord and sanctifies the present and thus, somehow, affects the future (I, 230).

The act that contains more righteousness is the act of desire. It is very convenient and very appropriate to our current state of wayfarers and militants. The act of desire presupposes the application of intelligence onto something that we still do not have, yet this application excites the desire for it in our will; that is why we strongly recommend its exercise (XXVI, 360).

We look upon every creature, every circumstance and every relationship as an epiphany of God. Therefore we recognize, love and serve God in every brother, and his will and his glory in every event (V, 65).

When you begin to awaken the desire, your precursor has arrived! The desire of grace is a pledge of it. The Lord, with the expansion of desire, prepares us to receive the grace of a higher order. When the desire arrives at the highest level, then the grace is divine. When at last it seems that the desire is irresistible, then, we are indeed blessed (XXVI, 379)!

The supernatural desire that the soul has and nurtures for God,

attracts God to the soul, because it is an act of perfect charity. To every act of perfect charity corresponds an increase of grace; this implies and accomplishes a new coming of God the Father, a new mission of the Word and of the Spirit, a new communion with the Trinity (XXVI, 15).

The soul that must transmit grace needs to be filled by God first; as they say, it must be first a basin and then a channel (XXVI, 200).

Before God, we stand where we are with our voluntary thought. So every day we bring ourselves to a different region of the world, country by country, and stop there with our thought. Through holy desires, prayers of intercession and reparation we will obtain the greatest benefit to the souls (XIX, 179).

CHAPTER VIII

Relationships

My whole life and my whole being is a progressive relationship with God (II, 49).

The Lord wants each and everyone of us to be a living and personal relationship of love with the three divine persons (XI, 219).

You cannot find nor know one component of a relationship, without finding and getting to know the other; one component of the relationship cannot live well or do well without the other to whom he is ordered to be joined (IX, 91).

The divine persons are like in a race of love amongst them, divinely applied to participate and communicate to man (one person out of love for the other) the benefit he can receive from the union of their personal relationship (III, 109).

All creation is in a necessary relationship with the Lord. All my life and that of my neighbors must be spent in this relationship (I, 40).

The Lord wants all souls to be in the state of free persons so that they may cultivate the personal relationship of love with the three divine persons (III, 208).

Every relationship clearly exists between two parties, and this

is the reason for our existence. Our relationship is between God and us (V, 253).

In the divinity, the three relationships are equal and distinct, so that no one can conceive a superiority or inferiority among those of fatherhood, sonship, and *spiration*. We can, likewise, safely affirm that all the relationships of love that, in the supernatural order, can exist between the souls and God, are all equal (V, 253).

All souls are called to holiness by the very fact of having been called to life and faith. They can aspire to the relationship of intimacy with the Lord in their sanctification [as soul-daughter, soul-mother, soul-spouse] (II, 21).

Every time that someone knocks at the door of our spiritual family I feel a gentle knock in my heart. My heart opens to the newcomer before the door does. The newcomer becomes mine and totally mine, more than a brother and friend. He becomes flesh of my flesh, bone of my bones and I can no longer be separated from him without suffering the cruelest physical and moral torture (II, 264).

One Judas is enough, but even one is too many (II, 265)!

O Holy Family, I see in you combined the three supreme relationship with God granted to mankind: child of God in Jesus Christ, Mother of God in the Blessed Virgin Mary, and spouse of God in the soul of St. Joseph (II, 174).

In any relationship with people you must rekindle within them faith, hope and love in the sanctifying will of God (XXII, 110).

The Lord ordered that in nature we start with being children and then we end up with becoming fathers and mothers. Something similar happens in the supernatural. We start with being

children of God's love, but the Lord does not want us to stop at the state of childhood and of beginner. He wants us to reach such a fullness of grace and charity that we may be able to transmit it to others (VI, 153).

I cannot find amongst men one that I may possess totally and to whom I may give myself the way I would like (II, 58).

Every relationship with God is essentially a life of elevation and ascension to the life of union with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (VII, 227).

You can say that there are as many relations with God as are souls. Each relationship has its own particular character, vocation and mission, because each person has his own role in the kingdom of God on account of his own relationship with the heart of God; this is his own personally, his own exclusively (V, 250).

We know what is our personal relationship with the divine persons, from the attraction and interior sympathy we feel for that relationship that delights us in preference to the others, when we begin to enumerate and consider them (V, 251).

Attraction and interior sympathy indicate to us the relationship that the Lord wants to establish with us, and for which he has called us to life, faith and grace (V, 251).

Man is created to enter into a relationship, or rather, more properly, to be a living and personal relationship with the three divine relations. Our relationships differ from those of the divine persons that are uncreated, while ours are created (V, 249).

In the natural world we are born from a love relationship, and soon we find ourselves in a loving relationship with our parents and family. As we grow over the years, we come necessarily to

other relationships of love. We bear within us the destination and the ability to contract and play other such relationships of love, likewise, with a holier, more beautiful and living reality, it does happen in the supernatural world (V, 250).

I am a living and personal relationship of love because love relationships are the divine persons (III, 122).

We cannot ignore our neighbors because it is the condition of human nature to live with others, even in religious life, much more in religion! We are like a chain where each link is followed and preceded by many others; by necessity we must relate with others and in a perfect way (XXVI, 296).

I am created to be a living and personal relationship of love with God. In my relationship of love with God, I have to get to the supreme loving relationship (XXVI, 346).

Even among us the relationship of friendship should normally grow in holiness and intimacy, to the extent that the relationship with our Lord grows, a trait of the union of souls (XIV, 135).

CHAPTER IX

Soul

My soul is the star of the glory of God, a star that is a living person. A star that emanates light, scent and melody! A star that becomes ever bigger, more beautiful and sweet (IX, 52).

The soul does not operate in a less divine manner in feeding the body than in nourishing itself with Holy Communion (X, 21).

The Lord seeks with his grace to form our soul worthy of himself as his beautiful image and likeness, to make of it his mystical spouse; in the relationship, after it has reached perfection, the spirit of man and the Spirit of God shall rest in each other (IX, 71).

With the soul we can go anywhere. We can establish the principle that we are there where our thoughts are, and since our thought is fast like lightning, we can go anywhere with the spirit and act on behalf of our own neighbors and, more directly, against the powers of hell (XXVI, 401).

We can think that the soul is like one of those huge worlds of fire, hovering and traveling in the skies. The soul is like a star. A large stellar world, all living blood of fire and radiant splendor, fragrance, harmony, but to which God has not yet set any boundaries as he did to the other stars, because he always wants it more alive with growing colors and splendor, songs and harmony, fra-

grances and perfumes. The soul flies in an orbit ever more extensive, with an elevation ever higher, in a spiral ever more wonderful, as it were destined to reach the inaccessible God, to embrace the illimitable God, to be the star of the glory, of the blessedness of God (IX, 38).

The soul is not free to be or not to be. Since it is, it must exist eternally (III, 116).

The soul is a living, personal image and portrait of each divine person made by one for the other, given by one to the other; consequently it is also a living and personal relationship of love for every other divine person, almost the result of the three relationships in one (III, 201).

The soul is the little all for its big all (III, 204).

O soul, you're so limited in yourself! You, for yourself, you are too limited and insufficient; for any other created person, you're too small, too poor, too stupid, but for the divine persons you are something infinitely beautiful, infinitely gentle, infinitely dear, my soul (III, 292)!

My soul is a living and personal portrait and gift of a divine person to another (III, 324).

The look and the word are the two ways in which we can give and receive the soul. This is said in general of the eyes and tears; but if we want to go deeper, if we want to see more deeply we must say that the eyes give only through the path of tears and the lips give only through the kiss (V, 133).

The cry tells us that the soul is so filled up that it cannot contain any more all the fullness of love and outflows into tears (V, 135).

The kiss is the easiest and the most straightforward way to consecrate ourselves to the Lord (V, 135).

For God it is divine to give, for me it is divine to receive.

For God it is divine to be, for me it is divine to become.

For God it is divine to act, for me it is divine the action.

For God it is divine to love, for me it is divine to correspond to love.

For God it is divine to will, for me it is divine to obey.

For God it is divine to speak, for me it is divine to listen.

For God it is divine to call, for me it is divine to come.

For God it is divine to attract, for me it is divine to consent.

For God it is divine to do, for me it is divine to imitate.

For God it is divine the eternal and infinite, for me it is divine the eternal and indefinite participation with the all (III, 300).

Souls are not made to be displayed before the eyes of others. What happens in the soul does not happen so that others may know it (V, 148).

He who commits sin is the enemy of his own soul, because by himself he places it near and under the influence of Satan; he sells his soul to him and abandons it to him, so that in it Satan may frenzy his beastly hatred for God (V, 278).

CHAPTER X

Soul-Daughter

I must not, I cannot love anyone else as my father, as my son, as my spouse, but my God and him alone (II, 260).

In the natural order man is born as a baby, in the only relationship of son, and only growing in the development of life, man can establish other relationships, such as friendship; when he reaches the fullness of development, he is led spontaneously by nature to the relationship of spouse. He is instinctively led to this relationship as by a necessity, which is also free, and with a freedom that is likewise necessary. The same thing happens also in the supernatural order (III, 292-203).

Every human person necessarily begins to exist in the relationship of son/daughter with his parents (IV, 41).

You have wanted me as your son, as a little mother, as a little spouse. I knew that you wanted me as your little all (XXVI, 158)!

The supernatural filial relationship is necessary for eternal life. We all are elevated by the divine goodness to this relationship and we must make it permanent and perfect with our cooperation (IX, 87).

We come into being as children, not as a father or as a spouse, but only, exclusively as children.

Even as adults, even when we develop other relationships, deep at heart we are always “children”.

We seek the mother, we want to find the mother in our superiors; we want to find the mother in the sister; we want to find the mother in the friend. We want to be loved maternally by our dependents; even in the servant, in the disciple, in the dependent, whenever it concerns us personally, we want to see some qualities of a mother (VII, 181).

The divine filial adoption begins with grace, develops with charity and is perfected with espousal (XI, 226).

CHAPTER XI

Soul-Mother

The soul-spouse assumes the functions and dignity of mother in the house of God and in the family of nations by receiving, making ours, cultivating and, in a certain way, growing the inspirations. Her children are in a sense all the holy works conceived, performed and perfected under divine inspiration. In another sense they are all the individual souls, creatures and daughters of the bridegroom God (IX, 247).

Jesus, the son in the divinity and in humanity radiates on his elect the maternal relationship of Mary and his filial affection for Mary when he sees them cooperate with the Holy Spirit, together with Mary, in giving him a new existence in the souls. When he sees them all as one with the Father, through the union of the will, as it is written: *He who does the will of my Father, this is my Mother* (IX, 87).

Only in the supernatural nuptial relationship, does the soul, created person, become a mother and bloom fruits of elect children of God. Then the soul receives and combines all forms and degrees of love for its Lord who makes the soul like a small all to the great all, the groom (III, 138).

The Lord calls every man to be his collaborator in universal salvation and sanctification, especially the souls that the divine love joins more intimately to him as soul-spouses; likewise he will unite them to their neighbor as soul-mothers (III, 288).

The generation and the birth of the Word in our human life happen when God becomes the constant thought of our mind (X, 145).

As soul-spouses, we should take maternal care of every soul, so that each soul may reach her ultimate goal (XXII, 104).

Having reached the goal of the supernatural nuptial relationship, I really thought of stopping; but love knows no boundaries and can never say "*enough*". From the supernatural nuptial received in full, completely possessed, and heartily enjoyed, as from the supreme flower of life, proceeds the priestly-supernatural that reveals itself in spiritual motherhood by its fruits of supernatural life (XXVI, 51).

We are all intended and given the potential to become mother of the Son of all mankind, who wants to be the son for everyone to whom he comes in grace, which is a share in the divine nature. He wants to be the Son of every soul that is a living and personal image of his Father.

Yet it is necessary that we long for, begin and cultivate that relationship that is in the image and likeness of the relationship of God the Father and the Virgin Mary.

So that this may become a reality, it is necessary that we give a new life to Jesus, thus he who is the Son of God and Son of Man, may begin to be our son (VII, 182).

He who unites himself to the Father as a beginner is my friend. He who unites himself to the Father as a proficient is my brother. He who unites himself to the Father with the perfection possible in this life becomes my mother (VII, 183).

He who does the will of the Father becomes brother and sister of Jesus. He who enables others to love and do the will of the Father becomes mother of Jesus (VIII, 246).

According to nature I have no other relationship with my neighbor but that of a son, brother and friend (X, 72).

I can see springing up in my soul a maternal tenderness for those whom I have generated with Jesus to grace, to religion, to holiness (X, 73).

CHAPTER XII

Soul-Spouse

The nuptial relationship¹ is the highest form of love; it is a synthesis of all other relationships; to it tends always man's heart and God's heart, subordinating and ordering to it the relationships of creature, subject, soldier, disciple, friend and son and every other possible. All for the bride of God! And such is mankind, the Church, and every soul individually and personally (IX, 229).

Soul-Spouse of God is every soul in the state and in the life of grace, with which it accumulates in itself the perfection of mankind and of the Holy Church, and therefore is also the expression of their nuptial relationship with God.

Any degree of grace is enough to establish us in God's friendship. In order to reach the spouse-relationship, which is the highest friendship with God, it is necessary to reach a very high degree of grace, exercised to the maximum (IX, 89).

¹ The nuptial relationship, called also mystical marriage, or soul-spouse relationship, is the highest possible relationship with God; by its very nature it leads us to perfect union with God. While this special relationship with God is part of the story of many a saint, as something very special, Fr. Justin feels that all souls are called to it, and that this is the only relationship really worthy of God, who, by his very nature, loves always and only totally, completely, exclusively, infinitely, and as such the love of God is always spousal love.

In the supernatural state, if we stay healthy and fervent, from our spiritual childhood, we pass into youth, and then move on to perfect manhood, and the fervent soul is not satisfied with the relationship of soul-daughter and perfects it with the relationship of friend in order to enter the relationship of spouse (IX, 60).

The supernatural nuptial is essentially free, as it is totally dependent on the free acceptance of the proposal of divine love (IX, 87).

Creation is as the offertory; the elevation to the supernatural is like the immolation; the relationship of soul-spouse of God is the communion of the divine sacrifice that each divine person offers the other. Love is like the priest who offers, immolates, and communicates to each other the two components of the nuptial relationship (IX, 67).

In the nuptial relationship of the soul with God it is divinely accomplished the whole purpose of God in creation, redemption, sanctification of souls, for his glory primarily, and for our happiness secondarily (IX, 22).

As in the natural order, the highest, the most intense and appropriate component, act, and state in the relationship of love between persons to whom it is possible to be united is the spousal relationship, so by analogy, in the loving relationship between the soul and the three divine persons, gleams this idea (III, 204).

Divine friendship is not enough for love and leads us to the mystical marriage, and in it to the open-ended steps of divine nuptial union (III, 135).

In the natural order the nuptial relationship is the highest form of friendship, the supreme state of love, the supreme act of life and it requires perfect freedom; in it development ends and ma-

turity is achieved, as is the union of finite and limited beings (III, 136).

In the supernatural order this nuptial relationship is the ultimate form of alliance and friendship with God, the supreme status and dignity of divine love, the supreme exercise and supreme function of divine love; it requires perfect development, supernatural maturity and perfect freedom (III, 136).

I am paired and ineffably united to each divine person as a bride to the groom according to grace (V, 180).

The love of the supernatural nuptial relationship requires absolute freedom. That relationship is based primarily on the most full and free self-giving (IV, 105).

I must first be a free person, as the supreme relationship of love of soul-spouse requires that I be free; without freedom, even among men in the natural order, the marriage contract would be null and void (III, 51).

All the secrets of the soul and heart are and should be reserved for the spouse of the soul-spouse of the Trinity (*sponsa Trinitatis*) (X, 86).

The highest degree of life and love is the marital relationship in which each spouse wants all the other; a spouse is not satisfied with a gift or communication of the other, but wants directly, specifically, most intensely the beloved person (IV, 177).

If the Lord, even anticipating and knowing how much he would be offended by human freedom, has always wanted to safeguard it, this means, reveals and proves that this divine-human-nuptial relationship was the integral goal of his creative, saving and sanctifying work (IV, 43).

The supernatural-nuptial relationship fully justifies all the divine outpouring of love and relationships and the very constitution of the human soul. No other purpose inferior to this supernatural nuptial relationship may be the convenient, proportionate and appropriate reason for God's revelations, communications and outpourings to his creature (IV, 34).

Every soul is elected individually, personally and therefore most distinctly as spouse of the Trinity, the only spouse of God in that unique divine perfection (IV, 35).

Marry me totally and ever more to you, O Lord, with the ever increasing union that is the infinite desire of your infinite love reflected in the desire of my heart that makes me all a living transference to you (II, 239).

To follow Jesus means to enter the nuptial relationship with God-Trinity in Jesus and through Jesus, because only the bride follows and must always follow the groom (IV, 66).

To deny or abnegate oneself is simply, solely and fully, to enter, live and cultivate the nuptial relationship with the Lord; it is to be a living, personal relationship of love with the Lord (IV, 71).

The All marries the nothingness in everything that he creates from nothing (III, 218).

The Lord regarded as God-Unity wants the soul as his bride only for the effusions of his goodness, for the splendor of his glory, and for the delights of his love that does not stop in-between his ways (IX, 71) .

Neither a country nor a city, nor a capital may be sufficient for the soul to whom the Lord entrusts the care of souls around the world as a true queen, because she is his real bride (IX, 73).

CHAPTER XIII

Presence of God

You can enjoy that gift of God's presence in you, around you, above, in front of you, whenever you want. You can enter that sense, that gift, that spirit, that supernatural atmosphere of marital intimacy when you want, whenever you want (XI, 208).

The presence of the Lord surrounds us and penetrates us, and yet we can say that there are visits of the Lord. This says that the Lord visits us when he operates in us an effect of grace different from the ordinary, common and general effect, when he operates a special effect (XXVI, 362).

Do the particular examination [of conscience] according to the method of St. Ignatius on the loving presence and action of God (XXII, 94).

Fervor is in direct proportion to worship and the sense of God's presence (X, 203).

If a religious should be lacking this gift and sense of God's presence in us, around us, ahead of us, he could not be a good religious (VI, 347).

My place is in the temple of the world before the altar of the universe, in the same chalice and paten, in the same tabernacle and in the souls of the brothers with Jesus (II. 49).

Leave, between us and the other party, the space for another, whenever we deal with others (I, 157).

Pay much attention to external personal decorum in honor of the divine presence, especially in the time and place of prayer (XXII, 84).

In community's things: maximum uniformity; in private matters: maximum variety (X, 175)!

All things are under a veil, which hides the Lord's presence, accessibility, and sensibility from the souls who seek him (V, 272).

When we are being reminded of the special presence of the three divine persons, it is a call from them. They call you. Stop everything, respond and extend the loving attention to God's presence (XI, 209).

Recognize, revere, love and serve, in every neighbor, Jesus himself, who considers everything said and done to the neighbor as being said and done to himself (I. 164).

God in his immensity is everywhere and in everything with his presence and power, not only to give and preserve the every existence of every being, but to give himself to us under the veil of things (V. 197).

In everything, always and wherever I may be, I find myself in God's presence, engaged personally with God, I am involved in the interests of God, I am employed in the design of God. In everything, always, anywhere I am dealing with God. Whenever I talk to any person, I actually talk to him, and regardless of what I talk about I am talking of him (V, 198).

Cultivate in a special way the divine presence for the divine

union, with an ever more alive awareness of the willingness to please the Holy Trinity in every act and state, at any given moment (XI, 296).

CHAPTER XIV

Divine Union

The Holy Spirit in his mission is bound to join our soul (so to speak and in a certain way) as the soul is preordained to join the body (XXVI, 55).

