

BOOK ONE
THE NATURE AND EXCELLENCE OF ABANDONMENT
TO DIVINE PROVIDENCE

Chapter One

**Sanctity — Fidelity to God's Order and Submission to
His Works**

1. God's Hidden Works

Sanctity under the old law, even for Joseph and Mary was just fidelity to God's plan. In former times, no regular system of spirituality existed. All spirituality was just fidelity to God's plan. In those early ages, souls were simple and straightforward. For them, each moment brought some duty. Their whole attention concentrated on each moment, which presented a new duty at each hour.

Such was the hidden spring of Mary's conduct. "Let it be done to me according to your word." (Lk.1:18). This was the purest submission of a soul to God's will. Her words are completely in harmony with Our Lord's desire, "Let your will be done" (Lk.22.42). At that instant, Mary was not interested in her own glory. She was ruled by God's will. In obscure duties or exalted ones, Mary always sought God's workings. Each moment was His gift for her who hungered for Him alone.

2. God's work hides beneath the shadows of each moment's duties.

The power of the most high overshadowed Mary (Lk.1:35). This shadow is the hidden power of God to bring forth Jesus Christ in every soul. Although the duties of each moment concealed their divine character, Mary saw them in their true divine light. The shadows even increased her faith. The archangel departs, his message delivered. Mary walks ahead already beyond the archangel, possessed by the Holy Spirit who will never abandon her.

Scripture records no extraordinary outward event in Mary's life. She did and suffered what others might do and suffer. She visited Elizabeth, gave birth in poverty, returned to Nazareth, and was supported by the manual work of Joseph and Jesus. But what divine nourishment was contained in those ordinary events! The visible can be seen by all but the invisible is God doing great things. O heavenly manna - the Sacrament of the present moment! God gladly reveals Himself under lowly forms to the humble but the proud do not discover Him because they see only the external.

2. The Work of Our Sanctification

From this point of view, sanctity is easily understood. Sanctification sometimes seems insurmountable when really it is one single practice, active and passive fidelity to our God-appointed duties. Active fidelity involves the duties imposed on us by the laws of God and the Church and by our state in life. Passive fidelity requires only a loving acceptance of all that God sends. Active fidelity requires us only to do what is in our power e.g. going to Mass when you are able. Only evil acts are totally forbidden. Isn't this reasonable? And this is all that God requires. This is all He asks, always and everywhere.

If, God leads us beyond the Commandments, to practice the counsels, He suits them to our character, and gives the attractions of grace to make them easy. He never impels us beyond our strength. What is more just? Oh you who are discouraged because you have read lives of the saints and have formed terrible ideas of perfection — for your sake God has led me to write this. Whatever is necessary for nature (breathing, eating, sleeping) God has made easy. It is the same in the supernatural order. Love and fidelity are not that difficult. Is not your life composed of innumerable small actions? God is quite satisfied with these. Fulfill these and God will do the rest. Grace has one condition. We must go far beyond what we can imagine. This is what God has planned. Passive sanctity is even easier. We accept what we have no power to prevent and we suffer with sweetness what otherwise causes weariness.

Sanctity consists in this grain of mustard seed. You do not have to search for this treasure because it is everywhere, offered to you at every moment. All creatures, friends and enemies, pour it out upon us. It flows like a fountain and we need only open our mouth. God's activity permeates the entire universe and every creature. Wherever we are, God is working. Would that everyone would know how very easy it is to reach sanctity. They need only accept their Christian duties, embrace the crosses of their life and submit to God's Providence in everything. This is the way the patriarchs and prophets were sanctified (before there were so many systems of spirituality). The most exalted and simple way is to use what God (the sovereign director of souls) asks us to do or suffer each moment.

3. In What Perfection Consists

Perfection lies in doing God's will, not in knowing His plans. God's will, His works and His grace are all one and the same thing. God works in the soul and we become perfect by cooperating with this work, which is always done and completed in secret. Theology has many theories about God's work and a person can know them all. However, if these remain only in his mind, he is like a sick physician compared to simple people who take the medicine, knowing nothing of how it works. They are in good health because they accept God's plan even though they are ignorant of theological theories.

Doing God's holy will (not just speculation about his works) sanctifies the soul. Only drinking quenches thirst, not reading books about water. When someone thirsts for sanctity, speculation only increases the thirst and drives the soul further away. True sanctity is to accept the actions and sufferings arranged by God (either by divine command or by permission). These happen at every moment and are always holy for us.

4. Only God's Influence Can Sanctify Us.

Reading (or any spiritual exercise) sanctifies us only as a channel of God's influence which we must recognize at every moment. All reading not intended by God is dangerous. By obeying God's inspirations (in reading and in work) we obtain grace. Reading, apart from God, deprives us of God's power and only empties the heart by filling up the mind. By means of the ordinary sufferings and deeds, God's will brings about holiness. In a simple, ignorant person, they produce supernatural life without the mind being filled. The proud man (filled with spiritual ideas from curiosity) has a heart which is not connected to God's will.

God's will alone is the soul's life no matter how it works or is obeyed. When the divine will is connected to the mind it nourishes the soul. God's will is for each moment and as this moment passes, God's will changes. This change becomes apparent through circumstances, which show us God's will for the next moment. Doing God's will is what sanctifies the soul. At one moment it is reading, at another moment it is contemplation, at another moment it is a duty needed to be performed. In this latter case, the duty (and not contemplation) unites the soul with Jesus. God's will comes to us in countless different ways. These form us in holiness until we reach the mysterious attainment of the fullness of Jesus Christ.

This fruit increases within us by performing our duties. By fulfilling these we choose the "better part", that is, God's holy will to which we blindly abandon ourselves with perfect confidence. God's will is infinitely wise, powerful and kind to those who abandon themselves unreservedly. They seek it alone and believe with unshaken faith that what it arranges at each moment is best.

Nothing is of any value unless God makes it useful for the soul. Apart from God's will everything is empty, null vanity, nothingness and death. God's will is the health and life of body and soul. God's will bestows upon things and events the power to form Jesus' image in the soul. This divine will has no limits. It is all-powerful.

Even if the mind is filled with distractions or the body suffers sickness, the divine will in the present moment is the soul's life. Only God's influence sanctifies us. Without it, reading darkens the mind; with it, darkness becomes light. God unites the soul to Himself and gives everything to the soul which possesses him.

5. The Use of Mental Faculties

All of our faculties are useful only when they are instruments of God's actions. The mind, (which can become the foremost tool) must be made the lowest of faculties because it is a dangerous slave. Although of great service, the mind is a danger if not put in subjection.

A soul must first understand that God's action alone is enough. Sometimes, God shows the soul that it needs some outward help (such as a book). The soul should receive this outward help with simplicity according to God's order, using it as a necessary tool.

The divine power, although infinite, only takes full possession when the soul is empty of self-confidence. This self-confidence, which resides inside the soul, is the main obstacle to God's action because God can change exterior obstacles into means of progress. For God, everything is equally useful or equally useless.

No matter what it is (contemplation, vocal prayer, quiet retreat or active work) only what God wills for the present moment is best for the soul. By seeing God in all things, the soul takes them or leaves them as God pleases. It hopes for only what God chooses. As Paul said "Lord, what would you have me do?" (Acts.9:6). The mind might want one thing and the body another, but the soul wants only God's will. Work or prayer is nothing unless part of the Lord's will.

The abandoned soul is not devoted to anything (no matter how sublime) only to God's will.

God's indwelling presence sanctifies the abandoned soul because it submits to His will. The contemplative act of God's presence brings about this union like any other act done in God's will. Love and esteem for contemplation are lawful only if they are directed to God who uses contemplation to bring about our union with Him. When in the palace of the prince, we should pay attention to the prince himself and not to his officers.

6. Attaining Peace

Solid peace exists only in submission to God's will. Unless attached only to God's will, the soul will not find satisfaction nor sanctification. If what God chooses for the soul does not satisfy, how can anything else? If God's meat does not nourish you, what can? The soul is enriched and sanctified only by fulfilling God's will in the present moment. If you can find all good in God's will, why search elsewhere? Do you know better than God? When you find God's will, isn't it the most excellent?

Can you resist the Almighty and find peace? Your resistance causes all the problems. If dissatisfied with God's will, the soul should (in justice) be unhappy with anything else. If the soul is deprived of peace (in the midst of spiritual activities), it has strayed from God's path and is pleasing only self. God cannot find an entrance. The spiritual activities are an obstacle to grace. If, however, God wills spiritual reading or contemplation, the soul will find peace and will be ready to move on when the present duties demand. Only what comes from God's will is really good and best adapted to sanctity.

7. Estimating the Degrees of Excellence.

The soul's degree of perfection is measured only by fidelity to God's will. For the soul that is totally submitted, God's will gives divine value to all things. The duties it imposes are holy and perfect, sharing in God's power. The soul must follow God's inspirations only if they do not withdraw it from the duties of their state, for these are the clear manifestations of God's will. In them, nothing is to be feared and the time to fulfill them is precious. Holiness is the fulfilling of God's established order. Nothing should be rejected that is God's will and nothing sought that is not God's will.

Books and prayer in accord with God's will are instructive and should be accepted because true abandonment includes the soul being active. When God requires action, sanctity lies in acting. God even requires other actions which the soul is inspired to do beyond what is commanded, although these should never clash with the duties of life. God makes saints as He pleases but always according to His plan. Submission to this plan is perfect abandonment.

Duties inspired by Providence are common to all saints. Some saints' virtues are shown in very singular and wonderful ways. These fulfill God's will by yielding to these singular inspirations and abandoning themselves to God's will.

Carrying out God's inspirations is our duty. For some, their whole duty is defined by exterior laws. Others are called beyond exterior duties. Both are holy paths and each person

must follow what is appointed because perfection consists in fulfilling most perfectly the duties of our state. Comparing different states of life is of no value.

If self-love motivates our works, then our supposed abundance is really absolute poverty because holiness is measured by our love for God, our desire to please him and our conformity to His will. Jesus, Mary and Joseph sought love rather than greatness. Therefore, one way is not more perfect than another. The most perfect is what is most conformed to God's will, both in exterior duties and inner dispositions.

8. Sanctity Made Easy

Sanctity becomes easy when this doctrine is applied. If souls were properly instructed, they would be spared a lot of trouble. Especially those in the world would be happy if they realized the merit that is hidden in what they often see as irrelevant, namely, their daily duties. They must know that they will gain the highest sanctity by accepting the crosses sent by God's Providence. Submission to God's will changes all their occupations and troubles into divine gold. What courage they would have if they realized that arriving at eternal glory has totally to do with what they are already doing and suffering.

O God, I want to be the missionary of your holy will and teach everyone that sanctity is attainable and within reach. Just as the good and the bad thief had to suffer the same death, so the interior person and the worldly person have nothing different to suffer. The interior person is sanctified by submitting to your will and the worldly person is damned because He only pleases himself.

You who read this please realize that only your heart (that is, your will) must be changed. Sanctity consists in willing what God wills, a simple "yes" to God's plan for you. What is easier and who could refuse to say "yes" to such a loving will?

Chapter Two

God Works Unceasingly For Our Sanctification

1. Faith Alone Unveils God at Work

Although visible only to faith, God's actions are always and everywhere present. Although we see only creatures' actions all creation is in God's hands. Faith believes that all things live in Jesus Christ. His work embraces every moment and lasts until the end of time.

Creatures actually veil God's hidden works. After the resurrection, Jesus appeared by surprise under various disguises and disappeared after making himself known. This same Jesus still surprises those who are weak in faith.

At every moment, God presents Himself under the cover of a pain to be suffered or a work to be done. All that takes place within and around us conceals God's action. Although really present,

God's action is invisible. If we could lift the veil, we would see God act and reveal himself and we would rejoice. We would say "It is the Lord" (Jn.21:7). All creatures would be seen as God's feeble tools and we would realize that nothing is wanting to us. By faith, we would cherish all God's creatures because they serve for our perfection. We would have an uninterrupted life with God.

As air transmits our words, so do all external events transmit God's words for us. On earth this happens by faith; in heaven by glory. Without the light of faith creation speaks to us in vain. We find only a confusion from which we cannot hear God's word. Faith alone gives us the clue to all creation because God speaks to us as He did to Moses from the burning bush.

By faith we can touch and see what the senses cannot. Faith is the key to God's treasures. It teaches us the emptiness of created things and reveals God in everything. What we see is vanity. We are continually warned that the world is but a passing shadow. Truth exists in God alone.

We look on the outside and do not see the mystery contained within. Instead, we should raise our eyes to God, the origin of all things, in whom all things are divine and sanctifying. All are part of the plenitude of Jesus Christ and each circumstance is a stone in the heavenly Jerusalem. Living by our senses, we are like madmen in an illusion and darkness. By faith we can live for God alone and go beyond the mere shadows of things.

2. Faith Recognizes God at Work

The more God's work is hidden, the more the eye of faith can see it. The faith-filled soul judges everything differently than the person who uses only his senses. By faith, they see the king in disguise. They see God's will in everything and accept all with joy. They receive the king with honor while others reject because they see Him beneath His abject garb. The more disguised the king is, the more the soul is filled with love.

