

RETREAT OF EIGHT DAYS AT EPHRAIM

(Today the town of Teybeh)

Charles de Foucauld

from

SHOUTING THE GOOD NEWS: RETREATS IN THE
HOLY LAND

Translated from the French by Joseph Kenny OP

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INTRODUCTION

Charles de Foucauld's "retreat at Ephraim", 14-21 March 1898, marks one of the major turning points of his life, this time to a life of contemplative witness to the Gospel among the poor, which was his characteristic life-style for the remaining years of his life. He made this retreat at the Convent of St. Claire at Nazareth, which he thought was the location of Ephraim.

Charles' meditations let us surmise that he had a room to himself with an image of the crucifix with Mary and Mary Magdalene standing at the foot of the cross. He writes not only as if he were in the real presence of these persons, but also really present at the events of Jesus' life just prior to his crucifixion, so that the crucifixion is put in the future tense. The result is an intense and realistic style enriched by a solid theological background, all serving Charles' clear and orderly mind to map the future direction of his life and the lives of all he would inspire.

NOTE

The French edition says that the manuscript had single and double underlining. The French edition puts the single underlining in italics, and the double underlining in bold print. The same is done in this translation.

Scriptural references, which the French edition puts in footnotes, are put between parentheses in the text in this translation.

RETREAT OF EIGHT DAYS AT EPHRAIM IN 1898
from Monday after the 3rd Sunday of Lent to Monday
after the 4th Sunday of Lent
(The Gospel according to Luke)

Monday after the 3rd Sunday of Lent

3 A.M... My Lord Jesus, thanks for waking me up; thanks for calling me to stay up with you, along with the Holy Virgin and St. Mary Magdalene... How good you are!... Everything is still asleep in the house and outside: only you are up with your Mother and her companion adorer of yours... Oh, how good you are, my God, for getting me up and calling me to stay up with you along with them!... You are silent and on your knees: you are praying to your Father, you are looking at him, you are offering him the people for whom you came to earth, those who surround you first of all, then all others now and to come... Your Mother and St. Mary Magdalene are on their knees close to you, very close to you, in front of you, a little back so that they can see you, and they have their eyes on you... They are also looking at God; they look at him in you; they do not take their eyes off you; silently they adore you from within and their souls expand in you with a chasm of endless love and adoration... Their hearts are taken up with both joy and sorrow: sometimes they are so happy to know they are so close to you, alone with you, possessing you, having you so close to them in solitude and silence, during these hours of calm, peace and prayer... Sometimes a bloody vision passes before their eyes, and they say sadly to each other: "Where will he be in 25 days? He will be with his executioners, bound, slapped, hit; and a few hours later this whole dear body which we so lovingly adore will be no more than a smear of blood; he will be nailed to a cross and he will die!... Then your sorrow, O my Mother, O Mary Magdalene, will become "as great as the sea" (Lam 2:13), your eyes will be wet, and "angels of peace will weep bitterly over you" (Is 33:7)... O my Mother, Mother of Perpetual Help, and you my Mother, St. Mary Magdalene, place me between you during these hours we are up; I give you my soul, make it share your feelings, your love, your joys and your sorrows; do what you like with it; I only ask you one

thing, one thing for my soul: Do with it what will make it as consoling as possible to the heart of our Lord... I entrust myself to you forever, O my dear Mothers; let me console our Lord Jesus as much as possible all the moments of my life! That is the only grace I ask of you for me... O my God, thanks for my being at your feet! I hold myself close to your Mother and St. Mary Magdalene and I entrust myself to them so that they will make me stay at your feet in the way that is most pleasing and consoling to you... I also entrust to them all men, asking the same grace for all men, your children, so that all may console you, O my God!... O my Lord and my God, this is very nice, very nice; it is heaven to be at your feet! But where will you be in 25 days? Too bad, too bad!... O my God, may all men console you, may all your children console you these 25 last days... My God, thanks for my being at your feet! I adore you, I love you, I give myself to you without limit and without measure, I want to breath only for you... Holy Virgin and St., M y Magdalene, keep me very close to you, body and soul between you at the feet of our Lord, so as to console him as much as possible! ... O my God, this is very nice! "My soul yearns..." (Ps 84:3.) How nice it is to be at your feet... Oh, thanks for having called me!... You are so divinely good! You love me!... Doesn't it sound silly that you, perfect God, should love me, a creature so poor and unfortunately so unworthy, so lax, and falling a thousand times a day... No, it is not silly, it is the truth, the truth of your divine heart, "Your love is a far cry from our love and your heart is a far cry from our hearts" (Is 55:8-9; 1 Jn 3:20). Yes, it is true that you love me-completely nothing and miserable as I am... You tell us so, you so kindly tell us so; that is enough... But even if you did not tell me, isn't there proof enough in the mere fact of your getting me up and calling me to stay up with you together with your Mother and St. Mary Magdalene? O my God, you are so good! How happy I am! Holy Virgin and St. Mary Magdalene, keep me very close to you at the feet of our Lord Jesus and make me console him with you and like you as much as possible now and always!... My God, I love you, I adore you; oh, my God, with your Mother and St. Mary Magdalene, let me get lost and submerged in

contemplation and love of you...

8 A.M.... Your prayer is ended, my God, your silent prayer, at least, when your mouth is still and your whole being shares in your soul's recollection; for your interior prayer, your soul is looking at your Father and our soul is looking at you, never stops in you, and
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should not stop in us... But after you offered yourself to the Father for his glory to thank him and ask his pardon and graces for us, and after you then pressed us against your heart, embraced us and gave us, O dear Jesus, a kiss with your mouth, a long kiss, a kiss over and over again (Song of Songs 1:2), after all that, you break the silence... We are gathered around you: the Holy Virgin, St. Mary Magdalene, the Apostles, your host, (1) and this unworthy miserable being whom you permit to stay before you and who commends himself more than ever to your Mother and St. Mary Magdalene that they may take him to themselves and make him be as you want him to be... The room is closed up... No outside noise is coming in except for the sound of rain... You are opening your mouth and speaking, my God... We are all looking at you and listening to you, with such love and such care!... You say that you have 8 more days to spend at Ephraim: You leave next Tuesday, a week from tomorrow, for Galilee which you will only pass through, because on Friday, 15 days from now, you will have returned to Bethany, and three weeks from Friday, the day of the Pascal sacrifice, will also be the day when the Lamb of God is sacrificed. (O Jesus, what do you say?)... During these 8 last days of retreat you are going to take your children who encircle you over the principal acts of your life... You are the way, the truth, and the life (Jn 14:6). By your grace and by the
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Most Holy Sacrament you will always be the life of souls and by these means you will always pour out this life in abundance; as for the truth and the way these you have been giving for 30 years, and you will continue to give them while on earth until your Ascension. But then it will be over! The earth will have to live on their memory until the end of time: Your teachings and your example together are at one and the same time both

the way and the truth. Before leaving the earth you are going to use these 8 days of retreat to review quickly the teachings and example which you gave the earth and which you are bequeathing to the earth as the truth and the way until the end of time...

O Holy Virgin, O St. Mary Magdalene, make me listen well and understand well; I am writing down the teachings of this last retreat of our Lord. Guide my hand, O my blessed Mothers, since, as you know, absolutely the only reason I am writing these words is because I believe that it is the will of the Lord. You know that I am doing so only because of obedience to what I believe he wants of me... Help me then in my work, or rather guide me in such a way that you are doing everything... My good Guardian Angel, I ask the same thing of you. My Lord Jesus, you see that I am writing what I understand you to say... Do not let me write anything but your words, and make me write them as you want them to be... a Spirit of Jesus, Holy 594

Spirit, whom Jesus gives when we ask him, I beg my Lord Jesus in his name and for his love to give me your assistance now and always, so that in writing and in every other thing I may do what most pleases his heart. Luke 1:38: "I am the Lord's servant," said Mary; "may it happen to me as you have said." and the angel left her. I was incarnated; I God, the second person of the Holy Trinity, created a human body and A human soul in the womb of the Virgin Mary and I was united with them in a single person at the same time that I created them... Always remaining what I can never cease to be, a true divine person, I became at the same time a true human person... Always remaining God, I became man,, O my children, what a lesson of humility, of lowliness, of prostration... Who could ever come down so far? You could well come down, but in a finite way; I have come down in an infinite way; infinity separates my divine status from my human status... And why did I want to come down? Because of love... God so loved men that he decided to give them his only Son to save them...(Jn 3:16) to redeem them, to be their way, their truth and their life ... Divine love is one; the love of the Father, the love of the Son and the love of the Holy

Spirit for men are one and the same divine love, one and the same God ... The son became man, was incarnated by this one and the same love which brings the three divine Persons to will the Incarnation
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together with a single will.. It was by love, by one and the same love and by the same will that my Father willed me to be incarnated, that I willed to be incarnated and that the Holy Spirit willed me to be incarnated. What made me your God come down here among you is my love, my love for all you men... The same love made me do all that I did... Having come down here only for you, I do everything here only for you. As man, since there is also the man in me, I did not come among you of my own will; I was created... I do not act because of love for men, nor with them in mind, but for the love of God and with him only in mind. Being man, I received everything from God and I must pay him back in full. All my thoughts, words, actions and every instant in my life must be for Him from whom I received my existence, my continuance in being, all that I am and all that I have. In this I am your way, your example. You must, for the same reasons, do exactly the same: do everything for God only, for justice's sake... But being a man, if I do everything for God alone, everything for love of God, it is also true that, still being a man, I do everything, but secondarily, for love of men, everything for their good. This means that, while doing everything for God's sake, my first duty is to love him perfectly and obey him in everything, and consequently to put my will in full accord with his. Now his command for me and his will,
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is that I love men with a love which is as close as possible to the wonderful love with which he loves them and which made him become man and work for their salvation and their sanctification , according to the love which he has for them and which I must have for them for his sake. I must put my will in full accord with God's will... Now the divine Person who adopted my human nature does everything for love of men, for their good. So, since I must do likewise, I must for God's sake, do everything for love of men and for their good...

I am teaching you many things, my children, by showing you this love of God for men, this dominating love which every creature owes to God, this duty of every creature to do everything for God's sake alone (in justice), and this duty of every creature to put his will in accord with God's will, to will what he wills, to love what he loves, and do what he commands...

From these lessons you see many virtues to practice: love of God, love of neighbor as I myself love him, doing everything, absolutely everything for God's sake alone, putting one's will in accord with God's will, putting one's soul and feelings in accord with God, obedience to God. That is the way; I have showed it to you from the moment I entered the world, at the same time that I let you see the truth in its source.

But above all notice in the Incarnation love for men, the love which God has for them, and which you
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therefore must have likewise "to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5:48)... How active and impelling this love is! How deep it is, making it leap over the distance which separates the finite from the infinite, and making it use that extreme unheard-of means for our salvation, the Incarnation; here God himself, the Creator, comes to live on earth as a creature... See this dedication to men, and figure out how much your own should be... See this humility for the good of men, and learn to lower yourself so as to do good, to go first to souls as I was the first in going to souls... Learn to become small so as to win others, not to fear to come down, to lose your rights when there is a chance to do good for souls, and not to believe that in coming down you lose the ability to do good. On the contrary, in coming down you imitate me; in coming down you are using the same means to save souls as I used; in coming down you walk in my way, and consequently in the truth, and you are in the best situation to have life and give it to others, because the best position for that is always to imitate me... I put myself at the level of creatures by my incarnation and at the level of sinners by my circumcision and baptism. Coming down, coming down, humility, humility!.. Always come down, always become humble, become the

servants of one another; let those who are first always take the last place by humility and frame of mind,
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being willing to come down and serve... Love for men, humility, the last place... the last place as long as the will of God doesn't call us to another place, because then we must obey; obedience comes before all, and not only obedience but also being in accord with the Divine Will. Yet even while you are in the first place, be in the last place by spirit, by humility, by occupying your place in the spirit of service, saying that you are there only to serve others and lead them to salvation; even when you are in charge of them you are only serving them, since you are in charge of them only for the purpose of making them holy. Besides this, realize that you should imitate me in everything, and so your coming into the world should have the same aim and purpose as mine. I came into this world for the salvation of men, of all men. So you, who are my brothers, my members, come into the world as I, as a human creature, did: first of all to glorify God to whom every creature owes everything that it is, and secondly for God's sake, to work for the sanctification of all men... Your aim is to glorify God, and this glorifying of God consists in sanctifying all men. So this sanctification of all men, that is, of yourself and of your neighbor, is your work on earth... That is your aim, your duty; that should be the direction of all your concerns and works, your occupation for every instant, the work which God assigns to you, what he wants of you, the
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reason for which he placed you in this world... The sanctification of yourself and of your neighbor for God's sake, that is your aim and your life, to which all your thoughts, words and actions should be directed every moment of your life, just as was the case in my life... In doing that you will be a perfect imitation of me, you will live from my life, you will be moving on my way, and will be in the truth. You will all be my perfect images, my true brothers, you will glorify my Father and you will console my heart as much as this is possible for you; you will do our will on earth as it is done by the angels in heaven.

Luke 1:39 Soon afterward Mary got ready and hurried off to the hill country, to a town in Judea. No sooner had I become man than I inspired my Mother to carry me to the house where John was to be born, so as to sanctify him before his birth... I gave myself to the world for its salvation in the Incarnation... Even before being born I was at this work, the sanctification of men... and I moved my Mother to work with me... She is not then the only one I move to work to sanctify others. From the moment other souls possess me I give myself to them... One day I say to my Apostles: "Preach"; and I give them their mission and lay down rules for them... Now I speak to other people, to all who possess me and live a hidden life, those who possess me but have not received a mission to preach; I tell them to sanctify
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souls by carrying me among them in silence. To those who live hidden and in silence, in solitude far from the world I hereby give them their mission and their rule, and tell them: "All of you, all, work for the sanctification of the world, work at it as my mother did. Without speech, in silence go and establish your places of pious retreat in the midst of those who do not know me. Carry me among them by building among them an altar, a tabernacle, and bring the Gospel there not by preaching it by mouth, but by preaching it by example, not proclaiming it, but living it. Sanctify the world, bring me to the world, you pious people, you hidden and silent people, just as Mary carried me to John. By inspiring Mary to make this visit I gave all of you the inspiration which should move you. By giving her her mission, I gave all of you your own mission.