All the desires of God's heart and ours are condensed in the reciprocal possession for divine union (VIII, 23).

The divine union is our blessed goal. It is the beginning and goal of each divine vocation (V, 254).

Grant, O Lord, that I may come into you, rather than you come into me! I have everything to gain by coming into you and you, coming into me, would gain absolutely nothing (XXVI, 144).

The whole life is spent working for a wedding dowry, on a continuous pilgrimage toward the groom, in a perpetual longing for union (X, 36).

Confidence is the first admission to intimacy, to union, to fusion (XXVI, 412).

If I bless, it is Jesus in me who blesses. If I catechize, it is Jesus in me who catechizes. If I form vocations, it is Jesus in me who forms his apostles (X, 27).

Union of the soul with the divine persons is the most intimate

that we may think about and that may exist after the one of the three divine persons in the unity of nature (V, 177).

The union with the Lord does not consist in absorption and therefore does not cause any relative or partial loss of the loved person. The distinct, unique, incommunicable personality of a loved one is rendered ever more distinct and personal by the perfection and vehemence of love.

The mystery of the hypostatic union has been given to me as heritage in the division of the assets of the divine mysteries, of the acts and states of the Lord Jesus (I, 20).

The hypostatic union is for us the way, the means and the medium to divine union with the three divine persons (III, 233).

The supreme type of our union with God is to be adored in the Most Holy Trinity, because it consists in the very unity and trinity of God. This unity that does not take away but infinitely brings out the distinction between the three relations, which are the three divine persons to whom we are united by their grace (XXVI, 104).

Fancying I asked you for a ring, but not the one given to men!
But the one you give to the souls that you find worthy of you and totally yours, God-groom, yourself!

Now on the altar of the sacrifice your reply has come to me. The whole soul is encompassed in the wedding ring, which is the very circulation of divine life in the three divine persons (XXVI, 154).

There is no imitation without union with the one we want to imitate, when we want to imitate him in his work in us (III, 226).

You cannot be admitted to union with God without freely

wanting and actualizing it, without the full consent of your will. Total willingness in complete freedom is essential to the relationship of union, both among men and with God (IV, 186).

Divine union is heaven on earth today, heavenly paradise tomorrow (XXII, 335).

CHAPTER XV

Holy Trinity

When we consider the nature of our being, which is successive, and when we reflect that, for the individual soul, particular things are always more effective than general ones, and when we consider how our worship is distinctly marked by human and divine personality, we feel that we may incline, with an inner spiritual preference, to the Trinity in Unity, rather than to the unity in the Trinity (VII, 168).

Experimentally, accentuating our personal relationship with each of the three divine persons opens new horizons to the soul and elevates it to progressive ascensions (VII, 168).

We can give nothing to the Father. Even though it may sometimes seem that we are giving something to God, in reality we are receiving. In what seems an offering, we present simply an empty vessel, to welcome new outpourings of the graces of life (VII, 170-171).

You are never so intimately united to the Son, and never honor him more than when you go to the Father, led by the Spirit (XI, 128).

The Holy Spirit is the animator of soul. The Incarnate Word, the friend and teacher, leader and bridegroom is next to you on the path of life. God the Father is up in front of you and inviting

you to ascend to him, the welcoming Father, total paternity, essentially Father (XI, 129).

The Holy Spirit is in me. Christ is beside me. Together we ascend to the Father. With the Son in the Spirit we go to the Father (XI, 187).

The three divine persons dwell and live in the soul, so that in turn the soul may always dwell and live in them (XXII, 335).

No human person deserves to have our heart and our life! There is one person, better, three adorable divine persons, to whom we will lift up ourselves. We will offer ourselves, we will abandon ourselves to them and we shall be happy. Challenge all the beauties and powers of the world to pass before God and see if there is any beauty or power that can compare with the beauty and power of our love (XV, 299).

In your name and for your glory, love and will, O adorable Trinity, we want to win all souls to your pure love, bringing them to the perfect practice of religion in the liturgy, so that they may be soul-daughters; to the perfect practice of ascension in asceticism, so that they may be your soul-spouses; to the perfect practice of union in the apostolate, so that they may be soul-mothers of Jesus in our neighbor (XX. 278).

CHAPTER XVI

Blessed Virgin Mary

The love-God joined together *virginity* and *maternity* in a single creature and made Mary (III, 330).

We see the ideal of the glorious state of our mutilated and desecrated body, in the Assumption of Mary (XXVI, 85).

The Virgin Mother of the Incarnate Word is the supreme type of correspondence of the human heart to the divine Heart (XXV, 165).

Devotion to Mary is a fast-tracked course of perfection. It is the perfect compendium of all means of salvation, corresponding to the fact that Mary is full of grace and the synthesis of sanctification (I, 351).

The Blessed Mother is such a wide world of perfection, beauty and spiritual wealth, that no soul and no work can exhaust it. Everyone receives from the Lord a special work of Mary by which to honor and imitate her: this is like a special source of wealth from whence to draw (VI, 152).

For every act of our spiritual life, we have the Virgin with us in a perpetual visitation, carrying out her motherly function (I, 352).

We believe in the participation of Mary in the divine perfections, and in the divine immensity. We feel her presence near every soul, in all the houses of God, in all religious houses of formation for the apostolate, in all our Vocationist residences (I, 352).

Her presence is always connected with her role as the mother of Jesus in the souls and as first cooperator and the first minister of redemption and sanctification, the first and most noble instrument, the first and sovereign means of divine union for us (I, 353).

The presence of Mary is loved, felt and enjoyed, in proportion to the commitment that every soul and every community puts into their sanctification and that of souls; it may well be a telltale sign and measure of our zeal (I, 353).

As Jesus is inseparable from the Mother of God, so the soul sought by the Trinity as spouse of God must be inseparably, ineffably and efficaciously joined to Mary (I, 348).

We believe, even not knowing how to define it, in a special presence of union of the Blessed Virgin Mary with Jesus in the Eucharist and with the Blessed Trinity indwelling in our souls (VI, 170).

Let us pray, and pray with the whole world in our hands, in our heart, in our mind as in the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary to St. Catherine Labouré (X, 134).

The Blessed Mother is really, truly present among us, especially in her room (X, 134).

In the Holy Family in addition to the person and relationship of the Son of God and in addition to the person and the relationship of the Mother of God, we find in St. Joseph the person and

the relationship of the soul-spouse of God; like St. Joseph we who aspire to divine union must unite ourselves to Mary (VI, 165).

Through divine union with Mary we intend to know, love and possess God, together with the Blessed Mother. We likewise intend to know, love and have Mary, together with God, perpetually going from one to another, ever more intimately united to one for the sake of the other, and vice versa (I, 348).

Our acceptance and correspondence to grace depends on our union with Mary (I, 350).

Our special devotion to the holy Virgin Mary is called *Divine Union with Mary*, because it is in imitation and honor of the union of Jesus and of the individual divine person with the Virgin Mary (VI, 165).

The Assumption [of Mary into heaven] is the culmination of all the privileges of the Blessed Virgin. It is the crowning of all the great things that God has done for Mary (VIII, 171).

Always have the rosary in hand (X, 213).

There is a special presence of Mary as a perpetual visitation, wherever there are souls of precursors, souls of disciples to be educated and sanctified, as in the house of Elizabeth, as with the twelve [Apostles] in the three years of Jesus' public life, and lastly as in the Upper Room (XXV, 175).

CHAPTER XVII

Maxims

Contemplation for action and action for contemplation (VIII, 219)!

Be holy (XV, 50).

Sanctify in order to save and save in order to sanctify (VIII, 219).

Holiness is not only possible; it is obligatory for all (VIII, 221).

Pleasure is more effective than duty in moving our will (VIII, 228).

Never do anything that cannot be accounted for (XI, 20).

Never consider only the outward appearance of things and people (XI, 20).

Happiness always follows a perfect act (VIII, 2234).

Please God; be of help to your neighbor (XV, 154).

In every sphere of activities, men feel the need to come together in order to reach their common goals (VIII, 262).

Every good always tends to spread itself to others, in order to unite them (VIII, 262).

Selfishness is essentially repulsive (VIII, 264).

Only the saints are really logical [in their thinking and acting] (X, 67).

Reparation must precede any other form of prayer (X, 67).

Hate is essentially dispersive (VIII, 264).

We were created to be loved (X, 24).

God alone in place of the "I" (X, 37).

Haste indicates that we have other purposes besides God (X, 38).

Renounce great things; hold on to the humble ones (X, 58).

Stop presuming what is extraordinary, be content with what is ordinary (X, 58).

The first and best to God with us (X, 1219)!

You are not God

The Congregation is not the Church.

The miracle is not routine (XI, 46).

Eliminate all unnecessary things.

Receive and zeal Holy Communion daily.

Form the family of souls to bring to Jesus (XI, 219).

Giving God only what is mandatory under pain of mortal sin is eternal damnation (XXVI, 87).

Be content with fragments! Expect patiently the total entity only from the inventor of the host (XIV, 130).

Now everything has to be spirit and life and therefore immortal (XIV, 130).

Every word is obscure unless it is an expression of the heart (XIV, 145).

CHAPTER XVIII

Holiness

Holiness is possible and necessary for all (XI, 219).

Holiness is the only living and true heroism. Divine heroism is needed to train to the most authentic and most sublime holiness, which is the formation of Jesus in us, and the continuation of his work through us (XXV, 210).

In order to become saints we do not need to know the profound and complete thought of God about our creation and our vocation. It is enough for us to know that he loves us and that our creation and vocation is the work of his immense love for us. Then, according to the knowledge that God apportions little by little, we will correspond to his enlightenments: it is enough to let ourselves be led by the will of God (XXVI, 239).

Each divine vocation to life and faith is only the beginning of the call to holiness, to divine union with the august Trinity (XXV, 23).

Holiness is the universal commandment expressed in the commandment to love God and neighbor (XXV, 27).

The General program of the Apostleship of Universal Sanctification is to let everyone know the essence and the requirement of holiness: to transmit to all the vocation and mission to holiness and to bring all to make good use of the means and to receive well the graces of holiness (XXV, 34-35).

CHAPTER XIX

Personal Sanctification

Anyone who really progresses in personal holiness will find himself at the head of other souls (I, 311).

Sacramentalize everything with the pious symbolism of the sign of the cross and the invocation of the holy names (XXII, 81).

We shall be cooperators of the Holy Spirit in universal sanctification, through universal consolation, as the consoling God is also the sanctifying God (I, 302).

Everyone should have for his room and for his body the same care that he has for the temple and religious worship. They are both considered as another temple of the Lord, who is present in them in a special way (I, 135).

The personal holiness of the Apostle and sanctification, which is the work of the apostolate, consists in forming Jesus in us and in our brothers (I, 282).

My personal sanctification is what I have to seek and attend to, always and everywhere (I, 223).

All those who are in this world, even though they may be violated, are always besieged by grace and thus do not only have good moments but all the possibilities of sanctification (V, 75).

We can be sure that in everything our Lord aims at our personal sanctification rather than at the success of our external works. We need to convince others that the only real happy success of any work in the Church and in the world consists in the personal sanctification of individuals. Where there is no such sanctification everything is disintegration, ruin and misery (XVI, 431).

We must concentrate on the present with all our energies, without scattering them throughout the past and the future (XXII, 94).

Each saint's life helps us to know Jesus better, because it is at the same time a page of the life of Christ, who lives in his saints (VIII, 185).

The habit of doing everything against our own personal taste, save always our duty and more perfect acts, is for us the greatest guarantee against every mortal and deliberate venial sin. It is also what is closer to and resembles the exceptional grace of confirmation in grace (XI, 227).

Everyone should want to save himself as a saint, and wish and provide to every soul the means to be saved as a saint as well (XXII, 100).

The divine word *Pax vobis - peace be with you* resounds on the second and internal chaos of the abyss of the heart. With the infusion of divine peace begins the work of the interior sanctification of the new man (I, 205).

We should attend with full awareness to the purpose of each action, in order to actually intend the greatest complacency of the Lord (XXII, 94).

As a religious you strive for perfection. As a religious pastor

you have to make it possible for all souls entrusted to you that they tend to perfection (XV, 374).

If everyone, on his own, becomes a saint and fulfills his duties well, everything will be better (XVI, 284).

CHAPTER XX

Universal Sanctification

The work of the Holy Church is universal sanctification (XXVI, 83).

The Lord gives to those who love him a divine thirst and a flame of love for universal sanctification (I, 311).

The work of universal sanctification requires the collaboration of many, of everybody, because everyone must correspond to divine love, and therefore, in addition to the Vocationists, the Sodality of the Divine Union (SUD) must always arouse and organize multitudes of consecrated people that live in the world (XXV, 55).

In the human person the life-will is the created source of all power, the principle of every act and the secondary cause of each state, even though the life-will needs to be lit and turned on (III, 115).

I will stand firm and maintain constant my “no” only when confronting sin (I, 265).

Every soul that comes into this world must be a saint. How true it is that the soul was created in the image and likeness of God (IX, 99)!

Whatever the human person really possesses is contained in

free will, is acquired by free will. The person possesses and acquires things only and always by free will, even while accepting and receiving it from others. The essence of the soul is summed up and culminates in free will and in freedom (IV, 70).

The fundamental, central and essential act of my free will is the choice; it is the election that I always do when it comes to living, moving and acting among all created and relative goods. In front of the uncreated and absolute good, I cannot choose, because he is only one (IV, 86).

We are not afraid to ask too much of souls, we are not afraid to push them too high! They are all made for Jesus; they must save themselves as saints (XV, 374).

The Lord wants the salvation and sanctification of the world through you, person by person, individual by individual, of each and every person, one by one, really all of them, all, no one excluded (VI, 381).

Each divine person does not want to lose any soul because she is the image and likeness, the living and personal gift of the other divine person (III, 225).

Sanctification and consolation go hand in hand, one equals the other: they are in direct proportion, both in the Christian concept and in the spiritual reality (I, 302).

In harmony we find so much strength for conciliation and edification that wounding and losing it equals renouncing the work of universal sanctification (I, 281).

My personal salvation is directed to the salvation and sanctification of others (VI, 381).

The Servant of the Saints, in order to effectively work for uni-

versal sanctification, must conquer to the religious principles, one by one all the families of the parish in which he resides (I, 296).

We must regain all Christians, soul-by-soul, family-by-family in order to bring them all back to the Lord, so that they may live his life, not only bear his name and sit at his table (XXVI, 84).

Observe the most absolute silence about what is personal or of the Congregation, both in the internal and external order (XI, 48).

The Sodality of Divine Union is the completion of our work! We need it in order to work efficiently for Universal Sanctification. Every religious should become a true missionary of this Sodality, and thus form a people of saints to be presented to the Lord (XIV, 340).

CHAPTER XXI

Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the continuous trainer and inspirer of the life of Jesus, and likewise he must be our inspirer, because we are members of Jesus. On our part, we must surrender to the Holy Spirit and let him animate us until we reach the fullness of incorporation with Jesus and the perfection of supernatural life in Christ Jesus (V, 39).

The Spirit of prayer is the very life of our relationship of love with the three divine persons. Our relationship of love must be constantly corresponded to, expressed, nurtured and lived (V, 47).

The Holy Spirit, which is called and is a gift, makes of us a gift of the Father to the Son and a gift of the Son to the Father (V, 50).

The Holy Spirit living in you is the infinite adoration of love of the Holy Trinity for you and in you (XI, 245).

Do not lose heart on account of difficulties. Cultivate intensely the spiritual part and you will see how everything flourishes at the breath of the Holy Spirit (XIX, 191).

CHAPTER XXII

Life

According to the Gospel our life is like a big party and wedding banquet to which all are called by God (IX, 88).

We can consider our lives in a threefold function, or in three ways, namely in our relation with God [*liturgy*], in our relation with ourselves [*asceticism*], in relation with our neighbors [*ministry*] (VII, 228).

The present life is always and in everything essentially militant. It requires that we be constantly awake, ready to fight, constantly vigilant and in readiness for battle (IX, 135).

Our whole life should be a continuous celebration of holy love for the Lord (XV, 35).

Pain and death come with sin. Jesus Christ destroys sin, comforts pain and brings us to life (X, 169).

In all and above all we see life as a rendezvous of the soul with the divine lover (IX, 21).

Every life, if it is full, overflows into other lives. The divine life overflowing creates the universe (V, 51).

We need to reach such a level of divine life that even in our

present life, without effort, we may reveal Jesus Christ, because every human life must be an epiphany of Jesus (V, 54).

Life is a long and great journey from earth to heaven, through seas, deserts, cities, valleys, plateaus, etc. and we must travel it to the end (V, 241).

In disorder and division there is weakness, slavery and death (IX, 48).

In order and union there is strength, freedom and life (IX, 48).

Life is a great work to be accomplished and then presented on the Sabbath to the divine artist, who will reward it if satisfied with the work performed; and punish for the unfinished and imperfect work. And the Sabbath is the day of death (V, 242).

Life is a battle to be fought against many unseen, and many times also visible enemies. This battle will decide your eternal fate and that of many other souls (V, 242).

CHAPTER XXIII

Religious Life

We want to possess God ever more and to be likewise possessed by him through the essential practice of religious life, which consists in doing, suffering, praying every moment for what we know in conscience to be of greater honor and complacency for the Lord God (V, 163).

Religious life is the supreme act of love, so much so as to be considered a second baptism (XXVI, 232).

In the soul consecrated to the Lord, there can be no voluntary offense to God, not even a venial fault, because, when it comes to offenses to the Lord there can be no distinction between small and big sin. We speak of souls that we suppose already purified and in the illuminative life, and tending to divine union: this is the ordinary condition of consecrated people (XXVI, 265).

We must burn with zeal and make sure that everyone knows and esteems religious life. We want to work with the elect of the divine vocations so that they may desire and embrace religious life (XXII, 82).

You will not be able to make the proud humble using with them methods that have pride in form and perhaps even in substance. Pride is overcome with holy humility (X, 103-104).

Religious life is a state of perfection, a non-ordinary state of

grace; it's like a perpetual sacrament because in it the soul is always in progress toward sanctification. Every moment the religious has some duty to be performed in the external and interior life and fulfilling that duty immediately increases, or causes to be given him, the grace to advance in perfection according to his state. Failing in that duty he does not receive that grace and slides backward (XVI, 468).

CHAPTER XXIV

Spiritual Life

Our spiritual life's journey, considered in the supernatural world of the relationship with God, goes from God-principle to God-end and from God-end to God-principle. Considered in the world of the supernatural relationship with the universe and with others, our spiritual journey goes from God-center to the periphery-creature, and from the periphery-creature to the center-God (IX, 41).

Our supernatural life is a journey, and so it must be lived wholly on the go (V, 261).

The spirit of goodness leads us to be open and united to all, in full confidence (I, 317).

Neither I, nor others, could desire for us a greater good than what you, [Lord], want for us (III, 73).

The fact that the three divine persons communicate, *ad extra*, freely such a great participation of their divine nature, and that they unite themselves in so many different ways to the soul is a sign that they want to make the soul a great, wonderful reality. I can have an idea of it only by thinking and accepting as a fourth divine relationship, not *ad intra*, but *ad extra* of the Trinity. This fourth relationship that I conceive is not necessary, but free. It is not a relation of nature but of grace. Yet it is a real and true

relationship, a fourth divine-human relationship with the human soul (IV, 33).

The most needed and most effective way to avoid mortal sin is to fight every venial sin.

The most needed and most effective way to avoid venial sin is to fight against every unnecessary thing in the internal and external world. Sin finds its way only in what is futile. (IV, 204)

Only the Christian hero is the witness of Jesus, the carrier, revealer and continuator of Jesus to the nations (I, 279).