So it was at Bethlehem as Mary saw God in the little child. Although the inhabitants of Bethlehem did not pay him homage, Joseph, Mary and the shepherds saw His infinite dignity and divine majesty. Faith increases as the senses fail. The less to see means the more to believe. Loving Jesus on Tabor does not show faith but accepting Jesus in difficult circumstances is tried faith which conquers the senses. Extraordinary faith can always see God in ordinary circumstances.

Being satisfied with the present moment is to delight in God. Even in suffering and humiliating events, God cannot hide from the eye of faith. The louder the senses claim, "there is no God", the more faith firmly believes He is there.

While the apostles fled, Mary stood at the cross. Jesus' wounds only made him more loveable to her. The greater the blasphemies, the more she venerated. Faith pursues God through all that disfigures and destroys him. It reproduces Mary at the cross and endures all trials. God deliberately hides in darkness and makes His will difficult to recognize, Nevertheless faithful souls still follow. They know that behind the dark clouds is the divine Son which they can contemplate in its mysterious course across the sky.

O faithful soul, pursue this Son from one end of the heavens to the other. If you are untiring, nothing will hide him from you. His feet are on the tiny grains of sand and on the huge mountains. You will see His footprints everywhere and you will find him wherever He is.

What peace to find God in all His actions! Faith is the mother of sweetness, turning ugliness into beauty and having compassion even for enemies. The greater the hardship, the greater is God's work and the larger is the soul's profit. The enemy tries to do harm but God always uses their actions for the soul's benefit.

God's will has only favors for submissive souls. We can never have too much confidence in God's will! Faith does not doubt! The more the senses rebel, the more faith says "All is well". The eye of faith penetrates everything and conquers all things. It penetrates the darkest clouds and always grasps the Sun of truth.

3. How to Discover God's Will

At every moment, God places before us things of infinite value, measured according to our faith and love. By seeing each moment as a manifestation of God's will, we find all we desire. God's will is perfect. Nothing can increase its value. To discover God's will at every moment is to possess everything.

You who desire perfection know that your desires have no limit. The present is an infinite treasure, more than you can hold. Only your faith and love are the measure. Enlarge your confidence because your capacity to receive God's present will is like a mighty ocean which no human heart can fathom. The human heart is greater than all creation and nothing, except God, can fill the heart. The present moment is the entrance to God's great abyss. Plunge into this abyss of God's will and receive your fullness.

Remove your own illusions and adore God's will. In this way you will seek the sole reality. The senses worship creatures but faith destroys these idols. Faith is enriched when the senses are crushed. Faith laughs at calamities and recognizes God's will in them. Because the soul readily submits, God can give himself as a powerful help in all their circumstances. To the degree the soul has learned abandonment, it can rejoice at God's coming.

4. The Revelation of God

God reveals himself to us in the ordinary events as truly as He did in the great biblical events. God's word in the Bible and in daily events is full of mystery. The biblical events and the daily events are two sealed books. God is the center of faith and everything that comes from that center is hidden in mystery. They are feeble rays coming from a sun obscured by clouds. Our mortal eyes cannot see this sun. Even the soul's eyes are blind to it.

The Bible is the mysterious utterance of God. The biblical words are drops from an ocean of darkness. The fall of the angels and of Adam, the sins of men before and after Noah are indeed Scripture's obscure words. After the Messiah's coming, it seems incredible that only a handful of people are preserved from idolatry, that sin should always prove powerful and that the few upholders of truth are always persecuted. Consider how Jesus was treated. Think of the plagues in the Book of Revelation. They are words revealed by God! These

mysteries will continue until the end of time. Yet, they are God's living word teaching us wisdom and power.

Likewise, all historical events show forth God's attributes. We cannot doubt this, but we do not understand. Why are there Mohammedans and enemies of the Church? Pharaoh and others existed only to show forth God's perfection. But unless seen by faith, they have a contrary appearance. To see God's mysteries we must close our eyes to externals and cease to reason.

O Lord, you speak to mankind by great public events and you speak to each individual by the events of life. However, people do not hear your voice in these events because they see only the outward appearance. They censure your words because they want the liberty to commit any excess.

However, they respect your Scriptures saying that, although they cannot understand it, they must give You glory. Although this is true, should they not read God's word written moment by moment on their soul by suffering and daily actions? Why cannot they see God's will in these daily events? Instead, they find fault with everything. They judge by the senses and not by faith. As we must read the Bible with faith, so we must use faith to read God's word in His daily works.

5. The Action of Jesus Christ in the Souls of Men

God still writes on the hearts of men the same words as in Scripture. However, the words will not be seen clearly until Judgment Day.

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8) was God from the beginning, the first cause of our existence. He participated in human history by becoming a man. During each person's lifetime, He works in the soul until the end of the world as if history were only one day. He began all things by Himself and will continue in His saints an unending life.

O Life of Jesus, you extend beyond all time and bring about new works of God at every moment. The gospels only outline a few features of Jesus' life. How many gospels would be needed to record all the events of Jesus' mystical life in which miracles are multiplied to infinity? As His natural beginnings were hidden and fruitful, so His actions throughout world history are done in secret.

In Scripture, the Holy Spirit has pointed out some few moments in the ocean of time. By these moments, we can see how God brought Jesus before the world. Amidst all the races of men, we have a genealogy of Jesus.

The Old Testament contains only what is necessary to prepare for His coming. The Spirit has kept much hidden. Only a tiny stream escaped, making its way to Jesus. It was then lost in the Apostles and engulfed by the Book of Revelation. Jesus' activity in human souls until the end of time can be seen only by faith.

The Spirit, while helping the Church to preach the gospel, writes His own gospel in the hearts of the just. With the ink of suffering and actions, the Spirit writes a loving gospel on the saints' souls. This great history written by the Spirit is still in the press. Every day the type is arranged, ink applied and pages printed! However, the paper is blacker than the ink and the letters are confusing, understood only in heaven. This gospel can be read only after it leaves the press, published in the day of eternity. If we could see God's life in all creatures, how His actions move them and press them forward to the same goal by different means, we would realize that everything has a meaning and a connection to God's eternal work. However, God's letters are obscure and foreign to us. The type is reversed and the pages blotted with ink. Using just 26 letters, man can write innumerable books. Who, then, can understand God's book of history where each letter is different and includes the most profound mysteries which cannot be seen and are grasped only by faith? Faith alone can see God as the origin of these events which blind those who use only reason.

"Teach me, Holy Spirit, to read this book which I cannot understand. It is enough that the Master says it, that He arranges the letters of life in such a fashion and makes himself heard in this way. I do not see the reason but I believe because Jesus is truth. He groups His letters to form one word and then groups them again to form another. Only He could bring the letters together and write these words. All has meaning and makes perfect sense. Nothing is missing and nothing is superfluous. At present, I can only believe. When all mysteries are revealed I will see plainly. Then, what now seems perplexing and intricate will delight me eternally by its beauty, order and wisdom."

6. How People Treat This Divine Action

Many Christians treat this daily divine action as unworthily as the Jews treated the sacred body of Jesus. How unworthy are the world's thoughts about God. It complains constantly of what He does, trying to keep God within its own limits, making Him follow the rules of reason and trying to improve upon His plans.

We are surprised how the Jews treated Jesus, but how do Christians treat God's will? Can the divine will ever be mistaken? Yet we say, "I need this and it has been taken away" or "Illness comes just when I need good health."

Only God's will is necessary and what He takes away must be useless. Good soul, nothing is lacking to you. All your misfortunes and disappointments (which seem so unreasonable) you never see as God's will and refuse to acknowledge it. "Oh Jesus, while on earth you were called demonic, but now that all acknowledge you as Lord, how is your will received? Do you not deserve praise at every moment until time ends? Can your will do me harm? Should I flee from your will? Where can I find anything better?"

I must listen attentively to God's words with my heart because my reason and my senses are bewildered by these words. These words deal them a death blow because they are mysteries which compel the sacrifice of both. Mystery demands that the soul live by faith. Every other power sees only contradiction. God's actions deal death to the senses, and reason but gives life to the soul. A simple soul discovers God's meaning when the mystery appears to have none.

Faith life is a constant struggle against the senses.

7. The Hidden Work of Divine Love

Theme: Divine Love comes to us through creatures, which, like the Eucharistic species, are veiled.

Creatures are like the Eucharistic species. They veil God's presence. God's truths are hidden under the veils from Christians who imagine themselves enlightened. Who can understand that every action of God's plan gives God to us? This can be compared to the gift of Eucharist. Faith reveals God's presence in all life's events just as the Church reveals Jesus' presence in the Eucharist.

God has arranged and permitted all things to unite us to Himself. He makes use of events (both pleasurable and distressing) and of creatures (the best and the worst). Every moment of our lives should be a communion with divine love producing as much fruit as the moment of Eucharist.

Although Holy Communion is sacramentally efficacious, it happens just once a day while this communion with God in each moment is constantly accomplished. By simplicity and littleness each holy life becomes a mystery.

O great feast, given by God and received under the veil of what seems worthless! Human prudence rejects those disagreeable moments which God makes sacraments of love. By what actually seems harmful, souls can receive of God as much as the soul desires.

8. Experimental Science

Theme: What God sends to us at the present moment is most useful because it is intended just for us.

We are instructed only by words that God means expressly for us. A science about God acquired by reading or studying history is vain, confusing and filled with pride.

What happens from moment to moment must be our instructor. Jesus himself acquired this experimental knowledge before teaching others. Only in experimental knowledge of the Father could He increase because His other knowledge was full from the beginning. If Jesus found it necessary to learn from experiences, we also must need it. We understand perfectly only what experience has taught us. This is the school of the Holy Spirit Who speaks both in our own hearts and through others whom He sends.

Reading gives light only if we experience God's daily action. This experience is the leaven and the salt. Without this we are like visionaries who know all the roads yet lose our way going home. We must listen to God every moment to gain a practical and experimental theology. Don't listen to God's words for others. Listen to God's words for yourself. This interior language will purify and increase your faith.

9. The Source of Sanctity: God's Will in the Present Moment

O thirsting soul, learn that Jesus' living water flows quite close to you in the present moment. Hasten to find it. With the fountain so near why do you run about to other sources? To be an Apostle just give yourself to God's inspirations.

○ God, it seems as if your wonders had ceased and all that we could do was to copy your ancient works and quote your past discourses. Do you not have an inexhaustible source of new thoughts and further actions? Can there not be those who live in perpetual abandonment of your works, of new Apostles and saints who do not need to copy the lives of others?

People say "the times of the saints". What a strange way of talking. O God, do you not work at every moment, sanctifying all? Is there an ancient method of abandonment which is now out of season? Did not those early saints have just one secret of becoming moment-to-moment whatever you made them? Will this power of glory ever not continue for souls abandoned to you?

○ Love ever fruitful! May God's workings be the book that I study. O God, I become what You want, not by consulting books but by receiving you in everything. I will follow this ancient road of the saints and, in doing so, copy and imitate all of them.

10. God Makes His Will Known Through Creatures

Theme: The present moment manifests the coming of God's kingdom.

The present moment is God's ambassador, announcing His commands. The soul need only listen and say, "Let it be done". The soul sails by this wind, for every direction for it leads to the shore of infinity. Everything helps the soul. It no longer chooses between opposites (Prayer or work; sickness or health; life or death). It chooses only what God presents at the present moment. In this renunciation of self and submission to God's will, the soul finds satisfaction only in the present moment as if nothing else existed.

A soul abandoned to God receives all that is really necessary. Nothing is wanting to it. Any self-pity only shows that the soul lacks faith and is living according to reason (which is never satisfied because unable to perceive God's sufficiency).

"To hallow God" (as Jesus teaches) is to see His holiness in all creatures because these proceed from God like words from the mouth. Each moment God expresses a divine thought through created things. These are His words which reveal His will for us. God has only one name but it is infinitely diverse in its effects and in the various characters that it assumes. To hallow God is to love His ineffable being and to adore His will at every moment. His decrees are just veils of His will, which is holy in all its works, words and actions.

Job blessed God, saying that whatever form His actions took (even destruction) it was still holy. Only by continual recognition of God's will in all events, can God reign in us. All the petitions of the Our Father are contained in abandonment to God's will. While the Church asks us to repeat this prayer often with our voices, we also chant it in our hearts when we do or suffer what He wills. Simple souls glorify God by pronouncing this prayer at every moment in their hearts. Realizing that they desire to bless God more than they are able, they even see persecutions as God's favors. God enriches the soul by depriving its senses and fills the soul by emptying it. This is God's wisdom.

We must venerate the events of every moment because they are filled with God's will. They are a kind of sacrament which sanctifies every submissive soul. They are manna falling always from heaven. They are the reign of inner holiness. We cannot consider these moments as mere trifles because they contain the kingdom of holiness and the bread of angels.

Lord, let your kingdom come to sanctify my heart. Oh precious present moment! Insignificant in the eyes of many but valued greatly by faithful souls. If the Father sees this present moment as so significant, why should I not also? Everything from His hand bears His stamp.

11. Everything is Supernaturalized by Divine Action

Theme: Divine action incites the soul to the highest sanctity, requiring only abandonment on the soul's part!

