

# Living in a State of Grace



Jean Galot, the author of the book *Le Coeur de Marie*, wrote in regard to the Annunciation that it was God's grace which "in Mary was the basis of her ability to make decisions, to make a choice, and to do so without her mind being obscured by prejudices or her will led or enslaved by passions." He would go on to say: "Grace made her capable of acting with a complete mastery of self. It conferred upon her the faculty of loving freely and fully, as a consequence, and it is precisely that faculty which would constitute Mary's Heart."<sup>1</sup>



## BEING ATTENTIVE TO HEAVEN

Since we are all called upon to follow the path Mary showed us, our duty is to work at our interior reform and to make sure that we do not become "spiritually deaf", refusing to hear the good inspirations that come to us from Heaven. Thus, in *The Imitation of Christ*, we read: "[God's] grace is precious and will not mingle with earthly things or worldly consolation. You must get rid of every impediment if you would have that priceless gift poured into your soul."<sup>2</sup>

In fact, so that we may be able to grasp His will, the Lord exacts of us all kinds of sacrifices and acts of self-abandonment. Thus, we must detach ourselves from our affection for persons and things, give

up our ideas which are sometimes very "set", change our way of organizing the events in our life and see everything as coming from God, look at everything with a spiritual regard, so as to understand and do what He wants in all things. It is by accepting these detachments that we will always be better able to journey along in God's grace and eradicate from our hearts an inordinate love of self and of our own will.

Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus guided us along this path when she wrote: "Prayer, for me, is simply an uplifting of the heart, a simple glance towards Heaven, a cry of gratitude and love in the midst of trial as well as in times of joy; in a word, it is something noble and supernatural expanding my soul, and uniting it to God."<sup>3</sup> Thus, we can be united with God through "a simple glance" and take advantage of His grace to let ourselves be led according to His divine designs. And if we have a hard time doing this, we can be sure that, in His love, the Lord will place along our route the providential events, the sufferings, the persons or the writings required to enlighten us and to help us refocus our eyes on Him.

## RENOUNCING ONESELF

In this regard, here is what the Lord said about the nature of man in *The Poem of the Man-God* by Maria Valtorta: "Man thinks he is always capable of doing something he is full of haughtiness and attachment to his 'ability'." A little further, Jesus sadly reminded us that "man is 'man' and wants to do things by himself without realizing that God asks but to help him." (vol. 2, p. 232)

That is also why, at the beginning of each Mass, we say: "I confess to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and what I have failed to do." In fact, those words urge us to acknowledge that we need God's grace, and that, by means of it, we can change our thoughts, our deeds and our words so that they are directed towards the love of God and others, and there will not be any more occasions to sin but rather victories of love over sin.

Thus, by acknowledging that our poor

nature must constantly be "set back on track" by acts of humility, we advance in the beneficent grace that comes from Heaven and pours forth in our souls the good inspirations that glorify God and bring everything back to Him. Thus, the human will is placed in the background and a life of complete self-abandonment in pure faith slowly begins. Such a life allows us, in fact, to fix our regard on God and Mary and to accept to cooperate with God's plan. We let ourselves be led amid the purifications and sufferings of life, like Jesus and Marie-Paule who lead us towards the highest summits of Love.

## DOING GOD'S WILL

Still in *The Poem of the Man-God* by Maria Valtorta, did not Jesus say: "Please do not hinder Me! Endeavour to understand My need to love and to be loved. I have but this solace on the earth: to love and do the will of God." (Id., p. 240)

Is that not the program of life which Mother Paul-Marie followed? And is that not the program of life proposed to all of us in the Army of Mary? To love and do God's will, there you have the essential element of our foundress' life, based on what is recounted in the volumes of *Life of Love*. That is why it is fundamental that we remain united with God, in grace, by conforming ourselves to His divine will, so as to accomplish our "mission of love".

Thus, may we be attentive to the grace of the moment, so as to perceive Heaven's words to our soul, for "God's word is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword." (Heb 4:12) Let us put ourselves in the service of God and Mary so that the Eternal One will grant us His grace and we may be His instruments, Christ's soldiers, entirely devoted to the Lady and on the march towards the Kingdom within the renewed Church.

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1. Galot, Jean, S.J., *Le Coeur de Marie*, Paris, DDB, 1955, p. 17.
2. *The Imitation of Christ*, Third part, chap. 53.
3. Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, *The Story of a Soul*, chap. X, Manuscript C, (different editions).