There is nothing too hard in spiritual life, because even the most difficult things really are made smooth and easy by love. There is nothing too easy in spiritual life, because even the simplest things become really difficult if you want to do them perfectly; they become extremely precious if done with great love (VI, 290).

The whole supernatural life is substantially a nuptial relationship of love with the Lord. This nuptial relationship goes from an initial rendezvous through an undefined and indefinable series of progressive engagements toward its blessed goal (III, 221).

The past is never divine, because in God there is no past. The future is never divine, because in God there is no future. Only the present is divine (II, 108).

The love-God joined together matter and spirit in vital union and made man (III, 330).

Supernatural life is essentially a life of religion. Religion is essentially a life of relationships with God (XXVI, 115).

Mediocrity does not need the help of a guide because it does

not want to walk, much less to reach the summit. God is the Most High and lives in the highest heights (XIX, 304).

Everything that upsets and discourages you comes from Satan and therefore is a lie. God is light and love and he is one who only brightens, fires, and revives us (XIX, 321).

CHAPTER XXV

The Will

The will necessarily tends to become one with the absolute good, God in the Holy Spirit (III, 116).

Our dominant spiritual disease is the weakness of our will: thus, we need the continued bolstering of energy and training exercises to reinvigorate it (V, 241).

The weakness of our will is caused by the lack of strong convictions. We need great ideas, bright enough to be able to inflame, enthuse, conquer and enrapture us They must be capable of shaking up and moving our will to implement them (V, 241).

Nothing happens by chance when it comes to hearing the divine words. Not even in our conduct does anything happen by chance, in the sense that it is wanted or ordered or permitted by God. This is much more true in the actions and in the *direct words of God*¹ (V, 150).

The express resolve never more to offend the Lord, reveals, confirms and strengthens the good will to sin no more (IX, 172).

¹ The *direct Words of God* are those words of Scripture reported as *quotation* of the very words of God; they are objects of the daily meditation for the Vocationist Fathers and Sisters. From among direct words of God, we have a special veneration and attention for the *divine imperatives*.

In the human person the life-will is the creating power of every faculty, the principle of every act and the secondary cause of each status, even though it needs to be illuminated and activated (III, 115).

Every satisfaction of your will pushes you out of the divine circulation of the Spirit in the Father and in the Son. Each abnegation of your will places you back on track and carries you into the circulation of the divinity, charity and Trinity (X, 95).

Every need and desire of supernatural things or enterprises is first the will of God and then my need or desire (X, 158).

Discipline does no violence to the will, but rather strengthens and frees it from bad habits (XXV, 241).

Our will is more efficaciously moved by pleasure than by duty (VIII, 228).

CHAPTER XXVI

The Will of God

The manifestations of the divine will are the frame of my building, the backbone of my life, the rail and carriage of my journey. Everything has to comply with them, be subordinated and conformed to them (III, 71).

Only what deviates from the divine will is evil (X, 21).

The only good, in and of itself in all things, is God's will (X, 21).

Whenever I do my own will and not the will of God somehow I stain my soul (III, 80).

God's will, in general, is present only conditionally, and at times only passively, in what is antagonistic, sad or painful. It means that, properly and directly, it is not God's will (V, 231).

The will of God is all life, joy and Paradise; it's all Father, Son and Holy Spirit, all glory and infinite love (V, 232).

If properly understood and fulfilled by us, the will of God becomes the glorification of the whole person, mind and heart, body and soul, in eternity and in time, (V, 232).

The will of God is seen more easily in all happy, joyful, bright,

life giving, beautiful, big and enjoyable things. They more readily give us the idea of God's will that aims at the absolute and infinite good (V, 233).

Sadly, we are all inclined to judge that what we think is always the best and what others think is always lacking in something. On the contrary, we must convince ourselves that what we do on our own usually does not conform to God's will. What is ordered by the precepts of the Church and by our superiors, what is requested by our neighbor or just happens in various circumstances is certainly the will of God (XXVI, 240).

The will of God is not an imposition to which we must resign ourselves by necessity, but the food with which we nourish ourselves. We should desire God's will as we desire and assimilate food (VI, 367).

All that is said or done to me, all that happens to me independently of my will is predisposed and wanted by the will of God for me (II, 334).

I intend and want to see, embrace and fulfill God's will in every event (II, 60).

My will is for me the will that least reflects and repeats the will of God and that most opposes and would like to preclude it (II, 336).

If I make mine your will in everything, O God, I will have all your perfections of holiness. I will be really transformed, deified and found worthy of your complacency (XXVI, 21).

O will of God, be my will (XXVI, 22).

All that is said and done to me, all that is asked from me or given to me, without my will, is God's will for me (IX, 265).

CHAPTER XXVII

Vocation

With you, for you, in you, O Jesus, I embrace this cross of fire that is the work of divine vocations¹, with all the struggles against the difficulty of detachment from the world and from families, with all the bitterness of misunderstanding and lack of correspondence by those who should correspond to it. I embrace all the agonies of infidelity and betrayal of candidates endowed with divine vocations (XX, 365).

In a general sense, everything in the world is divine vocation: vocation to life, vocation to faith and vocation to holiness. Every being and every status worthy of a human being corresponds to a divine vocation (IX, 81).

In the world of intelligent and free beings, their status will be worthy of their rank, and their work will be worthy of their sta-

¹ Blessed Fr. Justin sees life as a vocation and he feels that only those who discover and follow their calling in life, are the ones that will completely and happily live their life and achieve their fullest potential. People need help to discover and follow their vocation, especially the universal vocation to holiness, and to help people especially in this endeavor, he founded the Vocationist Fathers and Vocationist Sisters, two religious congregations founded to search, cultivate and form vocations to the priesthood and to religious life especially among the less privileged, so that in turn they may help all people to become saints.

tus, only when they understand and willingly follow their divine vocation (IX, 81).

The vocation to the priesthood was established by God for the service of all other vocations and therefore, by its nature, contains them all, but it is not contained by any of them, by their very nature (IX, 82).

The vocation to holiness is general. It is extended to all those who are called to life, and much more to all those who are called to faith. The vocation to holiness is remotely extended to all human beings and proximately to all faithful (IX, 96-97).

The person, who has received the gift of vocation and has endeavored to follow it, can expect to reach its goal.

The person who has made perpetual profession may feel that she has reached the goal and that can enter in a sense of quiet and relaxation. Such a feeling should be shaken off because it is false and imperfect. It is repugnant to our status of constant progress, of anticipation, of ascension (XXVI, 375).

Only God is the creator of souls, the mentor of the saints, the author of vocations (XXVI, 333).

The man who remains united to God, and faithfully imitates him, and who is inspired and moved by God, is the only one that can usefully collaborate with him in the education of divine vocations and the in the formation of the saints of the Lord (I, 333).

My special vocation is to focus on God Trinity with all the tenderness of the human heart, O God Man! O Lord Jesus (XXVI, 152).

Not once but perpetually you have called me from nothingness

to life, from among the living to faith, from among the Christians to a religious life of ever greater holiness (II, 232).

The greatest need of souls and therefore the greatest service that we can render to them is providing them with good religious and holy priests (I, 291).

Worship and apostolate, researching and serving divine vocations to the diocesan and religious clergy remains always the central and main work of *The Servant of the Saints* (I, 291).

I constantly hear within me the divine vocation to a never-ending conversion to my progressive ascension and to a consummate union (II, 233).

I recognize in my vocation a proof of the adorable predilection of the ineffable esteem that the Lord has for me, among *possibles*, among the living, among Christians (II, 232).

I will prepare every Christian family to welcome the vocation of their children to a state of perfection; to nurture for the Church those who have been called to the priesthood and to religious life (I, 297).

Spread the knowledge, appreciation and love for vocations to consecrated life and to the various religious families, without ever speaking explicitly of our Congregation (I, 322).

Vocation is a mystery and reserved exclusively to God. There is a canonical vocation to the priesthood, but apart from this, every other vocation is reserved to God, in the sense that he uses as his messengers those whom he wants (V, 150).

I must absolutely abstain from any bitter word or reproach in the presence of others. Any correction must be done always in

private, and must be serious, kind and firm, in imitation of God. This must be our ascetic-pedagogical method with all those who commit little or grievous transgressions (X, 121).

Every man when has reached a certain age and maturity is naturally or connaturally a father and a teacher. Every priest and religious should be placed at the head of a family and a school of souls (X, 129).

We want to use a lot of fraternal charity with all its internal and external sweetness toward every soul, but especially toward those who live in community, much more than toward those who live in the family. I must practice, radiate and inculcate this charity to the Vocationists, both for their edification and their apostolate (X, 203).

Theocentric [God-centered], not anthropocentric [man-centered]: everything from God, everything to God, everything for God Trinity. Such are we Vocationists [S. D. V.] (X, 132).

The worldly environment is not favorable but deadly to the culture of vocation (XXV, 89).

He who prays certainly saves his vocation; he who does not pray certainly loses it XXV, 196).

If you are aware of your vocation, there is no reason that could count against it (XIV, 359).

My God, grant that none of those you have given me or that you will entrust to me may be lost (XX, 365).

CHAPTER XXVIII

Vocationistality¹

The mystery of the Ascension of Jesus does not have a religious order of its own. It will be ours² (X, 48)!

Every night you have to dictate the points of meditation for the next morning and every morning you must guide the meditation orally, in addition to the more elaborate and more Gospel oriented weekly exhortations. Thus you'll be a good Vocationist who, as you know, has the duty of preaching daily (XV, 251).

If you knew, my dear, what a beautiful cross awaits us! Ours is a cross of fire. Like that of the Sacred Heart, it brings fire (XVI, 253)!

Every Vocationist should distinguish himself for the nobility of traits worthy of our vocation; every word and action of ours should emanate a sweet scent of kindness, civility, nobility, as the best expression and fulfillment of every virtue (XVI, 325).

¹ *Vocationistality* is a new word and expresses all the characteristics of the Vocationist life, spirit and ministry.

² During the long and difficult procedure for the pontifical approbation of the Congregation, some of the consulters in Rome had difficulties in accepting the name "*Vocationist*" and on that occasion Fr. Justin informed the Congregation for the Religious that he was willing to change the name from *Vocationists* to *Ascensionists*, if this would solve their difficulties. The difficulties were solved and it was not necessary to change the name.

The Vocationists form a special religious family. It is a synthesis of all the others but it contains many different elements from the others, and with many more spiritual forces than the others ... Every sum is greater than its addends, and each line is longer than its segments (XVI, 254).

The basis of our spirituality, of our life and teaching is: the *Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram* - *Let us make man in our image and likeness* (X, 149).

We find in the word *Ascension* all the great things that we wanted to propose to ourselves and to others (they were overshadowed in the name: *Servants of the Saints*) (X, 48-49).

The work of the Holy Spirit is universal sanctification. The work of sanctification needs the clergy. There is no Clergy without vocations and there are no vocations without seminaries. At the service of all and in all there is the very small Society of Divine Vocations and its Vocationaries³ (VIII, 25).

The whole religious life of the *Servant of the Saints* consists in the ever more faithful observance of the vow of charity (X, 32).

If the priest does not generate other priests, if the member of a religious family does not generate other religious, if everyone does not produce his specific fruit, which is essentially the reproduction of himself, he is a sterile plant (cfr. VIII, 26).

Oh, the ring and the kiss of divine union! Here it is: your ring is the Holy Spirit; your kiss is the Holy Spirit. This is the ring and

³ *Vocationary*, from "Vocation" is a place where vocations are cared for. It is another word invented by Fr. Justin, to indicate the Vocationists houses of formation for future priests and all the residences of the Vocationist Fathers.

the kiss that the Most Holy Trinity gives you. This is also true for every Vocationist and for every soul through the Vocationists (X, 139).

O Lord, you willed the synthesis of all the holy works of all religious families, of all Christian schools of asceticism, the synthesis of all the vocations and of all missions, the synthesis of all functions, of all inspirations, of all directions and of all relationships: The Society of divine Vocations (IX, 34)!

The beneficence most expressive of the Vocationist identity consists in the informal ministry of the edifying example and word (XXII, 11).

In the Congregation, we consider the admission to the novitiate as the conception, the first profession as the nativity and the perpetual vows as the marriage with the Congregation, our mother and spouse (see IX, 286).

Our religious emblem should be like the seal of the divine Unity and Trinity in our houses, upon our persons and in all our affairs (XXII, 364).

S. Raphael is the archangel of SDV for his greeting GAUDIUM⁴ and his nuptial mission (X, 196).

United by filial and nuptial ties with the Congregation, within the holy Church, the Holy Family and the blessed Trinity, we feel the need more than the duty to persevere and progress in esteem for its goal, its means and its works (IX, 287).

⁴ GAUDIUM is the Latin word for “joy”, one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. As an acronym, G.A.U.D.I.U.M is the motto-program of the Society of Divine Vocations and it stands for: “Gloria, amor, voluntas Dei in universo mundo” - *Glory, love and will of God in the whole world.*

Esteem will perpetually nurture supernatural love for our Congregation (IX, 287).

Before the entire world, in all circumstances, and with all saintly argumentations [every Vocationist] constitutes himself as an ardent defender and promoter of the Congregation. He must aim to universalize its life of prayer, especially the Offertory, and to establish a house in every corner of the world, and to compel all the souls to join the spheres of *The Divine Union* (our external association) (IX, 287-288).

Each Vocationist residence must be a large library, a study hall (X, 174).

Our religious Congregation should be a bed of lilies in which the beloved can be well pleased; it should be a host of angels among which the beloved is glorified; a bevy of Godlike virgins amongst whom the beloved finds his delight (IX, 294).

What will become of each one of our religious? What will become of the Congregation? He says: "*I am its guarantor*" (X, 207).

The S.D.V. is the Zion of today and forever, the heir of all the promises and the actualization of all the prophecies of consolation and union with God (XI, 20).

When it comes to glory, love and will of the Triune God:
All that I can do, I must do.
All that I must do, I want to do.
All that I want to do ... is done (IX, 34).

The Vocationist should be a very studious scholar of the highest order, a finder, devourer of every beautiful holy book, an auditor and assimilator of every good teacher. He immerses himself increasingly in the light of theology in order not to lose any ray

of truth. Thus he will increasingly esteem God in all his divine perfections and operations, experiencing, in himself and in others how true it is that in every loving heart, theology burns like holy fire (IX, 215).

*The Congregation of Divine Vocations to the divine union shall survive and fill the universe of God's glory and human happiness*⁵ (XI, 41).

My God and my All, this family was born, this people has begun! Now some want to destroy, or at least maim it. Please, do not allow it (XI, 42).

The lover of divine union is characterized by frequent withdrawals throughout the day, apart from everybody; and by frequent visits to the Sacrament of the altar, and yearns for the time allocated to silence so that he may be able to withdraw more intimately with God, since this is the whole spirit of and reason for religious silence; it is an exigency of the love of God and of the soul (IX, 207).

It is very good for you and for the work of the Congregation to live in this status of misunderstanding, oppositions, contradictions and humiliations. Excessive benevolence, kindness, protection and favors would hurt the soul; just as excessive light and heat would hurt the tender plants (XI, 192).

We have to use signs of honor with the greatest generosity, abundance and warmth, knowing that man needs more to be esteemed and honored than loved (IX, 275).

The Vocationary will make us live forever as real poor of Jesus Christ (IX, 348).

⁵This and other maxims reported in *italics* indicate inspirations reported by Fr. Justin exactly as were perceived, that is almost as direct words of God to him.

Regardless of how much the Vocationists may work and multiply, by themselves they will never be self sufficient in sustaining the Vocationary (IX, 348).

We would like that every hour and every place could see us constantly with a book in our hand. From the book in our hand, as a badge, we would love to be called: "*The People of the Book*" (VIII, 31).

The Vocationists will always live in the perpetual and profound humiliation of a male Congregation that is not self sufficient to sustain its works, but is sustained and nurtured by the Vocationist Sisters. The Vocationist Fathers are like servants, teachers, hired by the Sisters, mothers and sisters of vocations, to manage their Vocationaries. The Vocationaries must be considered as belonging to the Vocationist Sisters (IX, 348).

The preaching of the Vocationist is all light of truth, as an image of the Word and the Spirit (X, 169).

If we do not answer the routine complaints, comments, criticism, wishes etc. of the Sisters we render them a greater benefit, simply by changing the topic and elevating upward our conversation, universalizing and bypassing their small problems, pains, troubles, needs, etc. (X, 80).

The *Sodality of Divine Union*⁶ embraces the entire world, with its center and epicenter, with its spheres and constellations It is our main work and field of action. He, who does not have a mind and heart big enough to embrace the whole world with divine union

⁶ *Sodality of Divine Vocations* is an organization instituted by Fr. Justin; it consists of Vocationist Fathers and Sisters, the Lay Institute of the consecrated in the world, and an army of volunteers spread throughout different spheres and constellations, all committed to promote universal sanctification.

and does not act as a lever to lift up the world to divine union, is not a Vocationist (X, 254).

I will make a covenant with you! This is said in truth to every Vocationist. The Lord wants him to be like the head of a new people of souls, through his college of the twelve, the seventy-two⁷, of the twelve thousand sealed⁸. The Vocationist should prepare an ark of salvation from the flood of the spirit of the world and of evil (X, 262).

I feel the need to have before me the sign and emblem of the Congregation as sun for my soul in this twilight and desert (XI, 119).

It is very good that you grow in love and esteem for the Congregation, which for us is mother, heaven and everything. The Lord has decided to celebrate in the Congregation his encounter and divine mission with our soul (XIV, 328).

Any other work may be taken away, but that for vocations and divine union will remain forever. The Congregation has chosen the better part, which no one can take ever (X, 290).

That bishop said: cement of the Congregation is Justin. Our true cement is the blood of Jesus Christ. Justin will die and the

⁷ Following the example of Jesus, every Vocationist should form to holiness and ministry the group of the 12 apostles (candidates to the priesthood and religious life) and of 72 disciples (people consecrated in the world and lay ministers) through spiritual direction, special instructions, retreats etc.

⁸ Cfr. Rv 7, 2-14. Twelve thousand from each tribe of Israel were marked *with the seal on their foreheads*. It expresses the totality of salvation extended to all people. Fr. Justin reminds his Vocationists of the obligation to work for universal sanctification.

congregation may be dissolved. But in the blood of Jesus will remain the Congregation of saints (X, 292).

The Congregation was born from the vow of love⁹ and in that vow of love will always find its increase (X, 2993).

Our spirit is the spirit of the bride of God and therefore of the queen of the universe and the mother of souls (X, 294).

The expression “*all ours*” means explicitly the Vocationist Fathers and Sisters, the consecrated in community and in the world, the congregated and aggregated, and those in any manner or degree associated, benefactors and protectors. It means all individuals collectively and individually (XI, 132).

I see the holy Church as the rose of the Lord. The corolla, formed by every petal, consists of all religious families. At the center, in the heart, there is our religious family, from which originates the seed for a perennial blooming of the rose (XI, 231).

I was made to understand, and strongly feel that the research and formation of *external religious* [the consecrated that live in the world] is *aeque principalis* – *equally important* as our work for vocations (XI, 232).

[A young man who leaves the community] when he has not been expelled, should be told that he could always come back. We may even tell him that we send him on a leave and that we will

⁹ On the day of his priestly ordination (September 20, 1914) Fr. Justin made this Vow of Charity in the third degree, committing himself to do in everything what he understood to be of greatest glory to God. Another way to understand this vow is expressed by Fr. Justin in these words: “To do anything, to suffer anything, even death in order to avoid any voluntary imperfection”.

be waiting for him every day. So let us surround him of charity to the end (XV, 364).

The need of the Congregation is especially this: *“that you personally become a saint in it”*; the rest will follow by itself (XIV, 335).