5:00 P.M. The time is passing, my God; the hours are running by... Another day is finished, another evening at hand. Too bad, too bad that your remaining days here below are so few! How few are the evenings we will yet have before you... In 25 days where will you be at this hour? Too bad, my God, you will no longer be alive... And by such sorrows you will leave this life... You came here below only for us, my God... Men did not accept you at your birth, and they will violently make you leave this world in the midst of the worst and frightful torments... This is the way the earth receives

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its God, and men receive their Savior and Creator! It is true that you leave us to enter your glory... And it is very right for you to stop being a man of sorrows to become the King of glory... But, my God, you will go through such overflowing torments before taking your place at the right hand of your Father!... When you came into this world you were not accepted. All the doors in Bethlehem were closed to you at your birth... You were only a few days old when you were searched for to be put to death... In the 30 following years you found peace only by hiding in a foreign country or in your little town lost on a mountain, buried in silence and lowliness... From the moment you came out of silence you were persecuted. The first persecutors were your fellow citizens of Nazareth who wanted to put you to death, and during 3 years of preaching you were faced with threats of death from every side... And now you are going to permit these threats to take effect!.... See how the earth received its God! And you did not curse it, my God! And you will leave it while blessing it! And you are blessing it every day and will continue to bless it thousands of times every day until the end of time. And you are filling it and will always continue to fill it with inestimable graces... And after the earth rejects you, hunts you, and expels you in this way you will come back to it, and not only come back to it, but will remain in it until the end of time, and not just in
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one place but in any number of places!... But now the time for you to go away is near, my God. Thanks for letting me stay at your feet, thanks for the grace of letting me share with the Holy Virgin, with St. Mary Magdalene and your Apostles in your last retreat, your last trips and your last days! My God, make me spend these days in the way that will console you most! Holy Virgin and St. Mary Magdalene, take me into your company, inspire my thoughts, my words and my actions. Make me spend every moment as you did, consoling our dear friend Jesus as much as possible! Luke 2:7: She gave birth to her first Son, wrapped him in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger there was no room for them to stay in the inn. (Let us continue to

review this life which is about to end, my children...) I was born, born for you... born in a cave, in December, in the cold, in neglect, in the middle of a winter night, in a poverty the most poor do not know, in a solitude and destitution unique in the world... What am I teaching you, my children, by this birth? to believe in my love, since I loved you to that extent,... to hope in me, since I loved you so much,... to be grateful to me for doing so much for you;... I am teaching you to despise the world which I am treating as so unimportant; I am teaching you poverty, lowliness, solitude, humility and penance ... I am teaching you to love me who am so lovable that I was not content with giving myself to the world in the
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Incarnation and with sanctifying it invisibly as in the Visitation. No, that was not enough for my tender love. In my birth I showed myself to you, I gave myself to you completely, I put myself into your hands; from now on you can see me, touch me, hear me, possess me, serve me, console me. So love me, love me, since I am so close at hand to you; I also gave myself so generously to you and am so lovable and extraordinarily good to you: I give myself to you at my birth not just for a few days or a few years but to be among you from my birth until the end of time... Think of the infinite happiness which I gave you through my birth by letting you serve me while serving in church before a tabernacle, serve me by serving your neighbor, and serve me living there close to you in the tabernacle... Not only can you serve me, but you also can console me. I saw every moment of your life in every moment of my own, and my human heart which loves you so tenderly rejoiced or suffered for all the moments of your life: rejoiced if they were consecrated to what is good, suffered if they were used to do evil. What happiness is yours if you can console me every moment of your life... Also, by making myself such a small child, such a lovable child, I cry out to you, Trust! Familiarity! Don't be afraid of me; come to me; take me in your arms; worship me, but while worshiping me give me what children want, kisses. Don't be afraid; don't be overawed before this lovable
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little child who is smiling at you and holding out his

hands to you. He is your God, but he is full of lovable-ness and smiles. Don't be afraid. Come full of tenderness, love and trust... I also mention obedience,... obedience not only directly to God, but also indirectly to God by obeying for his sake and as to himself those he gives you as teachers, parents, ecclesiastical superiors, spiritual directors, superiors of every sort, each to the extent God tells us to obey them... See the small child Jesus, the perfect model of obedience. He is God; he can do anything; his Providence sustains all creatures, and he reduced himself to the obedience of a child in a diaper, without any choice, without any say, letting people carry him where they want and do with him what they want... Luke 2:21: A week later, when the time came for the baby to be circumcised, he was named Jesus, the name which the angel had given him before he had been conceived. I chose to be circumcised and receive the name of Jesus, Savior. I chose to be at the rank of sinners to teach you humility. That is because you need badly to learn it and practice it all the days of your life. By pride the angels were lost, and by pride Adam fell... You will always be tempted to pride... Sink into humility; there you have salvation... I also chose to give you an example of it thousands of times... In my incarnation there is infinite humility, in my birth humility, in my circumcision

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humility, in my 30 years of hidden life humility; everything in me is humility. "I am gentle and humble in spirit"...(Mt 11:29). Through humility in the circumcision I chose to teach you obedience, fervent and perfect obedience to all the precepts of the Church, great or small, obedience without debate, without second thoughts about your own interest, obedience just to obey. I chose to teach you penance and to give you a proof of love and penance by embracing this pain, by taking this chance to shed my blood for you when I was only 8 days old. I chose to be called JESUS, first of all because this name is truth (Jr 10:10; Jn 3:33; Rm 3:4), which you must love for its own sake, for its own beauty, since it is divine, secondly because this name is very tender and lovable and it wonderfully expresses my love for you, lastly because this name is suited to

inspire you with trust in me, to lead you always to hold out your hands as you would toward your Savior, to talk to me with the most trusting freedom of a son... That is what I want of you... I have been called and am your brother a hundred times over... Even while you worship me as God, I want from you the love of a son and of a brother with uninhibited trust.

Tuesday after the 3rd Sunday of Lent

4:00 P.M.... The day is almost ended... my God, today I haven't been in your presence as much as I would have liked, as much as I should have been... sorry! Help me, 606

my Lord, so that this will not happen again, so that I may manage my time better and arrange to be in your presence and enjoy your divine conversation... Oh! I want that always! but above all, above all during these remaining days, especially while on this retreat at Ephraim... Speak, Lord; your Mother, St. Mary Magdalene and the Apostles are listening. I am listening with them, my God. Make me listen as I should. Thank you!

Luke 2:22. The time came for Joseph and Mary to do what the Law of Moses commanded and perform the ceremony of purification. So they took the child to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. I desired to be presented in the Temple to give you a lesson in obedience, since I observed with such scrupulous care the least prescriptions, the least rites, the least ceremonies of the Law, even though I am above the Law. The Son of man is above the Sabbath, and greater than the Temple" (Mt 12:8; Mk 2:28; Lk 6:5) with what scrupulous care must you obey all the laws of the Church, all its decisions, its prescriptions, its ceremonies! And you see how I do everything out of love! I became man because of love; the visitation was because of love; my circumcision was because of love; I took the name Jesus because of love; my Presentation was because of love... Everything was because of love for you, everything was for you... What faith must you 607

have in my love! what gratitude! What love for me!
what love for one another in imitation of the love I have for all of you!

Luke 2:39. When they had finished doing all that was required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their hometown of Nazareth. After my Presentation and flight into Egypt I retired to Nazareth... where I spent the years of my childhood, my adolescence and my youth, until the age of 30... It was still for you and for love of you that I was there and that I led the life I did... What was that life? I led it for your instruction, not by words, but by my silence and my example. What did I teach you? I taught you first of all that you can do good for men and much good, infinite good, divine good without words, without speech, without noise, in silence, by giving good example... What example? That of piety, fulfilling your duties towards God with love, goodness towards all men, tenderness to those around you, fulfilling your household obligations with holiness; I gave you an example of poverty, work, lowliness, recollection, retreat, the obscurity of a life hidden in God, a life of prayer, penance, retreat, all lost and sunk in God... I taught you to live by the work of your hands, so that you will not be dependent on anyone and will have something to give the poor, and I gave this type of life an extraordinary beauty which no other type of life has, 608

except that of a Gospel worker; and this beauty is to imitate me... Those who live by the labor of their hands and those who live on alms while preaching the Gospel imitate me, and thus these two types of life have a beauty which no other life will ever equal, since nothing could ever be as beautiful as imitating me... Anything a person does which exceeds or falls short of what I did is less beautiful and less good. Perfection is to imitate me... You can never have anything better than that, better than my example. Not that everyone should be a carpenter or preach to the Jews... but all who wish to be perfect must sell what they have and give it to the poor, and then either live by the labor of their hands if they are not consecrated to evangelization, or live on alms if they are consecrated to the life of apostolic workers... In both cases they must live as poor men, in the most faithful imitation of my poverty at Nazareth... At Nazareth how much did I preach humility, by spending

30 years at hidden labor, and littleness by staying so unknown for 30 years, although I am the light of the world, and obedience by being subject for 30 years to my parents, who were certainly holy, but they were men and I am God... After seeing me so obedient for so long a time to those I owed no obedience, but am their sovereign master, creator and judge, how can you refuse perfect obedience to those of whom I, your God, said, "Whoever listens to them listens to me!" (Lk 609

10:16)... What a disdain of human things, of human intelligence, reputation, privilege, worldly distinction and fancy manners!... I cast all of that far from me so that I could be seen only as a very poor worker living very piously in a long retreat, or as a very poor missionary consecrating his days and nights to prayer and evangelization.

Luke 2:49. He answered them, "Why did you have to look for me? Didn't you know that I had to be in my Father's house?" Just one incident in the midst of these 30 years... Without telling my parents, I stayed in the Temple for 7 days asking questions of and listening to the teachers... Again I did this for you, for your love, and out of love... to teach you many things, but two especially: first, that when God calls, when the work of God calls, you must leave all, even your parents, even without telling them, even without saying goodbye, even against their wishes, secondly, that you must give great importance to sacred learning, you must pursue it, ask questions of teachers, get instruction when you are young, value it, and put great effort into acquiring this sacred learning... Not all should do this in an equal way... but each in obedience to what his spiritual director says. But in the context of this obedience... You must try to acquire sacred learning as much as possible, because it is something excellent in itself and of incomparable value, since it brings us very close to 610

God and helps us much to love and serve him. Besides, you are imitating me by looking for sacred learning; you are imitating the example I just gave, which I gave because I want you to imitate me.

Luke 3-1:21. After all the people had been baptized, Jesus

also was baptized. While he was praying, heaven was opened. After 30 full years of hidden life I had myself baptized, for you, for love of you... See once more before going on that all I did was for love of you, and therefore by all I did I am calling you to two things: to love me in thanksgiving for the love that I have for you, and to love one another, to imitate me in the love by which I embrace you all. Thus all I did preaches to you before all else: 1) love of God, 2) love of your neighbor... I told you and will tell you forever that these two loves are your first duties, your two great duties. You see how I confirm these words by my example, since in all that I did, without exception, I preached to you these same two virtues... So I had myself baptized for you, and by that I called you to love me and to love your neighbor! Besides these two teachings what else did I teach you by my baptism?... To have yourselves baptized, to extend the benefit of baptism to all you can... to be humble, you sinners, by seeing me, the most holy, put myself at the level of a sinners... never to defend your innocence when you are unjustly accused, unless duty demands it; you are really guilty, if not of what you are accused of, 611

at least of many other faults, and you see me, so pure, place myself at the level of sinners... I also taught you to purify yourselves not only by baptism, which you can do only once, but also by every means of purification: the sacrament of Penance, contrition, the cries of your heart asking pardon. Purify yourselves, you who so need to wipe out your constantly recurring stains, since you saw me purify myself, although I am so pure! Remember that for a person who loves reconciliation, asking and obtaining pardon and coming back to grace are very pressing needs. Such a person has no rest until he obtains repeated assurance that all is forgotten, that he has come back into favor, that he is pleasing and loved, that nothing is held against him, that he is pardoned, and that his sin is thought of no more, but he is loved wholeheartedly.. You must have a much greater desire constantly to be purified before me, since what a great difference there is between the love of God and the love of creatures, and how much more guilty you are before me than you ever could be before men! ...

I taught you to be humble yourselves not only before me, in secret in my presence and in the depths of your heart, but also before those whom I established as my representatives... How could you hesitate to humble yourselves before a priest, a superior a director, when you see me, who am God, humble myself before John?...

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Luke 4:2. ...where he was tempted by the Devil for forty days. In all that time he ate nothing, so that he was hungry when it was over. After my baptism I went into the desert and fasted... not for my Father He did not need it nor for myself I did not need it... (I really did fast, as a man and entirely for his sake. But since he wants me to sanctify you, my way of doing everything for his sake is to do everything for you for his sake... Also as God I did everything really for your sake, out of love... even though as God the first aim of what I do is God's glory, since it cannot be otherwise. So everything I do first of all glorifies me and should glorify me, but what impels me to act is not the desire for my own glory, since I cannot desire what I already have without limit, but I desire what I do not have, which is your happiness. So my desire for your happiness impels me to act. This desire comes from my infinite goodness, to communicate my happiness to others who are creatures.)... What did I teach you by going into the desert and fasting? First, as in everything I do, by the very fact that I did it for you I taught you to love me and to love your neighbor; then I taught you to look for solitude, to fast, and to practice all the mortifications I endured during those 40 days: cold, hunger, lack of sleep, fatigue,... solitude where I was away from those I loved, especially my mother... I taught you two more things: 1) that I can call certain people, like St. John, to

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live their whole life in complete solitude, that this vocation is very beautiful, because in following it they imitate me, imitating my life during those 40 days... Nevertheless this completely solitary life is exceptional in the Church, as it was exceptional during my life... but I blessed and sanctified it by giving an example of it for 40 days... And this sanctification of such a rare but high kind of life was one of my motives in carrying out this

solitary fast... For those called to a completely solitary life extreme solitude must, as in my fasting, be combined with extreme austerity. I showed by my example that in this kind of life the two elements must be combined. By combining these two elements the demons will be defeated who especially attack people who are called to this exceptional and very perfect life.

2) I also taught you that everyone without exception should at certain times of their lives, and especially before taking important decisions, make retreats, which are times of solitude, prayer and penance. Each of these different means should take a position of greater or lesser importance according to the effect hoped for and according to the person doing it, so as to obtain the greatest good possible. A retreat should renew, refresh and heal a person, and should also be a time of rest. I gave you a second example of this here at Ephraim, my children... In the desert I was alone and strong, and fasted without eating or drinking for 40
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days in absolute solitude before beginning my public life... Now I am making a second retreat before my Passion. But, since I am not alone, I am adapting to your needs by and am regulating this retreat not by my power but by your weakness and needs. You are not strong enough to be very much alone or to fast much. That would hurt you rather than help you. So I have gathered you very lovingly around me, and instead of fasting I permit you to eat, and I myself eat with you. We eat frugally, but enough to keep you from feeling any pain or bodily weakness which would be an obstacle to the activity of the soul... You cannot meditate and pray constantly.. We talk together. I gather you around me and, while providing time for silence and prayer, we also have times when I call you together and instruct you through intimate conversation... You are ignorant and in need of instruction. So I adapt this retreat to your needs and distribute the time so that it will not consist only of prayer, contemplation and meditation, but also of spiritual instruction which is necessary for your sanctification... You are sad over my impending Passion; you are restless and weak. I am taking account

of this in the retreat, and am taking care to intersperse some intimate chats when you give me a chance to speak, and will show you tenderness in embraces and blessings, so that you will get all the consolation,
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encouragement and comfort you need in your dejected and spiritless condition. This is because a retreat should be a rest, a therapy for a person. Thus it will be very different according to the person, since each temperament requires a treatment matching its own condition.

Luke 4-:12. Jesus answered him, "The Scripture says, "You must not put the Lord your God to the test." I permitted the devil to tempt me in the desert, and that was for you, for love of you, and for your instruction (Love me, and you will love one another), first of all so that you may know that one is tempted more in the desert than elsewhere, and that those who retire into solitude for love of me should not be surprised or discouraged by their many temptations. Secondly I wanted you all to understand that temptation is not sin, since I myself was tempted, and tempted with horrible things; therefore you should not be sad or discouraged when you are tempted, nor should you blame or despise your brothers when they are tempted. Finally I wanted you to understand how to resist temptations. You must resist them immediately, as soon as they come, from the first moment. An excellent way of fighting them is to bring against them some words of Holy Scripture, which have from their source a divine power... For that it is necessary to know Scripture well. Read it, re-read it, meditate on it, pursue
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it in greater depth, if your director so advises you. Not only your own good and my example, but also the respect and love which you owe me make this a duty of yours, since when I speak you should listen to me, and Scripture is my word. Nevertheless I said, "If your director so advises you," because not all spirits are equally capable of this strong nourishment.

Wednesday - After the 3rd Sunday of Lent

3:00 A.M.... Thanks, my God, for waking me and getting me up! How good you are!... Oh, my God, in my sadness

and anguish of heart these past few days my only consolation is to be constantly before you, to look at you without stopping. But I want to forget my consolation, my God, and do nothing for my own consolation, but only for yours. Your consolation, my God, is to have your children around you as much as possible... You tell us, if not all, at least some of us, and certainly myself (for which I thank you), "Stay up and pray with me" (Mt 26:41; Mk 14:38; Lk 24:47) Holy virgin, St. Mary Magdalene, place me between you before our Lord... Let us look at him and pray with you. Keep our eyes, spirits and hearts awake... Everything is quiet outside... See Jesus before us: He is praying; he is adoring his Father; he is praying for men; he looks at us kindly from time to time to encourage us, yet without coming out of his prayer... my God, I adore you! Let me spend this end of the night, this day and all my nights
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and days contemplating and loving you... O my God, you are there; you are before me. What do you want me to think, or to tell you from the depth of my heart? "I do not ask you to think much, but to love much," so your Spirit answers in the depth of my heart. "Adore me and love me. Look at me; tell me and repeat without end that you love me, that you give yourself to me, that you desire my children to love me and give themselves to melt... All is sleeping; all is at rest! Thank you, my God, for calling me to adore you and love you! Keep my eyes open, my God, and open more and more the eyes of my soul. Let me forget myself and sink into contemplating, adoring and loving you.