Because they don't know how to use God's divine action, many Christians use a multitude of methods. Their multiplicity doesn't impart the core principle of life (God himself) who is continually present and constantly acting each moment. Jesus (the Master sent to us) speaks to every heart only those words which apply to us. However, we do not hear. We want to know His words to others and not to ourselves. We don't believe that He supernaturalizes all our own experiences by His action. We must accept each moment with an open mind and with confidence that nothing will harm us. This vast activity of Jesus (from the beginning of time until its end) pours out every moment on souls who rejoice in the present moment.

You say you would gladly die for God because to lose all and to die forsaken are charming ideas. O Lord, for myself, I choose a different path. I glorify Your presence in all things. Your will is enough. I want to live and to die as it decides. Your will pleases me more than whatever instruments you use. Every moment of my life is heavenly, a genuine divine action. Living or dying each moment satisfies me. I don't single out times or ways but I welcome you in whatever way you come.

O divine will, you have revealed to me your immensity and I will walk only in your infinite bosom. You are the same yesterday, today and forever. All graces begin in you and flow from you. They are drops of the ocean which pour over all creatures. I no longer seek this action in spiritual persons nor by grace from door to door. I am a child of an infinitely wise and powerful Father whom I want to please by my faith. His divine action is present at every

moment to perfect me. I will use His immense fortune in a profitable way!

Why should I go to creatures for help when their actions cannot match God? If I did this, I would be rushing from one fountain to the next while the waters of God's sea encompass me on every side. All that happens to me is food for my nourishment and water for my cleansing, a channel of grace for all my needs. Why seek grace elsewhere when the present moment gives it constantly?

O God, people seek you in many ways because they do not know that you lavish yourself upon them. How foolish not to breathe air! How foolish to search for a place to stand when the whole countryside is available. People cannot find water even though God is providing a deluge because they cannot enjoy God when He is present in all things.

O good people, you search for God and yet you do not make use of what He sends you. Everything (except what is sinful or not a duty) leads to divine union. Just accept everything God sends and allow the present moment to accomplish God's purpose. All things are in God's hands. His action is more vast than air or water.

He even enters through our senses (if they are used according to His will). Every action of your being is formed by His power. Your blood flows in your veins by His power. All the fluctuations of your existence, strength and weakness, life and death are divine actions to sanctify you. All your bodily states are works of grace. All your opinions and ideas come from this source. However, you can learn only by experience. No created mind can teach you what God's action will do upon you.

Your life flows on in an abyss where each present moment contains what is best for you. Therefore, love must be the present moment! Have confidence in God's action which can do only good for you. O God, to what heights of sanctity would souls arrive if only they were satisfied with your action? If souls just left everything in God's hand, they would become eminently perfect. All would arrive at union because all are invited. No effort is required. God's work accomplishes everything.

In you, O God, every soul has a perfect model toward which your action ceaselessly operates. Souls must be faithful copies of your divine example, not of each other. Each soul is singled out and made unique by quite ordinary things. O God, how can I make souls appreciate what you offer? Why do souls perish in poverty while riches are available? Why are they parched plants in a desert when I can show them the sources of living waters?

Come souls who have no sensible devotion, who possess no talents or even an education. Come souls who cannot even understand spiritual words or eloquent preachers! I will teach you secrets that will lead you far beyond these clever minds. I will make perfection so easy that you will find it everywhere and in everything. You will walk hand in hand with God as soon as you begin practicing it. Do not study a map of the spiritual country but begin walking in it. Do not study what divine grace can accomplish when you can become subject to grace. Don't hear the words directed to others when you can listen to words meant for you.

12. The Divine Word as Our Model

Theme: Only God's action can sanctify us by getting us to imitate Jesus.

In history (human life) God's actions carry out the idea He has for everyone. All things have their identity in God. God always sees in the eternal Word exactly how you ought to be formed and all that you need to be holy.

The Bible contains one part of this word. God's action within you contains the other part. You receive God's word only by accepting it. This work cannot be done by mental speculation or by cleverness. God's word is accomplished only by a passive way of abandonment, like metal yielding to a mold or a stone formed by a sculptor's hand.

You cannot resemble God's idea for you by knowing all divine mysteries. Our resemblance to God's image results from God impressing His seal upon us. This impression doesn't come by ideas in our minds but from abandonment in our will. The just soul is content with what God intends. It accepts the boundaries of God's path and does not trespass them. The soul doesn't question God about His ways but is content with God's arrangement. The soul makes no effort to discover the meaning of events but desires only to know what each moment reveals.

The soul is content with God's word in its heart and thus becomes like God moment by moment without even knowing it. The bridegroom (Jesus) speaks to His spouse (the soul). She gratefully receives the divine action. The soul's spirituality is perfectly simple and totally solid. Its actions don't come from ideas that only serve pride. (Remember that mental exertion is often harmful to true piety.)

We must use only what God sends us, not learning His wonders by our minds but gaining His grace by our fidelity. Reading about God's great works often leads to despising trifling works which would have great effects upon us. We are fools. We admire God's works in history when God wants to write new words on our own hearts. Unfortunately, we keep moving the pages and prevent His writing.

O God, pardon my defects. I don't yet understand how to let you act. I have not been cast into your mold. I have attended all the spirituality workshops but I have not received the imprint of your pencil on my soul by abandonment. Still, I have found in you, a Master, a Physician, a Father and a Friend. I must be your disciple attending only your school. Like the prodigal son I must hunger for the Father's bread. Therefore, I relinquish my own ideas and I stop following other masters. I will use only your books in obedience to your actions. I will confine myself to the one essential business, which is enabling you to act in each present moment.

BOOK 2
ON THE STATE OF ABANDONMENT

Chapter 1

The Nature and Excellence of Abandonment

1. God's Life in the Soul

Theme: When the soul lives in God and when God lives in the soul are two quite different states.

When the soul lives in God it must use carefully and regularly every means possible to have divine union. When God lives in the soul it need only abandon itself to His Providence. The soul living in God uses the normal methods of readings and resolutions. All is done by a rule. When God lives in the soul it has nothing to follow, seeing only what God gives each moment. Nothing is marked out. The soul is just like a child, led wherever God wants and judging all things by what is presented. Often deprived even of a director, God alone supports it.

This soul lives in darkness and abandonment. Not knowing from where it will get relief, the soul looks to heaven for help. God seeing this purest disposition, provides the soul with all the books, insights and counsel she needs. The soul finds everything in abandonment at exactly the needed moment. She then gives up everything to live totally in God's care.

The non-abandoned soul takes up an infinity of good works, while the abandoned soul is apparently cast aside and of no use for anyone. Forsaken by creatures, the soul enjoys God with a true love (active but infused) and tries to accomplish nothing by her own skills. The soul knows only how to abandon herself to God. Because of appearances, the world judges this soul as useless, when really this soul spreads God's graces on many persons who have no idea where they came from.

For abandoned souls everything is efficacious and apostolic. God gives their prayers and their works a power, which (unknown to them) touches many others. God also uses others to instruct the soul. This soul itself guides and supports others without understanding its own power. God works in them by unknown impulses, and, like Jesus, power goes forth from them. Unlike Jesus, however, they do not perceive this power of their cooperation for it is like a hidden perfume.

2. The Most Perfect Way

Theme: In this state, God leads the soul through every kind of obscurity.

Moved by divine influence, the soul abandons all methods (books, ideas and persons) and is guided by God, the sole source of perfection. It remains in God's hands, realizing that He alone can guide it. If the soul sought other means, it would go astray. It is in the strange country led there by God.

Like the wind which always changes, the soul's direction is known only in the present moment. God's will is done by hidden undoubted instincts or by the duties of life. This is the only spirituality the soul knows. This is their vision, their wisdom and their counsel. Still, nothing is wanting to them. Faith shows them that all is well. When they seek advice, it is only to more clearly discern. They can see God's actions beneath everything and, therefore, they do not focus on externals.

By faith, these souls rest always on the infallible and ever-present action of God at each moment. They enjoy all things because everything is always at their service. They use things, not because they trust them but in submission to God's inner workings, which they discover easily and certainly. They seek or desire only God because they are assured of this most perfect way.

In whatever happens each moment (interiorly or exteriorly) they see the fullness of God's actions. Created things are nothing to them because only God's action is important. The soul loves this action whether it gives or takes away. This includes books, persons, health or even life itself. Because God's action is always sanctifying (no matter what form it takes) the soul is interested in only the source (God Himself) and does not worry about the way God acts.

3. Abandonment as a Pledge of Predestination

Theme: Abandonment mixes faith, hope and love into a single act which unites the soul to God.

We can explain this divine mingling (a spiritual oneness) by saying that by faith, hope and love the soul enjoys God and possesses Him. Although the state of abandonment is most frequently called pure faith, pure hope and pure love are also present and practiced in this obscurity.

No state is more secure in God or more disinterested because there is the certitude of being on God's side. On the soul's side, this certitude is mixed with fear and hope. O soul, this is a desirable trinity, so believe, hope and love. These come from the simple impulse which the Holy Spirit diffuses within the center of your heart. This is mystical revelation and the pledge of your predestination.

This impress of the Spirit is called pure love when the soul's powers are plunged in delight and pure faith when there is bitterness and darkness. Although pure faith neither sees nor feels, the differences with pure love is only apparent not real. Pure faith is part of the state of love and vice versa. The Spirit forms a variety of these states, rearranging them in various forms with each soul receiving exactly that action of God which is suitable for it.

All these forms have faith, hope and love. Abandonment is the general means to gain them. Each soul has a unique state. Yet, all are united to God through abandonment for that action which is best for them. In God's kingdom all can aspire to a crown. Whether the soul is in love or in faith, all are in union with God. The soul doesn't seek a state because the soul is indifferent to its state. It seeks God alone. Let us not preach about the state of faith (the cross) or the state of love (delights). Let us preach abandonment and souls will gain the state chosen for them from

all eternity. Let us not drive anyone away from their destined perfection. Jesus asks all to abandon themselves to the Father's will. He is their Head when their will accords with His. Jesus does not exact the extraordinary. All He wants is a will that He can guide and befriend.

4. Abandonment comprises the most heroic generosity.

Theme: Abandonment demands the highest generosity. As the soul accepts all perils and troubles, seeing God's hand in everything they find divine life flooding them.

An army of these is invincible because faith lifts the heart above the senses. By the life of faith and the instinct of faith all are one and the same. It is an enjoyment of whatever God sends, confident of His protection. All is pleasant because it is received with good grace. The soul is indifferent to and prepared for everything. It is happy even when the situation is desolate. The soul always believes in God's actions no matter what the senses say. The senses say, "You are lost", but faith exclaims "Go on and fear nothing".

5. The Great Merit of Pure Faith

Theme: By abandonment the soul gains greater merit than by extraordinary good works.

The extraordinary events (like revelations and visions) which we find in saints' lives are only a glimpse of their inner faith because the saint sees and hears God every moment. The extraordinary actions are really for others, who can get a glimpse of what is already within the saint. Jesus' Transfiguration and His miracles did not increase His inner holiness. These were just lights which escaped from the cloud of His humanity so others would have faith.

The saints' greatness lies in their constant faith which caused them to rejoice in God always. Their sanctity didn't need the extraordinary manifestations (which were shown outwardly to benefit others). The saints are happy in their obscurity and seek only God's good pleasure. Faith is content with being hidden. Those who require proof have less faith.

God establishes some saints for the salvation of souls. On these He bestows rays of glory so even the blind can see. Such are the prophets, the apostles and those God has placed in the Church's candlestick. These will always exist in the Church. However, others have been created to shine only in heaven. These give off no earthly light and die in obscurity.

6. Submission — a Free Gift to God.

Theme: The state of Abandonment includes the merit of every action of God.

Interior abandonment contains every possible variety of God's works because the soul opens itself to God's good pleasure and this surrender extends to everything God does. Each moment the soul's abandonment has no limit. The soul does not decide what it will submit to God because it has already decided to submit at all times and in all things.

From the soul God requires all the essentials of abandonment, the free gifts of abnegation, obedience and love. All the rest is God's business. By performing the duties of

state and by quietly following all God's inner attractions, the soul exercises one continual universal act of abandonment. This act is not limited by time nor by the express duty being fulfilled. It has all the total merit of a sincere good will. What God wanted done, is done.

Only God's good pleasure limits what the soul does. Its will has no limit. The will has a union with God that has no limit or measure. Love does a limited good because that is all God wants done. God finds the heart pure and free and communicates Himself fully because love has emptied the soul of everything created. By the soul's unreserved submission, God comes to the center of the soul.

"O God, do what you want with me. I do not want to arrange a single moment of my life. All is from you and for you. I want neither to add or to subtract anything. Regulate everything. My mortification, salvation and sanctification are all your business. My task is to be satisfied with your work and to leave all to your good pleasure."

7. Every Soul is Called to Enjoy the Infinite Blessings of This Free Submission to God

O God, I preach abandonment, a general method by which all can arrive at the state of union which you have marked out. I ask that souls abandon themselves knowing that you will infallibly have them arrive at their proper goal.

I preach faith, the willingness to be subject to God's action and to believe that at every moment and in every circumstance God is working. I preach this general state so that all souls can find God in different circumstances and in the different forms according to God's grace.

I have taught abandonment to souls in trouble, but now I speak to all souls. I announce this saving secret far and wide, to make myself all in all. This is a duty I fulfill with no difficulty. I am foolish with the foolish and use learned terms with the learned. All cannot gain the same favors but all can gain the same God, the same love and the same abnegation, which is the highest sanctity.