May your divine blessing and your divine protection, O adorable Trinity, make this Society of Divine Vocations to divine ascension toward divine union with you, worthy of your predilections and complacence, and as your tabernacle in the Militant Church, your throne in the Triumphant Church and your instrument in the work of universal sanctification (XX, 278).

CHAPTER XXIX

Abnegation

The more we grow in love, the more generously we deprive ourselves of what we have and make of it a gift to Jesus in his Church, to his altars, to his ministers, to his poor, to his works and for his kingdom (IX, 205).

I should live my life being oblivious of my own health, my own interests, my own future and career (I, 188).

We attain all the victories of purity, humility, charity, justice, fortitude and prudence and of every Christian virtue with the abnegation of the will (I, 218).

The practice of abnegation and universal mortification is essential for anyone who wants to be introduced to the ways of divine union, for anyone who wants to get closer and unite himself to Jesus Christ (V, 144).

One who is attached to anything, or to any person cannot freely unite himself to his God. He could become idolater to the point of thinking that the Lord God is all and only in that thing, that person ... he the inaccessible, the uncontainable, the infinite (V, 257).

One who is tied cannot walk, and therefore cannot follow. And Jesus wants us to follow him, which means that he walks (V, 257-258).

It is not enough to detach ourselves from many things and many people; it is essential that we detach ourselves from everything and every creature (V, 258).

Even if tied by a very thin thread, a bird cannot fly unless that thread is broken (V, 258).

The creature to which we are most tenaciously attached is our very self, and not so much our body as our own personality (V, 258-59).

The creature that most impedes our freedom of movement, our great desires and progress, is our own person, our exaggerated, morbid self-centeredness (V, 259).

Turning away from things, from our own self, down to the deepest forms, is a means, the primary means to unite ourselves to the Lord, otherwise it would not be worth it to make our nature, our soul and our heart suffer so much (XXVI 366).

Do not do anything directly for pleasure, neither of the senses, nor of the heart, nor the mind! The created pleasure is always and only a means that should never be understood for itself, for itself alone (X, 148).

The detachment of the heart from every creature, the renunciation of the heart to everything, the abnegation of the self in all its obstinacy and caprice, in all its weakness and laziness, in all its sensuality and vanity, in all its complacency and discouragement, in all its insubordination and wavering is an indispensable condition, because everyone who is tied up, cannot walk (XXV, 188).

Avoid any external singularity, except doing with utmost perfection ordinary and common things (XXII, 123).

CHAPTER XXX

Apostolate

The apostolate is nothing but a flame of love and fertility of love (V, 116).

To be an apostle for the soul one must first be a Seraphim for God (VIII, 145).

Only love produces. Wherever there is love there is fertility. Where there is no love there can be a lot of noise, a lot of confusion, a lot of external outgrowth, but there is no true fertility and production of holy works (V, 116).

Spread near and far all that is good as you learn and practice it (XXII, 337).

For the purposes of the apostolate, assimilate all the most sound and approved modern tools, avoiding falling into what is antiquated and formalist (XXII, 129).

Any form of apostolate should be such as to be called liturgy, on account of its goal, because it tends to lead all souls to divine worship (VII, 34).

Form a family of souls to bring to Jesus, especially among young people (XXII, 337).

The young man who is preparing for the apostolate should

also exercise the apostolate. Intellectual training is not enough. The moral formation of virtues is also necessary; both must be combined with practical and apostolic training, with at least the initial exercise of the various works that he will have to exercise tomorrow (I, 286).

The only Savior of men intends to make us through him glorifiers of the Father and that is the liturgy. He wants us to become with him saviors of souls, and that's the apostolate. In a special way he wants to make us with him sons of God, heirs of heaven, and that's asceticism (XXVI, 117).

The hunger and thirst for souls, the practice truly seraphic of apostolate is the first way to escape from our own self. That is why all true saints are apostles. All (XXVI, 78)!

Piety is the secret to success in every apostolate (VII, 121).

All the good that we have, we must also give. All the good that we know, we must also teach. All the good that we do we must also encourage others to do (I, 286).

We can cooperate directly in the search and the siege of sinners. There [you, Lord] wait and call to unite us, with all the grace and apostolate (III, 251).

When we cannot assist well the souls entrusted to us, on account of extrinsic necessity, it is a sign that the Lord wants to do more by himself than through us (XVI, 256).

Every soul is in itself a vast field, a world of work, to occupy fully and with dignity, a minister of the Lord, who wants to cultivate an intense spiritual formation in it (I, 318).

The residence of the *Servant of the Saints* in our parishes should

be at the same time, cloister for the religious, home for the clergy and a coterie of vocations, an office for the people, a dispensary of light and consolation, the heart of the parish (I, 295).

Spread and entrench the conviction of the religiosity of the marital status, on account of the great sacrament that raises to the supernatural all duties of marriage (I, 296).

Conquer to the ideal religiosity those people who in any degree have authority and influence over others, such as masters, teachers, supervisors, nobles and those well-educated, anywhere but especially in small towns (I, 298).

The recollection of the apostle consists in opening the heart and mind of souls, to come to Jesus (V, 80).

When Jesus is the center of attraction, then recollection consists in broadening the scope of our activities as much as possible, not restricting them to us (V, 80).

It is no wonder that wherever we are with the Savior, wherever we have to do with Jesus, souls come to us and come to us to find salvation and redemption (V, 84).

The needs of the souls are immense, it is not enough to just provide somehow. We have to provide in all the best and possible ways (VII, 53).

The needs of souls are perpetual; it is not enough just to provide once. We must provide for their needs always and repeatedly (VII, 53).

Begin an extraordinary catechetical mission. Catechism and catechesis, catechesis and catechisms endlessly (XVI, 232)!

What I like most in you is your desire to preach every morning. You have to do it (XVI, 232).

A good word said at the proper time and place for good works counts much more than great alms that are also so good (V, 108).

Jesus loves the neighbor not according to his current state but in this ideal state, i.e. with the holiness that he wants, expects and desires that every soul reach. Since he wants that every soul should reach a very high perfection, he makes use of all that surrounds him, of all the means at his disposal to make sure that the soul attains the place that he has prepared for it (XXVI, 207).

With all our efforts we will never truly understand the idea of God concerning the real good price of souls because only he knows their infinite worth and immense value (XXVI, 207).

It is so essential that goodness be diffusive, that we should not consider good what is not diffusive of itself. The same is true of every virtue (X, 194).

CHAPTER XXXI

Real Values

Only great actions are appropriate to the sons of the great. We are children of God! While on earth we dedicate ourselves to manual work, when required by the Father's interests. With our souls we sit among the angels, (oh, much better, among the three divine persons). In the temple of the soul, we listen to what they silently tell us in the solitude of the heart: *Speak, Lord* (VI, 240).

Divert your attention not only from all that is illegal or harmful, but also from everything that is simply superfluous and vain. Concentrate only just enough on everything that is necessary or convenient in temporal and sensitive affairs (V, 274).

My major deficiency is the lack of loving vision of the divine presence, the lack of loving attention to God's word (V, 288).

The Lord delights in the soul that cultivates its talent of natural reason, perfects and ratifies it, lives and applies up to its ultimate consequence (XXVI, 121).

Only the saints are people capable of making true and profound use of their reason, logically consistent with the light of natural reason (XXVI, 121).

Those who apply themselves to the things of the Lord, but not directly to his love, are very much opposed and troubled, precisely so that they may be purified (V. 112).

I greet you in thought and in the plan of God or of the holy Catholic Church, kingdom of heaven on earth, and kingdom of God in heaven. You are my world, my country, O Holy Catholic Church, my mother (II, 153).

The Kingdom of God is the kingdom of love. The kingdom of love is in the intelligent creatures, both angelic and human, and in all other creatures in proportion to their capacity to correspond to love (XI, 225).

We should believe in the coming of the kingdom of God against all external difficulties (XXII, 107).

CHAPTER XXXII

Communion of the Saints

The common good, to which every superior must fully dedicate himself, is the triumph of the glory, love and will of the Triune God in the individual subjects entrusted to him, and through them, in all the world (I, 315).

From the person and work of the superior must shine and flow the supernatural on everything and on everyone, (I, 315)

When I feel suddenly sad, and examining myself do not find in me, or around me, the cause of my pain, there is someone who suffers within the Church and I am called to do something to alleviate that pain (II, 212).

The life of the head cannot flow into the body if the body is not well attached to the head. In the same body cannot flow normally and effectively if its members are not well jointed and linked to each other and with the head (VII, 233).

The Congregation of the Servants of Divine Vocations will reach its individual and social goal in proportion to its incorporation with the holy Church, the mystical body of Jesus (XXXIII, 18).

I told everybody what you told to me, O my Lord! That they should write to you a love letter every day, full of questions and that you will answer them always, o my love XXVI, 163!

The soul that bypassing the natural impulse of man, widens and intensifies its vast intentions, becomes like the representative of the mystical body of Jesus, so if it prays well and works well, it obtains great advantage for mankind, and if it does not do well, all humanity suffers (XXVI, 199).

Live and let live the communion of saints not only passively, but also actively and productively (XXII, 101).

When a sudden anxiety and apprehension darkens and freezes me, it tells me that some most cruel and decisive battle is taking place in some souls (II, 212).

When waves of joy soothe, exalt, enkindle new fervor within me and it is not really a sense of physical well-being or a sense of natural beauty, it is because some souls are singing of their victory, souls going from purgatory to heaven, angels rejoicing for the conversion of sinners and for the salvation of the dying. I perceive an echo of it (II, 213).

He who is not a true spiritual director is not a true shepherd of souls (IV, 123).

The sinner, who approaches a saint with good dispositions, either is no longer in sin or has begun to emerge from sin and can approach the holy of holies (V, 98).

God truly gives himself to us, with all his heart, not only in heaven, but also in this life (X, 65).

CHAPTER XXXIII

Spiritual Communion

Spiritual communion is communion of the body, blood, soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, received by means other than ordinary sacramental communion (VI, 267).

When our desire is directed to the Eucharistic Jesus, to Jesus as the God-Man, to Jesus as our Father and our sacrifice, it really and truly attracts him to our soul (VI, 268).

Spiritual Eucharistic Communion is communion with the body, blood, soul and divinity of our Lord, received in a way other than the ordinary sacramental Communion (XI 30).

The soul-member of Jesus' family, who marries his interests, becomes with him the head of the human family, the owner of all the assets of the heavenly home, and as such, together with Jesus, it becomes the one who reconnects man with God. In imitation of Jesus who is the head of the mystical body, it will transmit life to man (XXVI, 202).

Everyone should consider all the time dedicated to study and school as spiritual communion with the divine truth (I, 179).

Spiritual Eucharistic Communion is not simply a prayer, a pious practice, but a new event of a new reality in the soul that does it properly (XXVI, 15).

Union and communion are the supreme needs of goodness and love, they are in the very nature of goodness and love (VIII, 173).

CHAPTER XXXIV

Knowledge

Food of love is the knowledge of the beloved (IX 25).

From myself I will know the Lord! From what I am in nature, faculties, needs, freedom and person I will know for "*speculum et aenigma*" what God is, in his nature, perfections and relationships I will know his thoughts and desires, his needs, laws and delights (III, 266).

From what God is I will know what I must become ever more, what I must do ever better, how to go to him and join him (III, 266).

Knowing completely the beloved is the first way to possess the beloved totally (III. 266).

You must know yourself in order to perform the duty of the work of self-purification, elevation to God, imitation of Jesus (V, 235).

From everything we must rise to the knowledge of God, going from the effects to the first cause (V, 244).

Of all creatures the one that most reveals the Lord, in our present condition of mortal life, is man (V, 244).

We are created in the image and likeness of God, and this prin-

ciple entitles us to see something of the divine demands upon us from what we feel in ourselves (V, 245).

By the ideal of perfection that we would like to impose on others we know the ideal of perfection that we must be (V, 245).

From all the examples of the saints, or rather of Jesus living in the saints, we will draw as many clues to the travails and battles that we must undergo (V, 247)

From our personal likes and dislikes about others and ourselves, we will draw as many clues of ways and means to be used in our journey (V, 247).

In the plural “let us make” we find a revelation of the Trinity of Persons in God, and of the three divine relations of Father, Son and Spirit, which constitute and distinguish the three divine persons (V, 249).

In the divine words “in our image and likeness” we find not only the exemplary cause of man, but also the final cause of his creation (V, 249).

The light of the intellect enlightens the will, but once lit, the will expands, deepens and even elevates the intellect (IX, 75).

Let’s stand and walk. In this position we cannot see all that is below the head of our body without bending and, thus, without slowing down or stopping our march (V, 235).

By applying myself to the knowledge of God, I will also acquire the knowledge of myself (V, 236).

We first possess the beloved with the intellect, and then with the will (III, 266).

The friend and lover is limited and successive. He can never possess God as he is and in the way God wants to give himself and be united with him (III, 266).

The friend and lover must content himself with knowing God ever more and better, loving him more and better, possessing him more and better, enjoying him more and better, resembling him ever more and better, uniting himself to him ever better and better (III, 267).

All that I suffer from those who are dear to me is not only a cleansing of all superfluity of human affections but especially precious lessons (XXVI, 156).

The divine friend by means of the many forms of infidelity, rudeness, vulgarity of false friends reveals to you what you are to him (XXVI, 155).

We must acquire a profound knowledge of the letter, spirit and observance of the ecclesiastical-religious laws (XXII, 90).

Your willingness to be fully known by your superiors makes their monitoring easier (XXII, 90).

CHAPTER XXXV

Consecrations

I offer, consecrate and espouse all myself to you alone, all myself to you forever (XXIV, 366).

The way of love is the pathway of consecrations on the part of the soul and on the part of God. If everyone could understand how to every consecration and respective commitments that the Lord inspires in us, that precede and infallibly follow on God's part, corresponds a new way of belonging to the soul, of working in the soul ever greater effects of grace, everyone would willingly make his own all the consecrations of the saints, and would want his life to be a synthesis of all consecrations (IX, 222-223).

The blessed and holy consecrations mark the transition from the acts of love to higher, more intense and intimate heights of love, which in turn lead to more elevated consecrations (IX, 227).

Each consecration we do is a consecration that the Lord makes of us, while accepting our consecration (VI, 337).

Without a Consecration, as without a Mass, every Christian feast is like a stalk without a flower (I, 110).

Every consecration is both a forward impetus and a commitment to persevere in one's momentum (VI, 337).

There is no more sublime way than that devised by our S.D.V. (Society of Divine Vocations), that is called precisely the pathway of the consecrations, and that brings us from one feast to another, from consecration to consecration till the feast of the divine union (V, 164).

CHAPTER XXXVI

Consolation

If God subtracts any consolation from us, he does so only to give us greater and more pure consolations (X, 38).

The Holy Spirit consoles from within, the enemy consoles us from without (XI, 71).

Jesus comes to be our oblation and our treasure (X, 213).

O divine consolation! Never has a human lover, away from his friend, desired and appreciated a portrait of his love as the Lord God desires and appreciates the soul, living image and likeness of his Father, that belongs to me, as the Father belongs me, I embrace and kiss you eternally (X, 272).

Positively, I must want to comfort every pain of others, as soon as I come to know of it (XXII, 105).

Nurture great esteem and desire for divine consolation to bolster fortitude of spirit (XXII, 105).

CHAPTER XXXVII

Contemplation

If I want to arrive at mystical contemplation, I better start by getting used to natural contemplation (V, 56).

Contemplation creates love; love generates the desire and effort of imitation (XXVI, 60).

In our congregation contemplation prevails over action because in contemplation we actualize the divine union (XXV, 328).

He never ceases to call you. Answer always.

Look at him intently.

Remain for a long time with him.

His face will shine upon you.

Your heart will be taken, wounded and inflamed by him (X, 206).

The glory of the Lord is my place of origin.

The will of the Lord is my home.

The Lord's love is my native family (XI, 115).

Contemplation in action, and action for contemplation (XXIV, 345)!

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Optimism

Apply yourself to discover every possible fragment of truth in every error, and every bit of goodness in every evil (IX, 120).

Even when it seems that we are going up to Calvary, Jesus leads us to Tabor through the *Via Crucis - Way of the Cross*. Let us never be victims of distrust and discouragement for any difficulty, adversity or sickness of any kind (XVI, 320).

Never despair of the most perfect conversion of every sinner, of the most perfect fervor of every lukewarm person, and of the most perfect sanctification of every righteous man (I, 222).

We have to spread our Congregation throughout the world, because it must benefit the whole world and is made for the whole world (XVI, 322).

Never despair of the reparation of all past sin, of the eradication of every present sin, of the preservation from every possible future sin (I, 222).

The Vocationist should purposely cultivate a sound and enlightened optimism, never despairing of the conversion and sanctification of all people, and of the advent of the kingdom of heaven on earth (XXIV, 94).

Cordially say of every person all the good that you know of him (XXII, 101).

Every child that comes into this world, notwithstanding the charm and beauty of childhood, does not want to remain a child, but hastens to become an adolescent. The teenager does not want to remain a teenager, but hastens to become a young adult, notwithstanding all the charm and beauty of adolescence. And then, notwithstanding all the charm and beauty of the springtime of his life, the young adult is not satisfied with the flowers of spring. He longs for the fruit and makes the transition into full virility and in it finally comes to rest (IX, 59).

You should always grow in culture, grace and in affective and effective love (XXII, 3335).

A man is born as a son, but notwithstanding all the sweetness of the filial relationship, he does not want to be only a son. He is not satisfied with only the native family. He tends to develop other relationships, as friend, with an ever-growing number of people, and he forms a larger family, and - at times it seems - a more sweet family of election. Notwithstanding all the sweetness of friendship, or better, because he is totally taken by the sweetness of friendship, he does not want to be only a friend, and he is no longer satisfied with the larger family of election, but he tends to the relationship of spouse with the person who seems to embody the ideal and the synthesis of all the goodness that humanity may offer. With this person, more friend than all other friends, he forms the family of his heart, where he can finally rest for all his life, in the sweet and strong exercise of the dominion of his conquering love (IX, 59).

Every spiritual progress in the supernatural life necessarily presupposes and requires a greater knowledge of God (V, 236).

Ask for yourself and others to grow indefinitely for all eternity

in divine grace, even after entering holy paradise. Through your prayers may this be as your permanent state: a state of growth, of perpetual ascension (X, 136)

While you keep receiving ever more divine goodness your boundless limitations of limited being expand ever more. While you keep exchanging more and more the divine good your unlimited grades of your successive activities keep rising ever more (III, 240).

Spiritually we must carry in our hands the entire world because it's our child that we must raise to God (XXVI, 409).

Regardless of the level of friendship we have arrived at, we immediately find ahead of us an ever-new intimacy to be reached, new degrees of love of God to be conquered (V, 78).

Each command or advice or inspiration that cannot be connected to the divine command "*grow*" is not from God but from the enemy of God and man (III, 40).

You want and appoint as extra-ordinary pastors of the lost sheep, as light to those that walk in the darkness, as sentinels to those who sleep, the souls that love you and that join you in a way and in a degree beyond the ordinary (III, 250).

"*Multiply*". Nothing should be taken only in the natural sense because the Lord has ordained everything, more or less directly, to the supernatural order; much more must be taken in the supernatural sense the "*direct words*" of God (III, 41).

The continuous becoming ever more and better must be felt and sensed; and likewise, the continuous growth of a body forever young. The continuous state of way with no end, in which is every individual and social being in this world (I, 339).

The Lord has given all things the beautiful prerogative of gradual development to their perfection. It would be an unwelcome experience to find ourselves at high noon at the first rising of the sun. It is so wonderful to contemplate the gradual development of the day first with the dawn, and then little by little with the appearance and warming up of the sun till midday (XXVI, 210).

How enjoyable it is for a mother to see the slow development of her child gradually becoming an adult, rather than viewing him suddenly grown, aged and near death in a short time (XXVI, 210-211)!