10:00 A.M.... Speak, Lord Jesus, your little servant is listening (1 Sam 3:9). The hours run by... Another morning is almost over... Too bad that these mornings are becoming fewer! In 23 days where will you be, my God? You will be scourged and crowned with thorns... O my God! What a thought, what a sight! Where does your love for us lead you? Too bad, sorry, my God! But now you are going to speak to us. I come close to you and the Holy Virgin and St. Mary Magdalene, and listen to you while I look at you... Holy Virgin, St. Mary Magdalene, I put myself into your hands. Let me spend this day and all my days so as to console our Lord Jesus

as much as possible.

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Luke 4:15. He taught in their synagogues and was praised by all. See how my public life began. I was teaching in the synagogues, for you, for love of you. (So love me! And love one another!) I was teaching the word of God... I was doing this to let you know the truth and to give you an example of preaching and of teaching religion. This gives rise to three duties for you: 1) to listen to religious teaching, to look for it, to learn the truths which I taught to the world, each of you to the extent that your right conscience tells you. You must all love religious teaching, receive it and lovingly look for it, since it is my message transmitted by the Church; for whoever listens to the Church listens to me"...

According to the guidelines of your spiritual director, who is my representative for you, you should try to get some level of knowledge of my teaching. Some of you should be content with listening to the words of their pastors. Others should follow courses in theology, reading the books of masters and spending their days and nights at this study. The time each of you consecrates to listening to my word will be very different, but the love and the respect which you should have for it should be the same for all. 2) Your second duty is to obey the religious teaching which I give you, which you have heard for three years from my mouth, and which the Church will repeat in my name until the end of time, since "Whoever listens to the Church

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listens to me"; you owe the Church the same obedience as you owe me. And each of you must conform to its teachings, which are my own, in your thoughts, words, actions and all your life through absolute obedience. 3) Your third duty is to preach personally. I have given some of you the mission to do this by word, after the example of my own preaching for three years; yet all of you must preach by example, as I did from the moment I came into the world.

Luke 4:30. But he walked through the middle of the crowd and went his way. In the episode referred to here I had returned to Nazareth, which I had sanctified by my 30 years of hidden life... I preached, even though I

foresaw that I would not be believed... I spoke with severity to my fellow citizens... They took me by force and wanted to kill me... I did all that and permitted all that for you (Love me, and love all men!), and I thereby taught you three things, not counting the duty of loving God and neighbor, which came first in all my acts and all my words by the very fact that I did and said everything for your good... The three other teachings are: 1) that you must preach, after my example even when you do not hope for success, for reason of duty alone, because your obligation is to give witness to the truth, even when it will not be believed. You must do so in obedience because I said later, "Preach to every creature" (Mt 28:20; Mk 16:15; Lk 24:47).

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So every creature should hear the Gospel, whether it is disposed or not to receive it... 2) You must also learn to speak to me with courage, as I did here. Fear God who can destroy the body and throw the soul into hell, but do not fear men at all who can only destroy the body (Mt 10:28)... moreover they can do so only with the permission of God, without whose will not a hair can fall off your head (Lk 21:18). Have courage, great courage, with all men. You are the sons of God; you are my brothers; an angel is at your sides; have no fear of any man, no timidity, neither in your words nor in your actions. Have charity, kindness, love, compassion, peace, tenderness without limit, but fear, never!... 3) My third teaching is that once you declare yourselves my servants you must expect persecution... I was persecuted all my life... At my birth Herod wanted to put me to death... I had hardly begun to preach when my fellow citizens wanted to kill me... I hardly escaped from their hands when I saw ambushes set for me by the Pharisees and Herod, who followed me from town to town and set new traps for me every day for three years in order to put me to death... At the present time, as you see, I could no longer go out in public in Judea without danger of death. My death was decided by the High Priest, and in 3 weeks it would be accomplished ... All that teaches you that if you imitate me in my

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virtues, if you imitate me in preaching the Gospel and in following the truth, the persecution which surrounded me constantly are waiting for you. You must receive them with joy, as precious marks of your likeness to me, as an imitation of your Dearly Beloved... You must endure them calmly, knowing that if they happen to you, it is because I permit them, and they will happen to you only in the measure that I permit; and not a hair of your head can fall off without my permission... You must accept them in conformity with the will of God, welcoming everything that happens, since everything that happens is permitted by God and leads to his glory in one way or another... You must suffer them with courage, offering your suffering to God as a sacrifice, as a holocaust for his glory and to carry out his will, a sacrifice that will please him more and be more valuable the greater your sufferings are and as they are offered by a more loving and more joyful heart... You must suffer them while praying for your persecutors, since they are children of God. because God desires their salvation and I myself gave my blood to save them, I gave you the example of praying for all men, for our persecutors and our enemies.

1:00 P.M... You interrupted your conversation, my God, so that we could pray in common the canonical prayer. We said it together aloud and then prayed silently
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together, yet each of us as if we were alone before God... Then came the relaxation of the body and soul in the midday meal... Prayer followed, and now you are resuming the conversation we had begun... Holy Virgin and St. Mary Magdalene, hold me between you before our Lord; let me listen to him, let me love him as I ought, let me be now and always what I should be to console him as much as possible.

Luke 14:40. After sunset, all who had friends who were sick with various diseases brought them to Jesus; he placed his hands on every one of them and healed them all. My apostolic tours were filled with an infinity of miracles: healing of possessed people, the sick, the blind the disabled... It was for you and for your good that I worked these miracles. So love me and love one

another! I worked these miracles for the physical good of those I cured and also for the good of their souls, and still more for the spiritual good of all my children. I taught all of you many things by these miracles: to love me and to love one another before all else, since I act only for you; then to have faith in me, Jesus, in my religion, and in my Church, because you have seen me work these wonders;... to practice love of your neighbor, as I constantly recommend, first of all by doing good for people's souls. That is the most important, essential and first thing for you. (Thus you see how I first taught before working miracles; and even while working

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miracles to relieve the body, I worked them principally for the good of souls, to arouse faith in my teaching, to win souls to my teaching by leading them to me by way of gratitude, and to mollify souls and lead them to praise God.) In second place, but always, I taught you to practice charity by doing good for people's bodies. You must always seek to relieve the body, first for the good of the soul, as I said, and secondly for the good of the body, because to love every man as a little one, as you must love me, you must desire every relief and every good for each man, as you would desire it for me (with somewhat less intensity, but with the same extent and universality of desire). As you should not be satisfied with desiring the good of my soul, but should also desire the relief of my body, so also you should desire for all men not only the good of their souls, but also the relief of their bodies... Nevertheless you must desire bodily relief for me and for men in union with the divine will, in conformity with God's will, that is, to the extent that he wills it, or I will it, and not to the greatest extent that it possible... But even while submitting yourselves with all your heart to the divine will and even while desiring for the body only the extent of good that God wills for it, your own duty, since you do not know what this extent of good is but only know that you must love your neighbor and do him all the good that is possible your own duty is to leave to God

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the care of restricting the goods of the body as well as restricting grace to souls, and to do by prayer and by

any means in your power, the greatest good possible for the bodies and souls of people. "Whatever good you do for your neighbor, you do for me... Whatever good you do not do, you are failing to do for me" (Mt 25:50-56) ... This shows you that even while putting spiritual goods in the first place and bodily goods only in the second place, you must do all the good you can for your neighbor, both bodily and spiritual good... I myself accept as done for me the good that you do for the souls and bodies of our brothers.

Luke 4:42. At daybreak Jesus left the town and went off to a lonely place. The people started looking for him, and when they found him they tried to keep him from leaving. You can see how I spent the three years of my public life, spending whole days instructing and healing, doing good for people's souls first, then for their bodies... what did I do in the evenings? In the evenings I retired from the crowd to whom I had so fully consecrated the day. Looking for solitude, I shut myself up in the house of a friend or I went to the hills, to some deserted peak. Whether in a house or in the desert, I passed the night in prayer... In any case I spent the night in recollection and silence, staying up praying away from the crowd... This is the example I left you. I did this for you. I myself was strong enough and had

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sufficient self-mastery to be everywhere as if I were alone with my Father... I saw him without interruption; I was always with him; I didn't need solitude to be recollected, or silence to pray to him, or particular prayers to be united with him... In the midst of the crowds, while speaking, I was just as united with him as I was in the deepest solitude... I did not need meditation to know him, because I already knew him. I did not need contemplation to strengthen me, because I was divinely strong... I needed neither solitude nor watching nor silence nor prayer, for within me prayer was continuous and perfect... To give you an example, I stayed up so many nights alone, praying to my Father under the starry sky or in a closed room... I did everything for you; so love me and love one another... And follow this example: Take as little sleep as possible, and spend as much of your nights as possible staying

up in recollection and silence, praying, contemplating and sinking into God... And by prayer I always mean meditation, contemplation, intercession and spiritual reading, according to what each person's spiritual director tells him will be most useful for his sanctification, that is, my glory, which consists in the sanctification of each of you. "God's glory is for you to become my disciples and bear much fruit" (Jn 15:8), that is, God's glory consists in the sanctification of all men.
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Luke 5:32. I have not come to call the respectable people to repent, but the outcasts. Remember, my children, how I defended you every time the Pharisees rebuked you or tried to embarrass you with their questions... Do likewise... Defend the good against the evil, the weak against those who oppress them unjustly. I defended you by love for you and love for all men (So love me and love one another!), by love for you personally, to lead you to love me in thanksgiving and to love your neighbor, by imitating what I did. I defended you to deliver you from imminent evil, from danger or from some suffering that threatened you, to give you an example and teach you to defend your brothers, your spiritual children, all the innocent and all the oppressed, as I defended you... Did I ever fail in the duty of defending those who were attacked unjustly? Never, to the last breath of my life... I defended people who were attacked even by yourselves, my friends. I defended Mary Magdalene against her sister... I am faithful, and I never saw my friends attacked without coming right away to their defense. You do likewise... It is a work of charity, one of the signs of love which you must have for your neighbor... And the same lesson, to defend the innocent and the weak as soon as you see them attacked, I taught not only to you but to all men. For all of them it is an obvious duty of brotherly love.
Thursday after the 3rd Sunday of Lent

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3:00 A.M.... My God, I adore you! Thanks for waking me up early this morning, and sorry, sorry, sorry for not coming right away... O my God, you woke me up and called me. You are up and praying. I could have stayed up and prayed with you, but I fell back to sleep. Sorry!

sorry! what a pity! What happiness I missed! What slackness have I committed! I could have consoled you, but I saddened you. I could have prayed before you, staying up and looking at you with the Holy Virgin and St. Mary Magdalene, but I not do so. Sorry! Oh, sorry!... Help me, my God, so that such an evil and such-a misfortune does not happen to me again... Change my heart of stone and this man of flesh (Ez 11:19). Oh, my good mothers, Holy Virgin and St. Mary Magdalene, do not let me fall again into such a detestable fault!... How good

you are, my God, to have awakened me a second time; I lost much time... Thanks for calling me a second time in spite of my slackness and for placing me in your presence... Oh, how good this is! Oh, how delightful it is to be before you with the Holy Virgin and St. Mary Magdalene and your holy Apostles who also are up and watching silently, looking at you and praying...

Thanks, thanks for letting me be in your presence and share in the recollection of your night prayer... You hardly took a few moments of rest. Your mother and Mary Magdalene took no more than you... The hours
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pass and you are praying always. You look at your Father and pray for your children... This prayer is always short, because it is always heard and is all powerful. Your Father hears you always. He does what you want, and you ask only what he wants. So just a word is enough when you ask. You put everything before your eyes by a simple act of your soul, praying in few words to him who fully hears all your words and with whom you are one... But your contemplation of his beauty lasts long in you; your act of love lasts a long time... Eternity would not be too much for you to spend in this contemplation, this love and this adoration. It will fill centuries for you. The hours of a night are too few and pass like a flash of lightning in your heavenly occupation... You contemplate God without moving, sometimes on your knees, sometimes sitting... Once in a while you give a tender look at these children of God gathered around you and on their guardian angels who adore you. You look at God; Mary, Mary Magdalene and the Apostles also look at him, since they are watching

you. Their eyes never leave their Beloved. They pray in silence, with their eyes fixed on you, who are everything for their souls, as they see your pale and pleasant face in the faint light of a small lamp. They look at you, and most of them are lost in this silent contemplation, lowering themselves before you without any other thought, but still looking at you and adoring you with
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all the love of their heart... While looking at you, some of them notice sad thoughts in their souls... This beloved Jesus, the blessed God, this dear master, how much longer will we see him among us? How many more nights will we spend before him in this pleasant prayer? In 71 weeks, at this hour, he will have only a day and a half to live. Oh, what a great sorrow! And how much greater a sorrow will be the torments which will accompany his leaving this earth which never received him, which hunted him and for his whole life offered him nothing but persecutions!... Oh, my God, if you have so many enemies and executioners and so few friends, at least make your friends be faithful and be courageous and eager in your service, not recoiling from anything that is pleasing to you or anything you would like them to do, but ready for anything your love and service asks... Help me, my God, so that I will no longer be lax or slack in the future. Sorry, sorry, sorry for the past; sorry for this night. Help me in the future to be faithful, kind and courageous at every moment of my life, doing everything, everything, everything which is most pleasing to you, so that I may console you as much as possible every instant of my life!

10:00 A.M. You are conversing again with your Apostles. I come alone to you, my Lord, and listen with delight. Holy Virgin and St. Mary Magdalene, keep me in the Lord's presence and make me listen to his word as I
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should. Let me make good use of these blessed hours as he desires of me... Too bad! In 3 weeks it will be his last Thursday, the last full day he will have on earth, the last morning before his Passion! Let me, let us all console him as much as possible these last days, O my blessed Mothers!

Luke 6:10. He looked around at them all, then said to

the man, "Stretch out your hand." He did so, and his hand became well again. Remember the courage I showed in the very midst of my enemies, even while they were plotting to kill me, as I proclaimed out loud to their face the teaching of truth, and those very truths which I know were most hateful and most insufferable to them... Remember the courage I showed in working before them and in their midst those healings and those acts which sent them into rage and made them swear to kill me. I did this for you, for your good (So love me and love all men whom I loved so much), in order to preach the truth openly, and in order to give all men a general lesson of courage, and to all men a particular lesson of courage in practicing charity and in practicing their religious duties, and in order to give all pastors a lesson of courage in their preaching. Do not hide the truth, whatever it costs you. If you are martyrs for it, so much the better; you will reign with me the sooner in the house of my father... But remember the example that I gave you. I am the

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light (Jn 8:12); I do not have the right to put myself under a bushel (Mt 5:15; Mk 4:21). I must enlighten men even in spite of themselves until the Father sounds the hour of my rest. You likewise, who are pastors, I have put you on a light stand. You must enlighten men whether they like it or not. You must sow the seed that I entrusted to you and cry on the housetops the teaching I confided to your ears (Mt 10:27; Lk 12:3). Cry out, sow, preach; do this to obey me; do this with such a pleasant joy that you are not only obeying me but also imitating me... Whether you are listened to or not, preach always, so that your words may bear fruit. If they do not bear fruit, continue preaching without sadness or discouragement, and with the same joy at this lack of success, since in not having success you are sharing my lot.