Graces are called extraordinary only because so few become worthy to receive them (something that will be made manifest on Judgment Day). It will be seen clearly that God did not withhold these favors but that souls (by their own fault) were deprived of untold blessings that they would have received only by simple submission.

If people receive nothing from Jesus, it is due only to their own bad disposition. All cannot aspire to the same perfection, but all can gain the perfection that would satisfy their desires. They would be happy according to both nature and grace.

8. God Reigns in a Pure Heart

Theme: All the treasures of grace result from a pure heart and perfect abandonment.

To enjoy an abundance of blessings, the soul need only detach itself from creatures and abandon itself to God. Let others ask for gifts, I will seek only a pure heart. "O pure heart, you see God in all things and at every moment. All things are God's instruments by which He rules

and guides you. Whatever happens you will the event just like God does. You cannot even see this desire within you but God does. Seeing your good inclinations, God knows you will be submissive. You are ignorant even of what you need but God gives you all that is necessary. You think you are going West, God takes you East. Without maps or compasses, your voyages are always fortunate. Encountering pirates, God suddenly pushes you out of harm's way.

O pure heart, Jesus knew your place in the beatitudes. What is greater than to possess God and have Him possess you. Rest peacefully in Providence's bosom and enjoy wisdom. Your journey has no anxiety even amid storms and rocks.

O pure heart, the foundation of the spiritual state, you are given faith, hope, confidence and love, and you profit from all of them. Priceless graces flower in your soul, which is entirely detached since all else is excluded. You are a faithful source of streams rich in God's flower garden. You say to everyone, "Look at me. I have chosen the better part. I produce a gentle fear which bestows a horror of evil and makes it easy to avoid. I allow souls to see God's greatness and the value of virtue. I am the source of ardent desires filled with hope. I get souls to practice virtue with the hope of possessing God forever.

O pure heart, invite all souls to come to you so they desire all that is beautiful and charming. Produce every kind of virtue. Honey flows in your land and your breasts distill milk.

Let us fly to that ocean of love which attracts us. Let us lose ourselves in God and be inebriated by His wine of love. Let us begin our journey to heaven. We can discover every passage. All the doors are open.

We can breathe this country air, going and returning when we please. We have the Key of David to enter and to depart the abyss where all treasures are hidden. With this key we open the gates of mystical death. We enter the lions' dens and yet emerge unscathed. We come to the joyful land of light and understanding, where the spouse rests and reveals His secrets which no mortal tongue can describe. God gives every good thing that can be possessed to those who love. Love flows (on the right and the left) into those souls who welcome the outpouring.

Why speak about this divine, eternal harvest when it is better to possess it in silence? Yet, you must be praised. From the moment you possess us, all matters (speaking or silence, life or death) become matters of complete indifference. This soul can take or leave anything, health or illness. In this compound of matter and spirit, this abandoned heart is your kingdom in which you reign supreme. It has only those feelings which you inspire. What nature or the devil substitute cause only disgust. If the soul is overcome, it is only so you can give it more wisdom. Recognizing its mistake, the soul returns to You with renewed love and great tenacity.

Chapter 2 The Duties of Souls Called by God to Abandonment

1. Sacrifice — The Foundation of Holiness

Theme: The soul's first great duty is an absolute and total surrender to God.

"Make your sacrifice and hope in the Lord." The solid foundations of the spiritual life are sacrificing self to God, being subject to Him (in interior and exterior matters) and becoming totally forgetful of self. In this state, the soul is formed by God because God's glory is the souls only good.

Once this foundation is laid, the soul rejoices that God is God and abandons itself. The soul is totally satisfied with all that happens. It does not even reflect on how God uses the soul. Abandonment has the duties of life as the soul's principal duty. How these duties are accomplished is the measure of the soul's holiness. The saint is freely submissive to God's will. What results is God's work and not man's.

God requires only blind abandonment because He determines what will happen just as an architect arranges the stones of his building. The soul's first duty is to love God's will in whatever way it is manifested and desire nothing else. God selects everything choosing always what is best for the soul. All spirituality is to abandon yourself totally to God. The soul must serve Him without any anxiety (which seeking perfection sometimes occasions). God wishes to do everything for us, so leave everything in His hands. Do not be troubled about what concerns God.

O soul, be lifted above earthly things and be satisfied with God and all He does. Don't entertain any anxious reflections. These only carry your footsteps off the path. Just leap over the labyrinth of self-love and don't try to cross its many detours. Go through illness, anxiety, weakness, the snare of the devil and of men. Go through jealousies and evil imaginations. Soar like an eagle with your eye upon the sun (which represents your obligations). Remember that your life is not a life of mere feelings. You must live in your soul's higher regions where God's will forms an eternity that is ever the same. In this spiritual dwelling where the uncreated God holds the soul at an infinite distance from all created things, the soul is calm even when the senses are tossed about.

In this blessed state, the soul becomes independent of the senses. Life's troubles are like the clouds which can never affect the sun. All things pass like clouds blown by the winds. In the state of faith (and of glory) God alone captivates the heart and one day will be its true happiness.

When in glory, the soul will have power over the material body and God will make the material partake in a heavenly power. He prepares the powers of soul and body here below. They are like a canvas for His painting and stones for His building. The canvas and the stones must pass through many alterations before attaining their brilliance. All they suffer here below leads to that eternal glory.

The faithful soul, knowing these secrets of God, is always at peace. Its interior graces are always reassuring. Convinced that God is guiding it, the soul sees all events with grace. It overlooks whatever God uses because it knows that God is at work.

The soul fulfills all its duties faithfully and exactly. This soul is totally moved by grace. According to God's plans, the soul receives sorrow or consolation. The soul can distinguish this divine action from everything else because it seeks only God's will and how to be conformed to it.

2. The Pains and Consolations of Abandonment

Theme: The soul must strip itself of all created things to arrive at the state of abandonment.

Abandonment is full of consolations but to arrive there the soul must pass through great anguish. Because the mind cannot grasp pure love, it must be taught by God's actions on the soul and these always include pain and obstacles. This practical knowledge enjoys God as the only good and requires detachment from everything. Therefore, pure love comes only by constant crosses and purifications. These trials must continue until all created things are as though they didn't exist. Then God becomes all in all.

God, therefore, combats all the soul's personal desires, even those of devotion or methods of prayer. Because God upsets the soul's plans, it finds only confusion and emptiness. The soul says "I must go this way" and God says just the opposite. Finding only emptiness, the soul must seek and be content with God alone.

If the soul understands God's lovingly severe conduct, it can be raised up and repose in God. It learns to use created things only when told by God and when His will is clear. The soul inhabits a region above earth, in God's fullness. Finding this soul empty of its own desires and clothed in indifference to creatures, God fills this heart casting a shadow of nothingness over creatures so the soul has no inclination toward created things. So much does God's majesty fill the soul!

Living thus in God, the heart becomes dead to all living things. Only God can revive the soul to His creation. God's order rules this life and the heart seeks creatures only according to God's order. Creatures are accepted by the soul only according to God's good pleasure. Because things are taken away by God and then return to the soul's life only by God's will, the soul must see God in all things. Each moment is spent only to satisfy God. This is an unreserved self-abandonment in which each moment contains everything.

3. The Different Duties of Abandonment

Theme: Abandonment includes both fulfilling duties) and following inspirations.

Although abandoned souls must be very passive, some activity is demanded. The state of abandonment is the virtue of abandonment practiced more habitually and in greater perfection. Therefore, the soul must do God's will and accept what God sends.

Abandonment is a total gift of self to God for whatever He wants. God uses the soul in two ways — to do something or to accept what God does. The soul responds in two ways. It accomplishes God's clear orders and submits to what He sends (whether pleasure or pain). Abandonment submits to God's will in the present moment, without caring what the present moment contains. All that is absolutely necessary is to abandon itself unreservedly.

However, besides duties to be fulfilled and accepted, there is a third part to active fidelity. These are inspired duties, those to which God's Spirit inclines the heart. Following this divine inspiration requires great simplicity and cheerful heartiness. The soul must be easily directed by grace. The soul must surrender and obey freely. God always provides the guidance to show how these inspirations should be used.

Fidelity to inspirations takes precedence over all laws and all roles. In saints, this is what is singular and extraordinary. It marks their prayer, their interior words, their noble lives, their austerities, their zeal and their prodigal devotion to others.

This is the interior role of the Spirit, and no one should try to obtain it, think they have it, think they deserve it or regret not having it. They also must not try to practice these uncommon virtues. These works have merit only if under God's direction. Otherwise, the soul is not content and is open to self-influence and delusion.

God keeps these souls hidden and little in their own eyes. He keeps them in obscurity. Otherwise they would be deceived. If well instructed, they know that fidelity is their path and they are at peace in lowliness. In the degree of their love and their submission to God's will, they are different from seemingly more favored souls. In this way, their sanctity exceeds the seemingly more favored.

Therefore, each soul must be content with fidelity to God's Providence (which God asks equally of all). God decides His attractions and works upon each soul. All natural effort actually opposes infused inspirations (which always come with peace). Only the divine Bridegroom's voice awakens the soul which must act under the Spirit and not by its own ideas. Not feeling the attractions of the saints, the soul just says "God did not will that for me".

5. God Does All for the Soul Which is Abandoned to God's Two-fold Manifestation of His Pleasure.

Abandoned souls resemble Jesus, Mary and Joseph because God's will was the fullness of their lives. By submitting to God's precepts and God's inspirations, they were completely dependent on His purely providential will.

Their lives (although extraordinary) seemed outwardly quite ordinary. They fulfilled their religious duties as others did. In their conduct, we find nothing striking. Their secret was that only their dependence on God's will arranged their lives. By their habitual submission they had complete self- mastery.

Likewise, abandoned souls are solitary and free. They are detached from everything to belong to God and to fulfill their present duty. They don't reflect or think of consequences or causes. They accomplish their plain duties as if there existed only the present obligation.

The present moment is a desert in which they see only God whom they enjoy, occupied with His duties and forgetting all else. Like an instrument, the soul receives interiorly what God does and then they do exteriorly His same inner work.

This interior acceptance includes the soul's active cooperation (even though this is infused and mystical). God sees the soul acting by His laws and filled with good will. He spares the soul the trouble, and does the work Himself. It is like someone seeing a friend preparing for a journey. He replaces the friend, goes himself and spares his friend the trouble. This action is a free determination to please the friend. It is also active, because sincerely undertaken, interior because nothing outward took place and mystical because God is the source. Please note that the soul's cooperation in this imaginary journey is quite different from fulfilling other obligations which result from the soul's free, active fulfillment.

Abandonment contains activity and passivity. It is habitual goodwill which, like an instrument, always responds to the master's touch. In God's hands, the soul fulfills all the purposes for which it was created. Intentional obedience is the soul's ordinary care. This other is quite different. It is a love infused into the soul in silence. This infused action is quite different (and higher) than the soul's usual fidelity. However, the soul must act to maintain this infused love.

God's will is the soul's method and rule in all things. It is the direct and safe path, the unchangeable law at all times and all places. The soul follows this straight line always, not moving to the left or right, nor overstepping its limits. What is beyond this path, the soul receives passively. Therefore, the soul actively fulfills its duties, but passively accepts all the rest. It is always patient with God's actions.

5. The Common Way of All Souls

Theme: The soul, aiming at union with God, values all His works but is attached only to the present moment.

We can possess God only by our union with His will. Anything else is an illusion. God's will uses all methods and all ways uniting us to Him by what suits us best. We should esteem all the ways that God uses. He accommodates everything to each soul and selects the best method for divine union. Although the soul sees how God works in others, the soul is not jealous but submits to God's choice and makes no choice itself.

If God prevents me from having sensible devotion, I should still esteem this in others and just use the present moment for divine union. I should not reduce religious practice to one means. God always chooses the best means for each soul. God's will has no limits and I should welcome whatever way He has chosen for me and revere whatever way He has chosen

for others.

All souls have one way to divine union (God's will). Yet, each way is distinct, thus forming the variety of the Church's mystical role. All souls should mutually esteem one another saying "We have the same goal but different paths". This is the way we must read the lives of saints and spiritual books. We must never change or forsake our own path because of what we have read.

We must only read those spiritual books that God wills. In this way the soul will be strengthened by finding what conforms to its way or even by what differs. If this reading is not God's will, it will cause confusion of ideas because only God's will gives order to everything. Why, then, are we anxious about what has nothing to do with our present duty? When will God be all in all for us? Let us go beyond all creatures and live entirely for God.

6. The Duty of the Present Moment is the Only Rule.

Theme: From these souls God demands perfect docility to His actions of grace.

To follow this method, the soul must be detached from all that it feels and does, and subsist in God alone. Everything else is superfluous. The soul must always think of the present duty, forgetting the previous duty or the one to follow.

If the practice of abandonment has made your soul docile and you feel a divine inspiration which leads you to say "I am inclined to read this book, or to give this advice, or to open my mind to another, to give something away or to perform some action", then, obey the inspiration without reflecting or reasoning.

Because God's will has been shown to you give yourself to these actions as long as God wishes. This supplants all your other supports. The obedient soul is faithful to the virtue needed each moment. She remembers all she has learned and is well mortified. Therefore, these souls are attracted to a certain book or a certain person, to some remark or reflection. In this way, God leads them to learn something which they will need in the future.

