

LOVE THAT IS FORGIVING: A MARVEL!

Irrespective of our merits, we have received the grace of being admitted into the Community of the Lady. We enter into it through our faith in the Total Christ, which, in order to be fully alive, requires that we work at producing fruits of kindness, justice and truth in an intense seeking of the Kingdom. In practice, this means that we must walk in the footsteps of the Good Shepherd and the Good Shepherdess who teach us the ways of Love which are giving, forgiving and self-abandonment.

Let us take a closer look at the love that is forgiving... It is easy to forgive when the offence does not really touch us. On the other hand, when it attacks that which we hold most dear, it does not take much for rancour, hatred or other harmful thoughts to surface. And yet, even the greatest love we may have for a person or a work never justifies rancour or hatred. In the Gospel, Jesus leads us to understand that any form of hatred is incompatible with divine life. Instead, it is necessary to be meek and humble, going so far as to love one's

enemies....

Marie-Paule also showed us just how far this kind of love could go. *Life of Love* abounds with such examples. To mention but one of them, let us recall an event recounted in *Appendix IV*. To set us in context, we must remember that nothing was more important to Marie-Paule than God's Work. Thus, she was deeply hurt when someone lacerated this Work with unjustified attacks. Several years after having spread slanderous writings against the Army of Mary in all the countries where it had been founded, an adversary of the Work humbly came back to Marie-Paule, sending her a letter in which he acknowledged his mistakes. Here is her reaction:

"I at once replied to the author, without reproach, without any reminder of those months of intense attacks on us, sending him the issue of 'Le Royaume'... just off the press. It seemed to me that he was getting off lightly, especially after all the trouble he had caused. But I quickly dismissed that thought, thinking of God's

mercy and recalling at the same time the words of John XXIII who glimpsed 'the bright dawn of the great Day of peace when victors and vanquished in this struggle would embrace fraternally, allowing to pass the powerful breath of divine life which would reveal to our souls, thirsting for happiness, the brighter horizons of evangelical justice and charity.'" (Vie d'Amour, Appendice IV, p. 278)

Although these struggles raised obstacles to the divine plan, Marie-Paule often had us notice that God uses them to purify us, to have us die to ourselves and grow in authentic humility so that we might be able to welcome with charity the persons who come back to the Work. Such is God's action in souls.

O the marvel of Love that is forgiving! Blessed will we be if we have an opportunity to practise this, for it will thrust us into the splendors of the Kingdom!

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MARY'S PERFECT HUMILITY

At the Annunciation, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to Mary to tell her that she would be the Mother of the Son of the Most High. We tend to see in this extraordinary happening a unique event of the past. However, it is certain that Mary thought of it again throughout her life. Privately, in her relationship with God, the salutation, "*Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you*", must have always echoed. Every time she thought of it again, rather than falling to her knees, she must have plunged into an ever deeper sentiment of humility and in a more intense prayer of thanksgiving, surrendering herself entirely into the hands of Him who had loved her so much from all eternity.

Knowing that she was loved of God in this way, she also knew that He would never refuse to grant her good prayers, including that of always keeping her hum-

ble. Thus, by immersing itself in humility and in the grace with which she had been filled, her soul would always be beyond the grasp of the devil. O abyss of God's Love, you are infinite and omnipotent in favor of those who love you and know that you love them!

On April 20, 1958, Marie-Paule wrote: "*I ask the Lord to grant me a profound humility, for it is so easy to tarnish the divine Work; the demon of pride knows well how to insinuate himself everywhere.*" (*Life of Love II*, p. 44) Marie-Paule was not born without the stain of original sin like the Virgin Mary but she knew that she was nevertheless loved by God so that He would grant this short prayer so very important.

We who have been redeemed by the most precious Blood of Christ, have become His beloved children. We too have received all graces and all blessings in Christ, so as to be able to live in righteousness and uprightness before our Creator.

Thus, the same tremendous words which the Virgin Mary probably meditated upon during her whole life ought to echo in us too: "*Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you*", for we have also been filled with graces in Christ, Total Man and Woman, and thus in Jesus Christ and Marie-Paule. Let us allow ourselves to be imbued with the sentiments of humility, purity and trusting surrender found in the words of the Hail Mary. And like Marie-Paule, let us ask the Lord to give us humility.

The world is dying for a lack of humility. It enables us to forget self in order to go out to other persons, to pardon, to thank, to sing a thanksgiving as children of God, that marvelous hymn of the servants of the Lamb of which the Book of Revelation speaks. (Cf. Apoc 14:2-3.)

Guide us, dear Mother, along the path of the loftiest virtues formed amid the greatest humility!

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