Luke 6:20-22. Jesus looked at his disciples and said, "Happy are you poor; the Kingdom of God is yours! Happy are you who are hungry now; you will be filled! Happy are you who weep now; you will laugh! Happy are you when men hate you and reject you, and insult you, and say that you are evil, because of the Son of

man! Remember my teachings! Happy are you poor!
Happy are you who are hungry! Happy are you who
weep! Happy are you when men hate you! Listen
carefully to these words which I spoke only for you and
for your good! (So love me and love one another!) ... Yes,
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happy are you when you are poor! Happy are you poor
in bodily or material things. To "sell what you have and
give to the poor" (Mt 19:21; Mk 10:21; Lk 18:22), and to get
rid of earthly goods as so much baggage that gets in
the way this is the first step in the way of perfection, the
first thing for those who want to follow, me (unless in
exceptional cases your director, the master I have given
you, my representative with you, forbids you to do so...
You must always obey him... "Whoever hears him, hears
me"... If he leads you poorly, I am there; I see him; it is
up to me to see that he changes or is replaced by a
better director... Obey, obey, obey me by obeying him
for my sake)... Even happier are the poor in spirit (Mt
5:3), who not only disown material goods, which is the
first degree, but go much higher and empty themselves
of every attachment, every taste, every desire and every
pursuit that does not have me for its goal... This
poverty of spirit empties the soul completely, removing
love of material things, love of neighbor, and love of
oneself, expelling all, all, all, and leaving only a void
which I fill entirely, since such people give themselves
entirely to me... And I then divinize their love of
neighbor, their love of themselves and their love of
material things that they put out of their souls to let
me occupy them wholly... They put out of their souls
only one love; I fill their souls which are empty of all
and full of me, but then in me and for my sake they
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begin again to love all things, no longer for themselves
or for their enjoyment, but for me. This is well ordered
love... They love all my creatures for me and not for
their own sake, since they owe me all their love. They
must get lost in me and have nothing except through
me and for me, both love and everything else... Happy
are those who are so poor in spirit, so empty of
everything, so full of me! Happy are you who are
hungry!, you who are hungry for justice, for the reign of

justice on earth, for my reign on earth, for my glory,
hungry to see me glorified by everyone, hungry to see
my will done perfectly by all beings... Happy are those
who have this hunger and love of justice, for this
hunger and love are in my own infinitely just heart, and
I can only have an infinite love of justice, a deep
revulsion for what is not just, and an extreme desire to
see justice reign everywhere. Those who share these
feelings are conforming their hearts, their souls and
their wills to mine, which is a wonderful happiness.
They are really happy, as Daniel was happy, whom I so
readily praised by calling him a "man of desires" (Dn
9:23 -Vulgate)... So be very hungry for justice: to see
justice observed perfectly by yourselves and by all men,
to see the will of God done perfectly by yourselves and
by all men, and to be made perfectly holy, yourselves as
well as all men... my heart longs for this hunger... Seek
this hunger more and more; seek it not for yourselves
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or for men, but for God's, sake... for love of God. For his
sake and for love of him seek this eager hunger for the
sanctification of all men and this eager love for all
men... Happy will you be in that case! for you will be
perfectly united with my heart!... Happy are you who
weep! Those who weep are happy because they are
unhappy, poor, mourning, sick, suffering in body and in
soul, tested in every sort of way. Happy are such people,
because their sufferings will help wipe out their sins,
will detach them from this world and make them lift
their eyes to me and attach themselves to me... Even
happier are those who weep for their sins... Happier
again are those who weep for my sufferings, my
Passion, and all the sufferings I endured on earth... And
happiest of all are those who weep for love, who weep
because they love me, for no specific reason, weeping
not from suffering or desire, but only because in
thinking of me their entire heart melts and they cannot
hold back their tears. Happy are you when men hate
and persecute you for my sake! Yes, such people are
happy, because by imitating me they are sharing in my
lot... As true spouses they will share fully in the lot of
their Spouse... Happy are such, for what is more
delightful than suffering with one you love if not

suffering for his sake?... Such people are doubly happy, since they are suffering with their Beloved and are suffering for him... They are also happy because by
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these sufferings their love for me grows. It grows to the extent that they are suffering for me... And this growing love is not a passing thing, but remains, and will remain for all time and eternity... Oh, happy are those who suffer persecution with me and for me and whose love grows constantly during these persecutions! Never refuse or fear to suffer pain, hatred or persecution for me; on the contrary, accept them with joy, blessing, thanksgiving and gratitude to God and to men, thanking me from the depth of your heart, praying for your enemies and executioners, uniting yourselves as earthly angels to their guardian angels to ask for their conversion, and rejoicing from the depth of your heart for being judged worthy to endure humiliations and sufferings for my name's sake (Acts 5:41)... Do not forget that this is how I treat those I love very specially... This is how I treated the patriarchs and prophets, the way I treated my mother, the way I treated my dear father Joseph, the way I will treat you, Mary Magdalene, and you Peter, John and James, and all my beloved; and above all this is the way I treat myself, who should be first in everything... What blessings will come at the end of these sorrows!.. The more you love and suffer for me in this world, and the more you are persecuted for me, the better you will see me and the better you will love me eternally in the
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other world; you will know me better and love me more, and for all eternity!

5:00 P.M.... My God, speak; your servant is listening. Between the Holy Virgin and St. Mary Magdalene, before the circle of your Apostles, there am I, very little, self-effacing, looking at you and listening... You resumed your conversation with your Apostles after midday prayer... You continue to survey your life and explain its meaning with your last instructions... I adore you, my God, and I am listening to you... Holy Virgin and St. Mary Magdalene, keep me In the Lord's presence!

Luke 6:27. But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you... Remember my teachings, my children, practice them and teach them. Notice that I gave them for you and for love of all men, and consequently they should lead you first of all to love me and to love all men. Love your enemies... bless those who curse you... Do good to those who wish you evil... If anyone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other ... If anyone takes away your coat, let him also take your shirt... Give to whoever ask you... If anyone takes something of yours, do not ask it back... Do to others what you want them to do to you... Be kind as your heavenly Father is kind... Do not judge, and you will not be judged... Do not condemn... Pardon, and God will pardon you... Do not look at your brother's

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speck, but at your own beam...(Mt 5:39-48; 7:1-5; Lk 18:22) All these commandments are commandments of love, my children, and they cannot be a surprise to you if you understand once and for all that all men together make only one single family whose common Father is God, the creator, conserver and Father of all alike. He loves all men much more than the most tender father loves his children... And just like any tender father, he wants the sons and daughters he loves so tenderly to be governed by harmony, love, tenderness, indulgence if need be, and a kindness which is always ready to give in... So he wishes us to give in to one another and help one another without reserve, and each of us to give up his right without ever claiming it back, giving in to his unjust brother so as to correct him by kindness and keep peace in the family, praying only for his self-correction... Finally, you see, this whole series of recommendations I made to you has only the one aim of keeping peace and love among all the brothers who make up the greater human family... Keep these rules always, and inscribe in the depths of your souls this principle from which all others follow: that all men are truly, really brothers in God their common rather, and that he wants them to look on one another, love one another and treat one another in all things as most dear brothers.

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Luke 7:15. The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother. - Be sympathetic with one another, as you see I am sympathetic with you... As I suffer, feel sorrow and sympathy for all sufferings, as I sigh with one and cry with another (Rm 12:15), I feel sorry for their sorrows, their sicknesses, their uneasiness, their hunger, their weakness, their ignorance and, above all, their sins. I not only do good to their souls and bodies, but my heart feels a sorrow and deep sympathy for all their evils of soul and body... Sympathy is part of love in every human heart. Since I command you to love all your brothers, show sympathy for all their troubles, large and small; suffer with them everything that they suffer, as I gave you an example in so many ways!... Never forget this duty of love and sympathy... Do not forget my tears and sighs and the miracles I worked without being asked, giving dead sons back to their mothers. May each of you be able to say at his last hour. "A thousand blessings on anyone who can say the same." And he can add: "The love of Christ pushes me on... It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me (Gal 2:20; 2 Cor 5:14).

Luke 8:24. The disciples came to Jesus and woke him up, saying, "Master, Master! We are about to die!" Jesus got up and gave a command to the wind and to the stormy water, they quieted down and there was a great calm.

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My children, whatever happens to you, remember that I am always with you...

Remember that whether I am seen or unseen, apparently acting or apparently sleeping and forgetting about you, I am always awake, I am everywhere, and I am all powerful. Never be afraid at all, or worry. I am there, I am awake, I love you (You do not doubt my love any more, I hope!), I am all powerful...

What more do you need?... Everything that happens to you, then, happens by my permission or my will, by the permission and desire of my love, so that you can derive great good from it, great good which I myself help you to derive from it by my grace... So don't be afraid of anything, since nothing can happen to you without my permission... Do not be troubled about anything, least

of all with any suffering which goes beyond the instinctive movement of sense nature, which is quick and passing, but put your will in conformity with mine... Nevertheless be sympathetic with the evils of others, the evils of their bodies, and above all those of their souls; cry for their sins and your own, but not with an excessive and uncontrollable sorrow, not like the pagans who have no hope, or like men who don't have the Faith and don't know that evil should be lamented only with moderation, because, even though I do not will it, I permit it. So even while bemoaning evil, you
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must do so moderately, putting your will in conformity with mine, and spend less time crying over the past, which can't be changed, than in providing for the future, so that God may protect the earth, water his graces and not allow it to suffer so much evil... Trust! Don't worry! I am there, and I love you! Devils and men are all under my power. No one can attack your soul or body without my permission... Remember the storms that I calmed with one word, making a great calm take their place. Remember how I held up Peter walking on the water (Mt 14:20ff)... I am always near each man as I was then to you, and I am just as ready to help and assist in any way that will benefit his soul... So trust! Have faith and confidence! Do not worry about your body or your soul, because I am there, all powerful and loving you... But do not forget that I am there... Your confidence should not arise from carelessness or ignorance of the dangers or from trusting in yourself or other creatures. No, your situation is very serious. You have only a few years, a few days to win a happy eternity or to merit eternal fire... The dangers you face are immense. Hostile demons who are strong and clever, your own nature, and the world are constantly waging a fierce war against you. You have no reason to trust in yourselves; recall your sins and your years, and this examination of your past will show you the deep level which your virtue, your spirit and everything that
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is in you has yet to reach. You can count no more on others; they cannot act in your place or save you in spite of yourself... Oh, in this life the storm is

continuous, and your boat is always ready to sink... But I am always there, and with me it is unsinkable. Mistrust everything, especially yourself, but trust completely in me, with no worry. Be careful about all that you do, but without worry, because I am there... But rely only on me... Rely on me in prayer, praying to me constantly: "Knock, and the door will be opened; ask, and you will receive... If you who are evil can give good things to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father, who is good, give you good things... Pray without stopping... Pray and do not stop praying... Watch and pray." (Mt 7:7-11; Lk 11:9-13; also Mt 26:41; Mk 14:38; Lk 22:46) ... I gave you not only the command to pray, but also the example, praying myself whenever I had the chance and spending my nights in prayer, and also hearing prayers promptly and universally without exception, whenever these prayers were made to me with faith and humility... So do not forget, whatever happens to you, that I am always there. And since I am always there, speak to me always; never stop spending time with me... Pray always and trust always!

8:00 P.M... My God, here once more is the time of silence... Night covers the earth. The sky is black and covered with clouds. No sound can be heard but some 642

singing in the distance... How sad is that song which comes from some worldly house, brought here by the wind! How false it is! How surely it is a cry human nature makes when it is not devilized by you, my Savior... This song is supposed to be a song of joy, but in spite of itself it is so plaintive; it is the sound of people seeking pleasure; the more they try to be joyful the heavier they are with tears... Oh, how happy we are, Lord Jesus, to be no far from the sad world whose far-off echo barely reaches us with the gusts of the wind!... It is really good to be closed in with you in this small room, in the company of your Mother, St. Mary Magdalene and your Apostles, to see you, look at you, hear you, and now as the night goes on, to pray silently before you among these holy ones, losing myself with you in contemplating you!... My Lord and my God, where will you be three weeks from today? Too bad, too bad! At this time you will be at your Paschal meal, your last

supper... At this time you will be a few moments away from your agony and your arrest... O my God, let me spend this night, which in three weeks will be so sorrowful, in a way that will most console you!... Oh, Holy Virgin, St. Mary Magdalene, my good angel, holy Apostles, and you too, my Father St. Joseph, who see me from the abode of the just, I beg you to let me console our Lord as much as possible during this night and at every moment of my life... And what I ask for myself, I

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ask for all other people whom the Heart of our Lord loves and whose faithfulness can console him, that is, for all men.

Friday after the 3rd Sunday of Lent

3:00 P.M.... My Lord Jesus, I have worked in your presence all morning and all day, and only now can I sit before You simply to listen to you... It was certainly nice, my God, to work in your presence, under your eyes, in the room where my mother the holy Virgin, my mother St. Mary Magdalene, the Apostles and angels surround you... But have I benefitted from this grace and looked at you lovingly while working, as I should have?... Too bad, I have not; pardon me, my God! Help me to finish with fervor this day which I began lukewarmly, so that this afternoon, tonight and always in the future I may be what you want me to be, so as to console your heart, my very dear Lord Jesus... Oh, holy Virgin, Oh, St. Mary Magdalene, my dear mothers, hold me between you and let me listen with you to the message that falls from the lips of our Lord! Luke 9:16. Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up to heaven, thanked God for them, broke them, and gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people. My little children, remember that among the miracles I worked before you, some had a special character... They symbolized a great mystery... I explained to you that at

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Capernaum something about this mystery, and these truths so surprised the people that most of them did not believe me and many of my disciples went away and no longer followed me... I am talking about the multiplication of loaves which prefigured the sacrament of my body and blood which I was to

establish on the eve of my death, at the last hour and the last meal I would share with you... I could not, my children, decide to leave you completely... I did not want to leave you or orphans (Jn 14:18). I will leave you at this very hour three weeks from now, but I will come back to you soon, first after rising from the dead until my ascension, and then in the most holy Sacrament of the altar until the end of time... So, even while going to heaven, I will remain among you upon earth until all ages are ended (Mt 28:20)... I am doing this for you, for love of you, for your good. (So love me! Love all men, since I love them all so earnestly!)... I am doing this because you are cold, to make you hot, fervent, loving and tender by my presence, my sight, the signs of my love,... because you are weak, to make you strong and courageous by your awareness of my presence, by seeing clearly that I am always with you,... because you are without hope and trust, to give you hope and trust, seeing my love for you and my familiarity with you, ... because you are sad and discouraged, to make you happy and full of joy through the good fortune of being
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on your knees before your dearly Loved One, being constantly in his presence, ... because you are inclined to be busy with things that are material, exterior, worldly and passing, which concern your body, to lead you to put them aside and be busy rather with spiritual, interior, heavenly and eternal things which concern your soul, by attracting you to my churches through my presence, by letting you spend days before my altars in devotion to my presence, by leading you to pray to me, who will hear you since I am so close to you in the tabernacle, by leading you to spend whole days in contemplation before the holy Host which you know is really myself, really the Jesus you love... That is not all... By giving you this heavenly bread, I not only place myself before you to be adored, even though this presence alone is already an infinite good, a divine and perfect good, the All,... (In thus giving you my presence in your tabernacles to the end of time, I give you an infinite gift)... but I give you two other infinite gifts besides... The second is that I give you myself to be your food... The third is that I give myself as an offering in