These souls do things because they feel an attraction, even without knowing why. All they can say is "I feel myself drawn to read, or to write, or to ask etc. God leads me to these and then stores these attractions in reserve for the future, both for myself and for others.

That is why these souls must be gentle, yielding and submissive to God's faintest breath. By abandonment, the soul's only rule is the present moment. The soul is as simple as a little child, like a ball receiving and following God's inspirations. These souls are like molten metal and take the form of whatever mold God chooses. Their disposition is like the atmosphere, affected by every breeze and filling every crevice.

They come before God as a fabric with a clear surface. They confidently abandon themselves. They are absorbed by their duty, totally oblivious to themselves and their own

needs. The more they do their work (which is often hidden and outwardly of little value), the more God embellishes the soul with brilliant colors. On this simple canvas God traces the most beautiful designs with delicate and intricate patterns of divine figures. "The Lord has made His holy one wonderful" (Ps.4).

The paper only feels the moving of the pencil. The stone (struck by the sculptor) feels only the cruel blow. A stone destined to become a statue does not know what is happening. It would say, 'I only know one thing. I must remain still in the hands of the master, to love him and to endure all that He does to me. This is my destiny. He alone understands what must be accomplished. I do not know what He is doing or what He plans for me. I only know that His work is the best and most perfect for me. Each blow of His chisel is the most excellent thing that could happen to me. In my opinion, each blow causes ruin, destruction and disfigurement, but that is not my business. I am content with the duty of the present moment and I endure whatever the master does with me without knowing or worrying about it.'

Yes! Give God what belongs to Him. Remain passive in His hands and believe that everything (exteriorly and interiorly) is best for you. Let the chisel or the needle do its work. Let the brush cover the canvas with its daubs. Respond by constant submission and fulfillment of your duties. Don't bother to study these ways or the "ins and outs". Go blindly along the path. Seek only the Kingdom of God, the rest will be given to you.

Many souls are distressed, asking "Who will direct us so we can gain perfection? Let them search in their books. You, faithful soul, just remain one with God and follow blindly His path. In your darkness, the angels are at your side. If God asks more of you He will let you know by His inspirations.

7. Trusting in God's Guidance

Theme: The docile soul does not even seek to know the road that God leads it upon.

When God acts as Guide, He demands complete confidence and a freedom from all anxiety concerning the road that He chooses. He moves the soul without revealing the road. The soul doesn't imitate others. It just moves on its own. To act otherwise would be a great risk. God's action is always fresh and new. The soul never retraces its former steps.

Souls truly led by God never know where they are going because their ways are not found in books. God's action carries them step-by-step and they make progress only by His plan. If a guide takes you across an unknown country at night by his own skill, all you can do is abandon yourself. What good is it to ask advice or to consult maps? The guide only asks you to trust Him and takes pleasure in overcoming your anxieties. If you are convinced that he is a good guide, you have faith and abandon yourself to him.

God's action doesn't need to be changed or controlled. It began at the dawn of creation and has continued ever since with ever-fresh energy and without limit. Yesterday, God acted one way. Today, He acts differently. It is the same action applied with new effects at every moment.

It has produced Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (all originals — no copy). Moses had no prototype and David was different from the Patriarchs. St. John the Baptist stands alone. Christ is the first-born. The apostles act mostly from the guidance of the Spirit.

Jesus set no limits. He often didn't follow His own maxims. He abandoned Himself to the Spirit. He didn't even consult His own past to know what to do in the future. Grace shaped His every moment according to the wisdom of the Trinity. Jesus received His directions every moment and followed them. This same Jesus works the same way in all His saints.

To live according to the Gospel, just abandon yourself to Jesus "the same yesterday, today and forever" (Heb.8:8). What Jesus accomplished is done. What remains to be done is carried on every moment.

Each saint receives a different share in Jesus' divine life. Although the saints share in the same Jesus, each saint is a new gospel. God is the gardener and no flower is alike (except in their universal fidelity to God's action). While obeying the laws imposed by their natures, they leave God to be free to do whatever He pleases. These souls do what is required, and let God act as He wants. This is the Gospel.

8. Great Faith is Necessary

Theme: Total abandonment is simple but its effects are marvelous.

Abandonment is the straight path to sanctity, the secret which is no secret and an art without art. God (who does everything) has explained it quite clearly and intelligibly. There is nothing easier to understand or to practice. The only mystery is what God does.

This is the same with the Eucharist. What is necessary is clear and easy. Even the most ignorant priest can accomplish it. Yet, the Eucharist is the mystery of mysteries, hidden and incomprehensible. The more spiritual someone is, the more faith is needed. This way of abandonment is similar to the Eucharist. It enables the soul to find God at each moment, an effect which is exalted, blessed and mystical. It is an inexhaustible source of thought, writings and wonders.

This prodigious effect requires one thing. We must let God act and do all that He wants. Nothing is easier or more within the soul's power, yet nothing is so wonderful or its path so obscure. To walk this path the soul needs great faith because reason will always be suspicious and invent excuses against God's will. Reason has never known about, read about, or admired abandonment. "The Prophets were saints, but this Jesus is a sorcerer" said the Jews. If any soul is scandalized and shows little faith in abandonment it deserves to be deprived of what God does for his faithful souls.

Chapter 3

The Trials Connected "With the State of Abandonment

1. Unwise Interference

Theme: The first trial is the wisdom of those who have a reputation for piety.

Abandonment is secure, easy, clear and less subject to illusion and error. God is loved. Sacraments are received. Duties are fulfilled and superiors are obeyed. The temptations from the world, the flesh and the devil are resisted because faithful souls are always on guard.

Why are these souls subject to so many contradictions? Usually, after fulfilling all their Christian duties, God expects them to fulfill practices to which the Church does not bind them. Others, who fulfill only the minimal duties (and then attend to their worldly concerns) are not falsely accused as is the abandoned soul. Therefore, these faithful souls (who fulfill all the precepts and practice exterior acts also) should be left in peace.

Yet, these souls are criticized because, after fulfilling the duties of their state, they give themselves to God's interior works and to His inspirations. The time which others give to amusements they devote to loving God. Criticism is an injustice.

We must strongly insist on this. People who do little by way of devotion are not criticized (although at times they are asked to do a little more). However, if someone tries to amend their life and improve their devotions, they are overwhelmed with advice and given different methods. If he does not follow this advice, he comes under suspicion. People should know that these practices (as holy as they are) are just one way to union with God. The soul needs to be free.

The truly abandoned soul has faithfully used these beginning practices and should not be held bound to them. God, seeing the soul's fidelity, has begun to lead it to divine union. When the soul arrived at abandonment and began to possess God by love, God began to free the soul of its troubles and made Himself the source of its holiness. At that moment, these early methods lost their value. Requiring the soul to use these methods demands that the soul begin all over again, when it has already gained the goal.

If the soul has any experience, it won't listen to these voices. It will stay in its peace where it loves God. This is the center of repose, the straight line traced by God. The soul's duties are clearly marked and it fulfills them without any confusion or haste. In all else, the soul has liberty — to obey every moment's grace and to abandon itself to Providence.

The soul knows that God intends to be the Master. The soul cannot forsake its liberty without attacking God's personal rights over the soul. The soul feels that if it accepted the rules of those who live by their own efforts (instead of acting by grace) it would be deprived of what it needs to fulfill future duties.

Others condemn the soul's simplicity because they cannot appreciate this sweet and full submission to Divine Providence. The soul, meanwhile, finds no fault with others but approves their state.

Worldly wisdom did not understand the wanderings of the Apostles, who settled nowhere. Ordinary souls cannot appreciate those who totally depend on Providence. God, however, cares for these faithful souls (even though misunderstood by many). He leads them to others who have also abandoned themselves.

Because good directors have led them to this state, they need less direction. If left without direction, it is because Providence has removed their guides. They are still willing to be guided and await Providence to provide. In this period, they meet persons in whom they can confide even without knowing them. With those temporary lights, the soul asks advice and follows it with docility. When this, too, is lacking, they follow the maxims of their first directors. They are always well directed — either by old principles or by directors whom they encounter until God provides a new directors.

2. Unjust Judgments

Theme: The second trial is that God allows exterior defects and apparent uselessness in these souls whom He raises to the state of abandonment.

Honor and reward are hidden because of the soul's incapacity and uselessness (as the world judges them). Abandonment, however, is not precluded from those with important offices or those with striking virtue that is universally acclaimed. Nevertheless, the greatest number raised to this state are known only to God.

These souls are free from outward obligations because they are little suited for worldly business or for putting their minds to complicated concerns. They seem quite useless, feeble in body, mind and feelings. They even seem stupid, having nothing of culture which makes an educated man. They are like children before getting a teacher. They have noticeable faults which don't make them more guilty but do cause offense to others. God removes everything but their innocence.

The world (being ignorant of this mystery) sees no value in them. It rejects them and exposes them to criticism. These souls are even more opposed if people observe them closely. People do not know what to do with them. Although something within speaks in their favor, people maintain their prejudices against them. Their actions are investigated by people who are like the Pharisees who thought everything that Jesus did was wrong. All the soul's actions seem ridiculous.

3. Self-Contempt

Theme: The third trial is interior humiliations

Although contemptible in the eyes of others, these souls are even more contemptible in their own eyes. Everything they do and suffer is paltry. All is quite ordinary. They have only troubles and afflictions within and disappointments without. They have feeble bodies which demand comforts (quite the opposite of the poverty and austerity of the saints). They have no heroic undertakings (fasts, almsgiving or acts of zeal).

Although united to God, they see only disorder in themselves. They see themselves as

much lower than those who pass for saints. They are confused by their own shortcomings and give way to tears and grief.

Remember that Jesus was both God and man. As man He was destroyed even though He retained his glory as God. These souls do not share His glory but they share the sadness of His sufferings. Men see them as Herod saw Jesus. These poor souls (as far as their senses are concerned) are nourished with a disgusting food which gives them no pleasure. They want something else but the paths to sanctity seem closed to them.

They live with the bread of suffering (interior and exterior). Their idea of what holiness means constantly torments them. They hunger for sanctity but are powerless to attain it. In this way, the soul is purified in its most intimate spiritual part. The soul finds no inner satisfaction and places all its affections in God. God deliberately leads the soul in this way so the soul takes pleasure in Him alone.

Because of all this, the truly abandoned soul cannot be occupied with desires or examinations, as others do. They cannot form plans or methods for their sanctity. This would imply that they have the power to choose their own path. This would entirely exclude the state of abandonment in which God has placed them.

They have given to God all their rights over their thoughts, words and actions; over their time and all connected with it. They desire only to satisfy the Master to whom they have chosen to listen so they can do His will immediately. They are servants who obey every order and use none of their time to do their own affairs. They neglect their own interests to serve the Master at every moment. These souls need not worry about their powerlessness because they give themselves to the all-powerful Master who works wonders with feeble instruments who offer no resistance.

Let us endure, then, the humiliations in our own eyes and in the eyes of others. Let us conceal ourselves behind these appearances and enjoy God who is all ours. Let us profit by apparent failure, by the necessity for comforts, by poor success, by contempt of others, by fears and troubles so that we find our happiness in God who gives Himself to us as our only good.

God will be ours without all the accessories of holiness. God will be our sole food and the only object of our desires. Our zeal, poverty and austerity would be causes for our vainglory. God has made everything disagreeable so He alone can be our whole support. The world despises us and leaves us alone so we can enjoy God in peace.

Because God wants to be the source of our holiness, our own active fidelity is very small and apparently contrary to holiness. The only thing great in God's sight is our passive endurance. Think no more. Leave your holiness to God who knows well how to bring it about.

It all depends on God's watchful care and is carried out without your knowledge in unexpected and even disagreeable ways. Just peacefully fulfill your little duties. Don't aspire to greater.

God does not give Himself because of our efforts. We become saints by His Providence and He knows what rank to give us. Leave this to God. Do not form false ideas or empty systems. Content yourself with God and pursue the path He has marked out for you. This path is paltry in your eyes and in the world's estimation.

4. Distrust of Self

Theme: The fourth trial is the obscurity of the soul's state and apparent opposition to God's will.

A soul desiring only God's will suffers most from the impossibility of being certain of loving God. Before, the soul saw clearly the plan of perfection. This is no longer possible. God gives the soul a perfection which is contrary to all its preconceived ideas and feelings.

Perfection comes by crosses, by the present duties, by certain attractions of grace which seem far from the dazzling sublimity of holiness. God acts in a strange and hidden manner. The soul feels too weak to bear the cross, wearied by its obligations and attracted only to ordinary exercises of piety.

The soul's inner ideal of holiness is always reproaching it. All the books about the saints seem to condemn the soul. The light of brilliant sanctity saddens the soul because it is too weak to attain that goal. The soul judges itself a coward, whereas God deliberately allows this weakness.

Those distinguished for holiness say "What a strange saint". The soul believes this and is confused by its constant failure to raise itself up. The soul has no answer, either for others or for itself. It feels totally lost. Its reflections offer no guidance or enlightenment and grace seems to have failed. However, this very loss is the door to restoration and to the hundredfold granted only by God's hidden actions (which are totally pure).