The soul can be more beautiful and sweet and so please God by becoming more spiritual ever more the image and likeness of God (III, 204).

Remove me, O Lord, from the number of those who say they want to do your will and yet cling to their own pleasure. I have been one of them, I confess it, but I shall not continue to be such (II, 256).

Every new degree of knowledge of God generates a new degree of virtue. Every new flame of charity starts from a new splendor of this truth; without any increase in this knowledge there can be no increase of merit, of love, of divine union (V, 236).

I will always incite people to the most perfect, never despairing of the sanctification of souls (I, 184).

Souls are all made exclusively for the Lord. The Lord is more glorified by heroism than by mediocrity (I, 184).

We must infuse, nurture and exercise in every sphere, member and work of the *Sodality of Divine Union*, the development of life, fulfilling all its needs of work, progress and production (IV, 313).

The most needed and effective way to preserve the life of grace consists in applying ourselves to its growth (IV, 204).

To further enhance our good acts, and to further enrich our moments of merit, we must multiply and intensify the good intentions that we attach to our every act and instant (I, 230).

The whole of the creature is never absolute. We can and must be in a state of ever-improving, in a perennial growth (VI, 338).

Every act of loving self-sacrifice is a step forward. In every progress there is always some small or large sacrifice (VI, 342).

Any act that does not go directly to God the Father, the Son or the Holy Spirit is not completely perfect; indeed it is often imperfect (VI, 186).

When God rules and prevails in a soul, he does not desist from increasingly attracting it to higher elevations. He transfigures and transforms it from conversion to conversion, from ascension to ascension up to such a perfection that can only be called deification (IV, 100).

I exercise the gift and the virtue of fortitude only by striving to achieve a greater good, only climbing arduous heights (III, 82).

Holy Scripture says that the day of the righteous is a continuous growth; so he who is just is to become ever more just, and he who is holy must become ever holier (V, 10).

The soul, in the grace of God, finds always possible higher degrees, then more elevated and then the loftiest, the most sublime for its participation with the divine nature, in union with the divine persons, in order to become more and more of glory and delight to God (V, 216).

If we were to convince ourselves that the more we love, the more we have done what we must do, we would have made great progress, a great spiritual attainment (XXVI, 359).

God wants to make us worthy of him, but he wants our cooperation (XI, 219).

You should always grow in grace and charity (XI, 219).

Our main duty is to live fully applied to the progressive, loving, effective knowledge of the Lord our God (IX, 68).

CHAPTER XXXIX

Always More, Always Better

If you want to give more and more of yourself, you must ever more deny yourself (IX, 28).

With caution we must make sure that no spark of fervor is turned off, neither by defect nor by excess, (XXII, 130).

In order to be an always more and better image and likeness of God, my whole journey must consist in ascending to, approaching and achieving union with God. The way to achieve it is to please the Lord ever more and better, by more and better resembling him (XXVI 102).

As rays of the sun, as children of light, we are told to walk always forward, always upward, always in fervor (VIII, 139).

We are lovingly insatiable when it comes to achieving an ever greater and always better spiritual perfection in the spirit of love (XXII, 130).

To facilitate and ensure the highest performance of all our faculties, we must work to attain a temperament-character that is ideally perfect, possibly emotional, greatly-passionate, dispassionately intellectual, voluntarily dominant of self and others, as it is convenient to truly great man of natural and supernatural action, of divine love (XXVI, 103).

Vegetative life has its boundaries that cannot be extended. Sensitive life has its boundaries that cannot be extended. Intellectual life elevated to the supernatural has no boundaries (XXVI, 131).

Not to act is not to go ahead (XXVI, 251).

Always push for the most perfect to the point of heroism, without indulging in mediocrity for false sweetness (XXII, 109).

Get used in every way and everywhere to ascend to God from every level of creation, and to see under the veil of created things, the infinite God (IX, 125).

We will always find something to correct in our mentality and something to improve in our behavior, not so much because we are always imperfect, but because we are always more perfectible (VIII, 235).

I get the impression that we have made "the religious of the little pleasure." When they like something, they are all complimenting, obedient, docile and affectionate. When something shakes, disquiets, injures or breaks down this idol of their hearts, the little pleasure, all of a sudden they are enemies (XV, 322).

A pleasure directly willed and enjoyed is inherently flawed because it disrupts and reduces our relationship whereby we should be on a continuous transition from ourselves to God. The same is true of idleness (X, 156).

Even the less perfect is necessary as a preparation, gauge and root of the more perfect (XI62).

The Saints continue throughout eternity the mission they had in time (XXVI, 378).

CHAPTER XL

Human Being

I have to be and become, do and conquer what you want me to be and become, do and achieve. You are love, and you want me to correspond and live in relationship with you and tend to perfect union with you (XXVI, 101).

For my divine imitation, ascension and union and for that of my neighbor, it is necessary to have very clearly in our mind the fact that we are persons, individuals of rational nature, integral, distinct and separated from each other, individual persons with un-communicable and unmistakable subsistence (XXVI, 102).

Love requires the distinction of persons both in the lover and in the beloved. Love requires the highest union, and then the highest equality either existing or to be achieved. Equality is an aspect of the exigency of love; an absolute distinction of person incapable of being assimilated is the other simultaneous aspect (XXVI, 103).

If union were to arrive at the absorption of one person into the other, of the beloved into the lover, the lover would no longer have the beloved to love. Love would be truncated and dead, because the relationship of attraction of the lover to the beloved, in which consists the very activity of love would cease (XXVI, 103-104).

In principle, every person no less than every other created

thing, is essentially dependent on God, the Creator. Every creature is in a relationship of essential dependence, in a state of essential dependence always and in everything, because the essence does not change, but persists unchanged (XXVI, 106).

O person, supreme summit of the soul! Alive and vital point, image and likeness of the divine unity of the divine simplicity, immutability and immanence of the divine life, mysterious image and likeness of the divine mystery (XXVI, 102)!

Each person belongs to a separate order, is a natural microcosm, a microcosm of supernatural unions and relations no less wonderful and mysterious than those of the soul with its own body (XXVI, 111).

Avoid all hysteria about personal hygiene, the illusions of sentimentalism and exaggerated preoccupations with one's health (XXII, 88).

Vigilance is never excessive and confidence is often excessive (XXII, 89).

Man, because of the great mysterious privilege of his liberty, is the cause of his own happiness, when he consents to God. He is the sole cause of his evil and unhappiness when he disagrees with God (IX, 63).

Man is the end to which all creation is preordained. Man is the image and likeness, more than a vestige, a sign or reflection of the divine nature and persons (III, 37).

Man is free, and every act of consent to the suggestions of the enemy increases his subjection to the devil who takes advantage of it to extend his influence in possessing man completely. The devil uses this creature as his instrument to spread evil to others (XXVI, 402).

For our divine imitation, ascension and union and for that of our neighbor, it is necessary to have very clearly in our mind the fact that we are persons, individuals of rational nature, integral, distinct and separated from every other (III, 231).

Man is a small living world, the synthesis and crown of all other creatures. He is also a large living world that embraces in his mind and elevates in his heart all other creatures to God, as sovereign of the universe and priest of God (III, 37).

Man, the last creation, as a synthesis eminently contains all previous creation (III, 38).

The man who does not understand when he is being honored, can be compared to ignorant donkeys and become like them (V, 165).

I must enter into that divine plural "*let us make man*" by cooperating to the gradual improvement in me of the divine image and likeness, if I want to receive the full effect of light, order and life, (III, 38).

Every command of God reveals the power that God has given to man (III, 38).

The Lord has willed and created the person to be open to him alone, penetrable by him alone, habitable by him alone, as his heaven of heavens reserved for him alone, as the throne of thrones reserved for him alone (III, 234).

The best use I can and must make of my body is to offer it as a sacrifice on the cross, in communion with the sacrifice of Jesus (XXVI, 40).

Concerning the body, we live ourselves and consider others,

like those angels that art envisions as a head between two wings and bodiless (IX, 303).

Our body has been given to us to be burned in the fire of the soul as an act of love for God. It must become the host of the sacrifice of the soul-priest of God. The body is a veil to the light of the soul in the truth of God; it is as the field and instrument of God's goodness in the world, when he wants to give, act and reveal himself (X, 139).

Consider your own body as the matter for the sacrifice to be offered daily (XXII, 119).

The best use I can make of the atoms of my being is to offer them to be consumed in the sacrifice of Jesus (X, 171).

Honor in your own body the temple and instrument of the Holy Spirit, and in your soul the heaven and the palace of God (XXII, 117).

In our being there are three "I", the I-life, the I-intelligence, the I-will, not three men but one human being, living in this created unity and trinity as the image and likeness of the divine and uncreated unity and Trinity (XI, 271).

What distracts me most, what more moves me away from the Lord, who is my center and my goal, is my own I (V, 56).

I no longer fear death, for I who live, I who think, I who feel, I do not die but I go to him who expects me from feast to feast of love worthy of him, infinite (X, 129).

Consider the "I" of your own personality, separated from God, as the worst traitor of the soul and of the Lord (XXII, 119).

In me and by myself I am nothing and sin (XI, 193).

What misery and baseness comes from this element of my ego which is always present and active in my every internal and external act! Free me from it, O Lord (XI, 228).

I think that I can say that the only "I" is my soul in this substantial form of my body, and my only "I" is my spirit as I am animated by grace, charity and Holy Spirit (XI, 191).

Recognize and venerate in your own self the work of the Lord God, creator, savior and sanctifier (XXII, 102).

Purify and value fantasy and sentiment in the supernatural life (XXII, 104).

CHAPTER XLI

The Heart

A big heart that expands ever more, such must be your heart (VI, 158).

You have given us a heart bigger than the world; you have given us a spirit bigger than the heavens, to fill it with you, to actualize it in you (II, 139).

I would like to tell you, but I'm afraid to tell you: there is no heart that more than mine wants to be your special friend, your favorite, your intimate, worthy of you, capable of you, like you, another you (II, 118).

In any fault we always find the influence of pride, and likewise we find also the influence of the heart. In every form of pride there is always attachment to ourselves, so it is always from the heart that we sin (VI, 159).

Consider your heart as the victim and host that you must consecrate and sacrifice daily (XXII, 119).

Only a broken heart goes with certainty to its God. A broken heart wants to live but can no longer live; feeling the pangs of death, it goes, as carried by the waves of its weeping at the feet of the Lord of life, who is the Lord of compassion. He values and takes into consideration every pain of his creature (VI, 273).

The more you reduce the material and sensitive elements, the more the heart becomes free and purified (VI, 163).

The stones of human hearts, the rock of my heart shall drip sweetly and effortlessly the sweetness of Jesus, for he himself is in me (XXVI, 146).

The more we mortify the need of the heart to give and to have confidences from creatures, the more we have those of God (XXVI, 414).

The heart remains wounded by the eyes.
Eyes open, heart dissipated and desecrated (IX, 306).

If the young Levite must give himself to God, he must do so with his heart. If man must belong totally to God, he must belong to him with his heart (XXV, 191).

Open eye, heart desecrated.
Heart divided, heart destroyed (XXV, 192).

CHAPTER XLII

Devotions

Before using anything, use the power that every Christian has, try to free it from all possible evil influence and fill it with beneficial influence. You can do this with the sign of the cross and the invocation of the holy names (I, 229).

We use to bless and publicly impose the Miraculous Medal before beginning any spiritual enterprise (I, 343).

The circulation of the life of love in God goes from one person to another. Outside of the divinity we find this circulation between God and the Virgin, and all the saints are raptured by it. We immerse and abandon ourselves in this circulation and draw all souls to it through our Marian apostolate (I, 349).

The devotion to the Most Precious Blood is the most priestly of all Catholic devotions, because it is the one that best identifies itself with the sacrifice of the cross and of the altar (I, 233).

The Precious Blood is essentially the price of universal redemption; its devotion consists in promoting the circulation of this divine price, for all effects of grace throughout the Church and the entire world (I, 234).

The blood of Jesus is the redemption's price, it must be offered and circulated (XXVI, 406).

Every soul in the state of grace possesses the precious blood as its own treasure and can offer it (I, 237).

The great sacrifice is the Holy Mass; the small sacrifice is the Offertory of the Precious Blood (IX, 193).

The offering of the Precious Blood is the greatest service we can render to the Church. It is the greatest glory we can offer to the Holy Trinity (XXVI, 409).

The devotion to the Most Precious Blood is the most priestly devotion among all Catholic devotions, because it is the one that most identifies with the sacrifice of the cross and of the altar, and therefore the most appropriate for priestly souls (XXI, 35).

The atlas is a devotional book for us (IX, 207).

¹ Fr. Justin had a big atlas, which is still kept in his room, and before this atlas he used to pray for the various countries of the world. He also instituted the pious tradition, still practiced by the Vocationist Fathers and Sisters, of placing a globe before the altar, to remind us to pray for the whole world, thus universalizing our prayers.

CHAPTER XLIII

Sweetness

With my God always trust, always confidence!
With my neighbor, always sweetness, always sweetness!
O give me pure love, pure zeal (X, 202)!

O divine yearning of enveloping love, always directed but with ever new sweetness to detach me from creation, to elevate me beyond myself, to enwrap me in the Lord my God, to unite me with the Trinity (XXVI, 11)!

Sweetness is essential, but as much as true sweetness is helpful, so is false sweetness harmful (I, 332).

False sweetness tends to focus on small or big pleasures and thus attracts to them the creature as well (I, 333).

True sweetness impels us only to the greatest joy, which is union with God, along the pathways of selflessness and detachment (I, 333).

We can find and draw spiritual sweetness only in the Eucharist, its true and only source (V, 174).

Never, never once have I found myself glad for having been angry or resentful or for having treated my poor neighbor severely or harshly. Never, never once have I been unhappy for having treated him with due sweetness (X, 107).

We consecrate ourselves to the supernatural sweetness of divine love for God and neighbor, as both internal disposition and external acts in order to benefit ever more souls, in order to unite ourselves more to the divine Heart of Jesus (XX, 43).

CHAPTER XLIV

Gifts of God

The act of the Lord is an eternal giving. My act is an everlasting receiving (III, 150).

We should not focus on the gift but on the giver (III, 169)!

Only God is my delight, everything else is only an instrument to reach him (III, 169).

The gifts of the Holy Spirit presuppose both faith and reason. The gifts of the Holy Spirit enwrap, penetrate and exercise to the outmost faith and reason, and at the end surpass them in height as the sky compared to the earth (IX, 74).

The Lord in his goodness does not take away his gift. The Lord never withdraws his gifts from the creatures to which they have once been granted (VI, 366).

Every creature, every circumstance, as far as it concerns me, is always a gift of love for the soul (II, 134).

Essentially I have been predisposed and donated by each divine person to the other as an act of glory, as an act of infinite love of one person for the other (V, 180).

I am also received and possessed by each divine person, out

of regard for the person whose image I am and to whom I have been given as a gift, with the same love with which they love one another (V, 180).

God regards the affection with which I give more than the gift itself (V, 61).

When the Lord allows us to know the existence of some grace, we must know that the mere fact of having made it known to us is a promise that the Lord will give us that grace. The Lord does not give us an idea of something good without promising it, since the only purpose of God in manifesting something good to us is that we should desire it. And the only reason for rendering it desirable is to prepare us to receive it soon, and to expand our internal capacity to receive it more abundantly (XXVI, 57).

Whatever beautiful, great, holy thing comes to mind without some extrinsic or intrinsic cause is always a disposition of divine providence to make us desire that grace. If the Lord had not intended to grant it to us he would not have given us the slightest idea, or the idea would have passed by without touching us. If an idea has come to us and moved us somehow, it is certain that the Lord wants to grant us that grace, even if it is an extraordinary grace (XXVI, 58).

Every gift that we give or receive on any occasion, should consist always and only of books (X, 174).

Chapter XLV

Limited and Successive Beings¹

We are limited and successive beings. We cannot simultaneously satisfy every duty, but one at a time. Great means of perfection is to concentrate ourselves totally in fulfilling the duty of the passing moment as if we were, so to speak, with no past, no future, in an eternal present (VI, 242).

We are limited and successive even in our freedom! For our freedom in our state of way and probation is essential that we be allowed to choose between a greater and a lesser good (III, 251).

You want the souls without loosing any of them, but you want them in their freedom (III, 252).

You are successive in your states and acts and you have to ascend gradually to more perfect states, to more sublime acts (III, 239).

¹ *"Man is limited and successive"* is a practical philosophical principal. Fr. Justin makes of it an ascetical principle. The fact that we are limited should keep us humble and yet aware that our limitations are not set on stone, they are extendable, they are unlimited, and so we keep striving for "always more, always better". The fact that we are successive (we can do one thing after the other) helps us to be patient and persevering, because what I cannot achieve now, I can achieve it later.

We cannot do everything we would like to do! We do what we can! We do first the duties of justice, and then those of charity and zeal (XV, 139).

You know, my soul, the limitless limits that the Lord assigned to your boundlessly limited being. You likewise know the unlimited degrees that you must ascend with your successive work under the rule of the law of love (III, 240).

Our unconscious acts are frailties that the Lord tolerates, but he wants to free us of them (XXVI, 262).

Everything is a progressive ascending culture of our relationship of love with the Lord that goes from alliance to friendship, to engagement, and then arrives at the mystical wedding. At each of these levels of love-relationship we must go through purification, perfection and deification (III, 197).

Because we are limited and successive, we are unable to express everything in one word, to capture everything in one thought (III), 163).

My Lord, establish and bring me ever more forward, ever more upward, in an ever larger sphere (III, 172).

The Lord delights in the soul that cultivates her talent of natural reason and perfects, invests, lives and applies it to its fullest extent (III, 175).

Only the more contains also the less. Only from the more can you also get the less. You can never get the more from the less (III, 179).

We cannot lose sight of the fact that we are under this law of progress; the first clue you are in this internal state, according to

the idea of God, is expectation: a state of waiting, a continuous sighing for a more perfect state (XXVI, 375).

Only the present is divine, because God has neither future nor past! The more the soul focuses on the present, the more it is united with the Lord (XXVI, 265).

The child (aged seven, seventy or seven hundred, it does not matter) soon gets tired of what he knows, of what he is doing, of what he is. He always wants new things for his life and activity, for his intellect and will. He wants to discover new worlds, expand to new horizons, ascend to new heights, facing new difficulties to attain new conquests. He gets especially excited about the truth when it is difficult and about the good when it is hard (IX, 66).

Edification must and will come regardless of our efforts; it will come as a necessary consequence when the good that is inherently diffusive is really in us (VI, 258).

CHAPTER XLVI

Eucharist

The Eucharist is Jesus repeating in every place and every time what he said and did during the brief years of his mortal life in the limited confines of his earthly existence (VII, 13).

In the holy Mass, Jesus, as mediator identifies himself with us; as a victim he takes our place, as a host he incorporates himself to us (VII, 235).

Among the divine works of creation, redemption, sanctification and glorification there is also the transubstantiation, the ilimitable limit of the unlimited divine charity (VII, 245).

In order to bring Jesus-Eucharist, and Jesus-Gospel to Jesus-Church¹ it is necessary that you have him in you, before having him in your hands (XV, 26).

The host is the kiss with which the Lord nurtures love, not in sips, but in floods of beauty and sweetness, from its own source (II, 256).

¹ *Jesus-Eucharist, Jesus-Gospel, Jesus Church* are three favorite expressions of Blessed Fr. Justin to indicate the oneness of Jesus with the Eucharist, the Gospel and the Church, rather than his presence in them.

Surround the Blessed Sacrament with every respect, tenderness and religious affection (XXII, 105).

There is no ascetic practice that is more worthy and appropriate to fill our time and life than Holy Communion (I, 257).