sacrifice for you to my Father in my name... The three gives art: (1) continual presence, (2) my entire being, God and man entering your body and received by you as food, (3) my incarnation on the altar at the voice of the priest and offering myself as a sacrifice to my Father for all of you every time the priest pronounces the sacred
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words... These are three gifts, each of them infinite, which I give you. By the second gift you touch me; your mouth touches my body; my entire being, divinity and humanity, comes down into you. In a wonderful way I prove my love to you and thereby commit you powerfully to pay back love for love, to give yourself completely to me, to live only for me, who give myself completely to you... How many, even among those who love you, would ever want you as spouse, would ever give themselves to you body and soul! Yet I espouse you completely and without restriction, while I am so great and you are so little! By this Sacrament you become really my Spouse!... What hope should you not have for the future, seeing that I give myself entirely to you? What will I not give to you when I give you myself entirely? What strength don't you have when you have God within you? What wonderful new purity don't you shine forth when Purity itself comes down into you, when you are so intimately united to the Holy One, the Perfect One?... What happiness don't you experience when you are united more closely than man can think of or desire to your dearly Loved One, the infinitely loveable Being!... What tender thankfulness do you not feel towards God who, being so beautiful, so rich, self-sufficient and in need of nothing, takes you as his spouse so perfectly and gives himself entirely to you, who are so little, poor, unworthy, and can do nothing
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for him! What a new union with all those who like you receive me in themselves! For you are united to them by myself who live in all of you equally. I take all of you as my spouses, and by giving myself to all make of all one single thing. I told you, "When you receive me you live by me," (Jn 6:57) and when you all live by me you have one single life, and consequently "you all become one" (Jn 17:11)... I am perfectly one with my Father and live

the life of my Father, by his power. So when you receive me and live my life, you live by my power, just as I live by the Father's power... Since you are all one with me, all together you are one. Together you are one, just as I and the Father who is united with me. You are all one in us, just as we are one (Jn 17:21-23)... I am in all of you who receive me in this holy Sacrament. For all of you I am your life. All of you have the same life, my own. Together you are all one thing. You are one, you are perfected in unity; you are just one, since you are all together united in me, by my own life which I give you... See what a wonderful, inexpressible union, oneness and love I establish between myself and you on the one hand, and among each one of you on the other hand by giving you my body as food! But that is not all. I give myself to you not just to be your continuous companion, not just to be simply one with you, joining myself to you in an inexpressible marriage and joining each of you to one another in me, but also, thirdly, to be
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your victim, to be offered thousands of times each day by you, by you in my name, yes, by you and for you to my Father, in a sacrifice of praise and adoration, thanksgiving, satisfaction for your sins and petition... In offering me this way you offer to good God himself, an infinite gift, a gift equal to everything he can do for you; you thank him perfectly and fully for all the favors he has given to you, that he has given since the beginning of the world and will give until the end of time... Just one of these sacrifices, which is the pure offering (Malachi 1:11) foretold by the prophets has this value and it gives perfect glory to God and all the glory and praise owed to him; it thanks him fully and perfectly, it fully and perfectly asks pardon for all the sins of men, past, present and future, and asks him with an irresistible force for all the favors men will need until the end of time, since a single sacrifice offers to God God himself... Think, then, how you must often offer this sacrifice which gives God such glory, a glory infinitely superior to the glory you could give him by any other act, or by the combined acts of all the saints and angels for all eternity... For this sacrifice is infinite; these others are finite. Here is God; there you have

creatures... see how you must try to offer this sacrifice often, give it honor, provide many priests to offer it, and honor me for having given you such a gift!...

Consider also what eagerness, attention and respect
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you must have to offer and assist at this holy Sacrifice as often as possible!

Luke 9:22-23. The Son of man must suffer much, and be rejected. by the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the Law. he will be put to death, and be raised to life on the third day... And he said to all, "If anyone wants to come with me, he must forget himself, take up his cross every day, and follow me." Remember, my children, that many, many times I told you about my coming suffering and death, telling you that I would be handed over to the Gentiles, scourged, mocked and crucified... And I added more than once, "Whoever wants to be my follower must deny himself, carry his cross and follow me" (Mt 16:24; Mk 8:34). I spoke this way for love of you. (So love me and love one another, since you are all dear to my heart) ... I foretold my suffering first of all to make you love me and love other men, then to give you faith in me by your recognizing my divinity from the truth of my preaching, to give you hope by your seeing what I do for you, what my love makes me do for you and what tremendous love the heart of God, my heart, has for you,... and to inspire you with thankfulness, aloofness from earthly things, which I push far from me,... aloofness from earthly pleasures, since I chose such sufferings as my lot,... aloofness from earthly honors, since I chose such humiliations,... esteem for the cross, sufferings and
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insults, which were my lot on earth, and love and desire for these things to imitate me... Meditate often on my suffering to imitate me, since I spoke of it so often to you and it was often on my mind; meditate on it also to obey me, since I spoke of it to you so that you would think about it.... Have compassion for my pains, and suffer with my sufferings, for love of me. This compassion should be all the more intense since at every moment of my life I saw every moment of your life, and since the love I have for you makes all the

moments of your life consoling or painful to me according to the amount of good or evil you are doing. So during my suffering, my agony and at every moment of my life I saw all the moments of your existence when you think of my sufferings, suffer for or with them, or you embrace them to let me not suffer alone. Seeing this gives me comfort, since it proves your love, and what do I want but that you love me. "I came to set the earth on fire, with the fire of my love, the love of God, and how I wish it to burn! (Lk 12:49)... not that I need your love for myself, but because I wish it for you, seeing that it is your greatest good and I wish your good... I repeat, I teach you by my suffering to seek for suffering, to love it, and to embrace everything that involves the cross, mortification, suffering and penance... I am teaching you to seek these when you do not have them... to put up with them courageously and 651

lovingly when you do have them... for love of me, to keep me from suffering alone, to imitate me, to share in my work, to help me carry my cross, and with me make up for your own sins and those of others... I am teaching you also to hate sin which cost me so much, to avoid it with all your strength, to deplore it when you commit it, to do penance for it, to desire not to commit it again, to ask me for forgiveness as soon as you fall into it, to desire others never to fall into it, to deplore it when they fall into it, to do all you can so that they will not commit it, to do penance not only for yourselves, but also for them, to pray that neither you nor they sin, since sin cost me so much, horrifies me so much, makes my heart suffer and offends me so much! ... I am teaching you that penance is good, helpful and necessary not only for you but also for all men, since all have been redeemed by blood, pain and shame, and also all are sinners and all justly should suffer and share somewhat in the pains and insults which I embraced for them... So preach humiliation and penance, not only to those who want to be perfect, but to all, since all who have as their God a crucified God must bear in their bodies and souls the cross which is the seal and the brand mark of belonging to him... But if penance, mortification, a share in the cross, and humiliation are

necessary for all Christians without exception, it is much more so for those who want to follow me more
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closely as my disciples and to live hand in hand with you. I tell these the same that I tell everyone, but with greater insistence, that whoever wishes to be mine, to be completely my child, to live as you in my house, next to me, seeing me, hearing me, being with me at every hour, continuously enjoying my kiss and blessing, should deny himself, that is, forget himself radically, stop existing for himself, act as if he did not exist, suppressing at the same time his tastes, preferences, judgement, way of holding to his will, and empty his soul completely to give it entirely to me, with only one thing ruling his heart any more, my love. (My love is love of my good, my interest... To love my good is to desire to fulfill my will... To desire to fulfill my will applies both to himself and to others... In himself this means perfect obedience in everything which is not sinful to his spiritual director, who is the instructor I give to the person, obedience with submission to the laws of God, the Church, to superiors and rules... To desire my will to be fulfilled in others means perfect obedience to one's spiritual director in all thoughts, words or actions which can be of help to the salvation of one's neighbor, to submit to him and do what he says when and how he says... Then the love which fills you will become a perfect obedience for my sake to those to whom I said, "Whoever listens to them listens to me.)... In this perfect forgetting of self, and perfect obedience
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"for my sake", to do my will and thus work for my greatest good, he will naturally fulfill the second of my commands, which is to take up his cross, not any cross but his own cross, the cross which I destine to each one and which he recognizes by obedience. To desire the cross, expose your desires to your spiritua¹ director, do all he says, obey him perfectly, and bear lovingly, courageously, patiently and constantly the crosses he imposes and those God sends without your seeking them; that is carrying your cross with me, the cross God gives you, destines for you, and which I make yours by wishing it for you, not any other one which you choose

yourself and which would not be truly yours, since I do not wish it for you or give it to you... Your cross is that which your director imposes or any other which I myself impose without your seeking, it... Any other cross is not yours nor what I wish for you... Totally forgetting yourself and carrying your cross, not any cross, but the one I give you, you only have to follow me, follow me, that is, imitate me... Here again obedience is your guide... As with the cross, you must desire to imitate me perfectly in everything... Just as you first think well which mortifications you can do, which crosses you can embrace and then submit them to your director for him to decide in my name,... in the same way, after meditating well on the Gospel and studying my life well, after consulting me well in prayer
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and seeing what you can do to imitate me, you must submit these views to your director and do what he tells you. In this way you will imitate me perfectly, since you are not imitating me as you want, but as I myself want. "He who listens to him listens to me"... You are perfectly practicing obedience, the virtue I practiced every instant of my life. "I did not come to do my will, but that of my Father" (Jn 4:34) You are doing the same every instant of your life by thus obeying not your own will, but that of my Father, whose will is one with mine. "He who listens to his director listens to me"... And you will love me perfectly, since "whoever loves me obeys my commandments" (Jn 14:21) , and my commandment is that in whatever is not certainly a sin you should obey for my sake those to whom I said, "Whoever listens to them listens to me"... You really practice this perfect obedience for my sake, since it is the only way of doing my will, that is, of working for my greatest good, that is, of loving me with the greatest love!

To sum up briefly these three commands, the way to fulfil them all is first of all to empty yourself and love only God for his own sake, and consequently to do everything for the sake of God alone, secondly to meditate and pray much so as to know who I am, I Jesus, your Spouse and model, thirdly to submit all inspirations and desires you have to serve me to your spiritual director, and with regard to these and

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everything else to do absolutely what he says in perfect obedience which you give him for my sake... In three words: Love, prayer, obedience.

Saturday after the 3rd Sunday of Lent

3:00 A.M.... Thank you, my God, for waking me and getting me up, and for taking me near to you to adore you during your night prayer and to spend these happy hours praying with you together with the holy Virgin and St. Mary Magdalene... It is raining outside; all is quiet; all is asleep. Only you are up, my very dear Lord, with my two mothers who look at you in silence, praying with you and for you... Oh! Holy Virgin, oh, St. Mary Magdalene, hold me with you as you stay up praying and looking at our Lord!... St. Joseph, my good Father, whose feast is today, you see your divine Son from Limbo and would stay lovingly with him if you were still on earth; put me in his presence this night, tomorrow and always, as you would be yourself if you could!... My God, I love you, I adore you. Thanks for letting me be in your presence. Make me console you as much as possible always and especially during this night prayer which your infinite favor allows me to make with you! May all your children console you as much as possible now and always! I ask you this in your name, O my divine Lord Jesus!

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9:00 A.M... You are speaking, my God! You have prayed long in silence, then offered yourself to your Father for his glory and our good, then you embraced us, held us against your heart, and after letting us soak up the delight of these kisses, you now speak... My holy Mother, Mother of Perpetual Help, Mother of God and my Mother, my mother St. Mary Magdalene, my Father St. Joseph who are not bodily with us but see us from the dwelling place of the chosen and have your heart fully with us, place me with you in the presence of our Lord. Let me listen lovingly to his word, let me console him as much as possible today and always... and give this same grace to all his children, in him, through him and for him!

Luke 9:48. Whoever in my name welcomes this child, welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me, also

welcomes the one who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the greatest. Among all the things I taught and recommended to you I keep coming back to humility... How often have I not said, "If you do not become like little children you will not enter the kingdom of heaven... The least among you will be the greatest... The last will be the first... Whoever wants to be first must be the last of all... He who lowers himself will be lifted up... Always take the last place... Any exaltation is an abomination before God... I am meek and humble of heart" (Mt 11:29; 18:3-4) ... I gave you an
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example of this virtue when I, although God, became man... and always took the initiative, going to men instead of waiting for them. I went to sanctify John even before my birth,.. being born in a cave which served as a barn, in abandonment and rejection... I was circumcized as a sinner.... was presented humbly in the Temple, although I am greater than the Temple... I fled because of persecution, although by a simple act of my will I could annihilate my persecutors and the whole universe... I lived thirty years hidden, unknown, looked down upon, silent, and apparently useless for everything and everybody, a spending time in prayer and working at a small-time job at Nazareth... I had myself baptized as a sinner,... although I am the master and John is my servant... I lived my whole life in such poverty that it constantly brought me its concomitant humiliations and insults... I took up a life of preaching to meet, in spite of the infinite perfection of my works, my words and my person, only disdain, insults, persecutions, general unbelief, mockery and attacks. People did not believe in me at all; they had no regard for me, and considered me an impostor and a demagogue. That is the attention I got, the honor I found in my ministry, even though I carried it out with divine perfection... For my parents I chose two poor workers; my neighbors were poor and despised like myself. For my public life I chose other poor men,
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workers, men of the lowest class; associating with them only increased people's disdain for me. But I was not ashamed of them; I loved them tenderly and embraced

and held them close to my heart! ... See how my example bore out my words... All this I said and did for you, my little children, for the good of all men. (So love me out of gratitude and love one another, since you are so dear to my heart!) Also listen to what I have repeatedly said, and follow my consistent example. Be humble; be humble in your feelings, making little of yourselves; be humble in your words, in your actions, in your whole life, loving the little and associating with them; be humble in your manner, everywhere taking the last place and not leaving it unless obedience or my infinite desire takes you from it (since my will, manifested through your director or by another way must come first)... Desire humiliation; desire people to think little of you; always look for humiliation, just as you always look for the cross, making my will the only limit of your humiliations (as you ascertain by obedience or in any other way... The surest way is always obedience). Humility, my children, humiliation, the last place, humility... I am humble of heart, a worm and not a man (Ps 22:7). Follow me! but in humiliation, as in complete obedience: Humility always, humiliation and the last place in accord with obedience... Humility is my command for you always, and it must always be 659

my command because it is truth, and I God, who am truth, can only command you what is truth... But as for humiliation, the last place, I can give it to you or take it away as I please. I do not command it absolutely. but only to the greatest extent that obedience to my will, according to circumstances, permits, no matter how my will is made known.

Luke 9:56: And they went on to another village. Another virtue I often recommend to you by my words and still more often by my example, is kindness (I preached it so often for your sake, for the good of all of you. So love me and love all men!)... Then practice this kindness, kindness in your thoughts, putting away and driving out as the devil's inspirations any thoughts of bitterness, hardness, greed, violence, anger, rancor, antipathy or severe judgements of those you are not responsible for. Welcome and nourish kindly and loving thoughts, thoughts of sympathy, goodness and

gratefulness... Mollify yourselves by considering the love you owe to all men, my down dear children and your brothers, and the gratitude you owe to all who do you any good through the communion of saints, through the glory they all give to me, your Dear One, whether they like it or not, and through union with the guardian angels of all men; all men are good through their guardian angels. In all men you have tender and very powerful friends, since you have in them (or at 660

least with them or against them) their good angels. Be all honey, tenderness and peace in your thoughts ... Do the same in your words... If duty ever obliges you to use severe words, let your very severity be like a transparent veil over a permanent kindness, showing that your severity is only temporary and will pass away as soon as it is no longer required for the good of the persons concerned, and that it will vanish and give way to kindness, tenderness and the sweetest honey... I was severe in my lifetime only towards the Pharisees and sellers in the Temple... This severity was not permanent, but passing and as soon as possible tried to give way to the warm rays of an eternal kindness. This was eclipsed only reluctantly and for the good of those who needed severe words.