The soul experiences a death blow because it even loses sight of God's will (which has hidden itself and is now standing behind the soul and pushing it on). The soul even loses sight of this clearly defined goal. However, this loss (which is only apparent) enkindles the soul. The soul which vehemently seeks divine union, experiences intense inner desires and yet finds no consolation.

A heart seeking only God, attracts God to itself. This is love's secret. Only in this way is the soul established in firm faith and firm hope. The soul believes what cannot be seen and expects what it cannot feel. By this the soul (both as subject and instrument) gains perfection although it seemingly doesn't gain it at all.

All that the soul accomplishes seems to be only from itself. It does not see that it is inspired by God's Spirit. Every action seems faulty and imperfect. Other people are admired and their actions cause the soul confusion. The soul distrusts its judgments and is uncertain about its thoughts. It submits to the least advice given by authority while God keeps the soul's outward signs of virtue hidden from itself.

All of this is humiliating, and seems to the soul an act of justice. The soul, in its own eyes and in the eyes of others, seems moved by feelings against virtue (as obstinacy, disobedience and indignation). There seems to be no remedy. The soul tries to overcome these defects but they only increase. They are part of God's plan. They are as the best means of detaching the soul and preparing it for divine union.

Great merit comes from this sad trial. Because everything conspires to lead the soul away from its simple path of obedience, the soul needs heroic virtue to stay firm. The soul must sing its part in a song that seems to say the soul is mistaken. Grace, however, is singing that the soul is not lost. The soul must have courage to walk firmly and let the lightening flash and the tempest roar. The soul is like Jesus in His passion. The Father's will imposed upon Him the cross, something apparently contradictory to Jesus' holiness.

Jesus and Mary allowed the clouds of that darkest night to gather. Many things seemingly opposed to God's will overwhelmed them. Yet, deprived of all support, they walked to the end. They fixed their eyes only on what the Father willed and they endured the entire weight of God's action. They groaned under the burden, but never wavered. They believed that all would be well in the end if they allowed the Father to act.

5. The Life of Faith

Theme: The fruit of these trials is a soul submissive to God.

The above description is clear. All that takes place spiritually and physically seems like death. What else is to be expected? God uses the disguise of death to carry out His plans very successfully. These disguises are ill health, failure and spiritual weakness. They all become good in God's hands. By troubling nature God accomplishes His great plans. "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God". (Rom.8:28)

He brings life from death. When nature fears, faith is full of confidence. The soul lives in joy, confident that all it must do or suffer in the present moment is part of God's plan. To maintain this level of faith, God allows the soul to be plunged into the rough waters of pain, difficulty fatigue and failures. In these, the soul needs faith to find God.

Although grace is given every moment, it is hidden under different appearances (such as bodily illness) the supposed loss of soul and earthly confusion. In all these, the soul still finds God. Its faith pierces through the appearances and clings to Him. In whatever does not constitute sin, the soul proceeds with confidence, seeing that everything is a veil and a disguise of God whose presence always reassures the soul.

In the middle of this total desolation, God gives the soul an inner assurance that it has nothing to fear as long as it abandons itself to Him. Although troubled, the soul has some inner assurance as did Jacob who said "God is in this place and I did not know it" (Gen.28:16).

Other souls seek God, but really He is already present. In this they are seeking their own idea of God when they already possess Him in disguise. O souls, please learn that God comes to you in your sufferings, your deeds and your desires. They are the species by which God gives

Himself to you. Do not vainly seek Him in sublime ideas because He does not come to you in this form.

Martha pleased Jesus by cooking. Mary was content to find Jesus in whatever way He wanted. Mary Magdalene sought Jesus on Easter Sunday according to her own idea but Jesus took the form of a gardener. The Apostles thought Jesus was a phantom.

God always disguises Himself to lift the soul to a faith level. God teaches the faithful soul to find Him in these disguises. After this, God disguises Himself in vain because the soul always can see Him. "He is there, behind the window, looking through the lattices" (Song of Songs 2:9).

O divine love, hide yourself in all the trials you send. Break apart all the soul's ideas and methods so the soul cannot even understand the path it used to see so clearly. The soul used to find you in prayer, in consolations, in duties and even in sufferings. Now it does not see you in any of these. The soul's efforts become useless. Now the soul can seek You alone in all things and everywhere. The soul learns to see You in all your actions, for this is how You give Yourself. The soul must seek You in whatever disguise You have chosen for the Sacrament of the present moment.

Faith has greater scope when little is seen or felt. Is not the fertile root hidden underground? Is not the soul's darkness fruitful? O little root, live in God's invisible heart and send forth your leaves and fruits (which are hidden to yourself) as a nourishment for others. May all who are grafted on to you receive from your sap. They will be known because they bring forth the same fruits as you do.

Become all to all. You, little silkworm remain abandoned in the darkness of your cocoon until grace warms you and sets you free. Then feed upon whatever leaves are given you. Do not regret the incomprehensible changes that have taken place which have removed your old formulas and methods. Take up God's new actions and you will spin in silk, accomplishing much while feeling nothing.

You will have a secret envy of your companions. You will admire them although you will have really surpassed them. Let your suffering in abandonment continue while you spin a silk that can attire in glory even the princes of the Church.

And what will be your future? You will be a marvel of that grace which molds souls in so many different shapes! The silkworm is provided with leaves and nature does the rest. All is God!

At this state, the soul cannot tell where it came from or where it is going. It cannot describe how it came from God's wisdom or where it tends. It now has only a total passive abandonment which allows the soul to act without any self- reflection.

The soul begins at the right time and ends at the right time. It acts by attraction and it acts

by being passive. By abandonment, the soul does things or leaves them undone, without even knowing the result. Then, after many changes brought by God's action, the soul is given wings, flies to heaven and leaves a plentiful harvest on earth for others to gather.

Chapter 4

God's Fatherly Assistance to Those Souls Who Have Abandoned Themselves

1. Confidence in God

Theme: The less the soul feels, the more God sustains it.

Some sanctity includes luminous and distinct communication with God. However, the passive state of faith is quite different. In this state, God's communication with the soul shares in the darkness that surrounds His throne (where all ideas become confused). In this darkness, the soul fears running into a rock. I say "Do not fear, faithful soul, this is your right path, for no way is more safe and sure." "But it is so dark, I cannot tell which way to go". "Go wherever you please. You cannot lose your way because there is no path anymore. You cannot see the good because nothing is visible".

"But I fear falling over a precipice. All is affliction. I am acting by abandonment but I seem to be acting contrary to virtue. The more I want to practice virtue, the more remote the virtue becomes. I love virtue but God's obscure attractions seem to keep me away. I yield to God's attraction because I cannot help following it. The spirit seeks light but my heart is in darkness. When I hear eloquent discourses, I understand nothing. Instead, I love those paths which contain no objects or ideas. I have an assurance (not by my senses but by a feeling inspired by faith) that this way is right".

Before God can lead a soul by this path He must persuade the soul that this is the right path. This feeling is more certain the less it is perceived. This certainty conquers all fears and all imaginations. The mind seeks a better way but the soul is on the right path. The bride unconsciously recognizes the bridegroom even though He disappears when she goes to touch Him. She knows her spouse has rights over her. She is content to abandon order and methods rather than use the beaten tracks of virtue to gain self confidence.

Let us go to God in abandonment knowing that we cannot acquire virtues by our own effort. Let lack of virtue not diminish our confidence. God reduced us to the necessity of walking so He could carry us. Why do we need ideas and certainty? What use is it to know and feel when we are being carried by Divine Providence?

The more we suffer from darkness (or see only rocks and deserts) the more we endure from fears, anguish and even despair; the more we see purgatory and hell — the greater must be our confidence. In the greatest peril one glance at God who carries us restores all our courage. We forget our paths, our ideas and ourselves in abandonment to the power and wisdom of the guide.

We think only of loving Him and avoiding all sin (even its appearance) while fulfilling all our duties.

To have trust and confidence is the only burden which God lays upon His children. He does the rest. O God, your children need only to love you and fulfill their duties. They are like a child in its mother's lap, occupied only with playing with its mother. Since no one can work in the dark, the soul reposes in God. Trying to reason only deepens the darkness of faith. Only God's radiance can disperse this darkness.

The bride seeks the bridegroom in the night but He stands behind her, holding her in His hands. He is not an idea but her source. For all the soul's needs (difficulties, falls, persecutions and uncertainties) God has secret and marvelous resources. These are reserved for those souls who have lost all confidence in their own actions.

The more perplexing the situation, the more the soul expects a satisfactory solution. "All is well. Nothing to fear. God carries on this work". Suspense and desolation are just verses in the canticle of darkness. No syllable is missing and it always ends "Glory be to the Father". Darkness itself becomes our guide and doubts give us our best assurance. The more Isaac was puzzled, the more Abraham trusted in God.

2. Diversity of Grace

Theme: These afflictions are God's loving actions which will give the soul great joy one day.

Souls in light sing canticles of light. Souls in darkness sing canticles of darkness. Both must sing the parts assigned by God. Nothing should be added and nothing left out. Every drop of bitterness must flow freely (just as Jeremiah and Ezekiel uttered cries of lamentations). If the grief of these prophets had been interrupted we would have lost the most beautiful passages in scripture.

The Spirit afflicts and consoles. Both have the same source. When God is angry the soul trembles and is terrified. These divine actions carry a remedy for each evil. So, allow yourself to weep, and to grow restless. Don't try to free yourself from heavenly troubles.

Receive these little streams which flow from the immense ocean of sorrows which filled Jesus' soul. Allow these sorrows for as long as grace places them in your soul. The same grace will also dry your tears. This darkness will disappear. The springtime will arrive and the results of your abandonment will be clearly seen.

It is useless to be troubled because all that takes place is as a dream. In sleep, the brain has sorrowful or consoling imaginations with the soul as their playground. Upon awakening, these dreams seem as nothing. No one pays any attention to the joys or sorrows of just dreams.

O Lord, during this night of faith you carry your children in your arms allowing them to have a variety of thoughts. In these dreams they experience fear and weariness, but on the day of

glory these will give way to solid joy.

When they awaken, these holy souls never tire of admiring and praising the tact and refinements of God's loving deceptions. They understand that His ways are impenetrable and that it is impossible to discover His disguises or to be consoled when He wills to spread terror and alarm.

The souls are like Jeremiah and David who were inconsolable in their grief. When the souls awake, they are a source of joy to angels. The bride sleeps through all the human actions. In her dreams she pursues the spouse who disguises Himself to deceive her. Allow her to dream because her fears only belong to her sleep. When her spouse has blessed her soul and shown forth His splendor, He will develop the fruits of these dreams and awaken her at the right time.

Joseph caused Benjamin (who could not penetrate the deception) to weep. His brothers were plunged into sorrow as Joseph also played his trick upon them. Yet, when he revealed himself and put everything right, they admired his wisdom in leading them to despair before revealing the greatest joy they ever experienced.

3. The Generosity of God

Theme: The more God plunges the soul into abandonment, the greater are His gifts.

Let's advance in our knowledge of God's loving deceptions. What the soul cannot perceive, God gives in a hidden way. The soul never is in want. It is like someone who maintains his friend but then seemingly withdraws. This support still continues to assist without the benefactor being known. The friend feels hurt and has ideas of criticism for his benefactor. However, when the mystery is revealed, the soul experiences joy, gratitude, confusion and admiration. It also has increased zeal and attachment to the benefactor. This trial strengthens the soul and prepares it for new surprises.

With God, the soul gains more as it seems to lose more. The more God removes the natural, the more He gives the supernatural. God is loved first for His gifts. When these are no longer seen, He is loved for Himself. By withdrawing His sensible gifts, God prepares the soul for the most precious gift which includes all others. Souls submitted to God's action must see all things in a favorable light, even if they lose their excellent spiritual director.

The true guides don't run after souls to direct them. They don't show eagerness or self-sufficiency. Even when appealed to they proceed with caution. Let the soul pass through these trials without fear. God's action produces marvels in spite of every obstacle.

God and the soul work together. God brings about a success which can only be ruined if the soul is not faithful. God's action is the counterpoise of the soul's fidelity. His work (the best part) is done stitch by stitch from the wrong side of the tapestry. The soul sees only the needle and the stitch being made. When the work is complete, the right side will be turned

outward.

While in progress, the beauty remains obscure. The soul abandoned to God has eyes only for Him and its duty. This performance is the imperceptible stitch with which God does wonders and of which He, at times, gives a glimpse. It will be totally revealed only in eternity. How good is the wisdom of God who keeps all that is great and exalted as His own work. He gives to the soul only what is light and easy. Thus, everyone in the world can reach perfection by accomplishing their obscure duties.

4. The Channels of Grace Are Always the Most Ordinary Actions

Theme: In abandonment, to lead the soul more safely, God must blind the soul more completely.

John's words apply especially to these souls. "You have no need for man to teach you because His anointing teaches you everything" (1Jn.2:20). To know God's will they need only to listen to their hearts and to the inspirations of this anointing which interprets God's will according to the circumstances.

God's action, although concealed, reveals itself intuitively. It shows the soul in a necessary way (i.e. not permitting anything else to be chosen) or by a supernatural feeling that impels the soul to act without even thinking. This inclination, while leaving the soul free, leads it also to choose or reject what God wants chosen or rejected.