Jesus-Host, as sacrifice, is the crowning act of glory to God and as a sacrament is the supreme happiness for mankind (II, 250).

He who leads one hundred souls to become daily communicants glorifies the Lord more than that nun who baptized fifty thousand children, more than Don Bosco who made eleven thousand priests, more than Saint Francis Xavier who converted millions of people to the faith (X, 190).

From any location, day and night orient yourself to the nearest church, where there is Jesus in the Eucharist² (I, 157).

I do not want to miss any Eucharistic Communion at the cost of the whole world. I want to persuade and convince all my brothers never to be defrauded of such a treasure (II, 250).

The Eucharist is the quintessence, the culmination and the synthesis of the divine revelation of the truth and of the divine outpouring of charity (VII, 169).

The Divine Eucharist is not only the supreme worship of the Trinity but also the supreme communication of the Trinity to the

² To indicate the centeredness of the Eucharist in the Vocationist life and spirituality, Fr. Justin wanted the chapel in all our houses to be the geographical center of the building, so that it would be easy for the inhabitants of the house to orient themselves to Jesus-Eucharist, and to stop for a short visit to the Blessed Sacrament before leaving and when re-entering the house.

soul, and the supreme elevation and assimilation of the soul into the Trinity (V, 170).

I offer my chest, my heart, my mouth, my eyes, my hands, my head to the Blessed Sacrament as a ciborium, monstrance and tabernacle. I put my blood into every lamp, my bones into every censer (V, 172).

We should orient ourselves, even with the body, wherever we are, night and day, toward the nearest sacramental church, and try to get as close as possible to the divine Sacrament (IX, 203).

Stay as long as possible with Jesus in the Eucharist; be close to him even bodily, as is required by every love that is really felt from the heart (IX, 203).

Sensitive and heartfelt love is ordered to let us know how Jesus cares for us. Much more than having our names written in his heart, he wants us to be carried in his arms and nourished in his bosom. He wants us to live at his side and to delight in his heart, with such a true spiritual fullness of divine union, as to rebound, in sweetness of life, even in our human being (IX, 204).

Only the Eucharist is the food that enters into us - alive - and takes away from us the living death and lust (V, 173).

We need strength to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. Strength does not come from medicines but from nutrition. Medicine is the confession (which is also required and how!). Nutrition is the Eucharist, and I need it every day. In the Eucharist there is communion with divine life (V, 260).

If you really want to live as a religious, you must enter into the Eucharistic status (XXVI, 227).

The idea of sacrifice in the mind of God is that of an ever wid-

er expansion and an ever more excellent elevation of our being. Sacrifice is like the tearing apart of the boundaries of our lives, without causing death, to receive an infusion of life that requires an ever bigger capacity. It is an opening of new heavens for the soul, a flood of new oceans of light, a new blossoming of flowers in every wonderful power of nature elevated to the supernatural (VII, 252).

Our greatest and holiest enterprise is to bring the world to daily communion (X, 1991).

God dwells in the depth of our soul and takes us to intimate union with him through sanctifying grace. Likewise Jesus dwells in us and espouses us to his being through communion (X, 33).

When all the atoms will be transformed into host and wine for the Mass, the accidental veils of the Eucharist, then the world, having become all one host, will come to an end, having been consumed as a holocaust to God for whose glory it was created (X, 79).

I should let the souls devour me in union with Jesus-Eucharist (X, 123).

CHAPTER XLVII

Faith

Faith is the foundation, basis and root of all the work of our sanctification (V, 17).

Since the root, basis and principle of all justification, faith, the first theological virtue, infused by God in us, depends in a certain way *ex auditu - from hearing*. The Lord wants it to be preceded by the ministry of his word, administered by his Church (VI, 275).

Each supernatural good is rooted in holy faith, and holy faith has its beginning in the grace of the divine word revealed and handed down, welcomed and meditated, believed and practiced properly (V, 280).

The greater is our faith, the more beautifully it shows us the Lord, and therefore the more it increases our love (III, 167).

The main mysteries of our faith that serve as the foundation of true religiosity, are the resurrection and the ascension of the Lord (I, 207).

To each sacramental absolution is infallibly linked an increase of holy faith (I, 32).

As in heaven there is no paradise without the vision of God, in the light of glory, so on earth there is no supernatural good without the vision of God, in the light of faith (XXV 190).

CHAPTER XLVII

Happiness

The Lord wants to communicate to us his own divine life. As long as we do not have it in its fullness and enjoy it in its security, we cannot be happy (V, 23).

This temporal, natural life can never satisfy our desires (V, 23).

Our inner happiness should be the indicator and measure of the glory that we give or deny, much or little, to the Lord our God (V, 211).

The happiness of love, not the love of happiness, moves man (XI, 153-154).

Become a sower of joy, a speaker of peace, radiating serenity everywhere (XXII, 100).

Fight in yourself and in others every form of discouragement and presumption (XXII, 336).

We need the oil of joy so that the wheels of the chariot of life may roll without shrieking and without halting on account of rust (V, 174).

If I am not happy I do not give glory to God. I determine the glory I give or do not give to God from my intimate state of happiness (X, 135).

“Play with me and let me play with you,” says the Lord (X, 159).

Let us accept adversities, and voluntarily immolate ourselves with a real wreath of flowers of joy internally and externally (X, 78).

The Vocationist must be and identify himself always with the inner, communicative and enthusiastic joy³ of something great and beautiful to do (X, 216).

Everyone should be happy that the Congregation prays that the Lord may call him to eternity, rather than he would have the misfortune of offending him (XXIII, 361).

Be happy in your inner self, always in hearty celebration, as in a perpetual song and dance before the Lord who loves you (XV, 191).

³ The motto-program of Fr. Justin and of his Congregations is the Latin word *GAUDIUM* which means *joy*, as a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Fr. Justin uses it also as an Acronym “G.A.U.D.I.U.M.”, which stands for “gloria, amor, voluntas Dei in universo mundo - glory, love will of God in the entire world”.

CHAPTER XLIX

Our Goal

Our ultimate goal is the Lord God, known, loved, possessed, glorified and enjoyed by us and communicated to our neighbors, in the highest degree, in the most perfect way, to the fullest extent possible for each one of us (VIII, 267).

Life is a castle in which the soul is given plenty of linen to make its wedding's dowry. This ultimate, supreme relationship of the soul with God is the real apex, the real ideal and the true goal. In this supreme relationship of the soul-spouse of the Trinity, God finds all his glory and the soul finds all her happiness (XXVI, 380).

The goal of every vocation is divine union with the Blessed Trinity through the ascensional perfection of love for God and neighbor (VIII, 35).

We must always have shining before us our personal, supernatural goal, so that it may attract and motivate us (XXII, 336)

On our part, the exercise of love for God consists in receiving what is good, in wanting to receive, to attract to us the very goodness of God. God is the active principle of everything; the creature is the passive principle (XXVI, 381-382).

The Lord has given us an unattainable goal to keep us in constant ascension (XXVI, 378).

A goal that does not attract me, that does not move me is not my goal (X, 135).

I exist totally, exclusively and perpetually for the glory of the adorable Trinity and as a revelation of him in order to be his delight. This principle is the light of life in the supernatural order (V, 209).

God wants us to understand the goal and to keep envisioning it because by it we are moved to action. Only the idea of the goal drives us *ab intrinseco* - *from within* - and moves us to the use of the means as such: that is, as much as they are helpful toward the goal (XXVI, 88).

We come from the love of God as our principle, and we are ordained to the love of God as our goal. Only the relationship of love explains to us our principle and reveals to us our goal (V, 250).

Only the relationship of love brings us out of our principles and makes us reach our goal (V, 250).

The essence of the fervor of every apostolate consists in looking at our goal constantly and ardently tending to it (VIII, 139).

Only a relationship of love indicates rapport between beginning and end, and generates allure from beginning to end (V, 250).

You were created solely and entirely for the glory of the Lord. You have to order yourself totally to that end, and everything in you, acts and states, work and relationships, must be of glory for the Lord (V, 243).

I like to see my great goal of union with God concretely in the mystery of the ascension of Jesus to the Father (I, 46).

The goal is what moves us to act. The ultimate goal is always unique. Our ultimate goal is the supernatural, so only this goal must move us to act (VI, 393).

My sun is that truth and family of many truths that not only enlightens the way from beginning to end, but that attracts and enraptures me to walk the path (II, 25).

The cause of our evil is a lack of complete vision of our goal. I'm in this world for my sanctification and that of all souls (VI, 382).

The cooperation of the soul always starts with the commitment to know more fully our goal, which is God, making use of all the creatures that manifest him as the effects [make known] the cause. We make use in a special way of our own self and of our heart to get to know God, because among all creatures we were made purposely in the image and likeness of God (IX, 53).

For us, the goal is a specific good or the infinite good that we must conquer for the Lord who is in himself the infinite good. The goal is not only a good to conquer, but a good to be communicated (VII, 149).

Everyone can contemplate his own goal in the formula that he likes, in the light that more enchants him, provided it always leads him to understand better and practice the "*Come to me*", which is the formula of our goal, spoken by the heart of God to ours (VIII, 244).

CHAPTER L

Formation

Fight always inconstancy, lightness and fickleness of character (XXII, 106).

Think carefully, before committing yourself to anything (XXII, 106).

As my creation, that God made and continues to make, was preceded by the other creations of six days, so the shaping of myself in his image and likeness, this great ascetic work, must be preceded by other ordinary ascetic tasks. It must always be preceded by other common, ordinary, general and much needed works. The ascetic work will progress normally, intensely, gradually and steadily in proportion to the previous ones (III, 183).

It is not charity to be content with little, and to tend to mediocrity in virtue, when we deal with vocations or seminaries where we welcome not spoiled youngsters to be converted slowly; with them we have to be content with the minimum. We are aware that we cannot immediately expect the most, but we do not renounce to it.

We are dealing with the elect of the divine vocations, who have the capacity and the need to be launched, with firmness and determination, to the most perfect in the divine imitation, since they are destined to be the light of the world, the leaders of the chosen people, the princes of the kingdom of heaven (I, 335).

Get used to the self-control in order to be able to curb any excess, to pacify any alteration, to soften any harshness (XXII, 108).

We must get used to self-control, if we want to refrain from every excess, calm any conflict, sweeten any bitterness (XXII, 108).

We must get used to reducing the multiplicity of our external acts to the unity of our internal status of adhesion to the Lord (XXII, 108).

Superiors and educators should be very careful not to presume to form all in their own mold rather than in that of the only teacher, Jesus Christ (XXII, 1300).

Do not pay too much attention to the bad, terrible example of some confrere. From you I expect a generous sacrifice and a good example for other confreres. And you will do it (XV, 174).

Educate religiously the good taste, imagination and feelings of our confreres, starting at their first encounter (XXII, 1005).

Nothing is more beneficial to spiritual formation than the personal experience of one who has received more from the Lord and has been more faithful to his grace (VI, 41).

Have great esteem for external order, and keep it at all costs. Cultivate a generous punctuality to schedules, appointments, and verbal promises (XXII, 106).

Only the environment of general, perpetual, absolute obedience, animated by the principle of imitation in true love is effective for the training of the candidates to the priesthood and to religious life, any other way is ineffective, illusory and wrong (I, 330).

He, who wants to make others perfect, must apply himself to his own perfection (VI, 59).

It is essential to achieve and maintain a character of ongoing formation, abhorring any static form, both in spirit and in works, both in our places and personnel, in all (I, 339).

Be strong and resolute. You can do it very well without losing your inner peace. Our form of government must be strong and sweet, strongly sweet, sweetly strong, but strong (XVI, 315).

The secret of a perpetual and progressive religious formation is the fidelity, generosity, gentleness, obedience and love of holy inspirations, both for our own sanctification and for that of others. There is no other life-giving Spirit than the Comforter and Sanctifier (I, 340).

There is no better way to educate a child than by presenting to him the religious horizons, viewed concretely in the wonderful stories of the saints and of the people of God; there is no more effective incentive to elevate them than holy catechism, meditation on the last things and the passion of the Lord (XVI, 434).

Another secret of perpetual progressive and religious education, is to make ours all good initiatives of any chosen soul who works for the good of both the internal and external life, without closing ourselves to the esteeming only of our initiatives (I, 340).

It should be clear to all our members that in the Congregation religious piety is greatly esteemed and cultivated. We want and achieve union with the Blessed Trinity through union with the Catholic Church and the Holy Family (XVI, 445).

We should be very generous in opening our doors to candidates, aspirants and disciples, because it is easier to select among many than among few. In this house of the Lord that is our congregation, there are many mansions (XXIII, 36).

The novice who throughout the whole year needs vigilance, threats and severity to behave properly is not worthy of holy profession (XV, 129).

Both for students and for novices the summer months are a time of greater physical weakness and temptations, so greater sweetness is needed with them (XV, 129).

In those areas in which you think differently from others, you never obey willingly. Simply thinking differently from your superiors, at the very least, is not perfection (XV, 132).

I attribute the great majority of disorders of the house and of things to the disobedience of local superiors to the Superior General (XV, 132).

Perpetual profession must be the object of the highest esteem and honor, desire and delight, because in it formally and to the fullest extent are present all the advantages and benefits of religious life (XXIII, 70).

Any external and severe fault against the virtue of purity must be punished with immediate expulsion; every known superficiality must be punished with the most severe and exemplary punishment. Those who knew this evil, and did not report it to the superiors as well as those who after reporting it to superiors still make it known to others are likewise guilty of the same sin and will be punished equally (XV, 325-326).

Let us become saints and let us spend our whole life in the formation and operation of this new body of sanctification for all souls that is the Congregation (XIV, 140).

Our method and spirit that is all philosophical in ascetical, mystical and pastoral theology, would greatly benefit [from the study

of Rosmini] and we would be well pleased to see confirmed many of our intuitions, (not wanting to call them otherwise). This would open for us the way to many spiritual discoveries (XIV, 143).

Our work is always the religious formation of a soul. All the other activities that are called "*works*" are only means (XIV, 144).

CHAPTER LI

Grace

Our great duty is not to be content with conserving God's grace, but to apply ourselves to grow in the grace of God (VI, 281).

We should not only preserve, but also enhance ever more grace and with it enhance also charity, and in and with charity every other virtue (XXII, 79).

All that is not conducive to grace and love is vanity (XXII, 335).

The less we give in to nature, the more we live in the spirit. The less we satisfy our nature, the more we grow in grace (IX, 116).

Grace is inseparable from love. Grace and love are equally mysterious. Indeed the mystery of grace and love is but one, irradiation of the mystery of the Trinity (V, 91).

By Jesus' grace you must ascend to the highest levels and forms of God's love in the divine union with the holy Trinity (XXII, 118).

Each divine grace can and should be accompanied, on the part of the soul, by free acceptance, free consent and free cooperation. The determination proper to man enables him freely to choose between good and evil, between heaven and hell, between his love and his enemy (III, 275).

Grace is life and like life tends essentially to develop and grow. He who does not want to make it grow and develop is condemned to decline in this life of grace, to decay, fall ill and die in a rather short time (III, 210).

Grace and love lead and carry us to an ever more intense relationship of love with God (III, 204).

Grant us, O Lord, that we may never arrive at the end of any day, nor at the end of life, without having reached that fullness of grace and virtue, merits and works, that you intended to give us (II, 128).

According to the nature and the exigencies of God's love, grace cannot be communicated by any created being, even if he possessed it in the highest degree, and with the most overflowing fullness (III, 180).

The man chosen by grace must put his whole being at the service of the supernatural, so that his whole being may be in a perpetual, incessant absorption and assimilation of the things of God in his immensity (V, 197).

CHAPTER LII

Imitation

All of creation and redemption necessarily lead to sanctification, and therefore, according to the divine will the sole duty of man is divine imitation (VIII, 23).

Imitation of the blessed Trinity for union with the holy Trinity is my goal (X, 82)!

Resolve to achieve the imitation of Jesus to the point of assimilation, to attain union with Jesus to the point of transformation in him (XXII, 79).

The imitation of God in Jesus Christ is both the condition and the necessary consequence of the relationship of the soul-spouse. Every friendship either finds similar or makes similar the lovers. The supreme friendship, the spousal relationship first ardently desires and then effectuates this similarity (IX, 235).

The Lord, your only friend and your only love, is inclined always to tell you more about *himself*, to give you ever more of *himself*, to make you more and more like himself (III, 240).

The glory of God requires the imitation of God and the reproduction of Jesus Christ. This is your journey, work, fight and mission, in which you have to spend and apply your entire life (V, 243).

Let us be convinced that the least we should be and do for the Lord is everything that we would like others to do for us (V, 244).

CHAPTER LIII

Image and Likeness¹

It seems that, in the divine image and likeness that is the soul, God wanted to become - one divine person to another - what was not possible in the divinity; or rather reveal in the created forms what a divine person is, gives and does for the other, in the uncreated reality (V, 178).

Never has a human lover, while away from the friend, so much desired and appreciated the portrait of his love as the Lord wants and appreciates the soul, his living image and likeness (V, 179).

Never human lover desired and appreciated so much and so tenderly embraced, kissed and preserved the portrait of his friend, as the Lord desires, appreciates, hugs, kisses and preserves the divine image and likeness that is the soul of each one of us (XIV, 276).

In no other thing we are so similar to the Lord as in his love (XXVI, 353).

¹ The creating words of God: "*Let us make man in our own image and likeness*" are the foundation of the Vocationist spirituality. In them Fr. Justin sees the dignity and sanctity of the human being and the goal of our ascetical life. He invites us to enter into that divine plural "*Let us*" and cooperate with God in making us and others an ever more perfect image and likeness of God.

You want me to be your image and likeness in my internal life and in my external works, so that I may be united to you. You yourself, O my Lord, are determined to make me ever more like you in order to unite me ever more to you (III, 47).

The divine love, the author of all that is good, in his initial, progressive and final entirety as the first cause of all good, wanted man to be similar to him as second cause, precisely in being author as a secondary cause of all his own good (III, 277).

For man creation continues not only in the conservation but in the perennial elevation to an ever greater good, so that he may be ever more perfectly the image and likeness of God (III, 107).

The spirit of the Vocationist toward God is that of a living image and likeness of him, and of a personal, progressive ascensional relationship with him, (XXII, 18).

Each ray of beauty or goodness or harmony is a shadow, reflection and sign of God. Every flower, every star, every heart is the flower, the star, the heart of our spirit made for you (II, 133).

In every soul there is a ray of the light of your face, Lord. This explains why everyone turns to his fellow man as to his light (II, 24).

The Lord God wanted and chose, created and elevated me. He called and consecrated me so that I may be his own image and likeness (I, 39).

Each divine person sees and loves the other divine person in me, as an image, likeness and gift of that divine person (IV, 39).

Our Lord has given us his living and true image and likeness, in which he means to receive our esteem, honor and servitude: our dear neighbor (II, 207).

The love with which we love the portrait of the beloved is not a different and distinct love from the love with which we love the beloved; it is the same love that embraces the beloved in himself and in his image, likeness and portrait. This is true in us, and it is much more true in the divine persons (III, 301-302).

Outside of God, in the created universe, in the divine life *ad extra*, there cannot be anything worthy of God, save the image and likeness of God (III, 325).

I am conscious of being the image and likeness of God in his three persons; in this I feel how dear I am and how I can become ever more dear to every divine person - on account of my correspondence - as I consent and cooperate in becoming an ever more perfect image of them (V, 181).

CHAPTER LIV

Inspirations

The nuptial act consists in giving, on the part of God, and on the part of the soul in receiving and accepting the divine inspirations, that may be considered as many divine seeds sowed in the furrows of human life and are meant to produce an abundance of supernatural flowers and fruits. These inspirations are meant to benefit not only us but also all mankind and the entire universe; mankind would be defrauded of the most important goods if the soul-spouse were not to understand, receive and correspond to them (IX, 242-243).