Be kindly in your actions: Don't be violent, impatient or pushy. If you must be severe at times, keep your severity to what is necessary, and be sure it is really necessary. In case of doubt always prefer kindness to rigorous procedures ... Defend your innocent brothers when other brothers attack them; do so for the good of both parties. Yet in defending others, even if it demands shedding the blood of an unjust aggressor, never put aside kindness. Try to prevent the unjust aggressor from causing harm without killing him... If need be, go as far as killing your unjust brother to defend your innocent brother; you must do so, and I command it, 661

but as much as possible do not go so far, and always remember that both of them are your brothers even though your duty is to defend one at the cost of your own life, and, if need be, by shedding the blood of the other... If you must always defend the innocent person

who is attacked, even by killing one or another aggressor, nevertheless when you are attacked, let it happen... Let yourselves, as I did, "be shorn and slaughtered without defending yourselves or complaining" (Is 52:13 - 53:12) ... Oh! when you are attacked you have just one thing to do, to imitate my kindness in my suffering, to let yourselves be stripped of everything, struck and put to death without a shadow of resistance, as I gave you the example... Whether they want to take your goods down to your last bit of clothing, or take your life, let them do it and be infinitely kind, praying for those who take your goods, mistreat you, or kill you, saying within yourselves, "My Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing" (Lk 23:34)... Thank you, God, for permitting me to imitate so closely the divine Lamb who was shorn and slaughtered without complaint or resistance... My God, may your will be done! ... My God, not a hair of our heads falls without your willing it (Mt 10:30). Thanks for letting your will be fulfilled in me. I want your will, whatever it may be. I welcome it and bless it... My God, I offer you this moment and every 662

moment of my life... I place my life in your hands (Ps 31:6; Lk 23:46)... My Father, glorify your name... Let your will be done with me as it is with the angels! ... The will of God is being done and will be done eternally, He is eternally happy and lacks nothing. He is happy for eternity. I love him. I am happy with his happiness! Be kindly, my little children, if you want to be like me. "I am kind and humble of heart" Kindliness is the daughter and companion of humility and of love... Keep this dear trinity in yourselves, as you observe that I always had it in myself ... Always remember what I once told you, "I send you man out as lambs among wolves" (4). Believe that I am repeating this to you every day at every hour. Believe that your motto is "to be like lambs". Imitate me in that and in everything, since I am "the Lamb of God" (Jn 1:29-36).

Luke 10:16 Whoever listens to you, listens to me; whoever rejects you, rejects me; and whoever rejects me, rejects the one who sent me. Remember this message of mine, "Whoever listens to you, listens to me;

whoever despises you, despises me." I did not say this only to you, my Apostles, but said it to the 72 disciples, showing that all who have an authentic mission in my Church to teach and direct should be listened to, obeyed, and honored, and that those who have pastors or ecclesiastical superiors or spiritual directors set over them by me listen to me when they listen to them, obey 663

me when they obey them, and honor me when they honor them; and when they deny them this trust, obedience and honor which they owe them for my sake, they are denying it to me... I have spoken this message to all for you, for your own good. So love me, since I do everything for love of you, and love one another for love of me, since I hold all of you in my heart and do everything for all of you, no matter whom... Oh, this message will really do you good, if you observe it... None of my other messages are as powerful as this one in bringing forth good works, holiness, peace and joy... This is a message you must bless a thousand times over every day and apply to your actions at every moment of the day, since it enables you to do my will at every moment of your life and consequently glorify me as much as you can at every instant of your life... This is what should be if you love me, your one and only desire and your goal... How will you apply this most blessed of all messages which enables you to glorify me as much as possible all the moments of your life?... By choosing, since I leave the choice to you a wise and holy director among the priests approved by the Church to lead you. It is better to remain a while without a director than to choose too rapidly and choose badly. When, by my grace and after praying and looking, you find a priest approved by the Church to direct people, consult him in everything and obey him in everything, except in what 664

is certainly sinful (which will hardly happen). In case of doubt whether what he commands is sinful or not, you must obey him, because humility as well as wisdom and love oblige you to believe that he knows the law of God better than you and he follows it even more than you... And consequently it is your ignorance which makes you think something is a sin which is not... So open your

whole soul to your director; let him know all your thoughts, your temptations, your interior life, your desires, your hopes and your dislikes, and obey him in everything. I said of him, "Whoever listens to him listens to me". Obey him in everything, in everything (except for indubitable sin), not for his sake but for me, not as if obeying him, but as if obeying me. Add really you are obeying me, since "whoever listens to him listens to me"... This obedience includes all your thoughts, words, actions and every moment of your life. By regulating all that, I mean all you have and all you are, by obedience you are regulating everything by me, since "whoever listens to him listens to me," and so you are doing my will in all your thoughts, words, actions and every moment of your life, since in everything "you are listening to myself when you listen to your director... In this way you give me the greatest possible glory, since the greatest glory you can give me is to do my will in everything... All the obedience you owe me, whether to my commandments, to the laws of 665

my Church, to the Gospel, to your ecclesiastical and religious superiors, to the counsels of perfection, to the inspirations I send you or to the revelations I make to you, etc., all these are included in obedience to a wise and holy priest approved by the Church and chosen by you with prudence and the help of prayer. He will speak and explain to you in my name how you must obey my laws, my counsels, religious superiors, religious rules, my inspirations or revelations. The full and complete obedience which you give him does not take away from obedience to my laws, your religious superiors or others; on the contrary it supports and regulates them by teaching what and how you must obey and by teaching you the obligation and limits of obedience... In a word, your director teaches you everything and commands you everything in my name. Of him I said, "Whoever listens to him listens to me"... He takes my place completely. By obeying him perfectly you obey me perfectly, you fulfil my will perfectly and glorify me as much as possible"... You see, my children, what a happy message is this, "Whoever listens to you, listens to me," and what a happy institution it establishes among you,

that of spiritual directors. By your obeying them they enable you to give me at every instant of your life the greatest glory that you can give me.

This message does not apply only to spiritual directors, but also to ecclesiastical and religious superiors; but it
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does apply fully and completely to spiritual directors... It applies to ecclesiastical and religious superiors to the greater or lesser juridical extent given them by the Church. In practice, like all the other laws of the Church, for you they are subordinate to the obedience you owe to your spiritual director, since he must explain to you the extent and obligations of your obedience to your ecclesiastical and religious superiors ... He teaches you what your obligations are in this as well as your obligations in everything... He is not the superior of your superiors, nor the master of God's commandments, the Church's laws or the Gospel counsels, but he is your instructor and guide given to you by God to teach you what way you must obey any of these... Obedience to your director does not take you from obedience to the religious or ecclesiastical superiors the Church places over you, nor from obedience to my commandments and counsels, but on the contrary gives you the means, and the only possible means, to obey any of these perfectly and always. Since your director always teaches you all your duties in my name, and "whoever listens to him listens to me," the better you obey him, the better you will fulfil all your duties, the better you will give everyone his due obedience and the better you will do what you ought in everything... If a director leads you poorly which will never happen if you take the time, care and prudence I
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advised you in choosing him, having prayed while choosing and having always obeyed him perfectly and purely for my sake do not change him unless he commands you what is certainly sinful or separates himself from me by heresy or schism and finally becomes my enemy... Outside these cases, which never happen, do not change him, and rely on my word that "whoever listens to him listens to me". If you need another guide, I am there, I know how to bring about

such circumstances that the guide who leads you poorly will be removed and another director according to my heart will be presented to you... Faith and obedience! "Whoever listens to them listens to me." So each of you should have his director and obey him perfectly in everything (except what is certainly sinful), in everything, in everything, in the greatest and least of things... In this way you will obey me in everything, since "whoever listens to him listens to me"... By obeying me in everything you will do my will perfectly... By doing my will perfectly you will glorify me as much as possible for you. This, I repeat, will be so if you love me as your greatest desire; and your greatest duty is to love me, since that is the reason for which I created you.

7:30 PM. You interrupted your conversation, my dear Savior, to bless us, to be recollected with us in silent prayer, and then to perform the evening liturgical
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prayer aloud together with us... You have now finished it, and since there is still a little time before supper, you begin to speak to us, embracing us and looking on us kindly... Holy Virgin, St. Mary Magdalene, St. Joseph, and my good Angel, make me listen well. Above all, make me love well; make me do now and always what our Lord Jesus wants of me.

Luke 10:28. "Your answer is correct," replied Jesus; "do this and you will live." Often, my little children, in your presence I was asked what is the greatest commandment. I always answered, "The 1st commandment is to love God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your spirit and with all your strength;... the 2nd is to love your neighbor as yourself" (Mt 22:37-39; Mk 12:28-31; Lk 10:25-27)... What does it mean to love me in this way, my children? It is to love me above all, as much as you can, as much as the grace I give you enables you to love... And what is love?... Love includes many things which differ according to people and the gifts of God. God sometimes gives one feeling, sometimes another; he makes one person feel one thing, another something else. He makes the same person feel one thing at one time and another thing at another time, and with very different degrees of

intensity. All these feelings are part of love and are real effects of love, but we feel them greatly or slightly according to the will of God, his grace and our fidelity
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in receiving his grace. Among these almost innumerable feelings which are all part of love the foremost is the desire to see, the desire to know, the desire to possess the Beloved, the desire to be loved by him, the desire to please him, the desire to do good for him, the desire to praise him, admiring him and desiring to imitate him, the desire to be approved by him, the desire to imitate him, the desire to obey him in everything, the desire to see him happy, the desire to see him holy and perfect, the desire to see him have everything which is good and helpful for him, in a word, the desire for everything that is his good, the desire to suffer for him, the desire to suffer with him, the desire to share his labors, his life, his situation, the desire to be like-minded with him, the desire to give oneself to him, living only for him and breathing only for him, the desire to work in his service, for pain over his sufferings, joy over his happiness, pain in union with him at the things that hurt him, joy in union with him at the things that give him joy .etc... All these feelings are effects of love, belong to love, are part of love, but are not love. Only one of them is really the essence of love; that is to desire passionately and above all, to the extent that you consider everything else as nothing and live and do everything only to accomplish this desire to desire in this way the good of the one you love... In this state you are no more concerned about yourself than if
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you did not exist; you are no more concerned about your neighbor and the whole universe than if they did not exist; you only think of one thing; you desire only one thing, you wish only one thing, you live and breath only to get one thing, which becomes the aim of all your thoughts, words, actions and every moment of your life. This thing is the good of the one you love. Here is the essence of love; here is the only true love, the only love worthy of the name... love which is self-forgetting and forgetful of everything in order to desire and live for only one thing anymore, the good of the Beloved.

This is the way you must imitate me, my children; this is what I unconditionally ask of all of you... As for other feelings, they must all be valued both in you and in others, since they all belong to love, but most of them should be just welcomed by you and others, and not looked for, since many of them are simple gifts of my grace which I give sometimes and sometimes take back, and at varying intervals. I can say that all these feelings are in the person who really loves me, who lives only to realize my good and desires only one thing, my good, and my good for my sake alone,... forgetting himself and every created thing. Although these feelings are always in such a person, they are more or less apparent, more or less sensibly felt according to whether my grace moves the person this way or that ... I move one person to share my sufferings, another to

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share my joys, one to imitate my poverty and lowliness, another to imitate my zeal for souls. I am the good shepherd (Jn 10:11-14), and in the field of my love every kind of food grows; I give each person the kind of food that he needs... You likewise, do not try so much to arouse in yourself or another such and such a feeling which seems very perfect to you, and really is so, being a very real effect of love, but try Father to be faithful and make others faithful to the feelings which I myself cause to spring up in you and in them. Do not pick out the food that grows in the field of my love, neither for yours nor for others, but focus rather on eating well, you and they, on digesting well the food I myself choose for each of you, and on benefiting, all of you, from it so that you can do not what you like, but what I like, doing the particular good which I wish each of you to do, which is the reason for which I offer each of you such and such a food. It is my business to turn persons into what I judge is good, since I made them and I alone know what I destined them to... Your work does not at all consist in destining them to one thing or another, but in seeing what food I am giving them at any moment, and what temperament I gave them, so as to understand from this double criterion what good I expect from them. After such an examination you must work with all your strength to help this person to

develop not in the way you would choose but in the
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direction you recognize that I am leading the person at
the present moment, since this direction can change at
another time...

Nevertheless, if all this is so variable and differs
according to the person and the time, one thing is
invariable and the same for all people at all times. That
is the basis and essence of love, the perfect love which I
ask of all and always and which all can and must give
me at all times. It is to forget about oneself and forget
about all creatures as if neither oneself nor they
existed, and to wish, seek, live and breath for only one
thing and make this thing the aim of all the thoughts
words, actions and moments of one's life. This thing is
my good (that is, my will, in other words, my glory)...

And I told you that the second commandment is to love
your neighbor as yourself... This means that to love me
perfectly you emptied yourself completely and left
nothing there, neither material things nor your
neighbor nor yourself. You are empty of all and have
room for me alone; I am the only one in charge of you
and I fill you completely... But once I am fully and solely
in charge of you, I move into you and bring along
everything I wish to see in you, just as the owner of a
house brings in the furniture he likes. I bring moral
strength, goodness, but the first item I bring, which I
want to see there and order you to take care of for my
sake, for my use and in obedience to me in this house of
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your person which you have made mine, is love of all
men, of yourself and of all others; that is love of all for
the same reason, because you are mine, and a very
great love of all (including yourself), since you are all
very dear to me, as I have proved to you, my little
children, by reason of all the abundant graces given to
men from the beginning of the world, and above all by
reason of the incomprehensible grace of the
Incarnation, and of my entire life, and finally because I
am about to give myself up to suffer for you, my dear
children,.. children of my heart!... So you see that after
emptying your heart of love of yourself and love of your
neighbor, I return you these two loves, but I return

them transformed and unified. Before, you loved your neighbor for himself and yourself for yourself. That is not so now; from now on you love your neighbor and yourself for me alone, for my sake. The love you have for others is equal to your love for yourself, since the cause of your love, whether for your neighbor or yourself, is the love I have for all of you, for which I embrace you all, my little children... You love all men and yourselves because I love all men, yourself included... So you love for my sake, for me and in me, in my love. You love all men (yourselves included) in as much as all men are in my heart; so you really love them in me. They are in your heart, not because they got there by themselves or because you put them there, 674

but because they are there in my heart, because they are held within me. They are within you not just because I place them there, but because they are in me, since they are in my heart which reigns within you... In the same way you love all men, the saints and angels and yourselves, not according to your likes, but as I myself love them, or as I told you to love them. (In general, I want you to love people as I myself love them, that is, unequally according to the amount of good to be found in each one for eternity, which amount is unknown to you... Yet exceptionally I can wish or order you to love certain persons more than others who are their equals in goodness, for example your father, mother and benefactors) ... As soon as there is a vacuum in your heart, I enter it and possess it, and I return to you love of all men, with yourselves included in this love... But I return you this love unified and arranged; "I arrange love" (Song of Songs 2:4, Vulgate). You no longer have love for your neighbor but for me; you do not love him by yourselves but by me; you love him only because he is in you, and I myself am in you. 9:00 PM. My God, the night is here... The wind is blowing fiercely, at times accompanied by rain... All noises are quieted... except for the wind and the falling rain... You are praying, motionless and silent; a little lamp lights up your face which is so beautiful, pale, calm and reflective... Next to you the Holy Virgin and 675

St. Mary Magdalene are on their knees praying. Their eyes are set on you and cannot look at you enough... Put me with them in your presence, my God! Let me stay up with them, looking at you, loving you with them and above all consoling you. Oh! my God, let me console you as much as possible this night, not just myself alone, but along with all who can offer you consolation, all your children, all men!... Holy Virgin, St. Mary Magdalene, my Father St. Joseph who see us from your place of rest, put me in the presence of our Lord; let me stay up this night praying with him, sunk, lost and drowned in contemplating, adoring and loving him. O my good angel, let me adore and love him with you; I put myself in your hands; do what you wish with my soul and body, but use it for the greater consolation of the heart of my Lord! By your help, my good angel, and by yours, O Holy Virgin, St. Mary Magdalene and St. Joseph, may I console our Lord as much as possible this night and every moment of my life!... Let the same be so for all men, so that the heart of our dearly loved Lord Jesus may be consoled as much as possible by all his children! Amen.

Sunday, the fourth in Lent

10:00 AM. My God, I adore you. The liturgical prayers which followed the silent prayer of the night are just over... You recited aloud with us the canonical prayers in this little room... I recited them very coldly, very

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tepidly, very dryly. Help me, my God, to say them and especially think them as you want of me, so as to console your heart as much as possible in this and in everything... You have embraced us since morning; you have now made us sit in a circle around you, or up against you, since we are happily so close together in this small room that we are almost touching you... Oh, happy poverty, which crowds us so close to you!... Speak, my God; make me listen to you as I ought... Holy Virgin and St. Mary Magdalene, let me listen to our Lord with you, and keep me with you in his presence so as to console him as much as possible!