By appearances it seems that virtue is lacking in the soul which is swayed and influenced in this way. There seems to be a lack of method. In reality, the highest virtue is present in which the person succeeds only after long practice. Here, the virtue is extremely pure. It is perfection itself.

The skilled musician combines musical knowledge with technical skills, and performs his art without thinking. His musical compositions are really in perfect conformity with the rules. However, his genius would be limited if he followed the rules and acted under constraint. Instead, his impromptus are admired by all connoisseurs.

So it is with the soul, trained for a long time in the methods used to assist grace. It forms a habit of acting according to instincts given by God. It then knows what to choose without consulting these methods. The soul acts at random trusting totally in the workings of grace that cannot mislead. The results of grace, visible to watchful eyes, are nothing short of marvelous.

The soul is exact without any method, orderly without any rule, profound without reflection, accomplished without any effort and is ready even for unexpected events. The soul gains meanings which authors never intended and sees truths which remain hidden to others. This is how God imparts truth to these souls, far beyond the apparent light.

Abandonment always leads to a mysterious life. These souls receive God's gifts from ordinary events that seem natural and accidental in the ordinary course of world events. The

simplest sermons, the most commonplace conversations and the easiest books become sources of God's wisdom. The soul carefully gathers up all these crumbs respecting and using everything.

Using things according to God's will is not a use of creatures but is an enjoyment of God's action through diverse channels. These sanctify, not in themselves, but as God's instruments. They communicate grace to these souls in ways seemingly opposed to its purpose. God can enlighten through mud as well as through glass. The soul never complains about the means because God supplies whatever is wanting to the instruments He uses.

5. God's Two Instruments — Nature and Grace

Theme: The less capable the soul is to defend itself the more God defends it.

God's infallible actions are applied to the submissive soul at just the right moment. To this interior direction, the soul corresponds totally. The soul is pleased with all that happens and with all the effects except sin. Sometimes the soul acts with full awareness and at other times is led only by obscure instincts. The soul acts and speaks without knowing the reason for doing so.

Sometimes the determining reason is natural. Perceiving no mystery present, the soul acts from necessity not convenience. Meanwhile God uses the wisdom and advice of friends to do simple things in its favor. The soul accepts these favors and opposes every action to take them away. Dealing with simple souls is like dealing with God. What can be done against His will or purpose?

God always takes in hand the cause of the soul which has no worry or need for intrigue. The Spouse relieves the soul of all anxieties. God frees the soul of those lowly ways which are necessary to human prudence. These suited Herod but the Magi just followed their star. Jesus rests in His mother's arms while His enemies advance His work.

When His enemies tried to take Him unawares, Jesus just acted freely. Their suspicions and persecutions were necessary to Him. As Jesus once lived in Judea, He now lives within simple souls. In them Jesus is free, peaceful and fearless. He needs no one and all must serve Him.

Some serve Him by evil acts and by their contradictions. Simple souls serve Him by holy acts and their obedience. God balances all of this in a wonderful way. Nothing is wanting or superfluous. There is enough evil and enough good for God's purposes.

God's will applies all this. The simple soul finds everything right, desiring neither more nor less of anything. It blesses the divine hand which has arranged everything. It receives friends and enemies with the same courtesy as Jesus did. All are God's instruments. God's action makes all of them necessary and all (good and bad) are welcomed according to their nature.

Only grace can give this supernatural quality which adapts itself to each person. This

doesn't come from books but from the prophetic spirit. It is the effect of divine inspiration. To understand this, the soul must be in the highest level of abandonment and enjoy full freedom from all self-interests, however holy.

The soul must see that the only serious business in the world is to follow God's will perfectly. To do this the soul must fulfill its obligations and allow the Holy Spirit to act interiorly without trying to understand. The soul is pleased to be kept in ignorance. The soul is safe and nothing can be done except for the soul's good.

6. Supernatural Prudence

Theme: The soul does not fear its enemies because they are useful helps.

I fear my own deeds and those of friends more than those of enemies. The greatest prudence is to offer no resistance to enemies. Just be peaceful and quiet. Simplicity opposes worldly prudence and turns aside all schemes without a thought. God leads the soul to surprising decisions because the deeds of enemies actually raise up the soul.

The enemies are galley slaves who bring the boat to shore by their rowing. Giving the enemy a free hand blesses the soul because God uses enemies as His agents. The soul need only to observe everything peacefully. This is the Spirit's prudence. All that happens helps the soul, while all opposed to the soul are ultimately destroyed.

7. Conviction of Weakness

Theme: The soul which is totally abandoned does not justify itself because God justifies it.

The soul reposes on the solid rock of God's order. This is veiled under crosses and daily duties. Beneath this veil, God's hand supports the abandoned soul. From the first moment of being firmly established in abandonment, the soul does not need to say or to do anything in self-defense. The effects and consequences of God's works justify themselves. "Day to day utters speech" (Ps.18:3).

Words can only express thoughts. The soul has no thoughts because it is led by inner reflections. Words are used to explain, and the abandoned soul cannot explain its conduct. It knows nothing of the source of its actions. The soul only experiences God's impression to act. The results must justify the source. These links of God's chain are firm and the effects will reveal the divine source. The soul does not have imaginations or multiple words because these are no longer of any use.

The soul does not see where it is going. Reflections no longer give courage or remove fatigue. There remains only inner weakness. As it advances, the road widens and the soul proceeds without hesitation. Being simple, the soul just follows God's commandments, relying on Him at every step. To avenge unjust detractions the soul always seeks God who manifests His presence.

8. The Mistake of Self-Guidance

Theme: God gives the soul means which seem more likely to destroy the soul.

During abandonment God would be the soul's life and accomplish His works in secret. At this stage, the soul's own ideas and reasoning become sources of illusion. After experiencing this self-guidance, the soul sees how useless it is. God has hidden from the soul all the solutions. Convinced of the harmfulness coming from its own ideas, the soul abandons all to God. God, then becomes the soul's life, not by giving ideas (for these are sources of illusion) but by giving grace under the strangest appearances.

Unknown to the soul, God gives His power in ways that seemingly would destroy the soul. This ignorance cannot be cured because God abides in this obscurity of faith. The soul is a blind subject, or better, a sick person who doesn't understand the medicine and only knows that it tastes bitter. These remedies seem to bring his death. However, the soul takes the medicines at the physician's advice and health is restored. The abandoned soul doesn't worry about its illnesses, except those that require rest or demand suitable medicines.

The soul's weaknesses in abandonment are illusory and should be defied with confidence. God sends them or permits them as opportunities for faith (which is the true remedy). The soul pays little attention to the problems. It generously follows God's will, using the body as a horse to be driven until it is worn out. This is better than thinking of health (which is a harm to the soul).

A courageous spirit does much to maintain a feeble body. One year of this is more valuable than a hundred spent in care taking. A soul should show outwardly that it is in the state of grace.

Why be afraid of God's will? These terrifying experiences exist only to show glorious victories. God's will involves the soul in troubles of every kind and where human prudence sees no answer. Although the soul sees all its weaknesses and shortcomings, the divine will asserts all its power. The results are more marvelous than those books of fiction which save their imaginary heroes and have a happy ending.

God does much more. He guides the soul through deadly perils (even the fires of hell with the demons). He raises the soul to heavenly heights and makes them the heroes of stories (real and mystical) that are more extraordinary than stories invented by man's imagination. Go, my soul, through all the perils. You are guided by God's almighty hand. Go in peace and joy making all the events into fresh victories. "He rode forth victorious to further his victories" (Rev.6:2).

Every step under His command will be a fresh triumph. The Holy Spirit is writing a book that will end only with human history's final moment. This book tells God's plans for mankind. We must be part of His story by the union of our will with His plans. By our actions and submission we must furnish material for His daily holy writing.

9. Divine Love is the Source of All Good

Theme: For those following this road, divine love is all that is needed.

Divine love totally suffices for this journey. First, it strips the soul of everything. Instead of giving to the soul His life, light and wisdom, God gives His love. In the soul, divine love becomes its instinct. Just as each flower has its beauty and each animal its instinct, so each soul has its special grace. This is God's gift to any soul who fully accepts the Divine Will. Once this habit of goodwill is formed, the soul comes under the action of God who influences the soul to the degree of its abandonment.

God's action is love and to abandon self is to love. The other faculties are of no interest. If the will is in submission, God takes possession of all the soul's faculties. He arranges everything for its sanctification. What is poison in other souls is destroyed in the abandoned soul by its goodwill.

The divine action withdraws this soul from every precipice. If it falls, God rescues it. The soul's faults are only faults of frailty. God's love takes no notice of them and even turns them into advantages. Love suggests everything to the soul (what to say or not say, to do or not to do). These are rays of light from God's own understanding. This understanding accompanies the soul at every step and prevents false steps which the soul might take from its simplicity.

If the soul makes the wrong promises, Providence rectifies everything. God cuts the knots of any schemes formed against the soul and has the others fall into their own trap. The soul does some things that seem useless at the time but later are important. These past events deliver the soul from troubles in which their own uprightness or their enemy's malice would have entangled them. There is prudence in simplicity, good plans in goodwill and ability in innocence.

Look at Tobias. While just a young man he proceeds on the journey with confidence because he has the archangel Raphael. Nothing frightens him. The monsters provide food and remedies. By God's Providence, he just attends feasts and weddings. Everything else is left to Raphael. Never before, have things been so well managed and successful. His mother weeps at his supposed loss but his father has faith, and Tobias returns to share their happiness.

To the abandoned soul, divine love is the source of all good and all that is needed is the desire to acquire it. God only asks for love and if you seek love, you will find it. If your heart is entirely devoted to God, then your own heart becomes the very kingdom you seek. The moment you desire God is the moment you enjoy God according to the measure of your desire. To desire to love God is truly to love Him! This love leads us to become His instruments so His love can act in us.

God's action does not correspond to the soul's aims, projects or chosen means. The soul might be deceived in these, but the soul's uprightness can never deceive. If God sees good

intentions in the soul, He can dispense with all the rest. He knows that the soul will do His will when it has truer ideas.

Goodwill has nothing to fear. Even if it falls, it is still under God's guiding hand which always turns the straying soul toward its real goal. By straying, the soul realizes not to trust its own faculties but to abandon itself to God's infallible guidance. Goodwill can never be taken unawares because failings are overcome by abandonment. All things work together for good. That is a belief of faith.

10. We Must See God in All His Creatures

Theme: By abandonment the soul receives more light and strength than others who resist God's will through pride.

Of what use are divine revelations if the soul does not love God's will? Lucifer fell because God's revelation of the Incarnation only caused him envy. Simple souls, enlivened by faith, always admire God's order. They find God's order even in confusion. One grain of faith gives more light than Lucifer's highest intelligence.

The soul's fidelity to duty, submission to inspirations and kindness to everyone are of more value than the greatest revelations. The soul can see God's action in the hardness of others' deeds. This roughness never disturbs God's order if the soul is faithful to humility and remains firm in its own path. By the soul's gentleness, cedars are broken and rocks dislodged. Who can resist the humility and gentleness of a faithful soul?

These arms of gentleness and submission conquer all our enemies. Jesus gives them for our defense and we must use them. Generosity, not cowardice, is the disposition needed to be God's instrument. All God's works are sublime and marvelous. Those who act against God cannot resist God's power in someone united to Him.

Who is Lucifer? He is an enlightened pure spirit, now at war with God. Sin results from this conflict and manifests itself everywhere. Lucifer wants to destroy God's order. So he defaces God's work wherever he enters. The more talents and intelligence someone has, the more he is to be feared if he is not satisfied with God's will.

By a well-regulated heart, the person becomes one with God's will. Without this, natural talents are generally in direct opposition to divine order. God uses only the humble as His instruments. He uses the proud as slaves for His purposes.

When I find a soul in total submission to God (however lacking in other powers) I say, "This soul has a great capacity to serve God". Mary and Joseph were like this. All else, without submission, makes me fear the action of Lucifer. I guard myself within my simplicity and oppose this outward glitter which is like broken glass.

11. The Strength of Simplicity

Theme: The simple soul sees God even in the proud who oppose God. All creatures, good and bad, reveal God to this soul.

The simple soul accomplishes only God's will, and appreciates even the deeds of the unruly. The proud soul despises the simple person who can see God in him. He imagines that the simple soul appreciates only itself when really the soul is loving God as manifested in the proud person.

Oh proud soul, the simple person doesn't fear you. It has God's compassion for you. You are God's slave. You are a disguise which God uses. The more you exalt yourself, the less the soul thinks of you. When you are violent, the simple soul surprises you. Your acts are just favors from heaven. The proud soul doesn't understand itself but the simple soul sees through it clearly.

Finding this divine action in everything that happens each moment is a true science, a continuous revelation and a dialogue with God. This is a rejoicing with the Spouse (not secretly but openly and in public) without human respect. It is a fountain of joy and satisfaction with God who is seen and believed and is working perfectly in all that happens. This is the eternal happiness of heaven, not perfectly realized here on earth except in this hidden manner.

At the moment of death (the Holy Spirit who arranges all the parts of the soul's life) will say "Let there be light". The soul will see all the treasures hidden in this peaceful abyss, all that the soul has done and suffered each moment. When God so gives Himself then what is common becomes wonderful. The way itself is extraordinary. No need for strange marvels, because everything is a miracle and constant joy (even with minor faults present). The miracle makes all sensible things wonderful even though it contains nothing marvelous to the senses.