Every inspiration of holy works is deposited into the soul like a seed in the furrow. It needs long seasons of rain and sun, long labors and absorption of nutrients to succeed in developing the plant that brings flowers and fruits (VII, 112).

Pay loving attention to holy inspirations, so as not to lose any of them fruitlessly (XXII, 94).

To reject an inspiration is the same as rejecting a new series of graces, a new series of goods, maybe a new world and perhaps a new order of goods (VI, 51).

When the Lord reveals his will through inspirations it is then especially that I consider him as my love, my friend (VI, 344).

Have an authentic cult of obedience for the approved inspirations (XXII, 82).

Every act of obedience to the divine inspirations is immediately rewarded with other inspirations and so on always (IV, 138).

Temptation is always an attraction to a lesser good; inspiration is always a push to a greater good (XXII, 335).

CHAPTER LV

Laboriosity¹

Life must be very laborious, as if we were dealing with an owner who wants to reap even where he did not sow; where he has not sown or scattered, however, he has placed an intelligent and loving servant (I, 150).

The divine work extends to the whole universe, not letting to drop an atom without using it in its design. Nothing of the world of things and relations, of acts and states, of atoms and moments of my world should be lost to my supernatural work (XXVI, 119).

He, who considers life as a job to be done and presented to the Lord, must know that it takes all the days of his life to accomplish it. He must progress every day and it will not be perfect as God wants from each of us, until it will be presented to him at the end of life (XXVI, 380).

The world of conquering is only accomplished through offensive action (XXVI, 400).

¹ Laboriosity is a Justinian word; it expresses the attitude, dedication and commitment to hard work. It is one of the distinctive characteristics of the Vocationist spirituality. Fr. Justin wants his religious to work all the time; work for ten, twenty, one hundred. Work is an effective means to be poor (earning our living with our work), a way to raise funds to sustain poor vocations, a tool of penance and a practical aid in preventing and overcoming temptations.

I journey my orbit with a perennial flight from God-principle to God-goal; I complete my sphere with a perennial flight from God-center to periphery-creatures in the function of supernatural purity, humility and charity (IX, 52).

It is not enough to work and work in any way, or even as good priests; we must sanctify ourselves and others as Vocationist, as apostles of divine union (XV, 155).

I know that you suffer and work. You do it not for me, but for the souls and the holy Trinity, who loves you and rewards you divinely (XV, 197).

CHAPTER LVI

Freedom

Without freedom I can never become the supreme relationship of love with God. Without freedom, I will never live the supreme relationship of love with God. The true natural or supernatural nuptial love relationship does not exist nor does it live without freedom (III, 52).

The divine love and lover has been suffering abuses from souls for centuries; he does not cease to love them and to want them worthy of him; he surrounds them with a flood of favors and graces which stop only before their freedom which he respects no less than he really wants and likes them (III, 271).

Man could not be glorified or condemned, nor there could be greater and lesser degrees in glory and in condemnation if man were not totally free to accept or reject, to correspond or abuse, to co-operate or undo the gift of the Lord (III, 277).

Man is immense in his aspirations, in his demands, in his possibilities for good. He is free because the Lord is infinitely, eternally, immensely, perfect freedom (III, 107).

All moral evil is caused by man, who abuses his freedom (III, 257).

Each of my evil acts happens always and exclusively as a consequence of the misuse or abuse of my freedom (III, 282).

CHAPTER LVII

Death

Death and all other penalties resulting from sin continues to make our life unhappy, unless a superior light enables us to discover in them a greater good, whose desire, possession and enjoyment overpowers in us every fear of death and suffering, in proportion that the enlightenment of the mind flows in the rest of our person (VI, 198).

When there is a very intense, pure love for the adorable Trinity, penalties and death come as a relief, like shadows in the summer heat (VI, 200).

Spiritually there should be no death, but only a continuous growth, a continuous expansion, a continuous ascension (V, 13).

You do not need to slow down, reduce any spiritual, seraphic, apostolic activity on account of the approaching and imminent death. Death does not extinguish the spirit-soul; it plunges you increasingly into immortal youth, the dawn of eternal life, the sunset of earthly life (XI, 301).

Often and heartily make an act of acceptance of death, for example, in times of storms, infirmity, and at night prayer (XXII, 84).

CHAPTER LVII

Religious Observance

The more the individual religious and especially the priests will increase the works of the external apostolate, the more the internal religious observance will flourish (I, 318).

He who becomes perfect in the observance of the Rule follows Jesus (XXVI, 251).

If I do not take seriously each article of my duty and become convinced of it, I will never observe it perfectly (VI, 96).

The law, for us religious, is our Rule; it contains the Gospel and the particular laws of religion. If we really want to rise to heaven, we must observe exactly all its details, in a spirit of lively and ardent faith, thinking that all is Jesus, that Jesus wants it all (XXVI, 225).

The exact observance of the Rule is more important than all other good occupations (XXVI, 226).

Great graces and a whole series of graces are linked to each religious observance and vice versa (I, 142).

Either you live under a rule or you must make one for yourself. Those who live in the world must make a rule for themselves and faithfully follow it. Those who have been favored by a vocation

are already under a rule and therefore they must simply observe it (XXVI, 99).

Obedience without dispensations; obedience without exception (I, 143)!

The Lord can inspire more and more observances as long as they are not against, but conform to the principles of the Gospel (XXVI, 101).

The observance of all canonical and liturgical, ascetic and apostolic laws must be integral and supernatural, intelligent and loving, as something alive and progressive. It must be really a religious observance and not just any submission or acquiescence (XXIII, 19).

Penance is the seasoning of all spiritual virtues. Penance itself must then be seasoned, perfumed, guaranteed and preserved with humility (VI, 105).

The Kingdom of God envisioned and longed for without penance is an unattainable mirage, it is a poor utopia (VI, 434).

If we are to be repairers, of course, we must begin with ourselves. If the reparation has an objective, of course, it is sin, and first of all our sin (IX, 167).

Working and struggling for repentance is a perpetual mission that marks the heralds of Jesus, as the sign of the Cross identifies his disciples (I, 277).

Mortify, to the point of heroism, your tongue and all the senses, especially sight (XXII, 125).

The Vocationist should need to be refrained rather than being

pressed in the flight from the natural, animal sense of pleasure, which is incompatible with spiritual progress (XXII, 124).

Community life is the greatest penance, for that saint¹, but it is not always and everywhere the maximum penance for all. Community life embraced with generosity becomes a joy, a little paradise (VI, 90).

Honor the austerities of the saints, and practice them with due counseling and obedience (XXII, 125).

Our Rule is very beautiful and will make the soul that embraces it a hero and a favorite. We all must be God's favorites but you in a special way (XIX, 137).

¹ Saint John Berchamans (1599-1621).

CHAPTER LIX

Word of God

One word of God is enough to compensate for all the books that you do not have time to read, for all the studies that you do not have the time to do, for all the sermons that you do not have the time to prepare (X, 71).

Through the word I receive, acquire and conquer an idea, which is a ray of truth. It is a ray of truth that I can see only through the eyes of the soul, and the will is or may be wounded by this vision of a ray of truth (III, 166).

Our Lord established the ministry of the word as the ordinary means through which he calls souls to faith (VII, 43).

"I am listening": here is the main activity of the religious soul. I will make sure to receive the Word in my whole being, in reparation for the past, for the sanctification of the present and in preparation for the future (VI, 183).

Every lover of God never ceases to copy over and over, and to comment the divine *direct words*; on them he does his meditation and his daily preaching (IX, 203).

When I pray it is I who speak to the Lord. When I read, the Lord speaks to me (I, 223).

Charitas ex visu - love comes through sight. The teaching of the

word must be integrated with the Ministry of vision, for the triumph of love in the soul and in the world (III, 168).

When the word of God finds docility of heart, it makes of that soul his prophet, his apostle, and even his mother (V, 206).

If souls do not come first to the banquet of God's word, they will never come to the banquet of the Lord's body (VII, 49).

Meditation is the sun for the day. Reading is like the moon for the night - reflected light - and when it is full, it is also beautiful, sufficient and romantic. The reading of good authors is like a mirrored light of God's word that we receive and contemplate in meditation (X, 219).

Every Vocationist should be perpetually a daily catechist. The daily sermon must be catechism. Every ministry of the word should be in form of catechesis, questions and answers, real or imaginary dialogue (XI, 206).

CHAPTER LX

Vainglory

Vainglory is the worm of holiness that gnaws the marrow of the strongest actions (VI, 257).

If we see someone who wants to embellish his looks, using perfume etc. with certainty we can say: "*He wants to please somebody*" (XXVI, 75).

The spirit of evil leads us to lock ourselves internally and to segregate ourselves externally, by keeping certain secrets that contain and produce darkness (I, 317).

Anyone who embellishes his appearance in a special way offers a foolproof argument that he wants to please someone of this world (XXVI, 75).

Make sure not to lose any time without occupying it in good readings and prayers (XXII, 94).

Relax your mind by changing, not interrupting your external work and your internal concentration (XXII, 94).

A form of laziness is that of wanting to be with others when you have nothing to do (VI, 301).

Generally, sloth prevails over us making us limit our ministries

to the minimum necessary, to the minimum our liturgical life that is only just enough to maintain Christian appearances before a pagan people. In that case, we may be in the process of becoming more pagan in our inner selves and in the core of our being (XXVI, 83).

Let us occupy properly our time. Not a moment of inactivity. Let us participate in all the practices of the community, at the appointed time, without exempting ourselves from any duty. We should dedicate our free time to edifying readings that can nourish our spirit of holy compunction (XVI, 483).

CHAPTER LXI

Perseverance

The Vocationist should be totally permeated by the knowledge that the gift of final perseverance¹ in every good enterprise, as far as the disposition and cooperation of the creature is concerned, depends first of all on prayer and secondly on study and constant effort in spiritual progress. He should make of this a law of life (XXII, 128).

Cling to the constant use of the most effective means to augment your fervor, and to achieve greater spiritual progress (XXII, 128).

Do not be content of harvesting some flowers of sentiment along the edge of this holy life. Advance on it with perseverance. Each step will appear similar to the previous one, but in the meantime you keep advancing (XV, 166).

What is more helpful to the works of the Lord is holy boldness in starting them, and holy perseverance in carrying them to completion, even during trials, despite all the oppositions (VI, 298).

Final perseverance is the result of daily perseverance, and general perseverance is the result of specific perseverance (V, 199).

¹ Final perseverance is the grace of all graces; from it depends our eternal destiny. Fr. Justin wrote a special prayer for "Final Perseverance" for each month of the year. All Vocationists every day faithfully recite this prayer. (See Devotional, at the beginning of every month).

CHAPTER LXII

Poverty

I shall never extend the concept of poverty to books¹ (I, 224).

Today, in the conditions of modern civilization, religious poverty consists largely in the cross of having involuntary but necessary debts (X, 167).

Our poverty should not be considered as an impediment to the practice of the spiritual and corporal works of mercy (I, 310).

Work as if everything were to be procured only through your activity (XXII, 86).

Voluntarily reduce the use of things only to the necessary (XXII, 86).

No one should procure nor keep for himself any money (XXII, 86).

The characteristic of our charity must be external honor, sign of the internal esteem that we have for the poor and for all those in need of any help (I, 310).

¹ In the sense that in buying books we do not look at the least expensive but to the substance of its content, regardless of the cost.

On the one hand we must trust in God as if we expected everything from him, on the other hand, we need a great ingenuity of effort among us and among lay people, as if everything depended on human cooperation (I, 300).

Divine Providence has established as sources of material means for our religious family the intense, spiritual and material work of all the branches and categories of the Congregation, the judicious general and particular economy, and the effective poverty of community life (I, 301).

The religious cannot sell or buy, receive or donate, lend or exchange any thing in their own name and will (XXIV, 86).

Live a perfect community life without anything out of the ordinary (XXII, 86).

We should form our confreres to notice the need of the brother more than their own, and to fulfilling that need (XXII, 86).

CHAPTER LXIII

Predilection

The divine predilections are more intense communications of God's life (XXVI, 71).

Every person favored by the Lord is always a cause of health for the world (VIII, 167).

Everyone, for his part, according to his vocation, must be a beloved of the Lord. If we have been created, it was due to the relation of divine predilection because every creation implies a choice between all *possibles*, and the one who chooses, chooses for a reason. The only reason that there may be in God is affection and if it is the affection that chooses, then there is a predilection (XXVI, 411-412).

We must always suppose that those who hear us are souls enamored of divine beauty, of divine perfection, of divine holiness and therefore they want to have some idea of divine predilections (XXVI, 72).

Every soul is a privileged and favored of the Lord (X, 201).

The divine predilection consists in a greater love expressed, understood and accepted, in an intimacy much more personal, intense and constant. Love wants this intimacy; the greater is the love the greater is the intimacy that it requires (XXVI, 73).

The predilections that require more intimacy from the Lord, for our part imply a continuous breaking of our boundaries, a continuous going out of self to delve more deeply in God (XXVI, 73).

Everyone who wants it will be the favorite¹. Everyone, at least in some respect is the beloved of the Lord (VI, 285).

The divine predilections are meant to benefit many through few, to benefit all through one, as the whole Church benefited from the apostles, as all humanity from the Virgin Mary (III, 283).

We talk about choosing a state of life very imperfectly, when it comes to the service of God and to our love relationship with him, in which consists all religion. The choice belongs to him, because he is the supreme Lord (V, 252).

¹ God does not have any "favorite". He divinely, immensely, infinitely loves all souls. Predilection is the result of our response to his infinite love. The more we love, the more we become his favorite.

CHAPTER LXIV

Prayers

Only those who pray are truly awake before the Lord (I, 149).

Only the hours of prayer are the hours of bright sunlight, the hours of full activity, the hours of great affairs, the hours of full life (II, 37).

Above all, we must have at heart, for us and for others, the perfect organization and the constant functioning of our prayer life (I, 53).

I am well aware, I know, I see that you love me, my Lord, just as I want to be loved! You are really wounded by love for me, and the wound is ever open and ever alive (XXVI, 26).

The sacred host is your kiss that nurtures love, not in sips, but as in floods of beauty and sweetness from its source (XXVI, 26).

After you, beside you, O God, there can be nothing dear, sweet, precious for me except the image of you (IX, 109).

It is prayer that moves and energizes the lungs and arteries of our life's internal functions. It is prayer that moves us and gives us the legs and feet to advance on this life's road. It is prayer that moves us and gives us arms and hands to accomplish the great task of life. It is prayer that gives us and enables us to use the

weapons and ammunition needed to fight the battles of life. It is prayer that gives and keeps in motion the wings to lift us to ever-higher spheres. It is prayer that gives and enables us to be levers to lift the whole world (I, 54).

Against all odds, we must believe in the omnipotence of prayer of intercession (XXII, 107).

Every day we should expressly implore the grace to hate sin and to propagate this prayer (XXII, 110).

May the Lord grant us to leave behind us and for us on earth, as many sources of supernatural wellbeing as many are atoms in our body, moments of our time, acts of our faculties and much more (II, 129).

O my Lord, tell me everything you want to tell me. Give me all that you want to give me. Do to me everything you want to do (VI, 260).

Lord Jesus, grant that I do not die before I conquer all those degrees of grace and glory that you wanted to give me in my life (II, 276).

Grant that I may not experience death before I have really helped to save and sanctify all those souls that somehow you, Lord, entrusted to me (II, 276).

Lord, grant that I may draw from all things the greatest profit for the soul (V, 158).

Grant, O Lord, that everything may nourish love in me (V, 158).

O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, may my soul be ever more your

image and likeness, and as such ever more dear and beloved to every divine person, increasingly owned by them and united to them so that Jesus Christ may be always more its head, and the Holy Spirit may be ever more its heart, and the Father ever more its life and the soul may become ever more like God (V, 180).

I find sweetness and internal unction pushing me to say to God the Father: "I love you infinitely, eternally I love you, I love you immensely, I love you immutably, not by myself alone, but I as living image of the Son (V, 183).

God the Son, receive and possess this soul as you receive your Father and make it ever more like you, and dearer and more worthy of the Father (V, 184).

Only with you I find myself well. You have wanted me alone with you, as an image and likeness of the divine Circuminsession (V, 190).

In spiritual reading God speaks to the soul. In vocal prayer the soul speaks to God. I believe that divine love finds more glory and delight when the soul listens to him than when it talks to him (X, 58).

CHAPTER LXV

Programming

Although it is always necessary to foresee the work to be done, set the program to be carried out and fix the criteria to follow, we have to adapt to the circumstances of the times, places and people (I, 284).

In our objectives and programs, let us not put any limit on the love of God, or to our likeness and union with God (XXII, 129).

We live in the present without dispersing ourselves in the past or in the future, this would weaken us (I, 285).

Evil lies in making personal projects, regardless of the will of the superiors, and then expecting their implementation at all costs (XV, 121).

Keep the offensive against all forms of personal and ambiental evil, while aiming at further determined achievements of greater goods (XXII, 129).

I wish that in every community we would not have more than seventy-two students, the sacred number of the disciples. If they are too many, either we enforce discipline with an iron hand and the house will look like an army camp, or we will not observe the rules and the students end up losing their vocation (XV, 253).

I heartily exhort you to observe: the hour of daily morning meditation (in honor of the Holy Spirit), the hour of sacred study (I say *sacred*) also daily (in honor of the eternal Father), the hour of ministry of the word, in a catechetical form to any group of listeners, children or adults (in honor of the Divine Word). These are our three [sacred] hours every day (XIV, 462).

CHAPTER LXVI

Purification

I commit myself to the elimination of all unnecessary things because the superfluous is from the evil one (III, 83).

The first purification is due to a first illumination. The first illumination is per se purification¹ (III, 104).

It is necessary to expel the culprits of faults against the beautiful virtue, even if they committed it only once.

For all others, already by nature inclined to evil and tempted to evil, an easy forgiveness would seem a connivance and could be taken as an encouragement and guarantee to repeat it. Instead immediate and very serious reparation would inspire fear and serve effectively to abstain from any form of immoderation.

We must bravely overcome the weakness of the heart, clean and sweep every day, prune every year (X, 215).

He [the Lord] can make bloom with new youth a body that is already near corruption (XIX, 105).

¹ While giving full freedom to his disciples in choosing the method of meditation most appropriate to them, Fr. Justin recommends the Method of the Three Ways: purification, illumination, union.

CHAPTER LXVII

Autobiographical Hints

I suffer being with the great that I endure, given my passive type, instead I am more active and I can better put to work and employ my talents when I am with the little ones and in school, (X, 167).

I cannot demand and I do not ask your confidences, but if you want to make them to me for the good of your soul, I will receive them gladly (XV, 41).

The relationship of spouse of the Trinity is all sweetness. *In it you will die* (X, 168).

Do not be afraid. The Congregation is of God and God wants it. The soul of his Church wants it in the whole world, for all time and beyond time. Fear not (XI, 37).

Your sons come from far away, and your daughters are coming up from everywhere¹. O my good Vocationists, children not of my charms, but of my marriage with the Lord (X, 142)!

Your vocation and your interior life have been a continuous understanding and practicing the greatest commandment of

¹ Is 60, 4.

love. You have understood that Jesus wanted also all your sensitive love concentrated on his humanity. Therefore do not give in to sensitive affections for creatures (X, 176).

If you shall correspond as a lover of Jesus Christ, you will find, not only in me but also in each person in which Jesus lives, a true friend (XV, 38).

That I may be a continuous opening and dilating to you, O my God (X, 193)!

O my Lord and my God, be more and more my friend, my intimate! "*Be my intimate and I will be yours as well*" (X, 197).