Luke 11:13. As bad as you are, you know how to give good things to your children. How much more, then, the Father in heaven will give the Holy Spirit to those who

ask him! More than once you asked me to teach you how to pray, my children, and I showed you how... Prayer is talking with God; it is the cry of the heart to God... So it should be something absolutely natural, absolutely true, the deepest expression of your heart... It is not your lips which must speak, nor your spirit, but your will... your will showing itself, opening itself in all its truth, its nakedness, its sincerity and simplicity before him. That is prayer. That does not always require a long time or many words or many thoughts. This will vary; sometimes it will be a little long; sometimes very short ... as the desires of your heart require... If they are
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perfectly simple one word will express them; if they are not so simple you will need a few sentences to express them... In any case, you are expressing the state of your will,.. or the state of your heart, not your heart with its imperfections and disordered attachments, but the state of your heart rectified by your will, the state of your heart as you would like it to be, cutting off all that you do not admit or you repel from your heart. Prayer, then, is asking what you desire, what you desire with the help of grace, what you desire for the sake of God, what you desire to desire... What must you desire?.. One word sums it all up: Since your first duty is to love God, you must desire his good very earnestly, and not desire anything which is not his good... All your desires are contained in this one word, the good of God, that is, the accomplishment of his will, since he himself wills his own good of necessity and in justice... So by saying, "My God, your will be done by all your creatures," you are making a very perfect prayer which includes all you must desire... It is the most perfect prayer you can make, since it matches most perfectly the will of God. Your prayer is the expression of your will. Your prayer, like your will, is only as perfect as it is in agreement with the will of God, So by making this simple prayer, "My God, your will be done in everything," your will so matches God's will that it is simply one with his, desiring everything which the divine will wishes and
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not desiring anything it does not wish... When your will is here, I repeat, it not only matches God's will, it is

lost, sunk into it as a drop of water in the ocean; it is not distinguished from it any more; it is drowned in it. Your prayer, which is the expression of your will, is then no longer just the expression of your own will; it is the expression of the very will of God, and consequently it has, while being your will, an infinite perfection, a divine perfection... Such a prayer is always heard, and could not be unheard. It is just as impossible for it not to be heard as it is for God's will not to happen... If you desire everything that God wills, and do not desire anything he does not will, necessarily everything you desire will happen and everything you do not desire will not happen... Your prayer and the fulfilment of your will share in the infallibility and omnipotence of God's will. What you desire will always happen, necessarily. Because you desire all that I wish, what you desire will always happen, necessarily... Thus if you love me as you ought, your prayers, your desires, your will is always heard, always, always ... You always have and receive for me, for others and for yourself what you desire, since you desire for me, for them and for yourself only what I myself desire, and that cannot fail to happen, Pray then, my little children, and let something like this be your only prayer: "My Father, your will be done" (Mt 6:10). This prayer contains everything. Really it

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expresses something that will always happen, and will happen necessarily, but it also expresses the ultimate desire of your heart, since it expresses the only ultimate desire of my heart... Pray this way, desiring all that I will, only what I will, how I will it, and to the extent that I will it: "My Father, your will be done"... I repeat, in this state of prayer and desire, your prayer and your desire are drowned and lost in the will of God; they are completely one with it and themselves are really divine...

This will be the prayer you will make eternally in heaven... But because of your weakness, the weakness of human nature, of your very disturbed and darkened vision, of your ever failing weak, suffering and sick heart, God the Father wishes you to tell him your pains and miseries and to throw yourselves against his breast, over his heart, into his arms, such as you are

with all your weaknesses, my poor little children. God permits and even loves that when you feel weighed down in your poor human heart with any desire (provided it is pure, without sin), whether for his glory or for the consolation of my heart or for the good of the body or soul of your neighbor or yourselves, you should show it to him with all sincerity and truth. You can unload your souls with the carefreeness of sons, telling him all about it; you can find consolation by speaking and asking that of your good Father. But he wishes you
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always, always, to add, whether implicitly or explicitly, "My Father, your will be done"... Your prayer must always come back to these last words... Whether your prayer consists only of these words or they come after many other words, they always constitute the base and essence of all prayer, and sum up whatever you may have asked ... You may ask for the realization of God's glory, the sanctification of someone, or any other thing, but you always desire and ask for these things only to the extent that God wishes, because he wishes them and as he wishes them... Everything that God desires, and consequently all that you desire, all that comes from God, and consequently all that you desire, is included in these words, "Father, your will be done." It is true that I taught you to ask for other things such as the glory of God, my kingdom, the Holy Eucharist, pardon, deliverance from evil; but, as I tell you through my saints, I spoke so much not because it is necessary to use so many words in speaking about God, but because it is very useful to know what are the really good things which God wishes us to seek and desire for ourselves and for others ... But all these requests are contained in that single one, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."... All other requests can be reduced to this one, because we do not ask God's name to be made holy as much as God can make it holy, but as much as he wants it to be made holy... We do not ask
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God's kingdom to come as fully as Jesus could establish it on earth, but as fully as he wants it to be established... We do not ask that men obey God, receive and adore the Holy Eucharist, be disposed for

forgiveness and be saved as much as it is possible for God to make that so, but as much as he wished it to be so... All our requests are therefore limited by this one, "Your will be done on earth as in heaven," and all are contained in it...

"Your will be done," I repeat, my children, should be your prayer and your desire at every hour and every minute... It should always be your will, your heart, your soul and your prayer ... As for the other intentions which I give you an example or advice to pray for, they are only accessories of prayer, its clothing; but prayer itself consists in these words, "Your will be done". I permit and even advise asking other things; my advice and example are for many reasons: (a) for the comfort of your soul, which needs to stretch out, and can do so best only in the depths of God, (b) for your instruction, so that in speaking to God of your needs you can become aware of real needs and can learn the truth by the thought that accompanies prayer, (c) to inflame your soul with love of me and of your neighbor by your asking many things for my glory and your good, (d) to give you the habit of looking to heaven and not to earth, by turning to me for all your needs, small or
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great, all your desires and all your fears, (e) to bind you to me, your Father, Spouse, brother and God who loves you and wishes to be loved by you, since your love for me is your only true good, in such a way that you have the familiarity, confidence and trust with me that comes from a continual relationship, constant conversation and an unending series of requests and gifts; in this way I lead you to think of me without stopping, to be very thankful to me and love me more and more. (f) Praying for many things also helps to recall to you the great truth that all good comes from me alone, that without me you can do no good for yourself or others, that everything you receive or have, whether from yourself or others, you have it from me alone. (g) Finally, there are so many other reasons for me to advise and give example of longer prayer where you express not only what you wish (which is never more than "Father, your will be done"), but also what you feel, that is, a series of fears, desires and hopes,

sometimes few, sometimes many... But perfect prayer, my children, the prayer I wish from you always, at every minute, the one that should express the state of your will at every moment and burst from your heart towards heaven is this. "Father, your will be done."

I told you what is really prayer in the strictest sense of the word, in the sense of a request... I taught you what to ask for, the fulfilment of God's will... But prayer in a
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wider sense includes many other things... Prayer is any conversation of the soul with God. More inclusively, it is the state of the soul looking at God without talking, but occupied only in contemplating him and telling him by its looks that it loves him, even while remaining silent with one's lips and even in thought... Prayer is any concentration of the heart and spirit on God with or without words, with or without exterior words, and with or without thoughts. As you can see, it is possible to pray almost without thinking. I say almost, because whenever there is a human act, love or knowledge of what you do, there must be some thought, but it is enough to have very little thought. It is enough to try little to understand, but there must always be much love, as much love as possible. The best prayer is that which has most love. Prayer in this wider sense can be defined as "the act of the soul putting itself in the presence of God to look at him, silently or with words." It is better to the extent that the soul looks on God with greater love, or has a more tender and loving attitude to God. Prayer in this wider sense of the word can be silent contemplation or contemplation accompanied by words:... words of adoration, love, offering of yourself, giving your entire being... words of thanksgiving for the goodness of God, his favors to you and to other creatures,... words of sorrow, of reparation for your own sins or those of others,... prayers of petition,...
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meditations on God's commandments and counsels, on your duties and what God wants of you,... words drawn from the depth of your soul with the grace of God, or words drawn from Scripture, prayers approved by the Church, liturgical offices, etc.,... vocal prayers and mental prayer... In your rule of life you must provide a

very large place for time devoted exclusively to prayer. I gave you an example by ascending so many nights praying on the mountains, going away sometimes from the crowd when it pressed me from every side, so as to be alone with you and spend some time in prayer... This time varies according to circumstances and the people concerned, but can be settled for each individual by his spiritual director. It should ordinarily be divided into three parts: one consecrated to prayer, familiar conversation with God and contemplation; the second to meditation, going deeper into my life, my Scripture, my example and my teaching, to know them better and thereby know your duties better; the third devoted to vocal prayer, preferably prayers most approved by the Church, especially the divine office which it has chosen for its clergy... These three divisions are subject to many changes and adaptations according to the persons and the circumstances. One's spiritual director will settle everything, and will do so very differently according to the persons and the circumstances; for in each case he will not follow his own thoughts, but my 685

viewpoint. He will settle everything not according to a plan fixed in his spirit and identical for all, but differently not only for each person, but even more differently according to different circumstances, constantly monitoring the impressions of my grace on each person, conforming his orders to my action in souls, commanding one thing to someone I am leading in a certain way, and another thing to someone I am leading in another way,... commanding one thing to someone in one state, and commanding another thing to the same person as I lead the person into another state... One person cannot meditate, and is always in contemplation; another cannot contemplate, but only meditate and reflect. People's states are infinitely variable,... and the director will lead each person according to the needs of the present moment. His job is to give each person not what the person or himself dreams of, but what I want for the person... But in all these states, in all these kinds of prayer, whether thought, understanding, reflection or words take a great or a small place, one thing should always be

prominent and take the first place. That is love. Whatever shape these different prayers take, whether they are silent or sung, almost without thought or full of reflection, the thing that gives them value is the love with which they are made. For all these kinds of prayer without exception, for all possible kinds of prayer, it
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eternally true that the best prayer is the one which has most love, and that prayer is as good as it is loving. To sum up, my children, in prayer what I want of you is love, love, love. For the manner and time of prayer, what I want of you is obedience to your spiritual director. In prayer of petition desire and ask for one thing, "that my will be done".

Besides the times you must consecrate each day exclusively to prayer, during the rest of the day, during other jobs that you do (which like all your acts should be done for my sake and regulated by your spiritual director), you should lift your soul as often as possible to me. According to the type of work, while doing it you can either think constantly of me, as is possible during certain purely manual jobs, or from time to time you can turn your eyes to me, at least as often as this is possible. It would be very nice, good and right to be able to contemplate me without stop and never lose sight of me. But that is not possible in this world for ordinary people. You can only do so in heaven. What you can and should do during jobs other than prayer alone is to lift the eyes of your soul to me as often and as lovingly as you can, and to try to keep the thought of me in your spirit as much as possible, according to the type of your work... In this way you will pray to me without stopping, continually, as much as this is possible to poor mortals. Lastly, besides this continual
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prayer and the hours reserved especially for prayer, you should reserve some complete days to prayer and other practices which bring your attention to me and are very similar to prayer, such as spiritual reading and sacred study. Such days can be holy days of the Church or certain times in your life, as retreats ... The use of these days and times of recollection will be regulated, as the rest of your time, by your spiritual director, and will

vary according to the needs of each person and what I wish for each of you.

Praying, you see, is above all thinking of me with love...

The more you love me the more you pray... Prayer is the attention of the soul fixed lovingly on me; the more this attention is loving, the better your prayer is. To pray well, I tell you the 20th time, have (1) love, (2) obedience to your spiritual director, (3) absolute conformity to my will: "Father, your will be done."

Luke 11:42. How terrible for you Pharisees! You give to God one tenth of the seasoning herbs, such as mint and rue and all the other herbs, but you neglect justice and love for God. These you should practice, without neglecting the others. Remember, my children, what I often said in front of you, "How terrible for you Pharisees! You give to God one tenth of the seasoning herbs, such as mint and rue and all the other herbs, but you neglect justice and love for God. These you should practice, without neglecting the others"... Always
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remember that, my children, and let it be the rule of your life. Do not turn things around, and don't let your spirit wander from the truth, by neglecting my commandments, the law of God and the major virtues, even while doing smaller things. When small things are commanded, do them with respect, but in second place, putting them where I put them, and begin always by fulfilling the commandments and the major virtues. Do first what is commanded, and then do not omit the other things you should do. But do not get lost in doing little things while neglecting the greater ones.

Luke 12:31. Be concerned with his Kingdom, and he will provide you with these things. Concerning your material life, what you have to drink, eat and wear, my children, of course you don't have to worry... I have taken responsibility for that once and for all... When you are busy preaching the Gospel you have the right to live on the offerings of the faithful, as I showed you by my example ... When you are not preaching, work with your hands, as I showed you by my example... But to have any shadow of worry over material things is forbidden to you, You do not have the right to do so; that would be to insult me, my children, and treat me

as a liar, an infidel. I told you once and for all, "Seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all the rest will be added to you"... Having that, you are only to seek the kingdom of God and his justice and accept
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what comes to you by way of offerings or from your labor, convinced that whether you receive enough to live with surplus, or you receive nothing and are left to die of hunger, this surplus or this death come to you from my hand for the greater good of your souls, to help lead you to heaven. They are what is added to you as a gift from my heart, my faithful servants and dear children.

Luke 12:40. And you, too, must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you are not expecting him. Be watchful, my children; be ready to appear before the Supreme Judge; think of death... Remember how often I repeated this to you, and consider from the number of times I repeated it how important it is ... Think of death and you will never sin... Be watchful all the time, as if you were at your last day.

Luke 12:48. But the servant who does not know what his master wants, and yet does something for which he deserves a whipping, will be punished with a light whipping. Much is required from the person to whom much is given; much more is required from the person to whom much more is given. And you, my dear favored ones, my privileged and chosen ones, remember the serious message that I spoke to you, "More is required from the person to whom more is given"... It was spoken for you, my chosen ones, my enriched ones, for whom I
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said everything, gave everything, including so many graces... The more you receive, the more will be demanded of you... The greatness of the favors I give you is my own sign of the great holiness that I will ask of you... So do not be so stupid as to believe that you are being proud in desiring, hoping and wishing to reach very great holiness. Father than pride, it is on the contrary a duty and obedience... The graces that I enriched you with, and which you cannot ignore without ingratitude, are a very precise order from me

to rise to great holiness. To give someone many graces is like my saying to him, "I want you to become very holy. As for the means, I order you to sanctify yourself, for I will demand an account of the great graces I give you; and if you do not make use of them to reach great holiness as I command you I will punish you... So desiring to reach great holiness is far from pride, it is pure obedience... So hope, desire, try and force yourselves to be great saints. Do this in obedience to the order I gave you when I said, "Much is required from the person to whom much is given"... You have no reason to be proud, but should rather fear, realizing that you have a serious obligation to become great saints and are far from being such... So far from becoming proud over my graces, be afraid and humble because of them, realizing, "since my words do not pass away" (Mt 24:35; Mk 13:31; Lk 21:33)), that they oblige you

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very seriously to become wonderfully holy, and that you have not yet laid the first stone of the building of your holiness ... Be humble, then, and fearful... Every new grace should be so far from making you proud that it Father doubles your humility and fear, seeing your debts increase so much and recognizing that you have nothing at all to pay them with... The shadow of intelligence you have should make you realize that my ever increasing graces and favors to you should only give you more humility and fear... Far from making you proud, the more they are given to you, the more you should be filled with fear and humility as you realize your great lowliness... What you should fear more than pride, if you are smart, is discouragement. It would easily overcome you if I did not command you to hope always, in spite of everything, to believe in my infinite mercy and to throw yourselves flat onto my heart, as miserable as you feel, as the prodigal son threw himself onto the heart of his father.