12. The Triumph of Humility

Theme: God promises the abandoned soul a glorious victory over the world and hell.

God's action will certainly triumph. This is hidden here below to increase the soul's merit. The whole history of the world is this struggle between the powers of the world and hell against souls devoted to God's plan. The advantage seems to be with the proud but the victory always remains with the humble.

The world is like the statue of gold, brass, iron and clay seen in a dream by Nebuchadnezzar. Human history is just a confused medley of interior and exterior actions of the children of darkness. Another image is the beast who makes war (from time's beginning) against the spiritual life of man. All historical events result from this war. One monster follows another.

The combat between Michael and Lucifer still continues on earth. Through envy, Lucifer's heart has become an abyss of every evil. He made other angels revolt. Now he wants to make men part of his cohort. Lucifer is the chief of those disobedient to God. The

disorder of the devil is the very inversion of God's order.

This diabolical disorder uses a false appearance of good to hide its infinite evil. Every wicked man (from the time of Cain) who has declared war on God has been outwardly great, powerful and worshipped by all. This outward appearance is a mystery. It covers over that they are beasts who have climbed out of their pit. They try to overthrow God's order. They have always been opposed by great men who have dealt them a mortal wound.

As fast as hell vomits them out, God creates new heroes. Ancient history (sacred and secular) records this war. God's order is always victorious and those who submit to God share His triumph in eternal happiness. Injustice cannot protect those who desert God. It rewards them only with eternal death. The wicked think they are invincible, but a single soul (as long as it stands on God's side) can stand against this world and all of hell without any fear.

The monstrous spectacle of wickedness (armed with so much power) is only an image founded on clay. The smallest stone will destroy it. The Holy Spirit has illustrated this. The centuries are like startling revelations with so many of God's heroes shining like brilliant stars bringing about wonderful events. The dream of King Nebuchadnezzar (although terrible in its impression) was immediately forgotten upon awakening.

These monsters come into the world to test the children's courage. If the children are well trained, God lets them slay the monsters. He always is sending fresh athletes into the arena. All of this is joy to the heavenly angels. It is work for the saints, and confusion for the devils. What opposed God actually embellishes His work. The workers of inequity are slaves of God, who builds His Jerusalem on the ruins of Babylon.

Spiritual Counsels of Father De Causade

The rest of this Simplified Version are letters written to various individuals by Father De Causade.

1. Conformity to the Will of God (1731 to Sister Manse- Therese de Voimemil)

To attain perfect conformity to God's will do the following:

1. At the beginning of each day, each prayer, Mass and Communion, tell God you belong entirely to Him and will devote yourself to the interior life.
2. Make your chief aim to conform to God's will in the smallest things saying "Oh God, I want to do your holy will and submit to you for two reasons. First, you are Sovereign Lord and your will should be accomplished. Second, I am convinced by faith and experience that your will is beneficent for me. I am blind, not knowing what to seek or avoid. I am also corrupt, longing for what would harm me. Therefore, I renounce my own will to do yours."
3. Repeat this continual submission to preserve your peace and to keep you from worrying about your faults.

4. Don't think of your past, only of the present and the future. Don't be troubled about your confessions. Add a serious sin of your past life to increase contrition. Don't even try to remove the obstacles that make frequent confession disagreeable.
5. To escape regret for the past, give the past to God's mercy, the future to His Providence, and the present to His love.
6. When God sends some disappointment, thank Him and see it as a great favor working for your protection.
7. Show a kind face to troublesome people. Go where Providence calls and do everything quietly without hurry, leaving everything else behind.
8. If you fail in these points make a gentle interior act of humility (not one of irritation that St. Francis de Sales wrote against). This is necessary to overcome your self-will and your being a slave to devotion.
9. Resolve to please God, not yourself. You will find God more completely when you have renounced yourself. When you are convinced you are incapable of any good, you will give up making resolutions. You will say, "Oh, God, all my resolutions are useless and I have depended on myself. You alone can do all things. So, give me what I require or I shall do nothing."
10. Beg pardon of anyone who has witnessed your outburst. This is needed because God Himself wants to do everything. Until you have experienced a thousand times that you are incapable, your inner presumption will prevent you from relying on God. When convinced of this truth, you will act rightly and God will be glorified. This is your path. To God is all the glory and to you is all the profit. You would be foolish to reject such a generous share.

2. On Outward Behavior (written to Sr. Charlotte)

1. Upon awaking, realize God's presence and adore the Trinity as did St. Francis Xavier. "O Father Creator, Son Redeemer and Spirit Sanctifier, I consecrate this day to you, not knowing whether it will be pleasant or troublesome, happy or sorrowful. I submit myself to all that you will."
2. Upon awaking, pay attention to what strikes you, the grace of your soul. Give yourself to God's Spirit and remain that way. As the good woman said, "God, if you won't give me bread at least give me patience".
3. Remember the points of meditation and do not let your mind wander or else the whole day will be out of order, like a clock set wrong in the morning.

4. At Mass, place yourself at the Cross, contemplating all the events. Admire the justice of God who punishes His Son for man's sins. Admire the greatness of God to whom such reparation was needed. Admire the value of your soul that required such a price. Admire the eternal happiness that was gained and the eternal torments that were avoided. If your mind wanders from these subjects, think of the Virgin Mary, John, Mary Magdalene and the Good Thief.
5. Concerning prayer, do it totally in submission to God's will, whether done successfully or with dryness. Always be at peace even if the prayer failed due to your own fault. Sooner or later, God will give you the grace to pray well.
6. Say the Divine Office in any of three ways:
 - a. Keeping yourself in the presence of God. Those doing this need no method.
 - b. Attend to the words and pray as the Church prays.
 - c. Reflect that, in this prayer, you are united with holy souls and share in their dispositions.
7. Concerning confession, do not be troubled. St. Francis de Sales says that peace should follow sorrow for sin. So, aim at peace, knowing that God glories in forgiving us. He loves simplicity so go to Him with confidence. That will win his heart. Do not spend a long time in preparing for confession. This would aid the devil. After recalling your sins, excite yourself to sorrow by thinking of God's goodness in preserving you from dying in sin and in reclaiming you from a life of lukewarmness.
8. Remember that contrition is spiritual and not always sensibly experienced. True sorrow is to resolve not to commit these sins again. God often gives sorrow but conceals it from souls to keep them in faith.
9. Tell those sins you remember in as few words as possible, leaving the rest to God's mercy. While receiving absolution recall the blood of Jesus and ask that it fall upon you. After confession, think no more about your sins or your sorrow. Close the door and move on!
10. Forgiveness in the confessional is God's mystery which the devil uses to disturb souls. They waste time and lose their peace. Peace is the best disposition for Communion. In anxiety, the soul has little desire for this divine food. So, let anxieties fall from you as a stone into the sea. Before Holy Communion act like Martha preparing yourself by fervent acts. After Communion act like Mary, remaining in ineffable peace.
11. Because nature seeks itself in everything (even in our acts of piety) the saints were always on guard. They saw themselves as their own greatest enemies. So be ready to sacrifice everything so as to fulfill our neighbor's needs. Let God's will prevail even over our holy desires.

3. Interior Direction to Sister Charlotte

For interior direction, please remember:

1. We attain God by annihilating ourselves.
2. We become filled with God as we banish all that is not God.
3. Abandonment is dying to self to make room for God.
4. The most excellent act is to resign ourselves totally to God and to lose ourselves in God. Oh, the riches of nothingness! The soul becomes greater as it annihilates itself. So let there be a simple recollection of God, forgetfulness of self and total submission to His will. This is our task.
5. Do not distinguish between rest from exterior labor and from interior labor. Submit willingly and keep interior peace.
6. In conversation be detached even in small things. Often a trifle can prevent progress. God wants an empty space in the most remote corner of ourselves to communicate Himself.
7. In the most trying circumstances, practice the greatest abandonment. Cheerfully accept the loss of everything except God.
8. Let nothing matter outside of God who is all in all.
9. Do not let your heart be saddened. Within you there should be only a peaceful void, which is established when we have detached ourselves. We must lose all to find all.
10. If we knew how to content ourselves with God, we would not be troubled by creatures. Being content with God cuts off all superfluous things, even the good and holy. These only harm us and do not help us to gain our goal, eternal life.
11. Make your motto be, "a single soul to a single God" (Blessed Giles of Assisi). Love your identity in God's unity. This expression of unity makes us remove all multiplicity and superfluity. It leads us to give our whole mind to God where alone we find the treasure of light and innocence

4. *Conduct After Faults*

After committing some fault, do the following:

1. Endure the humiliation of your faults. Contempt of self is a great advantage that we gain from our faults.
2. Do not fear. Fear after faults comes from the devil. Repel this dangerous illusion. If, by God's will the feeling is greater than your will, then apply a second remedy. Be crucified in peace as the martyrs accepted their tortures.

3. Do not even allow fears to arise from conspicuous faults. This is also occasioned by the devil. Sometimes, God uses this excessive fear to purify the soul. If you cannot drive these fears away, then just endure them until you regain your peace.

5. Temptations and trials (Sr. Anne Marie-Therese de Rosen)

1. Violent temptations are the great graces of martyrdom which made great saints through great victories.
2. This keen pain is a sure sign that the soul has not consented to the temptation.
3. In the darkness of these temptations, the soul (through fatigue) will commit minor weakness. In spite of this, the merit is pleasing to God. The soul is better prepared for the sacraments than those who have few trials. Their virtues are more solid because of passing through trials.
4. These tempted souls will make more progress because they are made humble by the temptations.
5. Beginners set value only on God's actions that are sweet to the senses. However, God's humiliating and crucifying actions purify the soul and unite it to God. All writers agree that more progress comes from patient endurance than from action.
6. God sanctifies lay people by temporal difficulties. He sanctifies religious by spiritual trials such as dryness, spiritual despondency, humiliating temptations, fears of being in mortal sin and terrors about judgment.
If the laity need temporal afflictions to remain close to God, why should not religious need interior trials? God leads a religious whom He loves through interior trials. We who preach patient endurance to the laity ought to apply the same to our inner trials. Do these trials not come from God? Is our patience any less pleasing?
7. To keep his elect in complete abandonment to His mercy, God hides His actions and the soul's interior dispositions. What does He use to do this? He makes use of temptations and the fear of having yielded.

He hides the soul's great victories by allowing small defeats. He hides their love of Communion by fears of having made bad ones. He allows sadness by the imperfections they imagine they committed. He lets them think that their good works are badly done when really they are great victories.

While keeping them in a state of humiliation, God does not want them to lose confidence so He enlightens their directors. If the soul is obedient, they will never be deceived. So, follow the rules:

Rule 1 - The soul must always obey the confessor concerning going to Communion. Blind obedience never leads the souls away from God. If the trials double after Communion, humble resignation will multiply merit. Most books on Holy Communion only speak of the ordinary effects. In special cases, contrary affects are experienced (as fear instead of peace). These communions produce a precious fruit as the vehement temptations augment merit and produce humility.

Rule 2 — Violent efforts to prepare for Holy Communion usually have disappointing results. These efforts must be moderate. In this difficult state of temptations, the best preparation is patient endurance in trials and the recognition of interior martyrdom. Preserve your peace in which God works so well. Self love wants to keep you away from Communion to avoid these agonies which God uses to destroy self-love.

Go to Communion with joy in these purifying trials. Eventually you will experience wonderful effects which God is hiding from you. See yourself as a criminal and a victim of His merciful justice.

The destitution and abandonment should increase self- distrust and compel the soul to have confidence in God. The soul sees no other help. Faith alone suffices. The sensitive powers cannot help the will. Trying to make many acts only tires the soul. The only act is to acknowledge God's power and to accept the suffering. Let the soul remain at peace in the middle of the storm, strengthened (it knows not how) by God's hidden hand.

Rule 3 — Do not allow yourself to be saddened by being incapable of sustaining thoughts or making acts in prayer. In God's sight, intention is everything. Desires that create anxiety must be moderated. During prayer and after prayer the soul must be at peace.

Don't make many resolutions but proclaim your weakness (known from your experience) and realize that only God's power can bring about any good. It is best if the soul just knows that it is acting for God.

Make simple acts from the heart, almost without thinking. All acts, interior and exterior, must be done peacefully and gently (as St. Francis de Sales teaches). Even our desire to form an act is seen by God. For God, our desires are the first cry of the heart and they have heavenly merit (Bossuet).

All acts made in dryness have more value than those made with sensible devotion. Handle worries about the future by resignation to God's will. This will keep your heart in a state of readiness. "O God, I accept all, just keep me from sin". This "yes" contains the greatest sacrifices.

PRAYER OF FATHER DE CAUSADE TO GAIN ABANDONMENT

O God, when will you give me the will to remain in your will where all is said without a word and all is accomplished by your acting, when my only preoccupation is your good pleasure and I am saved all trouble because I repose in you? How delightful when there is this interior joy. I

continually say "yes" to whatever you want. I renounce my own corrupt will (the mortal enemy of grace) and my own satisfaction.

PRAYER IN TEMPTATION

O God, in this temptation keep me from all sin while allowing the temptation to kill my self-love and crucify my pride. I accept these temptations as benefits of your mercy. Have pity on me.