Only in Jesus every soul reaches its full perfection and only in Jesus appears in all its amiability. This will happen to me and to all those I now find unworthy of what I give and would like to give to them, my heart. Only then the heart will be totally of Jesus and all loving and will find all people lovable and lovers of God (X, 13).

I consecrate myself to write endlessly during this part of my life what I receive is for my spiritual family. I cannot squander these goods, which are the vital inheritance for the Congregation. I will preserve and accumulate them and after my death the members of the Congregation will derive profit from them (X, 286).

You too, with others, complain about me and my methods, as if they were tying your hands and were the cause of the lack of fervor and of novices. ... We are not saints yet, so do not get discouraged, but let us tend to purify ourselves ever more each day (XV, 132-133).

If you know how to accuse yourself and repent, I will defend you properly (XV, 171).

I was told of an unfavorable evaluation that supposedly I had

made of you and I was saddened as by a slander of the worst kind. Really there is no worse slander than the one that sows shadows, suspicions and divisions between superiors and students and among brothers (XV, 194).

I love you dearly as a brother, as a son in the vocation and I like for you to be sweeter than I, so that you may be loved and the confreres would be as close to you as they are to me and to our sister (XV, 216).

I am glad that you are happy and in good health of body and soul, and you desire to see me, and that you want a rule, and to be directed by me, in the absence of anybody better. Only now it seems that you really want me to be your godfather for confirmation. The godfather is a second father of the soul, especially if he is a priest ... I would not like to be the second father of the soul to one that does not show me the spiritual confidence of a son (XV, 301).

I'm not happy with mediocrity; I want to see in you great virtues, such as those of the saints (XV, 308).

I have heard with great regret of mortal sins committed by you against the virtue of charity. My dear brothers, to say of a companion or of anybody: "He has committed mortal sins" and tell it to those who are unaware of it, and to make public a secret thing, is a great sin and you have done it!

May Jesus forgive you, and when he will have forgiven you, I will forgive you too, because you wound me in the heart, which is the good reputation of my religious confreres, from the youngest student to the most mature priest (XV, 338).

It would be enough for me to know that someone is looking for me or that he feels in his heart the need of me, for me to reach out to him immediately through way of the heart. But when I am not aware of it ... I make him suffer without my fault (XIV, 362).

CHAPTER LVIII

Priest

All the needs of humanity ask for the clergy and the saints. The internal and external apostolate of the Catholic Church claims the clergy and the saints. All the empire of the glory of God demands the clergy and the saints (VIII, 23).

He wants me very much for him, as if he could not live without me. In fact, without the priest he could not live his Eucharistic life (X, 16).

Those who as students are fond of discipline, will one day be exemplary priests (XXV, 241).

The priests are the elect and must be the saints *par excellence* (VIII, 226).

Priestly holiness is the most powerful attraction of the souls to Jesus (VIII, 226).

I cannot imagine a priest, with his character of ordained minister of the kingdom of heaven, who takes care of affairs that are not substantially the affairs of God (XXVI, 45).

A priest who is not totally of God, denies his God (XXVI, 45).

Even the parish priest is a man, every priest is a man (VII, 117)!

Only in his natural family the priest is not and should not be dependent, disciple, son (VII, 114).

The exercise of the priestly ministry with its many blessings given, with so many communions, sacraments and Masses celebrated is something wonderfully great, even in the face of eternity (XXVI, 68).

Even if a priest were less than exemplary, I would not look so much at his ministry or his responsibilities but rather to the immense benefit that from him redounds to the whole universe, even from one Mass he celebrated, albeit with his personal injury (XXVI, 68).

The priests, as extensions of the person of Jesus and his work, reproduce in themselves his life with all his dispositions and intentions, and distribute to the people the treasures of his word and of his blood (VII, 13).

Either the priest is all of God, all holy, or he will not be a good instrument for the sanctification of souls (XXVI, 45).

The priest is an intrinsic not extrinsic representative of all mankind (XXVI, 47).

The glory of the plant will consist in bearing fruit in large quantities, and of beautiful quality; during its life the plant will thus be surrounded, and after, leave the glory of an entire plantation, of which it has been the vital principle. Likewise the priest-plant will produce many beautiful things in the various ecclesiastical appointments, in the various works of apostolate, in the various priestly ministries, in its various cultural ramifications. What is mainly expected of him, that to which all his action must be directed, is his specific fruit: the fruit-priest produced by the plant-priest (VII, 78).

Only the priest is the saint, in the most proper and highest meaning of soul destined, and officially and totally consecrated to the service of God in the Church (VII, 81).

The canonical selection of vocations can better be done among a large rather than a small number (VII, 81).

The very first objective of priestly zeal, which must converge around the sacred ministry, is to promote, seek and cultivate vocations (VII, 82).

Only God calls his elect to his priesthood! In the ordinary way, he uses the instrument-man. In the case of vocations God uses precisely the man-priest, to convey all his will and vocations, to communicate all graces, not excluding this truly sovereign grace of vocation (VII, 85).

All priests, especially parish priests, should commit themselves by word and example to form a vocation oriented mentality among the Christian people in order to inspire spiritual and material cooperation in the formation of vocations (VII, 96).

All external difficulties may come: from the natural family, from the people among whom the priest has his place of work and battle, from his brother priests, and even from his immediate ecclesiastical superiors (VII, 103).

CHAPTER LXIX

Secrets

Everything that if revealed causes uneasiness; anything you do not want others to know is a dangerous tumor (V, 89).

Every secret of evil that we find repugnant to reveal to the ones who should know is like a dark corner where we hide the trash of the soul instead of throwing it away; the soul seems but it is not pure (V, 204-205).

Every secret about our good deeds makes the good purer, more intense, and therefore more diffusive (V, 205).

Every secret about evil renders it more grievous, contagious and hellish (V, 205).

As in the past you confided to me some failures, so now you must confide to me your victories, your perseverance, because I need to esteem you in order to love you (XV, 168).

Do not talk to anyone about your moral miseries, except with the confessor when it concerns a necessary matter (XIX, 178).

CHAPTER LXX

Servants

We see God in all people of the whole Church militant, triumphant and suffering. We see God especially in ecclesiastical superiors, in priests and in all religious. All of them are of God and need to be more of God. Those who belong to God are called saints. We constitute and call ourselves *Servants of the Saints*¹ for the love of God our Lord. We make ourselves servants of all in the Communion of Saints (VI, 225).

The Lord places the heart of his servant in his heart and seats him in his place of spouse (I, 152).

One day the Lord will take his servant, his soul-spouse, to take him into his world of light away in the secret of his face, in his inmost joy; even in the afterlife the servant wants to serve in the eternal wedding feast, because he is always the little servant of all, even in eternity (I, 154).

The Lord wants us truly servants of all. The works that we embrace and the spirit that animates us do not want us to resist or disappoint any person in any way, nor that we fight against anybody or anything, except sin (XI, 188).

¹ *Servants of the Saints* was the first name chosen by Blessed Fr. Justin for his Vocationist Family.

CHAPTER LXXI

Silence

Silence and solitude are like the adornment and splendor of holiness (VI, 258).

The silence imposed by creatures must become internal attention to the Lord, who wants to talk to us (V, 20).

The light comes from the Word of God, the best preparation to receive it is interior silence (V, 14).

To speak to the soul the Lord needs its silence. To be silent the soul needs that the Lord speaks to it (V, 15).

The Lord needs the silence to speak to you, needs the night to shine, needs the nothingness to work and requires death to give life (I, 108).

Without real need I will never talk, neither positively nor negatively, of myself and of those things and people that directly or indirectly may concern me (I, 188).

Think of doing, doing, doing, not of talking, talking, talking about yourself, albeit negatively, which is a false humility and disguised pride (XVI, 306).

We consider the silences as appointments, encounters and talks with Jesus Christ alone, in the sacred intimacy of love (I, 158).

The soul becomes accustomed to the inner continuous silence of loving attention to the Lord, to an external frequent silence, brightening the day with many mystical moments (I, 159).

CHAPTER LXXII

Sufferings

You cannot enjoy anything when the heart is wounded. Now everything seems dead because of the friend's betrayal (X, 289).

Do not ask directly any more sufferings; ask only the pure love and pure zeal (XV, 108).

Physical or moral pain is a tearing apart and expanding of the boundaries of the present capacity for an increased capacity to receive from the Father (XI, 148).

Now I cry, you know, because I feel so alone in the world, without anybody totally for me, without I being totally for anybody. A cold like death closes my heart to life, to love (II, 262).

In the creature there is nothing greater than suffering for God (X, 296).

Where there is more suffering, there is more offering (I, 48).

Now I cry, you know, because I feel so poor in every respect, on every side full of obligations on my part, of community needs. I cannot find resources. I have no more strength and feel pressure from all sides (II, 262).

We should never excuse ourselves with anybody, except when

under explicit obedience of those who can command us, regardless of what we may be accused of (I, 188).

Never see in the sufferings only the work of creatures (I, 214).

Jesus has placed all his wisdom, power and love in suffering divinely for the Father and for souls. You, too, especially in this, should exercise ingenuity, study and strength in offering yourself in so many ways (X, 76).

The good Lord has given you these pupils and subjects for your permanent self-denial. Each one of them must crucify you and those who are most dear to you must tear open your heart: you must love them more and more for this (X, 126).

Do not run away from any opportunity of penance, because when opportunities come without your will there is a manifestation of the will of God in them; who knows what graces he wants to grant to you (X, 175)!

What we suffer, God too suffers. What he suffered we too suffer: This is the result of the union between the head and the limbs (XI, 179).

The heightened sensitivity of the heart hurts (XI, 206).

We still have a lot to suffer before we leave forever this earth of sorrow. Of course, after we are fully healed, we are closer to death than before. Dear sister death, you are welcome! After you, comes the Lord (XV, 296).

CHAPTER LXXIII

Solitude

Love solitude to seek and expect appointments “*one to one*” with the Lord, who speaks to the heart (XXII, 80).

Solitude does not impede but rather promotes the highest and most effective forms of apostolate, which are prayers and sufferings (VI, 301).

Even though we love solitude and stay away from useless conversations, we must also love the conversations of duty, even if only for convenience, as the gymnasium for all virtues and the field of apostolic zeal (I, 165).

I’m alone from cradle to grave and in vain I try to be close to others. I cannot really get out of myself to adhere to others, be part of others and live with others. I cannot, even if I wished it, open up to others in order to receive them and hold them in me to live with them (V, 190).

You created me alone, wanted me alone and you have made it impossible for me to be in others. At the same time you have placed in me the need to live with others, so that I could not be in anyone but enclosed in you alone (V, 190).

God grants the soul-spouse relationship to the soul that is alone. I consent to being alone (X, 297).

I will be all-alone at the time of my death! I want to live all alone with my Lord and my God every day and in every action of my life (XI, 34).

CHAPTER LXXIV

Esteem¹

Man needs to be esteemed more than to be loved (I, 221).

The supernatural esteem of souls is essential to our vocation and mission (XXII, 118).

Build your esteem and your sense of human-Christian-religious dignity on supernatural reasons (XXII, 117).

There is no means more effective to the universal good than universal esteem (I, 221).

Grant, O Lord, that I may understand and feel all the estimability, all the lovability of my neighbor, in the esteem and love you have for him, in spite of all human miseries. If you esteem and love my neighbor it means that he must be well worthy of it in you and for you (see II, 27).

Every man needs to be esteemed more than to be loved; rather,

¹ Esteem is an important element in the formation methodology of Fr. Justin; he adds the element "*esteem*" to the Preventive Method of St. John Bosco, both in the academic and ascetical formation: Esteem is an absolutely necessary prerequisite to love. Knowledge leads to the appreciation and the esteem leads to love, or, even better, is the first level of love.

he first needs to be esteemed and then loved, because true love may be built only on true esteem (VII, 19).

Give the gift of a very hearty smile and a very spiritual greeting to anyone who approaches you (XXII, 112).

As long as a soul is not in the depth of hell, it is always object of the esteem and love of God; which means that it is worthy of it, since God cannot love and esteem an object unworthy of himself (I, 220).

Form the souls to get used to the high esteem that God has for them, for the immense value that the Lord confers upon them (XXII, 85).

We must express hearty esteem and brotherly affection to the infirm and the poor. We must communicate to them confidence and joy in the Lord, as objects of God's predilection (I, 176).

Make aware of your esteem and affection visitors, guests, newcomers, those who are tempted, and those who are spiritually weak and sick (I, 176).

Cultivate esteem and love for every soul consecrated to the Lord, especially if priests (XXII, 82).

No mistake, no fault of my neighbor can, or ought to impede, either internally or externally, my esteem and love of him in the Lord (I, 220).

The unfathomable depths of the sea and the highest mountain summits can never eliminate the spherical shape of the earth. Its colossal size is such that it greatly surpasses them; so too, all the faults and mistakes of our neighbor can never eliminate his basic

estimability and lovability, in the supernatural world, because he is much greater than his own evil (I, 220).

Do not despise anyone; they are all the work of God! Therefore they are worthy of God (X, 58).

Give everyone, even externally, all the esteem and honor possible in words and deeds (XXII, 100).

Touching the very bottom in the esteem of men, the Virgin Mary attained the summit of complacency in the esteem of God (XX, 51).

CHAPTER LXXV

Pride

Pride and self-love are one and the same thing, and God moves away, withdraws from a soul that is full of it (VI, 220).

The source of all evil is pride, impurity of the soul, which manifests itself immediately as impurity, pride of the flesh; they are inseparably intermingled (IX, 318).

Everyone ought to be on guard against those forms of hidden pride by which one presumes to be the beginning and the end of anything (I, 305).

Humility is manifested by the holy obedience. Pride is manifested by disobedience (XVI, 351-352).

The glory of God is our goal; nothing separates us from it more than pride that is universal ruin (IX, 98).

No superior should use the authority received nor the community entrusted to him for his own benefit, for the satisfaction of his ego and feelings (I, 325).

Always be wary of yourself and always be trusting in the Lord, especially on account of the multiform pride and sensuality (XXII, 120).

Every sin is both pride and disobedience (IX, 261).

CHAPTER LXXVI

Obedience

Obedience is essentially the union of the individual's will to that of the superior because he represents authority (IX, 269).

Obedience must be in the intellect, thinking as the superiors think; it must be in the will, wanting with affection what they want, and in the execution, doing well what they command (XVI, 352).

Have a sincere respect inside and outside for any constituted authority, both ecclesiastical and civil (XXII, 90).

You should always desire to be under the supervision and control of major or immediate superiors (XXII, 90).

Do not procure nor desire positions of authority and importance, neither within the Congregation, nor outside (XXII, 91).

Make sure that all your acts and states enjoy always the merit and blessing of obedience (XXII, 91).

Do not make any commitment without previous authorization (XXII, 91).

Every theological or cardinal virtue is essentially both humility and obedience (IX, 261).

Every authority is always for the common good. It is never given for the profit and honor of those who are invested with it (VIII, 167).

Each command, advice, desire of the superiors is both a revelation of what we can do and an infusion of power and ability to do it (IX, 270).

Our obedience is due to the will of God manifested in a lawful superior, not only in the Constitutions (IX, 270).

Both personal and universal sanctification are in direct proportion, as a whole and in its parts, to holy obedience of individuals and of everyone, always (IX, 262).

Wanting (if you are a dependent) and giving (if you are a superior) intrinsic or extrinsic reason of a command destroys the value and merit of obedience (IX, 269).

Every act of obedience executed lovingly strengthens me. Every act of disobedience weakens me (V, 260).

Personal initiatives are worth something. When approved and appropriated by the superiors they become precepts, field and exercise of obedience, which alone can develop, implement, and obtain the result that the Lord wanted (IX, 266).

Nobody should propose projects and agenda that he first cannot or does not want to properly execute (IX, 267).

CHAPTER LXXVII

Humility

True humility is a virtue which restrains in us the disordered desire to excel and disposes us to recognize and love the full truth of our being and work, and to refer to God alone all praise for all good things, of which he is the only author (IX, 97).

In every personal matter, both in the internal and external forum, do not pretend to judge by yourself, but ask the advice of the wise (XXII, 127).

In every conversation and dispute, state your opinion and support the truth without unnecessary passion and hardness (XXII, 127).

Nothing brings us closer to God, our goal, as humility does; for this humility is universal salvation (IX, 98).

Humility makes us ask to do all our purgatory in this life and in the flames of love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (IX, 188).

Humility is the key to victory in every temptation and attracts the predilections of Jesus (XV, 39).

In myself and by myself I am nothing but sin (II, 292).

Reverence and obedience are the main acts of humility, in them

are summed up and synthesized all the exercises of humility (IX, 127).

Holy obedience is exercise, aliment and sign of holy humility (XXVI, 202).

It is absolutely impossible that a person who does not obey may be humble (XXVI, 203).

The main act of humility, the first, essential, indispensable act of humility is to recognize and confess one's own sins to those whom the Lord has set for this (VI, 407).

There is a little child in each one of us. We too, in our heart, mind and person are a poor child (X, 213).

We do not achieve the fullness of light within our own selves, or the splendor of the light outside of us, if we do not have the disposition of humility (VI, 258).

Every principle of holy humility is drowned in the asphyxiating miasma of pride and flesh (V, 205).

The true humility that the Lord wants in those who love him is unlimited confidence, boundless audacity (XI, 145).

Do not ever talk about yourself, neither positively nor negatively, except when necessary with the superior or the doctor (XXII, 103).

Studiously endeavor to remain hidden, to disappear, to be completely forgotten by everyone (XXII, 103).

Do not ever excuse yourself of any accusation with anyone, unless required to do so in force of holy obedience (XXII, 103).

CHAPTER LXXVIII

Universality

Carry all in your heart, your religious family, the holy Church, mankind and the universe, exercising religious sacred worship, always, on behalf of all and for all (X, 217).

The Vocationist carries always the whole world in his arms in order to lift it to God (XI, 30).

You have given us a heart bigger than the world; you have given us a spirit larger than the sky, so that we may fill it with you, O Lord, implement it in you (XXV, 14).

As the soul-spouse you must regally care for all creation, even for the unanimated (XXII, 104)

With great joy I transmit to you a desire that for us is command of the Blessed Trinity: All, present and future Vocationist priests are responsible for the sanctification of the whole world, I say of each and every individual human being (XVI, 487).

We carry the whole world in our hands so that we may lift it up to God. We have the whole world in our hearts in order to raise it for God, as our son, as our little baby born to holiness, from the mystical union of our soul and of our Congregation with the Holy Trinity (XVI, 487).

Epilogue

Whenever we are depressed by some physical or external happening, or something within us causes a bad mood... we should review carefully whether we are living our religious observances.

Whenever we suffer any affliction or feel oppressed on all sides, before seeking any kind of remedy... we should review carefully whether we are living our religious observances.

Whenever temptation by the world, the flesh or the devil so assails us that we lose repugnance for sin ... we should review carefully whether we are living our religious observances.

Whenever lukewarmness overwhelms us and corruption disheartens us, when the zeal of divine love seems so far away or almost impossible... we should review carefully whether we are living our religious observances.

Whenever presumption inflates us, and pride consumes us, when we are guilt ridden to the point of discouragement because all our efforts seem in vain... we should review carefully whether we are living our religious observances.

When our heart expands with devotion and longs to be nourished with the most sublime and unconstrained intimacy with the Lord... we should strive for perfection in our every religious observance.

When zeal ignites and consumes us and wants soul after soul to be converted into saints for the glory, love and will of God ... we should strive for perfection in our every religious observance.

Reparation for our past sins, eradication of evil here and now, and our preservation from all future evil depends upon our religious observances.

Our continual spiritual progress, our achievement and enjoyment of the divine union, and our every truly effective apostolate also depends upon our religious observance.

O my God and my All, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, may your will be done, your love reign, your glory shine, always more in me and in everyone, as in yourself, O my God and my All!

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