6:30 P.M. The day goes on, my God. Too bad this stay at Ephraim is nearly finished... How fast time passes! In three weeks at this hour you will be risen! What a thought! What brightness! To be happy, blessed and infinitely glorious for eternity! All your sufferings and all your work will be finished ... For eternity you will be

the king of glory... How impatiently and joyfully you would look forward to that day, my dear Jesus, if you
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did not have to go through so many sufferings to reach it! Yet unfortunately you must enter your glory through such sufferings that my heart freezes and I cannot think of them without being pierced by the cold of death... O my Lord Jesus, two Fridays from now, the 15th, will be your last day. May that come soon... May all your children console you during these last days, my God... May I console you all the days of my life! May your children console you as much as possible! Your will be done in everything! Amen. You will recite aloud with us the liturgical prayers before supper... O my God, help me to say them so as to console you as much as possible, as you want of me according to your will. Holy Virgin, St. Mary Magdalene, let me recite them with you, between you, as you do, according to the will of our dear Lord Jesus!

Luke 13:4. What about those eighteen people in Siloam who were killed when the tower fell on them? Do you suppose this proves that they were worse than all the other people living in Jerusalem? We have a few minutes, my children, for me to remind you of what I said, "Enter by the narrow gate, for the wide gate leads to perdition" (Mt 7:13)... That is, enter by the way of the mortification of obedience above all, and of penance, since the contrary way, the way of laxity, of soft life, of ease and independence leads to hell... You must avoid two other traps in life, which I so often called to your
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attention when I said, "Avoid the yeast of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" (Mt 16:6)... The trap of the Pharisees consists in seeking perfection, but only in purely external observances, minor observances and formalities, rather than in practicing the virtues and imitating my example. This trap draws one into hypocrisy, rash judgements, hardness of heart, and pits for the soul to fall into... The trap of the Sadducees is laxity and which, under the pretext of making virtue consist of interior holiness, rejects all exterior practice, including anything that is unpleasant to the body, and declares all mortification useless. One then becomes a

slave of his senses, incapable of submitting his body or soul to any obedience, and rejecting anything that is a cross or humiliation. I showed you the way to avoid the two traps when I said, "Take the narrow path." I explained this path elsewhere: The narrow way is the one I showed by my example and described in these words, "If anyone wants to follow me, let him deny himself, take up his cross every day and follow me." (Mt 10:38; 16:24; Mk 8:34; Lk 9:23) Do this, my children, and you will live! Come after me on this path and avoid the traps of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

8:00 PM. My Lord Jesus, night has come; all is silent; shade and silence surround the earth... The village is all asleep ... No sound is heard ... But you are awake. Your Mother and St. Mary Magdalene stay up near you, look
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at you sadly and pray for you. They count the days: 18 days to your Passion, 19 days to your death... You dead, my Jesus! You who are so full of life, who are life itself! And dead after

such torture! And in 19 days! And voluntarily, with your whole heart!... Oh, my God, if your heart thirsted to be baptized with this baptism our hearts faint at the thought... My God, see the end draw near and come to pass, the end of your 33 years on this earth... How fast it went! What wonderful things it contains for us! Every day of your blessed life what infinite graces you poured on us who surround you and on the whole earth! What should I say?... Should I say as it once was said to you, "God forbid that you should suffer like this"? (Mt 16:22)... No. I will not have any other desire but yours, my Lord! I gave you my will once, and I will never take it back. It is lost forever and sunk in yours. Let whatever you want be done, whatever you will happen, whatever it may be... Your will be done, my God! I know that your will is your glory, your good... Let it be done... Oh, my God, since you love me and love all men, only let me and those you put particularly in my care, all the faithful of your Church and all men console you as much as possible and do your will in everything. Your will be done, my Lord Jesus! Amen, amen, amen!

Monday after the 4th Sunday of Lent

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5:00 PM... How late I am before you today, my God, to listen to you speak! ... It is my fault, my God; I cannot excuse myself... No, it is really my fault... I should have been careful of my time and come before you at the fixed times to listen to you, however holy my work was; even though it did not drive me from you, I should have left it to do nothing but listen to you... Sorry, sorry, sorry! I showed so little urgency to listen to you... I was with you, it is true; I was working for people's souls, it is true. But it was not that urgent; I should have left it all and thrown myself into the arms of the Most Holy Virgin and St. Mary Magdalene, asking them to put me in your presence to listen to you... Oh, my God! I made so light of this last day of the retreat! Tomorrow you are leaving Ephraim... I so poorly took note of the infinite grace of your letting me share your hiding place in Ephraim with your holy Mother, with St. Mary Magdalene and your Apostles! I made so light of the infinite favor of your letting me stay before you night and day, praying with you, spending all my time with you, and listening to you all day long! Sorry, sorry, sorry, my God! Help me not to fall again into such a fault... Let me spend at least the end of this day in the way that will most console your heart, according to your will for me; the same for all your children!... O Most Holy Virgin, O St. Mary Magdalene, place me

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between you very near the Lord, and let me look at him with you, loving him and listening to his words!

Luke 14:13. When you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. Remember what I told you, my children. When you give a feast, when you spend money or give a gift, do not do it for your relatives or rich friends, but for the poor... They too are your brothers. You must see me also in them, and even doubly, since they represent me both as people and as poor... But, you will say, can we never give anything to our rich friends? Isn't the spiritual good of consoling them, showing them tenderness and making ourselves lovable to them more valuable than the material good we do for others? My children, the spiritual good you do for the rich will be of even more benefit to the poor, and you will find, by using your imagination, other ways to

show the rich your affection... I am not saying that you cannot spend for them the cost of mailing a letter or of a cheap picture. Do that if need be, but anything more, no. Think of how to soften them by your love, by your delicate tenderness. Pray more for them; give them good example in everything, and good advice when called for; and think of your established rule of life to give all your money to the poor without keeping any of it that could serve as a small gift to the poor. When the rich see that this is your universal and strictly followed rule, they will not only not be annoyed, but will be
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highly edified and approve of this good example. Far from driving them from you, this will bring them closer to you and win their greater respect for you... So by following strictly this rule which I give you and making it the strict rule of your conduct, you will be far from doing less good to certain people; rather you will do much more good to all people. This conduct will have three results: (1) the spiritual and material good of the poor, which is my own good, (2) edification, good example and spiritual good for your rich friends and relatives, and (3) a greater affection for you from your rich friends and relatives who will regard you as a servant of God and consequently a friend in any circumstance.

Luke 15:4. Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them - what does he do? He leaves the other ninety-nine sheep in the pasture and goes looking for the one that got lost until he finds it. I am the good shepherd; I am always running to look for lost sheep; so I have told you a hundred times... Love me! since I love you so much, all of you, my sheep; and love one another, since your shepherd loves you all so tenderly!... Be grateful to me for my care in looking for you, for my goodness in pardoning you, for my joy when I find you! Help me in my work; imitate me. Do all you can with me and like me, each of you according to the orders of your spiritual director, to bring back as many
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as possible of the lost sheep... Share my feelings, my sorrow at seeing my sheep being lost, my joy when I find them again... Share my perseverance, my hope, my

generosity: my perseverance in looking for them, my hope which never refuses to believe in the possibility of their return, and my generosity in pardoning them... Share my tenderness for them when they come back; far from reproaching them and punishing them, I cover them with hugs and fall on their necks like the father of the prodigal son... So hope always for the return to a good life of every person living in this world. Work for that always to the extent set for you by obedience, and be tender to sinners who come back, as you saw that I was to so many people, as the father of the prodigal son was to this son, and as the good shepherd was for his sheep... In a word, which sums it all up, do for sinners what you want me to do for you.

Luke 16:13. No servant can be the slave of two masters; he will hate one and love the other; he will be loyal to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. My little children, the day is nearing its end, and I have only a few words for you... The climax is approaching for me, and this little retreat at Ephraim is nearly finished... Tomorrow morning we will leave for Galilee... Nevertheless I wish to tell you three more things while we are still recollected in this solitude: First, poverty, poverty, poverty! Remember my example 699

and my words concerning poverty. I was born in a cave, grew up in a poor family, was a the son of poor parents, living poorly like them by the work of my hands until the day when I began full time preaching. Then I lived by the alms of the faithful, but accepted only what was necessary to live on as poorly as when I was a worker. I had no possession in the world, not a stone to rest my head on. I chose my companions, my apostles from among the poor, and preached poverty... Remember my words: "Happy the poor!" (Mt 5:3; Lk 6:20)... "Woe to the rich!" (Lk 6:24)... "If you wish to be perfect, sell what you have and give the money to the poor"(Mt 19:21)... "Unless you renounce everything you cannot become my disciples" (Lk 14:33)... "You cannot serve two masters at a time; you cannot love God and money" (Mt 6:24; Lk 16:13)... "The poor man Lazarus was carried by angels to the side of Abraham" (Lk 16:22). Those who leave all to follow me will receive a hundredfold in this world and

eternal life in the next" (Mt 19:29)... I do not want to let this day finish without repeating to you again: poverty, poverty, poverty!

Luke 17:6. The Lord answered, "If you had faith as big as a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Pull yourself up by the roots and plant yourself in the sea!' and it would obey you. The second thing I want to repeat to you this evening is: faith, particularly faith in prayer... You know how many times I told you,
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"Whatever you ask for in prayer you will receive" (Mt 21:22; Mk 11:24)... I showed you how you should pray, how you should ask for anything,... and how your prayer, "the pure and simple expression of your will," should always in the last analysis be an expression of my absolute will, "May what you wish and what you permit be done... May the universe and all creatures be as you wish them to be according to your absolute will, even with the evil that you permit... May this whole universe be as your absolute will wishes and permits its existence:... My will, my God, is lost in yours... May all that you wish be done as you wish it. Amen." I let you understand also that this prayer, which should always be your final prayer, the end of all your prayers and the last word of all your requests, cannot be your only prayer... And just as I have an antecedent will for the spiritual and material good of all people, and a consequent will for the universe just as it is, so in your case also, besides this consequent and absolute will which you must have in all your prayers and which must be the unchanging foundation of your will, besides this will you must also, if you are to be like God, "perfect as your Father is perfect" (Mt 7:7), have another will, an antecedent will, matching his antecedent will, so that your absolute and consequent will matches his absolute and consequent will... You should express this antecedent will by prayers, prayers which end like the
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acts of God's antecedent will by returning to unite with his absolute will... In union with the will of God and expressing your own will which matches his own, your prayers should not be restricted to expressing his absolute will, even though such expression may often

take up most of your prayer and must always be its conclusion, always being present implicitly or explicitly. This expression of God's absolute will must always be in your prayers, but need not take up the entirety of your prayers. On the contrary, you must sometimes or often or even very often express also God's antecedent will by asking for the glorification of God by all men, the consolation of my heart by all men, the sanctification of all men, and the temporal and eternal happiness of all, both on a spiritual and a material level... This request, this antecedent will has, like the antecedent will of God, its source in love, in love which makes you desire and ask for God and for me, the Man-God, and for all men and all God's creatures, all possible glory, happiness and perfection... Such a prayer, such a wish, which matches God's antecedent will so well that you could say it is lost and drowned in God's antecedent will, in his heart, or in his divine love, and that it is identified with him, is consequently just as perfect as the other prayer, since it is just as divine and just as entirely united with God, being identified with his perfect will and most perfect

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love, even though it is very really subordinate to the other prayer which expresses union with the absolute will of God... You must have both kinds of prayer, as I have given you an example. Both are perfect and really divine, since by both you unite your will fully and completely with the will of God, in the one case with his antecedent will and in the other case with his consequent will. Nevertheless, even though you should pray in both ways and they are equally perfect with an infinite divine perfection, the prayer which expresses union with God's antecedent will, desiring all good and the greatest good possible in everything and for everything, is always subordinate to the other which expresses union with God's absolute will, his will that everything which was, is and will be should be as it was, is and will be. This prayer must always conclude the other prayer and be joined with it implicitly or explicitly and be the unchanging foundation of our will... Like the first prayer, it should be the invariable expression of the depth of our hearts, the expression of

our love for God and everything that comes from his hands... Your prayer will always be heard if it is made with faith; I am talking about prayer that matches my antecedent will... It is evident that the other prayer is always heard... But through my goodness and love for you, I wish that your prayers in union with my antecedent will, prayers which I foresaw from all
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eternity, should have an effect on my absolute will, on the graces which come from heaven to earth, on my intervention in the actions of men and the regulation of things... I love you so much, so much, my little children, that I wished to give you, to give your poor prayers, the words you address to me, this participation in my sovereign power... I wish, then, that these prayers which match my antecedent will, provided they have qualities that make them, I do not say worthy of me because that is impossible, but a little presentable, should have an effect, that what they ask should happen. The principal qualities which your prayers should have to be heard, to have this necessary effect which I promised them, which I give them by my word "which does not pass away", include first of all faith, faith in the promise which I make to you now. Lack of faith, after this promise, is a real insult to me, equivalent to calling me a liar... Your prayer must also be humble and respectful. But before all and above all you must have faith, without which your prayer becomes an insult, since after my promise you really insult me by believing that your prayer might not be heard. Reflect, however, that in my excessive love I put a sort of reservation to my promise: I promise always to fulfil your requests when they are really what you think they are, that is, really desirable for my glory, for the good of people. If in your ignorance you ask for things
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that are not so good in place of better things, for things which you think are good but really are harmful, then instead of granting what you ask for by ignorance in opposition to what you would desire if you were better informed, I grant you what you would ask for if you were so informed, and instead of the false good or the mediocre good that you ask for in ignorance. I give you

what is really desirable... So it can happen that having asked for one thing, you receive something very different. That does not mean your prayer is not heard. Not at all. If your prayer is made with faith, as is your absolute duty according to my promise, it is certainly heard. But three things could have happened: (1) You may have asked me for a mediocre or harmful thing, and I gave you instead a greater or really good thing (even though to your darkened eyes it may seem evil), (2) I may have answered your prayer only partially. I heard it, as I have promised, but heard it only to a certain extent, with the intention of hearing it more fully as you multiply and continue your prayer, as I told you: "Knock and ask" (Mt 7:7) over and over again... (as can happen when you ask for the conversion of someone). In this case your prayers obtain a grace; I give the person a certain amount of grace. A grace which is in a way all powerful comes from every prayer; every prayer is heard and obtains something, but not every prayer obtains everything. (3) It can happen that

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your prayer is in opposition to one of my absolute laws for which I make no exception. Here is a reason why you should take instruction from your spiritual director about what you should ask me, and what really matches my antecedent will... So obey in the matter of prayer as in everything; ask what my representatives tell you to ask for. Ask often what I wish by my antecedent will, that is, all good in heaven and on earth... Ask always, always, what I wish by my absolute will, that is, everything which is and will be. "My Father, your kingdom come... My Father, your will be done!"... Make the first request as I wish it and as you wish it with me, conditionally; make the second as I wish it and as you wish it with me, absolutely.

Luke 17:10. It is the same with you; when you have done all you have been told to do, say, "We are ordinary servants; we have only done our duty." I will add only one more message, my good friends, and that is a message of humility, a message which is for you, for the good of all of you, and which should lead you to love me and to love one another... After doing all that you ought, after following all my examples and all my

counsels, always say: "We have only done our duty; we have only given to God what is God's; we have only given God a part of what he has given us. All that we have comes to us from God. We have only imperfectly given him what we have from him alone and what we
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could and should have given him much more perfectly... We are useless servants (Mt 22:21; Mk 12:17; Lk 20:25), incapable of good, and miserable servants. My God, after all we have received from you and the little we have given you, we only hope in your infinite mercy!"... That is what your thought should be, my children; that should be at the bottom of your soul all the hours of your life... This is the humility which is truth, where your soul should swim as in its own element for all time and eternity...

May these three last virtues and the two virtues which are the primary lesson of all my words and all my acts, be the rule of your life, my little children. May they be found in you all the time of your existence on earth: poverty, prayer, humility, and above all love of God and love of all men.

END OF THE RETREAT OF EPHRAIM
